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Seizing the Novice’s Hand and Pouring Water into His Hands at the Vedic Initiation Ritual

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1 Introduction

The Vedic initiation ritual, through which one becomes a Vedic student (brahmachārin) in order to learn the Veda from his teacher, is attested since the Atharvaveda, the second oldest literary text in India. This ritual, generally called Upanayana,¹ has been regarded to be important throughout the Vedic period, and continues to function even in modern India, because it has formed the basis for the secure transmission of the Vedic canon. The procedure of the initiation ritual is first mentioned in the early Vedic texts such as the Atharvaveda and the Brāhmaṇas, and in the late Vedic period it comes to be prescribed in detail in the Grhyasūtras of all Vedic schools.

In this paper, I will investigate two major ritual actions performed at the Vedic initiation: that is, the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand, and the teacher’s pouring water from his own hands into the novice’s hands. The ritual action of the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand at

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The term upanayana (<upa-nī) is attested in the Grhyasūtras and onwards. In the pre-Grhyasūtra texts, the initiation of the Vedic students is expressed by the verbs upa-nī “to lead [the novice] near [the teacher himself] (in the middle voice; AV+) / [to the brahmacārya] (in the active voice; Br+); i.e. to initiate”; and upa-i “to go near [to the teacher]; to go near [to the teacher and the brahmacārya] (JUB 1,42,1); i.e. to ask for initiation” [Kajihara 2003: 12, n. 1; in press]. In this paper, I will use the term “Vedic initiation” to refer to the initiation ritual for the Vedic students in the Vedic period in general, and the term “Upanayana” to refer to the initiation ritual prescribed in the Grhyasūtras in particular.
the initiation is attested since the late Atharvaveda, the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, through the all extant Grhyasūtras [Kajihara 2004; 2009/2010]. On the other hand, the act of the teacher’s filling his own hands with water and his pouring it into the novice’s hands is first found in the Upanayana of the Grhyasūtras, and has no apparent precedent in the earlier texts. Though these two ritual actions have a different historical background, they come to be connected to each other in an entangled way at the Grhyasūtra stage.

This paper will explore how the two ritual actions in question are associated with each other in the Grhyasūtras, by examining their context and the ritual formulas (mantras) accompanying them. This investigation will also lead to the discussion about how the Vedic initiation ritual developed incorporating new ritual elements into the older ritual structure.

2 Seizing the Novice’s Hand at the Vedic Initiation

2.1 The Atharvavedic Formula for Seizing the Novice’s Hand

A formula for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand at the Vedic initiation is first attested in the latest stratum of the Atharvaveda, i.e. the twentieth book of the Paippalāda-Saṃhitā [Kajihara 2009/2010: 41–43].2 There the formula for seizing the novice’s hand is followed by the formula for the ritual declaration of the teacher’s admitting the novice as his student at the initiation. Those Atharvavedic initiation formulas continue to be used with variations for the same ritual actions in the eleventh book of the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa and the Grhyasūtras.

The formulas that refer to the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand and his admitting the novice as his student in the Atharvaveda read as follows:

\[
\text{Atharvaveda Paippalāda Orissa 20,53,1–2ab; Kashmir 20,49,1–2ab}[\text{Kajihara 2009/2010: 41f.}]
\]

\[
dhāṭṛ te hastam agrahīṭ savitā hastam agrahīṭ//
\]

(Formula A)

\[
mitras tvam asi dharmānāgir ācāryas tava //
\]

(Formula B1)

\[
agner brahmācāry asi mama brahmācāry asi //
\]

(Formula B2)

Dhāṭṛ has seized your hand. Savitṛ has seized [your] hand.
You are Mitra by right. Agni is your teacher.
You are Agni’s student. You are my student.

The first two lines (A, B1) are a variation of an Atharvavedic nuptial formula with which the bridegroom seizes the bride’s hand and declares that he is her master of house at the marriage ceremony.4 The bridegroom’s seizing the bride’s hand at the marriage is mentioned

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2 For the possibly late date of the “grhya” formulas in the twentieth book of the Atharvaveda Paippalāda-Saṃhitā, see Kajihara [2009/2010: 55f.].

3 Most of the mantras used in the Grhyasūtras may not be the direct quotations from the Atharvaveda, but from the stocks of formulas for the household (grhya) rituals of their own or related schools. In this paper, when I call the formulas “Atharvavedic” or “Yajurvedic,” I mean that they are first attested in the Atharvaveda or the Yajurveda; it does not mean that the formulas in question in the Grhyasūtras are directly quoted or derived from the Atharvaveda or the Yajurveda.

4 Atharvaveda Śaunaka 14,1,51 bhāgās te hāstam agrahīṭ savitā hāstam agrahīṭ / pānī tvām asi
since the Rgveda.\(^5\) The teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand at the initiation is most probably derived from the marriage ritual \[\text{Kajhara 2004: 426–428}\]. As the marriage and the initiation are both performed in order to unite two persons closely, the primary function of the ritual action of one’s (the bridegroom’s / the teacher’s) seizing his new partner’s (the bride’s / the novice’s) hand can be understood to symbolize the commencement of the inseparable relationship between them.\(^6\)

Among the above Atharvavedic initiation formulas (A, B1, B2), those by which the teacher admits the novice as his own student (B1, B2) find a parallel in the eleventh book of the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa. There they are said to be recited by the teacher when he seizes the novice’s hand:

\[\text{Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (Mādhyandina) 11,5,4,2; (Kāṇva) 13,5,4,2 (Initiation)}\]
\[\text{āthāṣya hāṣtaṁ grhr̄̄nī /} \]
\[\text{indrasya brahmacāry āṣy} \quad (\text{Formula B2})\]
\[\text{agnīr ācāryās tāvāhām ācāryās tāvāsāv īty} \quad (\text{Formula B1})\]

Then he (the teacher) seizes his (the novice’s) hand, saying,

“You are Indra’s student. Agni is your teacher. I am your teacher, O N.N.”

Though the Atharvavedic formula that refers to the ritual action of seizing the novice’s hand (Formula A) is not included, it is clear that here Formulas B2’ and B1’ are used for the ritual action of the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand.

The above Atharvavedic ritual formulas for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand and admitting him as his student at the initiation (Formulas A, B1, B2) are also quoted by most Grhyasūtras in the Upanayana (see 3.4 below; cf. \text{Kajhara [2009/2010: 42f., n. 9]}).

2.2 The Yajurvedic Formula for Seizing the Novice’s Hand

In the Grhyasūtras, another formula for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand is found. It has the following famous beginning:

\[\text{devāṣya tvā savitūḥ prasavē ’śvīnor bāhūbhyaṁ pūśṇo hāstābhyaṁ ...} \quad (\text{Formula C})\]

At the impulse of the god Savitṛ, with the two arms of Āśvins, with the two hands of Pūṣan, [I ... ] you.

This phrase is attested since the Yajurveda Saṃhitās with numerous variations \[\text{Bloomfield dhārmāṇāhāṃ grhr̄̄patis távā // “Bhaga has seized your hand. Savitṛ has seized [your] hand. You are the wife by right. I am your master of house”; cf. Paippalāda 18,5,8. For the development of the initiation ritual and the marriage ceremony with mutual influence since the Atharvaveda, including the adoption of the formula in question from the marriage to the initiation, see \text{Kajhara [2004]}; for the formulas concerning the initiation in Atharvaveda Paippalāda 20, see \text{Kajhara [2009/2010]; cf. n. 2 above.}}\]

\(^5\) Rgveda 10,85,26 (the nuptial hymn); 10,109,2–3 (the hymn on the Brahman’s wife); 10,18,8 (the funeral hymn).

\(^6\) Oldenberg [1886: 65, the note on ŚāṅkhGS 2,3,5]; \text{Kajhara [2004: 428]}. 
As is easily understood, it can be adapted for *mantras* for any ritual action performed with two hands by adding a verb at the end according to each use. At the Upanayana, this Yajurvedic phrase is concluded by either of two different verbs, *hastam grhnami* “I seize [your] hand” or *upanaye/upanayami* “I initiate.”

In the Grhyasūtras, the above two types of ritual formulas, i.e. the one that is first attested in the Atharvaveda (Formula A) and the other that is first attested in the Yajurveda (Formula C), coexist for one and the same ritual action of the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand. There must have been certain development in the Vedic initiation as to this ritual action and the formulas for it, which will be discussed next.

3 Pouring Water into the Novice’s Hands at the Upanayana

The ritual action of the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand at the Upanayana is prescribed by the all Grhyasūtras. And, in most Grhyasūtras, just before the teacher seizes the novice’s hand, the teacher pours water from his own hands into those of the novice’s. In this section, I will discuss the relationship between these two ritual actions by examining the ritual formulas used for them.

3.1 Pouring Water into the Novice’s Hands in the Grhyasūtras

The ritual action of pouring water from the teacher’s hands into those of the novice’s at the initiation is not found in the pre-Grhyasūtra texts. It is prescribed for the Upanayana in the Grhyasūtras of the two-third schools (12 out of 18 extant Grhyasūtras) in the following ritual sequence:

The teacher pours water into the novice’s hands → He seizes the novice’s hand → He declares the initiation

This sequence of the ritual actions has the following patterns:

1. The teacher pours water into the novice’s hands, and seizes his hand:
   - ĀsvGS 1,20,4–6; GGS 2,10,18–26 (SMB 1,6,15; 19); KhGS 2,4,10–13 (SMB 1,6,15; 19); JGS 1,12; 11,5–12; VārGS 5,13-19; BhārGS 1,7; 7,2–9; PGS 2,2,14–20

2. The teacher pours water into the novice’s hands, seizes his hand, and initiates him:
   - ŚāṅkhGS 2,2,4–2,3,1; KausGS 2,2,1–11; KauśS 55,11–14

3. The teacher pours water into the novice’s hands, sprinkles water upon him, and seizes his hand:
   - VādhGS; ĀpGS 4,10,12 (ĀpMP 2,3,3–24)

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7 In the KauśS, the teacher initiates the novice before he pours water into his hands and seizes his hand.
8 In the ĀpGS, the teacher also initiates the novice after he seizes his hand.
Seizing the Novice’s Hand and Pouring Water into His Hands

(4) The teacher seizes the novice’s hand, and initiates him (the action of pouring water is not mentioned):

KāthGS 41,16; MGS 1,22,5; 10 BaudhGS 2,5,26–28; HGS 1,5,9–14; ĀgGS 1,1,3:8,1ff.; VaikhGS 2,6:25,5–16

The ritual formula which accompanies the teacher’s pouring water into the novice’s hands varies among the schools; half of the schools do not give any formula to this ritual action.11 This fact would reflect the situation that the ritual action of pouring water into the novice’s hands is introduced to the initiation at the time of the Grhyasūtras and therefore has had no established mantra for it.

3.2 Pouring Water into the Novice’s Hands and Seizing His Hand

The following is an example of pattern (1) above. The teacher first pours water into the novice’s hands, and then seizes his hand:

Āśvalāyana-Grhyasūtra 1,20,4–6 (Upanayana)

apām amjiḻTI pūravivā tAT sativur vṛṇīmaha iti pūrṇenāsya pūrnam avakṣārayatī āśicya devasya tvā savitvā prasave 'śvinor bāhubhyāṃ pāśno hastābhhyāṃ hastam grhnāmy asāv iti tasva pāṇinā pāṇim sāṃguṣṭham grhnīyāt /4/

savitā te hastam agrabhād asāv iti dvitiyam /5/

agnir ācāras tavāsāv iti triṭiyam /6/

Having filled the two hollows of hands [of the teacher and the novice] with water, he (the teacher) causes to flow down [water] by full [hollow of his own hands] to his (the novice’s) full [hollow of hands], reciting, “That we choose of Savitṛ (Ṛgveda 5,82,1).” Having poured [water into the novice’s hands thus], he (the teacher) should seize his (the novice’s) palm including the thumb by [his own] palm, saying, “At the impulse of the god Savitṛ, with the two arms of Āsvins, with the two hands of Pūṣan, I seize you

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10 The MGS tells that the hands of the teacher and the novice are “not empty (arikta-)” when the former seizes the latter’s hand: MGS 1,22,5 (Upanayana) devasya tvā savitvā prasave 'śvinor bāhubhyāṃ pāśno hastābhhyāṃ hastam grhnāmy asāv iti hastam grhnām nāma grhnātī ... daksinām uttanām daksinena nićārīktaṃ ariktena “[The teacher] calls his (the novice’s) name, seizing the [novice’s] hand [with the formula], ‘At the impulse of the god Savitṛ, with the two arms of Āsvins, with the two hands of Pūṣan, I seize you [and your] hand, O N.N.,’ ... the right [hand of the novice being] turned upwards, by his right [hand] turned downwards, [the novice’s hand being] not empty, by [the teacher’s hand being] not empty.” The expression ariktena is also found in MGS 1,10,15 (marriage); KāthGS 25,21 (marriage). The commentator Devapāla explains that arikta- in KāthGS 25,21 means “with ornaments, gold, or flowers etc.” DRESSEN [1941: 95, n. 7], in his translation of MGS 1,22,5, refers to JGS 1,12 (see 4 below), where the filling of the novice’s hands with water is prescribed.

11 The assigned mantras are: Ṛgveda 5,82,1 tāt savitvā vṛṇīmahe (ĀśvGS); bṛh bhavah svar (ŚāṅkhGS; KausGS); Maitrāyani Samhiti 1,1,4: 2,12 sukṛāya vām (VārGS); Atharvaveda Paippalāda 1,1,1 / Śaunaka 1,6,1 sām no devṛ (BhrGS); Taityṛīya-Samhitā 2,3,14,3 gaṇāṇi tvā etc. (VādḥGS); Vājasaneyi-Samhiti 11,50ff. āpo hi śthā (PGS); om bṛh bhavah svar janaḥ om (Kaus). The schools which do not have any mantra for this ritual action are: GGS; KhGS; JGS; ĀpGS.
[and your] hand (devasya tvā savitūḥ ... hastam grhṇāmi), O N.N.” [The teacher seizes his hand] for the second time, saying, “Savitṛ has seized your hand (savitā te hastam agrabhūḥ), O N.N.” [He seizes his hand] for the third time, saying, “Agni is your teacher (agnir ācāryas tava), O N.N.”

According to this passage, in the Āsaṅgāyana school, the ritual action of pouring water into the novice’s hands is accompanied by a Ṛgvedic verse (tat savitur vṝṇāmahe), while the ritual action of seizing the novice’s hand is performed with the following three formulas:

- devasya tvā savitūḥ ... hastam grhṇāmi (Formula C)
- savitā te hastam agrabhūḥ (Formula A’)
- agnir ācāryas tava (Formula B1)

In this case, the two different types of mantras for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand, that is, the Yajurvedic (Formula C) and the Atharvavedic mantras (Formulas A’, B1), are gathered in sequence by prescribing the repetition of the ritual action three times with them.

This prescription presents two problems. One is the authenticity and necessity of seizing the novice’s hand with the Yajurvedic formula devasya tvĀ savitūḥ ... hastam grhṇāmi. The other is the discrepancy between the verb and its object found in the formula.

The first problem is that the three formulas prescribed here for one ritual action do not have the same pre-history as discussed in section 2. The first formula (devasya tvā savitūḥ ... hastam grhṇāmi [Formula C]) is attested only in the Grhyasūtras. On the other hand, the latter two formulas (savitā te hastam agrabhūḥ [Formula A’] and agnir ācāryas tava [Formula B1]) are attested since the latest stratum of the Atharvaveda in the context of the initiation ritual. There seems to be no apparent reason to employ these two different types of formulas together at first glance. This problem will be discussed below in section 3.4.

The second problem is that, in the Yajurvedic mantra (Formula C), the verb and its object show a discrepancy. In the formulas beginning with devasya tvā savitūḥ ..., the accusative tvā “you” should be the object of the concluding verb, in this case grhṇāmi “I seize.” However, in Formula C here, the actual object of seizing is hastam “hand.” Though it is not impossible to understand that here the concluding verb has two objects to mean “I seize you [and your] hand” as translated above,12 it is more natural to assume that the formula’s opening devasya tvā savitūḥ was so popular that it was used as it is, disregarding the discrepancy. Three schools show the same discrepancy (devasya tvā savitūḥ ... hastam grhṇāmi: ĀśvGS; MGS; BhārGS13).

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12 To interpret tvā as the hand itself to mean “I seize you, hand” is difficult, because the vocative asau “O N.N.” must refer to the novice being called “you” by the teacher. Cf. the next footnote.

13 In the BhārGS, the words hastena te “with [my] hand, your” are inserted before hastam grhṇāmi: BhārGS 1.7: 7ff. (Upanayana) devasya tvā savitūḥ prasave śivinor bāhuḥbhūyām pāśno hastābhadyām hastena te hastam grhṇāmi “At the impulse of the god Saviṭṛ, with the two arms of Āśvins, with the two hands of Pāśan, with [my] hand, I seize you, your hand”; the same line is found also in BhārGS 1.15: 15,11ff. (marriage) (in the marriage ceremony of the BhārGS, the bridegroom pours water into the
The other schools avoid this complication in two different ways.

The first way is to replace *tvā* with *te*, so that the teacher clearly says “I seize *your* hand” (*devasya te savituh ... hastam grhrnami*) as is found in four schools (GGS; KhGS; KāṭhGS; VārGS). This solution would be a result of a secondary revision of the formula. According to *A Vedic Concordance* [Bloomfield and Franceschini 2005 (1906)], the opening *devasya te savituh* ... is attested only in these schools in this very context of the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand.  

The second way to avoid the problem is to conclude the formula *devasya tvā savituh* ... not with the verb “I seize” but “I initiate,” as found in seven schools (ŚāṅkhaGS; KauṣṭhaGS; BaudhGS; ĀpGS; HGS; ĀgGS; VaikhGS), so that *tvā* “you” can work as the object of the verb. Next I will examine this pattern.

### 3.3 Pouring Water into the Novice’s Hands and Initiating Him

The following is an example of pattern (2) above. The teacher first pours water into the novice’s hands, seizes his hand, and then initiates him:

Śāṅkhaśāstra-Gṛhyasūtra 2,2,4–2,3,1 (Upanayana)

*aṅjali pūrayitvāthānam āha ko nāmāsīty/2,2,4/ asāv ahaṃ bhoḍ tiṭṭaraḥ /5/ ... bhūr bhuvah svar ity asyāṅjalāṅv aṅjalīṃs trīn āśicya /10/ daksinottarābhhyāṃ pāṇībhīyāṃ pāṇi sangṛhyā japatī /11/ devasya tvā savituh prasave ’śvinor bāhubhyāṃ pūṣno hāstabhīyāṃ upanayāny āśāv iti /12/ ... bhagaṃ te hastam agrabhīt savitā hastam agrabhīt / pūṣṭe te hastam agrabhīd aryamā hastam agrabhīn mītrās tvam asi dharmāṅgāṅīr ācāryas tava / asāv ahaṃ cobbāv aṅga etam te brahmācāryaṃ paridādāmi ... [2,3,1]

Having filled the two hollows of hands (i.e. the hollows of the teacher’s and the novice’s hands) [with water], then [the teacher says] to him, “Who are you by name?” The other (the novice) [replies], “I am N.N., sir!” The teacher, [replies], “I am N.N., sir!” ... [The teacher] having poured three handful [waters] into his (the novice’s) hollow of bride’s hands before seizing her hand with this formula). Cf. ĀgGS 1,5,3: 30,2 (marriage) *devasya tvā savituh prasave ’śvinor bāhubhyāṃ pūṣno hāstabhīyāṃ / hastena hastam grhrnami* “At the impulse of the god Savitr, with the two arms of Aśvins, with the two hands of Pūṣān, with [my] hand, I seize you, [your] hand.”

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14 The instance in the KāṭhaGS is not recorded in *A Vedic Concordance*. Also, though not recorded by Bloomfield and Franceschini [2005], there are two more instances of *devasya te savituh* ... which are concluded with *hastam grhrnami*; they occur in the marriage ceremony in which the bridegroom seizes the bride’s hand (KāṭhaGS 25,21; VārGS 14,13).

15 The usual opening *devasya tvā savituh* ... is found in numerous texts with various verbs, in which *tvā* is the object of the verbs naturally. For example, *devāsya tvā savitih prasave ’śvinor bāhubhyāṃ pūṣno hāstabhīyāṃ ā dade* “At the impulse of the god Savitr, with the two arms of Aśvins, with the two hands of Pūṣān, I take you” (Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā 1,24; Maitrāyi Saṃhitā 1,1,9: 5,11; Kāṭhaka-Saṃhitā 1,2: 1,6; Taittirīya-Saṃhitā 1,3,1,1; etc.).
Kajihara, Mieko

hands with “bhūr bhuvah svar;” and having seized his (the novice’s) two palms with his own palms keeping the right [palm] uppermost, he murmurs, “At the impulse of the god Savitr, with the two arms of Aśvins, with the two hands of Pūṣan, I initiate you (devasya tvā savituh ... upanayāmi), O N.N.” ...

[The teacher says,] “Bhaga has seized your hand (bhagas te hastam agrabhīt). Savitr has seized [your] hand. Pūṣan has seized your hand. Aryaman has seized [your] hand. You are Mitra by right. Agni is your teacher (mitras tvam asi dharmaṇāgīnir ācāryas tava), [and] I, N.N., both [are your teachers].

O Agni, I entrust this one (the novice) as your student. ...”

In this case, the sequence of the ritual actions from the teacher’s pouring water into the novice’s hand, the former’s seizing the latter’s hand(s), up to the former’s initiating the latter “with the two hands of Pūṣan,” is logical. The discrepancy between the accusative tvā and the concluding verb is resolved by using the verb upa-nī “to initiate” which takes the novice as the object.

At the same time, it should be noted that the ritual action of seizing the novice’s hand(s) still appears in this context, even though here the concluding verb of the formula devasya tvā savituh ... is not gṛṇhāmi “I seize,” and the accusative hastam “hand” is not found in the formula. The ritual formulas beginning with devasya tvā savituh prasave śvīnor bāhubhyām pūṣno hastabhīyām ... require a ritual action performed “with two hands.” However, the verb upa-nī “to initiate” does not represent any concrete action done with hands but refers to an abstract event. Here the ritual action actually done when the teacher recites this formula is his seizing the novice’s hand.16

In the Śaṅkhāyana-Grhyasūtra quoted here, the ritual actions and formulas in question are prescribed in the following order:

1. The teacher pours water from his hands into the novice’s hands, saying, bhūr bhuvah svāḥ. [ŚāṅkhGS 2,2,10]

2. The teacher seizes the novice’s hands, murmuring Formula C’ — [ŚāṅkhGS 2,2,11]

3. — and he initiates the novice, by the words “I initiate you” in the formula, devasya tvā savituh ... hastabhīyām upanayāmi. (Formula C’) [ŚāṅkhGS 2,2,12]

4. The teacher recites the Atharvavedic formulas, with no action being specified:

   bhagas te hastam agrabhīt ... (Formula A’)
   mitras tvam asi dharmaṇāgīnir ācāryas tava (Formula B1)
   agne etam te brahmaśāriṇaṃ paridadāmi 17 [ŚāṅkhGS 2,3,1]

16 The Āpastambas drop the words “arms” and “hands” from the formula so that they do not cause any problem: ĀpMP 2,3,24 (ĀpGS 4,10,12) devasya tvā savituh prasavā upa naye ‘sau “At the impulse of the god Savitr, I initiate you, O N.N.”

17 This formula represents the teacher’s entrusting his new student to the gods and various beings at the initiation. This is a variation of what is found among the initiation formulas in the twentieth book of the Atharvaveda Paippalāda-Saṁhitā as well as in the Brāhmaṇas: Atharvaveda Paippalāda Orissa
Though the text of the Atharvavedic initiation formulas (Formulas A’, B1) alludes to the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand and declaring that he is his student (i.e. he initiates him), the Grhyasūtra does not prescribe any particular ritual action to be performed when he recites them. It would have been assumed that, when the teacher recites the Atharvavedic formulas bhagas te hastam agrabhītī etc., the teacher is keeping his hand joined with that of the novice’s, which he has seized with the Yajurvedic formula devasya tvā savitūḥ, and he continues the recitation of the Atharvavedic formulas.

However, both of the ritual actions of seizing the novice’s hand and declaring the initiation are completed actually when the teacher recites the Yajurvedic formula devasya tvā savitūḥ ... pāṣṇo hastābhyaṁ upanayāmi “At the impulse of the god Savitṛ ... with the two hands of Pūsan, I initiate you” after he seizes (saṁgrhyā) the novice’s hand (ŚāṅkhGS 2,11–12). The quotation of the Atharvavedic formulas for the actions of seizing the novice’s hand and initiating him (ŚāṅkhGS 2,3,1) is somewhat redundant.

It seems that the main point of the teacher’s recitation of the Atharvavedic formulas in ŚāṅkhGS 2,3,1 is the teacher’s entrusting the novice to the gods (paridadāmi “I entrust”), another major ritual action at the Vedic initiation. In the Atharvaveda, the formulas for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand (Formula A), those for declaring the initiation (Formulas B1, B2), and that for entrusting the novice to the gods, are collected in sequence. It is possible that here the ŚāṅkhGS puts the formulas “So-and-so has seized your hand,” “You are Mitra by right,” and “I entrust you to so-and-so” as a set in the established sequence.

3.4 The Development of the Ritual Action of Seizing the Novice’s Hand at the Initiation

As mentioned above, the ritual action of the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand is prescribed in the Upanayana of the all Grhyasūtras. The ritual action of initiating the novice usually follows it. The ritual formulas for these actions are more or less the same among the schools, but the way of usage of the formulas is not always the same. The 17 Grhyasūtras19 use the

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20.53,2c; Kashmir 20,49,3c praṇāpātś tvā gopāyatu devāya tvā savīre pari dadāmi “Let Prajapati protect you. I entrust you to the god Savitṛ” (in the Atharvaveda, this line immediately follows Formulas A and B; cf. 2.1 above); Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa 11.5,4,3f. praṇāpate tvā pariḍādāmi devāya tvā savīrte pariḍādāmi ... “I entrust you to Prajāpati. I entrust you to the god Savitṛ. ...”; Kaṭha-Brāhmaṇa (upanayana-brāhmaṇa) [Sūryakānta 1943: 48] kāya tvā pariḍādāmi devāya tvā savītrte pariḍādāmi bhṛhaspaṭaye tvā pariḍādāmi “I entrust you to Ka (or ‘whom’). I entrust you to the god Savitṛ. I entrust you to Bṛhaspati.” See Kajhara [2009/2010: 41–46].

18 Atharvaveda Paippalāda Orissa 20,53,1–2c; Kashmir 20,49,1–2ab; 3c. Cf. n. 17 above. This sequence is also found in Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa 11.5,4,2–4 [Kajhara 2009/2010: 45f.].

19 The Kauśikī do not employ the formulas in question (A, B1, B2, C1 in n. 20 below) for seizing the novice’s hand (55,14), initiating him (55,11–12), and pouring water into his hands (55,13).
ritual formulas examined above as follows:

- **ĀśvGS**: Formulas C1, A, B1
- **ŚāṅkhGS**: Formulas C2, A, B1
- **KauṣGIS**: Formulas C2, A, B1
- **GGS**: Formulas C1, A, B1
- **KhGS**: Formulas C1, A, B1
- **JGS**: Formulas A, B1
- **KāṭhGS**: Formulas C1, C2, A, B1, B2
- **MGS**: Formulas C1, A, B1, B2
- **VārGS**: Formula C1
- **BaudhGS**: Formula C2
- **BhārGS**: Formulas C1, A, B1, B2
- **ĀpGS**: Formulas A, B1, C2
- **VādhGS**: Formulas A, B1, B2
- **HGS**: Formulas C2, A, B1
- **ĀgGS**: Formulas C2, A, B1
- **VaikhhGS**: Formulas C2, A, B1
- **PGS**: Formulas B2, B1

As is seen in this summary, most Grhyaśūtras employ both of the Atharvavedic (A, B1, B2) and Yajurvedic (C1, C2) formulas for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand and for his initiating him.

In many cases, however, employing both of the Atharvavedic and the Yajurvedic formulas for the same purposes causes some unnaturalness. For example, in the ĀśvGS, the teacher should repeat his seizing the novice’s hand three times when he recites Formulas C1, A, and B1 (see 3.2). In the case of the ŚāṅkhGS, Formulas A and B1 have seemingly no apparent corresponding ritual action, because the actions of seizing the novice’s hand and initiating him are completed by reciting Formula C2 only (see 3.3). This kind of redundancy is seen also in other Grhyaśūtras.

Why was the formula beginning with *devasya tvā savituh* introduced into the Upanayana in addition to the initiation formulas attested since the late Atharvaveda? In other words, why do those two types of ritual formulas coexist for the same ritual actions in the Grhyaśūtras? There would have been several factors behind this situation.

First, when the procedure of the initiation was formulated in detail as a grhya ritual at the time of compilation of the Grhyaśūtras in the late Vedic period, it would have been wanted to establish a concrete ritual action for the teacher’s initiating the novice at the Upanayana. For such a purpose, his seizing the novice’s hand could stand as a symbolic ritual action just as

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20 Formula A: *dhātā te hastam agrahāt savītā hastam agrahāt*
Formula B1: *mitras tvam asi dharmanāṅgīr ācāryas tava*
Formula B2: *agner brahmaçāry asi mama brahmaçāry asi*
Formula C1: *devasya tvā savituh prasave śvinor bāhubhyām pāśno hastābhhyām hastam grhnāmi*
Formula C2: *devasya tvā savituh prasave śvinor bāhubhyām pāśno hastābhhyām upanayāmī (upanaye)*
the so-called pāṅgramaṇa “[the bridegroom’s] seizing [the bride’s] palm” did in the marriage ceremony. Most schools used the Atharvavedic formulas for seizing the novice’s hand (A, B1) which are a variation of the Atharvavedic nuptial formulas for seizing the bride’s hand, and, half of the schools also added the more direct expression “I seize [your] hand” by introducing the Yajurvedic formula devasya tvā savitūḥ ... hastāṃ gr̩hāmi (Formula C1).

It would have been preferred to make the teacher explicitly utter “I initiate you” in addition to reciting the Atharvavedic formula “You are my student” (mama brahmācy asi [Formula B2]). The phrase devasya tvā savitūḥ ... was used as a handy opening to form a new mantra that clearly expresses the teacher’s initiating the novice by concluding it with upanayāmi or upanaye “I initiate” (Formula C2). At the same time, this phrase made the teacher’s initiating the novice with it inseparable from the ritual action of his seizing the novice’s hand, because it includes the word hastābhyām “with two hands.”

Second, once the ritual element of pouring water from the teacher’s hands to the novice’s hands was introduced to the Vedic initiation ritual at the time of the Gr̩hīyasūtras, it would have been natural that their hands were joined after pouring water from hands to hands. Since the ritual action of pouring water into hands was not accompanied by any established mantra, the phrase devasya tvā savitūḥ ... was also convenient to form a mantra for this ritual action. The word hastābhyām “with two hands” in this phrase would have also made the action of the teacher’s pouring water from hands to hands more easily connected to the former’s seizing the hand of the latter, or initiating him, with this formula. In practice, the connection between the phrase devasya tvā savitūḥ ... hastābhyām and the hands was so strong that the formula came to be recited when the teacher seizes the novice’s hand or initiates him with it after he pours water into the novice’s hands.

In this way, the two types of ritual formulas for seizing the novice’s hand came to be used in the initiation at the time of the Gr̩hīyasūtras. The ritual formula beginning with devasya tvā savitūḥ in the Upanayana was associated with the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand whether or not it was concluded with gr̩hnāmi “I seize.”

4 Ideas behind Pouring Water into the Novice’s Hands

There is no text that directly explains the function and meaning of the ritual action of pouring water into the novice’s hands. However, there are several clues for understanding them.

In the following text, the teacher’s pouring water into the novice’s hands is described to be an act of “filling”:

Jaimini-Gr̩hīyasūtra 1,12:11,6 (Upanayana)

ṭāv añjāḷi kuruta. uttarata ācāryas. tam anyo ’dbhiḥ pūrayen. nisrāvenetarasya pūrnam. ... athāya daśiṇena hastena daśiṇaḥ hastaṃ gr̩nāti-indras te hastam agrabhūd dhātā hastam agrabhūt puṣā hastam agrabhūn savitā hastam agrabhūd aryamā hastam agrabhūn mitras tvam asi dharmaṅāgni ācāryas taveti.
The two (the teacher and the novice) make the hollows of hands. The teacher is upper (i.e. the teacher’s hands are held over the novice’s hands). Some other one (a priest) should fill it (the teacher’s hollow of hands) with water. The filling of the other (the novice’s hollow of hands) is done by flowing down [of water].

Then, [the teacher] [seizes] [the novice’s] right hand by [his own] right hand, saying, “Indra has [seized] your hand (indras te hastam agrabhīt). Dhārṇ has seized [your] hand. Pūṣan has seized [your] hand. Savitr has seized [your] hand. Aryaman has seized [your] hand. You are Mitra by right. Agni is your teacher (mitras tvam asi dharman ācāryas tava).”

In this passage, the main focus of the ritual action of the teacher’s pouring water is on filling the novice’s hands. It is not difficult to assume that water here symbolizes the sacred knowledge of the Veda, which is being transmitted from the teacher to the student to “fill” the latter with it.\(^{21}\)

An idea of associating “filling” or “fullness” with the transmission of the sacred knowledge is also found elsewhere. THIÈME [2000] claims that the following verse attached at the beginning of a supplemental section of the Brhad-Āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad would allude to the knowledge given from the teacher to his student:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Brhad-Āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad 5.1.1 (}=\text{Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa [Mādhyandīna] 14.8.1.1})^{22} & \text{ } \\
pūrṇām adāḥ pūrṇām idām pūrṇāt pūrṇām ûdacyate / & pūrṇāsa pūrṇām ādāya pūrṇām evāvaśisyate / \\
\end{align*}
\]

That there is fullness, this here is fullness, Fullness is drawn up (scooped) from fullness, After taking away the complete fullness, It is fullness that is left. [THIÈME 2000: 382]

THIÈME [2000: 383] argues that this verse describes the fullness of the knowledge of the Veda inside the teacher and his student, which is “drawn up” to be transmitted from the former to the latter, and still remains full in the teacher. This verse is attached at the beginning of several Upaniṣads in modern editions as a sort of śānti, suggesting that it has been regarded to have a close relationship to the learning of the Veda.

Another idea that is associated with the action of pouring water into someone’s hands in ancient India is the oath of contract and transfer.\(^{23}\) SAKAMOTO-GOTO [2008: 58] enumerates the instances of passages in the Pāli Buddhist texts which tell that one should pour water into

\(^{21}\) A medieval commentary supports this view. Śrīnivāsa’s commentary on JGS 1.12: idam udakapradāna-rūpeṣa guror vedapradānapratijñānam “This is the signification of the giving of the Veda by the teacher in the form of the giving water.”


\(^{23}\) See LÜDER [1951: 32; 668f.]; Gorō [2008: 91f.] (with bibliography); SAKAMOTO-GOTO [2008: 58].
the other one’s hand when he gives or donates something to him, for example:

Jātaka VI 570 (No. 547: Vessantara-Jātaka)\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{sīgham eva kamaṇḍalunā udakaṃ āharitvā udakaṃ hatthe pātētvā bhāriyāṃ brāhmaṇassa adāśi.}

He (Vessantara), having brought up water with a jar with haste, and having let water fall on the Brahman’s hand, gave his wife to him [as a donation].

These kinds of ideas that are related to the fullness and the sacred knowledge, and the manner of donation confirmed by pouring water into one’s hand, may have existed behind the ritual action of the teacher’s pouring water into the novice’s hands at the Upanayana, where the knowledge of the Veda is going to be transmitted from the teacher to the novice.

5 Pouring Water upon the Initiate

In some schools, the teacher’s pouring water into the novice’s hands at the Upanayana is followed by his sprinkling water upon the novice. The latter ritual action reminds us of another famous ritual action, the \textit{abhiṣeka “[consecration by] pouring water [upon one’s head].”}

In this section, I will briefly examine whether any element of the \textit{abhiṣeka} is found in the Upanayana.

5.1 Sprinkling Water upon the Novice at the Upanayana

For the teacher’s pouring water into the novice’s hands at the Upanayana, the following verbs are used:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{pūr} “to fill” JGS; PGS
  \item \textit{ā-sic} “to pour” ĀśvGS; ŚāṅkhGS; KauśGS; KauśS
  \item \textit{ā-nī} “to lead in; to pour” BhārGS; VādhGS; ĀpGS
  \item \textit{ut-sr} “to let flow down” GGS; KhGS
  \item \textit{ava-kṣar} “to let flow down upon” ĀśvGS (caus.)
  \item \textit{pra-kṣal} “to wash” VārGS
\end{itemize}

In addition to pouring water into the novice’s hands, the teacher’s sprinkling water, probably upon the novice, is found at the Upanayana of several schools, with the following verb:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{pra-ukṣ} “to sprinkle” VādhGS; ĀpGS; VaikhGS
\end{itemize}

The following is an example of pattern (3) above. The teacher pours water into the novice’s hands, sprinkles water upon him, and seizes his hand:

\textsuperscript{24} This story has various parallels and translations among the Buddhist texts [KARASHIMA 1998].
Vādhūla-Grhaṇyāṣṭra (Upanayana)25

\[ \text{athāsyāṇjālāv apa ānyayati gaṇāṇāṃ tvā ... ivājanīty.} \]

\[ \text{athainam etābhīr evādhibhī prosāṃy oṣadhīhyās tvā prosāṃi} \]

\[ \text{vanaspāṭībhīyas tvā prosāṃi dyāvaprīṭhībhīyāṃ tvā prosāṃi} \]

\[ \text{subhūtīyā tvā prosāṃi brahmavārcaśāya tvā prosāṃīty.} \]

\[ \text{athāsya daksīṇena hastena daksīṇam hastan garhātī aṇiṣṭe hastam agrabhīt ... mitras} \]

\[ \text{tvam asi dharmeṇāṅgīr aham ācārīyas tavāṣau prāṇasya brahmaṃcāry asiṭhy.} \]

Then, he (the teacher) pours water into his (the novice’s) hollow of hands, saying, “gaṇāṇāṃ tvā ... ivājanī.26” Then he sprinkles him with the same water, saying, “I sprinkle you for waters. I sprinkle you for herbs. I sprinkle you for trees. I sprinkle you for heaven and earth. I sprinkle you for good beings. I sprinkle you for the splendor of the brahman.” Then he (the teacher) seizes his (the novice’s) right hand by his right hand, saying, “Agni has seized your hand (agniṣ te hastam agrabhīt). ... You are Mitra by right. I, Agni, am your teacher (mitras tvam asi dharmeṇāṅgīr aham ācārīyas tava), O N.N. You are the prāṇa’s student (prāṇasya brahmaṃcāry asi.)”

The formulas for sprinkling water in the above passage (adbhyās tvā prosāṃi ...) are the variations of what is found since the Yajurveda (e.g. Taittirīya-Saṃhitā 1,3,8,1.d adbhyās tvāusadhibhyah prosāṃi “I sprinkle you for waters, for herbs”: a formula for sprinkling a sacrificial animal).

In the next case, the object of sprinkling with water is not clearly indicated:

Āpastamba-Grhaṇyāṣṭra 4,10,12 (Upanayana) (Mantrapāṭha 2,3,2–12)

\[ \text{udakāṇjalim asmā aṇjalāv āntyottarayā triḥ prosyettarair daksīṇe haste grhitvā ...} \]

[The teacher,] after having poured a handful water into the hollow of hands for him (the novice), having sprinkled [water] three times with the next [formula in the Mantrapāṭha] (samudrād tāmīr mādhamāṃ ...), having seized his right hand with the next [formulas] (agniṣ te hástam agrabhīt ... “Agni has seized your hand. ...”; mitras tvam asi dharmeṇāṅgīr ācārīyas tava “You are Mitra by right. Agni is your teacher.”) ...

It appears probable that the sprinkling is done upon the novice, since it is done immediately after the teacher’s pouring water into the novice’s hands and immediately before the former’s seizing the latter’s hand.27

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25 The text is from my preliminary edition of the VādhGS; cf. KAJIHARA [2008–2009].
26 Here the mantras are difficult to be identified because of corruption of the manuscripts.
27 Oldenberg understands that the novice sprinkles water upon himself: “[the teacher] makes him sprinkle himself three times” [1892: 272].
5.2 Sprinkling Water upon the Initiate’s Head at the “Initiation” for the Vānaprasthas

There is one more Grhyasūtra which prescribes the teacher’s “sprinkling” (pra-ukṣ) at the Upanayana. It is the Grhyasūtra portion of the Vaikhānasa-Smārtasūtra, in which the object of sprinkling is not clearly indicated. This text furnishes good material for comparing the teacher’s sprinkling water at the Upanayana with the abhīṣeka.

In the Upanayana of the Vaikhānasa’s Grhyasūtra portion, the following line is found:

*Vaikhānasa-Smārtasūtra 2.6:25,16 (Upanayana)*  
śaṃ no devīr iti prokṣya

[The teacher,] having sprinkled [water], saying “śaṃ no devīr;” ...

Here it is not indicated what the teacher should sprinkle upon. It seems to be a bundle of grass which has been given to the novice just before the sprinkling [Caland 1929: 47], or it may have been the novice: it is not certain.

In relation to this unclear prescription, an interesting line is found in the latter part of the same text. The Vaikhānasa-Smārtasūtra is unique in including an “initiation” ritual for the Vānaprasthas (one who has set out to the life in wood, having left his householder life) in its Dharmasūtra portion. It is a ritual through which one becomes a Vānaprastha. The procedure of this ritual has many ritual elements in common with the Upanayana through which one becomes a Vedic student, and with the Saṃvartana through which one graduates from his studentship, borrowing them from the latter two rituals [Fujii 1995]. In such an “initiation” ritual for the Vānaprasthas, the following line is found:

*Vaikhānasa-Smārtasūtra 9.2:123,1 (Vānaprastha)*  
śaṃ no devīr iti svamūrdhni prokṣya

[The Vānaprastha-to-be,] having sprinkled on his own head, saying “śaṃ no devīr;” ...

This line is apparently incorporated from the Upanayana in the same text quoted above. The difference is that in the Vānaprastha ritual the object of sprinkling is explicitly indicated to be the head of the initiate.

The sprinkling water upon the initiate in the Vānaprasthas’ “initiation” in the Dharmasūtra of the Vaikhānasas is made closer to the abhīṣeka than that in the traditional initiation Upanayana in their Grhyasūtra, since the former is specified to be done upon one’s head. It seems that the Vaikhānasas incorporated an element of the abhīṣeka into the Vānaprasthas’ initiation at the time of their Dharmasūtra, utilizing the ritual structure of the Upanayana. This might reflect the expansion of the ritual usage of the abhīṣeka in the early Hinduism.

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28 The Vaikhānasa-Smārtasūtra is consisted of two parts: the first half is their Grhyasūtra, and the latter half is the Dharmasūtra.

29 Cf. Caland [1929: 197–201]; Fujii [1995]; Mori [2003: 66f.; passim]. An “initiation” ritual for the Saṃnyāsins is also included in the VaikhSmS which is built upon that for the Vānaprasthas (cf. Mori [2003: 67; passim]).
6 Conclusion

The primary purpose of the initiation ritual is twofold: to let the novice declare his intention to become a student, and to let the teacher proclaim that he accepts the novice as his student.

At the Vedic initiation, the ritual agreement between the teacher and the novice was originally expressed through the formulas that are first attested in the late Atharvaveda. The teacher utters the formulas “You are my student” and “I am your teacher” etc., while he seizes the novice’s hand with the formula “Dhār has seized your hand” etc. These Atharvavedic initiation formulas are a variation of the Atharvavedic nuptial formulas. This style of ritual agreement on the teacher-student relationship is retained from the late Atharvaveda, the eleventh book of the Śatapatha-Brähmana, through the Grhyasūtras.

In the Grhyasūtras, in which the more extended procedure of the initiation ritual is formulated as the Upanayana, another ritual formula is introduced for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand and proclaiming the initiation. The formula in question begins with the famous phrase that is first attested in the Yajurveda: “At the impulse of the god Savitr, with the two arms of Āśvins, with the two hands of Pūṣan.” This Yajurvedic phrase is convenient enough to form mantras by which the teacher can announce either “I seize [your] hand” or “I initiate you” more straightforwardly than the Atharvavedic formulas. Since this phrase contains the words “with the two hands,” it comes to require the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand, even if it is used as the formula for the declaration of the initiation by concluding it with the word “I initiate” as is seen in some Grhyasūtras.

There would have been another reason why the Yajurvedic formula devasya tvā savituḥ is introduced for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand and his declaring the initiation in addition to the Atharvavedic formulas for the same purposes. At the Upanayana in the Grhyasūtras, there appears another major ritual element: the teacher’s pouring water from his own hands into the novice’s hands. This ritual action is performed just before the teacher seizes the novice’s hand. It would have been natural that their hands are joined after the teacher pours water from his own hands into the novice’s ones. Once the sequence of the ritual actions, the teacher’s pouring water into the novice’s hands, his seizing his hand, and his declaring the initiation, is established, the all-round phrase “At the impulse of the god Savitṛ” would have formed a useful mantra for this sequence, because it can cover all of these actions at once: the teacher can pour water, seize the novice’s hand, and declare the initiation, with the single formula “At the impulse of the god Savitṛ, with the two arms of Āśvins, with the two hands of Pūṣan, I seize [your] hand / I initiate you.”

Thus, the Atharvavedic formulas for the teacher’s seizing the novice’s hand and initiating him, the Yajurvedic formula for the same ritual actions, and the ritual action of the teacher’s pouring water from his own hands into the novice’s hands, come to be connected to each other in an entangled way at the Vedic initiation in the Grhyasūtras.
Seizing the Novice’s Hand and Pouring Water into His Hands

Abbreviations


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Sūryakāṇṭa (ed.)


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古代インドの入門式における握手儀礼と灌手儀礼

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古代インドの入門式 (Upanayana) はヴェーダ聖典を学習するために師に入門する儀礼である。入門の儀礼は古くアタルヴァヴェーダから言及がみられ、ヴェーダ後期のグリヒヤストラトにおいて学派ごとに少しづつ異なる儀式が詳細に規定されるに至る。本稿はグリヒヤストラトの入門式で行われる「師が入門者の手を握る」「師が自らの手から入門者の手へ水を濁ぐ」という二つの儀式行為について論じる。前者は元来結婚儀礼から取り入れられたもので、入門儀礼の文脈ではアタルヴァヴェーダ層にみられる。後者はグリヒヤストラト段階で初めて入門儀礼に現れ、「手」という要素を介して前者と複雑に結びつく。

入門式で師が入門者の手を握る際に用いる祭文には、アタルヴァヴェーダ初出の入門儀礼祭文と、ヤジュルヴェーダ初出の文を利用して入門式用に作られた祭文の二種類がある。多くのグリヒヤストラトはこの両方を入門式で用いているが、異なる起源の祭文を併用することで、祭式行為と祭文の間にやや不整合をきたしている。

手を握る行為に二種類の祭文が用いられた背景には二つの事情があったとみられる。ひとつは、師が入門者の手を握り入門者の受け入れを表明するという、入門式の根幹を成す儀式行為を際立たせるために、アタルヴァヴェーダの祭文に加えて、より直截的な表現を含むヤジュルヴェーダの祭文が導入されたこと、もうひとつは、「師が入門者の手へ水を濁ぐ」という儀式行為がグリヒヤストラト段階で入門儀礼に導入されたことである。入門者の手に水を濁ぐ儀式行為はグリヒヤストラトより前には遙かに、独自の祭文をもたない。多くのグリヒヤストラトでは、手に水を濁ぐ行為と手を握る行為は一連の動作として行われ、そこでヤジュルヴェーダ由来の手を握る祭文が組み込まれた。これらの事情が複合して、グリヒヤストラトの入門式では、「手」に関わる祭文として、アタルヴァヴェーダ初出のものとヤジュルヴェーダ由来のものの二種がやや重複する形で用いられることとなった。