Translation of the Kāśī Māhātmya

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Note:

All quotation marks have been inserted into the nāgarī by the translator to delineate instances of direct speech. The text has been transcribed verbatim, with more obvious errors in orthography or grammar or spelling — particularly those which affect meaning — corrected in footnotes. Punctuation and missing particles have been inserted in square brackets. A nāgarī full stop appears like this [।] Translation follows the noted corrections. The text uses a mixture of Hindi, Sanskrit and even English writing conventions. Most terms are presented with Sanskrit transliteration conventions, meaning that terminal “a” is not dropped. Therefore darṣan and darśana are the same term, with the former reflecting Hindi pronunciation and transliteration, the latter Sanskrit. Apologies for any enduring inconsistencies in the following.

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Preface:

The following is an English translation of a pilgrimage guidebook collected in Banaras by the translator in June, 2014. The same cover design, with presumably the same content, was available in other Indian languages (i.e. Bengali and Tamil). This text was selected for translation because its content, presentation, and availability suggest that it is a resource designed for and used by Hindi-speaking pilgrims who visit Kāśī. The text describes the greatness of the city as a holy place, and relates stories of those saved by visiting it. It also describes, in a rather haphazard fashion, a liturgy of deities to be visited as one proceeds around or through the kṣetra, the sacred region (lit. field), of Kāśī.

The Hindi used throughout this booklet is highly Sanskritized, lending the text an air of formality, authority, authenticity, and traditionalism. The guide is sprinkled with ślokas, most of which are in pseudo-Sanskrit. Sometimes, Sanskrit euphonic morphology (sandhi) is implemented, but inconsistently, and often incorrectly. The most common errors appear to be orthographic, rather than a misapplication of rules.

Though I did not encounter an English version of the same booklet, it is likely that one exists. The price and language are both designed only in English on the cover on this Hindi version. This leads me to believe that while the book is published in Vārāṇasī, it is handled by a group with a more general audience in mind. It seems unlikely that the editing and typesetting was handled by a group familiar with Hindi: there are dozens of small, obvious errors throughout the pamphlet. I would go so far as to say that those who prepared the text could not really read nāgarī, as many of the errors are orthographic: combinations which look the same if you aren’t familiar with the script, but are glaringly obvious if you are. For example, there are many instances where को is written in lieu of की। These particles are both common in Hindi, but have very different meanings and uses: the first is an accusative oblique marker, the second is a genitive particle. Not only is the difference obvious to literate Hindi speakers, the meaning of a sentence would be radically changed by substituting one for another, and it would be obvious to an experienced reader that something wasn’t quite right. Other examples involve errors which generate non-existent words or all but unpronounceable combinations. Take ḍḍhāra द्धार vs.

1 The script in which Hindi, and Sanskrit, are most commonly written.
2 Sung verses, presented in meter, usually with religious content, often affiliated with Hindu traditions.
3 Language: “Hindi.” Price: “Rs. 8.00.”
duārā vs. dvārā, for example. Here, the first conjunct looks somewhat similar to the third, but a ddh* combination usually appears in the middle of a word, and there is no such term as “ddhārā.” The second example is impossible in Sanskrit and does not appear in Hindi: a long vowel followed by a long vowel in this manner would result in one of them being written in full matra form in Hindi, while the sounds would undergo sandhi in Sanskrit.

The booklet’s errors are sometimes phonetic — more common and expected errors such as using a short vowel instead of a long one — but there are so many instances of non-phonetic errors that I do not think the typesetter was a fluent Hindi speaker with a poor sense of spelling. It almost appears that a form of optical character recognition was used to pull copy from other sources, and that it was then cut and pasted without careful proofreading. This would account for the errors of orthographic similarity: a computer might think that की was को, especially if the original copy wasn’t particularly clear.

Beyond phonetic and orthographic errors, there is the issue of sentence division. Often, sentences are stacked one after the other. Sometimes, there are commas used to subdivide units of text. The variation across sections — some well punctuated, some punctuated with English conventions (commas), and some not punctuated at all — leads me to propose that this text was indeed compiled from many sources, most of which were originally scanned. This would account for the irregularity of the errors, and the fact that some portions are well curated while others are not. The content of the sections upholds this proposition: some of the sections deal with stories told in Banaras, some with descriptions of its greatness, and some describe the order of ritual to be observed.

In spite of these errors, this work might well serve as an experiential artifact for pilgrims. Perhaps having a copy is more important than applying specifically the details presented in it. It could be a memento of sorts: an artifact that can be taken home after the pilgrimage, to demonstrate to others and remind oneself of the ritual visit undertaken. Perhaps it is a sense of the language used, rather than the specifics of its meaning, that are important for the pilgrim’s experience. The fact that it looks like Sanskrit, and that the cover holds images of important sites in Kāśī, suggests that it might be important as an object in addition to, or even more than, a text. This is reinforced by the fact that the image of the most important liṅgam to visit in Kāśī (according to the text) is represented twice on the cover: once in an illustration as part of the set of 12 liṅgams most important to visitors of Kāśī, and once photographically, with a cartoon Śiva’s energy radiating onto it. This photographic image is labelled “darśana,” emphasizing the importance of sight to the pilgrim’s experience. Not only is it important to take darśana while on pilgrimage to the city; the cover itself is a form of darśan. If darśan can be taken of a drawn representation of a deity, how much better a photographic capture must be. In this way, the guide is a devotional object unto itself, but one which suggests through its hierarchy of — 1) text (and instructions); 2) drawing; 3) photo — a trajectory propelling the pilgrim toward the real-world Kāśī Viśvanātha liṅgam. This guidebook is then not merely an accessory: it is designed to potentially function as a ritual object in its own right, as well as a component integral to the layers of ritual experience of pilgrims in Kāśī.

4 It is possible that English is a preferred medium for guidebooks as it is a non-region-specific language spoken all over India, and a language of the learned, knowledge of which indicates class. This could be a contributing factor to the presentation of details on the cover in English, as well as the relative difficulty of finding a Hindi guide, when there were many other guides available in English.

5 Darśana is a mode of religious, ritual interaction between a devotee and a deity with an emphasis on the visual (as opposed to the aural, oral, tactile, etc.). Seeing is therefore central.
obverse.
reverse.
The Greatness of the Recitation Cycle of the Pañcakroṣṭi pilgrimage, Kāśī and Sārnāth Guide Included

There are 13 images of liṅgas on the cover. Twelve of the liṅgas are artists’ renderings of the most important liṅgas for pilgrims to visit while in Kāśī. Inside these liṅgas, Śiva is depicted with his consort standing in front of the golden roof of the Kāśī Viśvanāth mandir, which houses the Kāśī Viśvanāth liṅga. In front of them is a photograph of that liṅga, which is labelled “Śrī Kāśī Viśvanātha darśana.” The importance of this image being a photograph is discussed above. The liṅgas are, clockwise from top left,

- Śrī Mallikārjuna
- Śrī Nāgeśvara
- Śrī Rāmeśvara
- Śrī Viśvanātha
- Śrī Trayambakeśvara
- Śrī Kedāranātha

Śrī (Śrī) can have many meanings. As a proper noun, it is the name of a Goddess. When combined with the name of a male deity, the term denotes the presence the female energy which makes effective the actions of the male deity. Although indistinct (i.e. integrated with the male form of the deity) she is understood to be present. As an adjective, Śrī can mean blessed, holy, lavish, exalted, or lord. Śrī Kāśī, then, can mean “Holy/Blessed Kāśī” or “The Goddess Kāśī.” Śrī Viśvanātha can mean “Lord Viśvanātha,” or “Lord Viśvanātha imbued with the effective power of the Goddess Śrī.” In the following, I have most often translated Śrī as an honorific particle, but it always carries a multiplicity of meaning.

Pāṃcakroṣṭi

This is a transliteration of the English word “guide,” a use which does not fit with the high-Hindi of much of the rest of the booklet.

The term used is rudrākṣa, meaning “eye of Rudra.” It is a type of seed held to have protective and purificatory qualities. Here, it is a synecdochal reference to a looped string of these seeds used to count off recitations of certain prayers of mantras, somewhat similar to the use of a rosary.

Literally “five kroṣṭa,” a kroṣṭa being a unit of measure around 3.5 or 4 miles. This refers to the length of the pilgrimage circuit around Kāśī, which passes by Sārnāth. Sometimes, in Hindi, the term has become “paṃc kośṭi,” with the terminal “a” of “paṃc” dropped as is common in Hindi, and the “r” dropped from “kośṭi,” perhaps due to orthography. I have heard this modified term interpreted as “five doorways,” but the definition based on distance is supported both textually and by contemporary vernacular explanation.
The back of this booklet is also brightly covered, and depicts Śiva as a mendicant, receiving alms of porridge from Kāśī Annapūrṇā Devī. Below the image, the address of the publishing house is listed in Roman letters. The address is in the middle of Kāśī, making the irregularity of the Hindi in this pamphlet curious indeed. There are thousands of people in Kāśī who read and write Hindi beautifully, and it seems likely that literate pilgrims would also notice many of these inconsistencies. Again, this points to the importance of the booklet as an object rather than as a text itself. Its exterior is bright and glossy, with images that would be important to pilgrims. It is also true that Hindu, particularly Sanskrit-derived, tradition holds that the authoritative text is in the mind and upon the tongue of a paṇḍit, and not necessarily in a book. There is no shortage of such paṇḍits to recite pertinent verses and instruct pilgrims in their ritual and journey.
Bracketed by Sanskrit full-stops, the mantra above the image reads “Oṃ namaḥ Śivāya,” meaning, very roughly, “blessings be, praises to Śiva.” While discerning and explaining the meaning of Oṃ can be a life’s work unto itself, what is important to recognize about this phrase is that it is often chanted by devotees (it is a candidate for the tāraka mantra, discussed below), and it here consecrates the presentation of this māhātmya and dedicates it to Śiva.

The image is of Śiva as an ascetic, meditating while seated upon a tiger skin, with the Gaṅga flowing from his hair. Just as Śiva is joined by the Gaṅga, so too does the Gaṅga join Kāśi by creating one of the city’s borders and being home to its most holy sites.

The following śloka, presented in pseudo-Sanskrit, dedicates the presentation to God, implicitly Śiva.

समुद्रः सुगिन्धत सुमन ले सुमन सु-भिक्ति सुवारः।
पुष्पाञ्जीलि अर्पण करूँ देव! करी स्वीकार।।

Partake of the brilliant, fragrant ocean; that glorious writ adorned with righteous devotion (सु-भिक्ति),
Let me approach with cupped hands full of flowers; Oh Lord! Accept this offering!

श्री काशी माहात्म्य — The Blessed Majesty of Kāśi

**Interior Text**

11 समुद्र
12 This is a Hindi imperative form, quite out of place in this Sanskritized verse.
13 सुवार
Translation of the Kāśī Māhātmya

First Portion

Once upon a time, Lomaśādi and his retinue of sages asked the blissful Saint Bhṛgu, who was seated upon the banks of the Narmadā river, to tell them about the Blessed Majesty of the Land of Kāśī. Overjoyed, the cliff-saint began his description, saying, “Oh Great Sages! The primordial linga of Lord Viśvanātha is the abode of Lord Śiva, by whose power any sinful-self that leaves its body in the revered Kāśī will assuredly achieve a state of liberation (मुिक्ति).

Kāśī: those who demolish their gargantuan sin by uttering this word will surely obtain liberation by the acquisition of understanding.

Blessed are those who eternally dwell in the realm of Kāśī.

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14 पाप + आत्मा. The first component of this word, pāpa, is often translated as “sin” or “sinful.” The term sin has specific networks of meaning attached to it due to its use in Jewish and Christian theology, and these networks should not be presumed to exist in a Hindu context. Here, pāpa means infraction; trespass; ill-action; transgression; misdeed; crime; wicked; vile; evil. Most of the infractions described here are severe, and the weight of the term “sin” is appropriate. It also facilitates the flow of the translation: “sinful self” or “sinner” are more intelligible and digestible than “the self typified by the perpetration of irrereligious action.” Please keep this distinction in mind whenever the term “sin” appears.

15 This verb means quit/exit/leave, and literally means to leave a body. I keep this literal translation because it reflects a Hindu notion of a soul or self inhabiting a body, and describing death as the exit of a soul from a body can be understood to reflect an understanding of liberation from their physical realm. It is therefore often used to for holy people who are believed to have escaped the cycle of rebirth. It should also be noted, however, that it is often used to soften the brunt of the idea of death: as one might say in English “they have passed on” or “they are no longer with us,” so too might a Hindu refer to someone’s death as their having left their body. Here, it is useful to maintain this metaphysical indication due to the religious nature of the text, but ultimately it is death that is being described.

16 Essentially the same as the title of the work, this reference includes the word क्षेत्र indicating that they are asking about the sacred geography of Kāśī and environs.

17 The Hindi uses the singular term for “saint” to describe the speaker and whom he addresses, but uses the word for “sage” to denote those who asked the question in the first place. It is for this reason that I translate मुिन differently in these instances.
हे मुनि! काशीपुरी का महात्म्य में कहाँ तक वर्णन करें?

Oh sage! To what degree shall I describe the Blessed Majesty of Kāśī?

हिृत्तीयोऽध्यायः — Second Portion

In the Sat Yuga, the Golden Age, there reigned a chivalrous king named Bhūridyamna, amongst whose thousands of queens one by the name of Vibhāvaro was most excellent. As fate would have it, he was so besotted by Kāmadeva — by amorous desire itself — that his enemies took control of his entire federation of territories. Taking his queen Vibhāvaro with him, and grabbing a sword, he rode off to the terrifying Vindhya mountains.

कुछ समय के बाद एक दिन राजा से रानी ने कहा कि हे राजनु आपने कामदेव के वश होकर निज राज्य और अन्य स्त्रियों को खो दिया अब हमसे और आपसे इस निर्जन वन में कैसे रह जायगा?

One day, after some time, the Queen said, “Oh king, having succumbed to Kāmadeva, having lost your own kingdom and your other women, how are we now to survive in this desolate forest?

जो पुरुष धर्म अर्थ को त्याग कर काम ही के वश में रहता है उसकी आपकी आप ही की सा-गति होती है।

“He who forsakes righteousness (धर्म) and prosperity (अर्थ) remains indeed in the throes of desire; his, theirs, and yours indeed will such a path be.

बाहे राजा रानी श्यामा से व्याकुल हो निज कर्मम का स्मरण करते हुए धुमने लगे।

Then, the king and queen began to wander about, racked by hunger and preoccupied by the memory of their deeds.

18 महात्म्य
19 Quotation marks inserted by translator to help demarcate direct speech.
20 I believe it would be more common to see this written without declining the cardinal, making the heading instead the compound word तृतीयोऽध्यायः।
21 Should be सत्युग
22 Probably shouldn’t be a sentence break here.
23 Looks like sentence break should go here, based on typical word order.
24 This implies that other aims of life, namely goal acquisition, righteousness and (especially important for this text) liberation, are being neglected.
25 Should be घूम*
एक दिन क्रुद्ध से पोड़ित राजा के मन में पाप आया कि में निज रानी ही को मार कर खा जाऊँ।

One day, a thought came into the mind of the hunger-crazed king: “I shall kill my very wife, and eat her!”

रानी को यह बात मालूम हुई तो रानी ने कहा कि “है महाराज प्राप्ता मुख कमल क्षुधा से पोड़ित है अब मेरे शरीर में से मास निकाल कर भोजन कोजिये और निज प्राणों को बचाइये।

The queen was savvy of this spark, and said, “Oh, Great King! Your lotus-face has become shriveled from hunger. Take meat from my very body and make of it food, that your own life can be maintained.”

नीति के वचन सुन, घोर पापी राजा ने रानी को मार कर ज्योंही मास खाने को बैठा ज्योंही दो सिंह आपस में खेलते हुए वहाँ पर आये।

Hearing these words of council, the horrifically perverse king slew his wife and was just sitting to eat the meat when two lions approached, playing with one another.

सिंह को देखकर राजा भाग खडा हुआ और चार कोस की दूरी पर धान के बाँझ को लिये चार ब्राह्मणों को देखकर राजा ने उन्हें मार कर धान खाने को ज्योंही उघट हुआ यज्ञोपवीत और धान को देखा तो राजाको देववश धान हुआ कि मैने क्षुधा से रानी और ब्राह्मणों को मार कर खाने के यज्ञोपायका प्रश्नों से मनुष्य सी जन्म नरक में बास करता हैं और स्त्री के ब्रम्ह के बध से वह पचास कल्प है।

Upon seeing the lion the king up and ran, and after a distance of four kos he saw four Brahmins who were set about carrying rice bundles.7 He slew them, and just as he was ready to eat their rice he saw a sacred thread and their deerskin. Serendipitously, it suddenly dawned on him that, “My own foul mentality has led me to slay my own wife and these

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26 Should be मालूम
27 हे
28 This particle is wayward: there is no perfective verb in this sentence.
29 ज्योंही
30 Singular in original.
31 ज्योंही
32 उघट
33 यज्ञोपवीत
34 स्त्री
35 ibid.
36 Roughly 2 miles.
37 Sentences divided by translator.
38 This reminds him that they were no ordinary people. Thanks to Dr. Khanna for pointing out that he is becoming aware of his increasingly severe infractions: killing his wife is horrible, but killing four Brahmins worse still, especially as they might have been engaged in ritual activity, for Brahmins wouldn’t often carry rice otherwise.
Brahmins; and so I am guilty of Brahminicide. For that, I'll have to endure a hundred births in hell; and for the woman, it'll be fifty kalpas."

"I have committed the most grievous of sins against them!" Dwelling upon this thought, King Bhūridhumna came to the abode of Saint Śākalya. When he related the story of his deeds, and asked the saint what expiation he should perform, the saint said, with a pitying tone, "Oh, you poor Bastard. Get to Kāśī right away, for it is certain that should you wear clothing of five dark hues, then by merely taking darśan of Kāśī they all will become white."  Having heard this, Bhūridhumna, journeying for seven days, arrived in Kāśī, which destroys the fears of all living beings. Then, just by taking Blessed Kāśī’s darśan, his five-dark-hued clothing shone brilliant, lustrous white like a winter’s moon, and that wretched man began to perform ablutions in Kāśī’s eternal Gaṅgā and the requisite darśan and pūjā of Viśnava.

"Gaṅgā, oh Gaṅgā!" By uttering thus, by performing pūjā and taking darśan of Śri Viśvanātha at Manikarnika, by the impact of the Tāraka Mantra, becoming like unto Śiva, he achieved liberation. Thus it is, Oh Sages.

कारो: किसी जगह दैसा ही घोर घोरी त्यागता है तो उसे अवस्य ही मोक्ष प्राप्त होता है। धर्मार्थाओं को गति को कहना हो क्या है।

39 Kalpas = eons.
40 घोर
41 Also commonly written गङ्
42 Darśan (दर्शन) is a mode of interaction with the sacred based largely upon sight.
43 Sentence break inserted by translator.
44 उच्चारण
45 क्षेत्र. if it’s क्षेत्र, it means that Śiva, with from, achieved liberation in the
46 The mantra of liberation or crossing over (tāraka, caus. from tṝ - to cross over; achieve; liberate; rescue; save) so that mantra which saves you or crosses you over (here, the river dividing the living and the dead). This mantra is said to be whispered by Śiva to the faithful, but there is disagreement as to what the mantra actually is. I have heard claims that it is Oṃ ॐ, Rāma Rāma राम राम, or Oṃ Namaḥ Śivāya ॐ नमः शिवाय.
47 Meaning Kāśī ksetra.
In Kāśī, in whatever place and whichever way a horrible sinner leaves his body, it is certain that he will achieve liberation. So what’s there to say about those who walk the righteous path?48

तृतीयोध्यायः: 49 Third Portion

भृगुमुिन न कहा िक “हे ऋिषयः! िजस काशी में पिततो द्धािरणो और मिणकिणिका का कु ण्ड, श्री साक्षात् आदि शिवलिंग विश्वनाथजी विराजमान हैं, उस काशी के माहात्म्य को में क्या कह सकता हुँ”54।

Saint Bhṛgu said “Oh, Ṭṛṣṣ! Of that Kāśī in which are the Sinner-Liberator and Maṇikarnika Kuṇḍ, the Goddess Śrī made manifest, the primordial Śivalīma, and the revered Viśvanātha, what can I say about that Kāśī’s greatness?

जिस पुरुष ने काशी में वास करके कोई पाप कर्म किया उसको तीन हजार वर्ष रुद्र पिशाच होना पडता है, इसलिए, काशी में रहकर सदैव धर्म का आचरण करे।

Whichever person who, having set up residence in Kāśī, does some infractuous deed, they must spend three thousands years as a howling demon. Therefore, upon residing in Kāśī, engage only in righteous behavior.

श्री विश्वनाथ जो काशी में रहते हुए समस्त जीवों को तारक मन्त्र का उपदेश करते हैं, जिसके प्रताप से वह अवश्य ही मोक्ष को प्राप्त होता है।

48 Suggests that if those with lots of obstacles achieve liberation, how much easier still must it be for those who have lived righteously.

49 These headings are Sanskritized, adding to an air of refined authority. The correct sandhi here would be तृतीयोध्यायः: (ऋः + ओ = ओ ो 5ो). However, I believe it would be more common to see this written without declining the cardinal, making the heading instead the compound word तृतीयोध्यायः।

50 ने

51 In other instances, sanskrit vocative phrases of greeting are used. Here, the vocative plural of ऋषि is ऋषयः। Here, the oblique plural is used instead.

52 द्विरणो

53 The line below the final letter is a halant, used in Sanskrit to indicate a consonant is not followed by any vowel. This name is pulled from Sanskrit, but employing halants is done irregularly in this text.

54 हूँ

55 A kuṇḍ is a pool of water, usually man-made, and often square. They are usually found beside temples or within temple complexes. They are used for ritual bathing by pilgrims and holy people as a part of their religious activity. Maṇikarnika Kuṇḍ is built into the stairs which make up the bank of the Gāṅga in Kāśī, just north of Maṇikarnika Ghat, one of the cremation sites in the city. Pilgrims who are performing pūjā for the benefit of their ancestors bathe both in this kuṇḍ and in the Gāṅga during the relevant rite.
The Holy Viśvanātha, who dwelling in Kāśī teaches the tāraka mantra to all living beings, by the power of which one is most assuredly attains liberation.

एक समय सरस्वती नदी के किनारे वशिष्ठ जी के पास वामदेव मुनि आये और परस्पर वार्तालाप करते हुए श्री काशी धाम के माहात्म्य को वामदेव ने वर्णन किया की हे तपोधन। श्री विश्वनाथ जी का क्षेत्र जो काशी पुत्री हैं इसमें पापी और पुण्यात्माओं को श्री शिवजी शुभ गति देते हैं और आप सदैव काशी में वास करते हैं।

One day, on the bank of the Sarasvatī river, Saint Vāmadeva approached the revered Vaśiṣṭa, and in the course of their discussion Vāmadeva described the greatness of the abode of Blessed Kāśī, saying “Oh, great ascetic! The Revered Lord Viśvanātha’s domain, which is indeed the city of Kāśī, in this very place the Revered Lord Śiva provides the auspicious way for the wretched and the virtuous, and you dwell eternally in Kāśī.

परलोक यह वाराणसी शंकर जी का आनन्द वन है। गद्यिप पूथ्वी में अनेकों ही तीथर् हैं, परन्तु सुधारने के लिये काशी है।

The afterworld is the great Vārāṇasī, Śaṅkara’s forest of bliss. Although there are indeed many tīrthas on earth, for rectification, however, there is Kāśī.

यहाँ के पुण्य भाव अनन्त है जो कोई यहाँ पर एक वर्ष एक भी ब्राह्मण को बराबर भोजन देता है तो उसको गंगा जी की जितनी बालुकायें हैं उतने वर्ष भोजन देने का फल प्राप्त होता है।

This place’s auspicious atmosphere is eternal, so that whoever here gives food to a Brāhmaṇ regularly for a year, they will receive fruits as though they had done so for as many years as there are grains of the great Gaṅga’s sands.

जो पुरुषकाशी में सदैव वास करते हैं वे शिव समान हैं।

Those people who dwell forever in Kāśī, they are just like Śiva.

इस भाति वशिष्ठ और वामदेव की वार्ता होकर दोनों ही ऋषिवर्ग काशी को चल दिये।

In this way, Vaśiṣṭa and Vāmadeva’s conversation coming to a close, both of these great sages set off for Kāśī.

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56 को
57 गद्यिप
58 पूथ्वी
59 Sacred sites, where the worldly and transcendent intersect. Usually involving water, or the crossing of a body of water, they are in this literature sacred sites for purificatory bathing.
60 This term more commonly means improvement, especially self-improvement. Thanks to Dr. Khanna.
As those two drew near to Kāśī, the Demon Vikarālonmāli’s many, arms-bearing nightwalkers appeared in the jungle, and the leader of the aforementioned horde, by the name of Dak, having parleyed with Vaśiṣṭa and Vāmadeva, said “Hey Demons! Kill these two men: tout-suite! Amongst these, Vaśiṣṭa’s sons, the Parāśara the assassin, having performed various sacrifices to kill our father and family.”

Having received this command, as soon as the Nightwalkers ran [to kill them], at that very moment Śankara, becoming enraged, opening his third eye, turned the demons to ashes, and so ameliorated the predicament of the Revered Vaśiṣṭa and Vāmadeva and they, both Saints, arrived in Kāśī, and having done tapas for three thousand years, they pleased Śankara, and receiving the boon from Lord Viśvanātha of dwelling endlessly in Kāśī, they set up residence.

Whichever pilgrim will go to the abode of those sages and does darśan, and will listen to this story, then whatever obstacles there are to their setting up residence in Kāśī will all be destroyed.

चतुथोर्ंध्यायः Fourth Portion

Once upon a time, Yājñavalkya said, “Those who quit their bodies in Āśutoṣa’s, the Lord Viśvanātha’s, City of Kāśī, they most certainly find liberation. In Kāśī Brahmā is self-manifest in

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61 पराशर-धातक, name of a son, meaning “Skillful Killer”
62 सकुटुम्ब
63 Literally “nocturnal,” this term refers to those who move in the night, i.e. demons.
64 भस्म
65 Should have the word से here.
66 याज्ञवल्क्य
thousands of liṅgas, amongst which the Jyoti Liṅga is of Lord Viśvanātha, by the darśan of which mokṣa transpires easily indeed.

By performing worship with the water of Jñānavāpī, the Divine becomes visible.

Once, the King of Sveta Country, having ruled for a thousand years in Kāśī and a hundred years on Kailāsa, performed a sacrifice in Kāśī by means of Sage Durvāsā, who was dispatched by the Revered Śaṅkara.

So holy is this city. In Kāśī, Brahmā performed the ten-horse sacrifice and after multiple conversations with the Revered Śaṅkara, Brahmā said, “Blessed is Kāśī, and Kāśī-dwellers and those who relinquish their lives in Kāśī.

Having come to Kāśī, may you remain safe from desire and other pointlessnesses.”

Once, the revered Nārada, astonished by hearing the Greatness of Kāśī in a sacrifice to the winds, asked Śūryanārāyana about the Greatness of Kāśī and the god Śūryanārāyana ligurgized: “Kāśī: these two syllables being combined, the trespasser and the righteous both, by...
means of the tāraka mantra, achieve liberation. The trespasser alone must endure horrific purgatory, however he does not cross the threshold into hell.

In this way, the god Sūrya explained to Nārada; then, pleased, Nārada returned to his own realm.

पञ्चमोज्ञ्धयाः — Fifth Portion

हे महर्ष! एक समय शिव भक्त में सुनदन नामक राजा के विश्वरूप यज्ञ में सुनतकुमार जी ने जाकर काशी जी का मायात्म्य वर्णन किया की समुना। तद्पर मौन नामक मुनि के माण्डव्य और मौन नामक शिष्य थे। उन शिष्यों में माण्डव्य बलिराजा के यज्ञ में तथा और ययापूणर्होकर काशी का मायात्म्य बलिराजाओं के साथ माण्डव्य काशी जी को आये। इतने ही के अन्दर मौन ऋषि भी काशी भी आये। सोमाण्डव्य और बलिने मौन को केळकर पूजन करके मणिकण्ठ में स्नान कर श्री विशवनाथ जी का दर्शन करके काशी मायात्म्य पूजा। माण्डव्य मुनि ने भली-भाँति मोक्ष प्रद काशी जी का मायात्म्य वर्णन किया कि “हे बलिने मौन नामक राजा में धर्म दर्पणा हुआ सदेव वास करता है उसको मोक्ष वश्य ही मिलता है और जो कोई पाप करता है उसको अवश्य ही भैरवी यातना भोगनी पड़ती है। जो कोई पाप करता है उसको अवश्य ही भैरवी यातना भोगनी पड़ती है। जो कोई पुरुष काशी में धमर्ह दरता हूआ सदेव वास करता है उसको मोक्ष वश्य ही मिलता है। जो कोई पाप करता है उसको अवश्य ही भैरवी यातना भोगनी पड़ती है। इस अन्याय से काशी एक हजार वर्ष शुभ रहेगी। प्रातः होते ही देरीदास की मारने के लिए तालजघार राजा आये। बाद में घोर संग्राम होने से देरीदास हार भारद्वाज के आश्रम को चला गया और उक्त दोनों राजाओं ने काशी को शुभ कर दिया। राजा देरीदास ने भारद्वाज से समस्त कथा कही। तब भारद्वाज ने काशी मायात्म्य

77 In this instance, implied to be का + शी (kā + śī). Thanks to Dr. Khanna for pointing this out.
78 Alternatively, could be the Purgatory of Bhairava: the word is an adjective here, and can mean typified by the trait of horrificness, or by association with Bhairava, the horrifying one.
79 Prasār
80 पञ्चमोज्ञ्धयाः
81 यमुना
82 माण्डव्य
83 बलिराजा
84 मौन
85 Should be full-stop rather than comma.
86 अधि
87 की
88 को
89 तालजघा
90 दोनों
91 राजाओं
Oh, Great Sage! One time, during devotion to Śiva, during King Sunandana’s sacrifice for All Lords, the venerable Sunad, having gone to Kāśī, described its greatness, that “On the bank of the Yamuna were Māṇḍavya and Mudgal, disciples of the sage named Maun. Of these two students, Māṇḍavya went to King Bali’s sacrifice, and the greatness of Kāśī having become famous, Māṇḍavya came to Kāśī with King Bali. Just at that very point, Sage Maun also had arrived in Kāśī. So Māṇḍavya and Bali, having seen Maun, having performed pūjan, having bathed in Manikarnikā, having taken darśan of Lord Višvanātha, asked after the Greatness of Kāśī. So Saint Maun described exceedingly well, and for the purpose of liberation, the Greatness of Revered Kāśī, saying, “Oh, Bali! Whoever dwells in Kāśī and is always engaged in virtuous behavior doubtlessly receives liberation; and whoever engages in wicked behavior doubtlessly endures the horrific suffering of Bhairava’s purgatory. Having heard this, Bali had a Śivamūrti installed in Kāśī and returned to his own kingdom.

In Kāśī there was a sonless king named Devīdāsa. The king, with his queen, served the Great King Nikumbara for a year for the purpose of obtaining a son. Becoming angry when a son was not forthcoming, they had Nikumbara’s temple razed; so Nikumbara laid a curse upon them that due to this wrongdoing of theirs, Kāśī would remain barren for a thousand years. On the very next day, a king named Tālajāṃgha came for the purpose of killing Devīdāsa. Later Devīdāsa, having lost a fierce battle, went to Bhāraddhāja’s aśrama93 and the two aforementioned kings rendered Kāśī barren. King Devīdāsa told Bhāraddhāja the entire story. Then, Bhāraddhāja described the Greatness of Kāśī, and had the king perform the Desirous-of-a-Son sacrifice, causing to spring forth a son named Pratadana that by him King Tālajāṃgha died. And for one thousand years Kāśī was barren. Later, Devīdāsa dwelt in Kāśī penitently, and eventually obtained liberation.

So reads the Fifth Portion.

92 Literally “thus, the Fifth Portion,” it could be translated “So reads the Fifth Portion.” This is a highly Sanskritized way to end a passage, and it is not used elsewhere in the text. The spelling of pāñcamodhyāyah does not match at the beginning and end of this passage. There are no sentence breaks original to this passage. these inconsistencies indicate that this booklet was cobbled together from several other sources, and not edited for consistency.
93 Dwelling, usually rural, of a saint or holy person.