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Autor: Hayakawa, A.
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THREE STEPS TO HEAVEN

A. HAYAKAWA, Leiden

A question arises from the five mantras of TĀ 6.1.4¹, which are recited at the moment of cremation according to Baudhāyana-pitṛmedhasūtra 1.8. In these mantras, Agni, Agni Jātavedas, and Agni Vaiśvānara are invoked in that order. My question is: Why are these three types of Agni invoked in this ritual procedure? In other words, do they have different functions which are particular to each of them? Four of the relevant verses of TĀ 6.1.4 are taken from the Rigveda. Let us first look at earlier studies concerning Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas in the Rigveda to find a good starting point for our study.

Earlier Studies on Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas

The best point to begin the discussions about the Rigvedic Vaiśvānara is the following verse, because it contains the most important features of Vaiśvānara:

RV 1.59.2 Agni is the head of heaven, the navel of earth. And he became the *arati* of heaven and earth. The gods created you as such a god. O Vaiśvānara, [you are] the light for the Aryan².

Pāda a: Oldenberg (1894) does not discuss Vaiśvānara in detail³. Macdonell (1897: 99) indicates that there was a difference of opinion about

Acknowledgements: The basic structure of this paper occurred to me during a session with Prof. J. C. Heesterman. After discussions with Prof. H.W. Bodewitz, a prototype of this paper was submitted to Leiden University as my M.A. thesis in 1994. After some corrections, the prototype was exposed in my personal internet webpage with the title *Ascension of Fire* in 1998. This paper is a thoroughly revised, third version.

- 1 I follow the Ānandāśrama and Bibliotheca Indica editions in the numbering of the passages. In the Mysore edition, these verses are contained in 4.1.4. For the text, see section 2 of this paper.
- 2 *mūrdhā divó nābhīr agnīḥ pṛthivyā áthābhavad aratī ródasyoh / táṃ tvā devāso 'janayanta devāṃ vaiśvānara jyótir id āryāya //*

Vaiśvānara's location even in the time of Yāska: "Yāska in commenting on the epithet states (Nir. 7, 23), that ancient ritualists (*yājñikāḥ*) took Agni Vaiśvānara to be the sun, while Śākapūṇi considered him to be this Agni." Hillebrandt (1899: 114ff) identifies "the head of heaven" in the above verse with the sun and "the navel of earth" with the sacrificial fire. Keith (1925: 164) largely follows Hillebrandt and identifies Vaiśvānara with the sun and the sacrificial fire. The identification of Vaiśvānara with the sun is plausible in itself, as well as its identification with the sacrificial fire. But a problem arises in any case as a result of these identifications: How can Agni Vaiśvānara be the heavenly sun and the earthly sacrificial fire⁴? Findly (1982) collected the Rigvedic material about Vaiśvānara widely, and tried to present its comprehensive image. But as to the duality of Vaiśvānara, she leaves the problem of duality unsolved⁵.

Pāda b: The word *arati* is translated as "Diener, Gehülfe, Verwalter, Ordner, administer" in PW, "der das Opfer zurechtet, zu stande bringt" by Grassmann, and "Lenker, Wagenlenker" by Geldner. While PW and Grassmann do not appear to help us, Geldner's interpretation is significant. Although later works such as Thieme (1949) and Findly (1982) seem not to have noticed it, by translating *arati* as "Lenker", the heavenly Vaiśvānara and the earthly Vaiśvānara can be connected with each other through a mobile messenger. However, as Thieme (1949: 26) indicates, there are no good etymological grounds for *arati* "Lenker"⁶. Thieme himself interpreted *arati* as "Speichenkranz", which does not help us to understand Vaiśvānara's duality. Thieme's discussion will be examined later in this paper. Findly (1982) translates *arati* consistently "ministrant", which seems to have been taken from PW.

- 3 He discusses Agni as the sacrificial fire (p.102ff) and Agni as the sun (p.108ff), but does not mention Vaiśvānara there. Oldenberg Noten and Oldenberg SBE do not give important information on this Pāda.
- 4 Hillebrandt (1899: 115) says, "wir haben also einen V. im Himmel, einen auf Erden. So erklärt es sich, dass Nir. VII, 23 nach den Yājñika's Vaiśvānara die Sonne, nach Śākapūṇi aber "dieser Agni" ist." This indeed explains the difference of opinion in Nirukta, but of course it does not explain the duality of Vaiśvānara.
- 5 Findly (1982: 10) "Rising up as the most visible luminary in the sky, Vaiśvānara must be worshipped as prominent among the gods. But remaining as he does on earth, Agni the fire is bound to his priestly function to serve these same gods as well."
- 6 Mayrhofer's dictionary does not even mention "Lenker".

Pāda d: Findly (1982: 15ff) indicates Vaiśvānara's aspect as the "conquering fire".

As to the name *vaiśvānará*, we will discuss it later at the end of section 1. Relevant studies will also be mentioned there.

As to Jātavedas, we have a relatively small amount of secondary literature. Most earlier studies are concerned with the etymology of the name *jātavedas*. Findly (1981) is the first comprehensive description of Jātavedas. She indicated three aspects of the Rigvedic Jātavedas: "the unbroken presence at the ritual", "the keeper of the family" and "the presence at the cremation ritual". Among these aspects, the last one seems to be important for us. She argues: "Unlike any other aspect of Agni, Jātavedas is consistently associated with the fire which burns corpses, which carries the dead to Yama's kingdom, and which offers oblations to the ancestors." Jātavedas is invoked eight times in the Rigvedic funeral verses 10.15 and 16, and among them 10.16.1, 2, 4 and 5 mention the conveying of a corpse. It might be correct that Jātavedas has this function, but a procedural problem for us is that the verses which she mentions are identical with the verses which we see in TĀ 6.1.4. Therefore, we cannot make a conclusion based only on this material⁷. It is necessary for us to determine the function of Jātavedas in a more general form with more extensive material, so that we can understand the function of corpse-conveying as part of a more general function.

The above summary of earlier studies brings us to our starting point: 1) The problem of Vaiśvānara's duality, which Geldner attempted to solve through the interpretation of *aratí*. Are there any other solutions possible for its etymology? 2) The forms and functions of Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas: can they be more clearly described?

Material and Method

I define the Vaiśvānara verses as the verses in which Agni Vaiśvānara (or Vaiśvānara) is mentioned, not as the verses which are contained in the hymns dedicated to Agni Vaiśvānara. This definition is justified because the

7 Otherwise the discussion will be tautological: "What is the function of Jātavedas, who is carrying the deceased person in these verses?" "Oh yes, the function of Jātavedas is to carry the deceased person, because it is said to carry the deceased person in these verses."

hymns which are said to belong to Vaiśvānara contain many verses that mention Agni, Agni Jātavedas, or some other manifestations. In other words, I only use the material which definitely belongs to Vaiśvānara. In earlier studies, the material was not defined explicitly⁸.

The Rigvedic Vaiśvānara verses, which we obtain through this definition, are the following verses: RV 1.59.1; 1.59.2; 1.59.3; 1.59.4; 1.59.5; 1.59.6; 1.59.7; 1.98.1; 1.98.2; 1.98.3; 3.2.1; 3.2.11; 3.2.12; 3.3.1; 3.3.5; 3.3.10; 3.3.11; 3.26.1; 3.26.2; 3.26.3; 4.5.1; 4.5.2; 5.27.1; 5.27.2; 5.51.13; 5.60.8; 6.7.1; 6.7.2; 6.7.3; 6.7.4; 6.7.5; 6.7.6; 6.7.7; 6.8.1; 6.8.2; 6.8.3; 6.8.4; 6.8.6; 6.8.7; 6.9.1; 6.9.7; 7.5.1; 7.5.2; 7.5.3; 7.5.4; 7.5.5; 7.5.8; 7.5.9; 7.6.6; 7.6.7; 7.13.1; 7.13.2; 7.13.3; 7.49.4; 8.30.4; 9.61.16; 10.45.12; 10.88.12; 10.88.13; 10.88.14.

The method of definition of the Jātavedas verses is the same as outlined for the Vaiśvānara verses: The verses in which Agni Jātavedas (or Jātavedas) is mentioned. The Rigveda contains the following Jātavedas verses: RV 1.44.1; 1.44.4; 1.45.3; 1.50.1; 1.59.5; 1.77.5; 1.78.1; 1.79.4; 1.94.1; 1.99.1; 1.127.1; 2.2.1; 2.2.12; 2.4.1; 3.1.20; 3.1.21; 3.2.8; 3.3.8; 3.5.4; 3.6.6; 3.10.3; 3.11.4; 3.11.8; 3.15.4; 3.17.2; 3.17.3; 3.17.4; 3.20.3; 3.21.1; 3.22.1; 3.23.1; 3.25.5; 3.26.7; 3.28.1; 3.28.4; 3.29.2; 3.29.4; 3.57.6; 4.1.20; 4.3.8; 4.5.11; 4.5.12; 4.12.1; 4.14.1; 4.58.8; 5.4.4; 5.4.9; 5.4.10; 5.4.11; 5.5.1; 5.9.1; 5.22.2; 5.26.7; 5.43.10; 6.4.2; 6.5.3; 6.8.1; 6.10.1; 6.12.4; 6.15.7; 6.15.13; 6.16.29; 6.16.30; 6.16.36; 6.16.42; 6.48.1; 7.2.7; 7.3.8; 7.5.7; 7.5.8; 7.9.4; 7.9.6; 7.12.2; 7.13.2; 7.14.1; 7.17.3; 7.17.4; 7.104.14; 8.11.3; 8.11.4; 8.11.5; 8.23.1; 8.23.17; 8.23.22; 8.43.2; 8.43.6; 8.43.23; 8.71.7; 8.71.11; 8.74.3; 8.74.5; 9.67.27; 10.4.7; 10.6.5; 10.8.5; 10.15.12; 10.15.13; 10.16.1; 10.16.2; 10.16.4; 10.16.5; 10.16.9; 10.16.10; 10.45.1; 10.51.1; 10.51.3; 10.51.7; 10.61.14; 10.69.8; 10.69.9; 10.83.2; 10.87.2; 10.87.5; 10.87.6; 10.87.7; 10.87.11; 10.88.4; 10.88.5; 10.91.12; 10.110.1; 10.115.6; 10.140.3; 10.150.3; 10.176.2; 10.188.1; 10.188.2; 10.188.3.

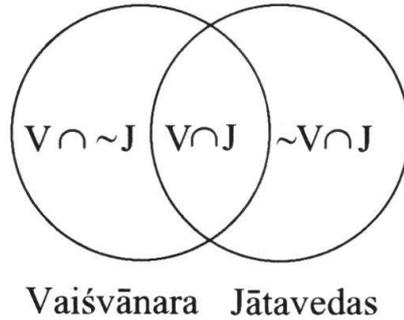
In 1.59.5, 6.8.1, 7.5.8 and 7.13.2, Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas are mentioned in the same verse. These require a separate discussion.

A Rigvedic god can be regarded as the sum of the attributes which are described and are attributed to him in the Rigveda. We can regard a god as a

8 Findley (1982) seems to have defined the material in a different way. Some Rigvedic verses which she cites, such as 3.2.13-14, 10.88.1-11, 7.6.1-5, are not relevant material according to our definition. The material is not clearly defined by the other scholars.

class, and his attributes as its elements. The attributes which are only contained in the class Vaiśvānara and not in the class Jātavedas are the attributes of Vaiśvānara. In the same way, the attributes which are only contained in the class Jātavedas and not in the class Vaiśvānara are the attributes of Jātavedas.

An ideal process would be as follows: First we extract the descriptions of Agni Vaiśvānara and Agni Jātavedas from the Rigveda. Then we obtain two classes of attributes, namely the class Vaiśvānara (V) and the class Jātavedas (J).



If a certain attribute belongs to Agni in general and not in particular to the manifestations, then it must appear in both V and J. Therefore, if we restrict our domain of discourse to the classes Agni, Vaiśvānara, and Jātavedas⁹, the class of the attributes which belong to Agni in general is defined as the intersection of V and J, namely $V \cap J$. The class of the attributes which are particular to Vaiśvānara is $V \cap \sim J$. And the class of the attributes which are particular to Jātavedas is $\sim V \cap J$. If $V \cap \sim J = \sim V \cap J = \emptyset$, it means that

9 I restrict our domain of discourse to keep our discussion simple. As a result, the terms “the attributes which are particular to Vaiśvānara/Jātavedas” and “Agni in general” are used in an approximate sense in this paper. Precisely spoken (i.e. if we set our domain of discourse to “all the manifestations of Agni”), the attributes which belong to $V \cap \sim J$ are not the attributes which are owned exclusively by Vaiśvānara, because there is a possibility that he shares the attributes with some other manifestations of Agni. In that case, “Agni in general” is the intersection of all the manifestation classes. Although I think that the restriction to Agni, Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas is practically enough for our purpose, a study of other manifestations could calibrate the result of the present study.

there is only a nominal difference between Vaiśvānara, Jātavedas, and Agni¹⁰.

The following study consists of two sections: Section 1 studies the mythological structure of Agni, Agni Vaiśvānara, and Agni Jātavedas. The meaning of the word *arati* will be examined first, and subsequently the forms and functions of Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas will be studied. Section 2 analyses the functions of Agni Vaiśvānara and Agni Jātavedas in the concrete context of the cremation ritual.

1. THREE STEPS

Arati

As was already mentioned, Thieme (1949) gives the translation “Speichenkranz” for *arati*, which is also adopted by Mayrhofer. Now we should re-examine his discussion. Let us start with the following verse:

RV 6.3.5 Like a shooter who is about to shoot, he puts on [the arrow]. He sharpens his flame just like an iron blade. The *arati* of light¹¹ which has a bright course¹² is just like a bird sitting on a tree, which flutters quickly¹³.

Arati looks like “a bird sitting on a tree, which flutters quickly”. A “Speichenkranz” never looks like such a thing. Although Thieme (1949: 30) mentions this verse, he does not fully discuss it. In the following verses, *Arati* is put down (*ni-ā-īr*) somewhere:

- 10 Gonda (1959: 256) suspects that the instances of Jātavedas “may also to a certain extent be explained from metrical considerations”. If he is right, there must only be nominal difference between Agni and Jātavedas.
- 11 Geldner: “der Lenker der Nacht” (He follows Ludwig’s “der Bote der Nacht”). Mayrhofer: “leichtes Gleiten, Salbe, Schminke; lichte Farbe, Licht, Strahl; dunkle Farbe, Dunkel, letzter Teil der Nacht”. I take it “light”, because *arati* is said to have “a bright course” here.
- 12 Geldner: “von wunderbarer Schnelligkeit”, however Mayrhofer (under *DHRAJ*): “mit glänzender Bahn”.
- 13 *sá id ásteva prāti dhād asiṣyāñ chíṣita téjó 'yaso ná dhārām / citrádhrajatir aratir yó aktór vér ná druśadvā raghupátmajamhāh //*

RV 2.2.3 The gods have put down the marvellous *arati* of heaven and earth on the bottom of the air. [They have put down] the brightly shining Agni who is to be known as a chariot, who is to be praised among the settlements like Mitra¹⁴.

RV 10.3.7 Bring the greatness hither for us. Put yourself down as *arati* of the two young women, [namely] heaven and earth. May swift, impetuous Agni come hither with the swift, impetuous horses¹⁵.

Thieme identifies “the bottom of the air” in 2.2.3 with earth¹⁶, which seems correct. He argues these verses in connection with Geldner’s interpretation “Lenker”: “*arati* ist mehrfach, geradezu typisch, Objekt van *ny èrìre* (1.128.8, 2.2.3), *nyerirè* (4.1.1, 8.19.21), das Geldner sicherlich richtig als Perfekt von *ni + ar* erklärt (anm. zu 4.1.1b), aber kaum treffend mit ‘haben bestellt als’ übersetzt. ‘Sie haben eingefügt’ führt viel eher auf einen Teil des Wagens als den Lenker als Objekt¹⁷.” However, “the ‘Speichenkranz’ which is put down on earth” can only mean a broken wheel. In any case, something is wrong with this interpretation.

The etymological ground of Thieme's discussion is the interpretation of the suffix *-ti* as a collective sense. Although this might be possible, it is not the only possible interpretation. Liebert (1949: 178), who collected the instances of the suffix *-ti* from a wide range of material, takes *arati* as denominative. He derives *arati* from **ara* (“rechte, passende Art” < *áram*), and translates *arati* “einer der die rechte, passende Art weiss, einer der das richtige Ritual kennt”. Liebert’s explanation does not fit the context of the above instances either, because a “ritual-knower” does not look like a bird on a tree. However, it leads us to the third possibility, which is mentioned neither by Thieme nor by Liebert: *Arati* can also be derived from *ará* “spoke” as denominative.

14 *tám devā budhné rájasaḥ sudāmsasaṃ divásprthivyór aratiṃ ny èrìre / rátham iva védyam śukráśociṣam agnīm mitráṃ ná kṣitiṣu prasāmsyam //*

15 *sá ā vakṣi máhi ná ā ca satsi divásprthivyór aratir yuvatyóḥ / agniḥ sutúkaḥ sutúkebhīr ásvai rábhasvadbhī rábhasvām éhá gamyāḥ //*

16 “Ihn (Agni), den sehr wunderkräftigen, haben die Himmlischen am Boden des Luftraums (= auf der Erde) als den Speichenkranz von Himmel und Erde eingefügt.” (p.30)

17 Thieme (1949: 27). RV 10.3.7 is referred in p.31, but not fully discussed.

AiG II,2 p639-640 mentions the following instances of the denominative *-ti*¹⁸: *pattí* (pedestrian) < *pad* (foot), *addhātí* (sage) < *addhā* (truly), and *vṛkāti* (murderer) < *vṛka* (wolf). Semantically this formation can be understood as the addition of “-man” in English. So, “foot-man” is a pedestrian, “truth-man” is a sage, and “wolf-man” is a murderer. Therefore, if we derive *aratí* from *ará* “spoke”, it means “spoke-man”, or a spoke as a god. And when we think of *aratí* as such, we can explain the above instances of *aratí*: *Aratí* is the spoke-god which supports the movement of the sun. When it stands upright, it looks like “a bird sitting on a tree” (RV 6.3.5), because in the Vedic mythology the sun is a great bird¹⁹. This interpretation also fits the context of RV 2.2.3 and 10.3.7 better. These verses clearly shows a scene in which the gods fix the bottom end of the spoke-god on earth. The reason why the *aratí* is called “the *aratí* of heaven and earth” in these verses is also clear: The spoke-god extends from earth to heaven and combines them with each other.

The above RV 2.2.3 contains a comparison of Agni with a chariot. RV 10.3.7 mentions “swift, impetuous horses”. Agni is often compared with a chariot, and it is one of the most important grounds for Thieme’s interpretation. However, the verses cited by Thieme do not always support his interpretation. A good example is the interpretation of *dadr̥śānápavi* “whose fellow has become visible” in the following verse²⁰:

RV 10.3.6 The hissing noises of him, when his fellow has become visible, [namely] when he gapes, sound forth. The most heavenly, far-reaching²¹ *aratí* shines forth with the ancient, brilliant, harnessed horses²².

Thieme explains: “Dem Dichter stellen sich die Flammen als schnaubende Rosse am Wagen, die vom Feuerschein umgebenen Flammen als die von der

18 AiG itself classifies *aratí* in “Anscheinend weder deverbale noch denominativ”.

19 Cf. Macdonell (1897) p31.

20 Thieme (p. 32): “Es ertönt sein Ungestüm, wenn er durch seine Gespanne schnaubt, wenn seine Radschiene sichtbar wird, wenn er, der erste der Himmlischen, wachsend nach allen Seiten hin leuchtet als Speichenkranz (Wagen) durch seine alten, hellen, singenden [Speichen].”

21 *vibhvan* Mayrhofer (under *BHAV*): “weitreichend”.

22 *asyá śuṣmāso dadr̥śānápaver jéhamānasya svanayan niyúdbhiḥ pratnébhir yó rúśadbhir devátamo ví rébhadbhir aratír bhāti vibhvā //*

Radschiene umschlossenen Speichen eines Wagenrades dar.” He seems to take *asyá dadṛśānápaver jehamānasya* as *aratí*. However, he is making a logical mistake here. He himself claims that *aratí* is a feminine noun²³. The genitives in 10.3.4 *asyá yāmāso brható ná vagnūn indhānā agnéḥ sákhyuḥ śivāsya*, 10.3.5 *svanā ná yāsya bhāmāsaḥ pávante rócāmānasya brhatāḥ sudívaḥ*, and 10.3.6 should be taken as *Sūrya*, as Geldner notes in 10.3.4 “*asyá*, des *Sūrya*”. The above verse depicts the rising sun (“when his felloes have become visible”) and the spoke-god, which instantly extends itself from the rising sun to the sacrificial fire (or, from the sacrificial fire to the sun). “The harnessed horses” (*niyúdbhiḥ*), which are also mentioned in 10.3.7 as *sutúkebhir ásvaiḥ*, is a figurative expression of the rays. The Vedic poets compared the extraordinary speed of the extending spoke-god with the horses, because they knew nothing faster than them. RV 2.4.2 *aratír jīrāśvaḥ* “*aratí*, which has a quick horse” is based on this association. The “extending *aratí*” can also be seen in RV 6.15.4d *havyavāham aratīm devām rñjase* “I extend the god *aratí*, the conveyor of the oblation”.

Thieme translates RV 6.12.3ab *téjiṣṭhā yāsýāratír vanerāt todó ádhvan ná vrdhasānó adyaut* “Der im Holz herrschende (Agni) ist erstrahlt, grösser werdend wie ein Wagenfahrer auf der Strasse (der immer näher kommt), er, dessen Speichenkranz sehr glühend ist.” (p.29). Based on this verse, he claims that *aratí* is a feminine noun. However, even if RV 2.4.2 *devānām agnir aratír jīrāśvaḥ* could be explained as assimilation to the gender of the qualifying noun, this verse cannot be decisive grounds on which to determine the gender of *aratí*, because *téjiṣṭhā* can also be the instrumental of *téjiṣṭha* (neut/masc)²⁴. Moreover, Thieme’s translation does not explain us why *aratí* is like “a charioteer on the way”. My translation is:

RV 6.12.3ab [Agni], ruling in the wood, whose *aratí* grows with the most brilliant [horse] like a charioteer on the way, has shone.

Aratí extends quickly, like a chariot running in full speed with an extremely fast horse. The charioteer of such a chariot looks growing on the way, if you

23 Thieme p.32. However, RV 2.4.2d *devānām agnir aratír jīrāśvaḥ* makes it unpalis-ble.

24 Grassmann also takes it as the instrumental.

look at him from his destination, namely the sacrificial enclosure where the poet is standing.

The following verse seems to show an interesting problem of Thieme's chariot:

RV 8.19.1 The gods have caused the god *arati* to run. They (priests) have offered the oblation to the gods²⁵.

Thieme's translation of this particular verse seems acceptable (p.31): "Den Himmlischen (Agni) haben die Himmlischen als *arati* laufen lassen, zu den Himmlischen haben sie [durch Agni] die Opferspeise gefahren." He argues: "Natürlich ist hier in dichterischer Ausdrucksweise ... mit "Speichenschaft" das ganze Rad oder der ganze Wagen gemeint." But the problem of Thieme's chariot is that its "Speichenkranz" is fixed on earth and in heaven. Therefore, it runs nowhere²⁶.

RV 4.38.4 has been translated in various ways. Thieme translates Pāda d "[der dahinläuft] ... schneller als die Speichenschaft (schneller als die Speichen sich drehen können)". Geldner: "Der im Kämpfen bis an die Wagendecke reichende (Beute) errafft, der als bester Gewinner hervorgeht, wenn er auf Rinder auszieht, seine Vorzüge offenbarend, die weisen Worte verstehend, seinen Lenker noch übertreffend, mehr als *Āyu* zu erreichen vermag." Renou EVP: "Lui qui, raflant les butins dans les combats, avance, gagnant (des richesses), allant (à la quête) de vaches, (ce cheval) aux marques bien-apparentes, attentif aux répartitions-rituelles, (qui est allé) au delà de l'emblème (solaire, qui) a en(touré de sollicitude) l'ouvrage de l'*Āyu*.":

RV 4.38.4 [The horse] which plunders booties at battle fields, which, as the best gainer approaching cows, foaming at the mouth²⁷ and

25 *devāso devām aratiṃ dadhanvire devatrā havyām ohire //*

26 *Dadhanvire* is interpreted in a causative sense by Thieme, Geldner and Grassman "cause to run". But it could also be interpreted in a non-causative sense "run", taking the accusative as the object. In this case, the translation of the verse will be "The gods have run to the god *arati*." See Gotō (1987: 178 note 309): "Selten mit Akk.: zum Haus (*kṣāyam*) IX 97,26, zum Kuh- und Rossbesitz (*gōmat ... āsvavat*) IX 105,4 (möglicherweise Inhaltsakk.), zu Indra (von Agni) III 53,4; einmal mit Lok. (*Māṃścatvé ... sārasi*) IX 97,52; manchmal mit Dat. ('für jn.' bzw. finaler Dat.)."

27 Mayrhofer (under *ṛjika-*): "an dem der Schaum hervortritt".

observing the distribution, runs through *arati* around the waters²⁸ of life²⁹.

As far as the following two verses are concerned, Thieme's interpretation "Speichenkranz" does not cause a serious problem:

RV 10.3.2 When he approaches this black [night] with the pretended form, generating the maiden, [namely] the child of the great father, the *arati* of heaven shines with Vasus, supporting the upward light of the sun³⁰.

RV 5.2.1 The young mother holds the covered baby secretly, and she does not give it to the father. People see ahead its not-changing face which is put on *arati*³¹.

Both of these verses are concerned with the dawnbreak³². It might be possible to take the *arati* of 10.3.2 and 5.2.1 as the morning sun with radiance. However, no other instance of *arati*, which we have seen above, can be translated "Speichenkranz". If we take *arati* in these verses as the spoke-god, we can explain the Pādas cd of these verses as follows: At the dawnbreak, the spoke-god forms a straight line towards the east, which runs on the surface of the earth. The morning sun, which is put on the tip of the spoke-god (5.2.1), shines upwards (10.3.2).

RV 1.59.2 *arati ródasyoḥ* and 10.3.7 *divásprthivyór aratir yuvatyóḥ* have already been discussed. Similar instance is RV 7.5.1 *divó aratāye*

28 I take *āpas* as the accusative. The horse runs through the cosmic spoke-god and approaches the heavenly waters.

29 *yāḥ smārundhānó gādhyā samātsu sánutaraś cárati góṣu gáchan / āvirrjiko vidáthā nicíkyat tiró aratim páry āpa āyóḥ //*

30 *kṛṣṇām yád énīm abhi várpasā bhūj janáyan yóṣām brhatáḥ pitúr jām / ūrdhvám bhānūm sūryasya stabhāyán divó vásubhir aratir ví bhāti //*

31 *kumārám mātā yuvatīḥ sámubdham gúhā bibharti ná dadāti pitré / ánikam asya ná mináj jánāsaḥ puráḥ paśyanti níhitam arataú //*

32 10.3.2b "maiden", "the child of the great father" is Uṣas. As to 5.2.1, Thieme (1949: 29) translates: "Die junge Mutter (= die Nacht) trägt den Knaben (= die Sonne) eingewickelt im Geheimen: nicht gibt sie ihn dem Vater (zur Anerkennung) Sein [die Satzungen] nicht täuschendes Gesicht (die stets pünktlich wiedererscheinende Sonnenscheibe) sehen die Völker vorn (im Osten) hineingesetzt in einen Speichenkranz."

pr̥thivyāḥ “for the *aratí* of heaven and earth”. This is most naturally interpreted as “the spoke-god combining heaven and earth”.

While the interpretations “Speichenkranz” and “spoke-god” are primarily concerned with the spatial form of *aratí*, Liebert’s “ritual-knower” does not give a concrete visual image of *aratí*. Just because of it, this interpretation does not cause a problem in the contexts presented above. However, it also gives no clear vision of *aratí* as “spoke-god” does. In any case, it cannot explain why *aratí* grows like a charioteer on the way (RV 6.12.3), why it is said to support the upward light of the sun (RV 10.3.2), or why it is put down on the bottom of the air (RV 2.2.3).

On the etymological level, *aratí* can be taken as “Speichenkranz”, “ritual-knower”, or “spoke-god”. However, the above contextual study shows that the only possible interpretation among them is “spoke-god”. Let us go further and see what role the “spoke-god” plays in the mythological structure of Agni.

The Spatial Descriptions of Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas

In Brāhmaṇas we very often observe a threefold structure of the world³³. It can be formulated as follows.

<i>location</i>	<i>the form of fire</i>
<i>Heaven</i>	<i>Sūrya</i>
<i>Antarikṣa</i>	<i>Vāyu</i>
<i>Earth</i>	<i>Agni</i>

Bṛhaddevatā³⁴ shows a slightly different structure.

<i>location</i>	<i>the form of fire</i>
Heaven	Agni Vaiśvānara

33 E.g. TS 5.6.7, ŚB 6.1.2.10, etc. It is also said in the ŚB that Agni is threefold (ŚB 6.7.3.16, etc), and that Agni, Vāyu, Āditya are all the light of the world (ŚB 6.3.3.16). Cf. also Macdonell (1897) p. 93-94.

34 1.95-96 in Tokunaga’s text, which correspond to Macdonell’s 1.99-100.

Antarikṣa	Agni Jātavedas
Earth	Agni

Here Agni Vaiśvānara and Agni Jātavedas appear instead of Sūrya and Vāyu, respectively. But as far as I know, this structure has not been positively attested to in the Vedic texts. Although Bṛhaddevatā does not belong to the Vedic corpus, and so we cannot conclude that this structure exists in the Vedic mythology based only on this passage, there might be a possibility that it contains some truth. So we will pay special attention to the spatial division of Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas.

As has already been seen, Vaiśvānara is identified with the sacrificial fire (“the navel of earth”) and the sun (“the head of heaven”).

RV 1.59.1 O Agni, other fires are only your branches. All the immortals rejoice at you. O Vaiśvānara, you are *the navel of the settlements*. You hold the people like a supporting pillar³⁵.

RV 1.59.2 Agni is *the head of heaven, the navel of earth*. And he became the spoke-god of heaven and earth. The gods created you as such a god. O Vaiśvānara, [you are] the light for the Aryan³⁶.

The following verse describes his ascent, which can be interpreted as that of the sun.

RV 3.2.12 *Vaiśvānara has ascended heaven* as in the ancient time. Being honoured by good hymns, he [ascends] the top of heaven. Producing the wealth for people as before, the watchful one goes round the same course³⁷.

The following verses describe Vaiśvānara as the morning sun.

35 *vayā id agne agnāyas te anyé tvé viśve amṛtā mādayante / vaiśvānara nābhir asi kṣitīnām sthūṇeva jānāim upamid yayantha //*

36 *mūrdhā divó nābhir agnih pṛthivyā áthābhavad aratí ródasyoh / tám tvā devāso 'janayanta devām vaiśvānara jyótir id āryāya //*

37 *vaiśvānarāḥ pratnāthā nākam āruhad divās pṛṣṭhām bhādamānaḥ sumānmabhiḥ / sá pūrvavāj janāyañ jantāve dhānaṃ samānām ājmaṃ páry eti jāgrviḥ //*

RV 10.88.12 The gods created for all the people as *the banner of days* Agni Vaiśvānara, who, *coming with the light, extended the shining Uṣases* and also *covers up the darkness*³⁸.

RV 6.9.1 The night and the day, [namely] two sides, rotate with [magical] knowledge. Vaiśvānara, being born, *overpowered the darkness with light*, just like a king³⁹.

The “celestial body”, which is identified with Vaiśvānara, can also be interpreted as the sun.

RV 10.88.13 The seers and the gods who are worthy of sacrifice, created Agni Vaiśvānara, who is not subject to old age, the ancient, unaltering, *moving celestial body*, the strong, high superintendent of the secret⁴⁰.

Some verses mention the omnipresence of Vaiśvānara with his light. This can also be understood as an aspect of a solar deity.

RV 7.5.4 O Agni Vaiśvānara, the threefold world, heaven and earth follow your law. *You have spread over Heaven and Earth with your light, [namely] the perpetual, flaming glow*⁴¹.

As already seen above, Vaiśvānara is also described as the spoke-god.

RV 7.5.1 Bring praise to strong Agni, [namely] *the spoke-god of heaven and earth*, [namely] Vaiśvānara, who was brought up in the lap of all the immortals by the watchful ones⁴².

38 *viśvasmā agnīm bhūvanāya devā vaiśvānarām ketúm áhnām akr̥ṇvan / ā yás tatānośáso vibhātír ápo ūr̥noti támo arcīṣā yán //*

39 *áhaś ca kr̥ṣṇám áhar árjunam ca ví vartete rájasī vedyābhiḥ / vaiśvānaró jáyamāno ná rájāvātiraj jyótiṣāgnis támāmsi //*

40 *vaiśvānarām kaváyo yajñīyāso 'gnīm devā ajanayann ajuryám / náksatram pratnám áminac cariṣṇú yakṣásyādhyakṣam taviṣám brhántam //*

41 *táva tridhātu pṛthiví utá dyaúr vaiśvānara vratám agne sacanta / tvám bhāśā ródasī ā tatanthājasreṇa śocīṣā śósucānaḥ //*

42 *prāgnāye tavāse bharadhvam giram divó aratāye pṛthivyāḥ / yó viśveṣām amṛtānām upāsthe vaiśvānaró vāvṛdhé jāgrvādbhiḥ //*

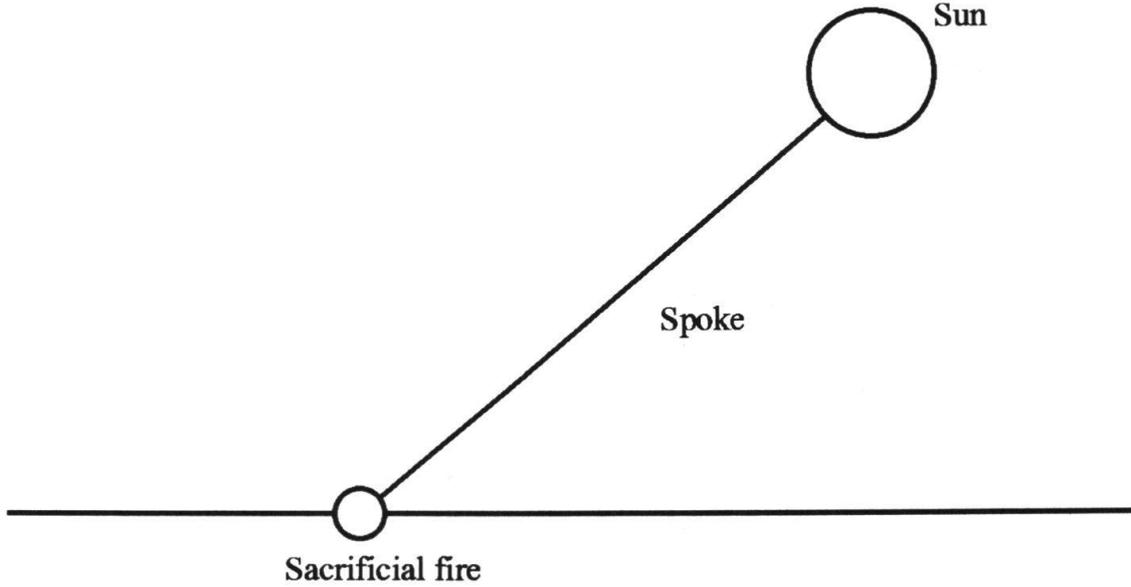
RV 6.7.1 The gods generate Vaiśvānara, [namely] the Agni who is born regularly, the head of heaven, *the spoke-god of earth*, the seer, the universal king, the guest of the people, the drinking-vessel at the mouth⁴³.

The following Vaiśvānara verses contain some ambiguous expressions: RV 3.26.1 mentions *svarvíd* as an attribute of Vaiśvānara. Geldner translates it “Sonnenfinder” and notes “er bringt durch seine Helle die Sonne, d.h. Licht auf Erden”. However, if his note represents his intention, PW and Grassmann “Licht, Glück, u.s.w. verschaffend” seems me less misleading. Geldner translates *yatate* in RV 1.98.1 *vaiśvānaró yatate sūryeṇa* “wetteifelt”. However, Gotō (1987: 254) and Mayrhofer: “in fester Weise eine Stellung einnehmen”.

We have seen the spatial descriptions of Vaiśvānara⁴⁴. Earlier studies, which translate *aratí* as “Speichenkranz” or “Lenker”, could not reconstruct the form of Vaiśvānara as a unity and they left it divided in heaven and on earth. But now, through the new interpretation “spoke-god”, we can present a more consistent form: The rotation of the sun is supported by the spoke, and “the navel of earth” functions as a pivot.

43 *mūrdhānaṃ divó aratim pṛthivyā vaiśvānarám ṛtá á jātám agním / kavim samrājam átithim jánānām āsānn á pātram janayanta devāḥ //*

44 Apart from these verses, there are some Vaiśvānara verses which describe the entering of Agni into the plants. Cf. RV 1.98.2, (and maybe also) 7.49.4. But the myth of entering into plants is not particular to Vaiśvānara. Cf. RV 10.51.3 (Jātavedas verse).



The spatial descriptions of Jātavedas are rather scarce, but in the following verse Jātavedas is put on “the place of libation”.

RV 3.29.4 *We put you on the place of the libation, [namely] on the navel of earth, o Agni Jātavedas, to convey the oblation*⁴⁵.

“The place of libation (= the navel of earth)” must be the sacrificial fire. And we should remember that the bottom of Vaiśvānara was also called the navel of earth. So here Jātavedas is spatially identified with the sacrificial fire⁴⁶. Jātavedas is identified with the spoke-god in the following verse.

RV 3.17.4 O Jātavedas, praising brilliant, beautiful Agni, we honour you, who are to be invoked. The gods made you the messenger, *the*

45 *iḷāyās tvā padé vayám nābhā pṛthivyā ádhi / jātavedo ní dhīmahy ágne havyāya vólhave //*

46 Some other facts support this identification. First, the word “kindled” often attributed to Jātavedas: *indhāna* (kindled inexhaustibly) RV 10.45.1, *sámiddha* (being kindled) 10.87.2, 10.110.1, 3.5.4, 6.15.7. *samidhāná* (flaming) 2.2.1, 7.9.4. *súsamiddha* (well-kindled) 5.5.1.

Secondly, in the funeral verses the epithet *kravyād* is used to denote Jātavedas. (10.16.9 and 10.16.10)

Thirdly, Jātavedas is once said to be “domestic (*dāmya*)” in 3.2.8. He is also said to be “of Vadhryasva (*vādhryasva*)” in 10.69.9.

spoke-god, the conveyor of the oblation, the navel of the honey⁴⁷.

The following Jātavedas verses contain some ambiguous expressions: RV 5.4.4b *yátamāno raśmibhiḥ sūryasya* “occupying his place with the rays of the sun” does not identify Jātavedas with the sun. See Pāda d: *ā ca devān havirādyāya vakṣi* “And bring the gods for the oblation-eating”. Here, Jātavedas brings the gods from heaven to earth, accompanied with the sunshine. RV 10.61.14 *bhārgo ha nāmota yasya devāḥ svār nā yé triśadhasthé niṣedúḥ* “His name is Glare, to which the gods also [belong], who put [him] down on the threefold seat like the sun” is not an identification, but a comparison. One might interpret Jātavedas in the following verse as the rising sun: RV 10.88.5 *yáj jātavedo bhúvanasya mūrdhān ātiṣṭho agne sahā rocanéna / tāṃ tvāhema matibhir gīrbhir ukthaiḥ sá yajñīyo abhavo rodasiprāḥ* // “O Agni Jātavedas, when you stood on the head of the earth with the light, we have impelled you with the hymns, the songs of praise, and the Ukthas. You become the adorable filler of the world.” But “the head of the earth (*bhúvanasya mūrdhān*)” corresponds with “the head of the heaven”. Therefore I would interpret it as the sacrificial fire on the fire altar. In 10.88.6, “the head of the earth” seems to be the sacrificial fire: *mūrdhā bhuvó bhavati náktam agnis* “At night Agni becomes the head of the earth.” RV 2.2.1 contains the word *svārṇara*. The meaning of this word is not clear. Mayrhofer quotes Renou EVP: “mot obscur et peut-être volontairement ésotérique” (Renou, EVP 7 [1960] 43 [mit Lit]).—Der etymologischen Auswertung eines solchen Wortes sind Grenzen gesetzt.”

Now we should look at the above figure again. Spatially, Vaiśvānara consists of the three parts: the sun, the spoke, and the sacrificial fire. But the spoke and the sacrificial fire are also identified with Jātavedas. And also, while Vaiśvānara is often identified with the sun, we see no identification of Jātavedas with the sun.

Therefore we should conclude as follows: Vaiśvānara ($V \cap \sim J$) is the sun. The sacrificial fire and the spoke, the common parts of Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas ($V \cap J$) belong to Agni in General. As to the spatial form, Jātavedas does not have a particular attribute ($\sim V \cap J = \emptyset$).

47 *agnim sudītiṃ sudṛśam grñanto namasyāmas tvēdyam jātavedaḥ / tvāṃ dūtām aratim havyaavāham devā akṛṇvann amṛtasya nābhim //*

Functions of Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas

Jātavedas appears in the Rigveda first and foremost as a conveyor. He brings gods, oblations, and other objects.

RV 1.44.1 O immortal Agni, [bring] the shining, glittering gift of Uṣases. O Jātavedas, *bring the gods* who awake with the dawn to the pious one today⁴⁸.

RV 3.6.6 Or put under the yoke of the regular order with the trace [a pair of] maned red [horses] whose surface is brilliant with ghee. And, o god, *carry all the gods*. O Jātavedas, carry out good sacrifices⁴⁹.

RV 5.4.4 O Agni, being in accordance with the libation, enjoy. Occupying his place by means of the rays of the sun, o Jātavedas, enjoy our fire-wood. *Bring the gods hither* for eating the oblations⁵⁰.

RV 10.110.1 Today being kindled in the house of a man, as a god you sacrifice for the gods, o Jātavedas. And, o Mitramahas⁵¹, being wise, *bring [them] hither*. You are messenger, seer, wise one⁵².

RV 10.150.3 I praise you, [namely] Jātavedas, who bestows every treasure, with the hymn. O Agni, *bring the gods* who are fond of observance⁵³ hither for us. For the favour [bring] those who are fond of observance⁵⁴.

48 *agne vivasvad uṣasaś citrāṃ rādho amartya / ā dāsūṣe jātavedo vahā tvām adyā devāṃ uṣarbūdhaḥ //*

49 *ṛtāsya vā keśinā yogyābhir ghṛtasnūvā rōhitā dhurī dhiṣva / áthā vaha devān deva viśvān svadhvarā kṛnuhi jātavedaḥ //*

50 *juṣāsvāgna ilayā sajōṣā yátamāno raśmibhiḥ sūryasya / juṣāsva naḥ samidham jātaveda ā ca devān havirádyāya vakṣi //*

51 The meaning of this word is not clear, but we can regard it as an epithet for Agni.

52 *sámiddho adyā mánuṣo duroṇé devó devān yajasi jātavedaḥ / ā ca váha mitramahas cikitvān tvām dūtāḥ kavir asi prácetāḥ //*

53 The meaning of *priyāvratā* is not clear. Geldner: “lieb Waltend”, PW: “erwünschtes Gesetz habend oder Gehorsam liebend”, Grassmann: “liebe Gesetze habend”.

54 *tvām u jātavedasaṃ viśvāvāraṃ grṇe dhiyā / ágne devāṃ ā vaha naḥ priyāvratān mṛlīkāya priyāvratān //*

- RV 3.11.4 The gods made Agni Jātavedas, who is famous of old as the son of strength, *a conveyor*⁵⁵.
- RV 3.29.4 We put you on the place of the libation, [namely] on the navel of earth, o Agni Jātavedas, *to convey the oblation*⁵⁶.
- RV 5.9.1 The mortals invoke you, the god, with oblations, o Agni. I think you are Jātavedas. *Carry the oblations* one after another⁵⁷.
- RV 5.26.7 Put down Agni Jātavedas, [namely] *the conveyor of the oblations*, the youngest one, the divine Rtvij⁵⁸.
- RV 7.17.3 O Agni, *go with the oblation* and worship the gods. O Jātavedas, carry out good sacrifice⁵⁹.
- RV 8.74.3 [I praise] wonderful Jātavedas, *who sends to heaven the oblations* which are lifted up with the divine service⁶⁰.
- RV 10.15.12 O Agni Jātavedas, being invoked, *you have brought the oblations* after making them fragrant. You have given them over to the fathers with the refreshment⁶¹. They ate it. O god, eat the offered oblations⁶².
- RV 10.16.9 I send the flesh-eating Agni further. Carrying impurity, let him go to the subjects of Yama. Here, let this other Jātavedas, the wise one, *bring the oblation to the gods*⁶³.

55 *agnim sūnum sānaśrutam sāhaso jātavedasam / vahnim devā akr̥vata //*

56 *ilāyās tvā padé vayam nābhā p̥rthivyā ādhi / jātavedo ni dhīmahy āgne havyāya vólhave //*

57 *tvām agne haviśmanto devām mártāsa ilate / mánye tvā jātavedasam sā havyā vaksy ānuśák //*

58 *ny āgnim jātavedasam hotravāham yaviṣṭhyam / dádhātā devām ṛtvijam //*

59 *āgne vīhi haviśā yáksi devān svadhvarā kr̥nuhi jātavedaḥ //*

60 *pányāmsam jātavedasam yó devātāty údyatā / havyāny airayat divi //*

61 *Svadhā* seems to mean refreshment in the context of the funeral cult.

62 *tvām agna ilitó jātavedó 'vād dhavyāni surabhīni k̥rtvī / prādāḥ pit̥rbhyaḥ svadháyā té aksann addhī tvām deva práyatā haviṃsi //*

63 *kravyādādam agnim prá hinomi dūrām yamárājño gachatu ripravāhāḥ / ihaivāyām itaro jātavedā devébhyo havyām vahatu prajānān //*

- RV 10.16.10 For the sacrifice of the fathers, I carry the flesh-eating old Agni, who has entered into your house while seeing this other Jātavedas. *Let him drive the Gharma-pot to the highest seat*⁶⁴.
- RV 10.51.7 We make your life ageless, so that you, who are harnessed, would not be injured, o Jātavedas. O well-produced one, being gracious, *bring the share of the oblation to the gods*⁶⁵.
- RV 10.176.2 Offer the divine hymn to the god Jātavedas. *Let him bring our oblations one after another*⁶⁶.
- RV 10.188.3 Let him invigorate our sacrifice with the light of Jātavedas, [namely] *the conveyor of the oblations to the gods*⁶⁷.
- RV 1.99.1 We press Soma for Jātavedas. Let him burn down the wealth of the malevolent one. *Let him bring us over all difficulties*. Just like a boat [brings us over] the river, Agni [brings us over] difficulties⁶⁸.
- RV 5.4.9 O Jātavedas, *convey us across all the dangers and difficulties*, just as the boat [conveys across] the river. O Agni, being praised with bow just like by Atri, be protector of our body⁶⁹.
- RV 5.43.10 O Jātavedas, being invoked, *carry all the Maruts* hither with names and forms. O Maruts, let all of you go to the sacrifice, the songs of praise, and the excellent admiration of the singer, all with protection⁷⁰.

64 *yó agniḥ kravyāt pravivéśa vo grhám imám páśyann ítaraṃ jātávedasam / táṃ harāmi pitryajñāya devāṃ sá gharmám invāt paramé sadhásthe //*

65 *kurmás ta āyur ajāraṃ yád agne yáthā yuktó jātavedo ná risyāḥ / áthā vahāsi sumanasyámāno bhāgāṃ devébhyo haviśaḥ sujāta //*

66 *prá devāṃ devyā dhiyā bháratā jātávedasam / havyā no vakṣad ānuśák //*

67 *yā rúco jātávedaso devatrā havyavāhanīḥ / tábhir no yajñám invatu //*

68 *jātávedase sunavāma sómam arātīyató ní dahāti védaḥ / sá naḥ parśad áti durgāṇi víśvā nāvéva síndhum duritāty agniḥ //*

69 *víśvāni no durgáhā jātavedaḥ síndhum ná nāvā duritāti parši / ágne atriván námasā grñāno 'smākam bodhy avitā tanūnām //*

70 *ā nāmabhir marúto vakṣi víśvān ā rūpébhir jātavedo huvānāḥ / yajñám gíro jaritúḥ suṣṭutīm ca víśve ganta maruto víśva ūtí //*

Jātavedas is said to be some kind of officiant: Hotṛ, Ṛtvij, and Purohita.

- RV 1.127.1 I consider Agni as *the Hotṛ*, the bounteous god, the son of strength, Jātavedas, like an inspired one, Jātavedas, the god who performs sacrifice well with the upward figure directed to the gods. With the glitter, he desires the flaming of Ghṛta and the offered Sarpis⁷¹.
- RV 2.2.1 Increase Agni Jātavedas with sacrifice, sacrifice continually with the oblation and the song of praise for the flaming, well regaled one who gives sunshine, *the Hotṛ of heaven*, who is on the pole [of the carriage] at the sacrificial enclosures⁷².
- RV 6.15.7 With a song of praise I praise Agni, who is kindled by the fire-wood. [I appoint him], who is pure and clear, as *the Purohita*⁷³ constantly at the sacrifice. With the hymns, we implore Jātavedas, [namely] the inspired Hotṛ, the seer, who is rich in gifts and free from malice⁷⁴.
- RV 8.71.11 [Our songs of praise are to] Agni Jātavedas, the son of might, who is always the immortal among the mortals, *the pleasant Hotṛ* at the settlement, for the giving of wealth⁷⁵.
- RV 10.88.4 Agni Jātavedas, who was *the first Hotṛ*, who was loved by the gods, and whom the chosen ones anointed with the Ājya, strengthen whatever flies, walks, stays and goes⁷⁶.

71 *agnim hótāram manye dāsvantaṃ vāsum sūnūṃ sāhaso jātāvedasaṃ vipraṃ ná jātāvedasaṃ / yá ūrdhváyā svadhvaró devó devācyā kṛpā / ghṛtāsya vibhrāṣṭim ánu vaṣṭi śociṣājúhvānasya sarpīṣaḥ //*

72 *yajñéna vardhata jātāvedasaṃ agnim yajadhvaṃ haviṣā tánā girā / samidhānāṃ suprayāsaṃ svārṇaraṃ dyukṣāṃ hótāraṃ vrjāneṣu dhūrśadam //*

73 Geldner: “zum Vorsitzer”.

74 *sāmiddham agnim samidhā girā gr̥ṇe śúcim pāvakāṃ puró adhvaré dhruvām / vipraṃ hótāram puruvāram adrúhaṃ kavim sumnair īmahe jātāvedasaṃ //*

75 *agnim sūnūṃ sāhaso jātāvedasaṃ dānāya vāryānām / dvitā yó bhūd amṛto mártyeṣv ā hótā mandrátamo viśi //*

76 *yó hótāsīt prathamó devājuṣṭo yāṃ samāñjann ājyenā vr̥ṇānāḥ / sá patatrītvarāṃ sthā jāgad yac chvātrām agnir akr̥noj jātāvedāḥ //*

- RV 5.22.2 Put down Agni Jātavedas, [namely] *the divine Ṛtvij*. Let sacrifice, which comprehends the gods, go [to him] today one after another⁷⁷.
- RV 5.26.7 Put down Agni Jātavedas, [namely] the conveyor of the oblations, the youngest one, *the divine Ṛtvij*⁷⁸.
- RV 3.2.8 Worship him, who gives the oblation, and who performs the sacrifice well. Honour domestic Jātavedas. Agni, the active charioteer of the great regular order, became *the Purohita of the gods*⁷⁹.
- RV 6.10.1 Appoint your agreeable, divine, well-praised Agni as *the Purohita*⁸⁰ at Soma sacrifice, when sacrifice is going on. Appoint him with the Ukthas, because he is our illuminator. Let Jātavedas carry out good sacrifices⁸¹.

While Jātavedas is often said to be a conveyor and an officiant, there is no statement that Vaiśvānara should bring the oblations to the gods or that he should be an officiant at a sacrifice. Geldner translates RV 6.7.3cd *vaiśvānara tvám asmāsu dhehi vāsūni rājan sprhayāyyāṇi* “Bring du, Vaiśvānara, uns begehrensweite Schätze, o king”. However, the verb is *dhehi*, which does not imply that Vaiśvānara literally “brings” something. RV 7.5.5 *rathyam rayiṇām* is translated “den Wagenlenker der Reichtümer” by Geldner. However, 6.7.2 *vaiśvānarām rathyam adhvarāṇām*, 10.92.1 *yajñāsya vo rathyam (agnim)*, 8.44.27 *yajñānām rathyè (agnāye)*, 8.45.7 *rathītamo rathīnām (indrah)*, etc. show that *rathī* “chariot-rider” should be interpreted as “leader” or “commander” in this context, and not as “carrier”⁸². In any case, *rātha* is not a carriage, but a chariot.

77 *ny àgnim jātavedasam dādhatā devām rtvijam / prā yajñā etv ānuṣāg adyā devāvya-castamaḥ //*

78 *ny àgnim jātavedasam hotravāham yaviṣṭhyam / dādhatā devām rtvijam //*

79 *namasyāta havyādātiṃ svadhvarām duvasyāta dāmyam jātavedasam / rathīr rtāsya brható vicarṣaṇir agnir devānām abhavat purōhitaḥ //*

80 Geldner: “Bestellet ... zum Vorsitzer”.

81 *puró vo mandrām divyām suvrktīm prayati yajñé agnim adhvaré dadhidhvam / purā ukthébhiḥ sá hí no vibhāvā svadhvarā karati jātavedāḥ //*

82 Mayrhofer *rathī* “Wagenlenker, Wagenkämpfer” under *rātha*.

If these functions were those of Agni in general, they would also appear in the Vaiśvānara verses. From this fact we can deduce that the functions as a conveyor and an officiant are particular to Jātavedas ($\sim V \cap J$), and not to Agni in general. Findly (1981: 364) indicated a function of Jātavedas as the conveyor of corpses. This function should be understood as a part of the general function as a conveyor.

In the following verse, Vaiśvānara is said to be a drinking vessel for the gods:

RV 6.7.1 The gods create Vaiśvānara, [namely] the Agni who is born regularly, the head of heaven, the spoke-god of earth, the seer, the universal king, the guest of the people, *the drinking-vessel at the mouth*⁸³.

“Trough” in the next verse must be describing the same thing.

RV 6.7.2 The gods rejoice together at the navel of the sacrifices, the seat of wealth, *the great trough*. The gods create Vaiśvānara, the commander⁸⁴ of the sacrifices, the banner of the sacrifice⁸⁵.

Vaiśvānara is the sun, and Jātavedas moves between heaven and earth to carry the oblations. And here Vaiśvānara is said to be a drinking vessel or a great trough. It is reasonable to think that the oblations which are thrown into the sacrificial fire are carried through the Antarikṣa by Jātavedas, and given to the gods at Vaiśvānara. Considering that Jātavedas does not have the function of “great trough”, this could be accepted as a particular function of Vaiśvānara.

In the following verse, Jātavedas is said to be “brought” by the flames:

RV 1.50.1 The flames bring the god Jātavedas upwards, so that everyone can see Sūrya⁸⁶.

83 *mūrdhānaṃ divó aratīm pṛthivyā vaiśvānarām rtá ā jātám agním / kavīm samrājam átithim jānānām āsān ā pātram janayanta devāḥ //*

84 See the above discussion about *rathī*.

85 *nābhiṃ yajñānām sádanam rayīṇām mahám āhāvám abhí sám navanta / vaiśvānarām rathyām adhvarānām yajñāsya ketúm janayanta devāḥ //*

86 *úd u tyám jātavedasam devām vahanti ketávaḥ / drśé viśvāya sūryam //*

This is not contradictory with the result of our research. Here, Jātavedas is pushed up from the fire altar, and it supports the rise of the sun as the spoke-god.

Vaiśvānara-Jātavedas

Rigveda contains 4 verses which mention Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas in one verse:

- RV 1.59.5 O Jātavedas Vaiśvānara, your greatness surpasses the great heaven. You are the king of the settlements of mankind. Through the battle, you made room⁸⁷ for the gods⁸⁸.
- RV 6.8.1 Now, I praise the strength and wisdom of Jātavedas, [namely] the strong, reddish bull. For Vaiśvānara the new hymn purifies himself, just like the pure soma which is dear to Agni⁸⁹.
- RV 7.5.8 O Agni Vaiśvānara Jātavedas, procure us with the excellent tonic with which you cause to swell your present, the great fame for a pious mortal⁹⁰.
- RV 7.13.2 O Agni, flaming with your flame, being born, you filled heaven and earth. O Vaiśvānara Jātavedas, you liberated the gods from the imprecation with your greatness⁹¹.

87 Geldner: "Freiheit". Maryhofer (under *vāras*): "freier, hindernisloser Raum, Freiraum".

88 *divás cit te brható jātavedo vaiśvānara prá ririce mahitvám / rájā kṛṣṭīnām asi mānuṣīnām yudhā devébhyo várivaś cakartha //*

89 *prkṣásya vṛṣṇo aruśásya nú sáhaḥ prá nú vocam vidáthā jātavedasaḥ / vaiśvānarāya matir návyasī súciḥ sóma iva pavate cārur agnáye //*

90 *tām agne asmé iṣam érayasva vaiśvānara dyumátīm jātavedaḥ / yáyā rádhah pínvasi viśvavāra prthú śrávo dāsúṣe mártýāya //*

91 *tvám agne śociśā sóśucāna ā ródasī aprṇā jāyamānaḥ / tvám devām abhísaster amuñco vaiśvānara jātavedo mahitvā //*

Logically spoken, these verses must have the attributes which belong to $V \cup J$. But here we see no special characteristics of Vaiśvānara or Jātavedas⁹². Maybe we have too small a number of Vaiśvānara-Jātavedas verses.

- 92 The attributes which are juxtaposed with Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas in these verses are as follows: *rājā kṛṣṭinām mānuṣānām* (king of the races of mankind), *prkṣāsya vṛṣṇo aruśāsya* (strong, reddish bull), *śociṣā śosucānāḥ* (flaming with flame), *jāyamānaḥ* (being born).

The element “king” belongs to both V and J. In the Vaiśvānara verses: *rājan* RV 1.98.1 (king of beings), 6.8.4 (praiseworthy king), 1.59.3 (king of those who are in mountains), *samrāj* 6.7.1 (universal king), *pāti* 7.5.5 (lord of the folks), *sátpati* 5.27.1 (righteous lord), *vratapá* 6.8.2 (protector of the law), *somagopā* 10.45.12 (protector of soma), *rakṣitṛ* 6.7.7 (protector of the immortal), *abhiśrī* 1.98.1 (king of beings). In the Jātavedas verses: *rājan* 6.15.13 (king), *śréṣṭha* 1.44.4 (chief), *śāna* 1.79.4 (ruler of the booty of cows), *viśpāti* 3.3.8 (lord of kinsmen) *suprānīti* 3.15.4 (leader of a great sheep-herd).

The element “bull” also belongs to both V and J. In the Vaiśvānara verses: *vṛṣan* 3.2.11 (bull), *vṛṣabhá* 1.59.6 (bull). In the Jātavedas verses: *vṛṣan* 3.1.20 (bull), *vṛṣabhá* 3.15.4 (bull).

The element “flaming / shining” also belongs to both V and J. In the Vaiśvānara verses: *svārvat* 1.59.4 (shining), *svarvid* 3.3.5 (bestowing light), 3.3.10 (bestowing light), 3.26.1 (bestowing light), *śosucāna* 7.5.3 (flaming for Purus), *vibhāvan* 1.59.7 (shining), *viśvaśúc* 7.13.1 (all-enlightening), *dīdivás* 10.88.14 (shining), *prthupājas* 3.22.11 (resplendent), 3.3.1 (resplendent), *candrā* 3.3.5 (shining), *suśrī* 3.3.5 (splendid), *vicakṣaṇá* 3.3.10 (bright), *hārivrata* 3.3.5 (whose surroundings are yellowish), *jyótis* 1.59.2 (light for Āryas). In the Jātavedas verses: *citrābhānu* 10.51.3 (glittering), *atirócamāna* 10.51.3 (shining), *vibhāvan* 6.4.2 (illuminator), 6.10.1 (illuminator), *śukrásocis* 7.14.1 (brightly shining), *sudyótman* 2.4.1 (shining), *rócamāna* 4.14.1 (shining).

The element “being born” also belongs to both Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas. In the Vaiśvānara verses: *jātá* 1.98.1 (being born from here), 3.3.10 (being born), 7.13.3 (being born), 6.7.1 (being born regularly), *jāyamāna* 6.7.5 (being born in the lap of parents), 6.8.2 (being born), 6.9.1 (being born). In the Jātavedas verses: *jāyamāna* 7.5.7 (being born in the highest heaven).

The other facts which can be extracted from these verses are difficult to discern from accidental, poetic expressions, but they are within the range of $V \cap J$: “whose greatness surpasses the great heaven”, “making room for the gods through the battle”, “procuring with excellent tonic”, “filling the heaven and the earth”, “liberating the gods from the misfortune”.

Agni

The attributes of Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas are sometimes mentioned by the name of Agni.

According to the results of our research, the Agni mentioned in the following two verses must be Jātavedas, because he is called Purohita, Ṛtvij, and Hotṛ. He is also said to bring the gods.

RV 1.1.1 I invoke Agni, the Purohita, the divine Ṛtvij of the sacrifice, the Hotṛ, the best bestower of wealth⁹³.

RV 1.1.2 May Agni, who is to be invoked by past and present seers, carry the gods here⁹⁴.

The Agni mentioned in the following verse must be Vaiśvānara, if “who appears shining at the twilight” denotes the morning sun.

RV 1.1.7 To you, o Agni who appears shining at the twilight, day by day we come with the hymns bringing homage⁹⁵.

In the following verse, no particular attribute of Vaiśvānara or Jātavedas is stated.

RV 1.1.9 So, o Agni, be easy of access to us, as a father to his son. Go together with us for well-being⁹⁶.

As is clear from the above, the Agni verses are a mixture of the verses for Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas. So we can conclude that the Agni mentioned here is an unspecified, undifferentiated Agni, which includes Agni Vaiśvānara, Agni Jātavedas, and Agni in general. Therefore: 1) When fire is called Vaiśvānara, the attributes of Agni in general and the particular attributes of Vaiśvānara are meant. 2) When fire is called Jātavedas, the attributes of Agni in general and the particular attributes of Jātavedas are meant. 3)

93 *agnim ilē puróhitam yajñásya devám ṛtvijam / hótāraṃ ratnadhātām //*

94 *agniḥ pūrvebhir ṛṣibhir ídyo nūtanair utá / sá devāṃ éhá vakṣati //*

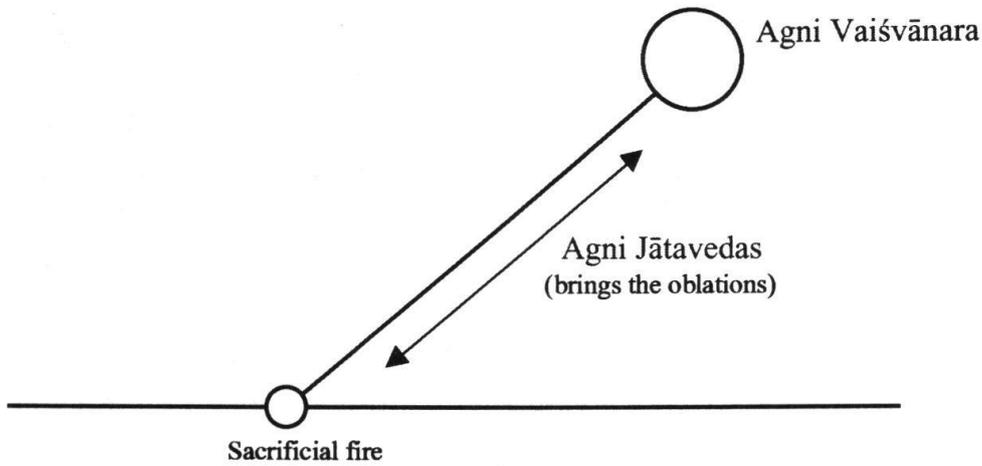
95 *úpa tvāgne divé-dive dóṣāvastar dhiyā vayám / námo bháranta émasi //*

96 *sá naḥ pitéva sūnávé 'gne sūpāyanó bhava / sácasvā naḥ svastáye //*

When fire is called simply Agni, the attributes of Vaiśvānara, Jātavedas and Agni in general may be meant.

Agni, Agni Vaiśvānara, Agni Jātavedas

As a result of our research, we have made the following clear: 1) In terms of the spatial structure, Vaiśvānara is the sun. Jātavedas has no own spatial attributes. 2) In terms of the functions, Jātavedas carries oblations from the fire altar to heaven, and Vaiśvānara functions as a great trough for the gods.



Therefore when we articulate the total structure of Agni through the regional differences, we obtain Vaiśvānara in heaven, Jātavedas between heaven and earth. This perfectly agrees with Bṛhaddevatā.

<i>location</i>	<i>the form of fire</i>
<i>Heaven</i>	<i>Agni Vaiśvānara</i>
<i>Antarikṣa</i>	<i>Agni Jātavedas</i>
<i>Earth</i>	<i>Agni</i>

However, the fact that some attributes of Agni in general, e.g. being the spoke-god or the sacrificial fire, are mentioned in the Vaiśvānara verses seems to have some meaning. It means that Vaiśvānara is a part of the cosmic Agni, which forms a continuum spread from heaven to earth. In this structure, the spoke and the sacrificial fire must have been thought of as marginal parts of Vaiśvānara by Vedic Indians. In this point, the Vaiśvānara verses makes an interesting contrast with Jātavedas verses. While the cosmic

aspect of Agni is conspicuous in the former, the stress is strongly laid on the ritual in the latter. Jātavedas is often invoked as a priest or a oblation-carrier, and he is never identified with the sun. In the above research, we only saw the forms and functions of Vaiśvānara and Jātavedas, and not their “character”. But if we are allowed to characterize these manifestations of Agni, we should do it with the words “cosmic” and “ritualistic”.

By the late Brāhmaṇa period, the knowledge about Vaiśvānara’s spatial location had been lost. It is clear even from a single example from ŚB: 1.4.1.10 “Videgha Māthava held Agni Vaiśvānara in his mouth⁹⁷.” This well known story of Videgha Māthava is explained by Heesterman (1993: 30) as the domestication of the wild⁹⁸, and it coincides with Findly (1982), who indicated an aspect of the Rigvedic Vaiśvānara “conquering fire”. Heesterman further indicates that Agni Vaiśvānara represents the hierarchic aspect of the ruler against the people⁹⁹. It is plausible that Vaiśvānara in the Brāhmaṇa period attained a stronger relationship with the kingship. In any case, the Rigvedic Vaiśvānara and the post-Rigvedic Vaiśvānara must be considered separately. The post-Rigvedic Vaiśvānara does not have some attributes of the Rigvedic Vaiśvānara, and it acquired some other attributes. A separate study is necessary for the post-Rigvedic Vaiśvānara.

In Section 2 of this paper, we will observe whether the knowledge about the spatial location of Vaiśvānara is preserved in the verbal procedure of the cremation ritual.

97 *videghó ha māthávo ‘gnīm vaiśvānarām múkhe babhāra.*

98 Heesterman summarizes the story and argues: “But the real way to conquer the other world of the wild is, of course, through the fire, as is shown by the story of Māthava Videgha and the fire, Agni Vaiśvānara (“common to all men”), that he held inside himself. His brahmin priest, however, teased it out of his mouth by mentioning ghee in a fire-kindling mantra. On the stimulus of the word “ghee” the fire flashed forth and rolled on to the east, burning everything before it, until it came to a stop at the Sadānirā River ... “At that time that [land] was quite uncultivated and waterlogged, for it had not [yet] been tasted by Agni Vaiśvānara. Nowadays, however, it is fully cultivated, for the brahmins have caused [Agni] to taste it through sacrifices.” So the sacrificial fire is the primary tool for domesticating the wild.” See also p.124, where the same story is cited.

99 Heesterman (1993) p. 89.

The Names *vaiśvānarā* and *jātāvedas*

It might now be worthwhile discussing the meaning of the names *vaiśvānarā* and *jātāvedas*.

Traditionally, *vaiśvānarā* has been interpreted as “belonging to all men”¹⁰⁰. Instead of this interpretation, Kuiper (1951) derives *-nara* from the old root **ner* “vital strength” and interprets the compound as “related to him, who possesses the total amount of vital strength”. Gonda (1959: 95) is somewhat sceptic about it, and Findly (1982: 5) rejects it because “there is little if any use of **ner* “vital strength” ... out of compound in the Rigveda”. I do not adopt Kuiper’s interpretation for the same reason as Gonda and Findly. De Vries (1979) proposes the third possibility “associated with all fires” based on statements of ŚB, but it does not seem to be very meaningful. In ŚB, Vaiśvānara is identified with almost everything to explain sacrificial procedures, so it cannot be the basis of a discussion.

I support the traditional “belonging to all men”. However, I would like to suggest a special implication which is contained in this concept. “Belonging to all men” can be interpreted in two ways: “common, in the sense that it is not personally owned by anyone” and “common, in the sense that everyone has it in himself”.

The Rigvedic Agni Vaiśvānara is not personally owned by anyone: While every sacrificial fire personally belongs to a sacrificer, the sun does not belong to anyone. It is an impersonal fire, which is shared by all the sacrificers¹⁰¹. Thus the sun is called *vaiśvānarā*. Note that this name is derived from the contrast with the personal sacrificial fire, not from the contrast with the other kinds of fire, e.g. wild fire or cooking fire¹⁰².

100 Macdonell (1897: 99), Oldenberg (1917: 62, 123), Keith (1925: 164).

101 We might be able to understand the following verse as a visual image of the sacrificial fires focussing on Vaiśvānara: RV 1.59.1 *vayā id agne agnāyas te anyé tvé víśve amṛtā mādayante / vaiśvānara nābhir asi kṣitīnām sthūṇeva jánām upamid yayantha* // “O Agni, other fires are only your branches. All the immortals rejoice at you. O Vaiśvānara, you are the navel of the settlements. You hold the people like a supporting pillar.”

102 The development of the speculation about *ātmán* could be understood clearly by means of the contrast between the sacrificial fire and Agni Vaiśvānara:

The personal fires	:	The common fire
The personal souls	:	x

As mentioned above, in ŚB we see Agni Vaiśvānara personally held by Videgha Māthava, which seems to imply that Agni Vaiśvānara was losing its impersonal character. In BĀU 5.9, it is even identified with the digesting fire. Here, *vaiśvānara* obviously means “common, in the sense that everyone has it in himself”, which shows that the meaning of the word *vaiśvānara* changed in the post-Rigvedic period¹⁰³.

The name *jātavedas* has been a mystery. The first part of this compound has two possibilities. As an adjective, it might mean “born”. And as a noun it might mean “creature”. The last part has also two meanings. As a derivative from *vid* (find / have), it might mean “possession”. As a derivative from *vid* (know), it might mean “knowledge”. Based on the combinations of these, most scholars interpret it as “all-knower” or “all-possessor”¹⁰⁴. Apart from these interpretations, Macdonell (1897: 97) cites the following verse, and argues that *jātavedas* means “he who knows all the generations”:

RV 6.15.13 Agni is the Hotṛ, the householder. He is the king. *Jātavedas knows all the births*. Let the regular one, who sacrifices the best among the gods and the mortals, sacrifice¹⁰⁵.

Findly (1981) admits two possibilities “*adj.* born, innate” and “*n.* creature” for *jātá*, and only one possibility “possession” for *védas*. She further determines the meaning of the compound *jātavedas* through examining the context of the Jātavedas verses, and observes: “The full range of Jātavedas themes centers on his immediacy in the worshipper’s home as the focus of an on-going ritual life, and the resulting sense that Jātavedas, being present over time, is both witness and guardian to the passing of the generations. It

The solution must be: x = the common soul (Ātman Vaiśvānara). At this point, our discussion comes close to that of Heesterman (1964 and 1993). See especially Heesterman (1993: 215ff), where he discusses the interiorization of fire.

103 Curiously, the term Ātman Vaiśvānara (ChU 5.11.1-5.18.2) seems to preserve the original meaning of *vaiśvānará*. (Note that nothing personal is identified with Ātman Vaiśvānara in the discussion between Uddālaka Āruṇi and the scholars.) This might mean that this term has an old origin. See also the discussion about Vaiśvānara in ŚB 10.6.1.

104 As to the various proposals in secondary literature, see Findly (1981: 349ff). Mayrhofer: “der Kenntnis (*vedas-*) von den Wesen (*jātá -*, o. I 567) hat”.

105 *agnir hótā grhāpatiḥ sá rājā víśvā veda jānimā jātavedāḥ / devānām utá yó mártayanām yájiṣṭhaḥ sá prá yajatām ṛtāvā //*

is quite natural, then, that the range of his concern should extend into the Pitaras, for the continuity of the lineage into the future through offspring ... is guaranteed only by the soundness of the lineage in the past is based, in turn, upon the ever-present protection of the dying worshipper, through death and the flames of the cremation fire, to the abode of the pious beyond¹⁰⁶". After this discussion, she concludes that *jātá* in the compound means "what has been born".

As the title of Findly's paper "Jātavedas in the Ṛgveda: The God of Generations" shows, she largely follows Macdonell's line and has supplied it with an etymological basis and a detailed contextual study. Most of her discussion is acceptable, but as to the interpretation of *jātá*, there is another possibility: The word *jātá* can also mean "birth". When we use this meaning, then we get "the possessor/knower of the birth" as the meaning of *jātavedas*. This gives a more direct and clear basis to Macdonell's "he who knows all the generations".

As Findly (1981: 359) discusses, Jātavedas is associated with wealth. Within our scheme, this can be explained as the result of his being a conveyor. The following verse is a typical example, in which he brings gifts from gods to "the pious one":

RV 6.5.3 You sit from of old in these clans. With magical power, you were the commander of wealth. Therefore, o wise Jātavedas, you send forth wealth one after another for the pious one¹⁰⁷.

The "wealth" here primarily means cattle¹⁰⁸. He is concerned with the birth of cattle, or more precisely, he brings something which is essential for the propagation of cattle.

Jātavedas is said to be a knower¹⁰⁹. Although there are not many verses which show what he knows, we might be able to infer it from the following verses.

106 Findly (1981) pp.371-372

107 *tvám vikṣú pradīvaḥ sīda āsú krátvā rathír abhavo vāryāṇām / áta inoṣi vidhaté cikitvo vy ānuṣág jātavedo vásūni //*

108 RV 1.79.4 (Jātavedas verse): *vājasya gómata íśānaḥ* "possessing booty rich in cattle".

109 The word *cikitvás* (knowing) occurs only with Jātavedas and never with Vaiśvānara. Cf. RV 1.77.5; 3.17.2; 4.3.8; 4.5.12; 6.5.3; 10.110.1.

- RV 4.3.8 Being asked, how do you answer to the troop of Marut, to the regular order, to the great sun, to Aditi, to the powerful one? O Jātavedas, be successful, you, *who knows heaven*¹¹⁰.
- RV 4.5.12 What wealth of him is for us? Is the treasure [for us]? You speak for us, o Jātavedas, *who knows secretly the far [end] of this way for us*¹¹¹, [whether] we, being censured, have not taken a deserted¹¹² way¹¹³.
- RV 10.69.9 O Jātavedas, [the fire] of Vadhryaśva, even the immortal gods praise your greatness. When the clans of people came inquiring, you won with the people who were strengthened by you¹¹⁴.

The first verse mentions the knowledge of heaven, the second the secret knowledge of a good pasture, and the third one must be seen from the point of the Brahmodya. These are all connected with the secret knowledge. It seems possible that *jātavedas* originally meant “the possessor of (the secret of) the birth (of cattle)”. The meaning was expanded to “the possessor of secret” during the early Rigvedic period. The last expansion happened in the late Rigvedic period with the introduction of cremation. He is now regarded as the carrier of the deceased sacrificer.

This interpretation might also shed some light on the following verse:

- RV 10.15.13 *You know the fathers who are here or not here, whom we know or do not know, as much as they are. O Jātavedas, enjoy the well-made sacrifice with the refreshment*¹¹⁵.

110 *kathā śārdhāya marūtām ṛtāya kathā sūrē bṛhatē pṛchyāmānaḥ / prāti bravó 'ditaye turāya sādḥā divó jātavedas cikitvān //*

111 Geldner: “da das ferne (Ende) dieses unseres Weges im Verborgenen ist”. I take *gūhā* as an adverb.

112 Mayrhofer: “zurückgelassene Fussspur”. However, root *REC* “verlassen”.

113 *kīm no asyā drāviṇaṃ kād dha rātnaṃ vi no voco jātavedas cikitvān / gūhādhvanaḥ paramāṃ yān no asyā réku padāṃ ná nidānā áganma //*

114 *devās cit te amṛtā jātavedo mahimānaṃ vādhryaśva prá vocan / yāt sampṛcham mānūsīr vísa áyan tvāṃ nṛbhir ajayas tvāvṛdhebhīḥ //*

115 *yé cehá pitáro yé ca néhá yāṃs ca vidmá yāṃ u ca ná pravidmá / tvāṃ vettha yāti té jātavedaḥ svadhābhir yajñāṃ súkṛtaṃ juṣasva //*

He knows every *pitr*, namely his rebirth in heaven. What he knows is not fragmental information such as tomorrow's weather, but the whole system of birth and rebirth.

2. TO HEAVEN

The cremation (BPS 1.8) is carried out with some mantra-recitations and Āhutis. Our initial problem was the functions of the three forms of Agni who are invoked in these mantras. In the first section of this paper, we have made clear the total spatial/functional structure of Agni. In this section we are going to substantiate the process of ascension with the schema.

The main procedures described in the text of BPS 1.8 are as follows¹¹⁶:

1. The ignition of the corpse with Mantra 1.
2. Mantra 2.
3. Mantra 3 (Ṣaḍḍhotṛ-mantra).
4. Tying a goat with Mantra 4.
5. An āhuti with Mantra 5.
6. The oblation of avadānas.
7. The worship of the deceased.

Mantras 1-5 are taken from TĀ 6.1.4¹¹⁷:

Mantra 1 O Agni, do not burn him completely. Do not consume him. Do not destroy the skin, nor the body. When you have made him cooked, o Jātavedas, then send him to the fathers¹¹⁸.

116 For the description of the ritual, see Caland (1896). This procedure is described on p. 58ff. For the translation, see Śrautakośa Volume I English Section Part II, p. 1049.

117 Mantras 1-4 are RV 10.16.1, 10.16.2, 10.16.3, 10.16.4.

118 *mainam agne ví daho mābhí śoco māśya tvácam cikṣipo mā śārīram / yadā śrtám kṛṇávo jātavedó 'them enam prá hiṇutāt pitṛbhyah //*

- Mantra 2 When you have made him cooked, o Jātavedas, then give him over to the fathers. When he would go to this leader of life¹¹⁹, then let him be subject to the gods¹²⁰.
- Mantra 3 Let your eye go to the sun. The body¹²¹, to the wind. Go to heaven and earth at will. Or go to the water. If your welfare is there, abide in the plants with the bones¹²².
- Mantra 4 The goat is [your] share¹²³. Heat it with the heat. Let your heat heat it. Let your flame [heat] it. O Jātavedas, bring him to the world of the pious with your auspicious body¹²⁴.
- Mantra 5¹²⁵ You are this man. Here, you are from him. Yonder, you are the womb for him. Vaiśvānara is the son who creates the world for the father. O Jātavedas, bring him to the world of well-doers¹²⁶.

The meaning of these mantras is relatively clear. There is almost no need of commentary except Mantra 3 (RV 10.16.3). Many scholars interpret that the deceased sacrificer is said to go to heaven, earth, water, and

119 *Asunīti*: As to the suffix *-ti* in agent nouns, cf. AiG II,2 p636. Schlerath (1968) gives the translation “*asu-Führung*” (p148-149), but Bodewitz (1991) suggests correctly: “The *asunīti* of the Ṛgvedasamhitā refers to the same situation as described in the story of Sāvitrī, where Yama or his messengers are said to fetch (*netum*) the soul. The dictionaries misinterpret this compound and often make it refer to the realm of the dead.” I would interpret the *asunīti* of this context as Agni Jātavedas.

120 *śrītam yadā kārasi jātavedo 'them enam pari dattāt pitṛbhyaḥ / yadā gachāty asunītim etām āthā devānām vaśanīr bhavāti //*

121 Here *ātmān* and *śarīra* should be translated “body” and “bones”. The other version of the ṣaḍḍhotṛ-mantra (TĀ 3.4.1) is: “Your eye [goes to] the sun. The prāṇa, [to] the wind. The back, [to] the heaven. The body (*ātma*) [to] the Antarikṣa. With the limbs, [to] the sacrifice. With the bones (*śarīraiḥ*), [to] the earth.”

122 *sūryam cākṣur gachatu vātam ātmā dyām ca gacha pṛthivīm ca dhārmanā / apó vā gacha yádi tátra te hitám óśadhīsu práti tiṣṭhā śarīraiḥ //*

123 The Ānandāśrama and Bibliotheca Indica editions of TĀ read *ajó 'bhāgás*, while Mysore edition, Caland's text of BPS, and RV 10.16.4 are without avagraha. *ajó bhāgás* seems correct.

124 *ajó bhāgás tásasā tam tapasva tam te śocis tapatu tam te arcīḥ / yās te śivās tanvó jātavedas tábhir vahainam sukṛtām ulokám //*

125 Cf. Bodewitz (1973) p. 128-130.

126 *ayám vai tvám asmād ádhi tvám etád ayám vai tád asya yónir asi / vaiśvānarāḥ putráḥ pitré lokakṛj jātavedo vahemām sukṛtām yátra lokāḥ //*

plants¹²⁷. However, Macdonell (1897: 166) noticed a problem: “In one passage of the RV. (10.16.3) the eye of the dead man is called upon to go to the sun and his breath (*ātmā*) to the wind. But this notion, occurring in the midst of verses which refer to Agni as conducting the deceased to the other world, can only be an incidental fancy, suggested perhaps by the speculations about Puruṣa (10.90.13), where the eye of the latter becomes the sun and his breath the wind. In the same passage (also in 10.58.7) the soul is spoken of as going to the waters or the plants, a conception which perhaps contains the germ of the theory of metempsychosis.” Concerning this problem, I would like to suggest that this peculiarity of Mantra 3 is caused by the interpretation of the second person “you”: 1) Throughout this series of mantras, the second person and two kinds of third person *ena-* and *ta-* are consistently used to denote Agni, the deceased, and the goat, respectively. Although it is not impossible to think that only Mantra 3 denotes a different person with “you”, it seems much more natural to take it as Agni. 2) The following verse from TB corresponds to Mantra 3:

TB 1.2.1.21 – 22 For energy and power, I lift you up. For virile vigour, for long life, for brilliance. You are a beater of rival, beater of Vṛtra. Your heavenly greatness which is among gods, your body, which entered into cattles, your prosperity, which spread among humans—therewith, o Agni, rejoicing, come to us. From heaven, from earth, from the Antarikṣa, from wind, from cattles, from plants. From whatever place where you were born, o Agni, rejoicing, come to us.¹²⁸

This verse is recited at the establishment of the fire in the Agnyādheya ritual¹²⁹. Here, Agni is called from heaven, earth, Antarikṣa, wind, animals, and plants towards the fire altar. It is highly possible that the recitation of this TB mantra is intended as the reconstruction of the fire which has been

127 E.g. Oldenberg (1894) p. 530 note 1, Hillebrandt (1902) p. 417, Horsch (1971) p. 112ff, Butzenberger (1996) p. 95ff.

128 *ójase bálāya tvódyacche / vṛṣane śuṣmāyāyuṣe vārcase / sapatnatúr asi vṛtratúḥ / yás te devéṣu mahimā suvargáḥ // yás ta ātmā paśúsu práviṣtaḥ / púṣtir yā te mánuṣyeṣu prathé / táyā no agne juṣámāṇa éhi / diváḥ pṛthivyáḥ páry antárikṣāt / vātāt paśúbhyo ádhi óśadhībhyah / yátra yatra jātavedaḥ sambabhúva / táto no agne juṣámāṇa éhi /*

129 Krick (1982) p. 322.

dispersed in the cremation¹³⁰. In this case, “you” in our Mantra 3 must be Agni. 3) All the places mentioned in Mantra 3 (sun, wind, heaven, earth, waters, plants) are well known as Agni’s places.

On the other hand, the traditional interpretation of Mantra 3 is supported by RV 10.58, in which “your mind” (*te ... mánas*) is called back from various places, especially from Yama’s place (1), heaven or earth (2), waters or plants (7), sun or dawn (8). BĀU 3.2.13 (a question from Ārtabhāga to Yājñavalkya) also tells that the voice, breath, eye, mind, hearing, body, soul, hairs of the head, hairs of the body, blood and semen of the deceased person go to fire, wind, sun, moon, quarters of heaven, earth, space, plants, trees, and waters, respectively. However, the deceased is brought forth by Agni’s manifestation. It means that he goes wherever Agni goes. Therefore the concept of RV 10.58 can be explained as a derivative from RV 10.16.3 (our Mantra 3). While TB 1.2.1.21-22, which is concerned with the reconstruction of the dispersed fire, preserves the original concept of RV 10.16.3, BĀU 3.2.13 adopted the concept of RV 10.58, of which the focus is shifted to the deceased person.

As already seen, the usual oblations are put into the sacrificial fire, are brought to heaven by Jātavedas, and then they are enjoyed by the gods at Vaiśvānara. In these cremation mantras, this system of Agni functions in exactly the same way as in normal oblations. In Mantra 1, Agni and Agni Jātavedas are invoked. According to our schema, this is the sacrificial fire and the Jātavedas, respectively. The body of the deceased is ignited during this mantra, and then it is brought to heaven by Jātavedas as a conveyor during Mantras 2, 3, and 4.

In Mantra 5, the relation between the fire and the sacrificer is explained. In this world (here), the sacrificer makes the sacrificial fire, while in the yonder world, the fire (Vaiśvānara) gives him birth. The implication is: Vaiśvānara, the fire in heaven, is the exit on the way from earth to heaven, while the sacrificial fire on earth is the entrance to that way.

The complete picture is now clear. The deceased is burned by the sacrificial fire, and is brought towards heaven by Jātavedas, the conveyor, and

130 It seems me natural to assume a continuity in the rituals of two generations: the cremation of father—the Agnyādheya of the son. Anyway, what we can observe in this correspondence of Agnyādheya and cremation verses is the trace of the ritualistic speculation about the continuity of the fire.

finally reaches heaven through Vaiśvānara, the sun. Thus he is not brought by Agni in general, but by Jātavedas. And the way he takes is a particular one which combines heaven and earth, namely the total structure of Agni. The invocations of Agni, Jātavedas and Vaiśvānara in the cremation mantras are therefore not accidental occurrences of arbitrary epithets, but have their own functions in the ritual's procedure.

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BD	Bṛhaddevatā (see Macdonell and Tokunaga under "Translations and commentaries")
BPS	Baudhāyana Piṭṛmedhasūtra
ChU	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
Nir.	Nirukta
RV	Rigveda Samhitā
ŚB	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
TĀ	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
TB	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa

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