

# Some Aspects of the Ritual Development in the Gṛhyasūtras

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The Hinduistic ritual ceremonies are for the first time fully described in the supplementary texts to the Gṛhyasūtras. But the Vaikhānasa and Āgniveśya-Gṛhyasūtra already contain some of those post-vedic rituals. It means that the post-vedic ritualism already started in the corpus of the Gṛhyasūtras, in other words, that within the various Gṛhyasūtras some ritual development occurred which led to the beginning of the new era of the Hinduistic ritualism. In this paper I try to find some aspects of the ritual development which can be seen by comparing the contents of the various domestic ritual texts. The whole of the *gṛhya* rites is mainly divided into three groups: 1. ceremonies which accompany the circle of the human life, but which exclude the rites performed for the dead and the ancestors, 2. ceremonies which are performed in the course of a year, and 3. various rites which are not included in the first two groups. Of the ancestral rites, the *aṣṭakās* which belong to the second group of the *gṛhya* rites, at first held the prominent position, but they are pushed back by the monthly *śrāddha*, and at the same time of this change the monthly *śrāddha* or the ancestral rites in general gained in importance, and entered into the circle of the ceremonies of the human life. The annual circle of the ceremonies gradually lost its clear outline, and instead of it the monthly and the daily circle of the ritualistic duties came to the fore. The contents of the third group of the domestic rites also suffered from the changing, and religious rites of the Hinduistic character appeared, either being added to or replacing the tradi-

tional ones. From this group came forth the *prāyaścitta* of the deficiency in the performance of the *gṛhya* rites. These aspects of the ritual development culminated in the composition of the long *prāyaścitta* section of the Vaikhānasa-Gṛhyasūtra, chapter six and seven, and the Āgniveśya-Gṛhyasūtra which, even retaining traditional elements, can be seen as the texts belong to the new, post-vedic era.