

the Hotris whose duties principally are treated at every Soma sacrifice are left out. So the ceremony of choosing the sacrificial priests (*ritvig-varaṇam*) by the sacrificer, including the Hotars, is left out, as Sâyaṇa has already observed. But every *Hâutra-prayoga*, i. e. practical hand-book for the Hotri-priests (for each sacrifice there are separate *prayogas* for each set of priests required), commences with it; the topic is generally treated in the Sûtras belonging to the Yajurveda; the principal mantras required at that occasion are to be found in the first chapter of the Tândya Brâhmaṇam of the Sâmaveda. The dialogue used at this occasion is interesting, and throws some light on the nature and character of some sacrifices; therefore I give here some account of it.

The person who wishes to perform the Agnishtoma sacrifice, for instance, sends a delegate called *Somapravâka* to all S'rotriyas (sacrificial priests) whose services he wishes to engage for his forthcoming Soma sacrifice, to ask whether they would be willing to officiate at this occasion. The dialogue between the Somapravâka and the Hotar is as follows: S. "There will be a Soma sacrifice of such and such one; you are respectfully requested to act as Hotar at it." H. "What sacrifice is it?" S. "The *Jyotishtoma-Agnishtoma-Soma* sacrifice." H. "What priests (*ritvijah*) will officiate?" S. "Vishṇu, Mitra,<sup>4</sup>" &c. H. "What is the reward for the priests?" S. "One hundred and twelve cows."

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<sup>4</sup> The priests represent the gods.