

Prātarānuvāka

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Prātarānuvāka (Pka) is an Early Morning litany, recited by the Hota, ca. 2 AM of the *stutya* day of the Soma ritual, inaugurating thereby the Soma phase of a Śrauta ritual. In the Kauṣītaki tradition, it is a composite litany of 357 verses addressing three deities, Agni, Uṣas, and Aśvins respectively in eight meters arranged in each case along a GA, AN, TR, BR/SB, UṢ, JG, PÑ backbone, with Agni getting 155 verses, Uṣas, 72 and Aśvins, 130. An examination of the litany along the three axes of the *Sarvānukramaṇī* of the *Ṛgveda* points to the following conclusions:

- i. As would befit an Early Morning litany, Pka possibly arose as an all-Uṣas liturgical compilation of 72 verses, strung along the above metrical bone, ending in an “omphalos” PÑ hymn from the Atri collection.
- ii. Verses from the Atri family played a vital role in shaping the final litany in that all three metrical strands of the litany end in similar omphalos PÑ hymns from the Atri family.
- iii. Verses of the litany come from all nine maṇḍalas (Book 9 excepted as it does not have verses to the three deities of the litany) of the *Ṛgveda*, rising within a given meter in the order of the books of the redacted 10-maṇḍala *Ṛgveda*, showing that the redactors of the litany visualized the 10-maṇḍala *Ṛgveda* although still an oral artefact.
- iv. The proem to the litany, a TR verse repeated three times, from Kavaśa Ailūśa collection, marks the elevation of the litany to its display as a trophy spectacle of the Śrauta ritual of the Soma phase inaugurating it and paving the way thus to the Kuru-Pāñcāla “classical” ritual.
- v. The entire litany becomes embedded (like its nuclear Uṣas liturgy) in a sort of mother all litanies, the Aśvinaśāstra of the Agnicayana, a 1000-verse liturgical compilation growing along two of the metrical strands, the verses for the Uṣas strand seemingly already fixed.
- vi. An assessment of the Gotra affiliations of the verses making up the two litanies is a measure of the ecumenism of the *Ṛgveda* in the post-redaction period.