

others of the royal family or household, as was no doubt often the case, either in whole or part. The king's share in a village is referred to as early as the Atharvaveda.²⁴

At the head of the village was the Grāma-nī, or 'leader of the village,' who is referred to in the Rīgveda,²⁵ and often in the later Samhitās and in the Brāhmaṇas.²⁶ The exact meaning of the title is not certain. By Zimmer²⁷ the Grāmaṇī is regarded as having had military functions only, and he is certainly often connected with the Senāni, or 'leader of an army.' But there is no reason so to restrict the sense: presumably the Grāmaṇī was the head of the village both for civil purposes and for military operations. He is ranked in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa²⁸ as inferior to the Sūta, or 'charioteer,' with whom, however, he is associated²⁹ as one of the Ratnina, the 'jewels' of the royal establishment. The post was especially valuable to a Vaiśya, who, if he attained it, was at the summit of prosperity (*gateśvī*).³⁰ The Grāmaṇī's connexion with the royal person seems to point to his having been a nominee of the king rather than a popularly elected officer. But the post may have been sometimes hereditary, and sometimes nominated or elective: there is no decisive evidence available. The use of the singular presents difficulties: possibly the Grāmaṇī of the village or city where the royal residence was situated was specially honoured and influential.³¹

²⁴ iv. 22, 2. Cf. n. 20.

²⁵ x. 62, 11; 107, 5.

²⁶ Av. iii. 5, 7; xix. 31, 12; Taittirīya Samhitā, ii. 5, 4, 4; Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā, i. 6, 5 (*grāma-nīthya*, 'the rank of Grāmaṇī': cf. Taittirīya Samhitā, vii. 4, 5, 2); Kāthaka Samhitā, viii. 4; x. 3; Vājasaneyi Samhitā, xv. 15; xxx. 20; Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, i. 1, 4, 8; 7, 3, 4; ii. 7, 18, 4; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, iii. 4, 1, 7; v. 4, 4, 8; viii. 6, 2, 1 (*grāma-nīthya*); Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, iv. 3, 37, 38, etc.

²⁷ *Altindisches Leben*, 171.

²⁸ v. 4, 4, 18.

²⁹ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, v. 3, 1, 5.

³⁰ Taittirīya Samhitā, ii. 5, 4, 4; Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā, i. 6, 5. Cf. Weber, *Indische Studien*, 10, 20, n. 2.

³¹ Presumably, there must have been many Grāmaṇīs in a kingdom, but the texts seem to contemplate only one as in the royal entourage. Cf. also Eggeling, *Sacred Books of the East*, 41, 60, n.; Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 13, 96; Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, 48, thinks that he was elected by the village council or a hereditary officer, because the appointment is only claimed for the king in late authorities like Manu, vii. 115. But there is not even so much authority for election or heredity, and we really cannot say how far the power of the early princes extended: it probably varied very much. Cf. Rājan and Cītraratha.