

Cātur-māsyā, 'four-monthly,' denotes the festival of the Vedic ritual held at the beginning of the three seasons of four months each, into which the Vedic year was artificially divided.¹ It is clear that the sacrifices commenced with the beginning of each season,² and it is certain that the first of them, the Vaiśvadeva, coincided with the Phālgunī full moon,³ the second, the Varuṇa-praghāśas, with the Āśādhī full moon,⁴ and the third, the Sāka-medha, with the Kārttikī full moon.⁵ There were, however, two alternative datings: the festivals could also be held in the Caitrī, the Śrāvaṇī, and Āgrahāyaṇī (Mārgaśīrṣī) full moons,⁶ or in the Vaiśākhi, Bhādrapadī, and Pauṣī full moons.⁷ Neither of the later datings is found in a Brāhmaṇa text, but each may well have been known early, since the Taittirīya Saṃhitā⁸ and the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa⁹ both recognize the full moon in the month Caitra as an alternative to the full moon in the month Phālguna, for the beginning of the year.

Jacobi considers that the commencement of the year with the full moon in the asterism Phalgunī, which is supported by other evidence,¹⁰ indicates that the year at one time began with the winter solstice with the moon in Phalgunī, corresponding to the summer solstice when the sun was in Phalgunī. These astronomical conditions, he believes, existed in the time of the Rīgveda,¹¹ and prevailed in the fourth millennium B.C. The alternative

¹ Taittirīya Saṃhitā, i. 6, 5, 3; Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, i. 4, 9, 5; ii. 2, 2; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, i. 6, 3, 36; ii. 5, 2, 48; 6, 4, 1; v. 2, 3, 10; xiii. 2, 5, 2; Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa, v. 1, etc.

² Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, i. 6, 3, 36 (cf. xiv. 1, 1, 28); Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa, v. 1.

³ In the month Phālguna, or February-March.

⁴ In the month Āśādhā, or June-July.

⁵ That is, in the month Kārttika, when the moon is in the asterism Kṛttikā: Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, ii. 6, 3, 13; Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa, v. 1, etc.

⁶ Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, iii. 13, 1; 14, 1, 2; 15, 1. These are the full-

moon days in the months Caitra (March-April), Śrāvaṇa (July-August), and Mārgaśīrṣa (November-December) respectively.

⁷ Deva's Paddhati on Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, pp. 430, 450, 497. These are the full-moon days in the months Vaiśākha (April-May), Bhādrapada (August-September), and Pauṣa (December-January) respectively.

⁸ vii. 4, 8, 1, 2.

⁹ v. 9, 8, 11.

¹⁰ Indian Antiquary, 23, 156 et seq.; Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 49, 223 et seq.; 50, 72-81.

¹¹ vii. 103, 9; x. 85, 13. Cf. Festgruss an Rudolf von Roth, 68 et seq.