

Vi-śākhe. See Nakṣatra.

Viś-pati is a word of somewhat uncertain signification, reflecting in this respect the nature of Viś. Zimmer holds that in its strict sense it denotes the head of a canton, but he admits that there is no passage requiring this sense, the only one quoted by him<sup>2</sup> being certainly indecisive. In the great majority of passages the word simply means the 'lord of the dwelling,' whether used of a man or of the god Agni as the householder *par excellence*, or possibly as the fire of the Sabhā or assembly house of the people. This sense suits even the passage of the Rigveda<sup>4</sup> in which the Viśpati, as well as the father and the mother of a maiden,<sup>5</sup> are to be lulled to sleep in order to allow her lover to approach her, for the household may well be deemed to have been a joint family, in which the Viśpati could easily be different from the father of the girl—e.g., a grandfather or uncle. In other passages<sup>6</sup> the Viśpati is the king as 'lord of the subject-people' (viśām), though here Zimmer<sup>7</sup> thinks reference is made to the election of a king.<sup>8</sup> Or again,<sup>7</sup> the Viśpati is the chief of the Viś, probably in the sense of 'subjects.'

<sup>1</sup> *Altindisches Leben*, 171.

<sup>2</sup> Rv. i. 37, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Rv. i. 12, 2; 26, 7; 164, 1; ii. 1, 8; iii. 2, 10; 40, 3; vii. 39, 2; ix. 108, 10; x. 4, 4; 135, 1, etc. So Viśpatni of the lady of the house, Taittiriya Saṃhitā, iii. 1, 11, 4.

<sup>4</sup> vii. 55, 5 = Av. iv. 5, 6.

<sup>5</sup> So Aufrecht, *Indische Studien*, 4, 337 et seq.; Zimmer, *op. cit.*, 308. Cf. Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader*, 370. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 2, 55 et seq., accepts the view of the Bṛhaddevatā, vi. 11 et seq. (where see Macdonell's note), that the hymn refers to Vasiṣṭha's approaching a house as a thief! The

interpretation does not affect the sense of Viśpati, which here is clearly not the title of a cantonal chief. Viś is sometimes equivalent to *Sajāta*; cf. Taittiriya Saṃhitā, ii. 1, 3, 2, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Av. iii. 4, 1; iv. 22, 3. Perhaps Rv. iii. 13, 5, is so to be taken; cf. vii. 39, 2. Cf. Weber, *Indische Studien*, 18, 22.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, 164, 165.

<sup>8</sup> But see *Bājan*.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., Taittiriya Saṃhitā, ii. 3, 1, 3, where Viś must clearly be the people or subject class, and the Viśpati their chief representative; we cannot from such a passage infer a formal office of Viśpati even as head of the Viś.

Viśpalā is, according to the tradition in the Rigveda,<sup>1</sup> the name of a woman to whom the Aśvins gave an iron (*āyastī*)

<sup>1</sup> i. 112, 10; 116, 15; ii. 11; 118, 8; x. 39, 8.