

Economy and Composition of Complex Rituals: *Upanayana* and *Samāvartana* as Part of Nuptial Ceremonies*

1 Economizing complex rituals

Many Hindus—like the majority of people worldwide—have to cope with time constraints and/or financial pressure when planning the rituals prescribed by their respective traditions. Among other factors, the inflexibility of many jobs and the long distances relatives live apart nowadays demand strategies to economize these rituals.¹ Thus, while many Hindus theoretically adhere to the course of *saṃskāras* prescribed by classical traditions, in practice this elaborate cycle is often abbreviated. However, modifications of rituals may also be caused by new theological doctrines and the decline of older ones.²

The ritual systems of classical Indian traditions provide many possibilities for compositionally correct changes as their rituals are constructed according to certain “grammatical” rules.³ The rites characteristic of, e.g., initiation or marriage are framed by certain ceremonies which need to be carried out for every ritual in the same or a very similar way.⁴ In order to economize the elaborate cycle of *saṃskāras* prescribed by classical traditions the special rites of more than one life-cycle ritual may be embedded into a single paradigm. This appears to be a “grammatically” correct modification.

A second rule which can be tentatively deduced from the data given below regards the interim between two life-cycle rituals: If a ritual starts with (almost) the same sequence of rites or ritual elements as the one performed before ends with, the whole sequence has to be performed only once if the two rituals are carried out in direct succession. This modification does not violate the ritual “grammar” because an interim

* In the article at hand, Sanskrit words which might be used in Hindi and Pahari are transcribed according to Sanskrit conventions; unless they are given in continuous Hindi text.

1 On the economy of religion see Gladigow (1995).

2 An example for a theological doctrine which continues to have an effect on the ritual practice, is the *āśrama* system (see pp. 52–3).

3 The idea that ritual actions function analogous to language and that the composition of rituals follows a kind of “grammar” has been put forward rather early (for references see Michaels 2007). Methods for the sequencing of rituals—an integral part of a “grammar” of rituals—have been put forward by Gladigow (2004). The “grammar” of the classical marriage ritual is the subject of my dissertation *Rites and Ritemes of the Classical Marriage Ritual and the Rules of their Combination – A Contribution to a ‘Grammar’ of the Grhya-Rituals* (Göttingen) which is part of the project *The Composition of Grhya-Rituals* (Göttingen, see <http://www.indologie.uni-goettingen.de/cms/index.php?id=28>).

4 On the frame or paradigm of classical rituals see p. 50, Caland ([KauśS] 1900: vi–viii), Gonda (1980: 345–57), Harting ([BaudhGPS] 1922: xxx) and Kane (1974: 207ff.).

between two rituals (or rites) appears to be elided on the level of composition when the last sequence of the first ritual is repeated at the beginning of the second ritual which may be performed months or years after the first one.

Both these rules are applied in order to economize the cycle of *saṃskāras* prescribed by classical traditions.⁵ In the article at hand it shall be shown in which way *upanayana* and *samāvartana* are, by these rules, shortened and incorporated into the marriage ritual in the Kangra valley.⁶ The compositional preconditions of these *saṃskāras* and the influence of the *āśrama*-system on their modification shall also be discussed. As it remains uncertain whether *samāvartana*, in the Kangra valley, has usually been performed at an occasion distinct from marriage, in the second part of the paper some Gr̥hyasūtras are discussed which allow conclusions about the classical concept of the connection of *samāvartana* and marriage. These texts basically provide two compositional types. Either the two rituals are connected by the “grammatical” figure of repetition or they actually overlap each other (see §3).

2 Initiation and the bridegroom’s paraphernalia in the Kangra valley

According to classical formulations of the *āśrama* system, boys have to be ritually born a second time through the performance of *upanayana* and thereby enter *brahmacarya*, the first stage of life (*āśrama*) during which the Veda is to be studied. Only when this aim is accomplished and a young man has taken the absolving bath and has returned home (*samāvartana*) he is allowed to marry and thereby become a householder (*gr̥hastha*).⁷

Among the upper castes of the Kangra valley initiation remains important—if not in itself, then at least as an indispensable precondition for marriage. Therefore, it will not

5 A third possibility to economize the classical *saṃskāras* is the shortening of these rituals by leaving out some of their rites or ritual elements. This strategy is applied frequently as in almost every *saṃskāra* some of the rites prescribed by ritual handbooks are not carried out (see p. 51). The omission of certain rites also follows particular rules which have to be deduced for the specific cases. A fourth strategy to cut down ritual costs is to carry out the *saṃskāras* for a group instead of an individual. This practice will not be treated in the article at hand but has been reported by other scholars. Thus, e.g., among some castes of Mandi (Himachal Pradesh), initiation is usually performed for a group of brothers or for all the boys of a household at the same time (see Hesse 1996: 219). In this case the *saṃskāra* can still be carried out as discrete ritual in full or abbreviated form. The major disadvantage is that the boys might be of rather different age when their initiation takes place.

6 In 2006 I carried out fieldwork in the Kangra valley (Himachal Pradesh) which provided part of the data basis for my master thesis *The Composition of the Classical Marriage Ritual* (Göttingen 2008). Here I would like to take the opportunity to thank Prof. Dr. Thomas Oberlies for his valuable advise, Dr. Brigitte Luchesi (Bremen) who introduced me to the Kangra valley, as well as Didi Contractor and Sarla Korla who not only accommodated me during my fieldwork but also supported me in the organisation of many of my undertakings in Himachal Pradesh. Further I am thankful to the *German National Academic Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes)* and the *Ernst Waldschmidt Foundation* (Göttingen) who made my fieldwork possible financially.

7 On the classical formulations of the *āśrama* system see Olivelle (1993: 131ff.) and cf. p. 52–4.

be abandoned (completely). However, today *upanayana* is carried out well in advance of marriage only for few boys at the age of eight to twelve. In particular, these might be sons of traditionally oriented families of (very) high status and/or rather wealthy families. For most young men *upanayana*, *samāvartana* and marriage are usually combined, thus, in a sense, forming a single ritual entity. This custom has already been reported for the nineteen-twenties⁸ and is common at least since the nineteen-seventies (see Campbell 1976: 64–5 and 74–7). The combination of *upanayana*, *vedārambha*, *samāvartana*, and marriage is widespread in other areas as well, though groups oriented towards *śāstrik* tradition often try to prevent such abbreviations.⁹

The *paddhati Saṃskārapañcaka*¹⁰ (SP) which is currently used by the majority of the Kangra valley's pandits treats five different life-cycle rituals. It comprises tonsure (*cūdākarāṇa* or *muṇḍana*), piercing of the ears (*karṇavedha*), initiation (*upanayana* or *janeo*), the ritually marked start of the Veda studies (*vedārambha*), and the student's bath (*samāvartana* or *snāna*) which is taken after the completion of the Veda studies. While *cūdākarāṇa* and *karṇavedha* may be performed on a single day,¹¹ *upanayana*, *vedārambha*, and *samāvartana* are clearly conceptualized as discrete rituals to be carried out on distinct occasions and framed by certain unvarying ceremonies (see p. 50).

Among the Gaddis, one of the so called “scheduled tribes” of Himachal Pradesh, initiation has been a prelude or even part of marriage at least from the beginning of the twentieth century. The apparently earliest report about Gaddi initiation is given by *Chamba District Gazetteer* (Punjab Gov. 1910: 141–2) where it is already depicted as a regular part of marriage. Furthermore, for the Gaddis, there is—as far as I can see—no document that would prove *upanayana* having been performed usually as a discrete ritual at an occasion distinct from marriage. Reporting from a village of the lower Hima-

8 *Kangra District Gazetteer* (1926: 136) reports that among “the wealthy classes the thread is usually assumed at the age of 10, but among the poor, *upanayana* or investiture is often deferred until marriage”.

9 In the nineteen-thirties the Khatri of Mandi argued vehemently against the local custom to perform *upanayana*, *vedārambha*, and *samāvartana* in a very shortened manner just prior to marriage (see Hesse 1996: 219). Freed & Freed (1980: 443) report the same custom for “Shanti Nagar”, a village near Delhi. Here especially elderly Brahman men stated that such abbreviations are not in accord with tradition. They were of the opinion that the performance of *upanayana* is proper only at an age much earlier than marriage.

10 The *paddhatīs* prevalent in the Kangra valley are generally in accordance with PGS and some pandits explicitly trace local customs to this late Vedic compendium. But the ritual traditions of Kangra cannot be assumed to be continuous since Vedic times. Rather it appears that a revitalization of Vedic rituals has taken place at some point of time, probably towards the end of the long period of British colonialism. The handbook SP was published in the middle of the second half of the twentieth century. Anyhow, it is modelled after an older *paddhati* which was composed in the forties.

11 For the case that *cūdākarāṇa* and *karṇavedha* are performed on the same day the *paddhati* prescribes an alternative *saṃkalpa* (see SP 3, n. 1: *yadi ukt^a donō saṃskār sāth hi karne ho to is prakār saṃkalp^a kare...*). In view of the handbook the combination of *cūdākarāṇa* and *karṇavedha* appears to be the regular case (see p. 50).



Plate 1: Manoj Kumar, dressed as an ascetic smeared with ashes and wearing a yellow *dhotī* and turban during his initiation (Siddhbari, May 2006).

layas of western Uttar Pradesh Berreman (1972: 130) has made the case that the initiation ceremony is “evidently of relatively recent origin in the hills, adopted along with Sanskritic marriage forms in an effort toward plains emulation or Sanskritization”. This interpretation is probably also correct for the Gaddis.

One of the marriage rituals I attended during my fieldwork in Himachal Pradesh was Manoj Kumar’s whose family defines itself as “Gaddi Brahman”. The young man’s *upanayana* took place amid the nuptial ceremonies. The rites of Manoj’s initiation and marriage alike displayed rites and ritual elements characteristic to Gaddi as well as Brahman traditions. When the smearing with turmeric paste (*buṭnā*) and the *sand* ceremony which comprises *nāndīmukhaśrāddha*, installation of the fire (*agni-sthāpana*), *śāntihavana*, tying of wristbands (*kaṅganabandhana*), and application of oil on the young man’s head (*tel* ceremony) were completed, Manoj was dressed as a regular ascetic (see plate 1). The priest (pandit or [*kula*] *purohita*) and the barber (*nāī*) smeared him with ashes and made him wear a yellow *dhotī* and turban. Then Manoj’s lower back was covered with an animal’s (traditionally an antelope’s) skin and a black woollen girdle (*mekhalā*) was wound around his upper body. After earrings of flour had been attached to his ears, he eventually picked up a bow and an arrow. Around the latter the “sacred thread” (*yajñopavīta*) was tied. Now the pandit instructed Manoj in the proper conduct of a *brahmacārin* while both men were standing. Afterwards the young man went to the courtyard to ritually beg alms from his female relatives. At the outer limits of the courtyard his mother’s brother showed the four cardinal directions and Manoj symbolically shot an arrow. This “journey” was repeated three times.¹² Now,

12 The specific modes of repeating discrete sequences in a ritual were dealt with in a lecture given by Prof. Dr. Thomas Oberlies and Anne Keßler in June 2006 in Heidelberg (see URL: <http://www.indologie.uni-goettingen.de/cms/index.php?id=28>). For repetition as a figure of ritual “grammar” see also Gladigow (2004: 74).

back in the room where the *sand* ceremony took place, the young man was given the *yajñopavīta* (untied from the arrow) by his *purohita*. Manoj had to hold the thread with both thumbs high above his head and was made to recite the following two mantras word by word:

*om yajñopavītaṃ paramaṃ pavitraṃ prajāpater yat sahajaṃ purastāt |
āyusyaṃ agryaṃ pratimuñca śubhraṃ yajñopavītaṃ balam astu tejaḥ ||* (SP 22)¹³

om yajñopavītaṃ asi yajñasya tvopavītenopa nahyāmi || (SP 23)¹⁴

Afterwards each of the relatives gave the young man a *yajñopavīta* and a mark on his forehead (*tilaka*). Hereafter his teacher, the *kula purohita*, taught him the *sāvitrī*, i.e. the stanza which contains the whole Veda in condensed form. During this rite both of them were covered by a blanket. Now, having completed the rites specific to *upanayana*, the “finishing oblation” (*pūrṇāhuti*) and the fire’s dismissal (*agnivisarjana*) were performed.

After a short period of *brahmacarya*, Manoj was equipped as a bridegroom. The young man’s hair was cut, his beard shaved and sitting on a small stool in the courtyard he was bathed by his mother with lukewarm water.¹⁵ When the *birdhi* or *vṛddhi* ceremony¹⁶ and the *mallīpatana* ceremony¹⁷ had been carried out, Manoj was dressed with great splendour. His equipment included an upper and a lower garment (i.e. a western-style suit), a second *yajñopavīta*, a sash, knife, turban and crown.¹⁸

Thus equipped the bridegroom and his party set out in procession (*barāt*) for the bride’s house. After arrival, the young man was respectfully received by his prospective father-in-law with the *argha* ceremony. Hereafter the actual marriage rites were commenced.

13 See PGS (2.2.10 [ed. Speyer 1872: 22]) and BaudhGS (2.5.7).

14 See PGS (2.2.10 [ed. Speyer 1872: 22]) and ŚGS (2.2.3).

15 These rites are central elements of the *godāna* ceremony (see SSU 82) which—according to classical view already—are performed as part of *samāvartana* as well (see Hillebrandt 1897: 61).

16 Seven *suhāgins*, i.e. married women whose husbands are alive, and an unmarried girl (*kanyā*) acquire water from the groom’s maternal uncle (*māmā*) who stations himself for this purpose under the archway (*torāṇa*). These women as well as the girl, one after another, pour water over the feet of the bridegroom who is seated on a small stool in the courtyard. When the whole process has been repeated three times, they put the small bowls, with which the water was carried, headfirst on the young man’s feet. This ceremony is prescribed by SSU (2–3) and SP (55); cf. also Campbell (1976: 77–8) and Conzelmann (1996: 275–6).

17 *Mallīpatana* is closely related to the *birdhi* ceremony (see n. 16). While the bridegroom stands on the small stool in the courtyard the barber puts a tiny pot (*mallī*) with embers in front of the groom and a female relative adds mustard seeds. She then touches feet, shoulders and head of the young man three times with smoke from the *mallī*. Having put some *darbha* grass behind the bridegroom’s left ear she leads him to the shrine inside the house while pouring out water from a pitcher (*kumbha*). The bridegroom follows her after he has overturned the *mallī* with his left foot. This ceremony is prescribed by SSU (3) and SP (55).

18 According to the *paddhati* (SU 9) the brother’s wife (*bhrātrpatnī*) should now put collyrium around the groom’s eyes and the latter should look into a mirror. However, these rites were not performed during Manoj’s marriage ritual.

2.1 *Upanayana* – the bridegroom’s admission to marriage

Upanayana is prescribed by the *paddhati* as a discrete ritual and has been performed as such in former times (see §2). Contrary to this, the abbreviated initiation described above appears to be, at least at first sight, a mere rite of the marriage ritual which is the main motive for the festivities. However, many ceremonies serve as preparation for *upanayana* as much as for marriage—an interpretation which is not only etic but is consciously recognized by the people involved. All auspicious *saṃskāras* should start with the ceremonies prescribed by *Śāntipaddhati* (ŚP).¹⁹ These are *nāṇḁīmukha-* or *ābhyudayikaśrāddha*, giving of *tilaka*, tying of wristbands, sipping of water (*ācamana*), *gaṅgāpūjā*, purification (*pavitṛikaraṇa*), banishment of ghosts (*bhūtāpasaraṇa*), *prthivīpūjā*, ritual decision (*saṃkalpa*), singing of *svastivācana*, and *pūjās* to different gods, goddesses and other deified phenomena. These are, among others, Gaṇeśa, the specific family deity (*kuladevatā*), the Nine Planets (Navagraha), Sixteen Mātṛkās, the syllable *om*, the Seven Vasudhārās, Seven Ṛsis, and the Sixtyfour Yoginīs. These ceremonies constitute the first part of the ritual frame which is completed by the installation of the fire and the performance of *śāntihavana* and the *tel* ceremony²⁰.

In the case of *upanayana*, *vedārambha*, and *samāvartana* the characteristic actions of the particular *saṃskāra* are performed subsequent to the named ceremonies, and the ritual is closed with *pūrṇāhuti*, the application of ashes on the forehead (*bhasmadhāraṇa*), the untying of the wristbands (*kaṅganamocana*), and the fire’s dismissal. For *cūḁākarāṇa* and *karṇavedha*, two *saṃskāras* which are to be performed on a single day (see p. 47), the *paddhati* prescribes the performance of the regular ritual frame only once. *Pūrṇāhuti* is offered at the completion of *karṇavedha* only and not when *cūḁākarāṇa* is finished. Consequently for *karṇavedha* the first part of the ritual frame is not performed (see SP 13). In the case of marriage, the ritual frame has to be partly doubled due to the change of location from the groom’s to the bride’s house (and back again). Hence, after arrival at the bride’s place, *tilaka*, *ācamana* and all the *pūjās* mentioned above are performed again before the rites constitutive for marriage are carried out. The whole ritual is then completed by a final oblation, *bhasmadhāraṇa*, and the fire’s dismissal. Finally, the wristbands are untied in a separate ceremony back in the bridegroom’s house.

19 The rites prescribed by ŚP provide a frame for many discrete rituals. SP (3), e.g., is explicit on this point in its prescription for *cūḁākarāṇa*: *śānti paddhati mē likhit vidhān ke anusār tilak, kaṅkaṇ bandhan, ācamanam, gaṅgāpūjan, pavitrīkaraṇ, bhūtāpasāraṇ, prthivīpūjan karākar saṃkalp^a pātr^a mē til ḁālkar trikuśā lekar saṃkalp^a karāve*.

20 *Tel* is conceived as “special offering” (*viśeṣa homa*) of the *sand* ceremony which comprises *nāṇḁīmukhaśrāddha*, *śāntihavana*, and the tying of wristbands. ŚP (72) makes explicit that the *tel* ceremony is part of every *saṃskāra*: *yadyapi sab śubh kāryō mē yahī śānti vidhān haī, tathāpi cūḁākarmādi saṃskārō mē nimn^a viśeṣtā hotī hai | barhirhom ke anantar kaṅkaṇ 3, 5, 7 muñj^amālā yajñ^amālā 3, tail, toraṇ inkī pratiṣṭhā kare | paścāt purohit pratham kuṃvārī kanyā ko kaṅkaṇ bāndhe, phir jiskā saṃskār ho use tathā puhāiyō ko kaṅkaṇ bāndhe | anantar muñj^amālā kā sparś^a karte hue sab log bālak tathā kanyā śīr par sthāpan karē | ... phir bālak athavā kanyā var ke śīr par tel ḁalvāve*.

At least in the ritual described above (see §2), the priest consciously made the bridegroom offer *pūrṇāhuti* subsequent to the rites specific to *upanayana* and not before.²¹ When performed this way, initiation is not a mere rite of marriage but a full ritual in itself. It does not differ substantially from initiation performed as a discrete ritual at an occasion distinct from marriage. Rather the effects of *nāndīmukhaśrāddha*, *śāntihavana* and *tel*, i.e. the first part of the ritual frame performed previous to *upanayana*, are used for the nuptial ceremonies, too. Due to the continued effects of these ceremonies they need to be carried out only one time for initiation and marriage.

The economic advantages of combining rituals in this way are manifold: relatives can attend *upanayana* and marriage at one instead of two occasions and thus have to be accommodated and entertained only once. The community feast (*bhojana*) that invariably accompanies bigger rituals and the giving of gifts (*bartan*) are held only once. The “gift” or ritual fee (*dakṣiṇā*) for the ritual experts also needs to be given just one time. Additionally the rather elaborate ceremonies of *nāndīmukhaśrāddha*, *śāntihavana* and *tel* have to be performed only once, too.

In order to further economize the process of initiation some of the rites characteristic to *upanayana* as taught by the *paddhati* were left out.²² The filling of the pupil’s hands with water (SP 23), showing the sun (*sūryadarśana*, SP 24), and touching the place of the student’s heart (*hṛdayasparśa*, SP 24) were not performed. Even the asking for the name of the young man was left out (*praśnottara*, SP 24), as were the different *homas*, and the touching of limbs (*aṅgasparśa*, SP 34).

From comparison with other rituals I attended it appears that on the one hand those rites which concern only student and teacher are susceptible to omission, particularly in comparison to those which include relatives and friends, i.e., for example, the begging of alms and the giving of the *yajñopavīta* by relatives. On the other hand those elements common to initiation and marriage will rather be performed in marriage and elided in initiation. This concerns, among other rites, *sūryadarśana*, *hṛdayasparśa*, and *aṅgasparśa*.

An incident, which I learned about only a few days after one of the marriage rituals I attended, concerned the elaboration of the single rites. Some guests were displeased because the pandit—apparently because of my presence—performed more rites or the regular rites in a more elaborate way than he usually would though the *dakṣiṇā* did not exceed the regular amount. This incident shows that the social prestige earned from the performance of rituals does not only depend on the dowry given, the number of people attending the festivities, or the richness of dresses but also on the elaboration of ritual actions.

21 This structure is similar to the one prescribed by the *paddhati* for *cūḍākarāṇa* and *kārṇavedha* when they are performed on a single day (see p. 50 and SP 13).

22 Anyhow, the omission of certain rites prescribed by ritual handbooks can be conceptualized in another way: the *paddhati* might prescribe rites which have never been (usually) performed in the Kangra valley. This might also be true for whole rituals, like *vedārambha* and, to a certain extent, *samāvartana* (see §2.2).

2.2 From *brahmacārin* to bridegroom

When Manoj's initiation was completed, the young man, a *brahmacārin* at that time, was equipped with the dress typical for a bridegroom. The ritually marked start of the Veda studies (*vedārambha*) which is described as a discrete *saṃskāra* in the *paddhati* (SP 39–47) was not performed²³ and *samāvantana* only to some extent. It was certainly not carried out as a self-contained ritual but neither left out completely. This is because *samāvantana*, as it is prescribed by the ritual handbook,²⁴ is equivalent to the bridegroom's bath and accoutrement. It comprises almost the same rites, a similar equipment is required and—with few exceptions—the same mantras are to be uttered.²⁵

Campbell (1976: 65) unambiguously conceptualized the bridegroom's final bath and dressing as a condensed form of *samāvantana*, a *saṃskāra* which, he reports, is carried out immediately before marriage. However, it is questionable whether *samāvantana* as a discrete ritual has ever been part of the Kangra valley's traditions. It rather appears to be a matter of textual representation that the ceremonies are mentioned in the ritual handbook for *samāvantana* as well as in the one for marriage. The authors of these handbooks might have intended this practice to become customary. This is all the more likely as *Saṃskārapañcaka*, unlike the *paddhati* for marriage, does not mention an *argha* reception for the *snātaka* (lit. "one who has taken the bath") which is, according to Vedic tradition, a central part of the *samāvantana* ritual.²⁶

It appears that the rites constituting *samāvantana* are not usually performed at an occasion different from marriage but traditionally have been part of the nuptial ceremonies only. The reason for this *identity* of *samāvantana* and the bridegroom's bath and accoutrement is not to be searched in economic advantage alone. The necessity to belong to an *āśrama* at all times (cf. Campbell 1976: 65) might also be a reason for this

23 *Vedārambha* was also not performed in the Seventies (see Campbell 1976: 64–5).

24 According to the *paddhati* (SP 47–62) *samāvantana* comprises—apart from the ceremonies belonging to the ritual frame (see p. 50)—bath, different sacrifices, *aṅgasparśa*, respectful salutation (*abhivādana*) of the teacher, besprinkling (*abhiṣeka*) of a waterpot, untying of the *mekhalā* and other items peculiar to a *brahmacārin*, *butnā* ceremony, *birdhi* (see n. 16), and *mallīpaṭana* (see n. 17), application of sandal paste, and accoutrement with a second *yajñopavīta*, an upper and a lower garment, knife, sash, flower garland (*puṣpamālā*), and headdress. When the *snātaka* has looked at himself in a mirror, he is also given a parasol, shoes, stick of bamboo (*veṇudaṇḍa*), and turban. Thus equipped he shall symbolically set out to study. Some local customs (*deśācāra*) are also mentioned, but chariot drive and *argha* are not.

25 See SP (47–62) for *samāvantana* and SSU (2–11) for the bridegroom's bath and equipment. Though some of the pieces of clothing are named differently in the two handbooks, the mantras to be uttered are almost identical. The headdress, for example, is called *ṭopī* ("headdress") by SP and *mukūṭa* ("crown") by SSU. Anyhow, both are tied to the young man's head with the same mantras. These are the ones already prescribed by PGS (2.6.20.21 and 24) for *samāvantana*.

26 In the Kangra valley an *argha* is performed in the bride's house when the marriage ritual proper has already started. *Aṅgasparśa* which is prescribed for *samāvantana* (SP 52), also is a regular and actually performed part of marriage (SSU 51).

custom. From the proscription of being *anāśramin*²⁷ it follows that no time gap is allowed between *samāvartana* and the beginning of marriage. If this proscription is followed, *samāvartana* and marriage either have to be performed in direct succession²⁸—in this case *samāvartana* is equivalent to the bridegroom's bath, equipment, and respectful reception—or, if there is a considerable gap between the two rituals, this time span must be ritually elided.²⁹ One possibility to elide such a gap is to repeat all or some of the rites of *samāvartana* at the beginning of marriage in order to tie in with *samāvartana*. Such a compositional figure might be particularly important for (contemporary) traditions according to which *samāvartana* is carried out together with *upanayana*, well in advance of marriage.³⁰ In this particular case *brahmacarya* lasts only for a short period of time, from *upanayana* until *samāvartana*. The time of being *anāśramin*, on the other hand, would be rather long and, if the interim was not compositionally elided in one or another way, the boy would remain between the *āśramas* possibly for a couple of years until he gets married.

27 The status of those outside the *āśrama* scheme has been controversial since long. Already the *Brahmasūtra* (3.4.36–39, cf. Mādhava's *Pārāśaramādhavīya* 1.533), which was probably composed in the early centuries of the common era, contains a discussion on whether such people could attain the liberating knowledge of Brahman (see Olivelle 1993: 222). Śaṅkara (on *Brahmasūtra* 3.4.39: *anāśramī na tiṣṭheta dinam ekam api dvijah*) forbids twice-born men being *anāśramin*. Very similar rules are found in Mbh (1.1618*: *anāśramī na tiṣṭheta kṣaṇamātram api dvijah*; cf. 13.24.7), SkP (4.36.35), BḍP (2.50.7), and *Dakṣasmṛti* (1.6–9: *svīkaroti yadā vedaṃ cared vedavratāni ca | brahmacārī bhavet tāvad ūrdhvaṃ snāto bhaved grhī || dvividho brahmacārī tu smṛtaḥ śāstre manīṣibhiḥ | upakurvānakas tv ādya dvitīyo naiṣṭhikaḥ smṛtaḥ || yo grhasthāśramam āsthāya brahmacārī bhavet punaḥ | na yatir na vanasthaś ca sa sarvāśramavivarjitaḥ || anāśramī na tiṣṭhet tu kṣaṇam ekam api dvijah | āśrameṇa vinā tiṣṭhan prāyaścittīyate hi saḥ*).

Mbh (13.24.71) lists “those who are outside an *āśrama*” among people who go to hell and *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* (3.241–242 [ed. Bombay 1949]) names being *anāśramin* among the minor sins (*upapātaka*). This *Smṛti* has probably to be dated back to a period between the first century BCE and third century AD (see Kane 1930: 184). Derrett (1973: 27) even assumes that *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* will have been in existence by AD 100. As the *sūtra* in question misses in some manuscripts (see Stenzler [*Yājñavalkyasmṛti*] 1849 and Gaṇapati Śāstri [*Yājñavalkyasmṛti*] 1922–24) it might be an interpolation of later origin.

From GaP (1.227.19 and 2.44.3), KūP (2.21.36), and BḍP (2.15.39) it is clear that the state of being *anāśramin* was socially objectionable or even precarious. For further references on *anāśramin* see Olivelle (1993: 220–2) and EDS (pp. 2419–20).

28 Pandey (1949: 254), though without citing any references, states that in “mediaeval times it came to be advocated that the *Samāvartana* should be performed when the marriage of the youth was already settled. So it takes place one day before marriage, possibly with the *Haridrā* ceremony”.

29 Campbell (1976: 65) states for the Kangra valley that “a very particular sort of time is involved between the *snan* [*scil.* *samāvartana*] and the completion of the marriage—such that the person is at no time [*scil.*] normal time) without an *asrama*”. Later in his book (*ibid.*: 104) he explains that the *sacred* time dominating during the ritual actions is not affected by the *profane* time which prevails in the intervals between the rites. This interpretation concerns the gap between *samāvartana* and marriage. However, while Campbell's explanation is based on the opposition of *sacred* and *profane* time, the interpretation given in the article at hand is concerned with the composition or “grammar” of complex rituals.

30 The performance of *upanayana* and *samāvartana* together, at an early age, has been reported, e.g., by Kane (1974: 415), Pandey (1949: 255), and Tachikawa (2001: 135).

The “grammatical” figure of repetition by which the interim between rituals is elided—at least on the compositional level—is already found in some Gṛhyasūtras’ prescriptions for *samāvartana* and marriage. These rules will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Anyway, the reasons for the use of this compositional element by some Vedic ritual texts cannot be assumed to be the same as today as most of these texts do not know the comparatively young proscription of being *anāśramin*.

3 *Snātaka* and bridegroom – the Gṛhyasūtras’ prescriptions

Almost every Gṛhyasūtra handed down to us gives instructions on how to perform *samāvartana*.³¹ This ritual usually comprises on the one hand bath and paraphernalia of the *snātaka* and on the other chariot drive and *argha* ceremony. If the “classical” *āśrama* scheme³² is followed, the subsequent life-cycle ritual will be the young man’s marriage. However, only the very young *Vaikhānasagṛhyasūtra* names the four life-stages. This text “does not explicitly state that a person should assume each *āśrama* successively, [but] it is clear that its author takes the classical scheme for granted” (Olivelle 1993: 146). *Āgniveśyagṛhyasūtra*, which also does not range among the most ancient Gṛhyasūtras, alludes to the classical system as well (Olivelle 1993: 145, n. 40). Yet, *Āpa-*

31 See ĀgniGS (1.3–4); ĀpGS (12–13); ĀśvGS (3.8–9); BaudhGS (2.6 [see also BaudhŚS 17.39–44 = *Baudhāyanagṛhyaparibhāṣāsūtra* 1.13]); BhāradGS (2.18–26); GGS (3.4); HGS (1.9–1.13.18); JGS (1.19); KauśS (42.12–18); KhādGS (3.1); KGS (3–4); MGS (1.2.8–21); PGS (2.6–8); ŚGS (3.1); VaikhGS (2.13–17); and VGS (9.6–21); see also *Vādhulagṛhyāgamavṛttirahasya* (5.1–144). *Samskārakaustubha* (cited by Kane 1974: 415) prescribes a very brief procedure for *samāvartana* when the *brahmacārin* is ill (see Kane 1974: 415).

According to ĀśvGS (3.8.14) *samāvartana* is performed by women as well. This Gṛhyasūtra is also otherwise the most explicit on the participation of women in Vedic rituals. Thus, e.g., *jātakarman*, *annaprāśana*, and *caula* are to be performed for girls, too, though without mantras (see ĀśvGS 1.15.10; 1.16.6; 1.17.19). Kane (1974: 293–6) has collected some passages concerning the topic of performance of *upanayana* for women which some scholars interpret to be “plenty of evidence that women were initiated into Vedic study during the period of the Gṛhyasūtras (roughly the second half of the first millennium B.C.E.)” (Olivelle 1993: 184). Anyway, in spite of such passages, particularly the often cited appellation *yajñopavītīnī* (GGS 2.1.19), it remains highly controversial that women participated in the study of Vedic texts on a regular basis or usually had *upanayana* and *samāvartana* performed for them during the time when the different Gṛhyasūtras were compiled (cf. Jamison 1996: 45–8).

The development of *samāvartana* prior to the Gṛhyasūtras will not be treated in the article at hand. However, in Vedic times the Veda student was probably admitted to the *sabhā* (“Männerhaus”) by means of this ritual (see Oberlies 1998: 207–13, especially n. 289).

32 The “classical” formulation of the *āśrama* system conceptualizes the four *āśramas* as life-stages which have to be assumed successively. According to the “original” formulation, on the other hand, one had to decide after the completion of *upanayana* and Veda studies whether to stay student or to become householder, hermit or renouncer (see Olivelle 1993 and Bronkhorst 1993).

*stambagr̥hyasūtra*³³ appears to adhere to the original scheme according to which one can choose whether to stay student³⁴ or to become householder, hermit or renouncer. The other Gr̥hyasūtras do not mention the *āśrama* system, neither in its “original” nor its “classical” formulation. Thus it cannot be taken for granted that *samāvantana* is followed by marriage in every case. However, in the paper at hand only the succession of *samāvantana* and marriage will be discussed. The connection of *samāvantana* and other life-cycle rituals cannot be properly analyzed as the information given by the Gr̥hyasūtras is not sufficient to do so.³⁵

In order to clarify the relation between *samāvantana* and marriage, it shall be discussed below whether the different Gr̥hyasūtras schedule an interim between these two rituals, whether the bridegroom is (still) dressed and adorned in the way he was as a *snātaka* during the nuptial ceremonies, and whether the *argha* mentioned in the passages on *samāvantana* is received from the (prospective) father-in-law at the beginning of the nuptial ceremonies or prior to marriage from another person.

3.1 *Samāvantana* – the bridegroom’s accoutrement and *argha* (VaikhGS)

The most unambiguous text is the comparatively young *Vaikhānasagr̥hyasūtra*. This compendium presupposes the classical *āśrama* system and conceptualizes *samāvantana* as a young adult’s preparation for marriage. *Samāvantana*, as it is prescribed by *Vaikhānasa* (2.13–17), consists of shaving the Veda student’s hairs, the cleansing of his teeth and a bath with cold and hot water mixed together. The *snātaka* is then smeared with sandal paste, dressed with two new garments and a girdle, decorated with finger- and earrings and a wreath (of flowers). Having looked into a mirror he takes up a staff, puts on sandals, and takes a parasol. Hereafter the second part of the ritual starts. The *snātaka* mounts a chariot, horse or elephant, and leaves for the bride’s house. After arrival, he, i.e. the bridegroom, is respectfully received by his father-in-law with an *argha* ceremony.

Vaikhānasagr̥hyasūtra makes clear that *samāvantana* and marriage are not only to be performed in direct succession but overlap each other in the sense that during *samā-*

33 ĀpGS (12.14: *rātinā sambhāṣya yathārtham gacchati* “Having spoken with a friend he may go where he likes”) runs parallel to the formulation of ĀpDhS (2.21.5: *buddhvā karmāṇi yat kāmayeta tad ārabheta*) which Olivelle (1993: 81, n. 25) from the context interprets to denote the choice of one of the four *āśramas*.

34 Persons who (still) study the Veda should not take the absolving bath (see KGS 3.2–3; MGS 1.2.10; and VGS 6.34). According to Devapāla (*ad* KGS 3.2) these are *naiṣṭhika* who remain *brahmacārīn* until their death.

35 The rituals for becoming hermits and renunciators are only treated by ĀgniGS (2.7.11) and *VaikhDhS* (9.1–4) (see Olivelle 1993: 145, n. 40). As both of these compendiums follow the “classical” *āśrama* system these rituals are carried out only after the performance of *samāvantana* and marriage.

varṭana the young man is prepared for his marriage.³⁶ He is still dressed and adorned as a *snātaka* when he approaches the bride's house where he will be received with an *arḡha*. Particularly, the chariot drive and *arḡha* can be understood as part of both, *samāvarṭana* and marriage. Hence, the bride needs to be chosen and wooed before the performance of *samāvarṭana* or at least before the chariot drive.³⁷

3.2 *Alaṃkaraṇa* – an abbreviation of *samāvarṭana* (MGS and VGS)

Two closely related compendiums, *Mānava-* and *Vārāhagr̥hyasūtra*, do not know (or do not mention) the *āśrama* system. They present a different model for the interim between and connection of *samāvarṭana* and the bridegroom's preparation for marriage. In their view *samāvarṭana* comprises an *arḡha* and the equipment with new garments and other items characteristic to a *snātaka*. Having completed *samāvarṭana* the young man searches a bride for himself (MGS 1.7.3; VGS 10.1), woos her (MGS 1.7.4; VGS 10.3) and—if he is successful—the girl will be given to him by her father (MGS 1.7.11–1.8.11; VGS 10.11–18).³⁸ After the bridegroom has arrived at the bride's house to perform the marriage ritual and after he has become the son-in-law, he is received by his father-in-law with an *arḡha*, the *snātaka*'s second one.³⁹ At least on the textual level this respectful reception is followed by *alaṃkaraṇa* (MGS 1.9.24–27, VGS 12.1–3) which marks the beginning of the nuptial ceremonies.

In his translation of *Mānavagr̥hyasūtra* Dresden ([MGS] 1941: 38–39) assumes that *alaṃkaraṇa* was performed for the bride only (cf. Gonda 1939: 106 [266]). Rolland ([VGS], 1971: 117), on the other hand, interprets the equivalent ceremony taught by *Vārāhagr̥hyasūtra* to be carried out for the bridegroom only. Yet, from neither of the two texts it is clear whether *alaṃkaraṇa* concerns the bride, the groom, or both of them. The fact that those mantras are to be uttered, which are taught by *Pāraskaragr̥hyasūtra* (2.6.18–20) for the *samāvarṭana* ritual, makes it likely that *alaṃkaraṇa* is performed

36 Pandey (1949: 255, 260) repeatedly laments that in his days *samāvarṭana* ceased to be a discrete ritual as it was incorporated into the marriage ritual. Anyway, from VaikhGS it appears that at least the direct succession of *samāvarṭana* and marriage has a rather long tradition.

37 The passage which treats the choosing of a suitable bride does not explicitly state at which point of time the wooing has to be carried out. Hence, it also remains unclear at what time the five days of fasting have to be absolved (see VaikhGS 3.2: 36, 17–18: *kanyāṃ varayitvā pañcāheṣu kulasya pariśuddhyai sapīṇḍaiḥ śrotriyaiḥ saha bhūtaṃ bhuñjīta*).

38 Neither MGS nor VGS make unmistakably clear whether the bridegroom himself or a wooer (usually his father) acts as representative of the groom's side in the rites of wooing and receiving of the bride—an ambiguity which is probably intended.

39 MGS (1.9.1) and VGS (11.1) name, among other individuals, “persons related by marriage” (*vivāhya*) and *snātakas* as being entitled to receive an *arḡha*. As the giving of the bride is performed before the *arḡha* the bridegroom may be considered to already be a *vivāhya*. Hence, the *samāvarṭana*'s *arḡha* is distinct from the *arḡha* received in the bride's house.

for the bridegroom only.⁴⁰ There is evidence for this interpretation in the commentary of Aṣṭāvakra (*ad* MGS), as well. Aṣṭāvakra discusses whether the bath of *samāvartana*, the *madhuparka* or the *alaṃkaraṇa* are to be carried out first.⁴¹ Also, one of the manuscripts of Gadādhara's commentary (*ad* VGS 11.1–24) teaches this rite as part of *madhuparka* (see Vīra [VGS] 1932: 34, n. 6). Furthermore *alaṃkaraṇa* is followed by *pravadanakarman*, an apparently “complementary” ceremony which is explicitly performed for the bride alone (MGS 1.9.28: *kumāryāḥ pravadane*⁴²...). In one manuscript of *Vārāhagṛhyasūtra* there is even a chapter separate from *alaṃkaraṇa* (ch. 12) assigned to *pravadanakarman* (ch. 13).

Alaṃkaraṇa is composed as a shortened version of the *samāvartana* ritual. While the latter comprises the *snātaka*'s *argha*, bath, and paraphernalia which includes the application of fragrant substances (MGS 1.2.15, see also n. 63), the former is to be carried out subsequent to the bridegroom's *argha* and comprises his decoration, *aṅganyāsa*, application of fragrant substances (*gandhotsādana*),⁴³ and dressing (MGS 1.9.24–27). *Vārāhagṛhyasūtra* (12.1–3) does not name *aṅganyāsa* but adds a sacrifice and the asking for *maṅgala*.

	<i>Samāvartana</i>		Marriage	
MGS	A	B	A*	B*
	<i>argha</i>	Bath, dressing, and decoration (including application of <i>gandha</i>)	Wooing and giving away of the bride	<i>argha</i> <i>alaṃkaraṇa</i> : Decoration, <i>aṅganyāsa</i> , application of <i>gandha</i> , dressing
VGS	A	B	A*	B*
	<i>argha</i>	Bath, dressing, and decoration	Wooing and giving away of the bride	<i>argha</i> <i>alaṃkaraṇa</i> : Decoration, application of <i>gandha</i> , dressing, sacrifices, <i>maṅgala</i>

40 As it remains highly questionable whether women participated in *upanayana*, Vedic studies, and *samāvartana* (see n. 31), the prescription of the mantras taught by PGS for *samāvartana* is here interpreted to point to the performance of *alaṃkaraṇa* for the bridegroom only. Nevertheless it is possible that *alaṃkaraṇa* was carried out for groom and bride in a parallel manner (cf. §3.3 on BaudhGS 1.1.24).

41 Aṣṭāvakra (*ad* MGS 1.9.26): *kecid utsādanam pūrvam icchanti teṣām alaṃkaraṇenāpi ūrdhvaṃ syāt | anyas tu gandhācchādane gandho vijñeyaḥ | ācchādanaṃ ca paridhānam ata evāha ahataṃ vāsaḥ paridhatta iti | ...tasya snānāt pūrvam kecin madhuparkaprāśane kṛte dāne 'dhikāraḥ paridhāsyety anena paridhatte | ekavacanam atantraṃ tena dve vāsasī bhavathaḥ*.

42 *Pramadana* is apparently the same word as *pravadana* (VGS 12.1) (cf. Dresden [MGS] 1941: 40) and denotes a specific rite, a “*karmaviśeṣa*” (see VWC: 1718 n. c).

43 For *aṅganyāsa* and *gandhotsādana* cf. PGS (2.6.18–19) on *samāvartana*: *utsādyā punaḥ snātvānu-lepanam nāsikayor mukhasya copagṛhṇīte prāṇāpānau me tarpaya cakṣur me tarpaya śrotraṃ me tarpayeti || pitarāḥ śundhadhvam iti pāṇyor avanejana dakṣiṇāniṣicyānulipya japet | sucakṣā aham akṣībhyāṃ bhūyāsam suvarcā mukhena | suśrut karṇābhyāṃ bhūyāsam iti*.

In the model presented in *Mānava-* and *Vārāhagr̥hyasūtra samāvantana* and marriage do not overlap. The wooing is clearly scheduled after the completion of *samāvantana*. The period “between” these rituals is compositionally elided by the performance of *alaṃkaraṇa*, a rite which repeats central parts of *samāvantana* at the time of marriage—apparently to tie in with the former ritual. Through this “grammatical” figure the temporal gap between the two ceremonies is closed.

3.3 Nuptial “*samāvantana*” (BaudhŚS / BaudhGS)

A similar connection of *samāvantana* and *alaṃkaraṇa* is displayed by the tradition of Baudhāyana. Here the ritual of *samāvantana* is taught in the Śrautasūtra (17.39–44) and comprises, next to the bath and the *snātaka*’s paraphernalia, a chariot drive and an *argha* which is to be offered to the young man by his teacher.

From *Baudhāyanagr̥hyasūtra* (2.6.19–21) it is clear that there is a temporal gap between *samāvantana* and marriage. It is stated that the *snātaka* has to offer the daily sacrifices up to his marriage with ghee instead of cooked food.⁴⁴ In the section concerning marriage it is then taught that the groom should take a bath, put on new garments, apply perfumes, put a garland, and eat (i.e. break his fast). All these rites should be performed just prior to the nuptial ceremonies, while he is still in his own house(s).⁴⁵ Afterwards he proceeds to the bride’s house and is received by the bride’s relatives with the *argha* ceremony.⁴⁶

As these rites again bear clear resemblance to the ones known from *samāvantana* the same interpretations apply which have been given above for *Mānava-* and *Vārāhagr̥hyasūtra*. The temporal gap between *samāvantana* and marriage is elided by the repetition of rites similar to the ones of *samāvantana*. At the time of marriage, bath, equipment, procession and *argha* are performed a second time. The *snātaka*’s respectively the bridegroom’s procession is not mentioned in *Mānava-* or *Vārāhagr̥hyasūtra* but Baudhāyana names both of them. The Śrautasūtra (17.43) says that the *snātaka* should mount a chariot (*ratha*). Similarly, the *Gr̥hyasūtra* (1.1.24: p. 3, 8) mentions that the groom should travel to the bride’s house by a mode different from going by foot (*apadātir gatvā*).⁴⁷

44 See BaudhGS (2.6.19–21): *samāvantana*prabhṛtyājyena vyāhṛtibhir hūyata ā pāṇigrahaṇāt || pāṇigrahaṇaprabhṛti vr̥hibhir yavair vā hastenaite āhutīr juhōti agnaye svāhā prajāpataye svāhā iti sāyam | sūryāya svāhā prajāpataye svāhā prātar api || Cf. Smith (1986: 82) on this passage.

45 These rites are also performed for the bride (see p. 17).

46 As the *argha* is performed during both rituals, *samāvantana* and marriage, BaudhGS (1.2.65–66) explicitly mentions *snātaka* and bridegroom as lawful recipients of an *argha*.

47 On the bridegroom’s mode of travel see also VaikhGS (2.15: p. 33, l. 8–9), but cf. ĀgniGS (1.6.1: p. 35, l. 2: °svastyayanah padātir vadhūgr̥ham gatvā which probably has to be emended to °svastyayano ‘padātir). Similarly, the *snātaka* moves by chariot, horse, or elephant (see, e.g., HGS 1.12.1).

	<i>Samāvartana</i>				Marriage		
BaudhŚS/ BaudhGS	B	C	A		B*	C*	A*
	Shaving, bath, application of <i>gandha</i> , dressing, decoration, and second bath	Chariot drive	<i>argha</i>	Daily sacri- fices with <i>ājya</i>	Bath, dressing, application of <i>gandha</i> , putting of a <i>sraja</i> , and eating	Groom's procession	<i>argha</i>

3.4 *Maṅgala* ceremony (ŚGS and ĀgniGS)

The prescriptions of *Śāṅkhāyana*- and *Āgniveśyagr̥hyasūtra* for the bridegroom's paraphernalia comprise some words which possibly denote an abbreviated "*samāvartana*" similar to the ceremonies taught by Mānava, Vārāha, and Baudhāyana (see §3.2 and 3.3).

Śāṅkhāyanagr̥hyasūtra (1.12.1) teaches that the bridegroom has taken a bath and that auspicious ceremonies have been performed for him (*kṛtamaṅgala*) before he arrives at the bride's house. From the preceding text it is clear that these words do not denote the rules for *samāvartana* because in the night of marriage or up to two nights prior to marriage⁴⁸ *indrāṇīkarman* or at least parts of this rite have to be performed not only for the bride but for the groom as well (see ŚGS 1.11.6–7).

Āgniveśyagr̥hyasūtra (1.6.1) uses a wording similar to *Śāṅkhāyana*. According to this text, the bridegroom wears a wristband (*baddhakautuka*⁴⁹), and auspicious ceremonies are performed along with *svastyayana*⁵⁰ (*kṛtamaṅgalasvastyayana*) before he leaves for the bride's house.

It is neither clear for *Śāṅkhāyana* nor for *Āgniveśya* which actions are denoted by *maṅgala*. Anyhow, the wording finds a parallel in the *alaṃkaraṇa* ceremony of *Vārāhagr̥hyasūtra* which is completed by the bridegroom's asking for *maṅgala* (see VGS 12.3: *maṅgalāny āśāset*).⁵¹

48 See ŚGS (1.11.1): *athaitāṃ rātrīm śvas tṛtīyāṃ vā kanyāṃ vakṣyantīti tasyāṃ rātryām atīte niśā-kāle*.

49 For the *kautuka* ceremony see ĀgniGS (2.3.5: pp. 58, l. 9–59, l. 18).

50 Gonda (1989: 177) defines "auspicious progress" as the basic meaning of *svastyayana*. This meaning is particularly clear in passages which are concerned with some kind of movement like journeys. Therefore *svastyayana* might denote the bridegroom's procession as an "auspicious progress". But the expression might also indicate a mantra or another verbal expression which facilitates such an "auspicious progress" (see Gonda 1989: 180).

51 Cf. also Mbh (1.190.9): *kṛtābhiṣekāḥ kṛtamaṅgalakriyāḥ*. However, by KGS (17.2) and *Harivaṃśa* (87.32) girls for whom the *maṅgala* ceremony has been performed are mentioned in connection with *Indrāṇī*. This points to a connection to *indrāṇīkarman* (ŚGS 1.11).

3.5 The other Gr̥hyasūtras' view

The other Gr̥hyasūtras handed down to us are far less explicit about the connection of *samāvartana* and marriage. However, there certainly is a close relation (but not necessarily a direct temporal succession) of the Veda student's absolving ceremony and marriage. *Gobhilaḥgr̥hyasūtra* (2.1.1–2) teaches in its passage on *samāvartana* that the *snātaka* should take a wife after his bath, and in its passage on marriage again states that a young man should marry after he has studied the Veda (*vedam adhītya*, GGS 3.4.1). According to Khādīra (1.3.2) he should take a wife after having absolved the [*samāvartana*]-bath (*āplavana*).⁵² The close relation between *samāvartana* and marriage is also alluded to by Jaiminīya (1.20: p. 19, 10–11: *snātvā ... jāyāṃ vindeta*), Āgniveśya (1.6.1: p. 34, 9: *samāvr̥tte bhāryām upayaccheta*) and Hiraṇyakeśi (1.19.1: *samāvr̥tta ... bhāryām upayacchet*). However from these passages it is not clear what happens in the period between *samāvartana* and the reception of the bridegroom at the bride's house.

Most of the Gr̥hyasūtras do not prescribe in which way the young man is to be dressed and adorned for the marriage ritual.⁵³ Contrariwise the bride's dressing is mentioned by many of these handbooks.⁵⁴ This arrangement points to the model known from Vaikhāṇasa (see §3.1). The young man might be dressed and adorned at the occasion of *samāvartana* and remain this way until after the marriage ceremony.

The majority of the Gr̥hyasūtras opt for the *snātaka* going "somewhere else" to be welcomed with the *argha* ceremony (see Heesterman 1968: 439). This wording includes the possibility that only one *argha* has to be performed for *samāvartana* and marriage. If the *snātaka* sets out for the bride's house right after his bath, he will receive the *argha* from his prospective father-in-law.⁵⁵ Thereby the *samāvartana* is completed and the nuptial ceremonies commenced. Hence, in this case, *samāvartana* and marriage overlap each other. Contrariwise *Baudhāyanaśrautasūtra* (17.43–44), *Jaiminīya-* (1.19: p. 18, 12ff.), *Gobhila-* (3.4.30 and 34) and *Khādīragr̥hyasūtra* (3.1.32) assign the task of respectful reception at the teacher's door. Thus, according to these texts, the *snātaka* is here first received by his teacher with an *argha*. After a certain period of time, when his marriage has been settled, he is again received with that ceremony in the bride's house.

52 However, the commentary on this *sūtra* discusses whether the bath of *samāvartana* or the one of marriage has to be taken first. This reveals that, at least according to the commentary, the young man, before marriage, has to absolve two ceremonies comprising a (very similar) bath.

53 Only the Gr̥hyasūtras discussed above (*viz.* BaudhGS, MGS, and VGS) mention the groom's equipment for marriage (see §3.2 and 3.3).

54 The bride is usually dressed with an upper and a lower garment (see ĀpGS 4.8; BhāradGS 1.13: p. 13, 4–14; GGS 2.1.18; JGS 1.20: p. 20, 1–3; KhādGS 1.3.6; KGS 25.4; MGS 1.10.8; PGS 1.4.12–13; VGS 14.1). Some Gr̥hyasūtras also mention the girding with a string of *muñja* grass (see ĀpGS 4.8; KGS 25.4; VGS 14.2). ŚGS (1.12.3–9) gives an exceptionally detailed passage on the bride's equipment (see §3.6).

55 See Heesterman (1968: 441), Hillebrandt (1897: 79), Krick (1982: 90, n. 227) and Oberlies (2007: 144, n. 12).

The persons to be honoured with an *argha* are mostly named as teachers, priests, *snātakas*, kings, fathers-in-law (*śvaśura* or *vivāhya/vaivāhya*) and friends.⁵⁶ *Āśvalāyana-gr̥hyasūtra* (1.24.2: *snātakāyopasthitāya*) makes clear—at least if one follows the commentary⁵⁷—that the *snātaka* is to be honoured when he approaches for marriage. This view is further substantiated by *Kauśikasūtra* (92.32) which does not name the *snātaka* but the bridegroom as lawful recipient of an *argha* reception (see Oberlies 2007: 143, n. 8). But even when *snātaka* and bridegroom are mentioned as persons to be honoured with an *argha* (see BaudhGS 1.2.65; ĀgniGS 2.6.6), this does not mean that the first *argha* (which is part of the *samāvartana* ritual) cannot be received from the prospective father-in-law. The title of a bath-graduate might attach to an individual not merely between the conclusion of studentship and his marriage but also after marriage (see Olivelle 2003: 500 [ad ĀpDhS 1.30.4]).

Many ritual Sūtras teach the *argha*⁵⁸ in the context of *samāvartana* where, most often, it is performed during the second half of this ritual.⁵⁹ Significantly the *argha* is instead explained in the context of marriage by *Baudhāyana-* (1.2), *Kāṭhaka-* (ch. 24), *Mānava-* (1.9.1–23), and *Vārāhagṛhyasūtra* (ch. 11). Except for *Kāṭhagṛhyasūtra* these texts are the ones most explicit on the difference between the *snātaka*'s and the bridegroom's paraphernalia.

3.6 The bride's bath and paraphernalia

Baudhāyanagṛhyasūtra (1.1.24) prescribes bath and equipment at the beginning of the marriage ritual not only for the groom (see §3.3) but, in absolutely parallel manner, for the bride, too. For her an abbreviated "*samāvartana*" is performed as well. It comprises bath, dressing with new garments, application of perfumes, wearing of a garland, and eating of food.⁶⁰

While *Śāṅkhāyanagṛhyasūtra* only indicates about the bridegroom that he has taken a bath and auspicious ceremonies were performed for him (see §3.4), the text holds greater indepth information for the bride's paraphernalia. These are given to her at the beginning of the marriage ritual (see ŚGS 1.12). Subsequent to *indrāṇīkarman* the young woman is given the marital dress by the bridegroom, her eyes are anointed with

56 See GGS (4.10.24), KhādGS (4.4.24), KGS (24.1), PGS (1.3.1), MGS (1.9.1), ŚGS (1.15.4–9), and VGS (11.1). Anyhow, ĀgniGS (2.6.6: p. 101, 8–9) and BaudhGS (1.2.65–66) name both, the *snātaka* and the bridegroom, as recipient of the *argha* (see Oberlies 2007: 143–4).

57 Nārāyaṇa (ad ĀśvGS 1.24.2): *upasthitāyeti | kṛtasamāvartanāya | tasmin nahani gr̥hān abhyāgatāya vivāhārthine ca*.

58 On the *argha* ceremony in the Gṛhyasūtras see Oberlies (2007: 143–5).

59 JGS (1.19), HGS (1.12.5–1.13.18), and, VaikhGS (2.15–16: pp. 33, 9–34, 8) teach the *argha* as part of *samāvartana*; BhāradGS (2.23–26) and ĀpGS (ch. 13) directly after *samāvartana*; and ŚGS (2.15 [2.16–17]) before this ritual.

60 See BaudhGS (1.1.24): *snāto 'hatavaso gandhānuliptas sragvī bhuktavān pratodapāṇir apadātir gatvā vadhūjñātibhir atithivad arcitas snātām ahatavasasām gandhānuliptām sragviṇīm bhuktavātīm iṣuhastām dattām vadhūm samikṣate...*

collyrium, and she receives a mirror, a wristband (*pratisara*), and *madhūka* flowers which are bound around her body. All these rites are accompanied by *ṛc*-stanzas and resemble remarkable similarity with the rites typical for *samāvartana*.

Some other rites performed for the bride before marriage, namely *pravadanakarman* (MGS 1.9.24–27, VGS 12.1–3), *jñātikarman* (GGS 2.1.10–11, cf. Rudraskanda [ad KhādGS 1.3.4]), *indrāṇīkarman* (ŚGS 1.11), and the elaborate ceremonies performed for the bride according to *Kāṭhakaḡrhyasūtra*⁶¹ (ch. 17–22) will not be discussed here as, on the main lines, they belong to a realm different from *samāvartana* and its abbreviations.⁶²

4 Résumé

Krick (1982: 5) has mentioned in her dissertation that *samāvartana* should *ideally* be performed at the time of marriage. This prescription is explicitly given by *Vaikhānasaḡrhyasūtra* (see §3.1) and might be correct for other *Ḡrhyasūtras* as well (see §3.5). The young man resorts to the bride's house immediately after his absolving bath and equipment as a *snātaka*. Hence he does not need to dress a second time for marriage and receives the *argha* not from his teacher but from his father-in-law. In this case *samāvartana* is a discrete ritual but serves as a prelude of marriage as well. However, other traditions, namely Mānava, Vārāha, Baudhāyana, Āgniveśya, and Śāṅkhāyana, are rather explicit on the point that *samāvartana* is to be performed well in advance of marriage (see §3.2–3.4). From the rules that these ritual texts give for *samāvartana* and the bridegroom's preparation for marriage respectively, it follows that the latter is an abbreviation of the former. According to these texts *samāvartana* is carried out at an occasion distinct from marriage and comprises bath, paraphernalia and *argha*.

From a compositional point of view the result is the same in both cases: there is no gap between *samāvartana* and marriage. While in the former case the two rituals actually overlap, in the latter the time span between them is elided by the “grammatical” figure of repetition. An abbreviated form of *samāvartana* is performed at the beginning of the nuptial ceremonies.

61 But the fact that according to *Kāṭhakaḡrhyasūtra* (17.1) the bride shall be adorned while the priest recites the mantras of *godāna* (*gaudānikair mantrair*) might point to a connection of this rite with the *samāvartana* as the *godāna* ceremony is often used as a rite of the *samāvartana*, too (cf. n. 15).

62 A full index of discrete sequences of the marriage ritual will be one of the results of my dissertation (see n. 3). However, the sequences in question have already been dealt with in my master thesis which will be published soon.

Between *samāvartana* and marriage the *snātaka* appears to be separated⁶³ by status elevation⁶⁴ which is a particular mode of liminality. He is decorated in an eye-catching manner and only now wears ointment and garland in public.⁶⁵ He has the appearance of a king (see Heesterman 1968: 440) but in a sense even ranges above him. A king has to salute a *snātaka* with respect.⁶⁶ The *snātaka* is also said to be a “great being” (see ĀśvGS 3.9.6) and instead of cooked food he uses ghee for his daily sacrifices (see BaudhGS 2.6.19–21) which is regarded as purest of all substances.

Possible reasons for the *snātaka*’s liminality are—depending on tradition and its respective concept of life—the standing between two life-stages, or the decision which life-style one wants to adhere to. No matter which concept of life the different Grhya-sūtras promote, the time following *samāvartana* denotes a or even is the turning point in a young adult’s life.⁶⁷

The ritual traditions of the Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh are based on *Pāras-karagr̥hyasūtra* (see n. 10) but with regard to the combination of *samāvartana* and marriage they *structurally* follow the model of *Vaikhānasagr̥hyasūtra*. *Samāvartana* is equivalent to the bridegroom’s absolving bath and equipment and as such becomes a prelude or part of the nuptial ceremonies. By this way of performance a violation of the proscription of being *anāśramin* (a concept not known to the Grhyasūtras) is avoided as the young man turns from student to householder without interim.

By the incorporation of another *saṃskāra*, namely *upanayana*, into the marriage ritual—a practice common in the Kangra valley and other regions of India as well—the duration of the life-stage of *brahmacarya* is considerably shortened. This loss is accepted because the social circumstances today do not usually allow an extended period of Veda studies anyway. In opposition to the amalgamation of *samāvartana* and the nuptial ceremonies, the incorporation of *upanayana* into the marriage ritual is a rather recent strategy to economize the cycle of *saṃskāras* prescribed by classical traditions.

63 The groom’s and bride’s seclusion in the period before marriage is well known from many contemporary traditions. Usually, this process is commenced by the ritual application of turmeric paste which is repeated for some days. The prescriptions of some Grhyasūtras for *samāvartana* and the bridegroom’s (and bride’s [see §3.6]) paraphernalia point to a liminality similar to the status of an adult just before marriage in today’s traditions. Thus, the repetition of an abbreviated form of *samāvartana* might be an influence on today’s *buṭnā* or *haridrā* ceremonies which aid to pass a particularly liminal phase, too. Especially *utsādana*, a part of *alaṃkaraṇa* as prescribed by MGS (1.9.26: *atha gandhotsādane vāsasī*), points to this relation, see also Aṣṭāvakra on this *sūtra* (*gandhaś candanādi | utsādanam udvarttam pakvatailādīnā*).

64 Similarly the bridal couple is marked by status-elevation during the liminal phases of marriage. In Himachal Pradesh they are identified with Viṣṇu and Śrī or Śiva and Parvatī (see Luchesi 1999). Deification of bride and bridegroom, as it can be reconstructed from the *sūryāsūkta* (RV 10.85), will be discussed by Keßler-Persaud (forthc.).

65 See Kane 1974: 413, ĀpDhS 1.32.5, MDhŚ 4.72, GautDhS 9.32, and VāsDhS 12.39 as well as Mbh 2.19.38–40.

66 See MDhŚ 2.138–139; GautDhS 6.25; VāsDhS 13.59.

67 In the “original” formulation the time following *samāvartana* was “the critical time of a young adult’s life when he had to make a decision regarding how he would live his adult life by choosing one of the four *āśramas*” (Olivelle 1993: 131).

Nevertheless, due to the specific way of incorporation into the nuptial ceremonies, *upanayana* remains a self-contained ritual. Its special rites are embedded into the ritual frame(s) which serve(s) for marriage as well as *upanayana*.

Two rules for a “compositionally correct” possibility to economize the classical life-cycle rituals can be tentatively deduced from the material given above: 1.) The special rites of more than one life-cycle ritual can be embedded into a single ritual frame and thus, in a sense, performed as one ritual, and 2.), as the interim between two rituals is elided when the last sequence of the first ritual is repeated at the beginning of the second, the sequence needs to be performed only once if the rituals are carried out in direct succession. Thus, the same goal can be reached by different ways of performance both of which are “grammatically” correct.

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Añjana (eye-salve), or any substance which is applied to the eyes, plays an important role in a number of initiation rites such as the *dīkṣā* (consecration), preceding the Soma sacrifice (*agnicayana*), and the *saṃskāra* (rites), the ceremony marking the end of student-ship. Eye-salve is used also in other rites described in the Veda and post-Vedic ritual texts. In this paper I first analyze the usage of *añjana* in the *dīkṣā* of the Soma sacrifice, and then discuss its use in the *saṃskāra*. I also touch briefly on examples of its use in other ritual texts, and attempt to show its ritual importance, as well as some changes in conception concerning this small element of ancient Indian ritual.

*Añjana in the dīkṣā of the agnicayana*¹

During the *dīkṣā*, the sacrificer has his beard and his armpits shaved and his hair cut, and after taking a bath, puts on new garments. He eats what he likes, anoints his body, applies eye-salve and is ritually purified by means of eleven bundles of *darbha* stalks. The following description of how the eye-salve is applied to the eyes in the *dīkṣā* is based on prescriptions given in the Brāhmaṇas and the Śrautasūtras:

The *añjana* is ground and kept in the lower grind-stone *śaṭkūṭa* (BaudhSS). The *añjana* used here comes from Mount Trīśakabha (*trīśakabhā*) (MS and ManSS) or Trīśakud (*trīśakada*) (SB, BhrSS, ApSS, VākSS, KāySS). If this special *añjana* is not available, any other salve can be used (SB, BhrSS, ApSS, VākSS, KāySS). The salve is applied with what is called simply a 'stalk' (*śāṭka* (MS), *śāṭā* (KS)), though the SB specializes it as a 'reed-stalk' (*śāṭakā*); most of the later texts follow it (ManSS, BaudhSS, BhrSS, ApSS, VākSS, KāySS). A stalk of *darbha* grass (*darbhayukā*) (ManSS, BhrSS, ApSS) or a bunch of *darbha* stalks (*darbhapūṣṭikā*) (BhrSS, ApSS,

1. *Añjana* is treated in the following Brāhmaṇas: MS 3.6.3 (p. 61, 18–19), MS 3.6.3 (p. 62, 5–13), KS 23.1 (p. 73, 8–18), TS 6.1.1.5–6, AB 1.5.6–7, SB 3.1.3.10–17, and in the following Śrautasūtras: ManSS 2.1.1.38–39, BaudhSS 6.2 (p. 158, 3–7), BhrSS 10.4.10–13, ApSS 10.2.1–4, BṛSS 7.1.39 (p. 588, 3–6), VākSS 12.7 (p. 137, 10–13), and KāySS 7.2.34. *Añjana* is sometimes called *trīśakubha*, because it originated in the Trīśakud peaks of the Himalayas, as for example in AV 4.9.9c (for the uses of this incense powder a and b in other ritual contexts, see below p. 78), AV 4.9.10, AV 19.44.6; in the *dīkṣā* SB 3.1.3.12, BhrSS 10.4.10, ApSS 10.2.1–2, VākSS 12.7 (p. 137, 10–13). In the *saṃskāra* BaudhSS 17.43 (p. 323, 7–9), BhrSS 1.3.33, BṛSS 1.1.3.47; it is also called *trīśakubha* MS 3.6.3 (p. 62, 8–10) (*śāṭakā*), ManSS 2.1.1.38 (*śāṭakā*), and ManSS 4.1.1.4 (unmarriage ceremony). KS 23.1 (p. 73, 10–11) only refers to Mount Trīśakabh. See Macdonell & Keith (1912: 55).

2. For the ritual procedure of these acts, see Caland & Henry (1906: 11–13).

