

Then the mother, having dressed the son in a clean garment, hands him, from south to north, with his face turned to the north, to the performer of the ceremony. She then passes behind his back and sits down to the north of him, on northward-pointed *Darbha* grass. He then sacrifices to Prajāpati, to the *Tithi* of the Child's birth, to the *Nakṣatra* of the child's birth, and to the presiding deity of that *Tithi* and of that *Nakṣatra*. He then murmurs the *Mantra*, "Who art thou? What art thou?, touching the sense-organs at the boy's head. In the passage of the *Mantra* : "Enter upon the month that belongs to Ahaspati (i.e., the lord of the days), N.N." After this the performer of the rite should first announce the child's name to the mother.¹⁹ Further the sacrificial fee of a cow is recommended.²⁰

Pāraskara,²¹ however, makes this ceremony very simple when it states, "On the tenth day (after the birth of the child) the father, having made (his wife) get up, and having fed the brāhmaṇas, gives a name to the child".

The Secret Name

The secret name is given to the child immediately after the birth of the child or even before when the rite for quick delivery is to be performed. As prescribed by the Gobhila Gṛhya-sūtra, the father pronounces a name in the formula : "A male will be born, such-and-such by name" ; and the name is kept secret.²² Āpastamba²³ prescribes that the father gives the name to the new-born child soon after his birth. This is a *Nakṣatra* name and is secret. The Khādira Gṛhya-sūtra²⁴ also prescribes that the secret name should be given immediately after the birth of the child. Śaṅkhāyana²⁵ prescribes the giving of the secret name by the father after feeding the new-born child with a mixture of butter, honey, milk-curd and water, or grind together rice and barley, from a golden vessel or with a golden spoon. The Hiranyakeśin Gṛhya-sūtra,²⁶ however, prescribes that on the twelfth day itself, the father should give the child two names out of which the second name should be a *Nakṣatra* name. The one name should be secret and by the other they should call him.

This means that according to Hiranyakeśin the secret name may not essentially be a *Nakṣatra* name.