

THE KĀTYĀYANĪ MYTH IN THE VĀMANA PURĀṆA (18.39-21.52)

by

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Abstract

This thesis is the translation, annotation, and commentary of that section of the Vāmana Purāṇa in which the story of Kātyāyanī is narrated (18.39-21.52). I have translated the story literally, recounted it in a simpler manner, analyzed it and tried to include as much information as possible about the characters, customs, religious beliefs, etc. The aim is to understand the story accurately, fully, and critically and to enable a critical reader to do the same. Thus, the major purpose of the thesis is philological: it is an exercise in acquiring a more precise knowledge of puranic Sanskrit, myths, characters, beliefs. The secondary purpose is to study the mythological motifs appearing in the story, as well as the gods and demons who play a role in the story.

Briefly, this passage of the Vāmana Purāṇa is the story of the defeat of the gods by the demons, and how the gods in turn defeated the demons by joining their powers together. The goddess Kātyāyanī, who is the central figure of the story, is an integration of all the god's strength.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: a) an Introduction that concentrates on analysis and interpretation of the story and on the language used in the story; b) the Sanskrit text of the story, literal translation and critical as well as explanatory annotations; c) a Glossary of proper names of individuals and classes of beings mentioned in the selected segment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The principal aim of this thesis is philological: a translation, annotation and critical study of a Sanskrit text that has not so far been translated or studied in English. The particular passage of the Vāmara Purāṇa was chosen because it afforded me a good chance to look at a specific Brahmanical myth — the myth of the creation of the goddess Kātyāyanī. Besides giving a rigorous exercise in philological translation, the subject matter of this thesis provided me an opportunity to get acquainted with many Brahmanical religious beliefs and mythical beings. I have presented a study of these and allied branches of thought in the following pages of the Introduction.

Puranic literature

The purāṇa-s are a class of religious literature of Brahmanism, along with the Vedic literature, the smṛti-s, the itihāsa-s (histories) like the Mahābhārata, as well as the śāstra-s and philosophical sūtra literature. It is vast, as it comprises one hundred and eight major and minor works and contains at least four hundred thousand verses. Besides being extensive in volume, the purāṇa-s are also unique by dint of their richness and variety of content. Their aim did not seem to be brevity, but rather preservation, perpetuation, and expansion. They contain countless digressions, and digressions within digressions. As the purāṇa-s were an oral literature for some time, almost every purāṇa seems to have grown over centuries through additions. In this aspect they can be compared to Homer's epics, which were also sung by ancient bards long before they were written down. The digressions served to entertain people and provide popular appeal.

The subject matter of the purāṇa-s is as extensive as their volume. The purāṇa-s cover the religious, cultural, and social-political history of India through a vast time span (ancient to medieval India). They document religious and social practices, philosophical speculations, dynastic successions and even the geography of the land. Their form is predominantly mythological, and has a cast of gods, demons, mythic sages and seers; the setting is sometimes earth, sometimes one of the heavens or hells. The authors wove Brahmanic metaphysical (especially devotional) doctrines into the fabric of myths and legends.

One of the properties of mythology is that it is explanatory. Many mythologems seek to explain why something in the world is a certain way, or how an object or a being got its or his name. For instance, in the mythologem of the section translated below, we see the origin of the goddess Kātyāyanī. The origin of her name is also given (in 19.13). The very format of purāṇic literature suggests this quality of explaining things. One sage asks another about the origin of some being, and that leads to further questions and digressions.

Purāṇic literature also contains the belief in the purifying influence of the purāṇa. In almost every purāṇa, one comes across this idea, that reading (or even listening to) the purāṇa will remove the stains of sin or fetters of transmigration. Usually, such a statement is found in the beginning chapters of the purana. Such is the case in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, where we read on the first page:

While it is doubtful that God can be speedily captured in one's heart by other means, He can be instantly seized through this work [i.e. the Bhagāvata Purāṇa] by those blessed persons who have a keen desire to hear it recited.

--Bhāgavata Purāṇa I.1.3

There are constant reminders of this purifying quality throughout the purāṇa as well. For instance, in verse 21.3 of our story we find:

"Listen to this ancient, auspicious story that removes sin and fear."

Introduction to the Vāmana Purāṇa

There are one hundred and eight purāṇa-s, divided into (major) Mahā-purāṇa-s (of which there are eighteen) and (minor) Upapurāṇa-s. The Vāmana Purāṇa (called VP from now on) is fourteenth in the list of Mahā-purāṇa-s. It is named after Vāmana (the Dwarf), the first human incarnation of Viṣṇu. The eighteen Mahāpurāṇa-s are evenly divided into Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite groups, the former being devoted to the deity Viṣṇu and the latter to the deity Śiva. Whereas many of the purāṇa-s are strongly sectarian on one side or the other, the VP seems to incorporate elements of both sects, though it still is regarded as a Vaiṣṇavite purāṇa. It gives almost as much recognition to Śiva as to Viṣṇu, while holding Viṣṇu supreme.

As for age, the VP is probably one of the earlier purāṇa-s (at least, the editor of the critical edition of the VP makes this argument), probably dating back to the seventh century in its present form. The setting for the VP is north India, though there are many references to south Indian geography and religion.

In addition to the Dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu, the VP deals with the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī, the birth of Skanda, and the wars between the asura-s (demons) and deva-s (gods). It narrates more exploits of the demons than almost any other purāṇa. This could be because its narrator is Pulastya, who is said to be an ancestor of the demons.

The story chosen for translation is one of this category. It tells how the gods were defeated and came back to power again.

The form of this purāṇa is a dialogue between the sages Pulastya and Nārada. Just before Pulastya narrated our story, he told Nārada about certain religious observances and the production of various fruits and flower trees, and a hymn of praise to Viṣṇu. When Pulastya mentions that Śiva had once used this hymn for Kātyāyanī, Nārada asks for further explanation. Here is where our story begins.

The literal translation of the story given in the next section of the thesis is not easy to follow. Therefore, a brief summary of the story would be useful for a clearer understanding:

The story in brief

Two demon brothers, Rambha and Karambha, went to the Pañca-nada country to perform penance for obtaining sons. While they were performing their penance, the god Indra killed Karambha. When Rambha came to know this, he wanted to kill himself, but was prevented by the god Agni, who gave him a boon. He desired a victorious son, and Agni granted the boon. Soon he found a she-buffalo he liked and had a son by her. This son was named Mahiṣa. In the meanwhile, a male buffalo was attracted to Rambha's wife, and fought Rambha to obtain her. He killed Rambha, but later himself died as a result of drowning. After dying, he reincarnated as the demon Namara. Rambha also reincarnated as a demon called Raktabīja. These three demons — Mahiṣa, Namara, and Raktabīja — conquered the gods. Mahiṣa, being the most powerful according to the boon, was

crowned as king.

After their defeat, the gods sought refuge in Viṣṇu and Śiva. They told these Supreme Gods about the victorious demons. Viṣṇu swelled with wrath. When he became angry, the other gods also became angry, and out of their mouths they all emitted intense tejas 'splendor'. This splendor was combined with the splendor of the seer Kātyāyana and resulted in a young woman of miraculous features. The prominent gods imparted several useful weapons and things to her. Then she started to live on the Vindhya mountain.

Mahiṣa soon heard about the beautiful woman living on the Vindhya mountain, and resolved to acquire her as wife. The demon army moved to the foot of the Vindhya mountain, and Dundubhi, as Mahiṣa's representative, went to ask Kātyāyanī for her hand in marriage. When the proposal was put to her, Kātyāyanī replied that according to the tradition in her family she must marry a powerful male — that if he wanted her, Mahiṣa must first defeat her in battle. Dundubhi reported this to Mahiṣa.

The demon army attacked, led first by Namara. Kātyāyanī easily killed many of the demons and Namara as well. She let out a loud laugh, from which came many sorts of fierce beings to harass the demon army. Cikṣura attacked next, but the attack was quickly put down by Kātyāyanī. Many demons came in next to attack Kātyāyanī, but were easily defeated. Then Mahiṣa attacked Kātyāyanī and her host of beings. When she bound him with a rope, he transformed himself into an elephant. When she cut off his trunk, he went back to the form of a buffalo. Kātyāyanī tried all the weapons provided her by the gods when she was created, but they all failed. Finally, she jumped on Mahiṣa's back and pounded him

heavily. But when she cut his throat, a man with a sword emerged to fight her. At long last, she made an end of this demon by cutting his head. The other demons being scared left earth for the nether world. The gods praised Kātyāyanī for her victory. Kātyāyanī sat at the foot of Lord Śiva and announced, "I shall again be born for the sake of the gods."

The Structure of the Story

What has been narrated above can be better understood as a myth if we analyze it into units and substitute impersonal terminology for proper names.

Two demons perform penance for a purpose. A god kills one of them. Another god comes to give the other demon a boon. The demon asks for a victorious son. The son is born and becomes head of the demon force. The demons defeat the gods.

After the gods are defeated, they go to the chief gods for help. Together, the gods form a beautiful woman for the purpose of defeating the demons.

The head demon hears about this beautiful woman and wants to be her husband. She stipulated that before he does so he must first defeat her in battle.

The beautiful woman kills many of the demons easily, but has considerable trouble defeating the chief demon. Many of her weapons fail her. Finally, she opts for an unconventional and unexpected method and kills the enemy. The gods are returned to supremacy.

The above, then, is the skeleton of what we are dealing with in the

present thesis.

Motifs figuring in the story.

Tapas: Tapas (usually translated as 'austerity' or 'penance') is an internal energy built up inside a yogin by his ascetic actions. (The primary meaning for the word is 'heat', but tapas has come to mean 'internal energy'.) The longer he performs tapas, the greater will be his eventual power. It is recorded that some yogins practiced so much tapas that even the gods (particularly Indra, chief of gods) became afraid of them. In such cases, usually a beautiful girl is sent down to distract the yogin or lure him away. It is also possible for demons and spirits of lower nature to perform tapas, as happens in the present story (Rambha and Karambha).

Examples of tapas are, besides the two varieties mentioned in 18.44, long fasting, celibacy, asceticism, and other acts or vows of abstention that were usually painful. The Chandogya Upaniṣad V.10.1-2 and the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad I.2.10-11 place tapas even over yajña (sacrifice), when it comes to winning the favor of the gods and burning off the dross of one's karman. In the present case of Rambha and Karambha, the ascetic acts were performed in order to acquire a son. This is "spiritual bargaining", if you will. Such practices are common throughout Indian literature.

Indra kills a demon: Perhaps one might wonder why Indra became a crocodile to kill Karambha in the river (18.45). Indra is a deity associated with the storm clouds and with rain, and thus associated with water. So it would be natural to see him as a creature in the river. Presumably,

he killed Karambha because of the traditional enmity between gods and demons.

Sacrificing oneself in the fire: When Rambha sees his brother killed, he begins to sacrifice himself in the fire (18.47). Greater power results from merit, and merit can be had through denying oneself something (that is why religious vows contain the element of restraint). Sacrificing oneself is the ultimate in denying things to oneself. Thus, it is a means of Rambha becoming powerful (here, capable of revenge) in the next life. Also, it is believed that the last desire before death influences one's future incarnation. Thus, when Rambha wants to kill himself, he wants to die with a desire for revenge in his heart. This would facilitate the revenge of his brother's murder.

The belief that sacrificing oneself in the fire was meritorious seems prevalent in ancient times. It also accounts for the rite of satī, according to which the wife of a dead man being immolated also throws herself on the fire and thus ascends to heaven along with the spirit of her late husband. We find the rite of satī in this very story: when Rambha dies, his faithful wife, the she-buffalo, offers herself on the funeral pyre (18.67). According to Kane, this rite probably arose as a custom a few centuries before Christ (Kane, 1930, II, 625). If we accept this view, the earliest possible date for the Vāmana Purāṇa would have to be later than the third or fourth century B.C.

Granting a boon: Agni, the god of Fire, granted Rambha a boon, which later led to the downfall of the gods. It is nearly as if Agni and Indra were working together to stir up mischief. Perhaps Indra kills

one brother so that Agni could grant the other brother a boon. Or possibly Agni prevented Rambha from gaining absolute invincibility through self-sacrifice. At any rate, there appears to be no external motive for Agni to grant the boon, although usually a person does something good for the god or seer and is granted a boon in return.

Rambha asked for a victorious son. Previously, the purpose of his austerities had been to gain a son, but now he wants a victorious one, presumably for the purpose of creating havoc among the gods, since Indra took away his brother. Furthermore, Agni gives Rambha the ability to bring about what he wishes from any source (18.52), by telling him that any female he puts his mind to will bear him a son. This kind of boon leaves the exact outcome up to the person receiving it, and thus almost anything can happen, depending on chance. This could be part of the mischief. But it certainly accounts for the birth of Mahiṣa.

The usual hero ineffective: It occasionally happens in mythologems that a situation develops where so many unexpected problems arise that not even the most powerful god (or hero) can do anything about it. In such cases, it is interesting to see how he gets out or is helped to get out of the situation. In this story, Viṣṇu is asked by the gods to remove the Buffalo-demon Mahiṣa, who has overrun the gods. The gods themselves have been thrown out of Svarga (heaven). This time, Viṣṇu himself could not avail, and so the gods pour all their energies together from which comes the great goddess Kātyāyanī.

The gods need the assistance of someone mature in penance: When the gods are ready to form Kātyāyanī, their splendor is combined with that

of the seer Kātyāyana, who is rich in penance (tapas). In other words, they cannot form the Goddess alone, but need the help of someone who has acquired considerable merit and power through performing penance. This reminds one of the story of Dadhīca, the Vedic seer. Dadhīca is said to have devoted himself to death so that Indra and the other gods could arm themselves with his bones in their battle with Vṛtra and the demons. In that case, the seer had undergone much sacrifice and consequently had built up a store of great power. Thus, he was able to help the gods.

The triad of eyes: Kātyāyanī possesses a triad of eyes (19.9), like several other creatures in mythology. The third eye is situated in the forehead between the other two eyes.

Gifts to Kātyāyanī: Several of the gifts given to Kātyāyanī are motifs which are found in other mythologems. For example, Vivasvat (Sun) gives her 'two quivers which had inexhaustible arrows' (19.14). Here is the theme of something that does not go empty. (It is found in other mythologems familiar to us: the urn of water that is never dry, the bag of food which is never empty, and even the Christ story of the feeding of the five thousand with a mere few loaves of bread and fishes.) In Indian mythology, Rāma and Arjuna also have quivers that never go empty.

A similar motif is found in 19.17, where the Seasons give Kātyāyanī 'a garland of never-fading flowers'. This is the motif of forever-fresh flowers, or something that needs no replenishing.

Praise by gods: After she had been created and the gifts bestowed on her,

Kātyāyanī is praised by all the gods (19.18). We find this motif frequently in mythology (another example would be the first chapter of Genesis). The traditional Indian explanation for this is that the god or goddess who is expected to accomplish a particular thing increases his or her strength because of the praise. stutyā hi vardhante devāḥ.

Loka-s and Tala-s. In one tradition of Indian mythology, there are seven loka-s 'worlds' and seven tala-s 'planes'. They are traditionally as follows:

<u>satya loka</u> (or <u>Brahma loka</u>)	<u>atala</u>
<u>tapoloka</u>	<u>vitala</u>
<u>jana loka</u>	<u>sutalā</u>
<u>mahāloka</u>	<u>rasātala</u>
<u>svaṛ loka</u> (or <u>Indra loka</u>)	<u>talātala</u>
<u>bhuvaṛ loka</u>	<u>mahātala</u>
<u>bhū loka</u> (the Earth)	<u>patāla</u>

The loka-s are generally considered the "heavens" of Indian mythology, and the tala-s as the "nether worlds". The terms trilokī, trailokya, or loka-traya 'three worlds' are extremely frequent in Indian mythology. They refer to svarga 'heaven', prthivī 'earth', and naraka 'hell'. Together they comprise the mythological universe. In this present story, the demons take over svarga and the gods are forced down to the Earth.

Dharma and Karman. These two concepts form the warp and woof of pre-classical to medieval Indian literature. Briefly, dharma is conduct conducive to maintaining the divine (moral) ordering of the world, and karman is the idea of action-and-reaction as it pertains to moral life. According to the doctrine of karman, one's actions in this lifetime determine the kind of future lifetime one will have.

Dharma is the power that upholds good existence, forms the basis of enjoyable life, and maintains the growth and development of the universe. When the balance of the cosmos is upset (for instance, when the demons win over the gods), dharma acts as a balancing force, and eventually returns the situation to normal by restoring the gods to power again.

Interpretation of the story

It is possible to interpret the story from several different points of view: the metaphysical point of view (which includes a macrocosmic and microcosmic interpretation) and a historical point of view. From the metaphysical point of view, the goddess Kātyāyanī seems to be the personification (or, in terms of the science of mythology, a projection or externalization) of the supreme energy of the universe. In this story, the gods amalgamate their separate energies to the fountainhead from which all their energies stem. The result: a renewal of the original state of cosmic potency.

To put it another way. The cosmos first began to be differentiated when the primeval śakti divided itself into individual manifestations, i.e. into the various gods and demons and their energies. But now the gods had lost their force and did not prove strong enough to avert the conquest by the opponents of cosmic order. Thus, the energies were reabsorbed back into the primeval mother-principle, into the universal womb.

The Great Mother is an important figure in mythology, as She embodies the eternal feminine elements of the creation. The Great Mother has even

reached a higher rank than the highest male gods in some cultures. (In our own culture, devotion to Mary, Jesus' mother, has been increasing for some centuries, and culminated in the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven, an official doctrine accepted by the Catholic Church in 1950.) One of Kātyāyanī's names used in the text indicates her aspect of the Great Mother: Ambikā, from ambā 'mother'.

The fact that the Goddess is riding on a lion is quite significant. The lion represents energy and will: both masculine qualities. The Goddess, as a personification of the primeval Universal Śakti, or Energy, is upheld by an animal, by an instinctual creature having strong will and driving force. Thus the femininity of the Goddess is balanced by the masculine qualities of the lion, and together they form a wholeness, which is the primeval energy of the cosmos. This resembles the Tantric doctrine of Śiva and Śakti, or pure consciousness (the changeless, static aspect of consciousness) and active, kinetic consciousness. According to this doctrine, there should be a marriage of the Śiva and Śakti elements of consciousness in man.

As for the microcosmic interpretation, this is merely the application of the above to Man. In other words, the primal energy in man was divided into many separate energies (mental and spiritual ones), which sometimes work against one another. When it seems as though the lower forces are conquering man's higher forces, it is necessary for him to draw together and integrate all the various energies that are diffused throughout his mind and spirit. This means (in Tantric terminology), the union of Śiva and Śakti, of higher consciousness (which is Energy, pure potential) and its external form (which is Power). (See the Serpent

Power, chapter one, by Arther Avalon.) In this interpretation, Kātyāyanī could be taken as a symbol of the śakti in the human body. In this way can the "demons" in man (the forces threatening to make his life-energies run amuck) be subdued.

Along a historical line, this story might represent the subjugation of a totemistic tribal god under the gods of the established culture. The totemistic tribal god would be represented by the main demon-buffalo in this story, and the established gods by Kātyāyanī and others of the divine pantheon. Similar instances of the struggle of gods and demons are to be found in the story of Kṛṣṇa. There are many stories of Kṛṣṇa killing demons having animal forms in the Purāṇa-s and the Harivaṃśa section of the Mahābhārata. These stories may be interpreted in the same way as the Kātyāyanī story, representing the triumph of the established religion and gods over pagan and tribal elements.

A critique of how the story is narrated

There are several sections in the story that are not structurally necessary for the action. The description of Kātyāyanī after she is formed is quite poetic in parts, but adds nothing to the action. Also, there is a long reference to the lowering of the Vindhya mountain, which forms a short parenthetical story of its own. Verse 18.33 gives strictly superfluous details about Agastya's hermitage. Much of the main narration is concerned with the preparation for battle and the actual battle of Mahiṣa and Kātyāyanī. Many details of this battle seem to be somewhat

superfluous.

Besides these over-developed parts of the story just mentioned, there are, on the other hand, several details that are not given any explanation at all. For instance, it is not told how, exactly, Mahiṣa conquered the gods. Furthermore, there are two instances of a man arising from a dead body: once, when Raktabīja arises from the funeral pyre of Rambha, and second, when a sword-bearing man comes from Mahiṣa's body after Kātyāyanī has pounded him like a wet hide (21.48). Why should two such unusual occurrences occur, especially within such a short space? Also, it seems as if the supreme gods (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva) were also subjugated by the demons under Mahiṣa (cf. 18.7 - Rudra, 21.43ab, 21.44ab). Does this imply that they are not, indeed, all-powerful? They seem to be oblivious to what was happening to the lesser gods (for instance, oblivious of Agni going to Rambha and granting him the boon of a victorious son.) This is contradictory to their supposed omnipotence and omniscience. Furthermore, why was Mahiṣa born a white buffalo (18.60) ? — to make him unique among all the demons? Also, there are details given in 18.54 and 18.69 which have absolutely no bearing on the story at all. These are some of the questions arising from the story which have no answers.

The Viṣṇu element in the story

The VP is a Vaiṣṇavite purāṇa, and yet the story before us concerns Kātyāyanī (or Durgā), who is associated with Śiva. She finishes a mission that even Viṣṇu could not finish. Be this as it may, there are still a few references to Viṣṇu as supreme lord in the story. The Viṣṇu-pañjara

mantra that is recited to protect Kātyāyanī contains a strongly devotional attitude toward Viṣṇu. As a comment to the Viṣṇu-pañjara mantra episode, verse 20.36 even suggests that the warrior who is a devotee of Viṣṇu never fear defeat in battle. Kātyāyanī is associated with Viṣṇu again in 21.51, where she is called Nārāyaṇī (Nārāyaṇa being another name for Viṣṇu). Perhaps she is associated with Viṣṇu here because, even though the author knew her to be a Śaivite deity, he still felt devotion to Viṣṇu and wanted her to appear with his lord's name. Or perhaps this represents a skilful attempt to reduce the tension between Viṣṇu's followers and Śiva's followers. Be this as it may, Kātyāyanī still finishes her task and sits at the feet of Lord Śiva before disappearing — certainly this shows her connection with Śiva.

Viṣṇu-Pañjara Mantra. When Kātyāyanī prepared to battle Mahiṣa, the gods tried to protect her by asking her to put armor on her body. However, she would have none of that, and so Śiva recited a mantra (spell) called the Viṣṇu-pañjara mantra (Viṣṇu-cage incantation), which would protect her (20.41). This mantra is given in an earlier section of the VP (17.36), and is also found in other Vaiṣṇava purāṇa-s: Agni Purāṇa 270.1-15, Garuḍa Purāṇa 1.13.1-13, and Bhāgavata Purāṇa 6.8.4-40).

(In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the ascetic Viśvarūpa uses the mantra to steal the fortune of the demons. When Viśvarūpa teaches it to Indra, Indra is able to conquer the demon.) Its purpose is succinctly stated in the following words: "By reciting it with reverential faith a man destroys his enemies." (Garuḍa Purāṇa 1.13) It is a hymn to Viṣṇu, who holds the eight weapons in his eight hands (in the eight directions) and envelopes the devotee with protection.

east--cakra 'discus'
 south--gada 'club'
 west--kamala 'lotus'
 north--musala 'a pestle-shaped club'
 northeast--dhanus 'bow'
 southeast--śaṅkha 'conch'
 southwest--asi/khadga 'sword, shield and coat of arms'
 northwest--vaijayantī 'garland' and Śrī-vatsa (a particular mark, said to be a lock of hair on Viṣṇu's chest)

With these objects in his hands, Viṣṇu should be imagined seated on the back of Garuḍa, his bird. Then the devotee should direct a prayer to him.

Here is an excerpt from the Agni Purāṇa's version of the prayer:

...May the mace of the god, resplendent as the sun of the millenium, or burning with the glow of living fire, kill the demons, monsters, piśāca-s and dākinī-s that are concocting evils for my ruin. May the bow of the god Vāsu-deva cast ruin and confusion broadcast among the ranks of my enemies, and men, and kuṣmaṇḍa-s and preta-s and fiendish creatures that are brewing mischief for my fall. May the sworn brotherhood of demons be defeated, frustrated and dispersed by the moon-shine-lustre of the irresistible sword of Viṣṇu, as serpents are routed by the mighty presence of the invincible Gaṇutmān.... (from chapter 270 of Śāstrī's translation of the Agni Purāṇa)

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa claims that "anyone wearing this armor (i.e. protected by this mantra)... is immediately and completely rid of (all) fear." (Bhāgavata Purāṇa 6.8.36) Besides doing this, the mantra is supposed to provide protection from warriors, robbers, dangerous animals, etc. So in reciting this mantra for Kātyāyanī, Śiva gives her as much protection as he can in the absence of armor.

Comparison with the same story in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa

Another account of the story under study is found in chapters 82 and 83 of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa. (There are other purāṇic accounts of the story, but they are not accessible to me.) The story there follows much

the same lines it does in the VP, with minor changes. Here is a comparison of the structural units found in both puranic accounts.

<u>Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa</u>	<u>VP</u>
Mahiṣa vanquishes the gods	"
the gods take refuge in Viṣṇu and Śiva	"
Devī formed from their combined wrath	"
Devī is praised by the gods	-----
gifts are given to her	"
she laughs, and takes off	she laughs, is praised by the gods, and takes off
(the reason for her fighting the demons is simply to defeat them)	Namara asks for her hand on the part of Mahiṣa (this gives her a reason to fight the demons)
battle between her and the demons (descriptions)	"
the weapons hurled at her are treated as playthings; the lion becomes angry	"
from her breaths issue forth beings to help her	(the beings issue from her laughs)
she defeats the demons; praised by the gods	"
Cikṣura and Camara battle with her; both are defeated	Cikṣura battles with her; he is defeated
	Kātyāyanī drinks a drink
Mahiṣa turns the tide of battle; harder to overcome than the other demons	Kātyāyanī's weapons fail; she faces Mahiṣa squarely
Mahiṣa transformed into different shapes (he became a lion, a man, an elephant	" (he became an elephant and then a

and a buffalo again)

buffalo again. A man
emerges from his throat)

Devī drinks a drink, and conquers
Mahiṣa

Kātyāyanī conquers
Mahiṣa

While the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa version is much the same as in the VP, there are several events in different order. The greatest difference between the two is the motive for Mahiṣa fighting Kātyāyanī. In the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, he merely wants to defeat her; in the VP version, he wants to win her as a wife, for which he must first defeat her.

The author as a poet

The author of this section of the VP is a narrator, by and large. However, occasionally he writes several verses together that can claim to be poetry. The section where Kātyāyanī is described by Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa to Mahiṣa is probably the most poetic portion of our story (20.4-14). The images figuring in the description and the flights of poetic fancy are analyzed in the commentary to the translation. Many of the images are a little obscure to a Western reader since they are often based on references to hallmarks of beauty as conceived in ancient India. For example, tapering arms, breasts with sunken nipples, three folds in the belly, a navel with a fold in it — are the hallmarks on which the images (bar, elephant's temple, staircase, seal, etc.) of the poet are based. Consequently, these are images that do not communicate extreme beauty to the Western mind. However, the author's keen observation is manifest in this passage. Indeed, he has a fertile imagination, as well as the skill to express the products of his poetic fancy. Failure to express

an idea clearly is noticed only in rare cases such as in 19.32, 20.12-13.

The only other section of poetic description in this story is the final battle scene.(21.4-50). Though this section is certainly not as poetic as the above description of Katyayani, it still contains a wealth of descriptive material. (Many verses are used in describing the battle; which makes it seem like the action is going slower than the rest of the narrative.) This further shows the author's developed faculty of observation.

Language

The language of the selected section of the VP is to a large extent the same as standard Sanskrit. By the term 'standard Sanskrit' (Sanskrit is abbreviated Skt. in the annotation following the translation), I mean that Sanskrit which agrees with Pāṇini's grammar and the practice of classical authors such as Kālidāsa. However, occasionally the language of the VP departs from what would be expected in standard Skt., giving such irregularities as the following (see the annotations for specific accounts of the irregularities):

Samdhi:

--double samdhi (19.35, 20.11, 20.30, 21.32)

--unusual samdhi (20.15)

an indeclinable treated as a declined word (18.45)

unusual use of cases:

--two objects, one in locative and one in accusative (18.47)

--locative used in place of genitive (19.3, 19.5)

--genitive used in place of dative (19.22)

--accusative used in place of nominative (21.44)

--accusative used in place of ablative (21.47)

unusual use of the genitive absolute construction (18.60)

unusual use of a root (18.71)

transferred adjective (20.17)

neuter and masculine interchanged (20.4, 20.26, 21.2)

plural used in place of dual (20.15)

gerunds taking -tvā as a suffix instead of -ya, and visa versa
(20.33, 21.16)

the a in the augment of the aorist and imperfect tenses dropped
(20.17,18)

voices interchanged:

--active and middle voices interchanged (21.3, 21.21, 21.31, 21.41)

--passive used instead of active (21.16)

words inserted within a locative absolute clause (21.47)

different agents for a gerund and the related finite verb (21.44-45)

Almost every one of these cases can be explained by the author's desire to stick to the metre chosen for the verse. The language is not, on the whole, obscure. However, there are a few cases of unintelligible lines (1.32 and 20.12-13).

It is surprising to see several Vaiṣṇava names given to Kātyāyanī. For instance, she is called Lakṣmī (19.20), Sarasvatī (20.36 and 21.36) and Nārāyaṇī (21.51). This could be an indication of the author's desire to synthesize the Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva cults.

There are several names of demons in the story that appear to be deliberately coined:

- *Caṇḍa 'violent, impetuous'
- *Muṇḍa 'bald, shaven'
- Biḍāla-netra 'having cat's eyes'
- *Bāṣkala
- Piśāṅga 'moving brilliantly, glittering'
- Ugrāyudha 'having fierce weapons'
- Śaṃbara 'having a dreadful face'
- Tāraka 'protecting'
- Ugrāśya 'dreadful'
- Karālāśya 'formidable'
- Uddhata 'excited, loud'
- Udagra 'exalted'
- Durddhara 'irresistible, hard to bear'
- Durmukha 'hideous'

Considering the etymological meanings of the names of these demons, it

is possible that the author used these adjectives in terms of their connotation when he wanted to name individual demons. Some of the names do not seem Skt., and are marked with an asterisk. These names may refer to tribal deities that were being replaced by established deities of Brahmanism.

Metre

There are principally two different types of metre used in this section of VP. All of the verses printed in two lines are in the anustubh metre. The anustubh metre has eight syllables in each quarter, with the fifth syllable light (laghu), the sixth syllable heavy (guru), and the seventh heavy in the first and third and light in the second and fourth quarters. Occasionally the anustubh lines have six quarters instead of four (e.g. 18.40). Approximately 46% of the verses examined are in anustubh. Almost all of the other verses are in upajāti metre, which has four eleven-syllabled quarters: $\overset{v}{-}v--vv-v-\overset{v}{-}$ (the sign $\overset{v}{-}$ means that syllable can be either heavy or light). The only other metre used is a twelve-syllabled one called vaṁśasthāvila, and corresponds exactly to the upajāti metre in the first ten syllables: $\overset{v}{-}v--vv-v-v-$. This metre is used sporadically, sometimes found throughout the four quarters of a verse, sometimes only in one quarter. The percentage of the verses which include the vaṁśasthāvila metre is about 10%. (They are in vaṁśasthāvila in the sense that they are closest to quarters in that metre than any other metre.) There are a few exceptions to the comments made above on the vaṁśasthāvila metre. In several quarters of verses, such as 19.10abc, 20.19b, and 21.48d, the first two syllables might be either

heavy or light, but do not conform to any pattern listed in Apte's Sanskrit Dictionary, Appendix on Metre.

Method of translation

For convenience, I have translated the following frequently-used words in this way:

<u>r̥ṣi</u>	'seer'
<u>muni</u>	'sage'
<u>asura</u>	} 'demon'
<u>Daitya</u>	
<u>Dānava</u>	
<u>Ditiya</u>	
<u>Danuja</u>	

As can be seen, there are several words for 'demon' in this story. I have translated all of them by 'demon', since there is practically no difference in meaning among them. See Asura in the Glossary.

The translation is as literal as English grammar will permit. This accounts for any lack of clarity in the English translation passages.

Throughout non-classical epic poetry, such fillers as tatas, tu, hi, vai, ca, etc. are used as verse-fillers, i.e. to complete the metres of the verses. In the commentary, such verse-fillers are mentioned merely as, for example: "tu: a filler."

Various words are used for Mahiṣa throughout the selected VP passage: Mahiṣāsura and Mahiṣāsurendra ('the demon Mahiṣa' and 'Mahiṣa the king of demons'), as well as other epithet-names. To preserve consistency throughout, I use simply Mahiṣa, and translate any other words that are compounded with that name.

There are many cases of the author using epithets or other names for the characters. In such cases, I have translated the original word

in the text and identified the character in parentheses immediately following it. The name found in parentheses is the most common name of the character and can be found in the Glossary under that particular name. For instance, Kātyāyanī is called Ambikā and Durgā many times in the text. When that happens, she is identified thus: "Ambikā (Kātyāyanī)..."

A note on the use of parentheses and brackets in the English translation. Parentheses are used when some explanation for the previous word is needed in the translation. Brackets are used to supply words not in the original, but which are necessary for understanding the verse.

All Sanskrit words in this thesis have been underlined, except the ones in the reproduction of the original Vāmana Purāṇa text at the beginning of each verse.

II. TEXT, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

18.39

Nārada uvāca.

kā 'sau kātyāyanī nāma yā jaghne mahiṣāsuraṃ

namaraṃ raktabījaṃ ca tathā 'nyān surakāṇṭakān

Nārada said:

Who is that one named Kātyāyanī, who killed the demon Mahiṣa,

Namara, Raktabīja, and also other enemies of the gods?

--39d. 'enemies of the gods': surakāṇṭakān. Literally, kāṇṭaka means 'thorn'. The meaning here of 'enemy' is a derived meaning.

18.40

kaś cāsau mahiṣo nāma kule jātaś ca kasya saḥ

kaś cāsau raktabījākhyo namarah kasya cātmanjah

And who is that demon Mahiṣa, and in whose family was he born?

And who is that one named Raktabīja? and whose son is Namara?

You should tell this at length, Dear (Pulastya), as it actually was.

--40c. 'Dear': tāta, which is usually a term of address to one's father or son, or anyone being in such a role.

18.41

Pulastya uvāca.

śrūyatām sampravakṣyāmi kathām pāpaprāṇāśinīm

sarvadā varadā durgā yeyam kātyāyanī mune

Pulastya said:

O sage (Nārada), listen. I will tell the sin-destroying story of this Kātyāyanī, who is the all-bestowing boon-granting Durgā.

18.42

purā āsuravarau raudrau jagatkṣobhakarāv ubau
rambhaś caiva karambhaś ca dvāvāstām sumahābalau

In the past, there were two terrible, powerful great demons, Rambha and Karambha, both of whom caused the agitation of the world.

18.43

tāv aputrau ca devarṣe putrārtham tepatus tapaḥ
bahūn varṣagaṇān daityau sthitau pañcanade jale

O divine seer (Nārada), and these two, being without son, practiced penance for the purpose of sons. For many scores of years the two demons remained in the Pañcanada.

--'penance': see tapas in the discussion of motifs in the Introduction.

--Although this verse states that both Rambha and Karambha stood in the water, the next verse clarifies it by saying that only Karambha practised the water-austerity.

--Pañca-nada: the meaning could be: a) 'in the water having five nada-s (wide rivers)', or b) 'in the water of the Pañca-nada (Punjab) region (near the Arabian ocean)'. In the second case, the original reading could have been a secondary adjectival derivation, namely pāñcanade.

18.44 "

tatraiko jalamadhyastho dvitīyo 'py agnipañcamī
karambhaś caiva rambhaś ca yakṣaṁ mālavaṭaṁ prati

There, one was in the middle of the water, and the second was the one with five fires. Karambha and Rambha [were thus devoted] around (in the vicinity of) Mālavaṭa yakṣa.

--Karambha was standing in the river, and his brother Rambha was in the middle of five fires, i.e. he stood under the blazing sun with four fires around him. There is perhaps some symbolism to the five fires: five usually refers to the senses of man (being five in number), and with five fires surround him we have an image of Rambha subduing his senses. This particular form of austerity is called pañcāgni-vrata 'the vow of five fires'. It is mentioned in Kālidāsa's Raghu-vaṁśa 13.41: "... Sūtīkṣṇa...is practicing asceticism standing in the midst of four fires fed with fuel, and having the seven-horsed sun scorching his forehead."

--44d. The use of the word prati is interesting. As a preposition (distinct from the prefix or preverb prati) it is usually used in the sense of 'concerning, with respect to, in the direction of'.

Here it has the rare but not unsubstantiated sense 'by the side of, in the vicinity of'. Cf. the exmple given by the grammarians vrkṣam prati vidyotate vidyut 'the lightning is shining near the tree'.

--Mālavaṭa: see Glossary under Yakṣa.

18.45

ekaṁ nimagnaṁ salile grāharūpeṇa vāsavaḥ
caraṇābhyāṁ samādāya nijaghāna yathecchayā

Vāsava (Indra) killed the one (Karambha), sunk in the river, as he (Indra) wished, having seized [Karambha's] feet, in the form of a crocodile.

--The word for Indra is Vāsava, a derivative from Vasu. See Glossary.

--45d. The standard Skt. form for yathecchayā 'as he wished' would be yatheccham. The compound of yathā and icchā is treated as an indeclinable in the standard Skt.

18.46

tato bhrātari naṣṭe ca rambhaḥ kopapariplutaḥ
vahnau svaśīrṣaṁ saṁkṣīpya hotum aicchan mahabalaḥ

Then when [his] brother had disappeared, the very powerful Rambha, overwhelmed with anger, desired to sacrifice his own head in the fire, after having cut [it].

--In the corrigenda, the editor recommends the change of the problematic reading saṃkṣīpya 'having thrown together, having compressed' to saṃchidyā 'having cut'.

18.47

tataḥ praṅṛhya keśeṣu khadgaṃ ca ravisaprabham
chettukāmo nijaṃ śīrṣaṃ vahninā pratishedhitaḥ

Then, having taken hold of the hair, and having taken a sword as bright as the sun, he wanted to cut off his own head, [but was] prevented by Vahni (Agni).

--47a. Praṅṛhya 'having taken' is used for two objects, the hair and the sword. However, one object is in the locative case and the other is in the accusative case.

--Here we see Agni as a beneficent god, trying to save Rambha. However, out of this action, Mahiṣa, who will conquer the gods, is born. Here is the motif of one god's boon (or action) being detrimental to all the gods, except the prominent, savior god.

18.48

uktaś ca mā daityavara nāśayātmānam ātmanā
dustarā paravadhyā 'pi svavadhyā 'py atidustarā

And he was told [by Agni], "O prominent demon, don't destroy yourself by your own hands (i.e. don't commit suicide); killing of some-

one else is [a sin] difficult to cross over; to kill oneself is [a sin that is] extremely difficult to cross over.

--In the last half of the verse, Agni indirectly refers to the law of karman, according to which one is responsible for one's actions and must make up for them.

--48c. The image implied by dustarā 'difficult to cross over' is that of an ocean of sin.

--48c. api 'also, even' used as a substitute of ca 'and'.

18.49

yac ca prārthayase vīra tad dadami yathepsitam
mā mriyasva mṛtasyeha naṣṭā bhavati vai kathā

"And, O hero, I give you that which you ask for, as you wish; don't die; the talk of one who is dead perishes in this world."

--Implication: the story of Rambha's life will die if he dies.

Rambha will be quickly forgotten.

18.50-51.

tato 'bravīd vaco rambho varām cen me dadāsi hi
trailokyavijayī putrāḥ syān me tvattejasā 'dhikāḥ
ajeyo daivataiḥ sarvaiḥ pumbhir daityaiś ca pāvaka
mahābalo vāyur iva kāmārupī kṛtāstravit

Then Rambha said, "If you indeed give me a boon, let there be for me a son, victorious in the three worlds, of a splendor greater than yours,/O Pavaka (Agni), unconquerable by all the deities, by all men and by all the demons; he [should be] one of great strength, like the wind, and should be able to take the form he desires and [should be] learned in weapons."

--'the three worlds': see "Lokas and Talas" in the Introduction.

--50d. 'of a splendor greater than yours': another way of taking tvattejasā 'dhikah' 'richer because of your splendor'.

--51d. 'learned in weapons' = kṛtāstravid, which also means 'learned in archery'. Astra is partly a spiritual missile, usually given to the hero by the boon of a patron god. For instance, Arjuna is provided with several different kinds of astras in the Mahābhārata. As he shoots them one by one, each has a different effect on the target. There is some redundancy in kṛtāstravid: kṛtāstrāḥ 'one who has done his weapons, one who is accomplished in weapons', or astravid 'one who knows weapons' would have been sufficient. Perhaps kṛtāstravid means: i) 'knower of those accomplished in weapons'; ii) 'knower of all made (invented, artificial) weapons', or iii) 'an accomplished knower of weapons'.

--'should be able to take the form he desires': the idea of being able to take on any kind of body according to one's wishes is common in Indian mythology. It is especially associated with the demons. Cf. 21.42.

18.52-54.

taṁ provāca kavir brahman bāḥma evaṁ bhviṣyati
 yasyāṁ cittam samāmbi kariṣyasi tataḥ sutaḥ
 ity evam ukto devena vahninā dānavo yayau
 draṣṭuṁ mālavaṭaṁ yaksam yakṣaiś ca parivāritam
 teṣāṁ padmanidhis tatra vasate nānyacetanaḥ
 gajās ca mahiṣās cāśva gāvo 'jāvipariplutāḥ

O Brahmin (Nārada), the wise one (Agni) spoke to him: "Certainly, it will be like this: in whomever you fix your mind, from her there [will be] a son [for you]." /Thus spoken to by the god Vahni (Agni), the demon (Rambha) went to see Mālavaṭa-yakṣa, surrounded by yakṣa-s (i.e., on whom other yakṣa-s were attending). /Among them, Padmanidhi dwells there, having a mind devoted to none other [than the object of meditation]. And elephants, buffaloes, horses, and cows, surrounded by sheep and goats [also dwelt there].

--54a. The purpose of mentioning Padmanidhi specifically is not clear. He is one of the twenty-four sons of Puṇyajani and Maṇibhadra, mentioned in Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 3.7.124 and Vāyu Purāṇa 69.155.

18.55

tān drṣṭvaiva tadā cakre bhavaṁ dānavapārthivaḥ
 mahiṣyāṁ rūpayuktāyāṁ trihāyanyāṁ tapodhana

O Penance-rich (Nārada), having just seen them (i.e. as soon as he

saw them) at that time, the king of demons (Rambha) developed a passion for a three-year old she-buffalo who had an attractive form.

--55b. 'developed a passion' = cakre bhāvam. Literally, it could be translated 'he made up his mind on...'

18.56.

sā samāgāc ca daityendraṁ kāmāyanti tarasvini
sa cāpi gamanaṁ cakre bhavitavyapracoditaḥ

She, being impetuous and lustful, came together (got united) with the chief of demons (Rambha), and he also made a move [towards her], urged by fate [as he was].

--'she...came together with (Rambha)': this is meant in a sexual way; she came to have intercourse with Rambha.

18.57-8.

tasyāṁ samābhavad garbhas tām pragṛhyātha dānavaḥ
pātālaṁ praviveṣātha tataḥ svabhavanaṁ gataḥ
dr̥ṣṭas ca dānavaiḥ sarvaiḥ parityaktas ca bandhubhiḥ
akāryakārakety evaṁ bhūyo mālavaṭaṁ gataḥ

An embryo came about in her. Then the demon (Rambha), having taken her, entered the nether-world. Then he went to his own abode. / He was seen by all the demons and was abandoned by the relatives,

with the thought, "he did something that should not have been done."

[Therefore] he went to Mālavāṭa again.

--57c. 'the nether world' = pātāla. See "Loka-s and Tala-s" in Introduction.

--58c. ⁰kārakah ity would be changed in standard Skt. to only kāraka ity. The purāṇa goes for double saṁdhi to accomodate the expression in the metre.

18.59-60.

sā 'pi tenaiva patinā mahiṣī cārudaśanā
saman jagāma tat puṇyam yakṣamaṇḍalam uttamam
tatas tu vasatas tasya śyāmā sā suṣuve mune
ajñjanat sutaṁ śubhraṁ mahiṣaṁ kāmarūpiṇam

The attractive she-buffalo also went with that very husband to that auspicious highest assembly of yakṣa-ś. / Then, O sage (Nārada), the black one (the she-buffalo) gave birth, while [Rambha] was living [there]; she begat a white son — Mahiṣa, who could take whatever form he desired.

--60a. 'with him living [there]' = vasatas tasya, a genitive absolute construction. Usually genitive absolute has a connotation of disrespect in later classical Skt., but it does not have such a connotation here.

--It is unusual to see a black buffalo (śyāmā) giving birth to a

white one (śubhra). The fact that Mahiṣa is a white buffalo distinguishes him from other buffaloes.

18.61-62.

etām ṛtumatīm jātām mahiṣo 'nyo dadarśa ha
sā cābhyagād ditivaram rakṣanti śīlam ātmanah
tam unnāmitanāśam ca mahiṣam vīkṣya dānavah
khaḍgam niṣkrīṣya tarasā mahiṣam samupādravat

Another buffalo saw this one when she had become menstruous, and she went to the prominent [son of] Diti (Rambha), protecting (i.e. in order to protect) her good character. / And the demon (Rambha), having seen that [other] buffalo who had raised his nostrils [and] having drawn a sword quickly, ran toward the buffalo.

--61c. The text has ditivaram ('best of the Diti-s', here referring to Rambha), instead of ditijavaram or daityavaram (prominent son of Diti).

--62a. 'who had raised his nostrils' = unnāmita-nāśam. Raised nostrils seem to have been mentioned to indicate the passion and vehemence of the buffalo.

18.63-64.

tenāpi daityas tīkṣṇābhyām śṛṅgābhyām hr̥dī tāḍitah
nirbhinnahr̥dayo bhūmau nipapāta mamāra ca
mṛte bhartari sā śyāmā yakṣāṇāṃ śaraṇam gatā

rakṣitā guhyakaiḥ sādhvī nivārya mahiṣaṁ tataḥ

By him (i.e. by the buffalo) too the demon (Rambha) was struck in the heart with two sharp horns. With his heart pierced, he (Rambha) fell to the ground and died. / With her husband dead, the black one (the she-buffalo) sought refuge with the yakṣa-s. The virtuous one was protected by the yakṣa-s, after they warded off the buffalo.

--64c. 'the yakṣa-s': the word in the text is guhyaka, 'beings to be hidden', that is, 'secret beings, invisible beings'.

18.65-66.

tato nivārito yakṣair, hayārī madanāturaḥ
nīpāpāta saro divyaṁ tato daityo 'bhavan mṛtaḥ
namaro nāma vikhyāto mahābalaparākramaḥ
yakṣān āśritya tasthau sa kālayan śvāpadān mune

Then the buffalo, repulsed by the yakṣa-s, filled with lust, fell into a divine lake. Then [having become] dead he became [reincarnated as] a demon named Namara, famous and one having great strength and valour. Having depended on the yakṣa-s, he remained there, herding the beasts of prey, O sage (Nārada).

--65b. 'the buffalo' = hayārī 'enemy of horses' comes to mean 'buffalo'. Compare verse 18.71 where hayārī = Mahiṣa. According to Monier-Williams, haya-dviṣat, 'horse-hater' (a synonym of hayārī)

is assigned the meaning 'buffalo' in Skt. lexicons. The Amarkośa has vāha-dviṣat 'horse-hater' as a word for 'buffalo'.

--66c. 'having depended on the yakṣa-s' = yakṣān āśritya. What is probably meant is that Namara stayed near the yakṣa-s.

--66d. 'herding' = kālayan. This word could also mean 'pounding', or even 'killing'. Cf. 19.4d.

18.67-69.

sa ca daityeśvaro yakṣair mālavaṭapurassaraiḥ
citām āropitaḥ sā ca śyāmā taṁ cāruhat pātīm
tato 'gnim adhyād uttasthau puruṣo raudradarśanaḥ
vyadrāvayat sa tān yakṣān khadgapānir bhayaṁkaraḥ
tato hatās tu mahiṣāḥ sarva eva mahātmanā
rte saṁrakṣitāraṁ hi mahiṣaṁ rambhanandanam

And the lord of the demons (Rambha) was placed on the funeral pyre by the yakṣa-s, who had Mālavaṭa moving in the front [as leader]. And the black one (the she-buffalo) climbed on top of that husband [of hers]. (i.e. stood in the fire protecting her husband's body and performed satī). / Then a man having a terrifying appearance arose from the middle of the fire. Causing fear and having a sword in the hand, he chased the yakṣa-s away. / Then all the buffaloes were killed by that great one, except Mahiṣa the son of Rambha, who was a protector.

--In verse 67 we have an instance of the rite of satī, where the

wife throws herself on the funeral pyre of her husband after he dies. See Introduction, under "Motifs".

--69c. 'except Mahisa' = ṛte mahiṣam. The word ṛte governs the ablative case in standard Skt., so the proper form would be ṛte mahiṣāt.

--'who was a protector': a protector of the yakṣa-s, because they were good to his mother.

18.70

sa nāmataḥ smṛto dāityo raktabījo mahāmune
yo 'jayat sarvato devān sendrarudrārkamārutān

O sage (Nārada), that demon (the one who arose from the fire) was remembered by name as Raktabīja, who completely conquered the gods, including Indra, Rudra, Arka (Sūrya), and Maruta-s.

--It is not known whether the author identified Rudra and Śiva. He uses both names in this story, but does not ever make them equivalent names. See Glossary.

18.71

evaṁ prabhāvā danuṣṭgavās te
tejo 'dhikas tatra babhau hayāriḥ
rajye 'bhiṣiktaś ca maha'surendrair
vinirjitaiḥ śambaratārakādyaiḥ

The superior ones among the demons were of such power. Mahiṣa — greater in brilliance -- shone forth among them. He was coronated in the kingdom by the great chiefs of the demons, who were totally conquered [by him], and among whom Śambara and Tāraka were foremost.

--71a. 'of such powers': the edition prints evam prabhāvā as two separate words. However, for proper syntax, it should be a bahuvrīhi compound, evamprabhāvāḥ.

--71b. The word babhau, in view of its usage in 19.12-13, etc., could be an equivalent of babhūva (see 19.12, commentary).

The meaning would then be 'Mahiṣa was greater in brilliance there among them.'

--71b. Mahiṣa = hayāri. See commentary to verse 18.65.

--Śambara: in the Vedas, a demon and personification of drought. He is similar to Vṛtra, or perhaps identical to him.

--Tāraka: the son of Vajrānaka. Tāraka was a Daitya whose austerities rendered him as powerful as the gods. In order to defeat him, Skanda, the god of war, was miraculously born.

18.72

aśaknuvadbhiḥ sahitaś ca devaiḥ
salokapālaiḥ sahutāśabhāskaraiḥ
sthānāni tyaktāni śaśīndrabhāskarair
dharmaś ca dūre pratiyojitaś ca

And [their own] places were abandoned by the gods, including the

world-protectors, Agni and the luminaries, who had come together and who were unable [to alter the situation], and by Moon, Indra and Sūrya. And Dharma was fixed at a distance (removed from life).

--72a. 'who could not do' = aśaknuvat, 'who cannot do, who are unable to do'. The object for this expression is left out, but we may assume that it means 'who are unable to do what the Gods should do', i.e. they cannot conquer Mahiṣa or resist him.

--72b. 'world-protectors' = lokapāla. These are the guardians of the world, eight in number, one for each cardinal direction and intermediate point. They include: Indra, Agni (Fire), Yama, Sūrya (Sun), Varuṇa, Vayu (Wind), Kubera, and Soma (Moon). Each one has an elephant that helps them protect the world.

--72b. 'luminaries' = bhāskara, the same word used in the next line for 'Sun', which is its usual meaning. Literally, it means 'light-maker', so it can be applied to either the stars or the sun.

--72c. 'Moon' = śaśin 'one having a hare'. The Moon is so named because the spot on it is supposed to resemble a hare (śaśa).

--Dharma: a difficult and complex word to translate into English, therefore it is left in the original Skt. It means 'moral or religious duty, righteous behavior, conduct conforming to or helpful in maintaining the Cosmic Law'. In this verse, "Dharma was fixed [again] at a distance" means that the positive forces were dethroned by the negative, unrighteous forces when the demons won over the gods.

--It is possible that 71cd is to be read with 72ab. Then the mean-

ing would be: "Mahiṣa was coronated by the great chiefs of demons such as Śambara and Tāraka, who were conquered and by the gods including Moon, Indra and Sūrya, who had come together and could not do [anything against Mahiṣa]."

CHAPTER XIX

19.1-2.

Pulastya uvāca.

tatas tu devā mahiṣeṇa nirjitāḥ
 sthānāni saṁtyajya savāhanāyudhāḥ
 jagmuḥ puraskṛtya pitāmahaṁ te
 draṣṭuṁ tadā cakradharaṁ śriyaḥ patim
 gatvā tv apaśyaṁś ca mithaḥ surottamau
 sthitau khagendrāsanaśaṁkarau hi
 dr̥ṣṭvā praṇamyaiva ca siddhisādhakau
 nyavedayaṁstā mahiṣādiceṣṭitam

Pulastya said:

But then the gods, conquered by Mahiṣa, having abandoned [their] places and having put Brahmā in the front, went, along with their vehicles and weapons, to see at that time the wielder of the discus, the husband of Śrī (Viṣṇu). And having gone, they saw the two supreme gods — Śiva and Viṣṇu — seated in each other's presence; having seen and having bowed down before the two who bring about accomplishment [of what is sought], they narrated that deed of Mahiṣa and others.

--1ad. tatas 'then' and tadā 'at that time' are almost repetitious.

--2a. 'in each other's presence' = mithaḥ, which usually means 'in between, to each other'.

--2b. Viṣṇu = khagendrāsana 'he whose seat (vehicle) is the chief of birds (Garuḍa).' See Glossary.

--2b. Śiva = Śaṁkara 'one who does (or makes) the Auspicious'.

19.3

prabho 'śvisūryendvanilāgnivedhasām

jaleśāsakrādiṣu cādhikārān

ākramya nākāt tu nirākṛtā vayam

kṛtavanisthā mahiṣāsuraṇa

"O Lord, having invaded the authorities of the Aśvins, Sūrya, Moon, Wind, Agni and the creator, and [having invaded] also in the case of Varuṇa, Indra, etc., we are removed from heaven and made to remain on the earth by the demon Mahiṣa.

--3b. 'and also in the case of Varuṇa, Indra, etc.' = jaleśa-śakradīṣu — a locative plural, where one expects a genitive plural, as in the first line. The author seems to have switched to the locative for the sake of the metre.

--3d. 'made to remain on the earth' = kṛtāvanisthāḥ. This is a joining (saṁdhi) of two words, kṛtāḥ and avanisthāḥ that trans-

gresses the rules of standard Skt., in which the change of kṛtāh to kṛtā would alone be sanctioned. The overdone sāṃdhi that results in absorbing the a of the following word is prompted by a consideration of metre. Another possibility is that the author has truncated avanisthā to vanisthā, as apīdhāya is truncated to pidhāya (cf. vaṣṭi Bhāgurir al-lopam avapyor upasargayoh).

'according to Bhāguri, a of the prefixes ava and api can be dropped.

19.4

etad bhavantau śaraṇāgatānām
śrutvā vaco brūta hitam surānām
na ced vrajāmo 'dya rasātalam hi
saṃkālyamānā yūdhī dānavena

"Having heard this speech of those (i.e. of us, the gods) who have gone to you two for shelter, tell what is good for the gods; otherwise, we will go to the nether-world now, being pounded in battle by the demon (Mahiṣa)."

--'those who have gone to you two for shelter': the speakers mean that very assembly of gods which they constitute. So the intended sense is: 'we have come to you two for shelter; having heard our words, ...'

--4c. 'nether-world' = rasātalam. See Introduction under "Loka-s and Tala-s". Rasātalam vraj could also be an idiom meaning 'to suffer a complete downfall, to reach the lowest possible stage'.

Compare Marathi idiom rasātaḷālā jāne.

--4c. hi a filler.

19.5

itthaṁ murāriḥ saha śaṁkareṇa

śrutvā vaco viplutacetasaś tān

dṛṣṭvā 'tha cakre sahasaiva kopāṁ

kālāgnikalpo harir avyayātmā

Viṣṇu, having thus heard the speech together with Śiva, and having seen them [the gods] of smitten mind, then suddenly became angry --
V. i ṣ ṇ u, whose Self is immutable, [was] like the fire at the time of deluge.

--5a. Viṣṇu = Murāri 'enemy of Mura [a demon]'.
--5d. 'the fire at the time of deluge = kālāgni: lit., the fire

of Time. According to the Indian conception, at the end of every cycle of creation, the universe burns up in a universal cataclysm (notice that the theme of universal cataclysm is found in many different traditions throughout the world). The fire which burns up the universe when this takes place is called kālāgni; this happens in each pralaya, or process of dissolution.

19.6

tato 'nukopān madhusūdanasya

saśaṁkarasyāpi pitāmahasya

tathaiva śakrādiṣu daivatesu
maharddhi tejo vadanād viniḥsṛtam

Then, because of that anger, a splendor of great growth issued out of the mouth of Viṣṇu [and] of Brahmā, along with [that of] Śiva, and likewise in the case of divinities such as Indra.

--6a. 'because of that anger' = tato 'nukopāt. If one accepts this reading, then anukopa 'after-anger' and kopa 'anger' would be synonyms. It is possible to read tato 'nu 'after that' and kopāt 'from the anger'.

--6c. 'in the case of divinities such as Indra' = śakrādiṣu daivatesu. As in verse 19.3, this is the locative substituting for the genitive. Śakrādīnam daivatānam is expected.

19.7

tac caikatām parvatakūṭasannibham
jagāma tejaḥ pravarāśrame mune
kātyāyanasyāpratimasya tena
maharṣiṇā teja upākṛtam ca

And, O sage (Nārada), that splendor, resembling a mountain peak, went to oneness (became unified) in the great hermitage of the incomparable Kātyāyana, and the splendor was favored (enhanced) by that great seer.

--'Kātyāyana' means 'born in the family of 'Kātya'.

--The institution of 'hermitage', or āśrama, was quite common in ancient times. An āśrama was a place of rest and instruction, where seers, sages, teachers and their disciples lived. It was usually located in a peaceful forest, or, occasionally, as in stories of miracles, in the sky. The word in the text is pravarāśrama, which could mean 'the hermitage on the Pravarā River' as well as 'the prominent hermitage'.

19.8-9.

tenarṣīrṣṭeṇa ca tejasā vṛtaṁ
jvlatprakāśārkasahasratulyam
tasmāc ca jātā tarālāyatākṣī
kātyāyanī yogaviśuddhadehā
māheśvarād vaktram atho babhūva
netratrayaṁ pāvakatejasā ca
yāmyena keśā haritejasā ca
bhujās tathāṣṭādaśa saṁprajajñire

And [the first splendor] enveloped by that splendor which was released by the seer, [became] similar to a thousand suns of dazzling light. And from it Kātyāyanī, having long, swift-moving eyes, and having a body pure on account of yoga, was born. / Then, [her] face came about from [the splendor] of Śiva, and [her] triad of eyes by the splendor of Agni, [her] hair came about by [the splendor] of Yama, and likewise her eighteen arms by the splendor of Viṣṇu.

--8d. 'a body pure from the practice of yoga': the practice of yoga results in the purification of one's body and mind. It was the seer Kātyāyana who practiced yoga. Kātyāyanī inherited purity and strength from him.

--The goddess Kātyāyanī is here described (verses 9-11) from head to foot, which is not in keeping with the way gods are usually described in classical Skt. poetry. According to Mallinātha's commentary to Kālidāsa's Kumārasambhava (1.32), "devatānām rūpam pādāṅguṣṭhaprabhṛti varṇyate mānuṣāgām keśād ārabhyeti dhārmikāḥ", "According to those who follow dharma, the form of deities is described from toenails; of men, beginning with hair." Each of the prominent gods will make a part of Kātyāyanī's body (verses 9-12), and each will provide her eighteen arms with something (verses 14-17).

19.10-11.

saumyena yugmaṁ stanayoh susaṁhataṁ
madhyaṁ tathaindreṇa ca tejasā 'bhavat
ūrū ca jaṅghe ca nitambasaṁyute
jāte jaleśasya tu tejasā hi
pādaḥ ca lokaprapitāmahasya
padmābhikośapratimau babhūvatuḥ
divākarāṇām api tejasā 'ṅgulīḥ
karāṅgulīś ca vasutejasaiva

Her compact pair of breasts came about by the splendor of the

Moon, and her middle (stomach and waist) likewise by the splendor of Indra. The thighs and calves together with the buttocks, were born of the splendor of Varuṇa. / Her two feet, which were like the interior of the lotus, came about by the splendor of the Great Grandfather of the world (Brahmā); the toes came about by the splendor of the suns, and the fingers of the hands by the splendor of the Vasus.

--Verses 9-11 have essentially one construction, the form being "... came about through the splendor of ...". In the original Skt. some words especially meaning 'splendor' and 'came about' are left out occasionally because of the metre, but the meaning is clear just the same.

--10d. tu, hi are fillers.

--'like the interior of the lotus': lotuses are reputed to have extremely soft interiors. Many times a poetic image comes from this, when the poet is describing how soft something is. The text reads padmābhikośapratimau: kośa would have sufficed, but here we find abhikośa (perhaps for the sake of the metre).

--11c. 'suns' = divākarāṇām. The word is in the plural, curiously enough. Perhaps this plural form had to be used instead of the singular because of the metre.

19.12

prajāpatīnām daśanāś ca tajasā
yākṣeṇa nāsā śravaṇau ca mārutāt
sādhyaṇa ca bhrūyugalaṁ sukāntimat

kandarpābanāsanāsanannibham babhau

And [her] teeth [came about] by the splendor of the Prajāpati-s, the nose by [the splendor] of the Yakṣa-s and the two ears from [the splendor] of the Maruts; the very beautiful pair of eyebrows, resembling the bow of Kāma, came about by [the splendor] of Sādhyas.

--12cd. Another translation of 'cd' would be: "[her] very beautiful pair of eyebrows [came about] by [the splendor] of Sādhyas. It appeared like Kama's bow." However, it is clear from 19.13c that the author of the VP is in the habit of using babhau as an equivalent of babhūva, although for standard Skt., babhau is derived from bhā 'to shine, to appear, to seem' and babhūva from bhū 'to become.'

19.13-14

tatharṣitejottamam uttamam mahān
nāmnā pṛthivyām abhavat prasiddham
kātyāyanīty eva tadā babhau sā
nāmnā ca tenaiva jagatprasiddhā
dadau triśūlām varadaś triśulī
cakram murārīr varuṇaś ca śaṅkham
śaktim hutāśaḥ śvasanaś ca cāpaṁ
tūṇau tathākṣayyaśarau vivasvān

In that manner (or because it had all these ingredients) the great supreme, excellent splendor of the seer (Kātyāyana) became known on the earth by the name Kātyāyanī. Then she became (or shone forth), well-known in the world by that same name. / The boon-granting Possessor of the trident (Śiva) gave a trident [to her], Viṣṇu a discus, Varuṇa a conch, Agni a missile (śakti), Vāyu a bow, and Viva-svat two quivers which had inexhaustible arrows,

--13a. 'the...supreme...splendor of Kātyāyana': the text reads ^otejottamam. This is the changed form (through sandhi) of the words tejaḥ and uttama. Within a compound, the visarga (h) should be dropped and we should be left with taja-uttama; but the author has seen fit to further join the a and the u into tejottama.

--Varuṇa is the Lord of the ocean, so it is natural that he would give a conch shell to Kātyāyanī. Conches were blown in battles to announce and inspire.

19.15

vajraṁ tathendraḥ saha ghaṇṭayā ca
yamo 'tha daṇḍaṁ dhanado gadāṁ ca
brahmā 'kṣamālāṁ sakamaṇḍalūṁ ca
kāmo 'sim ugraṁ saha carmaṇā ca

Indra [gave her] the thunderbolt, together with a bell, Yama a stick, Kubera a mace, Brahmā a garland of beads along with an ascetic's water-pot, Kālā a terrible sword along with a skin [to serve as shield].

--'thunderbolt': Indra's traditional weapon is the vajra or 'thunderbolt'. This would be the natural weapon for the lord of the storm-clouds to carry.

--15c. Brahmā is often depicted as old and as a ritualist. Thus here he appears with a rosary and water-pot.

19.16

hāraṁ ca somaḥ saha cāmaraṇa
mālāṁ samudro himavān mṛgendram
cūḍamaṇim kuṇḍalam arddhacandraṁ
prādāt kuṭharaṁ vasuśilpakarttā

And the Moon gave a necklace along with a chowrie, Ocean (Samudra) a garland, Himālaya a lion, the maker of riches and art objects (or the maker of art-objects who was one of the Vasues) a crest-jewel, an earring, a half-moon (crescent), and an axe.

--16a. 'chowrie': the tail of a yak used for fanning during the summer months. The word is an anglicized form of cāmara.

--16b. 'lion' = mṛgendra. This word can mean either lion or tiger: literally, 'king of beasts'. But from verses 21.9, 14, and 46, it is clear that a lion is meant here.

--16d. 'the maker of riches and art objects': this is the divine artisan, Viśvakarman, a beautiful, skilful worker, who forges the thunderbolts for Indra.

19.17.19.

gandharvarājo rajatānuliṭṭam

pānasya pūrṇam sadṛśam ca bhājanam

bhujaṅgahārām bhujaḡeśvaro 'pi

amlānapuṣṭam ṛtavah srajam ca

The king of the Gandharvas [gave] a vessel for drinking coated with silver — silver and proper (or suitable) [to her]; the Lord of snakes also [gave her] a serpent-necklace (or: a particular type of necklace), and the Seasons a garland of never-fading flowers.

--'Gandharvas': see Glossary.

--17b. 'vessel for drinking' = pānasya bhājanam. This use of the genitive would be unusual, though such usage is customary in English: 'a vessel of drinking'. Another possible translation would be: "... gave a vessel, coated with silver, filled with a drink, and worthy [of her]." This translation uses pānasya with pūrṇam, with the genitive substituting for the instrumental case.

--9-17. Personifications of different objects of nature (e.g. Samudra 'ocean') are ranked along with the prominent deities.

19.18

tadā 'tituṣṭā surasattamānām

atṭātṭahāsaṁ mumuce trinetṛā

tām tuṣṭuvur devavarāḥ sahendrāḥ

saviṣṇurudrendvanilāgnibhāskarāḥ

Then the three-eyed goddess, greatly pleased with the prominent gods, gave a very loud laugh. The great gods, including Indra, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Soma, the Wind, Agni and Sūrya — praised her [as follows]:

--18c. 'a loud laugh' = aṭṭāṭṭahāsa. It is unusual to have aṭṭa repeated. aṭṭahāsa is the common word.

19.19

namo 'stu devyai surapūjitāyai
yā samsthitā yogaviśuddhadehā
nidrāsvarūpeṇa mahīm vitatya
tṛṣṇā trapā kṣud bhayadā 'tha kāntiḥ

"Salutation be to the honored goddess, worshipped by the gods, who stands (remains in existence) with a body purified through yoga, having filled the earth in the form of nidrā (sleep); [she is] thirst, shame, hunger, and terrifying resplendence (or the terrifying one and resplendence).

--19b. 'with a body purified through yoga': see commentary to 19.8.

--19c. 'having filled' = vitatya. The literal meaning of vitatya is 'having extended, having spread'.

--Kātyāyanī is described with both good and evil qualities. Many of the great gods of the Indian pantheon are described in antithetical terms (e.g. Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad-Gītā, chapter 12).

There seems to be no particular inconsistency in having both sets

of qualities to describe the same god. Rather, these two aspects of the divinity are merely two different sides, or faces, of him. When a deity is described in this way, as both good and evil, the idea is that he or she is all and comprises all existence.

19.20

śraddhā smṛtiḥ puṣṭir atho kṣamā ca
chāyā ca śaktiḥ kamalālayā ca
vṛttir dayā bhrāntir atheha māyā
namo 'stu devyai bhavarūpikāyai

"She is faith, remembrance (or watchfulness), nourishment, forbearance, shadow, power, one having the lotus as her abode, existence (or tendency or livelihood), compassion, confusion, and illusion. Salutation be to the goddess, who has the form of [all] existence."

--20a. 'one having the lotus as her abode' = kamalālayā. This is the goddess Lakṣmī. It is unusual to see Kātyāyanī named Lakṣmī, since Lakṣmī (Śrī) is Viṣṇu's consort.

--20a. There are two ca-s 'and'. One can be left out in the translation. atheha, which has the sense of 'and', can also be left out in the first quarter, where it appears combined with u to give atho.

19.21

tataḥ stutā devavaraiḥ mṛgendram

āruhya devī pragatā 'vanīdhram
 vindhyaṁ mahāparvatam uccaśṛṅgaṁ
 cakāra yaṁ nimnataraṁ tv agastyah

Then the Goddess, praised by the superior gods, having mounted
 the lion, proceeded to the great mountain Vindhya, the tall-peaked
 supporter of the earth, whom Agastya made lower.

19.22.

nārada uvāca
 kim-artham adriṁ bhagavān agastyas
 taṁ nimnaśṛṅgaṁ kṛtavān maharṣiḥ
 kasmai kṛte kena ca kāraṇeṇa
 etad vadasvāmalasattvavṛtte

Narada said:

Why did the venerable great seer Agastya make the mountain one of
 low peaks? For whose sake, and for what reason? Speak of this, you
 who remain in spotless sattva.

--22c. 'for whose sake' = kasmai kṛte. In standard Skt., kṛte
 'for the sake of...' calls for a genitive. However, we find a
 dative here.

--22d. 'sattva': according to Indian philosophy (especially its
 Sāṅkhya school), there are three strands, tendencies, aspects, or
 qualities; called guṇa-s: sattva, rajas, and tamas. Together they

compose prakṛti 'primordial matter or substance'. Sattva is the quality of purity, enlightenment, and the force behind mental acts. Rajas is the strand responsible for physical action, ambition and desire. Tamas is the factor causing inertia, sleepiness, passivity.

--22d. 'you who remain in spotless sattva'--amalasattvavṛtte.

The idea is that a sage, or any liberated man, has accumulated the sattva in himself, and is free from any forms of the lower qualities, of rajas and tamas. Compare the notion in the Bhagavad-Gītā 2.45: "ever firm in sattva..."

19.23.

pulastya uvāca

purā hi vindhyena divākarasya

gatih niruddhā gaganecarasya

ravis tataḥ kumbhabhavaṁ sametya

homāvasāne vacanaṁ babhāṣe

Pulastya said:

In the past, the passage of the Sun, who moves in the sky, was obstructed by Vindhya. Then the Sun, having come to the bowl-born one (Agastya) at the conclusion of a ceremony, said the words:

--23b. 'the sun' = gaganecara 'mover in the sky'. This is an aluk-compound, where the case ending of the compound's first member is not elided, as in most cases.

--The reason for Vindhya blocking the sun is not given in this ren-

dition of the story. According to a story given by Dowson (1953 : 357.), Vindhya became jealous of ~~the~~ Himalaya because he was the shorter of the two. So he tried to make the Sun revolve around him, as the Sun then revolved around Himālaya. When the Sun refused, Vindhya blocked its passage. This story recounted here probably takes up at this point.

19.24

samāgato 'haṁ dvija dūratas tvāṁ
kuruṣva mām uddharaṇaṁ munīndra
dadasva dānaṁ mamayaṁ maṇīṣitaṁ
carāmi yena tridiveṣu nirvṛtaḥ

"I have come to you from far off, O Brahmin. Make an upliftment for me, O Chief of sages; give me the gift that is desired by me, on account of which (i.e. so that) I'll move in the heavens relaxed."

--24a. 'Brahmin' = dvija, 'twice-born one'. The Brahmins were called twice-born because they had two births -- one from their parents, the second a symbolic one from the thread-bearing ceremony called upanayana, just before they began their schooling.

--24b. 'make an upliftment for me' = kuruṣva mām uddharaṇaṁ. Usually we would expect the genitive mama instead of the accusative mām. The root kr does not usually take two accusatives for objects to convey 'to do something for someone'.

19.25

itthaṁ divākaravaco guṇasaṃprayogi
 śrutvā tadā kalaśajo vacanaṁ babhāṣe
 dānaṁ dadāmi tava yaṁmanasas tv abhīṣṭaṁ
 nārthī prayāti vimukho mama kaścid eva

Having thus heard the Sun's speech, endowed with good qualities,
 the bowl-born one (Agastya) then said the words: "I'll give you the
 gift that is desired by your mind; not one of my supplicants departs
 as one whose face is in the other direction (i.e. unfulfilled)."

--25c. tu a filler.

--25d. 'one whose face is in the other direction' = vimukha. When
 one does not get what one wants, one turns one's face. Hence this
 expression.

19.26

śrutvā vaco 'mṛtamayaṁ kalaśodbhavasya
 prāha prabhuḥ karatale vinidhāya mūrdhni
 eṣo 'dya me girivaraḥ prarūṇaddhi mārgaṁ
 vindhyasya nimnakaraṇe bhagavan yatasva

Having heard the nectar-filled words of the bowl-born one (Agastya),
 the Lord (the Sun), placing his hands on his head, said "At present,
 this prominent mountain obstructs my path, O venerable one. Strive
 at a lowering of the Vindhya."

19.27

iti ravivacanād athāha kumbhajanmā
 kṛtam iti viddhi mayā hi nīcaśṛṅgam
 tava kiraṇajito bhaviṣyate mahīdhro
 mama caraṇasamāśritasya kā vyathā te

Then, after the speech of the Sun, the bowl-born one (Agastya) said,
 "Know [Vindhya] as made of low peaks by me [already] (i.e. you can
 assume that what you ask for is already done). The mountain will
 be conquered by your rays. What affliction is there for you who
 have sought my feet (i.e. sought refuge in me)?"

--27a. 'then, after the speech of the Sun' = ravi-vacanād atha.

This phrase seems to have been used in the sense of ravi-vacanād
urdhvam/anantaram/uttaram/pascāt.

--27b. 'know [Vindhya] to be made of low peaks by me [already]':

lit., 'know: "it is made (kṛtam)" by me one of low peaks (nīcaśṛṅgam).'

The standard Skt. would have been nīcaśṛṅgaḥ kṛtaḥ instead of nīca-
śṛṅgaḥ kṛtam, as iti flanks the clause.

--27b. hi a filler, or to be taken as 'indeed'.

19.28

ity evam uktvā kalaśodbhavas tu
 sūryaṁ hi samstūya vinamya bhaktyā
 jagāma saṁtyajya hi daṇḍakaṁ hi
 vindhyācalaṁ vṛddhavapur maharṣiḥ

Having spoken thus, the bowl-born one (Agastya), the great seer who had an old body, having praised Sūrya and bowed down to [him] with devotion [and] having left the Daṇḍaka-forest, went to the Vindhya mountain.

--28a. tu a filler.

--28b. hi a filler.

--28c. hi a filler.

--28c. 'Daṇḍaka-forest': a forest lying between the Godāvarī and Narmadā. It is the setting for many episodes of the Rāmāyaṇa.

19.29

gatvā vacaḥ prāha munir mahādhram
yāścyē mahātīrthavaram supuṇyam
vṛddho'smy aśaktaś ca tavādhiroḍhum
tasmād bhavān nīcataro 'stūḥsadyaḥ

Having gone, the sage spoke [these] words to the mountain: "I'll go to the superior of the great places of pilgrimage, a most holy one. I am old and unable to climb on you; therefore, may you (or you please) become lower immediately."

--29b. 'the superior of the great places of pilgrimage' = mahā-tīrthavaram. A tīrtha (etymologically 'fordable, the point at which one can cross the stream') is a place of pilgrimage, where people go to bathe in the river-waters, in order to gain merit.

There were (and are) certain special spots where one could bathe (e.g. in the Ganges) which are supposed to have extremely good results for the bather.

Note: Agastya does not specify which place of pilgrimage he is going to. Is this deliberately vague?

--29c. 'unable to climb on you' = aśaktaś ca tavādhiroḥum.

Normally we would expect the accusative tvām of the second person pronoun, not the genitive tava, as we have here.

19.30

ity evam ukto munisattamena
sa nīcaśṛṅgas tv abhavan mahīdhraḥ
samākramac cāpi maharṣimukhyaḥ
prollaṅghya vindhyaṁ tv idam āha śailam

Thus addressed by the best sage (Agastya), the mountain became one of low peaks, and the chief of great seers (Agastya) too traversed [it]; after going beyond the Vindhya, he said to the mountain:

19.31

yāvan na bhūyo nijam āvrajāmi
mahāśramaṁ dhautavapuḥ sutīrthāt
tvayā na tāvat tv iha vardhitavyaṁ
no ced viśapsye 'ham avajñayā te

"As long as I don't come back again as one of cleansed body to my

great hermitage from the good place of pilgrimage, you shall not grow here [in height]. Otherwise (i.e. if you grow before I return) I'll curse you because of disrespecting (or non-abiding) on your part."

--31c. tu a filler.

--31d. Alternative translation: 'otherwise, I shall curse you with contempt (contemptuously).'

19.32

ity evaṃ uktvā bhagavāñ jagāma
 diśam sa yāmyām sahasā 'ntarikṣam
 ākramya tasthau sahitām tadāśām
 kāla vrajāmy atra yadā munīndrah

Having spoken thus, the venerable one (Agastya) suddenly went in the southerly direction in the sky. He remained [there] at that time, having occupied that quarter, when the chief of sages (Agastya) [thought] "I shall go here [to Vindhya or to my old hermitage] at a [proper] time."

--32a. I assume here that the root gam can take two accusatives, diśam and antarikṣam.

--32b. 'southerly direction' = diśam...yāmyām. The word yāmya means 'of Yama'. Yama was the lokapāla 'protector' for the southern direction (see 18.72).

--32cd. The meaning of the last two quarters is doubtful, even though all the words are intelligible individually. The syntax

is problematic, to say the least. The word sahitām in the critical edition should be read sa hi tām, as in the recast of the critical text in the Hindi edition.

18.33

tatrāśramaṃ ramyataram hi kṛtvā
 samśuddhajāmbūnadatoraṇāntam
 tatrātha nikṣipya vidarbhaputrīm
 svam āśramaṃ saumyam upajagāma

Having built there a more beautiful hermitage right up to an arched portal of pure gold and then having placed Vidarbha's daughter (Agastya's wife, Lopāmudrā) there, he went to his own pleasant hermitage.

--33c. Lopāmudrā is the girl whom Agastya formed out of the most graceful parts of different animals and had brought up in the palace of the king of Vidarbha. When she was old enough, Agastya asked the king for her hand in marriage and became her husband (from p. 181, Dewson: 1953).

18.34

ṛtāu ṛtāu parvakāleṣu nityam
 tam ambare hy āśramam āvasat saḥ
 śeṣam ca kālam sa hi daṇḍakasthas
 tapaś cacārāmitakāntimān muniḥ

In each season, at the periods of juncture, he always occupied that hermitage in the sky. And for the remaining time, the sage (Agastya), having immeasurable resplendence, practiced penance, remaining in the Daṇḍaka-forest.

--34a. 'periods of juncture': the Skt. word for juncture is parvan, meaning a time of change, the period that joins two recognizable segments of time. They are usually occasions for religious activity, for instance at the full or new moon, or at the equinoxes.

--34b. hi a filler.

--34c. hi a filler.

--34d. 'practiced penance': see section on motifs in the Introduction, tapas.

18.35

vindhyo 'pi dr̥ṣṭvā gagane mahāśramaṁ
vṛddhim na yāty eva bhayān mahārṣeḥ
nāsau nivṛtteti matiṁ vidhāya
sa saṁsthito nīcatarāgraśṛṅgaḥ

Having seen the great hermitage in the sky, Vindhya too did not at all grow, out of fear for the great seer (Agastya). Thinking 'that one has not returned', he remained one with extremely low top peaks.

--35c. 'that one has not returned' = nāsau nivṛtteti. There is a case of double-saṁdhi here: originally, the words were

nivṛttaḥ iti, then they became nivṛtta iti, and finally nivṛtteti.

The final change is not allowed in standard Skt., but it enables the author to follow the metre.

18.36

evam tv agastyena mahācalendrah
sa nīcaśṛṅgo hi kṛto maharṣe
tasyorūdhvaśṛṅge munisaṁstutā sā
durgā sthitā dāmanāśanāṁtham

Thus, O great seer (Nārada), the chief of the great mountains was made one of low peaks by Agastya. On its top peak, that Durgā (Kātyāyanī) who was praised by the sages, remained in order to destroy the demons.

--36a. tu a filler.

--36b. hi a filler.

18.37

devās ca siddhās ca mahoragās ca
vidyādhara bhūtagaṇās ca sarve
sarvāpsarobhiḥ pratirāmayantaḥ
kātyāyanīm tasthur apetaśokāḥ

All the gods, Siddhas, Great Snakes, Fairies, and hosts of spirits, along with the celestial nymphs, stayed there with [their] grief sub-

sided, causing Kātyāyanī to be happy.

--For the different beings in this verse, see Glossary under each individual name.

--37cd. pratirāmayantaḥ kātyāyanīm. The word pratirāmayantaḥ is quite rare. Another way of taking quarters c and d is: "enjoying with the celestial nymphs, their grief subsided, they attended upon Kātyāyanī." Here one assumes that pratirāmayantaḥ does not have a causal meaning, but is equal to ramantaḥ or ramamāṇāḥ and that tasthuḥ 'remained, stood' has the sense of upatasthuḥ 'attended upon'.

CHAPTER XX

20.1

pulastya uvāca

tatas tu tām tatra tadā vasantīm

kātyāyanīm śailavarasya śṛṅge

apaśyatām dānavasattamau dvau

caṇḍas ca muṇḍas ca tapsvinīm tām

But then, Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, two great demons, saw the ascetic Kātyāyanī who was dwelling there at that time on the peak of the great mountain.

--ld. tām is repeated unnecessarily.

20.2

dr̥ṣṭvaiva śailād avatīrya śīghram

ājagmatuḥ svabhavanaṁ surārī

dr̥ṣṭvocatus tau mahiṣāsurasya

dūtāv idāṁ caṇḍamuṇḍau ditīśam

As soon as they saw her, the two enemies of the gods, having descended from the mountain quickly, came home. Having seen [him, Mahiṣa], Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, messengers of the demon Mahiṣa, said this to the lord of [the sons of] Diti (Mahiṣa):

--2d. ditīśam; lit., 'lord of Diti'. What we expect contextually is 'lord of the sons of Diti'.

20.3

svastho bhavān kiṁ tv asurendra sāmpratam

āgaccha paśyāma ca tatra vindhyam

tatrāsti devī sumahānubhāvā

kanyā suṣūpā surasundarīṇām

"[May] you [be] happy, O Mahiṣa. But come now and we'll see Vindhya [over] there. There is this divine virgin of extreme majesty, who is [more] beautiful than the beautiful women of gods.

--3a. '[May] you [be] happy' = svastho bhavān. Literally, '[may] you [be] self-resting'.

20.4

jitās tayā toyadharā 'lakair hi
 jitaḥ śaśāṅko vadanena tanvyā
 netrais tribhis trīṇi hutāśanāni
 jitāni kaṇṭhena jitas tu śaṅkhaḥ

"Clouds are indeed conquered by her through [her] locks; the Moon is conquered by the slender one through [her] face; the three fires are conquered by her three eyes, while (tu) a conch is conquered by [her] neck.

--4b. 'Moon' = śaśāṅkaḥ. Literally, 'having the mark of a hare'.

The Moon is also called mṛgāṅka: 'having the mark of a deer'.

Cf. 18.72, commentary.

--4c. 'fires' = hutāśanāni. This is a neuter plural. Standard Skt. would employ masculine plural hutāśanāḥ.

20.5

stanau suvṛttāu atha magnacūcukau
 sthitau vijity eva gajasya kumbhau
 tvāṁ sarvajetāram iti pratarkya
 kucau smareṇaiva kṛtau sudurgau

"Her well-rounded breasts have sunken nipples; they stand as if they have conquered the temples of an elephant; the breasts were made all the more difficult for access by Kāma himself, [with him] having

inferred 'you are the conqueror of all' [and hence must have a real challenge].

--5b. 'having conquered the temples of an elephant'. The idea is this: her breasts have the qualities of expanse, roundness and firmness that are of such a high quality that they rival even the temples of elephants.

--5cd. Kāma (the god of Love) wanted either to pose a real challenge to Mahiṣa or to do his best to protect Kātyāyanī from Mahiṣa.

20.6

pīnāḥ saśastrāḥ parighopamāś ca
 bhujās tathā 'ṣṭādaśa bhānti tasyāḥ
 parākramaṁ vai bhavato viditvā
 kāmena yantrā iva te kṛtās tu

"Her eighteen arms, rounded, bearing weapons, and similar to a bar, appear like machines fashioned by Kāma, [properly challenging] for you [O Mahiṣa], after learning of your valor.

--The bar in mind (probably) is the type of bar used for locking doors from the inside: a sort of latch. Such a bar was large at one end and tapered down to a lesser thickness at the other end.

--6cd. Kāma placed protections around Kātyāyanī the way one protects a palace or a fort, by erecting mechanical devices around it.

20.7

madhyaṁ ca tasyās trivalītarāṅgaṁ
 vibhāti daityendra suromarāji
 bhayātur ārohaṇakātarasya
 kāmasya sopānam iva prayuktam

"And, O King of the demons (Mahiṣa), her belly, which has a ripple of three folds and which has a nice streak of hair, appears like a staircase put to use by Kāma, who is afflicted by fear [of you and hence is] scared to mount.

--7ab. 'her belly, which has a ripple of three folds and which has a nice streak of hair...': this was considered to be a mark of extreme feminine attractiveness.

--7cd. '...like a staircase put to use by Kāma, who is afflicted by fear of you and hence is scared to mount': an example of utprekṣā (poetic fancy). The image is this: the three folds in Kātyāyanī's belly are comparable to a staircase which was built to enable the god of Love to climb. He is so frightened by Mahiṣa as a potential rival that he cannot easily climb in the usual way. 'Climb' (ārohaṇa) suggests desire to enjoy her beautiful body. This poetic image leads us into the one in the next verse.

20.8

sā romarājī sutarām hi tasyā
 virājate pīnakucāvalgnā

ārohaṇe tvadbhayakātarasya
svedapravāho 'sura manmathasya

"That streak of hair of hers, touching from below her round breasts, appears extremely beautiful, O demon; [it is] the stream of sweat of Kāma, who, in climbing, is cowardly (shaken) through fear of you.

--The utprekṣā 'poetic flight' here is a little obscure, and needs explanation. The romarājī (the streak of hair on Kātyāyanī's belly) is now declared not to be a streak of hair at all, but rather the sweat from Kāma (the god of Love), who is climbing up the staircase of Kātyāyanī's trivalī (three folds of her belly). Thus Kātyāyanī is so beautiful that even the god of Love, Kāma himself, cannot resist her, but he is at the same time extremely afraid of Mahiṣa who, Kāma thinks, must want Kātyāyanī.

20.9

nābhir gabhīra sutarām vibhāti
pradakṣiṇā 'syāḥ parivattamānā
tasyaiva lāvaṇyagrhasya mudrā
kandarparājñā svayam eva dattā

"The deep navel of this one (i.e. of hers), which turns around (i.e. it has a fold turning) from the right, appears very beautiful; [it is] [indeed] the seal, placed by king-Kāma-himself, of that very [treasure] house of beauty.

--9ab. 'the deep navel of this one, which turns around from the right': this is a mark of beauty and an indication of the author's good observation.

--9cd. '[it is indeed] the seal... of that very [treasure] house of beauty': the imagery is quite interesting here. Kātyāyanī's navel is compared to a seal. A seal is used in completing a work, such as a letter or a king's edict, or something else very precious. Thus, in putting a seal on her, Kāma is marking her as a very special beauty to be carefully looked after.

20.10

vibhāti ramyaṁ jaghanaṁ mṛgākṣyaḥ
 samantato mekhalayā 'vajuṣṭam
 manyāma taṁ kāmanarādhipasya
 prākāragṛptaṁ nagaraṁ sudurgamam

"The hip-region of that gazelle-eyed one, which is enjoyed on all sides by a girdle, appears beautiful. We would consider it the city of king-Kāma, protected by ramparts, one of extremely difficult access.

--10a. 'gazelle-eyed one': having eyes like the eyes of a gazelle is a sign of beauty in women for Skt. poets. Gazelles have wide, black eyes.

--10c. 'we would consider it' = manyāma tam. Standard Skt. would employ manyāmahe (middle voice) in the place of manyāma. Also, the word for 'it' is taṁ (masculine), but should be tat (neuter), since

it stands for jaqhanam 'hip'.

--10cd. 'we would consider it the city of king-Kāma, protected by ramparts, one of extremely difficult access': again a lovely image, this time an image of Kātyāyanī's waist. Her waist is like a city built by the king of Love (i.e. it contains loveliness personified), and the city is imagined to have a fortress wall about it, protecting it from outside invasions. Similarly, Kātyāyanī's waist has a girdle about it, protecting her from the supposed assaults of those who cannot help but be attracted by her.

20.11

vṛttāvaromau ca mṛdū kumāryāḥ
śobheta ūrū samanuttamau hi
āvāsanārtham makaradhvajena
janasya deśāv iva sanniviṣṭau

"The girl's most excellent thighs, which are round, without hair and soft, look beautiful. [They are], as if, two regions placed together by Kāma for the purpose of settling people.

--11b. 'most excellent' = samanuttamau, a rare compound, rare because of the superfluous sam-. Literally, it means, 'compared to which there is nothing better'.

--11b. '[her] thighs...look beautiful' = śobheta ūrū. The words that underwent the process of samdhī to obtain these two words are śobhete ūrū. Apparently, the steps through which these words

passed to gain the present sāṃdhi form are -- śobhetay ūrū, and (then with the dropping of y) śobheta ūrū. But this isn't allowed, in standard Skt., to happen to a dual ending in i, u, or e. The author must be effecting this type of sāṃdhi for the sake of the metre.

--llcd. Here it is said that Kātyāyanī's thighs have all the hallmarks of land desirable for settling. They are round, without hair, and soft. In the comparison, a good land for settling would be rounded with hills; it would not have many trees, since a settlement cannot be made in a jungle, but only in an open region; and the ground itself should be soft and malleable, for growing vegetables. Thus, the qualities of a region that is desirable for settling are also the qualities of Kātyāyanī's thighs, and for that reason the author claims that Kāma created her thighs to settle people (a suggestion of physical attraction).

20.12

ta' jānuyugmaṃ mahiṣāsurendra
arddhon nataṃ bhāti tathaiva tasyāḥ
sr̥ṣṭvā vidhātā hi nirūpaṇāya
śrāntas tathā hastatale dadau hi

"Likewise, O Māhiṣa, king of the demons, that pair of knees of hers, raised half-way, appears [as if] the Creator, after having created [them], being tired, presented [them] like that on the palm of a hand for the observation [of others].

--What is given here is only a probable translation. The author's imagination here seems to outreach his words and the metre. Consequently, what exactly he has in mind is not clear.

20.13

jaṅghe suvṛtte 'pi ca romahīne
śobheta daityeśvara te tadīye
ākramya lokān iva nirmītāyā
rūpārjitasyaiva kṛtādharau hi

"Those calves of hers, well-round and hairless, appear beautiful, O Lord of the demons (Mahiṣa). [They are] kṛtādhara-s of what is earned through form (beauty) of that one who is created as if by overcoming (transcending) the worlds.

--13b. śobheta is used where one would expect śobhete, a dual verb.

--13d. The author's intention is far from clear. It seems to have puzzled the writer of every significant manuscript, as a variety of readings is available. However, none of the readings available makes satisfactory sense. The ordinary meanings of kṛta 'done, made' and adhara 'lower, lower lip' do not seem to fit the context. Perhaps kṛtādharau is the metrically forced form of kṛtādhārau 'have been made supports/props/foundations'. Even then the use of a compound to express the idea of kṛtau ādhārau would be strange. One expects kṛtādhara or kṛtādhārau to be a bahu-

vrihi compound. Moreover, such a bahuvrihi must agree with the feminine jaṅghe. Perhaps 13cd is to be connected to 14ab.

20.14

pāḍau ca tasyāḥ kamalodarābhau
 prayatnatas tau hi kṛtau vidhātrā
 ājñāpi tābhyām nakharatnamālā
 nakṣatramālā gagane yathaiva

"And her feet are like the inside of a lotus. They have been made with great effort by the Creator. A series of jewel-like nails, just like the series of constellations in the sky, was ordered [to come near] by them.

--14cd: Another very poetic image. Kātyāyanī's reddish bright toenails are compared first to jewels, and then to the stars in the sky.

20.15

evāṁsvarūpa danunātha kanyā
 mahograsāstrāṇi ca dhārayantī
 dṛṣṭvā yattheṣṭam na ca vidma kā sā
 sūtā 'thavā kasyacid eva bālā

"Now, O Lord of [the sons of] Danu (Mahiṣa), the girl is of such and such form, and is bearing extremely scaring weapons. Having seen [her]

at will, we don't know who she is, or [whether that] young girl is someone's daughter.

--15c. 'at will': i.e., we saw her as long as we wished. Cōn. 20.2a dr̥ṣṭvaiva 'as soon as they saw her'.

--15c. 'we don't know...' = na ca vidma... This is an unusual form, coming from vidmah, with the final h dropped before k. Moreover, contextually, the verb should be in the dual.

--15d. eva a filler.

20.16

tadbhūtale ratnam anuttamaṁ sthitam
svargaṁ parityajya mahā 'surendra
gatvā 'thāḥ vindhyaṁ svayam eva paśya
kuruṣva yat te 'bhīmataṁ kṣamaṁ ca

"That incomparable jewel, having left heaven, remains on the surface of the earth, O Lord of the great demons (Mahiṣa). Having gone to Vindhya, see for yourself. Do that which is preferable to you and feasible."

--16b. In the light of 20.20b, which gives the impression that the demons were settled in heaven, one could take svargaṁ parityajya 'having left heaven' as applying to Mahiṣa and translate: "That incomparable jewel remains on the surface of the earth. O Mahiṣa, after leaving heaven [and] going to Vindhya, see for yourself."

--16d. 'feasible' = kṣamam. Kṣama usually means 'capable', but here it means 'feasible'.

20.17

śrutvaiva tābhyāṁ mahiṣāsuras tu
devyāḥ pravṛttiṁ kamanīyarūpām
cakre matiṁ nātra vicāram asti
ity evam uktvā mahiṣo 'pi nāsti

As soon as he heard that attractive coming-about (or news) of the goddess from those two (Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa), the demon Mahiṣa thought, "there does not exist anything worth considering in this matter (i.e. I need not wait)" [and said so]. Having said that, Mahiṣa too does not exist (i.e. he paves the path to his own destruction)!

--17b. 'attractive' = kamanīyarūpām — lit., 'having a desirable form'. This is a transferred adjective, here applied to pravṛtti 'coming about, news', but it actually goes with Kātyāyanī, in terms of meaning. If, however, one assumes that kamanīya-rūpām is a metrically truncated version of the locative form kamanīya-rūpāyām, a better translation is possible: "As soon as he heard the news of the Goddess from those two, Mahiṣa fixed his mind on that one of desirable form. Having said, 'there does not exist anything worth considering in this matter,' Mahiṣa too does not exist (i.e. invites his own destruction)!"

20.18

prāg eva puṁsas tu śubhāśubhāni
 sthāne vidhātrā pratipāditāni
 yasmin yathā yāni yato 'tha vipra
 sa nīyate vā vrajati svayaṁ vā

O Brahmin (Nārada), good and evil fates of a person are already imparted properly by the Creator [even to the extent as to] in which, in what manner, to which, and from which he is either led or goes himself.

--This verse brings out the idea of everything being foreordained. Man is either led by fate to what must happen, or performs actions that amount to moving towards that fate.

20.19

tato nu muṇḍaṁ namaraṁ sacaṇḍaṁ
 viḍālanetraṁ sapīśaṅgavāṣkalam
 ugrāyudhaṁ cikṣuraraktabījaṁ
 samādidesātha mahāsurendrah

The great king of the demons (Mahiṣa) then issued orders to Muṇḍa and Namara, along with Caṇḍa, Biḍāla-netra, along with Piśaṅga, Bāṣkala and Ugrāyudha, Cikṣura and Raktabīja.

--19b. 'Biḍāla-netra': the word in the text is Viḍālanetra. The usual form of the word is Biḍāla⁰. Many times the v and b are

interchanged in manuscripts.

---Some of the names in this verse have interesting etymological meanings. See Introduction under "Language".

20.20

āhatya bherī raṇakarkaśās te
svargaṃ parityajya mahīdharaṃ tu
āgamyā mūle śiviraṃ niveśya
tasthuś ca saṃjā danunandanās te

Those sons of Danu, who were roughened by battle, having beaten the drums, having left heaven, having come to the [Vindhya] mountain, and having established an encampment at [its] foot, stood ready.

§-20b. tu a filler.

---20c. The same interchange of v and b that we saw in the last verse occurs here too. In the present verse we find Śiviraṃ, instead of the usual Śibiraṃ.

20.21

tatas tu daityo mahiṣāsuraṇa
sāmpreṣito dānavayūthapālaḥ
mayasya putro ripusainyamardī
sa dundubhir dundubhiniḥsvanas tu

Then a demon, who was the protector of the multitudes of demons, was

sent forth [to Kātyāyanī] by the demon Mahiṣa. That [demon] Dundubhi [was] the son of Maya, the crusher of enemy's armies, and the one having the voice of a battle-drum.

--21a. tu a filler.

--21d. tu a filler.

20.22

abhyetya devīm gaganasthito 'pi
sa dundubhir vākyam uvāca vipra
kumāri dūto 'smi mahāsurasya
rambhātma jasyāpratimasya yuddhe

And (api), O Brahmin (Nārada), having approached the goddess, that Dundubhi, stationed in the sky, said the words: "O young woman, I am a messenger of the great demon (Mahiṣa) who is the son of Rambha, and is incomparable in battle."

--22a. One can also translate gaganasthito 'pi as 'even while he was stationed in the sky'. The purpose perhaps is to point out that Dundubhi did not observe the messenger's etiquette of occupying a lower or equal position -- that he was rude.

20.23

kātyāyanī dundubhim abhyūvāca
ehy ehi daityendra bhayaṁ vimucya

vākyam ca yad rambhasuto babhāṣe
vadasva tat satyam apetamohaḥ

Kātyāyanī said to Dundubhi: "Come, come, O chief of the demons,
having abandoned fear. Say as one whose confusion is removed the
words which the son of Rambha (Mahiṣa) said, as they were."

20.24

tathoktavākye ditijaḥ śivāyās
tyajyāmbaram bhūmitale niṣaṇṇaḥ
sukhopaviṣṭaḥ paramāsane ca
rambhātmajenoktam uvāca vākyam

When the words of Kātyāyanī were spoken thus, the son of Diti (Dun-
dubhi), having left the sky, came down to the surface of the earth,
and, seated happily on a valuable seat, said the words uttered by
the son of Rambha (Mahiṣa).

---24a. Śivā: this is the first time in the present version that
the name has been applied to Kātyāyanī. It is probable that she
is called Śivā, the female counterpart of Lord Śiva, who is the
god of destruction, because this is just about the time when she
will make battle for the gods against the demon. However, one
cannot rule out the possibility that the author may have used the
word in its usual sense 'the auspicious one'.

---24b. 'having left' = tyajya. The gerund from simple tyaj

should be tyaktvā. If tyaj had a prefix attached to it, tyajya would have been proper in standard Skt.

20.25

dundubhir uvāca

evam samājñāpayate surāris

tvām devi daityo mahiṣāsuras tu

yathāmarā hīnabalāḥ pṛthivyām

bhramanti yuddhe vijitā mayā te

Dundubhi said:

"The demon Mahiṣa, enemy of the gods, commands you thus, O Goddess.

'As the gods, shorn of power, wander the earth, they are conquered in battle by me.

--'the gods, shorn of power..': see the last part of chapter 18 for reference to the defeat of the gods.

--25b. tu a filler.

20.26

svargaṁ mahī vāyupathāś ca vaśyāḥ

pātālam anye ca maheśvarādyāḥ

indro 'smi rudro' 'smi divākaro 'smi

sarveṣu lokeṣv adhipo 'smi bāle

"'Heaven, earth, the paths of the wind are under [my] control, as well

as (ca) the nether world and Maheśvara (Śiva), etc. [Now] I am Indra, I am Rudra, I am the Sun, I am the master in all the worlds, O young girl.

--Perhaps Mahiṣa presupposes that Śiva is subservient to him, since Śiva has not yet opposed him. If he had actually vanquished Śiva, the special status given to Śiva in 19.2b does not fit very well.

--26a. 'heaven' = svargam. The word is used here in the neuter, instead of the usual masculine. Svarga could have been originally a neuter (adjectival) noun like durga, but by classical time it had become a masculine noun.

20.27

na so 'sti nāke na mahītale vā
rasātale devabhṛto 'suro vā
yo mām hi saṁgrāmam upeyivāms tu
bhūto na yakṣo na jījīviṣur yaḥ

"There is neither in heaven, nor on the surface of the earth, nor in the nether world, a warrior of the gods or a demon or a spirit or a yakṣa, who wished to live and has approached me in battle.

--27c. 'approached' = upeyivān -- here the word takes two accusatives, mām 'me' and saṁgrāmam 'battle'.

--27c. tu a filler.

20.28

yāny eva ratnāni mahītale vā
 svarge 'pi pātālatale 'tha mugdhe
 sarvāṇi mām adya samāgatāni
 vīryārjitāniha viśālanetre

"All precious things, O innocent one (Kātyāyanī), which are on the surface of the earth or in heaven or on the surface of the nether region --- all of them have come to me now --- acquired through valor in this world, O you of big eyes (Kātyāyanī).

20.29

strīratnam agryaṁ bhavatī ca kanya
 prāpto 'smi śailaṁ tava kāraṇena
 tasmād bhajasveha jagatpatiṁ mām
 patis tavārho 'smi vibhuḥ prabhuś ca

"And you are an unmarried girl, the foremost among women-jewels. I have arrived at the mountain because of you. Therefore, take to me, the lord of the world. I am a worthy husband for you and a sovereign master."

--29b. 'because of you' = tava kāraṇena --- lit., 'with you as purpose'.

20.30

pulastya uvāca

ity evaṃ uktā diti jena durgā

kātyāyanī prāha mayasya putram

satyaṃ prabhur dānavarāt prthivyāṃ

satyaṃ ca yuddhe vijitāmarāś ca

Pulastya said:

When thus addressed by the son of Diti (Dundubhi), Durgā (Kātyāyanī) said to the son of Maya (Dundubhi), "It is true that the king of demons (Mahiṣa) is the lord on the earth, and truly the gods have been conquered in battle.

--30d. vijitāmarāḥ: a case of double sāṃdhi. The original words vijitāḥ amarāḥ would be changed only to vijitā amarāḥ in standard Skt.

20.31

kiṃ tv asti daityeśa kule 'smadīye

dharma hi śulkaḥkhyā iti prasiddhaḥ

taṃ cet pradadyān mahiṣo mamādyā

bhajāmi satyena patiṃ hayāriṃ

"But, O chief of the demons (Dundubhi), there is a well-known custom in our family called bride-price. If Mahiṣa gave it to me now, I shall truly take to Hayāri (Mahiṣa) as husband."

---31c. 'if Mahiṣa gave it to me': the word for 'it' in the text is taṃ, a masculine form of the pronoun tad. But it should be neuter tad, for the pronoun here stands for śulka, the neuter word for dowry-price. The masculine form is probably a result of the masculine word dharma associated with śulka in 31b.

---31c. 'now' = adya, usually means 'today'. Here, it means 'now'.

---31d. 'I shall truly take to him' = bhajāmi satyena...Hayāriṃ. The word satyena means 'swearing by truth, in truth'. For Hayāri, cf. 18.71.

20.32

śrutvā 'tha vākyam mayajo 'bravīc ca
śulkaṃ vadasvāmbujapatranetre
dadyāt svamūrdhānam api tvadarthe
kiṃ nāma śulkaṃ yad ihaiva labhyam

And then, on hearing this speech, the son on Maya (Dundubhi) said,
"Say what the price is, O one whose eyes are like lotus leaves!
[Mahiṣa] would give his own head for your sake. What then indeed
is a bride-price, obtainable in this very world!"

---'he would give his own head for your sake': ironic, since Mahiṣa
will actually give his own life for Kātyāyanī.

20.33

pulastya uvāca

ity evaṃ uktā danunāyakena

kātyāyanī sasvanam unnaditvā

vihasya caitad vacanaṃ babhāṣe

hitāya sarvasya carācarasya

Pulastya said:

Thus spoken to by the leader of the [sons of] Danu (Dundubhi), Kātyāyanī, having roared with [great] sound and having laughed, said these words for the benefit of everything moving and unmoving:

--33b. 'having roared with [great] sound' = unnaditvā. This would be unnadya in standard Skt. Here it is probably changed for the sake of the metre.

20.34

śrīdevy uvāca

kule 'smadīye śṛṇu daitya śulkaṃ

kṛtaṃ hi yat pūrvataraiḥ prasahya

yo jeṣyate 'smatkulajāṃ raṇāgre

tasyāḥ sa bharttā 'pi bhaviṣyatīti

The Glorious Goddess (Kātyāyanī) said:

"Listen to the price, O demon, which was made (determined) by the ancestors in our family, after enduring a lot: 'He who will conquer

in the battle-front a woman born in our family, will become her husband too."

--34b. 'after enduring a lot' = prasahya, from the root sah 'to tolerate, suffer, endure patiently', with pra as prefix indicating intensity. The implication probably is: 'after having gone through a lot of experiences'.

20.35-36

pulastya uvāca

tac chrutvā vacanaṁ devyā dundubhir dānaveśvaraḥ

gatvā nivedayāmāsa mahiṣāya yathātatham

sa cābhyagān mahātejāḥ sarvadaityapuraḥsaraḥ

āgatyā vīndhyaśīkharaṁ yoddhukāmaḥ sarasvatīm

On hearing this speech of the Goddess, Dundubhi, chief of the demons, having gone, reported as it was to Mahiṣa. / And he (Mahiṣa) of great brilliance came forward followed by all the demons -- [he] wishing to fight Sarasvatī (Kātyāyanī) after coming to the peak of Vīndhya.

--The word for Kātyāyanī in the text is Sarasvatī. This is a rather unusual usage of 'Sarasvatī', as the goddess Sarasvatī is the presiding deity of learning, the wife of Brahmā, and Kātyāyanī is associated with Śiva in the tradition.

20.37-38

tataḥ senāpatir daityo cikṣuro nāma nārada
 senāgragāmināṁ cakre namaraṁ nāma dānavam
 sa cāpi tenādhikṛtaś caturaṅgaṁ samūrjitaṁ
 balaikadaśam ādāya durgāṁ dudrāva vegitaḥ

Then, O Narada, the demon named Cikṣura, the army general, made a demon named Namara the one going in front of the army (i.e. Cikṣura appointed Namara to head the assault). / He (Namara) too, authorized by him (Cikṣura), rushed swiftly at Durgā (Kātyāyanī), having taken an energetic, four-limbed section of the army.

--38b. caturaṅga, lit., 'one which has four limbs'. In the context of the army it means divisions comprising of foot soldiers horse-riders (cavalry), elephant-riders, and charioteers (or occasionally camel-riders). Cf. 21.4.

20.39-40

taṁ āpatantaṁ vīkṣyātha devā brahmapurogamāḥ
 ūcur vākyaṁ mahādevīm varma hy ābandha cāmbike
 athovāca surān durgā nāhaṁ badhnāmi devatāḥ
 kavacaṁ ko 'tra saṁtiṣṭhet mamāgre dānavādhamah

On seeing him rushing up, the gods, led by Brahmā, said the words "Put on your armor, O Ambikā (Kātyāyanī)" to the great goddess. / Then Durgā (Kātyāyanī) said to the gods, "O Divinities, I will not

tie on the armor. What wretched demon would remain here in front of me (i.e. would withstand me)?"

---39d. 'put on your armor' = varma hy ābandha. Since the root bandh is of the ninth conjugation, the standard verb form would have been ābadhāna here.

---39d. hi a filler.

---In verse 40, the verb is badhnāmi, while in verse 39 it was ābandha. Both bandh and ābandh are apparently used in the same sense, even though they differ in the prefix.

---Kātyāyanī is here showing her confidence and prowess.

20.41

yadā na devyā kavacaṁ kṛtaṁ śāstranibarhaṇam
tadā rakṣārtham asyās tu viṣṇupañjaram uktavān

When the Goddess did not put on (lit., make) the armor which destroys weapons, [Śiva] recited the Viṣṇu-cage [mantra] for the purpose of protecting her.

---41d. Viṣṇu-pañjaram, a mantra that has the effect of putting an invisible protective cage around Kātyāyanī. See Introduction under "The Viṣṇu element in the story".

---The fact that it was Śiva who recited this mantra is given in 43ab.

20.42

sā tena rakṣitā brahman durgā dānavasattamam
avadhyaṁ daivataiḥ sarvair mahiṣaṁ pratypīdayat

O Brahmin (Nārada), Durgā (Kātyāyanī), protected by it (the Śiva-pro-nounced Viṣṇu-cage), harrassed Mahiṣa, the best of demons, who was inviolable by all the divinities.

20.43

evaṁ purā devavareṇa śāmbhunā
tad vaiṣṇavaṁ pañjaram āyatākṣyāḥ
proktaṁ tayā cāpi hi pādaghātair
niṣūdito 'sau mahiṣāsurendrah

Thus, in the past, that Viṣṇu-cage mantra was proclaimed by the great god Śiva for the one with long eyes (Kātyāyanī). And by her also, Mahiṣa, king of demons, was crushed with blows of the feet.

20.44

evamprabhāvo dvija viṣṇupañjarah
sarvāsu rakṣāsv adhiko hi gītaḥ
kas tasya kuryād yudhi darpahāniṁ
yasya sthitaś cetasi cakrapāṇiḥ

O Brahmin (Nārada), the Viṣṇu-cage [mantra], having such power, is said to be superior to all the defences. Who would make his pride-

killing (who would destroy his pride) in battle, in whose mind Viṣṇu is stationed (i.e. of a devotee of Viṣṇu)?

--The last half of this verse expresses a feeling of devotion to Viṣṇu. It says that the person who has his mind steadily on Viṣṇu cannot have his pride sacrificed in battle; that is, he will remain unconquered because of divine help.

CHAPTER XXI

21.1-2

nārada uvāca

katham kātyāyanī devī sānugam mahiṣāsauram

savāhanam hatavatī tathā vistarato vada

etac ca saṁśayam brahman hṛdi me parivartate

vidyamāneṣu śastreṣu yat padbhyām tam amardayat

Nārada said:

Tell in detail how the goddess Kātyāyanī killed the demon Mahiṣa, along with his followers and vehicles. / And, O Brahmin (Pulastya), there is this doubt turning in my heart [as to why is it] that even when the weapons existed, she crushed him with [her] feet.

--2a. 'this doubt' = etat saṁśayam. This would be eṣaḥ saṁśayaḥ in standard Skt. But instead of using the word saṁśaya in the masculine, the author uses it in the neuter.

21.3

pulastya uvāca

śṛṇuṣvāḥ hito bhūtvā kathāṃ etāṃ purāṇāṃ

vṛttāṃ devayugasyādau puṇyāṃ pāpabhayaṇāḥ

Pulastya said:

Listen attentively to this ancient, auspicious story which removes sin and fear and which took place in the beginning of the age of the gods.

---3a. 'listen' = śṛṇuṣva --- this verb is usually active, not middle; the standard form would have been śṛṇu.

---3c. 'the age of the gods': the word for 'age' is yuga. The concept of the yuga-s is found in most of classical Indian literature. It parallels the idea of an age of gold, of silver, of bronze, and of iron in other traditions. Here is a list of the yuga-s and their lengths:

<u>Kṛta</u> (or <u>Satya</u>) <u>yuga</u>	-- 4 x 432,000 years
<u>Tretā</u> <u>yuga</u>	-- 3 x 432,000 years
<u>Dvāpara</u> <u>yuga</u>	-- 2 x 432,000 years
<u>Kali</u> <u>yuga</u>	-- 1 x 432,000 years

With every successive age, there is a fall of righteousness in the world, until, during Kali Yuga (which began about 5,000 years ago), one would be hard put to find a righteous person anywhere. After a cataclysm following Kali Yuga, the series of yuga-s begins all over again. Now, the 'age of the gods' is an expression that presents a little difficulty in interpreting. This might refer to the

the first yuga, Kṛta Yuga, or it might simply be a reference to a period of time so long ago that there is no way of measuring it, a period of time known as mythological time, when the gods are supposed to have lived and made their history.

21.4

evam sa namarah kruddhah samāpatata vegavān
sagajāśvaratho brahman dr̥ṣṭo devyā yathecchayā

O Brahmin (Nārada), the angry, swift Namara attacked thus with elephants, horses and chariots. The Goddess saw him, according to [her] wish (i.e. without any hurry).

--'elephants, horses, and chariots': three limbs of the demon army.

--4b. samāpatata is found, where one would expect samāpatat in standard Skt.

21.5-6

tato bāṇaganair daityaḥ samānamyātha kārmukam
vavarṣa śailaṁ dhāraughair dyaus ivāmbudavarṣṭibhiḥ
śaravarṣeṇa tenātha vilōkyādriṁ samāvṛtam
kruddhā bhagavatī vegād ācakaṣa dhanur varam

Then the demon (Namara), having stretched the bow, rained the mountain [Vindhya] with hosts of arrows, just as the sky [rains] a mountain with streams of showers that are the downpour from clouds. / Seeing

the hill covered with that shower of arrows, the angry Goddess quickly drew a great bow.

21.7-8

tad dhanur dānave sainye durgayā nāmitam balāt
suvarṇapṛṣṭham vibabhau vidyud ambudharēṣv iva
bāṇaiḥ suraripūṇānyān khaḍgenānyān śubhvrata
gadayā musalenānyāms carmaṇā 'nyān apātayat

That bow was bent with strength by Durgā (Kātyāyanī) over the demon army. It, having a golden back, appeared like lightning in the clouds./ O one of good vows (Nārada), she struck down some enemies of the gods by arrows, some by sword, some by mace and a pestle, and others by the shield.

21.9-10

eko 'py asau bahūn devyāḥ kesarī kālasaṁnibhaḥ
vidhunvan kesarasaṭām niṣūdayati dānavān
kuliśābhihatā daityāḥ śaktyā nirbhinnavakṣasaḥ
lāṅgalair dāritagrīvā vinikṛttāḥ paraśvadhair

The Death-like lion of the Goddess, shaking the folds of [his] mane, killed many demons, although he was [only] one. / The demons were struck by thunderbolt. [Their] chests were split open by the missile. Their necks were torn by ploughs (a kind of weapon). They were cut by axes.

21.11-12

daṇḍanirbhinnasīrasasācakravīcchinnabandhanāḥ
 celuḥ petuś ca mamluś ca tatyajuś cāpare raṇam
 te vadhyamānā raudrayā durgayā daityadānavāḥ
 kālarātriṃ manyamānā dudruvur bhayapīditāḥ

Their heads were broken by clubs. Their tissues (arteries or veins) were cut by the discus. Some shook, [some] fell, [some] became pale (or vanished), and [others] left the battle-field. / Those sons of Diti and sons of Danu (i.e. the demons), being killed by the fierce Durgā (Kātyāyanī) and tormented by fear, ran away thinking it was the night of deluge.

--11b. 'tissues' = bandhana. Literally, 'bonds or binds (of the body)'.

--12c. 'the night of deluge' = kālarātri 'time of deluge, total destruction!'. There is in Indian mythology a cycle of unmanifest potential existence, after a full cycle of manifest existence.

The beginning of that unmanifest existence is heralded by kālarātri. See 19.5, commentary.

21.13-4

sainyāgraṃ bhagnam ālokyā durgām agre tathā sthitām
 dṛṣṭvājagāma namaro mattakuñjarasamsthitāḥ
 samāgamyā ca vegena devyāḥ śaktiṃ mumoca ha
 triśūlam api śimhāya prāhiṇod dānavo raṇe

On seeing the front of the army broken, and on seeing Durgā (Kātyāyanī) thus standing in the front, Namara came, seated on a mad (attacking) elephant. / On coming near, the demon quickly released, in the battle-field, a missile for (i.e. to get at) the Goddess and also a trident for the lion.

---'mad elephant': often elephants were used in the army in India. Before attacking, the soldiers would give them a drink and arouse their temper to make them that much more fierce. matṭa 'mad' could also mean 'rutting, irritated by passion.'

---l4b. ha a filler.

21.15-16

tāv āpatantau devyā tu hūmkāreṇātha bhasmasāt
kṛtāv atha gajendreṇa grhīto madhyato hariḥ
athotpatya ca vegena talenāhatya dānavam
gatāsuḥ kañjaraskandhāt kṣipya devyai niveditaḥ

Those two [weapons] coming up [to the Goddess] were reduced to ashes by the Goddess with a 'hum' sound. Then, the lion was grasped around the middle by the best elephant [of Namara]. / And then, having jumped quickly, having struck down the demon (Namara) with the paw and having thrown the dead [Namara] from the elephant's shoulders, [the lion] conveyed [him as dead] to the Goddess.

---'with a "hum" sound': in destroying the weapons aimed at her in this manner, Kātyāyanī displays her contempt for such an inferior attack. The description indicates her prowess. In Tantra, 'hum'

is a frequent sound in salutations to the deities.

--The structure of verse 16 is three gerunds with a past passive participle. In standard Skt., the participle would have been active, niveditavān. Also, the last gerund would have been kṣiptvā, not kṣipya. Moreover, gatāsu as an object would have appeared in the accusative as gatāsum.

21.17

grhītvā dānavam madhye brahman kātyāyanī ruṣā
savyena pāṇinā bhrāmya vādayat paṭaham yathā

O Brahmin (Nārada), Kātyāyanī grasped the demon (Namara) by the waist with anger, [and] having moved him around with her left hand, she beat [him] like a drum.

--17c. bhrāmya would have been bhramitvā or bhrāntvā in standard Skt.

--17d. vādayat: the verb form should have been avādayat. The a-augment seems to have been dropped for the sake of the metre.

--Playing Namara like a drum is another way of Kātyāyanī to show contempt for him.

21.18

tato 'ṭṭahāsam mumuce tādrṣe vādytām gate
hāsyāt samudbhavaṁ tasyā bhūtā nānāvidhā 'dbhutāḥ

She let out a loud laugh, when that sort of thing had become an instru-

ment. Many kinds of strange spirits arose from her laughter.

--'that sort of thing': a sign of the author's awareness that something strange was taking place.

--18c. samudbhavan would have been samudabhavan in standard Skt.

As in verse 17, the a- augment of the imperfect verb was dropped to preserve the metre.

21.19-20

kecid vyāghramukhā raudrā vṛkākārās tathā pare
 hayāsyā mahiṣāsyās ca varāhavadanāḥ pare
 ākhukukkuṭavaktrās ca go'jāvīkamukhās tathā
 nānāvaktrākṣicaraṇā nānāyudhadharās tathā

Some fierce ones had the face of a tiger, others had the shape of a wolf. Some were horse-faced, [others] were buffalo-faced, and still others were boar-faced. / [Some were] with a mouth like a mouse or a cock, and others had the faces of cows, sheep or goats; they had many mouths, eyes and legs, and they bore different kinds of weapons.

21.21

gāyanty anye hasanty anye ramanty anye tu saṁghaśaḥ
 vādayanty apare tatra stuvanty anye tathāmbikām

Some sang, some laughed, some rejoiced — in groups; others played instruments there; and others praised Ambikā (Kātyāyanī).

--21b. ramanti: in standard Skt., the root ram is usually employed in the middle voice; here it is found in the active voice.

--21b. tu a filler.

21.22-23

sā tair bhūtagaṇair devī sārddham tad dānavaṃ balam
śātayāmāsa cākramya yathā sasyaṃ mahāśaniḥ
senāgre nihate tasmin tathā senāgrāgāmini
cikṣuraḥ sainyapālas tu yodhayāmāsa devatāḥ

Along with those groups of spirits, the Goddess, after invading, slew that army of demons, as a great meteor destroys the crop. / When the front of the army and the one moving at the front of the army (Namara) had been slain, Cikṣura, the army general, engaged the divinities in fight (i.e. started fighting).

--23c. tu a filler.

--23d. 'he engaged the divinities in fight' = yodhayāmāsa devatāḥ, meaning 'he engaged the gods in fight'.

21.24-25

kārmukam dṛḍham ākarmaṃ ākṛṣya rathinām varah
vavarṣa śarajālāni yathā meghe vasundharām

tān durgā svaśaraiś chittvā śarasaṁghān suparvabhiḥ
sauvarṇapūṅkhān aparāñ śarān jagrāha ṣoḍāśa

On drawing the sturdy bow right up to the ear, the great charioteer
(Cikṣura) rained down nets of arrows, just as a cloud [rains] the
earth. / Having cut those hosts of arrows by her arrows
having good joints, Durgā (Kātyāyanī) grasped sixteen other arrows
having golden feathers.

--25b. 'having good joints' = suparvabhiḥ. Literally, 'of good
joints'. Bamboo sticks have many joints and were used to make the
body for arrows.

21.26-27

tataś caturbhiś caturas turaṅgān api bhāminī
hatvā sārathim ekena dhvajam ekena cicchide
tatas tu saśaram cāpaṁ cicchedaikesunā 'mbikā
chinne dhanuṣi khadgaṁ ca carma cādattavān balī

Then, having slain all (api) four forses with four [arrows], Kātyāyanī
cut down the charioteer with one [arrow] and the banner with one
arrow. / Then Ambikā (Kātyāyanī) cut with one arrow the bow along
with the arrow; when the bow was cut, the strong one (Cikṣura) took
a shield and sword.

--27a. tu a filler.

21.28-29

taṁ khaḍgaṁ carmaṇā sārdhaṁ daityasyādhunvato balāt
 śaraiś caturbhiś ciccheda tataḥ śūlaṁ samādade
 samudbhrāmya mahacchūlaṁ saṁprādravad athāmbikāṁ
 kroṣṭuko mudito 'raṇye mṛgarājavadhūṁ yathā

She (Kātyāyanī) destroyed with four arrows that sword, along with the shield of the demon (Cikṣura), who was swinging [them] around with strength; then [he] took the trident. / Having swung around the great trident, he ran up to Ambikā (Kātyāyanī), like a happy jackal [runs up to a] lionness in the forest.

--29c. kroṣṭukah: the usual word for jackal is kroṣṭr or kroṣṭu. The diminutive suffix is added here to indicate insignificance of Cikṣura.

--29cd. 'as a happy jackal in the forest [runs up to a] lionness': the idea probably is this: the jackal in the forest is running up to an animal which he can't see too clearly, all the time thinking it will make a fine meal. But the animal turns out to be a lionness capable of tearing him limb from limb.

21.30-31

tasyābhipātataḥ pāḍau karau śīrṣaṁ ca pañcabhiḥ
 śaraiś ciccheda saṁkruddhā nyapātan nihato 'surah
 tasminsenapatau kṣuṇṇe tadagrāsyo mahāsurah
 samādravata vegena karālāsyaś ca dānavah

The angry one (Kātyāyanī) cut with five arrows the feet, arms and head of him who was assailing [her]; the slain asura fell down. / When the army general (Cikṣura) was crushed, then the great demon Ugrāśya and the demon Karālāśya rushed quickly [at Kātyāyanī].

--31a. tasmin senāpatau kṣuṇṇe. This is a locative absolute construction; the next word in the text is tadā, which is not necessary after a locative absolute.

--31c. 'rushed' = samādravata. The root dru is used here in the middle voice. It is usually found in the active voice.

--Ugrāśya and Karālāśya are names dealt with etymologically in the Introduction, under "Language".

21.32-33

bāṣkalaś coddhataś caiva udagrākhyograkārmukhaḥ
durddhara durmukhaś caiva biḍālanayano 'paraḥ
ete 'nye ca mahātmāno dānavā balinām varāḥ
kātyāyanīm ādravanta nānāśāstrāstrapāṇayaḥ

And Bāṣkala, Uddhata, the one named Udagra who had a fierce bow, Durddhara, Durmukha, another one called Biḍālanayana -- these and other great demons, prominent among the strong ones, in whose hands there were many weapons and things to be hurled, rushed at Kātyāyanī.

--32a. Bāṣkala: in 20.19, the manuscripts read Vāṣkala.

Clearly, the mark that distinguishes 𑀧 from 𑀧 was missing in 20.19, since the name here is Bāṣkala.

--32b. 'Udagra who had a fierce bow' = udagrākhyograkārmukah.

This can mean either: a) udagrākhyah ugrakārmukah, as in the present translation, in which case there would be a case of double sandhi, or: b) udagrākhyah agrakārmukah, meaning 'whose bow was in front'.

--33c. ādravanta. Cf. 21.31c, commentary.

--See the section on "Language" in the Introduction, for information on the etymologies of the names occurring in these verses.

21.34

tān dṛṣṭvā līlayā durgā vīṇāṃ jagrāha pāṇinā
vādayāmāsa hasatī tathā damarukaṃ varam

On seeing them, Durgā (Kātyāyanī) sportingly took the vīṇā with [her] hand and, laughing, played the great drum too.

--34a. līlayā has the force of 'easily, without any strain'.

--34c. hasatī would be hasantī in standard Skt.

21.35-36

yathā yathā vādayate devī vādyāni tāni tu
tathā tathā bhūtagaṇā nṛtyanti ca hasanti ca
tato 'surāḥ śāstradharaḥ samabhyetya sarasvatīm
abhyaghnaṃś tāṃś ca jagrāha keśeṣu parameśvarī

The more the Goddess (Kātyāyanī) played those musical instruments, the

more the hosts of spirits danced and laughed. / Then the weapon-bearing demons, having approached Sarasvatī (Kātyāyanī), attacked [her]; and the Great Goddess seized them by the hair.

21.37

pragrhya keśeṣu mahāsurāms tām
utpatya śimhāt tu nagasya sānum
nanarta vīṇām parivādayanti
papau ca pānam jagato janitṛ

Having seized these great demons by their hair [and] having jumped from the lion to the [small] peak of the mountain, she danced, playing the vīṇa, and the Mother of the world (Kātyāyanī) drank a drink.

--38b. tu a filler.

--37d. Kātyāyanī's taking a drink is an ominous sign indicating upheaval and death for Mahiṣa. The drink and the vessel for drinking were given to Kātyāyanī in 19.17ab.

21.38-39

tatas tu devyā mahāsurendrā
dandānirdhūtaviśīrṇadarpāḥ
visrastavāstrā vyasavaś ca jātāḥ
tatas tu tān vīkṣya mahāsurendrān
devyā mahaujā mahiṣāsuras tu
vyadrāvāyad bhūtagaṇān kṣurāgraiḥ

tūḍena pucchena tathorasā 'nyān
niḥśvāsavātena ca bhūtasamghān

Then the strong great demons became those whose arrogance was torn and shaken [by Kātyāyanī] with a club-like arm, whose clothes had fallen off and who were without life. Then, on seeing those great chiefs of the demons [in such a pitiable condition], the very powerful demon Mahiṣa dispersed [some of] the Goddess' hosts of spirits with the tips of his hooves and other hosts of spirits with his mouth, tail, chest, and gust of exhaled breath.

--38a. tu a filler.

--In verse 39, the author shows his awareness of how a buffalo attacks.

21.40

nādena caivāśānisannibhena
viṣāṇakoṭyā tv aparān pramathya
dudrāva siṁhaṁ yudhi hantukāmaḥ
tato 'mbikā krodhavaśaṁ jagāma

And having churned the other [hosts of spirits] with a thunderbolt-like sound and with the points of horns, he, wishing to kill the lion in combat, ran [to the lion]. Then Ambikā (Kātyāyanī) was overwhelmed with anger.

--40a. eva a filler.

--40a. aśani could also be translated 'meteor'.

--40b. tu a filler.

21.41

tataḥ sa kopād atha tīkṣṇaśṛṅgaḥ
kṣīpraṁ girīn bhūmim aśīrṇayac ca
saṁkṣobhayaṁs toyanidhīn ghanāṁs ca
vidhvaṁsayan prādravatātha durgām

Then he, having sharp horns, quickly tore apart the mountains and the earth out of anger. Causing agitation in the oceans and destroying the clouds, he ran up to Durgā (Kātyāyanī).

--41d. prādravata. See 21.31c, commentary.

21.42

sā cātha pāśena babandha duṣṭaṁ
sa cāpy abhūt klīnnakataḥ karīndraḥ
karaṁ praciccheda ca hastino 'graṁ
sa cāpi bhūyo mahiṣo 'bhijātaḥ

She then bound the villainous one (Mahiṣa) with a tether. He became a great elephant having temples wet [with rut]. And she cut the trunk and front part of the elephant, and he became a buffalo again.

--'he became a great elephant': Mahiṣa is kāmarūpa; he has the ability to change his form at will. Cf. 18.51, where his father Rambha includes kāmarūpa in his boon as a property the son should have.

21.43

tato 'sya śūlaṃ vyaśṛjan mṛdānī
sa śīrṇamūlo nyapatat pṛthivyām
śaktim pracikṣepa hutāśadattām
sā kuṇṭhitāgrā nyapatan maharṣe

Then Mṛdānī (Kātyāyanī) cast the trident on this one (Mahiṣa). It fell to the ground with its base cut. [She] threw the missile given by Agni; it fell down, O great seer (Nārada), with [its] tip blunted.

--With this verse begins a list of various weapons which were given by the gods to Kātyāyanī (19.14-17) and how they were of no avail. Agni gave a śakti weapon to Kātyāyanī in 19.14.

21.44

cakram harer dānavacakrahantuḥ
kṣiptaṃ tv acakratvam upāgataṃ hi
gadāṃ samāvidhya dhaneśvarasya
kṣiptā tu bhagnā nyapatat pṛthivyām

The discus of Viṣṇu, the slayer of the circles of demons, when thrown

approached non-discusness (i.e. it didn't work). The mace of Dhaneśvara (Kubera), which was thrown, after swinging around (i.e. with great velocity), was shattered [and] fell to the ground.

--'the discus of Viṣṇu': Viṣṇu gave Kātyāyanī a discus (ĉakra) according to 19.14.

--'the club of Kubera': Kubera gave Kātyāyanī a club according to 19.15.

--44c. samāvidhya 'having thoroughly pierced' must be taken in the unusual sense of 'after having been moved around'.

--44c. 'mace': one expects the nominative gadā in the place of the accusative gadām, as gadā is the subject of nyapatat and is qualified by the nominative form kṣiptā.

21.45

jaleśapāśo 'pi mahāsureṇa
viṣāṇatunḍāgrakhuṇa praṇunnaḥ
nirasya tatkopitayā ca mukto
daṇḍas tu yāmyo bahukhaṇḍatām gataḥ

Even the bond of Jaleśa (Varuṇa) was ripped by the great demon with his horns, tip of the mouth, and hooves. On the other hand (tu), Yama's club which was released by throwing out [by Kātyāyanī], who was angered by him (Mahiṣa), went to many pieces.

--In 19.14, it is said that Varuṇa gave Kātyāyanī a shell. Varuṇa,

as a Vedic deity, is known to possess bonds; so perhaps the present verse refers to that well-known aspect of him.

--Yama's club was mentioned in 19.15b.

--44cd, 45cd. Two times in these verses we have the same grammatical fault: a gerund is used even when the action that follows has a different agent. For instance, in verse 44, gadāṁ samāvidhya has Kātyāyanī as agent, whereas nyapatat has gadā. (It could be that samāvidhya is actually a truncated form of samāvidhyat, in which case the translation would be: "She 'threw' the club of Kubers [at him]..." This seems to be the only way around the other syntactically unsatisfactory possibility.) In 45cd, the gerund nirasya has Kātyāyanī as the agent, but the participial predicate gataḥ has danda as the agent.

21.46-7

vajraṁ surendrasya ca vighrahe 'sya
muktaṁ susūkṣmātvam upā jagāma
saṁtyajya siṁhaṁ mahiṣāsurasya
durgā 'dhirūḍhā sahasaiva prṣṭham
prṣṭhasthitāyāṁ mahiṣāsuro 'pi
poplūyate vīryam adān mṛdānyāṁ
sā cāpi padbhyāṁ mṛdukomalābhyāṁ
mamarda taṁ klinnam ivājinaṁ hi

Indra's thunderbolt, released on the body of this one (Mahiṣa), went to minuteness (i.e. to many small pieces). Having abandoned the lion,

Durgā (Kātyāyanī) mounted the back of Mahiṣa all of a sudden. / When Mr̥ḍānī (Kātyāyanī) was stationed on [his] back, the demon Mahiṣa repeatedly jumped up, out of infatuation with [his] strength. And she crushed him with her soft and tender feet, as [one would crush] a wet hide.

--As each of the weapons is destroyed, one gets the feeling that the powers provided Kātyāyanī by the gods are not effective.

This adds suspense to the narrative and also provides an explanation of why she trampled Mahiṣa to death.

--pr̥sthasthitāyām mahiṣāsuro 'pi poplūyate vīryamadān mr̥ḍānyām.

This is a locative absolute construction, in the first and last words of the phrase. Most locative absolutes occur with all the words in the phrase together. It is unusual to have so many intervening words.

--47d. hi a filler.

21.48

sa mr̥ḍyamāṇo dharanīdharābho

devyā balī hīnabalo babhūva

tato 'sya śūlena bibheda kaṇṭham

tasmāt pumān khaḍgadharo vinirgataḥ

Being pressed by the Goddess, the strong one (Mahiṣa), having the appearance of a mountain, became one whose strength was lost. Then she cut the throat of this one (Mahiṣa) with [her] trident. From it

came out a sword-bearing man.

--This demon is not easy to kill. Where other beings would be killed by having their throat cut, this one makes still another transformation.

21.49

niṣkrāntamātrām hr̥daye padā tam
 āhatya saṃgrhya kaṣeṣu kopāt
 śiraḥ praciccheda varāsinā 'sya
 hāhākṛtaṃ daityabalaṃ tadā 'bhūt

As soon as he came out, Kātyāyanī struck him by [her] foot on the heart. Having angrily grasped [him] by the hair, she cut off the head of this one (the sword-bearing man) with [her] great sword. Then the demon army cried with panic.

--49d. hāhākṛtaṃ, lit., 'performance of the wailing sound'. This word seems to have been used in the sense 'one which is performing the wailing sound hā hā'. The other way of making a satisfactory sense of the line would be to change the noun daitya-balam to a locative daitya-bale: letters like ṛ often change to letters like ṛ̣ in manuscripts.

21.50-51

sacaṇḍamuṇḍāḥ samayāḥ satārāḥ
 sahāsilomnā bhayakātārākṣāḥ
 saṁtāḍyamānāḥ pramathair bhavānyāḥ
 pātalam evāviviśur bhayārtāḥ
 devyā jayaṁ devagaṇā vilokya
 stuvanti devīm stutibhir maharṣe
 nārāyaṇīm sarvajagatpratiṣṭhām
 kātyāyaṇīm ghoramukhīm surūpām

[The demons] including Caṇḍa, Muṇḍa, Maya, Tāra, [and] together with Asiloman, having eyes despondent from fear, being beaten by Bhavānī's (Kātyāyaṇī's) attendants [and] afflicted with fear, entered the nether world. / O great seer (Nārada), having seen the victory of the Goddess, the hosts of gods praised the Goddess with hymns -- [the Goddess who is] Nārāyaṇī, the foundation of the whole world, Kātyāyaṇī, one having a terrible face [and] one having a beautiful body.

--50d. eva a filler.

--Here we have another association of Kātyāyaṇī with Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is called Nārāyaṇa, and here Kātyāyaṇī is called Nārāyaṇī.

21.52

saṁstūyamānā surasiddhasaṁghair
 niṣaṇṇa-bhūtā harapādamūle
 bhūyo bhaviṣyāmy amarārtham evam
 uktvā surāṁs tān praviveśa durgā

Being praised by the hosts of gods and the Siddha-s, the Goddess sat down at the feet of Hara (Śiva). "I will become again (i.e. will reincarnate) for the sake of the gods." After having spoken thus, Durgā entered those gods.

--52b. 'sat' = niṣaṇṇabhūtā. Strictly speaking, bhūtā is not necessary. niṣaṇṇā would have been sufficient.

GLOSSARY
OF NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS
AND CLASSES OF BEINGS

AGASTYA. Agastya is a Vedic seer. His birth is attributed to Mitra, whose seed fell in a water-jar at the sight of Urvāśī. He was born from the water-jar, thus his epithets kumbhabhava, kalāsaja, and kalāsodbhava in this story. The name Agastya is supposedly derived from the tale told in 19.23-36, where he commands the Vindhya mountain to lower itself before him. The etymology presupposed is from aga 'mountain' ('that which does not move'), and -tya, a suffix meaning 'stationed, placed'; thus Agastya is said to mean originally 'stationed on top of a mountain'. However, it is also likely that the myth was invented to explain Agastya's name.

In any case, Agastya is highly respected in South India (and South-east Asia) and is attributed achievements that indicate his being foremost in bringing civilization (or some important aspects of civilization) to South India from North India. In this sense, he definitely lowered the barrier in the form of the Vindhya range.

Epithets in this section of the VP:

kumbhabhava -- 'bowl-born one' -- 19.23

kalāsaja -- 'bowl-born one' -- 19.25

kalāsodbhava -- 'bowl-born one' -- 19.28

AGNI. Agni is the traditional god of Fire, from Vedic times on. In the Veda, he is primarily the mediator between men and the gods; as the personification of the sacrificial fire, he carries men's sacrifices up to the heavens. Next to Indra, he was the most prominent of Vedic gods. The Vedic trinity includes Agni, Vāyu, and Sūrya. Agni is sometimes even called a seer, as well as a priest.

Epithets:

vahni -- 'one who carries [the sacrifice to the gods]' -- 18.47

hutāsa -- 'eater of what is offered' -- 18.72, 19.14

pāvaka -- 'purifier' (perhaps from the root pū) -- 18.50, 19.9

ASURA. This word derives from asu-ra, 'asu-possessing', asu meaning 'vitality, life, energy, breath'. In the early Vedic times the asura-s were those possessing power capable of controlling the cosmos and even included Indra, Agni and Varuṇa. The Taittīriya Brāhmaṇa (and the Vāyu Purāṇa) claim that the breath (asu) of Prajāpati became alive, and "with that breath he created the asura-s". But later, in late Vedic times and during the classical age, the asura-s were demons, adversaries of the gods, and in constant battle with the gods. The word 'demon' is only an approximate translation in the following sense: the meaning of asura went from 'power-possessing' to 'mighty', to 'those who have only power, not the discretion necessary for its use', to 'power-mad', to 'possessors of blind might', to 'those who aspire blindly for power', to 'demon'. The asura-s conquer the gods and are conquered by them in turn. As a general name for the demonic enemies of the gods, it includes the two groups mentioned in the present VP passage: Daitya-s 'progeny of Diti' and Dānava-s 'progeny of Danu'.

The Daitya-s [←]interfered with sacrifices. These giants were descendants of Kaśyapa, a Vedic sage. The word Daitya derives from Diti, and means the 'sons of Diti' (who was the daughter of Dakṣa, a Prajāpati). Thus the Daitya-s have their ancestry in a sage and a superhuman mother, yet turn out to be demons.

The Dānava-s are also demonic descendants of Kaśyapa, but their mother is Danu. In the Vedas, Dānava is often associated with Vṛtra, Indra's demonic enemy.

THE AŚVIN-S. The pair of Aśvin-s, named Dasra and Nāsatya, are the twins

of the Vedic pantheon, and the equivalent of Castor and Pollux in the Greek pantheon. They are always young, swift, handsome, and always found moving together. They are prominently saviors, helpers, and physicians. The Ásvins ride in a golden car driven by horses or birds. This golden car is supposed to go before the sun, and thus the Ásvins are connected with dawn.

BHŪTA. Literally, 'ghosts, goblins'. These are spirits which haunt trees, streams, cemeteries, etc., occasionally animate dead bodies, and devour human beings. They are attendants upon Śiva, and are said to be chthonic deities of an earlier tribal period in India. They were probably Sanskritized by relating them to established gods.

BRAHMĀ. Brahmā is one of the members of the Indian trinity: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Those three represent the Creator, Maintainer and Destroyer of the cosmos. Brahmā is the lord and father of all creatures, and is often called Pitāmaha (as in 19.2) -- 'grandfather'. In this respect, he is a recast of the Vedic Prajāpati. He has four arms and faces; in his hands he holds the Vedas and a sceptre, or spoon, a string of beads, his bow, or a water-jug. His consort is Sarasvatī the goddess of learning. He is often depicted as sitting on the lotus coming up from Viṣṇu's naval. Brahma rides on a swan, and lives in Brahmā-vrnda. He has seven mind-born sons, among whom is Pulastya, the seer in this passage who tells the story of Mahiṣa and Kātyāyanī.

Epithets:

pitāmaha -- 'grandfather' -- 19.1, 2

vedhaṣ -- 'the Creator' -- 19.3

lokaprapitāmaha -- 'great-grandfather of the world' -- 19.11

vidhātṛ -- 'the Creator, Ordainer' -- 20.12, 20.14

CANĀḌA. One of Mahiṣa's officers in the army. 20.19

CIKṢURA. The general of Mahiṣa's army -- 20.37.

Epithets:

sainyapāla -- 'protector of the army, army general' -- 21.33
senāpati -- 'lord of the army' -- 21.31

DUNDUBHI. A member of Mahiṣa's army and protector of the demons (20.21).

He had the voice of a kettledrum, which description is clearly prompted by the etymology of his name (dundubhi means 'kettledrum'). He was the son of Maya (20.30).

Epithet:

Ditiya -- 'son of Diti' -- 20.24. See note on asura above.

FAIRIES. Skt., vidyā-dhara 'possessors of knowledge [of unseen activities]'. These were a class of inferior deities dwelling between the earth and heaven. They are also attendants upon Indra. In Sanskrit plays and poems, they appear as reporters of what the spectators or characters cannot physically see.

GANDHARVA. Celestial musicians. Citra-rath is said to be the chief of the Gandharva-s, so perhaps he is meant (in 19.17) by 'king of the Gandharva-s'.

GREAT SNAKES. Skt. mahoragāḥ. Perhaps this is a reference to the serpent race of Nāgas. The king Snake, Śeṣa, has a thousand heads and is the resting place of Viṣṇu.

INDRA. Indra is traditionally the chief of the gods and punisher of demonic enemies of gods. In Vedic times, he stands out as the most pro-

minent god, as a storm-god. In classical times he is like a figurehead, the king of the gods (like Zeus in Greek mythology). He rides in a bright golden chariot, drawn by two ruddy horses with flowing manes and tails. He uses the vajra 'thunderbolt' for a weapon, as well as arrows, a large hook and a net. The Veda presents him as receiving great strength for battle from his voluminous draughts of soma. He reigns over the weather, and particularly the rain and storms. Another office of his is that of a Loka-pāla, a world-protector. (This is the weaker, demoted Indra, probably of a later period.) There are eight loka-pāla-s, one for each point of the compass and for each point between cardinal points. Indra is regent of the easterly direction, the direction of the rising sun. Indra's heaven is called Svarga.

KĀMA. The Indian equivalent for Cupid, Kāma is the god of Love. He possesses five arrows, each of them a flower --- which he shoots at the hearts of men with a flower bow stretched with a string of black bees, whose buzzing is the twang of the bow. His origin appears to be unknown --- the Taittīriya Brāhmaṇa attributes his birth to Dharma and Śraddhā, the Harivaṃśa to Lakṣmī, and another account to Brahmā. There is probably some connection of the mystery of his origin with the puzzling origin of sexual passion.

Epithets:

kandarpa --- 'the inflamer of Brahmā' or 'whom does he not make infatuated' --- 19.12

manmatha --- 'intoxicater and agitater' or 'heart-churner' --- 20.8

kandarparājan --- 'king infatuator' --- 20.9

makaradhvaja --- 'having a crocodile (or a specific shark) for an emblem' --- 20.11

KĀTYĀYANĪ. Kātyāyanī is an incarnation of Devī 'the Goddess', or Mahādevī 'the Great Goddess'. From other purāṇa-s it can be gathered that she is the śakti or female energy of Lord Śiva. Indeed she plays the role of his wife throughout her various incarnations. She has many incarnations during Śiva's long lifetime, and the incarnations are called Pārvatī, Durgā, Kātyāyanī, Kālī, Bhavānī, etc. She shuffles back and forth between her role as Mother of the cosmos and Śiva's consort. Together with Śiva, the two "are regarded as the primeval twofold-personalization of the Absolute. They are the first and primeval unfolding of the neuter Brahman into the opposites of the male and female principles." (p. 197, Zimmer:1962). The story of Pārvatī is given in the VP 25.1-28, among many other texts.

Epithets:

- śrīdevī -- 'the glorious goddess' -- 20.34
- devī -- 'the goddess' -- 20.35, 20.41, 21.22
- Sarasvatī -- 'watery' -- 20.36, 21.36
- Ambikā -- 'the mother' -- 20.39, 21.21, 21.27, 21.40
- Parameśvarī -- 'the great governing Goddess' -- 21.36
- mṛḍānī -- 'the compassionate' or 'wife of Mṛḍa (Śiva)' -- 21.43, 21.47
- Bhavānī -- 'wife of Bhava (Śiva)' -- 21.50
- Nārāyaṇī -- 'consort of Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu)' -- 21.51

KUBERA. (Also spelled Kuvera) In Classical times, Kubera is the god of wealth and chief of the yakṣa-s or guhyaka-s. According to one account, he is the son of Viśravaṇa and Idāvidā. However another account makes him a son of Pulastya (the father of Viśravaṇa).

Epithets:

- dhanada -- 'wealth-giver' -- 19.15
- dhaneśvara -- 'lord of wealth' -- 21.44

LAKṢMĪ. Lakṣmī is the goddess of fortune, wife of Viṣṇu. The Vāṇī...

MAHIṢA. The principal demon against whom Kātyāyanī fights in this story. He is the son of Rambha (18.50-60), and could take any form he desired.

Epithets:

ditīśa -- 'lord of the sons of Diti' -- 20.2

asurendra -- 'lord of the demons' -- 20.3

rambhasuta -- 'son of Rambha' -- 20.24

hayāri -- 'horse-hater, buffalo' -- 20.31

THE MARUTS. The Maruts are the storm gods in the Vedic pantheon, and already in Vedic times they were prominent deities, but not, however, as prominent as Agni, Indra, etc. As associates of Indra, they are armed with lightnings and thunderbolts, and number either 180 or 27. Several origins are ascribed to them, the most prominent being from the goddess Diti (Viṣṇu Purāṇa). Diti lost her children, and begged Kaśyapa the sage for a boon: that she might have a child who should destroy Indra, the killer of her children. Kasyapa granted the boon on the condition that she keep her body and mind absolutely pure for a hundred years first. Indra found out about this, and waited upon her with much humility. In the last year of the century, Diti went to bed without washing her feet, and Indra saw his chance. He divided her embryo into seven portions when he saw that the child was crying and was unable to pacify it. From his saying mā-rodī 'weep not' to the child, the word 'Marut' is said to have derived. However, this is clearly a folk-etymology. Mahā together with the root rut, 'great shouter or roarer' is more likely to be the original word.

MAYA. Maya was a demon who was an architect and artificer of the asura-s. in the same way that Viśvakarman was the artificer of the gods.

NAMARA. Namara was the reincarnation of the buffalo who developed a lust for Rambha's wife (18.61-67). Later in the story, he is appointed by Mahiṣa (who was Rambha's son) to start the assault on Kātyāyanī. (20.37) Etymologically, the name Namara could be taken to mean 'one who does not die.'

NĀRADA. Nārada is a Vedic seer, one of the Prajāpati-s 'lords of creatures', and also, according to one list, one of the seven great seers (saptarṣi-s). As for his origin, the R̥g-Veda attributes him to the Kaṇva family, while the Viṣṇu Purāṇa says that he is a son of Kaśyapa and one of Dakṣa's daughters. Still another source says that he came out of the forehead of Brahmā. Many stories relate how Nārada causes strife among the gods and men; for instance, he warns Kāṁsa of Kṛṣṇa's imminent birth, and then goes on to befriend Kṛṣṇa against Kāṁsa. Thus he is often called Kali-kāraka 'strife-maker', and kalaha-priya 'one to whom quarrel is dear'. He creates the necessity for divine incarnation or intervention. Nārada's function in this story is to ask Pulastya about Kātyāyanī (18.39, etc.).

NYMPHS. Skt. apsara-s, originally 'water-moving (spirits)'. The apsara-s are the nymphs of Indra's heaven. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa ascribes their origin to the churning of the ocean. They are wives or mistresses of the Gandharva-s, and have many lovers.

PULASTYA. Pulastya is one of the Prajāpati-s (a Vedic group of creative deities), and, according to one account, one of the seven great seers (saptarṣi-s). The selected portion of the VP makes him the story-teller;

he narrates the story, while Nārada prods him on with questions. He was the father of Rāvaṇa of the Rāmāyaṇa, and all the Rākṣasa-s 'monsters, demons' are said to have come from him.

RAKTABĪJA. Raktabīja is the reincarnated Rambha (18.70). He fought in Mahiṣa's army against Kātyāyanī. Etymologically, his name means 'one having impassioned (or red) seed'.

RAMBHA. Rambha was a demon who performed austerity to get a son (18.42 ff). He was killed by a buffalo after he had the son and reincarnated as Raktabīja. His name derives from the root rambh 'to roar'.

Epithets:

dānavapārthiva -- 'king of demons' -- 18.55

daityendra -- 'king of demons' -- 18.56

ditivara -- 'prominent [son of] Diti' -- 18.61

SĀDHYA. A vedic group of deities. According to one interpretation, they were the personified prayers and rituals of the Vedas, and dwelt mid-way between earth and heaven.

SIDDHA-S. A class of semi-divine beings. They have extraordinary powers (called siddhi-s), and dwell in the sky between the earth and heaven.

ŚIVA. Śiva, or Maheśa 'the great Lord', is the Destroyer within the trimūrti 'trinity' of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. He is the great Yogin, the master of all yogins. He is steeped in the highest austerities, which gives him many special powers. In the Veda he is possibly known by the name Rudra 'the howler'. Rudra was supposed to have a destructive and beneficent influence. He brings disease upon man and cows, and yet

he is known for his healing powers. In the White Yajur-Veda he is called Mahādeva, whose symbol is the liṅga 'phallus'; in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa he springs from the forehead of Brahmā, and is the parent of the Rudra-s or Maruts, half of whom are gentle and the other half ferocious. He vies with Viṣṇu for the honor of the 'highest deity', some sources claiming him to be the highest, and other sources claiming Viṣṇu. Śaivism, the worship of Śiva, has an emphasis on cosmic structure and process, while Vaiṣṇavism emphasizes human events. Śiva is called Śaṅkara 'the auspicious, or beneficent one', even though he represents the terrible, destructive, and dissolving side of nature. In his terrible aspect, Śiva is lord of ghosts and goblins, and lives in cemeteries. He has serpents around his neck and skulls for a necklace. Śiva is often depicted seated in samādhi, on a deerskin, with a third eye in the middle of his forehead (or else a crescent moon), his hair gathered up in matted locks on top of his head in a coiled shape, out of which pours the river Ganges; he has a necklace of skulls and a snake around his neck, and his neck is blue from drinking the poison which would have destroyed the world. He holds a trident, and is often seen with Nandi, his bull.

Epithets:

Śaṅkara -- 'the beneficent one' -- 19.2

Maheśvara -- 'the great Lord' -- 19.9

varada-triśūlin -- 'the boon-granting trident-possessor' -- 19.14

hara -- 'one who carries [sin] away' -- 21.52

SOMA. Originally, Soma is the celestial ambrosia of the gods, having extremely exhilarating qualities. It is praised in the R̥g-Veda as giving Indra the strength to conquer the demons, and later in the Veda (the 9th Maṇḍala), is deified into the Healer of all diseases, bestower of riches, etc. In later times, the connection was made between the soma-juice and

the Moon, and many of the qualities of Soma were transferred to the Moon. Consequently, the Moon has come to be called oṣadhi-pati 'the lord of the herbs'. In the purāṇa-s, Soma (as the Moon) is the son of the seer Atri and Anasūyā. From him the Lunar line of kings arose.

Epithets:

śaśin -- 'hare-possessing' -- 18.72
indu -- lit., 'drop [of Soma-juice]' -- 19.3

SURYA. Sūrya is the Sun, called loka-cakṣu 'eye of the world' in the Vedas. Sometimes he is called Savitṛ or Āditya. He is the son of Aditi (according to the purāṇa-s) or of Dyaus (according to the Vedas) or of Brahmā (according to the Rāmāyaṇa). Uṣas 'the dawn' is his consort. His chariot moves through the sky, drawn by seven ruddy horses. His sons are the Aśvins, by the nymph Aśvinī. The result of this affair deserves mention: when Sūrya returned to his wife after being with Aśvinī, she took him to her father (the seer Viśvakarman), who put Sūrya on a lathe and cut off an eighth of his effulgence. The fragments fell to the earth, blazing, and from them came several objects mentioned in this portion of the VP: the discus of Viṣṇu, the trident of Śiva, the club of Kubera, and weapons of other gods. The Solar line of kings comes from Sūrya.

Epithets:

bhāskara -- 'light-giver' -- 18.72
gaganecara -- 'mover in the sky' -- 19.23
divākara -- 'light-maker, day-maker' -- 19.23
ravi -- 'the sun' -- 19.23

VARUṆA. Varuṇa was the chief of the seven Āditya-s in Vedic times (thus, he was the Aditya). His name means 'the universal encompasser, the all-embracer'; as such he plays much the same role as Uranus in Greek mythology. He is a past-master of bonds. Many Vedic hymns serve no other

purpose but to liberate man from the 'toils of Varuṇa'. (Eliade, Images and Symbols, p. 95). Varuṇa knows how to use māyā 'magic' in binding the transgressors of ṛta 'Law'. In the Vedas, Varuṇa is occasionally the personification of the sky, the maker and upholder of heaven and earth. Besides this heavenly aspect, he is also associated with the waters, seas and rivers, as a lunar or aquatic god. His sign is the fish. When associated with the waters, he holds the waters back (e.g. "Great Varuṇa has hidden the sea" -- Rg-Veda 9.73.3). And finally, as lord of bonds and the noose and punisher of the wicked, he enforces the moral law; Varuṇa is more connected with the moral law than any other deity.

Epithet:

jaleśa -- 'lord of waters' -- 19.10, 21.45

THE VASU-S. The Vasu-s were a class of deities, eight in number -- they are Ap 'water', Dhruva 'pole-star', Soma 'Moon', Dharā 'earth', Anila 'wind', Prabhāta 'dawn', and pratyūṣa 'light'. Thus, they are personifications of natural phenomena. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa gives the list of Prthivī 'earth', Antarikṣa 'sky', Agni 'fire', Vāyu 'wind', Dyaus 'heaven', Āditya, Candramas 'Moon' and Nakṣatra 'star, constellation'. (SB 11.6.3.6) They are named Vasu because their presence is essential for the manifestation of life in matter (te yad idam sarvar vāsayante tasmād vāsava iti, SB. 11.6.3.6).

VINDHYA. The Vindhya mountains are the mountains which stretch across India, and divide the North from the South. According to the legend of the Mahābhārata (3.104.1-115), the personified Vindhya was jealous of

the Himālaya because he was shorter than Himālaya, and commanded the Sun to revolve around him as it did around Meru. When the Sun refused to do so, Vindhya raised itself to obstruct the passage of the Sun. The rest of the legend is exactly the same as that given in this portion of the VP.

VIṢṆU. Viṣṇu is the second member of the trimurti 'trinity' composed of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. He is the Maintainer of the universe. While not a chief deity in Vedic times, he arose to a supreme position later in Classical times, and vies with Śiva for adoration as the supreme god. Whereas Śaivism abounds in elements of terror, Vaiṣṇavism shows its deity with kindly, human traits. It is Viṣṇu, not Śiva, who is worshipped as a child, youth, and lover. Viṣṇu's name comes either from the root viś 'to pervade', or a lost root vi 'to fly'. Another name for him is Nārāyaṇa 'born of Nara 'man''. At the creation of the world, Viṣṇu is pictured on his serpent-couch, lying in the midst of the sea of milk, with Brahmā seated on the lotus in his belly. The purāṇa-s attribute 10 or 24 avataṛas 'incarnations' to him.

Epithets:

- cakradhara -- 'the discus-wielder' -- 19.1
- khaḡendrāsana -- 'the one who has the chief of birds (Garuḡa) for his seat' -- 19.2
- murāri -- 'enemy of Mura (a demon)' -- 19.5, 19.14
- hari -- 'carrier' -- 19.5
- madhusūdana -- 'slayer of Madhu (a demon)' -- 19.6

VIVASVAT. Literally, Vivasvat means 'the bright one'. The term is synonymous with the Sun, Sūrya.

YAKṢA. The yakṣa-s belong to the bhūta 'spirit' category and do not enjoy the status of worship in the higher religion of India. They are

usually said to reside in trees; thus the name Mālavaṭa 'banyon tree on a hill' (18.44) is significant. The yakṣa-s serve Kubera, the lord of wealth. In the present story, they seem to be associated with both gods and demons. As for Mālavaṭa Yakṣa, V.S. Agrawala (1964:39) says this:

...it is possible that it [the mention of Mālavaṭa yakṣa] appertains to one of the four yakṣa shrines of Kurukṣetra noted in the Tīrtha-yātrā Parva [(Ch. 81) of the Aranyaka-Parvan]. In it we find a reference to Muñjavata; Mālavaṭa may well be a variant of the same name, although the Yakṣa presiding-over that place is named Ulūkhala-mekhalā.

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