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VOLUME 13



IDEOLOGY AND STATUS OF SANSKRIT

*Contributions to the History
of the Sanskrit Language*

EDITED BY

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EJ. BRILL
LEIDEN • NEW YORK • KÖLN
1996

is being respected because it is an imported object. The wave of Westernization which has swept all over the country is thus seen to have stabilized the position of Sanskrit in its homeland.

(e) And lastly, Sanskrit has survived because of its intrinsic value. There is something enduring, of a permanent value in Sanskrit which has survived through the ages. Dr. R.N. Dandekar quotes, for instance, from Pandit Jawharlal Nehru's speech in the University of Poona when the degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon him in 1961. Referring to the Sanskrit citation that was read out to him Pdt. Nehru said,¹⁶

One of my regrets in my life has been that I have had no occasion to learn Sanskrit. Consequently I was unable to follow adequately the citation. But I must confess that I was greatly moved and thrilled by the mellifluous rhythm of the Sanskrit language. Even the mere sound of that language gently touched and stirred the inner cord of my heart. I believe that the history itself has established a kind of innate affinity between Sanskrit and Indian soul.

9.2 I would like to conclude this review of the past and present with a short statement concerning the future of Sanskrit, viz. that it may be expected that in spite of the fluctuations in the position and status of Sanskrit in India in the course of the many centuries of its history, it will survive as long as there is a quest for knowledge, respect for values, faith in culture and interest and love for that which has grandeur and beauty in the world.

¹⁶ Dandekar 1993:232. To this citation I may add, that I have also noticed that Sanskrit as an unique linguistic phenomenon with its sonorous character and its richness of inflexions as well as vocabulary, has attracted quite a few persons who want to pursue its study in spite of their non-Sanskrit career. Mention may here also be made of a Pune-based medical surgeon flying his own aeroplane, Dr. S.V. Bhavé, who claims that he has succeeded in identifying the path of the cloud in Kālidāsa's poem Meghadūta ('The Cloud-messenger').

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CONTEXTUALIZING THE ETERNAL LANGUAGE: FEATURES OF PRIESTLY SANSKRIT

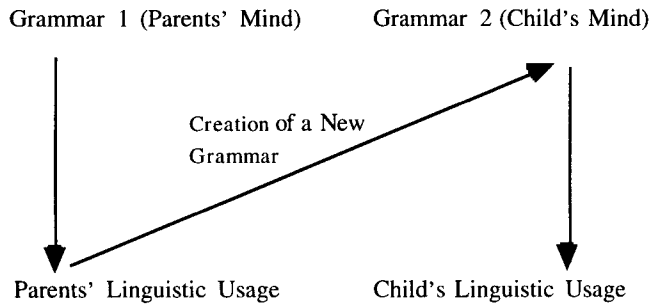
Madhav M. Deshpande

1. Introduction

There are some commonly held conceptions about Sanskrit. In terms of theological conceptions held by the Indian tradition, Sanskrit is an eternal language. The notion of an eternal language conceived purely in metaphysical terms may create a picture of a linguistic flatland beyond time and space. The ancient grammarians of this language did observe variation of usage in different domains, and yet struggled hard to reconcile this observed variation within the paradigm of eternal language. Occasionally, even the descriptions of modern linguists unintentionally seem to evoke an image of Sanskrit as a linguistic flatland. Consider the comments of M.B. Emeneau (1966: 123) referring to Classical Sanskrit: "We find in it no dialects, no chronological developments, except loss and at times invasions from the vernaculars of the users, and no geographical divergences." One may, then, be tempted to think of Classical Sanskrit as a linguistic flatland which becomes occasionally uneven due to factors like "invasions from the vernaculars of the users." However, such a perception of Sanskrit overlooks the sociolinguistic dynamics of Indian history within which Sanskrit had to survive along with all other things Indian. More recent sociolinguistic work (Deshpande 1979 and 1993; Hock and Pandharipande 1976) has begun to direct our attention away from such static views of Sanskrit and offer us a realistic understanding of the differing temporal, regional, and societal actualizations of this theologically eternal language.

While the Sanskrit grammarians were loath to admit influences of other languages on Sanskrit, the tradition of poetry was more open to

accepting a beneficial relationship between Sanskrit and the vernaculars. Vākpāṭirāja (*Gaṇḍavaho*, verse 65) says that the beauty of Sanskrit blooms with a touch of Prakrit (*payayacchāyā*), and that the effectiveness of Prakrits increases with Sanskritization (*sakkayasakkārūkarisaṇa*). Such Sanskritization or Prakritization of languages may be conscious or unconscious, and it may be due to a number of different factors. At the very basic level, the entire notion of learning a language or acquiring a grammar needs to be reconsidered. If we assume that a grammar exists in the mind of parents, does that grammar get transferred to their child through the process of conceiving that child? Andersen (1973: 767) provides a realistic answer to this question which can be represented by the diagram below:



Here the assumption is that a child does not directly inherit its grammar from its parents but builds its own grammar anew by observing the usage of its parents. If we extend this basic process beyond this limited situation, one may say that a child observes the linguistic usage not only of its parents, but of any number of other users it comes into contact with, and hence its newly rebuilt grammar and its own resulting usage of language is bound to be somewhat different from that of its parents. The same analogy can be extended further to the acquisition of a second language like Sanskrit. In spite of the grammarian's best intentions and efforts to inculcate the standardized Sanskrit grammar and language, the language learning process and the process of language use were in actuality complicated by many factors. The totality of such factors may be so complex that it may be indeed very difficult, if not impossible, to

pinpoint a specific factor responsible for a specific non-standard usage. However, with a reasonable allowance for complexity and multiple influences, one may still be able to offer what appears to be the most salient reason for a given deviation from some expected norm. This is not necessarily a fully scientific procedure, in that one can never be totally certain whether a given case of deviation from the norm of the classical Sanskrit usage is itself an old inherited pattern, lacking any creativity on the part of the current priestly user, or whether it is an example of the inherited norm of the priestly usage, caused by factors relating specifically to a given priestly performer. However, one must at least initiate the search for a possible cluster of influences. This paper proposes to initiate such an investigation. No suggestions made here are to be treated as exclusive and conclusive solutions, but suggestions for possible influences.

In this paper, I shall specifically focus on the usage of Sanskrit in priestly performances. This presentation is based on a large collection of recordings of priestly performances which I have made, other recordings which are commercially available, printed materials of popular and scholarly varieties, and manuscript materials found mostly at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute and the Vaidika Samshodhana Mandala, Pune. This material is too complex in its diversity, i.e. historical, regional, and social depth. I shall present here a preliminary account of some features which I have detected in this material, and I hope that a more extensive study of this material will be published in the future.

The collected material shows that the priestly performances generally involve three types of language varieties, i.e. Vedic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, and a vernacular language. The ritual performances of the Brahmins generally involve all the three varieties. For groups in the middle range, there is greater variation. Whether a certain group was traditionally considered to belong to Kṣatriya or Vaiśya ranks determined whether their rituals will or will not be performed by using Vedic mantras. Thus, for example, the community of Cāndrasenīya Kāyastha Prabhus (popularly known today as CKP) in Maharashtra wanted to be treated as Kṣatriyas and wanted their rituals to be performed with Vedic mantras. However, the Brahmins of the region often refused to treat them as Kṣatriyas and offered to perform rituals for

them only with the Purāṇic mantras. The controversial relations often produced bitter debates to be settled temporarily by referring the dispute to some religious authority. Narendra Wagle (1987) has given a detailed account of these conflicts. The rituals for the decidedly lower castes may or may not involve any Sanskrit, and could be carried out purely in vernaculars by non-Brahmin priests. In the present study, we are concerned with those ritual texts and performances which involve Sanskrit in one form or another.

The individuals who participate in these ritual performances have varying degrees of linguistic abilities. The linguistic performance can be analyzed in terms of whether a person is merely reciting a memorized text, versus whether one is actively using a language variety. An intermediate stage of linguistic performance occurs when one is forced by the contextual factors to modify or manipulate a received memorized text. The factor of linguistic comprehension is almost independent of the ability to recite or 'blurt out' a text. A priest may be able to recite a text flawlessly without comprehending the meaning of that text. If we make a distinction between highly learned priests and low-level priests, we can observe that the high scholar priest may have a flawless recitation of the received Vedic texts, with some low level understanding of the meaning of these texts. However, the same high scholar priest may have a more active control of the classical language. His full control of the local vernacular is simply taken for granted. For a low-level priest, he may have the ability to somehow recite the Vedic texts, with almost zero comprehension of the contents. Such a low-end priest may also have little ability to modify or manipulate the classical language portions. The host, excluding the exceptional scholar-host, generally has some contextual understanding of what is going on and some lexical recognition of Sanskrit expressions. All the participants are primarily working within the outermost frame of the vernacular language. All ultimate comprehension and communication occurs within this outermost frame of the vernacular language. The use of Sanskrit is situated within the frame of the vernacular language, just as the use of the recited Vedic texts is situated within the frame of the classical language. As it turns out, the Vedic text which is understood the least has the highest sacred value. Next comes the value of the text in classical Sanskrit. Sanskrit is deemed by both the priest and the host to be more sacred than

the vernacular. Therefore, a priest not only needs to be able to perform in Sanskrit, or what appears to him and to the host as Sanskrit, but he often needs to get the unlearned host to perform in Sanskrit by prompting him to do so word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase. The kind of Sanskrit one finds in a given text has some direct or indirect relationship to all these contextual factors. The priest needs to make things comprehensible to the host. The priest must produce a sacred atmosphere and must make the host feel that he is participating in something sacred. The use of texts and languages is simply a tool in this process, and a successful priest needs to know how to use this tool to achieve the best results. The contextual factors are presented below in a schematic form:

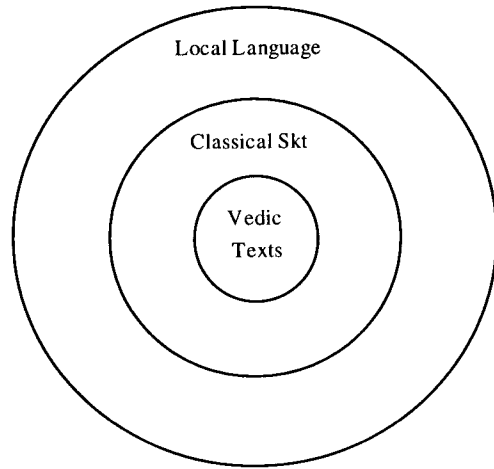
Comprehension of Different Languages involved in Ritual

| | LEARNED PRIEST | NON-LEARNED PRIEST | HOST |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Vedic L | Low comprehension | Very Low comprehension | No comprehension |
| Class. Skt. | High comprehension | Low comprehension | Some Vocabulary |
| Local L | Full comprehension | Full comprehension | Full comprehension |

The observed embedding of language varieties is shown in the diagram below. The outermost frame is that of the local vernacular. Whatever 'comprehension' needs to take place ultimately takes place in relation to this vernacular. Similarly, the Vedic texts exist only as recited segments within a textual frame of classical Sanskrit. In high-end Vedic sacrificial texts, the older Vedic texts are occasionally altered to fit the ritual context, but in most of the latter-day domestic Hindu rituals, the Vedic texts are almost never altered. However, the classical Sanskrit portions are often altered to fit the specific context. Ultimately, the classical Sanskrit portions are a part of the overall performance which is related by the priest to the host/audience through vernacular instructions and explanations. In the diagram below, the inner the circle the more sacred it is, but it also represents the lesser degree of comprehension of meaning. The ultimate goal of the ritual is the creation of the sacred and to this end often the outer linguistic varieties get pulled into the inner circles. The vernaculars get Sanskritized in vocabulary and the classical Sanskrit itself acquires features like pseudo-Vedic accents. Priests often recite vernacular and classical portions with these pseudo-Vedic accents, so much so that an untrained host cannot differentiate

these different portions. This is often depicted in the comic situations in Indian films where an unlearned shrewd village priest performs a wedding by reciting Hindi movie songs with a fake Vedic accent.

Spheres of Different Languages



In what follows, we shall examine some salient features of Sanskrit as it is found in priestly performances. As I have already stated, these different features are not historically of the same depth and many vary from region to region and context to context. However, we can learn much about the dynamics of living Sanskrit by examining these features which show us that Sanskrit in its actualization is much more and beyond what is found in the standardized grammars and learned texts edited and published by scholars.

2. Ūha: Linguistic Contextualization of a received ritual formula

We shall begin our exploration with the traditional notion of *ūha*. This term refers to the linguistic contextualization of a received ritual formula. This process already began with the ancient Vedic ritual texts and was continued into the later classical ritual texts. Bronkhorst (1991: 83) explains the original Vedic context of this notion:

Ūha is the term used to describe the adjustments Vedic mantras undergo to make them fit for other ritual contexts. An original mantra such as *agnaye tvā juṣṭam nirvapāmi*, directed to Agni, can become modified into *sūryāya tvā juṣṭam nirvapāmi*, directed to Sūrya. *Devīr āpaḥ śuddhā yūyam* (MS 1.1.11, 1.2.16, 3.10.1; KS 3.6), directed to the waters, becomes *deva ājya śuddham tvam* when directed to clarified butter. Sometimes only the number needs adjustment, as when *āyur āśāste* (MS 4.13.9; TS 2.6.9.7; TB 3.5.10.4) becomes *āyur āśāsāte* or *āyur āśāsate*. Only the gender is modified when *jūr asi dhṛtā manasā juṣṭā viṣṇave tasyās te satyasavaśaḥ* (MS 1.2.4, 3.7.5; KS 2.5, 24.3; TS 1.2.4.1, 6.1.7.2; VS 4.17; ŚB 3.2.4.11; ŚBK 4.2.4.9) becomes *jūr asi dhṛto manasā juṣṭo viṣṇave tasya te satyasavaśaḥ* because a bull is under discussion.

Bronkhorst also discusses the important question of whether the modified mantras were treated as mantras or as non-mantras, and he shows that while the traditions such as that of Mīmāṃsā reject the mantra status of the modified expressions, there is enough evidence to suggest that “apparently, at one time, modified mantras were mantras.”

While we are not directly concerned with this theoretical controversy at this point, it is important to note that at the beginning of his *Mahābhāṣya* (I, p. 1), Patañjali includes the *ūha* among the purposes of studying Sanskrit grammar: *ūhaḥ khalv api / na sarvair liṅgair na ca sarvābhir vibhaktibhir vede mantrā nigaditāḥ / te cāvaśyaṁ yajñagatena yathāyatham vipariṇamayitavyāḥ / tān nāvaiyākaraṇaḥ śaknoti yathāyatham vipariṇamayitum / tasmād adhyeyam vyākaraṇam*, “*Ūha* as well [is to be included among the purposes]. Mantras are not given in the Vedas with all [possible] genders and case-endings. They need to be appropriately modified by a person involved in ritual. A person not trained in grammar is not capable of properly modifying them. Therefore, one should study grammar.” Here, Patañjali brings out the two distinct dimensions: a) the ability to repeat an inherited ritual formula, and b) the ability to modify it to fit a new context. These are clearly distinct abilities. While the first one involves merely the ability of rote memorization and reproduction, the second ability involves comprehension of the received mantra as well as active control over the language of the mantra. With the widening gap between the language of the received mantra and the first language of the priest, the second ability increasingly became problematic. The very expectation that a received formula in an archaic language be appropri-

ately modified, rather than a new formula be produced in the local contemporary vernacular, is indicative of the cultural perception of the different language varieties. The language of the received formula is deemed to be more effective in producing the desired sacred result, but the priest has a relatively lesser control over its grammar, as compared to his own first language.

Formulas in the classical language also had to be appropriately modified to fit the ritual context. Consider the following instruction to the priest/host given in the context of a wedding which involves the giving and receiving of a daughter:

P1: *vācā dattā mayā kanyā putrārthan svīkṛtā tvayā / . . .
bhrātrādaḥ svīkartari bhrātrartham ityādyūhaḥ kāryaḥ / (C: p. 99)*

Here the received formula is stated in the first line: "I have verbally given my daughter and you have accepted her for your son." The second line says: "If the receiver [of the girl] happens to be the brother [of the groom], then the formula should be altered to say, '[you have accepted her] for [your] brother'." Further, the same text suggests that modifications in the formula regarding the age of the girl and other matters may need to be made as well:

P2: *aṣṭavarṣā tv iyaṁ kanyā putravat pālītā mayā / idānīm tava putrāya dattā snehena pālyatām // . . .* Footnote: *aṣṭavarṣety atra vadhvā var-tamānavatsaroho mātṛpitretarabhrātrādyutsaṅgapaveśane idānīm ca tava bhrātra ityādi yathāyatham ūhyam / (C: p. 114):* 'This daughter is only eight years old and has been raised by me like a son. Now she has been given to your son. Please take care of her with love.' [Footnote:] The expression 'eight year old' should be modified to reflect the current age [of the girl]. In case, [the girl, after being given to her in-laws], is going to be seated on the lap of the [older] brother [of the groom] etc., i.e. someone other than the mother and the father [of the groom], then the formula should be appropriately modified to say: '[The girl is given to you] for your brother' etc.

The above instructions are clear indications of the kind of modifications of the received formulas. Insert within this picture the complication that a priest is good enough to repeat the received formulas, but has little active control over Sanskrit. I can refer to two situations which I have observed myself. At the Venkateshwara temple in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, (USA), I was waiting in a line of devotees. As each devotee would approach the image of the deity, the priest asked the

name of the person and uttered a formulaic blessing: "X+*sya sukhām bhavatu*." The lady ahead of me gave her name as Kamalā, and the priest uttered the blessing: **kamalāsyā sukhām bhavatu*. The second instance comes from a Hindu wedding I attended in Ann Arbor a few years ago. The priest was a professional engineer with the ability merely to read the printed Sanskrit formulas. During the ritual of giving away the girl to the groom, the priest recited the standard formula: *tava putrāya* "to your son," etc. At that point the person receiving the girl on behalf of the groom said that he was not the father of the groom, but that the groom was his sister's son. The poor engineer priest had to concoct a modified formula on the spot, and after some careful thought, he said: *tava *bhaginīsyā putrāya* "to your sister's son."

In both the instances cited above, the priest had little active ability to handle Sanskrit grammar, and produced ungrammatical utterances. However, we must note that neither the priest nor the hosts realized there were any errors, and they were pleased that a proper Sanskrit blessing or ritual promise was carried out. The perception that it all happened in holy Sanskrit was very important to both the performers and the recipients, because it is this perception that leads to the creation of the resulting subjective sacred feeling, and the objective degree of grammaticality or ungrammaticality is of little consequence either to the performer-priest or the host/audience. They are both equally untrained in Sanskrit grammar. Secondly, the linguistic dimension of these modified formulas is worth noting. In both the cases, the ungrammatical forms **kamalāsyā* and **bhaginīsyā* reflect an extension of the prototypical (masculine) genitive affix *-syā*. This suggests that the priest was either extending this prototypical or most frequent affix to less prototypical contexts, or that the priest, with little understanding of Sanskrit grammar, was merely doing a lexical replacement, maintaining in tact the received *-syā* of the formula. The difference between these theoretical alternatives needs to be tested in ways which are beyond the scope of this paper. Yet the examples reveal the basic linguistic complexity.

3. Use of honorific śrī

In middle/late classical Sanskrit, the item *śrī* began its career as an honorific item, along with the elaborate form *śrīmat*. I have extensively dealt with the appearance of the honorific *śrī* in Sanskrit and Prakrit inscriptions in Deshpande 1993c. Here, I shall focus on some dimensions of the behavior of this item in priestly Sanskrit texts. Consider the following instances.

- P3. *sarvaviṣṇanaharas tasmai śrīgaṇādhīpataye namaḥ* / (A)
[Gaṇeśa is the] destroyer of all obstacles. Salutations to him, the honorable [lit. prosperous] lord of the Gaṇa [= tribe, group].

In this passage, the item *śrī* clearly looks like a later add-on to an earlier verse. This is probably the case because the addition of *śrī* creates an extra syllable in the *anuṣṭubh* verse quarter. The eight-syllable segment *gaṇādhīpataye namaḥ* perfectly fits the meter. The person who added the item *śrī*, however, may have thought that it was more important to add the honorific *śrī* to the name of the divinity, than to worry about maintaining the metrical pattern. Without going here into a statistical demonstration, I would like to observe that priestly texts which are generally more scholarly have a preference for *OM*, instead of *śrī*.

- P4. *OM-kāraḥ sarvatra lakṣmīnārāyaṇābhyāṁ namaḥ* /
umāmaheśvarābhyāṁ namaḥ / (C: Intro., p. 12)

In priestly texts, which are more popular, *śrī* is the most common honorific item, which is added almost to everything, including generic terms like *sarva* 'all' and *amuka* 'so and so'. Besides this, the noteworthy feature of *śrī* is that it is almost never combined in sandhi with the following vowel-initial words. The purpose of this is not hard to see. In sandhi situations, if the audible or visible form of the honorific item is altered, its value as an honorific in the mind of the common listeners may be lost. This feature is found in inscriptions, manuscripts, printed editions and in oral performances. Thus, the pragmatic need to maintain the recognizable identity of this item overrides the grammatical requirement of making the sandhi.

- P5. *śrī#iṣṭadevatābhyo namaḥ* /
śrī#etatkarmapradhānadevatābhyo namaḥ /

śrīsarvebhyo devebhyo namaḥ /
śrīsarvebhyo brāhmaṇebhyo namo namaḥ / (D: p. 203)

- P6. *śrī#umāmaheśvarābhyāṁ namaḥ* . . . (F: p. 71ff.)
P7. *śrī#umāyai namaḥ* . . . (F: p. 76)
P8. *śrī#arundhatisahitakaśyapādisapta#ṛṣibhyo namaḥ* (F: p. 102ff.)
P9. *śrī#atraye namaḥ* /, (G: p. 133)
P10. *om ko nāmāsi? śrī#amukaśarmāham bhoḥ* / (K: p. 37)
P11. *aham ācāryas tava śrī#amukaśarman* / (K: p. 12)
P12. *śrī#aṅgirā-ṛṣaye namaḥ* . . . (M: p. 37)

The decision of whether to add *OM* or *śrī*, or both, is a rather subjective decision. Some priests would rather add both the items to gain the maximum effectiveness. In the following passage, the priest not only combines *OM* and *śrī* with the first few salutations, he also replaces the customary *namaḥ* with *svāhā* giving the whole performance a rather archaic Vedic appearance. Such techniques seem to raise the stature of the priest in his own eyes as well as in the eyes of his audiences.

- P13. *Om śrīkeśavāya svāhā / Om śrīnārāyaṇāya svāhā / Om śrīmādhavāya svāhā* / [Later *śrī* is dropped] *Om govindāya namaḥ / Om viṣṇave namaḥ / Om madhusūdanāya namaḥ* / . . . (Q)

4. Deliberate splitting of words

In most popular priestly performances, the host has little ability to speak, recite or even repeat Sanskrit. In such cases, at some crucial points, the priest makes the host utter some Sanskrit formulas by prompting him word by word. In such cases of prompting, the long stretches of Sanskrit are broken down into smaller pieces which can be taught one at a time. In the following example, the priest says to the host in Marathi: *mhaṇā* '[Now] say', and then he prompts him phrase by phrase.

- P14. *MHANA - mama # ātmanah # paramēśvara # ādnyā[= Skt. jñā] rūpa # sakala # śāstroka # śrutismṛti # purāṇokta # phalaprapṛtyartham #*

sakala# durita # upaśama # sarvāpacchāntipūrvaka # sakalamanoratha-siddhyartham . . . (A)

In the following two instances, first there is a prompted sentence in which the host is made to request the priest to say something, and then the priest says that sentence. In the prompted speech of the host, the long stretches are broken down into smaller pieces. However, when the priest gives the answer, he says it in an unbroken stretch of Sanskrit:

P15. *puṇyāhavācana#phala#samṛddhiḥ astu iti bhavantaḥ bruvantu / (A)*, [The priest prompts the host to make the following request]. [O priest], please say: “let there be prosperity as a result of the declaration of an auspicious day.”

P16. *puṇyāhavācanaphalasamṛddhirastu / (A)*, [The priest responds:] “Let there be prosperity as a result of the declaration of an auspicious day.”

Contrast with the above performative sequence the descriptive sequence from a high-end scholarly text, where the scholarly author is addressing the learned priests. Here the text appears with full sandhis and no effort is made to simplify the Sanskrit stretches.

P17 *amukaprarāṇvitāmukagotrotpannāyāmukaprapautrāyāmukapautrāyāmukaputrāyāmukanāmne varāyāmukaprarāṇvitāmamukagotrotpannām amukaprapautrāmamukapautrāmamukasya mama putrāmamukanāmnamimāṁ kanyām . . . (C, p. 99)*. [I give] this daughter of mine, named such and such, [the daughter of me] named so and so, the grand-daughter of so and so, the great-grand-daughter of so and so, born in such and such a Gotra, and possessing such and such Pravara, to this groom named so and so, born in such and such Gotra and possessing such and such Pravara, the great-grand-son of so and so, the grandson of so and so, and the son of so and so.

The need to break down the long stretches of Sanskrit to make it easy for the hosts and audiences who repeat those phrases often leads to unexpected breaks in actual performances, as well as in written and printed materials, which show that the prompting priest, or the priestly editor has little comprehension of the contents of the text. The following passage illustrates such unintelligent divisions marked with hyphens in the printed text:

P.18. *agotrārkti-tvādanaikāntika-tvādalakṣyāgama-tvādaśeṣākara-tvāt prapañcālasa-tvādanārambhaka-vāt tvam ekā parabrahmarūpeṇa siddhā / . . . asādhārāṇa-tvādasambandhaka-tvādashinnāśraya-tvādanākāraka-tvāt avidyātmaka-tvādanādyantaka-tvāt tvam ekā*

parabrahmarūpeṇa siddhā / . . .
(M: p. 69)

4. Simplification to help host-participation

Part of the success of a priest lies in his ability to make the host and the audience feel that they are actively participating in the ritual action as well as in the linguistic exchanges in Sanskrit. Above we have seen certain kinds of simplification in breaking down the sandhis. However, the process of simplification takes many different forms. In the performance recorded in (B), the priest asks the host to recite *OM* 15 times while he himself recites the Vedic mantras. This assumes that the host does not have the ability to recite those Vedic mantras, but that the host can easily repeat the sacred syllable *OM*. In the performance recorded in Q, the priest (= Sant Keshavdas) instructs:

P19. Now offer the flowers one by one as you chant these 108 holy names of God. As I chant the mantra, you devotees chant *namaḥ*.
(Priest:) *om śrī satyadevāya*
(People:) *namaḥ*
(Priest:) *om satyātmāne*
(People:) *namaḥ*
(Priest:) *om satyabhūtāya*
(People:) *namaḥ* (Q)

It is clear from the recorded tape, that initially fewer people participate in saying *namaḥ*, and that gradually more and more people participate, and their utterance becomes more and more confident. In the same source (Q), the priest simplifies the request for the declaration of the auspicious day to a single word *puṇyāham*, and asks the audience to say this word three times. Contrast the following with the relatively more elaborate prompting cited above in P15 and P16.

P20. *adya kariṣyamāṇaśrīsatyanārāyaṇavratākhyakarmaṇaḥ puṇyāham bhavanto bruvantu # say # puṇyāham # (audience:) puṇyāham # (priest:) puṇyāham # (audience:) puṇyāham # (priest:) puṇyāham # (audience:) puṇyāham. (Q)*

Another mode of linguistic simplification is to replace the complex verb forms of Sanskrit with verbal nouns followed by a common verb. Thus, instead of using the finite verbs *dhyāyāmi*, *āvāhayāmi*, etc., it is

simpler to have the nouns *dhyānam*, *āvāhanam* etc. followed by a shared repeated verb *samarpayāmi* 'I offer'. This substitutes the complex verbal syntax of older Sanskrit with a more Middle Indic periphrastic construction type. In the passage below, most finite verbs are replaced by *samarpayāmi*. The only independent verbs in the passage below occur in the phrases *dīpaṃ darśayāmi* and *dhūpaṃ āghrāpayāmi*, and even these are, as I have personally observed, often replaced by the common verb *samarpayāmi*.

- P21. *dhyāyāmi / dhyānam samarpayāmi / ... āvāhanam samarpayāmi / ... āsanam samarpayāmi / ... pādyaṃ samarpayāmi / ... arghyaṃ samarpayāmi / ... ācamanam samarpayāmi / ... snānam samarpayāmi / ... vastraṃ samarpayāmi / ... yajñopavītaṃ samarpayāmi / ... gandhaṃ samarpayāmi / ... puṣpaṃ samarpayāmi / ... akṣatāṃ samarpayāmi / ... dhūpaṃ āghrāpayāmi / ... dīpaṃ darśayāmi / ... naivedyaṃ samarpayāmi / ... maṅgalaṇīrājanam samarpayāmi / ... mantrapuṣpaṃ samarpayāmi / ... pradakṣiṇānamaskārāṇaṃ samarpayāmi / ... prārthanāṃ samarpayāmi / ... dhyāna#āvāhanādi#śoḍaśopacārāpūjā#ārādhanam samarpayāmi / ... (Q)*

5. Lack of comprehension of the meaning of vedic mantras and their new ritual employment

As one moves from the early period of the Brāhmaṇas and Śrautasūtras to the later period of Purāṇic and Tantrik ritual, one finds that the composers of the later ritual texts had a great need to incorporate the ancient Vedic mantras in the new ritual settings to enhance the perceived sanctity of these latter-day rituals. The late Vedic notion of the ideal employment of mantras (*vinīyoga*) in ritual is expressed in the doctrine of *rūpasamṛddhi* 'perfection of ritual form', *etad vai yajñasya samṛddham yad rūpasamṛddham yat karma kriyamāṇam ṛg anuvadati*, *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, 1.13, "This is the perfection of a sacrifice, namely the perfection of ritual form, in that a ritual action being carried out is echoed by the mantra being recited." In an ideal setting, this of course demands that one fully understands the meaning of the mantras and that the ritual employment of the mantras is guided in terms of their understood meaning. However, the situation was different in the period of Purāṇic

and Tantrik rituals. Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, the author of *Prayogaratna*, refers to many of the difficulties involved:

- P22. *idaṃ kāryam aneneti na kvacid dṛśyate vidhiḥ / līṅgād evedamarthatvaṃ yeṣāṃ te mantrasañjñitāḥ* // (C: p. 48)
Sometimes one does not find an exact prescriptive statement that such and such a ritual is to be performed with such and such a mantra. Only from the indications in the mantra does one determine their ritual employment.
- P23. *avijñātasvarā mantrāḥ prayoktavyāḥ prayoktṛbhiḥ / ekaśrutyaiḥ homeṣu vijñātāḥ ca vikalpataḥ* // (C: p. 48)
The mantras whose accentuation is not known may be recited by the reciters in monotone while making oblations. Those mantras whose accentuation is known may be recited optionally in monotone.
- P24. *yad akṣarapadabhraṣṭam mātṛhīnaṃ tu yad bhavet / tat sarvaṃ kṣamyatāṃ devi* ... / (R: p. 16)
This recitation of mine which may lack the proper syllables and words, and which may also lack the proper pronunciation of vowel lengths, O Goddess, please forgive all of that.

Proper pronunciation and comprehension of Sanskrit was already problematic by the time of Patañjali, and I have discussed elsewhere at length how the grammarians tried to improve the situation by proposing to educate the priests in the science of grammar (Deshpande 1993, Chapter II). Here we shall focus on how the lack of comprehension of the original meaning of the mantras combined with the increasing attention to the magical power of sounds, and how this attention to the sounds created new perceptions as to the possible divinities to be propitiated with these mantras. This is indeed similar to what happens in folk-etymologies. The following examples illustrate this new employment of the old Vedic mantras and the likely basis for this new employment. Just to reiterate my caution, these 'new' *vinīyogas* are new only in relative terms. They are several hundred years old, and their actual starting point needs a separate detailed chronological investigation. Here, I am simply pointing out the shifting understanding. For the context of these mantras see Gudrun Bühnemann (1989).

- P25. *tatra brahma jajñānam gotamo vāmadevo brahmā triṣṭup / brahmāvāhane vinīyogaḥ / Om brahma jajñānam prathamam purastāt* ... (AV 4.1.1) *anena pālīkāmādhye brahmāṇam āvāhayet* // (C: p. 11). For the mantra *brahma jajñānam* (AV 4.1.1), the Ṛṣi is Gotama Vāmadeva, its

deity is Brahmā, and its meter is Triṣṭubh. It is used to invoke god Brahmā. With this mantra, one should invite Brahmā to come and reside in the sacrificial plate.

In this mantra, originally there is no reference to the divinity Brahmā, the creator god. The mantra actually contains a reference to the neuter Brahman. However, for the latter-day priesthood, the resemblance between *brahma* and *brahmā* was good enough to use this mantra to invoke Brahmā.

- P26. *dadhikrāvṇa ity asya gotamo vāmadevo dadhikrāvānuṣṭup / Om dadhikrāvṇo akāriṣaṁ jiṣṇor aśvasya vājinaḥ / surabhi no mukhā karat pra na āyūṁṣi tāriṣat / (RV 4.39.6) anena dadhi . . . (C: p. 22).*
For the mantra *dadhikrāvṇa* etc. (RV 4.39.6), the Ṛṣi is Gotama Vāmadeva, the deity is Dadhikrāvan, and the meter is the Anuṣṭubh. . . .
With this mantra, offer yogurt (*dadhi*) . . .

The priest even recites the traditional line which says that the deity of this mantra is Dadhikrāvan, which is a name of a horse. There is no reference to *dadhi* 'yogurt'. However, the fact that the priest does not comprehend the original mantra, but that he hears the segment *dadhi* must have led to this latter-day employment of the mantra in offering yogurt to a divinity. The way this passage is framed, it seems that even the explicit statement that the deity of the mantra was Dadhikrāvan was probably not fully understood, and hence had little influence in deciding the employment of the mantra.

- P27. *gaurīr mimāyety asya dīrghatamā umāvāhane viniyogaḥ / gaurīr mimāya salilāni takṣaty ekapadī dvipadī sā catuspadī / aṣṭāpadī navapadī babhūvuṣī sahasrākṣarā parame vyoman // (RV 1.164.41) (C: p. 24).*
For the mantra *gaurīr mimāya* etc. (RV 1.164.41), the Ṛṣi is Dīrghatamas, and it is used to invoke [the goddess] Umā.

Here the word *gaurīr* has no connection with Gaurī or Pārvatī. The original word refers to a cow. However, the expression *gaurīr* has sufficient sound-similarity to the word *gaurī* of the classical language, where it can refer to the goddess Umā or Pārvatī. This was apparently sufficient to use the mantra to invoke Umā.

- P28. *śukraṁ te anyad ity asya bharadvājaḥ śukras triṣṭup / śukrāvāhane viniyogaḥ / Om śukraṁ te anyad yajataṁ te anyad viṣurūpe ahanī dyaur ivāsi / viśvā hi māyā avasi svadhāvo bhadrā te pūṣann iha rātir astu / (RV 6.58.1), (C: p. 25)*
For the mantra *śukraṁ te anyat* etc. (RV 6.58.1), the Ṛṣi is Bharadvāja,

the deity is Śukra, and the meter is Triṣṭubh. The mantra is used to invoke the deity Śukra (= Venus).

In mantra RV 6.58.1, the word *śukra* has absolutely no reference to the planet/deity Śukra (= Venus). However, the lack of comprehension of the mantra combined with the mere occurrence of the word *śukram* allowed the latter-day priestly tradition to use this mantra to invoke the planet/deity Śukra.

- P29. *śam agnir irimbīṭhiḥ śanaīścara uṣṇik / śanaīscarāvāhane viniyogaḥ / Om śam agnir agnibhiḥ karac chaṁ nas tapatu sūryaḥ / śam vāto vātvarapā apasridhaḥ / . . . (RV 8.18.9) (C: p. 26).* Of the mantra *śam agniḥ* etc. (RV 8.18.9), the Ṛṣi is Irimbīṭhi, the deity is Śanaīścara (= Saturn), and the meter is Uṣṇik. It is used to invoke the deity Saturn.

There is clearly no reference whatsoever to the deity/planet Śanaīścara, or Śani as he is known later, in this mantra from the *Ṛgveda*. At best one can say that the priest who did not fully comprehend the meaning of the mantra heard the sound sequences *śam* and *śam naḥ*, and associated these sound sequences with Śani or Śanaīścara. This sound-similarity was enough to extend the mantra to the new deity.

- P30. *sacitram ity asya bharadvājaḥ citraguptas triṣṭup / citraguptāvāhane viniyogaḥ / Om sa citracitraṁ citayantam asme citrakṣatracitratamaṁ vayodhām / candraṁ rayim puruvīram bṛhantaṁ candra candrābhirgrṇate yuvasva / (RV 6.6.7) (C: p. 27).* For the mantra *sa citram* etc. (RV 6.6.7), the Ṛṣi is Bharadvāja, the deity is Citragupta, and the meter is Uṣṇik. It is used to invoke the deity Citragupta.

In the original mantra of the *Ṛgveda*, there is no reference to the latter-day deity Citragupta, the infamous accountant at the court of Yama, who reads out the Karmic account to the newly arrived souls of the departed. However, the fact that the mantra contains the sound sequence *citram* was sufficient for the priest to extend the application of this mantra to Citragupta.

- P31. *jātavedase mārīcaḥ kaśyapo durgā triṣṭup / durgāvāhane viniyogaḥ / Om jātavedase sunavāma somam arātīyato nidahāti vedaḥ / sa naḥ parśad ati durgāṇi viśvā nāveva sindhum durityāgniḥ / . . . (RV 1.99.1) (C: p. 27).* For the mantra *jātavedase* etc. (RV 1.99.1), the Ṛṣi is Mārīca Kaśyapa, the deity is goddess Durgā, and the meter is Triṣṭubh. The mantra is used to invoke goddess Durgā.

In the original *Ṛgvedic* mantra cited here, there is no reference whatsoever to goddess Durgā or Pārvatī. However, the mantra contains the

neuter accusative form *durgāṇi*, which contains the sequence *durgā*. It is this sequence that allows the latter-day priest to extend the mantra to invoke goddess Durgā.

P32. *gaṇānām tvā śaunako gr̥tsamado gaṇapatir jagatī / gaṇapatiprītyarthe . . . / Om gaṇānām tvā gaṇapatim havāmahe kavim kavīnām upamaśravastamam / jyeṣṭharājāṁ brahmaṇām brahmaṇaspata ā naḥ śṛṇvann ūtibhiḥ sīda sādānam / . . .* (RV 2.23.1) (C: p. 59). For the mantra *gaṇānām tvā* etc. (RV 2.23.1), the Ṛṣi is Śaunaka Gr̥tsamada, the deity is Gaṇapati (= the elephant-faced Gaṇeśa), and the meter is Jagatī. The mantra is used to propitiate the deity Gaṇapati.

The original Ṛgvedic mantra has most certainly no reference to the latter-day deity, the elephant-faced Gaṇeśa, the son of Śiva. However, the mantra does contain the expression *gaṇapatim*. The priest makes a natural leap from this expression to the identification of the *gaṇapati* in the mantra with the latter-day Gaṇeśa, who is also commonly called Gaṇapati.

In this context, one needs to keep in mind several factors. The first is that these new Viniyogas for the ancient Ṛgvedic mantras go back to a fairly old Purāṇic period, and I do not want to suggest that the modern-day priests are responsible for this transference. Referring to Vedic mantras used to worship the planets, G. Bühnemann says:

At first sight the selection of the Vedic mantras seems incidental. However, a closer examination of recited mantras reveals that there is a long tradition for their employment in specific contexts, and that their employment is quite meaningful and appropriate in many cases. (G. Bühnemann 1989:6)

Bühnemann's last comment is intriguing to me. While I suspect that the ignorance of the meaning of the original mantra may have played an important role in these transferences, there is a sort of traditional authorization for such interpretations found in earlier sources. Elizarenkova (1995: 124ff.) has pointed out that, already in the hymns of the Ṛgveda, one sees a poetic/ritual tendency to incorporate echoes of the name of the deity in the composition of the Ṛgvedic hymns. Thus, in addition to the direct mention of the name of the deity being invoked, one also hears indirect soundings or echoes of that name in the hymns. This is cleverly done through the repeated use of sound-sequences which come very close to the sound-sequence in the actual name of the divinity. Secondly, Yāska does offer as a last-ditch option to explain the

meaning of a word through the shared sounds between the word and the possible sources from which this word is built up. As a final last-ditch solution, Yāska says that commonality of even one vowel or consonant may be sufficient to make a connection, and that an etymologist can never say no to a word. He must attempt an etymology (cf. *avidyamāne sāmānye 'py akṣaravarṇasāmānyān nirbrūyāt, na tv eva na nirbrūyāt*, Nirukta 2.1). Medieval Mīmāṃsakas like Someśvara continued to look up to Yāska for guidance in this respect (*niruktād avagato yo dhātvarthapūrvako nāmārthaḥ / sarvaṁ nāma dhātujam ity arthakalpanādvāraṁ nirukte pradarsitam*, *Nyāyasudhā*, Fasc. III, pp. 225-226). These historical and theoretical antecedents were among the possible factors which allowed the development of new applications for the old mantras. A similar medieval extension of an ancient Ṛgvedic hymn beginning with the words *dve virūpe* (RV 1.95) to the worship of Viṭṭhala in Maharashtra has been discussed extensively by R.C. Dhere. Dhere (1984: 105-6, 277-79, 283, 338-339) has shown in detail how the worship of Viṭṭhala-Viṣṇu in Pandharpur in Maharashtra is a case of Sanskritization of the folk-tradition centered around the divinity Birobā. The similarity of the name *birobā* and a Prākṛitized pronunciation and/or understanding of the expression *virūpe* in the Vedic mantra allowed the Brahmins of Pandharpur to claim that the Vedic hymn is in praise of Viṭṭhala/Viṭhobā. There are several medieval commentaries on this hymn composed by priests from Pandharpur to show how the words of the hymn can be applied to Viṭṭhala/Viṭhobā, e.g. see the *Dve Virūpe Sūktabhāṣya* of Kṛṣṇācārya.

6. Vernacularization of sanskrit

Now we shall turn more directly to the signs of linguistic Vernacularization of Sanskrit in the context of its priestly use. Of course, it should be clear that such vernacularization of Sanskrit in the context of its priestly use is only a special case of the more general phenomenon of vernacularization of Sanskrit (cf. R. Salomon 1989 and Deshpande 1993), and hence in many respects this vernacularization is not completely distinguishable from other cases of Sanskritization. The special

features of priestly Sanskrit may be noticed in the specific texts, vocabularies, and contexts.

6.1. Vernacular Pronunciation of Sanskrit

In the priestly use of Sanskrit, while one may superficially think in terms of code-switching, the phonetics of the language use seems to be generally seamless, and this seamless phonetics is fully dominated by the vernacular pattern. Often Sanskrit words are uttered as chunks and then vernacularized in divers ways. The Sanskrit sequences *mādhavāya namaḥ* and *keśavāya namaḥ* in the Marathi-speaking areas are heard diversely as *mādhvāyanmaḥ* and *keśvāyanmaḥ*, or as *mādhavāyanmaḥ* and *keśavāyanmaḥ* as in the recorded tape (A).

In the same recorded tape (A), one hears the sequence *akṣatām ca samarpayāmi*, which presents an interesting example. In the original older sources, the expression is *akṣatān*. This word which means 'unbroken' refers to unbroken rice-grains which are offered to the divinity. The word for rice-grains is usually *taṇḍula*, which is a masculine word, and therefore, the accusative plural of the adjective is *akṣatān*. As the priestly reciters of the formulas had little grammatical understanding, the original expression *akṣatān*, with a relatively less frequent word-final *ān*, was generalized to the form *akṣatām*, ending in the more commonplace word-final *anusvāra*. With this *anusvāra*-final pronunciation becoming the most common pronunciation, the expression was reinterpreted as the feminine accusative singular of a reconceptualized new base *akṣatā*. The guess that this is what happened gets strengthened when we notice that the word in Marathi for the unbroken rice-grain used in such ceremonies is the feminine word *akṣatā*. Clearly, the source of this Marathi word must be traced to the standardized mispronunciation *akṣatām* in the Marathi-speaking region. This phenomenon must be fairly old, and can probably be dated by the appearance of the feminine word *akṣatā* in modern Indian languages like Marathi.

Among the verses recited by the priest in the recording (A), one hears the quarter line: *śrīkaraśrīdharaśrīvaraśrīśaṅkara viṣṇo*. This is part of a Sanskrit *ārati* prayer. The metrical pattern actually requires that the repeated syllable *ra* before *śrī* be a light (*laghu*) syllable. This becomes

possible through a non-emphatic pronunciation of *śr*. Such a pronunciation of *r*-clusters is attested in languages like Marathi, e.g. *purī* / *purā*. In the word *purā*, the first syllable *pu* is a light syllable. If this were a genuine Sanskrit word, pronounced in the canonical Sanskrit fashion, the first syllable would be a heavy syllable. Such occasional Prakritic pronunciations of Sanskrit consonant clusters are noticed even by the commentators of metrical treatises like *Ṛttaratnākara* (commentary of Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, pp. 11ff). Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa cites examples from works like *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Kumārasambhava*, and *Śiśupālavadha*. He uses the term *tīvraprayatna* or *atīva tīvraprayatna* to describe this pronunciation of consonant clusters. Perhaps, the word *tīvra* here does not mean 'sharp', but 'quick' or 'rapid'. Though these commentators do not call this phenomenon Prakritic, they notice it in both Sanskrit and Prakrit examples. Similar features have been noticed in the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit works by Siddheshwar Varma (1929).

In the pronunciation of Vernacular Sanskrit, we need to recognize that Vernacular Sanskrit is a sort of 'Interlanguage', which stands between the Vernacular and the canonical Sanskrit patterns. The Vernacular Sanskrit is not some stand-alone variety of Sanskrit with entirely consistent grammatical, phonetic, or lexical resources. As an 'in-between' variety, it has a rather 'utilitarian' access to both, the vernacular and the classical language. Thus, depending upon the necessity of the meter etc., one finds that one switches from vernacular to classical pronunciation of sounds. Consider, the two occurrences of the consonant-cluster *pr* in the following example. The *Ārati* of Gaṇeśa (R: p. 26) contains the line *garuḍaprāñjalisaktam śaṅkarapriyabhaktam*. Here, the syllable *ḍa* in the word *garuḍa* needs to be metrically heavy (*guru*). This is presumably (= my guess based on observation and participation in the recitation of such *Āratīs*) achieved by pronouncing *pr* after *garuḍa* in the standard Sanskrit fashion. However, the syllable *ra* in *śaṅkara* needs to be metrically light (*laghu*). This is achieved by using the non-emphatic vernacular pronunciation for the following *pr*. Thus, the same line has Sanskrit and vernacular pronunciations for *pr*.

As in the pronunciation of consonant-clusters, the vernacular Sanskrit found in priestly recitations also shows 'need-based' choice in the combination of the word-final *m* with the following vowel. The classical Sanskrit pattern does not allow a hiatus between the word-final *m*

and the following vowel, though various kinds of hiatus-instances are observed in Purāṇic, epic, and other varieties of Sanskrit. If the word-final *m* is not combined with the following vowel, then the word-final syllable ending in *m* becomes invariably a heavy (*guru*) syllable. If the *m* is combined with the following vowel, then the vowel before *m* can be light or heavy, depending upon its own quantity. In the following Ārati of Śiva, we find instances of both types, used as needed to fulfill the metrical requirements:

P33. Śivan īrājanārīṭh - (I have marked the hiatus required by the meter with '#').

Om̐ jaya gaṅgādhara hara jaya girijādhīśā /
tvam mām pālāya nityam̐ kṛpayā jagadīśā //
vāmavibhāge girijārūpam̐ # atilalitam̐ //
avalokayati maheśam̐ # īśam̐ # abhinatvā //
dhyānam̐ # āratīsamaye hṛdaye # atī kṛtvā //
rāmas trijāṭānatham̐ # īśam̐ # abhinatvā // (D: 203)

Many modern IA languages show the loss of the final *a* of Sanskrit words. For example, the Sanskrit word *vaṭa* is pronounced as *vaṭ* in Marathi. The NIA loss of final *a* vowels allows the metrically regular pronunciation of the vernacular Sanskrit verse-quarters like *vaṭasāvītryai namas te 'stu* /, (G: p. 10). Here, this quarter-line of a Śloka verse, if pronounced in canonical Sanskrit fashion, would give us an extra syllable. However, a Prakritic pronunciation of *vaṭa* as *vaṭ*, with the loss of the final *a*, allows this line to fit the requirements of the meter.

Prakritic pronunciations create other linguistic variations as well. Both the words *āhvāna* 'invoking, calling' and *āvāhana* 'bringing someone hither' are known to the ancient Sanskrit usage. However, several factors complicate the process of Prakritization or vernacularization of Sanskrit. The Sanskrit cluster *-hv-* gets metathesized to *-vh-* in its Prakritic pronunciation. This reduces the difference between these words and they become phonetically close equivalents. In the Puraṇic verses recited during the Pūjā performances, one finds both the words, e.g. *āvāhanam̐ na jānāmi* 'I do not know *āvāhana*' (B) and *kurve ghaṇṭāravam̐ tatra devatāhvānalakṣaṇam̐* 'I make the noise of the Ghaṇṭā bell which is a way of invoking the deities' (B). The Marathi glosses (cf. *devatānce āvāhan*) generally render both *āvāhana* and *āhvāna* with the term *āvāhana*, rather than with *āhvāna* (= *āvāhan*, in

Marathi pronunciation). At least within the Marathi-speaking region, the choice of *āvāhana* over *āhvāna* (= *āvāhan*) for glossing both of these terms is most probably dictated by the peculiar semantics of *āvāhan* in Marathi. The word *āvāhan* in Marathi has the meaning of 'to extend a challenge', (cf. Marathi: *āvāhan deṇe*) and therefore, the priestly usage of *āvāhana* and *āhvāna* makes better sense to the modern audience if rendered with *āvāhana*, rather than with *āhvāna*. One may make a guess that a text such as *kurve ghaṇṭāravam̐ tatra devatāhvānalakṣaṇam̐* either predates the change in the meaning of the word *āhvāna*, or comes from a community or region where this change was not operative.

6.2. Vernacular Vocabulary in Sanskrit

Inclusion of vernacular vocabulary in changed or unchanged form is indeed very common in the priestly formulas. Thus, referring to the sacred thread which symbolizes the serpent divinity Śeṣa or Ananta, one may find the word *anantasūtra* side by side with the more vernacular expression *doraka*, cf. Marathi *dorā* 'thread'.

P34. *atha DORAKA*bandhanamantraḥ /referring to *anantasūtra* (G: p. 171).

Going a step beyond the mere inclusion of vernacular vocabulary, one finds various patterns of combining vernacular and canonical Sanskrit grammatical patterns. For example, the Sanskrit verb root *khād* 'to eat' is reduced to a mere *khā* in languages like Hindi and Marathi. This vernacular root *khā* is occasionally inducted back into vernacular Sanskrit, and declined like a Sanskrit root ending in *ā*. The verb forms *khāhi* *khāhi* in the following citation are clearly in imitation of genuine Sanskrit forms like *pāhi*.

P35. *mama śatrūn KHĀHI KHĀHI māraya māraya* . . . (M: p. 37)

The South Indian tradition of Maṇipravāḷam poetry is a well known example of formally combining Sanskrit and Vernacular vocabulary in the same poetic composition. This pattern is, however, not restricted to South Indian languages, but is found in many North Indian languages as well. Many devotional poems composed by Tulasīdās show a fascinating mixture of Sanskrit and medieval dialects of North India. The same sort of mixture is evident in the Ārati literature, which incorpo-

rates features of Bhakti and ritual traditions. Here is a sample Āratī of Śiva. The relevant segment contains a description of Gaurī.

P36. *kokilakūjitaKHELATA* *Ahaṁsā vanalalitā* //
racayati kalākalāpam nṛtyati MUDAsahitā //
tanmadhye haranikaṭe gaurī MUDAsahitā //
indrādikasurasevita (no case-ending) *nāmayate ŚĪSAM* //
vibudhavadhūr bahu nṛtyati hṛdaye MUDAsahitā //
DHINAKATA THAI THAI DHINAKATA
mṛdaṅga (no case-ending) *vādayate* //
MUNDAI *racayati mālā* (no case ending) *pannagam upavītam* //
śaṅkhaninādam kṛtvā JHALLARI (no case-ending) *nādayate* //
 (D: p. 203)

Here, *khelata* is a vernacular Hindi expression. The word *śīsam* is interesting in that it takes the vernacular Hindi word *śīś* [= Skt. *śīrṣa*], and makes a Sanskritic accusative out of it. The repeated word *mudasahitā* shows that the Sanskritic *mud* has been replaced with *muda*. A genuine Sanskritic combination of *mud+sahitā* would have resulted with *sandhi* in *mutsahitā*, which would have been essentially unrecognizable to the popular audience of this Āratī composition. Several Sanskrit words like *mṛdaṅga* and *mālā*, which are syntactically accusative, are given without the Sanskrit accusative affix. In the case of *mṛdaṅga vādayate*, one could perhaps suggest that the addition of the accusative affix after *mṛdaṅga* may have led to a metrical violation. But such is not the case with *racayati mālā*. A possible explanation which may account for both of these cases is that this lack of the accusative affix is a reflection of a lack of overt accusative marking in many Hindi dialects, cf. *rām ām* [no overt accusative marking after *ām*] *khātā hai* 'Rām eats a mango'. Thus, even the grammars of Sanskrit and the vernacular are inextricably mixed in this composition.

Many rituals or portions of rituals developed in specific regions and were probably of non-Sanskritic origin. However, these local rituals were inextricably combined with the more Sanskritic rituals recorded in the Gṛhyasūtras and Dharmasūtras. Even these texts admit the great diversity of such rituals in different regions (*janapada*) and villages (*grāma*), and advise that these specific local traditions be honored especially in the course of the wedding ceremony (cf. *atha khalūccāvaca janapadadharmā grāmadharmāś ca tān vivāhe pratīyāt / yat tu samānam tad vakṣyāmaḥ*, Āśvalāyanagṛhyasūtra 1.7.1.2). Following the advice

of the Gṛhyasūtras, the latter-day priest class produced new Sanskrit formulas for these local rituals, and these new formulas incorporated the vernacular names of the local rituals. Notice the incorporation of the vernacular Marathi names for the rituals *sākharapuḍā* and *śālamudī* in the Sanskrit formulas for wedding rituals from the region of Maharashtra.

P37. *vivāhāṅgabhūtam SĀKHARAPUḌĀkhyam karma kariṣye* . . . (F: Pt. II, p. 121) I shall perform the rite called *sākharapuḍā*, which is part of the wedding ceremony.

P38. *vivāhāṅgabhūtam ŚĀLAMUDĪkarma kariṣye* . . . (F: Pt. II, p. 130)

Every Pūjā begins with a declaration called *saṁkalpa*, which states, among other matters, the specifics of time and place. In specifying the place, the usual formula contains words like: *bharatakhāṇḍe bharatavarṣe dakṣiṇāpathe godāvaryāḥ dakṣiṇe tīre* etc., "In the continent of Bharata, in the land of Bharata, in the southern region, on the southern bank of Godāvarī . . ." As we approach the modern period, we begin to see occasional changes made in this formula to fit the more modern conceptions. For example, the formula cited below refers to *Hindusthānadeśa* as the region where the ritual is going to take place.

P39. *bharatakhāṇḍe HINDUSTHĀNadeśe* . . . (F: Pt. II, p. 147)

This reminds me of two situations of Hindu weddings which I observed in the US during the last few years. On one occasion, the priest recited the formula *bharatakhāṇḍe bharatavarṣe* etc. without any modification. After the ceremony was over, I asked the priest for an explanation. The clever priest, who had not thought of this problem before, responded by saying that all the regions of the world where Indian immigrants have settled are now included in the region referred to by *bharatakhāṇḍe bharatadeśe*. On the other hand, I have observed other Hindu priests in my state of Michigan adjusting the traditional formula of *saṁkalpa* to reflect the changed geography: *amerikākhāṇḍe amerikādeśe miṣiganrājye anārbarnagare huron-nadyās tīre*, "in the continent of America, in the country of America, in the state of Michigan, in the city of Ann Arbor, on the bank of the Huron river." This is simply an extension of the process that had already occurred in the different regions of India.

6.3. Grammatical Deviations

Often one notices that Sanskrit compositions produced by the priestly class attempt to Sanskritize the local religious tradition by incorporating the local place-names and the local names of divinities. Such compositions often become so popular that they become an inextricable feature of the local ritual traditions. Consider the following verse which is invariably heard in the wedding ceremonies in Maharashtra.

P40. *svasti śrīgaṇāyakaṃ gajamukham MOREŚVARAM siddhidam /
BALLĀLAM MURADAM vināyakaMAHAM cintāmaṇiṃ
ŚRĪVARAM // LENYĀDRIM girijātmakaṃ suvaradaṃ
vighneśvaraṃ VOJHARAM / grāme RĀMJAṆAsaṃsthito gaṇapatiḥ
kuryāt sadā maṅgalam // (N: p. 46)*

This verse is found with several different variant readings. Here, I shall discuss only the version given above. The verse incorporates the names of the famous eight Gaṇeśas regionally known as the Aṣṭavināyakas. Gaṇeśa in *morgāṇ* [= Skt. *mayūragrāma*] is cited as *moreśvara* [< Skt. *mayūreśvara*]. Gaṇeśa in Murud is cited by the name *ballāḷa*. Notice that the name of Gaṇeśa as well as the place name are both in accusative, which, on the face of it, is not syntactically motivated. One priest explained to me that the word *svasti* is the verb and that it is equivalent to *namaskaromi*, and the names of Gaṇeśa are in the accusative because they are the objects of this verb. Perhaps, some such conception may explain the accusative of the Gaṇeśa names. How about the accusative of the place name? My best guess is that this is a rendering of the Marathi affix *-lā*, which can be added to a place-name in the locative sense. But the same affix is more commonly used as an accusative/dative affix. The priest replaced this Marathi *-lā* with the Sanskrit accusative affix *-am*. The next sequence *vināyakamaham* is somewhat intriguing. If broken into *vināyakam+aham*, one can understand the accusative *vināyakam*, but the following *aham* makes little sense. In fact, this is a reference to Vināyaka in the town of Mahad, which is simply shortened for the sake of the meter into *maham*, and compounded with the deity-name *vināyaka*. After that, we have a reference to Cintāmaṇi in the town of Śrīvara. The word *śrīvara* is a Sanskritization of the Marathi place-name *theūr*. This is followed by the reference to

Girijātmaja at Lenyādri. The word *lenyādri* is derived from a combination of Marathi *leṇe* 'cave-temple' and Sanskrit *adri* 'mountain'. Then we have a reference to Vighneśvara in Vojhara. The word *vojhara* is a Sanskritization of Marathi *ozar*, where *z* is an alveolar sound non-existent in Sanskrit. The priests actually pronounce the printed word *vojharam* as *vozaram* with the Marathi sound *z*. Additionally, the change of *o* to *vo* was probably metrically motivated. The priestly author probably thought that if he used the word as *ozaram*, the initial *o* would probably combine with the preceding *m*, and that would lead to a metrical deviation. In the final line of the verse, the priestly author shifts to the nominative case for the final reference to Gaṇapati most probably to syntactically link up with the common verse-ending *kuryāt sadā maṅgalam*. However, the portion *grāme rāmjaṇasaṃsthito gaṇapatiḥ* has its own interesting displacement of constituents. The word *rāmjaṇagrāma* is a Sanskritized form of Marathi *rāmdzaṇ gāv*. Phonetically, the sound *dz* is alveolar in Marathi, but Marathi uses the same written character for this sound and for the sound *j* of Sanskrit. Secondly, the Sanskrit phrase, grammatically speaking, should have been *rāmjaṇagrāme saṃsthito gaṇapatiḥ*. However, to fit the meter, this was altered to *grāme rāmjaṇasaṃsthito gaṇapatiḥ*. This is incomprehensible to a non-Marathi listener. However, a Marathi listener has hardly any doubt as to what the verse is referring to. Additionally, no Marathi priest recites this phrase with a true Sanskritic sound *j*. If one were to pronounce the word *rāmjaṇa* with a true Sanskritic *j*, the listener would not recognize this as a reference to Ranjangaon. This verse and the extremely high frequency with which it is recited and listened to by Marathi speakers raise interesting issues about the performance and comprehension of the priestly variety of Sanskrit. It is a fact that after listening to the phrase *grāme rāmjaṇasaṃsthito gaṇapatiḥ*, the Marathi listener recognizes this as a reference to Gaṇeśa in the village of Ranjangaon, and not as "Gaṇapati, in the village, sitting in a *rāmdzaṇ* 'clay water-pot'." What this means is that the comprehension and the production of priestly Sanskrit place little value on the strict rules of Sanskrit grammar, and place a higher value on the contextual and situational understanding of a given phrase. Specific vernacular features of the phrase, as it is performed, such as the Marathi alveolar pronunciation (*dz*) for the Sanskritic *j*, aid in the contextual recognition and

comprehension of the Sanskrit phrase. In this pragmatic sense, the local vernacular features override the received canonical Sanskrit features.

On other occasions, deviations from the norm of the classical language may be produced either through a lack of proper discrimination between Sanskrit and the Vernacular, or perhaps for specific metrical reasons. In a prayer to Durgā (*namas te sudurge*, etc) popular in the region of Gujarat, most of the composition is in grammatical Sanskrit. However, we hear a vocative form: *sadādhairyateje*. The best way to make sense of this is to say that the vernacular has *tej* for Sanskrit *tejas*, and that using this vernacular *tej*, the poet produced the feminine form *sadādhairyatejā*, leading to its vocative *sadādhairyateje*. Thus, the vernacular forms of the Sanskrit words are more closely linked to the recognition-ability of the listener, than to the canonical Sanskrit forms. In the recorded tape (A), the priest seems to use the phrase *paya+śarkarā*, rather than the canonical Sanskrit *payas+śarkarā* > *payaśśarkarā*. This may be due to the fact that Sanskritized Marathi has the word *paya*, and not *payas*. In the same recorded tape, the priest recites an Āratī of Viṣṇu, which contains the line: *nijarūpaikavihāraṇaTAMAhāraṇa viṣṇo*. Here, the canonical Sanskrit form derived from Sanskrit *taṃas* would have been ... *tamohāraṇa* ... This would have led to a metrical deviation. What probably aided the output *tamahāraṇa* is also the additional fact that Sanskritized Marathi has the word *tama*, but not *taṃas*. In some formulas for blessing, one finds the phrase *saṃśriyam astu* / (C: p. 7). In other texts, in parallel passages, one finds *saṃśreyam astu* and *saṃśreyasam astu*. Neither *saṃśriyam* nor *saṃśreyam* can be derived as proper Sanskrit expressions. The third form, i.e. *saṃśreyasam* is closer to canonical Sanskrit, a secondary derivation from *su+śreyas*. The form *saṃśreyam* appears to be a vernacularization, related to the fact that a modern language like Marathi has the word *śreya*, but not *śreyas*. Therefore, it is understandable how a medieval priest may derive the Sanskritized *saṃśreyam*, from a base of *su+śreya*. The form *saṃśriyam* appears to be a further mutilation, perhaps aided by a possible belief that it is derived from *su+śrī*. It is remarkable that the authoritative medieval text of *Prayogaratna* by Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa (C, p. 7) contains the reading *saṃśriyam astu*.

One also finds cases, where certain older words were replaced by similar sounding other words, perhaps because, in the course of lin-

guistic change, the meaning of the older words was deemed to be inappropriate in the given context. Consider the case of the word *uttare* in ritual formulas. In the older sacrificial texts, one finds the word *utkara* which refers to a place near the ritual enclosure where one discards the sacrificial waste. The modern Marathi words *ker* 'garbage' and *ukirḍā* 'garbage dump' are etymologically related to this old Sanskrit word. However, these modern words evoke a feeling of revulsion, and in modern Hindu practice, one would never think of dumping items like the withered garlands from the images of deities (*nirmālya*) in the garbage dump. One is supposed to take such items to a holy site like a river bank and immerse them in the water (*visarjan*). In the ritual formula current in the modern Pūjā performances, one hears the expression *uttare nirmālyam viṣṇya* ... / (B). Where does this *uttare* come from? If this were a true reference to the northern direction, one would then expect the Sanskrit pronominal locative pattern: *uttarāsmiṃ*, cf. *uttarāsyām diśi*, *Kumārasambhava* 1.1. It is my hunch that the word *uttare* in the phrase *uttare nirmālyam viṣṇya* is a medieval modification of an earlier *utkare*. Some person thinking that one could not throw the used garlands in the garbage dump thought that the word *utkare* was an error, and corrected it to *uttare*. This modification itself is fairly old and is found in authoritative medieval texts like the *Prayogaratna* of Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, and is not to be attributed to a modern priestly performer.

One finds cases where the grammar of a phrase is modified in view of the perceived distinctions which would be obliterated by the canonical Sanskrit form. For example, everyone knows that the neuter *brahma* is different from the masculine *brahmā*, and that in conjunction with the consort Sāvitrī, one invokes the masculine Brahṃā, and not the abstract neuter Brahma. Sāvitrī is the wife of Brahṃā. With this widespread popular knowledge, the Dvandva compound of *brahmā + sāvitrī* appears in the ritual formulas as *brahmāsāvitrībhyām namaḥ* ... (G: p. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 passim). By the canonical rules of Sanskrit grammar, such a form is not possible. One would have to reduce the form *brahmā* to *brahma*. However, to an untrained listener, this makes it appear as if one is invoking the neuter Brahma along with Sāvitrī. That being inadmissible, the formula always reads: *brahmāsāvitrībhyām namaḥ*. I have verified this usage in printed texts, manuscripts, and in recorded and

observed performances. A somewhat similar case is noticed in the passage *śrīsavitāsūryanārāyaṇadevatāprītyartham* ... (P: p. 16). Here, the expression *devatāprītyartham* is a genuine classical Sanskrit expression. The specification of the deity is, by contrast, done in the latter-day forms of vernacular Sanskrit. The expression *sūryanārāyaṇa* referring to the sun-divinity is a somewhat late phenomenon. The addition of the honorific *śrī* is also a relatively late phenomenon. The form *savitā* is a hanging nominative form, which cannot be grammatically justified in this context. One would expect the form *saviṭṛ* to appear in the compound. However, the vernacular-speaking audience, and the priest himself, have a greater recognition of the nominative form *savitā*, than the abstract base-form *saviṭṛ*. The nominative Sanskrit form *savitā* has been inherited by Marathi, but not the abstract base-form *saviṭṛ*.

One of the primary purposes of the priestly performance is to generate an atmosphere of auspiciousness or holiness for the host/audience. Among the various tools at the disposal of the priest, language is an important tool. However, language becomes a tool toward this end not exactly by being correct in terms of the elite grammar of classical Sanskrit, but by fitting a pre-existing pattern of cultural expectations on the part of the listener/performers. These expectations have little to do with the rules of Sanskrit grammar. They are more closely linked with the presence of certain well known items of vocabulary or phrases. Among such phrases in the context of a Marathi wedding is the refrain : *kuryāt sadā maṅgalam* (and its minor variations). Many recited verses end with this phrase and it serves as a punctuation during the ritual. Similarly, the recitation of holy names of deities, rivers, etc. also leads to the overall generation of a euphoric feeling of religious well-being. Observe the concatenation of holy river names in the following verse recited during many Marathi weddings:

P41. *gaṅgā sindhu sarasvatī ca yamunā godāvarī narmadā
kāverī sarayū mahendratanaṇyā carmaṇvatī vedikā /
kṣiprā vetravatī mahāsuraṇadī khyātā ca yā gaṇḍakī
pūrṇā pūrṇajalāḥ samudrasahitāḥ kurvantu vo maṅgalam //*
(H: pp. 23-4)

Here most of the grammar consists simply of the concatenation of the holy river names. The beginning of the verse creates several problems for a grammarian. How is the sequence *gaṅgā sindhu sarasvatī ca*

to be grammatically understood? If it is a compound, then one does not need a *ca*. If it is not a compound, what is the word *sindhu* doing there? One cannot grammatically account for it. Outside of a compound, one might have expected the form *sindhuḥ*. However, the short *u* is metrically required. Anyway, the audience of this verse has never been beset with such questions. The audience is happy to be blessed by all these rivers brought together in this single verse. The next example is even more revealing of this process. Here, a listing of all kinds of diverse holy items is followed by the singular phrase: *kuryāt sadā maṅgalam*.

P41. *gaṅgāgomatigopatir gaṇapatir govindagovardhano
gītāgomayagorajogirisutā gaṅgādhara gautamaḥ /
gāyatrī garuḍo gadādharaḡayāgambh īragodāvarī
gandharvagrahagopagokulagaṇāḥ kuryāt sadā maṅgalam //* (H: pp. 24)

The only guiding principle in the composition of this verse is that the names of all these different holy entities begin with (the holy sound?) *g*. The guess that the sound *g* is deemed to be particularly holy in the context of weddings and thread ceremonies is justified by the observation that the most important deity on these occasions, and especially connected with verses ending with *kuryāt sadā maṅgalam*, is Gaṇeśa, cf. *om gaṇ gaṇapataye namaḥ, Gaṇapatyartharvaśīrṣa*. Once such a holy listing of *g*-initial names is achieved, one does not worry too much about the rules of grammar. Violations of the rules of classical Sanskrit in this listing are so obvious and numerous, I need not list them individually. A similar concatenation of diverse things occurs at the end of the recitation of the verses ending in *kuryāt sadā maṅgalam*. These are Sanskrit or Sanskritized expressions, but one cannot say with any confidence whether one would regard these passages as Sanskrit passages. However, I have asked both the priests and the audiences what they thought it was, and for them it is all holy Sanskrit. Generation of holiness depends upon such perceptions on the part of the priests, hosts, and audiences. The word that the Marathi audiences immediately recognize is *sāvadhān*, derived from Sanskrit *sa+avadhāna* 'with attention'. However, for the Marathi audience, the word functions almost as a warning, an imperative: "be attentive!" This warning is uttered by the priests several times before the wedding ritual is finally concluded. This is meant to make the participants in the ceremony become aware of the fact that they are entering into this relation of holy matrimony being

fully conscious and attentive. The word *sāvadhāna* is not attested in this fuction in the classical language.

- P42. *iṣṭadevatākuladevatāgrāmadevatācintanasumuhūrtasāvadhān /
lakṣmīnārāyanabrahmāsāvitṛiūmāmaheśvaracintanasulagnasāvadhān
/ sāvadhān / sāvadhān / (H: p. 24)*

A common pattern of concatenation of Sanskrit words, with a minimal degree of Sanskrit grammar, is found in many texts where one finds a string of vocatives addressed to a certain deity or person, with some concluding phrase like “protect me.” This pattern is seen in the following verse. Additionally, in the meter *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*, most of these vocatives, naturally or otherwise, end in long vowels (marked here in upper case), and are metrically important. Vocatives like *śrīrāmā*, *puruṣottamā* etc. generally do not appear with such long final vowels in classical poems, though Sanskrit grammarians do indeed allow the presence of protracted vowels in vocatives. The lengthening here actually follows the Marathi vocative pattern, rather than the genuine Sanskrit pattern. This is clear from the vocative form *naraharī* in this verse. The genuine classical form would have been *narahare*. Metrically, either *naraharī* or *narahare* would be acceptable. However, the fact that the verse contains the form *naraharī* is an indication of the Marathi element in this composition. However, this is not uniformly present, as is indicated by the form *guṇanidhe*, which does follow the classical Sanskrit pattern. The best explanation is that there is no clear-cut dividing line between Sanskrit, Sanskritized Marathi, and Marathi in the mind of the author. The boundaries of all these categories are permeable and not fixed.

- P43. *śrīrāmā puruṣottamā naraharī nārāyaṇā keśavā
govindā garuḍadhvajā guṇanidhe dāmodarā mādhavā /
śrīkṛṣṇā kamalāpate yadupate sītāpate śrīpate
vaikunṭhādhipate carācarapate lakṣmīpate pāhi mām / (I: p. 21)*

The next passage shows a similar pattern of vocatives combined with the repeated phrase *tava śaraṇam*.

- P44. *dattātreya tava śaraṇam / dattanāthā tava śaraṇam //
triṅṇātmakā triṅṇātītā tribhuvanapālaka tava śaraṇam //1//
śāśvatamūrte tava śaraṇam / śyāmasundarā tava śaraṇam //
śeṣābharaṇā śeṣabhūṣaṇā śeṣāśāyi guru tava śaraṇam //2//
śaḍbhujamūrte tava śaraṇam / śaḍbhujayativara tava śaraṇam //
daṇḍakamaṇḍalugadāpadmakara śaṁkhacakraadhara tava śaraṇam //3//*

- śrīgurunāthā tava śaraṇam / sadgurunāthā tava śaraṇam //
kṛṣṇāsaṅgamataruvaravāsī bhaktavatsalā tava śaraṇam //5//
kṛpāmūrte tava śaraṇam / kṛpāsāgarā tava śaraṇam //
kṛpākataḥ kṛpāvalokanā kṛpānidhe prabhU tava śaraṇam //6//
kālanāthā tava śaraṇam / kālanāśakā tava śaraṇam //
pūrṇānandā pūrṇapareśā purāṇapuruṣā tava śaraṇam //7//
jagadīśā tava śaraṇam / jagannāthā tava śaraṇam //
jagatpālakā jagadādhiśā jagaduddhārā tava śaraṇam //8//
akhilāntarā tava śaraṇam / akhilaiśvaryā tava śaraṇam //
bhaktapriyā vajrapaṇjarā prasannavaktrā tava śaraṇam //9//
digambarā tava śaraṇam / dīnadayāghana tava śaraṇam //
dīnanāthā dīnadayālā dīnoddhārā tava śaraṇam //10//
tapomūrte tava śaraṇam / tejorāśī tava śaraṇam //
brahmānandā brahmasanātana brahmamohanā tava śaraṇam //11//
viśvātmakā tava śaraṇam / viśvarakṣakā tava śaraṇam //
viśvāmbharā viśvajīvanā viśvaparātpara tava śaraṇam //12//
vighnāntakā tava śaraṇam / vighnanāśakā tava śaraṇam //
praṇavāt ita premavardhanā prakāśamūrte tava śaraṇam //13//
nijānandā tava śaraṇam / nijapadadāyakā tava śaraṇam //
nityanirāñjana nirākārā nirādhārā tava śaraṇam //14//
cidghanamūrte tava śaraṇam / cidākārā tava śaraṇam //
cidātmamūrte tava śaraṇam / cidānandā citsukhakandā tava śaraṇam //15//
anādimūrte tava śaraṇam / akhilāvatārā tava śaraṇam //
anantakoṭībrahmāṇḍanāyakā aghaṭitaghaṭanā tava śaraṇam //16//
bhaktoddhārā tava śaraṇam / bhaktarakṣakā tava śaraṇam //
bhaktānugrahagurubhaktipriyā patitoddhārā tava śaraṇam //17//
Śrīdattaguruśaraṇāṣṭakam (I: p. 167-8)*

Note that some of the vocatives end in long vowels, while others do not, even in those cases where the classical grammar would require them to do so. The choice is mostly determined by the metrical necessity. For instance, in this non-Sanskrit meter, each of the first two feet of the verse has the same metrical structure. The pāda breaks down into two units, with the first one with eight mātrās and the second one with six mātrās. The constant portion *tava śaraṇam* consists of six mātrās. The preceding portion must consist of eight mātrās. Thus, in the very first pāda of the passage, we have *dattātreya tava śaraṇam*. The vocative *dattātreya* ends in a long vowel, because without the long vowel, it will not make eight mātrās. On the other hand, in the second pāda of the third verse, i.e. *śaḍbhujayativara tava śaraṇam*, the vocative *śaḍbhujayativara* does not end in a long vowel, because a long vowel would create an additional mātrā. The vocative *guru* in the second verse should have been *guro* according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar.

However, that would have created an extra mātrā. Also note that the verses are sung in Marathi phonetics, which allows additional flexibilities. Consider the lines *dattanāthā tava śaraṇam*, *jagannāthā tava śaraṇam*, and *cidākārā tavaśaraṇam*. Here, the words *dattanāthā*, *jagannāthā*, and *cidākārā* each would scan only seven mātrās, if counted by the rules of the classical language. However, in the Marathi recitation of these verses, many light syllables get metrically lengthened. I have indicated this lengthening by placing '2 after the vowel: *datta2nāthā*, *ja2gannāthā*, and *ci2dākārā*. Other acceptable recitational strategies include making long vowels even longer to scan for three mātrās, i.e. *dat-tanā3thā*, *jagannā3thā*, and *cidākā3rā*. While singing the same line again and again, the reciters use different alternative patterns of lengthening. [This is comparable to alternative prolation of different heavy syllables in a vocative prescribed by Pāṇini 8.2.86: *guror anṛto 'nantyasyāpy ekaikasya prācām*]. Thus, the vernacular recitational practice makes up for the lack of mātrās. There are reverse cases as well. There are expressions which in their canonical Sanskrit pronunciation would produce extra mātrās, but in their vernacular pronunciation they scan properly. As an example, consider the expression *anantakoṭībrahmāṇḍanāyakā* in verse 16 above. Pronounced in the canonical Sanskrit way, this expression would have an extra mātrā. In the recitational pattern common in the Marathi region, one gets rid of this extra mātrā by reciting the expression as *anantakoṭībrahmāṇḍa-NĀYKĀ*. Such a loss of short *a* is a common feature of the modern IA languages like Marathi and Hindi, cf. Skt. *apavāda* > Marathi/Hindi *apvād*. Another feature of the vernacular pronunciation of Sanskrit, which is manifest in this passage, is the occasional non-emphatic pronunciation of consonant clusters. In the expression *bhaktānugrahagurubhaktipriyā* in verse 17, the canonical Sanskrit pronunciation leads to an extra mātrā. One can get rid of this extra mātrā by using a non-emphatic pronunciation of the cluster *kt*. This allows the vowel *a* in the word *bhakti* in the above expression to be recited as a light vowel with one mātrā.

7. Conclusion

The above demonstration of some features of priestly Sanskrit shows that this variety of Sanskrit is in some respects similar to other varieties of Vernacular Sanskrit, in that this variety stands at the intersection of classical Sanskrit and the given vernacular. However, its specific features result from the specific context of its use and the specific motivations involved in its production. Its many features result from the fact that the priest who is generally quite ignorant of the grammar of the classical language needs to project a Sanskritic holy image to his host and the audience, who are, most of the time, even more ignorant of Sanskrit. The host refers to the priest by names like *paṇḍita* and *guru-jī*, and looks up to him for ritual, if not spiritual, guidance. The priest is caught between his own ignorance of Sanskrit grammar, and the need to simultaneously appear knowledgeable, authentic, and also at the same time be comprehensible to the vernacular-speaking host/audience. The features of priestly Sanskrit result from this peculiar hierarchical context and interaction.

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