

Part 3: Belief Systems and Ritual

Chapter Seven

Navarātra: The Festival of the Nine Nights

śūlaprotād upāntaplutamahi mahiṣād utpatantyā sravantyā
vartmany ārajyamāne sapadi makhabhujāṃ jātasam̐dhyāpramohaḥ |
nṛtyan hāsenā mattvā vijayamaham ahaṃ mānayāmīti vādī
yām āśliṣya pranṛttaḥ punar api purabhit pārvatī pātu sāvah || Caṇḍīśataka
16.

When drowned in red appeared the heavenly way
Once deluged the neighbouring earth had grown
In streams that gushed from trident-gashed Mahiṣa
Delighted Śiva, thinking it was Dawn,
Began to dance. Then grasping he had erred,
Exclaimed he-- "I mark your victory-fest!"
And that Mountain's Daughter clasping he danced.
May she he had embraced watch over you.

In mediaeval India, royal cults were meaningless unless brought to life in the sphere of ritual. In this chapter, I will present the politically most important enactment of the cult of Durgā so far examined in terms of its mythology, the patronage it secured, its local manifestations, its core symbols and beliefs. This ritual was the spectacular autumnal ceremony of the Nine Nights (Navarātra/Navarātri), also known as the Festival of Durgā (Durgotsava). In the various rites of the Navarātra marking Durgā's victory over Mahiṣa that transferred power and kingship from sovereign-goddess to king and thence to all citizens, the visible climax of the relationship between goddess and ruler was attained and publicly expressed. Held at the end of the monsoon, at a time heralding both the campaigns of kings and the onset of disease, ill-health¹ and inauspiciousness, the festival held a double significance: it was thought to bring military success in the former case and to ensure the protection of the realm

¹ Iyer 1928, vol. 2, pp. 57, 59, 60.

from the latter. The autumnal nine nights festival of the cult of the sovereign goddess was therefore essential for the periodical rejuvenation of the entire kingdom through averting potential crises. [22]

It was at this time that the affinity between Śakti-- Durgā in her pluralistic aspect-- and the ruler was singularly evoked, and temporal power was made sacred. To draw an analogy with the ceremonials of the cult of the Roman emperor in Asia Minor, which served a function similar to the goddess's Navarātra : “It was at festivals and their ritual that the vague and elusive ideas concerning the emperor [...] were focussed in action and made more powerful [...] Here the conceptual systems of temple, image and sacrifice found their living embodiment”.² During the Navarātra the range of symbols and beliefs evoking the regality of the sovereign-goddess, which we had observed in the previous chapter, were similarly “focussed in action and made more powerful”. It was also a time when the collective nature of the cult was most visible, when the ceremonies honouring the goddess alone, complementing and finding at every stage of the nine nights their human counterparts in parallel ceremonies centered on the king, were shared with all the people of the kingdom. Certain groups fulfilled particular ritual responsibilities; some honoured members renewed their allegiance to the throne by being allowed to pay tribute at the court, while others simply participated as observers in the grand public rites, or celebrated individually with rituals in their homes. [22]

Such an understanding of the Navarātra as an “incorporative ritual” has largely been guided by an influential article written by Burton Stein. Stein was the first to locate the importance of the festival as a communal rite of kingship.³ His detailed and convincing argument was, however, based on two uncritically held assumptions: one was that the Vijayanagara empire was where the first reports of the Navarātra emerge (and also the implicit view that it was the only place

² Price 1984, p. 102.

³ Stein 1983, p. 78.

where this ritual was performed),⁴ and the second was that eye-witness reports composed by travellers (Nicolo Conti, Abdur Razzak, Domingo Paez and Fernao Nuniz) to the Vijayanagara court in the 15th and 16th centuries would tell us everything about the festival. In fact, his conceptual edifice was primarily erected on the basis of these observational accounts. Though otherwise informative and meticulous, these travellers' reports carry a singular danger: they may impute to a tradition meaning its own practitioners would not have recognized. Reports written by visitors who saw only the public, and not private, dimension of the rite unfolding in the durbar-hall and the arena, had influenced Stein to view the Navarātra as entirely focussed on the Vijayanagara king.⁵ Accordingly, he does not explain fully either the rituals (which the reporters did not see) of worshipping the goddess in whom royal power was seen to be fully concentrated during the Navarātra, or how the worship of the king was necessarily tied in with the goddess's worship at this time. For, without the worship at Navarātra of a form of śakti for whom the rites were principally offered, a king's worship was believed to be meaningless, simply a secular act of homage that had little ritual validity without a transcendent power energizing it. If Stein's account of the South Indian Navarātra is compared to other Southern Navarātras celebrated in the Tamil kingdoms of Śivagaṅgai and Ramnad, successors to the Vijayanagara kingdom, a secondary layer of rituals is revealed, in which the king would either worship the goddess himself or would have her incorporated into his own worship, but which unfolded inside the palace and not within public arenas. These were not seen by Stein's witnesses, debarred from the crucial ritual areas as all outsiders were. ❏❏

Had Stein looked beyond eye-witness accounts, and considered accounts in Sanskrit from all over India that predated the Vijayanagara accounts by much more than a century, he might have reconsidered his belief that the Navarātra was spurred solely by the rise of that South Indian kingdom. These accounts in Sanskrit may be considered, in contrast to traveller's reports, as "insider-texts",

⁴ "The Mahānavamī is first reported in the greatest south Indian kingdom of mediaeval times, the Vijayanagara kingdom", Ibid, p. 77.

⁵ "In all cases the focus of the ceremonies is upon the reigning king and the revitalization of his kingship and his realm", Ibid. p. 78.

being composed by and for the class of ritual-specialists who were directly involved in the performance of the Navarātra and in determining the ritual sequence that was to be followed by a kingdom. Describing the ritual sequence in detail (including the all-important liturgy that would be recited during ritual action and contained the key-concepts of the ritual process), the Sanskrit sources embody indigenous views on what constituted ritual meaning and ritual structure. It is therefore necessary to rely on these insider accounts for conceiving how the ritual was performed. Eye-witness reports, where available, are used, supplementarily, to verify the Sanskrit and to fill in the gaps. ¶¶Of these insider-accounts of the Navarātra in Sanskrit there are plenty, and from a number of regions, and scriptural traditions, attesting that the ritual was truly pan-Indic in scale. There are firstly the Purāṇas, the scriptural authorities for the rite, and, secondly, treatises or chapters in larger works based on these scriptures, composed mainly by the Dharmasāstric cognoscenti, the smārtas (brāhmaṇa experts in the Smṛti, the orthodox legal corpus), who were located at various courts throughout India as advisors to kings.⁶ There is also evidence of the Navarātra in ritual literature that was not strictly brahmanical but syncretic in character, assimilating Tantric elements. Sanderson 2007 revealed the existence of certain Orissan ritual texts of this type teaching a version of the Navarātra that had developed in the context of the Orissan Atharvavedic traditions and propitiated the goddess Bhadrakālī/Jayadurgā with mantras from the Śākta Kālīkula.⁷ ¶¶

Although, the Purāṇas and the smārta-treatises are prescriptive and not factual in language (“this should be” rather than “this was”), they form by far our best and only sources for describing the rite.⁸ No other sources in the form of eye-witness accounts from a period preceding the 15th c. exist, and, in this absence, it is crucial to rely on prescriptive literature as evidence for how the mediaeval

⁶ For a chronological assessment of smārta literature on the Navarātra and an account of the Bengali rite known as the Durgā Pūjā between the 12th-15th c. see Sarkar 2012. Besides Raghunandana whom the article directly concerns, other early and important Gauḍīya Dharmasāstric writers on the goddess's pūjā such as Jīmūtavāhana and Śūlapāṇi have been assessed in this article.

⁷ Sanderson 2007, pp. 255-276.

⁸ Reasons for this are discussed in greater depth in Sarkar 2012, pp. 326-327.

Indians conceptualized ritual and their relation to the gods. The great importance of this literature is attested by 9th c. inscriptions from South East Asia, which conclusively confirm that prescriptive sources in Sanskrit were employed by mediaeval royal courts in directly shaping their ritual practices.⁹ The charge of idealism, though at first sight imputable to such writings, can thus be laid to rest where one is dealing with a culture as indebted to the sacred books and as respectful of sacred learning in all religious activities as the mediaeval Indic one. ☞☞

Regional traditions regarding the Navaratra directly influenced Purāṇic descriptions and these local traditions are reflected in the juridical literature by *smārta* writers originating in particular regional courtly environments. The *smārtas* drew from the Purāṇas as authorities. They include in their works vast passages on Navarātras from particular Purāṇas that doubtless were seen as forming important religious traditions in the regions of composition. Were it otherwise, those Purāṇas would not have been cited in the *smārta* treatises, which, being primarily legislative and constitutional in function, sought to embody the principles and religious systems guiding the kingdom. In *smārta* writings, one discerns therefore real historical contexts for the dateless and protean Purāṇic accounts of the Nine-Nights ceremony. One can also see an attempt by their authors, hired to create ritual curricula for their employer-kingsdoms that would be put into action, to make sense of and coherently interpret the mystical descriptions of the Purāṇas. However, examples from this literature are quite late, since they were composed only from the 12th c. onwards, at a mature phase of the Navarātra ceremony, when it had stabilized after centuries of change. I thus take them to mark the *termini ante-quem* for periodicizing the Navarātra. ☞☞

The *terminus post-quem* is difficult to ascertain given that very few Purāṇic sources have been edited properly and the most ancient manuscripts are either unknown or have not yet been utilized: the reader is warned that the historical sequence outlined below is only provisional and remains in large part open to

⁹ Sanderson 2003-2004, p. 353; pp. 355-357.

discussion and querying. Only a detailed examination of the manuscripts of some of the key scriptures, that I have been unable to undertake in the present work, can enable one to ascertain a sound chronological history. It is hoped that this effort will be undertaken in future studies.¹⁰ [?]

I. cca. 200 CE- 300 CE: The propitiation of Nidrā and a festival of the polis in the month of Kṛṣṇa's birth [?]

Previously in this book I have suggested that although it is difficult to envisage Durgā's cult before the 2nd century CE given the lack of materials, it is possible that she was a non-Brahmanical deity, though no firm conclusions can be made about this. This is why I began my analysis with Durgā's emergence within Vaiṣṇavism in the Gupta period. However, with regard to her ritual, the later sources preserve what appears to me be an archaic core that would enable us to support the hypothesis that she was originally an aboriginal deity. According to the sources we have available (namely the *Harivaṃśa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the old *Skandapurāṇa*, the *Kādambarī*, *Harṣacarita*, *Caṇḍīśataka*, *Gauḍavaho* and Purāṇic citations in juridical compendia from Bengal¹¹) the earliest core of the Navarātra, anteceding its Vaiṣṇava form, was a popular propitiatory tradition external to Brahmanism that pacified dangers and publicly exhibited the heroism of rulers. The goddess, known primarily as Nidrā, Kālarātri or Kālī was placated by buffalo sacrifice and acts of ritual self-mutilation by rulers of tribal groups in what must have been communal affirmations of the spirit of a polis (*nagara*). The old *Skandapurāṇa* provides one of our earliest template of the ritual. This passage,

¹⁰ Valuable work has already been accomplished in systematizing this mass of Purāṇic sources: Kane (Kane 1958 (1994), vol. 5, part 1, pp. 155-195). and Hazra's descriptive studies (Hazra 1963, vol. 2. pp. 2-15), along with Einoo's tabulation and genericization of Purāṇic passages on the Navarātra are foremost in the field. These studies succeeded in illuminating the great diversity in ritual programmes, showing that there was no monolithic template that the ceremony followed. However, given the difficulty in securely dating Purāṇic texts that changed and grew over the first to the sixth centuries, these studies have, with some reason, tended to avoid chronology. Furthermore, they, with the exception of Hazra, tended to see the rituals not as forming different regional traditions, but as isolated textual descriptions.

¹¹ *Harivaṃśa* 57.35-36; *Mahābhārata* 4.5.29 ff and 6.22.6 ff, old *Skandapurāṇa* 60.46; *Kādambarī* pp. 30-31; *Harṣacarita* p. 126; *Caṇḍīśataka* 16; *Gauḍavaho* 318, 319, Purāṇic citations in later *Gauḍanibandhas*.

old *Skandapurāṇa* 60.46, says that “ “You are propitiated by kings, who have lain their arms and knees on the floor, with the heads of buffaloes, whose eyes, blood-shot in the margins, are [still] spinning”.¹² Buffalo sacrifice formed the earliest ritual worshipping the goddess, and when her worship changed over time, it continued to serve as one of the most crucial propitiatory acts. Since myth and ritual are intimately connected in the case of the Navarātra, the sacrifice evokes the story of Durgā slaying the buffalo demon Mahiṣa. Let us recall the story as it is narrated in the later old *Skandapurāṇa*, the earliest record of a full dramatization: ॐ ॐ

After her re-incarnation of “Kālī”, Pārvatī’s black former self, her coronation by all the gods, her adoption by Indra as his sister, and her assignment of vassals to different regions, the goddess was invited to attend a sacrifice (*yajña*) at the hermitage of Śaradvat Gautama. Knowing of her arrival there, Mahiṣa, the valiant son of Sumbha (*sunuḥ sumbhasya*) quickly followed her, intent on avenging his father, whom Kauśikī had slain in the previous chapter. He was large bodied, with a great chest (*pṛthūraska*), broad neck (*mahāgrīva*), fine tail (*suvāladhiḥ*), pointed horns (*vakraśṛṅgaḥ*) and a lofty head (*viśālocchṛtamastakaḥ*). His roar resembled a clap of thunder (*vajraṇiṣpeṣaparūṣaṃ nardamāna*). He was like a mountain of split antimony (*añjanādrisamaprakhyaḥ*). Blocking her path he stood waiting for her. Learning of his arrival the goddess went where he waited. When he saw her, he dashed towards her like a dark mountain (*asitādrikalpaḥ*) with his tail lifted aloft and his horn bared. The goddess resolutely stood her ground. When his horn grazed the rolling necklace on her breast, she grasped it, lifted him high up, whirled him about and in fury dashed him to the ground. Grabbing his tail, she trampled his head with her foot, and piercing her trident through his back, robbed him of his breath. Showered by flowers, the goddess then returned to her mountain-abode.

ॐ ॐ

¹² *śirobhir mahiṣodbhrāntaraktaparyantalocanaiḥ / nṛbhiḥ kṣitalanyastakarajānubhir ijjase //*

What is striking here is that the scene evokes hunting. What can such a hunt symbolize? To quote the historian of religions Jonathan Z. Smith in his influential study on ancient rituals:¹³

“Within agricultural, urban societies, the religious symbolism of hunting is that of overcoming the beast who frequently represents either chaos or death. The hunt is perceived, depending on the symbolic system, as a battle between creation and chaos, good and evil, life and death, man and nature. The paradigm of such a symbolic understanding is the royal hunt which persists from ancient Sumer and Egypt to the contemporary Queen of England, mythologized in legends such as Saint George and the Dragon and partially secularized in the relatively recent ceremony of the Spanish bull fight. The king, as representative of both the ruling god and the people, slays the beast”¹³

In the myth of Durgā and Mahiṣa and in its ritual enactments, it is this very theme of the sacrificial hunt being played out, which becomes an allegory, dramatized in sacrificial *mahiṣabali* rituals during Durgā's festival, for cleansing the polis of disruption and inauspiciousness.

In the Indian version of this pervasive and ancient mythic trope, the hunt develops over the centuries from the simple core structure we have read above and goes down more expansive narrative pathways, in which notably among other developments the hunted beast acquires a thinking personhood. In interpretations in the *Vāmanapurāṇa* (18.39-21.52), the *Kālikāpurāṇa* (60.56-164) and also the *Devīmāhātmya* (Adhyāyas 2-3), Mahiṣa's part is gradually expanded from the kernel of the old *Skandapurāṇa* to include: an account of his origin through Rambha's copulation with a she-buffalo (*Vāmanapurāṇa*, *Kālikāpurāṇa*); an elaboration of heaven in chaos after his attack and the gods' plea to a council of higher gods (*Devīmāhātmya*, *Vāmanapurāṇa*); an elucidation of the birth of the goddess in tejas in the council (*Devīmāhātmya*, *Vāmanapurāṇa*); Mahiṣa's falling in love with and courtship of the goddess (*Vāmanapurāṇa*), an intricate sub-plot unfolding in the Vindhya mountain involving messengers, love-speeches, a proposal and a condition; and the battle

¹³ Smith 1980, p. 118.

itself, which in the *Devīmāhātmya* stretches for at least seventy verses and in the *Vāmanapurāṇa* for at least sixty one, and involves besides Mahiṣa in each of his successive transformations, the slaughter of sundry demon-generals and paltry subordinates. The most unconventional and ingenious reconfiguration of the tale appears in the Assamese *Kālikāpurāṇa* (c. 10th century CE) in which a non-linear, layered style of narrative is employed, whereby Mahiṣa's death is replayed both retrospectively and prospectively through dreams and visions, and he is portrayed as the unwilling victim of a curse cast by the seer Kātyāyana, on account of his tricking a pupil in the guise of a woman. His disposition and fate are thereby shown to be pre-ordained and the notion of his demonic culpability overturned. Moreover, he is no less than an *aṃśāvatāra*, a "portion-incarnation", of the great god Śiva himself and a model-devotee of the goddess, who welcomes his bloody death at her hands to ensure his eternal proximity to her feet.¹⁴ In this way, a paradox develops across the trajectory of stories about the demon-goddess battle: Mahiṣa is an animal of sacrifice but he is also a cognizing being, who reflects on his experience and even grapples with his demonic nature, questioning the way he is put to death. He becomes more and more man-like in later Śākta traditions-- in fact, myths, for example, the *Devīmāhātmya* (3.37-39), and also art, conceive him as a man exiting a wound on

¹⁴ His death is first revealed to the gods by the goddess on the eastern shore of the Ocean of Milk, and they are then asked to go to Kātyāyana's hermitage, where Durgā is formed through the light of all the gods, and the conventional plot of the *Devīmāhātmya* takes over. Once he is killed, the story does not end. There follows a "flashback" in which we discover that Mahiṣa had been murdered previously, in other ages. In this flashback Mahiṣa witnesses in a dream his head being cleft and his blood drunk by the goddess in an awe-inspiring, sixteen-armed form, Bhadrakālī. After this, he worships Bhadrakālī for a long time, and when propitiated she appears to him. He expresses his readiness to be killed by her if that is his fate, according to the curse, and also reveals that his father was a worshipper of Śiva and that he too is a devotee: thereby casting himself as the pious bhakta. The goddess then reveals his deaths in three successive kalpas by three ferocious forms, an eighteen armed Ugracaṇḍā in a previous birth, Bhadrakālī in a second birth and in the present age, by a ten-armed Kātyāyanī. Terrified-- for he is no longer the invulnerable, impersonal force of older literature--Mahiṣa expresses unwillingness to fight with the gods, and be slain in this horrific manner. And on account of his devotion to Śiva, Durgā relents and gifts him two boons, whereby after the gods regain their kingdom, he escapes rebirth for a vast period of aeons and secures a permanent place at her feet during her worship.

the buffalo's body holding a sword-- though his death reminds inevitably of his inalterable nature as the *paśu*. We also find that in later Śākta versions, for instance in the *Devīmāhātmya*, the narrative of 'Dharma threatened' is made much more prominent: Mahiṣa is not bent on exacting simply vengeance as he is in old *Skandapurāṇa*, but has larger ambitions to destabilize and subsume heaven. He defeats the armies of Indra, and takes over, and his death by the goddess is therefore conceived as action for the greater weal. In fact it is important to note that such was Mahiṣa's conception even within a strand of mythology connected Skanda that we had discussed in Part 1 Chapter 4. Accordingly, all Śākta myths of the buffalo demon, after the old-*Skandapurāṇa* story, particularly the *Devīmāhātmya*, turn, like Skanda's version, on the notion of Dharma restored. At the same time they show significant tensions within this concept: both Skanda and Durgā, though saviours of Dharma, manifest deadly and uncontrollable shades which oppose, or keep in check, their aspect as the Dharmic sovereign. During battle, they are depicted as self-proliferating-- their bodies sprout forth hordes of terrifying beings, antithetical in disposition to the gods of heaven. The appearance of these beings functions as a pretext for the manifestation of infernal sides in the two deities' characters (see Part 2). There is a constant sense, simmering beneath the surface, that trickery and the black arts come naturally to them. ☞☞

When the goddess was absorbed by the more elite faiths from what was a popular ritual context centred on the buffalo-sacrifice, it was in Vaiṣṇava literature that she was first described, and provided with the identity of Kṛṣṇa's sister, the dark and hallucinatory Nidrā, or her cosmic counterpart the Black Night of Death Kālarātri (see Part 1, Chapter 1). Even within Vaiṣṇavism she sits uneasily as there is always the underlying sense in the literature that she and her rituals are from some other time and space. According to the testimony of Bāṇa's works and the earlier *Harivaṃśa*, Nidrā's principal worship within the Vaiṣṇava tradition was associated with one, rather than nine, ceremonial days identified in the Sanskrit as Navamī or Mahānavamī¹⁵ and Vijayamaha (the festival of victory), the Special Ninth lunar-day commemorating the festival of the

¹⁵ Harṣacarita, Ucchvāsa 8, p. 126, l. 4: *mahānavamīmahaṃ*.

goddess's victory over demons.¹⁶ This Ninth day is particularly identified by both Bāṇa and the *Harivaṃśa* as sacred to the goddess, though none of these witnesses mention her worship on previous days. The silence of these works on that account suggests that the large-scale eight-day preamble, widespread in the later ritual, was either unknown or not widely followed at this time. [22]

The myth of the *Harivaṃśa* identifies the Ninth lunar day as falling on the dark half of the rainy month of Śrāvaṇa a month sacred to Kṛṣṇa. The importance of this ascription is explained by the *Harivaṃśa* as owing to the time of the goddess's birth: according to the myth of the goddess presented here, she was born from Yaśodā at midnight on the dark Eighth lunar day, that is on the first hour of the dark Ninth lunar day.¹⁷ The dark quarter of the month may have been associated with her dark colouring, and the fact that she conceptually evoked sleep and the night of *pralaya* when the universe was to be annihilated. The clearly ancient importance of the dark Ninth as the proper time for worshipping the goddess impacted the mediaeval Gauḍīya Navarātra which, in addition to beginning from the bright First, the more widespread practice, was also taught by Eastern treatise-writers to commence from the dark Ninth of the lunar month (*kṛṣṇanavamī*) because of the goddess's birth on that occasion. Even today particular traditions of the Durgā Pūjā in Bengal begin on the dark Ninth.¹⁸ [22]

At the primeval stage hinted at in these Sanskrit accounts, the festival was primarily apotropaic, seeking to placate spirits who could otherwise cause disease or lay horrific siege on villages. It was also associated with protecting men in dangerous situations, exemplified by the *Harivaṃśa* as being trapped in a forest, deluged in a great ocean, or imprisoned by robbers.¹⁹ This practical function of protecting a community from crises, war, supernatural dangers, pacifying omens and obtaining blessings and good-fortune remained the most

¹⁶ See opening verse to this chapter.

¹⁷ *Harivaṃśa* 57.35-36; 48.13. Kauśikī is said to have been born from Yaśodā at the same time as Kṛṣṇa was born from Devakī. She then exchanged places with Kṛṣṇa so that she would be dashed against a stone by Kaṃsa in Kṛṣṇa's lieu.

¹⁸ *Durgāpūjātattva*, pp. 47-48. The *Purohitadarpaṇa*, the ritual manual currently most in use in Bengal still teaches this option (*Purohitadarpaṇa*, p. 227).

¹⁹ See Part 1, Chapter 1.

important reason for worshipping the goddess during the autumnal ceremony even in the later tradition, attested in a number of later scriptural passages. 20

The hallmark of this early Vaiṣṇava rite was offering blood to the goddess, a substance she greatly relished and nursed an insatiable craving for. The *Harivaṃśa* describes that the goddess's worship on the Ninth lunar day must be accompanied by the offering of domestic animals (*sapaśukriyā*), for the goddess herself was, like the hordes of ghosts who attended her, “always fond of offerings of flesh” (*nityaṃ māṃsabalipriyā*). Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* associates Mahānavamī particularly with buffalo-sacrifice-- a metaphor used by the author to describe a Śabara, suggesting that the sacrifice of many buffaloes occurred on this occasion during his time.²⁰ In addition to animal sacrifice on Navamī of the month of Kṛṣṇa's birth, Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* also describes rites of self-affliction such as the offering of blood from one's body, given that the ferocity of the deity was a potentially benevolent and thus venerated characteristic in this early form of the Navarātra.²¹ There are also accounts of sacrificing one's own head to the goddess-- *kāvya* is full of such accounts²²-- or even gouging out one's eyes, as Rāma was about to have done on Mahānavamī in the *Kṛttivāsī Rāmāyaṇa* of Bengal.²³ The figure of the self-sacrificing king is one that appears with frequency in Indic literature and sculpture on the warrior-goddess, as we have noted in Chapter One. As Baldissera notes “as supporters and legitimizers of royal power goddesses appreciate the *rājasika* qualities that characterise victorious kings...[they] reward passion and fervour”.²⁴ Rituals of self-mutilation would have been viewed as ennobling demonstrations of heroism and self-sacrifice towards the deity. Besides self-mutilation, the Ninth was also marked by the performance of human-sacrifice, when the head of a human victim, would be offered to please the goddess.²⁵ This practice of propitiating Nidrā was

²⁰ See the Introduction.

²¹ See the Introduction.

²² For example see the *Kuvalayamālā* and the *Tilakamañjarī* discussed in Chapter 5, “The cults of heroic clan goddesses”.

²³ See Chapter Six, Part 3.

²⁴ Baldissera 1996, p. 86.

²⁵ Kālikāpurāṇa 61.14 describes the worship of the goddess “with [offerings] of Great Flesh” on Aṣṭamī:

continued, along with the practice of self-mutilation, into the Mahānavamī ceremonials of the later courtly Maithila Navarātra, discussed later. In fact, the later Purāṇas earmarked Mahānavamī for the custom of offering human blood, and, though carefully distancing themselves from the ritual by calling it the practice of *barbaras* and *mlecchas*, taught the offering of human-blood by *dvija* kings as a highly effective, albeit eccentric, means of propitiating Caṇḍī. It was in fact advocated by Bengali *smārtas* as late as the 15th century.²⁶

Joyous, incorporative rites involving the community would also have been performed. Purāṇic literature and its commentarial tradition discuss a festival called Śābarotsava, the Festival of the Śābaras, to be celebrated on the following lunar day, the Tenth (Daśamī) joined with the asterism Śravaṇa, a constellation believed to be governed by Viṣṇu. This custom was associated particularly with Mithilā, Assam and Bengal since all the literature on the festival hails from those regions. According to the main witness, the Eastern *Kālikāpurāṇa*, the festival is envisioned as a celebration of communal identity when everyone, including outcastes, is taught to join together in ecstatically paying farewell to the deity at her departure from the world at the end of the rite. Dancing, celebratory fanfares, bacchanalian game-playing and making conversation and songs about the male and female sexual organs were encouraged at this time, as the *Kālikā*, and the Bengali *smārta* commentarial tradition.²⁷

aṣṭamyāṃ rudhiraiś caiva mahāmāṃsaiḥ sugandhibhiḥ |
pūjayed bahujātīyair balibhir bhojanaiḥ śivām || Kālikāpurāṇa 61.14. . See also
Gauḍavaho 318 and 319, the worship of Dantesvarī in Bastar (see Chapter Five,
Part 2) and Caṇḍamārī with human sacrifice in the Yaśastilakacampū, pp. 26-29.
²⁶ Offering blood from one's body on the Navarātra is taught for instance in
 Raghunandana's *Durgāpūjātattva* as follows: *svadeharudhiradāne tu eṣa*
svagātrarudhirabaliḥ oṃ mahāmāye jagannātaḥ sarvakāmapradāyini | dadāmi
deharudhiraṃ prasīda varadā bhava | ity uktvā oṃ jayantīyādīnā dadyāt
(Durgāpūjātattva, p. 57).

²⁷ *visarjayed daśamyāṃ tu śravaṇe śābarotsavaiḥ | antyapādo divābhāge*
śravaṇasya yadā bhavet | tadā sampreṣaṇaṃ devyā daśamyāṃ kārayed budhaḥ
| suvāsīnikumārībhir veśyābhir narttakais tathā | śaṅkhatūryaninādaiś ca
mṛdaṅgaiḥ paṭṭahais tathā | dhvajavastrair bahuvidhair lājapuṣpaprakīrṇakaiḥ
| dhūlikardamavikṣepaiḥ krīḍākautukamaṅgalaiḥ | bhagaliṅgābhīdhānaiś
ca bhagaliṅgapragītakaiḥ || bhagaliṅgādīśabdaiś ca krīḍeyur alaṃ janāḥ |
parair nākṣipyate yas tu yaḥ parān nākṣiped yadi || kruddhā bhagavati
tasya śāpaṃ dadyāt sudāruṇam | Kālikāpurāṇa 61.17cd-22. The Śābarotsava

Though the Kālikā's teaching of the Śābarotsava speaks not of a tribal festival, but rather to a conscious cultivation of a tribal celebration, it seems possible that the Śābarotsava mentioned in this text was a fossilized remnant, or memory, of an older non-Aryan ceremony performed at the end of the goddess's worship that had been absorbed within the Vaiṣṇava festivities on the dark Ninth of Śrāvaṇa following Kṛṣṇa's birth. The requirement that people ought to behave like Śābaras may have been, therefore, based on tribal customs broadly genericized as Śābara practice, which had been assimilated into urban communities along with the cult of Nidrā. It is difficult to localize this indigenous tradition although all the literature summarized thus far associates it with the Vindhya region, which to me appears to be a symbol of its originally peripheral status as recalled by the Vaiṣṇavas, rather than the real provenance of the festival. ❏❏

II. cca. 500-1000 CE Incorporation with a Brahmanical military festival in Āśvina❏❏

With the rise of the early mediaeval kingdoms and the increased sophistication of courts promoting lavish ritualism as a key feature of culture and politics, the Navarātra spread from the Vindhyas, or the peripheries where it had been performed, and was incorporated by upcoming kingdoms. From a small sectarian festival, it became a more popular non-denominational celebration and, very soon, the key political ceremony performed by any mediaeval kingdom in order to attain the beneficence of the goddess in its regular activities. ❏❏

This development is reflected in the flowering of Sanskrit normative literature on the subject from c. 5th-12th centuries, prescribing the “how” and the “when”

passage in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* is commented on by the Gauḍīya smārtas in the following way: *Jīmūtavāhana writes śabaravarṇa iva parṇādyāvṛtaḥ kardamāliptaśarīro nānāvidhāsambaddhavalgitanṛtyagītādiparo bhūtveti śābarotsavapadārthaḥ | krīḍākautakamaṅgalair ity asyāpy ayam evārthaḥ (Kālaviveka cited in Durgāpūjāviveka, p. 33). Śūlapāṇi writes atra bhagaliṅgābhidhānanṛtyagītādikaṃ kartavyam | (Durgotsavaviveka, p. 24). Raghunandana writes tato dhūlakardamavikṣepakrīḍākautakamaṅgalabhagaliṅgābhidhānabhagaliṅgapragī taparākṣītaparākṣepakarūpaṃ śābarotsavaṃ kuryāt | (Durgāpūjātattva cited and translated in Sarkar 2012, pp. 72-73).*

of ritual conduct and guiding governments eager to regulate themselves in a respectable manner. Revealing the appropriation of the ceremony by courts, these, mainly early Purāṇic, scriptural sources on the ceremony continually emphasise that the goddess's annual worship was *rājyārtham* “for the sake of (that is to acquire) sovereignty” or *rāṣṭravṛddhaye* “for the increase of the kingdom's [prosperity and power]”.²⁸ The primarily secular purpose of the Navarātra is explained by these sources as its special ability to destroy fears and great enemies, grant great wealth and magical attainments, neutralize the bad effects of planetary conjunctions, bring rain, heirs, long-life and sovereignty and prevent poverty and untimely deaths in the kingdom.²⁹ All these rewards would have been thought to particularly sanctify a mediaeval kingdom, its towns and their inhabitants. After death, the goddess's worshipper is promised, not

²⁸ The Devīpurāṇa uses the term *rājyārtham* to explain why Vasu, Brahmā and Viṣṇu performed the Navarātra: ॐ
rājyārtham vasunā kṛtvā brahmaṇā hariṇā tathā / ॐ
rudreṇa tripuraṃ dagdham viṣṇunā śarabho hataḥ / *Devīpurāṇa* 50.81 (p. 290). ॐ

The use of the term *rāṣṭravṛddhaye* in the context of the Navarātra is to be found in a quoted passage from the Jyotiṣśāstra in Jīmūtavāhana's *Kālaviveka*: ॐ
ṛkṣatraye tu mūlādau navamyām āśvine site / ॐ
caṇḍikām upahārais tu pūjayed rāṣṭravṛddhaye / *Kālaviviveka* in *Durgāpūjāviveka*, p. 35.

²⁹ *mahābhayavināśāya mahāripuvadhāya ca* / ॐ
mahābhyudayakāmāya mahāsiddhiphalāya ca / ॐ
 ॐ *pūjayed yājayed devīm ṣaṣṭidhā paramēśvarīm* / ॐ
ṛtunāgakṛtā pīḍā yakṣarakṣograhodbhavā / ॐ
saṃvatsaramahādoṣajanmarkṣa-m-upamardakāḥ / ॐ
ketūtthā śasīrahūtthā bhaumārkitabhānujāḥ / ॐ
śamayed yajamānasya devīhomaratasya ca / *Devīpurāṇa* 50.4-9 (p. 282). ॐ

avṛṣṭau kṛtavān āsīt kratuḥ daśarathena ca / ॐ
anyaiś ca munīśārdūla prajāyurājyakāṅkṣibhiḥ / ॐ
kṛtavān suragandharvair yakṣarakṣomahānṛpaiḥ / *Ibid.* 50.83 (p. 290). ॐ

na tatra deśe durbhikṣaṃ na ca duḥkham pravartate / ॐ
nākāle mriyate kaścit pūjyate yatra caṇḍikā / ॐ
anena vidhinā yas tu devīm prīṇayate naraḥ / ॐ
skandavat pālayet taṃ tu devī sarvāpadi sthitam / ॐ
putradāradhanarddhīnāṃ saṃkhyā tasya na vidyate / ॐ
bhuktveha paramān bhogān pretya devīgaṇo bhavet / *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* cited in *Durgosavaviveka*, pp. 1-2.

liberation from the world, but rebirth in it as “an overlord of kings over kings, a patron, good-looking and beloved, having sons and wealth”.³⁰ Without stating this directly, the scriptures nevertheless make it clear that the intended audience of their prescription of the Navarātra was the segment of society who owned and ruled over land. ☐☐

Stimulated by this courtly appropriation, military rituals either blessing the army and weapons or prognosticating victory emerged as the most important feature of the goddess's Navarātra, performed with great pomp on Navamī. However, in contrast to sanguinary sacrifice, these rituals were not it seems an archaic constituent of the Navarātra. They appear rather to be derived from Brahmanical military traditions performed annually in the month of Āśvina. Vedic military traditions practiced by an Indian kingdom would for long be performed during this lunar month in autumn initiating battle. Such calendrically performed military rituals blessing the king's army and weapons, such as the lustration of the troops and state animals (*nīrajana*), which would later become necessary components of Caṇḍī's autumnal worship, were already well-established as civic ceremonies performed on Navamī in Āśvina, before the appropriation of the Śākta Navarātra by the early mediaeval kingdom. They are taught for instance in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of *Varāhamihira* (chapter 43), the *Kāṭhakaḡṛhyasūtra* (57.1) and the *Arthaśāstra* (2.30.51), but the goddess does not appear in this non-Śākta tradition honouring sovereignty.³¹ It seems that the cult of the warrior-goddess was only later accreted to this antecedent martial tradition centred on Āśvina, when her worship was integrated with the annual royal ceremonies associated with the replenishment of a Brahmanical kingdom's power. In this way we find that after beginning as a popular propitiatory ritual, and then being appropriated within Vaiṣṇava celebrations in the month of Śravaṇa, the tradition of worshipping the goddess was transposed onto this pre-existing strata of autumnal military sanctification. ☐☐

³⁰ *evaṃ yaḥ pūjayed arcāṃ durgāyāḥ śraddhayānvitah |...|punar etya mahābhāgo rājarājādhipo bhavet |dātā surūpaḥ subhagaḥ putravān dhanavān bhavet | Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* cited in *Kṛtyaratnākara*, p. 349.

³¹ Texts given in Sanderson 2005, p. 258, nn. 70-71. I am grateful to him for having pointed out the importance of this evidence in a personal communication.

From the 6th c. onwards, the time from which the first Purāṇic accounts of the Navarātra appear (as we shall see), the structures of the goddess's black Navamī had begun to subsume the function once served by the old Brahmanical kingship rituals on Āśvina. It formally marked the advent of the military calendar in autumn and was believed to organize and set into motion an army's success, the regeneration of the kingdom and the pacification of omens and crises, all practical goals any kingdom thought well to achieve before a period of potential uncertainty. In this newly enhanced ritual structure providing civic sanctification, the Śākta influx was significant-- the goddess's role became central in causing the efficaciousness of the military ceremonies. However, even though an external goddess-oriented popular tradition was thereby coalesced with a brahmanical tradition, in its female-centric, purity-negating core, the former was in many aspects at odds with its orthodox substrate, the principal deities of which were all masculine and which was ordered by a strict regard for conceptions of purity. Neither played much of a role in this external tradition, which as a matter of fact sought to subvert orthodox beliefs in order to assert superior status. ☐☐

Despite the important role of kings, the early-mediaeval Navarātra was not an elitist political ritual intended just for the powerful or for the army. Perhaps as a consequence of its unorthodox beginnings in folk-religion, and Durgā's assimilative nature, the festival retained even in its most courtly hey-day an ecumenical character. Though the main sponsor -- given the high costs involved - - would have been the king, anyone, of whatever religious background or degree of purity, could participate. Rājās, *kṣatriyas*, low-castes including Śūdras, Jains, outcaste tribes, their rulers, foreign warrior clans, even women, along with the armed forces of the kingdom all would have joined together in propitiating the sovereign-goddess, or various goddesses as one. Many lower groups had special ritual responsibilities to fulfil.³² Understood as the substance of power, the

³² For example, during the Navarātra ceremony of Berar, only a member of the Mahār tribe could officiate at the killing of the buffalo (Russell and Lal, vol. 4, pp. 131-2).

goddess in her forms was thought to permeate through the king into all levels of society binding the community of the kingdom together into a sacred whole. Indeed early normative literature makes quite a pointed note of the integrative aspect of the ancient rite.³³ In the later mediaeval period, the ceremony became more restrictive with increased Brahmanization such that, as the Dharmasāstrin Viṣṇubhaṭṭa Āṭhavale stringently noted, “*mlecchas* etc. do not have the authority to perform [worship] such as japa even through the agency of brāhmaṇas. However they must only make mental offerings of various gifts such as alcohol and animal-sacrifice to the goddess”.³⁴ ☐☐

Among the Purāṇic sources, the earliest to mention autumnal goddess-worship appears to be the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (cca. 500-600, but acquiring its present form possibly as late as the 9th c.),³⁵ a work, composed in Southern Kashmir or its immediate vicinity³⁶, and frequently employed in ancient Indian kingship for programmes of royal sanctification. The *Viṣṇudharmottara* formed the litany for a great part of the later Navarātra: verses accompanying the consecration of royal animals such as horses and elephants and accoutrements like weapons, the lion-throne, insignia etc, are all attributed by the *smārta* treatise-writers to this work. ☐☐

³³ *kartavyaṃ brāhmaṇādyais tu kṣatriyair bhūmipālakaiḥ |* ☐☐ *godhanārthaṃ viśair vatsa śūdraiḥ putrasukhārthibhiḥ | Devīpurāṇa 22.5* ☐☐ See also *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* cited in Kane 1958 (1994), p.157, n.401.

³⁴ *mlecchādīnāṃ tu brāhmaṇadvārāpi japādaṃ nādhikāraḥ kintu surādyupahārasahitatattadupahārāṇāṃ paśvādibaleś ca devīm uddīśya manasotsargamātraṃ taiḥ kartavyaṃ | Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi*, p. 81 (discussion on the Navarātra). See also Kane 1958 (1994), p. 157.

³⁵ Scholarly opinions conjecturing dates for the compilation of this huge work is summarized as follows. Hazra 1963, vol. 1, pp. 205-212, suggests it was composed between 400 CE-500 CE. Buhler conjectures that its composition was no later than 500 AD; Winternitz dates it between 628 and 1000 CE (Ibid, p. 212, n. 250); Pingree 1990, p. 276 dates it to the 6th or the 7th century on the basis of astronomical material dateable from the period; Sanderson conjectures that the iconographical sections of this work took shape around the second half of the ninth century (personal communication to Pratapaditya Pal on 27th April, 2010, kindly made available to me for this research).

³⁶ Hazra 1963, vol. 1, p. 216. Buhler and Winternitz are of the same opinion (ibid. and n. 263). See also Sanderson 2005, pp. 275-276.

It teaches the worship of the goddess Bhadrakālī, a form of “Kātyāyanī, beautiful, free-willed and boon-bestowing who goes to a Lord of the World when worshipped with all objects of desire”.³⁷ Her worship is spread over two lunar days in the bright half of *āśvina*: the eighth (Mahāṣṭamī) and the ninth (Mahānavamī). On Mahāṣṭamī a shrine to the goddess draped with various cloths was to be built in the north-east part of a military encampment (*śibira*). The goddess was to be painted on a cloth and worshipped therein.³⁸ This was to be followed by the worship of all weapons-- the royal armour, parasol and ensigns-- with flowers, perfume, fruits and sumptuous food. Then, offerings to the deity in the form of various staged entertainments were to follow. The king was to remain awake that night. On the following Mahānavamī, the same worship was to be repeated and concluded with a parade.³⁹ Animal sacrifice is not discussed, in all likelihood because the *Viṣṇudharmottara* is a Vaiṣṇavite text. ☐☐

From this description, it is clear that the early form of the autumnal ceremony was primarily military in character. Mahānavamī initiated military campaigning and occasioned a cult of heroism sacred to warriors. Legends of its power in granting omnipotent kingship appear in examples of Purāṇic literature: the *Varāhapurāṇa* describes the practice of fasting followed on the day as being a śauryavrata, “An Observance of Valour”, so called because “a [king] who has lost his kingdom assuredly gains his state, when this is performed”.⁴⁰ The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* explained it as a day of cosmic victory, when the goddess slew the buffalo-demon and was consecrated as the ruler of heaven⁴¹, further mythicizing its monarchical relevance. Her slaughter of the buffalo-demon was to be enacted on earth by her most favoured devotees: the Kālikā teaches that all kings must perform animal-sacrifice on Mahānavamī.⁴² ☐☐

³⁷ *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* 2.158.6cd-7.

³⁸ For how a cloth (paṭa) is to be prepared for ritual worship see Sanderson 2005, p. 251, n. 50.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 2.158.1-8; Einoo 1999, p. 43; Sanderson 2005, p. 256.

⁴⁰ *evaṃ kṛte bhraṣṭarājyo labhed rājyaṃ na saṃśayaḥ* | *Varāhapurāṇa* cited in *Kṛtyaratnākara*, pp. 364-365.

⁴¹ *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* cited in *Kṛtyaratnākara* p. 356.

⁴² *Kālikāpurāṇa* 60.1cd.

Given its archaic importance both in tribal customs of goddess-worship and also in certain Tantric texts (to be shown), it seems to have been this particular tithi, rather than the nine nights of the Navarātra, that was ubiquitously performed in the Indic world as the foremost ritual of prestigious kingship. One of the earliest smārta writers Lakṣmīdhara who was counsellor to King Govindacandra (1114-1154 CE) of the Gāhāḍavāla kingdom, whose nominal capital was in Vārāṇasī and Kanyakubja, codifies only the Mahānavamī rites⁴³, and this seems to be an indication that only this lunar-day was celebrated in that kingdom. ☐☐

The Mahāṣṭamī-Mahānavamī rites described in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* as sacred to Bhadrakālī were by no means unnoticed: they find their way into the *Agnipurāṇa* (267.13cd-16ab), a further scripture of significance for Indian kingship. This later work based, along with various other sections, this particular autumnal ritual of the goddess on the *Viṣṇudharmottara*,⁴⁴ and circulated it among a wider clientele of monarchs. As in the ritual of the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, on Mahāṣṭamī Bhadrakālī's picture was to be painted on a cloth; weapons, crests, banners and parasols were to be worshipped on the Eighth; and the worship was to be concluded with a bali, followed by a night vigil.⁴⁵ The same rituals were to be repeated on Navamī. The text specifies that the worship is for the sake of acquiring victory (*jaye*) and for the pacification of dangers (*śāntau*).⁴⁶ Here too the martial context for the early ceremony deriving from the *Viṣṇudharmottara* is underlined. ☐☐

III. Expansion and inclusion of Tantric ritual aspects in Eastern Court

Traditions: the Navarātras of Gauḍa, Kāmarūpa and Orissa ☐☐

The Mahāṣṭamī and Mahānavamī traditions of the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and the Agni centering on Bhadrakālī are also paralleled in two influential Eastern

⁴³ *Kṛtyakalpataru*, vol. 11 (*Rājadharmakāṇḍa*), pp. 191-195.

⁴⁴ *Agnipurāṇa* Adhyāyas 259-272 were based on the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*. The dependency is identified in Hazra 1963, vol. 1, p. 209. In addition to the section on Mahānavamī, other influxes into the *Agnipurāṇa* from the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* are also discussed *ibid*. This dependency was also noted by Sanderson 2003-2004, p. 382, n. 115 and Sanderson 2005, p. 256, n. 65.

⁴⁵ *Agnipurāṇa* 267.13cd-16ab.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*. 267.15cd-16ab.

scriptures-- the *Devīpurāṇa* and the *Kālikā*. The composition of these Eastern Purāṇas coincided with the Navarātra attaining its fullest shape in the regions where these texts were written-- East India (Bengal and Assam). Later, these scriptures formed the chief viaduct channelling the rites of the Navarātra into other parts of India (to be shown). ☐☐

The main innovation of these texts is that they present a Navarātra that is syncretic in nature, incorporating Tantric with Purāṇic ritual features, and, though never fully Tantric in that they did not arrogate to themselves the status of esoteric revelation but represented always mainstream religion, firmly embedded the autumnal worship of the goddess in an unmistakably Śākta⁴⁷ framework. This Tantrification no doubt owed to the indigenous Śākta traditions that enjoyed great popularity in East India and suffused all other sectarian currents in that area.⁴⁸ The Śākta character of the earlier of these two texts, the *Devī* was clearly recognizable to early Indian authors, for, it drew remarks from the Dharmaśāstrins Aparārka (cca. 1127-1148) and Vallālasena (cca. 1160-1179).⁴⁹ The latter, in fact, a paragon of Vaidika respectability, poured scorn on the *Devī* since, in his view, it “conformed to heretical [ie Tantric] doctrine” and excluded the scripture, which he felt was of ambiguous Purāṇic pedigree, from his list of the eighteen Purāṇas “because it included foul rituals”.⁵⁰☐

This controversial and ambivalent text was composed between the latter half of the 6th c. and the 9th c. approximately,⁵¹ in Bengal⁵² around Tāmralipti (present day Tamluk), the site of an ancient shrine to Vindhyavāsini (now

⁴⁷ I use this term in the widest possible sense.

⁴⁸ Sanderson 2009, pp. 225-242.

⁴⁹ Hazra 1963, p. 73 and n. 167; Sanderson 2009, p. 250 and n. 585.

⁵⁰ *tattatpurāṇopapurāṇasamkhyābahīṣkṛtaṃ kaśmalakarmayogāt/*☐☐ *pāṣaṇḍasāstrānumataṃ nirūpya devīpurāṇaṃ na nibaddham atra / Dānasāgara v. 67* cited in Hazra 1963, p. 73, n.161. See also Sanderson 2009, p. 250 and n, 585.

⁵¹ Hazra is of the opinion that it was composed no later than 850 CE (Hazra 1963, vol 2., p. 73). The upper limit for its composition is conjectured as 500 CE (Ibid. p. 76 and p. 77).

⁵² Hazra 1963, vol. 2, pp. 79-90.

known as Barga Bhīmā) dating from at least the 7th century.⁵³ Instead of worship solely on Mahāṣṭamī and Mahānavamī, the text envisions a build-up starting from the first lunar day of the bright quarter of Āśvina, and climaxing on the Eighth and Ninth. The Devī therefore attests that the content of the ceremony had developed in the East from an archaic, martial core centred in Mahānavamī to a more capacious celebration spanning nine (or even four or ten) lunar days beginning from the First of the bright fortnight. The sequence of the moon's waxing marked at every phase a subtle transformation of the goddess's energy while the final two *tithis* coincided with her fullest expansion-- this sequential process of transformation would be most apparent in the Maithila court rite, where Durgā was made to metamorphose from substrate to substrate during the course of the nine nights (to be shown).⁵⁴ The worshipper is taught to observe a vow of restricted eating for the first seven nights, to worship Śiva thrice daily, recite mantras, perform oblations in fire and feast a maiden. On the Eighth the text teaches the worshipper to build nine wooden shrines, or one (should the worshipper lack means). There the goddess was to be established in a gold or silver image or in a sword or trident. Gifts of clothes, jewels and fruits were to be offered to her, and she was to be worshipped splendidly with chariot-festivals,

⁵³ The shrine to Vindhyavāsinī at Tāmralipta is described in Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita*, Ucchvāsa 6. Daṇḍin was active around 680-720 CE (date clarified by Professor Sanderson, personal communication, August 2011).

⁵⁴ According to the table in Einoo 1999, p. 36, another early witness for the programme beginning on the Bright 1st is the Skandapurāṇa 21.2.47.77-82. But Einoo was following a reprint of the Shree Venkateshvara Steam Press edition of 1910 and this edition is not, as pointed out by Bakker et. al, representative of the original text. The old Skandapurāṇa does not make any reference to the nine-night programme: the parts of the original so far published by Bakker et al. do not seem to be familiar with the nine night programme in autumn, and the edition by Bhaṭṭarāi likewise make no reference to it. The programme seems to have been associated principally with the Śāktism of Eastern India. It was seldom publicized by a wider tradition before the Gauḍīya jurist Jīmūtavāhana (cca. 1090-1130) first advertized it in his Kālaviveka (*Durgāpūjāviveka*, pp. 30-39)-- from which one may infer that it was already in practice in Bengal-- and thereafter the later Maithilas and Gauḍīyas promoted it in a much more aggressive way. Thereafter, other dharmasāstrins, further to the west, popularized this ritual structure, on the basis of testimony originating in the East.

palanquin-processions, bali and the offering of various flowers. Then the worshipper was to fast and recite a *mantra* before the goddess.⁵⁵

Next, the work includes rites for kings with the specific object of attaining victory in battle. These resemble occultic power (*siddhi*) bestowing rituals particular to non-soteriological Tantric practice and were: a blood sacrifice resembling a pacificatory (*śāntika*) ritual and another sacrifice, a *śatrubali*, resembling a destructive (*māraṇa*) rite. Both sets of magical rituals took place at midnight and are thus called the *ardharātrapūjā* (Worship at Midnight). The same rites are paralleled in the Agni⁵⁶ indicating that this occultic military tradition at midnight was a popular one, performed by a wider orbit of kings than those who followed the *Devī*. According to the two accounts, the ceremonies can be summarized as follows. ☐☐

At midnight closing the Eighth and ushering in Mahānavamī (specified as when Aṣṭamī is joined by the asterism Kanyā), a sacrificial animal (paśu) was to be slain by the king and its blood was to be offered to pacify and dissipate the demons in the four quarters: Pūtanā in the south-west, Pāparākṣasī in the north-west, Carakī in the northeast and Vidārikā in the south-east. The invocation which the king was to chant to salute the deity as he performed the sacrifice is *kāli kāli vajreśvari lauhadaṇḍāyai namaḥ* (O Kālī Kālī, Goddess

⁵⁵ *kanyāsaṃsthe ravau śakra śuklām ārabhya nandikām* /☐☐

ayācī tv atha ekāśī naktāśī athavā ghṛtam /☐☐

prātaḥsnāyī jītvandas trikālaṃ śivapūjakaḥ /☐☐

japahomasamāyuktaḥ kanyakām bhojayet sadā /☐☐

aṣṭamyām nava gehāni dārujāni śubhāni ca /☐☐

ekaṃ vā vittābhāvena kārayet surasattama /☐☐

tasmin devī prakartavyā haimā vā rajatāpi vā /☐☐

mṛdvākṣī lakṣaṇopetā khaḍge śūle' tha pūjayet /☐☐

sarvopahārasampannā vastraratnaphalādibhiḥ /☐☐

kārayed rathadolādipūjāṃ ca balidaivakīm /☐☐

puṣpādidroṇabilvāmrajātīpunnāgacampakaiḥ /☐☐

vicitrām racayet pūjām aṣṭamyām upavāsayet /☐☐

durgāgrato japeṇ mantram ekacittaḥ subhāvitaḥ / *Devīpurāṇa* 22.7-13ab.☐☐

sarvopahārasampannā conj.] *sarvopahārasampanno* ed.

⁵⁶ *Agnipurāṇa* 185.12-13a; Einoo 1999, p. 41. Hazra is of the opinion that the *Agnipurāṇa* drew these rites from the *Devīpurāṇa* (Hazra 1963, vol. 2, pp. 81-82),.

of the Thunder-Bolt, Homage to Her, who bears a sceptre of iron). By addressing Caṇḍī as Kālī, the litany conveys their unity. Having thus satisfied her with blood, the king should then bathe in front of the goddess and decapitate a dough-doll of his enemy, offering the torso to Skanda and Viśākha. Through this aggressive magic by a proxy, his wishes to subdue his rivals are fulfilled. Its great popularity for kings in the East is evinced in the fact that it appeared in the Navarātra treatises of the Mithilā court between the 14th and the 15th centuries. The worship is then concluded in a Purāṇic fashion, with an incantation of a verse intoning various names of the goddess beginning with Jayantī, Maṅgalā, bathing the goddess with five nectars (*pañcāmṛta*), chariot processions (*rathayātra*) with festal images of the goddess and hoisting royal ensigns (particularly, as specified by the *Devī*, in the shrine of Carcikā) accompanied by offerings of *bali*.⁵⁷

Further making its Śāktism overt, the *Devī* strengthens the position of many other goddesses in the ritual, envisioning them as the ultimate sources of concentrated power in all aspects of a kingdom. It promotes, for instance, *kumārīpūjā*, the veneration of young maidens transformed into the goddess and envisages an ambitious Navarātra programme held every Āśvina for a

⁵⁷ *tad ardhayāminīśeṣe vijayārthaṃ nṛpottamaiḥ* / ☐
☐ *sarvāṅgalakṣaṇopetaṃ gandhapuṣpasragarcitaṃ* / ☐
☐ *vidhivad kālī kālīti japtvā khaḍgena ghātayet* / ☐
☐ *tasyotthaṃ rudhiraṃ māṃsaṃ gṛhītvā pūtanādiṣu* / ☐☐
nairṛtāya pradātavyaṃ mahākauśikamantritam / ☐☐
tasyāgrato nṛpaḥ snāyāc chatruṃ kṛtvā tu piṣṭajam / ☐☐
khaḍgena ghātayitvā tu dadyāt skandaviśākhayoḥ / ☐
☐ *tato devīm snāpayet prājñāḥ kṣīrasarpījalādibhiḥ* /
☐ *kuṅkumāgurukarpūracandanaiś ṭcārghyaṭ dhūpayet* / ☐☐[...]
☐ *dhvajacchatrapatākādim ucchrayec carcikāgrhe* / ☐☐
rathayātrābalikṣepaṃ baṭu-r-ādyavarākulaṃ / *Devīpurāṇa* 22.17cd-22ab.

Compare with *Agnipurāṇa* 185.12-16ab, where the invocation is described (Ibid. 185.11cd) and the names of the other demonesses (Ibid. 185.12-13ab). ☐☐

The sentence stating the rule -- *tasyāgrato nṛpaḥ snāyāt* [...] (also found in *Agnipurāṇa* 185.13cd) would suggest that the king should bathe before the slain animal (*tasya+agrato*). However Hazra argues that incorrect *saṃdhi* has been used in this verse for *tasyāḥ+agrataḥ* “before her, ie the Goddess” (Hazra 1963, vol. 2, p. 81 and n. 202).

full Jupiter cycle (sixty years), involving the placation of not just Durgā, but a vast number of female divinities with distinct characteristics. As the ritual progresses during the course of the sixty years, these deities, beginning as pacific, become incrementally more violent and martial in form and character--and thereby more powerful-- towards the finale.⁵⁸ Caṇḍī's figurations as malevolent, crisis-causing and quelling, occult deities with power over grahas and dangerous divinities, similar to the early Skanda or to Kālī, take a central place in the early form of the ceremony celebrated in the East, for, it was thought that the deeper the worship entered into the sphere of the darker and more dangerous aspects of the deity, the greater the power and rewards obtained from her, her violence being understood as nothing other than a dynamic manifestation of her gnostic and magical energy. ☐☐

This Śākta tonality is not restricted to the Devī, but is also observable in other early Eastern Purāṇic scriptures. The Agni, a further Purāṇa speculated to emerge in the East, in Orissa or in western Bengal,⁵⁹ and also decried by Vallālasena for its Tantric content,⁶⁰ specially dedicates Mahāṣṭamī to worship that syncretizes Śākta elements with its mainstream Purāṇic framework. The work multiplies the number of female divinities appearing on that night. All are envisaged as emanations of Caṇḍī surrounding her unaccompanied by consorts. They are named as the Nine Durgās, terrific forms of Caṇḍikā of various colour, holding different weapons in the act of slaying the buffalo, showing the threatening (*tarjanī*) gesture and depicted in

⁵⁸ *Devīpurāṇa* Adhyāya 50, pp. 283-318. For a summary see Hazra 1963, vol. 2, pp. 51-52.

⁵⁹ Hazra 1963, vol. 2, p. 82 and n. 203. Here Hazra presents evidence from inside the *Agnipurāṇa*, which indicate the possibility that it was composed in the East, this being exemplified by numerous references to Puruṣottama in Auḍra/Oḍra (modern day Puri in Orissa) and a reference to a Vidyā named bhelakhi, widely known in Bengal as bhelki (ibid.). He also points out that the text was known initially only in the East: it was familiar to Vallālasena, to whom he attributes the earliest reference to the *Agnipurāṇa*, and later, was first popularized by the dharmaśāstrins in the East, in particular by Viśvanātha Kavirāja (cca. 1300-1384), Narasiṃha Vājapeyin (15th century) and Govindānanda Kavikaṅkaṇācārya (cca. 1520-1560). It attained the recognition of writers outside Orissa and Bengal much later (ibid.)

⁶⁰ Ibid. n. 203.

a warrior stance, with their left knee raised as they place their feet on the back of the buffalo demon. Their worship is described in great detail. 22

Such open reverence for a kaleidoscope of autonomous goddesses (i.e. unaccompanied by consorts) as supreme beings in their own right was in keeping with the theological attitude of proper (esoteric) Śākta worship.⁶¹ This tendency would be emphasised in the later mediaeval Eastern Navarātra. In later Eastern scripture, such as the *Kālikā*, Mahāṣṭamī included, besides the worship of the Nine Durgās, the placation of a wider retinue of *māṭrs* and *yoginīs*.⁶² A legend developed in the Purāṇic corpus associating Mahāṣṭamī with the manifestation of the goddess in her Tantric form, “extremely horrifying with her countless *yoginīs*” (*mahāghorā yoginīkoṭibhiḥ saha*) who descended on that day hungry for blood.⁶³ In that legend the goddess of Mahāṣṭamī is identified, in accordance with the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and the *Agni*, as Bhadrakālī and it is claimed that on this day she was the antinomian “destroyer of [the Seer] Dakṣa's sacrifice” (*dakṣayajñavināśinīm*).⁶⁴ This myth that the goddess obstructed Vedic yajña on the most important day of the autumnal festival shows that-- at least in East India where this legend was primarily circulated-- Mahāṣṭamī was understood to mark the day on which the goddess's threatening and disruptive powers escalated and were even thought to become wildly uncontrollable. It was for this reason that the pacific rites of the Navarātra become from this day on, chiefly placatory in character, such that sanguinary sacrifices become more frequent in order to make peace with the deity and to calm her volatile nature, protective and yet capable of massacre. In fact all the rituals performed on the day adopt a more overt Tantric character to fully propitiate the transformed, more powerful, temperament of the goddess. The later Gauḍīya Navarātra of the 16th century would allocate Mahāṣṭamī for all

⁶¹ For a discussion of the autonomy of goddesses in the Vidyāpīṭha and in Buddhist Tantric scriptures, see Sanderson 1988, pp. 470 ff. and Sanderson 2009, pp. 173 ff.

⁶² *Kālikāpurāṇa* 60.52-53; Einoo 1999, p. 41.

⁶³ Brahmapurāṇa cited in Kṛtyaratnākara, p. 350.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

practices associated with Tantric worship, such as the *bhūtaśuddhi* (purification of gross matter), *nyāsa* (installation of mantras on the body), the worship of *mātṛs* and contemplative Tantric rites of visualization and self-identification with the deity.⁶⁵ In Nepal, Mahāṣṭamī would involve special occultic rituals such as the performance of the siddhi-bestowing, magical Rite of the Sword.☞☞

In addition, overtones of the esoteric Śāktism that flourished in Kashmir can be found in the Navarātra of Orissa, where a Tantrified Bhadrakālī was well-established as the central goddess in the royal rituals celebrating the final nights of the Navarātra. In the Orissan manual *Bhadrakālīmantravidhiprakaraṇa*, the “Observance of Bhadrakālī” (*bhadrakālīvrata*) is taught to kings on the ninth day of the bright fortnight with mantras that are derived from the Śākta Kālīkula tradition.⁶⁶ The text teaches that Bhadrakālī, also referred to in that work as Jayadurgā or Āsurī, the bestower of victory, must be worshipped by a king with a lengthy, complex and systematic array of rituals, some of which included: the daily repetition of Bhadrakālī’s mantras; oblations of parched grain and ghee into fire; a nightly fire-ritual; sacrifices of buffaloes and other animals; fire-sacrifices to empower the royal weapons starting from the dark Eight lunar day and continuing for a fortnight till the bright Ninth. The king is given four mantras of the goddess to choose from, each corresponding to a particular visualization of Bhadrakālī. As a necessary part of the worship, he was required to immerse his imagination in the form of the deity prescribed by the work while reciting the mantra. The first form is as a serene, dark-hued beautiful maiden on a lotus, bearing a skull filled with blood, with three copper-coloured eyes, wearing red garments.⁶⁷ The second is horrific, with fangs, lolling tongue, a large-nose “spewing fire from her mouth, terrifying

⁶⁵ This is most evident in the *Durgāpūjātattva* (Sarkar 2012, pp. 375 ff.)

⁶⁶ Text, translation and discussion of this work in Sanderson 2007, pp. 255-295. The mantras deriving from the Kālīkula are as follows: om̐ khphreṃ/hrīṃ mahācaṇḍayogeśvari phaṭ and hskhphreṃ (Ibid. p. 278). For an analysis of the relation between this work and the texts of the Kālīkula see ibid. pp. 276-287.

⁶⁷ Sanderson 2007, p. 258-259.

the three worlds, running towards and slaughtering his [the king's] enemy".⁶⁸ The third is her lotus-seated form showing a fierce expression.⁶⁹ The fourth stands on a lotus resting on the back of a corpse, five-faced "with three large, copper-coloured eyes in each of her five faces. With the force of her great anger she crushes [the king's] enemy again and again, holding him face-down in her two uppermost arms, tortured by the twenty fangs of her five faces".⁷⁰ Only after the worship of the goddess, is the king taught to proceed to battle: if during the battle he simply chants a special mantra of Bhadrakālī or wears an amulet containing the mantra, he will secure victory and effortlessly destroy all his enemies.⁷¹ Bhadrakālī's Tantrification was by no means restricted simply to the sphere of syncretic Orissan practice. That her worship on Mahāṣṭamī and Mahānavamī seemed to have also occurred in Kashmir within the domain of royal Tantric practice, is suggested by the fact that she appears, apart from the Kashmirian Viṣṇudharmottara, in the Śaiva scripture known as the Netratantra in the context of the autumnal military ceremonies sacralizing the king and his weapons and insignia. This work, composed sometime between 700-850 CE, teaches Bhadrakālī's propitiation in the king's sword with mantras of Amṛtalakṣmī, consort of the chief deity of the text, Amṛteśvara on Mahānavamī in *āśvina*.⁷² Given that this process of Tantrifying the ritual framework of the final two nights of the goddess's Navarātra was thus attested in contemporary examples of Tantrified and properly Tantric literature, it is not surprising that the Eastern Purāṇas should have articulated the conception of dangerous, hot-blooded and power bestowing goddesses appearing from Mahāṣṭamī onwards.☐☐

The Mahāṣṭamī and Mahānavamī tradition of the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, the *Agni* and the *Devī* then appear in a further influential Eastern Purāṇa, the *Kālikā*,

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 261.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 263.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 268.

⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 272-273

⁷² Sanderson 2005, pp. 255-262. For the date and Kashmirian provenance of the Netratantra, see *ibid.* pp. 273-294.

composed sometime between the 7th and the 12th CE⁷³ in Assam as much of it eulogizes the Śākta sacred site of Kāmākhyā.⁷⁴ Not only does this work advocate the Eastern traditions of worshipping Bhadrakālī and the Navadurgās⁷⁵ but it also strengthens the Śākta overtones first glimpsed in the *Devīpurāṇa*, including new features such as the homology of the warrior Caṇḍikā with the erotic deity of the eponymous shrine Kāmākhyā⁷⁶, the identification of the sacrificial buffalo with Śiva,⁷⁷ a myth about the sixteen-armed Bhadrakālī and her other forms the eighteen-armed Ugracaṇḍā and the ten-armed Kātyāyanī⁷⁸ and encourages the accompanying worship of a vast number -- sixty four, but preferably incalculable *koṭis* in its language -- of *mātr̥s* and *yoginīs*. ☐☐

Sometime contemporaneous with, or pre-dating, the emergence of the *Kālikā*, a tenth lunar-day Daśamī or Vijayā Daśamī celebrating the return of the goddess to her heavenly home, came to be added between the 9th and the 11th c. The *Kālikā* gives the earliest testimonia for Daśamī and teaches releasing the goddess in water (*visarjana*) accompanied by illuminating descriptions of a joyous civic festival where citizens became caste-less for the day and were encouraged to imitate the ecstatic abandonment of social distinctions and decorum of the Śābaras. This tradition of immersing the goddess in water on Daśamī was perhaps Assamese in its origin, given that its main witness is the *Kālikā*, but it is performed de rigueur in Bengal even today. Daśamī appeared much later in the Deccan, particularly promoted by the Vijayanagara Empire, and was marked differently, according to Vaidika norms deriving from the *Gopathabrāhmaṇa* (to be shown). It had little to do with venerating Durgā. What was common between both the Eastern and

⁷³ Hazra 1963, vol. 2, p. 245 dates the present form of the text to the 12th century CE, and elsewhere locates an early core originating in the 7th century (Ibid. p. 241). A citation identifiable from the *Kālikāpurāṇa* appears in the *Kālaviveka* by Jīmūtavāhana (*Durgāpūjāviveka*, p. 33), composed likely between the 11th and the 12th c. This means that the Purāṇa was well-known by his time.

⁷⁴ For more analysis see Hazra 1963, vol. 2, pp. 231-259.

⁷⁵ *Kālikāpurāṇa* 59.22-23.,

⁷⁶ Ibid. 65.30-32ab; Sarkar 2011 forthcoming b, pp. 15-16.

⁷⁷ *Kālikāpurāṇa* 60.146.

⁷⁸ Ibid. Adhyāya 59.

Deccan traditions of Daśamī was that it was a festival of the people. Though the king, and in the south the army, had a prominent role, the point was that everyone else in the capital, and outside it had to join in. The festival elevated the idea of a singular rather than a stratified social system, where all members were integrated as one working unit. ☐☐

From the 12th century we find expressed in literature a tendency to view goddess-rites as disreputable, a reaction perhaps against their non-Aryan beginning or their association with Tantric practice. Both the most important scriptures shaping the Eastern Navarātra, the *Devī* and the *Agni*, were roundly condemned as spurious works, Tantras disguised thinly as Purāṇas, by Brahminical stalwarts like Vallālasena.⁷⁹ Perhaps roused to action by this opprobrium, the juridical *smārta paṇḍitas* in the East patronised by Assamese, Gauḍīya and Maithila kings began to circulate Purāṇic testimonia of the Navarātra from 1100 CE (the first among them being the Gauḍīya Jīmūtavāhana, who was active between cca. 1090-1130). They initiated a programme accomodating the rite, and the dubiously thaumaturgical texts teaching it,⁸⁰ within a more flexible model of brahmanical orthodoxy, transforming the Navarātra into a ceremony of licensed antinomianism (as indeed evidenced in the teachings concerning the Śābarotsava) a Brahmanical kingdom could indulge in within the strict limits of a single day in the religious year. It is owing to their proselytizing efforts that Eastern Purāṇas such as the *Devī*, the *Kālikā* and the *Bṛhannandikeśvarapurāṇa* were popularized as the most authoritative sources for the Navarātra, and, via these Eastern Purāṇas, the ceremony percolated into other mediaeval kingdoms further to the west. ☐☐

⁷⁹ For Vallālasena's denunciation of the *Devīpurāṇa* see previously here. Like the *Devī*, the *Agni* too came under Vallālasena's firing-line in the *Dānasāgara* for being a spurious Purāṇa concerned with *pāṣaṇḍayukti*, the arguments of heretics (Hazra 1963, p. 82, n. 203).

⁸⁰ Besides the spurious "Purāṇas", there were even certain Tantras. Caṇḍeśvara for instance bases the Navadurgāpūjā on a Skandayāmala. See Sarkar 2012.

A leading role in proselytizing the Eastern Navarātra was taken by the *dharmaśāstrins* in the court of the mediaeval kingdom of Mithilā/Tirhut, straddling the present day Indo-Nepal border. The scheme described in the Maithila treatises was that which had the greatest influence on the later Gauḍīya *āśvina* rite, and thereby on rites elsewhere in India, given that several features of the Gauḍīya *durgāpūjā* percolated into Southern and Western kingdoms. This influence may have been enabled in part by the high esteem Maithila Brāhmaṇas enjoyed at the time. It is also from Mithilā that the earliest evidence of a distinctive court-ritual based on the early scriptures just discussed emerge. Though dating only from the 14th century, we must bear in mind that the sources were written at a late stage of the ceremony, after it had been performed for many generations. They may therefore show us the Navarātra in that kingdom when it had already departed substantially from the form it had when it was first adopted.

The Navarātra of the Kingdom of Mithilā

The most detailed account of the Navarātra in Mithilā is from the court of the Oinwars, but the precursor to the ritual of that court is to be found in the ceremony performed by their predecessors, the Kārṇāṭas. Not much can be inferred though about the Kārṇāṭa ceremony, for, the available descriptive account is unsystematic. But clearer assumptions can be made about the historical context of the Kārṇāṭas' Navarātra, and a few words are necessary, by way of a preamble to the Oinwars.

cca. 1314-1324: The Rite of the Kārṇāṭa Lineage

The earliest Maithila source is the chapter on the *āśvina* rites in the *Kṛtyaratnākara* of Caṇḍeśvara, son of Vīreśvara and learned “Composer of Dharmaśāstric Digests” (*nibandhakāra*) whose approximate floruit may be placed between cca. 1314-1324. Parallel to his scholastic side, Caṇḍeśvara had a significant political role--he held the important office of the

*sāndhivigrahika*⁸¹, the minister for war and peace, in the Maithila capital Simraun Gadh under the Kārṇāṭa sovereign Harisimhadeva. His family, a baronial one designated by their surname Ṭhakkura, was well-known to have held political power in Mithilā, for, his uncle Gaṇeśvara had headed the council of feudatory leaders in Mithilā while several members, including Caṇḍeśvara, had made donations and commissioned buildings, acts generally associated with eminent landlords or kings.⁸² Sometime in 1314 CE, Caṇḍeśvara made incursions into Nepal for Harisimhadeva, promulgating the new rule with various administrative acts such as donations of lands to brāhmaṇas, the building of a tank in Abhirāmapura and the performance of a *tulāpuruṣa* rite on the Vāgmatī, a gesture he records in the closing of his *Vivādaratnākara*.⁸³ ☐

Such a conspicuous public role lends greater credence to the assumption that the chapters on goddess worship in the *Kṛtyaratnākara* had a significant bearing on the religious activities of the state. The *smārta* digest-writers' works profoundly influenced social matters such as mediaeval legislation -- Caṇḍeśvara's *Vivādaratnākara*, for example, formed the prominent authority in the Maithila school of law for six centuries.⁸⁴

The idea of worshipping a goddess associated with a king's power is clearly central to the functioning of the society envisaged in that work, and its legislative authority prompts us to imagine a scenario in which the Kārṇāṭa state regularly performed various rituals of a public character honouring Śakti. The goddess's worship, a monthly affair, is described in three weighty sections: a *durgāvṛata*, a sequence of observances for Durgā, to be performed on the Aṣṭamī of every month usually involving bathing the goddess, making offerings of flowers, incense, food, feeding young girls and dvijas based on the *Devīpurāṇa*⁸⁵; a public

⁸¹ The colophon to the Rājanītiratnākara reads:

☐☐ *sapṛakriyamahāsāndhivigrahikaṬhakkuraśrīVīreśvarātmaśrīCaṇḍeśvaravira cite* (p. 87)

⁸² Jayasvāla's Introduction to Rājanītiratnākara, pp. l-m.

⁸³ Ibid. p. k. ☐

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. i. The *Dāyabhāga* of Jīmūtavāhana is another significant example, shaping legislation in Bengal even to the present day.☐☐

⁸⁵ Kṛtyaratnākara, pp. 238-253.

chariot procession with a festal image of Durgā on the dark half of Bhādrapada to the outskirts of the city based on the Bhaviṣyapurāṇa;⁸⁶ and the *āśvina* rites to the goddess forming the grand culmination of these ceremonies.⁸⁷ But the exact ritual sequences whereby this idea that the goddess was important for the sanctification of the kingdom was put into practice are unclear, for, the work is encyclopaedic, rather than systematizing, in character. A rough scheme can be gleaned from it as follows. Apart from the monthly worship of the goddess derived from the *Devīpurāṇa*, the kingdom would have performed Mahāṣṭamī and Mahānavamī during the Navarātra festivities also according to that work, for Caṇḍeśvara cites the Mahānavamī passage contained in the *Devī*. The kingdom may have begun worship on the Sixth of bright half of Āśvina, for Caṇḍeśvara, in a statement explaining a scriptural passage, seems to advocate initiating the ceremony from this *tithi*. He also explains, on the basis of that passage, that a worshipper was to eat once a day on the Fifth, follow observances of fasting, controlling the senses and to gift cows and recite the mantra whose presiding deity was Durgā having made an Oath in the morning of the Sixth, Seventh and the Eighth lunar days.⁸⁸ In addition, he teaches the worship of the Nine Durgās, the Śābarotsava, the worship of Aparājitā, the lustration of the army (*nīrājana*) and the ritual sighting of a white-wagtail (*khañjanadarśana*) on Daśamī. A large number of these rituals would be continued with greater pomp in the Oinwar ceremony.⁸⁹ □□

cca. 1375-1450: The rite of the Oinwar Lineage □□

The next source from Mithilā emerges after the decline of the Kārṇāṭas in the court of the Oinwar lineage (14th -16th c.). It drew directly from the tradition first outlined in the *Kṛtyaratnākara* explicitly acknowledging the older work as the source of many rites. This is not surprising as its author Vidyāpati Ṭhakkura was indeed a descendant of Caṇḍeśvara, a great-great-grand-nephew, and enjoyed a similar status at the Oinwar court. His composition the *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī* (“A River of Devotion to Durgā”) forms the most detailed

⁸⁶ Ibid. pp. 253-264.

⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 301-375.

⁸⁸ *Kṛtyaratnākara*, p. 361.

⁸⁹ The parallels are indicated in footnotes in the next section.

and comprehensive historical record of the court Navarātra so far available. It gained a reputation of being one of the foremost authorities on the autumnal worship of the goddess among other writers of Navarātra treatises, influencing in great measure the later Gauḍa *smārta* Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya⁹⁰ and Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa of Vārāṇāsi. The latter in fact in his *Nirṇayasindhu* teaches rites attributed to the *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī*, such seems to have been the stature enjoyed by its Maithila author.⁹¹ On the whole the *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī* can be said to represent the Eastern tradition (excluding Nepal)-- minor differences emerge from treatise to treatise, but its general pattern conforms to the rites described in most Eastern treatises, preserving their quintessential features: the rites of adorning the goddess from the first to the sixth lunar-days, the rites centering on the *bel* tree, the rites worshipping the goddess in nine leaves from crops and the celebration of Daśamī with the goddess's immersion in water and the Festival of the Śabarās.⁹² ☐☐

Beginning with a lengthy dedication to his king and patron Rūpanārāyaṇa/Dhīrasimha, Vidyāpati states in the very beginning that the rite he is about to discuss was one commissioned by the king, who perhaps, as the verse suggests, was even involved in its composition.⁹³

This courtly emphasis is made apparent in the very first ritual: the *kalaśapūjā*, the conferral of celestial substance to water contained in a vase (*kalaśa*), with

⁹⁰ Parallels in Raghunandana's *Durgāpūjātattva* appear as follows: Rites centering on the bilva tree, rites of adornment from the first to the fifth, the visualization from the Matsyapurāṇa, worship in the nine leaves, the prayer for boons, the worship of the goddess's retinue, worship of the Navadurgās, the worship of weapons, release in water on Daśamī with festivities. For an English translation of these rites from the *Durgāpūjātattva* see Sarkar 2012. The *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī* is also referred to on four occasions in the *Durgāpūjātattva* (pp. 1, 6, 12, 20, 25).

⁹¹ These rites derived from the *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī* are the worship of the goddess from the 1st to the 5th tithis of Āśvina, her awakening in a bilva tree on the Sixth, the installation of her icon, her worship on Mahānavamī and her immersion in water in Daśamī. See Sarkar 2011 forthcoming b, pp. 7-8.

⁹² Hazra 1963, pp. 2-15.

⁹³ *viśveṣāṃ hitakāmyayā nṛpavaro vijñāpya vidyāpatiṃ* ☐☐ *śrīdurgotsavapaddhatiṃ sa tanute dr̥ṣṭvā nibandhasthitim* / *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī*, p. 2, v. 6.

which the king was to be anointed later. A king's consecration by this holy water was one of the most important rites of kingship conferring divine fitness on him as a ruler. The ceremony preparing the water was to take place on the first lunar day of the bright phase of Āśvina in a shrine built of timber (in keeping with the *Devīpurāṇa* tradition) suitable for the goddess's worship, appointed with a square altar four square cubits in length and made smooth by being rubbed over with a mixture of water and cowdung so as to “resemble the reflective surface of a mirror” (*-darpaṇodaranibha-*). At an auspicious ritual hour in the forenoon, the king, identified as the chief sponsor (*yajamāna*) of the rite, having bathed and fulfilled preliminary practices, wearing two white garments and seated facing east or north, was to draw, or have drawn by means of some other *brāhmaṇa*, a lotus-shaped *maṇḍala* with powders of five colours. On this he was to install a previously unused (*navam*), strong vase without blemishes (*avraṇam*), smeared on the outside with yoghurt mixed with barley and filled with the five jewels and clear water, their necks wrapped with two cloths, each adorned with a garland, with their mouths filled with five kinds of leaves and a platter of barley set atop each of their mouths. These actions were to be accompanied by mantras. He was then to fill the pots with water with a chant invoking the pots as Varuṇa's supports, pillars and proper loci.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ *tatrāśvinaśuklapratipadi snātaḥ śuciḥ śukladvivāsāḥ suprakṣālitapāṇipādo darbhapaṇir ācānto dārumayaśuddhāsane prāṇmukha udānmukho vopaviṣṭo yajamānaḥ svayam anyabrāhmaṇadvārā vā pūrvāhṇe śubhalagne śobhanamuhūrte daivajñānivedite devīpūjāyogyaśubhadārumayaramaṇīye grhe caturaśracaturhastadarpaṇodaranibhavedikānvite pañcavarṇarajobhiḥ padmākāraṃ maṇḍalam ālikhya tanmadhye navam dṛḍham avraṇam aśyāmamūlaṃ bahir dadhyakṣatavibhūṣitam antaḥkṣiptapañcaratnaṃ nirmalajalapūrṇam vastrayugaveṣṭitagrīvaṃ mālyālaṅkṛtaṃ cūtāśvatthanyagrodhoḍumbaraplakṣapañcapallavamukhaṃ mukhadattayavaśarāvaṃ yavānām upari om *ā jighra kalaśam mahy ā tvā viśantv indavaḥ | punar ūrjā nivartasva sā naḥ sahasraṃ dhukṣvorudhārā payasvatī punar mā viśatād rayiḥ* iti mantreṇa kalaśam sthāpayet | om **varuṇasyottambhanam asi varuṇasya skambhasarjanī stho varuṇasya ṛtasadany asi varuṇasya ṛtasadanam asi varuṇasya ṛtasadanam āsīda** iti mantreṇa tatra jalaṃ dadyāt | *Durgābhaktatarāṅgiṇī*, p. 122.*

aśyāma- em.] *aśyāma-* Ed. Passage marked between * * is restored on the basis of *Vājasaneyisaṃhitā* 8.42 (the Maithila Brahmins followed the Mādhyandina recension of this Veda, as pointed out to me by Prof. Sanderson in a personal communication)] *ājighra kalaśam mahyātmā viśantv indavaḥ punar*

Then the officiant was to install the sacred waters in the vase by sacralizing the water already present inside by means of the invocatory invitation “Om. May all rivers beginning with the Gaṅgā, oceans, lakes and ponds that destroy the sins of the sacrificer enter [the vase]”. The ingredients used to infuse the water are identified as follows: seven kinds of earth from the stable, elephant-shed, a street, an anthill, from a confluence of rivers, a lake, and a cow-shed; eight types of medicinal herbs, water from a sacred bathing place, fruit, *dūrvā* blades and unhusked barley. On four corners of the altar he was to install four vases on top of barley filled with water and covered with a platter of barley. He was then to worship Brahman in the water of the central vase surrounded by the other four. First, he is instructed to summon Brahman in the vase with flowers, barley and a mantra, and offer the deity the water and flowers in a chalice, three kinds of guest-water (*pādyādikaṃ*), unguents, a cupped handful of flower thrice and a garment.⁹⁵ [?]

urjyā nivarttasvasānaḥ sahasraṃ dhukṣorudhārāpayasvatī punar mmāviśatādrayi
ed. [?]

Passage marked between ** ** is restored on the basis of *Vājasaneyisaṃhitā* 4.36] *varuṇasyottambhanam asi varuṇasya skambhaḥ sarjjanī sthaḥ varuṇasya ṛtasadanam asi varuṇasya ṛtasadanīm āsīd* ed.

⁹⁵ *om gaṅgādyāḥ saritaḥ sarvāḥ samudrās ca sarāṃsi ca | sarve samudrāḥ saritaḥ sarāṃsi ca nadā hradāḥ || āyāntu yajamānasya duritakṣayakārakāḥ | iti mantreṇa sarvatīrthāni kalaśe nyaset |*

tato'śvsthānagajasthānarathyāvalmīkanadisaṅgamahradagokulakṛtāḥ sapta mṛttikāḥ kṣipet | sarvauśadhīs ca murā māṃsī vacā kuṣṭhaṃ śaileyam rajanīdvayam | śaṭī campakamustaṃ ca sarvauśadhigaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ | iti kathitāḥ tīrthajalam phaladūrvākṣataṃ ca kṣipet | vedīcatuskoneṣu vastramālyālaṅkṛtān jalapūrṇān yavaśarāvamukhān yavopari caturaḥ kalaśān niveśayet || atha kalaśe brahmapūjā | sapuṣpākṣatam ādāya om bhūr bhuvaḥ svar brahmann ihāgaccha iha tiṣṭha ity āvāhya sthāpayitvā arghapātre dalapuṣpādi dattvā [...] itimantreṇa pādyādikaṃ dattvā idam anulepanam om brahmaṇe nama iti puṣpāñjalitrayeṇa pūjayitvā etāni gandhapuṣpadhūpadīpanaivedyāni om brahmaṇe namaḥ | idam vastram bṛhaspatidaivatam om brahmaṇe namaḥ iti dadyāt | Ibid pp. 122-124. kalaśe Em.] kalase ed. duritam conj.] dūritam ed. [?]

[?śaṭī conj. based on the original verse *murā māṃsī* [...] *smṛtaḥ* from the unpublished Śaiva *pratiṣṭhātantra Mohācūrottara/ Mohacūḍottara* (identification of this verse by Prof. Sanderson in a personal communication of August 2011).] *śaṭhī* ed. [?]The mantra for offering the guest-water, appearing in the edition where the above citation gives [...], is illegible.

According to another passage appearing in an earlier section of the *Durgābhaktitarāṅginī*, other deities, besides Brahman, were also to be summoned in the waters of the vase, including Bhavānī herself and the Mothers. The summoning of the goddess to be present in the waters of the vase was in keeping with a wider tradition, for it is taught in other ritual manuals.⁹⁶ From what we can understand from the *Durgābhaktitarāṅginī* passage⁹⁷ the king must bathe in those sacred waters permeated with the presence of Brahman, Bhavānī, the goddesses and the other deities on the first lunar-day, and he would also be consecrated with the empowered water on Daśamī. Next follows the worship of the goddess in a chalice of gold or another precious metal (*sauvarṇādyarghapātre*), and this was to be done daily until the sixth lunar-day when the substrate for worship changes into a branch of a bel tree (as we shall see).⁹⁸ Taking flowers with barley the officiant must summon Durgā and install her in the chalice. Placing in it water, flowers, unhusked barley, *dūrvā* and kuśa

⁹⁶ Identified and summarized in Kane 1958 (1994), p. 183.

⁹⁷ *atha pratipadi yajamānasnapanāya śāntikalaśasthāpanavidhiḥ |*
ṁṁmatsyapurāṇe ṁṁ[...]

sthāpayed avraṇaṃ kumbhaṃ varuṇaṃ tatra vinyaset |

gaṅgādyāḥ saritaḥ sarvāḥ samudrās ca sarāṃsi ca |

gajāśvarathyāvalmīkasaṅgamāt hradagokulāt |

mṛdam ānīya viprendra sarvauśadhijālānviṭaṃ |

snānārthaṃ vinyaset tatra yajamānasya dharmavit |

sarve samudrāḥ saritaḥ sarāṃsi jaladā hradāḥ |

ṁṁāyāntu yajamānasya duritakṣayakārahāḥ |

bhaviṣye

śrīkāmas tu nyaset samyak deśavṛddhikaraṃ śubhaṃ |

kāñcanaṃ ghṛtagodhūmān dūrvāṃ rocanayā saha |

brahmapūjā kalaśe | tathā ca durgotsavaprakaraṇe pakṣapūjāyāṃ kālīkāpurāṇe
|

agnir brahmā bhavānī ca gajavaktro mahoragaḥ |

skando bhānur māṭṛgaṇo dikpālās ca navagrahāḥ |

eṣāṃ ghaṭeṣu pratyekaṃ pūjayitvā yathāvidhi |

mūrdhni pavitraṃ ekaikaṃ dadyād ebhyaḥ samāhitaḥ | Ibid p. 52.

⁹⁸ In the Gauḍīya rite of the *Durgāpūjātattva* a modified form of the kalaśapūjā appears, excluding the worship of Brahman and the consecration of the waters. Here the goddess, rather than Brahman is meant to be worshipped in a pot (*ghaṭa*) (albeit without the herbs, the water from sacred sites and other substances used for the consecration) continuously till the sixth, when she is invoked in the bel branch (*Durgāpūjātattva*, pp. 48-49). This leads me to think that the same pattern of daily worship must have been followed in the Maithila rite of the *Durgābhaktitarāṅginī*

grasses, sesamum, turmeric and bilva leaves, he must recite the mantra from the Devīpurāṇa (Jayantī, Maṅgalā, Kālī, Bhadrakālī, Kapālinī, Durgā, Śivā, Kṣamā, Dhātrī, Svāhā, Svadhā, Homage to you). He must then offer the goddess the three kinds of guest water with the mantra known as the Durgā of Victory (Jayadurgā) “Om. Durgā Durgā Protectoress, Svāhā (*om durge durge rakṣani svāhā*),⁹⁹ followed by the incantation “Om. Homage to Durgā” (*om durgāyai namaḥ*). Then he must offer unguents such as sandalwood and turmeric with the latter incantation, having first anointed the chalice with those substances. Next with the same *mantra* he must worship the deity by offering a handful of flowers thrice, followed by offering perfume, flowers, incense, lamps, food-offerings, betel-nut and a garment. Then bilva leaves must be offered with the incantation: “O Empress of the Gods, I offer you this auspicious bilva leaf from the Bilva tree born from nectar and eternally adored by Śiva.” Then he was to offer droṇa flowers with the incantation “O Durgā, I give you this droṇa flower eternally adored by Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others to accomplish all my wishes”. ☐☐

Then having sung a hymn, he must bow down and ask for boons with this verse: “Om. Slayer of the buffalo, Mahāmāyā, Cāmuṇḍā, garlanded with heads, Grant me wealth, health and victory Goddess. Homage to you. O one auspicious with all good portents, benevolent, fully replete in wealth, bestow beauty, bestow fame, bestow good fortune on me O Goddess. Bestow sons, bestow wealth, bestow all my desires on me.” Then he was to sacrifice goats, sheep and buffaloes for the goddess, for the attainment of his wishes and was to keep lights, filled with clarified butter or oil, lit day and night in the goddess's shrine. He is also instructed to offer, if he can, cosmetics to the goddess-- sandalwood and turmeric to dress the hair on the first lunar-day, a silken thread to tie the hair on the second, red-lac to dye her feet, vermilion to anoint her hair and a mirror on the third; madhuparka, collyrium for her eyes and powders of silver etc. for her tilaka on the fourth; four kinds of unguents, a bed and jewels on the fifth.¹⁰⁰ ☐☐

⁹⁹ The use of this mantra during the Maithila rite also occurred during Caṇḍeśvara's time. He refers to it as the navatattvākṣarāṇi, the Syllables of the Nine Levels of Reality (Kṛtyaratnākara, p. 362).

¹⁰⁰ *atha pratipadādipratidinaprāptadurgāpūjāvidhiḥ | kālikāpurāṇe pratipadam upakramya tāvat tu saptarātrāṇi sarvadevaiḥ supūjitā | (kālikāpur 60.30) pūjā*

From the second lunar day up to the ninth, the royal horses were to be worshipped daily in the palace-stables as their celestial prototypes Uccaiḥśravas and Revanta, simultaneously as the rites centering on the goddess took place. The importance of the ceremony lay in empowering the war-horses for battle. The stable is perfumed, anointed and decorated with flowers. A space for worship is prepared to the south of the horses, by being ringed with a circuit of three mounds and inscribed with two maṇḍalas with sandalwood etc. In these maṇḍalas the deities Uccaiḥśravas, the son of Sūrya and Chāyā depicted on horseback, and Revanta, Indra's celestial horse are summoned and worshipped for pacifying all catastrophes, for long life and wealth. Offerings, excluding water are flowers, are made to propitiate them. The king's horses are then bathed, decorated and worshipped in the stables with offerings. A cloth pouch filled with five jewels and various grains is tied around their necks in order to protect them. Special care is taken of them-- they are guarded by weapon-bearing soldiers and

kumbhe devīpurāṇe pūjā maṇḍalakumbhasthā iti | tatra kramah | sapuṣpākṣatam ādāya oṃ bhūr bhuvah svar bhagavati durge ihāgaccha iha tiṣṭhety āvāhya sthāpayitvā sauvarṇādyarghapātre jalapuṣpākṣatadadhidūrvākuṣatilakuṅkumabilvapatrāṇi nidhāya | oṃ jayanti maṅgalā kālī bhadrakālī kapālinī | durgā śivā kṣamā dhātrī svadhā svāhā namo'stu te | iti devīpurāṇoktamantreṇa oṃ durge durge rakṣaṇi svāheti jayadurgāmantreṇa vā pādyaṅghācamaṇīyasnānīyapunarācamaṇīyāni oṃ durgāyai namaḥ iti pādyaḍi dattvā idam anulepanam oṃ durgāyai namaḥ iti candanakuṅkumādinānūlipya oṃ durgāyai namaḥ iti puṣpāñjalitrayeṇa pūjayitvā etāni gandhapuṣpadhūpadīpanaivedyatāmbulāni oṃ durgāyai namaḥ idam vastram bṛhaspatidaivatam oṃ durgāyai namaḥ iti dadyāt | oṃ amṛtodbhavam śrīvrkṣam śaṅkarasya sadā priyam | bilvapatram prayacchāmi pavitram te sureśvari iti bilvapatram | oṃ brahmaviṣṇuśivādīnām droṇapuṣpam sadāpriyam | tat te durge prayacchāmi sarvakāmārthasiddhaye iti droṇapuṣpam | tataḥ kiṃcit stutvā praṇamya prārthayed anena oṃ mahiṣagṇi mahāmāye cāmuṇḍe muṇḍamālini | dravyam ārogyavijayam dehi devi namo'stu te || sarvamaṅgalamāṅgalye śive sarvārthasādhike | śaraṇye tryambake gauri nārāyaṇi namo'stu te | rūpam dehi yaśo dehi bhāgyam bhavati dehi me | putrān dehi dhanam dehi sarvān kāmān pradehi me || chāgādibaliṃ nānāvidhakāmanayā devyai dadyāt | devīgrhe ghṛtapūritāṃs tailapūritān vā ahorātrasthāyino dīpān prajvālayet | sati sambhave devīm uddīśya pratipadi candanakuṅkumādikeśasaṃskāradravyam dvitīyadau keśasaṃyamanārtham paṭṭaḍorakam | tṛtīyāyām caraṇarāgārtham alaktakam śirasi dhāraṇārtham sindūram mukhaviḷokanārtham darpaṇam | caturthyām madhuparkam netramaṇḍanāya kajjalam rajatādītilakam | pañcamyām catuḥ samānulepanam śayyām alaṅkaraṇam copaharet | Durgābhaktitaraṅgiṇī pp. 124-25.

embodying her nature (*durgāsvarūpataḥ*) is ritually invited to enter the timber shrine of the goddess.¹⁰² ☐

On the seventh lunar day, either conjoined with the asterism Mūla or without it, the officiant was to go to the sacred tree and having eulogized it, sought its permission and prayed that it will feel no pain, cut off a single branch with two fruits chanting “Om tear tear, *phaṭ phaṭ hūṃ svāhā*”, a mantra attributed to the Gauḍanibandhas. Then the branch is brought to the shrine and installed on a seat (*pīṭha*) in the forecourt of the temple and then washed. Offerings are presented to it. The goddess is then summoned to enter the branch and a clay image of herself that will function as her main substrate from the evening onwards, and worshipped thereafter. A goat, sheep or a buffalo must be sacrificed. The branch and the clay-image are then carried in a palanquin to the door of the shrine. Worship commences propitiating ghosts and obstacle-causers in the ritual space with offerings of beans and placed in a circle made of cow-dung. White mustard-seeds and barley empowered with mantras are then scattered to clear the room of these obstacle-causers.¹⁰³ ☐

¹⁰² *atha bilve devyā bodhanāmantraṇavidhiḥ | tatrāśvinaśuklaśaṣṭhyām jyeṣṭhānakṣatrayuktāyām kevalāyām vā sāyamkāle bilvatarusannidhānaṃ gatvā arghapātre jalapuspākṣatāni nidhāya eṣo’rghaḥ om bilvavr̥kṣāya namaḥ idam anulepanaṃ om bilvavr̥kṣāya namaḥ iti puṣpāñjalitrayaṃ dattvā dhūpadīpanaivedyavāsāmsi dadyāt | tataḥ sapuṣpākṣatam ādāya om bhūr bhuvāḥ svar bhagavati durge ihāgaccha iha tiṣṭha iti bilvavr̥kṣe devīm āvāhya sthāpayitvā arghapātre jalādi nidhāya om jayantītyādimantram uccārya om durgāyai namaḥ iti pādyaḍibhir upacāraiḥ pūjayet | tato gītavādyamaṅgalaghoṣapuraḥsaram devīm bilve bodhayed anena | aiṃ rāvaṇasya vadhārthāya rāmasyānugrahāya ca | akāle brahmaṇā bodho devyās tvayi kṛtaḥ purā || aham apy āśvine ṣaṣṭhyām sāyāhne bodhayāmy ataḥ | iti devīm bodhayitvā bilvatarum āmantrayed anena | om merumandārakailāsahimavacchikhare girau | jātaḥ śrīphalavr̥kṣa tvam ambikāyāḥ sadā priyaḥ || śrīśailāśikhare jātaḥ śrīphalaḥ śrīniketanaḥ | netavyo’si mayāgaccha pūjyo durgāsvarūpataḥ || iti bilvābhimantraṇavidhiḥ | Ibid pp. 126-127. ☐*

¹⁰³ *tatrāśvinaśuklasaptamyām mūlānakṣatrayuktāyām kevalāyām vā pūrvadināmantritabilvatarusannidhānaṃ gatvā tam abhyarcya kṛtāñjaliḥ prasādayed anena | om bilvavr̥kṣa mahābhāga sarvadā śaṅkarapriya | grhītvā tava śākhām tu durgāpūjām karomy aham || śākhāchedodbhavaṃ duḥkhaṃ na ca kāryaṃ tvayā prabho | iti prasādyā śākhām ekām chedayet | chedanamanthro gauḍanibandhe om chindhi chindhi phaṭ phaṭ hūṃ svāhā | tataḥ phaladvayayutām bilvaśākhām āniya gr̥haprāṅgane pīṭhopari sthāpayitvā snapayet | eṣo’rghaḥ om bilvaśākhāyai namaḥ idam anulepanaṃ*

Then, the goddess is worshipped as the deity Cāmuṇḍā in the bilva-branch. The following hymn of visualization is invoked:☐

☐“I must bring you Śrīphala tree abode of Śrī, born on Śrīśaila, Go! You must be worshipped as the true form of Durgā. Oṃ. Dark as the petals of a blue-lotus, four-handed, holding a skull-topped staff and a scimitar in the right hands, in the left a shield and a noose in the top and bottom hands, garlanded with a skull-garland and wrapped in a tiger-hide, emaciated, with long fangs, extremely tall and very frightening, a lolling tongue, sunken and blood-shot eyes, with a horrific shriek, seated on a corpse, with long ears and gaping mouth-- She is known as Kālī and Cāmuṇḍā”. ☐☐

Having thus contemplated the *bilva* branch as having the form of Cāmuṇḍā, the officiant must hold the branch and impel Durgā collocated with the goddess to move with “Oṃ O Cāmuṇḍā Move! Move!”, and enter the shrine with the clay-image accompanied by songs and music. Then having worshipped the goddess in the branch and in the clay image, the officiant requests her presence to become stable in those substrates and in the place of worship (*sthīrikaraṇa*). Then the officiant should worship nine leaves (*nava patrikāḥ*). These are bound with a vine of the *aparājitā* creeper and the goddess is also worshipped therein in nine different forms. Each form is summoned to enter a different leaf and the five-fold offerings (lights, incense, flowers, fruits and food) are made to her: Brahmāṇī (in a plantain leaf), Raktadantikā (in a pomegranate leaf), Lakṣmī (in the rice leaf),

*gandhapuṣpadīpatāmbūlanaivedyavāsobhiḥ pūjayet | bilvaśākhāyāṃ
mṛnmayapratimāṃ ca devīm āvāhya sthāpayitvā pādyādibhir upacāraiḥ pūjayet |
chāgādibaliṃ dadyāt | atha dolayā bilvaśākhāṃ mṛnmayapratimāṃ ca
pūjāgrhadvāradeśam ānīya tatra gomayakṛtamaṇḍale bhūtān sampūjyāpasārayet
| tatra vidhiḥ | sapuṣpākṣatam ādāya oṃ bhūtā ihāgacchata iha tiṣṭhata ity
āvāhya sthāpayitvā oṃ bhūtebhyo nama iti pādyādibhiḥ sampūjya
māṣabhaktabaliṃ tebhyo dadyād anena oṃ bhūtāḥ pretāḥ piśācāś ca ye vasanty
atra bhūtale | te grhnantu mayā datto balir eṣa prasādhitaḥ || pūjitā
gandhapuṣpādyair balibhis tarpitās tathā | deśād asmād viniḥsrtya pūjāṃ
paśyantu matkṛtāṃ || oṃ bhūtebhya eṣa māṣabhaktabalir nama iti sapuṣpajalam
ādāyotsrjet | oṃ apasarpantu te bhūtā ye bhūtābhūmipālakāḥ | bhūtānām
avirodhena pūjākarma karomy ahaṃ || (kālikāpur 57.99) oṃ phaṭi iti
saptavārābhimantritān sitasarṣapayavādīn sarvavighnopasāntaye pūjāgrhe
vikiret | Ibid pp. 127-128. ☐*

Durgā (in the turmeric leaf), Cāmuṇḍā (in the mānaka), Kālikā (in the kacu), Śivā (in the bilva leaf), Śokarahitā (in the aśoka leaf) and Kārttikī (in the barley leaf). Once these deities have been summoned into these leaves and worshipped there with the five basic offerings, a goat, a buffalo or a sheep is sacrificed. All royal weapons, musical instruments, royal ensigns and pictures, are installed in their proper place at the door of the shrine. A festal archway (torāṇa), pillars and flags are erected at the doors of the temple of the goddess.¹⁰⁴ ॐ ॐ

The following lunar-day, Mahāṣṭamī, signals a change in the rituals, so far centred on plants. Their focus now becomes military rites. Durgā herself transforms on this occasion into a ferocious deity befitting the martial context. On Mahāṣṭamī the sacrificer, presumably the king himself, having bathed and performed the preliminary practices, was to sit on a purified seat facing east or north. He was, then, to meditate on the goddess by reciting numerous hymns eulogizing her functions, opening each hymn with a formal declaration of intention (saṃkalpa) in which he states identifies the action to be performed and the purpose for which he is undertaking it. The context of kingship is underlined during these recitations. The first three hymns for instance invoke the goddess's protective, wordly aspect with conventional images, declaring, for instance, that

¹⁰⁴ *atha punar bilvaśākhāyāṃ cāmuṇḍāyai nama iti pādyādibhir upacārais cāmuṇḍāṃ sampūjya oṃ śrīśailaśikhare jātaḥ śrīphalaḥ śrīniketanaḥ | netavyo'si mayāgaccha pūjyo durgāsvarūpataḥ || oṃ nīlotpaladalaśyāmā caturbāhusamanvitā | khaṭvāṅgacandrahāsaṃ ca vibhratī dakṣiṇe kare || vāme carma ca pāsaṃ ca ūrdhvādhobhāvataḥ punaḥ | dadhatī muṇḍamālāṃ ca vyāghracarmadharāambarā || kṛśāṅgī dīrghadaṃṣṭrā ca atidīrghātibhīṣaṇā | lolajihvā nimnaraktanayanā rāvabhīṣaṇā || kabandhavāhanāsīnā vistārasravaṇānanā | eṣā kālī samākhyātā cāmuṇḍeti ca kathyate || iti cāmuṇḍārūpatayā dhyātvā bilvaśākhāṃ grhītvā oṃ cāmuṇḍe cala cala iti cālayitvā mṛṇmayapratimāsahitāṃ gītavādyādinā grhaṃ praviśya oṃ āropitāsi durge tvaṃ mṛṇmaye śrīphale'pi ca | sthirānvitā tvaṃ bhūtvā me grhe tvaṃ kāmādā bhava || oṃ sthirībhaveti pūjāsthāne pīṭhopari sthirīkṛtya tatsamīpe samācārād aparājitālatābaddhā rambhādinavapatrikāḥ sthāpayed arcayec ca | [...] tato navapatrikāḥ pūjayet | tataḥ kadalyāṃ brahmāṇīm | dādīme raktadantikāṃ | dhānye lakṣmīm haridrāyāṃ durgāṃ | mānake cāmuṇḍāṃ | kacau kālikāṃ | bilve śivāṃ | aśoke śokarahitāṃ | jayantyāṃ kārttikīm | pratyekam āvāhya sthāpayitvā pañcopacāraiḥ pūjayet | chāgamahiṣādibalīm dadyāt | sarvāyudhāni vādyāni dhvajāni citrāni devīgrhadvāre yathāsanniveśaṃ sthāpayet | torāṇastambhapatākādi devīgrhadvāreṣu yathāśobhanam ucchrayet || iti patrikāpraveśanavidhiḥ || Ibid pp. 128-129.*

no fear of enemies arises in kings who recollect Durgā in times of affliction, such as those discussed previously (ch.2), or that those who recollect her do not drown in the impassable ocean of transmigration.¹⁰⁵ ॐ

The last oath is intended specifically for the heirless king-- by observing a preliminary observance of fasting and then declaring the oath, he was thought to obtain heirs. Here the royal context is particularly revealed by the wording, which runs thus-- “Om Today on the Special-Eighth lunar day, I, who have fasted, desirous that famine and sorrow shall end, of long life, of the attainment of the supreme state, of ascending an excellent chariot adorned with crests and many garlands and travelling to the world of Brahmā, followed by continuous happiness lasting for the year [that will follow] and victory free of misery will perform the worship of the goddess Durgā” (for the Sanskrit text, see the note after the next). The king’s wishes are not for liberation but for attaining verisimilitude with a celestial prototype of the victorious ruler on the march. In this way every element of the ritual liturgy of Maithila Navarātra functions in elevating the sovereign power of the king. After taking oaths, the worshipper was to restrain his breaths while repeating the mantras that begin with “Jayantī” and contemplate the form of Durgā as evoked in several verses attributed to the *Matsyapurāṇa*. In this verses she is described as the slayer of the Buffalo-Demon, adorned with masses of matted locks piled high on her head, with a digit of the moon embellishing them, three-eyed, her face like a lotus and the moon, her colour dark-blue like the atasī blossom, richly endowed with [the physical

¹⁰⁵ *atha mahāṣṭamyām devīpūjāvidhīḥ | tatra karttā nityakṛtyakriyaḥ
suprakṣālitapāṇipāda ācāntaḥ śuddhāsane prāṇmukha udaṇmukho vā upaviśya
kuśatilajalāny ādāya saṃkalpaḥ vidhāya smaraṇādikam ācaret | [...] tatraiva
smaraṇasya
ye tāṃ smaranti niḡaḍair api baddhapādā ॐ ॐ vyāghrāhicauranṛpavahnibhayeṣu
durgāṃ | ॐ ॐ teṣāṃ na kiṃcid api śatrubhayaṃ nṛṇāṃ syāt ॐ ॐ baddhās tu muktim
upalabhya sukhaṃ ramante || ॐ ॐ om adya sarvabhayābhāvakāmo bhagavatyā
durgādevyāḥ smaraṇam ahaṃ kariṣye | mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇe svasthasmaraṇasya
durge smṛtā harasi bhītim aśeṣajantoḥ | svasthaiḥ smṛtā matim atīvaśubhān
dadāsi | om adyātīśayitaśubhamatiprāptikāmo bhagavatyā durgādevyāḥ
smaraṇam ahaṃ kariṣye | śivarahasye smaraṇasya ye manāg api śarvāṇīm
smaranti śaraṇaiṣiṇaḥ | duṣpārāpārasaṃsārasāgare na patanti te | Ibid. pp. 132-
136. ॐ ॐ
śarvāṇīm em.] sarvvāṇīm ed.*

attributes of] newly acquired youth¹⁰⁶ and bejewelled, with charming teeth, full and up-lifted breasts, in the tribhaṅga posture, arrayed with a trident, sword, discus, a sharp arrow and a lance in descending order in her right hands, with a shield, a fully drawn bow, a noose, an elephant-goad, either a bell or an axe in her left hands, the headless body of a buffalo at her foot, a *dānava* emerging from the hole of the torso, brandishing a sword, pierced through the heart by her trident, his limbs reddened with his blood, disgorging his entrails, his eyes blood-shot and his eyebrows furrowed in anger, the locks of his hair seized by Durgā. The right foot of the deity was to perch on a lion, vomiting blood, while the left toe was to alight on the buffalo. When the king had contemplated the goddess in this, her heroic, form, she was to be summoned to enter the image, asked to protect the worshipper, to grant all desires, and is addressed in her omnipotent aspect as the Empress of the Universe (*viśveśvarī*). Then the base-worship (*mūlapūjā*) commences. Various offerings are made to the deity accompanied by her base-incantation (*mūlamantra*), either the “Jayantī, Maṅgalā” verse or the mantra “O Durgā, Durgā, Protectress, Svāhā” followed by “Om homage to Durgā” (*om durgāyai namaḥ*).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ The translation of this particular phrase (*navayauvanasampannā*) is by Prof. Sanderson.

¹⁰⁷ *om adya mahāṣṭamyāṃ durbhikṣaduḥkhanivṛttidīrghāyusṭvaparama-padaprāptidhvajamālākulavimānavarārohaṇapūrvakabrahmalokagamanapūrvak aśāśvatasamā-vacchinnaharṣaviśokavijayakāmaḥ sopavāso durgādevyāḥ pūjanam ahaṃ kariṣye | [...] putratvātāṃ upavāsavyatirekeṇa evāyaṃ saṃkalpaḥ kālikāpurāṇīyavacanāt | upavāsaṃ mahāṣṭamyāṃ putravān na samācaret | yathā tathaiva pūtātām vratī devīm prapūjayet || iti saṃkalpya | jayantītyādīmantreṇa prāṇāyāmaṃ vidhāya matsyapurāṇoktalakṣaṇāṃ durgādevīm dhyāyet | jaṭājūṭasamāyuktām ardhendukṛtaśekharaṃ | locanatrayasaṃyuktām padmendusadrśānanām || atasīpuṣpavarṇābhām supraṭiṣṭhām sulocanām | navayauvanasampannām sarvābharaṇabhūṣitām || sucārudaśanām tadvat pīnonnatapayodharām | tribhaṅgasthānasamsthānām mahiṣāsuramardinīm | triśūlam dakṣiṇe dadyāt khaḍgaṃ cakram kramād adhaḥ || tīkṣṇabāṇam tathā śaktim vāmato'pi nibodhata | khetakam pūrṇacāpam ca pāśam ankuśam ūrdhvataḥ | ghaṇṭām vā paraśum vāpi vāmataḥ sanniveśayet || adhastān mahiṣam tad vad viśiraskam pradarśayet | śiraśchedodbhavam tad vad dānavam khaḍgapāṇinam | hṛdi śūlena nirbhinnam niryadantravibhūṣitam || raktarakṭikṛtāṅgam ca raktavisphāritekṣaṇam || veṣṭitam nāgapāśena bhrūkuṭīkuṭilānanam | sapāśavāmahastena dhṛtakeśam ca durgayā || vamadrudhiravaktram ca devyāḥ siṃham pradarśayet | devyās tu dakṣiṇam pādāṃ samam siṃhoparisthitam || kiṃcidūrdhvam tathā vāmam aṅguṣṭham mahiṣopari | stūyamānam ca tad rūpam amaraiḥ sanniveśayet || evam ukta rūpam*

As Mahāṣṭamī progresses, and the power of the Navarātra gradually escalates, tantricised rituals, more effective in bestowing martial powers and killing enemies, were performed. Befitting her name, Durgā is truly dangerous on this occasion. She was to be worshipped in her occultic form ringed by a circuit (āvaraṇa) of female accomplices, with whom she was said to manifest herself on this lunar-day. A group of eleven divinities invoked in the Mantra beginning with Jayantī and ending with Svadhā and Svāhā was first to be installed to the south. This was to be followed by the installation of nine goddesses (the Navadurgās) in the east, eight to Durgā's left beginning with Ugradamṣṭrā and ending in Jayā, sixteen before her beginning with Maṅgalā and ending in Sunandā, and a group of sixty-four along with either thirty two, sixteen or eight to the south.¹⁰⁸ Each goddess is summoned to enter the ritual space and, in keeping with her more powerful temperament, is propitiated with mantras that are properly Tantric, that is to say that include the syllable Hrīm, a typical Śākta seed-syllable, between the opening Om and the name of the goddess.¹⁰⁹ The use of distinctly Śākta mantras serves in clearly marking the transformed character of the Maithila ritual from Mahāṣṭamī onwards. Next, the seven Mothers are summoned and installed in the east with Caṇḍikā in the centre and Bhairava is worshipped at the forefront of these deities. Worship commences propitiating the innermost circuit of divinities surrounding the central goddess, embodied by the ancillary (aṅga) mantras. Then points of the body of the central goddess, followed by her

dhyātvā sākṣatapuṣpam ādāya om ehi durge mahābhāge rakṣārtham mama sarvadā | āvāhyāmy aham devi sarvakāmārthasiddhaye || asyām muktau samāgatya sthitim matkṛpayā kuru | rakṣām kuru sadā bhadre viśveśvari namo'stu te || om bhagavati durge ihāgaccha iha tiṣṭha iha sannidhehi iha sthirā bhava suprasannā bhava ity āvāhanam vidhāya [...] om jayantī maṅgalā kālī bhadrakālī kapālinī | durgā śivā kṣamā dhātrī svadhā svāhā namo' stu te || iti mantram paṭhitvā om durge durge rakṣaṇi svāheti vā mantram uccārya [...] om durgāyai nama ity utsṛjet | evaṃ mūlapūjām vidadhyāt | Ibid pp. 136-139.

¹⁰⁸ For the full list of the goddesses see the note after the next.

¹⁰⁹ The importance of the mantras as Śākta invocations was noticed by Professor Sanderson who pointed this out to me in a personal communication of August 2011.

whole body, are worshipped with the five brahma mantras. Then the goddess's weapons and the royal lion-throne are propitiated.¹¹⁰

Then the goddess is bathed with clarified butter (*ghṛta*), milk (*dugdha*), yoghurt (*dadhi*), the five-products of the cow (*pañcagavya*), ie milk, yoghurt, butter, dung and urine, the same from a tawny cow (*kapilāpañcagavya*), five nectars (*pañcāmṛta*) (though unspecified by the text, typically milk, yoghurt, ghee, honey

¹¹⁰ athāvaraṇapūjā | tatra devyā dakṣiṇasyām diśi sapuṣpākṣatam ādāya sambodhanapadenāvāhya sthāpayitvā pādyādibhir gandhādibhir vopacāraiḥ pūjayet | oṃ hrīṃ jayantyai namaḥ evaṃ maṅgalāyai kālyai bhadrakālyai kapālinyai durgāyai śivāyai kṣamāyai dhātryai svadhāyai svāhāyai | pūrvabhāge hrīṃbījam eva dattvā devyāḥ śaktiḥ prapūjayet | hrīṃ ugracaṇḍāyai namaḥ evaṃ pracaṇḍāyai caṇḍogrāyai caṇḍanāyikāyai caṇḍāyai caṇḍavatyai caṇḍarūpāyai aticaṇḍikāyai | vāmadiśi hrīṃkāram eva prakṣipyā oṃ hrīṃ ugradamaṣṭrāyai namaḥ evaṃ mahādamṣṭrāyai karālinyai bhīmanetrāyai viśālākṣyai maṅgalāyai vijayāyai jayāyai | devīpurataḥ hrīṃpadam eva dattvā oṃ hrīṃ maṅgalāyai namaḥ evaṃ nandinyai bhadrāyai lakṣmyai kīrttyai yaśasvinyai puṣṭyai medhāyai śivāyai sādhyai yaśāyai śobhāyai jayāyai dhṛtyai ānandāyai sunandāyai | atha dakṣiṇe sakalāś catuṣṣaṣṭī devyo dvātriṃśat ṣoḍaśaṣṭau vā pūjyāḥ | oṃ vijayāyai namaḥ evaṃ maṅgalāyai bhadrāyai dhṛtyai sāntyai śivāyai kṣamāyai siddhyai tuṣṭyai umāyai puṣṭyai śriyāyai rddhyai ratyai dīptāyai kāntyai yaśāyai lakṣmyai īśvaryai vṛddhyai sākryai jayāvatyai brāhmyai jayantyai aparājitāyai ajitāyai mānasyai śvetāyai dityai māyāyai mahāmāyāyai mohinyai lālasāyai tārāyai vimalāyai gauryai śaraṇyāyai kauśikyai matyai durgāyai kriyāyai arundhatyai ghaṇṭāyai karṇāyai kapālinyai raudryai kālyai mayūryai trinetrāyai svarūpāyai bahurūpāyai ripuhāyai ambikāyai carcikāyai karālyai surapūjitāyai vaivasvatyai kaumāryai māheśvaryai vaiṣṇavyai mahālakṣmyai kārttikyai śivadūtyai cāmuṇḍāyai iti pratyekam āvāhya sthāpayitvā pādyādibhir upacāraiḥ pūjayet | atha mātaraḥ | pūrvādidikṣu oṃ brahmānyai namaḥ evaṃ māheśvaryai kaumāryai vaiṣṇavyai vārāhyai indrānyai cāmuṇḍāyai mahālakṣmyai madhye caṇḍikāyai iti pūjayed mātṛṛṇām purobhāge oṃ bhairavāya nama iti pādyādibhir upacāraiḥ pūjayet | athāṅgāni oṃ kāli kāli hṛdayāya namaḥ | oṃ kāli vajriṇi śirase namaḥ | oṃ kāli kāleśvari śikhāyai namaḥ | oṃ kāli vajreśvari kavacāya namaḥ ity āgneyādiṣu | oṃ kāli lauhadaṇḍāyai astrāya namaḥ | iti pūrvādicaturdikṣu oṃ kāli kāli vajreśvari lauhadaṇḍāyai svāhā netratrayāya nama iti devyagre pūjayet | atha pañca brahmāṇi (pañcāṅgāni) oṃ īśānāya nama iti śirase oṃ kāli kāli tatpuruṣāya nama iti mukhe oṃ vajreśvari aghorāya nama iti hṛdaye oṃ lauhadaṇḍāyai vāmadevāya nama ity adhaḥ oṃ svāhā sadyojātāya nama iti sarvāṅge pūjayet || athāstrāṇi dakṣiṇahasteṣūrdhvataḥ | oṃ trisūlāya namaḥ evaṃ khaḍgāya cakrāya tikṣṇabāṇāya śaktyai vāmahasteṣūrdhvataḥ khetakāya pūrṇacāpāya pāśāya aṅkuśāya ghaṇṭāyai iti pūjayet | oṃ vajranakhadaṃṣṭrāyudhāya mahāsiṃhāsānāya hūṃ phaṭ nama iti siṃhāsanaṃ pūjayet | tataḥ puṣpāñjalitrayeṇa devīm pūjayet Ibid pp. 139-141.

and molasses¹¹¹, sugar-cane juice (*ikṣurasa*), honey (*madhu*), water (*udaka*), diluted sandalwood (*candanavāri*), water infused with fragrant flowers (*surabhipuṣpatoya*), water mixed with droṇa flowers or some other appropriate plant (*droṇapuṣpādyaṅyatamayutaṃ vāri*), water compounded with gold (*hemavāri*), water compounded with jewels (*ratnavāri*), water compounded with camphor (*karpūravāri*), and water compounded with fragrant aloe wood (*aguruvāri*).¹¹² These are performed for specific wishes (*kāmyāni*) that are declared in the oaths preceding each bathing (for instance bathing with the five-nectars is said to confer on the king “an incomparable royal consecration that surpasses the heavenly enjoyment of Indra's kingdom lasting for one aeon of the gods”).¹¹³ In case her image was of clay, which could disintegrate with contact with water, then the same substances were either offered or poured on her reflection in a mirror.¹¹⁴ Then welcoming offerings (*argha*) are presented to the goddess envisioned as an honoured guest-- water with flowers (*puṣpodakārgha*), perfumed water (*gandhodakārgha*), pañcagavya, an argha formed of twelve constituents (*dvādaśāṅgārgha*)¹¹⁵ and one of eight (*aṣṭāṅgārgha*),¹¹⁶ offerings presented in three chalices of wood (*dārupātrārgha*), earth (*mṛtpātrārgha*) and copper (*tāmrapātrārgha*), lotus, palāśa and other suitable leaves (*palāśapadmapatrānyatamārgha*), in two chalices of silver (*raupyārgha*) and gold (*sauvarṇārgha*), in one gold chalice for all the gods (*sāmānyahemapātrārgha*), in silver (*raupyārgha*) and in a copper (*tāmra*) chalice. Each offering, presented to the deity as if she were a newly-arrived guest, is connected to a specific royal reward.¹¹⁷ Next gifts (*dāna*) are given to her and

¹¹¹ For example *Somaśambhupaddhati* vol. 1, p. 200, n. 2.(reference provided by Professor Sanderson).

¹¹² Ibid pp. 141-148.

¹¹³ *divyakalpāvacchinnasureśarājyabhuktyuttarātularājyābhiṣekaprāptikāmo aham amunā pañcāmṛtena bhagavatīm durgādevīm ahaṃ snapayiṣye* | Ibid p. 144.

¹¹⁴ *mṛṇmayapratimāyāṃ tu nivedanamātram ādarśapratibimbitāyāṃ vā kartavyaṃ* / Ibid p. 141.

¹¹⁵ The constituents are water, thickened milk, the tips of kuśa grass, unhusked barley, yoghurt, rice, Aloe indica (*sahā*, glossed as *ghṛtakumārīti prasiddhā*), white mustard, dūrvā grass, turmeric, cow bile and honey. Ibid p. 149.

¹¹⁶ The constituents are water, thickened milk, the tips of kuśa grass, yoghurt, clarified butter, rice, sesamum and white mustard. Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid pp. 148-151.

the list is unrestrictedly lavish-- unguents (anulepana), flowers (puṣpa), varieties of incense (dhūpa), lamps (dīpa), food-offerings (naivedya), cothes (vastra), ornaments comprising a crown, and optionally gold earrings, a necklace, a bracelet, an armband, a ring, a girdle, anklets, a foot-ornament, toe-rings,¹¹⁸ gold tilakas (hematilaka), a pair of gold eyes (hemalocanau), gold (suvarṇa), gold vessels (bahuhemapātra-), a copper vessel (tāmrāpātra), an earthen vessel (mṛṇmayapātra), vases and other accoutrements for her bath (devīsnānopayogikalaśādi-), a clear, jewelled, garlanded and anointed mirror (-darpaṇa), a parasol (chattra), a white parasol with a gold handle (kanakadaṇḍadhavalachattra), a chowrie with a copper handle (tāmradaṇḍacāmara), a chowrie with a gold handle (kanakadaṇḍacāmara), a chowrie made only of gold (suvarṇamātraghaṭitacāmara), a chowrie with a jewelled handle (maṇidaṇḍacāmara), an appointed jewelled bed (sopakaraṇaratnānvitaśayyā), an awning (vitāna), a pair of shoes (upānahau), a horse (aśva) or a palanquin (dolā), a cow (go) and a milch cow (dhenu), a white bull (śvetavṛṣabha), a slave-girl (dāsī), an ensign (dhvaja), another large ensign strung with a five-coloured cloth banner decorated with white lotuses and strung with a row of bells,¹¹⁹ another strung with a white banner (śvetavarṇapātākānvitamahādhvaja), one with a banner of five colours (pañcavarṇapātākānvitamahādhvaja), a row of flags (dhvajamālā), a further eight Mighty Crests (mahādhvajāṣṭaka), land measuring four cubits¹²⁰ and crops (dhānyādi-).¹²¹ ☐☐

This is followed by sanguinary offerings of which the work presents a number of options, and the oaths to be sworn in each case by the king.¹²² It seems that all the options were followed.¹²³ No vegetable-substitutes are given, in contrast to

¹¹⁸ *alaṅkāro mukuṭādiḥ [...] hemakuṇḍalakaṅṭhābharaṇakaṭakakeyūrāṅgurīyaka-
119* *kiṅkiṅijālasamvitavastranirmitaśvetapadmopaśobhitapañcarāṅgikapātākānvit
amahādhvajam* Ibid p. 184.

¹²⁰ *caturhastadaṇḍamānaparimitām [...] bhūmiḥ* Ibid p. 186.,

¹²¹ Ibid pp. 166-187.

¹²² Ibid pp. 187-189.

¹²³ The fact that more than one animal was sacrificed is suggested by the following: ☐☐ *devīpurāṇe* ☐☐ *paśughātaś ca kartavyo gavalājavadhas tathā |
☐☐ gavalah mahiṣaḥ | paśus tadanyo meṣādiḥ |* Ibid. p. 187.

the other Gauḍīya paddhatis¹²⁴ suggesting that the Maithila rite was completely sanguinary. Provision is made for the sacrifice of one buffalo (mahiṣa), several goats (bahuchāga-), several buffaloes (bahumahiṣa-), several sheep (bahumeṣa-), an offering of blood mixed with other liquids (rudhirādimelaka-), sheep's blood (meṣarudhira-), goat's blood (chāgarudhira-), buffalo's blood (mahiṣarudhira-), blood from both the king's arms and thighs (svabhujajaṅghādvayarudhiraṃ), and finally a human head (naraśiras).¹²⁵ The last two, in fact, are extolled by the text as incurring for the king merit for the greatest period of time, blood from his own body a thousand years, the head-offering one hundred thousand.¹²⁶

☐☐

The offering of blood formed the main power-bestowing ritual in the autumnal rites of any kingdom -- till recently the principal courtyard (Newari Mū Cuka, Nepali Mūl Cok) in Hanuman Dhoka, Kathmandu ran red every Mahāṣṭamī with the blood of 116 sacrificed buffaloes and many goats.¹²⁷ It enacted a transaction: in return for blood that was thought to fully satisfy the goddess in her terrible aspect and formed the most effective offering as far as Śāktism was concerned, the king received his political status from the deity, universal dominance (sarvavaśyatā)¹²⁸, offspring and several other rewards (these reasons were in

¹²⁴ Sarkar 2012, p. 349.

¹²⁵ *naraśiraḥpradānasya | nāreṇa śirasā vīra pūjitā vidhivan nṛpa | tṛptā bhaved bhṛśaṃ durgā varṣāṅghaṃ lakṣaṃ eva ca || adya lakṣavarṣāvacchinnātiśāyitadurgāprītikāma idaṃ naraśiro viṣṇudaivatam bhagavatyai durgādevyai tubhyam ahaṃ dade |* Ibid p. 189. See also *Kṛtyaratnākara*, pp. 356-357.

¹²⁶ On offering one's own blood:☐☐*svabhujādirudhiradānasya | sahasraṃ tṛptim āyāti svadeharudhireṇa tu | tarpitā vidhivad durgā bhitvā bāhū ca jaṅghake || adya sahasravarṣāvacchinnadurgāprītikāma etat svabhujajaṅghādvayarudhiraṃ viṣṇudaivatam bhagavatyai durgādevyai tubhyam ahaṃ dade |* *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī* p. 188. On offering the head, see previous note.

¹²⁷ Allen 1975, p. 24.

¹²⁸ This was most particular in the Gauḍīya ceremony, where the hymn to be invoked while offering the blood to Durgā in order to gain dominance is thus:☐☐*ity uktvā khaḍgarudhiraṃ ādāya-- oṃ yaṃ yaṃ sprśāmi pādena yaṃ yaṃ paśyāmi cakṣuṣā | sa sa me vaśyatāṃ yātu yadi śakrasamo bhavet || oṃ aiṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ nityaklinne madadrave svāhā iti sarvavaśyamantreṇa svīyalalāṭe tilakaṃ kuryāt |* ☐☐Saying thus, having taken the blood from the sword [the sacrificer must recite]:☐☐“Oṃ Whosoever I touch with my foot, whosoever I see with my eye, may he fall in my power, [even] if he is as mighty as Śakra. Oṃ aiṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ O You who are eternally moist, flowing with passion, Svāhā.” ☐☐With this Mantra

fact formally enunciated during the taking of oaths prior to the sacrifice).¹²⁹ The animal sacrifice taking place at midnight on Navamī was specifically for victory. . Blood, not only the essential stuff of life, was believed to be composed of the element rajas, a quality that dominated both in the virile warrior and in the passionate nature of the goddess herself.¹³⁰ It is also a symbol of sex, being highly redolent of female sexuality and fertility. In this way, the martial and the erotic, both aspects of passion, are interconnected in the image of blood. Thus, worship of her in autumn with blood came to be identified in certain Purāṇic texts and its commentarial literature as a rājasīpūjā, and associated most particularly with the obligations of a kṣatriya.¹³¹ Caṇḍī was thought to be

of Complete Subjugation he must draw a 'tilaka' mark on his forehead [with the blood]. Durgāpūjātattva, Sarkar 2012, p. 373.

¹²⁹ Some of these reasons stated in the Durgābhaktitaraṅgiṇī were to incur merit (puṇya) and Durgā's pleasure (durgāprīti) for a period of time.

¹³⁰ Among three sets of goddesses, sāttvika, rājasā and tāmasikā described in the Devīpurāṇa, Durgā, Kauśikī, Aparājitā, Arundhatī and other goddesses such as Jayāvati and Jayantī, who seem also to be warrior-divinities, are named in the second category, as follows: ॐ ॐ *brāhmī jayāvati śaktir ajitā cāparājitā* / ॐ ॐ *jayantī mānasī māyā ditiḥ śvetā vimohinī* / ॐ ॐ *śaraṇyā kauśikī gaurī vimalā ratilālasā* / ॐ ॐ *arundhatī kriyā durgā rājasā iti cāparāḥ* / *Devīpurāṇa* 50. 13-14, p. 284. Their iconography is described in great detail in *Ibid.* pp. 296-301, and they are said to grant boons of a worldly character, such as freedom from enemies and wealth, which would have been much desired by kings. In addition, the warrior character of these deities is also underlined in one particular description: the goddess Brāhmī is supposed to be worshipped by "great kings" (nṛpottamaiḥ) with "offerings of blood" (raktopahāraṃ) (*ibid.* 50. 12-13, p. 297).

¹³¹ Caṇḍī's autumnal worship with sanguinary offering is identified in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* (cited in Viṣṇubhaṭṭa Āthavale's *Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi*) as a rājasīpūjā (in contrast to a sāttvikī category of her worship at autumn eschewing animal-sacrifice intended for orthodox brāhmaṇas), in the following way: ॐ ॐ *bhaviṣye* ॐ ॐ

śāradī caṇḍikāpūjā trividhā pariḡiyate / ॐ ॐ

sāttvikī japayajñādyair naivedyaiś ca nirāmiṣaiḥ / ॐ ॐ

[...] ॐ ॐ

rājasī balidānena naivedyaiḥ sāmiṣais tathā / ॐ ॐ

surāmāṃsādyupahārair japayajñair vinā tu yā / ॐ ॐ

vinā mantrais tāmasī syāt kirātānām ca sammatā / *Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi*, p. 80.

ॐ ॐ *sāttvikī* conj.] *sāttvikī* ed. ॐ ॐ Viṣṇubhaṭṭa adds that, while "in this matter only sāttvika worship [that is worship without animal sacrifice] is [intended] for a brāhmaṇa" (*atra brāhmaṇasya sāttvikapūjaiva*), "the Rājasī category of the Navarātra alone is [intended] for kṣatriyas and vaiśyas" (*kṣatriyavaiśyayos tu rājasya api*) (*ibid.*). See also Kane 1958 (1994), p. 158 for a summary of this

propitiated by blood, and certain examples of litany even seem to suggest that she was believed to be nourished and replenished by means of it.¹³² In mediaeval Sanskrit literature, the topos of blood formed the most evocative symbol of the goddess, appearing in numerous obeisance poems to Caṇḍī, in which the red of the slain animals' vital fluids is most often poetically juxtaposed to the lac adorning the goddess's feet,¹³³ contrasted and deepened by the white light said to radiate from her toenails,¹³⁴ or likened, in lyrical flights of poetic fancy, to the fiery tint of the sky at the Juncture.¹³⁵ Such was her appetite for this substance, that the *Gaūḍavaho* includes several gory verses playing with the idea: one describes how Caṇḍī's tongue was ever-pinned to her rows of nail-like teeth in her greed for a juicy bone (v. 328), while another wonders how her temple

categorization in other examples of Purāṇic literature such as the Skandapurāṇa and its reflection in Raghunandana's *Tithitattva*.

¹³² This aspect of nourishment seems to be suggested by the liturgy accompanying the animal sacrifice in the Gauḍīya Navarātra. The invocation while offering the blood runs as follows: ॐॐॐ *tato mṛṇmayādipātre rudhiram ādāya devisammukhe sthāpayitvā oṃ adyetyādi daśavarṣāvachchinnaśrīdurgāprītikāma imaṃ chāgapaśurudhirabaliṃ dāsyāmi iti saṃkalpya eṣa chāgapaśurudhirabaliḥ oṃ jayantītyādy uccārya dadyāt | tataḥ oṃ kālī kālī mahākālī kālīke pāpanāśini | śoṇitaṃ ca baliṃ grhṇa varade vāmalocane || aiṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ kauśiki rudhireṇāpyāyatām iti vadet ||ॐॐ*

“Thereupon having collected the blood in a chalice of such substance as earth, having placed it before the goddess, having declared the resolution 'Oṃ Today etc I who wish for Durgā's affection for a duration of ten years give this bali-offering of goat's blood'; having recited “Here is the bali offering of goat's blood. Oṃ Jayantī...’, he must offer [the blood]. ॐॐThereupon: Oṃ Kālī, Kālī, Awesome Kālī, Kālīkā, Queller of Sins, accept the offering of blood, O Boon-Bestower, Fair-Eyed One. Aiṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ, O Kauśikī, may you be nourished with blood.” (Ibid p. 56)

¹³³ See for instance: ॐॐ

*hūmkāre nyakkṛtodanvati mahati jite śiṅjitair nūpurasya ॐॐ
śliṣyacchṛṅgakṣate 'pi kṣaradasrji nijālaktakabhrāntibhāji ॐॐ
skandhe vindhyādribuddhyā nikaṣati mahiṣasyāhito 'sūn ahārṣid ॐॐ
ajñānād eva yasyāś caraṇa iti śivaṃ sā śivā vaḥ karotu || Caṇḍīsataka 2. ॐॐ*

When the tinkling of the anklet triumphed over his fearful cry ॐॐby which oceans had been humbled; ॐॐwhen the scratch from chafing horns oozing blood had counterfeited ॐॐthe redness of her own lac-dye; ॐॐher foot plundered Mahiṣa's life ॐॐplaced on his scraping shoulder innocently ॐॐthinking it must be the Vindhya- ॐॐMay that Śivā bless you with joy. (Translation reproduced from Sarkar 2013, p. 429, n. 36.)

¹³⁴ As for instance in the hymn to Caṇḍī in the *Kulacūḍāmaṇitantra* 7.22-35.

¹³⁵ *Haravijaya* 47.26; *Gaūḍavaho* 293, and the parallel for this appears in *Haravijaya* 47.43.

embellished with red-coloured banners, seemed to spew forth blood that she had drunk from the daily decapitations of animals (v. 322). In the mediaeval conceptual universe, blood was therefore profoundly redolent of Caṇḍī and her passionate, insatiable and more dangerous, nature. In addition, offering blood to Caṇḍī also satisfied and prevented the advances of other malevolent spirits, planets and disease which goddesses like herself in their more dangerous aspects were seen to control. ॐॐ

Following the singing of hymns (stuti), commences the worship of weapons (and other royal insignia) (śastrapūjā) resulting in empowerment, with invocations said attributed to the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa. These royal weapons and insignia are named as the royal sword (khaḍga), dagger (churikā), cutlass (kaṭṭāraka), bow (dhanu), lance (kunta), armour (varman), chowrie (cāmara), parasol (chatra), ensign (dhvaja), banner (patākā), kettle-drum (dundubhi), conch-shell (śaṅkha), lion-throne (siṃhāsana) and royal horses (aśva).¹³⁶ This was done to ensure the effectiveness of the army in the battles that were to ensue with the beginning of the military calendar. Then follow sacrificial offerings of peas to propitiate Durgā's retinue of female deities followed by a sanguinary offering combined with peas and pumpkins to propitiate all the deities in the various directions-- the guardians of the worlds, planets, constellations, minor gods, ghosts, jackals and malevolent demons and demonesses.¹³⁷ ॐॐ

¹³⁶ *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī*, pp. 191-196.

¹³⁷ atha balidānaṃ | tatra gomayopaliptabhūbhāge māṣabhaktādibalim upādāya | om hrīṃ jayantyādibhya eṣa māṣabhaktabalir namaḥ | athavā om hrīṃ jayantyai eṣa māṣabhaktabalir namaḥ iti pratyekaṃ vā ekādaśebhyo dadyāt | evam ugracaṇḍādibhyo 'ṣṭabhyaḥ ugradamaṣṭrādibhyo navabhyo maṅgalādibhyaḥ ṣoḍaśabhyaḥ hrīṃ vinā vijayādibhyaś catuṣaṣṭhibhyo brahmāṇyādi navabhyaś ca balim dadyāt |
atha sāmānyato balidānaṃ | māṣakuṣmāṇḍamāṃsādyair deyo dikṣu balir niśi | tatra mantraḥ | ॐॐ lokapālagrahanakṣatrasurāsuraṅgandharva-
ॐॐ yakṣarākṣasavidyādharagaruḍamahoragakinnaragajendradevatāpsaro-
ॐॐ bhūtapretapiśācakraṇyādamanuṣyamātrgaṇayogiṇīdākiṇīśākiṇīgaṇā imaṃ nānādravyabalim grhnantu om huṃ svāhā | om śivāḥ kaṅkālavetālāḥ pūtanājambhakādayaḥ | te sarve tṛptim āyāntu balidānena toṣitāḥ ||
Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī, p. 196.

At midnight, on the onset of Mahānavamī, the Great-Ninth lunar day a king wishing victory in battle was to perform a further animal sacrifice to propitiate Durgā, now in her wrathful form as Kālī. A translation of the text's description of this ritual of military power (conforming exactly to the method of the Devīpurāṇa and the Agnipurāṇa) is as follows: ॐॐ

Next [follows] the animal sacrifice after worshipping the goddess [Durgā], performed at midnight on Mahāṣṭamī, the Splendid Eighth lunar day [of the bright fortnight], by a king wishing victory in battle. Provisioned with all offerings, having made diverse worship as before with cloth, jewels, fruits and the like, and with droṇa, bel, mango, jātī, punnāga and campaka flowers, having performed a spectacular worship exactly as before, having uttered the base-mantra before Durgā as many times as he can, having eulogised her, having asked for a boon after bowing down, having taken kuśa grass, sesame seeds and water, [a king must declare the Declaration of Intention with the words]--ॐॐ“Today at Midnight on the Eighth lunar day in the bright fortnight of Āśvina, I, desirous of victory, shall slay this buffalo, a sheep or a goat, aged five years as an offering to the goddess Durgā.” Thus declaring his intent, having taken a sword [he says], “Om̐ O Kālī, Kālī, goddess of the thunder-bolt, Iron-Stake, Homage to you!”. Having thus recited the mantra, he must slay the buffalo adorned with sweet smelling flower garlands and the like with the sword. He must offer the sacrifice along with the flesh and blood from that [sacrifice] empowered with the Mahākauśika mantra to the deities beginning with Pūtanā. ॐॐThe procedure in this is as follows: having worshipped Pūtanā in the south-west direction of Durgā’s temple with offerings beginning with the water for the foot (pādyā); having brought forward the bali offering of blood and flesh; having recited the Mahākauśika mantra as follows, ‘Om̐ hr̥m̐ throb, throb! Om̐ tear, tear! Om̐ shred shred. Om̐ gulva gulva. Om̐ cover, cover. Om̐ dhulva dhulva. Om̐ kill kill. Om̐ drive away, drive away. Om̐ shake, shake, pura pura, fill, fill. Om̐ hām̐ Om̐ hūm̐ bham̐ vaṃ hūm̐ phaṭ phaṭ crush crush. Om̐ hūm̐. Om̐ hūm̐’; he must offer [the flesh and blood] to [Pūtanā] in the south west direction [while saying] “Here is the flesh and blood offering. Homage to Pūtanā”. In the same way [he makes the offering] to [Pāparākṣasī]

in the north-west [while saying] “Here is the flesh and blood offering. Om homage to Pāparākṣasī”, to [Carakī] in north-east with “Here is the flesh and blood offering. Om Homage to Carakī”; to [Vidārī] in the south-east with “Here is the blood and flesh offering. Om homage to Vidārī”. In the same way he must make the offering to the demon Pilipiñja, carrion-eaters (kravyāda), and crunchers (jambhaka) with “Om Homage to Pilipiñja; Om Homage to carrion-eaters; Om Homage to Jambhaka” beginning with the east. Next, having made an image of his enemy out of dough; having sliced off its head with a sword; he must offer the head to Skanda with “Om homage to Skanda” and the trunk to Viśākha.☐“

☐Then, the king having washed while clothed, dressed in white, carefully washed his hands and feet and sipped water, was to worship the goddess again towards the close of midnight. First the deity was to be washed with the various fluids each measuring 108 palas, to the accompaniment of music, the recitation of the base-incantation and offering of lamps and incense in between. Once again, gifts of the scale and nature presented before, are made to the goddess. Having sung a hymn, the king was to offer a goat, sheep or buffalo as sacrifice. In this way the worship at midnight was to be completed.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ atha mahāṣṭamyām ardhharātre vijayakāmasya nṛpasya devīpūjāpūrvakabalidānaṃ |☐☐“sarvopahārasampanno vastraratnaphalādibhiḥ | puṣpaiś ca droṇabilvāmraajātīpunnāgacampakaiḥ ||”☐☐pūrvavad eva vicitrāṃ pūjāṃ racayitvā durgāgrato mūlamantraṃ yathāśakti japitvā stutvā praṇamya varam prārthya kuśatīlalāny ādāya adyāśvinaśuklāṣṭamyām ardhharātre imaṃ pañcābdam mahiṣam ajaṃ meṣam vā vijayakāmo’haṃ durgādevyai ghātayiṣye | iti saṃkalpya khaḍgam ādāya om kāli kāli vajreśvari lauhadaṇḍāyai nama iti mantraṃ japitvā khaḍgena gandhapuṣpasragādibhir alaṃkṛtaṃ mahiṣaṃ ghātayet | tadutthābhyāṃ raktamāmsābhyāṃ mahākauśikamantrābhimantritābhyāṃ pūtanādibhyo dadyāt |☐☐tatra kramaḥ | durgāgrhasya nairṛtyāṃ diśi pādyādibhir upacāraiḥ pūtanāṃ sampūjya rudhiramāmsabalim upanīya om hrāṃ sphura sphura om kuṭa kuṭa om kṛnta kṛnta om gulva gulva om kumba kumba om dhulva dhulva om māraya māraya om vidrāvaya vidrāvaya om kampaya kampaya pura pura pūraya pūraya om hāṃ om hūṃ bhaṃ vaṃ hūṃ phaṭ phaṭ marda marda om hūṃ om hūṃ iti mahākauśikamantram uccārya nairṛtyāṃ eṣa rudhiramāmsabaliḥ om pūtanāyai nama iti dadyāt | evaṃ vāyavyāṃ eṣa māmsarudhirabaliḥ om pāparākṣasyai nama iti dadyāt | aiśānyāṃ eṣa rudhiramāmsabaliḥ om carakyaiḥ namaḥ | āgneyyāṃ eṣa rudhiramāmsabaliḥ om vidāryai namaḥ iti dadyāt | evaṃ pilipiñjāya namaḥ om kravyādbhyo om jambhakāya nama iti prāgādi dadyāt |

Then the Navadurgās (yellow Rudraçaṇḍā, tawny Praçaṇḍā, dark complexioned Caṇḍogrā, blue-coloured Caṇḍanāyikā, fair-complexioned Caṇḍā, smoky Caṇḍavatī, yellow Caṇḍarūpā, white-hued Atiçaṇḍikā, and at their centre, flame-faced eighteen armed Ugracaṇḍā) were worshipped on an eight-petalled lotus.¹³⁹ Then ancillary mantras were installed in the petals of the lotus, followed by the worship of the goddess's weapons, the king's lion-throne, the propitiation of the ten guardians of the world, their weapons and the seven Mātr̥s/Śaktis. Further gifts of clothes and ornaments were to be given accompanied by the hymn to the goddess asking her for boons, particularly sons. Then the king and his court were to maintain a night-vigil, spent in dancing, singing and music-- these were entertainments said to delight the goddess. ¶¶

On Mahānavamī, the martial element of the rite is amplified. In the morning, the officiant having completed his preliminary rituals and oaths, was to install a

atha śatrupratimāṃ piṣṭamayīṃ kṛtvā khaḍgena tac chiras chedayitvā oṃ skandāya 2 nama iti śiraḥ skandāya 3 dattvā oṃ viśākhāya nama iti kabandhaṃ viśākhāya dadyāt | atha sacelaṃ snātvā śuklāambaradharaḥ suprakṣālitapāṇipāda ācāntaḥ punar ardhayāminīśeṣe devīm pūjayet | tatra vidhiḥ | kṣīreṇa ghr̥tena dadhnā ikṣurasena madhunā śarkarayā jalena ca pratyekam aṣṭorattaraśatapalaparimitena dhūpadīpāntaritaṃ nānāvādyaghoṣair mūlamantreṇa snāpayitvā yavagodhūmalodhravalkalacūrṇair uṣṇodakasahitair virukṣya sukhoṣṇavāriṇā prakṣālya sugandhavāriṇā snāpayet | tataḥ pādyaṅghācamanīyādi dattvā kuṅkumāgurukarpūracandanāny ādāya mūlam uccārya idam anulepanam oṃ durgāyai nama ity anulipyā kauṣeyādivaṣṭrāṇi yathāvibhavaṃ ratnādihemamayāni bhūṣaṇāni grathitāni droṇajātīcampakādīni surabhipuṣpāni ca mūlam uccārya oṃ durgāyai nama iti nivedayet | dhūpadīpaprabhūtanaivedyasukhavāsatāmbūlārātrikopānacchatracāmaravyajan aghaṅtāvitānāvadhānyāni dadyāt | tataḥ praṇamya stutvā chāgādibalim dadyāt | ity ardharātradurgāpūjāvidhiḥ || Ibid pp. 196-198. See also Kṛtyaratnākara pp. 360-361. Here the Mahākauśika mantra given is as follows: oṃ hrīṃ oṃ skuruṃ oṃ kulv (2) oṃ ghunu (2) oṃ gulu (2) oṃ tulu (2) oṃ ghunu (2) mārāya (2) vibhrāmāya (2) kampāya (2) kampātāya (2) pura (2) pūrāya oṃ drūṃ oṃ oṃ bhraṃ raṃ hruṃ phaṭ phaṭ mardāya (2) oṃ hruṃ oṃ hrīṃ (Ibid. p. 353).

¹³⁹ For text and translation of this passage in the *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī* see Sarkar 2012, p. 137, n. 116. The Navadurgāpūjā also appears in the Kṛtyaratnākara, and was therefore known to the Maithilas since Caṇḍeśvara's time (Kṛtyaratnākara, pp. 362-3). He also provides the option of installing the goddesses in a straight line, rather than a maṇḍala. The later Bengali tradition of Raghunandana identified the central Ugracaṇḍā with Bhadrakālī (Sarkar 2012, p. 380).

trident of wood or another substance on bare ground-- Caṇḍikā was to be worshipped in this substrate. She was first washed, then summoned to enter the trident and given various offerings. Then the trident, adorned with jewels and gold is placed on the back of a horse and taken, with fanfare and the flourishing of standards, to the shrine of goddess and there installed before her image. In this martial form she is worshipped again. First the same sequence of rites as performed on the Great-Eighth was to be followed, for the sake of the goddess now in the form of a trident, the weapon with which she was renowned for having slain the Buffalo-Demon.¹⁴⁰ ॐ ॐ

This is followed by further sacrifices of a number of goats, sheep and buffaloes.¹⁴¹ Then the circle of Mothers, the goddess's attendants in her war with demons, are propitiated in an eight-petalled lotus drawn with sandalwood paste, with Caṇḍikā in the centre. These goddesses were Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī,

¹⁴⁰ atha mahānavamīkṛtyam | tatra triśūlākṛtidurgāpūjāvidhiḥ | prātaḥ kṛtanityakriyāḥ suprakṣālitapāṇipāda ācāntaḥ prānmukha udānmukho vopaviśya kuśatrayatīlajalāny ādāya | adya mahānavamyām mahāpātākādisakalapāpakṣayadharmayaśodīrghāyusṭvabrahmalokagamana- ॐ ॐ brahmendrarudraviṣṇvādiprāptiparamapadaprāptikāmas triśūlākṛtiḥ bhagavatīm durgādevīm ahaṃ pūjayiṣye | iti saṃkalpya sūpalipte sthaṇḍile kāṣṭhādīmāyāṃ caṇḍikātmakāṃ triśūlāṃ nidhāya tīrthavāriṇā dugdhamadhughṛtādinā snāpayet | tato vāriṇā prakṣālya mano jyotir ityādīmantreṇa pratiṣṭhāpya sapuṣpākṣatam ādāya oṃ bhagavati caṇḍike ihāgaccha iha tiṣṭha ityādināvāhya sthāpayitvā etāni pādyaṛghācamanīyasnānīyapunarācamanīyāni oṃ bhagavatyai caṇḍikāyai nama iti pādyaḍi dattvā idaṃ kuṅkumānulepanaṃ dattvā oṃ caṇḍikāyai namaḥ iti sitakusumāñjalitrayeṇa pūjayet | karavīrajapājātībilvapatrādīmālābhir abhyarcya eṣa ghr̥tagugguladhūpa oṃ caṇḍikāyai namaḥ eṣa dīpa etāni tāmbulāni etāni naivedyāni idaṃ vastraṃ bṛhaspatidaivatam oṃ caṇḍikāyai nama iti pratyekaṃ dadyāt | evam eva hiraṇyaratnabhūṣaṇasindūrālaktakaṃ paṭṭakasūtikādi dadyāt | tataḥ praṇāmya maṇikāñcanabhūṣitaṃ triśūlāṃ haye samāropya samantato dhvajachatrācāmarādiśobhānviṭam nānāvāditranirghoṣair devyālayaṃ nītvā devyāḥ purataḥ sthāpayet | atha punas tatrāpi pādyaṛghācamanīyasnānīyapunarācamanīyānulepanasitapuṣpadhūpadīpatāmbū lanaivedyavāsobhiḥ oṃ caṇḍikāyai namaḥ iti pūjāṃ vidhāya praṇāmya durgāṃ śivāṃ śāntikarīm ityādīstotreṇa stutvā oṃ mahiṣagṇi mahāmāye ityādi rūpaṃ dehi ityādi sarvamaṅgalamāṅgalye ityādi kuṅkumena samālabdhe ityādikaṃ paṭhitvā kṣamasveti visarjayet | Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī, pp. 200-202. The mantra mano jyotir etc. is in Vājasaneyisaṃhitā 2.13 (reference provided by Prof. Sanderson).

¹⁴¹ Ibid. pp. 201-202.

Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Nārasimhī, Aindrī, Śivadūtī, and Cāmuṇḍā. The reasons for this worship, as stated in the oath, once again evoke the context of the kingdom: the Mothers are worshipped for the removal of fears everywhere in the king's palace and in the kingdom, for plentiful milk from cows, the brahmins' being intent on the performance of sacrifice, the destruction of the king's enemies, abundant supplies of food, wealth, good health, appropriate rainfall and an abundance of grains. This is followed by a second worship at the evening-juncture propitiating the Mothers in order to destroy all dangers in another lotus-shaped maṇḍala with an offering of rice mixed with pulses and flesh to each goddess in turn.¹⁴² Then three virgins are treated with care and fed with all honours, and their forgiveness is elicited at the end of the worship. In the same way brāhmaṇas and young women are fed with all courtesy. The Devīmāhātmya is recited aloud and the reciter is remunerated at the end of the reading. The king was to have a hundred and eight oblations of sesame seeds anointed with clarified butter, honey, thickened milk made into a fire established according to

¹⁴² *atha māṭṛcakrapūjanam | tatra kuśatrayatilajalāny ādāya adya svanivāsarāṣṭrādhikaraṇakasārvatrikabhayābhāvagobhūripayastva-
 ॐॐdvijayajñaparativabhūpālavairinivṛttisubhikṣa-
 ॐॐkṣemārogyayathākāmaparjanyavarṣaṇasasyasampattikāmo
 brahmāṇyādīmāṭṛṛṇām pūjanam aham karīṣye | iti samkalpya |
 candanenāṣṭadalapadmam ālikhya madhye caṇḍikām sampūjyākṣatam ādāya oṃ
 brahmāṇi ihāgaccha iha tiṣṭhetyādināvāhya sthāpayitvā
 pādyārghācamanīyasnānīyapunarācamanīyagandhapuṣpadhūpadīpatāmbūlanaiv
 edyavastraiḥ oṃ brahmāṇyai nama iti prāgdale | āgneyadale oṃ māheśvāryai
 namaḥ | dakṣiṇadale oṃ kaumāryai namaḥ | nairṛtadale oṃ vaiṣṇavyai namaḥ |
 paścimadale oṃ vārāhyai namaḥ | vāyavyadale oṃ nārasimhyai namaḥ |
 uttaradale oṃ aindryai namaḥ | īśānadale oṃ śivadūtyai namaḥ | madhye oṃ
 cāmuṇḍāyai namaḥ iti pūjayet | atha māṭṛbhyaḥ sandhyābalidānam |
 kuśatrayatilajalāny ādāya | asyām mahānavamyām sāyam sandhyāyām
 sakaladuritakṣayakāmo brahmāṇyādi māṭṛbhyaḥ
 pūjāpūrvakaghṛtadīpasamāṃsasamāśabhaktabalidānam aham karīṣye | iti
 samkalpya gomayopalīpte bhūbhāge candanādinā aṣṭadalapadmam ālikhya
 pradakṣiṇakrameṇa prācyādyāṣṭadaleṣu madhye ca brahmāṇī
 māheśvarīkaumārīvaiṣṇavīvārāhīnārasimhyaindrīśivadūtīcāmuṇḍā iti navamāṭṛ
 āvāhya sthāpayitvā pādyādibhir upacārair abhyarcya ete ghṛtapradīpā oṃ
 brahmāṇyai namaḥ iti krameṇa dīpān dattvā oṃ brahmāṇyai eṣa
 samāṃsasamāśabhaktabalir namaḥ | ityādinā brahmāṇyādīmāṭṛbhyo
 navabhyo'pi samāṃsasamāśabhaktabalīn dadyāt | iti māṭṛcakrapūjāvidhiḥ | Ibid,
 p. 203. ॐॐ
 āgneyadale oṃ māheśvāryai namaḥ | dakṣiṇadale em. Sanderson] oṃ brahmāṇyai
 nama iti prāgdale oṃ kaumāryai namaḥ | ed.*

the Gr̥hyasūtra followed by the tradition of the patron
(svagr̥hyoktavidhināgnisthāpanam).¹⁴³ ☐

On Mahānavamī the final worship of the king's horses was to take place. First Revanta was to be summoned in an open ground, installed, offered guest-water, a cupped handful of flowers thrice, and a hymn. Then a goat, a buffalo or a sheep was sacrificed and offered to the deity for “quelling all calamities and afflictions of horses, for health, long life and growth”. Then boons were to be asked from the deity. The divine horse Uccaiḥśravas was to be summoned and installed in the same spot, and worshipped likewise. All the king's horses, their mane trimmed, washed, and embellished were to be assembled fronted by the chief horse. Offerings of guest-water were to be made to them and they were to be worshipped with perfume etc. Then eulogistic verses were to be recited in the horses' ears, exhorting their growth through the power of all the gods and their protection, as divine offspring of gandharvas, at all times in battle.¹⁴⁴ Indeed it is

¹⁴³ Ibid pp. 203-204. ☐

¹⁴⁴ athāśvaśālāyāṃ revantādipūjā | ☐☐tatra kuśatīlajalāny ādāya | adya mahānavamyāṃ sakalāśvotpātapīḍāśāntinairujya-
☐☐dīrghāyusṭvasamṛddhikāmo revantoccaiḥśravasturaṅgapūjanam ahaṃ kariṣye iti saṅkalpa sthaṅḍilopari sapuṣpākṣatam ādāya revanta ihāgaccha iha tiṣṭhety āvāhya sthāpyitvā etāni pādyaṅghācamanīyapunarācamanīyāni oṃ revantāya nama iti pādyaḍi dattvā oṃ revantāya nama ity anulīpya ☐☐oṃ namo devādhīdevāya turaṅgavanacāriṇe | ☐☐sūryaputrāya devāya turaṅgānāṃ hitāya ca | ☐☐turaṅgapariṣadyasya nrgajopari dhāvati | ☐☐svāśvam aśvādhipaṃ rakṣa śaraṇaṃ tvāṃ vrajāmy ahaṃ |☐☐iti paṭhitvā revantāya nama iti puṣpāñjalitrayeṇa pūjayet | etāni gandhapuṣpadhūpadīpatāmbulanaivedyāni oṃ revantāya nama idaṃ vastraṃ br̥haspatidaivataṃ oṃ revantāya nama ity utsrjet | tato 'ñjaliṃ baddhvā ☐☐sūryaputra mahābāho chāyāhr̥dayanandana | ☐☐śāntiṃ kuru turaṅgānāṃ revantāya namo 'stu te || ☐☐iti stutvā praṇamet | chāgādibalīṃ dadyāt | adya mahānavamyāṃ sakalāśvotpātapīḍāśāntinairujyadīrghāyusṭvasamṛddhikāma imaṃ chāgaṃ vahnīdaivataṃ meṣaṃ vā varuṇadaivataṃ mahīṣaṃ vā yamadaivataṃ bhagavate revantāyāhaṃ ghātayiṣye | iti saṅkalpya ghātayet | rūpaṃ dehītyādinā varam prārthayet praṇamec ca | tataḥ sthaṅḍilopari sapuṣpākṣatam ādāya oṃ uccaiḥśrava ihāgaccha iha tiṣṭhetyādināvāhya sthāpayitvā uccaiḥśravase nama iti pādyaḍibhir upacāraiḥ pūjayet | atha kṛtakṣaurān snāpitān alaṅkṛtān mukhyāśvapuraḥsarān turaṅgamān sannidhāpya eṣo 'rghaḥ oṃ turaṅgebhyo nama ity arghaṃ dattvā gandhādibhir upacāraiḥ pūjayet | turaṅgānāṃ karṇajāpam imaṃ paṭhet |☐☐oṃ gandharvakulajāto'si mā bhūyāḥ kuladūśakaḥ | ☐☐brahmaṇaḥ satyavākyaena somasya varuṇasya ca | ☐☐tejasā caiva sūryasya munīnāṃ tapasā tathā | ☐☐rudrasya brahmacaryeṇa pavanasya balena ca

to be noted that the worship of horses had a special place in the sequence of the Maithila Navarātra, and this was to ensure their sanctity and power before they were led into the battlefield. On Daśamī, the goddess is ritually released by being carried with the Śābarotsava “with singing, dancing, musing, the chanting of invocations, games, amazing spectacles, and auspicious hymns” to flowing water, and then submerged in it.¹⁴⁵ The goddess's rites therefore continue into Daśamī in the Eastern tradition. After this the king is to return to the shrine and the officiant is to be remunerated. After Caṇḍī has been dismissed by the submerging and releasing of her image in flowing water, the goddess Aparājitā is worshipped for success in the military campaign that is to begin after the completion of these rites. ॐॐ

This deity seems to have been well-connected to rituals initiating military campaigns throughout the subcontinent, for her courtly worship during the final tithis of the Navarātra is attested in the literary work *Yaśastilakacampū*, composed in 959 CE, in Gaṅgādhārā, the capital of Vāgarāja (Vaddiga), the eldest son of the Cālukya Arikesari, feudatory of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇarājadeva (III). In this work she is described in a hymn (3.459-461), sung at the court of a king Yaśodhara by a royal bard, in order that she could “bestow immediate triumph” on the king, and as in the worship described in the Maithila text (to be shown), seems to have been viewed as incarnating a king's personal weaponry and parts of his body. A warrior is thereby imagined as transformed and incorporated into the deity herself before he embarks in to the battlefield.¹⁴⁶ ॐ

ॐॐprabhāvāc ca hutāśasya varddhasva tvaṃ turaṅgama | ॐॐsmara tvaṃ
rājaputro'si kaustubhaṃ ca maṇiṃ smara | ॐॐsurāsurair mathyamānāt kṣīrodād
amṛtādibhiḥ | ॐॐjāta uccaiḥśravāḥ pūrvam tena jāto'si tat smarahaḥ || ॐॐyāṃ
gatiṃ brahmahā gacchet pitṛhā mātrhā tathā | ॐॐbhūmyarthe 'nṛtavādī ca raṇe
yaś ca parāṇmukhaḥ || ॐॐsūryācandramasau vāyur yāvat paśyanti duṣkṛtaṃ |
ॐॐvrajes tvaṃ tāṃ gatiṃ kṣipraṃ tac ca pāpaṃ bhavet tava || ॐॐvikṛtiṃ yadi
gacchethā yuddhe 'dhvani turaṅgama | ॐॐripūn vijitya samare saha bhartrā
sukhībhava || ॐॐturaṅgama ciraṃ jīva paraśastrair alakṣitaḥ | ॐॐsadā māṃ
samare rakṣa svāmikāryaṃ sadā kuru || ॐॐiti revantapūjāvidhiḥ | Ibid. pp.204-
206. ॐॐsakalāśvotpāta em. Sanderson] sakalāśvotpatti

¹⁴⁵ *gītanityavādyabrahmaghoṣakrīḍākautukamaṅgalapuraḥsaram
srotajalasamīpaṃ gatvā [...] srotasi pravāhayet* / Ibid. p. 207. See also
Kṛtyaratnākara, p. 362, where the same Śābarotsava rites are taught.

¹⁴⁶ *khadḡe khadḡatanusthitir dhanuṣi ca prāptā dhanuḥsamhatim* ॐॐ

In the Maithila rite, Aparājitā was also figured as a king, and similarly invoked in a protective talisman that the king was to wear during the battle. After he had declared the initiatory oath, an eight-petalled lotus was to be drawn with sandalwood paste. Aparājitā and her attendants Jayā and Vijayā were to be summoned and installed in the maṇḍala with invocations. She was to be visualized by the king as four-handed, robed in yellow, adorned with all ornaments, carrying a sword and a shield in the top hands, showing the gesture granting boons and the gesture of protection, three-eyed, slightly smiling. She was to be summoned, installed and offered guest-water with “Oṃ Hrīṃ Homage to Aparājitā”. Then having worshipped her with many aparājitā blossoms, droṇa blossoms and bilva leaves, he was to worship the goddess's heart-mantra and weapon-mantras with “Oṃ Hrīṃ Homage to Aparajitā's Heart” and “Oṃ Hrīṃ Phaṭ to the Weapon”. Then having paid homage to Jayā to her right and Vijayā to her left, the king was to make them offerings and sing them hymns. Next he was to bind according to custom white mustard seeds and dūrvā grass in cloth dyed yellow with turmeric, place this “Armllet of Aparājitā” on the goddess's heart, and with his desired object in mind, was to tie this on his own body. Having then worshipped his weapons, he was to take his sword, circumambulate and empower the Armllet with the following invocation “Oṃ Since you, Aparājitā are renowned as supreme among all vines, I wear you in order to fulfil my wishes. O Goddess, bestow on me all prosperities. When worshipped grant me fortune for my general prosperity, [and may] my sin be destroyed.” The king must then wear the armllet with the invocation “O Goddess, granter of victory, granter of boons, Unconquered I wear you on my right arm on Daśam̄ for increased victory. O Armllet grant me might and my enemies defeat. By tying you, may there be wealth, crops and prosperity for my benefit.” The goddess is then invited to depart to her supreme abode and the rites honouring her are concluded.

*bāṇe bāṇavapur bhujē bhujamayī gātre tanutrākṛtiḥ |ॐॐ
 saṃgrāme 'grajayāya cintitavidhau cintāmaṇir bhūbhujāṃॐॐ
 yā sā syād aparājitā tava muhur jaitrāya dhātrīpate || Yaśastilakacampū 3.459.*

The Navarātra is then concluded with the ritual consecration (abhiṣeka) of the king. With water from the vase installed in the beginning of the ritual, brāhmaṇas would sprinkle the king with invocations from the Purāṇas. The water containing the powerful substance of the goddess and other deities is thereby transferred into his being. In the rituals of the Maithila Navarātra, the goddess took central place as the prototypical monarch presiding over the king, given gifts and paid tribute, just as he would. At the same time, a relationship between the deity and king was established throughout the ceremonies. Opening with the preparation of the consecratory waters of the ruler, the Maithila Navarātra frames the worship of the goddess within kingship rituals sanctifying the human king and his army, thereby visually setting up a ritually encoded analogy between devī and ruler. Each ritual accessing the goddess's energy is simultaneously paralleled with an accompanying ritual vivifying the energy of the military forces of the kingdom and the ruler.¹⁴⁷ ☐☐

¹⁴⁷ *atha vijayādaśamyāṃ devīpreṣaṇānantaram aparājitāpūjāvidhiḥ | ☐☐ tatra kuśatrayatilajalāny ādāya oṃ adya śukladaśamyāṃ yātrāyāṃ vijayakāmo 'parājitāpūjāṃ ahaṃ kariṣye iti saṃkalpya candanādināṣṭadalapadmam ālikhya tanmadhye oṃ aparājitāyai nama ity aparājitāṃ taddakṣiṇe oṃ kriyāśaktyai nama iti jayāṃ | vāme oṃ umāyai nama iti vijayāṃ pratiṣṭhāpya pūjayet | oṃ caturbhūjāṃ pītavastrāṃ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitāṃ dakṣiṇavāmayor uparitanahastayoḥ khaḍgacarmadharāṃ adhastanahastayor varābhayacihnāṃ trinetrāṃ iṣatprahasitavadanāṃ aparājitāṃ dhyātvā †bāhya† sthāpayitvā oṃ hrīṃ aparājitāyai nama iti pādyādibhiḥ pūjayitvā bahutarāparājitāpuṣpadroṇapuṣpabilvapratram abhyarcayet | oṃ hrīṃ aparājitāhṛdayāya namaḥ ity aparājitāhṛdayaṃ oṃ hrīṃ astrāya phaḍ ity astrāṇi pūjayet | tato dakṣiṇe jayāyai nama iti jayāṃ vāme vijayāyai nama iti vijayāṃ pūjayitvā gandhapuṣpadhūpadīpatāmbūlanaivedyavastrāṇi nivedya praṇamya oṃ cāruṇā mukhapadmena vicitrakanakojjalā | jayādevī śive bhaktyā sarvān kāmān dadātu me || kāñcana vicitreṇa keyūreṇa vibhūṣitā | jayapradā mahāmāye śivabhāvitacetasā || vijayā tu mahābhāgā dadātu vijayaṃ mama | hāreṇa suvicitreṇa bhāsvatkanakamekhalā || aparājitā rudralatā karotu vijayaṃ mama | iti paṭhitvā haridrāpītavastre dūrvāsahitasiddhārthakān baddhvā ācārād aparājitāvalayaṃ ca devyā hṛdaye nidhāyābhilaṣitakāmanayā svāṅge dhārayet | ācārād astrāṇi saṃpūjya khaḍgam ādāya oṃkāram uccārayan pradakṣiṇaṃ kuryāt | sadāparājite yasmāt tvam latāsūttamā smṛtā | sarvakāmārthasiddhyarthaṃ tasmāt tvāṃ dhārayāmy ahaṃ || bhavāparājite devi mama sarvasamṛddhaye | pūjtāyāṃ tvayi śreyo mamāstu duritaṃ hataṃ || ity aparājitāvalayaṃ abhimantrya oṃ jayade varade devi daśamyāṃ aparājite | dhārayāmi bhujе dakṣe jayalābhābhivṛddhaye || balam ādhehi valaya mama śatrau parājayam | tvaddhāraṇād bhavayur dhanadhānyasamṛddhayaḥ || iti mantreṇa bāhau dhārayanti | tataḥ praṇamya | imāṃ pūjāṃ mayā devi*

It should be noted that the Nepalese tradition of the Navarātra though deriving in the main from the Maithila tradition as embodied in the Kārṇāṭa royal ceremony of the *Kṛtyaratnākara* and *Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī*, is much more Tantric in character, involving mantra elements from the Kubjikā cult. Since this developed in a unique way, it will be treated in another study. 22

IV. The Southern and Western Court Traditions: the Navarātras of Devagiri, the Nāyaka domains, Vijayanagara and Madras. 22

The Deccan seems to have followed in the wake of the Eastern form of the Navarātra outlined in the *Devī* and the *Kālikā* until at least the early half of the 14th century. For instance, our earliest source, from the kingdom of Devagiri (present day Daulatabad in Mahārāṣṭra), the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, (the Wishing-Jewel of the Four Aims of Man), by the court-scholar Hemādri (1260-1309 CE) attributes the greater part of the ceremony to the Bengali Devī, particularly its celebration of the core-martial lunar days of Aṣṭamī and Mahānavamī. 22

But independent elements that would later characterize the Southern rite and distinguish it from the Eastern Navarātra are also in clear evidence in this work: for instance, the Devagiri rite eschews the rites of adornment between the first to the fifth, worship of the Navadurgās (Rudracaṇḍā etc.) and the goddess's visarjana in water and Śābarotsava on Daśamī. In fact Daśamī is not mentioned at all in the context of the goddess's worship in the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*: unlike the older Eastern tradition where the goddess's concluding rites continued on the day, here it was celebrated as a festival dedicated mainly to the king and the town, and this was a feature that would be perpetuated in the later Southern tradition.¹⁴⁸ Also in distinction from the Eastern rite, the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*

yathāsaktyā niveditāṃ | rakṣārthaṃ ca samādāya vrajasva sthānam uttamāṃ | iti visarjayet | athābhiṣekaḥ | [...] iti mantreṇa śāntikalaśam utthāpya tajjalena brāhmaṇāḥ paurāṇikamahāmantrair yajamānam abhisiñceyuḥ | Durgābhaktitarāṅgiṇī pp. 208-209. See also Kṛtyaratnākara, pp. 365-366. 22 svāṅge conj.] svāṅke ed.

¹⁴⁸ The rite of Devagiri can be summarized as follows: 22 First to the fifth lunar-days: Fasting, worshipping Śiva, feasting maidens, japa and homa (attributed to the Devīpurāṇa); worship of horses till ninth (attributed to the Devīpurāṇa); the worship of weapons and insignia by the king (lohābhisārikakarman) followed by

includes the worship, attributed to the Skandapurāṇa, of nine forms of the goddess summoned in the person of young girls aged between two and ten spread over each of the nine lunar days for the accomplishment of the king's tasks: the goddess Kumārikā summoned in a little girl aged two; Trimūrtinī in a three-year old girl; Kalyāṇī in a four-year old girl; Rohiṇī in a five-year old girl; Kālikā in a six year old girl; Caṇḍikā in a seven year old; Śāmbhavī in an eight-year old; Durgā in a nine year old; Subhadrā in a ten-year old virgin.¹⁴⁹ This practice would also appear in other Southern treatises, which teach the worship of each deity inside a little girl on every lunar-day.☐☐

The gradual independence of the Southern tradition, and its advocacy by the 15th c. of a Navarātra that was qualitatively different from the Eastern tradition in that it celebrated Daśamī differently and eschewed rites that were Tantric in their tone, is attested by the eye-witness accounts of the Navarātras of the Vijayanagara kingdom¹⁵⁰, of Mysore under the Wodeyars,¹⁵¹ of Ramnad and of Śivagaṅgai in Tamil Nadu.¹⁵² Unlike the rite of Devagiri, the ceremonies of these

the daily parade of horses and elephants in the city until the eighth (attributed to the Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa); the worship of nine goddesses (not the navadurgās) in nine virgins (kumārīpūjā) until the ninth (attributed to the Skandapurāṇa).☐☐Sixth lunar-day: The goddess's awakening (bodhana) in a bilva tree (attributed to the Liṅgapurāṇa) ☐☐Seventh lunar-day: the cutting of a branch of the bilva and its installation in the shrine (attributed *ibid.*) ☐☐Eighth and Ninth lunar-days (Aṣṭamī and Mahānavamī): the establishment of nine houses; establishing the goddess in a gold or silver sword or trident used during battle; worship with flowers etc., hymns; fasting; at midnight on Mahānavamī, animal sacrifice for victory with the Mahākauśikamantra and offering to demons in directions; sacrifice of a dough-doll to Skanda-Viśākha; sharing the offerings with kāpālikas and miscreants (duṣṭajanas); offerings to the goddess (attributed to the Devīpurāṇa); worship of devotees of the goddess and virgins (kumārīs). In the morning of Mahānavamī, a chariot procession with the goddess and carnival (attributed to the Devīpurāṇa and the Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa); animal sacrifice to propitiate ghosts and demonesses; military procession (yātrā) (attributed to the Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa) (Caturvargacintāmaṇi, vol. 2.1 (Vratakhaṇḍa), pp. 900-921).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 903.

¹⁵⁰ Stein 1983, pp. 67-90.

¹⁵¹ Iyer 1928, vol. II, pp. 56-71.

¹⁵² Price 1996, pp. 139-146. The first report described by Price concerns Daśamī in Śivagaṅgai, the second describes the first lunar-day (pratīpat) of the Navarātra in Ramnad.

kingdoms bear little resemblance to the earlier Eastern traditions. In addition to the distinctions first glimpsed in the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, these ceremonies did not incorporate the goddess's awakening in the bilva-tree, the rites invoking the goddess in the bilva-branch and the nine-leaves, the occultic Ardharātrapūjā drawn from the *Devī* and the *Agni*, the worship of the Mothers, the yoginīs, the Navadurgās and Aparājitāpūjā. The authority of the *Devī*, the *Agni*, and other Eastern scriptures, did not hold as much weight in the South, where other scriptures traditionally commanded greater respect. The Śākta element is also, in complete contrast to the Eastern ceremony, significantly diminished here-- wild and autonomous goddesses celebrated in the East for magical powers do not make their presence felt in the rituals of the South-- or were manifested more covertly. ☐☐

Among themselves the ceremonies of the four Southern kingdoms share a great many similarities, from which it can be inferred that they collectively formed a common religious heritage, and hence can be treated in totality. All for instance incorporate rituals such as the consecration of the king (*abhiṣeka*) on the first or tenth lunar-days; the king's wearing of a thread as an oath of commitment; the sanctification of the throne; the presentation of the sword; the holding of court-assemblies (*durbars*); the payment of tributes to the ruler; parades of troops and war-animals followed by entertainments in an arena; worship of weapons; the worship of the śamī-tree with arrow-shooting according to the Gopathabrāhmaṇa tradition on the tenth lunar-day. Foremost among these similarities, was the central position of the king and the visible forms of his power: in large court-assemblies as the recipient of honours from his subjects and emissaries, ritually coronated on the sanctified lion-throne, holding the state-sword¹⁵³ the Southern king affirmed his position as the locus of a divine cult of the ruler. The Eastern Navarātra in contrast tended to focus its ceremonies on the goddess as monarch, who received all the homage and tributes usually reserved for the real king, as observed. Rather than being a worship of the monarch per se, it was an enactment of the cult of the sovereign at an archetypal level. But the king was treated as god-like in the Southern

¹⁵³ Iyer 1928, pp. 60-61,

Navarātra, and was, as the goddess in the Eastern rite, continually on display. The emphasis on the king was by far the most significant innovation to have occurred when the Navarātra penetrated southwards into regions where Śākta sectarianism was less pervasive than in the East. 77

If the later Southern Navarātra celebrated a cult of the ruler, what became of the goddess to whom the nine lunar-days were dedicated? The reports on the ceremonies of these kingdoms, with the exception of the two on Ramnad and Śivagaṅgai, do not fully explain how the symbolism of the goddess was incorporated in the framework of a festival ostensibly devoted to the human king, how, that is to say, her form was seen to empower and merge with the ruler. This is because the reporters of these accounts saw, as the rest of the subjects and the king's courtiers did, the public dimension of the rite embodied in the displays of dancing and singing, the splendid processions and the colourful parades of elephants, horses and troops that were viewed by everyone as entertainments or as demonstrations of the might of the kingdom.¹⁵⁴ But in these spectacles the king alone, and not the deity, took centre-stage, like a god at the centre of his/her universe. 77

The greater part of the goddess's symbolism, unfolded privately in a palace shrine¹⁵⁵, or inside a pavilion (maṇḍapa) built specially for the occasion, guarded from the view of the outside world and attended only by the king and his family members. It was inside this private shrine and maṇḍapa that the ceremonials investing sacred power from goddess to king were evoked, that in fact the most crucial rituals energizing the state, such as the abhiṣeka, occurred, privy only to priests, king, family and perhaps a few key courtiers.¹⁵⁶ These more private

¹⁵⁴ The Persian reporter Abdur Razzak, for instance, was seated in one of nine additional pavilions to view the public part of the festival in the arena, that were built to seat important officials and senior members of the army (Stein 1983, p. 80).

¹⁵⁵ In the case of the Vijayanagara Navarātra, this shrine was built inside the main viewing pavilion where the king was seated, presumably so that he could have easy access to the deity (Ibid. p. 79).

¹⁵⁶ "For most of these purification and propitiatory rituals, performed by Brahmin priests with the raja or rani occasionally participating,

rituals occurred in tandem with the public ceremonies open to other members of the Durbar and the kingdom: every occasion where the king was presented to his/her subjects as a singular (semi-) divine presence, was followed by trips to the goddess where his/her¹⁵⁷ divine substance was reconstituted. In this way the worship of king and goddess was integrated. In Mysore, the ruler would worship Cāmuṇḍeśvarī in the palace shrine immediately after the first Durbar session where the whole court was assembled, and was required to do so regularly through the course of the nine lunar-days.¹⁵⁸ In the 1893 Navarātra of Ramnad, the Setupati king visited his presiding deity Rājarājeśvarī's shrine on three occasions, before and during the Durbar on the first lunar day, worship that was also seamlessly interlinked with the other public ceremonies for the remaining days.¹⁵⁹ Similarly at Vijayanagara, in between the parades, the wrestling-matches, the procession of the State Elephant and the State Horse in the arena and the Durbars at court, the king would also visit the shrine and worship the deity¹⁶⁰ in all probability Bhuvaneśvarī the goddess established by their founder Vidyāraṇya at the establishment of the city in 1334.¹⁶¹ It is important to understand the South Indian courtly Navarātra not just in terms of display as it has been thus-far analysed¹⁶² but also as a choreography of two different but complementary ritual sequences: one which was a public sequence unfolding in the parade-arena, court-room and the city-streets that focussed on show, on opulence, on, that is to say, secular forms of power; the other a private sequence in which the relationship between king and goddess unfolded more discreetly in

ordinary...subjects were not present. The durbar assemblies, the arrow-shooting ceremony and the royal processions to and from these occasions required the presence of people." (Price 1996, p. 140). In 1863, the abhiṣeka and coronation of the Rani of Śivagaṅgai during the first lunar day of the Navarātra was performed in the palace temple of Rājarājeśvarī and in the maṇḍapa inside the palace specially built for the consecration, witnessed only by priests, king, family members and important associates of the ruler. (Ibid. pp. 141-142.)

¹⁵⁷ The 1863 Navarātra in Śivagaṅgai was performed by the Queen Kathama Nachiar (Price 1996, p. 139).

¹⁵⁸ Iyer 1928, vol. II., pp. 61-62.

¹⁵⁹ Price 1996, pp. 144-145.

¹⁶⁰ Stein 1983, pp. 73, 86.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 88.

¹⁶² See particularly Stein 1983, pp. 78-84 and also Iyer 1928, vol II, pp. 60-62.

enclosed chambers of the palace, where divine kingship was renewed by association with the deity, and with comparatively less pomp. 22

In order to access these inner rituals, one must look once again at the religious treatises available describing the details of the rites. Two such later treatises are available which corroborate the rites of the four kingdoms observed by the eye-witness reports and, in addition, fill in their gaps by providing greater details on the sequence and inner-workings of each ritual. These treatises are the scripture *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* (approximately 17th-19th c.) and the dharmaśāstric work *Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi* (composed during or after the 17th c. by Viṣṇubhaṭṭa Āṭhavale¹⁶³). Of these the former will be dealt with in greater detail as it conforms more closely to the earlier Vijayanagara ritual and parallels in the second are indicated in footnotes. 22

The *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* was a manual of South-Indian kingship employed by the Marāṭha kings of Thanjavur, and, at least until the 1950s, personal copies of several kings, with their signatures inside, were held by the Saraswati Mahal Library in Thanjavur.¹⁶⁴ This work describes the Navarātra in the following way.

¹⁶³ Viṣṇubhaṭṭa refers to Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita a scholar from the 17th century as an authority (*Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi* p. 101). Of Viṣṇubhaṭṭa not much is known (*Ibid.* Introduction, p. 35) save, from the opening verses of his work, that he was born in the lineage of Atri, that his father was known as Rāmakṛṣṇa Sūrī and that he had acquired the title “Āṭhavale”. He also seems to have written in order to resolve certain points of difference between the works of the dharmaśāstrins Hemādri and Mādhava, and his own writings were possibly viewed as clarifying in a new light the older smārta literature: 22

atreḥ samudbhavād rāmakṛṣṇasūrīr abhūt kulāt / 22

āṭhavale iti khyātāt tannetrāc candramā iva / 22

22 tadātmajo viṣṇubhaṭṭa puruṣārthaprabhāsake / 22

granthe cintāmaṇau kālasamyagjñānaprasiddhaye / 22

hemādrinā mādhavasya virodhaḥ kālanirṇaye / 22

iti jñātvā kṛtās te 'taḥ parasparavirodhinaḥ / 22

navīnaviduṣāṃ granthāḥ suprasiddham idaṃ hy ataḥ / Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi, v. 2-5ab, p. 1. 22 The Introduction notes that the work was well known among dharmaśāstra scholars throughout India (*Ibid.* Introduction, p. 43). It was first published by Ānandāśrama Press in 1903 (*ibid.*).

¹⁶⁴ Note by the editor K. Vasudeva Sastri, Introduction to *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā*, p. 4.

It teaches first the building of an audience-hall (*āsthānamaṇḍapa*) in front of the king's apartments. This hall is likened by the scripture to Sumeru, the centre of the world, and for the duration of the ceremony, it would serve as the main locus for the king, the node inside the centre. It was to be elevated (*mahonnataṃ*), with a staircase fashioned from coral (*pravālamayasopānaṃ*), an altar of cats-eye gem (*vaidūryamayavedikaṃ*), pillars encrusted with pearls (*mauktikastambha-*), with a domed roof enclosing a jewelled room (*māṇikyavalabhīpuṭa*). It was to be appointed with ensigns, banners, canopies and arched entrances, and the ground before it was to be cleared for entertainments and sumptuously appointed with lanterns and rows of chariots.¹⁶⁵ On the northern side of his palace, the king was to have a flower-pavilion (*puṣpamaṇḍapaṃ*) built for worshipping goddesses such as Durgā and Ramā (*Lakṣmī*) (*durgāramādipūjārthaṃ*), perfumed with incense etc, and where he was to sit on his throne. Both structures were integral for instance to the layout of the Vijayanagara rite, forming a permanent part of the palace, and their ruins still remain at Hampi.¹⁶⁶ It was from these two buildings that the Rāya kings would overlook the arena where spectacles occurred. ¶¶

Having thus taught the necessary architectural preparations, the *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* says that a king was to begin worship from the first lunar day of the bright phase of Āśvina. Having risen at an auspicious hour, having purified himself with the preliminary purificatory rituals (*kṛtaśaucakriyaḥ śuciḥ*), having summoned the priests, he was to undergo the consecration ritual by being bathed with holy waters from sacred sites, poured from golden pots.¹⁶⁷ Then adorned in white (*śuklāambaradharaḥ*), bedecked in white garlands and unguents, he was to complete all his obligatory rituals, worship the priest, the aged, the twice-born and married women with his chief queen (*mahiṣyā sahitaḥ*), and meditate on his chosen deity (*sveṣṭadevaṃ*). Next the priest was to place a

¹⁶⁵ *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 99. 8-10.

¹⁶⁶ Stein 1983, p. 79. They are identified by Paes as the “King's Audience Hall” (*ibid.*), which must be none other than the *āsthānamaṇḍapa*, and the “The House of Victory/ Throne Platform”, where the king was to be seated on his throne (*ibid.*), which must refer to the *puṣpamaṇḍapa*.

¹⁶⁷ See also *Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi* p. 81.

gold amulet (pratisaram) on a chalice of gold and worship it with flowers. Then, he was to ceremonially enthrone the king on his lion-throne, and tie on his right arm the amulet chanting invocations.¹⁶⁸ This amulet was meant to be worn by the king as long as the rites lasted as a sign of his commitment, and he was to take a vow of abstinence and fasting for the duration.¹⁶⁹ The ceremonial tying of the amulet, or in other cases a thread, was common in the South. In 1893, for instance, the king Bhaskara Setupati of Ramnad had his wrist tied with a thread called in Tamil kappu (synonymous with the Sanskrit pratisara) and took an accompanying oath of abstinence and restricted eating on the first lunar day of Navarātra in just such an opening ceremony. The ceremony also included the presentation to the king of his sword and sceptre which had been placed at the base of the image of the Setupati tutelary-goddess Rājarājeśvarī, enacting thereby her granting permission to the king to rule and be the bearer of the state weapons.¹⁷⁰ In Mysore, the Wodeyar kings would also have to wear a thread made of silk and make a vow before the commencement of Navarātra, and here the ceremony was known as the kaṅkanadhāraṇa.¹⁷¹ ☐☐

In the *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā*, the priest was next to perform the most crucial ritual investing the king with divine substance, thereby transforming him into a sacred being worthy of the worship that was to be lavished on his person in the next nine days. This was the summoning (āvāhana) of the goddess into the king and his being made cognate with her. With a number of powerful invocations, the priest was to exhort the goddess “Imperial Fortune” (*Sāmrājyalakṣmī*) to enter the body of the king.¹⁷² Her summoning was to enable the king, “to rule the earth up to the girdle of the ocean”, “to protect the cultured” and “to instantly slay the wicked”. The magical potency of the invocation was to have a tangible effect. When the goddess had completely entered the king's person, there was to be an immediate and visible transformation of his appearance, which was to become lustrous like the goddess. “As a result of summoning Lakṣmī,” explains

¹⁶⁸ *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 99.11-21.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid 100.2-3. Read vijitendriyaḥ where the text says vijitedriyaḥ.

¹⁷⁰ Price 1996, p. 144.

¹⁷¹ Iyer 1928, vol. 2, p. 60.

¹⁷² *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 100.5-21.

the text, “the king blazes with tejas, might and valour like a jewel polished on a whetstone, as a tree that has borne little fruit becomes fruitful when its craving [is satisfied by the touch of beautiful woman].” In several successive similes, the goddess is viewed as the flame or the light of a kingdom's power. Union with her alone enables the king to shine with this light.¹⁷³ He is thereby made into a god-like being. ☐☐

Having been caused to prosper with benedictions (āśis) chanted by the priest¹⁷⁴ and radiant with the goddess in his body, the king was to be instructed on his duties (rājadharmā) by the priest.¹⁷⁵ More esoteric knowledge was then to be imparted to the king on the nature of reality (tattvopadeśa).¹⁷⁶ This was to be followed by the chanting of hymns by brāhmaṇas, the offering of empowered barley to the king and the making of benedictions to cause him to flourish.¹⁷⁷ ☐☐

Then, the king, carrying his sword, shield, armour and bedecked in all his jewels, was to be led by two brāhmaṇas chanting auspicious hymns, while he meditated on his chosen deity (sveṣṭadeva), to the flower-pavilion built before the commencement of the ceremony. Here he was to sit on a beautiful seat, restrain his breaths, and summon the deities Durgā, Lakṣmī and Vāgdevī (Sarasvatī) in lidded pots of gold, silver, copper or earth, narrow-waisted, filled with turmeric and rice. Having first worshipped the three goddesses in the water of the pot, he was to worship Revanta, the king of horses, with incense, flowers, circumbulations, prostrations and hymns.¹⁷⁸ In the 1893 Navarātra of Ramnad, the Setupati king worshipped water in nine clay-pots on the first-lunar day in a

¹⁷³ *evam āvāhanāl lakṣmyās tejōbalaparākramaiḥ | adhikaṃ śobhate rājā śāṅhollīḍho maṅir yathā | yathā svalpaphalo vṛkṣo dohadena phalādhikaḥ | sāmrajyalakṣmyās tv āvāhād rājā caiśvaryavān bhavet | yathā kāṣṭhagatā jvālā guṇatailāt prabhādhikā | tathā lakṣmīsamāyogād bhūpo 'pi syāt prabhādhiko | [...]* *sthālī guṇarasāktāpi bhrājate nāgninā vinā | tathā śriyā vinā bhūpo rāṣṭraīśvaryair na bhāsate | tasmād āvāhanam lakṣmyāḥ kāryam rājñi purodhasā* / Ibid. 100.8b-13.

¹⁷⁴ *tasmāl lakṣmīm samāvāhya purodhās tadanantaram | āśīrbhir vardhayed rājyalakṣmīyuktamahīpatim* / Ibid. 100. 15.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. Adhyāya 101.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Adhyāya 102.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. Adhyāya 104.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. 105.1-9.

pavilion (maṇḍapa) built specially for the ceremony, followed by the worship of nine metallic pots. Throughout the ritual, the king had to remain seated between the green stone representing Rājarājeśvarī, the Setupati lineage-goddess, and her icon, an eight-armed Maḥiṣāsūramardīnī, thereby symbolically evoking his unity with her.¹⁷⁹

In the *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā*, the worship of the goddess in pots was to be followed by the worship of thirty two weapons with naivedya, food, hymns, and then the worship of royal insignia: the lion-throne, the white parasol, a pair of chowries, a key, a pot, a palm-leaf fan, a blanket with gems, palanquins, swings, crest, flags, kettle-drum, saddle, the bridle-bit and whips.¹⁸⁰ Weapons were consecrated in this way during the Vijayanagara rite.¹⁸¹ Next, the king would have to worship his horses and elephants with offerings, and to tie around their necks protective amulets.¹⁸² Such acts of homage to the state animals were customary in the Vijayanagara rite, during which state-horses were the particular objects of reverence, circumambulated by an array of the king's women gorgeously dressed in their finery.¹⁸³ The state-horse and elephants were also paid obeisance during the opening Durbar of the Navarātra in Mysore.¹⁸⁴ The *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* then teaches that having bowed down and circumambulated the animals, the king was to witness the dance of the court-courtesans. The work envisages a grand court-assembly at this point at the flower-pavilion, with bards, vassals, poets, singers, dancers and musicians paying homage to the ruler.¹⁸⁵ The court-assembly and the entertainments of the first lunar-day formed the spectacular and much-vaunted highlight of the Vijayanagara ceremonies,¹⁸⁶ of the festival in Mysore (during which, in the 1920s, three terrific rounds of gun-shots used to be fired to add to the grandeur

¹⁷⁹ Price 1996, p. 144.□□

¹⁸⁰ *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 105.10-30; *Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi* pp. 86-92 (here the worship is called the lohābhisārikapūjā, "Purification of Weapons").

¹⁸¹ Stein 1983, pp. 80, 86.

¹⁸² *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 106.1-3..

¹⁸³ Stein 1983, p. 80, pp. 81-82.

¹⁸⁴ Iyer 1928, vol. 2, p. 62.

¹⁸⁵ *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 106.1-6..

¹⁸⁶ Stein 1983, p. 80.

of the proceedings)¹⁸⁷ and also in the 1893 Ramnad Navarātra¹⁸⁸. In the latter ceremony, in addition to the assembling together of a large entourage, richly dressed and obsequious as the occasion demanded, tribute was paid to the king by priests of temples controlled by the king, representatives of the important monasteries, brāhmaṇa scholars, singers and British officials.¹⁸⁹ In the *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā*, the king was then to ascend the state elephant and travel in great pomp to the Assembly-hall. Alighting, helped by the hand of a trusted person, he was to ascend a ceremonial platform inside the Hall accompanied by his close coterie, facing east in a restrained manner, and contemplate his chosen deity.¹⁹⁰ Two women were to fan him with yak-tail whisks, and shining in their midst he was to resemble “Sumeru, the king of mountains, surrounded by many flowing waterfalls”.¹⁹¹ Held above him was to be a white parasol, emblem of sovereignty, with clusters of radiant pearls, that was to resemble “the moon together with the stars who had arrived there to serve him”.¹⁹²

From his seat at the symbolic centre of the world, he was then to observe entertaining performances (vinodadarśana) by poets, singers, jesters, dancers, astrologers, courtesans, bards, with much fanfare from the priest and ministers, contemplating all the while his chosen deity in his heart.¹⁹³ This court-assembly would have even included a public display of the goddess's image in affinity with the king: spectators would have seen her either sharing his throne with him, or placed near him, as they did in the 1893 Durbar on the evening of pratipat in Ramnad¹⁹⁴ and also it would seem in Vijayanagara.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁷ Iyer 1928, vol. 2, p. 60-61.

¹⁸⁸ Price 1996, p. 145.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 106.8-9..

¹⁹¹ *divyastrīvijamānābhyāṃ cāmarābhyāṃ virājitaḥ | sravannirjharapūgābhyām anvito nagarāḍ iva* // Ibid 106.10.

¹⁹² *acchamauktikagucchena śvetacchatreṇa śobhitaḥ | sevārtham āgateneva satāreṇa sudhāṃśunā* / Ibid 106.11.

¹⁹³ Ibid 106. 12-18.

¹⁹⁴ Price 1996, p. 145.

¹⁹⁵ Stein 1983, p. 79. Even though the deity displayed with the Rāya king is unidentified in the sources consulted by Stein, it is highly likely, given the parallel in Ramnad, that this would have been the tutelary-goddess of the Rāyas.

☐The *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā*'s description of spectacles performed for the king on the great assembly on the first lunar-day is indeed a magnificent one. Included are a chariot-concourse, an elephant-concourse, an array of horses, all the foot-soldiers, elephants gifted by governors, the dancing of the principal courtesans, wondrous vidyās, drama of different genres, puppet-shows depicting ancient legends,¹⁹⁶ performing poets, a ship,¹⁹⁷ marvellous magic shows, rites stopping rain and fire, wrestling-matches, ram-fights, contests between wild-buffaloes, aerial deer artificially made from wood, cloth, hide and other substances, an image of Hanumat depicting his swift ocean-crossing,¹⁹⁸ a pair of ghosts, lanterns in the shape of chariots, a wooden model of a chariot and finally trees of arrows. The end of the spectacles was to be heralded by the sound of shooting arrows. All these delights would unfold in the arena prepared before the Assembly hall where the king was seated.¹⁹⁹ Such carnivalesque performances staged in arenas, observed by the king and his court in the *āsthānamaṇḍapa*, were customary in the Mysore²⁰⁰ and Vijayanagara rites.²⁰¹ It was to be a daily affair held in the evenings and was to be followed by the distribution of gifts by the king. At the end of the court-assembly, the king would depart the Hall and return to the palace on his elephant. At his entrance to the inner-compartments, the women of his harem were to lustrate him with lights.²⁰² In addition to the court-assemblies, the following lunar-days would have included, as they did in the case of the Mysore ceremony, the worship of the goddess in her shrine, her worship as Mahiṣāsūramardinī on the eighth lunar-day (Mahāṣṭamī), further worship of the state arms and animals and an oblation

¹⁹⁶ The dolls (pāñcālikāḥ) seem to be described as shadow-puppets: tato yavanikāvītakāyamānāntarasthitāḥ | paśyēt pāñcālikāḥ pūrvakathābhīnayasūcikāḥ || *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 107.16b-17a.

¹⁹⁷ tato dvīpāntarajanapratibimbair adhiṣṭhitām | nāvan narapatīḥ paśyed vikārākārabhīṣaṇaiḥ || *Ibid.* 107.28b-29a.

¹⁹⁸ tatparam tan nṛpaḥ paśyēt pratirūpaṃ hanumataḥ | sindhūllāṅghanajaṅghālas smaryate yena mārutiḥ | *Ibid.* 107.26b-27a.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 107.1-32.

²⁰⁰ Iyer 1928, vo. 2, pp. 61-62.

²⁰¹ Stein 1983, p. 80

²⁰² *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* 107.33-48.

made to Caṇḍī in fire (caṇḍīhoma) on the ninth-lunar day, accompanied by the removal of the thread or the amulet signifying the king's oath.²⁰³ ॐ

On Vijayadaśamī the king would have to worship a śamī-tree with the arrow-shooting ceremony. The tree, also known as a vanni-tree²⁰⁴ was to be planted in a hall or shed specially built for the ceremony inside the palace-grounds. In the 1863 Vijayadaśamī rites of Śivagaṅgai, an enclosed shed was built inside the open grounds of the palace, and the tree was visible through a gate.²⁰⁵ Having awoken on the morning of the tenth-lunar day of Āśvina, a day auspicious for undertaking new endeavours, and performed his preliminary purificatory rituals, having honoured the priest, worshipped several deities, including Jayadurgā and his lineage-deity and remunerated the priests, the Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā teaches that a king was to ask the royal priest to bestow on him the royal sword, shield and arrows. The priest having empowered the weapons with invocations, would have to hand them to the king.²⁰⁶ Such was the importance of the king's role that, in the 1863 Śivagaṅgai rite, the queen Kathama Nachiar, unable to emerge in public from the purdah, asked her son, the crown-prince, to officiate in proxy, and ceremonially gave him the five arrows she would have otherwise had to carry in public, to present to the priest.²⁰⁷ In the *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā*, the king was then to ask the priest to install the weapons at the foot of the śamī tree and then to ask him to worship the weapons. Having done so, the priest was to return to the king. Having sung eight hymns to various gods asking for their might and auspiciousness in the campaign to come, the king was to recollect the guardian of the direction in which he was headed, and surrounded with his army and princes was to go with all ceremony to the śamī tree. Evoking the march of the victorious sovereign, such was the symbolic significance of this, doubtlessly short, journey, that the Śivagaṅgai prince's procession to the grounds where the tree stood was made on the palace elephant, followed by the priest on another elephant, trailed by a cavalcade of

²⁰³ Iyer 1928, vol. 2, p. 62.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 63.

²⁰⁵ Price 1996, p. 142.

²⁰⁶ Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā 108.1-28.

²⁰⁷ Price 1996, p. 142.

family-members, dancers and crowds of people.²⁰⁸ Having worshipped Lakṣmī, Nārāyaṇa and the weapons installed under the tree, the Sāmrajyalakṣmīpīṭhikā says that a king was to proceed to the eastern direction, contemplate the guardian deity of that direction in his heart, and shoot the arrows, thereby killing his enemies in that direction. In the same way arrows were to be shot in all the other directions, and his dominion over enemies everywhere was thus ensured. Animal-sacrifice was also occasionally performed at each point where the arrows landed.²⁰⁹ He was then to proceed with all his troops to the city and return to the Assembly hall. At night another grand assembly would take place with various entertainments.²¹⁰ The rite of worshipping the śamī followed by an opulent evening court-assembly was performed not just in Śivagaṅgai²¹¹ but also in Ramnad²¹² and Mysore²¹³.²¹⁴

Despite being an integral part of the later Southern Navarātra, śamīpūjā on Daśamī drew not from the ancient Śākta conventions concerning the goddess (that describe her despatch in water), but from a military ritual attributed to the Gopathabrāhmaṇa that was essentially unrelated to the goddess's autumnal festival. We know this from Viṣṇubhaṭṭa's Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi, which, while introducing the Daśamī tradition, clarifies to this effect: “the [ceremony] taught for a king on the bright tenth lunar day of Āśvina is in the Gopathabrāhmaṇa”. The work then goes on to cite the passage from that Vaidika scripture.²¹⁴ It may

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Price 1996, p. 142.

²¹⁰ Sāmrajyalakṣmīpīṭhikā, Adhyāya 109.

²¹¹ Price 1996, p. 143-143.

²¹² Ibid. pp. 145-146.

²¹³ Iyer 1928, vol. 2, p. 63.

²¹⁴ *athāśvinaśukladaśamyāṃ rājānaṃ praty uktaṃ Gopathabrāhmaṇe: rājā nirgatya bhavanāt purohitapurogamaḥ | prāsthānikaṃ vidhiṃ kṛtvā pratiṣṭhet pūrvato diśi | gatvā nagarasīmāntaṃ vāstupūjāṃ samārabhet | sampūjya cātha dikpālān pūjayet pathi devatāḥ | mārge śamītarumūle dikpālapūjanapūrvakaṃ vāstupūjanaṃ kuryād ity arthaḥ | mantrair vaidikapaurāṇaiḥ pūjayec ca śamītarum | amaṅgalānāṃ samanīṃ samanīṃ duṣkṛtasya ca | duḥkhaprasamanīṃ dhanyāṃ prapadye 'haṃ śamīṃ śubhām | tataḥ kṛtāśiḥ pūrvasyāṃ diśi viṣṇukramān kramet | ripoḥ pratikṛtiṃ kṛtvā dhyātvā ca manasātha tam | śareṇa svarṇapuṅkhena vidhyed dhṛdayaḥ varmaṇiḥ | diśāṃ vijayamantrās ca paṭhitavyāḥ purodhasā | pūrvam eva vidhiṃ kuryād dakṣiṇādidiśāsv api | Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi, p. 183.*

be inferred that this tradition drawing from Brahmanical prose-works must have been united at some period with the autumnal festival of the goddess, and outside the East, for śamīpūjā was not performed at all in Gauḍa and Mithilā, where custom dictated a less Vaidika, more Śākta, goddess-oriented military ceremony. In the Southern Navarātra, the goddess's role ceased on Mahānavamī.

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Parallel to the rituals centred on the king, the worship of various manifestations of the goddess would have taken place continuously throughout the nine nights. These manifestations were believed to enter the person of pre-pubescent girls (kumārīs) whose bodies formed the vessels for the deities. The worship is called kumārīpūjā. Through its magical power, the girls underwent a radical transformation into the divine nature of the deity. The *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā* describes the worship of nine virgins transformed as the goddess on each day of the Navarātra, which agrees in all points of detail with the Skandapurāṇa kumārīpūjā described by Hemādri and the *Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi*.²¹⁵ On a maṇḍala strewn with rice and grains, the king having bathed and anointed himself was to summon the nine goddesses in the girl with invocations.²¹⁶ The same goddesses were also to be worshipped inside nine virgins in periods of state-crisis. The work also gives some details which formed the criteria for selecting the girls in whom the deities were to be summoned. Each girl could come from any of the four castes, and certain defects of appearance are stipulated that would proscribe a girl's eligibility.²¹⁷ Methods are also described as to how they were to be dressed for worship. In addition, the work describes the merits of worshipping each goddess. Kumārī grants wealth and heirs, Trimūrti/Trimūrtinī destroys enemies and pacifies evil effects, Kalyāṇī grants good fortune, Rohiṇī fame, wealth, knowledge and a kingdom, Kālikā grants victory in battle and kingship, Caṇḍikā mastery over a hot-tempered rival, the removal of poverty and pain and the satisfaction of the ancestors, Śāmbhavī grants mastery over a rival's fort and destroys sins, Durgā destroys dangers,

²¹⁵ Ibid Adhyāya 110; *Puruṣārthacintāmaṇi* pp. 84-86. For Hemādri's kumārīpūjā see the second paragraph in the section on the Southern tradition.

²¹⁶ Ibid. Adhyāya 111.

²¹⁷ Ibid 110.24-25.

Bhadrā grants slaves and slave-girls: for all these reasons the goddesses were considered sacred for a king's power.²¹⁸

Conclusion

Originating as a popular placatory ritual associated with tribal communities, particularly those non-Aryan groups resident in the Vindhyas and genericized as the Śabarās, the ceremony of the goddess was absorbed by into the Vaiṣṇava tradition in approximately the 2nd century CE. During this time it was performed as a ritual cleansing the polis on the dark Navamī closing the festivities marking Kṛṣṇa's birth in the rainy month of Śravaṇa. From this relatively small-scale festival in the Gupta empire it developed into a rite of civic sanctification performed by upcoming kingdoms around the 6th c., from which time Purāṇic accounts of the Śākta Navarātra begin to emerge. This was the time when in the process of kingdoms forming local goddesses thought to hold territorial power over them were merged into Durgā and attained their classical identity. Original military rituals from an earlier period of classicism performed during autumn were replaced by the goddess's rite. The ritual thereby grew from an archaic apotropaic ritual core centred on Navamī in the monsoon, to Mahāṣṭamī and Mahānavamī in the autumn. From this it grew further into an expansive ceremony of nine nights in the East, for the earliest testimony of the nine night programme emerges from that region, from around the 8th or the 9th c. The most elaborate description of a court sponsored rite emerges from the Kārṇāṭa and Oinwar courts of Mithilā, which embody what appears to be a ritual that had matured a good few centuries earlier before it was recorded in official literature. Among these the account of the Oinwars by the Maithila paṇḍita Vidyāpati is the most extensive treatment of Caṇḍī's autumnal worship by a king, and attained great renown among the learned at the time as an authoritative source. His description portrays a spectacular court ceremony, involving pomp and pageantry, in which horses and weapons were worshipped, the king was anointed, and the goddess propitiated as the central symbol of royal power in various substrates over the course of the nine nights. Vidyāpati's work also

²¹⁸ Ibid 110.11-19.

reveals the marked impact of Tantricism on the character of the rite, which employed Śākta mantras and propitiated autonomous, ferocious forms of the goddess associated with the occult, particularly on the penultimate days. Maturing in Eastern India, the goddess's Navarātra ceremony was proselytized by the smārtas further to the West and percolated into the Deccan, where, approximately from around the 12th century, it attained an independent Southern character. Whereas the Eastern rite focussed on the goddess as the central object of devotion, the Southern rite focussed on the symbolism of the king, attaining its most distinctive and lavish manifestation in the kingdom of Vijayanagara. Throughout this development, the Navarātra remained intimately associated with the theme of dispelling calamities thereby augmenting secular power in the world, sustaining the power of the ruler and granting political might and health to a community. It remained from its ancient core a ritual of dealing and averting crises performed collectively by a polis. Such remains its character even today.

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