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Five Great Sins (*Mahāpātakas*) with Special Reference to Śaiva Siddhānta

SUMMARY: The term *prāyaścitta* covers a number of rites and actions that are held to expiate or repair faults of omission and commission. In fact, many of the expiable offenses that are discussed in Saiddhāntika sources are not exclusively Śaiva but belong also to the realm of *smārta* traditions for they include such non-criminal and non-transgressive things as states of ritual impurity caused, for example, by life-events such as birth and death.

The expiatory procedure for the five great sins vary between Śaiva and *smārta* systems. Śaiva scriptures prescribe different types of *maṇḍalas* for these five great sins using five BRAHMA-*mantras* to expiate along with moon-related fasting of *kṛcchra*, *cāndrāyaṇa* etc., and initiation (*dīkṣā*) or an installation of Śiva (*pratiṣṭhā*). Most of the *smṛti nibandhas* say that the great sins are not expiable. Here I have focused on these two systems regarding the great sins, mainly taking into consideration the 12th-century Śaiva expiatory manual *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* of Trilocanaśiva.

KEYWORDS: Śaiva Siddhānta, sins, *prāyaścitta*, *maṇḍala*.

Introduction

Before going to the topic of *mahāpātakas*, let me say a few words about *prāyaścitta*. *Prāyaścitta* is a ritual which is performed by humans to eliminate the effects of their bad deeds. Humans are bound to make mistakes voluntarily or involuntarily. However, one has to repent

these bad deeds and resolve them, so that they are not repeated. *Prāyaścitta* includes austerities such as fasting, chanting of *mantras*, giving away gifts or visiting pilgrimage centers. *Prāyaścitta* comprises a number of rites and actions that are performed to expiate or repair faults of omission and commission.

Generally, we can find ritual prescriptions for an offense in *smṛti nibandhas* as well as in the Śaivāgamas. There are similarities and dissimilarities between these two traditions. Also, these traditions prescribe different ritual practices for the same offense. Just as there are *smṛti nibandhas* dealing with the *smārta* ritual procedures, we also have some ancient Śaiva ritual manuals, such as *Prāyaścittasamuccaya*¹ of Trilocanaśiva and *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* of Ṛḍayaśiva,² that are exclusively devoted to expiatory rites, on which I have mainly focused in the present article.

1. Why *Prāyaścitta*?

As Trilocanaśiva in his treatise *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (3–4b) says:

sādhakādyair anuṣṭheyam ācāraṃ śivabhāṣitam |
tadviplutau tadājñāyā laṅghane vyatyato yataḥ ||
teṣāṃ tatparihārthaṃ prāyaścittaṃ śivo 'vadat |

‘The duties of *sādhaka* and others [classes of initiate] have been taught by Śiva. Since there are negative consequences when these drop out [or] when His commands are transgressed, Śiva has taught expiation to avoid those [negative consequences] for these [various initiates].’

¹ For *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* of Trilocanaśiva see Sathyanarayanan 2014.

² The oldest manuscript of the *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* of Ṛḍayaśiva is held in Cambridge University Library, where it bears the number MS Add 2833. Palm-leaf, early Newari script. Copied in Bhaktapur near Kathmandu in the reign of Ānandadeva and dated 1157/58 A. D. There are 45 expiatory (*Prāyaścitta*) chapters of Śaiva scriptures included in this text. The complete text of diplomatic transcription has been given as an appendix in Sathyanarayanan 2014.

The typical rites and actions to be performed in expiation are listed in a quotation from the *Kālottara* that appears in the manual by Jñānaśambhu (*Jñānaratnāvalī*, GOML MS R 14898 p. 209):

snānaṃ japopavāsaṃ ca nityahomāś ca gaḍḍukāḥ |
pañcagavyāśanaṃ dānaṃ mārgaduṣkṛtanāśanam ||

‘Bathing, *mantra*-repetition, fasting, regular obligatory oblations, reciting *mantras* over pots, consuming a mixture of the five products of the cow (*pañcagavya*), donations—these destroy the [retributory consequences] of wrong-doings [of those] on the [Śaiva] path.’

These expiatory rites and actions are performed in various combinations; however, the most popular, and perhaps the only one that is frequently used, is the repetition (*japa*) of Śaiva *mantras*, particularly the five BRAHMA-*mantras*.

Then, who is liable to perform *prāyaścitta*?

Kūrmapurāṇa (2:30:2) states that *prāyaścitta* should be performed by:

akṛtvā vihitam karma kṛtvā ninditam eva ca |
doṣam āpnoti puruṣaḥ prāyaścittam viśodhanam ||

‘A man [who] fails to perform his prescribed duties (*vihitakarma*) and commits disapproved (*ninditakarma*) acts becomes polluted; the expiation is the purificatory procedure for [such] a guilty man.’

Prāyaścittas are observed on two occasions: if a man fails to perform his prescribed duties or if one commits disapproved acts. Then the questions will arise: what is *vihitakarma* and what is the *ninditakarma*? *Gautamadharmasūtra* (1:1) refers to them: *Vedo dharmamūlam* ‘Veda is the root for [maintaining] *dharma*’. Vedas lead a man in the right path (*dharmamārga*) by teaching *vihitakarma* and *ninditakarma*. What the Vedas prescribe a man to do is *vihitakarma* (i.e. prescribed duties) and what they reject or disapprove of is *ninditakarma* (i.e. forbidden acts). Thus Vedas prescribe *sandhyāvandana*, *aupāsana*, *agnihotra* etc., which are the duties that should be performed by a man.

And Vedas condemn eating meat or drinking liquor in passages such as: *na kalañjam bhakṣayet, na suraṃ pibet* etc. These passages refer to *ninditakarma* one should abstain from.

Other Dharmasāstra authors, such as Yājñavalkya (3:219) and Manu (11:44), reiterating the above instructions, add the control of sense organs (*indriyanigraha*) along with the commission of what is forbidden and the omission of what is ordained:

Yājñavalkyasmṛti:

*vihitasyānanuṣṭhānān ninditasya ca sevānāt |
anigrahāc cendriyāṇaṃ naraḥ patanam ṛchati ||*

‘A man is degraded [by] not observing the prescribed [duties]; repeating the prohibited [acts and] not restraining the sense organs.’

Manusmṛti:

*akurvan vihitaṃ karma ninditaṃ ca samācāran |
prasajaś cendriyārtheṣu prāyaścittīyate naraḥ ||*

‘If a man fails to undergo the prescribed duties, performs the forbidden acts, and is attached to the sense objects, he is subject to an expiation.’

Controlling the senses is not easy for human beings. If one keeps sense organs under control, he will restrain from forbidden activities.

*Garuḍapurāṇa*³ (1:105:1–4b) states that those who want to wash off their sins or demerits should undergo *prāyaścitta*, otherwise, they will go to terrible hell, such as *mahāraurava*.

Again, sins or crimes may be committed knowingly and unknowingly (*jñānataḥ–ajñānataḥ*), intentionally and unintentionally

³ Cf. *vihitasyānanuṣṭhānān ninditasya ca sevānāt |
anigrahāc cendriyāṇaṃ naraḥ patanam ṛchati ||
tasmād yatnena kartavyaṃ prāyaścittam viśuddhaye |
evam asyāntarātmā ca lokaś caiva prasīdati ||
lokaḥ prasīded ātmaivaṃ prāyaścittair aghakṣayaḥ |
prāyaścittam akurvāṇāḥ paścāttāpavivarjitāḥ ||
narakān yānti pāpā vai mahārauravarauravān |*

(*buddhipūrvam–abuddhipūrvam*) and openly and secretly (*prakāśe–rahasye*). The category of unintentionally committed mistakes often includes crimes that are in some way induced by circumstances.

Rules have been laid for assigning the expiatory procedures for different Śaiva initiates in *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (8) of Trilocanaśiva:

daivād rogāt tathā mohāc corarājabhayādibhiḥ |
ebhir doṣair akāmitvaṃ śeṣe jñeyā tu kāmītā ||

‘When a person commits mistakes because of problematic factors such as fate, disease, delusion, [or] because of danger of thieves or kings and such, they are considered “unintentional”; in other cases they are “intentional”.’

2. Determining the expiation

In prescribing ‘penalties’, other factors must also be taken into consideration: What is the gravity of the fault? What kind of initiate has committed it? Is the perpetrator a power-seeking *sādhaka* or *naiṣṭhika*? What is his age and state of health? What is the degree of his devotion? Are there any excusing factors? If the transgressor is unfit or unable to perform the expiation, other persons may do it on his behalf. The expiations are prescribed by an *ācārya*, ideally one’s own guru, but in his absence a council of three, seven or fifteen *ācāryas* who have sound knowledge of scriptures and who themselves are observants may determine the penalties ordained by scriptures, which is clearly stated by Trilocanaśiva in his *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (19) as:

trisaptapañcadaśabhir ācāryais tantrapāragaiḥ |
svaśāstraniyatābhyāsair dattaṃ svagurubhir vinā ||

‘In the absence of his own guru (*svagurubhir vinā*), [a reparatory rite may be] given by [a council of] three, seven or fifteen teachers who have reached the further shore of tantric scripture and who are fixed in the practice of [what is enjoined by] their own scriptures.’

In general, the quantity of expiation (recitation or oblation) varies depending on whether the crime was intentional (*kāmāt*) or unintentional (*akāmāt*).

Some rules have been prescribed for assigning expiatory procedures in the *smṛti* texts as well as Śaiva scriptures:

Viṣṇusmṛti (54:33–34) reads:

aśītir yasya varṣāṇi bālo vāpy ūnaṣoḍaśaḥ |
prāyaścittārdham arhanti striyo rogiṇa eva ca ||
anuktaniṣkṛtīnāṃ tu pāpānām apanuttaye |
śaktiṃ cāvekṣya pāpaṃ ca prāyaścittam prakalpayet ||

‘A person of 80 years [of age] and a child below 16 years, and [also] women and those afflicted by disease, are entitled to half the [any given] expiation. The sins for which expiations are not prescribed, the ritual sequence may be prescribed [by the guru] after considering the above said factors.’

Similar passage from the *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (9–12b) of Trilocanaśiva, also reads:

aśītir yasya varṣāṇi bālo vāpy ūnaṣoḍaśaḥ |
prāyaścittārdham arhanti striyo vā vyādhipīḍitāḥ ||
tatrāpi ca parikleśam jñātvārdhārdham prakalpayet |
deśam kālam vayah śaktiṃ jātiṃ bhaktiṃ kriyākramam ||
suvicārya pradātavyam nopavāso rujānvite |
prāyaścittāsamarthasya piṭṛbhrātrādibāndhavaiḥ ||
tadvibhajya vidhātavyam dviguṇam tu parair janaiḥ ||

‘A person of 80 years [of age] and a child below 16 years, and [also] women and those afflicted by disease, are entitled to half the [any given] expiation. And even in those cases, [the guru], considering their difficulties, may prescribe a quarter [of any given expiation]. Having well considered place, time, age, ability, caste, devotion and [the difficulty of] the ritual sequence, he should enjoin [expiatory rites]. There should be no fasting for one who is ill. For a person who is not able to perform a *prāyaścitta*, [the expiation] should be divided between his father, brothers and other relatives. [If it is shared] between others [who are not relatives], the expiations should be doubled.’

There exists a great discrepancy of views since ancient times as to whether *prāyaścitta* can destroy the sins which have been committed intentionally.

Though these types of rituals are generally less studied, they occupy a very important place in the ritual scheme. *Prāyaścitta* is an important reparatory procedure followed in households as well as in temple rituals. These are elaborately discussed in Āgamic texts. *Prāyaścitta* is an obligatory rite that has to be followed before commencing the funeral rites, both by the followers of *smṛti* and by Śaiva initiates (specifically called *antyeṣṭi* by Śaivites). Dharmasāstra texts based on *śruti* and *smṛti* deal with all aspects of rituals (obligatory, occasional and optional), including *prāyaścitta*. The Śaivāgamas also deal in detail with the same type of rites.

An important point of difference in *smārta prāyaścitta* and *śaiva prāyaścitta* is that the former prescribes various modes of fasting and recitation of Vedic passages for reparatory procedures, while the latter uses the Tantric or Āgamic procedures which include *maṇḍalas*, *mudrās*, *mantras*, *yantras* or *cakras*, which are worshipped predominantly with seed or root *mantras* such as the five BRAHMA-*mantras* (SADYOJĀTA, VĀMADEVA, AGHORA, TATPURUṢA and ĪSĀNA).

Another important difference between the *prāyaścitta* rites in the *smṛti* and *tantras* is that the *prāyaścittas* in Tantric or Āgamic sources are prescribed specifically for Śaiva initiates (*dīkṣita*). This may be because the Āgamic rituals like *dīkṣā* etc. are prescribed for all the four *varṇas* without any discrimination. *Sārdhatriśatikālottara*⁴ (8:7cd) proclaims that the initiation can even be performed for Caṇḍāla. *Śāradātilaka*⁵ probably quoting from *Kālottara* also reads similarly. The next verse of *Śāradātilaka* which is attributed to *Piṅgalāmata*⁶ states that those who are pure in mind and devoted to the worship of the teacher, gods and twice born are eligible to receive initiation. The *smārta* or *vaidika* system is restricted to the study or performance of Vedic rituals only to three *varṇas*.

⁴ Cf. *taṃ viditvā mahāsena śvapacān api dīkṣayet* |

⁵ Cf. *etaḥ jñātvā mahāsena caṇḍālān api dīkṣayet* | p. 91.

⁶ Cf. *brahmakṣatraviśaḥ śūdrāḥ arcāyāṃ śuddhabuddhayaḥ* | *gurudevadvijārcāsu ratāḥ syur adhikāriṇaḥ* || *Śāradātilaka* as attributed to *Piṅgalāmata* p. 91.

Further, in the Śaiva system, the rituals include the recitation of Āgamic *mantras* along with *vaidika* procedures, in particular types of fasting such as *kṛcchra* etc.

For example, in the expiatory procedures prescribed in the Śaiva system, one should recite the BRAHMA-*mantras* or other requisite *mantras* in addition to the expiatory observances of moon-related fasting such as *kṛcchra*, *cāndrāyaṇa*, *parāka* etc., which are also prescribed in *smṛti* texts.

Almost all *prāyaścittas* have become antiquated and are hardly ever performed now except in the form of gifts of cows or money to Brahmins, undertaking pilgrimages and recitation of some Vedic *mantras* specific to some deities. Therefore, only a few typical sins with a brief description of their expiatory rites are discussed here.

3. Great sins (*Mahāpātaka*)

Authors of different *smṛtis* enumerated the five *mahāpātakas* in a slightly different order. Vasiṣṭha in his Dharmasūtra⁷ refers to ‘stealing of gold’, which is one of the five grave sins, as ‘stealing the gold of Brahmin’.

Kūrmapurāṇa (2:30:8) reads:

brahmahā madyapaḥ steno gurutalpaga ucyate |
mahāpātakinas tv ete yaś caītaiḥ saha saṃvaset ||

‘One who kills a Brahmin, one who consumes alcohol, one who steals, one who has sex with one’s guru’s wife and one who lives with the persons who committed the above–stated [four] crimes are *mahāpātakins*.’

Garuḍapurāṇa (1:52:1), *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (2:73:52c–53b) and *Manusmṛti* (11:55) all read:

brahmahatyāsurāpānaṃ steyaṃ gurvaṅganāgamah |
mahānti pātakāny āhuḥ saṃyogaś caīva taiḥ saha ||

⁷ Cf. (1:19–20) *pañca mahāpātakāny ācakṣate | gurutalpaṃ surāpānaṃ brūṇahatyā brāhmaṇasuvarnāpaharaṇaṃ patītasamyogaś ca ||*

‘Killing a Brahmin, drinking liquor, stealing, having sex with [one’s] guru’s wife—they call these “grave sins”; [and] so is establishing any links with such individuals.’

Śaiva manuals, the *Jñānaratnāvalī*⁸ and the *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (338) of Trilocanaśiva also followed the same order. For example:

*brahmahatyāsurāpānam steyaṃ gurvaṅganāgamah |
mahāpātakam ity āhus tadyogāt pañcamaṃ bhavet ||*

‘Killing a Brahmin, drinking liquor, stealing (gold), approaching one’s own guru’s wife and associating oneself with a person who has committed any one of the above mentioned misdeeds are the five grave sins.’

Śaṅkhasmṛti (17:3) prescribes only four *mahāpātakas*.

*hemasteyī surāpaś ca brahmahā gurutalpaḡaḥ |
vratenaiteṇa śuddhyante mahāpātakinas tv ime ||*

‘Stealing gold, drinking liquor, killing Brahmin and approaching [one’s] guru’s wife—all these are grave sinners, [they are] purified by the observances.’

It does not mention the sin ‘association’ [the association of any one of the other four *mahāpātakas*] which is considered a fifth sin in the list of others.

The consequences of grave sins and minor sins have been stated in the *Garuḍapurāṇa* (2:2:63) and *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti* (3:209) in the following manner:

*brahmahā kṣayarogī syāt surāpaḡ śyāvadantakaḡ |
hemahārī tu kunakhī duścarmā gurutalpaḡaḡ ||*

‘A Brahmin slayer will be born with the disease of consumption or pulmonary tuberculosis; one who drinks liquor will be born with black tooth; a person stealing the gold will be born with the disease of his nails; one who approaches one’s own guru’s wife, will be born with the disease called leprosy.’

⁸ IFP Transcript 231, it is an exemplar namely of GOML R 14898 p. 219.

The grave sinners after experiencing the hells such as *raurava* will be born to suffer as dogs, pigs, donkeys etc.

There are four chapters from the Śaiva expiatory manual *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* of Hṛdayaśiva dealing with this subject of five great sins in an exhaustive manner—If one commits any one of the great sins either intentionally or un-intentionally, whether it is knowingly or un-knowingly, he should undergo the expiatory procedure.

Drawing five *maṇḍalas* for the five great sins and worshipping them are prescribed in *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (3:1–2b) of Hṛdayaśiva for the five great sins along with the *mantras* and the procedure of its observance:

sadyojātaṃ gavāṃ madhye vāmadevaṃ śivālaye |
śmaśāne bahurūpaṃ tu vaktram agnitrayālaye ||
īśānaṃ parvatāgre tu prāyaścittī jayet sadā |

‘One who performs *prāyaścitta* should always recite Sadyojāta in the midst of cows [*gomaṇḍala*]; Vāmadeva in an abode of Śiva [*śivālayamaṇḍala*]; Bahurūpa at the cremation ground [*śmaśānamaṇḍala*]; Vaktra (i.e. Tatpuruṣa) in the abode of three fires [*agnihotramaṇḍala*] and Īśāna on the top of the hill [*parvatāgramaṇḍala*].’

The prescribed five *maṇḍalas* are:

1. *dhenumaṇḍala* for *brahmahatyā*—SADYOJĀTA
2. *śivālayamaṇḍala* for *surāpāna*—VAMADEVA
3. *śmaśānamaṇḍala* for *svarṇasteya*—AGHORA
4. *agnihotramaṇḍala* for *gurudāragamana*—TATPURUṢA
5. *parvatāgramaṇḍala* for *tatsahacāra*—ĪŚĀNA.

3.1. *Dhenumaṇḍala* for *brahmahatyā*

The chapter in the *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (4:1—2b) of Hṛdayaśiva prescribes the five *maṇḍalas*. The chapter is in the form of conversation between Brahmā and Parameśvara, where Brahmā asks about the five *maṇḍalas* and their significance and Parameśvara demonstrates:

gomadhyaṃ iti kiṃ proktaṃ kiñca proktaṃ śivālayam |
śmaśānaṃ kiṃ smṛtaṃ deva agnihotragrahaṃ ca kim ||
kiṃ parvatāgraṃ deveśa vaktum arhasi tattvataḥ ||

‘O supreme God! Deserve to be stated accurately [the significance of the five *maṇḍalas*] what is said as the center of the cows (*gomadhyaṃ*); and what is said [as] an abode of Śiva (*śivālayam*); o God what is prescribed as the cremation ground (*śmaśānam*); and what is an abode of the sacred fire (*agnihotragrham*) and what is top of the hill (*parvatāgram*).’

The *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (339–347) of Trilocanaśiva gives the description of these *maṇḍalas* and provides information on how they should be worshipped and what for:

hatvākāmād dvijaṃ sadyo gavāṃ goṣṭhe jape tadā |
gomadhyaṃ goṣṭham ity āhur gosahasreṇa saṃmitam ||
gosahasrād adho goṣṭhaṃ brahman sāmānyam ucyate |
gomadhyaṃ maṇḍalaṃ proktaṃ saurabheyaṃ tu tat smṛtam ||
surabhyo yatra pūjyante ekādaśa savatsakāḥ |
aṣṭau dikṣu sthitā brahman tisro maṇḍalamadhyagāḥ ||
tāsāṃ madhyaṃ ca vṛṣabhaḥ svayam eva vyavasthitaḥ |
devyaḥ kāmadhughādyāstāḥ surabhyas tat padātmikāḥ ||
maṇḍalaṃ cāṣṭahastan tan navadhā daśadhā bhavet |
caturasraṃ caturdvāraṃ caturvarṇasavīthikam ||
kāmadhug madhyame pūjyā jagadyonis tu dakṣiṇe |
uttare ’moghamātā ca prācyāṃ tu vṛṣabhāgrataḥ ||
prācyāṃ jagaddhite svāhā āgneyyāṃ amṛte svāhā |
tejomālīnī yāmye tu nairṛtyāṃ ca jagaddhitā ||
vārunyāṃ sarvaśaktis tu sarvalokasajīvanī |
vāyau saume ca varade svāhā svāhāditaḥ kramāt |
sarvatejaḥsamhāriṇī svāhā śvetavṛṣāgrataḥ ||

‘If one unintentionally kills a Brahmin, one should recite the SADYOJĀTA-*mantra* in the “cow house among cows”. They say that the “cow house among cows” is “measured” by [i.e. requires] a thousand cows. The regular cow house (*goṣṭha*), O Brahman, consists of less than a thousand cows. The *maṇḍala* is said to be drawn in the midst of 1000 cows; it is said to be the *saurabheya-maṇḍala*, in which eleven cows along with their calves are worshipped; [eight of them] placed in eight directions, O Brahman, [and] three [of them] in the center of the *maṇḍala*; and the bull itself is situated in the midst of them. These cows, beginning with Kāmadhuk, are goddesses having the nature of the words [of the *mantra*]. The *maṇḍala* should be drawn eight hands [long], or nine or ten, and [it should be] square, with four entrances and with four colours and it should have passage-ways.

Kāmadhuk⁹ should be worshipped in the centre [of the *maṇḍala*]; Jagad-yoni [should be worshipped] in the South; in the North [of the *maṇḍala* should be] Amoghamātā; in the East in front of the *vṛṣabha* Jagad-hṛdayatā by uttering the *sāvitrī-mantra*. In the East [one should worship Jagaddhitā with the *mantra*] *jagaddhite svāhā*; in the South-East [should be worshipped Amṛtā with the *mantra*] *amṛte svāhā*; in the South [should be worshipped] Tejomālinī; in the South-West [should be worshipped] Jagaddhitā; in the West [should be worshipped] Sarvaśakti; in the North-West [should be worshipped] Sarvalokasajīvanī; in the North [should be worshipped Varadā, using the *mantra*] *varade svāhā*; and in the North-East [should be worshipped] Sarvatejaḥ-saṃhāriṇī.⁹

In this way one should arrange the *maṇḍala* and sit in the *dhenumaṇḍala* and perform the expiation for killing a Brahmin.

For the reparation of a grave sin (*mahāpātaka*) *brahmahatyā*, the Dharmaśāstra author Yājñavalkya (3:243–50) says:

śiraḥkapālī dhvajavān bhikṣāśī karma vedayan |
brahmahā dvādaśābdāni mitabhuk suddhim āpnuyāt ||

‘The murderer of a Brahmin should hold the staff with head-bone attached to it and he should carry the bone of the murdered Brahmin in his other hand; he should announce himself as the murderer of a Brahmin, and should eat only a small quantity of the alms for twelve years whereby he becomes pure.’

The other alternatives by Yājñavalkya (3:244–45) are given in the following passages:

brāhmaṇasya paritrāṇād gavāṃ dvādaśakasya ca |
tathā ‘svamedhāvabhṛtasnānād vā suddhim āpnuyāt ||
dūṅghatīvrāmayaḡrastam brāhmaṇam gām athāpi vā |
dṛṣṭvā pathi nirātāṅkam kṛtvā tu brahmahā śuciḥ ||

‘He may be relieved of the sin of killing by saving the life of a Brahmin, the lives of 12 cows or by taking part in the bathing at the end of the horse-sacrifice. Or by saving a Brahmin who is suffering on road from chronic and severe disease or even a cow in that condition.’

⁹ For better understanding of this *maṇḍala* see Sathyanarayanan 2014.

Gautama,¹⁰ Āpastamba¹¹ and Vaśiṣṭha¹² in their Dharmasūtras and *smṛti* texts such as those of Yājñavalkya and Manu also speak about the expiatory rites for the great sins. The reparatory rites prescribed for these sins are generally similar in these texts, i.e. one who has killed a Brahmin should remain in the forest for 12 years, recite the Vedas, get the alms for livelihood, should carry the skull bone and serve the cows and Brahmins.

Śaṅkha¹³ adds that the sinner should bathe thrice every day; erect a cottage thatched with leaves in a forest; sleep on the ground; subsist on leaves, roots and fruits; enter a village for alms all the time

¹⁰ Cf. (22:2–10): *agnau saktir brahmaghnas trir avacchātasya | lakṣyaṃ vā syāj janye śastrabhṛtām | khaṭvāṅgakapālapāṇir vā dvādaśa saṃvatsarān brahmacārī bhaiḥṣāya grāmaṃ praviśet karmācakṣāṇaḥ | patho 'pakrāmet saṃdarśanād āryasya | sthānāsānābhyāṃ viharan savaneśūdakopasparśī śudhyet | prāṇalābhe vā tannimitte brāhmaṇasya | dravyāpacaye vā tryavaram pratirāddhaḥ | āśvamedhāvabhṛthe vā anyayajñe 'py agniśudantaś cet ||*

¹¹ Cf. (1:9:24:10–25): *tasya nirveśaḥ | araṇye kuṭim kṛtvā vāgyataḥ śavaśiradhvajo 'rhaśāṇīpakṣamadhonābhyupari jānvācchādya | tasya panthā antarā vartmanī | dṛṣtvā cānyam utkrāmet | khaṇḍena lohitakena śarāveṇa grāme pratiṣṭheta | ko 'bhiśastāya bhikṣām iti saptāgārāṇī caret | sā vṛttih | alabdhopavāsaḥ | gās ca rakṣet | tāsāṃ niṣkramaṇapraveśane dviṭyo grāmo 'rthaḥ | dvādaśa varṣāṇi caritvā siddhaḥ sadbhīḥ saṃprayogaḥ | ājīpathe vā kuṭim kṛtvā brāhmaṇa gayo 'pajigīṣamāno vaset | triḥ pratirāddho 'pajītya vā muktaḥ | āśvamedhikaṃ vāvabhṛtham avetya mucyate |*

¹² Cf. (20:25–28): *bhrūnahāgnim upasamādhāya juhuyāt | lomāni mṛtyor juhomi lomabhir mṛtyuṃ vāsaya iti prathamām | tvacaṃ mṛtyor juhomi tvacā mṛtyuṃ vāsaya iti dviṭyām | lohitaṃ mṛtyor juhomi lohiteṇa mṛtyuṃ vāsaya iti tṛtīyām | māṃsaṃ mṛtyor juhomi māṃsena mṛtyuṃ vāsaya iti caturthīm | snāvāni mṛtyor juhomi snāvabhir mṛtyuṃ vāsaya iti pañcamīm | medo mṛtyor juhomi medasā mṛtyuṃ vāsaya iti ṣaṣṭhīm | asthīni mṛtyor juhomy asthibhir mṛtyuṃ vāsaya iti saptamīm | majjānaṃ mṛtyor juhomi majjābhir mṛtyuṃ vāsaya ity aṣṭamīm iti | rājārthe brāhmaṇārthe vā saṃgrāme 'bhi mukham ātmānaṃ ghātayet | trir ajito vāparāddhaḥ pūto bhavātī vijñāyate | dvādaśa varṣāṇy ātmanādiśya na grāme nāraṇye vaset khaṭvāṅgī kapālapāṇīḥ saptāgārāṇy asaṃkalpitāni cared bhaiḥṣaṃ bhrūnahane bhikṣāṃ dehīti svakarmāvedayamāno |*

¹³ Cf. (17:1c–3b): *nityaṃ triśavaṇasnāyī krutvā parṇakuṭim vane | adhaḥ śāyī jaṭādhārī parṇamūlaphalāśanaḥ || grāmaṃ viśec ca bhikṣārthaṃ svakarma parikīrtayan | ekakālaṃ samaśnīyād varṣe tu dvādaśe gate ||*

declaring his misdeed and should eat only once a day. After spending 12 years in this manner, the *mahāpātakin* becomes free from that sin.

3.2. Śivālayamaṇḍala for surāpāna

Prāyaścittasamuccaya (348–353) of Trilocanaśiva reads:

pītvā 'kāmāt surāṃ vāmaṃ śivaharmye japet tadā |
sāmānyavācakaṃ brahman ekaliṅgaṃ śivālayam ||
maṇḍalaṃ tu viśeṣo 'tra śivālayam udāhṛtam |
pūjyante yatra vidhinā śivāḥ sṛṣṭipurassarāḥ ||
eka eva sthito madhye vyomavyāpī mahāśivāḥ |
tasya sṛṣṭiśivāḥ pārśve dakṣiṇe samavasthitāḥ ||
sthitāḥ sthitiśivo vāme karṇikāyāṃ śivāsane |
aiśānyāṃ tasya digbhāge saṃhārākhyāḥ śivāḥ sthitāḥ ||
anugrahaśivāḥ prācyāṃ āgneyyāṃ muktidaḥ śivāḥ |
tirobhāvaśivo dakṣe rākṣase bhūtidaḥ śivāḥ ||
mūrtimūrtiśivāḥ sthāpya dikṣu śeṣāsv anukramāt |
maṇḍalaṃ kalpanīyaṃ tat pūrvavac caturaśrakam ||

‘If one drinks liquor unintentionally, one should recite VĀMADEVA-*mantra* in [the *maṇḍala* called] “Śiva-temple”. A “Śiva-temple”, [as] a general term, O Brahman [refers to a temple] in which there is a single *liṅga*. But “Śiva-temple” is taught to have a [particular] *maṇḍala* as its special sense—[a *maṇḍala*] in which [a group of] Śivas beginning with Sṛṣṭi-Śiva are worshipped as per the rules. Alone in the center is invoked Vyomavyāpin, [who is] Mahā-Śiva; on his Southern side is invoked Sṛṣṭi-Śiva; to the North [but still] on the pericarp, [and] on the Śiva-thorne, is invoked Sthiti-Śiva. [On the petal] in the North-Eastern direction is invoked Saṃhāra-Śiva; on the Eastern side—Anugraha-Śiva; in the South-East—Muktida-Śiva; in the South—Tirobhāva-Śiva; in the South-West—Bhūtida-Śiva; in the remaining directions [viz. The West, North-West and North] in due order should be placed the Mūrtimūrti-Śivas. The *maṇḍala* should be made square, as before.’

For the guilt of *surāpāna*, *Garuḍapurāṇa* (1:52:8), *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* (3:253–55) and *Manusmṛti* (11:91–93) prescribe similar expiatory rites: *Manusmṛti* reads:

surāṃ pītvā dvijo mohād agnivarṇāṃ surāṃ pibet |
tayā sa kāye nirdagdhe mucyate kilbiṣāt tataḥ ||

*gomūtram agnivarṇaṃ vā pibed udakam eva vā |
 payo gḥṛtaṃ vā maraṇād gośakṛd rasam eva vā ||
 kaṣṭhān vā bhakṣayed abdaṃ piṇyākam vā sakṛn niśi |
 surāpānāpanuttyarthaṃ vālavāsā jaṭī dhvajī ||*

‘If a Brahmin out of delusion drinks liquor, he should drink boiling-hot liquor; when his body is scalded by it, he will be released from that sin. Or, he may drink boiling-hot cow’s urine, water, milk, ghee or watery cow-dung until he dies. Or, he may eat only broken grain or oil-cake once a day during the night for a full year, wearing a garment of hair, keeping his hair matted, and carrying a banner, in order to remove the guilt of drinking liquor.’

3.3. Śmaśānamaṇḍala for svarṇasteya

Prāyaścittasamuccaya (354–358) of Trilocanaśiva reads:

*kṛtvā steyam akāmāt tu ghoram pitṛvane japet |
 śmaśānaṃ yatra dahyante jantavo jīvavarjitāḥ ||
 nāśahasrād adhas tat syāt karavīrādikasya tu |
 sāmānyavācakaṃ idaṃ viśeṣo maṇḍalaṃ tv iha ||
 bahurūpapadair eva ghorādyai rudrapaścimaiḥ |
 śmaśānamaṇḍale hy atra catvāras tu śivāḥ smṛtāḥ ||
 aghoraḥ padmamadhyastāḥ prācyāṃ ghorāḥ pratiṣṭhitāḥ |
 ghoraghorataro yāmye sarvo vāruṇadik sthitāḥ ||
 rudras tathottarāsāsthō maṇḍalaṃ tu caturdalam |
 catuspretaśirorūḍhāḥ sarve pūyā vidhānataḥ ||*

‘If one unintentionally steals [gold], one should recite AGHORA in the cremation ground (*pitṛvane*). A *śmaśāna* is that place where lifeless creatures are burnt [and where] there are no less than a thousand trees such as oleanders. This is the general [sense of the] term; the special [sense] here, however, is a [particular] *maṇḍala*. In the *śmaśāna-maṇḍala* these are held to be the four Śivas, [invoked] with words of the AGHORA beginning with GHORA and ending with RUDRA: AGHORA situated in the centre of the lotus; GHORA installed in the East; GHORAGHORATARA in the South; SARVA in the West; and RUDRA in the North. The *maṇḍala* has four petals. This indeed is the four petaled *maṇḍala*. All these [deities] are to be duly worshipped [visualised] as mounted on [seats made of] four skulls.’

For the crime of stealing gold, Manu (11:100–03b) prescribes punishment in the following way:

*suvarṇasteyakṛd vipro rājānam abhigamya tu |
svakarma khyāpayan brūyān māṃ bhavān anuśāsty iti ||
grhītvā musalam rājā sakṛd dhanyāt tu taṃ svayam |
vadhenā śuddhyati steno brāhmaṇas tapasaiva vā ||
tapasāpanunutsus tu suvarṇasteyajam malam |
cīravāsā dvijo ‘raṇye cared brahmahaṇo vratam ||*

‘A Brahmin who has stolen gold should go up to the king, proclaim his misdeed and say “lord punish me”. Taking a pestle, the king himself should strike him once. A thief is purified by being put to death or, if he is a Brahmin he becomes pure solely by ascetic toil. If a twice-born wants to rid himself of the sin of stealing gold by means of ascetic toil, however, he should carry out the observance prescribed for killing a Brahmin, living in the wilderness and dressed in tree bark.’

For the same crime, Yājñavalkya (3:257ab) says: *brāhmaṇasvarṇahārī tu rājñe musalam arpayet*—‘If a person steals the gold of a Brahmin, he should proclaim himself as a thief and submit a pestle to the king.’

3.4. *Agnihotramaṇḍala for gurudāragamana*

Prāyaścittasamuccaya (359–364) of Trilocanaśiva reads:

*gurustrīgamaṇam kṛtvā pramādāc ca japen naram |
agnihotragrhaṃ brahman hūyante yatra vahnayaḥ ||
no sahasrād adhas tat syān mohāt sāmānyavācakaṃ |
agnihotragrhaṃ tv atra viśeṣo maṇḍalam smṛtam ||
tribhiḥ padais tu devasya tad dhi tatpuruṣasya ca |
haranetratrayākāraṃ viśeṣas tv iha kīrtiyate ||
pūrvaṃ vedāśrakam vṛttaṃ vāruṇam yāmyam induvat |
yatra vai gārhapatyo ‘gnir devas tatpuruṣaḥ sthītaḥ ||
āhavāgnir mahādevo rudraḥ syād dakṣiṇo ‘nalaḥ |
pāścime puruṣo devo mahādevaḥ puraḥ sthītaḥ ||
rudras tu dakṣiṇe bhāge maṇḍalam parikīrtitam |
pūjyante yatra deveśāḥ puruṣe bhuktimuktidāḥ ||*

‘If one has congress with one’s guru’s wife by mistake, one should recite TATPURUṢA. O Brahman, the *agnihotragrha* is where fire oblations are made, not less than a thousand: this is [held] mistakenly to be [the sense,

when the expression is treated as] a general term. But *agnihotra-grha* here is a special [term, the sense of which] is held to be [a particular] *maṇḍala*. That [*maṇḍala*] indeed (*hi*) [is made] with the three parts (*padaiḥ*) of the Lord Tatpuruṣa. A special [term for this *maṇḍala*], however, is proclaimed here [in this scripture] to be ‘the three eyes of Hara’. The Eastern [part of the *agnihotra-maṇḍala*] is square; the Western is circular; and the Southern is like the [crescent] moon. Where the *gārhapatya* fire is [i.e. in the circle in the West], there resides the deity Tatpuruṣa. Mahādeva is the *āhavāgni*; Rudra is the Southern fire (*dakṣiṇāgni*). [In other words,] in the West is the deity [Tat]puruṣa; Mahādeva is situated in the East; and Rudra is in the Southern part. The *maṇḍala* has [thus] been taught [to be the one] in which are worshipped [these three] deities, who bestow *bhukti* and *mukti* upon man (*puruṣe*)¹⁴.’

For the crime of congress with one’s guru’s wife, Yājñavalkya (3:259–60) and Manu (11:104–07) both prescribe utmost punishment. For example *Manusmṛti* reads:

gurutalpo ‘bhibhāṣyainas tapte svapyād ayomaye |
sūrmīm jvalantīm vā ‘śliṣyen mṛtyunā sa viśudhyati ||
svayaṃ vā śiśnavr̥ṣaṇāv utkr̥tyādāya cāñjalau |
nair̥ṣṭīm diśam ātiṣṭhed ā nipātād ajihmagah ||
khaṭvāṅgī cīravāsā vā śmaśrulo nirjane vane |
prājāpatyaṃ caret kṛcchram abdam ekaṃ samāhitaḥ ||
cāndrāyaṇaṃ vā trīn māsān abhyasen niyatendriyah |
haviṣyeṇa yavāgvā vā gurutalpāpanuttaye ||

‘If a man had sex with one’s guru’s wife, he should proclaim his crime and lie down on a heated iron bed, or embrace a red-hot metal cylinder; he is purified by death. Or, he may cut off his penis and testicles by himself, hold them in his cupped hands and walk straight towards the south-west direction until he falls down dead. Or, he may perform *prājāpatya* penance for one year with a collected mind, carrying a bed-post, dressed in tree bark, wearing a long beard and living in a desolate forest. Or, he may perform the lunar penance (*cāndrāyaṇa*) for three months, keeping his organs under control and subsisting on sacrificial food or barley gruel, so as to remove the sin of sexual intercourse with his guru’s wife.’

¹⁴ It is possible that this is included to suggest a *nirvacana* or a justification for this being a *maṇḍala* that uses the Tatpuruṣa *mantra*.

3.5. *Parvatāgramanḍala* for *tatsahacāra*

Prāyaścittasamuccaya (365–369) of Trilocanaśiva reads:

yogaṃ pātakibhiḥ kṛtvā nagāgre pañcamaṃ japeṭ |
parvatāgraṃ tu śikharaṃ sāmānyaṃ parikīrtitam ||
tadvarṣaparvatānāṃ syāt kulādrīṇāṃ ca kīrtitam |
veśeṣo maṇḍalaṃ brahman parvatāgram iti smṛtam ||
meruṣ tu varṣaśailānāṃ pradhānaḥ parikīrtitaḥ |
vindhya eva kulādrīṇāṃ catuḥ śṛṅgāv ubhāv api ||
īśānaḥ parvato jñeyaḥ parvataḥ parvavān iti |
parvety arthavaśāt samjñā vācyavarṇapadātmikā ||
vācyānyasya tu parvāṇi catvāry uktāni śāsane |
sadāśivākhyam yadvācyam tadagraṃ parikīrtitam ||

‘If one associates with those guilty [of any one of the other four *mahāpātakas*], one should recite ĪŚĀNA on a “mountain top”. The top of a mountain is taught to be a general [term with the sense] *śikhara*.

That [mountain-top] may be on one of the [nine] *varṣācalas*,¹⁵ or [seven] *kulācalas*.¹⁶ [But] the special [sense intended] with “mountain-top”, O Brahman, is [a particular] *maṇḍala*.

Meru is proclaimed to be the principal [mountain] among the *varṣa*-mountains; Vindhya among *kula*-mountains. Both of these have four peaks. Īśāna is known as “*parvata*”. Parvata [means] (*iti*) “having parts” (*parvavān*). The element “*parva*” from context, [must be understood to be] a name for a unit [made up] of utterable sounds (*vācyavarṇātmikā*). Of him [viz. ĪŚĀNA] there have been taught in this scripture to be four utterable parts. As for the utterable unit [at the end of the ĪŚĀNA-*mantra*] “*Sadāśiva*”, that is proclaimed to be [its central] “peak”.’

¹⁵ See e.g., *Śivadharmasamgraha* 10:32c–33:

himavān hemakūṭas ca niṣadho nīla eva ca |
śvetaś ca śṛṅgavāṃś caiva gandhamādana eva ca ||
mālyavān atha meruś ca navaita varṣaparvatāḥ |

¹⁶ See e.g., *Svacchandatantra* 10:156c–57b:

mahendro malayaḥ sahyaḥ śaktimān ṛkṣaparvataḥ |
vindhyaś ca pāriyātraś ca bhānty ete kulaparvatāḥ ||

For the crime of associating oneself with those guilty of any one of the other four *mahāpātakas*, Yājñavalkya (3:261) states:

ebhis tu saṁvased yo vai vatsaram so 'pi tatsamaḥ |

‘When a man forges links with any one [of the sinners] for one year, he becomes equal to [the sinner].’

Hence, he should perform the same observance as prescribed for the *mahāpātakin* in order to purify himself of his association with him.

After stating the required *maṇḍalas* for these five great sins, *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (370–371) of Trilocanaśiva now prescribes the quantity of the recitations.

goṣṭhādiṣu sthito 'kāmād rahasye lakṣam abhyaset |
kāmatas tu rahasye cej japel lakṣadvayaṁ sudhīḥ ||
akāmataḥ prakāṣe cej japel lakṣacatuṣṭayam |
kāmatas tu prakāṣe ced aṣṭalakṣam tato japel ||

‘One [who has committed one of the five *mahāpātakas*] without being observed [by others] and unintentionally, [he] should stand [in the appropriate *maṇḍala*] and recite the prescribed *mantra* [i.e. SADYOJĀTA for *brahmahatyā*, VĀMADEVA for *surāpāna*, AGHORA for *svarṇasteya*, TATPURUṢA for *gurudāragamana* and ĪŚĀNA for *tatsahacāra*] for one lakh times. But if he has done the sin intentionally [and] without being observed [by others], a wise person should recite [the *mantra*] two lakh times. If he has done so unintentionally but openly, then he should recite [the *mantra*] four lakh times. If intentionally and openly, then he should recite [it] for eight lakh times.’

After worshipping the *maṇḍala* with the recitations as reparation one should also undergo the observances of fasting, which are described in the following verses in the *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (372–374b) of Trilocanaśiva:

cāndrāyaṇaṁ parākaṁ ca kṛcchraṁ caiva yathākramam |
taptakṛcchraṁ atikṛcchraṁ brahmahatyādipañcasu ||

‘He should perform *cāndrāyaṇa*, *parāka*, *kṛcchra*, *tapta-kṛcchra* and *ati-kṛcchra* respectively for the five [sins of] *brahmahatyā* etc.’

At the end [of such performance] he becomes pure through initiation. Alternatively, installation of Śiva.

*akāmādi caturṣv etad ekadvicaturaṣṭadhā |
ācared vratam evaṃ tad ante śuddhyati dīkṣayā ||
pratiṣṭhayā vā kathitaṃ mahāpātakaśodhanam |*

‘For these four types¹⁷ [of transgression] beginning with accidental [non-observed transgression] one should perform the [enjoined expiatory] religious observances in this way once, twice, four times and eight times [respectively]; at the end [of such performance] one will become pure through initiation. Alternatively, purification for the great sins has been told [to come about] by performing an installation [of Śiva].’

Further passages from *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (374c–375) of Trilocanaśiva, which are probably drawn from the Śaiva scripture *Vāthula*, describes the general statement of expiatory procedure for the sin of keeping contact with the great sinners.

*mahāpātakayuktānām darśanaṃ parivarjayet |
ālāpād ayutāc chuddhir dviguṇāt sparśato matā ||
śayanāt tryayutāc chuddhir bhojanāl lakṣataḥ śuciḥ |*

‘One should avoid looking at those who have committed [one or another of] the [five] great sins. One who talks [with such a person] will be purified by reciting [AGHORA] ten thousand times; becomes purified by reciting twice the number for touching [them]; becomes purified by reciting thirty thousand times for sleeping [beside them]; becomes purified by reciting one lakh for eating [with them].’

4. Secondary crimes (*Upapātaka*)

As far as the *upapātakas* are concerned, *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* (3:234–242) prescribes a long list, according to which Yājñavalkya¹⁸ (3:265)

¹⁷ Probably *akāmādicaturṣu* means—1. *akāmād rahasye*; 2. *kāmato rahasye*; 3. *akāmāt prakāṣe*; 4. *kāmataḥ prakāṣe*.

¹⁸ Cf. *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*: *upapātakaśuddhiḥ syād evaṃ cāndrāyanena vā | payasā vāpi māsenā parākenātha vā punaḥ ||*

prescribes the purificatory procedure for *upapātakas* by undergoing *cāndrāyaṇa* observance subsisting either on milk or on water, or by undergoing *parāka* fast.

Whereas the Śaiva reparatory manual *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (427c–428c) of Trilocanaśiva says:

*upapātakaśuddhiḥ syād aindavena vratena tu |
payasā vāpi māsenā parākenāpi vā bhavet ||
aghoralakṣato vāpi*

‘The secondary crimes will be purified by the *aindava* [= *cāndrāyaṇa*] or by [living off] water (*payasā*) for a month or by the *parāka*; or by reciting AGHORA one lakh times.’

In addition to the *cāndrāyaṇa*, *parāka* as a reparation for *upapātakas*, which are mentioned in *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti*, the recitation of AGHORA-*mantra* one lakh times is prescribed, which is specific to the Śaiva Āgamas.

Conclusion

As was mentioned at the beginning of the text, it is still debatable whether the *prāyaścitta* can destroy the sins which are committed intentionally. Manu (11:90) clearly states that:

*iyam viśuddhir uditā pramāpyākāmato dvijam |
kāmato brāhmaṇavadhe niṣkṛtir na vidhīyate ||*

‘This expiation has been prescribed for unintentional killing of a Brahmin, but for intentionally slaying a Brahmin there is no expiation.’

Similarly, *Kūrmapurāṇa* (2:30:17–18) further adds:

*akāmataḥ kṛte pāpe prāyaścittam idaṃ śubham |
kāmato maraṇāc chuddhir jñeyā nānyena kenacit ||
kuryād anaśanam vātha bhṛgoḥ patanam eva vā |
jvalantaṃ vā viśed agniṃ jalaṃ vā praviśet svayam ||*

‘This above-said expiation is for the grave sins which are committed unintentionally. For the intentionally committed sins there is no expiation

except death, as it cannot be expiated by any other means. Alternatively, one should fast, even fall from a precipice, enter the flames of a fire, or voluntarily enter the water.’

Though some of the *smṛti* texts appear to prescribe possible expiations for great sins, it is quite evident that one cannot be alive after undergoing such hellish prescriptions. Ultimately, as far as the great sins are concerned, they are not expiable according to *smṛti* texts. However, we see that the Śaivasiddhānta offers a man a possibility to purify himself even after committing grave sins which are committed intentionally. It is very much probable that a man after committing such grave sins and expiating for them may lead a good and peaceful life till his death. These expiatory rites prescribed in the Āgamas and referred to in *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* of Trilocanaśiva and *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* of Ḥṛdayaśiva give a chance to such sinners to mend their ways and lead a good life.

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Five Great Sins (*Mahāpātakas*) with Special Reference to Śaiva Siddhānta

SUMMARY: The term *prāyaścitta* covers a number of rites and actions that are held to expiate or repair faults of omission and commission. In fact, many of the expiable offenses that are discussed in Saiddhāntika sources are not exclusively Śaiva but belong also to the realm of *smārta* traditions for they include such non-criminal and non-transgressive things as states of ritual impurity caused, for example, by life-events such as birth and death.

The expiatory procedure for the five great sins vary between Śaiva and *smārta* systems. Śaiva scriptures prescribe different types of *maṇḍalas* for these five great sins using five BRAHMA-*mantras* to expiate along with moon-related fasting of *kṛcchra*, *cāndrāyaṇa* etc., and initiation (*dīkṣā*) or an installation of Śiva (*pratiṣṭhā*). Most of the *smṛti nibandhas* say that the great sins are not expiable. Here I have focused on these two systems regarding the great sins, mainly taking into consideration the 12th-century Śaiva expiatory manual *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* of Trilocanaśiva.

KEYWORDS: Śaiva Siddhānta, sins, *prāyaścitta*, *maṇḍala*.

Introduction

Before going to the topic of *mahāpātakas*, let me say a few words about *prāyaścitta*. *Prāyaścitta* is a ritual which is performed by humans to eliminate the effects of their bad deeds. Humans are bound to make mistakes voluntarily or involuntarily. However, one has to repent