A Ritual Explanation Concealing Its Name:

Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā I 9 (*caturhoṭṣ* Chapter)

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1. Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā I 9

Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā (MS) I 9 is called *caturhoṭṣ* chapter. *Caturhoṭṣ* is the name of a formula *pr̥thivī hótā, dyáur adhvaryús, tváṣṭāgnín, mitrá upavaktā*, and when it is used in plural, it represents the *caturhoṭṣ, pañcahoṭṣ, saptahoṭṣ*, and *daśahoṭṣ* formulas.¹⁾ This chapter teaches the use of the *caturhoṭṣ* formulas in the *śrauta* rituals, but these formulas are, quite strangely, mentioned nowhere in MS except I 9. That means the use of the *caturhoṭṣ* formulas was not generally accepted at the time of composing the main part of MS.²⁾ This chapter contains also esoteric rites that have never been identified with any *śrauta* ritual until now. This paper will provide a new finding that the *caturhoṭṣ* chapter contains the teaching about *sattra*, *dvādaśāha*, and *mahāvratā* that are not orthodox-*śrauta* rituals.³⁾ These are dealt not in MS, but in the *sattra* chapters of Kaṭha- and Taittirīya-Saṃhitā (KS and TS). In § 3 below the contents of the *caturhoṭṣ* chapter in MS are contrasted with those of the *sattra* chapters in KS and TS.

2. Mahāvratā

Before examining the texts, I will provide the background information about *sattra*, *dvādaśāha*, and *mahāvratā*. We can reconstruct a ritual cycle of the year-long *sattra* (*gavāmayana sattra*), that ends at the end of the year. It concludes with the twelve-day rite (*dvādaśāha*) that includes ten nights (*daśarātra*) and the next day after that, i.e., the 11th day of the twelve days as well as the penultimate day from the year end, that is, the *mahāvratā* day,⁴⁾ at which a kind of new-year rite is performed. This *mahāvratā* rite is known with some characteristic ritual actions: ritualistic sexual intercourse, recitation of special *sāmans* and “*mahad uktha*,” and riding on a swing by a *hoṭṣ*.⁵⁾

3. Contents of MS I 9

Here I will show important passages from MS I 9 in contrast with the descriptions about *sattra*, *dvādaśāha*, and *mahāvratā* from KS 33–34 (*sattra* chapter; 34,6–13 *dvādaśāha*), TS VII 3,1–10 (*sattra* chapter; VII 3,1–3 *dvādaśāha* and *mahāvratā*), KS 30,5 ~ MS IV 8,10 (end of *soma* chapter; *gavāmayana*, containing *mahāvratā*), Āpastambha-Śrautasūtra (ĀpŚS) 21,1–14 (*dvādaśāha*), and Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra (BŚS) 18,24–26 (*vrātyastoma*).

3.1. Creation by Prajāpati and Gods' *sattra* with *caturhotṛs*

MS I 9,3(1):132,7–18⁶⁾ (~ KS 9,11:112,10–113,1) *prajāpatiṛ vā ēka āsīt. . . . sá dāśahotāraṃ yajñām ātmānaṃ vyādhatta. {sá cītiṃ śrúcam ākuruta, cittám ājyaṃ, vācam védim, . . . } sá daśadhātmanāṃ vidhāya mithunāṃ kṛtvāyātanam aichat. sá vāi trivṛta evā prāṇān āyātanam acāyat. tāiḥ prajā asṛjata= ūrdhva údatṛṇat pūrvapakṣāḥ pañcadaśás. téna devān asṛjata.*

Prajāpati was the only one. . . . Then he partitioned himself as sacrifice into ten constituents. {He made his recognition a spoon, what he recognizes butter, his voice *vedi*, . . . (deformed from the *daśahotṛ* formula)}. He partitioned himself into ten constituents, made a coupling, and looked for a hold place. He noticed threefold (*trivṛt*) breaths as his hold place. He created creature with them. The first half consisting 15 parts went off upwards. He created gods with it. MS I 9,3(2):132,18–133,2 (~ KS 9,11:113,1–4) . . . *sá vā índram 'evántār ātmān āyātanam acāyat. sá [índram gacha, svāhā=] íty āpānad. vīryaṃ vāi prāṇó. vīryam índro. vīrya evā vīryam ajuhot.*

Then he (Prajāpati) noticed Indra in his body as his hold place [to offer]. So he breathed in, [saying:] “Go to Indra! *svāhā!*” The breath is power, Indra is power. He offered power in power.

MS I 9,4(1): 133,3–7 (~ KS 9,11:113,4–7) *té vāi caturhotāro nyāsīdant sómagṛhapatayā “índram janayiṣyāmā” íti. {pr̥thivī hótāsīd, dyāur adhvaryús, . . . } té vā etáu grāhā agr̥hṇata . . . tá ekaviṃśám āyātanam acāyaṃś. ténéndram ajanayan.*

They (the gods) **sat down [at a *sattra*]** with four priests and Soma **playing the role of *gṛhapati***, [wishing:] “We **will bring forth** Indra!” {The *hotṛ* was the earth, the *adhvaryu* [was] the heaven, . . . (deformed from the *caturhotṛ* formula)}. They drew these two drawings. . . . They noticed the *ekaviṃśa* [*stotra*] as their hold place. [Using] it, he **brought forth** Indra.

MS I 9,4(2): 133,7–11 (~ KS 9,11:113,7–10) *tá índram janayitvābruvant: “svār ayāma=” íti. té vāi pāñcahotāro nyāsīdan váruṇagṛhapatayas. . . . té triṇavám āyātanam acāyan. . . .*

They brought forth Indra and said: “Let’s go to heaven!” They **sat down [at a *sattra*]** with five priests and Varuṇa as ***gṛhapati***. . . . They noticed the *triṇava* [*stotra*] as their hold place.

MS I 9,5(1):135,6–12 (~ KS 9,12:114,20–115,8) *té vāi ‘svār yāntas . . . té vāi sapṭáhotāro nyāsīdann aryamāgṛhaspatayas. . . . té trayastriṃśám āyātanam acāyan. . . .*

As they were coming to the sun, . . . They **sat down [at a *sattra*]** with seven priests and Aryaman as ***gṛhapati***. . . . They noticed the *trayastriṃśa* [*stotra*] as their hold place. . . .

This myth explaining the origin of the *caturhotṛs* takes the matter of the gods' *sattra*, that is implicated by the words *nī-śad* and *gr̥hapati*. In the myth the gods brought forth Indra, which accords with the thinking that a *sattra* serves to bring forth (*jan*¹) something.⁷⁾ A passage using these words is found in KS *sattra* chapter:

KS 33,1:27,1–3 (~ TS VII 5,1,1 = VII 5,2,1) *gāvo vai sattram āsata śṛṅgāṇi siśāsantīḥ. tāsāṃ daśame māsi śṛṅgāṇy ajāyanta. tā abruvan “... taṃ kāmam arutsmahi yasmai kāmāya nyasādāma=” iti.*

At the gods' *sattras*, “two soma drawings” are performed. This probably corresponds with the *vaiśvakarmaṇa* and *āditya-graha* at the *mahāvratā*:

KS 30,5:187,13–18 (~ MS IV 8,10:119,13–120,2) *yad vaiśvakarmaṇo gr̥hyate, 'muṣya lokasyābhijityai. . . ādityaṃ śvo gr̥hṇīran. . . tā ubhau saha mahāvrate gr̥hyete* (~ BŚS 16,18)

It serves to win the yonder world that the *vaiśvakarmaṇa* [*graha*] is drawn. . . Next morning they should draw the *āditya* [*graha*]. . . The both should be drawn together at the *mahāvratā* day.

In each *sattra* scene the gods notice a *stotra* as *āyātana*:- *trivṛt*-, *ekaviṃśá*-, *triṇavá*-, and *trayastrīṃśá*-. And the number of participants at each *sattra* is 21 (15 gods + 4 priests + 1 *gr̥hapati* + Indra), 27 (these 21 + 5 priests + 1 *gr̥hapati*), then 35 (these 27 + 7 priests + 1 *gr̥hapati*). The similar way to increase number is seen in the *sattra* chapter:⁸⁾

KS 34,9:43,3–19 (participants at *dvādaśāha*) *dvādaśa dikṣeran . . . trayodaśa dikṣeran . . . pañcadaśa dikṣeran . . .* (then *saptadaśa*, *ekaviṃśatir*, *caturviṃśatir*, *saptaviṃśatir*, *triṃśad*, *trayastrīṃśad*, . . .).

3.2. Breath Offering

MS I 9,6(1): 137,12 *prāṇyāpāned. apānā eva prāṇam juhoti.*

He (the sacrificer) should breathe out and in. He offers breath in the breath he takes in.

A breath offering is referred to also in I 9,3(2) (3.1 above).⁹⁾ This rite found nowhere else, but the *sattra* chapter in KS and TS (KS 33,7:32,10–13 ~ TS VII 5,6,2, KS 34,8:42,12–14 ~ TS VII 2,9¹⁰⁾) mentions some relation between breath control and *sattra*.

3.3. Observance of the One *hotṛ*

I 9,7(1):138,12 (KS 9,15:117,11–12) *caturṇām ékaḥ saṃvatsarām náśnīyāt. tād vratām.*

One of the four [*hotṛs*] should not eat [usual] food for one year. This is his observance.

It probably tells about obligation of the leader at a *sattra*. It corresponds to BŚS 18,24

explaining *vrātyastoma*, that has the same origin as *sattra*:¹¹⁾

BŚS 18,24 *te yam abhisamjānate, tañ sthapatim kurvanti. sa eṣāṃ vratāni carati.*

They make him to whom they consent be a *sthapati*. [Only] he among them keeps the observances.

MS I 9,7 can be understood as the discussion about the leader of *sattra*. I 9,7(2) can indicate a scene of selecting a leader:

MS I 9,7(2b):138,16–17 *ātha yāu viśāpeyātām “aham bhūyo veda=, aham bhūyo veda=” ity, eṣā vā vā bhūyo veda, yās caturhotṛn veda.*

And when each of two people declares “I know more,” “I know more,” the one who knows the *caturhotṛ* formulas actually knows more.

Heesterman (1993, 169) treats *brahmodya* (riddle about *brahman*) as a contest to choose a leader of *hotṛs*. ĀpŚS 21,10,12–11,12 describes this scene in *dvādaśāha*.

Hotṛ in the context of *sattra* probably has a special meaning, different from its usual naming of “priest from an Ṛgveda family.” The *caturhotṛ* chapter indicates to replace *uktha* (recitation of *ṛc*) with *caturhotṛ* formula (see 3.4 below), which means that a *hotṛ* with his usual role is not needed in this ritual.

3.4. Sarparājñī’s *ṛc* and *uktha*

MS I 9,7(3):138,19–139,3 (~ KS 9,15:117,13–19) *caturhotārañ vaded daśamé ’hann ānnakāmó. ’nnañ vāi caturhotāró. ’nto daśamám āhar. āntam evā gatvānnādyam āvarunddhe. . . . iyām vāi sarparājñī. tāsya vā etád ukthām, yác caturhotāro. hótā vadati. stutām vā etád ānuśaṃsati.*

He should speak out the *caturhotṛ* formula at the tenth day if he wishes food. The *caturhotṛ* formula is food, the tenth day is the end. He ensures his own food after he reaches the end. . . . Sarparājñī is this [earth] here. It is *uktha* for it (the Sarparājñī’s *ṛc*) what are *caturhotṛ* formulas. The *hotṛ* speaks them out. **He recites *śastra* after *stotra* is sung in this way.**

It corresponds exactly to KS 34,2 and TS VII 3,1,3 describing the *mahāvratā*:

KS 34,2:37,2–4 *tañ dakṣiṇārdhe ’vedyā nidhāya sarparājñyā ṛgbhis stuyur. iyañ vai sarparājñy. asyā evainam adhisamirayanti. tad āhur “vyṛddham vā etád, yat stutam ananuśastam” iti.*

After putting it on the southern half of the *vedi*, they should sing *stotra* with Sarparājñī’s *ṛc*. Sarparājñī is this [earth] here. They move it from this [earth] here. According to this, people say: **“*stotra* was sung [but] no *śastra* is recited after that: it is failed.”**

TS VII 3,1,3 *ātha vā etád sarparājñyā ṛgbhī stuvanti. . . . ātha brāhma vadanti.*

And they sing *stotra* with Sarparājñī’s *ṛc* in this way. . . . And they speak out *brahman*.

Corresponding to the regular series of *stotra* sung by an *udgātṛ* priest and *śastra* (or *uktha*) recited by a *hotṛ* priest, Sarparājñī's *ṛc* and the *caturhotṛ* formulas are used in the situation described above. Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa (AB) V 23 (*caturhotṛ*) and ĀpŚS 21,10,5–6 (*dvādaśāha*) exactly follow these old texts. KS 34,5:38,19–20 (~ TS VII 5,8,5) indicates the use of *mahāvra* (*sāman*) as *stotra* and *mahad uktha*, that provides the classical form of recitation at the *mahāvra* rite. The use of Sarparājñī's *ṛc* and the *caturhotṛ* formulas is probably an old variation.

3.5. *Sambhāra* Formula

MS I 9,8(1a):139,4–11 *devās ca vā āsurās cāspardhanta. . . té devā abruvann: “étemāñ yajñāñ tirá upáry āsurebhyas tañsyāmahā” iti. tám etāvañśā ādāyōdakraṁann, {agnír yájurbhiḥ, savitā stómai, índra ukthāmadāir, bṛhaspātis chāndobhir} iti. tám tirá upáry āsurebhyo ‘tanvata.*

Gods and Asuras were competing. . . The gods said: “Come on! We will pitch this sacrifice over across the Asuras. They went up with it in hand in this way: {Agni with *yajus*, Savitṛ with *stomas*, Indra with *ukthas* and *madas*, Bṛhaspati with *meters*}. They pitched it over across the Asuras. . .

This myth explains the origin of *sambhāra* formula (MS I 9,2:132,1–3 *agnír yájurbhiḥ savitā stómais. . .*) that corresponds to the part enclosed in {}. The use of this formula is prescribed in I 9,8(1b):139,11–15 *etāir evā juhuyāt. . .*,¹²⁾ but MS does not use the word *sambhāra*- or the verb *sám-bhar*, while the *caturhotṛ* and *dvādaśāha* passages in KS do:

KS 9,15:177,21–118,1 *athaite sambhārās. . . te devā yajñam ādāya vyàkrāmañs. tam upari samabharan;* KS 34,7:41,5–9 *upasadbhīr yajñāñ samabharanta.*

What is prepared with this formula is not clear. Possibly the passage about making a special seat at *mahāvra* in Atharva-Veda (AV) *vrātya* hymn tells the same situation:

AV 15,3,2–6 *só 'bravid āsandīm me sám bharantv iti //2// tásmāi vrātyāyāsandīm sám abharan //3// . . . ṛcaḥ práñcas tántavo yájūñṣi tiryāñcaḥ //6//*

He said: Let them bring together a settle for me. For that *Vrātya* they brought together a settle. . . The verses (*ṛc*) the forward cords (*tántu*), the sacrificial formulas (*yájus*) the cross ones. (trans. Parpola 2015, 136–137)

3.6. *Patnī* Formula

MS I 9,8(2a):139,15–18 *daśñinató vái devāñ āsurā yajñam ajayañs. tá údañcaḥ pátñibhiḥ sahāgnīdhraṁ práviśañs. tán pátñibhiḥ sahā ‘prakśāya ‘jīhriyató ‘surā apāvartanta. táñs táta evāñūthāyājayañs.*

Asuras won the sacrifice from gods, from south. They went northwards into the *āgnīdhra* hall

with their wives. Asuras watched them with the wives and turned away because they got ashamed. [The gods] stood up from there and won against them.

The myth explains the origin of *patnī* formula (MS I 9,2:132,4–6). A similar myth is told in Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa (JB) II 69–70, the *mahāvratā* chapter:

JB II 69 *tena mṛtyum ajayat. tasya parājitasya rājāśūcyat. sa pratyani patniśālām prāpadyata.*

Therewith he defeated Mṛtyu. When defeated, his soma wasted away. Falling backwards, to the western end of the sacrificial arena, he took refuge in the hall of the women (*patniśālā*). (trans. Heesterman 1993, 54–56)

As mentioned in § 2 above, ritualistic sexual intercourse is performed at the *mahāvratā*. It is prescribed in KS 34,5:39,12. It is not explicit in MS, but the sexual scene in the *patnīs*’ myth can implicate it.

MS I 9,8(2b):140,3–4 indicates the use of the *patnī* formula at the offerings for Tvaṣṭṛ and the *patnīs*. It corresponds to the offering of a sacrificial animal for Tvaṣṭṛ at the *dvādaśāha*/*mahāvratā* in KS 34,2:36,21–22 and JB II 155.

4. Intension to Conceal the Names of *sattrā* and *mahāvratā*

We have confirmed the ritual actions of *sattrā* and *mahāvratā* in MS I 9. But we did not find these words themselves. What is peculiar in this chapter is also the way of embedding mantras into sentences of myths: the passages enclosed in { } in 3.1 above are deformed from *mantras*.¹³⁾ It can indicate an intentional secrecy. The chapter is ostensibly the teaching to use *caturhotṛ* formulas in regular *śrauta* rituals, but the passages on it (I 9,5(2)–(4) and I 9,6(2)–(7)) are quite formal and full of repeated phrases. They seem to just varnish over the secret knowledge.¹⁴⁾

Now the question arises, why. It can be due to the non-orthodox background of *sattrā* and *mahāvratā*, namely the so-called *vṛātya* culture.¹⁵⁾ MS I 9 shows the trace of an attempt to embed a non-orthodox ritual into the context of the orthodox *śrauta* ritual.

Notes

1) These are gathered in MS I 9,1–2, KS 9,8–10, Taittiriya-Āraṇyaka III; see Voegeli 2002, 157–178.

2) MS I 9 shows some non-orthodox character in its language, style, ritual, and thinking, and can belong to a new wave that occurred at the younger period in MS; see Amano 2016, 58–60, 63–64; forthcoming [1] and [2]; Rolland 1970, 262–263.

- 3) The “*caturhotṛ* rite” is said to have a character of house ritual or to be performed by a nonqualified *śrauta* sacrificer: *Mānava-Śrautasūtra* 9,5,5,1–2 *caturhotṛkagonāmike* . . . *anāhitāgnih pākayajñopacāram agnim upacarati*; KS 9,15:117,12 *eṣā vā anāhitāgner iṣtir, yac caturhotāras* (= ĀpŚS 14,13,2; see Rolland 1970, 261–262).
- 4) See ĀpŚS 21,17,1 with Caland 1969; Parpola 1983, 49–51; 2015, 250.
- 5) See Rolland 1973.
- 6) Original text with corrections and translation is provided in Amano 2009, 327–352.
- 7) MS IV 5,9: 76,17–19 *tisrò 'janayata* . . . *dhānus* and TS I 6,11,3–4 *purovātām ajanayan, vidyūtam* . . .
- 8) Cf. KS 34,13,45,11–20 and KS 33,8:34,16–35,4.
- 9) This was developed to the later bloomed discussion about breath offering and *agnihotra*; see Sakamoto (Gotō) 2007, 484–428 (155)–(211).
- 10) See Amano 2016, 41.
- 11) See Falk 1986, 30–49; Amano 2016, 35.
- 12) ĀpŚS 21,4,7 prescribes the use of *saṃbhāra yajus* at the *dvādaśāha*.
- 13) See Amano 2016, 59–60.
- 14) Cf. AB V 23,7 *devānām vā etad yajñīyaṃ guhyaṃ nāma yac caturhotāras*; see Rolland 1970, 262.
- 15) See Heesterman 1962; Falk 1986; Parpola 2012, 2015; Mucciarelli 2015, 65–69; Amano 2016.

Abbreviations

- AV *Atharvaveda (Śaunaka) with the Padapāṭha and Sāyaṇācārya's Commentary*. Ed. Vishva Bandhu et al. 4 pts. Hoshiarpur: Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, 1960–1964.
- JB *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda*. Ed. Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra. Sarasvati Vihāra Series 31. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986.

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- . Forthcoming [1]. “Saishiki o urazukeru ‘chishiki’ o megutte: Kovēdasaisihiki bunken ni okeru yā evām vidvān / veda no shiyōhō to tetsugakushisō no hatten” 祭式を裏付ける「知識」を巡って: 古ヴェーダ祭式文献における yā evām vidvān / veda の使用法と哲学思想の発展. *Machikaneyama ronsō: Tetsugaku-hen* 待兼山論叢: 哲学篇 50: 29–56.
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