

24.

(When and how the priests break their silence on the tenth day.)

All touch now the branch of an Udumbara tree (which is at the sacrificial compound behind the seat of the Udgâtar) with their hands, thinking, "I touch food and juice;" for the Udumbara tree represents juice⁷ and food. At the time that the gods distributed (for the earth) food and juice, the Udumbara tree grew up; therefore it brings forth every year three times ripe fruits. If they take the Udumbara branches in their hands, they then take food and juice. They suppress speech, for the sacrifice is speech; in suppressing the sacrifice (by abstaining from it) they suppress the day; for the day is the heaven-world, and (consequently) they subdue the heaven-world. No speech is allowed during the day; if they would speak during the day, they would hand over the day to the enemy; if they would speak during the night, they would hand over the night to the enemy. Only at the time when the sun has half set, they should speak; for then they leave but this much space (as is between the conjunction of day and night) to the enemy. Or they should speak (only) after the sun has completely set. By doing so, they make their enemy and adversary share in the darkness. Walking round the Ahavaniya fire, they then speak; for the Ahavaniya fire is the sacrifice, and the heaven-world; for by means of the sacrifice, which is the gate of the heaven-world, they go to the heaven-world. By the words, "if we have failed, by omission, or improper application, or by excess, of

⁷ The sap of the Udumbara tree is to be understood. It grew out of the food scattered by the gods on the earth.—*Sây.* compare 7, 32.