

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the hospitality of all my respondents in Kanchipuram, whose names I unfortunately cannot mention here, but to whom I am deeply indebted. I truly wish I could revisit every autumn to celebrate Navarātri and *kolu* with you!

The book started out as a Ph.D. thesis submitted in 2018 to the department of Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS) at the University of Oslo. I am grateful for their generous funding that facilitated my fieldwork and participation in conferences. I would also like to thank the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), my current workplace, for their funding support that made this publication possible.

A tremendous debt of gratitude is owed to Ute Hüsken, my Ph.D. supervisor, *guru* and co-editor of the Ethno Indology series at HASP. Your support throughout the years has been endless. You have read every chapter draft with precision and enthusiasm. Starting Sanskrit class with you in 2009 turned out to be a life-changing journey in so many ways!

I am grateful to my co-supervisor, Hillary Rodrigues, for encouraging me to think playfully about play and for theoretical suggestions which shaped the trajectory of this work.

Heartfelt thanks to my three research assistants: Mr. Subramanian, a reliable anchor in Kanchipuram, Vaishnavi, my right hand during Navarātri, and Sri-vidya, who stepped in on short notice. I certainly could not have written this without your help in the field!

I wish to thank Amy Allocco and Richard Davis, opponents during my doctoral defense, for intriguing discussions and constructive critique on my work. You made the whole day such a wonderful experience. I also wish to thank Annette Wilke for insightful comments.

I wish to express gratitude to Dr. Ganeshan of the French Institute of Pondicherry for aiding me in my Sanskrit translation of the chapters of *SC*, and to my Tamil instructors at PILC: Parashuraman, Aroki, Ravishankar, and Gnanasekaran. I also wish to thank Muthu, Ramya and Preethi for their assistance with Tamil back in Norway.

I wish to thank my former colleagues at IKOS: Arild, Kathinka, Kenneth, Claus Peter, Guro, Vera, Moumita, and fellow enthusiasts of South Asia at the South Asia Symposium in Oslo, for valuable inputs and insights. I also benefited

greatly from being part of the Navarātri, Navarātra, and Durgāpūjā in South Asia and Beyond research group.

I would like to thank Quoc-Bao Do for patiently copyediting and formatting this book, and the dedicated editorial team at HASP.

Lastly, my heartfelt thanks go to my little family: Arne, Ask, and Aurora. I could not have done any of this without your support.

Any errors in fact or interpretation are my own responsibility.