

*Devyāmata*, chapter 86: the laying of the cords in the cardinal directions (diksūtra) over the base (pīṭha), translation.

86.1 Next, hear the details of how the cord in the cardinal directions (diksūtra) is positioned on the base (pīṭha).

86.2-3b My dear, having made the base well shaped, level, without any gaps, and somewhat inclined to the northeast, one should then carefully ascertain the directions there, on the base.

86.3cd One may do so using the gnomon (śaṅku), as before, or by means of the two perpendiculars.

86.4 The ascertaining of the directions has been described clearly, without muddle. An account of the perpendiculars (lambana) is given next, conclusively and informatively.

86.5 A cord in the cardinal directions (diksūtra) is positioned at the fish-shaped intersections (matsya) as before. A [second] cord in the cardinal directions (diksūtra), which is aligned with [the first one and which lies] over the base (pīṭha), will now be clearly given.

86.6 O goddess, [it lies] along the jīvasūtra, as far as the matsya pair beyond. One should erect arches (toraṇa) in the cardinal directions, one hasta measure in from the matsya.

86.7 My dear, the wise man should carefully set up a pair of firm, straight upright posts (stambha) on each cord path, in each direction in turn.

86.8 He should set a distance of two hastas between the two posts. Having made the stable posts, he should form the arches (toraṇa).

1b diksūtraṃ: The cord in the cardinal direction is treated as a singular here, but in verses 25-26 below it is made clear that there is a pair of such cords: the east-west one and the north-south one.

6a jīvasūtreṇa: The two principal cords (sūtras) that are used to mark out a building plan are termed the mūlasūtras. One runs east-west through the centre; the other runs north-south through the centre: DM 81.17. Jīvasūtra is the term given to each half of each mūlasūtra, running to the centre of the plan from the outer edge in each cardinal direction. DM 81.17.

6-10: Here we are introduced to simple arches (toraṇas) that are placed over the path of the cords in the cardinal directions. Each arch is formed from a pair of upright posts (stambha) across the top of which lies a horizontal rod (daṇḍa). From those rods, perpendiculars will be hung, to establish correct alignment.

86.9 For the [horizontal portion at the top of each] arch (torāṇa), one should use firm, straight, wooden or cane, round rods (daṇḍa), 3 hastas long.

86.10 One should position each rod, level with the base (pīṭha) over each pair of posts. In all, there are 4 stable rods over the posts.

86.11 Then one should carefully fill the excavation (śvabhra) in the centre (garbhamadhya) with earth. Making the excavation level with the base (pīṭha), one should there install the cord in the cardinal directions (diksūtra).

86.12 The cord may be of cotton or śāla fibre. It is strong and new. Long, and well twisted, it runs between the two arches.

86.13 One should tie the cord to one arch, at the centre of the horizontal rod (daṇḍa), and then stretch it as far as the other arch.

86.14 Having carefully stretched the string out over the length of the base, one should tie it again, at the centre of the horizontal rod of the second arch.

86.15 From [the cord], over the two fish-figure intersections (matsya), one should carefully suspend (lambayet) a pair of perpendiculars (lambanadvitaya) so that they are at the centre of each fish-figure intersection.

86.16 My dear, if the knot (bandha) at the perpendicular (lambana) of the cord (sūtra) fixed at the arches (torāṇastha) between the intersections in the directions (digmatsya) is to the side (parśvasthita), one may freely shift it (svairam pracālayet).

86.16: Presumably, one adjusts the knot of the cord by sliding it along the horizontal rod until the perpendicular hits the matsya centre.

86.17 If the perpendicular is in front of or behind the intersection (matsya), one should untie the knot over the perpendicular and shift it.

86.18 My dear, when both perpendiculars are positioned over the intersection (matsya) centres, then the temple direction has been established without doubt.

86.19 Then, the cord being well stretched to each end of the base (pīṭha), one should draw (likhet) a chalk dot (khaṭikābinduka) at the cord (sūtragarbha) at the border (dhārā).

86.20 Having thus carefully established a pair of dots, one at each [edge] (ubhayoḥ), one should remove the original cord (pūrvasūtra) and position the central cord (madhyasūtra).

86.21 One should set up a strong, new, three-ply cord, rubbed with chalk, from behind the temple, reaching beyond the base (jagati).

86.22 One should extend the cord to the edge of the open hall (maṇḍapa). Stretching it well, it runs through the midpoint between the two dots.

86.23 The wise man should carefully shake the Brahma cord (Brahmasūtra), free-hand. Thereby a midline mark is made in the centre.

86.24 Then, along that path, one should carefully draw, free-hand with a sharp blade (tīkṣṇaśāstra), the auspicious scoring (śunivraṇa) of the pair of cords in the cardinal directions (diksūtra) in the centre.

86.25 Thus is the east-west cord established. One should then establish the north-south one by the same means at the pair of fish intersections (matsyadvaya) and centre.

86.26 The central pair of cords over the base (pīṭha) has been fully described. Next hear about the apportioning (bhūmibhāga) of the parts of the temple (prāsādāvayava).

Chapter 86: the features of the laying of the cords in the cardinal directions (diksūtra) over the base (pīṭha).

86.20 madhyasūtra and 23 brahmasūtra: the two terms appear to refer to the same cord, running through the centre (madhya) of the site, at the Brahmā position.

86.24b śastreṇa: The emendation from śastreṇa is made on the grounds of sense.

86.24d śunivraṇam: śuni in the sense of "auspicious" is not attested, but seems more reasonable than any connection to "dog".