

it. When it had been taken asunder (cut into pieces) by them, it was found not to be sufficient (to satisfy their appetite). The gods said: this sacrifice after having been taken asunder, will certainly not be sufficient for us. Well, let us dress (and fill up) this sacrifice. After having dressed it, they said to the As'vins, cure this sacrifice; for the As'vins are the two physicians of the gods, they are the two Adhvar-

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gods. It is a preparatory rite, just as the Dîkshâ, and is intended for providing the sacrificer with a heavenly body, with which alone he is permitted to enter the residence of the gods. That the gods do not receive mortals at their residence when arriving in their very bodies, one may learn from the amusing story of the king *Tris'anku* as reported in the *Râmâyana* (1, 57-60). For the performance of this important ceremony extensive preparations are to be made by the Adhvaryu and his assistant, the Pratiprasthâtar. All the vessels and implements required are brought to the spot and placed at the left side of the *Gârhapatya* fire. The chief implements are: an earthen vessel of a peculiar form, called *Mahâvîra* or *gharma* (i. e. heat, or heated substance, for it is to be heated), a seat (*âsandî*) to sit on, two wooden pieces for lifting the *Mahâvîra* pot (called *s'apha*), two shovels for charcoal (*dhrishṭi*), one very large wooden spoon (*Upayamanî*) from which the sacrificer drinks milk (this forms part of the ceremony), three fans (*dhavitra*), six shavings from the *Udumbara* tree as fuel, thirteen sticks, to be laid round the *Mahâvîra* vessel (*paridhi*), two metal blades, one of gold and one of silver (called *suvarṇarajatâu rukmâu*). A cow and a female sheep are to be kept in readiness. Two bunches of kus'a grass are prepared, and tied in the midst. They are called *Veda*, and resemble very much the *Baresma* (Barsom) of the Parsis, which is also tied together by means of a reed (*aiwyâonhanem*).

The *Mahâvîra* is first put on the Vedi. Then the Adhvaryu makes a circle of clay, in which afterwards the *Mahâvîra* is put. This ring is called *khara*, i. e. ass, for earth is always carried on the back of donkeys to the sacrificial compound. After the priests have repeated the mantras required for propitiation (*s'ânti*) *namo vâche*, &c. the *Mahâvîra* is taken from the Vedi and placed in that earthen ring (*khara*). Wooden sticks are put around it along with burning coals, and also fire is put in the *khara* just below the *Mahâvîra*, in order to make it hot. The fire is blown by three little fans which serve as bellows. The silver blade is put below, the gold blade above the *Mahâvîra*. Whilst the empty vessel is being heated, the Hotar repeats the first series of mantras, called the *pûrva pâṭala*. After the vessel has been made quite hot, it is lifted up by means of the two *S'aphas*. The cow then is called,