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## Wild Sacredness and the Poiesis of Transactional Networks

Relational Divinity and Spirit Possession  
in the *Būta* Ritual of South India

The ritual practices of the low castes have often been considered through concepts such as Sanskritization as well as consensus and replication, but have also been interpreted as resistance against the dominance of the high castes. The tendency common to these analyses is their interpretation of the low castes' ritual practices in terms of caste hierarchy and power relations. Focusing on the relational aspect of divinity and the importance of wild sacredness in ritual contexts, this study will provide an alternative perspective from which to view the complementary opposites in the rituals of the low castes. These are not merely a reflection of unequal caste relations, but are the basis of the relationships among all the various actors—including human beings, wild animals, and spirits—personified as *būtas* that constitute a fluid network in a social, ecological, and cosmological sphere.

KEYWORDS: spirit possession—transactional networks—*śakti*—*būta* ritual—  
South India

**B**ŪTAS ARE deities and spirits worshipped widely in South Kanara, the coastal areas of Karnataka.<sup>1</sup> They are generally considered deities, such as apotheosized local heroes or heroines or the spirits of wild animals dwelling in forests. The *būtas* are closely related to and also embody the wild, dangerous, and fertile aspects of divine power.

The *būta* ritual is mainly constituted of spirit possession, oracles, and the interactions between the devotees and the *būtas* incarnated in the impersonators belonging to the Nalike, Parava, and Pambada castes (all designated scheduled castes). Priest-mediums called *pātri* or *māni* of the Billava caste and *mukkāldi* of the Bant caste conduct the ritual.<sup>2</sup> Among all the devotees at the *būta* shrine, the patrons of the shrine play the most important role. Most of them are the landlords of local manors called *guttus*, who belong to the Bant caste.<sup>3</sup>

Since the colonial period, European writers have differentiated *būta* worship from the Sanskritic rituals for Hindu deities and have considered the former as inferior to the latter. For example, THURSTON (1975, 144–45) described *būta* worship as “devil dances” and a *būta* as a “demon” served by and incarnated in “a Pombada or a Nalke, a man of the lowest class.”

Thurston’s description makes explicit the general view of the colonial administrators and missionaries, a view based not only on Christianity, but also on the Brahmanical doctrine of native Brahman informants. *Būta* worship in South Kanara was thus regarded as one of the “archaic” Dravidian cults discriminated against by Brahman priests who conducted Sanskritic rituals (NAVADA and FERNANDES 2008, ix–xx).

Apart from the colonial interpretation of popular rituals, ritual practices of the low castes have often been understood in academia by contrast with the dominant, Sanskritic rituals. SRINIVAS (1952) described the customs and rituals of the lower castes using the notion of Sanskritization, while MOFFATT (1979) interpreted them through the concepts of consensus and replication. On the other hand, the ritual practices of the low castes have often been interpreted as resistance against the ideology and values of the high castes.<sup>4</sup>

A question common to these studies is this: how should we understand the ritual practices of the non-Brahman, low-caste people? In order to answer this question, most analyses focus on the hierarchical relationship and power relations between the high and low castes. In such analyses the whole meaning and func-

tion of a ritual is often reduced to a symbolic representation of the unequal caste hierarchy in the social-political sphere. However, as we will see in this article, these rituals concern not only caste hierarchy, but also the creation of a network through which particular actors, substances, and power are related to each other in more complex ways.

In this article, I attempt to reconsider the hierarchy-centered analyses of the low castes' ritual practices, such as theories of Sanskritization, consensus and replication, and resistance, through a close investigation of *būta* worship. Extending APPADURAI and BRECKENRIDGE'S (1976) notion of a "transactional network" and reconsidering DUMONT'S (1970) notion of relational divinity as well as his insight into the importance of complementary opposites in Hindu rituals, this study provides an alternative view to the hierarchy-centered analysis; namely, a perspective to analyze complementary opposites in ritual contexts not merely as the reflection of unequal caste hierarchy, but as the core of the relationships among various actors, including not only human beings but also wild animals and spirits personified as *būtas*.

#### INTERPRETATIONS OF RITUAL PRACTICES

Ritual practices of the low castes have often been considered through concepts such as Sanskritization, consensus, and replication. SRINIVAS (1952) first described the concept of Sanskritization as the adaptation of Brahmanical rituals, beliefs, and ways of life through which low castes seek to improve their position in the caste hierarchy. For this Sanskritization, the coupled notions of purity and impurity are important as they systematize and maintain the structural distance between different castes (SRINIVAS 1952, 103).

Related to this Sanskritization are MOFFATT'S (1979) concepts of consensus and replication. Moffatt argues that the Dalit live in consensus with the wider Indian culture by replicating among themselves almost every relationship from which they have been excluded. Though Moffatt's consensus and replication theory has provoked criticism from historical and epistemological points of view (for example, SEKINE 2002, 31–33), his ethnography warrants reevaluation from a new analytical perspective. Drawing on his ethnographic data, he gives the example of the annual festival of the territorial goddess Mariyamman in a Paraiyan or "Harijan" colony in Endavur village, Chingleput district, Tamil Nadu.

Moffatt explains that as a Dalit group, the Harijans are excluded from the *ūr* (main caste hamlet) and thus from the higher-caste cult of the *ūr* goddess Mariyamman. In response, the Harijans replicated for themselves an identical cult and a separate image of Mariyamman inside the colony. The colony Mariyamman even has the same powers as the *ūr* Mariyamman: to guard the boundaries of her territory, to protect those inside, and to bring rain (MOFFATT 1979, 222–47).

The bodily form of the goddess has a Brahman's head and a Dalit's body. In her worship in the colony, as in the *ūr*, she is alternately present in her low and high forms; that is, as dangerous, impure, and bloodthirsty, or benign, pure, and tranquil.

In the colony festival, the goddess is dealt with first in her low, fierce, and impure form, mediated by the *pūjāris* (temple servants), and then later in her higher forms, mediated by the higher-ranking Valluvar *purohit* (temple priest). She is transformed from a low, angry, and “hot” being into a higher, beneficent, and “cool” being who provides rain and protection to the colony (MOFFATT 1979, 250–67).

Moffatt argues that the Mariyamman festival shows the forms of social-structural replication by the Endavur Dalit. By replicating the *ūr* territorial cult from which they are excluded, “the Harijans have recreated for themselves the single specific divine being from who the higher castes have cut them off. This deity’s powers are thus available to them” (MOFFATT 1979, 223).<sup>5</sup>

In this way, ritual practices of the low castes have been interpreted as indications of their internalization of caste hierarchical values that distinguish highness and lowness, purity and impurity, and superordination and subordination among the higher castes. On the other hand, religious practices by the low castes have also often been interpreted as resistance to the ideology of the dominant castes.

UCHIYAMADA (2000), for example, illustrates how the ritual practices conducted by the Dalit Parayas and Pulayas of Nagarajanadu, Alleppey district, Kerala, work as resistance against the dominance of the high castes. The social structure of Nagarajanadu is expressed spatially with the houses of the higher castes such as the Nayars in the higher central part of the village and the houses of the Pulayas and Parayas closer to the *punja* (vast low-lying water-logged land), which is seen by the high castes as dangerous and polluted. The ancestor spirits of Dalits are also believed to be “sitting” in their lineage *kāvus* (groves) on the margins of the village.

Though Dalits are socially subordinate to the Nayars, there is a complementary relationship between the high caste in the center and the Dalit on the periphery, in that the Nayars remove their “sins” and malevolence, and “gift” them to the Dalits. On the other hand, paddy (*oryza sativa*) produced in the *punja* by the Dalits is brought to the landlords’ houses in the center. Through this process of mutual gift giving, of distance pollution, and paddy production, the space of Nagarajanadu is reconstructed into one of a pure, structured center with polluted and less-structured margins (UCHIYAMADA 2000, 65–66).

As a result of land reforms in the 1960s and 1970s, the Dalits lost their ancestral land, and many high castes came to own this marginal land. The Dalits, however, attempted to retain their control by performing ancestor worship in their lineage *kāvus*. By invoking ancestral spirits in the *kāvus*, they invoked the dominant symbolic system’s caste-specific spaces over the disembedded post-land-reform space. UCHIYAMADA (2000, 82–83) argues that the performance of ancestor worship thus works as resistance against the encroachment of higher castes into marginal lands by recreating the symbolic boundaries that separate the pure center from the impure margins.

BEYOND THE CONSENSUS AND RESISTANCE THEORIES:  
A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Uchiyamada interpreted Dalit ancestor worship as resistance to the higher castes, while Moffatt analyzed their Mariyamman worship as the replication of high-caste ritual practice. Although they reached contrastive conclusions, similar structures can be abstracted from their ethnographic descriptions: these rituals crystallize and recreate the interdependent, complementary relations of opposites—center and periphery, inside and outside, highness and lowness, purity and impurity, protection and danger, and structure and chaos.

In his reexamination of the Mariyamman festivals described by MOFFATT (1979) and BECK (1981), FULLER (1988) calls our attention to the relation of opposition between the high and low forms of the goddess. He points out that rather than being a cluster of contrasting attributes, the two contrastive forms of the goddess embody DUMONT's (1970, 20–32) principle of divinity as a relation between ranked complementary opposites. Based on his own research at the Minaksi Temple in Madurai city, Fuller insists that while divinity within the pantheon of village deities is always relational, for the Sanskritic deities relational divinity is largely displaced by substantial, non-relational divinity.

The Sanskritic deities ... symbolise a social order in which the keystone of Dumont's theory of caste, complementary hierarchical relationships, has vanished. These relationships instead organise, in counterpoint, the village deities, who symbolise the caste system as it exists, albeit one-dimensionally. Further, they also symbolise resistance to a Brahmanical pretence that the low castes have no function in the world, by according pre-eminence to the hierarchical relationships which necessarily link the high and the low. (FULLER 1988, 34)

Here, Fuller seems to reach a similar conclusion to Uchiyamada: rituals work as the resistance of the low castes against the high castes by recreating an interdependent caste relationship. Fuller's insight into relational divinity is most significant for the analysis of the low castes' ritual practices. His conclusion that the village deity symbolizes the resistance of the low castes to Brahmanical doctrine, however, is insufficient for two reasons. First, the complementary opposites are not only symbolized statically in the figures of the village deities but also dynamically flow through space and interact with each other. This can be seen, for example, in the high and low forms of the incarnation of Mariyamman in Endavur or in the pure paddy and destructive "gift" in Nagarajanadu. The "sacred geography" (UCHIYAMADA 2000, 83) is recreated through the physical interaction and circulation in space of substances and actors with contrastive characters. Second, when Fuller interprets Mariyamman worship as the "resistance" of the Dalit, he assumes that the relationship between complementary opposites in rituals merely symbolizes the caste relationship in the social-political sphere. Here, the whole meaning and function of the ritual is reduced to a symbolic representation of unequal caste hierarchy and power relations.

It may be true that all rituals concern the hierarchy and power relations of the people involved. Nevertheless, the rituals described by Moffatt and Uchiyamada concern not only caste hierarchy but also the creation of order in the world and the cosmos by linking, while separating and circulating particular substances in space (see DAS 1983; RAHEJA 1988). For instance, the Dalits in the Endavur Colony must conduct the Mariyamman festival themselves in order to access the goddess's power to reproduce the boundaries, to repel epidemics, and to bring rainfall. In a similar way, the Dalit in Nagarajanadu have to perform ancestor worship to recreate the sacred geography consisting of the appropriate circulation of agricultural products, sins, malevolence, and other substances.

In this sense, it is not sufficient to interpret the rituals merely in terms of caste hierarchy. Rather, they should be considered in terms of the cosmology, ecology, and ontology of the people who perform them. It may be necessary to consider the meaning of complementary opposites not merely from the viewpoint of unequal caste hierarchy in mundane human society, but as the relation of mutually differentiated, contrastive substances and actors that constitute a fluid network in a social, ecological, and cosmological space.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the above theoretical framework, I will examine *būta* worship in a village called Perar in a suburb of Mangalore, Karnataka. I will first investigate the historical background of *būta* worship in the village, then examine the process of the legitimation of Brahmanical caste hierarchy through the village *būta* shrine in the colonial period. Third, I will analyze *būta* worship in Perar from a relational perspective, focusing on the role of the *būtas*' impersonators as well as on the interrelation between the highest-ranked *būta* and the other *būtas* in the annual festival. Through these investigations, I will show how Brahmanical caste hierarchy interrelates with, or is absorbed into, the network of substances and actors created by *būta* worship.

#### THE LANDSCAPE OF PERAR

I conducted fieldwork in the two adjoining villages of Mudu Perar (East Perar) and Padu Perar (West Perar) in Mangalore Taluk, Karnataka.<sup>7</sup> In Perar, thick forests and shrubby hills surround lowlands intersected by a river. Land in Perar is classified into several categories according to its soil and humidity. Rice and areca nuts are produced mainly in the wet lowlands, while several kinds of vegetables are produced in the dry highlands. Local manor houses and other landed farmers' houses are scattered throughout the extensive paddy fields, while most wage laborers, who were once the domestic laborers of powerful *guttu* houses, live in the highlands.

In addition to the paddy and other cultivated fields, the forests and hills called *gudde* are an important resource for the villagers' lives. People often go into the *gudde* to hunt game or gather useful plants. Since most *gudde* land is under the control of local manor houses, a villager who hunts game there shares part of his bag with the owner. The *gudde* is believed to be the dwelling not only of

wild animals but also of *būtas* and other spirits. In Perar, several *nāga* (cobra) shrines called *nāgabana* are located inside the groves, and a shrine to Pilichamundi (*pilicāmūṇḍi* [a tiger *būta*]) is located on top of a hill near the village *būta* shrine. Because it is believed that various *būtas* of wild animals as well as other dangerous spirits are wandering about in the *guḍḍe*, it is regarded by most villagers as a fertile but hazardous place.

#### THE ORIGIN OF BŪTA WORSHIP IN PERAR

The territories of Perar, including living premises, cultivated fields, *guḍḍe*, and wastelands, are deeply related to the *būtas*' power, as illustrated in local legends. The *pāḍḍana* (oral epic) of Perar narrates the legend of Nadu, a tragic hero who travelled across the country as a human being, and then, after his death, was revived in a place called *baṅṭakamba* in Perar as a very powerful *būta*, Balavandi (*balavāṇḍi*), the main deity of the village shrine. Balavandi and related *būtas* such as Arasu, Pilichamundi, and Brammabermeru (*brammabermeru*) are believed to be the ultimate owners of Perar land. Thus they have the power to protect the land as well as to authorize the *guttus*' rights to their territory. The *pāḍḍana*, outlined below, shows the "origin" of *būta* worship and the highest-ranked *guttus*' control over village land.<sup>8</sup>

Balavandi was originally one of the followers of the supreme *būta*, Brammabermeru, in the spirit world. However, cursed by his master, Balavandi was sent to this world as a human baby and named Nadu by his foster parents. After growing up, Nadu travelled across the country with the king of Mangara (present-day Mangalore). On their way home, Nadu and the king met a Brahman who suddenly stopped them, taking the reins of Nadu's horse. The Brahman was actually Brammabermeru, who had disguised himself as a human being. Nadu and Brammabermeru glared at each other for a second, and then a great battle between them took place. As a result of this battle, Brammabermeru forced Nadu to disappear and become a *būta*.

After being revived as a *būta* in Perar, Balavandi invited another *būta* called Arasu, the "king" of the *būtas*, to enshrine himself there. Arasu agreed to come to Perar on one condition: that Balavandi also invite Brammabermeru. Balavandi accepted his request. The *būta* of a wild tiger called Pilichamundi joined them after fighting with Balavandi to acquire the right to enter the village.

Balavandi and Arasu then disguised themselves as human beings and visited several major houses in Perar. They visited a manor house called the Munda-bettu *guttu*, owned by a Jain lady called Koratai Balardi, the leader of the village. The deities requested that she build a *būta* shrine in exchange for the saving grace of the *būtas*. She accepted their request and built a shrine in cooperation with the heads of the other fifteen *guttus* in the village. The shrine consisted of a *māḍa* [tall *būta* shrine] for Arasu, a *cāvaḍi* [*būta* shrine with an open hall in front] for Balavandi, and a *guṇḍa* [sanctuary] for Brammabermeru. Balavandi

hierarchically ordered the *guttu* houses, and the Mundabettu *guttu* was given the highest position as well as control of the vast territory of Perar.

To fulfill Arasu's request, Balavandi went to a place called Kaje to get a *brahmaliṅga*,<sup>9</sup> the incarnation of Brammabermeru. After taking the *brahmaliṅga* to the village, Balavandi told all the heads of the *guttus*, "You people should perform a daily *pūjā* for Brammabermeru, hold a *dīpa pattuni* [light] for us, and conduct a *nēma* [festival] every year. If you do all these things, we great *daivas* [royal *būtas*] will protect both you and your land."

Henceforth, the heads of the *guttus* and other villagers have conducted the *nēma* in Perar.

The oral epic summarized above shows the ambiguous relationship between Balavandi and Brammabermeru. Balavandi, once a follower of Brammabermeru, was banished to the human world by his master's curse and then killed by him to become a spirit. Despite this antagonistic relationship with Brammabermeru, Balavandi took the *brahmaliṅga* to Perar to install it in the village shrine.

The *pāḍḍana* recounted above also shows the ambiguous character of Brammabermeru himself. In the epic, he is the sovereign of all the *būtas*, while he appears in this world in the form of a Brahman. Also, the *brahmaliṅga* is promised special status in the village shrine and offered a daily *pūjā*, something usually only performed by a Brahman priest for *paurāṇik* deities in Hindu temples. These aspects suggest both the local and Sanskritic qualities of Brammabermeru.

In the village *būta* shrine today, we can observe the Sanskritic characteristic of Brammabermeru, as described in the oral epic. For example, while a Bant priest called a *mukkāldi* conducts rituals for three *būtas* (Balavandi, Arasu, and Pilichamundi), a Brahman priest called an *asraṇṇa* performs rituals only for Brammabermeru in the *gundā*, which more closely resembles a temple than a *būta* shrine in structure. While chanting a mantra, the *asraṇṇa* cleans the inside of the shrine, bathes the *brahmaliṅga*, decorates it with garlands, and waves lamps in front of it. When worshippers come, he gives them sandalwood paste or a little consecrated water as *prasāda* (consecrated food offering). On the other hand, the *cāvāḍi* for Balavandi is usually closed and no daily *pūjā* is performed beyond an offering of light.

#### BŪTA WORSHIP, THE SYSTEM OF ENTITLEMENTS, AND THE TRANSACTIONAL NETWORK

*Būta* worship in Perar is based on a sophisticated system called *kaṭṭu* (custom or law). The most privileged families in relation to *būta* worship are a Brahman family called Pejattaya and the sixteen *guttu* families. These families are hierarchically ranked from the Mundabettu *guttu* to the sixteenth *guttu*, Pereer. Except for one Gowda family and three Billava families, all the other *guttu* families are Bants. Each *guttu* family has various roles and duties to organize the rituals at the village shrine. Among them, the first and the second *guttu* (the Mundabettu and Branabettu) are most responsible for the patronage and management of *būta* worship at the village level. The primary patron of the village shrine, the Munda-

bettu *guttu* head, called the *gaḍipattunāru*, has command over all the other *guttu* members and ritual workers.

For fulfilling their duties in *būta* worship, the Pejattaya and sixteen *guttus* are rewarded with various rights, privileges, and honors at the village shrine as well as in village society. During the *nēma*, all the heads of the sixteen *guttus* stand in front of a *būta* incarnated in a Pambada (*būta* impersonator), waiting their turn to be called by family name by the deity. At the end of the ritual, they receive the *būta*'s blessings according to their rank. These performances in the *nēma* show and confirm their social status.

The ritual roles of these sixteen *guttus* are complemented by another set of sixteen families called the *ulaguttu* (sub-*guttu*). Under these *guttu* and *ulaguttu* families, dozens of people called *cākiridakuru* (servants/people in service) execute various services for *būta* worship at the village level. These people are from particular families of several service castes, for example, Madivara (washermen), Jogi (musicians), Bandari (barbers), and Pambada (*būta* impersonators). Among them, one Pambada family plays an especially important role in Perar *būta* worship. Its male members are trained as the dancers and mediums of the *daivas*, or great *būtas*.

Traditionally, each *cākiridakuru* family was granted a portion of tax-free land called *umbali* from the Mundabettu *guttu*. Some of them settled there and those



FIGURE I. The *gaḍipattunāru* and *cākiridakuru* walking to the village *būta* shrine, 16 August 2008. All photos by Miho Ishii.

lands were named after the owners' families, such as *pambadele kōḍi* (Pambada's hilltop) or *jōgile bailu* (Jogi's plain). Also, these *cākiridakuru* families enjoyed the rights to a share of the paddy produced on particular plots of land called *bākimāru*. These plots were the property of the village *būta* shrine and were managed mainly by the head of the Mundabettu *guttu*. All ritual expenses and shrine worker rewards used to be paid in the form of paddy produced on this land. Apart from the *cākiridakuru* families, other families of various castes such as Billava, Achari (carpenters), and Gowda (cultivators and cattle breeders) also enjoyed rights to shares of the *prasāda* distributed during the *nēma*, in reward for their services at, or offerings to, the *būta* shrine.

The system of *būta* worship in Perar described above can be interpreted as a "system of entitlements" (TANABE 2006) that existed in pre-colonial western and southern India in various forms. In the pre-colonial system of entitlements, Tanabe argues, members of a local community were granted various rights to shares of local products and royal and/or community honors and privileges in exchange for performing different duties and functions for the reproduction of the state and community. In Perar, *būta* worship has been the core of the system of entitlements and has thus formed the basis of social-economic relations in the village through the redistribution of land, local products, honors, and *prasāda*. It can also be noted that *būta* worship in Perar constitutes a "transactional network" (APPADURAI and BRECKENRIDGE 1976) to which all the actors involved in this redistributive process are related. On the redistributive processes and transactional networks in South Indian temples, APPADURAI and BRECKENRIDGE (1976, 195) write as follows:

At the normative level, the deity ... commands resources (i.e., services and goods) such as those which are necessary and appropriate for the support and materialization of the ritual process described above. But these resources are not merely authoritatively commanded and received by the deity. On receipt, they are redistributed in the form of shares (*paṅku*) to the royal courtiers, the donor (*yajamāna*), and worshippers at large. The authority to command and redistribute resources places the deity at the center of a transactional nexus in which the deity is expected to be generous. Ritual which constitutes worship provides the schematic and elementary unit in which to observe the transactional network where first the deity and subsequently the donor are the object of gifting activity.

In Perar, the system of entitlements is constituted in, or embodied by, the mutual gifting activity between the *būtas*, as the ultimate owner of the land, and people in rituals, creating a transactional network among them. The term "network" is appropriate here because as STRATHERN points out, the concept of a network provides a way to "link or enumerate disparate entities without making assumptions about level or hierarchy" (1996, 522). Also, the concept allows us to focus not only on rules or regularity but also on the dynamism of the flow of certain substances through the transactional process, which performatively creates the nexus linking disparate entities (MARRIOTT 1976; STRATHERN 1988; 1996; see also GELL 1998, 106–20; SAX 2009, 133–34). In other words, it is not always

the case that the hierarchical system regulates the flow of substances; the flow of substances itself incessantly actualizes or (re)creates the relationship among the actors participating in the transaction. As we will see, in the case of *būta* worship, the actors who enter into the transactional network through the ritual process are not only the people and the deity as a sovereign, special person (APPADURAI and BRECKENRIDGE 1976, 190; APPADURAI 1981, 20–21), but also various wild animals such as tigers, wild boar, buffaloes, and cobras that are worshipped as *būtas*.

#### BŪTAS AND THE BRAHMANICAL CASTE HIERARCHY

While emphasizing the importance of the system of entitlements in pre-colonial West and South India, TANABE also points out that this system broke down with the advent of colonial administration and the new kind of monistic caste hierarchy that emerged under colonialism, where the ritualistic Brahmanical caste hierarchy matched the socioeconomic hierarchy (2006, 767–68). In the case of Perar, *būta* worship, which had formed the basis of the system of entitlements in the village, was unsettled and partly transformed under the colonial situation. To illustrate this, I will focus on the legal discourse's legitimation of the Brahmanical caste hierarchy in the village *būta* shrine.

The incident analyzed here is a legal dispute between an *asraṇṇa* named L. Udupa and the heads of the Mundabettu and Branabettu *guttus* over the trusteeship of the village *būta* shrine. Before we analyze the details of this dispute, it is necessary to outline the policy of the Madras government at that time on temple administration.

The Madras Endowments and Escheats Regulation, 1817 (Regulation VII of 1817) was the first legislation on religious institutions in Madras and was superseded by the Religious Endowment Act of 1863 (Act xx of 1863). In 1926, the Hindu Religious Endowments Board (henceforth HRE Board) was formed and the Hindu Religious Endowment Act (Madras Act II of 1927, henceforth HRE Act) was passed by the Madras Legislative Council. Through the foundation of the HRE Board and the HRE Act, the state enhanced its administrative power over local temples and gradually undermined the autonomy and traditional authority of local temples (PRESLER 1987, 15–35). Under these circumstances, the trusteeship of local religious institutions became a common subject of competition and dispute (APPADURAI 1981, 52–53; DIRKS 1987).

As we have seen, the village *būta* shrine in Perar consists of the *māḍa* and the *cāvaḍi* for Arasu and Balavandi respectively, and the special sanctuary or *gundā* for Brammabermeru. The daily worship and rituals for Brammabermeru are conducted only by an *asraṇṇa*, a Brahman priest who is hired by the Mundabettu *guttu* for this purpose. However, in 1928, L. Udupa, who was then the *asraṇṇa* of the village *būta* shrine in Perar, filed a suit in the district court against the then head of the Mundabettu *guttu* “for delivery of the properties appertaining to the Padu Perar institution” (Original Suit [O. S.] No. 26 of 1932, 6).<sup>10</sup>

This case was contested before the subordinate judge of South Kanara in 1932, with L. Udupa as the plaintiff and the six main members of both the Mundabettu and Branabettu *guttus* as the defendants. There were three main points of contention in the suit: first, which religious institution in Perar could be identified as the one over which the *asranṇa* insisted on his trusteeship; second, who had received the allowance (*tasdik* or *tastiku*) granted by the government to the religious institution in question; and third, whether the institution in question was a “hereditary temple” that could be “excepted” from the provisions of the HRE Act.<sup>11</sup>

According to the court record, the Padu Perar institution in question was registered in Mangalore Taluk in 1875 as “Perar Shastavu Brahma Bhoota” (O. S. No. 26 of 1932, 9). An *asranṇa* named A. Shibaraya was the then trustee (*moktesser* or *moktīsare*) of the institution and he had an allowance of nine rupees from the government. Since then, the person who became the *asranṇa* received the institution’s allowance. In addition, L. Udupa had been appointed by the Mangalore Circle Temple Committee (later replaced by the South Kanara District Temple Committee), which had been constituted under the HRE Act, as a trustee of an institution in Padu Perar described as “Shastavu Brahma Balavandi Pilichamundi Daivastanam.” Based on these facts, L. Udupa insisted on his trusteeship of the village *būta* shrine, which he identified as “Shastavu Brahma Balavandi Pilichamundi Daivastanam” of Padu Perar.

On the other hand, the *guttu* members insisted that the Padu Perar institution was known not as “Shastavu Brahma Balavandi Pilichamundi Daivastanam,” but as “Kinni Majlu Ishta Devata Balavandi Pilichamundi Daivastanam,” whose management was traditionally vested in the hereditary rights of the Mundabettu and Branabettu *guttus*. They also insisted that the institution was a “hereditary temple” exempt from the provisions of the HRE Act; therefore, neither the Mangalore Circle Temple Committee nor the South Kanara District Temple Committee had jurisdiction over it.

After a number of hearings and detailed investigations into exhibits from both the plaintiff and defendants, the court finally settled the suit in September 1933. Among the total of fifty-seven exhibits, the one the judge regarded as the most decisive was a report submitted to the Temple Committee in January 1930 by A. S. Pai and P. V. Rao, both advocates of the court and members of the Temple Committee. According to the report, they inspected the Padu Perar institution in question in the presence of the plaintiff (L. Udupa) and first defendant (J. Naik) and held an enquiry. B. G. Avargal, the then Subordinate Judge of South Kanara, stated the following about this report in the court record:

They observed in their report that the form and appearance of the building in which the idol of Brahma was kept led them to conclude that the building was a temple and not a Daivastanam [*būta* shrine] but that the “mada” of Ishta Devate [another name of Arasu] and the “chavadi” of Balavandi within the same enclosure had the appearance of Daivastanams.... They have further observed as a result of their inspection and enquiry that the institution for which the Plain-

tiff was appointed trustee by the Mangalore Circle Temple Committee and for which *tasdik* was paid by Government is the one in Padu Perar, *that the principal deity therein is Brahma and that the 3 daivas, viz., Ishta Devata, Balavandi and Pilichamundi, are subsidiary deities.* (O. S. No. 26 of 1932, 7–8 [emphasis mine, to illustrate the hierarchy of the deities presumed by the judges])

Based on the observations of two influential advocates, the judge concluded that the institution for which L. Udupa was appointed as a trustee was identified as the Padu Perar institution (that is, the village *būta* shrine), in which Brammabermeru was the presiding deity and other *būtas* were attendant deities. The judge also pointed out that the Padu Perar institution was not an “excepted temple,” since it had at least one office of trustee that was not hereditary (O. S. No. 26 of 1932, 19–21). The judge thus approved the Temple Committee’s right to exercise jurisdiction over the institution and therefore decided that its appointment of L. Udupa as a trustee was valid.

In this judgment, Brammabermeru was identified as a quasi-Hindu god enshrined in a “temple” and was regarded as superior to the other *būtas*. In the same manner, the judgment guaranteed the status of the *asraṇṇa* as the priest of the main deity and a trustee of the institution. It can be noted that this judgment was not only influenced by ideas of Brahmanical caste hierarchy held by the judge and two advocates, but it also consequently legitimized the Brahmanical caste hierarchy in the village *būta* shrine.

As we have seen, Brammabermeru has ambivalent characteristics both in the *pāddana* narratives and in worship at the village *būta* shrine, for he is treated as a local as well as a Sanskritic deity. In conjunction with legal discourse, which presumed the Brahmanical caste ideology, the Sanskritic aspect of Brammabermeru became evidence of his supremacy and the existence of Brahmanical caste hierarchy in the village *būta* shrine. As a result, at least at the level of legal discourse, the village *būta* shrine in Perar became recognized as an institution where a quasi-Hindu god is the supreme deity and a Brahman priest occupies a crucial status. Does this mean, however, that the village *būta* shrine in Perar has been Sanskritized through the penetration of legal discourse and Brahmanical caste ideology? In the next section, I will consider this question by focusing on popular narratives and practices.

#### FROM PURITY TO WILD SACREDNESS

Counter to the judgment of the subordinate judge who approved the supremacy of Brammabermeru, the then heads of the Mundabettu and Branabettu *guttus* contended that Brammabermeru was only a minor deity and that Balavandi was the chief deity there (O. S. No. 26 of 1932, 15). As shown in their statement, the devotees have through today generally regarded Balavandi as the main deity in Perar, although they acknowledge Brammabermeru’s special position in the *būta* shrine. In the same way, people continue to regard the Mundabettu *guttu* as

principal in *būta* worship in Perar, though they recognize Brahmans such as the Pejattaya and *asraṇṇa* as necessary for worship.

Contrary to the presupposition of the judicature in colonial South Kanara, neither the relationship between Balavandi and Brammabermeru nor the position of the Brahmans in the shrine can be fully explained in terms of the Brahmanical caste hierarchy based on a dichotomy between superior and inferior or purity and impurity.<sup>12</sup> In order to understand this from another viewpoint, we first need to consider the coupled notions of purity and pollution (*maḍi-mayilige* or *sudda-asudda*) in the context of *būta* worship. Dayananda Pambada, who is the impersonator of Arasu and Pilichamundi, explained that the impersonator should obey particular rules to invoke the *būta* in the ritual:

The *būta* performance is called *nēma*. This word originated from *niyama* [rules and regulations], in Sanskrit. Only when the performer obeys the rules, will it be successful. So, we should be in the condition of *niyama niṣṭhe* [devoting oneself to the rule]. We should follow several ritual practices. For instance, I'm a strict vegetarian and I never drink alcohol. If you obey these rules, *daiva* will definitely come to you. (Dayananda Pambada, 16 May 2008)

Satish Pambada, the impersonator of Balavandi in Perar, explained the rules he follows in a similar way:

We, as *būta* performers, should not eat food offered at a funeral. I'm strictly following this rule. Apart from that, we should not eat food prepared by a woman who is menstruating. Also, we should not eat food in the houses of Achari, Catholics, or Muslims. Though it is not easy for us to obey all the *niyama* today, we try to be in a state of purity [*sudda*] as much as we can. (Satish Pambada, 16 June 2008)

As shown in these narratives, for both, the notions of *niyama* and *sudda* are crucial to being a proper impersonator. At first glance, their keen concern for the rules and purity seems to be evidence of the Sanskritization of the Pambada impersonators; they seem to adopt both Sanskritic notions and the Brahmanical doctrine to raise themselves up to a higher position in the caste hierarchy. However, the notion of purity in the context of *būta* worship cannot be reduced to the dualistic model in which purity is opposed to an impurity that endangers the former with contamination. Rather, the notion of purity is closely connected with that of divine power or *śakti*, which is transcendental and thus immune to pollution (TANAKA 1997, 10–14, 138–39; see also HARPER 1964; FULLER 1979). Dayananda Pambada's comments on the relationship between the purification of a *būta* impersonator and ritual pollution provide a clue to understanding this point.

When a Pambada is selected as a *būta* impersonator, he should be purified by a Brahman priest. This ritual is called *kalaśa snāna*. After this ritual, he becomes immune to the pollution that occurs through either death or birth. He becomes free from them. Even if his father dies, he is exempt from *sūtaka* [death-pollution]. (Dayananda Pambada, 16 June 2008)

Purified by a Brahman priest, a Pambada impersonator is enabled to access the *śakti* of the *būta*, and thus to obtain sacredness, which frees him from ritual pollution.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, as FULLER (1979, 463–64) argues about rituals in a Hindu temple, purity is not the end of the ritual but is only a means to access divine power. Thus, the purity of a Pambada impersonator should be understood not as evidence of Sanskritization but as a necessary condition for him to invoke *śakti* within himself.

A number of fundamental characteristics of *būtas* are inextricably linked to wildness and femininity, in a word, *śakti*. It is notable that in Tulu, *śakti* can refer to power, the existence of the supernatural powers of the *būta*, or the *būta* itself (UPADHYAYA 1997, 6: 2834). That the *būtas* are believed to be the spirits of local heroes/heroines who met tragic deaths—or those of wild animals—contributes to this sense of danger and feral power. This is further connected to a feminine aspect of the *būta*, as in Perar, Balavandi is regarded as androgynous, and devotees offer beautiful saris to the deity. As these elements show, the *būtas* embody the strong, dangerous, and fertile *śakti*.<sup>14</sup>

If the relationship between Brammabermeru and Balavandi in the village shrine should thus be understood not in terms of the dualistic principle of high-low or purity-impurity, but in terms of the interrelation between purity and *śakti*, the question to be answered next is why people need Brammabermeru to be enshrined in a special position in the village *būta* shrine, despite their regard for Balavandi as the principal deity. To investigate this, I will analyze the process of the *nēma* in the village *būta* shrine.

#### THE FLOW OF *ŚAKTI* AND THE CREATION OF THE TRANSACTIONAL NETWORK

I investigate the dynamic circulation of divine power in the *nēma* in Perar here, focusing on the interrelation between Balavandi and Brammabermeru.<sup>15</sup> First, I examine the process of the confirmation or reproduction of rank among the Pejattaya and sixteen *guttus* through the interaction between the *būtas* and the heads of these families. Second, I investigate the creation of the transactional network through the flow of various actors, substances, and *śakti* within and beyond the ritual stage.

The *nēma* starts on the night of the full moon in the month of *māi* and is held for three days and nights.<sup>16</sup> It primarily consists of the rituals for Balavandi, Arasu, and Pilichamundi. Each ritual consists of the same basic process. The first stage of the ritual is called the *gaggaradecci*.<sup>17</sup> The impersonator, wearing a heavy anklet called a *gaggara*, stands in front of the altar, which is placed next to the *gunḍa*, on which the *bandāra* (sacred treasure of the *būtas*) is enshrined. The body of the impersonator begins to shake the moment the *gadipattunāru* offers a prayer, and the other *guttu* heads throw rice and flowers on him. The impersonator, possessed by the *būta*, dances around the precinct and greets the Pejattaya and the *guttu* heads one by one according to their rank.

The second stage is the recitation of the *pāddana* by the impersonator in front of the thousands of devotees thronging the shrine. In the third stage, called the *nēmadecci*,<sup>18</sup> the impersonator wears a big halo-like structure called an *aṇi* on his back. The priests, heads of *guttus*, and main workers follow him, and together they all march around the precinct. Then the possessed impersonator speaks to oracles in front of all the *guttus*. He receives a young coconut from the *gaḍipattunāru*, pours its juice on the floor, and gives it back to the *gaḍipattunāru* with blessings. At the end of the ritual, the possessed impersonator touches the hands of each *guttu* head with his sword and gives them blessings.

During the ritual, the heads of the main *guttus* communicate with the *būta* through the Pambada impersonator. The most significant and repeated form of their communication is the mutual gifting between the *guttu* heads and the *būtas*. In the *nēma*, the *guttus* offer the *būtas* a part of their farm products, which are regarded as being originally owned by the *būtas*. The *būtas* receive these offerings and in return give them oracles and blessings to ensure the future prosperity of the whole village. Finally, a part of these offerings are distributed as *prasāda* among the heads of the *guttus* and other devotees, according to their ranks.

Through the above ritual process, the ranks of the Pejattaya and the main *guttus* are not only confirmed but also constituted. All communication between the *guttu* heads and the *būtas*, such as being called by their family names or being given *prasāda*, happens according to their rank; and therefore it authorizes their status in relation to the deity. In this sense, the ritual concerns the constitution of the hierarchy and social-political power in the village society.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, the mutual gifting activity between the *būtas* and the devotees creates a transactional network to which all the actors involved in the ritual are linked, and in which a finite set of substances and *śakti* flow and circulate. Or rather, the flow of substances such as farm products and *prasāda* containing *būtas*' *śakti* actualize the nexus of various actors, of which social-political hierarchy is only one part.

The contrastive positions of and interrelation between Brammabermeru and the *būtas* Balavandi and Pilichamundi in the ritual performance offer a window through which this point can be investigated further. In the *nēma*, all the main deities except Brammabermeru always appear from outside the central shrine. For example, the priests, accompanied by some of *cākiridakuru*, walk up to the shrine on top of a hill and offer a *pūjā* to the deity Pilichamundi, as incarnated in the possessed Pambada impersonator, who comes down from the hilltop to the central shrine. After the ritual for Pilichamundi inside the precinct is complete, the deity is offered both vegetarian offerings and blood sacrifices right outside the shrine building. In a similar way, Balavandi, incarnated in the Pambada impersonator, also appears from outside the shrine as a half-naked, dangerous, and furious deity.

Contrary to these wild *būtas*, Brammabermeru is neither incarnated in an impersonator nor appears outside the *gundā*. The *brahmaliṅga*, the only manifestation of the deity, is permanently fixed inside the *gundā*, which is regarded as the sanctum sanctorum of the *būta* shrine. During the *nēma*, the *asraṇṇa* and sev-



FIGURE 2. Balavandi at the *nēma* in the village *būta* shrine, 9 March 2012.

eral other Brahman priests from neighboring villages hired especially for the *nēma* offer a *pūjā* to the deity.

The contrastive relation between Brammabermeru and Balavandi is vividly crystallized in the last part of the ritual for Balavandi. The possessed impersonator of Balavandi, wearing an *ani* and riding on a beautifully decorated wheeled wooden horse, parades around the altar with the *guttu* heads, priests, and many *cākiridakuru*. He stops just in front of the *gunḍa* and starts a “battle” against Brammabermeru, who remains inside the *gunḍa*. The impersonator violently swings his arms, pulls the mustache off his face, and throws it into the *gunḍa*, along with pieces of garlands pulled from his neck.

According to an informant from the Mundabettu *guttu*, this performance represents the mythical battle between Balavandi and Brammabermeru in the *pāddana*. Apart from this, it also clearly shows the contrastive yet complementary relationship between the two deities; namely, the wild, dangerous, and androgynous deity

Balavandi contacts and at the same time separates himself from Brammabermeru, who is incarnated in the pure, still, masculine figure of the *brahmalinga*.

Through this ritual process, the *śakti* of Balavandi embodied in the possessed impersonator flows from the outside into the central shrine, circulates within it, and finally reaches its sanctum sanctorum. The dangerous, wild *śakti* of Balavandi received in the *gundā* is then transformed into a calmer, more controllable form and finally distributed to the devotees as *prasāda* from Brammabermeru.<sup>20</sup>

This suggests why people need Brammabermeru to be enshrined in the special position in the village *būta* shrine, despite their regarding Balavandi as the principal deity. The position of Brammabermeru is critical in the shrine, as is the transactional network created by the ritual, as the “polar opposition” (FULLER 2004, 91) to Balavandi, as well as the device for receiving and transforming the wild *śakti* into grace for the people. In this sense, the divinity of Brammabermeru is certainly relational, as DUMONT (1970, 20–32) discerns in his general thesis on Hindu divinity. However, contrary to Dumont’s view, the essence of the relationship between Brammabermeru and Balavandi cannot be fully understood through the dualistic principles of superior and inferior statuses or purity and impurity. Rather, it must be comprehended as a complementary relationship between purity and *śakti*. Here the purity of Brammabermeru can be understood in the same way as that of the Pam-bada impersonators: it is the necessary condition for gaining access to and receiving the *būtas’ śakti*, which transcends the binary opposition of purity-impurity.<sup>21</sup>

The findings of this study thus urge us to reconsider not only the Dumontian interpretation, but also Fuller’s view that the “little” village deities symbolize the caste system by linking themselves to the “great” deities through complementary hierarchical relationships (FULLER 1988, 34; 2004, 99). According to Fuller, worship of the village deities legitimates in religious terms the caste hierarchy whose summit is occupied by Brahmans. While Fuller denies the sociological reductionism of, for example, DUMONT and POCOCK (1959), he also considers the complementary relationship between the contrastive deities only in terms of the Brahmanical caste hierarchy, which presumes the purity-impurity dichotomy and the supremacy of Brahmans.

To the task of finding an alternative interpretation to those based on Brahmanical caste hierarchy, the notion of a transactional network is critical. As we have seen, the mutual gifting activity between the *būtas* and the devotees, as well as the interaction between the contrastive deities, not only creates but actualizes the transactional network to which all the actors involved in the ritual are linked, and in which particular substances and *śakti* flow, circulate, and are distributed.

The actors entering into this network are not only people and deities as sovereign persons, but also various wild animals and spirits from the forests and mountains that are worshipped as *būtas*. Through their entering into and acting in the network as *būtas*, these wild animals and spirits, which represent the *gudde* or wild nature and embody its *śakti*, are personified as social actors who can communicate and interact with human beings from within their mutually differentiated, relative, and often contrastive positions in the network.

Thus the transactional network created by the *būta* ritual constitutes and mediates not only the social, economic, and religious relationships among the people, but also the complementary relationships among human beings, wild creatures, and spirits, all of who are personified through interaction in the network. Here the social-political hierarchy and authority of the people, which is confirmed through the ritual process, becomes only a part of the nexus of substances and actors that constitute the fluid network within and beyond the ritual stage.

### CONCLUSION

Ritual practices of the low castes have often been considered through concepts such as Sanskritization, consensus, and replication, or interpreted as resistance against the dominance of the high castes. The tendency common to these analyses is their interpretation of low castes' ritual practices in terms of caste hierarchy and power relations. In such analyses, the significance of the ritual is reduced to a representation of the unequal caste relationship in the social-political sphere.

Contrary to the hierarchy-centered analysis of previous studies, this study has attempted to provide a new perspective for understanding the ritual practices of the non-Brahman, low-caste people not simply in terms of caste hierarchy, but of a network and its relations. Focusing on the relational aspect of divinity and the importance of *śakti* in ritual contexts, this study has offered an alternative perspective from which to see the complementary opposites in rituals not merely as reflections of unequal caste relations, but as the basis of the transactional network among the actors and substances linked to it.

*Būta* worship in Perar has been at the center of the system of entitlements through which local products, land, and *prasāda* have been distributed among the people in exchange for their services at the village *būta* shrine. In pre-colonial Perar, this distribution process was handled by the Mundabettu *guttu*. However, this system was partly undermined in the colonial situation through the penetration of its modern administration and jurisdiction, which presumed a Brahmanical caste hierarchy and the supremacy of Sanskritic deities. As a result of a legal dispute between the local *asraṇṇa* and the Mundabettu *guttu*, the village *būta* shrine was officially reorganized into a religious institution in which Brammabermeru, as a quasi-Hindu deity, was given the supreme position and the Brahman priest came to occupy a central role.

At first glance, this event and the people's apparent admission of the Brahmanical doctrine and the caste hierarchy based on its dichotomies seem to provide evidence of the Sanskritization of the *būta* worship in Perar. However, a close investigation of popular narratives and ritual practices reveals that *būta* worship can be fully interpreted by neither the notion of Sanskritization nor the Brahmanical dualistic principle of purity-impurity. Rather, it should be understood as the dynamic relationship between purity and *śakti*.

As seen in this article, the interrelations between Balavandi and Brammabermeru show that their divinities are complementary and relational, as wild sacredness and

its recipients. The relationship between these contrastive deities constitutes the basis of the flow and distribution of *śakti* through the transactional network to which are linked not only human persons and deities as sovereign persons but also wild creatures and spirits personified as *būtas*. Thus, the transactional network not only constitutes social-political relations among people but also creates and vitalizes human-nature-spirit relations, in which the social-political is but a part of the broader network.

As shown in the case of *būta* worship, it is insufficient to analyze the ritual practices of the low-castes only in terms of the unequal caste relations in mundane human society. Rather, it is necessary to broaden our analytical scope to see their ritual practices both from within and beyond the social-political sphere. The rituals then reveal themselves as the constitutive parts of the transactional network, which links humans to deities, spirits, and wild creatures through the dynamic flow and interaction of the mutually differentiated substances, actors, and sacred power.

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#### NOTES

1. The native language of the region is Tulu. While *bhūta* means “ghost” in Sanskrit, in South Kanara the term *būta* is generally used for local deities. This article follows UPADHYAYA’S (1988–1997) system of transliteration for all local terms.

2. The traditional occupation of the Billava caste is toddy-tapping and that of the Bant caste is cultivation. While the Bants are regarded as the “dominant” caste in the area, most of the caste groups in my research field are designated as “Other Backward Classes” in Karnataka State.

3. On *būta* worship in general, see CLAUS (1979), GOWDA (2005), and BRÜCKNER (2009).

4. For example, see HARPER (1963) and UCHIYAMADA (1999; 2000). This tendency corresponds to many anthropological works that analyze the practices of the marginalized as “weapons of the weak” (SCOTT 1985) or “ritualized resistance” (COMAROFF 1985, 12).

5. On the mimetic ritual practices of Dalits, see also SAX (2009).

6. On the fluid transactions of substances in Hindu societies, see MARRIOTT (1976), MARRIOTT and INDEN (1977), and DANIEL (1984).

7. These two villages comprised a single village called Perar until they were administratively separated in 1904. The fieldwork on which this article is based was conducted from May to September 2008; in March, August, and September 2009; and from December 2010 to January 2011.

8. The *pāddana* in this article is reconstituted by the author based on interviews with Gangadara Rai, Baaleekrishna Shetty, and Dayananda Pambada. The interviews were conducted on 2–3 July 2008 and 6 August 2008.

9. The *brahmalīṅga* is a small stone with a smooth surface that is worshipped as the symbol of Brammabermeru.

10. Because the village *būta* shrine was located in Padu Perar, the institution was called “the Padu Perar institution” in the court record.

11. Under the HRE Act, “hereditary” temples (that is, temples whose managers had not previously been selected by government officers) were seen as private institutions and were thus relatively free from any direct outside control. The “excepted” temple category was abolished in 1959 (PRESLER 1987, 48).

12. This corresponds to Dumont's view of caste society in terms of the hierarchical ideology of purity and impurity as the encompassing ideology of Hindu hierarchical society (see SEKINE 2002, 15).

13. This is the case in purification rituals in Sri Lankan Tamil society presented by TANAKA (1997, 138). According to Tanaka, priests wearing a sacred *kāppu* cord containing *mantra śakti* become immune to death pollution. For the experiences of *būta* impersonators in ritual practices, see ISHII (2013).

14. On *śakti* and femininity, see FULLER (2004, 44–48) and UCHIYAMADA (2000, 71). On *śakti*'s relationship to tragic death and wildness, see UCHIYAMADA (2000, 64–65).

15. On the circulation of *śakti*, see MARRIOTT (1976, 113) and TANAKA (1997, 13).

16. The month of *māi* in the Tulu calendar corresponds to 15 February to 15 March in the solar calendar.

17. *Gaggaradecci* is the initial dance performed by the impersonator wearing sacred anklets (UPADHYAYA 1995, 3: 1036).

18. This word originated from the phrase *nēmada ecci*, which refers to the shivering of the *būta* impersonator's body during the annual festival (UPADHYAYA 1997, 4: 1844).

19. For the constitutive features of the redistributed *prasāda* of the deity, see APPADURAI (1981, 36).

20. TANAKA (1997, 148) describes a similar process of the transformation of *śakti* in Hindu rituals.

21. On the dynamic relationship between two contrastive deities, see also SEKINE (2002, 180).

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