

DIETRICH BOSCHUNG AND  
CORINNA WESSELS-MEVISSEN (EDS.)

# FIGURATIONS OF TIME IN ASIA

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MORPHOMATA

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The experience and the ensuing structuring of time forms a constitutive part of human cultures. There are many ways of coming to terms with time, calendars and historiographies being its most common cultural representations. The contributions to this volume deal with lesser known figurations that result directly from the various perceptions about time and phenomena related to time. Diachronous investigations in various parts of Asia (predominantly South Asia) reveal a broad spectrum of such visual and literary figurative manifestations.

While Hinduism recognizes a divine personification of time and allocates the ominous factor time in an ontological proximity to death, other cultures of Asia have developed their own specific concepts and strategies. This collection of essays combines perspectives of various disciplines on figurations in which time congeals, as it were. These figurations result from local time regimes, and beyond demonstrating their diversity of forms this volume offers coordinates for a comparison of cultures.

The topics include chronograms as well as early Buddhist topoi of the vastness of time, the Indian Jaina representation of both temporality and non-temporality and the teachings of a Mediaeval Zen master hinting at the more stationary aspects of time.



**MORPHOMATA**

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AND DIETRICH BOSCHUNG  
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AND CORINNA WESSELS-MEVISSEN

**FIGURATIONS  
OF TIME IN ASIA**

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## PREFACE

The following volume deals with a major topic of the Morphomata Center for Advanced Studies, namely the question as to how notions of time are given concrete, perceptible form or shape. In Morphomata's very first publication, which served as an introduction to the concept and approaches of our Center, several articles treated this topic with regard to particular phenomena relevant to ancient Greece and Pre-Columbian America.<sup>1</sup> The contributions to *Figurations of Time in Asia* continue such investigation focusing on Asian cultures, particularly those of Southern Asia.

Two aspects are of central importance here: first, exploration of the question as to how epistemic concepts of time are expressed concretely in various cultures, epochs and media, second, the consequences and achievements of such concrete manifestations. How in turn do such realities effect the notions they are based on? These questions reflect the focus of our research centre as articulated in its very name. "Morphómata" is the plural form of the Greek term "mórophôma" which denotes an entity achieving concrete form through its own or external shaping processes.<sup>2</sup> Based on this term, we coined the word *morphome* as the way cultural notions are given their concrete, perceptible form. This new term implies, on the one hand, the inevitable *process* of giving something a form, while,

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<sup>1</sup> Günter Blamberger & Dietrich Boschung (eds.) 2011. *Morphomata. Kulturelle Figurationen: Genese, Dynamik und Medialität*. Morphomata 1. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag. The following contributions are particularly relevant here: Dietrich Boschung, "Kairos als Morphom der Zeit. Eine Fallstudie": 47–90, Alan Shapiro, "Eniautos. Time, Seasons, and the Cycle of Life in the Ancient Greek World": 199–222, and Jennifer von Schwerin, "Space-Time and Maya Temple Design. The Dynamics of an Architectural Cosmogram": 261–286.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jürgen Hammerstaedt, "Die antike Verwendung des Begriffs *mórophôma*". In: *ibid.*: 91–109.

on the other hand, it emphasises the intrinsic value of *the resulting form itself*. Cultural artefacts—objects, art works or texts—are in a ‘*morphomatic*’ sense not mere emanations, portrayals, copies or simulacra of ideas, knowledge or concepts, whose relationships to their origins would always be disturbingly elusive. What we are dealing with does not simply reflect the prevalent knowledge of its time; rather, it modifies and determines knowledge through the process by which it takes on concrete form. We have applied these concerns to selected fields of inquiry, in particular to *notions of time*.

While our first volume dealt *inter alia* with notions of time in Ancient Greece and Pre-Columbian America, it expressed a significant concern of our Center, namely the attempt to investigate the particular approaches to notions of time across various cultures. This aim is only achievable, however, to the extent that we apply interdisciplinary skills and diverse fields of inquiry, which are otherwise segregated from each other due to the rigours of their respective subject matters and methodologies. It is one of the great advantages available to an international Center for Advanced Studies to bring together scholars from the most diverse fields.

This very volume serves as a model to be emulated: It is based on a conference which was conceived and conducted by Corinna Wessels-Mevissen, a Fellow of the 2009–10 term at the Morphomata Center for Advanced Studies. We owe Dr. Wessels-Mevissen a debt of gratitude for her efforts, especially her support in making this publication possible.

Dietrich Boschung

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CORINNA WESSELS-MEVISSEN

## INTRODUCTION

“It was so beautiful to touch the face of Time. I came out crying ...”

Chandralekha, Indian classical dancer and choreographer, about her visit to the Mahakaleshwar (“Great Lord of Time”) Temple, Ujjain.

*Mārg [Magazine]* 61, 4, 2010: 77

Although Time itself, the invisible pervasive principle that structures the lives of humans, animals and plants as well as shapes our physical environment, defies representation as such, there are innumerable ways it takes shape, congeals and trickles into our perception. The initial quotation is extracted from a narration of the Indian choreographer Chandralekha (1928–2006) about her transgressing a ritual boundary ensuring that the central image of a public temple may only be touched by priests. She had rushed to the Great Lord of Time (Mahākāla, a form of Śiva) worshipped in the North Indian town of Ujjain and was rewarded with a memorable moment of spiritual delight.<sup>1</sup> She firmly believed that Time itself is embodied in the somewhat amorphous image that is regularly decorated with different faces of the god and she had consciously experienced an encounter with Time (as such, both based on inherited religious notions and on the background of modern-day critical thinking). The liminal moment of bliss was not in the least impaired by the fact that in the Indian tradition Time is conceived as a wrathful devourer.

In the present volume, various academic encounters with the representation and the visibility of Time in its broadest definition have been assembled. The majority of contributions are based on papers read during the international workshop *Concepts of Time and Their Visual and Material*

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<sup>1</sup> Beholding (Skt. *darśana*) and touching (Skt. *sparśa*) are the most common devotional interactions with a divine image in Hinduism.

*Aspects—Focus Asia* held at the Morphomata Center on 25–26 June 2010. The main focus is on South Asia, but, as we wished to expand on the geographical “catchment area”, most parts of Asia, except for Western Asia, are represented by a glimpse of their rich cultural heritage in the field of Time.

Time has many facets and so has its relationship with objects and images. Its perception and classification is clearly culturally determined and has become the topic of general and philosophical reflection and discourse in most parts of the world. In modern thinking informed by scientific research, the relativity of the space-time continuum has become a valid model, although it can only with difficulty be grasped by laypersons.<sup>2</sup> Cognitive thinking as well is stated to combine temporal and spatial perception.<sup>3</sup> However, it can be observed that in cultural practices Time has been treated as quite a distinct factor although its close linkage to Space has not been lost sight of. In the Indian tradition this outstanding role of Time may be due to an underlying concept of the priority of Time over Space that has been stated in a few passages of some ancient texts.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of research on Morphemes, as envisaged by the *Morphomata Center for Advanced Studies—Genesis, Dynamics and Mediality of Cultural Figurations*, our ultimate objective is to identify recurring or enduring images of Time (or any of its major aspects) that reveal a high semantic congruency with associated cultural-philosophical concepts.<sup>5</sup> In order to pave the way in this direction, we have considered various angles and facets of the overarching topic of Time. An extremely abridged overview of Asian concepts of Time and their visual aspects as well as reference to some selected previous publications will be given below.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Hawking & Penrose 1996, Carrier 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Roenneberg 2010: 306, n. 263, “The inner representations of Time-Space and Space-Space constantly work as a team” (author’s translation).

<sup>4</sup> E.g. *Atharvaveda* 19,53.5: “Time generated Heaven above and this vast Earth [...]”.

<sup>5</sup> An exemplary study on Kairos as a Morphome of Time has recently been published by Boschung (2011).

## ASIAN “IMAGES OF TIME”

In the Indian cultural tradition, a tendency towards the personification of Time<sup>6</sup> may be recognized, although Time has never reached the status of an independent deity. A singular reference to “*kālā*” in the *R̥gveda* has been interpreted as referring to the “right time” for the Vedic game of dice.<sup>7</sup> In other early literary strata, traces remain of a notion of Time as the highest principle.<sup>8</sup> However, subsequent development resulted in a markedly negative connotation, basically equating Time with Death.<sup>9</sup> The two main gods of devotional Hinduism, Viṣṇu and Śiva, are conceived as, respectively, embracing and embodying Time.

On the other hand, the faiths of Buddhism and Jainism, both basically “ascetic” religions, have maintained a philosophical approach towards Time that tends to dissolve it into its units and ultimately negate it, a tendency which is not altogether absent from Brahmanism/Hinduism as well. It may be postulated that in such cases, imagery relating to Time comes in a much more subtle guise (cf. the respective contributions to the present volume). Moreover, both faiths share a certain number of predecessors of the respective founder of their religion, Buddha and Mahāvīra, who are depicted in art. Such lineages of highly revered personages may be interpreted as conceptually and visually exploring the depths of Time.

The Indian inclination towards a personification of Time is not shared by other regions of Asia. Eastern Asia has developed quite a differentiated outlook on Time that does not draw upon personification. In some chronological systems, however, elements of Time take shape

<sup>6</sup> Skt. *kāla* (m.)—time has similar shades of meaning as in English and German; further: death, time of death; of dark colour, black. For an etymological study see Wessler 1995: 395–401. For an introduction to the topic of Time in India see Panikkar & Bäumer 1976, cf. also González-Reimann 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Falk 1986: 127.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Wessler 1995: 84–86.

<sup>9</sup> Death (Skt. *mṛtyu*, *māra*), however, has retained an identity of its own. Both Time and Death do not have a fixed iconography, but sometimes share attributes with Yama, God of Death. Plate 1 shows a rare depiction of Kāla/Time as a man of a dark complexion with a wrinkled face, his hair standing on end and his body and hairline covered by serpents and scorpions. The attribute in his right hand is a noose (*pāśa*).

in an animal or hybrid form. In addition, the use of chronograms in Southeast Asia is relevant in this context, whereby the digits forming a date are substituted by certain terms or indicated by an appropriate image (cf. two contributions in this volume). The latter practice is not widespread, however.

Regarding the island of Java in Southeast Asia, a unique textual-visual figuration of Time has been explored by Peter Pink,<sup>10</sup> a participant of the 2010 workshop. He had observed that a magic formula referred to as the *kālacakra* (Wheel of Time) *mantra* takes the form of a palindrome (thus unfolding a “magical” to-and-fro-movement), and it is arranged in a star-shaped pattern located on the breast of the demonic deity Kala (basically conforming to the Indian Kāla). A striking peculiarity of the indigenous time regime in Bali, Uku or Wariga<sup>11</sup> is the system of parallel weeks, only converging periodically, which result in a kind of multilayered and, therefore, elusive representation of Time.

Another image that is evoked in the Indian tradition, the Wheel of Time (Skt. *kālacakra*), shall briefly be dealt with. The (chariot) wheel as a conceptualisation of Time since *R̥gveda* 1.164<sup>12</sup> (ca. second half of the second millennium BCE) is so well-known that it has become a truism.<sup>13</sup> However, even this *Denkbild* or thought-image of Time has, most likely, not been conceived as strictly figurative, and it has competed with other dominant notions about circularity.<sup>14</sup> In art, different kinds of chariot wheels have been depicted, with some of them providing visual reference to elements of Time (cf. Mevissen in his volume, Figure 19). However, *kālacakra*, the formidable Wheel of Time, imagined to be ever-revolving in the realm of the God of Death, was most probably not intended to be pictorially revealed.

<sup>10</sup> Pink 1993 and 1996. Cf. also Bühnemann (1999: 314–320) on a related topic.

<sup>11</sup> Pink 1993.

<sup>12</sup> No mention of “*kālā*” is made, however.

<sup>13</sup> Malinar 2007: 1, “For many, Indian notions of time may evoke images of circles and wheels [...]”.

<sup>14</sup> Zin & Schlingloff 2007. The Buddhist notion of the *samsārācakra* (Wheel of Transmigration) of this in-depth study does not have a strictly temporal connotation. Other important instances are the Wheel of the *cakravartin*, a sovereign of the world, and the Buddhist Wheel of Law or Dharma, i.e. the Buddhist doctrine. A more recent development, Gandhi’s emblematic spinning wheel, has actually drawn on such earlier meanings, according to Brown (2010: 103–105).

In Jainism as well, the term *kālacakra* is known although it remains uncertain whether it is to be imagined in a concrete shape (cf. the contribution by Del Bontà). In Buddhism, a body of religious teachings has existed in Tibet since the eleventh century that is known as the Kālacakra system. Interestingly, the “Wheel of Time” is understood here both as a deity and a reference to everything that exists. The most well-known practice of this Tantric system is the painstaking performance of creating a sand mandala depicting a palace as the dwelling place of the deity.<sup>15</sup> In this rite, both the esoteric content of this practice and the “exoteric” perception of making an image literally from single grains of coloured sand seem to converge in what may be paraphrased as the mastery, and thus, overcoming of Time.

The high regard, or rather awe, people have for Time, the calculation of which is also of extreme import for the correct performance of practically every Indian ritual, may be deduced from the worship of a waterclock during a marriage ceremony. A standard publication on Hindu rites explicates: “On the day of marriage a Ghaṭi[kā] or waterclock (Clepsydra) is established with the verse, ‘Thou art the mouth of the (universal) machinery, created by Brahman in the beginning [...]’”.<sup>16</sup>

#### PREVIOUS STUDIES OF TIME AND TIME-RELATED IMAGERY

In the 1950s, the series of Eranos conferences held in Ascona, Switzerland first took up the topic of Time in a comparative, intercultural perspective, and these have been followed by subsequent similar attempts.<sup>17</sup> More recently, the millennium change inspired the *Comité International d’Histoire de l’Art* to devote its conference in the year 2000 to “Symbols of Time in the History of Art”.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> E.g. Bryant 1992: 177–231.

<sup>16</sup> Pandey 1969: 210. The author concedes that “this custom is not very popular”. On traditional Indian methods for measuring time, particularly in Buddhist monasteries, see Schopen 1998; cf. Falk 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Campbell 1958. For subsequent attempts at transcultural studies see Gardet 1976, Tiemersma & Oosterling 1996 and Schweidler 2004; for Time and Eternity as spaces for divine activity see Kratz & Spieckermann 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Heck & Lippincott 2002.



A few “Western” works on Time and Time in Art can be recommended,<sup>19</sup> as the various approaches and treatments of the topic provide material that could be unfolded in another, comparative and transcultural perspective. The—largely philosophical—classification of Time as well as the differentiation of practices relating to it are clearly called for. Krzysztof Pomian uses a fourfold model for an initial approach when he distinguishes between chronometry (Time measurement), chronology (determining certain points in Time), chronography (evaluation of events happening in Time), and chronosophy (reflecting on Time and realising its essence).<sup>20</sup>

In the field of anthropology, Alfred Gell’s multi-faceted study of Time is certainly a standard work.<sup>21</sup> It contains valuable basic considerations but does not develop approaches to the morphological outcomes of temporal representation. In contrast, taking his approach from the field of art history and archaeology, George Kubler has provided us with an important reflexion on what might be called a search for the temporal correlation of the shapes and morphological function of man-made things.<sup>22</sup>

In the Asian context,<sup>23</sup> it has often been said that ritual Time completely differs from ordinary societal Time. (Of course, this would also basically hold true for the liturgical and festival calendars of religions outside Asia.) As the art production, particularly in South, Southeast and Central Asia, is largely confined to the religious or spiritual sphere, this claim would call for closer attention in future research.

Studies on the topic of Time in India are not rare,<sup>24</sup> and a few of them have recently, to some extent, touched upon its bearing on art.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Pochat 1996, Brough 2000, Rawson & Rawson 2005, Le Poidevin 2007, Sick & Schöch 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Lecture delivered at Einstein Forum, Potsdam, on 15 June 2011. Cf. Pomian 1984.

<sup>21</sup> Gell 1992.

<sup>22</sup> Kubler 1962.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. van Schendel & Schulte Nordholt 2001, Huang & Zürcher 1995, Wang-Riese & Höllmann 2009 (for regions other than South Asia).

<sup>24</sup> Coomaraswamy 1947, Sharma 1974, Balslev 1983, Bäumer 1992, Balslev & Mohanty 1993, Vatsyayan 1996, Inden 1998, Clayton 2000, Good 2000, Einoo 2005 and Parasher-Sen 2006; for a recent identification of a local “Centre of Time” see Willis 2009: 10–78; specifically on Time in Buddhism see, e.g., Prasad 1991.

<sup>25</sup> Zimmer 1933, Sivaramamurti 1981. See also the relevant articles in Malinar 2007 and Patnaik 2009.

Two publications which could, in this respect, be regarded as precursors of our present volume have been edited by Angelika Malinar (*Time in India: Concepts and Practices*, 2007) and Priyadarshi Patnaik (*Time in Indian Cultures: Diverse Perspectives*, 2009).

Like the perception and classification of Time itself, the figurations that it evokes open up a vast field. Between the practical aspect of Time reckoning and the freest artistic expression lies a zone with many shades, from “portraits” of Time (Plate 1) and its accessory phenomena to secondary subjects like the depiction of historical events. Scenes from a sphere of “Non-time” likewise belong to the broad-range outlook we have conceived for this volume.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

This volume assembles articles on diverse figurations of Time throughout different periods and geographical locations within Asia. As said above, the coverage is not strictly comprehensive but has its centre of gravity or main focus in South Asia. In some cases, the explorations reach out to concepts of “Timelessness” or “Non-time” (Skt. *akāla*) as well as to the closely related dimension of Space, as quasi-expansions of the topic.

We start our volume with the stimulating tension that arises between the realm of *Time* and its speculative counterpart, *Non-time*. EUGEN CIURTIN explores the temporal significance of earthquakes narrated in the earliest accounts of the Buddha’s Vita. While depictions of these terrifying and sublime as well as paradoxically timeless events remain extremely rare, the topos itself is a powerful simile of the Buddha and his teachings and, quite literally, his impact on this world. ROBERT J. DEL BONTÀ has surveyed the Jaina outlook on Time and its implications on the associated religious imagery. He traces the mythical layout of the world and the double concept of Time and Non-time in Jainism and its subtle visual expression.

The thematic bracket of *Point in Time versus Course of Time* has been conceived somewhat spaceously, in order to accommodate various elements of Time and their tangible manifestations. It is implied that an isolated point in Time, as well as other elements of Time, bears the seed or essence of Time’s flow. GERD J.R. MEVISSEN presents a carefully collected corpus of images of astral deities and related images in India. Their general characteristic is that of anthropomorphism, but man-animal composites and theriomorphic images also exist. These astral phenomena

clearly signifying elements of Time reveal a certain variability in their modes of representation or visual contexts. RYŌSUKE ŌHASHI contributes a stunning example of later Japanese Buddhist philosophy that leads to an experience of the shape of Time. He refers to Dōgen's apt wording that facilitates an intuitive grasp of Time's work and effect. E.P. WIERINGA discusses a pivotal monument, the early Javanese mosque at Demak, and its enigmatic turtle chronogram. His contribution thoroughly explores what may be called the culturally dense field of a transition period, when the starting point of a new era is marked by a motif that perpetuates certain elements of the past. BÉLA KELÉNYI shares significant examples of the Tibetan cult of prayer flags from Mongolia that assemble various personifications of particular years and other calendrical and astrological elements. These representations function in the context of invocation and appeasement that has resulted in the magnificently rich Tibetan imagery incorporating Chinese elements.

Under the rubric of *Cyclic Time*, KARL-HEINZ GOLZIO explains some basic facts of the calendar systems in India and (Mainland) Southeast Asia. Of particular interest is the substitution of numbers in historical dates with certain terms evoking them according to a largely standardized system. JOACHIM K. BAUTZE introduces a rare case in the form of a series of miniature paintings dating from the early nineteenth century showing elaborate ritual arrangements of the deities of the Vallabhācārya sect of Hinduism. The minutely rendered ritual decorations of the deities must have evoked a specific point in the ritual year and its cyclic repetition in the initiated onlooker.

Two specific cases of culturally determined renderings of Time in its entirety conclude our volume in the form of an image, first, literary and second, predominantly material, as *Images of Time*. CHRISTOPH EMMRICH's article opens up a world of vividly visual word icons that drastically elaborate the vastness of Time and the minuteness of the human lifespan. These roughly 2000-year-old rhetorical figures of instruction remain amazingly valid and thus, so to speak, timeless in and of themselves. Finally, according to CORINNA WESSELS-MEVISSSEN, the original meaning and content of Śiva Naṭarāja, the famous dancing form of one of the main gods of Hinduism and generally regarded as closely Time-related, has not been sufficiently understood as yet. Her contribution here is an attempt to fill this gap by highlighting a few hitherto neglected aspects encoded in this icon.

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## TIME VERSUS NON-TIME

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EUGEN CIURTIN

### **‘THUS HAVE I QUAKED’: THE *TEMPO* OF THE BUDDHA’S VITA AND THE EARLIEST BUDDHIST FABRIC OF TIMELESSNESS** (The Buddha’s Earthquakes II)

For Ruxandra’s life, as she always knew better than me to repeat  
“daß auch ich mich halten würde, wenn alles mich sinken läßt”  
(“that I too would hold up when everything else lets me down”).

Heinrich von Kleist, Letter of 16 November 1800 to his fiancée Wilhelmine  
von Zenge (*Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*. Ed. Helmut Sembdner. München:  
Carl Hanser, 1984, vol. 2: 593)

#### 1. THE BUDDHIST PHYSIOGNOMY OF NUNC STANS & NUNC TREMENS

For the last two centuries of intense multilingual research, the Buddha’s Vita has been one of the ultimate concerns in Buddhist Studies as well as in the study of South Asian and eventually worldwide comparative religions. Even leaving aside all compulsory Western exegesis, its indispensable bibliography would immediately fill a hefty book-length manuscript, which, however, has been absorbed by heart by many a worker harvesting in this gigantic and hard to penetrate field always in stern need of reading anew, of continuously adjusting much, and sometimes hopefully also of achieving a few new and better results. The scope of the present contribution is to ascertain for the first time the responsibility highlighted by the systematic *Bhūmicālasutta* “Sutta of Earthquakes” of the *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* (*Dīgha-Nikāya* [hereafter *DN*] 16 *ad DN* II 107–109) in defining the

Buddha's Vita.<sup>1</sup> Its immediate results will then be tested as new evidence for the biographical process as described in the chief canonical texts of several Buddhist traditions, with a focus on distinct representations and uses of time,<sup>2</sup> often seen as overlapping: the Vita itself as rigorously inscribed time in association with the Buddhist response to *samsāra*; the later six of the *sutta*'s canonical eight earthquakes as paramount pointers of a biographical *tempo*; the earthquakes as means and result in a fabric of timelessness.

Being aware of the higher philological, historical and doctrinal complexity of these things Buddhist, as they provide advanced evidence of interconnectedness at the core of Buddhist Asia for well over two millennia, an initial watchful step would necessarily be to ask if one might present something new indeed in such ultimate concerns. When rereading the masters of Buddhist Studies, one may truthfully expect nothing new in certain regards, which may in turn be a fitting tribute to their masterful acumen and tremendous labour. What, how or why would one change e.g. some indeed old statements of Eugène Burnouf or Étienne Lamotte? Particularly relevant for the present paper is one of the sometimes overlooked statements as expressed in the latter's, an immediate and impeccable review of Alfred Foucher's *Vie du Bouddha* (1949), the truest culmination of a long lifetime journey: "[e]n définitive, l'ouvrage de M. Foucher n'est pas et ne pouvait pas être une véritable biographie du Buddha, car l'état des sources ne s'y prête pas. Mais M. Foucher a rétabli dans sa pureté et sa simplicité primitive la vérité traditionnelle relative

<sup>1</sup> In a different way than in other parts of a long-term study, in this contribution we will pay primary attention not to the philological and doctrinal problems in the earliest Indic texts on earthquakes, e.g. the constitution and significance of the "Sutra of earthquakes"—neither on *when* it might have been composed, agglutinated, and spread, nor on *what* it claims—but rather we will grant preference for a moment mostly *how* it really *functions*: how it charts the realms and landscape of time, and what it substantially provides for the Buddha's biography, in a wealth of synoptic Indic texts.

<sup>2</sup> General introductions to the various uses and representations of time in ancient India are Filliozat 1969; Hoch 1991; Prasad 1991; Bhate 1992; Chattopadhyay 1992; Rospatt 1995; Schopen 1998; Vetter 1999; Karunaratne 1999; Brahmachari & Basu 2001; and Naudou 2004. For (the timing of) numinous events and agency, still useful are Eliade 1951/1952 and Bareau 1957 and 1981; but Wayman 1969/1990 and 1965 are at times highly speculative. On types of right/fitting/auspicious time, especially as *kṣaṇa*, see more recently Emmrich 1996, Ciurtin 1997 and 2004b, as well as Emmrich forthcoming.

à la vie du Buddha. Cette vérité traditionnelle contient plus de valeur psychologique, voire même de réalité objective, que la vérité historique qui n'est trop souvent que 'la conjecture sur laquelle les chercheurs de bonne foi ont fini par tomber d'accord'".<sup>3</sup> Recovering the equilibrium of Burnouf's message one century after, and just before launching a second, still unsurpassed *History of Indian Buddhism*, Lamotte was indeed aware of how this sharp opposition between proponents of historicizing vs. mythological readings of the Buddha's Vita may be finally disentangled by a more proficient and less partisan analysis, without intruding a then-fashionable and afterwards outmoded reading more properly belonging to the history of scholarship in the West, but rather closely following the insights as well as the qualms of Indic Buddhist sources themselves.

For our "Sūtra of earthquakes", the main canonical texts in Indic languages (in Pāli and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit) read:<sup>4</sup>

"When one who is intent on awakening falls from the company of the Contented Gods and mindfully and fully aware descends into his mother's womb (Pā. *mātukucchiṃ okkamati*; Skt. *mātuḥ kuṣāv avakrāmati*), then the earth is disturbed, it shakes, shudders, and quakes (Pā: *kamṇati saṅkamṇati sampakamṇati sampavedhati*; Skt. *mahāpṛthivīcāla*). This is the third reason and cause. Again, when one who is intent on awakening mindfully and with full awareness leaves his mother's womb (Pā. *mātukucchismā nikkhamati*; Skt. [*mātuḥ ku*] *kṣer niṣkrāmati*), then the earth is disturbed, it shakes, shudders, and quakes. This is the fourth reason and cause. Again, when the Tathāgata awakens to the unsurpassed complete awakening (Pā. *anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambujjhati*; Skt. *anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbo[dhim adhigacchati]*), then the earth is disturbed, it shakes, shudders, and quakes. This is the fifth reason and cause. Again, when the Tathāgata turns the unsurpassed wheel of Truth (Pā. *anuttaraṃ dhammacakkaṃ pavatteti*; Skt. *dvādaśākāraṃ dhārmyaṃ dharmacakraṃ pravartayati*), then the earth is disturbed, it shakes, shudders, and quakes. This is the sixth reason and cause. Again, when the Tathāgata mindfully

<sup>3</sup> Lamotte 1949: 256. One can fully agree with Silk (2003: 872) in this need to remember "the profound psychological insight of those ancient masters who composed or compiled it".

<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of the first two causes (earthquakes as produced for proto-geological reasons or as manifested by ascetics, brahmins, and gods), see Ciurtin 2009: 65–71.

and with full awareness gives up the force of life (Pā. *āyusankhāraṃ ossajjati*; Skt. *jīvitasaṃskārān adhiṣṭhāyāyusāṃskā[rān utsṛjati]*), then the earth is disturbed, it shakes, shudders, and quakes. This is the seventh reason and cause. Again, when the Tathāgata attains nibbana by means of the nibbana that is without any remnant of attachment (Pā. *anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā parinibbāyati*; Skt. *ānu[padhiṣeṣe nirvā]ṇadhātau parinirvāṇaṃ bhaviṣy[ati]*), then the earth is disturbed, it shakes, shudders, and quakes. This is the eighth reason and cause”<sup>5</sup> DN II 108–109, transl. by Gethin 2008: 61–62; *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (hereafter *MPNS*) 17.12–22, in Waldschmidt 1950–1951: 2.214–217.

## 2. TOWARDS THE INSIDE: FROM THE BUDDHA’S SEISMIC WEB TO HIS AURAL ‘CATALOGUE OF EARTHQUAKES’

Buddhist authors of all times, geography or affiliation have continuously provided most impressive proofs of fairly consecutive thinking. As Buddhaghosa mentions these eight earthquakes, he adds “here ‘these’ (*ime*) means pointing to examples”<sup>6</sup>. The present task would accordingly be to put forward a more updated *curriculum vitae* articulated by earthquakes, therefore rather a *Curriculum terrae motus* or *succussionis* for the Buddha’s Vita. This may be done accurately in a twofold way, combining—as again recommended by Buddhist canonical texts, e.g. in the description of the very last moment of the Buddha’s life before entering into *nirvāṇa*—the *anuloma cum pratiloma* (‘with’ vs. ‘against the grain’) technique.<sup>7</sup> We will

<sup>5</sup> In order to better situate such exploits of the Buddha’s agency, see Lamotte 1944–1980: 1.473–474 and 477; 4.2202–2206 (on the procedures of controlling the element ‘earth’); 5.2302 and 2251; Lamotte 1965/1998/2003: 216; Gómez 1977; Hara 1980, 1989/1994 and 2001; Wijesekera [1990] 1993; Lopez Jr. 2005; Bollée 2005 [2006]; Hara 2009.

<sup>6</sup> An 2003: 101 cum n. 2; *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī-purāṇa-tīkā* II 201,1–6; Ciurtin 2009: 71.

<sup>7</sup> Entering the first *dhyāna* (meditation) and then progressively going to the fourth, then covering the nine *samāpattis* ‘concentrations’ first in due order and secondly in reverse order, and then *back again* to the first *dhyāna* was misleadingly not recognized as belonging to an *anulomapratiloma* technique correlating the process of recollecting previous births just during the *bodhi*-night (on which see now Collins 2009: 513–517). There is a need for a newer perspective on earlier uses of *anulomapratiloma*, respectful of its etymology (sophisticated constructions with flexible prefixes based on the simple *loma* ‘hair’).

first chronologically traverse the sources *anuloman* and then we will collect their morphology and look through the result *p[r]atiloman*. As far as we know, modern scholars have never scheduled all these lists comprehensively and integrally. They have only tentatively ordered what they have gathered from distinct sources as synoptically confirmed episodes.<sup>8</sup> However, relevant for us is that—comforted by such a synoptic of all traditions and by all traditional criteria of authenticity—the Buddha already performed the desired painstaking task himself. The connected passages in Buddhist writings are overabundant. We have in the interim identified more than two hundred independent texts (up to Buddhaghosa) mentioning earthquakes. Careful readers will also pay attention to or supply the school affiliation of every excerpted text, yet lack of space prevents us from mentioning each of them.

The rationale of clarity and concision invites us to offer here (a) a sixfold table with indications of earthquakes for every occurrence of earthquakes as recounted in the *sutta* (*anuloma*); (b) then (*pratiloma*) a fourfold comparative table of Indic sources indicating similar texts which on the contrary only supply *some* such earthquakes, subsequently charted in *diminuendo*; analogous occurrences of *single* earthquakes which intrude in such or other texts with a seismic biographical *hapax* in a more or less erratic *staccato*, even so being recurrent fragments, and hence akin to all the other forefront pointers of biography; and, finally, sources akin to the standard ones which have *no* mention of earthquakes but do

<sup>8</sup> The model provided by Foucher 1908 seems to us still helpful, with its good Indian sorting into 64 episodes, which nonetheless appear today as fewer than expected. One may also compare his provisional listing with the accumulation of research one century later, part of which was surely mastered by his own later work; see mostly the arrangement by cycles and episodes in Foucher 1949. In her review of 1909 (see bibliography, Foucher 1908), Ridding wrote: “M. Foucher, with the tact and instinct of a true scholar, has seen that in two short passages (*Divyāvadāna*, xxvii, 389–94, and *Mahāvamsa*, xxx, 78–87) lies the essence of the Buddha’s life, and that they form, as he hopes they may do, ‘une amorce des futures synoptiques du Buddha.’” There is, however, no acceptance at present that the very two late works would contain ‘the essence of the Buddha’s life’. More recently, synoptic tables were offered by Strong 2001/2006: 26–29 and 133 (covering the whole biography), and by Silk 2003: 870 and *passim* (for the ‘paradox’ of omniscience/nescience). A collective *panopticum* of all available sources was started in 1999 by Chūō Academic Research Institute of the Tōyō University (Tokyo), see Durt 2010: 163.

claim biographic relevance, and so are examples of patent hiatus. It goes without saying the following tables are by no means exhaustive: They are only representative for the Indic sources.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, let us mention that besides these tables there are quite a few references to the propagation of earthquakes in instances neither involving the Buddha, nor describing moments similar to those occurring in his Vita.

#### THE CAUSES AND TIMES OF EARTHQUAKES IN THE BUDDHA'S VITA

Q = earthquake.

Q<sub>1</sub> = conception; Q<sub>2</sub> = birth; Q<sub>3</sub> = *bodhi* (Awakening); Q<sub>4</sub> = First predication; Q<sub>5</sub> = Cāpāla-caitya; Q<sub>6</sub> = *nirvāṇa*.

#### TABLE 1: EARTHQUAKE 1

1.) Pā. *DN 16 ad Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* 108, transl. in Walshe 1987/1995: 248; Gethin 2008: 61. 2.) Skt. *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 212–218 Waldschmidt. 3.) Pā. *DN 14 Mahāpadāna-sutta* II.12, transl. Walshe 1987/1995: 203. 4.) Skt. *Mahāvadāna-sūtra* 4a1–3 in Waldschmidt 1953–1956 and Fukita 2003: 52, l. 7. 5.) Pā. *Majjhima-Nikāya* (hereafter *MN*) 123 *ad Acchariyabbhutadhamma-sutta* III.118, transl. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 1995/2001: 980. 6.) Pā. *Anguttara-Nikāya* [hereafter *AN*] IV.308. 7.) Skt. Frag. S 360 f. 36 R<sub>2</sub>, in Waldschmidt 1950: 20. 8.) Skt. *Lalitavistara* VII *ad* 76–117 Lefmann. 9.) Tib. *Lalitavistara* V, transl. Foucaux 1860: 59. 10.) BHS *Mahāvastu* I.206, II.10, II.298 Senart, transl. in Jones 1949–1956: 1.164; 2.9; 2.279. 11.) Chin. *T 15c–16d, 165a–b, 180c–181a, 191c–192a*. 12.) Chin. *Madhyamāgama* 32 (*T 1 469c–471c*). 13.) Chin. *Ekottarikāgama* 42.5 (*T 125, 753c11–754a11*). 14.) Pā. *Nidānakathā* 52 Fausbøll, transl. Rhys Davids: 66. 15.) *Saṅghabhedavastu* 41 Gnoli. 16.) *Jinacarita* v. 98. 17.) *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* 1.92,16–97,8.

#### TABLE 2: EARTHQUAKE 2

1.) Pā. *DN 16 ad Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* 108. 2.) Skt. *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 212–218 Waldschmidt. 3.) Pā. *MN 123 ad Acchariyabbhutadhamma-sutta* III.124,

<sup>9</sup> Due to the limitations of space, some other relevant texts including all the six biographic earthquakes are not mentioned. Concordances in Minh Chau 1964/1991; Warder 1970/2000; Nakamura 1980/2007; Hirakawa 1990/2007; Grey 2000. For a German translation of a sixfold cluster in the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* translated by Buddhayaśas (early fourth century CE), see Weller 1939–1940: 80–84 / 1987: 746–751.

transl. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 1995/2001: 983. 4.) Pā. *DN 14 Mahāpadāna-sutta* II.15, transl. Walshe 1987/1995: 205. 5.) Skt. *Mahāvadāna-sūtra* 5a1–3 in Waldschmidt 1953–1956 and Fukita 2003: 62 l. 4. 6.) Pā. *AN IV.308*. 7.) Skt. Frag. S 360 f. 36 R<sub>2</sub>, in Waldschmidt 1950: 20. 8.) Skt. *Lalitavistara* VII *ad* 76–117 Lefmann. 9.) Tib. *Lalitavistara* VII, transl. Foucaux 1860: 73–105. 10.) BHS *Mahāvastu* I.222, II.25, II.299 Senart; transl. in Jones 1949–1956: 1.177; 2.21; 2.280. 11.) Chin. *T 15c–16d, 165a–b, 180c–181a, 191c–192a*. 12.) Chin. *Madhyamāgama* 32 (*T 1 469c–471c*). 13.) Chin. *Ekottarikāgama* 42.5 (*T 125, 753c11–754a11*). 14.) Skt./Chin./Tib. Aśvagoṣa, *Buddhacarita* I.21, transl. in Johnston 1936–1937/2004: 6; Olivelle 2008: 4; Willemen 2009: 5. 15.) Pā. *Nidānakathā* 52 Fausbøll, transl. Rhys Davids: 66.

#### TABLE 3: EARTHQUAKE 3

(Attack by Māra and response of *mahāpṛthivī* included)

1.) Pā. *DN 16 ad Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* 108. 2.) Pā. *MN 123 ad* III 118–124. 3.) Skt. *Lalitavistara* XXI *ad* 318–319 Lefmann. 4.) Tib. *Lalitavistara* XXI, transl. in Foucaux 1860: 326. 5.) BHS *Mahāvastu* I.229, II.343 Senart; transl. in Jones 1949–1956: 1.185, 2.313. 6.) Skt./Chin./Tib. Aśvagoṣa, *Buddhacarita* XIII.29–30, transl. in Johnston 1936–1937/2004: 194; Olivelle 2008: 383; XIII.32 in Willemen 2009: 95. 7.) Pā. *Nidānakathā* 71–75 Fausbøll, transl. Rhys Davids: 96–101. 8.) *Jinālaṅkāra* vv. 119–143.

*Continued in*

1.) Pā. *DN 16 ad Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* 108. 2.) Skt. *Lalitavistara* XXII *ad* 352 Lefmann. 3.) Tib. *Lalitavistara* XXII, transl. in Foucaux 1860: 337–338. 4.) BHS *Mahāvastu* II.283–286 Senart, transl. in Jones 1949–1956: 2.264–268. 5.) Chin./Tib. Aśvagoṣa, *Buddhacarita* XIV.87, transl. in Johnston 1936–1937/2004: 213; XIV.52 in Willemen 2009: 103. 6.) Pā. *Nidānakathā* 75–76 Fausbøll, transl. Rhys Davids: 101–104.

#### TABLE 4: EARTHQUAKE 4

1.) Pā. *DN 16 ad Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* 108. 2.) Pā. *Mahāvagga* I.6.29–31. Horner: 17–18. 3.) Skt. *Lalitavistara* XXVI *ad* 407 sq. Lefmann. 4.) Tib. *Lalitavistara* XXVI, transl. in Foucaux 1860: 384–385. 5.) BHS *Mahāvastu* III.334, III.341–342 Senart, transl. in Jones 1949–1956: 3.327, 3.335–336. 6.) Pā. *Nidānakathā* 81–82 Fausbøll, transl. Rhys Davids: 112–113. 7.) *Jinacarita* vv. 291–293.

#### TABLE 5: EARTHQUAKE 5

1.) Pā. *DN 16 ad Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* 108. 2.) *Divyāvadāna* XVII.203 Cowell & Neil [see Table 10], transl. in Rotman 2008: 337–343. 3.) Chin./Tib. Aśvagoṣa, *Buddhacarita* XXIII.71–74 & XXIV.1–3, transl. in Johnston 1936–1937/2004, Part 3: 76; XXIII.56 & XXIV.1–2, transl. in Willemen 2009: 165 and 167.





To further constrict the prior tableau, we thus obtain three separate nuclei of biographic earthquakes:

CLUSTER 1: *foetal* vita—at both ends (conception *cum* birth; difference: ten lunar months by all early accounts);

CLUSTER 2: *bodhi* vita—at both ends (finalising Awakening *cum* starting predication; difference: four to seven weeks by a variety of accounts);

CLUSTER 3: *parinirvāṇa* vita—at both ends (announcing its entering *cum* the very entering into *nirvāṇa*; difference: three months by *all* accounts; as *āyusāṅkhāraṃ ossaji* is operated during an afternoon and *nirvāṇa* is again placed at dawn, twelve more hours must be added here).

First, the *sūtra* is clearly opting for a combination of causes that is far from erratic. It is worth noting that by no means all permutations are possible, however, they are not extant. The formation of the actual lists (as well as their extraction through permutation) is logical: There is no Q1 without Q2 and no Q4 without Q3. In fact Buddhaghosa has already catalogued four of the six earthquakes by pairs, as manifested “through the effulgence of merit” (*puññatejēna*) (Q1+Q2), or “through natural compassion/lamenting” (*kāruṇṇā-sabhāvena/ārodanēna*) (Q5+Q6).<sup>10</sup> Note also the ‘spatial’ repartition of causes and moments (adopting for a moment the valuable old Latin seismic terminology): The Buddha is relating on the spot the reasons for a *terrae motus domesticus* (‘local’; noteworthy: reportedly felt by Ānanda only); he announces a *terrae motus vicinus* (the very last); he catalogues the precedent four as *terrae motus remotus*, the very first being a *coeli motus* rather.<sup>11</sup> In terms of doctrinal Theravāda history, we should assume a passage of time between the formation and the oral transmission of the core *sutta* with fewer than eight causes, as attested by parallel Chinese, later Sanskrit, Tibetan and even medieval Pāli sources, and the closing down of this first Nikāya, with Aṅguttara mentioning earthquakes only among its “eights”. Przyłuski, Waldschmidt, Frauwallner and Bareau<sup>12</sup> are still the most helpful as they were the first

<sup>10</sup> An 2003: 101, Ciurtin 2009: 71.

<sup>11</sup> On the earth of earthquakes and their universalized features in several and very different sources, see Ciurtin 2009: 64–69.

<sup>12</sup> For Przyłuski or Frauwallner, the ‘Sutta of earthquakes’ was an intricate, but episodic concern; on the contrary, for Waldschmidt and for Bareau this covers larger spans of their works, with sometimes different approaches and results (chronological references *infra*). Nevertheless, it may be noted that strangely the last three almost never referred to the results of any others;

scholars who saw how and tried to explain why the Chinese and Sanskrit *MPNS* very anomalously include both a list with eight earthquakes and a list with only three in the same text, obviously requiring but not receiving in due time an additional proofreading. Dutiful comparative reading may well add something. In an Avadāna which deserves to be coined as “Bhūmicālāvadāna” (*Divyāvadāna* XVII = *Māndhātāvadāna* 200–210), there are so manifold interpolations in and outside the presentation of the Catalogue<sup>13</sup> that what was positioned firstly as taking place at the shrine of Cāpāla during an early *afternoon* is greatly expanded. Ānanda will get back to the Buddha only in the evening!

### 3. HANDLINGS OF ILLUSIVE TEXT: FRAUWALLNER’S *SKANDHAKA*

Impossible to repel at this point is the hypothesis of a lost original and comprehensive *Ur-Skandhaka* (lit. ‘mass, multitude’; divided into *Mahāvagga* and the *Cullavagga* of the Vinaya), advanced by Erich Frauwallner (1898–1974) in his prominent book of 1956. He compared there the Pāli *Khandhaka* against the background of all the six extant *Vinayas*. The ‘author’ of this ‘*Skandhaka*’, who lived according to Frauwallner one century after the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* in Magadha (if not, in disguise, one decade after World War II in Vienna), is in his reconstruction the singular mastermind of the re-foundation of everything, or almost everything, relating to the Buddha’s biography. According again to Frauwallner, “[i]n this [*MPNS*] text a particular attention is deserved by the sermon of the Buddha on the causes of earthquake, *because* it has been handed down also elsewhere”.<sup>14</sup> Frauwallner’s hypothesis regarding the existence, content, and extent of an “old *Skandhaka*” as the landmark of the very “beginnings of Buddhist literature” is too bold and was subsequently too influential to be left unexamined here. His suppositions argued that “in course of time parts broke away from this assumed *Ur-Khandhaka*, such as a text corresponding to the Mahāparinibbānasuttanta of the Dīghanikāya, having stood at

and for Bareau (especially in his *opus magnum*, 1963–1995), to refer only to the texts themselves was a rather general method from 1950 to 1993.

<sup>13</sup> A most scrupulous philological analysis was recently offered by Hiraoka 1998, 2009 (complementing his Japanese translation and study of *Divyāvadāna*, Tokyo, 2007, 2 vols.) and, as a critique of Rotman 2008, Hiraoka 2011 (additional Chinese sources: 238–239; see also 266).

<sup>14</sup> Frauwallner 1956: 157 (italics added).

its end originally”,<sup>15</sup> and the far-reaching section of this text is precisely the Buddha’s ‘Catalogue of earthquakes’.

Contrary for instance to contemporary methodological attitude, Frauwallner’s contextual sensitivity appears to be missing here. Starting to chart philological solutions for a probable beginning, accretion, splitting and actually any other form of evolution or change in a major religious text on the fringe of its aural transmission, he undeservedly discards every concern for the very content of his backward-looking *bricolage*. The *Bhūmicālasutta* becomes then a *sutta* full of names, numbers and narrative knots—but is sternly scrubbed clean of earthquakes. It even looks like a text which, after his expert analysis, instead of earthquakes, speaks say of rain of *mandāra* flowers, or displays of rays, or any other ‘miraculous’ eightfold events, which especially in the earliest texts are *almost always subsidiary* to earthquakes<sup>16</sup> and as such they are *never* numbered and grouped, nor systematically analysed in *any* canonical Buddhist text whatsoever. Bearing the final title “The biography of the Buddha and the beginnings of the Buddhist church history”, these ten (pp. 155–164) full philological pages of dense verve were chiefly not enough to read one single earthquake under *bhūmicāla*. He was unable to concede a “Sutta of Earthquakes” may finally speak about earthquakes indeed. Frauwallner

<sup>15</sup> Hinüber 1996/2001/2008, §32: 17.

<sup>16</sup> As was aptly observed by Strong regarding the *Nidānakathā*, “the earthquake and the great radiance are just the first of thirty-two portents that are said to manifest themselves at the time of the Buddha’s birth (and also of his conception)” (Strong 2001/2006: 53). We were able to detect inversion (light explosions before quakings) only in texts several centuries older (as currently and approximately dated) than the present ones. However, recent research rather ignores what may already be seen as a principle of organisation in narrating ‘miracles’ at least: Even in lists with thirty-two *portenta*, earthquakes are always mentioned before light, and are moreover always mentioned at the top of this and of course lesser lists, without forgetting that perhaps the older ones are those mentioning earthquakes exclusively. See e.g. Weber 2002: 80–83, with further observations in the reviews by Ciurtin, *Bulletin d’Études Indiennes* 21 (2003): 317–323; Hinüber, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 50 (2006): 213–214; Roesler, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 51 (2008), no. 1: 23–27 (especially 25–26). Bareau 1974: 203, Anālayo 2010: 28–30 and 35 n. 59 and Anālayo 2011, vol. 2: 702–705, n. 93 (on *MN* 123) adduce several parallels to earthquakes with/after light(ning). Perhaps this variation belongs to the classical influence of Buddhist art representations, much adept in indicating *prabhā* (effulgence) rather than *bhūmicāla*.

has gone as far as to keenly and perhaps very prematurely endorse an alleged historicity of an earthquake occurring during the Buddha’s lifetime, which would therefore be an outer geological seism, not one of the *sutta* itself.<sup>17</sup> He was on the contrary not willing at all to ask what *bhūmicāla* had meant (nor *āyusañkhāra* ‘the vital compositions’, nor *ossaji*—for sure one of the most difficult *cruces* and less understood words in the Buddhist texts,<sup>18</sup> nor the biographical repartition of causes or their relation with each of the first two, etc.) for the very texts he had stunningly read. Like many other Buddhist scholars indeed, Frauwallner reminds us of Frederic the Great who—pompously adapting an inheritance of theodicy—supremely denied the existence as well as the very mentioning of earthquakes in his Prussia, which was shocked by the aftermath of Lisbon’s 1755 *mahābhūmicāla*. Several newspapers then spreading the news and discussing the ensuing earthquakes (e.g. in Magdeburg and Halle) were banned accordingly by imperial decree, and everyone willing to report on even the slight earthquake felt on 18 February 1756 was menaced with immediate incarceration.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> This was tacitly refined by Vetter 1988: xiv–xv: “[w]hat seems to be a reliable report is that shortly before the Buddha’s death an earthquake took place and it is possible that the Buddha explained this as an omen of his imminent decease. According to the *Skandhaka*, this earthquake was caused by the Buddha’s decision to finally enter nirvana. Afterwards every [sic] important event in the life of the Buddha is connected with an earthquake. This is only an example of the process of adaptation”. And this very adaptation, this time outside greater India, had the strongest expression in some of the earliest Chinese Buddhist sources, where “dates were created by relating such events in the life-story of the Buddha as the earthquakes mentioned in various texts to phenomena found in Chinese records” (Cousins 1996: 57 / 2005: 105). More on these hypotheses in Ciurtin 2009: 70 as well as in a forthcoming study.

<sup>18</sup> Parts of its difficulty are described by Jaini 1958/2001. Furthermore, a Prakrit inscription in Brāhmī script from the Amarāvati pillar (second century BCE), fortunately discovered on the sculpted steles representing scenes from the Buddha’s Vita very close to *MPNS* but neglected by its modern scholars, reads: *cāpala-cetiye māro yācate oṣaṭh-iti*, which Skilling translates: “At Cāpala Shrine Māra requests ‘the [Blessed One] to relinquish [his life]’” (2009a: 69–70).

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of Frederic the Great’s act with wider incidences in a comparative history of religions, see Ciurtin 2007: 21–22, centred in Kleist’s *Erdbeben in Chili* and referring also to Quenet 2005: 7–10 and *passim* (who starts an outstanding discussion with *Hallische Zeitungen* and *Magdeburgische privilegierte Zeitung* of the same week).

Further scrutiny seems necessary, since almost no supporters nor critics of Frauwallner's thesis mentioned a fairly basic fact, viz. the supposedly original *Skandhaka* as a work fully designed, completed and consecrated by a single, hence so singular person.<sup>20</sup> Always and everywhere in the Buddhist world, when firm proofs of the earliest global physiology of textual canonization come to light, commentarial traditions, arrangement, and translation across Asia, we have met a collective, and precisely not a single-handed work, to say nothing about its eventual individualistic acumen. Grand 'ideas and events' like the *saṅgītis*,<sup>21</sup> monastic teams of all types (to start with the diverse and sometimes colliding lineages of *bhāṇakas*), webs of pilgrimage and patronage, *refutationes*, *disputationes* and *retractationes* repeatedly blended in the *accommodatio* of the greatest *śāstras*, communal storage of the *buddhavacana* (what has been said by the Buddha) and widely reciprocal intermingling of borrowings, committees and indeed sometimes even key trans-regional and trans-doctrinal congresses dominate the scenery. That is to say—*pace* Frauwallner—not an endearing Montaigne-like library tower with his single perspicacious owner (all too often a male) apt to adopt the multifarious inheritance of a whole religious tradition, and then ready, by pouring on personal gleanings according to an unidentified graph, to switch the most vital of its parts in such a way that it disfigures its previous shape.<sup>22</sup> Until, of course, someone else came from a similar tower endowed

<sup>20</sup> With of course noted exceptions: Hinüber 1996/2001/2008, §33: 18: “the redactor(s)”; or §37: 20: “the author(s)”.

<sup>21</sup> See Hallisey 1991/1992/2005.

<sup>22</sup> A full-fledged comparison of Western and early Chinese techniques of translation from Indic sources was recently and splendidly offered by Bingenheimer 2010: esp. 26 sq., who reminds us that “[t]he largest translation projects in human history took place in China and Tibet”, mostly during the first millennium CE. He also aptly notes the ideal of a single-author work only to eventually dismiss it as obsolete, as it is charged with an overly provincial gist (Jerome as ‘patron saint of translators’; or Western Renaissance proto-philology), largely contradicted in pre-modern Buddhist Asia. Bingenheimer offers a discussion of a sixth century Chinese painting by Yang Zihua of the Northern Qi, just representing the activity of “Collating Texts” portrayed by a hall of eleven scholars working together without any distinctive hierarchy. All this, as well as all we know about the contemporary monastery-university Nālandā (before its devastation by Muslim invaders at the end of the twelfth century), are well ahead of the later birth and practices of Western university and textual techniques, and they cannot as such support anything of the perplexing portrait of Frauwallner's ‘*Skandhaka*'s

with a similar, again rather *ācārya-muṣṭi* (“teacher's [closed] fist”)-like learning, and single-handedly saw, organized and ‘repaired’ everything anew, with correspondingly inscrutable results. An imaginary tale which craftily fuses mainly silences, Frauwallner's ‘*Skandhaka* hypothesis’ was indeed influential but rests today for the most part as an impressive wild guess.

Similarly, it seems more appropriate to us to work out some of these implications, if the “*Skandhaka*'s author”'s veracity is very much in doubt. “As in the Suttavibhaṅga, in the Khandhaka, too, texts are found which have been taken over from the earlier Suttapiṭaka. [...] These parallel texts, which still need detailed investigation are as important for the relative dating of texts as for the structure of the single chapters of the Khandhaka.”<sup>23</sup> As Oskar von Hinüber again writes, “this view of Frauwallner was criticized almost at once by Lamotte, who rightly maintains that the different Vinayas grew into different directions” (1996/2001/2008: 17), and Hubert Durt, Lamotte's main disciple, echoed this reasoning recently (2010: 163, on which see *infra*). Perhaps Lamotte's early critique is to be seen as related to his mentor Foucher's *Vie du Bouddha*; he was, however, followed by Heinz Bechert and by Gregory Schopen, who in turn argues not for a chronological stratification of the *Vinayas*, but for a stronger regional diversity in their composition.

A chronological survey of secondary and tertiary exegesis reveals very different positions, with a prevalence of disapproval if not in things Vinaya primarily, at least with reference to biographical elaborations. Lamotte had strong reasons to doubt Frauwallner's hypothesis even with the sole arguments of his 1947 article on the “legend of the Buddha”.<sup>24</sup> Shortly before Frauwallner's death, Prebish devoted a whole, belated review article (his own very first publication) to its re-examination.<sup>25</sup> Bronkhorst started

author'. Moreover, everyone well read in contemporary medical research or natural sciences (including for instance seismology) would endorse Bingenheimer's claim that “[t]he pendulum is swinging back. It is possible that the ‘single-scholar’ paradigm will come to be regarded as an eccentric phenomenon in the history of knowledge” (here 32). If this correctly applies to scholars, it is on the contrary of no relevance for superlative religious persons (epitomized or modelled by religious founders), nor for musicians, nor for writers—Kleist's writing rests as an ideal instance of this.

<sup>23</sup> Hinüber 1996/2001/2008, §34: 18–19.

<sup>24</sup> More conveniently exposed in Lamotte 1958: 193–196 / 1988: 176–179.

<sup>25</sup> Prebish 1973: 669–678 / 2005: 244–256 (“his most creative and innovative theories [...] it is here that he is weakest”, 1973: 676 / 2005: 254); see, however, also Prebish 1994/1996: 132: “[t]his monumental work has remained the standard work on the *Skandhaka*”.

from similar suppositions related to the Vibhaṅga but expanded a fairly different analysis of several other *māṭṛkā*s ('matrix'), without overlooking, like Frauwallner, questions which really differentiate the ancient forms as well as the present handling of such texts, for which exact ultimate answers may only be stringently illusory.<sup>26</sup> Belonging to a similar scholarly family as Frauwallner, Vetter is rather favourable.<sup>27</sup> Brekke is decidedly the best contemporary supporter of a refining theory, in light of the new dating of the Buddha's *floruit*.<sup>28</sup> "In contrast to Frauwallner", among the major advances in von Hinüber's *Handbook of Pāli literature* (largely adopting his treatment of Abhidhamma topics) is a new structuring of the whole Khandhaka, paralleling the development of Suttavibhaṅga (especially §§31 and 37: 16–17 and 19–20). Another well-founded critique of Frauwallner is offered by Clarke.<sup>29</sup> More recently, as a very far-reaching critique, Collins detected similar, objectionable inadequacies of reconstruction pertaining to Frauwallner's excessively free handling of the composition of the *Visuddhimagga*, which would even more characterize his handling of the earlier *MPNS*.<sup>30</sup> Most recently Durt, in his outline of recent research on

<sup>26</sup> Bronkhorst 1985: esp. 309: "[o]ur question is: did the 'Original Vibhaṅga' make use of the Sūtras in their finished form, or did it rather use pieces of tradition which were still more or less free-floating and would only later be taken into the Sūtras known to us?"

<sup>27</sup> Vetter 1988: xiv–xv.

<sup>28</sup> Brekke 1998: 23–40 / 2002: 1–15 (with some changes).

<sup>29</sup> Clarke 2004: 77–120, especially 79 n. 6 on its reception in Japan, and 115.

<sup>30</sup> See Collins 1992: 235 n. 43 and now Collins 2009: 504 n. 22, who includes "some remarks about the hypothesis of Frauwallner, who thought that [the *Visuddhimagga*; hereafter *Vism*] was based on the *samādhi* section, with those on *sīla* and *paññā* added. [...] Unfortunately, in my view, the main accomplishment of this work [the "Abhidharma Studien"; English translation of 1995] is to exemplify clearly an outmoded and discredited form of Orientalism (in the pejorative sense). The method is: Herr Professor sits at a desk in Vienna with various texts, in various editions, before him (note that tucked away in a footnote is the remark 'I have only had limited access to the Pāli literature' [...]) He then excogitates an historical progression from simple to more complex (to which the judgement 'degenerate' is frequently applied) [...] and then says that the development of the Abhidharma 'must have happened in more or less the following fashion', going on to give an entirely hypothetical account, taken as fact in the rest of the work. The assumption that simple must precede complex has only to be articulated to be shown to be absurd as it is common in previous generations of Indological scholarship. Do not people sometimes summarize and simplify in exegesis

the legend of the Buddha, remarks that "la thèse de Erich Frauwallner sur une biographie perdue du Buddha n'a pas été retenue".<sup>31</sup>

Curiously, none of these eminent scholars devoted any attention to Frauwallner's application of his own theory to the *Bhūmicālasutta*, even if his analysis was undeniably intended to support and hone his larger hypothesis by studying a case seemingly more decipherable. However, his conclusion—"Everything invites to the conclusion that this transformation of the *Bhūmicālasūtra* into an episode of the *Mahāparinirvānasūtra* is the work of the author of the *Skandhaka*"<sup>32</sup>—cannot stand scrutiny. Not only are such an 'author' as well as an 'Ur-Skandhaka' very problematic, but what the Buddha properly does to produce the seventh type of the eightfold earthquakes-list (or, how to read Pā. *ossaji* / Skt. *utsrjati* u. Verw.), and why precisely this timing of *nirvāṇa* was the narrative climax (also building a large part of *MPNS*) are difficult problems completely left aside by Frauwallner.

#### 4. FISSION OF A NUCLEAR SŪTRA: THE MEETING OF MATRIX, METRICS, AND SEISMOMETERS. THE BUDDHA'S VITA AS IMMEMORIAL SCHEDULE

A single exception during this discussion may, however, be a connection between two short statements made by Hubert Durt in an authoritative overview first presented as a keynote lecture delivered at the *Sixth European Association for the Study of Religions / International Association for the*

of earlier material? Evaluative dismissals ('superficial', 'artificial', 'tedious', etc.) stand in for historical analysis." Due to its extensive comparative material, language, content, and date, the composition of *Vism* can hardly supersede in difficulty the *MPNS* or its relationship with the Suttapiṭaka as a whole. Failures in recognizing the architecture of *Vism* may be but consequently amplified by missteps in handling *MPNS*. Indeed, at least the sequence of 'simple-shorter-different-older' was fittingly criticized previously, e.g. by Prebish 1973: 672 / 2005: 247: "[d]espite his exhaustive presentation, Frauwallner's approach is dangerously close to reducing itself to a 'if it's different, it's older' stance". 'Divination' practices in Buddhist Studies, as they tacitly conceal frequent uncertainties under the firmer form of confident answers, surely deserve fuller enquiry. The conduct of suppositions in the works of Burnouf and Lévi is dissimilar to those acknowledged or even tacitly inserted by Bareau and indeed by Frauwallner.

<sup>31</sup> Durt 2010: 163.

<sup>32</sup> Frauwallner 1956: 162.

*History of Religions* Special Conference in Bucharest (2006). This includes a critique of Frauwallner as well as mention of the role of earthquakes as connections between the largest two biographical cycles in the Buddha's Vita: even if “[c]’est un ouvrage poétique, le *Buddhacarita*, d’Āśvaghōṣa [...] qui *semble* avoir fait la jonction entre la tradition de la jeunesse du Buddha et celle de son passage en *nirvāṇa*”,<sup>33</sup> Durt confirms: “[l]a biographie du Buddha a longtemps consisté en deux parties distinctes. La partie la plus ancienne était centrée sur le Parinirvāṇa à Kuśinagara avec plusieurs épisodes antérieurs, en particulier le rejet de l’existence effectué à Vaiśālī et l’ultime repas célébré à Pāpā (*pāli*: Pāvā)”; thus, “[l]e souci de biographie continue est attesté par de nombreuses manifestations dans la littérature la plus ancienne, peut-être sous l’influence d’un type de pèlerinage [...]. Après la *fixation des quatre épisodes principaux*: naissance du Bouddha, son illumination, sa première prédication et son extinction, *l’on en vint à établir des séries d’incidents suscitant des tremblements de terre*, huit événements qui entraînent l’érection de stūpas imposants, la mise en parallèle des nombreux incidents, etc.”<sup>34</sup> If the “rejet de l’existence” in the neighbourhood of Vaiśālī, at the Cāpāla-caitya, belongs to this most ancient first biographical part, then the entire *MPNS* section as ‘Catalogue of earthquakes’ generating a continuous biography is older than assumed and in other respects more relevant than observed by Frauwallner and its successors. Instead we may save from oblivion a quite similar phrase of Joseph Estlin Carpenter, co-editor of *DN* and its commentary, who tentatively affirmed as Durt did just almost one century ago, in a paper devoid of other than alas antiquarian significance: “There are some important references to it [*scil.* the biography of the Buddha] in the enumeration of eight causes of earthquakes”<sup>35</sup> As Silk (2003) has shown, perhaps for the first time, two models are sharply contrasted in every Vita of the Buddha: one which starts with full awareness at birth and as a result of innumerable lives *in crescendo*, and a second one which in contrast starts with the nescience implied by the shock of the Four

<sup>33</sup> Durt 2010: 162 (italics added). Hence previously “la tradition suivie s’interrompt brusquement, et les souvenirs de la carrière publique du Buddha ne forment plus qu’un amas confus et dispersé à tous les vents” — as for Lamotte 1949: 253. For another overview since Foucher, see chiefly Hinüber 2009.

<sup>34</sup> Durt 2010: 160 and 162 (italics added) against 163 on the limits of Frauwallner and Bareau.

<sup>35</sup> Carpenter 1912: 88.

Sights, and then with the conquering/recovering of a similar full awareness represented by the Awakening.<sup>36</sup> Again, there is a biographical gap between these two parts as seen previously and the earthquakes serve here specifically to indicate the armature of the whole (see Table 11).

For all the reasons presented here, it seems much less certain to assume—as perhaps everyone has previously done—that the narrative link between the birth *cum bodhi* and *nirvāṇa* cycles was ever established *earlier, without and irrespective of* the means of earthquakes as a ‘Catalogue’ spoken by the Buddha. The doctrinal, narrative and functional location of the earthquakes in question assure us of the contrary. The four foremost events to be understood as a biographic matrix are underlined by Q2, Q3, Q4 and Q6, centred as in the name “Buddha” in the earthquakes of Cluster 2 (Tables 3–4).

#### 5. HOW TO ANCHOR SAṂSĀRA OR ANY LESSER SEA OF TIME BY A SINGLE LIFE

If these results prove valid, then they make plain the simplest way to underline—with the widest cosmic background—that the Buddha was (finally) *born*, was (indeed) *awakened*, and was (truly) *parinirvanised*. To be sure, these are the simplest chief things in a Buddha’s Vita, the very *mātikā*/*mātrkā* ‘matrix’, or skeleton, or authoritative ellipsis of his own biography (here arranged accordingly in Table 11), to be so vastly expanded later.<sup>37</sup> It can be even more reduced, in only two concentric facts: The historical Buddha truly lived and we remember him precisely because he was the Awakened. Biographies need a basis: the more authoritative the basis, the more magnificent the biography. The Buddha’s is authenticated by

<sup>36</sup> I would also suggest that there is a similar paradox of aging and entering *nirvāṇa*: Descriptions of the Buddha in the events associated with the third cluster correspond only partly to those of aging monks as illustrated by Hinüber 1997/2009.

<sup>37</sup> The *Milindapañha* IV.1.135 presents the most redoubtable scrutiny of biographical and doctrinal “catalogues of earthquakes”, and it took the *sutta* itself as *mātikā*, see Horner 1963–1964 [1969]: 1.158–166. Annotating a translation of *Vism* 414, Horner added that “[a]nd so forth’ refers to the times when the Tathagata descended into his mother’s womb, issued from it, was self-awakened, turned the Dharma-wheel, and loosened the sankhāras at his final nirvana”. Cf. *Ps* iv. 114; *Mp* ii. 9; *Vbh-a.* 430, for Horner 1954/1964: 115 n. 1.

cosmic and indeed everlastingly earthshaking effects, replicated with entropic echoes for all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas across the endless *samsāra*, and for all Buddhists then across Asia and well beyond it today.<sup>38</sup> All through these six seismic manifestations, the Bodhisattva's and afterwards the Buddha's inevitable linkage (*bandhana*) with *samsāra*—which effectively has *no* basis, temporal or otherwise—would be proven as *escape* (*mokṣa*) from its 'seas' of time traditionally seen in India as 'wilderness',<sup>39</sup> i.e. completely *devoid* of a trustworthy definitive *tempo* (except the non attributable, mere swap-like mechanics of the periodic contraction and expansion of worlds). A *tempo* is the foremost commodity since "Buddhas, as events in time, repeat the same pattern; but the river of time flows on".<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the Buddha's Vita is endowed with a nuclear *tempo* and the earthquakes are there to indicate to everyone this very *tempo* as an indication of movement all through the distinct stages of his 'epochal career'.<sup>41</sup> In the Buddha's catalogue of earthquakes a tempo is noted for pointing out the form of a vita: how to understand it, how to follow it, and how to celebrate it. Everything else which is biographical substance in the Buddha's life derives or is expanded from this nucleotide-like fact. Indeed, as Steven Collins assumes, "the notion of eternal bliss, whether timeless or endless, Buddhist or Christian, or of any other kind, cannot coherently become the object of systematic and elaborated imagination".<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> The best recent literature on *bodhisatta/bodhisattva* career includes Osier 2010, Anālayo 2010, and Appleton 2010.

<sup>39</sup> For later Buddhist correlative treatments, see e.g. Śāntideva, *Śikṣasamuccaya* 1.5 on *bodhicitta* as *vaḍiṣa* 'hook' to escape such a sea. For discussions of *kṣaṇa*, *durlabha* as related to the status of *mānuṣya*, and therefore the parable of the turtle and the yoke, see Hara 1986; Ciurtin 2006: 157 and 165, and, for the newly discovered Gāndhārī version compared with Pāli and Chinese ones, Allon 2007 [2008]: 229–262 (mostly 234–243).

<sup>40</sup> Collins 2010: 144.

<sup>41</sup> See Skilling 2010; Matsumura 2010; and chiefly as regards the standard biographical fixing of the largest spans of time, Skilling 2009b: 135, on four earlier, lesser known biographies of the Buddha in Pāli: "[u]ne fois que les histoires furent mises en place à l'aube de la carrière, elles avaient pour fonction de situer Sakyamuni dans le temps (comme nous l'avons vu, la question de l'espace ne se pose pas). [...] Ces récits donnent du sens au temps et, du même coup, investissent le bouddha, le maître, d'un pouvoir immense".

<sup>42</sup> Collins 1992: 223; now Collins 2010: 28 (or chapters 1, 4 and *passim*). For an analysis of how the Buddhist *nunc stans* in *Lalitavistara* is described, see Kölver 1997.

It may, however, project instead a contrastive "systematic and elaborated imagination" of what properly remains *outside* it and at least for outsiders, with the single 'Catalogue of earthquakes' providing amplest proof as it blends non-timeless and non-endless narrative by the intrusion of timeless occurrences of *mahābhūmicāla*. Collating hence its earliest expressions, we may be now closer to the doctrinal reasons why earthquakes were so much valued by Buddhists (decidedly less by Buddhist scholars)<sup>43</sup> and to a philologically more feasible statement about the stratification of Indic Buddhist canons,<sup>44</sup> as in all likelihood earthquake stances belong to an earlier stratum than a very large part of everything that was previously assumed as earliest in worldwide research.<sup>45</sup>

Looking far back into the history and ensuing intricate dynamics of Buddhist Studies, one may well ask why every *bhūmicāla* was dismissed as rather irrelevant all through the first periods of editing and translating Buddhist canons. Some of the obvious motivations lie in the very circumstances of unearthing and replanting the first two millennia of Buddhism in India. As for the Pāli Canon, the *Bhūmicālasutta* became known accurately for more than half of the century during the foundational period of academic Asian studies through its variant readings (*Divyāvadāna*), not through the Nikāyas; secondly, it was put in circulation by translations—in English by Turnour in 1838 and in French by Burnouf in 1844—made then directly from a few manuscripts not above reproach, that is to say without benefit of any edition (till 1890); thirdly, the dissimilarities between the structure of the Canon itself (then hardly read, edited and understood as a whole, to say nothing of its matching Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan parts) and its discovery in the West obliterated its significance as one may easily document by comparing its standard shaky interpretations by Burnouf to Lamotte and Waldschmidt and well beyond indeed, in most cases up to the current day. Underlining other processes more dependent on the 'context of discovery', many academic or simply modern "Lives of the Buddha" of all pedigrees show a

<sup>43</sup> To be discussed in a forthcoming study or already on earthquakes, meditation and cosmology, Ciurtin 2009: 78–79 and *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> Ciurtin 2009: 65–72 and 2010b.

<sup>45</sup> It seems safer now to isolate with biographical acumen continuous earthquake listing from scattered earthquake occurrences, which only expand or imitate an older function, not necessarily, as we shall see, always understood, as was sometimes frozen under the rubric of literary devices—exactly those first read by Western scholars.

splitting apart of the *sutta*'s function, such as between the bolder factions of historicist and mythologizing readers, those ricochet in Frauwallner's analysis is the most striking outcome.

The *Bhūmicālasutta* (and all related literature) was perhaps much overlooked when it did not help much to identify in the very text, as a tightly ordered list of six causes of earthquakes, one of the earliest full-fledged biographies of the Buddha. This sixfold list is accompanied by two other causes which give the proper correlative armature to answer *how* this may happen (*iddhi-pāda* are e.g. mentioned as means of the first two causes *as for* Q5). The very fabric of timelessness, which this study has also tried to unfurl, may now be seen as located on the largest map of Indian Buddhism. It not only provides sufficient symbolic life for the time and narrative results of the most distinct biographic junctures. It also provides evidence for the timeless *summum bonum* which is *nirvāṇa*, 'located' outside the realm of time as *samsāra* precisely because it may be 'entered' with this—and only with this—earthquake biography and standard *vita*.

We may finally ask again with Ānanda, "what is the cause, what is the reason for the occurrence" of the Buddha's earthquakes? Arriving at this point, however, we must not forget that the earliest Buddhism, with all its overwhelming wealth of still extant or for a second time resurgent documents, is still very far from being completely charted adequately in all its intricate Indian density, myriad questions being left unanswered, and this would accordingly demand—almost two millennia and a half after its foundation—the prescribed amount of higher modesty, much like Ānanda as the earliest paradigmatic embodiment of all those who ever asked questions regarding Buddhist texts. But Ānanda was also infinitely better placed, as he received the right answers (traditionally: for a quarter of a century) from the Buddha himself (including the prescribed amount of silence). By a long way more hypothetical, we do in fact *not* know how to suitably answer Ānanda's question in all its reverberations since that afternoon and aorist of the Cāpāla shrine, exactly three months (and exactly an extra half of a day, which was hardly ever mentioned) before *nirvāṇa*. Yet we on the contrary do see now, from the Buddha's answer, that one of the causes is to anchor the very standing of the Awakened One with earthquakes and to progressively cement athwart the *samsāra*. If only others would sanction our demonstration that with this blending of earthquakes as biographic outlines and as apertures towards or punctures through timelessness, the Buddha acquires and displays a truly unique biography. Its uniqueness is therefore beyond every conceivable doubt,

as nothing is grander or more germane in Buddhism, nay, in Indian religions, than solving the *samsāra*. At present, it appears to me, there are no better elucidations why 'thus has He quaked'. Yet this is certain and we have even learned it from Buddhaghosa, "[t]his quaking has been going on right up to present times, but the rise and fall [of the earth] are not noticed *because of its thickness*".<sup>46</sup> The earthquakes of the Buddha(s) persist precisely ever since their results are by the same token perpetual and definitive.

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Note: Unless otherwise stated, the editions and translations of Pāli texts are those of the Pali Text Society and the abbreviations those of *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, including its *Epilegomena* and the supplements proposed by the editor Oskar von Hinüber 1996/2001/2007. For Sanskrit works, they rely mostly on the suggestions of Heinz Bechert 1990. In order to prevent an overly sibylline silhouette of the main text, fuller titles of original works are supplied there. A fuller bibliography of primary, secondary and tertiary sources will be included in my prospective book.

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<sup>46</sup> Transl. in An 2003: 98; Ciurtin 2009: 94–95 (italics added).

## ABBREVIATIONS AND MAIN PRIMARY SOURCES

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- Avadānaśataka** Jacob Samuel Speyer (ed.). *Avadānaśataka: A Century of Edifying Tales belonging to the Hīnayāna*. St. Petersburg, 1902–1909, 2 vols.
- BDK** Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, Tokyo.
- BHS** Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.
- Buddhacarita** Johnston 1936–1937/2004; Olivelle 2008; Willemsen 2009.
- Dīgha-Nikāya [DN]** Thomas William Rhys Davids & J. Estlin Carpenter (eds.). London: PTS, 3 vols., 1890–1911. Repr. 1975.
- Divyāvadāna** Cowell & Neil 1886; Rotman 2008; Hiraoka 2009.
- Ekottarikāgama (Chin.) T 125.**
- IGNCA** Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi.
- IsMEO** Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Rome.
- Jinacarita** Rouse 1905.
- Jinālaṅkāra** James Grey (ed., transl.). London: PTS, 1894. Repr. 1981.
- Lalitavistara (Skt./Tib.)** Foucaux 1848/1860; Foucaux 1884–1892/1988; Lefmann 1902–1908/1977.
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ROBERT J. DEL BONTÀ

## EXISTING IN AND OUT OF TIME: KĀLA OR AKĀLA IN JAINA ICONOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>

The name of the Jaina religion, Jainism, is derived from the word Jina, which can be translated as a Spiritual Victor. A Jina is also called a *tīrthaṅkara*, or builder of the ford (*tīrtha*) and functions as an omniscient spiritual teacher who organizes the Jaina community. He does not found a religion, but propagates the faith, a path to *mokṣa* (liberation or salvation), which is taught by the entire line. After a Jina achieves deliverance from rebirth, he does not aid future Jainas in any way, except through emulation. Although often given titles that signify deities in other religions, they do not intercede with any sort of godhead or actively assist the living. The Jainas believe that during each half-cycle in the world of man a line of twenty-four Jinas are born. There are many images of this line of teachers, but they should be merely revered, not worshipped.

The Jainas developed an elaborate cosmography that describes a vast universe. Time in part of this universe moves continuously in two halves, referred to as the *utsarpiṇī* and *avasarpiṇī* half-cycles. The *utsarpiṇī* half-cycle moves from a degenerate state to a state of perfection. In turn, the *avasarpiṇī* half-cycle goes from perfection to degeneration. The full cycle is unceasing; there is no state of *pralaya* or demanifestation between the shifts. Time does not begin at a point of creation nor end in dissolution.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the talk “Time (or Timelessness) in Jaina Iconography” read for *Concepts of Time and Their Visual and Material Aspects—Focus Asia*, Workshop at the Internationales Kolleg Morphomata, University of Köln (Cologne), 25–26 June, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> See Christoph Emmrich’s essay in this volume for a discussion of *pralaya*, the fiery end of the world.

Coexisting within the coordinates of these two halves is a narrative sequence that transcends the cycle. This is seen in the succession of twenty-four Jinas born within each half-cycle. Modern scholars sometimes use a circular diagram to illustrate the complete cycle, but there is no evidence that a circular shape was used in Jaina iconography. This essay considers ways in which common iconographies including depictions of all twenty-four Jinas might perhaps suggest this endless cycle, indicative of time (*kāla*) and timelessness (*akāla*) (Plate 2).

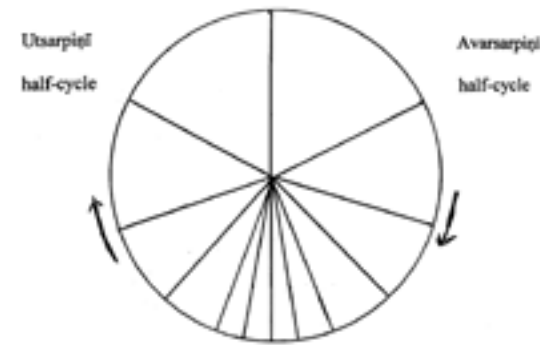
I plan to offer thoughts on Jaina time from a few different perspectives. First, I want briefly to point out how different it is from some other visual descriptions of time cycles from South Asia. Second, I will consider where the progressive and regressive half-cycles function in visual representations of the Jaina universe. Then I want to consider a few Jaina iconographies and suggest how they possibly relate to various aspects of time and what they tell us about Jaina conceptions of the transcendence of time.

In a small part of the Jaina universe, a cycle of time consists of twelve segments called *kālas*, six to each half-cycle (Jaini 1979: 30–31). Each half-cycle lasts a vast but finite length of time. Some scholars describe it as a circle divided into unequal wedges that reflect the way each stage gets smaller, having a shorter overall length, as we move to the bottom, the regressive part of the cycle (Figure 1). *Kālacakra* (Wheel of Time) sometimes is used in scholarly literature as a title for this diagram but the term is not a common one, although it does appear in a few Jaina texts that do not specifically suggest this diagram.<sup>3</sup> Time is an essential part of the Jaina cosmography and is considered a part of the Jaina universe as well, but time reflecting these progressive and regressive half-cycles only functions in a very small fraction of the entire universe.<sup>4</sup> Its importance for us is that it functions where we as humans live.

Circular compositions are found in two common diagrams. These are depictions of the *Aḍhādvīpa*, often rendered in English as the Two-and-a-Half Continents although actually a more accurate translation of the Sanskrit is the Two-and-a-Half Islands that make up the World of Man

<sup>3</sup> Personal communication between me and John Cort and Phyllis Granoff. The only reference of note that uses the term *kālacakra* is Brown 1966: 76, translating it as the “Wheel of Time”. Various sites on the Internet that use the term often cite Jaini 1979, but he does not use the term.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the various periods in the half cycles see Jaini 1979: 30–31 and Cort 2009: 41–42. Cort uses the terms “beginning-less” and “end-less time”. Cf. note 12 below.



1 Diagram of so-called *Kālacakra* (Wheel of Time).

(Plate 3),<sup>5</sup> and the *Samavasaraṇa*, the universal assembly where a newly enlightened Jina teaches in the four directions.<sup>6</sup> The former diagram is of importance for our discussion, but the *Samavasaraṇa* essentially illustrates directionality and does not concern us here.

#### DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OF TIME

Unlike other Southern Asian constructs of time, Jainas believe that the world was neither created nor is it destroyed, not even in the small area where the half-cycles function. Contrasting a few Hindu representations underscores how different the Jaina approach is. Iconographic images of Hindu creation myths vary. As a reminder, there is the common image of Śiva Naṭarāja, who dances the cycle of creation and destruction.<sup>7</sup> For Viṣṇu, a creation myth is demonstrated by the figure of him with Brahmā growing out of the lotus emanating from Viṣṇu’s navel, known as *Anantaśayana*. The most often represented panel of this myth is the Gupta period sculpture at Deogarh.<sup>8</sup> In these instances there is active

<sup>5</sup> The term used in the title is *dvīpa*, which means island, while the word for continent is *varṣa*. We will see below that there is also the idea of two-and-a-half continents in this construct for the half-cycles, so the usual use of the word “continents” in the translation of this title can be a bit confusing.

<sup>6</sup> See for instance Del Bontà 2009: 234–35, cat. no. P 06 and 256–57, cat. no. P 17.

<sup>7</sup> See Wessels-Mevissen in this volume, Figure 1. See also Huntington 1985: 535–36, figs. 21.33–34.

<sup>8</sup> For the Deogarh *Anantaśayana* panel see Huntington 1985: 209, fig. 10.29.

creation out of nothing: Śiva Naṭarāja dances his cycle of creation and destruction over and over while Brahmā creates the world from nothing and it returns to nothing. Then the process repeats itself.

### THE JAINA UNIVERSE

Jinas are of course not gods. Therefore, the concept of a Jina actively driving time does not appear in Jaina cosmography. However, there are many illustrations of aspects of their universe. The universe is often depicted in the shape of a person with his arms akimbo. These common diagrams are logically suggested by the description of the universe in Jaina texts, the *Lokākāśa* (Figure 2).<sup>9</sup> Often the anthropomorphic version of the diagram (Plate 4) is called *lokapuruṣa*, but the term is a bit misleading, since this title could imply that the universe is some sort of *Cosmic Man*, rather than merely in the shape of a person.<sup>10</sup> A number of these diagrams represent the universe as female, as is probably the case with our example.<sup>11</sup>

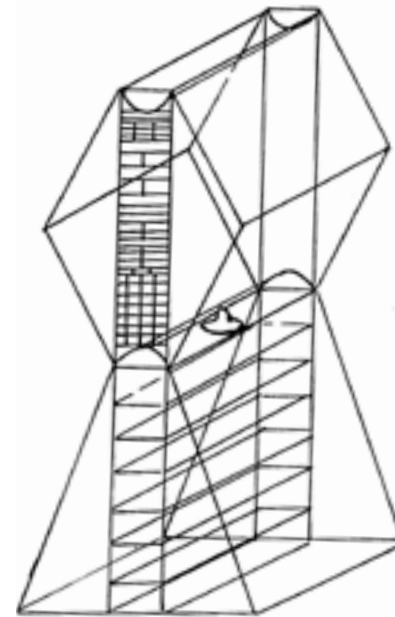
Where exactly does this endless temporal cycle, consisting of the *utsarpiṇī* and *avasarpiṇī* half-cycles mentioned above, actually function within this universe? These half-cycles function in a very tiny portion of the diagram of the *Lokākāśa* and its depiction in human form. It functions in the central section of the *madhyaloka* or middle world, which exists at the waist of both these diagrams. The *ūrdhvaloka* or celestial regions are above the waist and the *adholoka* or hells are below.<sup>12</sup> Outside the centre

<sup>9</sup> See also Jaini 2009.

<sup>10</sup> This diagram is sometimes called “*Purushkara yantra*”, but it seems that the source of that term is in publications by Philip Rawson (Rawson 1973: 151, fig. 134 and Rawson 1978: 153, fig. 130). I have not been able to find the term in any texts and his description implies that he reads the diagram as the constitution of the liberated soul and not truly or only as a description of the universe. See Balcerowicz 2011 for a recent discussion of the use of the term *lokapuruṣa* in Jaina texts and its relationship with the shape of the cosmos.

<sup>11</sup> This is especially clear in an example published in Van Alphen 2000: 112–13, cat. no. 38.

<sup>12</sup> Time is also an element of the *Lokākāśa*. The diagram describes the immense distances that souls transmigrate over time (Caillat & Kumar 1981: 54). Time can be defined in many different ways, since it functions in a wide range of manners. Outside of the area where the half-cycles function, it can be defined as a state of being, since there is no progressive or regressive activity. For a concise description of the three worlds see Van Alphen 2000: 49–55.



2 Diagram of *Lokākāśa*, after Jaini 1979: 128, pl. 14.

of the *madhyaloka*, time functions in different ways in other parts of this diagram in human form. Depending on one's merits, upon death souls are reborn to live in the Hells or the Heavens and they exist there for various periods of time. However, time does not work as it does in the area where the half-cycles function: It is merely existence; the soul lives or dies in either a blissful or painful state.

The anthropomorphic universe may recall images of the god Viṣṇu in his cosmic form as Viśvarūpa or Virāṭa Svarūpa, but the way the universe spreads across Viṣṇu's body functions quite differently.<sup>13</sup> In the Jaina

<sup>13</sup> A comparison of these images could be the subject of another article. Quite a few of the Hindu examples refer to Kṛṣṇa's transfiguration for Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgītā*, chapter XI. Comments here oversimplify the contrasts and comparisons that can be made among a wide array of Hindu images that distribute elements over the body. Many of the Hindu figures are quite different from one another. Diamond 2008: 289–90, cat. no. 44 and 294, cat. no. 48 discusses two paintings. No. 44 represents the Subtle Body, a diagram in a Tantric tradition that denotes the *cakra* power points spread on the vertical axis of the body. For no. 48, Diamond discusses its connections with Jaina

painting depicted in Plate 4 the universe is neatly divided at the middle; the heavens and the hells are clearly separated top and bottom, very different from the usual representations found in Hindu art, where we find gods and other features spread all over the figure of Viṣṇu.<sup>14</sup>

### THE *AḍHĀĪDVĪPA*

The half-cycles function in only a tiny portion of the *madhyaloka*, the middle level of the Jaina universe, in a small section of the world of mankind in the centre of the diagram between these heavens and hells. The *madhyaloka* is depicted by the circular elements at the waist of the painting illustrated in Plate 4, but in this case only the very centre of that world is shown, the first island and sea, not the full region consisting of two and a half islands. While we find many paintings and even sculptures which depict the Jaina universe, there are even more paintings that focus specifically on this central section of the *madhyaloka*, the terrestrial world—the world of mankind, called the *Aḍhādvīpa*, the Two-and-a-Half Islands in the centre of that level.<sup>15</sup>

Plate 3, a large cloth painting or *paṭa*, illustrates this central section. Mankind lives in three areas: on the central circular island, the Jambūdvīpa, on the ring-like island surrounding it, the Dhātākikhaṇḍadvīpa, and in the inside half of the second ring, the Puṣkaradvīpa.<sup>16</sup> This half is the portion inside the mountain range that separates the inner and outer halves of the outside ring. The artist has compressed the actual dimensions of the painting in Plate 3 for the sake of depicting the islands. As with measurements of time, Jaina numbers are phenomenally large, seemingly endless, but the Jainas do believe them to be finite. The second island is

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symbolism with elements of the universe spread over the body, but in a very different manner than seen in Plate 4. A wider assortment of Hindu imagery is seen in Rawson 1973: pls. 20–21, 23, 48, 51, 55 and 59. Pl. 23 is the closest in concept to the Jaina version, but seems more of a reaction to its symbolism without its consistent configuration. An illustration in Rawson 1978: 110, fig. 84 (Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa) is actually closer to the Jaina diagrams in its details, with bands of hells at the very bottom of the leg region, although again it is not quite the same in its full layout or intent.

<sup>14</sup> The Hindu conception of the universe as a man ultimately goes back to a hymn in the *R̥gveda*, the well-known “*Puruṣasūkta*”, *R̥gveda* X.90 (O’Flaherty 1981: 29–31).

<sup>15</sup> For a sculptural example see Van Alphen 2000: 115, cat. no. 40.

<sup>16</sup> The alternate title of Puṣkaravara appears in Jaini 1979: 30.

actually twice the diameter of the central one and the third doubles the size of the second. If zeroing in on the centre of the *madhyaloka* were not enough, the area where the half-cycles function is actually restricted to smaller portions within each of these Two-and-a-Half Islands.

For our purposes we need only consider the Jambūdvīpa in the centre, but parallel configurations are seen on the other island and a half, where these features are doubled. Jambūdvīpa consists of seven continents or *varśas*, but the half-cycles only function in two-and-a-half of them known as the *karmabhūmi*, the world of action, where Jinās are born and men can attain enlightenment and *mokṣa*—liberation or release from reincarnation. The other continents are called *bhogabhūmi*, the world of bliss, where humans cannot attain *mokṣa* (Jaini 1979: 29–30). On two of the continents of the *karmabhūmi*, Bharata at the very bottom and Airāvata at the top, Jinās are born only in the third and fourth *kālas* or segments of the half-cycles. We are currently living in the beginning of the fifth stage, so Jinās cannot be born in this degenerate time. But in half of the horizontal middle sections, called Mahāvideha on Jambūdvīpa and the other island-and-a-half, Jinās are always living, since the state of these half-continents is perpetually that of the end of the third stage. Thus living Jinās can and do exist there while not living in our world.

Outside of these regions time does not progress or regress and Jinās also exist, here suggested by the enthroned Jinās in temples in the corners that lie outside of the world of mankind. I will return to this idea of the constant presence of Jinās in various locations of the universe below.<sup>17</sup>

### ICONIC IMAGERY

Elsewhere I have argued that certain types of imagery evolve beyond narrative, narrative that describes the passage of real time, and transcend it to create an iconic image that exists out of a narrative context, beyond time.<sup>18</sup> There are also particular figures represented in ways that transcend a specific event, either essentially depicting a long process and not a single moment, or merely illustrating an enlightened state. This is true of the Bāhubali image at Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa (Figure 3) dedicated in 981 CE. In an

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<sup>17</sup> See Jaini 1979: 29–32 and 129. Discussions of descriptions of the world of man and comments on Jinās outside of that context are found throughout Granoff 2009.

<sup>18</sup> See Del Bontà forthcoming.





3 Bāhubali, Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa, Karnataka/India, Gaṅga dynasty, 981 CE, granite, height ca. 18 m. Photo: author.

earlier depiction of him at Bādāmi (Figure 4) we see Bharata, Bāhubali's brother, kneeling at his feet while two goddesses remove creepers which have grown on his limbs over his long meditation, at the moment of his enlightenment. At Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa the absence of the two goddesses and the figure of Bharata takes the literal moment, a specific point in time,



4 Bāhubali, Cave IV, Bādāmi, Karnataka/India, Early Western Cālukya dynasty, late sixth–early seventh century, sandstone, height ca. 230 cm. Photo: author.

out of the mix. The colossal image at Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa could be read as representing three points of time: the entire process of his meditation in *kāyotsarga* posture, his *kevalajñāna* or enlightenment, but more likely it signifies his *mokṣa* or liberation, which he attained at the moment of enlightenment. This state transcends time altogether.



5 Rṣabha, Patna District, Bihar/India, late Gupta to Early Pāla period, late seventh century, black chlorite stone, 66 × 40.6 × 12.7 cm, Yale University Art Gallery, purchased with a gift from Steve M. Kossak, B.A. 1972, 2000.36.1. Photo courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery.

This is true of most sculpted Jina images as well, as illustrated here by a Rṣabha image (Figure 5). Unlike images of Buddha Śākyamuni, Jinas do not display various *mudrās* (specific hand gestures) that can be linked to narrative events in their lives or the places where these events happened.<sup>19</sup> Jinas are usually only depicted in two ways: seated in *padmāsana* in *dhyāna mudrā* (in the “lotus” position with hands in the lap denoting meditation) or in *kāyotsarga* (standing with arms hanging down, away from the body). Far less commonly in sculpture one finds Jinas in narrative schemes. Many sculptural steles depict multiple events in the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni, and these events are often illustrated with him seated in *padmāsana* with hands in various *mudrās*, as seen in Figure 6.<sup>20</sup> Even without other figures around him, the Buddha’s hand gestures often can be read as signifiers of events. While in the case of a sculptural Buddha one can read *dhyāna mudrā* as Buddha Śākyamuni meditating before his enlightenment, in Jaina shrine sculpture this *mudrā* usually represents the Jina’s enlightened state. For Buddha images it is *bhūmisparśa mudrā* that signifies his enlightenment, representing the moment when Buddha Śākyamuni calls the earth to witness that he deserves enlightenment.

The Buddha’s *mudrās* vary and in the top left of Figure 6, the Buddha is shown in *dharmacakra mudrā* to signify his first sermon. Jina images

<sup>19</sup> *Mudrās* can also be symbolic gestures representing such ideas as appeasement, concentration, knowledge, the Law, etc., but they are also read as associations to specific events in the life of the historical Buddha. For a painting now in San Diego from an important Digambara series illustrating the life of Rṣabha see Del Bontà 2009: 253. It depicts Rṣabha twice in an identical pose, seated in *padmāsana* with hands in *dhyāna mudrā*. They are clearly labelled to suggest continuous narrative, one labelled with the word for meditation leading to the other titled for enlightenment. An exception to this exclusive use of *dhyāna mudrā* is seen in a sculpture in Quintanilla 2009: 178–79, S10, where the sculptor appears to be following Buddhist practice. Some of the Jina images surrounding the central figure display other *mudrās*. This is an extremely rare example.

<sup>20</sup> The scenes depicted here are, reading left to right from the bottom up: Birth and first bath, Māra’s assault, the Monkey’s gift of honey, the taming of the elephant Nālāgiri, the Descent from the Trayatrimśa heaven, the Great Miracle, the First Sermon, and the Parinirvāṇa. For a full analysis of this and other Gupta steles, see Williams 1975: fig. 3; 172, where she gives the piece a broad date. Huntington 1985: 459, fig. 20.12 suggests a narrower eighth century date.

do not display these different hand gestures to represent specific acts.<sup>21</sup> In the case of Jinas, *dhyāna mudrā* usually transcends any specific event and must be read as representing their enlightened state. When Jinas in *dhyāna mudrā* are configured in groups of four in the cardinal directions, illustrating the *Samavasaraṇa*,<sup>22</sup> one can read the identical *mudrā* as representing the Jina's teaching, but in reality it is this configuration, not the *mudrā* that denotes the universal assembly.

### NARRATIVE IMAGERY

Iconic images can transcend time and narrative, but what about narrative imagery?<sup>23</sup> In painting, particularly in Śvetāmbara illustrations of the popular *Kalpa Sūtra*, numerous scenes depict specific narrative events in the lives of four of the Jinas (Mahāvīra, Pārśva, Nemi and Ṛṣabha), whose lives are given in some detail in the text. These scenes are mainly related to the *pañcakalyāṇaka*, the five auspicious events in the lives of all of the Jinas.<sup>24</sup> Describing and illustrating these five events for these four Jinas creates a rhythm that re-enforces the repetitive passage of time while making the actual events less time-based. The repetition of imagery negates the unique quality of specific events, in essence blurring

<sup>21</sup> As suggested in note 19, *dharmacakra mudrā* could represent the content of the first sermon—*dharma* or the Law—hence it denotes a principal as well as an event, the Buddha's first sermon.

<sup>22</sup> Sculpted and three dimensional examples are numerous; see for example a *Samavasaraṇa*: Hegewald 2009: 99, fig. 6.16; and the shrine of the *Samavasaraṇa* of Kunthu, Quintanilla 2009: 204–05, S 23. See also Pal 1994: 236, cat. no. 105 for a painted version showing four Jinas facing the cardinal directions.

<sup>23</sup> There is little that represents narrative in Jaina sculpture, the most notable exceptions being ceilings in temples at Mt. Abu and Kumbhāriyā. For Kumbhāriyā see Dhaki and Moorti 2001. For Mount Abu, the most important narrative panels are in the Lūṇa Vasahi temple and the largest group of images available is found in the Internet at the American Institute of Indian Studies, Center for Art and Archaeology Photo Archive at: <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/images/aiis/> and search for “Luna Vasahi”.

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the *pañcakalyāṇakas* comparing the two major sects, the Digambara and Śvetāmbara, see Del Bontà 2009. They are listed on page 131. I also discussed them in some detail in Del Bontà 2009: 224–43. See also Brown 1934 and Doshi 1985: 103–20.



6 Scenes from the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh/India, post-Gupta period, seventh to ninth century, Chunar sandstone, 99 × 67 × 9 cm, Sarnath Archaeological Museum, C (a) 3. Photo: author.



7 Mahāvīra's *Janma* (Birth), Folio 39r from a *Kalpa Sūtra* loose-leaf manuscript, Patan, Gujarat/India, Western Indian Style, 1472 CE, opaque watercolour and ink on gold leaf and paper, folio: 11 × 26 cm, illustration: ca. 11 × 8.5 cm, Brooklyn Museum, gift of Dr. Bertram H. Schaffner, 1994.11.47. Photo courtesy of Brooklyn Museum.

the individual nature of the succession of Jinās. These repetitions evoke a sense of continuous time, similar to the way that the half-cycles follow one another. They create rhythmic mini-cycles within repetitive narratives.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> This repetition is not a conceit of the artist. Jaina texts themselves repeat stories for the various Jinās, using identical descriptions of specific events.

The composition typically employed to represent the second *kalyāṇaka*—*janma* or birth—proves this point. An example of the usual composition in *Kalpa Sūtra* illustration is seen in Figure 7. Manuscripts with many illustrations often contain four almost identical paintings, one for each of the four Jinās listed above. This same composition—with the Jina's mother reclining on a bed with an infant Jina beside her, a handmaid at her feet, and dancers and musicians below—appears in countless manuscripts. This uniformity negates the individuality of the Jinās, underscoring the concept in Jainism that the Jinās are all essentially the same.

Similarly, *mokṣa*, liberation (Figure 8), the fifth and final *kalyāṇaka*, is often conveyed by four nearly identical compositions. Typically the Jina figure is seated above the *siddhaśilā*, the wafer-thin curving motif that lets us know that the figure is a *siddha*, in a bodiless state, and has ascended to the top of the universe, a place that exists out of time.<sup>26</sup> There are numerous examples of identical compositions in countless *Kalpa Sūtra* manuscripts. I will return to a discussion of *siddhas* and other representations of them below.

#### DEPICTING THE TWENTY-FOUR JINAS

Returning to Jaina iconic imagery, the twenty-four Jinās are represented either singly or in various combinations—usually three, five, or the popular combination depicting all twenty-four in a single painting or sculpture. These works of art vary in their intent. Some, as in Plate 5, clearly depict a temple built on the mythical Aṣṭāpada (or Mount Kailāsa) by Bharata, the son of the first Jina, Ṛṣabha, who attained *mokṣa* there. Before giving up his body, Ṛṣabha recited the lineage that was to follow him in this half-cycle, giving his son all of the names of the coming Jinās. Bharata then built a temple in honour of his father and the entire group of twenty-four. This painting illustrates sculptural images of Bharata's father, Ṛṣabha, and the

This is very evident in the translation of the *Kalpa Sūtra* (Jacobi 1973). It is even more evident in the longer texts that followed the *Kalpa Sūtra* in time. For instance, large blocks of texts are repeated over and over again, often using the same phraseology in Hemacandra 1931–62 to a much greater degree. This technique helps memory in what was at one time an oral tradition, but it also gives a certain sameness to the narratives of each of the Jinās and other classes of people in the large group of sixty-three illustrious personages.

<sup>26</sup> The only image that is different is the depiction of Pārśva where he is surmounted by a snake-hood.



8 Nemi's *Mokṣa* (Liberation), Folio 66v from the same *Kalpa Sūtra* loose-leaf manuscript as Figure 7, for the details see there. Photo courtesy of Brooklyn Museum.

Jinas who followed him in their proper temporal order, even though they were yet to be born. At the base and to the sides, this *paṭa* also includes other stories concerning Aṣṭāpada that are outside the scope of our discussion.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Plate 5 is also illustrated in Del Bontà 2009: 284–86, cat. no. P 33, where the other stories are discussed.

The temple that Bharata built displays the Jinās in their historical order, but this is prophetic in nature, implying the succession before it happens. Other depictions of the twenty-four Jinās (called a *Caturvīṃśati paṭṭa* when sculpted and *paṭa* when painted)<sup>28</sup> clearly refer to this succession but do not relate directly to this narrative of Bharata's temple. Jainas must interpret illustrations of the twenty-four Jinās in their proper order as depicting part of their half-cycle, the two stages or *kālas* in which they all lived. In the Mysore painting seen in Plate 2, that is clearly the case and all the Jinās are labelled. Starting from the lower left they are depicted in order—moving up, around the top, and then down the other side and ending with the last two, Pārśva and Mahāvīra, in the centre.

If we read compositions where the Jinās are in order as representations of the historical progression and possibly the two sections of the half-cycle in which they lived, when depicted out of order this historical link is completely lost and cyclic time is not implied. Some sculptural and painted groupings of the twenty-four Jinās imply this historical progression, but others do not.

In sculptures of the twenty-four Jinās this proper order is often suggested by having Ṛṣabha in the centre.<sup>29</sup> This type of depiction, with Ṛṣabha in the centre, logically suggests reading the Jinās in their temporal order. When the image is not inscribed with his name, Ṛṣabha can be identified by the locks of hair to his shoulders. He is the only Jina shown with long hair.<sup>30</sup>

Other works have different Jinās in the centre, highlighting a specific Jina out of his historical order.<sup>31</sup> These *paṭṭas* are often organized in a standard manner with a group of five (a *pañcatūrtha*) at the centre with the other Jinās arranged around them. This mixing of the historical order negates and transcends the exact sequence in which the Jinās were born.

<sup>28</sup> I am following Granoff 2009 in using the word *paṭa* when describing a painting on cloth versus *paṭṭa* for a sculpted work.

<sup>29</sup> Quite a few examples with Ṛṣabha in the centre have been published; see Quintanilla 2009: 164–65, S 03; 200–01, S 21; 212–13, S 27; and 178–79, S 10, which depicts only half the set of twenty-four. See also Van Alphen 2000: 143, cat. no. 68 (labelled as Ādinātha another name for Ṛṣabha).

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of Ṛṣabha's hair see Quintanilla 2009: 162–63, cat. no. S 02.

<sup>31</sup> Other Jinās can occupy the centre of other steles; see Van Alphen 2000: 157–58, cat. nos. 82–3. No. 82 centres on Vimāla and no. 83 has Suvīdhinātha at its centre. Candraprabha is at the centre in Quintanilla 2009: 202–03, cat. no. S 22.

Another popular organization for these *Caturvīṃśati paṭṭas*, seen in Figure 9, is organized around a group of three standing figures (a *tritīrtha*). This example has Vāsupūjya, number twelve, in the centre, flanked by Vimāla, who follows him, number thirteen, to the left and Dharma, who is number fifteen, to the right.<sup>32</sup> Often, as in this case and others, Pārśva, Supārśva and Ṛṣabha—the only Jinas that are identifiable because they are depicted with their own attributes: snake-hoods for Pārśva and Supārśva<sup>33</sup> and long hair for Ṛṣabha—are not clearly identified when they are small figures that surround the central grouping, so there is a general and appropriate sameness to all of the smaller Jina figures. This is quite different from the historical order of the Mysore painting seen in Plate 2 and the Mount Aṣṭāpada *paṭa* seen in Plate 5.

This grouping with three larger Jinas highlighted in the centre often has Pārśva and Supārśva flanking a central Jina.<sup>34</sup> This makes for a pleasing symmetrical composition with the two snake-hooded figures to either side, but the order of the births of the Jinas is again completely mixed up. Pārśva and Supārśva are numbers seven and twenty-three in the succession.

An impressive bronze (Figure 10) has Ṛṣabha seated in *padmāsana* at its centre.<sup>35</sup> This could imply the historical succession, but he is flanked

<sup>32</sup> The inscription is dated during one of the hot months of VS 1549 corresponding to 1492 CE. The donor was the monk Jinacandradeva in the lineage of Kundakunda in the *Mūla saṃgha* (Del Bontà 2010: 42–43). This image represents the way Digambara Jinas are depicted as nude. Van Alphen 2000: 159, cat. no. 84 illustrates another example with three standing figures in the centre, illustrating the Digambaras preference of the *kāvotsarga* posture to display graphically the nudity of the figures. Śvetāmbara Jainas are, of course, clothed. In Van Alphen, the three are referred to as *ratnatraya* or three jewels.

<sup>33</sup> Snakes figure in the narrative concerning Pārśva (Shah 1987: 170–71) and are probably used for the image of Supārśva due to the similarity of their names, although there is a story of his mother dreaming of lying in the coils of snakes (Shah 1987: 139).

<sup>34</sup> For an example of the two snake-hooded Jinas flanking a central Jina, see Quintanilla 2009: 182–83, cat. no. S 12.

<sup>35</sup> The date of this sculpture is given as a chronogram and not in numerals and according to the museum records, someone in the past apparently interpreted it to be VS 1154 corresponding to 1097 CE, but I have not been able to verify that after consulting with John E. Cort and Phyllis Granoff. The chronogram does not follow any of the usual systems. Cort informed me that the icon was given by the son of Rājimatī, and was consecrated by



9 *Caturvīṃśati paṭṭa*, Gujarat or Rajasthan/India, 1492 CE, copper alloy, 54.6 × 36.8 × 17.1 cm, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, Museum purchase, B69B11. Photo courtesy of Asian Art Museum.

Kakā[sū]ri, who must be Kakkasūri. The name Kakkasūri rotated among the Upakeśa Gaccha *Ācāryas*, and one did take over this sect in VS 1154.



**10** *Caturviṃśati paṭṭa*, Khajurāho area, Madhya Pradesh/India, Candella dynasty, 1097 CE, copper alloy, 29.5 × 19.1 × 9.2 cm, Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Purchase F1993.11. Photo courtesy of Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

by two large standing Jinas: the seven-hooded Pārśva to his right and the five-hooded Supārśva to his left. Added to this central triad the five

repeated small groupings of Jinas in threes, three at the top and two on the sides at the bottom, creates a very different effect, one that includes the entire group, but clearly is not intended to suggest a historical lineage.

#### JINAS IN THE UNIVERSE

As mentioned above, Jinas and Jina images exist elsewhere in the universe. There are many sculptures and paintings that depict such places, especially Nandiśvaradvīpa, the eighth island of the *madhyaloka*, the middle world. This island is illustrated here by a sculptural panel from the Caumukha temple at Ranakpur (Figure 11).<sup>36</sup> Nandiśvaradvīpa contains fifty-two important temples in four groups housing 5,616 Jina images. The gods worship there three times a year (and mendicants with special attainments and the ability to fly can go there to worship these images as well). In our world, representations in paintings and in three-dimensional form make the island accessible to the devout. Again one must realise that these temples are eternal and the images exist out of time. Consequently they transcend the cyclic time of this discussion altogether. We may live in the world of mankind on a tiny part of *Jambūdvīpa* where the successions of twenty-four Jinas follow each other during the half-cycles and another Jina will not be born again for many years, but cosmography works in quite different ways in most of the Jaina universe—time does not change there.

#### SIDDHAPRATIMĀ IMAGES

I end with a short consideration of an important type of Jaina imagery. These are representations of souls that have attained enlightenment—the

<sup>36</sup> Painted examples of Nandiśvaradvīpa are seen in Van Alphen 2000: 48 and Del Bontà 2009: 273, P 27, where one can read descriptions of the island. For sculptural renditions of this holy place and others, see: Shah 1987, figs. 179, Nandiśvaradvīpa; 180, Sammeta Śikhara?; and 181, Aṣṭāpada. See also van Alphen 2000: 77 for a very different sculptural depiction of Nandiśvaradvīpa with multiple three-dimensional temple forms instead of a bas-relief and 161, cat. no. 86, where it is depicted as a three-dimensional shrine. There are also two examples in Pal 1994: 120–21, cat. nos. 11–12. See also Hegewald 2009: 100, fig. 6.17.



11 Nandīśvaradvīpa *paṭṭa*, Caumukha temple, Ranakpura, Rajasthan/India, 15th to 20th century, marble. Photo: author.

*siddhas*. Essentially the illustration of the Jina Nemi's *mokṣa* or liberation from the *Kalpa Sūtra* represents this concept (Figure 8). The figure is seated above a *siddhaśilā*, the wafer-thin curving motif that lets us know that the figure is a bodiless *siddha* and has ascended to the top of the universe. One need not be a Jina to become a *kevalin*, an enlightened being, and attain *mokṣa* in order to become a *siddha*. The Jainas developed an evocative iconographic type to illustrate this *siddha* state for non-Jinas. The soul is bodiless, but retains the shape of a body, so it is illustrated by a cut-out silhouette of a body known as a *Siddhapratimā*. Some simple renditions of a single silhouette have been illustrated in various publications. Figure 12 depicts a more ambitious conception; the *siddha* is framed



12 *Siddhapratimā* shrine, Gujarat or Rajasthan/India, 1333 CE, bronze with traces of gilding and silver inlay, 21.9 × 13.1 × 8.9 cm, Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Purchase F1997.33. Photo courtesy of Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.



by an elaborate shrine.<sup>37</sup> As Padmanabh S. Jaini states, “A siddha, [is] represented as nothing more than an external outline in order to suggest that such beings are without material forms yet retain the shape of their final embodied existence.” (Jaini 1979: 265, pl. 31). They exist out of time, retain the shape of the body, but are bodiless. Transcending this diagram, the *siddhas* exist forever, in a state of timelessness. These silhouettes of liberated souls transcend physical form and everything attached to the living state; they are freed from all activities.

The *siddhas* exist at the top of the universe, an area often suggested in the anthropomorphic diagrams of the *Lokākāśa* by the crescent *siddhaśilā* on its forehead. This is not the case in our example Plate 4, but is amply represented elsewhere.<sup>38</sup>

In this short essay, I have tried to present some common Jaina iconographies in a new way. Starting with a description of the half-cycles, I first contrasted that concept with a few other South Asian creation myths. I have described exactly where the half-cycles function, underscoring their importance for those of us living in the world where they apply, but so clearly of little importance outside this small area of the universe. Some iconographies suggest at least part of these cycles, specifically the depictions of all of the Jinās of our current half-cycle, in their proper historical order. Various other Jaina iconographic types, a vast majority of painted and sculptural representations, clearly negate the cyclic nature of this system. They represent beings that exist out of time, transcending time altogether.

<sup>37</sup> Figure 12 was published in Pal 1994: 124, cat. no. 14. For others see Van Alphen 2000: 183, cat. nos. 107–08. Some sources, such as Shah 1987: 42 and 340 suggest that this is a rather late iconographic type, but this elaborate shrine, dated corresponding to 1333 CE, proves that the depiction of *siddhas* in this manner is of great antiquity. In fact, the way the piece is constructed with the inscription on the surround which encases the *siddha* itself suggests that the cut-out form must be even older and considered important enough to be embellished in this manner. Pal 1994: 258–59 gives a translation of the inscription which can be modified. There the word *parikara* is taken to mean “with attendants”, but it must refer to the ornamental frame in which the older *siddha* has been placed since the inscription is found on the frame itself. My thanks to Phyllis Granoff for consulting with me on this new reading.

<sup>38</sup> For universes in the shape of a human where the *siddhaśilā* is seen, see Cort 2009: 34; Van Alphen 2000: 112–15, cat. nos. 38–40; Pal 1994: 230–33, cat. no. 103a and b; and Doshi 1985: 75, fig. 12.

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## POINT IN TIME VERSUS COURSE OF TIME

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GERD J.R. MEVISSEN

## FIGURATIONS OF TIME AND PROTECTION: SUN, MOON, PLANETS AND OTHER ASTRAL PHENOMENA IN SOUTH ASIAN ART

Since time immemorial man has been impressed by the sky and has watched the ever-moving luminaries, especially the sun, the moon, and the planets, but also the stars with their sparkling spots of light adorning the night sky. Being indicators of time *par excellence*, they have been used for the calculation of time in the human sphere, i.e. days, weeks, months, years, and year cycles. On the other hand, as has been the case also with other natural phenomena such as the elements, in the minds of the people they have been understood as supernatural powers having influence over the life and fate of human beings. It is this astrological connotation which has led to a gradual deification of these powers, and in the prevailing religious system they had to be given an iconic form in order to be pacified and worshipped.

### 1. EARLY IMAGES OF THE SUN-GOD

Of course, the sun is the most prominent celestial body.<sup>1</sup> Early images of the Sun-god Sūrya in the Indian subcontinent date from the beginning of the first century BC onwards.<sup>2</sup> Their iconography was influenced by the Greek tradition, which shows the Sun-god Helios mounted on a chariot drawn by four horses. He came to be known in India probably through

<sup>1</sup> For a useful account of the sun worship in ancient world cultures, see Gail 2010.

<sup>2</sup> For references to the Sun-god in early Indian texts, see e.g. Gail 1978: 333–334.

Graeco-Baktrian coins.<sup>3</sup> An early image of Sūrya is found on a door-lintel in the Jaina Cave 3 (Anantagumphā) at Khandagiri, Orissa.<sup>4</sup> The lintel is partially destroyed and belongs to the second doorway of the cave, which once had four entrances. Technically, the position of the image in the tympanon is called in Sanskrit *lalāṭa-bimba*, i.e. forehead-figure, as it appears on the “forehead” of the sacred space behind.<sup>5</sup> Here, Sūrya on his quadriga is accompanied by two female attendants. The group is flanked on the proper right by a radiating star, on the left by a crescent moon with eight round dots below and one above, obviously indicating stars or planets. An interesting feature is the large demonic figure at the bottom, shown in a moving or flying posture. Unfortunately, we do not know whether another such figure was originally present on the corresponding side. At any rate, this figure probably symbolizes darkness driven away by the light of the rising sun. Its iconography with the oversized head reminds us of the demon Rāhu, who in Indian mythology is thought to be responsible for solar and lunar eclipses.<sup>6</sup>

Similar monstrous figures, though female and of even larger dimensions, are also present beneath the Sūrya group flanking the entrance of the Buddhist Cave 19 at Bhaja in Western India of the first century BC.<sup>7</sup> Two smaller demons of darkness are depicted on the Sūrya image carved on a corner pillar of the railing enclosing the Buddhist compound at Bodhgaya in Bihar,<sup>8</sup> perhaps slightly earlier than the two previous

<sup>3</sup> See Gail 1978: 336, Abb. 7–8 (with further references).

<sup>4</sup> Frequently published; see e.g. Johnston 1939: 2–3, 7 (ill.); Saraswati 1957: pl. VI.36; Mitra 1975: 54, pl. XV.A; Gail 1978: 336, Abb. 5; Sahu 1984: 215, 218 fig. 1, 219–220; Quagliotti 2000: 1151 believes it is a syncretic image; Leoshko 2010: 12, 17 fig. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *lalāṭa* = forehead (Monier-Williams 1899: 898); *bimba* = disk of sun or moon; image (*ibid.*: 731); “*lalāṭabimba (bimba)*” = crest figure, central symbol on door lintel (*EITA* 1988: 404).

<sup>6</sup> See Markel 1990: *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> See Burgess 1910: pl. 178; Johnston 1939: pls. I–II; Gyani 1950–51: 16–17, figs. 4–5; Saraswati 1957: pl. X.49; Rowland 1977: 89, fig. 36; Bautze-Picron 1998a: 8–9, pl. I (with further references); DeCaroli 2000: 271–272, fig. 3; Kannal 2003: *passim*, pl. 40; Srinivasan 2005: 356–360, figs. 5–6; Gupta 2008: 39–40, figs. 15, 17; Gupta 2009: pl. 5.1. The identification of this image as Sūrya is not accepted by some scholars.

<sup>8</sup> Now in the Bodhgaya Museum; see e.g. Rowland 1938: fig. 2; Bussagli 1955: 11–12, fig. 3; Rowland 1977: 90–91, fig. 38; Sivaramamurti 1977: fig. 247; Gail 1978: 225–336, Abb. 3; Leoshko 1991: figs. 1, 3; Srinivasan 1986/1992:

examples. In this image the two female attendants of the Sun-god, now armed with bows, discharge arrows at two figures in the background behind the horses. Interestingly, such demonic figures disappear from the imagery of the Sun-god in India, but they reappear more than 1000 years later in Nepal, where they are frequently found on images of the Sun-god as well as the Moon-god from the 13th century onwards, showing two demonic figures shrinking away from a full-blown lotus, symbol of the sun, beneath the chariot.<sup>9</sup>

All the three early examples have one feature in common: They are placed on the outside of a sacred compound, thus demarcating either the sacrosanct threshold (Khandagiri and Bhaja) or the corner (Bodhgaya), i.e. the most vulnerable parts of the enclosure, and serving to protect the inner space from all kinds of mundane and supernatural intruders. Their occurrence in Buddhist as well as Jaina contexts can probably not be interpreted as indicating that the Sun-god was especially sacred to these religions, since his image is only one of several auspicious and apotropaic motifs,<sup>10</sup> and not a single representation is known that can be regarded as a cult image. However, the position of the image of the Sun-god on the Bodhgaya pillar, just above a panel representing the birth of the Buddha, has been interpreted genealogically as referring to the Buddha's descent from the Sūryavamśa, i.e. the Sun branch of the lineages mentioned in early texts.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. IMAGES OF THE SUN- AND MOON-GODS IN BUDDHIST ART

In the art of Gandhara in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent, the Sun-god is frequently found on capitals, datable to about the third century

64/41, pl. 3/5; Markel 1995: 23, fig. 5; Tanabe 1997/98: 222 (with further references), 231 fig. 22; DeCaroli 2000: 272, fig. 13; Quagliotti 2000: 1125 (with further references). A replica is exhibited in the Indian Museum, Kolkata.

<sup>9</sup> See Mevissen 2006a: 40–42, 46, nos. 69–72, 74–75, 77, 90–91, pls. 48–51, 53–54, 56, 64 (with further references).

<sup>10</sup> Such as guardian figures, erotic images, “Gaja-Lakṣmī” images, and magical decorative patterns.

<sup>11</sup> See Srinivasan 1986/1992. Rowland 1938 argues for an identification of the Buddha with the Sun-god. Leoshko 1991 regards the Bodhgaya Sun figure as hinting to Buddha's enlightenment (cf. also Frenger 2005: 444). See also Quagliotti 2000 for links to the Buddha's first meditation.

AD.<sup>12</sup> As before, he is mounted on his quadriga and accompanied by two female figures. On one capital<sup>13</sup> we notice two additional flying figures at the top corners as well as a single wheel at the very bottom. This is the single wheel of the solar chariot, already mentioned in the oldest textual references in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>14</sup> Above the wheel we also notice a bird at the head of the chariot. This is perhaps the earliest occurrence of Aruṇa, the personification of dawn and brother of the solar bird Garuḍa, who in later images of the Sun-god functions as Sūrya's charioteer.<sup>15</sup> Though the original architectural context of these capitals is not known, the fact that they are carved only on one side suggests that they once formed part of wall-pilasters facing outwards, i.e., they probably demarcated the threshold as was the case with the early reliefs.

Thousands of relief panels depicting different scenes of the life of the Buddha were carved in Gandhara. Among these, one episode is explicitly connected with a threshold, namely the Great Renunciation immediately preceding the Great Departure, when Siddhārtha, during night-time, decided to leave his palace and abandon worldly life. The event took place when he had attained the age of twenty-nine years, which is, astrologically, a very crucial time in the life of human beings.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, this seems to be the only scene in the whole array of Gandharan imagery where celestial bodies are depicted. In the relief from Jamrud,<sup>17</sup> the Bodhisatva is just stepping down from the bed to leave the palace and his sleeping wife. Above the balcony we see five divine characters peering over the balustrade; in the

<sup>12</sup> For a list of ten such capitals, see Mevissen in press: note 13. See also Shah 2010: 287–289, figs. 1–2.

<sup>13</sup> Now in the Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, 11×49.2 cm; see *GSR* 2002: cat. 170; *GABS* 2007–08: 113, cat. 85.

<sup>14</sup> For references see e.g. Markel 1995: 24 and Gail 2010a.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Mevissen 2008b: 51; Mevissen 2009a: 102–103.

<sup>16</sup> After 29 years the planet Saturn completes the first full revolution in the horoscope.

<sup>17</sup> National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi (507; 61.5×46.5×9.5 cm); Grünwedel 1900: 121, no. 62; Grünwedel & Burgess 1901: 128–131, ill. 81 (drawing); Bloch 1908: 648 ff.; Foucher 1918: 162–163, fig. 391; Ingholt & Lyons 1957: 58–59, no. 39 A-B (with further references); *GAP* 1984: 52–53, 160, 228, cat. II-8; Nehru 1989: fig. 111; Tanabe 1997/98: 215, 228 fig. 7; *BSBAA* 1998: 115, 212, cat. 86; *AGP* 2002: 38–39, 120, cat. 21; *Gandhara* 2008: 222, Kat.Nr. 156; Mevissen in press: fig. 1. A plaster replica of the panel is kept in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (GD 18); cf. Majumdar 1937: 42, no. 31; Sengupta & Das 1991: 145, no. 1.

centre is the head of a bull, probably symbolizing the zodiac sign Taurus, the birth sign of Siddhārtha; the bull is flanked by two nimbate heads, obviously the two luminaries—the Sun on the proper right with a full round halo, the Moon with a semicircular halo—and two further heads.<sup>18</sup>

In another example the night-time of the incident is even more strongly hinted at.<sup>19</sup> Here the centre of a row of five characters is occupied by a flying figure of the Greek Moon-goddess Selene in her well-known Graeco-Roman iconography with a billowing cloth above her head,<sup>20</sup> which seems to be backed by a flatly carved crescent, and a more prominent crescent moon projecting from the roof below further corroborates her identity. The Sun-god to her left is identifiable by his pointed Scythian cap, while the Moon-god to her right is shown with a brahmanic hair-style. That the figures above the roof of the pavilion are indeed located in the sky is further indicated by the interruption of the architectural decorative frame in the top centre of the panel. Thus, in these scenes the celestial bodies, especially the Sun and the Moon flanking another central figure, signify not only the time of the occurrence, which according to legends took place when the full moon, i.e. the opposition between sun and moon, occurred in the month of Vaiśākha (March–April),<sup>21</sup> but they also symbolize on the one hand the real threshold between the palace and the outer world and on the other the psychological threshold on the edge between one life period and another.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The six-petalled flower immediately above the bull's head may also bear astral significance, as such a decorative motif does not appear in this position on other panels.

<sup>19</sup> Now in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin (I 5937); see Weis 2000: 30, no. 41 (photo mirror-reversed); Johne 2004: 223, fig. 3; Mevissen in press: fig. 6.

<sup>20</sup> For a list of Gandharan panels depicting the Great Departure of the Bodhisatva which include representations of Selene, see Mevissen in press: note 3. See also Tanabe 1997/98: 217–219, figs. 15–20 (with further references).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Grünwedel & Burgess 1901: 130–131; Mevissen in press: note 1.

<sup>22</sup> For other examples of the Great Renunciation scene with astral figures or symbols above, see e.g.: (1) Musée Guimet, Paris (4052; H. 27 cm); three figures, Candra in centre; Hackin 1923: 22, pl. II.a; Auboyer 1982, pl. 36; Tanabe 1997/98: 215, 228 fig. 8; (2) from Gumbat, Swat; Victoria & Albert Museum, London (I.M.91–1939; fragment, 10.5 × 18 cm); Candra (in centre?) and two nimbate figures (of originally five figures?); Barger & Wright 1941: 58, no. 75, pl. III.4; Ackermann 1975: 52–53, pl. IVb; (3) Private collection,

That the Moon-god played not an unimportant role in Gandharan imagery can be deduced from the existence of one of the earliest independent images of that god, a sculpture hailing from Jamalgarhi.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately his hand attributes are destroyed. Although the figure is shown—like the early images of the Sun-god—seated on a quadriga, his identity as the Moon-god is deducible from the crescent behind his shoulders. At the bottom is seen a half-kneeling Atlas, and only two left feet remain of two other figures, all difficult to identify.

In a later image of the Moon-god from the north-western region he is again identified through the crescent behind his shoulders.<sup>24</sup> Here he holds a spear in his left hand, and his chariot is drawn—perhaps for the first time—by seven geese,<sup>25</sup> directed by a male charioteer. Seven geese as draught animals of Candra's chariot become a usual iconographic device only much later in Nepal, as is seen for example on a sculpture from Patan dated 1426 AD<sup>26</sup> where the Moon-god is surrounded by the other eight planetary deities. The tiny *linga* (sign of the God Śiva) at the apex points to a Śaiva context for this image.

Japan, 15 × 19 cm; 3 figures, Candra in centre; Kurita 1988/2003: 71, pl. 141; (4) Private collection, Europe, H. 70 cm; row of 8 and 9 disks with crescent moon in centre; Kurita 1988/2003: 74, pl. P2-II; (5) probably from Zurumkot; private collection, Japan, H. 18 cm; crescent moon and 6 stars; Kurita 1988/2003: 72, pl. 142; (6) from Jamalgarhi; Indian Museum, Kolkata (G 5 / A 23259); with 8 flowers above; *TWB* 1993: 26, cat. 10; Klimburg-Salter 1995: 182, 275, cat. 160; (7) Peshawar Museum; 2+2 figures (damaged); Kurita 1988/2003: 72, pl. 143. For a study of these and some other panels, see Mevissen in press: figs. 1–13.

<sup>23</sup> Indian Museum, Kolkata (G 58/A 23236; 20.2 × 12.5 × 6.1 cm); Majumdar 1937: 113, 123, no. 154; Rowland 1938: fig. 5; Banerjea 1948: 59; Bussagli 1955: 18, 13 fig. 4; Sengupta & Das 1991: 51, no. 87; *LoS* 2003: 118, col.pl.; Quagliotti 2000: 1144–1148, fig. 17 (with further references) considers it as a syncretic image of Siddhārtha and Candra; Zhu 2006: 686–687, 709, 712, fig. 4.

<sup>24</sup> H. 40 cm; cf. Eskenazi 1993–94.

<sup>25</sup> In Bamiyan, Afghanistan, there are at least two paintings in which Candra's chariot is drawn by geese: in Cave K3 by two geese (Tarzi 1983: 26 & figs. 6, 10d, 12; Quagliotti 2000: 1151, fig. 18; Zhu 2006: 687, 710, 713, fig. 5.b), in Cave M by four geese (Tarzi 1983: 26 & fig. 10e; Zhu 2006: 687, 709, 712, fig. 5.a).

<sup>26</sup> From Saugal Tole; Patan Museum (SS 335; 55 × 41 cm); Mevissen 2004a: 131, 140, no. C4, pl. 17.20; Mevissen 2006a: 42, no. 76, pl. 55; Mevissen 2008–09: 68, 77, note 69 (with further references), pl. XII, fig. 2. For similar examples see Mevissen 2006a: nos. 74, 75, 77, 90, pls. 53, 54, 56, 64.

The crescent as an iconographic marker of the Moon-god was introduced in South Asia around the middle of the second century AD through gold coins issued by the Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniṣka, which are inscribed with the god's Bactrian name Mao (Māh).<sup>27</sup> He wears a long tunic and boots like the emperor himself. The attribute held in his right hand is a long sceptre. The representation of the Sun-god on Kaniṣka's gold coins, bearing the inscribed Bactrian name Miuro in Indo-Greek characters, is quite similar, the main difference being the radiating nimbus of the latter.<sup>28</sup> None of them, however, is equipped with a chariot, denoting an Iranian rather than a Greek origin of this iconography.

In Mathura, the Indian capital of the Kuṣāṇa empire, a large number of images of the Sun-god were produced. They constitute a new iconography, squatting on the ground<sup>29</sup> and holding a lotus flower(?) in the right hand and a dagger in the left. In the sculpture from Kankali Tila,<sup>30</sup> a Zoroastrian fire altar is shallowly carved in the centre of the pedestal. The Sun-god wears a moustache, and his head was originally backed by a large nimbus, of which only traces remain.<sup>31</sup> The close connection of the Sun-god to the imperial rulers of Mathura can also be deduced from the two damaged lions on the sides indicating that he is placed on a lion

<sup>27</sup> Mao coin, British Museum, London (1879.5.1.4; diam. 18 mm, 7.4 g); Markel 1995: 36, fig. 9; *Gandhara* 2008: 146, Kat.Nr. 79. See also Banerjea 1948: 69, 97–98 and Pandey 1971: 74, pl. 6B (2).

<sup>28</sup> Miuro coin, British Museum, London (1894.5.6.17; diam. 21 mm, 7.91 g); *Gandhara* 2008: 145, Kat.Nr. 78; Pandey 1971: 74, pl. 6B (2).

<sup>29</sup> Quite similar to images of the Kuṣāṇa rulers who, however, are depicted as squatting on a throne; cf. Gail 1994: 213 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Mathura Museum (12.269); Rosenfield 1967: fig. 43; Sharma 1976: 52, fig. 38; Mode 1986: 56–60, Tafel 32; Markel 1995: 26, fig. 7; Gupta 2009: pl. 5.2; Frenger 2010: 95, 100, fig. 9; Gail 2010b: 155, pl. XX, fig. 3. See also the image in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1972.45); Harle 1974: 44, fig. 51; Pal 1978: 59, cat. 5; Harle & Topsfield 1987: cat. 25; Klimburg-Salter 1995: 231, 290–291, cat. 222. For another image in the Mathura Museum (16.1215), see Gail 1994: 213–214, fig. 18.1; Gail 2010b: pl. XXII, fig. 5. See also the Gokarṇeśvara colossus; Gail 1994: *passim*, figs. 18.2, 18.4; Rosenfield 1967: 148 f., figs. 11 & 11a; Gupta 2009: pl. 5.5; Gail 2010b: 155, pl. XXI, fig. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Two more examples of this type are in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (DSAL-AIIS 35491; 35492) and two fragments are in private collections (Sotheby's London, 23.11.1987: lot 267; Sotheby's London, 18.04.1983: lot 129), the latter preserving only the pedestal with the seven horses drawing the chariot, which will become the standard for Sūrya images in the following centuries.

throne, a royal sign *par excellence*. These images seem to confirm the existence of a cult of the Sun-god in Mathura, closely connected to the Kuṣāṇa dynastic cult in which the monarch was deified and worshipped in royal shrines.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the two luminaries are even depicted as crowning a Kuṣāṇa ruler on the Kaniṣka reliquary casket.<sup>33</sup>

Briefly returning to the above-mentioned sculpture of the Moon-god from Jamalgarhi, an interesting feature is the depiction of the wings of the horses, issuing from above the forelegs. One could be tempted to regard these wings as foreshadowing the geese that became his draught animals in later times. However, winged horses are also shown in what was probably the largest painting of the Sun-god ever executed in South Asia, namely the mural located in the vaulted ceiling immediately above the head of the colossal eastern Buddha at Bamiyan,<sup>34</sup> i.e. the smaller one of 'only' 38 m height, which was completely destroyed in March 2001 by Taliban iconoclasts. The large painting originally measured ca. 8 by 4 m, but no traces of it remain today.<sup>35</sup> Even before the blast, the painting was badly damaged, but still, after about 1400 years, the outline and general appearance of the Sun-god could be well distinguished. He stands in front of a large sun-disk and holds a long spear in his right hand while his

<sup>32</sup> The Rabatak inscription of the early regnal time of Kaniṣka mentions a royal shrine in which images of several gods, among them Miuro, were erected and worshipped. On some coins of Huviṣka, Miuro is even represented as a king; cf. *Gandhara* 2008: 122–124.

<sup>33</sup> See Czuma 1985: 31, fig. 9A, and p. 139.

<sup>34</sup> For a photo showing the eastern Buddha at Bamiyan before destruction, see *Gandhara* 2008: 34, Abb. 4. For a photo of the same Buddha after destruction, see Petzet 2009: 50. See also Mevissen in press: fig. 14.

<sup>35</sup> For the Sūrya painting at Bamiyan, see Godard & Godard & Hackin 1928: 21–23, fig. 6 (drawing), pls. XXI, XXII (replica painting); Rowland 1938: *passim*, fig. 1 (drawing); Bussagli 1955: 13, fig. 3 [=5]; Rowland 1977: 174–176, fig. 119 (replica painting); Tarzi 1977: col.pl. C2 & pl. IA (drawing); Klimkeit 1983: 18, fig. 2 (drawing); Goldman 1988: 98–99, fig. 20 (drawing); Klimburg-Salter 1989: 154–155, pl. XLIII, figs. 50–51; Grenet 1993: 88, fig. 1 (drawing); 1994: 45, fig. 11 (drawing); 1995: 109, fig. 4 (drawing); Zhu 2006: 687, 699, 710, 716, fig. 19 (drawing); *GABS* 2007–08: 154–155, figs. 8 & 10 (drawing). See also Tarzi 1983: 26 & notes 27 and 28 for further references; figs. 6, 10a & 11 for the Sūrya painting in Cave K3, where he flanks, together with Candra on the opposite side (cf. *supra*, note 25), the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha; fig. 10b for the Sūrya painting in Cave M; and fig. 10c for the Sūrya painting in Cave 32.

left hand holds a sword. He is accompanied by two standing attendants armed with bow and arrow; at least the one on the proper right seems to be female. The whole group is mounted on a two-wheeled chariot drawn by four horses with well recognizable wings. In the upper corners are two flying figures with a pointed coiffure holding billowing scarves. Below are two other flying figures with bird tails.<sup>36</sup>

Taking a closer look at the position of the Sun-god in the vault, we notice that he is not painted exactly above the Buddha's head, but brought a little forward, i.e. he is depicted just above his forehead. Thus the image of the Sun-god can be regarded as a *lalāṭa-bimba*, a "forehead-figure", both architecturally—like the image in the Jaina cave at Khandagiri, Orissa—and also pictorially, for the Buddha below. An enigmatic female head from Mathura provides evidence that images of the Sun-god were even directly worn as emblems on the forehead,<sup>37</sup> constituting a literal representation of the term *lalāṭa-bimba*.<sup>38</sup> In Indian culture, the forehead has always been regarded as that part of the body that is especially related to destiny and fate and thus has to be protected from evil forces, a function which is evidently served by the figures of the Sun-god at Bamiyan and on the forehead of the lady from Mathura.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> The heads of all these figures are backed by round haloes. Further, there are four ball-like circles in the periphery, two in the upper part and two just above the wheels, thus bringing the number of additional characters and symbols to a total of eight, a number suggestive of the eight other planetary deities, which together with the Sun-god constitute the group of Navagrahas (NG). The concept of NG was already established by the time the Bamiyan painting was executed, which was probably around 600 AD.

<sup>37</sup> State Museum, Lucknow (46.80; H. ca. 25 cm); Rosenfield 1967: 192, fig. 18; Frenger 2005: 445.

<sup>38</sup> Compare also the standing Bodhisatva sculpture from Gandhara in the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada (ROM 939.17.8; 122 × 45 × 20 cm). He wears a turban displaying on the crest an image on a quadriga, either the Sun- or the Moon-god; see Rowland 1938: fig. 7; Jongeward 2003: 63–67, cat. 8. Quagliotti 2000: 1141–1144, figs. 13–14 (with further references) argues for an identification of the crest figure as Candra. For another Bodhisatva with Candra in the headdress, see Quagliotti 2000: 1140–1141, fig. 11 (Japanese collection), and with Sūrya in a detached turban, *ibid.*: 1151–1152, fig. 19 (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1997.226).

<sup>39</sup> There are still open questions regarding this enigmatic figure, who also shows a recumbent bull and other symbols on her head.

The winged horses seen with the Moon-god from Jamalgarhi and the Sun-god from Bamiyan do not seem to have entered the iconographic repertoire of India proper. They were, however, transmitted to Nepal, where *maṇḍalas* of the Sun-god, both from Buddhist and even more from Brahmanical contexts, show winged horses as draught animals of Sūrya's chariot; see for example the Buddhist Sūryamaṇḍala, in fact the only such image in stone known so far, with a small figure of Buddha Amitābha at the apex indicating its Buddhist context.<sup>40</sup> In a similar *maṇḍala* from the Indreśvara temple at Panauti, the Śaiva affiliation is indicated by a small Śiva-*liṅga* at the apex.<sup>41</sup> Otherwise both images are very similar in showing the Sun-god in the centre surrounded by the other eight planetary deities.

The representation of the Sun- and Moon-gods and the panels depicting the Great Renunciation clearly indicate that in Gandhara, gods derived from celestial bodies were applied in a Buddhist context, albeit on a rather limited scale.<sup>42</sup> In India such images appear even less frequently in a Buddhist context. One example is a fragmentary door lintel from the Huvīṣka Vihāra at Jamalpur, Mathura.<sup>43</sup> In the upper row it shows important events from the life of the Buddha, with an image of the Sun-god seated on his quadriga in the extreme right corner. His position at the beginning of the Buddha's life events—obviously the sequence has to be read from right to left—suggests the interpretation that the Sun-god symbolizes the birth of the Buddha. Since the left part of the lintel is missing, we do not know whether an image of the Moon-god was carved

<sup>40</sup> Now in the National Museum of Nepal, Kathmandu (27/155, Ser.no. 54); Mevissen 2008–09: 65–70, 76–85, pl. X, figs. 3–4.

<sup>41</sup> See Mevissen 2006a: 40, no. 70 (with further references), pl. 49. For similar Sūrya figures with winged horses in stone, bronze and painting, see *ibid.*: pls. 45, 48, 50, 51, 52; Mevissen 2008–09: pls. XI fig. 2, XIII figs. 1, 3–4, XV fig. 3.

<sup>42</sup> For references to inscriptions and Buddhist texts referring to the Buddha and the sun/moon, see Quagliotti 2000: 1148–1150.

<sup>43</sup> Now in the State Museum, Lucknow (B.208; L. ca. 152 cm); Banerji 1930: 105, fig. [3]; Rowland 1938: fig. 6; Takata & Ueno 1966: front cover & col.pl. 7 & pl. 144; Rosenfield 1967: 239, figs. 40–40b; Rowland 1977: 160, fig. 104; *Rare Sculptures* 1984: 20, pl. 18; Srinivasan 1986/1992: *passim*, pl. 1/3; Nehru 1989: fig. 90; Markel 1995: 10, fig. 2; Bautze-Picron 1998a: 32–33 (with further references), pl. XVI.b (detail); Zhu 2006: 686, 709, 711, fig. 3; Frenger 2005: 444–445, fig. 2; Kaushik 2007: pl. 15. For a drawing of the fragment see Wiesner 1978: 58, fig. 18.

at the other end of the sequence.<sup>44</sup> The lower row preserves four images of the Seven Buddhas of the Past followed by Maitreya, the future Buddha.<sup>45</sup>

Several fragments of door lintels with images of the Seven Past Buddhas and Maitreya are known from Mathura. One example again hails from Jamalpur, preserving the beginning of the sequence with the first five Buddhas flanked by an adorer, all standing,<sup>46</sup> while another one from an unspecified site in Mathura shows the last three Buddhas and Maitreya seated, as well as a kneeling adorer.<sup>47</sup> All these lintels date from the Kuṣāṇa period, ca. second to third century AD.<sup>48</sup> In Ajanta the group

<sup>44</sup> Compare the well-known long panel (26×393 cm) from Garhwa (often referred to as 'lintel', which seems improbable; cf. Williams 1982: 153, note 163), now in the State Museum, Lucknow (B.223a,b,c), with corresponding figures of Sūrya and Candra at the extreme ends; see Cunningham 1880: 13–14, pl. VII; Joshi 1972: 85–87, 97–98, pl. 3 & figs. 8, 20; Williams 1973: 237, pl. 12; Harle 1974: 47, pls. 71–78; Williams 1982: 153 notes 163 & 165, 154 notes 166 & 168; Kramrisch 1983: 195–197; Frenger 2005: 444.

<sup>45</sup> For recent studies of representations of the Seven Buddhas and Maitreya, see Zin 2003: 457–469, and Rhie 2008: *passim*, esp. 41–53.

<sup>46</sup> Now in the Mathura Museum (P1), 63×121×22 cm; Williams 1982: pl. 2; Srinivasan 1990: 65, fig. 14. For a reconstruction of the portal frame see Wiesner 1978: 57, fig. 17.

<sup>47</sup> Now in the State Museum, Lucknow (B.182), 30×78×16 cm; see Vogel 1930: 33, pl. XXII.a; Klimburg-Salter 1995: 129, 253–254, cat. 76 (with further references).

<sup>48</sup> For slabs of the Seven Buddhas from Gandhara, see e.g. (1) from Hoti Mardan; Peshawar Museum (PM-3091, old no. 2108); *Gandhara* 2008: 270, Kat.Nr. 188; (2) Central Museum, Lahore (G-1285, old nos. GR-21, 2068); *Gandhara* 2008: 270, Kat.Nr. 189; (3) Christie's New York, 21.03.2007: lot 226; (4) *in situ* at Takht-i-bahi, Peshawar; Behrendt 2004: fig. 51; Rhie 2008: fig. 7.—For later slabs from Eastern India, see e.g. (5) from Bodhgaya; Indian Museum, Kolkata (B.G.83); Banerji 1933: 37, 85, pl. XIV.e; *TWB* 1993: 51, cat. 78; (6) from Bodhgaya; Indian Museum, Kolkata (B.G.133); Banerji 1933: 85, pl. XXXI.b; Nagar 2010: 281–371, pl. 305; (7) from Nalanda; State Museum, Lucknow (60.342); DSAL/AIIS 049925; (8) at Sarnath; Pandey 1996–97: fig. 54.—See also Zin 2003: 457–469, figs. 1–6; Rhie 2008: 51, fig. 11 for an example from Kansu, NW China, dated 428 AD; and Yaldiz 2000: 241–242, cat. 353 for an example from Khocho (Xinjiang).—For a directional *maṇḍala* arrangement of the Seven Buddhas and Maitreya as bronze figures, see Indrajī 1881–82: 297–301, pls. V–XII; Desai 1986: 12–13, fig. a, pls. II–VII.A; Desai 1989: 81, figs. 21, 23–25.—For a 12th-century Pāla miniature painting on a wooden book cover, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (20.589), see Kossak & Singer 1998: 32–33, col.fig. 15;

is painted above the doorway of Cave 17, datable to around 470 AD.<sup>49</sup> It has been suggested that the Seven Buddhas of the Past might be related to the seven luminaries visible to the naked eye, i.e. the Sun, the Moon, and the five planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn,<sup>50</sup> and their position above the entrance to sacred compounds coincides with the position of the Sun-god seen in the previous examples. This row of eight figures can perhaps be regarded as a precursor of the row of planetary deities adorning the entrance of hundreds, if not thousands, of temples from the late Gupta period, i.e. from about 500 AD onwards.

### 3. IMAGES OF THE NINE PLANETARY DEITIES (NAVAGRAHA)

As pointed out by Stephen Markel (1995: 2–3), “[...] the origin of the Indian representations of the planetary deities was directly dependent upon a specific historical event: the introduction and adoption of the Western seven-day week. This calendrical system entered India in the early fourth century AD via the trade routes from the Roman empire. It was imported as a corollary to Hellenistic astronomical theory, which was embraced by the ancient Indians because its precision in computing the positions of

Bautze-Picron 2009: 7, App. 2, no. 1 (with further references). For another painted wooden cover, originally belonging to the “Vredenburg Manuscript” kept in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (I.S.4–10.1958), which is dated to the regnal year 36 of Rāmapāla (ca. 1116 AD), but presently of unknown location, see Bautze-Picron 2009: 3, pl. 1.1 (with further references). For a 12th/13th century painted wooden book cover from Nepal, see Grönbold 1991: 26–28, no. 2; Mevissen 2004b: 49 Abb. 2, 59–60; Mevissen 2006b: 78, no. 1. See also the following note.

<sup>49</sup> See e.g. Indrajī 1881–82: 301–302, pls. XVII–XVIII; Burgess 1910: 22, pl. 197; Yazdani 1946: 77–78, pls. LXIX–LXX; Singh 1965: pls. 55–56; Ghosh 1967: pl. LXII; Takata & Taeda 1971: pls. 21–22; Mackenzie & Taeda 1983: 130–131 (col.pl.); Markel 1995: 10–11, fig. 3; *EITA* 1988: pls. 5, 6, 141; Okada & Nou 1991: 158, col.pls. on pp. 4 (detail), 159 (detail) & 160–161; Pant & Nou 1998: 55, col.pl.; Zin 2003: 457 (with further references), 468, no. 47.1, pl. 27. Another row is found in Ajanta's Cave 22 (Zin 2003: 457–458, 468, no. 47.2, pl. 37).

<sup>50</sup> As has been suggested by von Simson (1981) on the basis of textual studies; the links are as follows: Vipaśyin/Moon, Śikhin/Mars, Viśvabhū/Mercury, Krakucchanda/Jupiter, Kanakamuni/Venus, Kāśyapa/Saturn, Gautama/Sun.



the planets enabled them to cast horoscopes with greater accuracy and make long-term predictions of astrological omens [...]. The correlation of the seven-day week and the representations of the planetary deities is indicated by the exactly coinciding commencement, distribution, and frequency rate of the known inscriptions that mention the name of a weekday and the surviving sculptures of the deities, who are believed to preside over specific days of the week.”

Thus, from the very beginning the Grahas are invariably depicted in the temporal order starting with the Sun-god Sūrya (Sunday), proceeding with the Moon-god Candra (Monday), Maṅgala (Mars, Tuesday), Budha (Mercury, Wednesday), Bṛhaspati (Jupiter, Thursday), Śukra (Venus, Friday), Śani (Saturn, Saturday), and ending with two additional Grahas, namely Rāhu, the demon responsible for solar and lunar eclipses, and Ketu, the personification of comets. Though Rāhu and Ketu are not astral bodies in the narrow sense, in the Indian tradition they are considered as planetary deities.<sup>51</sup> These nine characters are collectively called *navagrahas*, “nine seizers”, pointing to their astrological significance.

In early representations of the Navagrahas only Sūrya, the first in the row, and Rāhu, the eighth, are generally shown with individual features: Sūrya is always depicted in a strictly frontal view symmetrically holding two lotuses in his hands,<sup>52</sup> while Rāhu’s image consists only of an oversized head without a lower body. In later images two more Grahas become iconographically distinct: Śani, the seventh, can easily be identified by his crippled leg, referring to the fact that he is the slowest moving planet,<sup>53</sup> and Ketu at the end is either male or female, often with a serpentine tail and snake-hood denoting his comet-like character. The other five Grahas generally resemble each other very much and can be identified merely by their position within the group; only in later representations from Eastern India, especially from Bengal, are they also distinguishable by individual features.<sup>54</sup>

### 3.1. NAVAGRAHAS IN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

In the formative phase, ca. 500–600 AD, seven or eight planetary deities, i.e. the seven luminaries and Rāhu, the demon of eclipses, begin to appear

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Markel 1990 & 1995: 55–67.

<sup>52</sup> For the general characteristics of Sūrya images, see Mevissen 2008b & 2009a: 99–103.

<sup>53</sup> On Śani’s iconography see Mevissen 1997a: 124–134 and 2000: *passim*.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Mevissen 2011: *passim*.

on lintels of Brahmanical temples in Northern India, from Gujarat and Rajasthan in the West to Orissa in the East.<sup>55</sup> By about 600 AD the group reaches its final number of nine by including Ketu, the personification of comets.<sup>56</sup>

In a lintel of one of the temples at Batesvar (also: Batesara) near Gwalior, Ketu is shown as the eighth rather than the ninth member of the group; he resembles a small indistinct lump, apparently representing a figure with hands joined in *añjalimudrā* turned towards Rāhu’s face (Figure 1). The same position of Ketu, i.e. before Rāhu, is found on another, detached lintel at the same site (Figure 2), in which the group of Grahas is followed by the group of seven dancing mother goddesses (Saptamātṛkā) led by Śiva-Viṇādhara, while the register below depicts another group of deities, the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu (Daśāvatāra), followed by two figures in an adoring pose (donors?).<sup>57</sup> Whereas the combination with the Daśāvatāras occurs repeatedly at Batesvar, but not



1 Temple at Batesvar, M.P., ca. ninth century, temple door with Navagrahas in upper lintel, full view and detail. Note the unusual position of Ketu before Rāhu at the end of the row. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

<sup>55</sup> See Markel 1995: 85–97, illustrating examples from M.P. (figs. 15–17), U.P. (figs. 19–21), Gujarat (fig. 22), and Orissa (fig. 23).

<sup>56</sup> This applies only to Brahmanical images from Central and Western India. The Jains were reluctant to accept the ninth Graha Ketu; thus, in Jain art, especially from Orissa and Western India, Ketu is generally represented only from about the eleventh century onwards.

<sup>57</sup> Listed in Mevissen 2010a: 263, no. I.4.6.

so often in other regions,<sup>58</sup> the combination with the Saptamātrkās is frequently found on many lintels from Central India. In another example at Batesvar the seated mother goddesses, flanked by Viṇādhara and Gaṇeśa, occupy the topmost register (Figure 3); here Ketu is apparently reduced



2 Detached lintel from a ruined temple at Batesvar, M.P., ca. ninth century, showing Navagrahas, again with Ketu before Rāhu, followed by dancing Saptamātrkās in the upper row, and Daśāvatāras below. Photo: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.



3 Ruined temple at Batesvar, M.P., ca. ninth century, with lintel showing seated Saptamātrkās in the upper row and Navagrahas below. Note Ketu's shape as a tiny indistinct figure above Rāhu's head. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

<sup>58</sup> For three more examples from Batesvar see Markel 1995: fig. 38 (= Parimoo 2000: fig. 421), Parimoo 2000: fig. 480, Mevissen 2010a: 263, no. I.4.7 (not ill.). For other lintels combining Daśāvatāras and NG see Mevissen 2010a: 262–263, nos. I.2.4–5, I.4.10, 15–17; Sotheby's New York, 30.11.1982: lot 241.

to a tiny, indistinct figure rising from Rāhu's head. Still another lintel at Batesvar places Ketu correctly at the end of the Graha sequence, his head marked with a tiny snake-hood (Figure 4); this lintel too continues with the Saptamātrkā group flanked by Śiva-Viṇādhara and Gaṇeśa. Another group of deities is combined with the Navagrahas on a lintel of a later temple at Batesvar; here the eight bull-headed Vasus (Aṣṭavasus), a class of divine beings connected with atmospheric powers, occupy the register above the Grahas (Figure 5).



4 Temple at Batesvar, M.P., ca. ninth century, with lintel showing Navagrahas followed by seated Saptamātrkās. Note Ketu's correct position after Rāhu. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.



5 Ruined temple at Batesvar, M.P., ca. tenth-eleventh century, with lintel showing seated bull-headed Aṣṭavasus above and standing Navagrahas below. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

This small series should suffice to illustrate the ubiquitous presence of the Grahas on door-lintels of Brahmanical temples.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, they also

**59** For some more lintels with Graha figures, see e.g. Markel 1995: figs. 15–16 (AG: Nachna Kuthara), 17 (SG: Pipariya), 21 (NG: U.P.), 23 (AG: Lakṣmaṇeśvara T., Bhubaneswar), 25 (NG: U.P.), 29 (NG: Rajasthan), 30 (NG: Svarṇajāleśvara T., Bhubaneswar), 31 (AG: Paraśurāmeśvara T., Bhubaneswar), 34–35 (NG: Central India), 37 (NG: Batesvar), 39 (NG: Rajasthan), 40 (NG: Acaleśvara Mahādeva T., Bhitu), 41 (NG: Kālikā Mātā T., Chittorgarh), 42 (NG: Mandor, = *EITA* 1991: pl. 286), 43 (AG: Piplādmātā T., Pipad, = *EITA* 1991: pl. 328), 44 (SG: Sūrya T. 1, Osian, = *EITA* 1991: pl. 319), 45 (NG: Śiva T., Bhundana), 46 (NG: Old T., Than), 47 (NG: T. 6, Roda), 50 (AG: Tāleśvara T., Bhubaneswar), 51 (AG: Madhukeśvara T., Mukhalingam); *EITA* 1991: pls. 91–92 (NG: Sūrya T., Umri; = Gail 2010b: pl. XXXVI, fig. 22), 96 (NG: Sūrya T., Madkheda), 116 (NG: Kakudeśvara T., Pathari), 118 (NG: Śiva T., Pathari), 132 (NG: Jarāi-kā-maṭh, Barwasagar), 147 (NG: Vaidyanātha T., Baijnath), 165 (NG: brick T., Nimiyakheda), 169 (NG: fragment from Ahar), 208–209 (NG: Śakti T., Chatrarhi), 286 (NG: Mandor), 312, 316, 319 (SG: Sūrya T. 1, Osian), 328 (AG: Piplādmātā T., Pipad), 335 (NG: Sūrya T. 2, Osian), 344 (SG: Viṣṇu T. 1, Osian), 355 (NG: Phāmsanā shrine next to Devī shrine, Osian), 377 (NG: Mahādeva T., Bhitu), 407 (NG: Harihara T. 2, Osian), 432 (NG: Śiva T. 1, Osian), 448 (NG: Harihara T. 3, Osian), 467 (NG: Pīpalādevī T., Osian), 483 (NG: Kāmeśvara T., Auwa), 560 (NG: Śiva T., Bhundana), 590 (NG: Viṣṇu T. 2, Osian), 627 (NG: Mahānāleśvara T., Menal), 699 (NG: southern *garbhagrha* of triple shrine of south group, Amvan), 785 (NG: T. 6, Roda), 833 (NG: Brahmāṇasvāmī T., Varman), 854 (NG: Sūrya T., Methan), 855 (NG: Śiva T., Methan), 897 (AG: Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara T., Bhubaneswar), 901 (AG: Bṛṅgeśvara T., Bajrakot), 908 (AG: Somanātha T., Baramba), 941 (NG: T. 1, Jayati), 946 (NG: Someśvara T., Mukhalingam), 974 (NG: Nīlakaṇṭheśvara T., Narayanapuram); *EITA* 1998: pls. 20 (NG: T. 5 of Daśāvātāra group, Badoh), 23 (NG: T. 20, Deogarh), 30–31 (NG: Śiva and Brahmā shrines, Dudhahi), 40 (NG: Asapuri), 50–51 (NG: T. 2 and 1, Survaya), 117 (NG, reverse order, Śiva T., Nota), 127 (NG: Śiva T., Marai), 139 (NG: Golā Maṭh, Maihar), 162 (NG: Jaina T., Bilhari), 166–167, 173 (NG: Śiva T., Kodal), 198 (NG: Lakṣmaṇa T., Khajuraho), 214 (NG: Ghaṇṭai T., Khajuraho), 246 (NG: Viśvanātha T., Khajuraho), 265 (NG: Kākorā Bābā T., Bahua), 327 (NG: Nīmājmātā T., Nimaj), 358 (NG: Kheḍeśvara T., Nadalai), 411 (NG: Ambikā T., Jagat), 441 (NG: Sās T., Nagda), 629–630, 632 (NG: Āmthermātā T. complex, Vadnagar), 644 (NG: Śītalāmātā T., Vadnagar), 683 (NG: Mūleśvara Mahādeva T., Padan), 688 (NG: Viṣṇu T., Sander), 701 (NG: Viṣṇu T. 1 in Sacciyāmātā T. complex, Osian), 751 (NG: Kakoni), 774 (NG: Narasiṃha T., Kakoni), 827 (NG: Kapileśvara T., Baudh), 901 (NG: Mukteśvara T., Bhubaneswar).

occur on the lintels of numerous Jaina temples, here illustrated by an example from Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh, in which Ketu is shown as a female figure provided with a large snake-hood and a snake-tail (Figure 6).



**6** Jaina temple no. 26 at Deogarh, U.P., ca. tenth-eleventh century, with Navagraha lintel. Note that Śani is bearded and Ketu is shown as a female figure with a snake-hood and a snake-tail. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

Peculiarly, in Buddhist temples the Navagrahas have never been represented. Only one Buddhist *torana* is known so far depicting at least two Grahas among other Brahmanical deities; it comes from Sarnath and shows the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* (death/attaining Nirvāṇa) in the central panel (Figure 7).<sup>60</sup> Sūrya on his chariot appears in the centre below the deceased Buddha, and Rāhu, on the proper right, shows a rather obscene hand gesture, the significance of which is unclear. All the other deities, most of them belonging to the group of the regents of the directions of space (Dikpāla), are also not shown in a mourning attitude, but form a battle array, which is difficult to explain.<sup>61</sup>

**60** Indian Museum, Kolkata (S 60 / A 24175), 54.6 × 110.6 cm; Foucher 1900: 169, fig. 30; *ASIAR* 1922–23: 141, pl. XL.f; Banerji 1933: 82; Sengupta 1985: *passim*, figs. 1–5; Bhattacharya 1995: 67, 69, fig. 3; Bautze-Picron 2001: 294, note 48; Khare 2005: 64, figs. 3.29–30 & pl. on p. 70; Dhar 2010: 140, fig. 4.46.

**61** For a painted *parinirvāṇa* scene flanked by Sūrya and Candra in Cave K 3 at Bamiyan, see *supra*, notes 25 & 35.



7 Detached *torana* from a Buddhist temple at Sarnath, U.P., ca. tenth-eleventh century, now in the Indian Museum, Kolkata, with details of Rāhu and Sūrya. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2009.

### 3.2. NAVAGRAHAS AS CULT IMAGES

A large number of independent stone slabs of Eastern Indian origin representing the Navagraha group indicates that from the eleventh century onwards the worship of the Navagrahas became quite popular, especially in Bengal. We find quite simple slabs like the one from Malda (Figure 8a),<sup>62</sup> but in the course of time the sculptures became larger and

<sup>62</sup> Malda District Museum, Malda (RNV-1), 31 × 62 cm; Bhattacharyya 1982: 12. See also the slabs illustrated in Mitra 1965: fig. 2; Bhattacharya 1986:

more artistic by providing the Grahas with mounts, often quite small and difficult to recognize (Figure 8b), and several side figures, or depicting them in an elaborate architectural setting.<sup>63</sup>



8 Two Navagraha slabs from North Bengal, ca. tenth-eleventh century; (a) Malda District Museum, Malda; photo: Gerd Mevissen, 2009; (b) Balurghat College Museum, Balurghat; photo: Balurghat College Museum, courtesy Ryosuke Furui.

fig. 2 (= 2000: pl. 16.2); Markel 1995: figs. 19, 24, 27–28, 32–33, 36, 48–49; Mevissen 1997a: pl. 10.6; Mevissen 2000a: fig. 2.

<sup>63</sup> See e.g. the slab in the Bangladesh National Museum (67.41) which includes Dikpālas (*SciBa* 2008: 150–151, no. \*55, pl. 23, with further references), and the slabs illustrated in Mitra 1965: figs. 8–10 & 14; Bhattacharya 1986: fig. 3 (= 2000: pl. 16.3); Markel 1995: figs. 22, 26; Mevissen 2000a: fig. 4; Bhattacharya 2011: pls. 6.1–6.7; Mevissen 2011: pls. 7.1–7.3.

Apart from the Sun-god Sūrya, whose cult developed into a separate religion in Northern India,<sup>64</sup> with a large number of temples<sup>65</sup> and hundreds of images that have come down to us,<sup>66</sup> the other Grahas mostly remained part of the group and were rarely worshipped separately. Only Śani (Saturn) seems to have gained an independent status, at least in Eastern and Southern India, indicated by a considerable number of separate images depicting this most dreaded Graha.<sup>67</sup> His well-known distinctive feature, the limping stance with one leg dragged behind, was retained in these independent images.<sup>68</sup>

In South India the situation regarding the Navagrahas is completely different. They were almost never shown as lintel figures above the temple entrance<sup>69</sup> and only rarely depicted on Navagraha slabs.<sup>70</sup> However, from about the 14th century onwards, a new cult of worshipping the Navagrahas in a square *maṇḍala* arrangement began to develop,<sup>71</sup> which gradually led to the erection of such *maṇḍalas* in the north-eastern sector of almost every Śiva temple complex (Figure 9).<sup>72</sup> Sūrya is always placed in the centre,

<sup>64</sup> On the Indian Sun cult, see Stietencron 1966; Pandey 1971; Srivastava 1972; Gail 1978, 2001 & 2010b; Cummins 2001 & 2004.

<sup>65</sup> The largest is the monumental Sun T. at Konarak, Orissa; cf. Boner & Śarmā & Dās 1972; Donaldson 1986: 592–628; Behera 1996 & 2005. For smaller Sun temples in Western and Central India, see Gail 2001: 18–44, 64–71.

<sup>66</sup> See the list of 210 Sūrya images from Bengal compiled by Enamul Haque in 1973 (cf. Haque 1992: 363–371, nos. 855–1059, 1092–1094, 1097–1098). Since then the total number of known Sūrya images has increased considerably.

<sup>67</sup> See Bhattacharya 1986: figs. 1, 4 & 6 (= 2000: pls. 16.1, 16.4, 16.6); Mevissen 1997a: pls. 10.11–10.13; Mevissen 2000a: figs. 10–20; Mevissen 2011: pl. 7.14.

<sup>68</sup> For a survey of possibly independent images of Candra, Budha, Bṛhaspati, Śukra and Ketu, see Mevissen 2011.

<sup>69</sup> The only exceptions known to me are the row of seated NG above the sanctum doorway in the Lankeśvara Cave T. at Ellora (see Markel 1995: 128–127, fig. 52) and above the *gopura* entrance to the Vedapurīśvara T., Pondicherry (see Mevissen 2000a: 1282–1283, fig. 9).

<sup>70</sup> For two horizontal Navagraha slabs from South India see Mevissen 2000a: 1280–1281, figs. 6–7.

<sup>71</sup> A possible precursor for this type of image is the chariot-shaped Sūryamaṇḍala in the temple at Gangaikondacholapuram, probably brought there from the Deccan by Kulōttuṅga I (r. ca. 1070–1122); see Mevissen 1996a: 499–500, pl. 32.38a–c.

<sup>72</sup> For other examples, see Thiagarajan 1989: 308–338, pls. 139–140, 145–148, 154; Kropf 1998: Abb. 1–9; Gail 2001: figs. 125–126; Gail 2010b: figs. 57–58.

surrounded by the other eight Grahas, who never face each other. The presiding deity of the respective week-day is always worshipped before the visitor moves on to the principal god of the temple. In addition, an individual planet in the *maṇḍala* is separately worshipped when one faces problems from a difficult astrological period caused by that particular planet.<sup>73</sup> Such Navagraha-*maṇḍalas* were also fashioned in silver for home worship.<sup>74</sup>



**9** Navagraha-*maṇḍala* in the Parvatagirīśvara temple at Kunnandarkoyil, Tamil Nadu, ca. 14th–15th century. Śani is placed in the centre of the front row, flanked by Ketu (left) and Rāhu (right). Candra is visible in the back row (right). Photo: Corinna Wessels-Mevissen, 2008.

### 3.3. PLANETARY DEITIES AS SUBSIDIARY FIGURES

The Navagrahas were not only represented on door-lintels, on independent cult-slabs and in *maṇḍala* form for worship, they also performed various functions as subsidiary deities on a number of images of other gods. The following section will present images of different deities of the major Indian religions (Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Saura, Jaina, Buddhist) that have been embellished with subsidiary figures of the planetary deities on their back-slab, indicating that they had entered all sections of religious life in India. It has to be kept in mind that such images are quite rare and constitute only a very small percentage of the total number of images representing the respective gods.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Kropf 1998 & 2009; Link 1999.

<sup>74</sup> See Koller, 8.-10.11.1979: lot 183.



10 *Yajñavarāha* at Eran, M.P., 500–505 AD, with detail of Graha figures on the chest. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

### 3.3.1. VAIṢṆAVA IMAGES

The earliest depictions of the planetary deities on Vaiṣṇava images occur with representations of *Varāha*, the boar incarnation of Viṣṇu who rescues the earth from the bottom of the ocean. A unique *Nṛ-Varāha* image (human body with boar head) from Mathura of the third century AD holds two disks in his two upper hands showing *Sūrya* and *Candra* seated on chariots drawn by two horses.<sup>75</sup> The earliest surviving group representation of seven *Grahas* (*Sūrya* to *Śani*) in Indian Art occurs on the chest of the colossal theriomorphic *Varāha* (*Yajñavarāha*) at Eran,<sup>76</sup> Madhya Pradesh, dated 500–505 AD (Figure 10).<sup>77</sup> Numerous later theriomorphic *Yajñavarāhas* exhibit the complete group of *Navagrahas* on the boar's body (Figure 11)<sup>78</sup> and sometimes extra figures of *Sūrya* and

<sup>75</sup> Mathura Museum (GMM 65.15.4, ht. 35 cm); see e.g. Schmid 2010: 562–563, no. 70, fig. 47 (with further references); Srinivasan 2011: 31–32, fig. 6.

<sup>76</sup> But see note 80.

<sup>77</sup> See e.g. Markel 1995: 87, fig. 14; Rangarajan 1997: 48–56, fig. 5; Becker 2010: 129–130, fig. 9.

<sup>78</sup> See e.g. Rangarajan 1997: 56 ff., figs. 15 ff.—An exceptional case of ten Graha figures (*Daśagrahas*) arranged in two groups (4+6) appears on the *Yajñavarāha* in the *Varāha T.* at Khajuraho; see Mevissen 2000a: 1267–1269, fig. 1a–b. This feature may be regarded as a mere mistake by the artist, since the extra figure is iconographically identical with the remaining *Grahas*.



11 *Yajñavarāha* from Badoh, now in the Gurjari Mahal—Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior, ca. ninth century, with detail showing rows of *Dvādaśādityas* (above) and *Navagrahas* (below). Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

Rangarajan (2010: 294) feels that “This one extra figure appears to be *Mahi*”, i.e. the earth, but she does not provide any reason for this identification.—For two more cases of *Daśagrahas* from Central India dating from around the tenth century, see Mevissen 2000b: 364–365, no. 102, fig. 16; Mevissen 2003: 481, no. 76, fig. 36. For later examples of a different group of *Daśagrahas* from Nepal, see Mevissen 2007: 177–180, nos. 77–92, pls. 20.31–32.

Candra are depicted above the boar's eyes.<sup>79</sup> The large Nṛ-Varāha at Udayagiri, Vidisha, is surrounded by numerous figures including astral deities (see below) but no Grahas have been included in this relief.<sup>80</sup> In fact, representations of Nṛ-Varāha with Navagrahas are very rare; the only example presently known to me is a ca. tenth-century image from Central India with a row of Navagrahas along the top.<sup>81</sup>

From the Gupta period onwards, Rāhu, Śukra (in his function as the priest of the demons), and occasionally also Sūrya and Candra occur in images of Viṣṇu's cosmic form as Trivikrama, in which he conquers the three worlds (earth, air and sky) in three steps.<sup>82</sup> One of the largest representations of Rāhu receiving in his mouth the raised foot of Trivikrama is found in a relief panel carved high up on a steep rock face overlooking the holy Gaṅgā river at Patharghata in Bhagalpur district, Bihar, probably dating from the seventh century (Figure 12).<sup>83</sup>

The full group of Navagrahas appears quite often above representations of the cosmic god Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa reclining on the serpent Ananta or Śeṣa floating on the primordial ocean before the creation of the universe (Śeṣaśayin). Most of the sculptures hail from Western, Northern and Central India, and only few are known from Eastern India, all roughly

<sup>79</sup> E.g. at Badoh and Khajuraho; see e.g. Rangarajan 1997: line drawings 3–4, figs. 11 (Badoh), 29–30 (Khajuraho).

<sup>80</sup> Nor anywhere else at Udayagiri. There is, however, a row of damaged figures above the lintel of Cave 19 with what appears to be Rāhu's large face at the end (see Burgess 1910: pl. 215; Williams 1982: 87, pl. 117; *EITA* 1988: 29, pl. 22). In the row just below is a representation of the Churning of the Milk Ocean (*amṛtamanthana*) in which Rāhu features prominently. Thus it is difficult to know whether this Rāhu has a narrative connotation or whether he represents the last member of a row of Aṣṭagrahas; in the latter case it would be the earliest depiction of a group of Grahas in India.

<sup>81</sup> University of Michigan Museum (2002/1.167), sandstone; see *Archives of Asian Art* LIV (2004): 102, fig. 2.

<sup>82</sup> See e.g. (1) Rao 1914, I: pl. XLVIII (Rajim); (2–3) Sharma 1968: figs. 2 (Pawaya), 6 (Kashipur); (4–7) Pal 1970: figs. 7 (Mrigasthali, Nepal, dated 467 AD), 9 (Changu Narayan, Nepal), 10 (Pharping, Nepal), 11 (Badami 2); (8–10) Desai 1973: figs. 76 (Osian), 77 (Dapthu), 78 (Ghusai); (11) Parimoo 2000: pl. 281 (Badami 3, dated 578 AD); (12) Handa 2006: pl. 114 (Gujjar Kheri); (13) Schmid 2010: fig. 56 (Mathura).

<sup>83</sup> For a detailed study of this image and the whole frieze see Melzer (in press).



12 Viṣṇu-Trivikrama and Rāhu at Patharghata, Bihar, ca. seventh century. Photo: Gudrun Melzer, 2009.

dating from the ninth through twelfth centuries.<sup>84</sup> The Grahas are invariably shown above the god, symbolizing the cosmic time of Viṣṇu's sleep. The additional presence of the Dikpālas in some images refers to the mundane space created by this form of Viṣṇu.<sup>85</sup> Another aspect of time is visible in those images that also include the ten Avatāras of Viṣṇu,<sup>86</sup> the cyclic incarnations in which he appears in the human sphere for the rescue of the good, the destruction of evil-doers and the re-establishment of *dharma*, i.e. moral, law and justice, implying movement and change, the dynamic qualities of nature within the cosmic time cycles.

<sup>84</sup> For images from Western India, see e.g. (1) Rao 1914: pl. XXXIV; (2–6) Parimoo 1983: figs. 24, 25, 39, 41, 44; (7) *EITA* 1998: pl. 755. For images from Central and Northern India, see e.g. (8–11) Parimoo 1983: figs. 7, 17, 19, 23; (12) Sotheby's New York, 05.10.1990: lot 29; (13) Sotheby's London, 08.05.1997: lot 28; (14) Joshi 1989, 1: fig. 34; (15–17) Handa 2006: pls. 70–72. For images from Eastern India, see e.g. (18–19) Mevissen 2002a: pls. 8.11–12; Mevissen 2008c: fig. 24 & cat. \*234, pl. 200.

<sup>85</sup> For images with Navagrahas and/or Dikpālas, see e.g. (1) Wessels-Mevissen 2001: 85, fig. 327; (2) Mevissen 2008a: 131, fig. 10; (3) Mevissen 2002a: pl. 8.11; (4–6) Parimoo 1983: figs. 16, 27, 29.

<sup>86</sup> See e.g. (1–6) Mevissen 2010a: 257, App. C.3.2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 15. For two more examples see (7) Cummins 2011: cat. 30; (8) Parimoo 1983: fig. 50.

Some images of another cosmic form of Viṣṇu, the eight-armed Viśvarūpa, who embodies within himself the whole universe, are furnished with Navagrahas.<sup>87</sup> Again we find them in the upper part of the sculptures together with other deities, such as the eight Dikpālas, the eight Vasus, and the twelve Ādityas, a group of ancient solar gods to which we will turn later on.

Interestingly, only relatively few images of the ubiquitous four-armed type of Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva, a form which has been carved in thousands of sculptures all over the Indian sub-continent, include figures of the Navagrahas.<sup>88</sup> These images are mostly from Western India and show the Grahas as tiny figures at the top level, as is the rule for all Vaiṣṇava images.

<sup>87</sup> See e.g. (1) probably from Gaya region, Bihar; National Museum, Kathmandu; Mevissen 2008a: *passim*, figs. 1, 3, 5; Mevissen 2008–09: 59–65, pl. VI, figs. 1–3, VII, fig. 2; (2) from Suhania, M.P., formerly Gwalior Museum, now State Archaeological Museum, Bhopal, ca. tenth century; Mevissen 2008a: 131–132, fig. 11 (with further references); Mevissen 2008–09: 63, 74, note 40 (with further references), pl. IX, fig. 3 (erroneously labelled “4”); (3) from Aghat, Etah, U.P., State Museum, Lucknow (G.112); Joshi 1989, 1: 206, no. 75 (not ill.); (4) from Bhusawar, Rajasthan State Museum, Bharatpur; Maxwell 1992: 156 fig. 13, 163–164, pl. 58; (5) from Chandatala, Munshiganj, Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka; Akmal 1999: 471, pl. 36.3; (6) at Bajaura, Kulu; Diserens 1992: 356, fig. 42.2; (7) at Sivasarya, Kushinagar, U.P.; Srivastava 2011: 59–65, pls. 27a–b.

<sup>88</sup> See e.g. (1) Kaithal, Haryana, seven Grahas, ninth–tenth century; Handa 2006: 11, 47–48, pls. 39–41; (2) Mehrauli, Delhi, dated 1147 AD; National Museum, New Delhi (L.39); Sivaramamurti 1977: 400, fig. 576; Handa 2006: 13, 58–59, pl. 65; Mevissen 2010a: 263, App. D.I.4.1 (for further references); (3) from U.P.; Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena (M.1975.11.11.S), ca. 1100 AD; Pal 2003: 130, col.pl. no. 88; (4) from Kansuwan, Kota, Rajasthan; Rajputana Museum, Ajmer (I.71.20); DSAL/AIIS 15920; (5) from Mathura; Sotheby’s New York, 20/21.09.1985: lot 249; Christie’s New York, 21.09.2007: lot 58; (6) from U.P. or M.P.; Sotheby’s New York, 20/21.09.1985: lot 317; Sotheby’s New York, 24.11.1986: lot 175; Christie’s New York, 21.09.2007: lot 60; (7) from Rajasthan; Sotheby’s London, 10/11.03.1986: lot 277; (8) from Rajasthan(?); Sotheby’s New York, 30.11.1982: lot 241; (9) from Rajasthan; Museum Rietberg, Zürich (RVI 212); Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1964: 88–92, no. 18; (10) Lalitāghāṭ near Nepali T., Varanasi; Gutschow 2006: 360–362, col.pl. on p. 363; (11) State Museum, Lucknow (U.N.17); Joshi 1989, 1: 240, no. 151, fig. 61. Nos. (4) to (9) are crowing members of the arched frame for a Viṣṇu image where the actual image is missing.

### 3.3.2. ŚAIVA IMAGES

In the Śaiva context the Navagrahas occur—though rarely—above images depicting Śiva’s cosmic dance. Only two ca. eleventh-century images of this type have surfaced so far, both from Bangladesh and both depicting the Navagrahas together with the Dikpālas above the principal image.<sup>89</sup> These two groups thus symbolize the cosmic time as well as the cosmic space in which Śiva’s dance takes place.

Another cosmic aspect of Śiva, namely his form as Tripurāntaka, the ‘Destroyer of the Three Cities’, includes representations of the Sun and the Moon, who serve as the two wheels of Śiva’s war-chariot. This form, which probably originates in a conception rivalling that of the Vaiṣṇava Trivikrama, relates to a myth describing how Śiva as the highest god, Mahādeva, assembled the powers, characteristics, emblems and attributes of all the other gods in order to be able to fight and vanquish the demonic forces that had conquered the three worlds (earth, air and sky) and threatened to overpower the gods. Only at a specific astronomically defined moment was Śiva able to use the combined powers and kill the three demons with a single shot with his fiery arrow. The most monumental translation of this myth into architecture is found in the Airāvateśvara temple at Darasuram, Tamil Nadu, constructed in the latter half of the twelfth century.<sup>90</sup>

The bulk of Śaiva images with Graha figures are related to Śiva’s marriage with Pārvatī. Most often they are found at the apex of Śiva-Vaiṣṇavikamūrti sculptures, sometimes with their lower bodies hidden

<sup>89</sup> See (1) National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi (1975–8); Mevissen 2002a: 109–110, 120, note 20 (with further references), pl. 8.10; Farooq 1988: 27, ill. [12]; Shah 2004: *passim*, pls. 1–2, 5; (2) from Sankarbandha; Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka; Sivaramamurti 1942: 42–43, fig. 37 (line drawing); Sivaramamurti 1950: 61, pl. XXV.D; Banerjee 1956: 475, pl. XXXVII.3; Sivaramamurti 1974: 36 fig. 9 (line drawing), 297 fig. 171, 299 (= 1994: 33 fig. 9 [line drawing], 286 fig. 171); Rahman 1979: 17, fig. 2; Mevissen 2002a: 108–109, 120, note 18 (with further references), pl. 8.9.

<sup>90</sup> See Mevissen 1993; 1994b; 1997b. On the political aspects of Tripurāntaka imagery, see Mevissen 1994a. On early South Indian Tripurāntaka images see Mevissen 2001a and 2006c.



by stylized clouds.<sup>91</sup> All the earlier images, from the eighth century onwards, originate from the region of Gaya in Bihar. In a large four-sided (*caturmūrti*) stele from Central India depicting Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Śiva-Vivāha and Brahmā on its four sides, the Navagrahas are split into two groups above the divine couple (Figure 13); the sequence starts in the topmost register with Candra (?), damaged) and Sūrya, followed by Śiva-Viṇādhara, the seven Mātṛkās and Gaṇeśa, while the register below contains the remaining Grahas including Rāhu and Ketu.<sup>92</sup> Only few Vaivāhika images show the Navagrahas at the lateral sides, i.e. flanking the divine couple, sometimes together with the

**91** See e.g. (1) from Pachar, near Gaya, Bihar; Patna Museum (Arch 106.48); Donaldson 2007: 139, fig. 49; (2) from Konch, near Gaya; Patna Museum (Arch 6047); Donaldson 2007: 139, fig. 50; Mevissen 2008a: 127, fig. 4 (detail); Mevissen 2008–09: 60, 71, note 12 (with further references), col.pl. VI, fig. 2 (detail); (3) from the Viṣṇupada T., Gaya, formerly (or still?) in the Suniti Kumar Chatterji Collection, Kolkata; Mevissen 2008–09: 60, 71, note 13, for references; (4) in Rāmgayābedi T., Sītākund, Gaya; Asher 1988: 76, 80, fig. 8; (5) probably from Bihar; National Museum, New Delhi (68.105); Sharma 1969: 418, fig. 7; Donaldson 2007: 139, fig. 51; (6) from Bihar or North Bengal; British Museum, London (OA 1880–2); Kumar 1974: 73–74, 125, 242, pl. 9; Mevissen 2008c: 67, 72, note 44 (with further references); (7) from Chhatingram, Bogra, Bangladesh; Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi (77); Mevissen 2008c: 66, 72, note 42, for references; (8) from Hili, Bogra; formerly Dacca Sahitya Parishad (now lost?); Mevissen 2008c: 66, 72, note 43, for references; (9) from Rampal, Dhaka, Bangladesh; Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Museum, Kolkata (285); Mevissen 2002a: 104–105, 119, note 10 (with further references), pl. 8.4; Donaldson 2007: 146–147, fig. 68; *Centenary* 2009: 7, col.pl.; (10) from Sankarbandha, Dhaka, Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka (35); Biswas 1995: pl. 37; Mevissen 2002a: 103–104, 119, note 9 (with further references), pls. 8.3a, 8.3b; Haque 2007: 101, 122, pl. 106; *SciBa* 2008: 138–139, no. \*30 (with further references), pl. 25; Mevissen 2008d: 99, fig. 34; *AGD* 2008: 252–253, col.pl. 96; (11) bronze from Mandoil, Godagari, Rajshahi, Bangladesh; Varendra Research Museum (3036); Nargis 2004: 71–73, 80, fig. 2; Bautze-Picron 2006: 112, figs. 2–3; Bautze-Picron 2007: 104, col.pl. 2.1; Donaldson 2007: 140–141, fig. 52; *SciBa* 2008: 200, no. \*190 (with further references), col.pl. 26; Mevissen 2008c: 67, fig. 17 on p. 63 (detail); (12) copy of (11); Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin (I 5992); Mevissen 2008c: 72, note 46, for references.

**92** A similar stele in the Gwalior Museum shows the whole NG group in the lower register, but here Rāhu and Ketu are damaged, while the upper register preserves remnants of what once probably was a row of seated Saptamātṛkās (unpublished; photos supplied by Gudrun Melzer).



**13** Śiva-Vaivāhikamūrti, Ashapuri Museum, Raisen district, M.P., ca. ninth-tenth century, showing Candra (?), Sūrya, Śiva-Viṇādhara, Saptamātṛkās and Gaṇeśa in the upper row and the remaining seven Grahas below. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

Dikpālas and the mother goddesses.<sup>93</sup> Their function is clearly determined by the astrological significance they bear in the auspicious moment when a new period of the life-cycle is entered through marriage.

Another event preceding the actual marriage is often accompanied by the celestial bodies, namely the penance performed by Pārvatī to win Śiva for marriage (Tapasvinī Pārvatī). According to the textual sources, she stood constantly in a rigid upright stance between four fires, the blazing sun serving as the fifth fire of her *pañcāgni-tapas*, the five-fire-penance.<sup>94</sup> The Navagraha figures often appear at the apex, taking the role of the sun as the fifth fire.<sup>95</sup> Alternatively, the Grahas can be represented by mere heads or even as circular dots,<sup>96</sup> or they are reduced to two symbols, a sun-disk and a crescent moon.<sup>97</sup> An interesting detail of an image with nine Graha heads, probably from Rajasthan, now in the Los Angeles

**93** See e.g. (1) from Etah, U.P.; Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi (175); Agrawala 1966: 61, pl. XIII; Punja 1990: 251–253, ill.; Singh 1993: 94, fig. 12; Bunce 2000, III: 1549, pl. CLXXIV; Donaldson 2007: 147–148, fig. 70; Mevissen 2008c: 72, note 45 (with further references); (2) from Khajuraho, M.P.; Khajuraho Museum; Mevissen 2008c: 72, note 45 (with further references).

**94** Cf. Joshi 1996.

**95** See Mevissen 2003: 446–450 (with further references), figs. 1–4.

**96** See Mevissen 2003: 454–458 (with further references), figs. 9–11.

**97** See Mevissen 2003: 451–454 (with further references), figs. 5–8.

County Museum of Art,<sup>98</sup> is the fourteen (or fifteen) small circles incised on the halo of the goddess, presumably symbolizing the phases of the moon (*tithis*) during a lunar fortnight. Regarding the provenance and distribution of these images, a quite intriguing observation can be made: All known images of Tapasvinī Pārvatī with astral figures or symbols, around 40 items, come from places aligned within a margin of less than 2 degrees of latitude along the Tropic of Cancer, stretching from Gujarat in the West to Bangladesh in the East. Significantly, it is only in this geographic region that the sun (in the days around the summer solstice) and the full moon (around the winter solstice) stand *vertically* above any given place on the surface of the earth, a fact which correlates perfectly with the imagery of Pārvatī's *pañcāgni-tapas*.<sup>99</sup>

Another group of Śaiva images with Navagrahas, also related to the pre-marriage period, shows the goddess reclining with Śiva in the form of a new-born baby (*sadyojāta*) lying by her side (Figure 14). Their provenance is almost exclusively confined to North Bengal, where more than thirty sculptures of this type have been found.<sup>100</sup> The Navagrahas appear invariably above the reclining mother, again signifying an auspicious moment in the life-cycle, namely the birth of a baby.

### 3.3.3. SAURA IMAGES

Quite naturally, we often find Graha figures on the back-slab of images of the Sun-god Sūrya (the first and foremost of the Grahas), mostly from Bengal, but also from Central and Western India, from the Deccan, and from Nepal.<sup>101</sup> Surrounding the central Sūrya in clockwise order, they constitute what may be called a *maṇḍala* of the weekdays, starting with Sunday. Representations of another member of the Saura pantheon, the hunter god Revanta, one of Sūrya's sons, are sometimes provided with Navagraha

<sup>98</sup> Los Angeles Museum of Art (AC 1992.209.1); see Mevissen 2003: 455, no. 26, fig. 9; Donaldson 2007: 108, fig. 9.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Mevissen 2003: 446. For an interesting new approach to the relevance of the position of the Tropic of Cancer for early Indian art and architecture, especially Udayagiri, see Dass & Willis 2002: *passim*, esp. pp. 34 ff., and Willis 2009: 10–37, 247–250; cf. also Mevissen 2006a: 22 and Kameswara Rao 1995.

<sup>100</sup> For a list of 28 such images see Mevissen 2003: 460–471 (with further references), figs. 14–26.

<sup>101</sup> See e.g. Mevissen 2006a: nos. 36–50 & pls. 3, 26–36 (from Eastern India), nos. 51–54 & pls. 37–40 (from Karnataka), nos. 55–61 & pl. 24 (from Central and Western India), nos. 62–73 & pls. 41–52 (from Nepal; see also Mevissen 2004a).



14 Two images of the Reclining Devī with Sadyojāta-Śiva from North Bengal, ca. eleventh century, now in the Balurghat College Museum, Balurghat, showing Navagrahas above. Photos: Balurghat College Museum, courtesy Ryosuke Furui.

figures along the upper edge of the image.<sup>102</sup> Revanta has especially been worshipped by merchants in order to secure a safe journey through wild forests and for protection from robbers. The presence of the Grahas can thus be regarded as indicating the propitiation of malevolent astrological forces during a potentially dangerous time.

### 3.3.4. JAINA IMAGES

Among the Indian images showing Grahas as subsidiary figures, Jaina images are certainly the most numerous, both in stone sculptures<sup>103</sup> and

<sup>102</sup> See Mevissen 2006a: 43, nos. 79–83, pls. 57–61. For a general study of Revanta images, see Mevissen 2010b.

<sup>103</sup> See Mevissen 2000b for a list of 128 Jaina stone sculptures with Graha figures; meanwhile the total number has risen to 164 items.



**15** (a) Standing Jina flanked by Aṣṭagrahas, ca. eighth-ninth century; Lucknow Museum (J.950); photo: DSAL/AIIS 044971, courtesy Lucknow Museum. (b) Standing Śāntinātha with Navagrahas in the pedestal, at Sankarpur/Mangalkot, West Bengal, ca. eleventh century; photo: Rajat Sanyal. (c) Seated Ṛṣabhanātha with Navagrahas in the pedestal, ca. eleventh century; Khajuraho Museum; photo: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

particularly in bronze. The Jainas were very reluctant to accept the ninth Graha Ketu, and we find images with eight Grahas as late as the beginning of the second millennium. The Grahas are either shown at the lateral sides of a Jina, where they can reach quite large dimensions in relation to the central image (Figure 15a), or they appear in the pedestal beneath the standing (Figure 15b)<sup>104</sup> or seated Jina (Figure 15c)<sup>105</sup>. In contrast to the Brahmanical images, in Jaina art the Grahas are never depicted at the apex of the sculpture, i.e. above the Jina's head, implying that the celestial deities were considered inferior to the sphere of the Jina. When occurring at the bottom, their size can be extremely reduced.<sup>106</sup> Also, some sculptures of Jaina goddesses<sup>107</sup> as well as a small number of the so-called Jaina tutelary couple,<sup>108</sup> both mostly from Central India, are shown with Graha figures.

Jaina bronzes with Grahas form certainly the most numerous subgroup of items from India depicting the planetary deities. Several hundreds are presently known; almost all of them are from Western India (Rajasthan and Gujarat), dating from the seventh through the 15th centuries and even later.<sup>109</sup> The Grahas are generally found in the pedestal of Jina images, either as small anthropomorphic figures,<sup>110</sup> or their iconographic form has been reduced to tiny squarish or roundish lumps that can be identified as Grahas only by their number, eight or nine.<sup>111</sup> In addition, there are several Jaina paintings, mostly tantric diagrams (*yantras*), that show Graha figures.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Mevissen 2000b: 349, no. 20.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Mevissen 2000b: 359, no. 85.

<sup>106</sup> See e.g. the standing Pārśvanātha in the Dinajpur Museum, Bangladesh; Mevissen 2000b: 350, no. 29, fig. 2; Mevissen 2001b: 12–15, pl. 1.3; Mevissen 2008c: 68, fig. 27 (detail of NG) and p. 208, cat. \*205 (with further references), pl. 545.

<sup>107</sup> See Mevissen 2000b: 367–370, nos. 117–125, figs. 19–24; Mevissen 2003: 483–487, nos. 78–89, figs. 38–40.

<sup>108</sup> See Mevissen 2000b: 370–371, nos. 126–128, figs. 25–26.

<sup>109</sup> For a representative sample from the well-known Akota hoard, see Shah 1959: figs. 7, 17b, 22, 23ab, 25, 26a, 27ab, 28, 29b, 30b, 31ab, 32ac, 36b, 39, 40, 41b, 46ab, 49, 50b, 51, 53b, 54–56ab, 57ab, 58–63a, 65, 67, 68.

<sup>110</sup> Presently I know of 178 Jaina bronzes of this type. Cf. also Del Bontà in this volume, Figures 9 and 10.

<sup>111</sup> Presently I know of 326 Jaina bronzes of this type.

<sup>112</sup> See e.g. Mevissen 2003: 487–489, nos. 90–92, figs. 41–42. Meanwhile I have gathered a list of 26 scroll paintings and 4 manuscript paintings showing Graha figures.

The function of the planetary deities in Jaina art seems to be generally more related to protection than to factors emphasizing the elements of time. Since Jaina icons are mostly devoid of any narrative content, it is unlikely that the presence of the Grahas refers to a specific time aspect.<sup>113</sup>

### 3.3.5. BUDDHIST IMAGES

In contrast to Jaina images, sequences of Graha figures are generally not found on the back-plates of Buddhist sculptures.<sup>114</sup> Only the dreadful Rāhu gained some importance in the tantric Buddhist sphere. His head is frequently found at the very bottom of images depicting Mārīcī, the Buddhist goddess of light.<sup>115</sup> Like Sūrya she was originally represented on a chariot drawn by seven horses,<sup>116</sup> but later her draught animals were changed to seven pigs, trampling the demon of darkness under their feet. The pigs are sometimes shown very vividly (Figure 16).<sup>117</sup>

Rāhu also occurs on at least one stone image from Bengal of the 12th/13th century depicting Buddha Śākyamuni.<sup>118</sup> This type of pictorial concept is reproduced in some Tibetan thangkas, where Rāhu is shown prominently.<sup>119</sup> In Tibetan Buddhism, Rāhu also appears as an independent

<sup>113</sup> One of the few Jaina protagonists that integrate a reference to time in the associated narrative is Bāhubali, son of Rṣabhanātha, who according to legend stood in a meditating posture (*kāyotsarga*) for so long that his feet became covered by an ant-hill. However, no Bāhubali image has surfaced so far that shows subsidiary Graha figures. The same applies to representations of the birth of Mahāvīra or other Jinas.

<sup>114</sup> For a rare Buddhist *torāṇa* from Sarnath showing some Graha figures, see above, section 3.1 and Figure 7.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Bautze-Picron 2001; Mevissen 2007: 156–166, pls. 20.1–19; Mevissen 2009b. *Marīci* is the “Vedic term for a particle of light, a mote or ray of light (of the sun or moon)”; cf. Stutley 1977: 183.

<sup>116</sup> See e.g. the Mārīcī in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin (I 380); Mevissen 2007: 158, no. 1, pl. 20.1, with numerous references; to these add: Chandra 2003: 2264 (ill.); Leoshko 2003: 1, 5, fig. 4; Shaw 2006: 209, fig. 10.2; Wessels-Mevissen 2007: 14, fig. 6; Wessels-Mevissen & Gadebusch 2007: 23, Abb. 6.

<sup>117</sup> See Sharma 2004: 213, fig. 151.

<sup>118</sup> See Bautze-Picron 1992: figs. 36.1, 36.4; Bautze-Picron 1995/96: fig. 15; Bautze-Picron 1996: figs. 23, 24, 25, drawing 1; Bautze-Picron 1998b: fig. 3 (Betagi).

<sup>119</sup> See Bautze-Picron 1995/96: col. figs. 2, 3, figs. 10, 16; Bautze-Picron 1998b: 48, fig. 2.



16 Mārīcī from Bengal, ca. eleventh century, with detail showing Rāhu beneath the seven pigs; Birla Museum, Kolkata (R-27/2006-07). Photo: T.K. Biswas.

deity, but in this case, his iconography has changed completely; he has four arms, nine heads and a snake tail.<sup>120</sup>

Like many other Brahmanical gods the Grahas were incorporated as subservient or protective deities into Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhist texts.<sup>121</sup> The Navagrahas appear collectively as adorants of Mahāmāyūrī (*SM* 206) and of the white Mārīcī (*SM* 132, 135). Seven Grahas (Budha, Bṛhaspati, Ketu, Rāhu, Maṅgala, Śukra, Śani) respectively appear in the seven skulls (*kapāla*) held in the right hands of Viśvaḍāka/Amoghasiddhi (*NSP* 24), the eighth one being Viṣṇu, who belongs to the twelve Ādityas. Arka (Sūrya) and Candra are held in two of the eight *kapālas* of Vajraḍāka/Hevajra (*NSP* 8, *HT* II.v.25). The Navagrahas occupy the fourth circle

<sup>120</sup> See e.g. the 15th-century gilt copper image from Central Tibet, H. 33 cm, in the National Gallery of Canada, Toronto, no. 26720 (cf. Pal 1997: 39, cat. 32), and a similar one offered at Sotheby's New York, 20.03.2001: lot 112 and Christie's New York, 27.03.2003: lot 91. See also a wooden sculpture in the National Museum, Kathmandu, identified by Deva (1984: viii, pl. 113) as “Kurukulla”.

<sup>121</sup> For several texts relating to the worship of the planets known from Tangut translations, see Samosyuk 1997/98. For textual references to Nakṣatras, Navagrahas and astronomy in *sūtras* translated into Chinese, see Niu 1997/98. See also Chandra 2003: 2321–2328 (month), 2329 (Mṛgaśīrā), 2395–2404 (Nakṣatras), 2431–2435 (Navagraha), 2431–2435 (Navoṣṇīṣa).

in the Dharmadhātu Vāgīśvara *maṇḍala* (NSP 21), the outer circle of the Durgatipariśodhana *maṇḍala* (NSP 22), and the fifth circle of the Mahāvairocana *maṇḍala* (KS 2). In the *maṇḍala* of Kālacakra, the Navagrahas are assigned to the north-western cemeteries (NSP 26). Āditya (Sūrya) and Candra figure as personifications of two of the eight dangers in the description of Mṛtyuvañcana-Tārā (SM 103, 112). The Grahas are also invoked in SM 223 (Mahāmāyā).<sup>122</sup> Representations of these concepts are mostly found in later Tibetan murals and thangka paintings. The Navagrahas also accompany the Buddhist goddess Grahamāṭṛkā (‘Mother of the Grahas’), first mentioned in Jagaddarpaṇa’s *Kriyāsamuccaya* (prior to the mid-13th century) and later frequently depicted in paintings.<sup>123</sup>

#### 4. DEITIES OF SOLAR TIME CYCLES: ĀDITYAS AND RĀŚIS

After having dealt with the Navagrahas who are basically connected with the seven weekdays, we now proceed to twelve-fold time divisions. For this we have to return to Central India and the Gupta period. In the well-known Nṛ-Varāha relief in Cave 5 at Udayagiri (Figure 17)<sup>124</sup> dating from the early fifth century, we come across a great number of side figures, among them the Twelve Ādityas (Dvādaśāditya), ancient solar gods connected with the twelve months of the solar year.<sup>125</sup> They are depicted in the uppermost row, just in front of Varāha’s snout; though quite weathered, we can still recognize the large halo of each figure. No Grahas have been included among the crowds of sub-figures in this relief.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Mallmann 1975: 178, 276–279, for textual references to the *Sādhanamālā* (SM), *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (NSP), *Hevajratāntra* (HT), and *Kriyāsamgraha* (KS); also Mallmann 1963: 73–107 for references to the *Agnipurāṇa*.

<sup>123</sup> See Mevissen 2006b: 77 (Table 4, s.v. Nava°), 81–83, nos. 12–20, 22–24, col.pls. XX.B–XXII.

<sup>124</sup> See e.g. Saraswati 1957: pl. XXV.111; Mitra 1963: *passim*, pl. I; Pal 1978: 12–13, fig. 1; Williams 1982: 43–46, fig. 5 (drawing), pl. 37; Rangarajan 1997: 131–133, figs. 118–122; Willis 2009: 41–73, figs. 23, 25.

<sup>125</sup> In early Indian texts, the number of Ādityas was uncertain, but was later fixed at twelve. For a summary of the Ṛgvedic and later Vedic concept of the number of Ādityas, see Brereton 1981: 3–6. The names of the Ādityas vary in the different texts; the *Matsyapurāṇa* (126), e.g., enumerates them as Aṃśa, Bhaga, Tvaṣṭṛ, Viṣṇu, Dhātṛ, Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra, Vivasvat, Parjanya and Pūṣan. For this and other lists, see Mallmann 1963: 76–81.



17 Nṛ-Varāha in Cave 5 at Udayagiri, M.P., early fifth century, with detail of the row of Dvādaśādityas above. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

Some Yajñavarāhas of subsequent centuries also contain depictions of the twelve Ādityas, as for example the one from Badoh in the Gwalior Museum already referred to (see Figure 11). Here the Ādityas occupy the register just above the Navagrahas and they are shown—as is the case with all later images of the Ādityas—as twelve identical, two-armed Sūrya figures, i.e. holding two lotuses. The Gwalior Museum has another unique sculpture in its collection, a fifth-century lion capital originally from Udayagiri (Figure 18).<sup>126</sup> On the abacus we find not only figures of the twelve Ādityas, each seated in front of a large sun-disk, but also representations of the twelve zodiac signs (Rāśi; conforming to the “Western” zodiac signs), thus correlating each Āditya with a certain sign. Only eight Rāśis have been preserved. Each group is separated from the next by triple dots, perhaps symbolizing the decans, the three subdivisions of each sign. This abacus from Udayagiri as well as the large Varāha relief

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Williams 1973: *passim*; Sivaramamurti 1981: 29, pls. 35–36; Harle 1974: 14, pls. 36–37; Williams 1977: 120; Falk 2006: 233 (with further references), col.figs. 1–2; Willis 2009: 18 fig. 9, 63, 244.



18 Lion capital from Udayagiri, M.P., ca. fifth century, with details of the abacus showing Ādityas and Rāśis; Gurjari Mahal—Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

at the same site bear witness to the dramatic changes in the astral-related iconography that started in the Gupta period. Another type of Viṣṇu image that is often accompanied by representations of the twelve Ādityas is the eight-armed cosmic Viṣvarūpa form.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>127</sup> See e.g. (1–4) four images from Kanauj; Maxwell 1988: 249–269, pls. 66–69; (5) from Bhuli; Maxwell 1988: pl. 70; (6) from Gurgi, M.P.; Maxwell 1998: 9, 61–62, pl. 2.2; (7) from M.P. or U.P.; Jaipaul Collection,

In the Kailāsanātha temple, the state temple of the Pallavas at Kanchipuram in South India, there is a large panel depicting the twelve Ādityas, dating from the early eighth century.<sup>128</sup> A panel of the twelve Ādityas from Bihar, now in the National Museum, New Delhi, dates from the mid-ninth century; each Āditya is inscribed with his individual name on the halo above.<sup>129</sup> Eleven (or sometimes twelve) Ādityas are also frequently found on the back-slab of a principal Sūrya image especially in East Bengal, but also in Northwest and South India,<sup>130</sup> and rarely even Navagraha slabs accommodate a row of the twelve Ādityas or the twelve Rāśis.<sup>131</sup>

A special feature of South Indian temple architecture is the chariot-shaped halls (*ratha-maṇḍapa*) that came into vogue in the later Cōla period in the beginning of the twelfth century. The wheels of several *ratha-maṇḍapas* are carved with figures of the twelve Ādityas,<sup>132</sup> for example at Kunnandarkoyil in Pudukkottai district, Tamil Nadu, probably constructed in the 15th or 16th century (Figure 19). Since these *maṇḍapas* probably functioned as the stage for yearly recurring religious performances,

Philadelphia; Maxwell 1994: *passim*; (8) from Aghat, Etah, U.P.; State Museum, Lucknow (G.112); Joshi 1989, 1: 206, no. 75 (not ill.); (9) from Chandatala, Munshiganj dist.; Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka; Akmam 1999: 470–474, pl. 36.3; (10) from Tumain, National Museum, New Delhi (78.998); (11) from Moriyama, Bihar; Private Collection, Patna; Mevissen 2008a: 133–134, fig. 12 (with further references); Mevissen 2008–09: 64, 75, note 51 (with further references), pl. X, fig. 2.

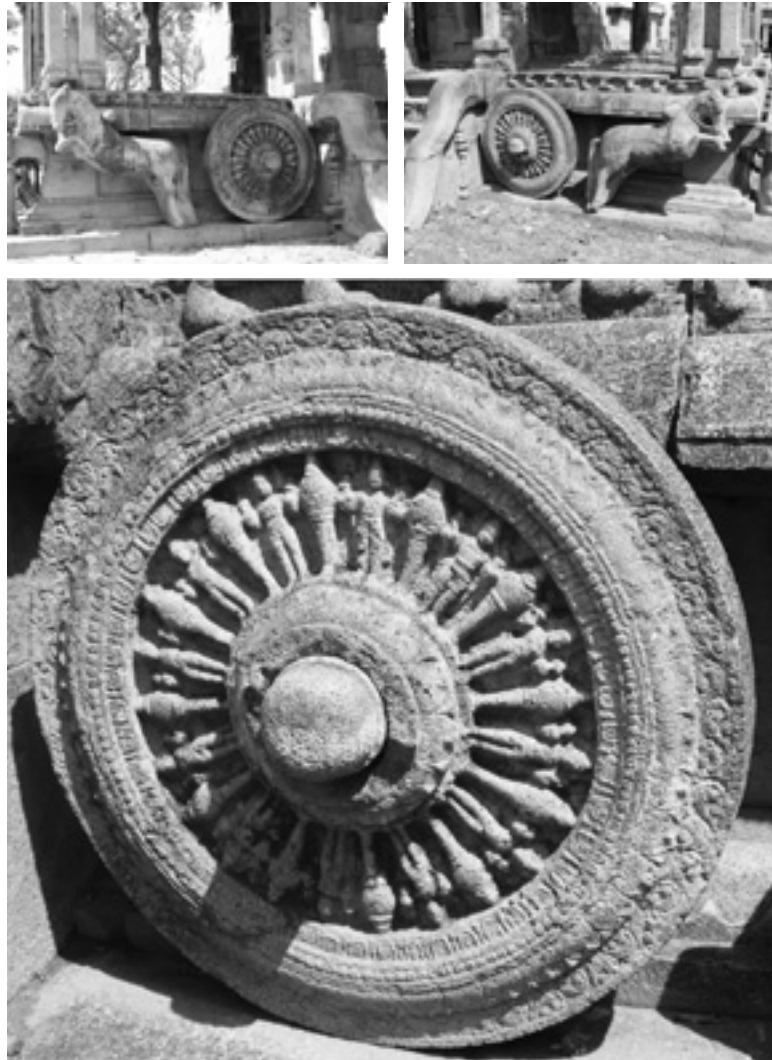
<sup>128</sup> See Mevissen 2006a: 4, pl. 1. For the slightly later Ādityas in the Vaikuṅṭha Perumāl T. at Kanchipuram, see *ibid.*, note 11.

<sup>129</sup> See Mevissen 2006a: 5 (with further references), pl. 2.

<sup>130</sup> See Mevissen 2006a: 26–32, nos. 1–35, pls. 3–25.

<sup>131</sup> See Mevissen 2006a: 47, no. 96, pl. 68 (stone, from Rajasthan; with twelve Ādityas above); Mevissen 2011: 85–86, 89, pl. 7.2B (metal, from Raiganj, West Bengal; with twelve Rāśis in the pedestal).—For Āditya figures occurring on doorways of some North Indian temples, see Mevissen (forthcoming).

<sup>132</sup> Altogether eight *ratha-maṇḍapas*, each with two wheels, show twelve Āditya figures between their twelve spokes (see Mevissen 1996a: 481–486, 497, nos. 13, 19, 20, 21, 26, 31, 32, 39, pls. 12, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 36); another one shows twelve dancing figures between the spokes (*ibid.*: 484, no. 27, pl. 25); two *rathas* have twelve-spoked wheels without figures (*ibid.*: 482, 485, nos. 15, 33, pls. 14, 32), and another one has wheels showing eight Ādityas between its eight spokes (*ibid.*: 482, no. 18, pl. 17).



19 *Ratha-maṇḍapa* in the Parvatagiriśvara temple at Kunnandarkoyil, Tamil Nadu, ca. 15th–16th century, with detail of wheel showing Dvādaśādityas. Photos: Corinna Wessels-Mevissen, 2008.

the marking of the wheels with the twelve Ādityas could be understood as pointing to the year-cycle.

Only one Sūrya image has been found so far that shows the twelve Rāśis on the back-plate; the sculpture is kept in the Pillaiyār shrine,

South Ter Street, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu.<sup>133</sup> Two solar stone altars (Sūryapīṭhas) from Andhra Pradesh, both of Kākatīya origin and dating from the twelfth century, are carved with the twelve Rāśis together with the eight Dikpālas.<sup>134</sup> Another Sūryapīṭha depicting on its upper surface a large central lotus surrounded by the twelve zodiac signs was found near the village of Naregal, Karnataka; it now seems to be lost. The order is peculiar in grouping the signs according to the four elements, viz. fire, earth, air and water.<sup>135</sup> An interesting spatial arrangement of the Rāśis is found in the *maṇḍapa* of the Vidyāśankara temple at Sringeri, Karnataka, where each of the twelve pillars bears the representation of a zodiac sign, said to be placed in such a way that only the one struck by the sun when it rises in the respective sign casts a shadow.<sup>136</sup>

A fine series of coins bearing the twelve zodiac signs was minted at the time of the Mughal emperor Jehāngīr in the 17th century. According to the emperor's own memoirs, he himself innovated the replacement of the usually inscribed month's name by the figural symbol of the respective zodiac sign. These coins, like those which contain the portrait of Jehāngīr on the obverse and the figure of a lion against the sun on the reverse suggesting the birth of Jehāngīr on a Sunday in the month of Leo, are indicative of the great importance given to not only astronomy and astrology, but to Time itself, at the Mughal court.<sup>137</sup>

An 18th-century bronze lamp from Nepal in the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Pune, depicts Sūrya in his chariot drawn by seven horses mounted on a lampstand with twelve oil-containers drawn by twelve horses, thus clearly hinting at the twelve-fold Āditya/Rāśi concept.<sup>138</sup>

133 See Mevissen 2006a: 44, no. 85 (with further references), pl. 62. See also Mollien 1853, Boll 1903: 342–346, and Kohl 1938 for a copper plate from Chidambaram depicting Navagrahas, Nakṣatras, Rāśis plus eight animals, and for a similar painting in the rock fort at Tiruchchirappalli.

134 (1) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly Prince of Wales Museum), Mumbai (S.4); see Chandra 1974: 55, pls. 163a–b; Shetti 1992: 338–339, figs. 3.a–b; Deva 1993–95: 111, figs. 12–13; Desai 2002: 56 col. pl. 49, 250 no. 49; (2) Archaeological Museum, Hyderabad; see Sivaramamurti 1981: 31, pl. 38; Williams 1973: 238, pl. 15; Shetti 1992: 337, fig. 1.d.

135 See Cousens 1926: 148–149, pl. CLVII, bottom right.

136 See Sivaramamurti 1981: 31, pl. 39; Srikrishna 2011: 221, 223–224, figs. 17.9, 17.10 (Taurus); Thakur 2011.

137 See Sivaramamurti 1981: 32, pl. 40; *IA-AR* 1983–84: 182, 201, pl. 91.

138 See Jain 1983: 108, top; also Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum n.d.: front cover. Similar lamps are also in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin (I 9903a–d;

In Nepalese scroll paintings the Ādityas are included in a number of *maṇḍalas*—both Brahmanical and Buddhist—featuring Sūrya as the principal figure. Generally Sūrya in the centre is encircled by the Grahas in the first ring and the twelve Ādityas in the second; sometimes a third circle is added containing figures of the twenty-eight Nakṣatra goddesses, while the twelve zodiac signs are depicted in the corner zones.<sup>139</sup>

#### 5. DEITIES OF LUNAR TIME CYCLES: NAKṢATRAS AND KALĀS

In contrast to the *solar* Ādityas, the time division represented by the Nakṣatras refers to the *lunar* months. The Nakṣatras or Lunar Mansions are certain constellations or asterisms distributed along the ecliptic, variously numbering 27 or 28 in ancient textual sources, evidently referring to the number of days the moon needs to complete a full orbit of the earth in relation to the fix stars;<sup>140</sup> they thus form a separate lunar zodiac, distinct from the solar zodiac. In the Purāṇas the Nakṣatras are personified as the wives of the Moon-god and regarded as the daughters of Dakṣa (representing ritual skill), and hence their association with the correct performance of sacrificial rites.<sup>141</sup> The iconography of the Nakṣatras in art is quite heterogeneous and it seems that different iconographic concepts had been followed by the artists. A comprehensive study of the imagery of the Nakṣatras is still lacking.<sup>142</sup>

see Thomsen [1977]: cat. 40) and in the Rijksmuseum Leiden (2040-6; see <http://www.volkenkunde.nl/Collections/zoom.aspx?image=P2000\2040-6.jpg>). For a ca. 19th-century brass lamp from Northern India in which, however, Sūrya's chariot is drawn by only three horses and the twelve oil-containers rest on thirteen winged (?) horses, see [http://www.auctionatrium.com/index.php?page=view\\_item&itemID=7877](http://www.auctionatrium.com/index.php?page=view_item&itemID=7877); I am thankful to Corinna Wessels-Mevissen for drawing my attention to the latter two items.

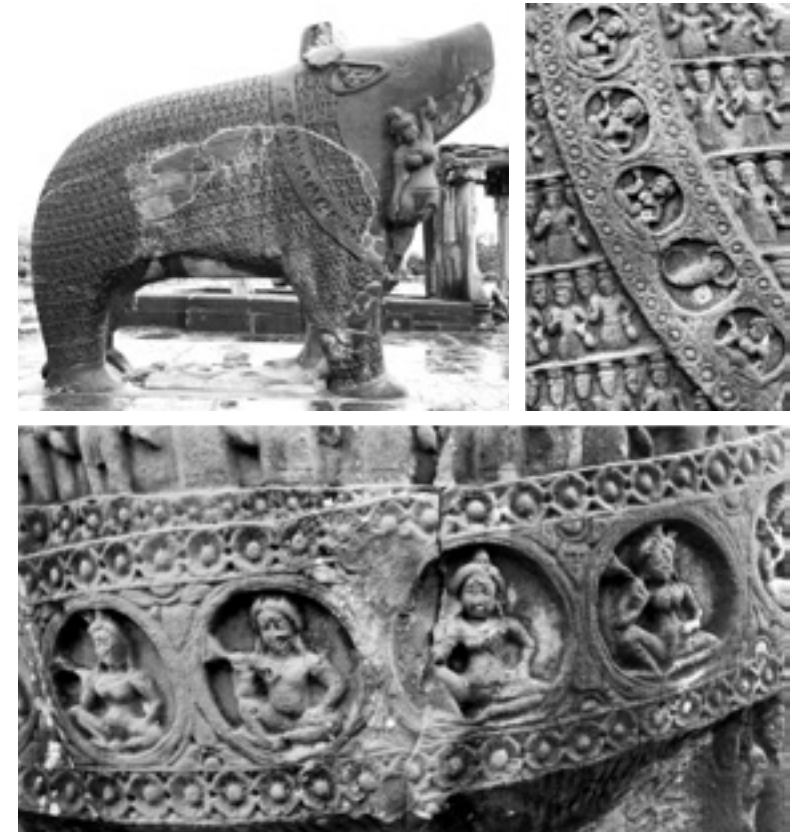
<sup>139</sup> For painted Sūryamaṇḍalas with Ādityas, see Mevissen 2004a: 127–129, 139–140, nos. S16–S19, pl. 17.16; Mevissen 2008–09: 68–69, col.pls. XIII figs. 3–4, XV fig. 3.

<sup>140</sup> “To accord with the moon's sidereal revolution (approximately 27 days), it was necessary to have 27 *nakṣatras*, but as the synodal revolution, or interval from one new moon to the next, is about 29½ days, an additional *nakṣatra* [...] was introduced” (Stutley 1977: 200–201, with further references).

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* On the textual sources of the Nakṣatras, see also Yampolsky 1950, Gibson 1951, and Narahari Achar 2000.

<sup>142</sup> For preliminary studies, see e.g. Pal & Bhattacharya 1969: 24–25 (Nepalese Candramaṇḍala paintings); van Kooij 1977: 66–72 (Nepalese

As in the case of the Grahas and Ādityas, images of the Nakṣatras can be traced back to the Gupta period. The colossal and earliest known Yajñavarāha at Eran, which bears the earliest representation of a Graha group (*supra*, see Figure 10), has a collar containing at least eight or nine male and eighteen female figures as well as Scorpio in animal form (Figure 20).<sup>143</sup> It is very probable that they represent the twenty-eight Nakṣatras, which would be depicted here for the first time.



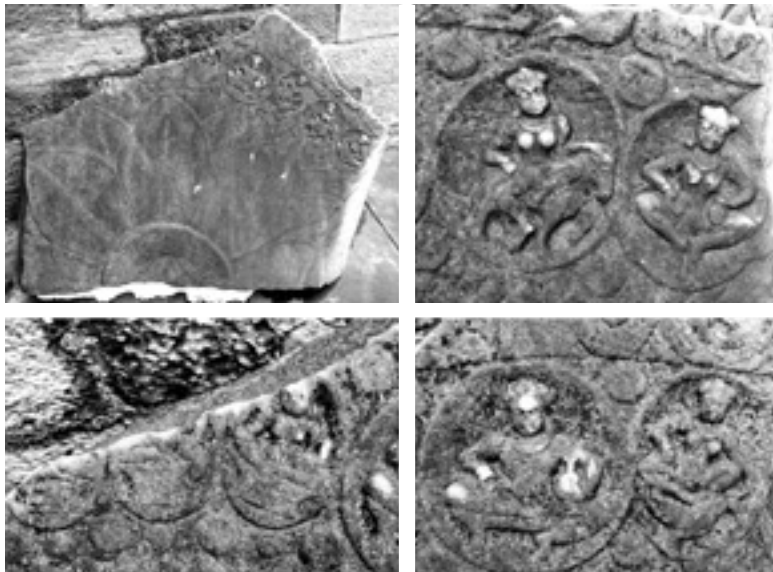
20 Yajñavarāha at Eran, M.P., 500–505 AD (see Figure 10), with details of some Nakṣatras and Scorpio. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

wood carvings); Banerjee 1984 (Central Asian ceiling paintings); and van Kooij 2008.

<sup>143</sup> See Rangarajan 1997: 49–50, fig. 4; Becker 2010: 129, fig. 6.



Several Nakṣatras and one Āditya are also preserved on a fragment of a lotus ceiling from Udayagiri (Figure 21).<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately their original total number is difficult to estimate. The Āditya resembles the ones on the Udayagiri abacus (see Figure 18); the female Nakṣatras are provided with animal mounts. In the following centuries the Nakṣatras did not gain wide dissemination in sculptural representations. Only some stray examples are known, for example on a broken slab from Rajasthan, which shows seven Nakṣatras with their names inscribed; they are all female and all provided with animal heads.<sup>145</sup>



21 Fragment of a ceiling slab from Udayagiri, M.P., ca. fifth century, with remnants of some Nakṣatras and one Āditya; Gurjari Mahal—Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior. Photos: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

<sup>144</sup> Now in the Gwalior Museum; see Williams 1982: 48, pl. 42. Williams dates the slab to ca. 415–425 CE and hypothesizes that there were “probably thirty-six [figures] in all. [...] it is likely that they represent the thirty-six Decans or stars, three of which are associated with each sign of the zodiac.” See also Willis 2009: 18, 20, fig. 10.

<sup>145</sup> From Aḍhāi Din kā Jhompṛā, Ajmer, now Ajmer Museum; see Bhattacharya 1960–61: 31, no. I (75) 451, pl. IX.

A particular detail in some images of the ascetic Tapasvinī Pārvatī (*supra*) seems to numerically allude to the Nakṣatras. In these examples the goddess is depicted as holding a garland (*mālā*) consisting of twenty-seven or twenty-eight beads above her head, presumably indicating that she continued her austerities day and night, month after month, as is described in the texts.<sup>146</sup> In South India, the earliest chariot-shaped *maṇḍapa*, which is to be found in the Naṭarāja temple at Chidambaram, shows 28 spokes in its wheels, obviously referring to the Nakṣatras.<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, several ceilings of later South Indian temples are decorated with carved figures of the Nakṣatras in animal form.<sup>148</sup>

As already mentioned, a number of painted Sūryamaṇḍalas from the Kathmandu valley in Nepal show the Nakṣatras in one of the outer circles.<sup>149</sup> Similarly we find them illustrated in several Candramaṇḍalas (as well as in some Buddhamaṇḍalas), which became quite popular within the Buddhist community from the 13th century onwards.<sup>150</sup> In addition, a new feature peculiar to Nepal from the 15th century onwards is the figural application of another lunar time cycle connected with Candra: the digits (*Kalā*) referring to the phases of the waning and waxing moon. The total number of *Kalās* is regarded as sixteen, of which fifteen are considered as movable and one as eternal.<sup>151</sup> In several sculptures and paintings the central image of Candra is encircled by sixteen seated *Kalā* figures of white complexion, all imitating the iconography of the Moon-god himself.<sup>152</sup> One of the paintings is of special interest, as it depicts

<sup>146</sup> See Mevissen 2003: 458–459, nos. 34–35 (with further references), figs. 12–13.

<sup>147</sup> See Mevissen 1996a: 481 no. 11, 497, pl. 32.10; 1996b: 358–360, fig. 5; 2002b: 62, pls. V.17–18.

<sup>148</sup> See e.g. Rajarajan 2006: 144–145, pl. 108 & cover illustration (erroneously identified as “Rāśis”).

<sup>149</sup> See Mevissen 2004a: 128, 138–140, nos. S16, S17, S18, pl. 17.16; 2008–09: 68–69, col.pl. XIII, figs. 3–4.

<sup>150</sup> See Mevissen 2004a: 138, 140–141, nos. C7, C9, C10, C12, C16, B2, B3, pls. 22, 25–26; 2008–09: 68–70, col.pl. XIV, figs. 1, 3.

<sup>151</sup> See Pal & Bhattacharyya 1969: 23–24.

<sup>152</sup> See Mevissen 2004a: 138, 140–141, nos. C6, C9, C10, [C12], C15, C16, C17, C18, pls. 22–24; 2006a: 46, nos. 90–91, pl. 64; 2008–09: 68–70, col.pls. XIV figs. 1, 3, 4, XV, figs. 1, 2. Three Indian stone sculptures of Sūrya from the eleventh century may be accompanied by sixteen female *Kalā* figures; if this identification is correct, they represent the earliest depiction of the *Kalās* on the Indian subcontinent; cf. Mevissen 2006a: 19, 45, nos. 87–89, pl. 63.

fifteen identical white Kalā figures while the eternal digit is represented as a *caitya* just above the head of Candra. Seven Kalās are painted on a white background, thus symbolizing the *śukla-pakṣa*, the bright half of the lunar month, and eight on a dark background, referring to the *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*, the dark fortnight. This is the only instance where the Kalās are differentiated in such a way.<sup>153</sup>

Several early Buddhist texts refer to the Nakṣatras as subservient or protective deities.<sup>154</sup> In art the Nakṣatras occur frequently on Central Asian paintings accompanying the Tejaprabhā Buddha ('Buddha of Blazing Light');<sup>155</sup> in Tibet they are depicted with the goddess Grahamāṭṛkā.<sup>156</sup>

Finally a unique stone disk from Dhubela in Central India should be mentioned (Figure 22).<sup>157</sup> It combines all the deities and symbols of time on its surface, among them the Navagrahas, the twelve Rāśis and the Nakṣatras, inseparably interwoven as are the different aspects and divisions with which man has tried again and again to cope with this complex phenomenon: Time.

<sup>153</sup> See Mevissen 2004a: 133–134, 141, no. C16; 2008–09: 69, col.pl. XIV, fig. 3.

<sup>154</sup> For the Nakṣatras in the *Mahāvastu*, the *Lalitavistara*, and the *Vinayapīṭaka* of the Mahāśāṅghikā, see e.g. Barea 1959. See also note 121.

<sup>155</sup> For mural paintings, see e.g. (1) Cave 61 at Dunhuang; Whitfield 1982: 323–324, fig. on p. 323; (2) from Cave VI at Toyuk, National Museum, New Delhi (Toy.VI.0272); Banerjee 1984; van Kooij 2008: 92–94 (with further references), afb. 3–4; (3) Cave VIII at Ch'ien Fo Tung; Meister 1954: Abb. 2–3. For cloth paintings, see e.g. (4) from Dunhuang, dated 897 AD, Stein Collection, British Museum; Meister 1954: Abb. 1; Whitfield 1982: 323–324, pl. 27, figs. 79–81; (5) from Dunhuang, Musée Guimet, Paris; Giés & Cohen 1995: 260–261, no. 200; (6) Boston Museum of Art; Meister 1954: Abb. 5; (7) from Kharakhoto, 11th–early 12th century, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; Samosyuk 1997/98: 356–357, fig. 1; van Kooij 2008: 94–96, afb. 5–6; (8–12) from Kharakhoto, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 12th–13th century; Samosyuk 1997/98: 356–358, figs. 2–4a; Sen 1999: figs. 17, 20–23.

<sup>156</sup> See Mevissen 2006b: 77 (Table 4, s.v. Nakṣ°), 81–83, nos. 14–15, 17–18, 20, 22, 24, col.pl. XXI.

<sup>157</sup> From Dhubela near Khajuraho, M.P., now in the Bhopal Museum, H. 106 cm, ca. tenth/eleventh century; cf. Joshi 1992: 134 no. x, 138, pl. 50; Desai 1996: 140, ph. 149; Joshi 2011: *passim*, figs. 7.1–7.5.



**22** Stone slab from Dhubela, M.P., ca. tenth/eleventh century, showing Navagrahas, Rāśis, Ādityas, Nakṣatras, etc.; Bhopal Museum. Photo: Gudrun Melzer, 2008.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The occurrence of time-related deities based on astral phenomena can be summarized as follows: Prior to the fifth century AD the Sun- and the Moon-gods were applied both to demarcate the sacrosanct threshold of a holy place and the threshold between one life-period and another. Being the basic indicators of time, the endless motions of the sun and the moon denote perpetuity as well as eternity. This also becomes evident from several inscriptions known from India and Southeast Asia which refer to the two luminaries either in a negative sense ("May people who violate that pious work undergo hell for as long as Sun and Moon shall

last!”) or in a positive sense (“... may profit remain here, for as long as the Sun and the Moon shall last, so that [the divine images erected by and named after ...] shall receive worship until the apocalypse!”).<sup>158</sup>

The other astral bodies were not yet iconographically differentiated in the early period, but this changed rapidly during the Gupta period in the fifth century. This change is witnessed especially at Udayagiri, which served as the central place for the establishment of new gods, including the previously unrepresented astral- and time-related gods. It was here that the image of the cosmic boar-form of Viṣṇu, Varāha, was chosen to include personifications of the twelve solar Ādityas for the first time; the lion capital from the same place added the twelve solar Rāśis; and the lunar Nakṣatras made their first appearance on a ceiling slab. All these deities are connected with monthly and yearly cycles.<sup>159</sup> The second large Varāha, erected at Eran around 500 AD, shows besides the Nakṣatras (and at least one Rāśi) the seven planetary deities (Grahas) for the first time,<sup>160</sup> thus incorporating the time division of the week. From then on the astral deities entered the art of all major South Asian religions, though with different emphasis, according to the mythological background of the concerned deities.

Man’s longing for eternity, i.e. immortality, seems to have been the underlying, all-pervading motivation for the incorporation of the astral bodies into the creative output of Indo-Asia’s material culture.

<sup>158</sup> Both quotations are from Khmer inscriptions (cf. Griffiths 2009: 471–473), but numerous similar examples occur in inscriptions from India (*ibid.*).

<sup>159</sup> As Michael Willis has convincingly shown, Udayagiri was a preeminent “place of time”, where an astronomical observatory was used for calendrical purposes (Willis 2009: 19–30); it “was a place for charting time and knowing the year. [...] The year [...] is the firm foundation [...] of all beings. [...] The year has this status because everything is conditioned by time and comes within its embrace. The gods are not beyond the reach of time and its endless cycles. [...] The establishment of the gods in such a place [...] gave cosmic sanction to the gods as sentient beings in temples. [...] In every way, then, Udayagiri is the starting point for all that is fundamental to the temple culture, social dispensation, and political constitution of the medieval world.” (*ibid.*: 165–166).

<sup>160</sup> But see note 80.

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#### ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

- AG** Aṣṭagrahas (Eight Planetary Deities)  
**M.P.** Madhya Pradesh (State in Central India)  
**NG** Navagrahas (Nine Planetary Deities)  
**SG** Saptagrahas (Seven Planetary Deities)  
**T.** Temple  
**U.P.** Uttar Pradesh (State in Northern India)

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RYŌSUKE ŌHASHI

## THE CONCEPT OF TIME ACCORDING TO ZEN MASTER DŌGEN: “A PINE TREE IS ALSO TIME, A BAMBOO IS ALSO TIME”<sup>1</sup>

The following paper is about a text which has been handed down since the 13th century in Japan. The culture in South Asia is, like the climate and the religion, very different from that of the Far East. The climate in the former, South Asia, is in general tropical in the flat country, where basically only two and not four seasons can be distinguished: the rainy and the dry season. However, in the mountainous areas there, the high mountains are covered with snow. In East Asia, on the other hand, the climate is humid and moderate so that all four seasons have their own distinct characters.

As to the religion, Hinduism and Islam are the two mainstream faiths in South Asia, while in East Asia, Buddhism, which originally came from India, and the two Chinese philosophical religions, Confucianism and Taoism, form the important core of the spiritual tradition. Buddhism in South Asia is only practised by a minority today. As the concept of time is closely related to experiences of the so-called “life-world”, the differences mentioned above should be taken into account if the South Asian and Far Eastern views on time are to be compared. The comparative consideration of the two views is, of course, not the subject of this small paper, but it seems to be meaningful to cast a glance at the climatic and religious background of the conception of time.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the edited version of a lecture manuscript which was read on 26 June 2010, during the workshop *Concepts of Time and Their Visual and Material Aspects—Focus Asia*, Internationales Kolleg Morphomata, University of Cologne (eds.).

No less an important background consideration is the language with which time is conceived. The main languages in South Asia, Hindi and Urdu, but also Bengali and Tamil (among many others), are quite alien to the people in East Asia. European languages are more familiar there, because of cultural exchanges over several centuries. The visual and material aspects are the expressions of epistemic concepts which are inseparably combined with the languages, and the language is the medium in which cultural figurations become manifest. Concepts of time and their visual aspects, based on reflexive or philosophical accumulations of knowledge must be regarded as an element of the cultural dynamics.

In the Far East, Buddhism has been one of the basic religions, and the related texts have been translated from ancient South Asian languages, Sanskrit and Pāli, into Chinese. In the modern age, these ancient languages are no longer used in everyday life. The tradition of Buddhism in China was largely replaced with Confucianism long ago and later discontinued under the Communist system of the country, but in Japan, the so-called Mahāyāna Buddhism was inherited and it has been developed further, so that important Buddhist thoughts have also been conceived in Japan. The text which I am going to treat is one of those Japanese fundamental Buddhist texts.

The author is Dōgen (1200–1253), the founder of the Japanese Zen-Buddhist sect named Sōtō. The Sōtō sect stands with the Rinzai sect as one of the two main streams of Zen Buddhism in Japan. A representative thinker of the same time in the West is the Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). The historical processes in Europe and Japan from the Middle Ages until the modern age resemble each other in many aspects. The 13th century in Europe is the epoch in which High Scholasticism was formed, represented by Albertus Magnus (1193–1280), Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura (1221–1274), and others. Meister Eckhart (1260–1328), who belonged to German mysticism, should also be counted among these important theologians. The 13th century in Japan on the other hand is also an epoch in which creative religious thoughts were conceived. Japanese Buddhism, in the narrow sense of the word, came into existence. Dōgen was not only the founder of the Japanese Sōtō sect of Zen Buddhism but also one of the founders (or: founding fathers) of Japanese Buddhism, along with Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262) in the Shin sect as well as Nichiren (1222–1282) in the Nichiren sect.

The main scripture of Dōgen, which I am taking up, is entitled “*Shōbōgenzō*”. The title means “the treasury of the eye of the true

Dharma". I have selected some important chapters of this text and translated them into German in collaboration with a colleague of mine. The book was published in 2006 (Dōgen 2006). In the following I am trying to give an abridged English translation of the chapter in which time is the subject-matter.

The text *Shōbōgenzō* is a collection of sermons, which Dōgen preached to his disciples mostly in oral, but also in written form. We are reminded of the writings of Meister Eckhart, whom I have mentioned before, because his writings were also sermons for the believers. Dōgen gives practical instructions for the technique of meditation but also philosophical explanations of Buddhist thoughts. In *Shōbōgenzō*, "time" and "being" belong to the main subjects and many philosophers in Japan have been engaged with the thought of Dōgen on time and being. But a mere speculative explanation was not the intention of Dōgen. As a collection of sermons, the explanation in *Shōbōgenzō* had to always be concrete. What does it mean to be concrete? It means that the content has to do with the circumstances of life or the existential way of life. All the descriptions in *Shōbōgenzō* are the direct expression of the concrete experiences of Dōgen himself and not an abstract reflection. This character is also fundamental to the chapter in which "time" is treated. The title of my paper: "A Pine Tree Is Also Time, A Bamboo Is Also Time" is one example for these concrete descriptions in *Shōbōgenzō*. But to be concrete and to be comprehensible is not always the same. Concrete things often need explanations in detail in order to be understood.

One more comment on the concreteness of the description by Dōgen: Because the themes he treated in *Shōbōgenzō* are the matter of life or of practising Buddhists' own existence, the body and soul, and not the intellect, are the ultimate subjects. For Dōgen as well as in many texts of Zen, the word "body-soul" is a key word. Two distinct words are unified into one word, which is not rare in Buddhism. Seemingly contradictory words, for example "being and nothing", "life and death", are often united to one word "being-nothing", "life-death" etc. Body-soul is the most concrete and existential matter for a human being. In the citations which I shall make in the following, this word "body-soul" does not appear, but when Dōgen speaks about "I" or "self", this should always be understood as another expression for "body-soul". But what is the body-soul, and what is "time"? One answer has been given by Dōgen: "A pine tree is also time, a bamboo is also time". But what does this mean? The meaning of this answer is concealed so that an interpretation is needed.

I quote some central phrases from the chapter "Being-time" in *Shōbōgenzō*.<sup>2</sup> The chapter is entitled "uji", which consists of two Chinese letters: "u" is being, and "ji" is time. "U-ji" means therefore "being-time" and Dōgen uses the expression in this sense. But this expression commonly means "sometimes" or "at a certain time". The first two sentences of the chapter for example can therefore be read in two ways. According to Dōgen it reads:

"An old Buddha said,  
Being-time is: standing on the top of the very high mountain,  
Being-time is: walking on the ground of the very deep ocean."

But according to the renowned Zen-master Yakusan of the eighth century in China, to whom this word is attributed, it must mean:

"Sometimes: standing on the top of the very high mountain.  
Sometimes: walking on the bottom of the very deep ocean."

Yakusan says that he sometimes stands on the top of a very high mountain, that is, on the supreme spiritual standpoint reached through hard training, which almost no one can achieve. But sometimes he also walks on the bottom of the ocean, that is, he lives among many people and creatures, who dwell in the ordinary life-world. They are tormented there by hardships and misfortunes. In Buddhism, the bottom of the ocean is a metaphor for the life-world of the creatures including human beings, who are destined to die some time and must suffer many troubles. To walk on the bottom of the ocean means to relieve them, not from above through grace of a heavenly being, but from below with compassion, by living and communicating with them. Dōgen, who has stayed in China for a few years, could read, write and speak Chinese fluently. He therefore knew the ordinary usage of the word "uji" in Chinese, that is, "sometimes". But he intentionally disconnected the word into two parts, "u" and "ji", so that the hidden sense of "sometimes" is uncovered. A situation, which is called "sometimes", means "a certain time", in which someone is standing or acting and his or her being is present there. Sometimes we walk or run, sometimes we read or write. Every time, a certain state of our being at a certain time is referred to. Being and time are always our own individual

<sup>2</sup> Dōgen 2006: 92–113. For an interpretation see also Izutsu 2008: 107–113.

being and our own individual time. Our whole existence is expressed in this “sometimes”. The text continues as follows:

“Being-time (sometimes): a guardian god with three heads and eight arms.

Being-time (sometimes): a sixteen-foot-high Buddha statue.

Being-time (sometimes): a crook and a fly-whisk.

Being-time (sometimes): a pillar and a lantern.

Being-time (sometimes): Peter or John.<sup>3</sup>

Being-time (sometimes): the large earth and the empty sky.”

Being and time are not abstract concepts. They are perceptible in the form of concrete things. This view coincides to a certain degree with that of Aristotle who thought that time is observed with things, which move *within* time (Aristotle, *Physica*, Book IV, Chapters 10 & 11). In this regard, Dōgen is closer to Aristotle than to the modern German philosopher Kant, who thought that time is the pure form of the senses and is *a priori*, that is, pre-empirical. But Dōgen’s view also differs from Aristotle’s, when he continues as follows:

“The so-called being-time (sometimes) means: Time is already being, every being is always time. The golden body of a sixteen-foot-high Buddha statue is just time. Because he is time, he possesses the magnificence and the splendour of time. The guardian god with three heads and eight arms is time. Because he is time, he must be united with the present twelve times.”

“Twelve times” means twelve time-zones of a day, named after twelve signs of the Chinese and Japanese zodiac: Ram, Bull, Twins, Crab, Lion, Virgin, Balance, Scorpion, Archer, Goat, Water Bearer, Fish. These zodiac signs already show that time is grasped as one with concrete images. But it is a misunderstanding if we think that Dōgen points out only objectively observable phenomena of time. As remarked before, *Shōbōgenzō* contains sermons for the disciples of Dōgen and the most important matter of concern is the search for the truth through the practice of Zen. The next sentences suggest just this aspect:

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<sup>3</sup> Two common first names.

“Although one does not measure how long and short these twelve times are, one calls them twelve times. Because the trail of coming and going (of time) is evident, no one doubts what time is. Though he does not doubt what it is, he does not know it.”

In the history of the philosophical arguments about time in West Europe we find a quite parallel phrase to these words. St. Augustine writes in his “*Confessiones*”:

“I know what time is, so long as no one asks me. But as soon as someone asks me, I do not know it.” (Augustinus, *Confessiones*, Book XI, 14).

He meditates and considers what time is. At last, he finds that the past is present in the memory of the soul; the present is present in the intuition of the soul, and the future is present in the expectation of the soul; it is the presence of the future. According to Augustine, the modes of time are the modes of the soul; time is united with soul. The soul in this sense is the archetype of the time-consciousness, which is reflected precisely in transcendental philosophy and phenomenology since the 20th century. Dōgen’s view, as expressed in the following sentence, also has this aspect of time-consciousness:

“I line up myself (as my acts) and look at it. The reason why the own self is time is just this.”

The expression “I line up myself as my acts” seems at first a little strange, but when we reflect on the structure of our self-awareness, we notice that this expression reveals a similar structure. In our self-awareness we project our acts upon our consciousness and look at them, that is, we line up ourselves and our acts and we reflect on them. These are acts which we have done some minutes ago or some days ago, yesterday, one year ago, and so forth. They stand in line as past acts, and this line-up itself is temporal. Our self is time. For Dōgen, this cognition is not merely epistemological but it is also the self-awareness of a man who practices Zen Buddhism. This is formulated more clearly in the following passage:

“Because of this circumstance, one should learn that there are numerous phenomena and countless grasses, and in each grass, in each phenomenon the whole earth is contained. The coming and going (of being-time) in this way gives the starting point of the practice (of Zen).

If one arrives at this stage (of understanding), (one sees that) each grass and each phenomenon is there. It happens that one understands the phenomenon, but also that one does not understand the phenomenon, it happens that one understands the grass, but also that one does not understand the grass. Because these respective times alone are that what exists, each being-time contains in it the whole time. Existing grass, existing phenomenon, are both time. In each respective time the whole being, the whole world is contained. Consider if there is a whole being or a whole world, which escapes from the present time.”

Here, suddenly the word “grass” appears, somewhat incoherently. The association of this word is premised. In Buddhist texts, the word is often a synonym for a phenomenon in the world of time and space, perhaps because growing and withering of grasses within a short time express the condition of temporal and specific phenomena as a whole. Grasses also mean desires and passions of human being because they grow thick and endless in humid climate in the Far East. But grass in this passage can also be taken as a grass in the ordinary sense. Here we can quote a poem of Wordsworth, “Splendour in the Grass”, in order to understand this passage in a loose but suggestive way:

“But trailing cloud of glory do we come from God who is our home. /  
Though nothing can bring back the hour of splendour in the  
grass, of glory in the flower, we will grieve not. /  
Rather find strength in what remains behind.”

The romantic poet William Wordsworth sees the strength of God in the grass though its glory has passed away. He sees that behind this fleeting phenomenon in space and time the eternal strength of God remains. The film *Splendor in the Grass* (1961) was named after this poem. Natalie Wood played the leading part of a woman whose youth is ending but her life at the same time assumes a deeper meaning. The romanticism will remain, though the present time passes away and it is kept in God. Augustine would say that the youth which has passed away is preserved in the memory of the soul, through which one can take up a dialogue with the soul of God. Dōgen would say that the past is preserved in me, who is one with time. Although the I is also fleeting and ephemeral, this fleeting I is one with being-time itself, and in each respective being-time in the form of the I, the whole being-time is contained. But enough of the comparison with romanticism. Let us read the following passage:

“For example: At the time where I was climbing a mountain, I existed; (therefore) time was there (united with me). Because I surely exist, time does not pass away. If time is not in the mode of going and coming, the time of mountain climbing is the just presence (=just-presence) of being-time. If time preserves the mode of going and coming, the just presence of being-time belongs to me. This is what being-time means.”

In this passage there are two contrastive sentences. The one is: “If time is not in the mode of going and coming, ...”, and the other is: “If time preserves the mode of going and coming, ...”. The former means that time does not flow and the latter says that time flows. The two sentences seem to contradict each other and cannot coexist. But what is contrasted with each other are the “modes” of time. These modes are the modes of “I”, who moves and acts and changes constantly and appears always in different modes of being but I keep always the identity of I. I was once a child, and youth, and now adult. I have always been I. I flow away but I myself do not flow at all. The two aspects of time, flowing and not flowing, were once pointed out by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. He says on the one hand, that time itself does not change (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A.41, B.58; A.182, B.225, A.144, B.183), but on the other hand, that time changes without cessation (A.234, B.291). For Kant these aspects of time were an epistemological problem. For Dōgen, they concern the existence of “I”, who sometimes walks on the bottom of the ocean, sometimes stands on the top of a high mountain.

Now, we have arrived at the point, where we are prepared to understand the meaning of the title of my paper expressed in the following passage:

“Therefore a pine tree is also time, a bamboo is also time. One should not think that time merely flows, one should not believe that it is the mere property of time to flow. If time is submitted to a flow, there should be openings. If one does not experience and understand the way of being-time, it is because one believes that time merely passes. To summarize in short: Each being in the whole world continues successively, and at each time it is time. Because it is being-time, it is my-being-time.”

In this passage it is repeated what I have described above. The summary which Dōgen gives can be replaced with the first phrase “A pine tree is

also time, a bamboo is also time". Time is visualized in a material form as a pine tree or a bamboo. I myself do see this time. Therefore it is "my-being-time" as one word.

I hope that my point comes across. Even I myself would say, as it goes in the German language: "Jain", or "yes/no". The comprehension itself is one mode of being-time, and incomprehension is also one mode of being-time. If someone answers "yes", he should be interrogated as to *how* he (or she) has understood Dōgen, and if the answer is "no",—how is such an answer possible, since he himself is already being-time?

Everyone knows what time is, but no one really knows, if asked, what it is. At any rate, we see here a bamboo and there a pine tree, which are both visual forms of being-time.

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E. P. WIERINGA

## A MONUMENT MARKING THE DAWN OF THE MUSLIM ERA IN JAVA: CHRONICLES AND CHRONOGRAMS ON THE GRAND MOSQUE OF DEMAK

In this contribution I wish to discuss the putative milestone event of the building of the grand mosque of Demak which, in the words of the Javanologist Nancy Florida, is "a monument to Islam in Java"<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1). The Demak mosque has an emblematic shape, "found from Atjeh (Achin) to Ambon (Amboina)"<sup>2</sup> The Javanocentric bias notwithstanding, it is customary in scholarship to speak of the 'Demak type' to denote mainstream pre-twentieth-century vernacular mosques in Islamic Southeast Asia which were constructed "as real monuments, having three to even five imposing roofs, with sturdy pillars supporting the structure"<sup>3</sup> Another remarkable feature of these mosques is that they did not have minarets but were equipped with a large drum, beaten just before the calls to prayer.<sup>4</sup> The historian De Graaf suggests that this specific Southeast Asian type of mosque perhaps originated in Sumatra, which in its turn may have been inspired by Indian models.<sup>5</sup> The eye-catching multi-tiered roofs have particularly given rise to an endless impressionistic and inconclusive debate: The overlapping roofs might represent a relic of the

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<sup>1</sup> Florida 1995: 325. A note on the abbreviations in this article: CE is Common Era; AH is *Anno Hijrae*, the Islamic era; AJ is *Anno Javanico*, the Javanese era.

<sup>2</sup> De Graaf 1963: 1.

<sup>3</sup> Van Dijk 2007: 47–48.

<sup>4</sup> Van Dijk 2007: 55–58.

<sup>5</sup> De Graaf 1963: 2. See Van Dijk 2007: 52 for a further discussion.





1 View of the Demak mosque with its characteristic three-tiered roof, 1910. Courtesy of KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies in Leiden.

(Javanese) Hindu-Buddhist past or could perhaps have been adapted from Indian mosque architecture which in its turn was influenced by Hindu temple building, or may even have had their origin in Chinese architecture (in this case pagodas).<sup>6</sup>

The architectural history of the ‘Demak style mosque’ in insular South-east Asia is riddled with questions, but the origin of the actual Demak mosque, too, is surrounded more by pious fiction than hard facts. Said to have been constructed as a joint effort by the legendary ‘nine saints’ (*wali sanga*), who reputedly brought Islam to Java, this prayer-house is the visible materialization of a new message and a new epoch. This heavily myth-laden foundational event belongs to what the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss has conceptualized as ‘hot moments’. Such moments “result from the individuals and groups whose discourses assign meanings and social significance to events regarded as benchmark moments or historically notable occasions”.<sup>7</sup> Pregnant with potent symbolism, the construction of the Demak mosque continues to inspire meaning-making until the present

6 See Van Dijk 2007: 52 for a brief overview.

7 Lévi-Strauss 1966: 259.

day. For example, fairly recently the noted Indonesian poet, journalist, and latter-day *philosophe* Goenawan Mohamad expressed his thoughts on Java’s earliest stage of Islamisation in the following epigrammatic way:<sup>8</sup>

“*Demak*: One day, which perhaps never really happened in the 16th century, nine saints calmly constructed the first mosque in this city at Java’s north coast. Hundreds of years later, the story is still circulating that one of them, Sunan Kalijaga, made a pillar of the Demak mosque from *tatal*:<sup>9</sup> left over woodchips and wood shavings which were lying around.

Astonished I reflect on this: a mosque which is supported by what has been thrown away, trivialities and things that could not be flattened—not a house of God which stands because of straight and firm fundamentals, with spears and a throne.”

This short contemplative note is the first of 99 pithy aphorisms in a collection of reflections on “God and unsettled things”, which happens to be the book’s title.<sup>10</sup> Goenawan Mohamad’s musings may certainly invite further thought, but in this essay I shall concentrate my attention on the curious paradox of a fabled watershed that “perhaps never really happened in the 16th century”.

In order to provide the reader with the necessary background information on this particular event, let me start by quoting from a state-of-the-art overview of the history of Java in the sixteenth century, which has recently been written by the eminent historian Merle Ricklefs. He begins his account with the following caveat:<sup>11</sup>

“During this time Java went through a fundamental religious-cultural and political transformation, but our sources are few and of uncertain veracity, so we have only an imperfect picture of how this happened. We have to rely heavily on Javanese chronicles (*babad*) which only survive in copies made well after the events. Nevertheless, some things are reasonably clear.”

8 Mohamad 2007: 9.

9 The Javanese word *tatal* means wood chips/shavings.

10 The book was translated into English as *On God and other unfinished things* by Laksmi Pamuntjak in 2007, but this was not available to me at the time of writing.

11 Ricklefs *et al.* 2010: 113.

The plot in Ricklefs's narrative is structured by the trope of rise, decline, and rise and decline again:<sup>12</sup>

“At the start of the century, the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit was in decline and threatened by north coastal Islamic states. In these circumstances, it is possible to imagine that internationally connected Muslim commercial interests were in the ascendant on the coast, at the expense of a less commercially inclined, aristocratic Hindu-Buddhist culture centred in the interior of East Java—both of these variants being mystical in religious orientation [...]. We should, however, be wary of imposing such simplistic interpretations just because there is little evidence to contradict them. By the end of the sixteenth century, the centre of political gravity was in the process of returning to the now-Islamized interior of Central Java.

The first of the coastal Islamic states to rise to prominence was Demak. Its mosque is traditionally believed to be the first to have been built in Java. It is said to have been constructed personally (and, in part, magically) by the legendary nine *walis*—the bringers of Islam to Java. Demak seems to have been founded in the late fifteenth century by a Chinese Muslim. Its greatest ruler was known as Trenggana (r. c. 1505–46), who is described as “Sultan” in the chronicles, but this title may be an anachronism. He consolidated Demak's hegemony over other states and led the final Islamic assault on the rump of Majapahit, then at Kediri, which fell c. 1527. It is of interest that, despite the transition from the hegemony of Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit to Islamic Demak, Javanese *babads* emphasize continuity. They wrongly date the fall of Majapahit *Śaka* 1400 (CE 1478–79) and depict the ruler of Demak who conquered Majapahit—whom they call Raden Patah—as a son of the last king of Majapahit by a Chinese princess.”

Demak's period of glory, however, was not long-lasting, and Ricklefs informs us that “[t]he disintegration of Demak's hegemony in the later sixteenth century facilitated the rise of other states”.<sup>13</sup> And so we enter the period of the rise of a new state, with a new dynasty in the inland district of Mataram. The Mataram empire was “the longest lasting of all

<sup>12</sup> Ricklefs *et al.* 2010: 113.

<sup>13</sup> Ricklefs *et al.* 2010: 113.

Javanese dynasties, which even today is still represented by four princely lines in Surakarta and Yogyakarta”.<sup>14</sup>

As one may judge from this extract, Ricklefs, who is a conscientious scholar and a leading authority on Indonesian, and especially Javanese, history, has wrought an easily digestible text, presenting an insightful survey. In the preface to *A New History of Southeast Asia*, from which his account on Demak is taken (quoted above), Ricklefs states that “a book like this, if it is to be of use to students in their studies and to general readers as a reference, [it] must provide a general, *factual* narrative” (emphasis mine).<sup>15</sup> Clearly, he has admirably succeeded in fulfilling this task—all the more so considering his preceding proviso, warning us about the most problematic nature of the sources.

The idea that a historian is basically a storyteller is still firmly entrenched in the discipline, as if the vigorous debate about narrative history, which has been raging over the last decades, were merely about theory and philosophy, with little to no utility to actual practice.<sup>16</sup> Typically, one of the chapters in the manual *From concept to completion: A dissertation-writing guide for history students*, which was compiled by twelve noted historians, and published by the American Historical Association (AHA) in 2009, is called “From notes to narrative: Finding the story”.<sup>17</sup> But what about finding the ‘notes’, those building blocks of a story, also known in the craft under such terms as ‘materials’, ‘evidence’, and ‘historical details’? As Anthony Grafton, AHA President for 2011, reminds students, they should adopt “the proper, skeptical attitude”.<sup>18</sup> I particularly liked Grafton's advice to budding historians: “First things first: trust no one”.<sup>19</sup> However, could a historian taking the role of the doubting Thomas in the case of early modern Demak ever get a pen to paper? Looking at the ‘evidence’, I think that even a ‘microhistorian’, who is used to attending to “the ‘spaces’ and internal inconsistencies in documents, to fragmentation, and to plurality of viewpoints”, would be

<sup>14</sup> Ricklefs *et al.* 2010: 113.

<sup>15</sup> Ricklefs *et al.* 2010: x.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Clark 2004; Meuter 2011: 140–155.

<sup>17</sup> Harkness 2009: 49–54. In fact, Harkness 2009: 49 writes: “The reason why history and writing are tangled together is because, at the most basic level, all historians are storytellers.”

<sup>18</sup> Grafton 2009: 28.

<sup>19</sup> Grafton 2009: 28.

hard pressed ‘to find the story’, telling us about the ‘single event’ of the building of the Demak mosque.<sup>20</sup>

In what follows I will focus on the problem of the factual dating of the Demak mosque, paying special attention to the complex Javanese system of chronogram words which has its origin in Sanskrit/Indian models (cf. the contribution by Karl-Heinz Golzio in this volume) but may be called, following Noorduyn, “a case of localization”, applying a concept by Wolters for a process by which “Indian materials tended to be fractured and restated and therefore drained of their original significance”.<sup>21</sup>

#### CHRONICLES AND CHRONOGRAMS

Javanese chronicles treat the ‘regime change’ in a rather matter-of-fact manner: The ‘fall’ of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit is commonly said to have taken place in Śaka 1400/CE 1478–9, and quite soon thereafter, a new dynasty supposedly began, viz. the rule of Demak, inaugurating a new, Islamic era. For example, in a chronicle noting memorable events of Javanese history, composed by Prince Suryanagara of Yogyakarta in 1865, we read:<sup>22</sup>

“Number 1400, the year Bé (of the *windu* cycle),<sup>23</sup> the fall of Majapahit, Brawijaya escapes, with his children and wives, end of the Buddhist religion.

Number 1401, the year Wawu, the *kraton* [kingship, reign; residence of a king] of Demak, Raden Patwa (Patah) mounts the throne with the title of Sultan Bintara.

<sup>20</sup> Clark 2004: 94.

<sup>21</sup> Noorduyn 1993. Wolters 1982: 52. For a discussion of Javanese chronograms, see De Casparis 1978: 28–32 and Ricklefs 1978: 239–244 with further references. Pigeaud 1938: XI–XII provides a succinct overview of the most important semantic fields of Javanese chronogram words. For manuscript lists of chronogram words, see Pigeaud 1967: 301–302. Padmasusastra 1950 is a rather small (28 pages) and handy booklet, while the standard reference still remains Bratakesawa 1980 (first published in 1928).

<sup>22</sup> Translation by Ras 1992b: 261.

<sup>23</sup> The Javanese Muslim years are divided into repeating cycles of eight years called *windu*, see Ricklefs 1978: 234 for a lucid discussion. The idea of a recurrent rhythmic development of time plays an important part in Javanese thinking, even in the modern era, see e.g. Hering 2002: 1 n. 1.

Number 1402, the year Jimakir, Brawijaya resides in *Candhi* [temple, shrine] Dhukuh, in the district of Ambarawa.

Number 1403, the year Alip, Sultan Bintara is officially installed with the approval of Sunan Giri.”

In another text, the so-called *Babading Sangkala* “Chronicle of Chronograms”, dating from 1738, the very first event is the fall of Majapahit in Śaka 1400, which is expressed in a chronogram that has become emblematic, viz. “disappeared (o), gone (o), was the prosperity (4) of the world (1)”.<sup>24</sup> A comparable dynastic history of Java with chronograms up to AJ 1760/CE 1832, entitled “Chronicle of the Kingdom”, and composed in Surakarta, most probably around the same year as the last entry, begins as follows:<sup>25</sup>

- |                                         |                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Sangkalané reké manira ngawwi</i> | The chronograms, which I have composed,                                               |
| <i>sun angétang Babading Nagara</i>     | I list [those in] the “Chronicle of the Kingdom”.                                     |
| <i>nusa Jawi sengkalané</i>             | The chronogram for the island of Java is                                              |
| <i>sirna rupaning dhuwur</i>            | “disappeared (o) are all kinds (1) of highness (o)”.                                  |
| <i>Candhi Sèwu sangkalanèki</i>         | The chronogram for Candhi Sèwu is                                                     |
| <i>naga iku angrusak</i>                | “the <i>naga</i> <sup>26</sup> (8) that (1) destroyed (o) the world (1)”. The time of |
| <i>jagat kalanipun</i>                  | Candhi Kalibening was                                                                 |
| <i>Candhi Kalibening ika</i>            | verily “the literati (8), those (1) who                                               |
| <i>bujanggèku anembah ing bumi</i>      | worship (2) the earth (1)”.                                                           |
| <i>singguh</i>                          | The foundation of the Borobudur was                                                   |
| <i>reca Budhur babadnya</i>             |                                                                                       |

<sup>24</sup> In Javanese: *sirna* (o) *ilang* (o) *kartining* (4) *bumi* (1), see Ricklefs 1978: 18.

<sup>25</sup> This manuscript, known as *Serat Babat Sangkala*, is numbered “6 Ta” in the Sasana Pustaka, i.e. the palace library of Surakarta, having the project number KS 1C.2, described in Florida 1993: 53–54. I have made use of a typed transliteration of this text, prepared by Nancy K. Florida in 1984, and available in the Sanana Pustaka. I slightly altered the spelling of the text. The last entry in this chronicle, which ends rather abruptly, is dated the first of the month Sura of the Javanese year 1760 (expressed in the chronogram *tanpa rasa swaraning rat*), i.e. 31 May 1832.

<sup>26</sup> In insular Southeast Asia *naga* may not only represent a mythical serpent or snake but can also denote a dragon.

2. *Tanpa ngrasa gunaning wong  
singgih  
masigit watu ing Salatiga  
sirna ilang tingaling wong*  
  
*Pajajaran ing dangu*  
  
*sirna ilang gunaning aji*  
  
*ngadeging Majalengka*  
  
*dyan sengkalanipun  
watu mungal katon tunggal*  
  
*duk gempuré sirna ilang  
karyèng bumi*  
  
*ngadeg kitha ing Demak*
3. *Geni mati siniram ing janmi*
- verily “without (0) feeling (6) is the use (3) of people”.  
The stone mosque in Salatiga: “disappeared (0), gone (0), was the view (3) of the people (1)”.  
The beginning [of the state] of Pajajaran was “disappeared (0), gone (0), was the use (3) of the king (1)”.  
The establishment [of the state] of Majapahit is expressed in the chronogram “a stone (1) protruding (3), visible (0) is only one (1)”.  
Its fall was at the time when “disappeared (0), gone (0), were the works (4) of the world (1)”.  
The foundation of the city of Demak was [when]  
“fire (3) was extinguished (0) with water (4) by men (1)”.

It is unknown when this particular selection of key events in Javanese history with accompanying chronograms received its first form, but at least by the beginning of the nineteenth century this remarkable view of the past had become received wisdom in Central Java. For example, the very same text can be found, almost literally, in the major *Centhini* romance, originally composed in 1814 at the behest of the Crown Prince of Surakarta. The 1814 version of the *Centhini*, named after a minor character of the story, is a narrative poem of astounding proportions, and it has often been described as the encyclopaedia of Javanese culture. Its only complete published version, a twelve-volume Romanized edition, covering around 3,500 pages, finally appeared in print (after a few earlier false starts) between 1985 and 1991, while a team project of translating this massive work into Indonesian took place between 1991 and 2008. The *Centhini* story belongs to the genre of what Pigeaud in his survey *Literature of Java* has called “vagrant students’ romances containing encyclopedical passages”.<sup>27</sup> In the twelfth volume, in canto 694, one of the

<sup>27</sup> See Pigeaud 1967: 227–229. For a description of this genre, see Behrend 1987: 325–326. Recently, Ricklefs 2011: 149–151 has provided a succinct discussion of the *Centhini*, also referring to further studies.

story’s main protagonists called Jayèngraga (literally “Victor of Love”) visits a learned man by the no less poetical name of Ki Cariksutra (literally “Silk Clerk”) in order to learn more about “Javanese literature” (*sastra Jawi*), and the first topic is about chronograms.<sup>28</sup> Ki Cariksutra provides the same list as in the “Chronicle of the Kingdom” (cited above), but adds the following comment upon the last entry, i.e. the foundation of the state of Demak in *Śaka* 1403:<sup>29</sup>

<i>Geni mati siniram ing jalmi</i>	“Fire (3) was extinguished (0) with water (4) by men (1)”:
<i>purwanipun trap agami Islam</i>	This is when the Islamic religion was for the first time applied.
<i>Sultan Bintara pupulé lan pra wali linuhung ngumumaken sarèngat Nabi</i>	It was Sultan Bintara who gathered together with the noble saints, and made the prescriptions of Islamic law public,
<i>supaya kèbekana sanungsa Jawèku ing sarak jeng Rasullolah</i>	so that the entire island of Java would fulfil the rules of the honourable Messenger of God,
<i>sinirnakken agama Buda kang lami salin agama Islam</i>	eliminating the former Hindu-Buddhist religion, replacing it by the Islamic religion.

Thereupon the conversation shifts to another topic, viz. *kérata basa*, i.e. explaining words by reference to their (supposed) etymologies.<sup>30</sup>

The brief and almost oracular presentation of historical events, *inter alia* to be found in the *Centhini* romance and “Chronicle of the Kingdom”, raises more questions than it purportedly answers. For example, the first chronogram for the island of Java itself is already puzzling: The phrase *sirna rupaning dhuzwur* contains three words, but whereas *sirna* and *rupa* are common, oft-used chronogram words having standard values (respectively “zero” and “one”), the final word *dhuzwur* (“high, tall”) is not listed in standard lists. Belonging to the semantic domain of “to ascend, rise in the sky”, and thereby associated with “sky” and “emptiness, void”,

<sup>28</sup> Canto 694: 21, see Kamajaya 1991: 47.

<sup>29</sup> Canto 694: 27, see Kamajaya 1991: 48.

<sup>30</sup> On this traditional way of etymologising, see Arps 1992: 364–365; Wieringa 2002: 279–280. Some examples of this practice will be discussed in the final part of this paper.

its value must be “zero”.<sup>31</sup> But isn’t it rather odd to express the year *Śaka* 10 as *Śaka* 010?<sup>32</sup> Or was *dhuwur* just a filler word, inserted *metri causa*, because the verse form for this line prescribes two more syllables and the final vowel /u/?

The next three dates are on the establishment of Hindu-Buddhist monuments, but the *Śaka* years 1018, 1218, and 1360 are absolutely not in accordance with present-day academic knowledge. Incidentally, in the *Centhini* romance the chronogram for the Borobudur is slightly different, viz. *tanpa ngrasa tingalé wong (singgih)*, but the variant word (*tingal*, “look, glance”, having the value “two”) makes quite a difference, yielding the year *Śaka* 1260.<sup>33</sup> The philologist may decide what went wrong here, and whether perhaps a clerical *saut-du-même-au-même* caused a temporal leap of one hundred years. Yet even the year *Śaka* 1260 is still much too late, and symbolism is obviously much more important here than antiquarian accuracy. But what about the stone mosque in Salatiga dated *Śaka* 1300? Was the mosque in Demak not supposed to be the oldest in Java?

Understandably, modern-day scholars are very suspicious about the historicity of Javanese chronicles. The mere circumstance that a single round year is said to mark “the end of the Buddhist religion” (or rather the pre-Islamic religion) does not sound very plausible.<sup>34</sup> There are undeniable facts which prove, firstly, that Hindu-Buddhism was still practised in Java after *Śaka* 1400, and secondly, that Islam did not suddenly arrive as its successor and nemesis. Though the Hindu-Buddhist state by this time appears to have been in what Ricklefs calls “an advanced state of collapse”, the demise of Majapahit was most probably gradual, and not dramatically abrupt.<sup>35</sup> The philologist Noorduyn, who has made an in-depth study of Majapahit in the fifteenth century, suggests that the conquest of Majapahit, which must have taken place somewhere between 1478 and 1486, marked the end of a civil war between two competing

<sup>31</sup> A synonym of *dhuwur* would be *luhur* “high, exalted” which is listed in the reference works under “zero”.

<sup>32</sup> Florida 1984: 2 (see above, note 25), Kamajaya 1991: 47, and Marsono 2008: 57 also arrive at the year *Śaka* 10.

<sup>33</sup> See Kamajaya 1991: 47 who in a footnote provides the year *Śaka* 1360, whereas Marsono 2008: 57 gives both options: “1360(?) / 1260(?)”.

<sup>34</sup> The Javanese text reads *sirna agami Buda* (Ras 1992b: 261). The term *Buda*, however, is not exclusively reserved for Buddhist belief or practice but rather indicates pre-Islamic beliefs *sui generis*.

<sup>35</sup> Ricklefs 1981: 34.

branches of the Hindu-Buddhist royal line. Even after 1486, however, Hindu-Javanese kings continued to reside in the old palace of Majapahit. Noorduyn concludes that the end of the kingdom did not come in 1486, but “until some forty years later, after it had been gradually reduced in size by the continual attacks of Muslim harbour states along the north coast like Dêmak and Surabaya, as we learn from Tomé Pires’s account of his visit to Java in 1513”.<sup>36</sup>

Islam, for that matter, was by then not an entirely new phenomenon in Central Java: Islamic gravestones have been found in Tralaya, near the spot where the palace of Majapahit reputedly stood, bearing dates which run, according to the epigraphist Damais, from *Śaka* 1298/CE 1376 to *Śaka* 1397/CE 1475. A stone with an Islamic year is from AH 874, which is equivalent to *Śaka* 1391–2 or CE 1469–70.<sup>37</sup> Though these stones had been known to Western scholars since the end of the nineteenth century, they failed to make sense of them, bedevilled as they were by the ‘fact’ that the fall of Majapahit had taken place in *Śaka* 1400. In other words, conventional wisdom refused to accept the evidence in stone, visible to anyone who cared to see. As Drewes puts it: “Because Majapahit had thus not yielded to Islam before 1478 there *could* not have been any Muslim gravestones in Majapahit from before 1478, and so the inscriptions on the stones of Trânâlâyâ had to be of a later date”.<sup>38</sup> However, as Damais has made sufficiently clear, Islam already had gained a firm footing in Central Java in the fourteenth century, and Muslims of Javanese descent were living in the capital of the realm at the time of Majapahit’s greatest prosperity under the rule of king Hayam Wuruk (1350–1389). Intriguingly, the Middle Javanese narrative poem *Kidung Sunda*, which tells of historical events in Java at the middle of the fourteenth century, mentions a “Grand Mosque” (*Masigit Agung*) in Majapahit (canto I:59a).<sup>39</sup> Yet

<sup>36</sup> Noorduyn 1978: 255.

<sup>37</sup> Damais 1956.

<sup>38</sup> Drewes 1968: 456.

<sup>39</sup> The text can be found in Berg 1927: 21 (Middle Javanese text) and 83 (Dutch translation). Berg 1927: 136, however, assumed that *Masigit Agung* was the name of a small place (perhaps to be identified with Sisigora). I concur with Robson 1981: 278 that “[t]here can be no other translation for this than ‘Grand Mosque’”. See Robson 1981: 289 for a more accurate translation of this passage. Incidentally, Zoetmulder 1982, who *inter alia* made use of Berg’s edition of the *Kidung Sunda* for the compilation of his major Old Javanese-English dictionary, did not include “*Masigit (Agung)*”, apparently agreeing with Berg that it was a toponym.

archaeology still has to solve the enigma that to date nothing concrete of this building has been found.

#### CHRONOGRAMS AT THE MOSQUE COMPOUND

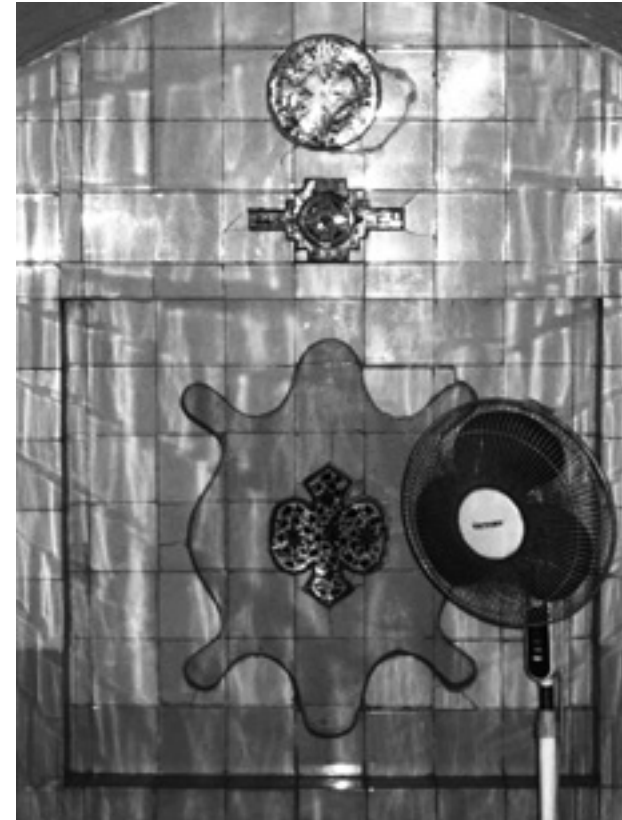
Surrounded by legends, it is impossible for the historian to reconstruct the 'objective' historical time in which the Demak mosque originally took shape. Legend has it that the building was made by all the nine saints during one single night. One among them, called Sunan Kalijaga, is said to have played a pivotal role in the fabrication and in the final placement of the mosque, settling its prayer direction.<sup>40</sup> A most wonderful tale relates how Ki Gedhé Séséla, a sixteenth-century ancestor of the dynasty of Mataram, once caught lightning with his bare hands, tied it up, and carried it to the Sultan of Demak, where it was imprisoned but later managed to escape.<sup>41</sup> A portal of the mosque, allegedly its former main entrance, is called *Kori Bledhèg* ("Door of Lightning"), which has an engraving of a bolt of lightning, marking its erstwhile incarceration.

The building, as it exists today, is the result of many restorations and reconstructions, which have taken place over the centuries, and it is a moot point when the first stone was laid. De Graaf and Pigeaud, who have written a study on the early Javanese states in the fifteenth and sixteenth century unfailingly cited as the standard reference work, derive their wisdom on the dating of the Demak mosque from an Indonesian collection of 'old tales' compiled by S. Wardi.<sup>42</sup> Wardi mentions two so-called "intricate chronograms" (*sengkala memet*), i.e. chronograms which are visually expressed by way of an image. Firstly, there is a special decoration of the *mih̄rāb*, i.e. the indented niche indicating the direction of the prayer to Mecca (Figure 2). Throughout the Islamic world it is common to see decorated prayer niches with beautiful calligraphy, tiles and mosaics, but here we find a highly unusual motif, denoting a turtle. This somewhat stylised image is interpreted as a 'concealed', pictorial

<sup>40</sup> See De Graaf & Pigeaud 1974: 30–32. Florida 1995: 319–351 provides a more detailed account in English.

<sup>41</sup> De Graaf & Pigeaud 1974: 31. See Florida 1995: 47 for an account in English.

<sup>42</sup> See De Graaf & Pigeaud 1974: 32–33 who call Wardi's book "recent" but fail to provide bibliographical references. The book must be S. Wardi, *Kumpulan tjerita lama dari kota wali*, already published in 1950.



**2** Turtle chronogram in the prayer niche of the Demak mosque, said to denote the year *Śaka* 1401/CE 1479. Photo by and courtesy of H el ene Njoto-Feillard.

chronogram, which is explained as follows: The head has the value "one", the four feet have the value "four", the oval body in the form of the number "0" graphically expresses "zero", and the tail means "one", resulting in *Śaka* 1401/CE 1479.<sup>43</sup> Secondly, the main door of the mosque is also said to depict a chronogram, suggesting *Śaka* 1428/CE 1506. De Graaf and Pigeaud provide no further details, and they opine that the *Śaka* years 1401 and 1428 are quite credible as both dates are from the period of the rise of the Demak kingdom. They harmonise the two different dates by

<sup>43</sup> In Indian lore the turtle/tortoise is listed among the five-nailed animals (*pañcanakhas*), but this aspect does not play a role in Javanese numerology, cf. Van der Geer 2008: 24.

suggesting a rather long-lasting building process involving several renovations.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, it is argued that the ornamentation of the *mihrāb* could well be regarded as an instance of the ‘recycling’ of older, originally Hindu-Buddhist, materials into the mosque.<sup>45</sup>

De Graaf and Pigeaud only based themselves on one Indonesian booklet, but in fact there is no shortage of publications on the chronograms of the Demak mosque. However, basically, the same ‘facts’ are repeated over and again. Generally, four chronograms are invariably mentioned:<sup>46</sup>

- (1) The oldest chronogram is said to be a concealed chronogram (*sengkala memet*) on the Door of Lightning (Figure 3). The engravings on this door panel would suggest the chronogram *naga sarira (katon) wani*, which is interpreted as Śaka 1388/CE 1466.<sup>47</sup>
- (2) The turtle chronogram (1401). Translated into a sentence, the chronogram for the *mihrāb* is said to be *sarira sunyi kiblating Gusti*, i.e. “body” (1), “deserted, lonely” (0), “direction of prayer” (4), and “Lord/God” (1), which translates to Śaka 1401/CE 1479.<sup>48</sup>
- (3) A text called *Babad Demak* “Chronicle of Demak”, which mentions the chronogram *lawang trus gunaning janmi*, containing the words *lawang* “door, gate, entrance” (9), *trus* “going right through” (9), *guna* “use” (3), and *janmi* “human being” (1), which translates to Śaka 1399/CE 1477.<sup>49</sup> Contrary to normal usage, Nasution and his team interpret the word *trus* as “two”, and hence arrive at the much earlier date Śaka 1239/CE 1407.<sup>50</sup>
- (4) The Śaka 1428 chronogram of the Door of Lightning.

<sup>44</sup> De Graaf & Pigeaud 1974: 33.

<sup>45</sup> De Graaf & Pigeaud 1974: 33. The recycling argument is also mentioned by Van Dijk 2007: 49 n. 34.

<sup>46</sup> In order not to inflate this note with references, I merely refer to Effendy *et al.* 1982: 23–24 and Nasution *et al.* 1992: 209. The same information, however, is presented in numerous other publications, e.g. Sofwan *et al.* 2000: 116–118, but all without much probing or doubt.

<sup>47</sup> Nasution *et al.* 1992: 209 merely read *naga sarira wani*, but the sentence is completed in Effendy *et al.* 1982: 24. The values of the words are in accordance to the standard lists. However, for some inexplicable reasons Effendy *et al.* 1982: 24 provides the year Śaka 1389/CE 1467.

<sup>48</sup> The word *kiblat* (from Arabic *qibla*) can also mean “direction of the wind” (see Gericke & Roorda 1901, I: 553). The word *kiblat* is not in the standard lists of chronogram words, but its numerical value is of course logical (the four main points of the compass, viz. north, east, south, and west).

<sup>49</sup> A recent Indonesian edition of the *Babad Demak* is Atmodarminto 2000.

<sup>50</sup> Nasution *et al.* 1992: 209.



**3** Engraving on the Door of Lightning with two *nagas*, said to constitute a chronogram, but its interpretations differ widely. Photo by Fendi Siregar (after Soewito Santoso, *The Centhini story. The Javanese journey of life*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2006: 50).

All in all, we are dealing with just two artefacts, viz. the turtle image and the Door of Lightning, but we now have four chronograms. As far as I know, the turtle chronogram is unanimously interpreted as a pictorial representation of the Śaka year 1401. However, deciphering the concealed chronograms in the form of images normally involves a different methodology. For example, in a painting at the court of Yogyakarta two *nagas* are depicted back-to-back with their tails entwined. This scenic figural work should be ‘read’ as a sentence, viz. *dwi naga rasa tunggal* “two (2) *nagas*

(8), their feelings (6) are one (1)”, hence subtly disclosing the year 1682.<sup>51</sup> Conversely, the so-called turtle chronogram does not refer to specific chronogram words constituting a sentence: For example, ‘foot’ or ‘feet’ conventionally has the value of “two”, but as we are dealing here with a quadruped the numerical value is taken to be “four”.

The symbolism of the turtle is quite rich, and speculations on the meaning of this image in the Demak prayer niche are not wanting.<sup>52</sup> For example, Sumanto Al Qurtuby, who has attempted to uncover the Chinese role in the early Islamisation process of Java, opines that the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) employed the turtle as a symbol for victory (over other regimes). As Chinese Muslims were in his opinion the prime movers behind the construction of the Demak mosque, Qurtuby suggests that the turtle symbol was borrowed by the Chinese builders who thereby wished to express ‘victory’ (of Demak over Majapahit).<sup>53</sup>

Intriguingly, the Door of Lighting can also be ‘read’ in different ways. The solution *lawang trus gunaning janmi* “a door (9) to go through (9) is of use (3) to a human being (1)”, which translates to Śaka 1399/CE 1477 could in principle be applied to any door. The dragon motif (*naga*) would make the year Śaka 1388/CE 1466 possible, but of course it is a matter of interpretation whether the dragons indeed “look bold” (*katon wani*). The logic behind the suggested year Śaka 1428/CE 1501 is unclear to me: There is, however, an interpretation which views the two leaves of the Door of Lightning as denoting a sentence reading *kori roro gawéning wong* “the doors (9), two (2) [in number], were made (4) by a man (1)”, but this results in the Śaka 1429.<sup>54</sup>

All four different claims to truth, then, are widely speculative, falling into the believe-it-or-not category. The meaning of the decorations of the prayer niche and the Door of Lightning are indeed in the eye of the

<sup>51</sup> Wiyatno 2003.

<sup>52</sup> In the final part of this paper I will go into Javanese reflections on the religious dimensions of the word turtle.

<sup>53</sup> Qurtuby 2003: 178. Qurtuby’s study, though highly debatable from an academic standpoint, is one of the first Indonesian attempts in the post-Suharto period to touch upon the subject of the early history of the Chinese and Islam in Java, which for decades was off limits for Indonesian researchers. It is beyond the scope of this article to further discuss the still sensitive issue of possible Chinese links with the Demak mosque, and I simply refer to Kumar 1987: 603–616 who *inter alia* also discusses De Graaf & Pigeaud’s 1984 book *Chinese Muslims in Java*, which is a textual study of the controversial “Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon”.

<sup>54</sup> This 1429 chronogram will be discussed in the next section (below).

beholder. Although I agree, in principle, with the concluding appeal made by Nasution and his team for more research into the authenticity of the chronograms, I wonder how this should be accomplished.<sup>55</sup> Incidentally, in modern-day Indonesian academic discourse the ubiquitous closing phrase that a topic “needs further research” is no more than a secularised variant of the traditional Islamic saying “The Lord alone knows”, i.e. a well-known euphemism for “I don’t know” (Indonesian *wallahualam*, Arabic *wa-‘llāhu-a‘lam*).

However this may be, according to an official plaque at the main entrance, the Demak mosque was built by the saints, and the exact day was 1 Dzulhijjah of the year Śaka 1428/CE 1506, i.e. on the first day of the Month of Pilgrimage, which is the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps needless to say, this bold assertion is not footnoted, but it is fully in accordance with the dominant Javanese historical tradition as codified in various versions of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* (“Chronicle of Java”). The so-called major “Chronicle of Java”, in its definitive 1788 version, which was copied in slightly over 9,000 pages at the court of Surakarta, pontificates exactly this very date, mentioning the chronogram *kari roro karyèng janma* “left over (8) were two (2) jobs (4) for man (1)”.<sup>57</sup> Dutch (colonial) scholarship has been influential in bestowing a privileged status to texts belonging to this Surakarta-focused “Chronicle of Java” tradition, claiming that this specific representation of the past constituted the ‘official’ version. It is this flawed view of Javanese historiography which through textbooks and school lessons has found its expression on the official plaque in front of the Demak mosque.

However, other stories have other tales to tell. For example, according to a Yogyakarta chronicle of 1777, the construction of the Demak mosque did not take place in the last month of the Islamic calendar, but in the first month (*Sura*), mentioning the rather enigmatic chronogram *paksi kerdha nèng samodra* “the bird (1), a *kerdha*-bird<sup>58</sup> (1), is (1?) in the

<sup>55</sup> Nasution *et al.* 1992: 209.

<sup>56</sup> Effendy *et al.* 1982: 23.

<sup>57</sup> Canto 18: 7, see the published version *Babad Tanah Jawi* 1939: 16. The same date is provided in numerals (without chronogram) in the prose version of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, see Ras 1987a: 30 (Javanese text) and Ras 1987b: 31 (Dutch translation). On the constellation of texts known as *Babad Tanah Jawi*, see Florida 1995: 264–268 and Wieringa 1999: 244–263.

<sup>58</sup> Gericke & Roorda 1901, I: 436 under *kerdha* mention different species, and it is not quite clear what kind of bird is meant here.



sea (4).<sup>59</sup> The *Serat Kandhaning Ringgit Purwa* (“Book of Stories of the Shadow Theatre”), another storehouse of mythical stories on Java’s past, perhaps composed in Semarang in the first decade of the eighteenth century, provides as chronogram *umpak bakal ngapit kori* “socles will flank the door”.<sup>60</sup> Apart from the word *kori* “door” which has the value of “nine”, none of the other three words in the latter chronogram are registered in standard lists, but the Javanologist Ras interprets this year as *Śaka* 1329/CE 1407.<sup>61</sup> Which date should count as ‘official’ is very much a matter of local discretion, depending on particular time- and place-bound contexts.

#### PILGRIMAGES TO DEMAK

How did earlier visitors of the mosque make sense of what they saw? Do accounts of the pilgrimage to Demak perhaps further inform us about the chronograms? The visiting of holy sites is a deeply entrenched aspect of belief in Java: “There live malevolent and benevolent spirits whose powers can affect directly the life of the pilgrim”.<sup>62</sup> At some unknown point in the past, the idea sprang up that five pilgrimages to the Demak mosque constituted the equivalent of the hajj, i.e. the fifth pillar of Islam stipulating the pilgrimage to Mecca which is incumbent upon all believers who are physically and financially able to perform it.<sup>63</sup>

Local lore in the district around Mount Muria near Kudus likens Java to the holy land of Islam. The Javanese city of Kudus, of course, was none other than al-Quds or Jerusalem, and Demak corresponded to Mecca, hence a septuple pilgrimage was said to be equivalent to the hajj.<sup>64</sup> Medina, where the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad is located, was to be found in Java in Adilangu where Sunan Kalijaga was supposed to be buried. Pathi, in the north-eastern part of Central Java, was also known as “Egypt” (*Mesir*).<sup>65</sup> Such ‘spiritual translocations’ were

<sup>59</sup> *Babad Kraton*, canto 14: 10, see Pantja Sunjata, Supriyanto & Ras 1992: 84.

<sup>60</sup> Canto 409: 23, see Marsono & Supriyanto 1988: 134 (who provide the year 1328). On the background of this text, see Ras 1992b: 293.

<sup>61</sup> Ras 1992b: 281.

<sup>62</sup> Ricklefs 1974: 233.

<sup>63</sup> Kumar 1985: 139 n. 31.

<sup>64</sup> According to other traditions, five pilgrimages would do, see above.

<sup>65</sup> See De Graaf 1954: 130.

not unusual in Javanese thinking: Raffles, in his famous 1817 *History of Java*, already pointed to the belief that the events related in the ancient Indian epic *Mahābhārata* had taken place on Javanese soil.<sup>66</sup> For example, Hastinapura, the capital of the Kauravas, was located in a place near present-day Pekalongan, and Amarta, the capital of the Pandavas, in Japara. The capital of Krishna was supposed to have been in Pathi, while some identified Mount Muria with Mount Indrakila, the place where Arjuna retired for his ascetic exercises, but others thought of Mount Arjuna, south of Surabaya.<sup>67</sup> Many legends have also grown up about the graves at the mosque compound in Demak, one even claiming that the five Pandava brothers are buried there.<sup>68</sup>

Unfortunately, we hardly possess any accounts of the alternative hajj in Java. One Mas Rahmat (alias Radèn Sumasari or Mas Juragan Somareja) has left a diary from the 1880s that records his wanderings to all kinds of holy places, ranging from ancient Hindu temples on the Dieng plateau to haunted caves and Islamic boarding schools.<sup>69</sup> This man was proud of his aristocratic lineage, and claimed that his more distant ancestry could be traced to the *guru Demak* (“the teacher(s) of Demak”) without, however, elaborating on what this identification might entail.<sup>70</sup> A pious mystic in search of insight, he also stayed overnight at the Demak mosque in order to acquire the blessing of the saints.<sup>71</sup>

What better place to look up information than an encyclopaedia? Often described as the encyclopaedia of Javanese culture, the major 1814 *Centhini* romance does indeed have an ‘entry’ on the mosque of Demak. This narrative poem, already referred to above, could be described as the Baedeker of pre-modern Java for its fabulous descriptions of the towns and countryside of an Arcadian Java with an all-Javanese cast and entirely free of European colonial busybodies. The *Centhini* narrative is set at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the three children of the ruler of the East Javanese port kingdom of Giri are forced to flee after its conquest by the armies of Sultan Agung. Historians tell us that Agung,

<sup>66</sup> See Raffles 1965 I: 411–412; cf. Ras 1992a: 70.

<sup>67</sup> Ras 1992a: 70.

<sup>68</sup> Kumar 1985: 139 n. 31.

<sup>69</sup> This text is kept in Leiden University Library, filed under call number Cod. Or. 6553, described in Pigeaud 1968: 393. For a commented summary of its contents, see Kumar 1985.

<sup>70</sup> See Kumar 1985: 13.

<sup>71</sup> Kumar 1985: 22.

the ambitious ruler of Mataram in Central Java, crushed the holy site of Giri about 1636.<sup>72</sup> In a nutshell, the plot of the *Centhini* goes like this:<sup>73</sup>

“Hunted by the spies of Mataram, they are separated: the elder son, Jayèngresmi (later known as Sèh Amongraga) escapes to the west, while the younger son and the daughter (Jayèngsari and Rancangapti) try to elude their pursuers to the southeast. The text describes their adventurous wanderings in a vain search to be reunited.”

The descriptions of the many adventurous travels are peppered with lurid sex scenes, which are generally attributed to the commissioning sex-besotted Crown Prince himself. This lubricious element has lent the *Centhini* some notoriety in the public imagination, although few people can claim to have actually read the text itself. It is in the first volume of the *Centhini* where we encounter the peripatetic wanderer Jayèngresmi in Demak. Pigeaud’s synopsis merely states in telegram style “visit of the mosque” and “from there to Japara”, but the episode, which is relatively short, is well worth quoting here in full.<sup>74</sup> It is from canto 34, verses 23–34 in the verse form *maskumambang*:<sup>75</sup>

- |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 23. <i>Kredyating tyas kapéncut arsa udani ing masigit Demak iyasaning para wali tan cinatur laminira</i>        | All of a sudden Jayèngresmi felt the urge to get to know the mosque of Demak, which had been created by the saints. It is not told how long it took                      |
| 24. <i>Wus umangasuk praptèng palataran masjid tan ana kang nyana yèn punika putra Giri kinira santri balaka</i> | before he arrived at the yard of the mosque. There was nobody who thought that he was a prince from Giri, taking him for just a student from an Islamic boarding school. |

<sup>72</sup> Ricklefs 1981: 43.

<sup>73</sup> Anderson 1990: 272.

<sup>74</sup> Pigeaud 1933: 19.

<sup>75</sup> The Javanese text can be found in Kamajaya 1985: 108–109. My translation deviates in a number of places from the interpretation as proposed by an Indonesian team coordinated by Darusuprta 1991: 99–100. Tardjan Hadidjaja & Kamajaya 1978: 76 have provided a general paraphrase in Indonesian, without troubling over details. See Soewito Santoso 2006: 52–53 for a condensed English paraphrase.

- |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25. <i>Minggah srambi wowolu sakanirèki ingukir pinatra betan saking Majapait sangkalanira pinirsa</i>                    | He went up to the front porch, and there were eight pillars, which were carved with leaf designs; <sup>76</sup> they were brought along from Majapahit. He noticed the chronogram, |
| 26. <i>Kori roro gawéning wong ungelnèki wiwara kang marang masjit ingukir tulya sri gambar gelap pinarada</i>            | which read: “the doors, two [in number], were made by a man”. The gateway leading to the mosque was beautifully carved, with a gilded illustration of lightning.                   |
| 27. <i>Tumpak kori sinerat sangkalan muni papatra kinarya rupa gelap tunggal nenggih radyan manjing sigra-sigra</i>       | There was a chronogram written on top of this entry, which read: “the [door] leaves have been made in the form of lightning, one really”. Jayèngresmi quickly went inside.         |
| 28. <i>Dupi prapta anèng sajroning masigit kalangkung anikmat mupangat raosing dhiri ènget mantheng nungkul ing Hyang</i> | Having arrived inside of the mosque, it was most pleasant, being beneficial for one’s inner feelings, bringing to mind that one should truly commit oneself, and surrender to God. |
| 29. <i>Sakaguru sakawan agengnya sami inggilé sembada gilig memet ragi methit agengnya kalih rangkulan</i>                | The four main pillars had the same size and the same height, rounded at the base and tapering toward the apex, as broad as two arms can clasp.                                     |
| 30. <i>Inggang elèr wétan sanès lan kang katri nenggih wujud tatal kinempal dados satunggil gilig alusè warata</i>        | The north-eastern pillar was different from the other three, consisting of wood chips, which had been collected to become one stem, completely round and smooth.                   |
| 31. <i>Yasanira Kangjeng Susuhunan Kali-jaga kang minulya</i>                                                             | This pillar was the work of His Highness Susuhunan Kali-jaga, the most excellent,                                                                                                  |

<sup>76</sup> Gericke & Roorda 1901, II: 268 under *patra* refer to this example in the *Centhini*.

- mawèh tilasing nagari* leaving a royal mark,  
*karamating waliyolah* a sign of his sainthood.
32. *Saya gambuh rahadyan dupi* Looking at it, Jayèngresmi increasingly  
*udani* became familiar with it;  
*sinungan umiyat* he was offered the ability to see  
*kaélokaning Hyang Widdhi* a miracle of God who ordains all.  
*sangandhaping panti kutbah* Under the pulpit
33. *Rompyok-rompyok kathukulan* there were some sprouts of fragrant  
*glagah wangi* reed-grass,  
*lintangé rahadyan* but apart from Jayèngresmi,  
*tan ana janma udani* not visible to anyone,  
*pratandha calon nugraha* being a portent of future blessing.
34. *Sampun medal saking capurining* Leaving the mosque compound,  
*masjid*  
*lajeng lampahira* he continued his journey.  
*tan cinatur laminèki* It is not told how long it took  
*ngancik laladan Japara* before he arrived in Japara.

Intriguingly, it is told here that Jayèngresmi felt magically drawn to the mosque of Demak. The wording of the first lines of verse 23 is very poetic, and a more literal translation would be: “Startled, bewitched, he wished to know the mosque of Demak”. The opening words *kredyating tyas* belong to the literary lexicon, meaning “startled in the heart”, and *kapéncut* means “attracted, seduced, tempted, bewitched, put under a spell”.<sup>77</sup> It is in this mosque that he miraculously receives a divine revelation indicating an eventually happy outcome of his ordeal.

The 1814 major *Centhini* romance is by far the most expanded version of a narrative poem which has constantly been rewritten through the ages. Its oldest kernel is believed to date back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, possibly originating in Cirebon.<sup>78</sup> However, the present state of research does not allow a proper dating for the original writing of the episode about Jayèngresmi’s pilgrimage to Demak. Although this fragment shows a great interest in the chronograms of the mosque, it is noteworthy that the storyteller does not call any attention to the turtle

<sup>77</sup> See Gericke & Roorda 1901, I: 427 under *kredyat* and Gericke & Roorda 1901, II: 190 under *péncut*.

<sup>78</sup> Behrend 1987: 329.

chronogram. It is merely told that our fictional hero encounters written interpretations of two pictorial chronograms, but the text does not make it entirely clear whether these helpful ‘captions’ apply to two different doors or solely to the Door of Lightning. However, in both cases no round figures are involved, and the chronograms make a more ‘factual’ rather than esoteric, symbolic impression. The first chronogram, already briefly discussed (above), viz. *kori roro gawéning wong* “the doors (9), two (2) [in number], were made (4) by a man (1)”, does not present any problems as far as the values of the words are concerned.

However, I am rather at a loss to understand the second chronogram. According to Kamajaya, the editor of the text, this chronogram reads *papatra kinarya rupa gelap*, for which he provides the year 1441, but I cannot wholly reconstruct this finding.<sup>79</sup> Though the word *papatra* is not included in the standard lists, it belongs to the same category as *ron* “leaf” and must thus have the chronogram value of “one”.<sup>80</sup> The base *karya* of the verb *kinarya* (synonymous to *gawé* in the previous chronogram) indeed commonly has the value of “four”. So far, so good, but problems start with the word *rupa* “form”, which Kamajaya apparently interprets as being used for the number “four”, although in all lists it always refers to “one”: In fact, *rupa* constitutes the very first word in mnemonic chronogram lists, traditionally beginning with “one”.<sup>81</sup> The next word *gelap* is omitted in the standard lists, but its synonym *kilat* “lightning” has the value of “six”.<sup>82</sup> But then, the text in fact reads *papatra kinarya/rupe gelap tunggal nenggih* (see above), and *tunggal* always has the value of “one”. However, even if we would read the chronogram as *papatra kinarya rupa gelap tunggal*, as suggested by Kamajaya in an earlier publication, the word denoting the century still remains problematic.<sup>83</sup>

Inspired by the major *Centhini*, visiting many of the same places as its literary protagonists and directly drawing on its descriptions, the administrator R.M.A. Candranagara (c. 1836–1885) published, in 1865–1866, his two-volume travelogue *Lampah-lampahipun R.M.A. Purwalelana* (“The travels of R.M.A. Purwalelana”). The latter pseudonym, meaning

<sup>79</sup> Kamajaya 1985: 108.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Noorduyn 1993: 304.

<sup>81</sup> Pigeaud 1967: 300. Cf. Noorduyn 1993: 303, 306, 312; Teeuw 1998: 374.

<sup>82</sup> Bratakesawa 1980: 235.

<sup>83</sup> See Tardjan Hadidjaja & Kamajaya 1978: 76. Bonneff 1986: 244 n. 324 reads this chronogram as “*patra/kinarya/rupe/gelap tunggal*: 1441 A.J./1519” without further comment.

something like “Wanderer of the Past”, refers to the travels in Java, which this oldest son of the then Regent of Demak had made in the company of the Dutch Inspector of Cultivations, before being appointed, in 1858, as Regent of Kudus. Wishing to provide a realistic description of places of interest in the Java of his time, his secular-minded book represents a break with the age-old Javanese tradition of religious voyaging, and he clearly distances himself from legendary tales about the heroes of the past, emphasizing his new approach by writing in prose instead of verse.<sup>84</sup> As his text is available in an excellent French translation by Marcel Bonneff, accompanied by copious explanatory notes, I will refrain from discussing it in much detail, but it should be noted that here again its well-informed author nowhere refers to the turtle chronogram.

Purwalelana mentions the existence of three chronograms. Firstly, he was shown an inscription at the gravesite of Demak with the chronogram *pandhita trustha sariraning tunggal* “the pundit (7) is happy (9), his body (1) is one (1)”, said to have been the year of the death of the ruler of Demak. Purwalelana leaves this chronogram uncommented, but as Bonneff remarks, it is highly problematic as the resulting year, *Śaka* 1197/CE 1275, seems much too early. The first edition of Purwalelana’s book had *rasaning* instead of *sariraning*, which moves the event to AJ 1697/CE 1771, but this year is much too late.<sup>85</sup> Discussing the mosque itself, Purwalelana furthermore mentions the same two chronograms which we already encountered in the *Centhini*.

## SIGNIFICANT TIME

In the final section of this chapter I would like to single out a rather remarkable particularity which can be found in a manuscript from Cirebon, dated 1889, which had been a family heirloom for generations.<sup>86</sup> The episode is about Sunan Kalijaga’s proposal to mark the event of the building of the Demak mosque by way of a chronogram. According to Amman N. Wahyu, who edited this text, the chronogram was *jeb leng gegathèlèng ngasu*, to which the other saints all agreed.<sup>87</sup> This editor comments that

<sup>84</sup> Cf. the review by Drewes 1987: 380–381.

<sup>85</sup> Bonneff 1986: 243 n. 321.

<sup>86</sup> See Wahyu 2005.

<sup>87</sup> See Wahyu 2005: 323 for the Javanese text, viz. canto XXIV: 13–14. An Indonesian summary can be found in Wahyu 2005: 75, and his commentary in Wahyu 2005: 225.

“in full” this chronogram should be interpreted as “mungal-mangil = 1, mungup = 1, jeb leng = 4, gegathèlèng ngasu = 1”, yielding *Śaka* 1411/CE 1489.<sup>88</sup> However, the source of Wahyu’s emendations is unclear, and his numerical attributions are not self-evident: Neither *mungal-mangil* “hesitant, uncertain” nor *mungup* “to show a little, begin to appear” are included in the standard lists.

My interpretation of the dating event is quite different: In canto 24: 12 we read that the nine saints gather together at the vestibule of the mosque (*sami nyerambi*) in order to give a name to the Door of Lightning (without mentioning its name, however). In verse 13 Sunan Kalijaga proposes a number of paradoxical appellations, after which the narrator seems to make fun of the whole affair, because verse 14 reads, if I understand the text correctly:<sup>89</sup>

<i>Jeb leng gegathèlèng ngasu punika</i>	“Speechless, a dick of a dog is that thing”:
<i>iki sangkalaning masjid</i>	this is the chronogram of the mosque,
<i>iya masjid Demak</i>	that is to say, the mosque of Demak.”
<i>Sunan Kali kang nganggita</i>	Sunan Kali[jaga] invented it,
<i>para Wali anduluri</i>	and all the saints agreed
<i>ing kersanira</i>	to his wish,
<i>kersané Sunan Kali</i>	Sunan Kali[jaga]’s wish.

The joke is that Sunan Kalijaga couches the chronogram in his bawdy remark “Speechless, a dick of a dog is that thing” or put less vulgarly, “Words fail for this: that thing is unbelievable!”. But although Sunan Kalijaga’s memorable phrase was obviously meant as a mnemonic device, its numerical value is not immediately transparent. I interpret the word *jeb leng* as a variant of *jembleng* “speechless, struck dumb”, which belongs to the semantic domain of “emptiness” and hence must have the numerical value of “zero”. The coarse phrase *gathèl ngasu*, literally “dog’s dick”, is normally a scornful expression of disbelief, meaning in English something like “tell that to the marines!”.<sup>90</sup> Hardly surprising, the crude word *gathèl* “penis; glans penis” is not included in the standard lists of chronograms, but by the meaning of “a single specimen or exemplar” it quite naturally must have the numerical value of “one”, just like *punika*,

<sup>88</sup> Wahyu 2005: 225.

<sup>89</sup> Wahyu 2005: 323.

<sup>90</sup> Typical for the rather sorry state of Javanese lexicography, only the dictionary of Pigeaud 1938: 120 mentions this colloquialism.

which can be regarded as the *krama* equivalent of *iku* “that; that thing”, going back to Old Javanese *ikū* “tail”.<sup>91</sup> As we now have arrived at the year 1710, we would expect the number “four” to denote the century, but *asu* is glossed as *luwih*, which has the numerical value of “one”, and so the year must be 1110.<sup>92</sup>

This attempt at a solution by conventional means does not seem to make much sense here. However, my perplexity does not necessarily imply that the Javanese storyteller wished to suggest that Sunan Kalijaga was uttering nonsense. I will leave it to more learned scholars to further theorize on this saint’s remarkable chronogram, but I should like to point out that his ribald statement is not out of character: In Javanese historiography Sunan Kalijaga is known for mystical, esoteric teachings (generally in the form of *papali* “prohibitions” and *wasiyat* “instructions”) as well as the creation of artefacts steeped in secret symbolism.<sup>93</sup> For example, it is said that he introduced the motif of birds in the art of batik, because the word *kukila* for “bird” alluded to the Arabic expression *\*qu qilla* “take heed to what you say”.<sup>94</sup> He is also supposed to have invented a certain style of Javanese men’s jacket called *takwa*, whose name is derived from Arabic *taqwā* “devoutness, piety”.<sup>95</sup> Despite, or perhaps rather because, of the Hindu subject matter of the stories from the ancient Indian epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, he is attributed with a renewal of the Javanese shadow theatre (*wayang*) into its present form, again

<sup>91</sup> On the numerical value of *iku*, see Noorduyn 1993: 303, 311, 312 and Teeuw 1998: 375.

<sup>92</sup> Gericke & Roorda 1901, I: 89 explain *asu* as a poetic word for *luwih*.

<sup>93</sup> Hasyim 1974 is a well-known hagiography of Sunan Kalijaga which pays close attention to his symbolic deeds and utterances. Hasyim’s book is preceded by a foreword of the regent of Demak, lending the publication ‘official’ status. The last decade has seen a huge increase in popular works on Sunan Kalijaga, but I will refrain from blowing up this note with bibliographic references.

<sup>94</sup> Salam 1960: 44. The fanciful ‘Arabic’ expression is of course entirely made up, perhaps inspired by Arabic *qāla* “to say”. In fact, *kukila* or *kokila* is the black or Indian cuckoo, “frequently alluded to in poetry, its musical cry being supposed to inspire tender emotions” (Zoetmulder 1982: 885). Conversely, in another hagiography it is argued that Sunan Kalijaga introduced floral motifs in the decorative arts in order to discourage the previous Hindu-Buddhist predilection for depicting animate beings, see Syamsuri 1995: 96.

<sup>95</sup> Salam 1960: 44; Hasyim 1974: 16.

with the purpose of proselytising the new faith.<sup>96</sup> Javanese hagiography has Sunan Kalijaga explaining to the king of Demak that “the *wayang* is indeed a reflected image of the One, so to speak, the image of the Law. The *wayang* represents all humanity, the *dalang* (puppeteer) corresponds to Allah, creator of the universe”.<sup>97</sup>

Sunan Kalijaga is commonly considered as a culture hero who more than any other saint is credited with having converted the Javanese to Islam. In popular imaginings Sunan Kalijaga is the only genuinely ‘Javanese’ saint, “the other eight being ascribed ‘foreign’ origins spanning the Muslim world from North Africa and Iran to Champa and China”.<sup>98</sup> Historically, this saint’s existence may well be doubted but “as a symbol, a materialized idea Sunan Kalijaga connects Indic Java with Muslim Java”.<sup>99</sup> As Geertz puts it: “Whatever the facts may be, he is seen as the bridge between two high civilizations, two historical epochs, and two great religions: that of the Madjapahit Hindu-Buddhism in which he grew up and that of the Mataram Islam which he fostered”.<sup>100</sup> Sunan Kalijaga’s impressive status in the popular mind can be gleaned, for example, from an illustration in a Javanese manuscript chronicling the crucial transition period (Figure 4).<sup>101</sup> In this narrative poem, entitled *Prang Demak* (“War of Demak”), composed between 1886 and 1887, we find a rather coarse polychrome drawing of Sunan Kalijaga robed in Arabic attire, seated upon a chair instructing Pamanahan, none other than the first ruler of Mataram (died 1584?), who is dressed as a nineteenth-century Javanese courtier, humbly sitting on the ground as if receiving orders. Different ways of dressing and sitting say more than words: not only is the clothing symbolic, but so, too, is the seating hierarchy, as traditionally only people of high status were allowed to sit on chairs while common folk would sit on the floor.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Hasyim 1974: 27–28; Reid 2010: 449.

<sup>97</sup> Reid 2010: 449.

<sup>98</sup> Feener 2010: 475.

<sup>99</sup> Geertz 1968: 27.

<sup>100</sup> Geertz 1968: 27.

<sup>101</sup> This picture can be found on folio 91b in manuscript Cod. Or. 23.742 of Leiden University Library. The text was begun in 1886 (folio 1b–2a) and was completed on 4 January 1887 (folio 160a).

<sup>102</sup> This tradition still lives on in Javanese theatre, see Hughes-Freeland 2008: 42.



4 The Muslim saint Sunan Kalijaga (right) instructing Pamanahan (left), the first ruler of Mataram. Manuscript Cod. Or. 23.742 *Prang Demak* (“War of Demak”), folio 91b, detail. Courtesy Leiden University Library.

Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that the turtle chronogram, which is attributed to Sunan Kalijaga, has invited deep interpretations. But then, a saint’s chronogram does not simply deal with “ordinary time”, but marks a key period of “significant time”.<sup>103</sup> The believer should beware and reflect on its wisdom. Javanese believers do not merely read chronograms, and especially the *sengkala memet* or concealed, pictorial chronograms, with an eye to numerical values, but they also try to probe its deeper meaning, reflecting upon the nature of the event for which the date was given.<sup>104</sup> As Mary Carruthers notes in her study of memory in medieval Western culture, visual puns “serve as signals and reminders of the initial attitudes of reading—how to prepare, how to orient oneself, how to ‘intend’ one’s reading, to stay mindful of the goal”.<sup>105</sup> As we have seen, the image of the turtle in the *mihṛāb* can be read as denoting the year 1401, marking the beginning of a new era. Yet the attentive observer

<sup>103</sup> On the importance of “significant time” underlying the Javanese calendar, see Kumar 2009.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Djajadiningrat 1965: 83–85.

<sup>105</sup> Carruthers 1998: 164.

may, upon closer examination, read much more into this image. For example, it has been deciphered by Javanese believers as a call to Islam: The Javanese word for turtle is *bulus*, which is interpreted by way of *kérata basa* etymologising as consisting of two elements, viz. (1) *bu*, glossed as *mlebu* “to enter”, and (2) *lus*, i.e. *alus* “refined, courteous”, hence “to enter gently”, implying not only the historical conversion to Islam, once in 1401 Java, but also, more generally, the enduring need to change one’s attitude upon entering the mosque.<sup>106</sup> Another word for turtle, viz. *penyu*, is associated with *nyuwun* “to ask humbly”, alluding to prayer, for which the mosque is specially designed. The Malay synonym *kura-kura* or Javanese *kura* (a species of land tortoise) would hint at Arabic *\*qur’ān* “reading of the Qur’an”, thereby reminding worshippers of God’s Word.<sup>107</sup>

A more scholarly point worth registering here is the close association in Hinduised parts of Southeast Asia between the turtle and the *naga*, where both figures represent “cosmic creatures supporting the earth”.<sup>108</sup> As the turtle and the *naga* constitute the centrepiece of the pictorial chronograms in the Demak mosque, this is certainly a subject worth pursuing, but the Indonesian hagiographical literature merely attributes their employment to Sunan Kalijaga, who thereby is said to have wished to bridge Indic and Islamic culture. Umar Hasyim explains that the turtle and the *naga* are associated with water, which in the Hindu-Buddhist period particularly suggested holy, ritual water or the mythical *amṛta* (elixir of life). Hasyim opines that in a Muslim context water would symbolize the source of life or the eternity of the soul, but rather surprisingly he does not mention the essential function of water in Islamic ritual as a means of purification.<sup>109</sup>

On a more esoteric level the number “0” has been taken to represent eternity and totality as this figure has no beginning and no end, hence also aptly symbolizing God.<sup>110</sup> Freely associating, I can very well imagine

<sup>106</sup> On *kérata basa* see note 30 (above).

<sup>107</sup> It is impossible to say who first came up with these esoteric interpretations of the turtle figure. I am mainly relying on Wahby 2007: 54 who made use of Sugeng Haryadi’s book *Sejarah berdirinya Masjid Agung Demak*, which was not available to me. The *bulus* association seems to be well-known: I also encountered it in Hasyim 1974: 56; Atmodarminto 2000: 197 and in Bashah 1996: 141–144.

<sup>108</sup> Forth 1998: 142.

<sup>109</sup> Hasyim 1974: 56–57. Cf. Poonawala 1982: 27–28.

<sup>110</sup> Hasyim 1974: 56.

that viewers could easily connect the turtle, a four-footed animal, which is a proverbially slow species, to the difficult mystical way of Islam consisting of four stations (respectively known as *sharīa*, *ṭarīqa*, *ḥaqīqa*, and *maʿrifa*, i.e. “the Highway of the Law”, the narrow “mystical path”, leading to “transcendental truth”, and finally to “direct knowledge of God”). Furthermore, the two elements for “one”, head and tail of the turtle, could easily be associated with God as the most High or “Head” (*tauḥīd*, belief in God’s absolute unity and Oneness is the most important Islamic dogma, constituting the first sentence of the profession of faith), while the tail (the back or last part of something) could denote “man, human being” as His servant and follower.<sup>111</sup> And so on, and so on. I hasten to add that this numerological interpretation is my own invention, but such speculations and word play are quite common in Islam generally, and particularly popular among Javanese Muslims.<sup>112</sup>

For example, although Effendy and his research team refrain from a numerological interpretation of the turtle image, they nevertheless emphasize the importance of certain numbers in the architecture of the Demak mosque; e.g. its typical three-tiered roof is said to symbolize the tripartite life of piety itself, divided in the phases (1) *islām*, “the external, legal, practical aspect”, (2) *īmān*, “the interiorized faith”, and (3) *ihsān*, “doing good”.<sup>113</sup> The five doors of the mosque are associated with the five so-called ‘pillars’ of Islam (profession of faith, ritual prayer, alms tax, fasting in the month Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Mecca), while its six windows should remind the faithful of the six ‘pillars’ of faith (*īmān*), viz. belief in God and His attributes, the angels, the revealed holy books, the prophets, the Day of Judgement, and divine destiny.<sup>114</sup>

Clearly, concepts of time are not universal. Western historians who have attempted to reconstruct the period of the ‘religious revolution’ in Java have done so by rewriting the extra-ordinary events of Javanese

<sup>111</sup> The expression “Highway of the Law” is taken from Schimmel 1994: 77.

<sup>112</sup> For a brief discussion of ‘sacred numbers’ in Islam, see e.g. Schimmel 1994: 76–83. Here one also finds references to God’s Oneness, the mystical fourfold path to God, and other possible associations.

<sup>113</sup> Effendy *et al.* 1982: 23. This trias is also discussed in Schimmel 1994: 77, from which I have taken the explanations of the three concepts.

<sup>114</sup> Effendy *et al.* 1982: 23. A similar argumentation is given for other Javanese mosques in Pijper 1977: 20. Incidentally, according to Pijper 1977: 20, Javanese mosques were originally windowless buildings.

storytelling into a more down-to-earth, ‘ordinary’ historical narrative, using the Christian calendar as standard frame of time-reckoning—nowadays globally accepted as Common Era.<sup>115</sup> However, although 1401 of the *Śaka* calendar in Java may translate to CE 1479 in international usage, these two years remain, so to say, ages apart. A Western chronicler employing the usual ‘normalising’ procedure of academic discourse may write that “[t]he Demak mosque was the meeting place of influential Muslims presided over by the scholarly Sheikh Bonang”, but the underlying Javanese sources are cast in a rather different register, referring to the “discussions of the saints” in the grand mosque of Demak under the leadership of the Saint of Bonang.<sup>116</sup> Somehow, it’s not quite the same.

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<sup>115</sup> The apt term ‘religious revolution’ is taken from chapter 3 of Reid 1993.

<sup>116</sup> I am referring to Reid 1993: 174. The “discussions of the saints” (*musawaratan para wali*) is a well-known episode in Javanese hagiography, see Pigeaud 1967: 84–87.

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BÉLA KELÉNYI

## THE REPRESENTATION OF ASTROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE CULT OF THE TIBETAN PRAYER FLAG

Welfare, plenty, success, and good fortune: The presence of these has always been, and still is, ensured for Tibetans by prayer-flags (Tib. *dar lcog*), called “wind-horses” (Tib. *rlung rta*),<sup>1</sup> which are hung everywhere. For any visitor to Tibetan Buddhist areas these coloured flags—flowing from the tops of monasteries, houses, the tents of nomads, roadside shrines, and stone cairns high up on mountain passes—are bound to be striking sights. Many versions of prayer-flags are known that can, through their colours, be linked to particular elements and therefore to particular years. The five elements (Tib. *byung lnga*) used in Sino-Tibetan astrology (Tib. *nag rtsis*) are the green Wood (Tib. *shing*), red Fire (Tib. *me*), yellow Earth (Tib. *sa*), white Metal (Tib. *lcags*) and blue Water (Tib. *chu*). The twelve-year cycle (Tib. *lo skor bcu gnyis*) is based on the Chinese zodiac, which, combined with the five elements, produces the sixty-year cycle. The years and elements as well as the cardinal points and genders are associated with the system of the twelve signs and thus this system can determine the characteristic features of a person born in a given year.

An enlightened being such as Padmasambhava, or the trinity of longevity (Amitāyus, Uṣṇīṣavijayā and Tārā) may be depicted in the centre of the flags, surrounded by appropriate supplicants and *dhāraṇīs* (Skt. for mystical verses, Tib. *gzungs*). However, in its most general form the Precious Horse (Tib. *rta mchog*) is in the centre. In the corners are four characteristic animals, the “four deities of the wind-horse” (Tib. *rlung rta'i lha bzhi*): the Tiger (Tib. *stag*), the Dragon (Tib. *'brug*), the mythical bird, the Garuda

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<sup>1</sup> On its origin and meaning see Karmay 1998: 413–415; Namkhai Norbu 1997: 68–70.

(Tib. *khyung*) and the Lion (Tib. *seng ge*), which, together with the Horse, also correspond, not only to the elements, but also to the individual forces that fulfil an important role in divination. These are the basic categories in astrological calculations and they even correspond to the signs of the zodiac: life force (Tib. *srog*, “life”); health (Tib. *lus*, “body”); personal power or prosperity (Tib. *dbang thang*, “power”), which also refers to one’s financial situation; and success or good fortune (Tib. *rlung rta*, “wind-horse”, or *klung rta*, “river-horse”), which also keeps the others in balance<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1). This structure can be seen in a prayer flag, the text of which corresponds to a work written by the Third Panchen Lama (1737–1780):<sup>3</sup>

*He-he!* May the strength of magic power, the Precious Horse, the Wind Horse of the year of the donor [space for name] increase! May the hugely swift Wind-Horse increase! May the life force, health, power, lifespan and merit increase! May the Horse, Tiger, Lion, Garuda and Dragon here increase! May all gather together! SARVA gather, gather, HOḤ! VAJRA ĀYUSE SVĀHĀ!

*He-he!* By the conqueror *Khyung* bird, Garuda, may the virtuous Wind-Horse increase! May lifespan, life force, health and power expand, and may every conceivable wish be fulfilled!

*He-he!* By the strong, five-faced Mighty One (i.e. the Lion), may the greatly resplendent Wind-Horse of the yogi and his retinue increase! May life force, health and power increase more and more!

*He-he!* By the roaring turquoise Dragon may the greatly famed Wind-Horse increase! May lifespan, life force, health and power expand, and may population, food and wealth be summoned!

*He-he!* By the heroic, wrathful Tiger may the greatly brave Wind-Horse increase! May life force, health, power, lifespan and merit increase, and may every conceivable wish be fulfilled!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Cornu 1997: 85–88.

<sup>3</sup> bLo bzang dpal ldan ye shes: 4b5–7a1.

<sup>4</sup> See Kelényi 2003: 75.



1 Prayer flag, Mongolia, linen, woodblock print, end of the 20th century, 25.2 × 18.5 cm, private collection, Budapest. Photo courtesy of private collection.

In order to counterbalance the decline of good fortune, i.e. the wind-horse (Tib. *rlung rta rgud pa*), and in order to win it back or cause it to rise (Tib. *rlung rta dar ba*), the Tibetans have had numerous ceremonies. These included the ceremony of liberating animals (Tib. *tshé thar*), the ransom rite (Tib. *mdos*) to counter demonic forces by a thread-cross (Tib. *nam mkha*),

the libation (Tib. *gser skyems*), set-up of the pillar of the prayer flag (Tib. *rlung rta ka ba'i 'dzugs*), and the most frequent offering of fumigation (Tib. *bsang*). One can find a number of small votive paintings which belong to one of these rites but they are rather different from the basic types of the prayer flag. Namely, they depict not only the usual group of the deities of the “wind-horse” but also some rather unfamiliar ones as well. However, without the textual background these kinds of depictions are not easily recognisable.

The groups of deities featured in these pictures are almost completely described by a text of a fumigation ceremony connected with the cult of the prayer flag. This is taken from a work written by the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) and its special significance is that the deities featured in the pictures that will be introduced here are more or less depicted on the basis of the list it contains:

“*Kye!* O Lama, yidam, Three Jewels, deities of the four classes of tantras, mighty Buddha, Three Protectors (Tib. *Rigs gsum mgon po*), *ḍākinīs*, *dharmapālas*, Sitabrahmā, deities of the space of the sky, of the foundation of the earth, and of the mighty Wind-Horse, excellent Kongtse (Tib. *Kong rtse*) bodhisattva with one hundred thousand sages, four deities of the Wind-Horse, namely Wood-Tiger, Fire-Snake, Metal-Monkey, and Water-Pig, as well as Horse, Tiger, Lion, Garuḍa Bird and Dragon, Deity of Birth (Tib. *skyes lha*), War-god (Tib. *dgra lha*), Deity of Males (Tib. *pho lha*), Deity of Place (Tib. *yul lha*), a certain King spirit (Tib. *rgyal po che ge mo*), Deities of the Individual (Tib. *go ba'i lha*), Local spirit (Tib. *gzhi bdag*), demons belonging together from earlier births to the present life, supernatural beings, you yourselves from the holiest places, I, with great and loving compassion, pray for your unhindered coming!”<sup>5</sup>

5 *kye bla ma yi dam dkon mchog gsum // rgyud sde bzhi yi lha tshogs dang // thub dbang rigs gsum mgon po dang // mkha 'gro chos bsrung Tshangs pa dkar // nam mkha'i bar snang sa gzhi la // dbang ba'i rlung rta lha tshogs dang // khyad par Kong rtse byang chub sems // drang srong 'bum phrag 'khor dang bcas // shing stag me sbrul lcags spre'u dang // chu phag rlung rta lha bzhi dang // rta dang stag seng 'khyung 'brug bzhi // skyes lha dgra lha pho lha dang // yul lha rgyal po che ge mo // go ba'i lha bsrungs gzhi bdag rnams // tshe rabs sngon nas tshe 'di bar // lhan cig 'brel bar 'grogs byed pa'i // 'byung po mi ma yin pa'i tshogs // rang rang so so'i gnas mchog nas // brtse ba'i thugs rje chen po yis // thogs pa med par gshegs su gsol // rLung rta gso ba'i bsangs gmol [=gsol] mchod rgyun khyer mdor bsdu rlung rta'i me spar ba'i rlung g.yab: 2a4–3a3.*

The most interesting figure mentioned in this Tibetan text is Kongtse, who can be found both in the Buddhist and Bonpo literature as the protector of an exorcism ritual (Tib. *gto*) which is carried out in order to neutralize the problems of everyday life.<sup>6</sup> As first Lessing and later Karmay have explained,<sup>7</sup> Kongtse is actually the Tibetan equivalent of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (Chin. *Kongzi*, 551–479 BCE), who, according to the Tibetans, established the astrology of the elements as the reincarnation of bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.<sup>8</sup> As the inscription of a large Mongolian woodprint connected to the cult of the prayer flag says:

“Precious scion of the Buddha,  
you who founded the science of astrology!  
I pray for the increase of the depleted life energy, health,  
power, and good fortune (Tib. *rlung rta*) of the donor!”<sup>9</sup>

In the cited text written by the Fifth Dalai Lama other important figures are the “four deities of the Wind-Horse”, who are completely different from the above mentioned four animals depicted in the corners of the prayer flag. Actually they belong to the zodiac and correspond to the four points of the compass and the four elements, and the zodiac is under the sway of one of them every three years.<sup>10</sup> These four animal-headed deities are the so-called four lucky years (Tib. *lo ba'i klung rta'i lha*, or *klung lha sde bzhi*): the white Metal-Monkey, green Wood-Tiger, blue Water-Pig and red Fire-Snake. Their forms are described by a Tibetan text belonging to the ransom rite (Tib. *mdos*) of the wind-horse as follows:

“The yellow robe of the One with the Monkey’s Head [ruling] the Tiger, the Horse and the Dog is very ornamented; on its green flag a great mantra of the wind is written in ink, and the red tongue of the flag soars very much.

The blue robe of the One with the Tiger’s Head [ruling] the Mouse, the Dragon and the Monkey is very ornamented; on its yellow flag a

6 See Lin 2007: 105–129.

7 Lessing 1976: 91–94; Karmay 1998: 169–89.

8 Namkhai Norbu 1997: 151.

9 *Sangs rgyas rin chen myu gu ni // gtsug lag gtan la 'bebs par byed // yon bdag srog lus dbang thang dang // rlung rta nyams pa bskyed du gsol //* (Kelényi 2002b: 83).

10 See Lo chen Chos dpal rgya mtsho 1997: 8.

great mantra of the wind-horse is written in red, and the white tongue of the flag soars very much.

The white robe of the One with the Pig's Head [ruling] the Bird, the Ox and the Snake is very ornamented; on its red flag a great mantra of the wind is written in green, and the yellow tongue of the flag soars very much.

The green robe of the One with the Snake's Head [ruling] the Pig, the Sheep and the Rabbit is very ornamented; on its white flag a great mantra of the wind is written in earth-coloured yellow, and the blue tongue of the flag soars very much."<sup>11</sup>

One unique painting in which the group of the above summarized deities can be determined is in a Swiss private collection (Plate 6). At the top of a palace Buddha Śākyamuni and slightly below him, the Three Protectors (Ṣaḍakṣarī Lokeśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi) can be seen. Below them there is an unknown deity riding a bird (in all likelihood he is Brahmā because of his mount, the goose, but he does not have four faces as in the usual depictions) and Mañjuśrī's embodiment on a turtle;<sup>12</sup> he is the central figure, Kongtse himself. He is holding a ritual arrow (Tib. *mda' dar*) in his right and an indistinct object (presumably a vessel full of jewels) in his left hand. Below him, on a four-stepped altar, his main attribute, the golden treasure vase (*gter gyi bum pa*), can be seen. On both sides of the stairs appear the four deities of the lucky years. All of these are hybrids with partly anthropomorphic features, riding an animal of the respective kind. It is even more remarkable to note inscriptions above the deities, on banners corresponding to the colours of their elements; in these, together with the usual good wishes the name of the person who

<sup>11</sup> *stag rta khyi gsum sprel mgo can // na bza' ser pos rab tu brgyan // dar ljang pa ni snag tsha yis // rlung gi sngags chen bri ba la // dar dmar lce ni rab tu bskyod // byi 'brug sprel gsum stag mgo can // na bza' sngon pos rab tu brgyan // dar ser la ni tshal dmar gyis // rlung gi sngags chen bri ba la // dar dkar lce ni rab tu bskyod // bya glang sbrul gsum phag mgo can // na bza' dkar pos rab tu brgyan // dar dmar la ni ljang tshon gyis // rlung gi sngags chen bri ba la // dar ser lce ni rab tu bskyod // phag lug yos gsum sbrul mgo can // na bza' ljang gus rab tu brgyan // dar dkar la ni sa ser gyis // rlung gi sngags chen bri ba la // dar sngon lce ni rab tu bskyod // mDos chog sna tshogs byung ba'i rlung rta bskyed pa'i mdo chog: 10b3-11a5.*

<sup>12</sup> For the meaning of the turtle in Tibetan astrology see Kelényi 2002a.

has offered the picture can be found: Lobsang Thubten.<sup>13</sup> On the reverse there is another long inscription, which shows that the depiction was made in connection with the rite "of setting up the pillar of the prayer flag" (Tib. *rlung rta ka ba'i dzugs*):

“OM MUNI MUNI MAHĀMUNIYE SVĀHĀ! The wisdom-beings (Tib. *ye shes pa*)<sup>14</sup> invited here remain forever here at the set up of the pillar of the prayer flag, stay in it, and have power over all living beings characterized by wisdom, power and wealth! The practice of the triads of learning, contemplating and meditating, explanation, debate and composition, learning, discipline and nobility, as well as the three trainings (i.e. discipline, contemplation and knowledge) and the two stages (of the tantric meditation, i.e. the creation and perfection stages) and all the rest, as well as the learning and realization, strength, precious qualities, glory, power and prosperity of the powerful family lineage, the entourage and the household things, and all the religious and secular prosperity and well-being increase! PUṢṬIM KURUYE SVĀHĀ! To both types of lamas who, abiding in the moment and meeting at the end (i.e. who represent the conventional and absolute truths), *yidams*, buddhas, bodhisattvas, *ḍākas*, *ḍākinīs*, *dharmapālas*, guardian spirits, wealth gods, lords of treasures, trigrams, numbers (of the astrological diagram), years, months, days, as well as to the four groups of the Wind-Horse deities [who acquired] the vitality, health, power and might, the helpful regional (Tib. *yul lha*) and local (Tib. *gzhi bdag*) deities, I myself, Lobsang Thubten and others, supported by the auspicious circumstances (Tib. *rten 'brel*) derived from all kinds of ritual objects and substances, have unmistakably moved the wind-horse (Tib. *rlung rta*) of the absolute truth and the appropriate energy (Tib. *rlung*) of the enlightenment (Tib. *'tshang rgya*), enriching the wind-horse of the provisional truth, lifetime, merit, wealth, enjoyment, property, glory and entourage, I pray for the religious and secular activity and the creation of successful luminosity, for the wide developing anthers of the lotus of mental activity, in brief, for pacifying every unfavourable condition and wish-fulfilment of every favourable condition! OM SUPRATIṢṬHA

<sup>13</sup> *bdag bLo bzang thub bstan zhes bya ba'i che bsod dpa' [=dpal] 'byor snyan grags mnga' thang rlung rta sogs bstan srid kyi bya ba thams cad PUṢṬIM KU RU YE SVĀ HĀ /*

<sup>14</sup> I.e. the visualized deities.

VAJRAYE SVĀHĀ! The gods are victorious! The gods are victorious!  
The gods are victorious!<sup>15</sup>

Based on this text we are able to identify those paintings whose structure slightly differs in each case, though the deities depicted on them are almost identical. A painting which can be found in the same private collection shows a similar portrayal.<sup>16</sup> The central figures are (from top to bottom) Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī and Brahmā (here in his four-faced form!). The central figure is Kongtse sitting on a turtle, immediately surrounded by the four deities of the prayer flag: the Garuḍa, Lion, Dragon and the Tiger. In this depiction Kongtse has a different attribute, namely, he is holding the wheel of the Buddhist doctrine (Tib. *chos kyi 'khor lo*) in his left hand. In the corners of the picture are located the four deities of the lucky years.

From the same private collection comes the next picture, which is similar to the above, but differs in some respects (Plate 7). Enclosed in a rainbow circle are Buddha Śākyamuni (top), the Three Protectors and Kongtse (bottom). At the same time, it is unusual to find two *dharmapālas* (protectors of the Buddhist doctrine) appearing in the upper part of the picture: on the left side (proper right) there is an unknown wrathful

15 OM MU NI MU NI MAHĀ MU NI YE SVĀ HĀ [/] 'dir spyan drangs pa'i ye shes pa rnam rlung rta ka 'dzug 'di la brtan par bzhugs nas gnas 'dir mkhyen ldan stobs ldan 'byor ldan gyis mtshon pa'i skye 'gro thams cad dbang du 'du zhing thos bsam sgom gsum / 'chad rtsod rtsom gsum / mkhas btsun bzang gsum / bslab gsum rim gnyis kyi nyams len sogs lung rtogs yon tan dpal ldan 'byor pa / stobs dang gzi brjid / mnga' thang rigs rgyud / 'khor dang yo byad / chos srid kyi legs tshogs thams cad PUṢṬIM KU RU YE SVĀ HĀ / skabs gnas mthar thug pa'i bla ma yi dam snags rgyas byang sems dpa' bo mkha' 'gro chos skyong bsrung ma nor lha gter bdag spar sme lo zla zhag dus srog lus dbang thang la dbang pa'i rlung rta lha sde bzhi dang stong grogs byed pa'i yul lha gzhi bdag rnam la bdag bLo bzang thub bstan sogs kyis mthun rdzas sna tshogs [']phul pa'i rten 'brel la brten nas nges don gyi rlung rta 'tshang rgya rung gi mnyug rlung phyin ci ma log par rgyu ba dang / drang don gyi rlung rta tshe bsod dpal 'byor longs spyod mnga' thang snyan grags 'khor tshogs rgyas pa dang bstan srid kyi bya ba byas pa la ci byas lam du 'gro ba'i 'od snang dang / yid byed padma'i ze 'bru rgya cher rgyas pa dang / mdor na 'gal rkyen thams cad zhi ba dang / mthun rkyen thams cad yid bzhin du 'grub par mdzad du gsol / om supra tistha badzraye sva ha // lha rgyal lo [/] lha rgyal lo [/] lha rgyal lo //

16 The Castle of the Wind-horse, Mongolia, linen, painted, end of the 19th century, 29.5×24.1 cm, private collection, Winterthur.

golden-bodied deity, and on the right side the dark-coloured Śrīdevī (Tib. *dPal ldan lha mo*) can be found. In the lower part of the picture a palace-formation appears, sheltering a number of objects among which the most important one is a golden treasure vase, Kongtse's main attribute, which perhaps symbolises Kongtse's power. Around the castle are placed the four lucky years.

Another type that can be linked with the same tradition presents the personified figures of the astrological system in a slightly different way (Plate 8). Kongtse is seated in the middle of the palace. This depiction differs from the more usual type in that Kongtse does not hold a vase in his left hand, but a flattish vessel with three jewels. At the outer fringe, forming a kind of enclosure and beginning from the bottom right-hand corner, the partly anthropomorphic animals of the zodiac can be seen. Further important elements of the Sino-Tibetan astrology are the eight Trigrams (Tib. *spar kha sde brgyad*). The figures clothed in red and holding staffs personify the Trigrams (only seven of them can be found in the picture).<sup>17</sup> The tradition of their use originates from the ancient Chinese divination book, the Book of Changes (Chin. *I Ching*). The Trigrams are positioned according to the cardinal points and the intermediate directions but they also correspond to the elements, and, peculiarly, they make up families of father, mother, three sons and three daughters. Additionally the figures seated around the palace embody the Nine Numbers of the Number Square (Tib. *sme ba dgu*), which also play a basic role in astrology.<sup>18</sup> The origin of the Number Square, divided into nine parts, also goes back to China. Each of the nine numbers arranged in a square—also called the 'Nine Continents' (Tib. *gling dgu*)—further corresponds to a cardinal point or direction and to an element. In the main quarters are the figures of the four lucky years: Just above Buddha Śākyamuni, who is seated at the apex of the palace, is the Water-Pig; on the left side, above the lowermost roof, is the Metal-Monkey, and, symmetrically on the right, the Wood-Tiger; below Kongtse, the Fire-Snake appears. According to the Mongolian inscription on the back of the picture, it was dedicated to the five deities born together with the respective individual (Tib. *'go ba'i lha lnga*)<sup>19</sup> who protected the people after their birth and sustained their long life. However, the inscription speaks about this group as only one deity: "The *γobi-yin lha* is called the protective deity of all male human

17 For their depictions see Kelényi 2003: 57–60.

18 For their depictions see Kelényi 2003: 57–58.

19 On them see Berounský 2007.

beings. This protective deity is watching over the body of a man from the onset of his birth".<sup>20</sup>

Although these five deities were also mentioned in the above cited text written by the Fifth Dalai Lama, they are not depicted in the votive pictures reproduced here. However, in a Mongolian picture which can be found in the Völkerkundemuseum, Leipzig, perhaps these deities born together with the individual can be seen.<sup>21</sup> The main part of the depiction has the usual structure: above Kongtse we can find Buddha Śākyamuni and the Three Protectors, below the deities of the four lucky years; nevertheless, around Kongtse there are six riding figures. Unfortunately, because of the quality of the picture, the identity of the six riders is unsolvable, but in all likelihood most of them are meant to be the deities born together with an individual. This fact could indicate that the function of the depictions belonging to the cult of the wind-horse was similar to the role of the five protective deities. On the other hand, all of their astrological elements emphasize the basic functions of the Tibetan prayer flag: turn away the troubles, change the decline of lifetime and power, increase the fortune, in short: raise the wind-horse. As the inscription of a prayer flag says: "May this virtuous deed bring everybody the continuous increase of the moving life force, health, power and luck, and may all of them expand like the growing Moon! May wealth, rich crops and wheat increase in the world, and may the Faith spread! May everything turn into happiness! May all the wishes in my mind be fulfilled! *Ki ki so so*, the gods are victorious! SARVA MANGALAM!"<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *γobi-yin lha-a er-e kümün bükүн-ü tngri geñü nerelededeg kümün törögsen čay-ača ekileged ele kümün-ü bey-e-yin sakiyan tngri ene ajuγu*. Translated by Prof. György Kara.

<sup>21</sup> Thangka, Mongolia, measurements: 45 × 35 cm, Völkerkundemuseum Leipzig (Hummel 1949: 9–10, pl. 3).

<sup>22</sup> See Kelényi 2003: 77.

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## CYCLIC TIME

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KARL-HEINZ GOLZIO

## THE CALENDAR SYSTEMS OF ANCIENT INDIA AND THEIR SPREAD TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

It is widely supposed that the notion of Time known to early India is cyclical as opposed to the notion of Time in other regions of the world, where it is often linear. But even in India this supposition is only partly true: While cyclic time occurs frequently in a cosmological context such as the theory of Yugas, Kalpas (successive, repetitive periods of time), etc., linear time is used in historical sources such as biographies, chronicles, etc., which do not belong to the oldest material available in this context. The earliest sources using this linear concept to describe historical events are in fact inscriptions. The most ancient ones as far as we know are those of the Maurya king Aśoka in the third century BC. These texts mention regnal years of the king—thus copying the mode of his Achaemenid predecessors in Iran. For this chronological task there was no fixed starting point, e.g. the beginning of an era, known in India at that time. However, despite the lack of a continuous reckoning of successive years, a calendar system existed since Vedic times. According to this lunar calendar, the year was divided into lunar months. Each of these months consists of two halves or *paṅśas*, which is usually translated as “fortnight”. The bright fortnight (*śukla*, *śuddha* or *sita paṅśa*) is the period of the waxing moon; the dark fortnight (*kṛṣṇa*, *bahula* or *asita*) is the period of the waning moon. This was the basis of the Indian moon calendar, but with the exception of mention of some days for religious festivals, e.g. full and new moon offerings, there is no hint of any chronology in the ancient texts of the Vedic and post-Vedic periods nor in the early Buddhist texts. However, during the first two centuries BC, this purely lunar calendar was combined with a solar calendar. This combination was introduced in part by the influence of the Greeks in Bactria and



India (after Alexander the Great), but mainly by their nomadic successors who also began to reckon from various fixed starting points which we call eras. This practice imitates the era of the Seleucids which started in 312/11 BC, and the Parthian Arsacids which started in 247 BC. The most well-known eras are those of a legendary king named Vikrama, starting in 58/57 BC (originally that of a king Azēs; Kielhorn 1890) and the Śaka era, starting in 78 AD. From that time onwards it was usual to give more or less precise dates in inscriptions which can be transformed accurately into our calendar system. For that reason, it is necessary to explain how the system of the Indian calendar works by giving a full explanation of its systematics and showing some examples of its application. The calendar system used since the first century BC is a luni-solar one, e.g. a given date appears in a lunar notation, but its basis is the solar calendar. The solar year in India is in principle identical with our Julian calendar, which was introduced into Northwest India and then spread all over India. It commences with the instant of the sun's entrance (*saṃkrānti*) into the sign of Meṣa—Aries, which is, at the same time, the beginning of the solar month Vaiśākha. The beginnings of the other solar months are similarly determined by the entrance into the different zodiacal signs. As their names are all borrowed from the Graeco-Babylonian calendar system, it is not surprising that they are all well-known to us. These signs are the dwelling-places of the sun during the year, whereas the *nakṣatras* or asterisms are the houses in which the moon appears at the time of a given date. The *nakṣatras* are the 27 (originally 28) “zodiacal” signs of ancient India, each covering 13°20' on the ecliptic as shown in the following list of *nakṣatras* and Western Zodiacal Signs:

Nakṣatras	Zodiacal Signs	Degrees on the Ecliptic
	<b>Meṣa (Aries)</b>	<b>0°–30°</b>
Aśvinī		0°0'–13°20'
Bhariṇī		13°20'–26°40'
Kṛttikā		26°40'–40°0'
	<b>Vṛṣa (Taurus)</b>	<b>30°–60°</b>
Rohiṇī		40°0'–53°20'
Mṛgaśiras		53°20'–66°40'
	<b>Mithuna (Gemini)</b>	<b>60°–90°</b>
Ārdrā		66°40'–80°0'
Punarvasu		80°0'–93°20'
	<b>Karkaṭa (Cancer)</b>	<b>90°–120°</b>
Puṣya		93°20'–106°40'

Aśleṣā	<b>Siṃha (Leo)</b>	106°40'–120°0' <b>120°–150°</b>
Maghā		120°0'–133°20'
Pūrva-Phalgunī		133°20'–146°40'
Uttara-Phalgunī		146°40'–160°0'
	<b>Kanyā (Virgo)</b>	<b>150°–180°</b>
Hastā		160°0'–173°20'
Citrā		173°20'–186°40'
	<b>Tulā (Libra)</b>	<b>180°–210°</b>
Svāti		186°40'–200°0'
Viśākhā		200°0'–213°20'
	<b>Vṛścika (Scorpio)</b>	<b>210°–240°</b>
Anurādhā		213°20'–226°40'
Jyeṣṭhā		226°40'–240°0'
	<b>Dhanus (Sagittarius)</b>	<b>240°–270°</b>
Mūla		240°0'–253°20'
Pūrva-Āṣāḍhā		253°20'–266°40'
Uttara-Āṣāḍhā		266°40'–280°0'
	<b>Makara (Capricorn)</b>	<b>270°–300°</b>
[Abhijit		276°40'–280°53'40"] <sup>1</sup>
Śravaṇa		280°0'–293°20'
Śraviṣṭhā or Dhaniṣṭhā		293°20'–306°40'
	<b>Kumbha (Aquarius)</b>	<b>300°–330°</b>
Śatabhiṣaj or Śatatāraka		306°40'–320°0'
Pūrva-Bhadrapadā		320°0'–333°20'
	<b>Mīna (Pisces)</b>	<b>330°–360°</b>
Uttara-Bhadrapadā		333°20'–346°40'
Revatī		346°40'–360°0'

This “Western” zodiacal belt with its constellations is without any doubt of Babylonian origin and it has been known there as early as 700 BC or perhaps earlier from the astronomical text <sup>mul</sup>APIN. (The Sumerian word “mul” means “star”, “planet” and “apin” means “plough”;<sup>2</sup> the “α and β Trianguli with γ Andromedae”, the opening words of that text.) It lists fifteen signs of the “the constellation in the path of the moon”, but states explicitly that not only the Moon, but also the Sun and the other

<sup>1</sup> Note that this is a special case, including the otherwise missing 28th *nakṣatra* called Abhijit.

<sup>2</sup> The words in superscript are Sumerian ideograms denoting, when at the beginning, the quality of the following term, or the quantity, if placed after a term. Regular letters are for Sumerian words, italics for Akkadian words.

planets move in the “moon’s path” defined by these constellations. Three of them, <sup>mul</sup>sib-zi-an-na, “Anu’s true shepherd” (Orion), <sup>mul</sup>šu-gi (*šibu*), “the old man” (Perseus) and <sup>mul</sup>gam (*gamlu*), “sickle sword” (Auriga)<sup>3</sup> do not belong to the zodiacal belt, but they rise with Aries and Taurus. However, at this time the number of stars and constellations was not fixed. Our well-known twelve zodiacal signs occur for the first time in the planetary text VAT 4924 for the year 419 BC (Waerden 1953: 220). Their Greek names are with the exception of <sup>h</sup>un-ga (*agru*), “hireling” (Aries) derived from the Babylonian ones: gu<sub>4</sub>-an-na, “the bull of Anu” (Taurus), maš-tab-ba-gal-gal, “the great twins” (Gemini), etc. In the so-called TE-tablet, written about 400 BC, the tails of <sup>š</sup>im-maḥ, “the great swallow”, and the *zibbāti*<sup>meš</sup>, “the tails” were combined to *rikis nūni*, “Band of the Fishes” (Pisces). Most interesting is the <sup>su</sup>ḥur-máš, “the goat-fish” which was changed by the Greeks to Ἀιγόκερως (Capricorn), but became in India the aquatic monster Makara. The above mentioned text contains the positions of the planets recorded by indicating the signs in which the planets are. In the Seleucid lunar and planetary tables, this system is even more refined: The positions are calculated arithmetically and expressed in terms of signs, degrees and their sexagesimal parts. Now the signs are of exactly equal length: 30 degrees each, as shown in the above table.

It was the whole system that was adopted first in the Gandhāra area, the melting pot of Western, Indian and Iranian traditions. The Indian contributions to the calendar system were the *nakṣatras* and the names of the months of the ancient lunar calendar. But how were the two systems combined? The names of the lunar months are invariably determined by the new moon forming the true beginning of its bright fortnight. The lunar month takes the name of the solar month in which the new moon occurs, e.g. the new moon in the solar month of Caitra always inaugurates the bright fortnight of the lunar month Caitra. If two new moons occur within one solar month, there are two lunar months of the same name: the proper one (*nija*) and the intercalated one (*adhika*). If no new moon occurs in a solar month, which is very rare, there is of course no lunar month of that name, and that month is considered expunged (*kṣaya*).

Each half of a month is divided into fifteen *tithis* (cf. the Table on p. 225). A *tithi* is the time required by the moon to increase its distance

<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, in the badly damaged M̄y-sōn Stele Inscription C. 73 A of the Campā king Śambhuvarman (r. ca. 580–629 AD) the name *aurikā* occurred along with other astronomical details, but the lacunae are too large to attempt a satisfying explanation (Finot 1903b).

westward from the sun by twelve degrees of the zodiac, running from one rising of the moon to the next. As the true motions of the sun and the moon vary with the position in their orbits, the length of a *tithi* is variable; most of them are shorter than a solar day, a few a little bit longer, but the standard value of one *tithi* is ca. 0.96 civil days. The *tithis* are numbered by the Sanskrit ordinals—*prathamā*, *dvitīyā*, etc. up to the 15th *tithi*. The 15th *tithi* of the bright half of a month is also called the full moon *tithi*, “*paurṇamāsī*”, and the 15th *tithi* of the dark half, the new moon *tithi*, “*amāvāsī*”. The instances of new and full moon are the terminal points of the dark and bright fortnights. In civil reckoning, the *tithis* are coupled with the civil days in such a way that the civil day (from true sunrise to sunrise) takes the name, i.e. the number of the *tithi* which ends in the day. A lunar month corresponds to one lunation, i.e. the mean time for one lunar phase cycle (i.e. the synodic period of the moon). It is on average 29.530589 days, or 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes and 3 seconds. It is reckoned either from new moon to new moon, or from full moon to full moon. The first scheme is called the *amānta* (new moon-oriented), or southern scheme; the latter the *pūrṇimānta* (full moon-oriented) or northern scheme (cf. the Table on p. 224). Thus, the bright fortnight in the *amānta* system is the first half of a lunar month; in the *pūrṇimānta* system, it is the last. But in either case it denotes the same space of time. It is different with the dark fortnight; in the *amānta* system it follows the bright half, but in the *pūrṇimānta* system it precedes the bright half of the denoted lunar month.

Astronomers begin the lunar year with the new moon in Caitra, the reckoning which prevails in Northern India. In Southern India the lunar year very often begins seven months later, i.e. with the new moon in solar Kārttika. The part of the year from Kārttika to Phālguna is the same in the north and south of India; but the months of Caitra to Āśvina of the southern year stand one year in advance of the northern account. For instance, a date of the month Caitra in a year x of the southern year corresponds to the year x + 1 in the northern system. Moreover, usually the year given in a date means the *expired* year, i.e. Śaka 611 means in full “after 611 years of the Śaka era had elapsed”, and the year denoted is actually the 612th year current. Occasionally—if not explicitly excluded by the term *gata* (elapsed, literally “gone”)—the current year is used.

In interpreting a date, we must keep in mind all possible cases. The year may be either the expired or the current year; it may be either the northern or the southern lunar year; and the date may be recorded either in the *pūrṇimānta* system or in the *amānta* system. Therefore, if it is not

clear which one of these possibilities is meant, a calculation is to some certain degree doubtful. However, in connexion with civil reckoning it may be remarked that in the fourth century India adopted the planetary week current in Europe since about the second century AD. The Indian weekdays are named in the same order as ours, Sunday, Monday, etc. In documents the weekday is frequently noted together with the lunar date, which enables us to verify the latter.

Now I would like to give an example, without showing every step of the calculation, which was performed by using some special tables printed in an article by Hermann Jacobi in the first volume of *Epigraphia Indica* (Jacobi 1892). The date under examination is the Vikrama year 898, the 2nd *tithi* of the bright half of the month of Vaiśākha. It hails from the Dhavalapurī (Dholpur) stone inscription of the Cahamāna king Caṇḍamahāsenā,<sup>4</sup> which was edited by Eugen Hultsch (1886: 38–42). A calculation for the elapsed northern year results in 28 March of AD 841, but the day of the week is a Monday. If we assume a current northern year, the result is 8 April of AD 840, but the weekday is a Thursday. Only the calculation for an elapsed southern year provides the required result, 16 April of AD 842, a Sunday.<sup>5</sup>

To determine the dates in cases where all necessary information is provided in an inscription is not a great challenge. But what to do with early dates from the first century BC up to the fourth/fifth centuries AD, which lack weekdays? In most of these cases a precise transformation

4 Dholpur is situated at 26°42' N and 77°53' E.

5 The full text runs as follows (stanzas 22–23):

*vasu nava [a]ṣṭau varṣāgatasya kālasya vikramākhyasya /  
vaiśākhasya sitāya[ṁ] ravivārayuta-dvītyāyā[ṁ] //  
candre rohiṇisaṃyukte lagne siṃghasya śobhane yoge /  
sakalakṛtamaṅgalasya hy abhū[t] pratiṣṭhāsya bhavanasya //*

“In year Eight-Nine-Vasu [= 8] of the elapsed year of the era called Vikrama, on the 2nd bright half of the Vaiśākha, on Sunday, when the moon was in Rohiṇī, the ascendant was Leo and the Yoga Śobhana, the erection of this temple took place of which the Fortunate was made complete.”

The date was already calculated by Kielhorn (1890: 35; cf. *Kleine Schriften*: 528), who gave the additional information that the Nakṣatra was Rohiṇī up to 21 h. 40 m., and the Yoga Śobhana up to 1 h. 19 m. after mean sunrise. Note that a Yoga is the period, of variable length, in which the joint motion in longitude of the sun and the moon amounts to 13°20', being the extent of a lunar mansion. Their names and the proportion of each are given in Jacobi 1892: 449, Table IX.

into an exact date of our common era is not possible, if the kind of year (current, elapsed) and the system (full moon or new moon) is not clearly expressed. Sometimes, given dates are coupled with the name of the *nakṣatra* or asterism in which the moon was at the time of the date. In this case, the mention of a *nakṣatra* is very helpful to calculate a date precisely. Moreover, it can help to decide whether some eras with different names are identical, as is the case of the eras of Azēs and that of Vikrama as mentioned above. Recently, Harry Falk has attempted to show that these eras are different, assuming that the starting year of the Azēs era was 47/46 BC instead of 57 BC. As support for his argument he has presented some inscriptions of the Azēs era which include names of *nakṣatras*. The first one is a donor inscription of a certain Ramaka from a village named Kudi in the Gandhāra area, dated 3rd Aśvayuj 74 of the Azēs era, *nakṣatra* Aśvayuj (Fussman 1980: 5–16). This date can only be verified by using the conventional starting year 57 BC. As the given *nakṣatra* Aśvayuj (“Aśvinī”) covers 0°0' to 13°20' on the ecliptic, this corresponds with the calculated 4°49' on 28 August 17 AD, interpreting the 3rd Aśvayuj as the 3rd *tithi* of the dark half of that month according to the *pūrṇimānta* system. However, Falk has doubts about the interpretation of the reading of the *nakṣatra*—in the original *aśpau*—which he interpreted as Bhadrpadā, a reading which is, in my opinion, very difficult to explain. Moreover, there is no *nakṣatra* that is just called Bhadrpadā, but only the *nakṣatras* Pūrva (earlier) Bhadrpadā and Uttara (later) Bhadrpadā. His arguments against the presented calculation, “If this identification [the reading “Aśvayuj”] were correct, the full moon would be in the *nakṣatra* āśvina at the beginning of the month and the progressing moon would three days later still occupy the same *nakṣatra*. Somehow, this is unlikely”, (Falk 2010: 24) do not stand the proof. In fact, on the full moon day of the month Āśvina, e.g. on 25 August 17 AD, the moon was in the *nakṣatra* Pūrvabhadrpadā. Even if we follow his new interpretation, calculating the date by using his starting year 47/46 BC, the result would be 9 August 27 AD according to the *pūrṇimānta* system, but then the moon would have been in the *nakṣatra* Revatī. Even in a current year which corresponds to 18 August 26 AD, the *nakṣatra* again is Revatī.

In his article, Falk presented another date of the Azēs era bearing a *nakṣatra* (2010: 18): “In the year [...] 121 [...] of the Mahārāja Azes [...], on the thirteenth day, 13, of the month of Gorpaios [...] in the Nakṣatra of Uttara Proṣṭhapada”. His comment and interpretation on this date reveal his lack of understanding, as full consideration of all relevant information available is required: “This corresponds to a day in a month starting in

the latter half of August, AD 74. Most welcome is the precise definition of the *nakṣatra*, given as *uttarapṛoṣṭhapada*. This constellation is adjoining *pisces*. In AD 74, the full moon was on August 25th, standing precisely in *pisces*. If day 13 finds the moon close to the place where the full moon takes place, then the month must have started with the new moon” (Falk 2010: 24). Both statements are true, the latter showing that here the *amānta* system was used, which is necessary so that the moon stands or at least “approaches” the given *nakṣatra*, but this is true for every year. On this full moon day the moon was in the Nakṣatra Pūrvapṛoṣṭhapadā (another name for Pūrvabhadrpadā, 320°00'–333°20'). Therefore, the 13th Gorpiaios corresponds to 23 August 74 AD, with the moon in the *nakṣatra* Dhaniṣṭhā (293°20'–306°40'). This is indeed close to Uttarapṛoṣṭhapadā (333°20'–346°40'). However, we are looking for a date on which the moon was precisely in the given moon-house and not close to it. Taking into consideration again that the year 57 BC was the starting point of the Azēs era, we have the two possibilities of an elapsed and a current year. The calculation for an elapsed year results in 12 September 64 AD, but the moon on this day was in the *nakṣatra* Pūrvapṛoṣṭhapadā (ca. 328°07'). This is much closer to the required moon-house than the date of Falk, but nevertheless also incorrect. Only the calculation for a current year is satisfying: It results in 24 September 63 AD, when the moon really was in Uttarapṛoṣṭhapadā (ca. 339°50'). I think it is not necessary to go into further detail,<sup>6</sup> but I should say one word regarding the unusual month Gorpiaios, which is the name of a Greek month corresponding to the Indian month Āśvina. Due to the Greek heritage in that region, this progeny is not astonishing. Greek month names were used up to the late second century AD, along with those of Indian stock.

Adherents of an autochthonous origin of the Vedic culture (who are at the same time strictly against the concept of an immigration of the Indo-Āryans from outside India) and its extremely old age have pointed to some passages in a Vedic text, the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB) that seem to refer to equinoxes, and would indicate the date of observation of these celestial phenomena. Michael Witzel has discussed the problem in detail (Witzel 2001: 71–72) referring especially to *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 2.1.2.3 (dealing with the places of offering-fires) where the Pleiades (*ṛttikā*) were described as being at the equinox point, i.e. some 60 degrees off today's position due to precession. This position was possible only for the third

<sup>6</sup> Regarding Falk's, in my opinion, erroneous dating of the Kuṣāṇa king Kaniṣka I, see Golzio 2008 and Golzio 2012.

millennium, at c. 2300 BC. As Witzel says, “the above passage is followed by a set of other ones which allow setting up the fires at *other* times, most of which are motivated and justified, like this one, by inherent Brāhmaṇa texts' concerns and logic. Further, astronomical observations in the Vedic texts are of a more general nature, and are clearly based on what is easily observable with the naked eye over the course of a few years”. However, the above-mentioned Babylonian text <sup>mul</sup>APIN (which is earlier than the Brāhmaṇa texts) says more or less what *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* does, namely that the Pleiades are in the East and Ursa Maior is in the north. Therefore, the spring equinox in Ṛttikā would be a learned remembrance of times long past, for—as Witzel has pointed out—“the same passage of ŚB also remembers that the Great Wagon/Big Dipper (*ursa maior*) was ‘formerly’ called ‘the bears’”. He concluded that texts cannot be dated by their earliest datable features, but by their *latest*. Moreover, the following consideration regarding the dating of Vedic texts cannot be ignored: The oldest text, the *R̥gveda*, whose geographical horizon does not reach beyond the Pañjāb and its surroundings, has no knowledge of iron, but only of the hard metal copper or bronze (*āyas*). Reference to iron is only found in later Vedic texts, where it is called *śyāma āyas* (*Atharvaveda* XI, 3, 7–8) or *ṛṣṇāyas* (*Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* III, 12, 6, 5), the “black metal”,<sup>7</sup> which appeared in South Asia only by ca. 1200 or 1000 BC. Hence the *R̥gveda* must be earlier than that. However, there is strong evidence of iron in the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, which according to Witzel “is very close in its cultural, economic, socio-political, and philosophical development to the time of the Buddha” (who lived around 400 BC).

From the second century AD onwards, the whole area of Southeast Asia with the exception of Vietnam came under the cultural influence of India, especially of South India. One of the striking examples of this is the story of Qiáochénrú 僑陳如 referred in the *Liáng shū* 梁書 (“Annals of the Liáng Dynasty”) of the Chinese historiographers Yáo Chá 姚察 (533–606) and Yáo Silián 姚思廉 (d. 637). Qiáochénrú (the Chinese rendering of Kauṇḍinya or Koṇḍañña, Koṇḍinya, etc.) was one of the successors of the king Tiānzǔ Zhāntán 天竺旃檀 (“Candana from India”), ruler of the kingdom Fúnán 扶南 (in southern Cambodia and southern Vietnam), who had sent tamed elephants in the year 357 AD as tribute to emperor Sīmǎ Dān 司馬聃 (r. 344–361; memorial name: Mùdì 穆帝):<sup>8</sup> “He was originally a Brahman from India. There a voice told him: ‘you must go

<sup>7</sup> Rau 1974: 19–23.

<sup>8</sup> Pelliot 1903: 252, 255, 269.

reign over Fúnán', and he rejoiced in his heart. In the south, he arrived at Pánpán 盤盤. The people of Fúnán appeared to him; the whole kingdom rose up with joy, went before him, and chose him king. He changed all the laws to conform to the system of India". The name Kauṇḍinya is well-known from South Indian inscriptions of the first millennium AD, and it seems that Fúnán was ruled up to the sixth century AD by a clan of the same name (Golzio 2009). According to the *Nán Qí shū* 南齊書 ("Annals of the Southern Qí Dynasty") of Xiāo Zixiān 蕭子顯 (485–537) the Fúnán king Qiáochénrú Shéyébámó 僑陳如闍耶跋摩 (Kauṇḍinya Jayavarman) "sent in the year 484 the Buddhist monk Nājiāxiān 那伽仙 (Nāgasena) to offer presents to the Chinese emperor and to ask the emperor at the same time for help in conquering Línyí 臨沂 (north of Campā) [...] The emperor of China thanked Shéyébámó for his presents, but sent no troops against Línyí" (Pelliot 1903: 259–260). One of the earliest inscriptions of Cambodia from Prāsāt Prāṃ Lovên in the "Plain of the Reeds" (Tháp Muôi) in Cochinchina (K. 5) refers to a Prince Guṇavarman, younger son (*nṛpasunu-- bālo pi*) of a king Ja[yavarman] who was "the moon of the Kauṇḍinya line ([...] *kaunḍi[n]ya[vañ]śaśaśinā* [...]) and chief "of a realm wrested from the mud" (Cœdès 1931: 2–8). This Kauṇḍinya line was so famous that its founding father in later times (from the seventh century onwards) was stylized as a mythical sage of the Indian epic *Mahābhārata*, although here this figure was completely insignificant, a mere name (see Golzio 2009: 157–165).

One of the many achievements of Southeast Asia that came from India was the calendar system. Here the Śaka era prevailed and became the commonly used calendar in this region. As the users of that era strictly followed the *amānta* system, there is no need to look for any other. Normally, the year begins with the month of Caitra, but in some inscriptions it is explicitly mentioned that the year started with Mādhava or Vaiśākha, or even Kārttika, as is usual in South India. The pattern of most of the dates in inscriptions of Southeast Asia is the same as in India, but in some cases they give planetary positions in addition to other information, then very often omitting the weekday.<sup>9</sup> Such dates, especially from Cambodia, are highly sophisticated. Here I would like to present some of them. The first one is the first known date of the Angkorian period, the second one is a defective date belonging to the pre-Angkorian time.

<sup>9</sup> For the calculation of planetary positions see Jacobi 1914.

The Angkorian one belongs to the foundation stele (K. 713) of the temple of Prāḥ Kô (Figure 1) in Hariharālaya, the first capital of the Angkorian Empire, ca. 18 km from Angkor:<sup>10</sup>

*"candravyomavasūpalakṣitaśake māghasya yāmye dine  
śukle kumbhavṛṣāntataula makarālyabjājagehāgate  
sūryyādau pratimās svaśilparacitā īśasya devyās ca tāḥ  
tisras sthapitavān bhava vṛṣagate sa śrīndravarmmā samam"*



1 Temple at Prāḥ Kô, Cambodia. Photo: author.

In the Śaka year denoted (*upalakṣita*) by moon [1], Sky [0] and Vasu [8], on the day of Yama (*yāmye dine*) in the bright half (*śukle*) of the month of Māgha, the sun and the other planets (*sūryyādau*) having reached (*āgate*) the houses (*geha*) of Aquarius (*kumbha*), the edge of that of Taurus (*vṛṣānta*), Libra (*taula*), Capricorn (*makara*), Scorpio (*āli*), Pisces (*abja*) and Aries (*aja*), Śrī Indravarmman simultaneously (*samam*) erected (*sthapitavān*) three (*tisras*) images (*pratimās*) of Īśa (and three others) of

<sup>10</sup> Published in *IC* VI: pl. CCXLVII. The transliteration of the Sanskrit and the Khmer text and a French translation was published in *IdC* I: 16–28; the revised Sanskrit text and an English translation was published in Bhattacharya 2009: 25–41.

the Goddess (*devyā*), works (*racitā*) of his art (*svaśilpa*), at the hour of the Taurus (*bhave vṛṣagate*).

The meaning of *yāmye dine* (on the day of Yama) in the bright half of Māgha in the Śaka year 801, etc. has raised some difficulties in dating the inscription. It was proposed by Cœdès's translation that "Day of Yama" meant the day of Saturn, i.e. Saturday. According to Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, XCIX, 1–2a, the god Yama is the regent of the 4th *tithi* (of the bright or dark half of the month), but in this case the calculation of the date is not reliable. Owing to the position of the planets, only the 10th *tithi* is possible, of which the regent is Dharma (sometimes identified with Yama). However, a better solution seems to be that of Cœdès in *Inscriptions du Cambodge* (Vol. IV: 257–258, "Note additionnelle"), where the meaning of *yāmye dine* is given as "twin *tithi*", i.e. a *tithi* beginning on one day, running over the following, and ending on the third day; the day on which the *tithi* ends takes the same number as the preceding day, which is thus repeated (this is proved right for the local time of Hariharālaya).

The late French Indologist and astronomer Roger Billard (1922–2000)<sup>11</sup> has interpreted this date rightly by identifying it with the often mentioned date on the temple towers of Prāḥ Kô: 801 śaka daśamī ket māgha candravāra in Khmer language, meaning the 10th bright Māgha of the Śaka year 801, a Monday, corresponding to Monday, 25 January 880 AD. At this time the Sun was in Aquarius (303°35') according to the meridian of Ujjain,<sup>12</sup> the moon at the end of Taurus (53°56'), Mars at the beginning of Scorpio, (210°18', but according to the local time at the end of Libra), Mercury in Capricorn (292°38') Jupiter in Scorpio (231° 29'), Venus in Pisces (335°45') and Saturn in Aries (9°42'). According to the meridian of Ujjain, there is no twin *tithi*, but taking into consideration the local time of Angkor, where sunrise happens ca. one hour earlier, the first 10th *tithi* begins and ends on the same solar day, which requires a second 10th *tithi*.

<sup>11</sup> The date "25 January 880 AD" is mentioned in some books by Claude Jacques without naming him.

<sup>12</sup> According to the astronomical treatise *Sūryasiddhānta* (fifth century CE) the prime meridian, or zero longitude, was defined as passing through Avanti, the ancient name for the historic city of Ujjain (23°11' N, 75°46'), and Rohitaka, the ancient name for Rohtak (28°54' N, 76°38' E), a city near the Kurukṣetra. Therefore, Ujjain became the reference place for Indian standard time, which was sometimes used even beyond India.

On this auspicious date, King Indravarman dedicated the whole temple complex consisting of six stuccoed brick towers: the southern ones to his parents, king Pṛthivīndravarman and queen Pṛthivīndradevī (K. 315a; Pou 2001: 41–43 and K. 713b), the northern ones to his maternal grandparents, king Rudravarman (the predecessor of the latter) and queen Narendradevī (K. 318a), and the central towers to the founding father Jayavarman II and his wife Dharaṇīndradevī (K. 320a; Pou 2001: 55–57), who were unified with Śiva and his consort Devī after their death. As the son and immediate successor of Jayavarman II, Jayavarman III (who probably died childless) was a follower of Viṣṇu, he was not unified with his god at this place, however, but instead a figure of Viṣṇu called Viṣṇusvāmin was established for the good of him, "who has gone to the world of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇuloka)" (stanza XXX of the Bākoṅ Stele Inscription K. 826, *IdC* I: 32–36, and Bhattacharya 2009: 43–63) at the Bākoṅ temple, consecrated in 881/82 AD.

In many cases steles which bear inscriptions are broken or damaged, and sometimes it happens that parts of the date are lost. One of these cases is the pre-Angkorian inscription of the temple of Tūol Tramuṅ (K. 582) in Trai Trak, Province of Kōmpōn Spu' (11°15' N 104°35' E).<sup>13</sup> The language is Sanskrit, the metre used Sragdharā ("female garland-wearer"):

-----/~~~~~/-v-----  
 -----[m]ṛgapatīsaḥite lagnabhāvaprayāte  
 taule bhaumenduḥjārkkāḥ tridaśaguruyutaś candramās cāpasamsthaḥ  
 kīṭaśukras tu sauras samakarabhavane kārttikasyeha naktam  
 paurvāṣāḍhe sulingam sitarasagaṇite tiṣṭhipad brahmaśaktiḥ

"... when the ascendant (*lagnabhāva*) appeared (*prayāte*) together with the Lord of the Deers (= the lion, Leo [*mṛgapatī*]), when Mars (*bhauma*), the son of the moon (*induja* = Mercury) and the sun (*arka*) were in Libra (*taula*), the moon (*candramās*) together (*yuta*) with the Guru of the 33 [gods] (= Jupiter) was standing (*samstha*) in Sagittarius (*cāpa*), Venus (*śukra*) in Scorpio (*kīṭa*), but (*tu*) Saturn (*saura*) in the house (*bhavana*) of Capricorn (*makara*) [this translation is doubtful, as there is no explanation for *sa-* / in the house which is similar/like

<sup>13</sup> The transliteration of the Sanskrit text and a French translation was published in *IdC* II: 200–201.

(*sama*) (close to) Aquarius (*kara*), on a night (*nakta*) of [the month of] Kārttika, in [the Nakṣatra] Purvāṣāḍha, on a bright (*sita*) [*tithi*] denoted (*gaṇita*) by the Rasas (tempers = 6) Brahmaśakti erected (*tiṣṭhipad*) here (*iha*) a beautiful (*su*) *liṅga* (sign of the god Śiva).”

The main problem here is the missing year, which without any doubt was incised at the beginning of the text, but we know that the inscription belongs to the time of ca. 700 AD plus/minus 50–60 years. Therefore, we have to look for a year in which the slowly moving planets, i.e. Saturn and Jupiter, are in the given positions: Jupiter in Sagittarius and Saturn in Capricorn or in Aquarius. The only possible year is the year 667 AD, precisely 29 September of that year. This date fits well with nearly all the other given information: Sun and Mars are in Libra (188°03' and 204°18'), but Mercury in Virgo (170°48'). The moon stood in 260°30' on the ecliptic, i.e. in Sagittarius and Purvāṣāḍha, Venus in Scorpio (233°48'), Jupiter in Sagittarius (249°09') and Saturn at the end of Capricorn (298°), close to Aquarius. As one would hardly find another year with Jupiter and Saturn in the denoted positions during the pre-Angkorian period, the information that Mercury was in Libra is obviously a mistake.

I was ambitious enough to fill the gap at the beginning of the text, considering the metre, as well. Surprisingly, it was easy to find several possible solutions, of which three are presented here (cf. Golzio 2006: 16–17):

[*śāke dvārāṣṭavānair mm*]rgapatisahite lagnabhāvaprayāte

In the Śaka [year denoted by] the arrows (*vāṇa* = 5), the Eight (8) and the apertures [of the body = 9] [...]

[*śāke nandāṣṭabhūtair mm*]rgapatisahite lagnabhāvaprayāte

In the Śaka [year denoted by] the sons [the five sons of king Pāṇḍu], the Eight (8) and the [nine] Nanda [kings] [...]

[*nandāṣṭārthaiś śākābde m*]rgapatisahite lagnabhāvaprayāte

In the Śaka year [denoted by] the objects of the senses, the Eight and the [nine] Nanda [kings] [...]

Another example is the pre-Angkorian inscription K. 21 from Poñā Hòr south of Tà Kev (10°53' North, 104°39' East).<sup>14</sup> In the Sanskrit portion, a king Bhavavarman is mentioned, who erected a figure of Viṣṇu Trailokyasāra. The Khmer portion bears a date of which the year again is lost by damage, but the remaining visible elements “Nakṣatra Uttaraphalguṇī, Wednesday, 12th bright Caitra” (*uttaraphalguṇīnakṣatra vudhavāra ta gui dvādaśī ket caitra*) in combination with the name of the king who could be either Bhavavarman I (ruling around 600 AD) or Bhavavarman II (ruling from the Thirties to the Fifties of the seventh century, but before 657 AD, the first known date of his successor Jayavarman I [14 June 657 AD]) enable us to calculate the date precisely as Wednesday, 25 March 655 AD. This solution is easily explained: Only a few instances of a 12th Caitra fall on a Wednesday during the period in question, but on exactly one of them the moon entered the Nakṣatra Uttaraphalguṇī.

It was very common to express numbers by words because the use of a simple number would often not fit in the metre of a stanza of Sanskrit inscriptions. Therefore, the authors used a large number of words to indicate the same number. A convention gradually developed, according to which ordinary words could be associated with particular numbers which were used to signify those numbers. Thus, all the Sanskrit words meaning “the hand” came to be used to indicate “2” since man has only two hands. Similarly, words meaning “the arrow” were employed in the sense of “5” because Kāma, the Indian god of love, is traditionally represented as armed with five arrows. When there was more than one tradition regarding the number associated with a particular object, generally only one of them was adopted. Thus, even though traditionally the Vedas are regarded either as three or as four and the seas either as four or as seven in number, the early Indian astronomers and mathematicians used the words indicating both the Vedas and the sea to indicate “4” only. D.C. Sircar referred to authors of the medieval age who violated this old convention as uncritical (Sircar 1965: 229) but sometimes they combined this “violation” with other information specifying the intended meaning.

A special case of “violation” was the date of the accession (*āptarājya*) of the Khmer king Jayavarman VII in the inscription K. 368 from Sai Fong, Prov. Vieng Čăn/Laos (17°35' North, 102°46' East), dated 1186/87 AD (Finot 1903a, 18–33): Here we find the year given as *vedāmvaraikendubhir*

<sup>14</sup> The transliteration of the Sanskrit text and a French translation was published in *JSCC*: 21–26, the Khmer text and a French translation in *IdC* V: 5–6.

(*āptarājyah*), “Moon-One-Ether-Veda” (a number expressed by words always begins with the unit, followed by the tens, etc.) which was explained as (Śaka year) 1103, interpreting “Veda” here as “3”. This was justified by the inscription K. 488 of the Maṅgalārtha temple, stanza 4 (Finot 1925: 393–406), where the date of accession of that king is given as the year “Heart[1]-Moon[1]-Ether[0]-Eyes[3]” (*netrāntarenduhr̥daye*). The meaning of “Eye” as “3” is also a “violation”, since man has only two eyes and only the god Śiva has a third one.

Coming back now to the time of king Bhavavarman II, we find a highly sophisticated violation of the rules, considering the date of the inscription K. 79 from Tà Kev (10°59' North, 104°47' East), published in *IC I*: pl. XXXIII (Figure 2) and both transliterated and translated in *IdC II*: 69–72:

*mukhartuvānai[r] gaṇite śakāpde [!]*  
*jhaṣodaye kaṇyagatārdhdhacandre*  
*puṣyasya kṛṣṇe divaso [!] dasārdhe [!]*  
*pratiṣṭhitam devīcaturbhujākhyam*

“In the Śaka year denoted by the arrows (5), the seasons (6) and the face, at the ascendancy of the Capricorn (*jhaṣa*), when the moon was half gone into the Virgo (*kaṇyā*), on the dark half-ten (= 5) day of Puṣya, a Caturbhujā called Devī (“goddess”) was erected.”

Despite many orthographical mistakes, there can be no doubt that the meaning of *jhaṣa* is not simply “Poissons” (Pisces), as translated by Coëdès, but “big fish” in the sense of an aquarian monster (*makara*). If we follow the conventional meaning of face as “1”, thus having the Śaka year 561, the result is 20 December 639 AD. Unfortunately, on this day the moon stood in Leo (137°41') and not in Virgo. How can this problem be resolved? It is true that man has only one face, but Sadāśiva is a god with five faces. Therefore, if we calculate the date again, assuming the Śaka year 565, the result is 5 January 644 AD, when the moon stood—as required—half in Virgo (162°48').

This short paper touches on only a few selected problems related to calendar systems and chronology within the wide range of the Indian cultural spheres. Some of the systems are combined with indigenous calendars, as is the case in Indonesia and its different weeks on which Louis-Charles Damais (1911–1966) has worked intensively (see especially Damais 1990). In the area of modern Cambodia, we find the influence



2 Inscription K. 79 from Tà Kev, Cambodia (after *IC I*: pl. XXXIII).

of the Chinese animal cycle as early as in the eleventh century: In the inscription K. 618 from Pràsət Sek Tà Tuy (Province of Bättam̃bañ), dated Thursday, 23 March 1038 (Finot 1928: 56–58; Pou 2001: 224–229), the date also provides the information that it was a “Year (*nakṣatra*, here in the sense of a sign of duodenary cycle) of the Tiger” (Khmer *khāl*). This is astonishing because Bättam̃bañ in the western part of Cambodia is far away from places of Chinese influence but, on the other hand, it is well-known that king Sūryavarman I (r. 1002–1049/50) came from the north-east, close to the sinicised Vietnamese kingdom of Đai Việ̃t 大越. Moreover, the lintel of the stone temple of Pràsət Snēñ in the same province (its inscription K. 879 bears the dates Monday, 26 May 1046 and Thursday, 26 June 1046 and the name of king Sūryavarman I [see *IC V*: 235–237]) exhibits the well-known motif of the Churning of the Milk Ocean, where the god Viṣṇu is seen reclining on Ananta, which was conceived as a Chinese dragon rather than a serpent (Figure 3).





3 Lintel of the stone temple at Pràsàt Snèñ, Cambodia. Photo: author.

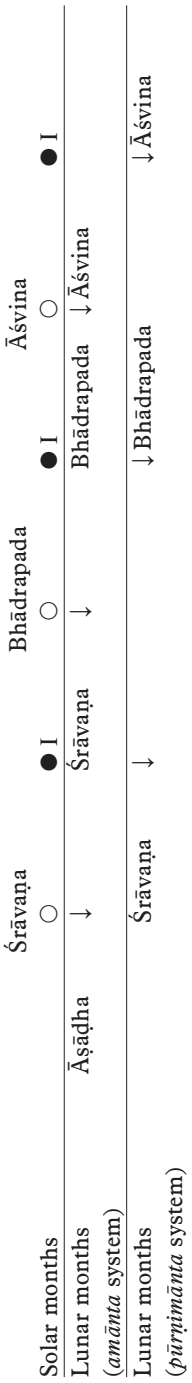
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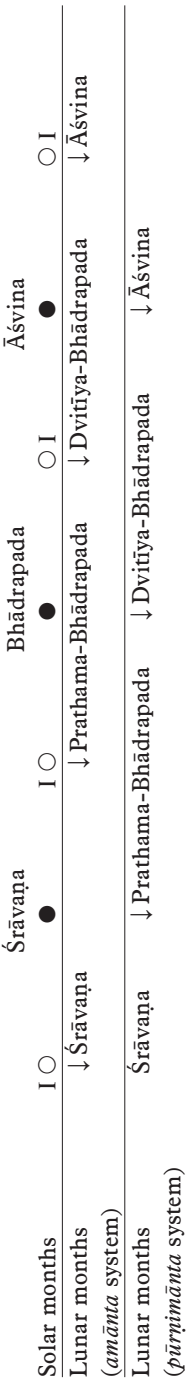
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**SYSTEM OF THE INDIAN LUNI-SOLAR CALENDAR**

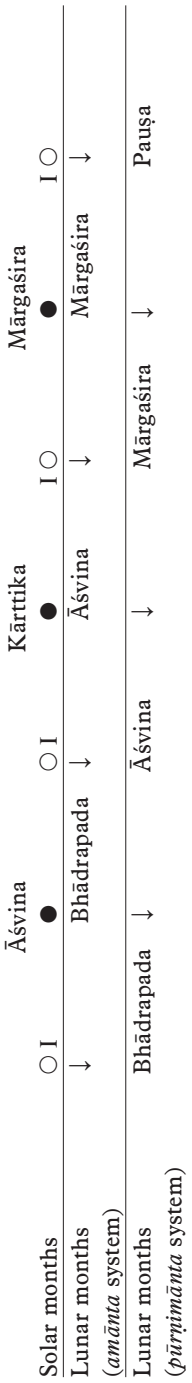
○ = new-moon day / ● = full-moon day / I = limits of solar months (schematic) / ↓ = limits of lunar months



**INTERCALARY MONTHS**



**EXPUNGED MONTHS (KĀRTTIKA-PHĀLGUNA)**



**REPEATED AND EXPUNGED TITHIS**

⊛ = sunrise / ↓ = limits of *tithis*

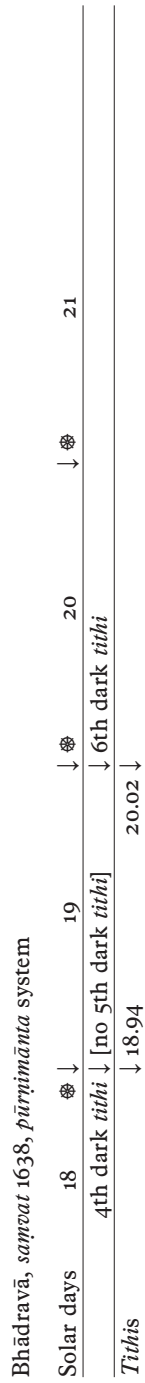
**EXAMPLE 1: REPEATED TITHI (ADHIKATITHI)**

Śaka year 1435, first and second 11th *tithi* of the month Āṣāḍha



**EXAMPLE 2: EXPUNGED TITHI (KṢAYATITHI)**

Samvat year 1638 (elapsed Northern year), month Bhādravā, 5th dark fortnight: the date belongs to the *amānta* system, because there is no 5th dark *tithi* using the *pūrṇimānta* system:



the *pushti marg*, translated variously as “The Path of Grace”, “The Way of Pleasure” or “The Way of Well-being”.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE MAJOR CULT IMAGES (SVARUPAS OR NIDHI SVARUPAS)<sup>5</sup>

##### 1. SHRI NATHJI

In the present context we shall concentrate on the visual aspects of this religious community alone. The story of the most important image of Shri Krishna, the god of the *Vallabhacharyas* par excellence, is linked to an event told in epics like the *Mahabharata*, the *Harivamsha*, the *Bhagavata Purana* and similar texts dating as far back as the second-third century CE.

When Krishna, an earthly personification of Lord Vishnu himself, was a child living in Braj (division Agra, district Mathura, Uttar Pradesh), the cowherd people of that place used to worship Indra, the god of rains. Krishna, in order to humiliate Indra’s pride, asked the people of Braj not to worship Indra anymore, but a nearby hill, called “Govardhan” or “Giriraj” (king among mountains). The people did so and Krishna assumed the form of the deity of the Govardhan hill, accepting the offerings. Indra, realizing that the people of Braj made offerings to Govardhan instead of him, decided to punish the cowherds for this neglect and sent torrents of rain down on the crowd of people. Shri Krishna however, unperturbed, took up mount Govardhan and held it with one arm upwards like a huge umbrella. He thus protected the cowherd families and the cattle for a number of days from the heavy rains until Indra was brought into submission.

On one early morning in 1410 a black stone in the form of a bent arm appeared out of the ground on top of the sacred hill, Govardhan.<sup>6</sup> Word

between 1478 and 1479 as the year of Vallabha’s birth, Golzio in another email explains, without going into further details, that it is possible that some authorities took the Southern Vikrama year as a guideline (Vallabha was born in the southern part of the Subcontinent) which differs from the Northern Vikrama year.

<sup>4</sup> For an explanation of the philosophical content of Vallabhacharya’s teachings and his life in general, see Mulji 1865; 34 ff., Barz 1992 and Ambalal 1987.

<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive explanation of this term see Peabody 1991: 739.

<sup>6</sup> For a description of this place and its temples together with their history and illustrations based on original photographs see Growse 1880, *var. loc.*

JOACHIM K. BAUTZE

## TIME OF THE MAHARAJAS AS REFLECTED IN INDIAN PAINTING FROM KOTA

The term “Maharaja”—from the Sanskrit word literally signifying “great king”—has more than one meaning. The most common one is in fact “ruler”, “king”. But there is a second one intrinsically tying this term to the *Vallabhacharyas*<sup>1</sup>, as already one of the first books written in English on that subject informs us (Mulji 1865<sup>2</sup>). Who are these *Maharajas* or *Vallabhacharyas*?

The *Vallabhacharyas*, *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya* or *Vallabha Sampradaya*, constitute a religious community which in certain parts of the subcontinent, particularly in Rajasthan and other parts of Western India, is still very dominant and influential. It was founded by Shri Vallabhacharya (1478–1531)<sup>3</sup>, a philosopher who is regarded by many as the founder of

<sup>1</sup> For a variety of reasons, the author has abstained from using diacritical marks (eds.).

<sup>2</sup> Unless preceded by a “V.S.” [Vikram(a) Samvat] denoting the conventional Indian calendar, all year specifications are given in the common era (CE).

<sup>3</sup> The name of his father is given as Lakshman Bhatta, that of his mother as Illama. The family’s home was in Andhra Pradesh. Vallabhacharya was born in Champaranya, a forest near the village of Champajhar, situated 36 km from Raipur, today the capital of Chhattisgarh State, on Sunday, the eleventh day of the dark half of the lunar month of Chaitra (March–April or Vaishakha [April–May], according to the calendar system) in Vikrama Samvat 1535, the equivalent of which is mostly given as 1479. The difference between the two dates is negligible, as both dates correspond to the same day of the common era (CE): March 29th, 1478 as calculated by Karl-Heinz Golzio. Golzio, in an email to the author, further explained that the date giving the month of Chaitra made use of the “*amanta*” system, whereas the date with the month of Vaishakha made use of the “*purnimanta*” system (cf. Karl-Heinz Golzio’s article in this volume). As to the difference

went round and since the image appeared on the day on which snakes are usually worshipped (*Naga-panchami*), the image received offerings of milk like the snakes and an annual fair was held to commemorate the appearance of that idol on that day. At midnight on the eleventh of the dark half of the lunar month Vaishakha, 1479, the image rose further from the ground, revealing an uplifted arm. Simultaneously, Vallabhacharya was born in Champaranya, Chhattisgarh.

In the course of time, Vallabhacharya travelled to some of the most important pilgrimage centers and mastered some of the major philosophical treatises and religious texts. In 1493 Lord Shri Krishna in a dream instructed Vallabha to travel to Braj (Uttar Pradesh), where he promised to reveal the true identity of the image found some 83 years earlier. Vallabhacharya went there and had *darshan*<sup>7</sup> of the image then locally known under the name of Devadamana. Vallabhacharya realised that this is a true form, *svarupa*, of Shri Krishna in the act of holding mount Govardhan over the heads of the people of Braj. He hence called this *svarupa* Govardhananathji and appointed a man<sup>8</sup> to take care of the image by performing *seva* (literally: service, divine service, for the *Vallabhacharyas* a particular kind of worship). Six years later, Purnamalla Khatri, a merchant from Ambala (district Ambala, Haryana), had a dream in which Krishna advised him to build a permanent temple for his *svarupa* on top of mount Govardhan. Purnamalla Khatri followed that advice and in 1520 the temple was ready. The solidly built temple, however, was no guarantee for the safety of the *svarupa*. Due to a politically unstable situation, it was hidden three times at three different places in nearby forests. When the attitude of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (Muhyi ad-Din Abu'l-Muzaffar Muhammad Aurangzeb 'Alamgir, r. 1658–1707) proved to be not in favour of the Hindu population of his empire, it was decided to remove the image from its then established place. On September 18, 1670, the image was concealed in a bullock cart and moved away from mount Govardhan. One of the stops included Kota (district Kota, Rajasthan),

<sup>7</sup> One of the most important terms in the religious life of the members of Brahmanical religions, which literally means: "sight" or "vision" in the sense of coming to see and to pay homage to a deity or highly respected human being. The *darshans* constitute the active hours of each image.

<sup>8</sup> According to Jindel 1976: 19, his name was Ram Das Chaudhary. According to Barz 1992: 46, his name was Ramdas Chauhan ("Rāmadāsa Chauhāna").

where the group of *sevakas* (i.e. those who care for the *svarupa*) spent two months during the rainy season. The image also halted at Bundi (district Bundi, Rajasthan), Kishangarh (district Ajmer, Rajasthan), Jodhpur (district Jodhpur, Rajasthan) and other places. Finally, the group followed an invitation by Maharana Raj Singh of Mewar (r. 1652–1680) and on November 17, 1671, they moved towards Udaipur, the capital of the Mewar state. On the way, however, the cart got stuck in the mud near a place called Sinhad (or Sinhar). All efforts to get it out of the slush were in vain. This was interpreted as Krishna's decision to stay there, and a temple was built accordingly. The installation of the image took place on Saturday, February 10, 1672,<sup>9</sup> and the place became known as Nathdvara or Nathdwara (district Udaipur, Rajasthan, literally: "door of the Lord"). This is where the idol can be seen today during its eight daily times for *darshan*.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. FURTHER PRIMARY DIVINE SVARUPAS

During his second great pilgrimage through India, between 1501 and 1503, Vallabha went to Pandharpur (district Solapur, Maharashtra)<sup>11</sup> in order to have *darshan* of the Vaishnava image Shri Vitthalnathji. During the *darshan* Shri Vitthalnathji told Vallabha to get married and so generate a line of descendants to preserve and promulgate the teachings. Vallabha followed the divine advice. He first went to Vijayanagar (district Bellary, Karnataka) where he requested his mother to accompany him to Varanasi (district Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh), where, between 1502 and 1504, he married a girl named Mahalakshmi. When she came of age, she gave birth to Vallabha's first son Gopinathji at a place called Adel, a village near Prayag or Allahabad (district Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh) in 1511 or 1512. By that time, Vallabha became known as Vallabhacharya.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> 1671 according to Talwar & Krishna 1979: 7, calculated from "Phalguna Krishna 7 Samvata 1728".

<sup>10</sup> For details see Jindel 1976: 62–68. As it is not allowed to take photographs during the *darshans*, published photographs of the actual image of *Shri Nathji* are practically non-existing. As also no scholar is allowed to approach the image, its age is a matter of debate, cf. Ambalal 1987: 50. "Photography is not allowed in temple premises", see p. 30 in *Guide Book to Shree Nathdwara* n.d.

<sup>11</sup> Mate 1970: 188–220. For a depiction of Vitthalnathji ("Shri Vitthal") see illustration 22 therein.

<sup>12</sup> See Barz 1992: 43–46.

In 1516 Vallabhacharya's second son, Vitthalnath, was born at Charnat, a place near Varanasi.<sup>13</sup>

In 1531, Vallabhacharya went to Varanasi to meditate at the bank of the Ganga<sup>14</sup> for about one month before he summoned his two sons and some of his followers. Upon arrival, Vallabhacharya delivered the leadership of the *Sampradaya* to his eldest son Gopinath. Following this transfer of conductorship, Vallabhacharya went into the waters of the Ganga from which he disappeared in a flash of light.<sup>15</sup>

Gopinath suddenly died in 1543 and left only one son, Purushottam. As Purushottam was then a minor of just 12 years of age, he could not take on the leadership of the *Sampradaya*, which was hence transferred to Vitthalnath, Vallabhacharya's second son. When Purushottam reached the age of maturity, Vitthalnath was asked to transfer the leadership to his nephew. But when in 1550 Purushottam also died, Vitthalnath became the unchallenged leader of the *Sampradaya*.

Vitthalnath married twice. His first marriage took place in 1533. His wife, Rukmini, died in 1560. The name of his second wife was Padmavati, whom he married in 1568. Besides seven sons, for which see below, he generated four daughters. Apart from their names (Shobha, Yamuna, Kamala and Devaka) almost nothing is known in available Western sources.<sup>16</sup>

Before Vitthalnath breathed his last on mount Govardhan in 1586,<sup>17</sup> he assigned the leadership of the *Sampradaya* not to his eldest son, but to all his seven sons, each of whom established his own "seat, assuming to be the incarnation of Krishna".<sup>18</sup> Apart from the image of Shri Nathji,

<sup>13</sup> Ambalal 1987: 44; Barz 1992: 52. Adel is also written "Adaila" and Charnat "Caranata". Websites about the *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya* give the following dates for the birth of Vallabha's two sons: Gopinath: twelfth day of the dark half of the month Bhadarva, V.S. 1567 and Vitthalnath: ninth day of the dark half of the month of Magasar in the year 1515 A.D. or V.S. 1572. It is also said that Vallabha had two daughters, cf. [http://www.vallabhkankroli.org/shree%20vallabhacharyaji\\_Managalacharan13.htm](http://www.vallabhkankroli.org/shree%20vallabhacharyaji_Managalacharan13.htm).

<sup>14</sup> Reportedly at the Hanuman Ghat, cf. Barz 1992: 32; Mulji 1865: 41.

<sup>15</sup> By then he "was fifty-two years and thirty-seven days old", Mulji 1865: 41.

<sup>16</sup> Ambalal 1987: 46. For their names see Mulji 1865: 43.

<sup>17</sup> Barz 1992: 54. Mulji 1865: 43 writes: "At the ripe age of seventy years and twenty-nine days, in Samvat 1649 (A.D. 1583), Vithalnathji quitted the earth on the sacred hill of Govardhan Parvata, where the image was set up by his father."

<sup>18</sup> Mulji 1865: 43.

Vitthalnath was in possession of at least<sup>19</sup> eight further divine *svarupas*, which he distributed as follows:<sup>20</sup>

I. Giridhar, Vitthalnath's eldest son, (born in V.S. 1597)<sup>21</sup> received three *svarupas*: 1. Shri Nathji, 2. Shri Navanitapriyaji and 3. Shri Mathureshji.

As no published photographs of any of these *svarupas* exist, the references in the following footnotes give indications to published visual renderings of these images. As early as 1865, eight<sup>22</sup> *svarupas* were published in engraved form by Mulji.<sup>23</sup>

- I.1. Shri Nathji, an image made of stone, is kept in its temple, actually known as *haveli*, in Nathdvara. It measures about 137 cm in height.<sup>24</sup>
- I.2. Shri Navanitapriyaji is "a small metal image of South Indian origin" which is kept in a separate shrine within the *haveli* of Shri Nathji.<sup>25</sup> During certain *utsavas* or festivals, it may substitute for Shri Nathji.
- I.3. Shri Mathureshji is a four-armed stone image today installed in a temple at Kota (district Kota, Rajasthan).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Already Vallabhacharya, it is said, "distributed among his disciples more than thirty images, under various forms and names", cf. Mulji 1865: 100.

<sup>20</sup> Barz 1992: 55. See also the table in Jindel 1976: 45. One of the first charts in a Western language showing the distribution of the *nidhi svarupas* was published by James Tod (1782–1835) in 1832, cf. Tod 1920, vol. 2: 640.

<sup>21</sup> The dates follow Mulji 1865: 43. For the equivalents in the Common Era see Ambalal 1987, Appendix 3 or <http://www.kripanidhi.com/Pathshala/sevenBalaks.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> Actually, these are seven *svarupas* plus Shri Nathji, as Tod 1920: 640 already observed: Shri "Nathji is not enumerated amongst the forms; he stands supreme".

<sup>23</sup> Mulji 1865, plate facing p. 100.

<sup>24</sup> Ambalal 1987: 49 f. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 128 f. *Guide Book to Shree Nathdwara* n.d. Purohit 1938: 57 f. Yate 1880: 54 f. Francklin 1805: 197 and 348. Broughton 1897: 156 f. Tod 1920, vol. 2: 608–643.

<sup>25</sup> Ambalal 1987: 54. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 131 ("Navnitapriyaji"). This is the "Nonita" in Tod 1920: 640.

<sup>26</sup> Ambalal 1987: 54 f. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 129 f. Bautze 2000: ill. 5–8. Desai 1985: 120. The image was kept in Bundi for some time. Barz 1992: 55 still claims it to be at Jatipura (district Mathura, Uttar Pradesh), to where it was moved in 1953. Giridhar gave the two images of Shri Nathji and Shri Navanitapriyaji to his son Damodar. His second son, Gopinath Dikshit, received Shri Mathureshji.

- II. Govindaray (born in V.S. 1599) obtained Shri Vitthalnathji, a metal image of about 10 cm in height with its consort, Rukmini, to its proper left.<sup>27</sup> It is presently kept in its own *haveli* at Nathdvara.
- III. Balakrishna (born in V.S. 1606) gained Shri Dvarkanathji, also known as Dvarkadishji or Dvarkadhishji, a four-armed image of Vishnu in black stone, now enshrined at Kankroli (district Rajsamand, Rajasthan).<sup>28</sup>
- IV. Gokulnath (born in V.S. 1608) was given Shri Gokulnathji, a tiny, four-armed metal image. Two of the hands are shown in the act of playing a transverse flute. Shri Gokulnathji has two attendant females, Radhaji and Chandravaliji, positioned on either side of the image. Since the mid 19th century, the image is installed in a temple at Gokul (district Mathura, Uttar Pradesh).<sup>29</sup>
- V. Raghunath (born in V.S. 1611) received Shri Gokulchandramaji, a wooden image the size of which is not given. It represents Shri Krishna playing the flute and is presently housed at Kamavana in Vraj (district Mathura, Uttar Pradesh).<sup>30</sup>
- VI. Yadunath (born in V.S. 1613) got 1. Shri Balakrishnaji, a tiny metal image similar to I.2.<sup>31</sup> It is now under worship in Surat (district Surat, Gujarat). Apparently, Yadunath received a second image which is close to Shri Balakrishnaji.<sup>32</sup> It is listed as 2. Shri Mukundrayji and presently housed in Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ambalal 1987: 55. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 130. The image was found on the same day when Vallabhacharya's second son was born. It saw stations at Kota (1581), Khimnor (near Nathdvara, Rajasthan) and Udaipur (in 1802).

<sup>28</sup> For the history of the idol and the temple see Yate 1880: 54. Purohit 1938: 58 and Ambalal 1987: 57. For an illustration *ibid.*: 57 top and Bautze 1995: 277, cat. no. 202, where the identification "Gokulchandramaji" is a mistake. The correct name and description of the image is given on p. 175. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 130.

<sup>29</sup> Ambalal 1987: 56 f. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 130. By 1865, this image was still at Jaipur (Rajasthan), cf. Mulji 1865: 101.

<sup>30</sup> Ambalal 1987: 57 and full-page plate: 149. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 130 f. When mistakenly accompanied by two females, this idol is easily confounded with that of Shri Madanmohanji.

<sup>31</sup> This image is not illustrated in Mulji 1865, plate facing p. 100. For descriptions see Ambalal 1987: 57 and Talwar & Krishna 1979: 131.

<sup>32</sup> Barz 1992: 55.

<sup>33</sup> Not illustrated in Mulji 1865, plate facing p. 100. For descriptions see Ambalal 1987: 59 and Talwar & Krishna 1979: 131.

- VII. Ghanashyam (born in V.S. 1618) obtained the image of Shri Madanmohanji, a two-armed metal image of probably small size showing a fluting Shri Krishna. Like Shri Gokulnathji, it is accompanied by Radhaji and Chandravaliji. It is now also kept at Kamavana.<sup>34</sup>

These altogether nine, in the traditional counting, are called *nidhis* ("treasures") or *nidhi svarupas* and constitute the corpus of preeminent idols (*svarupas*) of this religious community.

There is said to have been an adopted son of Vitthalnath, called Tulsidas, who received the image of Shri Gopinathji, presently located at Vrindavan (district Mathura, Uttar Pradesh).<sup>35</sup> The traditional lists, however, do not mention this idol.

#### SECONDARY SVARUPAS OR PUSHTI SVARUPAS

Next to these most sacred *nava nidhis* (nine treasures) another class of idols exists, which were worshipped and venerated by the followers of the *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya*. These are the *pushti svarupas*. Unlike the *svarupas* of the *nava nidhis*, which "miraculously appeared from the earth in full iconic form, unblemished by a human sculptor's imperfections"<sup>36</sup> the *pushti svarupas* are man-made. And unlike the primary divine *svarupas* the *pushti svarupas* may, on certain conditions, be photographed by scholars.<sup>37</sup> An example of a *pushti svarupa* is Shri Brijnathji,<sup>38</sup> ever since 1719 the tutelary deity of the Kota state. It was

<sup>34</sup> Ambalal 1987: 59, where the full-page plate on p. 58 probably represents Madanmohanji. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 131. Skelton 1973: 70 f., cat. no. 20. Tod 1920: 641 informs us that this image "has his rites performed by a priestess".

<sup>35</sup> Barz 1992: 55.

<sup>36</sup> Peabody 1991: 740.

<sup>37</sup> To photograph the shrine and image of Shri Brijnathji of Kota during *darshan* in the early and mid 1990s, I had to submit a written application, whereupon the religious authorities in the name of Shri Brijnathji granted permission. Another condition regulated proper dress, which included a particular coat in addition to a saffron-coloured turban. Both were generously supplied by H.H. Maharao Brijraj Singhji of Kota, without whose support it would not have been possible to write this article.

<sup>38</sup> For a published photograph of the idol as it is enshrined today in Kota, see Brijraj Singh 1985, fig. 25.

introduced by Maharao Bhim Shinghji of Kota (r. 1707–1720)<sup>39</sup> who, after having obtained certain privileges which helped the Kota Maharao to increase his territory from the then newly installed Mughal emperor, Abu'l-Muzaffar Nasir ad-Din Muhammad Shah (r. 1719–1748), went directly from Delhi to “Mathura where he was initiated into the Vallabha Sampradaya and endowed with the tutelary statue of Shri Brijnath”.<sup>40</sup> Maharao Bhim Singh changed his name to “Krishnadas” (servant to Shri Krishna) and renamed Kota as Nandgaon (name of the village in which Shri Krishna lived as a child). As it was the custom to place the tutelary deity on the head of the leading elephant in battle, Shri Brijnathji can look down upon an eventful life.<sup>41</sup>

The origin of a *pushti svarupa* is explained by Peabody thus: “The second class of Vallabha statues, those of admitted human manufacture, are empowered by virtue of their passage through the hands, at one time or another, of some agnatic descendant of Vallabhacharya who blesses them by bathing them in *pañcāmṛt* (the five nectars of curds, milk, ghee, honey, and sugar) and giving them *prasād* (a consecrated food offering) from a previously established *svarūp*. Because the agnatic descendant of Vallabhacharya is instrumental in bestowing the grace (*puṣṭi*) of Krishna on these images, they are known as *puṣṭi-svarūps*. Although these statues are *svarūps*, their human fabrication relegates them to a lesser order than the above-described divine *nidhi-svarūps*. Moreover, unlike the divine images remaining in the possession of descendants of Vallabhacharya, the man-made statues eventually may be distributed to lay devotees for worship. The Shri Brijnath image given to Maharao Bhim Singh of Kota in Mathura falls into this category.”<sup>42</sup>

The production of *pushti svarupas* may explain the large number of such images worshipped by members of the *Sampradaya*,<sup>43</sup> particularly in Rajasthan. Another such idol is, like that of Shri Brijnathji, housed in another shrine within the old palace of Kota: Shri Brijrajji. How popular this name of Shri Krishna remained to this day is shown by at least three successors to formerly acknowledged Rajasthani rulers who

<sup>39</sup> For a comprehensive account of his life see Bautze 1997: 45–47.

<sup>40</sup> Bautze 1987: 255 with references to published sources written in Hindi. Peabody 1991: 736, where this incident is given in more detail.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Peabody 1991, Bautze 1992.

<sup>42</sup> Peabody 1991: 740. Some of the italics are mine, JKB.

<sup>43</sup> The reason for the production of such images is explained in Peabody 1991.

share a common name: Brijraj.<sup>44</sup> As the number of *svarupas* is, for the said reasons, considerable, emphasis is laid in the following on paintings produced in Kota. These paintings show the primordial image of Shri Nathji and most of the *nava nidhis*, two images of, globally speaking, less importance: Shri Brijnathji and Shri Brijrajji.

#### THE DAILY ROUTINE OF A SVARUPA: THE “BUSINESS HOURS” OR DARSHAN-TIMINGS

Each image, no matter if it belongs to the *nava nidhis*, or *pushti svarupas*, is a manifestation of Shri Krishna, who follows a daily routine. During a *darshan* (from the Sanskrit verbal root *drś*, to see) the temple, in case of the *Sampradaya* at Nathdvara, the *haveli*, is open to the public. In other words: the believer is allowed to actually see the image and the ritual action that takes place around it. There are fixed *darshan* timings, according to season (during the hot season the *darshan* timings differ from the cold season by about one or two hours). Today, these “office hours” are announced on the website of the larger shrines of the *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya*. During each *darshan*, the *svarupa* is introduced in a slightly different way. A detailed painting showing a *svarupa* may hence give information about the time of day it intends to represent.

There are eight daily *darshans*.<sup>45</sup> In between these *darshans*, the shrine housing the *svarupa* is generally closed to the public, allowing the priests or *tilakayats* to change the decoration or *shringar/singar* (from Sanskrit *śṛṅgāra*) of the idol, often rendered as “*sigar*”. These *shringars* are generally very elaborate; they constitute the hallmark of the *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya*.

The image generally rests on a *simhasana* or lion throne, covered by a piece of textile of the same name.<sup>46</sup> It is flanked on either side by a

<sup>44</sup> These are: Maharao Brijraj Singhji of Kota (\*1934), Maharaja Brijraj Singhji of Kishangarh (\*1953) and Maharawal Brijraj Singhji of Jaisalmer (\*1968).

<sup>45</sup> Hindu temples not belonging to the *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya* may also announce nine daily *darshans* or non *darshans*, the latter being *darshans* scheduled for a certain time of the day but dropped due to the season.

<sup>46</sup> Skelton 1973: 76 f., cat. no. 23. Talwar & Krishna 1979, cat. nos. 8 and 9. Kreisel 1995: 280, no. 207. For a rare photographic illustration see Gutman 1982: 153, for an annotated drawing Ambalal 1987, Appendix 4.

*takiya*, a kind of long round pillow, resembling a huge sausage in shape. The image, especially when of small size, rests against another, similar pillow, the *masnad* (sometimes also called *gaddi* or *gadi*), which is often already depicted on the painted *simhasana* (textile). In front of the idol are generally placed two items: a *banta* or box filled with small green conical objects known as *pan* (a kind of refreshment made of the areca nut, betel leaf, slaked lime paste and assorted flavourings) and a *jhari* (a kind of jug with a muzzle), the latter wrapped in a red piece of cloth.

Krishna wears trousers, *suthan*, a headdress (*pag* or *pagri*) with a kind of aigrette (*chandrika*) consisting, according to the festival, of one, three or five ends of peacock feathers, garlands (*mala*), a coat (*jama*, *vaga*, etc.) or, according to the season, a lighter dress. During the cold season, to give an example, Shri Nathji might be wrapped in costumes to such an extent that only his head remains uncovered and hence visible to the followers of the *Vallabha Sampradaya* during the *mangla darshan*, as is demonstrated by our Plate 9. The idol may hold a flute (*venu* or *bansi*) and occasionally also the cane (*vetra*) of the cowherd which at times looks like a hockey stick.

Detachable stairs, *sirhi*, lead to the platform (*simhasana*) on which the image is placed. These are usually covered by a textile (also called *sirhi*), which sometimes has elaborate paintings or embroidery on the stair risers,<sup>47</sup> the treads being left untreated. Behind the *simhasana* usually hangs a large rectangular textile, a backdrop known as *pichhvai*. The *pichhvais* used for the image of Shri Nathji at Nathdvāra are marked by a central door-like open area, which *pichhvais* used for any other *svārūpa* do not show.<sup>48</sup> The colour combination of the dress, ornaments etc. indicates the time of day and the season. Each *darshan* is enacted like a stage performance that must be experienced. At Nathdvāra, the *darshans* are accompanied by music according to the time of day so that even an educated blind person would be able to figure out which *darshan* she or he attends.<sup>49</sup> Even persons who do not belong to the *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya*

<sup>47</sup> Skelton 1973: 78 f., cat. no. 24. They often form a unit with the painted *simhasana*, cf. Talwar & Krishna 1979: cat. no. 60, cat. no. 73.

<sup>48</sup> Krishna 1984, pls. 3 and 5.

<sup>49</sup> For the performance times of North-Indian musical compositions, *ragas*, see Kaufmann 1968: 1–58. For a modern “classification of Rag-Raginis in different Darshans” see *Guide Book to Shree Nathdvāra* n.d.: 56, Appendix VI.

have to admit the refinement of the decoration and the graceful movements of the priests, enhanced by a fresh bewitching fragrance and elaborate background music (*haveli sangit*).

#### THE EIGHT *DARSHANS* IN PARTICULAR

The names of the *darshans* and their approximate timings in summer (s.) and winter (w.) according to the list distributed at the *haveli* of Shri Nathji:<sup>50</sup>

<i>Mangla:</i>	s. 5:00	w. 6:00
<i>Shringar:</i>	s. 6:30	w. 7:15
<i>Gṛal:</i>	s. 7:15	w. 8:15
<i>Rajbhog:</i>	s. 10:15	w. 11:00
<i>Utthapan:</i>	s. 15:15	w. 15:00
<i>Bhog:</i>	s. 16:30	w. 16:15
<i>Sandhya Arati:</i>	s. 17:15	w. 17:00
<i>Shayan:</i>	s. 19:00	w. – <sup>51</sup>

#### A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EIGHT DAILY *DARSHANS*<sup>52</sup>

*Mangla* (literally: auspiciousness, good omen): A conch, *shankha*, is sounded. The image is washed and dressed. A light refreshment like dry fruits and *pan* is offered. The *arati*, a ceremony during which a burning lamp is waved before the image, is performed.

*Shringar* (here literally: ornament, adornment): The image is splendidly dressed according to the season. A *mukhiya* or head priest holds a mirror in front of the image to enable the latter to verify how beautifully it is adorned. After the ceremony of feeding the image, a flute is added to it.

<sup>50</sup> This list follows *Guide Book to Shree Nathdvāra* n.d.: 12: “Approximate time of Shree Nathji’s Darshan”.

<sup>51</sup> This *darshan* is not held from the first day of the bright half of the month *chaitra* until the ninth day of the bright fortnight of the month *āshvin*, cf. Ambalal 1987: 25. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 9–10.

<sup>52</sup> These descriptions only take visual changes and performances into account. For more comprehensive descriptions see Mulji 1865: 101–106. Jindel 1976: 62–67. Barz 1992: 48–49. Goswamy 1982: 125. Ambalal 1987: 21–25. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 8–10.



*Gval* (literally: cowherd): Neither flute nor flowers are displayed. The idol is in the garb of a cowherd.

*Rajbhog* (literally: royal food): Lunchtime. "The idol is clothed with magnificent vestments and decked with rich jewels and ornaments."<sup>53</sup> Various delicacies are offered to the image behind a curtain. Cones of *pan* are placed in front of the image, which is decorated with garlands and equipped with a flute and a cane, *vetra*. An *arati* is performed.

*Utthapan* (literally: awakening; after lunchtime, the *svarupa* is supposed to take a nap): A conch is blown. Dishes made of milk and fruits are offered.

*Bhog* (literally: pleasure, enjoyment; food): The idol is fanned with a *morchal*, a peacock feather whisk. An *angithi*, a brazen bowl filled with glowing charcoal, may be placed in front of the image during the cold season. Choice food is offered.

*Sandhya Arati* (literally: evening *arati*): The rich garments are removed from the image, which keeps the flute. An *arati* is performed by the *mukhiya* or head priest.

*Shayan* (literally: sleep; bed): The idol is prepared for the night.

#### THE ANNUAL UTSAVAS (FESTIVITIES)

The greatest pomp of the *Vallabha Sampradaya* is displayed during their annual festivals, *utsavas*. From the late 18th century onwards, illustrations of the sequence of the *shringars* of the annual *utsavas* of the *Vallabha Sampradaya* have adorned the interior walls of the *haveli*, the stately mansion of the wealthy and privileged members of the society. Plate 10 illustrates how these murals were once (1981) to be seen in the *Jhala-ki-Haveli* within the *garh* (fortified palace) of Kota. By 1983, almost all these murals have completely disappeared through local vandalism (foreign tourists were by that time practically unaware of these frescoes).<sup>54</sup> A sequence of these painted *shringars* of the annual festivals is called *utsavamalika* or garland of festivals. A complete *utsavamalika* may hence serve as calendar, as each painting contains a sufficient number of elements to allow the experienced viewer to determine which day or which week of the year is represented.

<sup>53</sup> Jindel 1976: 65.

<sup>54</sup> Bautze 1996.

Although several descriptions of such *utsavas* have been published,<sup>55</sup> most of them lack the precise date and description of the visual elements which give a hint to the exact identification of the festival in otherwise un-inscribed paintings. In fact, the visual arts of the *Vallabha Sampradaya* are to a great extent based on these *utsavas*. These *utsavas* are not necessarily identical in all the places where *svarupas* of Shri Krishna are kept; there are minor local variants.

As no published text of an *utsavamalika* seems to exist, it is useful for our purpose to concentrate on an illustrated and dated manuscript that deals with this subject.

#### THE GARLAND OF FESTIVALS OF THE TEMPLE OF SHRI BRIJRAJJI

The collection of the Government Museum, Kota contains a dated, illustrated and complete manuscript titled in the colophon as *shri vrajrajji ka ghar ki utsavamalika* (the garland of festivals of the temple [literally: house] of the venerable Shri Brijrajji).<sup>56</sup> The image of Shri Brijrajji was given to the then Maharajkumar of Kota, Kishor Singh (r. 1820–1827)<sup>57</sup> by *Tilakayat* Damodarji II (also known as Dauji, 1797–1826),<sup>58</sup> a descendant of Shri Vallabhacharya, on the occasion of the initiation into the *Vallabha Sampradaya* of the former, sometime before 1805. Like Shri Brijnathji, it is still under worship within the *garh* of Kota.<sup>59</sup> The manuscript was

<sup>55</sup> Skelton 1973: 84–97. Jindel 1976: 68–78. Ambalal 1987: 27–36. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 13 ff.

<sup>56</sup> Government Museum, Kota, acc. no. 1950; 3454. Shastri 1961: 46 f., cat. no. 484. Leaf size: 11" x 6½".

<sup>57</sup> He was the eldest son of Maharao Umed Singh of Kota. He was born about 1781, ascended to the throne on August 17, 1820 and breathed his last on July 2, 1827. For an account of his life see Bautze 1997: 53–55.

<sup>58</sup> For a short account of his life see Ambalal 1987: 64–67. The Indian dates are given as "Ashvina Shukla 4; V.S. 1853—Falguna Krishna 15; V.S. 1882", cf. [http://www.nathdwara.in/damodarji\\_dwitiya.php](http://www.nathdwara.in/damodarji_dwitiya.php).

<sup>59</sup> For an illustration of the shrine of Shri Brijrajji/Brijrajji after the *arati*-ceremony, see Bautze 2000: 125. In 19th century paintings, Shri Brijnathji and Shri Brijrajji have such a similar appearance that they can be easily confounded. Shri Brijnathji, however, is then accompanied by only one female attendant or *svamini*, whereas Shri Brijrajji is always in the company of two *svaminis*.

completed on Wednesday, March 6, 1805 (Julian calendar), or February 22, 1805 following the Gregorian calendar.<sup>60</sup>

The manuscript is bound in blue embroidered cloth. The embroidery consists of flowers placed in a kind of fluted diamond pattern in Imperial Mughal style. The pagination appears on the back of most pages but is skipped on some pages. The last folio is numbered “45” which would account for altogether 90 pages. A closer examination, however, reveals that there are at least 102 pages corresponding to 51 folios.<sup>61</sup> The total number of illustrations is 38. The text is written in *Nagari*;<sup>62</sup> the language is a mixture of Sanskrit and local Braj dialect. The suggestions for the different *pujas* or forms of worship as well as the *shringars* or setups are mostly given in catchwords: the person for whom this manuscript was written and illustrated knew already how to proceed. Detailed lists are given, however, for the different sweets to be donated and/or distributed during the various *bhogs*.

The actual suggestions for the *shringars* and *pujas* of the festivals are preceded by a text detailing the daily ceremonies of *thakurji*, as the image of Brijrajji and other *svarupas* is often called in this text.<sup>63</sup> There are three paginated folios of text in addition to three full page illustrations: 1. Vallabhacharya dictating a text to a scribe at the bank of a stretch of water while two more men, one of whom lies prostrate, are in attendance

<sup>60</sup> For a published illustration giving the year 1804, see Taylor 1997: 68, fig. 7. The conversion was again made by Karl-Heinz Golzio on the occasion of the workshop in Cologne on 26 June 2010. The full colophon with scribal remarks reads, in uncorrected form, on folio 45 verso of the said manuscript, starting in the eighth line from the top, in red ink: *iti shri shri vrajrajji ka / ghar ki utsavamalika sampurna // shrir astu // / kalyanam astu // shubham bhavatu // dhanadharmavridhi / r astu // santana vridhir astu // ... / [from here in black ink:] sambat // 1861 // masanam uttama mase phalgunama / se shubha shukla pakshhe tithau / 5 / budhavasare sampurnam bha / vatu //*

<sup>61</sup> Shastri 1961: gives “45” for the number of the *pages*, which is rather misleading. As was noted earlier (Bautze 1987: 257–259, pls. 11 and 12) there are actually two texts bound in this—now disbound—manuscript. The first text on the daily duties of service has 3 numbered folios in addition to 3 unnumbered paintings. It is the second or main text which has 45 numbered folios.

<sup>62</sup> For an example see Hutchinson 1877: 15.

<sup>63</sup> The text begins, in red ink: *shri gopijanavallabhaya namah // shri brajrajji ki niti / pratiseva prakara likhyate //*

(following folio 2 verso, without pagination).<sup>64</sup> 2. Vitthalnath and his seven sons (following the previous painting, without pagination)<sup>65</sup> and 3. Worship of Shri Nathji along with seven *nidhi svarupas* in the *haveli* of the former (following the previously mentioned painting, without pagination).<sup>66</sup>

The actual text begins with new pagination and an invocation to Shri Krishna followed by: “And now is written the garland of festivals in the house of Shri Brijrajji.”<sup>67</sup>

The enumeration of the description of the *shringars* as well as the *pujas* (forms of religious worship) of the *utsavas* starts with the first day of the dark half of the month Bhadon on folio 1 recto and ends with the fifteenth day of the bright half of the month Savan on folio 45 verso, thus covering a complete annual cycle.

In the following summary of the calendar of festivals, the different food items, consisting mainly of exquisite sweets, musical *ragas* to be performed and other elaborate details which cannot, or only with great difficulty, be shown in the paintings, are not mentioned. Also often recurring terms describing activities during the *puja*, like the use of incense (*dhup*), a lamp (*dipak*), the watering with a conch (*shankhodaka*), the sounding of the bell (*ghanta*) and cymbals (*jhalar*), the throwing of grains of rice (*akshata*) or the application of a *tilak* (mark on the forehead) are not specifically mentioned in this summary. As there are no nationwide mandatory rules for the spelling of the lunar months, each month can be written in different ways, such as *asoj* or *ashvin* for the period that corresponds to September–October of the Western calendar. The dark half (waning moon) is usually given as *vadi*, *budi* but in the main text of this manuscript never as *krishna*.<sup>68</sup> The bright half (waxing moon) of the lunar month is usually given as *sudi*, *shukla*, *shuddhi* or *shudi*. The text

<sup>64</sup> Since—apart from folios 25 verso, 36 verso (Bautze 1987: Abb. 11 and 12) and 41 verso and 42 recto, for which see Taylor 1997: 68, fig. 7—all other paintings from this manuscript seem to be unpublished, we refer here to similar, albeit much later published paintings. Cf. Ambalal 1987: 45, right hand half.

<sup>65</sup> Ambalal 1987: 45, left half.

<sup>66</sup> For a very similar illustration see f.18 recto in the same manuscript.

<sup>67</sup> In red ink: *shri govardhano dharanadhiraya namah // atha shri vrajraj / ji ka ghar ki utsavamalika likhyate //*

<sup>68</sup> This word only appears on the lower red margin of some paintings and is hence a later addition.

often does not specify for which *darshan* the *shringar* is meant, a fact that might show that it probably does not constitute a detailed description of the *shringars* but some kind of aide mémoire, especially since the phrase *or sarva nityavat* (and everything as usual) or *anuser* (according to custom) is often read. Instead of the *darshans* the respective *aratis* are more frequently mentioned; *san arti nityavat*, to give an example, would mean: “and the ‘bringing-to-bed’-ceremony [*san arati* for *shayan-arati*] as usual”.

## THE CALENDAR

The following information is given in the sequel: a serial number starting with “01”, the date according to the text, the name of the festival, if given, the place within the manuscript, on which the date and/or description are mentioned and/or described, keywords to the iconographic features (colours of the dress, *pichhvai*, number of peacock feathers in the *chandrika*, etc.). This is followed by a short reference to related painting(s) present or not present in this manuscript. Those paintings referred to as being not part of this manuscript belong to similar, albeit later *utsavamalikas* painted at Kota<sup>69</sup>. Contrary to the remarks of one scholar, these pictures were not

<sup>69</sup> There are three major sets or groups of sets of Kota paintings illustrating the festivals and/or *darshans* of the *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya*. The most elaborate is called the “Brijrajji-set of about 1831”, for which also see above. It illustrates the *shringars* of the various *utsavas* of Shri Brijrajji but apparently ends with a folio showing Shri Brijnathji. The first folios were published in 1966 (*Maggs Bulletin* 1966: lots 73–74), the latest one in 2010 (Losty 2010: 70–71, cat. no. 20). The painting with the date showing the *arati*-ceremony of Shri Brijnathji performed by Maharao Ram Singh (r. 1827–1866) during the *shayan darshan* in the month of *jeth* is published in Bautze 1987: Abb. 5 and 6. The second sequence of about the same date illustrates the *shringars* of the various *utsavas* of Shri Nathji along with the priests or *tilakayats*. Occasionally, two copies of the same festival may appear, perhaps more than one set had been commissioned. The third set or rather group of sets concentrates on Shri Nathji alone; priests are not shown. Also these sequences were commissioned more than once. Plates 9 and 15 belong to this third major group. All three major groups generally show inscriptions on the top red border, identifying in white *nagari*-script the occasion of the festival. A few folios, however, are uninscribed. The manuscript under discussion contains probably the only Kota paintings showing rarely presented *svarupas* like Shri Madanmohanji or Shri Dvarkadishji in a sequence of *utsavas*.

“made by temple painters for worshippers to take home”.<sup>70</sup> They all belonged to manuscripts which illustrated the *shringars* or setups of *svarupas* during the annual festivals. Below each painting within this manuscript appears a tiny caption giving the name of the festival as well as the date in abbreviated form. Since “*kri[shna]*” is written for the dark half of the month, these identifications were most probably added by a later hand. Note: “The Nathdvara calendar is usually one month behind the popular Hindu calendar”.<sup>71</sup>

## AUGUST–SEPTEMBER

01. bhadava budi 1. *subodhini puja*. f.1 recto, f.2 recto. The image should be venerated with music (*nadapuja*). It should have five peacock feathers in the *chandrika*. The *picchora*, waist cloth and cap should be saffron-coloured. Two drums should be placed in front of the idol. The corresponding illustration on f.1 verso is inscribed: *nadapuja/bhad° kri[shna]* 1, Plate 11. The *svarupa* shown is Shri Brijnathji wearing a dress in the colour as mentioned. *Nada puja* signifies the veneration through music, which explains the presence of one vocalist, one drummer playing the *mridangam* which is mentioned in the text and two musicians playing large cymbals. The priest on the proper right of Shri Brijnathji performs the *arati*, his counterpart waves a *morchal* while two *sevakas* ring the bell and sound the gong. It should be noted that the musicians are not allowed to stay on the same level as the idol and the priests.

02. bhado vadi 3. *badi tij* [Teej festival]. f.2 recto and f.3 recto: *hidora bijaya* [*hidora = hindola*, swing]. The image should first be dressed in yellow with one peacock feather, then placed on a swing covered in red textile, while the *chandrika* should consist of three feathers. The full page painting on f.2 verso, Plate 12, is inscribed: *badi tij/bhad° kri[shna]* 3. The swing is red in accordance with the text, but Shri Brijnathji, also mentioned in the text, shows five instead of three feathers in the *chandrika*. In the third group of Kota paintings related to the *utsavamalika*, Shri Nathji only wears one feather in the *chandrika*.<sup>72</sup>

03. bhado budi 5. [bhado vudi] *panchami*. f.3 recto. The image should be behind the *darikhana* (a kind of open summerhouse) and wear a saffron-

<sup>70</sup> Beach 1985: 63, no. 53.

<sup>71</sup> Ambalal 1987: 26.

<sup>72</sup> Bautze 1987: Abb. 22. The inscription reads: *shri nathji hidore biraje ta din ko uchava he*.

coloured (*keshari*) waist cloth and cap, adorned with gold-enamelled<sup>73</sup> and golden ornaments. The *chandrika* should consist of three feathers.

04. bhado vadi 7. *bhado badi* 7. f.3 recto. The waist cloth and turban should be red, one feather in the *chandrika*, golden ornaments. An unpublished painting from a later sequence of paintings illustrating the festivals of Shri Brijrajji confirms the suggestions given in the text.<sup>74</sup>

05. bhado vadi 8. *maha mahotsava* [Great major festival]. f.3 recto and verso, f.4 recto and verso, f.5 recto and verso, f.6 verso and probably f.7 recto. Saffron-coloured *dhoti*, a golden ring around the wrists and the "lotus feet" of the image, a golden garland around the neck, red-enamelled earrings. It should be placed on a kind of low seat made of eight metals (?). With a conch, the bath of five *amrits* should be given in the following sequence: milk, yoghurt, ghee, sugar and honey. The image should also be anointed with pure sandalwood and saffron, and finally it should be given a bath of water. Then it should be dressed in red trousers, a long dress (*baga*) and a turban, both saffron-coloured. The *shringar* then should use lotus petals and musk odour and the *chandrika* should be composed of five feathers. The *gadi*, *takiya* and all other elements of the *shringar* should be valuable (*bhari*) before the image is again installed on the *simhasana*. Then *svaminiji* (female consort of the image) should be anointed first with sandalwood and then with saffron before being given a bath of water and dressed in a red and saffron-coloured *sadi* (sari) and placed on the *simhasana*. The image (*prabhu*) should wear a saffron-coloured dress and be given the flute and the stick (*venuvetra*). The *takiya* should also be saffron-coloured. A *khandapata*,<sup>75</sup> a *chopad* (a board for playing *pachisi*) and dice should be placed below. Coconut should be given. Then *prabhu*

<sup>73</sup> "minaka" in the text, a kind of lavishly produced enamelling on gold, see Jacob & Hendley 1886. Hendley 1895: pl. VI.

<sup>74</sup> This painting belongs to the Brijrajji sequence of about 1831 (see above) and is part of the collection of Maharao Brijraj Singhji of Kota. The inscription on the top red border reads: *shri vrayajji ko bhadava vid 7 ko uchava*. For published paintings from this set see: *Maggs Bulletin* 1966: 79, nos. 73 (= Bautze 2000: 124) and 74. Leach 1986: color pl. XIV, cat. no. 79. Gahlin 1986: pl. 61, cat. no. 64. Bautze 1987: Abb. 1–6. Desai & Leidy 1989: pl. XV (= Cummins 2006: 163, pl. 90). Taylor 1997: 188–201. Peabody 1997: 77, fig. 2, just to mention a few.

<sup>75</sup> For this particular textile cf. Talwar & Krishna 1979: cat. no. 15.

should be given: cows, gold, pictures (? *chhaya*), sesame (*tila*), etc., while *prabhu* holds a tulsi (Holy Basil) leaf. This is followed by an enumeration of the sweets and other delicacies for the *rajbhog* to be given in the *nij mandir* (sanctum). The painting on f.3 verso illustrates the *panchamritsnan* (bath with five liquids) of Shri Brijrajji. It is inscribed: *bhad° k° 8*. The picture on f.4 verso shows Shri Nathji, who, in a saffron-coloured dress, holds a lotus, wears a long garland made of lotuses and a *chandrika* with five feathers. A priest and two *sevakas*, all dressed in saffron-coloured *dhotis*, perform the *arati*. It is inscribed below as *bhad° kr° 8*.

The full-page painting on f.6 recto introduces Shri Mathureshji with a *chopad* and dice placed below the *simhasana*. During the *panchamritsnan* which is performed in front of this image, Shri Mathureshji is replaced by a large dark blue pebble, called *gordhanji* or *govardhanji* in following parts of this manuscript. The inscription reads: *bhadu kri° 8*.

06. bhado budi 9. *bhado budi* 9. Probably f.7 recto [not entirely clear, but since *Nandrayji* and *Yasodaji* are mentioned, the ceremonies seem to take place the whole night], f.8 recto and verso. *Nandrayji* and *Yasodaji* (foster parents of Shri Krishna, as this is considered to be one day following his birthday) should do the *shringar*<sup>76</sup> and rock the cradle (*palna*). The lotus feet of *prabhu* should be adorned with large pearls, the hand with a diamond. Large nose-ring. Two garlands around his neck. The dominant colour is saffron-yellow. The corresponding painting on f.7 verso shows Shri Nathji, with Shri Navanitapriyaji in a cradle which is rocked by *Yasodaji* while *Nandrayji* entertains the newly born baby with a rattle.<sup>77</sup> Shri Nathji is dressed in saffron-yellow showing a huge pearl as part of his nose-ring (*nakabesar*). The diamond (*hira*) probably alludes to the large ornament as part of Shri Nathji's *hathphul*, a particular ornament for the hand.<sup>78</sup> The inscription on the lower red border reads: *bhadu kri° 9*.

07. bhadava budi 10. *No name given*, f.8 verso. Enumeration of food items for the *bhog* ceremonies. An illustration from the Brijrajji sequence of about 1831 shows an installation on top of the *simhasana*. The inscription

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Jindel 1976: 69, for a description of this festival at Nathdvvara.

<sup>77</sup> For renderings painted at Nathdvvara see Skelton 1973: 90, no. 12. Ambalal 1987: 28, bottom.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Pressmar 1982: 19.

informs: *bhadava vid 10 ko sigar hai* (the setup on the tenth day of the dark half of Bhadon).<sup>79</sup>

08. miti bhado vadi 11. *ditto*. f.8 verso. The long coat, *baga*, and the cap, *kulah*, should be red, *kasumal*. The *chandrika* should consist of five feathers.

09. arambha bhado vadi 11. *pavitra 11* (in words: *pavitra ekadashi*)<sup>80</sup>. f.8 verso.

10. bhado badi 12. *No name given*. f.9 recto. Embellishments should be white.

11. bhado sudi 1. *Ditto*. f.9 recto. The cap, *kulah*, and waist-cloth, *pacchoda*, should be white, three feathers in the *chandrika*.

12. bhado sudi 7. *Ditto*. f.9 recto. The waist-cloth and turban, *pag*, should be red.

13. bhado sudi 8. *radha-ashtami ko utsava* [Radha Ashtami festival]. f.9 recto. The *svaminiji* should get milk with her dress, should receive a *tilak*, and then a bath and new clothes. The sari should be saffron-coloured, the petticoat, *lahaga* and blouse, *choli*, should be of red colour, with heavy ornaments. Then she (the *svamini*) should be placed on the *simhasana* next to *prabhuji* (the cult image), where all embellishments should be saffron-coloured. *Prabhuji* should have the flute and the stick, *venabetra*. The full page illustration on f.9 verso is inscribed: *bhadu shu*<sup>o</sup> 8. It shows the image of Shri Madanmohanji during the *arati*, Plate 13. *Simhasana* and *sirhi* are blue, the *picchvai* as well as the *takiya* and the *gadi* are shown in red colour.

<sup>79</sup> Kramrisch 1986: 62, no. 55. When explaining the iconography of this painting to Dr. Stella Kramrisch (1896–1993) in her residence at Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia she immediately induced me to publish everything about it (“alles darüber publizieren”, as she spoke in German).

<sup>80</sup> This is not to be confounded with a festival of the same name taking place in the month of *shravana*, see below and Skelton 1973: 89, no. 9.

14. bhado sudi 11. *No name given*.<sup>81</sup> f.10 recto. The decoration of the crown, *mukata*, should be made of gold,<sup>82</sup> the *gadi* and the *takiya(s)* should be white.

15. bhado sudi 12. *vavana duvadasi [sic]*.<sup>83</sup> f.10 recto and f.11 recto. The overall dress (*abhyangavastra*), *dhoti*, scarf (*uparna*) and cap (*kulah*) should be saffron-coloured (*keshari*), the *chandrika* should have three feathers. Before applying the *tilak*, a *panchamritsnan* should be given and then be garlanded. Then, the one conducting the ritual should be dressed in yellow (*picche pitambara udhaiye*). The full-page painting on f.10 verso shows Shri Dvarkadishji, whose *chandrika* shows four feathers. In front of the idol, two priests perform the *panchamritsnan*. *Prabhuji* is, as on folio 6 recto, replaced by a pebble, here of black colour. The priests wear a yellow scarf, Shri Dvarkadishji is dressed in saffron-coloured garments, as suggested by the text. The inscription informs: *bhadu shu*<sup>o</sup> 12/*vamana dvadashi*.

16. bhado sudi 14. *No name given*. Apart from “the food on this day for the *rajbhog* should consist of *laddus*” (a kind of sweets), no iconographic data are given. The description ends with: “and everything as usual”.

#### SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER

17. ashvin vudi 15 [?].<sup>84</sup> *amavasa* [New Moon]. f.11 recto. *Ditto*.

18. asoj sudi 1. *navaratri* [Navaratri festival]. f. 11 recto and verso. The long coat (*baga*) should be red and closed. The *chandrika* on the *pag* (turban) should be “according to the time” (*vakat ra*).

<sup>81</sup> At Nathdvara this is the day of the *danalila* festival, cf. Ambalal 1987, Appendix 1. Talwar & Krishna 1979: cat. nos. 11–15. Skelton 1973: 36 f., cat. no. 3.

<sup>82</sup> The word for gold used here, *kacchani*, may occasionally also refer to mirror glass.

<sup>83</sup> More commonly known as *vamana dvadashi*, as mentioned in the later inscription below the painting, celebrating the birth of Vamana, the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu. For a rendering from Nathdvara see Skelton 1973: 92, no. 15.

<sup>84</sup> The figure is unreadable, but the name of the festival signifies the last day of the dark half of the lunar month, i.e. the fifteenth.

19. [asoj sudi] 9. *No name given*. f.11 recto and verso. Details for all nine days should be alike [?], “and the implements”.

20. asoj sudi 10. *dasahara ta din, dasahara ko utsava* [Dashahara/Dussehra festival]. f.11 verso and f.12 verso. The long dress and the cap should be white; the *chandrika* should have one feather and the ornamentation should be rich. Grains of rice (*akshata*) should be placed on the *gadi*, then barley, then garlands and then the *bidhis* (betel preparations) and flute and stick (*venavetra*). The full-page painting on f.12 recto, Plate 14, shows Shri Gokulnathji with one feather on his turban, the dominant colour is white. The inscription reads: “*ashvin su° 10 (dashahara)*.” Illustrations of Shri Gokulnathji are a rather rare occurrence. A Kota painting from the same sequence as Plate 9 shows Shri Nathji dressed in similar silver-white coloured garments, no *chandrika*, and, following the tradition from Nathdvara, with a sword and a shield at his feet, Plate 15.<sup>85</sup>

21. asoj sudi 11. *No name given*. f.12 verso. The crown should be made of gold.

22. asoj sudi 15. *shard ko utsava* (written in red ink) [Autumn festival]. f.12 verso, f.13 recto and verso. The crown and ornaments should be made with diamonds, the ornaments on the body should be silver (*kacchani supeta*, literally: gold-white), the embellishments should also be white or mirror-like (*saj supet va chitra*). The textile woven with golden (or: silver) thread (*jari*) should be white. The embellishments should be covered with a white (or silver) cloth, *chandini*. Flute and stick should be given. The painting on f.13 recto introduces Shri Gokulchandramaji during the *arati*, Plate 16. All textiles are white with mostly vertical streaks of silver; only the *picchvai* shows a regular pattern with Mughal style flowers. The inscription at the bottom of the folio informs: “*ashvin shu° 15 (sharad)*.” An unpublished painting in the private collection of Maharao Brijraj Singhji of Kota illustrates the same *utsava* with Shri Brijrajji, where all embellishments are of a silver hue. Besides, flute and stick are clearly

<sup>85</sup> The inscription on the top red border reads: *shri nathji ko dasenra ko ucchava hai* (Shri Nathji [on the occasion of the] Dashahara festival). In English, this festival is often given as “Dussehra”. For illustrations from Nathdvara cf. Skelton 1973: 92, no. 16. Ambalal 1987: 29.

apparent. The inscription above this painting reads: “[This] is a picture of Shri Brijrajji [during] the autumn [festival]”.<sup>86</sup>

#### OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

23. kati budi 1 (in red ink). *No name given*. f.13 verso. The *shringar* should be silver-white (all written in red ink). The respective full-page illustration on f.15 recto shows three priests performing the *arati* of Shri Brijrajji with his two *svaminis*, all dressed in silver. The *takiya*, *simhasana* and *sirhi* are covered with textiles having vertical streaks in silver-white. The *chandrika* of Shri Brijrajji shows three feathers. Two cows stand, on a lower level, in front of the shrine and anticipate the “cow *puja*” during the *dipavali*-festival, for which see below. The inscription reads: *karti° kri° 1*.

24. karttik badi 13 (in red script). *dhanateras ko utsava* (in red ink) [Dhanateras festival]. f.13 verso. The dress and *baga* should be *harijri* (green). A painting from the Brijrajji sequence of about 1831 in fact shows Brijrajji and the two *svaminis* dressed in green.<sup>87</sup> An illustration from the second set also exists.<sup>88</sup>

25. karttik vadi 14 (in red). *ta din rupa chatvadas ko utsava* (in red). f.13 verso and f.14 recto. In connection with *lakshmi*, the image should be anointed with different hues of red, sandalwood and saffron and the *shringar* should be arranged with garlands of lamps, *dipamalikas*.

26. karttik vadi [15]. *ta din divari kotsava* (in red) [Dipavali/Deepawali festival]. f. 14 recto and verso, f.15 verso. The trousers should be red, the long dress and the cap should be white. The sash (*patka*) should be red. The *chandrika* should show five feathers. The *shringar* should take place in the *tibari* (a special kind of room with three doors). The *gadi* and *takiya* should be valuable (*bhari*). The *mukhavastra* (literally: mouth-cloth) and

<sup>86</sup> *shri brajrajji ko sarad ko chitra hai*. The painting is part of the set dated around 1831. For this festival in Nathdvara, where the rendering is apparently quite different, see Skelton 1973: 42–51 and 93, no. 17. Ambalal 1987: 30, bottom. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 27–36 and plates.

<sup>87</sup> Desai & Leidy 1989, pl. XV (= Cummins 2006: 163, pl. 90). The inscription reads: *shri kati vid tes dhanateras ko chitra hai* (picture of [the setup for] Dhanateras on the thirteenth of the dark half of Karttik).

<sup>88</sup> Bautze 1987: Abb. 23. The inscription reads: *dhanateras ko simgar hai*.

all other embellishments should be saffron-coloured. A cow *puja* (*gai ki puja*) should be performed and the image should hold the flute and the stick. Betel and a *copad* should be placed and a mirror (*arsi*) held. The image should then return to the sanctum (*nij mandir*) together with the implements (mentioned are: *khandapata*, *sudha* [probably the *jhari* or water jug is meant], *simhasana* and *sirhi*, all saffron-coloured) where it should be equipped again with the flute and the stick and heavily garlanded.<sup>89</sup>

27. karttik sudi 1 (in red). *annakutotsava* (in red). f.15 verso, f.16 recto and verso, f.17 recto and verso, f.18 verso. The *arati* for the *mangla darshan* and the bath (*snan*) should be performed as usual. The image should carry the *gokarna* (*gokaran sivai dhariye*), the “crown with raised edges resembling the ears of a cow, [...] an additional head-dress”.<sup>90</sup> The implements for the *annakut* (literally: mountain of food) should be assembled, while a “mountain” (*giriraj*) is constructed partly of cow dung, *govar*, *kamdara* (if dried), together with the rituals around it, e.g. when *gordhanji* (name of the model of the mountain, shown mostly as a large pebble) should be anointed, get tulsi leaves and should be garlanded and receive a *tilaka*. Cows should sport around. Then *prabhuji* should be brought from the *mandir* (literally: temple) to the *tibari* together with his *simhasana* and *sirhi*. The beginning of the ingredients of the “mountain of food” is highlighted in red and more than 50 items are listed. The image should receive the flute and the stick and after the *arati* it should be brought back to the *mandir*.

The illustration on f.16 verso illustrates the rarely shown watering of the model of the Govardhan mountain in front of Shri Navanitapriyaji, whose head is adorned with the *gokarna* mentioned in the text, Plate 17. The inscription reads: “*karti° shu° 1/govardhanapuja*.”<sup>91</sup> The corresponding illustration from the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 shows a similar decoration of the mountain model.<sup>92</sup> The lower part of f.17 verso shows not one but several “mountains” of food, kept on trays, baskets, pitchers and other containers. It is inscribed as: *annakut*. The third illustration

<sup>89</sup> For a description of the *Divali*-festival in Nathdvāra see Jindel 1976: 77. Ambalal 1987: 30.

<sup>90</sup> Ambalal 1987: 30.

<sup>91</sup> For a version painted at Nathdvāra see Ambalal 1987: 115.

<sup>92</sup> *Sotheby & Co.* 1973, lot 261. For a rendering from Nathdvāra see Ambalal 1987: 115.

of this *utsava* on f.18 recto, Plate 18, presents an array of altogether seven *nidhi svarupas*, Shri Nathji and two “images of the lap” (*gaud ke thakurji*)<sup>93</sup> belonging to Shri Nathji. As the roof of the building clearly indicates<sup>94</sup>, they are assembled in the *haveli* of Shri Nathji. Represented are in the top row, from left to right: Shri Madanmohanji, Shri Dvarkadishji, Shri Nathji, Shri Mathureshji and Shri Gokulchandramaji. Only the *svarupas* in this line seem to be embellished with the *gokarna*-ornament. The front row is composed of, from left to right: Shri Gokulnathji, Shri Navanitapriyaji and Shri Vitthalnathji. The small image of a fluting Krishna is Madanmohanji. Balakrishnaji, apparently with a *svamini*, is the last. This Madanmohanji is a *gaud ke thakurji* and should not be confounded with the *nidhi svarupa* of the same name. A dozen baskets filled with delicacies and six jars are placed in front of this accumulation of *svarupas* while the *arati* is performed. The inscription below the painting reads: *annakut*. The assembly of eight of the nine *nidhi svarupas* is not described in the text and actually happened but rarely.<sup>95</sup> The *annakut*-festival is considered to be one of the most important annual events of the *Vallabha Sampradaya*.<sup>96</sup>

28. karttik sudi 2 (in red). *bhaiduj ko utsava* (in red). f. 18 verso. The long dress, *baga*, should be red, the trousers green, *hari*. Pan (*bidi*) should be given. An illustration from the set of about 1831 in a private collection shows Shri Brijrajji on an undecorated *simhasana* without *sirhi*; a *picchvai* is also not installed. The *gadi* and the *takiyas* are blue and yellow. Shri Brijrajji and his two *svaminis* look golden. The inscription reads: *bhaiduj ko ucchav he*.

29. karttik sudi 8 (in red). *gopasthāmi kotsava* (in red). f. 18 verso; f.19 recto. Golden crown and cloth woven with gold thread (*jari*) should be used. At the time of the *Gval darshan*, a cow-*puja* should be performed.<sup>97</sup>

30. kati sudi 9. *akshanavami* [Akshay Navami festival]. f.19 recto.

<sup>93</sup> Ambalal 1987: 53.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Ambalal 1987, Appendix 4.

<sup>95</sup> Jindel 1976: 73. Ambalal 1987: 67.

<sup>96</sup> For descriptions see Tod 1920: 638–639. Skelton 1973: 52–61. Jindel 1976: 70–73. Ambalal 1987: 30–33. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 36–44 and pls. 39–44.

<sup>97</sup> For the *gopasthāmi* in Nathdvāra and other places see Skelton 1973: 62–67. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 44–51, pls. 48–57.

31. karttik shukla 11 (in red). *prabodhini kotsava* (in red). f.19 recto and f.20 recto and verso. The image should be anointed with saffron and sandalwood. The cap, *kulah*, and long dress, *baga*, should be of red colour, the *chandrika* should show five feathers. A *devasthapanā* (here: a kind of arch made from sugarcane) should be made facing the south and *govardhanji* should be given the bath of five nectars (*panchamritsnan*). The ceremonies seem to continue through the night and include the use of leaves of the tulsi plant. The full-page painting on f.19 verso, Plate 19, shows Shri Vitthalnathji standing in a *devasthapanā* made of sugarcane and dressed in red and with five feathers in the *chandrika* as suggested by the text. Below, the ceremony of the *panchamritsnan* is performed; *gordhanji* is a black pebble, perhaps from the mountain itself. Also *gordhanji* is protected by a *devasthapanā* made of sugarcane. The tiny inscription in the lower left corner of the red border reads: *kati shu° 11/prabodhini*. A painting illustrating this festival in the Rao Madho Singh Trust Museum, Kota, is inscribed as: “*shri kati sud 11 pramodani [sic] ko utsa° hai*”. It shows Shri Brijrajji under the canopy made of sugarcanes. Shri Brijrajji is dressed in red and wears the *chandrika* with five feathers.<sup>98</sup>

32. kattik shuddhi 15. *kati shuddhi 15*. f.20 verso. “As usual.”

#### NOVEMBER–DECEMBER

33. agan budi 1. *No name given*. f.20 verso.

#### DECEMBER–JANUARY

34. paus budi 1. *shri gusaiji ka utsava*. f.20 verso, written in a different hand on top of the page.

35. pos vudi 9. *shri vithalnath janmotsava*. f.20 verso, f.21 recto and f.22 recto. The trousers should be red, everything else (*kulah*, *gadi*, *takiya*) should be saffron-coloured or yellow and very opulent. The *chandrika* should show five peacock feathers. Finally, the image should have the flute and the stick and also garlands after the preservation of the *janmapatri* (a kind of horoscope). The festival of Shri Vitthalnath’s birthday is illustrated on f.21 verso, Plate 20. The *svarupa* is represented by Shri Mathureshji, dressed in saffron-coloured textiles and wearing

<sup>98</sup> Reproduced: Taylor 1997: 196 f. For this festival at Nathdvara see Ambalal 1987: 32 f., where *gordhanji* of the text is called a “shaligramma”. Talwar & Krishna 1979: 51 f.

the *chandrika* with five feathers. Contrary to the text, however, the *gadi*, *takiyas* etc. are not saffron-coloured but mauve. The artist might have thought of the original colour of the flower (*crocus sativus*) that produces the colour *keshar* (saffron). The inscription in the lower left corner identifies the illustration as: *paush kri° 9/vithalnath janmotsava*.<sup>99</sup>

#### JANUARY–FEBRUARY

36. [magh budi; no date given]. *atha makasankramanotsava* (in red). *Sankranti makar ka din* [Makara Samkranti festival]. f.22 recto. The long dress, *baga*, and the turban, *pag*, should be red.

37. magh shuddhi 1. *No name given*. f.22 recto, f.22 verso. *shringar bhari* (valuable and/or ponderous setup).

38. magh shuddhi 5 (in red). *vasanta kotsava* [Spring festival]. f.22 verso, f.23 recto<sup>100</sup> and f.24 recto. The trousers, *suthan*, should be red, the long dress, *vaga*, white, the sash, *patka*, red and the cap, *kulah*, white. The *chandrika* should consist of five feathers. The *picchvai* (written here: *pacchvai*), mantle, *odhani* and cover, *rajai*, should be white. Holi<sup>101</sup> or *phag* should be played and for this, the colours of saffron, *abir* (a kind of red powder used specifically on this occasion), *gulal* (red farinaceous powder used for the same purpose) should be used in small quantities. Spring-mango shoots (*amra ki manjari*) should be placed near the *takiya* and the image should be given flute and stick for the *arati*. The step with the *chopad* should not be coloured, but all the rest should be. A mirror should be held in front of the image. This should be repeated until *magh shuddhi 15*. The painting on f. 23 recto shows the *arati* for Shri Brijrajji who is dressed all in white. The painted *simhasana* and the *sirhi* show streaks of yellow and red colours. A vase placed in front of the *sirhi* is filled with a white and several red flowers in a kind of symmetric arrangement.<sup>102</sup> This vase of flowers probably should have contained the mango sprouts mentioned in the text. The *mukhiya* and the three *sevakas*

<sup>99</sup> For this festival at Nathdvara see Skelton 1973: 95, no. 21.

<sup>100</sup> Apart from the pagination “23” nothing is written or painted on f.23 verso.

<sup>101</sup> For an early English description of this colourful spring festival see Tod 1920: 661 f. Ambalal 1987: 33 f. Jindel 1976: 76 f.

<sup>102</sup> For a rendering of this festival at Nathdvara see Skelton 1973: 95, no.22. Ambalal 1987: 33 f.



show traces of red colour on their *dhoti*. The inscription on the lower red border reads: *magh shu° 5/vasantotsava*. A corresponding painting from the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 illustrates how *Tilakayat* Damodarji II and apparently Maharao Kishor Singhji of Kota apply colour to the setup of Shri Brijnathji. The vase of flowers is placed between both men. The inscription informs: *shri vrajnathji vasant ko chitra hai* (a picture of Shri Brijnathji during the spring festival).<sup>103</sup>

39. magh suddhi 11. *No name given*. f.24 recto. The crown, *mukat*, should be golden, *kacchani*.

40. magh shuddhi 15. *Ditto*. f.24 recto. There should be one or five feathers in the *chandrika*.<sup>104</sup> The *picchvai* should be completely white.

#### FEBRUARY-MARCH

41. phagun vadi 7. *shri nathji ko patotsava*. f.24 recto and verso, f.25 recto. The *vaga* and the *kulah* should be saffron-coloured; the *chandrika* should have five feathers. The ornaments should be enamelled; *minaka* and all embellishments, *saj*, should be saffron-coloured; *phag* should be played and the face coloured with *gulal*. A large *pichakari* (a syringe used for squirting coloured water during the Holi festival) should be placed near the *takiya*. Later, the flute and stick and garlands should be given. The painting on f.24 verso shows Shri Nathji dressed as suggested by the text. In addition, the garments show streaks of red and brown colours. The *picchvai* is saffron-coloured but shows no traces of the playing of *phag* or Holi. The *arati* is performed by three persons: One raises the lamp; another one rings a bell, *ghanta*, and a third man sounds the gong. The inscription below the painting reads: *phagun kri° 10* [illegible]/*shri nathji rotsava*.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Peabody 1997: 77, fig. 2. "Spring" in the label is actually written *vansta*. Since Damodarji died in 1826, his portrait, as well as that of Kishor Singhji, who died in 1827, is based on contemporary likenesses.

<sup>104</sup> The initial "5" was changed into a "1".

<sup>105</sup> An unpublished painting of the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 in the Rao Madho Singh Trust Museum, Kota, illustrates this festival as well. It is inscribed: *shri nathji ko patucchav ko sigar he* ([This] is the setup of the *Pat*-festival of Shri Nathji). The *svarupa* shown is Shri Brijrajji; *sirhi*, *picchvai* and *simhasana* are white with streaks of yellow and red colours. Two syringes are placed before the image.

42. phagun budi 11. *No name given*. f.25 recto. "On this day the setup (*shringar*) and crown (*mukat*) should be golden (*kacchani*), and the rest as usual".

43. phagun sudi 1. *Ditto*. f.25 recto. Dress and *picchvai* should be white, *gulal* and *abir*.

44. phagun shuddhi 7 (in red). *shri mathureshp[at]otsava* (in red). f.25 recto. "New dress" (*vastra naya*).

45. phagun sudi 8 (in red). *shri vrajnathji ko patotsava* (in red). f.25 recto. The overall dress and the cap should be saffron-coloured; the *chandrika* should show five feathers; the *picchvai* should be white; Holi (*phag*) should be played and *prabhuj* given a syringe (*pichakari*). The painting on f.25 verso, Plate 21, represents Shri Brijnathji with his *svamini* in saffron-coloured dresses. His *chandrika* shows five feathers. Not only the *picchvai* but also the *simhasana* and *sirhi* are white with streaks of *abir* and *gulal* showing that Holi was in fact played. The *simhasana* and *sirhi* was brought forward,<sup>106</sup> so Maharao Umed Singhji of Kota (r. 1771–1819), the only person standing with a turban, is able to wave the lamp as part of the *arati*.<sup>107</sup> An unpublished painting in the Rao Madho Singh Museum Trust, Kota, from the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 shows Shri Brijrajji being shown a mirror. *All* textiles are saffron-coloured. The inscription on the top red border informs: *shri vrajrayji ko patotsava he* (Shri Brijrayji during the *Pat*-festival). A further unpublished painting from Kota demonstrates that the syringe is actually placed at the feet of Shri Nathji, as the text suggested for Shri Brijnathji.<sup>108</sup>

46. phagun shuddhi 11 (in red). *kunje ekadashi kotsava* (in red). f.26 recto and f.27 recto. The *shringar* and the crown (*mukat*) should be golden (*kacchani*); the ornaments should be made of enamelled gold (*minaka*). *Prabhuj* should be respectfully placed in a bower (*kunja*, here spelled:

<sup>106</sup> Even the king himself is not allowed to enter the actual sanctum of Shri Brijnathji. This rule is followed even today.

<sup>107</sup> It is said that Maharao Umed Singh died a few hours after having had a *darshan* of Shri Brijnathji, cf. Bautze 1997: 51–53.

<sup>108</sup> The inscription on top of the painting in a private collection reads: *shri nathji ko vrajnathji ko pat ucchava ko sigar he* ([This] is the setup of Shri Nathji [on the occasion of] the *Pat*-festival of Brijrajji).

*kuja*), *abir* and *gulal* should be used, after which *prabhu* should be placed on the *simhasana* and garlanded. Holi (*phag*) should be played with *prabhu* and a syringe placed on the *simhasana*. The painting on f.26 verso illustrates this festival in the *haveli* of Shri Nathji, who wears enamelled jewellery, Plate 22. The *picchvai* is white with the usual traces of *abir* and *gulal*. The bower, *kunja*, consists of banana trees as well as deciduous trees. Shri Nathji is entertained by four seated musicians while three standing persons perform the *arati*. The inscription in the lower right corner informs: *phalgun shu° 11/kunja ekadashi*.<sup>109</sup>

48. phagun shuddhi 12. *No name given*. f.27 recto. Turban and dress should be saffron-coloured, “the rest as usual”.

49. phagun shuddhi 15 (in red). *holi manglani kotsava*. f.27 recto and verso. The dress and the turban should be white; the *chandrika* should show one feather. *Gulal* and *abir* should be used to play Holi. Unpublished Kota paintings of this festival show Shri Nathji in fact with only one feather in the *chandrika*, a white dress with streaks of the mentioned colours and two syringes at his feet. A painting identified as showing the “*arati* of Shri Brijrajji on the occasion of the Holi-festival” from the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 is kept in the Rao Madho Singh Museum, Kota.<sup>110</sup>

#### MARCH-APRIL

50. chaitra vadi 1 (in red). *pushya-dolotsava* (in red). f.27 verso, f.28 recto and f.29 recto. A swing (*dol*) should be prepared. The trousers and the waist-cloth (*patka*) should be red, the dress (*vaga*) and the cap (*kulah*) white. The *chandrika* should have five feathers and the ornaments should be gold-enamelled (*minaka*). Holi should be played with *gulal* and *abir*. Everything should look as if it takes place in the sanctum (*nij mandir*) of Shri Nathji. A small and a large syringe should be used, flute and stick given and the swing (*dol*) should be rocked (*jhulaiye*). This “flower-spring-festival” is illustrated on f.28 verso, Plate 23. Five persons perform the *arati* for Shri Mathureshji, who is supposed to stand on a swing. His dress is white with the usual streaks of colour. The swing is almost hidden by a kind of bower composed of banana trees and branches of

<sup>109</sup> For this festival at Nathdvara see Skelton 1973: 96, no. 24.

<sup>110</sup> Taylor 1997: 188 f., cat. no. 56. The inscription reads: *shri vrijarajji ko hori ke ucchav sen arati ko*. The word *sen*, which Taylor apparently could not read, is probably a shorter form of *sayan*.

mango and other deciduous trees. Four musicians, one vocalist singing *kirtans* (devotional songs) and two instrumentalists, seated on a level below the idol, accompany the scene. The inscription informs: *chaitra kri° 1/pushyadolotsava*.<sup>111</sup>

51. chaitra budi 2. *dol ke dusra din*. f.29 recto. The long dress (*vaga*) should be red, the *picchvai jasuli* [?]. The painting on f.29 verso shows Shri Dvarkadishji dressed in red with one feather in his *chandrika*. The *takiyas* and the *gadi* are mauve-coloured; the *picchvai* is pea-green. Three persons are engaged with the *arati*, while one vocalist and three instrumentalists give a musical entertainment. A swing is not shown.<sup>112</sup>

52. chaitra shuddhi 1. *samvatsara betha*. f.30 recto. “The day of the flower pavilion” (*ta din phul-mandali*). The overall dress should be white with red lace (*kinari*). The sari (of the *svamini*) should be red. Then, the new calendar comes into existence.<sup>113</sup> The full-page illustration on f.30 verso shows a white-dressed Shri Madanmohanji standing with red trousers in a pavilion made of blossoms of red, white, yellow and blue flowers. Three persons are engaged in performing the *arati*, Plate 24. The inscription reads: *chaitra shu° 1*.

53. chaitra shuddhi 9 (in red). *ramnavami kotsava* (in red) [Ram Navami festival]. f.31 recto and verso and f.32 verso. The image should be placed on a kind of stool made of eight metals and given a *panchamritsnan*, followed by a bath to clean.<sup>114</sup> Bell and cymbals should not be sounded. Then there should be anointing with saffron and sandalwood, followed by (another)

<sup>111</sup> For further Kota paintings illustrating this *utsava* with Shri Nathji as well as Shri Navanitapriyaji see Bautze 1987: Abb. 24 and p. 274, note 93 for the transliteration of the inscription. For a similar painting in the Rao Madho Singh Trust Museum, Kota, see Taylor 1997: 186 f., cat. no. 55. The inscription reads: *shri nathji ko dol ko ucchav hai*. In both these paintings the syringes are clearly visible. For this festival in paintings from Nathdvara see Skelton 1973: 85, no. 1. For a description of this festival at Nathdvara see Ambalal 1987: 34 and 97 (illustration). Jindel 1976: 75.

<sup>112</sup> *dol ke dusra din* actually means: “second day of the swing [-festival]”.

<sup>113</sup> The description ends with *picch panchanga sunaiye nayo*. The name of this festival means “setting of the year”, because per tradition the New Year starts on this day.

<sup>114</sup> *Sudhsnan*. In the case of *sudhasnan* it would mean that the image should be bathed with Ganges water.

bath. Then new attire should be given: red trousers, a saffron-coloured mantle (*baga*) and a cap (*kulah*), a red sash and a *chandrika* with five feathers. By that time the *gadi*, *takiya*, *simhasana* etc. should be cleansed with turmeric, fire and camphor. Then *govardhanji* should be placed respectfully and the bell and cymbals should sound while *govardhanji* is placed on a plinth (*pitha*) and given a *panchamritsnan*. *Thakurji* should be garlanded. The full-page illustration on f.32 recto shows Shri Gokulchandramaji in saffron-coloured dress with red trousers against a plain white *simhasana* and *sirhi*. The *picchvai* is red. Three *sevakas* perform the *arati* with a *ghanta* (bell) and a *jhalar* (small gong). A level below Shri Gokulchandramaji the *panchamritsnan* is given to *govardhanji*, a black pebble similar to *gordhanji* mentioned and illustrated for the *prabodhini*-festival. The inscription reads: *chaitra shu° 9/ramanavami*.<sup>115</sup>

54. chaitra shuddhi 15. *No name given*. f.32 verso. "The setup on that day should be golden" (*ta din shringar mukat kacchani...*).

#### APRIL-MAY

55. vaisak vadi 1. *shri acharya mahaprabhu ko janmotsava*.<sup>116</sup> f.32 verso. The *vaga* and *kulah* should be saffron-coloured; the *chandrika* should have three peacock feathers.

56. vaishakh vadi 9 (in red). *shri darvar ke janmotsava* (in red). f.32 verso and f.33 recto. The *vaga* should be saffron-coloured. Commentary: It seems that this festival does not belong to the major festivities of Nathdvara. Probably the birthday of Umed Singh (r. 1771-1819), the then ruling Maharao of Kota, is meant, where *shri darbar* is often used to denote the king.

57. vaisakh vadi 10. *No name given*. f.33 recto. The dress (*baga* as well as *vastra*) and the turban should be red, the *chandrika* should have one feather.

58. vaisakh vadi 11 (in red). *shri vallabhacharya janmotsava* (in red) [Birthday of Shri Vallabhacharya]. f.33 recto and verso; f.34 verso. The trousers

<sup>115</sup> For a description, illustration and explanation of this festival at Nathdvara see Skelton 1973: 85, no. 2.

<sup>116</sup> The reading is clear, although this is the birthday of Acharya Mahaprabhu, another name for Vallabhacharya, whose birthday is actually celebrated on the eleventh of the dark half of Vaishakha.

and the sash should be red, the *vaga* and the *kulah* saffron-coloured. The *chandrika* should show five feathers, the following day it should have only three feathers. The textile (*tat*) of the *gadi* and *takiya* and all other embellishments should be saffron-coloured. The *janmapatrika* (a kind of horoscope) should be heard. For the *shayan-arati* the *takiya* and the *gadi* should be white. The illustration on f.34 recto shows an ongoing *arati*-ceremony performed by three *sevakas* around Shri Nathji in his *nij mandir* in Nathdvara. Shri Nathji's dress is saffron-coloured, but the *picchvai* and *sirhi* are again mauve-coloured. On a lower level a seated man reads from a manuscript (*janmapatrika?*) while two musicians play the *mridanga* and a pair of cymbals. The tiny inscription reads: *vaishakh kri° 11/vallabhacharya janmotsava*. A published painting from the second Kota set possibly illustrates this festival. The inscription is cropped.<sup>117</sup> A rendering from Nathdvara has been published and discussed.<sup>118</sup>

59. vaishakh sudi 2. *No name given*. f.34 verso. The dress, *baga*, should be red, in the "open-close"-fashion (*khulyabandh ka*).

60. vaishakh sudi 3 (in red). *akshatritiya kotsava* (in red). f.34 verso; f.35 recto and f.36 recto. The *picchvai* and the cap should be white; the *chandrika* should have five feathers. The ornaments should be made with diamonds (*abharan hira ka*). After the *bhog* and usual ceremonies, *prabhuji* should be brought to the *tibari* where he should be fanned with a *pankha* and cooled with sandalwood-paste. A fan should be placed on the ground in front of the *simhasana*. Everything should be white (*sab saj supet*). The corresponding illustration on f.35 verso, Plate 25, is unusual for its scarce use of any colour but white. The priest waves a fan of a dominant yellow colour; two fans are placed before the pedestal of Shri Mathureshji on a kind of low stool. The inscription, written as always in rather small characters, reads: *vaishakh shu° 3 (akshava tritiya)*. The corresponding painting of the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 illustrates the *arati*-ceremony of Shri Brijrajji. The dominant colours are white and a touch of rose. A large ceiling fan adds to the comfort of both priest and idol. Two hand fans are placed behind the *gadi*. The inscription informs: *shri vrayjayji*

<sup>117</sup> Rawson 1974: 49.

<sup>118</sup> For a Nathdvara rendering of the festival of the celebration of Vallabhacharya's birthday see Skelton 1973: 86, no. 3. For a description of the festivities at Nathdvara see Jindel 1976: 69 f.

*ko akhatij ko uchava hai*.<sup>119</sup> Another painting from the Brijrajji-set exists which illustrates the *shayan-arati* of the same day and festival. It shows the *simhasana* without *sirhi* brought out in front of the *tibari*. All embellishments are white, and two hand fans can still be seen behind the *gadi*. The inscription identifies the scene as: *shri vrajrajji ko sen arati ko chitra he akhetiya ko* (A picture of Shri Brijrajji during the “bringing to bed”-ceremony during the [festival of] Akshatritiya).<sup>120</sup>

61. vaishakh shudi 5 (in red). *shri vrajrajji ko patotsava* (in red). f.36 recto and verso; f.37 recto. The cap (*kulah*), waist-cloth (*pacchora*), cloth (*vastra*), *picchvai*, *simhasana*, *gadi* and *takiya* should be saffron-coloured, as everything should be in that colour. The *chandrika* should have five feathers. On the day after, when everything should be exchanged, the *chandrika* should consist of three feathers. The illustration on f.36 verso<sup>121</sup> shows in fact all dress, *simhasana*, *picchvai*, *takiya*, *sirhi* etc. in yellow. Four *sevakas* are engaged in performing the *arati*. One vocalist seated below is accompanied by two instrumentalists. The inscription in tiny characters reads: *vaishakh shu° 5/brajraj patotsava*. A painting from the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 is inscribed: *shri vrajrajji pat uchava vesakh sud° 4*.<sup>122</sup> The *shringar* resembles the illustration of the *akshatritiya*-festival from the same sequence. The embellishments here are slightly rose-coloured. This setup precedes the *shringar* of the dated manuscript under discussion by a full day.

62. vaishakh shudi 14 (in red). *nrisimhaji ko janmotsava* (in red). f. 37 recto and verso; f.38 recto. The waist-cloth and the cap should be saffron-coloured; the *chandrika* should have three feathers. The ornaments should be made with diamonds. Cymbals (*jhalar*) and bell should sound, while *govardhanji* is being given a *panchamrit-snan*. After this, *govardhanji* should receive a bath of saffron (*picche keshare susnan karaive*). The illustration on f.37 verso introduces again Shri Madanmohanji, for whom

<sup>119</sup> As happens so often, “*akha*” is actually spelled “*asha*”, the cerebral “*s(h)*” denoting the “*kha*”, see Taylor 1997: 190 f., cat. no. 57. For a rendering from Nathdvara see again Skelton 1973: 86, no. 4.

<sup>120</sup> This painting in the collection of Maharao Brijraj Singhji of Kota seems to be unpublished.

<sup>121</sup> Reproduced: Bautze 1987: Abb. 12.

<sup>122</sup> Reproduced and discussed: Taylor 1997: 198–199. The inscription very clearly shows a “4” and not a “5” as read by Taylor.

an *arati* is being performed. The colours of the dress correspond to the text; the *chandrika* shows three feathers; the *gadi* and *takiya* are mauve while *picchvai*, *sirhi* and *simhasana* are white. A level below, *govardhanji*, in the shape of a dark blue pebble as usual, receives the bath made of five liquids. The inscription reads: *vaishakh shu° 14 (nrisimha janmotsava)*.<sup>123</sup>

#### MAY-JUNE

63. jesht shuddhi 10 (in red).<sup>124</sup> *shri yamunaji kotsava*. f.38 recto. The cap and the waist-cloth should be saffron-coloured.<sup>125</sup>

64. jesht sudi 15 (in red). *snan yatra kotsava* (in red). f.38 recto and verso, f.39 recto. The ceremonies seem to start at night with lots of water. The water is prepared with sandalwood-paste, saffron, tulsi, culminating in a “water-*arati*.” (*jala-arati*). The early morning *darshan* (*mangla-darshan*) should be dropped; the image should wear a waist-cloth, *dhoti*. At about midday the *jeshta-abhishek* should take place, during which the gong (*jhalar*) and the bell (*ghanta*) should not be used. After this bath, the waist-cloth, here called *pacchora*, should be white and the *chandrika* should have five feathers; the ornaments should be made with diamonds. The illustration of this “bathing festival” on f.38 verso, Plate 26, shows the stele of Shri Nathji without *picchvai*, *simhasana*, *sirhi* or any other structure usually to be seen. A priest pours water on the image while four more *sevakas* attend the ceremony, called *abhishek*, with water-vessels. The inscription below the painting reads: *jyeshth shu° 15 (jyeshthabhishek)*. In the Brijrajji-set of about 1831, the image of Shri Brijrajji is placed on

<sup>123</sup> For a representation from Nathdvara of the “birthday of Narasimha”, the man-lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu, see Skelton 1973: 87, no. 5. An unpublished illustration from the third Kota-set of the festivals of Shri Nathji is inscribed: *shri nathji ko narasiha chatrudasi ko uchava*. It shows the idol with a saffron-coloured cap and waist-cloth, but with five instead of three feathers in the *chandrika*.

<sup>124</sup> It is astonishing that this manuscript does not mention the *jalakrida* or waterplay-festival, which actually was celebrated at Kota. The date of this festival, according to the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 was, following the corresponding illustration: *jeth sud 2 jalakrida ko chitra hai* (painting of the water sport-festival on the second of the bright half of Jyeshtha), cf. Taylor 1997: 194 f., cat. no. 59.

<sup>125</sup> For this festival in honour of the river Yamuna in Nathdvara see Ambalal 1987: 34 f. According to Ambalal, this festival is celebrated on the tenth in the dark half of the month Jyeshtha.

a construction of pedestals and receives the *abhishek*.<sup>126</sup> The illustration from the second Kota set which concentrates on the festivals of Shri Nathji alone shows blossoms in the water used for the *abhishek*.<sup>127</sup> The corresponding painting from the third Kota set presenting only the image but never any priests around Shri Nathji not only shows blossoms but also traces of saffron in the water used for the *snan* (bathing).<sup>128</sup> As can be expected, this festival is also celebrated at Nathdvāra.<sup>129</sup>

#### JUNE-JULY

65. ashadh sudi 2. *rathotsava* [Chariot festival/procession]. f.39 recto and verso, f.40 verso. Trousers and sash should be red, the cap and the *baga* white. The *chandrika* should have five feathers. A *rath* (chariot, here rather the model of a chariot) should be brought and it should face the southern direction (*rath ko mukh dakhan disa rakhiye*). The chariot should be moved and *prabhuji* be brought into the Rang Mahal. The chariot festival is illustrated on f.40 recto, Plate 27. It seems that the chariot, consisting of two models of horses on wheels, is placed right in front of the small shrine of Shri Mathureshji to make it look like Shri Mathureshji actually being in the chariot. The text informs that the chariot is moved from one place to another but it seems it is not explicitly said that *prabhuji* actually sits in the chariot while it is kept in motion. The text, as usual, abounds in enumerating the food-items for the *bhogs*, informs when the bell and gong should be sounded and when not, when the flute and the stick should be given etc. but seems to miss this important point, probably because the priest knew exactly what to do, especially since the description of this festival ends with the often repeated phrase: *or sarva nityavat*, and everything as usual. The man with the red turban and sash watching the *arati*-ceremony with joined palms is probably the young Maharajkumar Kishor Singh of Kota, who was then (1805) about 24 years of age. The tiny inscription reads: *ashadh shu° 2/rathayatra*.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Taylor 1997: 192 f., cat. no. 58. The inscription reads: *shri vrijayji ko asnanyatra ko chitra* (Picture of Shri Brijrayji during the bathing-festival).

<sup>127</sup> Czuma 1975: cat. no. 31. The inscription reads: *shri nathji ko asnan yatra*.

<sup>128</sup> This painting is unpublished. The inscription reads: *shri nathji ko snan yatra ko uchava hai* ([This] is the bathing festival of Shri Nathji).

<sup>129</sup> For a representation see Skelton 1973: 87, no. 6. For a description and illustration cf. Jindel 1976: 74 f.; Ambalal 1987: 36, 96 and 152.

<sup>130</sup> For background information with Nathdvāra illustrations of this festival see Skelton 1973: 88, no. 7. Ambalal 1987: 36. Jindel 1976: 75.

66. ashadh shuddhe 6 (in red). *shashti pamdaru kotsava* (in red). f.40 verso. The waist-cloth, *simhasana*, and cloth (or: dress? *vastra*), *gadi* and *takiya* should be red. The *chandrika* should show three feathers. On the second day, the *gadi* and *takiya* should be white. The full-page illustration on f.41 recto, Plate 28, basically adheres to the suggestions given in the text: The dress of Shri Brijnathji, who is shown here, is red, and so is the *simhasana*, *sirhi* and *picchvai*. The *gadi* and *takiya* is somewhat mauve, the *chandrika* displays three feathers. The person who replaces the priest in the act of performing the *arati* wears a turban. His face shows traces of smallpox. An identification of this royal figure is not given, but he is most probably Maharao Durjan Salji of Kota (r. 1723–1756), whose life is closely connected to Shri Mathureshji and Shri Brijnathji.<sup>131</sup> The inscription informs laconically: *ashadh shu° 6*.

67. ashadh sudi 11. *devashayani*. f.41 verso. No colour, dress or utensil is mentioned.

68. ashadh shuddhi 15. *No name given*. f.41 verso. The turban and waist-cloth (*picchora*) should be rose-coloured (*gulabi*); the *chandrika* should contain one feather. In an illustration of the Brijrajji-set of about 1831, the name of this festival is given as *punyo ko uchava*. Here, it is the *gadi* of Shri Brijrajji which is rose-coloured; the dress is red. Contrary to what has been written, the colour of the *picchvai* is not mentioned in the text at all.<sup>132</sup>

#### JULY-AUGUST

69. savan budi 1. *hidora ko mahurta*. f.41 verso and f.42 verso. The waist-cloth, cap, *simhasana* and cloth (*vastra*) should be red. The *chandrika* should have five feathers. The *gadi* and *takiya* should be yellow (? *mukhmalka*). All other embellishments should be white (*sajya ko saj supet*). *Prabhuji* should be placed on a swing, when gong and bell should be sounded. The swing should be rocked (*himdora jhulaiye*). The illustration on f.42 recto shows Shri Gokulchandramaji on a swing, dressed in red with three feathers in the *chandrika*. The *gadi* and the *takiya* are yellow, the *picchvai* is green. One priest moves the swing while another holds a

<sup>131</sup> For details of his life see Bautze 1997: 48–49.

<sup>132</sup> Taylor 1997: 200 f., cat. no. 62. Taylor reads *pag picchvai gulabya*, whereas it is written clearly *pag picchora gulabya*. The inscription on top of the painting reads: *asadh sud 15 punyo ko uchava hai* ([This] is the festival of merit on the fifteenth of the bright half of Ashadh).

*morchal*; two more *sevakas* hold a *chauri* (a kind of whisk made of the hair of the tail of a white yak [*bos grunniens*]) while one *sevaka* holds a hand fan. A platform below, a vocalist recites *kirtans*. He is accompanied by two seated instrumentalists. All persons are dressed in a white *dhoti*; this is what presumably the quoted passage from the text intends to say. The inscription reads: *savan kri*<sup>o</sup> 1 (*himdora muhurta*). An illustration from the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 that seems to fit the description is unlabelled. Shri Brijrajji has three feathers in the *chandrika*, the *gadi* is yellow, but his attire is blue. The *picchvai* is blue with a red border.<sup>133</sup>

70. *savan budi* [2]. *No name given*. f.42 verso. “New cloth” (*vastra naye*). A painting from the Brijrajji-set of about 1831 illustrates a festival on that date and gives a name. The inscription above this picture reads: *shravan vid 2 himdore biraje ta din ko // shri vrajrajji ko*.<sup>134</sup> The dress of the image is red and the *takiya* and *gadi* are yellow, as suggested for the previous day. The composition and setup strikingly resembles the illustration for the previous day in the same set. The main difference are two flower-strings pending above Shri Brijrajji in this illustration, whereas there is only one such string in the illustration of the *shringar* of the previous day, and the *picchvai* is red with a yellow border.

71. *savan sudi 3. thakurani tij*. f.42 verso<sup>135</sup> and f.43 verso. The waist-cloth should be red coloured (*lal chundadi*) and the turban also (*kasumal chundadi*). The *chandrika* should have one feather. In the evening, *prabhuj* should be brought to the *bagicha* (probably a kind of garden or courtyard), be rocked on a swing and entertained by *kirtans* after which he should be brought back to the temple. The painting on f.43 recto, Plate 29, is inscribed on top: *tij* and in the lower right corner of the red border: *shravan kri*<sup>o</sup> 3 (*himdora*). Shri Brijrajji is shown in red-orange dress<sup>136</sup> on the swing, his *chandrika* displays one eye of the tail of the peacock. Five

*sevakas* are in attendance. On a level below, two musicians entertain Shri Brijrajji with *kirtans*. Both a younger gentleman standing to the left and a mature gentleman standing on the right hand side venerate the image with their palms joined. Both men wear a turban and red trousers and they have a dagger tucked in their sash. Possibly, the artist intended to represent the son of then chief-minister of the Kota state (Rajrana Jhala Zalim Singhji [1740–1824]) Shri Madho Singh, who was born in 1775, and his son, Govardhan Das, born in 1794.<sup>137</sup>

72. *savan sudi 11* (in red). *pavitra kotsava* (in red). f.43 verso and f.44 verso. The crown should be golden (*kacchani*). At the auspicious moment (*ta samaye muhurta ta samaye*) silken wreaths (or threads, *pavitra*) should be offered, likewise at the time of the *utthapan*, *pavitras* of the son (? *suta-pavitra*), 360 (perhaps referring to the number of strings). When on the swing, the *gadi* and the *takiya* should be white. A gauze (*jali*) of wreaths (or: threads, *pavitra*) should be around when the swing is being rocked. The illustration on f.44 verso shows Shri Nathji, who wears a golden crown, in his *nij mandir* at Nathdvara. He is garlanded by a priest; several garlands dangle from a horizontal bar above the cult-image. More *pavitras* are lying ready on a kind of low stool in front of the image, which is surrounded by five *sevakas*. Three seated musicians on a level below Shri Nathji are playing on various instruments: a *sarangi*, a *mridangam* and a pair of large cymbals. The mauve-coloured *picchvai* corresponds to the pedestal, on which Shri Nathji is mounted. The inscription reads: *shravan shu*<sup>o</sup> 11 (*pavitra ...*). A painting from the second set shows similar garlands pending from a horizontal bar.<sup>138</sup> In the numerous illustrations belonging to the “third set”, Shri Nathji is dressed in white holding one or two lotuses in addition to the flute while several garlands come down from the top.<sup>139</sup> The garlands are also

<sup>133</sup> Losty 2010: 70 f., cat. no. 20.

<sup>134</sup> Gahlin 1986: cat. no. 64, pl. 61 (= Gahlin 1991: cat. no. 66, pl. 67).

<sup>135</sup> Folio 42 is followed by an unpaginated folio which, but for a rubber stamp impression from the Sarasvati Bhandar, Kotah, remains blank on both sides. The pagination is resumed with folio 43.

<sup>136</sup> Captain James Tod in the early 19th century already noticed that: “Red garments are worn by all classes on this day, and at Jaipur clothes of this colour are presented by the Raja to all the chiefs. [...] On this day, fathers present red garments and stuffs to their daughters.” (Tod 1920: 676).

<sup>137</sup> For a Nathdvara painting and a description of this festival see Skelton 1973: 88, no. 8.

<sup>138</sup> Christie’s 1977: lot 151, pl. 36. The inscription reads: *shri pavitra aikadasi ko uchava hai*.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Bautze 2000: 127, pl. 3. Dahmen-Dallapiccola 1976: colour pl. 3 (*shri nathji ko pavitra aikadasi ke uchava ko sigar he*). The other better preserved, but unpublished paintings belonging to this third group are inscribed as follows: *shri nathji ko pavitra aikadasi ko; shri nathji ko pavitra yekadasi ko uchava he* and *shri nathji ko pavitra aikadasi ko sigar he*.

shown in a painting from Nathdvara, where a swing, however, never seems to be represented.<sup>140</sup>

73. savan sudi 15 (in red). *rakhi ko utsava* (in red) [Raksha Bandhan festival]. f.44 verso and f.45 verso. The turban, waist-cloth and *chapiya* (meaning unclear) should be red. After the Rajbhog, at the right moment, the wrist-band (*rakhi*) should be tied. Following the *Sandhya Arati*, a swing is mentioned. At the time of final liberation (? *moksha samaye*) gifts should be made. Gifts of cow, gold and food. The illustration on f.45 recto shows Shri Brijrajji and his two *svaminis* in red dress. Also the *picchvai*, *simhasana* etc. are in red colours. Brijrajji's *chandrika* has three feathers. A priest to Brijrajji's right seems to have tied a *rakhi*, while two of the three *sevaks* facing him hold a *morchal* and a *chauri* each. On a level below stands an unidentified royal worshipper wearing red trousers and a yellow turban. His palms are joined in veneration. At his feet, three seated musicians play cymbals, a *mridangam* and a *sarangi* (a stringed bowed instrument). The inscription informs: *shravan shu*<sup>o</sup> 15 (*rakhibandhan*). An illustration of this festival from the second Kota set also seems to illustrate how one priest ties a *rakhi*.<sup>141</sup> In the third group of painted *ucchavas* from Kota, Shri Nathji wears but one peacock feather, his attire is red as mentioned in the text.<sup>142</sup> This festival was also celebrated at Nathdvara.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> This is the day on which sacred threads are presented. For a representation from Nathdvara see Skelton 1973: 89, no. 9.

<sup>141</sup> Beach 1985: 63, no. 53 (= Noey & Temos 1994: 66, no. 35). The inscription reads: *shri nathji rakhi ko ucchav ko chitra he*.

<sup>142</sup> For a published example see Losty & Galloway 2007: 64, no. 24. The inscription reads *shri nathji ko rakhi ko ucchav he*. The inscription on a similar, unpublished painting from this group informs: *shri nathji ko rakhi ucchav ko sigar he*, "This is the setup of the Rakhi-festival of Shri Nathji".

<sup>143</sup> For a painting and description see Skelton 1973: 89, no. 10.

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## IMAGES OF TIME

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CHRISTOPH EMMRICH

## **PILING UP BONES AND BURNING DOWN THE WORLD** Buddhist Literary Images to Think By and Time<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

The exact historical (and thus temporal) place of the texts this article deals with remains very difficult to determine. Although some, if not in their wording at least in their content may go back to the time to which the historical Buddha is dated by recent western scholarship, that is to the fifth or fourth century BC, the form in which they are extant today only goes as far back as the fifth century CE when, on the island of Sri Lanka, they and others were to form what Western scholarship has called a “canon” through their being collected and redacted and commented upon in a certain fashion, all in the Middle-Indic language called Pāli by Buddhaghosa, one of the patriarchs of a “textual community” alive in South and Southeast Asia till the present day, called Theravāda. The canon of the Theravādins<sup>2</sup>

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**1** I would like to thank Corinna Wessels-Mevissen for inviting me as the keynote speaker to the conference whose proceedings my esteemed colleague and friend has brought together in this volume. I am equally indebted to the Internationales Kolleg Morphomata, particularly its chairs Dietrich Boschung and Günter Blamberger, who supported this gathering of a magnificent round of speakers and an audience without whose many thought-provoking suggestions this piece would have been much poorer.

**2** The implications of that term for our understanding of its textual constitution and transmission and Theravādin textual practice more generally

is known as the “Threefold Basket”. The *Tiṭṭaka* and the examples we are going to look at all hail from one of the three collections, the *Suttapiṭaka*, the “Basket of [the Minutes of] the Sermons of the Buddha”. Although this so-called canon is a product of that period of textual and institutional reform marked by the redactorial and commentarial activities of Buddhaghosa, a tradition which over time became known as Theravāda, the individual texts we will encounter are not at all specific to that school. Rather, they form part of a layer of literature which the Buddhist schools since at least the first centuries CE seem to have shared, as it contains texts whose doctrinal content is so general and nonspecific, appears as so obvious and unquestionable, that they may have been handed down as literary material composed or claimed by Buddhists and as poetic forms perceived of as overall Buddhist without calling for any major doctrinal revisions. Scholastic discussion seems to have taken place elsewhere and it has been rather ignited by questions such as which terms to use to describe certain cognitive processes or issues surrounding the formulation of more legally binding regulations of monastic life. The motifs of the texts that this article will be dealing with—the all too long time of the world and the all too short time of human life as part of a rhetoric of urgency, to name just two<sup>3</sup>—seem to have played somewhat less of a role, at least in the more ardent scholastic debates. This leads us even one step further, for the less these motifs represent opportunities for Buddhist scholastics to sharpen their profile vis-à-vis the competing schools or distinguish themselves by demonstrating that it is they who interpret the Buddha’s word better than any other, the more they are part of a common religious-literary field within which the authors and redactors of ancient and medieval South Asia may have operated. To assume such a situation requires caution in speaking of specifically Buddhist content, motifs and images, even more so regarding a hypothetical Buddhist conception of time, as older studies of time in Buddhism and Hinduism<sup>4</sup> felt self-confident enough to do and as suggested by approaches which try to hammer out conceptions of time which are supposedly specific to particular

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has been an object of ongoing debate in the study of that literature (see most prominently Collins 1990, also Allon 1997, most recently Gethin 2011).

**3** It is not the discussion of duration and temporal units in Buddhist cosmographical texts or in general terms of the measurement of time, including references to the human lifespan, I am referring to, which the scholastic literature is rich in (see e.g. *AKBh* 3:78–93 and 5:25–27, *Vism* 472–473).

**4** E.g. Coomaraswamy 1947, Eliade 1952, Balslev 1983.

religions,<sup>5</sup> not to speak of those who have made such claims regarding the Orient or the Occident. In contrast to well-articulated doctrinal texts, those with a pronouncedly weaker orthodox affiliation give us the opportunity to remain methodologically and epistemologically, historically and contextually open in various directions, to locate both con- and disjunctures, to trace processes and the powers which propel them, instead of leading us on to expect or encourage doctrines, positions, conditions or even cultures to collide with each other. More specific to the field, the interest in these texts this article pursues is to explore the literary areas which stretch out around the pockets of more technical doctrinal discussions touching on time. The well-known Buddhist doctrine of relatively late South Asian origin called *kṣaṇikavāda*, that everything exists only for a moment, a *kṣaṇa*, a highly differentiated and in its intellectual consistency extreme formulation of the ancient Buddhist doctrine of the impermanence of the merely apparently permanent,<sup>6</sup> has historically lent itself to draw clear dogmatic lines vis-à-vis the Brahmanical and Jaina doctrines of the permanence of the individual or cosmic soul. This in turn has historically led to a lively debate and a rich apologetic and polemical philosophical medieval South Asian literature. In contrast, texts which highlight, to name just three topics with strong time content—the incalculable duration of the world, the ceaseless repetition of the cycle of birth and death or the dramatic brevity of human life—are found in Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina literatures and they point to a shared cosmological, eschatological and temporal knowledge, which represents the most common and basic yet least elaborated layer of literary religious articulation within the three traditions. We operate here on a level of literary articulation in which the way time is dealt with is neither specific to individual religious traditions nor even to regional cultures, without at the same time having to be termed anthropologically constant or universal. Dealing with time as incredibly long duration, with time as the relation between on the one hand the uniqueness and on the other hand the repetition of events or with time as that which runs out ever too soon, is nothing that we would expect to find only in religious texts from South Asia. It suffices to think of the Greek *aion* with its Homeric semantic field of longevity, the Avestan limitless *zruuan-akaran-*, the time of God of the Abrahamic faiths or, on the other hand, the time spent in hell, whatever its

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**5** Gardet *et al.* 1976; Dux 1989; Tiemersma & Oosterling 1996.

**6** For the history of its emergence see von Rospatt 1995; for its discussion in the Theravāda Abhidhamma and commentarial literature see Kim 1999.

religious affiliation, the transmigration of the soul in Pythagorean thought and its Platonic and Neoplatonic echoes or the becoming flesh of God the Father, the cyclic character of the Christian and Islamic liturgical years, the Roman *memento mori* or the theology of the mortality of man as a consequence of the original sin—to see how similar such attempts are, that deal with experiences found in literatures dating from the most diverse periods, hailing from the most diverse places, as soon as they deal with the kinds of time that preoccupy religious texts most. There are good reasons to argue that in each case we are talking about very different doctrines and to be reluctant to even suspect that the apparent communality of such motifs may go back to transcultural universal archetypes, to anthropological-existential constants which would have in independent historical instances necessarily sprung from the intellectual engagement with nature, individuality, death and hence time. On the contrary, we should perhaps rather ask whether it is the tradition and circulation of fragments of images, motifs, narratives and texts, indeed, of reading experiences which lie behind the emergence, development, resemblance and translatability of such cultural expressions. And it is probably just the loosening of religious, doctrinal and cultural specificity and the connectivity of rhetorical tone and literary motifs across sectarian and religious boundaries at very specific points in history across geographic trajectories which allows for certain particular images, motifs, puzzles, questions, problems and literary representations to be appropriated across boundaries of language and religious affiliation. And yet again, in moments of a tightening of religious, doctrinal and cultural specificity, characteristic for redactory and commentarial projects, they find their place in larger texts and collections of texts, harnessing their literary power for purposes that make these texts and the fragments and motifs they contain specifically Buddhist.

Indeed and in line with a sceptical attitude towards quick analogies and lazy universals, it may be fruitful to be hesitant to speak of “time” not only when referring to certain practices and technologies, but particularly when referring to certain texts in which the English word “time” does not even figure, because they have been written in other languages, such as the Pāli, Gāndhārī or Sanskrit of our sources, and instead of the one English term “time”, such texts feature several words which all denote various aspects of what is less specifically covered by “time”.<sup>7</sup> How adequate is

<sup>7</sup> A sceptical attitude towards the usefulness of this term regarding Chinese sources is taken by François Julien in his study *Du ‘temps’. Éléments d’une philosophie du vivre* (Julien 2001).

it, or, to ask differently, what are we doing, what consequences does it have and, more precisely, which insights do we preclude ourselves from having when we maintain that in depictions of the *duration* of the world, the *repetition* of birth and the *brevity* of life we are consistently dealing with time? Are we not in fact dealing with duration, repetition and brevity? Does not even the English “time” hide rather than cover much more specific individual “times” which do not necessarily demand to be brought together by the singular form, which may not even be pluralized variants of a more general term, which may not even have as much in common with each other as the term suggests? May not duration have more in common with endurance or exhaustion than with time, repetition with coercion or with familiarity, brevity with dalliance or with lack. May it not have much more in common with these domains, at least in certain texts, for a certain audience, in a certain historical phase, rather than with that which may be measured by a dial, a digit or a screen or with a term, such as momentariness, that may be used to make very specific ontological and epistemological claims? And is it not the case that regarding all these individual “times”, if we may call them thus,<sup>8</sup> duration, repetition, brevity,<sup>9</sup> we pretty much know what we are talking about, while we usually start fishing in murky waters when we start talking about “time” and would rather point at our watch or get bogged down in lists featuring terms such as “subjective”, “objective”, “cyclical”, “linear”, “historic”, “mythical”, “social”, “physical”, “calendrical” time and so forth adding ever novel binaries to the same unchanged and increasingly bloated

<sup>8</sup> In his study of early Greek poetry and the polymorphy of the temporal expressions found therein Michael Theunissen favors the term “times” (*Zeiten*) to signify the individual “temporal expressions”: “Die Signifikate dieser Ausdrücke mag man *Zeitformen* nennen. Angemessener ist wohl, sie einfachhin als *Zeiten* zu bezeichnen. Sind sie doch [...] keine bloß akzidentuellen Besonderungen einer Zeit überhaupt, unter deren Begriff sie sich restlos subsumieren ließen.” (2000: 1–2).

<sup>9</sup> Steven Collins, to whom I am deeply indebted in my engagement with Pāli literature in general and my attempts to ask and answer the questions such as those raised in this article in particular, has interrogated the same sources exploring the ways the understanding of time may be made more productive by looking at narrative, particularly when talking about the Buddha’s self-removal from the round of rebirth as conveying the “sense of an ending” and its literary representation as “textualization of time” (Collins 1992; Collins 1998: 234–281).

term.<sup>10</sup> And we eventually, both eruditely and frivolously, end up referring to Saint Augustine, who in his *Confessiones* famously confesses to only knowing what time is as long as nobody asks him to tell. One reason why we do not know how to say what time is because maybe the term means too many things and that that surplus, which lies buried under the weight of the very term, would be worth interrogating regarding its significance for us—for us, the readers of texts which deal with duration, repetition and brevity, and more importantly for those individuals and communities who have composed, redacted, read, understood and commented upon them as well as the associated dilemmas which the listener and reader experience when moving from one text to the other, from one reading experience to the other and which make them and us wonder and fear. So let us have a look at some of these wonderful and frightful sites.<sup>11</sup>

#### FOR MUCH TOO LONG

The first part of the Threefold Basket contains a collection called that of the “Conjoined Texts” (*Samyuttanikāya*), in which individual, mostly free-standing texts are arranged thematically. One of these themes is “the unfathomable beginning”, (Pā. *anamataḅga*).<sup>12</sup> The texts in this group all begin uniformly with the Buddha announcing to his monastic followers the earliest beginning of the series of births and rebirths, called “roaming” (Pā. *saḅsāra*), in which due to their ignorance and their greed all living beings transmigrate from a happy or less happy existence to the next, condemned to live on and suffer on, so that the beginning of this process lies beyond our imagination and we cannot talk about a prior beginning, about an origin as, even if there were such a thing, it would lie so far in the

<sup>10</sup> I am as reluctant to use the word “temporality”, which, carrying with it the phenomenological and ontological debts of Heidegger’s “Zeitlichkeit” and thus unable to shake off its primary and overarching interest in the futurity of time (Theunissen 1991: 343–347), is in its totalising scope, in my eyes, not helpful for understanding either the singularity of the premodern South Asian poetic formulations dealt with in this article in particular or the scholastic Buddhist preoccupation with impermanence in general.

<sup>11</sup> This article has emerged out of my forthcoming monograph project on “times” in Pāli literature, which branches out further and more systematically into commentarial literature and variant readings including but not limited to the texts and the kinds of texts discussed here.

<sup>12</sup> *Anamataggasamyutta*, SN II 178,1–193,8.

past that our mental powers would not suffice to go back to that source.<sup>13</sup> The texts assembled here differ with respect to the examples supposedly provided by the Buddha to make that point. The first two examples are those closest to the very idea of a sequence of births, as they challenge us, such as in the first text (SN II 178,3–26), to imagine that somebody collects all (and the text says *all*) blades of grass, sticks, twigs and leaves (*tiṇakatṭhasākhā palāsaḅ*) of the part of the world inhabited by humans, the continent of Jambudīpa (Skt. Jambudvīpa). Starting with the first item he would say “This is my mother”, then continue with the next by saying “This is my mother’s mother” and so on. The point is driven home by the following statement which claims that he who would count thus would exhaust all the material at his disposition, grass, sticks and so on, before reaching the end of that genealogical line. A very similar exercise is carried out by the protagonist of the second text (SN II 179,1–20) who uses up the whole earth to roll balls of mud the size of jujube seeds (*kolatṭhimattaḅ mattikāḅgulikaḅ*), the first for his father, the second for his grandfather and so on with an analogous outcome. The figure of the past existences of every single living being is equated with the open-ended maternal or paternal lineage, in which origin, genealogy and kinship is perverted into that which collapses into the nameless, the innumerable and the bottomless and for which the visible, graspable, measurable world is not big enough, provides not enough multiples, countables, i.e. objective, spatial material to serve as support for our imagination to fathom the temporal depths of a ceaselessly repeating event. Crucially, the persons who are here counted and who function as the measure of the incommensurable are one’s own progenitors, who have their share in continuing the process of conceiving and giving birth, of dying and outliving, who hence represent the life and afterlife of the one who inherits the maternal or paternal lineage and who does not exchange life as a householder for the celibate life of a monk or a nun. At the same time the image may appeal to filial piety, which throughout the history of Buddhism has remained the flip side of renunciation: Even the love for one’s highly respected parents and ancestors pales in view of the numbers produced by one’s generational predecessors. The horror of a predicament

<sup>13</sup> “[Having] a beginning that cannot be reckoned (*anamataḅga*), o bhikkhus, [that is] *saḅsāra*; the earlier end is not realized by the beings who run about and go about, shackled by thirst, obstructed by ignorance.” (*anamataggāyaḅ bhikkhave saḅsāro pubbaḅkoṭi na paññāyati avijjānīvaraṇānaḅ sattānaḅ taṇhāsaḅyojanānaḅ sandhāvataḅ samsarataḅ*, for example SN II 178,8–10).

beyond imagination has its origin precisely in what one holds dearest. The horror emerges from that which is dear, and that which is dear is submerged in horror.

The two texts of the genealogical tree without roots have their counterpart in the following twin texts. Here the immeasurable shifts from the domain of one's own ancestors to that of one's own body and individuality as projected onto one's own past births. Rhetorically the anonymous authors and redactors have the Buddha ask in the following text *SN II 179,21–180,26*: “What is more, o monks, the stream of tears (*assupasannam*), which you have shed during this long time of roaming and running around while being joined to that which is not dear and being separated from that which is—or the water of the Four Oceans?” Analogously the subsequent text *SN II 179,21–180,26* asks about the ratio ocean: milk, specifically about the milk drunk from one's mother's breast (*mātuthaññam pītam*), or rather one's mothers' breasts' when going through all one's past lives throughout one's repeated infancies. These images are considerably more chilling. Firstly, they suggest a quantification over time of bodily processes and that which in them is excreted and consumed: How many tears does one actually shed when one cries; how much milk must a woman spill to fill, say, a one-gallon bottle? Once we multiply, as this text suggests, successive human and animal existences and perform the bizarre experiment of merely adding measurable quantities, we embark upon the construction and projection of unlimited bodily resources. The second dramatic leap here is that, in order to perform that projection and justify the expansion of the subject's individuality and identity requires being extended to one's past existences. Contrary to the common view that Buddhism denies or at least remains sceptical regarding personal identity, here at least rhetorically, metaphorically, poetically—but I would be generally careful to draw such distinctions—the opposite point is made: All the tears which *we* have cried in our past existences, all the maternal milk that we have drawn, produce an individual which becomes the measure of the incommensurable and in turn becomes itself incommensurable, ungraspable—which in turn ends up being very doctrinally Buddhist. Finally, we should ask: why liquids? The images of bodily excretions have been used in Buddhist literature since its earliest sources to represent the physical as repulsive, be it to counter the ancient Indian ideal of beauty embodied by the erotic female body or be it during the meditative description of the decomposition of corpses. The trace of a tear or the image of a suckling baby may be endearing: Oceans of tears and breast milk are definitely

not. To draw a rhetorical parallel: Butter and milk on our breakfast table may be pleasing—the mountains of butter and the lakes of milk evoked by the critics of the EU's agro-policy are meant not to be. And what this text tries regarding the past, Winston Churchill may have tried for the future when announcing in his war-cabinet opening speech on May 13, 1940: “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat”. The Buddhist images in addition, however, point out something different: Now and again you may wipe away a tear or two and soldier on, but try wiping away an ocean of them. They point to the fact that we forget and try not to be aware of how many tears we have shed and that though time may heal all wounds, it also contains all their pain in it. And we can only be made aware of this—the Buddhist authors knew this—if we develop techniques, project literary images which allow us to connect one pain to the other, which in turn opens up corridors of time the vaster and farther the more pain they can accommodate. The breast milk, instead, points to the ambivalence regarding the female body referred to before, to the revulsion towards the female body as a literary trope, to the debt the monk and the nun feel towards their nurturing mother, and to the nurture and only temporary quenching of the infant's greed which keeps the wheel of birth and death rolling.

Interestingly, the next four texts are of an entirely different kind. They do not start with the formula of the unfathomable beginning but close with it and they elaborate that we have wandered for many *kappas* (Skt. *kalpas*), for many hundreds of thousands of *kappas* from birth to birth. Consequentially, these texts start with a monk asking the Buddha: “O venerable one, how long is a *kappa*?”<sup>14</sup> or “O Venerable one, how many *kappas* have already passed and lapsed?”<sup>15</sup> To this the Buddha replies that it is not useful to say that a *kappa* is so-and-so many years long, or that so-and-so many *kappas* have passed, which in turn prompts the monk to ask the Buddha to utter an *upamā*, to formulate a visual example. The first image, *SN II 181,24–31*, is also found in a tale recorded by the Grimm brothers<sup>16</sup> in which a king circulates a series of extremely difficult

<sup>14</sup> *kiṃ va dīgho nu kho bhante kappoti*, e.g. *SN II 182,10*.

<sup>15</sup> *kiṃva bahukā nu kho bhante kappā abhātītā atikantāti*, e.g. *SN II 183,3–4*.

<sup>16</sup> “[...] in Hinterpommern liegt der Demantberg, der hat eine Stunde in die Höhe, eine Stunde in die Breite und eine Stunde in die Tiefe; dahin kommt alle hundert Jahre ein Vögelein und wetzt sein Schnäbelein daran, und wenn der ganze Berg abgewetzt ist, dann ist die erste Sekunde der Ewigkeit vorbei.” (Grimm & Grimm 1984: 73–74).

questions which only a little shepherd boy is able to answer, one of which being the question: How long is eternity? While the shepherd boy knows of a mountain in Outer Pomerania (made of diamond!) on which a bird wets its beak once every hundred years, the Buddha mentions a mighty mountain with a man swiping a piece of Benares silk against its rock once in a century.<sup>17</sup> The mountain will have been withered away before a *kappa*, or, in the more Christian-romantic poetic language of the Grimms, by the time the first second of eternity has passed. This image acquires its power from its incremental composition: Extreme endurance plus extreme inadequateness of the material and its application, plus extreme temporal extension help induce a process in the mind of the reader or listener in which it is possible to understand the expected physical changes alluded to in the text although the challenge is to imagine the conditions under which their pace is such that their progression almost grinds to a halt. The attempt to make it possible to imagine minimal efficacy over time works thanks to a mechanism which produces two reactions in the reader or listener: to follow the unfolding of the image, to try to understand it in the sense of “what is it talking about”, hence to accept the challenge to imagine what the image in its staggering accumulation is trying to suggest, hence to actually attempt to visualize what kind of time scales we are dealing with here. The second reaction is necessarily the one in which the function of the image is fulfilled: the feeling of being overstretched, of not being able to follow, of failure, and the emotional reaction expressed in a smile or in shaking one’s head, to wonder, to be speechless, maybe to admire the artfulness of the image and to understand what the image has tried to achieve, namely to have us say “Now, *that* is a long time”. But what for?

The answer may be found in a text, *SN II 185,6–186,2*, which the redactors gave the title “Person” (*puggala*) and placed at the end of the collection and in which the three types of image which we have encountered so far, that of counting out past births, the accretion of bodily secretions and the depiction of a marvel of nature, seem to converge. Instead of dealing with *kappas* here, we return to fathoming the unfathomable beginning, but in truth this turns out to be something quite different from an attempt at overstressing one’s imagination. “Say”, the Buddha is made to pronounce, “a single person encumbered by ignorance and fettered with greed, roaming and wandering [on the rounds of rebirth]—and

<sup>17</sup> *tam enam puriso vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena kāsikena vatthena sakim sakim parimajjeyya, SN II 181,27–28.*

assuming a crematory collector (*samharako*) would collect (*sambhatañca*) them and they would not be destroyed (*na vinasseyya*)—leave behind a huge pile, a hill, a dump of bones (*mahā aṭṭhikaṅkalo aṭṭhipuñjo aṭṭhirāsi*)—it would be as high as Mount Vepulla” (*SN II 185,10–13*). One ought to add that Mount Vepulla stands out as the highest peak of the Magadhan Mountain Range surrounding the city of Rājagaha and would be located north of Vulture Peak, where the Buddha is giving this sermon, making it a prominent feature of a sacred landscape constructed by the narratives of the Buddha’s life and works. This image is more than a mere mind game. Basically the Buddha is saying to the monks: You see that mountain over there? Imagine it were a pile made up of the bones of your past existences. Rather than an exercise in futility this one is an exhortation to engage in a particular meditative practice: the meditation on the impure, Pā. *asubha-kamma-tṭhana*, especially the Nine Cremation Ground Meditations (*sīvathikā*), which belong to the standard repertory of the mental exercises of monks and nuns. Every South and Southeast Asian monastery of some repute has its own “skeleton in the closet”, usually a human skeleton kept on display in a shed in order to spare one the trip to the cremation ground, in front of which the meditators may regularly take a seat. The processual nature and the temporary results of death, decay and impermanence are the experiences and the doctrinal content embodied by this object and it is always first of all one’s own death and decay, one’s own bones, oneself as corpse which marks the point of departure. This text encourages engaging in this kind of practice, only extended to the degree that it is oneself who has been reproducing death and embodying decay as long as the world is old. As soon as one reads this image from the perspective of meditative practice one may realize what is supposed to hit one when being overwhelmed by one’s own speechless wonder at the previous images: an almost cosmic horror at one’s own life. A reminder of this is the line which recurs after every image of this collection discussed so far: “For such a long time, o monks, you have experienced suffering, experienced fear, experienced terror and have let the cremation grounds prosper. Such is enough, o monks, to develop regarding all composite things revulsion, equanimity and liberation”.<sup>18</sup> All images hammer home the

<sup>18</sup> *evaṃ dīgharattam vo bhikkhave dukkham paccanubhūtam tibbam paccanubhūtaṃ vyasaṇaṃ paccanubhūtaṃ kaṭasi vaḍḍhitā. yāvañcidam bhikkhave alam eva sabbasaṅkhāresu nibbindituṃ alaṃ virajjituṃ alaṃ vimuccitunti, SN II 178,24–25.*

fact that the world, that the cycle of birth and death has been around for as long as we know and of course this can be read as a doxological contribution to the Buddhist scepticism towards any form of cosmology of beginnings, be it a creator god, the creation *ex nihilo* or the Big Bang. What is more important here, though, is not so much that time is *very*, even unimaginably long, but that time is *too* long, “too” as in too long for *us* to endure, that this time is *our* time and that in it our suffering is spelt out and that we for the first time become aware of its scale, if not of its intensity then at least of its duration. We are made aware of how much such images not only overstretch our capacity to think and to imagine time, but how much our own frightfully persistent existence as humans, if viewed through the appropriate images, over-stretches our own capacity for suffering. As the corpse is meant to help develop the meditator’s sensibility for his or her own death, similarly these texts are meant to extend the listeners or readers consciousness to the extent of the suffering in them and beyond their present persona, the *puggala*, surely also in order to help them gather forces by the very process of revulsion and be ready to learn techniques of distancing and control towards which these texts already point. Even in a more pious, devotional sense, comfort can be taken in the fact that the mountain of bones is located in the landscape in which the Buddha trod, preaching the *dhamma*, and—as we shall see at the conclusion of this chapter—it is this *dhamma*, which teaches the monks the way by which even the cosmically high can be made low.

Before that, however, we still have to continue a little while on our stroll through the Buddhist Valley of Tears and consider an image which is much more ubiquitous in Buddhist literature than the examples discussed so far. It too deals with long, excessively long time. It is the image of a blind or, depending on the reading, one-eyed turtle (*kāṇo kacchapo*): “Suppose a man, o monks, threw a one-eyed yoke into the ocean and the eastern wind makes it drift to the west, the western wind to the east, the northern wind to the south, the southern wind to the north, and suppose there was a blind turtle that surfaces once every 100 years (*so vassasatassa accayena sakiṃ ummujjeyya*). What do you think, o monks, would she [ever] stick her neck into that one-eyed yoke?” [The monks reply:] ‘If at all, Blessed One, then only after a very long time’ (*yadi nūna bhante kadāci karahaci dīghassa addhuno accayenāti*). “[Then the Buddha said:] Yes, sooner (*khippantaram*) would a blind turtle stick her neck through that one-eyed yoke, than a fool, o monks, be reborn as a human”. (*MN*

III 169,9–22).<sup>19</sup> The reader of the Gospels may feel reminded of Matthew 19:23–24 stating that: “Rather would a camel go through the eye of a needle than a rich man enter the kingdom of God”,<sup>20</sup> an image which, with variations, is shared with the Talmud and the Qur’an.<sup>21</sup> As we would expect anyway by now, the Buddhist image is much meaner, so to speak: A turtle’s head fits easily through a yoke hole and we might be compelled to think of the large withers yokes which are fixed to the neck of zebu cattle or water buffalo with cords and staves and are still used in South and Southeast Asia today. But the devil lies in the details of the much tougher conditions, unpredictable winds, the vastness of the ocean, the size of a yoke with only one hole, not even two, the rarity in which the two movables meet on the same spatial level, and a turtle with possibly bad eyesight which would encourage her to engage in some very un-turtle-like behaviour such as that of domesticated bovines with their heavily impaired vision. Similarly, as with the man with his Benares silk cloth, and even more similarly to the bird on that mountain in Outer Pomerania, aggravating circumstances are added which are less about delaying the process merely in quantitative terms but keep it highly unlikely to ever happen. The mountain will, following the image’s own logic and granted a copious supply of the Banarsi textile industry, wither away at some point, if not in this *kappa*, in those to come. But a turtle with a yoke collar may be more and more likely the closer we approach infinity—yet it will never be certain. Even more than about duration, constructed by using the movement of bodies in space, plus duration in years, plus frustration, this image is about the unlikely. Here excessively long time is the relation between the conditions for a certain event to take place and its probability. Doctrinally this text is not meant to demonstrate how long we have been around suffering, but how wildly improbable it is that we will ever be reborn as humans again. It is crucial to know here that *nibbāna* (Skt. *nirvāṇa*) or escape out of the cycle of birth and rebirth, is only possible for humans, as only humans can listen to as well as understand and, crucially, comprehensively follow the Buddha’s teachings. Hence this

<sup>19</sup> Variants can be found in *SNV* 455,23–456,26 and in *SNV* 456,27–457,16. For a discussion of the allegory, see Norman 1970–71: 331–335 as well as Upadhye 1972–73: 323–326. For the Gāndhārī version see more recently Allon 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Parallels in Mark 10:24–25 and Luke 18:24–25.

<sup>21</sup> Berakhot 55b; Sura 7, Al-Araf, 007.040.

image in its negativity is an exhortation to realize the opportunity that this existence offers to listen to the word of the Buddha, to worship him, to internalize the Five Precepts (*pañcāsīla*) and, optimally, to be ordained, to forsake lay life and follow the Buddha's example—and, in addition, to start with this as soon as possible, because death and the next birth will arrive not a moment too soon. The image of the blind turtle shows us that excessively long, bad time may, if rarely, turn into something else and that is opportunity, good time, time which is good *for* something.<sup>22</sup> But it is in this good time as life as a human that the excessively long time of not being born as human not only turns into the all-too-seldom, but collapses into the all-too-short. Because the life as a human is too short to waste time.

#### ALL TOO SHORT A DATE

Curiously, one of the most poetic formulations of the brevity of human life included in the canon of the Theravādins is made by a teacher who is not otherwise known as a Buddhist. The anonymous authors and redactors of a text fittingly called the *Arakasutta* have the Buddha extensively quote a *tirthankara* (a religious leader) with an impressive following named Araka preaching to a brahman (*AN IV 136,17–139,27*): “Insignificant (*appakam*), brahman, is the life of humans, a remnant (*parittam*), scarce (*lahukam*), full of great suffering (*dukkha*), full of great concern”. (*AN IV 136,17*). This conclusion follows a series of images representing the length of the life of man: “Just as, brahman, at the rising of the sun a drop of dew (*ussāva-bindu*) on a grass tip evaporates (*paṭivigacchati*) very fast (*khippam yeva*) [and] does not last long (*na hoti ciratthikam*), [...] [j]ust as, if the [rain] god lets rain down big rain drops onto the water the water bubble (*udaka-bubbulam*) is soon to burst [and] does not last long, [...] [j]ust as, brahman, a line [drawn] with a stick (*danda-rāji*) on water (*udake*) is quickly dissipated [and] does not last long, [...] [j]ust as, brahman, a mountain stream (*nadi pabbateyya*), widely flowing, fast running (*sīghasota*), constantly tearing away (*hārahārini*), rests (*āramati*) not for a moment, [a *khana* or *laya* or *muhutta*], but moves (*gacchati*), proceeds

<sup>22</sup> Such as the constellation of conditions favourable to the *dhamma* having salvific effects depicted in the *Akkhaṇāsutta* of the *Aṭṭhakanipāta* (*AN IV 225,22–228,14*).

(*vattati*), flows (*savati*) all the time, [...] [j]ust as, brahman, a vigorous man could, having collected it on the tip of [his] tongue, with little effort eject (*vameyya*) a blob of saliva (*khela-piṇḍam*), [...] [j]ust as, brahman, a piece of meat (*mamsapesī*) thrown in to an iron pot that has been heated for an entire day (*divasa-santatta*) fizzes away in no long time, [...] a cow which is to be slaughtered, is led to the slaughter place whichever hoof she raises, gets [increasingly] close to being slaughtered [and thus] to dying, just as, brahman, a cow which is to be slaughtered so is the life of humans, a remnant (*parittam*), scarce (*lahukam*), full of great suffering (*dukkha*), full of great concern.” And this list (*AN IV 137,2–138,9*), like every single image in it, closes with the words: “Through [these] teachings (*mantāya*) take insight, do good, live chastely (*caritabbam brahmacariya*).” The first four images are variations of water: dewdrop, water bubble, a line drawn on water, a mountain stream, of which dew and bubble visualize the smallest, most fleeting, almost unnoticeable, but also manifold, repetitive, the opposite extreme of mountain and ocean. The watery trace includes the human agent but the focus rests on the futility to obtain something lasting, on evanescence as status quo. The mountain stream is a more complex image: The brevity of duration attributed to the other phenomena is reduced further, as the stream does not even stop for an instant, a *khana* or a *muhutta*, the smallest known temporal units in South Asian literature, and furthermore, it dives violently downhill. With saliva and meat the imagery enters the domain of the living and the body, using motifs of powerful disgust and violent destruction. The image of man as a piece of steak on the barbecue of life is as uncompromising as it is striking. The combination of cooking, food, consumption and death, as we will see further on, is not unusual in Pāli Buddhist literature: “*Kāla* devours everything”, is a verse found in the collection of canonized Buddhist birth stories, the *Jātaka*, where the event of death, ending and destruction in its powerful, temporal and more particularly momentary form (*kāla*) is also called “the cook of beings”.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> “*Kāla* devours all beings and even itself, / Yet who devours *kāla*, he cooks the cook of beings.” (*kālo ghasati* [the Burmese ms. reads *yapati*, for *yapeti*, “propels”?] *bhūtāni sabbān’eva sah’attanā / yo ca kālaghaso* [the alternative Copenhagen mss both read *kāloghaso*] *bhūto sa bhūtapacaniṃ pacī ti // Jā II 260,20–21*). The commentary on this passage found in *MN-a I 58,13–27* takes the punch out of these dramatic lines by claiming that it is the times of the day that “devour” each other by each limiting the duration of the preceding one.



The other image, that of powerful expectoration, here and in Buddhist literature more generally, just as in North American baseball culture rather a sign of pronounced masculinity rather than of bad manners, is frequently used in less existential contexts to help imagine instances of teleportation involving practically no time, such as when the Buddha, so to speak, beams himself across rivers or into various heavens. In such contexts other images are equally popular such as “as fast as a strong man can bend and stretch his arm”,<sup>24</sup> or “like a strong man may snap his fingers”.<sup>25</sup> Compare the transculturally shared gesture of snapping one’s fingers to express “in no time”, “just like that”, or the German expressions such as “im Augenblick” (literally, in a gaze) or “im Handumdrehen” (lit. in the turning of a hand) or the Italian “in un battimano” (lit. in a clap of the hand) to express the same idea—examples of the subtle ways in which the visual and the body are preserved in the linguistic representation of temporal experience and practice and, while appearing formal, frozen and arrested, keep alive that which remains unsolved about the modalities of talking about time. Returning to the text, most of the images transcend the boundaries of either Buddhist faith or texts and they are equally found in the epics and in courtly poetry: Whatever Araka may have intended in his appeal to the brahman, the Buddhist editors see this as a very clear formulation of the human condition on the one hand, as an illustration of impermanence (*anicca*), one of three main features of the world, in relation to human existence besides suffering (*dukkha*) and the intangibility of a stable personal substrate (*anatta*), and on the other hand as an appeal to follow the Buddha’s advice as soon as possible, as even soon may be too late. The pictures of Araka are shorter, less arithmetic than poetic, less overwhelming than melancholic. As in the other thought images, however, they provoke surprise, and the surprise lies in the poetic transfer which the reader or listener is expected to perform when the text demands equating the irrelevance or drama of the natural event with the image of human life.

<sup>24</sup> *seyyathā pi nama balavā puriso sammiñjitaṃ baham pasāreyya va, va pasāritaṃ baham sammiñjeyya*, e.g. *AN* II 20,31–21,4.

<sup>25</sup> *pi seyyathā ānanda balavā puriso appakasirena accharikaṃ pahareyya*, e.g. *MN* III 299,25–26.

#### LESS AND LESS TIME

A picture I have left uncommented on so far is that of the cow, and this is consciously so, as it opens up a completely different type of development and representation of time. So far, one could summarize, we have encountered two different, opposing literary techniques of producing time before our mental eye. The images from the Collection of the Unfathomable Beginning, including the turtle, construct excessively long time as if stretching our sense of time on a mental Procrustean bed through the addition of elements until the joints would crack. With the blind turtle the technique of adding parts was supplemented by that of subtracting occasions. In all cases, the target was maximum strain. In contrast, the images in Araka’s sermon construct short, excessively short time by equating the human lifespan with processes which happen under conditions of extreme acceleration and which terminate abruptly. They are very different from the earlier images as they do not help initiate extended mental processes and do not unfold as the text proceeds. On the contrary, the time of the human lifespan conceived of as duration is compressed to an image that merely flares up, shocks and is followed by the next. This compression happens in an attempt to think at once of the disparate, say lifespan and water bubble, and to let both be replaced by an equally extreme identification. The lack of mediation between the one and the other manages to startle with limited means and at the same time it calls for a strategy, a technique that prompts the reader or listener to react adequately. The inclusion of a hint at a possible exit strategy can only be accomplished by another kind of image, of which that of the cow may give us an idea.

As we have seen according to *AN* IV 138,4–7 of the *Arakasutta*, human life is like “a cow which is to be slaughtered (*gavi vajjhā*), is led to the slaughter place (*āghātanam*) with every hoof (*yañ ñad eva pādāṃ*) she raises, gets [increasingly] close to being slaughtered (*vadhassa santike*) [and thus] to dying (*marañassa*)”.<sup>26</sup> What is striking is that it is not the

<sup>26</sup> Turnour’s Singhalese ms reads *vajjham*, “place of slaughter”. The Burmese ms from Mandalay and that of Phayre both read *vaddhassa*, “rope”, instead of *vadhassa*, which would suggest the image of a cow being led to the place of slaughter on a rope, reminding one of the noose (*pāśa*) of Yama, the King of the Dead. F.L. Woodward translates in accordance with the Pali Text Society’s edition *vadhassa* as “nearer to destruction” (*AN*

extreme brevity of life the image articulates, because the trip to the slaughterhouse cannot compete in brevity with dew drops and bubbles. The dominant theme seems to be the theme of change or in this case movement in space irrevocably poised towards and in dramatic proximity to the event of annihilation as with the mountain stream or the piece of meat. And yet, the point of the image seems to lie in the statement that “whichever hoof” (*yañ ñad eva pādamaṃ*) or “with every hoof” she raises she is in the ever increasing proximity to death. As the brevity in the mountain stream is found in the fact that it does not stop even for a *khana*, so in this case brevity lies in the cow’s individual paces, so that her last walk can be reduced to the steps she makes. Her movement leads her nowhere else than to her death. The ritualized cry of the officer in US-American death row “Dead man walking” goes, or as the German slang expression “der Tod auf Latschen” (lit. Death in slippers) has it, referring to someone who is not looking as well as he or she usually would, in a sense the cow is already dead. Hence, it is business as usual. To be sure: The human being as dead man walking would suffice for a strong Buddhist image conducive to the mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*). The surprising and the horrific aspect of this image, however, is contained in the series of steps: the tension between the direction of that walk and the unobtrusiveness of each little step. Even something so short, small, harmless and still so decisive as a step carries death within it. Death, so the possible analogy to human beings, is not acknowledged because one dies one step at a time while deluding oneself that it is only one step and possibly only a small one and only one or maybe two. The literary technique at work here is the breaking-down of an extended process, the walk, into its constituent parts, its steps, to make us understand its processuality, yet, even more so to show us that the result is intrinsic to every single part without us being aware of the fact that the creature that walks is contributing to the result right now and throughout. What remains unexpressed in this image is that we may not be able to influence the process at large, the process as predicament, but that we can influence our small, daily steps and that, should we exert that influence, we would have the chance to influence the overall outcome as well.

The inconspicuousness of death becomes even more uncanny, when further on in the *Arakasutta* the teacher Araka applies this kind of literary

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transl. Woodward & Hare IV 92), and interprets the image as a progression. Nyānatiloka translates *vadha* more freely as “very near the edge of death” (*AN* transl. Nyānatiloka III 278).

device much more concretely and devastatingly to the human lifespan. After pointing out that in spite of the fact that the life expectancy of humans was much higher in the ages prior to the present day and that he would still have invoke in them the brevity of human life, and that by implication how much more urgent his message would be for present-day humans, he proceeds to analyze in *AN* IV 138,24–139,24 what the present day human lifespan actually comes down to. He takes “100 years or a little more” (*vassasatam appaṃ vā bhīyyo*) as the traditional South Asian upper limit, mentions the three seasons (*utu*) conventionally known in South Asia, the dry season, the rainy season and winter, and reckons that, to our shock and horror, our life is only 300 seasons long: 100 dry seasons, 100 rainy seasons and 100 winters. Assuming 4 months (*māsa*) per season he calculates 400 months for each season in one lifetime, equating our life to a total of 1200 months. He does the same for the fortnights (*addhamāsa*) and once he arrives on the number of days and nights (counted as “nights”, *ratti*) he counts 12,000 days of dry season, 12,000 days of rainy season and 12,000 days of winter, making a total of 36,000 days. Araka pushes it even further, breaking down the days to the daily meals (*bhatta*): Two a day makes 24,000 meals in the dry season, 24,000 meals in rainy season and 24,000 meals in winter, making a total of 72,000 meals per life. And that is, at least according to the text’s rhetoric, generously calculated for, Araka adds, it includes being breast-fed by one’s mother (although, at least to contemporary breastfeeding standards, this should happen 8–12 times a day) and the meals missed because of emotive distress, religious observance or simply lack of food, remembering that Araka’s estimate of 100 years for one life was on the generous side too. Now, 72,000 is not necessarily a low number. The intention and effect, however, are evident and obviously rhetorical: The mere idea that life has an end and that one is likely to die the closer one moves toward a hundred, is not likely to impress or scare anyone very much. The expression “end of life” and the figure of a hundred years are so abstract and in South Asian literature habitually associated with the term death, that they may be taken together as a package and ignored as they are not associated with literary experiences of impermanence and decay and cannot be thought of. What causes the first shock is that it is possible to say how many summers we may experience and each step produces a further discomfort until we are able to quantify even those activities which we would associate the least with dying because they are as much part of life, unreflected and taken for granted, as placing one foot in front of the other. Suddenly, life, the richness of seasons, the

constantly renewed days and the hot meal are countable, comprehensively viewable, limited. And although the figures rise constantly, what is being counted is increasingly that which nobody would think of counting, which we would refuse to count as it would bring to our eyes the scarcity of that which keeps us alive and lets us forget that we will die one day.<sup>27</sup> It is remarkable that the author of this exercise (Whether this is still an image is something that might be worth debating: To what extent do we visualize seasons and mealtimes?) chooses mealtimes as the ultimate building block of a human lifespan, as it recalls not only nourishment and livelihood, but also the dietary regulations of the monastic schedule,<sup>28</sup> which allows for only two daily meals and none between noon and the morning of the following day. Does this suggest that those who have opted for a monastic life would escape the slaughterhouse as they direct their steps, resist walking the walk by reducing the number of meals? Or rather does the increased awareness of the temporal regulation of food in monastic practice and the development of a literary image that merges sustenance and finitude imply a greater consciousness of the fact that we lose our life one meal at a time?

#### THE WORLD IN FAST MOTION, OR NOTHING TOO BIG TO FAIL

That this could be indicative not so much of life in the monastery but of the ways this specific text could have been read is suggested by the last two images which center once more on mountains. For the first image we return to the Collection of the Unfathomable Beginning. In line with the formulaic nature of the collection, the text called *Vepullapabbatam* (*SN* II 190,21–193,8) begins and ends with reference to the length of the cycle of birth and death. In the variable part of the text, however, the Buddha points once more to Mount Vepulla and explains that in the past during the time of the Buddha Kakusandha this famous mountain had a different name, Pācīnavamṣa (“Eastern Ridge”), was more than four times in size and that the people living at its foot were not called the Magadhans, but

<sup>27</sup> In his encyclopaedic *Visuddhimagga* the commentator Buddhaghosa includes the whole collection of images attributed to Araka in his elaboration of *marāṇasati* (*Vism* 337) and ends by quoting *AN* XIII 73 which directly links the awareness of mealtimes with death right down to the single morsel of food and to breathing.

<sup>28</sup> See *pācittiyās* 31–40 of the Theravādin Vinaya’s Pātimokkha section.

Tivarans. These people, in contrast to the contemporary Magadhans who, if they are lucky, reach the age of 100 years, lived till the impressive age of 40,000 years. The Buddha then reviews two more phases in the history of the mountain and with every new phase the mountain, the Buddha and his two main disciples bear different names, as do the people dwelling at the mountain foot, each having a shorter life expectancy than the following. Maybe not surprisingly the mountain’s height, measured by the time it takes to climb up and back down,<sup>29</sup> dwindles dramatically too over time. The Buddha mentions the current familiar and unimpressive conditions and announces that in the future the mountain will lose its name altogether (*pabbatassa samaññā antaradhāyissati*), possibly implying that it will no longer deserve to be called a mountain, that the people living there will perish and he himself will enter *nibbāna*. Contrary to the case of the towering ossuary or the almost-silk-cloth-resistant mountain, here we are dealing with a mountain that noticeably shrinks and will have been briefly called Vepulla before disappearing entirely. Obviously the image draws from shared South Asian narratives of cosmic decay: Dramatically falling lifespan rates are the most prominent sign of the fact that the world is going down the Buddhist drain, or should one say mountain stream? On the other hand we find that which is usually present in other Buddhist narratives of decline missing: the moral degeneration of man and community. Change, more crucially disintegration of that which appears most permanent can only be articulated within the framework of long time: So long is the timeframe constructed here that even the most permanent entity has the time to wither away. Not only does that require time to be compressed and developments fast-forwarded, simultaneously, condensed time has to be decompressed, so that not only impermanence and the relative brevity of the most durable may be represented, but also the length of time, as what this image intends to show is after all that, even where everything takes ages, impermanence and decay rule. To show this, the stages of decay have to be followed one after the other and just as the units which constitute our lifespan become smaller and smaller, the decay of the world can also be reckoned by the mountain’s decreasing height. We may not believe that, may wish to assume that the most durable things in life such as powerful people, giant mountains and hallowed names are not subjected to change and destruction and find

<sup>29</sup> Interestingly the shepherd boy’s Outer Pomeranian mountain’s size too is measured by time units (Grimm & Grimm 1984: 74).

consolation in that. In truth we are as mistaken regarding the mountain as we are regarding our daily mealtimes: Death and destruction lie at the heart both of the domestic and of the cosmic. The thematic frame of this collection aligns this text with those that depict the horrors of excessively long time. The image itself however, just as the analysis of the human lifespan, seems to perform something else: Here we are taught not to expand our awareness of long duration following the model of the duration of the world, nor to reduce the limits that keep us from understanding very short time even further, but rather we learn a third lesson: to divide every process, even those which, due to the extremely long timeframes it takes to observe them, remain undetectable, into smaller sections and to show that they too are ruled by the same laws that govern a water bubble. But what does that have to do with human beings? Both excessively long and excessively short time highlight their suffering and the fragmentation of their lifespan achieves that particularly effectively. But the analysis of the decay of a mountain? And are not all those images merely meant to scare, variants of *memento mori* intended to terrorise monks into remaining ordained and to motivate the few laypeople who might be exposed to these texts to be devout Buddhists? As a matter of fact, they are something much more important.

For that we come to the last picture: the collapse of the super-mountain, so to speak. In a text called *Suriyaṃ* or “the Sun” (*ANIV* 100,1–103,22), which reads like a continuation of the story of the disintegration of Mt. Vepulla, the Buddha is made to speak about the future. The Buddha starts with a variation of the standard closing formula of the short texts of the Collection of the Unfathomable Beginning, reminding the listeners of the evanescent and disappointing nature of all composite things regarding which they had better relinquish all attachment and then, as if in contrast, he proceeds to describe the majestic proportions of the cosmic mountain, Sineru, better known as Meru in Sanskrit. With that picture in front of everyone’s eyes, the Buddha predicts: “There will come, o monks, a time (*hoti kho so ... samayo*) in which for many years (*bahūni vassāni*), many centuries (*vassatāni*), many thousands of years (*vassasahasāni*), many hundreds of thousands of years (*vassasatasahasāni*) the [rain] god does not let it rain, and as he does not let rain, seeds and plants, herbs, grasses and trees of the forest wither, dry up and die. [And he continues:] There will be, monks, a period in which sooner or later (*kadāci karahāci*) after the passing of a long time (*dīghassa addhuno accayena*) a second sun appears. With the appearance of the second sun, monks, all the small rivers [and] ponds will evaporate [and] disappear.” (*ANIV* 100,13–101,1).

Subsequently, a third, a fourth and a fifth appear leading to a global environmental meltdown: The Gaṅgā, the Yamunā and all the great rivers evaporate, then the lakes from which they flowed, and finally ocean water starts to fall, one mile after another, down to the height of a palm tree, then the height of a human body, then to the length of a finger, and still falling, one joint at a time. Finally the only water left on the ocean floor is the amount held by hoof prints which a cow may leave here and there (*tattha tattha gopadesu udakāni thitāni*). With the sixth sun the earth and the world mountain begin to smoke like a South Asian kiln, smoke billowing from between the bricks, and with the rise of the seventh they both burst into flames, making the sparks fly up into the highest heaven, the world of Brahmā, until everything has burnt down just like an oil lamp leaving no residue, not even ashes or dust. The inferno sketched here, just as the history of decline referred to before, is a trope of South Asian cosmology, the inevitable fiery end of the world, called *pralaya*, at the end of every cosmic cycle. Images of the dancing Śiva Nāṭaraja in a corona of flames are read as an enactment of this event. But here the god does not dance; indeed the sparks reaching right up to Brahmā’s world indicate the precariousness of the divine. This text differs from the scenarios depicting the cycle of birth and death with their tendency towards seriality, open-endedness and transcendence: no cycle, at least not for this text, only destruction. Another key difference lies in the fact that while the previous constructions emerged in their processual structure, reversely here a spatially conceptualized field is posited which begins to break apart and dissolves into nothing. Klingsor’s words from Wagner’s *Parsifal* appear as if reversed: Here space becomes time. In the end, in a way, there is not even time left. Certainly, everything we said about the Mount Vepulla image applies here too, only in a more radical, universalized way. Not only a mountain, the whole earth centred around the cosmic mountain is altered by the powers of destruction and the readers and listeners can follow that process as if we were not part of this world, but witnessing from beyond. And exactly this achievement, that the reader and listener who are part of this world *can* and *ought* to follow this process seems to me the most remarkable fact about this text. Interestingly not only humans but the entire animated world, the human lifespan in its length or brevity, all issues connected to the position of the human between the exceedingly long and the exceedingly brief, even the relation marked by suffering between the dynamic of the image and its recipient seem to be absent from this image. Indeed, the dissolution of the world is described with a precision and detachment which differentiates this

text from all the previous ones, as if the place of the human should not be located within the image but somewhere else. It is the commentary dating from the fifth century which gives us the clue:<sup>30</sup> It explains that this text was taught by the Buddha to a group of 500 monks as an exercise in meditation on impermanence. Whether the text was actually composed with that intention or not, the tradition within which it was redacted and included into the canonical edifice has understood it in this fashion and there is much in the text which lends support to this idea.<sup>31</sup> Particularly, this statement opens up the possibility of understanding all the other texts discussed above as probably being part of a comparable practice, as having emerged out of or at least referencing it. It becomes clear that what the texts featuring Mount Vepulla, the meals of a lifetime and the cow's last stroll, but to a certain degree all the texts presented here, most explicitly achieve is that they do not primarily illustrate certain conditions, but primarily produce them literarily and supply the techniques for their reproduction. It is the reproducibility of processes—and that may be one of the basic principles of meditation—that presents them as subject to control, creativity and generally human agency, that makes them human. If one understands these texts thus, then they not only evoke pious horror but function as a literary models for spiritual development and ultimately liberation. They are not only a sophisticated appeal to make a decision in favour of the Buddhist path of liberation but also a model of how little the mind on this path rather than one's linguistic experience can be developed and how the time of life and the time of death can be won in constant engagement with these kinds of text. In this sense these texts are—and Buddhaghosa's commentary supports that—no mere instructions, no meditation manuals, but they are rather, being the word of the Buddha, of the highest urgency, of the highest

<sup>30</sup> *AN-a* IV 50,12–15; cf. *Vism* 414,34–417,4. For a more detailed discussion of the connections between meditation and cosmic dissolution in canon and commentary see Gethin 1997: 195–204.

<sup>31</sup> Biarreau 1981 points out the function of *pralaya* in the initiation rituals of the *samnyāsins* as well as in the meditation of the *yogi*, who in the process of the description withdraws his sensory perception into himself. On the conjuncture between cosmological events and soteriology see Wessler 1995: 293: “*Pralaya* ist daher strukturell der gemeinsame Bezugspunkt zwischen den Vorgängen am Ende des *yuga* und der individuellen Befreiung vom Zwang der Wiedergeburten [...]” For comparable forms in early Buddhist meditation practices, see Vetter 1988.

efficacy, but also of the highest beauty, for, as the canonical texts repeat, all that has been said by the Tathāgata (Buddha) is well-said and the *dhamma*, in another standard phrase, is auspicious in the beginning, in the middle and in the end. The word of the Buddha is not only instruction. These texts in their artistry are proof of that: The word of the Buddha is also and maybe primarily literature. And to make us think about the power of language through the creation of images is one of the guiding principles of South Asian poetics. Another principle is that of the good quote, the novel process and variation of an accepted and time-honoured motif, which is why the texts discussed all touch upon each other somewhere; they reproduce and vary each other. This is no dialogue with meditational practice or figurative art. Meditation manuals, particularly those within local Theravāda traditions, know images, but very different ones: the colourful depiction of decomposing corpses or the monochrome, usually plate-sized meditational devices called *kasiṇas*. South Asian Buddhist art has moved along other paths in processing temporal motifs, as the history of the Wheel of Becoming, the *bhāvacakra*,<sup>32</sup> has shown. On the contrary, with the images discussed here these texts seem to be involved in a conversation with themselves orchestrated by their learned redactors, in which anonymous authors tried to outshine each other in the mastery of combining verse, dialogue, cosmography and narrative prose to recreate the beauty and the poignancy of the Buddha's voice and word. To the extent that we can here understand time only from the word that the Buddha is made to have spoken to his monastic interlocutors, we are encouraged by these texts to take part in this lesson, in these acrobatic performances, to stretch time while compressing it, to both make time and to kill time, yet first of all to discover that the many contradictory and conflicting, surprising and terrifying experiences which we claim to cover by the term time lie in the silence before, after and between the words. The language of these texts may, being different from our own, not have that *one* word for time. Yet, what these texts can do for us today is that they, just as the Buddha did through the words of Araka when reminding us of the seasons, months, days and nights and mealtimes lived and un-lived, help us see what worlds, what details and what rays of hope await us behind the mostly pale and exhausted word called time.

<sup>32</sup> See most recently and comprehensively Teiser 2006.

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CORINNA WESSELS-MEVISSSEN

## THE EARLY IMAGE OF ŚIVA NAṬARĀJA: ASPECTS OF TIME AND SPACE

“Time itself is absorbed and carried by the movement of the image of Śiva Naṭarāja. His figure dances the flux of time and all it carries, produces, changes and devours. These images are far from showing one phase of the dance or one moment only of time. Dance in them is a state and suggests the totality of the flux of time [...]”

Heinrich Zimmer 1933: 38

The Dancing Śiva of the type that is commonly referred to as “Naṭarāja” (Figures 1, 2; Plates 30, 32) has been the object of intense and widespread devotion. This particular form of a Hindu god serves as the patron of classical dancers in southern India and has become internationally known as an appealing artwork and symbol of Hinduism.<sup>1</sup> It is no wonder that this type of image has instigated academic research, with the famous article “The Dance of Śiva” by A.K. Coomaraswamy, first published in 1912, marking its inception.<sup>2</sup> While the image of Śiva Naṭarāja has

<sup>1</sup> Among the more important of the many publications on the Dancing Śiva (including the Naṭarāja type, which has been variously defined, however) are Coomaraswamy 1918, Nagaswamy 1961, 1979a&b, 1983, 1995 and 2006, Barrett 1965, 1981 and 1990, Kulke 1970, Sivaramamurti 1974, Gaston 1982, Zvelebil 1985, Kaimal 1999 and 2011, Bhattacharya 2002, Dehejia 2002, Guy 2004 and Dehejia *et al.* 2006. Monographs on Chidambaram and its various issues are Natarajan 1994, Younger 1995, and Smith 1996. For a recent study of Chidambaram-related purāṇic texts see Cox forthcoming; for Naṭarāja as a “universal icon” see Beltz 2011, also Pal 2004. For the catalogue of a recent exhibition specifically devoted to Śiva Naṭarāja see Beltz 2008.

<sup>2</sup> In his article, A.K. Coomaraswamy stresses the Śaiva Siddhāntic interpretation of the Naṭarāja image (cf. below). The version of 1912 specifically addresses a South Indian readership interested in religious discourse.

received a high degree of scholarly attention, research on its origins and early development has remained difficult.<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, the image of Naṭarāja (before the twelfth century more correctly: proto-Naṭarāja, see *infra*) has come to express more than a god’s specific physical appearance, posture, mood, attire and attributes. This particular divine aspect has merged with textual traditions into a powerful allegory of the greatness of Śiva, one of the main gods in Hinduism.

The artwork itself, along with its unique setting, reflects a complexity that renders it an apt expression of a supremely important concept. It seems very likely that the icon was adopted and reinterpreted by the South Indian religious school of Śaiva Siddhānta some time before or during the eleventh–twelfth centuries, when the concept of Śiva’s five-fold action (“*pañcakṛtya*”<sup>4</sup>: *sṛṣṭi*—creation/emission, *sthiti*—preservation, *saṃhāra*—destruction/reabsorption, *tirobhāva* or *tirodhāna*—veiling, and *anugraha*—grace) became the dominant reading.<sup>5</sup> The latter is most notably expressed in the *Tirumantiram* of ca. eleventh–twelfth centuries<sup>6</sup> and refers to a multi-active role of the god, highlighting his pivotal position in the cosmos. Through the *pañcakṛtya* concept, Naṭarāja is actually linked to the cyclic periods of time involving destruction and renewal and thus, to the ever expanding and contracting universe.

Kersenboom 2011 analyses the modified version of 1918 from a biographical point of view, without being aware of the earlier publication. For a further discussion of the two versions and a critical appraisal see Wessels-Mevissen forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> Intensive research has been pursued by Barrett (e.g. 1981, 1990). Kulke (1970: 104–154), whose main objective was textual analysis pertaining to the cult of Naṭarāja at Chidambaram, has also devoted a section of his work to an art historical discussion. As the state of research has been progressing, it is important to take fresh approaches. A more recent attempt is Guy 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Vocabulary without further specification is in Sanskrit.

<sup>5</sup> Davis 1991: 43.

<sup>6</sup> Opinions about the date of this impressive piece of Tamil literature differ considerably. It is traditionally dated as early as the fifth–sixth centuries (Natarajan 1994: 255–256). I am following Goodall (e.g. 1998: xxxvii–xxxix) who has implied the eleventh–twelfth centuries, based on the treatment of the notions of *jñāna*, *kriyā*, *caryā* and *yoga* that inform the fifth chapter. Zvelebil (1975: 138) had proposed a seventh-century date, while conceding that this text contains later interpolations. The date of the respective portions of the *Tirumantiram* is obviously of central importance for establishing a text-image relationship with regard to *pañcakṛtya*.

Nowadays, the prototype of Naṭarāja is supposed to have been created in the ninth century,<sup>7</sup> a period to which hardly any descriptive, nor prescriptive, texts can be dated with certainty. This also suggests a distinct intellectual and art historical framework at the time of its inception (although traditionally oriented scholars would disclaim this). I consider it improbable that Hindu religious art, especially at this particular stage, would have produced a form as complex as a deity performing five activities simultaneously. The latter is obviously a theological and not a mythological concept and hence should be regarded as indicative of a subsequent appropriation and reinterpretation of the Naṭarāja image. However, as I shall outline below, it may have been the early multi-layered semantic structure of the image in question, paired with its aesthetic appeal, which had led to its sustained acceptance, admiration and artistic success that continue into the present time. The sovereignty over the abstract categories of Time and Space may have formed part of its original content, perhaps besides another theme, which should be expected to be mythological.

Padma Kaimal has already differentiated between primary and secondary connotations of the Naṭarāja image,<sup>8</sup> although her results differ from mine. She has pointed out that the Naṭarāja type was markedly destructive initially, while the later function was underpinned by the political interests of the Cōla kings. Actually, it is a widely accepted fact that an inherently threatening aspect generally characterises the Dance of Śiva, who is commonly referred to as the “Destroyer” among the trinity of high gods. Some, probably early, connection may therefore have existed with the negatively loaded concept of “Time”,<sup>9</sup> the destructive force of which Śiva embodies as Kāla (“Time”), or Mahākāla (“Great Time”). However, the context of the Tamil devotional literature of the sixth to ninth centuries seems to express a rather balanced attitude towards Śiva’s Time aspect.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The particularly early date of 800 CE has been proposed by Srinivasan (2001: 59, fig. 4; 2004: 443, pl. 4) for the image shown in Figure 2, on the basis of metal analysis (lead isotope ratio measurement). Hitherto, the Pallava dynasty (sixth century–late ninth century) had not been regarded as producing the Naṭarāja type. However, it is difficult for a non-specialist to judge how compelling the technological substantiation of this date actually is.

<sup>8</sup> Kaimal 1999 and 2011.

<sup>9</sup> A good introduction to the topic of Time in India is by Panikkar & Bäumer 1976.

<sup>10</sup> The ninth century *Tiruccatakam* contains a telling passage: “you are the earth and the heavens and time that comes and goes” (Cutler 1987: 164, v. 43). The eleventh–twelfth century *Tirumantiram* also contains several passages

In my view, the “gruesome” appearance of the god was less felt than Kaimal surmises. There is a literary topos which was common during the period when the Naṭarāja type was first conceived, motif no. 4 of Cutler’s analysis of the Tamil devotional literature, “The lord encompasses the whole world”.<sup>11</sup> During such an early period, both Time and Space would have been valued as entities of nature,<sup>12</sup> while in the evolved philosophical concept of Śaiva Siddhānta, both are meant to be transcended.

In my opinion, both aspects of Time and Space can be detected in a few concrete features of the respective images. The present paper is an attempt to identify such indicators. I have chosen to pursue an artefact-oriented approach, always concentrating on the early period in the development of the metal icon, which is likely to have taken place in the eighth–ninth centuries. We shall perhaps never be able to isolate the earliest traces of its existence. Most probably, Chidambaram (Tam. Tillai, *Excoecaria agallocha*) was the primary centre, although even this fact cannot be known with certainty. When the Naṭarāja cult became traceable in the form of bronze images, these were already spread over quite a vast area, which does not seem to reflect its initial stages. Without being able to offer an ultimate fine-tuning of the textual and visual-material evidence, I shall restrict myself to some observations and notes, which may facilitate further research in this field.

Apart from attempting a novel reading of Naṭarāja’s dance posture, I shall offer a fresh interpretation of the famous wall painting in the Great Temple of Tanjavur that depicts his sanctum at Chidambaram with some remarkable details. Furthermore, I turn to the poetry of the ca. sixth-century female Saint (Nāyaṇār) Kāraikkālammaiyaṛ, which I would suggest is an early source for the devotional cult of the Dancing Śiva that may be of greater importance than has so far been acknowledged.<sup>13</sup>

describing Śiva as being Time (v. 968) or “Timeless Eternity” (vss. 1458, 1837, 2173), or as governing Time (v. 1846: “He that shines atop of Time”).

<sup>11</sup> “The Tamil bhakti poets were fond of the idea that the lord is omnipresent in space and in time” (Cutler 1987: 198).

<sup>12</sup> Compared with the rich tableau of the recent processual analysis of Śiva’s mythological character by Handelman & Shulman, this scenario appears much poorer. Their findings are revealing in several respects. One conclusion is that “infinity somehow characterizes this deity”, but it is an infinity which “in this case, is an uneven flow” (Handelman & Shulman 2004: 220; cf. Handelman & Shulman 1997).

<sup>13</sup> Wood (2004: 108) has already expressed this view.



## IMPORTANT FACTS AND FEATURES OF NAṬARĀJA

From the outset it should be stated that at the Naṭarāja shrine filming and photography are prohibited, causing the extraordinary situation of evaluating something that evades reproduction by the modern media.

Śiva Naṭarāja belongs to the temple of Chidambaram (Tam. Cītamparam; Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu State, India), which is consistent with the general concept of localised deities that is particularly common in southern India. The icon is linked to the architectural context of the Hall, a structure of uncertain date. It is nowadays understood as divided into the Citsabhā (“Hall of Consciousness”) and Kanakasabhā (“Golden Hall”, nowadays roofed only in copper) (Figure 3). The association is so close that the divine ensemble, also comprising the goddess and other cult images, must be viewed as forming a common entity with the architectural frame.<sup>14</sup> During the two grand festivals each year, the god and his consort are taken out of the Citsabhā for procession and other rituals.<sup>15</sup> With this minor exception, Naṭarāja’s Dance is inextricably linked to this particular space that believers regard as a shrine for the element Ether. The highly specialised and localised character of the metal image of Naṭarāja that still serves as a cult image in the Chidambaram Naṭarāja Temple or “Sabhānāyaka Kōyil” is of overriding importance.<sup>16</sup> This is the only metal figure of a deity seen in the function of the central cult image,<sup>17</sup> while in the overwhelming majority of Śiva temples, the god’s typical “sign”, a stone *liṅga*, is worshipped in the sanctum sanctorum. According

<sup>14</sup> Natarajan 1994: xii. To date, no scaled plan of the inner portions of the temple has been published. What comes nearest is the plan of the buildings published by Nanda (2004: 14, ill. 4).

<sup>15</sup> The crucial role of Naṭarāja within the framework of temple festivals, not only at Chidambaram itself, should be properly analysed. The Nakṣatra Ārdra determines the most important time for Śaiva festivals, which generally include a procession of a bronze image of Naṭarāja. For the deities as “living beings” in this context see Davis 1997: 15–50. For observations on visual elements in South Indian festival culture see Wessels-Mevissen 2011.

<sup>16</sup> The present image is assumed to date from ca. 13th century (Barrett 1981: 17).

<sup>17</sup> The adjacent decorated empty space, the “Secret” (*rahasya*), is regarded as the actual sanctum sanctorum (Natarajan 1994: 135). A basically comparable shrine in that it lacks a cult image in stone is at Avadaiyur (Yocum 1986).

to their primary function, metal images are classified as processional images. At Chidambaram, an ancient *liṅga* shrine, the *mūlasthāna*, also exists within the same temple compound.

The repeated roof gilding of the Citsabhā since an early period makes it appear like an architectural jewel (Figure 3). Naṭarāja and his female consort Śivakāmasundarī (a particular form of his wife Pārvatī)<sup>18</sup> are kept in the Citsabhā, while the Kanakasabhā provides some extra space for rituals. Although they appear like twin halls, it is obviously the bigger and more elevated one housing the deities which was mentioned in earlier texts. Quite peculiarly, it was called the “Small Hall” (*dabhrasabhā*; Tam. *cīṟṟampalam*). The unique shape of this small complex refers to great antiquity, as this simple type of building has no surviving parallels.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, the evidence of the unique set-up of mobile metal sculptures of the God and the Goddess (cf. Plate 30)—supplemented by a few smaller icons<sup>20</sup>—cannot be underrated. The temple tradition evokes the powerful image of Chidambaram as the Centre of the Universe. The orientation of the sanctum and the images contained in them towards the South, the direction primarily associated with the God of Death (or, King of the Dead), has been emulated for the Naṭarāja shrines that have been introduced to other temple complexes subsequently. The position of these subshrines in other temples is not—more or less—central as in Chidambaram, but located on the Northeast of the compound.<sup>21</sup>

As is often practised with pilgrimage centres, the architectural complex of Kanakasabhā and Citsabhā with the in-dwelling deities have been depicted for devotional purposes. The earliest preserved instance is a mural in the circumambulatory corridor of the Rājarājeśvara temple at Tanjavur, the great royal temple constructed by Rājarāja Cōla I and consecrated in 1010 CE. Regarding this painting, which may have been executed slightly

<sup>18</sup> The name Śivakāmī or Śivakāmasundarī does not appear to be early. According to Nagaswamy (2003: 88), epigraphs of the tenth through 13th centuries refer to Naṭarāja’s female partner as “Umā Parameśvarī”.

<sup>19</sup> Kaimal 1999: 399.

<sup>20</sup> According to Natarajan (1994: 134), Ratnasabhāpati (ruby Naṭarāja), Svarṇa-Kālabhairava (Golden Terrible [Lord] of Time/Death) and the *sphaṭika-liṅga* (crystal “sign” of Śiva called Candramaulīśvara).

<sup>21</sup> This conforms with the typical configuration of shrines in South Indian temple complexes. “In all Śiva temples of importance a separate place is allotted to Naṭarāja which is known as the Naṭana-Sabhā [Dance Hall] or simply Sabhā.” (Gopinatha Rao 1916: 229). Generally, the images kept in these south-facing shrines are cast in bronze, but stone images also occur.

after the temple's construction, it has been rarely noted that the local Goddess Kālī (Tam. Tillai-k-Kālī) participates in Naṭarāja's dance.<sup>22</sup>

The rendering of Naṭarāja's Dance cast in metal alloy (hereafter "bronze", which should hold true for the overwhelming majority of cases), using the *cire-perdue* technique, facilitates the shaping of the god's unique posture with one leg lifted almost horizontally. It has been observed that the existing depictions in stone may have been created subsequent to the development of the bronze image.<sup>23</sup> Stone images occur in the form of small, shallow, or larger reliefs of high plasticity, kept in the outer wall niches of temples. They become relatively frequent during the tenth century, which seems to be linked to substantial temple construction commissioned by the Cōla Queen Sembiyan Mahādevī.<sup>24</sup> As in the case of the bronze images enshrined in other temples, the majority of reliefs are oriented towards the South and always refer back to Naṭarāja of Chidambaram.

There are also many dancing images of Śiva, which were fashioned after Naṭarāja became popular and which do not follow this type. Thus, Naṭarāja clearly does not signify the Dance of Śiva in general, but always contains the specific information of "Śiva's Dance as performed in Chidambaram". 17th or 18th-century paintings showing the two halls or only the Citsabhā are found on the ceiling of the associated Śivakāmasundarī temple (Plate 30),<sup>25</sup> while devotional pictures of the sanctum are still available to devotees in Chidambaram.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> A brief note on this is already included in Nagaswamy 1982a: 45. Only after I started working on this contribution, was full justice to the depiction of Kālī in the painting given by Sriraman (2011: 110–111, 124).

<sup>23</sup> The observation by John Irwin that the Naṭarāja image is ill-suited to stone, as discussed by Kaimal (1999: 395 and n. 21), goes in this direction. Cf. Kaimal (1999: 395; 2011: 477) on a relief from Tiruchchen[n]ampundi, where she detects the features of an incipient rendering of a Naṭarāja image in stone.

<sup>24</sup> Kaimal (1999: 409) provides a list of Naṭarāja niche reliefs in stone, from ca. 970 to the early eleventh century, and illustrates some of them (figs. 2, 11). A few examples are also illustrated by Barrett (1974: pls. 49b, 56, 70). The most well-known instances, from the great royal temples at Tanjavur (see here, Figure 12, left side) and Gangaikondacholapuram (Kaimal 1999: respectively, figs. 22, 12) date from 1010 and 1025 CE, respectively.

<sup>25</sup> Smith 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Guy 2004: 72, fig. 2. The flames encircling Naṭarāja have been reduced to floral ornaments (cf. 19th-century examples in Blurton 2008: cat. 77 and 79). On Naṭarāja's proper right, the "Secret" is visible, partly covered by a

A bronze sculpture that is regarded by some as the earliest known image of Naṭarāja has been ascribed to the ninth century (Figure 2).<sup>27</sup> It is distinguished from the bulk of the material by its relatively small size, the extremely slim figure of the god and the rather stiffly rendered sashes of his lower garment. The style of execution is quite unique, but the image already exhibits the main features of the fully evolved type.

The most important characteristic of Naṭarāja images (Figures 1, 2; Plates 30, 32) is Śiva's stance, planting his slightly bent right leg on the back of a dwarfish figure and transversely crossing his bent left leg from left to right.<sup>28</sup> It is noteworthy that there are many minor variations of the way in which this posture is carried out. The god has four hands. While the front right hand displays the "fear-not" gesture, *abhaya mudrā*, the front left arm also crosses the body in the stiff "elephant [trunk]" (*gaja*) or "stick" (*daṇḍa*) position, with the hand gently drooping.<sup>29</sup> The rear right hand carries a small hour-glass shaped drum (*ḍamaru*, Tam. *tuṭi*, *uṭukkai*) and the corresponding left hand holds a fire flame (*agni*, Tam. *aṅki*, *akkini*), which, in most cases, burns in a small shallow vessel.

Śiva's body is generally conceived as a vertically "split" one, as the female principle Śakti is permanently, at least latently, present on his proper left side.<sup>30</sup> This is most explicitly shown in the two distinctive earrings generally worn by Śiva, with the bigger "leaf" earring (*patrakuṇḍala*) of female connotation on the left. The figure of Naṭarāja displays a few more features that can be interpreted in this way, corresponding to the male-female union that is permanently present in Śiva's body. One of these is the tilting of the left hip in his unique stance (well visible in

curtain. Below this, Śiva's and Pārvatī's sons Gaṇeśa and Skanda have been added. For a similar devotional picture see Davis 1997: 22, fig. 7, which, however, differs from the previous example in some details.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. note 7. Barrett (1981: 20) already regarded it as perhaps the earliest known Naṭarāja, although he only assigned it to the tenth century (because the Naṭarāja type was expected to have been conceived in the tenth century). Another supposedly very early example with a number of individual traits is the image from Okkur (e.g. Srinivasan 1994: pl. LIII; Guy 2004: 78, fig. 12). However, I would not place it before the tenth century.

<sup>28</sup> The bent legs conform to the basic position in South Indian classical dance forms.

<sup>29</sup> Dance gestures involving "stiff" arms are always combined with a gracefully relaxed hand. They have often been depicted in art.

<sup>30</sup> The full articulation of this concept is the well-known Ardhanārīśvara form of Śiva, the "Lord [who is] half woman".



**1** Śiva as Naṭarāja, South India, bronze, ca. second half of the tenth century, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, acc. no. M.75.1, height: 76.2 cm. Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



**2** Śiva as Naṭarāja, South India, bronze, (perhaps early) ninth century, British Museum, acc. no. 1969.12-16.1, height: 28 cm. Photo courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Plate 32). Significantly, both extremities of the latently female side, the front left arm and the left leg, are being moved to the proper right in this specific dance position, as if to demonstrate the incorporation of the female element into the male, right, side. Although he always comprises the female aspect in himself, Śiva is still accompanied by his divine consort, Śivakāmasundarī, who exhibits a rather static, but nonetheless graceful posture (Plate 30).

The vertically placed third eye of the god is nearly always represented. The characteristic headgear of Naṭarāja consists of a fan-shaped element that is referred to as feathers in Sanskrit texts,<sup>31</sup> but as flowers or leaves of the Indian laburnum tree (*Cassia fistula*—*konrai*) in Tamil literature. In a few cases, it supplements Śiva's typical hair crown (*jaṭābhāra*) (Figure 1), though there are also subtypes missing the hair crown (Figure 2).<sup>32</sup> Still other examples, mostly early in date, show only the hair crown without any additions or they are devoid of a fan-shaped element.<sup>33</sup> A skull often adorns the centre of his headgear, while a datura flower (*dhuttūra*) frequently emerges from the proper left (sometimes right) side. A crescent moon is either located on the proper left or—more frequently—on the right. A serpent may form part of the headdress. The back of the head is normally provided with a “head wheel”, *śiraścakra*, though some exceptions are known. The River Goddess Gaṅgā as a small female protome, almost invariably clasping her hands in adoration, forms another element that often appears on the right side, on the flying hair strands (Figure 1). However, it is ultimately not essential for the Naṭarāja type of a slightly broader definition. This goddess is obviously a semi-narrative addition to the god's swinging hair, which is not always shown.<sup>34</sup> The long hair strands, often arranged nearly horizontally (Plate 32) but rarely centrifugally (Figure 1), are commonly decorated with flowers and conceived in an

31 E.g. *Suprabhedāgama* 34: “*bakapicchaka*”—“crane feathers” (Gopinatha Rao 1916, App. B: 123). The image in Figure 2 seems to wear feathers.

32 Namely, the “Chidambaram” [*sic*] Type, defined by Barrett (1981: 17–20).

33 An example for a “simple” hair crown comes from Sivaganga (Nagaswamy 1983: 74–75, cat. no. 9), while only the fan-shaped element is absent on the graceful image from Tandantottam (Nagaswamy 1961: pl. XXIII, fig. 1).

34 For the Naṭarāja image at Chidambaram, flying strands of hair had not or only modestly been depicted during the previous centuries, while Goddess Gaṅgā appears directly on his crown of matted hair. However, among the earlier images from this temple published by Nagaswamy (1979a: figs. 24, 25, 48, 49) there are several examples showing the spread-out hair strands.

ornamental way. A supposedly early instance of the fully-fledged type with flying hair strands is the well-known image from Karaiviram, ca. 915 CE.<sup>35</sup>

Naṭarāja's dress consists of a short lower garment, expressly made from tiger's skin (some Tamil sources reportedly mention lion's skin), and a short scarf as an upper garment. The “fur design”, if it is shown, always consists of dots as in the Tanjavur painting, where the lower and upper garments conform to this type (Plate 32). A serpent forms another component, most often seen winding around his front right arm. Figures of musicians sometimes adorn the representation, which is much more common in stone than in metal images. Another dynamic element of the “classical” type are two sashes issuing out from the god's waist and drifting to the proper left. They ingeniously balance the centre of gravity which is otherwise drawn towards the lower right by the oblique position of the left leg (Figure 1).

Naṭarāja's typical smile is not ubiquitous. As with the aforementioned features, several schools of art have handled this aspect differently. Particularly characteristic is the sublime smile appearing on Naṭarāja's face during the mature Cōla period (ca. 985–1070 CE). The dwarfish figure on which Naṭarāja plants his right foot is called Apasmāra (“lapse of memory”; “epilepsy”),<sup>36</sup> in Tamil *Muyalakaṇ*. These personal names refer to the mythological being that is largely specific to the Dancing Śiva but sometimes also occurs with a South-facing form of Śiva referred to as *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*.<sup>37</sup> Apasmāra normally exhibits grotesque facial features

35 Not all subsequent authors have accepted this date, which has been assigned on the basis of an inscribed, supposedly matching goddess figurine dated to 917 CE. (Nagaswamy 1979b). Since the two images show very similar stylistic traits, I personally do not find this claim to be altogether unwarranted, although the issue should still retain a small question mark.

36 Smith (1996: 222–227) has made some astute observations on Apasmāra/*Muyalakaṇ*. Ultimately, this character that is generally classified as a “*bhūta*”—“ghost” remains enigmatic. It has to be noted that it is strong enough to bear the god's immensely powerful step.

37 While *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is generally seated, there is a rare, early instance of a standing Śiva identified as *Viṇādhara* (“holding a stringed instrument”) *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, who treads with his left foot on Apasmāra holding his serpent (Rathnasabapathy 1982: 87–91). The author considers a date of seventh-eighth century possible for the finely worked image. However, an identification as “*Dakṣiṇāmūrti*” (“South[ward facing] Form/Manifestation”) is improbable, since the orientation of movable images other than Naṭarāja cannot be determined. Other Pallava specimens generally do not

like frowning eyebrows. He lies on his belly, holding a cobra in one of his hands, usually the left one, in an attitude that may be described as playful. His free hand seems to imitate the cobra's hood. The head of Apasmāra points in the direction of Śiva's raised leg. Sometimes he looks up, towards Śiva, or straight ahead, towards the beholder (Figure 2),<sup>38</sup> with both these variants seemingly restricted to relatively early images. The surrounding arch or circular frame (*prabhāmaṇḍala*, Tam. *tiruvāci*), generally provided with stylised flames, has been skilfully executed by sculptors. It is often removable, which must have facilitated the cleaning of the image after the application of liquids. The movement within a vertical ring of fire is an intriguing visual concept which suits the Dancing Śiva perfectly, who is already described by Kāraikkālamaiyār as "dancing on fire". However, an ornamental arch with flames appears with other deities as well. The accompanying goddess is often surrounded by a narrower, arch-shaped *prabhāmaṇḍala* (Plate 30).

In spite of a certain uniformity in the evolved Naṭarāja images, it must be stated that the individually distinct treatment of details is absolutely stunning, particularly in the images ascribed to the period until and during the twelfth century.

The full-fledged concept of Naṭarāja, still accepted today, is obviously reflected in the ca. eleventh–twelfth century *Tirumantiram*, stanza 2799, where the meaning of hand and foot positions and the two attributes is given, with the exception of the left arm crossing the body. The frame of reference is that of the five-fold action, "*pañcakṛtya*", of the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition:

"Hara's [Śiva's] drum is Creation;  
Hara's hand gesturing protection is Preservation;  
Hara's fire is Dissolution;<sup>39</sup>  
Hara's foot planted down is Obfuscation (*tirobhāva*);  
Hara's foot raised in dance is Grace (*anugraha*) abiding."

appear with the dwarfish figure underfoot. For the development during the Early Cōla Period see Gillet (2010: 98, n. 209).

<sup>38</sup> In Figure 2, Apasmāra is almost unique in that he raises his left hand and thus strangely mirrors Naṭarāja's protective gesture. See below for a further comparison of both protagonists.

<sup>39</sup> Kulke (1970: 129) worked with a different, probably erroneous version, translating "axe" instead of "fire", which led him to the conclusion that the *Tirumantiram* did not yet refer to the Naṭarāja icon.

## TERMINOLOGY

The well-known *ānanda-tāṇḍava* ("blissful-vigorous dance") that Śiva Naṭarāja performs at Chidambaram has developed as a result of a local adaptation of a pan-Indian concept of Śiva's Dance. The god's markedly ambivalent character, which is reminiscent of his Vedic precursor, the formidable God Rudra, clearly informs the notion and setting of this powerful topos, a dance pervading and even shaking the universe.<sup>40</sup> As noted above, Śiva's Dance often refers to the world's destruction at the end of a cyclic time period called a *kalpa*. For his dance as Naṭarāja at Chidambaram, the old concept has receded in favour of more benevolent connotations.

Scholars have hardly agreed on a typological definition of the image, except for a general description,<sup>41</sup> nor have they properly defined its subtypes. In some more recent works, a useful differentiation has been made between "Naṭeśa" (Naṭeśa—"Lord of Dancers") and "Naṭarāja" (Naṭarāja—"King of Dancers"), both names occurring in the *Cidambaramāhātmya* of ca. early twelfth century.<sup>42</sup> The former is now used for the Dancing Śiva in general, when he is not shown in any specific narrative context, while the latter refers to the type under discussion. Both appellations are not warranted by the earliest South Indian sources but have emerged as handy reference tools. Regarding the latter, I would like to use the expression "Chidambaram Type" in order to narrow down the general type of Naṭarāja to a—somewhat hypothetical—iconography that specifically belongs to, or originated in, Chidambaram.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in the present context, all the images of Śiva dancing with his left leg lifted to about the height of the right leg's knee (or slightly higher) and transversely crossing to the right will be considered as forming an—admittedly somewhat diverse—typological category.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Cf. O'Flaherty 1980.

<sup>41</sup> Kaimal 1999: 392–393; 2011: 474–475. However, the author does not address the issue of whether images missing e.g. the flying hair would be counted among the Naṭarāja type, which I would opt for. The actual blurring of the general type definition and the identification of subtypes deserves more attention in future studies.

<sup>42</sup> The *Cidambaramāhātmya* refers to the Dancing Śiva at Chidambaram as "Naṭeśa", "Naṭeśvara", or, rarely, "Naṭarāja" (e.g. XXVI.37).

<sup>43</sup> Barrett 1981: 17–20. Cf. note 32.

<sup>44</sup> What Gillet (2010: 148) calls "Type-de-la-jambe-transversale".

Although “Āṭavallāṇ” (also spelt Āḍavallāṇ; from “*āṭu*”—to dance/act, and “*vallāṇ*”—mighty man) was introduced by some scholars as the most common Tamil name for Naṭarāja, the term has not become widely used. Another fitting indigenous expression would be “Cidambareśvara”—Lord of Chidambaram. Quite well-known is “*bhujāṅgatrāsita*”—generally translated as “in fear of a serpent”—a terminus technicus for the 24th of the 108 *karaṇas* of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (treatise on dance, drama and music of ca. third century CE).<sup>45</sup> This term has been used to describe Naṭarāja’s characteristic posture in some of the South Indian Āgamas,<sup>46</sup> which, in spite of the indigenous tradition that postulates an ancient origin, cannot be proven to be earlier than ca. eleventh–twelfth centuries. As “conceptual kinetic units”, *karaṇas* denote a sequence of movement and should be applied to any static posture only critically and with great care.<sup>47</sup>

Regarding the English expressions “Cosmic Dancer” or “Cosmic Dance” coined by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,<sup>48</sup> although these translate the implications of the image, one should bear in mind that they do not correspond to any indigenous term. Apart from “Naṭarāja” itself, which is known at least since the twelfth century, other frequent Sanskrit terms referring to the Dancing Śiva in southern Indian terminology are Nṛttamūrti,<sup>49</sup> Nṛtṭeśa<sup>50</sup> and Naṭeśvara<sup>51</sup>. The earliest devotional poetry, the Tēvāram hymns in Tamil, use a plethora of appellations for the

<sup>45</sup> *Nāṭyaśāstra* 4.85; it seems to describe the posture of the lifted, obliquely held leg, although the side of the body is not specified. The names of the *karaṇas* are not strictly descriptive or self-explanatory.

<sup>46</sup> Gopinatha Rao (1916: 223) was already cautious about this: “*Perhaps* the one hundred and eight kinds of dances mentioned in the [Nāṭya-]śāstra are identical with the one hundred and eight modes of dances of Śiva [in the Śaivāgamas]” (italics are mine).

<sup>47</sup> Lopez y Royo 2004. The three *karaṇas* *bhujāṅgatrāsita*, *bhujāṅgāñcita*[ka] and *bhujāṅgatrāstarecita* may be seen to contain elements related to Naṭarāja’s posture. However, in labelled depictions of *karaṇa* reliefs, the positions of the legs and (front) hands are not identical with the latter (cf. Subrahmanyam 2003, III: 26, 39, 44).

<sup>48</sup> The caption of the frontispiece of the volume of 1918, referring to the article “The Dance of Śiva”, reads “Cosmic Dance of Naṭarājā [sic]”.

<sup>49</sup> Gopinatha Rao 1916: 223–270, on the basis of several Āgamas.

<sup>50</sup> *Cidambaramāhātmya* XIX.9bc.

<sup>51</sup> *Sakalādhikāra*, Chapter 9, but it also occurs in the presumably earlier *Cidambaramāhātmya*.

Dancing Śiva.<sup>52</sup> Naṭarāja’s lifted (*uddhṛta*) left “curved foot” is frequently called “*kuñcita-pāda*”. It arouses rapture in the mind of his devotees.<sup>53</sup> The *Cidambaramāhātmya* (XVII.41) has the composite expression “*tiryak-kuñcita-vāma-aṅghri*”—“the straight (or oblique) [leg and] curved left foot”. Reverence of Śiva’s dancing feet is frequently expressed in early Tamil devotional poetry (ca. sixth to ninth centuries).



3 Naṭarāja temple, Chidambaram, Citsabhā, with Kanakasabhā to the left, view from the Northeast (in the foreground the small shrine of Brahmā-Canḍeśvara). Photo: Raja Deekshithar.

<sup>52</sup> Kalidos 1996: 15–17; Soundararajan 2004: 28–29.

<sup>53</sup> Umāpati’s *Kuñcitāṅghristava*, celebrating Śiva’s Curved Foot, was previously assigned to the early 14th century (Smith 1996: 8). Alexis Sanderson opines that several authors can be expected to have borne the initiation name “Umāpati”, and above that he has discovered a few intrinsic pointers to a 16th century date (Sanderson forthcoming: 121, n. 260).

## SOME FACTS ABOUT THE HALL

The Citsabhā (“Hall of Consciousness”) shares its southern longitudinal side with the lower and porch-like Kanakasabhā (“Golden Hall”) (Figure 3). Its footprint measures approximately six by three metres. Both architectural elements rest on high stone bases and are covered by separate ridged roofs, with the ridges being crowned by nine pot-shaped finials, respectively. Roofing for both halls consists of small metal tiles. The Citsabhā roof has gilded copper, while the Kanakasabhā roof, in spite of its name, is only covered in copper. The Citsabhā is additionally surrounded by a cloister on three sides. The interior of the Citsabhā, which is said to be partly constructed from wood, is accessible only to priests. Naṭarāja, his consort and the empty, sparsely decorated wall space referred to as “the Secret of Chidambaram”, Cidambara-*rahasya*, are the main objects of worship in the Citsabhā, with a grille to separate them from the public that is allowed to approach from the Kanakasabhā. The “Secret” is a singular, enigmatic feature of Chidambaram that remains open to interpretation and, due to its uniqueness and inaccessibility to the public, even speculation. It is regarded as the place for the element Ether and as the actual sanctum sanctorum. The space of the Citsabhā is further divided into ritually relevant sections.<sup>54</sup>

The Hall, which is not referred to as a twin structure in early texts, is praised in the early twelfth century *Cidambaramāhātmya* (XV.39), where it is described as the only place which can resist the power of Śiva’s Dance and thus “unbreakable” (*abhaṅgura*).

## EARLY EXAMPLES OF ŚIVA’S DANCE: BADAMI 1 AND ELLORA 21

Naṭarāja has clearly developed from earlier representations of Naṭeśa, although the innovation that resulted in this specific form with high recognition value was quite significant. An early precursor of the South Indian type appears though in a small relief of ca. early sixth century at Bhumara, where the same transverse leg position occurs.<sup>55</sup> Any other

<sup>54</sup> Natarajan 1994: 134. On the Cidambara-*rahasya* see, e.g. Natarajan 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Banerji 1924, pl. XIIIb; cf. Gillet 2010: 146, n. 275. Apart from the leg position, it does not conform with the later South Indian type.

features of this Dancing Śiva do not compare, however, and this type obviously has no continuance, although images of Śiva Dancing have been produced throughout India.<sup>56</sup>

For the southern part of India, the grand artistic legacy of the Elephanta Cave temples near Mumbai of about the middle of the sixth century provides the best known early evidence of the development of Naṭarāja. At Elephanta, there are two skilfully carved high reliefs of the multi-armed Naṭeśa that survive, though sadly damaged.<sup>57</sup> Śiva’s basic posture is similar in both reliefs and already conforms to his common stance in the depictions of the Deccan and Orissa,<sup>58</sup> a frequent variant being his own mirror image. This posture involves a marked flexion of the body. While the upper part of the body moves to one side, dragging along the respective stiffly held arm (*daṇḍahasta* or *gajahasta*), the opposite hip and leg are curved outward to the other side. The leg of the more agitated side is strongly flexed, with the tip of the foot touching the ground (*agratalasañcara*), while the other foot rests on the ground. An example of the “mirror image” with respect to Elephanta is the well-known Naṭeśa image at Badami of the second half of the sixth century (Figure 4).<sup>59</sup> Here, Śiva is eighteen-armed, displaying an enormous array of weapons and he is shown together with his bull vehicle and his son Gaṇeśa, who seems to playfully imitate the stiff arm position with his right arm and trunk. A simple lotus socle forms Śiva’s support. Features already foreshadowing the Naṭarāja type are the small drum in one of his upper right hands and the *daṇḍahasta* of the front left hand. The cobra held aloft with two hands behind the god’s head (and halo) is an early attribute of Naṭeśa.

Several important Naṭeśa images of the seventh–eighth centuries are found in the Ellora cave temples, Maharashtra. Here, it is fascinating to observe the occurrence of a small skeletal figure cavorting around the legs of the Dancing Śiva. It carries the visual information of a spirit of a deceased person (*preta*) but is also reminiscent of Bhṛṅgin, an ardent,

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Desai & Mason 1993: 239–241, cat. no. 60.

<sup>57</sup> The best known image is at the northern entrance to the main cave temple (Michell 2002: 38–39); the second, very similar one has attracted less attention (Wessels-Mevissen 2001: fig. 20). Both are facing east.

<sup>58</sup> For the “Elephanta type” (my expression) see, e.g., Sivaramamurti 1974: 172 (1994: 160), fig. 9 (in this case, I am not sure whether the early date of fifth century can be upheld); 173 (1994: 161), fig. 10; 292 (1994: 281), fig. 162.

<sup>59</sup> This relief has been published frequently. An important earlier publication is Lippe 1972: fig. 39.

completely fleshless devotee of Śiva.<sup>60</sup> When exactly this weird figure should be called “Bhṛṅgin”, who, during a later period in the extreme South, is depicted three-legged and dancing next to Naṭarāja, has been the object of ongoing research.<sup>61</sup> The dancing skeleton is particularly common in Ellora, but not restricted to this artistically prolific site.<sup>62</sup>

In a unique configuration, the well-known, sensuously portrayed early Naṭeśa in Ellora, Cave 21 of ca. seventh century, faces a somewhat gruesome scene. It consists of a huge four-armed male skeletal being with a female counterpart at his proper left side, who have been referred to as “Kāla”, Time, and his female counterpart “Kālī”.<sup>63</sup> This is a reasonable interpretation, although in the absence of an iconographic injunction it cannot ultimately be proven. The wall laterally connecting Naṭeśa and the supposed Kāla group depicts the Saptamātṛkās, Seven Mother Goddesses of ambivalent character. They are seated along the roughly South-oriented wall, facing North. Naṭeśa in this case is depicted as particularly young and of a pleasant demeanour, standing in stark contrast to his ghoulish vis-à-vis, probably representing another facet of his own divine persona. Above him, on the left, four deities appear as witnesses to his dance, riding their respective vehicles, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra and, most probably, Yama.<sup>64</sup> The confrontation of Naṭeśa with a “counter image” relating to death and decay, in my view, sheds some light on the situation in Chidambaram, where Naṭarāja faces the South, Time/Death’s direction.

<sup>60</sup> Handelman & Shulman 1997: 135 and 138, fig. 20.

<sup>61</sup> Bautze-Picron 2010: 104–107. It is interesting to find the author pointing out some Buddhist sources. The “individuation” of Bhṛṅgin may have been underway around this period. It could well have been a secondary development, starting with a liminal being that was more akin to a restless spirit of a deceased person. Perhaps such beings were conceived as being attracted by Śiva’s dance movements.

<sup>62</sup> Sivaramamurti 1974: 189 (1994: 177), fig. 33 shows a ceiling panel from Bhavanasi Sangam / Andhra Pradesh dating to ca. eighth century, where Naṭeśa and Kālī dance together peacefully, with a skeletal figure, most probably Bhṛṅgin, between them.

<sup>63</sup> E.g. Handelman & Shulman 1997: 139 and 143, fig. 25; Bautze-Picron 2010: 101, fig. 5. For the Naṭeśa panel see Sivaramamurti 1974: 174 (1994: 162), fig. 11 (wrongly labelled “Cave 22”).

<sup>64</sup> Earlier, I had tentatively identified the latter as Kubera (Wessels-Mevissen 2001: 27 and fig. 22).



4 Naṭeśa with Gaṇeśa, drummer (proper left) and bull (behind), stone relief in front of Cave temple 1 (facing east), Badami/Karnataka, ca. second half of the sixth century. Photo: Gudrun Melzer.

#### NAṬEŚA AND ASPECTS OF SPACE

In several images of Śiva Dancing, which obviously form a pool from which the Naṭarāja image was developed, visual reference has been made to the eight directions of space. The most common reference involves associating the figures of the guardians of the directions (*dikpālas*). An early example of Naṭeśa with an—at least numerically—



complete group of directional guardians comes from Ellora 29, dating to ca. seventh century.<sup>65</sup> The panels displaying such an assembly are unusually large and remain restricted to the rock-cut temples, which provide ample space. In smaller depictions of Naṭeśa, the *dikpālas* are generally absent.

A second mode of representation is that of ceiling panels in temple halls. Ceiling panels showing Naṭeśa surrounded by the eight *dikpālas* have developed in the Deccan. Unfortunately, none of the examples comes from a surely datable context.<sup>66</sup> While working with approximate dates, the majority of this type of ceiling panels are assignable to the ninth century. It is likely that they were first conceived in the latter part of the eighth century. There are several variants with regard to the number of arms of Naṭeśa, his dance posture and attributes and certain features of the directional guardians and their configuration. Naṭeśa and the *dikpālas* are always accommodated in separate subpanels. Although the latter also occur on ceiling panels centred on other deities, their association with Naṭeśa seems particularly strong. Since the *dikpālas* are shown in the attitude of paying obeisance to Śiva, this configuration obviously highlights Śiva's control of the directions of space. In such panels, images of Naṭeśa have four or eight arms, both numbers that correspond to common classifications of the directions. It is a rare textual reference when the *Tirumantiram* describes the hands of the Dancing Śiva as being or symbolising the eight directions.<sup>67</sup>

#### SOME SELECT PRECURSORS OF NAṬARĀJA: KURAM, PATTADAKAL, ELLORA 16, SIYAMANGALAM

In the formative period of the Naṭarāja image, a number of Naṭeśa images in bronze were created which differ quite considerably in their details. Certain of their features appear to live on in the Naṭarāja icon.

<sup>65</sup> Wessels-Mevissen 2001: fig. 21.

<sup>66</sup> Wessels-Mevissen 2007: pls. 24.9–12 and *passim*.

<sup>67</sup> His “spreading hands” are the eight directions according to *Tirumantiram* 2774. Although I am actually unable to judge the accuracy of this translation, I suppose that Kaimal (1999: 394) is mistaken when she writes that the dwarf underfoot is eight-armed.

Nagaswamy, on stylistic grounds, proposes a date of the last quarter of the seventh century for the remarkable piece from Kuram (Figure 5).<sup>68</sup> It could be regarded as a precursor of Naṭarāja with respect to the raised left leg.<sup>69</sup> Just as in the latter, the front left arm is held parallel with the left shank, though differently. The dwarf lying underfoot is already clutching a cobra, in this case with his right hand, and the god's headdress contains the three elements skull, crescent (both right) and datura (left). Among these elements, the skull has not yet reached the centre and the datura not yet the lower position. The four arms are quite common to early bronze images. The rear left hand holds what is most probably a damaged serpent, but it is curved in such a way that it can be interpreted as a noose—*pāśa*.<sup>70</sup> As such it might refer to Śiva as vanquisher of Yama (see below). Through his frontal position and the serpent in his right hand, the dwarf resembles that of the supposedly earliest specimen of Naṭarāja, which is also characterised by a low positioning of hands of the god (Figure 2).

A typological precursor of Naṭarāja in stone belongs to the Virūpākṣa temple, Pattadakal/Karnataka, that was founded in 745 CE (Figure 6). Here the number of arms is eight, but the fire and the small drum are already present in two of the rear hands, on the proper sides. With one exception, the other hands are empty and display dance gestures. One of the left hands is resting on the left thigh in a scissor-like gesture, which would have been present as well in the Badami 1 example before damage occurred (Figure 4). The supporting dwarf, with an unusual, curly hairstyle, is particularly emphasised and ridiculed through his naked bottom. At Pattadakal, many forms of Śiva come with supporting dwarves in various shapes and sizes, sometimes holding a serpent. Naṭeśa's crown does not exhibit any of Naṭarāja's signs and there are no flying hair strands. The crossing arm and leg are both absent.

<sup>68</sup> Nagaswamy 1988: 153 and fig. 1. This image has been published frequently. Guy (2004: 76, fig. 7) assigns it to the ninth century, which is actually the more commonly used date.

<sup>69</sup> This position of the legs is generally described as *ūrdhvajānu* (raised knee), another *karāṇa* of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and thus, again, difficult to assess. A common misapplication occurs with respect to the *karāṇa catura* (*Nāṭyaśāstra* 4.101). Although *catura* refers to a hand gesture, for the past decades it has been used to denote a “square” position of the legs.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. another illustration, Sivaramamurti 1974: 204 (1994: 193), fig. 52. See below for the close affinity between noose and serpent.



5 Naṭeśa, with a serpent or noose (attribute of Kālāntaka) in the rear left hand, Kuram, Kanchipuram District, bronze, Government Museum, Chennai, ca. late seventh century or later. Photo: author.



6 Naṭeśa holding the attributes of Naṭarāja in two of his rear hands, Virūpākṣa temple, Pattadakal, stone relief, northern face, ca. middle of the eighth century. Photo: Gudrun Melzer.

On the ceiling of the main hall In Ellora 16 is an intriguing mural of Śiva in a rare dance posture (Plate 31)<sup>71</sup> which resembles Naṭarāja with respect to the transversal leg position. It may belong to the latter part of the eighth century. Naṭeśa's stance has an interesting parallel in another early bronze Naṭeśa from Poruppumettuppatti, Madurai District.<sup>72</sup> The transversal leg is, however, executed on the opposite side, while the left leg is the supporting one, resulting in a strangely twisted body posture. Naṭeśa is ten-armed and holds various attributes, with his front hands showing attitudes comparable to the Naṭarāja type. His right leg is bent in such a way that the upper side of the foot is visible and the foot forms a straight line with the leg (cf. the left leg in Figure 2). No dwarf or socle is depicted and the god balances himself on a beam or strut. Naṭeśa wears large, symmetrical earrings and a crown with a tucked-in crescent, behind which there is a large halo. No hair is seen flying. Naṭeśa's crown is adorned with three small skulls. The Lord's hue is reddish and he is wearing white clothes and whitish ornaments. Below, to the proper right, is seated a small, probably multi-armed figure, most probably female, clasping two hands in adoration. Among the other remarkable details is a skeletal figure crouching on the proper left. All three figures (including Naṭeśa) are holding shallow whitish bowls, most probably skull-cups. The skeletal figure seen wearing a tiny bangle holds the bowl in the direction of Śiva, whose lifted foot approaches its head. It is highly reminiscent of the skeletal figure that is present at Śiva's dance on the relief panels at Ellora, but here, it is squatting on the side, immediately next to Śiva's divine lifted foot. The backdrop of this unusual scene is painted in dark red, probably evoking fire.

Siyamangalam (Ciyamankalam), Tiruvannamalai District of Tamilnadu, has produced another important early specimen, a pillar relief of a Dancing Śiva with the correct leg in the transversal position.<sup>73</sup> What has not been noted in this connection is the proximity of two reliefs of

<sup>71</sup> Sivaramamurti 1974: 222 (1994: 211), fig. 73; he erroneously locates it in the "Nandimaṇḍapa".

<sup>72</sup> Sivaramamurti 1974: 213–214 (1994: 202–203), figs. 61–62. Śiva stands on an unusually large Apasmāra. As a date, the ninth or early tenth century has been proposed.

<sup>73</sup> Pattabiramin 1975: pls. XX, XXI. Naṭeśa's spouse is depicted to his left, on the adjacent side of the pillar. Guy (2004: 77–78 and fig. 8) follows the date of 798 CE pointed out by Barrett (1990: 332–333). See also Gillet 2010: 148–149 and fig. 76.

dancing warriors in a different style that probably predate the Naṭeśa of the late eighth century. Naṭeśa's stance conforms to Naṭarāja's transversal leg posture, but his front left arm is not thrown across his body. The flying hair strands are already present. The attributes held in the rear hands are fire burning in a bowl (right) and an axe (left). Since the fire is on the right side, this version does not conform to the Naṭarāja type, and the axe is unique in this context. The erect cobra shown next to his right leg and the absence of the pressed-down dwarf have been noted in previous descriptions. Among the small attending figures, the seated drummer is a more familiar figure, while the other, most probably the *tāla* player (timekeeper) strangely bending over Śiva's lifted foot, is a unique feature. The Siyamangalam example constitutes the closest "typological relative" of Naṭarāja among the examples presented here, although the Kuram image comes surprisingly close, particularly, when the early date is realistic.

#### THE CREATIVE ICONOGRAPHY OF ŚIVA'S DANCE ON PALLAVA STRUCTURAL TEMPLES

In the area of the present state of Tamilnadu, Hindu cave temples were carved from the sixth century onwards, while the earliest structural stone temples date back to the late seventh century CE. Even the early religious establishments and loose sculptures of the Pallava period were rather developed in terms of artistic quality. Smooth, sparsely adorned slim bodies appear in sublimely graceful shapes, the faces—like the bodies—following a certain ideal type. Depictions of Naṭeśa occur on the Kailāsanātha temple as well as on the smaller, slightly later Śaiva temples at Kanchipuram. With their marked variety, these would have provided an inspirational pool from which the Naṭarāja image has developed. While in the early rock-cut temples of Mamallapuram purely dancing images of Śiva are absent,<sup>74</sup> the instances of Naṭeśa on the temples of Kanchipuram from the eighth century abound in variants and reveal a rich repertory of forms.

<sup>74</sup> On the Dharmarāja Ratha, both dancing images are actually involved in killing demons (Kulke 1970: figs. 12 and 13; fig. 12 might be an early image of Jalandharavadha, cf. Gillet 2010: 211–221; fig. 13 is an early instance of Kālāntaka, cf. Kaimal 1999: 415, n. 19).



7 Śiva dancing with his right leg lifted vertically (with his bull vehicle in therianthropomorphic form dancing on his left), Kailāsanātha temple, Kanchipuram, stone relief, northern portion of the western face (facing west), ca. first quarter of the eighth century. Photo: author.

The Pallava stances of Śiva on the structural temples of Kanchipuram appear to be angular and conforming to geometrical shapes.<sup>75</sup> From all that can be observed on the Pallava temples of this period—and also on contemporary monuments and moveable icons—it becomes clear that with regard to dance representation a climate of experimentation prevailed at the time in the extreme South of India. This has led to some unusual, skilfully conceived representations of Naṭeśa. It must have been just this atmosphere of innovation on a high artistic level, particularly observable from the eighth century, which actually resulted in the creation of the Naṭarāja icon.

Naṭeśa with a vertically raised right leg is commonly referred to as *ūrdhva-tāṇḍava* (“erect” vigorous dance). This posture, which already occurs on the eighth century Kailāsanātha temple (Figure 7), is described in later sources as the one that enabled Śiva to vanquish the Goddess Kālī. Although the two are not visually associated in this early period, a beautiful, eight-armed wrathful goddess is uniquely depicted as dancing rather close to a Pallava Naṭeśa of the “thrown back legs” type on the Kailāsanātha temple. She could probably be regarded as an early instance of Kālī Dancing (Figure 8).<sup>76</sup>

#### EARLY RECORDS OF THE CONCEPT: THE POWERFUL POETIC ICON OF KĀRAIKKĀLAMMAIYĀR

The Saint-Poetess Kāraikkālammaiṅṅār (“revered mother from Kāraikkāl”, also: Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅṅār) is regarded as the earliest among the devotional poets of the South, the 63 Nāyaṅṅārs. In the second half of the first millennium CE, these devotional poets used the Tamil language in a novel context. Kāraikkālammaiṅṅār’s works, which have been handed

<sup>75</sup> Gillet 2010: 145–171.

<sup>76</sup> The identification as Kālī-Cāmuṅṅḍā has already been suggested by Parlier-Renault (2006: 152–153, fig. 109). Gillet (2010: 244–245, fig. 165) more cautiously describes her as “déesse dansante”. The position of the front arms resembling the Naṭarāja type is particularly noteworthy. For the associated Naṭeśa see Gillet 2010: 162, fig. 94. It is quite remarkable that the panel between Śiva and the probable Kālī shows his peaceful consort along with the bull. Thus, the presence of two female deities close to Naṭeśa basically conforms to the ensemble of the Tanjavur mural (Plate 32) and a number of stone panels centred on Naṭarāja.

down from ca. mid-sixth century, have remained less utilised by scholars studying Naṭarāja's Dance, perhaps due to the fact that a reliable English translation has only recently become available.<sup>77</sup>



8 Eight-armed goddess dancing, probably Kālī, Kailāsanātha temple, Kanchipuram, stone relief, southern portion of the western face (facing north), ca. first quarter of the eighth century. Photo: Christian Luczanits.

77 Craddock 2010: 115–144.

Kāraikkālammaiār's description of her beloved God Śiva and his impeccably divine dance on a burning ground for the dead (which she claims to have entered in the form of a goblin or ghost—Tam. *pēy*) is vivid and picturesque. Many of the physical features of Śiva's body described by her have remained valid. As can be expected, they do not completely tally with the Naṭarāja type but they already come quite close to it. The recurring information conforming with the latter are, in particular, his red or coral-coloured hue, his body covered with white ashes, his carrying a flame in his hand, being dressed in a tiger skin, having flying hair strands, being adorned with *koṅṇai* and a moon crescent on the right side of his head.<sup>78</sup> The Goddess Gaṅgā at least once is described as being on Śiva's head rather than just on his strands,<sup>79</sup> but the fact that she is mentioned frequently in the context of his dance is remarkable. Other mythological achievements of the god are also referred to repeatedly, including his vanquishing of Yama, the God of Death and his suppression of the demon king Rāvaṇa. The display of his "hero's anklet" (Tam. *kaḷal*) is referred to several times. Peterson has specified this as "an ornamental band or ring worn midway between ankle and knee, as a prize for victory and valour".<sup>80</sup> However, the thin thread holding most probably a bell that is often seen on one of Naṭarāja's legs rather resembles that of Śiva as a mendicant (*Bhikṣāṇamūrti*), which has been referred to by some authors as "*bhṛṅgipāda*" (faintly visible on Plate 30).<sup>81</sup> This one supposedly served a different purpose than a hero's anklet, alerting wild animals of the approaching ascetic.

There is a reference to the fact that Śiva's hair is "flying in the eight directions",<sup>82</sup> which points to his embracing space. Another, quite similar, expression occurs in the *Cidambaramāhātmya* of the early twelfth century (see below). Furthermore, the fact that Kāraikkālammaiār describes the fire attribute in Śiva's hand seems to me a significant reference, probably forecasting the image of Naṭarāja.<sup>83</sup>

78 Cf. de Bruijn 2007: 15–19. The author is not always adequately precise.

79 *Arputat Tiruvantāti* 11 (Craddock 2010: 117).

80 Peterson 1989: 98, n. 33.

81 Krishna Sastri 1916: 100. It is very unusual to find this on both legs in a Naṭarāja image in the Metropolitan Museum, of the 12th–13th centuries (Lippe 1971: 66–67, figs. 39–41).

82 *Tiruvāḷankāṭṭu Mūta Tiruppatikam* 1 (Craddock 2010: 139).

83 The fire attribute is quite specific to Naṭarāja and hardly known from other related images. Figure 6 shows an exception, as well as Figure 7,

As an important deviation from the later tradition, the place referred to by Kāraikkālammaiṅār is not Chidambaram, but Tiruvalangadu. This would have formed another locale of early worship of the Dancing Śiva which may have paved the way for the cult emerging in Chidambaram. At Tiruvalangadu, the dance contest between Śiva and Kālī is especially remembered nowadays, which, however, does not form a topic of Kāraikkālammaiṅār's poetry. I am not arguing here that she already referred to the full-fledged form of Naṭarāja, but that some key elements of this icon may well have been coined in her poetry.<sup>84</sup> One of her verses extolling Śiva's foot is the following:

“This is your foot that  
pressed Rāvaṇa  
who through arrogance lifted the mountain on his twenty strong  
shoulders,  
and made Māl [Viṣṇu] who always has Lakṣmī with him, and  
Brahmā, lament,  
because they have not seen it.  
But then later they rejoiced, and worshipped it.  
And your foot conquered Yama,  
then kicked him.”

*Arputat Tiruvantāti* 80, after Craddock 2010: 130

Kāraikkālammaiṅār describes Śiva as sublime and immaculate, even though he belongs to the gruesome cremation ground and associates himself with ghosts. Her basic message has been aptly paraphrased by Jean Filliozat (1982: 8): “Au milieu de l'horreur des bûchers funéraires [...], le dieu qui danse immaculé (*Vimala*, 2ème Dizain, 10) est la négation de la Mort, la négation des naissances toujours répétées pour ramener la mort. Il est la forme souveraine de l'existence éternelle, refuge de ceux qui sont à ses pieds et participent à son éternité, hors des courants de perdition, mais dans son mouvement sublime”.

Significantly, Kāraikkālammaiṅār herself figures in a number of tenth and eleventh century stone panels of Naṭarāja. The panels clearly refer

where Gillet (2010: 149, 154) has recognised a burning object in the uppermost hand on the proper left side.

<sup>84</sup> Alternatively, she may have been acquainted with an early predecessor of the Naṭarāja icon, made of perishable material, or, perhaps, embodied by a medium.

to the spreading popularity of his cult, as do the bronze images.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the poetess was, by this time, visually acknowledged as the chief devotee of Naṭarāja, and that within the framework of his cult at Chidambaram.

#### NAṬARĀJA'S HALL SHOWN IN A TANJAVUR MURAL

The earliest depiction of the Naṭarāja shrine is the well-known mural in the inner circumambulatory corridor of the sanctum of the Rājarājesvara temple, Tanjavur, the great royal temple constructed by Rājarāja Cōḷa I and consecrated in 1010 CE. Among these paintings, which must have been executed somewhat after this date, one stands out as a particularly large, faithful rendering of Chidambaram's sanctum (Plate 32). A second one shows the same temple slightly differently and in less detail.<sup>86</sup> Kaimal has observed that while standing in front of the larger picture, executed on the northwestern side of the sanctum (facing west), the viewer is actually oriented towards Chidambaram and he is presented a similar view of the architectural situation as if he had been able to bridge the distance with his own eyes.<sup>87</sup>

Chidambaram is located northeast of Tanjavur. A king, whose identity has been disputed, most probably Rājarāja I himself, is shown worshipping Naṭarāja together with his three wives. This group of devotees is standing in what is nowadays the Kanakasabhā. Until recently, it was rarely noticed that the Goddess Kālī participates in Naṭarāja's dance, while her figure appears much smaller in size. This seems to imply a reference to the goddess's presence, which the local lore in Chidambaram—and in Tiruvalangadu—refers to. Here, the mythological episode of the Dance Contest between Śiva and Kālī seems to be alluded to,<sup>88</sup> an important

<sup>85</sup> Her figure is among the diminutive figures of Naṭarāja's entourage and sometimes difficult to trace. The finest examples are at Gangaikondacholapuram, dated 1025 (Kaimal 1999: fig. 12; detail in Smith 1996: 221, pl. 30), and at Konerirajapuram, which is earlier and dates from ca. 971 (Kaimal 1999: fig. 11). In the former case the poetess is depicted seated below Naṭarāja's lifted foot, grouped with the dwarfish musicians, while in the latter instance she is integrated in the background of the panel, seated besides the dancing Bhṛṅgin (cf. this identification by Kaimal 1999: 395).

<sup>86</sup> Michell & Peterson 2010: 125, fig. 90d. For both paintings see also Champakalakshmi 1973: 353–355.

<sup>87</sup> Kaimal 1999: 400.

<sup>88</sup> O'Flaherty 1980: 210–211; Shulman 1980: 213–223.

part of Chidambaram's temple history, although it is absent from the twelfth-century *Cidambaramāhātmya*. From a theological perspective, it comes as a foundation myth, because Śiva is said to have established himself at Chidambaram only after defeating Kālī (or, for that matter, a local goddess identified with her). A given fact, however, is that both Śiva and Kālī are conceived as dancing side by side in certain contexts.<sup>89</sup>

It is highly significant that the Tanjavur painting depicts Kālī, even if she appears diminutive, in the architectural context of Naṭarāja's sanctum, because she does not form part of the assembly of deities any more. The considerable difference in size attests to her inferiority, but she is shown as actively engaged in dancing and displaying an intricate step involving crossed legs. Her body colour is green. Significantly, the floor she is dancing on seems to lie below the level of Śiva's partner Śivakāmī, who has a pale complexion and is only faintly visible on his right side and, gracefully leaning on Śiva's bull vehicle. Kālī's floor level is actually that of Apasmāra, the dwarf writhing under Naṭarāja's foot, although she is perhaps shown dancing on a corpse.<sup>90</sup> Naṭarāja himself radiates male beauty and confidence. His sheer expansiveness and dominating physical presence outshines the wrathful goddess. His headdress consists of the typical fan-shaped crest and a datura flower on the proper left, and it most probably includes a centrally placed skull. Reddish sashes that are visible on both sides of Naṭarāja's head add an important feature because they are also found in some bronze images. Śiva's smile is conspicuous. His face and body appear white, while his hands and feet are red, probably reflecting the red hue which the earliest poetry has already assigned to him. The blue throat caused by swallowing poison, which has often been described for Naṭarāja, is never shown, however.

On the basis of this evidence I am inclined to infer that the Goddess Kālī could have been present in the Hall of Naṭarāja during the early eleventh century, particularly, because it can be argued that the painted depiction of Kālī mirrors a metal icon. In fact, there are other indications that this goddess had been kept there.<sup>91</sup> The presence of Kālī in the

sanctum, even as protecting it, has been mentioned in some texts, but not interpreted as conclusive evidence so far.<sup>92</sup> The rare bronze image of Kālī at Tiruvalangadu provides a good parallel to the painted figure of her, while another one from Chennai shares some of its features.<sup>93</sup> The images in Tanjavur and Tiruvalangadu are eight-armed, with the upper right arm greeting Naṭarāja, who must have been positioned to the proper right side. Even the line of vision runs towards the upper right as in the Tanjavur painting. A difference occurs with regard to the leg position. At Tiruvalangadu, both legs are planted on the ground, as if to demonstrate the goddess's clumsiness, but in Tanjavur, her legs are crossed, with the left foot planted in front. This posture is exactly like the Chennai example of ca. early tenth century, where the goddess appears more confident and shares certain features with Naṭarāja. At Tanjavur, a fair-skinned dwarf stands on her right, probably carrying a tray, while on her left a skeletal or emaciated figure, probably Kāraikkālammaiār,<sup>94</sup> squats at the wall, resembling the attitude of the skeletal being on the painting at Ellora 16 (Plate 31).

Swamy has rendered a passage of the early twelfth century Naralōkavīraṅ inscription in Chidambaram as expressing the notion that Śiva dances with his beloved, Kālī, during a temple festival (*utsava*). However, this reading is highly unlikely.<sup>95</sup> A piece of related evidence may be seen in the prominent position of Kālī on the ceiling in front of the Naṭarāja shrine in the Airāvateśvara temple, Darasuram, which was constructed during the third quarter of the twelfth century (Figure 9). Since it can be assumed to reflect the situation at Chidambaram, after which such subshrines in other temples must have been modelled, this could be another hint that the Goddess Kālī was still part of the Hall's divine assembly. Notably, she is not shown in a defeated attitude.

The almost square shape and depth of the depicted Hall are remarkable and reflect the peculiarity of this holy space. Unfortunately, damage does not permit an assessment of its full inventory. It is likely that at

<sup>89</sup> Cf. note 62 and local mythology at Tirukkadaiyur (cf. note 114).

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Sriraman 2011: 111. The respective portion is damaged.

<sup>91</sup> Kulke (1970: 153) concluded that in the textual layer of the *Cidambaramāhātmya* dating to around 1000, the Dance Contest was not yet referred to. I can see a possibility that Goddess Kālī only moved to her own temple when this was constructed in the 13th century (cf. Kaimal 1999: 418, n. 95). However, there she is not worshipped in an enshrined bronze image.

<sup>92</sup> Smith 1996: 54; cf. 24–26.

<sup>93</sup> Nagaswamy 1982a: pl. 89. "Kolamoli Amman" temple, Chennai-Mylapore (Nagaswamy 1977). Cf. Dehejia 2002: 24, fig. 14 ("Koli Amman" temple).

<sup>94</sup> Sriraman (2011: 124) also seems to make this identification.

<sup>95</sup> Swamy (1979: 126) gives *kaṭikeḷi-* as referring to Śiva's dance with Kālī, in v. 10 of the inscription. However, the reading *keḷināḷi-* occurs both in Subramaniam (1957: 1310) and Swamy & Nanjundan (1973: 339), so that any mention of Kālī cannot be confirmed.

least a four-armed drummer was also represented, as he is shown in contemporary stone reliefs of Naṭarāja's dance.<sup>96</sup>



9 Kālī dancing, ceiling of the Naṭarāja Hall in the northeastern part of the enclosure, Airāvateśvara temple, Darasuram, Tanjavur District, stone relief, third quarter of the twelfth century. Photo: author.

#### NAṬARĀJA'S DISTINCTIVE DANCE POSTURE: REFERENCE TO HIS VICTORY OVER DEATH/TIME?

Naṭarāja's dance posture cannot be explained, in my view, by assuming that Śiva, seriously or playfully, tried to evade a serpent, as the frequently applied Nāṭyaśāstric term *bhujāṅgatrāsita* seems to suggest. Thus, there is room for a different approach. As we have seen, in some early texts, Śiva's "lifted foot" has been referred to. In this respect, the situation is rendered

<sup>96</sup> E.g. in Tanjavur itself, Michell & Peterson 2010: frontispiece (niche image of Naṭarāja). Sriraman (2011: 110–111, 124) traces parts of the expected drummer, as well as a flautist, on the mural.

somewhat complicated by the already early, eighth century, occurrence of a posture with a vertically raised right leg (Figure 7), which has similarly been reported in Kāraikkālammaiār's vision at Tiruvalangadu.<sup>97</sup> The vertical leg posture is also traditionally regarded as the decisive stance by which Śiva defeated Kālī during their Dance Contest. It is very possible that some other early textual references to a "lifted foot" denote the half-raised foot of Naṭarāja and not the vertically lifted leg,<sup>98</sup> although a semantic blurring remains. A half-lifted foot, however, does not per se appear worthy of mention. It should be taken to convey a specific meaning.

The transversal leg position is the most characteristic feature in the image of Naṭarāja.<sup>99</sup> This posture involves an element of torsion and thus seems to suggest an implied rotation of Śiva to his proper right. Such an assumed gyration has been referred to in descriptions and art historical appraisals of the icon. Kaimal puts it thus: "The flying sashes and locks of hair in Naṭarāja figures suggest a spinning dance. So could his lifted leg, which is poised just where it could provide the momentum to pirouette to his left".<sup>100</sup> Motion sequences are not actually referred to in the available texts,<sup>101</sup> although vigorous movement has been described for the Dance of Śiva in general. *Kuñcitāṅghristava* 220 speaks of a "bee's dance",<sup>102</sup> which remains, however, difficult to interpret. Even while a gyration may be conceptually implied, the obviously underlying multivalence can be perceived as one of the "mysteries" of the Naṭarāja image. Thus, it may be warranted to attempt an analysis of the significant posture exhibited by the god, reading it as a still posture, which, nevertheless, may be part of a frenzied dance.

<sup>97</sup> *Tiruvālaikāṭṭu Mūta Tiruppatikam* 4: "He swiftly lifts His leg so that it touches the sky" (Craddock 2010: 139). Craddock (2010: 58–59) is of the opinion that in another verse Kāraikkālammaiār alludes to the Dance Contest between Naṭarāja and Kālī, although this would be rather indirect.

<sup>98</sup> Kulke (1970: 149) in this connection points out the Tamil expression "*eḍuttapādam*"—"he who lifts his leg (dancing)".

<sup>99</sup> Kaimal (1999: 402 and n. 54) refers to some of the interpretations made so far.

<sup>100</sup> Kaimal 2011: 480.

<sup>101</sup> Smith (1989) has analysed an interesting passage of a court epic, Ratnākara's *Haravijaya*, where Śiva's Dance is described at length. Although this would not necessarily correspond with Naṭarāja's Dance, it is revealing to note that knowledge of the respective treatises of dance and acting (e.g. *Nāṭyaśāstra*) does not help the reader to grasp the imagination of the poet, as Smith concludes.

<sup>102</sup> Smith 1992: 160; 1996: 30. *Bhramara*—"bee" is also a Nāṭyaśāstric term.



A plausible interpretation, not suggested previously, could be derived from the fact that Naṭarāja faces southward. It has already been stated that this might refer to his attitude of keeping Yama (or “Kāla”—“Time/Death”) the God of Death and the Regent of the South in check.<sup>103</sup> The orientation and reference to Yama/Kāla could actually help explain the raised leg posture, although not necessarily the oblique position. In the majority of images and a number of texts, Śiva uses his left foot to counteract and kill Yama (Figure 10).<sup>104</sup> The encounter is slightly paradoxical because Śiva himself is regarded as “Kāla”, the embodiment of Time, on a higher level than the God Yama. However Yama carries out the task of collecting the moribund (generally executed by his messengers), judging and punishing them. The incident is related in a story where Yama comes to fetch the young Mārkaṇḍeya, an ardent devotee of Śiva. In killing Yama (and reviving him later), Śiva becomes Kālāntaka, the “Death of Death”, or, in the Tamil context, “Kālakālar”.<sup>105</sup> It is shown above that Kāraikkālammaiṃ had already included the motif of the defeat of Yama in her hymns on the Dancing Śiva. By lifting and prominently displaying

**103** Cf. Natarajan 1994: 135, 228. A slightly different analysis is that of Nagaswamy (2003: 89), who constructs a connection with the practices of the Kālāmukha sect. Kāla—“Time” is variously conceived as a part of Yama or an independent personality. A commendable study of Yama has been undertaken by Bosch (1982).

**104** This way of depicting the scene is unique to Ellora. For textual specifications see *Kūrmapurāṇa* II,35.26: “*vāmapādena*”—“with the left foot”. Sivaramamurti (1974: 88–89/1994: 83) cites Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita’s *Anandasāgarastava* 56 of the 17th century, where the defeat of Yama is credited to the Goddess in the left half of Śiva’s body: “*vāmāṅghrimātrakalite*”. *Kuñcitāṅghristava* 90 (Smith 1996: 205) has: “slaying Time with His lotus foot”. *Sakalādhikāra* XX, 1 and 9 refers to the left foot by which Śiva defeats Yama/Kāla. It would appear as an irony of fate that Yama himself, son of the Sun God, once attempted to kick his unfair stepmother. As a result, he was cursed by her, but even after partial retraction of the curse through the intervention of his father, he was left with an ulcerated leg (cf. Doniger 1998: 159). This incident ultimately resulted in his own death as the first mortal and thus in his role as God of Death. (There are several versions of this mythologem.)

**105** See Gillet 2010: 204; Smith 1996: 201–206; cf. O’Flaherty (1976: 231–237) for both the Sanskrit and Tamil versions of the myth. It should be noted that there are contexts where “Kālāntaka” is best read as “terminator by means of time” (Wessler 1995: 187, “Beender aufgrund der Zeit”, *Viṣṇupurāṇa* I,22.33).

his left foot, the one with which he ousted Yama, this attitude of Naṭarāja (or rather, proto-Naṭarāja) may have been conveyed even in the absence of his opponent.<sup>106</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that Kālāntaka has



**10** Śiva as Kālāntaka (slayer of Yama; emerging from the *liṅga* which the young Mārkaṇḍeya is worshipping), northern part of western facade of entrance hall, Ellora 16 (Kailāsa), stone relief, ca. third quarter of the eighth century. Photo: Gudrun Melzer.

**106** Counteracting Death is certainly an important issue in early Hinduism (e.g. Einoo 2005). For an interesting contribution on “Death as a Dancer” see O’Flaherty 1980.



**11** Śiva as Kālāntaka, northern face, Kailāsanātha temple, Kanchipuram, stone relief, ca. first quarter of the eighth century. Photo: author.



**12** Great Temple (Rājarājeśvara), southern face, Naṭarāja (left) and Kālāntaka (right), stone relief panels in niches, approached from the right side during circumambulation, 1010 CE. Photo: Cornelia Mallebrein.

a conspicuously wrathful character, whereas Naṭarāja's mien is described as peaceful, even blissful, by the relevant indigenous sources.

While looking for visual corroboration of the position of the left foot in the depiction of Kālāntaka, the eighth century example from the Kailāsanātha temple, Kanchipuram, appears encouraging (Figure 11). Śiva's left foot dangles above Yama's head like the sword of Damocles. Some other, mostly smaller, temples at the same site have a "mirror image" of this stance,<sup>107</sup> and the Āgamic texts are also not in agreement.<sup>108</sup> There seem to have been different ways of rendering Śiva's trampling of Yama, or rather, keeping his leg suspended over Yama's body, while the other foot is sometimes shown as stepping on the latter's body. It could have been the royal Kailāsanātha temple, which had the more authoritative version. Relying on later evidence from the sculptural arrangement of the large royal temples of Tanjavur (1010 CE) and Gangaikondacholapuram (1025 CE) cannot be avoided. On both temples, niche figures of Naṭarāja and Kālāntaka are related in certain ways. In both cases, the Naṭarāja panel is located on the south-western corner of the southern wall. In Tanjavur, both aspects of Śiva are juxtaposed, while Kālāntaka is reached first during circumambulation (Figure 12). In Gangaikondacholapuram,

**107** Gillet 2010: 204, figs. 130–131; 207: fig. 133.

**108** Cf. excerpts collected by Gopinatha Rao 1916, App. B: 79–82.

Kālāntaka is positioned exactly on the opposite side in the north.<sup>109</sup> Also in both cases, it is Kālāntaka's left foot which is raised, ready to give Yama a final blow. Regarding other features of Śiva as Kālāntaka, he is always four-armed, but the position of his arms and attributes do not resemble those of Naṭarāja. Often, a typical attribute of Yama, the noose, is included among these. It is because of this fact that I consider it possible that the Kuram Naṭeśa contains a "Kālāntaka element", as the serpentine object held in his left rear hand, reaching back to the shoulder, may be seen to resemble a noose (Figure 5). I am also of the opinion that at least one intermediate stage of development from the Kuram type towards Naṭarāja proper might be identifiable.<sup>110</sup> Whether the Kuram image has a serpent, which is frequently held by Śiva during his dance, or a serpentine noose, it seems to be unique in holding this object as the only attribute apart from the *damaru* drum.

No clear narrative aspect of the defeat of Yama is retained, neither in the Kuram image nor with Naṭarāja, and both are shown with a peaceful demeanour. However, Apasmāra under Naṭarāja's right foot perhaps provides a key to understanding the development at hand. According to the reading proposed here, Apasmāra could be a place holder for Yama/Kāla, as the latter may not have been appropriate as part of an icon destined for worship. Thus, Apasmāra might have been introduced as a "default enemy", which could also explain why he is often styled as a warrior in later periods (Plate 30).<sup>111</sup> As mentioned above, it is quite peculiar that Apasmāra also occurs with the South-facing Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti, so that I see the possibility of his being a mitigated form of Yama himself. The

<sup>109</sup> For the frequently published Naṭarāja at Gangaikondacholapuram, see Kaimal 1999: fig. 12; for Kālāntaka see Balasubrahmanyam 1975: pl. 210.

<sup>110</sup> The image from Anakkudi, Tanjavur District, which has been ascribed to ca. tenth century by Nagaswamy (1961: figs. 14, 16), appears to be significant in this respect. The crossing arm is held low, like in Kuram (Figure 5), and the left leg has not yet reached the transversal position. The front right hand is already high. The rear arms are more flexed than in a standard Naṭarāja image, and the absence of the dwarf is noteworthy. Whether the actual date of the image has to be revised or not, it seems to be "typologically early". Another well-known image of this category is the unique eight-armed piece from Nallur (Nagaswamy 1982b: fig. 7, dated to ca. 900). Here, the dwarf is shown frontally and the god's left leg is not yet in the transversal position, although it seems to "move" in this direction. Both rear hands hold the typical attributes of Naṭarāja.

<sup>111</sup> Blurton 2008: cat. 79; Guy 2004: 72, fig. 2.

serpent in Apasmāra's hand might likewise allude to Yama's dreaded noose, *pāśa*.<sup>112</sup> In this connection it is interesting to recall that Naṭarāja himself, in the overwhelming number of cases, has a serpent wound around his lower right arm, while Apasmāra generally holds a cobra with spread hood in his left hand. It is an interesting parallelism linking these two characters. The serpent, on the basis of the regular shedding of its skin, and, therefore, its ancient association with longevity and rejuvenation, may eventually be interpreted as a signifier of Time. By its deadliness it conforms to the "dark" aspect of Time.<sup>113</sup> Being Time is also a role shared by Naṭarāja and his antagonist Yama/Kāla, who probably appears in the guise of Apasmāra, a connection that would have been forgotten at some point in history. For Naṭarāja, further pointers in this direction would be the drum creating rhythmic sound, while it is traditionally correlated to the "Creation" aspect. A similar temporal capacity, but with a note of transience, could be assumed for the skull often forming part of the crown (although there are other possible interpretations) and the potentially world-consuming fire (*kālāgni*—"Fire of Time") in his rear left hand.

From the above facts I would like to develop the hypothesis that Naṭarāja displays his left foot to his devotees, who would read this

<sup>112</sup> The noose is one of Yama's weapons (Wessels-Mevissen 2001: 98), although it is interesting to note that the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (III,51.14), which distinguishes between Yama and his attendant Kāla, describes the noose as Kāla's weapon. Judging from early depictions, in Yama's case it seems to be less associated with a serpent than in the case of Varuṇa, Guardian of the West, who may explicitly carry a "serpent noose"—*nāgapāśa* (Wessels-Mevissen 2001: 101; figs. 240, 312, 131). The most elaborate panel of Yama in Tamilnadu, which is at Darasuram (Wessels-Mevissen in press: figs. 3–5), most probably once carried a noose and a staff. That Yama was, in a different context, conceived as a somewhat dwarfish, aged figure, has been aptly demonstrated by Bautze-Picron (2005). In the present case, however, I would argue in favour of Apasmāra's role as a place holder for Yama/Kāla.

<sup>113</sup> Indian serpent lore is a vast field. Temporal symbolism seems to be part of it, although it often remains to be unravelled. Both the longevity and immense physical extension of certain serpents are well-known topoi. Śiva's keeping the serpent king Vāsuki as a bangle (cf. the serpent on Naṭarāja's right arm) demonstrates his own dimension vis-à-vis serpents. He is said to have fetched Vāsuki from the underworld, Pātāla, whereafter the serpent assumed the form of a bangle (Mani 1975: 838). Another relevant passage, *Mahābhārata* 13.1.9–72, is referred to by Wessler (1995: 86–87). Here, a serpent that has killed a boy reveals itself as the agent of Mṛtyu—Death, and ultimately, of Kāla—Time.

gesture as a visual reference to Śiva's defeat and subsequent control of Yama/Kāla/Time. One may object that, if the victorious foot is the left one, why would the god be pressing down the dwarf with his right foot. I do not regard this as a fundamental inconsistency because there are different phases of the conflict, and the ensuing situation or status quo is the eternal dominance of Naṭarāja. During the course of further theological interpretation, the central message of Naṭarāja's raised foot would have—quite plausibly—evolved into the granting of “grace” (*anugraha*, Tam. *anukkirakam*) to worshippers, as it is expressed in the *Cidambaramāhātmya* (XXV.49) and in the *Tirumantiram* (2799, see above).

All in all, several subordinate narratives have been accommodated in the Naṭarāja image, one being the River Goddess Gaṅgā's descent on Śiva's matted hair. As has been said above, this is not always visually expressed in the Naṭarāja icon. Another aspect to consider is the story of Naṭarāja dancing together with Kālī, which would have been understood as an “unequal match” or competitive situation, because Kālī is portrayed much smaller. Exhibiting the foot that overcame Yama would be still another, though quite prominent, mythological narrative. It is perhaps significant that, in another context, both the latter elements are connected in the local tradition (*sthalapurāṇa*) of Tirukkadaiyur, where Kālī came to dance with Śiva after his victory over Death.<sup>114</sup>

## CONCLUSION

We do not know whether the Naṭarāja image worshipped at Chidambaram had looked the same from the very beginning. There is no evidence and perhaps never will be. For want of space, I have not pursued the possible intermediary stages in the development of Naṭarāja any further. These may in fact be identified among the broad variety of shapes occurring in the bronze images of the early period. The great antiquity of the Naṭarāja cult, which had started before the imperial Cōlas associated themselves with it, is not taken into question nowadays. The form of Naṭarāja that we still know today probably evolved during the eighth and ninth centuries, which was a creative period for the visualisation of dance postures in the South, both in metal and in stone.

<sup>114</sup> Shulman 1983: 268.

The emphasis on Śiva's left foot may originally have referred to his victory over Death/Time (Yama/Kāla). The accomplishment of this feat must have projected the God Śiva as a liberator from death. Shulman has identified the Kālāntaka theme as “the major myth of salvation in Tamil Śaivism”.<sup>115</sup> This possible referencing by Naṭarāja would have been framed by the semantic context of Time, which was regarded as a highly ambivalent force of nature. Naṭarāja's posture may have represented the most aesthetic solution of the motif of the display of his victorious foot. I could further imagine a specific intention of the turn of this foot towards the Southwest, a dreaded, but power-conferring direction.<sup>116</sup>

In interpreting the Tanjavur mural depicting Naṭarāja's sanctum, it has been noted that the Goddess Kālī is represented. Therefore, there is a possibility that a metal image of this deity was kept there in the early eleventh century. The contents of this chamber, the present-day Citsabhā, appear to reflect the elements of the Naṭarāja image on another level: The spatial connotations of Naṭarāja (e.g., his four arms and huge size) are complemented by its symbolic space. Apart from the Time aspect, also inherent in Śiva himself, this could have been complemented by the Goddess Kālī before her removal,<sup>117</sup> while nowadays this aspect may be recognised in the associated deity Svarṇakālabhairava (Golden Terrible [Lord] of Time/Death). References to Time and Space have been skilfully woven into the *Cidambaramāhātmya*, where Naṭarāja's hair strands are described as reaching the outskirts of the universe (XIII.46) and his dance is portrayed as preventing the end of time (XIII.48).

Reminding the devotees of the victorious deed of Time/Death's defeat would have been an original, subordinately narrative aspect of the proto-Naṭarāja which was superseded by a new theological interpretation over the course of the centuries.

As I have tried to demonstrate, there are probably concrete signifiers of Time and Space both in the Naṭarāja image and in the divine ensemble contained in the Hall which have not been described so far. Nevertheless, the initial shaping of the icon was so suggestive that it has inspired many

<sup>115</sup> Shulman 1983: 267.

<sup>116</sup> In *Mahotsavavidhi* 9 (edition of 2010: 90, 155), of the twelfth century or later, the *bhujāṅgatrāsa* dance is assigned to the southwestern direction. For this directional concept as informing temple architecture, cf. Wessels-Mevissen 2009.

<sup>117</sup> Kālī is closely connected with darkness, *tamas*, and through this quite certainly embraces the dark, menacing aspect of Time.

who have arrived at similar interpretations through close observation. One of these apt appraisals is by Kapila Vatsyayan. She has noted that the Naṭarāja icon was created in the tradition of the Upaniṣadic imagery of “navel”, “hub”, “centre”, “spokes” and “wheel” and she concludes: “The image of man is set against this circle with radiating spokes. Figures of Śiva dancing are unique in that the basic grid of circle, center, and spokes remains constant; the navel coordinates with the center [...] Naṭarāja’s dynamic presence draws together myth and movement, set against an underlying geometric motif, only to suggest timelessness, spacelessness, the *parārūpa* [highest form]”.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Vatsyayan 1984: 200. A similar observation has been made and graphically rendered by Kaimal 1999: 412–413.

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## PLATES



1 "Kāla" or Time, Punjab/India, ca. 1820–30, watercolour on paper, 26.1×19 cm, from a sequence of paintings depicting Time-related subjects, P. & G. Bautze Collection. Photo: Jürgen Liepe.



2 *Caturvimsati paṭa*, Mysore, Karnataka/India, ca. 1825–75 CE, ink, opaque watercolour and gold probably on layered paper, 58.4 × 48.3 cm, Dr. Siddharth Bhansali Collection. Photo courtesy of Dr. Siddharth Bhansali.



3 *Adhādvīpa paṭa*, the Two-and-a-Half Islands, Gujarat or Rajasthan/India, 17th century, ink and opaque watercolour on cloth, 96.8 × 98.1 cm, Navin Kumar Collection, New York. Photo courtesy of Mr. Navin Kumar.



4 Universe Depicted in the Shape of a Person, Folio 27r from a dispersed *Samgrahaṇīsūtra* loose-leaf manuscript, Sirohi, Rajasthan/India, late 16th century, ink and opaque watercolour on paper, 25.7 × 10.8 cm, gift of Jean and Francis Marshall, University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, 1998.42.99.2. Photo courtesy of Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.



5 Mount Aṣṭāpada *paṭa*, Rajasthan/India, 19th century, ink and opaque watercolour on cloth, 96.5 × 65.7 cm, Navin Kumar Collection, New York. Photo courtesy of Mr. Navin Kumar.



6 The Castle of the Wind-horse, Mongolia, linen, painted, end of the 19th century, 56×37 cm, private collection, Winterthur. Photo courtesy of private collection.



7 The Castle of the Wind-horse, Mongolia, linen, painted, beginning of the 20th century, 32×25 cm, private collection, Winterthur. Photo courtesy of private collection.



8 The Castle of the Wind-horse, Mongolia, linen, painted, beginning of the 20th century, 20×16 cm, private collection, Budapest. Photo courtesy of private collection.



9 Shringar of Shri Nathji for a *mangal-darshan* during the cold season, Kota, Rajasthan/India, ca. 1820–40. Size (leaf): 21.1×14.5 cm. Private collection. Photo: author.



10 Three *shringars* of Shri Nathji from the *utsavamalika* (garland of festivals) in the Jhala-ki-Haveli, *garh* of Kota, Rajasthan/India. Mural, photographed 1981, vanished since 1983. Photo: author.



11 *Shringar* of Shri Brijnathji for the *subodhini*-festival (good knowledge), folio 1 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



**12** *Shringar* of Shri Brijnathji during the *hindola-vijaya*-festival (one of several festivals involving the use of a swing), folio 2 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



**13** *Shringar* of Shri Madanmohanji during the *radha-ashtami*-festival (birthday of Radha), folio 9 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.





14 *Shringar* of Shri Gokulnathji during the *dashahara*-festival (Dussehra), folio 12 recto, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



15 *Shringar* of Shri Nathji during the *dashahara*-festival (Dussehra). From the same festival-calendar as Plate 9. Size (leaf): 20.2 × 14.0 cm. Private collection. Photo: author.



16 *Shringar* of Shri Gokulchandramaji during the *sharad*-festival (autumn), folio 13 recto, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



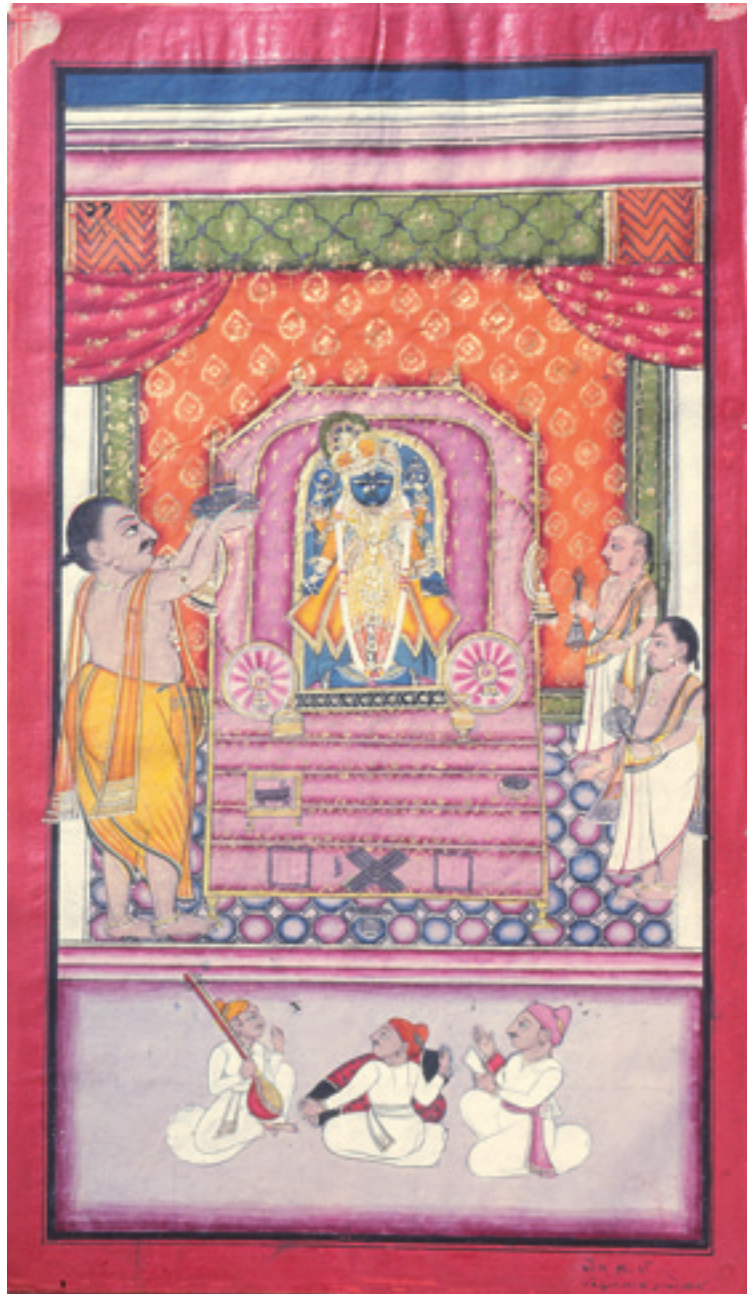
17 *Shringar* of Shri Navanitapriyaji during the *govardhan-puja* (veneration of the mount Govardhan), folio 16 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



18 *Shringar* of Shri Nathji and *sapta-svarupas* during the *annakut*-festival (mountain of food), folio 18 recto, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



19 *Shringar* of Shri Vitthalnathji during the *prabodhini*-festival ("awakening"), folio 19 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



20 *Shringar* of Shri Mathureshji during the *shri vithalnath janma-festival* (birthday of Shri Vitthalnath), folio 21 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



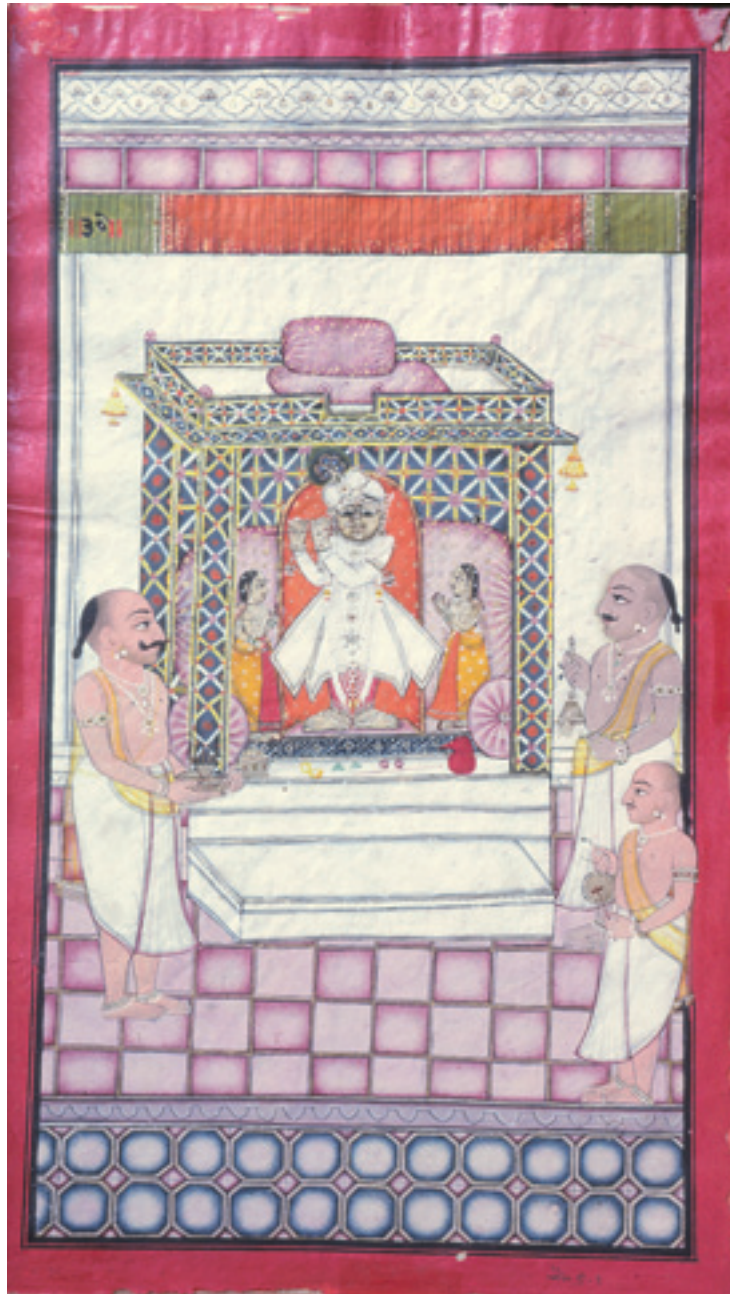
21 *Shringar* of Shri Brijnathji during the *shri vrajnathji ko pat-festival* (*pat-festival* of Shri Brijnathji), folio 25 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



22 *Shringar* of Shri Nathji during the *kunja ekadashi*-festival (bower on the eleventh day), folio 26 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



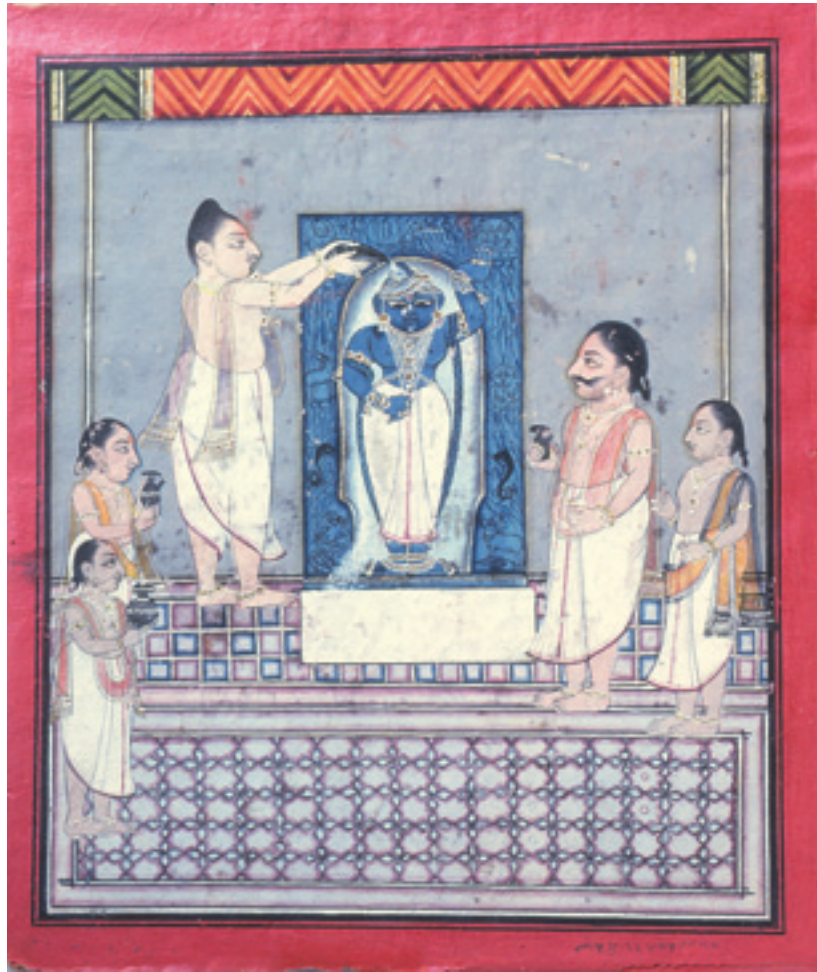
23 *Shringar* of Shri Mathureshji during the *pushya-dol*-festival (flower-swing), folio 28 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



24 *Shringar* of Shri Madanmohanji during the *samvatsara betha*-festival (setting of the [New] Year), folio 30 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



25 *Shringar* of Shri Mathureshji during the *akshatritiya*-festival (the “*aksha*-third”; *aksha* has multiple meanings), folio 35 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



26 *Shringar* of Shri Nathji during the *snan*-festival (bathing), folio 38 verso, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



27 *Shringar* of Shri Mathureshji during the *ratha*-festival (chariot procession), folio 40 recto, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



28 *Shringar* of Shri Brijnathji during the *shashti pamdaru*-festival (sixth *pamdaru*), folio 41 recto, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.



29 *Shringar* of Shri Brijrajji during the *thakurani tij*-festival (the third of *thakurani*, i.e. Parvati), folio 43 recto, Government Museum, Kota, Rajasthan/India, dated 1805. Photo: author.





**30** Mural showing Naṭarāja and Śivakāmasundarī installed in the sanctum, Naṭarāja temple, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu/India, Śivakāmasundarī shrine, ca. 17th–18th century. Photo: author.



**31** Ceiling mural of Dancing Śiva with transverse leg position, Ellora 16 (Kailāsa), Maharashtra/India, main hall, near southern balcony, ca. third quarter of the eighth century. Photo by and courtesy of Eric Huntington.



**32** Mural in the circumambulation corridor, first floor, showing Naṭarāja's Hall in Chidambaram (detail), Great Temple (Rājarājeśvara), Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu/India, facing West, ca. slightly after 1010, after Michell & Peterson 2010: 126, fig. 91a. Photo: N. Thyagarajan (courtesy Archaeological Survey of India).

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