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—Mahiṣāṣṭra—Tantrism—Javanese mythology—antiquities
Archaeological remains in the form of statues of the goddess (bhaṭārī) Durgā, Durgā the destroyer of Mahiśāṣura, 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 Mahiśāṣuramardini 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 Mahiśāṣuramardini 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 Mahiśāṣuramardini 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, samabhanga, and tribhaṅga) 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 Mahiśāṣuramardini 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 Mahiśāṣuramardini are the buffalo (mahīṣa) lying with its face to either the left or the right, and an āśura (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 Mahiśāṣuramardini statue depicts a particular mythological event, the final scene of the combat between Durgā and Mahiśāṣura, the king of the āśura in the form of a mighty buffalo (Edi Sedyawati 1993, 1–2). According to some Purāṇas, especially the “Devi Māhātmya” of the Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Durgā fights an āśura who has adopted the shape of a buffalo and troubles the lives of both men and gods. Durgā succeeds in killing Mahiśāṣura, who is then decapitated (or sometimes has his body pierced with a lance [trisūla]). When the mahīṣa lies dying, the āśura 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
accompanied by her vehicle (vāhana), a lion (AGRAWALA 1963; HARLE 1971–72; LIPPE 1972; BANERJEA 1974). This representation of battle and violence is less common in East Javanese Durga statues, in which the goddess usually touches or caresses the asura’s hair, who in turn is pictured politely greeting her (aṇjali) with a happy and peaceful countenance. The lion vehicle is absent in these Javanese examples.

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

DURGA IN INDIA

Who then is Durga 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, Durga, or Kālī, while Viṣṇu’s śakti is Lākṣmī, and that of Brahmā is Sarvasvati. Especially the śakti of Śiva is worshiped in its various aspects; the aspect sānta (calm) of Śiva’s śakti materializes as Pārvatī or Umā, his anger (krodha) manifests as Durga, 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 Taïttiriya Aranyaka (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, Yudhīṣṭhira 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 Purāṇas, 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 Hariyamsa Purāṇa of the fourth century C.E., considered her to be an adopted sister of Viṣṇu and later saw her as Śiva’s ākṣi (KUMAR 1974; SHULMAN 1980).

In the Purāṇas and the later Tantras, 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 ašura, that she rules the vegetable world, and that she has power over infectious diseases. Of these, her conquest of the ašura 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 “Devi Mahātmya (11.43–48), which first appears in the Mārkandeya 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 Śākambhari.

(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 worshiped in the Bengal area, is Vana Durgā. Several goddesses in whose form she incarnates (e.g., Rupasi, Ruaswari, Gundi, and Thakurani) are worshiped in specific trees, among them the banyan and the sal (śalavṛksa; Vatica robusta). There are also goddesses who are worshiped at home in connection with their relationship with plants and fertility, among them Lakṣmi. Archaeological evidence from the Kausambhi and Ujjayini areas in India show that in the third century B.C.E. Lakṣmi was already considered a fertility goddess. These finds include, among others, a statue of Lakṣmi 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 “Devi Māhāmya” 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.

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 protect 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 Devi, 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 Māri, 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 grāmādevatā (village fertility goddesses associated 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 protecresses of children (Bhattacharya 1977, 55–56; Shulman 1980, 245–80).

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

As mentioned above, one important feature of Durga is her role of conqueror of the āśura and other demonic beings. The tale of the destruction of the āśura and their king Mahiṣāśura is known as the Devī Māhātmya Purāṇa or Durgā Saptasati. This story first appeared in the Markāṇḍeya Purāṇa, which was composed in the sixth century C.E. The story, in brief, is as follows:

The gods were often troubled by the āśuras, lead by their ruler Mahiṣāśura, 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 Candi. 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 āśura 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 āśura in human form who attacked her. But Durgā’s spiritual power (śakti) was great, and she killed him.

One interpretation of Durgā’s defeat of the āśura 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 welfare. She is also regarded as a fertility goddess who especially rules the vegetable kingdom. On the other hand, when displeased with her human charges she may bring the evils they fear, especially disease.
Durgā in Java

The archaeological data discussed earlier show that it was as conqueror of the aśura that Durgā received most emphasis in Java. 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 (bhaṭṭārī arccarūpa) at the Tērēp hermitage. He gained victory, and upon returning to his palace he promulgated the prāsasti 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 bhaṭṭārī arccarūpa to be none other than Durgā (SANTIKO 1992, 236–39).

2) An inscription on the back of the base of a Chamundī statue, now located in the Trowulan museum, proclaims that Sri Maharaja Kertanagara, the last ruler of Singasari (thirteenth century), ordered the worship of Chamundī, or Chāmunda, in order to strengthen his position on the throne (SANTIKO 1992, 123). The way in which this worship was conducted, however, is not explained. Chāmunda is another form of Kālī, who is called Chāmunda when grouped together with other goddesses known as mātrākā (mothers). This group usually consists of seven goddesses, giving them the name Saptamātrākā, the seven mothers. There are also groups of three and five, however. These goddesses are the sāktis (female energies) of various gods; Brahmāni is that of Brahmā; Varahī is that of Viṣṇu as Varahavatara; Aindrī is the sākti of Indra, and so on. In Devī Māhātmya it is told that Kālī (Chāmunda) 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 Saptamātrākā, or Chāmunda 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 Chāmunda from Singasari is one of the mātrākā; here the mātrākā form a group of three that stand between reliefs of Gāṇeśa and Bhairava. Chāmunda, the largest, is shown seated cross-legged on a corpse lying face downward. She has eight hands that hold:
Left
a skull
the hair of the corpse
a bow
a nāgapāśa (snake-like noose)

Right
[arm is broken]
sword
short sword (khaḍga)
[arm is broken]

To the right of the goddess, on the base, there is a large trident (trisūla). 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 mātrikā. 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
a skull bowl
[arm is broken]

Right
a knife placed on top of a wolf
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 cakrās (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 mātrikā. 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 vaśikaraṇa, which aimed to defeat enemies (satrubali) through the use of black magic. Vaśikaraṇa 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) **Vāśkārana**, a ritual giving one control over one’s enemies and all their desires.

3) **Māraṇa**, a ritual through which one can kill a person or cause bodily harm.

4) **Vidveṣana**, a way of causing enmity between people.

5) **Uccūṭana**, a ritual causing others to become ill, to be shamed, or to suffer material loss.

6) **Ṣānti**, a ritual through which the negative influence of a person’s horoscope may be neutralized.

(CHATOPADHYAYA 1978; BANERJI 1978, 208–13)

It is possible, therefore, that King Kertanagara had a statue of Chamundī made as part of the mātrikā group, and that during its installation magical Tantric rites such as *vāśkārana* 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 Kertanagara had opposed by sending an army to Melayu (Sumatra), as well as by religiomagical means (MOENS 1924, 544; SANTIKO 1992, 133).

Not much is known about the way in which Durga 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 Durga 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 Durga 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 bhātārī (goddess) Bhagawati (Durga). They perform a dance during which Durga and her entourage appear and join them in the dance. Calon Arang then requests to be allowed to kill the inhabitants of the realm. Durga 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 Durga, 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 Bhagawati 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 Durga 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 Durga’s offering, and fourth, Calon Arang has Durga-like characteristics in that her anger brings forth infectious diseases.

In Tantric Hinduism worship can be divided into three categories: nityā-pūja 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 istadevata (god of one’s choice); kāma pūja is the worship of a god or its istadevata with the aim of gaining worldly benefits. Included in the last are Tantric rituals, using the six kinds of magic (śat-karman) mentioned earlier, e.g., stambhana, vasīkārana, and the like. The first five (excepting sānti) 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 māroṇḍa ritual 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 “Devi Mahātmā” tale referred to earlier is part of the Śākta traditions. In India, however, statues of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardini are worshiped by adherents of both Śāktaism and Śaivism. To which sect a particular statue of Durgā Mahiṣāśuramardini “belongs” can be ascertained from, among other things, the position of the goddess in the pantheon. In Śāktaism, Durgā is Mahadevi or Mahāsākti, a position superior to that of Śiva. She is given a special temple, known as a sāktapīṭha. 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 Mahiṣāśuramardini occupy the cella north of Śiva temple and no temple specifically dedicated to Durgā has ever been found,11 leading us to believe that Śāktaism never developed in Java. This is further supported by several literary sources, such as the kakawin12 Ghatotkacāśraya, where Durgā is called Mahāsākti and paramasūkhmatara.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 Mahiṣāśuramardini have frightful faces, depicting the goddess with fangs and bulging eyes. These derive from the time when Durgā was mixed up with Kālti to become Durgā-Kālti, who was worshiped in Tantra-Vamācāra 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-Kālti 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) precisely 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 Mahiṣāśuramardini— 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 (*rākṣasi*). 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 *rākṣasi* *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 *rākṣasi bhatārī* *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 Steinkallenfels* 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 *rākṣasi 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 Śūryā, the sun god, and with a cowherd. Angered and shamed, Umā tears up Gaṇeśa’s book and suddenly changes into the *rākṣasi bhatārī* *Durgā*. After some time she is released by Gaṇeśa, aided by the *Tīpuraṣi* 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 Mahiṣāsūramardini*. In the *Sudamala*, the demonic *Durgā* or Ranini is asked by Kuntī, the mother of the Pandava, to aid her sons in the Bharatayuddha war against their cousins, the Kaurava. Kuntī fears for her son’s safety, because the Kaurava are assisted by two mighty *rākṣasas*, Kalanjaya and Kalantaka.¹⁸

### 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 conceptions underlie them? The first form, from the Majapahit era and perhaps even earlier, is Durgā-Kālī, the goddess with the krūra traits who is worshiped by adherents of the Siva Tantra-Bhairava sect (Bherava-Sivapakṣa or Bheravapakṣa). The second is Durgādevī or bātari Durgā Ranini, who is the penal incarnation of Umā (Pārvatī), the sakti of Siva as bātari Kala.

Written sources containing these two concepts reveal that each was supported by a different cultural environment: the royal court and society beyond the court, respectively. Durgā as the primary goddess of Śaivism, including her role as destroyer of Mahišāsura (Durgā Mahišāśuramardini), was known in court circles, as can be learned from the kakawin Kaleyanawaranantaka, the kakawin Sutasoma, the kakawin Arjunawijaya, and the prose work Calon Arang. 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 traditions, 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 environment 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. For this reason it is not to be wondered at that literary works written outside the courts often portray deviant conceptions 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 paśca-mā-kūra-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, preferably 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 māṃśa (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 pānca-mā-kaṇa-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. Similarly, the secret nature of the rituals led to the mistaken idea that Durgā-Kāli 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. As part of those formulæ, 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 rākṣastī, 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 (madhyāṣṭuta), the right or left leg somewhat bent; saṃabhāṅga: standing erect; tribhāṅga: standing with the body along three lines (see Libeert 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.
224. 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 moksa (final release), if possible during the person’s lifetime. Tantric ritual was applied to several religious traditions, such as Saivism, Śaktism, and Buddhism. When this occurred the religious tradition was given the suffix tantra, so that we have Śiva Tantra, Śākta Tantra, and Buddha Tantra (or Tantrayāna).

5. Śaktism is a sect of Hinduism that considers the position of the sakti 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 Śrī or Dewi Śrī.

7. Śaivites consider Viśnū 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 Kertanagara 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 Kertanagara’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 Pārvati that is thought to have been an incarnation of Trābhūvana. 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. Paramāsūkhmatara 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. Luκat or ruwat is actually a dīkṣa (consecration) rite to wipe out klesa (sin) or mala (impurity) from the soul of the sisya (disciple).

17. Pātala is one of the regions under the earth, the abode of nāgas and demons. It is also the lower world in general, not to be confused with naraṇa, the place of punishment.

18. According to P. J. Zoetmulder and Edi Sedyawati, the Old Javanese belle-lettres kakawins (see note 12, above) were part of Old Javanese court life. The authors of these poems, known as kawis, lived at the court, even though they were themselves neither royal nor noble. The Tantu Panggelaran, Śri Tanjung, Sudamala, and Korawasrama, on the other hand, lack a court (kra toxins) 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 kākawin Ghatotkacāśavāya, she reunites Arjuna’s son Abhimanyu with his beloved wife, Kṣīri Sundari, the beautiful daughter of King Kresna of Dvaravati. In the same kākawin 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

20. In the *Tantu Panggelaran* there is a story about the moving of Mt Mahameru from Jambhuvipa (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 Kertanagara was addicted to intoxicating drink (*pijer anadah sajong*), though elsewhere the poet Prapanca claims that, on the contrary, the king abstained from this and the other forbidden matters. Kertanagara’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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