

*Devyāmata*, chapter 83: the excavation and the laying of the cords in the cardinal directions (diksūtras), translation.

83.1 Next I describe in detail the features of the excavation (khāta) of the site and the setting down of the brahmasūtra at the base of the excavation.

83.2 The excavation should be dug down to water. It should be level with, and as extensive as, the base (jagati), including the projection at the parrot beak (prāgrīva) and open hall (maṇḍapa), and not exceeding the projections from the walls (rathakas).

83.3-4 A conch, pure new shoots, a pearl, a plough, gold, silver, gems and jewels, a frog or turtle: if found in the site while the excavation is being dug, these always bring fulfillment of men's wishes. Seeing them, one should rejoice.

83.5 The excavation should be dug until water or rock is reached. One should make the excavation level and the same size as the outer edge of the construction (paridhi).

83.6 Making the ground at the bottom of the excavation flat and level all over, one should then correctly set down the cords in the cardinal directions (diksūtras) there.

83.7 One should set down the sūtra over the excavation, behind, in front of, and outside it, as far as the matsyas beyond.

83.8 Then one should fix it at the matsya centre, well extended beyond. One should examine it at length and then hang a perpendicular there.

83.7d matsyayor: A matsya is a fish-shaped figure made by the intersection of two arcs in setting up the cardinal directions.

83.9 Then, at the bottom of the excavation in the four cardinal directions, the wise man should set four equal, fine, square cardinal direction stones (dikchilā).

83.10 The perpendicular is positioned, reaching the ground, in the centre of the excavation. In the centre, [each stone] should be made level with the ground and aligned with the brahmā position.

83.11 The wise man should thus establish the cardinal direction stones (dikchilā) on the excavation floor, and then set down the cords of the cardinal directions (diksūtra) according to the perpendicular.

83.12 A cord is established in the excavation, running between the pair of matsyas. The wise man should establish a perpendicular there, at both ends.

83.13 It should be carefully set down as far as the stones (śilās). One should mark where the stone meets the perpendicular.

83.14 The chief officiant (guru) should extend the cord of the cardinal directions (diksūtra) between the two marks. Then, having stretched the cord well, he should shake it.

83.15 Thus there is an east-west cord, and a second, north-south, one. Thus should one correctly extend the cord path, between the stones.

83.16 Thus the wise man should carefully set down the pair of cords at the bottom of the excavation, and then prepare the temple.

83.9 onwards: There are four cardinal directions stones described in this chapter. In the next chapter we will be taught about the four stones in the intermediate directions.

83.14: The cord is chalked, so that, when the officiant shakes it, a chalk line is left on the ground underneath the length of the cord.

83.17 Or he who knows the *śāstras* should mark the east-west cord (sūtra, tantu) in the excavation, along the cord path, in the centre.

83.18 Having established the east and west points, he should mark them. Then a pair of fish figure intersections (matsyas) should be made, as before, in the south and north.

83.19 He should then extend the cord between the two matsyas. Making the cord reach both stones, the officiant (guru) should shake the string.

83.20 Then the intersection of the cords in the centre of the excavation is termed the Brahmathāna. From there he should prepare the building plan (vāstu).

83.21 Carefully taking a cord that is half the breadth of the temple, he should then measure out the temple along the cord path as before.

83.22 The wise man should establish the cord path at the Brahmā position and in the four cardinal directions, and mark it out, then fix the corners [of the construction].

83.23 Making the temple entirely thus well marked with cords, and equal in all directions, one should commence the installation of the stones in the intermediate directions, according to the cord path.

Chapter 83: The excavation and the features of the establishment of the cords in the cardinal directions (diksūtras).

83.22: The corners of the construction must be established at the intermediate points. See figure 2 for an illustration of how this procedure may be done.