

Mohacūrottara, chapter 4 verses 1-42, translation

4.1 Next I will describe in full the examination of the ground (bhūmeś caiva parigrahaṃ), the extraction of extraneous materials (śalyas), etc., and the ritual of offering bali, [for] houses and other [buildings].

4.2-5 The gods are always content by lakes that are covered with lotuses and [so] repel the rays of the sun, with pure ripples arrayed with water lilies dropped by geese, brilliant with geese, ducks, curlews and Cakravāka birds, with ripples that come to rest at shaded sand banks at the edge; on hills at sacred sites and the like; in places near a waterfall; on a river bank, by a water reservoir (taḍāga), beside a step-well or a water tank (puṣkariṇī); at a meeting of many roads; at tanks, etc.; at a fork in the road, or crossroads; and in forests and woods,

4.6 and also (tu) wherever there is ownership in a village (grāma), town (kheṭa), city (pura), etc. He (the ācārya) should first examine the ground to find one that is suitable for caste members seeking welfare.

4.7 [The soil should be] white for brahmins (vipra), red for kṣatriyas (nrpa), yellow for vaiśyas, and black for śūdras (itara). He should examine [the ground] to see if it is propitious for members of the different castes [by testing it] with lamps, digging [and] water.

4.4cd: The taḍāga and puṣkariṇī are both man-made water reservoirs, the latter smaller than the former (Sanderson 2009, footnote 677).

4.6a grāmakheṭapurādaḥ: The order in which these terms for settlements are given shifts from text to text, making it difficult to establish their relative sizes. The pura is clearly a larger settlement, a city. But the order of the grāma and kheṭa varies. See the discussion at introduction 2.5.

4.6a tu: While the gods are content in the places listed in verses 2-5, the tu indicates that it is also possible to build a temple in a settlement.

4.7b 'sitetare: The conjecture is made with support from parallel accounts that state that the soil for śūdras is black (for example, BK vy 2). Itare refers to śūdras. Antyajās would be excluded. Sanderson (personal communication 2009) points out that śūdras who are not brahmanized to the extent that they have abjured alcohol (sacchūdrāḥ) would also be excluded. See Sanderson 2009, pp.284-285, footnotes 681 and 683, for the distinction between sacchūdras and asacchūdras.

4.7cd: For an account of these tests, see the general introduction 2.2.

4.8 [Ground] that slopes to the east is recommended for kings (kṣatriyas), that sloping to the south is for vaiśyas, that sloping to the north is for twice-borns (Brahmins), and that sloping to the west is for śūdras.

4.9 Ground which slopes to the east, north or northeast is equal[ly suitable] for all [castes]. Seeded ground that germinates on the 3rd day is the best.

4.10 That which germinates on the 5th day is middling. That which germinates on the 7th day is worst. Mountain is in the south, forest in the west, grain in the north, and water in the east.

4.11-12b [Ground that is] not too soft and not [too] hard, that is good to the touch, level, dense, moist, heavy, firm, pure, with a good smell, without faults, with sweet water, not cracked, and fine-looking, is most pleasing.

4.12c-13b He should avoid ground that is seeded, salty, full of holes, contains creatures or blood, smells foul, or is spoiled by a putrid smell or the like. If he discovers that the ground is [like that], he should reject it.

4.13cd Having thus examined the piece of land, he should choose that which is without faults.

4.14 O Śakra (Indra), on a day that is associated with a good weekday, lunar day, lagna, and moon, he should thus formally adopt (parigrahet) [the ground] with exclamations of victory and a circling of the Śiva pot.

4.10c yāmye nāgo: If there is a mountain nearby it should be in the south (so that its shadow will not fall on the temple). IŚ, Kriyāpāda 23.30: prācyāṃ niṣiddho hi giris tacchayā hy udaye raveḥ. "A mountain in the east is forbidden, for its shadow [would fall on the temple] at sunrise."

4.10d harau: Hari refers to Indra, the lokapāla of the east. Sanderson makes the emendation to harau from harer, since the genitive or ablative cannot convey the required meaning.

4.14a indu: By "moon", the author, means at a time of an auspicious nakṣatra.

4.15 Having fully protected the boundary [of the site], the officiant (ācārya), accompanied by artisans (śilpi), should perform the ritual of boundary purification and then extend the cord.

4.16 [One should determine] the north by fixing the position of the pole star (dhruva), or the east according to the pole star (dhruvatārā) or by fixing the positions of Puṣya, Pauṣṇa (Revatī) and Maghā, or by means of the gnomon (śaṅku), etc.

4.17 Having thus ascertained the east-west line, he should position Brahman (Ka) midway between the two sides. Using a cord of the chosen length (the length between the east and west limits), he should obtain the north-south line.

4.18 Then, halving [the cord], he should mark the corners in the intermediate directions. Having thus made a square, he should divide it into 9 [parts along each side].

4.19 O Śacīpati (Indra), the 2 vaṃśas go from northwest to southeast and from southwest to northeast. He should make 8 rajjus. [4 of them] are 6 cells long, [4 are] 3 cells long, O Hari (Indra).

4.20 Then he should worship the deities in the vāstu with garlands, bali offerings, incense, etc. In the centre, he should worship the supporting Earth in the form of [Adhāra]Śakti.

4.21 O Śacīpati (Indra), he should then worship the vāstu and recognise Brahmā as master of 9 [cells] and Marīci, etc. as masters of 6 [cells].

4.15a surakṣitām: Sanderson points out that sutakṣitām is not plausible, whereas surakṣitām is well attested as an object of kṛ in Śaiva ritual literature, for example at *Somaśambhupaddhati*, *Damanapūjāvidhi*, v. 19ab: evaṃ surakṣitām kṛtvā śivāya nivedayet; *Netratantra* 19.194c: tasmāt surakṣitām kāryam.

4.15a sīmām: The pāda, as transmitted, yields no expressed object. Sanderson proposes that the object is concealed in the transmitted samām, a corruption of an original sīmām.

4.15b sīmāśuddhipuraḥsaram: Sanderson emends to give an adverbial bahuvrīhi. The ceremony of boundary purification is described at *Somaśambhupaddhati* 4.1.17-20: bhūmiṃ saṃsicya saṃsnāpya kuddālādyam prapūjayet | anyam vastrayugacchannaṃ kumbhaṃ skandhe dvījanmanaḥ || nidhāya gītavādyādībrahmaghoṣasamākulam | purasya pūrvasīmāntam nayed yāvad abhīpsitam || atha tatra kṣaṇam sthitvā bhrāmayet paritaḥ puram | siñcan sīmāntacihnāni yāvad īśānagocaram || arghyadānam idaṃ proktaṃ bhadrakumbhaparibhramāt | itthaṃ parigrahaṃ bhūmeḥ kurvīta tadanantaram ||

4.16 The pole star rises above the horizon in the north, Puṣya, Revatī and Maghā are three stars that rise above the horizon in the east. Using the pole star to establish a north-south line, one can then determine the east-west one by one of three methods: using the matsya method; referring to Puṣya, Revatī and Maghā; or using a gnomon.

4.17b nayet: The conjecture is suggested by Sanderson. It provides a needed verb, and replaces the problematic viyat.

4.17cd and 18ab: The north-south line, and the corners in the intermediate directions are determined by the matsya method.

4.22 O Surādhīpa (Indra), the 8 [deities] that are Āpavatsa, etc., have 2 cells each. The 32 deities beyond them, Hara, etc., have 1 cell each.

4.23 O Puraṃdara (Indra), from Brahmā to Diti, the number of deities in the vāstu body is 45.

4.24 Beyond Īśa (in the northeast) [and other intermediate directions], are Carakī, etc., and in the east and other [cardinal directions] are Skanda, etc. These are the 8 outer deities. The vāstupuruṣa is thus.

4.25 He should worship the guardians of the directions, Indra, etc., others that dwell there, and the host of demons that is there, with fine garlands, incense and bali offerings.

4.26 The vāstu is filled with all the marmans, therefore one should not cause harm [by impinging on them]. One may make an installation after shifting 1½ yavas somewhat to the northeast.

4.27ab O Śakra (Indra), when the vāstu is shifted, all the marmans are shifted.

4.27cd-28ab Know that, if the vāstudhāma (vāstumaṇḍala) of the gods is made in this way, it will bring about the success desired. Otherwise, the opposite [will result].

4.28cd-29 He who is endowed with knowledge of the state of liberation, who knows the teachings of jyotiḥśāstra, should remove pieces of extraneous matter (śalya)[from the ground] after recognizing [that they are present] through the calls of birds, or the speech of humans, or if an animal [such as a dog or jackal] crosses the cord, or by such knowledge as that of [the significance of the] scratching [of various parts of the body by the patron].

4.24a bahir īśāc: The pāda as transmitted is hypermetrical. Sanderson emends īśādi to īśāc. The expression īśāt is supported by the matching pūrvataḥ in pāda b.

4.30 He who has inner knowledge will gain fame in the extraction of extraneous materials. He should dig until he reaches water or stone. ???

4.31 He should refill the hole, with [repeated] pourings of stone [in layers] 1 hasta [deep], with intermediate [layers] of earth 8 aṅgulas [deep], until the hole is $\frac{3}{4}$ full.

4.32 He should level the ground well and apply the cord as before. Then he should install the stones. [Next I will describe] in brief their characteristics.

4.33 They are 5 in number, 4-cornered, a hasta long, and 8 aṅgulas high. Five pots are marked with lotuses and filled with jewels and honey, etc.

4.34 They are cleansed with the pañcagavya (5 products of the cow: milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung) and astringents, etc. [Now] pure, they [should be] completely wrapped about [with cloth]. [The stones] are worshipped with the names Nandā, Bhadrā, Jayā, Riktā and Pūrṇā.

4.35-36a They should have the tattvas from earth upwards installed in them [so that] they contain [all] the levels [from earth] up to buddhi. Of these, those [from earth] to the tanmātras comprise the ātmatattva, those [above those] up to manas are the vidyātattva, and ahaṃkāra and buddhi are the third [Tattva, the Śivatattva].

4.36bcd Then he should install the lords of [these three] Tattvas. When he has [then] worshipped Śiva together with the lokapālas, made oblations [to the same] in the fire, and distributed [offerings],

4.37 when the mantras have [all] been gratified and the whole path [of the tattvas] purified, he should set up the stones after first installing the pots [on which they are placed].

4.30d vā ‡ roparodhataḥ ‡: The cited parallel at *Somaśambhupaddhati* indicates that the vā in pāda d may have validity. The remainder is a puzzle.

4.38 [The pots are named] Padma (lotus), Mahāpadma (great lotus), Śaṅkha (conch), Marakata (emerald) and Samudra (ocean) as the 5th; he should purify them with nāmamantras.

4.39 Having first worshipped the vāstu, he should place the Śakti in the centre, the Samudra [pot] on it, and the Pūrṇā [stone] above that.

4.40 He should install Śakti at Brahmā, etc., as the dwelling of the Padma, etc. [pots]. Those who are resolute should place [the stones], Nandā, [Bhadrā, Jayā, and Riktā], within the walls.

4.41 In terms of height, the best base (pīṭha) is declared to be ½ the temple, the middling one is a ¼ less, and the smallest is ½ the best one.

4.42 One should set the height of the pīṭha thus, well plastered, without joins. O Śacīpati (Indra), one should place the inner chamber (garbha), wall, etc., upon it.

4.38b marakataṃ: At SŚ IV 1.32d, marakata is replaced by makaraka. In her notes, Brunner comments that some of the manuscripts available to her read marakata, but that makaraka is preferable for 2 reasons. First, it, like the other 4 items in the list has an association with water. Second, it is, like the others in the list, one of the 8 treasures of Kubera. I have left Marakata in my edition of the *Mohacūrottara*, since I feel that the name as given in the text should not be obscured. But I take to heart Brunner's arguments for Makaraka perhaps being the more probable of the two.

(SŚ IV 1.34-35 lists the set of 9 pots as follows: Subhadra, Vibhadra, Sunanda, Puṣpadanta, Jaya, Vijaya, Kumbha, Pūrva, and Uttara.)

4.40: In the centre is Śakti, with the Samudra pot on top of it and the Pūrṇā stone on top of that. In the east, the Nandā stone is on top of the Padma pot. In the south, the Bhadrā stone is on top of the Mahāpadma pot. In the west, the Jayā stone is on top of the Śaṅkha pot. In the north, the Riktā stone is on top of the Marakata pot.

4.40d suniścitaiḥ: The emendation is made with the support of the following passages. *Kubjikāmata* 5.91cd: anena kramayogena kramaḥ kāryaḥ suniścitaiḥ; 8.84ab: kṣetrasthānāni suśroṇi jñātavyāni suniścitaiḥ; Netratantra 19.212ab: anenaiva vidhānena rakṣitavyaḥ suniścitaiḥ.