

Devyāmata, chapter 84: the installation of the stones, translation.

84.1 Next I describe in detail the features of the installation of the stones (śilānyāsa). Now hear as the set of five [stones] at the foundation (mūlapādu) is described.

84.2 First the fine features of the stones are given in brief, and next the procedure for installing them is given.

84.3 Four excellent, fine stones or bricks (iṣṭaka) should be installed at the temple foundation (prāsādamūlapādu).

84.4 They are four cornered, even, and fine on every side. They measure one hasta [in length]. The thickness is 1/3rd the breadth.

84.5 The size and characteristics of the stones and bricks has been given. The stones or bricks are named Nandā, etc.

84.6 Know that the bricks are shaped like the stones and known as Nandā, etc. They are complete, well measured, smooth, with a good sound, and beautiful.

84.7 Auspicious, they are marked with kuśa and dūrva grass. They are patterned with a banner (dhvaja), parasol (chattra), chowrie (cāmara), hook (aṅkuśa) and arch (toraṇa). They are marked with a turtle (kūrma), fish (matsya) and plough (hala).

84.8 They have the designs of a mirror (darpaṇa), elephant (hasti) and thunderbolt (vajra). Lauded, they are marked with objects (dravya). Altogether fine, they are patterned with excellent birds, and wild (mṛga) and domestic (vṛṣa) animals.

84.1 onward: The four stones described in the preceding chapter were set in the cardinal directions. The five stones described in this chapter are placed in the intermediate directions and at the centre.

84.1c mūlapādava: I take this form as an equivalent to mūlapāda, the locative of mūlapādu, seen at 3c. The form mūlapāda is used at verse 20-22, and in DM chapter 85.

84.3a vātheṣṭakam: I considered emending to vātheṣṭakā, to give the more usual feminine form in -ā seen at 5a, but decided that the emendation was unnecessary.

84.4: PI 6.70 and MC 4.33 agree that the bricks should be 1 hasta long and 1/3 of that measure thick.

84.5c nandyādyadhiṣṭhitā: at verse 32, we learn that the four, presumably peripheral, stones are named Nandā, Bhadrā, Jayā and Pūrṇā.

Compare with MC 4.34, at which the five stones are named as: Nandā, Bhadrā, Jayā, Riktā and Pūrṇā.

84.9 Stones with a svastikā and vedikā, patterned with a nandyāvarta design, with padma, etc. designs, give all wealth and power.

84.10 Similarly, stones with cow or horse footprints are excellent and bring delight. Those with the footprints of predator or prey, are not recommended, nor [those with the footprints] of birds.

84.11 One should avoid [stones] that are poorly aligned, small, long, short, damaged, pale, cracked, broken, lacking in good qualities.

84.12 Stones that are marked with the shapes of recommended animals, and recommended materials (dravya), with the good features that have been described, always bring welfare.

84.13 Thus have the stone[s] been briefly described in terms of their features. Now hear the features of the bricks in brief.

84.14 The four [bricks] are carefully measured, with good qualities, a hasta in [length]. Their thickness is 1/3rd that measure.

84.15 The Nandā, etc., bricks should have a single colour, be well-baked, well measured, fine, square, and well-made.

84.16 Nandā, etc, with all their stated good qualities, positioned in due sequence, from the southeast onwards, are always beneficial.

84.17 [Bricks] that are marked with footprints of creatures that are not recommended, have broken corners, contain bone, coal or grit, are unbaked or black, are to be avoided.

84.18 [Bricks] that have a side that is faulty or missing, or are less than a *hasta* in length, or that are cracked, broken, uneven, or small, should be carefully avoided.

84.19 Having carefully examined them, they should have the fine qualities described. The wise man who knows the śāstras installs the stone or brick.

84.20 Since the installation of the stones is the support for the foundation (*mūlapāda*), the installation of the stones for the foundation is described first.

84.21 Stones should be installed in a temple made of stone. In a temple made of brick, the installation should be of bricks.

84.22 Stone is used when the base (*pīṭha*) is stone. Brick is used when it is brick. The foundation is established, commencing with the installation of the stones, my dear,

84.23 in a bright fortnight (the fortnight of the waxing moon), at a good lunar mansion, on a good lunar day, when the sun is in its northern course, in the auspicious entry of a fixed sign of the zodiac, under a good planet, at a good *karaṇa* (half a *nakṣatra*),

84.24 at a time suited to the patron (*yajamāna*), under the beneficial *Mitra*, to the accompaniment of salutations, proclamations of an auspicious day, prayers, and the sounds of song and musical instruments.

84.25 The chief officiant (sthāpaka) is clean, bathed, learned in the śāstras, and concentrated, carrying white garlands, wise, and smeared in fine perfumes.

84.26ab Composed, his worship of the deities complete, he commences the installation of the stones.

84.26c-28b Having taken Nandā, etc., to their proper positions in the temple vāstu, and having built a square ritual base (vedī) over the excavation, with unhusked barley grains, he should establish the stones there. To rectify any error on the part of the artisans, he should first bathe [them] in the praṇava, then in astra water.

84.28c-29b Having bathed and fully purified the set of four stones, he should worship with the svanāmamantra and praṇava.

84.29c-30b Having properly worshipped, and made announcement, [the chief officiant] should set down each [stone], in its true direction, from southeast onward in due sequence.

84.30c-31 Having set them down, the chief officiant (sthāpaka) and artisans (śilpi) should examine the cord path, making it altogether level with the cord. Having done that, the wise knower of the śāstras should install the stones in the corners.

84.32 The four stones, called Nandā, Bhadrā, Jayā and Pūrṇā, should all be aligned with the cords and borders (dhāra), and always be level.

84.29c-30b: We see that the four stones are placed at the corners of the future construction, in the intermediate directions: southeast, southwest, northwest and northeast.

84.32 dhāra: I translate as border with support from dhārā at verse 34 and paridhi at verse 36.

84.33-34b [The stones], Nandā, etc., should be placed in the southeast, etc., in turn. At the installation of the first stone, the wise man should properly examine the intersection of the east-west and north-south lines in the centre of the site (lagna) and omens such as birds, etc.

84.34c-35b The stones should be well made, and aligned with the vāstu corners and the vāstu border (dhārā). They should all be thus well made and stable.

84.35c-36b It is recommended that they slope to the north and east, not to the west and south. [Stones that] have a good slope, do not shift, and are aligned with the border (paridhi) and corners [of the vāstu] are approved.

84.36c-37 Then the well focused, wise chief officiant (mantrī, sthāpaka), accompanied by the artisans (śilpi), should install each [stone] in turn, level with the borders and corners (paridhikarṇasammita), to the accompaniment of the sounds of the vedas and musical instruments, song and auspicious utterances.

84.38ab One should bathe them in astra water and then in mantra water.

84.38c-39b All the stones are beautiful, graced with a golden colour. They have every adornment. Satisfied, they smile.

84.39cd Having meditated on them as made of mantras, the chief officiant (mantrin) should take them, one by one.

84.40 Installing them by name, Nandā, etc., he should bathe them in mantra water, using pots made of gold, silver or brass, full of water.

84.34b lagnam: the lagna is the intersection of the east-west and north-south lines in the centre of the building site. See DM 82.14, and 82.19-22.

84.41 Or [the pots are] made of firm, unbaked clay, decorated with sprays of flowers. They contain gold and medicines, and are smeared with recommended perfumes.

84.42 They have the said qualities and are covered in flower garlands and sprays. Beginning in the southeast, one should bathe Nandā with mantra water.

84.43 One should bathe it properly with the praṇava accompanied with its name. In the same way, the officiant (guru) who knows the procedure should bathe Bhadrā, Jayā and Pūrṇā.

84.44-45b Then, having bathed Nandā well, one should sieve the water with a cloth. Having used its cloth, one should then fully anoint Nandā with fragrant sandal, fine perfumes and flower garlands.

84.45cd Then, having worshipped Nandā, one should use incense and complete [the procedure].

84.46 Having established the mudrā, one should offer a naivedya (food offering) of curd with meat, a full food offering. Then one should propitiate.

84.47ab One should proceed with the praṇava, the svamantra, and sambodha (full visualisation):

84.47c-49b "ūṃ, O Nandā, who gladdens mankind, I establish you here. Stay here, delighted, as long as there are moon and stars. In this temple, O Nandā, ever carefully protect the life, desires and prosperity of men."

84.49cd He who knows the procedure should do thus for Bhadrā, etc., in turn.

84.50ab One should perform the installation. The mantra[s] for [the stones] are given next.

84.50c-51b "Ūṃ, O Bhadrā, granter of happiness, you always bring prosperity to men. O goddess, may you always grant life, desires, and prosperity."

84.51c-52b "Ūṃ, O Jayā, ever gracious, stay here, established by me. O goddess, constant granter of victory, may you bring prosperity to the owner."

84.47c-53b: SŚ has similar utterances addressed to the four stones At the SŚ, a fifth stone, Riktā, is also addressed (SŚ 4.1.106, Brunner 1998:64):

oṃ rikte riktadoṣaghne siddhamuktiprade śubhe |
sarvadā sarvadeśasthe tiṣṭhāsminnīśarūpiṇī ||

84.47c-49b: See the similar utterance at SŚ 4.1.102-103, as listed in the testimonia.

84.50c-51b: See the similar utterance at SŚ 4.1.104, as listed in the testimonia.

84.51c-52b: See the similar utterance at SŚ 4.1.105, as listed in the testimonia.

84.52c-53b "Ūṃ, O Pūrṇā, whose knowledge is great, whose attributes are manifold, may you bring completion here in this temple through your blessing."

84.53cd Having thus satisfied Nandā, etc., one should worship the deity of the vāstu.

84.54 Having made an offering to the vāstu deity, one should then make a bali offering to the bhūtas. My dear, once Nandā, etc. are thus well established, one should not move them.

84.55 If they are moved, many ills [arise]. If they are well affixed, many benefits [result]. So, once they are thus established, one should not pick them up or separate them.

84.56 Having done this [procedure], one should perform the construction of the foundation (mūlacaya). One should perform it down to water level, in a village, town, house or temple.

84.57 The installation of the stones has been described. [Next] hear about the construction of the foundation (mūlapādacaya).

Chapter 84: The features of the installation of the stones

52c-53b: See the similar utterance at ŚŚ 4.1.101, as listed in the testimonia.