

The Development of the Rules of Ancestral Rites Performed in Sacred Places:

Examination of the *Tristhalīsetu* and Other Dharmanibandhas

MUSHIGA Tomoka

1. Introduction

Tristhalīsetu (*TSS*) was composed in Banaras in the latter half of the sixteenth century by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa (NB), an outstanding scholar from a well-known family belonging to the Mīmāṃsā school from Maharashtra. The first General Section (Sāmānya-praghaṭṭaka) discusses pilgrimage and rituals performed in *tīrthas* (sacred places), and it is followed by three other sections dealing with individual *tīrthas* (Prayāga, Kāśī, and Gayā). The General Section devotes seven chapters to discussing Tīrtha-śrāddha (ancestral rites performed in sacred places). The longest chapter, titled “Prohibited Elements in Tīrtha-śrāddha,” presents a lengthy argument founded on the interpretation of a verse from the *Devīpurāṇa* quoted at the beginning: “Śrāddha should be done there without the water-offering (for entertaining guests) and invitation of ancestors.” A set of verses from the *Devīpurāṇa*, including the aforementioned, is also discussed in the previous chapter, titled “Śrāddha at a Tīrtha.” In *Tīrthavivekanakāṇḍa* of *Kṛtyakalpataru* by Lakṣmīdhara, the earliest Dharmanibandha (first half of the twelfth century), which deals with *tīrthas* and pilgrimage, this set is quoted as verses from the *Devīpurāṇa* (p. 10)¹⁾; however, the extant *Devīpurāṇa* does not include these. The *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* (*TC*), written by Vācaspati Miśra in Mithilā in the fifteenth century, also cites the same verses from the *Devīpurāṇa* and provides some related discussion. This paper examines the characteristics of the description in the *TSS* by comparing the interpretation of the verses from the *Devīpurāṇa* in *TC* and *TSS*.

That NB referred to *TC* has already been pointed out by R. Salomon (1985, xviii). This paper highlights a few features of the description in the *TSS* that stand out when compared to *TC*: the adoption of relatively loose rules that seem to consider contemporary practices and the use of orthodox Mīmāṃsā to legitimize them. Interesting views about the background against which NB composed *TSS* can be drawn from the consideration that he

was one of the leading pandits in sixteenth-century Banaras. At that time, Banaras was a destination for many ambitious and talented Brahmin migrants, and the Muslim ruler expected their communities to solve various practical sociopolitical matters related to religion (O'Hanlon 2012, 122–123). And the *tīrthas* and pilgrimage were not included as a main subject in Dharma literature before the development of Dharmanibandhas, whose authors tried to redefine pilgrimage as a Vedic and orthodox practice, even though the custom of pilgrimage did not exist in the Vedic period (Jacobsen 2018, 335, 338). I suppose that the authors of Dharmanibandhas may have found validity in discussing *tīrthas* and pilgrimage in relation to the Vedic and orthodox Śrāddha rites to incorporate pilgrimage as a subject of Dharma literature. How does *TSS* discuss Tīrtha-śrāddha, taking into account social needs and citing not only Vedas and Smṛtis but also Purāṇas and Māhātmyas as authorities, in a manner slightly different from the principles of the Mīmāṃsā school? Although no conclusion can be drawn from this comparison, which is small in scope, this paper is the first step in my study of *TSS* and other Dharmanibandhas.

2. Examination of the verses from the *Devīpurāṇa*

2.1. The verses from the *Devīpurāṇa*

śrāddhañ ca tatra kartavyam arghyāvāhanavarjitam / ... / kāle vāpy athavākāle tīrthe śrāddham tathā naraiḥ // prāptair eva ca kartavyam pitṛñām caiva tarpaṇam / ... / (Quoted in *TSS*, pp. 103–104) [Śrāddha should be done there without the water-offering and invitation. ... Śrāddha is to be done at a *tīrtha* by men as soon as they have arrived there, whether at an appropriate or inappropriate time; likewise, Tarpaṇa (libation of water) for the ancestors. ...]

In relation to this set of verses, *TC* and *TSS* examine the “application of the prohibition of invitation at Tīrtha-śrāddha” and the “interpretation of the inappropriate time (*akāla*)” in detail. Regarding the former, as demonstrated in the next section, both *TC* and *TSS* accept the opinion that the prohibition of invitation should apply only to Śrāddha occasioned by arrival on a *tīrtha*, and not generally to Tīrtha-śrāddha. The latter cannot be presented in detail because of space limitations. *TSS*, sometimes citing some Māhātmyas of *tīrthas* as an authority, argues that Tīrtha-śrāddha should be performed at a *tīrtha* even at night or at other times when the performance of Śrāddha is forbidden. Conversely, *TC* says that it should not be done at a forbidden time for any reason and that “inappropriate time” should be interpreted as “when the performance is neither recommended nor forbidden” (pp.

12-13). This is mentioned in *TSS* as the opponent's opinion. In response, *TSS* argues that, if so, the direction contained in the statement from the *Purāṇa* regarding performing Śrāddha at an inappropriate time would become useless because it has already been decided that such performance at a time neither recommended nor forbidden take place on the occasion of arrival at a *tīrtha* (381.2-388.1).

2.2. To which case does invitation prohibition apply?

406-412.3 [NB] The prohibition of invitation should apply only to Śrāddha occasioned by arrival at a *tīrtha*, for the word *tatra* is a causal-locative because the first line forms one continuous sentence through to the fourth line: “Śrāddha is to be done at a *tīrtha* by men as soon as they have arrived there” in the set of verses from the *Devīpurāṇa* (=TC₁).

412.4-5 [Opponent (O)] A causal-locative can be understood only from a sentence. Given that the inflections for a case function (*kāraṇavibhakti*) and independent expression (*śruti*) are stronger, the word *tatra* is a locative of location.

412.6-18 [NB] The word *tatra* is a causal-locative because *tatra* (=tīrtha) cannot be taken as indicating locality by virtue of being *śeṣin*, *aṅgin*, *śeṣa*, or *aṅga*. Since a *tīrtha* is permanent and cannot itself be an occasion, one's arrival there will become the cause.

412.19-20 [O] If the Śrāddha is particularized by the occasion of arrival at a *tīrtha*, and moreover, the invitation of ancestors is prohibited there (two rules are prescribed in one sentence), there will be a split of the sentence (*vākyabheda*).

412.21-414 [NB] Given that the Śrāddha at a *tīrtha* is already particularized and well-known, a split of the sentence does not happen.

414.1 [O] Since the result of the invitation is the ancestors' presence, and they are always present at *tīrthas*, invitation cancellation would apply to any Śrāddha at a *tīrtha* improperly (opinion of an opponent to TC₁).

414.2-4 [NB] The bringing about of their presence is a commendatory statement of cause (*hetvarthavāda*). An invitation may be extended as a courtesy, even when a person is already present, but in the case of Śrāddha occasioned by a *tīrtha*, the invitation is cancelled because it is clearly forbidden in the quoted verses.

414.5-9 [O₁=TC₂] According to the Section of Deities (*Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* IX 1.4.6-10), the presence of the deity is neither physical nor mental. The deity only exists in the form of words. The invitation is extended not to induce the presence of the deity but for an invisible purpose (*adṛṣṭa*); thus, there would be no modification (*ūha*) of the invitation *mantra*.

414.10–423.7 [O₂] (Opposition of O₁) According to the testimonies from the Vedas, the gods and ancestors are present in the performer's mind. What is denied in the Section of Deities is that the deity is the main matter (*prādhānya*) in a ritual. The deity is subordinate to a ritual (*guṇa*). The Section of Deities refutes the five elements of a deity, such as the body, to establish the deity as a subordinate, so that the modification of the *mantra* may take place. The main matter in a ritual is the transcendental result (*apūrva*).

423.8–442.6 [O₃] According to the testimonies from the Vedas, the results of Śrāddha are brought to the ancestors; thus, the ancestors are the main matter of a ritual, while the gods are subordinate to it. (Hereafter, oppositions and insistences of NB continue.)

442.8–449.2 [NB₁] The presence of the deity in the performer's mind is not brought about by invitation (opposition to O₂). The testimonies enumerated by O₂ and the invitation *mantras* newly enumerated here prove the presence of the deity, not in the mind but in reality.

449.3–10 [NB₂₋₁] Both gods and ancestors are subordinate to the ritual (opposition to O₃). If the deity is the ritual's main matter, the modification of *mantras* will be impossible.

449.11–460.1 [NB₂₋₂] According to the testimonies from the Vedas, no difference can be established between the function of gods and that of ancestors (opposition to O₃).

460.2–461.5 [NB₂₋₃] The deities of Śrāddha are not only ancestors but Vasus, etc. (divine ancestors); these other kind of ancestors are also merely subordinates to the ritual.

461.6–462.5 [NB₃] One should not consider the presence of ancestors to be brought about by the invitation. Otherwise, it would be cancelled in any Tīrtha-śrāddha. It cannot also be said that an invitation should be extended in all the Tīrtha-śrāddha because it has an invisible purpose connected with the restriction (*niyamādṛṣṭa*) of *tīrtha*; when the visible result (the presence of ancestors) is dropped, the invisible result should also be dropped.

462.6–463.2 [NB₄] One should show coherence regarding whether they deny the existence of the five elements, such as the deity's body. This view may be an objection to O₂, which refutes O₁ based on the presence of the deity in the performer's mind, simultaneously denying the existence of the deity's five elements to make the deity subordinate to the ritual. The following discussion (463.3–502.3) seems to insist on the possibility of modification of the *mantras* in a different way than O₂, but it is omitted here due to space limitations. NB proves that *mantras* can be modified under certain conditions.

3. Conclusion

In the above discussion, *TSS* recognizes the presence of ancestors in a ritual, which *TC* clearly denies. Referring to Yoshimizu (2008), it can be understood that *TC* is closer to the established theory of the Mīmāṃsā school. In contrast to *TC*, which states that there is no modification of the *mantra* of invitation, *TSS* argues in great detail that *mantra* modification is allowed under certain conditions. Generally, *TSS* discusses the problems that people may face when actually performing Śrāddha at a *tīrtha* with respect to a variety of topics to a greater extent than *TC*, while also providing clear solutions to these potential problems, thereby reconciling the orthodox Mīmāṃsā approach with contemporary customs and people's feelings. We have only examined a small part of *TSS*. This view, which is currently only speculation, should be verified by examining *TSS* as a whole in the future.

Notes

1) The only set of verses cited under the topic of Tīrtha-śrāddha in the *Smṛticandrikā* (pp. 451–452) is very similar to the verses from the *Devīpurāṇa*, even though the author gives their source as the *Matsyapurāṇa*. Under the topic of Tīrtha-śrāddha in the *Śrāddhakalpa* of *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* (pp. 1568–1581), all the verses are cited in pieces, as from the *Matsyapurāṇa* or *Padmapurāṇa*.

Abbreviations

TC *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* of Vācaspati Miśra. Ed. Kamalakṛṣṇa Smṛtītīrtha. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1912. *TSS* See Salomon 1985.

Bibliography

Jacobsen, Knut A. 2018. "Pilgrimage: *tīrthayātrā*." In *Hindu Law: A New History of Dharmaśāstra*, ed. Patrick Olivelle and Donald R. Davis, Jr., 335–346. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

O'Hanlon, Rosalind. 2012. "Speaking from Siva's Temple: Banaras Scholar Households and the Brahman 'ecumene' of Mughal India." In *Religious Cultures in Early Modern India*, ed. Rosalind O'Hanlon and David Washbrook, 121–145. London and New York: Routledge.

Salomon, Richard. 1985. *The Bridge to the Three Holy Cities: The Sāmānya-praghaṭṭaka of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's Tristhalīsetu*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Yoshimizu Kiyotaka 吉水清孝. 2008. "Saishiki no naka no kamigami" 祭式のなかの神々. *Ronshū* 論集 35: 79–100.

(This research was supported in part by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 20J00499.)

Key words Hinduism, Dharmanibandha, Tīrtha, Śrāddha, Early Modern

(JSPS Research Fellow, Kyoto University, PhD)