



Asian Literature and Translation

ISSN 2051-5863

Vol 12, No. 1, 2025, 80–98

**Horror and Wonder in a Putrid Trench:
The *Brahmayāmala*'s “Rite of the Pit of Power”
(*siddhigarttāyāga*)**

Shaman Hatley

<https://doi.org/10.18573/alt.67>

Item accepted November 2025

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International License (CC-BY-NC-ND)

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

© Shaman Hatley



Cardiff University Press

Gwasg Prifysgol Caerdydd

Horror and Wonder in a Putrid Trench: The *Brahmayāmala*’s “Rite of the Pit of Power” (*siddhigarttāyāga*)

Shaman Hatley
University of Massachusetts Boston

Abstract

This article presents a critical edition and translation of chapter 46 of the *Brahmayāmala* or *Picumata*, entitled “Rite of the Pit” (*garttāyāga*). The *Brahmayāmala* is one of the earliest surviving goddess-oriented (i.e. Śākta) *tantras* of the Śaiva Mantramārga, positioning itself within the Vidyāpīṭha (Wisdom-Mantra Corpus) division of Bhairavatantras. Its core chapters may have been composed between 650 and 750 CE (HATLEY 2018: 137–41). Chapter 46 belongs to a cycle of chapters (46–48) that exemplify mortuary (*kāpālika*) asceticism of an extreme variety: antinomian rituals with non-soteriological aims set in the cremation ground that entail intense engagement with impurity, ritual violence and the supernatural. This chapter describes a practice—the *siddhigarttāyāga* (“rite of the pit of power”)—in which the tantric practitioner constructs a pit filled with all manner of impurity and abides there, continuously incanting a mantra until various signs, visions and powers arise.

Introduction¹

Few works of tantric literature approach the depths of the *Brahmayāmala*’s engagement with the grotesque and the supernatural, as well as with eroticism. This voluminous early *tantra* abounds with rites seeking to tap into extraordinary power through the “impure”—rites of virtuosic complexity, heroic difficulty, and sensual decadence, in turn or at once. The darker elements of early Śaiva tantric traditions come to the fore in the *Brahmayāmala*’s mortuary (*kāpālika*) rites, nocturnal practices of the cremation ground involving all manner of bloody and otherwise impure offerings. While some forms of mortuary asceticism aim at spiritual liberation, here we find its potential harnessed in the pursuit of supernatural power (*siddhi*). To succeed, the practitioner (*sādhaka*) must unflinchingly confront harrowing spirit beings and transcend inconceivably powerful feelings of disgust, shame, and terror. These are thus rites of “heroes” (*vīra*), an amoral path to potentially unbridled power through ascetic fortitude and extraordinary courage (*mahāsattva* or *vīrasattva*), and in some cases ritual violence.

¹ I would like to thank Peter Bisschop, Simon Brodbeck, Csaba Kiss, Jim Mallinson, Olga Serbaeva, Judit Törzsök and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable suggestions on various versions of this article.

A particular cycle of chapters (*paṭala*), 46–48, stands out in the *Brahmayāmala* for its preoccupation with the horrific and supernatural. These chapters teach extreme “rites for mastery” (*sādhana*) of supernatural powers (*siddhi*) which share similar structures and aims. Longest among them is chapter 46, teaching the “rite of the great churning” (*mahāmanthānavidhāna*). In this nocturnal cremation-ground *sādhana*, the tantric adept (*sādhaka*), after fasting, drawing the maṇḍala, and performing fire ritual and other preliminaries, churns a vessel brimming with human fluids set upon a corpse with a churning stick of bone, pulled by a cord of gut and hair. All manner of terror and wonder emerge forth from his churning, echoing both the primordial cosmogonic acts of Bhairava the Churner (*manthānabhairava*) and the gods’ fabled churning of the ocean (*sāgaramanthana*). At the rite’s culmination, the goddess Aghorī herself manifests to bless the *sādhaka*, mounted upon a skull, hued like a rainbow and radiant like a crore of suns. Suckling from her breasts, the *sādhaka* becomes equal to Bhairava himself.²

In chapter 47, a pavilion (*maṇḍapikā*) supplants the churning vessel as the locus of ritual, and human remains proliferate. Indeed, no tantric ritual known to me matches the *Brahmayāmala*’s odiously macabre “rite of the pavilion of power” (*siddhimaṇḍapikāvidhi*), where the pavilion itself is made from corpses.³ Successfully completed, the rite ends with Bhairava’s entry into the very body of the *sādhaka*, effecting his apotheosis.

Chapter 48’s “rite of the pit of power” (*siddhigarttāyāga*) is mild in comparison, but similar to the rites of chapters 46 and 47 in structure, method, and aims. Its brevity of presentation also sets it apart from these, especially from the lengthy “rite of the great churning” (130 verses). The presentation is sometimes elliptical, referring the reader back to instructions in chapters 45 or 46.⁴ Despite occasional ellipses, *Brahmayāmala* 48 is coherent and comparatively free of serious textual problems, factors making it amenable for presentation in the present form. After introducing and contextualizing this material, this article provides an edition of the chapter’s text and an annotated translation. The purpose is to make available for study a representative example of the *Brahmayāmala*’s more “extreme” form of praxis rooted in Kāpālīka traditions.

The *Brahmayāmala* or *Picumata* is a monumental early work of the goddess-centered Vidyāpīṭha (“corpus of *vidyās*,” i.e. female-gendered mantra-deities), a division of the Śaiva Bhairavatantras distinguished by its *śākta* (goddess-centric) cults and non-soteriological, *siddhi*-oriented forms of praxis. The text survives in a Nepalese palm-leaf manuscript dating to the year 1052 CE and several derivative paper manuscripts, a recension similar to, if not the same as, that known by Abhinavagupta around the turn of the eleventh century.⁵ A text of multiple strata, some form of the *Brahmayāmala* likely existed between the mid-seventh and early-eighth centuries. As transmitted, the text spans 104 chapters and upwards of 13,000

² For a summary and analysis of *Brahmayāmala* 46, see TÖRZSÖK 2011: 360; 2013: 184; also HATLEY 2018: 240–43.

³ For a brief account of the *siddhimaṇḍapikā*, see TÖRZSÖK 2013: 183–84; see also TÖRZSÖK 2011: 359–60.

⁴ See for instance the annotation to verse 4 below (n. 28).

⁵ On the manuscripts of the *Brahmayāmala*, see HATLEY 2018: 24–28; on Abhinavagupta’s knowledge of the text, see pp. 521–32.

verses.⁶ Two volumes of the text have been published to date: those of KISS (2015) and HATLEY (2018). Themes of the published chapters include the *sādhaka*'s core ritual disciplines, the text's principal deity-pantheons and mantras, Kāpālīka emblems and their mythic origins, and scriptural revelation. While chapters concerned with the *Brahmayāmala*'s sexual rituals have been published, as have studies thereon,⁷ the text's mortuary rituals have been discussed but not yet edited and translated, a void that this publication of chapter 48 partially fills.

The "rite of the pit of power" (*siddhigarttāyāga*) may be summarized thus: the *sādhaka* digs a hole his own size (in both depth and width, presumably) in a cremation ground. After purifying this and fasting for three days, he performs pantheon-worship and fire ritual (*homa*) therein and beseeches the Goddess to grant his ritual success. He fills the pit with any number of impure items, including cow or human flesh, covers the pit with hide, pays homage to the deities, and enters therein. Visualizing the goddess Aghorī in the center of the fire-pit (*kunḍa*), he abides in a state of concentration, incanting the Nine-Syllable Vidyā (*navākṣarā vidyā*). As he remains thus in the dank, fetid pit, day by day increasingly extraordinary visions and powers manifest. Finally, on the seventh night he has a vision of gods and *siddhas* and is assailed by hostile spirits. He destroys them fearlessly with his mantras and, on the eighth day, beholds the shadow of the Aghorī. She blesses the *sādhaka* and offers a boon. He may choose any power he wishes, from lordship over the earth to a wish-fulfilling jewel. Eschewing all of these, he may instead ask for the Goddess's grace and persevere in the ritual. Miraculous signs manifest on the ninth day, and at dawn, Aghorī herself manifests before him and speaks, again offering the *sādhaka* any boon he desires. Forgoing this, he may instead join the ranks of the Eight Bhairavas (*vīrāṣṭa*). Incanting the *vidyā*, he offers homage his guru and flies off into the firmament with the Seven Mothers (*sapta mātaraḥ*), who emerge bodily from the putrid trench. The *sādhaka*'s quest reaches ultimate fulfillment in his attaining the nature and powers of Bhairava. This model of divine apotheosis underscores a ritual logic implicit in the early Mantramārga, which conceived of *bhukti* and *mukti*, power and spiritual liberation, as integral, non-exclusive aims.

The *siddhigarttāyāga* exemplifies a mortuary (*kāpālīka*) and sanguinary ritual culture that reaches its zenith in Vidyāpīṭha literature. Though differing in both aims and character, this has roots in the soteriologically oriented asceticism of the "Great Vow" (*mahāvratā*) or "Skullbearers' Observance" (*kapālavratā*) practiced centuries earlier by Śaiva renunciates of the Atimārga, whose traditions Alexis SANDERSON (2006) demonstrates to have been formative to Mantramārga or "Tantric" Śaivism. More specifically, the highly antinomian practices of the Kāpālīkas or Somasiddhānta ("Atimārga III"), attested by the fifth century, may lie in the Vidyāpīṭha's immediate background.⁸ These are carried forward most notably in the *Brahmayāmala* and *Jayadrathayāmala*, texts which may in fact directly incorporate Kāpālīka textual material.⁹

⁶ On the dating and stratification of the *Brahmayāmala*, see HATLEY 2018: 64–141; for an overview of its contents, see pp. 46–50.

⁷ *Brahmayāmala* 45 is published in KISS 2015, and chapter 40 in HATLEY 2018. For studies, see TÖRZSÖK 2014; KISS 2015: 35–55; HATLEY 2018: 195–212; and HATLEY 2019.

⁸ On the dating of the Kāpālīkas, see SANDERSON 2014: 5–6.

⁹ See especially SANDERSON 2009: 133–34 n. 311; 2014: 11–12.

Building on SANDERSON's observations, Judit TÖRZSÖK (2011; 2013) argues that chapters 46–48 of the *Brahmayāmala* have particularly strong Kāpālika connections. Key to this hypothesis is evidence that Kāpālikas conceived of the *mahāvrata* as a means for attaining the soteriological goal of Śivahood through divine possession (*āveśa*). This doctrinal and ritual emphasis on possession may have distinguished Kāpālikas from otherwise closely related Śaivas.¹⁰ She shows, furthermore, that “possession does not seem to be part of the *Brahmayāmala*'s own ritual and doctrinal system” (2013: 182) and features almost exclusively in the context of its *vratas* (ascetic observances), a domain of ritual that, in general, has significant continuity with Atimārga Śaivism.¹¹ For their part, chapters 46–48 presuppose that the *sādhaka* is a practitioner of the *mahāvrata*, bearing its distinctive emblems of human bone, cremation-ground ash, and so forth,¹² and culminate in a state of identity with Bhairava, in the cases of chapters 46–47 through divine possession. Such factors lead TÖRZSÖK to suggest that these chapters are particularly likely to have a Kāpālika pedigree.

This view on the whole seems compelling. In fact the *Brahmayāmala*'s assimilation of Kāpālika textual material likely extends to other parts of the text as well, particularly chapter 83, which concerns the iconography, symbolism, and mythic origins of the skull-vessel (*kapāla*) and skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), quintessential accoutrements of the *mahāvrata*.¹³ And while chapters 46–48 share a common structure as well as intertextuality, chapter 15 has much in common with these as well. This teaches a version of the renowned *vetālasādhana* (“zombie rite”) described in a range of tantric and literary sources.¹⁴ In the *Brahmayāmala*'s version, the *sādhaka* sits upon a carefully prepared corpse in a cremation ground and performs fire ritual (*homa*) in its mouth. Terrifying portents and spirit beings seek to break his concentration, but a persistent *sādhaka* is rewarded with increasingly marvellous powers. A notable difference is that the *sādhanas* of chapters 46–48 culminate in apotheosis as Bhairava. In the *vetālasādhana*, in contrast, the *sādhaka* ascends into the skies on an aerial vehicle (the corpse?), after taking hold of a magical sword transfigured from the corpse's animated, severed tongue; in this manner he becomes the emperor of emperors of celestial wizards (*vidyādhara*) rather than attaining the state of Bhairava. This vision of the ritual goal is consistent with conceptions of *vetālasādhana* in earlier sources.¹⁵ Also bearing affinity to chapters 46–48 is the

¹⁰ On the Kāpālika view that liberation arises through divine possession, see SANDERSON 2009: 133–34.

¹¹ See especially SANDERSON 2006: 202–9.

¹² Note e.g. 48.10d, which stipulates that *sādhaka*'s body should be adorned for the Great Vow (*mahāvrata* *tanusthitaḥ*).

¹³ For an edition and study of *Brahmayāmala* chapter 83, see HATLEY 2018.

¹⁴ For an excellent study of *vetālasādhana* based on a range of sources, including *Brahmayāmala* 15, see DEZSÖ 2010.

¹⁵ At the rite's end, the *sādhaka* “rises up into the sky on an aerial vehicle, surrounded by [other] aerial vehicles. Mounting this, the mighty hero becomes the lord of emperors” (*Brahmayāmala* 15.63c–64d: *tatas taṃ gr̥hya mantrajño utpate gagaṇāṅgaṇe || uttiṣṭhati vimānasthaṃ vimānaih parivāritaṃ | tatrāruhya mahādhīraś cakravartīśvaro bhavet*). I concur with DEZSÖ's assessment (2010: 396) that *cakravartīśvara* “presumably means the lord of the emperors of the wizards, *vidyādharacakravartins*.” As DEZSÖ also observes (pp. 395–96), the somewhat similar version of this rite in the *Guhyasūtra* of

kaṅkālavratasādhana (“rite of mastery of the corpse observance”) of *Brahmayāmala*, chapter 63. This takes as its ritual locus a corpse impaled upon a stake from the cremation ground, upon which a trident is mounted. Its similarities to *Brahmayāmala* 46–48 are mainly thematic; these chapters do not seem to form a compositional unit. Chapter 63, rather, is closely related to chapters 66 and 83, which may have been redacted together (HATLEY 2018: 117–20). Although all the forementioned chapters could have Kāpālika connections, their redactional histories seem varied and potentially complex. Furthermore, a note of caution is warranted. In the case of chapter 46, the *Brahmayāmala* names a specific earlier Bhairavatantra as its source: the lost *Ucchuṣmottarabhairava* (HATLEY 2018: 185–93, 243). The *Brahmayāmala*’s apparent debt to Atimārga sources may thus be indirect, possibly multiple steps removed. Nevertheless, such material in the *Brahmayāmala* probably brings us as close as is possible to the Atimārga Kāpālikas, whose own literature has not survived as such.

Irrespective of its historical roots, the rite of the *siddhigarttā* exemplifies a key strand of Vidyāpīṭha ritual culture: the quest for extraordinary power through transactional, power-bestowing encounters with the deities in liminal places, especially cremation grounds. In contrast to *Brahmayāmala* 46–48, these encounters are not typically with the highest god or goddess, but rather with groups or clans (*kula*) of female deities, especially *yoginīs* and *mātrīs*. Such encounters are referred to as *melaka* or *melāpa* (and other synonyms), “mingling” or “rendezvous.” Arguably, *yoginīmelaka*, visionary and transformative encounters with groups of goddesses, is the paradigmatic goal of Vidyāpīṭha ritual systems: the ultimate attainment is to join the circle of sky-traversing deities, much as the *sādhaka* alights into the sky with the Seven Mothers at the culmination of *Brahmayāmala* 48. This emphasis on power-bestowing encounters with groups of goddesses may set apart the early Vidyāpīṭha from its Kāpālika precursors. As TÖRZSÖK argues (2013), encounters with *yoginīs* in the *Brahmayāmala* are not characterized by possession (*āveśa*, etc.), which are potentially a hallmark of Kāpālika cremation-ground practices, while the *Jayadrathayāmala* likewise rarely associates *melaka* with possession-like states (SERBAEVA 2013). These are somewhat more integrated in the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, which may be slightly later than the *Brahmayāmala*.¹⁶ Vidyāpīṭha sources appear to have amplified exorcistic and sanguinary aspects of Kāpālika ritual, while completing a shift towards the divine feminine probably already underway in Kāpālika circles, centered on Cāmuṇḍā and her entourage of Mothers.

The closing verses of *Brahmayāmala* 48 describe the *siddhigarttāyāga* as *haṭhasādhana*, a “rite of forceful mastery.” In the *Brahmayāmala*, *sādhana* generally refers to the demanding supererogatory rites of the *sādhaka* aiming at extraordinary power, a usage familiar from expressions such as *vetālasādhana*. In this sense *sādhana* is synonymous with *siddhisādhana*, an expression occurring throughout the *Brahmayāmala*.¹⁷ As for *haṭha*, this could have the sense of “difficult” or even “violent,” but perhaps also “forceful,” in the sense of being an effort to master the deities through coercive methods. This language unambiguously evokes the

the archaic *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* culminates in the *sādhaka* becoming a *vidyādhara* (likewise the *Harṣacarita*, etc.; pp. 404–6).

¹⁶ For an excellent examination of possession in early Śaiva sources, see TÖRZSÖK 2013.

¹⁷ E.g. 76.2ab (*brahmabhaṅgyā nyāsen mantrī sādhaḥ siddhisādhane*). Cf. the closely related expression *siddhiyāga*, discussed in HATLEY 2018: 465–66.

dichotomy between “forceful” (*haṭha*) and “pleasing” (*priya*) encounters with goddesses (*yoginīmelaka*) intimated in a number of Vidyāpīṭha and related sources.¹⁸ The *Brahmayāmala* associates *haṭhamelaka* with powerful and impure *yoginīs* or *ḍākinīs*, from whom, when summoned, the practitioner faces lethal danger: “If by mistake a *sādhaka* lacking in courage should tremble, the *yoginīs* devour him that very moment, proud of their yogic power. Even if Rudra himself arrived, he would be unable to save him.”¹⁹ As SERBAEVA argues in a study of encounters with *yoginīs* in the *Jayadrathayāmala* (2016), it is difficult to identify one single factor distinguishing *haṭhamelaka*: common threads are the ferocious and impure nature of the deities summoned, the extreme danger posed to the *sādhaka*, who requires extraordinary fortitude, and the presence of human remains or ritual violence (especially the offering of one’s own blood). All these elements characterize the *haṭhasādhana* of *Brahmayāmala* 48, although the goal is not to summon and master hostile female spirits, but to attain the darshan of Aghorī herself. The possibility that the *siddhigarttāyāga* was originally a Kāpālīka rite may clarify *haṭhamelaka*’s historical background and early conceptualization.

The edition of the text presented below is based on the *Brahmayāmala*’s sole surviving important witness: National Archives of Kathmandu ms. no. 3-370, copied in Nepal in the year 1052. All of the other surviving manuscripts derive from this, directly or indirectly.²⁰ The *Brahmayāmala* was composed in a highly non-standard variety of Middle-Indic-influenced hybrid Sanskrit, sometimes referred to as Aīśa, “the language of the Lord.” The annotation to the translation highlights non-standard forms and other problems of interpretation. For a more detailed discussion of the language, see KISS 2015: 73–86. While the edition incorporates numerous emendations and some conjectures (as required by sense or suggested by parallels elsewhere in the text), I have avoided normalizing the orthography in the direction of modern printed Devanāgarī. In this respect the edition has a diplomatic quality, following in the footsteps of the editors of the *Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā*. For a more detailed discussion of editorial principles, see HATLEY 2018: 28–38.

In the edition, readings deemed corrupt and for which no conjecture is offered are enclosed by daggers († ... †). Folio and line numbers in the old manuscript are indicated in square brackets. The following abbreviations are used in the critical apparatus: *corr.* for correction, *em.* for emendation, and *conj.* for conjecture. “A” is the siglum for the manuscript, while the symbol “o” indicates editorial ellipsis.

¹⁸ See s.v. *priyamelaka* in *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa*, vol. III; and SERBAEVA 2016.

¹⁹ *Brahmayāmala* 14.217c–18d: *pramādā yadi kṣubhyeta satvahīnas tu sādhakāḥ || tatkṣaṇā devī khādanti yoginyo yogadarppitāḥ | na ta[m] rakṣayitum śakto rudro ’pi svayam āgataḥ*. (Understand *pramādā* and °*kṣaṇā* as ablatives with the final -t elided; see EDGERTON 1953: §8.46–48.)

²⁰ For a discussion and description of the manuscripts, see HATLEY 2018: 24–28.

The *Brahmayāmala*'s Chapter on the Rite of the Pit of Power: Text and Translation

[f217r, 1] **athātaḥ sampravakṣyāmi siddhigarttāṃ suśobhanāṃ |
yāṃ kṛtvā tu mahāsatvo trailokyam sādhayet kṣaṇāt ||1||**

1b °garttāṃ suśobhanāṃ] *em.*; °garttā susobhanā A 1c yāṃ] *em.*; yaṃ A

[Bhairava spoke:]

Now I shall teach the glorious Pit of Power (*siddhigarttā*),²¹ making which a man of great courage can master the triple universe in an instant.²² (1)

**pūrvvoktacodite sthāne tatra garttāṃ suśobhanāṃ |
khānayet svapramāṇena tatas tām śodhayet budhaḥ ||2||**

2b °garttāṃ suśobhanāṃ] *em.*; garttā susobhanā A 2d śodhayet] *corr.*; sodhayet A

In a place [of the kind] designated previously,²³ one should dig a glorious pit of one's own [body's] measure. The wise one should then purify this. (2)

²¹ In 1b, the manuscript's *siddhagarttā susobhanā* has been emended to *siddhigarttāṃ suśobhanāṃ*. The accusative is expected, as object of *sampravakṣyāmi*, while *siddhi*^o is confirmed below in 5d. Correct accusatives appear in 2d (*tām*), 3a (*mahāgarttām*), 8cd (*tām ... garttām*), etc. However, as the case of *anujñā* in 5c illustrates, the nominative and accusative are fluid in the language of the *Brahmayāmala*, and it is difficult to arrive at consistent criteria for correcting; see also the feminine nominatives for the accusative in 11a–12b.

²² *satvo trailokyam* in 1cd presents the generalized -o ending (for -as) of the Middle-Indic nominative masculine singular; see EDGERTON 1953: §8.18. Cf. *siddho tvan* (for *siddhas tvam*) in 30b.

²³ The place referred to is likely a cremation ground, as described in 46.3: *gatvā ni[ś]i [ś]ma[ś]ānan tu yāgopaskarasambhṛtaḥ | sakhāyais [ś]obhanair yukta eko vātha mahāvrataḥ ||* (“One observing the Great Vow should go to the cremation ground at night, furnished with all the materials needed for worship and with good companions, or else alone.”)

**śodhayitvā mahāgarttām sādhakas tryahapoṣitaḥ |
tato yāgaṃ prakurvīta tasmim gartte ma[2]hārṇṇave ||3||**

3a śodhayitvā] *corr.*; sodhayitvā A

After purifying the great pit, the *sādhaka*, who has fasted for three days,²⁴ should then perform pantheon-worship (*yāga*) in that pit, [to be envisioned as] the great ocean.²⁵ (3)

**pūrvvoktenaiva mārgeṇa balihomañ ca kalpayet |
punaś cārgham pradātavyaṃ kapāle pūrvvavad budhaḥ ||4||**

4a mārgeṇa] *corr.*; mārgena A 4b °homañ ca] *em.*; °homaś ca A 4c punaś] *corr.*; punaś A

In the very way stated previously, he should also effect *bali*-offerings and fire ritual [there].²⁶ The wise one should again offer the guest-water from a skull-vessel, as before.²⁷ (4)

**tataḥ ekamano bhūtvā sādhaḥ susamāhitaḥ |
anujñā dada me devi siddhigarttā mamāmbike ||5||**

Afterwards,²⁸ the *sādhaka* should become single-minded, and in a state of deep concentration [say], “Goddess, grant authorization to me [for] my Pit of Power, O Mother!”²⁹ (5)

²⁴ In the compound *tryahapoṣitaḥ* (3b), *poṣitaḥ* apparently means *upoṣitaḥ*, “fasted”; cf. 46.2c, where the expression is *uṣita* (*ṭṛātṛoṣito bhūtvā tu*), and *Siddhayaogeśvarīmata* 25.22ab: *tataḥ kṛṣṇacaturdaśyām trirātram samupoṣitaḥ*. The form may be explained as irregular sandhi, with elision of the initial *u-* (cf. EDGERTON 1953: §4.16), though I have not observed this elsewhere in the *Brahmayāmala*.

²⁵ *mahārṇṇave* (“in the great ocean”) is obscure; perhaps emend to *mahātmanah* (a non-standard nominative) or *mahātmane* (feminine vocative). Both occur frequently at the end of even verse-quarters in the *Brahmayāmala*.

²⁶ What passage “previously” refers to is uncertain: chapter 46, where one expects to find this, itself refers to the *agnikārya* (i.e. *homa*) “stated previously” (46.34a: *agnikāryaṇ ca pūrvvoktaṃ*). Fire ritual is described in detail in 45.91c–124. The intended passage describing *bali*-offerings is perhaps 46.35c–38b.

²⁷ With the nominative *budhaḥ* (4d) one expects an active verb, but this instead construes with the gerundive *pradātavyaṃ*, which requires an instrumental agent. Perhaps *budhaḥ* should be emended to the instrumental plural, *budhaiḥ*; cf. 46.128, *aprakāśyam anirddeśyaṃ sugopya[m] prāṇavad budhaiḥ*.

²⁸ In both 5a and 23c the manuscript has *tataḥ eka°*, retaining a visarga that one expects to be dropped. We instead find *tato eka°* in 18.2a.

²⁹ In 5cd, the manuscript’s *anujñā* and *siddhigarttā* could be accounted for as nominative in the sense of the accusative. Cf. 46.55cd: *anujñā me mahādeva sādhanam prati śūline*. (This should likely be emended to *anujñā dehi me deva°*, or *anujñā dada me deva°*.) However, in a similar passage in 47.11cd, the old manuscript transmits the accusative: *anujñāṃ dada me devi siddhimaṇḍapikāṃ prati*.

**tato pūrayitvā tāñ ca pañcagavyena śobhane |
picu madyā tathā mānsaṃ snāyu pittaṃ tathaiva ca ||6||**

6a pūrayitvā] *conj.*; pūrayitā A 6b śobhane] *corr.*; sobhane A 6c mānsaṃ] *corr.*; sānsaṃ A

And afterwards, he should fill that [pit] with the five cow products,³⁰ O beautiful woman, and [also] mixed sexual fluids (*picu*), alcohol,³¹ meat, sinew, and bile; (6)

**gomūtraṃ gomayaṃ caiva dadhikṣīraghṛtan tathā |
gomānsaṃ naramānsaṃ ca śuneś caiva yathe[3]psayā ||7||**

7d śuneś caiva] *conj.* (J. TÖRZSÖK); munis caiva A

[and the five cow products]—cow’s urine, dung, yoghurt, *kṣīra*, and ghee—[and also] beef, human flesh, and [flesh] of dog, as he pleases:³² (7)

**gr̥hṇayet phalguṣaṃ prājñāḥ prāṇināṃ manasepsitam |
evan tāṃ pūrayed garttāṃ sādḥakaḥ susamāhitaḥ ||8||**

8a prājñāḥ] *corr.*; prājñā A 8b prāṇināṃ] *em.*; prāṇinā A 8b °epsitam] *corr.*; °epsitām A

a wise man should take the flesh of living beings as his mind desires. The well-concentrated *sādḥaka* should fill the pit in this manner. (8)

**gocarma prāvaritvā tu hasticarma -m- alābhataḥ |
mudrāṣṭakaṃ tato badhvā namaskṛtvā tu bhairavam ||9||**

Covering [the pit with] cowhide, [or] if that is not available, elephant hide,³³ he should bind the Eight Mudrās after paying homage to Bhairava.³⁴ (9)

³⁰ In 6a, the manuscript’s *pūrayitā* seems likely to be corrupt, unless one understands the verse-quarter to mean “And afterwards, he [becomes] one who fills (*pūrayitr̥*) that [pit].” While *pūrayitvā* seems the most plausible emendation, the result (*tato pūrayitvā tāñ ca*) is unmetrical, unless *-tvā* does not render the preceding vowel heavy. It is possible that the pāda was originally hypometrical, reading *tato pūrayitvā tāṃ*. Concerning the non-classical sandhi *tato pūr̥*, see EDGERTON 1953: §4.38.

³¹ *picu madyā* or *picumadyā* in 6c is suspect—I am not aware of *madya* ever being feminine elsewhere—but the same expression appears again in 11b. On the meaning of *picu*, see s.v. in *Tāntrikābhīdhānaśāstra*, vol. III. Perhaps construe *picumadyā* as a compound, “wine of mixed sexual fluids.”

³² In 7d, for *munis caiva* (i.e. *muniś caiva*?) I have adopted Judit TÖRZSÖK’s excellent conjecture, *śuneś caiva* (personal communication). I had earlier conjectured *śvānaś caiva*, which could be explained in light of frequent confusion between *m* and *s*, *s* and *ś*, *sva* and *su*, and *i* and *ā*.

³³ In 9b, I have construed *hasticarma -m-* as an accusative followed by a sandhi consonant. The *m* could instead be a sandhi consonant in compound (see EDGERTON 1953: §4.60), viz. *hasticarma-m-alābhataḥ*, “in the absence of elephant hide.” On this point I have followed the suggestion of TÖRZSÖK (personal communication), who points out that cowhide is the more transgressive option.

³⁴ The Eight Mudrās could be those of the Eight Mother-goddesses (*mātr̥*) delineated in *Brahmayāmala* 55.105–14. A larger number are delineated in *Brahmayāmala* 43 (the *mudrāpāṭala*), while the *mudrās* of Bhairava number five (12.93–95).

**aṭṭahāsaṃ śivārāvaṃ ghaṇṭhāḍamaruvādanam |
piñcchakaṃ bhrāmayet paścān mahāvratatanusthitaḥ ||10||**

[He should utter] ferocious laughter [and] the cry of jackals, sounding the bell and *ḍamaru* drum.³⁵ Afterwards, he should wave about a peacock-feather whisk (*piñcchaka*) with his body [prepared for] the Great Vow.³⁶ (10)

**praviśeta mahāgarttāṃ picumadyāsupūrite |
smṛtvā devī mahāvīryā agho[4]rī bhīmavikramā ||11||
sūryakoṭipratīkāśā kuṇḍamadye vicintayet |**

11a praviśeta] *corr.*; praviśeta A **11a** °garttāṃ] *em.*; °garttā A **11b** °supūrite] *corr.*; °supūrite A **12a** °pratīkāśā *corr.*; °pratīkāśā A

He should enter the great pit well-filled with *picu* and alcohol,³⁷ contemplating the mighty goddess Aghorī of fierce valor. He should visualize her within the fire-pit (*kuṇḍa*),³⁸ radiant like a crore of suns. (11–12ab)

**niḥsaṅko nirghṛṇo bhūtvā vidyāṃ smṛtvā viśed giri ||12||
tato japeta vidyāṃ vai avadhūtatanusthitaḥ |
mūtrapurīṣa†m āpekṣā† na tiṣṭhed anyathā kvacit ||13||**

12c niḥsaṅko] *corr.*; niḥsaṅko A **12c** nirghṛṇo] *em.*; nighṛṇo A **12d** viśed] *em.*; viśem A **13d** na tiṣṭhed anyathā] *conj.*; na tiṣṭhe nānyathā A

Being free of hesitation and disgust, the mountainous *sādhaka* (*giri*³⁹) should contemplate the [Nine-Syllable] Vidyā and enter [the pit]. Afterwards, he should incant the Vidyā, his body empowered by the [mantras of the] *avadhūtā śakti*.⁴⁰ †Depending on [the need to pass] urine and stool, he should not abide elsewhere.†⁴¹ (12cd–13)

³⁵ The orthography *ghaṇṭhā* is likely original, for *ghaṇṭā* (“bell”); see HATLEY 2018: 35.

³⁶ *mahāvratatanusthitaḥ* likely means *pañcamudrādharaḥ*, “wearing the Five Insignia [of the Great Vow].” On the identity of these emblems, see s.v. *pañcamudrāḥ* in *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa*, vol. III; and HATLEY 2018: 506–7.

³⁷ In 11ab, the manuscript’s *garttā* and *supūrite* seem to be in agreement, despite the grammar. The former could either be emended to the accusative, as I have done, or considered a stem form. On the odd *madyā*, see above (6c). Concerning *picu*, see n. 33 above.

³⁸ The syntax of 11–12b is doubtful, with *smṛtvā* and *vicintayet* ostensibly sharing the same object (*devī*), expressed in the nominative.

³⁹ On the term *giri* for *sādhaka*, occurring also in the *Svacchandatantra* and commentary, see s.v. in *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa*, vol. II.

⁴⁰ The Nine-Syllable Vidyā (*navākṣarā vidyā*) is the *Brahmayāmala*’s principal mantra, embodying the goddess Aghorī or Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī and her pantheon. Nine mantra-deities form the Vidyā’s core pantheon: Kapālīśabhairava, the Four Devīs, and the Four Dūtīs. See HATLEY 2018: 159–66. Concerning the expression *avadhūtatanu* and the *avadhūtā śakti*, epithet of the supreme Goddess, see pp. 421–24.

⁴¹ 13cd is problematic, the manuscript reading *mūtrapurīṣam āpekṣā na tiṣṭhe nānyathā kvacit*. To make sense of 13d, it seems necessary to emend to *na tiṣṭhed anyathā*. 13c has the metrical fault of light

**dinam ekaṃ yāva tiṣṭheta sarvvapāpaiḥ pramucyate |
dvibhis tu jāyate tasya mantrasiddhiḥ manepsitā ||14||**

14d manepsitā] *corr.*; manepsitām A

Should he remain there a single day,⁴² he is liberated from all sins. After two days, he attains power over mantras, as his mind desires. (14)

**vaśyākaraṣavidhānaṃ ca sādhaṇya tṛbhiraḥ dinaiḥ |
[5]pūtanā mātṛsahitās caturthe paśyate dhruvam ||15||**

15a vaśyākaraṣa°] *em.*; madyākaraṣa° A 15c pūtanā mātṛsahitās] *em.*; pūtanām mātṛsahitām A
15d paśyate] *corr.*; paśyate A

He masters the rites of subjugation and attraction after three days.⁴³ On the fourth [day] he assuredly sees *pūtanās*, together with Mother-goddesses.⁴⁴ (15)

**pañcame -m- arddharātre tu yakṣā nāgās ca karṣate |
samudrāṃ stambhaye cānyaṃ mṛtyuś caiva nivarttate ||16||**

16b yakṣā nāgās ca] *em.*; yakṣānāgās tu A 16c samudrāṃ] *em.*; samudrā A 16c cānyaṃ] *em.*;
cānye A 16d mṛtyuś] *corr.*; mṛtyus A

On the fifth day, in the middle of the night,⁴⁵ he attracts female *yakṣas* and *nāgas*.⁴⁶ Moreover, he may also arrest the oceans, and death turns away [from him].⁴⁷ (16)

syllables in positions 2 and 3, and *āpekṣā* is difficult to interpret. Csaba KISS (personal communication) suggests that this may occur for *apekṣayā* (nominative for instrumental, with metrical lengthening of the first vowel?), and this is the interpretation I have adopted. Another possibility is to read *mūtrapurīṣasāpekṣo*, an adjective: “[Besides] being dependent on (*sāpekṣaḥ*) urine and stool, he should not go elsewhere.”

⁴² Verse quarter 14a is hypermetrical, and Jason BIRCH (personal communication) proposes emending *tiṣṭheta* to *tiṣṭhet*, which results in a correct *ra*-vipulā. This is an excellent idea, but may be unnecessary, for the *Brahmayāmala* tends to allow such hypermetry (see HATLEY 2018: 32). Moreover, *yāva tiṣṭheta* occurs again in 17c.

⁴³ *madyākaraṣavidhānaṃ* in 15a appears to be a corruption of *vaśyākaraṣa°* (“rites of subjugation and attraction”). Cf. 14.40cd: *vaśyākaraṣanakarmāṇi kurvanty asmin tu saṃsthitāḥ*.

⁴⁴ In 15c, I have emended *pūtanām mātṛsahitām* to the correct feminine accusative, *pūtanā mātṛsahitās*. However, the feminine accusative plural in *-ām* or *-ān* is attested; see EDGERTON 1953: §9.99.

⁴⁵ The medial *-m-* in 16a is a sandhi consonant (see EDGERTON 1953: §4.59).

⁴⁶ Alternatively, one could read the masculine *yakṣān nāgāṃś ca*, “he attracts [male] *yakṣas* and *nāgas*.”

⁴⁷ 16c is problematic, the manuscript reading *samudrā stambhaye cānye*. We may understand *stambhaye* as optative, with loss of the final consonant, and I have emended to *samudrām* (accusative plural). The problematic *cānye*—perhaps nominative for accusative?—has been emended to *cānyaṃ*, which is common in the *Brahmayāmala* at the end of odd-numbered pādas. I understand this in the sense of *anyac ca*, “moreover.” One might instead emend to *caiva*; cf. 41.10cd: *sāgarām stambhaye*

ṣaṭbhis tu sādhyed yogī phalākarṣaṇ ca guhyakām |
saptāhaṃ yāva tiṣṭheta ākāṣe paśyate surām ||17||
siddhāni vividhān caiva divyabhāṣām śṛṇoti ca |

17d ākāṣe] *corr.*; ākāṣe A 18a vividhān] *corr.*; vividhās A

And after six days, the yogin may master the attraction of fruit, [etc.,?] and the *guhyakas*.⁴⁸ If he remains for seven days, he sees the gods in the sky, and various *siddhas*;⁴⁹ and he hears divine speech. (17–18ab)

pūrvvoktāni tu vighnāni jāyante nātra saṃśayaḥ ||18||
sarvvās tā ghā[217v]taye devī pūrvvoktāstreṇa vidyayā |

18c vighnāni] *conj.* (KISS); cihnāni A 18d saṃśayaḥ] *corr.*; sansayaḥ A 19a tā] *em.*; tām A
19b pūrvvoktāstreṇa] *conj.* (TÖRZSÖK/HATLEY); pūrvvoktāstraiva tu A

The obstructing forces described previously [then] arise,⁵⁰ without a doubt. O goddess, he should quell all of these [obstacles] with the weapon mantra taught earlier, along with the Vidyā (?).⁵¹ (18cd–19ab)

caiva kim anyais mantracintakaiḥ (“And he could arrest the oceans—to say nothing of other [deeds accomplished] by those contemplating the mantra”).

⁴⁸ 17ab presents syntactical and other difficulties. Ostensibly the subject of the verb *sādhyed*, *yogī[h]*, with a visarga restored, could in fact be its object, in the sense of *yoginī[h]*; forms of the irregular feminine stem *yogi* or *yogī* occur widely (see *Tāntrikābhidhānakośa*, vol. IV [forthcoming]). *phalākarṣa*, “[magically] attracting/gathering fruit,” is mentioned several times in the *Brahmayāmala* as a *siddhi*; note especially 84.2ab: *phalānām karṣaṇam caiva vastramadyāpakarṣaṇam* (“attracting fruit, and drawing down clothing and wine”). As for *guhyakām*, this is probably accusative plural, although it could instead be an irregular genitive plural (cf. EDGERTON 1953: §8.124). If feminine, this would refer to the *Brahmayāmala*’s Four Devīs or Guhyakās rather than a class of spirit beings. The irregular feminine genitive plural *guhyakām* occurs twice, both times in the expression *guhyakām patayaḥ* (4.6a and 4.273a).

⁴⁹ *siddhāni* (18a) is neuter for masculine. I have emended *vividhās caiva* to *vividhān°*, the corruption probably arising from confusion between *śc* and *ñc*.

⁵⁰ One might expect *cihnāni* (“signs,” 18c) to refer to signs of the attainment of *siddhi*; however, *cihnāni* seems to be picked up by *sarvvās tā[h]* in 19a, and thus to be the object of *ghātaye[d]*. This supports emending *cihnāni* to *vighnāni*, as Csaba KISS proposes (personal communication). The feminine pronouns suggest that these *vighnas*, “obstructing forces,” are female spirits of some kind. They may be the horrifying obstructing forces which assail the *sādhaka* described in 45.636–45 (see KISS 2015). After these are dispelled, various signs of *siddhi* (*prataya*) arise, according to 45.646–50b. It is hence possible that *cihnāni* is original, referring both to the *vighnas* and to these signs of success.

⁵¹ As transmitted, 19b is hypermetrical and probably corrupt, reading *pūrvvoktāstraiva tu vidyayā*. This could conceal a reference to the *astra* mantra, typically used to drive away obstacles; cf. 14.167cd (*kuryāt pāśupatāstreṇa vighnoccātam na saṃśayaḥ*) and 45.21cd (*uccātanārtham vighnānām kṣipet astraṇa mantravit*). I have hence conjectured *pūrvvoktāstreṇa* (suggested independently by TÖRZSÖK as well, personal communication). However, this makes *vidyayā* difficult to interpret. I also considered the conjecture *pūrvvoktās tatra vidyayā* (meaning, “O goddess, he should in that case quell all of these

**nirviśaṅkamano bhūtvā -d- anivarttapade sthitaḥ ||19||
sādhayen māṃ tvayā sārddhaṃ kim anyair bhūtanāyakaiḥ |
aṣṭame paśyate cchāyām aghoryāyā tu sādhaḥ ||20||**

His mind becoming free of fear, remaining in the state beyond regression (?),⁵² he may attain mastery of me, along with you—let alone other lords of spirits. On the eighth [day], the *sādhaka* sees the shadow of Aghorī.⁵³ (19cd–20)

**evan dadati sā tuṣṭā sādhu vatsa varaṃ vṛṇu |
pṛthvīsaṃ vāmaratvañ ca pātālottiṣṭham eva ca ||21||
gaganāṅganacāritvam adreśyaṃ rasarasāyaṇam |
cintāmaṇi tathā khaḍgaṃ pādukā rocanāñjanam ||22||**

21d °ttiṣṭham] *em.*; °ttiṣṭam A **22a** gaganāṅganacāritvam] *conj.* (TÖRZSÖK); gaganāgatacārīṇāmm A

She, being pleased, grants [him boons] thus:⁵⁴ “Good, my child! Choose a boon: [becoming] lord of the earth, immortality, [descent into] the netherworlds, raising up,⁵⁵ the ability to traverse the sky, invisibility, an elixir or potion (*rasarasāyana*),⁵⁶ a wishing stone, or a [magical] sword, sandals, orpiment, or eye-salve. (21–22)

**atha[2] kim bahunoktena krīḍayasva manepsitam |
tataḥ ekamano bhūtvā arghayeta mahāprabhum ||23||**

23b krīḍayasva manepsitam] *em.*; krīḍayā svamanepsitam A

“But what is the point of saying more? Sport according to your mind’s desire.”⁵⁷ Afterwards, becoming single-minded, he should offer guest-water to the great Lord. (23)

[obstacles] described previously with the Vidyā”), and the more straightforward *pūrvvoktās caiva vidyayā*.

⁵² The meaning (and perhaps text) of *anivarttapade* (19d) is doubtful; the expression seems not to occur in sources known to me.

⁵³ While one might emend *aghoryāyā tu* to *aghoryāyās tu*, genitives in *-āyā* do occur; cf., e.g., 86.29 (*vāmāyā tu vidhi[m] vakṣye*), and see EDGERTON 1953: §9.47. In either case, the genitive is formed on the extended stem *aghoryā* (for *aghori*); see HATLEY 2018: 421 n. 1.

⁵⁴ The third-person singular present indicative *dadati* occurs for classical *dadāti*, though either would be metrical. Cf. EDGERTON 1953: §28.8–11.

⁵⁵ Concerning the power called *uttiṣṭha* (“get up!”), see *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa*, vol. III (p. 584), where it is proposed that this refers to animating a corpse to do one’s bidding. I am grateful to TÖRZSÖK (personal communication) for pointing this out.

⁵⁶ On 22b’s hypermetry, see HATLEY 2018: 32.

⁵⁷ It seems that the Goddess’s speech should end in 23cd, which makes the absence of a verb suspicious. It is possible that *krīḍayā svamanepsitam* is corrupt for *krīḍayet°* or even *krīḍate°*. However, I have adopted *krīḍayasva manepsitam*, with the imperative verb, which seems the least invasive solution. This finds support in a similar passage of the *Devīpurāṇa* (93.252ab), where goddess Nandā

**yācayeta mahādevi varam ekaṃ manepsitam |
atha vā yadi neccheta vīrāṣṭapadakāṃkṣiṇaḥ ||24||**

24b ekaṃ] *em.*; eka A

O Mahādevī, he may [then] request a single boon that his mind desires. Otherwise, if he doesn't wish for [a boon, instead] desiring [to attain] the state of the Eight Heroes,⁵⁸ (24)

**prasādaṃ me mahādevi namaskṛtvā punaḥ punaḥ |
dine tu navame tasya yad bhava tan nibodha me ||25||**

[he should say, "Give me] your grace, O Mahādevī,"⁵⁹ paying homage to her again and again. Listen to what happens to him on the [night of the] ninth day.⁶⁰ (25)

**uttiṣṭhati mahāśabdo garttāyāṃ caiva dāruṇaḥ |
sugandho vāyate vātaḥ puṣpavṛṣṭiḥ samantataḥ ||26||
kampanti devatās sa[3]rvvā bhūtāḥ saṃstrastalocanāḥ |**

26c vātaḥ] *corr.*; vāta A 26d °vṛṣṭiḥ] *corr.*; °vṛṣṭi A 27b bhūtāḥ] *corr.*; bhūtā A

A mighty, dreadful noise arises from the pit, and a fragrant wind blows. A shower of flowers falls all around. All of the deities tremble, terrified, their eyes full of fear. (26–27ab)

**tataḥ prabhāte vimale aghoryāyāḥ sahasradhā ||27||
āgacchanti mahābhāgā bhūtāni vikṛtānanāḥ |
pratyakṣadarśanībhūtvā sādhaḥ cābhibhāṣate ||28||**

27c prabhāte] *em.*; prabhāta° A 27d aghoryāyāḥ] *corr.*; aghoryāyā A

Afterwards, in dawn's pure light, Aghorī's spirits arrive by the thousands,⁶¹ of great splendor and terrible visage.⁶² And after becoming visibly manifest, [she herself] speaks to the *sādhaka*: (27cd–28)

blesses the *sādhaka*: *sādhaka tvam prasādena krīḍayasva yathāsukham* ("O *sādhaka*, be so gracious as to sport [here] as you please").

⁵⁸ The Eight Heroes are presumably the Eight Bhairavas, listed variously in different sources (see s.v. *aṣṭabhairava* in *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa*, vol. I). In 24d, °*kāṃkṣiṇaḥ* is nominative singular, formed on the thematized stem °*kāṃkṣiṇa* (for *kāṃkṣin*). See EDGERTON 1953: §10.3.

⁵⁹ Perhaps emend 25a to *prasādaṃ dada me devi* or *prasādaṃ dehi me devi*.

⁶⁰ In 25d, *bhave* is probably original, for the optative *bhavet*, with loss of its final consonant; see EDGERTON 1953: §29.12. Although inconsistent, the old manuscript of the *Brahmayāmala* transmits this form dozens of times.

⁶¹ A metrical variant (*ma-vipulā*) is present in 27c. In this verse-quarter, *aghoryāyāḥ* (with a final visarga tentatively restored) is genitive, formed on the extended stem *aghoryā*; see n. 55 above.

⁶² Although *bhūtāni* is neuter in form, this agrees with the masculine plural adjectives *mahābhāgā[h]* and *vikṛtānanāḥ*; cf. *siddhāni* in 18a above.

**mātṛñāṃ bhaktakas tvam hi tvam eko sādhakottamaḥ |
vatsa vatsa mahāvīra sādhakendra mahātapah ||29||**

“You are [truly] devoted to the Mother-goddesses. You are the very best of *sādhakas*.⁶³
O child, heroic child, lord of *sādhakas*, mighty ascetic; (29)

**varam vṛñīṣva me rudra siddho tvan nātra saṃśayaḥ |
satyaṃ satyaṃ punaḥ satyaṃ sādhakendra mahātapah ||30||**

30a rudra] *em.*; rudrah A

“choose a boon from me, *rudra*! You have attained perfection, without a doubt.⁶⁴
Truly, truly, truly, O lord of *sādhakas*, mighty ascetic. (30)

**uttiṣṭhasva kim adyā[4]pi tiṣṭhase puruṣottama |
etan vā yadi neccheta evaṃ brūyāt punaḥ priye ||31||**

31a uttiṣṭhasva] *corr.*; uttiṣṭasva A 31a adyāpi] *em.*; adyo pi A 31b tiṣṭhase] *em.*; tiṣṭha me A
31b °ttama] *em.*; °tamaḥ A 31c neccheta] *em.*; niccheta A 31d brūyāt] *corr.*; brūhi brūyāt A

“Rise up! Why do you still remain [in the pit], O best of men?”⁶⁵ But if this [boon] is
not what he desires,⁶⁶ he should speak again thus,⁶⁷ my dear: (31)

**vīrāṣṭakapadaṃ divyaṃ dadasva mama śobhanam |
dattaṃ dattaṃ mahāprājña kṣaṇamātraṃ punaḥ smara ||32||**

32b śobhanam] *corr.*; sobhanam A 32c °prājña] *em.*; °prājñaḥ A 32d °mātraṃ punaḥ smara]
conj.; °mātra puna smara(ṇ?) A

“Grant me the beauteous, divine state of the Eight Heroes.” [She replies,] “Granted—
granted, O wise one! Meditate just another moment (?).”⁶⁸ (32)

⁶³ Alternatively, emend *sādhakottamaḥ* (29b) to the vocative and understand 29ab to mean, “You alone are [truly] devoted to the Mother-goddesses, O best of *sādhakas*.”

⁶⁴ Regarding the non-classical sandhi of *siddho tvan* (30b), cf. *satvo trailokyam* in 1c, and see n. 24 above.

⁶⁵ Concerning the non-classical *ātmanepada* present indicative verb *tiṣṭhase* in 31b (by emendation of *tiṣṭha me*), cf. *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* 16.3a (*triṣkālan tiṣṭhase kṣetre*).

⁶⁶ The pronoun *etan* in 31c is nominative (as though *etad*); see EDGERTON 1953: §21.11.

⁶⁷ In 31d, the manuscript reads *evaṃ brūhi brūyāt punaḥ priye*; *brūhi* was probably an error that the scribe recognized but neglected to mark as such.

⁶⁸ The command in 32b is an odd one, and the imperative doubtful; the manuscript may read *smaraṇ*, but the final syllable is faint.

**kṣaṇamātram smared yāva garttāmadhye mahātape |
uttiṣṭhanti mahābhāgā mātaraḥ sapta eva tu ||33||**

33c uttiṣṭhanti] *corr.*; uttiṣṭhanti A

While he meditates for just a moment, O mighty ascetic,⁶⁹ from the pit arise the Seven Mothers themselves, of mighty splendor. (33)

**teṣām aṣṭamako devi bhavate nātra saṁśayaḥ |
gurupādaṁ namaskṛtvā utpate nānyathā kvacit ||34||**

34d nānyathā] *em.*; tanyathā A

He becomes their eighth member, O goddess, without a doubt. After paying reverence to the feet of the guru, he flies up [into the sky]; it is never otherwise.⁷⁰ (34)

**haṭhasāadhanam etad dhi jñāta[5]mātreṇa sidhyati |
tantrajñas sādhamo vīra gurubhaktisamanvitaḥ ||35||**

This is a rite of forceful mastery (*haṭhasādhana*) [over the deities]. By its merely being learned, a heroic *sādhaka* who knows the *tantras* and possesses devotion to the guru attains *siddhi*.⁷¹ (35)

**na japena na homena na vrata-n-niyamena ca |
jñātvā tantram prasādheta haṭhasāadhanam uttamam |
na dātavyaṁ na dātavyaṁ ātmanaḥ siddhim icchatā ||36||**

36c tantram] *em.*; tantra A 36f ātmanaḥ siddhim] *corr.*; ātmana sidhim A (*unmetrical*)

He accomplishes [this] ultimate rite of forceful mastery not by incanting mantras, nor by fire sacrifice, ascetic observance, or rules of conduct, [but only] by learning the *tantra*.⁷² It should never be given away, never be given away by one desiring *siddhi* for himself. (36)

⁶⁹ *mahātape* (33b) is a feminine vocative formed from the stem *mahātapa* (for °*tapas*); see EDGERTON 1953: §16.13.

⁷⁰ The text of 34d is doubtful, the manuscript reading *utpatetanyathā kvacit*. One solution would be to read °*tadyathā*, understanding *utpate* to be an optative verb with its final consonant elided; thus, perhaps, “he flies off somewhere [into the sky], like them.” A more likely solution is to read *utpate nānyathā kvacit* (or *utpaten nānyathā*). The stock phrase *nānyathā kvacit* (“never otherwise”) is common at the end of even verse-quarters.

⁷¹ The sandhi *vīra guru*° (instead of *vīro guru*°) across the pāda-boundary of 35cd is likely original; see the discussion in HATLEY 2018: 433 n. 11.

⁷² The syntax of 36b is problematic; the manuscript’s *na vratan niyamena ca* seems to mean *na vratena*°. This would be hypermetrical, but not implausible. The compound *vrataniyamena* is less likely, leading as it does to light syllables in the verse-quarter’s second and third positions. Another possibility, proposed by Csaba KISS (in unpublished notes shared with the present author), is to understand *vrata-n-niyamena* as a compound with the nasal doubled for metrical purposes—a metrical anusvāra of the kind described by EDGERTON 1953: §2.75.

brahmayāmale garttāyāgo ’ṣṭacatvāriṃśatimaḥ paṭalaḥ ||46||

brahmayāmale garttāyāgo] *conj.*; garttāyāge A • ’ṣṭacatvāriṃśa°] *corr.*; aṣṭacatvārinsa° A

Thus ends the Rite of the Pit, chapter 46 of the *Brahmayāmala*.

References

- Brahmayāmala*. National Archives of Kathmandu ms. no. 3-370 (Nepalese-German Manuscript Preservation Project microfilm reel no. A42/6). Palm-leaf, mid-11th century. Siglum “A.”
- Devīpurāṇa*. Pusphendra Lal SHARMA, ed. *Devī Purāṇam. First Critical Devanāgarī Edition*. Delhi: Lal Bahadur Shastri Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapith, 1976.
- DEZSŐ, Csaba. 2010. “Encounters with Vetālas. Studies on Fabulous Creatures I.” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 63, 4: 391–426. <https://doi.org/10.1556/orient.63.2010.4.1>
- EDGERTON, Franklin. 1953. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, Volume 1: Grammar*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998.
- HATLEY, Shaman. 2018. *The Brahmayāmalatantra or Picumata, Volume I. Chapters 1–2, 39–40, & 83. Revelation, Ritual, and Material Culture in an Early Śaiva Tantra*. Collection Indologie, no. 133 (Early Tantra Series, no. 5). Pondicherry: Institut Français d’Indologie/École française d’Extrême-Orient/Universität Hamburg.
- . 2019. “Sisters and Consorts, Adepts and Goddesses: Representations of Women in the *Brahmayāmala*.” In *Tantric Communities in Context*, ed. by Nina MIRNIG, Marion RASTELLI, and Vincent ELTSCHINGER, pp. 47–80. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences.
- Kaulajñānanirṇaya*. Draft edition of Shaman HATLEY.
- KISS, Csaba. 2015. *The Brahmayāmalatantra or Picumata, Volume II. The Religious Observances and Sexual Rituals of the Tantric Practitioner: Chapters 3, 21, and 45*. Collection Indologie, no. 130 (Early Tantra Series, no. 3). Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École française d’Extrême-Orient/Universität Hamburg.
- Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*. Dominic GOODALL, Alexis SANDERSON, and Harunaga ISAACSON, eds. *The Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā. The Earliest Surviving Śaiva Tantra, Volume I. A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the Mūlasūtra, Uttarasūtra and Nayasūtra*. Pondicherry: Institut français de Pondichéry/École française d’Extrême-Orient/Universität Hamburg, 2015.
- SANDERSON, Alexis. 2006. “The Lākulas: New Evidence of a System Intermediate between Pāñcārthika Pāsupatism and Āgamic Śaivism.” Ramalinga Reddy Memorial Lectures, 1997. *The Indian Philosophical Annual* 24: 143–217.
- . 2009. “The Śaiva Age.” In *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. by Shingo EINO, pp. 41–350. Institute of Oriental Culture Special Series, 23. Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo.
- . 2014. “The Śaiva Literature.” *Journal of Indological Studies* 24 & 25 (2012–13): 1–113.
- SERBAEVA SARAOGI, Olga. 2013. “Can Encounters with Yoginīs in the *Jayadrathayāmala* be Described as Possession?” In *‘Yoginī’ in South Asia: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. by István KEUL, pp. 198–212. Routledge Studies in Asian Religion and Philosophy. London & New York: Routledge.
- . 2016. “Varieties of *melaka* in the *Jayadrathayāmala*. Some Reflections on the Terms *haṭha* and *priya*.” In *Goddess Traditions in Tantric Hinduism*, ed. by Bjarne Wernicke OLESEN, pp. 51–73. London & New York: Routledge.
- Siddhayogeśvarīmata*. Judit TÖRZSÖK, ed. Collection Indologie/Early Tantra Series. Pondicherry: Institut Français d’Indologie/École française d’Extrême-Orient/Universität Hamburg, forthcoming.
- Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa*. Vols. I–II. Hélène BRUNNER, Gerhard OBERHAMMER, and André PADOUX, eds. *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa. Dictionnaire des termes techniques de la littérature hindoue tantrique*.

- Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens, nos. 35 & 44. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000 & 2004.
- . Vol. III. Marion RASTELLI and Dominic GOODALL, eds. Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens, no. 76. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013.
- . Vol. IV. Marion RASTELLI and Dominic GOODALL, eds. Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, forthcoming.
- TÖRZSÖK, Judit. 2011. “Kāpālikas.” In *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vol. III, ed. by Knut A. JACOBSEN et al., pp. 355–61. Leiden: Brill.
- . 2013. “Yoginī and Goddess Possession in Early Śaiva Tantras.” In *‘Yoginī’ in South Asia: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. by István KEUL, pp. 179–97. Routledge Studies in Asian Religion and Philosophy. London & New York: Routledge.
- . 2014. “Women in Early Śākta Tantras: Dūtī, Yoginī and Sādhakī.” *Cracow Indological Studies* 16: 339–67. <https://doi.org/10.12797/CIS.16.2014.16.13>