**ParamaikAnti’s svastivAcanam**

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This anuvākā named mṛgārā finds its place in udakaśānti, which was compiled and blessed by śrī Bodhāyana bhagavān. There our elders followed the method of chanting the complete mantrās referred to by pratīkams (beginning of mantrās - references) and also showing the anuṣaṅgam, as they considered udakaśānti as a karma.

It is very painful for me not to mention this in the present tense as ‘are following’. The current situation is such that only the past tense - ‘followed’ can be used.

During 1980-s, the udakaśānti japam was held as part of the upanayanam function for the grandson of one of my close acquaintances who was very much inclined to vedic ways. Since, it was on a holiday, I thought of chanting the udakaśānti mantrās along with the elders and correct any mistakes I may make. Hence, I went there with the book. The head priest (bṛhaspati) who conducted the proceedings was very knowledgeable. However, the japam was held with only pratīkams and without anuṣaṅgams. I was very much surprised. I did not want to create confusions in the assembly. I asked the bṛhaspati, when he was alone, as to why this methodology was followed. He explained as follows: “This is the city style udakaśānti. Here there is no time. Hence only pratīkam and ‘ditto’ japam is followed. I cannot change this. Poor man’s utterances are not accepted by the society.”

In 1994, one of my friend, who is a philanthropist and who takes due care in doing things, performed upanayanam for his son. I participated in that hoping that it would be held as per the tradition. Hundreds of vedic scholars thundered like lion. However, there also, it was a city style udakaśānti. Again, not wanting to create problems in the assembly, I countered one of the swamis in solitude. He mentioned that chanting the complete mantrās in the place of pratīkams and chanting the complete anuṣaṅgams are only for the scholarly yajamānās (doers). For laukīkās, city style udakaśānti is the tradition followed in that place.

In 2007, there was another udakaśānti. Due to the previous experiences and being branded as partially learned person, I was avoiding participating in udakaśāntis. However, fate pushed me into participating in that udakaśānti. Due to the compulsions, I participated. There, the complete mantrās were chanted in the place of pratīkams and anuṣaṅgams were shown. I was happy. However, during the chanting of nakṣatra iṣṭi, instead of pausing at the line breaks as in the following lines, they chanted the lines continuously.

अग्नये स्वाहा कृत्तिकाभ्यस् स्वाहा। अम्बायै स्वाहा दुलायै स्वाहा।

agnaye svāhā kṛttikābhyas svāhā|ambāyai svāhā dulāyai svāhā |

Even that could be tolerated as occurring due to the speed of chanting. However, instead of chanting the letter ‘hā’ in the last word ‘svāhā’ of the first line with dīrgasvaritam (elongated higher accent), they joined that with the first letter ‘a’ of the first word ‘ambāyai’ of the next line and chanted as ‘svāhāmbāyai’, thereby creating a new saṁhitā. Unable to bear that, I sought the explanation for the new tradition in the assembly itself.

One person told me that this was the method followed even by scholars of one of the famous agrahāram. When the debate was in full swing, śrimadubhayave Taiyār Kṛṣṇamūrti svāmi, who is a vedic scholar and the tiruvārādhakar in our Ashramam, arrived there. He concluded the argument by mentioning that my side of the argument was correct. However, the japam was completed with the new saṁhitai tradition.

Some may murmur as to why I am mentioning all these here. In years to come, it is possible that the city style udakaśānti and converting śākhai into saṁhitai may become the scholarly tradition. Hence, there is a fear that the garbage may get accumulated under the carpet of great tradition. There is a doubt that even the existing scholarly tradition might have become like this over a period of time.

However, I mentioned this with a satisfaction of doing something to prevent the newer mistakes getting added into our society in the name of scholarly tradition.

I often used to get frustrated with thoughts: “Who is going to read this series considering me as a competent authority? Why I should I write this much? Whatever I tell is like poor man’s utterance. It is not going to be accepted by the society”. During those times, śrī Pādukā devi used to console me in some ways. She used to correct me in one way or other, make me understand that She is there to protect me and motivate me. One such incident happened recently. I am sharing that incident with the readers before explaining the complete mantrās because:

1. During pārāyaṇam (regular chanting) and brahmayajñam, if the meaning of the complete mantrās, indicated by the pratīkams, are contemplated in the mind, then one can experience the Supreme Lord and thus reaching a situation where a golden lotus gets fragrance as well.
2. During udakaśānti, chanting fully is the actual scholarly tradition. Chanting only the starting phrase and ‘ditto’s are the new mistakes due to the spread of city style udakaśānti.

What is that incident?

When I was explaining the meaning of the previous mantrā, I had split the words as follows (in Tamil version):

(1) यत्, (2) इदम्, (3) मा, (4) अभि, (5) शोचति, (6) पौरुषेयेण, (7) दैव्येन, (8) स्तौमि, (9) विश्वान्, (10) देवान्, (11) नाथितः, (12) जोहवीमि, (13) ते, (14) नः, (15) मुञ्चन्तु, (16) एनसः

(1) yat, (2) idam, (3) mā, (4) abhi, (5) śocati, (6) pauruṣeyeṇa, (7) daivyena, (8) staumi, (9) viśvān, (10) devān, (11) nāthitaḥ, (12) johavīmi, (13) te, (14) naḥ, (15) muñcantu, (16) enasaḥ

Here, abhiśocati has been shown as a single padā by padakārās. I have written that as two words by mistake, without verifying with the pada pāṭhā. There are only 15 padās in that mantrā.

This was brought to my notice by śrī Sudarsanan from Bangalore. I am duty bound to thank him. Looks like, he is the one who has been translating this article for English Pādukā. I asked him to send me his English translation through email and read that. His translation had a very easy flow. The fact that at least the translator is reading the article line by line served as a tonic.

However, I had the following thoughts: “Oh! Pādukā devi ! You haven’t blessed me to write this without a mistake. You made me send the article for printing without comparing the text with the pada pāṭhā and thus fed the people who tease me as an incomplete learned person. Despite me chanting the following mantrā blessed by Sri Desikan before brahmayajñam and pārāyaṇam (regular chanting) as per the stipulation of my father, you have let me down, which is unbecoming of you:

आम्नायैस्त्वाम् अनितरपरैः स्तोतुमभ्युद्यतानां

मध्ये भक्त्या मधुविजयिनः पादुके मोहभाजाम्।

शिक्षातत्त्वस्खलितवचसां शिक्षयस्येव पुंसां

मात्रादीनि स्वयमनुपदं मञ्जुभिः स्वैर्निनादैः॥

āmnāyaistvām anitaraparaiḥ stotumabhyudyatānāṁ

madhye bhaktyā madhuvijayinaḥ pāduke mohabhājām |

śikṣātattvaskhalitavacasāṁ śikṣayasyeva puṁsāṁ

mātrādīni svayamanupadaṁ mañjubhiḥ svairninādaiḥ ||”

However, the sequence of events that followed made me understand that Pādukā devi wanted to show a big treasure for me and hence, made me to commit this mistake.

I will share them in the next issue.