

and so forth. This is not contradicted by any Vedic evidence, for instance, the poet of a hymn of the Rigveda¹²⁶ says he is a poet, his father a physician (Bhiṣaj), and his mother a grinder of corn (Upala-prakṣiṇī). This would seem to show that a Brahmin could be a doctor, while his wife would perform the ordinary household duties. So a Purohita could perhaps take the field to assist the king by prayer, as Viśvāmitra,¹²⁷ and later on Vasiṣṭha¹²⁸ do, but this does not show that priests normally fought. Nor do they seem normally to have been agriculturists or merchants. On the other hand, they kept cattle: a Brahmacārin's duty was to watch his master's cattle.¹²⁹ It is therefore needless to suppose that they could not, and did not, on occasion turn to agricultural or mercantile pursuits, as they certainly did later. But it must be remembered that in all probability there was more purity of blood, and less pressure of life, among the Brahmins of the Vedic age than later in Buddhist times, when the Vedic sacrificial apparatus was falling into grave disrepute.

It is clear that the Brahmins, whatever their defects, represented the intellectual side of Vedic life, and that the Kṣatriyas, if they played a part in that life, did so only in a secondary degree, and to a minor extent. It is natural to suppose that the Brahmins also composed ballads, the precursors of the epic; for though none such have survived, a few stanzas of this character, celebrating the generosity of patrons, have been preserved by being embedded in priestly compositions. A legend in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa¹³⁰ shows clearly that the Brahmins regarded civilization as being spread by them only:

¹²⁶ ix. 112.

¹²⁷ Rv. iii. 33. 53.

¹²⁸ Rv. vii. 18.

¹²⁹ Chāndogya Upaniṣad, iv. 4. 5; Aitareya Arāṇyaka, iii. 1. 6.

¹³⁰ i. 4. 1, 14-17. Cf. Weber, *Indische Studien*, 9, 257, 277, 278, and Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, iii. 44.

Almost all that can be said of the Brahmins is collected in Weber's *Indische Studien*, 10, 40-158. Cf. also Ludwig, Translation of the Rigveda, 3, 220-226; Fick, *Die sociale Gliederung*

(for Buddhist times; the evidence is, however, of uncertain, and much of it probably of late date); Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 13, 82, 182, etc. (for notices of the Brahmins in the Epic); *The Mutual Relations of the Four Castes according to the Mānavadharmasāstra* (for the Dharma view). Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, 1², 248 et seq., discusses the priesthood in the Rigveda, and Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 197-212, gives an excellent summary of the facts.