

**Cakra**, the 'wheel' of a chariot or wagon, is repeatedly mentioned from the R̥gveda<sup>1</sup> onwards, often in a metaphorical sense. The wheel was fixed on the axle (**Akṣa**) when the chariot was required for use; this required considerable strength, as is shown by a reference in the R̥gveda.<sup>2</sup> The wheel consisted normally of spokes (**Ara**), and a nave (**Nābhi**),<sup>3</sup> in the opening (**Kha**) of which the end of the axle (**Āṇi**) was inserted. An indication of the importance attached to the strength of the wheel is the celebration of the car of the god Pūṣan as having a wheel that suffers no damage.<sup>4</sup> The usual number of wheels was two,<sup>5</sup> but in seven passages of the R̥gveda<sup>6</sup> a chariot is called 'three-wheeled,' in a few others 'seven-wheeled,'<sup>7</sup> while in one of the Atharvaveda<sup>8</sup> it is styled 'eight-wheeled.' Zimmer<sup>9</sup> argues that these epithets do not refer to real chariots, pointing out that in all the passages where *tri-cakra*, 'three-wheeled,' occurs there is a mythical reference. On the other hand, Weber<sup>10</sup> thinks that there might have been chariots with three wheels, one being in the centre between the two occupants. This is not very conclusive; at any rate, the seven-wheeled and the eight-wheeled chariots can hardly be regarded as indicating the existence of real vehicles with that number of wheels.

In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa<sup>11</sup> the potter's wheel (*kaulāla-cakra*) is referred to.

<sup>1</sup> i. 130, 9; 155, 6; 164, 2. ii. 11, 14; 174, 5; iv. 1, 3, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Av. xi. 7, 4; xix. 53, 1. 2, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Rv. viii. 41, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Rv. vi. 54, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Rv. viii. 5, 29; Chāndogya Upaniṣad, iv. 16, 5; Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad, i. 4.

<sup>6</sup> i. 118, 2; 157, 3; 183, 1; viii. 58, 3; x. 41, 1; 85, 14 (all of the Aśvins' chariot); iv. 36, 1 (of a chariot made

by the R̥bhus, who are three in number).

<sup>7</sup> Rv. i. 164, 3. 12; ii. 40, 3.

<sup>8</sup> xi. 4, 22.

<sup>9</sup> *Altindisches Leben*, viii., ix.

<sup>10</sup> *Proceedings of the Berlin Academy*, 1898, 564, quoting Virchow, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 5, 200.

<sup>11</sup> xi. 8, 1, 1.

Cf. Zimmer, *op. cit.*, 247.

**Cakra-vāka** is the name, apparently derived from the nature of its cry, of a species of gander (*Anas casarca*), the modern Chakwā, as it is called in Hindī, or Brahmany duck in English.<sup>1</sup> It is mentioned in the R̥gveda<sup>2</sup> and in the list of victims at the

<sup>1</sup> Griffiths, *Hymns of the R̥gveda*, i. 309, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 39, 3.