

## 4 Saṃskāra performance in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century

In part 2 the analysis of the *Daśavidhahetunirūpaṇa* and other texts made clear that especially the prenatal life-cycle rituals are important means to express and transmit the Vaikhānasas' specific identity. In spite of an assumedly unaltered ritual tradition, the analysis of the texts (see 2.2.2–2.2.5) illustrates that the rituals have in fact been subject to change: the Vaikhānasas' interpretation and performance of the viṣṇubali saṃskāra were adapted to the initiation ritual into Śrīvaiṣṇavism, pañcasamskāra. However, within this complex process of adaptation the Vaikhānasas emphasised only the features distinguishing them from other vaiṣṇava groups, and interpreted them as signs of superiority. In 3.1 the account of conflicts in the recent past and in the present showed that the same issues were and still are relevant in the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Moreover, the patterns of interpretation remained the same, although the form (and the outcome) of the debate differed depending on the historical and local contexts. Opening up another perspective, in this section an account of three contemporary viṣṇubali performances is given. First the texts used during the performances are introduced, and the relevant sections are translated and compared with each other. However, the focus of attention are not the textual sources as testimonies of stability or change, but rather the use of texts in the enactments, in order to explore the nature of the connection between these two planes of ritual. This section aims at showing how performance can help understanding texts. This does certainly not apply to every literary genre. However, especially the ritual handbooks dealt with here are used by the performers themselves in practice—the texts thus live in and through the performances. Moreover, the priests themselves are very clear about the fact that only from expertise in ritual performance arises the competence to use a ritual handbook, whereas knowledge of ritual texts alone does not imply competence in ritual practice. Ritual handbooks, Welbon (1984: 72) says, “are written for functioning priests and serve them as compendious references, sanctions, and models more than exhaustive procedural guides.” Thus, many necessary details of performances are not at all included in these handbooks, but are left to the training given by a teacher. In the process of oral, embodied and textual transmission, some aspects of the respective rituals are rather static, whereas others are modified, added, or left out. However, it would be deceptive to assume that only those rites which are not given in the texts are subject to change: many rites, knowledge of which is evidently (and correctly) presupposed and which are not described in the texts are nevertheless

performed almost identically in all three performances I could witness. Some building blocks, which are part of many rituals, are described only once, if at all. Here, by comparing three ritual events and the texts used, the reasons lying behind the rituals' potential variance shall be explored. How are rituals altered, which elements underlie the changes and to which extent gives this change expression to, or is independent of, a distinct Vaikhānasa identity?

#### 4.1 Ritual handbooks (prayoga, paddhati)

The ritual specialists among the Vaikhānasas today assume that the viṣṇubali saṃskāra is performed as it is described in the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra*. In fact, the ritual handbooks actually used for the performances are consistently based on this sūtra insofar as the ritual elements of viṣṇubali given in the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra* (see 2.2.2.1) are basic elements in the ritual handbooks and in the performances. However, ritual handbooks (such as those dealt with in 2.2.2.2–2.2.4.7) were partly also written because the necessity arose to explain the sūtra's content: practice and/or texts were not understood any more, or were interpreted differently. Although these ritual manuals do not have the same sacrosanct quality as the sūtra they seek to elucidate, nowadays the rituals are learned and performed rather with the help of these ritual handbooks than with the actual sūtra text. The various detailed and practically-oriented ceremonial instructions in the ritual handbooks are consulted during the performances. These texts mostly do not quote the sūtra word for word, but seek to describe how the instructions of the sūtra are to be translated into ritual actions. In this they do not necessarily follow the order of events as specified in the sūtra, but are rather arranged according to the sequence of the performance from a practical point of view, mirroring the practice prevalent at the time of their compilation. They are not necessarily written in high literary style or even in a very regular Sanskrit: their main aim is the transmission of practice by way of textual pre- and descriptions. These prescriptions are continuously individuated through practice (see Colas 1995: 32).

#### 4.2 Rites not specific to saṃskāras

In the handbooks reference is made to rites which are not explained or described in detail therein. Müller (1992: 35) rightly refers to these rites as “elemental actions” which need not be described extensively because the ritual specialists know

them.<sup>416</sup> Although these rites are not specific to the performance of saṃskāras alone, they are also important components of the three observed and described stagings, and they shall be shortly introduced now.<sup>417</sup>

Viṣvaksenārādhana precedes the rituals to be performed. It is the invocation of the god Viṣvaksena, who averts influences detrimental to the ritual.<sup>418</sup> Then follows puṇyāha, the “announcement of the auspicious day” by the Brahmans present. This is likewise a ritual which should precede most rituals and ensures the success of the ritual undertaking. Ācamana is the “ritual sipping” of water, a purifying rite. The ācamana water is taken from the puṇyāha vessel. Ācamana takes place at the beginning of the ritual and also at the beginning of individual ritual units.<sup>419</sup> The bṛhaspati trickles water onto the right palm of the officiator—and occasionally also his wife—with a darbha grass bundle, who then slurps it from the hand. Through the purifying effect of the water the condition of ritual purity required for the ritual is attained. At the same time ācamana is also done after eating. Thus, the god, as honoured guest, is offered ācamaniya, water for rinsing the mouth (see also TAK 1, s.v.). Apart from ācamaniya, also water for washing the feet (pādyā) and other sanctified water (arghya) are offered to the deity in the course of regular worship.<sup>420</sup> Prāṇāyāma, the “restraint of the breath,” is likewise a preparatory ritual, which serves to attain the condition of ritual purity. It compensates for wrong doings committed consciously or unconsciously.<sup>421</sup> It involves the yajamāna using his right hand to alternately close one of his nostrils and allowing the breath to pass in and out through the nose, or holding it in. This rite is also to be performed daily by a Brahman in the course of the morning rituals, called sandhyāvandana.<sup>422</sup> During the morning ritual one should inwardly recite the gāyatrī mantra, during the yajamāna’s prāṇāyāma the

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416 Müller (1992) gives a very good summary of common introductory and concluding rites on pp. 36–44 of his work; here only those relevant for the ritual at hand are introduced.

417 See Kane 1974a: 212ff.; Müller, in addition, makes reference to the rites snāna, homa, puṇyāha, dakṣiṇā, āgnyāyatana, āghāra, nāndīmukhaśrāddha, prāṇāgnihoṭra, which are explained in the sūtra and shortly referred to in 2.2 of this book.

418 SANukr 1, pp. 8–12. On the god Viṣvaksena see Gupta 1976. Viṣvaksenārādhana corresponds to the Gaṇapatīpūjā of other Hindu traditions (on this see Kane 1974a: 213ff.).

419 See Kane 1974a: 315f., see Müller 1992: 39f.; for ācamana during pūjā see Tachikawa 2001: 29.

420 Tachikawa 2001: 37ff.

421 See Kane 1974a: 317 and 1973: 42.

422 On this see Kane 1974a: 315ff., see also the summary in Michaels 1998b: 261f.; see also Tachikawa 2001: 30.

br̥haspati and the others present recite the gāyatrī mantra out loud.<sup>423</sup> The handbooks refer to this rite only by saying *prāṇān āyamyā*, “after he has restrained the breath.”<sup>424</sup> As an act of inner purification and concentration the restraint of the breath precedes the “formal declaration” (*saṃkalpa*). In contemporary India a ritual undertaking is almost always begun with a *saṃkalpa*.<sup>425</sup> It emerges only indirectly from the Vaikhānasa texts that a *saṃkalpa* sometimes also precedes parts of the ritual which are perceived of as separate entities. It should, however, be noted, that the *saṃkalpa* is not mentioned in the *Vaikhānasagr̥hyasūtra*. The first time it appears is in Nṛṣimha Vājapeyin’s *Bhāṣya*. Thus the *saṃkalpa* might have been assumed to be self-evident at the time of the *sūtra*. A *saṃkalpa* involves a spoken statement, which identifies the act which follows it as a ritual act and expresses the adoption of a “ritual stance” on the part of the main performer (*yajamāna*).<sup>426</sup> Thus one of the *saṃkalpas* to be expressed during *viṣṇubali* is as follows: “Through the *viṣṇubali* ritual, [which is] the sacrifice for the Viṣṇu-follower in [my wife’s] womb, I perform the *saṃskāra* on this rightfully wedded wife of mine, having [so and so] name and belonging to [so and so] gotra” (SAnukr 2.22.19–23.4). Michaels (2005a: 50f.) shows that there are different possibilities for the construction of such a “formal declaration.” In the present case the *saṃkalpa* contains information about which ritual will be performed, and to what end. In addition it names those whom the ritual will affect, i.e. those who will be changed by the ritual: the unborn child and the wife of the *yajamāna*. The wording of the *saṃkalpa* must be adapted to the situation and the participants. This fact implies that the *saṃkalpa* must be “consciously” declared. This, however, cannot be confirmed from the three actual performances I witnessed. Grammatically the *yajamāna* is the subject of the act expressed in the *saṃkalpa*. Nevertheless, in all of the observed cases, the *yajamāna* was not aware of what he should say, or of what the *br̥haspati* said on his behalf. In one case the *yajamāna* did not even personally pronounce the *saṃkalpa* at the start of the ritual (see 4.5.4). The *saṃkalpa* as a spoken statement is accompanied by a particular posture of the hands and body. While the *br̥haspati* says the *saṃkalpa* for the *yajamāna*, or says it first for the *yajamāna* to follow, the *yajamāna* adopts the following posture: the left hand lies palm down on the right thigh, the right hand

423 At all three stagings the gāyatrī mantra recited was preceded by a *vyāhṛti*: *om bhūr om bhuvah om suvah om bhūr bhuvah suvah tat savitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt*.

424 See Müller 1992: 40.

425 On this see the detailed account in Michaels 2005a.

426 On the significance of the so-called “ritual stance” or “ritual commitment” for a ritualized act see Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994: 5, 75, 88ff.

covers the left, with the back of the hand facing upward. At the end of the saṃkalpa water again plays a role as seal, confirmation and purification, namely when the yajamāna touches water. This takes place either by his touching a pot containing water, or the bṛhaspati sprinkling some drops of water on the yajamāna's hands with the bundle of darbha grass. In each of the handbooks the required wording of such a saṃkalpa is given, but they do not mention the appropriate posture, or attitude, knowledge of which is evidently assumed. An important component of the saṃskāras is the homa, the sacrifice into the fire which takes place while mantras are recited.<sup>427</sup> The entire process of fire installation is called āghāra or agnipraṇayana in the Vaiṣṇava tradition. The procedure is described in *Vaiṣṇavasasmārtasūtra* II (*āghāravidhānam*). A Brahman lights his own domestic fire during the marriage ceremonies. Afterwards, he should perform the daily morning and evening offerings in it. However, since nowadays only few Brahmans are able to attend to their domestic fire daily, those who do not do so have to rekindle it for the performance of the saṃskāras.<sup>428</sup> The prescriptions for the rekindling of the domestic fire are given in the ritual handbooks and can be enacted, as present day practice reveals, on a large or small scale. This means that sometimes the fire is produced "by friction" (agnimanthana), but in most cases the fire comes "from the house of a learned Brahman,"<sup>429</sup> that is from the kitchen. In two of the viṣṇubali performances I observed and documented, this was done on a "small scale." In these cases, the relevant mantras were recited, while the fire itself was lighted from fire brought from the burning kitchen's hearth, brought to the ritual arena by a female relative of the main performer. This is also called "laukika" (worldly, common). In the enactment of viṣṇubali in the temple setting in Vijayawada, however, the fire was installed on a "large scale." Agnimanthana was performed there in an elaborate way (also called vaidika, "vedic"). The fire resides inside the the araṇī (wooden blocks made of aśvattha wood). These are then used to light the fire. A peg, a spindle and a rope are then used to churn the fire.<sup>430</sup> In both cases the fire place is prepared by sprinkling water on it (prokṣaṇa). Only then the burning fire is put onto the altar or into the pit. In a next step, the gods Brahmā and Soma are respectively in-

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427 See Kane 1974a: 207ff., see Pandey 1949: 36–38.

428 The creation of the fire: either it is a āhāvāniya agni, or an aupāsana agni. Both are generally the same, the same measurements apply, etc.

429 See Kane 1974a: 210; see DVD -> parts of the ritual -> preparatory rites -> vitalisation of the fire.

430 See also Dharmadhikari 1989: 2; see also Ranade 2006; s.v. agnimanthana.

voked at the sides of the fire place.<sup>431</sup> The utensils used for the homa are purified,<sup>432</sup> and then follows paristarāṇa, the strewing the darbha blades around the fire. The ends of the blades should point towards north or east. This rite confines the fire to the fire place and at the same time assures Agni, the god of the fire, of his place. Some other preliminary rites are the preparation of the so-called brahmāpraṇidhi and somapraṇidhi: two vessels are filled with puṇyāha water, akṣata, flowers, etc. Then a kūrca is immersed in the water contained in these vessels and mantras are spoken. Then the vessels are taken with the right hand, moved clockwise, and placed on two sides of the sacrificial fire. After the other utensils required for the sacrifice (e.g. ghee, caru rice) are purified a rite called nirvāpana is performed: the sacrificial ghee in the vessel is dedicated to Brahmā and Soma respectively. As I was told by many ritual specialists, nirvāpana serves to assure the two gods witnessing the sacrifice (Brahmā and Soma) that the offering is dedicated to them. Afterwards the clarified butter is poured into the fire. The wooden spoon used for this offering is called “sruva.” The formulas for the the sacrifice into the fire mostly begin with the sacred syllable *om*, which is also referred to as “praṇava.” The mantras which are recited during the offering into the fire—which during viṣṇubali includes milk porridge (*pāyasa*) as well as clarified butter—end with the exclamation “svāhā,” “hail!” All sacrifices into the fire are framed by a rite called pariṣecana, the sprinkling of water around the fire (see VaikhSmS 1.9, 1.14; prescribed for the beginning of an āghāra). This rite serves to tame and restrict the divinity to the fire, and also to mark the beginning and end of a sacrifice. In the handbooks pariṣecana is mostly referred to only by the first couple of words of the formula (*adīte ’numanyasva* or *adīte ’nvamaṃsthāḥ*; see VaikhSmS 1.14). While the yajamāna sits on the west, facing east, he sprinkles water on the four sides of the sacrificial fire, having recited before the sacrifice: *adīte ’numanyasva anumate ’numanyasva sarasvate ’numanyasva deva savitaḥ prasuva*,<sup>433</sup> “Aditi, give your permission, Anumati give your permission, Sarasvatī, give your permission, o god Savitr, allow [the sacrifice].” Once the sacrifice to the fire is over, these deities are again called upon: *adīte ’nvamaṃsthāḥ anumate ’nvamaṃsthāḥ sarasvate ’nvamaṃsthāḥ deva savitaḥ prasā-*

431 As I was told, there exist local differences regarding the performance of this rite: in Andhra Pradesh usually two persons represent Brahmā and Soma, while in Tamil Nadu two vessels (*kalaśa*) with a coconut are kept, which represent Brahmā and Soma.

432 During this procedure the performer keeps all items (ladle, kūrca, etc.) in his left hand and purifies it with prokṣaṇa water.

433 The water is first sprinkled on the southern side (from west to east), then on the western side (from south to north), then on the northern side (from west to east), and last on the eastern side of the sacrificial fire (from south to north).

*vīr*, “Aditi, you have given your permission, Anumati, you have given your permission, Sarasvatī, you have given your permission, Savitrī, you have allowed [the sacrifice].” Bundles of blades of darbha grass,<sup>434</sup> so-called *kūrca*, are used for the sprinkling of water in *pariṣecana*, for the invocation of the god, and for the transfer of worship materials to him. A *kūrca* is made up of differing numbers of blades of grass depending on the use intended. The *kūrca* is dipped in the vessel containing the water ritually purified by *puṇyāha*, and this water is then sprinkled with the *kūrca*. *Viṣṇubali* involves both, sacrifice (*homa*) and *pūjā*.<sup>435</sup> The invocation (*āvāhana*) of the god takes place at the beginning of a *pūjā*, ensuring the divine presence. This *pūjā* implies that in the course of *viṣṇubali* (and in the *Cidambaram* performance also to *cakra* and *śaṅkha*) several items (*upacāra*)<sup>436</sup> are offered to *Viṣṇu* in his twelve forms. These are a seat (*āsana*; in this case consisting of darbha-grass bundles), *puṣpa* (flowers), *gandha* (fragrant materials), *naivedya* (food), *dhūpa* (incense), and *tāmbulā* (betel nuts). Here too water is dripped on the offerings. It is poured together with the offering and thus seals that the offering is not any more the sacrificer’s (see Müller 1992: 46). Finally *dīpa* (light) a flammable piece of camphor is waved in front of the deity (*ārati*), honouring the deity (see Eck 1998). In the end, *namaskāra*, the salutation to the deity, is performed by the officiator. As these ritual elements hardly differed between the three stagings, one can speak of standardized transregional conventions.

### 4.3 The two ritual handbooks used during the performances

Many contemporary priests specialised in domestic rituals consult, or even read out fully, Sanskrit handbooks during the less frequently performed rituals such as the prenatal *saṃskāras*.<sup>437</sup> In this section, the texts and translations of the passages on *viṣṇubali* in the two ritual handbooks used in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are given, translated and compared with each other in order to isolate and analyse variations on the textual level. For Andhra Pradesh it is the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*, printed in Telugu script, and for Tamil Nadu it the *Pūrvaprayoga*, printed in Grantha script. The *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* was printed in the 1920s, the *Pūrvaprayoga* first appeared in 1979. The two works are the most recent com-

434 The botanical name of this type of grass is *poa cynosuroides*; on this see Müller 1992: 24, who refers to Gonda 1985.

435 See DVD -> Parts of the ritual -> main offerings -> *pūjā* for *viṣṇu*, and offering into the fire.

436 See Kane 1974b: 705ff.; also Michaels 1998b: 265ff.; for a detailed description of the performance of a *pūjā* with the “16 means of worship” see Tachikawa et al. 2001.

437 See B.K. Smith 1989: 138f.; see also Deshpande 1996.

plete presentations of the domestic rituals of the Vaikhānasas with detailed descriptions of diverse ritual elements in their prescribed order. For all their common features, there are differences especially in thoroughness, and in the ordering of ritual elements, which are discussed in section 4.3.4.

#### 4.3.1 *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*

The text *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* was composed by the Sanskrit paṇḍit Gudupūḍi Śrīnivāsācārya (he died ca. 1960) from Kakulapadu (Kṛṣṇā District, Andhra Pradesh), and to date has only been printed in Telugu script.<sup>438</sup> The *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* appears to have enjoyed great popularity from the beginning, as it has been reprinted many times.

The text is divided into three volumes. The first volume deals with some preparatory rituals, which precede many of the other rituals (see 2.2). The *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* here also describes different rites connected with setting up a fire-place and kindling the sacrificial fire (āghāra), and in addition the sacrifice in the end (antahoma), which closes the rituals. The nāndīmukha sacrifice, to include the ancestors in auspicious events (see 2.2), the related expiations, as well as añkurārpaṇa, the “offering of shoots,” contribute to the success of the ritual.<sup>439</sup>

The second volume of the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* describes the saṃskāras with their associated expiations, and the third volume contains an account of the rituals for the dead (antyeṣṭi), as well as daily performances such as the worship of the domestic cult image, dietary prescriptions, sacrifices for particular months, special rules for women during menstruation, etc.

The second volume of the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* is primarily of interest here. It opens with the rekindling (punarādhāna; SANukr 2, pp. 1–2) of the so-called aupāsana fire. This is a domestic fire which is first kindled in connection with the wedding rituals of the yajamāna. The kindling of this fire marks him out as the head of a household, with full rights to sacrifice. This fire should constantly be attended to.<sup>440</sup> If the daily sacrifices are interrupted, the fire must be “rekind-

438 However, one passage from the section on viṣṇubali is given in abbreviated form in the *Pūrvaprayoga*, and to that extent also preserved in Tamil Grantha script.

439 Puṇyāha: SANukr 1, pp. 13–27; āghāra: SANukr 1, pp. 28–77; antahoma: SANukr 1, pp. 78; nāndīmukha: SANukr 1, pp. 78–113; añkurārpaṇa: SANukr 1, pp. 114ff. In the first volume of the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* some statements are illustrated with quotations from Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita’s *Tāparyacintāmaṇi*, from Nṛsiṃha Vājapeyin’s *Sūtrabhāṣya* and from a work by Sundararāja.

440 In brief, the process of aupāsana is as follows: the man sits to the left of his wife and first sprinkles the fire with water (*pariṣecana*). He then puts a drop of clarified butter in



led.”<sup>441</sup> This is followed by an account of ritually seeking the assent of the assembled Brahmans for the performance of the rituals, and by the first sacrifice into the newly kindled fire.<sup>442</sup> The account of the actual *aupāsana* begins on page 6 of the second volume. It is to be offered into the domestic fire twice daily, morning and evening, after the ritual bath and after the evening rituals.<sup>443</sup> As there are today hardly any Brahmans who perform *aupāsana* in the prescribed manner daily, it must be re-established with the appropriate expiations every time before *saṃskāras* are performed. The *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* goes on to describe the expiations and then the main sacrifice for *ṛtusaṃgamana* (SAnukr 2, 8.16–13.8), followed by a short discourse on the prenatal *saṃskāras* (*garbhasaṃskāra*), which are here identified as *garbhādhāna*, *pūṃsavana*, *sīmanta* and *viṣṇubali*.<sup>444</sup> It is left open to the officiator to perform these *saṃskāras* together. If he chooses to do so, the rituals from *puṇyāha* up to the kindling of the fire have only to be performed once (SAnukr 13.15–17). Moreover, the statement is also to be found here that the performance of the five prenatal *saṃskāras* is valid for all the children of this wife (SAnukr 2, 13.23–24). At this point brief exceptional rules are given with reference to *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra* 6.3: in the absence or death of the child’s father, his father or brother, or a male relative of the pregnant woman, performs the *garbhasaṃskāras*. In these cases, the wording of the formal declaration varies according to whether the husband is dead or merely temporarily absent (SAnukr 2, 13.17–22). If a male child is born, without the *garbhasaṃskāras* having been performed, the expiations should if possible be performed individually, while the boy lies in the mother’s lap. If this is not pos-

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his wife’s hand, then a handful of rice grains. The wife returns this to the man again, who divides it into two parts (one part is the offering to Sūrya, the other to Prajāpati) and puts it into the fire. If the woman is menstruating, *aupāsana* is deferred for four days and only resumed on the fifth day, with the appropriate expiations. It seems to be the *gṛhya* continuation of the *śrauta* *agnihotra* (see Bodewitz 1976/2003: 194).

441 The “re-kindling” of the sacrificial fire in two of the three documented *viṣṇubali* rituals is shown on the DVD: > parts of the ritual > preparatory rites > vitalisation of the fire.

442 *Parīṣatprārthana*: SAnukr 2, pp. 2–3; *punarādhānahoma*: SAnukr 2, pp. 4–6.

443 For a summary of *sandhyāvandana* see Michaels 1998b: 261ff. and note 111.

444 The correct moment in time for the performance of these rituals is first stated. This is followed by the statement that these *saṃskāras*—i.e. expiations together with the main sacrifice—are to be offered into the *aupāsana* or in the *laukika* fire (the “worldly” fire, which is used for cooking), and that for all four *saṃskāras* the *nāndīmukha* ritual is to be performed on the day before (SAnukr 2, 13.9–13.14). *Ṛtusaṃgamana* is not included in this enumeration, as this *saṃskāra* takes place without *nāndīmukha* on the previous day (see 2.2.1).

sible, the expiations can also be performed together (SAnukr 2, 13.24–14.3).<sup>445</sup> For each of the saṃskāras described in what follows, two possibilities for the formal declaration (saṃkalpa, on this see 4.5.4) are given, the wording of which takes into account the circumstances, namely whether the garbhasaṃskāras are carried out together or individually. At the beginning of the ritual series the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* describes the officiating yajamāna's<sup>446</sup> request to the assembly of Brahmans for their blessing on the planned rituals. In the course of this ritual the performing priests receive the dakṣiṇā gift in return for their contribution to the success of the ritual and as compensation for the fact that with the gift they take on the ritual impurity of the officiator (SAnukr 2, 14.13–15.7).<sup>447</sup> Only now is the sacrificial fire established. In the saṃkalpa, all the rituals to be performed are mentioned (SAnukr 2, 15.8–12). According to the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* the sequence of prenatal rituals is garbhādhānaprāyaścitta, garbhādhāna, puṃsuvana-prāyaścitta, puṃsuvana, sīmantaprāyaścitta, sīmanta, viṣṇubaliprāyaścitta<sup>448</sup> and viṣṇubali.<sup>449</sup> The saṃskāras jātakarman, utthāna, nāmakaraṇa, varṣavardhana, annaprāśana, pravāsāgamana, piṇḍavardhana, caula, upanayana (with the appropriate atonement rituals), samāvartana, vivāha and niṣeka (see 2.2) are dealt with later in the second volume of the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*.<sup>450</sup>

### 4.3.2 Pūrvaprayoga

The *Pūrvaprayoga* is a text by Śrīnivāsa Paṭṭācāryarāḷ [Bhaṭṭācārya], published in Kumbhakonam (Tamil Nadu) in 1979 in Grantha Tamil and Tamil script. To-

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445 In all three performances documented this was the case: the prenatal saṃskāras (or some of them) were performed together, along with an atonement ritual for “not performing them at the prescribed time.” Two instances of these prāyaścittas are presented on the DVD (see “parts of the ritual” - > “atonement”).

446 In this section the father of the unborn child, who performs the ritual, is described throughout as the yajamāna or—in the subtitles of the DVD—as officiator.

447 Müller (1992: 41) also refers to the fact that the “fruit” of the ritual only after handing over the dakṣiṇā to the priest accrues to the yajamāna.

448 Regarding the content, it is here required that as expiation for a viṣṇubali ritual that is not performed, or performed too late, the six mantras of the vaiṣṇavasūkta and the viṣṇusūkta are recited four times each.

449 Garbhādhānaprāyaścitta: SAnukr 2, 15.13–16.16; garbhādhāna: SAnukr 2, 16.17–17.22; puṃsuvana-prāyaścitta: SAnukr 2, 18.1–22; puṃsuvana: SAnukr 2, 18.23–20.5; sīmantaprāyaścitta: SAnukr 2, 20.6–21.2; sīmanta: SAnukr 2, 21.3–22.6; viṣṇubaliprāyaścitta: SAnukr 2, 22.7–18; viṣṇubali: SAnukr 2, 22.19–27.12.

450 This second volume of the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* contains a few quotations from the partially preserved *Vaikhānasagrhapariśiṣṭasūtra* (see 1.4).

gether with another prayoga text, the *Vivāhaprayoga*, it describes the 18 saṃskāras of the Vaikhānasas.<sup>451</sup> In the *Pūrvaprayoga* the saṃskāras from niṣeka / ṛtusamgamana to pārayaṇavratibandha are given, which is the “adoption of the pārayaṇa vow” during upanayana. The *Vivāhaprayoga* describes all rituals connected with marriage and ends with brief instructions on the duties of a householder (gṛhasthadharma; VivāhaP, pp. 88f.). In the *Pūrvaprayoga* niṣeka is named as the first prenatal saṃskāra (see 2.2.1), after which ṛtusamgamana, garbhādhānaprāyaścitta, garbhādhāna, puṃsavana, sīmanta and viṣṇubali are described.<sup>452</sup> After this follow jātakarman, utthānaprāyaścitta, utthāna, nāmakaraṇaprāyaścitta, nāmakaraṇa, varṣavardhanaprāyaścitta, varṣavardhana, annaprāśanaprāyaścitta, annaprāśana, pravāsāgamana- and piṇḍavardhanaprāyaścitta, pravāsāgamana, piṇḍavardhana, cauḷaprāyaścitta, cauḷa and a general expiation, for all post-natal saṃskāras performed up to the time of upanayana (sāmānyaprāyaścitta), and upanayana with the appropriate vows.

### 4.3.3 Tabular comparison of the viṣṇubali sections

In what follows, the descriptions of viṣṇubali in the two prayoga texts will be compared with one another. In the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* viṣṇubali comes after the description of the expiation for viṣṇubali, in *Pūrvaprayoga* after the description of sīmanta. The division of the ritual into phases is modelled according to the division in the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra* and the other texts dealing with viṣṇubali given in 2.2.2–2.2.4.7, with some additional subdivision. Where the two texts contain parallel ritual sections they are compared with one another. In the left column the text and translation from the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* is given, in the right column the parallel passage from the *Pūrvaprayoga* together with its translation. For the sake of clarity the textual passages are put in a table. The Tamil passages in the *Pūrvaprayoga* are marked in curved brackets in the text and translation. Many of the rites<sup>453</sup> mentioned in both handbooks are only mentioned in this section, but are dealt with in section 4.4 in connection with the account of the practical performance of the rituals. The mantras and formulas mentioned for recitation in the texts are only translated when they are short invocations, sacrifici-

451 The *Pūrvaprayoga* refers to, and even on occasion quotes, the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*.

452 Ṛtusamgamana: PūrvaP, pp. 1ff.; ṛtusamgamana: PūrvaP, pp. 13ff.; garbhādhānaprāyaścitta: PūrvaP, pp. 25ff.; garbhādhāna: PūrvaP, pp. 28ff.; puṃsavana: PūrvaP, pp. 33ff.; sīmanta: PūrvaP, pp. 35f.; viṣṇubali: PūrvaP, pp. 36ff.

453 This included the “restraint of the breath” (*prāṇāyāma*), the “sprinkling (of the fire)” (*pariṣecana*), the ritual swallowing” (*ācamana*), the “formal declaration” (*saṃkalpa*) and “worship” (*arcana*).

al or worship formulas to be composed by the officiator himself. Where the extracts use mantras from the Vedas, they remain untranslated.

While the *viṣṇubali* section in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* ends by quoting a verse from the *Ānandasamhitā*,<sup>454</sup> in the *Pūrvaprayoga* an abbreviated citation from the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [praṇāma]—[pāyasapraśana] is found at the end of the *viṣṇubali* section, containing further details on the performance of *viṣṇubali*.<sup>455</sup>

<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
[saṃkalpa]	
SAnukr 2, 22.19–23.4 <i>viṣṇubaliḥ. ukhāvāsagandhapuṣpayuk-            praṇidhiṃ bhūṣaṇavastrataṇḍulān dara-            cakrasugavyapāyāsādyakhilam viṣṇuba-            lau samāharet. iti saṃbhārān saṃbhṛtya            prāṇān āyamyā deśakālau saṃkīrtya (śu-            bhatīthau) gotrām nāmnīm enām mama            dharmapatnīm garbhavaiṣṇaveṣṭyā viṣṇu-            balikarmaṇā saṃskariṣyāmi (apa).</i>	PūrvaP 36.9–14 <i>viṣṇubaliprayogaḥ. prāṇān āyamyā ... śu-            bhatīthau / nakṣatre rāśau jātām ... nām-            nīm mama dharmapatnīm garbhasthaśī-            śoḥ rakṣaṇārthaṃ garbhasthacakraṅka-            nasiddhyarthaṃ garbhavaiṣṇavasid-            dhyarthaṃ viṣṇubalikarmaṇā saṃskariṣ-            yāmi. apa.</i>
Viṣṇubali: For <i>viṣṇubali</i> he should bring together the <i>praṇidhi</i> pot with mouth-scent, incense and flowers, [and] ornaments, clothes, rice grains, [and] conch-shell, disk, good cow-products, milk porridge etc. all this. After having brought together all these materials, he controls his breath, announces the place and time,	The performance of <i>viṣṇubali</i> . After having controlled the breath ... on an auspicious lunar day [he announces]: “Through the <i>viṣṇubali</i> ritual I perform the <i>saṃskāra</i> on my rightfully wedded wife, born on [so and so] lunar mansion [and] in [so and so] sign of the zodiac, in order to protect the child in the womb, [and] in order

454 SAnukr 2, 27.11–12: *tatsuto bhāgyavān dhanyo garbhavaiṣṇavasamjñikāḥ / aprākṛto mahātmāsau garbhacakraṇa lāṃchitah.*

455 PūrvaP 39.4–5: *śrīvaikhānasasūtrānukramaṇikā* {*viḷim mātiri kānapṭakīratu*}, “It is viewed like [the mantra / the syllable] *viḷim*.” (?). PūrvaP 39.6–25: *prāṇān āyamyā ... śubhatīthau asyāḥ gotrāyāḥ nāmnīyāḥ. mama dharmapatnyāḥ garbhasthaśīśoḥ garbhavaiṣṇavatvasiddhyarthaṃ imaṃ garbhaṃ garbhacakraḥ karmaṇā saṃskariṣye* [= SAnukr 2, 25.23–26]. *agnīm pariṣicya. “bhūm ānanto ’gre” “vandyo na eṣa” iti dvau cakramantrau. “tan mā yaśo ’gre” “asmād upāsyē” dvau saṃkhamantrau. hutvā. ante tattat gāyatrīyā aṣṭottaraśata ājyāhutir hutvā. [= (roughly) SAnukr 2, 26.1–7]. “sudarśanāya vidmahe mahājvālāya dhūmahi tan naś cakrah pracodayāt svāhā.” “sudarśanāyedaṃ.” “vārdhijātāya vidmahe mahāśaṃkhāya dhūmahi tan naḥ pāñcajanyaḥ pracodayāt svāhā.” “saṃkhāyedaṃ.” [= (roughly) SAnukr 2, 26.7–15] sudarśanapāñcajanyaḥ grhītvā. tattan mantrau japitvā. tadagnau pratāpya pāyasaśeṣa ’mkanam kuryāt. [SAnukr 2, 26.15–18]. tataḥ patnyā saha pradakṣiṇa pūrvakaṃ devasya dakṣiṇataḥ uttarābhimukhas tiṣṭhan ṛgyajussāmātharvabhir mantraiḥ vaiṣṇavair devais saṃstūya. [= SAnukr 2, 26.19–21] keśavādīdvādaśanāmabhiḥ praṇamet. śrī bhagavantam anusmaran tam pāyasaśeṣam patnīm praśayet. [= (roughly) SAnukr 2, 27.3–4 and 27.9–10].*

<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
( [and] the auspicious lunar day) [and recites]: “Through the viṣṇubali ritual, [which is] the sacrifice for the Viṣṇu follower in [my wife’s] womb, I perform the saṃskāra on this rightfully wedded wife of mine, having [so and so] name and belonging to [so and so] gotra.” [He then touches] (water).	to attain the marking of the [child] in the womb with the disk, [and] in order to make the foetus a Viṣṇu-follower [already] in the womb.” [He then touches] (water).
[purusāvāhana]	
SANukr 2, 23.5–9 <i>atha viṣṇubaliḥ uttarapraṇidhāv agnyādi-devān oṃ bhūḥ puruṣam oṃ bhuvah puruṣam oṃ suvah puruṣam oṃ bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣam cety āvāhya // oṃ bhūḥ puruṣam āvāhayāmi / oṃ bhuvah puruṣam āvāhayāmi / oṃ suvah puruṣam āvāhayāmi / oṃ bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣam āvāhayāmi //</i>	PūrvaP 36.14–17 <i>uttarapraṇidhā / vaṭapuram praṇidhiyil oṃ bhūḥ puruṣam āvāhayāmi / oṃ bhuvah puruṣa ... mi / oṃ suvah puruṣa .. mi / oṃ bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣa ... mi /</i>
Now (begins) viṣṇubali. After having invoked the gods beginning with Agni in the praṇidhi pot, placed north [of the fire] [with the formulas]: <i>oṃ bhūḥ puruṣam, oṃ bhuvah puruṣam, oṃ suvah puruṣam, oṃ bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣam</i> . [The mantras are]: “ <i>Oṃ bhūḥ</i> I invoke Puruṣa, <i>oṃ bhuvah</i> I invoke Puruṣa, <i>oṃ suvah</i> I invoke Puruṣa, <i>oṃ bhūr bhuvah suvah</i> I invoke Puruṣa.”	In the praṇidhi pot, placed north [of the fire] = in the praṇidhi [vessel] kept in the north. “ <i>Oṃ bhūḥ</i> I invoke Puruṣa, <i>oṃ bhuvah</i> I ... Puruṣa, <i>oṃ suvah</i> I ... Puruṣa, <i>oṃ bhūr bhuvah suvah</i> I ... Puruṣa.”
[puruṣārcana]	
	PūrvaP 36.17–18 <i>āsanādisamastopacārān samarpayāmi. kadalīm alam nivedayāmi.</i>
	I offer the seat etc., all the means of worship. I offer kadalīm alam [mantras](?)
[nirvāpaṇa]	
SANukr 2, 23.9–12 <i>tathaiva nirvāpayet // oṃ bhūḥ puruṣāya juṣṭam nirvāpāmi / oṃ bhuvah puruṣāya juṣṭam nirvāpāmi / oṃ suvah puruṣāya juṣṭam nirvāpāmi / oṃ bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣāya juṣṭam nirvāpāmi //</i>	PūrvaP 36.18–22 <i>ājyanirvāpaṇam / oṃ bhūḥ puruṣāya juṣṭan nirvāpāmi / oṃ bhuvah puruṣāya juṣṭa ... mi / oṃ suvah puruṣāya juṣṭa ... mi / oṃ bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣāya juṣṭa ... mi /</i>
In the same manner he should bestow [the clarified butter by reciting]: “ <i>Oṃ bhūḥ</i> I bestow what is agreeable to Puruṣa, <i>oṃ</i>	Bestowing the clarified butter [he recites]: “ <i>Oṃ bhūḥ</i> I bestow what is agreeable to Puruṣa, <i>oṃ bhuvah</i> I ... what is ag-

<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
<i>bhuvah</i> I bestow what is agreeable to Puruṣa, <i>om suvah</i> I bestow what is agreeable to Puruṣa, <i>om bhūr bhuvah suvah</i> I bestow what is agreeable to Puruṣa.”	agreeable to Puruṣa, <i>om suvah</i> I ... what is agreeable to Puruṣa, <i>om bhūr bhuvah suvah</i> I ... what is agreeable to Puruṣa.”
[āghāra]	
SAnukr 2, 23.12–15 <i>tathaiva hutvā / adite 'numanyasva * om bhūh puruṣāya svāhā / om bhuvah puruṣāya svāhā / om suvah puruṣāya svāhā / om bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣāya svāhā // adite 'nvamamsthāh * āghāraṃ hutvā /</i>	Pūrvap 36.22–37.4 <i>om bhūh puruṣāya svāhā / om bhūh puruṣāyedaṃ / om bhuvah puruṣāya svāhā / om bhuvah puruṣāyedaṃ / om suvah puruṣāya svāhā / om suvah puruṣāyedaṃ / om bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣāya svāhā / om bhūr bhuvah suvah puruṣāyedaṃ /</i>
He offers in the same manner into the fire: “Aditi, give your permission” *, “ <i>Om bhūh</i> , to Puruṣa, hail! <i>Om bhuvah</i> , to Puruṣa, hail! <i>Om suvah</i> , to Puruṣa, hail! <i>Om bhūr bhuvah suvah</i> , to Puruṣa, hail!” “Aditi, you have given your permission.” * After having offered clarified butter into the fire,	“ <i>Om bhūh</i> to Puruṣa, hail! <i>Om bhūh</i> this is for Puruṣa. <i>Om bhuvah</i> to Puruṣa, hail! <i>Om bhuvah</i> this is for Puruṣa. <i>Om suvah</i> to Puruṣa, hail! <i>Om suvah</i> this is for Puruṣa. <i>Om bhūr bhuvah suvah</i> to Puruṣa, hail! <i>Om bhūr bhuvah suvah</i> this is for Puruṣa.”
[preparation of the sthaṇḍila]	
SAnukr 2, 23.15–19 <i>agneḥ pūrvasyāṃ navavastrayuktaṃ taṇḍulāiḥ caturaśraṃ hastamātraṃ sthaṇḍilam kṛtvottarābhimukhaḥ gandhapuṣpākṣatayutair jalaiḥ praṇidhim āpūrya tat-praṇidhijale bhagavantam dhyātvā tat-sthaṇḍile dvādaśakūrcān pavitrāṇi vā prāg agrān udagantaṃ nidhāya</i>	Pūrvap 37.4–6 <i>agneḥ pūrvasyāṃ vrīhibhis taṇḍulair vā hastamātraṃ kṛte sthaṇḍile dvādaśakūrcān prāgagraṃ udagantaṃ āstīrya</i>
After having prepared a platform in the east of the fire, quadrangular and cubit-sized, with taṇḍula rice grains covered with a new cloth, he faces north and fills the praṇidhi pot with water mixed with scent, flowers and unbroken rice grains. After having meditated upon the glorious one in the water in that praṇidhi pot, he places twelve kūrca bundles or pavitras on that platform with their tips pointing towards east, ending [the row] in the north,	After having spread the twelve kūrca bundles, with their tips pointing towards east, ending [the row] in the north, on the cubit-sized platform prepared of vrīhi or taṇḍula rice grains in the east of the ritual fire,
[dvādaśanāmāvāhana]	
SAnukr 2, 23.19–24.1 <i>teṣu praṇidhijalaṃ kūrcena srāvayan</i>	Pūrvap 37.6–8 <i>teṣu dakṣiṇādi teṅku mutal keśavam āvā-</i>

<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
<p><i>pratyāñmukhaṃ keśavādidvādaśanāma- bhir devaṃ viṣṇuṃ āvāhya // oṃ keśavam āvāhayāmi / oṃ nārāyaṇam āvāhayāmi / oṃ mādhavam āvāhayāmi / oṃ govindam āvāhayāmi / oṃ viṣṇuṃ āvāhayāmi / oṃ madhusūdanam āvāhayāmi / oṃ trivikra- mam āvāhayāmi / oṃ vāmanam āvāhayā- mi / oṃ śrīdharam āvāhayāmi / oṃ hr̥ṣī- keśam āvāhayāmi / oṃ padmanābham ā- vāhayāmi / oṃ dāmodaram āvāhayāmi //</i></p>	<p><i>hayāmi ... dāmodaram āvāhayāmi /</i></p>
<p>Dripping on these [kūrcas] the water from the prañidhi-pot with a kūrcā bundle, he faces east and invokes the god Viṣṇu with his twelve names, beginning with Keśava: “<i>Oṃ</i> I invoke Keśava, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Nārāyaṇa, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Mādhava, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Govinda, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Viṣṇu, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Madhusūdana, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Trivikrama, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Vāmana, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Śrīdhara, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Hr̥ṣīkeśa, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Padmanābha, <i>oṃ</i> I invoke Dāmodara.”</p>	<p>Beginning in [the seats’] south [=] from the south [he invokes]: “I invoke Keśava ... I invoke Dāmodara.”</p>
[instructions for the domestic image]	
	<p>PūrvaP 37.8–10 <i>grahe arcanābimbam asti cet agneḥ pūrvasyāṃ pratyāñmukhaṃ sthāpayitvā / kraha arātaṇa perumāḷai akṇiyiṅ kilāṅtapuṛam eḷḷappaṇṇavum</i></p>
	<p>If there is an idol of the god in the house, then he should place it in the east of the fire, facing west = one may install Perumāḷ worshipped in the house on the eastern side of the fire.</p>
[snapana]	
<p>SAnuKr 2, 24.1–11 <i>keśavādidvādaśamūrtibhyas tattannāma- bhiḥ pṛthakpṛthakkrameṇāsanapādyāca- manādāni datvā // keśavāya namaḥ āsa- naṃ samarpayāmi / ... dāmodarāya na- maḥ āsanaṃ samarpayāmi // keśavāya namaḥ pādyaṃ samarpayāmi ... dāmoda- rāya namaḥ pādyaṃ samarpayāmi / keśa- vāya namaḥ ācamaṇaṃ samarpayāmi / ... dāmodarāya namaḥ ācamaṇaṃ samarpa-</i></p>	<p>PūrvaP 37.11–13 <i>keśavādidvādaśamūrtibhyaḥ tattannāma- bhiḥ / pṛthakpṛthakkramaṇa āsanapādyā- camaṇāni datvā / āpo hiraṇya pavamā- naiḥ saṃsnāpya /</i></p>

<i>Sūtrānukramanikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
<p><i>yāmi // āpo hiraṇya pavamānais saṃsnāpya // – āpo hi śṭhā mayobhuvah – janayathā ca naḥ // hiraṇyavarṇāḥ – brahmavarcanāya tvā // pavamānas suvarjanaḥ – jātavedāmorjayantyā punātu // keśavāya namaḥ snānaṃ samarpayāmi / – dāmodarāya namaḥ snānaṃ samarpayāmi //</i></p>	
<p>After having offered seat, water for washing the feet, and for rinsing the mouth etc. to the twelve forms [of Viṣṇu] beginning with Keśava, with the respective names, one after the other, in a row: “Salutations to Keśava, I offer a seat ... Salutations to Dāmodara, I offer a seat, Salutations to Keśava, I offer water for washing the feet ... Salutations to Dāmodara, I offer water for washing the feet. Salutations to Keśava, I offer water for rinsing the mouth ... Salutations to Dāmodara, I offer water for rinsing the mouth.” After having bathed [the twelve forms] with the [mantras beginning with] <i>āpo ... hiraṇya ... pavamānas ...</i> [These are the passages from] <i>āpo hi śṭhā mayobhuvah</i> [until] <i>janayathā ca naḥ</i>, [from] <i>hiraṇyavarṇāḥ</i> [until] <i>brahmavarcanāya tvā</i>, [and from] <i>pavamānas suvarjanaḥ</i> [until] <i>jātavedāmorjayantyā punātu</i>. [He then recites]: “Salutations to Keśava, I offer water for bathing ... Salutations to Dāmodara, I offer water for bathing.”</p>	<p>After having offered a seat, water for washing the feet, and water for rinsing the mouth, with [mantras] containing the twelve names, to each of the twelve forms [of Viṣṇu], which begin with Keśava, he gives bath [to them while reciting the mantras beginning with] <i>āpo ... hiraṇya ...</i> [and] <i>pavamānaḥ ...</i></p>
[arcana]	
<p>SA nukr 2, 24.11–13 <i>evaṃ plotavastrottariyābharaṇayajñopavītācamanapuṣpagandhadhūpadīpārghyācamaniḥ pratyekam arcayati.</i></p>	<p>PūrvaP 37.13–15 <i>evaṃ plotavastrottariyābharaṇayajñopavītācamanapuṣpagandhadhūpadīpārghyā-camaniḥ pratyekam arcayati /</i></p>
<p>In this way he worships each of the [twelve forms] with cloth, upper garment, jewellery, sacred thread, water for rinsing the mouth, flowers, scent, incense, light, arghya water and water for rinsing the mouth.</p>	<p>In this way he worships each [of the twelve forms] with cloth, upper garment, jewellery, sacred thread, water for rinsing the mouth, flowers, scent, incense, light, water for arghya and water for rinsing the mouth.</p>



Sūtrānukramāṇikā	Pūrvaprayoga
[viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta]	
<p>SAAnukr 2, 24.13–25.8  <i>agnim pariṣicya // adīte 'numanyasva — prasuva // ato devādyair viṣṇor nu kā-dyair ājyena juhūyāt // ato devā avantu no yato viṣṇur vicakrame / pṛthivyās sap-tadhāmabhis svāhā // idaṃ viṣṇur vica-krame tredhā nidadhe padam / sa mū-ḍham asya pāṃsure svāhā // trīṇi padā vicakrame viṣṇur gopā ādābhyah tato dharmāṇi dhārayanth svāhā // viṣṇoḥ karmāṇi paśyata yato vratāni paspaṣe in-drasya yubhyas sakhā svāhā // tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padaṃ sadā paśyanti sūrayah / divīva cakṣur ātataṃ svāhā // tadviprā so vipān yavo jāgrvāmsas samindhate / vi-ṣṇor yat paramaṃ padaṃ svāhā // viṣṇor nu kaṃ vīryāṇi pravocaṃ yah pāṛthivāni nūmame rajāṃsi yo askabhāyaduttaram sadhasthaṃ vicakramānas tredhorugāyo viṣṇor arātam asi viṣṇoḥ pṛṣṭham asi viṣ-ṇoś japtre stho viṣṇos syūr asi viṣṇor dhruvam asi vaiṣṇavam asi viṣṇave tvā svāhā // tad asya priyam abhipātho aśyā-nnaro yatra devayavo madanti / urukra-masya sa hi bandhur itthā viṣṇoḥ pade parame madhya uthsas svāhā // pra tad viṣṇus stavate vīryāya mṛgo na bhīmaḥ kucaro giriṣṭhāḥ. yasyoruṣu triṣu vikra-maneyv adhikṣiyantī bhuvanāni viśvā svā-hā // paro mātrayā tanuvāvṛdhāna na te mahitvam anvaśnuvanti / ubhe te vidma-rajasi pṛthivyā viṣṇo devatvaṃ parama-sya vidhse svāhā // vicakrame pṛthivīm eṣa etām kṣetrāya viṣṇur manuṣe daśa-syan. dhṛvāso asya kīrayo janāsa urukṣi-tiṃ sujanimā cakāra svāhā // trir devaḥ pṛthivīm eṣa etām vicakrame śatarcasam mahitvā / pra viṣṇur astu tava sastsavī yāntv eṣam hy asya sthavirusya nāma svāhā // adīte 'nvamaṃsthāḥ ... deva sa-vītaḥ prāsāvīḥ //</i></p>	<p>PūrvaP 37.16–38.1  <i>atodevādiviṣṇ-n-kādyaiḥ ājyenā dvāda-śāhutīr hutvā / agnim pariṣicya / ato devā / viṣṇor nu kaṃ ... viṣṇave tvā svāhā / viṣṇava idaṃ / tad asya ... utsa svāhā / viṣṇava idaṃ / pra tad viṣṇu ... viṣvā svā-hā / viṣṇava idaṃ / paro mātrayā ... vitse svāhā / viṣṇava idaṃ / vicakrame ... ca-kāra svāhā / viṣṇava idaṃ / trir devaḥ ... nāma svāhā / viṣṇava idaṃ /</i></p>
<p>After having sprinkled around the fire [while reciting:] “Aditi, give your con-</p>	<p>After having offered the twelve oblations of clarified butter into the fire [while re-</p>

<i>Sūtrānukramanikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
<p>sent” [until] “... stimulate,” he should offer clarified butter into the fire [reciting the mantras] beginning with <i>ato devā</i> [and with] <i>viṣṇor nu kā</i>. [He recites:] <i>ato devā avantu no yato viṣṇur vicakrame / pṛthivyās saptadhāmabhis svāhā // idaṃ viṣṇur vicakrame tredhā nidadhe padam / sa mūḍham asya pāmsure svāhā // trīṇi padā vicakrame viṣṇur gopā ādābhyaḥ tato dharmāni dhārayanth svāhā // viṣṇoḥ karmāni paśyata yato vratāni paspaṣe indrasya yubhyas sakhā svāhā // tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padaṃ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ / divīva cakṣur ātataṃ svāhā // tadviprā so vipan yavo jāgrvāmsas samindhate / viṣṇor yat paramaṃ padaṃ svāhā // viṣṇor nu kaṃ vīryāṇi pravocaṃ yaḥ pāṛthivāni nūname rajāmsi yo askabhāyaduttaraṃ sadhasthaṃ vicakramānas tredhorugāyo viṣṇor arāṭam asi viṣṇoḥ pṛṣṭham asi viṣṇoś japtre stho viṣṇos syūr asi viṣṇor dhruvam asi vaiṣṇavam asi viṣṇave tvā svāhā // tad asya priyam abhipātho aśyānnaro yatra devayavo madanti / urukramasya sa hi bandhur ithā viṣṇoḥ pade parame madhya uthsas svāhā // pra tad viṣṇus stavate vīryāya mṛgo na bhūmaḥ kucaro giriṣṭhāḥ. Yasyoruṣu triṣu vikramaṇeṣv adhikṣiyantī bhuvanāni viśvā svāhā // paro mātrayā tanuvāvrđhāna na te mahitvam anvaśṇuvanti / ubhe te vidmarajasī pṛthivyā viṣṇo devatvaṃ paramasya vidhse svāhā // vicakrame pṛthivīm eṣa etāṃ kṣetrāya viṣṇur manuṣe daśāsyan. dhṛvāso asya kīrayo janāsa urukṣitīm sujanimā cakāra svāhā // trir devaḥ pṛthivīm eṣa etāṃ vicakrame śatarcasam mahitvā / pra viṣṇur astu tava sastsavī yāntv eṣaṃ hy asya sthavidrasya nāma svāhā.” [Then he sprinkles water around the fire reciting:] “Aditi, you gave your consent” [until] “god Savitr you stimulated [the sacrifice].”</i></p>	<p>citing the <i>mantras</i> beginning with] <i>ato deva</i> [and] <i>viṣṇor nu kaṃ</i> he sprinkles water around the fire. [He recites] <i>ato devā</i> [and] <i>viṣṇor nu kaṃ</i> [until] <i>viṣṇave tvā</i> hail! This is for Viṣṇu! [He recites from] <i>tad asya</i> [until] <i>utsa</i> hail! This is for Viṣṇu! [He recites from] <i>pra tad viṣṇu</i> [until] <i>viṣva</i> hail! This is for Viṣṇu! [He recites from] <i>paro matrayā</i> [until] <i>vitse</i> hail! This is for Viṣṇu! [He recites from] <i>vicakrame</i> [until] <i>cakāra</i> hail! This is for Viṣṇu! [He recites from] <i>trir devaḥ</i> [until] <i>nāma</i> hail! This is for Viṣṇu!”</p>

<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
[pāyasānivedana]	
<p>SAnukr 2, 25.9–12  <i>pāyasam ājyasaṃyuktaṃ keśavādidvāda-  śānāmabhiḥ pratyekaṃ deveśāya nivedya  // keśavāya namaḥ ājyasaṃyuktapāyasam  nivedayāmi ... dāmodarāya namaḥ ājya-  saṃyuktapāyasam nivedayāmi // tataḥ  pānīyācamaṇamukhāvāsān pratyekaṃ  dadyāt //</i></p>	<p>PūrvaP 38.1–3  <i>pāyasam ājyasaṃyuktaṃ haviḥ devaṃ ni-  vedya / perumāḷukkum, kecavāti perumāḷ-  ukkum. pāyasam annaṃ nivetanaṃ paṇṇi.</i></p>
<p>After having offered the milk porridge mixed with clarified butter to each god with [mantras mentioning] the twelve names, beginning with Keśava: “Salutations to Keśava, I offer milk porridge mixed with clarified butter ... Salutations to Dāmodara, I offer milk porridge mixed with clarified butter.” Then he should give water for drinking, water for rinsing the mouth, and mouth perfume to each of them.</p>	<p>After having offered the oblation of milk porridge mixed with clarified butter to the god = and one may offer to Perumāḷ and to Kecavāti Perumāḷ milk porridge and food (rice). Milk porridge is the food = the food is offered as nivedana [to the god].</p>
[pāyasahoma]	
<p>SAnukr 2, 25.12–22  <i>agnim pariṣicya // adite ’numanyasva *  (keśavādi)dvādaśānāmabhir ato devā-  dyair viṣṇor nu kādyair ājyamiśraṃ (pr-  thakpātre) pāyasam aṅguṣṭhānāmikāma-  dhyamair akṣamātram avadāya juhuyāt //</i>  <i>oṃ keśavāya svāhā / oṃ nārāyaṇāya svā-  hā / oṃ mādhavāya svāhā / oṃ govindā-  ya svāhā / oṃ viṣṇave svāhā / oṃ madhu-  sūdhanāya svāhā / oṃ trivikramāya svā-  hā / oṃ vāmanāya svāhā / oṃ śrīdharāya  svāhā / oṃ hr̥ṣīkeśāya svāhā / oṃ padma-  nābhāya svāhā / oṃ dāmodarāya svāhā /  ato devāḥ (6) viṣṇor nu kaṃ (6) adite ’va-  maṃsthāḥ * (atra gṛhārcābimbasya san-  nidhāpanam ārādhanādi ca kecid ācār-  yās samācaḥṣate).</i></p>	<p>PūrvaP 38.3–7  <i>homam ceyyavum. dvādaśānāmabhiḥ ato  devādi viṣṇor nu kādyaiḥ ājyamiśraṃ pā-  yasam annaṃ juhuyāt / keśavāya svāhā /  keśavāyedaṃ / ... dāmodarāyedaṃ / ato  devā / viṣṇor nu kaṃ / adite ’nvamaṃ-  sthāḥ /</i></p>
<p>After having sprinkled water around the fire [reciting:] “Aditi give your consent!” * He should offer milk porridge mixed with clarified butter into the fire, [reciting the mantras] containing the twelve names, (beginning with Keśava), [and the</p>	<p>And one may perform the homa. He should offer the food, the milk porridge mixed with clarified butter, [while reciting the mantras] with the twelve names, [and the mantras] beginning with <i>ato deva</i> [and] <i>viṣṇor nu kaṃ</i>. [He should re-</p>

<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
<p>twelve mantras] beginning with <i>ato devā</i> and <i>viṣṇor nu kaṃ</i> [and he should at the same time] place an amount equal to akṣa seed with thumb, ring and middle fingers (in a separate vessel): “<i>Oṃ</i> this is for Keśava, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Nārāyaṇa, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Mādhava, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Govinda, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Viṣṇu, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Madhusūdana, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Trivikrama, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Vāmana, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Śrīdhara, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Hṛṣīkeśa, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Padmanābha, hail! <i>Oṃ</i> this is for Dāmodara, hail! ([He recites the] six [mantras beginning with]) <i>ato devāḥ</i> ([and the] six [mantras beginning with]) <i>viṣṇor nu kaṃ</i>. [He sprinkles water around the fire reciting:] “Aditi, you gave your consent” * (Here some ācāryas teach the bringing and the worship of the idol kept in the house).</p>	<p>cite:] “To Keśava, hail! This is for Keśava ... This is for Dāmodara!” [And he should recite the mantras beginning with] <i>ato deva</i> [and] <i>viṣṇor nu kaṃ</i> [and finish with] “Aditi, you gave your consent.”</p>
[saṃkalpa 2]	
<p>SAnukr 2, 25.23–26  <i>tato devasya purata asīnaḥ yajamānaḥ ātmānaṃ devarūpaṃ smṛtvā // prāṇān āyama deśakālau saṃkṛtya (śubhatithau) asyā gotrāyāḥ nāmnyāḥ mama dharmapatnyāḥ garbhasthaśiṣoḥ garbhavaiṣṇavatvasiddhyarthaṃ imaṃ garbhaṃ garbhacakra karmaṇā saṃskariṣyāmi (apa).</i></p>	
<p>Then the officiator sits in front of the god and meditates on his self as having the form of the god. He restrains his breath and then announces the place and time [and says] (on the auspicious lunar day): “In order to attain the characteristics of a Vaiṣṇava already in the womb for the child in the womb of my rightfully wedded wife, who has [such and such] name, and who is from [such and such] gotra, I perform through the ritual of [imprinting] the disk [already] in the womb the saṃskāra for this embryo.” [He touches] (water).</p>	

<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
[cakraśaṅkhapūjā]	
<p>SAnukr 2, 26.1–4  <i>śaṅkhacakrau arcāsannidhau vidhivat  pratiṣṭhāpya sthāpitau cet tūṣṇīm ādāya /  (akṛtapratiṣṭhāsaṃskārau ced vidhivat  pratiṣṭhāpya) pūrvoktasthaṅḍile nidhāya  tattannāmanantrair āsanapādyācamana-  puṣpagandhadhūpadīpārghyahaviḥpānī-  yācamanamukhavāsāntam abhyarçya</i></p>	
<p>After installing in the appropriate manner the conch and disk near the idol, and in case they have already been installed, taking them quietly (if the saṃskāra of installing has not been performed. He should install them in the appropriate manner), place them on the above-mentioned platform and worship them with [the mantras containing] the respective names; [he should offer them the following means of worship:] a seat, water for washing feet, water for rinsing the mouth, flowers, scent, incense, light, water for arghya, oblations, water for drinking, water for rinsing the mouth, and mouth perfume as last item.</p>	
[cakraśaṅkhaḥoma]	
<p>SAnukr 2, 26.4–16  <i>agniṃ pariṣicya adīte 'numanyasva *  bhūm ānanto 'gre vandyo na eṣa iti dvau  cakramantrau tan mā yaśo 'gre asmād  upāsyē ti dvau śaṅkhamantrau hutvānte  tattadgāyatryāṣṭottaraśatājyāhutīr hutvā /  bhūm ānanto 'gre bhuvanasya goptā vā-  mabhya īsanty amarāmarāś ca / kurvate  'gnau suhutaṅ ghr̥tena svāhā // vandyo  na eṣa vasuṣu nidadyāt tridhā tridhām  ābibhryād adīnānt svāhā // sudarśanāya  vidmahe mahājvālāya dhīmahi tan naś  cakrah pracodayāt svāhā // tan mā yaśo  'gre tāvate vasūnām yajāmahe syād bha-  vataḥ prasannaḥ / tadā vadaty uttamam  jayante svāhā // asmād upāsyosyehi hi /  vṛddhiśarma bhavato darāt svāhā // vā-  rdhijātāya vidmahe mahāśaṅkhāya dhī-</i></p>	

<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
<p><i>mahi tan naḥ pāñcajanyaḥ pracodayāt svāhā // adīte 'nvamamsthāh *</i></p> <p>After having sprinkled water around the fire [reciting]: “Adīti, give your consent!”</p> <p>* At the end of offering into the fire [while reciting] the two cakra mantras <i>bhūm ānanto 'gre</i> [and] <i>vandyo na eṣa</i> [and then] the two śaṅkha mantras <i>tan mā yaśo 'gre</i> [and] <i>asmād upāśya</i>, he should offer 108 clarified butter offerings into the fire while reciting the respective [cakra and śaṅkha] gāyatrī mantras. [The cakra mantras are]: <i>bhūm ānanto 'gre bhuvanasya goptā vāmabhya īśanty amarāmārāś ca. Kurvate 'gnau suhutaṅ ghr̥tena svāhā</i> [and] <i>vandyo na eṣa vasuṣu nidadhyaṭ tridhā tridhām ābibhryād adīnānth svāhā</i>. [The cakra gāyatrī mantra is:] <i>sudarśanāya vidmahe mahājvālāya dhīmahi tan naś cakraḥ pracodayāt svāhā</i>. [The two śaṅkha mantras are:] <i>tan mā yaśo 'gre tāvate vasūnām yajāmahe syād bhavataḥ prasannaḥ. tadā vadaty uttamaṃ jayante svāhā</i> [and] <i>asmād upāśyosyehi hi. vṛddhiśarma bhavato darāt svāhā</i> [The śaṅkha gāyatrī mantra is:] <i>vārdhijātāya vidmahe mahāśaṅkhāya dhīmahi tan naḥ pāñcajanyaḥ pracodayāt svāhā</i>. [The he recites]: “Adīti, you have given your consent.” *</p>	
[cakraśaṅkhapratāpana]	
<p>SAnukr 2, 26.16–19</p> <p><i>sudarśanapāñcajanyaḥ ghr̥tvā tattanmantrau japitvā tadagnau pratāpya pāyasaśeṣe 'ṃkanaṃ kuryāt // bhūm ānanto 'gre ... ghr̥tena // vandyo na eṣa vasuṣu — bibhryād adīnān // tan mā yaśo 'gre ... jayante // asmād upāśyo ... bhavato darāt //</i></p>	
<p>After taking the disk and the conch [and] uttering the respective mantras, and after he heated them in this fire, he should mark the remainder of the milk porridge. [He recites:] <i>bhūm ānanto 'gre</i> [until] <i>ghr̥tena</i> [and] <i>vandyo na eṣa vasuṣu</i> [un-</p>	

<i>Sūtrānukramanikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
<p>til] bibhṛyād adīnān, [and] tan mā yaśo 'gre [until] jayante [and] asmād upāsyo [until] bhavato darāt.</p>	
[vedamantra]	
<p>SAAnukr 2, 26.19–27.3  <i>tataḥ patnyā saha pradakṣiṇapūrvakaṃ devasya dakṣiṇata uttarābhimukhas ti-ṣṭhan ṛgyajussāmātharvabhir mantrair vaiṣṇavair devaṃ saṃstūya // agnim īle purohitaṃ yajñasya devam ṛvijam / hotāraṃ ratnadhātamaṃ // iṣe tvo 'rje tvā vāyava sthopyāyava stha devo vas savitā prārpayatu śreṣṭhatamāya karmaṇa āpyāyadhvam aghniyā devabhāgam ūrjasvatīḥ payasvatīḥ prajāpatīr anamīva aya-kṣamās mā va stena īsata māghaśaṃso rudrasya hetīḥ pari vo vṛnaktu dhruvā asmin gopatau syāta bahvīr yajamānasya paśūn pāhi // agna ā yāhi vītaye grṇāno havyadātaye / ni hotā satsi barhiṣi // śaṃ no devīr abhiṣṭaya āpo bhavantu pītaye / śaṃ yor abhisravantu naḥ // ato devāḥ (6) viṣṇor nu kaṃ (6) sahasraśrīṣā puruṣaḥ ... santi devāḥ //</i></p>	<p>PūrvaP 38.7–9  <i>ṛgyajussāmātharvabhir mantraiḥ vaiṣṇavais sahasraśrīṣādyaiḥ devaṃ saṃstūya</i></p>
<p>Then, after circumambulating [the fire] with his wife, while he is standing south of the god facing northwards, the god is praised with vaiṣṇava mantras from Ṛg-, Yajur-, Sāma- and Atharvaveda: <i>agnim īle purohitaṃ yajñasya devam ṛvijam, hotāraṃ ratnadhātamaṃ. iṣe tvo 'rje tvā vāyava sthopyāyava stha devo vas savitā prārpayatu śreṣṭhatamāya karmaṇa āpyāyadhvam aghniyā devabhāgam ūrjasvatīḥ payasvatīḥ prajāpatīr anamīva aya-kṣamās mā va stena īsata māghaśaṃso rudrasya hetīḥ pari vo vṛnaktu dhruvā asmin gopatau syāta bahvīr yajamānasya paśūn pāhi. agna ā yāhi vītaye grṇāno havyadātaye, ni hotā satsi barhiṣi. śaṃ no devīr abhiṣṭaya āpo bhavantu pītaye, śaṃ yor abhisravantu naḥ, [and the] (six) [mantras starting with] ato devāḥ [and the] (six) [mantras starting with] viṣṇor</i></p>	<p>After having praised the god with the vaiṣṇava mantras from Ṛg-, Yajur-, Sāma- and Atharvaveda [and those] beginning with <i>sahasraśrīṣā</i></p>

<i>Sūtrānukramanikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
<i>nu kaṃ, [and the passage from] sahasra-śrīśā puruṣaḥ [until] santi devāḥ.</i>	
[prāṇāma]	
<p>SAAnukr 2, 27.3–8  <i>praṇavādinamontaiḥ keśavādyair nāma-  bhiḥ prayekaṃ daṇḍavat praṇamet // oṃ  keśavāya namaḥ / oṃ nārāyaṇāya namaḥ  / oṃ mādhavāya namaḥ / oṃ govindāya  namaḥ / oṃ viṣṇave namaḥ / oṃ madhu-  sūdanāya namaḥ / oṃ trivikramāya na-  maḥ / oṃ vāmanāya namaḥ / oṃ śrīdha-  rāya namaḥ / oṃ hr̥ṣīkeśāya namaḥ / oṃ  padmanābhāya namaḥ / oṃ dāmodarāya  namaḥ //</i></p>	<p>PūrvaP 38.9–15  <i>praṇamet / agniṃ ṅle ... dhātamaṃ / iṣe-  tvorje ... pāhi / agna āyāhi ... bharhiṣi /  śannodevī ... sravantunaḥ / ato devā / sa-  hasraśrīśaṃ devaṃ / inta mantiraṅkalai  kaikūppic collavum. keśavādidvādaśanā-  mabhiḥ praṇamet // namaskarikkavum.  keśavāya namaḥ ... dāmodarāya namaḥ /</i></p>
<p>He should prostrate like a stick to each [god] while [reciting mantras] that have <i>oṃ</i> in the beginning, that end with <i>namaḥ</i> and that contain the names, the first of which is Keśava: “<i>Oṃ</i> salutations to Keśava, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Nārāyaṇa, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Mādhava, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Govinda, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Viṣṇu, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Madhusūdana, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Trivikrama, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Vāmana, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Śrīdhara, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Hr̥ṣīkeśa, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Padmanābha, <i>oṃ</i> salutations to Dāmodara.”</p>	<p>He should salute [and recite the following mantras]: <i>agniṃ ṅle ... dhātamaṃ. iṣet-  vorje ... pāhi. agna āyāhi ... bharhiṣi. śannodevī ... sravantunaḥ. ato devā. Sa-  hasraśrīśaṃ devaṃ.</i> He should recite these mantras worshipping with joined hands. He should salute the god [while reciting the mantras] containing the twelve names, beginning with Keśava. [He recites:] “Salutations to Keśava ... Salutations to Dāmodara.”</p>
[cakraśaṅkhapratāpana]	
	<p>PūrvaP 38.15–16  <i>pāyasaśeṣe cakraśaṅkhāv aṃkhayitvā le-  khayitvā</i></p>
	<p>After having marked [or] drawn the disk and conch in the remainder of the milk porridge</p>
[pāyasaṃprāśana]	
<p>SAAnukr 2, 27.9–10  <i>bhagavantam anusmaraṃs taṃ pāyasaśe-  ṣaṃ patnīm prāśayati // tato 'ntahomaḥ //</i></p>	<p>PūrvaP 38.16–39.3  <i>pāyasaśeṣaṃ patnīm prāśayet / homaśe-  śānnattil śaṅkhacakraṃ eḷuti tarpattiṅṅal  japikkavum. bhūm ānanto 'gre bhuvana-  sya gopīā vāmbhyaṃ raṃsanty amarā-  marāś ca / kurvate 'gnau suhrtaṃ ghr̥te-  na / vandyo na eṣa vasuṣu nidadhyāt / tri-  dhā tridhām ābibhryād adīnaḥ / tan mā  yaśo 'gre tāva ke vasūnām yajāmahe</i></p>



<i>Sūtrānukramaṇikā</i>	<i>Pūrvaprayoga</i>
	<i>syād bhavataḥ prasannaḥ. / tadā vadattya uttamaṃ jayante / asmād upāsyo 'syehi hi / vṛddhiśarmabhavato dharāt / pāyasaśeṣaṃ patnīm prāśayet / antahomaṃ /</i>
While thinking of the glorious one, he feeds his wife with the remainder of milk porridge. Then [he performs] the final homa.	He gives the remainder of the milk porridge to his wife for her to eat. And one may write the cakra and śaṅkha into the remainder of the homa with the tarpam grass and recite it. [He recites the cakra mantras:] <i>bhūm ānanto 'gre bhuvanasya goptā vāmabhyam raṃśanty amarāmarāś ca. kurvate 'gnau suhrtaṃ ghrtena</i> [and] <i>vandyo na eṣa vasuṣu nidadhyāt. Tridhā tridhām ābibhryād adīmaḥ</i> [and the and the śaṅkha mantras:] <i>tan mā yaśo 'gre tāva ke vasūnām yajāmahe syād bhavataḥ prasannaḥ. tadā vadattya uttamaṃ jayante</i> [and] <i>asmād upāsyo 'syehi hi. vṛddhiśarmabhavato dharāt.</i> He makes his wife eat the remainder of the milk porridge. [Then follows] the final homa.

#### 4.3.4 Comparison of the two ritual handbooks

For several reasons the *Pūrvaprayoga* is considerably shorter than the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*. Some of the rituals to be performed before each saṃskāra are not described separately therein. Knowledge of them is evidently assumed. The expiations for puṃsavana, sīmanta and viṣṇubali are also lacking. The *Pūrvaprayoga* assumes much more knowledge, experience and capacity for projection on the part of the performer than the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*.<sup>456</sup> In the latter mantras are often quoted in full, while the *Pūrvaprayoga* only quotes the first, and occasionally also the last words of the mantras to be recited. The performance of the relevant ritual acts are also only seldomly described in detail in the *Pūrvaprayoga*.<sup>457</sup> This applies for example to the preparations for the ritual in [saṃkalpa], the account of the platform and the invocation of the twelve forms of the god in section [dvādaśanāmāvāhana] as well as their worship in section [snapana].

456 For example for the first invocation of god in [puruṣāvāhana] in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* the full wording of the *Vaikhānasmārtasūtra* is quoted. In the *Pūrvaprayoga* by contrast only a keyword is quoted, which is explained in Tamil.

457 Thus in section [āghāra] in the description of the sacrifice of clarified butter to Puruṣa, the prior pariṣecana is explicitly mentioned only in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*.

Overall the *Pūrvaprayoga* is evidently rather intended as an *aide memoire* for experienced ritual specialists, while the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* is oriented toward those with less experience. On the other hand, the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* assumes a better knowledge of Sanskrit on the part of the user, as it contains no explanations in Telugu, while the *Pūrvaprayoga* often explains Sanskrit terms in Tamil.

The most significant differences between the two ritual texts is to be found in section [saṃkalpa] and SANukr [saṃkalpa 2]: the wording of the formal declarations (*saṃkalpa*) differ considerably. According to the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* the officiator should simply announce that “the sacrifice for prenatal vaiṣṇava nature” (*garbhavaiṣṇaveṣṭi*) and viṣṇubali will be performed. The *Pūrvaprayoga* is much more detailed. Here several goals or purposes of the ritual are explicitly mentioned. According to this, viṣṇubali serves to protect the unborn child, it marks the unborn child with the disk, and it establishes the embryo’s “prenatal vaiṣṇava nature.” The *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*, in contrast, does not mention these specific aims in the first saṃkalpa, but only later [saṃkalpa 2], when a second saṃkalpa is spoken. Here the purpose of the ritual is likewise said to be to achieve a prenatal vaiṣṇava nature for the foetus. According to the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* therefore, viṣṇubali is constituted not by one, but by two rituals or separate rites, with the second part being called “garbhacakra-karman,” following the terminology introduced first by the *Ānandasamhitā*. Section SANukr [cakraśaṅkhapūjā] deals with the installation of the two metal symbols of disk and conch and their worship. This section, too, directly depends on the *Ānandasamhitā*, in which this rite occupies a prominent position (see 2.2.4.2). Another borrowing of the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* from the *Ānandasamhitā* is the instructions regarding the sacrifice of clarified butter to the fire during recitation of the cakra and śaṅkha mantras, and the 108 sacrifices prescribed in SANukr [cakraśaṅkhahoma].

Due to the considerable variability of the ordering of the ritual elements in the performance of rituals in practice (see below, 4.5), during which the ritual texts are continually consulted, it is noteworthy how little the two ritual texts actually diverge in this respect. The differences concern only the moments for recitation of the cakra and śaṅkha mantras and for the marking of the milk porridge. While in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* in [cakraśaṅkhapratāpana] the branding of the milk porridge with the heated symbols follows immediately after the sacrifice of clarified butter during recitation of the cakra and śaṅkha mantras, in the *Pūrvapra-*

*yoga* it only happens later in [cakraśaṅkhatāpāna], that is, immediately before the feeding of the pregnant woman in [pāyasaprāśana].<sup>458</sup>

Although the *Pūrvaprayoga* is in general shorter than the *Sūtrānumāṅikā*, it nevertheless does contain some passages which describe ritual elements which go beyond those in the *Sūtrānumāṅikā*. Thus according to section [puruṣārcana] of the *Pūrvaprayoga* the yajamāna should recite the following during the invocation of puruṣa: “I offer the seat etc., all the means of worship.” This represents a summary of the worship of Puruṣa who is invoked here, which is regarded by the author as the inevitable next step after the invocation of. This could be a characteristic of the Tamil tradition, as it is only described in the *Pūrvaprayoga* and also only performed in Cidambaram (see 4.4.3 [puruṣārcana]). At three points ([āghāra], [viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta], [pāyasahoma]) the *Pūrvaprayoga* prescribes short formulas which are not mentioned in the *Sūtrānumāṅikā*: at the offering of clarified butter to the fire when the forms of god are mentioned by name after the mantras which end in “svāhā,” each time a formula should be spoken by the receiver of the gift. For example, after “for Keśava, svāhā” (...) the formula “this is for Keśava” (...) should be spoken. The ritual element [instructions for the domestic image] also appears only in the Tamil tradition. According to this the domestic divine image should be set up in a particular position among the twelve seats. In the *Sūtrānumāṅikā* by contrast (although the existence of this image is assumed; see [pāyasahoma] and [vedamantra]), its position is not prescribed.

Already in the Tamil introduction to the *Pūrvaprayoga* a problem with respect to the meaning of the viṣṇubali saṃskāra is brought to the attention of the user. Various arguments which also play an important role in the *Daśavidhahetunirūpana* are brought to bear in this introduction, although the author of the introduction does not refer to this text.<sup>459</sup> Although not mentioned in the *Sūtrānu-*

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458 Although in one Tamil passage of the *Pūrvaprayoga* the drawing of the symbols is mentioned as an alternative to branding, in actual practice this is only performed in southern Tamil Nadu, as I was told.

459 It is mentioned in the introduction of the *Pūrvaprayoga* that viṣṇubali has a purificatory effect upon a Vaikhānasa even as a foetus, that through viṣṇubali the Vaikhānasas become garbhavaiṣṇavas, that they are special in as much as they follow only their own sūtra, and that this sūtra is indeed the only vaiṣṇava sūtra. Moreover reference is made here to the idea that the Vaikhānasas were the first Vaiṣṇavas, and that all other vaiṣṇava groups first emerged through divisions among the Vaikhānasas. Only the Vaikhānasas, according to the introduction, are so-called paramaikāntins, which is also important in relation to the temple rituals. As a garbhavaiṣṇava a Vaikhānasa may perform temple service immediately after upanayana, while other Vaiṣṇavas first require a dīkṣā. According to this introduction, the marking of the milk porridge in the context of

*maṅikā*, the corresponding awareness of this problem is much clearer than in the *Pūrvaprayoga* due to the strong similarity between *Sūtrānumaṅikā* and the tenth chapter of the *Ānandasamhitā*. In the *Pūrvaprayoga* a clearer separation is made between the meaning attributed to the ritual elements and their performance, while in the *Sūtrānumaṅikā* it is apparent that greater efforts are made to express the meaning ritually or to reveal the connection between content and action.

Despite all the differences in detail, the similarities between the two ritual handbooks predominate in the description of the viṣṇubali saṃskāra: there can be no doubt that they present one and the same ritual of this specific tradition. Not only the similarities in what is said, but also that which is not dealt with in both texts is significant, as will become clear in the observation of ritual practice. Thus, neither handbook mentions the participation of the pregnant woman in the ritual acts. Only in section [vedamantra] of the *Sūtrānumaṅikā* do we read that the yajamāna should circumambulate the fire clockwise with his wife, and then recite mantras standing in front of the divine image. Other than that, in both texts, the woman is only mentioned as the one who should be fed with the milk porridge.<sup>460</sup> Neither are others present at the performance of the ritual mentioned. Only from puṇyāha, and the feeding of the Brahmans which ends the saṃskāras, is it to be assumed that others must be present. Above all it is remarkable that there is not a single word in either text about the role of the bṛhaspati as the priest who leads the ritual. Rather the two handbooks suggest that the yajamāna performs the recitations and the ritual acts independently without aid or specialist doing or for him. As discussed in 4.5.3, it is exactly this factor which allows for a considerable degree of variety in the performance of the ritual, even when the written instructions are closely followed. As soon as the yajamāna is identified with the bṛhaspati at the start of the ritual, he as an individual fades into the background, and the form of the performance is laid entirely in the hands of the bṛhaspati. Although it is the yajamāna who formally authorizes the performance of the ritual through the saṃkalpa, it is *de facto* the bṛhaspati who shapes the ritual.

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viṣṇubali is in principle performed through the drawing of the symbols (see Pūrvap, pp. 6–8) or even through mantras alone.

460 The passages on viṣṇubali in other texts involve the woman somewhat more. Thus according to SR-Vṛtti [praṇāma] and TPC [praṇāma] the wife should also bow before the twelve mūrtis (see 2.2.2.3, and 2.2.3). According to SY-N the yajamāna should take a ritual bath together with his wife before the start of the ritual (see 2.2.4.6).

#### 4.4 Actual performance: three examples

In this section analysed material from three performances of viṣṇubali which I was able to observe and to document in South India is presented. This sheds light on the relation between the written texts and the observable ritual act, that is on the realization of the text in action, its “staging.” After the tabular comparison of the structure of the rituals in 4.4.2, a detailed description of the three rituals follows in 4.4.3. Video and audio coverage of the stagings are presented on the accompanying DVD. As only video clips and no photos are available for many ritual sequences, some of the pictures in this section of the book are taken from the digitized video sequences which affects the quality of the images.

Not only do the different stagings depart from the ritual handbooks in several ways, but they also differ in many respects from one another. Here it becomes clear, as will be discussed in detail in 4.5, that the basic text is only one factor among many that influences the concrete enactment of a ritual. Many other factors are equally important: place, time, the officiator, other participants, gestures and movements, language, speech acts, verbal and gesticular instructions, materials (clothing, ornaments, etc.), the interaction and relationship between the participants, the nature of the reliance on the texts involved and much more. Especially the specialists contracted for the ritual, the so-called *br̥haspatīs* (priests), have a considerable influence. For the staging of the ritual they rely on the one hand on the ritual handbooks, but on the other also considerably on their personal experiences and pre-knowledge. Thus they also have in mind and follow unwritten “stage directions” for the rituals or individual rites. This personal background is based to a great degree on their training and the repetitions of the ritual performances. As bearers of “ritual competence” they are the guarantors of the proper performance and therefore also of the efficacy of the rituals. They embody the tradition and at the same time they are those who “individuate” the tradition each time the ritual is performed. Thus the individual development of the priests who conduct the rituals is a decisive factor for the ritual form of the *samskāras*. For this reason the training of the domestic priests of the Vaikhānasa tradition is dealt with in section 4.6, which describes as examples the career of three such ritual specialists. Finally some institutions for training ritual specialists of the Vaikhānasa tradition are introduced and discussed in 4.6.5.

As we shall see, in spite the use of nearly identical texts, the actual performances differ to a great degree. Performance and performers, and the use of texts during the enactments of the rituals are isolated as main factors contributing to ritual variance, in spite of the widespread assumption that rituals are rather sta-

tic, and also in spite of the professed view of the practitioners themselves, that these rituals are performed “in the same way since time immemorial.”

Three performances of *viṣṇubali* will now be compared with each other and with the ritual texts which are used. Here I investigate questions such as how the relationship between text and performance in general may be characterized, how and why changes in the ritual come about, to what extent this is the expression of a particular religious or ritual identity, and whether this allows us to draw any further conclusions about ritual as a mode of action.

Through the mediation of my friends Dr S. Muttubhattar (Chennai) and A. Rangacharyulu (Vijayawada) I was invited to three performances of prenatal saṃskāras in Vaikhānasa families. One performance took place in Cidambaram (Tamil Nadu), and two in Vijawada (Andhra Pradesh). The description and analysis presented here is based on my observations during the events, on the repeated revisiting of my audio-visual documentations, and on the semi-structured interviews with the participants after the performances.<sup>461</sup> On all three occasions the garbhasaṃskāras were performed during the woman’s first pregnancy. In Cidambaram I took photographs and made an audio recording of the events. In the domestic setting in Vijayawada and in the performance in a small temple in Vijayawada I was allowed to make video and audio recordings of the rituals.

After a comparative description and analysis of the circumstances (participants, equipment, setting, background, etc.), the descriptions of the three events will be presented one after the other, preceded by one comparative table listing the sequence of the rites. The text of the descriptions is provided with some pictures. A detailed visual representation of the events is given on the DVD, both comparatively and in the details of the individual performances. For those sequences described here which are given on the DVD, reference to the time code is made in the text.

A few remarks shall precede the comparative description and analysis of the performances. In the following detailed textual descriptions and in the subtitles of the DVD the names of the diverse actors and participants are not given. Instead, I chose to refer to their ritual roles which are not necessarily obvious to the untrained eye but which is important information for this structural com-

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461 On the events and the author’s position in the field, see also Appendix 3. The dates of the performance of the saṃskāras were: 13.11.2000 Cidambaram, 27.11.2000 in the domestic setting in Vijayawada, and 20.1.2001 in a small temple in Vijayawada. These events involved the performance of the prenatal life-cycle rituals *ṛtusamgamana*, *garbhādhāna*, *puṃsavana*, *sīmanta* and *viṣṇubali* in Cidambaram, *sīmanta* and *viṣṇubali* in the domestic setting in Vijayawada, and *garbhādhāna*, *puṃsavana*, *sīmanta* and *viṣṇubali* performed in the temple setting in Vijayawada.

parison of the diverse events. The priest who leads the rituals is referred to throughout as the *bṛhaspati* here.<sup>462</sup> He is the ritual specialist who directs and coordinates the performance, and who also instructs the actual officiator, the father of the unborn. The officiator is consistently referred to as *yajamāna* here.<sup>463</sup> Even during the smallest event, the one in the domestic setting in Vijayawada, at least one further person was present to support the priest. In what follows I refer to this person, or persons, as assistant(s). As the short formulas of invocation, sacrifice and worship spoken by the *bṛhaspati* or *yajamāna* have been given and translated in the previous section 4.3, and the mantras from the Vedic *saṃhitās* have already been given at full length in 2.2.2.1, they are only mentioned here,<sup>464</sup> rather than being given in full length in the text and/or translation. The twelve forms of the god *Viṣṇu*<sup>465</sup> which play a role in the context of *viṣṇubali* are here referred to collectively as “*mūrti*.”

#### 4.4.1 Comparison of the scene of the three performances

“Rites are not are not absolute performances in themselves. They are necessarily associated with and permeated by social, practical and other realities since they only take shape through and due to these factors” says Colas (2005: 28). Thus, for example the family and professional background of the participants fundamentally informs the ritual enactments.

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462 The titles most often used for these domestic priests are *bṛhaspati*, *purohita* or *ācārya*. In the context of temple ritual, the term *ācārya* describes a “master” by contrast with a simple temple priest, who is usually described as *arcaka* or, though rarely in the *saṃhitā* texts, as *pūjaka* (see Colas 1996: 129f., 153). In the temple, the *ācārya* is responsible for the proceedings and leads the rituals while other priests are available to assist him. The *ācārya* takes the highest place in the hierarchy of ritual specialists in the temple (see Colas 1996: 132, 143, 153f.). In order to avoid confusion in what follows I use throughout the term *bṛhaspati* for the domestic priest who is charged with primary responsibility for the performance of the *saṃskāras*. On the DVD, which is also available separately, I tried to avoid using too many technical terms. There he is referred to as “priest.”

463 In some places in the *Sūtrānumaṅikā* the officiator is called “*yajamāna*” (SANukr 2, 5.14, 13.3, 14.6 and 25.23). On the DVD he is consistently referred to as “officiator.”

464 Some mantra series now have own names. Thus six mantras are collectively labelled “*vaiṣṇavasūkta*” (see 2.2.2.1) another six mantras are called “*viṣṇusūkta*” (see 2.2.2.1), and an extract from the *Ṛgveda* is labelled “*puruṣasūkta*” (RV 10.90). For the sake of simplicity, in the description of the stagings the collective names are used.

465 These are *Keśava*, *Nārāyaṇa*, *Mādhava*, *Govinda*, *Viṣṇu*, *Madhusūdana*, *Trivikrama*, *Vāmana*, *Śrīdhara*, *Hṛṣīkeśa*, *Padmanābha* and *Dāmodara*.



Plate 1 (left): from left to right: bṛhaspati Katukallūr S. Manivanna Bhaṭṭācārya, yajamāna K. Bālajī Bhaṭṭācārya and his wife Śrīvidyā (Cidambaram).

Plate 2 (right): from left to right: bṛhaspati Parāṅkuśa Raṅgācārya-svāmi, the pregnant woman Kalyānī, and yajamāna Jvāla Narasiṃhācāryulu (performance in the domestic setting in Vijayawada).



Plate 3 (left): yajamāna Śrīnivāsa Cakravartin and his wife Vasudharā (performance in the Kodaṅḍarāma temple in Vijayawada).



Today, the performance of *saṃskāras* is always entrusted to a leading priest (*br̥haspati*) who performs the rituals for, and with, the actual patron (*yajamāna*). In each of the three cases at hand, the *yajamāna* is the father of the unborn child who is to undergo this life-cycle ritual.<sup>466</sup> And in all the observed stagings the *yajamāna* is either a close relative of a practising temple priest, or himself a temple priest. Therefore either the *yajamāna* himself,<sup>467</sup> or those who performed the ritual for the couple,<sup>468</sup> are experts in the performance of rituals, although they do not necessarily have routine in this specific ritual. The *br̥haspatis* who led the three ritual events I documented all had close ties to the family of the respective *yajamāna* or his wife.<sup>469</sup>

In Cidambaram, besides the *br̥haspati* Katukallūr S. Manivanna Bhaṭṭācārya only the *yajamāna* K. Bālajī Bhaṭṭācārya and—toward the end—his wife Śrīvidyā were immediate participants in the ritual (see plate 1, p. 192). During the ritual an assistant, namely K. S. Vāsudeva Bhaṭṭācārya (the *yajamāna*'s sister's husband and at the same time brother of the *br̥haspati*), began to give instructions to the *yajamāna* as the *br̥haspati*'s gestures were not immediately intelligible to the *yajamāna*. Another assistant joined the *br̥haspati* during most of the recitation. In the *viṣṇubali* performance in the domestic setting in Vijayawada there were only a few participants: the concerned couple, Jvāla Narasiṃhācāryulu and his wife Kalyānī, the main priest Parāṅkuṣa Raṅgācāryasvāmi (see plate 2, p. 192) and the closest relatives of the pregnant woman in whose paternal home the ritual was performed.

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466 However, already in the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra* (6.3) it is stated that if the father is not available, he can be replaced by a male (*sapinda*) relative of his side, or even by a male relative of the pregnant woman's side.

467 The *yajamāna* in Cidambaram is a temple priest at the Govindarāja shrine in the Naṭarāja temple in Cidambaram, and the *yajamāna* in the event performed in a domestic setting in Vijayawada is a temple priest at a small temple in Hyderabad.

468 The *yajamāna* of the performance in the temple setting in Vijayawada is the son-in-law of the temple priest at the Kodaṅḍarāma temple in Vijayadharapuram, Vijayawada. The *yajamāna* himself, however, has a secular profession and therefore his personal experience with performing rituals is very limited.

469 In Cidambaram, both the *br̥haspati* entrusted with leading the rituals, as well as his brother who functioned as the assistant, are related to the *yajamāna*. In the domestic setting in Vijayawada a *br̥haspati* from Penukanciprolu (Kṛṣṇā District) was entrusted with performing the *viṣṇubali* and *sīmanta saṃskāras*. He is the father of the *yajamāna* and at the same time the maternal grandfather of the pregnant woman. The acting priest in the performance in the temple in Vijayawada has inherited ties to the performing families and is usually called for this family's domestic rituals.



Plate 4 (left): The fire altar in the domestic setting in Vijayawada.

Plate 5 (right): The fire altar set up in the Kodaṅḍarāma temple in Vijayawada.



Plate 6 (left): The ready-made homa-kunḍa provided in the marriage hall in Cidambaram.

The assistant here is the father of the pregnant woman. He helped the *br̥haspati*, who was evidently not very experienced in this ritual, at many points with the recitation, and performed some central acts for him, or for the *yajamāna*.<sup>470</sup>

The third documented *viṣṇubali* ritual also took place in Vijayawada. The couple, Śrīnivāsa Cakravartin and his wife Vasudharā (see plate 3, p. 192), enacted the ritual in the small Kodaṇḍarāma temple, in which the Vasudharā's father serves as main priest. The performing priest, Parāṅkuśam Vāsudevācāryulu comes from a nearby small town for this ritual. He brought three assistants, who lended a hand in the staging of the ritual by reading from the ritual handbook, taking over most recitations and in many ways leading the *yajamāna* through his actions.

The participation of the pregnant woman in the rituals appears to be variable, and in the first place depended upon her state of health. Thus, the pregnancy of Śrīvidyā in Cidambaram was problematic. She had been strictly confined to bed for the last months, the only exception was this event. She was present from the beginning of the ritual, but withdrew for long periods into a separate room.<sup>471</sup> By contrast, in the *viṣṇubali* performance in the temple setting in Vijayawada, Vasudharā was present during all rites and was considerably involved in the event.

As already mentioned, the normal practice today, even in orthodox families, is to perform several *saṃskāras* at once.<sup>472</sup> In Cidambaram and in the Kodaṇḍarāma temple in Vijayawada all the prenatal *saṃskāras* were performed together. In the event in the domestic setting in Vijayawada only the *saṃskāras* prescribed for the eighth month of pregnancy, namely *sīmanta* and *viṣṇubali*, were performed at that time.

In all three cases, however, the corresponding *prāyaścittas*, such as the “atonement ritual for not carrying out the prenatal *saṃskāras* at the prescribed time,” were enacted along with the ritual. These atonement rituals also make good for any other deficiency that might have occurred during the performances (see *VaikhSmS* 6.3). This rite involves a piece of gold (*suvarṇagarbha*; ideally in the form of an embryo) that is tied around the belly of the pregnant woman.

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470 Because of this simplicity, but also because I could cover this event fully with a (NTSC) DV video camera (kindly provided by M. Hariharan, Chennai), I chose this occasion to represent the “full ritual” on the DVD.

471 Because of her condition I was asked not to take video coverage. At that time videoing domestic rituals was not yet common in this very conservative tradition and the use of a video camera was evidently perceived as an unnecessary risk to the woman's and child's health. But I was allowed to take still pictures, along with a professional photographer, who was hired by the family.

472 Kane (1974a: 199) says that this might have been the case already for several centuries.



Plate 7 (left): A small metal throne stands at the southern end of the rostrum. On it are the symbols of the disk and conch, a small Navanī-takṣṇa, a figure of the snake Ādiśeṣa, and a sā-lagrāma stone.

Plate 8 (below): On a cloth with a layer of rice grains are two rows of leaves. On the second row the offerings for the twelve mūrtis are placed. The metal symbols of the disk and conch are laid on the first row.



Plate 9 (below): In the domestic setting in Vijayawada a long table north of the fire-place served as the rostrum. Two rows of twelve leaves for the invocation of the twelve mūrtis are arranged on it.



The number of rituals performed at the respective occasions influenced the length of the ritual activity. The scale of the family celebrations accompanying the rituals differed greatly in all three cases. In Cidambaram up to 100 guests were present at different times, who had even come from distant places in Tamil Nadu such as Tenali or Chennai, just for this event. Quite clearly this is also a question of prestige: at this occasion a professional photographer and two musicians were engaged, and due to the number of invited guests the rituals took place not in a domestic environment but in a rented “marriage hall.”

By contrast, the two stagings in Vijayawada were celebrated as family events, with only the closest family members and a few friends. However, in the performance in the Kodaṇḍarāma temple in Vijayawada, many people were present for their personal temple activities who were not invited for the *saṃskāra*. These differences are also determined by the profession of the *yajamāna* or the host. The Govindarāja shrine in the Naṭarāja temple in Cidambaram has very close connections, stretching back to Rāmānuja, with the Govindarāja temple in Tirupati. It is therefore also closely connected with Tirumalai, the now largest pilgrimage centre in India, which has also given rise to close familial relations. The Govindarāja shrine in Cidambaram itself is likewise an important destination for *vaiṣṇava* pilgrims. Thus the temple priests in Cidambaram also enjoy considerable esteem within the *vaiṣṇava* communities, and their lavish stagings of rituals have to be understood within this context. The hosts of both celebrations in Vijayawada by contrast are *arcakas* in small Viṣṇu temples, hardly known beyond the bounds of the part of the town in which they are located. Moreover, the respective *yajamānas* were not in their own circles, as in both cases the family of the pregnant woman organized the rituals and their own professional and familial connections were in different cities.<sup>473</sup> On the other hand, some family members or friends of the families involved in the rituals in Vijayawada are very active in several regional or trans-regional *Vaikhānasa* associations (see Hüsken 2001b). Therefore on the video clips a banner in the background is to be seen, advertising the association “*Vaikhānasa Youth Forum*.” This banner was set up because I took the video coverage of the event.

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473 The *yajamāna* in the domestic setting in Vijayawada lives with his wife in Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), and the *yajamāna* of the performance in the Kodaṇḍarāma temple in Vijayawada lives with his wife in Ananthagiri (Nalgonda District, Andhra Pradesh). Both had travelled to Vijayawada especially for the rituals, and the women also stayed on for the delivery of their first child, as is the custom in South India.

In all three cases, the preparations for the rituals were already completed on the day prior to the ritual, or on the morning of the same day. The equipment and materials used in the three stagings differed, in part considerably, as is immediately evident from a glance at the fire altars (see p. 194, plates 4-6). Due to the more extensive celebrations, the rituals in Cidambaram were performed in a so-called “Marriage Hall,” which is a room large enough to accommodate more than 100 people with an attached kitchen and sanitary facilities, rented out for such events. The building is situated next to the famous Naṭarāja temple in Cidambaram. The mobile enclosure for the sacrificial fire also belonged to the equipment of these premises. The assistant (the brother of the bṛhaspati) made a considerable contribution to the preparation of the place for the event, ensuring that the objects and materials are available in sufficient quantities. On the morning before the start of the ritual, over the entrance of the marriage hall a canopy of coloured cloth was set up, and at each side of the entrance a trunk of a banana tree with flowers and unripe fruit.<sup>474</sup> In the anteroom of the marriage hall were two musicians (a drummer and a musician with a wind instrument called Nāgasvaram) who, taking their cue from the Brahmans, musically underlined the drama of central rites (see below, plate 10).



Plate 10: The musicians playing during the performance in Cidambaram.

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474 This structure is set up before the ritual event, on an auspicious moment, calculated by an astrologer. The Tamil term for ritually setting up this structure is *pantalkāl*. Moreover, in South Indian vaiṣṇava traditions a ritual called *dahdhyārādhana* is usually performed on the day before.

In Cidambaram the rostrum for the twelve forms of the god (mūrti) consisted of a layer of rice grains on the floor covered by a banana leaf, its tip pointing north, and on it another layer of rice grains on which are the twelve kūrcaś as “seats” (āsana) for the god (see plate 7, p. 196). The shorter ends of the kūrcaś point east. For each kūrca there was also a betel leaf, two betel nuts and a banana lying on the rice base.<sup>475</sup> At the southern end of the rostrum, facing north, stood a small metal throne with the symbols of the disk and conch (see plate 11, p. 200), with a small Kṛṣṇa figure (as the so-called Navanītakṛṣṇa), and a figure of the snake Ādiśeṣa and a so-called sālagrāma stone, which represented the domestic image of the god.<sup>476</sup> In the domestic setting in Vijayawada the rituals were performed on a large roofed terrace, about 20 square metres in size, in front of the host’s home. Some preparations, such as the erection of a fireplace were completed by the bṛhaspati just before the rituals. His wife scattered white, yellow and red powder ornaments on the fire-altar, and on the eastern side of the fireplace she sprinkled the outlines of the disk and conch, as well as a puṇḍra symbol (see plate 4, p. 194). A long table placed to the north of the fireplace served as the rostrum, on which the twelve mūrtis were to be invoked. On it were arranged two rows of twelve betel leaves each with flower petals, two betel nuts and a banana as the place for the invocation of the twelve mūrtis (see plate 9, p. 196). In the beginning of the ritual stood a decorated metal image of Viṣṇu on another table on the eastern side of the terrace. The assistant shifted this image later, during the ritual, on the table with the rostrum. A plate with flowers, a half coconut, akṣata rice grains and the two metal symbols of the disk and conch were during the ritual placed on the table with the rostrum, at the western end of the two rows of betel leaves (see plate 12, p. 200).

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475 I was unable to observe whether the placing of the kūrcaś on this base followed the pattern from south to north, as required by *Pūrvaprayoga* [instructions for the domestic image], as the kūrcaś already lay on the rostrum before my arrival.

476 A sālagrāma, a round black stone with fossilization inside, comes from a river in Nepal. The fossilization is seen as a specific manifestation of Viṣṇu, in many cases as “disk” and “conch.” The god Viṣṇu is always present in such a sālagrāma. A sālagrāma can therefore be worshipped in the home in place of a pictorial representation of the god: as Viṣṇu is always present within, a simple pūjā suffices, while the worship of an iconic representation of the god first requires an invocation, in order to realize the presence of the god in the image.





Plate 11 (left): The metal symbols of disk and conch are kept on the throne along with the Navanītakṛṣṇa and sālagrāma, facing the rostrum (Cidambaram).

Plate 12 (right): A plate with flowers, a half coconut, akṣata rice grains and the two metal symbols of the disk and conch are placed on the table with the rostrum (domestic setting; Vijayawada).



Plate 13 (left): The two metal symbols of the disk and conch at first were on a plate together with a porcupine quill for sīmanta and other utensils (Vijayawada; temple setting).



In the other performance in Vijayawada the rituals were enacted in the Kodaṇḍarāma temple, in a covered area immediately in front of the three main shrines, in the midst of the usual temple bustle. Although many people were thus present for short periods, only some of them were especially invited to attend the saṃskāras. Even the father of the pregnant woman was present only some of the time, for as arcaka he was performing the regular worship of the deity and had to attend to the devotees who came to the temple. The two metal symbols of the disk and conch at first were on a plate together with a porcupine quill for *śimanta* and other utensils (see plate 13, p. 200), but later got a special place on the rostrum. The rostrum was prepared to the north of the fire. It consisted of a cloth with a layer of rice grains on which were two rows of betel leaves oriented north-south. The row of leaves immediately in front of the *yajamāna* were not at first decorated. Later were the offerings for the twelve *mūrtis* arranged on this row: flower petals, dates, betel nuts, *akṣata* rice grains and twelve *kūrcas* as seats with the short end pointing east. Four more betel leaves formed the second row: on the outer two leaves were flowers and *akṣata* rice grains deposited, and on each of the inner leaves two bananas, petals and *akṣata* rice grains. Later the metal symbols of the disk and conch were laid on these leaves (see plate 8, p. 196).

The spatial starting point at the beginning of the *viṣṇubali* saṃskāra thus differed with respect to the position and orientation of the rostrum and the “seats” on it of the twelve *mūrtis*,<sup>477</sup> with respect to the positioning of the two metal symbols and with respect to the position of the assembled Brahmans. There was nevertheless a core position which was the same in each of the three stagings: the *yajamāna* sat to the west of the sacrificial fire, facing east. To the right was the place for his wife, and the *brhaspati* sat to the south of the fire, looking north, where the *praṇidhi* vessel was located. These are the ideal coordinates for every ritual (apart from the inauspicious death rituals) which involves a sacrificial fire: there is hardly ever any variation.<sup>478</sup> However, the respective positions of the rostrum, the twelve seats, their orientation etc., although not arbitrary, were nevertheless adapted to suit local conditions. Therefore despite the identical instructions in the written handbooks, they differed considerably.<sup>479</sup>

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477 The orientation of the rostrum affected both the direction and order of the invocation and worship of the twelve *mūrtis*: in the temple setting in Vijayawada and in Cidambaram the invocation took place from south to north, as the texts specify, in the domestic setting in Vijayawada the *mūrtis* were invoked from west to east.

478 See Kane 1974a: 207f., 212f.

479 Both in Cidambaram and in the Kodaṇḍarāma temple in Vijayawada the seats were already arranged on the rostrum in advance. In the domestic setting in Vijayawada, by



Plate 17 (above): The yajamāna heats disk and conch in the sacrificial fire (Cidambaram).

Plate 18 (below): While the br̥haspati speaks mantras and holds a darbha grass blade against the vessel with milk porridge, the yajamāna dips the heated metal symbols into the porridge.




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contrast, the invocation of the twelve mūrtis took place without the darbha grass blades already being laid out. These were only laid in place during the following worship.

It is possible that local traditions play a greater role, as the two rostrums in Vijayawada were structurally more similar. Only in two of the performances, in Cidambaram and in the domestic setting in Vijayawada, did the domestic divine image have a place on, or next to, the rostrum. In the ritual enacted in the Kodaṅḍarāma temple in Vijayawada, such an image played no immediate role, as the rituals were performed directly in the line of sight of the divine images in the temple. Evidently the worship of an additional divine image was therefore seen to be unnecessary or even inappropriate. Moreover, the two domestic images worshipped in Cidambaram and in the domestic setting in Vijayawada could not have been more different: in Vijayawada an iconic image was set up on the rostrum and worshipped (see plate 9, p. 196), while in Cidambaram the divine image was aniconic, namely a sālagrāma stone (see plate 11, p. 200).

The symbols of the disk and conch were very similar in all three stagings; only that in Cidambaram they did not have wooden handles.

The three performances also differed considerably in the number of the rites performed.<sup>480</sup> Whether these differences are based on local differences or are to be ascribed to the different scale of the celebrations escapes my knowledge. As has frequently been stated,<sup>481</sup> rituals are usually characterized by being spatially, verbally or otherwise framed, thus being set apart from everyday actions. The ritual frame is constituted, for example, by acts such as changing of clothing, entering or leaving a “ritual area” or speech acts which frame the ritual insofar as they announce “this is ritual.” This is clearly observable in all three rituals at hand. None of the yajamānas and bṛhaspatīs wore everyday clothing for the performances, and the women were also dressed festively. By this and many other signs, in particular through the speech act of the, the ritual acts were marked as such and distinguished from everyday acts. An overview over the sequence of events in the three documented performances of viṣṇubali is given now first in a table, and then in detail. The detailed account contains photographs, and references to the corresponding sequences on the DVD. An analysis of the comparative account follows in 4.5.

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480 In Cidambaram these were: viṣvakṣenārādhana, puṇyāha, punarādhāna, pariṣatprārthana, aupāsana, aupāsana, ankurārpaṇa; in the domestic setting in Vijayawada these were: viṣvakṣenārādhana, puṇyāha, agnipratiṣṭhāpana; in the performance in the Kodaṅḍarāma temple in Vijayawada these were: pariṣatprārthana, viṣvakṣenārādhana, puṇyāha, agnipratiṣṭhāpana (on these rites see 4.2).

481 Based on Bateson (1955) this “framing” is usually understood as meta-communication that shapes and orients cognition and attitudes (see Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994: 75; see also Handelman 2006, who proposes the idea of “moebius framing,” which stresses the ongoing relationship of the frame to its inside and to its outside).



Plate 19 (above): The yajamāna spoons some branded milk porridge into his wife's right hand (Cidambaram).

Plate 20 (below): The pregnant woman swallows the branded milk porridge (Cidambaram).



## 4.4.2 Table: a comparison of the structure of the three performances

The table presented here offers a comparative oversight of the structure of the three performances. The Sanskrit terms in square brackets refer to the division of the main sacrifice of viṣṇubali into ritual phases on the basis of the ritual handbooks (*Sūtrānukramaṇikā* for the two events in Vijayawada and *Pūrvaprayoga* for Cidambaram).

Cidambaram [handbook used: Pūrvaprayoga]	Domestic setting in Vijayawada [handbook used: Sūtrānukramaṇikā]	Temple setting in Vijayawada [handbook used: Sūtrānukramaṇikā]
[saṃkalpa]	[saṃkalpa]	[saṃkalpa]
[puruṣāvāhana]	[puruṣāvāhana]	[puruṣāvāhana]
	[preparation of the sthaṇḍila]	
[puruṣārcana]		
[nirvāpaṇa]	[nirvāpaṇa]	[nirvāpaṇa]
[āghāra]	[āghāra]	[āghāra]
[saṃkalpa 2]		
[dvādaśanāmāvāhana]	[dvādaśanāmāvāhana]	[dvādaśanāmāvāhana]
[arcana] and [pāyasani vedana]	[snapana and arcana]	[snapana and arcana]
		[cakraśaṅkha pūjā]
		[pāyasani vedana]
		[praṇāma]
[vedamantra]		
[arcana]		
[viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta]	[viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta]	[viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta]
		śaraṇāgati?
	[pāyasani vedana]	
[pāyasahoma]	[pāyasahoma]	
	[pāyasani vedana]	
	[saṃkalpa 2]	
	[cakraśaṅkha pūjā]	
	[cakraśaṅkha homa]	[cakraśaṅkha homa] and [cakraśaṅkha pratāpaṇa]
[praṇāma]		
[cakraśaṅkha pūjā, cakraśaṅkha pratāpaṇa]	[cakraśaṅkha pratāpaṇa]	
	[praṇāma]	
	[prāyaścitta]	
	[vedamantra]	
[pāyasapraśana]	[pāyasapraśana]	[pāyasapraśana]

#### 4.4.3 A comparative description of the three performances

##### Viṣṇubali in Cidambaram [handbook used: *Pūrvaprayoga*]

After the performance of the other prenatal life-cycle rituals together with their *prāyaścittas*, the *viṣṇubali saṃskāra* starts.

[saṃkalpa]

The *br̥haspati* reads out the *saṃkalpa* and the *yajamāna* restrains his breath. The *br̥haspati* says the *saṃkalpa*, inserting the place and time as well as the *gotra* name and the personal name of the pregnant woman. He retains eye contact with the *yajamāna* while he speaks. The *yajamāna* does not repeat the *saṃkalpa* after him, but nevertheless adopts the appropriate bodily posture and attentively.<sup>482</sup>

[*puruṣāvāhana*]

*Parīṣecana* follows: the *br̥haspati* says the formula and the *yajamāna* sprinkles around the fireplace with water.<sup>483</sup> Now the god *Puruṣa* is invoked. The *br̥haspati* recites the mantras while the *yajamāna* sprinkles water—following the gestures of the *br̥haspati*—on the *praṇidhi* vessel standing to the north of the fire.

[*puruṣārcana*]

The *br̥haspati* recites the mantras that dedicate some articles of worship to the god *Puruṣa*. Among these are grains of *aḥṣata* rice which, at the instigation of the *br̥haspati*, the *yajamāna* silently scatters on the dish standing to the left of the sacrificial fire.

[*nirvāpaṇa*]

The *br̥haspati* recites the mantras with which the clarified butter is dedicated to the god *Puruṣa* while the *yajamāna* with a small metal spoon scoops up the clarified butter in front of him, and lets it drip back into the dish.

[*āghāra*]

The *br̥haspati* recites the formula for the offering of clarified butter to *Puruṣa*. On each “*svāhā*” that ends these mantras the *yajamāna* spoons some clarified butter from the dish in front of him to the fire with a metal spoon.<sup>484</sup> The closing *parīṣecana* follows: the *yajamāna* sprinkles water around the fireplace with a *kūrca* while the *br̥haspati* recites corresponding mantras.

482 See DVD -> parts of the ritual -> preparatory rites -> formal declaration.

483 This rite is not specifically mentioned here in the *Pūrvaprayoga*.

484 The recitation of “*oṃ bhūḥ puruṣāyedaṃ*,” prescribed by the *Pūrvaprayoga* in [*āghāra*] is missing here.

## [saṃkalpa 2]

Following the bṛhaspati's instructions the yajamāna stands up, walks clockwise round the fire and then sits down in front of the rostrum on which the seats for the twelve mūrtis are prepared (see plate 7, page 196). Once he has taken his seat, the bṛhaspati, together with other Brahmans present, recites the gāyatrī mantra. Meanwhile the yajamāna performs the restraint of the breath. The bṛhaspati announces a further saṃkalpa while the yajamāna adopts the corresponding body and hand posture: "mama dharmapatnyā garbhasthaśiṣuṃ garbhavaiṣṇava-tvasiddhyarthaṃ viṣṇubalikarmaṇā saṃskariṣye, keśavādidvādaśanāmamūrtin ārāadhanaprārthanakarma kariṣye" ("I will make perfect the son which is in the womb of my duly wedded wife through the viṣṇubali ritual, in order to attain [for him] the state of being a Vaiṣṇava already in the womb, [and] I will perform the ritual of invoking and venerating the twelve forms [of Viṣṇu], namely Keśava and so on.")<sup>485</sup>

## [dvādaśanāmāvāhana]

The bṛhaspati invokes the twelve forms of the god with their mantras.<sup>486</sup> At the same time the yajamāna performs the corresponding actions: he sprinkles water on the twelve kūrcas (Viṣṇu's seats) on the rostrum. He takes the sprinkling water from a pot standing to his right, from which he has already taken water for pariṣecana.

## [arcana] and [pāyasanivedana]

The worship of the twelve mūrtis, which are now present on these seats, and of the sālagrāma follows. As offerings to the mūrtis the yajamāna scatters akṣata rice grains on the twelve seats and bathes the twelve mūrtis by again sprinkling water on them. The bṛhaspati also recites the formulas for other means of worship. The yajamāna performs the offering of food (*nivedana*). This process is concealed from the eyes of all persons who are no temple priests (arcakas), as an assistant of the bṛhaspati shields the scene with a cloth (pic). In temples in Tamil Nadu the feeding of the gods (*nivedana*) usually takes place behind closed curtains; no-one other than the arcakas may see this. The bṛhaspati names once each of the worship objects used.<sup>487</sup> While the bṛhaspati recites "puṣpam samarpayāmi" ("I offer flowers"), the yajamāna lays flowers on the rostrum and on the

485 Such a second formal resolution is not prescribed in the *Pūrvaprayoga*, but in [the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [saṃkalpa 2], albeit in slightly different words.

486 The formulas do not begin with "oṃ" according to *Pūrvaprayoga* [āghāra], but only according to *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [āghāra].

487 The twelve mūrtis are not individually invoked as prescribed in *Pūrvaprayoga* [arcana]. The name of each of the twelve mūrtis is not mentioned for each of the means of worship.

throne. At “dīpam darśayāmi” (“I show light”) the yajamāna swings a lighted camphor lamp over the rostrum.

[vedamantra]

All Brahmans present recite the beginnings of the four Vedas as well as other vedic passages. During the entire recitation the yajamāna, reciting along with the other Brahmans, sits calmly in front of the rostrum and holds a metal plate with both hands, on which lie akṣata rice grains, flowers, a pavitra ring and some coins (see plate 21 below).<sup>488</sup>



Plate 21: Veda recitation by the assembled Brahmans (Cidambaram).

[arcana]

The worship of the twelve mūrtis continues while the bṛhaspati recites the appropriate formulas. Meanwhile the yajamāna scatters flowers on the twelve mūrtis from the plate which he already held in his hands during the preceding recitations. The assembled Brahmans together recite some auspicious verses (maṅga-

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488 This whole section is not mentioned in the *Pūrvaprayoga* at this point. The recitation of the three bathing mantras prescribed in *Pūrvaprayoga* [snapana] is also not performed. The recitation of the beginnings of the Vedas is a component of *Pūrvaprayoga* [vedamantra].



laśloka). The yajamāna offers fruits to the twelve mūrtis, holding a tray with bananas, apples, and dry fruit over them. Again the yajamāna waves the camphor lamp over the rostrum. When the recitation ends the yajamāna, still seated, makes a bow to the twelve mūrtis, bowing his head and touching the ground in front of the rostrum with both hands.<sup>489</sup> The yajamāna changes his place again on the bṛhaspati's instructions and sits to the west of the sacrificial fire, facing toward the fire.

[viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta]

The Brahmins present recite the whole of the vaiṣṇavasūkta and viṣṇusūkta, adding at the end of each of the twelve mantras "svāhā." On each "svāhā" the yajamāna takes a little clarified butter from the dish in front of him with the metal spoon and pours it into the fire.<sup>490</sup> At the end this sacrifice the yajamāna recites "oṃ bhūr svāhā, oṃ bhuvaḥ svāhā, oṃ suvaḥ svāhā, oṃ bhūr bhuvāḥ suvaḥ svāhā."<sup>491</sup> Then the Brahmins recite the twelve mantras of the vaiṣṇavasūkta and the viṣṇusūkta, which they also end with "svāhā." The yajamāna again spoons clarified butter into the fire on each "svāhā."<sup>492</sup> While this recitation and offering of clarified butter is still going on, the bṛhaspati prepares the milk porridge for the coming sacrifice, mixing it with clarified butter in a cup.<sup>493</sup>

[pāyasahoma]

The bṛhaspati hands the milk porridge mixture over to the yajamāna in a cup. While the bṛhaspati recites the twelve mantras together with the assembled Brahmins, the yajamāna offers the milk porridge to the fire with the metal spoon on each "svāhā," as he had done with the clarified butter before.<sup>494</sup> In closing the bṛhaspati recites: "oṃ bhūḥ svāhā, oṃ bhuvaḥ svāhā, oṃ suvaḥ svāhā, oṃ bhūr

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489 This procedure contains several borrowings from the worship of the god in the temple and diverges considerably from the information in *Pūrvaprayoga* [arcana].

490 In *Pūrvaprayoga* [viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta] the exclamation "viṣṇava idam" ("this is for Viṣṇu!") is prescribed after each of the twelve mantras, but this is left out here.

491 These mantras are not mentioned in the *Pūrvaprayoga*.

492 This second series of mantras with offering of clarified butter is not prescribed by the *Pūrvaprayoga*. A closing pariṣecana as the end of the offering is also missed out here, again in deviation from the *Pūrvaprayoga*.

493 The offering (*nivedana*) of the milk porridge prescribed in *Pūrvaprayoga* [vedamantra] is missed out here.

494 Deviating from the *Pūrvaprayoga*, the bṛhaspati says "oṃ keśavāya svāhā" instead of "keśavāya svāhā." In addition, the exclamations "keśavāyedaṃ" to "dāmodarāyedaṃ" are left out in the performance. Also missing is the recitation of the vaiṣṇava- and viṣṇusūkta during the sacrifice of the milk porridge prescribed according to *Pūrvaprayoga* [pāyasahoma].

bhuvāḥ suvaḥ svāhā” while the yajamāna puts more milk porridge to the fire.<sup>495</sup> The closing pariṣecana is then performed: the bṛhaspati recites the formulas and the yajamāna sprinkles water with a switch of darbha grass around the fire.

[praṇāma]

The pregnant woman now joins her husband. The yajamāna stands up and both bow twelve times, while the bṛhaspati and the others present recite the twelve mantras, from “oṃ keśavāya namaḥ” to “oṃ dāmodarāya namaḥ.”

[cakraśaṅkhapūjā, cakraśaṅkhapratāpana]

The yajamāna takes his seat in front of the fire. The pregnant woman sits to his right. The bṛhaspati passes the metal symbols of the disk and conch to him. With the help of the assistant, the yajamāna sprinkles the two symbols with pañcagavya (the “five cow products”), while the bṛhaspati recites the sudarśana gāyatrī and the pāñcājanya gāyatrī. This ablution of Viṣṇu’s two weapons consecrates them for the ensuing ritual. While the bṛhaspati recites the invocation and worship formulas for the two symbols,<sup>496</sup> the yajamāna heats the two symbols in the fire and dips them in the cup of milk porridge (see plates 17-18, p. 202). At the same time the bṛhaspati holds a blade of darbha grass on the edge of the cup. This is repeated twice.<sup>497</sup> With some of the other Brahmans the bṛhaspati recites the cakra and śaṅkha mantras, the twelve mantras from “oṃ keśavāya namaḥ” to “oṃ dāmodarāya namaḥ” and “oṃ sudarśanāya namaḥ, oṃ pāñcājanyāya namaḥ.” Afterwards the bṛhaspati and his assistants again recite the cakra and śaṅkha mantras, which they end with “svāhā.”<sup>498</sup> After the marking of the milk porridge the bṛhaspati recites “oṃ bhūr svāhā, oṃ bhuvāḥ svāhā, oṃ suvaḥ svāhā, oṃ bhūr bhuvāḥ suvaḥ svāhā.”

[pāyasaprāśana]

The yajamāna and the bṛhaspati stand up. Both stand in front of the pregnant woman, who also gets up from her chair. Three times the yajamāna uses a spoon to put a little of the milk porridge from the cup into her hand. Each time the pregnant woman slurps it from her hand (see plates 19-20, p. 204). The music grows louder and the bṛhaspati again recites the cakra gāyatrī and the śaṅkha gāyatrī. Finally the pregnant woman receives some water from the yajamāna for

495 This mantra is not explicitly prescribed by the *Pūrvaprayoga*.

496 This corresponds to *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [cakraśaṅkhapratāpana] but is not prescribed in the *Pūrvaprayoga*.

497 The invocation and the worship of the cakra and śaṅkha take place simultaneously with the marking of the milk porridge.

498 This mantra recitation, not prescribed in the *Pūrvaprayoga*, corresponds to *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [cakraśaṅkhaḥoma], although there no sacrifice into the fire is prescribed for the recitation of the cakra and śaṅkha mantras.

ritual sipping (*ācamana*). The yajamāna sits down again in his place in front of the fire and the saṃkalpa for the final sacrifice is spoken.

Viṣṇubali in a domestic setting in Vijayawada [handbook used:  
*Sūtrānukramaṇikā*]

[saṃkalpa]

The bṛhaspati and the assistant recite the gāyatrī mantra while the yajamāna restrains his breath. This recitation extends to the saṃkalpa for viṣṇubali. While the bṛhaspati speaks the saṃkalpa, the yajamāna and also his wife adopt the corresponding hand positions. Both look toward the sacrificial fire. The bṛhaspati inserts the gotra name and the personal name of the pregnant woman into the saṃkalpa.<sup>499</sup> The assistant indicates to the yajamāna that he should touch the opening of the vessel of water standing to his right. The pregnant woman gets up and moves into the living quarters.

[puruṣāvāhana]<sup>500</sup>

The bṛhaspati reads out the instructions from *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* 2.23.5–9 up to “āvāhya” and recites the invocation formulas. At the same time the yajamāna takes a bundle of darbha grass, dips it in the water vessel to his right, and drips water onto the vessel standing to the north of the fire.

[nirvāpaṇa]<sup>501</sup>

The bṛhaspati reads out the instructions from *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [nirvāpaṇa]. The yajamāna takes a tin of clarified butter and refills the dish in front of him. The bṛhaspati recites the nirvāpaṇa formulas. The yajamāna spoons clarified butter out of the dish with a wooden sruva spoon and pours it back into the dish from the height of a few centimetres.

[āghāra]<sup>502</sup>

Now follows pariṣecana, introducing the offering of clarified butter: the bṛhaspati recites the mantras and the yajamāna takes water from the pot in front of with a darbha grass bundle and sprinkles with it around the fire. Immediately thereafter the bṛhaspati and the assistants recite the formulas for offering to the fire. Using the wooden sruva spoon, the yajamāna pours a little clarified butter to the fire on each “svāhā.” The sequence ends with the closing pariṣecana. The

499 Although prescribed in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [saṃkalpa], he does not mention the place and time. However, these specifications were in fact named during the first saṃkalpa at the beginning of the entire ritual sequence.

500 Here starts the video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD.

501 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:00:59.

502 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:01:26.

bṛhaspati recites the formula and the yajamāna sprinkles around the fire with water as before.

[preparation of the sthaṇḍila]<sup>503</sup>

The yajamāna stands up and positions himself before the prepared table, the rostrum, on the northern side of the terrace. The bṛhaspati reads out the text which describes this rostrum.<sup>504</sup>

[dvādaśanāmāvāhana]

The bṛhaspati and the assistant recite the mantras invoking the twelve mūrtis. The yajamāna goes along the table from west to east. He sprinkles with a kūrca water on the nearer row of betel leaves. He takes this water from the vessel which earlier stood to the right of him in front of the fire, from which he also had taken water for the invocation of Puruṣa.

[snapana] and [arcana]<sup>505</sup>

The bṛhaspati reads out the instructions at the start of *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [snapana] and the abbreviated formulas given there for the offering of the seats etc. He recites only the first and last of the mantras.<sup>506</sup> During the recitation the yajamāna again distributes flowers, sandal paste and unbroken rice grains (akṣata) on the first row of betel leaves, sprinkles them with water and waves a tray with burning camphor and incense over the seats. The bṛhaspati now recites the first of the three mantras prescribed in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [snapana] for the bathing of the god. The yajamāna again sprinkles water. The recitation breaks off. The assistant hands the kūrca over to the yajamāna who distributes them— from west to east on the betel leaves. The yajamāna then takes his seat in front of the fire.

[viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta]<sup>507</sup>

The bṛhaspati recites the twelve mantras of the vaiṣṇavasūkta and the viṣṇusūkta together with the assistant, ending each with “svāhā.” On each “svāhā” the yajamāna pours clarified butter with the spoon from the vessel in front of him into the fire. Afterwards the bṛhaspati and the assistant recite the closing formula for pariṣecana, while the yajamāna sprinkles water around the fire.

503 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:02:03.

504 The rostrum is erected to the north of the fire (pic), not to the east as specified in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [preparation of the sthaṇḍila].

505 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:02:26.

506 He does not actually recite the mantras for each of the twelve mūrtis individually as prescribed in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [snapana].

507 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:04:09.

[pāyasanivedana]<sup>508</sup>

The bṛhaspati reads out the instructions. As he does so the assistant places the god's image on the oblong table on the north side of the terrace, in the centre behind the rows of betel leaves (see plate 9, p. 196). The yajamāna stands up and makes his way to the table with the twelve seats. There he first distributes twelve leaves as a front row, pours a little clarified butter into a large pot of milk porridge and spreads this, first with his fingers and then with a spoon, on the twelve leaves (from west to east). Standing at the western head of the table, the assistant prepares a plate with flowers and two leaves. The yajamāna puts two dabs of milk porridge on each of these leaves. Nivedana now takes place: the yajamāna sprinkles water on the leaves with milk porridge while the bṛhaspati recites the twelve mantras from “oṃ keśavāya namaḥ” to “oṃ dāmodarāya namaḥ.”<sup>509</sup> The bṛhaspati reads out the instructions, the assistant recites the formula and the yajamāna offers drinking water, water to rinse the mouth and betel nuts to the mūrtis, as he sprinkles water over the seats, and then touches the seats with his right hand.<sup>510</sup>

[pāyasahoma]<sup>511</sup>

The yajamāna sits down in front of the fire and sprinkles water around it while the bṛhaspati says the pariṣecana formulas. The bṛhaspati reads out the instructions. He begins with the recitation of the mantras “oṃ keśavāya svāhā, oṃ nārāyaṇāya svāhā.” Then the pregnant woman is called in. She sits down to the right of her husband. He puts a leaf into her hand. Using his hand, the yajamāna puts a little milk porridge onto it, and then he adds clarified butter with a spoon. The pregnant woman puts it to the fire, while the yajamāna separately pours clarified butter into the fire. Every time they make this offering, one of the twelve mantras directed to the twelve mūrtis is recited (“keśavāya svāhā” to “dāmodarāya svāhā”). The bṛhaspati and the assistant adjust the speed of the recitation to that of the yajamāna's and the pregnant woman's offerings. The recitation continues seamlessly with the vaiṣṇavasūkta and viṣṇusūkta with the couple making an offering of mixed milk porridge and clarified butter into the fire on each “svāhā.” The bṛhaspati recites the formula for the closing pariṣecana and the yajamāna sprinkles water around the fire.

508 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:05:34.

509 Although it is specified in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [pāyasanivedana] that each of the twelve mūrtis should individually be addressed in the mantras, this is abbreviated in the recitation.

510 Again in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [pāyasanivedana] the formulas are prescribed for all twelve mūrtis, but here the means of worship are in fact offered together.

511 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:07:36.

[pāyasanivedana]<sup>512</sup>

The ṛhaspati slips a few lines and begins to read again the ritual instructions for *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [pāyasanivedana]. He and the assistant recite again “keśavāya namaḥ ājyasamyuktam pāyasam nivedayāmi” etc. This time, however, after Dāmodara, Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣana, Pradyumna and other forms of the god are included in the recitation. The yajamāna, standing in front of the rostrum, lays flowers in front of the god’s image and on the tray with the metal symbols, and sprinkles the twelve seats again with water.

[saṃkalpa 2]<sup>513</sup>

The ṛhaspati reads the instructions. He and the assistant recite the gāyatrī mantra. The yajamāna restrains the breath. The ṛhaspati reads out the wording of the saṃkalpa for “garbhacakra karma,” inserting the gotra name as well as the personal name of the woman.<sup>514</sup> During the reading of the saṃkalpa the yajamāna stands between the fire and rostrum but he adopts the corresponding posture of the hands.

[cakraśaṅkha pūjā]<sup>515</sup>

The ṛhaspati reads out the instructions. The yajamāna takes the tray with the symbols from the table and passes it to the assistant sitting to the north-west of the fire. He takes the symbols from the plate, dips them in clarified butter, lays flowers on the tray, briefly heats the symbols and places them again on the tray. The ṛhaspati reads out further instructions from *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [cakraśaṅkha pūjā]. The yajamāna, who is still standing in front of the table, takes the tray back again and places it at the feet of the god’s image. The assistant begins to recite the invocatory formulas for the disk and conch. Then the first cakra mantra is recited. The yajamāna sprinkles the symbols with water. The assistant and the ṛhaspati recite the formulas for some of the means of worship while the yajamāna stands with joined hands in front of the rostrum. The yajamāna lights two incenses and waves them over the symbols. Afterwards he also waves a camphor light over the symbols and in front of the image of the god. The ṛhaspati and the assistant meanwhile recite the corresponding offering formulas. As they recite “havis nivedayāmi” the yajamāna also places the large pot with milk porridge on the table in front of the image of the god and lays two betel leaves with betel nuts there. He then retakes his place in front of the fire.

512 This scene is not represented in the video on the DVD.

513 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:11:57.

514 The announcement, prescribed in the text, of the time and place is left out.

515 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:12:32.

[cakraśaṅkhahoma]<sup>516</sup>

The bṛhaspati and the assistant recite the opening formula of the pariṣecana while the yajamāna sprinkles water around the fire. The bṛhaspati and the assistant recite the first cakra mantra seven times, which they end with “svāhā.” They then recite the cakra gāyatrī twelve times in all, likewise ending each time with “svāhā.” On each “svāhā” the yajamāna pours clarified butter to the fire with the wooden sruva spoon. After this the assistant reads out the second cakra mantra twice and recites once each of the other mantras given in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*: the cakra gāyatrī, the two śaṅkha mantras and the śaṅkha gāyatrī. To finish pariṣecana is done again: the bṛhaspati and the assistant reciting the formulas while the yajamāna sprinkles water around the fire.<sup>517</sup>

[cakraśaṅkhapratāpana]<sup>518</sup>

The bṛhaspati reads out the instructions. The yajamāna gives the symbols and the plate to the assistant who is sitting to the north-west of the fire. The assistant then arranges leaves on the plate and the two dabs of milk porridge. He gives the plate back to the yajamāna, who holds the tray with the two symbols in his hands. While the yajamāna holds the plate, the bṛhaspati and the assistant together recite each of the two cakra mantras once, one after the other, and then the two śaṅkha mantras. One of the other Brahmans present starts to recite the vedamantras but soon stops again. Meanwhile the assistant heats the two symbols together in the fire, holding both in his right hand. He takes the heated cakra symbol, makes the yajamāna hold it together with him and together they press the symbol on the dab of rice on the right (from the yajamāna’s point of view).<sup>519</sup> Thereafter the assistant heats the śaṅkha symbol and presses it, together with the yajamāna, onto the other dab. The assistant lays both symbols back on the plate. The yajamāna holds the tray during the remaining recitation.<sup>520</sup>

516 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:14:56.

517 The performance again diverges from *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [cakraśaṅkhahoma] with respect to the mantras and their frequency. Moreover, the 108 clarified butter offerings into the fire are not made.

518 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:17:29.

519 According to *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [cakraśaṅkhapratāpana], the heating and the marking of the milk porridge should take place during the recitation of the cakra and śaṅkha mantras.

520 The circumambulation of the fire and the recitation of the puruṣasūkta described in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [vedamantra] are not performed. Nevertheless, the puruṣasūkta is recited later, during [pāyasapraśana].

[praṇāma]<sup>521</sup>

The yajamāna stands up, bows before the rostrum and performs one bow before each of the twelve mūrtis while the bṛhaspati and the assistant recite the twelve mantras from “oṃ keśavāya namaḥ” to “oṃ dāmodarāya namaḥ.” At the same time the grandmother of the pregnant woman smears her temples, throat and upper arms with sandal paste.

[prāyaścitta]<sup>522</sup>

A ritual which is not part of viṣṇubali is now performed, namely an atonement ritual (*prāyaścitta*) for not having performed or for not having performed at the prescribed time some of the prenatal saṃskāras (see VaikhSmS 6.3). For this the assistant hands the yajamāna a golden foetus symbol, called suvarṇagarbha, on a tray. The yajamāna first places it with a flower in front of the divine image. He takes a garland of flowers from the image of the god, and passes it to the grandmother of the pregnant woman, who hangs the garland around the neck of the pregnant woman. Then the yajamāna tries to tie the suvarṇagarbha around his wife’s stomach. However, the thread is too short. While the Brahmans start to recite mantras dedicated to Viṣṇu, the pregnant woman’s aunt brings a new thread. Now the yajamāna accomplishes his task.

[vedamantra]<sup>523</sup>

The assistant trickles clarified butter on the two dabs of milk porridge marked with the symbols. He hands the plate to the yajamāna, who is standing next to his wife. The yajamāna hands the pregnant woman a leaf with a dab of milk porridge. Meanwhile all Brahmans present start to recite the puruṣasūkta.

[pāyasaprāśana]<sup>524</sup>

After a short pause the pregnant woman swallows the milk porridge in one go. The same happens with the second dab of milk porridge. Immediately afterwards the woman receives from her aunt some water to drink, and then the yajamāna trickles three times water for ritual swallowing (*ācamana*) into her hand. She slurps this down in one go. All Brahmans present continue to recite.

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521 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:20:40.

522 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:21:12; see also “parts of the ritual” -> “atonement” on the DVD.

523 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:23:28.

524 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:24:22.



[blessings]<sup>525</sup>

Finally those present receive flower petals from the assistant and throw these first on the head of the pregnant woman, then on the yajamāna's head.<sup>526</sup> Viṣṇubali is thereby brought to a conclusion.

Viṣṇubali in a small temple in Vijayawada [handbook used:  
*Sūtrānukramaṇikā*]

[saṃkalpa]<sup>527</sup>

The assistants recite the gāyatrī mantra and the bṛhaspati indicates to the yajamāna that he should restrain his breath. An assistant recites the saṃkalpa, and together with the bṛhaspati he adds the personal name and the gotra name of the pregnant woman. The bṛhaspati sees to it that the yajamāna adopts the appropriate hand and body postures and leads him through the saṃkalpa. The yajamāna, who has no knowledge of Sanskrit, tries to repeat the words after the bṛhaspati. The bṛhaspati makes the yajamāna touch the opening of the water pot with his right hand. Immediately afterwards the bṛhaspati indicates to the couple that they should take their place in front of the rostrum with the twelve seats for the mūrtis.

[puruṣāvāhaṇa]

While the couple seat themselves in front of the rostrum, an assistant recites the four mantras for the invocation of the god Puruṣa. During this the bṛhaspati sprinkles the vessel standing to the north of the fire with water. The yajamāna is not involved.

[nirvāpaṇa]

The assistant reads out the nirvāpaṇa mantras, while the bṛhaspati, using a piece of wood as a spoon, dips it into a dish of clarified butter standing in the northwest corner of the sacrificial fire, and lets the clarified butter drop back into the dish from the height of a few centimetres. The yajamāna is also not involved here.

[āghāra]

The bṛhaspati performs pariṣecana, sprinkling water around the fire while an assistant recites the formulas. The assistant reads out the ritual instruction “tathaiva hutvā” from *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [āghāra]. The bṛhaspati indicates to the

525 See video sequence “full ritual” on the DVD, starting from 00:26:09; see also “parts of the ritual” -> “concluding rites.”

526 What now takes place is not the final sacrifice, as specified in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [pāyasaprāśana], but śimanta.

527 The saṃkalpa represented on the DVD (“parts of the ritual” -> “preparatory rites” -> formal declaration”) is the saṃkalpa spoken at the very beginning of the entire ritual event, not the one spoken at the beginning of viṣṇubali.

yajamāna to sit down in front of the fire again. His wife remains seated in front of the rostrum. The assistants recite the mantras together with the *br̥haspati*, and on each “svāhā” the yajamāna puts clarified butter to the fire with the piece of wood. As closing *pariṣecana* the *br̥haspati* sprinkles water around the fire and the assistant recites the corresponding formulas.

[preparation of the *sthaṇḍila*]<sup>528</sup>

The yajamāna takes his place again next to his wife in front of the rostrum. The assistant reads out from the ritual handbook the instructions for the rostrum and the laying out of the seats on it.

[*dvādaśanāmāvāhana*]<sup>529</sup>

An assistant reads out the instructions. Another assistant sitting opposite the yajamāna indicates to him how he should proceed. The assistants begin the invocation of Viṣṇu with “oṃ viṣṇave...” Meanwhile the yajamāna sprinkles water on the seats of the first three *mūrtis* with a *darbha* grass bundle. As the *br̥haspati* notices that the names of the gods used are not those prescribed in the handbook, he corrects the assistants. They inform the yajamāna that he should start anew. The yajamāna and his wife respectfully put their hands together in the direction of the rostrum. After that the assistants begin the recitation again together with the *br̥haspati*. While they recite “oṃ keśavam āvāhayāmi” to “oṃ dāmodaram āvāhayāmi,” the yajamāna again sprinkles water on the *kūrcas* one after another from east to west, supervised by one assistant.

[*snapana*] and [*arcana*]<sup>530</sup>

The assistant reads the instructions. The yajamāna and his wife receive *akṣata* rice grains from the assistants and scatter these over the twelve seats. The *br̥haspati* then recites in detail the formulas for the offering of the seats (*āsana*) to all twelve forms of the god while the yajamāna sprinkles water on the seats. The *br̥haspati* recites an abridged form of the offering of the means of worship. The yajamāna and his wife again receive *akṣata* rice grains, which they scatter over the twelve seats. The yajamāna sprinkles water from a small vessel with a

528 See video sequence on the DVD -> “parts of the ritual” -> “main offerings” -> “pūjā for viṣṇu,” starting from 00:04:24. This *sthaṇḍila* had been prepared by two assistants of the priest beforehand: one of them placed the *darbha* grass bundles as seats on the twelve leaves placed on a layer of rice grains, another assistant provided betel nuts, unbroken rice grains (*akṣata*) flowers, and placed one coin on each leave. Another assistant prepared two leaves in the front row as seats for Viṣṇu’s weapons.

529 See video sequence on the DVD -> “parts of the ritual” -> “main offerings” -> “pūjā for viṣṇu,” starting from 00:06:14.

530 See video sequence on the DVD -> “parts of the ritual” -> “main offerings” -> “pūjā for viṣṇu,” starting from 00:05:22.

flower over the seats. One after another the assistant hands the yajamāna burning incense and a small burning camphor lamp, which the yajamāna waves clockwise over the seats, while the pregnant woman touches the back of his right hand with her right hand and thus performs the movement with him.<sup>531</sup>

[cakraśaṅkhapūjā]<sup>532</sup>

The worship and invocation of the disk and conch follow now.<sup>533</sup> Dabs of milk porridge are spread on the first row of twelve betel leaves. An assistant invokes the disk and conch in their two symbols while the others recite the corresponding invocation mantras. He then places flower petals on the two leaves and worships the disk and conch with perfumed water, and finally with a burning camphor lamp and incense. Then another assistant places a small vessel with milk porridge between the two symbols, and also two dabs of milk porridge on the two leaves. The other assistant pours a little clarified butter over these two dabs and then offers it to the disk and conch by sprinkling some water on the dabs. Afterwards the yajamāna waves a burning camphor lamp over the rostrum, his wife again holding his right hand with her right hand and so performing the movement with him. At the same time those assembled recite verses of praise.

[pāyasanivedana]<sup>534</sup>

The assistant again sprinkles water on all the milk porridge dabs on the rostrum and the assembly recites a nārāyaṇa gāyatrī. The yajamāna and his wife again scatter akṣata rice grains on the seats of the gods and on the two metal symbols. Finally each of them again receives some akṣata rice grains in their hands and an assistant sprinkles water on them. Both put these grains on the ground in front of them.

[praṇāma]<sup>535</sup>

The yajamāna and the pregnant woman stand up. They stand in front of the rostrum with their hands respectfully joined while the bṛhaspati and the assistants recite the twelve formulas from “oṃ keśavāya namaḥ” to “oṃ dāmodarāya namaḥ.” The yajamāna is asked to repeat these formulas one after the other.

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531 The three prokṣaṇa mantras prescribed in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [snapana] are not recited here and the ritual sections [snapana] and [arcana] are taken together. Moreover, the worship described in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [arcana] is simply read out, but not actually performed.

532 See video sequence on the DVD -> “parts of the ritual” -> “main offerings” -> “pūjā for viṣṇu,” starting from 00:07:54.

533 In *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* the worship of the two symbols is prescribed only for a later point.

534 No video representation of this sequence is given on the DVD.

535 No video representation of this sequence is given on the DVD.

[viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta] and [pāyasahoma]<sup>536</sup>

The couple sits down again in front of the fire. The yajamāna restrains the breath. The bṛhaspati leads him through a short saṃkalpa which ends on “hoṣye.”<sup>537</sup> The yajamāna touches the edge of the water pot. He now performs pariṣecana alone for the first time, while the assistant speaks the corresponding formulas. Those present—except the bṛhaspati and the yajamāna—recite the twelve mantras of the Vaiṣṇavasūkta and the Viṣṇusūkta. Meanwhile the yajamāna puts clarified butter with a wooden stick into the fire. At the start of the seventh mantra, that is, at the recitation of the Viṣṇusūkta, the bṛhaspati indicates to the pregnant woman to put milk porridge from the pot standing in front of her to the fire with her hand. From this point on the yajamāna and his wife together offer clarified butter and milk porridge to the fire on each “svāhā.”<sup>538</sup> The pregnant woman continues to put milk porridge to the fire while the yajamāna offers clarified butter and the assistants recite the twelve mantras from “oṃ keśavāya namaḥ” to “oṃ dāmodarāya namaḥ.”

[śaraṇāgati?]<sup>539</sup>

Afterwards the bṛhaspati recites four times the mantra: “oṃ hūṃ hrīm̐ kṛṣṇāya govindāya vallabhāya svāhā.” On “svāhā” the pregnant woman and the yajamāna offer milk porridge and clarified butter to the fire as before.<sup>540</sup> After brief instructions in Telugu from the bṛhaspati, the yajamāna and his wife put their hands together while the bṛhaspati twice pronounces the following formula for them: “devakīputra govinda vāsudeva jagatpate dehi me tanayam. kṛṣṇa tvām ahaṃ śaraṇaṃ gataḥ”<sup>541</sup> and “hrīm̐ kṛṣṇāya svāhā” The yajamāna tries to pro-

536 See video sequence on the DVD -> “parts of the ritual” -> “main offerings” -> “offering into the fire,” starting from 00:04:42.

537 I could not clearly understand this saṃkalpa, but as it ended on “hoṣye” the wording could not be the same as the only much later prescribed saṃkalpa in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [saṃkalpa 2].

538 The separate sacrifices of clarified butter and milk porridge prescribed in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [viṣṇusūkta / vaiṣṇavasūkta] and [pāyasahoma] are therefore taken together here.

539 See video sequence on the DVD -> “parts of the ritual” -> “main offerings” -> “viṣṇu marks the foetus,” starting from 00:05:43.

540 The deviation here from the instructions in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [pāyasahoma] is very clear: a further offering of milk porridge should follow with the recitation of the vaiṣṇavasūkta and viṣṇusūkta. The last mantra which is recited several times by the bṛhaspati is not mentioned in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*.

541 This part of the ritual is not mentioned in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*. In translation this reads: “O son of Devakī, Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Vāsudeva, Lord of the worlds, give me

nounce these formulas after him. On “svāhā” he offers clarified butter into the fire.<sup>542</sup>

[cakraśaṅkhahoma] and [cakraśaṅkhapatāpana]<sup>543</sup>

The offering of clarified butter during the recitation of the cakra and śaṅkha mantras takes place, together with the heating of the two symbols. The bṛhaspati recites the first cakra mantra three times, and then “oṃ cakraḥ svāhā, oṃ hṛīṃ cakrāya svāhā, oṃ sudarśanāya svāhā.” Meanwhile the yajamāna offers clarified butter into the fire. The bṛhaspati first heats the symbol of the disk in the fire. He then presses it on one of the two dabs of milk porridge, which lie there on two leaves on a cloth on a plate. On the prompting of the bṛhaspati the yajamāna continues with the offerings. The bṛhaspati then marks the other dab of milk porridge, reciting the Śaṅkha mantra and then “oṃ śaṅkhāya svāhā, oṃ hṛīṃ śaṅkhāya svāhā, oṃ pāñcajanya svāhā.” The bṛhaspati takes the stick from the yajamāna’s hand and trickles a little clarified butter on the two dabs, holding his left hand over his heart as he does so.<sup>544</sup>

[pāyasaprāśana]<sup>545</sup>

The bṛhaspati silently takes one of the two dabs of milk porridge from the plate and gives it to the yajamāna who then passes the dab on to the pregnant woman. She takes the milk porridge from the leaf into her hand and swallows it in one go. The bṛhaspati recites two short mantras ending in “svāhā.” He gives the second dab of milk porridge to the yajamāna, thereby uttering two more mantras.<sup>546</sup> The pregnant woman also swallows the second dab of milk porridge. The bṛhaspati puts a little water into the pregnant woman’s hand. She pours it

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offspring! O Kṛṣṇa, I have taken refuge in you!” This therefore might represent a formula for taking refuge in Kṛṣṇa, which the couple speaks.

542 A second saṃkalpa is described in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [praṇāma]. This element is evidently lacking here and is substituted by this formula of taking refuge.

543 See video sequence on the DVD -> “parts of the ritual” -> “main offerings” -> “viṣṇu marks the foetus,” starting from 00:07:10.

544 The rising and circling of the fire prescribed in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [vedamantra] is left out here, as is the recitation of the beginning of the vedas and the sūktas. The 108 offerings of clarified butter prescribed in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [cakraśaṅkhahoma] are also not actually performed. *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [praṇāma], the bowing of the yajamāna before the twelve mūrtis, likewise plays no role.

545 See video sequence on the DVD -> “parts of the ritual” -> “main offerings” -> “viṣṇu marks the foetus,” starting from 00:08:38.

546 The first mantra contains the words: *sudarśanam mahājvāla samāprabha ... svāhā*, the second mantra contains *pāñcajanya ... vidmahe mahāviṣṇave ... svāhā*. These mantras are not prescribed in *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* [pāyasaprāśana].

behind her seat, whereupon the bṛhaspati sprinkles the fire while an assistant speaks the pariṣecana formula. Viṣṇubali is thereby concluded.

#### 4.5 Factors behind ritual variance

Here the following questions are dealt with on the basis of the material presented so far: how and why enter variations the ritual, how may the relation between text and performance in general be characterised, when and why may a ritual or a ritual element be seen as “defective” or “invalid,” how may the role of the bṛhaspati in the course of the ritual be characterised, how does the ritual specialist relate to the text he uses, what is the function of the “formal declaration” (*saṃkalpa*), and to what extent are the issues related to the specific Vaikhānasa identity worked out on the basis of the texts relevant in the observed ritual practice.

The comparison of the stagings shows that the specific circumstances are highly relevant for the actual form of the performance. This holds true for the familial and professional background of the yajamāna, the economic situation of the families involved, the spatial situation, and the pregnant woman’s health. For example, the degree and mode of integration of components from the temple ritual depends on the context. In Cidambaram the yajamāna and also many of the male guests present were practising temple priests. Accordingly, those ritual elements which are performed many times every day in the temple, such as the worship of the god (*pūjā/arcana/ārādhana*) with different means of worship (*upacāra*), were carried out here in accordance with the customs of the temple: the feeding of the god, for example, was screened from public view. In the temple setting in Vijayawada the ritual was performed in front of the *sanctum sanctorum* of the temple. For this reason domestic images of the god were not used and the temple image played an important role, especially during the kindling of the fire. However, apart from such differences, which are based on individual and local particularities, further more general factors may be isolated which contribute to the variance in ritual.

##### 4.5.1 Text and performance

The sections of the ritual handbooks presented in 4.3 contain instructions for the staging of the main sacrifice during viṣṇubali. Although the two handbooks differ in style and at times in detail, there are no fundamental disagreements in the sections on viṣṇubali. Thus differences in the texts cannot be responsible for differences in performance. This comes as a surprise, since ritual rules, once set down in writing, are frequently seen to “freeze” the performance and to make

variations or deviations almost impossible.<sup>547</sup> Moreover, many scholars define ritual as being rule-governed (“prescribed” or “structured”) and even being mainly constituted by rules: it is only by following the rules that the ritual can be performed.<sup>548</sup> Thus it might be expected that the performance of rituals governed by identical (the two events in Vijayawada) or at least similar (Cidambaram) textual instructions would differ little, if at all.

The description of the three performances and the video sequences on the DVD nevertheless show clearly that the stagings differed from one another, at times even considerably, and also deviated from the underlying texts. How is this to be explained? If ritualised actions are to be understood as units or elements always already constituted by rules (see Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994: 88f.), then for the rituals discussed here these rules are evidently not (only) the written instructions of the ritual handbooks.

What Welbon (1984: 97), Brunner (1999: 263–268) and Fuller (2003: 81, 87) say about the relation of āgamic texts and temple ritual holds true for the relation of handbooks and the performance of domestic rituals as well: in the past these ritual texts were never conceived as models that must be followed prescriptively. Knowledge of rituals leads to knowing the meaning of the texts, not the other way round. In present day practice too the written instructions serve more as guidelines than as a rulebook.<sup>549</sup> This holds true even for the ritual performances during which the instructions are read out aloud. Ritualised reading (recitation) is a ritual presentation of texts which is not to be confused with reading a text for getting information.

It is moreover striking that the rites not described in the texts were identical in all the stagings. Basic rites (building-blocks of many rituals) used in the course of many domestic rituals are for example the recitation, the body posture, and the hand gestures during the saṃkalpas, and the offering of the clarified butter to the fire. These rites have to some degree a “trans-confessional” character. They are not only used in this way in the Vaikhānasa tradition, but are the common property of most sanskrit Brahmanic ritual traditions. These elements are

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547 See, for example, Platvoet 1995: 29 and note 24. It is moreover a fact that the printing of the ritual texts made the interaction between text and performance less flexible: the texts, which were seldom read, interpreted and perhaps copied before, were ossified by printing, that is, through the change of medium from individually copied palm-leaf manuscripts to a uniform printing on paper. This aspect is not pursued further in the present work; see Fuller 2003: 86ff.

548 See Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994: 117. References to diverse definitions of “ritual” are given in Snoek 2006.

549 See also Buss 2007: 168.

embodied in every ritual specialist and consulting ritual instructions is not necessary here.<sup>550</sup> Significant differences in the stagings occurred especially in those rites which are unique to *viṣṇubali*, and for which the ritual handbooks were consulted throughout. Here it became clear that the education and personal background of the *br̥haspati*, as well as his experience in performing this ritual, were important factors for the enactment.

The use of the ritual handbooks is, however, judged ambivalently. On the one hand the use of written ritual instructions is seen as a proof that the rituals are in fact enacted according to the rules, on the other it is also something that the ritual specialists of the tradition themselves regard as a deficiency: it reveals that the knowledge of the *br̥haspati* is insufficient and he has to rely on the guidelines in the form of a text.<sup>551</sup> In fact, the persuasiveness of the performances, even for me as an outsider, exists in an inversely proportional relationship to the degree of reference to the text. In Cidambaram the *br̥haspati* came across as very experienced in the performance of the rituals. This impression was reinforced by the very high speed of his recitations. Where the text implicitly assumed materials or actions, he swiftly supplied or performed them. He knew the sequence of the ritual so well, that without further ado he even integrated the instructions from the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* into the staging when he divided the ritual into two sections by introducing the second *saṃkalpa* not given in his ritual handbook. The situation in the domestic setting in Vijayawada was quite different. The *br̥haspati* came across as very inexperienced in performing the prenatal *saṃskāras* and stuck to the letter of the ritual handbook. This even led to him allowing a ritual section to be performed twice, when he slipped some lines in the handbook. Overall the handbook was read

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550 What is true for several rites in the observed performances, is true for entire “genres” of ritual, too: in the performance of initiation (*upanayana*), marriage (*vivāha*) and to a somewhat lesser degree also to the eightieth birthday (*śatābhīṣeka*), local traditions and customs are apparent to a high degree, while many of the specific features of the different *sūtra* traditions fall by the wayside. Thus, one of the components of the marriage ritual of the *Vaikhānasa*s is *niṣeka*, which is traditionally regarded as the first *saṃskāra* of a *Vaikhānasa*, and as such constitutes a fundamental aspect of *Vaikhānasa* identity. In practice, however, it is apparent that *niṣeka* is in fact only rarely performed as a part of the marriage ceremony (see 2.2.1; see Hüsken 2005).

551 Welbon (1984: 98) even says: “... the reliance on a written ‘crib’ is probably disturbing not only because it may indicate that the performer’s learning is insecure. We ought also to be reminded that there is a great danger that certain efforts to ensure the maintenance of *āgamic* standards may actually exacerbate the difficulties challenging the survival of tradition and may, in fact, hasten its demise.” However, at the same time it has to be taken into account that ritualized reading can also enhance the perceived meaningfulness.



very slowly, and the ritual acts and the related recitations were often not well synchronized. In the temple setting in Vijayawada, by contrast, it was very clear that the *br̥haspati* regarded the details of the underlying text as guidelines or recommendations. This suggested a high degree of experience in the performance of these rituals. Although he followed the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* in the essential elements, in doing so he nevertheless made strenuous efforts to convey ritually his understanding of the central significance of *viṣṇubali*, namely that the unborn child takes refuge in *Viṣṇu* as *Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva*. Thus immediately before the feeding of the pregnant woman with the marked milk porridge, he had the *yajamāna* speak the formula for taking refuge on behalf of the unborn child: “O son of *Devakī*, *Kṛṣṇa*, *Govinda*, *Vāsudeva*, Lord of the worlds, give me offspring! O *Kṛṣṇa*, I have taken refuge in you!” This creativity emphasises the *br̥haspati*’s ritual competence and in no way devalues his performance.

#### 4.5.2 Mistakes in ritual

As I have argued elsewhere (Hüsken 2007b), we can gain important insights into the process by which the concrete form of the ritual emerges by considering deviations from ritual norms which are evaluated negatively (flaws, mistakes, errors, slips etc.). In the present examples it is evident that not each and every deviation from written instructions is perceived as a “mistake.” Thus, at some points in the performance in *Cidambaram* some mantras prescribed by the *Pūrvaprayoga* were not recited. In the performance in the domestic setting in *Vijayawada* it was striking that the sequence of rites prescribed in all the ritual texts, and confirmed in advance by the *br̥haspati* as the correct ritual sequence, was not adhered to. Shortly before the end of *viṣṇubali*, the atonement ritual for *sīmanta* (*sīmantaḥprāyaścitta*) was inserted. Moreover, the main sacrifice for *sīmanta* took place only after the conclusion of *viṣṇubali*, although the texts suggest that *sīmanta* precedes *viṣṇubali*. Due to a slip in reading, the *br̥haspati* allowed one ritual element to be performed twice. Occasionally the prescribed mantras were not recited, or recited at the wrong point. In the temple setting in *Vijayawada* at a certain point the participants hardly followed the sequence of rites as given in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* at all when putting the instructions into action. Some rites were left out, and the *br̥haspati* had the *yajamāna* speak a *saṃkalpa* which differed significantly from the *saṃkalpa* described later in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*. Some rites were fused with one another and the *br̥haspati* supplied mantras which appear in neither of the ritual handbooks. In addition the *br̥haspati* had the *yajamāna* pronounce a formula for taking refuge that is not even mentioned by the handbooks. These changes and deviations did not lead to

the ritual or parts of the ritual being judged to have been “wrongly performed.” Rather, it became clear that one can only speak of “mistakes” when the *br̥haspati* leading the ritual himself explicitly or performatively declares certain acts or recitations to be mistaken. This is only the case if he revokes them and insists on a new, corrected performance of the rite in question. During the three stagings I was able to observe this in the following cases: unlike in Cidambaram and in the domestic setting in Vijayawada, the *br̥haspati* in the temple setting in Vijayawada indicated to the *yajamāna* to take his place in front of the platform with the seats for the god too early, namely, immediately after the first *saṃkalpa*. The *br̥haspati* did not at first correct his error and therefore performed the actions for the invocation of *Puruṣa* and the “filling” of the clarified butter himself. Only when the connected clarified butter sacrifice came up did the *br̥haspati* call the *yajamāna* back to the sacrificial fire so that he could perform the relevant actions there. The same *br̥haspati* had another rite corrected: when his assistants began to invoke *Viṣṇu* with names other than those of the twelve *mūrtis*, while the *yajamāna* began to sprinkle the “seats” of the *mūrtis* with water, the *br̥haspati* intervened and ordered that the invocation must be restarted, which happened immediately.

Deviations from the text were in principle not judged to be “mistakes” in ritual. Apparently the *br̥haspati* alone is competent to declare a ritual action correct or deficient. At the same time it is precisely the *br̥haspati* who is also competent to point out and correct mistaken ritual actions. The question as to who is competent and eligible to perform a ritual correctly, on the one hand, and who possesses the authority and competence to disclose mistakes and to correct them, on the other, is of utmost importance here.<sup>552</sup> Here it is the ritual specialist as competent ritual agent who alone has the power to react creatively to contingencies and to deviate from the norm. His ritual competence is therefore not only established through knowledge of and adherence to rules, but also through his interactive and improvisational skills (see Schieffelin 1998: 198). In the performance of rituals the *br̥haspati* evidently not only has the competence to introduce changes in relation to the written instructions, but also to add, omit and replace rites, and to invert their order.

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552 Brosius (2007: 302) characterises this competence as “the ownership of the right to know how, when and by whom a ritual could be performed effectively.”

### 4.5.3 The role of the bṛhaspati

Although several people are involved in the different tasks for staging the ritual,<sup>553</sup> it is invariably the bṛhaspati alone who leads it. The division of roles between the bṛhaspati, his assistants and the yajamāna differed in the three stagings. Nevertheless it was always the bṛhaspati who assigned the roles,<sup>554</sup> and it was never left to the yajamāna to decide which ritual acts he performed and in what way.

Moreover, how the bṛhaspati led the rituals and in what way he relied on the text also differed in all three cases. In Cidambaram he himself used the *Pūrvaprayoga*, reading out a part of the instructions and then converting them into recitation, or having the corresponding actions done. Recitation by the Brahmins present was initiated in Cidambaram by the bṛhaspati, in that he struck up the first words of the mantra, those present joining in provided they were familiar with the mantras. Where particular actions were required, the bṛhaspati indicated this to the yajamāna with clear gestures while he himself recited, or he called out brief instructions in Tamil to the yajamāna. Often the assistant sitting to the yajamāna's left indicated what he should do, or assisted him to do it. In the domestic setting in Vijayawada the bṛhaspati read out the relevant section of the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā* in full. Where recitation of formulas or mantras was required, the bṛhaspati began these after the respective section had been read out. The assistant then performed or co-ordinated the accompanying ritual actions of the yajamāna. Thus in the domestic setting in Vijayawada and in Cidambaram the bṛhaspatīs did not perform the ritual acts, but instead either the yajamāna or the assistant. In the temple setting in Vijayawada, by contrast, an assistant read out the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*, and he also began the required recitations. The bṛhaspati put some of the instructions into action himself, others he left to the yajamāna to perform, making clear to him with gestures or instructions in Telugu what was expected of him.

This high degree of agency assigned to the bṛhaspati is all the more surprising as the texts know nothing of him or his role: they consistently indicate that

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553 These are the bṛhaspati and one or more assistants, who in the temple setting in Vijayawada were his pupils, but in the domestic setting in Vijayawada and in Cidambaram were relatives of the yajamāna. In addition there were always also other Brahmins present, who supported the officiator while reciting mantras. These assistants are, just like the bṛhaspati, not mentioned in the ritual handbooks.

554 In the different performances the participation of the pregnant women differed, the degree and kind of their involvement being left to the bṛhaspati to determine, although the woman's state of health is also taken into consideration.

the yajamāna is the acting person. In fact the passages on the main sacrifice for viṣṇubali give not the slightest hint that anyone other than the yajamāna—and occasionally the pregnant woman—are involved to any great extent in the staging. Although this fact is mentioned in the margins of the scholarly literature several times, the significance of it has nevertheless never been pointed out.<sup>555</sup>

Not a single word is said about the bṛhaspati in the ritual handbooks, but in all three stagings he was the ritual specialist with primary responsibility. He led the rituals, functioning as “director” of the rites that he initiated. He co-ordinated the recitations and actions by his instructions and gestures, and in part performed them himself. In this the handbooks served as guiding principles for action; nevertheless there was no general standard and no higher authority standing over the bṛhaspati in the situation. Although the structure of the different performances was the same in all essentials, the performances can evidently be abbreviated or embellished according to the discretion or the taste of the bṛhaspati in which the individual’s feel for the appropriateness of any particular element also played an important role. Thus the manner in which the bṛhaspati wished, or was able, to carry out the performance determined the form of the staging. In this respect the performances in the domestic setting in Vijayawada and in the temple setting in Vijayawada are two widely-separated examples: while the bṛhaspati in the temple setting wanted to present a good and convincing performance, the bṛhaspati in the domestic setting in Vijayawada clearly was primarily concerned to stick to the ritual text with as few deviations as possible. Nevertheless in each case the bṛhaspatīs were entirely free in this regard.<sup>556</sup>

#### 4.5.4 Saṃkalpa as transfer of agency

Can one really speak of the bṛhaspati’s agency? From the ritual texts, and among them above all from the content of the saṃkalpa, it seems clear that the husband

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555 B. K. Smith (1989: 151), for example, refers only to the priest in domestic ritual as an “optional helper.” Caland (1929: 13, note 1) concludes from one passage in the *Vaiṣṇavāsmārtasūtra*, where an ācārya is mentioned, that this must be the leading priest, although this is not in the text. Müller (1992: 34) remarks that an ācārya is only mentioned in the description of the rituals for sūdras without attending to the fact that nowhere is a priest mentioned for the rituals of the twice-born, including Brahmins. This is different for śrauta rituals, as Michaels (2007) remarks.

556 Platvoet (1995: 33) calls this aspect in particular the performative dimension of ritual: rituals, as social events, must capture the attention of those involved. It should be added that in the cases dealt with here, the style of performance makes no difference to the efficacy of the ritual. Nevertheless, this “scene-setting” to a certain degree influences the chance of future engagements of the bṛhaspati.

of the pregnant woman and father of the unborn child is the performer of the ritual action. The saṃkalpa reads in the *Sūtrānukramaṇikā*: “Through the viṣṇubali ritual, [which is] the sacrifice for the Viṣṇu follower in [my wife’s] womb, I perform the saṃskāra on this rightfully wedded wife of mine, having [so and so] name and belonging to [so and so] gotra.” or, still more explicit in the *Pūrvaprayoga*: “Through the viṣṇubali ritual I perform the saṃskāra on my rightfully wedded wife, born on [so and so] lunar mansion [and] in [so and so] sign of the zodiac, in order to protect the child in the womb, [and] in order to attain the marking of the [child] in the womb with the disk, [and] in order to make the foetus a Viṣṇu-follower [already] in the womb.”

Michaels (2005: 47f.) deals in detail with saṃkalpas and characterises them as promissory speech acts. A saṃkalpa, he argues, must be consciously declared, as the literal meaning of saṃkalpa (“will, intention, decision”) itself suggests. However, Michaels adds that “a saṃkalpa cannot be considered as a communicative or informative act because its purpose is neither to communicate nor to inform anybody [... i]t just signalises that from that point in time on [...] all actions that follow [...] may be considered as being of a ritual or sacred nature” (2005: 59). He thereby refers to Humphrey & Laidlaw (1994: 74) who point out: “[...] the communication here is not intrinsic to the *ritual* character of these acts. It belongs rather to the as it were ‘pre-existing’ linguistic act which has been ritualized.” Ritual, according to Humphrey & Laidlaw (1994: 88ff.), is a type of action which is different from everyday activity by the “ritual stance,” or “ritual commitment” which the actor assumes in performing. A ritual act is perceived as a unit already established in advance, in which the nature and sequence of actions are determined not by the intention of the actor but are rather “predetermined,” not entirely authored by the actors themselves.<sup>557</sup> As the introduction to and the beginning of the ritual, the saṃkalpa serves precisely to create the adoption of this “ritual stance.”<sup>558</sup> Thus the fact that in practice only few yajamānas understand the content of this speech act does not affect the change in the plane of action which is initiated by the saṃkalpa. The bṛhaspati, however, understands or is aware of the meaning of the saṃkalpa, and moreover is capable of

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557 On the basis of this definition, Michaels (1998b: 257) lists five criteria which distinguish everyday actions from ritual actions: causal change, formal resolution, formal criteria for action, modal criteria for action, and change of identity, status or competence.

558 In the cases at hand, however, the ritual action framed by the saṃkalpa and the antahoma did not mark the beginning of the ritual as a whole, but marked the beginning of a specific section of the rituals performed at one stretch. One might therefore prefer to speak of a “nested frame,” a frame within a frame: “Nested framing continues the logic of hierarchical meta-messaging that characterizes lineal framing” (Handelman 2006).

including the appropriate details with regard to the ritual's time, performers, locality, and objectives (see Deshpande 1996: 404f.).<sup>559</sup>

Although the saṃkalpa does not express the intention of the agent, its content is not independent of ritual events: through declaring in the saṃkalpa the time, place and person, the yajamāna is identified and authorized to perform the ritual (Michaels 2005: 57). However, it is precisely this aspect that deserves our special attention. The yajamāna as is the actual performer of the ritual which—through his wife—has an effect on his child. It is into his mouth that the words of the formal declaration are placed. In practice, however, it is not the yajamāna who utters the formula, but the bṛhaspati (n the domestic setting in Vijayawada and in Cidambaram) or one of the assistants (in the temple setting in Vijayawada). In none of the three performances I observed did the yajamāna speak this saṃkalpa himself.<sup>560</sup> On account of this fact and also on account of the further course of events, I argue here that for the events framed by the saṃkalpa and the “offering at the end” (*antahoma*) the yajamāna is identified with the bṛhaspati. Both actors merge. This identification includes the transfer of agency from the yajamāna to the bṛhaspati.

By analysing the announcement of the time and place (*deśakāla*) in the context of a saṃkalpa Michaels shows how the time and locality of the ritual is generalized and thereby transcended by, for example, referring to the cosmographic territory (such as “Brahmā region”) and the cosmographic time (such as the yuga and mahāyuga).<sup>561</sup> This is true also for the yajamāna who loses his individuality in the saṃkalpa by being brought, through his genealogy, into an immediate relationship with a mythical Ṛṣi and the progenitor of his clan (Michaels 2005: 57f.). This de-individualizing of the yajamāna is not only expressed through the wording of the saṃkalpa but also has concrete effects upon the performance: it is not the yajamāna who in fact performs the ritual actions and speech acts, but rather the bṛhaspati who performs it or an assistant who does it

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559 A saṃkalpa consists of building blocks which can be put together in different ways, but is recognisable by virtue of its structure. A saṃkalpa does not have to be identical with the “ideal” model, but it must resemble it. “To be sure, not all [...] features of a saṃkalpa are found in the written sources [...], but they can generally be observed in ritual practice” says Michaels (2005: 50).

560 Gérard Colas informed me that according to Berti (2001: 18) contemporary priests in the Kullu valley mention the name of the yajamāna in the saṃkalpa and that from his own observation the ritual specialists in Andhra Pradesh simply have the yajamānas say *mama*, that is “mine,” after them, in order to show that they are the actual agents.

561 See Michaels 2005: 55f.; Tambiah (1979: 123) argues that “the cosmogony is repeatedly enacted in the archetypes reiterated in order to achieve the double feat of projecting concrete present time into mythical time.”

on his orders. This identification of the yajamāna and the bṛhaspati takes effect, at the latest, with the saṃkalpa, thus at the beginning of the ritual performance. Bṛhaspati and yajamāna are now no longer separate individuals, but rather melted in the person of the bṛhaspati. For the period of the ritual agency and ritual competence are united, and the bṛhaspati performs the rituals not “for the yajamāna” but rather “as the yajamāna.”<sup>562</sup> He is the only one competent to act and to decide how the ritual should be performed. He assigns roles, decides whether the rituals are ‘correct’ or not, who participates and what is done. Even the presence of other, more experienced ritual specialists and/or the availability of written instructions do not change this situation.

It is for this reason too that the division of tasks in the context of the ritual varies: due to the fusion of the agency of the yajamāna and the ritual competence of the bṛhaspati it makes no difference to the outcome of the ritual who performs what.<sup>563</sup> In the context of the ritual the yajamāna as individual is transcended and identified with the religious powers in the person of the bṛhaspati.

Michaels (2005: 61) assumes that the “announcement of time and place” prescribed as a part of the saṃkalpa contributes to the transformation of religious ideas into a ritual, and therefore speaks of a type of space *an sich*, expressed in the saṃkalpa. Equally central, however, is the identification—also accomplished in the saṃkalpa—of the officiator, the yajamāna, with religious power, which in the case of Brahmanic domestic ritual is represented by the bṛhaspati. The result is the transformation of the yajamāna into a person *an sich* whose agency is incorporated into and enacted by the bṛhaspati.

#### 4.5.5 Power and status

This central opposition between religious status and (worldly) agency, dissolved during the ritual and reinstated afterwards, is also the key for understanding why even within the group of the Vaikhānasas, who as temple priests are “professional” intermediaries between the god and the devotees, domestic rituals are always performed with a bṛhaspati as intermediary.<sup>564</sup> When asked, all the Vaikhā-

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562 During one ritual sequence in the temple setting in Vijayawada the yajamāna/bṛhaspati even appeared to be identified with the unborn child: the bṛhaspati spoke for the yajamāna the formula of taking refuge, in which the “agent” is the unborn child.

563 The same principle lies behind the perception of the bṛhaspati’s assistants. They are evidently understood as “part” of the bṛhaspati and perform, on the bṛhaspati’s instructions, some ritual acts and recitations for, or “as,” the yajamāna.

564 It must be emphasised, however, that this is a situation peculiar to the Vaikhānasas. Brahmanic ritual specialists are usually either the specialists in domestic ritual or the

nasas, in both Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh unanimously stated that despite the potential competence of the yajamāna to perform domestic rituals, the presence of a br̥haspati is indispensable. Only one Vaikhānasa reported that he has himself performed the prenatal saṃskāras for his first child, without the participation of a br̥haspati. Even in this case, however, his father was present and supervised parts of the ritual. The employment of a ritual specialist is evidently not merely a matter of lack of skills or knowledge on the side of the yajamāna. It rather seems that even rituals in the domestic sphere require mediation of a br̥haspati guaranteeing successful interaction with the god, which is essential for an orderly ongoing social existence (see Tambiah 1979: 119). Once the ritual is over, the latent opposition between (worldly) power (yajamāna) and (religious) status (br̥haspati) is reinstated. In the context of domestic rituals this fusion ends with the dissolution of the place of sacrifice which signals the end of the ritual, and is moreover performatively expressed by the yajamāna handing over the ritual fee (*dakṣiṇā*) to the br̥haspati. This handing over of *dakṣiṇā* implies that in exchange for this compensation the agency for ritual action as well as the religious merit arising from it are claimed by the yajamāna (see Colas 1989: 133f.). The dissolution of the temporary unit br̥haspati-yajamāna is also expressed by the br̥haspati's blessings for the yajamāna and his wife, and by his participation in the common meal after the ritual.<sup>565</sup>

#### 4.5.6 Ritual practice and the meaning attributed to the ritual

From the analysis of the texts (see 2.2.2.2–2.2.4.7) it emerges that for centuries a specific Vaikhānasa identity as opposed to other groups of vaiṣṇava temple priests has been connected primarily with their prenatal saṃskāras. In the course of the historical development the ritual element of branding the upper arms from the pañcasam̥skāra initiation has been integrated into the viṣṇubali saṃskāra as the branding of the milk porridge. Moreover, Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita linked this ritual element to the Śrīvaiṣṇava concept of “taking refuge in Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa” (*samā-*

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specialists in temple ritual. Here, the Vaikhānasas are to some extent exceptional, as they have their own tradition for both domestic and temple ritual. Pāñcarātra ritual specialists usually do not perform domestic rituals but employ a br̥haspati who is well versed in the relevant sūtra.

565 This relationship between the yajamāna and the br̥haspati in the context of domestic ritual resembles the structure of the relationship between Śrīvaiṣṇavas and Vaikhānasas in the context of temple rituals (see 5.2). The parallel is to be located, however, on an abstract level and is not perceived as such by the participants. In actuality the ācārya or the arcaka in temple ritual is primarily seen as a specialist in the task at hand (rituals).



*śrayana*) in the same way as the Śrīvaiṣṇavas linked pañcasamṣkāra to the taking refuge. The identification of the ritualized taking refuge with the prenatal viṣṇubali samṣkāra is explicitly formulated and defended in Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita's texts *Daśavidhahetunirūpaṇa* and *Vaikhānasamahimañjarī*, as well as in Raghupatihātācārya's *Mokṣapāyapradīpikā* (see 2.2.5.5). Even today these two aspects (branding and taking refuge) remain important issues in the performance of the viṣṇubali ritual. In each of the three ritual events witnessed and documented, the branding of the milk porridge was an integral component.<sup>566</sup> Moreover, in the performance in the temple setting in Vijayawada the "taking refuge" of the child was even explicitly acted out. Although this is not described or even mentioned in the handbooks and could only be observed in one of the three performances, the integration of elements of the "taking refuge" appears not to be exceptional. For example, the Vaikhānasa scholar and practitioner Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru from Machilipatnam stated that the aṣṭākṣara mantra, the dvaya mantra and the caramaśloka are whispered in the ear of the pregnant woman in the course of viṣṇubali before the branded milk porridge is given to her. These mantras play an important role in the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' "taking refuge" during pañcasamṣkāra. It is clear from these two examples, that the change in the meaning attributed to the ritual on the theological and soteriological level has also affected its practice.

#### 4.6 On ritual competence: the bṛhaspati

While the Vaikhānasas themselves assume that their samṣkāras have been performed unaltered up to the present according to the vedic specifications (here: according to the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra*), it became evident that changes can nevertheless be seen in both texts and practice. In this section one aspect of how such changes enter tradition will be dealt with. Agency<sup>567</sup> and the diverse modes of transmitting ritual competence are of central importance. As is clear from what has already been said, as bearer of ritual competence the bṛhaspati is cen-

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566 Contemporary practice in the marking of the milk porridge also allows for other variants. Thus the milk porridge does not necessarily have to be marked with the heated metal symbols. It is equally possible to draw the symbols of the conch and disk on the milk porridge with darbha grass, as follows from the *Pūrvaprayoga*. Moreover, several Vaikhānasas in southern Tamil Nadu told me that they do not mark the milk porridge physically but chant the sudarśana and pāñcājanya mantras over it before feeding the pregnant woman.

567 Ahearn (2001) offers a summary of recent research on agency especially from the point of view of linguistic ethnology. See also Sax 2006, and references there.

tral in determining the actual form of the rituals. The transfer of agency from the yajamāna to the bṛhaspati through the saṃkalpa is one of the factors which make the action a ritual action. The bṛhaspati is moreover recognized as having the competence (*adhikāra*) to lead or to perform the rituals in question.

It is therefore only by taking into account questions of ritual competence, its definition in a given context, its transmission and its confirmation that a comprehensive picture emerges of how ritual tradition is maintained *and* changed (see also Welbon 1984: 97). Because the nominal performer, the yajamāna, transfers his agency to him, the bearer of ritual competence has the authority not only to perform the ritual, but also to adapt it to contextual needs. As is clear from the analysis of ritual practice in 4.5.3, the bṛhaspati's authority to act includes that, for example, he can change the sequence of actions, abbreviate or expand performances, omit or add rites, substitute materials and even invent rites (see Michaels 2007: 124). Repeatability and repetition—as features of ritual—anchor rituals in the past and relate them to the future. It is precisely this potential repeatability which constitutes the ritual's potential for innovation: ritual is newly constructed in each performance but is perceived of as a repetition of former enactments (see Hüsken 2007a: 286). In this process, rituals are linked mainly through the ritual specialists to the past and the future, since the bearers of ritual competence “inherit, individuate, and transmit tradition” (Welbon 1984: 97). These individuated rituals become in turn prototypes of the next performance, which is then subject again to changes when enacted.<sup>568</sup> Moreover, at least in the case examined here, it is the ritual specialists who transmit, or modify, not only the concrete performance but also the interpretation of the rituals. The individual development and training of the performing bṛhaspati, as well as his interactive competence, are important factors in this process.

It is thus instructive to take a closer look at the processes of transmission of ritual competence among the Vaikhānasas. I will therefore present here three short vitae of Vaikhānasa ritual specialists, and introduce some institutionalised training centres for Vaikhānasas.<sup>569</sup>

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568 There are, however, always limitations to this innovative ritual creativity. These limitations are set by such factors as the concrete local and historical context or a sense of appropriateness.

569 This section is based on several periods of research in South India (8/2000–3/2001; 11/2001–2/2002; 6–8/2005) during which I visited the ritual specialists, conducted narrative, structured and semi-structured interviews with several Vaikhānasa scholars and practitioners, and visited some training institutions (*pāṭhaśālā*).

### 4.6.1 Traditional Brahmanic training

The Brahmanic sūtras and śāstras preserve detailed prescriptions for the education of boys and young men of the three “twice-born” classes (*varṇa*) during the first “stage of life” (*āśrama*) as a brahmacārin. The texts specify that this phase should last for up to twelve years, from initiation (*upanayana*) at the age of eight to twelve years to their return to their home and subsequent marriage.<sup>570</sup> At the heart of the learning process lies the personal relationship between the teacher and student. This is already implied by the terminology: the initiation which comes at the start of the training is regarded as a second birth. It makes the person concerned one of the “twice-born” (*dvija*). The teacher takes the place of the father, and during the training the student lives in the teacher’s house.<sup>571</sup>

Several scholarly works have taken up the practical aspects of traditional training and its historical development within different Brahmanic Hindu traditions.<sup>572</sup> Reference is however seldom made to the training of ritual specialists within a specific tradition.<sup>573</sup> In relation to the temple priests this may, among other reasons, be due to the rather marginal position that the arcakas hold in traditional Brahmanic learning (see also 2.1.2). For the most part they are not seen as scholars in the classical sense, although their profession is in many ways based on the knowledge of Sanskrit (Michaels 2001b: 7).

There is also little that can be learnt about the training of ritual specialists from the texts of the Vaikhānasa tradition. This is true of both temple and domestic ritual. In the sūtras there is certainly no statement of the requisite qualifications of the ritual specialists who guide the saṃskāras. It is implicitly presupposed there that (in the case of viṣṇubali) the performer is the father of the unborn child (see 4.5.3). The texts on temple ritual are also silent on the question of the arcaka’s education. However, although training of ritual specialists is not described in the Vaikhānasasamhitās, these texts at least contain brief statements

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570 On education or different models of learning presented in ancient Indian literature see Mookerji 1947; see also Kane 1974a: chapter VII.

571 As we will see, in the Vaikhānasa tradition it is in fact often the father who takes on the training of his son.

572 See Mookerji 1947; see also the literature listed in the articles by Michaels, Aklujkar, and Deshpande in Michaels (ed.) 2001.

573 Subramaniam (1974) discusses purohitas among the smārta Brahmins in Mayavaram and Manakkal, in particular their social standing, on the basis of field research in the 1950s. Knipe (1997) deals with a small and unusual vaidika community of Brahmins in the Godāvarī delta, which until recently did not use any written texts in training their sons. Data similar to those in the present work have been gathered by Fuller (1997, 2001, and 2003: 80–113) for the training of śaiva priests in southern Tamil Nadu.

on the desirable or necessary qualifications of those who perform temple rituals (*arcaka*) and for the head priests (*ācārya*).<sup>574</sup> These passages almost always state that the person concerned must have undergone the life-cycle rituals prescribed in the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra*. Moreover they must know the Veda and its auxiliary sciences (*vedāṅga*). They should hail from a Vaikhānasa family and be in either the first or the second stage of life, i.e. they should either be students (*brahmacārin*) following initiation (*upanayana*), or head their own household (*gr̥hastha*) following marriage (*vivāha*).<sup>575</sup> Here too, there is no reference to the way in which future arcakas are to be trained. However, the requirement in the *saṃhitās* that an *ācārya* or an *arcaka* must hail from a Vaikhānasa family and that he must have received the *saṃskāras* of the Vaikhānasa tradition indicates that the Vaikhānasas had already become an endogamous group with hereditary vocation by the time of the *Vaikhānasasaṃhitās*. The training of an *arcaka*, and also training for performing domestic rituals, therefore might well have taken place within the family.

Apart from these important hints we cannot know for certain how priestly knowledge and competence were preserved and transmitted in the past and, as we shall see, we should avoid projecting present day practices to a more remote past. Nevertheless, in order to convey an idea of how the transmission of ritual competence might look, some contemporary examples of the training of Vaikhānasa ritual specialists are presented here.<sup>576</sup>

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574 The relevant term for qualification or entitlement to perform ritual is *adhikāra* or *adhikārin*. In the *saṃhitās* and in Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita's *Daśavidhaheturirūpaṇa* the term *adhikāra* usually refers to the entitlement to worship Viṣṇu, reserved only for the Vaikhānasas (ĀS 3.21–22; KhA 41.7–10 and 19–20; PrA 33.33; DHN<sup>D</sup> 20.6–8, 27.16–19, 47.17–19). At one place in the *Khilādhikāra* entitlement to function as *yajamāna* (officiator) of a sacrifice is extended to *anulomas* and *śūdras* under certain conditions (KhA 23.8; see Colas 1996: 123ff.). Followers of other *sūtras* are said to be entitled to carry out Pāñcārātra rituals in SA (65.124–125). In the more recent literature of the Vaikhānasas *adhikāra* and *adhikārin* are often mentioned in connection with the so-called *vaidika prapatī*, by which reference is made to the *viṣṇubali saṃskāra*. On the transmission of *adhikāra* through the religious teacher see Gengnagel 2001.

575 See VK paṭala 27; PrA 11.2ff.; KrA 1.22ff.; KhA 1.38ff.; ĀS 3.21ff; *Arcanatilaka* 5.15.

576 The data presented in 4.6.2–4 are based on semi-structured, structured and narrative interviews I conducted with the persons concerned. However, the reader should be aware of the fact that I do not intend to present the concerned persons' views and interpretations of their own life story and family history as 'factual', but rather as (retrospectively) constructed identity. It is important to note that this construction took place in a specific and unusual situation ("interview"), and that the material here aims at conveying how my interview partner saw themselves and their history.

### 4.6.2 A classical expert

Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru<sup>577</sup> was born in 1917 in Pamaru, a small town between Vijayawada and Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh. According to the oral history of his family their ancestors came from a town on the banks of the Tambraparni river in southern Tamil Nadu,<sup>578</sup> where the family was known for performing the daily sacrifice into the three sacrificial fires (*agnihotra*).<sup>579</sup> Even today members of the family therefore bear the epithet “Agnihotra.” Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru reports that inscriptions in Śrīkākulam (Andhra Pradesh) indicate that the family was summoned from Tamil Nadu to perform ritual in this then leading city of the coastal region.

He was the youngest of eight siblings, seven boys and one girl. Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru and all of his brothers took up the family vocation, that is, they became arcakas or, in the case of one brother, an āyurvedic doctor. Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru learnt Sanskrit quite early at a college close to his home town, while his father and his grandfather introduced him to ritual practice. This part of his training began in his fourteenth year and lasted for four years. At the age of eighteen he was in a position to perform rituals independently. His uncle who was a student of Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya’s father played an important role in his education in the performance of temple ritual. After the basic training by this uncle, he spent a further four-year period with Vedāntam Śāstrācāryulu in Sīpuri.<sup>580</sup> Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru mentioned also several other teachers who contributed to his education and who were important to him.<sup>581</sup> His skills and the areas of his activity were as diverse as the list of his

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577 I conducted the interviews with Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru on 16.12.2001 and 26–27.1.2002 in his house in Machilipatnam. In January, 2006, this wonderful, gentle, loveable, and knowledgeable man passed away, aged 89, hopefully now reunited with his beloved wife at the feet of Lord Viṣṇu. I would like to thank especially Mr A. Rangacharyulu, who established the contact for me with his uncle, Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru, and Mr P. V. Ramanacharyulu, who kindly accompanied me from Vijayawada to Machilipatnam and served as an interpreter.

578 The Tambraparni is a river in the present Tirunelveli District. The family has no connection to this region today.

579 On this see Bodewitz 1976.

580 He was the brother of his father’s cousin.

581 These were Gudipudi Śrīnivāsācārya from Kakulapadu (Kṛṣṇā District, Andhra Pradesh), a Sanskrit paṇḍit and poet, who composed the prayoga text *Sūtrānukramanikā* (see 4.3.1); R. B. Śrīnivāsa Bhaṭṭācāryulu, the older brother of Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya; Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya; R. Śrīnivāsācāryulu from Maheśvari (West Godāvāri District, Andhra Pradesh) for Sanskrit and Telugu; Vedāntam Keśavācāryulu, a Sanskrit paṇḍit and poet; Vedāntam Vipranārāyaṇācāryulu, an āgama scholar; Vedāntam Śrīni-

teachers. Until the late 1990s he himself led the daily ritual in the temple in which his family serves as priests. In addition, in the 1990s he designed and planned the Hayagrīva temple in Machilipatnam and performed the temple inauguration (*pratiṣṭhā*). For health reasons Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru soon had to hand over temple duties to a grandson he had trained himself. As he was also no longer able to perform the elaborate regular domestic worship he had deposited his domestic shrine in the sanctum sanctorum (*garbhagrha*) of the Hayagrīva temple. He always took care not only of the rituals, but also of many necessary tasks around the actual ritual activity. Thus he himself manufactured the metal insignia of Viṣṇu, conch and disk, kept in the Hayagrīva temple. He made the stone image of Vikhanas, the mythical founder of the tradition, for the shrine of the Vaikhānasāśrama in Tirumalai,<sup>582</sup> and he himself carved the wooden reliefs needed for the several temple rituals. Nevertheless he said that he had never been systematically instructed in these handicrafts. In the course of his long life Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru had also gained a reputation as an āyurvedic doctor. He explained the connection between the Vaikhānasa tradition and Āyurveda on two different levels. Firstly, one form of Viṣṇu is called Sarvabhūta-dhanvantarī, “the healer of all beings,” and those Vaikhānasas who practice medicine follow his example. Furthermore in each of the saṃskāras in the Vaikhānasasūtra, said Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru, medical plants are used. Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru often also performed the rituals required for the planning and building of houses (*vāstu*) and advised the constructors on architectonic questions. He also performed life-cycle rituals for non-Vaikhānasas, drew up ritual diagrams (*yantra*) for special occasions and people, cast horoscopes as an astrologer, advised on educational questions and much more. As a result of these many talents and activities, but also because of his kind and compassionate character, Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru enjoyed a very high regard in and around Machilipatnam. Both times I visited him a constant stream of petitioners came from many villages, near and far, in expectation of his advice or practical help on different matters or simply asking for his blessings. Here it is clear that the charisma of the person involved also plays a considerable role in the recognition of ritual competence. Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru passed on

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vāsācāryulu from Poranki (Andhra Pradesh), a specialist in Veda and āgama; Parāṅkuśam Kṛṣṇamācāryulu from Penuganchiprolu (Kṛṣṇā District, Andhra Pradesh), an expert in āgama and domestic ritual; Parāśaram Venkaṭācāryulu from Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh); Vedāntam Jagannāthācāryulu, an āgama specialist; Parāśara Śrīnivāsācāryulu, an āgama specialist.

582 Photographs of the production are reproduced in the publication *Namassumālu* by Śrī-mān Bṛṃdāvanam Raṅgācāryulu, Buttāyipeṭ (undated), pp. 5 and 23.

his knowledge and skills within his family but also headed a small training institution (*pāṭhasālā*), in which ten young men of the region studied. The lessons were held on the temple premises. In addition to the study of texts on domestic and temple ritual,<sup>583</sup> the emphasis there was on the practical performance. The students learnt these by accompanying Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru and watching or assisting him. Despite his advanced age and severe backpain, in 2001 he still often traveled to perform rituals in other places. Nevertheless he voiced considerable concern that there were not enough young men to undergo such training, mostly because of the low income of ritual specialists in domestic ritual, especially in rural areas. He even regarded it as doubtful whether the larger part of his own students would actually later use what they learnt with him.

#### 4.6.3 From small town to big city

Varada Bhaṭṭācārya<sup>584</sup> was born in 1959 in Pudevāyal (near Ponneri in northern Tamil Nadu) as the third oldest of six siblings (one sister and five brothers). His father's family has been resident for 800 years in Pudevāyal, the current home of the father and the older brothers. According to Varada Bhaṭṭācārya, the oldest written evidence for the presence of the family in Pudevāyal is from the year 1501: a palm leaf, that has long been preserved in the local temple. Varada Bhaṭṭācārya is very fluent in English. In this regard he continues a family tradition, since his grandfather came to prominence at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a mediator between the inhabitants of Pudevāyal and the British colonial authorities. Varada Bhaṭṭācārya's father, Kṛṣṇasvāmi Bhaṭṭācārya (born in 1922) is a ritual specialist very highly regarded in Tamil Nadu. By the year 2000, he had been involved in, or led, more than 400 (!) temple inaugurations and is also known for performing domestic rituals among Vaikhānasas.<sup>585</sup> Varada Bhaṭṭācārya and his brothers were primarily trained by their father. The family has the hereditary charge of the Vijayarāghavasvāmi temple in Pudevāyal. In 2002, Varada Bhaṭṭācārya's father was still the acting arcaka responsible for the temple, but he planned to hand over this office to Varada Bhaṭṭācārya's older brother soon, who

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583 The textual basis of the training primarily consists of the Vaikhānasas' own collection of mantras (*Mantrapraśna*) and a ritual handbook in Telugu script (*Sūtrānukramaṇikā*, see 4.3.1). For temple ritual the texts *Brahmotsavānukramaṇikā* and *Bhagavadarcāprakaraṇam* were used.

584 The data presented here are based on several conversations with Varada Bhaṭṭācārya in his relative's house in Tirunīrmalai near Chennai (December 2001) and in his home in Villivakkam (January 2002), a suburb of Chennai.

585 See *Sri Vaikhanasa Satabdhi Sancika* 2000, p. 21.

still lives in Pudevāyal with his parents and helps his father in the temple. Both the father and the brother have no source of income other than that.<sup>586</sup> Varada Bhaṭṭācārya began to learn Tamil and also English at the age of six in the government school in Pudevāyal. At the age of twelve his sister, who is eight years older than him, taught him Sanskrit. At this time the sister was already practicing her profession as a teacher in the government school in Pudevāyal. She in turn had received her knowledge of Sanskrit from their father. The lessons in Sanskrit from his sister and later from his father were limited to reading, writing and some basic grammar. The language of instruction was Telugu. At the age of sixteen he completed the Pre-University Course at a college. In the same year his initiation (*upanayana*) was performed. In accordance with his mother's wishes this took place in Tirumalai. Only after this were he and his brothers introduced to the *gāyatrī* and other vedic mantras. Between his twelfth and sixteenth year training in the traditional profession of the family was limited to the lessons in Sanskrit. After the initiation his father was his teacher in religious matters. At this time he had three students: Varada Bhaṭṭācārya, his older brother and a cousin from a neighboring village who, however, did not regularly take part in the lessons. The daily routine during this training was very closely regulated. Each morning they got up at 4:30am,<sup>587</sup> took a ritual bath (*snāna*), performed the dawn rituals (*sandhyāvandana*), and recited the *gāyatrī* mantra. From 5.30am the father taught them temple ritual and the vedic mantras (in particular from the black Yajurveda) and also instructed them in the performance of some domestic (*grhya*) rituals and some special temple rituals (e.g. *pratiṣṭhā*). The lesson lasted until 8am. After that they went to school, and later to college. Around 4 or 4.30pm they returned home. Then ritual bath, mantra recitation and sandhyāvandana were performed again. After this followed visits, together with their father, to different temples in the surrounding villages in order to perform the regular rituals there. Following their return around 7.30pm they received a further hour's lesson in which what they had learned in the morning was repeated. Occasionally, when his other obligations allowed, Varada Bhaṭṭācārya accompanied his father also to the performance of different domestic rituals at which, however, he only recited the mantras together with his father and did not perform the practical acts in the ritual. To do so was reserved for his father. After six years—at

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586 Earlier, Varada Bhaṭṭācārya's brother—like Varada Bhaṭṭācārya himself—had worked as a businessman. However, as the income was insufficient, he gave up this work and turned completely to performing rituals.

587 This applies for the days on which one traditionally studied the Veda (for the exceptions see Kane 1974a: 394ff.).



the age of 21—his training was completed. His study, however, did not result in any certificate or other official recognition. In the same year he was married and from now on accompanied his father regularly to different rituals. Only now did he himself perform rituals like the *saṃskāras*, either together with his father or in his stead. He lived together with his father for almost two years longer. Varada Bhaṭṭācārya regards the years from 22 to 26 as his main period of practice in the performance of the rituals. He occasionally also took up short-term worldly jobs in parallel to his ritual activities. At the age of 26 he accepted a permanent position as “medical representative” of a pharmaceutical company. From this time on he helped his father in rituals only occasionally, but at the same time depended on this additional income. He even cut off the traditional *śikhā*, the tuft of hair characteristic of orthodox Brahmans, and had a modern haircut (“crop haircut”) during this time.<sup>588</sup> After two years, at the age of 28, he gave up this work, mainly because he found the work very stressful and unsatisfying. In addition the low income placed him in financial difficulties, as in the meantime he had to support a family of five. Following the decision to earn his living entirely as a ritual specialist, in 1997 Varada Bhaṭṭācārya and his wife and three daughters moved to Villivakkam, a suburb of Chennai. It is easier to make an adequate income as a ritual specialist in an urban context than in rural areas. In the meantime he also continued his education beyond what his father had taught him by observing and listening to other *br̥haspatīs*. He is now in a position to perform the rituals most often requested like, for example, “fire offering to pacify the nine heavenly bodies” (*navagrahaśāntihoma*) and the rituals required for building and inaugurating a house (*vāstu*). Since 1997 Varada Bhaṭṭācārya has lived only from performing rituals. According to him, as there are not very many *br̥haspatīs* who perform domestic rituals for others, and because demand has risen in recent years, he has a sufficient to good income. Moreover he finds the activity itself satisfying. That he, unlike many other ritual specialists, is able to explain the rituals in English is also beneficial from the point of view of satisfying *yajamānas* in an urban context. He performs rituals for *Vaikhānasas* and conducts rituals in the different *Vaikhānasa* temples, but also performs vedic sacrifices (*yajña*) for non-*Vaikhānasas*, and for non-Brahmans.<sup>589</sup> He also performs life-cycle rituals for non-*Vaikhānasas* according to their own tradition, but only for Brahmans. He mentions explicitly *gr̥hapraveśa*, *upanayana*, *vivāha*, *pūṃsa-*

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588 See Fuller (2003: 95f.) on the indexical value of “wearing a *śikhā*” as opposed to a “crop haircut.”

589 Varada Bhaṭṭācārya estimates that 25–30% of the rituals he performs are for non-*Vaikhānasas*.

vana, sīmanta, nāmakaraṇa and annaprāśana. He does not find it difficult to carry out, for example, the saṃskāras of the Āpastamba or Baudhāyana school, since these are considerably simpler to perform than those for Vaikhānasas, and the mantras are moreover identical. Nevertheless, temple rituals constitute by far the greatest proportion of the income he earns. Unlike his father and brother, however, Varada Bhaṭṭācārya does not at present perform worship regularly in a specific temple.

He also has students, but none of his own children are among them as he has no sons. His five students come from Vaikhānasa arcaka families. Varada Bhaṭṭācārya instructs them in the Vaikhānasasūtra and vedic mantras. However he does not hold lessons daily: the students only come ten to twelve times a month. Occasionally they also accompany him to his ritual performances and then support him in the recitation of mantras. This happens seldom, as the students also have to carry out the daily rituals (*nityārādhana*) in their own hereditary temples and are therefore often occupied.

#### 4.6.4 A modern scholar priest

Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya<sup>590</sup> was born in 1968 as the elder of two sons of an arcaka in the famous Pārthasārathi temple in Triplicane (Chennai). For generations, the male members of his family have shared responsibility for temple service in this temple with another Vaikhānasa family in Triplicane. At present, Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya's family is entitled to perform ritual in the *sanctum sanctorum* (*garbhagrha*) of the temple for monthly four days, then follow four days at the movable image of the god used for processions during temple festivals (*ut-savamūrti*). The other family which shares the responsibility for rituals performs the rituals on the other days. In the "free" time Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya's family members have to earn their income elsewhere. He mentions that his grandfather survived mainly from agriculture.

Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya himself first qualified as an engineer and worked in that profession for some years. During this time he performed temple rituals only occasionally. However, two years ago, after his marriage, he gave up this profession. He states that he concealed his vocation from his future wife before the marriage, as he feared that she would not agree to marry him as a fulltime ritual specialist. Since then, he has performed not only temple rituals but also domestic rituals (including saṃskāras) for Vaikhānasas and non-Vaikhānasas. He

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590 My conversation with Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya took place in his father's house in Triplicane (Chennai) on 10.1.2002.

learnt the performance of temple rituals primarily in the temple itself and above all from his father. As his teacher for domestic rituals he mentions Vijayarāghava Bhaṭṭācārya from Uttiramerūr (Kanchi District, Tamil Nadu). He visited this teacher twice and learnt the relevant mantras from him. Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya concedes that a longer training is usually required. He, however, was able to acquire the necessary knowledge in a very short time. Moreover, he was able to observe the relevant actions many times when they were performed by others, and occasionally he also consulted the relevant ritual handbooks when unsure about the correct procedure. Moreover, it must be mentioned that Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya is a very active member in several registered local and transregional Vaikhānasa associations (such as the Vaikhasa Arcaka Benifit Society and the South India Vaikhanasa Arcaka Association), which aim at promoting and furthering living and working conditions of Vaikhānasa priests as well as publishing texts of the Vaikhānasa tradition (see Hüsken 2001b). He is co-editor of a Vaikhānasa magazine in Tamil, edits Vaikhānasa texts in Grantha script, and publishes on other matters relevant to the Vaikhānasa communities. In August 2004 I met him again, when he spoke at the “National Conference on Āgama,” held by the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), as an invited representative of practicing vaiṣṇava arcakas. He is a modern priest throughout.

To sum up, in spite of all differences regarding age, region, and personality of the three ritual specialists introduced here, the rough sketch that can be drawn of the career of a Vaikhānasa ritual specialist is rather uniform. All three stated unambiguously that no official recognition, no certificate or the like, is required for one to be permitted to perform domestic ritual for Vaikhānasas. The only prerequisites are the upanayana initiation, and a thorough knowledge of the mantras and ritual actions. They achieved this thorough knowledge in the rituals’ practical performance in the first instance from learning with their fathers, or with other male relatives. In every case the father also practices or practiced as ritual specialist. It seems that those who perform life-cycle rituals for other Vaikhānasas are mostly sons of Vaikhānasas who themselves perform these rituals. All of those concerned were also instructed in the performance of temple rituals. Most domestic priests also have a hereditary tie to a temple, so that in addition to domestic ritual they also perform temple rituals and occasionally participate in larger rituals in other temples. The close relation between the father/teacher or to the family continues to be kept up in all three cases: Anantapadmanābhācāryulu Gāru lives with one of his sons, Pārthasārathi Bhaṭṭācārya lives with this wife and children in his father’s house, and even Varada Bhaṭṭācārya maintains very

close relations with his father just as before. Although he had left his home village and now lives in Chennai with his family, he still often carries out rituals together with his father, as I was able to observe. All three were unanimous that the income of an arcaka in the villages—by contrast with the urban milieu—is mostly not enough to support a family, even when several temples in different villages are cared for. This income divide leads many ritual specialists—among them Varada Bhaṭṭācārya—to move to the city. There they not only perform temple and occasionally domestic rituals, but also specialize in a series of rituals for non-Vaikhānasas and can thereby be sure of a steady and sufficient income.

These findings are confirmed by the brief accounts of well-known contemporary Vaikhānasas in a publication from the year 2000, which introduces a range of scholars and practitioners of the Vaikhānasa tradition.<sup>591</sup> Following their names, addresses and the names of their parents and wives, their qualifications and achievements are listed. Texts which those concerned had mastered are often cited here.<sup>592</sup> Knowledge of the specific Vaikhānasa texts is apparently assumed to be either self-evident, or—given the demonstrated capacity in practical performance—irrelevant, as they do not receive special mention. The degree of each person’s experience is demonstrated by the number of “inaugurations” (*pratiṣṭhā*, *saṃprokṣaṇa*, *mahāsaṃprokṣaṇa*) of temples or shrines that he has carried out or directed. In addition, special emphasis is placed on Vaikhānasas who regularly perform agnihotra.<sup>593</sup> Where those presented had been awarded honorary titles, these are stated.<sup>594</sup> It is striking that only in one case the place of training is mentioned: Śrī U. Vē. Śrīnivāsa Paṭṭāccāriyār [Śrīnivāsa Bhaṭṭācārya] from Sangendi studied at the pāṭhaśālā in Śrīraṅgam. Conversely, it is reported that Śrī U. Vē. S. B. Nārāyaṇa Paṭṭāccār [Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭācārya] from Ālvārtiru-

591 On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Śrī Vaikhānasa Divya Siddhānta Vivardhini Sabha (SVDSVS) a jubilee text was published which addressed different aspects of the present situation and the future of the Vaikhānasas in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu (*Sri Vaikhanasa Satabdhi Sancika* 2000). On the SVDSVS see Hüsken 2001b: 175f.

592 Thus, for example, the *Rāmāyana*, *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmat Bhāgavata* are given for Śrī U. Vē. Kovintarāja Paṭṭāccāriyār [Govindarāja Bhaṭṭācārya] (p. 16).

593 This applies only to Śrī U. Vē. p.Rākava Paṭṭāccār [Rāghava Bhaṭṭācārya] (p. 10).

594 Thus the titles Sudarśana Upāsakar and Śrīvaikhānasabhagavacchāstrabhāskara were conferred upon Śrī U. Vē. Śrīnivāsa Paṭṭāccāriyār [Śrīnivāsa Bhaṭṭācārya] from Sangendi (near Trichy) (p. 25), the title Śrīvaikhānasāgamacakraṅgavartin was conferred upon Śrī U. Vē. p.B. Nārāyaṇa Paṭṭāccār [Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭācārya] from Ālvārtirunagar (Chennai) by the Kāncī Kāmakōṭi Pīṭādhīpati, and Śrī Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita of Vallutūr received the title Śrī Vaikhānasamānasasarōruhaḥsam, Kaṇakāyamāna Kaṇṭiravam and Alamkāra Kalātilakam (p. 29).

nagar (Chennai) teaches 30 students in a pāṭhaśālā established by the Tamil Nadu government in Triplicane (Chennai). This account therefore leads us to conclude that the training of ritual specialists of the Vaikhānasa tradition seldom takes place in private or government training centres.

#### 4.6.5 Vaikhānasa training institutions

Nevertheless, more and more such training institutions (named *pāṭhaśālā* or *vidyāpīṭha*) were established in the second half of the last century, some of which also offer instruction in the Vaikhānasa ritual system. These rather recent foundations of pāṭhaśālās are an outcome of attempts to offer a standardised training for temple priests and other ritual specialists. The process initiating these attempts, namely modern temple reform in Tamil Nadu, began in the late nineteenth century.<sup>595</sup> At that time mismanagement of the temples was at first the focus of attention of the reformist movement, mainly among the politically active Madras elite. The outcome was, in 1926, the Hindu Religious Endowment (HRE) Act, giving the government more power over temple administration than it has ever had before. This control was even intensified when the HRE Board was replaced by the Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department in 1952. By that time, if not before, the priests had become another main focus of attention. More and more complains were to be heard about the lack of learning among the temple priests, allegedly causing low standards of ritual performance. They were accused of incompetence and misperformance, and the reason for their “lack of competence” was seen in a lack of “proper education.” After several decades these accusations have been internalised by the priests themselves (see Fuller 2001: 4). Thus, after independence, even the temple priests’ own association, the South Indian Archakar Association, publicly complained about low performance standards among temple priests. The critics demanded that no priest should be allowed to work in a temple without a certificate from an āgama school. This demand was answered in 1964 by new service rules issued by the HR&CE Department, stating that every newly appointed priest needs a certificate issued by an āgamic school or its equivalent. Although these rules have so far not been put into practice, the priests are well aware of the fact that this might happen. Therefore many temple priests’ families who en-

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595 What follows here is mainly a summary of Fuller’s 2003 account of the events and their effects (chapter IVs “The agamas and priestly education”). See also Presler 1987, and Good 2004.

joy hereditary rights to perform worship in certain temples encourage their youngsters to subscribe to such courses in an āgama school.

Today, there exists a large number of such training centres, maintained in different ways.<sup>596</sup> These institutions are often linked to a temple, and in many cases these pāṭhaśālās are run or maintained by an ascetic institution (*maṭha*, “monastery”; see Kane 1974b: 906f.). However, only a few of these pāṭhaśālās offer courses in Vaikhānasa rituals.<sup>597</sup> The two institutionalized pāṭhaśālās in Andhra Pradesh which offer training in the Vaikhānasa tradition are attached to Viṣṇu temples of the Vaikhānasa tradition.<sup>598</sup> The two pāṭhaśālās I visited in Karnataka (in Bangalore and in Mysore) are neither linked to a specific temple nor to a maṭha,<sup>599</sup> and the only pāṭhaśālā I saw which is entirely reserved for Vaikhānasas is in Dvāraka Tirumalai (near Ellūru, West Godāvārī district).<sup>600</sup>

Two of the institutions which offer courses in Vaikhānasa ritual shall be introduced here in more detail.

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596 See the detailed account in Mishra (1997) and *Government Report* (referred to in Michaels 2001, bibliography). Note, however, that today a whole variety of comprehensive schools also have pāṭhaśālā as a component of their name.

597 One of the reasons for this situation might be that the Vaikhānasa tradition is first of all a tradition of ritual practice, without maṭhas. Maṭhas are institutions for celibate men, mainly aiming at preserving, teaching and learning certain doctrines and philosophies. Although the Vaikhānasa tradition also developed its own brand of Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, it still is mainly a ritual and not a philosophical tradition. One of the prerequisites for practising the profession of a temple priest in the Vaikhānasa tradition is that the concerned person has to be either a married householder (*gṛhastha*) or a Brahman student (*brahmacārin*). This fact might have prevented the development of specific Vaikhānasa maṭhas. There is, however, a suggestion in the *Jayākhyasamhitā* that the Vaikhānasas too may have had maṭhas (see Colas 1996: 56).

598 According to Rāghunāthācārya (in Mishra 1997) there are in total at least sixteen non-government Veda pāṭhaśālās in Andhra Pradesh.

599 In Bangalore Pāñcarātra, Vaikhānasa and Śaiva āgama classes are offered, whereas in Mysore additionally Vīraśaiva āgama and Jaināgama courses are offered. I visited the pāṭhaśālā in Bangalore on 30.8.2005 and had one interview there with the Pāñcarātra teacher Mr. Vāsudeva Bhaṭṭācārya. I visited the other pāṭhaśālā, the Mahārāja Sanskrit College in Mysore, on 31.8.2005 and had an interview there with the teacher Mr. Gaṅgādhara Bhaṭṭa. I thank both of them for sharing their time and knowledge with me.

600 Many heartfelt thanks are due to Mr. Jagannātha Charyulu and his family whose hospitality I enjoyed during my visit. On average 30 students live at the pāṭhaśālā, who all come from Andhra Pradesh, from families who have hereditary charge of a temple. The performance of domestic rituals is not part of the curriculum in this pāṭhaśālā. The school is divided into three classes: 1) daily temple ritual, 2) the Brahmotsava temple festival, and 3) temple construction and temple rituals performed only occasionally (*naimittika*).

### The pāṭhaśālā in Nanguneri

Nanguneri is a small hamlet in the Tirunelveli district in southern Tamil Nadu, home to a Viṣṇu temple called Tiruccirivaramangai (or Vānamamalai), one of the 108 holy vaiṣṇava places (*vaiṣṇava divyadeśam*). Within a stone's throw of the temple is the pāṭhaśālā. It is housed in a two-storeyed building with a hall and kirchen downstairs, and two dormitories for the students upstairs. This institution was set up in 2002. From the outset has been financed by the TVS group,<sup>601</sup> and managed by the current head (*jīyār*) of the famous Vānamamalai maṭha. Here Vaikhānasa and Pāñcarātra āgamas are taught, each by a different teacher. The teacher on the Vaikhānasa subject, Mr. Govinda Bhaṭṭācārya, is a full time teacher who came to Nanguneri from Tirukkurungudi, where he himself went to school. During my visit, in August 2005, fifteen students resided in the pāṭhaśālā, their age ranging from twelve to nineteen years. Nine of them were learning Vaikhānasa āgamas, five studied Pāñcarātra āgamas. The Vaikhānasa classes in this pāṭhaśālā are open to Vaikhānasas only. All students present at the time of my visit came from Tamil Nadu: four were from nearby Tirunelveli, six from Madras, and one student each from Trichy, Madurai, Tirutanka near Sivakasi, and from Bodhi. Both course are designed for four years and include only temple rituals (*daivikam*). No training in the performance of domestic rituals is offered. The training of the Vaikhānasa students, however, also includes the sūtra with its mantras. One textbook used for teaching the students, for example, is the *Nityārcana*, a text on the daily rituals to be performed in a temple. The lessons take place daily for two hours in the morning and for two hours in the evening. The students are practically trained through their frequent presence in the temple during the daily ritual course, but also when they accompany their teacher to bigger rituals performed in other temples, such as temple inaugurations (*saṃprokṣaṇa*).

The administration by the *jīyār* of the Vānamamalai maṭha is mainly confined to his right (and duty) to conduct the exams of the students which take place every six months. However, the Vaikhānasa teacher adds that since the *jīyār* does not know the āgamas (he himself does neither belongs to the Vaikhānasa tradition nor does he follow the Pāñcarātra tradition), the exams are prepared and corrected by the āgama teachers, and the *jīyār* then signs the certificates and personally hands them over to students. The TVS company provides the students with a stipend of 300 Indian rupees per month. The wife of one of the temple priests, Mrs Sundarā Bhaṭṭācārya, takes care of the cooking in the pāṭhaśālā. The

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601 The TVS group is today one of India's largest industrial entities and was founded 1911 by the Vaiṣṇava Śrī T. V. Sundaram Iyengar.

rules of conduct for the students are comparatively relaxed: only during lessons inside the pāṭhaśālā or inside the temple the students have to follow the traditional vaiṣṇava bachelor's dresscode, wearing only a dhoti and an upper cloth. When "going out" they are also allowed to wear shirts and pants. It must be mentioned, however, that the "worldly" distractions in the village are limited to a few shops, offering only the opportunity of some fairly basic shopping.

#### The Veda pāṭhaśālā in Tirumalai<sup>602</sup>

A so-called Veda pāṭhaśālā is connected with the Veṅkaṭeśvara temple in Tirumalai (Andhra Pradesh), the largest pilgrimage centre in India. As the temple ritual in the Veṅkaṭeśvara temple is performed according to the Vaikhānasa tradition, training in this ritual system is also offered in the Veda pāṭhaśālā. The pāṭhaśālā is situated three miles up the hill, in an idyllic spot in the forest. It consists of several small but solid huts where the teaching is done, a rather large library building, and a bigger complex which houses the dormitories of the students. This institution was founded in February 1884 by the Tirupati Tirumalai Devasthānam (TTD) organisation, which continues to finance the pāṭhaśālā. The institution is thus maintained without governmental support, primarily out of the income from the temple and its associated institutions.<sup>603</sup>

In January 2002, when I visited the pāṭhaśālā for the first time, there were 372 resident students. Each year around 50 new entrants (only Brahmans) are admitted. Before admission pupils must have undergone the upanayana initiation and therefore be in the brahmacārin stage of life. Furthermore, those who belong to a family with a traditional connection to the priestly profession are preferred when it comes to admission. On entering the pāṭhaśālā, attendance at comprehensive schools comes to an end for the children.<sup>604</sup> Board and lodging are provided for the students for free. The boys receive three meals a day, and are accommodated in dormitories for 60, in which each of them has a secure locker. A sleeping mat, a plate, a cup and a blanket are the only personal belongings the students are allowed to keep. In addition the students receive two sets of clothes (dhoti and upper cloth) each year. Moreover, they are evidently allowed to keep an additional set of "worldly" clothing. Here—as in Nanguneri—the rules for

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602 I visited this pāṭhaśālā thrice in 2002. At that time I had the chance to speak with one teacher of the Vaikhānasa classes, several students, and the director of the pāṭhaśālā.

603 For details, see Bhaskara Rao 1992.

604 According to Michaels (2001b: 5), this demonstrates the general isolation of the pāṭhaśālās from the modern Indian educational system—one of the factors responsible for the decline in Sanskrit learning, he argues.



clothing appear to apply only to the lessons. At other times the boys are also to be seen in T-shirts and pants. Each month the students also receive two pieces of soap and a small amount of hair oil. Medical attention is free, and in winter warm water is available. One of the 25 teachers spends the night with the students in the pāṭhaśālā on a rotating basis. The teachers are paid at a rate equivalent to that in government training institutions.<sup>605</sup> The students' progress is assessed in three examinations each year, and passing the end of year exam is a precondition for further study. In addition, in March each year competitions take place between the different pāṭhaśālās. The boys come from the federal states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka but the majority are from Andhra Pradesh. The main reason for this is that instruction takes place primarily in Telugu, the state language of Andhra Pradesh, and also that the Sanskrit texts are read in Telugu script. Only in the Divyaprabandha class is the language of instruction Tamil, as this text is written in Maṇipravāla, a mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil, and is recited in vaiṣṇava temples in Tamil Nadu. All students begin with Sanskrit. The students initially had very different degrees of knowledge of this language. Sanskrit is studied for example through memorizing the list of Viṣṇu's thousand names, *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Moreover, at the beginning the students are together instructed in the rituals common to almost all Brahmanic traditions, for example the dawn-rituals (*sandhyāvandana*) and the recitation of praise verses.

Three types of courses are offered in the pāṭhaśālā: "Veda classes" for vedic recitation, "āgama classes" for temple ritual, and "paurohita classes" for domestic ritual. The students register for only one subject, depending on the age at which they enter and their interests. The Veda classes involve a twelve-year training; the entrance age of the children is eight years, after they have successfully completed the third standard in a comprehensive school. In total there are seven Veda classes in the pāṭhaśālā: one Ṛgveda class, two Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda classes, two Śukla Yajurveda classes, one Sāmaveda class, and one Atharvaveda class. Successful attendance at one of these Veda classes makes the person concerned a "Vaidika." He recites the text of his respective branch (*śākhā*) of the Veda in temples. In many cases the TTD finances not only the training, but also the regular payment of those who have studied the Veda in the three federal states Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka. At the beginning of 2002, the director of the Veda pāṭhaśālā estimated that there were about 400 Vaidikas financed by the TTD. Depending to their specialization the Vaidikas receive either

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605 At the age of 58 the teachers retire. Michaels (2001b: 5f.) refers to the payment of the teacher as an important departure from "the traditional system."

1800 (*kramapati*), 2200 (*ganapati*) or 1200 (*vṛddhapaṇḍita*) rupees per month. The āgama classes involve an eight-year training period. The āgama classes deal with the temple ritual according to the Vaikhānasa, the Pāñcarātra and the Śaiva ritual system. When entering, the students must have successfully completed the fifth standard in a comprehensive school. Graduating from the āgama classes makes the students arcakas (temple priests). The paurohita traditions passed on in this pāṭhaśālā belong to the Black Yajurveda (*kṛṣṇayajurvedapaurohityam*), the White Yajurveda (*śuklayajurvedapaurohityam*), the Ṛgveda (*ṛgvedapaurohityam*), and the ritual tradition of the Vaikhānasas (*vaikhānasa-paurohityam*). When graduating from one of these paurohita courses the students receive the title ācārya. The teaching covers the recitation of mantras, but also the practical performance of the rituals. For all courses, a student is usually ready to graduate by the age of twenty. At the conclusion of their study most students return to their home towns or villages. On successful completion of the training the ācāryas and arcakas receive a certificate together with a one-off payment of 10000 Indian Rupees. Those who complete the Veda class receive 15000 Indian Rupees.

The lessons take place daily (except for those days traditionally perceived as unsuitable for the study of the Veda), from 8am to 11.30am and from 1pm to 4pm. The method of teaching is the same for all courses. First the texts are learnt by heart, and then the meaning is explained.<sup>606</sup>

There are in total three Vaikhānasa classes in the Veda pāṭhaśālā in Tirumalai: one paurohita and two āgama classes. They were attended in 2002 by a total of 90 Vaikhānasa students (of which about 30 were in the paurohita class), all of whom came from Vaikhānasa families. These students occasionally also help with performing rituals in the Veṅkaṭeśvara temple in Tirumalai. Lakṣmīnara-siṃha, a student from Chittoor (80 km southwest of Tirumalai), was in his eighth year of training in 2002. He reported that both his father and his uncle regularly carry out rituals in the temple. He himself participates—like his older brother—in the daily suprabhātam recitation at 4am (see Venkatacharya 1999) during the wake-up ceremony for the god.

According to the teacher of one of the Vaikhānasa āgama classes in Tirumalai, as in Nanguneri the texts used for the lessons are not the Vaikhānasa saṃhitā and sūtra texts, but rather compilations of extracts from these texts. The teacher of the āgama class explained that although the āgamas and sūtras are the theoretical textual basis for the lessons, the actual working materials are later, more

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606 On this method of teaching which seems to be the same in āgama schools throughout South India, see Fuller 2001: 13ff. and 2003: 103ff.

systematic texts.<sup>607</sup> Thus, for example, for instructions on the daily temple rituals the text *Nityārcanāvidhāna* is used. The text systematically describes the temple rituals, and also goes into detail on issues like the utensils to be used and the sacrificial materials.<sup>608</sup> The same is true of the *Bhagavadarcāprakaraṇa*, a text by Nṛsiṃha Vājapeyin. This text describes the daily worship of Viṣṇu, the use of different vessels in worship as well as diverse purificatory rituals and similar topics. For the annual Brahmotsava temple festival (Ramesh 2000: 59ff.), Nṛsiṃha Vājapeyin's *Brāhmotsavānukramaṇikā* is used (see Muttu 1996: 23f.). This text offers a detailed description of this temple festival in several sections, with accounts of the preparations, the diverse vehicles of the god (*vāhana*), and the relevant expiations. Another text used in lessons is the *Pratiṣṭhānukramaṇikā*, a selection of sections from diverse Vaikhānasa āgamas on the installation of divine images in the temple. The teacher of the Vaikhānasa āgama class stated that the actual difference between the āgama and the Vaikhānasa paurohita class is not so great since, for example, both classes are taught the *Rāmadeśikāhnikā*, a text on the division of the day into five ritual phases.<sup>609</sup> In addition to such works on the general conduct of Vaikhānasas, the paurohita class studies the commentary to the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra*, and also the *Sūtrabhāṣya* of Nṛsiṃha Vājapeyin and Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita's *Tātparyacintāmaṇi* for advanced students.

#### 4.6.6 Ritual knowledge

According to the *Vaikhānasasamhitās*, in principle all rituals performed by a Vaikhānasa are "valid," however far the ritual practice diverges from, for example, the textual instructions, so long as the performer is actually from a Vaikhānasa family, and has received the Vaikhānasa saṃskāras. This is clearly expressed as a theoretical idea in the *Ānandasamhitā*: independently of the degree of his learning, an arcaka who belongs to a Vaikhānasa family and has received the viṣṇubali saṃskāra may worship Viṣṇu, but others may not (ĀS 3.24 and ĀS 8.12).<sup>610</sup> However, in practice there is evidently more to the evaluation of ritual performance than this text suggests.

607 This accords fully with Welbon's observations in Tirukkurungudi (1984: 75).

608 This text does not count as one of the so-called *Vaikhānasasamhitās*, but is nevertheless ascribed to the Ṛṣi Marīci.

609 On the Pāñcarātrins' division of the day in five sequences (*pañcakāla*) see Rastelli 2000; on the Vaikhānasas' corresponding concept see Hüsken 2004.

610 On this method of legitimizing and validating ritual practice, see also Stavrianopoulou 2007.

Thus, in the course of modern temple reform in Tamil Nadu, many complaints were voiced about the allegedly “low performance standards,” “ignorance,” “laxity” and lack of education of the priests. In response to this critique, *pāṭhaśālās* were set up, providing a standardised training for future ritual specialists. Hand in hand with the demand for a “better education” of temple priests went efforts to print and publish texts on temple rituals. “Agamic education as it operates in the modern era is predicated upon the existence of texts that are accessible, standardized source of authoritative knowledge. In producing such texts, printing and publication have played a crucial role” (Fuller 2003: 86). Many *āgamas* and *saṃhitās* were printed for the first time, and then distributed among the temple priests.<sup>611</sup> One of the aims of printing the books in great number was their potential use for educating the young priests in *āgama* schools or *pāṭhaśālās*.

However, a uniform standard had never actually existed before. It can be assumed that especially for the *Vaikhānasa* tradition, learning was formerly primarily individual, and moreover that regulatory authorities outside the tradition were not referred to, since the *Vaikhānasa* ritual tradition claims no universal applicability. Thus the mode of transmitting ritual knowledge was determined by the personal relationship between the pupil and the learning environment created by the teacher, and the concrete performance of the ritual was determined by the relationship of the officiating *ācārya* and the *yajamāna*, the commissioner and sponsor of the ritual in question. The establishing of institutionalised training centres such as the *pāṭhaśālās* thus resulted in the de-individualizing as well as the de-localizing of the training: neither the specific relationship between teacher and student, nor local traditions and customs were supposed to shape ritual practice. This represented a radical departure from the then prevalent practice. What was presented as a “return to tradition” did thus in fact result in a “re-invention of tradition” (see Hobsbawm 1983). This process illustrates one of the characteristics of ritualized actions in general, identified by Humphrey & Laidlaw (1994: 12, 105): in religions with scriptural traditions reform of rituals is always understood as a return to a postulated “original meaning” of a text, or to a “true prototype” of a ritual, above and beyond current ritual practice.

However, the effect of the availability of “canonical texts” and their inclusion in the curriculum of the *pāṭhaśālās* on the quality of education was evidently

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611 On the role of the French Institute in Pondicherry (“the myth of Pondicherry”) in this process, especially for the *śaivāgama* literature, see Fuller 2003: 91ff. This fundamental change is also reflected change of arguments used in the dispute in Singhapurumal (see 3.1.3).

misjudged. According to the Government Commission set up in 1956/57, the introduction of uniform reading of certain texts as well as timetables, and also uniformity in the examinations in the pāṭhaśālās, contributed instead to a decline in learning.<sup>612</sup> The view that the pāṭhaśālās are not conducive to a “better education” of the ritual specialists is shared by many Vaikhānasas, although the reasons given for this vary. The teachers in the pāṭhaśālās complain that a large part of the students leave before the end of the course, and start practising on the basis of partial knowledge, while at the same time boasting about their respected place of training. And in fact the majority of the boys and young men present at the Veda pāṭhaśālā in Tirumalai are under the age of fifteen. Moreover, the profession of a ritual specialist is unattractive. Lack of respect in society, coupled with a low religious status (see above, 2.1.2) and small income in rural areas, adds to the social disdain which Brahmans with a traditional lifestyle experience. Since social mobility—including across caste barriers—has substantially increased in the last century, there is a tendency that only those who cannot prove themselves in school or on the job market take up traditional callings. The head of the trans-regional Vaikhānasa association SVDSVS in Tirumalai, D.V. Chari, shared this assessment.<sup>613</sup> It is therefore the longterm goal of the association to hive off the training of Vaikhānasas from the general Veda pāṭhaśālā and to establish a pāṭhaśālā of their own. Only in this way, D.V. Chari thought, could a comprehensive training of the next generation be achieved. At the same time this would have the advantage that the Vaikhānasas themselves had more influence on the selection of teachers and teaching methods—the inadequate practical exercises of the students is especially regretted. Apart from the erection of a sacrificial hall (*yā-gaśāla*), other media of instruction could also contribute to this purpose. Along these lines there is also the idea to make use in the training of audio cassettes and videos of recitations and rituals.<sup>614</sup> The ultimate goal is the “maintenance of standards” in the performance of rituals. In a further step this would also ensure the same in other regions, as arcakas could be sent for a fixed rate to a centre to be established in Tirumalai, in order to give practical training to the students. The arcakas would also benefit, according to D.V. Chari, as they would have secure positions. The “quality of the rituals” could then be guaranteed.

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612 This evaluation refers to Sanskrit learning irrespective of the tradition; see *Government commission*, p. 135 (quoted in Michaels 2001b: 10).

613 The conversation with D.V. Chari, the late secretary of the Sri Vaikhanasa Divya Sidhanta Vivardhini Sabha, took place on 14.1.2002 in the Vaikhānasāśrama in Tirumalai.

614 At the time of our conversation, financial means required to put this plan into practice (for the technical equipment and for payment of the arcakas who would perform the rituals) were not available.

The lack of emphasis on practical training is in fact one of the major disadvantages in many pāṭhaśālās. This, however, is already built into the very concept underlying these institutions, namely that knowing the āgama texts inevitably implies that one is capable of performing the rituals, and that standardised texts alone are the source of authoritative knowledge (see Fuller 2003: 86). When books came to be seen as the primary source of knowledge, the āgamas were transformed into “holy books.” In fact, however, these texts do not contain detailed instructions about how to perform the rituals (see Fuller 2003: 82),<sup>615</sup> and evidently they never were meant to be used as “how to do” handbooks: “they are written for functioning priests and serve them as compendious references, sanctions, and models more than exhaustive procedural guides” (Welbon 1984: 72).<sup>616</sup>

The large number of ritual texts of the Vaikhānasa tradition itself suggests that the main performers of both temple and domestic ritual have never been unanimous regarding the performance of rituals.<sup>617</sup> Evidently there always have been local traditions, personal styles, and even ritual “fashions,” handed down not only in written records, but also by different performative and oral traditions (see also Tambiah 1979: 115). In addition to an understanding of the relevant texts, performative knowledge which is gained mainly through experience is required to translate text into practice. Thus, knowledge of texts *and* knowledge of how to apply them is an essential part of priestly competence. The performer and the process of how he acquires his ritual competence are extremely important factors in a ritual’s concrete enactment. Bado-Fralick (2009) convincingly argues that in the process of acquiring ritual competence the body is increasingly involved not only as an acting agent, but also as “knower” of the skills necessary for ritual work. The physical body thus emerges as “equally important to belief or intellectual knowledge.” Even the memorisation of textual passages for recitation can be characterised as important kind of bodily technique, albeit combined

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615 Welbon (1984: 75) comments that at present the arcakas’ access to the rituals takes place above all through prayogas, not through saṃhitās, and in addition through the scholars of the tradition, whose advice is sought.

616 However, although āgamic schools and the emphasis on āgamic learning in pāṭhaśālās can be viewed as a failure in terms of enhancing the students’ ritual knowledge, it meanwhile does in fact have potential economic advantages: a certificate issued by a pāṭhaśālā helps temple priests to be employed abroad, be it in Singapore, in the USA, or in another place with a large enough diaspora community to establish and maintain a Hindu temple.

617 See, for example, the diverse Vaikhānasa scholars’ explications on viṣṇubali presented in 2.2.2.2–2.2.4.7, or the fact that two differing versions of the Vaikhānasa *Mantrapraśna* are accepted as authoritative by the tradition (see Colas 1996: 222ff.).

with literate learning: the correct vocalisation of texts (including stress, pitch, rhythm) are important features of priestly education (Fuller 2003: 86, 102f.). Therefore, while the existence of texts in printed form helps in memorizing the texts and thus in fact improves the young priests' capacity to recite relevant mantras or other texts by heart, priestly education still is mainly based on practical training, achieved by mimetic means. The required contextual knowledge is acquired through practical performance (Fuller 2003: 104), as are specific bodily techniques such as the hand gestures (*mūdra*) and other details of ritual enactment. Performative learning, such as "being with elders," bodily presence during ritual performances, gradual involvement and mimesis are important means of internalisation of ritual competence. Ritual knowledge, is, above, all, practical knowledge: "how well a priest uses his body is interpreted as an index of how correctly he can perform ritual" (Fuller 2003: 108).<sup>618</sup> The careers of ritual specialists in the Vaikhānasa tradition can be very different with respect to the methods, duration and subject of the learning and transmission of knowledge. Moreover, it seems that ritual practice is as individual as the performer. Textual traditions (some of which may be unknown to us) as well as oral and, above all, performative traditions, exerted and exert an enormous influence on the concrete enactment of rituals.

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618 Interpreting ritual as text prevents a thorough understanding of its actual performance, its bodily enactment and its potential to create reality (see Wulf & Zirfas 2004: 38).

