

Abhisheka, *Punarabhisheka*, and *Maháabhisheka*. The principal part of all these ceremonies consists in the sprinkling of holy water over the head of the kings, which is called *abhisheka*. It corresponds to the ceremony of anointing the kings with the Jews. It is of particular interest to observe that the Brahmans at this occasion did not allow the king to drink the proper Soma juice, but that he had to drink instead of it, a beverage prepared from the roots and leaves of several trees. The enjoyment of the Soma juice was a privilege reserved by the Brahmans to themselves alone. The king was, properly speaking, even not entitled to bring a sacrifice at all. It was only for the sake of the most extravagant gifts which the shrewd Brahmans extorted from kings for their offices, that they allowed him to bring a sacrifice. But before he could do so, he was to be made first a Brahman himself; at the conclusion of the ceremony he had, however, to resign his Brahmanship, and return to his former caste.

The last chapter of the *Brâhmaṇam* is taken up with the appointment by the king of a duly qualified Brahman to the office of a house-priest, who is called *purohita*, i. e. president, superintendent. The word, as well as the office, must be very ancient; for we find it not only in the *Saṁhitâ* of the *Rigveda*, but even in the *Zend-Avesta*. It is, as to etymology, the same word as *paradhâta*,⁷ which is generally

⁷ The word *purohita* is composed of *purâs* before, and *hita* placed (from the root *dhâ*); so *paradhâta* also; *para* is the Zend form of *purâ* before, which is equivalent to *purâs*, and *dhâta* is the Zend participle of the root *dhâ*.