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VARUṆA AND VIDŪṢAKA
On the origin of the Sanskrit drama

by

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VARUṆA: ASURA AND ĀDITYA¹

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The place of Varuṇa in the Vedic pantheon is one of the most difficult problems of Rigvedic mythology, "le point névralgique des études védiques" as Renou has rightly characterized it². The fundamental difficulty would seem to be that the modern approach, which tries to give an uncontradictory definition of his character, such as "god of the night-sky", "god of the oath", fails to do justice to the intrinsic double-sidedness of the god. Defining Varuṇa as a numinous god wrongly suggests that a solution has been given while the very search for it has still to begin. The only thing which this formula rightly expresses is the difficulty which the notion of a divine-demoniacal god presents to rational thinking, whereas myth can express the double-sidedness of such a god in its own direct way, which does not dissimulate the logical contradictions involved.

One of the mythological traits in which Varuṇa's ambiguous nature manifests itself is the fact that in the Rigveda he is the Asura *par excellence* (and as such is rightly equated to Ahura Mazdā of the Old Iranian religion) while, at the same time, as the most prominent of the Ādityas, he is one of the Devas. Since it cannot be doubted that the Asuras and Devas represent the two fundamentally contrasting moieties of a dualistic cosmos³, it is clear that this double-sided character of Varuṇa, his being an Asura as well as a Deva, constitutes one of the basic problems of Vedic mythology. It is curious, therefore, that only a few scholars have recognized this difficulty and taken it seriously. In the first place two men of genius must be mentioned: Abel Bergaigne, who clearly formulated one aspect of the problem but could only explain it as the expression of two different conceptions of the divine which co-existed in the Vedic religion (see p. 45) and, secondly, Peter von Bradke, who pointed out that there are two different conceptions of the Asuras in the Rigvedic material, while rightly rejecting the possibility that the one has developed

¹ When in references to some Saṁhitās of the Black Yajurveda the numbers for page and line are added, the number of the line indicates the beginning of the passage quoted. In view of the character of this study it has been considered unnecessary to increase the typographical difficulties of this text by maintaining in the transcription of the Yajurvedic texts the distinction between *ardhacandra* and "*anusvāra*", which differs from one text to the other. See, e.g., Macdonell, *Vedic Grammar*, p. 53, Renou, *Grammaire de la langue védique*, p. 19.

² Renou, *Festschrift Lommel*, p. 122.

³ Out of the many publications special mention may be made of G. J. Held, *The Mahābhārata, An ethnological Study* (Amsterdam, 1935) and F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ, An Introduction to Indian Symbolism* (Indo-Iranian Monographs, vol. II), 's-Gravenhage 1960.

from the other. His own conclusions, however, are unacceptable ⁴. Further, Eggeling, SBE. 44, p. XX ff., made some interesting observations on the problem. Of the present generation of scholars W. Norman Brown, in one of his earliest papers, was the first to draw attention to the problem ⁵. In the German-speaking countries, on the other hand, the discussion of the Asura problem and the relation between Ahura and Daēva in Ancient Iran, has not, from Haug down to Paul Horsch ⁶ led to notable results. This is mainly due to the fact that the contrast between Devas and Asuras was interpreted in terms of "divine" versus "demoniacal" ⁷ and that the difficulties inherent in the conception of the Asuras were rather concealed than explained by an evolutionistic approach ⁸.

2. VARUṆA AS AN ASURA

The Vedic passages where Varuṇa, either alone or conjointly with Mitra, is called *ásura* are not numerous ⁹. Sometimes this term occurs in a context where Varuṇa's ominous and inauspicious character is prominent. This is particularly the case in II.28.7 "Strike us not, O Varuṇa, with thy weapons which wound the sinful man, O Asura, while thou art searching for him," I.24.14 "We deprecate thy wrath, O Varuṇa, by our worship, our sacrifices and oblations. Thou, who hast the power, O wise Asura, O king, untie the sins that we have committed" and Ath. S. V.11.1 "How unto the great Asura didst thou speak here? how with shining manliness unto the yellow father? having given, O Varuṇa, a spotted (cow) as sacrificial fee, thou hast with the mind intended re-bestowal" (Whitney) ¹⁰. In the other passages it is rather Varuṇa's all-powerfulness that is stressed; cf. VIII.42.1 "He, the all-knowing Asura, has propped up the sky, he has measured out the extent of the earth . . . All those things are (the effect of) Varuṇa's vows," II.27.10 "Thou, O Varuṇa, art king over all, over the gods,

⁴ See P. v. Bradke, *Dyāus Asura, Ahura Mazdā und die Asuras. Studien und Versuche auf dem Gebiete alt-indogermanischer Religionsgeschichte*. Halle, 1885.

⁵ W. Norman Brown, "Proselyting the Asuras (A Note on Rig Veda 10,124)", *JAOS*. 39 (1919), pp. 100-103 (cf. also *JIES*. 2 [1973]).

⁶ Paul Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur*. Bern, 1966.

⁷ Cf., e.g., Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie II*² (1929), p. 402ff.: "Manen, Dämonen, Asuras".

⁸ This is also true of Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth. II*², p. 420 n. 1 (see below, p. 32) and of Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes [EVP]* 15, p. 171 "Juxtaposition qui tournera vite en une opposition tranchée".

⁹ P. von Bradke, op.c., pp. 72, 120, Dandekar, "Asura Varuṇa", *Annals Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute XXI* (1940), pp. 178-79 (whose characterization of Varuṇa as "Creator and constructor of the Universe", p. 181, needs some specification).

¹⁰ Cf. II.28.7 *mā no vadhair Varuṇa yé ta iṣṭān énaḥ kṛtvāntam asura bhṛṇānti*, I.24.14 *áva te hélo Varuṇa námobhir áva yajñébhīr imāhe havīrbhīḥ, kṣáyann asmábhyam asura pracetā rájann énámsi śísraṭhaḥ kṛtāni*, AS. V.11.1 *kathām mahé ásurāyā 'bravīr ihá kathām pítṛé háraye iweśānṛmṇaḥ, pñśnim Varuṇa dáksīṇām dadāvān punarmaghatvām mánasā 'cikiṣīḥ*. For the last hymn see Hillebrandt, *Varuṇa und Mitra*, pp. 88, 110, von Bradke, op. c., p. 100, Bloomfield, *The Atharva-veda*, p. 77, Renou, *Festgabe f. H. Lommel*, p. 126.

O Asura (!), and over the mortals", X.132.4 (cf. II.27.10) "The other one, yonder Heaven, was given birth to, O Asura. Thou, O Varuṇa, art king over all", further V.63.3, where Geldner gives an alternative explanation of *ásurasya māyāyā* as referring to Varuṇa, and Ath. S. IV.15.12 "(. . .) Pouring down waters, our father Asura . . . Let the gurgles of the waters puff, O Varuṇa—let go the waters that hang down (from the sky); let the frogs whose arms are speckled croak among the water courses" ¹¹, Mitra and Varuṇa are addressed by the dual vocative *asurā* in I.151.4 "That people is foremost that is very dear to you, O Asuras, you announce the high order, you (gods) who are *ṛtāvan*", and in VII.36.2 "This newest hymn of praise I make for you, O Asuras, Mitra and Varuṇa" ¹².

Particularly interesting are the passages where Mitra and Varuṇa are called *devāv asurā* or *devānām asurāḥ*, cf. VIII.25.4 "The two great sovereigns (*samrājā*), Mitra and Varuṇa, the gods who are Asuras" ¹³ and VII.65.2 "They are the two Asuras of the Devas, they are the Aryas" ¹⁴. The exact meaning of this term, which only occurs in the Rigveda, has to my knowledge never been correctly explained. It apparently implies that there are some Devas who are Asuras, in contrast with others, such as Indra, who are not. In a few passages, it is true, Indra is also called an Asura, but it is generally conceded that this is due to a secondary extension ¹⁵. In the family collections Indra is an Asura-killer (VI.22.4 *asurahán*) but never an Asura ¹⁶. In VIII.96.9 he is exhorted to slay the

¹¹ VIII.42.1 *ástabhñād dyām ásuero víśvávedā, ámimīta varimānam pṛthivyāḥ, . . . víśvét tāni Váruṇasya vratāni*, II.27.10 *tvām víśveṣām Varuṇā 'si rájā yé ca devā asura yé ca mártāḥ* (cf. Renou, EVP. 7, p. 90), X.132.4 *asāv anyó asura sūyata dyaús tvām víśveṣām Varuṇā 'si rájā*, V.63.3 *samrājā ugrā vṛṣabhā divás páti pṛthivyā Mitrá-varuṇā vicarṣañi, citrébhīr abhráir úpa tiṣṭhato rávaṁ dyām varṣayatho ásurasya māyāyā*, AS. IV.15.12 *apó niṣiñcān asurāḥ pitā nah śváśantu gárgarā apām Varuṇa úva nícīr apāḥ sṛja vādantu pṛṣṇibāhavo maṇḍúkā iriṇā 'nu* (for *nícīḥ* see India Maior, Congratulatory Volume J. Gonda, p. 152). Cf. also, e.g., MS. I.6.11 (104,2) *Váruno vai devānām rájā* (see n. 74).

¹² I.151.4 *prá sá kṣítir asura yá máhi priyá ṛtāvānāv ṛtām á ghoṣatho bhát*, VII.36.2 *imām vām Mitrávaruṇā suṛktīm iṣāṁ ná kṛṇve asurā návīyah*. Cf. also Bernhard Geiger, Die Amēša Spēntas, p. 222 n. 1.

¹³ *mahāntā Mitrávaruṇā samrājā devāv asurā* "(qui sont à la fois) dieux (et) Asura's," Renou, EVP. 5, p. 91 (cf. 7, p. 68), like Geldner: "die Götter und Asura's sind." What is actually meant is "Asuras who have become Devas", "Devas of Asuric origin". Different is X.82.5 *paró devébhīr ásurair yád ásti* "what is beyond Devas and Asuras", where two different groups are meant.

¹⁴ *tá hí devānām asurā táv aryā* "die sind die Asura unter den göttern, die die freundlichen" (Ludwig, similarly Bergaigne III, p. 87, and Renou). Incorrect von Bradke, op. c., p. 87 and Geldner: "sie sind die beiden Gebieter (Asura), die Herren unter den Göttern", since all *Ādityas* must have been *devānām asurāḥ*. Cf. VIII.27.20, Bergaigne l.c. and, for Varuṇa as king of the gods, n. 296. Different is, of course, AS. I.10.1 *ayām devānām ásuero ví rájati* "This Asura rules over the gods". See n. 74.

¹⁵ Cf. I.174.1 (an imitation of II.27.10, where Varuṇa is addressed), VIII.90.6 (in a fixed formula, see von Bradke, p. 61) and two passages in the tenth maṇḍala (X.96.11 and 99.12, see von Bradke, p. 73). See also Bergaigne III, pp. 71ff., 80, B. Geiger, Die Amēša Spēntas, p. 205 n. 2, Kuiper, IIJ. 3, p. 187.

¹⁶ Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 427f.

ásurā adevāh ¹⁷. If, then, the Rigvedic poets distinguished between two classes of Asuras, the question naturally arises why none of the later texts (except some Atharvavedic passages, cf. p. 41) make this distinction and why they no longer refer to Varuṇa as an Asura.

The contrast between Devas and Asuras, as we find it in the brāhmaṇas, is only one of the forms in which the dualistic world order of upper world and nether world manifests itself. (See, e.g., Hist. of Rel. 15, p. 107 ff.). The same dualism was recognized in the contrast of the first half of the year (*devayāna*) versus the second (*pitryāna*), of the first half of the month with the waxing moon (*śuklapakṣa*) versus the second with the waning moon (*kr̥ṣṇapakṣa*), of day versus night (e.g., TS. I.5.9.7), of light versus darkness (e.g., ŚB. II.4.2.2; 5) and, on the social level, of Ārya versus Dāsa (IIJ.12, p. 282). Cf., e.g., "The Śūdra and the Ārya were created, Day and Night were their *adhipatis*" ¹⁸. The fact that the dualism is in this manner only expressed in the brāhmaṇas is generally regarded as a proof of its post-Rigvedic character. It has, however, been objected that the same dualism underlies the whole Rigvedic mythology and clearly stems from the proto-Indo-Iranian religion ¹⁹. The difference which seemingly exists in this respect between the brāhmaṇas and the Rigveda is rather due to the circumstance that the authors of the brāhmaṇas were theologians ²⁰, who handled the mythic tradition in a systematic manner, whereas the poets of the Rigvedic hymns rather presupposed it and, besides, expressed themselves in the traditional poetical terminology.

The traditional theory of a "Verteufelung" of the Asuras in a later stage of development of Vedic mythology ²¹ is no doubt incorrect. It is due to a failure of former generations to realize the mythological meaning of the strife between the Devas and their elder brothers ²², the Asuras, "both of them sons of Prajāpati" as the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa significantly adds ²³. In the ancient conception of the world the strife between the two parties of gods was necessary for the generation and continuation of life, and for the same reason it was necessary that it ended with the gods subduing their opponents.

This idea, however, is seemingly at variance with another one, quite

¹⁷ Von Bradke, op. c., p. 86.

¹⁸ *śūdrāryā asṛjyetām, ahorātré adhipatnī āstām* MS II.8.6. (p. 110, 14), KS. XVII.5 (248,23), KKS. XXVI.4 (107,9/124,19), TS. IV.3.10.2. See also G. J. Held, The Mahābhārata, p. 169 and cf. IIJ. 12, p. 282.

¹⁹ See IIJ. 3, p. 211.

²⁰ Similarly von Bradke, p. 90.

²¹ Thus, e.g., Macdonell, Vedic Mythology p. 156. See above, n. 8 and Renou, EVP. 13, p. 145: "acceptation péjorative d'Asura."

²² See von Bradke, p. 89, my note in IIJ. 8, p. 106 and cf. Rām. VII.11.14.

²³ *ubhāye prajāpatyāh* ŚB. I.2.4.8, I.2.5.1, I.5.3.2, I.7.2.22, II.2.2.8, II.4.3.2, III.4.4.3, III.6.1.8, IV.2.2.11, V.1.1.1, IX.2.3.8, IX.5.1.12, XI.1.8.1, XI.5.6.3. See Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice, p. 44, Minard, Trois Enigmes II, p. 325. For the same reason it can be said (VS. 30.22) *āsūdrā ābrāhmaṇās té prajāpatyāh*, for Prajāpati is undefined (ŚB. VI.4.1.6), or he is both defined and undefined (VII.2.4.30), limited and unlimited (VI.8.1.4).

common in the brāhmaṇas, according to which the Devas drove the Asuras away from these worlds²⁴. At first sight this might look as though the dualism of the cosmic contest had been replaced by a monism in which the dark, demonic aspects of the world had been pushed away. Such a conclusion, however, would be incorrect. There are certainly, in late

²⁴ The Rīgveda only refers to the victory of the Devas over the Asuras: X.53.4 *tād adyā vācāḥ prathamām masīya, yénā 'surām abhī devā āsāma*, 157.4 *hatvāya devā āsurān yād āyan*, cf. *asurahān*, epithet of Agni (VII.13.1) and Indra (VI.22.4). Its reticence (except VIII.96.9 *cakrēna tān āpa vāpa*, see von Bradke, p. 86) is noteworthy in view of AS. IV.19.4 *yād adō devā āsurāns tvāyā 'gre nīrākurvata* "when of yore, in the beginning, the gods drove out the Asuras with thee", IX.2.17 *yēna devā āsurān prāṇudanta, yéné 'ndro dāsyūn adhamām tāmo nīnāya*, 18 (*babādhe for nīnāya*), X.3.11 *sā me sātrūn vī bādhatām Indro dāsyūn evā 'surām*, perhaps also VI.7.3 (Paipp. XIX.3.12) *yēna devā āsurānām ōjāmsy āvrñidhvam* ("repelled"??). Cf. further MS. I.10.5 (145,1) *devās ca vā āsurās cā 'smīmī lokā āsant. sā Prajāpatir akāmayata: prā 'surān nudeya . . . sō 'surān prāṇudata*, II.5.3 (50,3) *tāto devā āsurān ebhyō lokēbhyaḥ prāṇudanta*, II.5.9 (60,8), III.6.6 (66,14) *devā āsurān hatvāi 'bhyo lokēbhyaḥ prāṇudanta*, III.2.1 (14,8) *tair āsurān ebhyō lokēbhyo nīrabādhanta* (15,8) *tair āsurān ebhyō lokēbhyaḥ prāṇudanta*, III.8.1 (92,1) *āsurānām vā eṣū lokēṣu pūra āsan . . . tān ebhyō lokēbhyaḥ prāṇudanta*, IV.1.10 (13,14) *āsurānām vā iyām pṛthivyā āsīt, té devā abruvan: dattā no 'syāḥ pṛthivyā iti . . .* (after the four quarters have been assigned to the Vasus, Rudras, Adityas and Maruts, the text continues, p. 14,1) *tāto devā āsurān ebhyō lokēbhyo nīrabhajan*; KS. VIII.5 (88,11) *stomapurogā vai devā ebhyo lokebhyo 'surān prāṇudanta* (otherwise MS. I.6.4: 92,3 *āsurān abhyājayan*), IX.14 (117,2) *pañcāhotrā vai devā āsurān prāṇudanta*, X.7 (132,15) *tāto devā āsurān ajayāms, té 'surān jītvā rākṣāmsy āpānudanta*, (132,19) *yāny evā purastād rākṣāmsy āsāms, tāni tēna prāṇudanta . . . yāny evābhīta āsāms, tāni tēna vyābādhanta*, XIII.3 (181,14), XXV.2 (104,13) *Viṣṇur (vā) imāmī lokān udajayat, sa ebhyo lokebhyo 'surān prāṇudanta*, XXI.4 (41,20) *praviḡacitā vai devā āsurān prāṇudanta*, XXVI.1 (121,10) *prācībhir vā āhutībhir devā anyān āsurān prāṇudanta*, XXXII.5 (23,9) *Viṣṇumukhā vai devās chandobhir ebhyo lokebhyo 'surān prāṇudanta* (cf. TS. I.7.5.4), XXXV.20 (66,12) *sā [Prajāpatih] cāturmāsyaīr evā 'surān prāṇudanta* (67,2) *Indro Vrtrām ahan, vaiśvadevāna vai sō 'surān prāṇudanta*, XXXVII.12 (93,6) *tenai 'nān prāṇudanta*; TS. II.6.1.3 *té devāḥ prayājair ebhyō lokēbhyo 'surān prāṇudanta*, VI.2.3.2 *tām Rudrō 'vāsrjat, sā tīsrāḥ pūro bhītvai 'bhyo lokēbhyo 'surān prāṇudanta*, VI.3.1.4, 4.10.3-4 *yé purastād āsurā āsan, tāms tābhīḥ prāṇudanta, yāḥ prācīr yé paścād āsurā āsan, tāms tābhīr āpānudanta*; AB. I.23.2 *te [devāḥ] yām eva prathamām upasadam upāyāms, tayai 'vainān asmāl lokād anudanta, yām dviṭyām . . .*, II.11.1 *te [devāḥ] 'gnīnāiva purastād āsurarakṣāmsy apāghnatā 'gnīnā paścāt*, V.11.1 *te vai devāḥ ṣaṣṭhenāivā 'hnai 'bhyo lokebhyo 'surān prāṇudanta*, VI.14.9-10 (*nīrjaghnuh, prajīgāya*); KB. VIII.8 [= 9.10] *etena vai devāḥ pañcadaśena vajreṇai 'bhyo lokebhyo 'surān anudanta*, XII.3.9 *etena vai devās triṣamṛddhena vajreṇai 'bhyo lokebhyo 'surān anudanta*; PB. VIII.9.1 *asurā vā eṣu lokeṣv āsāms, tān devā hariśriyam ity asmāl l. prāṇudanta* (etc.), IX.2.11 *asurā vā eṣu lokeṣv āsāms, tān devā ūrdhvasadmanenai 'bhyo lokebhyaḥ prāṇudanta*; GB. II.2.7 *ta ebhyo lokebhyo nīraghnan, ekayā 'muṣmāl lokād, ekayā 'ntarikṣād, ekayā pṛthivyāḥ*; ŚB. IX.2.3.8 *devās cā 'surās co 'bhāye prājāpatyā dikṣv āspardhanta, té devā āsurānām dīso 'vrñjata*, XIII.8.1.5 *té devā sapātnān bhrātrvyān dīgbhyō 'nudanta, té 'dīkkāḥ pārābhavan*, XIII.8.2.1 *devās cāsuras co 'bhāye prājāpatyā asmīmī lokē 'spardhanta, té devā āsurān sapātnān bhrātrvyān asmāl lokād anudanta*, etc. — These passages are important in more than one respect. KS. XXIII.8 (83,10), XXVIII.2 (154,1), 3 (156,9) *devā vā āsurān hatvā vairadeyād iṣamānāḥ . . .* and similar passages point to the conclusion that

Vedic texts, traces of a tendency to deny the reality of the cosmic contest (see p. 40) but here we are obviously dealing with a completely different mythological notion. A brief sketch of the Vedic cosmogonical myth may be helpful to explain this ²⁵.

3. COSMOGONY AND ASURAS

According to the cosmogonical myth, as it can be reconstructed from the scattered indications in the Vedic texts, this world arose in two successive phases. In the first, the primordial hill rose from the bottom of the primeval waters and drifted about on their surface. It contained, as a potentiality, life and light and all the goods of human existence, but a strong force of resistance (*vrtrá*), impersonated by a serpent, prevented them from spreading into the world of darkness outside the hill. The Asuras were the gods of this *rudis indigestaque moles*, this world of undifferentiated unity. The second phase is initiated by the sudden emergence of Indra as the protagonist of the Devas. Indra, who apparently comes from the darkness outside the hill but whose origin is unknown (apart from some references to his mother), throws his *vájra* at the floating hill, which thereby becomes fixed and, at the same time, is split open. He pushes heaven and earth asunder (which symbolizes the creation of the dual cosmos) and the cosmic tree rises from the hill, as the central pillar of the universe, to support the sky. Only at this moment (later re-enacted in Indra's banner festival) the god and the world pillar are identical. As for the opening of the hill, however, this meant conquering

mythologically there was little or no difference between driving away and killing the Asuras. The difficulty which the driving away presented to rational thought is openly stated in ŚB. IX.2.3.2-4, which first relates how Indra and Bṛhaspati, before the sacrifice, drove the Asuras away in the south but then goes on to say: "Now what the gods did then, that is done on this occasion. Those fiends, it is true, have now been chased away by the gods themselves, but when he does this, he does so thinking, 'I will do what the gods did;' and having had the Asuras, the mischievous fiends, chased away in the south by Indra and Bṛhaspati, he performs this sacrifice in a place free from danger and devilry" (transl. Eggeling). The sacrificial act thus repeats the primordial events. The question then arises whether the place to which the Asuras had been relegated, although different from *imé lokáḥ*, still formed part of the universe. According to the brāhmaṇas it was outside the *trailokya*, that is, heaven, atmosphere and earth (AB. I.23.2, GB. II.2.7), but according to the epic the Asuras were in Varuṇa's underworld (see p. 81, RS. X.82.5 and History of Religions 15, p. 115). The construction of the theatre, however, which represents the sacred world as protected against the evil influences from outside, shows that the Asuras (Daityas, Dānavas) were considered to be outside the cosmos, in contrast with the *nāgas* and other inhabitants of the *pātāla* or *rasātala* (Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśāstra 1.95, 3.62), which protect the dramatic performance "from below" (*adhastād raṅgapīṭhasya*) and reside in the lowest joint of the *jarjara* (IIJ. 16, p. 252 and see below). In view of the relationship between Nāgas and Asuras (see p. 88), this functional contrast should be noted. No weight should be laid on the commentary which paraphrases Kād. 227 line 2 *asura* by *pātālavāsi-devānām*.

²⁵ The Indian creation myth is treated in greater detail in History of Religions 10 (1971), pp. 91-110 (only this part!) and 15 (1975), pp. 107-120.

the power of resistance of the realm of the Asuras, that is, subduing the Asuras themselves.

It has been argued elsewhere²⁶ that this cosmogonical fight had to be repeated annually, at the beginning of the new year, in order to renew life and society, and that the Rigveda in its essence is a collection of hymns of the New Year festival. The obvious implication is that Indra was a seasonal god²⁷. Much more important, however, is the question which has never explicitly been posed so far, as to what became of the Asuras. In the next section it will be shown that some of them went over to the party of their opponents and thus became *devā́ ásurā́h*. The reason why this term is no longer used in the post-Rigvedic literature will become clear when the problem of the Ādityas is discussed. Whether intentionally or not, their origin is no longer mentioned, once they have been incorporated in the Devas and have become part of the dual cosmos. It will be shown that although their original name of Asura is no longer used, they actually retain an ambiguous character up to the period of the epics (and later). As for the rest of the Asuras, who are sometimes called *ásurā́ adevā́h* in the hymns²⁸, they are chased away from this world as a result of Indra's victory. Since, however, Indra and the Devas have to fight them at the beginning of every new year they must apparently return into this world during the period of crisis which precedes the new strife. For a short period, therefore, the banished demons again become seasonal anti-gods. In later sections we shall have to return to these Asuras. In the present context it is sufficient to remark that their so-called "Verteufelung" is consequently not the result of a historical development of the Vedic religion but is part of the cosmogonical myth. Here again, Bergaigne has made some interesting remarks on the problem (vol. III, p. 115), although he has not recognized the seasonal character of "les démons . . . vaincus, frappés, foudroyés, déchiquetés par leurs adversaires". Therefore, the question remains to be answered what exactly is the position of the *devā́ ásurā́h* during the same period. It has been suggested that in the period for which most of the Rigvedic hymns were apparently composed, Varuṇa was particularly dreaded because the inauspicious side of his character was prominent²⁹. At this point it will suffice to point to this problem (see below, pp. 24, 42).

²⁶ See "The Ancient Aryan Verbal Contest", IJ. 4, pp. 217-281.

²⁷ Cf. Kālikāpurāṇa 90.52ff. (J. J. Meyer, Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation III, p. 113). The much discussed line (RS. II.12.5) "of whom some say 'he is not here (*eṣá*)'" may refer to his supposed absence. It would seem entirely out of the question that the poet here refers to "atheists" (*nāstika*), as is still the current opinion. See further p. 25 and n. 135.

²⁸ See von Bradke, p. 105.

²⁹ See, e.g., S. Lévi, *Doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 167f., Bergaigne, *Rel. Véd.* III, pp. 142, 157, Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², p. 33, Lommel, *Symbolon* 4, p. 158ff., Renou, *Festschrift Lommel* p. 125, Kuiper, IJ. 5, pp. 53, 55; 8, p. 109 n. 68. According to Renou there is a "durcissement du personnage" in the Atharvaveda, but in view of the reticence of the Rigveda regarding Varuṇa a different explanation is possible. In this connection attention may be drawn to Hillebrandt's words (II²,

As for the fact that the fight between gods and Asuras is constantly referred to in the brāhmaṇas but only seldom in the R̥gveda, this is primarily a matter of difference of style. The authors of the brāhmaṇas, in order to explain the aim and effectiveness of a certain rite, had to recur to the beginning of the world, that is, the cosmogony, which was a guarantee for the efficacy of the ritual. For this purpose they used the fixed formula (the exact wording of which differs from school to school): "The Devas and the Asuras were at strife". When, on the other hand, the Vedic poets relate, over and over again, how Indra slew the serpent, they refer to the same cosmogonical fight in a stylistically different form. Mythologically, this is equivalent to the formula of the theologians.

To conclude this section a few words may be devoted to the relation between the Asuras and Death. In the brāhmaṇas Varuṇa is sometimes identified with *pāpmán*³⁰ and *mṛtyú* "death" (see p. 72). This shows that, as a result of Varuṇa's incorporation in the pantheon of the Devas, also Death and the ominous powers have been integrated with the cosmic order. In the same way the R̥gvedic poet addresses the dead in the words "Thou shalt see the two kings, revelling each in his own wise, Yama and the *deva* Varuṇa"³¹. While in later times a distinction was made between the world of Yama and that of Varuṇa (see p. 74), the R̥gvedic poet here regards Varuṇa as the god of the world of the dead. The latter continue to belong to the organized cosmos: "Les Pères sont des morts, mais des morts demeurés mortels; ils n'ont pas rejeté le mal"³². They are in the charge of the *devā ásurāḥ*. This explains the difference with TS. II.4.1.1, a passage more than once quoted in the handbooks³³. Here three contrasting pairs are enumerated, viz.

<i>devāḥ</i>	:	<i>ásurāḥ</i>
<i>manuṣyāḥ</i>	:	<i>rákṣāṃsi</i>
<i>pitáraḥ</i>	:	<i>piśācdḥ</i>

Undue prominence is usually given to the horizontal pairs. The real importance of this passage is, however, in the vertical groups, and particularly in the fact that the dead (*pitáraḥ*) are here classed together with the Devas and men. This is apparent from KS. X.7 (132,10) and JB. I.154 (line 10), where the *pitáraḥ* and the *manuṣyāḥ* have changed places and the former, accordingly, are opposed to the *rákṣāṃsi*. Although this order also occurs in TS. VI.1.1.1 in the tetrad *devāḥ - pitáraḥ - manuṣyāḥ - rudrāḥ*³⁴, the common order (corresponding to heaven -

p. 34): "Keine Erklärung Varuṇa's darf als ausreichend angesehen werden, welche nicht dem R̥V., dem Ritual oder dem klassischen Sanskrit gerecht wird und nicht die Vermittlung zwischen den drei Auffassungen gewährt. . ." Only his character of a god of the subterranean world can account for the different aspects, cf. IJ. 8, p. 115, Hist. of Rel. 15, pp. 114f., 116.

³⁰ Cf. Pāli *Māro pāpimā*.

³¹ *ubhá rájānā svadháyā mādantā Yamám paśyāsi Váruṇam ca devám*. Cf. IJ. 8, p. 109.

³² Lévi, Doctrine du sacrifice, p. 98.

³³ E.g., Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, p. 164, Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², pp. 405, 421 (cf. Delbrück, Altindische Syntax, p. 215).

³⁴ Arbman, Rudra, p. 154 n. 2.

earth – nether world) must have been *devāḥ – manuṣyāḥ – pitāraḥ*, which also occurs, e.g., in ŚB. III.6.2.26 and which is sometimes abridged to *devamanuṣyāḥ*, a term which then also includes the *pitāraḥ*³⁵. The Asuras mentioned in this passage are real demons, who stand outside the cosmic order. Logic would demand that Varuṇa, the former Asura who had become a Deva, is their adversary. It is the object of this study to show that this is only part of the truth and that in fact Varuṇa is, even in his relation to his banished brothers, basically ambiguous.

4. VARUṆA AND THE FATHER ASURA

Varuṇa's fundamental ambiguity is particularly apparent in his relation to the "Father Asura" in the cosmogony. The critical point in this relation is the moment when Indra, by breaking the "obstruction" of the undifferentiated primeval world, makes the dual cosmos arise. As we have seen, this act was not so much a real creation as rather a transformation of the primordial Chaos into an organized world. It did not put an end to the existence of the Asuras. A re-grouping takes place. While the majority of the Asuras are chased away from this world and, according to later texts such as the Mahābhārata, continue to live "under the earth" or in the nether world (see p. 88), some become Devas and are *yajñīya* "worthy of sacrifice" and *yajata* "worthy of worship" (although it is not certain whether *all* Devas were necessarily *yajñīya*, see n. 36). The most prominent among them (apart from Agni and Soma) are Mitra and Varuṇa, the *devāv āsurā* (VIII.25.4). It is of fundamental importance, therefore, to make a clear distinction between, on the hand, the undivided group of Asuras as gods of the undifferentiated primordial world – seldom referred to, it is true, in our texts – and, on the other hand, the later two groups of Asuras, some of whom belonged to the ordered cosmos, while the others subsisted outside it, on the fringes of the "formed" world.

The main points of Vedic cosmogony can be summarized in the three stages I. waters II *ásat* III the duality of *sát* and *ásat*. Apart from the famous *nāśadasīya*-hymn (RS.X.129) the Rigveda has very little to say about stage I but the more so about the primordial hill, which arose from the waters and symbolized the undifferentiated world of *ásat* against which Indra directed his attacks (Vṛtra-slaying). The theological speculations of the Veda centre round this undifferentiated character of *ásat*, in the Brāhmaṇas often impersonated by Prajāpati who is prior to the dual world of *sát* (III) but continues to exist in it as the representative of its totality (see below). The world of *ásat*, which may be roughly named chaos after its Greek homologue, is said to have been "one", "without

³⁵ Delbrück, *Altindische Syntax*, p. 57. It is true that at ŚB. II.1.3.1 the Devas are opposed to the Pitaras, but cf. XIII.8.1.6 "He thus gives him [viz. the deceased] a share of the world of men". Is the different order in the Black Yajurveda due to a tendency to bring the dead in closer contact with the gods? See about this tendency Caland, "Een indogermaansch lustratiegebruik", *Meded. Kon. Akad. Wet., Afd. Letterk.* 1898, pp. 279–80.

a second", "unformed", "undifferentiated (undiscriminated)", "unmeasured or immeasurable (limitless)" and "not defined (by a name)", which according to L. Renou and L. Silburn, *Sarūpa-Bhāratī* 1954, p. 68ff. is equivalent to "unshaped, unbounded, unorganized". A few illustrative passages may be quoted: "That breathed according to its nature, although there was no wind. (It was) one, there was not further any other thing whatsoever", "*Asat*, verily, was this in the beginning", "In the beginning there was nothing here, neither heaven nor earth or atmosphere. This, being *ásat*, thought: May I be", "Prajāpati, verily was alone this (world): there was neither day nor night", "Prajāpati was alone this (world). Vāc was his only (possession). Vāc was his second", "Asat was this in the beginning, one without a second", "Unformed, verily, was this", "It was neither day nor night, (it was) undifferentiated". The rise of the cosmos from the primordial world is sometimes described in the abstract terms of the theologians as a birth, as in "*Sát* was born from *ásat* in the first period of the Devas", or as an emanation, e.g. "Prajāpati, verily, was alone this (world). Only Vāc was his own (possession). Vāc was his second. He thought: This Vāc I will emit (*visṛjā iti*)". Cf. "The Devas are on this side (that is, also a product) of the emanation of this (world)"; or, finally, as a multiplication, e.g. "This, which was one, has developed to all (that exists)", "Prajāpati is manifoldly born", etc. ³⁶.

After this digression we can return to the problem of the Asuras who partly belong to the dual world of the cosmos, partly seem to have been relegated to a non-defined world beyond the pale (*Hist. of Rel.* 15, p. 112). Two restrictions must, however, be made. First, the terminological distinction is only relevant for the Rigveda, since in later texts the term *devā ásurāḥ* does no longer occur. The first group is then only denoted

³⁶ See, e.g., von Bradke, pp. 59, 104ff. (where the relation between the *Devā ásurāḥ* and the *Asurā adevāḥ* is discussed), RS. X.124.3, which stresses the transition from *ayajñīyā* to *yajñīya*, and, on the other hand, X.19.7 *yé devāḥ ké ca yajñītyās té rayyā sām sṛjantu nah*, which seems to imply the existence of Devas who are not *yajñīya*. Note in this connection that *devā ásurā* is also used with reference to Rudra, cf. V.42.11 *námobhir devām ásurām duvasya*. The passage might be of importance for determining the place of Rudra in the Vedic pantheon. — The passages quoted are the following: RS. X.129.2 *ánid avātām svadhāyā tát ékam tásmād dhā 'nyān ná parāḥ kīm canā 'sa*, ŚB. VI.1.1.1 *ásad vá idám ágra ásit*, TB. II.2.9.1 *idám vá ágre naivá kīm canā 'sit. ná dyaúr ásit, ná pṛthiví, ná 'ntárikṣam. tát ásad evá sán máno 'kuruta : syām iti*, PB. XVI.1.1 *Prajāpatir vá idam eka ásin, ná 'har ásin na rátrir ásit*, XX.14.2 *Prajāpatir vá idam eka ásit, tasya Vāg eva svam ásit, Vāg dviṭīyā* (otherwise KS. XII.2 : 167,15), ChU. VI.2.1 *asad eve 'dam ágra ásid ékam evá 'dviṭīyam. tásmād asataḥ sad ajāyata*, MS. III.7.1 (75,1) *áklptām vá idám ásit* (cf. TS. VI.1.5.3 *kl'ptyāi* "for bringing into harmony" and the fixed phrase (*ékam sántam*) *bahudhá kalpayati*, RS. VIII.58.1, X.114.5, cf. I.164.46 *vadanti*, AB. III.4.9 *viharanti*), TS. V.3.4.7, VI.4.8.3 *ná vá idám divā ná náktam ásid, ávyāvṛtam* (cf. *vyāvartayati* "to distinguish, separate", ŚB. II.3.1.17, III.9.3.33, TB. I.1.8.1, etc.), RS. X.72.2 *devānām pūrvyé yugé 'sataḥ sád ajāyata*, X.129.6 *arvāg devā asyá visárjanena*, cf. 6 *iyám visṛṣṭih*, VIII.58.2 *ékam vá idám ví bahūva sárvaṃ*, AS. X.8.13 *Prajāpatir bahudhá ví jāyate* and the well-known formulaic phrase *Prajāpatir akāmayata : prajāyeya, bhūyān syām iti* (Deussen, *Allg. Gesch. d. Phil.* I.1, p. 181ff.), e.g., PB. VI.1.1 *Prajāpatir akāmayata : bahu syām, prajāyeye 'ti*. For *ásat* see also n. 121.

by the specific name *Ādityas*, whereas the name *Asuras* is exclusively used with reference to the *Asuras* who have become demons. Secondly, it seems that the distinction is no longer made during the period of crisis which preceded the new year. As will be shown below, there are reasons to suppose that in those days there was a regression to the situation before the "second creation", in which case all *Asuras* must again have formed one group against the *Devas*. With these restrictions the use of the term *ásurā adevāḥ* to denote all *Asuras* who are opposed to the *Devas* (von Bradke, p. 105) can be accepted, although it occurs only once in RS. VIII.96.9 *anāyudhāso ásurā adevās cakrēna tām āpa vāpa rjīšin* "the *Asuras* that have not become *Devas* are without weapons, disperse them, O *rjīšin*, with thy disk".

In this connection a passage in RS. X.124 is of particular importance. It has been called a difficult hymn³⁷, but its difficulty is mainly due to the fact that earlier scholars failed to recognize its place in Vedic cosmogony. This is particularly true of Geldner's interpretation (Übersetzung III, p. 353). He explained it as a finding again of *Agni*, which is a late reflex of some misconceptions of the nineteenth century. Even in the most recent discussion by Horsch the hymn is, in spite of some correct observations, finally placed in a wrong context.

The passage referred to above is found in the stanzas 4 and 5:

4. *bahvīḥ sāmā akaram antār asmīnn Indraṁ vṛṇānāḥ pitāraṁ jahāmi,
Agnīḥ Sómo Vāruṇas té cyavante paryāvard rāṣṭrām tād avāmy āyān.*

³⁷ Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², p. 61 "In diesem schwierigen Liede", Paul Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* (1966), p. 239 with note 3: "Dem schwierigen Liede 10,124 liegt gerade der Übergang der Weltherrschaft von den *Asuras* unter *Varuṇa* zu den *Devas* unter *Indra* zugrunde, wobei jedoch charakteristischerweise eine Versöhnung zwischen *Varuṇa* und *Indra* stattfindet: *Varuṇa* tritt damit zu den *Devas* über." In spite of this correct remark Horsch's total conception of this hymn is, I am afraid, beside the mark. Of the secondary literature on this hymn the following may be mentioned in chronological order; 1877: A. Hillebrandt, *Varuṇa* und *Mitra*, p. 107f.; 1882: A. Bergaigne, *Religion védique* III, pp. 129, 145ff. (on *Varuṇa*: *Vṛtra*!); 1885: P. von Bradke, *Dyāus Asura*, p. 97ff.; 1885: H. Oldenberg, *ZDMG.* 39, p. 68ff. [= *Kleine Schriften*, p. 490ff.]; 1890-1897: H. S. Vodskov, *Sjæledyrkelse og Naturdyrkelse* (I, *Rig-Veda og Edda*), p. 210ff. ("en forholdsviis mærkelig god oversættelse af den så mishandlede RV. X.124," S. Sørensen, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Filologi* 3R VI, 1897-98, p. 137 n. 2); 1893: E. Hardy, *Die Vedisch-brahmanische Periode der Religion des alten Indiens*, p. 59; 1897: Geldner, *Vedische Studien* II, p. 292ff. (translation of the hymn on p. 295f.); 1908: Leopold von Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimus im Rigveda*, p. 196ff.; 1912: Oldenberg, *Ṛgveda, textkritische und exegetische Noten* II, pp. 342-44; 1913: A. Hillebrandt, *Lieder des Ṛgveda*, p. 21ff. (*devayāna* taking the place of *pitṛyāna*); 1920: J. Charpentier, *Die Suparnasage*, p. 118; 1923: Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*³⁻⁴, pp. 94 n. 2, 162ff.; 1929: A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* II², p. 61ff.; 1951: Geldner, *Übersetzung III*, p. 352ff. (like Geldner 1897: *Agni*'s flight; see also Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², pp. 62, 211); 1965: L. Renou, *EVP.* 14, p. 29 (translation), p. 97 (notes); 1966: P. Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur*, p. 239, and the references given in *IJJ.* 5 (1961), p. 53, *Etudes Asiatiques* 25 (1971), pp. 87, 97. The following publications were inaccessible to me: Perry, *JAOS.* XI, p. 159f., T. Segerstedt, *RHR.* 57, p. 174f. (quoted by Oldenberg) and S. Sørensen, "Til spørgsmålet om *Aditya*'erne," *Festskrift til Vilhelm Thomsen* (1894), p. 335.

5. *nīrmāyā u tyē āsurā abhūvan tvām ca mā Varuṇa kāmāyāse,*
ṛtēna rājann ānṛtaṁ vivīñcān māma rāṣṭrāsyā 'dhipatyam éhi.

(4) [Agni:] "Many years have I passed within him; I now leave the father and choose Indra. Agni, Soma and Varuṇa (now) secede. The sovereignty has now turned: I accede to that one and support it".

(5) [Indra:] "The Asuras have just lost their magic power (*māyā*). If thou, O Varuṇa, lovest me, assume, O king, the *ādhipatya* of my empire, dividing *ṛtā* from what is against the *ṛtā*".

The first stanza is entirely clear except *akaram*, whose exact meaning is obscure³⁸. There are, however, three expressions which call for some comment, viz. *antār asmin*, *īndraṁ vṛṇānāḥ* and *pitāraṁ jahāmi*.

4a. *antār asmin*.

As has been noted long ago³⁹, in the Rigveda *antār* is still an adverb. When followed or preceded by a locative it means, accordingly, "within" (Dutch *binnen in*). Its function of stressing the meaning of the locative is apparent in, e.g., MS. II.4.3 (40,19) *ásti vā idám tyásminn antār víryam* versus TS. II.4.12. 4-5 *ásti vā idám, máyi víryam*, KS. XII.3 (164,18) *víryam vā idám mayy asti* "there is, indeed, this strength in me". Grassmann's assumption of a special meaning "in seiner Gemeinschaft" for this passage and for VII.86.2⁴⁰ has rightly been rejected by Geldner, *Übersetzung III*, p. 353. It is due to an insufficient insight into the mythological implications of the context.

Since the primordial world was undifferentiated, its most prominent feature was the absence of all contrasts which characterize the phenomenal dual world. Thus it lacked, for instance, one of the basic contrasts, that of male versus female. As a consequence the poets, when referring to the "first creation", were compelled to have recourse to paradoxes as a means of expressing what cannot be expressed. Hence it is that they speak alternately of a female being, a primeval Mother, of the womb of a male being, of a bisexual bull, a cow which is at the same time a bull. Cf., e.g., III.29.14 "Day after day, the joyous one (Agni) does not close his eyes,

³⁸ *akaram*: for the function of the aorist see K. Hoffmann, *Injunktiv*, p. 157. The meaning "durchmachen, zubringen", conjectured by Grassmann, is uncertain. It has only been recorded from Mhbh. XV.1.6 crit. ed. (PW. II, col. 83) but from RS. I.33.15c *jyók cid átra tashivámso akran* "Schon lange hatten sie hier verweilend gesäumt" (Geldner) it may be inferred that in Vedic idiomatic usage *kṛ-*, when used with a word for a certain span of time, had actually that meaning. For this passage only earlier translators followed Grassmann: Hillebrandt, *Lieder*, p. 21 and Hardy, p. 59 ("viele Jahre verbrachte ich bei ihm"), W. Norman Brown, *JAOS*. 39 (1919), p. 102 ("Many years have I passed within him"). Geldner's translation "Viele Jahre war ich in ihm tätig" clearly presents difficulties. Hence Renou: "Durant de nombreuses années j'ai travaillé chez lui", K. Hoffmann "viele Jahre habe ich (bis jetzt) bei ihm gewirkt," which does not, however, solve the problem.

³⁹ See Roth, *PW. I*, col. 239, Delbrück, *Altindische Syntax*, p. 446.

⁴⁰ Accepted by Delbrück, *Altind. Syntax*, p. 446 (cf. also his earlier work *Ablativ, Localis, Instrumentalis*, 1867, p. 48), and more recently by Hoffmann and Renou in their translations (see n. 38).

ever since he was born from the womb of the Asura" 41.

This primeval world can also be represented by the specific power of obstruction (*vṛtrá*) which is peculiar to it. Cf., e.g., I.54.10 42 "There was the darkness of the waters, which made their foundation (?) vacillate; the mountain was in the womb of the *vṛtrá*" 43, that is, the primordial hill was present as a potentiality in the womb of Chaos. Whether or not the poet here refers to an abstract obstruction or, more likely, to the serpent as its personification, is not relevant. The Chaos consisted of the primeval waters (*āpaḥ, dānu*), whose child was the serpent (*dānavá*). Since in the "first creation" the primordial hill (*párvata*) rose from the bottom of these waters, it must have been present there. After the hill had risen above the surface of these waters, the power of "resistance" was concentrated in it, rather than in the waters. This explains why Indra's attacks are as much directed against the hill as against the serpent 44.

Parallel to these Rigvedic passages, where the poets refer to the womb of the Asura or *Vṛtra*, there are several passages in the brāhmaṇas where, in the more direct diction of their authors, the phrase "within *Vṛtra*" is used. Geldner (l.c.) rightly points to TS. II.5.2.3, which relates that Agni and Soma were still in *Vṛtra* at the moment Indra was going to strike and that they said to him "Strike not, we are within" (*má prá hār, āvám antáh svaḥ*). Parallel passages 45 are KB.2 III.7.17ff. 46 "As for his offering to Agni and Soma at the Full Moon sacrifice: Agni and Soma were within *Vṛtra*; against them Indra could not throw his *vajra*. For them he instituted this share [a cake] at the Full Moon sacrifice" 47, ibid. XV.3.5 (=KB.1 XV.2) "Agni and Soma were within *Vṛtra*: against them Indra could not throw his *vajra*. They came outside to this share

41 *ná ní miṣati surāṇo divé-dive yád ásurasya jaṭhárād ájáyata*. On the "Father Asura" (whose place was to be taken by Prajāpati in the world of order) see, e.g., Hillebrandt II², pp. 63f., 423 n. 4 and cf. *Etudes Asiatiques* 25, pp. 87, 97f.

42 *apám atiṣṭhad dharūmahvarāṁ támo 'ntár vṛtrásya jaṭhāreṣu párvataḥ*. Cf. Bergaigne II, p. 201, III, p. 146.

43 For the accent see Wackernagel, *Altindische Grammatik* II/1, p. 220 ("im Behälter schwankend"), but the meaning "receptacle", which Grassmann gives for *dharūṇa*, is probably incorrect, see Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 172 n. 2) and note the contrast with *agnihvára* YV. (op. c., p. 18). Renou, *EVP*. 17, p. 20: "Les ténèbres se tenaient (là), bouleversant le fondement des eaux."

44 See Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 170f and, for a more detailed discussion of the hill in Vedic cosmogony, cf. *History of Religions* 10 (1970), p. 106f., *India Maior*, p. 144ff. Cf. also the short formula *gírír vaí Vṛtró* "Vṛtra is a mountain" in MS. IV.5.1 (62,15). This is not the place to discuss Ivanov and Toporov's etymological connection of *párvata* with Slavic *Perúnŭ*.

45 See Leo Buschardt, *Vṛtra*, *Det vediske Dæmondrab*, pp. 55, 72f.

46 KB² refers to the new edition of the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* by E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma (*Verzeichnis der orientalischen HSS. in Deutschland*, Suppl. Band 9,1), Wiesbaden 1968.

47 (17) *atha yat pauruṇamāsyām Agniṣomau yajati* (18) *Agniṣomau vā antar Vṛtra āstām* (19) *tāv Indro nāśaknod abhí vajraṁ prahartum* (20) *tābhyām etaṁ bhāgam akalpayat pauruṇamāsam*.

of theirs at the full moon sacrifice”⁴⁸, ŚB. I.6.3.13 “While Indra thus went forward (pursuing Vṛtra) he said to Agni and Soma: ‘You belong to me, and I to you. He is nothing to you. Why then do you aid this Dasyu against me? Come over to me! . . .’”. This passage ends with the words “They went over to him, and after them came all gods, all sciences, all glory, all food, all prosperity”⁴⁹. The TS. passage quoted above also ends with Indra’s words “You belong to me, come over to me”, whereupon all kinds of goods of Life followed Agni and Soma. In paragraph 5 of that passage there is a variant: “Heaven and earth said ‘Strike not, for he is lying upon us’”⁵⁰. In this connection attention may be drawn in passing to the wording of 4: *sá devātā vṛtrān nirhūya vātraghnam havīḥ pūrṇāmāse nīr avapad . . .* “After he had called off the deities from Vṛtra he offered the *vātraghna* libation at full moon”. This practice of calling off someone will be discussed in a later section (see p. 103).

Passages where *antār asmin*, *antār vāruṇe* refer to the dual cosmos are not relevant in this connection⁵¹.

⁴⁸ (5) *Agnīṣomau vā antar Vṛtra āstām* (6) *tāv Indro nāśaknod abhi vajraṁ prahartum* (7) *tāv etaṁ bhāgam upanīcakrāmatām* [v.l. *upanīcakrāmatām*] (8) *yaś cainayor asau paurṇamāse*. Read *upanīcakrāmatām*?

⁴⁹ ŚB. I.6.3.13 *sá vā Indras tātthavā nuttās cāran, Agnīśomā upamantrayām cakre*: ‘*gnīṣomau yuvām vai māmā stho yuvāyor ahām asmi nā yuvāyor eṣā kīm canā kām ma imām dāsyuṁ vardhayatha, úpa mā vartethām iti*.

⁵⁰ TS. II.5.2.2–3 *ténā bhīy āyata tāv abrūtām Agnīśomau: mā prá hār āvām antāḥ sva iti, māmā vai yuvām stha ity abravīn, mām abhy étam iti*.

⁵¹ It is not always possible to draw a sharp dividing line between the undifferentiated primordial world and the nether world of the organized cosmos, as the latter preserves some characteristics of the first (cf. Hist. of Rel. 15, p. 118 n. 22). In VII.87.5 *tisró dyāvo níhitā antār asmin tisró bhūmīr úparāḥ śáḍvidhānāḥ, gīṭso rájā Vāruṇas cakra étam . . .* “Three heavens are placed within him, three earths below them, arranged as six, King Varuṇa, able (?), has made this [golden swing]” there seems to be, in the words *antār asmin*, a reminiscence of Varuṇa as a representative of the older world of the Asuras, in which the world was contained as a potentiality. In V.47.3 *ukṣā samudró aruṣāḥ suparnāḥ pūrvasya yónim pitúr á viveśa* “The bull, the reddish eagle, entered the womb of the primordial father” the poet means the nether world, whatever the exact meaning of *samudró* may be (Geldner: “Meer des Lichts”, Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. I², p. 323: the moon). In VII.86.2, a Varuṇa hymn which immediately precedes that quoted above, the text reads: *utá sváyā tanvā sám vade tát kadā nv antār Vāruṇe bhuvāni, kīm me havīyām áhṛṇāno juṣeta kadā mṛḷikām sumānā abhi khyam*. The poet no doubt speaks of his entering, in a visionary state of mind, the palace of Varuṇa, which is described in VII.88.5 *bṛhāntam mānam . . . sahásradvāram . . . gṛhām*. Renou, EVP. V, p. 70 rightly renders the stanza “Alors je me consulte en moi-même: quand donc serai-je dedans Varuṇa? Est-ce qu’il daignerait agréer mon offrande sans être courroucé? Quand apercevrai-je (sa) compassion, (en sorte que j’aie) l’âme apaisée?” [Otherwise Renou, La pensée religieuse de l’Inde ancienne, 1942, p. 60f. “Quand donc serai-je à nouveau proche de Varuṇa?”, Geldner: “Wann werde ich wohl dem Varuṇa nahe kommen?” (cf. also Siebenzig Lieder des Rigveda, 1875, p. 6), K. Hoffmann, Injunktiv, p. 246 “Wann werde ich drinnen bei Varuṇa sein?”. Thieme, Mitra and Aryaman, p. 65 translated “When shall I get inside of True-Speech?” with the following comment: “It literally says that the poet wants to reach that point where he is never again to

We can now return to X.124.4a *bahvīh sámā akaram antár asmin*. Since the poet refers to the undifferentiated sexless primordial world, Vodskov⁵² was right in comparing V.2.2 *pūrvīr hí gárbhaḥ śarádo vavárdhá 'paśyam jātām yád ásūta mātá* "Many years the foetus had been growing, I saw him when his mother brought him forth so that he was born". Mythologically, *antár asmin* "within him" (that is, in the Father Asura) is equivalent to *ásurasya jalhárūd* (III.29.14), *vṛtrásya jalháreṣu* (I.54.10), *antar vṛtre* (in the brāhmaṇas) and to the mother. They are all expressions for the mythological notion of an unorganized world which was darkness (*támas*). Therefore, Bergaigne, *Rel. védique* III, p. 146, was perfectly right in translating "dans son sein". This explains why in stanza 1 of the same hymn X.124 Agni is addressed with the words *jyók táma śśayiṣṭhāh* "for a long time thou hast been laying in the darkness"⁵³. It is the darkness out of which light was to be born.

4b *pítāram jahāmi*

As we have seen in the preceding section, at the moment when the Devas appear as an entirely new element outside the world of the Asuras, some entities go over from the Asuras to the new gods. This process of reorganization of the original world is described in various ways, which may here be briefly summarized before some details are discussed more thoroughly: A. Indra releases the entities from the bonds of the primordial world by breaking its power of obstruction (*vṛtrá*). B. The entities go over to the gods, even before Indra accomplishes his demiurgic act, either of their own accord (see, e.g., p. 16) or because they have been called forth by Indra (cf. *nirhūya*, p. 18). C. They are stolen from the primordial world before Indra's exploit, by a mythological figure who comes "from outside" (his place of origin is never specified) and overcomes the fiendish powers of that world: thus Mātariśvan steals Agni, and the *śyená* or *suparná*, Soma. For a more ample discussion see below, p. 102. The idea which underlies the different processes of B and C was apparently that Indra was unable to accomplish his act unless he was first strengthened by the powers of Soma. Hence the logical contradiction of a god who must drink Soma to acquire the power needed to deliver Soma. In the

leave the sphere of true speech, never again to be involved in untruth". In *III*. 8, p. 109 n. 68, the question was raised whether in *antár varuṇe* the word may still have been used as an appellative for the nether world, its application as a proper name to the god being due to taboo. It may be objected that as early as *circa* 1380 B.C., in the treaty of the Mitanni king Šattiwaza, Varuṇa was already used as a proper name. However that may be, the inference drawn from the Vedic material that Varuṇa's palace was in the nether world (*III*. 8, p. 107ff.) is confirmed by the epic, which locates it in the Pātāla (cf. *Mbh.* V.96.5. *avagāhya bhūmim* and see n. 305).

⁵² See Vodskov, *Sjæledyrkelse og Naturdyrkelse* p. 211.

⁵³ Cf. X.51.5 *támasi kṣeṣy agne*. For the function and the form of the aorist see K. Hoffmann, *Injunktiv*, p. 157 (with n. 100), and Johanna Narten, *Sigmatische Aoriste*, p. 60, 255 respectively.

Yajurveda there is a fixed formula which says that Indra slew Vṛtra with the help of Agni and Soma ⁵⁴.

In X.124 we are concerned with the *evocatio*, the calling off of Soma, along with the change of sides of Varuṇa, Agni and Soma. The poet apparently did not regard the two notions as basically different. The *evocatio* occurs in 6c, where Indra addresses Soma with the words "Let us slay the *vṛtrá* (*Vṛtrá*). Come out, O Soma!" (*hánāva vṛtrám niréhi Soma*).

On the other hand, the gods go over of their own accord in 4c "Agni, Soma and Varuṇa, they go over" (*Agnih Sómo Váruṇas té cyavante*) and in 4b "preferring Indra I leave the father" (*Índram vṛṇānāh pitáram jahāmi*). The last pāda shows a well-known pattern, which Geldner ⁵⁵ has rightly recognized in Atharvaveda XII.1.37 "The pure earth starts in fright away from the serpent (*sarpá*)" and "choosing Indra, not Vṛtra, she, the earth, adheres to Śakra, the lusty bull" ⁵⁶. Pāda c *Índram vṛṇānd pṛthivī na Vṛtrám* should especially be noted ⁵⁷. Geldner also points to RS. IX.97.41 "That great deed the bull Soma has performed that he, the embryo of the waters, chose the gods" (*apdm yád gárbhó 'vṛṇīta devān*). A similar situation is found as late as the Mahābhārata: while in the myth of the Churning of the Ocean Śrī is among the first goods of Creation that emerge from the primeval waters through the joint effort of Asuras and Devas ⁵⁸, in her conversation with Indra (XII.221.26-27) she herself gives an entirely different account of her transition to the gods: ⁵⁹ "Formerly I lived among the Asuras, although I am the origin of Truth and Law. When, however, I saw that they were wicked, I preferred to live with thee". (Śakra said:) "What was the behaviour of the Daityas among whom thou livedst, O fine-faced woman? And what didst thou see which made thee come here, leaving the Daiteyas and Dānavas?" ⁶⁰ A more or less parallel passage (Mhbh. XII.91.21-22) describes how she left Bali: "Then Śrī went away from him, as she lacked majesty (living) with him. (22) Thereupon, having left him, she went to Pākaśāsana [Indra]. Afterwards he [Bali] regretted it when he saw Śrī (living) with Purāṇḍara

⁵⁴ Cf. MS. II.1.3 (5,1), KS. XXIV.7 (97,18), KKS. XXXVII.8 (202,20) *agnīśómā-bhyām vai vīryēṇē 'ndro vṛtrám ahan*, TS. I.6.11.6, VI.1.11.6, AB. II.3.12 *agnīśómā-bhyām vā Índro vṛtrám ahan*. In ŚB. XI.1.6.19 Agni and Soma are called Indra's brothers. See also RS. IX.61.22 *sá pavasva yá ávithé 'ndram vṛtráya hántave*, and cf. *Etudes asiatiques* 25 (1971), p. 87.

⁵⁵ In the introduction to his translation of X.124 (Übersetzung III, p. 352f.)

⁵⁶ *yápa sarpám vijāmānā vimṛgvarī yásyām āsann agnāyo yé apsv antáh, párá dāsīyūn dádati devapīyūn Índram vṛṇānā pṛthivī ná vṛtrám, śakráya dadhre vṛṣabhāya vṛṣe*.

⁵⁷ Cf. MS. III.7.3 (77, 16), KS. XXIV.1 (90,7), KKS. XXXVII.2 (195,17/228,1), TS. VI.1.6.5.

⁵⁸ Mhbh. I.16.34 crit.ed. (= Matsyapurāṇa 250.3) *Śrīr anantaram utpannā ghṛtāt paṇḍuravāsini*. Cf. Mhbh. XII.34.13, Bhāgavata Purāṇa VIII. 8.8 *tataś cāvīr abhūt sākṣāc Chri ramā*.

⁵⁹ Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 47, wrongly characterized this passage as a late moralization.

⁶⁰ *asureṣu avasām pūrvaṁ satyadharmanibandhanā, viparītāms tu tān buddhvā tvayī vāsam arocayam (Śakra wāca) kathāmvṛteṣu daityeṣu tvam avātsir varānane, dṛṣṭvā ca kim ihāgās tvam hitvā daiteyadānavān?*

[Indra]”⁶¹. Another illustration of this mythical pattern, viz. Uśanā Kāvya’s going over from the Asuras to the Devas, will be discussed on p. 93ff.

After these introductory remarks stanza 2 of X.124 will be clear: “Now that I, being a Deva, go stealthily away from him who is no Deva, I go, looking forward, to Life: while leaving, being unfriendly myself, him who was friendly (towards me), I go over from my own party to a foreign lineage”⁶². The implication is that, before the Devas arrived on the scene as a foreign element, Agni, as a child of the primordial world and born from the womb of the Asura⁶³, was himself an Asura. In several passages he is, indeed, denoted as such⁶⁴. Cf., e.g., IV.2.5 “This (sacrifice), O Asura, comprises oblations, it secures us offspring, it is long-extended wealth with a broad foundation, which secures (the possession of, or predominance in) a *sabhā*”⁶⁵. Like Varuṇa and Soma, Agni has an ambiguous character. Just as in the ritual Soma is tied up (*úpanaddha*) as long as he is in Varuṇa’s power, there is also an *Agnír úpanaddhaḥ*. See Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 60f. and for the interpretation IIJ. 15, p. 231⁶⁶. Such statements as JB. II.155 line 7 *tasmād āhur agnīsomāv asuryāv iti* refer to this particular mythological situation, which has its counterpart in the ritual, e.g., when the Soma-plant has just been bought from the Soma vendor. Cf., e.g., KS. XXXIV.3 (37,19) *somo vā eṣo asurya iti tu, tasmān nā ’bhiṣutyah*⁶⁷. These mythological notions of a nether world aspect of Agni and Soma have been preserved with a remarkable tenacity. In the

⁶¹ (21) *athā ’smāc* (viz. Bali) *chrīr apākrāmad yā ’smīn nā ’sīt pratāpinī* (22) *tatas tasmād apakramya sā ’gacchat pākāsāsanam, atha so ’nvatapat paścāc Chriyam drṣṭvā purāndare*. I take *pratāpinī* in the sense “majestic, powerful” since *yā ’smīn āsīt pratāpinī* (“burning, scorching, paining”) would not seem to make sense. In V.106.12 *atra pātālam āśritya Varuṇaḥ śriyam āpa ca* the word *śrī* is apparently used as an appellative.

⁶² (2) *ādevād devāḥ pracātā gūhā yān prapāśyamāno amṛtatvām emi, śivām yāt sāntam āśivo jāhāmī svāt sakhyād āraṇīm nābhīm emi*. It should be noted that *amṛtatvām* can be construed with *emi* (Vodskov) or with *prapāśyamāno* (von Bradke, Hillebrandt, Geldner). For *sakhyā* in the sense of “party” see IIJ. 4, pp. 237, 250.

⁶³ III.29.14 *yād āsurasya jaṭhārād ājāyata* (see n. 41) and 11a *gārbha āsuró* with Geldner’s note (Übersetzung I, p. 363) “Asurisch (*asurá*) heisst Agni, solange er verborgen ist.” Cf. also Renou, EVP. 12, pp. 70, 126.

⁶⁴ See Bergaigne, Rel. véd. III, p. 145, Geldner, Ved. Studien II, p. 299 n. 1.

⁶⁵ *ilāvām eṣo asura prajāvān dīrghó raythē prthubudhnāḥ sabhāvān*. Cf. Renou, EVP. 13, p. 4 and his comment (p. 88): “Agni comme Asura, càd. ‘maître’, emploi reflétant un état antérieur à l’accession des devá.” See also *ibid.*, p. 145 (on Agni as an Asura).

⁶⁶ In view of ŚB. I.4.1.34 the three Agnis mentioned in TS. II.5.8.6 (viz. of the gods, the *pitáras* and the Asuras) are probably due to a later systematization: *tráyo vā agnáyo, havyavāhano devānām, kavyavāhanaḥ pitṛnām, sahárakṣā āsurānām*. The name *sahárakṣas* “accompanied by Rākṣasas”, although correctly given as such by Eggeling, SBE. XII, p. 110f. (I.4.1.36), has caused some slips: Ludwig, Der Rig Veda IV, p. XVII (*sahasrākṣaḥ*), Keith (“guardian”).

⁶⁷ In this connection the identification of Soma with *Vṛtra* should be considered. Cf. MS. III.7.8 (87,17) *Sómo vaí Vṛtrāḥ*, KS. XII.3 (165,1), ŚB. III.4.3.13; 9.4.2, IV.1.4.8; 2.5.15 *Vṛtró vaí Sóma āsīt*. Geldner refers to RS. IX.74.7; 99.1 (Vedische Studien II, p. 299 n. 1). See Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. III¹, pp. 234–236 (= II², p. 186) and cf. History of Religions 10 (1970), p. 107.

epic description of the town Pātāla in Varuṇa's subterraneous *nāgaloka* (Mhbh. V.97.3f.) both an *āsuro 'gniḥ* and the *amṛta* are said to be present ⁶⁸.

4c. *Varuṇa's ādhipatyam*

Before the creation of the organized dualistic cosmos as well as after it, Varuṇa's position appears to have been, like that of Agni and Soma (and perhaps even more so), basically ambiguous. This ambiguity, however, is of a characteristically subtle nature. Very seldom does he overtly act as an opponent of Indra, and never does he fight the Devas as a warrior. In the cosmogonical fight against the powers of the primordial world Indra's attacks are exclusively directed against Vṛtra and the primordial hill, in which the force of obstruction is concentrated ⁶⁹. As far back as the eighties of the nineteenth century, however, Bergaigne and von Bradke had rightly stressed the antagonism between the two gods in the Rigvedic hymns IV.42 and X.124. The latter hymn, however, deals with the moment when the fight was ended and the Devas had acquired the supremacy. Its importance lies in the fact that it shows how the poets conceived the organization of the cosmos after the defeat of the Asuras, and Varuṇa's incorporation in the world of the "second creation". As for IV.42, it does show the antagonism between Indra and Varuṇa during the cosmogonical fight but in the form of a bragging contest (*vivāc*). Whether or not the hymn has been composed for a royal consecration, this does not alter the fact that the general structure of vv. 1-6 points unmistakably to a verbal contest ⁷⁰. Cf. the first words of these verses: *māma* (1), *ahām* (2), *ahām* (3), *ahām* (4), *mām* (5), *ahām* (6). In the first three verses Varuṇa is speaking. He refers to the *primordial* character of his sovereignty: "I am king Varuṇa, to me belonged that primordial sovereignty (*asuryāṇi prathamā*)" (v. 2).

⁶⁸ *atrā 'suro 'gniḥ satatam dīpyate vāribhojanaḥ, vyāpāreṇa dhṛtātmānam nibaddham samabudhyata* (4) *atrā 'mṛtam suraiḥ pītvā nihitam nihatāribhiḥ*. Cf. also I.19.6 *pātālaivalanāvāsam asurāṇām ca bandhanam*. In Mhbh. III.221.15 Bomb. Night is said to have given birth to Agni and Soma (which would be reminiscent of Hesiod, Theogonia 107, 123f., 211f.): *niśā tv ajanayat kanyām Agnīṣomāv ubhau tathā, Manor evā 'bhavaḥ bhāryā suṣuve pañca pāvakām*, but the correct reading is without any doubt *niśām* (III.211.15 crit. ed.).

⁶⁹ For VI.68.2 *vṛtratūrā*, said of Indra and Varuṇa, see p. 44 and Bergaigne III, pp. 140, 142. This is a case of incidental assimilation, just as when Indra and Viṣṇu are said to stride out intoxicated by Soma (RS. VI.69.5, one of the most instructive passages in this respect), or when Indra and Varuṇa are implored to give their *mārḍikā* "mercy" (VII.82.8, cf. Yt. 10.5 *āca.nō jamyāt marḍikāi*). Varuṇa's natural position, however, is *outside* the battle-field, see pp. 38, 106f., 108f. At best, he helps the Devas, e.g., JB. I.180. As a rule, however, the Vedic Varuṇa does not fight and cannot, therefore, be defeated. In the epic he fights the Daiteyas with his nooses (Mhbh. III.42.27-29). Different are Harivaṛṇa App. I. 42.2209 (but cf. 42.2146!) and the Purāṇas (nn. 445, 448).

⁷⁰ See Bergaigne III, p. 142, von Bradke, p. 31. The interpretation of IV.42 as a cosmic *vivāc* was first suggested in IJ. 4 (1960), p. 270 n. 80b and Numen 8 (1961), p. 38, that as the hymn of a "Königsweihe" by Lommel, Festschrift Schubring, p. 32ff. and accepted by Schlerath, Königtum, p. 160. But see p. 42 and Gonda, Dual Deities, pp. 234-248.

Varuṇa tries to disguise the difference between himself and Indra: "I, Varuṇa, am (also) Indra . . . I have united these two wide, deep and well-founded worlds and have supported them" (v. 3). Indra, who comes second as the new-comer and pretender in this world and who cannot base his claims on old rights, is speaking in the next three verses (4-6). He starts with disputing Varuṇa's last statement: "I have supported (*dhārāyam*) the sky in the seat of the Ṛtá" (v. 4b), which clearly refers to 3d *sám airayam ródasī dhārāyam ca*. He then goes on by stressing the difference between Varuṇa and him: "Aditi's son is righteous (*ṛtāvan*) according to the Ṛtá; he has also extended the earth in a threefold way" (v. 4), "(but) me men with good horses invoke in their contests . . ." (v. 5). The verses 5-6 have an unconcealed bragging character: "I have performed all these (acts), no divine force can restrain me, as I am irresistible . . . both endless worlds fear (me) when (etc.)" (v. 6). Such passages have often been misinterpreted as though Indra were the parvenu among the gods. In fact, his position is comparable to that of, e.g., Tištrya in the Avesta (see IJ. 4, p. 255). He is trying to win a new status, which implicitly amounts to disputing Varuṇa's. It is significant that, while Varuṇa's words are taken for granted, a human speaker, immediately after Indra's ostentation, accepts his claims: "Thine (acts) all beings know; thou art proclaiming (*prá braviṣi*) them to Varuṇa, O vedhas; thou art famous for having struck down the obstructions (*vṛtrāni*), thou hast made the rivers stream, which were obstructed (*vṛtān*)" (v. 7). The repetition of "thou" (*tvám*) is important, since it corresponds to *ahám* (4a 5d 6a) and *mám* (5ab) in Indra's words. What is at stake is the justness, not of Varuṇa's reference to his old rights but of Indra's claims, which he proclaims to Varuṇa and which the poet confirms. From now on the situation in the cosmos has fundamentally changed, and the two gods are further invoked together (*Indrāvaruṇā* 9b, 10c). The last fact would seem to exclude Hillebrandt's interpretation of Varuṇa as the god of the old year (Ved. Myth. I², p. 26), since in that case Varuṇa would have been replaced by Indra. Instead of it, we find the same situation as that presupposed in X.124. On the other hand, the question as to a possible ritual context in which this cosmic *vivāc* may have been dramatized is not relevant for our purpose; see p. 43. The only thing that matters here is, how this contest was visualized.

To some extent the rareness of the references to this antagonism in the Rigveda may be due to an intentional reticence on the part of the poets⁷¹. The assumption of a taboo, which withheld the poets from clearly expressing their ideas is not entirely unfounded. If the theory that at the beginning of every new year Indra had to re-enact his cosmogonical fight is correct, it follows that not only the powers of Chaos (the *ásurā adevāḥ*) temporarily returned into this world from the place to which

⁷¹ See Bergaigne III, p. 76, Lévi, Doctrine du sacrifice p. 167f., Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 127, Gösta Johnsen, IJ. 9, p. 260 n. 74 and cf. IJ. 3, p. 211, 5, p. 52f., and 15, p. 226.

they had fled after their defeat, but that also Varuṇa in this critical period must have reassumed his Asura-character of the primeval world. This means that at that time of the year he was not a *Devá ásurā* but a dangerous Asura *tout court*. He must have been dreaded all the more as also his introduction into the world of the cosmos apparently did not result in an unambiguous position. Even in sources as late as the Mahābhārata there are indications to show that Varuṇa, although a god of this organized world, continued to maintain secret relations with the suppressed demons and the "night-side" of this world (see p. 90). His majestic character, too, was based upon his partly transcending the boundaries of the organized cosmos (see p. 38).

In this connection it may be useful to consider more closely X.124.5, quoted above:

*nīrmāyā u tyé ásurā abhūvan tvám ca mā Varuṇa kāmāyāse,
ṛténa rājan ánṛtaṁ vivīcán máma rāṣṭrásyá 'dhipatyam éhi.*

From the translations⁷² it is apparent that the chief difficulty of this verse lies in the last words *máma rāṣṭrásyá 'dhipatyam éhi*. Most translators seem to assume that with these words Indra offers Varuṇa, more or less as a compensation, a subordinate position in his realm. Oldenberg, *Noten a.l.*, rejected this interpretation and translated, in essentially the same manner as Geldner in 1897, "komm her zu dem (d.h. erkenne an das)

⁷² 1876: Ludwig, "mein ist des reiches oberherlichkeit; kome [lasz es gut sein]"; 1877: Hillebrandt, *Varuṇa und Mitra*, p. 108 "komme heran zur Oberherrschaft über mein Reich"; 1877: Grassmann, "komm her in meines Reiches Oberherrschaft"; 1882: Bergaigne, *Rel. Véd. III*, p. 146 "deviens le suzerain de mon royaume"; 1885: P. von Bradke, *op. c.*, p. 99 "und wenn du, o Varuṇa, nach mir Verlangen trägst, so komme, o König, der du Recht vom Unrecht unterscheidest, und sei Oberherr über mein Reich (oder über mich und das Reich)"; 1894: S. Sørensen, *Festakrift til Vilhelm Thomsen*, p. 335f. (not accessible to me); 1897: Vodskov, "kom du hid til mit Riges Overherredømme"; 1897: Geldner, *Vedische Studien II*, p. 298 "und wenn du, o Varuṇa, der du Wahrheit von der Lüge scheidest, o König, mich als den Oberherrn meines Reiches magst, so komm!"; 1913: Hillebrandt, *Lieder des Rgveda*, p. 21 "und du, willst du mich lieben, o Varuṇa, tritt, Recht und Unrecht scheidend, an die Oberherrschaft über mein Reich" (otherwise 1927: *Ved. Myth. II*², p. 63 n. 2, where he disregards Delbrück's observations on the use of *ca* with the subjunctive, see *Altindische Syntax*, p. 329f.); 1951: Geldner, *Übersetzung III*, p. 354 "Wenn du, Varuṇa, mich lieben willst, so tritt, o König, der das Unrechte vom Rechten scheidet, die Oberherrschaft meines Reiches an!"; 1965: Renou, *EVP*, 14, p. 29 "Si toi, tu m'aimes, ô Varuṇa, toi qui discrimines, ô Roi, d'avec l'Ordre ce qui est non conforme à l'Ordre, adhère à la souveraineté sur mon empire!" Recent translations (e.g., P. Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* [1966], p. 239 n. 3) are virtually identical with Geldner's. J. J. Meyer's interpretation of this passage in *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation* (1937), III, p. 213 (cf. p. 210) is based on a misunderstanding of the mythological context. Renou's comment (p. 98) "*éhi*, nuance conforme à *emi* 2b" is not quite clear to me: in 2b Agni leaves the father Asura, whereas here Soma is invited to *come* to Indra (*ā + i-*). In any case, it explains nothing about the *ádhipatya*.

ādhipatyam, das ich in meiner Königsherrschaft ausübe”⁷³. Several objections must be raised to this interpretation.

First, the words *māma rāṣṭrāsya* are more problematic than is commonly realized. They seem to suggest that Indra is the king of the new order which he has inaugurated. This, however, is clearly contradicted by the Vedic texts. Our reconstruction of the Vedic cosmogonical myth implies that Indra is a seasonal god. He mainly functions in the short period during which in later times the Indradhvaja was erected, that is, about seven days. Only then is he the principal god who restores life and renews the cosmic order (as the symbolism of the tree demonstrates). No more than Varuṇa, however, is Indra a god of the totality. During his festival, it is true, the tree (with which he is identified and which in classical texts is even called Indra) is the cosmic centre. In the system of classification, however, he is never localized in the centre.

It need hardly be pointed out that *rājan* is the characteristic function of Mitra and Varuṇa⁷⁴, whose mother Aditi therefore bears the title *rājaputrā* “mother of kings”. Theirs is the *ḷṣatrā*⁷⁵, just as Ahura Mazdā’s power is symbolized by his *xšaθra*⁷⁶. Indra’s relation to the Devas, on the other hand, is characterized by his being *jyješṭhā*. Cf., e.g., VIII.63.12 *indrajyješṭhā asmān avantu devāḥ*⁷⁷, ŚB. III.4.2.2 *indrajyješṭhā devā itī*. Only once, in one of the late Vedic texts (TB. I.5.6.4) does the term *indrārājan* occur, precluding the classical use of such terms as *devādhipa*, *amararāja*, etc.⁷⁸. Indra, it is true, is often called a king⁷⁹, but he is a

⁷³ There is no reason to doubt (with Oldenberg, *Noten*) the correctness of *ādhipatyam*, the analysis of the Padapāṭha. See Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik* II/2, p. 817. Incorrect Edgerton, *Language* 19 (1948), p. 112. In such matters we may trust the Padakāra’s knowledge of the Vedic language, since he would scarcely have invented a non-existent *ādhipatyam* instead of *ādhipatyam* (AS. VS. MS., etc.).

⁷⁴ Whatever the exact meaning of the term *samrāj*, which is the characteristic epithet of Varuṇa (VII.82.2), the latter’s kingship is sometimes said to be universal, as in II.27.10 *tvām viśveṣām Varuṇā ‘si rājā yé ca devā asura yé ca mártāḥ* (see p. 39), AS. I.10.1 *ayám devānām ásuvo vī rājati, vāsā hī satyā Vāruṇasya rājñāḥ*, MS. I.6.11 (104,2), II.2.1 (15,18), ŚB. XII.8.3.10 *Vāruṇo vaī devānām rājā*. Of a special nature are Varuṇa’s words in his bragging contest with Indra IV.42.1 *viśvāyor viśve amṛtā yāthā naḥ, krātuṃ sacante Vāruṇasya devā rājāmi kṣṣṭér upamāsya vavrēḥ* (see p. 22). Although Varuṇa begins with stressing his position as *rājā* (a: *māma dviṭā rāṣṭrām kṣatriyasya*), this *rāṣṭrām* is specified with a reference to his *krātu* (cf. Ahura Mazdā’s *zratu*). It is also Varuṇa who lays the *krātu* in the hearts of men, cf. V.85.2 *hṛtsū krātuṃ Vāruṇo apsv Ágnīm divī sūryam adadhāt Sómam ádrau*. The exact nature of this kingship, which Varuṇa possesses “from of old” (?*dviṭā*) and which he seems to trace back to his position as supreme Asura in the primordial world, must still be defined in detail. It is not easy to see how the *adhīpati* of the nether world could rule over the Devas, unless this was meant in a special sense.

⁷⁵ RS. V.68.3 *māhi vām kṣatrām devēṣu*, VI.67.5 *viśve yád vām . . . kṣatrām devāso ádadhuḥ sajōṣāḥ*.

⁷⁶ See B. Geiger, *Die Arneša Spentas*, pp. 204–232.

⁷⁷ For *indrajyješṭhā(sa)ḥ* in the Rigveda see I.23.8, II.41.15, VI.51.15, VII.11.5. In PB. VII.8.3 Indra is *śreṣṭha* of the gods. Cf. JB. II.128, 141, etc.

⁷⁸ Mhbh. V.10.7, I.83.6, 12 and Hopkins, *Epic Mythology* p. 122, Sørensen, *Index to the Names in the Mahābhārata*, p. 333ff.

⁷⁹ *rāj* I.121.3, *rājā* I.174.1, 178.2, V.40.4, VI.24.1, VII.18.11, 27.3, *rājānam* VII.31.12, *rājan* I.63.7, VI.19.10, 39.5. In VII.84.1 *rājānau* is used for addressing Indra and Varuṇa.

svarāj, a king in his own right, not a *samrāj*, which is the specific title of Mitra and Varuṇa. There can be no doubt that the poets and the priests chose their terms very carefully. In TS. V.5.9.4 the Vasus, *pitaras*, *Ādityas* and *Maruts* are invoked for protection in their respective quarters, after which the prayer ends with the words (5) *devās tvē 'ndrajyeṣṭhā vāruṇarājāno 'dhāstāc copāriṣṭāc ca pāntu* (see nn. 183, 328). It is likely, therefore, that an ancient distinction has been preserved in the yajus *agnihvarébhyas tvā ṛtūyūbhyā indrajyeṣṭhebhyo vāruṇarājabhyo vātāpibhyaḥ parjānyātmaḥ*⁸⁰. In the light of such passages the terminology of RS. X.66 is particularly interesting. The poet, after invoking in verse 1 the gods "whose senior (or superior) is Indra" (*devān huve . . . yē . . . indrajyeṣṭhāso amṛtā ṛtāvḍhaḥ*) goes on to say in verse 2 *indrāprasūtā vāruṇapraśiṣṭā yē sūryasya jyōtiṣo bhāgām ānaśūḥ* "(the Maruts) who, impelled by Indra and by the command of Varuṇa, have got their share of the sunlight"⁸¹. This does not necessarily point to a difference of rank, one being superior to the other, but it certainly proves that Indra was not, in Vedic mythology, the *rājān* of the *Devas*, even though he more than once receives that title.

When, therefore, Indra speaks of his *rāṣṭrā*, this cannot simply mean his "Königsherrschaft", unless one should limit this term to the very beginning of the organized cosmos. Nor can Geldner's translation "die Oberherrschaft meines Reiches" be correct.

When Indra has established the New Order, his role dwindles down to the comparatively modest one of a *dikpāla*, a protector of one of the quarters. The Indra festival, as we know it from later sources, illustrates his character of a seasonal god. It is inconceivable that Indra should offer Varuṇa a high rank for the brief period that he himself is the central god. Indra is speaking on behalf of the *Devas* to an *Asura* and the only sense that the poet can have attached to the words *māma rāṣṭrāsya* is "the (new) reign [of the *Devas*] that has been inaugurated by me".

Secondly, it has often been demonstrated that as early as the *Rigveda* Varuṇa was closely associated with the waters⁸². There is no reason to

⁸⁰ MS. I.3.35 (41,16) in the *Dadhigraha*. Cf. also KS. XXIX.5 (173,9), KKS. XLV (XLIV).6 (272,14/319,20) and TS. III.5.8a, which reads *agnijihvėbhyas tvā* (with a curious accent) and has a slightly different word order. Note RS. X.132.4 (= II.27.10) *tvām vėśveṣām Varuṇā 'si rājā* (with Oldenberg's note), VIII.93.11 and Bergaigne III, p. 76. See n. 74.

⁸¹ Otherwise Geldner: "Die von Indra befehligt, von Varuṇa unterwiesen, Anteil an dem Sonnenlicht erlangt haben." The two epithets are hapaxes in the *Rigveda*. A late variation occurs in *Kaus.* 3.3 *indrāpraśiṣṭā vāruṇaprasūtā āpaḥ samudrād divam ud vahantu* (see Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 104f.).

⁸² See, e.g., Lüders, *Varuṇa*, pp. 9-13, and Dandekar, *Annals Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute XXI* (1940), p. 190, who refers to II.28.4, 38.8, V.85.3, 6, VII.87.1, VIII.41.2, X.75.2, AS. VII.88 (83), 1. The last passage runs as follows: *apsi te rājan Varuṇa gṛhō hiranyāyo mitāḥ, tāto dhṛtāvratō rājā sārva dāmāni* (MSS.: *dhāmāni*) *muñcatu*. Cf. MS. IV.7.8 (104,9) *samudrō vai Vāruṇo, dakṣiṇā samudrō, yād vāruṇō dakṣiṇārdhā ālabhyāte yājamānasya nirvaruṇatvāyai, 'tād vā eṣā 'bhyānūktā* (RS. VIII.69.12): *sudevō asi Varuṇa yāsya te sapta sindhavaḥ, anukṣaranti kākūdam sūrmyaṃ suṣīrām iva, iti*, MS. II.5.6 (55,4) *etā vai pratyākṣam vāruṇīr yād āpaḥ,*

consider this the result of a later development⁸³. On the contrary, it must have been the original function of Varuṇa to represent or impersonate these waters. What earlier scholars have failed to recognize is that before Indra's demiurgic act Varuṇa and the Asuras were the gods of the primordial world which consisted of the waters. After the emergence of the earth floating on the waters and the subsequent creation of the organized world, the waters (*āpaḥ*, *salilā*, *samudrā*) were thought of as being under the earth, as its foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*)⁸⁴, as well as surrounding it. Varuṇa's association with the waters, therefore, is due to the fact that the *primeval* waters, along with their lord Varuṇa, have been incorporated in the cosmos as part of the nether world. Hence it is that Varuṇa is said to dwell amidst his seven sisters⁸⁵ and that these seven rivers, when they flow from the central mountain over the earth, are said to emerge (from the *samudrā* in the nether world) through Varuṇa's throat as through a hollow reed: VIII.69.12 *sudevó asi varuṇa yásya te saptá síndhavaḥ, anukṣárantī kākúdam sūrmyām suśirdm iva*⁸⁶. A late confirmation of this interpretation (see n. 316) can be seen in the name Varuṇadeva, which in the thirteenth century was given to the stone slabs of water wells in Chamba State⁸⁷. See p. 84.

In none of the discussions of X.124.5 has the technical meaning of the term *ādhipati* been given due consideration. Oldenberg, *Noten II*, p. 124, even regarded it as a mere synonym of *rājā*. In Vedic cosmogony, however, *ādhipati* is the specific term for a god or group of gods who, in the system of classification, have the function of protector(s) of one of the points of the compass. As such they exist as soon as the Cosmos arises from Chaos, for the world order is inconceivable without a system of classification. Cf. VS. XIV.30, ŚB. VIII.4.3.16 *dyāvāpṛthivī vy ātām, Vāsavo Rudrá Ādityā anuvy āyāms, tā evā 'dhipataya āsan*, which Eggeling renders as follows: "Heaven and Earth went asunder, the Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas separated along with them: they indeed were the lords!"⁸⁸ A similar description occurs in JB. II.141: Prajāpati first created the Vasus,

KS. XIII.2 (180,20) *āpo vai Varuṇaḥ*, TS. VI.6.3.4 *samudré hy antár Vāruṇaḥ*. In the Rigvedic passage quoted above the word *sudeva* should be noted: in his auspicious aspect as *sudeva* Varuṇa, although normally the god who withholds the water (see e.g. IJ. 5, pp. 47, 51), is expected to let the water flow from the subterranean *samudrā*, see below, p. 27. See also Renou's remark on Varuṇa as "dieu bloqueur" in *EVP*. 7, p. 82f. In his auspicious aspect Varuṇa is identical with Mitra: Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 715, rightly remarks that whenever Varuṇa gives rain, Mitra is always mentioned together with him.

⁸³ Cf. IJ. 8, p. 115.

⁸⁴ For references see, e.g., India Maior, p. 145 n. 1.

⁸⁵ See, e.g., Lüders, *Varuṇa*, pp. 51, 154, 274, and cf. India Maior, p. 151.

⁸⁶ For Geldner's entirely different translation see n. 316.

⁸⁷ See J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba State I*, p. 31ff., and cf. IJ. 4, p. 249, 5, p. 52, 8, p. 112 n. 91.

⁸⁸ Cf. KKS. XXVI.4 (107,13/124,23) and TS. IV.3.10.2 *tēsām ādhipatyam āsīt*. MS. II.8.6 (110,19) and KS. XVII.5 (249,4) only mention *Vāsavo Rudrāḥ*. Cf. ChU. III.6.4 (7,4, 8,4), see p. 59.

Rudras and Ādityas. They called themselves *adhīpatayaḥ*, since they were superior and senior (*śreṣṭhāḥ* and *jyēṣṭhāḥ*). Then, however, Prajāpati created Indra to be a chief and *adhīpati* over them (*eteṣām . . . śraiṣṭhyāyā 'dhipatyāya*) but Indra objects "How could I be a chief, an *adhīpati* over them?" (*katham eṣām śreṣṭho 'dhipatiḥ syām*). The word usually denotes a function, which must be specified: Agni is the *adhīpati* of Heaven, and Yama of the next world ⁸⁹.

Since *adhīpati* is especially used with reference to a function in the system of classification, it should be stressed that, in spite of the fact that only a few traces of the Vedic system can be found in the Rigveda, its antiquity cannot reasonably be questioned. Similar systems are well known from various archaic cultures ⁹⁰. It is inconceivable, therefore, that later theologians could have created the Vedic system *ex nihilo*: at best they may have elaborated it.

The Atharvaveda-Saṁhitā, which is much closer to the brāhmaṇas in this respect, mentions the *adhīpatis* in several passages. In AS. III.27.1-6 they have the function of the *dīkpālas* of classical literature: Agni in the East, Indra in the South, Varuṇa in the West, Soma in the North, Viṣṇu in the centre (Sāyaṇa: nadir) and Bṛhaspati in the zenith. The Yajurveda has a series of formulas in which each of the quarters is addressed with its own specific name and its specific *adhīpati* is mentioned. For the western quarter it has *samrddā asi praticī dīg Ādityās te devā ādhīpatayaḥ* ⁹¹.

In the system of classification the gods are also *adhīpatis* of all kinds of entities and it is in this connection that Varuṇa is mentioned as the *adhīpati* of the waters. Cf. AS. V.24.4 *Vāruṇo 'pdm ādhīpatiḥ sā mā 'vatv* (etc.), 5 *Mitrāvāruṇau vṛṣṭyā ādhīpatiḥ tāū mā 'vatām* (etc.), TS. III.4.5.1 *Agnir bhūtdnām ādhīpatiḥ sā mā 'vatv, Indro jyēṣṭhdnām, Yamāḥ pṛthivyā . . . Mitrāḥ satydnām, Vāruṇo 'pdm*. This implies that Varuṇa's sphere is different from Indra's and that conflicts might arise between the two domains. Aquatic animals are not subject to Indra and this is obviously the background of a cult legend told in JB. III.193. It relates that once upon a time all creatures praised Indra except the dolphin, who declared: "I will not praise thee. I move within the waters diving near (thee?) [or: "I continue diving near (thee?) within the waters"] and only so much I praise thee" (*apsv antaś carāmy upanīmajann etāvato aham tvām*

⁸⁹ Cf., e.g., MS. III.2.3 (18,2) *Yamō 'mūṣyasya lokāsyā 'dhipatyam ānaśe* (last word as corrected by Caland, ZDMG. 72 [1918], p. 7), AB. III.43.1 *Agnir vai svargasya lokasyā 'dhipatis, tam Vasavaḥ prathamā āgachams . . .*

⁹⁰ For references see Rodney Needham's "Introduction" to Primitive Classification by Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss (The University of Chicago Press, 1963), which is a translation of "De quelques formes primitives de classification: contribution à l'étude des représentations collectives", Année Sociologique VI (1901-1902), Paris 1903, p. 1-72.

⁹¹ MS. II.8.9 (113,14), KS. XVII.8 (251,5), KKS. XXVI.7 (109.12/127,11), TS. IV.4.2.1-2, VS. XV.12, etc. For a different arrangement in the Atharvaveda and the Yajurveda see below, p. 56f.

stuyām). Cf. *upanyāmajjat* TB. I.1.3.6 (*samīpe* Sāyaṇa), KS. VIII.2 (84,14), KKS. VI.7 (66,4/77,10), but here the exact reference of *upa-* is not clear. Varuṇa moves through the sea (RS. I.164.14 *adbhīr yāti Vāruṇaḥ samudrē*). In the same way the dolphin belongs to the sea (MS. VS. *samudrāya śiśumāro*) and as such refuses to praise Indra in the common way. Although its diving is vaguely reminiscent of "Varuṇa's trick" referred to on p. 77, it does not justify its refusal by a reference to Varuṇa.

Although in the epic Varuṇa is mostly denoted as *apām patih*, it is actually his *ādhipatyam* which forms part of the religious tradition. As far back as 1885 Oldenberg pointed to Mhbh. V.16.33–34⁹². In vv. 27–28 Kubera, Yama, Soma and Varuṇa come to Indra to congratulate him with slaying Vṛtra. Indra then asks them to help him in killing the *rājā devānām Nahuṣaḥ* and they ask him what their reward will be. He replies

(31) *bhavatu bhavān apām patir, Yamaḥ Kuberaś ca mahābhiṣekam, samprāpnvantv adya sahaiva tena*⁹³. The episode then ends with the two ślokaś

(33) *evaṁ saṁcintya bhagavān Mahendraḥ pākaśāsanah
Kuberaṁ sarvayakṣāṇām dhanānām ca prabhuṁ tathā*

(34) *Vaivasvataṁ pītṛṇām ca Varuṇaṁ cāpy apām tathā
ādhipatyam dadau Śakraḥ satkr̥tya varadaś tadā*

Cf. also V.109.8, where Kubera is said to have been installed as an *adhipati* over Rākṣasas, Yakṣas and Gandharvas (*ādhipatyena . . . abhiṣecitah*), whereas Varuṇa was consecrated as king of the Yādasas and as protector of the waters (V.108.3), and Indra as king of the Gods (V.106.7). See p. 79f.

The relevance of these facts for the interpretation of X.124.5d *māma rāṣṭrāsya 'dhipatyam ehi* is clear. According to the Yajurveda, then, the three groups of gods were already present as *ādhipatis* at the moment when Heaven and Earth went asunder (see p. 27), that is, at the moment of Indra's demiurgic act. Since the Atharvaveda already refers to Varuṇa as *apām ādhipatih*, it can safely be assumed that the *ādhipatyam* which Indra offers Varuṇa immediately after the defeat of the Asuras (when Varuṇa has gone over to the "foreign lineage" of the Devas), is the *ādhipatyam* over the waters and the western quarter. The fact that this is related in the tenth book of the Rigveda should not be interpreted chronologically, as a proof that this is a notion which has developed in a period posterior to the family collections, but rather in the light of the general character of the tenth book, which is closer to that of the Atharvaveda.

On the basis of the preceding interpretation it cannot be said that

⁹² In "Ākhyāna-Hymnen im Rigveda," ZDMG. 39, p. 71 n. 1 (= Kleine Schriften, p. 493 n. 1). In his *Noten* II, p. 344, he wrongly withdrew this reference on account of Geldner's remark that "es sich dort nur um das bekannte *ādhipatyam* über die Wasser handelt" (*Vedische Studien* II, p. 302 n. 1). This, however, is the very thing that RS. X.124.5 refers to.

⁹³ For Varuṇa's *abhiṣeka* see below, p. 79f.

Varuṇa is subordinated to Indra. They are on the same level but their fields of actions are entirely different. Bergaigne's definition of Varuṇa's character as "d'une suprématie nominale et d'une autonomie morale" (Rel. védique III, p. 146), although thought-provoking like all this sharp-sighted scholar has written on Varuṇa, does not go to the root of the matter. Still less so does Hillebrandt's characterization of Varuṇa as "Herrscher" and of Indra as "Feldherr"⁹⁴. As far as their rank is concerned they appear to be equals. In the second part of this study an attempt will be made to show that a similar essential equality is characteristic of the relation of *vidūṣaka* and *nāyaka* in the Sanskrit drama.

In this light, I think, such a passage as RS. I.101.3 has to be interpreted⁹⁵. The stanza reads as follows:

*yāsya dyāvāpṛthivī pavīṁsyam mahād
yāsya vratē Vāruṇo yāsya Sūryaḥ,
yāsye 'ndrasya śindhavaḥ sāścati vratām
marūtvantam sakhyāya havāmahe*

"Indra, to whose great manly power Heaven and Earth (conform), under whose command Varuṇa and Sūrya (stand), whose command the rivers obey, him who is accompanied by the Maruts we invoke for alliance". It is possible that this passage belongs in the context of the New Year festival. According to the Taittirīya Saṁhitā Indra was born on New Year's eve (*ekāṣṭakā*)⁹⁶ but his festival lasted only five to seven days, at least in the account of Purāṇic texts, and the Indra tree, which symbolized the cosmic centre and the world pillar, was at the end of the festival removed and thrown into a river. Although nothing is known about a Vedic Indra festival, it is quite likely that the Vedic contests of a potlatch-like character took place about the beginning of a new year (IIJ. 5, p. 169ff.) and stood under the patronage of Indra. However that may be, only a special occasion can have induced a poet to describe the relation between Indra and Varuṇa in such terms. In any case, the passage quoted, isolated as it is, is insufficient to prove Varuṇa's subordination to Indra⁹⁷.

A third and last objection that must be raised to Oldenberg's inter-

⁹⁴ In one of his earliest publications, *Varuṇa und Mitra* (1877), p. 103.

⁹⁵ See Bergaigne, Rel. véd. II, p. 188, III, pp. 142, 219.

⁹⁶ *ekāṣṭakā*: Cf. AS. III.10.12, Paipp. I.106.4, KS. XXXIX.10 (127,7), TS. IV.3.11.3 *ekāṣṭakā tāpasā tāpyamānā jajāna gārbham mahimānam Indram, tēna dāsyūn vy āsahanta devā hantā 'surāṇām abhavac chācibhūḥ*, KS. XIII.3 (182,22) *etasyaṁ vā Indro 'jāyata* and MS. II.5.9 (59,3). See Bloomfield, ZDMG. 48 (1894), p. 579, Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. I², p. 30, Caland ad PB.V.9.1 and cf. IIJ. 4, p. 223.

⁹⁷ See n. 74. It is not necessary in this connection to discuss such passages as VI.20.2 where Indra's *asuryām* is mentioned, or VIII.15.9 (AS. XX.106.3) *tvām Viṣṇur bhān kṣāyo Mitrō grṇāti Vāruṇaḥ*. For the first passage (read *asuryām*, von Bradke, Oldenberg, ZDMG. 55, p. 325f. = Kleine Schriften, p. 784f.) see von Bradke, op.c., pp. 32, 44, E. Hardy, Die Geldisch-brahmanische Periode der Religion des alten Indiens (1893), p. 23 and Geldner's translation, for the latter, e.g., Hillebrandt, *Varuṇa und Mitra*, p. 105.

pretation (p. 24) is that the mythological conception of figures going over from the Asuras to the Devas has a strictly fixed pattern. Above (p. 20) the epic tale of how Śrī left the Asuras and came to Indra was quoted. There is, however, a closer parallel in the Veda, as von Bradke (p. 101) has pointed out. In the Atharvaveda (ASS. XIX.56, ASP.III,8) it is related that *Svápna*, Sleep, originally belonged to the world of the Asuras⁹⁸ but that, when he went over to the Devas, he was offered an *ādhipatyam*. The hymn begins with the words "Out of Yama's world (*Yamásya lokád*) hast thou come hither". Verse 3 may here be quoted in full:

*bṛhádḡvā 'surebhyó 'dhi devān úpāvartata mahimānam ichān
tāsmāi svápnyā dadhur ādhipatyam trayastrimśásah svār ānaśāndh*

"He, . . . , turned from the Asuras to the gods, seeking greatness; for this Sleep the thirty-three [gods] established an *ādhipatya* after they had reached heaven". In several archaic religions Sleep is thought of as residing, together with Death, in the primeval waters or "outside the finite world", as de Buck put it. Every night man is sleeping there and his awakening is a new birth⁹⁹. In India a well-known illustration of this belief is Viṣṇu's sleep, during which he is resting, every year, in the waters under the earth upon the cosmic serpent Śeṣa¹⁰⁰. In the Rigveda the words "like sleeping in the womb of Destruction, resting in the darkness like the sun"¹⁰¹, which describe something (or some one?) that is buried (*nikhāta*) may not be significant in this context. When, however, in the cosmogonical myth the dragon is said to be fast asleep at the moment Indra slays him¹⁰², this is, isolated though this description is, certainly more than a fancy of an individual poet. Sleep is, indeed, closely related to the destructive forces of the nether world, as is clearly stated in AS. XI.8(10).19

*svápno vai tandrīr nīrṛtiḥ pāpmāno nāma devātāḥ
jarā khālatyam pālityam śārīram ānu prāviśan*

"Sleep, weariness, destruction, the deities named *pāpman* (evils)¹⁰³, old age, baldness, hoariness entered the body". The dragon belongs by nature to this world of sleep and *mūradevas*. Sleep is associated with the west

⁹⁸ Cf. Sāyaṇa ad v.3: *svayam Asurapakṣīyaḥ san*.

⁹⁹ See W. B. Kristensen, *Symbol en Werkelijkheid*, p. 19, A. de Buck, *De Godsdienstige Opvatting van den Slaap, inzonderheid in het oude Egypte. Inaugurele Oratie [= Mededelingen en Verhandelingen No. 4 van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap "Ex Oriente Lux"]*, Leiden (Brill), 1939.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *History of Religions* 10, p. 125.

¹⁰¹ RS. I.117.5 *suṣupvāmsam ná nīrṛter upāsthe sūryam ná dasrā tāmāsi kṣiyāntam*. The mythological allusion in *sūryam ná . . . tāmāsi* should in any case be noted (cf. IJ. 8, p. 111ff.). Cf. Manu 1.5 *prasuptam iva*.

¹⁰² RS. IV.19.3 . . . *abudhyām ābudhyamānam suṣupvānam Indra, . . . āhim vājrena vī riṇā aparvān*.

¹⁰³ For the connection between *pāpmān* and *mṛtyú* see n. 30 and below, p. 72.

in TS. V.5.10.4. Cf. also Mhbh. V.108.4,7,8, where Night and Sleep (*nīdrā*) are said to be in Varuṇa's western quarter and the Daityas are described as sleeping there.

5. THE ĀDITYAS I

The fundamental problem, accordingly, is that Varuṇa although becoming a god, does not entirely lose his character of an Asura. He and Mitra are *devdv āsurā* (see p. 7), gods who are at the same time Asuras and are still addressed as such (VIII.27.20). As Devas, however, they form a special group, the Ādityas, the principal of whom is Varuṇa. Their name, "sons of Aditi", characterizes them as sprung from the undifferentiated primeval world of which the World mother Aditi is one of the most prominent personifications. She cannot, however, be discussed here in detail. This raises the question about the status of the Ādityas in the Vedic pantheon. Hillebrandt quite incidentally refers to this problem when, in a foot-note, he observes "denn gerade die Bezeichnung Asura's gibt dem Namen im ṚV. nichts Dämonisches und als die Asura's zu Dämonen geworden waren, ist Varuṇa—kein Asura mehr"¹⁰⁴. Here he seems to be faintly aware of the complexity of the problem but at the same time he has recourse to an evolutionistic scheme to explain it away. It may be asked, indeed, if anything is explained by stating that at a later stage of the evolution the Asuras became demons but that Varuṇa was not affected by this change. Is this anything more than formulating the problem again in other words, leaving the basic difficulty as it was before?¹⁰⁵ The hypothetical historical development, handled as a last irreducible fact, remains unexplained, its main function being that of a *deus ex machina*. As for RS. X.124, Hillebrandt's ritualistic interpretation

¹⁰⁴ Ved. Myth. II², p. 420 n. 1.

¹⁰⁵ It should be noted that it is often hard to ascertain what modern scholars, when discussing this matter, actually mean to say. Thus A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Yaksas II*, p. 27, refers to ŚB. XIII.8.2.1 (one of the many passages where the Asuras are said to have been driven away from this world by the Devas, see above n. 24) and then remarks: "Varuṇa, indeed, escapes this fate for he is accepted as a Deva, and his asuric character is forgotten . . .". The last words cannot be accepted without some modification but the main question is: *by whom* was Varuṇa, in Coomaraswamy's opinion, accepted as a Deva? Apparently he thinks that this was a voluntary act of the believers, which, then, must have reflected a fundamental change in their mythological conceptions and in the religious attitude of Vedic man. If this interpretation of his words is correct, they contain an arbitrary statement which lacks a solid foundation in facts. William Norman Brown, in his juvenile paper "Proselyting the Asuras (A Note on Rig Veda 10.124)," *JAOS*. 39 (1919), pp. 100–123, had probably the deepest insight into the problem, but even in his article there is still a lack of clearness in that he introduces the notion "proselyting" so as to account for the fundamental change. But see his last article in *JIES*. 2 (1974). In this connection it should be noted that Sāyana's gloss *pūrvadevāḥ* for *Āsurāḥ* (ad AS. VI.109.3) is mere guess-work: in the preceding hymn he paraphrased the same word by *Dānavāḥ* (VI.108.3) and elsewhere he uses other glosses again (II.3.3, XIX.86.1). As for the *pūrvadevāḥ* of RS. VII.21.7 and X.109.4 (cf. X.90.7), they are no doubt the Sādhyas; see Geldner ad I.164.50 and the Excursus below.

of it as referring to the beginning of the new sacrificial year¹⁰⁶ curiously disregards the words *bahvīh sámāh* "many years" in verse 4. A strictly mythological explanation was only given by Bergaigne, who quite rightly recognized in this hymn a description of the defeat of the Asuras by the Devas¹⁰⁷.

It follows from the preceding discussion that the basic problem is neither one of a historical change in religious belief (the older Asuras having been replaced by the younger Devas)¹⁰⁸, nor one of a contrast between two different conceptions of the Divine (a unitarian versus a dualistic one) existing side by side¹⁰⁹. As was pointed out above (p. 11), Bergaigne is the only scholar who has recognized the basic difference between the Asuras and Devas, although he was not aware of the fact that we are not so much concerned with two contemporaneous conceptions of the Godhead as with two different stages in the cosmogonical process (see n. 107).

¹⁰⁶ See *Lieder des R̥gveda* (1913), p. 21: "Auch dieses Lied knüpft wie X, 51-53 an den Wechsel von Devayāna und Pitryāna und die Neubelebung des Opfers am Jahresanfang an . . . Mit dem Übergang von der opferlosen Zeit des Pitryāna zu der des Devayāna assoziiert sich der neu auftauchende Gegensatz von Devas und Asuras."; *Ved. Myth.* II² (1929), p. 62: "Wiederbeginn der Opfer nach der langen Zeit des Tamas." Some other passages Hillebrandt interprets (as Geldner interprets this one) as referring to Agni's flight and the effort of the gods to induce him to return (*Ved. Myth.* II, pp. 62, 211). See above, n. 37. (Geldner's interpretation of *arkā* at X.157.5 is very doubtful!).

¹⁰⁷ Bergaigne, *Rel. véd.* III, p. 145ff. (on X.124): ". . . indication, et cette fois tout à fait claire de la rivalité de Varuṇa et d'Indra, et de l'usurpation consommée par le second [cf. Vodskov, p. 210 n. 1!] . . . la révolution qui lui a fait perdre la puissance en même temps qu'à Soma et à Varuṇa . . . Agni, Soma, Varuṇa sont renversés; la révolution est faite" [= *paryāvārd rāṣṭrām*]; pp. 74, 76, 147 (defeat of the Asuras, victory of the Devas), p. 84 (the name *deva* characteristic of "un dieu de la conception dualiste comme Indra") and p. 3 where Bergaigne rightly opposed the gods of the dualistic cosmos to those of the undifferentiated world, although he did not yet situate this contrast in a cosmogonical context. He rightly stressed the ambiguous character of the Asuras ("caractère équivoque", pp. 69, 70, 72, 76, 84, 115, 148 etc.). Only the disintegration within the world of the Asuras brought about by the creation of the cosmos he has failed to recognize. It should be added, however, that even he had not entirely abandoned the theory of the "Verteufelung" of the Asuras as a historical process of the Vedic religion; cf. vol. III, p. 68f., p. 69 n. 2: "les rapports ordinaires d'Indra avec les Asuras, même avec les Asuras conservant encore le caractère de dieux."

¹⁰⁸ Thus, e.g., Kasten Rönnow, *Trita Āptya I* (Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift 1927), p. 10ff., Paul Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* (1966), pp. 238, 240ff., especially p. 243 and *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ See Bergaigne, *Rel. véd.* III, p. 3ff., p. 142 and cf. especially p. 4: "Mais ce mythe . . . s'il consacre l'antériorité *mythique* de ces mêmes dieux sur Indra, ne saurait passer pour une preuve de leur antériorité *historique*, je veux dire d'une antiquité plus haute de la conception religieuse à laquelle ils appartiennent" and p. 149: ". . . ces deux personnages [*viz. Indra and Varuṇa*] qui, d'après le vers VI,68,4, dépassent en grandeur tous les dieux, résumant les deux conceptions de la divinité entre lesquelles semble osciller la conscience religieuse des Aryas védiques." Instructive is the reaction of an outstanding contemporary scholar to this structural approach, which can be found in P. von Bradke's Preface to his *Dyāus Asura* (1885), p. XIIIff. It was written three years after the publication of vol. III of Bergaigne's work.

This interpretation, however, while solving an old problem of Vedic religion, at the same time reveals the real complexity of the Vedic conception of the world. In the mythological way in which the Vedic poets express themselves, Indra breaks the power of resistance (*vrtrahātya*). As we have seen above, this had constantly to be repeated, probably at the beginning of every year. Not only Indra, accordingly, but also the powers of resistance (*vrtrá*), impersonated by the serpent (*Vrtrá*), must have been seasonal deities ¹¹⁰. If the strife between Gods and Asuras had been decided once for all by Indra's victory, the brāhmaṇas would not have referred to this primordial myth for every detail of the ritual. In fact, however, not only the ritual as a re-enactment of the mythical prototype, but any action in this world could be seen in the light of that myth because the fight between the two powers is never ended. The *locus classicus* for this idea is the commentary on TS. I.2.12.2. In the Vedic age, the conception of time as a cyclical process within the limits of a year must have led to the belief that after the crisis which marked the transition from the old year to the new one the Asuras were for the time being eliminated. It is significant that in the brāhmaṇas it is said, as a stereotyped expression of their defeat, that the Asuras were driven out from this world (see n. 24). There is a marked contrast, accordingly, with the Rigvedic dragon (the impersonation of the power of resistance of the realm of the Asuras), which is slain ¹¹¹. The implication is that the organized cosmos does not represent the total reality. Along its borders this cosmos is threatened by the demoniacal powers which, although driven away from this world into the darkness of the nether world, constantly imperil its existence. In psychological terms this myth might express a repression of the dark aspects of existence into the unconscious mind (n. 24) with, as its natural consequence, the fear engendered by that repression.

This fear is clearly expressed in such a passage as Śat. Br. I.2.4.8–11 (in Eggeling's translation): "The gods and the Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, were contending for superiority. The gods vanquished the Asuras; and yet these afterwards harassed them again. The gods then said: 'We do, no doubt, vanquish the Asuras, but nevertheless they afterwards again harass us. How then can we vanquish them so that

¹¹⁰ Bergaigne, who rightly stated that there was a mythological relationship between Varuṇa and Vrtra, was wrong in identifying them directly (Rel. véd. III, p. 147f.). Actually the dragon is killed, whereas Varuṇa is incorporated in the group of Devas.

¹¹¹ Bergaigne, III, p. 115: "Supposera-t-on qu'il enferme les démons des ténèbres ou de la sécheresse? Mais ce serait là une conception peu conforme à l'esprit général de la mythologie védique. Les démons sont vaincus, frappés, foudroyés, déchiétés par leurs adversaires: il n'est pas ordinairement question de les enfermer." This is true but a distinction should be made between the Asuras and Vrtra (whom Bergaigne reckons among the Asuras). In the Mahābhārata the Asuras, driven away into the nether world of Varuṇa, are actually fettered (see below). As for the commentary on TS. I.2.12.2 (p. 321), it runs as follows: *tasmād ihaive 'dānīm eva tadupāvartanāt prāg eva devān vijayāmaha iti vicintya vajram udyatya devān abhilakṣya prahartum āgatāh.*

we need not fight them again?' Agni then said: 'By fleeing northwards they escape from us'. By fleeing northwards they had indeed escaped from them. Agni said: 'I will go round to the northern side, and you will then shut them in from here; and whilst shutting them in, we will put them down by these (three) worlds; and from what fourth world there is beyond these (three) they will not be able to rise again'¹¹². In these words we find an awareness of the existence of a world beyond the world of order, a world of disorder and formless Chaos, over which gods and men had no control. With this fourth world, however, the reflections of the Vedic theologians had reached a limit. What was beyond the three worlds was unimaginable and the author declares himself to be uncertain about the existence of this fourth world (I.2.1.12, ŚBK. II.1.4.10): "What fourth (world) there is or is not beyond these (three) worlds, by that indeed he thereby chases away the spiteful enemy. Uncertain, no doubt, is what fourth (world) there is or is not beyond these (three) worlds . . ." (Eggeling). When this fourth world is incidentally identified with Prajāpati (ŚB. XI.1.2.8), this is entirely on the lines of the numerical speculations in which the sum total plus one symbolizes the all-embracing totality, personified by Prajāpati (cf. also Śrautakośa II, p. 781).

The same idea is implied in the conception of gods of the totality of all that is. In them a belief in the ultimate oneness of Order and Chaos, of Good and Evil, is expressed. If, however, they are a guarantee for the final victory of Order over Chaos remains questionable. Although they sometimes help the Devas to vanquish their adversaries¹¹³, their

¹¹² (8) *Devās ca vā āsurās ca, ubhāye prajāpatyāḥ pasprdhire. té ha sma yád devā āsurān jāyanti tāto ha smaivai 'nān pūnar upōttiṣṭhanti* (9) *té ha devā ūcuh, jāyāmo vā āsurāns, tātas tv evā naḥ pūnar upōttiṣṭhanti. kathān nv ēnān anapajayjām jāyemé 'ti* (10) *sā hā 'gnīr uvāca, ūdañco vai naḥ palāyya mucyanta ity, ūdañco ha smaivai 'ṣān palāyya mucyante* (11) *sā hā 'gnīr uvāca, ahām uttaratāḥ pāryeṣyāmy, ātha yūyām itā upasāmrotsyatha. tānt samrūdhyaī 'bhīś ca lokair abhinīdhāsyāmo yād u cemānīl lokān āti caturthām tātaḥ na sāmhāsyanta iti.*

¹¹³ E.g., PB. VIII.3.1 "The Gods and the Asuras contended for (the possession of) these worlds. The Gods resorted to Prajāpati; he gave them this sāman, (saying): 'By means of this sāman ye will be able to drive them away.' By it they drove them away from these worlds" (translation by Caland): *devās ca vā asurās caīṣu lokeṣu aspardhanta. te devāḥ Prajāpatim upādihāvims. tebhya etat sāma prāyachhad: etenai 'nān kālayiṣyadhva[m] iti. tenai 'nān ebhyo lokebhyo 'kālayanta.* (Bibl. Ind.: *kālayiṣpaddham*, Kashi Skt Ser.: *kālayiṣyaddhvam*; Caland, ZDMG. 72 [1918], p. 20 and translation, p. 167 emended this to *kālayiṣyaddhva iti* with the support of the Leiden manuscript. H. C. Patyal, "On the Modal Forms of the Simple Future in the Veda", Poona 1969 [Public. Centre Advanced Study in Sanskrit, No. 32], p. 83f maintains the form in *-am*. The manuscripts will have to decide which reading is correct). Other instances are JB. III.104, where the Devas ask Prajāpati for help against the Asuras: *Devāsurā aspardhanta. te devā Prajāpatim upādihāvims: tan naś chandaḥ prayachhā 'yātayāma yenā 'surān abhibhavāme 'ti. sa tapo 'tapyata. sa tapas taptvā 'tman siṁsimāyad avāpaśyat,* and TS. II.5.2.2, where Prajāpati dips the vajra so as to enable Indra to slay Vṛtra (after Tvaṣṭṛ had created the Indraśatru to avenge Indra's killing his son Viśvarūpa): *sā Prajāpatim upādihāvāc: chāturu me 'janī 'ti. tāsmāi vājraṁ siktvā prāyachhad: etēna jāhī 'ti.* Otherwise MS. II.4.3. See further n. 408. A later instance is Maitrī Up VII.10, where Brahmā gives the correct explanation of the *ātman* only to the gods, but not to the Asuras.

own position is one above the contending parties. Hence it is that Western scholars have often misinterpreted their role as due to weakness of character. Instructive, both for the position of the High God and for modern misunderstanding of his character are the words in which Hopkins describes Brahmā's role in the epics: "He is a god of asceticism, he is father of gods and demons. Therefore, to win his favor, gods and demons practice asceticism, and because he is an impartial father he grants invulnerability, etc., to either god or demon indifferently. As the demons always take advantage of this weakness, Brahman is ever engaged in preserving the world from the result of his own folly. One cannot call it ignorance, for he is prescient. He is 'equable to all', that is his boast and glory . . . but he is also well-disposed, *suhṛd*, toward both demons and gods . . ., as being equally his children" ¹¹⁴.

A striking illustration of this position of Brahmā is found in the Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśāstra. After Indra's victory, his killing of the Asuras and Dānavas was celebrated in the assembly of the gods by Indra's banner festival (1.55 *tasmin dhvajamahe nihātāsuraḍānave*). During this festival, before an audience which consisted of gods, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Snakes (1.62), Bharata and his sons gave a dramatic performance which reproduced "how the Daityas had been vanquished by the gods" (1.57). Since, however, the theme of this performance was the extinction of Daityas and Dānavas (1.64 *prayoge . . . daityadānavanāśane*), "all Daityas who were there assembled" were enraged at it and, at their instigation, the personified Obstacles (*Vighna*), together with the Asuras (1.66), obstructed the performance. Although Indra drives them away ¹¹⁵ with his *vajra*, they come back and Bharata, unable to bring the performance to an end, asks god Brahmā for a means of protection (*rakṣāvidhi*). Brahmā, who was also the inventor of the dramatic art

¹¹⁴ Epic Mythology, p. 195, where he refers to Mhbh. V.76.7 crit ed. *Pāṇḍavānām Kurūṅāṁ ca bhavān paramakāḥ suhṛt, surānām asurānām ca yathā vira Prajāpatiḥ*. Cf. p. 49 "Not unlike the relations of the Rākṣasas to the Great-Father (god) is that of the Asuras, who also are continually receiving boons from Brahman" (with examples), p. 50 "Brahman gives the Asuras all boons except immortality, for immortality is withheld from them . . . The Asuras have no father-god except Brahman, for Brahman remains also their "father" and gives them not only boons but also good advice . . .".

¹¹⁵ 1.71 *gateṣu teṣu vighneṣu sarveṣu saha Dānavaiḥ* ed. Ghosh, in accordance with the MS. *na* of the second edition of the Baroda text. The other editions read *nihateṣu ca sarveṣu vighneṣu (nihiteṣu in the ed. Raghuvamśa)*. M. M. Ghosh, The Nāṭyaśāstra, The Original Sanskrit Text, vol. I², Introduction, p. xxxiv, gives the very arguments in favour of this reading which may at one time have induced a copyist to substitute *gateṣu* as an emendation for *nihateṣu*. In view, however, of verse 74 *dr̥ṣṭvaiva jarjaram te 'pi gamiṣyanti evam eva tu, Viṣṇudharmottara II.154.12 dr̥ṣṭamātreṇa yene 'ha vidraṁṣyanti*, Hemādri, Caturvargacintāmaṇi II,2, p. 401 *na tathā 'pi kṣayam gatāḥ* (cf. p. 402 *taṁ dr̥ṣṭvā saubalam saṁnyam bhagnam sa ca nīpātitaḥ*) there is a possibility that *gateṣu* is the authentic reading. For the rest, it is possible, judging by the internal evidence, that the passages vv. 58-63 and 67-76a are interpolations but these questions of higher criticism are here left out of consideration. In any case the lines form part of the text as it has traditionally been handed down.

(*nāṭyaveda*) and who had instructed Bharata, now conceives the idea of creating a theatre, which Viśvakarman builds at his command. The cosmic symbolism of this building will be discussed below. Here it may be sufficient to state that it represents the world of order, protected against the demoniacal forces which threaten it from without (the "fourth world" of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa). As the demons are offended at this device which is directed against them, Brahmā tries to conciliate them by kind words (1.100 ff.): "Having heard these words of the gods Brahmā said to the Vighnas: 'Why have ye risen to destroy the performance?' Having heard this word of Brahmā Virūpākṣa, along with the Daityas (and) the hosts of Vighnas, spoke the following conciliatory words: 'By creating this Nāṭyaveda, in accordance with the wish of the gods, Thy Holiness has rejected us. It is for the benefit of the gods. Thou shouldst not do this, O Grandfather of the World; no less than the Devas, the Daityas have sprung from Thee in the beginning (v.l.: all)'. When Brahmā heard these words of Virūpākṣa, he said: 'Don't ye be angry or dejected, O faultless ones! I have created the Nāṭyaveda, which shows the alternatives of good and evil¹¹⁶ of you and the gods and which takes into account the connection¹¹⁷ between deeds (*karman*) and mental states. It does not onesidedly indicate the feelings of you or the gods but it is a representation of the state of the whole of the three worlds'¹¹⁸. It should be noted that there is some similarity between the theatre as a protected area and the *vāstu*, which is the sacred ground plan for temples and palaces. V. S. Agrawala defines it as "the emergence of a divine *Kshetra* in the midst of the Āsuric universal. The forces of all the Devas are concentrated on the limited sanctified area of the *Vāstu*", the latter being "a complete specimen or replica of the cosmos in which light and darkness exist together"¹¹⁹.

As was stated above, the epic evidence, which will be discussed below in detail, shows that Varuṇa, although incorporated in the cosmos, still maintained secret relations with that which is beyond the bounds of it. In this connection it may be asked whether the many translators of

¹¹⁶ Abhinavagupta (Baroda ed. I², p. 34 line 16f.) has the following comment: *śubham aśubham ca dharmādharma rūpam sukhaduḥkhalatvena vibhedena kalpayaty, adhyavasāyayati nāṭyavedaḥ*.

¹¹⁷ Abhinavagupta, p. 34 line 19 takes *anvaya* in the sense of descentance: *anvayo 'bhījanaḥ āryāvartādi-brāhmaṇyā . . . śceti*.

¹¹⁸ *devānām vacanam śrutvā Brahmā Vighnān uvāca ha, kasmād bhavanto nāṭyasya vināśāya samutthitāḥ* (102) *Brahmaṇo vacanam śrutvā Virūpākṣo 'bravīd vacaḥ, Daityair Vighnagaṇairḥ sārḍham sāmāpūrvam idaṁ tataḥ* (v.l. *vacāḥ*) (103) *yo 'yam bhagavatā sṛṣṭo nāṭyavedaḥ surecchayā, pratyādeśo 'yam asmākaṁ surārtham bhavatā kṛtaḥ* (104) *tan naitad evaṁ kartavyam tvayā lokapitāmaha, yathā devās tathā Daityās tvattaḥ pūrvavinirgatāḥ* (v.l. *sarve vinirgatāḥ*) (105) *Virūpākṣavacaḥ śrutvā Brahmā vacanam abravīt, alam vo manyunā Daityā viśādam tyajatā 'naghāḥ* (106) *bhavatām devatānām ca śubhāśubhavikalpakaḥ, karmabhāvānvayāpekṣī nāṭyavedo mayā kṛtaḥ*, (107) *naikāntato 'tra bhavatām devānām cā 'nubhāvanam (-tra bhāvanam), trailokyasyā 'sya sarvasya nāṭyam bhāvānukīrtanam*.

¹¹⁹ Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *Matsya Purāṇa — A Study* (Ramnagar, Varanasi, 1963), p. 345.

Atharvaveda Samhitā IV.16¹²⁰ have grasped the meaning of verse 5a *sárvaṃ tād rājā Váruṇo ví caṣṭe yád antará ródasī yát parástāt* "King Varuṇa perceives all that is between heaven and earth and what is beyond". It seems that no one has ever wondered what the poet may have meant with this "beyond". In the cosmogonical myth of the Rigveda (X.124) we are told that only some of the Asuras went over to the party of the gods but that the other Asuras, having lost their magic power (*māyá*), renounced their sovereignty (*parydvard rāṣṭrám*). The brāhmaṇas relate that the Asuras (that is, the *ásurā adevdḥ* of the Rigveda) were driven away from "these worlds". We are probably not wide of the mark when we say that by Indra's demiurgic act *ásat* was converted into *sát* (RS. VII.24.5, X.72.2) but that part of *ásat* continued to exist, on the fringe of the organized cosmos, as an unformed (rather than non-)being¹²¹. Only the all-embracing transcendental world of the highest gods, "in the highest heaven, in the lap of Aditi" (X.5.7), encompassed both *ásat* and *sát*. It has mostly been insufficiently realized, owing to the exalted wording of such hymns as AS. IV.16, that Varuṇa is not a high god in the strict sense of the word. The difference between Varuṇa and Prajāpati, who is "the limited and the unlimited" (ŚB. VII.2.4.30) and who encompasses all, like the year, is obvious. Similarly that between Varuṇa and Viṣṇu, who with his three strides covers (and creates) nether world, upper world and the transcendental third world of the cosmic totality¹²². As an Āditya, Varuṇa belongs to the Devas, who are "on this side of Creation" (X.129.6). What is "beyond these (three) worlds"¹²³, is the fourth world to which the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa refers. Still, the Atharvavedic stanza quoted above cannot mean anything else but that Varuṇa had some connections with the world of *ásat*. If this conclusion is correct, the poet here openly declares what is mostly only indicated in an indirect way (see below, p. 68). It will also be clear that the way in which out of the proto-Indo-Iranian **Asura* the pre-Zoroastrian high god Ahura Mazdā has developed in Iran thus poses a special problem.

Some passages might easily lead to faulty conclusions with regard to Varuṇa. Thus RS. X.132.4ab "The other one, yonder Heaven, O Asura,

¹²⁰ See the references in Bloomfield, SBE. 42, p. 390, Whitney-Lanman, Atharva-Veda, Translation and Notes (HOS vol. 7), p. 176 and H. Lüders, Varuṇa, p. 30f.

¹²¹ Only with regard to this "unorganized rest" of the universe can *ásat* be said to be "destructive" (Gonda, Religionen Indiens I, p. 181). For *ásat* = "undifferentiated, formless" see particularly H. Oertel, New Ind. Ant. I (1938), pp. 317-321 and the latest discussion by R. Ambrosini, *Studia classica et Orientalia Antonino Pagliaro oblata* I, p. 96ff. Cf. also R. N. Dandekar, *India Maior*, p. 93. For MS. III.7.1 (75,1) *áklptāṃ vā idām ásit*, etc. see n. 36.

¹²² This notion, it is true, does not seem to have been formulated *expressis verbis* before the classical period but it is so intimately interwoven with the essence of Viṣṇu's character and with his three steps that it cannot well be due to a later elaboration. See *Hist. of Rel.* 15, p. 117f.

¹²³ *imámli lokán áti*. Cf. RS. X.125.8 *paró divá pará ená pṛthivyá*, X.82.5 *paró divá pará ená pṛthivyá paró devébhír ásurair yád ásti* and see n. 112.

was given birth to: thou, O Varuṇa, art king over all (beings)"¹²⁴ should not be interpreted as meaning that Varuṇa is a god of totality. The poet who in a late period composed this stanza has here made use of II.27.10ab "Thou art king over all, (namely) over the Devas, O Asura, and the mortal beings"¹²⁵, which restricts the range of Varuṇa's power to "this side of Creation" (X.129.6). Even more restricted it is in VII.83.5, where Varuṇa and Indra are addressed with the words "For ye two have power over the twofold wealth" (i.e., that of the upper world, which is Indra's domain, and that of the nether world, which is Varuṇa's)¹²⁶. In the former of these two stanzas Varuṇa is contrasted with (the Asura) Heaven¹²⁷, who "was given birth to" (*sūyata*). In view of Peter von Bradke's theory of *Dyaus pitár* it should be observed that, while Varuṇa was present in the primordial world as the eldest son of the World mother Aditi, heaven existed only as a potentiality. The latter's "birth", therefore, can only be due to Indra's *vṛtrahátya*. This situation is clearly expressed in TS. II.5.2.5 "Heaven and earth said 'Strike not, for he [Vṛtra] is lying upon us' ". The cosmic duality of heaven and earth was only a potentiality in the undifferentiated unity of the primordial world, the unfolding of their dual character being prevented by the repressive power of Vṛtra. The description found in other brāhmaṇas¹²⁸ (and also well-known from Egypt) to the effect that heaven originally lay upon the earth is only a different manner of expressing the same idea of undifferentiated unity, to which Indra put an end by "propping up" the sky¹²⁹. What the poet may have meant is that, in contrast with Dyaus, who owed his existence to Indra's intervention, Varuṇa was a god in his own right.

Bergaigne has seen the character of Varuṇa much more sharply than those scholars of the following generation who exalted the lofty character of the high ethical god. Right at the beginning of his chapter on "les dieux souverains et les dieux pères" he states "qu'à l'idée de la paternité est souvent étroitement unie, dans les personnages en question, celle de la malveillance" (III, p. 2) and on p. 84 he gives the following striking characteristic of the Asuras: "Les Asuras devaient être des dieux auxquels les croyances des rishis n'opposaient pas de démons; dieux puissants pour le mal comme pour le bien; tantôt manifestés sous la forme brillante que semble impliquer le mot *deva* . . . tantôt au contraire cachés et cachant eux-mêmes la lumière et les eaux, tous les trésors que l'homme attend du ciel; enfin, en tant qu'opposés à Indra, assimilables dans une plus ou moins forte mesure aux démons combattus et vaincus par ce dieu.

¹²⁴ *asāv anyó asura sūyata dyaús tvám víśveṣāṃ Varuṇā 'si rájā*. Cf. Renou, EVP. 5, p. 89 "Cet autre là-haut, le Ciel, ô Asura, fut mis au monde; (mais) toi, ô Varuṇa, tu es le roi de tous (les êtres)," and see above, p. 25.

¹²⁵ *tvám víśveṣāṃ Varuṇā 'si rájā yé ca devā asura yé ca mártāḥ*.

¹²⁶ See above, p. 27. Similarly VII.82.4 *īśānā vásva ubháyasya kārava Índravaruṇā suhāvā havāmahe*.

¹²⁷ Although P. von Bradke's translation (p. 71) is incorrect, there can be no doubt that Dyaus was also an Asura.

¹²⁸ See n. 50.

¹²⁹ See History of Religions 10, p. 104f.

Les Asuras en général, comme *Tvashtri* en particulier, paraissent avoir eu dès l'origine un caractère équivoque, susceptible de s'accuser dans le sens démoniaque, comme de devenir l'expression la plus complète et la plus auguste de l'idée de la divinité". From a different starting-point and working along different lines we have arrived at results which are in some respects remarkably similar to those of Bergaigne. It is in this context that the passage of the early-classical *Nāṭyaśāstra* has been quoted to illustrate the complex nature of the relation between the Asuras and the Devas of the pantheon. The archaic character of the first introductory chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is also apparent from the fact that Indra is here still represented as the central figure among the Devas.

The later development in religious thought may either be described in terms of a shift from the worship of a seasonal god to that of the gods of totality (*Prajāpati-Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, probably also *Śiva*), which may then be explained from the seasonal rites getting into disuse, or, in a more theological way, as a shift from the exponent of the formed world that is threatened by the powers of the unformed (*ásat*) to the all-embracing gods who transcend this dualism and the cosmic contest (as is illustrated by the characteristic rôle of *Brahmā* and *Viṣṇu* in the epic tale of the Churning of the Ocean (see p. 104ff., *Hist. of Religions* 15, p. 119).

The earliest trace of such a theological re-evaluation of the idea of Indra's contest occurs in *ŚB.* XI.1.6.9, where it is said in a *gāthā*: "Never didst thou fight, nor hast thou, O Maghavan, any enemy. What is told of thy fights is only an illusion which thou hast created. Neither today nor formerly hast thou fought against an enemy". I do not think that it is right to describe this development as a tendency towards monism¹³⁰. Nor would it seem correct to characterize Indian religious thought in general as tending towards a one-sided emphasis on the non-formed. Although there has certainly been a shift of emphasis from the formed to the non-formed, still, in the older stage of Indian religion,

¹³⁰ (9) *tāsmād āhur naitād asti yād daivāsuraṁ yād idāṁ anvākhyāne tvad udyāta itihāse tvat tāto hy evā tām Prajāpatiḥ pāpmānā 'vidhyat té tāta evā parābhavann iti*
 (10) *tāsmād etād ṛṣiṇā 'bhyanūktam, nā tvām yuyutse katamāc canā 'har nā te 'mitro maghavan kās canā 'sti, māyēt sá te yāni yuddhāny āhūr nōdyā śātrūṁ nā nū purā yuyutsa, iti.* For the interpretation see Minard, *Trois Enigmes* II, §§785ff., 872f., (relation to *RS.* X.54.2, for which see Bergaigne III, p. 83, Gonda, *Four Studies in the Language of the Veda*, p. 135f.). From the remarks made above it will be clear why I cannot accept Horsch's explanation in *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* (1966), p. 242: "Dieses merkwürdige Relikt einer verlorenen, mythologischen Tradition besiegelt zugleich die Alleinherrschaft des *deva* Indra, der bald vom Lichtglanz der neuen Götter des Hinduismus, die ihre Macht grossenteils den niedern, z.T. vorarischen Volksschichten verdanken, verdunkelt wird." From a different point of view Heesterman has drawn attention to the elimination of the element of contest from the ritual; see "Brahmin, Ritual and Renouncer," *WZKSO.* 8 (1964), p. 1ff.

man looked upon the phenomenal world as the result of a periodical strife between the powers of Chaos and Cosmos. In spite of characteristic differences there are, I think, significant similarities between Vedic and Old Germanic religious thought ¹³¹.

6. THE ĀDITYAS II: ĀDITYA AND ASURA

On the one hand, accordingly, Varuṇa is in the Rigveda still called an Asura, while, on the other hand, he is, as the principal of the Ādityas, a Deva. The single passage where the Ādityas are called Asuras ¹³² shows, it is true, that their character as *devā āsurāḥ* was still known to the poets. Everywhere else, however, the Ādityas are simply called *devāḥ*, e.g., II.27.4. See p. 11.

The problem as to why the name Asura has fallen into disuse in the post-Rigvedic period ¹³³ as an epithet of Varuṇa is certainly important, but this cannot be dissociated from another one, equally important, viz., Why is it that the Rigvedic poets still continue to call Varuṇa an Asura, whereas he has become a Deva, that is, "worthy of sacrifice"? ¹³⁴ In other words, What is the relation between the two terms Asura and Āditya and what were the respective functions of these two categories?

As for the first problem, this seems purely terminological. No indication can be found in our texts for a material change in Varuṇa's status and function during the whole Vedic period. The disappearance of Asura as a title of Varuṇa must, therefore, be due to causes which lay outside the god's personality. As far as I can see, the last trace of this use of *Asura* occurs in the Atharvaveda. Cf. I.10.1 "He rules, as an Asura, over the Devas" (n. 74) and, for the Asuras in general, VI.108.3 "The wisdom (*medhā*) that the Ṛbhus know, the wisdom that the Asuras know, the salutary wisdom that the Ṛṣis know".

Any attempt to answer the second question can at present only be tentative. It has been pointed out above (pp. 11, 23) that if the theory of an annual reiteration of Indra's Vṛtra-slaying and his fight against the Asuras as gods of the primeval world is correct, it then follows, first,

¹³¹ See G. H. van Senden, *Het Werelddrama*² (Amsterdam 1965), p. 74ff.: "Het Vormbeseef in verschillende Cultuurgebieden", whose characterization of various cultures in terms of their position towards "formed" versus "non-formed" is important for a deeper insight into the background of Vedic religious thought (which he does not discuss).

¹³² VIII.27.20 (to Aryamā Mitró Váruṇaḥ, see v. 17) *yád vā 'bhīpitvė asurā ṛtām yatė chardīr yemá ví dāsúṣe*. See von Bradke, p. 75, Bergaigne III, p. 87. On the *asuryā* of the Ādityas (only II.27.4 *dīrghādhiyo rákṣamāṇā asuryām*) see von Bradke, p. 33f., Bergaigne l.c.

¹³³ Cf., e.g., Paul Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur*, p. 236. On p.238 n. 2 there is a reference to Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* III¹, p. 439, who concluded from the rare occurrence of the name Asura in the family books of the Rigveda that the "Asura-cult" was already waning.

¹³⁴ Cf. Arbman, *Rudra*, p. 152, who cites instances of the use of the word *deva* for demons in later literature.

that Indra was a seasonal god¹³⁵ and, secondly, that there must have been a belief which held that in the critical period before the beginning of the New Year the world had returned to the state of the primordial Chaos, a belief well-known from other archaic religions. In other words, in this period Devas and Asuras were again opposed, as they had been in the beginning, and Indra had to repeat his contest for supremacy with Varuṇa, who at this moment was again the protagonist of the world of undifferentiated unity (see p. 24). To the Rigvedic poets this contest was not a mere legend from a dim past but a reality of their actual world. In RS. IV.42, which contains a bragging contest between the two gods (see p. 22), Indra says (among other things) that he *institutes* the race (*ājī*), which was a form of a socio-religious contest¹³⁶. If it should be true that the hymn had been composed for a special ritual purpose, this would only prove the more forcibly that the cosmogonical event, as *the* paradigm for actual social life, was conceived as being reiterated continually and (probably) periodically. According to J. C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration* (1957), p. 222, the *rājasūya* must originally have been one of the yearly festivals which “cluster round the turning

¹³⁵ For the uncertainty about Indra's origin (who apparently comes “from nowhere”) see Minard, *Trois Énigmes* II § 786a. Cf. AS. III.10.12 (etc.), where Indra is said to have been generated by the New Year's eve and to have slain the Dasyus or Asuras (see n. 96), and further RS. I.132.2ab *svarjeṣe bhāre . . . āhann Indro yāthā vidē śirṣṇā-śirṣṇo 'pavācyah* “Im Kampf, wenn es gilt das Sonnenlicht zu gewinnen . . . , an dem Tage ist Indra, wie bekannt, Haupt für Haupt anzurufen” (Geldner, “en (ce) jour” Renou, *EVP.* 17, p. 46, instead of “erschlug”, “tötete”, Grassmann, Ludwig, Pischel, *Ved. Studien* 1, p. 68). It remains to be seen to what extent the seasonal character of Indra affords an explanation for the well-known passage II.12.5 *yām smā prchānti kūha sēti ghorām utēm āhur natsō asti 'ty enam* “He about whom (people) ask ‘Where is he?’ and about whom they say ‘This one is not (present).’” The Dutch equivalent would be “Hij is er niet” (German: “Er ist nicht da”). For the continuation of the relative clause see Caland, *Zur Syntax der Pronomina im Avesta* (Amsterdam, 1891), p. 46, Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* II², p. 243. Modern commentators who refer to the later *nāstikas* disregard the fact that in the parallel passages the poets do not question Indra's *existence*, their main concern being who has *seen* him, or his act (V.30.1 *kvā syā vīrāḥ kō apaśyad Indram*, VI.27.3 *Indra nākir dadṛśa indriyām te*, 100.3 *kā im dadarśa*), and *where* he is (II.12.5 *kūha sēti*, VIII.64.7 *kvā syā vṛṣabhō yūvā* and V.30.1 quoted above). Hence the answer *ihā* in VIII.100.4 *ayām asmi jaritah pāsya mehā vīśvā jātāny abhy āsmi mahā* “Here I am, O singer, see me here, I surpass by my greatness all races”, which is a reaction to 3 “There is no Indra”, some one says, ‘Who has seen him, whom shall we worship?’” People do not know (that is, have not yet experienced) the *maghavattvá* of the *maghāvan*, because no one has yet seen his Indric force (VI.27.3), but his existence is obviously not questioned. What matters is the god's epiphany, which becomes manifest by his divine acts. In II.12 the poet refutes the assertion of “some ones” by merely pointing to the god's accomplishing again his exploits. This method of rebuttal would not seem favourable to the theory that “There is no Indra” is the counterthesis in a verbal contest (see J. C. Heesterman, *WZKSO.* XII-XIII [1968], p. 180). For the different problem posed by X.54.2 *māyēt sā te yāni yuddhāny āhūh* “c'est (un tour de) ta magie, les combats qu'on dit (que tu as) livrés” (Minard, *Trois Énigmes* II, p. 286), see p. 40 and n. 130.

¹³⁶ See v. 5 *kṛṇomy ājīm maghāvā 'hām Indraḥ (kr, not yā !)*.

of the year and are all in some way or other concerned with the regeneration of the year, which is conceived of both as an actual time unit and as a cosmological entity". A striking confirmation of this conclusion is furnished by the fact that an annually repeated *abhiṣeka* (*saṁvatsarābhiṣeka*), usually performed about the time of the first (*pūrvābhiṣeka*, *prathamābhiṣeka*), still exists. See M. R. Pant, *J. Nep. Res. Centre I* (1977), p. 96. Therefore, the idea of an annual reiteration of the cosmogonical strife seems well-founded, and there is no contradiction between Lommel's interpretation of the ritual use made of RS. IV.42 and the cosmogonical explanation as a *vivāc*. No poet would have thought of composing a hymn in which the primordial strife for supremacy is so dramatically depicted if that contest had once for all been decided in the mythical beginning. If, however, the contest was repeated every year, nothing is more natural than that it took place during a renewal of the king's status. On the other hand, the hymns show beyond doubt that, in terms of mythology, Indra had regularly to repeat his exploit of the *vrtrahātya*. It may, therefore, be considered plausible that also his contest with Varuṇa, which resulted in the latter's adoption into the ordered cosmos, was repeated. Dandekar, *India Maior*, p. 93, argues that Vedic texts do not speak of repeated creations and refers to RV. VI.48.22 "Only once was the heaven born, once the earth". It is certainly true, that the texts do not say that heaven and earth were "born anew" like Agni (VIII.43.9 *gārbhe sāt̄ jāyase pūnaḥ*) but they do not contradict the conclusion of an annual renewal. What the poet stresses at the end of VI.48 is that Pṛṣni has only once given birth (to the Maruts) and that no one else was born after (*tād anyo nānu jāyate*) and in confirmation of his statement he refers to heaven and earth. It can, indeed, be stated that after creation no *other* heaven or earth has arisen, but this does not contradict the obvious fact that the cosmogony was periodically reiterated.

The question then arises if Varuṇa bears the title Asura in the Rigveda because this collection of hymns was in its essence (that is, in the family books) designed for the celebration of the New Year period of contests (see IIJ.4, p. 217ff.). This cannot definitely be proved, but since there are in the Rigveda traces of a competitiveness between Indra and Varuṇa, this must have recurred in the period of crisis at the end of every year, just before Indra's victory was celebrated by the erection of his banner (see p. 129ff.). If at that time Varuṇa was again a true Asura of the primeval world, his "losing" that epithet in later times may possibly have been connected with the circumstance that the ancient seasonal ritual gradually lost its importance. Further research is needed to decide whether this suggestion is correct.

In close connection with the preceding remarks the often discussed contrast between Varuṇa and Indra, as elaborated in the hymns VII.82-85, may be briefly summarized¹³⁷. The most significant detail is that Varuṇa

¹³⁷ See above, p. 25 and cf. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts V* (1874), p. 122ff. Hillebrandt, *Varuṇa und Mitra*, p. 102f., Renou, *EVP*. 7, p. 6, Bergaigne III, p. 118 (on II.27.14, where he says about Indra "son nom . . . ne figure que dans la formule

only very rarely is said to join Indra in the latter's fight. Only once are they jointly addressed as *vrtraturā* (dual), "striking down obstacles"¹³⁸. Varuṇa's epithet *samrāj*, as against Indra's title *svarāj* (VII.82.2), has often been commented upon¹³⁹. In 82.4 and 83.5 the two gods are said to have power over goods of "both sorts" (*vāsva ubhāyasya*). The word *ubhāya* can refer to the two moieties, as in the stereotyped phrase, used with reference to Asuras and Devas, *ubhāye Prājāpatyāḥ* "both of them sons of Prajāpati" (n. 23). The phrase has, therefore, been interpreted above as saying that since Indra has power over the goods of the upper world, and Varuṇa over those of the nether world, they conjointly have at their command all *vāsu* of the world¹⁴⁰. In 82.5 Mitra honours Varuṇa with peace (*kṣēma*)¹⁴¹, while Indra drives about as a mighty one (details not clear). While 82.6 is insufficiently clear¹⁴², 83.9 says that the one slays the *vrtrāni* and the other watches over the *vratāni* (vows). A characteristic antithesis also occurs in 84.2: "May Varuṇa's wrath avoid us, may Indra give us space". The greatest blessing that is expected from Varuṇa is negative, his not striking men with his wrath. On the other hand there are indications in the Rigveda which justify the assumption that, apart from the cosmic and social aspects of Indra's *vrtrahātya*, its religious importance was individually experienced as a break-through of *ānhas*, a widening of consciousness¹⁴³. In 84.4 we are told that the Āditya gets round (?) the *ānṛtā* (plural), whereas the hero distributes goods (*vāsūni*)¹⁴⁴.

de demande, et non dans la formule de dépréciation"), and more in general III, p. 140ff., where also VI.68 (cf. Geldner, *Vedische Studien* 1, p. 142) is discussed. See further Dandekar, *Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume* (1969), pp. 237-248. For the hymns VII.82-85 see Renou, *EVP*, 5, pp. 99-102 (translation) and 7, pp. 81-87 (commentary). In the Atharvaveda Indra and Varuṇa are not (no longer?) mentioned conjointly, see Renou, *Festgabe Lommel*, p. 122f.

¹³⁸ See note 69.

¹³⁹ Dandekar, *Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume* (1969), p. 242f., holds that Varuṇa as a *samrāj* is superior to both Indra and Mitra. From the analysis of X.124.5 (above, p. 24f.) it follows that the relation between Indra and Varuṇa cannot simply be defined in terms of superiority.

¹⁴⁰ Sāyana (ad VII.82.4): *divyasya pāṛthivasya ca vasuno, dhanasya* (cf. VII.83.5, VI.19.10). Against him Geldner: "Eher feindliches und eigenes". Renou: "Vous qui disposez d'un double bien-matériel", resp. "Puisque vous régissez l'un et l'autre biens (céleste et terrestre)." Cf. n. 126 and n. 23.

¹⁴¹ See Renou, *EVP*, 7, p. 82 Cf., however, *dhruvākṣema* as an epithet of Mitra and Varuṇa (IIJ, 8, p. 109 n. 68).

¹⁴² *ājānim anyāḥ śnathāyantam ātirad dabhrēbhīr anyāḥ prā vṛṇoti bhūyasaḥ*. Cf. Bergaigne III, p. 113, Renou, *EVP*, 5, p. 99 "recouvre", 7, p. 82f. "dieu bloqueur".

¹⁴³ For the nature of Varuṇa's blessing see Bergaigne III, p. 142 and cf. IIJ, 5, p. 52. Indra's *vrtrahātya*, in so far as it has a bearing on the individual poet as the breaking of an inner obstruction and the opening of the well of inspiration, was discussed in IIJ, 4, p. 248. For a psychological evaluation of the experience of space see M. Lietaert Peerbolte, *Psychic Energy* (Wassenaar, 1975), p. 145f. The notion of *ānhas*, discussed by J. Gonda, IIJ, 1, p. 33ff., might be considered in the light of Peerbolte's views.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. VII.65.3 (Mitra and Varuṇa) *tā bhūripāsāv ānṛtasya sētū*. Cf. Bergaigne, *Rel. véd.* III, p. 142, Renou, *EVP*, 7, p. 86.

In 85.3 the translation is not certain: "The one controls (? *dhārayati*) the chosen (?) people, the other breaks through the barriers (*vrtrāni*) which do not offer resistance"¹⁴⁵. Somewhat different is VI.68.3 "The one forcefully slays *Vṛtra*, the other accompanies (Indra?) as an inspired speaker"¹⁴⁶, which leaves the question open as to who is accompanied by *Varuṇa*. The god who is ordinarily expected to inspire the speaker is *Agni*¹⁴⁷, not the remote *Varuṇa*. This group of hymns is interesting because the *Vasiṣṭhas*, traditional *Varuṇa*-worshippers, have here tried to do full justice to the specific character of each of the two gods.

It is significant that the *Rigvedic* religious thinkers who thus defined the two gods in terms of a contrast were aware of the systematic character of their theology. The first Western scholar to follow them in this respect was *Bergaigne*. Almost a century ago he described *Vedic* mythology "comme un système achevé de toutes pièces" (*Religion védique* I [1878], p. III). He recognized the necessity of a "systématisation" (p. II) of the data and thus became the first exponent of a structural approach *avant la lettre*. In contrast with *Geldner's* evolutionistic theories, which were in conformity with the spirit of the age, *Bergaigne* interpreted the difference between *Devas* and *Asuras* as "une opposition née de la rencontre des deux conceptions unitaire et dualiste, sur l'ancienneté relative desquelles je n'ai d'ailleurs pas cru pouvoir me prononcer" (III, p. 142).

It is natural that some of *Bergaigne's* conclusions are no longer acceptable. This is especially true of the relation between "unitaire" (which he considered characteristic of the *Asuras* and *Ādityas*) and "dualiste" (which he rightly recognized in *Indra*). Such remarks as that about "les deux conceptions de la divinité entre lesquelles semble osciller la conscience religieuse des *Aryas* védiques" (III, p. 159) show that he regarded them as two coexisting conceptions. In fact, however, they characterized two successive stages of the cosmic process, viz. the undifferentiated primordial world and the dualistic cosmos (if it is permitted, for a moment, to reduce the complex state of things to an over-simplified formula). The antithesis as he put it is, therefore, only correct for the brief (presumably annual) period during which the original *Asuras* (who, in a way, were "jenseits des Guten und Bösen") and the *Devas* were again fighting for the supremacy over this world. As for the "dieux pères", however, the problem must be formulated in a different way. *Bergaigne* is right in describing *Varuṇa* and the "sovereign gods"

¹⁴⁵ *kṛṣṭīr anyō dhārayati prāviktā vrtrāny anyō apratīni hanti*. For *prāviktā* different interpretations have been proposed: "ausgewählte" (*Geldner*, *Renou*, *EVP*. 7, p. 87), "(aux résidences) séparées" (*Renou* 5, p. 102), "erschreckt" (*Hillebrandt*, *Lieder*; similarly *Oldenberg*), "fortgesprungene (Grenze)" (*Thieme*). Cf. *Eggeling*, *SBE*. 44, p. xxii, *Dandekar*, *Cama Or. Inst. Golden Jubilee Vol.* (1969), p. 248, n. 26, *P. Thieme*, *Kl. Schr.* p. 254 n. 2.

¹⁴⁶ *vājreṇā 'nyāḥ śavasā hanti vrtrām śiṣakty anyō vrjāneṣu viprah*. See *Renou*, *EVP*. 7, p. 80 (also on *vrjāneṣu*).

¹⁴⁷ See *IJ*. 4, p. 248ff.

as comprising within themselves the opposition of divine and demoniacal forces but, owing to his excluding the theological speculations of the brāhmaṇas from his study (vol. I, p. IV), he has overlooked the fact that, even in the Rigveda, the Ādityas did not stand apart in isolation but were incorporated in the system of the dualistic cosmos. In this world of order the original antithesis of Devas versus Asuras recurs in that of upper world versus underworld, the latter being impersonated by the Ādityas, the "Asuras among the gods" (*devānām āsurāḥ*). In a way, therefore, the old antithesis of the formed versus the non-formed seems to reappear in the world of the formed. As for the Ādityas, this adds a new complication to their complex character, already recognized a century ago by Bergaigne.

7. THE ĀDITYAS III: THE RIGVEDA.

For many details concerning the Ādityas as a group it is sufficient to refer to the handbooks¹⁴⁸. For the members of their group the texts give different numbers¹⁴⁹ but, in any case, they have always been considered a closed group, in contrast with the limitless Asuras¹⁵⁰. When one Āditya is referred to, this is always Varuṇa. Two Ādityas refer to Varuṇa and Mitra, three to Varuṇa, Mitra and Aryaman.

In none of the handbooks, however, the place of the Ādityas in the pantheon is given due consideration¹⁵¹. From the oldest texts downwards the pantheon is considered to consist of three groups of gods, the Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas. There are a few other groups, which, however, are not included in this fundamental tripartite system. Many gods, such as Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, belong to one of the three groups. There are, besides, a few individual gods who, in some way or other, stand for the totality of the world and, accordingly, transcend this system. To them belongs Prajāpati and originally, it seems, Viṣṇu. It is significant that, when they are incorporated in the tripartite system, they are assigned to the group of Ādityas. Cf., e.g., Viṣṇu. The same, however, is true of Indra who in the brāhmaṇas is often counted among the Ādityas, although

¹⁴⁸ See, e.g., Bergaigne III, p. 98ff., Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, p. 130, who disposes of the Ādityas in half a page (under the heading "Groups of Gods"), in contrast with, e.g. the Maruts (pp. 77-81).

¹⁴⁹ Seven according to Bergaigne III, p. 98, but see Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 87. For priestly speculations cf., e.g., MS. II.2.1 (15,2) *trīr vai saptā saptā 'dityāḥ*, KS. XI.6 (142,3) *trīr vā Ādityās saptā saptā, yāvanta evā 'dityās tān badhnāti*; for metrical speculations (eight Vasus: gāyatri; eleven Rudras: tristubh; twelve Ādityas: jagati), see Oldenberg, Kleine Schriften, p. 696 n. 2 and, e.g., the Vedic Concordance sub *vasavas tvā gāyatreṇa*. Different, again, is ŚB. XI.6.3.6; cf. also AB. VIII.12.4, JB. I.283,1, II.101,2,4,7.

¹⁵⁰ For the Asuras as an open group, see Oldenberg, "Varuṇa und die Ādityas", ZDMG. 50 (1896), p. 46 n. 3 (= Kleine Schriften, p. 691 n. 3); their number is legion: F. D. K. Bosch, The Golden Germ, p. 87 (on the Kauravas).

¹⁵¹ See, e.g., Muir, Orig. Skt Texts V, p. 54ff., Oldenberg, l.c., pp. 43-68 (= Kleine Schriften, pp. 688-713), Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 87. The latter two were mainly concerned with the dispute on the Zoroastrian Ameša Spentas. Arbman's discussion (Rudra, p. 308) is unsatisfactory.

originally he was the leader of the Vasus. Other mythological figures, such as Tvaṣṭṛ, seem in fact to have belonged to the undifferentiated world. As will be shown below, the order in which the three groups were enumerated was fixed ever since the R̥gveda.

For the present the true meaning of this remarkable tripartition must remain an open question. Here it can only be pointed out in passing that during the cosmogonical fight Indra, as the leader of the Vasus (note 153), with the help of the Rudras (= Maruts), gains the victory over the Asuras of the primordial world, as a result of which some of the last group join the Devas. The nature of the tripartition might thus be formalized as "Vasus-Rudras + Ādityas". It might be tempting to suggest that, owing to the ambiguous character of the Ādityas (which will be demonstrated in this chapter), they add a new dimension to the group of Vasus-Rudras. However, not before a much better insight has been gained into the nature of the Rudras, the most elusive of these groups, will it be possible to determine the relation between Vasus and Rudras.

Our task is more modest, viz. to answer the question how this tripartite system was fitted into the normal quadripartite system of classification, which turns clockwise from the East to the North. The Vasus are always associated with the East, the Rudras with the South and, with rare exceptions, the Ādityas with the West. The problem of finding a fourth group for the North has been solved in different ways, which will be discussed below.

The first question that arises is whether these fixed associations were due to the fixed order of the three groups (as is, no doubt, the case in some priestly speculations)¹⁵² or if, inversely, the association was from the beginning a given fact and thus led to enumerating the groups in the order of the classification system. As far as I can see, the second alternative is correct because for Indra¹⁵³ and Agni¹⁵⁴, who were not only Vasus but even their leaders, only the association with the East is natural¹⁵⁵. On the other hand, the connection of Varuṇa, the principal

¹⁵² Cf. the ascending order of metres (Gāyatrī = 8, Triṣṭubh = 11, Jagatī = 12), for which see above, n. 149; or the stereotyped ascending order of earth, air and sky (e.g., JB. II.141 see below, note 159, and ŚB. VI.1.2.10, see note 163).

¹⁵³ VII.10.4, 35.6, X.66.3. See below, p. 50.

¹⁵⁴ E.g., I.44.3 *Agnīm purupriyām adyā dūtām vṛṇīmahe Vāsum*, I. 127.1 *Agnīm hōtāram manye dāsvantām Vāsum sūnūm sāhaso jātāvedasam*, V.51.13 *vaiśvānarō Vāsuv Agnīḥ*. Cf. MS. III.4.2 (47,1) *Agnir vai Vāsuḥ* and even in the epic, Mhbh. XII.122.31 *Vasiṣṭham īsam viprāṇām Vasūnām jātavedasam* (viz. *vidadhe prabhum*).

¹⁵⁵ For the classification system the fact that both Indra and Agni belonged to the East (Indra: TS. II.4.14, guardian of the East; Bhar. NŚ. 3.23f., 5.95f., Purāṇas; Agni: cf., e.g., TS. I.8.7, ŚB. IV.4.9, ŚB., Gobh.GS., Mhbh., Rām.) created difficulties. Therefore, Agni is mostly associated with the Vasus and the East, while Indra is relegated to the South and functions as leader of the Rudras. The original identity of Rudras and Maruts (cf., e.g., III.32.3, X.32.5) and Indra's close connection with the Maruts may have contributed to this makeshift but do not explain it, as Agni was also connected with the Rudras (VII.5.9, VIII.103.14). Anyway, a

Āditya, with the setting sun and Death, shows that the relation of the Ādityas to the West was not arbitrary. In the light of the following material it is unexplainable how one of the greatest Vedic scholars could write that in the Rigveda the Vasus are not yet a separate class¹⁵⁶.

A second question is, whether the few exceptions in the Rigveda to this order (III.8.8, VII.35.14, X.66.12) prove that the order was not yet entirely fixed at that time. I think, such a conclusion would not be warranted. The poets were much freer in handling the traditional material of their religion than the systematic theologians of the brāhmaṇas, and that they made use of this freedom for prosodical purposes is apparent from a comparison of III.20.5 with III.8.8: whenever the nominative or vocative plural of *Vāsu* was required, the poets of the family books preferred to put this after the caesura. Cf. III.8.8 *Ādityā Rudrā Vāsavaḥ sunīthāḥ* (VII.35.14 *Ā. R. Vāsavo juṣanta*, X.66.12 *Ā. Rū. Vāsavaḥ sūdānavah*) as against III.20.5 *Vāsūn Rudrām Ādityām ihā huve*. Similarly in the genitive plural in X.48.11 *Ādityānām Vāsūnām rudriyānām*. Only in the latest book we find in an irregular pāda (X.128.9) *Vāsavo Rudrā Ādityā upariṣṭam*. A similar case is CII. III, p. 8, where Samudragupta is said to be *Dhanada-Varuṇe-ndrāntaka-sama* (sequence N.W.E.S.).

A third question concerns the exact relation of Indra to the three groups. As for X.48.11, where Indra says "I, as a Deva, do not infringe the law (?) of the Devas, viz. the Ādityas, Vasus and Rudriyas"¹⁵⁷, this would seem to stress the solidarity among the Devas (whatever *dhāman* may here mean) rather than to express a subordination of Indra to the totality of the three groups. Such an inferior rank of Indra cannot be inferred either from an isolated brāhmaṇa-passage, where Indra is said to have been later born than the Devas¹⁵⁸. If any importance can be attached to this passage, "Devas" must here be a general term for the Devas Ādityas only (cf., e.g., X.65.9, 66.4). Such a cult legend as JB. II.141-142, where the Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas do not accept Indra's supremacy because they claim, as *jyeṣṭha*, to rank above him,

makeshift it was. Elsewhere the East is assigned to Indra and the South-East to Agni (e.g., Hopkins, *Epic Mythology* p. 151. Gonda, *JAOS.* 87 [1967], p. 423b), e.g. in the Gobhila Gr̥hyasūtra and the Purāṇas, while in the epics Agni is often located in the East (Hopkins, pp. 56, 104, 151). Indra's connection with the Vasus remains unaffected by the artificial solutions of the cosmic classification, cf. Mhbh. XIII.150.79 Bomb. ed. *sāvitrīm adhiḡamya Śakravasubhīḥ kṛtsnā jītā Dānavāḥ*. The derivative *vāsava*, an epithet of the name Indra in AS. VI.82.1 (see Bloomfield, *SBE.* 42, p. 95, Ludwig, *Rigveda* III, p. 470, etc.) becomes a name of the god in the epics.

¹⁵⁶ Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², p. 387.

¹⁵⁷ *Ādityānām Vāsūnām Rudrānām devō devānām nā mināmi dhāma*. The translation given above is Geldner's, but *dhāman* is a notorious crux. Cf. Gonda, *Dhāman*, p. 38f.: "Projections of the divinity of his colleagues."

¹⁵⁸ Cf. TS. II.3.4.2 *devānām ānujāvarāḥ*. But in the parallel version of KS. XI.4 (147.13) it is Br̥haspati who is the *ānujāvarah*. Cf. TS. V.5.9.5, where *devāḥ* in the classification system can only mean the *devā Ādityāḥ* (RS. X.65.9, 66.4, etc.).

may have arisen because of the necessity of justifying the *Vighana-sacrifice*¹⁵⁹.

In the *Rigveda* we find either the three groups of gods alone¹⁶⁰, or with their leaders, respectively Indra, Rudra and Varuṇa (or Aditi herself). If the poet gives a quadripartite classification, the fourth is either Bṛhaspati with the "singers" (= Aṅgirasas) or Tvaṣṭṛ. Although the *Rigveda* seldom refers to the system of classification *expressis verbis* (as the *Atharvaveda* does), there can be no doubt that this complementation of the triad was due to the need of adapting it to the cosmic classification (expressed, e.g., at VIII.28.3). The poets, however, were not systematic: sometimes only a single deity is mentioned in connection with three groups, such as Mitrā-Vāruṇā or Agni (Indra in VS. 38.8).

The following is the material of the *Rigveda*:¹⁶¹

- III.20.5 *Vāsūn Rudrān Ādityān ihā huve*
(cf. TS. III.5.1.2 *V. R. Ā. ihā jinvatam*).
- III.8.8 *Ādityā Rudrā Vāsavaḥ sunīthā*
dyāvākṣāmā prthivī antāriksam
- VII.35.14 *Ādityā Rudrā Vāsavo juṣante*
'dām brāhma kriyāmāṇam nāvīyaḥ
- X.66.12 *Ādityā Rūdrā Vāsavaḥ sūdānava*
imā brāhma śasyāmānāni jinvata
- X.66.4 *Āditir dyāvāprthivī ṛtām mahād*
Īndrāviṣṇū Marūtaḥ svār bhāt,
devām Ādityām āvase havāmahe
Vasūn Rudrān Savitāram sūdāmsasam

¹⁵⁹ Prajāpati, after creating the Vasus on earth, the Rudras in the air and the Ādityas in yonder world, creates Indra, for whom no room is left. Prajāpati then says "I have created thee for the highest respect and for the overlordship over them" (*eteṣām tvā . . . śraīṣṭhyāyādhipatyāyā 'srkṣi*). The gods do not accept this: "We, verily, are most esteemed, we are overlords because we are superior" (*vayam vāva śreṣṭhā[s] smo, vayam adhipatayo ye jyeṣṭhā[s] sma iti nā 'jānan*). Prajāpati then "sees" the *Vighana-sacrifice* and performs it for Indra, whereupon the latter slays all his enemies (*mṛdhaḥ*). The normal situation would rather seem to be that Indra, as an *ādhipati* ("overlord"), meets the Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas (who are also overlords, see below VS. XIV.30, ŚB. VIII.4.3.16) on equal terms. He sometimes claims, it is true, to be *śreṣṭha* (PB. VII.8.2 *aham vaḥ śreṣṭho 'smi*) but in the light of the older mythology it is hard to determine what the mythological meaning of Indra's becoming a *śreṣṭho 'dhipatiḥ* may have been. With the *jyaīṣṭhyam śraīṣṭhyam* of JB. II.67 cf., e.g., Śāṅkh. Ār. IX.8 *jyeṣṭhāya śreṣṭhāya svāhā*, TĀ. X.44, ŚB. XIV.9.3,4, AB. IV.25.7-9, etc.

¹⁶⁰ Variations are rare. In I.58.3 *Rudrēbhir Vāsuhīḥ* only two groups are mentioned. See also n. 166. The variation usually concerns the Rudras, who are replaced by another group, cf. VII.44.4 *Ādityēbhir Vāsuhīr Aṅgīrobhīḥ* (although, properly speaking, the Aṅgirasas are not gods, see n. 208), II.3.4 *ghṛtēnā 'ktām Vasavaḥ sīdate 'dām Viśve Devā Ādityā yajñīyāsaḥ*. Similarly AS. I.9.1: Vasus, Ādityas, Viśve Devāḥ.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Arbman, Rudra, p. 157 n. 1.

The triad has been extended to four in:

- VII.10.4 *Índram no Agne Vásubhiḥ sajóṣā*
Rudrám Rudrébhir á vahā bṛhántam,
Ādityébhir Āditim viśvájanyām
Bṛhaspatim fkvabhir viśvāvāram
- VII.35.6 *sám no Índro Vásubhir devó astu*
sám Ādityébhir Váruṇaḥ suśámsaḥ,
sám no Rudró Rudrébhir jálāṣaḥ
sám nas Tváṣṭā gṛdbhir ihá śṛṇotu
- X.66.3 *Índro Vásubhiḥ pári pātu no gáyam*
Ādityatr no Āditiḥ sárma yachatu,
Rudró Rudrébhir devó mṛlayāti nas
Tváṣṭā no gṛdbhiḥ suvitḍya jinvalu
- X.125.1 *ahám Rudrébhir Vásubhiḥ carāmy*
ahám Ādityatr utá Viśvādevaiḥ,
ahám Mitrávaruṇo 'bhā bibharmy
ahám Indrāgní ahám Aśvino 'bhā

This is the only place in the Rigveda where the Viśve Devas are introduced as a fourth group, which is sufficient to show the secondary character of this quadripartite system. In the family books they once take the place of the Rudras in II.3.4cd

ghṛténā 'ktám Vasavaḥ sidate 'dám
Viśve Devā Ādityā yajñtyāsaḥ

The nature and the function of the Viśve Devāḥ are still obscure¹⁶², although they were clearly connected with the idea of totality, cf. RS. I.89.10cd (= AS VS)

Viśve Devā Āditiḥ páñca jánā
Āditir jātám Āditir jánitvam

In the brāhmaṇas, where they often occur together with Bṛhaspati in the cosmic classification this character is still more perspicuous.

¹⁶² Caland's suggestion that they were the deified forefathers (*devāḥ pitáraḥ*, see Altindischer Ahnencult, p. 182f.) does not seem to be confirmed by the data, except Mhbh. V.107.3, XII.165.440* (see Sørensen). Nor are they "a factitious sacrificial group meant to represent all the gods" (Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, p. 130). For a recent discussion see Renou, EVP. 4, pp. 1-11. On the basis of X.65.11 he characterizes them as "une pluralisation anticipée de Prajāpati" (p. 9 n. 1). They are "impelled by Indra, commanded by Varuṇa" (X.66.2 *indrāprasūtā vāruṇa-prakṣiṣṭāḥ*), which may indicate that they were connected with both upper and under world and thus represented aspects of both moieties (cf. n. 183). As this antithesis shows, the alternative translation of *prasūta* as "hervorgebracht" (H. P. Schmidt, Bṛhaspati und Indra, p. 129) cannot be correct, cf. also *vājaprasūta*, *hāryaśvaprasūta*. For II.3.4, where the Viśve Devāḥ take the place of the Rudras, see note 160. I doubt if Renou is right (pp. 3,8) in taking *viśve Vāsavaḥ*, *viśve Marútaḥ* and *viśve Ādityāḥ* as standing for the *Viśve Devāḥ*.

Only Agni or the dual group Mitrāvārunā is mentioned in connection with the three groups in the following stanzas:

- X.150.1 *sāmiddhaś cit sām idhyase*
devébhyo havayāvāhana,
Ādityai Rudraír Vāsubhír na á gahi
mṛṣikāya na á gahi
- II.31.1 *asmākam Mitrāvarunā 'vataṁ rátham*
Ādityai Rudraír Vāsubhiḥ sacābhūvā,

the second pāda of which recurs in the hymn to the Ásvins:

- VIII.35.1 *Agniné 'ndreṇa Vāruṇena Viṣṇunā*
'dityai Rudraír Vāsubhiḥ sacābhūvā,
sajóśasā Uṣásā Sūryeṇa ca
sómam píbatam Áśvinā.

Finally the three groups occur once in the Rigveda in a very special context in VIII.101.15, where Aditi is said to be the daughter of the Vasus, the sister [!] of the Ādityas and the mother of the Rudras. The poet can hardly have meant (in spite of X.48.11, discussed above, p. 48) that *all* Devas descended from the primordial world, just like the Ādityas, sons of Aditi¹⁶³. At best he may have referred to the relationship that existed between the Devas, as “younger brothers” of the Asuras, and the World Mother, who was the female manifestation of the Father Asura in the primordial world (where male and female were still interchangeable as a consequence of its undifferentiated state), before she, like the Ādityas, became part of the dual world and thus gave rise to Diti as her counterpart among the banished Asuras¹⁶⁴.

It must be admitted, however, that what can be inferred from the texts about the origin of the Devas is very vague and it may be questioned if the Rigvedic poets themselves had clear-cut ideas on this point. This is particularly true of Indra. In the Vedic myth his appearance in the undifferentiated world had an irrational character and it is not surprising

¹⁶³ A different idea occurs in ŚB. VI.1.2.10. Here Prajāpati first creates Agni and the Vasus, who are located on earth, then Vāyu and the Rudras in the air, thereupon the Sun and the Ādityas in the sky, and finally the Moon and the Viśve Devāḥ in the quarters (*dśas*), which again points to an association with cosmic totality. Cf. also AS. I.9.1 (Vasus, Ādityas, Viśve Devāḥ).

¹⁶⁴ For references see Indol. Studies — W. Norman Brown, p. 146 n. 59 and further Max Müller, Hymns to the Maruts (1869), pp. 230–251 (cf. SBE. 32 [1891], pp. 241–263), J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts V (1874), pp. 35–53, Oppert, ZDMG. 57 (1903), pp. 508–519, H. Güntert, Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland (1923), p. 201ff. Heinrich Zimmer, Eranos Jahrbuch 6 (1938), pp. 175–220, L. Buschardt, Vṛtra, Det rituelle Dæmondrab (1945), p. 97f. Aditi must have “gone over” like Varuṇa, but she represents the dual cosmos in its totality. She knows “both worlds” (KS. XXIII.8: 83,19 *aham evemā ubhau lokau veda*, KKS. XXXVI.5: 191,23/223,14. *aham evemau*). Hence her being *ubhayātahśirṣṇī*? (different explanations at ŚB. III.2.4.16, TS. VI.1.7.5, MS. III.7.5: 82.1). As *devī* she is opposed to the Asuras (MS. IV.2.3: 24,17 *Āditir devésv āsū, Kústā 'sureṣu*). The banished Asuras got Diti for their mother (A. B. Keith, Religion and Philosophy, p. 217f.).

that the Rigvedic references to his mother (VIII.77.1-2, etc.) are very vague. In the light of such reflections it would seem very doubtful that originally Indra was regarded as the last-born son Aditi, as he is sometimes represented in the Yajurveda (but see n. 96). Since the scarce evidence leaves too much room for subjective interpretations, no decision is possible. The stanza reads as follows:

*mātā Rudrāṇām duhitā Vāsūnām
svāsā 'dityānām amṛtasya nābhīḥ,
prā nu vocam cikitūṣe jānāya
mā gām ānāgām Āditīm vadhiṣṭa.*

8. THE ĀDITYAS IV: OTHER VEDIC TEXTS.

In the brāhmaṇas, too, the three groups Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas occur. In the Black Yajurveda the earth, identified with Aditi, is said to be the seat (*sādas*) of the three classes of gods¹⁶⁵, and the *somakrāyanī*-cow is addressed with the words "You are a Vasvī, a Rudrā, Aditi, an Ādityā . . ." ¹⁶⁶.

The problem of how to extend this system by a fourth group is solved in different ways, depending on whether a fifth group is added for the centre or not. Thus the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa follows the tradition of RS. X.125.1 by adding the Viśve Devas with Bṛhaspati¹⁶⁷. As for the Yajurveda, in one passage of the Taittirīya Saṃhitā and the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa the same extension is found but here it can be shown to be

¹⁶⁵ MS. IV.1.13 (18, 6ff.) *iyām vā Aditir, asyām evainam asiṣadad, Vāsūnām Rudrāṇām Ādityānām sādo 'stty, etā vā etām āgre devātām abhyājayams, tābhya evainat sādaḥ karoti*, KS. XXXI.10 (13,4), KKS. XLVII.10 (294,11/345,20) *Vāsūnām Rudrāṇām Ādityānām sādānam aśi 'ti, yā evā devātā abhyājayams tābhya enat sādānam karoti*. Cf. MS. I.1.12 (7,16), KS. I.11 (6,10), KKS. I.11 (8,9), Vedic Concordance, p. 850a, B. Geiger, Die Amēsa Spēntas, p. 205.

¹⁶⁶ TS. I.2,5, VI.1.8.1, ĀpŚS. X.22.11 *Vasvy asi, Rudrā 'sy, Āditir asy, Ādityā 'si śukrā 'si, candrā 'si*. Caland's translation "Die Gute bist du" for *vasvy asi* (Āpastamba Śrautasūtra, l.c.) is a slip of the mind. In this connection the question may be asked whether (in spite of the fact that the Āsvins are a dual deity, which RS. X.125.1 puts on a par with Mitrāvāruṇā and Indrāgnī) the words *vāsū Rudrā purumāntū* directed to them (I.158.1) do mean "Gut sind die beiden Rudras" (Geldner). Since I.58.3 *Rudrēbhir Vāsuhir* (n. 160) refers to the two classes and VII.59.8 *Maruto . . . Vasavo* means "O Maruts . . . O Vasus" (Geldner, Renou) it is more likely that the Āsvins are referred to as "the Vasu and the Rudra with many thoughts" (cf. Renou, EVP. 16, p. 24). That there is a structural contrast between the twins has been demonstrated (convincingly in my opinion) by Stig Wikander, "Nakula et Sahadeva", *Orientalia Suecana* 6 (1957), pp. 66-96.

¹⁶⁷ AB. I.24.4 *te devā abibhāyur : asmākaṃ vipremāṇam anv idam asurā ābhaviṣyanti 'ti. te vyūkrāmyā 'mantrayantā, 'gnir Vasuhir udakrāmad, Indro Rudrair, Varuṇa Ādityair, Bṛhaspatir Viśvair Devaiḥ*, JB. I.283 *Vasavo gāyatrīm samabharan . . . Rudrās triṣṭubham samabharan . . . Ādityā jagatīm samabharan . . . Sādhyās cā 'ptyās cā 'ticchandāsam samabharan*. For Bṛhaspati cf. RS. IV.50.6 *pitṛe viśvādevāya* and see H.-P. Schmidt, Bṛhaspati und Indra, p. 218. In general cf. Bergaigne II, pp. 114-156 ("arithmétique mythologique").

secondary¹⁶⁸. The passage of the AB. is interesting because parallel versions occur in the Black Yajurveda. The tale contains an aetiological myth which explains the system of classification from a quarrel that once arose among the Devas, while they were fighting against the Asuras. Because no group was willing to accept another group's superiority (*śrī*, *śraīṣṭhya*, *jyaiṣṭhya*), they split into four (or five) separate groups, which dispersed into the four directions¹⁶⁹. In one version of the Yajurveda the Maruts, who in the Rigveda are identical with the Rudras¹⁷⁰, have been split off as a separate group, which here takes the place of the Viśve Devas. Although in other passages the normal order is preserved¹⁷¹, in this version Ādityas and Maruts have changed places, for which I cannot offer an explanation¹⁷².

More normal, however, is that the Maruts are located in the North when five groups are distinguished. In that case the Viśve Devāḥ are located in the centre, symbolizing the totality. This is found in the Taittirīya Saṁhitā, the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa¹⁷³. In this centre, however, the dualism recurs in the vertical opposition of

¹⁶⁸ TS. III.5.6.2 *Vásubhyo Rudrēbhya Ādityēbhyo Viśvebhyo vo Devēbhyaḥ pannējanīr gṛhṇāmi*, TB. II.2.10.5-6 *tām devāḥ samantān pāryaviśan, Vāsavaḥ purāstāt, Rudrā dakṣiṇatāḥ, Ādityāḥ paścāt, Viśve Devā uttaratāḥ, Āngirasaḥ pratyañcam* (6) *Sādhyāḥ pārāñcam* (S. Lévi, *Doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 73). That the Viśve Devāḥ have later been added, appears from the parallel versions MS. I.3.1, (29,10), KS. III.9 (28,4), KKS. II.16 (24,8/29,4) *Vāsūnām Rudrānām Ādityānām pannējanīḥ stha, Vāsavo Rudrā Ādityā etā vaḥ pannējanīḥ*. There are more instances of such an extension of a formula in TS., cf. IV.3.10.3 (VS. XIV.30, ŚB.VIII.4.3,16) *dyāvāpṛthivī vyaitām . . . Vāsavo Rudrā Ādityā anuvyāyāms, tā evā 'dhīpataya āsan*, as against MS. II.8.6 (110,19), KS. XVII.5 (349,4) *Vāsavo Rudrā anuvyāyan*.

¹⁶⁹ It may be noted that the five groups of gods fighting against the Asuras can mythologically be paralleled to the five Pāṇdavās (four of whom go to the four quarters during the *digvijaya*, Mhbh. II.23-29) waging war against the countless Kauravas (G. J. Held, *The Mahābhārata*, F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ*).

¹⁷⁰ See Arbman, *Rudra*, p. 14, n. 3. The name Rudras does not occur in books IV and VI of the Rigveda.

¹⁷¹ MS. IV.1.10 (13,14) *āsurāṇām vā iyām pṛthivy āsit. té devā abruvan: dattā no 'syāḥ pṛthivyā iti. té vai svayām evā brūdhvam* (read *evā 'varuddhvam*) *iti. tāto vai Vāsavaḥ prācīm dīsam údajayan, Rudrā dakṣiṇām, Ādityāḥ pratīcīm, Marūta údīcīm*.

¹⁷² MS. II.2.6 (19,13), III.7.10 (90,1) *devā anyò 'nyāsya śraīṣṭhyē 'tiṣṭhamānā* (emendation of *śriṣṭe, ścaīṣṭhye tiṣṭhamānā*, von Schroeder, edition Aundh) *caturdhā vyūdākrāman, Agnir Vāsuhīḥ, Somo Rudrair, Īndro Marūdbhīr, Vāruṇa Ādityais. tān vā etēna Bṛhaspatīr ayājayat . . . tāto devā ābhavan, parā 'surāḥ*, KS. XXIV.9 (100,3), KKS. XXXVIII.2 (206,1/240,10) *devā vā anyo'nyāśraīṣṭhyāya* (KS. *anyo'nyasya*) *nātiṣṭhanta. te caturdhā vyūdākrāmann, Agnir Vāsuhīḥ, Somo Rudrair, Īndro Marūdbhīr, Vāruṇa Ādityais. te devā pāpīyāmsò 'bhavan, vasiyāmsò 'surās. te 'viduḥ: pāpīyāmsò vai tye bhavanti, vasiyāmsò 'surā iti*.

¹⁷³ TS. VI.2.2.1 *devāsuraḥ sāmyattā āsan, té devā mithó vipriyā āsan. tē 'nyò'nyāsmāi jyaiṣṭhyāyā 'tiṣṭhamānāḥ pañcadhā vy ākrāmann, Agnir Vāsuhīḥ, Somo Rudrair Īndro Marūdbhīr, Vāruṇa Ādityair Bṛhaspatīr Viśvair Devais . . .*, ŚB. VIII.6.3.3 (about the Gārhapatya) *tām ihā 'hṫyó 'pādadhata, tāsmin vyāvadanta, Vāsavaḥ purāstād, Rudrā dakṣiṇatā, Ādityāḥ paścāt, Marūta uttaratō, Viśve Devā upariṣṭāt . . .*, Gop. Br. II.2.2 *pañcadhā vai devā vyūdākrāmann, Agnir Vāsuhīḥ, Somo Rudrair, Īndro Marūdbhīr, Vāruṇa Ādityair, Bṛhaspatīr Viśvair Devais. te devā abruvann asurebhyo vā idam bhrātṛvyebhyo radhyāmo yan mitho vipriyā smo . . .*

the zenith versus the nadir, corresponding with the top and the bottom of the cosmic axis, and with the upper versus the nether world respectively. When this distinction is made, Bṛhaspati is often located "above" (*upāriṣṭāt*), that is, in the zenith¹⁷⁴. This place he shares with Savitr, whom he seems to have ousted in the course of time¹⁷⁵. In later texts, such as the Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra and the Purāṇas, this place is attributed to Brahmā¹⁷⁶. By the side of the ŚB. passage mentioned above there is another one in the same text which polemizes against the introduction of the Viśve Devāḥ. This passage is mainly interesting because it seems to show that its author no longer understood the idea of a totality which is more than the sum total of its components¹⁷⁷.

In connection with Bṛhaspati's place in the zenith a brief digression may here be inserted. In the Brāhmaṇas, just as well as in the Saṁhitās, it is characteristic of the Ādityas, and particularly of their leader Varuṇa, that they only very rarely take part in the fight of the other Devas against the Asuras¹⁷⁸. One of the exceptions is a passage in the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa which tells that the Asuras fled with the essence and power of the *savanas* (pressings) into the darkness and that Indra won back one third with help of Varuṇa, one third with Bṛhaspati, and one third with Viṣṇu¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁴ ŚB. V.1.1.4 *eṣo 'rdhvā Bṛhaspāter dīg ity evā 'huḥ* "They say that the upper region belongs to Bṛhaspati." From JB II.25,3, where Bṛhaspati is mentioned conjointly with Prajāpati in the description of the *rājāsandi*, it does not follow that Bṛhaspati had some traits in common with Prajāpati. Cf. AB. VII.12.3 and 17.2, where Bṛhaspati is associated with Savitr.

¹⁷⁵ See Hanns-Peter Schmidt, Bṛhaspati und Indra, p. 88f.

¹⁷⁶ Bṛhaspati in the zenith, as opposed to Viṣṇu in the nadir, is already found in the Atharvaveda, see below, p. 56. That this may be interpreted as upper world versus nether world may be inferred from AS. IV.40.5-7, where in the centre are located Earth, Vāyu and Sūrya. See in general for the system of classification E. W. Hopkins, Epic Mythology, p. 149ff., Mhbh. VIII.30.76-77, V.106-110, XIII.100.11, Rām. II.14.321*, etc., A. K. Coomaraswamy, Yaksas II, p. 31, Thérèse de Mallmann, L'iconographie de l'Agnipurāṇa, p. 124ff. (table on p. 127), whose material, in so far as it has been taken from J. N. Banerjea, The Development of Hindu Iconography, p. 520 n. 1, is useful but not always reliable: the latter's reconstruction of the classification on the basis of Manu V.96 is incorrect. Banerjea's book itself was not accessible to me. For Brahmā in the zenith, as opposed to Ananta (= Śeṣa, Viṣṇu's snake) or Vāsuki in the nadir, see de Mallmann, pp. 56, 96 (who refers to Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra and the Purāṇas). See n. 195.

¹⁷⁷ ŚB. III.4.2.1 *ātithyéna vai devā iṣṭvā, tānt samād avindat, té caturdhā vyādravann anyo'nyāsya śriyā ātiṣṭhamānā, Agnir Vāsubhīḥ, Sómo Rudrair, Varuṇa Ādityair, Indro Marūdbhīr, Bṛhaspātir Viśvair Devair ity u haika āhur eté hā tv evā té Viśve Devā yé té caturdhā vyādravaṁs. tān vidrutān asurarakṣasāny anuvyāveyuḥ (2) té 'viduḥ pāpīyāṁso vai bhavāmo, asurarakṣasāni vai no 'nuvyāvāguḥ*.

¹⁷⁸ For the view that the Ādityas were fighting the Dānavas (Jean Varenne, *Di alcuni miti cosmogonici del Ṛg-Veda*, Torino 1969, p. 12) I find little support in the texts (see n. 223). MS. II.2.1 (15,5) *Ādityā vā aparoddhāraḥ*, KS. XI.6 (151,4) *Ādityā vai trātāra, Ādityā aparoddhāraḥ* only conceal the existing fear of Varuṇa's wrath. But see also p. 76 and n. 223.

¹⁷⁹ AB. III.49.1, 50.1-3 *agniṣṭomāṁ vai devā aśrayanto, 'kīhāny asurās, te samāvadvīryā evā 'san . . . te vā asurā Maitrāvaruṇasyo 'kīham aśrayanta. so 'bravid Indrah: kaś cā 'ham ce 'mān ito 'surān notsyāvahā ity. aham ce 'ty abravīd Varuṇaḥ . . .*

In view of the characteristic association of Viṣṇu with the third part (as in Jaim. Brāhmaṇa II.243, where Indra is said to get two parts of Vṛtra's *indriyaṃ vīryam*, but Viṣṇu the third), it has been argued that, if Viṣṇu here represents the totality of the cosmos, Varuṇa is likely to stand for the nether world and Bṛhaspati for the upper world¹⁸⁰. The reason for choosing Bṛhaspati as the representative of the upper world, in spite of his later ambiguous character (n. 361), may have been his place in the system of classification¹⁸¹.

In spite of the criticism by one author of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa there can be no doubt that a system which divided the universe into five regions belonged to the old tradition of the Yajurveda. In a list which gives for each region its mythical name, the name of its "overlord" (*ādhipati*) and that of the "arrestor of the arrows" (*hetinām pratidhartā*), we find in MS. II.8.9, KS. XVII.8, KKS. XXVI.7 and TS. IV.4.2.1ff.:

- East: name Rājñī, overlords: Vāsus, arrester: Agni.
- South: resp. Virāj, Rudrás, Índra (KKS.: Sóma).
- West: resp. Samrāj, Ādityás, Sóma [!] (KKS. Índra).
- North: resp. Svarāj, Marúts (TS.: Víśve Deváh), Váruṇa [!].
- Zenith: resp. Ádhipatñī, Víśve Deváh (TS.: Marúts), Bṛhaspatī.

The Taittirīya Saṁhitā is consistent in associating the Víśve Devas with the North (see n. 168), although the combination of them with Varuṇa (as in TS. IV.3.3.2) is sufficient to prove the secondary character of this system. All the texts of the Black Yajurveda, however, concur in locating Varuṇa in the North (but cf. MS. II.7.20: 105, 12). Here the White Yajurveda has a more logical (although not necessarily textually older) division. Cf. VS. XV.10-14, ŚB. VIII.6.1,5ff.:

JB. I. 179-180 *devāsura jāyñe 'spardhanta. te devā asurān jāyñān nīravāghnan. te 'surās trayāñām savanāñām rasañ vīryañ pravṛhyā 'ndhañ tamaḥ prāvīśan. yad dha vai kiñ ca parācīnam agniṣṭomāt tad andhañ tamaḥ. yat parācīnam sañvatsarāt tad andhañ tamaḥ. etāvān vava jāyño yāvān agniṣṭomaḥ. etāvān u sañvatsaraḥ. dvādaśa vā agniṣṭomasya stotrāñi, dvādaśa māsās sañvatsaraḥ. dvādaśa stotrāñi, dvādaśa śastrāñi, dvādaśa pūrvaapakṣā dvādaśā 'parapakṣāḥ. atha yat tataḥ parācīnam tad andhañ tamaḥ. tat prāvīśat. te devā asurān anvabhyavāyan. tān asurān etair eva 'kthaiḥ pratyudatiṣṭhan. yad ukthaiḥ pratyudatiṣṭhañs tad ukthāñam ukthavam. tāñs tato nīr evā 'vāghnan. te 'ndhañ tamaḥ prāvīśan, rātrīm eva. sa Indro 'bravīt kaś cā 'hañ ce 'dam anvabhyavaiṣyāva iti. [180] ahañ ce 'ty abravīt Varuṇaḥ. ahañ vām jyotiṛ dhārayiṣyāmē 'ty Agnir abravīt . . . Cf. also JB. III.104, where Varuṇa helps the Devas.*

¹⁸⁰ See Indological Studies—W. Norman Brown, pp. 145, 150. Varuṇa was there explained as standing for the Asuras, which is inaccurate (p. 150). He acts as a *devāśura* (= *Āditya*) of the dualistic cosmos, the Asuras themselves standing outside the world of order. Varuṇa, although associated with the West in the classification system, was thought of as residing below (*adhāstāt*). Cf. TS. V.5.9.5, as interpreted below, n. 183, and IIJ.8, p. 108. For the general problem of the difference between function and place in the classification see IIJ. 13, p. 283.

¹⁸¹ The role of this system appears in Gopatha Brāhmaṇa II.4.11, where Agni, Varuṇa, Bṛhaspati and Viṣṇu may stand for the main opposition in the horizontal plane (Agni: East, life, light, etc. versus Varuṇa: West, death, darkness, etc.) and for the vertical opposition (Bṛhaspati: zenith, Viṣṇu: nadir) but Indra's place in between remains to be explained.

East: name: Rájñi, *adhip.*: Vásus, *pratidh.*: Agní.
 South: resp. Viráj, Rudrás, Indra.
 West: resp. Samráj, Ādityás, Váruṇa.
 North: resp. Svaráj, Marúts, Sóma.
 Zenith: resp. Ādhipatñi, Viśve Deváh, Bḥhaspáti.

As an illustration of the many variations that occur in details the following table gives a synopsis of the data of two Atharvavedic passages (III.27.1–6, XII.3.55–60), compared with two Yajurvedic texts (MS. II.13.21, TS. V.5.10.1–2). They give for each region its mythical name, its overlord (*ādhipati*), its “defender” (*rakṣitṛ*) and its arrows (only in the AS.):

	<i>East :</i>	<i>South :</i>	<i>West :</i>	<i>North :</i>
AS. name	Práci	Dákṣiṇā	Pratīci	Údici
overlord	Agní ¹⁸²	Índra	Váruṇa	Sóma
defender	Asitá	Tiraścīrāji	Pṛdāku	Svajá
arrows	Ādityáh [!] (but XII: Ādityáh)	Pitáras ¹⁸³	ánnam	śśani
MS. name	Samci	Ojasyā	Práci [!]	Suśádā
overlord	Agní	Índra	Sóma [!]	Váruṇa [!]
defender	Asitá	Tiraścīnarāji	Svajá	Sṛdāgu, v.l. Sṛdāku
TS. name	Samci	Ojasvīni	Práci [!]	Avasthávan ¹⁸⁴
overlord	Agní	Índra	Sóma [!]	Váruṇa [!]
defender	Asitá	Pṛdāku [!]	Svajá	Tirásčārāji
	<i>Zenith</i>	<i>Nadir</i>		
AS. name	Ūrdhvá	Dhruvá		
overlord	Bḥhaspáti	Viṣṇu		
defender	Śvitrá	Kalmāṣagrīva		
arrows	varśám	vīrúdhah ¹⁸⁵		

¹⁸² But AS. XVIII.3.25: East: Indra and Maruts, South: Dhātṛ, West: Aditi, North: Soma.

¹⁸³ Taboo may have been the main reason why the *Pitáras* are but seldom mentioned in the system of classification in connection with the region that is characteristically theirs. They belong, indeed, to the cosmos (see above, p. 12). When they are included in the system, the Rudras are shifted to the East, cf. TS. V.5.9.4 *Vásavas tvā Rudrah purástāt pāntu, pitáras tvā yamarājānaḥ pitḥbhir dakṣiṇatāḥ pāntu, Ādityás tvā Viśvair Devāḥ paścāt pāntu, Dyutānás tvā mārutó Marúdbhir uttaratāḥ pātu* (5) *devás tvé 'ndrajyeṣṥhā váruṇarājāno 'dhástāc copáriṣṭāc ca pāntu*. Cf. VS. XXXVIII.9 (below, p. 61). The term *deváh* here seems to denote the *Viśve Deváh*. For a parallel see above, n. 158. The phrase *índrajyeṣṥhā váruṇarājānaḥ* refers to the cosmic dualism, since Indra and Varuṇa are regularly opposed to each other. Moreover, in RS. X.66.2 similar epithets are used for the *Viśve Deváh*, which may lead to the conclusion that they transcend the dualistic contrasts of this world (n. 162). It is tempting, then, to interpret this TS. passage in the same manner, the more so as here the contrast is indicated *expressis verbis* by the words *adhástāt* and *upáriṣṭāt*, denoting the nadir and the zenith. In this vertical opposition, corresponding to top and bottom of the world axis, Varuṇa belongs, indeed, to the lower end of the axis, the roots of the world tree. See n. 180

¹⁸⁴ Cf. ASPaipp. II.56.4, MS. II.13.21 (167,8) *avasthá*.

¹⁸⁵ Thus also the Paippalāda version of XII.3, where the Śaunaka version has *ośadhīḥ*.

MS. name	Ādhipatnī	Avasthá
overlord	Bṛhaspáti	Vīṣṇu
defender	Citrá ¹⁸⁶	Kalmāṣagrīva
TS. name	Ādhipatnī	Vasīnī
overlord	Bṛhaspáti	Yamá
defender	Śvitrá	Kalmāṣagrīva

The normal term for the zenith in the Yajurveda is *br̥hatī dīk* "the high region"¹⁸⁷, perhaps with assonance of Bṛhaspati. Only MS. has *ūrdhvā dīk*. The nadir is sometimes called *dhruvā dīk* "the fixed region" (TS. *iyām dīk*), the term for the centre in general.

In addition to the VS.-passage quoted on p. 56 another may be mentioned where the White Yajurveda seems also to have preserved (this time in agreement with the Maitr. version of the Black Yajurveda) the old combination of three groups of gods. This is the passage dealing with the partition of the vertebrae of the sacrificial horse¹⁸⁸. The parallel versions of KS. and TS. here add the Aṅgirasas, Sādhyas and Viśve Devas, which is no doubt a secondary extension of the original grouping¹⁸⁹.

A very elaborate form of the Vedic classification, which may be mentioned in conclusion, occurs in JB. II.142. After Indra has slain all his enemies, the gods (*sarve devāḥ*) sit down around him¹⁹⁰ in a ceremonial manner, which is called *daivī sabhā* or *daivī samsād* (TS. VII.4.2.1f.) and reproduces the system of classification, viz. in the East the Vasus, in the South the Rudras, in the West the Ādityas, in the North the Maruts, in the zenith (*upariṣṭāt*) the Viśve Devas, in the nadir (*adhastāt*) the Sādhyas¹⁹¹ and Āptyas, and round about (*abhitāḥ*) the Aṅgirasas.

9. THE ĀDITYAS V: LATER TEXTS

In the "ideal" ceremonial grouping of the gods in the passage just quoted the Aṅgirasas stand more or less outside the system. They were,

¹⁸⁶ Probably a misreading, according to Whitney ad AS. III.27.6. The new Indian edition (by Viśvabandhu) reads *śvitró*, but Paipp. III.24,6 has *citro*.

¹⁸⁷ *br̥hatī dīk* does not mean "the great quarter" (Keith, H.O.S. 19, p. 449).

¹⁸⁸ MS. III.15.6 (179,7), VS. XXV.6 *Viśveṣām Devānām prathamā kīkasā, Rudrānām dvitīyā, 'dityānām tṛtīyā*.

¹⁸⁹ KSA. XIII.7, TS. V.7.17 *Vāsūnām prathamā kīkasā, Rudrānām dvitīyā, 'dityānām tṛtīyā, 'ṅgirasām caturthī, Sādhyānām pañcamī, Viśveṣām Devānām ṣaṣṭhī*. The curious insertion of the Aṅgirasas (after the Ādityas) may possibly be due to the close connection between these groups, to be discussed below, section 10.

¹⁹⁰ *tām vijigyānam sarve devā abhitas samantām paryaviśan*. For this ceremony cf., e.g., KS. X.7 (132,16), TS. II.4.1.2 *samantām devān pāry aviśan*, TB. II.2.10.5 *tām devāḥ samantām paryaviśan*, MS. III.8.6 (102,18). For *sarve*, cf. MS. II.8.9 (114,11), KS. XVII.8 (251,19), KKS. XXVI.7 (110,1/128,3), TS. IV.4.2.3, where a classificatory enumeration is concluded with the words *tē tvā sarve samvidānā nākasya pṛṣṭhē suvargē lokē yājamānam ca sādayantū*. Cf. Keith, Religion and Philosophy p. 213 n. 2, Renou, EVP. 4, p. 3.

¹⁹¹ The proper place of the Sādhyas was *upariṣṭāt* (see n. 192), in contrast with the Āptyas, who were *adhastāt*. They were always located in the centre. See further p. 242ff.

indeed, mythical forefathers but, properly speaking, no gods, and in the system of the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa they have been introduced as a kind of appendix, at the end of the list of gods.

In this way they are also added when groups of gods are enumerated without a direct reference to the system of classification. In those cases the authors were freer and could add the Aṅgirasas as a last member of the series, without necessarily implying that the Aṅgirasas belonged to the cosmic centre¹⁹². The Maruts, too, are sometimes mentioned after (instead of before) the Viśve Devas¹⁹³ but since these two groups were both used to complement the older system of three groups, variation in their respective order is not unnatural. However, the variation found in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, where not only the Aṅgirasas but also the Maruts occur at the very end of the list, after the Sādhyas and Āptyas¹⁹⁴, is rather uncommon. The result is that the Viśve Devas are located in the North, but the Maruts and Aṅgirasas in the zenith¹⁹⁵. Only a systematic study of all classifications occurring in the brāhmaṇas could show to what extent particular variations are peculiarities of a single work. Thus the rare occurrence of the Viśve Devas in the classifications of the Atharvaveda (only XVIII.3.25–29?)¹⁹⁶ would seem an individual feature of that Saṁhitā.

¹⁹² As an instance may be quoted TS. VII.1.18 *Vásubhir devébhīr devátayā . . . Rudrébhīr devébhīr devátayā . . . Ādityébhīr devébhīr devátayā . . . Viśvebhīr Devébhīr devátayā . . . Aṅgīrobhīr devébhīr devátayā*. A difficulty in any attempt to explain such variations is the impossibility of determining to what extent they may simply have been due to the personal idiosyncrasies of an individual priest or to mere differentiations between various schools, and how far they are essential, as expressions of divergent theological speculations. The Aṅgirasas are sometimes associated with the nadir (cf. Vādhūla Sūtra, Acta Or. 6, p. 130 *Aṅgīraso 'dhastāt, Sādhyā upariṣṭāt*), but more often with the zenith. See n. 215.

¹⁹³ JB. II.25, lines 5–6, III.152 (in connection with the "King's throne" (*rājāsandī*): *Vasavo rājyāya, Rudrā vairājyāyā, 'dityā svārājyāya* (sic!), *Viśve Devās sāmrajyāya, Marutas sārvasyāya, Sādhyās ca 'ptyās ca pārameṣṭhyāya*.

¹⁹⁴ AB. VIII.12.4 *Vasavas . . . sāmrajyāya. Rudrās . . . bhaujyāyā, 'dityās . . . svārājyāya, Viśve . . . Devā . . . vairājyāya, Sādhyās ca tvā 'ptyās ca devāh . . . rājyāya, Marutas ca . . . Aṅgirasas ca devā . . . pārameṣṭhyāya mārājyāyā 'dhipatyāya svāvasyāyā 'tiṣṭhāya . . .*

¹⁹⁵ AB. VIII.14.1–4 East: Vasus, South: Rudras, West: Ādityas, North: Viśve Devāh, *asyām dhrvāyām madhyamāyām pratiṣṭhāyām diśi*: Sādhyas and Āptyas, *ūrdhvāyām diśi*: Maruts and *Aṅgīraso devāh*. For the Aṅgirasas this location is not unparalleled: cf. Maitrī Upaniṣad VII.1–5, where the zenith is assigned to Mitra-Varuṇa and the Aṅgirasas, which conception cannot be old, the less so, as the North is assigned to Varuṇa alone. The Maitr. Up. is interesting in that it locates Śani with the snakes in the nadir. See n. 176.

¹⁹⁶ East: Indra marutvat, South: Dhātṛ, West: Aditi with the Ādityas, North: Soma with the Viśve Devāh; further Dhātṛ and Savitṛ, apparently in the nadir and the zenith respectively (see above, p. 54 for Savitṛ). As for Dhātṛ who, in that case, is at the bottom of the world axis and supports it, see H.-P. Schmidt, *Bṛhaspati und Indra*, pp. 88f., and cf. IJ. 13, p. 283. Some places where the system seems to have been abandoned are AS. XIX.17.1–9, KS. XXXVI.15 (83,11), which gives Agni, Indra, Viśve Devāh and Prajāpati, and ĀpŚS. XV.7.6.

In conclusion two passages from the two oldest Upaniṣads may be mentioned. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad (III.1-5) contains a series of speculations on the *rasa* that is gathered from the Vedas. It is then argued (III.5.4) that this *rasa* is identical with the nectar (*amṛta*), and that there are five forms of *amṛta* (III.6-10): first, that on which the Vasus live, using Agni as their mouth; second, that of the Rudras, who use Indra as their mouth; third, that of the Ādityas, whose mouth is Varuṇa; fourth, that of the Maruts, with Soma as their mouth; and fifth, that of the Sādhyas, who use Brahma as their mouth. This Brahma is the pitā Brahma (not Brahmā!) of III.11.4-5, the predecessor of god Brahmā, who was to take Bṛhaspati's place in the zenith.

While in this classification the Viśve Devas are absent, they occur in the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad as the fourth group, the fifth being the Maruts¹⁹⁷.

From the preceding sketch it will be clear that, whatever the complications and contradictions of the system of classification, the world of the Devas consisted basically of three groups, and that the Ādityas belonged from the beginning (that is, from the mythic beginning of this world)¹⁹⁸ to this main body of gods, which was distinct from "the former gods", the Sādhyas and Āptyas¹⁹⁹.

This is the more remarkable because even the Rigvedic poets, though in a lesser degree than the later theologians, at times hint at their ambiguous character. In X.63.4 they are called "the gods who have the magic power of the serpent(s)"²⁰⁰, in II.27.16, 29.5²⁰¹ there is a reference to their snares (*pśśāḥ*) and VII.61.5 mentions the "attacks" or "deceits" (*drūhaḥ*) of Varuṇa and Mitra, a notion more familiar in the brāhmaṇas²⁰². Varuṇa's *dhūrti* "malice, viciousness" is also referred to²⁰³. That the Ādityas were Devas of a special kind, different from the other groups, has, indeed, never been questioned²⁰⁴.

The general conclusion must be that the Ādityas were originally Asuras, who had been received (a mythological conception, not a historical process!) in the world of the gods. However, although fully incorporated in the Devas, they still retained some ambiguous traits, being both beneficent and demoniacally destructive. Most illustrative in this respect is the contrast between the two aspects of the dual deity Mitṛā-Vāruṇā. In the organized cosmos the Ādityas represent the under world aspect. This is

¹⁹⁷ BĀU. I.4.12 (= ŚBM. XIV.4.2.24) *sa viśam asṛjata, yāny etāni devajātāni gaṇśa ākhyāyante : Vasavo Rudrā Ādityā Viśve Devā Maruta iti.*

¹⁹⁸ TS. VII.1.5.1 (after the earth has arisen in the waters) *tāsyām aśrmyat Prajāpatiḥ, sā devān asṛjata, Vāsūn Rudrān Ādityān. té devāḥ Prajāpatim abruvan.*

¹⁹⁹ On the Sādhyas see Excursus.

²⁰⁰ *devāso . . . āhimāyāḥ*, but the epithet may have been taken from VI.52.15, where it characterizes the Viśve Devāḥ. See n. 205.

²⁰¹ See the ample discussion by Renou, EVP, 7, p. 58.

²⁰² Cf., e.g., KS. XVII.19 (264,10) *yas te rājan Varuṇa druhaḥ pāśo.*

²⁰³ E.g., I.128.7, VIII.27.15 and cf. Geldner, Ved. Studien I, p. 142.

²⁰⁴ See Bergaigne, Rel. véd. III, pp. 88ff., 256ff. and passim, B. Geiger, Die Amāṣa Spāntas, pp. 157, 220ff., etc.

especially true of Varuṇa who in the day-time resides in the cosmic waters beneath the earth, at the lower end of the world axis. In the dualistic structure of the cosmos the Ādityas are the opponents of the gods of the upper world (Vasus, or Vasus and Rudras?). All that can at present be said about their mutual relations, however, has a provisory character. There does not seem to be any open hostility between the Ādityas and the other gods except at the end of the year. It must be assumed that during the critical period of the transition to the New Year the Ādityas again sided with the Asuras, who returned from outside the cosmos to resume their contest with Indra for the supremacy in the world. Only this assumption would seem to make the Rigvedic theology intelligible as a coherent system. If, however, we compare the scarce Rigvedic data about the verbal contest between Varuṇa and Indra and the former's transition to the world of the gods (IV.42, X.124) with the epic tale of the Churning of the Ocean, where Varuṇa stands apart from (but not above) the contending parties (see p. 108), we must come to the conclusion that even during the annual strife between Asuras and Devas Varuṇa does not take part in the fight. Others have studied his inactive role in connection with the Indian conception of kingship. The conclusions here summarized are strictly limited to the theological system, without reference to the reality of Indian life in which these notions functioned.

Two references in the tenth book to Ādityas born on earth, in heaven and in the waters are here left out of account, because the same is said in earlier books of the Viśve Devāḥ²⁰⁵, from whom this idea may have been transferred to the Ādityas.

10. ĀDITYAS AND AṄGIRASAS

The relation between the Ādityas and the Aṅgirasas is particularly interesting²⁰⁶. The nature of the latter, too, was ambiguous. As the mythological ancestors of man they were, on the one hand, the first performers of the rites and, as magical singers, they assisted (in the Vala-version of the cosmogonical myth) the god Indra Bṛhaspati in liberating the cows²⁰⁷. Their role was so important that the god was also

²⁰⁵ Cf. X.65.9 *yé pārthivāso divyāso apsu yé*, X.63.2 *yé sthā jātā Aditer adbhyaś pári yé pṛthivyāś* and, with reference to the Viśve Devāḥ, VI.52.15 *yé ké ca jma mahino ahimāyā divo jajñiré apām sadhāsthe*. Since X.63.4 *devāso . . . ahimāyāś* may be an imitation of VI.52.15, the same may be true for stanza 2. Cf. also VI.50.11 *daśasyānto divyāś pārthivāso gójātā āpyā mṛlātā ca devāś* (Viśve Devāḥ).

²⁰⁶ See Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les brāhmaṇas*, p. 63ff.

²⁰⁷ For the relation of the "singers" to Indra see Hanns-Peter Schmidt, *Bṛhaspati und Indra*, p. 238. Indra is *āṅgirasatama* (but this is more often an epithet of Agni and once, in book X, of Soma) and *āṅgirasvat* (II.11.20, VI.17.6, also once said of the Aśvins). Bṛhaspati is *āṅgirasá* (RS., GB II.2.14,15, Baudh. ŚS. XVIII.47: 403,9, 404,3,11) or simply an *aṅgiras*, e.g. JB. III.188, line 4, where Bṛhaspati functions as the *udgātr* of the Aṅgirasas ("Die als Opferpriester erfordernten sind alle Angirasen", Caland, *Jaim. Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl*, p. 161 n. 8). This is, no doubt, an exception: the only parallel is KB. XXX.6, where Bṛhaspati is a *brahmán*, but the other versions (ŚB. III.5.1.15, AB. VI.34.2, GB. II.6.14 (266,11) only mention

said to be an *āṅgīras*. On the other hand, they were also, as the mythological prototype of man, the first to follow the primeval man Yama to the realm of the dead, which accounts for their close connection with Yama and the Fathers. Their character was, accordingly, intrinsically ambiguous, beneficent and inauspicious. As benefactors they are sometimes, even in the Rigveda ²⁰⁸, treated as gods ²⁰⁹. As for their connection with the world of the dead cf. VS. XXXVIII.9 “(I offer) thee to Yama, who is accompanied by the *Āṅgīrasas* and the *Pitaras*” ²¹⁰, and especially in the funeral rites, cf. RS. X.14.3–6 (3) “*Mātali* with the *kavyas*, Yama with the *Āṅgīrasas*, *Bṛhaspati*, growing, with the singers, revel, some *svāhā*, others *svadhāyā* (in the way corresponding to the funeral ceremonies)”, (4ab) “Sit down on this *prastarā*, O Yama, uniting with the *Āṅgīrasas*, the *Pitaras* . . .”, (5ab) “Come thou here, with the *Āṅgīrasas* who share in the sacrifice, O Yamá, revel with the descendants of the *Virūpas* . . .” (6ab) “The *Āṅgīrasas*, our Fathers, the *Navagvas*, the *Atharvans*, the soma-spending *Bṛḡus*, [may we be in their favour] . . .” ²¹¹. The *Āṅgīrasas* are called *virūpāsah* ²¹², which has been interpreted as referring to their ambiguous nature, since they belong to the opposed parts of the cosmos. The *vairūpās*, “sons of the *virūpa(s)*”, were probably not different from the *Āṅgīrasas* ²¹³.

It thus appears that in many passages where the *Āṅgīrasas* are not

Agni as the hotṛ. As for the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa itself, in I.125 *Bṛhaspati* acts as the purohita of the Devas, as against *Uśanā Kāvya*, who is the purohita of the Asuras. In the epic, again, *Bṛhaspati* is *Āṅgīras muni* (I.71.6), *Āṅgīrasām varīṣṭha* (V.16.27), but also an *Āditya* (I.60.38 *Bṛhaspatiś ca bhagavān Ādityeṣv eva gaṇyate*). ²⁰⁸ Cf. VII.44.4, where they take the place of the *Rudras* (*Ādityēbhir Vāsuhir Āṅgīrobhīḥ*) and VII.10.4, where *Bṛhaspátim śkvabhīr viśvāvāram* is mentioned by the side of *Indra* with the *Vasus*, etc. Otto Strauss, *Bṛhaspati im Veda*, p. 40, characterized them as “die priesterlichen Heroen”. They are *yajñīya* (X.14.5). ²⁰⁹ Later they are sometimes actually called *Āṅgīraso devāḥ*, e.g., AB. VIII.14.4 *Marutaś ca tvā 'ṅgīrasaś ca devāḥ*, TS. VII.1.18 *Āṅgīrobhīr devēbhir devātayā*.

²¹⁰ *Yamāya tvā 'ṅgīrasvate pitṛmāte svāhā*.

²¹¹ X.14.3 *Mātali kavyair Yamó Āṅgīrobhīr Bṛhaspátir śkvabhīr vāvṛdhānāḥ*, . . . (4) *imām Yama prastarām ā hí sīdā 'ṅgīrobhīḥ pitṛbhiḥ samvidānāḥ*, . . . (5) *Āṅgīrobhīr ā gahi yajñīyebhir Yama vairūpāir ihā mādayasva*, . . . (6) *Āṅgīraso nah pitāro nāvagvā Atharvāṇo Bṛḡgavaḥ somyāsaḥ* . . . See H.-P. Schmidt, op. c., p. 56f.

²¹² RS. X.62.5–6. See Schmidt, p. 40 and IJ. 13, p. 282. Macdonell, *Ved. Myth.* 143, it is true, takes *virūpa* as a proper name; similarly Geldner in his translation of X.62.5–6, 78.5 (as against III.53.7).

²¹³ Whereas in VII.10.4 the singers (*śkvan*), who must be identical with the *Āṅgīrasas*, are the companions of *Bṛhaspati*, they have here been doubled because the *Āṅgīrasas* occur under their proper name as companions of Yama. This is a case where the question arises what influence the poetical technique of the Rigvedic poets may have had on their theological phrasing. The poet who composed the pāda X.14.3b *Bṛhaspátir śkvabhīr vāvṛdhānāḥ* may well have had in mind VII.10.4d *Bṛhaspátim śkvabhīr viśvāvāram*. In that case (which cannot be proved to be true since no other possible reminiscences of VII.10 can be pointed out) the main problem would be why the poet introduced *Bṛhaspati* (see Hanns-Peter Schmidt, l.c.). The doubling itself may either be due to purely technical considerations of versification or to a theological necessity of mentioning both Yama and *Bṛhaspati*.

a dark, demonic aspect? This is certainly true of Agni and Soma, who are sometimes called *āsurā* in the Rigveda and about whose "Varuṇic" character at certain stages of the ritual (particularly when they are *upanaddha*) the texts do not leave any doubt²²⁰. This would also explain why *Svápna*, the god of sleep, in spite of his transition from the Asuras to the Devas (see p. 31) is still considered a harmful, inauspicious deity²²¹. As such he can be paralleled with the *Āngirasas*. The question as to just when the latter were considered ominous and when, apart from the Vala-myth, they were godlike would require a special study²²².

The preceding remarks were essential for a better insight into one of the most intriguing characteristics of the *Ādityas*. Within the limits of the organized cosmos, that is, in terms of the cyclical cosmic process as completed within a year, up to the New Year Festival, they are never, as far as I can see, in conflict with the other groups of gods. On the other hand, in the *brāhmaṇas* they are depicted as being traditionally in conflict with the *Āngirasas*, in spite of the fact that the latter are not really gods (see n. 208). While both parties have an ambiguous character, the *Ādityas* here fight as true Devas²²³. Their opponents, the *Āngirasas*, by the very fact of this opposition, here become representatives of the Asuras. Just as in the contest between the Devas and Yama mentioned above, the fight between *Ādityas* and *Āngirasas* was interpreted, in accordance with the fixed pattern of the cosmic contest, as a special instance of the eternal struggle between Devas and Asuras. As a result of this polarization the *Āngirasas* became simply Asuras. That this interpretation gives a correct picture of the way the Indian priests looked at their theological system is shown by the fact that in two *brāhmaṇas* (*ŚB.* and *JB.*) the authors, in the middle of the tale, seem for a brief moment to have forgotten who the real actors are. They substitute *devāḥ* and *āsurāḥ* for the correct terms *ādityāḥ* and *āngirasas*, which reappear at the end of the legend. This is, no doubt, primarily a problem of text tradition.

²²⁰ For *agnir upanaddhaḥ* see, e.g., Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II, p. 60 and cf. p. 21, *IJ.* 12, p. 281, 15, p. 231f.

²²¹ As for *Svapna* (Sleep), in spite of his changing sides and joining the gods (see above, p. 31), the Atharvavedic poets do not rate him very high. Cf. XI.8.19 "Sleep, laziness, destruction, the deities called evils (*pāpman*), old age, baldness and greyness entered, one after the other, the body" (*svāpno vai tandrīr nīrtiḥ pāpmāno nāma devātāḥ, jarā khālatyaṁ pālityaṁ śārīram ānu prāviśan*).

²²² In this connection the circumstance that in the hymns Agni is often referred to as *āngiras* and even *āngirastama* may be meaningful (cf. also AB. VI.34.2 *Āngirasām vā eko 'gniḥ*). Our insight into Vedic theology, however, is still far too imperfect to explain the exact character of the relation between Agni and the *Āngirasas*.

²²³ In contrast with the normal practice of the *Ādityas* of keeping out of the contest with the Asuras (with whom they remain connected by relationship, see p. 59), there are some Yajurvedic passages where the *Ādityas* stand for the Devas as a group in their fight against the Asuras. Cf. KS. XXVIII.6 (160,6), KKS. XLIV.6 (261,20/306,10) *Ādityā vā asurān hatvā* versus an immediately preceding passage KS. XXIII.8 (83,10) XXVIII.2 (154,1), KKS. XXXVI.5 (191,14/223,5) XLIV.2 (256,15/299,17) *devā vā asurān hatvā* and the corresponding passage MS. IV.6.9 (92,14) *devā āsurān hatvā*, etc.

It is possible that in some text two different versions of one and the same tale have been confused. Still, there is apparently more to it, and if there has been a confusion, this was made possible by the fact that the contrast between Ādityas and Aṅgirasas had a structural character. This is shown by the first introductory words in ŚB. XX.2.2.9 "Now, the Ādityas and the Aṅgiras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati²²⁴, were contending together saying . . .". These words, and ŚB. III.5.1.13 "Now, in the beginning there were two kinds of beings here, the Ādityas and the Aṅgirasas" explain what the author of AB. I.16.39 meant with his laconic words "The Ādityas and the Aṅgirasas existed here"²²⁵. From these passages it appears that the contrast between Ādityas and Aṅgirasas was one of the ways in which the fundamental cosmic dualism was expressed. It is clear that this conclusion only reveals a basic pattern but does not explain why the Aṅgirasas were the chosen adversaries of the Ādityas²²⁶. It must also be repeated that, apart from the structural aspects, there is a textual problem that has to be solved by its specific method. In particular the strange contradiction in the version of the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa, where the Devas are, on the one hand, represented as identical with the Ādityas²²⁷ and, on the other, as standing above the two parties may be due to a confusion, two different versions having been mixed.

The various passages where the Ādityas are depicted as contending with the Aṅgirasas refer partly to the ritual of the *sadyahkri*, when the Soma is bought and offered up on one and the same day²²⁸, and partly

²²⁴ See above, n. 23. This discussion is a more elaborate version of some brief remarks made in IJ. 13, p. 282.

²²⁵ ŚB. XII.2.2.9 *āthā 'dityās ca ha vā Aṅgirasas ca, ubhāye prājāpatyā aspardhanta, vayam pūrve svargam lokam eṣyāmo vayam pūrva iti*, III.5. 1.13 *dvayyā ha vā idam āgre prajā āsuḥ, Ādityās caivā 'ṅgirasas ca*, AB. I.16.39 *Ādityās caive 'hā 'sann Aṅgirasas ca*.

²²⁶ The basic pattern could also be elaborated in other ways. Much better known is the contrast between Atharvans and Aṅgirasas, which is a replica, on the level of non-divine groups, of the dualism. For *ātharvaṇa* "holy" versus *aṅgirasa* "magical" see Maurice Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda*, p. 112, H.-P. Schmidt, *Bṛhaspati und Indra*, p. 39.

²²⁷ Already pointed out by Caland, *Das Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa im Auswahl*, p. 161 n. 11.

²²⁸ Cf. AB. VI.34.2 *Ādityās ca ha vā Aṅgirasas ca svarge loke 'spardhanta: vayam pūrva eṣyāmo, vayam iti. te hā 'ṅgirasas pūrve śvaḥsutyām svargasya lokasya dadṛśus, te 'gnim prajighyur—Aṅgirasam vā eko 'gnih—parehy, Ādityebhyaḥ śvaḥsutyām svargasya lokasya prabrūhī 'ti . . . KB. XXX.5(6).2 Ādityās ca ha vā Aṅgirasas ca 'spardhanta: vayam pūrve svargam lokam eṣyāma ity Ādityā, vayam ity Aṅgirasas. te 'ṅgirasa Ādityebhyaḥ(-ān) prajighyuh: śvaḥsutyā no, yājayata na iti. teṣām hā 'gnir dūta āsa, ta Ādityā ūcur: athā 'smākam adyasutyā, teṣām nas tvam eva hotā 'si, Bṛhaspatir brahmā, 'yāsya udgātā, Ghora Aṅgiraso 'dhvaryur iti . . . GB. II.6.14 Ādityās ca ha vā Aṅgirasas ca svarge loke 'spardhanta: vayam pūrve svar eṣyāmo, vayam pūrva iti. te hā 'ṅgirasas śvaḥsutyām dadṛśus, te hā 'gnim ūcuḥ: parehy, Ādityebhyaḥ śvaḥsutyām prabrūhī 'ti . . . JB. III.187f. Ādityās ca vā Aṅgirasas ca svarge loke 'spardhanta. ta aikṣanta: yatare no yatarān yājajīṣyanti, te hāsyanta iti. te 'ṅgirasas pūrve yajnam samabharan śvaḥsutyām, te 'gnim Aṅgirasam dūtam prākhyann: imām naḥ śvaḥsutyām Ādityebhyaḥ prabrūhī 'ti. sa etyā 'bravid: Ādityā, Aṅgiraso vaḥ*

to the *Abhiplava śadhā* ritual²²⁹. The confusion is only found in ŚB. III.5.1.13–22 and in the corresponding passages in JB. III.187–188 and II.115–116, which Caland has put together in his *Auswahl*, pp. 158–161. These two passages are here quoted in the translations by Eggeling and Caland respectively. The italics are mine. Of the other passages only the first lines are quoted in the foot-notes.

Śatapatha Brāhmana III.5.1.13 ‘Now, in the beginning there were two kinds of beings here, the Ādityas and the Aṅgiras. The Aṅgiras then were the first to prepare a sacrifice, and having prepared the sacrifice they said to Agni, ‘Announce thou to the Ādityas this our to-morrow’s Soma-feast, saying, ‘Minister ye at this sacrifice of ours!’” (14) The Ādityas spake (to one another), ‘Contrive ye how the Aṅgiras shall minister unto us, and not we unto the Aṅgiras!’ (15) They said, ‘Verily by nothing but sacrifice is there a way out of this: let us undertake another Soma-feast!’ They brought together the (materials for) sacrifice, and having made ready the sacrifice, they said, ‘Agni, thou hast announced to us a Soma-feast for to-morrow; but we announce to thee and the Aṅgiras a Soma-feast even for to-day: it is for us that thou art (to officiate as) Hotṛ!’ (16) They sent back some other (messenger) to the Aṅgiras . . . (17) The Aṅgiras then officiated for the Ādityas in the sacrifice with Soma bought (kri) on the same day (sadyas); whence this *Sadyahkri*.

śvaḥsutyām prāhur iti . . . (188) . . . *te 'bruvann: Agne, ciram tad yac chva, imām eva vayam tubhyam adyasutyām prabrūmas, teṣām nas tvam hotā 'si, Gaur Aṅgirasō 'dhvaryur, Bṛhaspatir udgātā, 'yāśyo brahme 'ti sarvān avṛṇata . . .* PB. XVI.12.1 *Ādityās cā 'ṅgirasas cā 'dikṣanta. te svarge loke 'spardhanta. te 'ṅgirasa Ādityebhyaḥ śvaḥsutyām prābruvan . . .* ŚB. III.5.1. 13ff. *dvayyō ha vā idām āgre prajā āsuḥ, Ādityās caivā 'ṅgirasas ca, tāto 'ṅgirasah pūrve yajñām sām abharams. te yajñām sambhṛtyo 'cur Agnīm: imām naḥ śvaḥsutyām Ādityebhyaḥ prā brūhy, anēna no yajñēna yājayatē 'ti . . .* BaudhŚS. XVIII.22 (369,11) *athā 'dityās ca ha vā Aṅgirasas ca svarge loke pasprdhire. te 'ṅgirasa Ādityān abhiprajgmur Agninā dūtena: śvaḥsutyā na ity, athā 'smākam adyasutyē 'ti. (23) Ādityā procus: teṣām nas tvam hote 'ti.*

²²⁹ Cf. AB. IV.17.5 *Ādityās ca ha vā Aṅgirasas ca svarge loke 'spardhanta: vayam pūrva eṣyāmo, vayam iti. te hā 'dityāḥ pūrve svargam lokam jagmuḥ, paśce 'vā 'ṅgirasah, ṣaṣṭyām vā varṣeṣu . . .* GB. I.4.23 *Ādityās ca ha vā Aṅgirasas ca svarge loke 'spardhanta: vayam pūrve svar eṣyāmo, vayam pūrva iti . . .* ŚB. XII.2.2.9 *āthā 'dityās ca ha vā Aṅgirasas ca, ubhāye Prājāpatyā, aspardhanta: vayam pūrve svargam lokam eṣyāmo, vayam pūrva iti . . .* See also MS. III.4.2 (46,10) *dvyuttarēna vai stōmenā 'dityāḥ svargam lokam āyamś, caturuttarēnā 'ṅgiraso (as must be read for stōmenā'dityāḥ and āṅgirasau in the editions von Schroeder and Aundh) and KS. IX.16 (119,10) Aṅgirasas ca vā Ādityās ca svargē lokē 'spardhanta. tā Ādityā etām pāñcahotāram apaśyams. tām mānasā 'nūddrūtyā 'juhavus. tāta Ādityās svargam lokam āyann, āpā 'ṅgiraso 'bhramśanta (as against IX.14: 116,19 pāñcahotrā vai devā asurān prānudanta, MS. I.9.6: 138,3 pāñcahotrā vai devā asurān pārābhāvayan, . . . 138,6 pāñcahotrā vai devāḥ svār āyan, I.9.5: 136,17 pāñcahotrā vai devāḥ paśān āsrjanta, pārā 'surān abhāvayan), TB. II.2.3.5f. Ādityās cā 'ṅgirasas ca svargē lokē 'spardhanta: vayam pūrve suvargam lokam āyāma, vayam pūrva iti (6) tā Ādityā etām pāñcahotāram apaśyan . . . tāto vai te pūrve suvargam lokam āyan. Cf. KS. XX.11 (31,19), KKS. XXXI.13 (161,22/188,20) *ādityadhāmāno vā anye prānā, āṅgīrodhāmāno 'nye. ye purastāt ta ādityadhāmāno, ye paścāt te 'ṅgīrodhāmānaḥ, MS. III.2.9 (30,8) ādityādhāmāno vā ūttare prānā, āṅgīrodhāmāno 'dhare, and GB. I.1.7 (Aṅgirasas from Varuṇa Mṛtyu).**

(18) They brought Vāc (speech) to them for their sacrificial fee. They accepted her not . . . (21) Now Vāc was angry with them: 'In what respect, forsooth, is that one better than I—wherefore is it, that they should have accepted him and not me?' So saying she went away from them. Having become a lioness she went on seizing upon (everything) between those two contending parties, *the gods and the Asuras*. The gods called her to them, and so did the Asuras. Agni was the messenger of the gods, and one Saharakshas for the Asura-Rakshas. (22) Being willing to go over to the gods, she said, 'What would be mine, if I were to come over to you?' . . . So she went over to the gods".

Jaim. Brāhmaṇa III.187² "Die Ādityas und Angirasen stritten sich um den (Besitz des) Himmelsraumes. Sie überlegten: "Welche von uns beiden für die anderen als Opferpriester auftreten werden, die werden (auf der Erde) zurückbleiben". Die Angirasen bereiteten (zur Erreichung des Himmels) zuerst ein Opfer vor, nl. eine sich über einen Tag erstreckende Soma-feier, welcher ein für die Weihe und den Somakauf bestimmter Tag vorangeht (eine *śvaḥsutyā*). Sie sandten den zu ihnen gehörigen Agni als Boten ab: "Sage diese unsere Śvaḥsutyā den Ādityas an". Der ging hin und sprach zu den Ādityas: "Die Angirasen sagen euch eine Śvaḥsutyā an" . . . (III.188) "Da bereiteten die Ādityas diese Soma-feier vor, bei welcher an demselben Tage der Soma gekauft (und dargeopfert) wird (eine *adyasutyā*). Da sagten sie: "Agni, bis morgen ist lang; hier sagen wir dir die Adyasutyā an. Du sollst unser Hotṛ, der Angirase Go soll unser Adhvaryu, Bṛhaspati unser Udgātṛ und Ayāsyā unser Brahman sein" . . . (II.115) "Die (Angirasen, von den Ādityas als Opferpriester) erwählt, entzogen sich nicht. Sie gingen hin und verrichteten das Opfer für sie. Als Opferlohn führten sie (nl. die Ādityas) ihnen (den Angirasen) die Vāc in der Gestalt einer weissen mit einem Zügel angebundenen Stute herbei: "Nehmt diese entgegen". Sie sagten: "Diese ist stärker als wir, wir werden sie nicht aufheben". Diese (nl. Vāc), erzürnt aus Erwägung: "Sie haben mich nicht entgegengenommen", nahm die Gestalt einer Löwin²³⁰ mit zwei Mäulern (einem auf beiden Seiten) an, stieg (in die Luft) empor, und stellte sich zwischen Göttern und Asuras (d.h. zwischen Ādityas und Angirasen), angreifend *wen sie von den Göttern und Asuras ergreifen konnte*. Sowohl die Götter als die Asuras rief[en] sie zu sich heran²³¹. Sich zu den Göttern hinwendend sprach sie . . . (II.116) "Nun führten die Ādityas ihnen (den Angirasen) die Sonne in der Gestalt eines weissen mit einem Zügel angebundenen Rosses herbei: "Nimmt diesen entgegen". Sie sagten: "Dieser aber ist stärker als wir; wir werden auch diesen nicht aufheben". Da kamen die Götter und Seher zusammen herbei und sagten: "Opfer ohne Opferlohn werden zunichte gehen. Nehmt (ihn) an".

²³⁰ For this lioness see below, n. 421.

²³¹ For the text see n. 421. For (*tām upaiva devā*)*āmantrayanto 'pā 'surāḥ* (Caland, Raghū Vira-Lokesh Chandra) the MSS. read *amantrayantovāsuraḥ* (ka), *amantrayantopāsuraḥ* (kha, ga). The reading *āmantrayanta* seems to be an emendation but is wrong: Viśvabandhu Śāstrī gives for the brāhmaṇas (I, p. 278) some 25 occurrences of *upa-mantrayati*, but only this passage for *upa-ā-mantrayati* (I, p. 289). As for the Saṁhitās (Viśvabandhu, p. 954), it has long been noticed that KS. XXVII.8 (147,1) *tā upāmantrayata abruvatām* is corrupt for *tā upāmantrayata. tāv abruvatām*. Cf. Caland, WZKM. 26 (1912), p. 125, Raghū Vira, Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha Saṁhitā, Introduction, p. 30 (2p. XXVIII), who however read *tā* for *tāv*, and TS. VI.4.10.1 *tē devāḥ śāṅḍāmārkāv upāmantrayanta. tāv abrūtām* . . . So there remains ASPaipp. XVII.28.5 *athē'ndrāgnī tam upāmantrayante*, which L. C. Barret emends to *upāmantrayete* (registered by Viśvabandhu) but for which the context rather requires an imperfect. See further n. 418.

11. VARUṆA AS A DEMONIALACAL FIGURE AND AS THE GOD OF DEATH

In the context of this study of Varuṇa's relation to Asuras it is necessary to say a few words on the demoniacal aspect of Varuṇa in the Veda and the epic. Since much has been written about it²³² and the later Vedic texts are explicit, there is no need for a circumstantial exposition of facts which are generally known.

When, however, it comes to interpreting the evidence one is again faced with the well-known basic difficulty that the main part of the R̥gveda differs from book X and the Atharvaveda in that it contains but few references to the dark aspect.

First of all, it is necessary to stress the fact that Varuṇa was associated, not with R̥ta (the cosmic order) only, but with the pair of opposites R̥ta and Druh. The last word denotes all that is not in harmony with the divine laws of the Universe. Such translations as "malice" or "falsehood" evoke too exclusively the idea of ethical relations between men. To avoid this, it will here be translated by "wrongness", which, although admittedly not very satisfactory, has the advantage of not directly evoking ethical associations. This pair of notions originated in the Proto-Indo-Iranian religion²³³. Varuṇa's relations to both entities (an inheritance, it seems, from the undifferentiated primordial world) constitute his basically ambiguous character. On the one hand, it is true, Varuṇa and Mitra are guardians of the R̥ta, they are *ṛtāvṛdhā* (VII.66.19) and are said to be free from *drúh*²³⁴. On the other hand, Varuṇa not only discovers every act against the R̥ta²³⁵ but he is also invoked to

²³² See, e.g., (1877) Hillebrandt, *Varuṇa und Mitra*, pp. 53-63 "Varuṇa's Fesseln als Ausdruck für die Nacht (Ungemach, Tod)", pp. 63-70 "Varuṇa's Fessel ein Ausdruck für die Wassersucht"; (1883) A. Bergaigne, *Religion védique* III, pp. 84 ("caractère équivoque"), 115, 128-129 ("caractère quasi démoniaque"), 139, 147-148, 156; (1893) K. Bohnenberger, *Der altindische Gott Varuṇa nach den Liedern des R̥gveda*, pp. 56-61, E. Hardy, *Die Vedisch-brahmanische Periode der Religion des alten Indiens*, p. 58; (1897), A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 27; (1898) S. Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les brâhmanas*, pp. 96, 152-171; (1899) H. Oldenberg, *Aus Indien und Iran*, p. 179; (1905) Otto Strauss, *Bṛhaspati im Veda*, p. 19f. ("er wird als eine zu überwindende dämonische Kraft betrachtet"); (1916) B. Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas* (Sitzungsber. Kais. Akad. Wiss. Wien, 176 Bd, 7. Abh.), p. 178; (1917) K. F. Johansson, *Über die altindische Göttin Dhiṣaṇā und Verwandtes*, Upsala, p. 128ff.; (1923) H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, 3. und 4. Aufl., pp. 183, 293, 299-304; (1929) A. Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie* II², pp. 20, 22, 31f., 40, 127 ("mit der doch im ganzen unheilvollen Natur Varuṇa's"), 420 n. 1, Festgabe Garbe, p. 19f.; (1937), J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation* III, pp. 204ff., 209, 214, 265; (1951), H. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 676; (1960) J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens* I, p. 76f., Renou, *EVP.* 7, pp. 4 ("un artisan du mal"), 20, 58, Festgabe H. Lommel [=Paideuma VII, 4-6], pp. 122-128, especially p. 124; cf. *IJ.* 5 (1961), pp. 51-53; 8 (1965), p. 108 n. 63; (1972), J. Gonda, *The Vedic god Mitra*, pp. 40, 75.

²³³ B. Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, p. 178ff.

²³⁴ RS. V.68.4, VII.66.18 *adrúhā*, V.70.2 *adruhvāṇā*.

²³⁵ AS. I.10.2 *viśvaṁ hy ūgra nicikéṣi drugdhām*.

deliver from his noose²³⁶, which is an indirect indication of his power over *drūh*²³⁷. Most earlier studies on Varuṇa, indeed, omit to mention that Varuṇa's dark aspect is identical with the antithesis of Ṛta, namely Druh. It has been argued elsewhere that the other aspect, the one which delivers from evil, is identical with Mitra, when and in so far as there is a reference to the dual godhead Mitrā-Vāruṇā²³⁸, the "dieu unique à deux noms"²³⁹.

An indication that there has, indeed, been a euphemistic reticence with regard to Varuṇa is the occurrence of taboo substitutes for his name. It has been suggested that the Old Iranian name Ahura Mazdā may have been such a substitute for the name Varuṇa²⁴⁰, which is attested as early as the treaty of the Mitanni king Šattiwaza of c. 1380 B.C. As B. Geiger has pointed out²⁴¹, similar indirect denotations are found in the Rigveda (VIII.42.1 *ásuro viśvávedāh*, I.24.14 *asura pracetaḥ*). It might be objected that the Rigvedic terms are not specific (as Geiger himself remarks), *pracetas* being much more commonly used as an epithet of Agni, but in the Yajurveda the words *pracetas tvā Rudraḥ paścāt pātu* can hardly refer to any other god but Varuṇa (as it is, indeed, interpreted by Sāyaṇa, Uvaṭa and Mahidhara), and in the classical literature *Pracetas* is, from Kālidāsa and Amara onwards, used as a name of Varuṇa²⁴². Cf., e.g., Bāṇa, Kādambarī, p. 217, l. 2 Peterson (as against pp. 37,13, 79,21, 119,8, 123,15, where the common name is used).

The question as to why the Rigvedic poets seldom refer to this dark aspect has rarely been given the attention it obviously deserves. It has often struck scholars that Death, for instance, is rarely mentioned in the old family collections²⁴³. It may be considered significant that in the

²³⁶ In support of this thesis may be quoted, e.g., TS. II.3.13.2 "Varuṇa seizes him with the Varuṇa-noose" (*Vāruṇa enām varuṇapāsēna grhṇāti*) versus "Varuṇa frees him from the Varuṇa-noose" (e.g. II.3.12.2 *sá evai 'nam varuṇapāsān muñcati*). See further below, n. 252, etc.

²³⁷ RS. VII.86.5 *áva drugdhāni pūtryā sṛjā nó 'va yā vayām cakṛmā tanúbhiḥ*, I.24.14 *rājann énāmsi śisrathaḥ kṛtāni*, etc.

²³⁸ See IJ. 5, p. 46ff. and Bergaigne III, p. 128f., who opposes his dark aspect as belonging to the natural order to his lighter one, as connected with the religious order, which is an illegitimate intrusion of Roman-Catholic theology into the domain of Vedic religion. Nevertheless Bergaigne has, more sharply than most other scholars, recognized the basic problem.

²³⁹ Renou, EVP. 7, p. 3. Similarly Johansson, Die altindische Göttin Dhiṣṇā und Verwandtes, p. 134.

²⁴⁰ See IJ. 5, p. 55, 8, p. 109 n. 68. Others may already have expressed the same opinion previously but, if so, they have escaped my notice.

²⁴¹ Die Amāsa Spēntas, p. 213.

²⁴² For the Yajurvedic formula see KS. II.9 (14,20), KKS. II.3 (16,18/19,22), TS. I.2.12.2, VS. V.11, ŚB. III.5.2.5, cf. TĀ. I.20.1 and TS. VI.2.7.5. For the classical literature see PW., and cf. Bāṇa, Kādambarī p. 217, 2 Peterson (as against pp. 37,13, 79,21, 119,8 and 123,15, where the common name is used). See for the mythological background IJ.18, p. 35.

²⁴³ Macdonell, Ved. Mythology, p. 165 "In the Vedic hymns there is little reference to death".

tenth book of the Rigveda there are fifteen occurrences of the word *mṛtyú*, whereas in the other books it does not occur at all, except in one of the latest interpolations inserted after the composition of the Padapāṭha (VII.59.12 *mṛtyór mukṣīya*, see Oldenberg, Prolegomena, p. 511). Saying that “the thoughts of the poets of the RV., intent on the happiness of this earth, appear to have rarely dwelt on the joys of the next life”²⁴⁴ does not provide an explanation for this fact, nor can the characterization of their spirit as *diesseitig* or positive²⁴⁵ be regarded as such. One is driven to the conclusion that there was an intentional euphemistic reticence²⁴⁶. The only explanation so far proposed for this reticence is the theory that the Rigvedic hymns differed from those of the later Saṁhitās in that they had been composed for a specific seasonal festival, during which Varuṇa was particularly dreaded as he had probably again become an Asura for a short while²⁴⁷.

It will be sufficient to summarize a few details. First, there is, in spite of Oldenberg’s rejection²⁴⁸, an undeniable relation between Varuṇa and Vṛtra²⁴⁹. Second, there is an unmistakable relation between Varuṇa and

²⁴⁴ Op. c., p. 169.

²⁴⁵ So recently Ogibenin, see the next note.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Bergaigne III, pp. 76 (“atténuation de l’idée primitive d’une défaite”), 115 (Varuṇa is “une forme de Vṛtra élevée à la dignité divine”), 144 (“allusion plus ou moins vague à certains traits de ressemblance entre le personnage divin de Varuṇa et le personnage démoniaque de Vritra”), 148 (“atténuations”), S. Lévi, Doctrine du sacrifice, p. 167: “Le caractère de Varuṇa ne doit donc pas faire illusion; si parfois il apparaît comme le gardien de la morale, c’est simplement en vertu de sa nature rituelle. Il est . . . divinité chatouilleuse, mal commode, peu maniable, prompt à se retourner contre qui la manie, dangereuse à heurter, dangereuse à invoquer. Un nom si périlleux, susceptible par sa seule énergie de déchaîner tant de maux, appelait un palliatif. Comme le farouche Rudra, évocateur des larmes, a reçu des noms de propitiation et de paix pour annuler l’effet de ses noms sauvages et violents et s’est dédoublé en Rudra-Çiva, Varuṇa a été associé à Mitra, divinité très vague . . .”, J. J. Meyer, Trilogie III, p. 254 n., Kuiper, IJ. 5, p. 52 (“the euphemistic reticence of India’s oldest text”), B. L. Ogibenin, Struktura mifologičeskix tekstov “Rigvedy” (Moskva, Akad. Nauk, 1968), p. 77 n. 1 “sleduet ukazat’, čto vedijskie teksty otražajut liš’ položitel’nye (pravye) členy protivopostavljenij; strogo govorja, to, čto oboznačetsja otricatel’nymi (levymi) členami, ne predstavleno v “Rigvede”—eto svjazano s odnostoronne pozitivnym karakterom pamjatnika.” That the character of the text may seem different from the other Vedas is not so much due to its different theological position as to a taboo caused by the period of contest. A similar euphemism can be found in the reticence of the Rigvedic poets with regard to the slaying of Soma; see H. Lommel, Symbolon 4 p. 158f.

²⁴⁷ Cf. IJ. 5, p. 53 and above, pp. 23, 41f.

²⁴⁸ Oldenberg, Textkritische und exegetische Noten II, p. 343.

²⁴⁹ See above, n. 246 and Bergaigne II, p. 202, III, pp. 115, 128, 144, 148, S. Lévi, Doctrine du sacrifice, p. 168, Geldner, Vedische Studien II, p. 292ff., Übersetzung III, p. 353, Bloomfield, The Atharvaveda, p. 107, SBE. 42, p. 370, Keith, Religion and Philosophy, p. 100, Charpentier, Die Suparnasage, p. 118, Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², pp. 33, 40, Renou, Festgabe Lommel, p. 125 n. 12, EVP. 7, p. 82, Eliade, Eranos Jahrbuch 27 (1958), p. 208ff., Traité d’histoire des religions p. 365f., Images et symboles p. 128f., Agrawala, Indological Studies-W. Norman Brown, p. 1 and cf. IJ. 5, p. 52 n. 12.

drūh, as pointed out above. Renou aptly remarks: “Vr [= Varuṇa] est celui qui délivre et en même temps ce dont on se délivre, c’est un personnage ambivalent: les *drūh* n’étaient-elles pas à son service RV. 7.61,5 (et au service de Mitra)?”²⁵⁰. Later Vedic texts were more outspoken about this aspect (which is only vaguely indicated in the Rigveda, cf. II.27.3, where the Ādityas are characterized as *dipsantaḥ* “intending to injure” and v. 16 *yā vo māyā abhidrūhe*). They did not tend to conceal euphemistically the god’s real character, as was done in the Rigveda, because as theological treatises they were less dangerous than the mantras with their “magical” potency. There is in the brāhmaṇas a constant association of the notions of noose (*pāsa*) and *drūh*. Vedic man prayed to be delivered from Varuṇa’s noose, or from “wrongness” and the noose, or from the noose of wrongness. Cf. “With the words ‘I have been delivered from Varuṇa’s noose’ he is delivered from the Varuṇa-noose”²⁵¹, “With the words ‘May I be delivered from wrongness, from Varuṇa’s noose’ he delivers him from wrongness, from the Varuṇa-noose”²⁵², “That snare of wrongness of thine, O king Varuṇa, that, consisting of the metre Gāyatrī, has entered the earth and has the *brahman* for its support, that of thine I hereby avert by sacrifice, *svāhā* to it!”²⁵³ The phrase “snares of wrongness” occurs once in the Rigveda: “The furious man, O Maruts, who is fain to kill us, even when we do not expect it, O Vasus, may he put on himself the snares of wrongness”²⁵⁴. Cf. also in the Atharvaveda: “Thus I deliver thee from the afterbirth, Nirṛti, the curse that comes from thy kin, from wrongness, from Varuṇa’s noose”²⁵⁵ and “the fetters of wrongness that does not release”²⁵⁶.

²⁵⁰ Renou, Festgabe Lommel, p. 124. Cf. also EVP. 7 (1960), p. 58: “Il semble bien qu’on ne puisse échapper à la notion de *drūh* qui sont au service de VrMi . . . on en arrive à associer Vr. à l’idée du mal AV. 1.10,3 . . .” (where, again, the evolutionistic scheme emerges).

²⁵¹ MS. III.9.1 (113,17) etc. *nir Varuṇasya pāsād amukṣī ’ti varuṇapāsād evā nīrmucyata iti*.

²⁵² KS. XXVI.2 (124,4), KKS. XL.5 (230,5/269,14) *nir druho nir Varuṇasya pāsān mukṣīye ’ti druha evai ’nam varuṇapāsān muñcati*. Cf. KS. III.1 (23,8), KKS. II.8 (19,13/23,9), the Vedic Concordance under *nir varuṇasya* and ŚB. V.2.5.16 *ātha yād vāruṇo yavamāyaś carūr bhāvati, tāt sārvasmād evatīd varuṇapāsād sārvasmād varuṇyāt prajāḥ prā muñcati tā asyā ’namivā akilbiṣṭāḥ prajāḥ prā jāyante . . .*

²⁵³ KS. XVII.19 (264,10) *yas te, rājan Varuṇa, druhaḥ pāso gāyatrachandāḥ pṛthivīm anvāviveṣa brahmaṇi pratiṣṭhitas, tam ta etad avayaje, tasmai svāhā*, etc. Cf. XII.6 (168,19) *yas te, rājan Varuṇa, gāyatrachandāḥ pāsas ta (in) ta etad avayaje tasmai svāhā*, etc., MS. II.3.3 (30,10) *yās te, rājan Varuṇa, gāyatrachandāḥ pāso brāhmaṇa pratiṣṭhitas tān ta etēnā ’vayaje*, Vedic Concordance under *yas te rājan*.

²⁵⁴ RS. VII.59.8 *yō no Maruto abhi durhrāyās tīrās cittāni Vasavo jghāmsati, druḥāḥ pāsān prāti sā mucīṣṭa . . .* Geldner translates: “so soll er sich die Schlinge des Trugs (selbst) umlegen”, Keith (transl. of TS. IV.3.13.4) “in the noose [*pāsām*] of destruction may he be caught.”

²⁵⁵ AS. II.10.2–8 *evā ’hām tvām kṣetriyān nīrṛtyā jāmiśamsād druho muñcāmi Varuṇasya pāsāt*. Cf. TB. II.5.6.1 and Heesterman, The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration, p. 18.

²⁵⁶ AS. XVI.6.10 *āmucyā druḥāḥ pāsān*.

In general the Atharvaveda is much less reticent about the inauspicious character of Varuṇa than the Rigveda and we find there the first passages which openly state that man has to be delivered from Varuṇa: "As thou hast spoken untruth with thy tongue, much wrong, I release thee from king Varuṇa whose laws do not fail"²⁵⁷. In the Rigveda similar passages are only met with in the tenth book, cf. "May they (viz. the plants) deliver me from the (evil resulting from a) curse and from what comes from Varuṇa, and also from Yama's fetter and from every sin against the gods"²⁵⁸. This so-called "emergence" of Varuṇa's *krūra* aspect has often been explained in terms of a historical evolution and as the result of a biased deformation of the god. As Renou put it in one of the most recent discussions of the problem: "Dans le domaine de la description mythique, l'AV. est un témoin peut-être moins sincère que le Rigveda: les faits sont biaisés selon une orientation tantôt magique, tantôt spéculative . . ."²⁵⁹. It is, however, rather the Rigvedic evidence that may be called biased. See n. 82, etc.

It need hardly be said that whatever is well-offered is seized by Mitra but that the ill-offered part of the sacrifice is seized by Varuṇa²⁶⁰. Varuṇa's *krūra* character is most clearly shown by the fact that he is identical with Death. The Gopatha Brāhmaṇa even uses the term Varuṇa Mṛtyu²⁶¹. In the funeral hymns of the Rigveda it is said that the deceased will see king Varuṇa and Yama in the next world²⁶² and in one of the Vasiṣṭha hymns, which testify to a close intimacy with Varuṇa, the poet prays the gods that he may not have to go into the "clay house"²⁶³. In spite of Geldner's different interpretation²⁶⁴ these words probably refer to the grave²⁶⁵.

²⁵⁷ AS. I.10.3 *yád uvákthā 'nṛtaṁ jihváyā vṛjinám bahú, rájñas tvā satyádharmaṇo muñcāmi Váruṇād ahám*. Cf. verse 1, where "this man" is said to be led "upwards" (*ud-nī-*) from the wrath of the mighty one, and verse 2, where homage is paid to Varuṇa's wrath. In *ud-nī-* an indication may be seen of Varuṇa's abode being in the nether world; cf. India Maior (Congratulatory Vol. J. Gonda), p. 147.

²⁵⁸ RS. X.97.16 *muñcāntu mā śapathyād átho varuṇyād utá, átho Yamásya pádbiśāt sárvasmād devakībiśāt*. For *varuṇyā* see Eggeling, SBE. 41, p. 57 n. 2.

²⁵⁹ Festgabe für Herman Lommel (1960) [= Paideuma VII, 4-6], p. 122.

²⁶⁰ ŚB. IV.5.1.6 *yád vā ijānāsya sviṣṭam bhāvati, Mitrò 'sya tád grhṇāti, yád v asya dúriṣṭam bhāvati, Váruṇo 'sya tád grhṇāti*, TB. I.2.5.3 *Mitréṇai 'vá yajñāsya sviṣṭam śamayanti, Váruṇena dúriṣṭam*, PB. XIII.2.4, XV.1.3; 2.4; 7.7 *yád vai yajñāsya dúriṣṭam, tad Varuṇo grhṇāti, tad eva tad avayajati*. See below, p. 207f. For *śamayanti* cf. KS. XXVII.4 (142,12), KKS. XLII.4 (250,18/292,18) *tā imāḥ prajā Mitréṇa śāntā, Váruṇena vidhṛtāḥ* ("restrained"). Therefore, AB. III.38.3, VII.5.4 *Viṣṇur vai yajñāsya dúriṣṭam pāti, Varuṇaḥ sviṣṭam, tayor ubhayor eva śāntyai* cannot be explained from what we know of Vedic mythological thought.

²⁶¹ GB. I.1.7.

²⁶² RS. X.14.7 *préhi préhi pathibhiḥ pūrvyēbhir yātrā naḥ pūrve pitāraḥ pareyūḥ, ubhā rájānā svadháyā mādantā Yamám paśyāsi Váruṇam ca devám*.

²⁶³ RS. VII.89.1 *mó śú Varuṇa mṛnmáyam grhám rájann ahám gamam*.

²⁶⁴ Geldner, Kommentar, p. 115: "die irdene Gruft für die Gebeine, das Beinhaus"; Übersetzung: "die Urne, in der die Gebeine beigesetzt wurden."

²⁶⁵ Zimmer, Altindisches Leben, p. 407, pointed to AS. XVIII.2.50 *mātā putrām yáthā sicā 'bhy énam bhūma ūrnuhi, 51 jāyá pátim iva vāsasā 'bhy énam bhūma ūrnuhi*,

Varuṇa's connection with Death is most explicitly stated in the practice of black magic (*abhicāra*): "When practising witchcraft one should sacrifice a black ram, which belongs to Varuṇa. For Varuṇa is Death. So he causes Death to seize upon him. Verily, this [ram] is symbolic of *pāpman*. *Pāpman* is black, as it were. In that it [the ram] is black, he endows him [the victim] with *pāpman*, saying: "I tie this victim for King Varuṇa, a bull as a share for Indra, for it is his alone. May the gods enter his limbs, may Yama, may Destruction seize our enemies! These deities, verily, have power over man. Having bought him off from these—Yama is Death—he causes Death to seize upon him"²⁶⁶. The identification of Varuṇa with *pāpmán* (also MS. II.5.6: 55,3) should be noted in the light of the same identification of *Nīrti* (Destruction) in MS. II.5.5 (54,7): *tád enām Nīrtīr pāpmá 'grhñāt*. As is well-known, the black colour is generally associated with Varuṇa, e.g., ŚB. V.2.5.17 "A black cloth is [the fee] for the Vāruṇa [oblation], for what is black belongs to Varuṇa"²⁶⁷.

52 *abhī tvō 'rñomi pṛthivyā mātūr vāstreṇa bhadrāyā*, and to V.30.14 (*mā nū gān*) *mā nū bhāmigrho bhuvat* "Möge er nicht Bewohner des Hauses von Erde werden." Similarly Hillebrandt, *Lieder des R̥gveda*, p. 79 "Haus aus Lehm" and Renou, *EVP*, 5, p. 72; 7, p. 27. But see Caland, *Die altind. Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche* p. 166.

²⁶⁶ Most explicit is KS. XIII.2 (181,7) *vāruṇam kṛṣṇam vṛṣṇim abhicarann ālabheta, mṛtyur vai Varuṇo. mṛtyunai 'vai 'nam grāhayaty. etad vai pāpmano rūpam. kṛṣṇa iva pāpmā. yat kṛṣṇaḥ, pāpmanai 'vai 'nam abhiṣuvati* "paśuṁ badhnāmi Varuṇāya rājña Indrāya bhāgam ṛṣabham kevalo hi, gātrāṇi devā abhisamvisantu Yamo grhñātu nīrtis sapatnān" *ity etā vai devatāḥ puruṣasye 'sate. tābhya evai 'nam adhi niṣkrīya (adhiniṣkrīya von Schroeder and ed. Aundh but cf. TS. III.4.3.1)—mṛtyur Yamo—mṛtyunai 'vai 'nam grāhayati. Cf. MS. II.5.6 (55,6) vāruṇam kṛṣṇam pētavam [cf. IV.7.8: 103,8] ālabhetā 'bhicāran. yād vāruṇo, Vāruṇenai 'vai 'nam grāhayitvā sthñute. kṛṣṇo bhavati. tāmo vaḥ kṛṣṇām. mṛtyús tāmo. mṛtyúnai 'vai 'nam grāhayaty. etād vai pāpmāno rūpam yat kṛṣṇām. kṛṣṇā iva hi pāpmā. pāpmānai 'vai 'nam abhiṣuvati. tān nīyujjyāt* "paśuṁ badhnāmi . . ." *ity etābhya evai 'nam devatābhya nīryācyā—mṛtyúr vaḥ Yamō—mṛtyúnai 'vai 'nam grāhayati . . ., TS. II.1.8.2 Vāruṇenai 'vá bhrátvyaṁ grāhayitvā . . .*

²⁶⁷ ŚB. V.2.5.17 *tāsmād ṛṣabhó Vaiśvānarāśya dākṣiṇā, kṛṣṇām vāso vāruṇāśya. tād dhī vāruṇām yat kṛṣṇām. yādi kṛṣṇām nā vindéd, āpi yād evā kīm ca vāsaḥ syāt*. For black sacrificial animals offered to Varuṇa, and for the black colour connected with Varuṇa, see Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², p. 21f., J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie II*, p. 43, III, pp. 208f, 230, 266. On p. 325 Meyer points out that at the Vājapeya sacrifice black and white animals were offered up to Prajāpati, which is based on Sāyaṇa's interpretation of *śyāmā* in ŚB. V.1.3.9 *sārve śyāmāḥ, dvé vai śyāmāśya rūpé, śuklām caivā lōma kṛṣṇām ca. dvandvām vaḥ mithunām, prajānanam. prajānanam Prajāpatiḥ. prajāpatyā eté*. It is characteristic of Prajāpati that as a god of totality he comprises the light and dark aspects. In the difficult Varuṇa-hymn RS. VIII.41 the last stanza (10) *yāḥ svetām ādhinīrñijaś cakrē kṛṣṇām ānu vratā* may mean "He who made the white wearers of garments black ones, in accordance with his vows". See Grassmann and Oldenberg, *Noten für ādhinīrñij*. Since, however, it remains obscure to which "wearers of *nīrñij*" the verse refers, no conclusion can be drawn from these words. Other interpretations have been given by Geldner: "Der die weissen, die schwarzen (Farben) nach seinen Gesetzen zum Mantel sich gemacht hat" (implying a double relation which would only be explicable if Varuṇa here stands for the dual deity Mitrā-Vāruṇā) and by Renou:

In the same manner Varuṇa's bond (*bandhā*) is used in the Atharvaveda: "King Varuṇa's bond art thou; do thou bind so-and-so, of such-and-such lineage, son of such-and-such mother, in food, in breath" (Whitney) ²⁶⁸.

The most prominent role of Varuṇa in the ritual is that of a "seizer". Instances of this feature are well-known to every reader of brāhmaṇas. Cf., e.g., "With what vehemence Varuṇa seized these creatures, with that vehemence..." ²⁶⁹ but the same expression already occurs in the Rigveda ²⁷⁰. It is true that sometimes other words are used, such as "injurer" ²⁷¹, or that he is said to kill or harm ²⁷², but they are much less characteristic. Seized by Varuṇa is the sinner as well as the sick man: Prajāpati, after creating the creatures, caused Varuṇa to seize them as they were offending (against his laws). They then had recourse to Prajāpati and "he saw which this one [was, which was] not seized by Varuṇa. He offered this one [viz., the black ram], which belonged to Varuṇa, in order to free them from Varuṇa. With it he freed them from Varuṇa. A sick man is seized by Varuṇa. Because (this black ram) belongs to Varuṇa, he frees him from Varuṇa" ²⁷³.

"Lui qui a mis sur soi les ornements blancs (du jour), noirs (de la nuit)", see EVP. 5, p. 73, 7, p. 31. These translations disregard the grammatical difficulty of *ādhinirñij* being a masculine noun (see Oldenberg).

²⁶⁸ AS. X.5.44 *rājño Vāruṇasya bandhò 'si, sò 'mum amuṣyāyaṇām amuṣyāḥ putrām ānne prāṇē badhāna.*

²⁶⁹ ŚB. V.4.5.12 *sá yénai 'vaú 'jase 'māḥ prajā Vāruṇó 'grhṇāt, ténai 'vá . . .* For *ójas* cf. MS. II.3.1 (27,15) *yá vām Mitrāvaruṇā ojasyaḥ tanús, táyā vām vidhema. táye 'mām amūm muñcatam ānhasaḥ* (and 27,19 *yá vām Mitrāvaruṇā ojasyaḥ sahasyaḥ yātavyā rakṣasyā tanús, táyā . . .*, J. J. Meyer, Trilogie III, p. 205 n. 2). Similarly KS. XI.11 (158,11), but TS. II.3.13.1 reads *yá vām Indrāvaruṇā sahasyaḥ rakṣasyā tejasyā tanús táye 'mām ānhaso muñcatam.*

²⁷⁰ RS. II.29.5 *mā mā 'dhi putré vīm iva grabhīṣṭa, X.12.5 kīm svīn no rājā jagrhe kád asyá 'ti vratām cakrma, I.139.2 ādadāthe ānrtam svéna manyimā.* See Bohnenberger, *Der altindische Gott Varuṇa*, p. 57.

²⁷¹ ŚB. V.5.4.31 *Vāruṇo vá ārpayitā.*

²⁷² Cf., e.g., Śāṅkh. Ār. XII.5 (21) *nainam divyo Varuṇo hanti bhītam*, 6 (28) *nainam pramattam Varuṇo hinasti* and such well-known passages in the Rigveda as II.27.4 *cāyamānā ṛṇāni*, VII.60.5 *imé cetāro ānrtasya bhūreḥ*, I.24.11 *mā na āyuh prā moṣih*, I.25.2 *mā no vadhāya hatnāve jihīlānāsya rīradhaḥ, mā hṛṇānāsya manyāve.*

²⁷³ KS. XIII.2 (180,15) *vāruṇam kṛṣṇam petvam ekaśitipādam ālabhetā 'mayāvī jyogāmayāvī. Prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjata. tā enam atyacarams. tā aticaranṭir Varuṇenā 'grāhayat. tā jihmāḥ pannā aśerata varuṇagrhitās. tāḥ kṛṣṇāḥ petva āpravata. tāsyā 'bhīhāya pādām agrhṇāt. sa prāvṛhyata. sa ekaśitipād abhavat. tāḥ Prajāpatā anāthanta, so 'paśyad yo 'yam avaruṇagrhitās, tenai 'nā Varuṇān muñcāni 'ti tam vāruṇam ālabhata. tenai 'nā Varuṇād amuñcat . . .* (see n. 275), MS. II.5.6 (54,17) *Prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjata. tā enam sṛṣṭā ātyamanyanta. tā atinānyamānā Vāruṇenā 'grāhayat. tā vāruṇagrhitāḥ kṛṣṇāḥ pētvo 'ūhyaskandat. tāsyā 'nuhāya pādām agrhṇāt. tāsyā śaphāḥ prāvṛhyata. sā ekaśitipād abhavat. tam acāyad: ayām vāv 'śām prajānām āvaruṇagrhitō. 'néne 'māḥ prajā Vāruṇān muñcāni 'ti. tam vāruṇam ālabhata. tāta imāḥ prajā Vāruṇāt prāmucyanta. tād varuṇapramocanṭya evai 'śā . . .* (see further n. 275). Varuṇa even seizes the gods (as he seized Mitra, MS. IV.5.8: 76,7, KS. XXVII.4: 142,18, KKS. XLII.4: 251,2/293,5); cf. KS. XXVI.2 (123,7), KKS. XL.5 (229,7/268,10) *sarvān vā etad Varuṇo grhṇāti yad dikṣite, manuṣyān pitṛn devān . . . prajā eva varuṇapāsān muñcati.* That deliverance from *varuṇya*

A sick person is *vāruṇaghṛīta*, seized by Varuṇa²⁷⁴. This was particularly true of those who suffered from a chronic disease (*jyógāmayāvin*). As we have seen above, in these circumstances Varuṇa was equated to *pāpman* and *mṛtyú*, e.g., “Who is suffering from a chronic disease, him he should cause to offer, for this man is seized by Varuṇa, by *pāpman*, and he has been ill for a long time. In that it [the ram] belongs to Varuṇa, he thereby delivers him from Varuṇa”²⁷⁵.

In the speculations of some brāhmaṇas, accordingly, Varuṇa is still associated with Death. In the epic his function is assigned to Yama, whose abode (*yamasādāna*) is the “world of the Fathers” (*pitṛloka*), whereas Varuṇa’s world has here become the abode of demons (see p. 90). As early as the Black Yajurveda, however, there is a tendency to connect the *pitāras* with the worlds of gods and men (p. 12). In 1898 Caland suggested the idea that the Yajurvedic custom of locating the *pitāras* not in the South but in the South-East, that is, closer to the East, was due to an attempt to bring them in closer contact with the gods. He even took a further step and put forward the theory that originally the *pitāras* had been associated with the western quarter. In that case Varuṇa’s ambiguous relation to the demons might explain why he had been unable to join the blessed fathers’ trek from the western to the south-eastern quarter. Since, however, all this is purely hypothetical, there is no need for dwelling upon this theory (see Eén idg. Lustratiegebruik, p. 279).

12. VARUṆA IN THE EPIC I

It is generally assumed that in post-Vedic times Varuṇa had sunk to the level of a mere “Lord of the Waters” (*apām patih*). This opinion

(see n. 258) is equivalent to deliverance from Varuṇa himself can be inferred from a comparison of, e.g., ŚB. V.2.5.16 *átha yád vāruṇó yavamáyaś carúr bhavati, tát sárvasmād evai ’tád varuṇapāsát, sárvasmād varuṇyát prajāh̄ prámuñcati* with MS. II.1.2 (3,9) *vāruṇám yavamáyaś carúr amayāvinám yājayed. vāruṇaghṛīto vá eṣá yá amayāvī. Vāruṇād evai ’nam̄ téna muñcati*, KS X.4 (128,14) *vāruṇám yavamáyaś carur̄m nirvapet . . . varuṇaghṛīto vá eṣa yo ’nyasyā ’dadāna upaharamāṇas carati. yád vāruṇo, Varuṇād evai ’nam̄ muñcati*.

²⁷⁴ Cf. also in classical Sanskrit (lex.) *abhyānta* “sick, diseased”. In RS. I.189.3 *Ágne tvám asmád yuyodhy am̄vā ánagnitrā abhy amanta kṛṣṭh̄* “O Agni, ward off the diseases from us. Let them seize tribes that are not protected by Agni” the verb *abhi-am-* is used with reference to the diseases themselves. It is certainly not accidental that only in the Yajurveda Varuṇa is said to be the ‘seizer’, cf. MS.III.12.1 (160,7), KSA. 4.4, TS. VII.4.15, VS. XXII.5, VSK. XXIV.1.5 *tám abhy am̄iti Vāruṇah̄* as against TS. II.2.6.2, etc. *tám Vāruṇo gṛhṇāti*.

²⁷⁵ MS. II.5.6 (55,2), IV.3.7 (46,18) *yó jyógāmayāvī syát, tám eténa yājayed. Vāruṇena h̄ vá eṣá pāpmanā gṛh̄itó. ’thai ’tásya jyóg amayati. yád vāruṇo, Vāruṇād evai ’nam̄ téna muñcati*, KS. XIII.2 (181,1) *pāpmanai ’ṣa gṛh̄ito ya amayāvī. kṛṣṇa iva pāpmā. yat kṛṣṇah̄, pāpmanam̄ evā ’pahate. yád ekaśitipād, varuṇapāsam̄ eva tena pramuñcate* (181,5 *Varuṇād evai ’nam̄ muñcati*), XXVII.4 (143,1) *tenai ’nam̄ Varuṇād amuñcad. yan̄ maitrāvaruṇo gṛhyate, nirvaruṇatvāya*, TS. II.3.11.1f. *Vāruṇa enam̄ varuṇapāséna gṛh̄nāti . . . yó jyógāmayāvī syád, yó vá kāmāyeta : sárvam̄ dyur̄ iyām̄ t̄i . . . vāruṇénai ’vai ’nam̄ varuṇapāsán̄ muñcati*.

²⁷⁶ Religion védique III, p. 114.

was already expressed in 1883 by Bergaigne in the words: "Cette fonction [viz. as binder] de Varuṇa est peut-être . . . celle sur laquelle les poètes védiques insistent le plus souvent, et l'attribut en est resté attaché à la représentation plastique de Varuṇa dans la mythologie brahmanique, alors qu'il était descendu du rang de Providence vengeresse à celui d'un simple dieu des eaux. Varuṇa est en effet toujours figuré avec une corde à la main"²⁷⁷. Sylvain Lévi quoted these words²⁷⁸ with the sceptical comment: "Reste à savoir s'il s'agit réellement d'une évolution chronologique du personnage". His reservation, dating from a time (1896-1897) when as a young teacher he gave a course on a subject that was still unfamiliar to him, testifies to a remarkably sharp insight into the basic difficulties that surround every study of a Vedic god. There is no denying that there has actually been an evolution in the religious ideas ever since Vedic times. The problem is, however, how far such a development can be reconstructed from what the texts say and omit to say with regard to such an ominous god as Varuṇa, who was apparently surrounded by taboos. Bergaigne's words "un simple dieu des eaux" show how even a scholar of his high rank could fall a victim to the seemingly innocent wording of the texts and to a wrong perspective in which the textual evidence was viewed. In fact, even in the epic, Varuṇa, far from being a simple god of water, still retains a good deal of the ambiguity and complexity that characterized him in the Vedic period. What had changed in the religious conception of the god was not so much his character itself as rather the importance of the cosmic dualism and, accordingly, of the annual contest between Varuṇa and Indra²⁷⁹. The increasing emphasis laid on the gods of totality, who transcended this dualism, would seem to be the main reason why the importance of both Varuṇa and Indra, when considered in the context of the total mythological system, is no longer equal to what it was in the Vedic period. It is significant, however, that even in the epic, where Śiva and Viṣṇu have

²⁷⁷ At an early stage of Vedic studies it had already been pointed out that it was one of the characteristics of book X that here Varuṇa had "already" become a "Lord of the waters". See R. Roth, ZDMG. 6, p. 73, H. Oldenberg, Prolegomena, p. 267: "Aber Varuṇa und Mitrâ-varuṇau verschwinden nahezu, ebenso Ushas . . .", H. Lommel, DLZ. 74 (1953), col. 403 (in a review of Lüders's Varuṇa I): "Neben Feststellung der Tatsachen kommt Entwicklungsgeschichte bei L. wenig zu Wort, und die sich aufdrängende Annahme, dass die Gestalt des ursprünglich noch viel umfassenderen Gottes im Lauf der Entwicklung verarmt sei, so dass er im Epos fast nur mehr der "Herr der Gewässer" ist, bleibt unausgesprochen" [but see the second part: Varuṇa, p. 714]. An attempt to explain the supposed evolution in religious thought was made by R. N. Dandekar, ABORI. 21 (1940), p. 190: "The deterioration in Varuṇa's religious supremacy began with the ascendancy of Indra." It is hoped that the present study will show that the real development was different.

²⁷⁸ La doctrine du sacrifice, p. 153 n. 6.

²⁷⁹ This is also the main objection that must be raised to Hopkins's words (Epic Mythology, p. 117): "All this, however, is no indication of Varuṇa's real epic position. He is no longer a heavenly god, no longer a god rivalling Indra, or having stars as eyes. He is lord of water . . .". For the decline of the idea of a cosmic contest see above, p. 43.

become the principal gods, Varuṇa still appears to have preserved much of his original character.

We have seen above (n. 113) that in the Veda the Devas often had recourse to Prajāpati for help against the Asuras. The same situation is found in the epic, e.g. when the gods, before the Churning of the Ocean, approach Brahmā²⁸⁰, or when Prajāpati predicts the defeat of the Asuras in words which still echo the Vedic phraseology²⁸¹.

Varuṇa is mentioned as the fifth or fourth of the Ādityas²⁸², who in the epic are merely one of the classes of the gods and are seldom referred to individually. Just as in the Vedic contest with the Aṅgirasas, they sometimes stand for the gods in general and fight the demons²⁸³. Since elsewhere both parties are invoked to give their blessings²⁸⁴, the Ādityas apparently stand for the whole group of Devas, which does not imply that their name is here synonymous with Deva (see PW. and Sørensen, Index). As a curious detail, whatever its significance, it may be pointed out that in the great final single combat between Arjuna and Karṇa, which is full of cosmic symbolism²⁸⁵, the Ādityas side with Karṇa²⁸⁶ but the Devas (sic!) and Pitaras with Arjuna.

The demons in these passages are called Daityas, a name nearly or entirely synonymous with Dānavas and Asuras²⁸⁷. It has been pointed out above (p. 36) that traces can be found in the epic of the idea that the "demons", no less than the gods, were sons of the World father. Hopkins refers, in illustration of his statement "for Brahman remains also their 'father' and gives them not only boons but good advice"²⁸⁸, to Mhbh. XIV.26.6f., where an "old tale" is related, according to which Prajāpati,

²⁸⁰ Mhbh. I.16.4 *Viṣṇum āsinam abhyetya Brahmāṇam ce 'dam abruvan.*

²⁸¹ Mhbh. V.126.42 *parābhaviṣyanty Asurā Daiteyā Dānavaiḥ saha, Ādityā Vasavo Rudrā bhaviṣyanti divaukasah.* Cf., e.g., MS. III.7.10 (90,6), III.8.5 (99,12) *tāto devā ābhavan, parā 'surāḥ*, KS. XII.3 (165,4) *tāto devā abhavan, parā 'surā abhavan.*

²⁸² He is "the oldest and best" of the Ādityas according to Sørensen, An Index to the Names in the Mahābhārata, p. 13b (but the reading of V.96.13 crit. ed. differs from V.98.13 Bomb. ed.).

²⁸³ Mhbh. I.58.26 *Ādityair hi tadā Daityā bahusō nirjitā yudhi*, Rām. I.44.26 *Aditer ātmajā virā Diteḥ putrān nijaghnire.* See n. 178!

²⁸⁴ Rām. II.22.569* *tavā 'dityās ca Daityās ca bhavantu sukhadāḥ sadā.* See Hopkins, Epic Myth., p. 47.

²⁸⁵ See also IJJ. 11, p. 154f and cf., e.g., VIII.67.26 *papāta Karṇasya śarīram ucchrītam . . . girer yathā vajrahataṁ śiras tathā.*

²⁸⁶ See VIII.63.39 *Ādityāḥ Karnato 'bhavan.* The account is full of contradictions in details. Although Varuṇa is said to side with Arjuna (śloka 40), and Karṇa after his death goes to the world of Vasus and Maruts in heaven (śl. 56), the latter shoots his *vāruṇam astram* (VIII.65.13+, 1039*), and his arrows are like snakes (65.33 *nirmuktasarparpratimais ca tikṣṇais . . . śaṣṭyā nārācais*, 37 *śarāms tu pañca jvalitān ivoragān*), or they are snakes that have sided with Takṣaka's son (65.39 *te nyapatan pṛthivyām mahāhayas takṣakaputrapakṣāḥ*).

²⁸⁷ Sørensen, Index to the Names, p. 98a, says that Asura "seems to have been totally synonymous with Dānava and Daitya", whereas Hopkins, Epic Mythology, p. 47, thinks that the Dānavas are more "god-like" than the Daityas. If there was a distinction at all, it must have been very small.

²⁸⁸ Epic Mythology, p. 50.

by merely pronouncing the syllable "om" was teaching "happiness" (*śreyas*) to the Gods, the Ṛṣis, the Nāgas and the Asuras. Much more frequent are the passages where gods of the totality are represented as protecting the *surāsurāḥ*, demons and gods. Thus Brahmā fulfils their wishes and is their *guru*²⁸⁹. Kaśyapa, whom Hopkins describes as "the sire of all demons"²⁹⁰, in fact stands for the cosmic totality: the epic calls him, who had married the two daughters of Prajāpati, Kadrū and Vinatā, "a husband similar to Prajāpati"²⁹¹ and according to the Viṣṇupurāṇa he is the father of the Daityas (with Diti), the Nāgas (with Kadrū) and the Ādityas (with Aditi)²⁹². In the epic Kaśyapa is said to be the father of gods and Asuras²⁹³. In the same manner Śiva and Hari/Viṣṇu are called gurus of gods and demons²⁹⁴, although Viṣṇu is predominantly the destroyer of the demons²⁹⁵.

13. VARUṆA IN THE EPIC II: THE LORD OF THE WATER

It is not necessary to demonstrate in detail that in the Mahābhārata Varuṇa is still the god of the water (*apām patiḥ*) and the ocean, who can stand for this ocean itself. His palace is on the bottom of the sea. That he resides and even conceals himself in the water is also apparent from the "trick of Varuṇa" (*vāruṇa yoga*), to which Kauṭalya 7.17.42 refers and which according to Kangle consists in "remaining submerged in water for a long time and coming up at a very distant place". The ancient idea of Varuṇa as the god of the subterranean *samudra* seems, however, gradually to fade away, at least as far as the term is involved. The Rāmāyaṇa, in locating Pannagas and Dānavas in Pātāla in the ocean (VI.21.27, 30; 22.4) apparently mixes up the two notions of the subterranean abode and the sea (see p. 85). When, however, different terms are used, Varuṇa remains the god who provides water in wells and tanks.

In the way the poets represented the relation between the god and his element there is, understandably enough, some variation. It is natural

²⁸⁹ Mhbh. XII.326.59-60 *tvam caiva varado brahman varepsūnām bhaviṣyasi, surāsuragaṇānām ca ṛṣiṇām ca tapodhana* (60) *pilṛṇām ca mahābhāga satalam samśītavrata, vivīdhānām ca bhūtānām tvam upāśyo bhaviṣyasi* and XIII.151.3 *devāsuragurur devaḥ sarvabhūtanamaskṛtaḥ* (cf. XIII.17.141).

²⁹⁰ Hopkins, Epic Mythology, p. 47.

²⁹¹ Mbh. I.14.6 *prajāpatisamaḥ patiḥ*. In some versions Kaśyapa is even incidentally identified with Prajāpati, cf. I.20.16 Bombay ed.=fragment 285*, line 10 crit ed.

²⁹² Viṣṇupurāṇa I.15.141-21.3, I.21.19-22 and I.15.126-134 respectively. This is, of course, different from the older account of the Suparṇākhyaṇa, where Kadrū and Aditi are synonymous, whereas here Aditi, as the mother of the Ādityas, may possibly have been imagined as standing for the upperworld (=Suparṇī in the Yajurveda, Vinatā in the epic).

²⁹³ I.60.33 *Mariceḥ Kaśyapaḥ putraḥ Kaśyapasya surāsurāḥ, jajñire nṛpaśārdūla lokānām prabhavas tu saḥ*. Cf. XIII.12.26 *rājahetor vivaditāḥ Kaśyapasya surāsurāḥ*.

²⁹⁴ See respectively XIII.17.141 *devāsuragurur devo devāsuranamaskṛtaḥ*, and XII.324.20 *surāsuragurum Harim*.

²⁹⁵ XII.202.29 *nihatya dānavapatīm*, XII.334.14 v. 1. *asuravadhakarāḥ for tapasām nidhiḥ*. Cf. VIII.35.34 (*tān . . .*) *pothayām āsa Bhīmo, Viṣṇur ivā 'surān*.

that they had some difficulty in visualizing what in the brāhmaṇas was a mere mythical identity (*samudrō vai Vāruṇaḥ*) and as such a purely abstract notion. In the epic version of the Churning of the Ocean the gods announce the churning to the sea, whereupon *Varuṇa* answers (p. 108). The personification of the sea, however, is not always necessarily the god. Cf., e.g., Bhāg. Pur. IX.10.13 *sindhuh . . . rūpi*, which does not denote *Varuṇa*. When Rāma, approaching Laṅkā, sees the sea which separates the mainland from his enemy's island, he simply says "Give orders to the sea" (Rām. VI.13.22 *samudro 'yaṁ niyujyatām*), although the poet here often refers to this ocean as "Varuṇa's abode" (*varuṇālaya*: VI.13.11, 12, 21; 14.13; 15.11). The fact that such other epithets as "abode of the Dānavas" (App. I.11.8) and "abode of the *makaras*" (VI.14.8, 11) occur side by side with it shows that *samudra* had come to be taken in entirely the same sense as *sāgara*.

The same episode is found in Bhāsa's *Abhiṣekanāṭaka*, act IV. Rāma here describes his disappointment at seeing his way barred by the ocean after all the hardships he has overcome. Lakṣmaṇa says, pointing to the sea, "Here is Lord *Varuṇa*" but then describes the ocean (*sarīpatīḥ*). While Rāma again expresses his annoyance, Rāvaṇa's brother *Vibhiṣaṇa* arrives through the air and is led before Rāma, who receives him with the words (IV.11,3) "O *Vibhiṣaṇa*, the mere fact of thine arrival guarantees the success of our enterprise!" (*Vibhiṣaṇa, tvadāgamanād eva siddham asmatkāryam*). These words, which Bhāsa did not find in Rām. VI.19.7, Bomb., 14.10 crit. ed., prove that he was still aware of the importance of the underlying mythical pattern. When Rāma observes that there is no possibility of crossing the ocean, *Vibhiṣaṇa* says (IV.11,5) "If the ocean does not grant you passage, your majesty should throw his divine missile on it" (*yadi mārgaṁ na dadāti, samudre divyaṁ astraṁ tāvad visraṣṭum arhati devaḥ*). When Rāma threatens to dry up the ocean with his arrows (IV.12), *Varuṇa* enters the stage in confusion. He confesses that he has committed an offense against *Nārāyaṇa* and says that he will seek protection with the latter. In this passage there is not only the double aspect of the god and his sea but also of Rāma as an *avatāra* of *Viṣṇu* and as the human hero of the saga. In his first aspect he is worshipped by *Varuṇa* and respectfully referred to as *bhagavat*, whereas in his second aspect (that is, as *rājaputra* 15,3) he is addressed with *bhavat*. When *Varuṇa* has granted him passage (16,2 *eṣa mārgaḥ. prayātu bhavān*) and while Rāma's troops march through the passage formed by the sea, Rāma describes the beauty of the sea in the traditional way, well-known from such texts as the *Caturbhāṇī* and the *Mṛcchakaṭikā* (16,13 *aho vicitratā sāgarasya. iha hi . . .*). Here and in the final words "Through the favour of the holy god we have crossed the sea" (17,1 *bhagavato prasādād atītaḥ sāgaraḥ*) the distinction between the god and his element is stressed. In Rām. VI.15.1, on the other hand, it is the Ocean himself who appears after Rāma's menaces. In the same verse he is referred to as *Sāgara*, arising from the middle of the *Samudra*, and as *Samudra*. The first word is more common for the non-personified

element (VI.14.12; 15.15, 17, 22, 24, 25, 26, 30, 33; 16.1, 2, 3, 6), but cf. *samudra* (VI.14.10, 16, 17; 15.27).

While the Vedic idea of a dualism which splits the world of the Devas into two parties has faded in the epic, this does not mean that the Ādityas, and in particular Varuṇa, have lost their ambiguous character in this period. On the contrary, more openly than in any older text it is now said that Varuṇa maintains secret relations with the dispelled Asuras, who continue to exist outside or on the fringe of the ordered cosmos.

Before considering, however, the relations between the Cosmos and the powers of Chaos on its border-lines, it must first be stated that the Vedic conception of Varuṇa as a *rājā* and *samrāt*, which incidentally evoked the idea of Varuṇa's consecration by Prajāpati and the gods²⁹⁶, survives in the epic. Here several times mention is made of Varuṇa's *abhiseka*, e.g. by Brahmā²⁹⁷, who stands for (or rather, is) the Vedic Prajāpati. One of these passages, viz. Mhbh. IX.46.5ff. is here given in full:

- (5) *ādau kṛtayuge tasmin vartamāne yathāvidhi
Varuṇam devatāḥ sarvāḥ sametye 'dam athā 'bruvan*
- (6) *yathā 'smān surarāt Śakro bhayebhyaḥ pāti sarvadā
tathā tvam apī sarvāsām saritām vai patir bhava*²⁹⁸.
- (7) *vāsaś ca te sadā deva sāgare makarālaye
samudro 'yam tava vaśe bhaviṣyati nadīpatih.*
- (8) *somena sārđham ca tava hānivrddhī bhaviṣyataḥ*²⁹⁹
evam astv iti tām devān Varuṇo vākyaṃ abravīt.

²⁹⁶ ŚB V.4.3.2 *Vāruṇād vā abhiṣiṣcānāt, indriyām vīryām āpa cakrāma* (in the description of the Rājasūya ritual) for "the Rājasūya is Varuṇa's consecration" (*varuṇasavó vā eṣā yád rājasūyam*). In the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa there is a tale of how Varuṇa wishes to become king over all the gods and practices asceticism for a hundred years. Prajāpati then teaches him a *sāman* which makes all the gods stand up in his presence because they see in him a form (*rūpa*) of Prajāpati. He is then consecrated by Prajāpati and the gods: JB. III.152 *atha varuṇasāma. Varuṇo vai rājā sadhamādam ivā 'nyābhīr devatābhīr āsit. so 'kāmāyata: sarveṣām devānām rājyāya sūyeye 'ti. sa Prajāpatau śatam varṣāṇi brahmacaryam avasat. tasmā etat sāmā 'bravid: etad vai me rājyam rūpam. gaccha. rājānam tvā devāḥ kariṣyanta iti. sa devān abhyaīt. tam āyantaṃ dr̥ṣṭvā devāḥ pratyavārohan . . . yad vai naḥ pituḥ Prajāpate rūpam, tad idam tvayi paśyāma iti.* Cf. further JB. II.25-26: the *abhiseka* of Āditya at the ritual of the *mahāvṛata*.

²⁹⁷ Mhbh. IX.44.20 *purā yathā mahārāja Varuṇam vai jalēśvaram, tathā 'bhyāṣiṇcad bhagavān Brahmā lokapitāmahaḥ, Kaśyapaś ca mahātejā ye cā 'nye nā 'nukṛtītāḥ* and Viṣṇu Purāṇa I.22.1 and 3, Mhbh. IX.45.92 *Aujasaṃ nāma tat tīrtham yatra pūrvam apām patih, abhiṣiktaḥ suragaṇaiḥ.*

²⁹⁸ Lack of symmetry ("rupture d'équilibre", Renou, Festgabe für Herman Lommel, p. 123), as in RS. VII.84.2 "May Varuṇa's wrath spare us, may Indra give us room" (Bergaigne III, p. 142) and TS. I.8.16.2 (mantra for the adoration of the king) "Thou art Mitra, the kindly . . . thou art Varuṇa, of true rule" (*Mitrò 'si suśévo . . . Vāruṇo 'si satyādharmā*) where Sāyaṇa stressed the ambiguity of the god (p. 988 line 25): *Varuṇo 'pi kvacid anīṣṭakāritvād anṣṭarūpaḥ, kvacit tanvīvartakatvāt satyarūpaḥ.* Cf. also the commentary on TB. I.7.10.1 *tvam Varuṇo 'si saucādāv anīṣṭavārakatvāt.*

²⁹⁹ Soma is the moon (cf. I.16.38 *prasannabhāḥ samutpannaḥ Somaḥ śītāmśur*

- (9) *samāgamyā tataḥ sarve Varuṇam sāgarālayam
apām patim pracakrur hi vidhidṛṣṭena karmaṇā.*
- (10) *abhiṣicya tato devā Varuṇam yādasām patim
jagmuḥ svāny eva sthānāni pūjayitvā jaleśvaram.*
- (11) *abhiṣiktas tato devair Varuṇo 'pi mahāyaśāḥ
saritaḥ sāgarāmś caiva nadāmś caiva sarāmsi ca.*
- (12) *pālayām āsa vidhinā yathā devāṅ Śatakratuḥ.*

Unlike Indra, who "always protects against dangers", Varuṇa, although consecrated, is not expected to perform beneficial actions. There is, however, no trace of a *specific* degradation of Varuṇa in comparison with his status in the Veda. In one passage it is Indra who consecrates Varuṇa, viz. V.16.33–34: "Having thus pondered the Lord Mahendra Pākaśāsana, (consecrated) Kubera as the lord of all Yakṣas and of riches, Vivasvat's son as lord of the Pitaras, and also Varuṇa as lord of the water. Śakra, the grantor of wishes, thus gave him respectfully the overlordship"³⁰⁰. Although no direct connection need exist with the Rigvedic passage X.124.5, where Indra offers Varuṇa the (or, an) *ādhipatyā* of his kingdom (see p. 29), the situation is remarkably similar. What has changed in the centuries that separated the epic period from the Vedic age is not so much Varuṇa's cosmic function as lord of the waters as rather man's attitude towards the cosmic law and its general status. Whereas Yama as *dharmarāja* in a way continues Varuṇa's function as *ṛtāsya gopāḥ*, *dharmapatiḥ*, the general shift of emphasis from the

ujjvalaḥ). In the classification the moon is associated with Varuṇa, as the sun is with Mitra. See Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 107, p. 82 and cf. Mhbh. V.97.4 (in Varuṇa's abode) *ataḥ Somasya hāniś ca vṛddhiś caiva pradṛśyate* (for a different version see IX.34.40ff., where the moon is said to bathe in Prabhāsitṛtha). The moon is a vessel which is periodically refilled. In the same way, the ocean is replenished, for *tava* (which PW. VII, col. 1596, explains as standing for *tava samudrasya*) implies that Varuṇa and the sea are identical (just as in I.16.7–8, see p. 108). There seems to be a reference to high and low tide, the former being considered a periodical replenishment of the sea by the rivers. Hopkins, who recognized the importance of this passage, wrote (Epic Mythology, p. 117): "Varuṇa is formally consecrated by the gods as lord of rivers and waters (9,45,22; 46,105) and told that his home shall be in ocean, the home of *makaras*; that Ocean, the Lord of Rivers, shall be under his will, and that his own decline and growth shall agree with the waning and waxing of Soma. There seems to be actually no difference felt here (though expressed) between Ocean and Varuṇa." It should be added that elsewhere a distinction is made between the *apām rājyam* and *mahodadhiḥ*. Cf. XII.122.26ff., where Śiva consecrates both Indra and Varuṇa: (26) *bhūyah sa Bhagavān dhyātvā ciram śūlavarāyudhaḥ, tasya tasya nikāyasya cakārai 'kaikam īśvaram* (27) *devānām īśvaram cakre devaṁ daśatekṣaṇam, Yamam vaivasvataṁ cāpi pitṛṇām akarot patim* (28) *dhanānām rakṣasām cāpi Kuberam api ce 'śvaram, parvatānām patim meruṁ saritām ca mahodadhim* (29) *apām rājye surānām ca vidadhe Varuṇam prabhum*, etc. Cf. also Bhāsa, Abhiṣekanāṭaka IV, discussed on p. 78. For *surānām* see below, n. 349.

³⁰⁰ The text has been quoted above, p. 29. Since the syntactic structure is rather loose, no literal translation is possible.

gods of the organized cosmos to those gods who transcended the wider all-encompassing opposition of *sát* and *ásat*, of Cosmos and Chaos, also altered the character of sin. After the seasonal awakening of Viṣṇu as the god of the upper and the nether world had been projected to the gigantic dimensions of the god who periodically comes to this world to restore the *dharma*, and who even survives the total destruction of the world, sleeping on the Oceanic waters of Chaos, sin was no longer primarily considered an offense against Varuṇa. But this degradation was a consequence of the fading of the ancient notion of the ordered cosmos as based upon a contest of opposed powers.

It was only part of the general degradation of all those Vedic Devas who did not stand for the totality³⁰¹. Once the religious consciousness had widened so as to include even the *ásat* of the Veda, the conception of the cosmic drama had so much changed as to deprive most Devas of their importance.

14. VARUṆA IN THE EPIC III: THE NETHER WORLD

In the epic Varuṇa is, as Lord of the Waters, one of the Devas³⁰², but, just as in the Veda, his most characteristic feature is his being the principal god of the nether world. It is significant that none of his epithets refers to this side of his nature. His is the world where the sun sets: "That place where the sun, O king, sets in accordance with truth, that men call the king of mountains Asta. King Varuṇa, living in that king of mountains and in the great ocean, *protects* the beings (*bhūta*)"³⁰³. That this is an old genuine trait of Varuṇa is apparent from the Vedic evidence³⁰⁴. The same localization is found in the account of Mātali's

³⁰¹ A reservation must again be made for Śiva. If he, as Rudra, originally stood outside the sacrificial year, he may have been closely connected with Chaos. This problem, however, will not be considered here.

³⁰² E.g., in the Nala-episode, Mhbh. III.51.22, 52.4-5, 54.31, and in XII.29.16 *yasya sendrā savaruṇā bṛhaspatipurogamāḥ, devāḥ*, a reminiscence, it seems, of the older position of Indra and of the opposition of Bṛhaspati and Varuṇa in the brāhmanaas. See above, p. 55 with n. 180.

³⁰³ Mhbh. III.160.10 *yañ prāpya Savitā rājan satyena pratīṣṭhati, astam parvatarājānam etam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ* (11) *etam parvatarājānam samudraṁ ca mahodadhim, āvasan Varuṇo rājā bhūtāni parirakṣati*. Cf. Oldenberg, Kleine Schriften, p. 702 n. 4 against Pischel, GGA. 1895, p. 449.

³⁰⁴ KB. XVIII.6.10 (9 Lindner) *sa vā eṣo 'paḥ praviśya Varuṇo bhavati*, AS. XIII.3.13 *sá Vāruṇaḥ sāyám Agnir bhavati*, RS. V.62.1, where Sūrya's horses are said to be unharnessed in Mitra's and Varuṇa's sacred abode. See Bergaigne III, p. 117, Hillebrandt, Lieder des Ṛgveda, p. 80 n. 2, Geldner, Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch, Heft 9, 2nd ed., p. 42, Renou, EVP. 5, p. 78, 7, pp. 40, 29 and JB. II.25, 13-14, where Varuṇa's region is associated with Ṛta and night: *mām abhy astamaye 'ti pratiṇī dik prāyachad ṛtam ca rātrim ca*. Cf. History of Religions 10, p. 97. On the other hand, Thieme, Mitra and Aryaman, p. 71 and Renou, Festgabe für Herman Lommel, p. 125, explain the AS. passage as due to a secondary development. Gonda, The Vedic God Mitra, p. 42, only remarks that the KB. passage does not prove "a more or less exclusive, original or fundamental association of Varuṇa with night or the nocturnal heaven". This is correct but no-one, as far as I can see, has ever claimed this. See IJ. 15, p. 226.

and Nārada's pilgrimage to Varuṇa's realm. Nārada here says to Mātali: "I will explain everything to you, while showing you the nether world. Then Mātali and Nārada, the magnanimous ones, both descending into the earth, saw the guardian of the region, the lord of the waters. Nārada explained to the charioteer all beings without exception, who lived inside the earth, as he knew them . . ." They then visit the world of the nāgas: "Taking leave of Varuṇa they roamed about in the *nāgaloka*". It is not said that this *nāgaloka* is different from Varuṇa's world. Cf. also V.106.12 "Here, living in Pātāla, Varuṇa got Śrī (good fortune)"³⁰⁵.

Mythologically the (western) ocean and the subterranean water, which the Rigveda calls *samudrā*, are identical. They are also identified in Mhbh. I.19.3 "There they then saw the ocean (*samudra*), the receptacle of water, the mine of all gems and the abode of Varuṇa, the lovely abode of the nāgas, the highest lord of the rivers, the habitation of the Pātāla-fire and the jail of the Asuras, and the frightener of beings, the sea, receptacle of water"³⁰⁶. In those passages where a distinction is made, "Varuṇa's abode", which is identical with the "World of Nāgas", is reached by a hole in the ground. In the tale of the sons of Sagara, who are sent out to find the sacrificial horse, we read: "Obeying this order, the sons of Sagara began again to search the whole earth. Then the heroes saw (a place where) the earth had been excavated. Having reached that hole and digging it, the sons of Sagara dug out the ocean with hoes and spades. This *abode of Varuṇa (varuṇālaya)*, being dug out by all Sāgaras, became very much afflicted as it was excavated on all sides. *Asuras, snakes (uraga), Rākṣasas* and all sorts of beings (*sattva*) gave cries of distress as they were killed by the sons of Sagara . . . While they thus dug out the ocean, the *abode of makaras*, a long time passed away but the horse did not appear. Thereupon the sons of Sagara, O king, enraged dug out Pātāla in the north-eastern region and there they saw the horse roaming about on the soil (lit. earth)"³⁰⁷. Just as in V.96.8 quoted above, where

³⁰⁵ Mhbh. V.96.5 *aham te sarvam ākhyāsyē darśayan vasudhātalam* (6) *avagāhya tato bhūmim ubhau Mātalināradau, dadṛśāte mahātmānau lokopālam apām patim . . .* (9) *Nāradaḥ sarvabhūtānām antarbhūminivāsīnām, jānaś cakāra vyākhyānām yantuḥ sarvam aśeṣataḥ*. Cf. also above n. 24 in *fine*, n. 61 and V.106.12 *atra pātālam āśritya Varuṇaḥ śriyam āpa ca*. Just as in the epic Pātāla is the capital of the *nāgaloka* (V.97.1), it is in classical literature an abode of snakes, cf. Kādambarī p. 92, lines 2–3 *pātālam iva mahākāncukisaharādhyāsitam*.

³⁰⁶ Mhbh. V.96.8 *Varuṇenā 'bhyanuḥjñātau nāgalokaṁ viceratuḥ* and, e.g., I.19.3 *dadṛśāte tadā tatra samudraṁ nidhim ambhasām* (5) *ākaraṁ sarvaratnānām ālayam Varuṇasya ca, nāgānām ālayam ramyam uttamam saritām patim* (6) *pātālaivala-nāvāsam Asurāṇām ca bandhanam, bhayaṁkaraṁ ca sattvānām payasām nidhim arṇavam*, etc. See further in general Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 118f. On the other hand in III.101.8 the *udadhī* as Varuṇa's abode is apparently considered to be different from the Pātāla under the earth in III.103.12. The same notion that serpents and Dānavas dwell in the ocean in Pātāla (that is, accordingly, in the subterranean *samudra*) is met with in, e.g., Rām. VI.14.19.

³⁰⁷ Mhbh. III.105.18 *pratiḡr̥hya tu saṁdeśam tatas te saagarātmajāḥ, bhūya eva mahīm kṛtsnām vicetum upacakramuḥ* (19) *athā 'paśyanta te vīraḥ pṛthivīm avadāritām, samāsādya bilam tac ca kṣanantaḥ saagarātmajāḥ, kuddālair hreṣukaiś caiva samudram*

no clear distinction is made between Varuṇa's world and that of the serpents, this *varuṇālaya* is apparently identical with the *nāgaloka*, which has a similar entrance.

An interesting parallel can be found in the well-known Uttānka-episode of the epic³⁰⁸. In the former of the two relevant passages the entrance to the *nāgaloka* is a "wide, big hole" (*vivṛtaṁ mahābilam*), in the latter, the serpent, having taken the two ear-rings in its mouth³⁰⁹, disappears in an ant-hill, which is the entrance to the nether world. Since the abode of the Asuras under the earth is identical with that of the *nāgas* (as we shall see below), the *vivṛtaṁ mahābilam* (Mhbh. I.3.137) and the *asuravivara*, a term used in classical literature for the entrance to the nether world, are synonyms. The latter word occurs at Daśakumāracarita, p. 41,1 ed. Agashe, whereas the much later Introduction (Pūrvapīṭhikā, pp. 14,3; 15,12, etc.) uses the uncharacteristic terms *bila*, *bilapatha*. The proper meaning of *asuravivara* was misunderstood by the 18th century commentator who glossed it with *pātāla*. In the Harṣacarita the word means "treasure cave" according to Thomas, JRAS. 31 (1899), p. 489. Cf. Kād. 227,2.

The ant-hill in the Uttānka-episode reminds us of the fact that there is an ancient connection between ants and Asuras: in the Atharvaveda the ant *upajīkā* is said to be a daughter of the Asuras (and a sister of the Devas!)³¹⁰. Because the Asuras have fled under the earth, they have at an early date become the prototype of diggers³¹¹, who bury a remedy (AS. VI.109.3) or a charm (ŚB. III.5.4.3 *krtyām . . . nī cakhnur*, cf. AS. V.31.8). In the later belief that a digger of pools attains Varuṇa's

akhanams tadā (20) sa khanyamānaḥ sahitaīḥ sāgarair Varuṇālayaḥ, agacchat paramām ārtīm dāryamāṇaḥ samantataḥ (21) asurogarakṣāmsi sattvāni vīvidhāni ca, ārtanādam akurvanta vadhyamānāni sāgaraiḥ . . . (23) evaṁ hi khaṇatām teṣāṁ samudraṁ makarālayam, vyatitāḥ sumahān kālo na cā 'svaḥ samadrśyata (24) tataḥ pūrvottare deśe samudrasya mahīpate, vidārya pātālam atha saṁkruddhāḥ sāgarātmajāḥ, apaśyanta hayaṁ tatra vicarantām mahītale.

³⁰⁸ Cf. Mhbh. I.3.137 *sa (viz. śramaṇaḥ) tad rūpaṁ vihāya takṣakarūpaṁ kṛtvā sahasā dharaṇyām vivṛtaṁ mahābilam viveśa (138) praviśya ca nāgalokaṁ svabhavanam agacchat. tam Uttānko 'nvāviveśa tenaiva bilena; (158) tābhīr nāgaloko dhūpitaḥ, XIV.57.21 apaśyad bhujagaḥ kaścit te tatra maṇikuṇḍale (22) Airāvatakulotpannaḥ śiḡhro bhūtvā tadā sa vai, vidaśyā 'syena valmīkaṁ viveśā 'tha sa kuṇḍale (26) tataḥ khaṇata evātha vipraṣer dharaṇītalam, nāgalokasya panthānam kartukāmasya niścayāt (27) rathena hariyuktena taṁ deśam upajagmivān, vajrapānīr mahātejā dadarśa ca dvijottamam (28) . . . Uttānkam abravīt: tāta naitac chakyaṁ tvaye 'ti vai (29) ito hi nāgaloko vai yojanāni sahasraśaḥ . . . (32) tato vajraprahārais tair dāryamāṇā vasuṁdharā, nāgalokasya panthānam akaroj Janamejaya (33) sa tena mārgeṇa tadā nāgalokaṁ viveśa ha . . .* For Takṣaka see also n. 339.

³⁰⁹ The reading *sa kuṇḍale* (Bombay ed. and crit. ed.) makes it necessary to take *kuṇḍale* as the object of *vidaśya*. Otherwise PW. pw., whose interpretation of this passage is based on the different reading of the Calcutta edition.

³¹⁰ AS. VI.100.3 *Asurāṇāṁ duhitā 'si sá devānām asi svāsā, divās pṛthivyāḥ sambhūtā sá cakarthā 'rasāṁ viśām.*

³¹¹ AS. II.3.3 *nīcāḥ khaṇanty Asurāḥ, VI.109.3 Asurās tvā nyākhanan devās tvó 'davapan pūnaḥ.*

world³¹² we find, again, a connection between Varuṇa's world and the Asuras, which will be discussed in the next section. In this context it is interesting to note that the "ants are endowed with the faculty of producing water"³¹³, which must be due to the fact that as "diggers" they were associated with the nether world and Varuṇa's subterranean water. Hence in a charm undertaken with springwater (AS. II.3.4) it is said that the *upajīkā*-ants bring up the remedy from the "sea" (*úd bharanti samudrād ádhi*), where, "deep down", the Asuras bury it (v. 3 *nīcāḥ kṣananti*).

This side of Varuṇa's character is still seen in the Purāṇas, where Varuṇa is the king of the waters "uniquement lorsqu'il s'agit de rites de consécration des puits, mares et réservoirs"³¹⁴. It has been pointed out elsewhere that the name *Varuṇadeva*, used in medieval times for stone slabs of wells in Chamba State³¹⁵ reflects the same conception of Varuṇa as a god residing in the nether world. This idea can be traced back to RS. VIII.69.12 "Thou art a good god, O Varuṇa, as thy seven rivers stream through (along) the hollow of thy mouth as through a hollow pipe"³¹⁶. Just because Varuṇa could obstruct the water (cf. Vṛtra), he is denoted by the auspicious term *sudevá* "a good, auspicious god" — an instance of word-magic³¹⁷. While allowing the water to spring forth from

³¹² Viṣṇusmṛti 41.2. Such a digger may have been supposed to be digging "beyond the earth", as the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa puts it (I.237 *pareṇa pṛthivīm . . . anūtkhāya*). Cf. TS. VI.3.4.2 *pitṛdevatyām hy étād yān nīkhātam*.

³¹³ Bloomfield, SBE. 42, p. 278 (referring to Kauśika Sūtra 25).

³¹⁴ See M.-Th. de Mallmann, Les enseignements iconographiques de l'Agni-Purāṇa, p. 132, who refers to Agni-Purāṇa 64 (*kūpādi*), and cf. History of Religions 10, p. 98.

³¹⁵ See above, n. 87.

³¹⁶ See above, p. 27. The current interpretation of *sudevó asi varuṇa yásya te saptá sindhavaḥ, anukṣáranti kákúdam sūrmyām suśirám iva* is hardly correct. Geldner translates (like Ludwig and Grassmann) "in dessen Schlund die sieben Ströme fließen wie in eine hohle Röhre", which disregards the specific meaning of *ánu*. Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 19, thinks that this stanza has no mythological importance at all, whereas Lüders, Varuṇa, p. 53, interprets it as saying that Varuṇa drinks much Soma. Actually, the stanza should be paralleled with VIII.41.2, where Varuṇa is said to be dwelling "at the origin of the rivers, with seven sisters, (himself) amidst (them)" (*yāḥ sindhūnām úpo 'dayé saptásvasā sá madhyamó*, for which see Lüders, p. 412) and the other passages quoted in India Maior (Congratulatory Volume J. Gonda), p. 151. It is interesting that MS. IV.7.8 (104,9) quotes this stanza in support of *samudró vai Váruṇaḥ* "Varuṇa is the (subterranean) ocean". Cf. also Thieme, Kleine Schriften, p. 620 and German Scholars on India, p. 334.

³¹⁷ Not "ein rechter Gott" (Lüders, Varuṇa, p. 54, who interprets the word as referring to Varuṇa's drinking much Soma). It should be noted that the stanza is recited in order to be delivered from Varuṇa (MS. IV.7.8 *nirvaruṇatváya*). Elsewhere the word is mostly a *bahuvrīhi* but cf. ŚB. VII.5.2.52 *sudevó adyá tád vidyād yátra nirvápanam dadhúḥ*. The idea that Varuṇa releases the subterranean water is indissolubly linked up with the certainty that he also could detain it. Cf. in this connection RS. X.124.7 "without being compelled Varuṇa released the waters" (*áprabhātī Váruṇo nír apāḥ sṛjat*). See Bergaigne, III, pp. 127, 148, Renou, EVP. 7, p. 5 (otherwise H. Güntert, Der arische Weltkönig, p. 287). However, I now have my doubts about the explanation suggested in IIJ. 5, p. 52 for the name *Varuṇadeva*, which in medieval times was given to the stone slabs of wells in Chamba State. They need not necessarily owe their name to the obstructive character of Varuṇa.

the earth he represents the Mitra-aspect of the dual deity³¹⁸, which also explains the use of *sudānavah* with reference to the three Ādityas (including Mitra!). Since *dānu* specifically denoted the primordial and the subterranean water, the epithet meant either “whose water is auspicious” or, perhaps “well (bounteously) giving water”³¹⁹. It has been one of Lüders’s important observations that only conjointly with Mitra Varuṇa is said to give rain³²⁰. This confirms the conclusion that the specific Varuṇa-aspect was the one which obstructed the water. Mythologically, this water was both the spring-water and the rain-water falling down during the night. While it is clear that drawing water from a well must have meant drawing it from Varuṇa’s dwelling-place, the taboo which forbade drawing water at night³²¹ is not immediately clear. The texts say this was prohibited because at night the spring-water was “in Varuṇa”. Whatever they may have meant by these words, it may be suggested that the original motive was that at night Varuṇa and the subterranean water were in the sky so that what was drawn up from a well at that time was not Varuṇa’s water.

From the passages quoted it may be inferred that the poets, unless they expressly associated Varuṇa’s palace (*sabhā*) with the western ocean (in accordance with the system of classification)³²², located the god in the *nāgaloka* at the lower end of the world axis. However, the association of Varuṇa with the quarter of the setting sun, although understandable enough, could easily overshadow the basic notion that Varuṇa’s true place in the cosmos was in the nadir, at the roots of the world tree. Some later descriptions such as in Rāmāyaṇa VI.14–15 cr. ed., may give the impression of being mixtures of two different pictures, the *varuṇālaya* being identified with the *makarālaya* and the sea³²³. It would require a separate study to determine if, and in how far, they are mixed up but

³¹⁸ See IIJ. 5, pp. 51–53.

³¹⁹ For *sudānavah* see Lüders, p. 716, for *dānu* cf. Hist. of Rel. 10, p. 122.

³²⁰ Varuṇa, p. 716: “Meistens ist aber Varuṇa, wenn er Regen spendet, mit Mitra verbunden”, and p. 719: “Oft wird Varuṇa auch um Regen angerufen, gewöhnlich zusammen mit Mitra”.

³²¹ See J. J. Meyer, Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation III, p. 207 n.l. A simpler explanation would be that, since Varuṇa is a god of the night and of the water, his power over the waters is at night still more dreaded. For the rain falling during night see India Maior, p. 150f.

³²² The inevitable result of assigning every deity to one of the five or seven quarters was a potential conflict between the place of a god in the system of classification and the place which he naturally occupied (see IIJ. 13, p. 283). The identification of Varuṇa’s home with the (western) ocean must have been due to the system (and his special relation to the setting sun) but theoretically Varuṇa was the lord of all the four oceans which in the mythical cosmology surrounded the earth.

³²³ Cf. Rām. VI.14.13, 278*, 280* *varuṇālaya* beside VI.14.8 and 11 *makarālaya*. The same notions are connected in Mhbh. III.105.20 versus 23, see n. 307; cf. also Mhbh. III.101.8–9, where *varuṇālaya* = *udadhī ghora*. In the Rāmāyaṇa the Pātāla is said to be in the *sāgara* (VI.14.19, App. I.11.2), which is the dwelling-place of the Dānavas (*dānavālaya* VI, App. I.11.8). The *rasātala* is also located there (VII.23.3).

this much would seem certain that in the older literature the *samudrā* in Varuṇa's world was, ever since RS. VII.88.3, primarily (and perhaps exclusively) the subterranean water. See p. 26f.).

We have seen above that in the Mahābhārata Varuṇa's abode (*varuṇālaya*) is identical with the world of the serpents (*nāgaloka*), in which the town Pātāla, situated in the very cosmic centre³²⁴, is Varuṇa's dwelling-place³²⁵. Here are "Asuric" forms of Agni and Soma and here is the moon³²⁶. The latter belongs here as a consequence of the classification upon which the mythic cosmology is based, viz. sun : day-time sky : upper world versus moon : night-time sky : nether world. This led to identifying the water under the earth and the underworld jar with nocturnal sky and the moon³²⁷. Classificatorily the second group consists of different aspects or manifestations of Varuṇa's world. While every morning Varuṇa

³²⁴ Mhbh. V.97.1 *etat tu nāgalokasya nābhīsthāne sthitam puram, Pātālam iti vikhyātam daitryadānavasevitam.*

³²⁵ See notes 305–307.

³²⁶ See Mhbh. V.97.3–4 (quoted in n. 68) and IX.46.8 (above, p. 79). The idea is that the gods after winning the *amṛta* at the Churning of the Ocean and drinking from it gave it to guardians of the nether world to guard it there. The same idea is also found in the tale of the Churning of the Ocean, cf. I.17.30 *dadau rakṣitum*. This is a detail that has arisen in the Vedic period among authors of Yajurvedic texts. Its genesis can be reconstructed (see *Études Asiatiques* 25, p. 90) but it is only a secondary variant of the original idea that the *sōma/amṛta* had to be won from the primordial world. See p. 17 and e.g., IIJ. 15, p. 231. For the *āsura agni* see Mhbh. I.19.6 *pātālaivalana* and RS. III.29.11 *gārbha āsuró* (n. 68), and cf. IIJ. 8, p. 111, above p. 19f. For the waxing and waning moon (*Soma*) see above, n. 299.

³²⁷ For the *vāruṇa kumbha* (Agni-Purāṇa 64.4) cf. Varuṇa represented as sitting beside a *kumbha* on a relief of Badami (see p. 146f.). The symbolism of the cosmic tree rooted in the *kumbha* was, it seems, more common in Khmer and Indonesian art, see J. Auboyer, *Le symbolisme du trône*, p. 97, F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ, An Introduction to Indian Symbolism* (Indo-Iranian Monographs, vol. II), 1960, pp. 110–113, 156f. In India the bowl is usually filled with lotus leaves, which can be extended upwards, "especially when narrow vertical spaces are available," "to a considerable height, either as a conventional candelabra-like tree, or as a long spray of lotus" (A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas II* (1931), p. 62). The tree seems to be comparatively rare (Bosch gives only one example on plate 83, a painting in the Jogannmohan Palace, Mysore). As a rule the symbol of the world axis is represented not as a tree but as the cosmic pillar (*stambha*). Some illustrations are the stone pillar crowned by the solar wheel depicted on a pilaster in Sarnath and the pillar *cum* foliage arising from a bowl in a relief from the Hazāra Ramachandra temple, Hampi, see reproduction in Prithvi K. Agrawala, *Pūrṇa Kalāśa or the Vase of Plenty* (Varanasi, 1965), plate XXI and figure 19. E. B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art* (1920/1927), p. 43, had rightly recognized that "The vase forming the base of the pillar stood for the cosmic waters." James Burgess, *Indian Antiquary* 12 (1883), p. 321, reported about a South-Indian ritual in which "a decorated *kumbha* represents king Varuṇa" (quoted by Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas II*, p. 62 n. 2). Cf. the mantra used in pouring water into a vessel: *astu rājā Varuṇo revatībhīḥ* (*Āśv.* GS. II.9.5). That the bell-shaped capital represents the inverted cask on top of the world axis in the nocturnal sky is now contested by John Irwin, *Burlington Magazine* 117 (1975), p. 636f. For further references concerning the *pūrṇaghāṭa* see M.-Th. de Mallmann, *Les enseignements iconographiques de l'Agnipurāṇa* p. 242f. and below, ch. II n. 232.

and Mitra liberate the sun after its "Nachtweg" through their world, the moon, whether visible or not, permanently belongs to Varuṇa's realm. From the latter's close connection with the serpents it can be understood that while in the Rigveda Varuṇa must have been thought to hold the roots of the world tree and thus to support the universe, in the epic it is the world serpent Śeṣa who has taken over this function³²⁸.

The location of Pātāla as the dwelling-place of the Daityas-Dānavas in the nadir (that is, at the lower end of the world axis) in Mhbh. V.97.1 is also met with in Sāyaṇa's commentary on ŚB. I.4.1.34. The brāhmaṇa here tells how the Devas and Asuras were contending to win Gāyatrī, while the latter was standing between the two parties³²⁹. The author of the brāhmaṇa equates Gāyatrī with the earth, which can, indeed, be considered to be between heaven (Devas) and the nether world (Asuras). In this connection the commentator has the following remark: "For on the top of the (cosmic mountain) Meru is the town named Amarāvati; for in it the gods are dwelling. And so, the town that is situated under the Meru is named Irāmukha. In it, indeed, the Asuras are dwelling. Between these two there is the earth..."³³⁰. Cf. Mhbh. V.108.9, where Varuṇa's realm is said to be the foundation (*mūla*) of the Himālaya. The common name Pātāla is again found in the Paiśāci-passage of the Kuvalayamālā (§ 139), which runs as follows: "More delightful is the King of Mountains, the Mountain of the thirty(-three Gods), where the divine damsels wandering at their sweet will sing the praises of their lovers' lineages, where even the Pātāla drips with the sweat of their joy,

³²⁸ See IJ. 8, p. 108 and cf. Mhbh. V.101.2 *eṣa Śeṣaḥ sthito nāgo yene 'yam dhāryate sadā . . . mahī*, VII.69.48 *adhastād dharaṇīm yo 'sau sadā dhārayate nṛpa, sa Śeṣaḥ pannagaśreṣṭhaḥ*. For *adhastād* see above, n. 183 on TS. V.5.9.4 *devās tvē 'ndrajyeṣṭhā vāruṇarājāno 'dhastāc co 'pāriṣṭāc ca pāntu*. For Varuṇa's connection with the world axis in the Rigveda cf. VIII.41.10bc *yó skambhēna vi ródasī ajó ná dyām ádhārayat* (like the god Dhartṛ in the centre AS XVIII.3.29). The later replacement of Varuṇa in this function by Śeṣa, the underworld aspect of the god of cosmic totality, is quite in keeping with the general evolution of Indian religion as sketched above, p. 40. For Varuṇa's connection with the serpents see below, n. 332, Shendge BDCRI. 9, p. 281, G. Johnsen, IJ. 9, p. 260, M.-Th. de Mallmann, *Les enseignements iconographiques de l'Agni-Purāṇa*, p. 132 n. 2 (Varuṇa represented with a snake in his hand), ŚB. III.1.1.7 (in the classification system the snakes are in the West: *yá pratīcī sá sarpāṇām*) and, e.g., Mhbh. II.9.8, where Vāsuki and Takṣaka attend on Varuṇa in his *sabhā*). As for the world tree, which belonged to both the nether world and the upper world, it was in a way both the *samrāj* Varuṇa and (during the New Year festival, as *Indradhvaja*) Indra (see p. 138). This may have been meant by AS. VI.86.3 *samrāḍ asy āsurāṇām . . . devānām ardhabhāg asi*.

³²⁹ A different version occurs in MS. II.1.11 (13,8), where the Gāyatrī is identified with the year (line 14 *saṁvatsaró vaí gāyatrī*).

³³⁰ Sāyaṇa ad ŚB. I.4.1.34 *Meror agrabhāge hí Amarāvati nāma nagari, tasyām hí devāḥ, tathā Meror adhastādbhāge ca yad [yat, Weber] Irāmukham nāma nagaram. tasmīn hy Asurā nivasanti*. The name Irāmukha for Pātāla is only found here (PW. pw.). Other names, such as Hiraṇyapura (name of the capital of Pātāla), occur in the Mahābhārata.

and where the broad slabs of gold are chequered with red lotus-flowers”³³¹.

Two characteristic traits emerge from the evidence quoted: first, a close relation between Varuṇa and the snakes (already apparent from the fact that his home is in, or near, the “world of serpents” (*nāgaloka*) and, secondly, a relation between the god and the Asuras. As for the first point³³², the earliest traces of a connection between Varuṇa and serpents occur in the Atharvaveda, in V.13.1 “Varuṇa, the *kavi* of heaven, has given (them) to me. I dissolve thy poison with powerful spells”³³³. In the epic the presence of serpents is a common feature in descriptions of Varuṇa’s abode, both in the Mahābhārata and, e.g., in Rāmāyaṇa VII, where they are mentioned side by side with the Daityas³³⁴.

There is, indeed, also a close connection between Asuras and serpents which confirms that there was a well-established tradition that Varuṇa, the *nāgas* and the Asuras all had the nether world for their home. Hopkins, remarks that “The Nāgas, though distinct from Asuras, are as a group affiliated, living with them and fighting on their side . . . and generally the Asuras and Nāgas belong together, though numerous exceptions occur in the case of the nāgas”³³⁵. Sometimes, indeed, the distinction between *nāgas* and Daityas is of vital importance, see n. 24 (*in fine*). It is this relation of Varuṇa to the Asuras (Daityas, Dānavas) that will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

15. VARUṆA IN THE EPIC IV: THE ASURAS IN VARUṆA’S WORLD

In several passages quoted above there was a reference to Asuras (or Daityas, Dānavas, etc.) in Varuṇa’s world. A difficulty is, however, that in the epic the notions about the nether world have not yet been systematized (see, e.g., Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 119) and that it is not always clear how Varuṇa’s world is delimited with regard to other parts of the nether world. In Varuṇa’s *sabhā* there are Nāgas and many kings of the Daityas (II.11.44), in the *varuṇālaya* there are Asuras, Serpents (*uraga*) and Rākṣasas, all kinds of beings (III.105.21) and Rām. VII.23.3 depicts the Rasātala, which is often identified with Pātāla, as inhabited by Daityas and Serpents, while it is guarded by Varuṇa. Although Varuṇa is seldom mentioned in direct connection with Pātāla

³³¹ Kuvalayamālā § 139 (p. 71, line 15 in the edition by Upadhye, Singhi Jain Series Nr. 45). Cf. IIJ. 1, p. 237 n. 6.

³³² See n. 328.

³³³ AS. V.13.1 *dadīr hi māhyam Vāruṇo divāḥ kavir vācobhir ugrair ni riṇāmi te viṣām*. Cf. Bloomfield, SBE. 42, p. 27. Shendge’s statement that Varuṇa “has an authority over the serpent-world” is virtually based on this single passage, since X.4.1 and 16 do not prove much in this respect. See Shendge, BDCRI. 9 (1949), p. 281. AS III.27.3 is a “snake charm according to Western scholars” (Shendge, p. 281 and n. 2). See Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda*, p. 81.

³³⁴ Cf. Rāmāyaṇa VII.23.4–6.

³³⁵ *Epic Mythology*, p. 47.

(V.106.12 *atra pātālam āśritya Varuṇaḥ śriyam āpa ca*), the picture that emerges from Mātali's visit to the nether world (Mhbh. V.96 ff.) is interesting. Under Nārada's guidance he first greets Varuṇa. They then roam about in the *nāgaloka* (96.8), which is the abode of the Lord of waters (96.10 *udakapateḥ sthānam*). Apparently this is not considered different from Varuṇa's world (cf. p. 82 and n. 339). Here they see all the weapons of the Daiteyas who have been robbed of their kingdom (96.15) and Varuṇa's umbrella, from which cool and pure water drips and flows to a place to which no human eye can reach (96.23f.). They then enter Pātāla, the 'town' (*puram!*) in the centre of *nāgaloka*, which is inhabited by Daityas and Dānavas (97.1 and 6). Here the Asuric fire, the moon and the amṛta are hidden and here, too, the Daiteyas who enjoyed *adharma* lived imprisoned after Indra had deprived them of their *śrī* (96.11). The next place which they visit, however, is the town (*puravara*) Hiraṇyapura in Pātāla (*pātālam āśritam* 98.2). Here the Daityas, Dānavas and Asuras, always given to hostility (*vaira*), live unrestrained because none of the four *lokapālas* (including Indra and Varuṇa!) are able to bring them under control (98.4). Obviously we have here entered a world beyond the pale, outside the ordered world, but the demons, living in crystal palaces, are not hampered by guilty feelings and the text does not state that their world is anyhow separated from the rest of the nether world. After a short visit to Garuḍa's world, somewhat unexpected in this region (but see IIJ.8, p. 110), they finally enter the town Bhogavatī which, according to a formulaic verse (V.101.1, 107.19, Rām. VII.23.4), is guarded by Vāsuki. Here Śeṣa "always carries the earth" (see IIJ.8, p. 108). Here, again, there are Nāgas. Since one expects to find Śeṣa at the lower end of the world axis, this looks like a replica of the Pātāla of V.97.

In V.108 there is another description, which this time follows the cosmic classification and thus situates Varuṇa's world in the West. See on the conflict between the classification and the "functional place" of a god IIJ.13, p. 283. Here is Varuṇa's *pratiṣṭhā* and "beginning" (108.1). Kaśyapa, representative of the totality, has consecrated Varuṇa as *rājā* of the sea-monsters (*yādas*) and guardian of the waters (108.3). The moon waxes here, as it drinks Varuṇa's six *rasas*. Here are (or were?) the Daityas who, having been surpassed and fettered by the Wind, have been asleep (*susupuh*), hissing while they were tortured by the great Nāgas (108.5). The sun sets here and from here Night and Sleep spread at the end of a day. Here is the root of the world axis, Mount Mandara (108.9 *atra mūlaṁ himavato mandaraṁ yāti śāśvatam*), which is obviously an attempt to bring the classification system in harmony with the notion of cosmic centre.

In Rām. VII.23 it is related how Rāvaṇa, after having been killed by Rāma, first goes to Yama's realm, where he slays Yama, and then goes to Varuṇa's abode (VII.23.16). This is an instance of the specifically epic conception which Hopkins formulated in the words "A dead or defeated demon goes to Varuṇālaya as naturally as a dead man goes to Yamasādana"

(see p. 74).³³⁶ The first trace of the transfer of Varuṇa's function to Yama, however, can be found in the Rīgveda, e.g., IX.113.8³³⁷.

The presence of demons in Varuṇa's home may at first sight seem somewhat puzzling because the demons have been driven from "these worlds" (plural, see n. 24), whereas Varuṇa's abode must have formed part of "these worlds". The position of the Ādityas among the Devas is in itself sufficient proof for their belonging to the ordered cosmos. So the idea of demons dwelling in Varuṇa's world must have offered some difficulties to the epic poets. The question naturally arises how they visualized this presence of the demons. The answer is twofold.

On the one hand, one meets with the notion that Varuṇa in his *sabhā* is not only surrounded by the Ādityas, but also respectfully worshipped by Daityas and Dānavas, "adorned with brilliant ear-rings"³³⁸. He is an object of worship for various *bhūtas* (see nn. 289, 303), which term may comprise the spirits and "devils". It is not surprising that also Vāsuki and Takṣaka, the kings of serpents, are there, along with other Nāgas³³⁹, since this is the natural consequence of the identity of (or, close relationship between) *varuṇālaya* and *nāgaloka*, and of Varuṇa's lordship over the serpents.

Varuṇa's world appears to be the *refuge* for demons after they have been slain (e.g. Rāvaṇa) or expelled from the earth: "The great Asuras, afflicted by the gods, entered the earth and the sea of saltish water"³⁴⁰. Lomaśa relates that the Kāleyas at first were Vṛtra's allies (III.98.3ff.). After seeing Vṛtra slain by Indra, they fly into Varuṇa's abode, but at night they come back to kill seers and to destroy "people" (or, "the worlds"). Because the sea is their refuge, they are unassailable³⁴¹. This passage is instructive in that it openly depicts Varuṇa's abode as a source of evil, the underlying idea apparently being that Varuṇa *protects* the

³³⁶ Epic Mythology, p. 119.

³³⁷ *yātra rājā vaivasvató yātrā 'varóghanam diváh, yātrā 'mūr yahvátir āpas tátra mām amṛtam krdhi.*

³³⁸ Mhbh. II.9.7 *Ādityās tatra Varuṇam jaleśvaram upāsate, 9.15 daityadānavasamghās ca sarve rucirakuṇḍalāḥ . . . (17) te tasyām Varuṇam devam dharmapāsadharam sadā, upāsate . . .*

³³⁹ See Mhbh. II.9.8 *Vāsukis Takṣakas caiva nāgās ca 'rāvatas tathā . . . (11) ete cā 'nye ca bahavaḥ sarpās tasyām Yudhiṣṭhira, upāsate mahātmānam Varuṇam vigataklamāḥ* and III.42.6, where Varuṇa is surrounded *nāgair nadair nadibhiś ca Daityaiḥ Sādhyaiś ca daivataiḥ*. The *nāgaloka* into which Takṣaka enters (see n. 308) must, accordingly, have been Varuṇa's world. For the Sādhyas residing in the nadir see the Excursus. The nāgas belong to the ordered cosmos, cf., e.g., p. 88 and n. 24 *in fine*.

³⁴⁰ Mhbh. I.17.28 *tato mahīm lavaṇajalam ca sāgarām mahāsuraḥ praviviśur arditāḥ suraiḥ.*

³⁴¹ Mhbh. III.101.7ff.: *Kāleya iti vikhyāto gaṇaḥ paramadāruṇaḥ, taiś ca Vṛtram samāśritya jagat sarvaṁ prabādhitam (8) te Vṛtram nihataṁ dṛṣṭvā sahasrākṣeṇa dhimatā, jivitam parirakṣantaḥ praviṣṭā varuṇālayam (9) te praviśyo 'dadhīm ghoram nakragrāhasamākulam, utsādanārtham lokānām rātrau ghnanti munin iha (10) na tu śakyāḥ kṣayaṁ netum samudrāśrayagā hi te, samudrasya kṣaye buddhir bhavadbhīḥ sampradhāryatām.* Cf. also III.99.21 *samāśritya mahormimantaṁ ratnākaram Varuṇasyā 'layam sma* and 100.1 *samudraṁ te samāśritya vāruṇam nidhim ambhasām.*

evil-doers, who at night attack the world of order. Cf. also Mhbh. III.160.11 "he protects the *bhūtas*" (*bhūtāni parirakṣati*) and Rām. VII.23.3, where Varuṇa is said to protect the Rasātala, dwelling-place of the Daityas and serpents (p. 88). It may be noted in passing that the notion of *niśācaras* "(demons) moving about by night" has its roots in the Vedic ideas about rakṣases³⁴². After being defeated by the Devas those of the Asuras who survived the slaughter split up the earth and vanished in the Pātāla³⁴³. Their defeat seems to have changed their position fundamentally. They live on³⁴⁴ in the nether world as exiles (III.101.8, 103.12), no longer protected by Varuṇa. Similar accounts are found elsewhere, e.g. in the Matsyapurāṇa, where the Dānavas flee into the *rasātala* or *pātāla* (the two terms are here used optionally)³⁴⁵. In the Kāleya-episode of the Mahābhārata there is, accordingly, a difference between the spontaneous flight in the beginning, during which they are in Varuṇa's abode and their second flight into the Pātāla, where Varuṇa is not mentioned by name. However, whether the author of this episode recognized this or not, Pātāla is also Varuṇa's abode (V. 106.12) at the bottom of the world-tree. So some kind of relation must have continued to exist between the dispelled demons and Varuṇa.

Just as in the Veda (n. 24), the demons are driven away from the earth³⁴⁶. But the epic bards, like the Vedic theologians (p. 34), were confronted by the dilemma that the demons, though dispelled, cannot be definitively destroyed. As Mhbh. III.98.3-5 puts it, the Dānavas and Asuras in Hiraṇyapuram cannot be killed by Śakra, nor by Varuṇa, Yama or Dhanada (Kubera). Similarly Rām. VII.23.10. In XIII.140.3ff. the gods defeated by the Asuras wander about on earth till they see Agastya. At their request he burns the Dānavas with the fire of his *tejas*. By thousands they fall down from the atmosphere on earth but others "leaving the two worlds" go to the South (*kāṣṭhām dakṣiṇām*), where Bali is just performing the horse-sacrifice under(?) the earth (*mahīṅgataḥ* or *mahīm gataḥ*)³⁴⁷. The Asuras who are under and in the earth (*mahīstha*) are not burnt. When the gods ask Agastya to kill them, too (*bhūmiṣṭhān asurāṅ jāhi*), he declares himself unable to burn the *mahīgata* Asuras.

³⁴² KS. X.5 (129,19) *āmāvasyām vai rātrīm niśī rākṣāṁsi prerāte* (Caland: *prerate* [?]), TS. II.2.2.3 *niśitāyām hi rākṣāṁsi prerāte*. Cf. II.4.1.1 and Geldner, Ved. Studien II, p. 167 n. 1.

³⁴³ Mhbh. III.103.12-13 *hataśeṣās tataḥ kecī Kāleyā manujottama, vidārya vasudhām devīm Pātālatalam āśritāḥ* (13) *nihatān Dānavān drṣṭvā tridaśā munipuṅgavam, tuṣṭuvur vividhair vākyair idam caivā 'bruvan vacaḥ*.

³⁴⁴ Incorrect Hopkins, Epic Mythology, p. 119.

³⁴⁵ E.g., Matsyapurāṇa 47.63, 212, 233 (*viviśus te rasātalam, viz. Dānavāḥ*) and 47.68, 215 *Pātālam*.

³⁴⁶ Cf. Mhbh. I.58.25ff. (*so tasmāl lokād iha cyutaḥ*).

³⁴⁷ The crit. ed. (śl. 12) reads *mahīgatān*. Sorensen, Index, p. 17a, rightly translates *mahīm gataḥ* by "in the nether regions". Neither *mahīṅgata* nor *mahīstha* (*mahīṣṭha*) is recorded in the Petersburg dictionaries, but cf. PW. *bhūmiṣṭha* "in the earth" and *bhūtā bhūmisamsthītāḥ*, IJ. 15, p. 177.

Varuṇa's character is accordingly basically ambiguous. Although he never ceases to be a Deva nor is called an Asura or king of the Asuras³⁴⁸, some variant readings testify to an uncertainty, at least among some copyists, about the god's nature. In VIII.30.77 the critical edition reads *praticim Varuṇaḥ pāti pālayānaḥ surān bali* "Varuṇa the mighty one, guards the western region, protecting the gods" but the Bombay edition (VIII.45.32) has here a different reading *pālayann asurān bali* "protecting the Asuras". A similar variant, which is *mythologically* the *lectio difficilior*, occurs in the Calcutta edition XII.4497 *apām rājye 'surāṇām ca vidadhe Varuṇam prabhum* "(Viṣṇu) (installed him) as king over the water and made him lord of the Asuras"³⁴⁹.

While in the passages here referred to the ambiguity of Varuṇa's nature was more or less openly acknowledged and left unsolved—and insoluble it was, indeed—there are other passages where Varuṇa is depicted as a warder of the imprisoned demons. Mythologically this must, in the light of the preceding observations, be considered a rationalistic attempt to explain away the dark aspects in Varuṇa's relation to the banished demons. Such a passage is Mhbh. V.126.44ff., where the highest god Prajāpati orders god Dharma to fetter the Daityas and Dānavas and to hand them over to Varuṇa. The latter fetters them also with his own nooses (*pāśa*) and guards them henceforth in the sea³⁵⁰. Less clear is the situation in III.42.6, where Varuṇa, surrounded by Nāgas, rivers, Daityas and Sādhyas is coming to Arjuna, but then tells him that he has fettered thousands of *Daiteyas* by means of his nooses³⁵¹. The ocean which Kadrū and Vinatā are watching (I.19.6) is described in the words

³⁴⁸ Kings of the Asuras and Dānavas are, e.g., Bali, Śambara and Vṛtra, the last of whom is often called *Asurapravīra*, e.g. XII.271.44. This function of Vṛtra is already met with in the Veda, see MS. IV.3.4 (42,14) and cf. Geldner, *Vedische Studien* II, p. 299 n. 3.

³⁴⁹ The text-critical problem has, of course, to be judged by its own criteria. In XII.122.29 the critical edition reads *apām rājye surāṇām ca vidadhe Varuṇam prabhum* (see n. 299) and records only one variant reading '*marāṇām* in a single manuscript. But the writing or omitting of the *avagraha* was largely left to the discretion of the copyists, who besides used it in a way different from what has become usual in modern printed texts. So reading '*surāṇām* for *surāṇām* can hardly be called an emendation. Moreover Varuṇa is not, as a rule, said to be a protector of the gods. In IX.46.11–12 (see p. 80) he protects "the rivers, seas and lakes just as Indra protects the gods." The reading of the Calcutta edition '*surāṇām . . . prabhum* "lord of the Asuras" certainly makes better sense.

³⁵⁰ Mhbh. V.126.44ff. *iti matvā 'bravīd Dharmam paramēṣṭhī Prajāpatiḥ, Varuṇāya prayacchai 'tān baddhvā Daiteyadānavān* (45) *evam uktas tato Dharmo niyogāt paramēṣṭhinaḥ, Varuṇāya dadau sarvān baddhvā Daiteyadānavān* (47) *tān baddhvā dharmapāśais ca svais ca pāśair jaleśvaraḥ, Varuṇaḥ sāgare yatto nityam rakṣati Dānavān.*

³⁵¹ Mhbh. III.42.5f. *tato vaiḍūryavarṇābho bhāsayan sarvato diśaḥ, yādogaṇavṛtaḥ śrīmān ājagāma jaleśvaraḥ* (6) *nāgair nadair nadibhiḥ ca Daityaiḥ Sādhyaiḥ ca daivataiḥ, Varuṇo Yādasām bhartā vaśī tam deśam āgamat* and vv. 27–28, where he says to Arjuna: (27) *mayā samudyatān pāśān varuṇān anivāraṇān, pratigrhṇīṣva Kaunteya sarahasyanivartanān* (28) *ebhis tadā mayā vira saṁgrāme tārakāmaye, Daiteyānām sahasrāni samyatāni mahātmanām.*

'abode of the Pātāla-Agni (= *āsuro 'gnih*, n. 326) and prison of the Asuras' (*pātālaivalanāvāsam asurāṇām ca bandhanam*). Here again there are some significant variant readings, which suggest the idea that the notion of captive Asuras was not generally accepted³⁵².

The only conclusion that can be drawn from these data is that also in the epic Varuṇa, far from being "un simple dieu des eaux" (p. 75), was still essentially the same ambiguous and ominous god as in the Veda. Although the epic is less reticent than the older texts, the traditional taboo is still prevalent. Judging by the indirect indications one is bound to conclude that as a rule it prevented also the epic bards from openly referring to the god's dark side. What is said about him explicitly only relates to his opposite favourable aspect. Typologically the epic Varuṇa belongs to the category of such two-sided figures as Viśvarūpa, who publicly was the purohita of the gods but secretly of the Asuras, or Vidura³⁵³.

Hopkins incidentally touches upon the general problem with which Varuṇa's relation to the demons confronts us but his explanation does not go to the root of the matter. He writes: "Ordinarily the Devas exclude the demons; they are as light to darkness, but (as shown below) all spiritual beings are sons of the Father-god and so all are divine. It is rather the nature of the individual which determines whether he is "god" or "demon", than the class to which he is assigned"³⁵⁴. In Varuṇa the divine and the demoniacal are linked in a suprarational unity, which eludes every attempt at a logical formulation³⁵⁵. In contradistinction to Hopkins' opinion this is not merely an isolated feature of the god alone but a structural trait that can also be found in other mythological figures. One of these will be studied more in detail in the next section.

16. AMBIGUOUS FIGURES: UŚANĀ KĀVYA AND VIŚVARŪPA

A classical instance of the same ambiguity that has been pointed out in Varuṇa is Uśanā Kāvya. (See also Dumézil, *Mythe et épopée* II, pp. 133-228). The latter stemmed from the Proto-Indo-Iranian mythology but in the Sanskrit epic (where he also bears the name Śukra) he had become the father-in-law of Varuṇa, who married his daughter Devī³⁵⁶. Of old he bears the title *kavi* and in the epic he is the *guru* of gods and Asuras³⁵⁷. Of his relation to both parties that to the Asuras is the more

³⁵² For *asurāṇām ca bandhanam* some manuscripts read *asurāṇām niveśanam* "dwelling-place of the Asuras," *asurāṇām tathā 'layam* "and also the abode of the Asuras," and *asurāṇām ca bāndhavam* "and cognate of the Asuras."

³⁵³ For Viśvarūpa see also p. 101.

³⁵⁴ *Epic Mythology*, p. 3 n. 1.

³⁵⁵ Cf. Renou, *EVP*, 7, p. 4: "autour duquel on aurait voulu laisser planer une sorte d'ambiguïté fondamentale." The words "on aurait voulu" reflect a different view of the relation of Vedic man to his myth from the one here taken.

³⁵⁶ *Mhbh.* I.60.51 *Varuṇasya bhāryā jyeṣṭhā tu Śukrād Devī vyajāyata*.

³⁵⁷ *Mhbh.* I.60.40 *Bhr̥goḥ putraḥ kavir vidvān Śukraḥ kavisuto grahaḥ . . . yogācāryo mahābuddhir Daītyānām abhavad guruḥ, surāṇām cāpi medhāvī brahmacāri yatavrataḥ*. Cf. Sørensen, *Index*, p. 312b.

significant one for he is said to be their teacher (*upādhyāya*) and priest (*purohita*)³⁵⁸. As such he is the adversary of Bṛhaspati, whom the gods have chosen as their priest. In the last-quoted passage Kavi Uśanā has a special power (*māyā*), which is called the *vidyā samjīvanī* “science of revivification” and which at first ensures the superiority of the Asuras. Kavi Uśanā is the prototype of the *kavis*³⁵⁹. All this is rooted in ancient Vedic and pre-Vedic tradition³⁶⁰, according to which Uśanā Kāvya was originally the *purohita* of the Asuras, just as Bṛhaspati was of the gods. How essential Uśanā’s relation to the Asuras was is shown by the fact that sometimes he is represented as the messenger of the Asuras, in which function his divine counterpart is Agni³⁶¹. His connection with the Asuras was, therefore, more essential than his priesthood, or the opposition between him and Bṛhaspati.

As far as these details are concerned the epic tale (Mhbh. I.71.5–6) corresponds with the older sources. In some of the latter, however, important additional details are found. According to one version (occurring in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa and in Baudhāyana) there was a Gandharva, who stood above the two contending parties of the Devas and Asuras and who was the only one to know the issue of the endless war. On account of his position it is probable that this Gandharva was conceived as still

³⁵⁸ Mhbh. I.71.5f. *surāṇām asurāṇām ca samajāyata vai mithah, aiśvaryaṁ prati saṁgharṣas trailokye sacarācare* (6) *jigīṣayā tato devā vavrire ’ngirasam munim, paurohityena yājyārthe Kāvyaṁ tū ’śanasam pare, brāhmaṇau tāv ubhau nityam anyonyasparhdhinau bhṛṣam*. The Asuras are victorious until Uśanā goes over to the gods, cf. also Matsyapurāṇa 47.61 *tato ’surān parityajya Śukro devān agacchata*.

³⁵⁹ Mhbh. VI.32.37 (=Bhagavadgītā X.37) *muninām apy aham Vyāsah, kavīnām Uśanā kavīḥ*. Cf. RS. IV.26.1 *kavīr Uśanā*.

³⁶⁰ See Geldner, *Vedische Studien II* (1897), p. 167ff., Caland, *Über das rituelle Sūtra des Baudhāyana* [Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XII (1903)], p. 26, H. Oertel, JAOS. 28 (1907), pp. 81–88 (on Jaim. Br. I.125–127), J. Charpentier, *Kleine Beiträge zur indoiranischen Mythologie* [Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift 1911], p. 82, E. Sieg, *Sonnenrennen im Rigveda* [Nachr. Ges. Wiss. Göttingen, 1928], pp. 196–198, A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie II*² (1929), p. 423, H. Lommel, “Kāvya Učan”, *Mélanges Bally* (1939), pp. 209–214.

³⁶¹ PB. VII.5.20 *Uśanā vai Kāvyo ’surāṇām purohita āsīt*; JB. I.125 line 1 *Devāsurās saṁyattā jyon na vyajayanta, Bṛhaspatir devānām purohita āsīt, Uśanā Kāvyo ’surāṇām, I.126 line 2 sa (viz. *triśīrṣā Gandharvo) hovāca: brāhmaṇāv imau samam vidatur, Bṛhaspatir ayaṁ deveṣū, ’śanā Kāvyo ’sureṣu*; Baudh.ŚS. XVIII.46 (401,11) *Devāsurā ha yatra mahāsaṁgrāmaṁ saṁyetyire, tad dhe ’māni bhūtāni dvedhai ’va vyapacakramur, devān evā ’nv anyāny, asurān evā ’nv anyāni. Bṛhaspatir devānām purohita āsīt, Uśanā Kāvyo ’surāṇām*; Śāṅkh. ŚS. XIV.27.1 *Uśanā ha Kāvyo ’surāṇām purohita āsa* (commentary: *Śukraḥ kavēḥ putraḥ*, cf. Mhbh. I.60.40 *Śukraḥ kavīsuto*). Lommel conjectured (*Mélanges Bally*, p. 211) that the epithet *Kāvya* has been inherited from Proto-Indo-Iranian and is identical with *MIr. Kā(ūs)*. For Uśanā and Agni as the messengers of the Asuras and the Devas respectively see TS. II.5.8.5 *Agnīr devānām dūtā āsīt, Uśanā Kāvyo ’surāṇām, taū Prajāpatim praśnām aitām* (but in ŚB. III.5.1.21 *Sahārakṣas* is thus opposed to Agni). In *Maitrī Up. VII.9 Bṛhaspati*, disguised as Uśanā, gives the Asuras a wrong instruction: *Bṛhaspatir vai Śukro bhūto ’ndrasya ’bhayāyā ’surebhyaḥ kṣayāye ’mām avidyām asṛjat*. Cf. van Buitenen, *Maitrī Up.*, p. 88 “Bṛhaspati who has the (late) reputation of being a false teacher.” This motif has been elaborated in, e.g., *Matsya Pur. 47.183ff.*

standing quite close to the primordial unity of the undifferentiated Chaos. A confirmation of this suggestion can be seen in the Rigvedic myth of Yama and Yamī, where the Gandharva as their ancestor occupies a similar position. The interesting detail then is that on the part of the undivided primordial world there is a knowledge of things to come (or, perhaps, of the deeper nature of all that is) that has gone lost in the two moieties of the dualistic Cosmos. The Gandharva knows that it will be impossible for any of the two parties to gain the victory, unless it can persuade the *purohita* of the other party to go over³⁶². In other words what is found here is another instance of the *evocatio deorum*³⁶³, already met with above where Indra exhorts Soma to come outside with the words *nirēhi soma*³⁶⁴. In the same way Indra here, after having learnt by a ruse the 'truth' of the Gandharva, goes to Uśānā Kāvya and tries, in his quality of protagonist of the Devas, to induce him to go over³⁶⁵.

The myth of Kavi Uśānā, accordingly, shows the same pattern that was seen in Varuṇa's going over to the Devas (RS. X.124.4). In the light of this conclusion, however, the current interpretation of the Rigvedic references to Uśānā Kāvya cannot be accepted as correct³⁶⁶. When interpreted in the light of the later Vedic evidence, however, they appear to present difficulties which have escaped notice so far.

It must first be stressed that Kāvya Uśānā is here clearly a man, who refers to himself as a *mārtya*. Cf. X.22.6 "As ye both [viz. Indra and Kutsa] arrive, Uśānā asks you: 'For what purpose (do ye enter) our house? Ye have come from afar, from the heaven and the earth, to a mortal man'" Indra seeks spaciousness for him (VI.20.11): "Thou, O Indra, wert the first of the helpers, as thou wert looking for a way out for Uśānā Kāvya". Cf. X.40.7: "Ye, O Aśvins, have aided Bhujyu, ye Vaśa, Śiñjāra and Uśānā"³⁶⁷. The persons here named were historical or legendary men:

³⁶² JB. I.126 line 5 *tayor yataro yatarān upasameṣyati te jeṣyanti 'ti*.

³⁶³ The phrase *evocatio deorum ex urbibus obsessis*, used by Macrobius (Saturnalia 3.9) has here been adopted as a succinct term for this mythological process. The corresponding Sanskrit term is *upamantraṇa*. Cf. Livy 1.55.5 and 5.21.5 (*deos*) *alios ex urbe sua evocatos*.

³⁶⁴ RS. X.124.5. See above, pp. 17–20 and cf. X.60.7 *ēhi nir ihi*.

³⁶⁵ JB. I.126, lines 7–8 *sa ho 'śanasam Kāvyaṃ ājagāmā 'sureṣu. tañ hovāca : rṣe, kañ imāñ jamañ ("foreign people") vardhayasy, asmākañ vai tvam asi, vayanā vā tavā, 'smān abhyupāvartasve 'ti*, Baudh. XVIII.46 (403,2) *sa ha gatvai 'vo 'śanasam Kāvyaṃ upamantrayām cakre, Jayantyās ca duhitrā catarbhiś ca kāmdughābhīḥ. sa hā 'jñāpto [!] 'surebhyo 'dhi upasamiyāya. tato ha vā etad devā asurān mahāsamgrāmañ jigyuhḥ*. The situation as described in JB. has a close parallel in ŚB. I.6.3.13 (see n. 49). For *jana* "foreign people" see Minoru Hara, *Pratidānam*, p. 256ff. (with references), for *upamantrayati* see nn. 231, 418.

³⁶⁶ See Bergaigne II, pp. 338–341, Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* p. 147. The seventeen passages where Uśānā (Kāvya) occurs are I.51.10, 11, 83.5, 121.12, 130.9, IV.16.2, 26.1, V.29.9, 31.8, 34.2, VI.20.11, VIII.7.26, 23.17, IX.87.3, 97.7, X.22.6, 40.7.

³⁶⁷ RS. X.22.6 *ādha gmānto 'śānā prchate vām kādarthā na ā grhām, ā jagmathuḥ parākād divās ca gmās ca mārtyam, VI.20.11 tvām vrdhā indra pūrvyō bhūr varivasyānn Uśāne Kāvyaṃ, X.40.7 yuvām ha Bhujyūm yuvām Aśvinā Vāsam yuvām Śiñjāram Uśānām upārathuḥ*.

Bhujyu is elsewhere said to be the son of Tugra (I.117.15), and Vaśa was the *purohita* of king Pṛthuśravas (I.116.21, etc.). Only about Śiñjāra (whose name points to a non-Aryan background) further data are lacking.

As a human being, Uśanā was a sacrificer, who invigorated Indra with Soma before the god's fight against Śuṣṇa (I.51.10–11): "As Uśanā with force fashions thy force, (thy) violence thrusts asunder the two worlds with their greatness" (11) "Indra, when revelling at Uśanā's, mounts the (chariot with the) horses, which run ever faster. The vigorous one (mounts) the (chariot which) hastens along. He effused the water in streams. He broke open the firm strongholds of Śuṣṇa"³⁶⁸. The "force" (*sāhas*) which Uśanā here "fashions" for Indra is only a metaphor for the Soma. In the same way the Soma is called a *vāja* in I.121.12 "The intoxicating (beverage), which Kāvya Uśanā gives to thee, which he fashioned as a resistance-breaking *vāja* that belongs to new year's day (?)"³⁶⁹ or indirectly denoted as such in V.34.2 "He, the liberal one, who filled his belly with Soma and revelled in the (beverage of the) sweet plant, when Uśanā, who has great weapons, gave him the thousand-pointed weapon to kill the animal"³⁷⁰.

When Uśanā appoints Agni as his *hōtṛ*³⁷¹, or is said to be supported by Indra and the Áśvins³⁷², this still agrees with the current picture of the Vedic sacrificer. Things become different when his quality of *kavi* is stressed. This was the most marked characteristic of Uśanā, who is the only Proto-Indo-Iranian *kavi* whose name has been handed down to us. Uśanā is introduced as saying "I am the *kavi* Uśanā, look at me"³⁷³. *Kavi* was the specific term to denote an initiate who, as a devotee of Varuṇa, had received his initiation and knowledge of the cosmic mysteries (*medhā*) in the nether world³⁷⁴. This character of the initiation explains how the mortal Uśanā could become the priest of the Asuras.

On the other hand, since Uśanā as the *kavi par excellence* must have stood in close relation to Varuṇa, the ancient Vedic tradition about his being the *purohita* of the Asuras may be considered to prove indirectly

³⁶⁸ RS. I.51.10 *tákṣad yát ta Uśanā sāhasā sāho ví ródasī majmánā bādhatē sāvah* (11) *māndiṣṭa yād Uśāne Kāvye śacām Índro vañkū vañkutārā 'dhi tiṣṭhatī, ugró yayim nír apáh srótasā 'srjad ví Śuṣṇasya drñhitā airayat púrah*.

³⁶⁹ I.121.12 *yām te Kāvya Uśanā mandīnam dād vṛtrahāṇam pāryam tatakṣa vājram*. This translation is different from Geldner's. For *dād* see K. Hoffmann, *Injunktiv* p. 191 n. 157: "genereller Injunktiv oder prospektiver Konjunktiv"; for *pārya* see IJ. 5, p. 181; for *vāja* see Bergaigne, II, p. 253, Oldenberg, *Noten*, and Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie* I², p. 336 n. 2.

³⁷⁰ RS. V.34.2 *á yáh sómena jaṭhāram āpipratā 'mandata maghāvā mádhvo ándhasah, yád im mrgāya hántave mahāvadhah sahásrabhṛṣṭim Uśanā vadhām yāmat*. The soma acted for Indra as a *vāja*. This explains the use of the adj., four times an epithet of the *vāja*, as an epithet of Soma (twice). Cf. IJ. 12, p. 283.

³⁷¹ RS. VIII.23.17 *Uśanā Kāvyaś tvā ní hótāram asādayat, āyajim tvā Mānave jātāvedasam*.

³⁷² RS. VI.20.11 *tvām vṛdhā Indra pūrvyó bhūr varivasyān Uśāne Kāvyaśya, X.40.7 yuvām ha Bhujyīm yuvām Áśvinā Vāsam yuvām Śiñjāram Uśanām upārathuh*.

³⁷³ RS. IV.26.1 *ahām kavir Uśanā páśyatā mā*.

³⁷⁴ Cf. IJ. 4, p. 187, 8, pp. 110, 127, and especially VIII.6.10 *medhām ṛtasya*.

that also in Vedic belief the *devá ásurā* Varuṇa had a secret connection with the *ásurā adevāḥ*. It has been suggested above³⁷⁵ that at the end of the year Varuṇa was, again, temporarily one of them. As for Uśanā, it is characteristic of him that he himself is never called an Asura. The way in which Baudhāyana accounts for his curious position in terms of the cosmic dualism is instructive: "When the Devas and Asuras were contending in the great war (*mahāsaṁgrāma*), then all these beings departed into two directions: some of them joined the Devas, others the Asuras. Bṛhaspati was the *purohita* of the Devas, Uśanā Kāvya of the Asuras"³⁷⁶.

That Uśanā, as a *kavi*, actually had a knowledge of the cosmic mysteries can indirectly be inferred from what is said of Soma in IX.87.3: "The inspired Ṛṣi, the leader of men, who is a skilful Ṛbhu and, owing to his prophetic inspiration, is Uśanā, found what was concealed of them [the cows], the hidden secret name of the cows"³⁷⁷. Since Soma is also a *kavi*³⁷⁸, it was natural for him to be likened to Uśanā. The same knowledge of cosmic secrets, however, is also attributed to Varuṇa himself as the divine *kavi*³⁷⁹, who is asked to reveal it to the poet³⁸⁰. This is the well-known pattern of the initiation of the poet-seer by Varuṇa³⁸¹. Soma could be likened to Uśanā owing to his *kāvya* because the ancient Aryan **kavi Uśan(ā)*, being a mortal, had become the prototype of the Aryan seer in general. In a similar way Soma is likened to him in IX.97.7 "Openly professing his *kavi*-ship like Uśanā the god names the births of the gods"³⁸², which may be paralleled with IV.16.2 "The (*hótr*) must recite a hymn of praise, a poem, he who is a *vedhás* like Uśanā, to thee, O Asuric one, who hast the insight"³⁸³.

On account of his being a *kavi*, Uśanā is also mentioned jointly with Atharvan and performs acts which have almost a cosmogonical character. Cf. I.83.5 "Atharvan was the first to clear the paths by means of sacrifices;

³⁷⁵ See above, p. 42.

³⁷⁶ See n. 361.

³⁷⁷ RS. IX.87.3 *ṛṣir viprah puraetá jánānām Ṛbhúr dhíra Uśanā kāvyaena, sá cid viveda níhitam yád āsām apicyam gúhyam náma gónam*. Lüders, p. 521f., has convincingly demonstrated that this secret name is Uśas. Cf. Renou, EVP. 9, p. 100.

³⁷⁸ Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. I², p. 370ff.

³⁷⁹ RS. VIII. 41.5 *yó dhartá bhúvanānām yá usrāṇām apicyō véda námāni gúhyā, sá kavíḥ kāvya purú rūpām dyaúr iva puṣyati . . .* See Lüders, Varuṇa, p. 522.

³⁸⁰ RS. VII.87.4 *uvāca me Váruṇo médhirāya tríḥ saptá námā 'ghnyā bibharti, vidvān padāsya gúhyā ná vocad . . .*

³⁸¹ Cf. IIJ. 8, p. 110ff. on RS. VII.88 (which is closely connected with the preceding hymn).

³⁸² RS. IX.97.7 *prá kāvyaṁ Uśáneva bruvāṇó devó devānām jánimā vivakti*. Ludwig II, p. 503 and Geldner translate *jánimā* as "Geschlechter", Renou, EVP. 9, p. 46 renders "naissances".

³⁸³ RS. IV.16.2 *sānsāty ukthām Uśáneva vedhás cikítuṣe asuryāya mánma*. The meaning of *vedhás* ("Meister" according to Geldner, "Meister in der Kultdichtung" Lüders, p. 554) must have been close to that of *kavi*. See Renou, EVP. 16, p. 148 (also 4, p. 68, 7, p. 10 and 9, p. 91: "ce mot indéterminable"). Although *cit-* seems to have been an Indo-Iranian word for "vision", its exact shade of meaning cannot be determined.

from these Sūrya, the seer, the guardian of vows, was born. At the same time (?śácā) Uśānā Kāvya drove the cows thither . . .”³⁸⁴.

It is quite in keeping with Uśānā’s function as *purohita* of the Asuras that the Rigvedic poets represent him as living “far away” or “coming from afar”. This must have been a traditional notion since twice a pāda begins with the words *Uśānā yāt parāvātah*, cf. I.130.9 (to Indra) “Since thou, O *kavi*, hast come from afar, together with Uśānā, for aid”, V.31.8 (to Indra and Kutsa) “When the gods brought you into contact with Uśānā” and VIII.7.26 (to the Maruts) “When ye come from afar, with Uśānā, to Ukṣṇo Randhra”³⁸⁵. On the other hand Indra and Kutsa are said to come from afar, from heaven and from the earth, to the mortal Uśānā³⁸⁶. The term “afar” (*parāvāt*) is specifically used to denote the nether world and it is readily understood that Uśānā, living with the Asuras, had to come “from afar”³⁸⁷. When, therefore, it is said in X.22.6 that Indra (from heaven) and Kutsa (from the earth) had to come “from afar” (*parākād*) to meet the mortal Uśānā, this may be interpreted as implying that Uśānā was “far away”, in the dwelling-place of the Asuras. In this connection it is particularly interesting that Uśānā asks them “For what purpose have ye come to our house?”³⁸⁸ As far as I can see the word “our” has been disregarded by all translators. It can only be fully understood, when it is realized that Indra and Kutsa, in order to meet Uśānā, had to go all the way from heaven and the earth to the nether world and the Asuras.

According to Geldner³⁸⁹ Indra and Kutsa came to ask Uśānā’s *advice*. This opinion, which is characteristically based upon Uśānā’s fame in the classical period as the author of a *nītiśāstra*, is hardly correct. Indra needed material support, not advice: the next stanza (X.22.7) refers to an incantation (*brāhmó ’dyatam*) for the benefit of Indra³⁹⁰. What the poet actually had in mind may be inferred from V.29.9 (to Indra and Kutsa): “When ye, O Indra, together with Uśānā, came to the house, with the powerful swift horses, thou camest here victorious, on the same chariot (with Kutsa); with (the help of) Kutsa and the Devas thou hadst

³⁸⁴ RS. I.83.5 *yajñair ātharvā prathamāḥ pathās tate tātaḥ sūryo vratapā venā ājani, ā gā ājad Uśānā Kāvyaḥ śácā . . .*

³⁸⁵ RS. I.130.9 *Uśānā yāt parāvātó ’jagann ūtāye kave* (cf. Hoffmann, *Injunktiv*, p. 191 n. 155), V.31.8 *sām ha yād vām Uśānā ’ranta devāḥ*, VIII.7.26 *Uśānā yāt parāvāta Ukṣṇó rāndhram āyātana (dyavir ná cakradad bhīyá)*. An accusative *Uśānā* (for *Uśānām* X.40.7), as assumed by Geldner ad I.130.9, V.29.9 and VIII.7.26, is impossible.

³⁸⁶ See n. 367.

³⁸⁷ It is certainly due to an assimilation of the well-known type that in I.130.9 Indra, addressed as *kavi*, is said to have come with Uśānā “from afar”. On Indra’s *kavi*-ship see H.-P. Schmidt, *Bṛhaspati und Indra*, pp. 151, 157f. and cf. IJ. 13, p. 284. The same must be true of the Maruts in VIII.7.26.

³⁸⁸ X.22.6 *kādarthā na ā grhām, ā jagmathuḥ . . .*

³⁸⁹ Note ad X.22.4 and *Vedische Studien* II, p. 168 (for Uśānā’s *mantras*), p. 169 (for his *nīti*!).

³⁹⁰ See J. Narten, *Die sigmatischen Aoriste im Veda*, p. 175.

overcome [or “then overcamest”?] Śuṣṇa”³⁹¹. Whatever house may be meant here, Śuṣṇa’s (before the fight) or Kutsa’s (at the triumphal return after the fight, as is Sāyaṇa’s interpretation), or perhaps even the poet’s³⁹², this much follows from the translation here given that Uśanā’s presence was necessary for Indra to overcome the demon Śuṣṇa. Therefore, Uśanā’s surprise at the unexpected arrival of Indra and Kutsa at the *gṛhá* of the Asuras (“our house”!) is quite understandable. Only a very serious purpose could have induced them to come to see him *there*, and this purpose can only have been the *evocatio* mentioned in later Vedic texts. The need for Uśanā’s presence is clearly explained in the hymns: he is not yet (as Geldner thought) the wise counsellor, the author of a *nītiśāstra* which he was to become in the classical period, but the one who gave Indra the soma that became his *vájra*³⁹³. The “magical” strengthening by Uśanā was indispensable and the formulaic phrase “to come with Uśanā” expressed the certainty that the god would now be victorious. Since the Soma had to be won from the powers of the nether world (as the *śyena*-myth expresses in a mythical way, and the ritual of the *somakráyaṇa* in a symbolical one) it is natural that Uśanā could act as a mediator between the two worlds. It is possible that according to one version of the myth Indra drank the Soma in Uśanā’s house, that is, in the nether world³⁹⁴. Anyway, Uśanā had to side with Indra in order to enable the latter to fight Śuṣṇa and this involved the necessity of Uśanā’s going over. The idea of the *evocatio*, as found in the *brāhmaṇas*, was also known to the Vedic poets (RS. X.124.6).

Leaving aside RS. I.130.9³⁹⁵ we may now turn to the epic, where Uśanā’s “magical” power is described in greater detail as a *vidyā*

³⁹¹ Geldner’s principle that everywhere in the formulaic *pāda*-opening *Uśanā yát* there must be the same grammatical form and syntactic structure (*Vedische Studien* II [1897], p. 169) was quite sound, although the possibility of reinterpretation by later poets (in the sense of Manu Leumann’s *Homerische Wörter*) or mere variation in the use of a traditional formula cannot be ruled out. He rightly, therefore, took Uśanā as an instrumental. Later, however, he changed his mind, taking it as a genitive in his *Glossar* (1907), and, apparently, as an accusative in his *Übersetzung* II, p. 26 (in spite of the reference to his *Glossar*). But his translation “Als ihr beide . . . zu Uśanas ins Haus kamt . . .” is grammatically impossible and presupposes a situation which it is difficult to explain. Ludwig II (1876), p. 109, rendered *Uśanā* as a vocative, which is impossible on account of the accent. This may have been the reason why in 1883 (vol. V, p. 95) he suggested that *Uśanā* here meant the *vájra* which Uśanā had given to Indra. Oldenberg took *Uśanā* as a nominative.

³⁹² Geldner, in a note on his translation of X.22.7–10, and Hoffmann, *Injunktiv*, p. 191, rightly point out that Indra’s fight with the *mrgá Śuṣṇa* is a mythical exploit, which is represented as being repeated in the world of the poets. It is, therefore, of lasting importance.

³⁹³ See nn. 368–370.

³⁹⁴ Cf. I.51.11, quoted above, p. 96.

³⁹⁵ RS. I.130.9 *prapitvé vācam aruṇó muṣāyati ’śānā ā muṣāyati, Uśanā yát parāvātó ’jagann ūtāye kave*. See Bergaigne II, p. 339 (*Uśanā* or Indra stole *vāc*?), Oldenberg, *Noten* I, p. 135, Hoffmann, *Injunktiv*, p. 191 (“ganz unklar”), etc.

sañjivani (Mhbh. I.71.9). Herman Lommel³⁹⁶ has pointed out that this is a feature of Uśanā which can be traced back to the common Aryan mythology. In the Iranian tradition the well-known hero king Kay Kāūs³⁹⁷ subdues the country of demons “und Kay Kāūs ist dadurch auch Gebieter über die Daemonen geworden. Diese errichten für ihn wunderbare Zauberschlösser im Elburzgebirge, wo ewiger Frühling und ewige Jugend herrscht, und gealterte Menschen verjüngt werden” (p. 212)³⁹⁸. Since contact with demons and magic power (access to the source-wells of life) must of old have been characteristic of the Aryan *kavi*, the fight of Kay Kāūs in Middle Iranian sources is obviously a secondary aetiological myth and the Indian epic has here, as in other cases, preserved old features of the myth. In this connection it is hardly accidental that in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad I.1 Uśan(t)’s son Naciketas goes to Yama and the realm of the dead.

In the epic Uśanā has unquestionably an “underworldly” character: when Rudra is performing a *dikṣā* before his fight against Tripura, Uśanā cuts off some locks of hair. These then become serpents which wind about Rudra and thus make him Nilakaṇṭha³⁹⁹. Just as in older texts, he is in the epic the *purohita* of the Asuras and, as such, the antagonist of Bṛhaspati⁴⁰⁰. He possesses a knowledge which sometimes surpasses Bṛhaspati’s⁴⁰¹. He is known as a *nītiśāstrakartṛ*⁴⁰², his work having been revealed at the Auśanasa tīrtha⁴⁰³, and is especially quoted as a military epigrammist⁴⁰⁴, his instructions having the same value as those of Bṛhaspati⁴⁰⁵.

³⁹⁶ See n. 360.

³⁹⁷ According to Lommel’s guess from Proto-Indo-Iranian **kavi* *Kāvya* *Uśan*. See n. 361.

³⁹⁸ See A. Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, p. 73ff.

³⁹⁹ See Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, pp. 180, 226, and cf. Mhbh. XII.329.15 (:342.26 Bomb. ed.) *tripuravadhārtham dikṣām abhyupagatasya Rudrasyo ’śanasā śirasō jaṭā ulkṛtya prayuktāḥ, tataḥ prādurbhūtā bhujagāḥ. tair asya bhujagaiḥ pīḍyamānāḥ kaṇṭho nilatām upanītaḥ. pūrve ca manvantare svāyambhuve nārāyaṇahastabandha-grahaṇān nilakaṇṭhatvam eva vā.*

⁴⁰⁰ Mhbh. XV.35.13 *Bṛhaspatir vā deveṣu Śukro vā ’py Asureṣu yaḥ . . .* and Bhāg. Pur. VIII.10.33, where Bṛhaspati, in the battle of the *Amṛtamanthana*, is fighting with Uśanā.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. Matsyapurāṇa 47.81 *mantrān icchāmy aham deva ye na santi Bṛhaspatau.*

⁴⁰² Thus Nilakaṇṭha in his commentary on V.39.30 Bomb. ed. Cf. Pañcatantra I śl. 185 (BBS, ed. Kielhorn) *Uśanā veda yac chāstraṁ yac ca veda Bṛhaspatiḥ, strībuddhyā na viśiṣyete tasmād rakṣyāḥ katham hi tāḥ* (: Mhbh. XIII.39.7. *tāḥ sma rakṣyāḥ katham naraiḥ*), Hitop. I śl. 114 (edd. von Schlegel and Lassen), I śl. 122 (ed. Nirṇaya Sāgara Press, Bombay 1947), not in the ed. Peterson (p. 27).

⁴⁰³ Mhbh. IX.38.6 *tatra pūrvam tapas taptam Kāvyaena sumahātmanā, yatrā ’sya nītir akhilā prādurbhūtā mahātmanāḥ.*

⁴⁰⁴ Mhbh. XII.136.127 *buddhyā tvam Uśanāḥ sāksād bale tv adhikṛtā vayam, tvanmantrabalayukto hi vindeta jayam eva ha*, XII.56.28 *ślokaḥ co ’śanasā gītau purā tāta maharṣiṇā, tau nibodha*, XV.12.15 *Uśanā veda yac chāstraṁ tatrai ’tad vihītam vibho*, IX.57.12 *api co ’śanasā gītaḥ śrūyate ’yam purātanāḥ, ślokaḥ tattvārthasahitas tan* [v.l. *taṁ*] *me nigadataḥ śṛṇu* (13) *punar āvartamānānām bhagnānām jīvitaiṣiṇām, bhetaḥ punar ariṣeṣānām ekāyanagatā hi te.*

⁴⁰⁵ Mhbh. IX.61.48 Bomb. ed. (fragment 367* after IX.60.46 crit. ed.) *Bṛhaspater Uśanaso nopadeṣaḥ śrutas tvayā.*

Still more ambiguous is Viśvarūpa, son of Tvaṣṭṛ. Geldner has been the first to point to “die eigentümliche Zwitterstellung des Tvaṣṭṛ im ganzen RV.”⁴⁰⁶ Since his *patnī* (or *sapatnī*) was an Asurī, the TS. II.5.1.1 says (in the translation by Keith) “Viśvarūpa, son of Tvaṣṭṛ, was the domestic priest of the gods and the sister’s son of the Asuras. He had three heads, one which drank Soma, one Surā, and one which ate food. He promised openly the share to the gods, secretly to the Asuras. Men promise openly the share to every one; if they promise any one secretly, his share is indeed promised. Therefore Indra was afraid (thinking), ‘Such an one is diverting the sovereignty (from me)’. He took his bolt and smote off his heads”⁴⁰⁷. The Mahābhārata, which relates the story in detail as an *itihāsa purātana* in V.9.3–36, gives the version of the *Taitt. Samhitā* (II.5.1.1) in XII.329.17–19⁴⁰⁸, where the ambiguous behaviour of Viśvarūpa is particularly stressed. In this light the role of Vidura in the epic may also prove interesting.

17. THE EVOCATIO (UPAMANTRANA)

From the myths mentioned before there emerges a general picture, which was briefly referred to on p. 20 but which it is now possible and necessary to analyze in greater detail. The basic idea is that in the primordial fight between Devas and Asuras, which is periodically repeated, there is a balance of power so that neither of the two parties can gain the victory. For this to become possible there must be a shift in the *status quo*, which can be brought about in various ways:

A. Intervention of a god of the totality in favour of one of the parties. Since these gods by their very nature transcend the dualism of the

⁴⁰⁶ See *Vedische Studien* II (1898), p. 168.

⁴⁰⁷ TS. II.5.1.1 *Viśvarūpo vai tvāṣṭṛāḥ purōhito devānām āsīt, svasrītyo ’surāṇām. tāsyā trīṇi śiṛṣāṇy āsant, somapānam surāpānam annādanam. sā pratyākṣam devēbhya bhāgām avadat, parōkṣam āsurebhyaḥ. sāvrasmai vai pratyākṣam bhāgām vadanti, yāsmā evā parōkṣam vādanti, tāsyā bhāgā uditās. tasmād Indro ’bibhed: idṛṇ vai rāṣṭrām vi paryāvartayati ’ti. tāsyā vājram ādāya śiṛṣāṇy achinad . . . Cf. MS. II.4.1 (38,1) *Viśvarūpo vai tvāṣṭṛā āsīt triśiṛṣā ’surāṇām svasrītyaḥ. sā sōmam ēkena śiṛṣṇā ’pibat, sūrām ēkenā, ’nam ēkenā ’vayat. sā Indro ’manyatā: ’yam vāve ’dām bhaviṣyati ’ti. tēna sāmālabhata. tēna yugaśaram apatat. sā takṣāṇam tiṣṭhantam abravīd: ādhāve, ’māny asya śiṛṣāṇi chinddhī ’ti. tāsyā tākṣo ’paskādya paraśunā śiṛṣāṇy achināt. tasmāt takṣṇe śīro dhṛtam, KS. XII.10 (172,5) *Viśvarūpo vai triśiṛṣā ’sīt, tvaṣṭuḥ putro ’surāṇām svasrīyas. sa somam ēkena śiṛṣṇā ’pibat, annam ēkenā ’vayat, surām ēkenā ’pibat. sa Indro ’manyatā: ’yam vāve ’dām bhaviṣyati ’ti. tena sāmālabhata. tena yugaśaram apadyata. sa takṣāṇam tiṣṭhantam abravīd: ādhāvā, ’sye ’māni śiṛṣāṇi cchinddhī ’ti. tāsyā takṣo ’pādṛutya paraśunā śiṛṣāṇy acchināt. tasmāt takṣṇas śīro dhṛtam (viz. at the sacrifice, cf. Mhbh. V.9.33 śiraḥ paśos te dāsyanti bhāgam yajñesu mānavāḥ). After Viśvarūpa’s death Tvaṣṭṛ creates Indrasatru and Prajāpati dips Indra’s *vāja*, see n. 113.***

⁴⁰⁸ In the epic the story is found in Mhbh. V.9.39ff. (esp. 42), VII.69.54, V.16.20 and 28 and (in a prose passage) XII.329.17, which literally quotes part of TS. II.5.1.1 (see Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 130f.). The Taittirīya version is not, however the original one. Cf. MS. II.4.3 (40,14), where it is Tvaṣṭṛ himself who dips the bolt, just as he fashions it in the Rigveda (V.31.4, etc.).

contending parties any step taken by them turns out to be decisive. It may be true that in the phenomenal world every victory is only temporary⁴⁰⁹, but the myth describes the ideal structure of this process. According to the pattern of the myth the god may stand either *between* the two parties, or above them. In the former case it can be said that the god participates in either party, the clearest instance of which is Viṣṇu. Regardless of whether the belief of later Hinduism about his being eight months in the upper world, while sleeping⁴¹⁰ four months in the nether world, is in this form old or rather a later elaboration, it is in any case the clearest expression of Viṣṇu's nature. In this context it is evident that his taking three steps *before* Indra strikes at Vṛtra is deeply rooted in the constitution of the Universe as the Vedic Indians saw it⁴¹¹.

A god of totality who stands *above* the parties is Prajāpati. He is best characterized as the god in whom the two moieties participate. His character of an impartial high god has been discussed above. Only rarely is he said to give direct support to the Devas⁴¹². More often this is done in a subtle, indirect way⁴¹³. A clear illustration of the different positions of Viṣṇu and Prajāpati will be seen below in the epic account of the Churning of the Ocean.

B. An entity is surreptitiously stolen from one party and taken to the other. This is found in the myth of Mātariśvan's stealing Agni from the Asuras for the gods⁴¹⁴, and in that of the eagle (*śyenā*) who brings Soma to Indra. It is obvious that these two agents must originally have had a mythological status outside the two parties, otherwise they would not have been able to perform their acts. In the myths, however, no attempt is made to define their status more exactly.

C. One or more entities go over of their own free will:

1) as the result of their own decision, e.g., in the case of Agni who leaves the father Asura and prefers Indra (X.124.4) or in the epic Śrī, who during the Churning of the Ocean, leaves the primordial world and sides with the gods⁴¹⁵, or, having lived with the Asuras, prefers to live with Indra⁴¹⁶. Another instance is Vibhīṣaṇa in the Rāma-saga, who goes over from his brother Rāvaṇa to Rāma and is welcomed by the latter as the one who by his mere arrival guarantees Rāma's victory (p. 78).

2) as the result of a contest, the (mostly female) entity standing between the two parties. Although this could be considered a variant of 1),

⁴⁰⁹ See p. 34.

⁴¹⁰ For the mythical meaning of sleep see p. 31.

⁴¹¹ Cf. Indological Studies – W. Norman Brown, p. 150 n. 88.

⁴¹² See n. 113.

⁴¹³ For a characteristic instance from a later stage of Indian mythology, viz. Brahmā's position with respect to Devas and Asuras in the Nāṭyaśāstra, see above, p. 36 f.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Etudes Asiatiques 25, p. 95ff.

⁴¹⁵ Mhbh. I.16.36 *Śrīḥ surā caiva Somaś ca turagaś ca manojavaḥ, yato devās tato jagmur ādityapatham āśritāḥ.*

⁴¹⁶ See p. 20.

the two additional elements of the contest and the intermediate position are so characteristic that it can better be considered a separate way of deciding the strife.

Some instances will be discussed below.

3) as the result of an *evocatio*⁴¹⁷.

While C 1-3 are different ways of looking at the same myth rather than different myths, B constituted a separate myth. The four possible variations can be illustrated by Soma being stolen by the *śyená* (*passim* in the Rigveda), Soma going over to the Devas (X.124.4c), his *evocatio* by Indra (X.124.6c *niréhi Soma*), and the contest in I.108.6 *ayám Sómo ásurair no vihávyah* "We have to compete with the Asuras in calling Soma towards either side".

It has been seen above that the typical term for the 'evocatio' is *upamantrayati*, which does not mean "bestechen"⁴¹⁸ but simply "to call towards oneself"⁴¹⁹. If an entity is the stake of a contest, the Rigveda uses *vi hvayete*, *vi hvayante*, irrespective of whether a mythical or a real strife is referred to⁴²⁰. Cf. *vihavá* "competitive invocation" (Wettruf, Wettanrufung I X²). In the Atharvaveda Agni is *vihávyá* by the kings (II.6.4) and this is the technical name of AS. V.3 (cf. GB. II.2.34, perhaps also AS. VII.5.4, cf. V.3.11c). In the Yajurveda *upamantrayante* (MS. KS. TS. ŚB., also JB.) is the common term, *icchante* is only used in MS.⁴²¹, and *nirhúya*, corresponding to RS. *niréhi*, is a hapax in TS. II.5.2.4

⁴¹⁷ See on this term n. 363.

⁴¹⁸ Thus Geldner, *Vedische Studien* II, p. 167. For the form *upa-mantrayati* see also n. 231.

⁴¹⁹ E.g., the gods try to persuade their *mahimānah*, which have fled to the Asuras, to come back. Cf. KS. XXIX.1 (167,17), KKS. XLV.2 (268,13/314,19) *devās ca vā asurās ca samyattā āsaṁs. te devebhyo mahimāno 'pākramāṁs. te 'surān agacchāṁs. te 'surā devānām bahūni śatāny aghnāṁs. tāni 'māni cchandāṁsi yāny ayajñāvāhāni. te devā abibhayaḥ : iṭhāni vāva na sarvān asurā avapatsyanti 'ti. tāny upamantrayanta. te 'bruvan : vāryam vṛṇāmāhā iti*. Or the gods ask the sacrifice (their heritage from Prajāpati's bequest) to entice Vāc away from their adversaries: ŚB. III.2.1.19 *tē devā yajñām abruvan, yóṣā vā iyām vāg, úpa mantrasyasva, hvayisyāte vāi tvē 'ti*, etc. In AS. VI.73.1 ("for supremacy") *éhá yātu Vāruṇah Sómo Agnir Bḥhaspātir Vāsubhīr éhá yātu, asyā śriyam upasānyāta sārva ugrāsyā cettūh sámmanasaḥ sajātāh* it is doubtful if a formal *evocatio* is meant. I know no passage where *á yātu* is used in the sense of *nir-á-etu*.

⁴²⁰ Cf., e.g., RS. X.80.5 *agnim ukthair ṛṣayo vi hvayante*, IV.24.3, 39,5, X.42.4, 112.7 *vi hvayante (tām, Índram, tvā, tvām)*, II.12.8 *yām (Índram) vihváyete*. Only I.102.6 does not refer to Indra.

⁴²¹ This may concern the *téjo yajñīyam* of the altar, or Gāyatrī, or Vāc. Cf. KS. XXV.6 (108, 17), KKS. XXXIX.3 (214,18/251,6) *devās ca vā asurās ca samyattā āsaṁs. tān yad asyās tejo yajñīyam āsī, tat simhūrūpam iva mahiṣūrūpam iva bhūtvā 'ntarā 'tiṣṭhat. te 'vidur : yatarān vā iyam upāvartsyati ta idam bhaviṣyanti 'ti. tān devā upamantrayanta. sā 'bravid : vāryam vṛṇai* and MS. III.8.5 (99,6) *yád vā asyā yajñīyam médhyaṁ yát sádevam, tād utkrāmyā 'tiṣṭhad antarā devāsurānt samyattānt simhūrūpam iva bhūtvā. tē 'vidur : yatarān vā iyam upāvartsyāti tā idam bhaviṣyanti 'ti. tāsyaṁ vā ubhāya aichanta*. In the following passages Gāyatrī stands between the parties: KS. X.7 (133,8) *devās ca vā asurās ca samyattā āsaṁs. tān gāyatrī antarā 'tiṣṭhad ojo vīryam annādyam parigṛhya. samvatsaró vāvainān sò 'ntarā 'tiṣṭhat . .*

(see p. 18), since AS. *nirhvayāmi* (Śaun. 2, Paipp. 4) is only used in magic. Similarly *indram nirāhvayan* (JB. 3.169⁵), whereas (*indram*) *nirhvayante* (GS 4) is only corrupt for *nihvayante* (AB., cf. Av. *nizbayemi*).

In a modern paraphrasis of these myths they seem ultimately to express the conviction that the Universe is based upon an asymmetric balance between life and death, the powers of life just turning the scale⁴²². The same idea apparently underlies the symbolism of the numbers 101 and 99, of which the latter is the typically demoniacal number in the Rigveda⁴²³. The "divine" number 101 has remained in use in its derived form (101 + 7 =) 108⁴²⁴.

18. VARUṆA AND THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

In conclusion of this study of Varuṇa's relation to the world of the shaped and the shapeless his position in the Amṛtamanthana will be considered more closely. It has been seen above that he does not personally take part in the cosmogonical fight⁴²⁵. The same appears to be still true

tē 'vidur : yatarān vā iyām upāvartsyāti tā idām bhaviṣyanti 'ti. tām vyāhvayanta . . . sā devān upāvartata. tāto devā ābhavan, parā 'surā abhavan ; MS. II.1.11 (13, 8) devās ca vā āsurās cā 'spardhanta. tān gāyatrī sāvam ānnaṁ pariṅghyā 'ntarā 'tiṣṭhat. tē 'vidur : yatarān vā iyām upāvartsyāti tā idām bhaviṣyanti 'ti. tāsyām vā ubhāya aichanta ; ŚB. I.4.1.34 devās ca vā āsurās ca 'bhāye prājāpatyāḥ pasprāhīre. tānt spārdhamānān gāyatrī antarā tasthau. yā vai sā gāyatrī āsīd, iyām vai sā pṛthivī, 'yām haivā tād antarā tasthau. tā ubhāya evā vidm cakrur : yatarān vai na iyām upāvartsyāti, tē bhaviṣyanti, parē 'tare bhaviṣyanti 'ti. tām ubhāya evā 'pamantrayām cakrīre. However, in MS. III.7.3 (78,3)=KS. XXIV.1 (90,10), KKS. XXXVII.2 (195,20/228,4) *vihvayāmahā iti* is used. Similarly ŚB. III.2.4.4 *vy āhvayanta*. The last quotations refer to the contest between the gods and Gandharvas for supremacy. In a similar context *vyahvayetām* is used at PB. IX.2.22. Finally two quotations with Vāc standing between the parties: JB. II.115 line 3 *sā kruddhā . . . simhy ubhayatomukhī bhūtvō 'rāho 'dakrāmat. so 'bhayān devāsūrān antarā 'tiṣṭhad. yām devānām upāpmod, yam asurānām, tam* [as is the reading of two manuscripts instead of *tad*] *ādādānā. tām upaiva devā amantrayanto* [see n. 231], 'pā 'surāḥ. sā devān abhyupāvartamānā 'bravit : kim me tataḥ syād, yad vo 'bhayupāvarteye 'ti ; ŚB. III.5.1.21 *tēbhyo ha vāk cukrodha, kēna mād eṣā śrēyān bāndhunā3 kēnā3 yād etām pratyāgrahīṣṭa, nā mām iti. sā haibhyō 'pacakrāma. sō 'bhāyān āntarena devāsūrānt sāmyattānt simhī bhūtvā 'dādānā cacāra. tām upaivā devā amantrayantō, 'pā 'surā . . .* (22) *sā devān upāvartsyānti uvāca : yād va upāvarteya kim me tātaḥ syād iti*. Since the dvandva-compound *devāsūrāḥ* is not, as a rule, used in the ŚB. (Delbrück, *Altindische Syntax*, p. 57) this passage may have been taken over from another brāhmaṇa. The specific terminology got out of use in the classical literature. Cf. *Matsyapurāṇa* 47.229 *yajñeno 'pāhvayāmas tau* (viz. *Śaṅḍāmārkau*) as against TS. VI.4.10.1 *tē devāḥ Śaṅḍāmārkāv upāmantrayanta*. [Add *āpa-sās*-MS.4].

⁴²² See M. Lietaert Peerbolte, *Psychocybernetica* (Amsterdam 1968), p. 101.

⁴²³ Cf. the ninety-nine citadels of Śambara or the Dāsas, which is a mythological notion by which the reality of contemporary life could get a religious interpretation; and the ninety-nine Vṛtras (I.84.13f.). But the number 100 also occurs. Cf. Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², p. 245, Macdonell, *Ved. Myth.*, pp. 159, 161.

⁴²⁴ On the number 108 see I. Scheftelowitz, "Die bedeutungsvolle Zahl 108 im Hinduismus und Buddhismus", *Studia Indo-Iranica* (Ehregabe für Wilhelm Geiger), Leipzig 1931, pp. 83-88.

⁴²⁵ See p. 54.

in the epic account of the Churning of the Ocean, which proves the relatively archaic character of the epic in contrast with the Purāṇas ⁴²⁶.

Whatever the origin of this creation myth may be, its archaic character cannot be questioned. Instead of Indra's fight with Vṛtra resulting in the latter's death and Indra's opening the primordial hill ⁴²⁷, we here find a cooperation, which is at the same time a competition and fight between the two groups of gods for the purpose of winning the life-elixir (and other goods) directly from the primeval water. The role of Mount Mandara is here limited to its functioning as the cosmic pivot, used as a churning-stick. The two parties need each other to achieve their purposes, which is symbolized by the technique of churning. This consists in pulling a cord to and fro on two sides, thus making the churning-stick rotate ⁴²⁸. Held, who discusses the symbolism of the churning in detail, aptly remarks that this is the most concrete expression for the notion of the cosmic *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* ⁴²⁹.

An important and significant detail of the epic tale is that three gods do not take part in the competition.

Brahmā stands *above* the parties and, apart from making incidentally a request to Viṣṇu, he confines himself to giving his permission to start the contest.

Viṣṇu stands *between* the parties, in accordance with his fundamental characteristic that he belongs to the two moieties of this world. Since Gonda, Viṣṇuism and Śivaism p. 7, contests this, I may point not only to Viṣṇu's position, in Yajurvedic texts, in the middle of an arrow (ch. II, n. 275) and likewise of the jarjara (p. 151), but also to the emphasis which our texts lay upon his position in the Churning of the Ocean. In Mhbh. I.16.12-13 it is said that the Asuras took hold of the head of the world serpent, and the Devas of its tail—which may be connected with their character of older and younger brothers (Indol. Studies – W. Norman Brown, p. 145 n. 51)—“but where the god, Lord Ananta was [viz. wound as a rope around the churning stick, Bhāg. P. VIII.7.1], there was Nārāyaṇa”. In this version Viṣṇu helps the gods, in this intermediate position, by shaking the head of his serpent, which then produces fire and smoke for the Asuras, but cooling rain for the gods (more explicitly at Viṣṇupurāṇa I.9.86-7). His ambiguous character becomes particularly apparent when the gods get tired and ask Brahmā for Viṣṇu's help, without which they are unable to complete their work. When Brahmā then asks Viṣṇu to give the gods strength, the latter pretends to be neutral (I.16.31) ⁴³⁰: “Strength I give to all who

⁴²⁶ E.g., Matsyapurāṇa 249-251, Bhāgavatapurāṇa VIII.5.17; 8.15.

⁴²⁷ Cf. History of Religions 10, p. 107ff.

⁴²⁸ Mhbh. I.16.12 (Viṣṇupurāṇa 9.84, Bhāg. Pur. VIII.7.1) *netra* (cf. *navanīta* “fresh butter”); but Rām. I.44.17 and Mhbh. Kumbakoṇam ed.: *yoktra*.

⁴²⁹ G. J. Held, The Mahābhārata, pp. 146, 143 and for cooperation *cum* competition, e.g., p. 171.

⁴³⁰ Cf. I.16.31 *balam dadāmi sarveṣām*.

have undertaken this work. Let all agitate the 'jar'". (For *kalasa* see India Maior, p. 149). Only later is he to help the gods by a trick, which was apparently an essential part of the myth (I.16.39 *māyām āsthito mohinīm*)⁴³¹. In interpolated passages of the Rāmāyaṇa version the tortoise which carries Mount Mandara on its back, and which the Mahābhārata refers to as "Akūpāra, king of the tortoises" (I.16.10), becomes a form of Viṣṇu himself, while at the same time he also takes part in the churning "amidst the deities" (App. I.8d, 9, v.l. *mamantha devatānām ca madhye*, v.l. 8.25 *devānām madhyataḥ sthitvā*). Similarly Bhāg. P. VIII.7.8f. Most elaborate is the Viṣṇupurāṇa (3rd or 5th cent. A.D.): "In the middle of the Milk Ocean was Lord Hari himself in the shape of a tortoise, as a pivot for the mountain which turned round as the churning-stick. In one shape, bearing his discus and club, he pulled the king of serpents among the gods, in another among the Daityas. But above, he was, as Keśava, standing on the top of the mountain in still another, great shape of his, which was invisible to gods and Asuras" (I.9.88-90). Similarly Bhāg. P. VIII.7.11 (*āsuraṇa rūpeṇa*) and 12. This version comes nearest to the bas-reliefs of Angkor Vat where, in a representation of the Churning of the Ocean, Viṣṇu is seen, standing in the middle between the contesting parties and joining hands with Devas as well as with Asuras. Beneath is the tortoise as another shape of the god and above the mountain he appears in his most heavenly shape, pressing down with both hands the mountain top. Cf. *nagāgraṃ piḍayām āsa vāmahastena* and *parvatāgraṃ tu lokātmā hastenā 'kramya Keśavaḥ* in two interpolations after Rām. I.44.17 (App. I.8d.7 and 8.24). In all these versions, accordingly, Viṣṇu is the "connecting link" (Indol. Studies, p. 145). This position is so fundamental that it cannot possibly have been a later accretion: as early as the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa Viṣṇu is defined as "that which is between the two". It has been argued that in the Rigveda Viṣṇu could not fight the Asuras because they, too, were part of his essence. Gonda objects that even the Rigveda describes him as destroying demons (VII.99.4f.) and states that Viṣṇu goes to war (I.155.6). I am afraid, he here misses the point. In VII.99.4-5 Indra and Viṣṇu are *conjointly* addressed as having slain the *māyās* of the Dāsa and the men of the Asura Varcin, which does not prove that Viṣṇu was supposed to fight demons single-handedly (see n. 69!). What Viṣṇu's role was in their joint exploits is clearly enough described in the hymns: he takes part in the fight by his three strides, and in this sense he can also be said to "meet the challenge" (I.155.6 *prāty ety āhavām*). Cf. MS. II.4.3, TS. II.4.12.3-5 (*viṣṇvanuṣṭhita!*). His character of connecting link between the parties would seem to stand unchallenged.

Varuṇa's part is also ambiguous, but for other reasons. He is not only the overlord or lord (*ādhipati*, *pati*) of the waters but in a way he is himself the water⁴³². Before the emergence of the dual cosmos (the very

⁴³¹ On Viṣṇu as the divine trickster see Held, p. 299 and Hopkins, Epic Myth., p. 215.

⁴³² MS. IV.7.8 (104,9) *samudró vai Vāruṇaḥ*, KS. XIII.2 (180,21) *āpo vai Varuṇaḥ*. See p. 77ff. and Hillebrandt, Vedische Mythologie II², p. 18.

process which is, in a way, described, in the myth of the Amṛtamanthana) the "waters" are the primordial world, which comprises, as a potentiality, all good and evil. This double-sidedness the myth expresses by the notion that not only the life-elixir *amṛta*, but also the deadly poison *kālakūṭa*⁴³³ is produced from this water. It is true that according to the critical edition of the Mahābhārata the episode relating the emergence of this poison is a later interpolation, the aim of the churning being the creation of life. This does not necessarily mean that it is also a later addition to, or elaboration of the original myth. However that may be, the idea that by creating the ordered dualistic cosmos out of the undifferentiated primordial world not only life but also its opposite, death, came into existence was necessarily implied in this conception of creation itself. In the ocean (and in the *pitṛ āsura* who impersonated it) such opposites as day versus night, life versus death did not yet exist but creating the one necessarily involved creating the other⁴³⁴. Later Purāṇic versions of this myth took the idea of churning literally and evolved the notion of a Milk-ocean⁴³⁵.

The churning, as the epic describes it, has the character of a violent attack on the ocean, that is, on Varuṇa's world: "As the ocean was churned by means of Mount Mandara by the gods and Asuras, it produced a terrible sound like the thunder of big rain-clouds. All kinds of aquatic animals, squeezed out by the big mountain, died by hundreds in the saltish water. Various creatures belonging to Varuṇa (and) living in Pātāla were killed by the big mountain. And while the mountain was turned round, big trees, rubbing against each other, fell down from the top of the hill with (all their) birds"⁴³⁶. This particular feature of "Varuṇic animals" is preserved even in the later Purāṇas⁴³⁷.

In spite of its different presentation of the process this myth is characterized by the same aggressive attack on the primordial world as Indra's fight. Just as Indra slays Vṛtra, the churning results in the killing of hundreds of creatures. For the founding of the cosmos the cooperation of the Asuras is needed but as soon as the existence of the dual world is ensured, the defeated Mahāsuras disappear, in accordance with the ancient Vedic pattern⁴³⁸, into the nether world and the sea⁴³⁹, while

⁴³³ Mhbh. I.16, 274*, 3-7.

⁴³⁴ See also Held, p. 145 and p. 306, where he rightly remarks that the Asuras were not entirely destitute of the *amṛta*.

⁴³⁵ E.g., Matsyapurāṇa 249.14 *mathyatām kṣīravāridhiḥ* as against Mhbh. I.15.2 *mathyatām kalasodadhiḥ*. See India Maior, p. 149 n. 3.

⁴³⁶ Mhbh. I.16.18-21 = Matsyapurāṇa 249.69ff. *babhūvā 'tra mahāghoṣo mahāmeghara-vopamaḥ, udadher mathyamānasya Mandareṇa surāsuraīḥ* (19) *tatra nānājalacarā viniṣpiṣṭā mahādriṇā, vilayaṁ samupājagmuḥ śataśo lavaṇāmbhasi,* (20) *vāruṇāni ca bhūtāni vividhāni mahādharaḥ, pātālatalavāsini vilayaṁ samupānayat* (21) *tasmimś ca bhramyamāṇe 'drau saṁghrṣyantāḥ parasparam, nyapatan patagopetāḥ parvatāgrān mahādrumāḥ.*

⁴³⁷ Matsyapur. 249.25 *tathe 'ti Mandaraḥ prāha yady ādhāro bhaven mama, yatra sthitvā bhramiṣyāmi mathiṣye varuṇālayam.*

⁴³⁸ See n. 24. Cf. Viṣṇupur. I.9.111 *pātālam ca viveśa vai.*

⁴³⁹ Mhbh. I.17.28 *tato mahim lavaṇajalam ca sāgaraṁ mahāsuraḥ praviviśur arditāḥ suraiḥ.*

other deities, such as Śrī and Soma, side with the gods (as they did in RS. X.124)⁴⁴⁰.

Inconspicuous, but for that very reason most instructive, is Varuṇa's position in this contest. According to the older classical formula of Baudhāyana the 'great war' of the cosmogony was a process of polarization, in which all creatures sided with either of the two parties⁴⁴¹. Varuṇa, however, impersonates the ocean itself and must, therefore, stand apart. He does not resist the Devas, nor can he prevent the churning from taking place. The most significant lines in this respect are I.16.7-9. They describe how at Viṣṇu's command the world-serpent Ananta (actually his own 'underworldly' aspect) lifts Mount Mandara, which is to serve as the churning-stick. Then the gods go with Mandara to the ocean and announce that they will churn its water in order to obtain the *amṛta*. The lord of the waters then stipulates that he shall also get a part of it. On that condition he is willing to endure the violent crushing by Mount Mandara⁴⁴².

It is characteristic that the text here does not make a clear distinction between the element and its god. The divine element is propitiated, like a victim before its immolation. Clearly, it cannot oppose the irresistible course of things. The myth seems to suggest the idea that the emergence of the ordered world was a cosmic necessity⁴⁴³, to which even Varuṇa had to resign himself. On the other hand, the condition he makes also implies his going over to the gods.

When compared to the epic tale, which neatly distinguishes Varuṇa's position from that of the Devas, the authors of the Harivaṁśa and the Purāṇas seem to be no longer fully aware of the mythical background. This may, at least, be inferred from the fact that such an early Purāṇa as the Matsyapurāṇa, while preserving the idea that Mount Mandara⁴⁴⁴ is to churn "Varuṇa's abode", at the same time says that the gods made Varuṇa their assistant⁴⁴⁵. Since, however, Varuṇa's aloofness is here still presupposed, it is not easy to interpret exactly the author's views. He may have been thinking of Varuṇa's belonging, in a later stage of the cosmogonical myth, to the Devas. In any case he was still aware of the fact that Varuṇa, true to his nature, did not take part in the fight⁴⁴⁶. Not before the late Bhāgavatapurāṇa⁴⁴⁷ is Varuṇa represented as fighting

⁴⁴⁰ See n. 415.

⁴⁴¹ See n. 361.

⁴⁴² Mhbh. I.16.7-9 *atha parvatarājānam tam ananto mahābalaḥ, ujjahāra balād brahman savanam savanaukasam* (8) *tatas tena surāḥ sārḍham samudram upatasthire, tam ūcur : amṛtārthāya nirmathīṣyāmahe jalam* (9) *apām patir atho 'vāca : mamā 'py amśo bhavet tataḥ, soḍhāsmi vipulam mardam mandarabhramaṇād iti.*

⁴⁴³ Cf. in this connection Lommel's remark about the necessity of Soma's being slain. See Paideuma III, 6-7 (June 1949), pp. 215-216.

⁴⁴⁴ Matsyapurāṇa 249.25 (see n. 437).

⁴⁴⁵ Matsyapurāṇa 249.14 *sahāyam Varuṇam kṛtvā.*

⁴⁴⁶ See pp. 54, 104.

⁴⁴⁷ For the tenth century A.D. as the date of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa see Jean Filliozat, Indological Studies - W. Norman Brown (1963), p. 74 (=Laghu-Prabandhāḥ 1974, p. 75).

as a mere *lokapāla* on the side of the gods⁴⁴⁸. However, the exact chronology of this change in the conceptions about Varuṇa's position would require a more detailed study than is possible here. The circumstance that in sculptural art Varuṇa is at a much earlier date represented as fighting among the Devas⁴⁴⁹ shows that the evolution was not as simple as it might seem to be at first sight.

⁴⁴⁸ Bhāgavatapurāṇa VIII.10.26 *lokapālāḥ saha gaṇair Vāyav-Agni-Varuṇādayaḥ* (and 11.47 *Vāyav-Agni-Varuṇādayaḥ*), 10.28 *Varuṇo Hetinā 'yudhyan Mitro rājan Prahetinā*. For Varuṇa as a fighter cf. also Hariv. App. I.42B line 2143f.

⁴⁴⁹ In the basreliefs of Badami, Cave II, dating from the sixth century (or, according to Agrawala, Matsya Purāṇa, opposite p. 311, from the seventh). See R. D. Banerjee, Basreliefs of Badami, Memoirs Archaeological Survey of India No. 25 (1928), p. 24 and Plate XI, e.

THE VIDŪŠAKA

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

After all that has been written about the various theories on the origin of the Sanskrit drama¹ there is no need for a new critical survey. In recent times Renou and Thieme have briefly discussed the main theories². The old idea of a Greek origin³ and that of the Greek-Roman pantomime being the source of the (North-)Indian drama⁴ have definitively been refuted.

The main theories which still hold the field are those which derive the drama from an Indian pantomime⁵, which may have been connected with religious ballads or songs and dances⁶, or with the recitation of the epic⁷. Although some scholars, in view of Patañjali's well-known comment

¹ For references see S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Sanskrit Literature, Classical Period*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 630-656 and see further, e.g., Sylvain Lévi, *Le théâtre indien* (Paris, 1890), pp. 343-366, Sten Konow, *Das indische Drama* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1920), pp. 40-42, Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur III* (1922), p. 174, A. B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama* (Oxford, 1924), p. 57ff., Paul Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* (Bern, 1966), pp. 341-343, M. M. Ghosh, *The Nāṭyaśāstra, Text, vol. I* (Calcutta, 1967), Introduction, p. LI, n. 137, M. Chr. Byrski, *Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre*, New Delhi, 1974, G. H. Tarlekar, *Studies in the Nāṭyaśāstra*, Delhi-Patna-Varanasi, 1975, and many Indian publications which were not accessible to me, such as S. N. Shastri, *Laws and Practices of Sanskrit Drama*, vol. I, Benares, 1961.

² See Louis Renou, "La recherche sur le théâtre indien depuis 1890", *Extrait de l'Annuaire 1963-1964, Ecole pratique des hautes Etudes, IVe section, sciences historiques et philologiques*, pp. 27-40 [=Introduction, *Le Théâtre indien par Sylvain Lévi, réimpression, 1963*] and Paul Thieme, "Das indische Theater" in: Kindermann, *Fernöstliches Theater*, Stuttgart, 1966, pp. 26-51.

³ A. Weber, *Indische Studien II*, p. 148, etc., Windisch, *Der griechische Einfluss im indischen Drama* (1882), *Geschichte der Sanskrit Philologie*, 2 vols (1917-1920), pp. 398ff.

⁴ Hermann Reich, *Der Mimus I* (Berlin 1903). See Winternitz, p. 175, Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 67 n. 2, Dasgupta, p. 650ff.

⁵ See Dasgupta, p. 642 and particularly Thieme, p. 29f.

⁶ See, e.g., Winternitz, *Geschichte der ind. Lit. III*, p. 161 ("Balladendichtung"), p. 163 ("Tanz und Mimik"), p. 169 ("Einfluss des Volksstückes"), Macdonell, *Skt. Literature* (1900), p. 347: "From all this it seems likely that the Indian drama was developed in connection with the cult of Vishṇu-Kṛiṣṇa, and that the earliest acted representations were therefore, like the mysteries of the Christian Middle Ages, a kind of religious plays, in which scenes from the legend of the god were enacted mainly with the aid of song and dance, supplemented with prose dialogue improvised by the performers", M. M. Ghosh, *Nāṭyaśāstra, Translation I²* (1967), p. xlix [I, p. lv]: "it developed probably out of dances and songs in honour of a deity like Śiva who in later times came to be styled the great dancer-actor (*naṭarāja*)."

⁷ H. Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 428, Sten Konow, *Aufsätze zur Kultur- und Sprachgeschichte* (1916), p. 113f.: "als noch der Mimus das eigentliche Drama war . . . In denjenigen Dramen Bhāsas, die von der zweiten Wurzel des indischen Dramas,

on Pāṇini III.1.26, have argued that these epic tales must have been Krishnaitic, it has rightly been pointed out that the classical drama as we know it, is predominantly based upon the story of Rāma⁸. Other theories that have found considerable support trace the origin of the drama back to puppet or shadow plays⁹. On the other hand, the idea that the Sanskrit drama has developed from Prakrit dramas¹⁰ has long been abandoned. The not uncommon but fallacious idea that the simplest form is always necessarily the oldest has led some scholars to assume that the one-act *bhāṇa* (with a single actor!) is the prototype of the drama¹¹.

dem halbdramatischen Vortrage epischer Stoffe, herkommen . . .", Das indische Drama (1920), p. 47: "Aus einer Verschmelzung des durch Schattenbilder illustrierten Vortrages epischer Sagen und der Kunst der alten Mimen ist somit das indische Drama entstanden", and Thieme, p. 33.

⁸ See S. Lévi, p. 316, Renou, p. 39 with n. 2 (otherwise Thieme, p. 108; cf. also von Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimus im RV.*, p. 17ff. who points to the Śaiva cult). R. V. Jagirdar [Adya Rangacharya], *Drama in Sanskrit Literature*² (Bombay, 1967), p. 36ff., holds the *sūta* and the *kuśilavas* to have been the first performers of the drama, the *sūta* having been the direct precursor of the *sūtradhāra*, with whom he is sometimes identified (Mhbh. I.47.15 crit. ed.). He compares BhNS. 2.27C *śuklam sūtram prasārayet*. G. T. Deshpande (in: *Indian Drama*, Delhi 1956, p. 16) accepts his theory. Cf. also Dasgupta, p. 647, on Cakkyars and *sūtas*.

⁹ For the puppet play see Pischel, *Die Heimat des Puppenspiels* (Halle, 1900), Shankar P. Pandit, Vikramorvaśī, Notes p. 4f., Sylvain Lévi, p. 324f., Winternitz III, p. 178 n. 1, Konow, *Das indische Drama*, p. 46f., Keith, p. 52f., Dasgupta p. 641f. Thieme, p. 32 ("Ob es das Puppenspiel im alten Indien gegeben hat, muss dahinstehen: wirklich beweisende Spuren oder Hinweise aus alter Zeit haben sich nicht auftreiben lassen"). Pischel had drawn attention to Mhbh. (crit. ed.) III.31.22 *dārumayī yoṣā*, V.39.1 *aniśvaro 'yam puruṣo bhavābhavē sūtraprotā dārumayī 'va yoṣā, dhātṛā tu diṣṭasya vaṣe kilā 'yam*, which are not discussed by Thieme. H.-O. Feistel, *Das Vorspiel auf dem Theater, Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des klassischen indischen Schauspiels* (Dissertation Tübingen, 1969), p. 34, quotes an interesting passage from the Vākyapadiya 3, Kālasamuddēśa 4, where the puppet play is called a *yantra* and the puppet (in the commentary) *yantrapuruṣa*. In this passage the *sūtradhāra* is the performer of the puppet-show, although Thieme, p. 42 explains the term as having originally denoted the performer of a shadow-play, on the supposition that this technique was different from that of the modern shadow-play in South India (cf. F. Seltmann, BTLV. 127 [1971], pp. 452-489, 128 [1972], pp. 458-490) and of the Javanese wajang. S. K. Chatterji in: *Indian Drama*, Introduction, p. 6, takes the same view as Feistel, but *sūtradhāra* has also been explained as "measurer" (thus, e.g. Adya Rangacharya, *Drama in Sanskrit Literature*², p. 36) or as "sūtra-holder" (Renou, p. 33 n. 4: "tenant de [la doctrine énoncée en] *sūtra*'s [les *naṣasūtra*'s pāṇinécens]"?). Adya Rangacharya (l.c.) may be right in saying that "the puppet plays were merely the substitute of the populace for the dramatic luxury of the intellectuals". As for the shadow-plays see H. Lüders, SBAW, 1916, p. 698ff. [=Philologica Indica p. 391ff.], S. Konow, *Das indische Drama*, p. 45f., Thieme, pp. 30-34, 111-116, Renou, p. 33 n. 3 ("Rien là, en tout cas, ne nous conduit nécessairement aux origines du théâtre").

¹⁰ See S. Lévi, pp. 329f., 335, A. Barth, *Revue critique* 1886, p. 265 [=Œuvres III, p. 474f.], J. Huizinga, *De Vidūṣaka in het indisch tooneel* (1897), p. 6, Renou, p. 36, on the possibility of "un type de littérature demeuré relativement "populaire", un peu comme l'ont été le *Pañcatantra* et ses dérivés en regard des contes savants."

¹¹ D. R. Mankad, *The Types of Sanskrit Drama* (Karachi, 1938), p. 136ff. Cf. G. T. Deshpande in: *Indian Drama* (Delhi 1956), p. 17.

Still important are the various attempts, from 1869 onwards, to find in Vedic literature and ritual the roots of the drama. Possible connections were found in the Rigvedic dialogue hymns¹², or in the *mahāvratā* ritual¹³, in which a contest between an Ārya (Arya) and a Śūdra symbolically represented the fight for the sun between the Devas and Asuras (the Rigvedic *svārṣāti*). In view of the ample discussion which in recent times Horsch has devoted to this problem¹⁴ it is necessary to say a few words about his book, which gives a summary and synthesis of former research¹⁵.

Horsch starts with the *ākhyāna* literature and first carefully investigates if traces of dramatic action can here be found. His conclusion is that they are entirely lacking in the recitation of tales¹⁶. In the *pāriplavam ākhyānam* of the horse sacrifice (p. 321)—which is not old according to Eggeling, SBE. 44, p. 361 n. 4—he finds “germs” of epic narrative and rhapsodical poetry¹⁷ but not of drama. His own picture of the historical development is as follows (p. 324): from the Vedic “ballads” must have developed “dance songs”, which again must have been the prototype of the popular drama (“das volkstümliche Drama”)¹⁸. He then points to the well-known prohibition of singing and dancing by the orthodox brahmins (p. 325, cf. pp. 231, 423) and rightly argues that since it was

¹² Max Müller, *Rig-Veda-Sanhita translated and explained*, Vol. I Hymns to the Maruts (1869), p. 172f., repeated in the rewritten edition SBE. 32 (1891), p. 183, adopted and elaborated by S. Lévi, *Le théâtre indien* (1890), p. 301ff., L. von Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimus im Rigveda* (1908), *passim*, J. Hertel, “Der Ursprung des indischen Dramas”, WZKM. 18 (1904), pp. 59–83, “Der Suparnādhya, ein vedisches Mysterium”, *ibidem* 23 (1909), p. 273ff., 24, p. 117ff., M. Winternitz, “Dialog, Ākhyāna und Drama in der indischen Literatur”, WZKM. 23 (1909), p. 102ff. Cf. also Keith, p. 14ff., Konow, p. 39 and Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* (1966), pp. 321, 329ff.

¹³ A. Hillebrandt, “Über die Anfänge des indischen Dramas”, *Sb. kön. bay. Akad. Wiss.* (München, 1914), 4. Abh., p. 22f., Konow, p. 42ff. (criticized by Keith, p. 25f., J. Gonda, *Acta Orient.* 19 (1943), p. 373f.).

¹⁴ See Paul Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* (Bern, 1966).

¹⁵ Also Tsuji, *IJ.* 12 (1969), pp. 27–34 mainly confines himself to giving a survey of its contents.

¹⁶ See p. 321: “Die Rezitation ohne kultische Handlung hat bei Itihāsa-Motiven die magische Wirkung des Zauberrituals. Jede Anspielung auf Mimus, Tanz, Gesang und so weiter fehlt in diesem Falle”.

¹⁷ See p. 323 “Keime epischer Erzählkunst und der Rhapsodendichtung”.

¹⁸ See p. 324: “In Indien auf jeden Fall müsste der Tanz den melodischen Vortrag begleiten. Sicher ist die Annahme berechtigt, dass sich das volkstümliche Drama aus Tanzliedern entwickelt hat. Letztere wiederum haben ihre Hauptwurzeln in der altvedischen, religiösen Balladendichtung. Das Drama setzt deshalb mehrere Entwicklungsstufen voraus, die man nicht überspringen darf, indem man ein vollendetes Kultdrama in die Hymnenzeit projiziert... Unsere Behauptung wird mehr Überzeugungskraft besitzen, wenn wir zeigen können, weshalb der Übergang von der Ballade und der von Lautengesang begleiteten epischen Gāthā zur eigentlichen theatralischen Schau innerhalb der konservativ-brahmanischen Kreise erst spät vollzogen wurde. Der Hauptgrund ist der Widerstand von seiten der orthodoxen Priesterschaft”.

prohibited it must have existed¹⁹. In this connection the *mahāvratā* ritual can be considered the missing link, because it comprised singing and dancing²⁰. From the fact that the words *nāṭaka* and *nāṭya* "drama" are of Prakrit origin, he further concludes that the oldest form of the drama must have been popular plays, which were performed on a primitive stage. That the subjects were taken from the mythic-religious tradition is in his opinion not essential²¹.

The so-called "popular origin" of the Sanskrit drama, which also in Horsch's speculations plays such a prominent part, calls for some comment. In support of the assumption of these "volkstümliche Spiele" Hillebrandt, for instance, had referred to such features as the *vidūṣaka* (interpreted as the clown of the popular play)²², which would require a more careful approach.

It is certainly true that the use of various Prakrits and the alternative use of prose and poetry in the Sanskrit drama have not yet been satisfactorily explained. However, does this use shed any light on the problem of the origin? Others have objected that "Le fait sanskrit, ici comme d'ailleurs, est d'abord un fait singulier"²³. The circumstance that the actors were low-class people can to some extent account for the use of Prakrit terms, such as *nāṭya*, but does not give any clue to the origin. Particularly in this field the danger of unjustified generalizations is great. There are at least three points which speak against a "popular" origin and which will be discussed in detail: first, the performance of the

¹⁹ See p. 325: "Was verboten und bekämpft wurde, musste bekannt sein. Nur gehörte es andern Kreisen an, in diesem Falle also jenen volkstümlichen Schichten, deren Lebensführung dem konservativen Klerus ein Dorn im Auge war."

²⁰ See p. 326f.: "Das Mahāvratā ist ein religiöses Volksfest gewesen. Das *missing link* zwischen dem vedischen Kultdrama und dem authentischen indischen Schauspiel ist deshalb nicht im orthodoxen Brahmanentum, sondern im gemeinen Volke zu suchen".

²¹ See p. 327: "Von Leuten, die einen Dialekt sprachen, wurden die volkstümlichen Spiele, die auf einer wohl höchst primitiven Bühne aufgeführt wurden, geschaffen. Dass sie dabei auf mythisch-religiöse Themen zurückgriffen, ist nicht erstaunlich". He refers to Winternitz III, p. 165 and Hillebrandt (see n. 13), p. 28: "Ganz in Übereinstimmung mit Winternitz führt Hillebrandt die wichtigsten Momente des klassischen Sanskritdramas auf die autochthonen, in Dialekt aufgeführten Spiele zurück".

²² See Hillebrandt, p. 28 (quoted by Horsch): "Das die Dramen einleitende scheinbar improvisierte Zwiegespräch zwischen Theaterdirektor und Schauspielerin, die Anwendung verschiedener Dialekte, die Mischung von Prosa und Lied, die Verbindung mit Musik und Tanz, die Einfachheit der indischen Bühne, schliesslich die Figur des *Vidūṣaka*, sichern dem indischen Drama seine Entwicklung aus dem Volkstück, dem primitiven Mimus und niedern Schauspielerkreisen, die, in Indien autochthon, im Lande umherzogen, tanzten, musizierten, mimten und ihre Frauen zur Liebe hingaben". The idea that the *vidūṣaka* was a clown and as such had his origin in "popular" plays, particularly the mime, is fairly current. See Thieme, p. 38 (and pp. 50, 53f.), Feistel, p. 119f. and Samskrita Ranga Annual VI (1972), p. 7 "the figure of the *vidūṣaka* having indubiously developed in the sphere of popular entertainment".

²³ See Renou, p. 30.

“Preliminaries” (*pūrvavaṅga*), far from being a mere entertainment, was considered equal to a sacrifice for the benefit of the king and his country; secondly, the older situation as described by the *Nāṭyaśāstra* seems to have been that the sponsor and patron of a performance was mainly, if not exclusively, the king; thirdly, the oldest forms of the drama we know were based on the Vedic mythical picture of the world. In the light of these facts it seems highly questionable whether such terms as “Klerus” and “volkstümlich” are any help in understanding the driving forces behind the evolution which Horsch assumes, even though it may be correct that the Indian *gāthā*, in contrast to the sacred *ṛc*, got a profane character as a result of the orthodox ban on singing. The 19th century frame of reference with which Oldenberg at one time tried to explain certain aspects of Vedic religion is no longer adequate.

The basic fact is that for the Vedic period there are no other sources but an exclusively religious literature, clearly originating in circles which had both ideologically and sociologically a special character. Little is known of any other facet of the cultural and social life. Kings and *kṣatriyas* are only incidentally mentioned in so far as they come, as peripheral phenomena, within the range of vision of the poets or theologians. It is misleading, therefore, to call everything that is not mentioned in Vedic literature (and, accordingly, remains unknown) “volkstümlich”, that is, belonging to “the people’s culture”. At best it might be termed “profane”, if this is not taken as a category basically separated from and contrasting with “sacred”. Hillebrandt has further introduced the autochthons into the discussion and Horsch (p. 327) follows him in this respect. Here, too, it is necessary to distinguish between facts and modern guess-work. Although direct knowledge about the aborigines is lacking, it can be stated that many of the names of Bharata’s sons as given in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (1.26–39) are obviously of foreign origin²⁴. Some Yajurvedic texts (VS., TB.) associate the *śailūśa* (which word later denotes the actor) with singing and dancing (*gītā* and *ṛttā*): it only proves that in those circles which felt themselves bound by the rules of the brahmins, people outside the three classes of *Āryas* were used when, for religious or not strictly religious purposes, singers and dancers were needed. Nothing is known about how far the rules of the brahmins were considered valid. It is certainly not advisable to look upon the precepts of brahmanical literature as a faithful picture of the real social life. Since nothing can possibly be said about the performance of dramas in that society, it is not necessary to dwell on the speculations of Hillebrandt, Horsch (p. 326) and others.

A few words must only be said about Horsch’s conclusion, based upon Pāṇini IV.3.110, that there existed a dramatic theory (which presupposes performances) in the fifth or sixth century B.C. but that the Vedic hymns and the ritual were not the immediate precursors of the classical drama

²⁴ See Gedenkschrift-Brandenstein, p. 83ff.

(p. 328 n. 4, p. 329f.)²⁵. The first conclusion is not justified by the evidence²⁶. As for the second point, Horsch is right. Since only a part of the top of the iceberg of Vedic culture is visible in the priestly literature, there is no reason to expect that here the starting-point for the later evolution of the drama can be found.

In the case of the *mahāvratā* ceremony, which has more than once been referred to as the missing link, the ritual has preserved an isolated instance of a ceremonial contest that must have stood central in Ancient Aryan social life. It must originally have been a ritual in which the whole community took part, not an amusement for the "masses" (as opposed to a social *élite*). Characterizing it as "ein religiöses Volksfest" may, therefore, easily evoke wrong associations. It is true, traces of cultural change can be seen in the fact that more primitive features were abolished in the course of time. Since, however, as a symbolical representation of the *svārṣāti*, it must have been a seasonal ritual, it is hard to see why its origin should have been "im gemeinen Volke" (Horsch, p. 327). While speculations on "die volkstümlichen Spiele, die auf einer wohl höchst primitiven Bühne aufgeführt wurden" are contradicted by the historical evidence, which points to performances sponsored by kings, the mythic-religious subjects suggest the inference that the drama had, from the oldest (pre-literary) times onwards, a religious function. If this is correct, it raises the problem to a different level, the real question then no longer being that of "popular or non-popular" but of religious versus profane²⁷.

Two more theories must finally be mentioned. Thirty years ago J. Gonda put forward ample ethnographical material on which he based his view that the magical effect attributed to the representation of such acts as dancing, laughing and eating was one of the main roots from which the Sanskrit drama has sprung. It is impossible to summarize this paper, which contains many interesting remarks and deals extensively with the

²⁵ As against Sylvain Lévi, Hertel, von Schroeder, Hillebrandt, etc.

²⁶ It is not necessary to repeat what has been written about Pāṇini's *bhikṣunaṭa-sūtrayoh*, "ein Sūtra für Mimen" (Böhlingk), rather than "règles des acteurs" (Renou). The uncertainty about what exactly was meant by *naṭa* at that time has been stressed by Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 427: "wenn wir einmal etwas Bestimmteres über die Kunst der *naṭas* der älteren Zeit erfahren, hat es mit dem Drama gewöhnlich gar nichts zu tun". Cf. Konow, p. 48: "kann ebensogut ein Mime wie ein wirklicher Schauspieler gewesen sein", p. 43: "Es kann nach alledem nicht zweifelhaft sein, dass sie wirkliche Mimen waren . . .".

²⁷ A different point is that, whenever a cult act evolves into a piece of literary art, such as tragedy and comedy in Greece, there is always the possibility of secularization if in the context of the culture concerned the religious origin and character of the ritual is forgotten. In Greece Euripides dropped the chorus in his tragedies as an element that had become cumbersome and had lost its meaning. In India the *pūrvaraṅga*, the religious *drōmenon* par excellence, was shortened and stripped of those elements which had at one time been of the highest importance, and new themes of a non-religious nature, as found in the "bourgeois" drama (*prakaraṇa*), arose at an early date—so early, indeed, that it cannot even be proved on the basis of the dramas that have come down to us, that the *prakaraṇa* was the result of a later development of dramatic art. Its origin is still obscure, and probably will remain so as long as no fresh evidence comes to light. See below, p. 213.

general problem of the origin of the drama²⁸. An entirely different thesis has been defended by Indu Shekar, who argued that the drama was a product of a non-Aryan culture of India. The present study will show why I think that the evidence available points to a different conclusion²⁹.

Finally, two ideas must be mentioned which in my opinion contain an important element of truth but which must be incorporated in a more comprehensive approach. The first, put forward in 1909 by M. Haraprasad Shastri, emphasizes the fact that according to the native tradition of the Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśāstra the first legendary dramatic performance took place on the occasion of Indra's Banner Festival (*Indradhvajamaha*). The importance of this ceremony will be discussed below³⁰, where it will be argued that the half-mythic, half-legendary form in which this tradition is embedded is no reason for questioning its fundamental correctness. The second theory has, as far as I can see, only been proposed by G. K. Bhat and has generally been rejected. In his opinion the *vidūṣaka* of the drama is historically connected with the Asuras of the Veda. The way he conceived this connection is, it is true, unacceptable and the argument in support of his view very weak³¹. In spite of these shortcomings, however, his theory deserves to be mentioned because in its essence it is, in my opinion, of greater importance than Bhat may have been aware of.

From this brief survey it emerges that there is such a chronological gap between the classical drama as we know it and its supposed origin that all attempts to bridge it must needs be conjectural³². Renou's

²⁸ See J. Gonda, "Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung und Wesen des indischen Dramas", *Acta or.* 19 (1943), pp. 329-453. Renou reacted to this approach in the following words (p. 30), the purport of which is not quite clear to me: "Éclairer l'évolution préhistorique du théâtre sanskrit par le folklore peut amener des comparaisons intéressantes: l'inconvénient est que l'originalité d'un art savant se trouve diluée dans l'anonymat des structures élémentaires. Le fait sanskrit, ici comme ailleurs, est d'abord un fait singulier".

²⁹ Indu Shekar, *Sanskrit Drama, Its Origin and Decline* (Leiden, 1960). See Renou, p. 29 n. 4: "hypothèse souvent formulée pour d'autres secteurs de l'indianisme et qui semble dispenser d'explication interne rationnelle". An attempt to determine to what extent non-Aryan influence may have been at work, and what its limits were was made in *Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft und Kulturkunde, Gedenkschrift für Wilhelm Brandenstein* (1968), p. 82ff. It is true, influence of non-Aryan cultures has too often been invoked, without the slightest proof, as a *deus ex machina* to explain away difficult problems. If, however, there are specific (mostly linguistic) indications pointing to that conclusion, there is obviously no point in ignoring their existence, our task then being to try to understand what the role of the influence can have been in the whole context of Indian culture.

³⁰ M. Haraprasad Shastri, *J. and Proc. As. Soc. Bengal* 5 (1909), pp. 351-361 (especially p. 361), Raghavan, *J. Or. Res. (Madras)* 7, p. 41. This festival will be discussed below.

³¹ G. K. Bhat, *The Vidūṣaka* (Ahmedabad, 1959), p. 45: "The evidence of the Nāṭyaśāstra and the Sanskrit literature shows that the earliest phase of the drama was marked by the Deva-Asura conflict, where the representation of Asura as a comic character provided the only possibility for humor", and *passim*. Indu Shekar (see fn. 29), p. 78, rejected this theory as "far-fetched and entirely conjectural".

³² See Renou, p. 30.

characterization as a “problème difficile, insoluble peut-être” (p. 29) correctly summarizes the present situation. There is still a lack of agreement on one of the basic questions, viz. whether the origin of the drama was religious or profane. While Konow and Lüders assume a double origin and Renou’s position, as usual, is non-committal³³, Thieme has made an interesting attempt at a logical reconstruction of the genesis on the basis of three existing theories, which started from dance, mime and shadow-play respectively. In his synthesis the mime, being a popular play without dance and music and with profane subjects³⁴ and, on the other hand, dance and shadow-plays with religious themes³⁵ have led to the emergence of the drama. In accordance with current theories³⁶ he then concludes that the *vidūṣaka*’s part must have been “die Rolle eines reinen Spassmachers”³⁷ and that he, consequently, must have originated in the mime³⁸. Since the Nāṭyaśāstra according to him nowhere refers to a specific part of the *vidūṣaka* in the drama³⁹, Thieme further assumes that originally the *vidūṣaka*’s role was limited to the so-called “prelude” (*pūrvaraṅga*). A difficulty is, however, that the oldest extant dramatic fragments, dating roughly from about 150 A.D., force the conclusion upon us “dass zu Aśvaghōṣas Zeit dem *vidūṣaka* die typische Rolle des Heldenfreundes durch feste Tradition bereits zugeteilt war”⁴⁰.

In view of the lacunary character of the tradition it can be understood that other scholars restrict themselves to the evidence of the classical drama – which, however, teaches us next to nothing about the prehistory and genesis of the drama. This position has succinctly been expressed in Renou’s words of resignation: “la préhistoire du théâtre – il faut décidément y renoncer”⁴¹.

³³ For Lüders and Konow see above, n. 7. Also Gawroński assumed a double source, religious and “bardic” (see Renou, p. 31 n. 2; not accessible to me). See further Renou, p. 33 n. 3 and Dasgupta, p. 642.

³⁴ See Thieme, p. 38.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

³⁶ Konow, p. 14: “Es wird allgemein angenommen, dass der *vidūṣaka* eine alte Figur der Volksbühne ist, die das klassische Drama aus den Volksstücken der fahrenden Tänzer und Mimen übernommen hat”; p. 15: “Der *vidūṣaka* ist eben eine Figur der alten Volksstücke, in welchen die Sitten und das Benehmen der höheren Kasten, besonders der Brahmanen genau so, wie heutzutage, verspottet wurden”; p. 47: “die der Mimenbühne entnommene Gestalt des *vidūṣaka*”. Cf. also Horsch, Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur, p. 343, where the *vidūṣaka* and the *viṭa* are characterized as “populäre Gestalten”. On the *viṭa* see below, p. 233ff.

³⁷ Thieme, p. 53; cf. p. 50.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 40, 53. Cf. Feistel, p. 119!

³⁹ This is, as far as I can see, contradicted by NŚ. 19.17–18C *vayasya rājann iti vā bhaved vācyo mahāpatih, vidūṣakena rājñi ca ceṭi ca bhavati 'ty api* [= 17.79–80 KM²].

⁴⁰ Thieme, p. 54. Similarly already Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 208 and Konow, p. 50.

⁴¹ Renou, p. 34.

2. THE BHĀRATĪYA NĀTYAŚĀSTRA: THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF THE DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE

Since the evidence that can be found in the existing classical dramas is so scarce, it is somewhat surprising that comparatively little use has been made of those indications about the origin of the drama which are contained in the handbook of dramaturgy known as the *Bhāratīya-nātyaśāstra*. This is the more striking as this Nātyaśāstra is rightly referred to in every discussion of the Sanskrit drama and as there exists a general agreement about its being anterior to all dramas that have been handed down to us, at least as far as its core is concerned. The explanation for this oversight is no doubt to be sought in the mythic form in which the obviously old and interesting tradition has been clothed. It is not difficult to understand the sceptical attitude of judicious European and Indian scholars. Sylvain Lévi was among the first to deny the value of this tradition when in 1890 he wrote: "La fable racontée par le Nātya-śāstra peut suffire à la pieuse crédulité des Indiens; la critique européenne ne saurait s'en contenter". Others have expressed similar opinions, e.g., S. K. De (1962): "The orthodox account of the origin of the Sanskrit drama, by describing it as a gift from heaven in the form of a developed art invented by the divine sage Bharata, envelops it in an impenetrable mist of myth; while modern scholarship, professing to find the earliest manifestation of a ritual drama in the dialogue-hymns of the *Rgveda* and presuming a development of the dramatic from the religious after the manner of the Greek drama, shrouds the question of its origin in a still greater mist of speculation"⁴².

⁴² See Sylvain Lévi, *Le théâtre indien*, p. 299, S. K. De in: S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Sanskrit Literature I* (see n. 1), p. 43 and cf. Adya Rangacharya, *Drama in Sanskrit Literature*² (1967), p. 31f. on the fifth Veda: "Every new school of thought in India has striven to claim and establish for itself the sanction of the Vedic texts. So a statement of the kind under question is more a tribute to the sanctity and hold of the Vedas than a reference to a fact". The notion of a fifth Veda has its roots in Chānd. Up. VII.1.2, where, elaborating on the traditional enumeration . . . *sāmavedo 'tharvāṅgirasa itihāsaḥ purāṇam . . .* (BĀUp. II.4.10, IV.1.2, V.5.11) the text has *ātharvaṇam caturtham itihāsapurāṇam pañcamam (vedānam . . .)*, which the BhāgPur. I.4.20 paraphrases as *itihāsapurāṇam ca pañcamo veda ucyate*. The Rāmāyaṇa I.1.77 calls itself "equal to the Vedas" (*vedaḥ ca sammitam*) and it is said that the Mahābhārata is considered a fifth Veda (A. Barth, *Œuvres III*, p. 473, M. Krishnamachariar, *History of class. Skt. Lit.*, p. 30) but except in a śloka found in the beginning and at the end (Mhbh. I.1.205, 56.17, XVIII.57* *kārṣṇam vedam imam vidvāḥ śrāvayitvā 'rtham aśnute*), the late interpolation after VII.173.107 *kārṣṇas tu pañcamo veda yan Mahābhārataṁ smṛtam* (in Ś. K₂. K₃. D₁ pp. 1059-1062) and some passages which are not explicit (I.1.208 *catvāra ekato vedā Bhāratam caikam ekataḥ*, XVIII.36* *vedāḥ sāṅgāḥ tathāikatra Bhāratam caikataḥ sthūtam*), the epic refers to itself as an *ākhyāna*, being the fifth after the Vedas; cf. III.55.230* *yo 'dhīte caturo vedān sarvān ākhyānapañcamān*, V.43.23 *ākhyānapañcamair vedaiḥ*. The expression "equal to the Veda(s)" also occurs in the Mahābhārata but only once, as far as I can see, with reference to the epic itself, and that in a spurious śloka occurring in a passage where the text "is in a chaotic condition" (I.56.27ff.). The relevant lines run as follows (I, App. 33, lines 17-19 = I.62.48-49 Bomb. ed.) *tathā Bhāratam ucyate [soil. ratnadhī], idaṁ hi vedaiḥ*

Only G. K. Bhat, as far as I know, has defended the (relative) value and importance of the data of the Nāṭyaśāstra with respect to the problem of the origin of the drama⁴³. It will be the object of the present study to show that on closer investigation the mythical story of this work turns out to lend itself much more to a rational interpretation than may appear at first sight. On the other hand an analysis of a number of details of the *pūrvaraṅga* discloses the existence of an underlying structure, which throws a new light on the historical background of the drama.

Although the work, in its present somewhat chaotic state of different versions, no doubt contains a great deal of later accretions, it is almost generally accepted that the original Nāṭyaśāstra, which was the prototype of the first part of the various versions now extant, must have been earlier than all the dramas known at present. Estimations vary between 150 A.D. (or earlier) and about 350 A.D.⁴⁴.

saṁmitam pavitram api cottamam, śravyam śrutisukham caiva . . . In the other passages it is mostly an epithet of *purāṇa* or *itihāsa*, cf. XII.326.106 *tebhyas tac chrāvayām āsa purāṇam vedasaṁmitam*, 335.7 *kathayisyāmi te sarvaṁ purāṇam vedasaṁmitam, jagau yad bhagavān Vyāso . . .*, 335.72 *etad Dhayaśiro rājann ākhyānam tava kīrtitam, purāṇam vedasaṁmitam yan mān tvam pariprechasi*, XVIII.5.43 *itihāsam imam puṇyam mahārtham vedasaṁmitam, śrāvayed yas tu . . .*, VII.173.101 *dhanyam yaśasyam āyusyam puṇyam vedaiś ca saṁmatam (!) . . . vyākhyātām śatarudriyam* (cf. the variant reading in XIII.17.169 . . . *stavam . . . svargyam ārogyam āyusyam dhanyam vedena saṁmitam*). As a v. 1. it also occurs in XIII.61.33 *vyāhrtim . . . vedasaṁmitām*. In the same way the Nāṭyaśāstra describes in its introductory part (1.4) how the munis interrogated Bharata about the Nāṭyaveda "equal to the Vedas" which he had composed: *yo 'yam bhagavatā samyag grathito vedasaṁmitaḥ, nāṭyavedaḥ . . .*

⁴³ See G. K. Bhat, *The Vidūṣaka* (1959), p. 19: "There is a tendency to disregard the evidence furnished by tradition, but this is unjustified. It is certainly necessary to sift all such evidence very carefully; but when such evidence is nearly all that we possess as a starting point of an inquiry it cannot be treated lightly, much less ignored, as it has been done. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata and the actual dramas must lead our way, I think, to the solution of the present problem".

⁴⁴ From the various guesses the following may be mentioned: Konow, *Das indische Drama*, p. 2 (with references) considered it to be only slightly earlier than Bhāsa (towards the end of the 2nd century A.D.? Konow, p. 51) and dated it to the 2nd century (p. 49). S. K. De, *Sanskrit Poetics I*², p. 31 wrote: "The lower limit of the date of Bharata's work, therefore, can be provisionally shifted back to the fourth or fifth century A.D., while it is almost certain that it existed in its present shape in the 8th century A.D. The upper limit cannot be put too early" (cf. p. 29 and p. 18 with references). P. V. Kane, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*³ (1961), p. 41 (with references) thinks "that before 300 A.D. there existed a work on *nāṭyaśāstra* ascribed to *Bharata* and dealing with the *rasa* theory and dramaturgy in general" (similarly p. 47). Cf. p. 20: "That most of the chapters now found were in existence from at least the 3rd or 4th century A.D. follows from several considerations"; p. 43: [These details] however, make it probable that the present Nāṭyaśāstra is not much older than the beginning of the Christian era"; p. 21: "the present Nāṭyaśāstra existed at least a century or two earlier than 350-450 A.D., i.e. in the 3rd or 4th century, if not earlier". Thieme, p. 52 (cf. p. 35) considers it to be earlier than Aśvaghoṣa and Bhāsa, i.e. earlier than the 2nd century A.D. Similarly H.-O. Feistel, *Das Vorspiel auf dem Theater*, pp. 138, 136 (after the beginning of the 1st century A.D.), *Sanskrita Ranga Annual VI*, p. 26 (the kernel of the NS. probably composed in

Since the tradition referred to above is mainly contained in the first chapter of the Nāṭyaśāstra, it is necessary, before proceeding to a close analysis of that chapter, to note that according to one scholar this is a late addition to the work. Since experience teaches us that the first and last portions of literary works have a greater chance of being additions than the main body, this opinion has to be taken seriously, the more so as it emanates from a well-known scholar. P. V. Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics³⁻⁴ (1961-71) assumes that chapter I, and probably the next four chapters, were added some centuries before the fifth century A.D. (p. 20) to raise the status of dramatic art (p. 22). They were, accordingly, "comparatively late additions" (p. 16, cf. p. 41). All this, it is true, is advanced as "a very tentative theory" (p. 18). I fail to see, however, any decisive arguments in favour of Kane's rather startling supposition⁴⁵. As will be shown below, the first chapter contains such Vedic reminiscences as to exclude a comparatively late origin. On account of its contents it is hard to imagine that it was originally composed as a separate work. It was obviously conceived as the introductory part of a work on dramaturgy. Since the sixth chapter immediately starts, without any introduction, with the theory of the *rasas*, this cannot possibly have been the original beginning of the Nāṭyaśāstra. If Kane were right, the first five chapters would have taken the place of the original introduction. Since, however, the *pūrvaraṅga* was of the highest importance because it comprised the ritual for the "consecration" of the stage, it is hard to believe that the hypothetical older version of the work had not contained a special chapter on this ritual. As a consequence of Kane's theory, the present fifth chapter, which deals extensively with the *pūrvaraṅga* and which is full of interesting details of an archaic character, would have been substituted for an older version. I fail to see any internal evidence for such a substitution. Both the first and the fifth chapter must to all appearances have belonged to the oldest stratum of the work. This conclusion is based on the analysis of these chapters which will be given in the next sections. As for the other chapters, only a critical analysis, which is outside the scope of this study, could determine their relation to these two chapters. From the point of view of composition, the second chapter, for instance, differs so much from the first that it is hard to believe that it has been composed by the same author. Possibly it has been inserted at a later date.

the 1st century A.D.). So there is a certain agreement about the first or second century as the time of origin of the older parts. The only exception is Manomohan Ghosh, who at first placed the date between 100 B.C. and 200 A.D. (which "cannot be far from the truth", Kane, p. 41f.), but in the second editions of his text and translation of 1967 changed this into 500 B.C. See The Nāṭyaśāstra ascribed to Bharatamuni, Vol. I², Introduction, p. lxxxii, Translation I², Introduction, p. lxxv. As for the date of Bhāsa it may be noted that only Pusalkar and D. S. Pathak have considered him to be earlier than the Nāṭyaśāstra (see the references in Feistel, Das Vorspiel, p. 128 n. 5).

⁴⁵ Quoted without comment by S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics I² (1960), p. 28 n. 1.

An analysis of the first chapter of the Nāṭyaśāstra leads to the conclusion that the drama, and in particular its performance as a *drōmenon*, had a religious character. In the introductory verses it is related how the *munis* asked Bharata to inform them about the origin, the aim and the performance (*prayoga*) of the *nāṭyaveda*, which is here called "equal to the (four) Vedas" (see n. 42). According to the story as Bharata then tells it, Indra and the other gods, at the beginning of the Tretayuga, asked Brahmā for a play (*kṛīdanīyaka*) which could be seen and heard⁴⁶. As they pointed out to him, knowledge of the four Vedas was not allowed to the Śūdras. There was a need, therefore, for a fifth Veda, to which all classes could be admitted (1.12 *sārvavarṇika*). After being sunk in meditation Brahmā then creates, on the basis of the four Vedas, the Nāṭyaśāstra as a fifth Veda. The fiction that it consists of elements of the four Vedas, the dramatic art being a combination of recitation (*pāṭhya*) from the Rīgveda, singing (*gīta*) from the Sāmaveda, dramatic action (*abhinaya*) from the Yajur, and sentiments (*rasāḥ*) from the Atharvaveda⁴⁷, can here be ignored.

The term *nāṭyaveda*, mostly used, it seems, in this connection, stresses the religious character of dramatic art as a Veda. As a *karmadhāraya* compound it means "the Veda that is the drama" and is almost synonymous with *nāṭya* alone⁴⁸. Thus it can be said that the Nāṭyaveda was performed⁴⁹.

It is clear that this legendary story is a fiction, and this has rightly been stated by Sylvain Lévi and others (above, p. 118). It is also evident

⁴⁶ 1.11 *dṛśyaṃ śravyaṃ ca yad bhavet*.

⁴⁷ 1.17 Cf., e.g., Nāṭyaśāstrasarāṅgraha 9 *pāṭhyam abhinayān gītām rasān saṅgrhya Pālmabhūḥ* (10) *vyarīracat trayam idaṃ dharmakāmārthamokṣadam . . . etc.*

⁴⁸ According to Feistel, p. 100, the word has been created in analogy to Rīgveda, etc. As the name of the fifth Veda, it is certainly parallel to those of the other Vedas but it is a *karmadhāraya* compound "the Veda that consists of the drama", cf. 1.20 *nāṭyasamījño hi vedāḥ*. As such it is almost synonymous with *nāṭya*, except that it stresses its religious character as a creation of Brahmā. It is, therefore, mainly used, it seems, in the first chapter and where *nāṭya* is contrasted with the other Vedas, e.g., 1.4 *yo 'yaṃ Bhagavatā samyag grathito vedasāmmitaḥ, nāṭyavedaḥ . . .* (in the versification of the BhNS (just as in the Mbh.) *samyak* functions as a stop-gap at the end of the odd pādas, cf. 1.51, 4.12, 5.30, 32, 179), 7 *śrūyatām, nāṭyavedasya sambhavo*, 16 *nāṭyavedaṃ tataś cakre*, 18 *vedopavedaiḥ sambaddho nāṭyavedo mahātmanā*, 19 *utpādyā nāṭyavedaṃ tu*, 102 *yo 'yaṃ Bhagavatā sṛṣṭo nāṭyavedaḥ sureccchayā* (: 4.12 *aho nāṭyam idaṃ samyak tvayā sṛṣṭam*), 22.22 *nāṭyavedasamutpannā vāg-aṅgā'bhīnayātmikā* (: 23 Rīgveda, etc.), 36.8 *nāṭyavedasya niścayam*, etc. For 1.6 *Bharato munīḥ, pratyuvāca tato vākyaṃ nāṭyavedakathāṃ prati* "about the tale of the Nāṭya-Veda", cf. 4.329C *bhūyaḥ kiṃ kathyatām viprā nāṭyayogavidhiṃ prati* "about the performance of the yoga that consists of the drama" (v. 1. *anyān nāṭyavedavidhiṃ prati* 4.320B²), 5.179 *bhūyaḥ kiṃ kathyatām samyaṃ nāṭyavedavidhiṃ prati* "about the performance of the Veda 'Drama'" (not "das Wissen, das das Schauspiel ist", Feistel, p. 100). *Vidhi* here means "Ausführung", rather than "Vorschrift" (Feistel, l.c.), cf., e.g., 5.60 *prayujya gītakavidhiṃ*, 142 *sarvam evaṃ vidhiṃ kṛtvā*, 163 *nṛtagītavidhiṃ prati*, 4.322 *bhāṇḍavādyavidhiṃ prati*.
⁴⁹ 1.55 *ayaṃ vedo nāṭyasamījñāḥ prayujyatām* "This Veda which bears the name 'Drama' must now be performed".

that, once the general pattern had been given, it could be elaborated, as has been done, e.g., in the last detail mentioned about the elements taken from the four Vedas⁵⁰. The question remains to be answered whether the fiction was a mere literary artifice or whether it had, in the last resort, a mythical character. At all events, the fact that the dramatic art is called a fifth Veda shows that the drama was considered to belong to the domain of religion, not to that of entertainment. Was this claim well-founded?

As is well known, in theory and practice a dramatic performance consisted of two parts, the *pūrvaraṅga* and the play proper. The importance of the *pūrvaraṅga* for the success of the performance and, accordingly, also for our insight into the original character of the drama, has not sufficiently been understood and translations such as “Vorspiel auf dem Theater”, inspired by Goethe’s reviving the Indian tradition, can easily lead to wrong conclusions. When the character of the *pūrvaraṅga* is defined as “a ritual of worshipping the gods”⁵¹ this is only a late and weak reflex of the ancient *drōmenon*, the performance of rites, which the *pūrvaraṅga* clearly was.

Fortunately the author of the Nāṭyaśāstra was still fully acquainted with these rites⁵² so that here we stand on solid ground. In later times, when the real nature of these “preliminaries” was no longer understood, the *pūrvaraṅga* must gradually have dwindled down to a short formality, although we have no direct information about this development. The older meaning of the preliminaries, however, was to enact the banner festival and transform the stage into the sacred world. The Nāṭyaśāstra states expressly that the “worship of the gods” (in which formula the ritual of the consecration is often summed up) is equal to the Vedic sacrifice (*yajña*)⁵³. The verb *yaj-* is also used to denote the “worshipping of the stage” (*raṅgapūjana*)⁵⁴, another term for the same consecration, and the Nāṭyaśāstra says that “hearing recitation, song and music is equal to words which express the contents of a sacred text of the Veda”⁵⁵.

⁵⁰ Similarly the story of Brahmā’s asking Indra to perform with the other gods the *itihāsa* which he has composed (1.19) and Indra’s refusal, after which Brahmā gives it to Bharata (1.22–25) and his hundred sons (1.40).

⁵¹ NŚ. 36.29 *devatābhārcanam*, 32.483 *devatāpūjādāhikārah*, Sāgaranandin, NLRK. 2159/250 (also quoted by Raṅganātha ad Vikram. I.1) *pūrvaraṅgo bhaved eṣām (bhavet teṣām) ādau devārcanavidhiḥ*, see n. 53.

⁵² Although sometimes he already defined the aims of a dramatisation in terms of entertainment. See below, n. 75.

⁵³ 1.126, 3.96C *yajñena sanimitam hy etad raṅgadvaitapūjanam*.

⁵⁴ 3.93C *samyag iṣtas tu raṅgo vai*. Cf. 5.112C, where the *nāndī* ends with the words *ijyayā cā ’nayā nityam priyantām devatā iti* (v. 1. *sarvadevatā* in one MS.). The word *ijyā* here probably refers to the *pūrvaraṅga*, although it is possible to take it as referring to the whole performance (Feistel, p. 70).

⁵⁵ In the last chapter (36.26C¹), which is probably a later addition: *pāṭhyam śrutvā tathā caiva gānam vādītram eva ca, vedamantrārthavacanaiḥ samam hy etad bhaviṣyati*. The reading of 36.21 KM² differs considerably (*vādyam nāṭyam tathā geyam citram vādītram eva ca, vedamantrārthavacanaiḥ . . .*) but *vādyam* is here redundant: it sometimes occurs, it is true, in conjunction with *gīta* (e.g., 5.149C *vādyagītāpramāṇena*,

While in such passages the drama, or the *pūrvaraṅga*, is equated to a sacrifice, others show that a *nāṭya* was sometimes performed simultaneously with a sacrifice, as in Harivaṁśa II.91.25 Bomb. ed. (No. 29F, 51–52 crit. ed.). “While the sacrifice there took place, a *naṭa* named Bhadrānāman satisfied the Maharṣis with a good performance”⁵⁶. It remains doubtful, it is true, what the word *sunāṭya* here exactly denotes. Keith rendered it by “his excellent power of representation” but a mere dance may have been meant. This is apparently the meaning of *nāṭya* in Kālidāsa’s *Mālavikāgnimitra*, where dancing is described as follows: “The Ṛṣis consider this to be a charming visual sacrifice for the gods . . . dancing, although of manifold forms, still is one and the same amusement for people of different tastes”⁵⁷. As is apparent from the last quotations the meanings “dance” and “dramatic performance” cannot always easily be distinguished. What is said of the former, is also true of the latter: both were regarded as a special form of sacrifice.

This was not a simple metaphor. The Vedic sacrifice was performed at the expense and for the benefit of the *yajamāna* by a group of officiating priests, who released him from ritual impurity. Just so the drama can be looked upon as a *drōmenon* accomplished by a group of actors at the patron’s expense, who is denoted either by more neutral names such as *prekṣākartṛ*, *prekṣāpati*, *arthapati*, *sabhāpati*, or by terms such as *bhartṛ* and *svāmin*, which also denoted the king⁵⁸. In the light of this parallelism the reward given to the actors⁵⁹ can be compared to the *dakṣiṇā* of the priests.

In connection with this suggestion a point on which there is much difference of opinion must here briefly be touched upon. This is the question as to the place of the drama in social life. In spite of its being intended for all classes (1.12 *sārvavarṇika*) the general impression one gets from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is that the author constantly had the king in mind as the common “patron” of performances, although it is nowhere stated that this patronage was a royal prerogative. The vagueness of the text in this respect is reflected by modern studies. As an illustrative instance

164 *gīte vādye ca nṛte ca*), but so does *pāṭhya* (cf. 2.21 *pāṭhyam ca geyam ca*) and *gītavādītre* “song and instrumental music” is attested as early as Chānd. Up. VIII.2.8.

⁵⁶ Harivaṁśa II.91.25 (8575) *tatra yajñe vartamāne sunāṭyena naṭas tadā, maharṣiṁś toṣayām āsa Bhadrānāme ’ti nāmataḥ*, quoted by PW. IV, col. 99 V, col. 194 (*Bhadra*), Hertel, WZKM. 24, p. 118, Keith, p. 48. The passage, however, occurs in the long episode *Pārijātaharāṇa* (II.65–97), which according to P. L. Vaidya (Crit. ed. I, p. xxxiii) must have been interpolated after 1050 A.D. and has, therefore, been excluded from the text of the critical edition (see App. I, No. 29F, line 51).

⁵⁷ Kālidāsa, *Mālavikāgnimitra* I.4 *devānām idam āmananti munayaḥ kāntam kratum cākṣusam, . . . nāṭyam bhinnarucer janasya bahudhā ’py ekam samārāadhanam*. Quoted by Thieme, p. 37.

⁵⁸ E.g., 5.111C *prekṣākartṛ*, Abhinavagupta I, p. 55 (ad 2.29 *svāmin*) *prekṣāpati*, 1.127 *arthapati*. For *sabhāpati* see Balbir, IJ. 6 (1962), p. 44. For *svāmin* see the foot-notes 64 and 68; *bhartṛ* occurs, e.g., 27.98.

⁵⁹ See M. M. Ghosh, note on his translation of 1.58–61.

may be quoted Keith's subchapter on "the Audience"⁶⁰. After having pointed out that the audience should be cultivated, critical and experienced, he goes on to say (p. 370):

"The rules for placing the patron at whose bidding the drama is performed, Sabhāpati, and his guests, are elaborate⁶¹. He sits himself on the Lion Throne, the equivalent of the royal box, with the ladies of his harem on the left, and on the right the personages of highest importance, such as the vassal princes of a great king like Harṣa. Behind the latter are the treasurer and other officers, and near them the learned men of the court, civil and religious, including the poets, and in their midst the astrologers and physicians. On the left again are the ministers and other courtiers; all around are maidens of the court. In front again of the king [!] are Brahmins, behind the bearers of fans, radiant in youthful beauty. On the left in front are the reciters and panegyrists, eloquent and wise. Guards are present to protect the sacred person of the sovereign [!]. How far the dramas were viewed by the public in general we cannot say; the rules regarding the play-house contemplate the presence of Īūdras, but that is a vague term, and may apply to a very restricted class of royal hangers-on. We have the general rule that barbarians, ignorant people, heretics, and those of low class should not be admitted, but such prescriptions mean very little".

It may be added that BhNŚ. 2.46–53 mentions four particular pillars relating to the four social classes in a context where the cosmic meaning of the playhouse is stressed.

This quotation illustrates how in these discussions the patron and sponsor is almost automatically identified with the king. The latter is supposed to attend the performance⁶² and to decide to which actor the *patākā* (prize) is assigned⁶³.

The way the ritual prescribed for the building of a playhouse and that of the *pūrvaraṅga* were performed had a direct favourable or unfavourable effect on the king and the whole country. In the discussion of the prescriptions of how to measure out the future theatre with a "white string", it is said "when the string is broken in half, the king will certainly die; when it is broken into three pieces a political disorder will arise in the country"⁶⁴. This is reminiscent of the rules for erecting the

⁶⁰ The Sanskrit Drama, p. 369ff.

⁶¹ Keith here refers to Saṅgītaratnākara 1327ff., S. Lévi I, p. 375ff. and Kāvyaṁimānsā p. 54f. For the seats for Śūdras in the theatre see, e.g., Keith, p. 359.

⁶² See, e.g., 2.59 *purohitam nṛpatim caiva bhojayen madhupāyasaiḥ*, 3.83 *nṛpater nartakīnām ca kuryād dīptyabhivardhanam, abhidhyotyā sahā 'todyair nṛpatim nartakīḥ tathā* (84) *mantrapūtena toyena punar abhyukṣya tām vadet: mahākule prasūtās ca guṇaughaiḥ cā 'py alamkṛtāḥ!* (85) *yad vo janmaguṇopetaṁ tad vo bhavatu nityasaḥ, evam uktvā tato vākyam nṛpater bhūtoye budhaḥ* (86) *nāṭyayogaprasiddhyartham āśiṣaḥ samprajojayet.*

⁶³ See 27.77 *ghātā yasya tv alpā samkhyātāḥ siddhayaś ca bahudhā syuḥ, viditām kṛtvā rājñe tasmai deyaḥ patākā tu* (78) . . . *siddhyadhike tu patākā samasiddhau vā 'jñayā nṛpateḥ* (79) *atha narapatīḥ samaḥ syād ubhāv api tu lambhanīyau tau.*

⁶⁴ 2.29 *ardhacchinne bhavet sūtre svāmīno maraṇam dhruvam, tribhāgacchinnyā rajjvā rāṣṭrakopo vidhīyate* "If the string is broken into two pieces, the king will surely die; when broken into three pieces, the string causes political disorder". Since the context deals with disasters befalling the country, *svāmīn* must refer to the king as *prekṣāpati*. It may be conjectured that in Abhinavagupta's time it was no longer

Indra-banner⁶⁵. The pillars of the playhouse must be auspicious for the king⁶⁶ and the *jarjara* is implored to give victory and prosperity to the king⁶⁷.

In view of these facts it is natural to interpret the word *svāmin* in 2.29⁶⁸ not only as the patron (*prekṣāpati*, as Abhinavagupta glosses it), but more specifically as the king. It is no doubt true that “der Spielgeber (*sabhāpati*) ist häufig ein Fürst oder eine andere hervorragende Persönlichkeit”⁶⁹. All such general statements, however, which are bound to be vague because our sources are so, do not answer the basic question, viz., Is it at all conceivable that in older times other persons than the sovereign were entitled to organize and sponsor a performance which had such an influence on the whole country and its king? Again and again the Nāṭyaśāstra says that the rites, e.g. those for the consecration of a new playhouse, are of immediate importance for the king, who will either be threatened by his enemies or conquer them⁷⁰. Also the ritual preparations on the stage must be duly performed so as to be auspicious for the king⁷¹. Even in the last chapter, apparently of later date, the “prosperity of the king” is mentioned in connection with the *nāndī* (introductory prayer)⁷². All this need not, it is true, imply that the theatre had necessarily to be built by a king but the first clear statement to the contrary that I know of, dates from about 1200–1300 A.D., when Śāradātanaya wrote that “the audience in this theatre should be only males, consisting, besides the king, of proprietors of other theatres

self-evident that the patron was the king. Indirectly his gloss would seem to confirm the conclusion which will be drawn below (n. 73) from Śāradātanaya (about 1200–1300 A.D.).

⁶⁵ See VarBS. 42.58 *acchinnarajjum . . . utthāpayel lakṣma*.

⁶⁶ NŚ. 2.61 *abhimantrya yathānyāyaṃ stambham utthāpayec chuciḥ : yathā 'calo girir Merur Himavānāṃ ca yathā 'calaḥ* (62) *jayāvaho narendrasya tathā tvam acalo bhava !*

⁶⁷ NŚ. 3.81 *jayam cā 'bhyudayaṃ caiva pāṛthivāya prayaccha naḥ*.

⁶⁸ For Lévi's and Konow's theory that *svāmin* is a Sanskrit translation of *murunḍa*, title of the Śāka kings, and the conclusions drawn from it see Keith's summary (p. 71). P. V. Kane, while objecting that in the Nāṭyaśāstra *svāmin* is prescribed as a term of address for the prince royal (19.12 *yuvarāja*, see History of Sanskrit Poetics³, p. 41), disregards the fact that, e.g. at 3.93: 94 *svāmin* is used as synonym of *nṛpa* (see n. 71). A similar case is 2.29 (see above, n. 64). This use as a term of address for the king is sanctioned by the Sāhityadarpaṇa VI.144 (431), which, however, restricts its use to the servants (*bhṛtya*).

⁶⁹ Konow, p. 8.

⁷⁰ NŚ. 3.87 *homaṃ kṛtvā yathānyāyaṃ havir mantrapuraskṛtam* (88) *bhī(n)dyāt kumbhaṃ tataś caiva nāṭyācāryaḥ prayatnataḥ, abhinne tu bhavet kumbhe svāmināḥ śatruḥ bhayam* (89) *bhīnne caiva tu vijñeyaḥ svāmināḥ śatrusaṃkṣayaḥ*. For the meaning of these verses see below, p. 162ff.

⁷¹ NŚ. 3.93 *samyag iṣṭas* (consecrated) *tu raṅgo vai svāmināḥ śubham āvahet* (94) *purasyā 'bālavyādhasya tathā janapadasya ca, duraiṣṭas tu tathā raṅgo daivatair duradhīṣṭhitaḥ* (95) *nāṭyavidhvamsanaṃ kuryāt nṛpasya ca tathā 'śubham*.

⁷² NŚ. 36.24C¹ *yāvat taṃ pūrayed deśaṃ dhvanir ātodyasaṃskṛtāḥ, na sthāsyanti hi rakṣāṃsi na ca viḥnavināyakaḥ* (25) *āvāhe ca vivāhe ca yajñe nṛpatimaṅgale, nāndīśabdān upaśrutyā hīmsrā naśyanti sarvadā*. Cf. 5.110 *praśāstv imāṃ mahārājaḥ pṛthivīm ca sasāgarām*.

(*para-mandapika*) and the chief citizens”⁷³. The lack of explicitness of the older sources, however, leaves room for divergent opinions.

As for the occasions on which the drama was performed, they are not conclusive as regards the personage of the patron. What the Nāṭyaśāstra says of dancing may have been generally true of dramatic performances: ‘In general dancing is by nature liked by every one; and dancing is declared to be auspicious on the occasion of marriage, child-birth, reception of a son-in-law, joyous religious festivals, etc.; dancing is also called a source of amusement’⁷⁴. Although some occasional expressions such as “it creates beauty” or “giving amusement”⁷⁵ seem to refer to a purely aesthetic appreciation, the indications pointing to an originally ritual character of the performance are too strong to be questioned on this ground. In this connection the following summary of some of Schärer’s conclusions about the Ngaju Dayak should be noted: “. . . among the Ngaju Dayak the two months between the old and the new year, when all the agricultural tasks are finished, are considered the most proper time for contracting marriages. It is the time between the expiry of one period and the beginning of another in the existence of the world: the time of a new creation. This is also the period in which the community celebrates its major religious feasts. The *tree of life* is then erected, later to be destroyed again. All sorts of *contests* are organised and *theatrical performances* held. The wedding is one of these major religious feasts, for to be married means to enter a new stage of the sacred life. It is the same kind of event as birth, initiation and death . . .” (J. J. Ras, *Bijdr. Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 109 (1973), p. 453f. Italics his).

For determining the character of the ancient performances the number of spectators is naturally important. The interpretation of the prescriptions for the building of a theatre is, however, notoriously a moot point. The wording of the text lends itself to very divergent explanations. M. M. Ghosh arrives on the basis of his interpretation at the conclusion that the theatre which the author had in mind can at best have accommodated about four hundred spectators⁷⁶. He, therefore, assumes that “dramatic spectacles meant for the common people were held in the open halls

⁷³ Bhāvaprakāśana, p. 295, line 10. The Nāṭyaśāstra differs from Śāradātanaya in that it refers to the presence of *stribālamūrkhāḥ*, see IIJ. 16, p. 243 n. 10.

⁷⁴ NŚ. 4.269 *prāyeṇa sarvalokasya nṛttam iṣṭam svabhāvataḥ, maṅgalyam iti kṛtvā ca nṛttam etat prakīrtitam* (270) *vivāha-prasavā’vāhapramodā’bhyudāyādiṣu, vinodakaraṇam caiva nṛttam etat prakīrtitam*.

⁷⁵ Cf. 4.268 *śobhām janayati*, 1.120 *vinodajananaṁ loke* (cf. 4.270 *vinodakaraṇam*, quoted in the preceding foot-note, 5.165 *rāgaṇanaka*). See also 2.21 *yasmāt pāṭhyam ca geyam ca sukham śravayataram bhavet*, which, however, more concerns the technical aspect of acoustics in the play-house.

⁷⁶ Ghosh, Translation, Introd. p. li; Mankad, *Ancient Indian Theatre* (1950), p. 11, considered two possible solutions, viz. 500–600 or 20,000 spectators for the smaller type of theatre, and 1500 or 25,000 for the larger one. The possibility of a covered building accomodating 20,000 or 25,000 spectators cannot seriously be considered. The mere comparison with the open-air theatres of Greece is sufficient to show

called the Nāṭ-mandir (Nāṭya-mandira) in front of temples, or in a temporarily devised theatre under the cover of a canopy, as in the case of the modern Bengali Yātrās which seem to have unmistakable resemblance and connexion with the ancient Indian Nāṭya described in the NS” (p. li). As far as I can see, this is pure speculation, without any support of the Nāṭyaśāstra, which everywhere seems to refer to a walled building⁷⁷. Nowhere in this text can a confirmation be found for the existence of separate buildings “for the common people” – a distinction also made by Mankad⁷⁸ – in addition to the regular playhouses. Since the lack of precise information has naturally led to all kinds of speculations, it may be added in conclusion that also Keith’s words to the effect that “At great festivals, when plays were given in the temples, there must have been admission for as many as could be crowded in” cannot be substantiated with the evidence at hand. The Nāṭyaśāstra, at least, does not mention, as far as I can see, any other place for performances than the playhouse especially built and consecrated for it. That temples have been used for this purpose is just possible but cannot be proved [cf. p. 241].

The final conclusion to be drawn from the facts mentioned is that the classical Sanskrit drama must have been composed and performed for an *élite*. As far back as 1890 Sylvain Lévi already pointed out what high requirements the spectators had to meet: “Tous les spectateurs ne sont pas aptes à goûter le rasa; c’est une sorte de récompense qu’il faut mériter par une étude assidue des poèmes et par des impressions saines et délicates accumulées pendant les existences antérieures”⁷⁹ and Winternitz rightly characterized the drama as “das wertvollste Erzeugnis der höfischen Kunstdichtung”⁸⁰. This has been the conclusion of most scholars. Only

that the technical problems of such huge buildings could hardly have been mastered in ancient India but, even apart from this negative argument, the indications pointing to a comparatively small audience are sufficient to dismiss Mankad’s alternative.

⁷⁷ The Nāṭyaśāstra uses, without any perceptible distinction, the terms *nāṭyāgāra* (34.79C¹ = 24.53 KM²), *nāṭyaveśman* (2.2, 4, etc.), *veśman* (2.10, 20), *nāṭyamaṇḍapa* (2.3, 6, 18, 25, cf. 14.1), *maṇḍapa* (2.8, 17, 19), *nāṭyagrha* (2.31, 3.1), *prekṣāgrha* (2.7, 12, 21), *geha* (2.23) and, as a very general, non-specific, term *bhavana* “building” (2.11). All these terms denote covered buildings. Cf. also Lévi II, p. 62, Jones, JAOS. 93, p. 288.

⁷⁸ See D. R. Mankad, *Ancient Indian Theatre* (1950), p. 23: “the *Śilparatna* tries to describe the Nāṭyamaṇḍapa which was usually attached to the Royal palace, while the Nāṭyaśāstra describes the usual theatres which were mostly meant for the ordinary people”. Macdonell’s supposition (in *A History of Sanskrit Literature* [1900], p. 352) that in the Indian Middle Ages plays were performed in the concert-room (*saṅgītaśālā*) of royal palaces was rejected by Haraprasad Shastri, J. and Proc. As. Soc. Bengal 5 (1909), p. 353, who also referred to the term *prekṣāgrha*, Prakrit *pekḥhāgharaa*. But see S. Lévi II, p. 62.

⁷⁹ See *Le théâtre indien*, p. 258.

⁸⁰ See *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur* III, p. 160. Similarly J. K. Balbir, IJ. 6 (1962), p. 44: “it is obvious that Sanskrit drama was intended to be a drama of the *élite*, written by master-artists, played on special occasions by finished actors, and enjoyed by qualified persons. It was a refined product religiously presented as an offering before a discriminating audience”.

Konow, after stating "In dem klassischen Drama wird es überhaupt vorausgesetzt, dass das Publikum ein gebildetes ist", then adds the words "Auch das grosse Publikum hat aber ohne Zweifel eine gewisse Kenntnis von den technischen Mitteln der Schauspieler gehabt"⁸¹. Whoever has read the definition of the *prekṣaka* in BhNŚ. 27.49ff. and considered it in connection with the other data will question the correctness of this speculation. In its origin the drama was rather a ritual performed on the initiative, in the presence, and for the benefit of the king.

3. BHĀRATĪYA-NĀṬYAŚĀSTRA CH. I: DATE AND PARTICULARS OF THE LEGENDARY FIRST PERFORMANCE

After these general introductory remarks our first task will be to consider more closely the legendary story as related in chapter I of the Nāṭyaśāstra. It runs as follows: At the request of the gods, Brahmā composes the Nāṭyaveda as a fifth Veda, which contains the quintessence of all four Vedas and is open to all social classes. He then asks Indra to give, with the gods, a performance of the legend (*itihāsa*) he has composed (1.19–23) but Indra refuses because the gods are, according to him, incapable (*aśakta*) and unfit (*ayogyā*) to learn and perform a drama. Indra says that this is rather a task for the "wise men who know the secrets of the Veda" (*vedaguhyajñā munayah*). Brahmā then orders Bharata to rehearse the drama with his hundred sons to the accompaniment of song and instrumental music (1.24ff.). The implication of this part of the story is obviously that in the *nāṭya* human beings enact rôles which were designed for gods: the drama is a "divine comedy", in the sense that cosmic events are presented on a human scale.

When Bharata informs Brahmā that the rôles have been studied and asks for further instructions, Brahmā says: "Just now an important moment has arrived for the performance. The auspicious banner festival of the great Indra has just begun. On this occasion now perform this Veda which is called Drama! Then, at that banner festival (celebrated) on the occasion of the slaying of the Asuras and Dānavas, at that festival of the victory of the great Indra, where the gods were assembled in joy, I first uttered a Benediction (*nāndī*) with blessings, which was full of variation as it consisted of words of the eight categories and which were approved of by the gods. Thereafter I arranged an imitation of how the Daityas were defeated by the gods, which was full of altercation, tumult, mutual cutting off and piercing (of limbs)"⁸².

From these lines there emerges a picture which, although it is a projection of actual practices backwards into a primordial time, still bears testimony to the preservation of recollections of earlier stages of the Sanskrit drama. To begin with, this first performance was a re-enactment of the cosmogonical strife between Indra and the Asuras, and by repeating the defeat of this group the "creation" of the world was again actualized.

⁸¹ Konow, p. 8.

⁸² See n. 145.

This performance was *baddha*, which must mean "arranged", since "composed" or "devised" (Ghosh) would seem out of the question here (see n. 144). If so, however, the question as to what exactly had been rehearsed by Bharata remains unanswered. It seems that the author of these lines was primarily thinking of the art of acting, rather than of memorizing a text. Anyway, the presentation of the cosmogonical event can only have been meant as a reiteration of the act of creation, that is, as a renovation of the world. It was, accordingly, a religious act *par excellence*, a *drōmenon* in the proper sense of the word.

This first performance is here connected with a religious ceremony, Indra's banner festival, which is here represented as a celebration of Indra's victory over the Asuras. This is confirmed by some of the oldest texts which deal with this festival and trace the origin of its ritual back to a primordial fight between Indra and the Asuras. Thus Varāhamihira (c. 490–587 A.D.) in his *Bṛhatsamhitā* 43 (42).1–7 relates how the gods at one time, unable to conquer the Asuras, appealed to Brahmā, who then advised them to ask Viṣṇu for the *dhvaja*. When Viṣṇu gave this banner to the gods, Indra placed it upon his chariot and with the help of the *dhvaja* he defeated his foes⁸³. The mythical situation is the same as in the Churning of the Ocean (Mhbh. I.16.28–31), where Brahmā stands above the parties but Viṣṇu, at Brahmā's request, gives the gods strength (although he says that he will give it to *all* who participate in the battle, an ambiguity which can hardly have been unintentional, see p. 105). A fairly similar version (stemming from the same source, Garga) occurs in the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa II.154.1–17, where Indra after his victory worships the banner himself (v. 17).

On the basic meaning of the banner festival, which is in some texts represented "as a royal rite for the benefit of the king's welfare and superiority in war"⁸⁴ opinions differ⁸⁵. The character of the "banner",

⁸³ Cf. Abhinavagupta ad NŚ. 1.54: *dhvajamahasya viśeṣanadvāreṇa sambhavam darśayati 'nihatāsurasādānava' ityādīnā* "By means of the attribute 'after the Asuras and Dānavas had been killed, etc.' he indicates the origin (occasion) of the Banner Festival". The importance of the detail in the version of the *Bṛhatsamhitā* that Indra places the banner upon his chariot seems never to have been noticed. Cf. 43.5 *taiḥ samstutāḥ sa devas tutoṣa Nārāyaṇo dadau caiṣām, dhvajam asurasuravadhūmukhakamalavanatuṣāratīkṣṇānśum* (6) *taṁ Viṣṇutejohavam aṣṭacakre rathe sthitāṁ bhāsvati ratnacitre, dedīpyamānaṁ śaradī 'va sūryaṁ dhvajam samāsādyā mumoda Śakraḥ* (7) *sakiṅkiṅjālapariṣkṛtena śrakchatraghaṇṭāpītakānvitena, samucchritenā 'mararād dhvajena ninye vināśam samare 'risaiṅyam*. It has been argued elsewhere that the banners on the chariots were, indeed, representatives of the Indradhvaja (see IJ, 11, p. 154ff., particularly p. 156, where this passage is quoted). Gonda, JAOS. 87 (1967) p. 416, quotes BhNŚ. 3.11ff. (*pūjā* to the *jarjara*) for the ritual aspects of the festival, but that passage only describes the function of the *jarjara*, whereas here the cosmogonical character of the festival is stated *expressis verbis*.

⁸⁴ Gonda, JAOS. 87 (1967), p. 414.

⁸⁵ See J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation, Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Religions- und Kulturgeschichte, Fest- und Volkskunde* (Zürich-Leipzig, 1937), III, where all the relevant texts are quoted in German

mostly a bamboo pole (*veṇumayī yaṣṭi* VarBS. 43.8)⁸⁶, as a representative of the *axis mundi* cannot, however, be questioned. Its association with Indra's cosmogonical act, for which evidence can be found in comparatively early texts⁸⁷, then admits of no other interpretation than that the erection of the pole was a ritual re-enactment of Indra's "propping up" the sky by means of the cosmic pillar (see IJ. 11, p. 156, 16, p. 248ff., and cf. p. 141). The banner festival was, consequently, a reiteration of the creation and must as such have inaugurated the new year, that is, a new life in a renovated world.

Two points of detail may here be stressed. First, several texts, both of earlier and more recent times, confirm that the banner festival was organized by the kings⁸⁸. Secondly, many passages mention "spectacles"

translation. The only two texts which Meyer had dismissed as worthless (p. 55 n.), viz. the Kauśikasūtra and Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa, have since been carefully translated and commented upon by J. Gonda, JAOS. 87 (1967), pp. 413-429. For the archaeological evidence see Odette Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne* (Paris 1954), pp. 96-98. While in Meyer's opinion the Indra-tree is a solar and vegetation tree (p. 134), which brings good luck and prosperity in this world and in the next (p. 116), Gonda, p. 416, formulates his conclusion in these words: "it is not only a seasonal rite and a form of tree cult, but also assures the king's victoriousness and invincibility". This is no doubt correct as far as it goes. It should only be observed that the hypothetical meaning of the world pillar, which may be inferred from its cosmogonical origin, viz. a symbol of life and guarantee of the cosmic order, may be formulated in very different ways according to the specific context in which it occurs. It is not advisable, therefore, to attach too much importance to a single passage. Thus Mhbh. I.57.17 has *iṣṭapradānam uddiṣya śiṣṭānām paripālīnīm*, which I translate "for the fulfilling of desires [as a *kalpataru*] and protective of the learned men" (otherwise Meyer, p. 4: "indem er sie als erwünschte Liebesgabe bezeichnete"). The Harivaṃśa 59.6, however, says (*meghāḥ*) *sasyam janayanti navāmbubhiḥ* "(the clouds) cause the corn to grow by fresh rains", which reflects the main concern of an agricultural community. This has a striking parallel in the *medhi* which according to the (apparently late) Kṛṣiparāśara was erected in the field to ensure the growing of the corn (*sasyavṛddhikara*, see IJ. 11, pp. 156, 214f.). This belief may have been as authentic as the kings' belief that the pole brought them victoriousness. Cf. Brhatsaṃhitā 43.11, where the *pūjā* to the Indradhvaja is performed *narendrair balavṛddhijayārthibhiḥ* and, somewhat parallel to it, the *pūjā* to the *jarjara*, NŚ. 3.13: *nṛpasya vijayam śaṃsa ripūṇām ca parājayam, gobrahmaṇaśivaṃ caiva nātyasya ca vivardhanam*, which is instructive for the variety of intentions. Gonda, p. 418, discusses the possibility that the "emphasis laid on victoriousness" may be of later date. The different character of the various literary sources may to a large extent have determined the different emphasis. In conclusion it may be observed that the character of the Indradhvaja, connected as it was with a very definite cosmogonical myth, was so specific that by subsuming it under the general heading of "tree worship" one runs the risk of missing the point. It was not the tree as such but the renewing of the world which it symbolized that stood central (see Odette Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, pp. 93-98). See also n. 123.

⁸⁶ See Meyer, p. 18.

⁸⁷ Viṣṇudharmottarap. II.154.17: *tato labdhajayaḥ Śakraḥ pūjayām āsa tam dhvajam*. For a translation of the whole passage see Meyer, p. 6ff.

⁸⁸ Cf. Kauś. Sūtra 140.1 and, e.g., Mhbh. I.57.19 *tataḥ prabhṛti cā 'dyā 'pi yaṣṭiyāḥ kṣitīpasattamāḥ, praveśaḥ kriyate . . .*, Harivaṃśa 59.18 *tasmāt prāvṛṣi rājānaḥ sarve Śakraṃ mudā yutāḥ, mahaiḥ sureśam arcanti . . .*

(*prekṣāh*, *prekṣaṇīyāni*) performed during the festival⁸⁹ but, as Meyer observes, this refers to performances by dancers, wrestlers (*malla*) and jugglers. These festivities for the ordinary people clearly did not include dramatical performances and must, therefore, be kept distinct from the latter: they were limited to such popular amusement of the town's people as could take place in the streets⁹⁰. In all discussions of the origin of the Indian drama, as far as I can see, the essential fact has constantly been overlooked that the characteristic difference between the drama and all popular amusements is that the former had to be performed in a *consecrated building*.

About the time of the year when this festival was celebrated the texts have very divergent statements but Hopkins's conclusion still holds good: "it is at least clear that the festival occurred after the rains had ceased and when New Year's was celebrated, for in its installation it is especially said that the feast takes place at the end of the year (*gate samvatsare*)"⁹¹. According to the Prakrit description quoted in n. 90 the festival apparently lasted eight days, the last one being the full moon, when the king himself worshipped the tree. The next day the tree was

⁸⁹ Cf. Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa II.155.17 *sthāne sthāne deyaḥ prekṣyā* (read *prekṣā*, Meyer). . . . *pūjāyena nrtyagītena rātrau Śakraṁ narādhipaḥ* (21) *nītyaṁ nrtyena gītena tathā Śakraṁ ca pūjāyeta*, Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa 139.25 *prekṣaṇīyāni* (Meyer, p. 38). Meyer (p. 10 n. 4) does not attach much importance to this detail because performances are mentioned with reference to every festival. As for the reading *nrtya-*, the distinction made by M. Krishnamachariar, History of Classical Sanskrit Literature (Delhi, etc. 1937/1970), viz. "The *Nritya* is gesticulation without language, or pantomime; and the *Nrīta* is simple dancing" is, it seems, of later date. It is based upon Daśar. 1.12–13. In Vedic texts the nouns corresponding to JB. II.69 *yad vīṇāyām gīyate, yan nrtyate* "what is sung to the accompaniment of the lute, what is danced" are *gīta* and *nrīta*, cf. VS. 30.6 (VSK. 34.6) *gītāya śailūṣām*: TB. III.4.2.1 *nrīttāya śailūṣām* and VS. ibid. *nrīttāya sūtām*, ŚB. III.2.4.6 (*yā . . .*) *nrīttām gītām upāvavāta*, KB. XXIX.5.16 *nrīttām gītām vāditaṁ iti* (v. 1. *nrīttām* only in the printed editions of Lindner and Poona). The Nāṭyaśāstra seems still to continue the Vedic usage, e.g. 5.163C (158B) *nrītagītavidhiṁ prati*, v. 1. *gītanrītagītavidhiṁ p.*, 164 *gīte vādye ca nrīte ca*, 22.47 C. *bahunrītagītā*, and cf. 5.12, 93, 131, 148, 159C, but Mhbh. XIII.109.36 has (a)*psarasām nrītagītavīnādite*, only the South Indian manuscripts reading *nrīta-*. See n. 107.

⁹⁰ Cf. the Prakrit story of Domuha (Jacobi, Ausgewählte Erzählungen in Māhārāshṭrī, p. 40,18): *tao naccanti naṭṭiyāo, gījjanti sukairaiyā kavvabandhā, naccanti narasamghāyā, disanti dīṭṭhīmohaṇāim indayālāim, indayālīṇo ya dijjanti tambolāim, khippanti kappūrakūṅkumajalachaḍḍā, dijjanti mahādāṇāim, vajjanti muiṅgāiōjjāim* (drums and instruments). *evam mahāmoeṇa gayā satta vāsarā* "Then the nautch girls danced, poetic compositions written by good poets were sung, the multitude of men danced, juggler's tricks that bewildered the eyes were seen, and betel and other things were given to the juggler; a great deal of camphor, saffron, and water was thrown, great gifts were given, drums and other instruments were sounded. Thus seven days passed in great joy". (Translation by J. J. Meyer, Hindu Tales, p. 143). Cf. also the southern recension of the Mahābhārata I.57.507*, line 5ff. *sabhājayitvā rājānam kṛtvā narmāśrītāḥ kathāḥ, ramānte nāgarāḥ sarve tathā jānapadāiḥ saha, sūtās ca māgadhās caiva naṭante naṭanartakāiḥ*, etc., Var. Brhatsamhitā 43, 9–10. For similar festivals (*stūpamaha*) when a stūpa was erected see Avadānaśataka I, p. 385.7.

⁹¹ See Hopkins, Epic Mythology, p. 126. See below, p. 133.

pulled down and despoiled by the people. It can be inferred that the pole was not allowed to remain standing during the waning moon⁹². The main reason, however, why the tree had to be removed will be discussed below. In spite of his correct statement that the tree was erected at the end of the year Hopkins finally explained the date of the festival from the fact that it coincided with the period of warfare⁹³. There are, however, no indications to show that this can have determined the date of the Indra-festival⁹⁴.

The oldest text, the Kauśikasūtra 140.2, gives as the exact date of the "entrance" of the tree into the town the eighth day of the light fortnight in the month Prauṣṭhapada (now: August-September) or Aśvayuja (now: September-October)⁹⁵. Although in later times the former of these two dates was considered to be characteristic of the Sāmavedins⁹⁶, it is here found in a work of Atharvavedins. The same date is given by Garga, the source of the relevant passages of the Bṛhatsamhitā and the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa (Meyer III, p. 17). The passage which is of particular interest has been handed down in the commentary on VarBS. 42 (43).7: "Garga has it as follows: 'When the Asuras saw the *dhvaja*, they lost, dispelled by the power (*tejas*) of the *dhvaja*, consciousness and, defeated in the battle, they ran away and disappeared (or, perished). After the thousand-eyed god had slain the Asuras with his *vajra* (see below, p. 142) in the month Bhādrapada (*māse Bhādrapade*) . . . the victorious one [read *sajitvā*? Cf. RS. III.12.4] went on his way to heaven, under Śravaṇa, accompanied by the twice-born'". The last words might be interpreted as referring to the end of the seasonal worship of Indra but according to most sources it is the erection of the pole, not its pulling down, that takes place "under Śravaṇa" (Kauś.S. 140.3, see Meyer III, p. 113f., Gonda pp. 418 and 420). Later texts give somewhat earlier or later dates, ranging from June-July to November-December⁹⁷.

⁹² Similarly Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa II.154. See J. J. Meyer, p. 113.

⁹³ Hopkins, p. 125f.: "Indra's day comes when the rains are over and the roads are fit for war, and is the new moon's day of Saumya *māsa* (probably the end of September: *amāvāsyā Śakraadevatā* 5,142,18)", but he thinks it is impossible to identify this "Indra's day" with the festival. Similarly Gonda, JAOS. 87 (1967), p. 420, who, however, rightly opposes the last statement; see p. 417 n. 25.

⁹⁴ Although the end of the rains is traditionally known as the season for military expeditions, the months most suited for warfare are according to Mhbh. XII.101.9f. *Mārgaśīrṣa* and *Caitra*, accordingly January-February (or December-January, see n. 112) and March-April (or February-March): *caitryāṃ vā mārgaśīrṣyāṃ vā senāyogaḥ praśasyate, pakvasasyā hi pṛthivī bhavaty ambumatī tathā. (10) naivā 'tiśīto nā 'tyuṣṇaḥ kālo bhavati Bhārata.*

⁹⁵ See Gonda, p. 420.

⁹⁶ See Auguste Barth, Oeuvres 4, p. 175 (quoting Jacobi), Rām. IV.27.10 Gorresio (21.10 N.W. recension) = IV.27.34 crit. ed.

⁹⁷ See Meyer, p. 113ff., especially p. 117f., Gonda, p. 420, Bhat, The Vidūṣaka p. 33, M. M. Ghosh, Nāṭyaśāstra, Translation p. 9 n. 1 (ad 1.53). According to Keith, Sanskrit Drama, p. 41, the Indra-pole was originally the Maypole, erected at the end of the winter. In India, however, he thinks there has been a shift, the pole having lost its original character and symbolizing "a thanksgiving for Indra's victory

This is sufficient proof to show that the festival was not originally connected with either the culmination of the sun ("Johannisfest")⁹⁸ or war-fare.

On the other hand, there is one passage in the Mahābhārata where (as Hopkins has pointed out) the actual meaning of the ceremony is stated in unambiguous terms. In the story of the Cedi King Vasu, to whom Indra had given the bamboo pole (*yaṣṭi vaiṇavī*) and who was the first man to celebrate the pole festival, it is said: "In order to worship Śakra on earth the protector of the earth (the king) ordered the pole to be brought into the town *when the year was gone*"⁹⁹. In explanation of this statement the commentator Nilakaṇṭha adds the following note: "Nowadays one can still see the 'entrance' of the pole in Mahārāṣṭra and other countries at the end of the year"¹⁰⁰. Since he here clearly refers to a custom that he knew from personal experience (that is, about 1675 A.D.) and since the words *gate saṁvatsare* of the Mahābhārata cannot possibly mean anything else but "at the end of the year" the doubts expressed by Meyer¹⁰¹ are unfounded.

It is a well-known fact that Indian sources mention different dates for New Year's day¹⁰². As has long been observed, a radical change took place

over the clouds, the Asuras". This mythological reconstruction will have to be restated: although it is indeed likely that the Indra-pole has always symbolized the beginning of a new year, the date of New Year's day must have shifted considerably after the oldest Vedic period.

⁹⁸ Meyer, p. 118.

⁹⁹ Mhbh. I.57.18 *tasjāḥ Śakrasya pūjārtham bhūmau bhūmipatis tadā, praveśam kārayām āsa gate saṁvatsare tadā.*

¹⁰⁰ Nilakaṇṭha: *saṁvatsarānte yaṣṭipraveśo 'dyāpi Mahārāṣṭrādīṣu dṛśyate.*

¹⁰¹ See Meyer, Trilogie III, p. 4 n. 2. Meyer refers to Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa 139.7, where it is said that Vasu brought the pole (*yaṣṭi*) from heaven to earth during the rains, whereas verse 9 says that in later times people imitated him in worshipping the pole *varṣānte*. Here a translation "innerhalb der Regenzeit", which Meyer (pp. 36, 114) diffidently suggests, is plainly out of the question. Cf., e.g. Tamil *varuṣāntam* "close of the year". Similarly the commentator on Viṣṇupurāṇa V.10.24 *prāvṛṣi*: "at the end of the rains" (see n. 115).

¹⁰² Cf., e.g., Weber, Jyotiṣam, pp. 27 (partly the winter solstice), 78, Oldenberg, Kleine Schriften pp. 28, 647 (spring as the first month), 663, Hillebrandt, Romanische Forschungen 5 (1889-90), p. 310ff., Rituallitteratur p. 115, Vedische Mythologie I², p. 33, II², pp. 182, 137, Macdonell-Keith, Vedic Index II, pp. 157, 412f., J. Hertel, Das indogermanische Neujahrsopfer im Veda (1938), passim, J. Filliozat, L'Inde Classique II, p. 724, C. d'Onofrio, Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni 24/25 (1953-54), p. 141f. (with ample references), Claus Vogel, ZDMG. 121 (1970[1971]), pp. 284-326, and the references given in IIJ. 4, p. 219 n. 7. According to the Jaim.Ūp.Br. I.35.5ff. the year ended with *hemanta* and began with *vasanta*, which constituted the two "ends" of the year. With the first (*hemantā*) the three seasons of the Manes ended and with *vasantā* began the three seasons of the gods (ŚB. II.1.3.1). [For similar speculations about the two Phalgunis and the two *atirātras* being the end and the beginning see A. Barth, Oeuvres 4, p. 174f. and, e.g., TS. VII.5.1.3, ŚB. VI.2.2.18]. The rainy season and the autumn are in the middle of the year (ŚB. VIII.3.2.7-8), which is not contradicted by RS. VII.103.9 (as Jacobi suggested): see, e.g., Oldenberg, Kl. Schr. p. 659f. According to Benveniste, Mnemes Charin I, p. 34, the word *hāyanā* "year" shows that the year began with

in the post-Vedic period, as a result of which the month Mārgaśīrṣa (now: mid-November to mid-December), in older times the tenth month of the calendar, became the first¹⁰³. It is not necessary for the purpose of this study to inquire further into the historical background of this change. Even though it may be true that certain Vedic sacrifices began after the rainy period¹⁰⁴, the fundamental change in the calendar of “L’Inde des moussons” seems to have taken place in post-Vedic times. In the Mahābhārata Mārgaśīrṣa is clearly the first of the months¹⁰⁵. In

the winter (**hayan* : Av. *zayan*). This might be compared with Goth. *twalibwintrus* “twelve-years-old” (and Latin *bimius*, *trimus*, Cl. Vogel, p. 284) but the Rigvedic poets use *śatām śarādāḥ* just as much as *śatām hīmah*. Cf. *bahvīh sāmāḥ* and ŚB. XII.8.2.35 “All the seasons are first, all of them intermediate, and all of them last”. Anyway, after a system of six seasons had been formed by splitting up *hemantā* into *hemantā* and *śiśirā* (Claus Vogel, p. 286), the winter ended with *śiśirā*, and New Year’s day (*ekāṣṭakā*, AS.III.10, TS. IV.3.11.3, etc.) fell on the eighth day of the second half of Māgha, that is, January–February or formerly December–January (*māghakṛṣṇāṣṭamī*, Sāyaṇa ad AS. III.10.12 and introduction to that hymn). See Hillebrandt, *Rituallitteratur*, p. 94ff., Ved. Myth. I², p. 30, Caland, note on translation of PB. V.9.1, Keith, note on transl. of TS. VII.4.8.1 (p. 607 n. 3), Vedic Index I, p. 119, II, p. 157. This is, accordingly, round about the winter solstice, which fell on the new moon of Māgha (KB. XIX.1.28 *māghasyā ’māvāsya’yām*). According to Caland New Year’s day was (“as it seems”) a week after Ekāṣṭakā. But from MS. II.5.9 (59,3), IV.2.3 (25,4), KS. XIII.3 (182,15), AS. III.10.2 and 8, etc. it is apparent that it was New Year’s night. In different calendars, again, the new year began in the month of Phālguna, i.e. February–March (cf., e.g., the commentary on PB. V.9.8 *etad uktam bhavati : yadā phālgunīpaurṇamāsyā uttara-phālgunīyuktā tadā phālgunamāsah samvatsarasayā ’dir bhavati ’ti*) or in Caitra, i.e. March–April. Cf. ĀpŚS. XXI.15.4–6, Keith’s note on his translation of TS. VII.4.8.1–2, Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration* p. 7f. and further Oldenberg, *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 647f., 663ff. (from 1894–95), C. d’Onofrio, l.c. (either the 8th or the 9th day of *śuklapakṣa* of Phālguna, or full moon of Caitra, or 8th or 9th day of *śuklapakṣa* of Jyaiṣṭha or Āṣāḍha; or generally in the period between spring and summer, cf. ŚB. XIII.4.1.2–3 (according to some one should begin the *Aśvamedha* in summer, for summer is the *kṣatriya*’s season, but it is strongly advised to begin it in spring, which is the *brāhmaṇa*’s season).

¹⁰³ PW. V (1868), col. 745: “der zehnte (später der erste) Monat im Jahre”. But now Mārgaśīrṣa is the ninth month of the Hindu year, the first being Cait (Caitra), i.e. March–April. The Fasli year, however, commences with the month of Āsin (see Grierson, *Bihar Peasant Life*, p. 274), that is, in September–October. Similarly the Tamil–Malayalam year begins on the first day of the month of *Cittirai* (*Mēdam*) (10–14 April). Divination, however, here takes place at the time of the winter solstice during *poṅkal*, which marks the first day of the month of *Tai* (January) as the beginning of a new period. The festival on the preceding day (*pōki(p)paṅṅikai*) is celebrated in honour of Indra ([L. Dupuis et L. Mousset], *Dictionnaire tamoul-français s.v. poṅkal*), who is here, accordingly, associated with the winter solstice. The Cola kings, on the other hand, celebrated the *Intiraviḷavu* festival in the month of *Cittirai*.

¹⁰⁴ The *cāturmāsya* offerings started in autumn, in winter or at the beginning of the rainy season. See Jacobi, *Festgruss* f. Roth, p. 71, Hillebrandt, *Rituallitteratur*, p. 115f.

¹⁰⁵ Mhbh. XIII.109.17–19 (the twelve months from Mārgaśīrṣa to Kārttika), Appendix I, 12 line 5 (in a list of *upavāsas*; it starts with *dvādaśyām Mārgaśīrṣe tu*), 12A line 5 (an enumeration of the months starting with Mārgaśīrṣa). Cf. *Bhagavadgītā* 10.35 *māsānām mārgaśīrṣo ’ham ṛtūnām kusumākaraḥ*.

this later calendar the main caesura in the annual cycle is the period of the rains (about mid-June to mid-September), which coincides with Viṣṇu's sleep. Viṣṇu's awakening on the eleventh day of the light half of Kārttika (26 October)¹⁰⁶ inaugurates a new beginning and is celebrated accordingly¹⁰⁷. The circumstance that Kārttika, the last month of the year, became the specific time for dicing may also reflect this change in the calendar. At least, Held's observations¹⁰⁸, if correct, would lead to the supposition that the time for dicing must originally have been what he calls "the period of the great tribal feasts". In terms of Vedic social life this would mean: in the period of the contests round about New Year's day. In any case, there can be no doubt that the rainy season, was a most inauspicious time, surrounded by taboos¹⁰⁹.

As such it was, as far as its character is concerned, comparable to the Vedic annual period of *am̐has*. This must have been at the end of the year and must have formed the transition to the new year, as may be inferred from the fact that the thirteenth (intercalary) month was called "lord of the *am̐has*"¹¹⁰. Just as the Vedic period of cosmic chaos was followed by New Year's day, so the rainy period of classical India formed – at least, in some of the later calendar systems – the transition from the old to the new year. Diwali, which is celebrated on the day of the new moon of Kārttika¹¹¹, is nowadays often regarded as a New Year's festival.

That the rainy season, as the main caesura in the annual cycle, has come to determine the beginning of the new year is, therefore, probable. The month Mārgaśīrṣa, it is true, does not coincide with the end of the rainy season since nowadays it corresponds with mid-November to mid-December. At the time of the Saurasiddhānta (\pm 350 A.D.), however, which can in this respect be considered contemporaneous with the Mahābhārata, the same month must have corresponded with October-November¹¹².

When the dates of the various parts of India are taken into account, the rainy season lasts from mid-June to mid-October and comprises,

¹⁰⁶ Thus Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* I², p. 361.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie III*, pp. 10, 34 (*jāgaraṇa*), 20, 39 (*jāgara*), and, e.g., *Skāndapurāna* VII.4.24.35 *nṛtyam̐ gītam̐ ca kartavyam̐ sam̐prāpte jāgare tava*.

¹⁰⁸ See G. J. Held, *The Mahābhārata*, p. 243ff., especially p. 277.

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., the references in Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², p. 447, Held, *The Mahābhārata*, pp. 190, 185, 197 (not entirely correct in detail, for the rainy season was certainly not the time of war). The taboo on travelling in the rainy season was not restricted to Buddhists but also valid for Brahmins, cf., e.g., *VaikhDhS.* III.7.8.

¹¹⁰ See *VS.* VII.30, XXII.31, *VSK.* VII.12.1, XXIV.18.1 *am̐hasaspatāye*, *MS.* III.12.13 (164,7), *TS.* I.4.14.1, VI.5.3.4, *ĀpŚS.* VIII.20.8 *am̐haspatyāya* (= *samsarpa*, *Ved. Index II*, p. 162).

¹¹¹ On the day of the new moon (*amāvāsya*) of Kārttika, that is, on the fifteenth day of the dark half of that month. See, e.g., *Platts, A Dictionary, Hindūstāni and English*, Meyer, *Trilogie II*, p. 90 n. 1 and *passim*, Hopkins, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* 5, pp. 868, 870.

¹¹² According to J. Filliozat, *L'Inde Classique II*, p. 723.

accordingly, the months Āṣāḍha, Śrāvaṇa, Bhādra (or Prauṣṭhapada) and Āśvina (or Āśvayuja)¹¹³. The same months are according to J. J. Meyer (p. 117) mentioned in the texts as those in which the Indra-pole is erected. This would imply that the last and the first months of the calendar are not mentioned at all. In the beginning of his study (p. 5), however, Meyer had rightly pointed out that two editions of the southern recension of the Mahābhārata state that the Indradhvaja was erected in Mārgaśīrṣa, the first month of the year. The Telugu and Grantha manuscripts collated for the critical edition read, indeed, instead of the pāda I.57.18d (*praveśam kārayām āsa*) *gate samvatsare tadā*, the two pādas (502*) *sarvotsavavaram tadā Mārgaśīrṣe mahārāja*. The two manuscripts in Malayalam script, on the other hand, add after v. 18 the line (503*) *Mārgaśīrṣe mahārāja paurṇamāsyām mahāmaham*. The erecting of the Indra-pole in Mārgaśīrṣa was apparently a regional custom, which was restricted to South India. In modern Kerala (as Dr. A. Govindankutty informs me), every third year in Kumbham (= Phālguna, March-April) members of low castes bring a bamboo pole into the town, where it is erected in front of the temple of Bhagavatī and adorned with garlands, etc. After some weeks, but before New Year's day (14 april) the pole is removed. There are no doubt numerous parallels in Northern India. One of them is found in the Kṛṣiparāśara, a late text on agriculture, in which it is said that in the month Mārga (vv. 214, 219) a pole (*medhi*, vv. 214-220), adorned with flags (*vaijayantīsamāyukta*, v. 217), is erected in the fields to protect the crops (see IJ. 11, p. 214ff.).

It is clear, however, that older texts, such as the Kauśika Sūtra, give much earlier dates for the Indra festival and that it is not self-evident that our conclusion, based upon the words *gate samvatsare* of the Mahābhārata, also holds good for these texts. According to the Sūtra the festival was celebrated in one of the two months preceding the last month of the year of the later calendar. These months, Prauṣṭhapada and Āśvayuja, now correspond to August-September and September-October of our calendar, but must have corresponded to July-August and August-September about the beginning of our era. In this case it cannot be questioned that the festival was celebrated *during* the rainy season, whether or not this coincided with the new year. The term *prāvṛṣi* "during the rains" remained traditional in later texts, although there are indications to show that actually the date had changed¹¹⁴. Thus the commentator of the Viṣṇupurāṇa interprets *prāvṛṣi* as meaning "at the end of the rains"¹¹⁵. This curious explanation, which obviously reflects a shift of the date, is confirmed by the Harivaṃśa, which itself specifies the term *prāvṛṣi* by "in the autumn . . . at the end of the rainy season"

¹¹³ See Petersburger Wörterbuch and Monier-Williams s.v. *prāvṛṣ*.

¹¹⁴ Viṣṇupurāṇa V.10.24 and Harivaṃśa 59.18 crit. ed. (*prāvṛṣi*).

¹¹⁵ Similarly, e.g., Odette Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, p. 95. See also above n. 101 (*varṣānte*) and n. 100 (*samvatsarānte*).

and says that the pole is adorned with "autumnal flowers"¹¹⁶. It would seem, accordingly, that *prāvṛṣi*, a remnant of older times, had come to be used as a rough indication for that period, at the end of, or after, the rainy season, which, marked by such festivals as Diwali and Viṣṇu's *jāgara* and extending to Mārgaśīrṣa, had in later calendar systems become the beginning of the new year. It may be noted incidentally that in Vedic India as well as in Tibet, the New Year's festival was celebrated by contests and especially by chariot-races¹¹⁷. See also above, p. 126. In modern India chariot-racing is also reported to occur on the occasion of the erection of a certain pole¹¹⁸.

A few words must also be said about the conclusions which J. J. Meyer has drawn from his careful and important study of the evidence of the Sanskrit sources. His view that the banner festival celebrated the culmination of the sun and that the Indra-pole corresponds to the Johannisbaum in Germany has already been briefly mentioned above (p. 133). This theory was strongly influenced by Hillebrandt's interpretation of Indra as a solar deity, which Meyer had accepted as "one of the few certain results of Vedic research"¹¹⁹. There is some contradiction in his interpretation since, on the other hand, he thinks that none of the Vedic poets was still aware of this character of Indra¹²⁰. That Meyer must assume considerable shifts in the date of the festival, from the summer solstice to the period of the rains¹²¹, is clear. The main objection, however, that must be raised to his theory is that, while Hillebrandt disregarded the cosmogonical character of the Vṛtra-myth, a correct appreciation of that character necessarily implies that Indra was a seasonal god connected with the ceremonies that accompanied the transition from the old to the new year. In this light the importance of the classical testimonies to the effect that, whatever the calendar date of New Year's day may have been, Indra's festival was to be celebrated at the end of the year, should not be underestimated. Meyer ignored their vital importance or tried to explain them away. In this connection also Keith's explanation must be mentioned. In his opinion the drama was "once connected with

¹¹⁶ Harivamśa 59.18 *tasmāt prāvṛṣi rājānaḥ* etc. (see n. 88) but 31 *śarat* (cf. 47, 50, 55 referring to war), 57 *śaradi . . . prāvṛṣaḥ kṣaye*, 58 *puṣpaiḥ śaradīkaiḥ*. As for 62.46 *varṣārdhe ca dhvajo nityam* see Meyer III, p. 132.

¹¹⁷ See IIJ. 4, p. 217ff., 5, p. 169ff.

¹¹⁸ See Meyer, Trilogie III, p. 134 on "Wettrennen und Wettspiele" in connection with the erection of the pole of Zāhir-Pir.

¹¹⁹ Trilogie III, p. 134: . . . zu den wenigen ganz festen Erkenntnissen vedischer Forschung . . . gehört meines Erachtens die Entdeckung Hillebrandts, dass Indra ursprünglich ein Sonnengott sei", p. 135 "dass Indra ein Sonnen-, ein Frühlingsgott ist", p. 118 "was seit Hillebrandt für jedermann feststehen müsste". Hence his conclusion (p. 118): "Der Indrabaum wäre also genauer ein Johannisbaum" and further p. 191, where Indra is said to have been "ursprünglich ein Sonnen- und Frühlingsgott und ein Befruchtungsgenius". The word "ursprünglich" here seems to point to a certain reservation that is lacking in the other passages.

¹²⁰ See p. 150 n. 1, which would seem to contradict p. 135.

¹²¹ See pp. 117f., 192.

the ceremonies of bringing in the Maypole from the woods at the close of the winter, but in India the rite fell at the close of the rainy season, and the ceremony was converted into a festival of thanksgiving for Indra's victory over the clouds, the Asuras"¹²². There is no reason to doubt that in the old Aryan tradition Indra has always been the god who conquered the Asuras, and that the festival has always been a symbolical reiteration of that cosmogonical event¹²³. As such it must originally have been celebrated during the winter solstice or the spring equinoctial, before the beginning of the new year had been shifted and the tenth month had become the first (see nn. 102 and 103).

In conclusion a few words must be said about the relation of the god to his pole (*yaṣṭi*) or banner (*dhvaja*). This relation is more problematic than might seem at first sight. The tree or bamboo pole is, first and foremost, considered a symbol (*cihna*, *lakṣman*) of the god. During the ceremony of the *pūraṇa* (also called *prapūraṇa*, *āvahana*, *adhivāsana*)¹²⁴, however, the god was called upon to be personally present in his symbol. Hence it is that the texts often refer to the tree as the god himself¹²⁵, a belief that is still found as late as circa 1000 A.D. in Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Nāṭyaśāstra¹²⁶. Although the identification of the god and his symbol is, accordingly, an established fact¹²⁷, the question of to what extent the Indra-pole was identical with the cosmic tree (*axis mundi*) calls for some comment. The world pillar which keeps heaven

¹²² See Sanskrit Drama, p. 41.

¹²³ Otherwise Gonda, JAOS, 87 (1967), p. 418: "... it is not beyond possibility that Indra's relation to the pole-festival is not 'original', that Indra and—especially among the higher classes—with him also the emphasis laid on victoriousness etc. were associated with it at a comparatively recent date". As has been pointed out above (n. 85) the position taken in the present study is different in that the interpretation here given of the festival implies that quite different meanings could be attached to the festival according to the social situation. The emphasis which certain texts lay on victoriousness is easily explainable from the fact that the pole was erected by the king and that his personal interest naturally centred around victory in warfare. For the rest, the interpretation of the festival from an Aryan myth does not exclude that other, apparently parallel, forms of "tree-worship", such as that of the *medhi* referred to in n. 85 may have been rooted in historically different religious traditions, even without an explicit *interpretatio Arica*. Even as far as Indra's banner festival is concerned, it seems that the authors were no longer aware of any connection with the Vedic Creation myth. At that date the distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan, if it can then be made at all, is only of historical interest.

¹²⁴ See Meyer III, p. 23 n. 3 and Gonda, p. 421.

¹²⁵ See Meyer III, pp. 13, 46, 52 n. 2, 101, 117, 131 n. 1, 134.

¹²⁶ In his commentary (l. 54) on *dhvajamahāḥ . . . mahendrasya* (see n. 83) he writes: *dhvajasye 'ndrasya mahanaṁ pūjanaṁ yatra sa dhvajamahāḥ. dhvajamahāsya viśeṣanadvāreṇa sambhavaṁ darśayati "nihatāsuraḍānava" ityādinā*, "The Dhvajamahā (occurs) where there is a *mahana* (worshipping) of the *dhvaja*, that is, Indra. In the words 'after having killed the Asuras and Dānavas' etc. (the author) indicates by means of an attribute the origin (occasion) of the Banner Festival". Here *Indrasya* can only be meant as an explanation of *dhvajasya*.

¹²⁷ See IIJ, 11, p. 155, Gonda, JAOS, 87, p. 422.

and earth apart has risen in the beginning of the creation as the result of Indra's demiurgic act but is nevertheless *not* identical with the god. It is sufficient to point out that the world tree, which symbolizes the totality of the universe, is conceived as standing in the centre of the cosmos, whereas Indra is in the cosmic classification localized in the East (or South, when Agni occupies the place in the East). While this was the god's normal place in the system, the situation may have been different during the few days when the pole was erected and Indra was particularly prominent. The central point is Indra's character of a seasonal god, which has been inferred above¹²⁸ from his mythic role. As early as the Rigveda, indeed, Indra is not only said to place his sign (*ketu*)—which may be interpreted as referring to his world pillar—but he is also said to be himself that *ketu*¹²⁹. Except during that short period round about New Year's day, however, the cosmic tree has little to do with Indra but all the more with the gods of totality, such as Viṣṇu¹³⁰, with whom in modern times the holy fig tree (*pīpal*) in the centre of the village is sometimes identified¹³¹. This situation may be illustrated by a reference to the *jarjara*, which on the Indian stage represented the cosmic tree like the *kekajon* or *gunungan* in the Javanese wayang. Although according to the Nāṭyaśāstra it is Indra who gave the *jarjara* to the actors as a token of his contentment (see p. 144) — a trait which might be an innovation of the author of this chapter¹³² — the gods who reside in the five nodes of the bamboo pole do not comprise Indra, as they are Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Skanda and “the great Nāgas Śeṣa, Vāsuki and Takṣaka”¹³³. It has already been pointed out elsewhere¹³⁴ that Viṣṇu's position between the high gods of the upper world and the deities of the nether world¹³⁵

¹²⁸ See above, pp. 10, 30, 34, 42.

¹²⁹ See IIJ.11, p. 155f. on the use of *ketu* from the Rigveda onwards. It is still used for Indra's *dhvaja* in, e.g., Varāhamihira's Bṛhatsamhitā 43.2.

¹³⁰ See Indological Studies—William Norman Brown, p. 150, IIJ. 13, p. 283, Gonda, JAOS. 87, p. 417, Viṣṇuism and Śivaism, p. 6 and passim.

¹³¹ For the identification of the Pīpal and Viṣṇu see Dubois-Beauchamp, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, 3rd ed., p. 652f.

¹³² Cf. BhNS. 1.59 *prītas tu prathamam Śakro dattavān svadhvajam śubham*. In passages which deal with the banner festival it is Viṣṇu who gives the *dhvaja* to the gods, cf. Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa II.154.13 (cf. v. 17 where Indra worships it!), Varāhamihira's Bṛhatsamhitā 43.5 and Devīpurāṇa (Meyer III, p. 8). The difference is, of course, that in the cosmogonical strife Indra needed the help of Viṣṇu who, as a representative of the unity of the universe, guaranteed that the dichotomy of upper and nether world which Indra was about to create would nevertheless be comprised in an all-encompassing totality (see p. 102). In the Nāṭyaśāstra, however, Indra is the central god of the festival. Moreover the *jarjara*, although said to be the *dhvaja*, seems also to be a form of the *vajra*, which is Indra's weapon. See following note and n. 141.

¹³³ See BhNS. 1.92ff. *jarjare tu vinikṣiptam vajram daityanibarhaṇam, tatparvasu vinikṣiptāḥ surendrā hy amitaujasaḥ* (93) *śiraḥpārśve tato Brahmā dvitīye Śamkaras tathā, tṛtīye ca sthito Viṣṇus caturthe Skanda eva ca* (94) *pañcame ca mahānāgāḥ Śeṣavāsukitakṣakāḥ, evam vighnavināśāya sthāpitā jarjare surāḥ*.

¹³⁴ See, e.g., IIJ. 13, p. 283.

¹³⁵ As for Skanda cf., e.g., his place in the *Vāstupuruṣa*, discussed by V. S. Agrawala,

is quite in line with his character as the connecting link between the two worlds, which is exemplified by the old Vedic simile of the arrow, the head of which is Agni, the shaft Soma, while Viṣṇu is the part by which the head is attached to the shaft¹³⁶.

The reason why Indra does not occur among the gods in the *jarjara* is that he does not belong to the centre. The interesting point is, however, that here a conflict between the seasonal function of the god and his usual place in the classification comes to light¹³⁷. The festival must have been a re-enactment of the god's primeval act of lifting up the sky and separating heaven from earth by means of the world pillar (*skambhá*). It need not be stressed that this is a modern explanation based upon what we think we know at this moment of Vedic religion as a whole: none of the texts that have been handed down speak of the festival in these terms. The general view of their authors may be summarized as follows: it is traditionally performed for the good of the country and its king, it should, therefore, not be omitted and be done in the right way, or else disaster may threaten the king and the country. There is only a difference in degree with the modern villagers who erect their Maypole every spring in the centre of a Dutch village, by the side of the Roman-Catholic church, for no other reason than that it has been done so from times immemorial. The meaning which people attach to such a ceremony may, of course, have changed several times. On the other hand, whoever

Matsyapurāna (Ramnagar, Varanasi, 1963), p. 347, viz. in the south-eastern corner, together with the witch Pūtanā. Skanda's localization in the cosmic centre requires a closer examination. For the place of the nāgas at the bottom of the world tree see Mhbh. V.101.2, VII.69.48 and IIJ. 8, p. 108, India Maior (Congratulatory Volume – J. Gonda), p. 151.

¹³⁶ See Indological Studies – William Norman Brown, p. 145 and cf. MS. III.8.1 (92,11) *Agnim śṛṅgam, Somaṁ śalyām, Viṣṇum kūlmalam*, KS. XXV.1 (102,12), KKS. XXXVIII.4 (208,5-243,1) *Agnim śṛṅgam, Somaṁ śalyām, Viṣṇum tejanam*, TS. VI.2.3.1 *tā iṣum sām askurvātā 'gnim ānīkam, Somaṁ śalyām, Viṣṇum tejanam*, ŚB. III.4.4.14 *Agnim ānīkam, Somaṁ śalyām, Viṣṇum kūlmalam* (here transferred from the *iṣu* to the *vāja*, see Schlerath, Orbis 24 [1975], p. 508), Mhbh. VIII.24.84 *iṣuś cāpy abhavad Viṣṇur jvalanaḥ Soma eva ca, Agniśomau jagat kṛtsnam vaiṣṇavam co 'cyate jagat* (which refers to the belief that all things in the Universe are characterized by either an Agni or a Soma nature, but that the world as a whole is at the same time identical with Viṣṇu as the god of the all-embracing totality), VII.173.58 *śaram kālāgnisamyuktam Viṣṇusomasamāyutam, 173.1457 * śalyam Agnim ca vai kṛtvā puñkhe Somam apām patim, sa kṛtvā dhanur omkāram sāvitṛm jyām Maheśvaraḥ* (cf. VII, App. 25.13 [=VII.202.77 Bombay ed.] *Viṣṇum śarottamam kṛtvā śalyam Agnim tathaiiva ca, Vāyum kṛtvā 'tha vājābhyaṁ puñkhe Vaiśvataṁ Yamam*), VIII.24.257* (=34.18–19 Bombay ed.) *Viṣṇum Somaṁ Hutāśam ca tasye 'ṣum samakalpayan, śṛṅgam Agnir babhūvā 'sya bhallaḥ Somo viśām pate, kūlmalaś cā 'bhavad Viṣṇus tasmīn iṣuare tadā* (the commentator Nilakanṭha here quotes MS. as the *śruti*), XIII.145.27 *Viṣṇum kṛtvā śarottamam, śalyam Agnim tathā kṛtvā puñkham Vaiśvataṁ Yamam*. Against Whitney's translation of AS. IV.6.5 (and PW. VII, 109) see Zimmer, Altindisches Leben, p. 300: *śṛṅga* is the tip (= *ānīka*), *apāśhā* the barb, *śalyā* the shaft, and *kūlmala* the "neck". Similarly Gonda, Early Viṣṇuism p. 35 n. 8.

¹³⁷ For the difference that may exist between a god's function and his place in the system of classification see IIJ. 13, p. 283.

wants to understand *the* meaning of a festival – thereby presupposing that it is possible, in that particular case, to find the original meaning – must come to the conclusion that what the villagers have to say about the meaning of their Maypole is of little help to him. The same is true of the, mostly post-Vedic, texts on which our information about the banner festival is based: either one restricts oneself to their explicit information and gives up every attempt at a real understanding of the underlying meaning of that festival, or one bases oneself on modern knowledge of the older religion and tries to interpret the facts accordingly. In the light of such an interpretation, then, it must be assumed that at the moment when Indra, standing in the centre of the Universe, separated heaven and earth, he was himself the *skambhá*. For the ambiguous relation between Indra and the world axis, cf. on the one hand RS. X.111.5 “the great sky he has propped with a pillar, the best supporter” and, on the other, AS. X.7.29–30, ASP. XVII.9.10, 10.1 “Skambha, I (we) clearly know thee to be contained entire in Indra” [or: I clearly know thee: all is set in Indra], “Indra, I (we) clearly know thee to be contained entire in Skambha”. The last words, taken from the well-known Skambha-hymn, can only refer to the banner festival, during which the world axis, in the shape of the Indra pole, could be considered an impersonation of Indra himself. It is clear, however, that the *Indradhvaja*, connected as it is with the re-enactment of a specific moment of Creation, is only a momentary *aspect* of the world tree. The banner festival celebrates the short moment when Indra coincided with the cosmic centre, but since he, as the protagonist of the Devas, stood for only one of the two moieties, the pole which was his symbol could not be allowed to stand any longer and was pulled down and thrown into the water at the end of the festival. There is a parallelism with the Christmas tree in Europe, and a contrast with the Maypole, which, at least in the Netherlands, is left standing the whole year in the centre of the village¹³⁸. Indra’s pole is associated with the inauspicious period of strife when the old year passed into the new year. In the new harmony after the close of that period there is no longer a place for that tree, which has to return to its origin, the primeval waters. Cf. AS. X.7.38,41 and the stanza VI.80.3, Paipp. XIX.16.13, which according to Atharvaveda Pariśiṣṭa XIX.1.10 should be addressed to Indra’s banner in case a vulture or a black bird alights on it: “In the waters is thine origin, in heaven thy home, in the middle of the sea and upon the earth thy greatness” (Paipp. “in the sea thy soul (*ātmā*), on earth thy greatness”)¹³⁹. The cosmic tree is, indeed, considered to have risen from the primeval waters and to remain rooted in the

¹³⁸ I refer particularly to the Maypole of Noorbeek (prov. Limburg, The Netherlands).

¹³⁹ *apsú te jānma diví te sadhásthanī samudré antár mahimā te pṛthivyām*. See, e.g., Bloomfield, SBE. 42, p. 501 and Gonda, JAOS. 87, p. 425, who explains *apsú* as the heavenly waters, the mythical prototype of the *Indradhvaja* having been in heaven (?).

subterranean ocean, while its top reaches into heaven, illustrations of which can be found in India and in Java¹⁴⁰.

The *jarjara* will be discussed in greater detail in a following section. Here it may be stated that, although Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra uses the term *dhvaja* in connection with Indra's victory over the Asuras and Dānavas and his festival (*dhvajamaha*), it is apparently necessary to distinguish between the *dhvaja* of the Indra-festival and the *jarjara* on the stage. Only the former could impersonate Indra, whereas the *jarjara* could not. Although it is said to be the *dhvaja*, it actually has the function of his *vajra*, as it is the weapon with which Indra destroys (*jarjarīkaroti*, BhNS. 1.70,72) the demons. It is this double function of the *jarjara* that justifies its being denoted by a distinct term. This is particularly clear when Bharata's account is compared with the fragment of Garga's work quoted above (p. 132). In the latter the Asuras are depicted as fleeing, frightened and losing consciousness at the sight of the *dhvaja*, whereupon Indra kills them with his *vajra*¹⁴¹. In the Nāṭyaśāstra, on the other hand, it is not only said that the Vighnas, as soon as they see the *jarjara* (1.74 *dr̥ṣṭvāiva jarjaram*) will flee, but also that Vighnas and Asuras are torn to pieces (1.73 *jarjarīkṛtāḥ*) by the same weapon (cf. p. 151).

If the presence of Indra in the *dhvaja* at the banner festival is due to his character of a seasonal god, his absence from the *jarjara* certainly does not prove that Indra's importance was already on the wane. On the contrary, from the fact that in the first chapter of the Nāṭyaśāstra he is still the central god it may be inferred that the author of this chapter, as far as his theological views are concerned, still stood in between the Vedic and the post-Vedic world. This circumstance makes it possible for modern research to reconstruct the religious background against which the older parts of the Nāṭyaśāstra were written.

4. THE "FIRST" DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE (NS. 1.51-59)

From the preceding section it will be clear that the authors of the oldest handbook on Indian dramaturgy considered the drama as having originally been a ritual re-enactment of creation, consisting of an imitation of Indra's victory over the Asuras¹⁴². The tale of the first chapter is essentially a cult legend, which explains the dramatical performance as

¹⁴⁰ See India Maior, p. 145 n. 2 (with references) and for the reconstruction of this aspect of Indian cosmology also IJ. 8, pp. 108, 116.

¹⁴¹ See the commentary on Var. Bṛhatsamhitā 43 (42). 7: *tathā ca Gargaḥ : Asurās taṁ dhvajam dr̥ṣṭvā dhvajatejaḥsamāhatāḥ, viśamjñās samare bhagnāḥ parābhūtāḥ pradudruvuh. tān vajreṇa sahasrākṣo māse Bhādrapade 'surān, ghātayitvā sajyeṣṭhāyām* (read *sa Jyeṣṭhāyām*) . . . Similarly Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa II.154.12 *dr̥ṣṭamātreṇa yeneha vidraviṣyanti Dānavāḥ*. See further Ch. I, notes 132 and 133 and below, p. 160.

¹⁴² This is not at variance with the fact that the theory of the Nāṭyaśāstra also takes into account the nature of the later drama, whose goal and character are defined by such terms and phrases as, e.g., 4.270 *vinodakaraṇam* or 36.11C *lokasya caritaṁ nāṭyam*. See n. 75.

a *drōmenon*, whose origin can be traced back to primordial time and which, for that reason, seems to have been considered a mystery¹⁴³.

The technical question as to whether the mythical first drama in Bharata's presentation was a full-fledged drama or an introductory part¹⁴⁴ is not relevant to our purpose. The Nāṭyaśāstra only says that it consisted of fight, tumult and mutual cutting off of members. The whole passage (NS. 1.51–59C), which is instructive when viewed in its context, is here given in full in translation (see p. 128): "Thus, after having well studied, together with all my sons as well as Svāti and Nārada, this drama (*nāṭya*) which was based on Vedas and Vedāṅgas, I approached with folded hands the Lord of the worlds (Brahmā) with a view to a performance: 'We have completely learnt the drama. Tell me what I shall do'. When the Grandfather heard this word, he answered 'An important (lit. great) time for the performance has just now (*ayam*) arrived: this is the time of the auspicious (*śrīmat*) banner festival of the great Indra. On this occasion now perform this Veda which bears the name Nāṭya'. Thereupon at that banner festival, (celebrated because) the Asuras and Dānavas had been destroyed, at the celebration of great Indra's victory where the gods were assembled in joy, I first performed (*kr-*) the Benediction (*nāndī*) with blessings, which was full of variation as it consisted of words from the eight categories and was approved of by the gods. Thereafter I arranged an imitation of how the Daityas were defeated by the gods, which was full of altercation, tumult, mutual cutting off and piercing (of limbs). Then Brahmā and the (other) gods, who were pleased at the performance and glad, gave us all sorts of paraphernalia (*upakuraṇa*)"¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴³ BhNS. 36.10C *tat sarvaṃ nikhilene 'daṃ nāṭyaṃ guhyaṃ nidarśaya*, 36.15C *pratyuvāca punar vākyāṃ guhyārthābhīnayaṃ* (thus the MSS.) *prati* "He answered them again with respect to the dramatic presentation, whose meaning is secret" and the next lines, which read in KM² (36.11) *kathayāmi kathāṃ guhyāṃ yaṃ mām pṛcchatha svratāḥ, pūrvarāṅgavidhānasya . . .* "I will tell you the secret tale for which you are asking me, O pious men, namely about the performance of the Pūrvaraṅga". [Similarly 36.15 B.]

¹⁴⁴ Abhinavagupta ad 1.57B: *tadanta iti, nāndyante parisamūptau, anukṛtīr iti nāṭyam, tatra ca baddhe 'ti guṇanikā* ["introduction to a drama"] *yojītā, na tu prayoga ity etac cāsat, tatpūrvottaravyāghātāt* ["contradiction"]. *pūrvam hy uktam: evaṃ nāṭyam idam ityādi nāndī kṛte 'tyantam* [51–56], *vaksyate ca* [58b]: *brahmādayaḥ prayogaparitoṣitā iti. tasmād baddhe 'ti prastāvitā, na tu niṣpādītā. prastāvanā tāvat prayukte 'ty arthaḥ, anye tv anukṛtīr iti nāṭyānukārarūpā prastāvane 'ty āhuḥ, "kṛtā tadante 'nukṛtīḥ" iti ca paṭhanti. etadupajīvanenai 'va cīrantanā kavayo "nāndyante sūtradhārah" iti pustake likhanti sma. kim prastāvitam ity āha yathā daityā iti, dīma-samavakāre-'hāmṛgādīnām anyatamaḥ prayogaḥ prastāvi 'ty arthaḥ. yady api Bharataputirair daśarūpakam abhyastam tathā 'pi na yugapat sarvaḥ prayoktum pāryata ity evam uktam . . .* [For *baddhā* cf. 36.71–73 C.].

¹⁴⁵ BhNS. 1.51C (KM², 53B) *evaṃ nāṭyam idam buddhvā sarvaṃ sutaiḥ saha* (52) *Svātīnāradasaṃyukto vedavedāṅgakāraṇam, upasthito 'haṃ lokaṣaṃ prayogārtham kṛtāñjaliḥ* (53) *nāṭyasya grahaṇam prāptam brūhi kim karavāny aham, etat tu vacanam śrutvā pratyuvāca Pītāmahaḥ* (54) *mahān ayaṃ prayogasya samayaḥ samupasthitāḥ, ayaṃ dhvajamahaḥ śrīmān Mahendrasya pravartate* (55) *atre 'dānīm ayaṃ vedō nāṭyasamjñāḥ prayujyatām, tatas tasmīn dhvajamahe nihatāsuraḍānave* (56) *prahṛṣṭā-marasaṃkīrṇe mahendravijayotsave, nāndī kṛtā mayā pūrvam āśīrvacanasamjūtā* (57)

This, then, is Bharata's account of the "first" performance of a drama. Some general conclusions that can be drawn from it have already been indicated above, p. 128. In a different context we shall meet with another account. For the present moment, however, the tale of the Nāṭyaśāstra has to be interrupted in order to study more closely the various presents of the gods.

5. THE PRESENTS OF THE GODS (NS. 1.59ff.)

As we have seen at the end of the preceding section, the gods, pleased with the performance by Bharata and his sons, gave all sorts of gifts to the actors. The Nāṭyaśāstra describes them as follows (1.59b-63): "First of all Indra, pleased, gave his glorious banner, and Brahmā the *kuṭilaka*. Likewise Varuṇa (gave) the golden pitcher (*bhṛṅgāra*), Sūrya the parasol, Śiva success (*siddhi*) and Vāyu the fan. Viṣṇu (gave) the throne (*siṃhāsana*), Kubera the head diadem (*mukūṭa*). [And Sarasvatī gave the gift of being well audible and visible]¹⁴⁶. And all the rest, Devas as well as Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Pannagas, very pleased in that gathering, the glad celestials, gave in accordance with their (?) different descent (*jāti*) and qualities¹⁴⁷ to my sons, according to the latter's various parts, the (appropriate) speech, the (various) psychic states, emotions, good looks, the right movements (?) and strength"¹⁴⁸.

In general, the presents are clearly emblems characteristic of the various gods, e.g., the banner given by Indra and the fan given by the Wind. As for the throne which is presented to gods and kings¹⁴⁹, it occurs in Buddhist iconography from the first century A.D. onwards and has been shown to be closely connected with the *yūpa* (sacrificial stake) and the cosmic centre¹⁵⁰. It is not surprising, therefore, that Viṣṇu, who is a god of the centre, offers the throne as his gift. The only exception is, at first sight, the parasol, which is presented by the Sun god, although it gives protection *against* the heat of the sun (cf. the synonym *ātapa-tra*). Abhinavagupta was apparently also struck by this anomaly but his

aṣṭāṅgapadasaṃyuktā vicitrā devasaṃmatā [v. 1. *vedanīrmitā*], *tadante 'nukṭir baddhā yathā Daityāḥ surair jītaḥ* (58) *sāmpheṣa-vidrava-kṛtā chedya-bhedyā-'havātmikā, tato Brahmādayo devāḥ prayogaparitoṣitāḥ* (59) *pradadur hr̥ṣṭamanasaḥ sarvopakaraṇāni naḥ . . .*

¹⁴⁶ This line is lacking in some manuscripts.

¹⁴⁷ Read *nānājātiguṇāśrayāḥ* for *-ān C?*

¹⁴⁸ 1.59b *prītas tu prathamam Śakro dattavān svadhvajam* (v. 1. *svam dhvajam*) *śubham* (60) *Brahmā kuṭilakam* (v. 1. *kamaṇḍalum*) *caiva bhṛṅgāram Varuṇas tathā* (v. 1. *-naḥ śubham*), *Sūryas chattraṃ Śivaḥ siddhim Vāyur vyajanam eva ca* (61) *Viṣṇuḥ siṃhāsanaṃ caiva Kubero mukūṭam tathā, [śrūvatvaṃ prekṣaṇīyasya dadau devī Sarasvatī]*, (62) *śeṣā ye devagandharvā yakṣarākṣasapannagāḥ, tasmīn sadasy atiprītā* (v. 1. *abhipretān*) *nānājātiguṇāśrayān* (63) *aṃśāṃsair bhāṣitān* (v. 1. *bhāṣitam*) *bhāvān rasān rūpam kriyābalaṃ* (v. 1. *balaṃ tathā*), *dattavantaḥ prahr̥ṣṭās te matsutebhyo divaukasah*.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. 13.208 (12.167 KM) *devānām nṛpatīnām ca dadyāt siṃhāsanaṃ dvijāḥ*.

¹⁵⁰ Jeannine Auboyer, *Le trône et son symbolisme dans l'Inde Ancienne* (Paris, 1949), pp. 34, 74ff.

ingenious explanation to the effect that the parasol is an imitation of the clouds, which are a product of the sun¹⁵¹ would seem *astutius quam verius*. In a different context (Bhāg. Pur. XVIII.18.15) the *chattrā* is a present of the sky (*dyauh*).

As for the *kuṭilaka*, this is a bent stick. Abhinavagupta explains it as “a curved stick used by the *vidūṣaka*, a staff which is the brahmins’ (?) weapon”¹⁵². This must be based on NŚ. 13.143f., which describes the natural gait of the *vidūṣaka*, who has the *kuṭilaka* in his left hand while making the *caturaka*-gesture with his right one¹⁵³. The *kuṭilaka* is apparently identical with the *daṇḍakāṣṭha*, which is described, immediately after the manufacture of the *jarjara*, in 23.179–182 (21.172ff. KM). Cf. particularly verse 180: “It should be made curved in its third part [?] and have (good) characteristics”¹⁵⁴. The passage does not mention how this *daṇḍakāṣṭha* was to be used but Ghosh rightly refers to Mālavikāgnimitra IV.15.36 (29), where Nipunīkā says: “I will, behind a pillar, frighten this inferior brahmin, who is afraid of snakes, with this staff of his own, which is crooked like a snake”¹⁵⁵. A similar, apparently stereotyped, expression occurs in Ratnāvalī II.5.12, where the *vidūṣaka* says with reference to

¹⁵¹ *chattram atra vitānaḥ : jaladānām sūryodbhavatvāt tatpratimāḥ.*

¹⁵² *vakradaṇḍako vidūṣakopayogī, brahmāyudhātmā daṇḍaḥ.*

¹⁵³ *svabhāvajāyām vinyasya kuṭilam vāmake kare (144) tathā dakṣiṇahaste ca kuryāc caturakam tataḥ.*

¹⁵⁴ *vakram caiva hi tat kāryam (kartavyam 21.183B) tribhāge lakṣaṇānvitam.* The v. 1. *tvaiṣa* (21.172 KM) for *caiva* is apparently a mere misreading. As for *tribhāga*, it denotes a third part of the eye, e.g. Kādambarī 165,16 (ed. Peterson) *madanaśaraśalyavedanākūṇitatribhāgena nātimīlitena locanayugalena* and pw.: “ein Drittel des Auges bei Seitenblicken”. It cannot mean, as far as I can see, “three bents”, as Ghosh translates it. Although it is tempting to read *tribhaṅgalakṣaṇānvitam* “having three bents and (good) characteristics”, none of the editions B C KM mention a variant reading for *tribhāge* and it is not clear when *tribhaṅga* is attested for the first time. The only occurrence that is known to me from literature is in the late Gopālakelicandrikā (p. 46 line 1, cf. *tribhaṅgin* p. 124 line 32) but it is well-known in archaeology. The word *bhūmaṅga(ma)kuṭīla*, which is used with reference to the *daṇḍakāṣṭha*, may indeed indicate that it was curved like the Indonesian *keris* (dagger), which has been explained as representing a serpent.

¹⁵⁵ *bhūmaṅgabhīruam bamhabandhum imiṣā bhūmaṅga(ma)kuṭīleṇa attāṇo daṇḍakāṣṭheṇa tambandaridā bhāāmi (bhāāissam).* Shankar Pāṇḍurang Pandit omitted *attāṇo*, see The Mālavikāgnimitra, A Sanskrit play by Kālidāsa, with the commentary of Kāṭayavema, ed. with notes by Sh. P. P. (Bombay Sanskrit Series No. VI), 2nd ed., Bombay 1889. Of all his manuscripts, however, only one modern MS. omits the word, whereas it occurs in his six manuscripts ABCDE and the Telugu manuscript G. Whether or not Kāṭayavema read *attāṇo* in his text is not sufficiently clear from his *chāyā*, which in the edition referred to does not contain *ātmanah*. In the recent editions by R. D. Karmarkar (4th ed., Poona 1950) and Sane-Godbole-Ursekar (2nd ed., Bombay 1959) *attāṇo* is also omitted. Since, however, it is the *lectio difficilior* and has the support of the manuscripts, it must be accepted as the authentic reading. If so, it must be taken, like Skt *ātmanah*, in the meaning “eius ipsius” (see PW.). The alternative would be to assume that Nipunīkā, while speaking the words quoted, picks up a stick from the ground. This is very unlikely because parallel passages show a stereotyped use of similar phrases with reference to the staff of the *vidūṣaka*. See above.

the *daṇḍakāṣṭha* in his hand (6.12) "With this stick, which is crooked like the heart of a deceiver I shall . . . throw you to the ground"¹⁵⁶ and in *Mṛcchakaṭikā* I.42.15: (angrily raising his staff) . . . "Therefore I shall smash him to pieces with this stick which is crooked like the lot of people like us"¹⁵⁷. Also in the *Śakuntalā* there are references to the *daṇḍakāṣṭha* as an attribute of the *vidūṣaka*¹⁵⁸. Outside the drama the *daṇḍakāṣṭha* occurs, beside the *daṇḍa*, as a name for the ascetic's staff, e.g. in the story of *Uttanka* in the *Pauṣyaparvan*¹⁵⁹. It is probable, therefore, that the *kuṭilaka* or *daṇḍakāṣṭha* characterized the *vidūṣaka* as a brahmin. If so, this may explain why it is *Brahmā* who gives the *kuṭilaka*.

Varuṇa's gift confronts us with one of the problems of Rigvedic mythology, about the interpretation of which no general *consensus* has been attained yet. Some of the technical aspects have been discussed at greater length in a separate article, to which the reader may be referred¹⁶⁰. According to Vedic cosmology there was a receptacle (*pātra*) of the cosmic waters under the earth, in which the world tree was rooted. This receptacle was identical with the pail (*kōśa*) or amṛta-jar (*kalāśa*)¹⁶¹, to which the texts often refer and which contained the elixir of the waters. *Varuṇa* was imagined as residing in the day-time in this nether world, at the bottom of the world tree. The jar is sometimes identified with the earth, of which in a sense it forms part. *Indra*'s demiurgic act of opening the (primordial) hill in order to release the waters meant, therefore, the breaking open of the hill, which was conceived as a jar. It will be shown below that *Indra*'s act was ritually imitated on the stage by breaking an earthenware jar (*kumbha*) in which a small piece of gold had been laid (NŚ. 3.72), apparently to indicate that this jar represented the golden pitcher. Since gold is well-known from the *brāhmaṇas* as symbolic of life, it seems a reasonable guess that the golden pitcher expresses that its contents consisted of the waters of life. Perhaps there is a connection with the golden pail (*hiranyāya kōśa*) in the "Unconquerable City"

¹⁵⁶ *imiṇā piṣuṇajanahiaakuḍilena daṇḍa(k)atṭheṇa . . . (bhūmie) tumam pādaiṣsam (iti hantum udyataḥ).*

¹⁵⁷ (*sakrodham daṇḍakāṣṭham udyamya*) . . . *tā ediṇā amhārisajañabhāadheakuḍilena daṇḍakatṭheṇa . . . kuṭṭaiṣsam.* The use of *kuḍila* in the *Ratnāvali* with reference to the "crooked" stick and the deceitful heart of a cheat is more natural than this passage, where the *vidūṣaka* likens the crookedness of the stick to that of his own lot. This seems to be a later variation of a current expression. Since the words do not occur in the *Cārudatta*, they may have been added by the author of our version of the *Mṛcchakaṭikā*, which was probably composed after 600 A.D. Therefore, the possibility that the author of this version here imitates the *Ratnāvali* cannot be ruled out a priori.

¹⁵⁸ II.0.19 edd. Cappeller and Pischel *iti dāṇḍakāṣṭham avalambya tiṣṭhati* (v. 1. *sthitāḥ*), VI.9.1–2 Pischel¹, 8.1–3 Kale *bho vaassa, cittaḥ dāva jāva daṇḍakatṭheṇa kandappabāṇam nāsemi (iti daṇḍakāṣṭham udyamya cūṭānkuraṁ pātayitum icchati).*

¹⁵⁹ *Mahābhārata*, interpolation 204* after I.3.138.

¹⁶⁰ See *India Meior*, *Congratulation Volume*-J. Gonda (Leiden, 1973), pp. 144–155. See also IIJ. 8 (1964), p. 107ff.

¹⁶¹ For these words see Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* I², pp. 432–438, especially p. 435.

(*pār ayodhyā*) of the gods¹⁶² but if so, the character of this divine city¹⁶³ and its relation to Varuṇa's nether world¹⁶⁴ remain to be elucidated. In later times the use of the golden pitcher was widely spread, not only in ritual. In the Tamil poem Cilappatikāram the *talaikkōl*, which was obviously identical with the *jarjara* and which was identified with Indra's son Jayanta (Cil. 3.119 *intiraciṟuvan cayantan āk' eṇa*), was bathed in the holy water from a golden pitcher before it was carried into the theatre (3.121–122 *puṇṇiya naṇṇīr porkuṭatt' ēnti, maṇṇiya pinṇar*). In iconography the connection between Varuṇa and the *amṛta*-cask or jar is but seldom expressed. However, in the reliefs of Cave IV of Badami, dating from the sixth century A.D., Varuṇa is depicted as "a male seated on a *makara* with a mace in his left hand and a cup in his right hand"¹⁶⁵ and elsewhere as "seated beside the *amṛta*-bowl"¹⁶⁶. In this connection the words *vāruṇam kumbham* of Agnipurāṇa 64.4 should be noted. The Badami reliefs may well be based on the Vedic mythological conception but iconography seems to offer no parallels to the reliefs¹⁶⁷.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAYHOUSE

After Viśvakarmā had built the playhouse he went to Brahmā's *sabhā* (1.80) to announce the completion of his work and to invite the World-Father for a visit. Brahmā, along with Indra and with "all the gods accompanied by others"¹⁶⁸ then came to look at it. Brahmā thereupon ordered the gods to contribute to the protection of the theatre with "parts" (*aṁśabhāga*) of their essence¹⁶⁹.

The following list of gods (1.83–95) shows that the theatre was considered a replica of the cosmos. The italicized names also occur in chapter III, where the consecration of a new playhouse is described (3.1ff.):

1. *Candramas* "Moon": *rakṣaṇe maṇḍapasya*, "for the guarding of the (whole) theatre". Whereas the Sun is not mentioned at all, the most

¹⁶² Cf. Ath. Samh. X.2.31 and Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. I², p. 326.

¹⁶³ In the third heaven? Cf. AS. V.4.3 *aśvatthō devasādanas tṛtīyasyām itō divi, tātrā 'mṛtasya cākṣaṇam devāḥ kūṣṭham avanvata* "the holy fig tree which is a seat for the Devas is in the third heaven from here: there the Devas won the *kūṣṭha*-(herb) as a manifestation of the *amṛta*".

¹⁶⁴ On this fundamental problem see India Maior, p. 156 and Hist. of Rel. 15, p. 118 n. 22. The third heaven apparently represented what Brede W. Kristensen called "the absolute life". As a world which transcended the dualism of the phenomenal world it had some traits in common with the primordial undifferentiated world which preceded it.

¹⁶⁵ See R. D. Banerji, Basreliefs of Badami, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 25 (Calcutta 1928), p. 56 and Plate XXVIIb.

¹⁶⁶ Plate XXIIIa. See also P. K. Agrawala, The Pūrṇa Kalaśa, fig. 48.

¹⁶⁷ See A. Gopinath Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography, vol. II-2 (1916).

¹⁶⁸ NŚ, 1.81 *tataḥ saha Mahendreṇa suraiḥ sarvaiś ca setaraiḥ*. Abhinavagupta explains *itare* as *vidyādhara-gandharvādīyāḥ*.

¹⁶⁹ 1.82 *aṁśabhāgair bhavadbhis tu rakṣyo 'yam nāṭyamaṇḍapaḥ*. Abhinavagupta explains *aṁśair* by *yāni bhajanāny adhiṣṭhānāni taiḥ* "with the sharing (possession?), that is, the power of control".

important function, viz. the protection of the whole theatre, is here assigned to the Moon. For the moon as the guardian deity of the playhouse see also Raghavan, note ad Sāgaranandin 1110 (= NS. 5.109 *jitaṃ Somena vai rājñā*) and comm. on Mālatimādhava (Lévi II, p. 24). The moon is satisfied by the *nāndī* (NS. 5.51, Sāgaranandin 1120). Any connection between the theatre building and the night or nether world cannot, however, be proved.

2. *Lokapālas* "Regents of the points of the sky": *dikṣu* "in the quarters". It should be noted that Agni, Yama and Varuṇa, all of them *lokapālas*, are also mentioned separately.

3. *Mārutas* (Maruts 3.5) "the winds": *vidikṣu* "in the intermediate points of the compass".

4. *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*: *nepathyabhūmau* "in the floor of the dressing room", respectively *ambare* (= ?). The line 1.84 BC *nepathyabhūmau Mitras tu nikṣipto Varuṇo 'mbare* poses several problems. In the parallel list of Chapter III *Varuṇa* is omitted (3.6 *Mitram Agniṃ surān Rudrān*) and from the prayer to *Varuṇa* in 3.63–64, which characteristically differs from those to the other gods, it can be inferred that he was still dreaded as an ominous god. The dressing room was the place where the introductory part of the *pūrvaraṅga*, the *nirgīta*, was performed to appease the demons (5.11, 36f.). The reason was no doubt that this part of the *pūrvaraṅga* was too inauspicious for the stage, which was a consecrated place. There was, accordingly, a contrast between the stage and the *nepathya*, a contrast which probably must be defined in terms of sacred versus profane, rather than of the celestial world versus the nether world. In any case, hell and demons could be represented on the stage (14.6), and the performance of the *Amṛtamanthana* (see ch. I, § 18) shows that demons had been common on the stage from earliest times—but only to enact their defeat. As for the term *nepathyabhūmau*, the dressing room is always denoted by the words *nepathya*, *nepathyagrha* (e.g., 2.35, 62; 14.2, 33. 221 line 2) or *nepathyagrha* (2.69, 95). So *bhūmi* must here have the specific meaning of "floor" (cf. 2.25). In view of the old contrast between *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, this might contain a clue to *ambare* "in the sky (?)", if this should be understood as the ceiling of the dressing room, but both the occurrence of *Varuṇa* in this context and the place where he is located remain puzzling¹⁷⁰. *Abhinavagupta* does not explain *ambare*.

5. *Vahni* (3.6: *Agni*), the Fire God: *vedikārakṣaṇe* "appointed to protect the raised floor of the stage". *Abhinavagupta*'s comment (vol. I, p. 31, line 10) does not help, except that it states that the *vedikā* was part of the stage: *raṅgavedikā, tatra tikṣṇo 'dhiṣṭhāte 'ty arthaḥ*. The *vedikā* is also mentioned in the description of the wooden ornamentation of the theatre, the so-called *dārukarma* or *kāṣṭhavidhi* (2.77 *nānāgrathitavedika*) and at

¹⁷⁰ Since no variant reading is given in B, the reading *Varuṇeśvaraḥ* in KM seems to be corrupt. Ghosh translates "the space [within the building]", but Raghuvamśa takes it as *khālī ākāś bhāg mē Varuṇa*. Similarly M. Chr. Byrski (see n. 1), p. 34f.

2.98, 99, where Ghosh renders it by "plinth". Mankad does not mention it. The translation "raised floor" is only tentative¹⁷¹.

6. Sarve *divaukasas* "all celestial gods": *bhāṇḍe* "in the musical instruments (specifically the big drum)". For the worship of the instruments, and especially of the *mṛdaṅga* (drum) see Clifford R. Jones, JAOS. 93 (1973), p. 295 n. 29 and cf. IJ. 16, p. 258. There can be little doubt that *divaukasah*, here just as elsewhere (e.g., 1.63, 71; 5.58), means the gods. Cf. also the parallel passage 3.6 *Mitram Agniṃ surān Rudrān*¹⁷². It was a general belief that the sound of thunder of the big drum was caused by the celestials. The *nāṭyamaṇḍapa* should be constructed in such a way that the deep sound of the drums comes out clearly. Cf. 2.82 *gambhira-svaratā yena kutapasya bhaviṣyati*.

7. The four *varṇas*: *stambheṣu* "in the pillars". The four pillars represent the four social classes, cf. 2.46–49 *brāhmaṇastambha*, *kṣatriyastambha*, *vaiśyastambha* and *śūdrastambha*. The classes are here deified, just as in 3.6 *Mitram Agniṃ surān Rudrān varṇān Kālam Kaliṃ tathā*¹⁷³.

8. *Ādityas* and *Rudras*: *stambhāntareṣu* "in the interstices between the pillars". It deserves notice that the Vasus are omitted and that Mitra-Varuṇa and Indra also occur elsewhere separately.

9. *Bhūtas*: *dhāraṇiṣu* "in the rows", cf. 2.78 *supīṭhadhāraṇi* "row of good seats"¹⁷⁴. For the *Bhūtas* see below sub 20.

10. *Apsarasas*: *śālāsu* "in the rooms" (?). It is not clear which rooms are meant. See below for *dvāraśālās*.

11. *Yakṣiṇis*: *sarvaveśmasu* "in all apartments". It is not clear what exactly the term denotes, nor in what respect the *veśman* differed from the *śālā*. It cannot mean "in the entire house" (Ghosh) because of the plural form and because it would then be synonymous with *maṇḍapa* (see above sub 1).

12. *Mahodadhi* "Ocean" (: 3.7 *Samudra*): *mahīpṛṣṭhe* "on the (bare) ground)" (lit. on the surface of the earth). The ground (*bhūmi*) is mentioned with regard to the very first preliminaries of the building of a theatre (2.24, 25), cf. 2.27 *vasumatī*). "Ocean" (*samudra*) was from Vedic times

¹⁷¹ The translation "the stage" (Ghosh) is inexact; in 2.77 he does not translate the word *nānāgrathitavedikam*. Raghuvamśa explains it by *yah sundar vyavasthit vedikāo par ādhārit*. For *vedikā* "(small) platform" see Mānasāra 15.54 and 58, 19.31 and 32. Less likely is the meaning "railing" (see, e.g., G. H. Schokker, The Pādātāḍitaka of Śyāmilaka, The Hague 1966, p. 272. Implausible Byrski (n. 1), p. 35.

¹⁷² Curiously, Abhinavagupta takes *divaukasas* in the sense "clouds": *meghā mandragambhīrasabdāsiddhaye* (etc.), which was accepted by Ghosh, vol. I, Introd. p. liii, vol. II, p. 12, although *sarve* speaks against it. The celestials could give the big drum (*mṛdaṅga*) the sound of thunder. Was the correct reading perhaps *meghamandragambhīrasabda* "having the deep and low sound of clouds"?

¹⁷³ Abhinavagupta explains this as follows: *varṇā iti: tadadhiṣṭhātāro devatāviśeṣāḥ*. Ghosh's objection that the four classes are nowhere deified (vol. II, p. 38 n. 1) is refuted by the fact that they are so in the Nāṭyaśāstra (see 3.6 and cf. n. 182).

¹⁷⁴ *dhāraṇiṣu* is not found in two manuscripts. KM reads *dhāraṇeṣu*, whereas Ghosh translates "the railing (of seats)".

on the specific term for the primordial waters under the earth. From the description of the building it appears that only the surface of the ground was ritually purified by ploughing and removing all bones and potsherds (2.26). Since the guardian deities do not go beyond the boundaries of the sacred area, the surface of the earth is here assigned to the Ocean as one of the cosmic entities.

13. *Kṛtānta* and *Kāla*: *dvāraśālāniyuktau* “in charge of the lodge at the entrance”¹⁷⁵. There is a text-critical and interpretative problem. Ghosh (1.87C) reads with some manuscripts *dvāraśālāniyuktas tu kṛtāntaḥ Kāla eva ca*, where the last words may be taken to imply that *kṛtāntaḥ* is here an epithet of *Kāla*. In 3.68C, however, all editions (B C KM) read *tathā Kṛtāntaḥ Kālaś ca sarvaprāṇivadhēśvarau*. In spite of the dual Ghosh here translates “O Yama, the Fate . . ., the end of all actions” but since Yama is specifically mentioned in 3.26 and 61, the author apparently refers to *Kṛtānta* and *Kāla* as two different deities. As the variant reading for 3.68 *sarvaprāṇadhaneśvaraḥ* (in two MSS.) shows, there has long been some divergence in the interpretation of this passage.

14. *Nāgamukhyau* (v. 1. *Nāgarājau*) “the two chief *Nāgas*”: *dvārapārsve tu* “beside the door(s)”, (that is, the entrance of the theatre?). Variant readings *dvārapatre tu*, *dvārapatreṣu* “in the door-blades” (B KM Ragh.), the latter variant being the reading which Abhinavagupta explained by the gloss *dvārabahuvāc ca bahuvacanam*¹⁷⁶. Since the *Nāṭyaśāstra* elsewhere mentions three chief *Nāgas* (*Śeṣa*, *Vāsuki* and *Takṣaka*, see 1.92f., 3.78f.), it remains doubtful which two can have been meant here. Abhinavagupta takes them to be *Ananta* and *Gulika* (?), whereas Ghosh and Raghuvamśa identify them as *Ananta* and *Vāsuki*.

15. *Yamadāṇḍa* (: 3.6 *Kāladāṇḍa*): *dehalyām* “on the threshold”.

16. *Śūla* “(Śiva’s) pike”: *upari* (“the top of the door” Ghosh).

17. *Niyati* and *Mṛtyu*: *dvārapāḥlau* “door-keepers”.

18. *Mahendra* (: 3.4 *Indra*): *pārsve raṅgapīṭhasya* “by the side of the stage”.

19. *Vidyut* (*daityaniśudani*): *mattavāraṇyām* “in the *Mattavāraṇi*”. See Clifford R. Jones, op. c., p. 295: “the covered veranda or balcony-like structure with seats and backrests . . .”? In 3.69 it is the *vāstudevatāḥ* who are residing in the *mattavāraṇi*.

20. *Bhūtas*, *Yakṣas*, *Piśācas* and *Guhyakas*: *stambheṣu mattavāraṇyāḥ* “in the pillars of the *mattavāraṇi*”. In 3.65f., however, the *Yakṣas* and *Guhyakas* are connected with *Kubera* (as usual) and in 1.95 they are located *adhastād raṅgapīṭhasya rakṣaṇe*. The *Bhūtas* were already mentioned sub 9. For the *Yakṣas* and *Guhyakas* see also sub 24.

¹⁷⁵ *dvāraśālā* B C Ragh., cf. Mṛch. III.2.3, 21.2 *bāhīladrūśālā*, Mudr. I.10.5 *dvāraprakoṣṭhaśālā*. KM has *dvāraśākhā*, which is corrupt.

¹⁷⁶ The translation “the two blades of the door” (Ghosh) is hardly correct. In *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa* the entrance has two doors, one behind the other. See Tarlekar, *Studies* (n. 1), plate XI.

21. *Vajra* (*daityanibarhaṇa*): *jarjare* "in the *jarjara*". It is one of the characteristics of the *jarjara* that, although it stands for the Indra-tree (*indrādhvaja*), it has at the same time the function of Indra's weapon (*praharaṇa*), the *vajra*. Cf. 1.69–70 *gṛhītvā dhvajam uttamam . . . jarjarī-kṛtadehāṃs tān akarōj jarjareṇa saḥ* : 72 *aho praharaṇam divyam idam āsāditam tvayā* and 3.12 (*jarjarapūjā*) *tvam mahendrapraharaṇam sarva-vighnanibarhaṇam*, while according to our passage (1.91) the *vajra* is one of the divine powers that is located in the *jarjara* (*jarjare caiva nikṣiptam vajram daityanibarhaṇam*). Cf. 3.79 *nirmitas tvam mahāvīryo vajrasāro mahātānuḥ*.

22. *Brahmā, Śaṅkara, Viṣṇu, Skanda* and the three Mahānāgas Śeṣa, Vāsuki and Takṣaka: *parvasu* "in the (five) joints (of the *jarjara*)". Similarly 3.78f., where the gods mentioned are *Brahmā, Hara, Janārdana, Kumāra*, but only one Pannagottama is mentioned (see sub 24). The bamboo staff which is used as *jarjara* must be *pañcaparvā caturgranthiḥ* (23.174), that is, it must have five joints and four nodes. It has been pointed out above¹⁷⁷ that in the *jarjara*, as the cosmic axis, all the gods of the totality are located and that Viṣṇu's place in the middle of that axis corresponds to his function of connecting link (p. 140) between upper world and nether world. Only Skanda's (Kumāra's) place below Viṣṇu calls for a closer examination. If the interpretation of Viṣṇu's middle position is correct, Skanda is on the side of the nether world but the Nāṭyaśāstra is rather contradictory in this respect. While in 3.24 he is located in the East together with Indra, Sūrya, etc. (*Skandārkaṇḍa*, v.1. *Skandaḥ Sūryo*), in 3.31 his place is in the western pillar. Such a detailed investigation cannot be undertaken here.

23. *Brahmā: raṅgapīṭhasya madhye* "in the centre of the stage". From the description of the consecration of the stage in Chapter III it is apparent that the stage as a whole is considered a replica of the cosmos and that its centre, indicated by lines, is the *brāhma maṇḍala*. Since in the ideal picture of the cosmos the *indrādhvaja* should stand in this centre, there is no contradiction between *Brahmā* being located both here and at the top of the *jarjara*. See also IIJ. 16, p. 253.

24. The Pātālavāsins, viz. the *Yakṣas, Guhyakas* and *Pannagas: adhastād raṅgapīṭhasya* "under the stage". The Pātāla was situated at the lower end of the world axis, see p. 89. Since the centre of the stage, the *brāhma maṇḍala*, was identical with the cosmic centre, it is natural that the Pātāla was situated under the stage. In 3.79 the *Pannagottama* "chief of the serpents" is said to be in the lowest joint of the *jarjara*, which place is cosmologically identical with the one here assigned to the Pannagas and in 1.93 to the three Mahānāgas Śeṣa, Vāsuki and Takṣaka. On account of 3.7 *nāgarājam ca Vāsukim* it may be guessed that the "highest Pannaga" of 3.79 is also Vāsuki. It is hard, therefore, to identify the two *Nāgamukhyas*,

¹⁷⁷ See p. 139 and IIJ. 13 (1972), p. 283, 16 (1974), p. 252, India Maior, Congrat. Vol. J. Gonda (1973), p. 151.

discussed above sub 14, although there are several repetitions in this list. The Yakṣas and Guhyakas have already been mentioned above, sub 19. They are commonly associated with Kubera (see, e.g., Sørensen's Index to the Names in the Mahābhārata).

All the italicized names of the preceding list recur in Chapter III, where instead of a legendary tale an exact description of the ceremony of consecration of a newly built playhouse is given. Therefore, it is not correct to say with regard to the names just mentioned "Such deities are nowhere to be met with" (Ghosh, Transl., p. 12 n. 1). The authenticity of the list cannot be doubted. It is, however, far from complete, as is apparent from a comparison with Chapter III. Some details may strike us as curious, such as the fact that the Moon is mentioned first of all but that the Sun is omitted, that the Ādityas and Rudras are recorded but not the Vasus, Mitra and Varuṇa but not Viṣṇu (except, of course, in the jarjara). Is there a predominance of elements of the nether world? Why do the Ocean, Kṛtānta and Kāla, the Nāgas, Yama's staff, the inhabitants of the Pātāla and the Bhūtas¹⁷⁸ occur? There are many details which would deserve a closer examination than is possible here. If Fate (*Niyati*) and Death (*Mṛtyu*) were "doorkeepers of the stage" (Ghosh), this could throw an interesting light on the character of the *nepathya*, but the "threshold" mentioned in close connection with the door suggests that the entrance of the theatre is meant. In that case, however, the question recurs: Why had one to pass by Death when entering the theatre? And why should the playhouse be built in the shape of a cave and was the stage on the west side so that the audience was looking in the direction that was associated with Varuṇa's nether world?¹⁷⁹ But then, why was it forbidden to give a performance at midnight and at noon?¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, during the consecration the gods got their respective places on the stage assigned in the evening

¹⁷⁸ They occur twice, in 1.86 *dhāraṇiṣṭu sthītā bhūtāḥ* (v. 1. *dhāraṇeṣu atha bhūtāni* KM) and in 1.90 *stambheṣu mattavāraṇyāḥ sthāpitāḥ paripālāne Bhūtā Yakṣāḥ Piśācāś ca Guhyakāś ca mahābalāḥ*. This raises the question as to whether two different recensions have got mixed up, or if the term *bhūta* denotes two different categories. The same problem recurs in 3.23 as against 3.27. The first line reads *ādau niveśyo bhagavān sārđham Bhūtagaṇair Bhavaḥ*, where the last word must be the correct reading (as against the variant readings *navaiḥ*, *Śivaḥ*, see KM) on account of 3.9 *sarvalokeśvarān Bhavam*. Here, as often, the *Bhūtas* form the retinue of Śiva, cf. 4.11 *tato Bhūtagaṇā hr̥ṣṭāḥ karmabhāvānukīrtanāt, Mahādevāś ca supṛitāḥ Pītāmaham athā 'bravūt*. In 3.27, however, *nairṛtyām Rākṣasānś caiva sarvabhūtān niveśayet* inauspicious beings are meant, just as in 3.17 *dinānte dāruṇe ghore muhūrte bhūtadaivate* "in the evening, in the hard and horrible hour over which the *Bhūtas* preside". On the other hand, in 3.30 the *brahmarṣi-bhūta-saṅghas* are located in the most divine region, the North-East. For a non-Sanskrit tradition concerning the *Bhūtas* cf. Dikshitar's note ad Cilappatikāram III.95-114 (Translation p. 102 n. 1, p. 115 n.): "The names of the deities of būtas worshipped are Vacciradēhaṇ, Vacciradandaṇ, Varuṇaṇ and Prattakēśvaraṇ (*Śīla*, p. 115 n. Cf. Jivakacintāmaṇi st. 672)".

¹⁷⁹ 2.80 *kāryaḥ śailaguhākāro dvibhūmir nāṭyamaṇḍapaḥ*. For the stage on the west side of the theatre see IIJ.16, p. 266ff.

¹⁸⁰ 27.95 *ardharātre na yuñjīta na madhyāhne tathaiva ca*.

(3.17 *niśāyām*), that is, at a dangerous moment of the day, and at this same time (2.38) offerings to the *lokapālas* are brought during the laying of the foundations. At night, too, the gods were asked for protection and aid in the performance.

7. THE CONSECRATION OF THE THEATRE I

It has already been noted above that Chapter III also contains two lists of tutelary deities of the theatre. Although these lists on the whole agree fairly well with that of Chapter One, they show some interesting differences. In the first chapter the two central gods are Brahmā and Indra and there is an entire lack of Śiva-worship. References to a worship of Brahmā are generally and rightly taken as evidence of an early date. See, e.g., Ghosh, Text I, Introduction p. lxxvii, who, however, failed to notice the characteristic differences in this respect between the first books of the Nāṭyaśāstra, which discrepancies inevitably point to the conclusion of a different authorship. Just as Chapter Two, the third chapter is apparently the work of a devoted Śivaite. His list contains the names of the gods to whom the *nāṭyācārya*, after fasting for three days, is to pay homage (*namas*). It begins with

A) 1. Mahādevam sarvalokodbhavaṁ Bhavam “the great god Bhava, the origin of the whole world”¹⁸¹.

2. *Padmayoni* (= Brahmā). From the fact that this god here occupies the second place it may be inferred that the list has been reworked and originally began with the World-Father.

3. Suraguru (= Brhaspati).

4. *Viṣṇu*.

5. *Indra*.

6. *Guha* (= Kārttikeya).

He then continues with:

B) 1. Sarasvatī 2. Lakṣmī 3. Siddhi 4. Medhā 5. Smṛti 6. Mati
and ends up with the following gods:

C) 1. *Soma* 2. *Sūrya* 3. *Maruts* 4. *Lokapālas* 5. *Aśvins* 6. *Mitra* 7. *Agni*
8. *Suras* 9. *Rudras*¹⁸² 10. *Varnas* 11. *Kāla* 12. *Kali* 13. *Mṛtyu* 14. *Niyati*
15. *Kāladaṇḍa* (see 11.) 16. *Viṣṇupraharaṇa* (see A4) 17. *Nāgarāja*
Vāsuki 18. *Vajra* 19. *Vidyut* 20. *Samudra*¹⁸³ 21. *Gandharvas* and
Apsarasas 22. *Munis* 23. *Nāṭyakumārīs* 24. *Mahāgrāmaṇī* (also 33.272!).

The names have here been enumerated in the same order in which they occur in the text. It seems clear that the list has been composed of three different lists: A) is the group of great gods who reside in the *Jarjara* (1.92–93), with the sole difference that Śiva here occupies the first place

¹⁸¹ Thus B KM Ragh. C reads *sarvalokeśvaram* “Lord of the whole world”.

¹⁸² 3.6 *Mitram Agniṁ surān Rudrān varṇān Kālaṁ Kalim tathā* C, *surān varṇān Rudrān B, svarān varṇān Rudrān KM Ragh*. This corresponds to 1.84 *Mitra . . . Vahni, divaukasah, varṇāh . . . Ādityās caiva Rudrās ca*. Therefore Ghosh’s translation “other gods such as Rudra” cannot be correct.

¹⁸³ *vajravidyutsamudrāṇś ca* C. Probably one ocean is meant.

and that his original place has been assigned to Brhaspati, who is very rarely mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra¹⁸⁴. Similarly the Serpents have been left out, but Indra (Mahendra in the preceding list) has been inserted between Viṣṇu and Kārttikeya. Apart from traces of sectarianism and a few alterations, this group is basically not very much different from that of Chapter One.

Of group C) almost all of the first twenty items are found in the same order in Chapter One. The last ones (21–24) can easily be accounted for as later additions.

Most interesting, however, is group B). There can be no doubt that this list contains the *nāṭyamātaraḥ*. Ghosh, in a note ad 3.44, remarks that they do not occur in the Purāṇas and (ad 3.86) that their number is seven. I doubt the correctness of the latter statement as it seems impossible to fix their number, the divergence between the various lists obviously being due to metrical considerations¹⁸⁵. As for the *nāṭyakumārīs* in 3.8 (variant reading *grāmādhidevatāḥ*), they seem to be different from the Mothers but, as far as I can see, no further information about them is available.

8. THE CONSECRATION OF THE THEATRE II

A second list of gods enumerated with reference to the system of classification also occurs in Chapter Three. The gods are here mentioned in connection with the drawing of lines on the floor of the stage, which characterize it as a replica of the cosmos, and with the placing of images of the gods in their appropriate places. The whole cosmological configuration might be called a *maṇḍala*, although the text reserves this term for the centre, which is denoted as “Brahmā’s maṇḍala”¹⁸⁶.

The symbolical representation of the cosmos was performed by drawing two lines, which crossed in the centre¹⁸⁷. In this way four main divisions

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Ghosh, Text, Vol. I, Introduction p. lxxv, who, in addition to this passage, refers to 34.98, 35.56.

¹⁸⁵ In 3.86b–87a *siddhi* is not personified, as she is in 5a (cf. also 3.63 *disantu siddhim*) but other names are added: *Sarasvatī Dhṛtī Medhā Hriḥ Śrīr Lakṣmīr Matīḥ Smṛtīḥ, pāntu vo mātaraḥ sarvāḥ siddhidās ca bhavantu vaḥ*. While here both *Dhṛtī* and *Smṛtī* occur, 3.5 has only *Dhṛtī* (B KM Ragh., v. 1. *Smṛtī* C). *Smṛtī* is also lacking in 3.51f. *devadevi mahābhāge Sarasvatī haripriye, pragṛhyatām balir mātara mayā bhaktiyā samarpitāḥ* (52) *Lakṣmīḥ Siddhīr Matīr Medhā sarvalokanamaskṛtāḥ, mantrapūtam imam devyaḥ pratigrhṇantu me balim*. In 3.66 the name *Brāhmī* occurs for *Sarasvatī*: *namo ’stu nāṭyamātrbhyo brāhmyādībhyo namo namaḥ*. In 3.24, where *Śraddhā* is added, the same group must be meant: *Sarasvatī ca Lakṣmīḥ ca Śraddhā Medhā ca pūrvataḥ*. Without specification the group is mentioned in 3.44 (consecration of the *mattavāraṇī*) *nāṭyasya ca tathā mātṛr Dhanadaṁ ca sahānugaiḥ* and in 3.29 *uttarasyaṁ diśi tathā Dhanadaṁ samniveśayet, nāṭyasya mātṛḥ ca tathā Yakṣān atha saguhyakān* (KM). The last word (v. 1. *sahānugān*) is at variance with 3.26, where the *Guhyakas*, along with the *Pitaras*, *Pisācas* and *Uragas*, are located in the South.

¹⁸⁶ 5.74 *brāhme ’tha maṇḍale*.

¹⁸⁷ 3.22 *madhye caivā ’tra kartavye dve rekhe tiryagūrdhvage, tayoh kaksyāvibhāgena daivatāni niveśayet*. Mankad’s discussion of the *kaksyāvibhāga* (Ancient Indian Theatre, Vallabh, Vidyanagar 1950, p. 21f.) does not lead to a convincing result.

(*kakṣyā*) were formed. Since the theatre was facing West, the stage facing East¹⁸⁸, the lines were no doubt drawn in the direction West-East (along the longitudinal axis of the theatre) and North-South and thus pointed to the four quarters. The four corners of the stage accordingly represented the intermediate points of the compass (*pradīśaḥ* or *vidīśaḥ* 1.83). In these divisions of the stage the gods are placed as follows (3.20ff. *devatānām niveśanam*):

Centre: Brahmā seated on a lotus (23a).

East: Bhagavān Bhavaḥ (Śiva) with his bhūtagaṇas (23b), Nārāyaṇa, Mahendra, Skanda, Arka (or Sūrya, variant reading in B KM Raghuv.), the Aśvins, Śaśin; further Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī, Śraddhā, Medhā.

Of these gods Śiva, Viṣṇu and Skanda occupy the second, third and fourth joints of the bamboo *jarjara*, as gods of the centre. The first two are also mentioned apart, together with Brahmā, in the *pūrvaraṅga*, where the *sūtradhāra*, after turning round and saluting the gods of the four cardinal points (5.95–97), greets them: “Thereupon the *sūtradhāra*, with his face towards the audience, should perform the salutation of Rudra, Brahmā and Upendra” (5.98f.). On the other hand, Indra has from early times been located in the East (cf. 5.95). For the addition of Sun, Moon and the Aśvins I know no parallels. Although the female deities are no doubt the *nāṭyamātaraḥ* (see n. 185), they are also separately mentioned as a group in the North.

South-East: Vahni, Svāhā, Viśvedevāḥ, Gandharvas, Rudras and Serpents (?)¹⁸⁹.

South: Yama, Mitra sānuga, Pitaras, Piśācas, Serpents (*uragāḥ*), Guhyakas.

On the location of Mitra in the South see below. It is doubtful if *uragāḥ* can be taken to prove that the reading *sarpagaṇāḥ* (see n. 189) is corrupt. The Guhyakas recur in 3.29, where they are located in the North.

South-West: Rākṣasas, Bhūtas (27a).

West: the *samudras* and Varuṇa “*Yādasām patiḥ*” (27b).

North-West: *saptavāyus*, Garuḍa with the birds (28ab).

North: Dhanada, *nāṭyasya mātaraḥ*, Yakṣas and (v. 1.) Guhyakas (29). As we have seen, the last group is also mentioned in 26b (South), and four of the *nāṭyamātaraḥ* also occur separately in 24b (East).

North-East: Nandin, etc., Gaṇeśvaras, Brahmaṛṣis, Bhūtasamṅhas. The last group occurs as *bhūtagaṇāḥ* in 23b (East). For the problem of the *bhūtas* in general see n. 178.

This elaborate list differs from the short traditional group of *lokapālas* (1.83) as found in 5.95–97 (E.: Śakra, S.: Yama, W.: Varuṇa and N.: Dhanada). The most remarkable detail, however, is that Mitra, along with Yama, is located in the South. This combination is characteristic of the

¹⁸⁸ See IIJ. 16, p. 266ff.

¹⁸⁹ 3.25 *sarpagaṇāḥ* B Raghuv., *sarvagaṇāḥ* KM, ca *ṛṣayaḥ* C.

third chapter, where it occurs thrice¹⁹⁰, with the only exception of 3.6a, where Mitra is mentioned conjointly with Agni (cf. Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni in 1.84a)¹⁹¹. They are always referred to in the fixed order *Yamo Mitras ca (-as tu)*, *Yamamitrau*. For the author of this chapter they seem to have been a kind of dual deity but none of the handbooks of epic and classical mythology which I consulted nor Gonda's recent books on Mitra and the dual deities¹⁹² make mention of this group. Since in the Vedic system of classification Mitra, as an Āditya, belongs to the West, the association with Yama is hard to explain. The Vedic dual deity *Mitrā-Vāruṇā* had in any case long since ceased to exist. As late as the epic, however, Mitra had retained some traces of his ancient function of deliverer¹⁹³—a function which, as far as I can see, has not been refuted by Gonda¹⁹⁴. In the Rigvedic period Varuṇa and Yama ruled over the realm of the dead but in later Vedic literature Varuṇa, although still associated with the notion of death, lost the specific function of King of the dead, which then became the function of Yama alone. The question may be considered whether in *Yama-Mitrau* the former of the gods stands for Varuṇa in his Rigvedic function, the dvandva in a way continuing Vedic *Mitrā-Vāruṇā*. In my opinion the basic contrast between these Vedic gods was that of a binding and a delivering god. Yama, who is armed with the noose (*pāśa*) that originally characterized Varuṇa, is clearly the binding god. As for Mitra, his connection with defecation (e.g. Mhbh. XII.301.2, XIV.42.34) cannot be explained as a later development of a god who in classical literature does not seem to have been much more than a reminiscence of the Vedic period. In the Veda an idea more or less akin to this can perhaps be found in MS. III.10.6 (138,8), where it is said that by turning round the intestines (? *gudā*) of the sacrificial animal one kills people by constipation (*udāvartā*), for *gudā* is equal to the "vital airs" (*prāṇḍh*) (III.10.4: 135,3 etc. *prāṇḍ vai gudāḥ*) and *prāṇā-'pānau* are equated to Mitra and Varuṇa. The turning round (cf. TS. VI.4.1.1) must imply the idea of producing the Vāruṇic aspect of these dual entities. However that may be, the three passages in Chapter III, isolated as they are, provide no basis for further speculations.

As for Varuṇa, it may be added that although his role in religion, as reflected by the Nāṭyaśāstra, was seemingly reduced to that of *lokapāla* of the West (3.27, 5.96) and god of the oceans¹⁹⁵, yet he had not, no

¹⁹⁰ See 3.26 *dakṣiṇena niveśyas tu Yamo Mitras tu sāvugah*, 38 *Yamamitrau samabhyarcyau apūpair modakais tathā, pit-n piśācān uragān sarpiḥkṣīreṇa tarpayet*, 61 *Yamo Mitras ca bhagavān īśvarau lokapūjītau* (62) *imaṃ me pratigrhṇītām balīm mantrapuraskṛtam, rasātala-carebhyas tu pannagebhyo namo namaḥ*.

¹⁹¹ *nepathyabhūmau Mitras tu nikṣipto Varuṇo 'mbare* (cf. 85, which mentions *Ādityās caiva Rudrās ca*).

¹⁹² See *The Vedic God Mitra* (Leiden 1972) and my remarks in IIJ. 15, p. 232, and cf. the same author, *The dual deities in the religion of the Veda* (1974).

¹⁹³ See IIJ. 5, p. 51.

¹⁹⁴ See J. Gonda (see n. 192) and my remarks in IIJ. 15, p. 227.

¹⁹⁵ 3.63 *sarvāmbhasām patir devo Varuṇo hamsavāhanah*. The last epithet corresponds to the classical iconography. Cf. also his title *Yādasām patih* (3.27), which is quite common in the epic.

more than in the epics, lost his inauspicious character. (See below). It can hardly be merely accidental that when during the consecration of the play-house the *bali* is offered to the various gods, the formula for offering it to Varuṇa is completely different from the other formulas. Whereas in almost all other cases the formula is "accept this offering" (*pratigrhṇātu me balim, pragrhyatām eṣa baliḥ, pragrhyatām balir deva*) a special formula is used in addressing the serpents and Varuṇa (3.62-64): "Homage to the serpents who live in the nether world (*rasātala*)! May they who live on the air, now that they have been worshipped, bestow success on the play! May the lord of all waters, God Varuṇa, who has a goose for his *vāhana*, be propitious (*pritimant*), along with the oceans, streams and rivers, now that he has been worshipped"¹⁹⁶.

9. THE ROLE OF THE JARJARA IN THE CONSECRATION

The details of the ceremony of the consecration leave no doubt that the stage (*raṅgapīṭha*) was considered a sacred space, which symbolically represented the cosmos. It is impossible to ascertain how much of these ceremonies and the underlying religious notions had survived up to the time of Kālidāsa and the classical drama, but it is clear that the consecration was based on old traditions. This is apparent from the fact that the god who is located in the centre of the stage is Brahmā¹⁹⁷. Several scholars have already surmised that in an early phase of Indian culture the worship of Brahmā must have been more important than may be inferred from the classical evidence¹⁹⁸. The data of the Nāṭyaśāstra are the more interesting because most chapters of this text must have been composed by one or more Śivaite, and even in the third chapter Śiva is once mentioned first, even before Brahmā¹⁹⁹. It must have been an old and very strong tradition which in spite of Śivaite sectarianism of the author(s) maintained itself in Chapters One and Three of our text.

In this connection the curious contradiction between NS. 1.19-20 and 4.5 is particularly interesting. In the former passage Brahmā is the supreme

¹⁹⁶ *rasātalacharebhyas tu pannagebhyo namo namaḥ* (63) *disantu siddhiṃ nāṭyasya pūjitāḥ pavanāśanāḥ, sarvāmbhasāṃ patir devo Varuṇo haṃsavāhanaḥ* (64) *pūjitāḥ pritimān astu sasamudranadinadaḥ*.

¹⁹⁷ 3.23 *padmopaviṣṭam Brahmānam tasya madhye niveśayet*, 5.74 *brāhme 'tha maṇḍale*, which is followed by a spurious line *raṅgapīṭhasya madhye tu svayam Brahmā pratiṣṭhitaḥ*. This is lacking in some manuscripts. It may be a later addition (based upon 3.23?), dating from a time when the term *brāhma maṇḍala* was no longer understood (but see n. 227!). See also Feistel, *Das Vorspiel auf dem Theater*, p. 55.

¹⁹⁸ Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann, *Les enseignements iconographiques de l'Agni Purāṇa*, p. 119 and D. Seyfort Ruegg, *IJ*. 8, p. 226, who refers to recent studies by Hacker. T. Bhattacharya's book *The Cult of Brahma* (Patna, 1957) was inaccessible to me.

¹⁹⁹ 3.4 *namaskṛtya mahādevaṃ sarvalokeśvaraṃ Bhavam, padmayoniṃ suraguruṃ Viṣṇuṃ Indraṃ Guhaṃ tathā*, see above p. 153. Cf. 1.1 *praṇamya śirasā devau pitāmahamaheśvarau* and 3.23 *padmopaviṣṭam Brahmānam tasya madhye niveśayet, ādau niveśyo bhagavān sārḍham bhūtagaṇair Bhavaḥ*, 3.46-47 (mantras addressed to Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu), 5.99 *Rudrabrahmopendrābhivandanam*, 100-101 *vandeta pauruṣeṇe 'śam śrīpadena Janārdanam, napuṃsakapadenā 'pi tathavā 'mbuja-sambhavam*.

god, whose authority is not challenged and who, after creating the drama as a special *genre*, asks Indra to perform it with the other gods (which Indra declines). In 4.5, on the other hand, Brahmā composes the *samavakāra Amṛtamanthana*²⁰⁰ and after having respectfully paid obeisance to Śiva, orders it to be performed for that god on the Himālaya. Thereupon Brahmā asks Śiva graciously to act as an instructor in the *aṅgahāras* (“limb-movements, major dance figures”), cf. 4.16ff. That the *naṭarāja* Śiva²⁰¹ should teach the dance figures is not surprising, although their optional character (4.16) suggests the conclusion that they do not belong to the older type of performance but are a later addition to it. The main point, however, which has been overlooked by Ghosh as well as by Kane²⁰², is the fundamentally different character of Chapter One, where (apart from the *maṅgalaśloka* 1.1 see n. 202) Śiva is only one among the devas, a dancer (1.45), who confers success (1.60 *siddhi*) and is the protector of all the characters save the three chief ones (1.96). The only “supreme deities” in this chapter are Brahmā and Indra. The circumstance that the dramatic performance is here connected with the latter’s banner festival (*dhvajamaha*) is no satisfactory explanation for Śiva’s subordinate position in this chapter. In comparison with the archaic character of the first chapter, the Śivaite tradition of the fourth chapter seems clearly to reflect a later cultural stage (cf. Śāradātanaya p. 285, 6–12!). In its first four lines, it is true, no conclusive indications for this assumption can be found but nothing compels us to assign them to a different author.

As for the consecration of a new playhouse as described in ch. III, the principal objects of worship are here Brahmā and the *jarjara*. This conclusion, which follows from the preceding analysis, is confirmed by the ritual of the *pūrvaraṅga*, which is a kind of worship of the stage (*raṅgapūjana*)²⁰³. The identity of the *jarjara* and Indra’s “banner” (*dhvaja*) is clearly stated in 1.69 and 73. It must be observed in this connection that from a purely text-critical point of view it might be argued that in the text as we have it 1.58–63 and 67–76a are interpolations. Even if this is true, there are no indications to show that the interpolations are of a much later date than the rest of the text.

It is one of the indications of the archaic character of the first chapter that here the Indra festival is still represented as a celebration of the

²⁰⁰ See below, p. 195.

²⁰¹ Cf. 1.45 *Nīlakaṇṭhasya nṛtyataḥ*.

²⁰² See Ghosh’s remarks in his text edition I², pp. LXXV, LXXVII, Translation I², p. XLIX, and P. V. Kane, *History of Sanskrit Poetics* (1971, 1973), pp. 20 and 22, according to whom the first chapter, probably even the first five chapters are of later date, added some centuries before the fifth century A.D. That the Nāṭyaśāstra is the work of different authors is also Ghosh’s opinion, cf. Translation I², p. XXVII. As for the *maṅgalaśloka* (NŚ. 1.1), this is in all likelihood a later addition. Christopher Byrski’s theory that Maheśvara here denotes Indra (*Festschrift Sluszkiewicz*, p. 57ff., and *Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre*, pp. 24–26) has not convinced me.

²⁰³ See “The worship of the *jarjara* on the stage”, *IJ*. 16 (1974), p. 241ff.

god's victory over the Asuras²⁰⁴, although the cosmogonical nature of this victory seems no longer to have been recognized. This is particularly instructive when it is compared with such late Vedic texts as Kausika Sūtra 140 and Atharvaveda Pariśiṣṭa 19, which characterize the festival in a purely ritual way as "a royal rite for the benefit of the king's welfare and superiority in war"²⁰⁵.

It is obvious that the older meaning of a ritual can easily be obliterated or re-interpreted in later times. In Europe the tree of life that was erected about the winter solstice to promote (as we may assume) the resurrection of life and the return of sunlight has been accepted by means of an *interpretatio christiana* as Christmas tree and can be seen inside Christian churches. The Maypole, however, continues to belong to folklore and in a village in Limburg (The Netherlands), for instance, it is every year carried into the village and erected outside, but by the side of the Roman Catholic church, where it is left standing for the rest of the year. Folklore and religion thus remain separate domains in the life of the community.

In India poles were erected on various occasions. Although they do not bear Indra's name, their character is so much similar to that of the *Indradhvaja* that they may be mentioned in this connection. Temporary posts were annually erected in the month of Mārga (c. November), when agriculturists put a post adorned with flags on their fields to protect the crops²⁰⁶ and the cattle-breeders made a *Mārgapālī* for the lustration of the animals²⁰⁷. Non-temporary posts were, e.g., the banner on top of the

²⁰⁴ See 1.55 *tasmin dhvajamahe nihātāsuraḍānave*.

²⁰⁵ Cf. J. Gonda, "The Indra festival according to the Atharvavedins", JAOS. 87 (1967), pp. 413-429. The words quoted occur on p. 414. See also p. 423. While there is admittedly no point in speculating about the prehistory, I cannot see any reason for doubting that the Indian banner festival has always been associated with Indra (cf. Gonda, pp. 416, 418). For the description in later texts see J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation* (Leipzig-Zürich 1937), pt III (to which references to the classical Tamil literature, such as *Cilappatikāram* 3.119ff. [cf. 28.98ff.], 144, *Maṇimēkalai* 1.7.8 should be added). For festivals in Western Bengal and Nepal see the references given by Meyer, III, p. 196 and Gonda, p. 413 n. 4. An eye-witness's account of the ceremony in modern Nepal has been given by A. A. Bake in a paper "Het feest van de rode en de witte Matsyendranath in Patan en Kathmandu", read in the Royal Dutch Academy in 1959 (see *Jaarboek der Kon. Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* 1959-1960, p. 148). As far as I know, it has never been published. Mr. John Irwin informed me about celebrations of the festival in other parts of North India and according to Dr. Michael Witzel the *Indrajātra* in Nepal (in September) is the usual time for dramatic performances (letter 21.1.1977).

²⁰⁶ See the data in the *Kṛṣiparāśara* about the *medhi vaijayantisamāyukta*, discussed in IJ. 11, p. 214f. The word *vaijayantī* may be a direct reference to Indra, as J. J. Meyer, op. c., III p. 4 n. 1 suggests. The word for erecting is here *āropayati*, which is also, but rarely, used with reference to the Indra pole, cf. *Agnipurāṇa* 102.8. In *Cilappatikāram* 3.119 the staff is said to represent Indra's son Jayanta: *intira-ciruvan cayantaṅ āk eṇa*. Cf. Skt. *jayanta* "flag".

²⁰⁷ Meyer, op. c. II, pp. 160-174.

chariot of a warrior, which was to guarantee his life and victoriousness²⁰⁸, and the "pinnacle" erected on *stūpas*²⁰⁹ and theatre buildings²¹⁰.

As for the Nāṭyaśāstra the *dhvaja* itself, although associated with Indra, had lost its character of world tree and had been attributed, as Indra's weapon, the function of the Vedic *vajra*. Indra, indeed, uses the *dhvaja* to dispel his enemies and on the other hand the *vajra* is said to reside in the *jarjara*²¹¹. Therefore the main function of the *jarjara* is said to be the dispelling and destroying of the "obstacles" which might disturb the performance (cf. 5.83 *jarjaro vighnajarjaraḥ*). It is addressed as "weapon of the great Indra"²¹², which is a reminiscence of the mythical tale of the first chapter, where Indra is said to have driven away the "obstacles" (1.69) and the Asuras and Dānavas, and to have given his *dhvaja* as a present to the actors to protect them (1.59). But in the same verse 3.12 it is also said to have been created by all the gods²¹³ and to be worshipped as a sacred object in its own right²¹⁴.

It follows that the pole could be erected with various intentions. The aim of the rite was different according as to whether it was performed on the stage, in the fields or in the town, when the main concern was the king's welfare and victoriousness. The relative chronology of our sources, therefore, is of minor importance in this respect and it would be wrong to think that the "original" meaning of the rite is best preserved in the earliest texts. When it was performed with a view to the welfare and prosperity of the whole country, it was natural that the king, in whose person they were concentrated, was mentioned first of all, and success of the king almost automatically meant victoriousness. This is true, not only of the two Atharvavedic texts, the importance of whose testimonies can easily be overrated unless they are carefully interpreted in their particular contexts, but also of the Nāṭyaśāstra. The prayer in NŚ. 3.11-13 "for the success of the performance"²¹⁵ ends with the words: "Do thou announce victory to the king and defeat to his enemies, welfare of cows and brāhmins and success (*vivardhana*) of the drama"²¹⁶. The

²⁰⁸ *jayāspada*. See IJ. 11, p. 154ff. This banner was called *dhvajayaṣṭi*, *ketu* or *ketana* in the epic.

²⁰⁹ The *stūpayaṣṭi*, see Avadānaśataka, p. 387, 10-11.

²¹⁰ For this *stūpi* (*stūpi*), Tamil *tālika-k-kuṭam* see Clifford R. Jones, JAOS. 93 (1973), p. 294. For the *stūpikīla* see Mānasāra 18.169ff.

²¹¹ 1.91 *jarjare caiva nīkṣiptam vajram daityanibarhaṇam* and 3.78 *vajrasārah* (see n. 221).

²¹² Cf. 3.12 *mahendraprahaṇam*. For Mahendra see Hillebrandt, Vedische Mythologie II², p. 190f.

²¹³ See 3.12 *nirmītam sarvadevaiś ca sarvavighnanibarhaṇam* and cf. 3.77 *vighnajarjaraṇārthaṁ tu jarjaram cā 'bhimantrayet, vighnānām samanārthaṁ hi devair brahmapurogamaiḥ* (78) *nirmītas tvām mahāvīryo vajrasāro mahātānuḥ* and 3.80 *nītyam sarve hi pāntu tvām surās tvām ca śivo bhava*.

²¹⁴ *pūjā*, see 3.11 and 73-77 and 5.102 *pūjanam jarjarasya*.

²¹⁵ 3.11 *nāṭyaprasiddhaye*.

²¹⁶ *nṛpasya vijayam śaiṁsa ripūṇām ca parājayam, gobrāhmaṇaśivam caiva nāṭyasya ca vivardhanam*.

military aspect, which is expressed in the word *jaya* "victory", and which also accounts for the function of banners on war-chariots, is only a special facet of the more comprehensive notion of "good fortune, success". It occurs in conjunction with "victory" in, e.g., 3.80f. Here the *jarjara* is addressed as follows: "do thou give victory and success to our king"²¹⁷. Protection of the crops²¹⁸ (for which J. J. Meyer's description in terms of a fertility cult is not fully adequate, unless it is seen in the light of the cosmogonical prototype) is yet another aspect of the same function, which is ultimately founded on the role of the world pillar in the cosmogony.

At the same time, however, we are here faced with the problem which has already been touched upon above (see p. 42, n. 135). Indra's erecting of the cosmic pillar has its particular place in the cosmogony, and in the few days at the beginning of the new year (Mhbh. I.57.18 *gate samvatsare*) Indra, as a seasonal god, repeats his act and is temporarily considered identical with his pole. During the rest of the year, however, the gods of the totality are considered to be connected with it and residing in it. The same is true of the *jarjara*. Although it is Indra's weapon, the gods who reside in its five joints are, from top to bottom, Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Skanda and the three Mahānāgas, viz. Śeṣa, Vāsuki and Takṣaka²¹⁹.

It has already been pointed out above²²⁰ that Indra's absence from the *jarjara* is due to his character of a seasonal god. His relation to, and identity with, the cosmic tree was restricted to the few days when the renovation of the world was celebrated by the erection of the *Indradhvaja*. After that period Indra reassumed his normal function of *lokapāla* of the East. The statement of the Nāṭyaśāstra that Indra's *vajra* is present in the *jarjara*²²¹ concerns the general character of the *jarjara* as the protector of the stage against disturbing powers (*vighnas*). In contrast with the gods who reside in the various joints the *vajra* has no special place because it is functionally identical with the *jarjara* as a whole. As far as I can see, this is not a characteristic of the world axis or the *indradhvaja* in general but only an aspect of the *jarjara* on the stage.

²¹⁷ 3.80 *nakṣatre 'bhijite śreṣṭhe jātas tvaṁ ripusūdanaḥ* (81) *jayam cā 'bhyudayam caiva pārthivasya prayaccha naḥ*. For the importance of Abhijit see Hillebrandt, Romanische Forschungen 5 (1889-90), p. 301.

²¹⁸ For the *medhī* see above n. 206.

²¹⁹ See 1.92f. *śiraḥparvā 'sthīto Brahmā dvitīye Śaṅkaras tathā, tṛtīye ca sthīto Viṣṇuḥ caturthe Skanda eva ca* (93) *pañcame ca mahānāgāḥ Śeṣavāsukitakṣakāḥ*, 3.78f. *śiras te rakṣatu Brahmā sarvadevagaṇaiḥ saha* (79) *dvitīyam ca Haraḥ parva tṛtīyam ca Janārdanaḥ, caturtham ca Kumāraś ca pañcamam pañnagottamāḥ (-ottamaḥ C.)*. Cf. the similar cosmic symbolism with regard to the sacrificial stake in TS. VI.3.4.7, ŚB. IV.4.13 (see IJJ. 16, p. 248 n. 43 and p. 259 n. 80).

²²⁰ See p. 140 and cf. IJJ, 16 (1974), p. 252.

²²¹ See 1.91 *jarjare caiva nikṣiptam vajram daityanībarhaṇam, tatparvasu vinikṣiptāḥ surendrā hy amītaujaśaḥ*. Cf. 3.78 *nīrmitas tvaṁ mahāvīryo vajrasāro mahātanaḥ*, which is, however, ambiguous: either there is an intentional double entendre or it may simply mean "hard as adamant" (Ghosh).

10. THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONSECRATION: COSMOGONICAL TRAITS

The archaic character of the role of the *jarjara* on the stage is particularly apparent in connection with the ceremonies which conclude the consecration of the playhouse as described in the third chapter.

After the consecration of the *jarjara* (NŚ. 3.73–81) ghee is poured into the sacrificial fire (*homa*) and then the king, the female dancers and the musical instruments (*ātodya*) are purified (*mārj-*) or illuminated (*abhi-dyotayati*) with torches, lit (in the sacrificial fire) in order to enhance their brilliance (*dīpti*). They are then sprinkled with water that has been purified with *mantras* “for the happiness and well-being (*bhūti*) of the king” and a benediction is uttered for the success of the performances (3.81–87).

From this passage it may be inferred that the consecration of a new theatre took place immediately before the first performance, at the moment when the king (probably as the *prekṣāpati*)²²² and the audience were already present. The technical term *adhivāsanaṃ veśmanaḥ*²²³ describes its function correctly, for *adhivāsana* denoted “the preliminary consecration of an image, its invocation and worship by suitable *mantras*, etc. before the commencement of a sacrifice”²²⁴. This implies, however, that it was immediately followed by the *pūrvaraṅga*, which in some respects was a doubling of the consecration (it also comprised a *pūjā* to the *jarjara*, NŚ. 5.102f.), although its main purpose was different. It seems doubtful that in such cases the ritual of the *pūrvaraṅga* was performed *in toto*.

The end of the consecration is particularly instructive. It consists of three consecutive acts:

- a) the first act: the breaking of the jar (*kumbha*).

The jar used in this ritual is different from the golden pitcher (*bhr̥ṅgāra*), which is used in the *pūrvaraṅga* for ritual purification (5.81) and elsewhere in connection with the pole festival²²⁵. For the purpose of this ritual an earthen jar is used, which is filled with water and adorned with a garland of leaves. After having placed it in the middle of the stage the *nāṭyācārya* puts a piece of gold in it²²⁶, which may indicate that the earthen jar stands for a gold one. The place where the jar is put down (the *raṅgamadhya*) is the point of intersection of the two lines (East-West and North-South), which have been drawn on the floor of the stage. It is the centre of

²²² See above, p. 123.

²²³ Cf. 3.2 *tato 'dhivāsayed veśma raṅgapīṭhaṃ tathaiva ca, mantrapūtena toyena prokṣitāṅgo nisāgame*. Abhinavagupta has the following comment: *adhivāsayed iti : devatā maṇḍapam adhivasanty, āgacchanti, nāṭyācāryo dharmā (ryakṛtam upari)tanadevatopanimantraṅgam adhivāsanaṃ veśmanaḥ . . . vaded iti sambandhaḥ*. The reading *nāṭyācāryakṛtam* is apparently an emendation of the editors of the Baroda edition.

²²⁴ See Apte, *The practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v.

²²⁵ See Cilappatikāram 3.121 *puṅṅvā nannūr por̥kuṭatt' ēnti*.

²²⁶ 3.71 *kumbhaṃ salilapūrṇaṃ ca parṇamālāpuraskṛtam (72) sthāpayed raṅgamadhye tu svarṇaṃ cātra dāpayet*. The *parṇamālā* is also referred to in 2.54. For the (usual) meaning of *puraskṛta* (“accompanied by, with”) see, e.g., 3.87. The translation “with a garland of leaves in its front” (Ghosh) is no doubt incorrect.

the stage, which is known as the *brāhma maṇḍala*. According to Abhinavagupta a lotus, symbolizing Brahmā, used to be drawn at this point²²⁷. Under it another piece of gold had been buried in the ground when the theatre was built²²⁸. Ever since the brāhmaṇas, gold was considered a symbol of life²²⁹ and the notion of a golden pitcher in the nether world as the receptacle of *amṛta*, the life-giving substance, was well-known in the Veda²³⁰.

The ritual of breaking the jar must be performed with great care (*prayatnataḥ*), for much depends on it. Should the *nāṭyācārya* fail to break it, then the king would be menaced by danger from his enemies. On the other hand, if the director succeeds, the king can be sure of destroying his rivals²³¹. It is clear that the author of this chapter considered the ritual a beneficial act. That it was in origin a mere analogical magic, the smashing of the jar symbolizing the crushing of the enemies, is improbable for several reasons. The jar, filled with water and adorned with leaves, is clearly a *pūrṇakumbha* or *pūrṇaghaṭa*²³², also called a *maṅgalakalaśa*²³³.

²²⁷ 3.22 (see n. 187) and 23 *padmopaviṣṭam Brahmānam tasya madhye niveśayet*. From Abhinavagupta's commentary on the last line (ed. Baroda I², p. 74 line 5), viz. *padmopaviṣṭam iti : madhye padmaṁ kāryam iti* it might be inferred that at his time the symbolism of the centre of the stage and ritual acts connected with it were still known (against the suggestion made above in n. 197). Other data, however, point to the conclusion that about 1000 A.D. the whole *pūrvarāṅga* was skipped or performed, as far as the *nāṇḍī* was concerned, behind the scenes. Cf. also Raṅganātha (1665 A.D.) ad Kālid. Vikram. I.1.1 *alam ativistāreṇa : pratyāhārādī-nikhīlapūrvarāṅgāṅgakarāṇe hi kathārambhotkanṭhitānām janānām jādyaṭā syāt, atas tiṣṭhatv ayaṁ etatprapañca 'iti bhavaḥ*. It is possible, however, that the consecration of a new playhouse was still performed in the absence of the audience.

²²⁸ Cf. 2.73 *ratnāni cā 'tra deyaṇi pūrvam vajram (diamond) vicakṣaṇaiḥ (74) vaidūryam dakṣiṇe caiva sphaṭikam paścime tathā, pravālam uttare caiva madhye tu kanakam bhavet*.

²²⁹ Cf. ŚB. V.2.1.20, 3.5.15, 4.1.14, VI.7.1.2; X.4.1.6, XII.8.1.22.

²³⁰ See Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, I², pp. 326, 437, Lüders, *Varuṇa*, p. 379, Kuiper, *India Maior* (Fs. Gonda), p. 148f.

²³¹ Cf. 3.88 *bhī(n)dyāt kumbhaṁ tataś caiva nāṭyācāryaḥ prayatnataḥ, abhinne tu bhavet kumbhe svāmīno śatruto bhayam (89) bhinne caiva tu vijñeyaḥ svāmīnaḥ śatrusaṁkṣayaḥ*. In this connection it is interesting to note that in the Rgveda Indra is said to have broken open the hill like a new (=unfired? J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie III*, p. 139) jar. Cf. X.89.7 *bibhēda girim nāvam in nā kumbhām, ā gā Indro akṛṇvata svayūgbhīḥ*).

²³² For the *pūrṇakumbha* or *pūrṇaghaṭa*, *pūrṇakalaśa* see, e.g., A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas II* (1931), p. 61f. (cf. ch. I, n. 327), Jeannine Auboyer, *Le trône et son symbolisme dans l'Inde Ancienne* (1957), pp. 84, 100f., Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann, *Les enseignements iconographiques de l'Agnipurāṇa*, p. 242f., S. Al-George et A. Roşu, "Pūrṇaghaṭa et le symbolisme du vase dans l'Inde", *Arts Asiatiques* 4 (1957), pp. 243-254, F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ* (1960), pp. 110-113, P. K. Agrawala, *Pūrṇa Kalaśa or the Vase of Plenty* (Varanasi, no date, 62 pp.). It is sometimes counted among the *aṣṭamaṅgalāni*, see von Hinüber, *ZDMG*. 1974, Supplement II, p. 361. Two of them were placed on the sides of the door, Kād. 68.4 *pūrṇakalaśādhīṣṭhitadvārapakṣake*, 96.14 *dvārāvasthitasitapūrṇakalaśam*, (Utt.) 281.4 *ubhayapārśvasthāpitotpallavamukhapūrṇahemakalaśam*.

²³³ Mṛech. IV.27.20 *cūda-pallava-lalāma-phaṭiḥa-maṅgalakalaśasābhīrām-ohaa-pāssassa*

Therefore it is placed in the very centre of the stage. Mythologically this was the place where the golden *amṛta*-jar was hidden in the primordial hill, at the root of the world axis²³⁴. The piece of gold which, as we have seen, had been buried beneath this centre, must have symbolized this world of potential life. According to Rigvedic mythology there is under the earth (represented by the primordial hill) an ocean (*samudrá*) of cosmic waters²³⁵. Indra's demiurgic act consisted in making a hole (*khá*) in this hill so that the subterranean waters could stream down from the top of the hill in four directions²³⁶.

That the earthen jar of the director is rightly equated to the cosmic jar or bucket under the earth is apparent from the fact that the director must crush the jar and that the prosperity of the king (and implicitly of his kingdom) is believed to depend on the water flowing from the jar. The *nāṭyācārya* thus repeats Indra's cosmogonic act. After the stage has been ritually converted into an image of the sacred world, its religious meaning is emphasized by a re-enactment of the "second creation"²³⁷.

A golden pitcher (*bhṛṅgāra*) is also one of the main paraphernalia (*upakarana*) used by the actors in the ritual ceremonies which precede the dramatic performance. The fact that this pitcher is said to have been the present given by Varuṇa to Bharata's sons after their legendary first performance of a play supports our thesis that it symbolizes the subterranean jar²³⁸. In the *pūrvaraṅga* it is used to pour out water on the director immediately before he is to erect the bamboo staff. Although the *Nāṭyaśāstra* describes this rite in terms of ablution and sipping of water²³⁹, it is possible that originally here, too, the act of pouring out was the most important aspect (see p. 168).

Mythologically the opening of the hill was immediately followed by the rising of the world axis. It is not surprising, when viewed in this mythological context, that the two main paraphernalia of the actors were the golden pitcher and the bamboo staff. The more remarkable, therefore, is the fact that the director, after breaking the jar, does not erect the bamboo staff in the centre of the stage. The *jarjara* is only mentioned twice in the third chapter, first when, as part of the "worship of the deities on the stage", a *pūjā* is offered to the staff (3.11-13) and secondly when it is consecrated for its use on the stage (3.73-81). It has not,

... *vasantaseṇā-bhavaṇa-duārassa*, Kād. 68.7 *śirobhāgavinyastadhavalanidrāmaṅgalakalaśam*, 178,13 *saptalokanidrāmaṅgalakalaśe*, Gitagov. 12.18 (II.1) with comm.: *maṅgalārthakalaśo hi payahpūrṇo bhavati sunīlāmrāpallavair upacitāś ca*.

²³⁴ For the *amṛta*-jar at the root of the world tree see, e.g., E. B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art* (1920-27), p. 43, F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ* (1960), pp. 110-113, 156f. (and the plates), and cf. above, ch. I, n. 327.

²³⁵ *samudrá*=*āpaḥ*, see RS. VI.69.6 (cf. *India Maior* p. 149) and cf. IIJ. 8, p. 125.

²³⁶ See, e.g., Lüders, *Varuṇa* p. 284ff., B. H. Kapadia, *Purāṇam* 4 (1962), pp. 146-153. Cf. *India Maior* p. 148 (with further references).

²³⁷ For the "second creation" see *History of Religions* 10 (1970), p. 104ff., 117, Renou, *EVP*. 16, p. 169.

²³⁸ For *Varuṇa* and the *kumbha* see above, p. 147.

²³⁹ *śauca* and *ācamana* (5.81).

however, a fixed place assigned to it in the "installation of the gods" (3.20-32). As will be shown in the next section, the staff was only temporarily erected in the *pūrvaraṅga* and for that purpose it had to be consecrated as a sacred object during the consecration of the theatre.

b) the second act: the illumination of the stage (3.89-91).

The director now takes fearlessly²⁴⁰ a burning lamp to illuminate the stage²⁴¹. With a roaring sound and snapping of the fingers he places the lamp with much noise in the centre of the stage²⁴². In this description three points are significant. First, the illumination takes place immediately after the breaking of the jar; second, the lamp is placed in the centre, and third, the illumination is accompanied by much ostentatious tumult (the technical term for which is *vidrava*). In the Rīgveda the winning of Agni or, more specially, of the sun (*svàrsāti*)²⁴³ is a cosmogonical event which is entirely parallel to the winning of water. When viewed in the light of the preceding act, this rite must obviously be interpreted as an imitation of the first rising of the sun from the world mountain, which is the cosmic centre. In this respect, too, we are accordingly dealing with the enactment of an aspect of the "second creation". As for the roaring sound, however, no unambiguous explanation can be proposed. On the one hand it is reminiscent of the shouts that seem to have accompanied the "return" of the sun after the winter solstice²⁴⁴. On the other hand it reminds us of the legendary imitation on the stage of the primordial fight of gods and Daityas, which is said to have consisted of "altercation and tumult"²⁴⁵.

c) the third act: the fight.

"Then one performs on the stage fights which are accompanied by the sound of conch-shells and drums, big drums (*mṛdaṅga*) and small ones (*paṇava*) and all kinds of instruments of percussion (*ātodya*). In these fights wounds which are struck, incised and gaping, with blood streaming from them . . . will portend success"²⁴⁶. The words *bhinna* and *chinna* in

²⁴⁰ 3.89 *nātyācāryo 'py apetaḥhī* C (with the manuscripts *ṭha ma ta*). The variant reading *prayatnataḥ* (B KM Raghuv.) is a *lectio faciliior*, which may have crept in from 88a *nātyācāryaḥ prayatnataḥ*.

²⁴¹ *raṅga* is not "auditorium" (Ghosh), since only the stage as a sacred space can be meant.

²⁴² 3.89b *bhinne kumbhe tataḥ caiva nātyācāryo 'py apetaḥhī* (90) *praṅghya dīpikām dīptām sarvaṁ raṅgaṁ pradīpayet, kṣveditaiḥ sphoṭitaiḥ caiva valgitaiḥ ca pradhāvitaiḥ* (v. 1. *vipradhāvitaiḥ*) (91) *raṅgamadhye tu tām dīptām saśabdām saṁprayojayet*.

²⁴³ For *svàrsāti* see the comments in IJ. 4, p. 220, 5, p. 173.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Chānd. Up. III.19.3 *ghoṣā ulūlavo* and see IJ. 4, pp. 235, 272.

²⁴⁵ 1.57 *tadante 'nukṛtir baddhā yathā Daityāḥ surair jītāḥ* (58) *saṁphetaḥvidravakṛtā chedyabhedyāḥavātmikā*, cf. 14.56C (13.54 KM), and 35.53 (26.28B, 35.20+, p. 654 line 1 KM) *yat tv āviddhāṅgahāraṁ tu (-antaṁ) chedyabhedyāḥavātmakam (sattvāviddha-C)* and 27.13B C *yac chedyabhedyāḥavātmakam* (n. 328).

²⁴⁶ 3.91 *śaṅkhadundubhinirghoṣair mṛdaṅgapaṇavais tathā* (92) *sarvātodyaiḥ praṅghitaiḥ raṅge yuddhāni kārayet, tatra bhinnam ca chinnam ca dāritam ca sāṣṇitam* (93) *ḥṣatam pradīptam āyastam nimittam siddhilakṣanam*. B (3.92f.) has the same text but KM reads *raṅgayuddhāni* and has *kṛtam* for *ḥṣatam*.

combination with *kṣveḍita* "roaring sound" of verse 90 exactly echo the word *chedyabhedyāhava* quoted in n. 245, where *āhava* means "challenging". This terminological parallelism is an indication that the fight on the stage, introduced by the illumination, is an "imitation"²⁴⁷ of the cosmogonical fight between Devas and Asuras. Thus the consecration of the stage ended with three main aspects of the cosmogony. Only the *jarjara*, although ritually consecrated, was not actually erected. As we shall see below, this formed part of the ceremonies of the *pūrvaraṅga*.

Summing up it can be said that the end of the consecration was a drama in a nut-shell, for the legendary first dramatic performance is said to have also been a representation of the cosmogony (see p. 143). That there is also some kind of parallelism with the *pūrvaraṅga* is not surprising. The two ceremonies, however, are only partly parallel for, whereas the former aims at transforming the stage into a sacred place, the central meaning of the *pūrvaraṅga* lies in the ritual of the *jarjara*. There is a clear contrast, accordingly, between the consecration, which comprises a representation of the release of the waters, the birth of Agni and the fight between Devas and Asuras, and the *pūrvaraṅga*, which, although not entirely lacking the element of strife, concentrates upon the unity of the ordered world as personified by Brahmā. It is he, not Indra, who erects the *jarjara* and it is under his patronage that the verbal contest between the protagonists of the cosmic moieties takes place. This shows that the two rituals were basically different in character.

11. THE JARJARAPRAYOGA IN THE PŪRVARAṅGA

The "performance with the *jarjara*" is discussed in detail in ch. V, which deals with the *pūrvaraṅga*. The interpretation of the text, however, presents some difficulties and consequently opinions differ. Since these problems have been treated in detail elsewhere²⁴⁸, this section will only briefly summarize those conclusions that are of interest in the context of this study.

The *pūrvaraṅga* is a religious act of high importance, which according to the Nāṭyaśāstra is equal to a sacrifice: 1.126 = 3.96. Cf. 3.93, 5.112 and 5.57 "The performance of the *pūrvaraṅga* is a religious (meritorious) act, which confers fame and long life and serves to please Daityas and Dānavas and all the gods". After playing music behind the curtain to appease the Daityas and Dānavas, the musicians enter the stage and make some music in praise of the gods.

The director (*sūtradhāra*) then enters accompanied by his two assistants, who carry in their hands the two paraphernalia (*upakaraṇa*), viz. the *jarjara* and the golden pitcher. As far as I can see, the following ritual cannot be understood unless the two assistants are taken to stand for

²⁴⁷ 1.57 *anukṛti* (see n. 245). In this way *anukṛti* and *anukaraṇa* (1.111, 121) became terms for the drama in general. Cf. Abhinavagupta (B I², p. 26 line 7) *anukṛtir iti nāṭyam* and Ghosh, Translation I², Introduction p. XXIX.

²⁴⁸ See n. 203.

the divine world. If so, however, the two objects which they are carrying characterize them as Indra and Varuṇa, for we have seen above that the *upakarāṇas* are the legendary presents of these two gods. In that case the fact that these gods were chosen to represent the world of the gods reflects Vedic mythological thought since only in the Veda Indra and Varuṇa stood for the two cosmic moieties and thus represented the whole ordered world. Apart from the internal evidence of the ritual itself, an argument in favour of this interpretation of the character of the assistants is the fact that at the end of the *pūrvaraṅga* one of the assistants becomes the *vidūṣaka*, whose traditional make-up, as described in the Nāṭyaśāstra is remarkably similar to the outward appearance of the Vedic *jumbakā*, the human representative of Varuṇa in the Vedic ritual. As we shall see below, the *vidūṣaka* and the *nāyaka* were the only male characters who had a special divine protector, the *nāyaka* being Indra's *protégé*.

The *sūtradhāra*, who has flowers in his hands, goes between the two assistants. Since this fact is expressly stated in our text (5.70), it must have had a special meaning. This can only be understood if the two assistants actually represent (as was assumed above) the upper world and the nether world. If so, the *sūtradhāra*'s position between them characterizes him as a god of totality (see p. 176f.). It must be stressed in this connection that the *pūrvaraṅga* was a ritual and for that reason considered equal to a sacrifice. Hence the special meaning referred to above must have been a ritual meaning, and the *sūtradhāra* must consequently have impersonated god Brahmā. It then follows from the well-known symbolical meanings of "right" and "left" for "higher" and "lower" that (although the text does not say so) the assistant with the *jarjara* must have gone on his right and the *bhṛṅgāradhāra* on his left.

Although the *sūtradhāra* had entered the stage "with the wish to worship Brahmā" (5.71 *Brahmaṇo yajaneccayā*), it is characteristic that the word *pūjā* is nowhere used in this context: he throws his handful of flowers as a donation in the centre, which is dedicated to Brahmā²⁴⁹ and then performs three salutations²⁵⁰. The normal "salutation" (*abhivādana*) consists of rising from one's seat, clasping the feet of the superior and mentioning the name of the person addressed and one's own. Here the

²⁴⁹ 5.74 *puṣpāñjalyapavargaś ca kāryo brāhme 'tha maṇḍale*. According to Sāgaranandin (c. 1200–1250) this ceremony is meant to avert evil: *rañgeṣu puṣpaparakaraḥ kṛtaḥ svastyayanam bhavet* (Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa 2185–263). A similar definition is sometimes given of the *pūrvaraṅga* in general, e.g. *vighnaprasāntaye* (see n. 254), Mālatīm. I.5.2 *suvihitāni raṅgamaṅgalāni*. Such definitions, which refer to the aim of the *pūrvaraṅga*, are not contradicted by those which describe its formal aspect as a *devārcanavidhi* (Sāgaranandin 2159–250). Cf. NŚ. 5.57 *sarvadaivatapūjārham sarvadaivatapūjanam* and below, n. 255, where the benediction of the world is described as *devastutisamāśrayā* "consisting in a praise of the gods". In the account given above the various dance steps are left out of consideration because their meaning is still, as far as I know, obscure. Each of them, however, had no doubt its own specific ritual meaning.

²⁵⁰ 5.75 *abhivandyah Pitamahah, abhivādanāni kāryāni triṇi hastena bhūtale* (76) . . . *vandanābhinayāntakah*.

text only specifies that, instead of clasping the feet (which is impossible), the *sūtradhāra* should, while kneeling in the centre, touch the ground thrice. The number three symbolizes the idea of totality associated with the centre.

The *sūtradhāra* then rises, leaves the *brāhma maṇḍala* in which he had made his salutations, makes a *pradakṣiṇa* around it and calls his assistant. Actually, as the situation indicates, both assistants must have been meant. The one who carries the golden pitcher (and who has been called according to the text) pours water from the pitcher on him. The text interprets this as an ablution and rinsing of the mouth. There is, however, some reason to doubt if ritual purification was actually the original meaning of this act, the more so as the *sūtradhāra* was already consecrated (*dikṣita*) at the moment when he entered the stage. As has been pointed out above (p. 164), in the consecration of the playhouse the water streaming from the broken jar and portending happiness and prosperity for the king and his kingdom can be interpreted as a reiteration of the creation of the ordered world. Likewise the water poured out from the pitcher, symbol of Varuṇa's nether world, can, in view of the unmistakable cosmogonical meaning of the following ceremony, originally have had a mythological meaning different from the ritual interpretation given by the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

Immediately after his purification the *sūtradhāra* seizes the *jarjara*, apparently from the hand of the other assistant. Muttering mantras the director performs particular steps. This part of the *pūrvaraṅga* ends with his taking five steps in the direction of the orchestra. Although the text does not specify how this "seizing of the *jarjara*" (*jarjaragrahaṇa*) was to be executed, it must have comprised the erecting of it. This appears from the fact that this first part of the *pūrvaraṅga* to be performed on the stage is called *Utthāpana*, which is the traditional term for erecting the Indra-pole, and further from the fact that the director later lowers the *jarjara*. At this moment he apparently erects it in his (right?) hand, which explains why preferably a bamboo staff was used for this purpose (23.172ff.)²⁵¹.

When entering the stage between his two assistants "with the wish to worship Brahmā", the *sūtradhāra* could be considered to be himself the god of the totality. Now that, after "greeting" god Brahmā, he stands in or near the *maṇḍala* in the centre of the stage, he must have impersonated Brahmā and the totality of the cosmos. He then turns round and "salutes" the four quarters with their *lokapālas* (1.83), viz. the east and Indra, the south and Yama, the west and Varuṇa, and the north with Dhanada (Kubera). An example of these salutations from a much later time is given by Sāgaranandin (c. 1200–1250), NLRK. 1134/118: "Accept my salutation, you gods, lords of the regions; come nearer, O illustrious ones, and protect my stage". Thereupon he performs with three steps, described as masculine, neuter and feminine, his "salutation" to the three gods of

²⁵¹ However, also for the pole of Indra's banner festival a *venuyāṣṭi* was often used. See Meyer, *Trilogie III*, *passim*.

the centre Rudra, Brahmā and Viṣṇu. Since these gods also reside in the three upper joints of the *jarjara*, it remains uncertain just how they are "saluted": whether in the *maṇḍala* of the centre or in the bamboo staff. It has already been remarked above that nowhere in the description of the ritual the word *pūjā* is used. This term is reserved for the homage which is to be paid by the "fourth man" (*caturthakāra*). The conclusion seems warranted, therefore, that the *sūtradhāra* actually represents the divine world, and that he and his two attendants impersonate the gods Brahmā, Indra and Varuṇa.

In addition to the divine honours which the "fourth man" pays to the *sūtradhāra*, which will be discussed below, there are other indications which seem to confirm this conclusion. One of them is the curious way in which, according to the Handbook, the names of the author and the drama should be announced to the audience. Since this was a profane task, the *sūtradhāra* and his attendants leave the stage at the end of the *pūrvaraṅga* (5.166) and "The *sthāpaka*, who has the qualities and the outward appearance of the *sūtradhāra*, then enters" (5.167b). In the Diamond Jubilee Number of the Annals of the Bhandarkar Or. Res. Inst. (1978), p. 173ff. it has been pointed out that *sthāpaka* or *kāvya-prastāvaka* was the name of the *sūtradhāra* in his profane *function* (thus also Abhinavagupta), which explains why the *sthāpaka* has the same appearance as the *sūtradhāra*. In the classical drama, however, this form of prologue is entirely unknown and the interpretations of Dhanamjaya and other theorists, though usually taken as an accurate description of the earlier practice, must necessarily have been mere guess-work. As the *pūrvaraṅga* fell into disuse, the need was felt for a more elaborate introduction than the Prologue, which was only an interlude. Hence the conversation (*saṃlāpa*) was substituted for the Prologue. This talk of the *sūtradhāra* with his wife (*naṭī*) or an attendant was technically called *āmukha* (NŚ. 22.28) but in most dramas the name for the older prologue, *sthāpanā* (in the prologues of the "Bhāsa"-plays) or *prastāvanā*, was maintained, and the use of *prastāvanā* for *āmukha* was sanctioned by NŚ. 22.29 (possibly an early interpolation). It will be clear that the German term "Vorspiel auf dem Theater" is neither correct for the *pūrvaraṅga* as a whole, nor for the *Prarocanā* and the *Prastāvanā*, but only for the *Āmukha*.

After this digression, necessary to illustrate the *sūtradhāra*'s sacred character in the *pūrvaraṅga*, we will now return to the ritual itself. What happens next is that a "fourth man" (*caturthakāra*), who is not ritually consecrated, enters the stage. His only task is to offer a *pūjā* of flowers to the *jarjara*, the orchestra and the *sūtradhāra* himself. It should be noted that this *pūjā* is entirely different in character from the preceding salutations. The *sūtradhāra* is treated as an equal of the bamboo staff and the orchestra (or: musical instruments), that is, as a divine being. It thus confirms the view taken above, that the *sūtradhāra*, when entering the stage with his two attendants, represented the world of the gods, and indirectly it may support the inference that he stands for Brahmā. The *pūjā* accentuates the character of the salutations given to the gods of

the four quarters and those of the centre. It is true that they formed part of a kind of consecration of the stage as an image of the divine world — a consecration which was prerequisite for the following ritual act. It must also be admitted that at the moment the *sūtradhāra* paid obeisance to the gods, including those of the centre, he at best represented a lower deity but he was not yet the highest god. However, after circumambulating the centre and seizing the *jarjara* he must have become god Brahmā, and the *pūjā* of the “fourth man” (apparently a representative of the human world) confirms his divine function. The text does not say just where he is standing at this moment but if it is not in the very middle, the *brāhma maṇḍala* (which would be the only legitimate place), it must have been quite near it.

It is now that the *sūtradhāra*/Brahmā pronounces his benediction (*nāndī*)²⁵². In the oldest practice, accordingly, as it is described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*²⁵³, the *nāndī* was not the benedictory verse recited at the beginning of a dramatical performance but the most solemn part of the *pūrvaraṅga*. Its function is to appease all obstacles²⁵⁴. On hearing its sound, which is equal to that of the explanation of a Vedic mantra (36.26), evil spirits flee (36.25). It is a benediction²⁵⁵ of the gods, the king, the cows and brahmins (5.108–112)²⁵⁶. Since the performance by the *sūtradhāra* culminates in this act, it becomes clear why such high demands are made upon his person (36.66–74): a man who was to bless “the whole world”²⁵⁷ had to fulfil the highest requirements.

After the *nāndī* the *sūtradhāra* pronounces the *jarjaraśloka* (5.117f.) which is immediately followed by another śloka which accompanies the inclining of the *jarjara*. The two assistants then retreat to the back of the stage. Apparently the director has acted a banner festival with the bamboo staff in his hand, which he first raises (to his forehead? 9.78) and then inclines. As a result the following dramatic performance can be considered to take place just as in the legendary first performance (1.54), on the occasion of Indra’s banner festival. After lowering the *jarjara*, the director holds (the lower part of) his left arm in a horizontal

²⁵² For its importance see Bādarāyaṇa apud Sāgara 1092f.

²⁵³ For the later practice see, e.g., S. Lévi, *Le théâtre indien* I, pp. 136, 379, II, pp. 27, 64, Kuiper (p. 169), pp. 179–182.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Bādarāyaṇa *vighnaprasāntaye*, Sāgaranandin 1090–115 *sarvaviḡhnaprasāntaye*. See n. 249.

²⁵⁵ 5.24 *āśirvacanasam̐yuktā* (cf. Sāgaranandin, NLRK. 1123–116, Sāh. D. 6.24, S. Lévi II, p. 24), 35.96 *āśirvāda(na?)yuktair madhurair vākyaḥ ca samaṅgalācāraiḥ, sarvaṁ stauti hi lokam̐ yasmāt tasmād bhaven nāndī*, Sāgaranandin, NLRK. 1095 *pradhānam aṅgam̐ pūrvaraṅge sūtradhāraprayojyadevastutisam̐śrayā āśirvacanātmikā dvādaśapadā aṣṭapadā vā*.

²⁵⁶ 5.108 *namo 'stu sarvadevebhyo dvijātibhyaḥ śubham̐ tathā* (109) *jitam̐ Somena vai rājñā ārogyam̐ gobhya eva ca, brahmo 'taram̐ tathāivā 'stu hatā brahmadviṣas tathā* (110) *praśāstv imām̐ mahārājāḥ pṛthivīm̐ ca sasāgarām̐, rājyam̐ pravardhatām̐ caiva raṅgaś cā 'yam̐ sam̐rdhyatām̐, etc.* For the connection between Moon (Soma) and *nāndī* see 5.51, for the Moon and the rasas see Bhāvaprakāśana, p. 197 (G.O.S.), lines 6–9.

²⁵⁷ 35.96 *sarvaṁ stauti hi lokam̐*.

position near his navel, while the palm of his left hand, in which he seems to have held the horizontal *jarjara*, is turned downwards. All this can be explained as symbolic of the laying down of Indra's banner, which is now desecrated. After having "turned round" (5.101 *parivartana*) and recited two ślokas, the *sūtradhāra* joins his two assistants and returns the *jarjara* to one of them. Whatever the way in which the latter may have got rid of it (which is not clear from the text), it cannot be doubtful that this act meant the *visarjana* of the desecrated object, the technical term for which was *jarjaramokṣa* (27.40). At this moment, it seems, the acting was taken to have begun, and the jury of experts (*prāśnīka*) started evaluating the acting (27.40). This moment, after the *jarjaramokṣa* (27.40) or after the first *jarjaraśloka* (5.118), was called *raṅgadvāra* "beginning of the acting" (5.27, 118)²⁵⁸ or, it seems, *nāṭyadvāra*. It cannot have implied, however, that now the *pūrvaraṅga* lost its ritual character. Passages in which this view is taken, such as 32.460

prayujya ca bahirgītaṃ pūrvaraṅgaṃ prayojayet
pūrvaraṅge pravṛtte tu nāṭyadvāraṃ samāśrayet

"After the *bahirgīta* he performs the *pūrvaraṅga*, and after the *pūrvaraṅga* the *nāṭyadvāra*" cannot represent a common opinion of older times. Usually the *pūrvaraṅga* is said to commence with the *bahirgīta*, the first member, in which music was played behind the scenes to appease the demons, and to end with the *prarocanā*. If, therefore, *nāṭyadvāra* is actually a synonym of *raṅgadvāra*, the verse must represent a later practice, which would not be surprising in this appendix. (See p. 190). The alternative is that *nāṭyadvāra* (not attested elsewhere, as far as I know) denoted the beginning of the play proper, after the completion of the *pūrvaraṅga*.

However, the more of the *pūrvaraṅga* was skipped, the stronger became the tendency to consider the remainder as part of the play. According to Śāradātānaya's *Bhāvaprakāśana*, p. 288, 7-10 the *sūtradhāra* must announce the play, the hero, the story and the *rasa* in the *nāṇḍī*. The first traces of this trend can be found in the definitions of the last two "members" of the *pūrvaraṅga* in Chapter V.

12. NĀYAKA, VIDŪṢAKA AND TRIGATA

In the preceding sections 5, 9 and 11, which dealt with the presents of the gods, the *jarjara* in the consecration of a new playhouse and the worship of the *jarjara* in the *pūrvaraṅga* respectively, it has been pointed out that the presents of Indra and Varuṇa, the *jarjara* and the golden pitcher, were particularly important. On the other hand, the ritual of the consecration and the *jarjaraprayoga* will, it is hoped, have made clear that the stage represented the sacred world and that the central deity in this world was *Brahmā*.

This long discussion of various religious aspects was necessary as an

²⁵⁸ 5.26 *yasmād abhinayas tatra prathamam hy avatāryate* (27) *raṅgadvāram ato jñeyam vāgaṅgābhīnayātmakam*. Cf. IJ. 16, pp. 260 and 264f.

introduction to one of the basic problems of the oldest form of the Sanskrit drama, viz. its chief characters. The key to this problem can be found in chapter I, where a separate passage deals with the divine protection of the theatre (I.82-95). After a lengthy enumeration of all the gods who protect the various parts of the building this passage concludes with briefly mentioning the protectors of the leading characters: "As for the *nāyaka*, he is protected by Indra, and the *nāyikā* by Sarasvatī. The Omkāra protects the *vidūṣaka*, and Hara [Śiva] the remaining characters"²⁵⁹.

There is no reason to doubt that the Nāṭyaśāstra has here preserved a very old tradition, which is in accordance with the general archaic character of the first chapter. This tradition recognizes three protagonists, who are considered distinct from the rest of the troupe. In the following discussion the *nāyikā* will be left out of consideration. The final section is exclusively devoted to her.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the oldest native tradition is that it does not lend the slightest support to modern theories which explain the *vidūṣaka* as a buffoon who at a comparatively late date intruded from the popular into the higher drama. This raises the question as to whether the modern interpretation of the character of the *vidūṣaka*, which is mostly regarded as self-evident and on which these theories are based, is correct. This point will be discussed below (§ 16).

That the tradition preserved in the Nāṭyaśāstra is actually very old follows from the fact that Indra is still regarded as the protagonist of the Devas, be it only on the occasion of the banner festival. The close relation between the *nāyaka* and his protector has already been referred to in the preceding section, where it has been argued that of the two assistants of the *sūtradhāra* in the *pūrvaraṅga*, the one who carries the *jarjara*, represents Indra, the giver of that religious symbol. There is, indeed, a double close relation, between Indra and the *nāyaka* on the one hand, and between the god and the *jarjara* on the other. It would seem a reasonable guess, therefore, that it is the *nāyaka* who in the ritual part of the *pūrvaraṅga* functions as the *jarjaradhara*, that is, the assistant who carries the *jarjara*. Apart from other arguments to be discussed below, it is significant that at the end of the *pūrvaraṅga* one assistant comes again to the front of the stage with the make-up of the *vidūṣaka*. At this moment his opponent may well have been recognizable as the *nāyaka*, but the text does not give any particulars.

A similar close relation must have existed between Varuṇa, the golden pitcher and the assistant who carried it. In view of the unmistakable

²⁵⁹ 1.96 *nāyakam rakṣati 'ndras tu nāyikām tu Sarasvatī, vidūṣakam atho 'mkārah śeṣas tu prakṛtir Haraḥ*. An interesting parallel for the importance of the protection of the actors during the performance is provided by the *ḍalang*, who performs the *wayang* (shadow play) in Bali. As Hooykaas remarks: "A ḍalan is prone to all sorts of dangers during a show" (Cosmogony and Creation in Balinese Tradition, p. 117). On the parallelism between *ḍalang* and *sūtradhāra* see J. J. Ras, BTLV 129 (1973), p. 456 (with references).

similarity between the make-up of the *vidūṣaka* and the outward appearance of the Vedic *jumbaká*, who represented Varuṇa (see § 18), the assistant who at the end of the *pūrvaraṅga* comes to the front as the *vidūṣaka* can only have been the *bhṛṅgāradhāra*. It might be expected, then, that the personal protector of the *vidūṣaka* was Varuṇa. In fact, however, the text gives a different and enigmatic name for the god who protects the *vidūṣaka*. It cannot be accidental that references to a god *Om̐kāra* are only seldom met with ²⁶⁰.

As a name for Viṣṇu it seems to occur only once in the *Mahābhārata* ²⁶¹, which rules out the possibility that this god could have been meant. The same is true of Śiva ²⁶², since he is mentioned in the same verse as the protector of all the other actors and thus is contrasted with *Om̐kāra*. The circumstance that *Om̐kāra* as the name of an individual god is only found in a few late Vedic texts may, therefore, be considered significant in the light of the archaic character of the first chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and its many Vedic reminiscences.

In one part of the *Gopathabrāhmaṇa*, which has gained a certain amount of independence under the name *Praṇava-Upaniṣad* ²⁶³, *om̐kāra* is both a term to denote the sacred syllable *Om̐* ²⁶⁴ and, in the same passage, the name of a son of *Brahmā*. In I.1.23 the text relates how the gods, frightened by an attack of the Asuras on Indra's city *Vasor dhārā* ²⁶⁵, wondered who could repel the Asuras ²⁶⁶. The text then runs

²⁶⁰ M. M. Ghosh only remarks that "Om̐kāra as a deity is very rarely to be met with" (Translation I², p. 13 n.).

²⁶¹ In the *Mahāpuruṣastava*, Mhbh. XII.325.83. Different is Hariv. App. I, 31.3648 *tvam om̐karo vaṣaṭkāras tvam yajñas tvam Pitāmahaḥ*.

²⁶² The Petersburg Dictionary refers to Wilson, who in the Works by the late Horace Hayman Wilson vol. I (London 1862), p. 223 n. 1 quotes Aufrecht's Catalogue of the Bodleian, and Weber's of the Berlin manuscripts and writes, with regard to the legendary twelve *liṅgas* mentioned in the *Nandi-Upapurāṇa* (*Śivapurāṇa* ch. 44-61), that "*Om̐kāra* is said to have been in Ujjain, but it is probably the shrine of MAHĀDEO at *Om̐kāra Mandatta* [Māndhāttā] on the Narmadā". For an ample description of this shrine see Central Provinces Gazetteer, 2nd ed., and Captain James Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India*, 2nd. ed. (London 1872), p. 171f.: "Far to the west of Puchmuree, in the district of Nimār, is a rocky island in the Nabadā river called Māndhāttā, on which is situated the shrine of Śivā called *Om̐kār*—one of the oldest and most famous of all India". Forsyth quotes from the "*Narmadā khandā*" (said to be part of the *Skānda Purāṇa*) and suggests that this may have been an old centre of worship of *Kālī* and *Kāla-Bhairava* by the *Bhils* before the first *Rājput* introduced *Om̐kāra*. Whether the name *Om̐kāratīrtha* (*Verzeichnis der Oxforder Handschriften* 68, b, 22) refers to the same place I am unable to verify, but the same name is mentioned several times in the *Matsyapurāṇa*, cf. 22.27 *Om̐kāraṃ piṭṭīrthaṃ ca Kāveri-kapilodakam* (cf. 189,6), 186.1-2 *idānīm Narmadāyās tu mātmyam vada sattama, yatro 'm̐kārasya mātmyam kapilā-saṅgamasya ca, 195.1 ity ākaryā sa rājendra Om̐kārasya 'bhivarnanam*.

²⁶³ GB I.1.16-30, cf. Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishad's des Veda*³, p. 858ff.

²⁶⁴ GB I.1.22 *purastād om̐kāraṃ prayukte*. Cf. NŚ. 34b. 178B *ādāv om̐kāra ucyate*.

²⁶⁵ For *Vasordhārāṇām aindram nagaram* (ed. Gaastra) read *Vasor dhārā nāmāi 'ndraṃ nagaram*. Cf. MS. III.4.1 (45,1), KS. XXI.11 (51,5 etc.), TS. V.4.8.1, ŚB. IX.3.2.1 (etc.) *vāsor dhārām*, PB. XXI.3.7.

²⁶⁶ Read: *ka imān asurān apahaniṣyati*.

as follows: "They saw Omkāra, the eldest son of Brahmā and said to him: 'May we, with thee as leader (*mukha*), be victorious over these Asuras'. He then said . . ." ²⁶⁷. This passage stresses the fact that the omkāra precedes all other things (*pūrvam, ādītaḥ*) ²⁶⁸, a notion which runs parallel with that of omkāra as the essence of everything ²⁶⁹. At the end of the passage, indeed, the omkāra is said to be the *ṛc* in the *ṛc* (etc.), the *sūtra* in the *sūtra*, the *praṇava* in the *praṇava*. It is described, accordingly, as the core and essence of every solemn utterance and as such also as different from, and even transcending, the *praṇava Om*. In this speculation the omkāra seems to come very close to the all-embracing notion of Brahman ²⁷⁰ and this is, indeed, stated *expressis verbis* in the Śaunaka-Upaniṣad ²⁷¹. Although in its first paragraph the syllable *Om* (*praṇava*) is compared and then fully identified with Indra ²⁷², in the third paragraph this merges in an identification with Brahman: "Der Praṇava ist Indra und darum gross . . . Da erkannte der Praṇava: . . . und ich bin die Erscheinung des Brahman und nicht von ihm verschieden". In the two Upaniṣads the *Praṇava/Omkāra* occurs in the characteristic Vedic frame-work of a fight between Devas and Asuras. Hence its being equated in the Śaunaka-Upaniṣad, as the king of syllables, with the king of the gods Indra. On the other hand this work, whose central motif is the glorification of the *praṇava*, thus introduces the notion of power. This is at variance with the basic idea of immanence, which comes out clearly

²⁶⁷ *ta Omkāraṁ Brahmaṇaḥ putraṁ jyeṣṭhaṁ dadṛśus, te tam abruvan : bhavatā mukhena 'mān asurāṅ jayeme 'ti. sa ho 'vāca . . .* Note the modern expression *bhavatā mukhena* "with thee as leader" for MS. III.4.1 (45,11) etc. *tvāyā mukhena*.

²⁶⁸ GB. I.1.23 *tasmād omkāraḥ pūrvam ucyate*, 25 *tasmād vai tad bhadrām omkāraṁ pūrvam ālebbe*, 24 *omkāraṁ ādītaḥ kurvanti*, 28 *tasmād brahmanvādīna omkāraṁ ādītaḥ kurvanti*, 26 *ādīta omkāro vikriyate*. Cf. Śaunaka Upaniṣad (Deussen, Sechzig Upaniṣad's, p. 876) "Da machte Indra den Praṇava zum beständigen Anfang der Gāyatri". The meaning of *mukha* is, accordingly, different from Chānd. Up. III.10.1 *tat* (*acil. amṛtam*) *Sādhyā upajīvanti Brahmaṇā mukhena* ("with Brahmā as their mouth") and Bṛh. Ār. Up. V.14.8, where Agni is the devouring mouth (*mukha*) of the *gāyatrī*-metre.

²⁶⁹ GB. I.1.30 *ātmabhāṣajyam ātmakaivalyam omkāraḥ*.

²⁷⁰ In general *omkāra* and *praṇava* were, of course, identical. In the Śaḍvīmśa-brāhmaṇa (IV.5.3) Prajāpati is said to have seen as a "remedy" against the attacks of the Asuras: *rta, satya, brahman, omkāra* (commentary: *praṇava*), "and he (also) saw the *gāyatrī*, consisting of three pādas as the beginning (?*mukha*) of the brahman". Bollée translates "He saw the face (i.e. the most important part) of Brahman", taking *brahman* in two different meanings. In the current equation *brāhma gāyatrī* the second word generally refers to the metre of that name, e.g. MS. III.4.4 (49,2) and Chānd. Up. III.12 (to which Eelsingh in his edition of the ŚB, p. 218, refers). Bollée refers to PB. XI.11.8-9, where however *brahman* denotes the priesthood. In the passage of the ŚB quoted above the words *tripadāṁ gāyatrīm* apparently also denote the metre, but then the meaning of *mukha* in *brahmaṇo mukham* by the side of *brahman* remains a crux. I doubt whether the gloss *pradhānam* of the commentator is correct. See also above, nn. 267 and 268.

²⁷¹ Deussen, Sechzig Upaniṣad's des Veda³, p. 875ff.

²⁷² "Dieser Praṇava ist Indra, ist alles was ist" . . . "Indra ist das Bewegte und das Unbewegte, so sagen sie, Indra aber ist der Praṇava".

in the recognition that the *praṇava* is identical with the Brahman and in the words “denn der Gipfel der Grösse ist der Praṇava. Alle Wesen sind in ihm enthalten, und seine Stätte ist in dem Nachhall, denn in diesem hatte er sich verborgen”. The same idea is stressed in the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, which not only depicts the Devas as invoking the assistance of *Om̐kāra*, the eldest son of Brahmā, but also describes the non-personified *om̐kāra* as comprising the totality of the divine world²⁷³.

The only later relevant passage which has been quoted as referring to the personified *Om̐kāra* occurs in the Kāśīkhaṇḍa. It has, however, an incidental character²⁷⁴. Two passages in the Mahābhārata, VII.173.1457*²⁷⁵ and V.106.14²⁷⁶ can also be left out of consideration.

After this digression we can return to the protector of the *vidūṣaka*. The Nāṭyaśāstra has fortunately preserved a precious indication as regards the light in which the *Om̐kāra* should be considered. This is the word *ādau* in 33.224 *caturṇām api vedānām ādāv om̐kāra ucyate* “The *om̐kāra* is said to be at the beginning of the four Vedas, too”. This reminds us of the speculations about the *om̐kāra* being *āditaḥ* etc. in GB. I.1.26 and 28 (see n. 268). This parallelism may not be accidental and may show that in this respect, too, the Nāṭyaśāstra is still rooted in the Vedic religious tradition. However, whether or not the vague figure of the divine *Om̐kāra* who protects the *vidūṣaka* is a reminiscence of the “eldest son of Brahmā” in the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa I.1.23, the problem remains that the three other protectors, viz. Indra, Sarasvatī and Śiva, are well-known deities, whereas *Om̐kāra* can at best be associated with a very vague and incidental personification, somehow related to Brahmā but not

²⁷³ In GB. I.1.25 the four morae of the *om̐kāra* are equated to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and all the gods (*sarvadevatya*).

²⁷⁴ H. H. Wilson, op. c., p. 4 n. 1 (see PW. V, col. 1225) points to Kāśīkhaṇḍa 31. In this passage the Praṇava is introduced as speaking after the four Vedas, for which purpose he must assume a human figure (31.31): *tad udīritam ākarnya praṇavātmā sanātanaḥ, amūrto mūrtimān bhūtvā hasamāna wāca tau. Praṇava wāca* : . . . Much later than this passage from a purported part of the Skāndapurāṇa is Māyā's account of the first being, which Wilson (p. 81) cites from the Bijak of Bhagodās, one of Kabir's disciples: “the *Om̐kāra* did not witness his beginning, how then can I explain it . . .”.

²⁷⁵ In Mhbh. VII.173.1457* crit. ed. there is no reason to assume a personification: *śalyam Agniḥ ca vai kṛtvā puṅkhe Somam apām patim, sa kṛtvā dhanur om̐kāraṁ sāvitrīm jyām Maheśvaraḥ, hayāmś ca caturō vedān sarvavedamayaṁ ratham, Prajāpatiṁ rathaśreṣṭhe vinūyujya sa sārathim*. In the Bombay edition a longer passage is interpolated (VII.202.71–80). The *om̐kāra* here occurs in v. 76 *kṛtvō 'om̐kāraṁ pratodam ca Brahmāṇam caiva sārathim*. Both interpolations (and Mhbh. VIII.24.257*) are elaborations of an ancient Vedic equation, see n. 136. In contrast with this older version, which contains the names of three gods, the later one contains the four Vedas and the Sāvitrī-verse, which is never personified (PW. VII, col. 964f.). There is no reason, therefore, to consider *om̐kāra* as a personification.

²⁷⁶ Mhbh. V.106.14 *om̐kārasya 'tra jāyante sūtaḥ daśatīr daśa*, with a variant reading *śṛtaḥ* which Nilakaṇṭha explains as follows: *śṛtaḥ : mārgāḥ. Om̐kāro vai sarvā vāg iti śruter, vedasya śākhāpraśākhādibhedo 'traiva jāta ity arthaḥ*. Neither reading is clear to me.

actually a god of the pantheon. Abhinavagupta refrains from giving any explanation. Since our difficulties in identifying this "god" can hardly be due to a deficient knowledge of the Hindu pantheon on our part, it is reasonable to conclude that this name has been chosen on purpose, just because it does not evoke the image of an individual god.

The reason for this remarkable choice must have been taboo. It is the object of this book to demonstrate that the *vidūṣaka* impersonated Varuṇa, who was too inauspicious to act (or, to be named) as the protector of a dramatic character. Was, then, Omkāra a different god, substituted for Varuṇa, or merely a euphemistic name, used because the real name was tabooed? As a mere guess it may be suggested that, since the *omkāra* was identified with the *brahman* (n. 270), and since *brāhman* could denote in Vedic the whole social class of brahmins, the *vidūṣaka*, who had to be a brahmin, was protected by an impersonation of the brahmins as a whole (see p. 222). According to Byrski (n. 1), p. 27 Omkāra stands for Brahmā.

The basic difficulty in studying Varuṇa is this element of taboo. An intentional reticence can seldom be proved. In his case, it is true, there are sufficient indications pointing to feelings of fear and awe with regard to him. We have some reason, therefore, to expect a restraint, dictated by taboo, in what Vedic and post-Vedic authors tell us about Varuṇa. Although it is argued again and again that the only sound and scholarly method of studying a god is to confine oneself to what the texts explicitly say, this is only fully true for the study of gods of a less complex character, such as Indra. It is seldom realized that the same principle, when applied to the study of Varuṇa, is tantamount to condemning oneself to an imperfect understanding, if not a complete misunderstanding, of the god. In this case it would be an unsound method to ignore the aspect of taboo and a possible reticence, and to proceed as if the direct data of the evidence are the only reliable basis for an interpretation of his character.

As we have seen above, in the *pūrvaraṅga* the *sūtradhāra* and his two assistants enter and leave the stage as a group. Since this is described by similar formulaic lines²⁷⁷, the specification given for their entrance, viz. that the *sūtradhāra* goes between his assistants²⁷⁸, must also be true of their exit. From the fact that the *pūrvaraṅga* is a ritual, it has been inferred that this position had a ritual meaning. The symbolism of the middle is too well known to need an ample discussion. In the Yajurveda Prajāpati is said to have created the Devas with his right hand (or, on his right) and the Asuras with (or, on) his left²⁷⁹. In modern illustrations of the Mahābhārata Yudhiṣṭhira is represented as seated in the middle, with Bhīma and Arjuna sitting to the right of him, and Nakula and Sahadeva on his left²⁸⁰. Right is always associated with the higher group

²⁷⁷ See 5.69 *praviśeyuḥ samañ trayāḥ* and 5.142 *niṣkrāmeyuḥ samañ trayāḥ*.

²⁷⁸ See 5.70 *madhye tu sūtradhṛk tādhyāñ vṛtaḥ*.

²⁷⁹ See MS. I.9.3 (132,16) *dākṣiṇena hāstena devān āsṛjata savyenā 'surāms, té devā vīryāvanto 'bhavan mṛddhā āsurāḥ*, KS. IX.11 (112, 18) *dakṣiṇaṁ hastam anu devān āsṛjata te vīryāvanto 'bhavan, savyaṁ hastam anu asurāms te mṛddhā abhavan*.

²⁸⁰ See Numen 8, p. 41f.

and the divine, left with the lower order. In the ordered world the contrast between Devas and Asuras in the cosmogony has been replaced by that of upper world and nether world²⁸¹. For that reason the *jarjaradhara*, as he represented the world of the Devas, must have gone on the right of the *sūtradhāra*. The ambiguous position of Varuṇa has been amply discussed in Ch. I. Although he had become a Deva (be it a *devā āsura*, who remained associated with the nether world), the Vedic theological system leads to the supposition that at the end of every year he became again an Asura. But apart from this conclusion, which cannot be supported by direct evidence of our texts, the fact that he stood for the nether world was sufficient reason to make him, *in this respect*, inferior to the representative of the upper world. It may not be superfluous to warn against the misconception that Varuṇa was therefore considered morally inferior to Indra. Moral appreciations according to human standards are out of place here. In the last hundred years they have contributed much to misinterpreting and distorting the image of the Vedic pantheon. That the Vedic Varuṇa, as the guardian of the cosmic order (*ṛtāsya gopdā*) had a majestic character does not contradict the fact that as a god of the nether world he was of a lower order than the gods of the other moiety. The assistant who carried his present and symbol, the golden pitcher, must therefore have gone on the left of the *sūtradhāra*.

This conclusion is of direct importance for the interpretation of the next part of the *pūrvaraṅga*, which follows the desecration of the *jarjara*, viz. the so-called Trigata (5.136–140) or Trika (?5.16). After a detailed description of the dance steps of the Mahācārī (5.128–135) the Nāṭyaśāstra describes the Trigata as follows: “When this is finished he addresses²⁸² his assistants while taking three steps²⁸³. When they have come to him, those who know (the tradition well) sing a *narkuṭaka* song²⁸⁴. [While this is being sung he performs (the Sūcī [Vedha] Cārī) by putting forward the left foot first and the right foot afterwards]²⁸⁵. He must also perform a Trigata in the Bhāratī style²⁸⁶. The *vidūṣaka* holds a conversation which is *ekapadā*(?)²⁸⁷, mainly consists of incoherent phrases and evokes a smile of the *sūtradhāra*. [He must make critical comments²⁸⁸, with abrupt

²⁸¹ See History of Religions 15, p. 113.

²⁸² The use of *vyā-hṛ-* seems uncommon but it can hardly have a different meaning from the one assumed here. Influence of *ā-hṛ-* ‘herbeiholen’ (Feistel) is improbable.

²⁸³ *tripadyā*: cf. 5.99a, where the reading *tripadair* C is against the manuscripts. The meaning is unknown but is obviously different from *tripadī*, name of a metre. Feistel, p. 80, translates “mit einem Dreischritt”.

²⁸⁴ See for the *narkuṭaka* or *natkuṭaka* (*dhruvā*) 32.322–347 (and vv. 395, 440, 476–478), 34.204+ KM (p. 643 line 19, p. 644 line 3)=33.237+, 238+C.

²⁸⁵ This verse, only found in B and C, is the same as 5.135a C.

²⁸⁶ See n. 307.

²⁸⁷ The reading *ekapade* C seems to be a mere conjecture for *ekapadām* of the other editions. B does not mention any variant reading. For this word see Feistel, pp. 83, 120.

²⁸⁸ *vitandā*: Ghosh translates it by “controversial topic”, Feistel by “‘frivole’ Diskussion’ and refers to Nyāyakośa (Poona 1928), s.v. See below, p. 190ff.

remarks²⁸⁹ and enigmatical utterances²⁹⁰, and questions such as 'Who is standing (there)?' (or) 'Who has won?', etc., which having a bearing (?)²⁹¹ on the (following) play. The *trigata* is performed as a conversation²⁹² by one assistant. It is distorted²⁹³ by the *vidūṣaka* but established by the *sūtradhāra*]²⁹⁴.

This curious intermezzo is, apart from the following *Prarocanā*, the final "member" of the *pūrvaraṅga*. Hardly any attempt has been made to understand its meaning. As far as I can see, scholars have without

²⁸⁹ For *gaṇḍa* see 20.129ff. (18.125B), Lévi, p. 115 and Konow, p. 22 "Wenn ein von einem Aussenstehenden gesprochenes Wort sich in ein Gespräch hineinfügt, und z.B. wie eine Antwort auf eine Frage aufgefasst wird". This is based on *Daśarūpaka* 3.18 *gaṇḍam prastutasambandhibhinnārtham sahaso 'ditam*, where the commentary refers to *Uttarāmacarita* 1.38+. Haas renders it by "abrupt remark" (cf. Feistel, p. 83). Similarly *Sāhitya Darpaṇa* 527 (VI.260 *gaṇḍam prastutasambandhibhinnārtham satvaram vacaḥ*) and *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* 2.97, which K. H. Trivedi, *The Nāṭyadarpaṇa* p. 110 paraphrases "When a relevant speech suggests, all of a sudden, some other sense it is called *Gaṇḍa*". But *Sāgaranandin*, *Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakōśa* 2990 (366) takes it in a different sense.

²⁹⁰ For *nālikā* (*nālikā* KM) see 20.123C *hāsyenā 'vagatārthā prahelikā nālike 'ti vijñeyā*, *Daśarūpaka* 3.19 *sopahāsā nigūḍhārthā nālikaiva prahelikā*, *Sāhitya Darpaṇa* 529 (6.261) *prahelikaiva hāsyena yuktā bhavati nālikā*, S. Lévi, p. 116 "paroles énigmatiques où se mêle la plaisanterie et dont le sens est caché", similarly Konow, p. 21. *Sāgaranandin* 2935 (360-61) adds an alternative definition. B (5.135a) reads *tālikām* without indicating on which manuscripts this is based. The reading has been adopted by *Raghuvamśa* and Feistel. The latter's guess (p. 83) "Schnapsideen", *Rede die vom Toddy (tāli) beeinflusst ist* is rather far-fetched. The only word *tāla* which frequently occurs in the NŚ. denotes musical time, e.g. 5.132, 144-46, 148. (For Hindi *tāri*, Engl. *toddy* see Turner, CDIAL. no. 5750 [the *Kādambari* has both *tādīpuṣa* p. 126,23 and (*tālapatra* 20,8), *tālipaṭṭa* 188,3, *tālipuṣa* 98,16], and *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 927f.). KM. only records the v. 1. *nāmikām* (in KSS). The verse occurs exclusively in one (or two) manuscript(s) of the Madras Gov. Or. Mss. Library and the library of Trivandrum.

²⁹¹ *prarūpiṇim* : a (probably late) hapax, from **prarūpayati*, used instead of *ni-rūp-*, cf. 5.141 *kāvyaṣṭunirūpaṇam*. Perhaps corrupt for *-prarūpaṇim*, but see Debrunner, *Altind. Grammatik* II-2, p. 342f.

²⁹² *saṃjalpa*, cf. 5.28-29 *vidūṣakaḥ sūtradhāras tathā vai pāripārśvikah, yatra kurvanti saṃjalpaṃ tac cāpi trigataṃ smṛtam*. Konow, p. 24, gives the correct translation "Gespräch", cf. p. 191. Not "(amüsantes) Geschwätz" (Feistel, pp. 34, 83, 120), "gemeinsames Geschwätz" (idem, p. 151).

²⁹³ *vidūṣitaḥ* C KM, *virūpitaḥ* B. *Raghuv.* No edition records a variant reading. The verse is not commented upon by *Abhinavagupta*. The former word occurs elsewhere in the NŚ., cf. 34.217 KM. (*carmalakṣaṇam na bhūmāgnividūṣitam* (but 33.251C *na ca dhūmāgnividūṣitam*). The word may be meant as an etymological explanation of *vidūṣaka* (n. 320) and *virūpita* may be the *lectio facilior*, due to a copyist but this cannot be decided without a better knowledge of the evidence of the manuscripts. See nn. 320, 355 and 391.

²⁹⁴ 5.136 *tasya 'nte tu tripadyā 'tha vyāharet pāripārśvikau, tayor āgamane kāryam gānam narkuṣakam budhaiḥ (137) tatrā 'pi vāmavedhas tu vikṣepo dakṣiṇasya ca, tathā ca bhāratibhede trigataṃ saṃprajoyayet (138) vidūṣakas tv ekapadām sūtradhārasmitāvahām, asaṃbadhahakathāprāyām kuryāt kathānikām tataḥ [(139) vitanḍām gaṇḍasaṃyuktām nālikām ca prajoyayet, kas tiṣṭhati jitam kene 'tyādī kāvya-prarūpiṇim (140) pāripārśvikasaṃjalpo vidūṣakavidūṣitaḥ, sthāpitaḥ sūtradhāreṇa trigataṃ saṃprajuyate].*

exception taken it for granted that it was a meaningless farce. The later Indian theorists did not understand it any more, and from the fact that they even omit it in their lists of the "members" of the *pūrvaraṅga*²⁹⁵ it may be inferred that not only its performance on the stage had become obsolete (which was probably true for almost the whole *pūrvaraṅga*), but no memory of it had even survived.

In the light of our conclusion, however, that the whole *pūrvaraṅga* was a ritual which aimed at a restoration of the primeval sacred world on the stage and a re-enactment of at least a part of the cosmogony by celebrating the erection of the Indra pole, the question as to the meaning of the Trigata cannot be lightly dismissed. The ritual character of the context in which it appears leads to the conclusion that this quasi-comical intermezzo must originally have been completely different from the clownish act which it is generally taken to be. The author of ch. V of the Nāṭyaśāstra himself, to whom we owe the last echo of what at one time must have been a meaningful performance, does not seem to have had any idea as to why this Trigata had to be performed. From his description we can only infer that he simply transmitted a tradition which had been observed from times immemorial. At this point the modern student of the Sanskrit drama is faced with a basic methodological dilemma. Trying to understand and interpret the scanty data of the Indian handbook means, in this case more than in others, going farther back into the past, beyond the Nāṭyaśāstra, and reconstructing, on the basis of what we think we can understand of the ancient *pūrvaraṅga*, a meaning for which even our earliest dramaturgical source can provide no corroboration. The alternative is to confine oneself to what the text says *expressis verbis* and to the conclusions that can be drawn from it, which would imply that one would have to abstain from any guess at a possible meaning of the Trigata and leave it for what it is in our text: an incomprehensible *corpus alienum* in a ritual of high religious importance. No scholar has shown this self-restraint, for interpreting the Trigata as a farce means saying more than the text itself permits. The following sections are based on the conviction that the bounds set to research are not always necessarily dictated by the nature of our sources and that an effort to reconstruct,

²⁹⁵ It is interesting to see which of the twenty-two members (against twenty-one in NŚ. 33.226+, see IJ. 16, p. 243 n. 10) Sāgaranandin, NLRK. 1126f. considers worth mentioning: *pratyāhāra* (placing of the musicians), *mārjanā* (playing of the drum), *gītavidhi* (song of praise), *brahmayogacārī* (graceful song and dance), *mahācārī* (forceful song and dance), *prarocanā* (inducement), *nāndī* (benediction), *jarjarastuti* (praise of the *jarjara*), *digvandanā* (salutation of the cardinal points), etc. (here quoted according to the translation by Dillon-Fowler-Raghavan). The order is strange but from the words (v. 1088) *nāndy api tatraiva kartavyā* we may infer that the *nāndī* at this time (1200-1250?) was recited after the *prarocanā*, immediately before the *sūtradhāra* entered (1094 *yad ucyate nāndyante sūtradhāra iti*). While Sāgaranandin quotes illustrative texts of the *prarocanā*, *nāndī*, *jarjarastuti* and *digvandanā*, his reticence about the Trigata was not, perhaps, entirely due to its character of an improvisation in prose. It may have been a mere name known from the Nāṭyaśāstra.

if possible, a pre-literary stage can at times be as legitimate as the reconstruction of a prehistoric linguistic stage.

A serious difficulty, however, is the circumstance that the word *trigata*, apart from denoting one of the last members of the *pūrvavaṅga*, also occurs in a seemingly different meaning in the list of the thirteen constituents of the *vīthi*, the so-called *vīthyaṅgas*²⁹⁶. It is therefore necessary, in order to prevent wrong conclusions, first to examine the use of the term *trigata*.

13. THE TRIGATA I.

A definition of the *vīthyaṅga* Trigata has been handed down in two different versions, both in the *āryā* metre and both corrupt. They will be distinguished as A and B. The version A is found in 20.128 C

*yad udāttavacanam iha ca tridhā vibhaktam bhavet prayogesu
hāsyarasasamprayuktam tat trigatam nāma vijñeyam*

and in 18.179–180 KM (where it is given as a variant reading in the critical apparatus)

*yathā 'nudāttavacanam tridhā vibhaktam bhavet prayoge tu
hāsyarasasamprayuktam tat trigatam nāma vijñeyam*

In the second quotation the first word *yathā* must be corrupt for metrical reasons. One may conjecture *yatrā* or, in view of *yad* in C, *yady*. For metrical reasons, however, the latter reading would necessitate a further alteration of the text by reading *yady anudāttam vacanam*, which is improbable²⁹⁷.

Version B is found in 18.179b–180a KM

*śrutisārūpyārthātmani bahavo 'rthā yuktibhir niyujyante
yad dhāsyam ahāsyam vā trigatam nāmā 'pi vijñeyam*²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ See Konow, p. 21f.: "Bestandteile der vīthi"; Haas, Daśarūpa, p. 84: "division", Ghosh, Translation I, p. 371 n. 1: "type"; Feistel, pp. 103, 105: "Glieder der Vīthi". Cf. 22.26 *bhedāḥ . . . aṅgatvam āgatāḥ* "varieties . . . have become its component parts" (Ghosh), "Arten . . . sind zu Gliedern geworden" (Feistel).

²⁹⁷ For *udāta* "exalted" ("erhaben", Konow, p. 34) with reference to persons cf., e.g., 20.10 and 64 *prakhyātodāttanāyaka*, 34.20 *senāpatir āmatyaś ca dhīrodāttau prakīrtitau*, 34.26 *divyā ca nṛpapatnī ca kulastrī gaṇikā tathā, etās tu nāyikā jñeyā nānāprakṛtilakṣaṇāḥ* (27) *dhīrā(ś) ca lalitā(ś) caiva udāttā nibhṛtā(ś) tathā, divyā rājāṅganā hy etā gaṇair yuktā bhavanti hi* (28) *udāttā nibhṛtā caiva bhavet tu kula-jāṅganā, lalitā cā 'py udāttā ca gaṇikā śilpakārikā* and *passim*. On the other hand, it is true, *udāta* is met with in such expressions as NŚ. 20.32 *udāttavacana(kṛta)* "exalted speech", 20.45 *udāttā bhāvāḥ* "exalted situations", 26.11 *gambhīrodāttasamyuktān* "deep and exalted (feelings)", Dhanamjaya, Daśar. 3.60 *anudāttokti*, Śāradātanaya, BhPr. p. 197, 16 *prakhyātodāttavastunah*, Śāgaranandin, NLRK. 321–22 *tayor udāttam api vacanam* (with Raghavan's note, p. 61). See further below, p. 188. Ghosh's translation "exalted words" is, therefore, also possible.

²⁹⁸ For *yad* the edition has the conjecture *etad*, which is against the metre.

and in 18.264 B (here quoted from a foot-note in C)

*śrutisārūpyād asmin bahavo 'rthā yuktibhir niyujyante
yad dhāsyam ahāsyam vā trigatam nāmā 'pi vijñeyam*

Version A can be translated as follows: "When in a performance a talk of (non?-)exalted persons is divided over three (characters) and it has the comical sentiment, it is to be distinguished as a Trigata". As for version B, whatever may have been meant exactly by its composer, it clearly refers to something quite different from A: "In it many meanings are artfully attached to (a sentence, etc.) owing to a resemblance of sound. This, which may have a comic or non-comic character, is to be distinguished by the name Trigata". It is interesting to see that one of the earliest among the later theorists, Dhanamjaya (between 974 and 996 A.D.), did not try to conciliate the two contrasting definitions but simply juxtaposed them (Daśarūpaka 3.16):

*śrutisāmīyād anekārthayojanam trigatam tv iha
natādītritayālāpaḥ pūrvaraṅge tad iṣyate*

which can only mean that he still recognized, beside the modern *vithyaṅga*, a different Trigata that was limited to the *pūrvaraṅga*. His commentator (and brother?) Dhanika only explains the first meaning (like the Nāṭyadarpaṇa, which takes it in the sense *saṁdeha* "doubt", see K. H. Trivedi, The Nāṭyadarpaṇa, pp. 114f., 124) and quotes Vikramorvaśī I.3 (N.S. Press): here the *sūtradhāra* is in doubt whether he bears bees, a cuckoo or *kiṁnarīs* (v.l. divine women). Similarly Śāradātanaya, Bhāvaprakāśana p. 231, lines 10–15 (between 1100 and 1300 A.D.), who quotes the Daśarūpaka but then adds the line *etat prastāvanātme 'ti kathyate nāṭyavedibhiḥ* "experts call it a kind of prologue". This shows that he mixed up the Trigata and the *āmukha* (prologue). Significant for this confusion is the fact that in his definition of the older Trigata (Bh. Pr. p. 197 line 19) he substitutes *sallāpa* (that is, *saṁlāpa*) from the definition of the *āmukha* (NŚ. 22.28) for *saṁjalpa*. In the first passage quoted here there can be no doubt that Śāradātanaya, like Dhanika, is only referring to the later Trigata. It is, however, difficult to decide whether he regarded the two Trigatas (the older one of which was a purely traditional name to him) as identical. Unfortunately, Raghavan's book on Bhoja, who was Śāradātanaya's main source, is inaccessible to me so that it is impossible to determine to what extent Śāradātanaya is here dependent on his predecessor. He illustrates his definition with a quotation from a *vithī*, which is similar in character to Dhanika's example. Viśvanātha (between 1300 and 1350?), as usual, follows Dhanamjaya in paraphrasing the Daśarūpaka: *trigatam syād anekārthayojanam śrutisāmīyataḥ* "The Trigata is the application of more than one meaning to a sentence owing to a similarity of sound" (Sāhityadarpaṇa 523/VI.257). The commentary refers to it as a different opinion and quotes as an example Vikramorvaśī IV.21 (NS Press), where the echo of a question is taken as the answer to it. Only Sāgaranandin (between 1200 and 1250?) in his Nāṭakalakṣaṇarat-

nakośa 2981/364 presents an entirely different definition, viz. *sphuṭa-bhāvvyarthakathanam* "telling clearly what is going to happen".

On the strength of these later texts and their commentaries Konow (p. 22) interprets this definition as follows: "wenn dieselben Worte verschiedenen Sinn haben, z.B. wenn ein Echo als Antwort auf eine Frage aufgefasst wird; verschieden hiervon ist der neunzehnte Bestandteil des *pūrvaraṅga*". Cf. Lévi, p. 114, Śāradātanaya p. 231 l. 13ff.

Konow's last words confront us with the fundamental problem: was there any connection between the Trigata of the *pūrvaraṅga* and the *vithyaṅga* of that name, or were they indeed, as Konow assumes, entirely different? Feistel, p. 81f., arrives after an ample discussion at the conclusion that the definition of version B is a later interpolation, inserted by one who did no longer know the difference between the two Trigatas. Like Konow, accordingly, he assumes that the two Trigatas were originally different. His arguments will be discussed below.

The first difficulty that faces us when we try to disentangle this complex of problems is the circumstance that the manuscripts give two entirely different definitions. That version B is also found in the Daśarūpaka and the Sāhityadarpaṇa is no proof for its being the older form. Its words *yad dhāsyam ahāsyam vā* "which can have a comical character or not" rather seem to contain an element of polemics directed against *hāsyarasa-samprayuktam* "with the comical sentiment" of A. If that is correct, A is the older definition and has been replaced by a later one, which covered a wider use of the rhetorical figure.

Another and stronger argument in favour of the older age of A is the fact that it apparently still describes the Three Men's Talk of the *pūrvaraṅga*, whereas B refers to something different. Some more conclusions can be drawn from A. According to the reading *anudātta-* in KM., the *saṃjalpa* between the three men was considered a conversation between lower characters. In this view the *sūtradhāra* who, as the word *tridhā* implies, was placed on the same level with the two participants in the conversation, must have lost his lofty character when coming back to the front of the stage. This raises a number of questions, because there are no indications to show that at this point the *pūrvaraṅga* had already ceased to be a religious ceremony. Unfortunately we have no means of answering such questions as: on what manuscript evidence is this reading based, and, is it probable that the one who for the first time wrote *anudātta-* "non-exalted" had still seen the whole *pūrvaraṅga* (including the Trigata) performed on the stage, at a time when the Trigata had already been degraded to a mere farce? Or was he writing about a literary tradition to which nothing corresponded any longer in practice? These questions are important because the same definition has been handed down in a form which says exactly the opposite, viz. that the Three Men's Talk was performed by exalted characters. The variant form of the verse in which *udātta-vacanam* "consisting of words of exalted characters" (C) occurs is certainly a bit clumsy, with its stop-gap *iha ca*, but then, this is not uncommon in such technical definitions which had to be given in

a metrical form. Judging from what it says, the latter reading is no doubt the *lectio difficilior*. No attempt will be made, however, with the scanty data that are at our disposal, to decide this text-critical problem. It is sufficient to state that there is a tradition according to which the three actors of the *jarjaraprayoga* (including the *vidūṣaka*), when coming back to the front, had remained exalted characters or spoke an "exalted" text.

For determining the relation of the Trigata as described in definition A to the *vīthyaṅga* of that name it is important to note that the words *tridhā vibhaktam* "divided over three (characters)" are irreconcilable with the general rule that all *vīthyaṅgas* had only one or two actors: "The *vīthī* consists of one act and has one or two actors"²⁹⁹. This unambiguous definition (quoted by Konow, p. 32) is, however, curiously contradicted by a line which precedes it in the *Kāvyaṃālā*-edition, but follows it in C: "It has three characters who can be of the high, the middle or the low category". (*adhamottama-madhyābhir yuktā syāt prakṛtibhis tisṛbhiḥ*)³⁰⁰. Konow refers to the *Sāhitya Darpaṇa*³⁰¹. That this line, which directly contradicts the general rule has been inserted at a later time into the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is indicated by its place in the manuscripts, before or after the general rule. It must have become necessary at a time when to the list of the *vīthyaṅgas* a new one was added with three characters. As a result the older definition was no longer generally valid and had to be widened so as to comprise the Trigata with its three characters. *Sāgaranandin*, as a matter of fact, describes the *vīthī* in general as performed by three actors³⁰² and quotes as an example for the Trigata a passage from a classical drama in which a female character predicts (or rather hints at) future events^{302a}.

²⁹⁹ Cf. 20.112 *vīthī syād ekāṅkā dvipātrahāryā tathai 'kahāryā ca*. Cf. 18.163 KM *vīthī syād ekāṅkā tathai 'kahāryā dvihāryā vā*.

³⁰⁰ This is, it seems to me, the only possible translation. Ghosh renders it as follows: "And it is to include characters of the superior, the middling or the inferior type" but ignores the crucial word *tisṛbhiḥ*. In the introduction to his translation, vol. I², p. XLVI, he paraphrases these words as follows: "It may contain any of the three kinds of characters superior, middling and inferior (XX.112-113)". The reason for this remarkable interpretation can be found in the words which precede it: "Vīthī should be acted by one or two persons".

³⁰¹ Konow, p. 32, who refers to SD. 6.253f.: "SD. bemerkt aber, dass nach der Ansicht eines Unbenannten auch drei auftreten können, ein Hochstehender (*uttama*), einer mittleren Ranges (*madhyama*) und ein Niedrigstehender (*adhama*). Der Kommentar zum *Mālatīmādhava*, ed. Bhandarkar², S. 81, schreibt diese dem Bharata zu. Das dort gegebene Zitat lässt sich aber in der Ausgabe nicht nachweisen, und nach SD. handelt es sich wohl um eine andere Autorität". The text reads: *vīthyaṃ eko bhaved aṅkaḥ kaś cid eko 'tra kalpyate, ākāśabhāṣitair uktaiś citrāṃ pratyuktīm āśritāḥ*, etc. and the commentary explains *kaścid* by *uttamo madhyamo 'dhamo vā*.

³⁰² *Sāgaranandin*, NLRK. 2906 (357+) *atha vīthī. sā ca tribhiḥ pātraiḥ prayoktavyā. yathā Bakulavīthikā. uttamādhama madhyamanāyikābhūṣitā triprakṛtiyutā bijabindukāryair arthaprakṛtibhir yuktā. ekāṅkā saṃdhidvayayuktā mukhanirvahanayutā nānārasabhāvasaṃdhitā ca. asyā aṅgāni trayodaśa*, (etc.). Cf. 1855 *vīthikāyāḥ, udghātyakādi trayodaśa*.

^{302a} *Ibidem* (v. 2981/364+) *sphuṭabhāvvyarthakathanāṃ trigatam. yathā Kadaligrhe*

Our tentative conclusion is that definition A, which corresponds to the Trigata of the *pūrvaraṅga* and is more concrete, is older than version B, which is vaguer, more comprehensive and which seems to contain a correction of A. Although none of these arguments is in itself decisive, the correspondence of B with the Daśarūpaka and the Sāhitya Darpaṇa shows that this definition was accepted in later times. Whether this reconstruction is correct or not, line 20.112b is, as far as I can see, only explicable as a later interpolation. Since the general rule in 20.112a prescribes for all *vithyaṅgas* a maximum of two actors, one is bound to conclude that the words *tridhā vibhaktam* in definition A of the Trigata (20.128) are irreconcilable with the older definition of the *vithyaṅgas*. Thus the Trigata as defined in version A cannot originally have been a *vithyaṅga*. Konow and other scholars have arrived at the same conclusion but in their opinion this discrepancy proved that the *vithyaṅga* Trigata as a rhetorical figure had from the outset been different from the Trigata of the *pūrvaraṅga*. The only text, however, which Konow had at his disposal in 1920 was the first edition of the Nāṭyaśāstra in the Kāvyaṃalā Series. It seems now possible to reconstruct the historical development in greater detail.

All "members of the *vithi*" are as such also kinds of the verbal style (*bhāratī vṛtti*)³⁰³. As *bhāratibhedas* all *vithyaṅgas* can be used in, e.g., the prologue (*āmukha* or *prastāvanā*), which is itself also a *bhāratibheda*³⁰⁴. The "laudation" (*prarocanā*), which follows the Trigata and is the end of the *pūrvaraṅga*, is expressly mentioned as a form of *bhāratibheda*³⁰⁵. In the same manner the verbal character of the Trigata of the *pūrvaraṅga* involved that, even at a time when it was not yet inserted in the list of *vithyaṅgas*, it was performed according to the verbal style (*bhāratī vṛtti*). When the theorists began to list the many cases of the verbal style as special "species" of the *vithi*, the Trigata was also marked as a special *vithyaṅga*³⁰⁶. It should be noted that the wording of 5.137 *tathā ca bhāratibhede trigatam prayojayet* "and further he should perform the Trigata in a kind of verbal style"³⁰⁷ does not necessarily imply that the

[Ratnāvalī II.0.61] *Susāṅgatā: eṣā uṇa ettha sārīā saṅkīdāvā. kadā vi gahīdatthā kassa vi purado pāsedi* "Trigata is clearly to tell what is going to happen. For example, in *Kadalīgrha*: *Susāṅgatā: But this sārīkā is to be mistrusted. If she hears what we say, she may at any time make it public before anyone*" (Transl. M. Dillon etc.). Cf. Śāradātānaya p. 231 ll. 14–15.

³⁰³ Cf. 20.107 *vithyaṅga* and 22.26 *bhedās tasyās tu vijñeyās catvāro 'ṅgatvam āgataḥ*.

³⁰⁴ 22.29 *vithyaṅgair anyathā 'pi vā* "they adopt any type of the *vithi* or talk in any other way" (transl. Ghosh).

³⁰⁵ 22.27 *jayābhyudayinī caiva maṅgalyā vijayāvahā, sarvapāpaprāśamanī pūrvaraṅge prarocanā*.

³⁰⁶ Similarly A. Barth, *Oeuvres* IV, p. 149. Cf. Feistel, pp. 103 and 104.

³⁰⁷ Similarly Feistel, p. 80. Ghosh translates "Then, in case of a play in the Verbal Style (*bhāratī vṛtti*) the Three Men's talk should take place". This is impossible because the Trigata is part of the *pūrvaraṅga*, which is performed irrespective of the nature of the following play.

author was already acquainted with the theory of the *vithyaṅgas*. The fact that he explicitly mentions the *bhāratibheda* may even indicate that at his time the theory of a “verbal style” had not yet been developed to such an extent as to make this characterization of the Trigata superfluous.

It is, indeed, attractive to accept Feistel’s assumption³⁰⁸ that the elaboration of a systematic theory of the *bhāratī vṛtti* in ch. 22 (20 KM) dates from a later period (circa 250 A.D. according to Feistel). At that time four *bhāratibhedas* “kinds of the verbal style” were distinguished, viz. the *prarocanā*, the *āmukha*, the *vithi* and the *prahasana*³⁰⁹. The first belonged to the *pūrvaraṅga* and the second, immediately following it, was the introductory part of the drama. It would not be surprising, therefore, if the Trigata had also been inserted as a “member” of the *vithi*, which would explain why it is not expressly listed here. This brings us with due caution to the conclusion that the “two Trigatas” were historically one and the same. While, however, the older Trigata of the *pūrvaraṅga* fell into disuse at an early date, theorists started looking for instances of the *vithyaṅga* Trigata and quoted scenes of an entirely different character (cf. the quotation from Sāgaranandin in n. 302). It may be true that according to the later theory all *bhāratibhedas* belonged to the literary art of the dramatist³¹⁰. This would only prove that the improvised Trigata of the *pūrvaraṅga*, which did not form part of the drama proper and which had to be performed *bhāratibhede*, dates back to a time when such theoretical distinctions were not yet made.

Definition A (see p. 180) still seems to refer to the old Trigata but its characterization of this scene as “performed with the comic sentiment” (*hāsyarāsaśamprayukta*) indicates that the Trigata had already come to be regarded as a farce. It is further difficult to decide which of the two variant readings *udāttavacanam* (C) and *anudāttavacanam* (KM) is correct. Arguments have been brought forward above for the correctness of the former on the assumption that the definition actually refers to the old Trigata. As for definition B (18.264 B, 174 KM), it apparently refers to Trigatas of a more general character, which occurred in the plays and had not necessarily a comic character. It has probably taken the place of A at a time when there was no memory any more of the older Trigata.

Even in the theory of chapter XXII there are some details which seem to be inconsistent. Among the characteristics of the verbal style are mentioned the absence of female characters and the use of Sanskrit. One of the four categories of this style, however, is the *āmukha*, the introduction of the prologue of a drama, which can consist of a talk between the *naṭi* and the *sūtradhāra*³¹¹. As for the Trigata, not even the restriction that

³⁰⁸ See Feistel, pp. 136, 125.

³⁰⁹ Similarly Daśarūpaka 3.5, Sāhitya Darpaṇa 6.30.

³¹⁰ See Feistel, p. 81, who considers the possibility that the Trigata of the *pūrvaraṅga* might have got its name from the rhetorical figure. The evolution has rather been the other way round.

³¹¹ 22.28 *naṭi vidūṣako vā 'pi pāriṣpārśvika eva vā, sūtradhāreṇa sahitāḥ saṁlāpam*

only Sanskrit should be used (22.25) was later considered valid, for Sāgaranandin quotes a scene from the *Ratnāvalī* in which a female servant is speaking Prakrit.

It must be admitted that the evidence is too scanty for an irrefutable reconstruction of the historical development between the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the dramaturgists after 1000 A. D. In such a situation it is in general advisable to abstain from even tentative conclusions. In this particular case, however, no attempt at an explanation of the ancient *Trigata* can be made without determining to what extent later definitions can have had a bearing on this *Trigata*. Whatever the merits or demerits of this reconstruction which will here be briefly summarized, one conclusion seems sufficiently well founded, viz. that the *Trigata* of the *pūrvaraṅga* stands quite apart. It has to be taken as an episode of the *pūrvaraṅga* in its own right and must be interpreted in the light of the only authentic evidence available, viz. the passage at NŚ. 5.137–140 and the definition given at 5.28–29.

To the authors of these two passages its meaning seems no longer to have been fully clear but there is nothing in their wording to justify its being characterized as “amusing small talk”³¹². There is, however, one word in one of the interpolations which betrays that a later conception had already begun to gain ground: the “controversial topic” (*viṭaṇḍā*) is said to have some bearing on the following play (*kāvyaṅgarūpiṇī*). First, this is against the general character of the *pūrvaraṅga*, which is a worship of the gods (*devārcaṇavidhi* NLRK. 2159), in which the audience is not addressed directly and which had no relation to the play (*kāvya*). Secondly, it was seen above (p. 181) that in later times the disputation (*saṁjalpa*) of the *Trigata* got mixed up with the *saṁlāpa* of the prologue (*āmukha*), whose proper function was to introduce the first actor (NŚ. 22.28–36). For these reasons it may be suggested that alluding to the following play was not originally a function of the *Trigata* and that the word *kāvyaṅgarūpiṇī*, occurring in the interpolation which is only found in two South Indian manuscripts, dates from a time when the proper character of the *Trigata* was no longer understood.

A similar term, viz. *kāvyaṅgastunirūpanam* “mentioning the plot of the play” is also found in the definition of the next (and last) member of the *pūrvaraṅga*. This is the *prarocanā*, and here, again, the tradition has got confused. If we first consider the two definitions of Chapter Five, we find:

5.141

prarocanā 'tha kartavyā siddheno 'panimantraṇā (-ṇam)
raṅgasiddhau punaḥ kāryam kāvyavastunirūpanam

yatra kurvate. Feistel, p. 125 is probably right in explaining this as the result of a later development as against 5.167ff., where only the *sthāpaka* is mentioned. See the Diamond Jubilee Number of the ABORI (1978) p. 175.

³¹² See above, n. 292. Cf., e.g., DR. 3.16.

“The the *prarocanā* is performed. (Then), however, an “invitation” with *siddham* is performed
– for success of the performance – which mentions the subject of the play”.

From *kartavyā* and *kāryam* we may infer that the invitation is different from the preceding *prarocanā*. If, however, the audience was addressed at this moment, this would imply that the “invitation”, which “defined” the plot, had a similar function as the subsequent *prastāvanā*, the prologue of the play. *upanimantraṇa* + instr. is common in the sense “invitation with, offer of”. That *siddhena* (Ghosh: “expert”) must actually be construed with *upanimantraṇa* is apparent from 5.29–30:

*upakṣepeṇa kāryasya hetuyuktisamāśrayā
siddhenā 'mantraṇā yā tu vijñeyā sā prarocanā*

“An invitation with *siddham*, based on reasoning and arguments (?) by alluding to the (following) action, is known as *prarocanā*”.

For *kāryasya* C (against *kāvyaśya* Abhinavagupta, Śāradātanaya) cf. 21.98 and n. 329. Abhinava I, p. 219, 12 here explains *siddhena* by *siddhyo 'palakṣitam*. However, later theorists confuse this *pūrvaraṅga-prarocanā* with both the *prastāvanā* and the *vimarśasam̐dhi-prarocanā* (which during the “crisis” points ahead to the denouement, NŚ. 21.96). See also T. Venkatacharya, *Rasārṇavasudhākara* (forthcoming), p. 342f. Thus the definition of the latter *prarocanā* in DR. 1.47 is *siddhāmantraṇato bhāvidarśikā syāt prarocanā*, which is made up of NŚ. 5.30 and 21.96. Śāradātanaya’s interpretation as *āmantraṇam yat sādhyasya siddhavat* “announcement of (future events) as though they had already taken place”, however, would seem excluded for *siddhena* at NŚ. 5.30. In other words, *āmantraṇa* has here a new meaning, different from NŚ. 5.30. On the other hand, the two definitions of Ch. V are strikingly different from the third in 22.27 (cf. Sāgaranandin 1070/114):

*jayany udayinī caiva maṅgalyā vijayāvahā
sarvopāpaprāśamanī pūrvaraṅge prarocanā*

“The *prarocanā* which occurs in the *pūrvaraṅga* serves to attain success, prosperity, good luck, victory and extinction of all sins”.

According to this definition the “Recommendation” (*prarocanā*) was a religious act, not a prologue. If it did contain an “invitation”, who exactly were addressed? Not before the end of the 10th century do we find the interpretation “appeal to the audience”. Cf. Abhinavagupta (I², p. 219 line 11f.) *tena kāvyopakṣepeṇa hetubhūtena tadviśaye sāmājīkānām yā āmantraṇā, nimantraṇam*. About the same time Dhanamjaya (between 974 and 996 A.D.) wrote (*Daśarūpaka* 3.6) *unmukhīkaraṇam yatra praśaṁsātaḥ prarocanā*, which Dhanika explains as *prastutārthapraśaṁsanena śrotṛṇām pravṛttyunmukhīkaraṇam*. Somewhat later Śāradātanaya, *BhPr.* p. 197, 16–17 paraphrased it by *prarocanā sā yatraiva prakhyāto-dāttavastunaḥ, praśaṁsayā prekṣakāṇām unmukhīkaraṇam tu yat* “where

the attention of the audience is drawn by the praise of a well-known and elated subject” and p. 228, 20–21 *prekṣakādy-unmukhikārah prastutārtha-praśamsayā, prarocanā sā ‘Śrīharṣo Nipuṇe ‘tyādino ‘cyate* (the last words of which refer to Dhanika’s quotation from the Ratnāvali).

It is necessary to stress the fact that the current view, which holds that the Prarocanā aimed at “exciting interest by praising an author in the prologue of a drama” (Monier-Williams) is, first of all, incorrect in that the Prarocanā had originally no connection with the Prologue. And secondly, this view is exclusively based on the word *unmukhikaranam* in a definition written at a time (between 974 and 996 A.D.), when there was not even a faint memory of the Prarocanā. This can be seen from the fact that Dhanamjaya’s brother (?) and commentator illustrated Daśar. 3.6 by a quotation (Ratnāvalī 1.5) which is, in fact, a stanza from the Prastāvanā! This is, of course, fully intelligible because at that time next to nothing had survived of the old *pūrvaraṅga* and no information could be found in old manuscripts, since the ritual had never formed part of the play. As Sylvain Lévi (*Le théâtre indien* I, p. 379) saw long ago, all difficulties are due to the fact that the theorists continued to pay lip-service to Bharata and to copy his directions, even though nothing corresponded any longer to them in the practice of their time.

If, then, we put aside the evidence of Dhanamjaya and the later theorists and confine ourselves to the only and last testimony about the Prarocanā, which is found in the Nāṭyaśāstra, we are faced with the contradiction between 22.27, which describes it as a ritual, and the two passages in Chapter V—one of the oldest chapters, in my opinion, of the whole work—, which include in the definition an allusion to the following play. In 5.141 this is formulated as a kind of “afterthought”, which does not form part of the definition of the preceding line. In 5.29–30, however, the two definitions seem to have been amalgamated into one, or, to put it in a more neutral way, the aspects that are discernible in 5.141, are here inseparable. Clearly, these facts admit of different explanations. I am fully aware of the fact that in the following account an element of circular argumentation cannot be avoided. The *pūrvaraṅga* is a religious ceremony in which only the gods are addressed, but nowhere the audience. This makes it very unlikely that *āmantraṇā* and *upani-mantraṇam* can mean an appeal to the audience; nor can *āmantraṇā*, for that reason and in view of the apparently synonymous word *upani-mantraṇa*, have meant a “farewell” of the *sūtradhāra*. An “invitation” addressed to the *sthāpaka*, who was to introduce the play after the completion of the *pūrvaraṅga* is not likely either, if it is correct that the *sthāpaka* was the same person as the *sūtradhāra*. On the other hand although *āmantrayati* is sometimes used in a context where a god is addressed (e.g., ŚB. IX.1.2.16), our text would no doubt have been more specific if this had been meant in these two passages. No convincing interpretation, therefore, can in my opinion be proposed for the two words. There remains, then, the second question: Is it likely that the *prarocanā* had originally the function of “alluding to” (5.29) or “explaining”

(5.139) the plot? Not only the character of the *pūrvaraṅga*, as described in the preceding pages, but also the fact that it was the task of the *sthāpaka* to introduce the play lead to the conclusion that this definition of the Prarocanā must have arisen at a time, when the distinction between *pūrvaraṅga* and the play was no longer fully maintained. For the same reason, then, the allusion to the play in the Trigata must be considered alien to the original character of this episode. It will be clear that this conclusion cannot be drawn from the material but rests entirely on a general theory of the *pūrvaraṅga*.

14. THE TRIGATA II

The following attempt to interpret the character of the old Trigata will be based exclusively on the data of ch. V of the Nāṭyaśāstra. All theories, therefore, which derive the Trigata and the *vidūṣaka* from the mime³¹³, or which hold that the Trigata and the Prarocanā had a profane character³¹⁴ and that the *vidūṣaka* had only secondarily intruded from the *pūrvaraṅga* into the play, there to become the friend and companion of the *nāyaka*³¹⁵, will be left out of consideration. They are all based on the premise that the *vidūṣaka* was, and had always been, a buffoon ("lustige Person, Hanswurst") and hence had necessarily originated in the "popular theatre" (about which nothing is known) and could not have had a religious origin³¹⁶. They all disregard the fact that the only Sanskrit drama that we know of belonged to court art and was performed in a theatre whose religious character is beyond dispute, and that the *vidūṣaka* according to the Nāṭyaśāstra had always been one of the three leading parts in this drama (cf. Pischel, Puppenspiel, p. 17).

Let us first summarize a few conclusions of the preceding sections. The *pūrvaraṅga* has been shown to be, up to this Trigata, a religious ceremony (5.142 *vidhi*). The stage represented the world in its sacred aspect and the religious importance of the various acts, including the raising and worship of the *jarjara* and culminating in the *nāndī*, cannot be questioned. There is no indication to show that after the desecration of the Indra staff the character of the *pūrvaraṅga* had changed. As has been pointed out above, statements in the Nāṭyaśāstra to the effect that after the dismissal of the *jarjara* the acting with words and gestures was considered to begin (5.27 *raṅgadvāram*) and that at that moment the judges started evaluating the acting according to aesthetic standards (27.40) do not imply that this was the end of the ritual part — quite apart from the question as to when this aesthetic evaluation may have been introduced. As for the late passage 32.460, which says that the *nāṭyadvāram*

³¹³ Thieme, "Indisches Theater", p. 40, Feistel, pp. 113, 120, 131.

³¹⁴ E.g., Thieme, p. 40, Feistel, p. 116.

³¹⁵ Feistel, pp. 105, 125.

³¹⁶ Feistel, although accepting Thieme's theory (p. 120), admits that the argument of the participation of the *vidūṣaka* is "nur bedingt beweiskräftig" (p. 119).

(beginning of the acting?) was at the end of the *pūrvaraṅga*³¹⁷, this may date from a time when the seemingly clownish and meaningless Trigata and the Prarocanā, which had become a useless double of the Prastāvanā, were skipped. There can be no doubt, however, about their having been the last parts of the *pūrvaraṅga*³¹⁸.

As we have seen, in the first part of the *pūrvaraṅga* the two attendants had been characterized by the sacred objects they were carrying as impersonations of Indra and Varuṇa, and thus as standing for the two cosmic moieties. During the *jarjaraprayoga* and the *nāndī* they were clearly subordinate to the *sūtradhāra*. In the Trigata they are still so but now the active role is theirs.

In interpreting the relevant passage (5.137–140) we are faced with the text-critical problem that it contains several lines which occur in a few manuscripts only and must therefore be considered interpolations. As a rule such interpolations are either amplifications or corrections, dating from a later time and reflecting changes in the practice of the dramatic performance. Since, however, there is no appreciable contradiction between the lines of this passage, use has been made of the whole passage as it appears in C., even though the text-critical basis on which 5.140 rests seems to be slender. It has been adopted in B KM and C but was rejected by Grosset. As we shall see, something more special can be said about it.

The characteristic point of the interpolated verses 5.139 and 140 is that they seem to describe the intermezzo of the *pāripārśvika* and the *vidūṣaka* in terms of a formal disputation according to the terminology of the oldest stage of the *vāda*-doctrine that is known to us. As G. Oberhammer, WZKSO. 7 (1963), p. 63ff. has shown, the oldest passage preserved, viz. Caraka-Saṁhitā III.8.28, is merely "ein Organon für die Disputation", the disputation being divided into two parts, the *jalpa* and the *vitaṇḍā*. In the *jalpa* each of the opponents defends his thesis, e.g., one defends the thesis that there is transmigration, while the other argues that there is not. In contrast with the *jalpa*, in which each party uses arguments, the *vitaṇḍā* "only consists in criticizing the opponent" (*jalpaviparyayo vitaṇḍā. vitaṇḍā nāma parapakṣe doṣavacanamātram eva*). The commentary of Cakrapāṇidatta (13th century) is here particularly interesting: *tena vitaṇḍāyām apy uttaravādinah parapakṣadūṣaṇalakṣaṇah pakṣo 'sty eva, param svamataṁ na sādhayati 'ti bhedaḥ*.

In view of the term *sthāpita* in 5.140 it must be added that Caraka attaches a high importance to *sthāpanā* "establishment, dialectical proof of a proposition" and *pratiṣṭhāpanā* "counter-assertion, statement of a counter-thesis". They belong to the earliest stage of the *vāda*-doctrine and got out of use before the Nyāyasūtras (Oberhammer, pp. 73, 77f.), whereas *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā* disappear after them (ibidem, p. 81 n. 40).

³¹⁷ See above, p. 171.

³¹⁸ 5.15 *trikaṁ prarocanā cā 'pi pūrvaraṅge bhavanti hi* (16) *etāny aṅgāni kāryāṇi pūrvaraṅgavidhau tu ca* [but see Corrigenda p. 236: *trigataṁ prarocanā ca*].

Although no definite date can be fixed for this stage, it can hardly have been later than the first centuries of our era, accordingly the same period in which also the core of the Nāṭyaśāstra was presumably composed. The verses 5.139–140 thus define (redefine?) the “talk” of the Trigata both in terms of rhetoric (*gaṇḍa*, *nālikā*), the date of which remains to be settled, and as a formal disputation with the terminology of the oldest “vāda-tradition” (*viṭaṇḍā*, *vidūṣita* and *sthāpita*). As for the word *saṁjalpa*, although it is a common term for “conversation, talk” in classical Sanskrit, Bharata (5.29, 140) distinguishes it from *saṁlāpa* (22.28). Is it used here in the sense of the old technical term *jalpa*?

A few words must be added on the term *sthāpita*, which is here used in a sense that is clearly different from *sthāpanā* in Caraka. Unlike the Vedic ritual *brahmodyas*, in which one of the two opponents automatically gained the victory when the other could no longer answer and remained silent (see J. C. Heesterman, WZKSO. 12–13 [1968], p. 171ff.), there is in this disputation a highest authority, who stands above the parties and gives his decision by “establishing” the words of the assistant (5.140, lacking in most manuscripts). Heesterman has already suggested that the “unsophisticated abuse and the equally artless praise” of the Vedic ritual may perhaps be considered “an early predecessor of the distinction between *jalpa* and *viṭaṇḍā*” (p. 178). In view of the apparently religious origin of the Trigata I am inclined to think that this disputation in the presence of a “judge” was a direct reflex of the Vedic *vivāc* as a social phenomenon, which could be described in terms of the post-Vedic (*vi*)*vāda* because the latter was a direct continuation of the older verbal contest. Oberhammer (p. 81) has already concluded that the *sthāpanā* and *pratiṣṭhāpanā* must have belonged to a pre-Caraka stage, and that they were notions that were known from the practice of disputations. In Caraka the five categories of demonstration (*Beweisglieder*) are still elements of *sthāpanā* and *pratiṣṭhāpanā*. It seems to me that the Trigata preserves the older Vedic stage, in which *sthāpayati* had nothing to do with a logical proof but only with one’s winning acceptance for one’s contentions in a verbal contest. The decisive *sthāpanā* is here pronounced by the highest authority.

The preceding verse 5.138 quite suddenly introduces the *vidūṣaka* and refers to his incoherent speech. He had apparently the role of the *uttaravādin* in the later formalized *viṭaṇḍā*. According to Cakrapāṇidatta the *uttaravādin* confined himself to criticizing (*dūṣaṇa*) the proposition of the opponent without proving his own (see notes 320, 391). Since the two assistants had remained all the time at the back of the stage and had now come again to the front (apparently without their paraphernalia), one of them must in the meantime have made himself recognizable as the *vidūṣaka*, probably by means of a make-up to which the text refers elsewhere (36.25 KM)³¹⁹. It has been argued that the only assistant that

³¹⁹ Ghosh’s translation (p. 94) “During it the Jester should suddenly come in” is of course not based on what the text says.

can have functioned as such is the one who had carried the golden pitcher. If it is correct that the two assistants have all the time impersonated Indra and Varuṇa, this must still be the case, since nothing indicates that they have changed their former characters. Unfortunately it cannot be decided whether the Nāṭyaśāstra considers them “exalted” (*udātta*) or “non-exalted” (*anudātta*) characters. As far as I can see, however, the remarkable fact that the *vidūṣaka* speaks Sanskrit in this Trigata has never been given due attention. (See Abhinavagupta p. 219 l. 8 ad NŚ. 5.28–29!).

For a correct insight into the character of the disputation between the assistant and the *vidūṣaka* it may be well to call to mind that the consecration of the stage in chapter III, which shows some striking parallels to the *pūrvaraṅga*, ended with a fight which has been interpreted above as a re-enactment of the cosmogonical strife between Devas and Asuras. See p. 165 and cf. NŚ. 3.91–93. The disputation of the Trigata, too, has a strong element of contest. The *vidūṣaka* “criticizes” the words of his opponent. Although the authenticity of the reading *vidūṣakavidūṣita*, a variant of *-virūpita* “deformed”³²⁰, is not certain (but see n. 391), it is obviously intended to give an etymological explanation of the word *vidūṣaka* (see n. 320) and in view of the archaic terminology preserved in these verses, there is no reason to question its correctness. See above on the *dūṣaṇa* of the *uttaravādin*. The *sūtradhāra*, who must have been standing between the two opponents, decides the contest by confirming (“establishing”) the words of the assistant. The fact that the latter *must* be victorious is significant. It shows that this dispute was not simply an improvised comical intermezzo but a ritual act, such as, e.g., the Mahāvratā-ceremony, in which the Ārya (or Arya) *had* to defeat the Śūdra. Such a *verbal* contest (5.137 *bhāratibhede!*), as the Trigata obviously was, is strongly reminiscent of the verbal contest between Indra and Varuṇa in Rigveda IV.42. This was a cosmogonical *vivāc*³²¹ in which Varuṇa probably still (or again)³²² had his Asuric character. In other words, the contest of the Trigata between the leader of the Devas and the highest Asura is only a mythological variant of the cosmogonical strife between all Devas and Asuras, represented at the end of the consecration of the stage. In that consecration as well as in the *pūrvaraṅga* the ceremonies ended with a renewal of the cosmos by a reiteration of the primordial mythical fight.

³²⁰ See n. 293. *virūpita* is, it seems, first attested in the epics. It may originally have been a gloss for *vidūṣita*, which has later ousted the correct reading. It is important to note that *vidūṣayati* has been in use ever since the Rigveda so that it is quite possible that the word *vidūṣaka* was created in the Vedic period. For this type of formation cf. VS *gāṇaka* “astrologer”: ep. *gaṇayati* (Debrunner, Altind. Grammatik II-2, p. 146f.). See further n. 355.

³²¹ See above, p. 22f. and cf. IJ. 4, p. 270 n. 80b, Numen 8, p. 38. For a different interpretation of the hymn as referring to the royal consecration see H. Lommel, Festschrift Schubring p. 32ff., Schlerath, Das Königtum im Rig- und Atharvaveda (Wiesbaden, 1960), p. 160, J. Gonda, The dual deities in the rel. of the Veda (1974), pp. 234–248.

³²² See History of Religions 15, p. 116 on Varuṇa as a seasonal god.

As for the incoherent talk of the *vidūṣaka*, which evokes a smile of the *sūtradhāra* and which has greatly contributed to his being considered a buffoon in modern times, it may have its origin in the fact that the *vidūṣaka* must be defeated in a *verbal* contest. In the *vivāc*, the Vedic prototype of the *saṃjalpa*, the victorious speaker “outtalks” (*āti-vad-*, cf. *brhād vad-*) or “defeats” (*ji-*) his opponent by his successful speech³²³. Just as Indra *must* win the cosmogonical contest, it is the task of the *sūtradhāra*, who still impersonates Brahmā as the god of totality and who as such stands above the two parties, formally to confirm his victory.

The *vidūṣaka*'s negative role as criticizer of the assistant's speech should be noted because we find here the prototype, as it were, of the pattern of the relation between the *nāyaka* and the *vidūṣaka* in the plays (see p. 208).

The preceding interpretation of the Trigata was mainly based on one verse, which seems to have been added as an amplification to the older description and which, if I am not mistaken, is only found in one of the few manuscripts used for the edition of Baroda, the one written in Old Malayalam script. It does not, however, contradict the other verses and even though it is apparently an interpolation, it may contain an old and authentic tradition.

15. THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

According to the Nāṭyaśāstra the origin of the Sanskrit drama dates back to the mythical primordial time when Brahmā created the dramatical art and “composed” the first drama. The tale of the legendary first performance occurs in two versions, which are both instructive as they show us what, according to the Indian tradition, was the oldest form of drama.

The first version describes the performance by Bharata and his sons, on the occasion of Indra's banner festival. At that time no theatre had been built yet by the divine architect Viśvakarman. The sage Bharata tells the munis about this performance in the following words (1.57–58): “Thereupon [that is, after the *nāṇḍi*, 1.56] I organized³²⁴ an imitation³²⁵

³²³ Cf., e.g., II.1.16 *brhād vadema vidāthe svīrāḥ* “May we with our valiant sons outtalk (our rivals)”, VII.18.13 *jéṣma Pūrum vidāthe mṛdhrāvācam* “May we during the potlatch surpass Pūru who speaks injuriously” (see *Indologica Taurinensia* 2, p. 131), AB. VI.33.20 *atīvādena vai devā asurān atyudyā 'thainān atyāyan* “by means of the Ativāda [AS. XX.135.4] the gods outspoke the Asuras and overcame them” (Keith), ŚB. XI.6.2.5 *té hocuḥ, āti vai no 'yām rājanyābandhur avāḍīd dhāntai 'naṁ brahmōdyam āhvāyāmahā iti* “They said, ‘Surely, this fellow of a Rājanya has outtalked us: come, let us challenge him to a theological disputation!’” (transl. Eggeling).

³²⁴ *baddhā*: the PW. gives the meanings “Verse abfassen, componiren”, “bewirken, hervorrufen” and “machen”. Cf. 1.18 *sāmbaddha* = 1.4 *grathita*. Since “to compose” would seem excluded by the context, one might consider translating “I devised” (Ghosh). Abhinavagupta thinks that no *prayoga* can be meant here and takes it to mean that a *prastāvanā* was performed: *tatra ca baddhe 'ti guṇanikā yojitā, na tu prayoga ity, etac cā 'sat tatpūrvottaravyāghātāt . . .* (see n. 144), *tasmād baddhe 'ti prastāvitā; na tu niṣpādītā* (“performed”), *prastāvanā tāvat prayukte 'ty arthaḥ*. For

of how the Daityas were defeated by the gods, (which imitation) consisted of altercation³²⁶ and tumult³²⁷ and of cutting and piercing (of limbs) and roaring sounds”³²⁸. The second line has a more or less stereotyped character. See the parallels quoted in n. 245 and cf. 27.13

*dīptapradeśam kāvyam yac chedyabhedyāhavātmakam
savidravam athau 'tpātam tathā yuddhanīyuddhakam*

which Ghosh translates “If the play has [a plot containing] burning hostility, cutting and piercing [of limbs], fight, portentous calamity, terrific happening or minor personal combat . . .³²⁹.

According to this legend the first dramatical performance, after Brahmā had created the art as a fifth Veda, took place immediately after Indra’s victory over the Daityas and Asuras and consisted of an imitation of his fight and victory. It is quite understandable that, while the gods were elated, the Asuras were disconcerted because (as we may add) this “imitation” was in fact a new defeat by magical-religious means. They therefore disturbed the performance by means of a host of “Obstacles” (*vighna*). This again induced Brahmā to order the building of a theatre as a sacred space, well defended all around against demoniacal attacks.

This first legend confronts us with two important facts: the first performance not only took place immediately after Indra’s cosmogonical

Brahmā’s composing plays our text uses the terms 1.56, 111 *krta*, 1.19 *utpādayati*, 1.19, 4.12 *sr̥ṣṭa*, 4.3 *pragrathita*. Here a performance improvised by Bharata is referred to. Hence “staged, arranged the performance” rather than “devised” must be meant.

³²⁵ See n. 247.

³²⁶ *sāmpheṭa* “conflict”. Cf. 22.61 “Conflict is known to include excitement, many fights, personal combats, deception, betrayal and much striking of weapons” (Ghosh) and 20.79 “angry conflict” (Ghosh). More succinct is the definition of Daśarūpaka 2.58 *sāmpheṭas tu samāghātaḥ krudhdhasamrabdhayor dvayoh*, and similarly Sāh. D. 420=6.135. Sāgaranandin’s definition (NLRK. 1380ff.-137+) is in accordance with this view: *sāmpheṭas ca vīrarauḍrādbhutaprāyair yuktaḥ sasambhramamayo yuddhaniyuddhabahulaḥ kapaṭamayāḥ śāstraprapāṭaviṣayāḥ*, which he illustrates by a reference to the fight of the gods and Asuras in the *Samudramathana* and the hand-to-hand fighting and fighting with weapons (*bāhuyuddhair astrayuddhair*) of Indra and Vṛtra. Hence the translations “ungestümer Zusammenstoß” (Konow, p. 21), “fighting” (Keith, Sanskrit Drama, p. 328). This is supported by *sāmspheṭa*, *sāmsphoṭa* “war, battle” (comm. on Hemacandra) and *sāmpheṭaka* “drummer” (not listed in the lexica but occurring in Abhinavagupta I², p. 64 line 5 *kutapah: sāmpheṭaka-gāyana-vādaka samūhah*). However, the translation “leidenschaftlicher Wortwechsel” (PW, pw) has the support of Sāgaranandin 806 *roṣagrathitam vākyaṁ sāmpheṭaḥ* “discussion conducted in anger”. Cf. Drav. Et. Dict. 3601.

³²⁷ *vidrava* “tumult” (Konow, p. 29, Ghosh, who also translates “excitement”, cf. 20.79). Three kinds are traditionally distinguished, cf. 20.70, DR. 3.67, Sāh. D. 6.240 and Sāgaranandin, NLRK. 766 *śaṅkābhayatrāsakṛto vidravaḥ* “panic is caused by apprehension and fear and trembling” (M. Dillon, etc.); cf. 2811ff.

³²⁸ See pp. 143 and 165.

³²⁹ This is based on Ghosh’s doubtful emendation *dīptapradeśam*. Cf. 20.85 *dīptarasa* “with exciting sentiments”, Mhbh. V.182.7 *krodhadīpta* “excited with anger”. Different is 3.93 *ḷṣatam pradīptam āyastam*. Note *kāryam* B KM for *kāvyam*, and *athotphullam* B KM, *athātpātam* K for *athautpātam*.

fight (here apparently an annual re-iteration of the primordial fight, connected with the celebration of his banner festival) but it was itself a performance of this fight and therefore a creative act, a renovation of the world owing to the efficaciousness of imitation. A second conclusion that follows from this tale is that every dramatic performance has potentially a dangerous "magical" power which arouses the resistance of and obstruction by fiendish spirits. It will be remembered that the aim of the *nāndī*, for instance, was said to be "the appeasement of all obstacles" (see n. 254).

When the theatre has been built (1.81) and the consecration of a new playhouse has been described in detail (ch. III), the legendary tale is taken up again in 4.1: "After having thus carried out the *pūjana*, I said to the Grandfather (Brahmā): 'Give me now quickly your orders, O Lord, as to which play must be performed!' Thereupon the Holy One said to me: 'Perform the Churning of the Ocean. It stimulates efforts and is a powerful means of giving pleasure to the gods'"³³⁰.

Again it is a cosmogonical fight—although of a special character, in which cooperation and competition go together—which is the theme of this performance. In contrast with the previous one in ch. I, which can only have been improvised by the actors, this one is said to have been a *samavakāra* (4.3), composed by Brahmā himself (4.4), which was performed to the delight of both gods and demons (4.4). It is somewhat surprising to find the latter here assembled together with the gods but the playhouse had only been built to safeguard the actors and the performance against evil influence of *fiendish powers* (1.76–79). On the other hand, Brahmā had consoled the enraged demons (or rather, their "Obstacles") by saying that the drama would represent acts and feelings of the demons no less than of the gods (1.105) and that it would be instructive for all (1.113).

The genre *samavakāra* must have become obsolete at an early date. Our knowledge, as well as that of later dramaturgists, is exclusively based on the definition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (20.64–65), which seems to describe the characteristics of a single play still known to the author, rather than those of a whole genre³³¹. In Ghosh's translation this definition is as

³³⁰ 4.1 *evam tu pūjanam kṛtvā mayā proktaḥ Pitāmahaḥ, ājñāpaya prabho kṣipram kaḥ prayogaḥ prayujyatām* (2) *tato 'smy ukto Bhagavatā yojayā 'mṛtamanthanam, etad utsāhajanānam suraprītikarānam mahat.*

³³¹ See S. Lévi, pp. 30, 143, 153 ("éteint avant la période classique"), Konow, p. 28f. ("Es ist nach alledem klar, dass Bharata ein bestimmtes Werk, und nicht eine ganze Gattung, vor Augen hatte, und seine Nachfolger haben einfach seine Definition wiedergegeben und zum Teil weiter ausgesponnen. Bh. 4.2f. nennt den *samavakāra Amṛtamanthana*, und dasselbe Werk ist gewiss mit dem *Ambhodhimanthana* des Daśarūpa (3.58) und dem *Samudramathana* des Sāhityadarpaṇa (zu 6.240) gemeint.), Keith, p. 97 "that dubious kind of play", p. 291f. "the *Samavakāra*, for instance, is described in terms which, with the precise definition of the time to be occupied by the acts, can be interpreted only as based on a single drama", p. 353 etc. Only Sāgaranandin diverges in referring to a drama *Śakrānanda* (NLRK. 2812/355f.), but from his ample description (2811ff.) it is clear that he tried to identify some

follows: "It should have the [exploits of] gods and Asuras as its subject matter and one of them as its well-known and exalted Hero, and it is to consist of three Acts [presenting] the three kinds of deception, the three kinds of excitement or the three kinds of love. [Besides this] it should have as many as twelve *dramatis personae* and require a duration (lit. length) of eighteen Nādikās [for its performance]"³³². In this translation the words "one of them as its well-known and exalted Hero", for which the first edition had "and an Asura as a well-known and exalted character as its Hero", can hardly be correct. The text clearly says that there are twelve *nāyakas*, who are all traditionally well-known and exalted characters. The implication is, as Abhinavagupta explicitly states, that there was no *vidūṣaka* in this play³³³.

The *samavakāra* was a sub-class of the *āviddha* type of play, which is described as follows (14.56–59, cf. 35.53–56): "The play which requires energetic (*āviddha*) gestures and dance movements (*aṅgahāra*) to represent cutting, piercing and challenging, and contains the use of magic and occult powers as well as artificial objects and make-up, (57) and has more men and less women [among its *dramatis personae*] and applies [in its production] mostly the Grand [*Sāttvati*] and the Violent [*Ārabhaṭi*] Styles, is of the energetic type. (58) According to the [expert] producers, [plays of] the *Ḍima*, the *Samavakāra*, the *Vyāyoga* and the *Īhāmrga* [classes] are known to be of the energetic type. (59) Production of a play of this type should be made by [an impersonation of] gods, *Dānavas* and *Rākṣasas* who are majestic and haughty, and have heroism, energy and strength" (Ghosh)³³⁴. In this definition of the more comprehensive category, too, the presence of demons is stressed, even though Ghosh's translation of the last two lines is not very exact³³⁵.

passages in the dramas known to him as instances of the *samavakāra*. On the question as to whether Bhāsa's *Pañcarātra* is a *samavakāra* see Konow, p. 29, Keith, pp. 96f., 346, Ghosh, Transl. I, p. 363 n. For an explanation of the name see, e.g., Dhanika ad *Daśarūpaka* 3.62 *samavakīryante 'sminn arthā iti samavakārah*, accordingly an overwhelming by fate.

³³² *devāsurabijakṭaḥ prakhyātodāttanāyakaś caiva, tryaṅkas tadā (tathā KM.) trikapaṭas trividravaḥ syāt triśrṅgārah* (65) *dvādaśanāyakaabahulo hy aśṭādaśanāḍikāpramāṇas ca* . . . Cf. DR. 3.62–68 and SD. 6.234–239, which will be discussed below.

³³³ Abhinavagupta I², p. 32 line 11 (ad NŚ. 1.97) has the following comment: *hāsyāśrṅgārāṅgatvād "vidūṣakam" ity uktam, ata eva daśarūpakaprayogasūcanam etat, samavakāre vidūṣakābhāvāt.*

³³⁴ *sattvāviddhāṅgahāraṁ tu cchedyabhedyāhavātmakam, māyendrajālabahulaṁ pustanepathyasamṃyutam* (57) *puruṣair bahubhīr yuktam alpastrīkaṁ tathāiva ca, sāttvaty-ārabhaṭīprāyaṁ nāṭyam āviddhasamjñitam* (58) *ḍīmaḥ samavakāras ca vyāyoge 'hāmrgau tathā, etāny āviddhasamjñāni vijñeyāni prayoktṛbhiḥ* (59) *eṣāṁ prayogaḥ kartavyo daitya-dānava-rākṣasaiḥ, uddhatā ye ca puruṣāḥ śaurya-vīrya-balānvitāḥ.* The same text recurs in 35.53C¹, 26.28B, where C has *yat tv āviddhāṅgahāntam* as the initial words, *yat tv* (v. 1. *tatra*) *āviddhāṅgahāraṁ tac* 13.54 KM., *na cā' vidyāṅgabhāvas tu* (!) p. 654 line 1 KM.

³³⁵ A more literal translation would be: "These *genres* must be performed by *Daityas*, *Dānavas* and *Rākṣasas* and by men who are dominating personalities and have heroism, courage and strength". For *chedyabhedyāhavātmakam* see above n. 245.

The subject-matter of the Samavakāra is, accordingly, the *devāsura*, which the later dramaturgists took as a dvandva “gods and Asuras”³³⁶ but which the author may have meant in the Vedic sense “fight between Devas and Asuras, well-known (from tradition)”³³⁷.

If the general opinion that the composer of these lines has based his definition on a single play is correct, it can be concluded that he still knew a Samavakāra which represented the fight of Devas and Asuras and had twelve “famous and exalted heroes”, who, then, must have been partly gods and partly Asuras. This conclusion is indeed drawn by the author of the Daśarūpaka³³⁸. This definition is perfectly in line with the situation found in the Churning of the Ocean, where the chief gods and Asuras, all “famous and exalted”, took turns pulling the rope of the churn-staff, thereby symbolizing the *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* of the cosmic creative process (see n. 209). This situation excluded, however, the presence of other characters and it remains obscure why the commentator of the Daśarūpaka introduced a new element by adding “etcetera” after “Devas and Asuras”³³⁹.

The number of twelve heroes is not exceptional for one of the old and extinct genres. For two other genres of the *āviddha* type, viz. the *Ḍima* and the *Īhāmṛga*, a late theorist mentions the numbers of sixteen and ten (or six) heroes respectively³⁴⁰. They differed, however, from the Samavakāra in that, e.g., in the *Īhāmṛga* the three leading parts were the hero (*nāyaka*), his antagonist (*pratīnāyaka*) and a woman, whereas in the Samavakāra there seem to have been no protagonists. All heroes, probably six Devas and six Asuras, were on an equal footing and they all pursued their own purposes³⁴¹.

³³⁶ Cf. DR. 3.63 *khyātaṁ devāsuraṁ vastu*, SD. 6.234 *vṛttaṁ samavakāre tu khyātaṁ devāsuraśrayam*, NLRK. 2811 (355+) *sa ca devāsura-viryakṛtaḥ*.

³³⁷ Cf., e.g., JB. I. 247 lines 6 and 9.

³³⁸ Dhanañjaya 3.63 *netāro devadānavāḥ* (64) *dvādaśo 'dāttavikhyātāḥ phalaṁ teṣāṁ pṛthak pṛthak, bahuvīrā rasāḥ sarve yadvad ambhodhimanthane*. Similarly SD. 6.240 *yathā samudramathanam*. These late theorists may simply repeat an old tradition and combine NŚ. 20.63ff. with 4.2 (see above n. 331) but the detailed description of SD. is anyway remarkable.

³³⁹ Cf. Dhanika ad DR. 3.63 *devāsuraḍayo dvādaśa nāyakāḥ*. It is not clear what he had in mind. The two editions of the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* accessible to me, viz. the one by Pandit Durgaprasād Divedi and Kāśināth Pandurang Parab (Bombay 1902) and by Kṛṣṇamohan Sāstrī (Benares, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 2nd ed. 1955) both read in 6.235 *nāyakā dvādaśo 'dāttāḥ prakhyātā devamānavāḥ*. The commentator Rāmacaraṇa Tarkavāgīśa Bhaṭṭācharya (1544 A.D.) glosses this reading by *divyādivyāḥ* but quotes a variant reading *devadānavāḥ*, which does not seem to occur any longer in modern manuscripts. The curious reading *-mānavāḥ* is possibly due to the definition of the general category of the *āviddha*, of which the *samavakāra* was a sub-group. In the *āviddha*-category *puruṣas* did occur. This may have led to the assumption of human heroes in the *samavakāra*, too.

³⁴⁰ See SD. 6.243 *ṣoḍaśā 'tyantam uddhatāḥ* and for the *Īhāmṛga* 6.248 *patākānāyakā divyā martyā vāpi daśo 'ddhatāḥ* and 250.

³⁴¹ DR. 3.64 *phalaṁ teṣāṁ pṛthak pṛthak*, which the commentator Dhanika illustrates with the words “just as in the Churning of the Ocean Vāsudeva etc. won Lakṣmī etc.” (*yathā Samudramanthane Vāsudevādīnām Lakṣmīdīlābhāḥ*).

In this connection there is certainly, in the light of the origin of the Greek drama, some reason to raise a point to which, as far as I can see, little attention has been given by students of the Sanskrit drama. Greek tradition has preserved the memory of the exact time when the drama was born, as the first protagonist stepped forward as a separate actor, to speak and act as an individual against the anonymous collectivity of the chorus. The question must be raised if something similar may have happened in India and if in the Samavakāra with its twelve heroes the prototype of later forms of drama, with a *nāyaka* and a *nāyikā*, has been preserved. Perhaps it will never be possible to answer that question in a satisfactory way. I do not think that we are at this moment, with the available evidence, in a position to discuss it exhaustively. I will, therefore, confine myself to the following brief comment.

Although in Greece as well as in India the drama has developed from a religious *drōmenon*, there is a clear difference. To begin with, the Samavakāra was different from the chorus because the actors were not an anonymous collectivity. The twelve heroes are described as well-known personalities, each trying to fulfill his own desires. Just as in modern illustrations of the Churning of the Ocean each god and Asura is marked with his own name, so they were in the ancient play *khyāta*, "renowned" and "well-known", that is, recognizable for the audience as individuals. Secondly, the cosmogonical strife which they are said to have represented was ever since Vedic times described in a twofold way. While in the Rigveda Devas and Asuras as groups remain in the background, the fight being primarily depicted as one between two protagonists (particularly Indra and Vṛtra), the later brāhmaṇas mostly ignore Indra's individual exploit and use the fixed formula (with slight differences from one *śākhā* to another) "The Devas and Asuras were at strife" (*devāś ca 'surāś ca paspṛdhire [aspardhanta, ayatanta, samyattā āsan, etc.]*)³⁴². There are no indications to show that one way of presenting the sacred history was anterior to the other. In the light of this fact, the absence of the *vidūṣaka* in the Samavakāra is no more surprising than that of the *nāyaka*. If we are right in identifying them with Varuṇa and Indra respectively, both were present among the (six) Devas and (six) Asuras. There was no need, therefore, for them to act separately, disguised as special characters of the drama. It is true that in some forms of the classical drama the *vidūṣaka* does not occur either. This, however, is a different problem which will be discussed separately in § 17, after the character of the *vidūṣaka* has been examined more closely.

To conclude this section a point may be raised which, it is hoped, will show that reasonable guesses are sometimes possible in these matters, even though they cannot be definitely proved with the help of our sources. This point is the place on the stage occupied by the two parties during the performance of the Churning of the Ocean. It has been suggested above that at the moment when, at the beginning of the *pūrvaraṅga*, the

³⁴² For references see, e.g., S. Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice* p. 44 n. 1, 45ff.

sūtradhāra entered with his two assistants, the *jarjaradhara* must have gone on his right and the *bhṛṅgāradhāra* must have been on his left. In the same way the relative positions of Devas and Asuras as the higher and the lower group must necessarily have involved that the first stood right of the centre (the *brāhma maṇḍala*) and the latter on its left. What was "right" and what "left" was determined by the *nāṭyācārya*, the stage-manager, while he was standing on the stage and looking towards the audience. It may be assumed that the situation in India was in this respect not much different from that in Indonesia and Malaysia, where in the *wayang purwa* (shadow play) all the characters of the "noble type" are on the right of the *ḍalang* (puppet handler) and those of "violent type" on his left³⁴³.

16. THE CHARACTER OF THE VIDŪṢAKA IN THE SANSKRIT DRAMA

Although much has been written on the part of the *vidūṣaka*³⁴⁴, it is remarkable that most scholars have started from a premise which to them was apparently so self-evident as to be in no need of being stated explicitly, viz. that the *vidūṣaka* was a clown ("Spasmacher, Hanswurst"), who therefore could not originally have belonged to the drama. The further conclusion was that in that case he must have originated in a "popular

³⁴³ See W. H. Rassers, "Over den oorsprong van het Javaansche tooneel", *Bijdragen Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 88 (1931), pp. 338, 360, 363, who mentions the terms *wayang tengen* (on the right of the *ḍalang*) and *wayang kiwa* (on his left).

³⁴⁴ Sylvain Lévi, *Le théâtre indien* (Paris 1890), p. 122f., [Francesco Cimmini, *Il tipo comico del Vidūṣaka* (Napoli 1893), not accessible to me], J. Huizinga, *De vidūṣaka in het indisch tooneel* (1897), Montgomery Schuyler, "The origin of the Vidūṣaka and the Employment of this character in the plays of Harṣadeva", *JAOS.* 20 (1899), p. 333ff., R. Pischel, *Die Heimat des Puppenspiels* (1900), p. 17ff., A. Hillebrandt, "Über die Anfänge des indischen Dramas", *Sitzungsber. d. kön. bay. Akad. d. Wiss. Philos.-philol. und histor. Klasse, Jahrg. 1914, 4. Abhandlung* pp. 24-26, M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur III* (1922), pp. 171, 172 n. 2 (references), 176, 178 n. 1, J. Hertel, "Der Ursprung des indischen Dramas und Epos", *WZKM.* 18, pp. 59f., 137f., 24, p. 118, S. Konow, *Das indische Drama* (Berlin-Leipzig 1920), p. 14, A. B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama* (1924), pp. 39f., 50f. (references p. 51 n. 1) and passim (see index), D. R. Mankad, *Types of Sanskrit Drama* (Karachi 1936), p. 211ff., J. Gonda, "Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung und Wesen des indischen Dramas", *Acta Orientalia* 19 (1943), pp. 329ff. (especially pp. 395-417), [R. V. Jagirdar, *Drama in Sanskrit Literature*, Bombay 1947], [J. T. Parikh, *The Vidūṣaka: Theory and Practice*, Surat 1953], G. K. Bhat, *The Vidūṣaka* (Ahmedabad, 1959), passim, Henry W. Wells, *The Classical Drama of India* (Bombay, 1963), p. 14ff., Paul Thieme, "Das indische Theater" in *Fernöstliches Theater* (ed. H. Kindermann, 1966), pp. 38, 50, 53f., etc., Paul Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* (Bern 1966), p. 343, H.-O. Feistel, *Das Vorspiel auf dem Theater* (no place, 1969), pp. 119f., 125, The same, "The pūrvaraṅga and the chronology of pre-classical Sanskrit theatre", *Sanskrita Ranga Annual VI* (Special felicitation volume in honour of Dr. V. Raghavan, Madras 1972), pp. 7f., 14, S. Weeratunge, "Some Remarks on the Vidūṣaka and Imagery in Sanskrit Drama", *Añjali* (O. H. de A. Wijesekera Felicitation Volume, Peradeniya 1970), pp. 182-184. Cf. also Louis Renou, *La recherche sur le théâtre indien depuis 1890* (Paris 1964), p. 29 n. 4, J. C. Heesterman, *Spel der Tegenstellingen* (Leiden 1964), p. 23 n. 39 and J. Clifford Wright, *Non-Classical Sanskrit Literature* (London 1966), p. 21.

drama", about which, however, nothing is known. It is, of course, possible to assume by way of hypothesis that such a popular dramatic art once existed but it is clear that further conjectures about its character necessarily lack any foundation. Such theories are particularly hazardous if they are construed on the analogy of the 18th century "Possentheater" in Germany. Some authors, indeed, went so far as to define the character of the hypothetical popular theatre as a mime (e.g. M. Schuyler 1899, p. 338, Hillebrandt 1914, p. 26, Konow 1920, p. 14f.). The theory of a popular drama, again, created the further dilemma as to whether or not this drama had had a religious origin, a question that Hillebrandt 1914, p. 27, left open.

It may be useful to state clearly that this whole scholarly discussion, which in German-speaking countries was dominated by the word "volkstümlich" as the *vitium originis*, was primarily based upon a questionable conception of the character of the *vidūṣaka*. The problems with which several generations have struggled, such as the question "popular or not?", "religious or non-religious?", "mime or something else?" are modern constructions, which can be ignored when an attempt is made to interpret the data of the Nāṭyaśāstra. It is characteristic that some modern scholars, while accepting some of the theories, felt compelled to make an important reservation as to the foundation upon which they were built. Thus Winternitz 1922, p. 172, remarks about the *vidūṣaka* "Im Nāṭyaśāstra wird er viel grotesker beschrieben, als er in unsern Dramen erscheint. In manchen der klassischen Dramen tritt das Groteske fast ganz zurück und die Freundestreue viel mehr in den Vordergrund". Hillebrandt 1914, p. 27, had already observed that the description of the *vidūṣaka* in NS. 24.106 differs from his character in later texts such as Aśvaghōṣa's drama and rather resembles a kind of devil.

Thieme, p. 53³⁴⁵, has elaborated the theory of an original mime, in which the *vidūṣaka* did not take part in the action. The latter was not, accordingly, a *dramatis persona* but a member of the troupe, whose natural place can only have been in the "Vorspiel" (*pūrvaraṅga*). In the course of time, however, he became for unknown reasons mixed up in the play, as an actor who had to play his part. Since the approach of the present study is entirely different, there is no use in amply discussing here Thieme's ingenious theory. It has already been observed that the assumption of the mime has no foundation in historical data. It may be added as a general remark that in many modern studies on the Sanskrit drama a somewhat confusing use is made of the term "Preliminaries" or "Vorspiel", in so far as the introduction to the play (the *āmukha* or *prastāvanā*) is insufficiently distinguished from the *pūrvaraṅga*, which stood apart as a religious ceremony.

Feistel, p. 125, has elaborated Thieme's theory in a different way. He suggests that the introduction (*āmukha*) has arisen in imitation of the Trigata of the *pūrvaraṅga*. This is very well possible. According to

³⁴⁵ See also pp. 38, 40, 43, 50.

NŚ. 22.28 the *āmukha* consists of a conversation of the *sūtradhāra* with either an actress or the *vidūṣaka* or the assistant (*pāripārśvika*). The fact that the two characters of the Trigata here return with the same names, but now in a profane function, may be considered a strong indication that the *āmukha* was somehow a continuation of the preceding Trigata. This *āmukha* was not, however, a Three Men's Talk and the fact that one of the two characters of the Trigata could be used as a partner in the conversation of the Introduction may have been due to simple practical considerations. After the exit of the three as impersonations of the divine world and the *sūtradhāra*'s renewed entrance as *sthāpaka* or *prastāvaka*, it was a convenient device to take one of the assistants as a partner in the dialogue (as is sometimes done in the prologues of Bhāsa's plays). There was, however, nothing to prevent an actress taking his place. It is hard to find in the facts an argument for Feistel's assumption that in the *āmukha*, once it existed as such, the actress was introduced as a new element. Still harder is it to conceive how the actress, after she had been admitted to the Prologue, could have ousted the *vidūṣaka* from it. The further hypothetical development, in which the *vidūṣaka*, after being ousted from the *āmukha*, became one of the three leading characters of the Indian drama, cannot well be visualized.

There is only one point in these theories which is rightly stressed by Thieme and others and which will have to be seriously considered in the context of this study. This is the absence of the *vidūṣaka* from the dramas with an epic subject-matter, the "genuine" *nāṭakas* ascribed to Bhāsa, and from one of Aśvaghōṣa's plays.

Against the current theory that the *vidūṣaka* originated in the popular mime the following arguments can be brought forward:

1. In the oldest Indian tradition, as found in ch. I of the Nāṭyaśāstra, the *vidūṣaka*, the *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā* are the only leading characters of the drama (1.96). Abhinavagupta's comment may here be quoted (I, p. 32 line 10): *pradhānapātrāṇi prthag rakṣaṇīyāṇi 'ty āha "nāyakam" iti* "Because the leading parts are in need of a personal protection, (the author) says *nāyakam* etc." (=1.96).

2. Ever since the oldest dramas extant the *vidūṣaka* is one of the *dramatis personae*. In two of Aśvaghōṣa's plays he acts already his traditional part. In the Śāriputraprakaraṇa he is the friend and companion of a monk, who is here the *nāyaka* (see n. 374).

3. The theory of a (non-religious) mime – of which no trace exists – 346

346 See Keith (n. 344), p. 50f.: "The popular origin of the Vidūṣaka is obvious but the point is whether this origin is religious or secular . . . It is manifestly unnecessary and illegitimate, when the descent of this figure from the Vedic literature is clear, to insist that it was borrowed directly from popular usage, for which there is no proof, but only conjecture". Similarly Gonda (n. 344), p. 403f.: "Warum, schliesslich, soll man . . . diese Typen als "volkstümlich" bezeichnen, falls man mit diesem Adjektiv meinen möchte, dass sie anfangs zu profanen Bühnenaufführungen und Volksspielen gehörten (von denen wir aber nichts wissen) und aus diesen in das

is based on the interpretation of the *vidūṣaka* as a clownish character. As we have seen, several scholars have already expressed their doubts about the correctness of this interpretation of his part in the classical drama. In the preceding sections it has been argued that in the *pūrvaraṅga* the *vidūṣaka* is identical with the assistant who carries Varuṇa's golden pitcher in the *Utthāpana* (the second part of the *pūrvaraṅga*) and represents the nether world in the *Trigata*. In the latter his relation to the other assistant is structurally similar to that of the *bhṛṅgāradhāra* to the *jarjaradhāra*. The fact that as *vidūṣaka* he speaks Sanskrit (overlooked by Abhinavagupta ad 5.28 B *vidūṣakaveṣabhāṣācāro!*) would seem significant.

4. The so-called grotesque character ascribed to the *vidūṣaka* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Winternitz, p. 172, Thieme, p. 50, etc.) is mainly based on the description of his make-up in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*³⁴⁷.

It is true that this text in some passages (to be discussed below) does refer to his comical (*hāsyā*) appearance, but the reason for his strange appearance (described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in such detail as can hardly have been actually represented on the stage) will become clear from § 18. There must, indeed, have been a wide gap between the theory of the prescriptions of the Handbook and the practice of the dramatic performances. One indication is that according to the *Nāṭyalocana*³⁴⁸ the *vidūṣaka* must wear a turban, like the ministers, chamberlains, big merchants and the chaplain, whereas the *Nāṭyaśāstra* prescribes that he must be bald.

Although it will be shown that the curious appearance of the *vidūṣaka*, as described in the Handbook, had not originally any connection with the stage nor aimed at a comic effect, it cannot be denied that in the classical drama his behaviour was intended to evoke laughter. Cf. *Śāradātanaya*, p. 289,2 *vidūṣako 'pi sarvatra vinodeṣū 'payujyate. Terms*, however, in which his clownish character is expressed, do not appear before the ninth century A.D. Two different lines of tradition can be distinguished, one which uses *hāsyakārin*, *hāsyakṛt* and similar expressions, and another which uses the word *vaihāsika*.

Of the material that has come to my notice the following instances may be quoted.

Opferriuell aufgenommen worden sind?" and Horsch (n. 344), p. 343 n. 1: "Das Fehlen älterer Volksstücke macht seine Verbindung mit dem Hanswurst der Volksbühne (s. Konow) rein hypothetisch".

³⁴⁷ See, e.g., Winternitz (n. 344), p. 172, Thieme, p. 50 and Bhat (n. 344), p. 21: "The *Vidūṣaka* appears in the preliminaries of a dramatic representation, known as *Pūrvaraṅga*, and provides laughter by his appearance, talk and gestures. This role that the *Vidūṣaka* plays is irrespective of the drama proper, which may or may not have contained comic elements. Its purpose is pure fun; and it must have been all the more necessary, we may presume, if the drama were of a serious or exalted type. The role of the *Vidūṣaka* in the preliminaries of the drama is determined solely by the psychological and social expectation of amusement by way of laughter . . .".

³⁴⁸ Quoted by S. Lévi, II, p. 70 from *Rāghavabhaṭṭa's Arthadyotanikā*.

hāsyakārin, etc.: circa 850 Rudraṭa, Śṛṅgāratilaka I.31 (41) *kriḍāprāyo vidūśakaḥ*, *svavapurveṣabhāṣādihāsyakāri svakarmavit* (vv.11. *ca karmavit*, *ca narmavit*), Kāvyaśālikā 12.15 *vidūśakaḥ kriḍānīyakaprāyaḥ, nijagūṇayukto mūrkhō hāsakarākāraveṣavacāḥ*, circa 975–1000: Dhanamjaya, Daśarūpaka 2.8 *hāsyakṛc ca vidūśakaḥ* and Dhanika's commentary: *hāsyakāri vidūśakaḥ, aśya ca vikṛtākāraveṣādītvam hāsyakāritvenaiva labhyate* (Schmidt: "Weil er der Spassmacher ist, so ergibt sich daraus, dass er sein Äusseres, seine Kleidung usw. entstellt"), c. 1175–1250: Śāradātanaya, Bhāvaprakāśa (GOS. p. 289) *hāsyānūkavibhūṣitaḥ* [Bhat, p. 48 "possessed of a funny sort of back-bone (that is, 'hunch-back')"], c. 1300 (?)–1350: Viśvanātha, Sāhityadarpaṇa 3.79 *karmavapurveṣabhāṣādyaiḥ, hāsyakaraḥ kalaharatir vidūśakaḥ syāt svakarmajñāḥ* (cf. above Rudraṭa), Pratāparudrīya I.38 *hāsyaprāyo vidūśakaḥ*, c. 1330 A.D.: Śīngabhūpāla, Rasārṇavasudhākara I.92 *vikṛtāṅgavacoveṣair hāsyakāri vidūśakaḥ*³⁴⁹. As an anonymous quotation the last definition is found in Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī's commentary Pada-candrikā on the Daśakumāracarita (c. 1650), p. 42 line 8 (ed. Agashe, B. S. S.), where the Bhūṣaṇa reads *aṅgādiveṣavaiḥkṛtyahāsyakāri vidūśakaḥ* and the Laghupīkā *saṁdhānanīpūṇaś caiva hāsyakāri vidūśakaḥ*.

vaiḥāsika ("jester, buffoon, actor in general" Apte, Dict.; Böhtlingk still quoted the lexicographers Halāyudha and Hemacandra as his only authorities). As we now know, it was in rather common use in classical Sanskrit. As a gloss for *vidūśaka* it seems to have been used for the first time in the Kāmasūtra I.4.46 *ekadeśavidyas tu kriḍānako viśvāsyas ca vidūśakaḥ, vaiḥāsiko vā*. In VI.1.22 the *vaiḥāsika* is mentioned side by side with the *pīṭhamarda* "parasite": *bhāvajijñāsārtham paricārakamukhān saṁvāhaka-gāyana-vaiḥāsikān gamye tadbhaktān vā praṇidadhāt, tadabhāve pīṭhamardādīn*. The gloss of the commentary *vaiḥāsiko vidūśakaḥ* raises questions that will be discussed in § 19. Murāri, Anargharāghava, p. 146, quotes the line *vaiḥāsikaḥ kelikaraḥ prahāsi ca vidūśakaḥ*, which he attributes to Bharata (Lévi II, p. 19). On the great variety of verses which are assigned to the Nāṭyaśāstra see in general S. Lévi, p. 27. Murāri is generally supposed to have lived circa 900 A.D. The use of the word *vaiḥāsika* would seem to exclude that this line was actually taken from the Nāṭyaśāstra. On the other hand, a variant form *vaiḥāsika*, not registered in any dictionary, occurs in Agnipurāṇa 339.40 *vidūśako*

³⁴⁹ See K. H. Trivedi, The Nāṭyadarpaṇa of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, A critical Study (Ahmedabad 1966), p. 186 n. 3, who quotes this passage while summarizing the data of the ND in the words: "In short the Vidūśaka is ludicrous in physical appearance, dress and speech". The Nāṭyadarpaṇa dates from about 1100–1150 A.D. Sylvain Lévi, II, p. 19 quotes the same text from Rāghavabhaṭṭa's commentary on the Śakuntalā, as taken from the Sudhākara. As for Śīngabhūpāla's date see S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics I², p. 239, and for that of the Pada-candrikā see Wilhelm Printz, KZ. 44 (1911), pp. 100, 104. Of unknown date is Nityanātha's Rasaratnahāra 54, which has been quoted as saying "Der vidūśaka erregt Gelächter wegen der Entstellung seines Körpers, seiner Sprache und seiner Kleidung" (Richard Schmidt, Beiträge zur indischen Erotik, p. 146).

vaihasikaḥ. This is the reading in the text of Poona 1900 as well as in that of the Kashi Skt. Series 174, Varanasi 1966.

In contrast with these later theorists the Nāṭyaśāstra does not stress, as far as I can see, the clownish character of the *vidūṣaka* except in one passage. No importance, it seems, can be attached to the circumstance that this passage (13.137–142 C) is omitted in KM³⁵⁰. It deals with *gati* (*gati*) and distinguishes three kinds of comic effect (*hāsya*), which are specified according to a distinction well-known in the Handbook as *aṅga-vākya-kṛtam* and *nepathyajam* “produced by corporeal defects, by words and by the costume and make-up”. This kind of distinction has become stereotyped since Rudraṭa and is also found in the discussion of success³⁵¹.

Apart from this passage I can only quote 27.8 C *vidūṣakocchekakṛtam* (?) *bhavec chilpakṛtam tu yat, atihāsyaena tad grāhyaṁ prekṣakair nityam eva hi*³⁵² and 27.61 *bālā mūrkhā(s) striyaś caiva hāsyanepathyaḥ sadā (viz. tuṣyanti)*³⁵³. The last passage can refer in general to *dāsas* and other characters, who have to be characterized by some deformity.

It is not necessary to discuss in this context the theory that the deformity of the *vidūṣaka* is connected with the superstitious belief that disfigured persons bring good luck³⁵⁴.

After these preliminary remarks an attempt will be made to explain the *status* and the *function* of the *vidūṣaka* in classical drama. Only then his name may become clear. There is, it is true, a general agreement that *vidūṣaka* means “corrupter” (“Schlechtmacher, Schimpfer”)³⁵⁵ but this etymology does not explain very much, as long as it is not clear what exactly he “corrupts”.

³⁵⁰ The passage occurs in B (12.137ff.) and KM¹ (12.121ff.). In KM² thirty lines have been omitted after 12.114, but neither the critical apparatus nor Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics⁴, p. 13 mentions this gap in the text. It is, therefore, probably due to mere inadvertency.

³⁵¹ While 27.3C mentions (*siddhiḥ*) *sāriri vānmayā tathā*, 27.3B has *vānnaipathya-sarirajā* and 27.2 KM *vānmanahkāyasambhūtā*. See further below, p. 217.

³⁵² The correct reading of the first word is very doubtful, see below, p. 216. For *śilpa* see Ghosh, Translation, foot-note: “For example, the art of comic make-up” and NŚ. 27.58, where *śilpa* occurs beside *nepathya*.

³⁵³ For this stereotyped group see ILJ. 16, p. 243 n. 10.

³⁵⁴ Gonda, pp. 410–416.

³⁵⁵ See in general Gonda (n. 344), p. 402f., K. H. Trivedi, The Nāṭyadarpaṇa, p. 187, and cf. PW. (“Verunglimpfer”), Konow, p. 14 (“Schimpfer”), Keith, p. 39 (“given to abuse” and n. 2 on “ritual cathartic cursing”), Gonda, p. 416 (“Tadler, Schimpfer, derjenige, der jem. oder etw. in den Augen anderer schlecht macht”), the *vidūṣaka* being “gewissermassen eine Verschmelzung des Hoffnarrtypus und des apotropäischen Phthonoswehrrers”, A. N. Upadhye, Candralekhā (Bombay 1945), Introduction, p. 26f. (“The name Vidūṣakaḥ is just a hyper-Sanskritic back-formation of Prakrit *viuso* or *viusao* [with *k*-suffix] which is to be connected with *vidvas*”), similarly J. C. Wright (n. 344), p. 21, whose remark on “the highly stereotyped figure of the pedant (Sanskritized *vidūṣaka*, i.e. *vidūs*, Pkt. *vidū*)” is based on a misconception of the character of the *vidūṣaka*, G. K. Bhat (n. 344), p. 88 (“one who has a characteristic mode of fault-finding, or spoiling, with a view to evoking laughter”). Thieme, p. 38, conjectured “Verpatzer” (gambling away).

As for his social status in general, several theories have been proposed, all necessarily without any foundation in facts. It may be sufficient to mention the not uncommon views that he was used by the dramatists as a persiflage of the brahmins³⁵⁶, or that the court-jester had stood model for him³⁵⁷. All such theories disregard the undeniable fact that actually we know the *vidūṣaka* exclusively as a stage character. This cannot be due to a deficient knowledge of urban life in ancient India. His purported role in Indian society will be examined in § 19. Here we will first try to answer the question as to what can be learnt about the status of the *vidūṣaka* in the only surroundings where we meet him, that is, in Sanskrit drama.

Status in the drama. It is curious that seldom attention seems to have been given to the fact that according to the Nāṭyaśāstra the *vidūṣaka* is the only character on the stage who meets the king on an equal footing. This follows as an inevitable conclusion from the circumstance that the king and the *vidūṣaka* address each other as "friend" (*vayasya*), which is a form of address that is exclusively permitted between people of equal standing³⁵⁸. This throws a new and unexpected light on Abhinava's statement that the *nāyaka* and the *vidūṣaka* are the two male leading characters. Bhat, p. 183, points out that only in late dramas the strict rule is disregarded and that the *vidūṣaka* here ranks with the servants, who address their master as *deva*. The uniqueness of *vayasya* as a form of address comes out best in the context of the whole passage³⁵⁹. It is

³⁵⁶ Cf., e.g., R. Pischel, Die Heimat des Puppenspiels (1900), p. 18 ("die Priester aller indischen Religionen mit Vorliebe verspottet"); A. Hillebrandt (1914), pp. 24 and 26: "eine Verspottung der höchsten Kaste", H. Güntert, Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland (Halle-Saale, 1923), p. 235: "Ist es doch bezeichnend, dass in den späteren indischen Dramen die komische Figur fast immer ein Priester sein muss, dessen Appetit meistens unvergleichlich viel mehr ausgebildet ist als sein Verstand", W. Ruben, Kālidāsa, The human meaning of his work (Berlin, 1957), p. 19, etc.
³⁵⁷ Hertel (n. 344); but Winternitz, p. 172, n. 1, rightly objected that in no Old Indian description of court life a court-jester is mentioned and that the *vidūṣaka*, like the *viṭa*, rather belonged to Indian town-life (which point will be taken up below in § 19). It should be noted here that *rājya-vidūṣaka* "court-jester" in Sāgaranandin's Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa 2014 is a corrupt reading, see Raghavan's note in Translation, p. 66 (Bābūlal Shukla reads accordingly *rājā vidūṣakam avadat*, p. 194, line 1 from the bottom). At the court of the Moghuls there seem to have been professional jesters, as Bīrbal was famous as the court-jester of Bābar in Delhi. In Old Tamil literature, however, the professional jester seems to have been as unknown as in Sanskrit literature. How the Telugu poet Tenāli Rāmakṛṣṇa, who lived under the kings Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Veṅkaṭapatiṛāya (first half of the 16th century A.D.) has become in Tamil tradition the court-jester of Kṛṣṇadevarāya I have been unable to find out (S. M. N. Sastri, *Tales of Tennalirama* was unfortunately not accessible to me). Dr. Kamil Zvelebil, to whom I owe the data on the Telugu poet, referred to A. S. Panchapakesa Aiyar, *Tenāli Rāma* (Madras, 1947). See p. 226.
³⁵⁸ 19.10 (17.72 KM) *samāno 'tha vayasye 'ti*.

³⁵⁹ 19.16 *deve 'ti nṛpatir vācyo bhṛtyaiḥ prakṛtibhis tathā, bhāṭṭe 'ti sārvaḥmaṃsa tu nityam parijanena hi* (17) *rājann ity ṛṣibhir vācyo hy apatyapratyayena vā, vayasya rājann iti vā bhaved vācyo mahīpatiḥ* (18) *vidūṣakeṇa. rājñī ca ceṭi ca bhavati 'ty api,*

also significant for the ancient character of this stage convention that later theorists, such as Sāgaranandin (between 1200 and 1250?), did not understand it any longer and misinterpreted the theory: "A companion is called *vayasyaka* (friend), and this term is used also for the jester"³⁶⁰. The Sāhityadarpaṇa gives also a different version³⁶¹. See further Bhat, p. 106f.

Function in the drama. This leads us to consider the central problem: What exactly was the function of the *vidūṣaka* in the play?

Those who have studied his part, as it is known to us from the classical plays, without preconceived ideas about buffoons, have more than once stated that the *vidūṣaka* interferes with the plot, but often in a specific way. J. Huizinga, who wrote his doctor's thesis on the *vidūṣaka*, gave evidence of his perspicacity even in his early years, when he characterized the role of the *vidūṣaka* as follows:³⁶² "The *vidūṣaka* is a counter-stroke of the spirit of the play itself; the loftiness of the sentiments comes out the more strikingly by the contrast of his vulgarity". He points out that the *vidūṣaka*, while trying to help his friend, on the contrary gets him into trouble (p. 25): "His clumsiness manifests itself in his committing silly blunders in the very circumstances in which all depends on him—blunders with which he gets his friend into trouble, especially because he always lets his tongue run away with him". (See also pp. 23 and 128). In numerous situations he is scolded as *mūrkhā* or *vaidheya* "fool"³⁶³.

In connection with an observation by Huizinga on the Mālavikāgnimitra Gonda, p. 406f., remarks: "... aber ich frage mich, ob es nicht zum Charakter eines wahren Vidūṣakas gehört, dass er die Sachen stört und verdirbt, und auch, ob gerade die Tatsache, dass die Lösung des Knotens ohne sein Zutun zustande kommt, nicht vollkommen im Einklang ist mit der Aufgabe des Vidūṣakas in diesen Stücken, die u.a. darin bestand,

nāmnā vayasye 'ty api vā rājñā vācyo vidūṣakah (19) sarvastrībhiḥ patir vācyā āryaputre 'ti yauvane, anyadā punar ārye 'ti vācyo rājñyā 'pi bhūpatiḥ.

³⁶⁰ Sāgaranandin, Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakosa, translated by Myles Dillon-Murray Fowler-V. Raghavan (Philadelphia 1960), p. 44. The text (NLRK. 2199) reads *vayasyakah saḥcaraḥ sa eva ca vidūṣakah*. Raṅganātha in his commentary (dated 1655 A.D.) on Vikramorvaśī II.0.1 and the edition by Bābūlal Śukla (Varanasi 1972, śl. 270) have the variant reading *vayasyakah cātupaṭuḥ sa eva ca vidūṣakah*; *cātupaṭu* or *cātubaṭu* lexicographers gloss with *bhaṇḍaḥ* "jester". According to Sāgaranandin the *vidūṣaka* belonged to the court servants (see 2206=270), which must be due to a late attempt of theorists to fix his position (see § 16). This author does not mention him as a leading character together with the *nāyaka* and *nāyikā* in 2170ff.

³⁶¹ See SD. 6.145 *rājarṣibhir vayasye 'ti tathā vidūṣakeṇa ca, rājann ity ṛṣibhir vācyah so 'patyapratyayena ca.*

³⁶² J. H. Huizinga (n. 344), p. 41: "De vidūṣaka is een terugslag van den geest van het stuk zelf; de verhevenheid van de sentimenten komt door het contrast van zijn platheid des te sterker uit", p. 25: "Zijn onhandigheid bestaat daarin, dat hij juist in de omstandigheden, waar het op hem aankomt, onnozele blunders maakt, waarmee hij zijn vriend in ongelegenheid brengt, vooral doordat hij nooit zijn mond weet te houden". Cf. also pp. 23 and 138.

³⁶³ See Huizinga, p. 32, Indu Shekar (n. 344), p. 79.

dass er die von anderen in Gang gebrachten und geführten Vorgänge zwa, förderte, aber zugleich einen allzu glücklichen Ablauf ein wenig hemmte oder doch die grosse Freude des Helden über den schönen Verlauf der Ereignisse einigermassen verleidete. Diesen letztgenannten, schon oben erwähnten Charakterzug, die Neigung zum Stören von freudevollen und begeisterten Stimmungen durch nüchterne und kleinliche Bemerkungen, seine Tadelsucht, seine Platttheit der Erhabenheit des Helden oder der Situation gegenüber, finden wir auch wiederholt in anderen Stücken”.

Bhat, p. 171, gives a similar characterization: “He, however, miscarries them [viz. the tasks of the hero], or makes a mess of them, and often creates complications for the hero”. Elsewhere in his book, it is true, he proposes an unacceptable explanation for this behaviour but the facts referred to support Huizinga’s description and deserve to be quoted here (p. 106): “The Vidūṣakas enjoy the confidence of the heroes, who turn to them with their secrets of love. And if Gautama blabbers the secret of the king in his sleep, as does Vasantaka in Priyadarsikā; if Māṇavaka loses the love-letter, as Maitreya allows the pot of ornaments to be stolen: these are blunders affected for humorous turn, or for story-development; and cannot be interpreted as a betrayal of the trust placed by the heroes in the Vidūṣakas”.

It is not surprising, in view of such characterizations of the *vidūṣaka* as a leading part of the drama, that some connection has been sought between his generical name and his function in the plot of the play. Mostly, however, his name was taken to mean “scoffer, jeerer”, which has long been associated with the ritual scoffer who is known from the Vedic ritual of the Mahāvratā. Those scholars, however, who have drawn attention to this ritual as a possible forerunner of the classical drama, have in general concentrated too one-sidedly on the abusive language used in the ritual talk between a brahmacārin and a courtesan³⁶⁴.

More instructive is the ritual contrast between the “praiser” (*abhiḡara*) and the “reviler” (*apaḡara*). In this case the function of the reviler is clearly formulated in the words (PB. V.5.13) “He who finds fault with them, drives away their evil lot”³⁶⁵ or (JB. III.356) “The *ninditr* takes

³⁶⁴ Thus Konow, p. 14, Keith, pp. 24f., 39, Gonda, p. 402f. criticizes this one-sided approach. On p. 359 he discusses the *abhiḡara*.

³⁶⁵ The whole passage runs as follows: *abhiḡarāpaḡarau bhavato, nindaty enān anyāḡ, prā 'nyāḡ śamsati. ya enān nindati pāpmānam eṣām so 'pahanti, yaḡ praśamsati yad evaiṣām suṣṭutam suśastam tat so 'bhigṛṇāti*. See J. J. Meyer, Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation (Zürich-Leipzig 1937), III, p. 247, Gonda, AO. 19 (1943), p. 352, J. C. Heesterman, WZKSO. XII-XIII (1968), p. 177, Pierre Roland, “Le Mahāvratā” (Nachr. Akad. Wiss. Göttingen 1973-3), p. 67, and cf. TS. VII.5.9.3 ā 'nyāḡ krōsati prā 'nyāḡ śamsati, yā ākrōsati punāty evai 'nānt sā, yāḡ praśamsati pūteṣv evā 'nnādyam dadhāti, JB. II.405 tayor ā 'nyāḡ krosati, prā 'nyāḡ śamsati. ya ākrosati punāty evainān saḡ, atha yaḡ praśamsati pūteṣv evaiteṣu sa indriyam vīryam dadhāti, KS. XXXIV.5 (39,1) *abhiḡarāpaḡarau bhavataḡ, pra vā anyas satrināś śamsati, nindaty anyo. yaḡ praśamsati yad evaiṣām suṣṭutam suśastam tat sa praśamsaty, atha yo nindati yad evaiṣām suṣṭutam su(ś)śastam* [r.: *duṣṣṭ. duśś.*] *tat so 'pahanti*, TB. I.2.6.7 (ĀpŚS. XXI.19.10-11) *imē 'rātsur imē subhūtām akrann*

upon him the impurity of (the one he reviles)". In this connection it is interesting to note that what is badly offered in the sacrifice is seized by Varuṇa³⁶⁶. These words express more than a mere association of Varuṇa and evil. They obviously imply that Varuṇa, like Nirṛti, is not only dreaded but also functions as a divine scapegoat who can take away evil and sin. This may also throw some light on a hidden aspect of the brahmin-*vidūṣaka* (see p. 222).

The importance of the Vedic "reviler" is primarily that it reveals in a general way in what context the role of the "criticizer" in the drama should be considered. It becomes more and more clear to what extent the figure of the *vidūṣaka* is rooted in Vedic religion. For a more direct study of the part of the *vidūṣaka* in the drama, however, we need not rely on speculations on possible Vedic prototypes or "forerunners", since the Nāṭyaśāstra contains more concrete data than any theory about the prehistory of the drama can give us. Here we have to consider once more the role of the *vidūṣaka* in the Trigata.

In the definition of the Nāṭyaśāstra he is described as the "spoiler" of the conversation of the assistant³⁶⁷. The assistant and the *vidūṣaka* are identical with the two assistants of the first part of the *pūrvavaṅga*,

ity anyataro brūyāt. imā udvāsikāriṇa ime durbhūtām akrann ity anyatarāḥ. yād evaiṣām sukr̥tām yā rāddhiḥ tād anyataro 'bhīśrīṇāti, yād evaiṣām duṣkr̥tām yā 'rāddhiḥ, tād anyataro 'pahanti (accentuation according to the Ānandāśrama ed.), Baudh. ŚS. XVI.22 (p. 268,7) *brāhmaṇas ca sūdras cā 'rdre carmakarte vyāyacchete. ime 'rātsur ime subhūtām akrann iti brāhmaṇa, ima udvāsikāriṇa ime durbhūtām akrann iti vṛṣalo, brāhmaṇaḥ saṁjayati, naśyati vṛṣalaḥ, Lāṭy. ŚS. IV.3.1 brāhmaṇo 'bhigaraḥ pūrvasyām sadaso dvāri pratyañmukha upaviṣet (2) vṛṣalo 'pagaro 'parasyām prāñmukhaḥ (3) sa brūyān nā 'rātsur ime sattriṇa iti (4) arātsur ity abhigaraḥ . . . (13) sarveṣām karmaṇi niṣṭhite tad evā 'bhigaras trir brūyāt [commentary: arātsur iti] (14) avasṛjya sūdraḥ pradravet, Kāty. ŚS. XIII.3.6 antarvedy abhigarāpagarau (7) ākrośaty ekaḥ, praśamsaty aparaḥ. For the possible historical relations between the abhigarāpagarau and the opponents in the disputation of the later vāda-tradition, see p. 191 and J. C. Heesterman, WZKSO. 12-13 (1968), p. 177.*

³⁶⁶ According to JB. III.356 line 24 the *apagara* takes upon himself the impurity of the one whom he reviles (*śamalam asya ninditā pratimuñcate*). In this connection it may be suggested that the Sūtras which connect the reviling with the fight for the symbol of the sun (see the preceding note) may reflect a later conception of this ritual. It will be argued below (p. 222) that the *vidūṣaka* had to be a brahmin because as such he could take upon him the impurity of the sponsor of the dramatic performance. The same is true of the vendor of the Soma plant and of the *apagara*. I do not think, therefore, that the *sūdra* or *vṛṣala* of the fight for the hide was originally identical with the person of the *apagara*. The parallelism in this respect with Varuṇa as the divine scape-goat is clear. According to ŚB. IV.5.1.8 Mitra seizes what is well offered (*sviṣtam*) of the sacrifice, and Varuṇa what is badly offered (*dūriṣtam* see Ch. I n. 260). The same role of Varuṇa can, it seems, be seen in the formula which the priest mutters while accepting the *dakṣiṇā*, viz. *varuṇas tvā nayatu devi dakṣiṇe* (KS. IX.9, PB. I.8.2ff.) "Let Varuṇa lead thee, o divine Dakṣiṇā". Heesterman, IJ. 3 (1959), p. 243, rightly stresses the danger inherent in accepting a *dakṣiṇā*: the priest, while accepting it, should turn away from it (*vyāvṛtya*) and assign the gifts to various gods. This is expressly done in the two passages referred to above, where each assignment is preceded by the formula quoted.

³⁶⁷ See p. 191 and the foot-notes 293 and 320.

who have been interpreted as standing for Indra and Varuṇa. As we have seen above, the highest authority in this *vivāc*³⁶⁸ declares the “assistant” victorious, which implies that he stands for Indra, who *has* to win the contest. The *vidūṣaka* must then be the impersonation of Varuṇa. There is, accordingly, a mythical identity of Indra = *jarjaradhara* = *pāripārśvika* on the one hand, and of Varuṇa = *bhṛṅgāradhāra* = *vidūṣaka* on the other. It has already been pointed out in passing that the relation between these two mythical “complexes” contains the basic pattern for that between the *nāyaka* and the *vidūṣaka* in the play (see p. 193). These two are the leading parts and the *nāyaka* is protected by Indra. That their relation was a curious one has long been noted by modern scholars. If we disregard the protector of the *vidūṣaka* for the reasons stated above (p. 176), the two groups of equations are Indra = *jarjaradhara* = *pāripārśvika* = *nāyaka* and Varuṇa = *bhṛṅgāradhāra* = *vidūṣaka*. In other words the relation between *pāripārśvika* and *vidūṣaka* in the Trigata is basically the same as that between *nāyaka* and *vidūṣaka* in the play. The structural approach thus throws a new light on the so-called “Freundestreue” of the *vidūṣaka* and shows that in the relation that must *originally* have existed between the hero and his “friend” there was in fact an element of contest.

The Vedic verbal contest between Indra and Varuṇa must have taken place at a time when Varuṇa was still the representative of the primordial world of the Asuras. Their *vivāc* was an aspect of the strife between the two cosmic powers, out of which the ordered world was to be born. The contest was in general considered a creative act, as is beautifully symbolized in the myth of the Churning of the Ocean. Held has pointed out that the creation of the cosmos is an act in which both Devas and Asuras participate. By taking turns in pulling the rope that is wound around the churn-staff they perform the two cosmic movements of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, as a result of which the primordial waters (later called the Milk Ocean) produce the goods of life³⁶⁹. In Ch. I, we have already met with this combination of cooperation and contest between gods and Asuras, who need each other and yet must necessarily fight each other in order to promote the process of life³⁷⁰. The analysis of the Trigata leads to the conclusion that the same ambiguous relation must originally have existed between the *nāyaka* and the *vidūṣaka*. It is Huizinga’s merit to have detected traces of this relation even in the behaviour of the *vidūṣaka* in the classical drama and to have divined that here the most essential and characteristic trait of his character has been preserved. He was a “tegenspeler”, a fellow-player and “counter-actor”.

It is inevitable, in view of the current opinions on Varuṇa and the *vidūṣaka*, that the idea that the latter is an impersonation of the former

³⁶⁸ See n. 321.

³⁶⁹ See G. J. Held, *The Mahabharata*, pp. 171, 306.

³⁷⁰ Cf., e.g., Dhanika ad DR. 3.64 *teṣāṃ ca phalāni pṛthak pṛthag bhavanti, yathā samudramanthane Vāsudevādīnām Lakṣmyādīlābhāḥ*.

must appear wildly grotesque and absurd. This is due, on the one hand, to a misinterpretation of the *vidūṣaka* as a mere buffoon and, on the other hand, to a confusion of a superhuman cosmic order (*Rtá*), of which Varuṇa was the guardian, with human ethics. In the Vedic conception one who unwittingly transgresses the cosmic order is punished for a sin which can only be understood metaphysically, not ethically. Varuṇa is a majestic god but in his own way, not as many great Vedists of the 19th and 20th centuries used to depict him, because he impersonates the ambiguity of cosmic life, in which death is comprised. Just as no *pravṛtti* can be conceived without its negative counterpart of *nivṛtti*, so the *nāyaka* can only be understood in relation to his counterpart, the *vidūṣaka*. The basic flaw in many studies on the *vidūṣaka* has been that he was considered separately, not in the interrelation which constitutes his real character. This also provides an answer to the fundamental question, which, however, seems never to have been asked: Why was it that this purportedly grotesque and comical character is stated in our oldest source to have been *the* leading part of the drama, on a par with the hero? This fact, which none of the existing theories can explain, becomes clear when it is realized that in the interplay of action and counteraction his relation to the *nāyaka* was that of Varuṇa to Indra. For basically the action of the oldest Sanskrit drama must have been a reiteration of the cosmogony and a ritual act aiming at a renewal of life.

It is instructive to compare the ambiguous character of the *vidūṣaka* with that of the "opponent" of the *nāyaka*, the "counter-*nāyaka*". From the handbooks on dramaturgy we know that in the *Īhāmṛga* a *pratināyaka* stood over against the *nāyaka*. According to the commentaries this term referred to the "hero of the opposite party" (*pratipakṣanāyaka*) in plays where, e.g., Rāma and Rāvaṇa, or Yudhiṣṭhira and Duryodhana were opposed to each other³⁷¹. This theoretical distinction does not seem have been very important in practice.

17. DRAMAS WITHOUT A VIDŪṢAKA

From an analysis of chapters I and V of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* it has been inferred that in an older form of the Sanskrit drama the *nāyaka* and the *vidūṣaka* were the leading parts³⁷². There is a more or less general agreement on the older parts of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* dating back to a time

³⁷¹ See DR. 2.9 (*atha pratināyakaḥ lubdho dhīroddhataḥ stabdhaḥ pāpakṛd vyasanī ripuḥ*, and Dhanika's commentary: *tasya nāyakasye 'tthambhūtaḥ pratipakṣanāyako bhavati, yathā Rāmayudhiṣṭhīrayo Rāvaṇaduryodhanau*. Cf. also the definition of the *Īhāmṛga*, DR. 3.73 *naradvīyāv aniyamān nāyakapratināyakau, khyātau dhīroddhatāv antyo viparyāsād ayuktakṛt*. The idea that the *pratināyaka*'s wrong deeds are due to "error" (*viparyāsād*, Dhanika: *viparyayaññānād*) introduces a novel element. SD. 6.246 changes this into *anyo gūḍhabhāvād ayuktakṛt*.

³⁷² Thieme, who states that "das *Nāṭyaśāstra* einerseits von einer 'Rolle' des *vidūṣaka* im Schauspiel nichts sagt" must have overlooked such data as the term of address *vayasya* (see n. 359), which presupposes scenes in which the *vidūṣaka* and the king were both on the stage.

anterior to the oldest extant dramas, including the fragments of Aśvaghoṣa's³⁷³. In view of this fact and of the theory that the combined action of *vidūṣaka* and *nāyaka* reflects a certain structure of Vedic mythology one is led to assume that all old dramas must needs have had a *vidūṣaka*. The tradition which required that he should be one of the leading characters is, indeed, faithfully maintained in one of the oldest dramas, fragments of which have come down to us, viz. Aśvaghoṣa's Śāriputraprakaraṇa, which Lüders has in a masterly way reconstructed from the central Asian fragments. The *vidūṣaka* is here the friend and companion of a mendicant monk, and he speaks words which according to the Buddhist tradition have been spoken by Maudgalyāyana. His character is not without dignity but on the other hand his action results in checking and retarding the action of the *nāyaka*³⁷⁴. In Bhāsa's and Kālidāsa's dramas the *vidūṣaka* was "ein kluger Berater des Königs"³⁷⁵.

From the dramatic literature that has been handed down to us, however, it has rightly been concluded that the *vidūṣaka* only occurs in the Prakaraṇa, a *genre* often characterized as "bürgerliches Drama". He does not occur in the *nāṭaka*, which takes its subject-matter from the epics. Since far-going theories have been founded on this fact, it may be well to repeat that, as far as we can see, the Sanskrit literary drama has always been a form of court art. This is as true of the Prakaraṇa as it is of the Nāṭaka. The difference between the two genres was according to the Nāṭyaśāstra (20.50–51) one of plot and characters. The theory that on account of these characteristics the Prakaraṇa must have originated in a hypothetical popular theatre is unfounded³⁷⁶.

In the following discussion data of the theorists about other genres, such as the *Ḍima*, the *Īhāmrga*, etc. will be left out of consideration as they have only theoretical importance.

The *vidūṣaka* does not occur in the following dramas:

- a) the Samavakāra (see Abhinavagupta ad 1.97).
- b) the Rāma- and Kṛṣṇa-dramas of Bhāsa.

³⁷³ See, e.g., Thieme, p. 35, Feistel, p. 137f.

³⁷⁴ See H. Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 208. To Lüders the introduction of the *vidūṣaka* in such a drama was absurd: "An und für sich ist natürlich die Idee, einem nur der Hoffnung auf Erlösung lebenden Bettelmönch—denn das war Śāriputra schon, ehe er in den buddhistischen Orden trat—die lustige Person zum Gefährten zu geben, absurd. Wenn es doch geschieht, so beweist das, dass die Verbindung des *Vidūṣaka* mit dem Helden, er mag sein wer er will, zu Aśvaghoṣas Zeit schon ein so festes Gesetz der Bühne war, dass der Dichter sich ihm nicht entziehen konnte".

³⁷⁵ See Konow, p. 62.

³⁷⁶ For an ample and excellent discussion of the origin of the *prakaraṇa* see Thieme, p. 38, where it is derived from the mime, and, e.g., p. 81, where it is characterized as "die Gattung des auf die literarische Ebene gehobenen Volksstücks", which is older than Aśvaghoṣa. Konow, p. 43, sums up the arguments for the existence of a mime: "Es kann nach alledem nicht zweifelhaft sein, dass sie wirklich Mimen waren, obgleich wir uns von ihrer Kunst keine vollständige Vorstellung machen können" (cf. pp. 14, 15, 47).

- c) the *Mudrārākṣasa*.
- d) Bhavabhūti's dramas.
- e) the shadow-plays (*chāyānāṭakas*) *Mahānāṭaka* and *Dūtāṅgada*.

Of these five categories the last three can be ignored for various reasons³⁷⁷. What remains is the *Samavakāra* and the epic dramas. The *Samavakāra* has been discussed above, where it was pointed out that here Indra and Varuṇa must have appeared without disguise. In its structure the *Samavakāra* with its twelve *nāyakas* was nearer to the *Ḍima* with sixteen *nāyakas*³⁷⁸.

The *Nāṭaka* was the typically heroic drama. Kālidāsa has been the first to introduce a *vidūṣaka* in this *genre*, who had up to that time been excluded from it. The subject-matter of these plays is characterized as mythical, in contrast with the *Prakarāṇa*. To a certain extent this is correct but it may give rise to false impressions and misunderstandings. There is a wide gap between the Vedic myth and the epics. Even though the war between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, as told in the *Mahābhārata*, is a replica of the fight between Devas and Asuras³⁷⁹, Yudhiṣṭhira and Duryodhana³⁸⁰ are not, from a mythological point of view, of prime interest. The arguments brought forward in favour of the theory that Arjuna stands for Indra, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra for Varuṇa, seem to me convincing³⁸¹. Besides, the so-called epic dramas do not seem to date back to a remote past. In any case, those of "Bhāsa's dramas" which are based on the *Mahābhārata*, viz. *Madhyamavyāyoga*, *Dūtaghaṭṭakā*, *Pañcarātra*, *Ūrubhaṅga*, *Karṇabhāra* and *Dūtavākya* deal in fact with legendary tales, not with the old mythology, traces of which are even in the epic hardly perceptible. Hence the absence of the *vidūṣaka* is not surprising³⁸².

³⁷⁷ Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārākṣasa* is in more than one respect quite unique in dramatic literature: although its author introduces it as a *nāṭaka*, it has some characteristics of a *prakaraṇa* and its plot can be said to be based on two *nāyakas* (not a *pratināyaka* and a *nāyaka*!) without a *nāyikā*. The severe *vīrarasa* prevented the introduction of a *vidūṣaka*, which is not striking in the most uncommon of classical dramas. In the case of Bhavabhūti there was apparently "eine persönliche Abneigung" against the *vidūṣaka* (Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 428). The shadow-plays *Mahānāṭaka* (11th cent.) and *Dūtāṅgada* (13th cent.) are too late to prove anything in this connection.

³⁷⁸ See for the first 20.65, DR. 3.64, SD. 6.235, and for the second 20.88, DR. 3.58, SD. 6.243.

³⁷⁹ See the references in *Numen* 8 (1961), p. 40.

³⁸⁰ Quoted by Dhanika, see n. 371.

³⁸¹ For Arjuna see W. Caland, "De incarnaties van den god Wisṇu", *Mededeelingen van het Provinciaalsch Genootschap voor Letterkunde* (Utrecht 1927), p. 27. Cf. *Mhbh.* V.58.11, where Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa are called *indraviṣṇusamau*. In a more general sense, however, all five Pāṇḍavas are impersonations of Indra, cf. I.189.33 (: 32, 28 etc.), III.254.21 *Pārthāḥ pañca pañcendrakalpāḥ*, IV.19.18 *yūyam indrasamāḥ sadā*, V.24.8 *Pāṇḍoḥ sutāḥ sarva eva 'ndrakalpāḥ*, V.33.103 *Pāṇḍoḥ putrāḥ pañca pañcendrakalpāḥ*. For the equation of Varuṇa and Dhṛtarāṣṭra see Gösta Johnsen, *IJ.* 9 (1966), pp. 245-265.

³⁸² For some of these dramas it is moreover doubtful whether they are *nāṭakas* or *vyāyogas*. See Konow, p. 52f., M. M. Ghosh, *Translation I*², p. 367 n. 2, Thieme, p. 74.

The same is true of "Bhāsa plays" based on the Rāma and Kṛṣṇa legends. In the Pratimānāṭaka, and Abhiṣekanāṭaka, which belong to the Rāmaic tradition, and in the Bālacarita, taken from the Kṛṣṇa-tradition there is nothing to suggest that we have an old type of dramas before us. It is even possible that in these dramas the development of the Nāṭaka from the recitation of the epic (according to Lüders's theory)³⁸³ can still be seen. Renou stressed the fact that the classical drama is principally based on Rāma worship³⁸⁴. In dramas based upon Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa, however, there was very little room for a *vidūṣaka*. His absence, far from proving anything about the origin and prehistory of the Sanskrit drama³⁸⁵, would rather seem an indication of the comparatively late rise of the Nāṭaka as a genre.

On the other hand, the circumstance that traditionally the *vidūṣaka* belonged to the Prakaraṇa and the *kathā*-dramas leads to the unexpected conclusion that as a *genre* the Prakaraṇa was probably older³⁸⁶ than the Nāṭaka. This leaves several questions open, which cannot be answered for lack of evidence.

18. VIDŪṢAKA AND JUMBAKA

Since the Nāṭyaśāstra only seldom refers to the comic effect of the costume and make-up of the *vidūṣaka* (see p. 202), it is remarkable that there existed a detailed and fixed tradition about the corporeal particularities which characterize the *vidūṣaka*³⁸⁷. References to this tradition are to be found in various parts of the Nāṭyaśāstra, which leads

³⁸³ Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 427: "Dadurch, dass man das Wort dem Rezitator nahm und den bis dahin nur durch die Geste wirkenden Figuren selbst in den Mund legte, ist das Nāṭaka im engeren Sinn entstanden".

³⁸⁴ See Renou, *La recherche sur le théâtre indien depuis 1890*, p. 39. He, however, also leaves the possibility of a Kṛṣṇaite origin open (pp. 30 n. 2, 39).

³⁸⁵ Cf. Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 428: "Glücklicherweise sind wir jetzt in der Lage, mit Bestimmtheit behaupten zu können, dass das episch-mythologische Drama in vorklassischer Zeit den Vidūṣaka noch nicht aufgenommen hatte".

³⁸⁶ For the theory of its originating in the popular mime see above, n. 376.

³⁸⁷ G. K. Bhat, *The Vidūṣaka* (Ahmedabad 1959), pp. 48-52 gives a survey of the particulars of the appearance of the *vidūṣaka* as described in the Nāṭyaśāstra and found in the classical dramas: "Later theorists do not mention anything about the appearance of the Vidūṣaka except Śāradātanaya who repeats Bharata's adjectives, that the Vidūṣaka is bald-headed, red-eyed, possessed of a funny sort of back-bone (that is, 'hunch-back') and adds that his hair is tawny and he has a beard that is either yellow or green in colour". This passage in the Bhāvaprakāśana (p. 289, lines 5-7, dating from between 1175 and 1250 A.D.) runs as follows: *vedavin narmavedī yo netuḥ sa syād vidūṣakaḥ, khalatīḥ piṅgalākṣaś ca hāsyānūkavibhūṣitaḥ, piṅgakeśo hariśmaśrur nartakaś ca vidūṣakaḥ*. It should be added that Dhanika in explanation of DR. 2.9 *hāsyakṛc ca vidūṣakaḥ* remarks *asya ca vikṛtākāraveṣāditvaṃ hāsyakāritvenai 'va labhyate*. SD. 3.42 mentions his appearance in a very general way: "causing laughter by his actions, his figure, his make-up and his speeches" (*karmavapurveṣabhāśādyair hāsyakarah*). The term *vikṛtākāra* used by Dhanika occurs in NS. 31.17 with reference to the servants (*dāsabhūmi*).

to the conclusion that it must have been part of an old collection of prescriptions which have been compiled in Bharata's Handbook.

As we have seen above (p. 204), these descriptions have generally been interpreted as primitive means to achieve a comic effect, although the Nāṭyaśāstra only twice refers to this effect. Seldom has due consideration been given to the practical consequences of the fact that the Handbook distinguishes between three kinds of comic effects, viz. those due to corporeal defects, to words and to the costume and make-up of the *vidūṣaka* (p. 205). The first of these three categories, however, requires an entirely deformed person for the part of the *vidūṣaka*. There can be no doubt that in the classical drama this aspect has been ignored, but if so, the basic question that calls for an answer is: Why does the Handbook consistently stress such strict requirements which are only understandable in the case of servants (p. 221)?

Since the Nāṭyaśāstra constantly deals with this practice, and goes into the most minute details of how movements, feelings, etc. should be represented on the stage, it is inconceivable that it should have given such impracticable prescriptions *unless there were absolutely compelling reasons to lay down these strict rules, in the face of the obvious impossibility of fulfilling them in practice*. It is the object of this section to inquire into these reasons. To this end it will be necessary to quote the exact wording of the Sanskrit passages.

The first passage occurs in chapter XIII, which deals with the various gaits. Immediately after a passage which describes how the gait of lame men, cripples and dwarfs is to be represented the text has the following verses:

- vidūṣakasyā'pi gatir hāsyatrayasamanvitā*
- (138) *aṅgavākyakṛtam hāsyam hāsyam nepathyajam tathā
danturah khalatiḥ kubjaḥ khañjaś ca vikṛtānaḥ*
- (139) *ya idṛśaḥ praveśaḥ syād aṅgahāsyam tu tad bhavet
yadā tu khagavad gacched ullokita vilokitaiḥ*
- (140) *atyāyatapatatvūc ca aṅgahāsyō bhavet sa tu
vākyahāsyam tu vijñeyam asaṁbaddhaprabhāṣaṇāt*³⁸⁸.

“Also the gait of the *vidūṣaka* has three comical properties. It is comical because of his corporeal defects (and movements), his talk and because of his costume and make-up. He has protruding teeth, is bald-headed, hunch-backed and lame and has a distorted face. When he makes his entrance in such a way, the laughter is due to his “limbs”. When,

³⁸⁸ 13.137-139 C., 12.137-138 B., 12.121-122 KM¹ (omitted in KM², see above, p. 204. Variant readings: *yad idṛśaḥ* KM¹ for *ya idṛśaḥ*; *smṛtam* and *-aṅgavākyakṛtam* for *tathā* and *aṅgavākyakṛtam* C. Cf. also 12.142 B (125 KM¹) *kāvyahāsyam* for 13.140 C. *vākyahāsyam*, which must be the correct reading: “*vākya* is the text or song” (Raghavan, note on NLRK., p. 65), whereas *kāvya* is “drama, play”, cf. 27.24, 42, 43, 44. Cf. 27.58 *yad yasya śilpaṁ nepathyam karma vāk ceṣṭitam tathā, tasya tenaiva tat sādhyam svakarmaviśayāśrayam*, 13.191 *strī pumāṁsam tv abhinayed veśavākyaviceṣṭitaiḥ* and Śiṅgabhūpāla *vikṛtāṅgavacoveṣair hāsyakāri* (see p. 203).

however, he walks like a bird, looking up and down, he is (also), owing to his taking excessively wide strides, laughable due to his limbs. Laughter due to words is the effect of incoherent talk . . ." etc.

The last words are reminiscent of the *asambaddhakathāprāyām . . . kathanikām* (5.138) of the *vidūṣaka* in the Trigata (p. 178 n. 294).

In a brief characterization of the various parts of the *sūtradhāra*, *pāripārśvika*, *viṭa* and *śakāra*, the *vidūṣaka* is described in a similar way:

*vāmano danturaḥ kubjo dvijihvo vikṛtānanah
khalatiḥ piṅgalākṣaś ca sa vidheyo vidūṣakah*³⁸⁹

"The *vidūṣaka* must be represented as a dwarf with protruding teeth, hunch-backed, double-tongued, with a distorted face, bald-headed and yellow-eyed".

In *Suśruta* the double-tonguedness is a disease. It may be conjectured that here it refers to a stuttering speech, similarly to Dutch *zijn tong slaat dubbel* "he speaks thickly, in a thick voice", but this must remain a guess. See above, p. 193.

Two further passages must be mentioned. The first runs as follows:

*vidūṣakasya khalatiḥ syāt kākapadam eva ca*³⁹⁰

"The *vidūṣaka* is bald-headed and has lines in the skin (? of his face?)"

and the second:

*pratyutpannapratibho narmakṛtair narmagarbhanirbhedaīḥ
chedavibhūṣitavadano vidūṣako nāma vijñeyah*³⁹¹

"A *vidūṣaka* is ready-witted by disclosures made as a pleasantry (*narma* 22.50) or a covert pleasantry (*narmagarbha* 22.53) and has stripes of colour (?) put on the face".

The last verse is for several reasons of dubious value. It appears as a second definition (35.92–93) after the traditional definition, which is given a few lines before (35.79), it has further been handed down in many variant readings and, finally, the meaning of *cheda-* (a variant reading of *KM*), which has here been translated in accordance with Bhat (*The Vidūṣaka*, pp. 49, 102 n. 16), is quite uncertain.

³⁸⁹ 35.79 C¹. Similarly 24.103 KM² (*dvijanmā*) and *ibid.*, p. 655, interpolation after 35.20 (*dvijihvo*), 35.57 K. (v. 1. *dvijihvo* according to Bhat, *The Vidūṣaka*, p. 48 n. 1).

³⁹⁰ 23.151. Similarly 22.126 KM¹ (*khalitiḥ*), whereas 21.155 B., 21.148 KM², 23.148 K. read *vidūṣakasya kartavyam khallikākapadam (khallī kākapadam) tathā*. Cf. Abhinavagupta *kākapadam : kākapakṣavad yatra keśavicchedaḥ* and see Bhat, p. 49.

³⁹¹ 35.93 C¹. While 35.25 KM (both editions) reads *narmakṛtā*, C. has *narmakṛtair, -nirbhedaī(ś ca)*, (B. *narmakṛto -nirbhedaḥ*) and *cheko vidūṣitavacano*, which might be connected with (*saṃjalpa*) *vidūṣakavidūṣitaḥ* in 5.140 (138 KM²), see the foot-notes 293 and 320. The Kāśī edition (35.71 K) has *nirbhedyah yas tu vibhūṣitavacano . . .*, see Bhat, p. 102 n. 16. His assumption of a word *narmakṛt* with the same meaning as *narmakṛti* is unacceptable.

The same variant reading also occurs in 27.8

*vidūśakocchekakṛtam bhavec chilpakṛtam ca yat
atihāsyaena tad grāhyaṁ prekṣakair nityam eva hi*

Ghosh's translation "Laughter created by the bragging of the Jester and by some artifice (*śilpa*) should be received by the spectators with an Excessive Laughter (*atihāsya*)" is based upon his conjecture *utseka* "haughtiness, pride". Although the v.l. *uccheda* (27.8 KM^{1,2}, 27.8 B¹, which reads *tu* for *hi*, 27.20 K [?]), seems to occur in some MSS., it cannot be correct, since *uccheda* means "cutting off". Abhinavagupta reads *cheda*, which according to him means "irony, wit, repartee" (*vidūśakacchedakṛtam iti cchedo 'tra vacanabhaṅgī*, B. III¹, p. 310 line 5). This interpretation is not, as far as I can see, supported by any other evidence. If it is correct, it would be possible to conjecture for 35.25 KM. *chedavibhūṣitavadano vidūśako nāma vijñeyah* the emendation *chedavidūṣitavacano* "who criticizes the other's words by his witty interruptions" (see n. 391). This would come near to Ghosh's reading (conjecture?) *cheko vidūṣitavacano vidūśako* etc. (35.93) but the first word is probably not correct, since *cheda* vs. *śilpa* seems a contrast like *veśa-vākya*, *vaco-veśa* (see n. 388).

As we have seen above (p. 202), there must have been a wide gap between theory and practice. In the classical dramas there are no indications to show that the stage-managers cared much for these rules of the Handbook³⁹². In practice the prescriptions about the *aṅgakṛtam hāsyaṁ*, in so far as they referred to deformity, seem to have remained a dead letter, and the actor apparently confined himself to choosing a costume and make-up that were appropriate to his part. Along with the traditional theory also this practice has found expression in our text: the *locus classicus* for the outward appearance of the *vidūśaka* in ch. XIII, the beginning of which has been quoted above, then goes on to describe the *nepathyajam hāsyaṁ* in the following words: "One who is dressed in a tattered cloth or in a skin, or smeared with soot, ashes or red chalk, such a man, O brahmins, will cause laughter owing to his costume and make-up"³⁹³. The text states expressly that it is left to the actor, after carefully considering the character (*prakṛti*) he has to represent, to adapt his *bhāva* ("state", in Ghosh's translation) to it. Nowhere else is the gap between tradition and reality so manifest as here. The author begins with two different definitions of the comic effect achieved by the "limbs". The first is obviously an old mnemotechnical verse, which is quoted with some variation in several places of the Handbook but has, in fact, hardly any bearing upon the gait. It is purely theoretical and impracticable and, therefore, complemented by a second definition, which can, indeed, be

³⁹² Cf., e.g., Bhat, *The Vidūśaka*, p. 50: "The Sanskrit dramatists tacitly assume the peculiar appearance of the Vidūśaka and do not bother to mention it in their texts. And when they do so, they refer not always to the attributes given by the theorists, but to the general appearance of the Vidūśaka only".

³⁹³ 13.141 (12.141 B., 140 K., Grosset) *cīracarmamaṣībhasmagairikādyaḥ tu maṇḍitah, yas tādṛśo bhaved viprā hāsyo nepathyajas tu saḥ*. Bhat, p. 50, points to this passage.

realized by gait, but only incidentally. In reality the *vidūṣaka* must have achieved the comic effect that was expected from him mainly by means of his talk (which was part of the *vākya*, the literary text) and his make-up.

A further argument for the purely theoretical nature of the traditional prescriptions is that none of the later theorists mention them except Śāradātanaya (c. 1175–1250 A.D.)³⁹⁴,

In view of some modern studies in which the appearance of the *vidūṣaka* has been connected with deformity³⁹⁵ it may be noted that the Nāṭyaśāstra never classes him with deformed people. It distinguishes the gait of cripples and dwarfs (13.131–136) from that of the *vidūṣaka* (13.137–140) and in the description of the accompaniment of the orchestra (*vādyavidhāna*)³⁹⁶ it makes a distinction between the way in which the walking movements of the lames, the cripples, dwarfs, hunch-backs, etc. are accompanied³⁹⁷, or the walking of yatis, munis, Pāśupatas and Buddhists³⁹⁸, and the accompaniment of the walking of “the *vidūṣakas*, the *nirmuṇḍas*, servants and eunuchs”³⁹⁹, accordingly a group of court-servants. As far as his corporeal characteristics are concerned, the *vidūṣaka* has, indeed, more in common with the servants⁴⁰⁰ than with the cripples.

There is, however, another figure with whom the *vidūṣaka* has particularly striking features in common and who shows that the curious description of the *vidūṣaka*, inexplicable in a handbook for dramatic performances, is also rooted in an old Vedic tradition. It is the Vedic *jumbakā*⁴⁰¹, on whose head, at the end of the horse sacrifice and in conclusion of the purificatory bath, an offering is made. The similarities between the

³⁹⁴ Cf. Bhāvaprakāśana (GOS. No 45, p. 289), quoted in n. 387.

³⁹⁵ E.g., Gonda, Acta Or. 19 (1943), pp. 410–416.

³⁹⁶ 33.232 + C. (p. 176 line 14). Very corrupt in KM², p. 642 line 3. [Cf. 34, p. 486, 23B].

³⁹⁷ *khañjavikalavāmanakubjādīnām pravṛttagamaṇeṣu*.

³⁹⁸ *yatimuniṣpāśupataśākyādīnām liṅginām ca*.

³⁹⁹ *vidūṣakanirmuṇḍopasthāyakaavarśadharādīnām*. For *nirmuṇḍa* cf. 34.77 *aupasthāyika-nirmuṇḍān strīnām preṣaṇakarmaṇi, rakṣaṇe kumārīnām ca bālikānām ca yojayet* (the second line is omitted in 24.52 KM.) “And the Aupasthāyika-nirmuṇḍas are to be employed in escorting women, and in guarding maidens and girls” (Ghosh). They live in the harem, just as the *snātakas*, *kañcukīyas* and *varśadharas* (34.72) “have no sexual knowledge” and are hermaphrodites: 34.80–81 *napuṃsakā ye puruṣāḥ strībhāvena varjītāḥ, nirmuṇḍā nāmato jñeyāḥ kāmavijñānavarjītāḥ*. The definition “one who is completely impotent and idle” (K. H. Trivedi, The Nāṭyadarpaṇa of Ramacandra and Guṇacandra, Ahmedabad 1966, p. 188) seems only approximately correct.

⁴⁰⁰ See above n. 387 and cf. 35.16 *mantharam vāmanam kubjam vikṛtam vikṛtānam, viṣṭabhdhanetram kāṇākṣam sthūlam cipiṭanāsikam* (17) *durveṣam duḥsvabhāvam ca vikṛtākāram eva ca, dāsabhūmau prayuñjīta budho dāsān[k]asamñyutam*. The reading *dāsānka* - C. ex conjectura: KM. has *dāsāṅga*- and further *viṣṭabhdhanetram, durjanam* (for *durveṣam*), whereas K (according to C and KM.) reads *viṣṭanetrakāryānām sthūlam vihanunāsikam, durveṣi* etc. It is not surprising that Huizinga (n. 344), p. 62, who had only the corrupt first edition of the Kāvya-mālā Series at his disposal, thought that these lines referred to the *vidūṣaka* and that one or more lines had been lost.

⁴⁰¹ A variant form *Jumbuka, Cumbuka* is only found in Hiraṇyakeśin.

descriptions of the *vidūṣaka* and the *jumbaká* are the more interesting because the latter impersonates Varuṇa⁴⁰².

In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa the relevant episode of the purificatory bath (*avabhṛthá*) is described in the following words: ⁴⁰³ "With 'to Jumbaka hail!' he offers, at the purificatory bath, the last oblation; for Jumbaka is Varuṇa: by a sacrifice he thus manifestly redeems himself from Varuṇa. He offers it on the head of a white-spotted⁴⁰⁴, bald-headed (man) with protruding teeth⁴⁰⁵ and reddish brown eyes⁴⁰⁶; for that is Varuṇa's form: by (that) form (of his) he thus redeems himself from Varuṇa" (translation by Eggeling).

Kātyāyana in his Śrautasūtra adds that the *jumbaká* is standing in the water, and Baudhāyana, that he must dive naked into the water. Most detailed is Śāṅkhāyana's description, according to which the *jumbaká* is taken to a river, where people make him descend into the water and make an offering on his head at the moment the water has reached his mouth. Some authorities add that he must be a brahmin of the gotra of the Ātreyas (Baudhāyana, Hiraṇyakeśin, Śāṅkhāyana), who according to Śāṅkhāyana must have been bought for a thousand (pieces of gold)⁴⁰⁷.

⁴⁰² See for the *Jumbaka* especially K. F. Johansson, Über die altindische Göttin Dhiṣāṇā und Verwandtes, Beiträge zum Fruchtbarheitskultus in Indien (Skrifter utgifna af K. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala 20: 1), Uppsala 1917, p. 126f., Lüders, Acta Orientalia 16 (1938), pp. 142-145. Cf. also Geldner, Vedische Studien 2, p. 292 n. 2, Eggeling, SBE. 44, pp. XXII, XXXIXf., Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 27 n. 3.

⁴⁰³ ŚB. XIII.3.6.5 *jumbakāya svāhé 'ty avabhṛthá uttamām āhutiṁ juhoti, Vāruṇo vai jumbakāḥ. sāksād evā Vāruṇam āva yajate. śuklāsya khalatē viklidhāsya piṅgākśāsya mūrdhāni juhoty, etād vai Vāruṇasya rūpām. rūpēṇai 'vā Vāruṇam āva yajate.*

⁴⁰⁴ *śuklā* "hellfarbig" (Lüders, Acta Or. 16, p. 134). The word seems to refer to a fair complexion, cf. TB. III.4.1.17 (Puruṣamedha) *sūryāya haryakṣām . . . ahnē śuklām piṅgalām* (comm. *śuklavaruṇadeham*) as opposed to *rātriyaī kṛṣṇām piṅgākṣām*, Kāty. ŚS. XX.8.17 *śuklo 'tigaurah*, KB. 25.10-25.9.15 *śukra etasyā 'hnaḥ piṅgākṣo hotī syād iti haika āhuh* "The Hotṛ for this day should be white, with red eyes" (Keith).

⁴⁰⁵ *viklidha* is explained as *dantura* by Harisvāmin in his commentary on ŚB., in the commentary on Kātyāyana and by Mahidhara in his commentary on VS. XXV.9. See Lüders, op. c., pp. 142-145.

⁴⁰⁶ *piṅgākṣa* "with yellow eyes", Lüders, op. c., pp. 132-134, contrasting with *piṅgalā* (see n. 317).

⁴⁰⁷ The relevant passages are Kāty. ŚS. XX.8.17 *avabhṛtheṣṭyante 'psu magnasya piṅgalakhalativiklidhasuklasya mūrdhani juhoti jumbakāya svāheti*, on which Mahidhara has the following comment (ad VS. XXV.9): *avabhṛthayāgānte, evam-vidhasya puṁso mūrdhani jumbakāye 'ti mantreṇā 'jyam sakṛd gṛhitam juhuyāt, kūrśasya puṁsah? jale magnasya piṅgalākśasya khalateḥ (khalvāṣasya) viklidhasya (danturasya) śuklasyā ('tigaurasye) 'ti sūtrārthaḥ. varuṇadevatyā dvipadā, yajur gāyatri, Udanyaputramuṇḍibhadṛṣṭā*, whereas Uvaṭa gives some interesting details: *avabhṛthe, apsu magnasya piṅgalakhalativiklidhasuklasya mūrdhani juhoti "jumbakāya svāhā" iti. vāruṇī dvipadā Śundibha-udanyadṛṣṭā. "Varuṇo vai jumbakāḥ" iti śrutih, eṣā cāntar jale japtā pāpanāśini. tad uktam Hārītena: "jumbakā nāma gāyatri vede vājananyake, antar jale sakṛj japtā brahmahatyām vyapohati" iti*, (which is based on TB. III.9.15.3 *etām ha vai Muṇḍibhā Audanyavāḥ/bhrūṇahatyāyāi prāyaścittim vidām cakāra/yō hā 'syā 'pi prajāyām brāhmaṇām hānti/sārvasmai tasmai bheṣajām*

The commentator on the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa states that this sacrifice makes Varuṇa *pāparūpa* disappear⁴⁰⁸. Somewhat apart from the stereotyped descriptions stands TĀ. I.2.3, where he is described in the words:

*paṭāro viklīdhaḥ piṅgāḥ | etād varuṇālakṣaṇam |
yātrāitād upadṛśyate | sahasraṁ tātra nīyate*⁴⁰⁹.

In view of the many details that have since become known it can no longer be reasonably doubted that Albrecht Weber was right in explaining this ritual as a last trace of human sacrifice⁴¹⁰. By drowning a brahmin as the impersonation of the god the latter was induced to return to his

karoti, iti), TB. III.9.15.3 *Vāruṇo vai jumbakāḥ. antatā evā Vāruṇam āvayajate, iti. khalatēr viklīdhāsya suklāsya piṅgākṣāsya mūrdhāñ juhoti. etād vai Vāruṇasya rūpām, rūpēnaiivā Vāruṇam āvayajate*, which the commentator explains as follows: *etat khalatyādiyuktam śarīraṁ Varuṇasya vārakasya pāpasya rūpam, atas taducitenaiiva rūpeṇa Varuṇaṁ pāparūpam avayajate, vināśayati*, BaudhŚS. XV.37 *athaiṣa Ātreyo viḥṛtaḥ śuklo viklīdhas tilakavān piṅgākṣaḥ khalatir vikaṭaḥ kunakḥi kubjaḥ śipiviṣṭo nagna upamajjati. tasya mūrdhni juhoti "jumbakāya svāhe"* 'ty, atrā 'smā etac chataṁ vipathaṁ dadāty, athainam iṣujātāt pradhamanti (? reading uncertain) "mā me rāṣṭre vātsīr" iti, ŚāṅkhŚS. XVI.18.18 *athā 'treyaṁ sahasreṇā 'vakriya yaḥ śuklaḥ piṅgākṣo valinas ("shrivelled, wrinkled") tilakāvalo viklīdhaḥ khaṇḍo baṇḍaḥ khalatis, tam ādāya nadīm yanti. athai 'nam udake 'bhīpraḡāhya yadā 'syo 'dakaṁ mukham āsyandētā 'thā 'smā adhvaryur mūrdhany āsvatedanīm juhoti "bhrūṇahatyāyai svāhe"* 'ti, ĀpŚS. XX.22.6 (based upon TB. and ŚāṅkhŚS.) *avabhṛthena pracaryā 'treyaṁ śipiviṣṭam khalatim viklīdham śuklam piṅgākṣam tilakāvalam avabhṛtham abhyavanīya tasya mūrdhañ juhoti "mṛtyave svāhā, bhrūṇahatyāyai svāhā, jumbakāya svāhe"* 'ti *tisraḥ, HirŚS. XIV.4 Ātreyaṁ khalatim viklīdham śuklam piṅgākṣam śipiviṣṭam tilakāvalam avabhṛtham avanīya . . . tasya mūrdhañ juhoti, Vādhūlasūtra (Acta Or. 4, p. 203) tasmā anoyuktam ca śataṁ ca dattvā 'ha : kṣattar, etad etasmā upakuru, athai 'nam nīrvaha, mā me vijite vātsīr iti.*

⁴⁰⁸ Caland's conclusion in his note on Āp. XX.22.6 ("Die meisten [viz. Epitheta] beziehen sich offenbar auf das lichte Wesen des Varuṇa") was rightly rejected by Lüders, op. c. p. 143 n. 4.

⁴⁰⁹ Quoted with the accentuation of the edition of the Ānandāśrama Series 36 pt I³ (1967), p. 9 (except *yātrāitād*). The explanation which the commentary suggests for *paṭāra* is plainly mere guess-work and devoid of sense. Lüders, p. 143 n. 2, rightly pointed to *vaṭara*, which the Kāśikā adds to the gaṇa *kaḍārādi* and for which Lüders proposes to read *vaṭhara*. It may be doubted, however, whether in such a native word for a defect a text emendation is required. The meaning may have been the same as of *baṇḍa* "maimed, defective, crippled" in Śāṅkhāyana. See also Turner, Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages 9124 and 11236.

⁴¹⁰ See A. Weber, ZDMG. 18, p. 268 (=Indische Streifen I, p. 63), Hillebrandt, Altindien, p. 93f. (quoted by K. F. Johansson, Über die altindische Göttin Dhiśāṇā (see n. 402), p. 131f.), Vedische Mythologie II², p. 27 n. 3, K. F. Johansson, op. c., pp. 125–132, A. K. Coomaraswamy, Yakṣas II (1931), p. 28, and further S. Lévi, Doctrine du sacrifice, p. 132f., Keith ad TS. VI.1.11.6 *puruṣaṇiṣkrāyaṇa iva hi* (p. 500 n. 3), J. C. Heesterman, "The case of the severed head", WZKSO. 11 (1967), pp. 22–43, D. Schlingloff, IJ. 11 (1968), p. 175 with references for the *puruṣamedha*. On Keith's interpretation of the Jumbaka as "a mystical view of the nature of Varuṇa" (Religion and Philosophy of the Veda, p. 96, on the basis of ŚB. XIII.3.6.5) see Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 28 n. 3. Keith, p. 304, only accepted the scapegoat character of the Jumbaka. For the scapegoat in general see also Hertha Krick, WZKS. 16 (1972), p. 31 n. 27.

own element, the water. In this connection the words *yadā 'syo 'dakam mukham āsyandeta* "when the water reaches his mouth" are particularly significant. Equally eloquent is the prescription, handed down by Baudhāyana and Śāṅkhāyana, that at the end of the ritual the Ātreya must be banished. After the ritual drowning of the victim (who had been bought for this purpose) had become only a symbolical act, other means were needed to get rid of the scapegoat, who was burdened with evil (*Varuṇa pāparūpa!*).

An exact comparison of the terms which occur in the various descriptions of the *vidūṣaka* with those of the *jumbaká* shows that four features of the former have direct correspondences with the latter:

<i>dantura</i> "with protruding teeth" NŚ.	: <i>viklīdhá</i> ŚB. TB. TĀ. Hir. Āp. Śāṅkh. Baudh.
<i>khalati</i> "bald-headed" NŚ.	: <i>khalati</i> ŚB. TB. Hir. Āp. Śāṅkh. Baudh.
<i>kubja</i> "hunch-backed" NŚ.	: <i>kubja</i> Baudh.
<i>piṅgalākṣa</i> "red-eyed" NŚ.	: <i>piṅgākṣá</i> ŚB. TB. Hir. Āp. Śāṅkh. Baudh. <i>piṅgala</i> Kāty., <i>piṅgá</i> TĀ.

Four other features can be paralleled with similar characteristics, although the correspondence is at best partial:

<i>vikṛtānana</i> "with a distorted face" NŚ.	: <i>vikṛta</i> Baudh.
<i>khañja</i> "limping" NŚ.	: <i>khaṇḍa</i> "crippled, defective" Śāṅkh.
<i>vāmana</i> "dwarfish" NŚ.	: <i>baṇḍa</i> "maimed, defective, crippled" Śāṅkh., cf. <i>patāra</i> TĀ.
<i>chedavibhūṣitavadana</i> (? p. 216) NŚ.	: <i>tilakāvala</i> Śāṅkh. Hir. Āp., <i>tilakavant</i> "furnished with marks" Baudh.

The precise meaning of *khaṇḍa* and *baṇḍa/vaṇḍa* is, it is true, doubtful: the first means "mutilated" but *bhagnadanta* according to the commentary ad ĀpŚS. VII.12.1, the latter also "mutilated" (*yo na vivardhate*) but *bhinnapuccha* "tailless" according to the Nighaṇṭu and some commentators, "impotent" (*nirvīrya*) according to Sāyana ad AthS. VII.67(65).3. Both characteristics were, in any case, inauspicious and therefore not allowed in the case of sacrificial animals (such as the he-goat, ĀpŚS. VII.12.1, cf. MS. IV.3.8: 47,15) or of the Soma-cow. On the other hand, the latter had to be *piṅgākṣá* "red-eyed", because this was the appearance (*rūpá*) of Soma (TS. VI.1.6.7).

Apart from two old words whose meaning is unknown (*śipiviṣṭa* Baudh. Hir. Āp. and *patāra* TĀ), there are only two adjectives in the description of the *jumbaká* to which no parallel can be found in the Nāṭyaśāstra, viz. *śukla* "bright-coloured" (in all texts) and *kunakhin* "having diseased nails" Baudh.⁴¹¹

⁴¹¹ Since for a comparison with the Vedic texts only the oldest description of the *vidūṣaka* is relevant, later sources (n. 387) have been ignored. Cf. Śāradātanaya (c. 1175–1250), Bhāvaprakāśana (GOS. No. 45, p. 289, lines 5–7) *vedavin narmavedi*

It is curious that even Bhat, who explained the *vidūṣaka* as originating in the Vedic Asura, has not noticed these similarities and dismissed the outward appearance of the *vidūṣaka* as a "stage trick"⁴¹². It is the more remarkable that this misconception did not blind him to one of the fundamental questions, which had almost universally been ignored in previous studies, viz., Why is it that only for the *vidūṣaka* such a detailed and rigid prescription is given?

It is true that the *vidūṣaka* shares some features with the servants (*dāsa*) but this only brings out more clearly the basic problem. It is natural that the low social order of the *dāsa* was represented on the stage by visual means, by making him a dwarf (*vāmana*), a hunch-back (*kubja*) or one with a distorted face (*vikṛtānana*). This, however, makes it the less explicable why a brahmin should be characterized by the same deformities. That Bhat's reference to a comic function cannot be correct, is apparent from the stereotyped and rigid character of Bharata's prescription and its impracticability. They lead to the conclusion that this is rather the last echo of an old tradition.

At this point the line of argument of this book has reached its completion. The comparison with the Vedic *jumbaká* has provided the final proof, it is hoped, that both the character and the traditional (but theoretical) outward appearance of the *vidūṣaka* date back to the Vedic ritual. It shows that there is, indeed, some reason to question the *hāsya*-character which even the Nāṭyaśāstra in some places ascribes to his strange appearance—at least, when its origin is considered. It now appears that it was still prescribed, in spite of its purely theoretical character, because it was dictated by a religious tradition. In its origin the deformity of the *vidūṣaka* had no connection whatsoever with dramatic performances but was simply the deformity of the Vedic scapegoat.

yo netuḥ sa syād vidūṣakaḥ, khalatiḥ piṅgalākṣaś ca hāsyaṇūkavibhūṣitaḥ, piṅgakeśo hariśmaśrur nartakaś ca vidūṣakaḥ, where "bald-headed" is contradicted by "tawny-haired" (see Bhat, p. 48), which in the Nāṭyaśāstra is said to be a characteristic of Daityas and Rākṣasas. Cf. 13.52f. *raktākṣaḥ piṅgakeśaś ca asito vikṛtasvaraḥ, rūkṣo nirbhartsanaparo raudraḥ so 'tha svabhāvajaḥ (so 'yam 12.49 KM)*. For further references see R. Schmidt, Beiträge zur indischen Erotik, p. 145.

⁴¹² Bhat, The Vidūṣaka, p. 44f.: "The physical deformity of the Vidūṣaka, on the contrary, is artificial; it is a stage trick to provoke laughter; or better perhaps, it can be traced to the hideousness of the Asura type, or the unusual tuft of hair of Nārada. Many of these traits were convenient and handy for evoking fun. A repeated use of them must have settled the outline of this character and turned him into a conventional figure of the stage". P. 53: "The appearance of the Vidūṣaka could have been a legacy from the earliest Asura type, as previously suggested. But it is possible that Bharata provided several attributes, to which a little addition was made afterwards, mainly with the intention of guiding the actor in preparing his make-up. It cannot be imagined that each and every detail in the prescription was intended to be strictly followed. The underlying idea in the appearance of the Vidūṣaka seems to be of a physical deformity only, which Bharata suggested by means of several attributes. It must have been naturally left to the actor (or the dramatist) to emphasise one or more of these attributes in the actual dramatic performance. After all, some incongruity in physical appearance would certainly be a source of laughter on the stage".

Needless to say, the Vedic *jumbaká* was not ridiculed for his corporeal defects, which were considered a *varuṇalakṣaṇam* (TĀ), a mark of Varuṇa. His deformity was due to his being a human image of Varuṇa and was the outward manifestation of the evil with which he was burdened. This is apparent from such a verse as AS. VII.65 (67).3

*śyāvādātā kunakhīnā baṇḍēna yāt saḥ śimā
āpāmārga tvāyā vayāṁ sārvaṁ tād āpa mṛjmahe*

“If we have been together with one dark-toothed, ill-nailed, mutilated, by thee, O off-wiper, we wipe off all that” (Whitney),

where the ominous character of the defects is manifest. Cf. also, e.g., TS. II.5.1.7, where *śyāvādant* and *kunakhīn* occur side by side with *khalati*, *kāṇā* “one-eyed” and other defects.

There is, however, more to it than the problem of a traditional appearance. The *jumbaká* was a scapegoat but he was also a brahmin, who moreover impersonated Varuṇa. On p. 208 it has already been pointed out that Varuṇa, by taking upon himself that which is “badly sacrificed” (*dūriṣṭa*) acts as a divine scapegoat. Here we find finally an answer to a question which has been ignored in most studies on the *vidūṣaka*, viz. Why had the purported buffoon by definition to be a brahmin? The only exception is NŚ. 34.21, which also allows *avarajāḥ*. Heesterman has in various papers (e.g. WZKSO.8 (1964), p. 3) stressed the character of the brahmin in general as the purificator, who takes impurity upon himself. The equation *vidūṣaka* = brahmin = *jumbaká* = Varuṇa seems finally to disclose the original full function of the *vidūṣaka* in the dramatic performance. It may be suggested that this not only consisted in cooperating-in-contest with the *nāyaka*, but also in purifying the king, as the sponsor of the performance, by taking upon himself the latter’s impurity. The statement of the Nāṭyaśāstra that the *pūrvaraṅga* was equal to a sacrifice may originally also have been true of the play itself. In the introduction it has been pointed out that the sponsor of a performance had the status of a *yajamāna* and must usually have been the king. Only a brahmin was able to redeem the king from evil by accepting the role of scapegoat. It was, it seems, because of his function of scapegoat, that the *vidūṣaka* had to be a brahmin. This lends some support to the explanation suggested on p. 176, that the Oṁkāra was named instead of Varuṇa as the protector of the *vidūṣaka* because the latter was a brahmin. In classical iconography no trace has been preserved of Varuṇa’s deformity as the *jumbaká*. Varuṇa is “of white colour . . . draped in yellow garments, possesses a pacific look . . . karaṇḍamakūṭa, yajñopavīta” (Rao, l.c.), he has two or four arms and is seated on a *haṁsa*, *makara* or *jhaṣa*⁴¹³.

⁴¹³ The white colour (*sveta*) is also prescribed in the rules for the make-up of the Nāṭyaśāstra (23.91). For the classical iconography see Gopinath Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography (Madras 1914–1916), II (1916), pp. 529–531 and *260* (texts); A. K. Coomaraswamy, Yakṣas (Washington D.C., 1928–1931), II, pp. 36–37, J. J. Meyer, Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation III (1937), p. 228,

19. VIDŪṢAKA AND VIṬA

In 1897 J. Huizinga concluded a critical discussion of the question as to whether the *vidūṣaka* was a real character in social life with the words: "Outside the drama, accordingly, the figure of the *vidūṣaka* proper does not seem to have developed"⁴¹⁴. Since that time there has been a long but fruitless discussion on whether the *vidūṣaka* was a court jester or a character of town life—a question that seems at best of minor importance. Besides, the conclusions at which some authors arrived were far from clear. Thus Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur III* (1972), p. 172, wrote about the *viṭa*: "Er gehört jedenfalls dem städtischen Leben an und wird wohl auch aus volkstümlichen Spielen, in denen das Treiben der Hetären und ihrer Gefolgschaft dargestellt wurde, herübergenommen sein". One cannot but conclude that the *viṭa*, whatever his "origin" (which is Winternitz's main concern) was a stage character and nothing else.

As for the *vidūṣaka*, it will be sufficient to quote here two authors to show that a reappraisal of the problem is not out of place. Dasgupta writes: "It is thus not true that the *vidūṣakas* are Fools who attended the courts of kings only. They are mere comedians, who made their livelihood by their witticisms and also by friendly advice . . . were real characters in social life in the 2nd century B.C. and were not merely

Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann, *Les enseignements iconographiques de l'Agni-Purāṇa* (Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'études, Tome 67, Paris 1963) pp. 131f. As for the *hamsa* (goose) cf. Varāhamihira's *Brhatsamhitā* 58 (57).57 *hamsārūḍhas ca pāśabhṛd Varuṇaḥ*, Agnipur. 64.3 *hamsaprastham* (but *makare, makarārūḍha*: 51.15, 56.23, 96.29). According to M.-Th. de Mallmann, p. 131 the *hamsa* belongs to Varuṇa as sovereign of the Waters, whereas the *makara* characterizes him in his function of *lokapāla*. Cf. p. 132: "A cette tradition primitive [viz. of the *Brhatsamhitā*] se rattache la notion du roi des Eaux telle que l'atteste le *Viṣṇudh.*, notion encore préservée par l'*AgP.*, mais *uniquement lorsqu'il s'agit des rites de consécration des puits, mares et réservoirs*. Partout ailleurs, dans les textes comme sur les images l'anser est supplanté par le *makara*, tandis que Varuṇa se réduit progressivement à n'être plus que le Gardien de l'Occident". Cf. also p. 230. For the *makara* in general see A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas II*, p. 13, who stresses his aquatic character (p. 34, etc., similarly M.-Th. de Mallmann, p. 233). On the other hand, attention has been drawn (with reference to F. D. K. Bosch, *De Gouden Kiem*, p. 170=The Golden Germ, p. 146) to the fact that the *makara* represents the nether world, his open mouth symbolizing the gate which is opened at sunrise and sunset. See Kuiper, *Bijdragen Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 107 (1951), p. 71 n. 5. This explains why it was forbidden to look at the rising and setting sun, cf. *VaikhDS.* III.1.14 *udaye 'stamaye ca sūryam ne 'kṣeta*, *Manu* 4.37 *ne 'kṣeto 'dyantam ādityam nā 'stamīyantam*. At those moments, indeed, the gate of the nether world was opened. A third *vāhana* of Varuṇa is the *jhaṣa*, cf. *Matsyapurāṇa* 261.18 *jhaṣāsanagatam*, which is the correct reading and need not be emended (see de Mallmann, p. 131 n. 6).

⁴¹⁴ See J. Huizinga, *De vidūṣaka in het indisch tooneel* (Groningen, 1897), p. 57: "Buiten het drama schijnt zich dus de eigenlijke *vidūṣaka*-figuur niet ontwikkeld te hebben" and p. 63 "Voor een type uit de samenleving schijnt het woord *vidūṣaka* niet te zijn gebruikt. Een plaats uit het *Daśakumāracarita* kan een oogenblik doen denken, dat het woord een omgangstype aanduidt, maar zoewel de commentaren als de tekst zelf bewijzen, dat er van een acteur wordt gesproken". Gonda (n. 344), p. 408 contested this, but see below, p. 229.

dramatic invention". Bhat seems to hold a somewhat different view, as may be inferred from the following words: "It was customary for kings to maintain a court-jester. It is also possible to say that professional fools were fashionable in ancient India"⁴¹⁵. Elsewhere (p. 134f.) he discusses the Vidūṣaka's "Function of a Court-Jester".

Bhat's bold statement naturally raises the question as to how it is possible to say anything definite about professional fools in ancient India and on what evidence the assumption of court-jesters is based. As far as I can see, the answer must be that what we actually know at this moment about Old Indian court-jesters is next to nothing. See n. 357. The reading *rājyavidūṣaka* at Sāgaranandin, NLRK 2014 is certainly corrupt and does not mean "court-jester" (Translation, p. 66). It is also clear that if the drama imitated contemporary court life, it would be even more difficult to explain why, then, a brahmin had to act as a jester. On the other hand, it will have been noticed that the picture of the "real characters in social life" that Dasgupta confidently presents is (and has to be) entirely based on the conventional part of the stage character of the drama. As the literature on the subject shows, it is, indeed, difficult to avoid circular argumentations when writing on this aspect of life in Ancient India, for which evidence is entirely lacking.

Although the distinction does not seem to be essential, it may be convenient for a critical discussion to follow those scholars who think the main problem is whether the *vidūṣaka* was a court-jester or a character in social life.

Gonda, l.c., points in a very general way to the existence of court-jesters in countries other than India. For the rest (pp. 410-415) he classifies the *vidūṣaka* on account of his physical deformity with the dwarfs, hunch-backs and cripples, who lived at royal courts, in India as well as elsewhere. See, however, above, p. 217. Bhat does not give the slightest argument for his statement quoted above. A. B. Keith⁴¹⁶ had already pointed out that in the epics with their profuse descriptions of court-life there is not a single reference to professional jesters. The same is true of Kauṭalya's Arthaśāstra (first century A.D.?)⁴¹⁷, where the word *vidūṣaka* does not occur either.

The situation is different in the Daśakumāracarita by Daṇḍin (c. 550 A.D.?) see n. 432) where, apart from a single occurrence of the word *vidūṣaka*, which will be discussed below, the following passage must be mentioned. It is the description of a man who had access to the harem and who was sitting there near the king: "a skilful mind-reader, a royal favourite, an adept in song, dance, instrumental music and related arts, a connoisseur

⁴¹⁵ See Dasgupta in: S. N. Dasgupta-S. K. De, A History of Sanskrit Literature, Classical Period, Vol. I (Calcutta 1962), p. 654f., and G. K. Bhat, The Vidūṣaka, p. 39f. Cf. also Bhat, p. 25: "The professional fool and the court-jester were known in ancient India; the tradition continues".

⁴¹⁶ The Sanskrit Drama, p. 28.

⁴¹⁷ See Hartmut Scharfe, Untersuchungen zur Staatsrechtslehre des Kauṭalya (Wiesbaden 1968), p. 334. Cf. also IJ. 13, p. 286.

of unconventional women, shrewd, talkative, clever in periphrastical and enigmatical speeches (*bhaṅgi*), critical, a *buffoon* (*parihāsaiṭṭr*), a scandal-monger, an adept in calumny, ready to take bribes even from ministers of state, an instructor in all naughtiness, a pilot in the science of love (*kāmatantra*) and the king's servant from the time the former was a prince"⁴¹⁸. Only in one point does this person resemble the *vidūṣaka*: while he is said to be a "pilot in the *kāmatantra*", the *vidūṣaka* is once called a *kāmatantrasaciva* "counsellor in matters of the *kāmatantra*, or in amorous adventures" (*Mālavikāgnimitra* IV.17.10). The passage has never to my knowledge been quoted as proof for the existence of a professional court-jester, and rightly so. Ryder's translation of *parihāsaiṭṭr* as "buffoon", which has been adopted in the preceding rendering, is hardly correct. The literal meaning to be expected would rather be "who elicits mockery, who induces others to mock or ridicule (persons)". Therefore, Agashe's note in the commentary to his edition (p. 342) "causing merriment or jovial" is less correct than "Spötter" in J. J. Meyer's translation. In other words: the *parihāsaiṭṭr* is not identical with the *vaiḥāsika* (p. 203). But even if he were a jester, professional or not, this passage shows eloquently what differentiates the *vidūṣaka* from any jester, viz. the latter's intelligence and quick wit. The *vidūṣaka* is never characterized as *paṭu* "shrewd" (see n. 360). It has generally been overlooked that he lacks the characteristic traits of the court-jester.

No more than in the works quoted can any reference to the *vidūṣaka* as a court-jester be found in the very detailed descriptions of court life in Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* and *Harṣacarita* (shortly after 600 A.D.). On the other hand, a comparison of the *Kādambarī* with the earlier *Arthaśāstra* shows that enumerations of persons living inside and outside the royal court are so much similar that one is bound to conclude that at an early date lists of this kind must have been conventional in literary use. Cf. on the one hand *Kādambarī* (ed. Peterson), p. 70,11 *-kubja-vāmanakirātāḥ*, p. 74,4 *pranṛtta-kala-mūka-kubja-kirāta-vāmana-badhira-jaḍa-jāna-* p. 89,6 *aneka-kubja-kirāta-varṣadhara-badhira-vāmanaka-mūka*, p. 89,10, *kubja-vāmana-kirāta*, p. 90,23 *purāṇapurūṣa-vāmana-*, and, on the other hand,

Kauṭalya 1.12.9 *kubja-vāmana-kirāta-mūka-badhira-jaḍā-ndha-cchadmano naṭa-nartaka-gāyana-vādaka-vāgjjivana-kuśilavāḥ*, 2.27.25 *etena naṭa-nartaka-gāyaka-vādaka-vāgjjivana-kuśilava-plavaka-śaubhika-cāraṇānām*, 7.17.34 *naṭa-nartaka-gāyaka-vādaka-vāgjjivana-kuśilava-plavaka-śau(b)hika-*.

Cf. further also Kauṭalya 1.12.9 *sūdā-'rāḷika-snāpaka-saṁvāhakā-'staraka-kalpaka-prasādhako-'dakaparicārakāḥ*, 1.21.13 *snāpaka-saṁvāhakā-*

⁴¹⁸ See Daśakumāracarita p. 130,21 ed. Agashe (p. 190, 3 ed. M. R. Kale, 1966). For *bahubhaṅgiviśārada* cf. p. 137,1-198,13 *bhaṅgibhāṣaṇarataḥ*. The *kumārasevaka* must have been different from the tutor (*kumārādhikṛta* NS. 34.83, 97, *kumārādhyakṣa* Kauṭalya, cf. Ghosh, Text I², Introduction pp. liii, lv, lxxi. Translation II² p. 210 n. 3). For *kāmatantra* cf. *madanatantra* Daśak. p. 53.11 and NS. 16.32; 24.150, 191, 201, 205 (not 220); 25.38, 53, 62, 65. Cf. further *Mālavikāgnimitra* IV.17 (10) and the *Caturbhāṇī*, passim (Schokker, The *Pādatāḍitaka*, pp. 53, 246, 341).

¹*staraka-rajaka-mālākāra-*, 7.17.40 *sūdā-'rālīka-snāpaka-saṁvāhakā-'stara-ka-kalpaka-prasādhako-'dakapariçārikair.*

These lists are quoted here because a work written about 970 A.D. shows in this respect a curious divergence from the Arthaśāstra. Somadeva Sūri gives in his Nītivākyaṁṛta 14.8 a long list of persons who may act as spies for the king. After some other persons, he enumerates the following: *kirāta*, *yamapañjika*, *ahitunḍika*, *śaunḍika*, *śaubhika*, *pāṭaccara*, || *viṭa*, *vidūṣaka*, *pīṭhamardaka*, || *naṭa*, *nartaka*, *gāyaka*, *vādaka*, *vāḡjivaka*, . . . , *sūda*, *ārālīka*, *saṁvāhaka* . . . , *jaḍa*, *mūka*, *badhira*, *andha* ⁴¹⁹.

It seems obvious that here Somadeva Sūri has simply copied a traditional list, such as found in Kauṭalya, of persons living inside and outside the court, irrespective of whether or not they could actually be used for the purpose of spying. Into this list, however, he has inserted the triad indicated above which does not occur in the Arthaśāstra. Nothing indicates that they were living at the court, nor that one or more of them were court-jesters. As far as I can see, nothing is known about the time when the jesters mentioned in late Indian tales made their entrance at the courts. Hertel refers to the Sanskrit "Erzählungsliteratur" ⁴²⁰ but Jinakīrti, the author of the Pāla-gopāla-kathānaka, probably lived about 1450 A.D. The famous North-Indian jester Bīrbal, said to be of Āndhra origin, is also of late date. As for the Tamil collection of anecdotes about Teṅṅālu Irāmaṅ, it is still entirely obscure how one of the great Telugu epic poets, Tenāli Rāmakṛṣṇa (alias Rāmuḍu) became a court jester in Tamil legend, the less so as court jesters seem to have been completely unknown in classical Tamil literature. See above, p. 205 n. 356.

The triad, although quoted in an unusual order by Somadeva Sūri, had been well known long before him. It is, indeed, as traditional as the other lists, which he has compiled here. Its first occurrence is, it seems, in Vātsyāyana's Kāmasūtra, which is tentatively assigned to the first centuries of our era ⁴²¹. In this work the group always occurs in the compound *pīṭhamarda-viṭa-vidūṣaka*, except in 1.4.44-46, where a definition of each of the three terms is given and the last sūtra runs as follows: *ekadeśavidyas tu krīḍanako viśvāsyaś ca vidūṣakaḥ, vaihāsiko vā* ⁴²². In all other passages, with a single exception, the three words always occur in this compound, often in combination with terms denoting garland makers, etc. Cf. I.4.21 *bhojanānantaram . . . pīṭhamarda-viṭa-vidūṣakāyattā vyāpārā*

⁴¹⁹ Quoted from Oscar Botto's translation II Nītivākyaṁṛta di Somadeva Sūri (Torino 1962), p. 95.

⁴²⁰ J. Hertel, Literarisches Zentralblatt 1917, 1198ff., "Jinakīrtis Geschichte von Pāla und Gopāla", Ber. sächs. Gesellsch. d. Wiss. LXIX, 1917, p. 121 n. (both referred to by Winternitz, Gesch. d. indischen Litteratur III, p. 172 n. 1).

⁴²¹ "Er wird wohl an den Anfang unsrer Zeitrechnung gehören", R. Schmidt, Beiträge zur indischen Erotik² (1911), p. 12; fourth century A.D. (?) according to Winternitz, op. c., III, p. 540.

⁴²² Cf. Daśarūpaka 2.9 (13) *ekavidyo viṭas cā 'nyo hāsyakṛc ca vidūṣakaḥ*.

divāśayyū ca, I.5.37 *rajaka-nāpita-mālākāra-gāndhika-saurika-bhikṣuka-gopālaka-tāmbūlika-sauvarṇika-pīṭhamarda-ṛiṭa-vidūṣakādayo mītrāṇi*, II. 10.48 *tatra pīṭhamarda-ṛiṭa-vidūṣakair nāyakaprayuktair upaśamitaroṣā tair evā 'nunītā*⁴²³, VI.1.8-9 *yair nāyakam āvarjayed anyābhyas cā 'vacchindiyāt . . . te tv āraṣapurūṣā dharmādihikaraṇasthā daivajñā . . . pīṭhamarda-ṛiṭa-vidūṣaka-mālākāra-gāndhika-*⁴²⁴ *śauṇḍika-rajaka-nāpita-bhikṣukāḥ*. The only exception occurs in VI.1.22-23, where the *vaiḥāsika* is mentioned along with the *pīṭhamarda*⁴²⁵.

Before discussing later occurrences of the triad it may be useful first to consider the evidence of the Kāmasūtra more closely. It has long been observed that Vātsyāyana in his Handbook of Erotics apparently imitates Kauṭalya⁴²⁶. Winternitz remarks: "Das Kāmasūtra spricht da z.B. von den Freunden des Liebhabers und den Liebesbotinnen nicht viel anders als das Arthaśāstra von den Freunden des Königs, den Spionen und Gesandten". (l.c.). Thus, after giving separate definitions of the *pīṭhamarda*, the *ṛiṭa* and the *vidūṣaka*, the Kāmasūtra characterizes them together in the words (I.4.34) *ete veśyānām nāgarakāṇām ca mantriṇaḥ sandhivīgrahani-yuktāḥ* "These are the ministers of the courtezans and men about town, to whom treaties and wars are entrusted"⁴²⁷. It is instructive to compare this definition with the one given in a literary treatise (Agnipurāṇa 339.39)

*pīṭhamardo ṛiṭas caiva vidūṣaka iti trayas,
śrṅgāre narmasacivā nāyakasyū 'nunūyakāḥ*

"The *pīṭhamarda*, *ṛiṭa* and *vidūṣaka*, these three are the companions of the *nāyaka* in his erotic amusements and his attendants".

On the other hand, there is a clear interrelation between the Kāmasūtra and the dramaturgic handbooks. The central figure of the Kāmasūtra is

⁴²³ Cf., e.g., SD. 3.40 *kupitavadhūmānabhañjanāḥ* and further Rasamañjari, Kāvyañuśāsana and Rasaratnahāra (Schmidt, Beiträge, p. 143f.).

⁴²⁴ Cf. also NS. 34.55 (24.36 KM) *chattraśayyāsane yuktā tathā vyajanakarmani* (56), *saṁvāhane ca gandhe ca tathā caiva prasādhane, tathā 'bharaṇasaṁyoge mālyasaṁgrahaneṣu ca* (57) *vijñeyā nāmataḥ sā tu nṛpateḥ paricārikā* = 24.53B¹ *śayyāpālī chatradhārī tathā vyajanadhārīṇi* (54) *saṁvāhikā gandhayoktrī tathā caiva prasādhikā, tathā 'bharaṇayoktrī ca mālyasaṁyojikā tathā* (55) *evaṁvīdhā bhavayur yās tā jñeyā paricārikāḥ*. Lüders, Philologica Indica, p. 416 n. 1 quotes Vidhurapaṇḍitajātaka (545), Gāthā 59 *mālākāre ca rajake ganthike athā dussike, suvaṇṇakāre maṇikāre maṇimhi passa nimittan* and gives in the Addenda the correct explanation of *ganthike* = *gāndhikāḥ*.

⁴²⁵ *bhāvajijñāsārtham paricārakamukhān saṁvāhaka-gāyana-vaiḥāsikān gamye tad-bhaktān vā prañidadhyaṭ, tadabhāve pīṭhamardādīn*, where the commentary paraphrases *vaiḥāsiko*: *vidūṣakāḥ* and *pīṭhamardādī* 'ty: *ādisabdād ṛiṭa-mālākāra-gāndhika-śauṇḍikādayaḥ sahāyāḥ*.

⁴²⁶ For stylistic reminiscences see, e.g., R. Shamasastri, Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra translated⁵ (Mysore, 1956), p. xi and further Winternitz, op. c., III, p. 537 n. 1 with references. Cf. also Friedrich Wilhelm "Nāṭyaśāstra and Nītiśāstra" in Festschr. Słuszkiewicz, pp. 271-276.

⁴²⁷ The commentary says *ete nāgarakāṇām pārśvavartitvād upanāgarakāḥ*. Gonda (n. 344), p. 409 n. 8, had already pointed to similarities between the *nāgaraka* and the *svāmin* and referred to Kāmasūtra 308-310 and Arthaśāstra 96.

the *nāgaraka* "man about town, elegant", a member of a refined leisure class, of whose daily life this work gives an idealized picture. Rather than describing, however, the *Kāmasūtra* prescribes. It lays down the rules which one has to comply with in order to become a perfect gentleman, a *vidagdhajana*⁴²⁸ as the commentary paraphrases the word *nāgaraka*. Several times, however, the commentary refers to him as the *nāyaka*, the technical term for the hero in the drama, and this term is also used in the *Kāmasūtra* itself, e.g., I.5.28ff., II.10.46, 47, etc. In other words, there is a tendency in the *Kāmasūtra* to describe the ideal "reality" in terms of stage characters. Inversely, it is a well-known fact that a small *Kāmatantra* has been inserted in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*⁴²⁹.

All this must be borne in mind when one tries to evaluate the importance of the fact that the *Kāmasūtra* mentions the *vidūṣaka* as a synonym of the *vaiḥāsika*, the friend and confidant of the *nāgaraka*, for whom he is a plaything (*kriḍanaka*)⁴³⁰. Two things must here obviously be distinguished, viz. the formalization of the enumeration of groups of occupations and, on the other hand, the institutionalization of functions attributed to certain characters who may or may not have existed in Old Indian society.

To the first category belong, e.g., *sūdārālika-*, *snāpaka-samvāhaka-* (*nāpita-Kāmas.*), *rajaka-mālākāra-gāndhika-* (Kauṭ., *Kāmas.*), *naṭa-nartaka-gāyaka-vādaka-*, *kubja-kirāta-vāmana-jaḍa-mūka-badhira-* (Kauṭ., *Kād.*). The actual existence of these figures in Indian social life cannot, of course, be questioned but it is characteristic that every author, be it of theoretical treatises such as the *Kāmasūtra* and the *Arthaśāstra*, or of literary compositions, such as the *Kādambarī* and a *Pāli Jātaka*, when referring to these figures, automatically fell back upon traditional lists. However authentic and "real" every member of the groups enumerated may have been in social life, it cannot be denied that every author here follows a fixed *literary pattern*. His description of reality, accordingly, is not based on his own direct observation but is indirect and derivational. Nothing proves more impressively the artificiality of these lists than the fact that in a description of the rejoicing in a palace at the birth of a prince a prose *kāvya* sums up almost the same groups, in more or less the same conventional order, as are found in the *Arthaśāstra* as lists of persons who can be used as spies. An instructive instance is also Somadeva Sūri's list of prospective spies, which is a mere concoction of the various existing lists of his predecessors, without much concern for the possibility of using them as such in actual life.

⁴²⁸ "ein gebildeter Mensch" (R. Schmidt). The same is no doubt meant by the term *nāgarikapuruṣa* in *Daśakumāracarita* p. 42,8 (ed. Agashe), where all the three commentaries explain *nāgarikā nipuṇāḥ*.

⁴²⁹ 24.94-319C. = 22.95-323B., 22.89-312 KM. For the use of the term *kāmatantra* see above n. 418 and cf. P. V. Kane, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*⁴, p. 43. As for *nāyaka* in the sense of "husband" (*Daśak.* 49,15 Agashe), this is clearly a "literary" word.

⁴³⁰ Bhat (n. 344) p. 135 rightly observes that the *vidūṣaka* is an "object of jest, rather than being a jester".

As for the institutionalization, it is sufficient to point to the "amusement-companions" (*narmasacivas*) of the "elegant". In normal conditions of life it is natural that a young man of this class should have had some friends who may have been living at his expense since he, as a *nāgaraka*, had by definition some wealth. Occasionally one or more of these friends may have been a bit of a comic. When, however, it is prescribed that in the company of a *nāgaraka* there must be a *vaihāsika*, whose characteristics are specified, it would seem that we have left the solid ground of reality and are moving in a fictitious world. When, further, this comic is generally called a *vidūṣaka*, while the *nāgaraka* is sometimes denoted by the term *nāyaka*, the influence of the drama and dramaturgic theory can hardly be denied. It has been argued above that in the drama the *vidūṣaka* must originally have had a definite function, which was to help and, at the same time, unintentionally to counteract the hero. Even in the most abstract theory of a man about town, however, it would be difficult to conceive of a particular function of a comic, let alone of a *vidūṣaka*. And when, finally, this *vidūṣaka* is in the *Kāmasūtra* almost exclusively mentioned as a member of the group *pīṭhamarda-ṛiṭa-vidūṣaka-*, there can be little doubt, as far as this text is concerned, about the purely theoretical character of this group. On the other hand, we have seen (p. 226) that the *Kāmasūtra* was apparently the first text in which this triad was added to the list taken over from *Kauṭalya* and probably other theoretical handbooks. The conclusion, then, must be that, since *Vātsyāyana* cannot have coined this compound himself but must have borrowed it from some dramaturgic treatise, and since it is still unknown to *Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra*, the group must have been created by the author of a handbook on dramatic art which was in current use in the first centuries of our era.

A final remark may not be out of order here. Later dramaturgists often refer to this triad as the *narmasacivas* "boon companions" or "friends in sport"⁴³¹. The same word, however, is also used in stories for the companions of a young prince, such as *Udayana*. *Gonda* has rightly remarked that the use of the same term does not imply that such a *narmasaciva* was identical with the *vidūṣaka* (op. c., p. 407).

As we have seen, the compound *pīṭhamarda-ṛiṭa-vidūṣaka-* must have been in current use from the first centuries of our era onwards. One of the oldest texts in which it occurs, besides the *Kāmasūtra*, is *Daṇḍin's Daśakumāracarita* (c. 550 A.D.?)⁴³². Among the various ways in which

⁴³¹ Thus *A. B. Keith, Sanskrit Drama*, pp. 188 and 311, as a translation of *narmasuhṛd*. *Monier-Williams* renders *narmasaciva* by "amusement-companion, promoter of the amusement of a prince". Cf. *Sāgaranandin, NLRK. 2200 antahpuracarō rāṅṅān narmāmātyaḥ prakīrtitaḥ*. A similar expression is *Pkt. kāmāntasaciva* used with reference to the *vidūṣaka* *Mālavikāgnimitra* IV.17 (10) etc. (see *Schokker, Pādatāḍitaka*, p. 246).

⁴³² *Daśakumāracarita*, p. 42.8 ed. *Agashe* (p. 67, 3 ed. *Kale*). For the date of the *Daśakumāracarita* see *Mirashi, ABORI. 26*, pp. 20-31, *Studies in Indology*, pp. 176-177 ("not long after 550 A.D."). See also *S. K. De, History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 209 (contemporaneous with, *inter alia*, the *Caturbhāṅī*, the oldest of which is dated between 455 and 510 A.D. by *G. H. Schokker, The Pādatāḍitaka*

a young courtesan is "advertised" in the town the author mentions *pīṭhamarda-viṭa-vidūṣakair bhikṣukyādibhiḥ ca nāgarikapuruṣasamavāyeṣu rūpaśīlamādhuryapraṣṭāvanā* "having her beauty, character and sweetness praised in the gatherings of men about town by *pīṭhamardas*, *viṭas*, *vidūṣakas* and female mendicants, etc." 433. It is again the same stereotyped

of Śyāmilaka, p. 25), Kuiper, Journal Madras University 28-2, pp. 121-125 (anterior to the *Mṛcchakaṭikā*). Otherwise J. Nobel, ZII. 5, p. 149 and cf. JORMadras 19 (1952), p. 161 (end of the seventh century), M. Krishmachariar, History of Classical Skt. Literature (1937-1970), p. 457 (between 635 and 700 A.D.). These dates would seem too late.

433 See p. 42,7 ed. Agashe, v. 1. *rūpaśīlaśīlpaśaundaryamādhuryapraṣṭāvanā*, p. 69,10 ed. Godbole, p. 67,2 ed. Kale. *nāgarikapuruṣāḥ* (commentary: *nīpuṇāḥ*) is "men about town" (Ryder), not "fatsoenlijke lieden" (decent people, Huizinga, op. c., p. 63), nor "Männer der Stadt" (J. J. Meyer). In the *Daśakumāracarita nāgara* and *nāgarika* are used in three different meanings:

1) "townsman, citizen", cf. 54,13 *nāgaramukhyeṣu* (: 54,21 *pauramukhyaiḥ*), 58,18 *nāgarikebhyaḥ* (Padacandrikā: *nāgavāsilokebhyaḥ*, read *nagara-*), 63,9 *nāgarikavara* (Padac.: *nāgarikaśreṣṭha*) and Pūrvapīṭhikā 23,20 *nāgarikajana* (: 22,23 *paurajana*) "townspeople". Cf. also, e.g., Bṛhatkathāślokaśringraha, ed. F. Lacôte, 1.2, 17,102 *nāgara*, 17,93 *nāgaraka* and Pali *nāgara* "citizen", Pkt. *nāyara* and see Turner, CDIAL. 7043. More common is *paura*, e.g., *Daśak*. 47,2 *pauravṛddhānām* (Padac.: *nāgarikaśreṣṭhānām*), 64, 19 *pauravṛddhaiḥ*, 54,21 *pauramukhyaiḥ*, etc.

2) "City Superintendent" (Jolly-Schmidt, *Arthaśāstra* II, p. 17 ad *Kauṭilya* 6.2), "police officer" (Beng. *nāyer*, *nāyar* "agent, steward", Turner, l.c.). Cf. Śivarāma Tripaṭhin in his *Bhūṣaṇā* ad *Daśak*. 49,11 *nāgarikabalam* : *nagararakṣākartuḥ*, *bhāṣayā* "kotwāl" *ityākhyasya*; *balam* : *sainyam*. In connection with the last words attention may be drawn to *Mṛchh*. VI.16.1 *senāvaī* beside VI.27.4 *padhānadaṇḍadhārao* and IX.23.3 *nagararakṣādhiḥkṛta* (the last word also occurs in a commentary on Śakuntalā VI.0.1 as a gloss on *nāgarika*), which are used in the same sense. In spite of the incorrect gloss *kārāpatir* : *nāgarikaḥ*, which the commentaries ad *Daśak*. 58,16 quote from the *Vaijayantī*, the word *nāgarika* is used in the sense "Chief police officer, superintendent of the city police" in 58,16 *nāgarikaḥ*, 49,11 *nāgarikabalam* [= 51,6 *rakṣikabalam*], 57,10 *nāgarikapuruṣān*, 59,11 *nāgarikapuruṣaiḥ* (Padacandrikā *kārāpatipuruṣaiḥ*; = 63,12 *rakṣikapuruṣaiḥ*). Whether the *nāgarika* also functioned as a judge, as is suggested by the gloss *nāgarikasāmsadi* on 42,14 *adhikarane* in the commentary *Bhūṣaṇā*, must here be left open. As for 51.3, where Agashe's text has *samuccalantau nāgarikasāmpātena* and the third edition by N. B. Godabole and K. P. Parab (Bombay 1898) *samuccalantau nāgarikasāmpāte* it is clear that the Padacandrikā (by Kavindrācārya Sarasvatī, c. 1650 A.D.) misinterprets the passage by paraphrasing *nagarasthalokasāmmarḍe(na)*. *sāmpāta* no doubt means "appearance" (see PW.) and what Daṇḍin's adventurers are afraid of is not the appearance of townsfolk but of policemen, cf. 139,17 *rājapurūṣasāmpātabhītaḥ*. Therefore, only the variant reading *nāgarikapuruṣasāmpāte* (see Agashe's critical apparatus) makes sense: the *Bhūṣaṇā* rightly paraphrases *nagararakṣakapurūṣasāmpāte*. As for *sam-uc-cal-*, its meaning can (in spite of PW. II, col. 970) hardly have much differed from that of *uc-cal-* "to start" (46,5 *nagarāyo 'dacalam*, 49,10 *triciturāṇi padāny udacalam*, 57,10 *asidvītyo raṁhasā pareṇo 'dacalam*). The words *samuccalantau nāgarikapuruṣasāmpāte* accordingly mean "being off at the appearance of policemen" (Meyer: "uns davon machend, da die Stadtwächter herbeistürzten"; incorrect Ryder: "we fell in with policemen"). Cf. also Kālid. Śak. VI.0.1, Vikram. V.4.1.

3) *nāgara*, *nāgaraka*, *nāgarika* "refined; fine gentleman, elegant, man about town" (PW. "gewandt, geschickt, gerieben, fein"; cf. A. K. Coomaraswamy,

triad, which cannot, therefore, prove very much for social life in Indian towns of that period.

In later times the group frequently recurs in the writings of theorists, such as Dhanamjaya (between 974 and 996 A.D.) in his Daśarūpaka II.8-9⁴³⁴, probably about the same time in the Agnipurāṇa 339.39⁴³⁵, later (c. 1175-1250) in Śāradātanaya's Bhāvaprakāśana, p. 93, 21f.⁴³⁶ and (in the 14th century?) in Vāgbhaṭa's Kāvyaṅuśāsana, p. 62⁴³⁷.

Not before the fourteenth century an innovation was introduced by the addition of the *ceṭa* "servant" as a fourth member to the traditional group. As early as NŚ. 35.77-80, in a passage which must reflect an old tradition because it contains the description of the *vidūṣaka* as a *jumbakā*, the characteristics of respectively the *viṭa*, the *śakāra*, the *vidūṣaka* and the *ceṭa* are summed up. From such passages the *ceṭa* may, in course of time, have come to be incorporated in the triad. It is significant, however, that this is only found in works on literary aesthetics. Cf. (between 1300 and 1384) Viśvanātha, Sāhityadarpaṇa 3.39-40 and 3.46⁴³⁸, (between 1300 and 1350) Vidyānātha, Pratāparudriya I.38⁴³⁹, (between 1340 and 1360) Śiṅgabhūpāla, Rasārnavasudhākara I.89⁴⁴⁰, (between 1450 and 1500)

JAOS. 48, p. 265). Pāli has *nāgarika* "citizen-like, urbane, polite". Cf. Latin *urbānus*, Greek *asteios* "polite, refined, elegant, witty". In this sense it is used in Daśak. 42,8 *nāgarikapuruṣasamavāyeṣu* (Ryder: "in gatherings of men about town") quoted above, and 52,23 *sāndrādaraḥ samāgaman nāgarajanaḥ* "the connoisseurs gathered with tense anticipation" (Ryder: "gay society"; not "die Leute" Meyer. Different from 52,23 *paurajanaḥ*. The gloss *nāgarikalokaḥ* in the Padacandrikā is ambiguous). Cf. Bṛhatkathāślokaśamgraha 24.44 *nāgarikaḥ*, v. I. *nāgarakaḥ* "amateur", 9.19 (cf. vv. 32, 34, 35) *nāgarakaḥ* "un roué, un coureur de bonnes fortunes", 7.45 *nāgarakammanyāḥ* "qui se croit bel esprit", 32.123 *nāgarikammanyā* "femme qui se juge fine", 9.34, 102 *nāgarakatā* "politesse", 9.81 *nāgarakatvam*, idem. Cf. also Kālidāsa, Śak. V.1.9 *nāgarikavṛtṭyā sañjñāpayai 'nām* "tell her politely", Vikram. II.11.20 *nāriḥ si* "you are a refined person", III.13.3 *nāriḥ* "gallants". According to Sāgaranandin, NLRK. 2226 the names of *nāgarāḥ* in dramas should end in *-ila*: *Rāmīla-Kāmilāhvānā nāgarāḥ prakīrtitāḥ* and they always address a courtesan with the term *vāsu* (2228). The *nāgaraka* is the central person of the Kāmasūtra (see p. 228).

⁴³⁴ *patākānāyakas tv anyāḥ pīṭhamardo vicakṣaṇaḥ, tasyaivā 'nucaro bhaktaḥ kimcidūnaś ca tadguṇaiḥ* (9) *ekavidyo viṭaś cānyo hāsyakṛc ca vidūṣakaḥ*.

⁴³⁵ *pīṭhamardo viṭaś caiva vidūṣaka iti trayāḥ, śṛṅgāre narmasacivā nāyakasyā 'nūnāyakaḥ*. For the date of the Agnipurāṇa see P. V. Kane, History of Dharma Śāstra I, p. 170ff. (about 900 A.D.), History of Sanskrit Poetics⁴, p. 9 (after 1050?), S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics I, p. 99 ("later than the middle of the 9th century").

⁴³⁶ According to Bhat (n. 344), p. 177 n. 2.

⁴³⁷ See R. Schmidt, Beiträge zur indischen Erotik, p. 144.

⁴³⁸ 3.39 *dūrānuvartini syāt tasya prāsaṅgiketivṛtte tu, kimcit tadguṇahīnaḥ sahāya evā 'sya pīṭhamardākhyāḥ* (40) *śṛṅgāre 'sya sahāyā viṭa-ceṭa-vidūṣakādyaḥ syuḥ, bhaktā narmasu nīpūnāḥ kupitavadhūmānabhañjanāḥ śuddhāḥ*. (3.46) *uttamāḥ pīṭhamardādyaḥ madhyau viṭa-vidūṣakau, tathā śakāra-ceṭādya adhamāḥ parikīrtitāḥ*.

⁴³⁹ *eṣāṅ nāyikānukūlane pīṭhamarda-viṭa-ceṭa-vidūṣaka-nāmānaḥ sahāyāḥ*.

⁴⁴⁰ He also gives *pīṭhamarda*, *viṭa*, *ceṭa* and *vidūṣaka* according to Bhat, p. 177 n. 2.

Bhānudatta, *Rasamañjarī* fol. 72b⁴⁴¹, and the *Rasaratnahāra* 52–53, which quotes Bhānu⁴⁴².

Everywhere the *ceṭa* is inserted between the *viṭa* and the *vidūṣaka*, in spite of the fact that these two belong to a higher category than he. R. Schmidt rightly remarks in his book on erotics: "Den nur für das Drama in Betracht kommenden *ceṭa* lassen wir hier unberücksichtigt . . .⁴⁴³".

The evidence quoted allows but one conclusion: there is no indication to prove the existence of either court-jesters or of professional buffoons in general and all references in literature to the *vidūṣaka* are ultimately derived from the dramatic character. Huizinga, who had to base his conclusion on very slender evidence, has here, as often, intuitively grasped the real state of things. It is significant that his words quoted in the beginning of this section, viz. "Outside the drama the *vidūṣaka* proper does not, accordingly, seem to have developed" imply the preconceived idea that there was a dramatic character, first and foremost, who might have "developed" in social life but did not. There is a curious conflict here between an intuitive insight and a certain lack of logic. How could dramatic characters, who belong to the stage, develop to figures in social life? It follows that the *vidūṣaka* whom V. S. Agrawala thinks he has detected on a terracotta panel in the Mathura Museum⁴⁴⁴ must, if the identification is correct, also portray a dramatic scene.

Gonda, who disputed Huizinga's conclusion⁴⁴⁵, rightly recognized that the real problem is the fact that the characteristic traits of the *vidūṣaka* cannot be explained from reality and belong to the stage but he misinterpreted, like Konow⁴⁴⁶, the occurrence of the *vidūṣaka* in the *Kāmasūtra* and the *Daśakumāracarita*.

A few words must finally be said about the other *narmasacivas*, the *pīṭhamarda* and the *viṭa*.

As for the *pīṭhamarda*, this character is unknown to Bharata. It has been suggested that he was no longer used as a dramatic figure at that time. However that may be, not before Rudraṭa (between 825 and 850 A.D.)⁴⁴⁷ and Dhanamjaya (between 974 and 996 A.D.)⁴⁴⁸ is he mentioned by theorists of dramaturgy. Bhavabhūti substitutes him for

⁴⁴¹ *teṣāṃ ca narmasacivāḥ pīṭhamardo viṭas tathā, ceṭo vidūṣaka iti caturdhā Bhānuno 'ditāḥ*. Cf. Schmidt, *Beiträge*, p. 199. On the date of Bhānudatta see S. K. De, *Sanskrit Poetics I*, p. 246, P. V. Kane, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, p. 308.

⁴⁴² See Schmidt, p. 144.

⁴⁴³ *Beiträge*, p. 146.

⁴⁴⁴ See Bhat, p. 54 with plate.

⁴⁴⁵ See *Acta Orientalia* 19 (1943), p. 407f. He then adds that it should not be inferred, however, that the character of the *vidūṣaka* only occurs in dramas and refers to the *Daśakumāracarita* and the *Kāmasūtra*.

⁴⁴⁶ See Konow, *Das indische Drama*, p. 15: . . . " . . . nicht bloss im Drama . . . , sondern auch z.B. im *Kāmasāstra* voll entwickelt vorlag".

⁴⁴⁷ *Kāvyaśāstrakāra* 12.13f., *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 1.39f.

⁴⁴⁸ *Daśarūpaka* 2.8. For further references see R. Schmidt, *Beiträge zur indischen Erotik*², p. 142f.

the *vidūṣaka*⁴⁴⁹. Dhanika in his commentary on the Daśarūpaka⁴⁵⁰ illustrates the rules regarding the *pīṭhamarda* by a reference to Makaranda in the Mālatīmādhava and Sugrīva in the Rāmāyaṇa. For all practical purposes, however, he was unknown in theatrical art. Hence the conflicting definitions given by later theorists⁴⁵¹. Cf. Kāmasūtra 1.4.31!

There remain two problems. Apart from Mhbh. IV, App. 21.11 crit. ed. (IV.21.33 Bombay ed.) *rathinaḥ pīṭhamardās ca hastyārohās ca naigamāḥ*, where some kind of warrior seems to have been meant⁴⁵², the word is met with in the Aupapātika Sūtra as a term for a State official⁴⁵³. It is not necessary for our purpose to enter more deeply into this matter.

On the other hand, if it is true that Vātsyāyana has taken over the triad *pīṭhamarda-ṛiṭa-vidūṣaka*- from an earlier rhetorician, while the Nāṭyaśāstra does not recognize the *pīṭhamarda* as a special character, there must consequently have been a different school of theorists of dramaturgy anterior to the Kāmasūtra.

As for the *ṛiṭa*, he might at first sight seem to have a better chance of having been a special character in the society of an Old Indian town. This was particularly defended by Gonda⁴⁵⁴.

To the authors of the Nāṭyaśāstra he is simply a stage character. It gives a definition (35.77) and prescribes that he is to be used in the prakaraṇa (20.53) and the bhāṇa (20.110 *dhūrta-ṛiṭa-saṁprayojyaḥ*). As S. K. De observes⁴⁵⁵, "The *ṛiṭa*, usually neglected in the serious drama,

⁴⁴⁹ See Bhat, pp. 39, 93.

⁴⁵⁰ ad Daśarūpaka 2.8.

⁴⁵¹ Rudraṭa, Kāvyaśālikāra 12.13 *kupīṭastrīprasādakaḥ*; similarly Bhānudatta, Rasamañjarī and, for all three *narmasacivas*, Rudraṭa 12.13-15, Viśvanātha, Sāhityadarpaṇa 3.40 and Vāgbhaṭa, Kāvyaśālikāra, p. 62. Agnipurāṇa 339.40 has *pīṭhamardaḥ samb(h)alakaḥ* "matchmaker", whereas Śāgaranandin, NLRK. 2201 explains "The king's friend in his intrigue with the courtesan is called *ṛiṭa*; he who teaches her her craft is the *pīṭhamarda*" (*veśyāṁ prati sakhā rājño ṛiṭa ity abhidhīyate, tadṛiṭācāryakaṁ prāptaḥ pīṭhamardaḥ prakīrtitaḥ*). Similarly Halāyudha.

⁴⁵² Nilakaṇṭha's gloss *rājapriyāḥ* is certainly no more than a wild guess, based on *nāyakasya priye 'pi ca*, which he quotes from the Medinikośa.

⁴⁵³ Otto Stein, Jinist Studies, p. 85f.

⁴⁵⁴ Acta Or. 19, p. 408: "Dass auch der *ṛiṭa*-, "Lebemann" oder lustiger Gesell eine bekannte Figur in bestimmten Kreisen des altindischen Lebens, nicht nur eine Theaterrolle was, brauche ich nicht nachzuweisen; er wird in mehreren Werken der Sanskrit Literatur erwähnt". Gonda refers to R. Schmidt, Beitr. zur ind. Erotik, p. 144f. and Kathāsaritnāgara 6.51ff., PW. VI, col. 1030. Schmidt's material, however, is *entirely* taken from dramaturgy handbooks. As for the Kathāsaritnāgara, see below.

⁴⁵⁵ Sanskrit Poetics II, p. 270 n. 25. Later theoreticians mention some kinds of plays in which a *ṛiṭa* is acting, such as the *durmali* or *durmaliikā*, first mentioned, it seems, in the Śṛṅgāraprakāśa (between 1000 and 1050) and the Bhāvaprakāśana (between 1175 and 1250), then in the Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa (between 1200 and 1250), which describes it in detail (3186ff.): it consists of four acts in which successively the *ṛiṭa*, the *vidūṣaka*, the *pīṭhamarda* and the *nāgara* appear. Similarly Sāhityadarpaṇa 6.303-305. As an instance is quoted the play *Bindumati*. According to the Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa 3149 the *ṛiṭa* appears as an *upanāyaka* in the Prasthāna (cf. Lévi, p. 148).

except in *Cārudatta* and *Mṛcchakaṭīka*, appears in all his glory in the *Bhāṇa*, for which he is prescribed as the hero". It should be added that the *viṭa* occurs as a character in the *Nāgananda*, Act III and that the words *eṣa hi Mṛdaṅgavāsulako nāma purāṇanāṭakaviṭaḥ* in Śūdraka's *Padmaprābhṛta* 20.5 have been interpreted as referring to the role of a *viṭa* in old dramas⁴⁵⁶, although the term admits of different explanations. For the *viṭa* as a special figure in social life, however, the evidence is virtually non-existent. In the four earliest *bhāṇas* of the so-called *Caturbhāṇī* the *viṭa* is already a conventional stage-character⁴⁵⁷. Therefore, they do not allow any inference about the occurrence of such a character in the actual town-life of that time.

Apte, however, rightly remarks⁴⁵⁸ that in non-dramatic Sanskrit literature *viṭa* means "1. A paramour; (Māl. 8.8; Śīs. 4.48). 2. A voluptuary, sensualist (BhāḡP. X.1327)". This distinction, which is better than that of PW. VI, col. 1030, accounts for almost all the passages where the word occurs.

1. "Lover, paramour": *Mālatīmādhava* VIII.8ab

tvadvallabhaḥ kva nu tapasvijanasya hantā,
kanyāviṭaḥ patir asau parirakṣatu tvām

"Where, then, is your beloved, who only kills ascetics? Let this violator of girls (commentary: *kanyādūṣakaḥ*), your lord, now protect you!" For *pati* "legal lover" (= *priya*) cf. *Daśak.* 205,15 Agashe. In *Śīsūpālavadha* IV.48 *madhukaraviṭapānamitās tarupaṅktīr*, where there is a pun (*madhukaraviṭa-pānam itās* and *madhukara-viṭapā-namitās*), *madhukaraviṭa-* means "the bees acting as lovers". In *Pūrṇabhadra's* *Pañcatantra*, p. 210 line 19 it is said of a *pumścali*: *atha pūrvaparicitaviṭagrhe gatvā* "Having gone to the house of her paramour, with whom she had become acquainted before"⁴⁵⁹. In Edgerton's reconstruction the text reads *dūtikayā viṭam ānaya* "having sent a female messenger for her paramour" and in the same text he occurs again p. 335 line 5 *asmimś (cā) 'ntare (saśapatham) viṭenā 'bhikhitā* "meanwhile the paramour said to her", but at the end of this story this *dayitajana* (p. 334 line 7) is called her *jāra* (p. 337 line 1). This is, indeed, one of the common meanings of *viṭa*. It is thus used in *Pūrṇabhadra*, p. 223 line 19 *tasya bhāryā pumścaly anyāsaktamanā ajasram*

⁴⁵⁶ See G. H. Schokker, *The Pādatāḡitaka of Śyāmilaka*, pt I, p. 43. Improbable is the interpretation by Motichandra and Agrawala, *Śṛṅgār-hāṭa* (Bombay 1960), p. 26, according to which the person concerned had formerly been an active actor in plays performed in the brothel but now, owing to his age, had become a mere *viṭa*.

⁴⁵⁷ See Schokker, p. 45 n. 137.

⁴⁵⁸ V. Sh. Apte, *The practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (1912); similarly in the new ed. by Gode and Karve, vol. III (1959), s.v.

⁴⁵⁹ Similarly Kosegarten, *Textus ornatior*, p. 186 line 1 and the edition Benares 1930 (*The Haridas Sanskrit Series* No. 13), p. 132 line 24. Less clear is the reading in the *Bombay Skt. Series* (ed. Bühler), IV, p. 18 line 16 *tataś ca paricitam kamcid viṭagrham gatvā*.

viṭāya sakhaṇḍa(ghṛtān) ghṛtapūrān kṛtvā . . . prayacchati, and p. 224 line 16 *atha tasyā hrdayavallabho viṭas . . .*⁴⁶⁰.

2. "sensualist": In this more general sense the word occurs, e.g., at Daśakumāracarita p. 136, 21 (ed. Agashe) *viṭavidheyatayā* "on account of the king being in the power of the apostles of sensuality"⁴⁶¹ and similarly in the Pūrvapīṭhikā, p. 2,19, where the young Kāmapāla is said to be *viṭa-nata-vāranāri-parāyaṇo durvinītaḥ* "only caring for bon-vivants, actors and harlots, and undisciplined"; further at Kathāsaritsāgara 6.51 *viṭaprāya* "a man who was a bit of a roué"⁴⁶², 6.58, where *viṭa* refers to persons frequenting a brothel and also 32.166 *vidagdhā api vañcyante viṭavarṇanayā striyaḥ* "Even clever women are deceived by the tales of a rogue" (impostor, transl. Tawney). In his translation of the Rājatarāṅgiṇī Aurel Stein translates *viṭa* by "roguish", "parasites", "wicked men". The commentary Laghudīpikā ad Daśakumāracarita 42.8 quotes "*gamyo viṭaḥ pāllaviko bhujāṅgaḥ*" *iti Bhāguriḥ*. Viṭas did exist, consequently, but not as the stereotyped characters as which they have become known from the plays ever since the Cārudatta and the Caturbhāṅgi. Sometimes, it is true, they are mentioned in connection with professional groups, as in the Pūrvapīṭhikā quoted above and, e.g., in Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 68.26

*karoti gāyatām vittam nṛtyatām ca prayacchati
bandinām atha sūtānām viṭānām lāsyapāṭhinām*

"He bestows wealth on singers and dancers, and on minstrels, bards, sycophants (and) those who are skilled in drama" (transl. Pargiter),

cf. Rājatarāṅgiṇī 5.352 *viṭa-bandy-ādi*.

Therefore, the case of the *viṭa* is different from that of the *vidūṣaka*. He did exist in Old Indian society but, like the *ceṭas* "servants", he had at the time of the Nāṭyaśāstra already become a conventional stage-character. The existence of a *viṭasāstra* (quoted by the Bṛhatkathāśloka-saṃgraha 10.69) points to the same conclusion. Cf. also Śāradātanaya, p. 289,11 *viṭaḥ prākṛtavādi ca prāyo . . .* The evidence quoted leads to the following conclusion: Bharata mentions separately, as typical stage-characters, the *sūtradhāra* and his *pāripārśvika*, the *viṭa*, the *śakāra*, the *vidūṣaka* and the *ceṭa*⁴⁶³. In two texts, which may be counted among the earliest of this kind of literature, viz. the Kāmasūtra and the

⁴⁶⁰ Similarly Kosegarten, p. 199, lines 8–9 and 25; ed. Benares 1930, p. 141, line 30 and p. 142, line 12. Not found in other recensions.

⁴⁶¹ Bühler-Agashe; cf. Kane, note on p. 198, 9: "his parasites or companions in sensuality". Meyer translates "da der Herrscher ganz von den liederlichen Lebe-männern abhängig war".

⁴⁶² Tawney-Penzer, Ocean of Stories I, p. 64.

⁴⁶³ 35.66–80C.=24.91–104 KM (=p. 654, interpolation after 35.20). For the *ceṭa* see 35.80. In the KM. edition he is said to be a *gandhasevaka* (24.104, p. 655, line 17) "using fragrances". He must have been different from the *gāndhika* "seller of perfumes" (n. 424). Ghosh, however, emends to *bandhasevaka* (35.80 C.) "giving service under bondage".

Daśakumāracarita, three already occur in the fixed formula *pīṭhamarda-viṭa-vidūṣaka*. The possible theory that the description of the Nāṭyaśāstra is older than this formula would not account for the fact that Bharata does not mention the *pīṭhamarda*. The early date of the Kāmasūtra, when the triad had already become formulaic, excludes the idea that the *pīṭhamarda* was a late intruder in the drama. It is from the drama that Vātsyāyana must have taken this triad, as it is highly improbable that he has created it himself. The formulaic way in which it is used in the Kāmasūtra and general considerations lead to the conclusion that the triad must be a trace of scholastic reflexion on dramatic art, which has found its way into the handbook on Erotics. Since the *pīṭhamarda* does not occur in the extant dramas (apart from some late attempts at a revival), he must have belonged, like the *genres* *Ḍima* and *Samavakāra* to an earlier but almost forgotten stage of development of the Sanskrit drama. If this is true, the formulaic triad must indeed, as has been suggested above, have originated in a dramaturgic school which was different from Bharata's.

As for the *vidūṣaka*, the final conclusion must be that there is nothing to show that he was at any time more than a stage-character.

20. THE NĀYIKĀ AS THE LEADING LADY

In § 12 (p. 171) the tradition about the guardian deities as found in the Nāṭyaśāstra has been discussed. It was shown that this necessarily leads to the conclusion that the *nāyikā* must, at an early stage of development of the Sanskrit drama, have been considered one of the principal parts (*pradhānapātrāṇi*, as Abhinavagupta has it). Just as the *nāyaka* has Indra for his guardian deity, and the *vidūṣaka* the Omkāra, so it is Sarasvatī who is the special patroness of the *nāyikā*. Since this is mentioned in the first chapter of the Nāṭyaśāstra, which is characterized by some Vedic reminiscences and which has preserved the oldest traditions about the origin of the drama, it is a reasonable conclusion that the idea of three special guardian deities is a heritage from the same pre-classical period to which some other traditions must be ascribed.

In the preceding study the main stress had to be laid on the ambivalent relation between the *nāyaka* and the *vidūṣaka*, which was shown to reflect a structural antagonism between Indra and Varuṇa. For that purpose the problem of the *nāyikā* could be ignored as being of no direct relevance to this antithetic relation. In the light of the theory of the identity of Indra and *nāyaka*, however, the relation between the *nāyikā* and Sarasvatī must now be considered more closely.

In contrast with the *vidūṣaka* the *nāyikā* has never been considered to be only of secondary importance. Comparatively late dramaturgists such as Sāgaranandin, who no longer recognize the *vidūṣaka* as one of the principal characters, still continue to mention the *nāyikā* along with the *nāyaka* as the leading parts. To some extent this might be explained from her prominent role in some classical nāṭakas and prakaraṇas (Śakuntalā, Vasantasenā, etc.). Since, however, the prototypes of the

nāyaka and the *vidūṣaka* could be found in Vedic mythology, there is some reason to look for a similar mythological prototype of the *nāyikā*. In that case the first thing that comes to mind is the old Vedic pattern of Devas and Asuras both wooing a divine maiden.

From the *brāhmaṇas* onwards the texts refer to a fixed type of contest between Devas and Asuras with a young goddess at stake. A well-known instance is their strife to win Vāc by calling her to their respective sides (*vi-hvā-*)⁴⁶⁴. Vāc stands in a particularly close relation to Prajāpati, the World-Father, who impersonates both the primeval Oneness and the totality of the dual cosmos. Like Prajāpati himself (ŚB. IV.5.7.2), Vāc thus stands above the duality of the differentiated cosmos⁴⁶⁵. As such she is free to choose according to her own will. In ŚB. III.2.1.18-21 however, the following tale is told: "Now the gods and the Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, entered upon their father Prajāpati's inheritance: the gods came in for the Mind and the Asuras for Speech . . . (19) The gods said to the Sacrifice: "That Vāc is a woman: beckon her, and she will certainly call thee to her" . . . He accordingly beckoned her. She, however, at first disdained him from the distance . . . (20) . . . He beckoned her; but she only replied to him, as it were, by shaking her head . . . (21) . . . He beckoned her, and she called him to her . . . (23) The gods then cut her off from the Asuras . . ." (tr. Eggeling).

There is some difference between the two tales in that the first has as its central motif a contest between Devas and Asuras, both wooing Vāc, whereas in the second the gods win her stealthily. What the stories have in common is the fact that the gods owe their success to their psychological insight. In both tales the position of Vāc with regard to the two parties is characterized by her freedom to choose for herself.

For the problem here under discussion it may be of interest that in the *brāhmaṇas* Vāc is identified with Sarasvatī⁴⁶⁶. In the *Mahābhārata*, where Vāc but seldom occurs as a goddess⁴⁶⁷, Sarasvatī has taken over

⁴⁶⁴ See MS. III.7.3 (78,3), KS. XXIV.1 (90,10), KKS. XXXVII.2 (195.20-228,4), TS. VI.1.6.6, ŚB. III.2.4.4-6 (Devas and Gandharvas).

⁴⁶⁵ For Vāc's relation to Prajāpati cf. KS. XII.5 (167,15), XXVII.1 (137.8), KKS. XLII.1 (246.2/287,2) *Prajāpatir vā idam āsit, tasya vāg dvitīyā 'sīt, tām mithunam samabhavat . . .*, PB. XX.14.2 *Prajāpatir vā idam eka āsit, tasya vāg eva svam āsit, vāg dvitīyā*, ŚB. VI.1.1.9 *vāg evā 'sya*. Different ideas, according to which Vāc is secondary to mind, in ŚB. VIII.1.2.8 (cf. VS. 13.58 *iyām upāri matīs, tāsyaī vān mātyā*), X.5.3.4. In III.2.1.18, however, Vāc is on a par with Manas (mind). Cf. J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts V*, p. 392.

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. MS. II.3.9 (37,4), III.6.4 (64,1), KS. XII.10 (173,6), XXIII.2 (75,3), KKS. XXXV. 8 (184,12/214,21), TS. VII.2.7.4-5, ŚB. III.1.4.9 and 14, III.9.1.7, V.2.2.13, V.3.4.25, IX.3.4.17, XIII.1.8.5, XIV.2.1.15 *vāg vai Sārasvatī*, ŚB. VII.5.1.31, XI.2.4.9 *māno vai Sārasvān, vāk Sārasvatī*, AB. III.1.10 *vāk tu Sārasvatī*, III.2.10 *vāg ghi Sārasvatī*. Cf. Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* II², p. 338 n. 1.

⁴⁶⁷ See, e.g., XII.224.55 [= 233 (232).25 Bomb. ed.] *anādinidhanā nityā vāg utsṛṣṭā Svayambhuvā* (Nīlakaṇṭha: *vedamayī divyā*) and XII.231.8, where there is an identification: *jīhvāyām vāk Sārasvatī*. Similarly XII.306.6 *Sārasvatīha vāg bhūtā śarīraṁ te pravakṣyati* and XIV.21.13 *tasmād ucchvāsam āsādya na vakṣyasi Sārasvatī: (15) tasmād ucchvāsam āsādya na vāg vadati karhi cit*.

her function. She here bears the title "Mother of the Vedas"⁴⁶⁸, and she is incidentally said to be the daughter of the All-god Brahmā, who corresponds to the Vedic Prajāpati⁴⁶⁹.

In the light of these facts it is possible that Sarasvatī as the patroness of the *nāyikā* is historically related to Vāc of the brāhmaṇas⁴⁷⁰. In any case, if the interpretation of the *nāyaka* and the *vidūṣaka* in terms of Vedic mythology is correct, only a contest between Devas and Asuras can account for the importance that was apparently attached to the part of the *nāyikā*. If this is true, however, the fact has to be considered that the same pattern is in later literature also found with respect to another goddess, who is much more prominent, viz. Śrī.

In the brāhmaṇas Śrī is said to be a daughter of Prajāpati⁴⁷¹. As such she holds the same intermediate position, between and above the two parties, that is characteristic of Vāc. This mythological trait of hers has particularly been elaborated in the Mahābhārata. Gösta Johnsen, who has given a good account of the material in IJ. 9 (1966), p. 252ff., rightly stresses the importance of the underlying pattern. He points out⁴⁷² that "Śrī is not without a will of her own. It is she herself who decides to leave the Asura and go to Indra. She states that nobody knows her, neither Devas, nor Asuras. Nobody can be sure of possessing her". The fickleness of the divine Rājaśrī, the impersonation of a king's good fortune, who may abandon him at any moment to support his adversary, is a well-known motif of classical poetry⁴⁷³. It need hardly be added that, side by side with this deified Fortuna, the word *śrī* could express a more impersonal power, as in Mhbh. II.17.16 *eṣa śrīyaṃ samudītāṃ sarvarājñāṃ grahiṣyati*.

One of the most interesting instances of this role of Śrī occurs in the tale of the Churning of the Ocean, in the course of which the Devas win Śrī by churning the cosmic waters⁴⁷⁴. The Amṛtamanthana is a classical instance of the cosmogonical contest between Devas and Asuras. Since, according to the Indian tradition (p. 195), it was also the subject-matter of the first dramatic performance, it is possible that Śrī's part in this drama was important. In that case she would have been the prototype

⁴⁶⁸ XII.326.52 *Śrīyaṃ Lakṣmīm ca kīrtiṃ ca pṛthivīm ca kakudminīm, vedānām mātaraṃ paśya matsthām devīm Sarasvatīm*. Cf. Harivaṃśa II.120.15 (=10244= App. I.35.29) *vedānām mātaraṃ caiva Sāvitrīm bhaktavatsalām*.

⁴⁶⁹ See XII.330.10 *ṛtā brahmasūtā sā me satyā devī Sarasvatī* and cf. XII.121.23 *yathoktā brahmakanye 'ti Lakṣmīr nūtiḥ Sarasvatī*.

⁴⁷⁰ It is not quite clear what exactly M. M. Ghosh had in mind when in his note on NS. 1.96 (Translation² p. 13 note) he wrote that with Sarasvatī the Vedic goddess of that name was meant.

⁴⁷¹ ŚB. XI.4.3.1 *Prajāpatir vai prajāḥ sṛjāmāno 'tapyata. tāsmāc chrāntāt tepānāc chrīr úd akrāmat*.

⁴⁷² Op. c., p. 254, where he refers to Mhbh. XII.218.7f.

⁴⁷³ Cf. e.g., Mudrārākṣasa II.12, Daśak. p. 15,7 Agashe (and p. 4, 19). See also Gonda, Aspects of early Viṣṇuism, p. 189. In Beiträge zur Geschichte der Göttin Lakṣmī by Gerda Hartmann (doctor's thesis, Kiel 1933), p. 33, there is only a casual reference to Lakṣmī's function as "Orts- und Stadtgottheit".

⁴⁷⁴ See n. 482.

of the pre-classical *nāyikā*, the last reminiscence of whom is still preserved in the Nāṭyaśāstra. Apart from this conjecture it may be pointed out that Śrī's emerging from the primeval waters is mythologically equivalent to her being sprung from Prajāpati. Originating in the undifferentiated world she stands above the duality of the two opposed parties. Her fickleness as a woman (as the Indian poets saw it) is, indeed, deeply rooted in mythological notions about the undifferentiated primordial world.

In Mhbh. II.61.58ff. Vidura tells an old story of a dispute between the Daitya Virocana and the brahmin of Angiras' race Sudhanvan about a maiden (v. 59 *kanyāhetoh*). In this contest Johnsen (p. 252) has recognized an instance of epic dualism⁴⁷⁵. In V.35.5 this *saṁvāda* is said to have been about Keśinī (*keśinyarthe*). From another passage, which relates how a fight arose between the Deva Indra and the Asura Bali⁴⁷⁶ Johnsen rightly infers that the *kanyā* and Keśinī are identical with (or should we perhaps rather say: mythologically equivalent to?) Śrī⁴⁷⁷.

It seems to me that Johnsen has brought to light an important mythical pattern, which may be interpreted as follows: The Devas and Asuras were fighting about Śrī⁴⁷⁸ but since the divine maiden, born of the all-encompassing totality, stood above the duality of the phenomenal world, neither party could "know" her (XII.218.7), as she by her very nature transcended them both. She was, indeed, free to choose her partner among the Devas as well as the Asuras. In the story told in the Harivaṁśa Bali vanquishes Indra (by using his *vāruṇāstra* "Varuṇic arrow", which is mightier than Indra's! III.64.20 = 14005 = App. I, 42B, 2401) and Śrī comes to him because of his *sattva* (III.65.9ff. = 14029ff. = App. I, 42B, 2445f.).

In the light of these facts it may not be surprising that the tradition preserved in NŚ. 1.96, which, for several reasons, is probably the last reminiscence of the oldest form of the Sanskrit drama, classes the *nāyikā* among the three principal parts. It must be admitted, however, that of the old pattern that has been reconstructed here no trace can be found in the classical drama. The most important lesson, however, which can be learnt from an attentive study of the first chapters of the Nāṭyaśāstra is that it would be a fallacy to think that a prehistoric stage of the drama can be reconstructed from the classical *nāṭaka*. In the latter the *nāyaka* need not compete with an adversary to win the young girl, who is mostly already enamoured of the hero from the first moment she has seen him. If we look back at the older obsolete forms of drama, for which we have to rely entirely on the brief definitions of the theorists, there is in the Īhāmṛga actually a competition between a divine *nāyaka* and a *pratināyaka*,

⁴⁷⁵ See also above, p. 20.

⁴⁷⁶ See Mhbh. XII.218 and cf. Harivaṁśa III.64.13ff. (= 13998ff. = App. I, 42B. 2363).

⁴⁷⁷ In Mhbh. XII.218.7-8 Śrī says *na mā Vīrocāno veda na mā Vairocāno Balī . . . tvam mām Śakra na jānīṣe sarve devā na mām viduḥ*. See p. 51 n. 164!

⁴⁷⁸ Mhbh. XII.34.13b *idaṁ ca śrūyate Pārtha yuddhe devāsūre purā, Asurā bhrātaro jyeṣṭhā devās cāpi yavīyasaḥ* (14) *teṣāṁ api Śrīnimittam mahān āsit samucchrayaḥ, yuddham varṣasahasrāṇi dvātriṁśad abhavat kila*.

both well-known from tradition but the latter being an evil-doer (*ayuktakṛt*) by inadvertence. Although the Daśarūpaka defines the Īhāmṛga as “a contest about a woman”⁴⁷⁹ the attempt on the part of the *pratināyaka* to win her by violence⁴⁸⁰ must have excluded a free choice of the “divine maiden”. She must, therefore, have been more an object of the dramatic action than a leading part.

Thus, looking for a kind of drama with a prominent *nāyikā*, we are again led back to the legendary *samavakāra*, to which type the mythical first drama, the Churning of the Ocean, is said to have belonged. The number of *nāyikas* prescribed for this kind amounts, it is true, to as many as twelve (see above p. 196f.). This implies that there was a contest between two parties instead of two protagonists, but each of the parties got its profit from the strife. As we have seen, Dhanika in his commentary on the Daśarūpaka adds the explanation “Just as in the Churning of the Ocean Vāsudeva etc. win Lakṣmī etc.”⁴⁸¹. Here, indeed, the pattern is found in which the presupposed prototype of the *nāyikā* could take an active part in the action. After appearing at the surface of the Milk-ocean Śrī chooses of her own free will the Devas⁴⁸².

In conclusion it may be useful to summarize briefly the preceding discussion and to state which inferences would seem justified on the basis of the scarce data at our disposal. It is obvious that no well-founded history of the development of the *nāyikā* can be reconstructed. Particular reference can only be made to the following details. According to Indian tradition the oldest drama had the Churning of the Ocean for its subject and was a *samavakāra*. A *samavakāra* is defined by the dramaturgists as a contest for a woman and Dhanika illustrates it by referring to Vāsudeva’s winning of Lakṣmī. It has generally been inferred that this definition merely describes a single specimen of this *genre*, a *Samudramanthana*, which had been preserved and which must still have been known at the time when the definition of the Nāṭyaśāstra was made. From the old mythological pattern it may be inferred that in such a play Śrī/Lakṣmī must have played a prominent part because she had an independent position with respect to the two parties. It remains dubious to what extent we may rely on Dhanika’s words “the winning of Lakṣmī, etc.” (*Lakṣmyādilābhah*) in assuming such a part of a *nāyikā* in a play for which the theory only prescribes twelve male heroes. Structurally there was a similarity and parallelism between Śrī of the epic and the Vedic

⁴⁷⁹ 3.76 *strihetur iha saṅgahaḥ*, SD. 6.250 *divyastrihetukaṁ yuddham*. Cf. NŚ. 20.78 *divyastrikāraṇopagatayuddhaḥ*. Note v. 81 *kevalam amarastrīyo hy asmin*.

⁴⁸⁰ DR. 3.74, SD. 6.247 *divyastriyam anicchantīm apahārādine ’cchataḥ*.

⁴⁸¹ ad DR. 3.64: *yathā samudramanthane Vāsudevādīnām Lakṣmy-ādilābhah*.

⁴⁸² Mhbh. I.16.33f., Matsyapurāṇa 250.2–4: *prasannabhāḥ* (*prasannābhah* MP) *samutpannaḥ Somaḥ śītāṁśur ujjvalaḥ* (34) *Śrīr anantaram utpannā ghṛtāt pāṇḍura-vāsinī*, *Surā devī samutpannā turagaḥ pāṇḍuras tathā . . .* (36) *Śrīḥ Surā caiva Somaś ca turagaś ca manojavaḥ, yato devās tato jagmur ādityapatham āśritāḥ*. The Matsyapurāṇa has only vv. 1–4 in common with the Mahābhārata. See also Bhāgavatapurāṇa VIII.8.8.

Vāc/Sarasvatī. In what way the latter goddess has become the patroness of the *nāyikā* can no longer be determined. The only thing that can be said is that the part of the pre-classical *nāyikā* as reconstructed here would have fitted in very well with the general pattern which it has been the object of this study to disclose, that is, the interplay of the two principal male characters of the Sanskrit drama.

ADDENDA

Ad p. 125: According to Kāmasūtra 6.1.12 the *nāyaka* likes dramatic performances (*prekṣaṇaka*) very much, but the "shows" or "spectacles" (*prekṣā*), mentioned as diversions along with cock-fighting and gambling (1.4.25, cf. 1.4.8 and 6.1.25 *prekṣaṇaka*) need not refer to dramas. The commentary (13th cent.) explains *sajīva-nirjīvair naṭādīprekṣābhīḥ*, cf. also ad 6.1.25). As for the 31st of the 64 *kalās*, viz. *nāṭakākhyāyikādarśanam* (1.3.15), it apparently means "knowledge of dramas and short stories" (*parijñānam* comm.). Of greater interest are the plays (*prekṣaṇaka*) which the *nāyaka*, who here acts as the head of the *nāgarakas*, organizes, as part of a procession (*ghaṭā*), in the temple of Sarasvatī (1.4.14–18). Every month or fortnight he commissions some *nāgarakas* to perform the *pūjā* (which must primarily have been worship of the goddess on whose special day the festival takes place) and instructs the actors. Foreign actors are tested on this occasion. The day after the performance the *nāgarakas* offer *pūjā* to the actors (cf. above, p. 169) and pay them the amount due. Even though this description may be an idealized and systematized picture of actual life, it shows that performances, sponsored by rich citizens, did take place, on the occasion of religious festivals which were also social events, but in temples instead of theatres.

Ad p. 208: According to Yaśodhara (13th cent.) on Kāmasūtra 1.4.33 the *vidūṣaka* reviled the *nāgaraka* or the courtesan when they were over-bold, which he apparently states in explanation of the term *vidūṣaka*: *sa ca veśyāṃ nāgarakaṃ vā kvacit pramādyantaṃ labdhapranayativād apavadate, iti vidūṣakaḥ*.

CORRIGENDA

p. 35, line 1 from the bottom, *Add*: Cf. ChUp. VIII.7.8.

p. 38, line 1 read: verse 5ab.

p. 52, n. 167: delete JB.I.283.

p. 87 n. 328, p. 88 n. 333: read: N. J. Shende.

p. 87, n. 330 (line 2): delete *yad*.

p. 194, n. 326: Sāgaranandin, NLRK 806 quotes NŚ. 21.90.

EXCURSUS: THE SĀDHYAS

The scarce secondary literature on the Sādhyas that I know contains remarkably little information of any value. Most handbooks simply ignore them. See Weber, Ind. Stud. IX., p. 6 n. 2, Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts I, p. 10, V, p. 10ff., p. 17 n. 26, Bergaigne II, p. 76, III, p. 75, Sieg, Die Sagenstoffe des R̥gveda, p. 15, K. Rönnow, Trita Āptya I, pp. 37f., 105f., Hillebrandt, Ved. Myth. II², p. 407 n. 2 (“deifizierete Vorfahren”), Geldner note ad RS. I.164.50, Renou, EVP. 16, p. 149, Hopkins, Epic Myth., p. 175, Monier-Williams, Skt. Engl. Dict. The problem was correctly stated by Roth (see Whitney’s translation of AS. VII.5.1). See also, in general, on the problem of the generations of the gods Muir, OST. V, p. 16ff., Macdonell, Ved. Myth., p. 17. By far the best survey of the data has been given by S. Lévi, Doctrine du sacrifice, p. 62f. The basic facts would seem to be the following:

1) They were on earth before the Devas, but are also consistently called Devas. Cf. KS. XXIII.8 (83,12), XXVI.7 (129,19), KKS. [XXXVI.6 ex conjectura], XLI.5 (240,3/279,7) *Sādhyā vai nāma devā āsan pūrve devebhyaḥ (teṣāṃ na kim cana svam āsit, te ’gnim mathitvā ’gnau juhvata āsata)*, PB. XXV.8.2 *Sādhyā vai nāma devebhyo devāḥ pūrva āsan*, VIII.3.5, 4.1, 4.9 *Sādhyā vai nāma devā āsan*, MS. III.9.5 (121,1) *Sādhyā vai devā āsan, ātha vai tārhi nā ’nyā ’hutir āsit* (cf. III.7.9, 10; 9.4.5), TS. VI.3.5.1 *Sādhyā vai devā asmim lokā āsan, nā ’nyāt kim cana miśāt*. The Rigvedic poets refer to them as *pūrve devāḥ* “former gods”, see VII.21.7, X.109.4 (cf. 90.7), I.164.50. Cf. perhaps also AS. XI.8(10).10: ten gods *devēbhyaḥ purā* (“before the gods”?). It should be noted in this connection that the statement found in some modern surveys that the Sādhyas were older than the Ādityas is open to doubt. In the Yajurvedic version of the Mārtāṇḍa myth (see Karl Hoffmann, MSS. 11, p. 85ff.) only the Taittirīyas have the detail that Aditi cooked the *brahmarudanam* for the Sādhyas, who then must have existed in the primordial world even before the Ādityas were born (TS. VI.5.6.1ff., TB. I.1.9.1ff.). The other versions do not mention the Sādhyas, cf. MS. I.6.12 (104,10), KS. VII.15 (78,15) = GB. I.2.15, KS. XI.6 (151,5), ŚB. III.1.3.3–4. This detail is, therefore, most likely a later addition, but even if the Sādhyas did not exist in the primordial world and if they were not originally Asuras (which is, indeed, never suggested in the texts), the fact remains that the later gods were *avare* “younger, posterior” in respect to the Sādhyas. Cf. KS. XXIII.8 (83,13).

2) They were the first to go to heaven, where they are now. Cf. KS. PB. *svargam lokam āyan* and RS. I.164.50, X.90.16 *yajñēna yajñām ayajanta devāḥ tāni dhārmāṇi prathamāny āsan, té ha nākam mahimnāḥ sacanta yātra pūrve Sādhyāḥ sānti devāḥ*. Somehow, accordingly, they must have

been present as Devas at the moment when the dual cosmos was created. Nowhere is it said where they came from (but see Mhbh. I.1.33).

3) That they were no ordinary Devas is shown by the fact that they sometimes stand in clear opposition to the latter, e.g., when the Sādhyas, going to heaven, try to prevent the Devas from following them (KS. XXIII.8: 83,13, a gap in KKS. XXXVI.5, not in MS. III.7.1), just as the gods try to prevent men (TS. VI.3.4.7); or when, going to heaven, they take the sacrifice and Soma with them (PB. VIII.4.1).

4) That this opposition had a structural character is shown by AS. VII.79.2cd, where the goddess of the New Moon says: "In me all the gods of the two parties, both the Sādhyas and those who recognize Indra as their leader, came together" (*māyi devā ubhāye Sādhyās cé 'ndrajyeṣṭhāḥ sāmagacchanta sārve*). For the "non-technical" use of *sārve* see p. 57, n. 190 and Renou, EVP. 4, p. 3. The word *ubhāye* points to a binary opposition (see pp. 8 and 44 on *ubhāye prajāpatyāḥ*). This seems to rule out the possibility of the Sādhyas standing for the Ādityas and Aṅgirasas, as is suggested by Sāyaṇa ad RS. I.164.50 (cf. AB. I.16.36–39).

5) In the system of classification the Sādhyas always belong to the centre, specifically, it seems, to the zenith. Cf. ŚB. IV.4.9 *pitaraś cā 'dharāyām, Sādhyās co 'rdhvāyām*, VādhS. (Acta Or. 6, p. 130) *Aṅgirasō 'dhasāt, Sādhyā upariṣṭāt*, cf. ChUp. III.10.1, etc. Only conjointly with the Āptyas, it seems, are they located in the nadir. Cf. JB. II.142 *Viśve Devā upariṣṭāt, Sādhyās cā 'ptyās cā 'dhasāt*. As for AB. VIII.14.3 *asyām dhruvāyām madhyamāyām pratiṣṭhāyām diśi Sādhyās cā 'ptyās ca devāḥ* the *dhruvā diś* is here contrasted with the zenith (*ūrdhvā diś*). Therefore the possibility should be considered, that it is not the centre in general that is meant here but more specifically the nadir—a possibility which Gonda, Viṣṇuism and Śivaism, p. 17, too rashly denies. Cf. also the commentary ad AS. III.27.5 *dhruvā diś: adhodik*.

6) The Sādhyas seem to have also been associated with the idea of transcendence and, after they have gone to heaven, with what is *beyond* the top of the world axis. A *yūpa* which is thirteen cubits long is of the same measure as the Sādhyas (KS. XXVI.4: 126,13), the thirteen months of the year (ŚB. III.6.4.24) or Prajāpati (MS. III.9.2: 115,7). This number characterizes the Sādhyas as a manifestation of the totality (12+1). To the Sādhyas belongs the uppermost part of the sacrificial stake (*yūpa*), viz. that part which, one finger-joint long, protrudes above the top-ring (*caśḍla*). Cf. KS. XXVI.4 (126,20) *yāvād uttamam aṅgulikāṇḍam tāvad atirecayed, yajñaparūṣā saṁmitam* (otherwise MS. III.9.4: 119,4 *aṅgulimātrām kāryām*). Cf. "What is superabundant of the sacrifice, that remains for the Sādhyas gods. Superabundant of the sacrifice is that which is superabundant of the sacrificial stake" (KS. XXVI.4: 127,1), "The Sādhyas gods despised the sacrifice. To them, verily, belongs that which is made superabundant during the sacrifice. Superabundant during the sacrifice is what fire they sacrifice in fire. That (part) of the sacrificial stake which

protrudes above the *caṣḍla*, that *touches (sprṣati)* them” (MS. III.7.9: 89,6). This idea of *atirikta* “superabundant” also explains why in JB. I.283 the Sādhyas and Āptyas (with whom the Sādhyas in this text always form one group, the sixth and last after Vasus, Rudras, Ādityas, Viśve Devāḥ and Maruts) are associated with the metre *aticchandās* (I.283) and *pārameṣṭhyāya* (II.25, III.152). The notion of *atirikta* is closely connected with that of *āparimīta* in the Brāhmaṇas. While most texts (KS. XXVI.6: 129,6, KKS. XLI.4: 239,5/278,15, TS. VI.3.4.7, cf. ŚB. III.7.1.25, ŚB. IV.4.16) content themselves with the simple statement *Īndrasya caṣḍlam, Sādhyānām atiriktam*, the MS. III.9.4 (119,3) has the additional detail of the Sādhyas despising the sacrifice: *Īndrasya caṣḍlam, ye vai devdḥ Sādhyā yajñām atyāmanyanta tēṣām vā etād yād upariṣṭāc caṣḍlasyā ’ṅgulimātrām kāryām*. This *motif* apparently only serves to explain why nothing but the “superabundant” (*atirikta*) of the sacrifice is allotted to them. Similarly TS. VI.3.4 8.

7) The only conclusion that can be drawn from the data is that the Sādhyas, unlike the Ādityas, were not originally Asuras who had gone over to the party of the Devas. They were Devas in their own right and were somehow “here”, when the other (later) Devas conquered the Asuras, their most significant feat being that they were the first sacrificers. When there was nothing else to offer but Agni, they offered Agni (KS. XXVI.7: 129,19) and so ascended to heaven. It is understandable that Sylvain Lévi, p. 63, thought that they had been ousted and obliterated by the Ādityas but their place in the pantheon is so entirely different from that of the Ādityas that the latter can hardly have affected the position of the Sādhyas. Rönnow’s attempts to explain “former gods” in terms of cult changes are hardly correct, because here, as in the other cases, “former” is more likely to be a mythological than a historical notion. No well-founded interpretation can be proposed but this note may be helpful to state the problem.

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Note ad *Bhāratīya-Nāṭyaśāstra* :

References are, unless otherwise indicated, to the Calcutta edition (C): *The Nāṭyaśāstra Ascribed to Bharata-muni*, by Manomohan Ghosh, I², Calcutta 1967; II (Bibl. Ind. 272A), Calcutta 1956.

B (Baroda edition) refers to M. Ramakrishna Kavi, *Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharatamuni with the Commentary Abhinavabhāratī by Abhinavaguṇṭācārya*, I² (GOS 36) by K. S. Ramaswami Śāstrī, Baroda 1956; II (GOS 68) by M. Ramakrishna Kavi, Baroda 1934; IV (GOS 145) by M. R. Kavi and J. S. Pade, Baroda 1964.

KM (or KM²) refers to the 2nd ed. of Kāvyaśālā 42: *The Nāṭyaśāstra by Śrī Bharatamuni*, ed. by Pandit Kedārnāth, Bombay 1943. KM¹ refers to *The Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata Muni*, ed. by Paṇḍit Śivadatta and Kāśīnāth Paṇḍurang Parab, Bombay 1894.

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