

Even in the *Rigveda*⁸ there is clear proof of the importance attached to agriculture. In the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*⁹ the *Vrātyas*, Hindus without the pale of Brahminism, are described as not cultivating the soil.

The plough land was called *Urvarā* or *Kṣetra*; manure (*Śakan*, *Kariṣa*) was used, and irrigation was practised (*Khani-tra*). The plough (*Lāṅgala*, *Sira*) was drawn by oxen, teams of six, eight, or even twelve being employed.¹⁰ The operations of agriculture are neatly summed up in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹¹ as 'ploughing, sowing, reaping, and threshing' (*kṛṣantaḥ*, *vapaṇtaḥ*, *lanantaḥ*, *mṛṇantaḥ*). The ripe grain was cut with a sickle (*Dātra*, *Spṇi*), bound into bundles¹² (*Parṣa*), and beaten out on the floor of the granary (*Khala*).¹³ The grain was then separated from the straw and refuse either by a sieve (*Titau*) or a winnowing fan (*Śūrpa*).¹⁴ The winnower was called *Dhānyākṛt*,¹⁵ and the grain was measured in a vessel called *Urdara*.¹⁶

The *Rigveda* leaves us in doubt as to the kind of grain grown, for *Yava* is a word of doubtful signification, and *Dhānā* is also vague. In the later *Samhitās*¹⁷ things are different. Rice (*Vrihi*) appears, *Yava* means barley, with a species styled *Upavāka*. Beans (*Mudga*, *Māsa*), sesamum (*Tila*), and other grains (*Apu*, *Khalva*, *Godhūma*, *Nivāra*, *Priyaṅgu*, *Masūra*, *Śyāmāka*) are mentioned, while cucumbers (*Urvārū*, *Urvārūka*) were known. It is uncertain whether fruit trees (*Vṛkṣa*) were cultivated, or merely grew wild;¹⁸ but frequent mention is made of the jujube (*Karkandhu*, *Kuvala*, *Badara*).

The seasons for agriculture are briefly summed up in a passage of the *Taittiriya Samhitā*:¹⁹ barley ripened in summer, being no doubt sown, as in modern India, in winter; rice

⁸ x. 34, 13; 117, 7. Cf. Hopkins, *India, Old and New*, 208.

⁹ xvii. 1.

¹⁰ Av. vi. 91, 1; *Kāthaka Samhitā*, xv. 2. Cf. Rv. viii. 6, 48; x. 101, 4.

¹¹ i. 6, 1, 3.

¹² viii. 78, 10; x. 101, 3; 131, 2.

¹³ Rv. x. 48, 7.

¹⁴ Rv. x. 71, 2; Av. xii. 3, 19. The technical terms are *tusair vi-vic*, Av. xi. 1, 12; *palāvān apa-vic*, xii. 3, 19.

¹⁵ Rv. x. 94, 13.

¹⁶ Rv. ii. 14, 11. See also *Sthivi*.

¹⁷ See *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*, xviii. 12, for a list.

¹⁸ The pulling of ripe fruit is referred to in Rv. iii. 45, 4. Cf. *pakvā śākhā*, Rv. i. 8, 8; *vṛkṣa pakva*, Rv. iv. 20, 5; Av. xx. 127, 4. But that does not prove arboriculture.

¹⁹ vii. 2, 10, 2.