

Manu and his five sons

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Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā I 5,8 tells an interesting story: Manu had ten wives. The nine among them had ten, nine, eight, seven ... and two sons respectively, the other one had the sole son. The son allied with nine brothers of one mother, the two with the eight, the three with the seven, the four with the six. The five brothers were left behind. Thus the five groups consisting of each ten brothers excluded the five brothers. The five sons sought help from father Manu. Manu taught them a curse of firewood, with which they overcame 50 other half brothers. One who, knowing this curse, puts firewood on the sacred fire, destroys his sin and rivals.

This rite is used for beating down of competitors, taking leadership among one's family and gaining protection from evil.

The family structure in this legend is quite unique. It is remarkable that the knowledge of an ingenious calculation method for adding natural numbers from 1 to 10 up is applied behind it, i.e. $10 + (9+1) + (8+2) + (7+3) + (6+4) + 5 = 10 \times 5 + 5$. The subtlety of the alliance strategy between struggling brothers can be also read here.

As is generally known, Manu is the first man, the father of the human race. Since five sons of Manu survived in this story, they are the ancestors of the all existent human beings on earth.

There is no story inherited relating to this legend in the *ÖRg-* and *Atharva-veda* nor the other *Yajurveda-Saṃhitās*. This story may be an original work of theologians of *Maitrāyaṇīya* school at that time, based on the notion of *pañca janās*, *pañca mānuṣās*, *pañca mānavās* etc. meaning "five races", "five descendants of Manu" i.e. "all human beings".