

because of its connexion with the word Śravaṇa, 'ear'—and in view of the precession of the equinoxes, we must assume that Bhādrapada was kept because of its traditional coincidence with the beginning of the rains after it had ceased actually so to coincide.<sup>156</sup>

*The Origin of the Nakṣatras.*—As we have seen, there is no evidence showing the process by which the Nakṣatras may

<sup>156</sup> Mention should here be made of the following points: (1) Jacobi's argument from the word Dhruva, the name of the star pointed out to the bride in the marriage ritual. The word does not occur in the literature anterior to the Ḡṛhya Sūtras, and it must remain an undecided question whether the practice was or was not old. Jacobi urges that Dhruva means 'fixed,' and that it must originally have referred to a real fixed pole star, and he thinks that such a star could only be found in the third millennium B.C. Whitney and Oldenberg definitely reject this view on the ground that too much must not be made out of a piece of folk-lore, and that the marriage ritual requirements would be satisfied by any star of some magnitude which was approximately polar. This conclusion seems convincing. Cf. Keith, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1909, 1102; 1910, 465; *contra*, Jacobi, *ibid.*, 1909, 726 *et seq.*; 1910, 464. (2) The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, ii. 1, 2, 3, asserts that the Kṛttikās do not move from the eastern quarter, which the others do; and stress has been laid (by Jacobi, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1910, 463, 464) upon this assertion as giving a date of the third millennium B.C. for the Śatapatha observation. But this notice is quite inadequate to support any such result, and its lack of trustworthiness as a chronological guide is increased by the fact that the Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, xviii 5, has a similar notice, coupled with another notice, which, according to Barth, would only be true somewhere in or after the sixth

century A.D., the equatorial point being placed between Citrā and Svātī, which in the early period were both very much north of the equator (see Caland, *Über das rituelle Sūtra des Baudhāyana*, 37-39). The same passage of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, ii. 1, 2, 2, in the Mādhyamīna recension, states that the number of the Kṛttikās is greater than that of the stars in any of the other Nakṣatras, which consist of one, two, three, or four stars, or which, according to the Kāṇva recension (see Eggeling, *Sacred Books of the East*, 12, 282, n. 2), have four stars. It is not possible to put much faith in this assertion, for Hasta later has five stars, and its name (with reference to the fingers) suggests five (cf. Weber, *Nakṣatra*, 2, 368, 381), and that number is possibly referred to in the Rīgveda (i. 105, 10). See Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 3, 177. (3) Attempts have been made to regard the names of the Nakṣatras as significant of their position in the list. Thus Bentley, *Historical View*, 2, thought Viśākhā was so called because the equinoctial colure divided the equator about 1426 B.C.; this is refuted by Tilak, *Orion*, 57 *et seq.* Jyēṣṭhaghñī has been interpreted as 'slaying the eldest'—*i.e.*, as marking the new year by putting an end to the old year. Tilak, 90, suggests that Mūla was so called because its acronycal rising marked the beginning of the year when the vernal equinox was near Mṛgaśīras. More probable is Whitney's view, *Sārya Siddhānta*, 194, that it was the most southern, and so, as it were, the basis of the asterisms.