HARIANI SANTIKO
Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta

The Goddess Durgā in the East-Javanese Period

Abstract

This article assesses the changing perceptions of the goddess Durgā in Java in the tenth to the fifteenth centuries C.E. From an early perception of her as a beneficent goddess, slayer of the demon Mahiṣa and protector of welfare and fertility, we see later portrayals of her with a frightful countenance and a predilection for graveyards. This change is traced through the mythology to poorly understood Tantric practices that deteriorated into black magic and the coercion of the goddess's power for evil purposes, causing her image in Java to become tarnished and turning her into an evil demon.

Keywords: Durgā—Mahiṣāśura—Tantrism—Javanese mythology—antiquities

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS in the form of statues of the goddess (*bhaṭārī*) Durgā, Durgā the destroyer of Mahiṣāsura, are quite numerous in Java. The oldest of these statues is estimated to date from around the eighth century C.E., while the most recent is from about the fifteenth century. On the basis of their characteristics and of the area where they were found, these Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī statues can be divided into two large groups: those from the Central Javanese era, dating to between the eighth century and the beginning of the tenth century, and those of the East Javanese period, which date between the middle of the tenth century and the fifteenth century C.E.

The Central Javanese period is very rich in archaeological remains (especially from early Hindu-Buddhist times), though relatively lacking in written data. A large number of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī statues from this period have been found, but these finds are not balanced by written, i.e., literary, sources from which the religious concepts that underlie the statues can be ascertained. The East Javanese era is relatively richer in such sources, and for this reason this paper is confined to the concept of Durgā between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries C.E., when political power had shifted to East Java.

THE EAST JAVANESE DURGĀ STATUES

Between 1980 and 1985, seventy-three complete statues of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī and a large number of fragmentary ones were found in various places in East Java. These statues generally represent the goddess in resplendent attire, standing in various poses (*abhaṅga, samabhaṅga,* and *tribhaṅga*)[1] on the back of a buffalo (*mahiṣa*) and having variously two, four, six, and eight arms, the hands of which hold different weapons: *cakra* (wheel), *śaṅkha* (snail shell), *dhānu* (bow), and *śara* (arrow) (SANTIKO 1992, 36–37). Statues with eight arms were the most numerous (fifty-eight), while only three statues with two arms, ten with four arms, and seven with six arms were found.

Durgā is usually depicted as a beautiful, slender goddess, graceful and

smiling (figure 1). Her statues from the East Javanese period have a special trait in that her hair is long and hangs loose. On the other hand, there are some statues of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī of the Majapahit period (thirteenth to fifteenth century). On these she has long canine teeth, a grimacing face and frightful, protruding eyes (see figure 2). Examples include the statue from Candi Rimbi near Jombang, dating from about the fourteenth century, and ones from Bojonegoro and from Sampang in Madura (SANTIKO 1992, 30–40).

Accompanying figures of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī are the buffalo (*mahiṣa*), lying with its face to either the left or the right, and an *aśura* (a kind of giant in human form, though much smaller than Durgā), either emerging from the buffalo's head or sitting or standing quietly on its head or hindquarters. This kind of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī statue depicts a particular mythological event, the final scene of the combat between Durgā and Mahiṣāśura, the king of the *aśura* in the form of a mighty buffalo (EDI SEDYAWATI 1993, 1–2). According to some *Purāṇa*s, especially the "Devī Māhātmya" of the *Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Durgā fights an *aśura* who has adopted the shape of a buffalo and troubles the lives of both men and gods. Durgā succeeds in killing Mahiṣāśura, who is then decapitated (or sometimes has his body pierced with a lance [*triśūla*]). When the *mahiṣa* lies dying, the *aśura* in human form suddenly appears from the buffalo's head or body and vainly attacks Durgā. In Indian statues depicting the last battle, Durgā may be

FIGURE 1. Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī from Candi Siwa, Prambanan (Photo: Ditlitbinjarah)

FIGURE 2. Durgā Ranini in front of Kunti, from
Candi Tegawangi (East Java) (Photo: HNS)

accompanied by her vehicle (*vāhana*), a lion (AGRAWALA 1963; HARLE
1971–72; LIPPE 1972; BANERJEA 1974). This representation of battle and vio-
lence is less common in East Javanese Durgā statues, in which the goddess
usually touches or caresses the *aśura*'s hair, who in turn is pictured politely
greeting her (*añjali*) with a happy and peaceful countenance.[2] The lion vehi-
cle is absent in these Javanese examples.[3]

Temples exclusively devoted to the goddess Durgā, such as those in
India, have not been found in Java. Rather, both from previous reports and
from a number of Durgā statues found *in situ*, it can be inferred that Durgā
Mahiṣāśuramardinī statues were always placed in the northern niches or
cella of Śaiva temples.

DURGĀ IN INDIA
Who then is Durgā and why does she fight Mahiṣāśura? In Hinduism gods
are thought to possess a certain energy or power (*śakti*), which they need to
fulfill their tasks. This energy often manifests itself as the female counterpart
or spouse of the god in question. Thus the *śakti* of Śiva is called Pārvatī,
Durgā, or Kālī, while Viṣṇu's *śakti* is Lakṣmī, and that of Brahmā is
Saraswati. Especially the *śakti* of Śiva is worshiped in its various aspects; the
aspect *śānta* (calm) of Śiva's *śakti* materializes as Pārvatī or Umā, his anger
(*krodha*) manifests as Durgā, and his fierceness (*krūra*) as Kālī. Although
each of these aspects is worshiped for its own reason, in Tantrism Śiva's

power, expressed in Durgā, and his cruelty, expressed as Kālī, are often mixed, so that Durgā often acquires the characteristics of Kālī.[4]

In the oldest Indian religious texts, the Vedas, Durgā is not mentioned. A similar name—Durgī—is found in a younger poem, used to worship the god Agni. This poem is part of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (forest texts). Clearer information comes from the *Mahābhārata*, especially *parva* (book) 4, the *Bhīṣma parva*, and *parva* 6, the *Virāṭa parva*. In the *Bhīṣma parva*, Arjuna strongly desires to vanquish his enemies, the Kaurava. In order to gain victory, Arjuna worships Durgā by reciting songs of praise (*stuti*) to her the night before the battle (AVALON 1973, 51–52). In the *Virāṭa parva* of the *Mahābhārata*, Yudhiṣṭhira recites another song of praise to Durgā in his heart, asking for her protection while on his journey to Virāṭa (AVALON 1973, 150–53).

A fully developed idea of Durgā is only found in the *Purāṇa*s, the sacred books of Hinduism. She was not originally an Aryan goddess, as can be discerned from her characteristics, from the place where she is found, and from some of the rituals performed for her. Rather, she was a protectress (*grāmadevatā*) of the original inhabitants of the area around Mt. Vindya, including the Sabara, Barbara, and Pulinda peoples. This indigenous goddess was subsequently adopted by the Aryans, who first, in the *Hariyamśa Purāṇa* of the fourth century C.E., considered her to be an adopted sister of Viṣṇu and later saw her as Śiva's *śakti* (KUMAR 1974; SHULMAN 1980).

In the *Purāṇa*s and the later *Tantra*s, Durgā had become the most important goddess of the adherents of Śaivism and Śaktism.[5] The three things that are often pointed out about her there are that she vanquished the buffalo *aśura*, that she rules the vegetable world, and that she has power over infectious diseases. Of these, her conquest of the *aśura* is primary, as will be discussed below.

That she rules over plants and is the goddess of fertility is attested to in the aforementioned song "Devī Māhātmya" (11.43–48), which first appears in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*. AGRAWALA has translated these lines as follows:

> 11.43. And again when rain and water shall fail for a hundred years, propitiated by the Munis I shall be born on the earth but not of the womb.
> 11.44. Then I shall behold the Munis with a hundred eyes, and so people shall glorify me as the Hundred-eyed One.
> 11.45. At that time, O gods, I shall support the whole world with life sustaining vegetables, born out of my body, until the rain sets in again. Then I shall be famed on earth as Śākambharī.
> (1963, 139–41)

Thus, in this song, Durgā is Sākambharī, who aids people by providing the
vegetation they need during a drought.

One incarnation of Durgā as ruler over plants, an incarnation wor-
shiped in the Bengal area, is Vana Durgā. Several goddesses in whose form
she incarnates (e.g., Rupasi, Ruaswari, Gundi, and Thakurani) are wor-
shiped in specific trees, among them the banyan and the sal (śalavṛkṣa; Vatica
robusta). There are also goddesses who are worshiped at home in connection
with their relationship with plants and fertility, among them Lakṣmī.[6]
Archaeological evidence from the Kausambhi and Ujjayini areas in India
show that in the third century B.C.E. Lakṣmī was already considered a fertil-
ity goddess. These finds include, among others, a statue of Lakṣmī standing
on top of a lotus bloom (padmā) and a relief showing her being bathed by
two elephants. Both the lotus and the elephants are fertility symbols
(BANERJEA 1974, 110–11).

The reason Durgā was considered the ruler of plants useful to mankind
may have been that the "Devī Māhātmya" was part of both Śaktism and
Śaivism, sects for whom Durgā was the primary goddess. As such she would
automatically have authority over various aspects of human life.[7]

Another aspect of Durgā is that of ruler over infectious diseases, a role
played by several goddesses in India. On the one hand these goddesses pro-
tect people from diseases, especially the very much feared smallpox and
cholera, and on the other hand they themselves spread these diseases when
angry and dissatisfied with human conduct. In North India such a goddess
is Śītalā Devī, also known as Vasanti Caṇḍi, Ai, and Thakurani
(BHATTACHARYA 1977, 53–54). In South India several figures are regarded as
spreaders of disease, among them Marianna or Mārī, while in the Bengal
area the above-mentioned Rupasi, Ruaswari, Gundi, and Thakurani are
believed to spread infectious diseases among children, and are worshiped to
protect children from such diseases (BEANE 1977, 56–57). Vana Durgā, then,
of whom these goddesses are manifestations, can be said to represent two
aspects of Durgā simultaneously (SANTIKO 1992, 199–200).

Then there are several grāmadevatā (village fertility goddesses associat-
ed with smallpox, cholera, and cattle diseases [STUTLEY and STUTLEY 1984,
10]) plus a group of goddesses—known as children of Durgā—named
Halimā, Mālinī, Vṛnilā, Āryā, Palālā, and Vaimitrā, who rule over childhood
diseases and at the same time act as protectresses of children
(BHATTACHARYA 1977, 55–56; SHULMAN 1980, 245–80).

In both North and South India Kālī and Durgā are often venerated as
rulers over disease, which they spread when angered. As was pointed out
above, Durgā and Kālī control all aspects of human life, including disease;
furthermore, in several places Durgā has become mixed with the grāmade-

vatā who, as we have seen, react similarly when angered (VENKATARAMANAYYA and SUBRAHMANYA 1941, 60–61).

As mentioned above, one important feature of Durgā is her role of con-queror of the *asura* and other demonic beings. The tale of the destruction of the *asura* and their king Mahiṣāśura is known as the *Devī Māhātmya Purāṇa* or *Durgā Saptaśati*. This story first appeared in the *Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, which was composed in the sixth century C.E. The story, in brief, is as follows:

> The gods were often troubled by the *asura*s, lead by their ruler Mahiṣ-āśura, who had the form of a ferocious buffalo. One day the gods, under the leadership of Brahmā, came to Śiva, who was speaking with Viṣṇu. Upon hearing the god's complaints, Śiva grew quite angry and a very hot glow emanated from his face. A similar heat radiated from Viṣṇu's face and that of the other gods, so that a mountain of fire came into being that suddenly changed into a beautiful goddess, who was no other than Durgā, also called Candikā or Candī. The gods were very pleased to see Durgā, each giving her presents of weapons and jewelry. Durgā set off for the battlefield, riding a lion. There she fought the *asura* armies. After she had killed them all, Mahiṣāśura, their king, attacked her. A terrible battle ensued, during which Mahiṣāśura changed shape several times. Finally he took the form of a ferocious buffalo. Durgā jumped on his back and pierced his throat with her lance. From the wound there suddenly appeared an *asura* in human form who attacked her. But Durgā's spiritual power (*śakti*) was great, and she killed him.
>
> (from AGRAWALA 1963)

One interpretation of Durgā's defeat of the *asura* is that it symbolizes her role of protecting people, especially from the consequences of war. Reference to this most important of her roles is found in her name, which comes from the Sanskrit *durgā* (*dur* + *gam*), meaning "fort" (KUMAR 1974, 120). Durgā's role is further clarified in *Devī Māhātmya* 12.4–7, in which it is stated that she protects those who worship her on the eighth, ninth, and fourteenth of the month, when the moon is bright. The worshippers need not fear evildoers, will not be wounded by weapons, will be protected from poverty, fire, and flood, and will not be separated from their loved ones (AGRAWALA 1963, 144–45).

In summary, the Indian conception of Durgā sees her as a great goddess who offers protection from enemies and disease and assures the general wel-fare. She is also regarded as a fertility goddess who especially rules the veg-etable kingdom. On the other hand, when displeased with her human charges she may bring the evils they fear, especially disease.[8]

DURGĀ IN JAVA

The archaeological data discussed earlier show that it was as conqueror of the *aśura* that Durgā received most emphasis in Java.[9] Examination of written sources confirms that her role there was similar to the one described in *Devī Māhātmya*. She is worshiped mainly to gain victory over and protection from enemies, as may be seen from the following examples.

1) Durgā was worshiped by King Erlangga, who ruled over Java during the tenth and eleventh centuries. After he fled his capital Watan Mas in the face of an attack, Erlangga went to Patakan, the village Kambang Sri, to worship a goddess in the form of a statue (*bhāṭṭarī arccarūpa*) at the Tērēp hermitage. He gained victory, and upon returning to his palace he promulgated the *praśasti Tērēp* (Tērēp inscription) in 1032 C.E., granting the Tērēp hermitage tax-free status. Although the name Durgā does not appear in the Patakan inscription, comparison with other data proves this *bhāṭṭarī arccarūpa* to be none other than Durgā (SANTIKO 1992, 236–39).

2) An inscription on the back of the base of a Chāmundī statue, now located in the Trowulan museum, proclaims that Sri Maharaja Kertanāgara, the last ruler of Singasari (thirteenth century), ordered the worship of Chāmundī, or Chāmundā, in order to strengthen his position on the throne (SANTIKO 1992, 123). The way in which this worship was conducted, however, is not explained. Chāmundā is another form of Kālī, who is called Chāmundī when grouped together with other goddesses known as *mātṛkā* (mothers). This group usually consists of seven goddesses, giving them the name Saptamātṛkā, the seven mothers. There are also groups of three and five, however. These goddesses are the *śakti*s (female energies) of various gods; Brahmāṇī is that of Brahmā; Varahī is that of Viṣṇu as Varāhavatara; Aindrī is the *śakti* of Indra, and so on. In *Devī Māhātmya* it is told that Kālī (Chāmundā) and several other goddesses emerged from Durgā's brow when she was angered. They then helped her slay the *aśura* (AGRAWALA 1963, 105–13). For this reason the Saptamātṛkā, or Chāmundā herself, are worshiped in South India and Bengal in order to obtain victory over, or protection from, one's enemies (KUMAR 1974, 111).

The statue of Chāmundī from Singasari is one of the *mātṛkā*; here the *mātṛkā* form a group of three that stand between reliefs of Gaṇeśa and Bhairava. Chāmundī, the largest, is shown seated cross-legged on a corpse lying face downward. She has eight hands that hold:

Left	*Right*
a skull	[arm is broken]
the hair of the corpse	sword
a bow	short sword (*khaḍga*)
a *nāgapāśa* (snake-like noose)	[arm is broken]

To the right of the goddess, on the base, there is a large trident (*triśūla*). Four smaller relief statues surround Chāmundī:

1) To her right is a four-armed Gaṇeśa holding in his left hand a drinking bowl made from a skull. The other three arms are broken. His throne is decorated with a *chandrakapāla* (crescent moon and skull). He is clothed in a jacket that reaches his knees, and he has strings of small bells around his ankles. He stands on top of a pile of corpses.

2) To Chāmundī's right, above Gaṇeśa, there is a relief of a god on a fish. This may be Varahi, one of the *mātṛkā*. This statue is smaller than that of Gaṇeśa.

3) Also to Chāmundī's right is a relief of Bhairava, of the same size as that of Gaṇeśa. Its four arms hold:

Left	*Right*
a skull bowl	a knife placed on top of a wolf
[arm is broken]	a trident

The unclothed Bhairava dances on top of a pile of skeletons, wearing a necklace of skulls. His ankles are decorated with strings of small bells. The shape and details of this relief are quite similar to those on a large statue of Bhairava now in the museum in Leiden that has *cakra*s (discuses) engraved on its base.

4) To the left of Chāmundī, above the Bhairava relief, there is an unidentifiable, broken relief of a goddess. The small statues of goddesses represent two of the *mātṛkā*. This depiction is odd because, while grouped together with them, Chāmundī is much larger. The inscription on her back confirms that this goddess is indeed Chāmundī. The other two perhaps serve to bring additional power to the worship, so that an even better result may be achieved.

These details of the statues open the possibility that Tantric rites were practiced here. In the Bengal area Chāmundī was worshiped in a Tantric rite called *vaśīkaraṇa*, which aimed to defeat enemies (*śatrubali*) through the use of black magic. *Vaśīkaraṇa* is actually the common name of a ritual for the defeat of enemies, a ritual taken up by adherents of Tantrism and forming part of a group of six Tantric magic rituals:

1) *Stambhana*, a ritual that destroys a person's physical powers. Everything involved can be done by the person performing the ritual.
2) *Vaśīkarana*, a ritual giving one control over one's enemies and all their desires.
3) *Mārana*, a ritual through which one can kill a person or cause bodily harm.
4) *Vidveṣana*, a way of causing enmity between people.
5) *Uccaṭana*, a ritual causing others to become ill, to be shamed, or to suffer material loss.
6) *Śānti*, a ritual through which the negative influence of a person's horoscope may be neutralized.

(CHATOPADHYAYA 1978, 9; BANERJI 1978, 208–13)

It is possible, therefore, that King Kertanāgara had a statue of Chāmundī made as part of the *mātṛkā* group, and that during its installation magical Tantric rites such as *vaśīkarana* were performed to defeat his enemies. Who these enemies were is not clear from the inscription, but considering that it is dated about 1214 Saka (1292 C.E.), it is likely that they would have been the Chinese under Kublai Khan, whom Kertanāgara had opposed by sending an army to Melayu (Sumatra), as well as by religiomagical means (MOENS 1924, 544; SANTIKO 1992, 133).[10]

Not much is known about the way in which Durgā was worshiped in Java. The only source that we have for this is the manuscript *Calon Arang*, dating from the Majapahit era (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries). This is an Old Javanese manuscript that also contains some Middle Javanese words; it is written in Balinese script, and was translated into Dutch by Poerbatjaraka in 1926. It is a copy of an older, unrecovered manuscript, which is thought to date from the Majapahit era. The *Calon Arang*, which tells of events in the time of King Erlangga, can be divided into two parts. The first part is the story of Calon Arang, a witch-widow from Girah, while the second part tells of the division of Erlangga's kingdom by Mpu Bharadah. For the purposes of this paper only the first part is relevant. Briefly, the story is that Calon Arang, a witch-widow from the village of Girah, has a very beautiful daughter named Ratna Manggali. Because Calon Arang is known as a sorceress, no one dares to ask for her daughter's hand in marriage, which arouses Calon Arang's anger. In response she orders her disciples to join her in worshiping Durgā in the graveyard at midnight, with the aim of killing everyone in the kingdom by spreading an infectious disease. She succeeds, and many of Erlangga's subjects die. She is finally stopped by Mpu Bharadah, the lord of the yogis who lives in Lemah Tulis (POERBATJARAKA 1926, 115–31).

Calon Arang and her disciples worship Durgā twice. The first ritual is performed at night. After Calon Arang has "read her book" (read mantras?) she tells her disciples to join her in the graveyard to ask for the blessing of *bhaṭāri* (goddess) Bhagawatī (Durgā). They perform a dance during which Durgā and her entourage appear and join them in the dance. Calon Arang then requests to be allowed to kill the inhabitants of the realm. Durgā gives her permission, but reminds Calon Arang not to kill anyone living in the capital. After taking their leave, Calon Arang and her disciples dance and cause a commotion at a crossroads. The next day many people fall ill and die. In the second ritual Calon Arang is even angrier because she has been attacked by the king's army. She goes to the graveyard at night to wait on the goddess Durgā, ordering all her disciples to dance. She brings a corpse back to life, which she ties to a tree and kills again as an offering to the goddess. The goddess Bhagawatī appears and grants all of Calon Arang's requests, after which ever more people become ill and die, the disease spreading even to the center of the capital.

There are several aspects of Calon Arang's worship of Durgā that deserve our attention. First, she uses black magic to vanquish her enemies. Second, it is performed in a graveyard at midnight. Third, a human corpse (here brought back to life) is Durgā's offering, and fourth, Calon Arang has Durgā-like characteristics in that her anger brings forth infectious diseases.

In Tantric Hinduism worship can be divided into three categories: *nityā-pūjā* is the worship of a deity, especially a protective one, which is done daily without expectation of personal profit; *naimittiaka* is the worship of gods without expectations of worldly profit but with the hope of becoming one with the temple's *iṣṭadewatā* (god of one's choice); *kāma pūjā* is the worship of a god or its *iṣṭadevatā* with the aim of gaining worldly benefits. Included in the last are Tantric rituals, using the six kinds of magic (*ṣaṭ-karman*) mentioned earlier, e.g., *stambhana*, *vaśīkaraṇa*, and the like. The first five (excepting *śānti*) are destructive in nature because they use black magic. They are known as *abhicāra* or *krūrakarma* (malevolent spells or violent actions). Tantrists do not like *abhicāra pūjā* because they demand innocent victims. However, if the rituals are performed successfully, the worshipper will have the power and the characteristics of the deity worshiped and can "force" this deity to grant his desires (GUPTA 1972, 126, 159–61).

Considering the place, time, the goddess involved, the way in which she is worshiped, and the desired goals, it can be assumed that the Tantric ritual Calon Arang and her disciples were involved in was the *māraṇa* one, one of the (black) magical Tantric rituals for the destruction of one's opponents. The word *mā- raṇa* (death) is mentioned several times in the Calon Arang manuscript, although it is not clear whether this word is connected with the

ritual in progress. The *abhicāra* or *krūrakarma* ritual—that is, the *māraṇa* rit-
ual Calon Arang performed—seems to have been successful, in that she
gained Durgā's powers and characteristics. Like Durgā, Calon Arang in her
anger spreads an infectious disease and succeeds in "coercing" Durgā to
grant her every request (SANTIKO 1992, 258–59).

The "Devī Māhātmya" tale referred to earlier is part of the Śākta tradi-
tions. In India, however, statues of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī are worshiped
by adherents of both Śaktism and Śaivism. To which sect a particular statue
of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī "belongs" can be ascertained from, among other
things, the position of the goddess in the pantheon. In Śaktism, Durgā is
Mahadevī or Mahaśakti, a position superior to that of Śiva. She is given a
special temple, known as a *śāktapīṭha*. These are found all over India, the
best known being the Khalighat temple in Calcutta (BEANE 1977, 203). In
Śaivism, on the other hand, Durgā is Śiva's "wife," and her statue occupies
the cella north of Śiva's temple, as can be seen in Orissa (BONER 1966). As
was pointed out above, in Java statues of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī occupy
the cella north of the Śiva temple and no temple specifically dedicated to Durgā
has ever been found,[11] leading us to believe that Śaktism never developed in
Java. This is further supported by several literary sources, such as the *kakawin*[12]
Ghatotkacāśraya, where Durgā is called Mahāśakti and *paramasūkṣmatara*.[13]
It is also made quite clear by the position of Śiva, who, as Bhatara Guru, is
much higher than the goddess (SANTIKO 1992, 143–61, 293–94).

Several statues of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī have frightful faces, depict-
ing the goddess with fangs and bulging eyes. These derive from the time when
Durgā was mixed up with Kālī to become Durgā-Kālī, who was worshiped
in Tantra-Vāmācāra rituals, possibly by adherents of the Śiva Kāpālika sect
(in Java known as Śiva Bhairava or Bherawapakṣa-Sewapakṣa).[14] In Tantric
sects in Java, Durgā-Kālī is often symbolically portrayed as a cruel goddess
who punishes sinners in a horrible fashion. In the *kakawin Ghatotkacāśraya*,
for instance, Durgā is said to eat evildoers, and in the Trailokyapuri II
inscription (dating from the end of the Majapahit era [1408]; see below) pre-
cisely detailed descriptions are found relating how those who disobey the
regulations set forth in the inscriptions are to be punished by Durgā.

THE RĀKṢASĪ DURGĀ ON RELIEFS

In addition to statues of Durgā as the slayer of Mahiṣāśura, there are also
Durgā reliefs from the Majapahit era depicted on temple walls; e.g., at
Candi Tegawangi near Pare, Candi Sukuh on the western slope of Mt Lawu,
and on the terrace of the Panataran temple, near Blitar. On these reliefs the
goddess is shown quite differently from Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī—she is
tall, large, and fearsome in appearance, with fangs, bulging eyes, large nose,

and long, loose, disordered hair (*gimbal*), and has the look of a female demon (*rākṣasī*). She dwells in graveyards, surrounded by all sorts of hideous spirits (plate 3).

Written sources from about the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such as the *Tantu Panggelaran*, the *Sudamala*, the *kidung*[15] *Sri Tanjung*, and the *Korawāsrama*, inform us that this *rākṣasī* Durgā was none other than the penal appearance of Umā (Pārvatī), who was condemned because of her transgressions. In the *Sudamala*, Umā is unfaithful to her husband, and takes Brahmā as her lover. Śiva, here called Batara Guru, is both very angry and shamed, and curses her to become the *rākṣasī bhaṭārī* Durgā or Ranini for a period of twelve years. She and her escorts, among whom is the female demon Kalika, are sentenced to reside in the Setra Gandamayu cemetery. After twelve years her offense is expiated (*linukat*) by Sadewa, one of the Pandawa Lima (the five Pāṇḍavas), aided by Batara Guru (VAN STEIN-CALLENFELS 1925, 10–31).[16]

In the *Tantu Panggelaran*, Durgā punishes her son, Kumāra, by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. When Batara Guru sees this, he becomes very angry and condemns her to become the *rākṣasī* Durgādevī, who must remain in the *pātāla* (underworld) and expiate her sins by doing penance (*tapas*) there (PIGEAUD 1924, 103–104; SANTIKO 1992, 172–75).[17]

The *Korawāsrama* tells of a magic book that Gaṇeśa (Bhātarā Gana) receives from his father, Śiva, in which one can read about a person's past and future lives. Umā forces Gaṇeśa to foretell her future, but when he does it becomes known that she was once unfaithful with Sūryā, the sun god, and with a cowherd. Angered and shamed, Umā tears up Gaṇeśa's book and suddenly changes into the *rākṣasī bhaṭārī* Durgā. After some time she is released by Gaṇeśa, aided by the *Tripuruṣi* Sarasvatī, Śrī, and Sāvitrī (SWELLENGREBEL 1936, 41–42; EDI SEDYAWATI 1985, 286–92; SANTIKO 1992, 178–83). The *Sri Tanjung* tale does not make clear how Umā changed into Durgā, nor does it describe her appearance. All it says is that it happened because of her past sins, and that she looks repugnant and frightening (PRIJONO 1938).

Interestingly, this demonic Durgā is quite similar to the Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī. In the *Sudamala*, the demonic Durgā or Ranini is asked by Kunti, the mother of the Pandava, to aid her sons in the Bharatayuddha war against their cousins, the Kaurava. Kunti fears for her son's safety, because the Kaurava are assisted by two mighty *rākṣasā*s, Kalanjaya and Kalantaka.

IDEAS UNDERLYING THE TWO FORMS OF DURGĀ
On the basis of evidence collected since 1980, we know that between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries two different conceptions of Durgā

were simultaneously current in Java. This gives rise to two questions. First,
why are there two different physical forms of her, and second, what concep-
tions underlie them? The first form, from the Majapahit era and perhaps
even earlier, is Durgā-Kālī, the goddess with the *krūra* traits who is wor-
shiped by adherents of the Siva Trantra-Bhairava sect (Bherava-Sivapakṣa or
Bheravapakṣa). The second is Durgādevī or *batari* Durgā Ranini, who is the
penal incarnation of Umā (Pārvatī), the *śakti* of Siva as *batara* Kala.

Written sources containing these two concepts reveal that each was sup-
ported by a different cultural environment: the royal court and society
beyond the court, respectively.[18] Durgā as the primary goddess of Śaivism,
including her role as destroyer of Mahiṣāśura (Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardinī),
was known in court circles, as can be learned from the *kakawin
Kalayanawanantaka*, the *kakawin Sutasoma*, the *kakawin Arjunawijaya*, and
the prose work *Calon Arang*.[19] References to the *rākṣasī* Durgā are found in
the stories *Sudamala*, *Tantu Panggelaran*, *Sri Tanjung*, and *Korawasrama*.

The authors of these court *kakawin* appear to be referring to Indian tra-
ditions, while literature originating beyond the courts is freer in these
matters (EDI SEDYAWATI 1985, 220–21, 260–61, 368, 382). We can propose,
then, that the idea of Durgā as a Śaivite goddess was current in court circles,
while Durgā as *rākṣasī* prevailed beyond the court walls. This later environ-
ment seems to have allowed a greater liberty to interpret various conceptions
of Indian gods and goddesses, permitting them to develop into Javanese
deities of the *Tantu Panggelaran*.[20] For this reason it is not to be wondered at
that literary works written outside the courts often portray deviant concep-
tions of Hindu deities, nor is it surprising that no Indian models can be
found for many of the tales they contain, including stories of the *rākṣasī*
Durgā.

However, the reason for the shift in the concept of Durgā, from a
supreme Śaiva goddess to the fearsome demonic figure, are not as yet
known, because this is not explained in the written sources. The infidelity
that causes Umā (Pārvatī) to be cursed is curious because in India Umā is
known as a faithful wife and is held up as an example to Indian women.
This extraordinary change in her personality may be due to an erroneous
understanding of the essence of secret Tantric ritual and of Durgā-Kālī as
the goddess worshiped in it.

One Tantric ritual that may have been known in Java is the *pañca-mā-
kāra-pūjā*. In this ritual disciples (*sādhaka*), led by a teacher, conduct a ritual
within a circle at midnight. The location should be an isolated one, prefer-
ably a graveyard, which is reminiscent of the actions in the Calon Arang tale
discussed above. Both the disciples and the teacher must be within the circle,
each with a female partner. Here they perform the five forbidden *ma*: eating

matsya (fish), eating *maṃśa* (meat), performing *mudrā* (specific ritual gestures), drinking *madya* (wine), and engaging in *maithuna* (sexual intercourse). The female partners of both the teacher and the disciples should preferably be their wives, but if a wife is unable to participate, each pair must undergo a marriage ceremony called *Śaiva vivaha* to be made into a permanent ritual couple (BANERJI 1978, 110). Only *sādhaka* who have attained specific levels of initiation may participate in this ritual, so that the practice will not be misused.

The *pañca-mā-kāra-pūjā* ritual is performed to teach the disciples self-control. The five forbidden practices are specifically indulged in and at the peak of their enjoyment the participants must identify themselves with the highest deity, Śiva Bhairava, and their partners with Bhairavi. This is a secret Tantric ritual, so that the practice, goal, and essence of each action are not understood by outsiders.[21] Similarly, the secret nature of the rituals led to the mistaken idea that Durgā-Kālī had been unfaithful to her husband and was not fit to be placed on one level with the other gods and goddesses.

So too with other Tantric rituals in India, and perhaps in Java as well. The use of bloody offerings, which in themselves were symbolic, gave rise to a popular idea of Durgā as a demonic goddess, an idea that may already have existed in ancient Java before the Majapahit era. In Java, at the end of various *praśasti* (inscriptions) there is a portion called the *śapatha* (imprecatory formula), which consists of a call upon the gods, spirits, ancestors, guardians of the compass-points, and the like to insure that the proclamation contained in the inscription be obeyed by the ruler, officials, and the people.[22] As part of those formulae, Durgā along with demons and spirits believed to haunt human habitations are named and asked to punish those who disobey the proclamation.

And thus Durgā, the *śakti* of Śiva, who started out as a goddess who aided humankind and was worshiped in Tantric rituals, became a demonic female *rākṣasī* in the popular conception. A misunderstanding of Tantric ritual by outsiders caused her image to become tarnished, turning her into an evil *rākṣasī*, not a goddess but a fanged queen of the dead who lives in graveyards.

NOTES

1. *Abhaṅga*: standing straight with the head and torso in one line (*madhyasutra*), the right or left leg somewhat bent; *samabhaṅga*: standing erect; *tribhaṅga*: standing with the body along three lines (see LIEBERT 1976, 1, 248, 301).

2. Of seventy-three statues, only ten depict fighting in any form.

3. In Java there are only two statues of Durgā accompanied by her lion vehicle. One was found in Pekalongan, Central Java, and is now kept in the Museum Nasional in Jakarta (no.

152). The other consists only of fragments found in the courtyard of the Singasari temple.

4. Tantrism is a secret ritual practice full of symbolism. Its goal is the quick achievement of *mokṣa* (final release), if possible during the person's lifetime. Tantric ritual was applied to several religious traditions, such as Śaivism, Śaktism, and Buddhism. When this occurred the religious tradition was given the suffix *tantra*, so that we have Śiva Tantra, Śakta Tantra, and Buddha Tantra (or Tantrayāna).

5. Śaktism is a sect of Hinduism that considers the position of the *śakti* to be higher than that of the gods and generally has Durgā as its primary goddess.

6. In the *Purāṇas* Lakṣmī is called Śrī-Lakṣmī, while in Java she is better known as Sri or Dewi Sri.

7. Śaivites consider Viśnu as the aspect of Śiva that protects humankind and cares for the world.

8. In this she does not differ from other gods, spirits, and even rulers who display their demonic side to those who do not acknowledge their exalted status, e.g., by disobeying rules of behavior (see BERG 1951, 484).

9. In India there are nine forms of Durgā that together are called Nava Durgā.

10. MOENS (1924, 544) points out that Kertanāgara initiation as Bhairawa may be compared to Kublai Khan's initiation as Jina, giving the two equally demonic aspects with which to face each other (see note 8). As BERG (1951, 484) points out, it is but a small step to the assumption that Kertanāgara's initiation into these rites and his foreign policy were a reaction, respectively, to Kublai Khan's initiation and to his aggressive posture (cf. BERG 1950, 25).

11. In the Candi Rimbi, near the city of Jombang, the primary chamber was once occupied by a statue of Pārvatī that is thought to have been an incarnation of Tribhuwana. Lack of supporting evidence makes it difficult to consider Candi Rimbi a Śākta temple, however. Although in Central Java the Kalasan temple is dedicated to the goddess Tārā, this is a Buddhist temple and thus cannot be used to prove that the Hindu Śākta sect was present in Java.

12. A *kakawin* is an Old Javanese literary genre using the Indian poetic form *kavya* (poems related to the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*) as its model. It uses a different meter from the *kidung*.

13. *Paramasūkṣmatara* is the highest immaterial state of being.

14. It is possible that the Śiva Bhairava sect arose only during the Majapahit era. From the book *Tantu Panggelaran* we know that the rituals performed by its adherents were very similar to those performed by the Śiva Kapalika sect (LORENZEN 1972; SANTIKO 1992, 272–74).

15. The *kidung* is a kind of Middle Javanese literary genre.

16. *Lukat* or *ruwat* is actually a *dīkṣā* (consecration) rite to wipe out *klesa* (sin) or *mala* (impurity) from the soul of the *śiṣya* (disciple).

17. *Pātāla* is one of the regions under the earth, the abode of *nāga*s and demons. It is also the lower world in general, not to be confused with *naraka*, the place of punishment.

18. According to P. J. Zoetmulder and Edi Sedyawati, the Old Javanese *belle-lettres* *kakawin*s (see note 12, above) were part of Old Javanese court life. The authors of these poems, known as *kawi*s, lived at the court, even though they were themselves neither royal nor noble. The *Tantu Panggelaran*, *Sri Tanjung*, *Sudamala*, and *Korawāsrama*, on the other hand, lack a court (*kraton*) background.

19. Another aspect of Durgā is that of a deity who comes to the aid of separated lovers. Javanese literary data on this aspect of her are scarce (SANTIKO 1992, 236). In the eleventh-century Old Javanese *kakawin Ghatotkacāśraya*, she reunites Arjuna's son Abhimanyu with his beloved wife, Kṣiti Sundarī, the beautiful daughter of King Kresna of Dvaravati. In the same *kakawin* Durgā devours all of the wicked people, meaning that she destroys the evil that is loose in the world of men (WIRJOSUPARTO 1960; SANTIKO 1992, 143–61). She is also depicted

as helping unhappy lovers in the works *Sri Tanjung* and *Kidung Margasmaya* (PRIJONO 1938, 32–45, 108–29; SANTIKO 1992, 252–53).

20. In the *Tantu Panggelaran* there is a story about the moving of Mt Mahameru from Jambhudvīpa (India) to Java. The summit of Mahameru is the home of the gods and thus its move to Java meant that these gods moved as well and in the process became Javanese gods.

21. For example, the book *Pararaton*, which dates from after Majapahit's fall, reports that King Kertanāgara was addicted to intoxicating drink (*pijer anadah sajong*), though elsewhere the poet Prapañca claims that, on the contrary, the king abstained from this and the other forbidden matters. Kertanāgara's indulgence was part of his participation in the *cakra* ritual, into which he had been initiated. This was paired with his initiation into the ten purification rituals and the eight initiations of *cakra* Tantrism (MOENS 1924, 530–532).

22. This custom was known beyond Java and into the Muslim era as well (cf. WESSING and PROVENCHER 1987).

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