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Kings and wives: the separation of status and royal power

FRÉDÉRIQUE APFFEL MARGLIN

INTRODUCTORY

Research on the rituals of the devadāsīs (hereafter I use the word without diacritical marks) of the temple of Jagannātha in Puri, Orissa, has thrown interesting light on the Hindu conceptions of kingship and royal power. Orissa offers a particularly fertile area for the study of kingship since a Hindu king remained as the head of the important temple of Jagannātha until 1955 when the state government took over its administration. Even after that date the king retained a position on the committee looking after the affairs of the temple. Moreover, his presence is indispensable to enact certain rituals during the most important festival of the year which attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to Puri.

The devadasis are a sign of sovereignty. The manner in which they signify sovereignty will be explored in this paper principally, although not exclusively, through the medium of rituals and myths. Such an endeavour has important implications for Louis Dumont's thesis of the separation of status and power. In *Homo hierarchicus*, he has argued that power—which he equates with royal power—is subordinated to or encompassed by the realm of the pure and impure. In his recent preface to the new French edition of the book, Dumont (1979:ix) has identified this thesis as the central one in *Homo hierarchicus*. The present essay approaches the subject of kingship from the point of view of what Dumont would classify as 'representations' in a movement inverse to the one followed in *Homo hierarchicus*. He has characterised the approach in that work as being 'chained to the social forms': 'As such, it obviously only covers a part of Indian culture, not because we willfully limited it in that aspect, but because we included of culture and of representations in particular only what imposed itself immediately in relation to social forms' (1979:xxxi, my translation).

Here the social forms are included as they imposed themselves from a study of rituals and myths. Such a procedure is, I believe, what Dumont himself envisages as one sort of development which can grow out of his own work, what he has called in the new preface 'a precise study of the

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secondary levels as they relate to the primary levels' supposing 'that the perspective of *Homo hierarchicus* endures' (1979:xxxii).

For the present essay the perspective of *Homo hierarchicus* endures. Specifically, I consider that the hierarchical principle of the pure and impure does underlie the society of caste. In an earlier paper (Marglin 1977), I have detailed the consistency of the rules of purity and impurity with hierarchy. Although I have found that a certain form of power—in the restricted sense of privileged access to women, occupation and wealth—is at the heart of hierarchy, I do not think these findings invalidate Dumont's thesis: they only modify it in certain respects. His separation of power from hierarchy and, therefore, from purity and impurity—as he specifies in his new preface—refers to power 'in the usual sociological meaning of the term', namely economic politico-territorial power (see Dumont 1979). That sort of power is not the one I found at the heart of hierarchy.

Although I have found that it cannot be said that kingship has been secularised since ancient times, Dumont's more fundamental insight, namely that kingship is subordinated to as well as outside of the principle of the pure and impure is confirmed here. His central thesis, namely that in India status and royal power are separated, is consonant with the analysis which is to follow.

It will be argued that royal power is essentially female power (śakti), a power which stands outside of the realm of the pure and impure. Furthermore, it will be shown that the king's relationship to purity and impurity is homologous to that of women. The king's link to hierarchy is through his Brahman preceptor (rājaguru) just as a woman's link to hierarchy is through her husband. This parallelism between the positions of king and wife is found not only in their respective relationships to purity and impurity but also in their roles and the kinds of power inherent in them.

It will be argued further that power, understood as royal and female power, belongs to a realm in which a principle different from that of purity and impurity is at play, namely the principle of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. A study of the rituals of the devadasis and the relevant myths surrounding these will be the opening avenue of investigation. The essay will shift towards the end its focus to the realm of kinship in order to understand the role of wives, and how it parallels that of the king, as well as further our understanding of the categories of auspicious and inauspicious and how they differ from those of pure and impure.

It would be useful at this point to specify, briefly, the way I conceptualise the relationship between rituals and myths, on the one hand, and social forms, on the other; and where my approach diverges from that of Dumont. He uses the words 'representations' and 'primary and secondary', which suggest that social forms are in some sense prior to such cultural

forms as rituals and myths, the latter representing the former. This formulation suggests precisely a secondariness, the presentation in a different medium of something already existing either in a temporal or a causative sense. The position I take is somewhat different and closer to that of the cultural analysts. Dumont has criticised the latter approach because, in his view, it 'dangerously distances representations from institutions and behaviour' (Dumont 1979:xxx). On the contrary, it seems to me that, such an approach considers institutions, behaviour and social forms not to belong to a different level of reality from that to which rituals and myths, for example, belong. Rituals bring to life in an action medium a cultural reality which in itself is not divided and myths generate this reality in a narrative medium. This unified reality corresponds to what Tambiah (1979:12f.) has called a 'cosmology' in which social relations, political conventions as well as beliefs about gods and other supernatural powers are all part of that 'body of conceptions that enumerate and classify the phenomena that compose the universe as an ordered whole and the norms and processes that govern it'.

The question of the divinity of the king cannot be dealt with here for lack of space. It is only possible to state the conclusion I have arrived at, namely that the evidence I have been able to gather does not support Dumont's argument on the secularisation of the kingly function in India.[1]

SIGNS OF SOVEREIGNTY: DEVADASIS, LAKṢMĪ AND THE 'FULL VESSEL'

The temple servants classify the devadasis among royal insignias. The link between sovereignty and the devadasis expresses itself in ritual also. The devadasis are also closely associated with the goddess Lakṣmī and the 'full vessel' (pūrṇa ghaṭa, pūrṇa kumbha, pūrṇa kalaśa). Lakṣmī's own association with sovereignty will be explored, as it presents itself in ritual and myth, as well as the association between the 'full vessel' and sovereignty.

Devadasis

The devadasis perform twice a day in the temple, in the morning and

[1]On the question of the divinity of the king in ancient India, see Gonda (1956-57), Derrett (1976), Biardeau (1976) and Inden (1978). On the question of the divinity of the king in Orissa, Kulke (1978) has argued that the divinisation of the king, expressed in the phrase 'the walking Viṣṇu' as it applies to the king of Puri is a late development resulting from the king's loss of power following the Muslim conquest in 1568 and then the British conquest in 1803. In my thesis (1980) I have critically reviewed the evidence presented by Kulke and have found that the Oriya case fits the picture of kingship drawn by the above mentioned Indologists, namely that in India kings were considered to be the living embodiments of certain deities, particularly Viṣṇu.

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n the evening. The morning ritual consists of a dance performed by one devadasi, accompanied by a drummer, without song. It takes place in the argest hall of the temple, called the 'dance hall' (naṭa mandira), at the ime of the first of three main food offerings to the deities. The meal is resented by Brahman temple servants inside the inner sanctum which is losed to public view. This meal is the only one of the day which is called 'royal offering' (rājadhupa). Raw food for this offering was sent in the norning to the temple from the palace, which is situated on the north-east ide of the temple at some 300 yards from it. After the food has been ffered, a portion of it is sent to the palace in the same brass containers in hich the raw food is sent. The king and the queen eat this food for their iidday meal.

The dance of the devadasi is called a 'royal offering' (rājopacāra). The ities during the meal offering are worshipped by Brahmans in the tradi-onal vaiṣṇava manner with 16 offerings (sodāsopacāra). These consist of eating the deities as honoured guests by such acts as offering a seat; ashing the feet; giving a fresh cloth; offering a sweet drink, water for sing the mouth, food, incense, flowers, etc. These offerings are given in e inner sanctum, behind closed doors; they are not called royal offerings. e latter, presented outside the inner sanctum and sometimes outside the mple, include the elephant, the horse, the fly whisk (cāmara); a black d a white umbrella (chattra), a large fan (tarāsa); a particular style of umming called 'drumming in the telengana style' (telengi bajā); a trum-t-like instrument (kahāli).

The devadasi performs in the presence of one of the rājagurus (precep- of the king) who stands by her side holding a gold handled cane (sunā a). The rājaguru is the supervisor (paricā) of temple rituals. He is not a nple servant but a learned high class Brahman (śāsan brahmaṇa) and of the highest officials in the kingdom. He does not perform services bā) for the deities like temple servant Brahmans and his holding the den cane during the performance of the devadasi is his only ritual duty he temple. The golden cane itself seems to be a royal insignia since on occasion of one of the festivals called 'the golden' (suniā), which cele-tes the king's new regnal year, the king also holds a golden cane.

he rājaguru must accompany the king when the latter visits the ple. The temple servant Brahmans do not hand over directly to the left-overs from the deities but first hand them to the rājaguru who n proceeds to touch them to the forehead of the king before handing n to him. Thus both the presence of the king and of the devadasi in the ple[2] is accompanied by the presence of the rājaguru.

[2]The devadasis also perform an evening ritual just before the deities go to sleep. rājaguru is not present at this ritual during which the devadasi sings songs from *Gītagovinda*.

The devadasis, along with the musicians (bajantari), who belong to various Shudra castes, are the only temple servants who are also palace servants. The devadasis participate in all the three major royal festivals held in the palace. All the other palace servants, who are non-Brahmans except for the cooks, do not perform functions in both palace and temple.[3]

Lakṣmī

The devadasi is called by the temple priests 'the walking goddess' (calanti devī), an expression which exactly parallels the appellation of the king as the calanti Viṣṇu. The king is considered to be the living embodiment of the main diety Jagannātha who is an incarnation of Viṣṇu, while the devadasis are considered to be the living representatives of Jagannātha's consort Lakṣmī. The devadasis are considered to be married to Jagannātha, their ceremony of dedication to temple service being equated with marriage to the deity. During the 'car festival' (ratha yātrā) the devadasis become the mouthpieces of Lakṣmī. They accompany the image of Lakṣmī, when the latter leaves the temple in an angry mood, to voice her anger at Jagannātha who has left her to go and reside at that time in another temple. When the deity is thus separated from his wife, his living embodiment, the king, loses his sovereignty and becomes a sweeper.

The whole of the car festival takes place in separation from Lakṣmī. At its beginning, before the three main deities—namely Jagannātha, his elder brother Balabhadra and his sister Subhadrā—are taken out of the inner sanctum in procession, the images of Jagannātha's two wives, Lakṣmī and Bhūdevī (the earth goddess), are removed from the dais. These images are placed in a store room where they remain, except for Lakṣmī's angry escapade, until the end of the festival some three weeks later.

It is during this festival that the king of Puri performs a distinctive ritual. When the deities have been carried in great pomp onto the three huge chariots, which will take them to another temple some two miles out, the king arrives from the palace, making his way in a man-carried conveyance preceded by the temple elephant. The vast crowds of pilgrims greet him with shouts of 'victory to the Gajapati!'. Gajapati (Lord of elephants) has been the title of the Orissan dynasties since the thirteenth century. The king then proceeds to sweep the platform of the three chariots. This ritual of sweeping, when the king becomes a hāḍi (an untouchable sweeper), has deep emotional resonances among the Oriya people. It forms the subject of one of their most popular legends (The Kañci-Kāveri legend) about a southern king of Kanci who refused to give his daughter in marriage to the king of Orissa because he becomes a sweeper. The point which I want to

[3]Today there are only a handful of palace servants left, but up to around 1930 there used to be 200 to 300. There are over 1500 temple servants.

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emphasise now is that without Lakṣmī the king ceases to be a king; in fact, he becomes one as far removed from kingship as possible—a sweeper.

The same theme of the loss of sovereignty in the absence of Lakṣmī is found in a myth from the *Oriya Lakṣmī purāṇa* written in the sixteenth century by Balarām Dāsa. This is a story about the curse of Lakṣmī, very popular in Orissa and recited on the occasion of the festival of Lakṣmī on the Thursdays of the month of Mārgaśira (November-December). It is also told in abbreviated form by the pujārī of the Lakṣmī temple on the beach in the northern edge of the city. I will give a more extensive rendering of this myth further below; a brief summary should suffice now.

> At the time of the festival of Lakṣmī, the goddess goes out of the temple to visit the houses in the city and observe the worship. She goes to an untouchable's house and partakes of food there. Upon returning to the temple, Jagannātha's elder brother tells Jagannātha that Lakṣmī should not be readmitted in the temple because she is polluted and would pollute it too. Lakṣmī leaves in anger and curses the two brothers to be without food and water for 12 years. After Lakṣmī's departure all the food and water in the temple disappear. The two brothers are driven out to beg for their sustenance. However, no one gives it to them for they are not recognised and they are taken to be beggars and thieves.

In this myth, as in the car festival, Jagannātha, who is considered to be the sovereign of Orissa ruling through his living representative, the king, is stripped of his sovereignty in the absence of Lakṣmī. Unrecognised, he is mistaken for a beggar and a thief, statuses as far removed from kingship as that of the sweeper.

Lakṣmī as the source of sovereignty is a theme which is not only found in these Oriya examples but has been discussed in the context of the *Mahābhārata* by Hiltebeitel (1976:157). He retells a story from the Śāntiparvan about how Indra, in the guise of a Brahman, took from the demon-king Prahlāda his sovereignty when the goddess Śrī left his body.

These three examples illustrate that Lakṣmī-Śrī is the source of sovereignty and that without her the king is not a king. This is reflected in the fact that a king had to be married before the coronation ceremony in ancient India (see Hocart 1927:101; Inden 1978:38). As is well known, the bride is likened to Lakṣmī. In Puri today, although a king can have the first coronation (abhiṣeka) performed even if he is single, the yearly ceremony of renewal of sovereignty, called puṣyābhiṣeka, must be performed for both the king and his queen. It is also called a 'complete coronation' (sampurṇābhiṣeka), whereas the coronation of an unwed king is called an 'incomplete' (asampurṇa) ceremony. The rājagurus of Puri explained to me that the reason for this is that without a wife the king is not 'full-limbed',

or 'full-bodied' (purṇānga), since a man is the half-body (arddhānga), and the wife is also the half-body (arddhānginī), of the other. It is only when a man and a wife are united in marriage that a full body is created.

The devadasi as representative of Lakṣmī can like her be considered to signify sovereignty.

The full vessel

The purṇa kumbha, (kalaśa, ghaṭa) is, minimally, a pot filled with water, with green leaves from fruit bearing trees, especially mango leaves, covering its mouth, and a coconut placed on top. The pot, placed on white raw rice, is the most widely used sign of auspiciousness (maṅgala, śubha). Usually two such pots are placed at the entrance to the house where an auspicious ceremony is taking place. When a wedding, the auspicious ceremony *par excellence*, takes place in Puri, painters are called to make designs of full pots around the door frame of the entrance to the house.

The devadasis, who are called the 'auspicious women' (maṅgala nārī), come at the houses of Brahman temple priests on the occasion of weddings (as well as other auspicious ceremonies such as temple dedication and initiation) and sing 'auspicious songs' (maṅgala gīta). These songs are about the wedding of Kṛṣṇa to Rukminī and of Rāma to Sītā. On the occasion of the king of Puri's wedding in December 1978, two of the devadasis were called to sing the auspicious songs. While singing the devadasis stood on either side of the door beside the full pots.

The association between Lakṣmī and the full vessel has been noted by art historians such as Moti Chandra (1973:14,19,43) and Coomaraswamy. The latter is of the opinion that the three signs, namely Lakṣmī, the full vessel and lotuses are 'apparently equal and synonymous symbols of abundance, and it may be that the vase alone should be regarded as an aniconic symbol of and equivalent of the goodess herself' (1971:61).

An elaborated version of this full vessel is the central object in the ceremony of abhiṣeka, the king's coronation. The ceremony begins with the preparation of this vessel which is called 'the increaser vessel' (bardhanī kalaśa). The description of this ceremony was given to me by the two rājagurus from Puri.

Water from the five tīrthas of Puri[4] and seven types of mud (sapta mrutikā) are then poured into this vessel. The sources of mud are: earth dug by the tusk of an elephant, a boar and a rhinoceros; earth from the banks of a river, the top of a mountain, a cow-pen, and the house of a courtesan. Then 'all the medicinal herbs' (sarba auṣadī) and five jewels are added. This completes the filling of the vessel, which is then smeared with

[4]The tīrthas are the sea, Indradyumna tank, Rohini Kuṇḍa in the temple compound, Markandya tank and Sweta Ganga tank.

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curd and rice, and placed on a heap of white rice. On the mouth of the pot leaves from different types of trees and a coconut are placed. The king is later sprinkled by the rājaguru with the contents of this vessel while the latter recites sacred formulas (mantras). It is by this action that the rājaguru transforms a man into a king.

Thus in the ceremony of the coronation, the full-pot is literally the source of sovereignty. When its contents are sprinkled over him, the be-sprinkled man bears the signs of sovereignty—these are indices, in Pierce's terminology of signs (1932:vol.2)—and only then does he become a king. The sprinkling of the king with the contents of the full vessel can thus be taken to be the expression in a ritual medium of the mythical story of Lakṣmī leaving Prahlāda and entering Indra, thus transferring sovereignty to him. Sovereignty takes a female form—the devadasis and the goddess Lakṣmī—and the non-anthropomorphic representation of these—the full vessel. All these are considered auspicious. It would follow that to understand the nature of kingly power one must pursue the significations of auspiciousness.

THE MEANING OF AUSPICIOUSNESS: DEVADASIS, LAKṢMĪ AND THE FULL VESSEL

Devadasis

The devadasis are locally referred to by other words also such as beśyā and dārī which mean prostitute. They are also called the 'auspicious women' (maṅgala nārī). One readily given 'explanation' of their auspicious status is that they never become widows since they are married to the deity. They are always 'women whose husband is alive' (ahya or sudhabā). However, I have gathered evidence which points to the fact that another source of their auspiciousness is their sexuality. Various texts give lists of auspicious things and beings such as the full vessel, aquatic animals and flags which include the prostitutes (veśyā and ganikā) (Gonda 1975:236). In the *Viṣṇu saṁhita* (63.29) it is written that to circumambulate a prostitute is an auspicious observance.

The erotic sculptures on the outside walls of Indian temples representing couples engaged in amorous play or sexual intercourse—called mithuna—are also called auspicious in texts on temple architecture. These texts recommend placing these figures along with other auspicious motifs, such as the full vessel, on the door jambs of temples (Bhattacharya 1963:228-29). This classification of mithunas as auspicious is not forgotten today. One temple priest of a small Kṛṣṇa temple in Puri told me, pointing to one of these mithunas, that it was an 'auspicious thing' (maṅgala jinisa).

It would be tempting, but facile and erroneous, to rush to the conclusion that erotic pairs as well as the devadasis are auspicious because of the

fertility associated with sexuality. The difficulty with this interpretation is that the devadasis are not supposed to procreate. They do not have earthly husbands but only earthly lovers from whom they deny having children, saying it is a rule among them not to bear children. They recruit new members by adopting the daughters of their brothers, who do marry, or girls from outside their circle. As to the mithunas on temple walls, many writers have commented on the rather remarkable absence of babies and children among the figures, while threesomes and even larger erotic combinations occur on the outside walls of such temples as those at Konarak and Khajuraho.

The linking of the devadasis and mithuna with fertility is not altogether wrong, however. The following story told me by a temple priest of Jagannātha when asked the meaning of these mithunas makes this evident:

> These representations please Indra, king of the gods, the master of rain. He sees that in this way, through these images, the play (*līlā*) of Viṣṇu is brought to general notice and thus he feels like preserving the temple and the city in which they are found by sending good rains, since he is a devotee of Viṣṇu. So we get rain and thus we are able to live because food can grow. Hence this is *maṅgala* (auspicious) for us.

Thus in this explanation the sight of erotic couplings is ultimately the cause of rain and food and hence auspicious.

The devadasis are similarly related, though indirectly, to food in the morning ritual. Their morning ritual takes place simultaneously with a royal food offering. The food in the temple is cooked and then offered behind closed doors by Brahman men. The devadasis are separated from it since they perform outside the inner sanctum. The sexuality of the devadasis, however, is linked with the rains, and does correspond to the erotic couples on the temple walls. Such a conclusion was reached through the analysis of one of the festivals in which the devadasis play a prominent role. This is the 'candan (sandalwood) festival'.

This festival takes place in the months of Baisākh (April-May) and Jyeṣṭha (May-June). It is called jala krīḍā by the devadasis since a great part of it takes place on boats in one of the main tanks of Puri and water has a central place in it. Its name has an erotic connotation and would be accurately called 'water love-play'. Sandalwood paste like water, is considered a cooling agent and both are used during the festival to cool the deities. The timing of the festival links it closely with the car festival; the latter starts in the month of Āsāḍha (June-July) when the monsoon breaks normally. The two previous months are the hottest and driest in the year, when everyone eagerly awaits the arrival of the rains.

The candan festival starts on the third day of the bright fortnight of

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Baisākh. This day also coincides with the beginning of the building of the three chariots for the car festival. On that day the representative images of Jagannātha (namely Mādan Mohan) and his two wives, Lakṣmī and Bhūdevī, as well as the representative image of Balabhadra (namely Rāmakṛṣṇa) along with five Śivas from five Śiva temples in Puri, are taken in palanquins from the main temple to a tank. On their way, the images stop in front of the king's palace, where the logs for the building of the chariots are kept, to receive the orders for the commencement of this work. The candan festival ends on the day before the beginning of the car festival on the last day of the month of Jyeṣṭha. Thus the one festival can be seen as a prelude to the other and the arrival of the monsoon.

The 42 days of the festival are divided in two halves of 21 days each. The first half is called 'outside candan' and the second half is called 'inside candan'. During the 'outside' period, the representative images mentioned earlier are taken to a tank and placed on two boats which are then rowed around the tank. The images of Mādan Mohan and his two wives are placed in one boat and those of Rāmakṛṣṇa and the five Śivas are placed in another. On the boat with Mādan Mohan the devadasis take turns dancing and singing.[5] The dances are characterised by the mood of erotic love (śṛngāra rasa). On the boat carrying Rāmakṛṣṇa and the five Śivas young boys dressed as women dance. These boys are called 'one son' (gotipua) or 'child of the akhaḍā' (akhāḍā pilā). The akhāḍās are men's clubs, organised by neighbourhoods, where the men do physical and body building exercises, especially wrestling. Women are not allowed in these institutions, but it is their responsibility to teach the young boys to dance. The boys, however, never perform inside the temple.

The procession of the images from the main temple to the tank takes place twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, during the first 21 days of the festival. During the second 21 days, the images are not taken to the tank but are placed in brass containers with sandalwood-scented water. These are kept on a special platform in the inner compound of the temple, called 'the water-play platform' (jala krīḍā maṇḍapa).

During the festival the daily routine of the devadasis is greatly altered. They do not dance at the time of the food offering but at the time of 'giving sandalwood' (candan lāgi) which occurs after the morning and evening meals. The dance is performed in the same manner and at the same place (in front of the Garuḍa pillar in the dance hall) as the daily morning dance. The evening songs sung by a devadasi at the time of putting the deities to sleep (pahuḍa) take place as usual. Besides these three occasions, the devadasis perform twice daily on the boats and also twice daily during a time called 'fanning' (ālatā lāgi). This last ritual takes place

[5]The devadasis have stopped dancing on the boats since some 15 years ago.

once in the morning after the food offering and before the giving of sandalwood (when they dance in the hall) and again after the evening meal. It is called 'the secret ritual' (gupta sebā) and unlike the dance on the boat takes place throughout the festival. Thus during the first 21 days the devadasis perform on seven separate occasions daily and during the last 21 days on five.

The 'secret ritual' is unique in many respects. Thus, this is the only time of the year when the devadasi performs for Balabhadra instead of Jagannātha. Its setting is also highly unusual. The gate leading from the dance hall into the antechamber of the inner sanctum is closed. The devadasi enters through the southern door which leads into the antechamber. Normally she proceeds from the northern entrance into the dance hall. On this occasion she comes in through a side entrance. Everyone except for three priests is kept out of this portion of the temple, and the southern door is kept closed during the ritual. It is guarded by the astrologer who keeps track of the time with an hourglass.

Before the devadasi arrives all the lights in this portion of the temple (which includes the audience hall and the inner sanctum) are extinguished. Thus the area is kept in complete darkness since there are no windows. During the ritual three priests sit on the dais in the inner sanctum, one in front of each deity, fanning the images. Midway through the ritual the astrologer, who has been keeping track of the time for this purpose, calls out the three priests who are siṁhāris (who decorate the images) and they are replaced by three pūjā paṇḍas (who do the food offering) who also sit on the dais fanning for the remainder of the ritual.

The devadasi enters and stations herself on the threshold of the door leading into the inner sanctum, facing Balabhadra. Since it is completely dark she guides herself by the glow of the diamond on Jagannātha's forehead. It is a time of 'great fear' (baḍa bhayara samaya), so much so that the devadasi is said to have 'no blood in her body'. The devadasis purify themselves much more rigorously during the 42 days of this ritual. Their dress is different also; they do not wear the normal round red powder mark (sindura ṭapā) but a vertical red line (sindura śirī) on the forehead; they do not use the red foot dye (alatā), nor wear scented hair oil or scented flowers; lastly, they do not wear ornaments which produce sound, like ankle bracelets: they bring their bangles up on their arms so that they will not jingle.

When she has arrived at her place on the threshold of the entrance to the inner sanctum, the devadasi undrapes her sārī so as to uncover the upper part of her body and performs the ritual half naked. The ritual consists of singing a song, which is a long poem called the '34 of the bathing festival'; a 34 (cautiśā) is a poem in which each stanza begins with one of the 34 consonants of the Oriya alphabet. This poem tells of the sorrow of

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the poet at not being able to witness and see with his own eyes the splendour of the bathing festival (snāna uschaba) which introduces the car festival. The three images are also 'naked'; i.e. they are each draped in only a thin transparent loin cloth. The story told to me by the devadasis about the origin of this ritual is as follows:

> Once there was a quarrel between Jagannātha and the Sun. The Sun said: 'I will become so hot that you won't be able to stand it for even five minutes'. Jagannātha replied: 'All right, go ahead'. Then he closed all the doors and asked the priests to fan him and the devadasis to sing songs so he'll forget the pain of the heat.

What does this festival as a whole and the secret ritual in particular signify? My suggestion is that it is a variation on the basic themes of the opposition between heat, drought, and lack of sexual activity, on the one hand, and water and sexual activity, on the other. The greatly increased activity of the devadasis during this hottest-driest season and the association of this activity with water, as in the boating festival, may be seen as an activity designed to usher in the rains. As with the building of the chariots, which starts at the same time as this festival, it is a preparation for the great yearly festival which is made to correspond with the onset of the monsoon.

To recall, I have already said that the image of Balabhadra is placed along with five Śivas and on that boat men, called 'one son' or 'child of the *akhāḍā*', dance. Both these names emphasise the single status of the dancers. Balabhadra also is associated with Śiva as the ascetic (and not as Pārvatī's consort) and with the non-married state. On this boat there are no wives either in the form of deities who would correspond to Lakṣmī and Bhūdevī or in the form of devadasis. Balabhadra is not flanked by a wife on the dais on which he stands in the temple as Jagannātha is. Subhadrā, who stands on Balabhadra's left, is considered as being a sister, not a wife. The boating festival thus displays, with the arrangements on the boats, an opposition between Jagannātha and the married state and Balabhadra and the unmarried state. It is against this background that the secret ritual must be understood.

During the secret ritual the devadasi performs for Balabhadra and this is the only time of the year that she does so. She is not married to him and this is indicated by the fact that she does not wear the round red spot on her forehead and wears all the other signs of married status in an altered form. Balabhadra is single and, as already stated, at this time his association with Śiva is emphasised.[6] The association of nakedness with asceti-

[6]Balabhadra at other times is mainly identified with Śesa, the cosmic snake on which Viṣṇu sleeps during the interregnum between kalpas. The statue of Balabh[illegible]

cism is well known and in Orissa at least there is a strong aversion to ever being naked. It is said that a husband and wife must never see each other naked as it is inauspicious. It will be objected that it is the three deities that are naked and not only Balabhadra. In this temple the three wooden images of Jagannātha, Balabhadra and Subhadrā are always treated in the same manner. The offerings are done simultaneously and identically by three priests. It is only in the treatment of the representative images that differentiation enters. In the case of the wooden images, whatever is done to the one is done to the others; this applies to actual 'bodily' manipulations such as decorating, dressing, bathing, feeding, etc.

The devadasi stands half naked, exposing her breasts, a gesture which I interpret as the seduction of Balabhadra. The unusual spatial arrangements, the darkness and the secrecy can be read to express both that this ritual stands in contrast to the usual ritual of the devadasi, in which she performs for Jagannātha, and that it is associated with asceticism, a condition opposed to that of householder and associated with the 'forest', i.e. with what is beyond the settled, ordered city or village. The devadasi is frightened and the image conjured up is that of the fear-inspiring ascetic.

The story of the origin of the ritual explains it as a device to 'beat the heat', and the song which the devadasi sings tells of the desire to see the bathing festival where 'the bathing waters falling down from the Lord's face are like the torrents which flow from the height of deep black mountains . . . and the white umbrellas, fly whisks and fans surrounding the Lord are like the lowering clouds'.[7] As already stated, the song speaks of the poet's inability to see the festival, of his deep longing to do so, and of the profound bliss that such a sight might give. Singing this song during the secret ritual clearly links it with the wish to 'see' the bathing festival, the end of heat and the appearance of rain. Thus, here in the ritual realm we have the theme of the seduction of the ascetic by a courtesan who overcomes his ascetic heat and thus ushers in the rains: the prelude to the end of drought and the threat of famine.[8]

The theme of the seduction of an ascetic by a courtesan is found in the epics also. One of the most well-known of this type of myths is the story of the seduction of the ascetic Riṣyaśringa which is found both in the

shows him with a five headed snakehood over his head. However, three of the nine side deities on Balabhadra's chariots are either Śivas or Ganeśa.

[7]These lines are from stanza 11 and 19 of Dinakruṣṇa Das's poem *Snānaschaba cautīsa* (17th century).

[8]The mithuna sculptures on temples in Puri, Konarak and Bhubaneshwar sometimes represent the union of a woman and an ascetic. Some texts also speak of the representation on temples of tapasvilīlā or tapakrīḍā – the amorous sport of ascetics. [illegible]da 1975:243.

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Mahābhārata and the *Rāmāyaṇa* as well as in other texts.[9] The myth is particularly relevant since the courtesans are sent by the king to achieve his purpose of bringing the ascetic to his city to end a drought. A prostitute's daughter succeeds in this task and the rains come.[10] In this myth the opposition between asceticism and water is stated twice. First, the father of the ascetic breaks his continence on seeing an apsaras by spilling his seed in the water of a pond drinking from which makes a doe pregnant and she bears Riṣyaśringa, Second the end of the son's continence brings on the rains. In the first event water is associated with pro creation; in the second water in the form of rains ends the drought.

Lakṣmī

The link between the devadasis and the king which has so far been emphasised is that of the rains. The rains in turn are the source of food. Although the devadasis are indirectly linked to food, the goddess whom they represent, namely Lakṣmī, is directly represented by food. The festival of Lakṣmī is celebrated in the month of Mārgaśira (November-December) on every Thursday of the month. This period of the year also coincides with the rice harvest, rice being the staple of the Oriyas. Lakṣmī is worshipped in the homes by women in the form of a heap of freshly harvested rice and rice stalks.

The association between Lakṣmī and the fertility of the land has been exhaustively studied by Moti Chandra (1973) in a historico-cultural context. In particular he points out Lakṣmī's association with water, mud and slime and cattle and food (1973:12,15).

Lakṣmī's association with sovereignty is iconographically represented by her being shown together with such kingly insignias as elephants. According to the *Mahābhārata*, she lives in maidens, ornaments, the rain clouds, lakes filled with lotus flowers, elephants and kings on the throne (Moti Chandra 1973:14). Lakṣmī's auspiciousness also resides in wealth. As is well-known, merchants worship her in the form of money. She is the very embodiment of prosperity which, along with health and pleasure, are at the heart of the concept of auspiciousness.

The full vessel in the coronation ceremony

This association between Lakṣmī and sovereignty is expressed in the ritual domain in the coronation ceremony. The main object in this ceremony, too, is the full vessel, but with muddy water, jewels, and medicinal

[9]The tale of Riṣyaśringa occurs in Book I, Chapter 9 of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and in Book 3, Chapter 33,110-113 of the *Mahābhārata*. For several other versions of this myth, see O'Flaherty 1973: 43-50.

[10]For details, see van Buitenen's translation of the *Mahābhārata* Vol. 2: 432-41.

herbs in it. Jewels are the tangible form of prosperity which is the gift of Lakṣmī; whereas medicinal herbs represent well-being and health. Health forms part and parcel of the concept of auspiciousness as can be seen from what happens during the car festival. In separation from Lakṣmī the deities become ill, and for the fortnight of their illness the rituals of the devadasis —the representatives of Lakṣmī—as well as cooking in the great kitchens of the temple are interrupted. During this time the deities are in the exclusive care of the daitās, temple servants descended from the Saora tribe, who do the inauspicious work for the deities.

The sources of the various kinds of mud added to the full vessel are significant in themselves. Three of these come from places in the earth which have been dug up by the tusks of animals, those of a boar, an elephant and a rhinoceros. All three animals are associated with sovereignty. The boar is one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, the sovereign deity whose incarnation the king also becomes. The elephant is one of the insignias of sovereignty. The elephant as a metaphor for a rain cloud is associated both with Lakṣmī and the king. The association of the rhinoceros with kingship is attested to in the *Mahābhārata* (VII.6.37) where a rhinoceros horn is used for lustrating a king (Moti Chandra1973:34).

The plowing of the earth is a metaphor for sexual union. During the festival of Raja Saṁkrānti celebrated in the villages of Orissa, the earth is said to be menstruating. For the four days of the festival, farmers do not plow or run their carts or in general do anything that would cut through the earth. The earth is impure during that time and she should not be penetrated just as women during their menses should not be thus approached. So considered, mud or earth dug up by the tusk of kingly animals represents the sexual union between the king and the earth.

Earth from a cowpen may also be taken as a reference to Lakṣmī and to prosperity. In the *Mahābhārata* Lakṣmī is said to reside in cow-dung, because cows though wonderstruck by her resplendent beauty—and even though informed of her being a goddess and the indwelling source of the prosperity of the gods including Indra, Viṣṇu and Agni—did not agree to receive her or any gifts from her. 'Śrī asked them at least to point out some part of their body where she could reside. Moved by the insignificant request they agreed that she could reside in their dung and urine. Thus her ancient function as abounding in the dung, a necessary aid to agricultural operations, is fully supported by the MBh. (Moti Chandra 1973:15).

The earth from both banks of a river as well as from the doorway of a courtesan can also be taken as a sign of the fertility of the earth as the foregoing interpretation of the devadasis' ritual suggests. Devadasis are courtesans who are associated with water and its fertilising effect.

The tops of mountains seem to have an association with food. Pārvatī (daughter of mountain) is also called Annapūrṇā, meaning 'full of food'

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(O'Flatherty 1973:235). The mountain Govardhana ('increaser of cattle') is worshipped with a mountain of food (annakūṭa) in Braj (Vaudeville 1980). Thus the contents of the full vessel are all tokens of auspiciousness in generalised as well as specific manifestations.

According to Inden it is an analogous daubing of mud from various parts of the earth onto the king which 'effects a kind of extraordinary marriage of the king and the earth' (1978:45). The king was conceived by Hindus to be the husband of the earth (bhūpati, mahīpati). Inden's textual material separates the daubing with mud from a complex series of sprinklings. The whole ritual, as described in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (8-9th cent. A.D.), being much more complex than the ritual described to me by the King of Puri's rājagurus. In particular the daubing of the king with mud from various parts of the earth (five out of 15 being the same as in the Puri ritual), which takes place in a separate enclosure away from public gaze and prior to the affusion, is in the Puri ritual incorporated into the affusion itself which combines mud with other objects.

Inden has argued that the daubing of the king with earth strengthens his body. I wish here to extend and perhaps intensify this interpretation. The ritual proceeds in a movement from preparation and installation of the increaser vessel to sprinkling its contents onto the king-to-be while reciting mantras, to the transformation of the king-to-be into a king who bears upon his body the indices of the content of the vessel. This transformation of the king is achieved by a metonymic progression from symbol to icon to index (using Pierce's trichomony of signs). The full vessel is a symbol—although it could be argued that it is also an icon, its round form (as a container) might be seen as a diagrammatic representation of the womb—of female fertility.[11] The sprinkling of its water being an iconic representation of rain[12] and, finally, the muddy wetness of the king being an index of the contents of the vessel. The strengthening of the king then would more specifically consist in his incorporating the generative, prosperity-causing powers, residing in Lakṣmī and in the devadasis as contained in the full vessel, the indices of which are on him.

This ritual has to be repeated every year at the time of the moon's conjunction with the lunar mansion puṣya. It is then called puṣyābhiṣeka. As Gonda comments, the word puṣya also means 'nourishment' and its derivative puṣṭi, a 'well-nourished condition'. Thus the ritual has to be repeated to ensure the continued prosperity of the realm. If the rite is essentially

[11]Jakobson (1962:349) has argued that most signs are a combination of symbol, icon and index.

[12]My interpretation of sprinkling the king as an iconic representation of rain makes sense of the use of many holed strainers for the purpose, mentioned in the texts studied by Inden. His own interpretation is as follows: 'The use of the strainer protects the king from the disintegrating force of repeated showers' (1978:48).

conceived as a marriage it would not have to be repeated annually. Thus the earth dug up by royal animals rather than being metaphors for a wedding between the king and the earth should rather be taken as metaphors for sexual union with the earth, the king fertilising her. However, it seems to me that, besides his male fertilising power, the king takes on a specifically female power as well. The devadasis and Lakṣmī are both married to the sovereign deity and hence to his living embodiment but also represent him, represent sovereignty itself. The sovereign is both wedded to Lakṣmī and the devadasis as well as incorporating their power. This train of thought is pursued in the next part of this essay.

KING AND WIFE

The parallel I wish to draw between the king and the wife is based on a similarity in two contexts: (1) their respective functions; (2) their relationship to purity and hence to status.

Gonda's study of ancient kingship richly documents that the king is conceived first and foremost as the increaser as well as the maintainer of the realm's prosperity. In an agricultural society this primarily means abundant crops and in India in particular this means good and timely rains. As Gonda puts it, 'above all the sovereign is indeed responsible for rainfall' (1956:42). So much so that in a country without a king 'there will be neither rain nor seed, neither wealth nor wife, neither sacrifices nor festivals' (Rām,2,67,36 in Gonda1956:71). Timely rain represents the generative power of the earth without which there can be no wealth, for the latter in an agricultural society is essentially based on the product of the land. It is interesting that in this passage quoted by Gonda the absence of the king provokes not only an absence of rain, seed and wealth but also of wives. The wife is the one who, like the earth, has generative powers and who, through progeny, increases the line of her husband.

The king, too, like the wife must have generative powers: 'Thus it becomes clear that . . . the essence of nutritious food, the essence of water and useful plants, any refreshing draught, a well-nourished condition, and generative power are expressly enumerated among the manifestations of royal power' (Gonda1956:43).

The wife, like the king, is thought of as the bestower of wealth. The young bride laden with jewelry is the very embodiment of Lakṣmī. She brings wealth in the form of jewelry and other items of her dowry. She thus embodies wealth, generative powers and happiness.

> Between wives (*striyah*) who (are destined) to bear children, who secure many blessings, who are worthy of worship and irradiate (their dwel-
> [illegible] between the goddesses of fortune (*śriyah*) who (reside) in the

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houses (of men), there is no difference whatsoever . . . Offspring (the due performance of) religious rites, faithful service, highest conjugal happiness and heavenly bliss for the ancestors and for oneself, depend on one's wife alone (Manu IX.26,28 in Bühler 1969:332).

In these verses from Manu the identification between the wife and goddesses of fortune is explicity made. Śri Lakṣmī is of course the foremost goddess of fortune. The presence of a wife is strikingly similar to the presence of the king; without a king there is no wealth, no increase, no generative power and no sacrifice or festivals.

If one takes up an analogy between the sovereign's realm and the household, the king and the wife play the same role regarding increase and religious ceremonies. The king himself does not sacrifice, his purohita does. The wife does not perform the life-circle rituals herself; her husband does, or the family priest does, but without a wife a man cannot perform them and her presence is necessary. These rites were called by several of my informants 'dharmic works' (dharma kārjya) and a bachelor or widower was said to have no right (adhikāra) to perform these. This contemporary situation is echoed in an ancient text: 'On women depend dharma and artha and from them man derives the pleasure of sense (sic) and the blessings of sons' (*Bṛhat saṁhitā*, chapter 74 in Kane 1930-62 vol.II, part I:579). Thus the pursuit of the puruṣārtha, viz. wealth (artha), pleasure (kāma) and dharma, depend on the wife.

In discussing daṇḍa, the kingly function *par excellence*, Biardeau remarks that it contains three puruṣārthas; dharma, artha and kāma. She quotes from the *Mahābhārata* (15.2-4a): 'The wise know that daṇḍa is dharma. Daṇḍa protects dharma as well as artha. O prince, daṇḍa protects kāma. It is said that daṇḍa is the trivarga (=all of the three puruṣāratha: dharma artha and kāma) (1976:163, my translation).

However the king must wield daṇḍa in cooperation with and under the council of Brahmans. Lingat speaks of the cooperation between the king and the Brahman thus: '. . . dharma cannot be realised without their [the king and the Brahmans] cooperation. This principle of the essential cooperation of the two powers is one of the fundamental elements in *smṛti's* theory of kingship' (1973:216). The relationship between the king and his Brahman councillor is structurally parallel to the relationship between the wife and her husband. The husband and the Brahman are superior to the wife and the king respectively. Dumont has emphasised the superiority of the Brahman over the king and compares the closeness of their relationship to that of a marriage giving as a textual reference for this comparison *Aitareya brāhmaṇa* (VIII.27) (Dumont1970:63,65). My suggestion is that in such a relationship the king stands for the wife and the Brahman for the husband.

The inferiority of the king expresses itself ritually in Puri in the yearly ceremony of renewal of kingly power, the puṣyābhiṣeka. The ceremony consists of two parts: first, the besprinkling of the king and the queen from the increaser vessel as described above, it being the same as in the abhiṣeka ceremony; second, the king receives from a group of high Brahmans (śāsan brahmaṇa) a sacred thread after which he circumambulates the assembled Brahmans and then prostrates himself in front of them, taking the dust from their feet.

As both Derrett (1976) and Dumont (1970) have pointed out, the Brahman is dependent materially on the king although he is superior to the latter. The husband is similarly dependent on the wife for offspring and general prosperity but he is her superior. In both cases it is a relationship of asymmetrical interdependency.

The role of the wife in the household as its increaser and as enabling the husband to perform 'dharmic works' parallels the role of the king as the increaser of the realm enabling by his material gifts the Brahmans to perform sacrifices and festivals. The name of the full vessel during the coronation ceremony—namely the increaser vessel—captures this identity between the wife and the king. The full vessel—let us remember—is particularly associated with weddings, as are the devadasis, who come and sing the auspicious songs at the wedding of temple priests and the king. The devadasis are ahyas, 'women whose husband is alive', and represent the active sexuality of the wife as opposed to the sexual inactivity of the widow.

Another significant parallel between the wife and the king is the nature of the consequences of their misbehaviour. My informants in Puri told me that on the proper behaviour of the wife depends the welfare and prosperity of the household as well as of the ancestors. If the wife neglects her dharmic duty, of if she is unchaste, calamity will ensue. This calamity is spoken of in terms of natural disaster such as drought, disease, fire, etc. It must be noted that the deities responsible for such disasters are mostly female deities (such as Maṅgalā, Śitalā, Caṇḍi) who are especially worshipped at the onset of the hot season (in Caitra) during which the danger of such catastrophies occuring is most likely.

Similarly, the misbehaviour of the king, or his failure to wield daṇḍa properly, leads to natural disasters, in particular the failure of the rains which means drought and famine. 'The soil cannot be tilled, without protection [i.e. daṇḍa] and rain. The misdeeds of the people, disturbances in natural harmony, bring about a failure of the rains' (Derrett1976:605).

Both king and wife are indispensable for the fulfillment of the three puruṣārthas, dharma, artha and kāma, and both are excluded from the fourth, mokṣa. Sannyāsa is reserved for twice-born men (ManuIV.91,94 in Bühler 1969) and women cannot pursue this path and until they are

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reborn as men. Biardeau in her study of the *Mahābhārata* declares that 'Sannyāsa is forbidden to the king' (1976:170). The king as a Kshatriya is twice-born and thus one would expect him to be eligible for sannyāsa. A clue to this can be found in Carman's suggestion that the realm of renunciation is one in which purity as it exists in the social world—that is purity as one of the guṇas of prakṛti (namely sattva)—is separated from the other two strands of prakṛti and thereby transformed into what can be termed 'transcendent purity' (paraśuddha) (see Carman 1980). My suggestion is that both kings and wives belong to the realm of the auspicious and the inauspicious and do not themselves pertain to the realm of the pure and the impure but are linked to it through their relationship to the purohita and the husband respectively.

In order to enter the path of transcendent purity there must be a continuity with this-worldly purity (sattva). The relationship of women and the king to this-worldly purity is indirect and thus the prerequisite for entering the path to salvation—namely a continuity in purity—is absent for them. In order to substantiate this claim it is first necessary to establish that the two principles of auspiciousness/inauspiciousness and purity/impurity do indeed correspond to separate realms. The argument will then have to proceed to women's and then the king's relationship to purity and impurity as well as to status. This will take us into the realm of kinship.

The separation of auspiciousness from purity is most glaringly evident in the case of menstrual blood. Menstrual blood is at once highly polluting and yet a source of auspiciousness. It is the sign of woman's fertility as well as of the fertility of the earth. Its absence in a mature woman renders her inauspicious. A girl's puberty rituals in Puri are called an auspicious (maṅgala) ceremony. This is also attested to among the Coorgs where a girl's puberty ceremony is a maṅgala (Srinivas 1952:71). A birth is also an auspicious occasion. Both these events entail impurity, of the kin group in the case of a birth and of the girl in the case of puberty.

The distinction between the two categories of auspicious and pure are captured in expressions such as 'auspicious impurity' and 'inauspicious impurity' (śubha asauca and aśubha asauca). Such a distinction has also been noted by Khare (1976:184) in his study of food.

In her studies of ancient domestic ritual texts (gṛhyasūtras), Das has also found a series of spatial oppositions which correspond to a life/death opposition. Although she does not bring these under the single rubric of the auspicious/inauspicious axis, the oppositions she identifies correspond to those that the opposition auspicious/inauspicious refer to. She has also stressed that these oppositions do not correspond to the pure/impure one (Das 1977:99).

The distinction between the two categories is also evidenced in the devadasis themselves. The devadasis are called the 'auspicious women' (maṅgala nārī). However, they are not allowed to enter the inner sanctum of the temple of Jagannātha, a remarkable prohibition since in this temple the inner sanctum is open to visitors twice a day. The devadasis tell a story to explain this prohibition. According to them, originally—that is in the mythical time of the satya yuga – the devadasis were chaste, undecorated women who used to spend the night in the inner sanctum. Because of a mishap having to do with the food offering, the king ordered them to decorate themselves and to satisfy their sexual desires with the temple Brahmans. Ever since then the devadasis have not been allowed in the inner sanctum. Thus the prohibition is linked with their active sexuality. Sexual intercourse is polluting and is prohibited in the temple. On the day of their ritual duties, the devadasis have to purify themselves by bathing, fasting and refraining from sexual intercourse. A passage in a text written by a devadasi towards the end of the previous century[13] states that they must not even salute the king on the day of their duty in the temple:

> The Gajapati [title of the Oriya kings] is the hope of our community,
> He gives us food and water.
> Knowing him as a god we offer our body to him,
> But on the day of our duty in the temple, we should not even salute him.

Although sexual intercourse is polluting, it is auspicious. As we noted earlier, the sculptures of erotic couples (mithuna) are called 'auspicious'.

The sexuality of the devadasis is linked with the fertility of the earth and an abundance of food. The food referred to, however, is raw, the unprocessed produce of the land. Raw food is dissociated from status as the work of Marriott (1968) on food transactions has shown.

Although the food offered to the deities in the temple is cooked it has the peculiar characteristic of being able to be shared by Untouchable and Brahman alike without the latter becoming polluted. This particular property of mahāpraśād—the food offered in Jagannātha temple—is explained in a local myth as the doing of Lakṣmī. The story, in much abbreviated form, goes like this:

> Lakṣmī on one of the days of her festival [in the month of Mārgaśira, November-December] went out of the temple to visit the houses in town and see how her worship was being performed. She was dissatisfied with what she saw and decided to visit the house of an Untouchable woman.

[13]This text is in Oriya on palm leaf. It is entitled *Māhāri nāca bidhi*. It is in the possession of Pandit Sadasiva Ratha Sharma of Puri who translated the text with me.

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There she found that her worship was being carried out wonderfully and she partook of the food cooked by the Untouchable woman. When she returned to the temple, Jagannātha's elder brother Balabhadra who knew what had happened, told his brother to repudiate his wife for she was polluted and to readmit her in the temple would pollute them and the temple. Jagannātha did so and Lakṣmī in anger cursed the brothers to be without food and water for 12 years. After Lakṣmī's departure the brothers found no food or water either in the temple or outside of it. They went begging for food but people mistook them for beggars and thieves and did not give anything to them. After 12 years they finally arrived in front of the palace that Lakṣmī had built for herself and begged for food. Lakṣmī sent food through her maid servants (dāsīs) and the brothers ate, even though this was the food of an Untouchable woman. They asked her to come back with them to the temple. She agreed on the condition that the food that she cooks in the temple be shared by all alike regardless of caste distinctions. This was accepted and they all returned.

In this story, the power of Lakṣmī is affirmed and it is non-hierarchical power. Lakṣmī is worshipped at the time of her festival in the form of newly harvested rice and rice stalks by the women of the house. Thus she, like her representatives in the temple, the devadasis, is associated with the produce of the earth, which is raw food. Lakṣmī in the story transforms cooked food into the equivalent of raw food as far as status distinctions are concerned.

The fertility of the earth is dissociated from status and it is associated also with the fertility of women. These ideas are reflected in the sphere of kinship. The wife is called the 'field' (khetra) who receives and nourishes the husband's 'seed'; but what is being passed on from one generation to another is the father's 'line', not the mother's. The mother 'increases' or nourishes the embryo but does not continue the male line. .

Fruzzetti and Ostor write about Bengali kinship: '. . .but it is the father's line that is carried, his blood that is being 'increased' by the mother. The mother accepts like a vessel, and nourishes like a field, the seed and line given by the father' (1976:122). Inden makes a very similar point, also about Bengali kinship: 'it was thought that the coded substance which defined a caste or clan should properly be transmitted from one generation to the next through the semen of men and not the uterine blood of women' (1976:95). In Puri also, caste or status, was said to be inherited through the father and not the mother. The mother nourishes the child in her womb with her blood but does not pass to it the rank inherent in the father's line.

To illustrate this point, examples of mixed marriages were poin

in which the children invariably belonged to the caste of their father. This was particularly striking in the case of several daughters of devadasis who have entered into love marriages with Brahman men and whose children belong to their father's caste. In all these cases, however, the mother had severely diminished relations with her natal household. In the case of the marriage between a Brahman and a woman of a princely family, the father of the man had gone for advice to the assembly of learned Brahmans (mukti maṇḍapa) in the temple. These high śāsan Brahmans are the repository of the knowledge of the sacred law (dharmaśāstra). The father was told that by marrying a Brahman, this woman had become Brahman but since she had to feed the ancestors on the occasion of ancestor worship, she should cease to eat in the house of her parents. The crucial issue seems to be the consumption and the preparation of *cooked food*. It would seem that, in the case of women, their fertility is dissociated from status but not their cooking and their consumption of cooked food.

The woman's role is primarily as a feeder. It is the wife who cooks for both the living and the dead members of her husband's lineage. Her role in child bearing and conception is also conceived as one of feeder. She feeds the embryo with her uterine blood and thereby 'increases' it. It would seem that what Inden and Marriott have in their writings called coded-substance is inherited through the male but maintained, sustained and increased by women. These functions of women are precisely the royal functions: maintenance and increase of the realm. Bilaterality, which caste endogamy would seem to necessarily entail, here does not mean that rank is equally inherited from both father and mother. Position in caste and clan are inherited through the father; the rank of the mother is also relevant and important, not because of what she passes onto her progeny, but because of the nature of her contribution as a feeder and the cultural meanings surrounding food in caste society.

Women's dissimilar position from that of men as regards status is also expressed in the fact that women are not twice-born. In the dharmaśāstra literature, they are classified along with the Shudras; this fact has been emphasised by Thapar: 'It is interesting that whereas these [legal] texts take great care to classify men with a minutiae of distinctions, women are generally treated as a uniform category. Furthermore, the status of women as a whole is clearly defined, for they are unambiguously equated with the śūdras' (1975:9).

Correspondingly women's observances in case of certain types of pollution is different from men. In the case of what Orenstein has called 'act pollution' (when an ego contacts a polluting object or being) women regardless of their status, follow the Shudra pattern (1968,n.12). In Puri when a twice-born man incurs such a type of pollution, he will perform various actions, including the changing of his sacred thread, reciting the

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gāyatrī mantra, changing of his clothes, and taking a bath. Women who do not wear the sacred thread and do not have access to vedic knowledge only change their clothes and sprinkle water on their head. It is only in the case of relational pollution (incurred by ego when someone in his/her kin group dies or is born) that men and women are similarly affected.

The foregoing excursus into the domain of kinship throws light on the conception of kingship and particularly on the issue of kingly power and status. The king is conceived as the 'increaser' of the realm through his role as the sender of good and timely rains. Such a conception corresponds to the way the wife is conceived in the realm of kinship; she is the 'increaser' of her husband's lineage.

The king, like the wife, also has a peculiar relationship to rules of purity and impurity. The king of Puri, along with the queen and his immediate family, is exempt from the rules of purity and pollution except in the case of self-pollution (i.e. answering calls of nature). When the king dies, his eldest son and heir, does not observe rules of pollution and does not participate in his father's funeral as any other son would. A Brahman is appointed to perform the role of the eldest son at the funeral: he is called 'the son Brahman' (pua brāhmaṇa). Such exemption from the rules of purity and impurity in the case of the king is very ancient as Gonda's work on kingship (1956:50-51) has shown.

Kings, both historically and mythically, have come from various varṇas and not only from the Kshatriya varṇa. Kane (1930-62, vol. III) has a lengthy discussion on this subject in which he refers to many texts stating that a king can come from any varṇa. In Orissa, there were at least three kings who ascended the throne who were not Kshatriyas.

This parallelism between the king and the wife is, I believe, at the root of the parallelism noticed long ago by Hocart (1927:100) between the marriage and the coronation ceremonies. In the former the bride and groom are dressed as king and queen. In both ceremonies the full vessel is a central symbol.

The only royal function that I have discussed here is that of the king as the increaser of the realm. The other aspect of royal power is the king's power of arms, a consideration of which is outside the scope of this essay. However, I would like to note simply that it too is symbolised as a female power embodied in the goddess Durgā. Kanaka Durgā is presiding deity of the palace in Puri: at dasaharā when the king worships his weapons it is goddess Durgā, the warrior goddess, the vanquisher of the arch-enemy demon Mahiśāsura, who presides.

I would argue that the king, like women, is not implicated in status in the same manner as men in general are. The power of the king is essentially a female power, a power of fertility and a power of arms. That power is called śakti and it is a non-hierarchical variety of power. To fully substan-

tiate the use of term śakti to refer to female power would necessitate an analysis of the śākta ritual popularly known as the five 'm's' or makāras. Again this would take us too far afield. However, in the light of Wadley's (1975) use of the term śakti to refer to power in general, not only to female or royal power but also to the power of purity, it is necessary to emphasise that here the term śakti is considered to stand only for female and royal power.

The separation of status and royal power

In the second part of the ritual of puṣyābhiṣeka, the king circumambulates and prostrates himself in front of an assembly of śāsan Brahmans, who are representatives from all the agrahāras of the realm. The assembly of learned Brahmans, called the mukti maṇḍapa, which sits in the temple compound is similarly composed from 16 chosen representatives of the same Brahman villages. It functions as a court settling conflicts having to do either with ritual or social matters such as intercaste marriage or dining and so forth. This assembly embodies the knowledge of the dharmaśāstras. It, however, cannot mete out punishment (daṇḍa)—that is the prerogative of the king—but only penances (prāyaścitta), which focus on purificatory actions.

This assembly of learned Brahmans upholds the principles upon which the society of caste rests, the principle of the pure and the impure. Purity and pollution, caste and rank, are their actual concerns; they are the very embodiment of these principles. The king by contrast is not the embodiment of the knowledge of the dharmaśāstras; for such knowledge he depends on the Brahmans. His role is to protect these principles by means of daṇḍa. Status inheres in the learned Brahmans and it is maintained and sustained by the activities of the king, just like status in the realm of kinship is passed on in the male seed which is increased, nourished and sustained by the wife.

I propose, therefore, that the power of the king, which I have identified with the concept of śakti, is outside of the domain of the pure and the impure and is governed by the principle of the auspicious and the inauspicious. The king's link to status is through his link to the Brahman which is a subordinate/superordinate one; a link which parallels that of the wife to her husband.

Louis Dumont's conceptualisation of royal power as being encompassed as well as separated from the realm of the pure and the impure is thus confirmed by the present essay written in his honour.

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AXVIII.2

Ex XVIII #2

THE DEVADASIS

B. R. PATIL*

The Devadasis have had a very important place in the history of prostitution in India. The term Devadasi is used more commonly in a euphemistic sense to refer to women in the ignoble profession of prostitution, though in the past it was used to refer to a purely religious institution. Through ages the pure form of Devadasis degenerated, deteriorated and was finally given a burial by the Provincial legislations preventing the dedication of women and girls to gods, goddesses, and other objects of worship. However, the institution is not yet unkown totally. In the following pages an attempt is made to understand what was this institution, how it was brought into existence and why, what were the regional variations, and what were its good and bad effects on Indian culture and society.

I

The institution of Devadasis is a legacy of the past. The term literally means the slave-servant of the god. The Devadasis were generally known as the dancing girls, temple dancers, and the courtesans. The institution in its original form was free from sex and noble in character. Like the priests and the musicians, the women (in prostitution ?) were pressed into the temple service. These women occupied the rank next to the temple priests among the temple staff. The temple dancers were enjoined upon the duties of sweeping and cleaning the temple floors, cleaning and putting oil in the sacred lamps in the temple, fanning the idol while it was worshipped, singing and dancing twice a day at the time of worship, carrying the sacred lamp during the processions, etc.

The dedication to gods, goddesses, and other objects of worship was both of men and women. The more common practice, however, was the dedication of women. The original form of the Devadasis and the dedication emphasized virginity and chastity of the woman dedicated so long as she was in the temple service. Likewise, the men pressed into the service of the temples as the Devadasis were required to dedicate their virility to the deity. As a matter of fact, men were castrated before they were dedicated. This was the practice at least in the early years of the institution in most of the ancient countries of the World. In later years the natural eunuchs started to dedicate themselves to the temples of their favourite deities. Thus, in India too, we find both men and women servants of god and goddesses, who are known by different terms in different parts of the country. For instance, they are known as the Muralis and Vaghyas — the female and male servants of god Ekavira of Jejuri in Maharashtra. And both the male and female servants of goddess Renuka or Yallamma of Saundatti in Karnataka are known as the Jogatis (however, they are distinguished by the common man by using the gender adjective; thus the male Jogati is called as Gandu Jogati or Jogappa, and the female Jogati as the Hennu Jogati or Jogawwa.

The custom of dedicating girls to Hindu temples and the objects of worship came into vogue during the post-Vedic and the post-Buddha period, in about third century A.D. This was the era of Puranas in India. The Puranas, especially the Bhavishya Purana, held it highly rewarding for a person seeking heaven to purchase girls and

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dedicate them to temples. Again it was during this period that the temple culture in India took its roots and shape. During the Vedic period the temples were not known; the religious rites were performed on temporary altars constructed for each occasion. Hence, we do not find any reference in the literature of the Vedic period about the Devadasis eventhough the Vedas and other writings mention about the different kinds of prostitutes, like the ganikas, rudraganikas, veshyas, and the Devaveshyas. With the development of Puranic religion, the ancient hard-riding, Soma-drinking, and flesh-eating Indra and his followers were replaced by gods like Shiva and Vishnu and their wives. The new gods were consecrated in big temples all over India. The pleasures of these temple gods were of a different type. They loved ablutions, ornaments, flowers, soft couches of downs, fruits, milk *and above all, music and dancing*. It was for the pleasure of these gods and their wives — to amuse them with music, songs and dances — that the temple dancers or the dancing girls, or the courtesans were first employed in the temples in India. (Thomas, 1964:237).

By the seventh century A.D. the institution had its firm roots in Indian culture. The Sun temples became very famous for eroticism. One could find in these temples a large number of Devadasis. Although the Sun temples were the specialised centres of Devadasis in the early period of the history of this institution, temples of all sects had their full complement of singing and dancing girls in later periods. And in South India, by the 9th and 10th centuries, there prevailed much activity in the matter of building temples for different gods and goddesses and elaborating the services in the temples. The total number of Devadasis in temples was in direct proportion to the wealth and prestige of the shrine; and the institution flourished with unabated vigour under the patronage of both the religious order and the State. The inscriptions show that in 1004 A.D. the great temple at Tanjore, built by the Chola King Rajaraja, was attached with as many as 400 Devadasis. All these women lived in the free quarters built by the State in four streets around the temple and were allowed tax free land out of the temple endowments. Likewise, the famous shrine of Somanatha in Saurastra had 500 Devadasis in its service to provide music day and night for the pleasure of the deity. In medieval times in Gujarat four thousand temples had about twenty thousand dancing girls (Thomas, 1964 : 237-39; Crooke, 1930 : 407).

The destruction of great temples by Muslim invaders and erection of mosques in the places of temples was the beginning of the decline of the institution of Devadasis in North India. But in South India, which was ruled by the Hindu kings, the institution flourished with the same vigour as it did in the pre-Muslim India. And at the zenith of its glory the Vijayanagara empire in South India had conferred considerable social recognition on the Devadasis. Abdur Razak has reported that "every temple had its crowds of Devadasis or handmaids of the god, and the prostitutes' quarter was one of the sights of the capital. The splendour of these houses, the beauty of the heart-ravishers, their blandishments and ogles are beyond description. . . . . These girls were skilled dancers and singers and many of them amassed enormous fortunes" (Thomas, 1964:136). And as late as the beginning of the 19th century there were 100 dancing girls attached to the temple at Canjeevaram. But it must be admitted that by the middle of the 19th century the institution had its real decline even in South India. The temple at Tanjore now had only fifteen Devadasis in its service

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(Crooke, 1930:407, Thomas, 1964:239). And when the Provincial Governments enacted the legislations during 1920s and 1930s preventing the dedication of girls and women to idols and objects of worship the grave was dug to bury the institution. Even then it was not buried for two more decades, i.e., until late 1950s. As a matter of fact, we still hear cases of Devadasis receiving their annual allowances from the temples and the villagers.

SOURCES OF RECRUITMENT

Generally speaking, the Devadasis were drawn from the classes of prostitutes to serve as the temple girls and courtesans. There were, however, other sources of recruiting the Devadasis. In times of famines, in ancient and medieval India, quite often the temple authorities purchased good looking girls from the poor parents and brought them up as the temple girls. In a few cases, the dancing girls were "adopted by the temple priests in childhood and were trained by them in the art of dancing and singing" (Thomas, 1964:112). At times, the pious and the superstitious parents offered their first born female children to the temples either for a male child or to keep with some special vow taken in the past due to miseries and sufferings including the child birth. A girl suffering from chronic illness was promised to be dedicated to the god in the event of her recovery from the illness. A girl was also dedicated to a deity in return for the health of an adult/aged person of the family; and if the girl promised for the deity died before the dedication ceremony, another girl from the family was promised to the deity and was dedicated through an appropriate ceremony. In some parts of the country, the girls considered to be unlucky to the parents and the family were given to the gods and goddesses capable of averting or counteracting the evil influences the girl might have.

The practice of dedicating girls to temples and objects of worship was very common among the backward classes and the untouchable communities of the Hindu society. Among these it was the custom to have always one of the daughters as the Devadasi; and a group of families or a clan saw to it that at least one girl was dedicated as a Devadasi every year. Similarly, some families among the Madigas — the untouchables among the Lingayats of Karnataka — used to dedicate one girl — preferably the last one — to the family god/goddess. Sometimes a girl became a Devadasi if she remained unmarried for a long time. Likewise, the reluctance to adopt a stranger as a son and the desire to have the continuity of the lineage was also a reason for dedicating the youngest girl of the family to a deity (the sons born out of the promiscuous life of this woman were accepted as the legitimate heirs of her father for all purposes).

In other regions, the priests demanded beautiful girls and women from their parents and men for the seraglio of gods. For example this was the common practice at Tirupathi and Jagannath temples. The Devadasis were also gifted to temples in order to earn the heaven which is clear from the Bhavishya Purana. In later years, the Devadasis were recruited on the hereditary basis for two reasons: firstly, to retain the landed property, and secondly, no respectable Hindu was prepared to marry the daughters of a Devadasi. To these sources may be added the voluntary dedication due to strong devotion or for the prosperity of the family.

TYPES OF DEVADASIS

On the basis of the above discussion and in full agreement with Santosh Chatterjee, the Devadasis may be grouped into

seven types. These are: (1) *Datta* — one who gives herself as a gift to a temple; (2) *Bikrita* — one who sells herself for the same purpose; (3) *Bhritya* — one who offers herself as a temple servant for the prosperity of her family; (4) *Bhakta* — one who joins a temple out of strong devotion to the deity; (5) *Hrita* — one who is enticed away and is presented to a temple; (6) *Alankara* — one who, being well trained in her profession and profusely decked, is presented to a temple by kings and others; and (7) *Rudraganika* or *Gopika* — one who receives regular wages from a temple, and is employed to sing and dance in the temple at the time of worship (1945: 32-33).

DEVADASIS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS

India is known for her cultural diversity. The institution of Devadasis is not an exception to this characteristic feature of the country. The institution was in existence all over the country, but was known differently in different regions exhibiting certain unique features. For instance, the Devadasis were known as *devaratial* — slaves of the gods — in Tamil Nadu; as *kudikkar* — those who belong to the house — in Travancore region; as *Bhavins* or *Bhavinis* — beautiful, wanton women — in Goa and Western India; as *Muralis*, *Jogtinis*, and *Aradhinis*, etc., in Maharashtra; as *Bhagtani* or *Bhagtan* — wife of a Bhagat or holy man — in Marwar; and as *Basavis* in Karnataka. However, only a few of these institutions are described below, while giving more importance to Basavis and other institutions in Karnataka.

Bhavinis: The Bhavinis are also known as *devli* — an attendant of an idol, or as *naikin* — mistress, procuress. The recruitment as Bhavinis was hereditary. Interestingly enough, these women came from the households of the chiefs of the communities in which the system had been in existence. A second unique feature of this institution was that a Bhavini was free to choose two or three girls among her daughters to succeed her as Bhavini. These women differed from the common prostitute only with respect to their dedication to a temple (Crooke, 1930: 407).

Bhagtanis: The Bhagtan or Bhagtani was only an ironical title denoting that the woman is the wife of a holy man — god. The unique feature of this institution was that before entering the temple service the girl was required to marry a *Sadhu* or the portrait of Lord Ganesha, for it was considered a sin to allow the maiden girls to take up the infamous employment before performing the marriage ceremony. A Sadhu was supposed to give up every connection with his bride on a nominal payment of a rupee and a half, as a token for his sacrifice. When no Sadhu was available, the girl was married to the portrait of Lord Ganesha, the god of enterprise (Crooke, 1930: 407-8).

Basavis of Karnataka: The term Basavi is the feminine gender of Basava — the bull. However, the term literally means the 'she bull', and carries with it the import of 'procreator'. In this ritual meaning we find the motive behind the institution's origin, namely, the continuation of the family and the lineage. Normally speaking, the lineage is continued, in all patriarchal societies, through the male member. And when in a family no male is born the lineage is supposed to have come to an end, provided adoption is not resorted to. In other words, the reluctance to adopt a son and the reluctance to accept and permit the discontinuation of the family lineage resulted in the practice of not marrying the youngest daughter and allowing her a free sexual life within the caste of her own and with the persons of upper castes

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as well. The children born out of such promiscuous life were considered legitimate offsprings of the woman and the legitimate heirs of her father for the purposes of continuing the family lineage. These children were allowed to marry girls and boys born out of wedlock. They were socially much higher than the children born to a widow, a divorcee, or out of wedlock. Thus the institutions of Basavis is indicative of the existence of both matriarchal and patriarchal family systems side by side in the same society.

Types of Basavis: Whatever may be the reasons for the origin of the institution of Basavis, they were also the women pressed into the temple service by their parents or the community. In the erstwhile princely State of Mysore the Basavis are classified into: (1) Garuda Basavi, and (2) Linga Basavi. The former type of Basavis are the women dedicated to Lord Vishnu and bear the image of the bird eagle, which is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu according to Hindu mythology, tattoed on their body, generally on their right breast, as the distinctive rank of their status. The Linga Basavis are the women in the service of Lord Shiva and bear the mark of Lingam (phallus) tattoed on their thighs. A third type of Basavi called as the *Hennu Basavi* was also in existence. The word 'Hennu' means female. She was called so when the dedication was neither to Lord Vishnu nor to Lord Shiva. Instead she was dedicated to a goddess or a female deity of the village. In other words, this classification is in terms of the god or goddess to whom the woman was dedicated.

In the erstwhile Bombay Karnatak region (comprising the districts of Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwar and North Kanara) the Basavis were grouped into: (1) Bala Basavis and (2) Batla Basavis. The former were recruited from the Mahar caste — the untouchables among the Veerashaivas or the Lingayats. The word Bala means young or maiden. Hence, (perhaps) they were supposed to be virgin and chasteful throughout their life. But like any other form of Devadasi in any region of India, this form also lost its original meaning in course of time, perhaps in the medeival times, and the women had been the prostitutes. But these women were reputed to prognosticate events such as rain, weather, crops, etc., in which the village people were interested. On the first day of the Hindu calender — the *Yugadi* — they used to worship the musical instrument called *Tamburi* — an indigenous guitar — which they used to carry with them wherever they went. They used to go from house to house foretelling the events and collecting gifts while playing the Tamburi. On other occasions also they had this practice. The Bala Basavis are still found in some villages in North Karnataka, but they do not prostitute. And even today some of them collect the annual rewards and grants from the temple to which they were dedicated and also from the community.

The Batla Basavis were found more commonly than the Bala Basavis. The adjective *Batla* means a concave metal vessel which was carried by these Basavis always. This vessel is the distinguishing symbol of this Basavi as the Tamburi is of the Bala Basavi. The vessel was given to her at the time of her dedication by the Veerashaiva community, especially the merchant class among the Veerashaivas. The Batla Basavi was free to thrust the vessel into the heap of any food grains in any body's shop in the market and get a handful of that grains. Thus she collected her livelihood; she could collect her livelihood so long as she possessed the vessel. The brothers of a Basavi had no claim over

her perquisites which she got from the Veerashaiva community. Instead they were entitled to only one fourth of the movable property of her family; the rest was owned by the Basavi herself.

Unique Features: The Basavis were the women dedicated to serve exclusively the Veerashaivas and to live under their care. The rules of conduct of the Veerashaivas lay down that the Basavis should not have the sexual relations with a *Bhavi* — a non-Lingayat. When a Basavi was found to have sexual relations with a Bhavi, she was deprived of her vessel and was prevented from collecting her livelihood from the Veerashaivas. It also meant the loss of care and protection from the Veerashaiva community and becoming a common prostitute to sell her charms to any body for monetary considerations. But the spiritual loss was still greater — becoming a prostitute of Bhavis meant the definite loss of heaven, for if a Basavi served the Veerashaivas faithfully, it was believed that she would attain salvation. The philosophy of the Veerashaivas has been "Work is Worship". Therefore, sincere and devoted pursuit of one's own profession would definitely earn for him the heaven and the salvation. The profession of a Basavi was the prostitution. Hence she was expected to be faithful to the Veerashaivas as a prostitute and help herself to get heaven for herself. This Rule forms the eleventh of the *sixty four* rules of conduct of the Veerashaivas that were laid down during the 12th Century (or may be even earlier). Thus the profession of Basavis in Karnatak was socially and religiously recognised as a means to attain salvation.

SIMILAR INSTITUTION IN NORTH KARNATAKA

In North Karnataka there have been three more institutions that are similar to as well as different from the institution of the Devadasis. These are: (1) the institution of the Jogatis, (2) Patradavaru, and (3) the Veshis. Of these, the first one is the most important and very popular institution from the view point of the common man and also an anthropologist.

The Jogatis: The term Jogati is a corrupt form of the word Jogiti which is derived from the word Jogini — the feminine gender of the word Jogi. The word Jogi is also a corrupted word. It is a corrupt form of the sanskrit word Yogi. The word Yogi means an enlightened person or a person in the persuit of the knowledge and who has renounced the wordly pleasures and has devoted the rest of his life for the attainment of Moksha. Hence, the word Jogati necessarily means a person who has renounced the worldy pleasures and has devoted the rest of the life to the service of the goddess Renuka or Yallamma of Saundatti in North Karnataka.

The institution of Jogatis, strictly speaking, cannot be equated with the institution of Devadasis although there are certain common features. There are two types of Jogatis, viz., the Mangalarati Jogati and the Muttukattida Jogatis. Of these only the former may be regarded as a Devadasi; yet she differs from a Devadasi in many respects. And among the latter type of Jogatis only a few are prostitutes and they are clearly distinguished from other types of Jogatis within the group.

Mangalarati means the sacred lamp. This sacred lamp is carried by the Jogati while the idol of Renuka is taken in procession; and at other times she just cleans and puts oil in it. Therefore, she is known as the Mangalarati Jogati. Unlike a Devadasi

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the Mangalarati Jogati is bought by the temple priests. There is only one Jogati of this type and she is attached to the main temple of Renuka. The temple priests buy a young and beautiful girl from a poor and low class family and dedicate her to the service of goddess Renuka. She would be replaced by another young and beautiful girl only in the event of her death. The Mangalarati Jogati remains all her life as a prostitute to the temple priests. However, she is not changed after she loses her charm or after becoming old. The children born out of her promiscuous life with the temple priests are allowed to marry and settle their own households. None of the daughters of this Jogati can succeed her mother.

Muttu means pearls and *Kattida* means tied. However, the pearls are not used, instead the stone beads are stringed and tied round the neck of the person undergoing the initiation ceremony to become a Jogati. In other words, Muttu-Kattuvadu is an initiation ceremony which is not conducted in the temple, but in the quarters of one of the temple priests outside the temple premises. Both men and women may get initiated as the Jogatis. Most of the men who get initiated as Jogatis are eunuchs; and most of the women becoming Jogatis are married, and the newly acquired status of a Jogati does not affect their marital status and relations with any member of the family. These women obtain a kind of pearls (beads) that are called as the Garati Muttu (the word Garati means a devout wife). It is compulsory on the part of the wives of the priests of the temples of Renuka in different villages to become Jogatis. These also obtain the Garati Muttu. They mainly assist their men in worshipping the goddess by way of carrying the idol of the goddess to the houses of the devotees along with the bowl and holy lamp.

There are two more types of beads, namely, the Sule Muttu and the Jogati Muttu. The word *Sule* means a prostitute. Thus, it is obtained only by those who intend to become the ignoble women selling their bodies to any body and every body paying them their charges. In certain cases the parents who want their daughters to become prostitutes also get for their girls the Sule Muttu. The Jogati Muttu is not meant for any specific category of persons. It is obtained by men, eunuchs, the widows, and the retired prostitutes alike. These persons have a desire to serve the goddess.

Thus, prostitution is not an essential feature of the institution of the Jogatis as it is of the Devadasis, yet there is a provision for prostitution. Although the number of the women entering prostitution via this institution is small and is rapidly decreasing, the society has attached a sort of social stigma to it. Therefore, women from higher castes and the upper socio-economic classes are prohibited to become Jogatis; yet there are many instances of such women who are the Jogatis. The institution of Jogatis is essentially popular among the low caste people, the poor and the uneducated masses. The high caste Hindus and the educated look down upon the institution of Jogatis because of the fact that at least on occasions there is a free mixing of prostitutes-cum-Jogatis, the Jogatis from the untouchable communities and others; every new Jogati is required to perform certain rituals in the colony of the untouchables in order to qualify herself/himself as a Jogati; and every Jogati is required to collect alms at least from five households, and not to speak of the requirements of wearing birth suit or covering the body with the neem leaves before becoming a Jogati or after becoming

a Jogati. However, it must be noted that, compared to the institution of the Devadasis the institution of the Jogatis is very strong in its religious and social aspects, and there is no danger of its degeneration into the institution of prostitution especially when prostitution via this institution has already become unpopular.

Patradavaru: The term Patradavaru literally means the role players. When the institution of Devadasis became very popular with the common man and the dedication of girls was in large numbers, the women in the temple service could not be engaged all the day nor they could be paid for their maintenance. In such cases, the Devadasis were allowed private practice when not engaged in the temple service. Therefore, they took to singing and dancing in social functions or for socially well placed persons on attractive terms; and *some of them took to stage acting*. Those women who took to stage acting specialised in the art of acting and were the professional actresses. In North Karnataka such women came to be known as the Patradavaru. In the historical sense, this institution is a legacy of the Vijayanagara empire.

The unique feature about this institution is that these women are not dedicated to a god or goddess, yet they sing and dance on festive occasions in the temples of the presiding deity of the village. They also used to render such services to high caste Hindus or to the wealthy persons in the village on occasions like marriages and birth anniversaries. Until recently no marriage in the family of a wealthy person and the village headman in North Karnataka was performed without singing and dancing by these women. The second unique feature of the institution has been that these women had never been prostitutes. Instead they were concubines or mistresses to a wealthy person or the village headman. Many instances are cited even today of these women who have been as loyal, faithful and devoted as any married woman.

Veshis: The term *veshi* is the corrupt form of the word *Veshya*—a prostitute. But not all Veshis were the common prostitutes. Many of them were concubines. The term is also used in a euphemistic sense to refer to the women dedicated to god or goddess or an object of worship. She was usually dedicated to the presiding deity of the village, and normally god Hanuman, in the same manner as a Devadasi was dedicated. But after the dedication she was allowed to live with any body from her own caste or from higher caste, but who promised her maintenance. She could thus be a mistress to a single person all her life, or she could change her masters. If no body was willing to take her as a mistress with a promise to provide her maintenance, she was free to become a prostitute.

Whether she was a mistress or a prostitute, occasionally she was required to render a few services to the temple to which she was dedicated. Such occasions were the annual fairs and the festivals, in which she was required to carry the sacred lamp, participate in the *Okuli* — a game played with coloured water and in which men from certain communities of the village throw water on women and the women beat them with the trunk of a flower tree which is called in the regional language as Kanagila — oleander (Nerium Odorum). For these services she was rewarded with a pair of sarees every year. A Veshi was also asked to prepare the Mangalasutra of a bride if she was present on the occasion. A Veshi was commonly found in the Dharwar district of Karnataka.

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II

INSTITUTION DEGENERATED

Although the original form of the Devadasi was free from sex, noble in character, and emphasized virginity, chastity, and morality of the woman, soon it degenerated into an institution of prostitution under the guise of religion. Many factors were responsible for this change.

In many cases the young girls were pressed into the temple service forcibly either by their parents or by their masters for the attraction of material and heavenly benefits. The profession promised no opportunities to the young ladies for the fulfilment of their natural physiological urges. The sacred duties to be performed every day in the temple did not occupy the full-time of the Devadasi. And in some cases, the remuneration from the temple was only nominal. Therefore, in course of time, they were allowed private practice when not engaged in sacred duties. They acted in stage shows, danced and sang in social functions on payment. Thus opportunities were provided to them to come in contact with men outside the family (including in the temple). The woman who was not provided with the opportunities for the fulfilment of physiological urges and to have sexual gratification, the woman who was idle for most part of the day, and the woman who was to be in contact with the men outside her home and other than her relatives, and the woman who was allowed private practice of her talents in singing, dancing, and acting, was certainly amenable for inducements to lead an immoral life. But the question is 'who induced and exploited her sexually'?

The available accounts of the institution of the Devadasis indicate that the institution (combined with sex) was borrowed by the priest from the king. Just as the kings employed armies of prostitutes for enhancing their pleasures and pomp, the temples engaged the women (in prostitution?) for various services in the temple. Since these services were rendered by these women under the close supervision of the priest who had a greater control over the affairs of the temple and the temple staff, he may be considered as the exploiter of the women in temple service —sexually and morally—in order to satisfy his sexual hunger. And it appears that "at first they were reserved exclusively for the enjoyment of the Brahmins" (Dubois: 1928: 585).

Abbe J. A. Dubois, who travelled far and wide in South India in late 18th and early 19th Centuries, described how the priests used to recruit beautiful women for the seraglio of God Venkateshwara at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, and also when and how they were dismissed from the seraglio, in the following words:

> ". . . . At a certain time of the year a grand procession is formed, which attracts an immense crowd of persons of both sexes. While the image of Venkateshwara is borne through the streets on a magnificent car, the Brahmins who preside at the ceremony go about among the crowd and select the most beautiful women they can find, demanding them of their husbands or parents in the name of Venkateswara, for whose service, it is asserted, they are destined. Those husbands who have not lost all common-sense, understanding, or at least suspecting, that a god of stone has no need of wives, indignantly refuse to deliver up theirs, and bluntly speak their mind to the hypocritical rogues. The latter, far from being disconcerted, proceed to apply to others who are better disposed,

for some of the men are delighted at the honour conferred upon them by so great a god in condescending to ally himself with their family, and do not hesitate to deliver their wives and even daughters into the hands of his priests.

. . . . When the god takes it into his head that some of his wives are beginning to grow old or are no longer pleasing to him, *he signifies through the priests his intention of divorcing them**. A mark is branded on their thighs or breasts with a red-hot iron, representing the god Venkateswara, and they receive a certificate showing that they have faithfully served a certain number of years as legitimate wives of the god, and are therefore recommended to the charitable public. Then they are dismissed, and provided with their certificate of good conduct they go about the country under the name of *Kaliyuga-Lakshmis* . . . . Wherever they go their wants are abundantly supplied.

This system of procuring wives (and dismissing them) for their idols is not a peculiarity of the temple of Tirupati. The priests of many other temples have found it convenient to have recourse to it, as for instance those incharge of the temple of Jagannath which is even more famous than the temple of Tirupati. . . ." (601-02).

Since the women in the temple service were sexually exploited by the priests and after a few years were dismissed from the temple service and were recommended for the public, and also were allowed private practice while in temple service but when free from temple duties, the Devadasis started granting favours of a more intimate nature to the general public for which they were paid heavily. In South India, as a matter of fact, as early as 9th and 10th Centuries the term Devadasi came to be used in the euphemistic sense to refer to the women in prostitution. From then onwards a Devadasi has been recognised as a woman prostituting in the name of god and religion; and since then the fame of a shrine is identified with the charm of its voluptuous attendants instead of the greatness of the deity to whom they were dedicated, and pilgrims were more attracted by these women than the deity (Thomas: 1964: 239). In course of time, dedication became an integral part of the institution of prostitution, consequent upon which a Devadasi was not normally distinguished from a prostitute and also was looked down upon by the society.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS RECOGNITION

Although the Devadasis were looked down as the lewd women making public traffic of their charms, they were given a place of honour in society. Certain rituals — both at the temple and at the home — were exclusively performed by Devadasis. It is already mentioned that the Devadasis occupied a rank next to the temple priests among the temple staff, and that their presence was compulsory while an idol was worshipped or was taken in procession. Even today the 'descendants' of the Devadasis perform certain important rituals at least during the fairs and festivals of the presiding female deity of the village. A woman of a low caste, preferably belonging to the family of a Devadasi, accompanies the processions of goddesses; without her presence the procession does not make a move. The Devadasis take active part, along with the men of the village, in a game of coloured water played on the

* Italics mine.

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occasion of the annual festival of God Hanuman. Only the Devadasis are supposed to take part in this game. Since the Devadasis are a rare phenomenon these days, they are in great demand on such occasions and are paid in hundreds for taking part in the game; or the festival itself is not observed every year.

The Devadasis were allowed private practice when not engaged in temple service. As a matter of fact, they took to stage acting, singing and dancing in social functions. They were a media of entertainment both to the elite and the common man. We find references to this effect in history. For instance, during the days of Vijayanagara empire, stage acting was the alternative job for a girl or woman trained to become a Devadasi or a mistress against her own desire. There was a rule in Vijayanagara regulating the contract between the foster mother or parents and the future master of the girl to be signed before taking the girl in his possession as his mistress.

The Devadasis seem to have enjoyed an enviable social position in the past. A Devadasi was considered as the very embodiment of the goddess to whom she was dedicated. On the occasions of the village festivals, before any one was served the feast (including the priests) the Devadasis were served. Even today we find such instances in Bijapur district of Karnataka, where these women are known as Sumangaliyaru. The similar practices have been in existence in different parts of the country.

It was considered auspicious and good if a Devadasi prepared the sacred necklace of a bride, for a Devadasi never becomes a widow as she happens to be the wife of an immortal husband — a god or goddess. An encounter with a Devadasi before embarking upon a journey or a voyage was also considered as a very good omen of definite results. And in the past, the ordinary politeness required that when persons of some distinction paid formal visits to each other, they were necessarily accompanied by a certain number of such women; their absence on such occasions was considered as a disrespect to the person visited.

The institution of Devadasi was not only approved by the religious order and the common man but also by the State. Accounts by the Muslim scholar Alberuni and the inscriptions reveal that the kings who had vested interests in the temple revenue employed the dancing girls in temples provided there was no opposition from the right-minded Hindus. And Abdur Razak, the ambassador of Turky to Vijayanagara in 15th Century, has recorded that women of this class were living in the State controlled institutions the revenues of which went towards the upkeep of the police (Thomas, 1964 : 136; Crooke, 1930: 407).

Thus it was because of the recognition from the society as a whole that the institution could have its firm roots in Indian society and make deeper impact on our culture for centuries together.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DEVADASIS TO INDIAN CULTURE

The Devadasis in Tamil Nadu formed a caste group which had its own laws of inheritance, customs, rules of conduct, the etiquette, and caste panchayats or councils. Thus the system had no parallel in any other part of India and the World too. The temple dances and their accompanists formed the sub-castes from which the temple girls were recruited on hereditary basis.

The temple dancers were the only women in India who had the privilege of learning to sing, dance and read — of course

to render the services in the temple more attractively. As a matter of fact, they mastered singing and dancing and developed them into fine arts. While the temple dancer mastered dancing and singing, her brothers and sons mastered the vocal and instrumental music. Thus, the caste groups like the Ammals, Aiyyars and Aiyyangars have rendered yoeman service to the domain of fine arts, especially Bharat Natyam and the Carnatic music. Most of these men and women have been known for their mastery over different musical instruments; and few names are attached with the respective musical instrument over which the persons gained mastery.

EVIL EFFECTS

The general effect of this institution, however, was undesirable from the social and ethical point of view. The institution of Devadasis did not do anything to elevate the social position of the temple dancers, instead the temple dancers degenerated into mere prostitutes and their apartments around the temples into brothels. Prostitution by the Devadasis was encouraged by the State and the religious order everywhere. Thus, in course of time, prostitution and concubinage became the accepted and justified ways of life for a Devadasi even while she was in temple service. There was no difference between a Devadasi and a common prostitute, except that the former was dedicated to an object of worship and prostituted in the name of religion. Since a Devadasi was given some recognition despite she being a lewd woman, the women taking to prostitution started getting dedicated themselves to an idol or object of worship before becoming a prostitute. Hence, the term Devadasi was loosely applied to the women both in prostitution and temple service.

As the illegitimate children and the children born out of the promiscuous relations had no place in society (as also at present), the female offsprings of a Devadasi were pressed into the institution on hereditary basis. The girl was taught all the arts and skills of the profession of prostitution quite before she was drafted into it. In other words, she was trained to lead an immoral life even when she did not know what was morality. However, it must be admitted that the institution provided them, at least, the material security in their life. And prostitution is so much and so long associated with the Devadasi system that a prostitute coming from a low caste family and rural area does claim that she is a Devadasi, and to be a Devadasi is a custom and traditional occupation of the family.

As a matter of fact, even after two or three decades after the custom and the practice of dedication of girls to the idols and objects of worship was prohibited by Provincial legislations, there were instances of dedications. For instance, the Annual Reports on the Working of the Backward Class Department of the erstwhile Bombay Government mention about the practice of dedicating girls to gods and objects of worship among the backward communities as late as early 1950s. And the authors of *A Study of Prostitutes in Bombay* could find in late 1950s about one-third of the commercial prostitutes in Bombay belonging to the institution of Devadasis. This finding of these authors has generated a full-fledged study into the 'dead' institution of Devadasis. The reasons are not far to seek. Since the dedication of girls to idols and objects of worship was legally prohibited and the society was rather reluctant to do away with the practice all of a sudden, the institution did not have an immediate burial. For some time, i.e., till 1950s girls were dedicated to idols and objects of worship with the Government approval; and some of the 'so dedicated' women took

to concubinage instead of prostitution. But it must be mentioned here that after a total retirement from the life of a concubine these women have turned themselves into brothel keepers and the procurers, and thus, have been responsible for the immoral traffic in girls and women even today. But with the death of the 'living Devadasis-turned-brothel-keepers' the institution will have its final burial.

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The Institution of Dévadāsīs in Assam

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Women had occupied an important place in the religious life of Assam in all ages. Though the 16th century Vaishnavite revolution under Śankara Deva deprived them of this privilege it is maintained in the folk-cults as well as the non-Vaishnavite forms of worship. One such example is the Dévadāsī dance. It was a very common feature in the Saivite temples of Hājo, Parihāréśwara temple of Dubi, the celebrated shrines at Dérgāon and Jaysāgar near present Sibsāgar. But its influence was equally felt at non-Saivite temples like that of Hayagrīva-Mādhava dedicated to Viṣnu which is sacred to Hindus and Buddhists alike. The Dévadāsī dance is a forgotten story now and the only living memories of the extraordinary religious dance style of Assam are the very old Dévadāsīs, though senility has effaced all memories of their hey-day till fifty years ago. But it is living in another form, the Deodhanī dance of Upper Assam which however is restricted only to the female oracles of the Marān and Maṭak communities. This less than pure dance consists only of the leaps, jumps and sprints of the violently shaking bodies of the females who had taken a vow and had been possessed. It is a trance dance. The Maibis of Manipur, also priestesses of folk-cults, are the counter-parts of the Deodhanīs of Assam. The term Deodhanī is the feminine form of Deodhāi which means the nurse of the gods, Déo for a god and Dhāi, a nurse.

The Dévadāsī is known as *Naṭi* or *Naṭinī* in Assam. This simplification of her designation only as a dancer attached to a temple proves that the origin of the system must have been secular. She was allotted to the temple only for the precise purpose of dancing at the time of the *Ārati* twice a day and no mysterious or semi-religious association is made with the profession as in the case of south India. Girls were usually selected and trained from the Naṭ Kalitā caste who are dancers and acrobats by profession.

They are not associated with any particular place but Kālugāon was one of their centres, whence came the famous Assamese queen and ruler, Pramathéśwarī Dévī, originally a Dévadāśī with the name Phuléśwarī attached to the temple of Joydol near Sibsagar. But she and her cousin Draupadī, later to be known as Amvikā Dévī (pl. I) ruled Assam in succession during the incumbency of their spouse Svargadeo Śiva Siṁha Mahārājā.

Other temples which were famous for Dévadāsīs were at Biśnāth in the district of Darrang and at Béngénā Āti in that of Sibsāgar. Tradition says that there was a time when 5,000 Dévadāsīs were employed in the Kāmākhyā temple of Gauhati too. But the temple being a Śaktist one, dedicated to Devi, it seems improbable.

Assamese history and literature are full of references, direct or indirect, to the practice of dedicating Dévadāsīs to temples and it appears to have been common till the Pre-British times. The origin of Dévadāsī institution is lost in mystery and tradition. All ancient cultures had at some time or other associated dance with religion. It grew ultimately of the fertility cult of primitive man who was awed at the reproductive capacity in the female. She became the nucleus for the conception of the supreme deity in the form of the Mother and mortal females too were regarded as possessors of some sparks of the energy of supreme Mother. Religious rites included dancing which had magical significance in Egypt, Phoenicea, Assyria, and Greece. Ancient Babylonians gave the wife her true status only when she had given herself up to the gratification of a stranger in the temple of goddess Mylitta. In Armenia too girls had to serve as temple attendants before they were married. An echo of this custom is still to be found among the Buddhist population of Lahul and Spiti and also in Himachal Pradesh. Among them girls who cannot be married off before attaining a reasonable age are dedicated to the Lamasaries as Jomos who take care of the places as well as of the Lamas who reside there. A kind of religious but clandestine prostitution arises out of this close association between the Jomos and the Lamas. The charm of religious dances had been so great in the ancient mind that even monotheistic and puritanical people as the Hebrews could not resist the temptation. We find references to such dances in the presence of the Golden Calf in the Old Testament

PLATE I

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which was much to the chagrin of Moses. In Rome the Vestal Virgins were an important part of religious life. In India the earliest literary reference to female temple dancers can be found in Kālidāsa's *Méghadūtaṁ* which is assigned to the 4th century A.D. It says that the temple of Mahākāla at Ujjainī resounded with the sound of the ankle-bells of the numerous dancers who performed there. The *Rājataranginī* mentions one Kamalā, the Dévadāsī of Paundravardhana or north Bengal who fell in love with the king of Kashmir. In the 11th century the continuance of the system has been vouchsafed by the Venetian traveller Marco Polo who came to India. It was about this time that *Tantricism* especially its *Vāmāchāra-mārga*, became powerful and the need for associating women with magico-religious rituals again began to be felt. It possibly influenced the concept of secret love as upheld by the *Parakiyā-Préma* ideal of the Neo-Vaishnavite movement in the 16th century. The Assamese Vaishnavite revival of the late 15th century however kept itself free from the above concept just as it had discarded idolatry too. As a result of Chaitanya Vaishnavism Dévadāsīs or Maharīs were engaged in the Jagannātha temple of Puri to recite and enact the *Gīta Govinda* daily. The temples of Tamilnad were already teeming with Dévadāsīs. In the Andhra region they were known as Vasavīs i.e., Vṛiṣavī, on account of their association with, Saivism. In the Chingleput district the weavers dedicate the eldest daughter to be Dévadāsī. She would thus fall under the category called the Dattā, i.e., the one given or dedicated. This custom is known as *Séja* all over the south. The other classes are named according to the way they come to the temple; for example, the *Vikritā* is one who had sold herself for debt or some such economic reasons to the temple. There were also some others called the *Hritās*, i.e., kidnapped ones. Such girls were forcibly removed to the temple on account of their exceptional beauty and charm, to be utilised for the service of gods. The Dévadāsīs of Maharaṣṭra areas were known as the *Muralīs* and Goa too preserved this custom in spite of four hundred years of Portuguese rule and persecution.

The life of a Dévadāsī was what she made of it. The term Dévadāsī (*Devaṁ indriyaṁ dāsmīti — hanṭītiḥ, devadās aṅ gauṇādītvāt ngīṣ*) simply means the servant of the god or it can be twisted to mean the servant for the pleasure of the god (*devāya kṛīḍāay dāsīva*). This is the twist which brought infamy to the

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otherwise religious duty. The novices in the Chingleput district were initiated with due ceremonies to the sacred duties. They were supposed to practise *Brahmacharya* and lead a clean and pious life. But their youth, the pleasure of the flesh enjoyed in the lavish surroundings of the prosperous temple and the seduction by the priest and the laity made it hard for them to lead an ideal life. Those who took life too easy became no better than common prostitutes. Some of the girls were married to the icon, some again to the *Khaḍga* or the sabre for animal sacrifice in the temple. It is a simple marriage. The girl places a garland on the sabre, *Bhāṭa* or bard sings the benedictory verse while her mother blesses her with a married life with the tutelary deity. Thenceforth she is known as the *Bhavin* and remains a virgin. Such *Bhavins* live in matrilineal society for generations in the temple and those who have no daughters resort to adoption. People overlook the birth of children to *Bhavins* which is ascribed to divine grace. The *Bhavins* get up very early when there are yet two *Dandas* left for sunrise and are engaged in household works of the temple, i.e., their divine spouse. The evenings are dedicated to singing and dancing in the temple at the time of the *Arati*.

Speculations however had been made from time to time as to the origin and necessity of and popular attitude towards the system of Dévadāsīs. In the earlier phases man might have desired to entertain his god with all the things that he enjoyed on earth. But gradually philosophy and rituals sought to give a new meaning and support to the otherwise not so popular system. The following observations by Dr. A. L. Basham appear quite convincing. "In the Middle Ages the god in his temple was treated like an earthly king, he had his wives, his ministers and attendants and all the paraphernalia of a court including his attendant prostitutes. These were often the children of mothers of the same profession, born and reared in the temple precincts, but they might be daughters of ordinary citizens, given in childhood to the god as pious offerings. They attended on the god's person, danced and sang before him and like the servants of any earthly king bestowed their favours on the courtiers whom he favoured, in this case the male worshippers who paid their fees to the temple."[1]

1. *The Wonder that was India*: Basham, A. L., p. 185.

Contrary to Western theories that the Dévadāsī system was actually given its position and aura of sanctity by the priestly classes only for their sensual gratification we find early mediaeval records showing the resentment of the Brahmins and priests towards the system which however was encouraged by the rulers for economic reasons. The priests wanted to clear the temples of such profanity and obscenity but popular interest in the dance and the dancers backed by royal support and grant for the maintenance of the Dévadāsīs in the temples was too strong for them. Al-Beruni says, "Kings maintained this institution for the benefit of their revenues in the teeth of opposition of Brahmana priests. But for the king..... no Brahmana or priest would allow in their temple women who sing, dance or play. The kings however make them a source of attraction to their subjects so that they may meet the expenditure of their armies out of the revenues derived therefrom."[2] The above statement shows the priestly and religious attitude towards the system at the end of the 1st millenium A.D. "But as we have noticed in many other cases the secular attitude differed very greatly from the religious ideals, and here it was the secular view which prevailed. By the Middle Ages the Brahmans who propounded the Sacred Laws might themselves be attached to the temples with hundreds of prostitutes on their staff."[3]

As regards the antiquity of the institution of Dévadāsīs in India we go back to the days of Aśoka as found from the inscription in Prākrit from Ramgarh, about 160 miles south of Banaras. It gives the names of Dévadinna, a painter and Sutanukā, the Dévadāsī whom he loved.[4] "The practice of maintaining Dévadāsīs in temples is at least as old as Kauṭilya (ii, 23); but there was no attempt before the 11th century A.D. to pool together all the dancing girls attached to all temples in a particular region with a view to adding to attraction of each and every religious festival".[5]

2. *Struggle for Empire*: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, p. 496.
3. *The Wonder that was India*: Basham, A. L., p. 185.
4. *A.S.I.R.*: 1903-4, p. 122.
5. *Economic History of North India*: Majumdar, B. P., p. 375.

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It is difficult to determine when the Dévadāsī became an institution in Assam. "It appears probable that the institution developed in Assam under *Tantric* influences. It is however strange that the virgins dedicated for a noble cause living as it were the life of a Buddhist nun could degenerate into prostitutes and were allowed to defile the temple of gods."[6] Assam had been the greatest seat of *Tantricism* and it is no wonder that the system of maintaining Dévadāsīs would find a congenial atmosphere among a people given to dancing and music. The *Vajrayāna* and the *Kālachakrayāna* sects of Buddhists emphasise sex as a way to salvation in the doctrines as follows:

> *"Sambhogārthamidaṁ sarvaṁ tridhātu kāmaśéṣaṭaḥ*
> *Nirmitam Vajranāthéna sādhakānām hitāyacha."*

The earliest epigraphic records mentioning the Dévadāsis in Assam are the Tezpur Copper Plates Grants of Vanamāla who ruled during 835-'60 A.D. In many places of the three plates forming the grant which was made in the 19th year of the reign (c. 854 A.D.) are direct references to the dedication of women to the temples, to the quarters of prostitutes of this kind and also to the precise case of the offer of Dévadāsīs to the temple of Hāṭakéśvara or Hāṭaka Śulin at Tezpur. Line No. 24 of this grant reads as follows:

"Dhuruhe Nahuṣasya yéna patitam kālāntarādalayaṁ saudhaṁ bhaktinatā khilamaravaravratārchitanreḥ punaḥ prālayeachalaśringatungamatula grāmebhya véśyājanairyuktaṁ Hāṭakaśuliṅaḥ kshitibhujā bhaktyā naraṁ chakruṣā."[7] Again there is a reference to music in the temple in line No. 28 in this manner: *"Gāyantyadyapyabjrabhyoḥ suvapyon déśé déśê śālinīmasya kirtiṁ."* The donation of women for the temple has been recognised as a pious and meritorious act in line No. 29, *"Vahuhéma raupyagajavājihahi pramadādiratnanichayaṁvahuśaḥ"*. The river Lauhitya or the Brahmaputra has been compared to the appeal and

6. *History and Civilization of the People of Assam*: Chowdhury, P. C., p. 350.

7. *Kamarupa Sasanavali*: Bhattacharya Vidyavinod, Pandit Padmanath, pp. 62-4.

8. *Purani Asam Buranji*, pp. 82-3.

coquetry of the Daluhāngana and the dancing girls: *"ramaṇīyādaluhaganābhiriva sakalajanamanohārinīmḥi naṭibhiriva nartaka puruṣakramaṇa samvardhitotkantabhi....."* The unusual term *Daluhānganā* has been successfully explained by Dr. B. K. Kakati as a woman of the *Daluhā* or the temple. According to him *Daluhā* is the temple or place or worship in Austric vocabulary. The Austric affiliation of Assamese religious dance has also been corroborated by Dr. P. C. Choudhury in his 'A History of Civilization of the People of Assam.'

Later references to *Nāṭīs* or Dévadāsīs are to be found in the capture of two of them by Satrājit from the Śiva temple at Biśnath near Tezpur. This happened in 1634 Saka or 1712 A.D. The Koch and Āhom kings of Assam had brought members of the Gandharva or *Naṭ-Kalitā* community, who were high grade Śūdras from many places of the lower Brahmaputra valley and settled them in the vicinity of temples of Śiva-Umānanda at Gauhati, Hayagrīva-Mādhava at Hājo, Svayambhulinga of Dubi and Śiva at Dérgaon to dance and sing their numbers on the deities.[9]

Classical Indian dancing received an impetus with the introduction into Assam of the Śrī Hastamūktāvalī, a treatise on dancing during Ahom rule. It was produced by Śuvankara probably in Mithila during 1583-1619 A.D. "Even the Ahom royal residence known as the 'Kāréng' was a compound of two Āhom words 'Kā' or dancing girl and 'Rén' or house.[10] But the crown jewels of the *Naṭ-Kalitās* were the two cousins, Phuléśwarī and Draupadī who by virtue of their beauty, charm and intelligence rose to the position of the chief queen of Assam, one after the other. Phuléśwarī was a daughter of a *Naṭ* family from Kālugāon — Chinātoli near Sibsagar. The eyes of the king, Śiva Singha fell on her on one occasion as she danced in the temple of Joydal and this set the ball rolling.[11]

The life and career of Phuléśwarī reads like a romance. Soon after the coronation of Śiva Singha, the Rājaguru, Krishnarāma Nyāya Vāgisha declared that the king was under the evil

9. *Sura Parichaya*: Bardoloi, K., 1928.

10. *Ahom Jati Aru Asamiya Samskriti*: Gogoi, L., p. 161. 1961.

11. *Buranjiya Parasa Nagar*: Gogoi, L., 1957.

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effect of stars called the Chatrabhanga Yoga, and it were bene-
ficial if he handed over charge of the government to some one else
till the evil effect lasted. Now it was the time for Phuléświarī to
step in. She, a neo convert to Śaktism along with her husband, was
in the favour of the Rājaguru, and thus was raised to the position
of the ruling queen and was given the title of Bar-Rajā, or the
'great king'."[12] She even had coins struck in her name with the
legend in Persian, 'Ahom Begum Pramatheswari Devi'. The
Assamese legends on her conjoint coinage with her husband were
'*Śrī Śrī Swargadéva Śiva Singha nripa tadvallabhā Śrī Śrī Phuléś-*
warī Dévinām' and those for her exclusive coins were '*Śrī Śrī*
Śiva Singha nripamahisī Śrī Śrī Phuléśwarī dévyāḥ', respec-
tively.[13] Tradition says that she herself had been a girl of immense
beauty and great intelligence and attracted the attention of Śiva
Singha while he was still a prince.[14] But sober history says she
was picked up by one officer Rupa Chandra Barbarua when she
and her cousin Draupadī were tending cattle in childhood. They
were presented to queen Ratnakānti, the first wife of Śiva Singha
as *Ligirīs* or handmaids. As Phuléświarī grew in years the young
king became more and more fascinated with her charms and
wiles till at last she was married to the king and raised to the
position of the *Bar-Kuañrī* or Mahisī, i.e., the chief queen. An
other version makes her the *Ligiri* of the *Rājmāo* or the king's
mother and not of Ratnakānti. Then followed an era of constructive
activities, particularly in the building of the Dhāi Āli or the Nurse
maid's Highway in memory of the nurse who looked after Śiva
Singha as a boy. She also established schools for royal ladies and
daughters of the nobility known as the *Bar-Rajār Paḍhāśā*.
Another direction in which the cultured spirit of the queen was
manifested was her patronage of literature and of learned men.
She inspired great poetical works. Kavirāja Chakravartī, the court
poet, rendered into Assamese verse the story of Śakuntalā at the
instance of the king and the queen. The same indomitable court
poet translated for the poetically minded royal spouse the *Śa-*

12. *Manuscript Painting in Mediaeval Eastern India*: Das Gupta, Vol. I, p. 52.
13. *Asam Buranji*: Dhekial Phukan, H., p. 40. 1830.
14. *Manuscript Painting in Mediaeval Eastern India*: Das Gupta, Vol. I, p. 52.

khachūḍa Vadha, a chapter from the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, the
manuscript of which is still remarkable for its penmanship and
illustrations. Another court poet Ananta Ācharya composed the
Assamese translation of the *Ānanda Laharī*, a work in praise of
goddess Dūrgā. The *Gītā Govinda* was also translated by Kavi-
rāja Chakravartī and each and every folio contains illustrations
on both sides. But the queen soon became unpopular on account
of her *Śaktist* leanings which she expressed in violent oppressions
and insults meted to Vaishnava *Gossains* of Āuniati, Garamur and
Moāmarā. This resulted in growing discontent and internal feud
in Assam which led to the Moāmariā rebellion during the days
of Rājéśwar Singha, the next king. It not only weakened the
House of Tungkhung but also prepared Assam for the era of
foreign domination and plunder. However, the fortunate Phu-
léświarī died long before all these, in 1731 A.D. in the 18th year
of her husband's reign.[15]**

She was succeeded as the *Bar-Rajā* by her cousin Draupadī
who was already married to the governor of Śadiya. The king
re-married her and named her Amvikā Dévī or Madamvikā. She
also was a patron of learning and advancement as her illustrious
cousin Pramathéświarī. She also had coins struck in her own
name in Assamese. "The legends bore *Śrī Śrī Swargadéva Śiva*
Singha nripamahishī Śrīmadamvikādévyāḥ".[16] "The name of Queen
Madavikā will go down to posterity as the inspirer of a great
Assamese treatise on Elephantology, with the title *Hastividyār-*
ṇava."[17] Another important work of art of this period is the
Bhāgavata Book VI painted by Vadha Ligirā in 1736 A.D. at the
orders of the king, the queen and their son the Prince of Tipām.
The *Dharmapurāṇa* was composed in metrical Assamese by Kavi-
chandra Dwīja and was also illustrated by Vadha Ligirā....Other
important works of this period were the *Ghorā Nidāna*, a treatise
on the treatment and training of horses, the *Bhāsvatī*, an astrono-

15. *Buranjiya Parasa Nagar*: Gogoi, L., p. 46. 1957.
** The mound topped by the bungalow of the Manager of the Charaideo Tea Estate near Sibsagar is said to be the Maidam or grave of queen Phuléświarī. Buranjiye Parasha Nagar: by Lila Gogoi, Sibsagar. 1957; p. 7.
16. *Asam Buranji: Dhekial Phukan*, H., p. 41. 1830.
17. *An Assamese Nurjahan*: Bhuyan, S. K., 1925.

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mical work based on the Sanskrit *Sūrya Siddhānta* and the *Dharma Saṁvāda*, a portion of the *Aśvamédha Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* by Subhanāth Dwija. Queen Amvikā was also a builder. She had the Muktinātha temple or the Śibdol built and the Sibsagar excavated in 1734 A.D., after which the present temple of Sibsagar was named. Temples were also built at Kālugāon, the ancestral village of the queens and the Dévidol or the temple of Dūrgā built at Gaurīsāgar.[18] Her coins bear the latest date 1735 A.D.[19]

The dance of the Dévadāśīs is now extinct in Assam. But the author was fortunate enough in having the unique experience of seeing it performed by two teenage girls at a music conference at Gauhati a few years ago. They were from Dubi village in Kamrup district where amateur dancers are trying to revive the dance style by piecing together bits of instructions and training received from the members of the Dévadāsī community whom senility has disabled and whose memory has been affected. The *Bhāgavata* Book V dated 1539 A.D. from the Bali Sattra of Nowgong shows an *Apsarā* dancing, which is a perfect replica of the Dévadāsī dance in matters of pose, stance and costume. Like the Carmelite nuns of Christianity the Dévadāsīs were also primarily regarded as brides of the god, hence they dressed in bridal purity and decency. The dress consists of a billowy ankle-length skirt, full sleeved blouse and a veil covering the chest as well as the head. All is white like an Assamese bride's dress. Contrary to general conception (through Western imagination) of extreme lasciviousness in dress and manners of a temple dancer, the Dévadāsīs of Assam appeared like nuns. Ornaments include wide band-like wrist ornaments or *Gām-Khāru*, necklaces made of large gold beads with crescent-shaped lockets of solid gold known as the *Jon-Biri* or the moon-necklace. A circular vermillion mark on the forehead shows prominently.

The dancers stand facing the *Linga* with their heels joined but knees bent and thrust out sideways, very much as in

18. *Manuscript Painting in Mediaeval Eastern India*: Das Gupta, p. Vol. I, p. 53.
19. *An Account of Assam*: Hamilton, Franscis, p. 9.

Kathākali (Fig. 1). The orchestra is simple and consists of a drum, a pair of brass cymbals and a stringed instrument. The tempo is very slow at the beginning. The music seems to arouse the dancers from the trance-like attitude. They look sideways and the hands are held up at the sides up to the shoulders and the fingers open up like lotus blooms. The fingers remain thus formed and the palms rotate on the wrists only in half turns. Suddenly the music beats faster and the tempo catches up with it (Fig. 2) The end is a *Praṇāma* to the deity. The dancers face the public and fold hands at the chests in salutation. Then in that position they bend backwards in till the pointed chignons touch the ground

1 2 3

(Fig. 3). The hands touch the ground and within a wink of the eye the dancers somersault and land on their feet facing the deity. Then they do a regular *Praṇāma* with folded hands and bowed heads. This *Bandha* is rather unusual. But it might have been derived from the Bhutanese way of doing *Praṇāma* to Hayagrīva Mādhava of Hājo whom they regard as a Buddhist deity, nay a statue of the Buddha himself. The Bhutanese who come to Assam for trade and worship every winter pay homage to the above deity by bending forward but instead of folding hands at the chest in the front they do it on the waist at the back.

The prevalence of the system of Dévadāsīs in Assam till recent times and in Orissa to our days shows its great importance in the

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cults of eastern India. The *Rajatarangini* refers to Kamalā, the dancer of Paundravardhana or north Bengal who ultimately became supreme in Kashmir and even founded the city of Kamalāpura in her new home. Koncho village of Mithila in Bihar still has a class of religious dancing girls known as the *Nāchanī*. Both Hindu and Buddhist *Tāntrikas* assimilated cult of sex under many covers and philosophised its importance in life here and hereafter. "It is no wonder that by practising this kind of religion the whole of Eastern India lost all vigour and the whole population became corrupt on the eve of Turko-Afghan conquest".[20] Śankaradéva had been able to minimise the effects of an amorous atmosphere in religious institutions by his *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma*, but Chaitanya Vaishnavism retained the elements of the soil under the name *Parakiyā Préma* which found appreciation in Bengal, Manipur and Orissa. The memory of the Dévadāsīs still persists in a place name like Negheriting in Assam which is so named because of the resemblance of the hill with the pointed chignon of the Dévadāsīs known as the *Negheri-khopā*. In common parlance a coquettish girl is referred to as Nāṭī which brings an Assamese maiden low in the esteem of the society.

20. *Proceedings of the 3rd Oriental Conference*, Madras, 1925; Bhattacharya, B., pp. 139-40.

The Bāthū Shrine and the Rajas of Guler: A Brief Study of a Vaishnava Establishment

BY

MRS. KARUNA GOSWAMY

Chandigarh

An important aspect of the study of religion in the Panjab Himalayas is the relationship in which the relatively new creed of Vaishnavism and the Rajas of the various hill states stood. A late comer to the hills, Vaishnavism entered a significant phase in the 17th and early 18th centuries: its impact upon a people predominantly Shaiva and Shākta in their faith began to be felt, and it succeeded decidedly in attracting an increasing following among the hill chieftains. Whether it is in Jagat Singh of Kulu and his building the Raghunath temple,[1] Jagat Singh Pathania of Nurpur and his installation of the Brijrājswāmī image in the Fort,[2] or Suraj Sen of Mandi and his surrender of his entire state to the Mādho Rāi idol,[3] the pattern of the progress made by Vaishnavism in the hills become increasingly discernible.

A link in the same chain is the patronage extended to the small but important Vaishnava shrine of Bāthū by the chiefs of the hill state of Guler.[4] Small and unpretentious, this out-of-the-way establishment lies one and a half miles off Anūr on the present day rail link from Pathankot to Jogindernagar. The shrine lies

1. J. B. Lyall, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Kāngrā District* (Lāhore, 1889), p. 76; Hirānanda Shāstrī, "Historical Documents of Kulu," *Arch. Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1907-08, II, p. 269.

2. The oral tradition at Nurpur is emphatic on the point, and the old bard, Bānka Rāi of Nūrpur, tells a long and fascinating story about the foundation of the temple. Cf. H. A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Panjab etc.*, 3 Vols., (Lāhore, 1911-19), I, p. 374.

3. *Gazetteer of the Mandī State*, Part A, 1904, p. 39.

4. The principality of Guler was originally an offshoot from the larger state of Kāngrā, but later came to play a significant role in its own right in the history and culture of the Panjāb hills.

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which a tank is attached where a crocodile lives in royal but single state. Palliport has already been mentioned. Tripayar on the western bank of the Ponnani has a famous temple the property of which consists solely of crocodiles adorned with gold and other ornaments. It is a religious duty on the part of the pilgrims to feed them. Last year I am told one of the sacred brutes escaped from the temple precincts but was brought back with musical honors, headed by a procession of devotees. At Madai-the Railway station is known as Palayngadi—the temple has a pond where many young crocodiles and 1 or 2 large one live. Their daily food is given by Pidarans the priests of the temple. Once a year when the grand annual festival of the Kavu is on, a huge metallic vessel full of rice cooked in milk and sughr and other eatables is placed on the brink of the pound. The senior crocodile drags the vessel into the water and all of them partake of the offerings. The vessel was usually returned a day or two before the succeeding annual festival by a crocodile placing it on the edge of the pond. Some 4 years ago there was no sign of the vessel—my informant is sure some irreverent rogues forestalled the preist an stole it away and so the offerings are now given in large leaf-plaited baskets *

S. T. MOSES M. A., F Z S.

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II. DEVADASIS IN SOUTH INDIA THEIR TRADITIONAL ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

Devadasis:—According to old Sanskrit works there are seven classes of dasis, namely Datta or one who gives herself as a gift to a temple: 2 Vikrita or one who sells herself for the same purpose: 3 Bhritya or one who offers herself as a temple servant for the prosperity of her family: 4 Bhakta or one who joins a temple out of devotion: 5 Hrita or one who is enticed away, and presented to a temple: 6 Alankara or one who is well trained in her profession and is profusely decked, and as such is presented to a temple by kings and noblemen.; 7 Rudraganika or Gopika who receive regular wages from a temple, and are employed to sing and dance.

It is about the last class of Dasis that the following account is given Dasis or Devadasis (handmaid of the gods) are dancing girls attached to the temples in the Tamil districts, and they live by dancing and music. This practice is of the oldest profession in the world. The origin of the community and its euphemistic name seems to date from about the ninth and tenth centuries A. D. during which many activities prevailed in South India in the matter of temple-building and elaborating the services held in them. Their duties at present are to fan the idol with *Chamaras* (Tibetan ox tales), to carry the light called *kumbarti*, and to sing and dance before the god when he is carried in procession. In the South Indian Inscriptions vol II, Part III, page 259, it is found that the great temple of the Chola king Raja Raja of Tanjore had attached to it four hundred women of the temple, who lived in free quarters in the four streets round about

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it, and were allowed tax-free land out of the endowment. Other temples had similar arrangements. At the beginning of the last century there were a hundred dancing girls attached to the temple at Conjevaram who were kept for the honour of the deities and the amusement of the votaries. Any familiarity between these girls and an infidel would cause scandal. At Madura, Tanjore and Conjevaram there are now numbers of them who receive allowances from the endowments of the big temples at their places. In former times the profession was countenanced both by the church and the State. Dancing girls dedicated to the usual profession of the caste, are formally married in a temple to a sword or a god, the *tali* being tied round their necks by some men of their caste.

Devadasis are divided into two classes, namely those that belong to the right hand faction and those to the left hand. The chief distinction between them is that the former have nothing to do with the Kammalans (Artisan classes) or any other of the left-hand castes or play or sing in their houses. The latter division, on the other hand, is not so particular, and are sometimes called Kammala Dasis. Neither of the divisions is allowed to have any dealings with men of the lower castes, and the violation of this rule of etiquette is tried by the panchayat of the caste, and visited with excommunication.

Dasis derive a profitatble trade under sanction of religion, and some courtesans have been known to amass enormous fortunes. They do not consider it inconsistent with their methods of making money to spend it in works of charity. Here and there bridges and other works of public utility owe their exsistence to the liberality of this frail sisterhood. The large tank at Chennarayapatna in Mysore was built by two dancing girls.

Among the Dasis, sons and daughters inherit equally, and this is contrary to Hindu usage. Some of their sons remain in the caste by playing music for the women to dance or to by teaching singing and dancing to the younger girls, and music to the boys. These are called Nattuvans. Others marry girls of the caste who are too plain to be likely of any success in the profession and drift out of the community. The daughters of the caste, who are brought up to follow the caste profession, are carefully taught dancing, singing and the art of dressing; and their success is largely due to the contrast which they thus present to the ordinary Hindu housewife.

Closely allied to the Devadasis are the Basavis. In certain castes parents without male issue instead of adopting a son in the usual manner, dedicate a daughter by a simple ceremony to the god of some temple, and thenceforth by immemorial custom, she may inherit her parents' property, and perform their funeral rites as if she is a son. She does not marry, but lives in her parents' house with any man of equal or of higher caste, whom she may select, and her children inherit her fathers' name and *bedagu* (sept) and not of their own father. Her son may inherit her property. Her daughter again becomes a Basavi.

Parents desiring male issue of their own, cure from sickness for themselves or their children or relief from similar calamity will similarly dedicate one of their daughters. The children of a Basavi are legitimate, and neither they nor their mother are treated as in any way inferior to their fellows. A Basavi can never become a widow and is always a welcome guest at weddings. Basavis differ from the dancing girls in their duties in temples. Those of the former are nominal, and they do not prosti-

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tute themselves promiscuously for hire. A Basavi invariably lives faithfully with one man who allows her a fixed sum weekly or monthly for her maintenance and a fixed quantity of new garments annually. They cannot be distinguished from other women. In some places there is a custom by which they are considered free to change their protectors once a year at the village car-festivals or some other annual festival, when they seize the opportunity to test their partners' affection by suggesting that a new cloth and bodice would be a welcome parent. According to Police reports many crimes are commited during Nagara-panchami time when those who keep prostitutes should pay their dues as otherwise they will have their new engagements.

In the Kurnul District of the Madras Presidency, where the Basavi system is in vogue, it differs from that in the Bellary district and Mysore. In these two districts the object of making a Basavi is to perpetuate a family when there is no male heir. In the event of there being only a girl in a family, the family becomes extinct if she is married to another man, because of the change of her sept thereby. To prevent this, she is dedicated as Basavi, and continues to be in her father's sept to which any male issue that is born to her belongs. In the Kurnul district the motive is different. The girl is not wedded to an idol, but on an auspicious day is tied by a garland of flowers to the Garuda Kambham (lamp) of a Balija Dasrri. She is released either by the man who is to recieve her first favours or by her maternal uncle. A simple feast is held, and a string of black beads tied round the girl's neck. She becomes a prostitute, and her children do not marry into respectable Boya families.

Basava women are sometimes married to a dagger

and sometimes to an idol. In dedicating a female child to a temple, she is taken and dedicated to some idol. A dagger is placed on the ground, and the girl who is to undergo the ceremony puts a garland thereon. His mother then puts rice on the girl's forehead. The officiating priest then weds the girl to the dagger, just as he was uniting her to a boy in marriage by the recital of marriage hymns, a curtain being held between the girl and the dagger. The initiation ceremony of the Basavis of the Bellary district is as given below. A sword with lime stuck on its point is placed upright. It represents the bridegroom who in the corresponding ceremony of Hindu marriage sits on the bride's right side. A tray on which are a Kalasam (a vessel of water) and a lamp is then moved thrice in front of her. She rises and, carrying the sword in her right hand, places it in the God's sanctuary. Among the dancing girls very similar ceremonies are performed. With them the girl's spouse is represented by a drum instead of a sword and she bows to it. Her insignia consists of a drum and bells. Sometimes a *tali* on which is depicted a *namam* of Vishnu fastened to a necklace of black beads is tied round her neck. As a rule, *dasis* are recruited from the Vallala and Kaikolan castes; while the Basavis of the districts of Bellary, Kurnul and Kadappa as also of Mysore are generally from the Boyi, Holeya, Madiga and few other castes.*

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B.A., L.T., F.R.A.I.

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* This paper was read before the Section of Anthropology of the Thirteenth Session of the Indian Science Congress held at Bombay in January 1926.

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DEVDASIS—FROM DISGRACE TO GRACE

By Mario Cabral E Sa
Sketches: Mario Miranda

How the system of prostitution developed in Goa may not be difficult to fathom. It was all due to economic compulsions and the environment of the times. But how they woke up from their drudgery to a new world of equality and dignity is a story that deserves to be told.

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According to the census of 1
Goa,

	Mal
Kalavants	30
Devlis	461
Bhandis (slaves)	375
Adbaktis (half slaves)	90

They were few, indeed. Yet
community has thrown up such
Marba **Pednekar**, said to be the
singar, **Deenanath Mangeshka**
as well as Balgandharva and
Mangeshkar, the phenom
er, Asha Bhonsle and their
her Hridaynath; Layabhas
ribed as a "miracle in rh
yaneshwar Nadkarni); the or
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pils of Alladiya Khan, and Mog
Kishori Amonkar. There w
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dhukar Pednekar (harmoni
rathi stage – Jyotsna Bhole,
aokar; in films – Ratnaprabha,
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cameraman.

There are big names outside t
: the internationally famous
Dr V. Shirodkar, surgeon late
ace criminal lawyer late Su
novelist Chandrakant Kakodka
Moolgaokar, Editor S. Mulgaokar
Kerkar, Telco Chairman S. Mul
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all the result of the resurgen
ich rebaptised itself as th
ratha Samaj."

According to Malbarao Sardesa

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WHEN THE *dasis*, the *dev* and the *upa*, stigmatised themselves as prostitutes, might never be known. Why they succumbed to the lure of the trade is not difficult to fathom — economic compulsions, the environment. Their captivity, perhaps, made their whole existence a one-way street: to peddle pleasure, even if in a very unpleasant way. How they eventually woke up from their drudgery to a new world of equality and dignity is a fantastic feat of courage, intelligence and self-reliance. It is a great story which needs to be told.

According to the census of 1904 there were in Goa,

	Males	Females
Kalavants	305	420
Devlis	4615	4051
Bhandis (slaves)	3752	4099
Adbaktis (half slaves)	900	1881

They were few, indeed. Yet, such a small community has thrown up such big names as: Murarba Pednekar, said to be the creator of the Sursingar, Deenanath Mangeshkar, a man who sang as well as Balgandharva and is the father of Lata Mangeshkar, the phenomenal playback singer, Asha Bhonsle and their film director brother Hridaynath; Layabhaskar Parvatkar, described as a "miracle in rhythmics" (by Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni); the only playwright of her time, Hirabai Pednekar; the incomparable Kesarbai Kerkar, Moghubai Kurdikar, both pupils of Alladiya Khan, and Moghubai's daughter, Kishori Amonkar. There were other big names too: in music — Sridhar Parsekar (violin), Madhukar Pednekar (harmonium); on the Marathi stage — Jyotsna Bhole, Ashalata Wadgaokar; in films — Ratnaprabha, Jayashree and Meenakshi as actresses and Pandurang Sabi Naik as cameraman.

There are big names outside the Kala world too: the internationally famous gynaecologist late Dr V. Shirodkar, surgeon late Dr Mulgaokar, the ace criminal lawyer late Sushil Kavlekar, the novelist Chandrakant Kakodkar. Air Marshal Moolgaokar, Editor S. Mulgaokar, hotelier Ajit Kerkar, Telco Chairman S. Mulgaokar, Goa's first Chief Minister Dayanand Bandodkar (succeeded by his daughter Shashikala Kakodkar) are all the result of the resurgence of the clan which rebaptised itself as the "Gomantak Maratha Samaj."

According to Malbarao Sardesai, a nationally known player of the pakhwaj, (he likes it to be known that he also plays the harmonium and the flute which he learnt for 14 years at the feet of Alladiya Khan), Kalakar knew no bonds. Malbarao is a Saraswat Brahmin who traces his roots to Kanauj, from where his ancestors migrated to Goa, via the South, in the 9th or 10th century AD. Malbarao's proposition is that the Saraswats came to Goa with their families, their artisans, their servants, their soldiers, their devdasis and upadasis. The devdasis were to god what the upadasis were to men. Malbarao's family being the oldest Saraswat family of Goa, much of what he says is backed by a certain authoritative knowledge of the subject. His proposition that the Saraswats came to Goa well-equipped for their spiritual and material needs was supported by the late Dayanand Bandodkar who claimed, basing himself on traditional knowledge, that his ancestors had come to Goa with Malbarao's forefathers.

Historically, however, Malbarao's thesis is open to doubt. Dr T. Gune, the Director of Goa Historical Archives (A Karad Brahmin) contemptuously says that "Saraswats make all sorts of claims." According to him, the dasis already existed in Goa, as much as elsewhere in South India — or in the whole of India, for that matter — where the Saraswats migrated southwards. They (the Saraswats) were on the run after the Muslim forays in the North. According to the "Life and teachings of Sri Madhavacharya" it was the Kadambas who introduced the Brahmins in Goa. Devsharma, from Kanauj and Brahmins from Nagar in Rajasthan were possibly the first settlers in large numbers. Earlier, in the fourth century AD, Govindswamy and Indraswamy, both brahmins, had been living in Goa on grants given by Devraj of Gomantak.

Social Set-up

POSSIBLY, therefore, the social infrastructure already existed when the Saraswats set foot in Goa, along with the princes of Vijayanagar. The dasis of Vijayanagar, as described by Abdur Razaak, the Turkish Ambassador in the 15th century AD (Elliot — History of India) were women living in state-controlled institutions, the revenue of which went towards the upkeep of the police — the latter, perhaps, kept an eye on the seraglio.

The dasis, as much as elsewhere in India,

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were either admitted in the profession (through parental offerings, sale, personal surrender e.g. widows who had escaped sati, etc.) or recruited or were born in the clan. E. Thurston in his "The Native Races of India – Castes and Tribes of South India" identifies seven types of devdasis: datta (who gives herself to the temple); vikrita (who sells herself to the temple); bhritya (who offers herself for the sake of the prosperity of her family); hrita (who is enticed away and presented to the temple); bhakta (who joins the temple out of devotion); alankara (who is well trained in her profession, profusely decked and presented to the temple by noblemen and kings); and the rudraganika or gopikas (who are employed to sing and dance). The Goan Saraswats, who like to emphasize their "Sumerian Sanskritic origins," had a simpler devdasi structure: they had the Kalavants (note the etymological root Kala = art), who were either ghanis (singers) or the nachnis (dancers) or both; they also had the bhavinis who sat in the temples, at poojas, close to the deity and had semi-priestly duties like fanning the idol with chonvri (fans made of Tibetan oxtail) or akdagiri (circular fans adorned with plumes), carrying the kumbh-arti, lighting the aartis for the bhats, etc; they finally had other temple servants like pednis, the bhandis, and their illegitimate male offspring like the forjents etc. At some stage the Goan devdasis seem to have migrated to Kerala, where they are still found, whereas, in Goa, there are no more devdasis in the temple periphery or precincts.

As opposed to the devdasis, there were the upadasis. These were trained in ars amoris, from the art of conversation to the subtleties of titillation. They were like the Japanese geishas, accomplished women who provided the epicurean Saraswats the pleasures denied to them by their virtuous wives. At some unsettled point of history, the upadasis who were, in essence, concubines, began to freelance; the devdasis, on the other hand, succumbed, first, to the enticements of temple priests and, later, to the blandishments of rich pilgrims. The Saraswats, in order to preserve their freedoms, had engaged for templework and as priests the bhats from Canara.

The Saraswats, thus freed themselves of temple duties and ascetic rigours. The bhats were paid servants and the bhavinis had all the rights of the bhats, except, in order to avoid exposure, the rights to domiciliary visits, for performance of duties and collection of alms. Malbarao Desai is, perhaps, right when he says that his forefathers tied the kalavants to no bonds and kept them free. Their sex life was immaterial. They tended to regard it as either a stimulant or a psychological tension-release. Saraswat girls were encouraged by their parents to sing and dance, and learn the arts from the kalavants. They were, of course, permitted no sexual freedom. And the Saraswats were as

indulgent to the devdasis as they were sarcastic about the bhats.

When the handmaiden of the gods, as the devdasis supposedly were, got involved in left handed unions, eventually with the highest bidder, they became, as all prostitutes, bhandis, slaves in every sense of the word. The 'bayaderes', described by J. Michaelis in his accounts of the times of Hyder Ali and Tipoo Sultan, the women who populate "An Indian Olio" by Richard Burton, the women described by Abdur Razaak (of whom mention was made earlier) are all courtesans who had ceased to be the handmaids of the gods, perhaps chased by their mythic hoodoo.

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Celestial Incarnation

MYTHICALLY, the devdasis are the incarnation of Urvashi, the celestial nymph. Urvashi was dancing at Indra's Court when she saw Jayanta, Indra's son. For a brief moment, her eyes lingered on Jayanta and, in the distraction, she missed a step. This enraged Agastya, the sage, who had observed their infatuated exchange of glances. He instantly cursed them. And they had to atone for it, going down to Earth and performing their art there. From an Urvashi in love, a thousand devdasis were b...

Like the vestals, the devdasis were made to overcome the limitations inherent in the system created for them. The Saraswats in Goa, as Brahmins elsewhere, contrived for them marriage rituals, the symbolism of which bares, at once, hypocrisy and vile. They devised the sessa, a system (with tribal origins) and by which devdasi girls were given in marriage to the temple before puberty. The ceremony consisted of an offering by a 'gaokar', an original settler of the village, of a supari pierced by a sword or a dagger and a coconut. The pierced supari was, perhaps, a symbol of impending defloration. Often, the gaokar who offered it thus won for himself the right to do this after puberty was attained. The temple priest performed the marriage following the common wedding ritual, except that a woman, usually an older devdasi, officiated as the bridegroom. The symbolic bridegroom was dressed as a male and played in the ceremony the role a male normally plays. Her name was entered in the records as the "husband." This form of marriage, by sessa (a word of obscure etymology) immediately led to several unsavoury consequences: first and foremost, the girl was thereafter, technically an adult; second, having been married to a woman, her future mating with men would in no way be sinful or adulterous; thirdly, having accepted the sessa, she enslaved herself to the system. Just like in any Hindu child marriage, at puberty, there was another ceremony, culminating generally in consummation. Consummation (the equivalent of the Garbadhana) was in this case the possession by the highest bidder and this was known as Laat lavni, meaning the first touching of her body by a male hand or what in legal parlance is known as having carnal knowledge of a woman. On the dawn of her initiation, the girl often planted a coconut sapling at her door step. The coconut tree, in many ways, resembled a man — tall and erect in youth, shrunken and shrivelled in old age. And they lived their fated roles, until death did them apart.

Elsewhere in the South, the devdasis marriage was performed by the tali ritual, where the girl's dress was knotted to a deity who became her symbolic spouse. The girls were stamped with sandal paste on their shoulders with "chank" and chakram". Their marriages, even if symbolic, were performed after they had signed an agreement with the temple before an European magistrate and a superintendent of police. In one case (reported by Thuston in "Castes & Tribes of South India") the Madras High Court waived the limitations of the age of consent, the mother having successfully pleaded that, as a guardian, she had already entered into a marriage contract (its symbolism notwithstanding) for her two daughters aged 15 and 12, respectively. In contrast, the Portuguese tolerated the symbolic sessa marriages, but they were not recorded at the Civil Registry.

Me Khon is an autobiographical account in Marathi, by Rajaram Painguinkar. Painguinkar, in his genetic introspection, presents himself as the son of a Brahmin widow, who, having borne him, had no other exit but to enter the temple seraglio. It is a dramatic, if at times loud, account of the narrow and insufferable confines of the institution. The Saraswats would like the world to believe that the whole system was without blemish, if any woman went astray, it being of her own free will. What emerges from *Me Khon* is an institutionalization of vice as virtue itself. Painguinkar, along with others, launched a crusade to redeem the clan. They were of the firm view that the sessa system of their women's betrothal and surrender to the temple was the root cause of their disgrace.

Supported by a legislator Prof. Narain Bandodkar, a venij, (who perhaps shared their anti-brahmanism), a bill was introduced in the Legislative Council in 1930 and the system was abolished. Until then, the devious sessa had branded the clan in more ways than one — the girls remained girls forever; they were known as chedduan (Konkani for girls) and their offspring were known as chedduanle, those borne by girls, which was an unbearable stigma. Quite a few women were legitimately married, but even their legitimate children were publicly referred to as "chedduanle". The moment sessa was abolished, the chedduan cut her bonds with

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tradition. For want of a better word, the Portuguese texts refer to them as "solteiras", i.e. the 'spinsters.'

Until then, the Portuguese had accepted the 'bailadeirea', (i.e. the dancing women) as a class apart. They exempted them from their rigid "matricula" (enrolment and licensing of prostitutes) as long as they lived in the temple periphery. Their Saraswat Hindu mentors had convinced them that a bhavina was no bhasavi. She would become a bhasavi the moment she left the temple periphery and settled as a prostitute in a municipal area or township.

their male counterparts were roughly in the ratio of 100 females to 70 males. Among the devlis, who had temple duties to perform, the males outnumbered females. Was it because, in this particular category, there were work avenues for the males prescribed by the system itself? For, the male devlis played musical instruments and were paid for it and they played by themselves not to accompany the kalavants, unlike the ghans, mridangis and gaikas. Among Bhandis and adbhakhis who were tied to more confined lives, the ratio of men is much lower. Even then, there were about 27,000 devdasis, when the

Sessa Abolished

AFTER the sessa was discontinued, the devdasis began to legally marry the males in their community. Until then, the males had played a secondary role. The girls sang and danced and the males played the mridung, the tabla and the harmonium. The girls prostituted themselves, the males pimped. The abolition of the sessa also emancipated the male. For understandable reasons, the devdasis practised birth control. In the early stages of pregnancy, they aborted themselves with strong laxatives and ayurvedic preparations containing quinine. They seldom tried abortion after the fourth month of pregnancy. It was not uncommon to dispose of male children at birth, by either abandoning them or giving them for adoption. Not too rarely, they were physically done away with.

In this regard, the figures quoted in the foregoing census (1904) make interesting reading: As mentioned, there were only 420 kalavants,

population was hardly 300,000.

It is really interesting to note that there were only 420 kalavants in a total devdasi population of about 27,000. What does it imply? That the kalavants were really artists, as Malbarao repeatedly stated to me? In a foreword to 'Dance Dialects of India' by Ragini Das (in which mention is made of kalavants), Rabindranath Tagore referred rather evocatively to "those of us in the North who have lost the memory of the pure Indian classical dance," implying that the performing arts had either lost their purity in the North after the Muslim forays or had simply fled south to escape it. Did the Goan kalavants stick to the purity of their art form despite the compulsions, social and economic, of their milieu? Were they able to keep their sect distinct from others? Tradition has it that a Goan kalavant, Anjanibhai Malpekar was "a woman of rare beauty which set the hearts of many Rajahs throbbing." The kalavants from Goa, according to Malbarao,

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were prominent in the Jaipur Gharana. Maybe he exaggerates but he defies anyone "to prove that the like of Kesarbai Kerkar was never heard hundred years before she was born or will be heard again for a hundred years after her death." According to *Assa Aahe Maazaa Gomantak* by Gopalkrishna Bhobe, the Kalavants were taught by Vithobanna Hadap and Anantbuva of Gwalior. Saraswati Bandodkar and Hirabai Barodekar, both kalavants, migrated from Goa and made a name for themselves nationally.

In the 1930s, after sessa was abolished, the Gomantak Maratha Samaj injected fresh energy into their crusade. The inclusion of the word "Maratha" in their coinage is a pointer. Most Saraswats dismiss as a mere fad the suggested Maratha linkage. They argue that, whether the original devdasis came from Kanauj or were already living in the place, they were not Marathas. But just as Dr Ambedkar tried to get the scheduled castes out of the rut by embracing a casteless religion, the creators of the Gomantak Maratha Samaj opened for the clan new possibilities of identity. They could, for instance, migrate to Bombay, adopt Marathi as their language and seek their fortunes in the Kalakar world for which they had the intuition and, some, the training. Stage two, their children could go to schools without fearing that their illegitimacy would haunt them as in Goa. They were certainly intelligent and as anyone exposed for centuries to the vicissitudes of life in a seraglio, they had a certain sharpness of the senses, particularly of adaptation and shrewdness. They really had no deep sense of belonging to Goa — even today Lata Mangeshkar takes no great pride in her Goan origins — and the world was theirs.

Statistics

ACCORDING to the Prostitution Committee of Bombay 1923, page 31, there were "225 female dependants in Goa to 510 prostitutes born in Goa" (both Hindus and Christians, but the Hindus were the largest denominational group). There were "137 male brothel keepers and their dependants born at Goa out of total of 489." The figure in 1931 was as high as 2000 prostitutes of the Goan Hindu community alone. The Committee inferred that there was "an organized import of girls from those places."

Interestingly, it is around the same time that the Gomantak Maratha Samaj activated its drive against the perpetuation of the devdasi system. The Samaj formed a "Ladies Association," curiously with ladies who had had some connection with the clan and had successfully opted out of it and were presently living socially respectable and economically comfortable lives. They taught the dasis a new honourable profession, encouraged them to send their children to school, encouraged the women to learn Marathi. In their drive for funds, they were liberally helped by the dasis themselves, whose intentions of giving up the profession at the earliest were thus made abundantly clear. Even the Portuguese Government gave them grants through its consulate in Bombay and lauded the Samaj's brave efforts.

An average dasi, in those days, according to reports compiled by Dr Germano Correia (1938), a Professor of the Goa Medical School, could earn a net of Rs 30,000 in a five to six year period. And there were those who were kept by big sethias, nawabs, rajahs and high officers. Interestingly, their illegitimate offspring, by then already armed with academic qualifications and occupying good positions both in Government and business and industry, took an active role in spreading the gospel of emancipation and social uplift. Clearly, it was not money that mattered to them or to the dasis. They had a past to forget, even if profitable; they had a future to look forward to, even if on the earnings of their past.

Back in Goa, the abolition of sessa, led temporarily to higher registrations of licensed prostitutes. As on July 1, 1938, there were 1898 registered prostitutes of which 1748 were Hindus, 141 Christians and nine Muslims. Of the 1748 Hindus, 483 were kalavants, 397 bhavinas, 533 devlis and 135 were from other castes unconnected with temple servants. The highest concentration — 492 — was in the temple area of Ponda. The age groups ranged from under 15 years to 55 or more, (110 for all communities). All these figures in the light of the 1904 census which recorded 27,000 dasis lead to the conclusion that prostitution in the clan was incidental, if not altogether accidental.

Remarkably, the incidence of venereal diseases in this particular clan was rather low, the death rate with venereal diseases as a cause of death averaging about 15 a year in the case of syphilis and one in the case of gonorrhoea. Hospital figures for persons treated for venereal diseases were around 115 a year, the highest being 436 in 1914 (when the Portuguese brought

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African troops to subdue the revolt of the Ranes of Satari), and the lowest being 85 in 1926. The figures, obviously, do not reflect the unreported cases which, perhaps, were quite a few. But Garcia da Horta, the internationally celebrated Portuguese researcher of Indian herbal medicines, had recorded that, as early as in the 16th century, "Indians were in possession of very good remedies for such ailments."

Another interesting aspect is that, unlike in other sectors of organized prostitution, the dasis were not particularly fond of liquor. In fact, they discouraged their patrons from seeing

them when in a state of intoxication. Everything seems to point out that the dasis only reluctantly took to concubinage and, later, to a tramp life of prostitution. Dr Tovar de Lemos, a Portuguese Sociologist, wrote poetically "when hunger enters by the door, virtue flees through the window."

That window was effectively closed by the Gomantak Maratha Samaj, ironically using in the campaign all the resources—e.g. money, status, contacts, education—made possible by the practice of the trade. If there is a finer instance of arma mea contra mea, I know of no other.

Coincidentally or not there was a severe recession in Goa in the 30's. Farming wealth — then only the landed gentry were wealthy — was assessed in terms of coconut production and the worth of coconut in markets like Kolhapur, where Goa coconuts were in great demand, particularly for pooja offerings. (Goa coconut then being smaller than Kerala's and cheaper, though more durable). Coconuts had slumped to an all time low of Rs 30/- per thousand (it is Rs 1500/- per thousand today). The Saraswat landed gentry was, thus, in no position to take economic initiative and prevent the exodus.

Saraswats maintain even today that the dasis had some definite functions to perform in the temple. For instance, the pennems at the weddings have been discontinued, because there no longer are kalavants to dance. Saraswats will not admit that the devdasis literally pulled themselves up by their bootstraps. They say that it never was their intention to institutionalize prostitution. It is the devdasis themselves, they argue, who went astray. A time came, they rationalize, when the Saraswats, upset at the goings on, ceased to be as generous as before. They stopped their patronage and the devdasis sought patrons among rich businessmen from Bombay, who, after having come to Goa often, under the pretext of pilgrimage to temples, decided to take them away to Bombay and settle them there.

From all points of view, theirs was a remarkable and tenacious battle for emancipation. Champions of moral hygiene might consult them for effective strategies to wipe out what is quite lasciviously known as the "world's oldest profession."

Of the devdasi stock, in the once fertile hunting ground of the Mahalsa temple periphery in Mardol, nothing remains — except a cripple called Sanjay, a boy of 14, but as big as a 7 year old, with a drooling cleft palate. He alone remains unschooled, because of his handicap. Like his foremothers, he never really had a beginning.

'Aqui viveu Batabai', reads the inscription in Portuguese in the Dargali temple area. It means "here lived Batabai." Tradition has it that Batabai was the concubine of a Secretary General of the Portuguese government. He took away the son she had borne him and gave him the best possible education. He also told his son who his mother was. When the son came back to Goa, as a high Portuguese official, he went to Dargali and paid homage to his mother.

'Here lived Batabai," has its own nostalgia for others too.

There are no Batabais now. **THE END**

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THE INSTITUTION OF 'DEVADĀSĪS' ACCORDING TO THE KATHĀSARITSĀGARA

By

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The Kathāsaritsāgara (Kss.) of Somadeva provides us with some important data regarding the institution of 'devadāsīs' which is found as a regular and flourishing class in early medieval period throughout the country. In course of his narration of some stories Somadeva has happened to throw some side-light not only on this institution but on its central Asiatic affinities.

The origin of this institution in India is wrapped in mystery as neither the religious nor the secular or legal literature before 600 A.D. refers to this institution which is found widely prevalent by the 11th & 12th centuries. How all of a sudden this custom appears on the stage of Indian society and gains such a rapid and wide prevalence and popularity that foreign travellers of early medieval India like Abu Zeid Al Hasan, Al-Bīrūnī and the author of Hudūd-ul-ālam saw it as a regular feature of Indian temples, is a matter of deep and comprehensive research. In the present article we have just made a humble attempt to utilise the material provided by Somadeva's Kathāsaritsāgara and corroborated by Ksemendra's Bṛhatkathāmañjarī (Bkm.) and the Rājataraṅgiṇī (R.T.) to forward a hypothesis that with all probability the institution of Devadāsīs entered India during the middle ages along with the 'satī' and other practices, with the Scythian hordes.

The Kss. presents us with courtesans as temple-dancers. Sundarī of Kāñcanapura and Rūpaṇikā of Mathurā[1] are 'Devadāsīs' or temple-dancers. In R. T. we find them in several places. Kamalā of Pauṇḍravardhan is a dancer at a temple of Kārttikeya[2]. Sahajā and Kāyyā are dancing girls attached to a temple.[3] R. T. further refers to old dancing girls of temples.[4] That they were courtesans publicly, is quite clear in the narratives of the Kss. and the episode of Kamalā in R. T.

In India the Vedic literature, the epics and Buddhist literature do not refer to this institution. It has no mention in the Smṛtis and the Arthaśāstra, excepting the term Rūpadāsī[5] which some scholars[6] like to explain as 'Devadāsī'.

[1] Kss., XII, 80, 101. She is named Rupiṇī in BKM., II, Guccha II, 78.
[2] R. T., IV, 421.
[3] R. T., VII, 856-857; VIII, 82.
[4] R. T., VIII, 706-710.
[5] Arthaśāstra, Bk, II, Ch. XXVII.
[6] Louis Renou, the Civilization in Ancient India, p. 129.

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Kauṭilya has no rule or regulation regarding this institution. In the Arthaśāstra[7] we find terms like 'gaṇikā', 'rūpajivā', and 'rūpadāsī'. The last term has been explained as meaning a prostitute employed in making garlands, seats, etc. It is a matter of conjecture how far the term can be explained in the sense of a temple-harlot. Because a master-mind like Kauṭilya would not have forgotten to provide elaborate rules and regulations for such a class, if it really existed as it could be a very good source of royal revenue to augment which Kauṭilya had to resort to several new and unconventional ways and means. The term occurs in the Meghadūta[8] of Kālidāsa but the reference is without any details about the nature of the institution.

The earliest epigraphic reference to it is vague and lacks in corroborative data. A cave at Ramgarh* contains two[9] inscriptions in prakrit language. The script is post-Aśokan. The first inscription is in verse and means.

> "Poets, the leaders of lovers,
> light up the hearts which are heavy with passion
> She who rides on a seesaw, the object of jest and blame,
> how can she have fallen so deep in love as this?"

The second, in prose, says

> "The excellent young man Devadinna, the painter, loved Sutanukā, the slave girl of the god".

The first inscription does not throw any light on religious prostitution. The second one, containing the word Devadāsī (slave girl of the god), does not specifically state that the said girl served the deity in the capacity of a dancing girl or that she prostituted. The term 'Devadāsī' implies two things, that the women concerned, danced before the deity, and that she was a public prostitute. In Kss, Rūpaṇikā[10] was such a one whose mother had the same profession and who aimed at making money that way. Her activities in the temple were side-duties.[11] That the public had not the least hesitation to approach them who were generally known as courtesans, is clear in the case of Sundarī whom Īśvaravarman approached as soon as her dance was over in the temple. The

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[7] Arthaśāstra, Bk. II, Ch. XVII, English Trans. by R. Shamasastry, p. 138.

[8] Meghadūta, I, 35.

*In the Vindhya hills about 160 miles south of Banaras. A. L. Basham, The Wonder that was India, p. 185.

[9] Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, Delhi, 1903-4, p. 122.

[10] ... । तस्यां रूपणिकेत्यासीत्ख्याता वारविलासिनी ॥
तस्या मकरदंष्ट्राख्या माताभूद्वृद्धकुट्टनी । ... ॥
पूजाकाले सुरकुलं स्वनियोगाय जातु सा । ... ॥ Kss., XII, 78-80.

[11] Kss., XII, 78-104.

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story shows that she was an unscrupulous woman who cared for money and that her mother had the same life of a prostitute.[12] In both the cases, they were public prostitutes living under the care and guidance of old bawds, their own mothers. The same is the case with Kamalā, the 'Devadāsī' of Pauṇḍravardhana, who was visited by king Jayāpīḍa.[13] In her case we do not find any 'kuṭṭinī' mother.

If an institution of accomplished temple-dancers existed in any part of India in his time, a person like Kālidāsa would not have certainly ignored to use it for its artistic merit to add beauty and glamour to his works. Bāṇa does not refer to it. The Purāṇas mention it.[14] After that the practice slowly and steadily developed to take the form of a regular institution by the 11th century.

In Kss., we find two courtesans working as temple-dancers. We have already mentioned the references to temple-dancers in RT. Abu Zeid Al Hasan,[15] an Arab traveller who visited India in 867 A.D. saw them. A.T Bīrūnī noticed[16] the practice and says that kings of India supported it as it was a source of income for them needed for the army. According to Chau-ju-Kua[17], the number of 'Devadāsīs' in Gujarat in the 12th century was about twenty thousand. In contemporary Rajasthan its great popularity is noticed. No big temple was without them. Many maidens were presented to Harsanath temple.[18] Raja Jojalladeva of Nadol ordered the courtesans to join the procession of all the temples of Nadol and directed his descendants to punish even learned people, old men and others who tried to interfere with this time-honoured custom[19]. In the copper plate inscription of Ālhaṇa (Vs. 1205), we find courtesans attached to the temples of Caṇḍeśvara and Tripuruṣadeva[20]...

From the contemporary inscriptions, we learn that there were 'Devadāsīs' at the temples of Pradyumneśvara founded by Vijayasena[21], of Anantavāsudeva[22] at Bhuvaneśvara, of Sobhāneśvara[23] Śiva temple situated near Cuttack and the Brahmeśvara temple founded by the dowager-queen Kalāvatī[24]. An ascetic named

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[12] Kss., LVII, 74-78.

[13] R.T., IV, 433-434.

[14] A. S. Altekar, The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, p. 215.

[15] Ancient Accounts of India and China (1733 ed.), p. 88.

[16] Sachau, Vol. II, p. 157.

[17] B. P. Majumdar, Socio-Economic History of N. India, p. 372; The Struggle for Empire, pp. 495-6.

[18] Harsanath Inscription of Vigraharaja II, verse 1030.

[19] E. I.. Vol. XI, p. 28.

[20] D. Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p. 260.

[21] E.I., Vol. I, p. 310, verse 30.

[22] E.I.. Vol. VI. pp. 198-205, verse 25.

[23] JBORS., XVII, 1931, p. 124.

[24] JRASB., XIII, 1947, p. 71.

Īśānsaśiva arranged for 'Devadāsīs' in a temple of Śiva built in Badaun in Uttar Pradesh.[25]

It is significant that the institution unknown to Indian society before the 6th century is all of a sudden found to be an important and honoured practice in early medieval India. In R. T. we are clearly told that it had become a hereditary profession, the daughters of 'Devadāsīs' taking to the profession of their mothers, by the time of king Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa.[26]

The 6th Century is no doubt a land-mark in the social history of India. By this time we find the Rajputs appearing on the Indian social stage, the custom of 'satī' is to be noticed and the institution of 'Devadāsīs' finds its place in the Purāṇas. The Rajputs are now generally accepted as a social group with a good amount of blood of Central Asiatic nomads, the Scythians. The custom of 'satī'* is supposed to be brought by these Scythians into India. Now we have to see if this institution of 'Devadāsīs' too came along with the Central Asiatic hordes who came in many waves and finally poured into India like torrents during the Gupta Age and ultimately were merged into Indian society and accepted as the Rajputs. Perhaps, we can construct such a theory connecting the 'Devadāsī' institution that prevailed in Central and Western Asia and Corinth in ancient days, and the practice as known from the Kss. and attested by the R. T.

Strabo tells us about the prevalence of this custom in Central and Western Asia. He noticed it at Comana in Pontus where the temple of the Moon goddess was "full of women trafficking in their person, most of them sacred"[27]. He saw it at the Phoenician colony of Sicca on the North African coast, at Heliopolis in Syria, and in Armenia at the temple of Anitis, where the most illustrious people dedicated their virgin daughters, who prostituted themselves for a long time in the service of the goddess and were afterwards given in marriage[28]. The consecrated prostitution was associated with the worship of Aphrodite at Corinth[29]. Further, we learn from an inscription from Tralles in Lydia, referred to by Frazer[30] that the custom prevailed in Asia Minor in the 2nd century A.D. This inscription shows the hereditary character of sacred prostitution that obtained in Asia Minor and which we find prevailing in Kaśmīra at

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[25] E. I., Vol. I, pp. 61-6, verse 17.

[26] R. T., IV, 266-271.

* It did not exist in India before and was widely prevalent in Central Asia which was the home of the Scythians, in ancient times. A. S. Altekar, The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, p. 150.

[27] Strabo, XII, 559 (published by Wolters, Amsterdam, 1707).

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] J. H. Hutton, Caste in India, Its Nature and Functions, Pt. III, Ch. X, pp. 140-2.

[30] Frazer, Golden Bough, verse 38.

the time of king Lalitāditya Muktāpīda. In the inscription of Tralles it is recorded of a certain woman, Aurelia Aemilia by name, that not only she herself served the god in the capacity of a harlot but that her mother and female ancestors had done the same before her.[31] Strabo refers to the dedication of girls to the temple of Ammon in Egypt. The girls after serving their term as wives of the god for some time were given to human husbands in marriage and at that time they as god's wives were mourned as dead. Even before the days of Strabo girls were married to gods Mardok and Shamash (sun-god) in Mesopotamia and got human children. The term used for these dedicated women was a Hebrew word meaning a temple harlot.[32]

Apart from the wide prevalence of the practice in Central and Western Asia during early centuries of Christian Era, we notice that temple-dancers (or temple harlots, which is more expressive of their immoral life) could be legally taken as wives and those who served in the temple of god Ammon in Egypt, or prostituted at the temple of goddess Anitis in Armenia, were afterwards married to human husbands. The temple girls associated with the temple of Ammon in Egypt were mourned as dead, when they took human husbands. What is significant is that they were taken as legal wives, not as concubines, and enjoyed the rights associated with the status of a legal wife.

The practice that a temple-dancer could be married and given the legal status of a wife is found in the Kss. and also in the Bkm. Significantly enough, as we presently see, this was actually done by a king of medieval Kaśmīra. In the Kss. we find that king Devasena of Śrāvastī became enamoured with the wife of his commander-in-chief. The latter offered his wife to the king and suggested that he would make his wife a temple girl first, after which the king could take her without incurring any sin.[33] The Kss. does not make it clear whether she was to be taken as a concubine ('avaruddhā') or as a legal wife. But an instance in the R.T. clarifies the position. King Durlabhaka Pratāpāditya was enamoured with the wife of a merchant named Nona. The lady being released from her marriage bond by being made a 'Devadāsī', was taken as a wife by the king. It is note-worthy that the lady named Narendraprabhā became the mother of crown-prince, the king Candrāpīḍa of Kaśmīra and also of Tārāpīḍa and Muktāpīḍa.[34] The last named one was the illustrious king Lalitāditya Muktapida of Kaśmīra.

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[31] *Ibid.*

[32] J. H. Hutton, Caste in India, Its Nature and Functions, Pt. III, Ch. X, pp. 140-2.

[33] सा दासी न परस्त्रीति गृह्यतां यदि वाप्यहम् ।
त्यजामि तां देवकुले स्वीकरोतु ततः प्रभुः ॥ Kss., XV, 76.
सुरालये विधास्यामि नर्तकीं तामतो भज ॥ BKM. III, Guccha I, 33.

[34] R. T., IV, 11-39, 42-43, 45, 126.

It is to be noted that the Dharmaśāstras though silent about 'Devadāsīs' provided, since the days of Gautama, legal sanction for maintenance, etc., for courtesans taken under exclusive care of a man.[35] But nowhere they are given the legal status of a wife nor their children are given the status of legitimate children. In fact, while the son of a concubine along with his mother was entitled to life-long maintenance from the property of the deceased, he was not given the right of inheritance. The daughter of a concubine was not entitled even to maintenance[36].

The position of chief-queens[37] given to temple girls as found in R.T. and also in one place in Bkm. (where it was offered but rejected) has no sanction from Hindu law. The case of Narendraprabhā in R.T. and especially of her sons, the illustrious Candrāpīḍa, Tārāpīḍa and Lalitāditya Muktāpīda becoming kings[38], seem to be totally incongruous with the rights given to the issues of such a union in law books. Narendraprabhā was taken into his keeping by king Durlabhaka Pratāpāditya in the capacity of a temple girl. If he made her wife, there is no reference to the performance of the marriage ritual. We do not know the legal validity of such a marriage. A temple dancer, whose social status was that of a courtesan, could be taken as an 'avaruddhā' but not as a wife. Any definite legal verdict on the issue is wanting. A somewhat similar instance is found in the case of Anaṅgaprabhā in the Kss. who, after passing through the hands of seven paramours, was taken by a king as a wife and became the mother of the crown-prince.[39] Unless we are ready to accept it as a reflection of the practice in Armenia and Egypt where 'Devadāsīs' having served their term, during which they led the life of a harlot, got married to human husbands, as already discussed, no cogent explanation for the existence of the practice in India can be offered. If the custom crept into India from Central Asia, its associating ideas must have come along with it.

The belief that a woman as soon as she becomes a 'Devadāsī,' is a new person, one dedicated to god with all her previous bonds severed, with no connection with her past life, and that she can be taken as a wife, clearly reflects the practice that obtained in Armenia and Egypt. The 'Devadāsī' custom being unkown to the Dharmaśāstras, the question of their being taken as wives and the legal implications of such marriages, do not arise at all. Thus, we see that the theory that the institution of 'Devadāsī' came to India from Central

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[35] Nārada Dāyabhāga, 52; P. V. Kane, History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol. II, Pt. I, pp. 638-9; Vol. III, pp. 808-15.

[36] P. V. Kane, History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol. III, p. 810.

[37] R. T., VII, 856-860. BKM., XVI, 106-113.

[38] R. T., IV, 11-126.

[39] Kss., LII, 170-369.

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Asia along with the Central Asiatic nomadic hordes, gains support. There is no wonder that along with the institution the beliefs and practices associated with it in Central and Western Asia came to India.

The hypothesis giving further support from the fact that according to South Indian conception Devadāsī will never marry. Thus in Kss. we find a commander-in-chief offering his own wife to a king. He says that he would repudiate Unmādinī, his wife, in the temple, so that the king without transgressing 'Dharma' would be able to take her.[40] In Bkm. the same is repeated.[41] Our law books nowhere prescribe any such method of taking another man's wife. No doubt it reflects Central Asiatic belief and practices as discussed above, and which was done by king Durlabhakapratāpāditya of Kaśmīra as R. T. tells us.

[40] Kss., XV, 76.
[41] BKM., III, Guccha I, 33.

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GODS' GIRL

U. S. GOSWAMI

Till the fifties of the present century, when the last vestiges of Devdasi cult were fading away, the institution had been in existence for about one and a half millennia in the Indian temples. Devdasis used to be proficient in the twin arts of singing and dancing and were expected to entertain the reigning diety of the shrine and to attend to various routine services in the temple. Although, a Devdasi was considered to be a God's girl or a dedicated wife of the diety, she seldom commanded the respect and devotion that was the due of the consort of a god. As a wife of an idol, she was forced to lead an unnatural life or have a degenerated existence. Over the years, certain Hindu temples became popular and attracted large number of pilgrims only because they had beautiful Devdasis to give singing and dancing performances. About half a century ago the enlightened public opinion in the country had taken up cudgels to improve the lot of Devdasis but it took them well over two decades to legally ban the institution and to do away with the cult altogether.

Throughout the long hisitory of the Devdasi institution in India, it had generally been concentrated in the temples of South. To some extent, the cult had also been prevalent in Orissa, Assam, Gujarat and Maharashtra, but in North India the institution is not known to have held much ground at any time.

It is very difficult to say with any certainty as to when Devdasis first appeared on the Indian religious scene. The earliest reference to the existence of Devdasi institution in India is found in the 'Padam Puran.' Padam Puran is believed to have been compiled about the 4th century A.D. The Puran avers that "one who offers a beautiful woman to God attains heaven for one full Kalpa (4,320,000,000 years)". In 'Skand Puran', supposed to be written about the 7th century A.D., Rishi Markandey says, "in the course of my suplications to Shiva, as I offered oblations to fire, there came out seven beautiful maidens, whom I employed in the service of the Lord." According to another Puran, the Bhavishya Puran, "one who consecrates a bevy of women in honour of the Sun God, passes no to the highest region where shines the Sun." The Shiva Puran while laying down the rules and regulations for building a Shiva temple categorically says that the temple should be provided, among other things, with hundreds of beautiful girls who should be proficient in the arts of singing and dancing.

There are many historical references too through which we know that about a millennium ago the Devdasi institution was flourishing in various parts of the country. Kalhana's Rajtarangini tells about an eighth century Kashmir ruler Lalitaditya who while breaking in horses, came across two beautiful temple giris who used to sing and dance regularl in honoury of the deity of their

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village temple. One comes to know from the epigraphical inscriptions that the great Chola king Rajaraja I (A.D. 985-1014) had been maintaining four hundred Devdasis in the temple of Brihadeshwara at Tanjore. In 1024, when Mehmood of Ghazni sacked the temple of Somnath in Gujarat he found three hundred musicians and five hundred dancing girls attached to the shrine.

However, the dedication of beautiful girls for dancing and singing in the temples for entertaining the Lord was unknown in the Indian religious life before the dawn of the Christian era. Obviously the idea of having dedicated girls in the temples had not originated in India. The ancient civilisation that flourished in Mesopotamia, on the banks of the Nile and in Greece and Rome had such institutions. More than four thousand years ago in Sumeria there used to be beautiful girls in the temples of the Sumerian gods who would entertain not only the idols of the Sumerians but also the priests and other social high-ups of the land. Although the institution was no better than prostitution under the garb of religious rituals but the Sumerian people were made to believe that it represented the complete and meritorious dedication of the girls to the gods and their earthly agents. The Babylonian gods also had a bevy of beautiful women to entertain them and to attend to various temple chores. The institution was also prevalent in ancient Egypt as well as in ancient Rome. In Greece there was probably no organised institution of dedicated girls to various gods but at certain religious festivals the women would not only sing and dance before the diety but would even indulge in erotic activities to please the gods.

If the Devdasi institution in India got its inspiration from the ancient cultures of the West it might look somewhat strange that the institution did not develop as much in North India which was first to come in contact with the legacies of these civilisations in the wake of Alexander's invasion of India. But the relations between North India and Greece were more of a political nature and could not be expected to be instrumental to the permeation of cultural elements beyond a certain degree. It is known with certainty that South India had developed maritime contacts with Rome and other civilisations of the West at least by the dawn of the Christian era. The cultural contacts effected through commerce and trade are more profound and effective than such contacts diffused through a fighting force. It could be very well avered that in the wake of the commercial contacts the people of South India came to know about the religious ideas and institutions of the populace of those far-flung ancient civilisations; and most probably the institution of Devdasi in South India would have been inspired through the tales of the traders and merchants of those lands.

The cult had also travelled to various other parts of India. In Orissa, the institution was introduced at least by 9th century, if not earlier. In Orissa, the Devdasis were known as Maharis. The temple of Jagannath of Puri was the main centre where Devdasis had been employed since its consecration in the 11th century A. D. In Assam, the Devdasis were known as Natis and were attached to Shaivite as well as the Vaishnavite temples. Dancing girls under the name of Murlis were consecrated in the Khandoba temples in Maharashtra. In South India Devdasis had been known by various names such as, alicheri, pendugalis, basavis, bogams, tevadiyals and murlis.

The institution had also found its adherents in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal where it exists even today. Recently, it was reported that the Nepali girls were being sold at rupees three thousand each to the temples

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in the western part of the country to serve as 'divine' dancing girls there. In Nepal the Devdasi has been known as Duki. Although the institution is officially banned in the country, the number of Dukis in the Nepalese temples today is estimated to exceed 1,500. The practice is said to have its roots in superstitious parents offering their daughters to placate various goddesses during epidemics and other calamities. But over the years the practice further deteriorated and the small girls are now even being purchased to serve as the girls of the gods who would generally end up making their living by dancing and singing at various social functions outside the precincts of the temples.

The Devdasi cult had become quite strong in medieval India. Various foreign travellers who came to India during that period noted the existence of beautiful women in Hindu temples. The Venetian traveller Marco Polo, who had come to India in 1250, while writing about Malabar had said that "they have idols, male and female, to which they offer their daughters, which when the monks appoint, sing and dance to cheer the idols." According to the medieval historian Ferishtas Sultan Alaudin Bahamani (A. D. 1351-58) had conquered certain regions of Karnataka from where he captured several Murlis attached to the temple there and got them for his harem. A Portuguese traveller Domingo Paes visited the Vijyanagar empire in 1522.. About the religious life of the region, he has said: "they feed the idol everyday, for they say that he eats; and when he eats women dance before him, who belong to that pagoda, and they give him food and all that is necessary, and all girls born of these women belong to the temple. These women are of loose character, and live in the best streets that there are in the city."

The Devdasis, being wives of the diety, used to receive land and other properties from the temple treasure. Temples had attained a very pivotal position in social life of and society and used to receive substantial offerings not only from the public but also from the kings who would attach income of certain villages to the temples. Temples were also given large tracts of agricultural land by the rulers and as such temples had ammassed considerable wealth. With the passing of time more and more wards were offering their girls to the temples out of the lure for money and land that the Devdasis used to get from the temple property.

The inherent danger of the custom leaving corrupting influences on society became came apparent quite early after the development of the Devdasi cult. There could hardly be two opinions about the fact that under the garb of offering salvation to the unwary women the Devdasi cult had generally been used to exploit the women of this country. But to be fair to the memories of the generations of Devdasis, it must be said that the institution had made some very important contributions to the cultural life of our country. The majority of our classical dance forms which have been hailed equally in India and abroad had their genesis in the temples and it was the Devdasis who developed the various delicate nuances of the dances which keep even the modern audiences spell-bound. Bharatnatyam, Kuravanji and Odissi dances are purely the product of these temples where the generations of Devdasis had developed these dances into impeccable pieces of performing arts. Kuchipudi, Kathakali and various other forms of our well-known classical dances had also first originated in our temples which were later on developed for giving secular performances. In an age of shifting political fortunes and patronage only the religious centres were well suited to preserve the cultural legacy of the land and the contribution of the temples and Devdasis in the development of classical dances and other performing arts has been considerable.

The villagers engaged themselves in religious thought; even the boys spent their time writing scared names on trees and walls. The livelong day was spent in this quaint manner, and people retired to their own homes in the evening wrapped up in a melancholy mood. Then came the influence of sleep enjoined by nature; every one, young or old, succumbed to it. Puru only kept guard over his host and master, and protected him, fan in hand, against the ravage of biting flies. Again the spell was broken by the morning sun, and the people of Chhatrina, waking from sleep, gathered round the saint. They shouted 'Hari' 'Hari' round and about him ; and Rami with great care and affection wrote the scared name all over his body. Ladies adorned him with flowers, music poured in from flutes and conches were blown. Some chanted the Vedas, others recited the Chandi.

The saint puckered his brows; all at once there fell a hush on the assembly. Everybody understood that the fateful hour was fast approaching. Somebody called for a Vaidya, a physician, for the body must be tended and all rational attempt must be made to save it from disease and decay,—at least that was what the holy books enjoined. But even as the physician came, numbness sped through the limbs and the saint laid himself down to sleep, to sleep the sleep that knows no waking. The air was rent with deafening cheers ; drums and trumpets, flutes and pipes and other musical instruments, declared the event. The women burst into tears. And simultaneously with it, Rami, who had cast her gaze overhead may be for a sign, fell down all of a heap, They rushed to her, felt her pulse, examined her in other ways. But all that was useless; life was extinct in her body; she had faithfully followed the instructions to which she herself had been a party.

Was there a whisper about her or about the loss of caste suffered by Chandidas through his sticking to her despite all threats ? There might have been, but it mattered not. Their bodies were carried through mysterious agency to the field at Nannur, and there deep trenches were dug, the dead bodies were dressed in new clothes, made to sit face to face and buried in that position.

The people who had attended came back, heavy at heart. Could they form a proper estimate of the mighty mind, singer and saint, lover and poet, whose mortal remains they thus buried that day—the mind whose fervour and music time has not damaged to the slightest extent even though centuries have intervened ? Controversies have waged and will wage about the detailed incidents of his life, or about the nature of his teachings, but the immortal dust of Chandidas lies enshrined in the heart of Bengal, young and old, secure against all disturbance for all time to come.

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LUCIO RODRIGUES

THE DAKNI—"THE SONGS OF THE DANCING GIRL"

THE syncopated rhythm of the *tabla* and the *mridang* and the clang of the cymbal provide a dramatic opening for the song of the dancing girl of Goa. The melody of the song flows from the reed of the oboe, like a serpent uncoiling itself into a graceful, gliding movement. It is a music full of an oriental charm, subtle and insinuating. You may sway to the lilt of its rhythm as a cobra sways to the snake charmer's pipe. Soon follows the sound of tinkling anklets, the thud of dancing feet keeping measure, and there floats before you with the grace of a swan a thing of enchantment, like a very *apsara* come to life from a sculptured panel in an Indian temple.

The people of Goa call her 'kolvont'. She is the descendant of the *devadashi* of ancient India, the temple dancer, the virgin dedicated to the service of the temple god. In days gone by she fanned the idol, carried the sacred light, and sang and danced before the lord in an ecstasy of adoration. This handmaid of the god thus came to be the repository of the arts of dancing, music and poetry. But times have changed, and she who was once a devotee has become a *fille de joie*, a victim to man's lust and selfishness. The *kolvont* in Goa belongs to a professional class of singers and dancers who are branded with the mark of shame. She still lives in the precincts of the Hindu temples in Goa, at Mardol, Mangesh etc., in the district of Ponda, but instead of serving the god of the temple she serves man.

In the dakni the typical *kolvont* is seen as the chief entertainer at Hindu weddings.

> It is known to all that we are dancers. (D2)
> There is a dance of *kolvonts* in Damu's wedding hall. (D1)

Her presence lends distinction to the marriage function, as only the well-to-do can afford the luxury of engaging her services. She dances before the guests assembled in the wedding hall, and also at frequent intervals

She is gorgeously attired, her arms and feet and neck and ears heavily decked with a variety of gold and silver ornaments. Her *sari* is gaily coloured, and throws various irridescent hues in the shifting light.

We are dressed in pitamori, look. (D2)

The *sari* is sometimes drawn in between the legs into a *kas*. A broad golden band clasps it tightly at the waist, and the *palou* is firmly drawn over the left shoulder and tucked into the waistband. The *choli* is of khonn, checked and striped, short and close fitting, drawn tightly under the breasts, the sleeves ending just below the shoulders. Her dark hair, shining with oil, are parted in the middle, a glittering pendant over her forehead; and the hair are gathered at the back and bound into a big bun. A fragrant wreath of jasmine and mogras and chrysanthemums covers the bun.

A wreath of mogras is in our hair. (D2)

A gem studded *notim* sparkless in her nose, and from her ears swing two long pendants. Necklaces of gold and silver, of various designs, which have several names in Konkani (gollsori, fugodor, gagorpati etc.), sparkling with imitation pearls and jewels, adorn her bosom. Her arms and fingers are liberally covered with bracelets, bangles, rings, (patli, monkutteo, kankonnam etc.) and her feet are weighed with anklets (paizonnam, vedde, zonzor etc.)

Thus arrayed the kolvont of the dakni glides before us with the grace of a gazelle, swaying her supple body in rhythmic gestures her dark expressive eyebrows and the kazal-touched, glancing eyes weaving the spell of fascination on the audience. She sings even as she dances, inviting us to watch the beauty of the ornaments that adorn her person, and admire the movements of limbs.

There are anklets on my feet,
And bangles on my hands.
Have a look at me.

Have a look at me, do look at me
As I dance the dakni. (D3)

The scene of most daknis is the bank of a river where there is the traditional ferry crossing. The kolvont has been invited to dance at a

We are going to a weeding at Xirigao. (D2)
I am going to the wedding hall of Damu. (D1)

She has a long way to go from her own home. She does the journey by foot, walking in the dew of the early morning and in the heat of the noonday sun.

Through dew and the sun's heat have I sped fast. (D2)

As evening approaches she lights her *diuti*, but before she reaches the ferry side the oil in her lamp burns out. It is fearfully dark, and she has to cross the river to get to the wedding hall. So she calls out to the boatman,

O boatman, I am late. (D2)

And in a voice that pleads and begs not to be refused, she asks him to take her across the river, to row her to the other bank.

I want to go to the other bank, sir,
I want to go to the wedding hall of Damu,
Show me the way, please,
I do not know it, sir. (D1)

Surely the boatman will not refuse to take her across in the wedding boat, and give her a torch to light her way to the place where she is to dance.

O boatman dear, come to our help,
Come with the wedding boat to take us.

Give us a torch
It is a request easy to grant. (D2)

The boatman is accomplished not only in the art of rowing but also in the art of love-making. He is the Don Juan of the river. He is sensitive to beauty and susceptible to its charms. The awning of his boat is a bower of bliss, as safe and cosy as any other in the world. The kolvont, he knows, is not too unwilling to while away the tedium of the short trip across the stream in a passing flirtation. So he agrees to row her across to the other bank; and in the gloaming, as the boat glides over the placid waters, there is a pleasant interlude of love. When

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has dropped her *notim* and her *gollsori* in the awning of the boat. She cannot appear before the wedding guests without these adornments ; so she pleads in a voice that cannot be resisted.

> Give them to me, O boatman,
> And keep the secret between you and me. (D4)

But the philandering boatman can be playfully teasing at times. He is deaf to her entreaties, and seemingly indifferent to her eagerness to reach her destination. So she has to tempt him with gold and silver, in order to make him row her across.

> I will give you my anklets, row me across,
> I will give you the bangles round my arms, row me across. (D2)

And she offers him in turn her necklace, her nose-ring. At this stage the boatman may relent, and promise to come to her rescue.

> I will show you the way. (D3)

But when he is in a mood to dally, he can be tantalising in his refusal. She cries to him in her distress, and offers to him all the valuable she has on her, with all the charm at her command.

> Take, O take, sir,
> The anklets on my feet,
> Take, O take them. (D1)

But the boatman is curt in his refusal.

> I do not want them, dear, I do not want them. (D1)

She tries all the persuasion she can muster ; but it is long before the boatman ultimately gives in. Her final appeal is to his sense of chivalry. She is completely at his mercy. She is lost without his help.

> I do not know the way, sir. (D2)

Perhaps this final appeal works.

Whereas the background of the mando and the durpod is Christian, that of the dakni is essentially Hindu. All the references in the dakni are associated with a Hindu environment and a Hindu way of life. The name of the kolvont of the dakni is Abolem or Xiumtem or Mogrem. These names are names of flowers in Konkani ; but in Goa they are

dancing performances of the kolvont are associated with places where there is a predominating Hindu population, such as Bandora, Xirodda, Xirigo etc. She goes to the wedding hall of Damu, a Hindu. The dress and the ornaments she wears are those worn by the Hindus, the nose-ring, the anklets, the bracelet, etc. The vocabulary that the poet of the dakni uses has words of Hindu reference, the temple, pannu supari, dada, diuti, the fig tree, nari etc. whereas in the mando the word used for marriage is kazar, from the Protuguese, the word used for it in the dakni is a pure Konkani word, login. In current usage the first, kazar, denotes a Christian marriage, and is used mainly by the Christians of Goa ; while the other, login, is applied to a Hindu marriage and is used by the Hindus.

But though there are Hindu associations in the dakni it is not in the real sense a Hindu song. It is is not a song sung by the Hindus of Goa, nor by the dancing girl as she dances at Hindu weddings. It is really speaking a song about the dancing girl. It is the composition of a Christian poet and composer of Goa, and is inspired by the life and art of the dancing girl. She is the theme of the song.

Compared with the mando, there is not much of variety in the treatment of the theme in the dakni. The genius of the folk poet seems to have exhausted itself in a many-faceted treatment of the character of the Goan woman in the mando. No such attempt is therefore made in the dakni. The number of daknis is in fact very negligible compared with the number of mandos, and even in this small number the same theme is repeated without much variation. The main situation exploited by the poet of the dakni is the encounter between the dancing girl and the boatman on the bank of the river. It is a situation full of dramatic possibilities ; and the poet skilfully draws out the characters of the two protagonists in the riverside drama. In the twilight of a hot and dusty day we see the silhouette of the dancing girl, standing at the edge of the water, tired and footsore, impatient to get across the river, and in the distance the dancing shadow of the boatman, standing on his boat with the oar poised, silent and imperturbable, like a god of the temple who has to be wooed into good humour, with offerings and prayers. He is the lord of the stream who has to be courted with words and with favours. The two silhouttes engage themselves in a love duet, in which the boatman plays his part with the grace of a connoisseur.

Whereas the mando throws a brilliant spotlight upon the emotional texture of the woman of Goa, the dakni throws no such light upon the inner life of the kolvont. Her story as evident in the dakni is a story of her professional engagements. She has no private life of her own.

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invited at weddings where she offers her accomplishments to the paying host. She is a gay, carefree creature of flesh, who decks herself with all the fineries that man's art has invented, not for their own sake but for the sake of the living that they help her to earn. Dress and make-up are indispensable to her in her profession.

To the poet she is a vision of beauty, a thing of enchantment, and the poetry she evokes from him is the poetry of statement, objective and purely descriptive. He imagines her as a thing of light, glittering with stone and metal and silk.

O dancing girl, a *notim* sparkles in your nose. (D3)

He swoons with delight at the fragrance of the mogras and jasmine in her hair. There is music in her step, and as she dances the bells on her feet make such sweet music that he is swept into an ecstasy. The movement of her agile limbs hold him in thrall; and as she calls upon the spectators to watch her in motion,

Look at us folks, look,
As we dance the dakni. (D3)

he echoes her in excitement,

Look at them folks, look. (D3)

She is delicate and supple, as becomes a dancer, and the poet in search of a suitable setting for her insinuating grace imagines her against the background of a waterfall—the water from the crown of the hill tripping down the slopes, dancing down in endless curis and curves.

High up on the highest hill
The water is ever curling. (D1)

The language of the dakni is simple but extremely vivid and dramatic. It seems to take its beauty from the beauty of the dress and ornaments and flowers that the kolvent has on her person. The poet uses an extremely limited vocabulary. It is pure Konkani without the admixture of Portuguese words as we find in the mando; but within the limits of the narrow range, the poet achieves an expression that is at the same time concrete and picturesque. It is deft brushwork, and the figure of the dancing girl stands before us, a figure of romance. It is an impressionistic technique that is used. The short, elliptical sentences convey the effect of speed and an atmosphere of gay abandon. It is a style that is essentially evocative.

The poetry of the dakni is not always the poetry of statement; it can sometimes be the poetry of suggestion. The dancing girl has about her dress and ornaments and flowers, and in the rhythmic movements of her body, and in her glancing eyes a gentle hint of seduction. She is a charmer, and the poet conveys in the most subtle manner the ancient spell she casts over men, with her half-inviting,

Give them to me, O boatman,
And keep the secret between you and me. (D4)

The victim of her spell offers her posies of flowers, mogras and chrysanthemums, but why should she want flowers that are cheap.

Chrysanthemums and mogras are cheap,
But I will not have them. (D3)

She herself has the fragrance of the flowers that she wears, and men are drawn towards her as are bees towards flowers. That is how she charms her lover, as she sits crowned with flowers at his feet.

Chrysanthemums and mogras will I buy
and wear them in my hair,
And I will sit at the feet of my lord,
yes, at the feet of my lord. (D1)

Besides the use of suggestion, the poet may fall back upon symbolism. The fig tree is an ancient symbol of sex and regeneration, and it is used with subtle effect in one dakni.

Many a thing, dada,
Did brother ask sister,
The fruit of the fig tree, dada,
Did he ask for.
Father and mother have gone to Serula
Fear not, girl. (D6)

There is no regular stanza pattern used by the poet of the dakni. The standard form is the rhymed couplet. Sometimes single lines occur, and occasionally triplets. In many daknis the poet lets the dancing girl speak for herself. Imagine her in a wedding hall, poised before the guests who have gathered on the occasion. She must put forth her best. Her song is a call for admiration, as in the most naive manner she calls the attention of the spectators to her name, her make-up, her profession, her engagements. When the scene changes to the river crossing, her song is a call to the boatman, which may not evoke any response from him, as in dakni 4. Sometimes the poet apostrophises her, and as the dancing girl calls upon her admirers to watch her nimble feet in action, he voices their appreciation and echoes her (D2). The highest effects in the dakni are secured when the dialogue method is used. The poet may play the part of a narrator, but the whole drama is unfolded in the dialogue between the dancing girl and the boatman, making the dakni a miniature play.

In keeping with the theme and atmosphere of the dakni the music has a rhythm which is more native than that of the mando. It is closer to the Indian tradition, though it is not model in character. The rhythmic measure of the typical dakni is two-fourths. It is brisk in

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falls, accompanied by the tinkling of anklets emphasising the main beat or crossing or syncopating it.

Like the mando, the dakni is sung in two voices, using the elementary harmony of thirds and sixths, together with sometimes a nasal drone on the tonic. The instrument which in point of timbre is most appropriate for the dakni is the oboe, with its mellow, serpentine sound. The fittest accompaniment to the melody of the dakni is provided by the tabla, with the small cymbals coming in to add more colour to the rhythm. The violin has also been used to supplement the oboe; while the guitar and the double bass may be used to reinforce the beat of the tabla. Piano and orchestral arrangements have been made with success of this type of folksong as of the mando; and choral and instrumental recordings of some choice daknis have been made in recent years by the Goan Folksong and Choral society, and the Konkani Folksong Group, for the H. M. V. Bombay.

The melody of the dakni is simple in structure. Its chief characteristic is the accent on the first and the last beat of the bar. It is made up of two phrases, one for each line of the couplet, and each of the phrases is repeated.

The dance of the kolvont of Goa belongs to the age-old tradition of Indian dancing, and is danced to Indian music, and not to the music of the dakni. The dakni of the Konkani folk poet has no specific dance with any regular tradition behind it. The dakni is the composition of a comparatively modern folk poet and composer. In recent years attempts have been made to adapt the Indian dance tradition to an interpretation of the words and music of the dakni, and dakni dance arrangements have been presented on the stage with considerable popular appeal. They are in the nature of experiments which may be anathema to purists in Indian dancing, but they may open up new directions in expression to meet the demands of the folk music embodied in the dakni.

There is the quality of fleeting beauty and joy expressed by the dakni. It is not heavy with emotion as the mando is. The mando treats love with the seriousness and devotion that it demands as an affair of a life time. And as time and circumstance are the mortal enemies of such a love, the tragic note haunts the mando. In the dakni the poet treats of love as a passing fancy, an affair of a moment, an amour. The dancing girl of the dakni is the symbol of love that walks in and out of the hearts of men, a love that knows no disappointment, and is never disillusioned, because it has no faith in permanence. The typical love play at the river side or in the boat is a passing dream dreamt in the halflights of the evening dusk, half real, half

JOGENDRA SAKSENA

DEEPAWALI FESTIVAL OF RAJASTHAN

FOLK arts often reveal the quintessence of culture and heart of the place in which they have survived for ages together. The Hir Giving Festival of Rajasthan and the various traditions and customs prevalent in the folk-life there, which have got their symbolic representation in the Mandana art, amply illustrate this point.

While studying the folk-arts of Rajasthan, Mandana and Mehndi and the various traditions and customs prevalent in the folk-life there, the one that attracts our attention the most is the Hir Giving Festival referred to above.

Hir literally means a torch or to illuminate. It is an earthen pot like a dish with a flat bottom and a stand to hold on and provided with a piece of sugarcane handle for picking up. This pot locally known as 'Falsa' is then filled in with the cotton seeds soaked in linseed-oil and then put to flames. While illuminating lights in the evening 'Hir' is also kindled and their number corresponds with the number of the male-members in the family. Hir is first worshipped with Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and abundance. It is done in the evening after the ceremony is over.

After worshipping Hir along with Lakshmi in the evening, Hirs are removed from their places and shown in every nook and corner in the house and then taken round in the neighbourhood and to the houses of friends and relatives. This sort of carrying of Hirs from place to place is called 'Hir Dena' that is the giving of Hir. It is given to elders by the youngers, who go to them and call aloud: 'Hiro dwali tel melo', which means, 'it is the auspicious occasion of Deepawali, please pour in linseed-oil in my Hir to keep it burning'. Having given the Hir, the giver prostrates himself at the feet of his elders and pays his respects to obtain their blessings. The elder, who is given Hir then pours in some oil and worships it with the customary sweets prepared at the occasion and puts in something of silver in the Hir, be it a four-anna or eight-anna piece or a rupee or something of the sort.

A Local Function:

Hir is one of the most important and remarkable local functions celebrated on the eve of Deepawali in the Harauti region of Southern

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Kantowsky points out at the beginning that his intention was to write a personal, subjective book reflecting his experiences and the resulting consequences. This only leaves the possibility of saying whether one liked the book or not. Nevertheless, I wish to make a few remarks. One great merit of this book is that it shows that the present problems of our time are not due to any constraints but result from our way of thinking. The changes of opinion which occur in any scientific career are described in a very impressive manner based on the author's own experience. But it is nevertheless doubtful whether this way via South Asian thinking is really necessary in order to find new alternatives. As Kantowsky says, the virtues of Buddhism are not bound to it, they can also be found in other cultures.

Christian Wagner

JACOB RÖSEL: Der Palast des Herrn der Welt. Entstehungsgeschichte und Organisation der indischen Tempel- und Pilgerstadt Puri. (Materialien zu Entwicklung und Politik, 27). München: Weltforum-Verlag, 1980. XXXVIII, 378 pages, DM 59.-

Jagannath and the temple city of Puri which Claudius Buchanau, the first Christian missionary to visit Puri in 1806, had called "the Moloch of the heathen world which is to the Hindoos what Mecca is to the Mohammedans, the stronghold and fountain-head of their idolatry" form the fascinating subjects of J.Rösel's monograph. With its Great Temple of Jagannatha, "The Lord of the World", and about 500 other temples and holy places and about 10 000 priests and temple servants Puri attracts and accommodates according to Rösel's calculations each year about 20 times as many pilgrims (c. 1.5 million) as its own population which amounts to c. 65 000. Puri can thus still be regarded as one of India's major temple cities.

Rösel's first major chapter contains an exhaustive study of the social, economic and ritual organization of the temple city. In the context of this short review it must suffice to mention only a few major conclusions of this analysis. The chapter on the social organization and its 118 priestly groups (sevakas) and some 70 monasteries (matha) is introduced by a structural comparison of the cult of village deities and the imperial cult ("Reichskult") of Jagannatha. Whereas the ideas of the equality of the devotees of Jagannatha and his "territoriality" had their origin in his tribal and post-tribal village background, the highly sophisticated organization of Puri's Brahmanical priests served as a model for the Hinduization of the emergent class society of medieval Orissa and the political organization of the regional kingdom of Orissa. In this context Rösel's description of "the structure of traditional division of labour" is of particular interest. Despite its outward appearance of a distinctly hierarchical organization, the structure of Puri's priesthood is based on an institutionalized system of organized mistrust ("Fließgleichgewicht des Mißtrauens"). Characterized by a large number of overlapping functions and double employment, it guarantees to all, or at least most, of the priests a steady state of economic opportunity. Everybody who works on the structure of medieval Hindu kingdoms faces similar problems with the pompous titles of their officers which sometimes even seem to reflect a modern departmental system. Rösel's hypothesis on the traditional division of labour amongst the priests of Puri will certainly help us better understand the administrative system of medieval Hindu kingdoms.

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The chapter on the economic organization which is introduced by a systematic analysis of about 50 copperplate inscriptions emphasizes the great importance of the landed property of the temple and mentions its additional sources of income which are derived mainly from pilgrim donations. The wide-spread yet still relatively unknown system of auctioning off to priests of Puri the right to perform various minor rituals and economic activities deserves particular notice. It is this system which according to Rösel allows the temple to minimize its administrative responsibility considerably and, at the same time, to delegate economic opportunities in order to maintain and strengthen the "Fließgleichgewicht des Mißtrauens". But above all, Rösel's analysis of the economic organization of Puri and its priesthood shows the tremendous importance of landed property for all aspects of social status, mobility and class formation. Finally, another politico-economic function of India's temple cities has to be mentioned. According to Rösel the temple cities and their daily rituals and great annual festivals have to be regarded as an immensely extended and refined system of merit economy. It leads to the redistribution of socially produced agrarian surplus on the one hand and, on the other, neutralizes (as donations to the temple treasure) suspicious private wealth of the aristocracy, thus weakening potential enemies of the central king. Furthermore, it permits socially underprivileged groups to participate at least temporarily in religious spheres which otherwise are closed to them. Thus temple economy is an essential stabilizer of the traditional society of medieval India. It is therefore not astonishing that the sacred food, its preparation, metamorphosis and distribution as divine "great grace" (mahaprasad) forms the most important part of Rösel's description and analysis of the ritual organization. As a medium of concrete communication with the gods the sacred food of Jagannath serves for Rösel as a paradigm of Orissan society and a clue for its analysis.

In his second major chapter Rösel introduces and analyzes Puri's temple legends as told by the pilgrim guides and priests to the pilgrims during their visits to Puri and its 500 temples and holy places. The idea of the survey is to evaluate semiotically the above-mentioned hypotheses on the basis of the oral tradition of Puri and to reconstruct the cosmos of Puri as viewed by Jagannatha's devotees and pilgrims. The temple legends depict Jagannatha as a divine king whose court, the temple compound, is peopled by the divine

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court nobility and court officers and who holds his durbar with his divine tributary rajas who live in their respective temples and shrines in Puri. Here again the analogy with the kingdoms of the rajas of Orissa as Jagannatha's earthly deputies is quite self-evident. But the most fascinating result of Rösel's analysis of the temple legends is Jagannatha's integrative power. It operates on four different levels: 1. Through substitution of well-known Hindu gods and goddesses from all over India and Orissa, e.g. Rama from Rameshwar, Siva from Benares or Samalesvari from Sambalpur in Western Orissa; 2. accumulation of conquered or donated divine figures; 3. socialization of dangerous spirits and tribal deities, e.g. Bhadrakali, who devoured human beings in the jungles of Orissa, was allowed to settle in Puri and to become a vegetarian; 4. interregional coordination of portions of deities who have been dismembered after their death and spread all over India. All these deities were accommodated in Puri and duly honoured by separate shrines inside and outside of Jagannatha's temple compound. Through these different modes of integration the cult of Jagannatha and the temple city of Puri acted as the most important factor of local integration, the emergence of a regional tradition in Orissa and its integration or "universalization" in the all-Indian context.

The importance of Rösel's monography, however, lies not in the vast amount of detailed information, part of which has not even been mentioned at all in this review, e.g. the organization of pilgrimage and Puri's famous "pilgrim hunters". The uniqueness of his study certainly is the comprehensiveness of his structural analytical approach which leads him to far reaching conclusions. Some of them may be precipitate. But even historians will profit from the results of his "ahistorical and structural-anecdotical method" (p.99) of analysing the copperplate inscriptions, and Indologists should read carefully his "critical remarks on the Indological method" (p.218 ff.) which serve as an introduction to his analysis of Puri's temple legends. A few minor errors and Rösel's delight in witty formulations should not detract from the importance of his study. Its value can be appreciated only by those who have once stood at the "lion's gate" in front of the "Palast des Herrn der Welt" which no European has yet been allowed to enter.

Hermann Kulke

UWE HOERING (unter Mitarbeit von Christa Wichterich): Indien ohne Gandhi. Begegnung mit einer Gesellschaft im Aufbruch. (Peter Hammer-Taschenbuch, 22). Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1984. 207 pages, DM 14.80

The title of this book ("India without Gandhi") is, of course, doubly ironic after Mrs.Gandhi's assassination, but the author is referring to the Mahatma, who serves as a kind of discursive foil to situate topics like industrialization,

caste conflicts or land reforms in the context of an introduction to the complexity of India's socio-political configuration. The author does not romanticise Gandhian positions and Ambedkar and E.M.S.Namboodiripad are quoted to provide an objective and distanced presentation. This attitude accounts in no small measure for the book's success in steering clear of the usual extremes into which European reactions to India often fall: unconditional admiration or complete rejection. The author understands the simultaneity of feudal and capitalist social formations in the country with their conflicting and mutually reinforcing interests as also the international context of the situation. Many otherwise more ambitious and detailed books often do not pay enough attention to this point with the result that the India they present is in theoretical terms a monolithic undifferentiated entity. The resultant texts often have a peculiar "closed" character. There is a claim to authenticity ("I was out there") coupled with a symptomatic possessiveness about the subject matter which often brinks on authoritarianism.

Fortunately, Höring seems prepared to occupy a generic space which comes to terms with some of the textual problems posed by all attempts to represent other societies and histories. Attention to such problems is, of course, all the more necessary when there is an explicit claim to participate in some kind of internationalist discussion which does not reduce the "Third World" to the role of the mute object of study. The kind of polyphonic text without a dominating author that one would like to see more often is quite serious about the responsibility of writing about "Others" and therefore tends more and more towards a montage of elements, thus allowing the participation of both reader and reality in the complicated process of constructing a point of view.

Höring proceeds from the kind of exotic detail most readers would expect, like the village well, women tobacco workers or Howrah bridge and succeeds in eight precisely written texts in indicating their place in socio-historical contexts, like the weakening of caste barriers in times of need or the resistance to class exploitation or transportation problems.

These "encounters" as the author calls them form a spectrum which supplies the themes that form the subject matter of the book: the caste system and social oppression, land reform, agricultural development, ecological problems and energy crises, industrial development, health and hygiene, urbanization. The technique of reportage enables the author to convey a great deal of information within a readable presentation. Fortunately the author does not have a prescriptive authoritarian formula to project or a vision to redeem. This does not mean that the book does not take sides. On the contrary, there is a conscious "view from below" which is the fulcrum of the presentation: changing Indian reality is judged from what it does to the worker, Dalits, women, tribals, peasantry. The implicit underlying point is that the combination of socialist rhetoric, capitalist innovations and continuing feudal interests characteristic of the Indian crisis do not hold out the promise of any meaningful kind of progress as a whole. It remains literally sectarian.

There is, of course, enough evidence for this. The author contrasts the

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JAKOB RÖSEL

Landed endowment and sacred food

The economy of an Indian temple

The setting

I SHALL DEAL in this paper with the Jagannath temple of Puri which nowadays constitutes one of the biggest remaining North Indian temple and pilgrimage centers (1). This town of 60,000 inhabitants still draws approximately one million pilgrims annually from all over India (2). Puri is situated on the seashore of the Bay of Bengal and is the greatest temple town of Orissa, an Indian province lying adjacent in a westerly direction to the province of Bengal. The present temple was constructed in the eleventh century, and the God's name, Jagannath, which translates as 'ruler of the world', spells out well the intent of the founders of the temple, the Ganga, the main dynasty of medieval Orissa. The name was appropriate, because the history of the Gangas shows that they dedicated their kingdom to Jagannath and they only ruled as regents or ministers on behalf of their deity (3). In the context of the overall Indian high tradition, Jagannath is regarded as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. The sculpture that is actually worshipped in the temple is singular in the Indian setting. It is the only wooden idol which receives veneration, and in addition, this sculpture is, compared to the conventional blue-stone images of Vishnu, of a particularly crude, quasi-

(1) Basic fieldwork for this paper was conducted in Puri from 1970 to 1971. Research was undertaken in the framework of an inter-disciplinary study group, the 'Orissa Research Project' (O.R.P.). The project was organized to study the framework of a North-Indian temple city and financed by the *Deutsche Forschungs-Gemeinschaft* (*D.F.G.*). All unpublished research materials are referred to as O.R.P. *mimeo*.

(2) M. AHMED (ed.), Census of India, *District Census Handbook Puri* (Cuttack 1966), p. 318.

(3) M. M. CHAKRAVARTI, The date o, the Jagannath temple in Puri, Orissa, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*; LXVII (1898) 5, 328-331; H. KULKE, Jagannatha Kult und Gajapati-Königtum. Ein Beitrag zur hinduistischer Geschichte religiöser Legitimation Herrscher (Wiesbaden 1979), pp. 48-51.

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totemistic style. This strange, iconographic artifact has never deterred the Oriyas from lavishing a splendid ritual in honour of their Overlord. In the course of thirteen daily main rituals, the God receives three meals, the main lunch consisting of fifty-six different dishes (the temple kitchen houses 270 hearths and ovens) (4); he is dressed and undressed four times a day; and some 10,000 priests organized into 108 different service-groups attend to his needs and desires. In the classical age these priests subsisted entirely on the daily distribution of the divine food offerings and were clothed in the used garments, the *dhotis*, of Jagannath. The temple organization was supervised by high-ranking, land-controlling Brahmins, who resided nearby in the center of landed endowments, bestowed by the Orissan kings to finance the daily routine (5). Although the temple underwent many changes it is still an economic unit of actual political interest. Jagannath is still widely considered the biggest single landowner in India, and the temple treasury stores, in net weight alone, some 430 kg of silver, 135 kg of gold, and 22 kg of precious stones (mostly diamonds from the Orissa area), all in the form of hundreds of utensils and jewellery which belong to the God (6).

In the following short paper, I do not want to deal so much with a detailed description of all the myriad of economic facts and activities of the temple; instead I would like to focus on what I shall call the principle of maintenance of the whole structure: a set of interrelations, which regulate the interaction of the economic, social and ritual activities. These three distinct, yet interrelated, spheres of interest are to be found in the Puri temple's landed endowments, ritual service and distribution of sacred food.

Endowments as food. The meaning of Mahāprasāda

Huge landed endowments are and have been given to Jagannath, not so much in the desire to maintain his priestly establishment, but to procure additional daily meals for him (7). These landed properties are therefore called *Amṛta-maṇohi*, 'nectar-feeding',

(4) L. PANDA, Report of the special officer under the Puri Shri Jagannath temple, Administration Act 1952, 4 vols: I, pp. 52-55; II, pp. 2-35.

(5) G. PFEFFER, *Puri's Shasandörfer, Basis einer regionale Elite* (Heidelberg, O.R.P., 1974), pp. 30-98.

(6) Calculation based on L. PANDA, *op. cit.* IV, pp. 17-87.

(7) P. MUKHERJEE, A descriptive list of temples in the southern part of Orissa, *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, I (1952) 2, 145-155.

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because the sugarcane, coconuts and paddy of these endowed villages form the basis of the pleasure, the *Bhoga*, of the God and therefore ensure the eternal growth of his prosperity and power. The cooked meal is carried into the sanctum, where the God, by looking at it, partakes of it. Through this very act of eating with his eyes, he transforms the food into 'leftovers', *Vichistha*, which are regarded by his faithful, with an ambivalent shudder of horror, as his spittle, *Juthia*. This, the most degrading substance in normal Hindu society, is, in the case of the divine, regional, Overlord, the most precious. This 'spittle-food' is now distributed among the temple priests, the Orissan kings and high aristocrats ; the land-controlling, high-class Brahmins normally find a discreet way of avoiding it (8).

In the later middle ages, with the fall of the last regional Hindu dynasty, the subsequent loss of power of its high-class Brahmins and the resultant loosening of restrictions on temple entry, it was precisely this feature of 'sacred spittle' which formed the basis of Jagannath's popularity. The same food that had served to set the monarchy and its aristocrats apart from the rest of the population now served the opposite function of closing all social distances before this Overlord. In the sentimental logic of the Bhakti and Chaitanya ages, this spittle of Jagannath became '*Mahāprasāda*' the 'great Grace' (9). As the pilgrims' most popular legend states, 'whoever eats from the food of the Lord shall be blessed ; fools become wise, the sick become healthy, the poor become rich, the blind see again and the crippled walk ; Brahmins and Untouchables should eat the Lord's food together. Thus they both become children of the Lord' (10). So the eating or bestowal of *Mahāprasāda* shattered caste barriers, and with this direct communion all classes became the equal children of Jagannath.

Thus the popularity of Jagannath in the latter medieval age developed in proportion to the ease of access to his food. After the sixteenth century a new 'Hall of Pleasure', a gigantic platform for food-offerings, had to be constructed, a kitchen complex was developed, and trade in the dried rice of Jagannath, Nirmalya, spread throughout India. In a distinct reversal of normal Hindu practice, eating from the food of the Lord became more important than seeing him. In the center of the temple an *Ānanda Bazaar*, a 'bazaar of eternal delight', a

(8) L. S. S. O'Malley, *Puri District Gazetteer* (Patna 1929), chapter on Jagannath.

(9) K. C. Mishra, *The Cult of Jagannath* (Calcutta 1971), pp. 92-93.

(10) J. Rösel, A walk through the holy compound, a collection of all the legends told to the pilgrims by the priests (Freiburg) *mimeo*, pp. 7-8.

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sort of walk-in restaurant, was set up ; this was a center for commensality, where Brahmin and low-caste pilgrims alike were expected to eat the food, sitting face to face.

Thus, while the volume of divine food distributed became the precise measure of the popularity of Jagannath with the masses, these masses from now on contributed the most important source of his future growth and power : every pilgrim was expected to provide Jagannath with the institution of a new additional meal. In the framework of this still exclusively agrarian, premarket society, this meant that additional acres or a whole village had to be endowed to procure 'as long as sun and moon shall shine' the requisite basic materials. From the sixteenth century onward the quality and quantity of the landed endowments acquired a new structure ; the exclusively Orissan regional king was replaced by the nondescript, all-Indian landlord as the typical donor ; endowments came to be scattered all over India (11). The transformation of Northern India under the reign of the Mughals into an economy of essentially monetary relations introduced the collection of rents in cash rather than kind (12).

This increase in landed property not only ensured the growth and social differentiation of the various priestly services, it made them at the same time necessary. Additional groups of scribes and accountants were needed to keep track of the collections from these various endowments ; new cooks, specializing in the preparation of rice-pudding and sweetmeats had to be installed, and new food-carriers, ropemakers, astronomers and calendar-makers, etc., had to be introduced. The growth and differentiation of these service-groups can be traced through the sequence of their increasing numbers—the original temple at the end of the the eleventh century had eight priest-groups, at the end of the thirteenth century we find thirty-six groups mentioned, by the middle of the sixteenth century fifty-six, and at the end of the eighteenth century it reached its climax, with the highest holy number available one hundred and eight (13).

This process of differentiation was at the same time one of diversification. It was not, however, the evolution of a deliberately devised, efficient system of division of labor ; the present diversification represents more the outcome of eight centuries of alliances, intrigues

(11) A good example in S. C. Dey, A grant to Lord Jagannatha of the time of Padma-Nabha Deva, *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, III (1954), 40-43.

(12) S. Chandra, Some aspects of the growth of a money economy in India during the seventeenth century, *Economic and Social History Review*, III (1966) 4, 311-330.

(13) J. Rösel, *Der Palast des Herrn der Welt, Entstchungsgeschichte und Organisation der indischen Tempel- und Pilgerstadt Puri in Orissa* (München 1980), pp. 18-28.

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and mutual suspicion between different, often antagonistic, priest-groups, eager to intrude into new services and jealously guarding their own against the interference of others. Normally an already internally-arranged system of division of labor was confirmed by the king, through the official recognition and installation of a new service, and the subsequent allotment of new shares of holy food and clothes.

At the same time, this overall process served to blur the originally prominent ethnic and sectarian distinctions of these groups and transformed them into small interrelated parts of a highly sophisticated, self-regulating clockwork of ritual interaction. While it evolved, however, a much more important, although nearly invisible, shift occurred and the whole system of control and power was reorganized in the temple.

The rise of the temple priests and the development of mass-pilgrimage

Before the age of mass-pilgrimage and mass-commensality, the temple, as already mentioned, was an exclusive and highly esoteric affair supervised by high-ranking land-controlling Brahmins with North Indian backgrounds (14). Although they would not defile their hands by actually serving a God whose mythology, ritual and iconography was entirely of their own making, they had devised and they supervised the most minute details of the ongoing ritual. The sacred routine was a mechanical clockwork of elaborate, relentless consumption on the part of the God, and every failure or absenteeism on the part of the temple priests was mercilessly punished by corporal punishment, meted out by a special institutional police-force. This group of high Brahmins resided in the very center of the traditional and original land endowments of the temple, that is within a ten to twenty miles radius of Puri (15). However, after the fall of the last Hindu dynasty, the helpless God's role was to cater to the new needs of the North Indian landholders. The question arose, who was to control the new, scattered lands endowed to Jagannath by these pilgrims ? This new source of power came to be monopolized by the once landless temple priests, and as it was they who conducted

(14) S. N. RAJGURU, The Brahmanas and the Landgrants (Bhuvaneshwar 1972), O.R.P. *mimeo*.

(15) Earliest village grants, published in A. K. RATH, The Orissa State museum plates of Aniyanka Bhima III, *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, XII (1964) 3, 164-196.

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these pilgrims around the temple and accommodated them in the straw-thatched mudhuts, or under the Banyan trees in Puri, they normally registered their names as '*Marfaddar*', 'Manager for Jagannath'. Jagannath himself could not reasonably be expected to supervise all his petty land-holdings in person.

Thus, what on the one hand worked against the reputation of these temple-priests, that is, their defiling contacts with pilgrims of questionable social background, became on the other their new road to power. From a group of disreputable temple servants, these *Deolipandas* rose to become a powerful class of betel-chewing, opium-smoking, quasi-landlords in the name of Jagannath. The impoverished, but prudish high-class Brahmins remained helpless, watching, bystanders and were sometimes even forced by sheer poverty to find employment in the business of their former temple servants. There they wrote or edited sacred texts, the *Mahātmyas*, which described the splendors of Jagannath and the need to see him in person (16). The actual temple service was normally conducted by the second-born sons of the temple priests or farmed out to some distant relative, while their share of holy food and cloth was sold to pilgrims ; they concentrated entirely in the cultivation of their scattered land-holdings, which they visited to collect their rents, and to propagate, organize, and conduct new pilgrimages to Puri. Thus, these *Pandas* transformed themselves into the famous 'pilgrim hunters' and became the chief agents for the ever-increasing flow of pilgrims and land endowments. The rents from the latter did not normally profit Jagannath : it was very seldom that their equivalent value in meals was served, or presented over a long period of time, although 'sun and moon' still shone on the head of his betel-chewing priestly manager.

The 'management' of their pilgrim-clienteles now led them to the logical corollary of their landed estates—the cultivation of their so-called 'pilgrim-estates'. Whenever they had extracted promises of land endowments from their more-often-than-not bankrupt pilgrims, the gifts were entered into yearly registers, together with the date, plus some sort of signature. The pilgrim's name and family clan were recorded in another register, the village register, and whenever a distant relative in some future generation came to pay the traditional homage to Jagannath in Puri, the demonstration of these registers constituted irrefutable proof that this pilgrim 'belonged'

(16) U. SCHNEIDER, Der Holzgott und die Brahmanen, Testausgabe und Interpretation des *Purushottama Mahatmya*, O.R.P. *mimeo* 1973.

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to this priest, his customary family '*Yajamāna-panda*' ; and the initial endowment set the standard against which his generosity was measured. In this way, by the end of the eighteenth century the whole of India had been parcelled out into village and district registers, through which these 'pilgrim-farmers' kept track of their clientele ; at the same time these registers constituted chips of predictable success in the yearly roulette-game of harvesting new endowments or gifts. As this potential spending power for Jagannath was shared out between the several hundred priestly families in Puri, it is not surprising that by the nineteenth century we find an option-exchange type of trade practice : district and yearly registers could be bought and sold, and were given as dowry. Often they were traded in order to unify and concentrate a person's holdings in certain provinces, thereby minimizing travel expenses and optimizing the recruitment of new pilgrims. Sometimes whole new districts were bought because a good season or a new monastic influence promised an increase in the number of pilgrims to Puri.

It is, ironically enough, in the age of British-built steamships and railroads that this 'Weberian', 'innerwordly urge' for universal quantification and predictability reached its climax (17). Distances shrank to the price of a railway ticket, and the whole of India became a ready market for the pilgrimage organizers. For the first time Jagannath became accessible to the millions of landless laborers and village craftsmen who heretofore had been unable to afford long-term pilgrimages. At the same time, the direct, round-trip pilgrimage relieved the priests of the tiresome burden of sharing their clientele's spending power with other shrines lying along the pilgrims' route.

But meanwhile the ominous spectre of the shifting ratio of people to land endangered the future greatness of the Lord's servants. From the 1870s onward land prices began to rise in alarming fashion : cash-crop markets and rising population densities had brought all land under cultivation (18).

Thus the new pilgrims of the railroad age were pilgrims who either could not, or would not, endow land. The temple economy reacted to this serious challenge with impeccable elegance. No longer was the pilgrim expected to endow land for new meals ; instead he was expected to present Jagannath with a sum of money,

(17) W. W. HUNTER, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Oxford 1907), 4 vols : III, pp. 385-386.

(18) S. L. MADDOX, *Final report on the survey and settlement of the Province of Orissa, 1890-1900* (Ranchi 1920) ; K. M. PATRA, *Orissa under the East India Company* (New Delhi 1971), pp. 68-70.

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the yearly interest from which financed a new meal. A price-list for subscribers was drawn up by the priest, with a plain rice dish beginning at 5,000 rupees, ranging upward to 250,000 rupees for a *seer* of *Makhan Mishri*, a one-kilo dish of butter-rice with raisins dipped in coconut oil and sweetened with sugar balls. This new arrangement provided the priests and the temple with ready cash, which enabled them to participate in the emerging colonial money economy.

Thus, the concept of providing for the God and a sacred routine focusing on conspicuous consumption has well survived the divers historical and economic challenges of the last nine centuries.

But what was the nature of the benefits that the different classes of donors received, beside the rather vague honour of becoming kinsmen of Vishnu ?

Ritual interaction

During the classical Hindu phase of the temple, the food-offerings served to ensure the collective prosperity of the kingdom ; access to the God and his food was a privilege, and the ritual scope universal ; the kingdom as a whole, with all its endless hierarchies of mutual distinctions was supposed to endure and to prosper as a result of the pleasure of its Overlord. With the advent of mass pilgrimage the temple is transformed into a Bazaar, a religious vending machine, in which the age-old hopes and desires of Indian peasant society can be realized in exact proportion to a price. Many (and male) children, health, good harvests, the discovery of hidden treasure are the rewards which the legends universally promise. During this period the temple compound changes into a ritual playground, in which the pilgrims rediscover the sacred objects of their village religion in amalgamated and only slightly sublimated form (19). These objects of worship are the sacred tree, the well or water-reservoir, rock boulders, the bathing *ghat*, hills, seashores and ant-hills. All these sites are not so much distinct facts or objects of worship ; they act as catalysts for a mimetic experience on the part of the pilgrims. Hills are to be perambulated, water drunk ; streams and bathing *ghats* used to bathe oneself, and the branches of sacred trees to fasten parts of one's jewelry or pieces of pottery (20). Thus these archaic models

(19) For a good description, see L. A. BABB, *The Divine Hierarchy. Popular Hinduism in Central India* (New York 1975), pp. 69-102.

(20) *An Old Brahminical Guidebook for Pilgrims*, probably dating from the four-

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of village religion precipitate a series of experiences and impressions which transform the pilgrim into a different person, ready to observe, but never to touch, the Jagannath. His ritual and sensual activities, a sequence of holy rites entirely predetermined by the temple compound's architecture and iconography, and supervised by the pilgrim's traditional priest, transform and change his state of mind. So the worship is not conducted in a framework of superabundant verbalization; not communication, but communion in a very direct and non-symbolic way constitutes the content of a temple visit. Thus the truth of the temple's ritual entirely subsists on what the pilgrim's beliefs are, and in Puri he believes in what he shares—the used food, the used bathing water and the used flowers of the God. These objects are part of an uncomplicated and sensual communion based on pleasure. The Mandora flowers of the temple's three flower gardens are said to excel in color, the temple food is really excellent. Therefore the mood in the temple resembles more the gaity of a village *mela*, a village fair, than the sombre atmosphere of a Shiva shrine or the plain boredom of a protestant church.

But despite all these changes, the main ritual of the classical Hindu period still persisted. There were never any attempts to reconcile its premises with popular and regional beliefs. A very different ritual logic from that just portrayed appears if we look into the sanctum, at the main ritual, during which Jagannath is supposed to enjoy his fifty-six-course luncheon. There, out of the sight—the ritual is performed behind closed doors—and out of the grasp—the ritual is performed in sanscrit—of the ordinary pilgrim, a complete logical turnover takes place. No longer is the pilgrim guest of the God, instead the God is treated as a Guest of high-class Brahmins (21). The main ritualist, the *Pujapanda*, in a standardized series of gestures and sacred formulas, destroys himself and then begins to create out of his own sacred void the 'idea' of a divine body. After undergoing an interrelated series of ever-increasing materializations, the essence of a newborn and therefore absolute pure God is awakened to life and transmitted into the formerly lifeless sculpture of the God.

Finally, seated in the crude wooden sculpture, the God is greeted as a tired, dusty, though high-ranking stranger, who may enjoy

teenth century, gives a detailed enumeration. Kapila Samhita (Bhuvaneshwar 1972), O.R.P. *mimeo*.

(21) The following based on G. C. TRIPATHI, The mode of daily worship in the Jagannath temple of Puri (Bhuvaneshwar 1972), O.R.P. mimeo; which in turn is based mainly on the text of the 'Gopalarohanavidhi' attributed to King Purushottama Deva.

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the hospitality of the high-class Brahmins and their underling, the king. A welcome aperitif (a sweet drink in fact, *madhu parka*) is offered, he is sacrificially sprinkled with water, his feet are washed, and a towel to clean his face is handed over. Then the customary *sodaça-upachāra*, the sixteen kinds of offerings which are due to a high-ranking guest, are made. Finally three sacrifices of Vedic origin are performed, in which the actual offering of food, *Naivedyam*, plays the most insignificant role.

Afterwards the essence of the God is withdrawn from the statue, sniffed in through the right nostril of the priest, and with the help of yogic practices, sacrificially burned in his spinal cord. So, while the pilgrims eagerly throng the hall of audience to see their regional Overlord, the Lord has already departed. What is shown to them after the customary siesta hour is, according to the explicit statement of the sanskrit manual, a lifeless idol.

That such a travesty should represent the most central mystery of the cult is easily understood : nothing is purer than the content of a mystery. It is even beyond the touch of comprehension, which constant threat the ritual must overcome, as it must reconcile the contradiction between divine purity and conspicuous consumption, between the need for a divine image of a society based on distances and untouchability and the need to display that very same image. But this secret ritual of dominance disguised as hospitality serves yet another purpose. It reaffirms the true causality which led to the formation of this Hindu kingdom. That is, not the God, who, owning and reigning over this kingdom, dispenses favors to the king and Brahmins, and who in turn is honored by them with due gifts ; but the sacred and sacrificial knowledge of Brahmins, which inspired the sequence of constitutional sacrifices and rituals from which the construction and growth of temples, idols, palaces and institutions resulted.

What in terms of the ritual is a gigantic puppet-play, which the pilgrims may enjoy only subconsciously, enshrines at the same time the Empire's innermost secret. So while the effectivity of Jagannath for the Hindu monarchy, its aristocrats and the latter-day pilgrims was derived from the regional, territorial, and so to speak vernacular identity and reality of the God, this central ritual reconciled their interpretation with the Brahminical 'great Tradition' and its world-transcending and encompassing Vishnu.

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The principle of maintenance

What is the specific connection we find between the economic, social and ritual activities of the temple, which I earlier called 'the principle of maintenance' ? In my opinion these three spheres are interrelated, and their *raison d'être* is the banal, superficial and to us subversive, search for pleasure. The number of landed endowments is the measure of the services which can be financed or procured, and it is these services, mainly in the form of food, that constitute divine pleasure ; it is in exact proportion to this divine pleasure or food that worshippers receive 'Great Grace'. Thus they are blessed with children, harvests and prosperity, which in turn will yield more endowments, more food, more pleasure. The terminological sequence of *Amritamanohini*, *Seva*, *Bhoga* and *Mahāprasāda* constitutes therefore a precise description the institution gives of itself and we do not need to look elsewhere to superimpose more idealizing, metaphorical or symbolic descriptions. As Jagannath acts as Lord of Orissa we do not need to see him as a symbol of power, we better admire him in the practice of power.

Thus we can say that this divine kingdom maintained itself with the help of a sacred food-chain, or to use a more modern and fancy expression, it recycled divine pleasure. It was within this matrix of nectar-feeding lands, service, pleasure and grace, that the power of the God and his township increased and decreased, every loss in one part of the sequence immediately translating itself into the other parts. Along this cycle, the God, his town, and domain reacted against the different historical challenges of the last nine centuries, and, as we have seen, he reacted remarkably well. To use the waxing and waning of this sacred food cycle as a 'leitmotiv' for the history of Orissa is beyond the scope of this small paper ; instead, having outlined how the complexities of the temple implicate and assume the existence of this simple and banal model, let us try to reduce the latter still further, by analyzing the basic anthropomorphic image which it in turn assumes of the God.

The God as a mighty landlord

That assumption, which is the rationale of and the justification for the whole food-chain, stems from a special conception of the

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God—that of the mighty territorial landlord with both sensual and mundane needs and pleasures. Banal and unremarkable as such a model may appear to us, who have the benefit of not only monotheist, but secular hindsight ; it took a millennium in Orissa before it could replace older and more archaic conceptions of, or better, projections on, the 'true nature' of Gods. All great predecessors of Jagannath were of Shiva or Shakti origin—this means in the Orissan regional context that these Gods were venerated in the form of mostly uncut rocks and boulders. They were seen more as magical forces than as mythological, reproducible forms. As such they attacked peasants in the form of fever or disease, and rode lions and jackals by entering their bodies (22). Rituals, even those conducted in the major shrines, were often of an exorcistic nature and conducted in utter seclusion and esoteric settings. Food offerings needed metaphorical explanations, were restricted in scale, and seldom accepted by the worshippers (23).

From the eleventh century onward, this religion of fear was gradually replaced by a cult of gift-offering, centered on the new state-deity of Jagannath. This new conception of the God has several features, which predetermined the structure of the whole temple. In the first instance the establishment of the 'big landlord' figure eliminates an element of fear : the power of the new God is measured by the numbers he attracts, not those he repels. This complete turnabout is possible because his new image has entered the stage of social interaction. He can be honoured according to the rules of the social game, which, not only in the Orissan context, were loyalty, submission and spending.

Having entered the social realm, the God becomes predictable, a prognostic fact. Philosophical thought and exorcistic superstitions alike can be reduced to the level of such questions as, should the lord be served sweetmeats twice a day, or, is garlic admissable to the divine palate ? The cognitive outlook likewise can grasp and domesticate the essence of the God in fixed architectural, mythological and iconographic detail. Thus art becomes the important schoolteacher in the process of the God's socialization ; thus bloodthirsty hill-goddesses are educated to become well-behaved, vegetarian temple statues. Interrelations between God and worshipper can therefore be translated from magical and mechanic reciprocity into the more indistinct,

(22) B. J. M. Das, Note on the Gram Devati *or* Tutelary village deity of Orissa, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, LXXII (1903) 2, 81-85.

(23) H. Brunner, De la consommation du Nirmalya de Shiva, *Journal Asiatique*, CCLVII (1969), 214-263.

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deferred, but harmless social reciprocity (24) : that of a patron-clientele relationship. Worshippers are clients, kinsmen, who, by partaking of the God's food and showering him with gifts and bribes will be compensated in due course (25). But the image of the 'big landlord' is the same as that of the 'big man' : one of ever-growing demands and desires.

There is nothing improper in the priesthood's constant demands for new meals, new dhotis, incense, and dancing women, to perfect and embellish the daily routine. Keeping up with the divine Joneses must also be of concern to the king, who acts as regent. Thus the king neither can, nor has to, resist the growth of the sacred metropolis. In that way the basic image provides its own rationale and urge for unlimited growth, a growth which always finds its upper limit and which is held in check by the actual resources of the kingdom. The God's life-style is thus not indicative or symbolic of the state of the nation ; it is the actual state of the nation's prosperity, it is the consummation of power in its most direct form of consumption.

Not only can the pattern of conspicuous consumption grow, but at the same time the territorial extension of the kingdom can expand as well, without presenting any sectarian or religious difficulties. The *shaiva* and *shakti* deities were regarded as being or as representing their territories—they were as immortal as their territorial body-substance was ; thus neither their territories nor they themselves could shrink, expand or be destroyed. For Jagannath this older notion of representing territoriality now changed into the more flexible rationale of possession and rule. Although Jagannath can now, and does, in theory, rule over a vast newly-conquered territory, he pays for this potential of infinite conquest with the spectre of possible defeat, which in the case of image-worship and in the hands of Muslim iconoclasts must lead to his own bodily destruction : for example in 1360 A.D. Muslim conquistadors dragged him out of his temple and burned him to ashes (26).

The sheer effort of organizing the tiresome task of completing the daily schedule of divine pleasure calls for an otherwise unknown degree of scope and complexity in social interaction : 108 different groups,

(24) H. D. EVERS, *Monks, Priests and Peasants* (Leiden 1972), p. 68.

(25) W. S. BROOKE, Note on the custom of Maha-prasad in the Sambalpur District, *Indian Antiquary*, VII (1878), 113-115.

(26) The chronicle of the temple gives a graphic description of this incident : MADALI PANJI, *The Chronicle of the Jagannath temple* (Bhuvaneshwar 1971), *transl.* O.R.P. See also H. MAHTAB, Invasion of Orissa in 1360 A.D., *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, I (1952) 1, 31-35.

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comprising some 10,000 people, are daily interrelated and interacting in basically one and the same central ritual. Besides being the biggest economic unit of the kingdom, the temple becomes at the same time the greatest social integrated unit—this despite the fact that this challenge of social interaction is unprecedented, and that the basic ideals of Orissan society value distance over interaction, self-sufficiency and self-containment of small economic units over widespread division of labor and the consequent economics of scale. Again in this context the central image not only requires the integrated interaction of all those groups, at the same time it also guarantees it : holy food, daily consumed, eliminates all the sectarian and ethnic differences between priest-groups, because it constitutes their only available daily subsistence ; furthermore holy food only becomes holy through this daily ritual interaction. So the image of Jagannath initiates a model for widespread, complex interaction, while it upholds at the same time the basic tenet of the notion of purity. As the palace administration is organized to be a precise copy of the temple, and many central functions are overlapping, the Jagannath temple enabled the Orissan kingdom to evolve a sacred administration complex diversified enough to rule over a vastly expanded territory. The fact that the daily subsistence of many of these administrators was distributed via the central focus of the God's image centered the groups around Jagannath and prevented a state of segmentary rule by the headmen. As a result, deceit, distrust, strikes and *dharna* 'sit-ins', were avoided.

Thus we could say that the anthropomorphic image of the God as a mighty landlord and Overlord allows for definite advantages in the domain of more efficient ritual, social and political integration and expansion. But this image, although indispensable, is not the crucial precondition to the maintenance principle of the food chain. That factor is the simple act of eating that is assumed by the food-chain, an activity that in its turn presupposes the anthropomorphic image of the God. Let us now see if we can derive from this single iconographic feature and precondition some traits and constraints which predetermine and shape something like an 'economy of incorporation'.

An economy of incorporation

Royal repentance, pilgrims' promises, priestly consolation and humble submission and obedience, every possible sphere of interaction with the God can be materialized and expressed in terms of

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food (27). Food becomes the social coin of ritual interaction. The spatial arrangement of the Puri district, the architecture of the entire temple compound, the ritual itself, all have one basic purpose, that is, to procure food for the daily consumption of the God. The structure of the economy is geared towards one goal, and this goal is 'incorporation' in the original sense of the word. Thus in this economy which values incorporation before circulation, consumption before investment, there should be no place for the notion of money, with its unsavory associations of unpredictable movement, unrestricted contact, and careless interchange in foreign places between still more foreign people. But money exists, and the way it is used within the framework of the temple economy again helps to show that the central idea is the act of incorporation : gold that is given to the temple treasury is called *pindika*, 'small riceballs', in an analogy to the riceballs offered during ancestor-worship ; the smallest connotation for the value of copper in Orissa is 'one rice-grain', for gold, one *Ganja*, 'Hashish-seed'. Although no coins, in the sense of fixed standards for weights and quality of metal, existed in Orissa, we still find the existence of temple money. Goldsmiths transformed thin sheets of silver or gold into punch-marked sacred coins by stamping the images of various Hindu Gods, or the symbols of the pilgrims' desires, children or grain, on to them. These coins were used by the pilgrims to pay for, or better, to give thanks for, services (28). Later in Puri, during great festivals, they were thrown and showered over the statues of Gods ; heaped on great metal trays, they were carried away and hoarded in the treasury until they were melted into new statues.

Thus coins were labelled and computed as a surrogate for food, drained off the market, hoarded as treasure and finally incorporated by the God into his own statue. Coins counted only when they could no longer be counted. In the framework of the temple, and for the believer, this incorporation is complete, legitimate, of sensual and direct meaning, and unavoidable. This image of power as destruction through consumption, and as hoarding through incorporation was a seemingly irresistible persuasion in this society.

Seen therefore from the logic of the ritual and with the eye of the believer, which we have up until now made our own viewpoint, the

(27) A good example of this fact on the level of the 'Little Tradition', L. A. Babb, The food of the Gods in Chhattis-Garh ; some structural features of Hindu ritual, *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, XXVI (1970) 3, 287-304.

(28) S. C. Dey, Orissan coins, *Journal of the Kalinga Historical Research Society*, I (1946) 4, 363-373. Also, P. Mukherjee, The early coinage of Utkal, *ibid.* 2, 151-159.

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whole kingdom is one big sacrificial venture, pouring the country's available surplus riches, in kind or cash, into the belly and coffres of the Overlord, while only a part is redistributed as his spittle and grace to nourish an evergrowing priesthood, pilgrims and beggars. This process, year after year, not only led to the total decline of all other shrines and to a situation in which some 40 % of all taxable land was endowed to Jagannath, it also led to the total sanctification of a province which Brahminical manuals still regarded as defiled and disreputable as late as the thirteenth century (29). What is of still greater interest is that this very same process led to an era of widespread ritual and Brahminical colonization, with new Jagannath monasteries constructed and new land brought under cultivation. But the main point is that this process of unparalleled expansion and sacred investment, via the distribution of food, at no point could be perceived as such, the perspective and logic of perception being tainted by the prevalence of divine consumption and incorporation. Thus it would be unfair to rationalize this economic undertaking using the commonsense terminology and concepts of our so-called real world. This is not a sacred, pre-industrial, agrarian, re-investive, expanding and innovative economy; instead it is the realm of the Lord of the world, who is fond of eating, hoarding jewels, and sharing his leftovers.

(29) R. Geib, *Die Indradyumnalegende. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Jagannatha-kultes* (Wiesbaden 1975), p. 134.

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NITYASUMAṄGALĪ: towards the semiosis of the devadasi tradition in South India
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(thesis RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT TE UTRECHT, 18.5.1984)
supervisor: Prof Dr O.J. de Jong

Cosmic Woman, Kuṇḍalinī is referred to as feminine.
9) Cf. Ch.II, p.205-6.
10) Cf. Ch.III, p.313.
11) Cf. Ch.III, p.325ff.
12) Cf. Ch.I, p.111 ff.
13) The capacity of the nityasumaṅgalī to deal with this 'excess heat' is considered indispensable but also dangerous and to be avoided when not strictly necessary.
14) In a famous padam 'Pataṟi varukutu' (rāga kambhōji, tāla rūpaka, composer Ghanam Krishna Aiyar), the second line of the caraṇa says that Śrī Murukaṉ will cover the love-lorn girl with māyappoṭi 'magic powder'. According to one informant, the term māyappoṭi refers also to aphrodisiacs that were mixed into drinks served to guests.
Cf. for the first type of 'implements' Ch.I, p.110-111.
15) Cf. Ch.II, p.207. The ritual of kumbhārati was quoted by all informants. Even those devadasis whose artistic heritage disintegrated, remembered the task of waving the pot-lamp. In other instances we find that the temple did no longer employ the artistic talents and skills of the devadasis but only required them to wave the pot-lamp in utsava times (and during the Cāyaraṭcai pūjā of the daily ritual).
16) Cf. Ch.II, p.270 ff.
17) Cf. Ch.II, p.262-4.
18) Maṅgalas are often sung during the celebration of saṃskāras (rites of passage) in private houses.
19) Cf. Ch.II, p.234-5, here the term Vasantotsava ('spring-festival') indicates a one-day festival within the structure of a large festival (Brahmotsava).
20) Cf. W.Th. Elmore, op.cit., p.13-17; his description of the festival for the goddess Polerammā is but one example of the general festivities that accompany the worship of the village gods.
21) In Chapter II we defined the devadasi 'proper' as well as her tasks in daily and festival ritual.
22) Cf.Conclusion, p.345, Graph 20 under village, village cults.
23) ~~Cf. T. Balarasvati~~, 'Bharata Natyam', in Marg Vol.XXIV No.3, p.37-45, and 'Reflections', in Quarterly of National Centre of Performing Arts, jubilee issue 1972-82, Bombay, 1982, p.6-14.

Sadyojātaśivacārya p.312
ancient Commentator on KĀMIKĀGAMA
(Index 121, 143, 196, 202, 205, 207, 285, 289, 30, 338)

AXVIII.11 Box XVIII #11

Select Bibliography

The following list includes only those works which have been quoted in the present thesis. However, a large number of more general works has been consulted in the course of this study. For reasons of presentation and economy of space we have limited ourselves to a strictly select bibliography.

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invoked in later discussions. The Maharajan committee suggested that in truth the Āgamas do not deny entry into the priesthood to properly trained non-Ādisaivas. As I have not seen the full report, I do not know how that case is argued, but the committee did recognise that it would be safer to amend Article 25(1) before its provisions put into effect (*Hindu*, 18 September 1982).

45. Subbaraya v. Subbaraya: *Bhattar*, A.I.R. 1916 Mad 465 (cf. chapter 4n 26)

46. In the Act to abolish the hereditary priesthood, the aims were stated to be 'that the hereditary priesthood in the Hindu society should be abolished, that the system can be replaced by an ecclesiastical organisation of men possessing the requisite educational qualifications who may be trained in recognised institutions in priesthood and that the line should be open to all candidates irrespective of caste, creed [*sic*] or race' (quot. in (1972) 3 S.C.R. 815, p. 820). Such an organisation has, of course, never existed in Hinduism and the model may be the Christian clergy: that was certainly the case in an early reformer's proposal that priests be properly trained to serve all Hindus, like Western missionaries, and that 'a religious or ecclesiastical service for the country' be created (Subramanya Aiyar n.d.: 5). The idea of a professional ecclesiastical service was, however, implicitly rejected by the HREC, which recommended that the hereditary priesthood be retained (*Report*, p. 58). It is hard to believe that such a service will ever come into existence.

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of these kinds disguise the vital sociological fact that deities' attributes are, to a great extent, those ascribed to them in rituals performed by particular historical actors belonging to particular social groups, whether these be Nāyaka kings or ordinary villagers. The social construction of deities, in other words, tends to be overlooked. On the other hand, my approach is also to be seen as opposed to the widespread current tendency (itself a reaction to 'Brahmanical' versus 'non-Brahmanical' dichotomies) to over-emphasise the 'unity' of Hinduism, so that sociologically important differences become obscured. Leaving aside the problem of whether a social structure can be logically prior to its ritual celebration, it can still be agreed, I would hope, that some deities, are more closely or directly tied to the social order than others. If that proposition can be assented to, then variation can be further investigated and through that investigation a more sophisticated understanding of the relation between the religion of the temples and society can be attempted. The admittedly sketchy conclusion to this study of the rituals of kingship of Mīnākṣī and Sundareśvara is offered as a preliminary step along that road.

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XVIII

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ARNOLD-BERGSTRAESSER-INSTITUT
MATERIALIEN ZU ENTWICKLUNG UND POLITIK
Development
18

Jakob Rösel

Der Palast des Herrn der Welt

Entstehungsgeschichte und Organisation der indischen Tempel- und Pilgerstadt Puri

= The Palace of the Lord of the World
The history of the origin, growth & organisation of the Indian Temple & Pilgrimage City of Puri.

1980
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VORWORT

Diese Arbeit entstand im Rahmen des durch den Sonderforschungsbereich 16 geförderten Orissa-Projekts. Das Orissa-Projekt untersuchte die hinduistische Tradition und ihre Auswirkungen auf das gegenwärtige Indien am Beispiel des Jagannath-Kultes[1].

Das Projekt begann Ende 1970 und endete fünf Jahre später. Es wurde interdisziplinär durchgeführt. Zum ersten Mal arbeiteten Indologen, Religionshistoriker, Kunstwissenschaftler, Historiker, Volkswirtschaftler, Völkerkundler und Soziologen gemeinsam an einem Thema[2]. Die genauen Einzelthemen und die verschiedenen Veröffentlichungen meiner Kollegen, vor allem auch der indischen Mitarbeiter, nenne ich anschließend in der Einführung.

Ohne die finanziellen Mittel, die die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft dem Projekt zur Verfügung stellte, wäre diese Arbeit kaum möglich gewesen. Die bisher größte, systematische Bibliothek zu einer indischen Region stand mir ebenso zur Verfügung wie eine Manuskriptsammlung, die alle wesentlichen wissenschaftlichen und literarischen Zweige einer Hindu-Region umfaßte[3]. Diese Sammlung in Form von Palmblatt-Manuskripten wurde von der Projekt-Gruppe erworben, kopiert und zum Teil übersetzt, die Originale wurden anschließend dem Orissa State Museum in Bhubaneshwar geschenkt. Einheimische Projekt-Mitarbeiter und Pandits beantworteten meine Fragen.

Im Mittelpunkt der vorliegenden Arbeit steht die Untersuchung einer Tempelwirtschaft, die als sozialer, ökonomischer und religiöser Integrationsmechanismus in einer frühen Hochkultur angesehen wird, dem Hindu-Regionalbereich von Orissa. Thematisch grenzt die Arbeit an die Monographien von G. Pfeffer und H. Kulke. Mit G. Pfeffer wurden fast alle wesentlichen Punkte dieser Arbeit diskutiert, so daß beide Monographien eigentlich als Teil einer gemeinsamen theoretischen Anstrengung angesehen werden können[4].

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1) U. Schneider: "Feldforschung in Orissa/Indien"; in: Freiburger Universitätsblätter, II, 1972, S. 63-69.

2) Auf Rahmenbedingungen und Problemstellungen der interdisziplinären Forschung habe ich in einem Beitrag hinzuweisen versucht: "Bemerkungen zur interdisziplinären Entwicklungsländerforschung"; in: Internat. Asienforum, V, 2, 1974, S. 243-253.

3) H. Kulke hat eine Bibliographie über die ganze Region geschaffen: "Orissa - A Systematic Bibliography of an Indian State"; unveröffentl. Manuskript, ORP 1974.

4) Einen allgemeinen theoretischen Bezugsrahmen haben wir im 2. Zwischenbericht vorgeschlagen.
Rösel/Pfeffer: "Strukturelemente der traditionalen Gesellschaft Orissas";
Pfeffer/Rösel: "Die traditionale Gesellschaftsformation Orissas", 2. Zwischenbericht des ORP, 1973.
Siehe auch: Rösel: "Hinduismus - Modell eines Integrationsprozesses"; unveröffentl. Manuskript, ORP 1972.

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In der Folgezeit nimmt dann auch die politische Bedeutung des Jagannath zu. Dies in dem Maße, in dem sich die Nachfolger von ihrem Stammland und dessen shivaitischen Territorialgott, dem Gokarneshwar auf dem Mahendraberg, lösen. Mit der politischen Bedeutung gewinnt nicht nur der Tempel, sondern auch sein Kult an Gewicht. Entlang der Bedeutungszunahme des Kultes setzt dann auch ein Ausbau der Priesterschaft ein. Das wollen wir nun betrachten.

1.0.4 Der Großtempel und der Königskult

Unter den Nachfolgern Chodagangas gewinnt nun der Kult um den Jagannath an Bedeutung und es werden weitere Priestergruppen an den Tempel geholt. Wir erhalten aus der Jagannatha Sthala Vrttantamu die folgende 19 Ämter umfassende Liste (185-187):

Muduli (unübersetzbar)
Der "Hauptmann" der Kuhhirten
Der Vorsteher der Kuhhirten
Der Schatzhausbewacher
Der Garderobenbewacher
Die "großen Leute"
Der Träger der Patis
Die Topf- und Wasserträger
Der Verantwortliche für die Pans
Die Geheimritualisten
Die Bekleider
Die Boten
Die Geleitwächter
Die Köche
Die Tempeltänzerinnen
Die Schreiber
Die Tempelaufseher
Die "Siegelhand"
Die "Daitas" (unübersetzbar)

Die Liste spiegelt damit die Arbeitsanforderungen eines Großtempels wider. Die Liste erscheint dabei auch deshalb einleuchtend, weil die Verwaltungsstruktur des Großtempels, die sich aus ihr herausschält, in Analogie zur Residenzverwaltung der Ganga-Herrscher in Cuttack aufgebaut wurde. Den Erfordernissen eines Königskults wurde also auch in dieser Richtung Rechnung getragen.

Zumindest läßt die Kenduli-Kupferplattenschenkung Narasimhadevas eine auf weiten Strecken ähnliche Verwaltungsstruktur der Residenz Cuttack erkennen[1]. Der neue Großtempel wird nun von einem Shasana-Brahmanen,

1) S. N. Rajguru: "The Kenduli Copperplate Grant of Narasimha Deva, of Saka 1305", O. H. R. J., V, No. 1, 1956, S. 45.

einem landbesitzenden Hochbrahmanen, dem Pariksha, direkt verwaltet. Eine "Siegelhand" tritt als Stellvertreter und Bote des Rajas auf. Der Tempel wird also deutlich für die Erfordernisse eines Königskults in Gebrauch genommen.

Im Folgenden müssen wir nun noch nachweisen, daß die Angaben der Jagannatha Sthala Vrttantamu überhaupt irgendeinen historischen Wert haben. Der Wert der Liste dieser 19 Arbeitsgruppen geht aber aus den folgenden drei Tests hervor:

1. Die 19er Gruppenliste geht in allen vier folgenden großen Listen auf (J. St. V., Groeme, R. o. R. und 36 M. M.).
2. Diese 19 Gruppen gehören noch heute zu den zahlenstärksten (M. M. 13-15).
3. Die hier genannten 19 Gruppen sind diejenigen, die am stärksten in weitere Gruppen ausdifferenziert werden (M. M. 13-15).

Alle diese drei Punkte gestatten es, diese Liste des Großtempels als eine reale Etappe in der Evolution des Systems der Arbeitsteilung zu betrachten.

1.0.5 Der Staatskult

Für den nächsten Schritt der Evolution des Tempels gibt es nur die legendarische Behauptung, Anangabhima Deva III habe zu Beginn des 13. Jahrhunderts den Tempel mit Chatishi Nijog, 36 Arbeitsgruppen, ausgestattet. Diese Liste wird aber in der populären Überlieferung an keiner Stelle genannt. Lakshman Panda behauptet sogar: "The thirtysix nijog is a misconception" (R. o. R. I 71)[1]. Nun behauptet M. Mahapatra, eine solche undatierte Liste gefunden zu haben[2]. Einen Nachweis für meine Behauptung daß diese Liste ebenfalls einen realen weiteren Schritt der Ausdifferenzierung von Arbeitsleistungen war, unternehme ich wieder mit Hilfe der folgenden drei Tests:

1) Groeme sagt dagegen: "9th Para. In former times the establishment of the Temple of Jagannath consisted of thirtysix and they were in consequence called the Chutees Nijoga, but from a period of at least two hundred years others have been added to these thirtysix, and the number now belonging to the Temple amount to 250 ... Besides these establishments which are denominated, the establishment of Jagannath, there are others which are called the Bahar Dewli Shewak ... They are so named from their being appropriated to serve the Thakoors surrounding the Temple ... There are no expenses attendant on the Bahar Dewli Shewaks as they only receive a portion of the Mohaprasad or sacred food." Seite 6-7.

2) "Names of the 36 nijogas as recorded in an old register of the Jagannath Temple Office", M. M. 16.

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1. Die 19er Liste muß voll in die 36er Liste eingehen.
2. Die 17 neuen Gruppen müssen sich im wesentlichen als Ausdifferenzierungen der 19er Liste ableiten lassen.
3. Die 36er Liste muß in den folgenden Großlisten (250, 150, 140 und 118) aufgehen.

Zuerst aber die Liste der 36:

Die ununterbrochen Bewachenden
Die Standwachen
Die Sänftenträger
Der Vina-Musikant
Die Garderobenbewacher
Die Cari-Vorbereiter
Die Ehrenschirmhalter
Die Weißbinder
Die Blumengirlanden-Gärtner
Die Daitapatis
Die Tempelschreiber
Der Datta-Beamte
Die Topf- und Wasserträger
Die Gongschläger und Pfeifer
Die Pastenhersteller
Der Verantwortliche für die Pans
Die Bettgestellbewacher
Die Ankündiger
Die Kothbhog-Wasserträger
Der Boten-Soldat
Die "großen Leute"
Die Dekorateure
Die Bewacher
Die Muduli
Die Geheimritualisten
Die Gemüseschneider
Die Tempelaufseher
Die Bekleider
Die Träger der Patis
Die Bürohilfen
Die Geleitwächter
Die Befähigten
Die Tempeltänzerinnen
Die Köche
Die Träger der Köche
Die Köche der Krankheitsperiode

Nun die Tests:

1. Mit Ausnahme der "Siegelhand", einer Einzelperson, dem Stellvertreter des Rajas, der als Arbeitsgruppe nicht genannt werden kann, und den beiden Ämtern für die Kuhhirten geben die restlichen Gruppenbezeichnungen in der 36er Liste auf.

2. Von den 20 neuen Gruppen (36 - (19-3)) lassen sich 8 aus der 19er Liste ableiten: Als Autorität gelten dabei die von Manamohan Mahapatra gesammelten Auskünfte der heutigen Priester (M. M. 13-15).

3. a) Die 36er Liste geht in der gegenwärtig gültigen Ordnung von 118 Gruppen bis auf 2 Gruppen auf.
b) Die 36er Liste geht in der 250er Liste von Groeme Garrett voll auf.
c) Die 36er Liste geht in der undatierten 150er Liste von M. Mahapatra voll auf.
d) Die 36er Liste geht in der 140 Punkte starken Liste der Jagannatha Sthala Vrttantamu nur zu dreiviertel auf. Dies ist aber zu erklären: Die Jagannatha Sthala Vrttantamu-Liste, mit südindischen Dienstbezeichnungen gespickt, geht auch in den anderen drei großen Listen nur unvollständig auf.

Diese drei Tests machen es meiner Meinung nach möglich, die 36er Liste als eine weitere Etappe der Herausbildung der Arbeitsteilung im Tempel zu behandeln und verbieten es, sie lediglich als zeremonielle "magische" Zahlenspielerei der späteren Zeit zu betrachten. Die 36er Liste hat sich naturwüchsig aus Vorläufern herausgebildet. Sie ist weder formaler Beginn noch Endpunkt. Die Dienstleistungsstruktur, die sie aufweist, schildert uns einen Tempel, der auf dem Weg ist, von einem Königskult zu einem Staatskult zu werden. Die bereits monumental zu nennende Versorgung des Idols - etwa durch die "großen Leute", die eigens für Wartung und Reparatur des Goldschmucks zuständig sind - macht dies deutlich.

Allerdings sollten wir diesen weiteren Ausbau der Priesterschaft mit einer Bedeutungszunahme des Kultes begründen können. Deshalb ist an dieser Stelle ein geringes Abschweifen notwendig, um zusätzliche externe Daten herbeizuholen.

Hermann Kulke[1] nennt nämlich in seiner Arbeit wesentliche Argumente, die eine schlagartige Zunahme der Bedeutung des Kultes begründen:

Unter Anangabhima III. wird die Herrschaft über Orissa auf den Jagannath übertragen. Die durch diese Übertragung gegebene zusätzliche Herrschaftslegitimation wird durch die Angriffe des muslimischen Bengalen notwendig. Ein Ersatz- und Residenztempel des Jagannath wird zusätzlich von Anangabhima III. in seiner Palastresidenz in Cuttack errichtet.

Zusätzlich gibt es aber noch ein gewichtiges Argument: Wie G. N. Dash mir mitteilte, ist die Zahl der Chatishi Nijog, der 36 Dienstgruppen, eine magische und volkstümliche Formel. Diese 36 Dienste sind nämlich alle jene Handwerksleistungen, über die ein Dorf in Orissa in sich selber oder über die Nachbardörfer verfügen muß.

Stimmt das, dann hätte Anangabhima III. den Puri-Tempel zu einem zentralen und sakralen Riesendorf seines Reiches gemacht; eine bessere Taktik der massenhaften Legitimation läßt sich schlecht denken.

1.6.6 Das Pilgerzentrum und theokratischer Zentralkult

Wir müssen nun die Ausweitung der Arbeitsteilung in den Bereich um die 60 Dienstgruppen nachweisen. Da wir dafür keine Quellen haben, müssen wir hypothetisierend vorgehen. Wir wissen, daß die gegenwärtige 118er Liste in der 250er Liste von 1806 aufgeht. Wir können also unterstellen, daß alle heutigen Arbeitsgruppen auch 1806 bestanden haben. Heute führen sich nun alle 118 Gruppen auf bestimmte Herkunftsgruppen zurück. Diese Übergruppen stellen dabei allgemeine Berufsbezeichnungen wie "Bewacher", "Koch" etc., dar. Das bedeutet, daß diese Gruppenbezeichnungen teilweise

1) Hermann Kulke: "Jagannatha Kult und Gajapati-Königtum", Heidelberg 1975, Habilitationsschrift, abgeschlossen 1975. Daraus: "Die Begründung der 'Stellvertreter-Ideologie' durch Anangabhima III.", S. 28-44.

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auf einen Zustand weit vor der Differenzierung der 36er Liste zurückgehen. Es gibt heute rund 49 solcher Gruppenbezeichnungen. Da sie allgemeine Oberbegriffe darstellen, zeigt diese große Zahl, daß der Großteil dieser Obergruppen erst später hinzugekommen sein kann, und zwar handelt es sich dabei um zahlreiche Handwerksgruppen, also Handwerksbezeichnungen. Da das Alter der ältesten eigentlichen Priestergruppen aber weit vor der 36er Liste - die ja ihrerseits eine Ausdifferenzierung darstellt - liegt, so müssen wir diejenigen der 36er Liste, die in der 49er Liste nicht enthalten sind (15 Gruppen) auf die 49 zählen und erhalten damit eine neue Etappe der Differenzierung der Arbeitsteilung. Diese Liste enthält dann alle 36 Gruppen und die nach ihr hinzugekommenen allgemeinen neuen Gruppen, die wir einmal als die Anfangszellen einer danach einsetzenden noch weiteren Differenzierung interpretieren möchten.

Die heutige 49er Bezugsliste:

Die Standwachen	Die Panhersteller
Die Zimmerleute	Die Fischer
Die Feuerwerker	Die Bronzeschmiede
Die Vorbereiter der Pans	Die Bronzeschmiede (anderer Name)
Die Sänftenträger	Die Ankündiger
Die Barbiere	Die Schmiede
Die Bhoi (Kaste)	Die Kothbhog-Wasserträger
Die (Pflug)bauern	Die Bewacher der Bettgestellchen
Die Bildermaler	Die Töpfer
Die Daitas	Die Gärtner
Die Blumengirlanden-Gärtner	Die Großköche
Die Tempeltänzerinnen	Die Mudulis
Die Schneider	Die Gesichtsreiniger
Die Kuhhirten	Die Bewacher
Die Topf- und Wasserträger	Die Korbflechter
Die Astronomie-Brahmanen	Der Beamte der Patis
Die Pastenhersteller	Die Träger der Patis
Die Schreiber	Die Figuren-Restaurateure
Die Geheimritualisten	Die Köche
Die Vorbereiter aller Feste	Die Träger der Köche
Die Tempelaufseher	Die Bambuskorb-Füller
Die Bekleider	Die Kupferschmiede
Die Geleitwächter	Die Ölpresser
Die Palastträger	Die Ärzte

Die folgenden Gruppen der 36er Liste sind in der 49er Bezugsliste nicht enthalten:

Die ununterbrochen Bewachenden	Die Ehrenschirmhalter
Der Vina-Musikant	Die Weißbinder
Die Garderobenbewacher	Der Datta-Beamte
Die Cari-Vorbereiter	Die Gongschläger und Pfeifer

Die Bettgestellbewacher	Die Gemüseschneider
Die Botensoldaten	Die Bürohilfen
Die "großen Leute"	Die "Befähigten"
Die Dekorateure	Die Köche der Krankheitsperiode

Von diesen 16 in der 49er Gruppe nicht enthaltenen sind lediglich 5 nicht ausdifferenzierte Gruppen. Die 19er Liste geht stattdessen fast voll - mit Ausnahme von 5 - in dieser Liste auf.

Diese Ergebnisse lassen zwei Folgerungen und eine taktische Möglichkeit zu:

a) Die Tatsache, daß das aktuelle 49er Herkunftsschema fast alle im Verlauf der Entwicklungsgeschichte des Tempels neu hinzugekommenen Dienstleistungen anführt, aber die internen Differenzierungen, auf die wir bisher unser Augenmerk gerichtet haben, beiseite läßt, läßt darauf schließen, daß das Schema in seinem Kern sehr alt ist und weit vor der 36er Liste lag. Dies läßt also unter anderem die Folgerung zu, daß die berühmten Chatishi Nijog nie das fixe Schema waren, als das sie immer hingestellt werden, sondern daß es - wie wir gezeigt haben - eben nur eine bestimmte Etappe war.

b) Die Tatsache, daß die 19er Liste fast voll, die neuen nicht ableitbaren Gruppen der 36er Liste aber fast gar nicht in die heutige 49er Liste eingehen, erhöht die Vermutung, daß das aktuelle Schema auf die 19er Liste zurückgeht. Da nun alle rund 30 neuen Gruppen der 49er Liste relativ kleine spätere Handwerksgruppen sind, so müßte eine Addition dieser 49er Gruppe mit den 16 nicht erfaßten der 36er Liste eine gute Rekonstruktion der neuen Etappe der Ausdifferenzierung des Systems der Arbeitsteilung darstellen. Wir gewinnen damit eine Bedienstetenstruktur von 65 (49 + 16) Posten bzw. Arbeitsgruppen. Diese Struktur ist nur erklärbar durch einen weiteren Einkommens- und Pilgerzuwachs des Tempels. Für die Ausdifferenzierung dieser Struktur haben wir darüber hinaus ein historisches Datum: Die Großköche sind in der neuen Liste nun mit enthalten, sie datieren ab Purushottamas Kanchi-Feldzug 1466-87 (M. M. 20)[1].

Dieser Konstruktion entspricht dabei aber auch in etwa der allgemeine historische Sachverhalt:

1. Die neue Dynastie der Suryavamshas hat ihre Herrschaft ganz eindeutig in den Schatten des Namens des Jagannaths gestellt, aus dem schon bestehenden Staatskult scheint ihren Edikten gemäß fast so etwas wie eine fixe Theokratie zu werden[2].

2. Der Nachfolger Purushottamas markiert durch seine Konversion zur Chaitanya Bhakti den Beginn einer ersten Epoche des Massenpilgerns nach Puri.

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1) H. Kulke: op. cit., 1975, S. 51-52.
2) Ibid., S. 48-51.

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GROEME: "THE ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE TEMPLE", 1806 (List No. 13)

Der Mangel dieser 250 Posten umfassenden Liste ist, daß sie die Seva-Bezeichnungen lediglich in Oriya enthält, und zwar in einem englischen Pidgin-Oriya, das heute nicht mehr verstanden werden kann. Groeme und Garrett konnten anscheinend kein Wort Oriya, und vor allem bestand 1806 noch keine Oriya-Transkription, geschweige denn eine Grammatik. Also schrieben sie alles nach dem Hörensagen auf. Daraus resultieren dann Begriffe etwa wie ungrowah für angarua oder dhout panckhalleah für duta pakalia. Dazu kommt, daß dieser Report dann noch mehere Male kopiert wurde, was die Genauigkeit weiter verminderte. Deshalb konnte ich nicht alle Dienstbezeichnungen übersetzen.

1. Siegelhand
2. Geheimritualisten
3. Homaopfer-Ritualist
4. Der Rukmini-Briefschreiber
5. Bekleider und Schmücker
6. Der Vertreter der 36 Nijogs
7. Der Türschließerbeamte
8. (Ussorurrah Dhura Sebuck)?
9. Der Sojapastengeber
10. Der für das Tempelinnere zuständige Beamte
11. (Muduli) ?
12. Die Sojapastenträger
13. Mäuse- und Kakerlakenfänger
14. Der Nanda-Spieler
15. Der Bhismakaraja-Spieler
16. Die Daitapatis
17. Der Pati-Beamte
18. Blumenwerfer und Beleuchter
19. Der Vishvadhatri Thakurani-Spieler (Die Herrin, die alles trägt = die Erde)
20. Der das heilige Gesicht schmückt
21. Die großen Leute
22. Der Wächter des Südhauses
23. Der, der den Dolavedi-Gott begleitet
24. Der Raghunath-Spieler
25. Der Jaigopal-Spieler
26. Der Aditya-Kashyapa-Spieler
27. Der Dasharatha- und Kausalya-Spieler
28. Der Vasudeva- und Devaki-Spieler
29. Der Bewacher des inneren Schatzhauses
30. Der mit dem goldenen Fächer
31. Der Bewacher des äußeren Schatzhauses
32. Der Ankündiger des Königs
33. Der Außenankündiger
34. Der schmückende Ankündiger
35. Der Rukmini-Spieler Khuntia
36. (Ghorah Barick Khoonteah)?
37. Der Ankündiger, der auf die Katze aufpaßt
38. Der Garderobenbewacher
39. Der Bewacher des ewigen Lichts
40. Der Siegler
41. Der Bewacher der Bettgestelle
42. Die Blätterträger
43. Die Tontopf- und Wasserträger
44. Die äußeren Tontopf- und Wasserträger
45. Die Kochträger
46. Die Bhogbewahrer
47. Die Pura(Käsekuchen)macher
48. (Bitur Burahah)?
49. Die Nektarköche der Erkältungsperiode

50. Die Nektarköche
51. Die Betelmacher
52. Die Sojapasten-Vorbereiter
53. (Damoorinh Sebuck)?
54. Der Uhrzeitmann mit dem Stock
55. Die Rundkissenschlepper
56. Die Dochtmacher für die Alati
57. Die Gesichtswäscher und Zahnputzer
58. Die Morgenalati-Diener
59. Die Purana-Rezitatoren
60. Die Tirtha-Diener
61. Der Ritualverantwortliche
62. Der Mann mit Stock und Schirm (bei der Raja-Vesa)
63. Der Blumenkettenverantwortliche
64. Der Kleiderverantwortliche
65. Der Ehrenschirmhalter
66. Der Schirmhalter
67. Der Wolkendeckenschirmhalter
68. Die Standwächter
69. Die Bettgestelldiener
70. Die Großköche
71. Die Vereinigung der Köche und Großköche
72. Die Linienmacher
73. Die Süßknödelköche
74. Die Kochträger
75. Die Baumwollträger
76. Die Thanley-Köche
77. Die Spezialkuchenköche
79. Der Kothbhog-Aufpasser[1,2]
80. Der Wäscher
81. Die Küchensoldaten
82. Die Sojabohnenpastenträger
83. (Torah Butty)?
84. Die Großtontopfvorbereiter
85. Die Blumengeber und Leuchter
86. Die Königsbeleuchter
87. Die Geleitwächtervereinigung
88. Die Bündelmacher
89. Die Türaufseher
90. Der Tempellandvorgesetzte
91. (Shye Naik)?
92. (Taruck)?
93. Der Bildermaler Muduli
94. Die Gemüseschneider
95. Der Dahi(Joghurt)versorger
96. Der Küchenbewacher
97. Der Kothbhog-Vorbereiter
98. Die Festvorbereiter
99. Die Vorbereiter von Krishnas Entzücken
100. Die Vorbereiter für die äußeren Tempel
101. Die Köche für den Außentempel
102. Die Parfümierer
103. Die Sesam(Til)öl- und Sauerfrucht(Amla)-Parfümierer
104. Die Myrrhen(Gogul)- und Suango(?)-Parfümierer
105. Die Mondleuchten-Parfümierer
106. Der Lampensteller für den ununterbrochenen Schlaf
107. Die Türsteher
108. Der Gundicha-Tempel-Steher
109. Der Bootsverwahrer
110. Die Geschirrspüler
111. Die Spiegler
112. Der Palastzwischenträger
113. Der für das Küchenwasserreservoir Verantwortliche

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1) Zählfehler im Original.

2) Koth Bhog heißt "Palastgenuß". Es ist das Essen, das vom Palast, vom König, gestiftet wird, und das zu Teilen ihm zurückgegeben wird. Der heutige Raja in Puri lebt hauptsächlich von dem Verkauf seiner Anteile an die Pilger. Da dieses Bhog im Sanktum aufgestellt wird, ist es das eigentliche heilige Bhog.

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114. Der für den Brunnen, in dem die zerriebenen Wurzeln liegen, Verantwortliche
115. Der Stoffwäscher
116. Die Kothbhog-Wasserschlepper
117. Die die Puja-Tulasi-Blätter bringen
118. Die Feuerverantwortlichen
119. Der Kalkstampfer, Weißbinder und Fahnenanbinder
120. Der Blumenkettengärtner
121. Der Vimana-Träger
122. Die Handollia-Träger (2 Arten von Palankas, Sänften)
123. Die Shalgram-Ritualisten
124. Die Brunnenseilmacher
125. Die Küchenreiniger
126. Der Kohlenmann
127. Die Kuhdung-Wassersäuberer
128. (Rabareah)?
129. Die, die fähig sind, zerstampften Kalk (Chuna) herzustellen, (Weißbinder)
130. Die, die fähig sind, schwarze Sojabohnen zu zerreiben
131. Die Reisverleser
132. Die Registratoren des gepreßten Reises
133. Die Gongschläger
134. Die Pfeifer und Bläser
135. Die Wassersprenger
136. Der Vina-Spieler
137. Die schmückenden und bindenden Diener
138. Die Festträger
139. Die Zuckerbäcker für das Krokodilsfest
140. (Seckulee Munjah)?
141. (Petal-Caum Munjah)?
142. Die für die Puja-Utensilien Verantwortlichen
144. Der Königsastronom
145. Der Almanach-Führer
146. Der Verantwortliche der Töpfer
147. Der Schmied
148. Ein Spezialfächeler
149. Der für das Vogelwasserreservoir Verantwortliche
150. (Soota Saubully Sebuck)?
151. (Tir Common Sebuck)?
152. Der für das goldene Fußwasser (der Götter) Verantwortliche
153. Der Baumwollstoff(verteiler)
154./55. Zwei Arten von Wedlern
156. Der Reisdrescher
157. Die Piuns (Büroboten)
158. Der Bote
159. Der Außenbote
160. Der Parganna-Bote
161. Die Miliz
162. Der zielende Bogenschütze
163. Der jagende Bogenschütze
164. Die 16 Dekorationspasten-Diener
165. (Chinarah Sebuck)?
166. Der Goldschmied
167. Der Kupferschmied
168. Der hölzerne Planken (auf dem Wagen) befestigt
169. Die Kohlebesorger
170. Die Wasser in den Reis-Mischer
171. Der Fähnrich
172. Der Zimmermann
173. Der Freskenmaler
174. Der Bildermaler
175. Der Eisenschmied
176. Der Schmied der 1000 Qualitäten
177. Die Bettgestellmacher
178. (Huraty Sebuck)?
179. (Bhahoot Sebuck)?
180. Die Steinschneider
181. Die Besenhalter und Putzer
182. Die Wasserzufluß(verteiler und -Verantwortlichen
183. Die Verwahrer der hölzernen Puja-Artikel

184. Die Verwahrer von Chandua ("Mondschein"-Baldachin), Chara (?) und Sindura (rote Farbe aus Quecksilberoxyd[1])
185. Der Schneider
186. Der Rollkissenmacher
187. Die Stock- und Sonnenschirmmacher
188. Die Sitzmacher
189. Der Bambuskorbfüller
190. (Bawoots Tumba Sebuck)?
191. Der Bambuskorbflechter
192. Der Schreiber des Inneren
193. (Gnah Bunat Sebuck)?
194. Der Panji-Bewahrer
196. (Aik Nucky Sebuck)?
197. (Bug Sammul Sebuck)?
198. Der Telengi-Trommler
199. Die Curry-Schmecker
200. Die Madeli-Trommler
201. Die Muschelbläser
202. Die in Gruppen Singenden
203. Die Tänzerinnen
204. Die Innensängerinnen
205. Die Gewürze für das Pan Besorgenden
206. Die Baumwollspinner
207. Die Palankin-Macher
208. Der Medizinmann
209. Die Mörserstampfer
210. Die Elefantentreiber
211. Der Palastverbindungsmann
212. Der die große Trommel schlägt (Nuhobut)[2]
213. Der "sweeper" vom Indrayumna-Teich
214. (Jyetolah Burmacharrey)?
215. Der Kuhherdenhalter
216. Der Wäscher u. Großwäscher
217. Der Holzplanken-Bhoi
218. Der Wagenseilmacher
219. (Bahar Pawrah)?

Die Verwaltung

1. Der Oberpriester
2. Die vier Oberaufseher
3. Der Satais Hazari Mahal-Oberaufseher
   Der Satais Hazari Mahal-Naik
   Der Satais Hazari Mahal-Tasildar
4. Der Tempelschreiber
5. Der Budgetbeamte
6. Der Garderobenschreiber
7. Der Schatzhaus-Naik
8. (Tundkar Burgun Sebuck)?
9. Der Spion
10. Der Beamte
11. Der Küchenlampenschreiber
12. (Cheahwoo Sebuck)?
13. Der Pindika-Verwahrer) (Goldspenden)
14. Der Koth (Palast)-Schreiber
15. Der Maßbewahrer (der das Khei mit dem tönernen Krug austeilt)
16. Der Herumreisende
17. Der Schreiber der Küche
18. Der Schreiber des Landbesitzes

1) Da alle indischen Frauen zum Zwecke des roten Farbmals auf ihrer Stirn solches Quecksilber mit sich herumtragen, ist das auch ihr beliebtestes, wenn auch qualvollstes Selbstmordmittel.
2) Eine von den islamischen Truppen eingeführte große Trommel, die heute in den Dörfern von den Hindus zum Ankündigen ihrer Hochzeiten geschlagen wird.

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19. Der Registrar von allem Verbrauchten (Nirmalya)
20. Die Pilgerfänger
21. Der Beamte der Parganas (Tempelland-Distrikte)
22. (Puschim Dwar Burgum Sebuck)?
23. Der Schreiber, der den Mann der 27 000 Güter trifft
24. Der Agent für das Bhog
25. Der Agent für die Festtage
26. (Kursodah Sebuck)?
27. Der Chronist
28. Die vier Empfangsagenten der Parikshas
29. Der Dhuja (Tempelfahnen) Verwahrer
30. Der für das Trocknen Zuständige
31. Der Jedermann-Diener.

Anschließend folgen die 139 Sevakas der Außenschreine, die heute samt und sonders den Puja-Pandas zugezählt werden.

In welcher Weise diese Außenschreine verwaltet werden, vermag ich nicht zu sagen. Eine Antwort legt aber das Material nahe. Da Groeme den Außenschreinen bestimmte namentlich aufgeführte Puja-Pandas zuordnet, die jeweils den Namen ihres Gottes tragen, etwa "Bindaban Chund Sebuck", "Sevaka des Mondes von Vrindavan" = Krishna, so läßt sich vermuten, daß diese Sevakas traditionell diesen Schreinen zugeordnet waren. Ich halte es für relativ unwahrscheinlich, daß solche seit Jahrhunderten bestehenden Rechte auf den Schreingott und damit dessen Spenden heute nicht mehr bestehen.

EINE KUPFERSCHENKUNG

Schilderung des Königsreichs und der Residenz:

"In dem Land voll Ruhm,
das von den vier großen Meeren umgeben ist,
wo sich eine große Anzahl von Inseln, Städten und Häfen befindet,
das als ein sehr wohlhabendes Königreich gilt, das verschiedene Einrichtungen enthält wie Rasthäuser für Pilger und Siddhas (Magier) und Tempel für Götter,
das von Menschen bewohnt wird, die den vier Ständen zugehören, die genau den Pfaden des Dharma folgen, indem sie ihren verschiedenen Pflichten im Einklang zum absoluten Dharma nachgehen,
wo auch eine ständige Rauchflamme hoch über den Feueropfern aufsteigt,
die von den zahllosen Agnihotra-Brahmanen durchgeführt werden, und die einen entzückenden Geruch[1] in den Wäldern der Eremiten hervorruft und in den Himmeln wie die Strahlen der Sonne und des Mondes glänzt,
welches frei von allem Unglück ist, weil die heiligen Hymnen der vier Veden und ihrer Nyasas ständig dröhnen,
wo in allen drei Welten, im Himmel, auf der Erde und in der Unterwelt das Ereignis der Dürre völlig unbekannt ist, wo aber dagegen das Wachstum der Bäume und der Lianen, die Blumen und Früchte außerordentlichen Geruchs und außerordentlicher Süße tragen, sehr wohl vorherrscht."

Schilderung der Genealogie des Königs:

"... Und während dieses hervorragende Land vom König der Könige, Maharaja-adiraja Gopachandra beherrscht wird, dem Sohn des Maharaja-adiraja Dhanachandra, dem Mond der Geschenke, und seiner Königin Giridevi, der Berggöttin,
dessen Verdienst, Ruhm und Freigebigkeit sich über alle Welten innerhalb der vier Meere ausbreiten,
dessen gewaltiger Wasserfluß von Libetionen zum Zeitpunkt der Landschenkungen einen Flußlauf bildet, der die Flecken (Sünden) des Kalizeitalters hinwegwäscht,
der vom Volk als das verkörperte Dharma angesehen wird durch seine verdienstvollen Handlungen der Pflichterfüllung,
der sich vom Dharma (Gesetz) selbst, dem Herrn der Reinheit[2], nicht mehr unterscheidet im Bezug auf seine bemerkenswerten gesellschaftlichen Einrichtungen und Organisationen und der alle wünschenswerten Qualitäten besitzt,

---

1) Bei diesen Homa-Opfern werden viele Tontöpfe mit Ghee, flüssigem Butterfett, verbrannt.
2) Man beachte die Gleichsetzung von Sünde mit Flecken und Gesetz mit Reinheit: Ein Leben im Gesetz ist ein Leben in Sozialdistanz, weil die verschiedenen Gruppen unterschiedlicher Reinheit sich sonst "berühren".

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Summary

This study tries to analyze the growth and structure of an Indian temple city: the town of Puri, lying at the sea shore in Orissa. The basic framework of our whole argument rests on a peculiar conception of its god Jagannath, the Ruler of the World. In the context of Orissa this god is not regarded as some sort of sanscritic, worldtranscending deity, instead, from the 13th century onward, Jagannath was invested with all the prerogatives and splendours of kingship over Orissa, the kings of the Gajapati dynasty reigning as his viceroys or sons. As a logical corollary to this conception the size of the temple and the splendours of the daily consumption of Jagannath had to overshadow those of the palace of the Gajapati kings. Feeding and entertaining the god with ever more precious meals and services became the duty of the kings and their dignitaries. In this way the god acted as a poignant metaphor for the prosperity and well-being of his own realm. This legitimatory arrangement found its institutional expression in the growth of landed endowments, the ever encreasing scale of the daily routine of conspicious consumption, and the growing numbers of his priests. This in turn served to make pilgrimages to Jagannath ever more attractive, till an esoteric ritual for the maintenance of power gradually changed into a market for the ritual display, Darshana, of the god for pilgrims, who showered him with landed endowments and gold. In this way the temple soon acquired control over many small landholdings, scattered all over Northern India and it gained a foothold in a slowly emerging money economy. Thus the concept of this deity and the subsequent growth and change of his temple city predetermine the different parts of this study.

In the first part we show how an ever more complex system of ritual division of labour evolved and how this division of labour mirrors the competition of various ethnically heterogenious priest groups, all trying to enlarge their position in the temple economy.

In the second part we show what prime importance attaches to the act of endowing villages to either gods or Brahmins, as these endowments fundtioned as the starting point for the evolution of a pure Hindu state, and that the further endowing of land was a going concern for the regional elite and its monarchy to update and adapt the rituals, the dresses and pleasures of the god to the actual contemporary political environment.

In a third part we finally show how a highly sanscritic and secret ritual has to reconcile this regional deity with the high class conception of Vishnu, thus adding external legitimity to the internal legitimity that could be generated by way of this conception of a regional overlord.

It is only in a final chapter that we turn to an analysis of Jagannath as seen by his pilgrims. On the basis of a study of all the legends told to the pilgrims we try to show that the palace of the Lord of the World

reflects in mythological terms a state of segmentary rule over nucleated areas of settlement as practised by the Gajapati-dynasty of Orissa. This leads to a conclusion, in which I argue that the temple was not only essential for the maintenance of the regional kingdom, because it substituted legitimation for the lack of any powers of coercion, but that in addition it became important because it stabilised this structure of segmentary rule by syphoning off huge quantities of surplus production and gold that might have otherwise been invested in either political or economic ventures that would in turn have tended to destabilize the regional power balance - either by displacing the regional dynasty in the short run or by transforming an economy of hoarding and consumption into a market economy of monetary relations in the long run.

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Glossary

agam	secret shrine in upper storey of a *baha*.
agam dyo	violent god depicted copulating with consort: the image occupies the *agam*.
aju	'grandfather': the term is used in reference to the ten elders of a *Bare* clan.
astha mangala	eight auspicious signs of Northern Buddhism.
asum	models of human figures enjoying sexual dalliance.
baalaa	beautiful.
baalaakegu	to beautify.

baamalaa	ugly.
baha	'monastery' (corruption of the Sanskrit *vihara* : a Buddhist court-yard occupied by *Bare*.
Bare	A Newar caste comprising Buddhist priests and laymen, who sub-divide into Vajracarya and Sakya.
bisnes dyo	'business god': an idol made for the tourist market.
butta	motif or design (used by engravers).
dhoti	lower garment, worn by Indian men and gods.
dyo dekegu	to make/manufacture a god.
ghee	clarified butter.
gubhaju	Buddhist priest (Vajracarya).
malla	dragon.
mati loogu	'to find in the mind': in reference to innovative ideas of craftsmen.
mati wanegu	'to come to mind': (see above).
rupee	monetary unit: £1 = 26 *rupee* (1979).

THE HINDU TEMPLE-DANCER: PROSTITUTE OR NUN?

Amrit Srinivasan

In the period of British contact with India, two separate and contrasting understandings of the Hindu temple-dancer prevailed - if one saw her essentially as a prostitute, the other saw her as something of a nun.[1] But whether derogatory or complimentary, each of these conceptions, as also the programmes that became latched onto them, represented only varieties of error and vested interests. The reform and revival movements surrounding the temple-dance are already accomplished facts; it is only the structure of 'incomprehension' underlying their huge success that remains to be explained.

In 1947, the Madras Legislative Assembly of free India, brought

into force an Act to prevent the dedication of women as *devadasis*[2] to Hindu deities, idols, objects of worship, temples and other religious institutions. (Madras Act XXXI of 1947). This Act capped legislative and media battles that spanned almost a century and were associated in the public mind with a widespread social movement popularly known as the Anti-Nautch campaign. The *nautch*, a corrupt version of the Hindi term *nach*, referred to a programme of dance and song which graced all domestic and 'society' celebrations. As a blanket term it included all manner of women's regional dance styles in the tradition of the *ekaharya lasyanga* of the classical treatise *Natyashastra* (Ghosh 1950). In this form of 'play', one actor plays many roles and 'narrates' a dramatic story using various techniques of mime, rhythm and gesture (Vatsyayan 1974:15-16). Although it could also form part of distinct predominantly male traditions of dance-drama (such as the *Bhagvata Mela Nataka* of Tanjore) the *ekaharya lasya* was essentially classified as the solo, feminine and 'graceful' variant within the larger tradition.

In Tamil Nadu or the province of Madras as it was earlier known, it was the *devadasi, tevar adiyal* or D.G. (short for dancing-girl in Anglo-Indian coinage) who was the nautch girl of elsewhere. With appropriate variations, she danced this style both before the deity in the temple and also at royal courts, the domestic celebrations of the local elite, public ceremonies of honour and temple festivals. The performance of the nautch, the *cinnamelam*[3] or *sadir kacheri*,[4] as it was variously called in Madras, was obligatory and a matter of etiquette at society occasions. Besides of course, it proclaimed the wealth and prestige of patrons who maintained the dancing girls (as concubines) and their bands of musicians, all at great cost.

The campaign against the dedication of women to temple service began in earnest in 1892 and took the form of signature protests, and public propaganda in newspapers such as the *Indian Social Reformer* and *The Hindu*. Memorials urging action were presented by the Hindu Social Reform Association[5] of Madras to the Viceroy of India and the Governor of Madras. Articulated primarily by the educated Hindus, Brahmin and non-Brahmin alike, the campaign formed part of the whole complex of reforms relating to women, such as the ban on *suttee*, female infanticide, the encouragement of widow-remarriage and the

raising of the age of consent, which had earlier been pressed forward by the English missionaries and officials themselves. The overall moral, political and scientific 'experiment' tried out in India by the Utilitarians and enlightened Protestants, had however proved to be a dangerous failure (Stokes 1959). The mutiny of 1857, and growing local protests had brought home to the British Parliament the impracticality of interfering with their subjects' private lives. In 1858, the government of India was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown and Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, promised the Indian people tolerance and non-interference in all matters relating to religious faith and observance. The equal and impartial protection of a rational system of civil law was, in the same breath, offered as a privilege available to all.

This new policy of the British government, as we shall see, begged the whole question of whether in India one could so separate the religious from the civil, the public from the private. Not because of any inborn confusion - to think that would be to reproduce the classical error of early anthropology which supposed that the savage 'confused' jaundice with gold - but because of systematic choices which had been made over time within the orthogenetic tradition itself to accommodate one to the other.

Her Majesty's assurance was increasingly viewed by the Indian public as a desire on the part of the government to withdraw from the responsibilities of rule while continuing to draw its benefits. Not so far wrong when we consider that the move for greater neutrality in the religious affairs of the Indians had been initiated by the missionaries, who saw in the government's 'protective' attitudes towards the Hindu temples, for instance, a patronage of precepts and practices at variance with Christianity. As early as 1833, the Directors of the East India Company sought to withdraw all control and sever connections with the management of religious institutions. Despite the enormous complications of such a move (given the government's deep involvement in temple affairs) they set about it, while yet continuing to draw what benefits they could from the temples, as for instance, the utilisation of surplus endowments on matters requiring public spending. (Mudalier 1974:17-22). If the public had made its anger felt earlier at the comprehensive programmes of religious (Christian) attack on idolatory, caste practices and

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other social customs, it now went about letting the government know that its duty lay not in indifference but in the ratification of the people's wishes and expectations even in private and/or religious matters.

The government's policy of neutrality combined with its potential power to legislate, was destined to greatly politicise the Indian people who competed with one another to somehow gain official attention. Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the tremendous spurt in both constitutional and unconstitutional agitations, religious and secular, reform and revivalist, has been well documented by political historians. Lobbies, associations and other pressure groups were formed to let the 'consensus' be known on which government action could be based and were, in a sense, encouraged by the British. It is in the context of this greatly accelerated political activity that many of the older questions relating to women's issues were regenerated, this time largely through native initiative. Not that there was anything particularly new in this for Indians: the tradition of liberation and reform was as much a part of shared experience as that of conservatism and conformity and went back to a period much earlier than the advent of the British. What *was* new, however, was that given the rational, impersonal basis of British law, these movements were more likely than ever before to be couched in terms of a universalistic jargon essentially insensitive to socio-historical complexity (Seal 1973). If *suttee* (1829) and sacrificial infanticide (1794) had been banned earlier as 'murder', then by the late nineteenth century, temple-dancers were being presented as 'prostitutes' and early marriage for women as 'rape' and 'child-molestation'. Those in favour of state-intervention were simultaneously in favour of reform based on scientific facts, not traditional textual authority. It is not entirely accidental that women missionary doctors through their widely circulated scientific publications on the physiological repercussions of such practices, played a crucial role in the resurgence of public interest in these matters. Given the dual role of the British, both as administrators and legislators, there was a premium on social issues being presented in a 'language' understood by them, on which their actions could be based. And this applied to

everyone - those in favour of the British regime as also those against it, who repudiated its legitimacy.

This imposition on all manner of public activity of an abstract framework of understanding, played up the apparent contradictoriness of Indian social realities. And when, as was to be expected, political interests got latched onto these partial understandings, the stipulated incoherence and confusion of native life seemed justified.

At the height of the Home Rule movement in Madras, it was apparent that if it meant a secular, free India to some, it meant a Dravidian or Islamic free State to others; if members of the *devadasi* community were agitating for the ban on temple-dancing from public motives of civil 'Self-Respect', the elite castes were propagating it as a sacred vocation within private society; if nationalist re revivalism meant the encouragement of Sanskrit studies to some, it meant the encouragement of Tamil literature to others; if the Age of Consent Bill was viewed by the upper-castes as state interference in domestic society, it was seen by others as state negligence of the public, professional rights of the *devadasis*!

> 'Raising the consent age about 14 in extramarital cases would be unfair to *devadasis* as that would prevent them earning their livelihood.' (Testimony of Mr. Pandit, Asst. Commissioner of Belgaum, Age of Consent Committee, Poona hearing. Appearing in Associated Press despatch, Bombay *Daily Mail*, 1928, November 5).

What is significant to our purpose here is that the alien rationality which saw these as essentially contradictory and mutually exclusive, entered ethnography (which was anyway largely official) and (through the Orientalist and Theosophist influences) indology as well, albeit transformed. Given their political involvement, it is perfectly understandable why the former stressed civil separation, division and discontinuity in their researches on India; just as the latter stressed religious unity on a comparative evolutionary scale. But that these attitudes continue to influence scholarship even in a post-colonial context is rather surprising. The theoretical models available today remain essentially the same as these earlier 'lay' (as opposed to professional anthropological and sociological) understandings. In a situation where any link with pragmatic goals is consciously witheld the myriads of individual *jatis* of early ethno-

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graphy re-appear as functionally 'integrated' castes to the empiricists whereas to the idealists they form a 'religious' system based on a structure of shared ideas. The *devadasi* studied even today in terms of either of these intellectual streams would emerge as a civil, exploited 'class' or functionally integrated 'caste' (primarily viewed within a village context) on the one hand; and as the embodiment of pan-Indian religious notions of *Sakti*[6] or other such orthogenetic concepts, on the other. It is not difficult to perceive the continuing relation to older theories which viewed the temple-dancer as 'prostitute' and 'nun', and were utilised in programmes of social change, during the period of British interaction with India.

In the arguments they presented against the dedication of women to temples, the Anti-Nautch supporters stressed its connection with a life of immorality, beginning from a very early age, and the resultant impurities it introduced into the sacred realms of religion. They preferred to underplay, quite understandably, the other more vexing aspect of this institution - its connection with a life of dedication and service to a god-husband and to a vocation, the highly stylised classical dance of South India. The effect the ban would have on the future of the art (which was performed by no one else but the *devadasis*), and on the 'honour' of the deity they served in the temples, were questions however which they were forced to answer.

That the problem was a real one, touching religious and cultural sensitivities, is amply documented in the Legislative Assembly debates on the question as also the popular press campaigns in *The Hindu* presenting opinions both for and against legislation. The American journalist Katherine Mayo, staunch supporter of the ban on the dedication of girls and arch propagandist of the medical horrors associated with the practice, was nevertheless aware that:

> '...a province could be roused to madness by the forcible withdrawal of girl-children from the gods.' (Mayo 1927).

Even the British government was initially hesitant to back any movement which sought to do away with a traditional form of entertainment which as far as they could see was not characterised by any 'impropriety'. (Viceroy's reply to the memorialists on September 23rd 1893). It did not occur to them, they further felt, to inquire into

the morals of professional dancers in Madras any more than in Europe or elsewhere in India! (the Governor's reply to the memorialists on 4th October 1893). After much pressure and recriminations however both from the missionaries and Anti-Nautch lobbyists who assured them that the dances were '...performances of women who, as everybody knows, are prostitutes; and their Excellencies hereafter, at least, must know to be such...', the government agreed to take sides. Lord Wenlock, Governor of Madras was one of the first to refuse to countenance the nautch in his period of office up to 1896. In 1905, the Collector of Trichy, Mr. E.L.Thornton, advised his subordinates to let it be known that his sympathies were with the Anti-Nautch movement:

> 'Unhappily, while dancing girls continue to occupy the present position, I cannot but feel that their appearance arouses in a mixed audience feelings exactly the opposite of those I should wish to be entertained...we must sacrifice the innocent pleasure the performance affords to avoid the appearance or rather the suggestion of evil." (Quoted in *A Hundred Years of the Hindu*, 1978).

In 1911, Lord Morley issued a despatch to the Government of India desiring nationwide action to be taken against these dedications.

Having been drawn willy-nilly into the battle, the government was anxious nonetheless, given the uncertain politics of the day, to avoid arousing native apprehensions about cultural discrimination on their part. Accordingly, they sponsored what must have been one of the first instances of the *devadasi*'s dance being performed for merely exhibition purposes, as it is today. The Arts and Industries Exhibition at Allahabad held in 1910-1911, featured *devadasis*, whose music and dance tradition would otherwise die out, it was claimed by the British sponsors. This move was promptly condemned however by the reformers and there the matter rested, till later a Brahmin, E.Krishna Iyer, criticised the connection drawn by the Anti-Nautch lobbyists between art and vice in a bid to revive the dance.

> 'Should the art be penalised for a defect of society? Is it really the arts that lead to concubinage? The killing of the art will only doubtfully lead to less vice.' (*The Hindu* , December 7, 1932:5).

It was the passionate defence of the art by this pioneering figure, who dressed himself up as a woman and performed the dance on the stage, and exhorted the humiliated artistes (as also upper-caste girls) to take to the art, which accounts for its re-birth in the 1930-40 period. Ironically, the legislation preventing dedication of women came at a time (1947) when in practice it was already quite dead and the 'new' *devadasi* had been born. I do not mean this as a purely facetious remark.

However hazy the beginnings of the anti-Nautch movement in the Age of Consent controversy of the 1890s (in which Brahmins and non-Brahmins participated alike) or other social programmes asking for greater inspection and control of corruption in temple affairs; it had by the 1920s and 30s, become inextricably linked with the political aspirations of the 'Backward non-Brahmins' in Madras state.

In 1920, the non-Brahmin Justice Party assumed power as the first elected government in the then Province of Madras. During its term of office, it consolidated its position through various legislations giving it increasing control over the local bodies and wealthy temples and monasteries of the Presidency. The Hindu Religious Endowments Bill (1923), the amendment to the Penal Code (1924) to make dedication of minors an offence and the Madras Act of 1929, enfranchising service *inams* or land grants held by the *devadasis* (thus protecting their material interests) were all the work of the influential Justicites. These legislations paved the way for the 1930 Bill of Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy, a spokeswoman of the Backward Classes and a member of the Legislative Council of Madras, banning the practice of temple dedications.

The Self-Respect movement and the Justice party joined forces in 1938 to form the more radical D.K. (*Dravida Kazhagam*)[7] in 1944, which urged Tamil separatism and opposed Hindi as the national language. With the formation of the D.K., under Annadurai's influence, the predominance in the Justice Party of rich 'clean' *Sudra* communities was reduced and the Backward Classes of which the *devadasi* community was more clearly a part, came into the forefront.[8] If earlier, the category of '*sudra*' had mobilised elite, non-

Brahmin groups to define Dravidian nationalism, in the later years with the incorporation of the Backward Classes, it was film and the media which brought about mass identification of Dravidian status (Barnett 1976).

The D.K. which later on became the D.M.K. (*Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam*) in 1949, remained a largely propagandist movement of social reform, consciously steering away from elective politics till later. It stressed rationalism, anti-ritualism and anti-casteism in addition to older calls of being Dravidian both culturally and politically. What is important to our purpose here is that much of its populist campaigns were conducted through film, touring drama troupes, public poetry contests and dramatic dialogue presentation of party programmes. Literary activity, both 'new wave' and orthodox, involving the translation of crucial, Tamil classics to replace Sanskrit works in the field of ethics and philosophy, was encouraged. Many of the leading lights of the D.K./D.M.K. were actors, actresses, cinema people, writers and directors and continue to be so even today. Mr. Karunanidhi, able lieutenant of Annadurai was a member of the *devadasi* community as were many others. (With political awareness, the men of the community associated themselves increasingly with the 'clean' musician castes or the Barbers). Their association with the world of the performing arts, their exploitation of newly created avenues of education for the Backward Classes as also their contacts with the rich and landed upper-castes who were their 'fathers', enabled them to make excellent political capital of their traditional talents. Many *devadasis* entered films with remarkable ease because of the inhibitions of the higher caste girls against a career in the cinema. By the 1940s and 50s rural people would walk miles to see a beloved and charismatic public leader or a 'retired' dancer in a film at the local, mobile cinema unit. The temples were shunned as a public meeting place by the members of the Backward classes, more so now when legislation (Act XXII of 1939) opened their portals to them. If the snub was intended for the ritually orthodox and elite members of local society, it was heightened by the unswerving agitation all through this period to remove the *devadasis* - the

only section of the Backward Classes communities given traditional entry, if not a place of importance, in the temples - from any further association with the temples.

Having said all this, it should be quite obvious why the original *devadasis* could have no part to play in the revival of the temple-dance or *sadir*, in the 1930s. Emotionally and politically they had moved away (or been forced to move away by their menfolk) from the *sadir*. The more enterprising were dancing a version of it in the films while the majority were looking for husbands - the marriage of a *devadasi* was as yet an 'event' in Madras society as was the re-marriage of a widow. Interestingly therefore, the first well-known *devadasis* who married made very good matches with liberated, social reformers and wealthy upper-caste men, to whom such action was a public declaration of their convictions.

At the peak of her career as an anti-Nautch lobbyist, Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddi had in fact justified the threat her legislation posed to the dance-art as unavoidable. Given the dance's existing association with vice, its future was not of immediate concern to her. However 'pure' the art in its origin, it no longer remained so and therefore had to go:

> '...Encouragement of fine arts must not be at the expense of good morals and health of the race..The arts must be restored to their original purity and grandeur so that respectable, good and virtuous women may come forward to learn and practice them..' (*The Hindu*, Dec. 1932:5).

The Congress Ministry of Madras in free India which in 1947 finally passed her Bill of 1930 into law (Act No 31, 1947) expressed essentially the same sentiments about an earlier religious duty having become 'perverted', about 'prostitution being a crime in civilised nations' in order to point out the 'pernicious' nature of the *devadasi* system. There was however, a great concern for the future of the art which had never been there before.

As I have already pointed out, the legislation came at a time (1947) when the practice of dedication was already quite dead and seems to have been pushed through as much to mark the birth of a new, elite class of 'amateur' dancers as to seal the death of the old professional class of temple-dancers. With newly won Independence to spur on the Congress Ministry of that time, official sponsorship

and patronage of traditional arts was at a premium:

> 'This legislation should not cut at the root of art and culture..This culture has come to us from generations past, from the Pandya, Chola, Chera and Pallava kings. These things should not be killed in our jealousy for social reform.' (The Hon. Dr. P. Subbarayan, in the Legislative Assembly Debates on the Bill, 9th October, 1947)

The revival of the *sadir* as *Bharata Natyam*,[9] one of the national dances of India had already begun.

E. Krishna Iyer's plea to restore the art of dance had not fallen on deaf ears. As part of her ongoing, theosophical crusade in matters humanitarian, cultural and artistic, Rukmini Arundale (wife of the President of the Theosophical Society,[10] G.S. Arundale) enthusiastically took up the cause of the dying art of *sadir*. Much influenced by E. Krishna Iyer, she set a personal example by dancing on stage at a time (1936) when it was still taboo in respectable society. More importantly, she began *Kalakshetra*,[11] the Academy of the Arts at Adyar, Madras, in the same year, under the umbrella of the Theosophical Society. Ostensibly created to 'purify' and revive the arts, *Kalakshetra* provided the prototype for the much patronised dance schools that were to follow.

The support given to the revival of the *sadir* (or the *Bharata Natyam*, by which name it has since been known) by Rukmini Arundale is entirely understandable in the context of her own particular position in the Theosophical Society which, in a sense, cut her out for the role. The direction the dance took under her protective wing cannot be severed from the all-embracing influence of Theosophy on her early public career.

At an impressionable age, Rukmini Arundale had been groomed by the elders of the Theosophical Hierarchy as the chosen Vehicle for the World Mother. Why this idea never took root the way the parallel male conception of a World Teacher did (in the person of young J. Krishnamurthy) is not of immediate concern to us here. What remains significant is that such an intention existed and that it was Rukmini Arundale who was the medium through which it was sought to be expressed. C.W. Leadbeater's visions in 1925 of the Virgin Mary, foretelling Her appearance as an angel amongst humans, were the immediate cause for the formation of a *World League of Motherhood*, under Lady

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Emily Lutyens, who was put in charge of such a cause. Officially, however, it was only in 1928 that the World Mother mission was made public. On 25th March, 1928, at the festival of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, celebrated at the Liberal Catholic Chapel of St. Michael and All Angels, at Adyar, Rukmini Arundale was presented as such, by Annie Besant. A magazine, *World Mother* was begun and inside Rukmini (who was also the editor) suggested her possession by the Being in a free association verse, 'To the World Mother'. In many ways, the initiation of this programme resembled the early organisation of the Order of the Star of the East in 1911, which prepared the way for J. Krishnamurthy's approaching avatarhood. The World Mother campaign however was nipped in the bud fairly soon after it was begun. By 1930, the programme appears to have been shelved officially after a brief period of active campaigning in India and abroad (West 1929:256; Nethercot 1963;362-406).

In one sense, it might be said that this abortive attempt to establish Rukmini Arundale as a symbol of (in her own words, when she briefly spoke as a Mother at a Theosophical camp held in 1925 at Ommen in Holland): '...the woman as she was in ancient India, not as she is today; the woman who was the Warrior, the True Mother, the Priestess, the ideal for the World', was a dismal failure and a fiasco. In another more interesting sense, however, we see the continuation of the campaign in the creation, very soon after the public announcements of 1928, of a new role for her by the Theosophical Society - as Patron of Art and Beauty, Ancient Hindu Temple-Dancer and Leader of the Young Theosophists. In fact as early as 1930 (as the officially sanctioned *A Short History of the Theosophical Society* bears witness) Shrimati Rukmini was dedicating her work as '..a resuscitator of all that is best in India's traditional art and culture, giving them new interpretations.' to the World Mother 'who represents the feminine side of Divinity and the Ideal Womanhood'. (Ransom 1938:486).

The Order of the Star of the East had been influenced in its origins by the early Christian, essentially gnostic beliefs of the Theosophical leaders. At the same time various nineteenth century

currents of revivalism going on within the Church of England itself, (such as the Oxford Movement) towards older modes and theories of worship, had been absorbed by Theosophy in the ceremonial organisation of the Order. In the various camp meetings in Holland, when the Myth of the Coming of the Star was first elaborated, the initiation and 'consecration' (by the Lord *Maitreya*[12] and the Masters themselves) of twelve 'Apostles', as Bishops, Deacons and Abbesses had taken place. These favoured few, included of course, Annie Besant, Leadbeater, Arundale and other leading members of the Hierarchy, who were to supervise in advance the programme of the Coming of the Lord. Given these Tractarian, High Church leanings of the Theosophists the World Mother campaign was influenced no less I think by the Anglican Church's rejection as early as the eighteenth century of the extreme position of Puritanical creeds towards Mary, Mother of God. The continued theological avowal in the Anglican and Scottish Orders, of Mary as 'a purifying and exalting principle', was eventually to lead to the revival of religious communities for women, once again under the influence of the Oxford Movement. In 1841, E.B. Pusey and J.H. Newman, leading figures of the Oxford Movement, received the vows of the first 'Sister of Charity' in the Anglican Church. Following this many more orders were formed which were either 'active' or 'mixed' and the sisters were involved in work amongst the poor in the slums (Cross, 1958:1150). I mention this only to contrast them with the Protestant Missions which had moved away from the monastic religious life, and in India, formed a powerful lobby against the activities of the Theosophical Society.

Besides these obvious theological influences, the World Mother campaign as also Theosophy in general seems to have been touched by the widespread popularity and scientific orthodoxy of evolutionary and ethnological theories of the day (Jinarajadasa 1956:640-53). The Theosophical version of 'progress' for women was the rehabilitation of her ancient, spiritual glory and 'tribal' independence from sexual and economic exploitation of any sort. The pseudo-historical researches of Morgan and Tylor had influenced Engels (1958,II:170-327) and Marx (Krader 1972) who wrote of primitive classlessness where

the lack of antagonism between public and private, the leisured and the labouring was reflected in group sex practices. From the promiscuity and 'freedom' of all women had emerged the subjection of women to men both in monogamous marriage and as a class. Intermediate to this development was the emergence of a special class of 'sacred women' or hetarae who provided the first historical evidence of an exploitation based on sex. The function of these public women was seen as a 'sacrifice' of virginity, a taking over of promiscuity which had been the previous 'painful' function of *all* women, to enable a privileged few to enjoy the fruits of chastity and family life. The value biases of Victorian society as regards women and their expected attitudes to sex, are not difficult to uncover.

Frazer, another colourful evolutionist of the day, extended the compass of such comparative research in the twelve volumes of the *Golden Bough*, where much against orthodox theological practice of the day, pagan and Christian customs and beliefs were dealt with on an heuristically equal footing. Theosophy too tried out something similar except that it worked towards an occult synthesis of western and eastern mythologies and science based on irresistible evolutionary, spiritual forces which moved towards higher consciousness. Frazer, on the other hand, marked out the evolutionary excellence of rational science over any existing system of religion and/or magic to be found worldwide. In any case all evolutionary research remained an attempt at the systematisation of suddenly enlarged horizons of human information, which were the outcome of colonial expansion.

Despite its scientific pretensions, however, evolutionism encouraged theoretical conjecture which was of a sentimental (hence false) nature, and was variously produced by disdain and ridicule or equally sympathy and nostalgia towards customs that were 'alien' in terms either of time or space. We have just recorded the infiltration of Victorian moral attitudes into Engels' understanding of female specialisations. Frazer, for his own part, amidst discussion of Babylonic and Syriac prostitution, Behrew *kedeshoth*, Greek rites for Adonis in Lydia, Cyprus and Armenia and West African women of the Ewe coast (not to mention Indian examples), talks of sacred 'goddesses'/ 'harlots' whose vocation:

> '..far from being deemed infamous was probably long regarded by the laity as an exercise of more than common virtue and rewarded with a tribute of mixed wonder, reverence and pity not unlike that which in some parts of the world is still paid to women who seek to honour their Creator in a different way by renouncing the natural functions of their sex..' (Frazer 1905:54-57).

The pagan temple-prostitute as class 'victim' and 'nun' were notions equally favoured by the nineteenth century evolutionists. Interestingly, both these attitudes were present in the Theosophist reactions to the Hindu temple-dancer. In general, the anti-progressive, ultra-conservative view of the Theosophical Society on the subject of women's reforms was an aspect of their political antipathy to official, missionary action in the realm of Hindu religion and social custom. The corruption of temple women according to their way of thinking, was only the baneful effect of western materialism on Indian society in general. The institution of the nautch was reprehensible only insofar as it was encouraged by bourgeois male, sexuality and the public toleration of it was akin to other morally ambiguous official practices such as the supply of prostitutes to the army. (Nethercot 1963:196). But if the removal of the *devadasis* from the temples and people's homes had not found place in the Theosophical Society's programmes, the rejuvenation of the temple-dance certainly did. By the 1930s and 40s, the emergence of a culture-hungry, nationalist elite did much to provide a favourable environment for such aims. The writings of eminent personalities such as Rabindranath Tagore and A.K. Coomaraswamy encouraged the restoration of a cultural freedom and identity for India and not merely the winning of her political freedom from the west.

Coming then at the time that it did, the problem of the languishing art of the temple-dance, provided the Theosophical Society with an opportunity to publicise itself afresh, both as a medium for India's renaissance in the Arts and as a champion for her women's ancient spiritual heritage. By 1930, the Order of the Star of the East programme had begun to go sour. J. Krishnamurthy had publicly rejected the motley assortment of ancient Christian, Hindu, and even pseudo-scientific notions which had sought to make him into a god. This widely

advertised 'defection' from the Theosophical Society had had repercussions on the stability and popularity of the Society world-wide. (For some observers the shelving of the World Mother campaign *in that form* and at that very time was certainly influenced by Krishnamurthy's actions). Even on the political plane, Gandhi's successes in securing political privileges for the Indians which were almost tantamount to the granting of freedom, had taken the limelight away from the Theosophical Society's endeavours in these areas. Unlike Gandhi's strategies and programmes, Annie Besant's conceptions of a Hindu Renaissance and a totalising Hindu Unity had remained alienated from the Indian people. In many ways then, the 'falseness' and inefficacy of Theosophy vis-a-vis Indian political/ religious realities, had been demonstrated.

After the passing away of Annie Besant in 1933, it was largely in the development of programmes dedicated to art and the youth of India that the new President G.S. Arundale sought to recoup the Society's losses. For Rukmini Arundale personally, it marked the onset of her public career as a crusader in those very areas of social life which had formed part of the unfulfilled World Mother campaign. Even a perfunctory scan of the history of the Theosophical Society in this period, reveals the growing emergence of Rukmini Arundale as a public figure in the field of Art and various Youth Programmes.

In 1936-37 at the Theosophical Society's Diamond Jubilee International Convention held at Adyar, the already existing Adyar Players founded *Kalakshetra*, the International Academy of the Arts (6th January 1937) with Rukmini Arundale as the President. The Objects of the Academy were to i) encourage the essential unity of all true art ii) to work for the recognition of the arts as inherent in effective individual, national and religious growth. It was also hoped that by its creation the art aspect of Theosophy would be brought into the mainstream of the Society's activities. As part of the general title of the Convention's campaign which focussed on the Plan of Evolution, many pamphlets were prepared on the Arts with this point of view in mind. At many subsequent public occasions, both in India and abroad, Shrimati Rukmini spoke on subjects such as; 'India's genius in Art', 'The Message of Beauty to Civilisation', 'The Spirit of Motherhood' which generally promoted the emergence of

Art in the Theosophical Movement, besides of course the interests of the International Academy of Arts (Ransom 1938:518-34).

The International Convention also marked the emergence of Rukmini Arundale as a performing artiste in *Bharata Natyam*, after having received training from a traditional *guru*, the famous trainer of *devadasis*, Sri Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai of Pandanallur village in Tanjore District. With her appearance in public as a dancer, all social prejudice against married, society women taking to the art, seems to have disappeared. Prior to this, the efforts of the Music Academy, also a premier institution of the arts, in Madras, had had meagre success because of upper-caste prejudice amongst its members which prevented family women from taking to the dance.

In all this period, G.S. Arundale as President of the Theosophical Society supported his wife's activities through his official messages and books. In *Gods in The Becoming* (1936) he dwelt on 'God in Womanhood' (pp.418-53) and reaffirmed all the ideas underlying the World Mother campaign of yore. The sacredness of women as physical or spiritual 'mothers', as priestesses of The Motherhood of God and of Creative Activity, as needing education or 'consecration' not only in '..the beautiful and spiritual mission of their sex..' but also in the more homely arts of cooking and needlework(!) was once again spelt out. In his 'Watch-Tower' notes as President (*Theosophist*: February 1936) he spoke definitively of a new interpretation of Theosophy which was emerging - the interpretation through 'Beauty' - in addition to older aims.

The enormous success of *Kalakshetra* as a pristine Academy of the Arts would, as we have seen, been impossible without the patronage of the Theosophical Society which provided necessary funds, enthusiasm and organisation to back Shrimati Rumini. At the same time, changed political circumstances too had encouraged the Society to relate itself more clearly to Indian social realities, in order to succeed. Earlier G.S. Arundale's ecclesiastical position as 'Bishop' of the Liberal Catholic Church had led to such strong objections to his standing for President that he had deemed it well to announce that if elected, he would give up his ecclesiastical

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title and cease wearing clerical dress (Ransom 1938:514). In a similar sense the 'Bishop's Wife' Shrimati Rukmini was encouraged to revive the 'Hindu Temple-Dance' modelled on indigenous traditions of training and practice. Without, as we shall see, the actual *praxis* of the *devadasi*'s dance (the *sadir*) to root her down, *Kalakshetra*, like so many other typically eclectic and idealistic schemes of the Theosophists would never have taken off the ground.

All revivals however present a view of the past which is usually an interpretation fitting in with a changed *contemporary* situation. Quite frequently, notions of purification, betterment and progress accompany the utopian vision of revivalist programmes. Given the upper-class, Christian religious biases of the Theosophists which it will be recalled were encouraging the revival of the consecrated life for women, and the deep influence of evolutionary theories on their 'science', it was more than likely that the ancient Hindu dancer as the 'Priestess of Beauty', as sacred votary, and as 'nun' would be stressed in their programmes. Certain obvious resemblances such as the dedication to a vocation through a 'marriage' to God, were already there to seduce them in their task. Gombrich (1971:54) has talked of a Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka in recent years where the model of an ancient 'pure' Buddhism was largely that culled from western and Theosophical scholarship on Buddhism and its texts. The *devadasi*, it was now affirmed had been a good and holy creature in the past but had become 'corrupted' making it necessary that her office be abolished. The dance art, without the attendant immorality, was a noble and spiritual exercise and must on that account be restored to its pristine glory. But in many ways as we shall see presently, the 'purification' of the art has meant nothing more really than its rehabilitation in 'correct' society.

Shrimati Rukmini's arguments for the re-birth of the temple dance were heard largely by the urban, educated classes, particularly the civil servants and professionals and elite businessmen who were the spokesmen for the newly emergent nationalism. The pre-eminence of their women in the field of *Bharata Natyam* today conclusively indicates that in many ways, the art has come to be re-born in those very sections of society which had been drawn to Theosophy in the

first place. With political lines drawn, in early twentieth century Madras, between the 'Backward' non-Brahmin-D.K.-Tamil complex on the one hand and the Brahmin-Congress-Sanskrit complex on the other: it should not be difficult to understand why, by the time the former had done their best to kill their connections with the dance, it should be the latter who would promote it as a national art.

Given the changed orientation to the dance, the spiritual/intellectual aspect of the art, as a form of '*yoga*' has been highlighted by promoters and performers alike. Many of the dancers don't just dance but also carry out research on the theory and the history of the dance. In direct proportion to the growth of 'uneducated' audiences (foreigners and urban masses alike) there has been an increasing official sponsorship of 'festivals' of dance which come replete with 'lecture-demonstrations', seminars and discussions in which the dancers themselves participate. The search for the 'original' *Bharata Natyam* through recourse to archaeological and inscriptional evidence has translated into the actual practice of the art in at least one case with the dancer consciously basing her movements on the poses sculpted in Tanjore temples (Subrahmanyam 1979).

At the same time, the increased 'textualisation' of the dance is viewed by many as a means of purifying the classical tradition, as well as reviving lost forms. Dancers have collaborated with erudite sanskrit scholars in the search for manuscripts of ancient dance-dramas, the original *natya*, to which they can set their practical talents. The classical, sanskrit treatise, Bharata's *Natyashastra* (dated in and around the beginning of the Christian era) is invoked both in symbolic (such as the new name of the dance) and real (such as new 'old' techniques) terms, as a measure of present-day excellence. The demand for a parallel measure with respect to the ancient *Agamic*[14] literature, by those intent upon the 'reform' of temple worship and its officiating priests has been remarked upon by Fuller (Davis 1982:153-167). The 'directives' for Siva's worship laid down in these sanskrit manuals, it is stipulated should be brought into a closer relation with existing practices. According to Fuller, not the least important fact about all this activity,

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is that it is doomed to failure, for various reasons:

> '...the demand that priests should be trained in the *Agamas* and carry out the rituals according to their direction is effectively impossible...because the Agamic texts do not contain detailed instructions about rituals that are today perceived as the core of temple worship and festivals and because they are in many places esoteric or inscrutable...'

Why this should be so is however not fully explained in the paper. The demand for the more rigorous training of priests in the *Agamas*, as also the desire to root the *Bharata Natyam* in the textual, sanskritic tradition, rests largely on a misunderstanding of the nature of indigenous, scientific scholarship. The whole of the post-Vedic, technical literature (of which the *Natya Shastra* is an earlier, more secular and the *Agamas*, a later, more clearly theistic, branch) was never written to be 'applied' in the modern sense (Winternitz, Vol. III, Pt. II, 1967:538). It reflected rather the emergence of specialist knowledge about the lay beliefs and practices of society. As the work of religious specialists, however, and not the secular laity (as in the West) this 'social science' retained its connection with values and was instructional and authoritative in character.

Given this peculiar mix of science and philosophy in the technical, Sanskrit literature, we can hardly expect from it a blue-print for specific action, be it in the field of art or temple-ritual or law (Derrett 1973). The truths embodied in these texts were for the consumption of specialists, not lay practitioners, just as Sociology and Linguistics today are written for other social scientists and can hardly be expected to teach people how to live their lives in society, or speak the language. It is for this reason that all attempts to bring ancient texts into relation with existing practice (the earliest example appears to have been the efforts of Orientalists such as Sir William Jones who in the late eighteenth century administered law to sections of the native population according to the *Codes of Manu* [Mukherjee 1968]) remain misguided to say the least.

Interestingly, the desire to link ancient cultural 'theory' to present-day practice has found expression in the attempt to 'sanskritise' the organisation of elite schools of dance, for which *Kalakshetra* was the model. In the total absence of any possibility of re-creating the traditional *gurukula*[13] system of tr

such efforts have merely ended up supporting upper-caste social practices at the institutional level. Enforced today, alongside the necessarily democratic, economic and administrative structure of a modern school system is a daily regimen of early rising, prayer and vegetarian diet for both staff and students. A superior, more ancient and 'pure' dance is being brought into relation with the social mores of an appropriately 'superior' social class. Many other changes introduced by Rukmini Arundale in the training and presentation of the *Bharata Natyam* seem to indicate this as well: the more erotic and bawdy songs of the *devadasi*'s repertoire were excluded and the image of the *melam* or dance band was done away with by giving the dancer prime focus on the stage. Earlier, the dance-conductor and his assistant used also to stand behind the dancer as she danced, following her movements around the stage. Today all the accompanists sit out of the limelight in a corner of the stage and the dance-conductor is, often enough, a women. In fact the visible predominance of men in the *devadasi's* band has given way almost completely to women. More and more women are being employed to provide the drone and vocal accompaniment today. The percussionist and clarinet player alone remain exclusively male.

The learning of practical skills by upper-caste girls in surroundings removed from the domestic or community influence has in a sense made such changes necessary. What is significant, however, is that they are considered authoritative and are usually carried out in the name of 'improvement' of the art through its support of public decency. In the field of temple Hinduism, Fuller (1982:162-64) notes that the demand for reform has enabled what the socially inferior temple priests see as an 'interference' in their affairs on the part of the government and western-educated legislators as well as elite, spiritual personages such as the Sankaracaryas of Kanchi. The insistence on priests holding a diploma in ritual science from an authorised school is one outcome of such interference. In the field of dance, we have already noted, reform has meant the removal of the traditional class of dancers, the *devadasis*. At the same time, the traditional method of training by the *Nattuvanas* who were men of the *devadasi* community, has been eased out in favour

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of schools managed either by the state or by private persons belonging to the urban, educated and business classes. The elite, more prestigious private schools are run by dancers themselves who very often combine the activities of teaching and performance. In fact it would not be wrong to say that the 'star' quality of a dancer is reflected in her having a dancing-school to her name.

The desire to teach as well as to dance (besides of course ensuring certain commercial benefits) is linked to the changed orientation of the dance from being a community to a primarily individual exercise. The artiste no longer sees herself as a mere practitioner of the art but its interpreter as well. As one dancer in the forefront of the profession today, remarked to me:

> 'The *devadasis* only danced. They knew nothing of the theory of music which underlies dance and therefore they could not win the respect of their accompanist musicians. One must keep one step ahead of the musicians and never let them catch you in error as regards footwork, otherwise they will cheapen you. You must let them know who is supreme and they will automatically leave you alone as a woman.
> The Brahmin girl is better in the dance than the *devadasi* because she is better looking and more intelligent.

As the new class of dancers themselves freely admit, success today is more than ever before dependent on their wits as much as on their talent. Concentrated individual effort on their part over a broad spectrum of activities relating to the dance has become very necessary. The career dancer's ability to manage her accompanist musicians, many of whom are social inferiors, her efficiency at public relations with officialdom and the press and her tenacity at being able to stay in the limelight without any automatic or enduring system of patronage to hand, are only partly related to how well she can dance. But whatever the extent of her personal charisma as a dancer/*guru*, in the absence of any in-built mechanism by which it can be perpetuated over the generations, it cannot crystallise into a unique dance method or 'style'. This ironing out of community traditions or '*paramparai*' of the past has led to what critics see as a tedious uniformity in the art as it is practised today. The dance schools remain only too closely tied to her person and given the slightest lack of attention on her part, become 'dead'

institutions even within her lifetime.

To sum up the general arguments of the paper: to the reformers, the worst thing about the *devadasi*'s dance had been its association with a recognised 'caste' given to prostitution; in equal but opposite measure the revivalists stressed the excellence of the dance art as a personal and national vocation. Both however used essentially the same temporal argument of past purity and present sin to separate what may be termed the 'sacred' from the 'profane' aspects of the *devadasi* system, in their respective programmes. Ironically, however, all attempts to rationalise and universalise the two contrasted strands of her social personality, remained grounded in her person.

By emphasising the *Bharata Natyam* as a sacred and ancient covation the revivalists only sought to rejuvenate it freed from the *devadasi*'s monopoly; just as by emphasising prostitution and vice, the reformers only sought to evict her from the temple and people's homes. The anti-Nautch lobbyists, even in their heyday, had to admit that it was not so much prostitution and immorality they were arguing against as its sanctification and acceptance in civil society through the *devadasi*'s person. Immorality and dancing in the public theatres or films of the time, 'sometimes practically naked', was invariably connected. Yet, it was only the dance of the *devadasi* which was being singled out for punitive action in their legislation. In a telling remark, one of the supporters said, '..while we need not tolerate the modern system of half-naked dance, we *can* abolish the *devadasi* system.' Clearly, unlike immorality and disguised prostitution (which as all reformers know is impossible to eradicate) the *devadasi* institution could be so removed. At the same time, great care was exercised in the framing of the Act, so as to ensure that the amateur performance of the *devadasi*'s dance was not penalised.

For their own part, the revivalists argued that they had rescued the sacred *Bharata Natyam* from the sin and immorality of the *devadasi* system which threatened it with extinction. Yet, in a very real and practical sense it was only the *devadasi*'s dance they could hope to perpetuate. They had no other available model for the so-called pure and ancient dance they hoped to revive. It is this which lead them into what can only be termed an ambiguous position:

'..Although in later days, the *sadir* unfortunately developed sensual characteristics, which almost brought about the extinction of the art, it must be remembered that the devadasi's maintained a high standard of technique and the spirit of the dance tradition..The corruption that killed them was not theirs alone but of society in general.' (Rukmini Devi quoted in *Indian Renaissance*, 1937).

In all the promotion of the *Bharata Natyam* going on today (in Madras city alone there are over three hundred registered dance schools and the number that are unregistered must be legion) it must always be kept in mind that for those involved, the dance they are dancing is none other than the '*sadir*' of yesteryear, the preserve of the 'corrupt' *devadasi*.

Many of the best known artists in the field, proudly acknowledge training in the secrets of the art from old, defunct *devadasis*. In the absence of any textual choreography, the widespread renaissance of the dance was really only possible with the help of the jobless *nattunars*, dance-conductors and teachers of the *devadasis*. In 1936, *Kalakshetra* had initiated classes in '*Bharata Natyam*' with the renowned expert of *sadir*, Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, (after much hesitation on his part) as traditional *guru* to the new class of dancers.

And so began the mushrooming, all over the urban centres of India, of hundreds of dancing schools owning the services of an 'original' *nattunar*. In the midst of new brands of profanity surrounding the dance profession today, such as commercialism, cinema and the requirement for official patronage, it is the *devadasi* tradition alone which is propagated by the more elite schools as representative of the ancient 'pure' *Bharata Natyam*.

The contradictions in the reformist and revivalist approaches alike to the *devadasi* were precipitated by the alien context of understanding within which she was placed. The reformers presented the extant temple-dancer as a 'prostitute' in order to do away with her; the revivalists presented the ancient Hindu temple-dancer as a 'nun' in order to incarnate her afresh. The piecemeal and crude nature of these formulations reflects the primarily pragmatic necessity on which they were based. Categories such as 'prostitute' and 'nun' can tell us nothing or next to nothing about the *devadasi* as a creature peculiar to Hindu Bhakti sectarianism. But they can

and do tell us a lot about the reformers and revivalists who used them to bolster their political claims. It was the incomprehensibility of the *devadasi*, the apparent confusion in her person of categories normally kept apart, which compelled social action in fundamentally opposite directions.

Notes

[1] In this article, I have gone by *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*'s (1959:1344-5) definition of 'nun' which is i) a woman devoted to a religious life under certain vows; and ii) a priestess or votaress of some pagan deity.

[2] The term '*devadasi*' literally means 'slave of the gods' and was used to refer to the temple-dancers of India. In Tamil Nadu, however, the women themselves preferred to be known as '*Thevar Adiyal*' or 'at the feet of the god' as against the cruder term '*Tevadiya*', which literally means 'one who is not married and is available for men'; but in real terms was used to refer to a more common class of 'prostitute'. The term '*Tevadiya Makane*' or 'son of the prostitute' is a very strong insult in Tamil.

[3] The band which accompanied the dancing-girl, as against the '*periamelam*' which accompanied the male, temple-pipers.

[4] The term '*sadir*' is not a Tamil word. Some derive it from the urdu or hindustanee word '*sadar*' which referred to the public law courts. Others derive it from the prakrit form of the Sanskrit term '*sadarshya*' which refers to 'something seen', 'a spectacle' as against something only heard. In usage it referred to the public, solo, concert or '*kacheri*' dancing at rich men's homes on ceremonial occasions.

[5] This Association was the more radical wing of the older Hindu Widow Remarriage Association.

[6] The general term refers to 'instrumentality', 'capacity', 'potency' and is conceptualised as female and even deified as a goddess under various names.

[7] D.K. stands for Dravidian Federation as against the later DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazagham) which stands for Dravidian Progressive Federation.

[8] The refusal to push through the Act to prevent dedications of girls to the temples, was a specific allegation made against the Justicites by the Backward Classes and was one of the issues on which they pressed forward their claims for a separate party more sympathetic to their cause.

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[9] The term *Bharata Natyam* has made its appearance at the time of the revival of the *sadir* and is variously interpreted. Most crucial is the connection of the ancient sage Bharata with the Sanskrit manual on dramaturgy, the *Natyashastra*. '*Bharata*' is also a general term for an actor. *Natyam* refers to a 'play' which is enacted and danced.

[10] The Theosophical Society, under the leadership of Madame H.B. Blavatsky and Colonel H.S. Olcott, became active in South India in the 1890s, with India's spiritual and cultural revival as their professed aim.

[11] The term *Kshetra* means 'field' of creative energy or capacity. '*Kala*' refers to both the arts and crafts, in the Indian context.

[12] The name of an ancient sage as also one of the names of the Buddha.

[13] A training system based on total subjection, moral, economic and physical to the teacher or *guru* by the student who becomes a part of the *guru*'s spiritual and social 'household' or '*kula*'. The 'contract' with the teacher is in the nature of a covenant and the student remains influenced by it throughout his artistic career. The system was not based on the regular payment of fees but was rather organised around gift-giving or '*dakshina*' not only in return for services rendered but also as a means of honouring the teacher. The dancing-girl paid out a percentage of her earnings as a dancer to her *guru* through the entire period that she performed.

[14] The *Agamas* are a set of sacred texts, the earliest of which date from the third century A.D. (but the majority are later around the seventh-ninth century A.D) which deal with the worship of the God *Siva*. They are all written in Sanskrit and have a large number of commentaries on them.

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Fnv XVIII #16
A XVIII.16

Orissa
Views on JUGGERNAUTH Temples

The figures and decorations of their temple (probably of mystic allusion to Hindu mythology) are certainly indecent in the extreme, I had heard this point both asserted and denied, and I had the curiosity to satisfy myselfin company with the gentleman above alluded to, by a very minute inspection of the sculpture on the outside of a great number of ancient Hindoo temples at a place called Bhobenessur, situated nearly about half way from Cuttack and Juggannath, where we had occular demonstration of the fact by seeing and minutely examining numerous instances of indecency. The figures were rude and the sculpture course and ill-executed, but still the design and nature of the representation was sufficiently evident and the Brahmins which followed us through these ruins appeared by their manner to express emotion of dislike to our scrutiny. Under all the foregoing disgusting circumstances attendant on a gross Idolatory, it is not surprising a christian divine should be filled with sentiments of horror and religious commiseration.

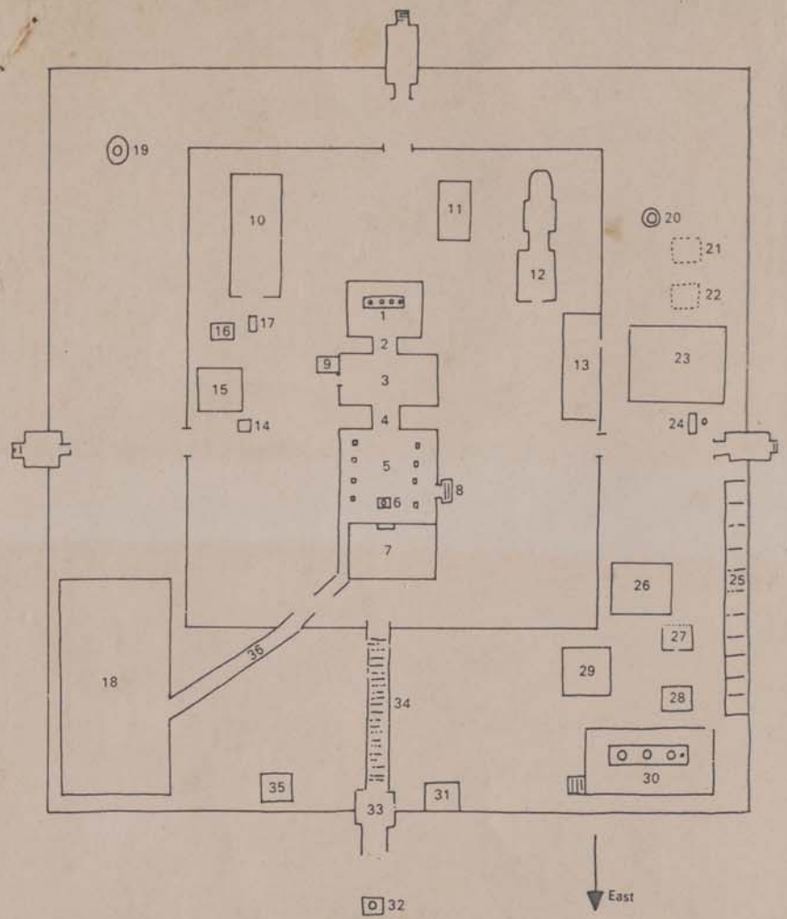
from Report on Cuttack by Mr John Richardson, Member, Board of Revenue, in Bengal Revenue Consultations dated 18.3.1815 (No 29) reproduced in Board's Collections No 12139 (vol 505 of 1816-7) on pages 2-133 (above extract pages 108-10). Order and letter of Government given on pages 133-42.

KKKKKK Cuttack Land Revenue

It is self evident that the value ofland can never be great when the revenue derivable from it or in other words the demand of government is not defined, but on the contrary, when it is known to be liable to increase at the end of each periodical engagement, in proportion to the improvement which the exertions and industry of the last occupant have made, on a principle which leaves to the cultivator avowedly a profit of only ten percent. Can any proprietor of land set m much value upon a property so uncertain in its value, or can the revenue of government be secure from the sale of estates affording so little temptation to purchasers.

~~FKKK~~Report of Mr Travers, Collector,Cuttack(referred to)

Land Revenue: Rs 13,63,668 Land: 12,00,220 Beegahs
Estates: 2349 Inhabitants: 7,13,990 Hindus, 21,932 Moslems



Simplified Diagram of the Temple

Based on the plan of the temple published in the *Record of Rights*, Government of Orissa, 1955.

In this diagram only the most important structures, as well as those mentioned in the text, are included. Besides these there are 85 more small temples and images. Of these about 25 are of Śiva or Ganeś and about 53 are of various incarnations of Viṣṇu; only 7 are to goddesses. Besides temples there are at least 80 store rooms to keep articles of worship, treasures, the movable images, food, wood for the kitchen fires, flowers, pots, etc.

Ent XVIII #17 (AXVIII.17)

1. Inner sanctum (*bhitara pokhariā*) — The Main Temple
2. Gate: *Kalā Hāta duāra.* — The Main Temple
3. Outer sanctum (*bāhāra pokhariā*) — The Main Temple
4. Victory, Victory Gate (*jaya bijaya duāra*) — The Main Temple
5. Dance or audience hall (*nāta maṇḍira, jagamohan*) — The Main Temple
6. The Pillar of Garuda (*garuda stambha*) — The Main Temple
7. The food hall (*bhoga maṇḍapa*) — The Main Temple
8. The main northern entrance to the main temple. — The Main Temple
9. The platform where the king sits (*beharaṇa*)
10. Temple of Bimalā
11. Temple of Bhubaneśwari, Sarasvatī, Ṣaṣṭhī, Savitri, Gayatri.
12. Temple of Lakṣmi
13. Temple of the sun with image from Konarak
14. Temple of the Sun
15. Mukti Maṇḍapa
16. Water-play platform (*jaḷa kriḍā maṇḍapa*).
17. The pond of Rohinī (*Rohinī kuṇḍa*)
18. The kitchen
19. Well in the Garden
20. Another well in the garden
21, 22. Temporary structure at the time of Naba Kalebara
23. Burial ground of the Images (*koili Vaikhuṇṭa*)
24. Temple of Sitāḷā with its 'golden well' (*suna kuā*)
25. Market stalls; sweet shops — Ānanda Bazar
26. Place where pilgrims eat *mahāprasād* — Ānanda Bazar
27–29 Places where *mahāprasād* is sold — Ānanda Bazar
30. The bathing platform (*snāna bedi*)
31. The 'gazing pavilion' (*cāhāṇi maṇḍapa*)
32. The pillar of the sun, brought from the sun temple of Konarak, (*aruṇa stambha*)
33. The main eastern gate: Lion Gate (*siṃhaduāra*)
34. The 'Twenty-two Steps' (*baiśi pāhāca*)
35. The 'meeting pavillion' (*bheṭa maṇḍapa*)
36. Passage way from the kitchen to the main temple used by the cooks to bring the food for the offering.

Wives of the God-King: the Rituals of Devadasis of Puri by Frédérique Apffel Marglin Oxford Univ. Press Delhi 1995

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(a) 'dedication' means the performance of any ceremony, by whatever name called, by which a woman is dedicated to the service of a Hindu deity, idol, object of worship, temple or other religious institution, and includes '*pottukattu*', '*gajjepuja*', '*mudri*', and dancing by '*Kumbhaharathy*';

(b) 'devadasi' means any woman so dedicated;

(c) 'woman' means a female of any age.

3. (1) The dedication of a woman as a devadasi, whether before or after the commencement of this Act and whether she has consented to such dedication or not, is hereby declared unlawful and void; and any woman so dedicated shall not thereby be deemed to have become incapable of entering into a valid marriage.

Nothing contained in this sub-section shall be deemed to affect the operation of [section 34 of the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1951] or the rights to which a devadasi is entitled under that section.

(2) Any custom or usage prevailing in any Hindu community such as the Bogum, Kalavanthula, Sani, Nagavasulu, Devadasi and Kurmapulu, that a woman of that community who gives or takes part in any melam (nautch), dancing or music performance in the course of any procession or otherwise is thereby regarded as having adopted a life of prostitution and becomes incapable of entering into a valid marriage and the performance of any ceremony or act in accordance with any such custom or usage, whether before or after the commencement of this Act and whether the woman concerned has consented to such performance or not, are hereby declared unlawful and void.

(3) Dancing by a woman, with o. without *kumbhaharathy*, in the precincts of any temple or other religious institution, or in any procession of a Hindu deity, idol or object of worship installed in any such temple or institution or at any festival or ceremony held in respect of such a deity, idol or object of worship, is hereby declared unlawful.

4. (1) Any person having attained the age of sixteen years who after the commencement of this Act performs, permits, takes part in, or abets the performance of any ceremony or act for dedicating a woman as a devadasi or any ceremony or act of the nature referred to in section 3, sub-section (2), shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

Explanation: The person referred to in this section shall include the woman in respect of whom such ceremony or act is performed.

(2) Any person having attained the age of sixteen years who dances in contravention of the provisions of section 3, sub-section (3), or who abets dancing in contravention of the said provisions, shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with a fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

5. No court inferior to that of a Presidency Magistrate or a Magistrate of the First Class shall inquire into or try any offence punishable under section 4.

The Madras Code Vol. III. Unrepealed Madras Acts 1922 to 1948, Government of Madras Law Department, 1958, pp. 795–7.

8 The state took control of the temple at that time. However, the king's uncle told me that his older brother, who was then king, sued the state at that time in an attempt to regain control of the temple. While the suit was pending the king retained control of the temple. The state won the case and took over fully the administration of the temple in 1963.

9 For a discussion of the treatment of the category of auspicious in the literature see the Conclusion, part I, pp. 282–300.

CHAPTER 1

PURI ENCOUNTERS

1 See Alice Boner and Sadasiva Rath Sarma, *Silpa Prakasa of Ramachandra Kaulacara* (translated and annotated), Leiden, 1966. Also by the same authors, *New Light on the Sun Temple of Konarak*, Varanasi, 1972.

CHAPTER 2

KINSHIP: MARRIED WOMEN AND DEVADASIS

1 Although the record of rights lists 118 separate ritual duties, many of these are grouped under one general heading. For example, among cooks (*suāras*), there will be many specific ritual duties named, such as cutting vegetables, being in charge of certain pots, doing the cooking in the kitchen of another temple in the compound, etc. When my informants referred to the temple servants as a group, they used the phrase: 'The 36 *nijoga*-s.' *Nijoga* refers to one of these general categories of ritual duties. I have not made a study of the temple organization, and I refer the reader to the unpublished Ph.D. thesis of J. Rösel, *Der Palast des Herrn der Welt*, 1976, Freiburg University.

The following is a list of the 36 *nijogas*, compiled by my collaborator with the help of several temple servants. Its accuracy cannot be guaranteed but it gives the reader an idea of the type of rituals and how they are categorized.

Brahmins:

1 chā mahāpātra; the most important servants: bhitaracha and talicha mahāpātra, who open and close the gates in the morning and evening.
2 purohita, not temple brahmins but śāsan brahmins. Perform the Vedic fire sacrifice in the kitchen every day.
3 pūjā paṇḍā; do the main offering.
4 simhāri or puśpālaka, bathe and decorate the deities.
5 bāḍu sebāka; in charge of containers.
6 pati-mahāpātra; one person special duties during the car festival; said to belong to the suāra class.
7 pratihāri; watchmen.
8 mekāpa; in charge of various ritual objects.
9 suāra; cooks.
10 khuntiā; supply camphor and flowers to the simhāris.
11 chatāra; carry the umbrellas and fans.
12 bhalapa nāyaka; who bring the betel nuts.
13 pradhāni; calls the servants to their ritual.

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14 sābuta nijoga; in charge of the 5 tīrthas where they offer oblation to the pilgrims' ancestors.

Non-brahmins

15 muduli (potter caste); in charge of mud seals.
16 daitā; descendants of tribal.
17 dutta-mukha simhāri; a daitā in charge of painting the face of the deities.
18 karaṇa; temple scribes.
19 ghatuāri; (garland-maker caste) play the gongs at the car festival.
20 mohābhoi (caste of cowherds); supply milk and milk products.
21 pāniā; (cultivator caste) bring water for kitchen.
22 bajantāri (musicians; several castes).
23 devadasis.
24 cakra dehurī (barber caste), places a lamp on the *cakra* which is at the top of the temple tower on certain days.
25 khumbāra bišoi (potter caste); supply earthen wares daily for the kitchen.
26 suānsiā (cultivator caste); servants of the cooks.
27 cunarā (lime maker caste); supplies lime for cleaning, also worships Garuda.
28 jyotiśa; astrologer.
29 baidya; physician of the deities.
30 bindhāni; goldsmith.
31 tīrtha mātiā sebāka; (cultivator caste).
32 ojhā mahāraṇā (carpenter caste); build the chariots.
33 cāpa beherā (boatman caste); row the boats at Candan festival.
34 aśva hasti sebāka (*khandāyat* caste); in charge of the temple elephant.
35 mahāsethi (washerman).
36 pāliā mahāra (sweeper).

2 In Bengali kinship terminology the same term *kutum* or *kutumba* does not refer to relatives by blood but to relatives by marriage. See Fruzzetti and Östör (1976:105).

3 One of the brothers died in 1976 after I had left Puri.

4 See Kane, *History of the Dharmaśāstras*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 444: 'If a person does not give away a maiden when she has reached her 12th year, his *pitṛs* have to drink every month her menstrual discharge (Parāśara VII, 6–9).'

5 The sister-in-law of the married daughter of Sahasrakhyi had been married as a pre-pubertal child to a temple servant whose wife had died. While the little girl was visiting her father-in-law's house, the husband tried to have intercourse with her. She cried out and was very upset. She was brought back to her parents' house where she told what happened. That night her father went into the husband's lane, called out some prominent men of the neighbourhood and told what had happened to his daughter. That very night the husband committed suicide writing a note that he had lost face.

6 The same point is made by Fruzzetti and Östör (1976:118): '*Matri bongso*: by this Bengalis do not mean generations of mothers but rather the generations of the mother's father.'

7 On the widespread practice of second or final funerals see Robert Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand*, 1960, first published in French in 1907.

8 Inden and Nicholas write that: 'Derived from the root *kṛ*, meaning "act," "make," "perform," "manage," the word *kartā* literally means "actor," ' 'he who independently performs enjoined actions for his house (*gṛha*) and his bodily dependents (*parivāra-varga*).' In *Kingship in Bengali Culture*, 1976, pp. 6–7. They do not mention that a *kartā* needs a wife to play his role.

9 See Kane, ibid., Vol. II, Part I, p. 429: 'The wife enables the man to perform religious rites and is the mother of a son or sons who were supposed to save a man from hell.' Kane then quotes Manu IX 28: 'On the wife depend the procreation of sons, the performance of religious rites, service, highest pleasures, heaven for oneself and for one's ancestors.'

Ibid., p. 579, quoting Varāhamihira (6th century AD) in Bṛhat Saṃhitā chapter 74: '. . . . On women depend *dharma* and *artha* and from them man derives the pleasures of sense and the blessings of sons.'

Similarly, there was a belief that there was no hope of going to heaven for a woman who died unmarried. Ibid., pp. 443–4: 'It came to be believed that there was no hope of heaven for a woman who died unmarried. In the Salya parva chapter 52 we have the story of a girl, daughter of Kuṇi, Garga, who practised severe penance till she reached old age and yet was told by Nārada that if she died unmarried she would not go to heaven. The woman induced Sṛngavat of the Gālava family for a day previous to her death to marry her by the promise of giving him half of her merit (*puṇya*). The Vaikhānasa smārta sūtra (V.9), while describing the ceremony of funeral rites in cases of distress, mentions the curious practice of finding out a male of the same caste for a girl who dies unmarried though of the age of puberty, with whom a sort of marriage is gone through and the girl is cremated.'

10 For an insightful discussion of *dharma*, see Van Buitenen 'Dharma and Mokṣa', *Philosophy East and West* (Honolulu), 1957.

11 One of my informants called turmeric an 'auspicious sign' (*śubha lakhyana*). Turmeric powder mixed with oil is massaged on both the bride and the groom before the wedding. At the wedding ritual itself, before the crucial part of tying the hands together, the forearms and the hands of both bride and groom are also rubbed with turmeric. At the puberty ritual of a girl when she takes her purificatory bath she is also rubbed with turmeric. Turmeric is only used during auspicious (*śubha*, *maṅgala*) ceremonies.

12 It must not be imagined from this that women are drastically isolated. The houses in Puri's old lanes are all contiguous and have backdoors and terraces. One visits through the terraces with one's neighbours up and down the lane. Gossip has it that a lot of visiting, some of it not very legitimate, takes place through the backdoors and the terraces. There is a lively women's social life which takes place outside of the public street and temple. When I visited my friends many of the women neighbours—at least at the beginning—came through the terraces to have a look at me.

13 Fruzzetti and Östör's paper, 'Seed and Earth: A Cultural Analysis of Kinship in a Bengali Town', *CIS*, 1976, paints a picture very similar to the one that I briefly describe here.

14 See Manu V:108: '. . . . is purified . . . a woman whose thoughts have been impure by the menstrual secretion.' In Bühler (1969:188).

15 I was several times given the examples of Śakuntala in the Mahābhārata and of Sītā in the Rāmāyaṇa to illustrate this point.

16 These widows had become *mātā*-s. These are women, widows or women who have been abandoned by their husbands, who join a monastery (*matha*) and live there

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the Gajapatis. This development, however, was accompanied by, and the direct consequence of, a constant decrease of political power. In the context of Hindu kingdoms actual divinization of kings seems to have been primarily a compensation for the loss of political power (1978:23, 26).

The increased involvement of the palace in temple rituals and the fact that, according to Kulke, 'temple servants had to serve in the palace' (1978a:332) as well as the increased use by the Khurdā rājās of the cult of Jagannātha for purposes of legitimization, is the evidence that Kulke musters to argue that divine kingship is not part and parcel of the ancient ideology of Hindu kingship but is a relatively recent innovation.

The evidence for the imperial period, along with indological research on the ideology of kingship, points rather to the fact that Hindu kings have always been thought of as embodying a divine power. The intensification of kingly involvement in temple rituals after the fall of the empire is indeed a new development which can most probably be related to the king's loss of territory and political power. Whether this development constitutes a radically new departure from the older conception of kingship remains to be established. In order to understand the nature of the new relationship between the palace and the temple that was instituted in the seventeenth century, a close examination of palace organization and its relationship to the temple is necessary. My information comes mostly from the *rājagurus*, the *dei*, and the devadasis.[9] It is a description of what palace organization was some thirty years ago, when the tradition started by the early Khurdā rājās finally ended.

In the words of one of the *rājagurus*: 'very few persons do both the *sebā* of the palace and the temple'. The two *rājagurus* of Puri were separately interviewed on this topic and they both said that since around 1925 when Rāmacandra Deb came to the throne most of the palace servants were dismissed probably due to financial difficulties. The great majority of palace servants were *śūdras*, with only a few brahmins. They were unable to give me any figures but what is clear is that the proportion between brahmin and non-brahmin servants in the palace and the temple were inverted. According to the record of rights there were in 1954 1,021 brahmin *sebākas* and 326 non-brahmin *sebākas* carrying out ritual duties in the temple.[10] We do not know the exact number of palace servants before 1925, but the general order of magnitude is estimated at two to three hundred out of which only about twenty or so were brahmins. Those brahmins, of the

pūjāri class, that is the same class as the temple brahmins, were employed for the performance of the worship (*pūjā*) of the various deities in the palace and for cooking in the palace kitchen. By deities in the palace is meant images, not the king. The king is never worshipped by brahmins. I will return later to the relation between the king and the two classes of brahmins: the *pūjāris* (who do the worship of images) and the higher brahmins, locally known as *śāsan* brahmins.

The palace brahmins are called *pāśupālakas*. Although there is a group of brahmins in the temple called *pāśupālakas* (also called *simhāri*)—their duties consist of decorating the images with flower ornaments—the palace and the temple *pāśupālaka* are two separate groups.

Except for a few individuals the only temple servants who as a *group* serve both in the temple and in the palace are the devadasis and the musicians (*bajantāri*). The devadasis are classified into two groups according to their ritual duties in the temple; these are the 'singers of the inner portion' (*bhitara gāuṇi*) and the 'singers of the outer portion' (*bāhāra gāuṇi*) also called 'dancers' (*nācuni*). Both of these groups also participate in certain rituals in the palace. The musicians,[11] unlike the devadasis, do not constitute one single social category, although they constitute a single ritual category. Some of them are of the bell-metal worker caste (*kansāri*), others are *khandāyat* and two of them are brothers of the devadasis. In any case none of these persons are brahmins.

Besides these two groups there are a few individuals who have duties both in the temple and in the palace. One of these is a *pradhāni*; a brahmin whose main function is to call the brahmins who do the offering (*pūjā paṇḍā*) when it is time to carry out their duties. A *pradhāni* also stands by the *rājaguru* during the morning ritual of the devadasi in the temple. The record of rights mentions seven persons who are *pradhānis*. Only one of them also works in the palace.

Another brahmin group is that of the *khuntiās*—a *sebā* consisting of handing over garlands and camphor to the *pāśupālakas* and of calling them for their ritual. One person in that group also works in the palace; he is called the *Beherā Khuntiā* and his duty is to walk in front of the king at the time of the king's visit to the temple with a cane, announcing the king's visit.

Members of the caste of scribes (*karaṇa*) who are in charge of

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