

To Enter, to be entered, to merge:
The Role of Religious Experience
in the Traditions of Tantric Shaivism

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

South and Southeast Asian Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Fall 2014

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Abstract

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The role of religious experience in the tradition of Tantric Shaivism

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Professors Robert Goldman and Alexander von Rospatt, Co-chairs

The present work comprises a detailed study of specific terms of discourse in the pre-twelfth century sources of esoteric “Tantric” Shaivism, both scriptural and exegetical, some of which are still unpublished and others of which are published only in the original Sanskrit. As a dissertation in South Asian Studies using the philological method, the primary purpose of the study is to ascertain the range of meanings of certain technical terms of great importance to the theology and practice of the Śaiva religion, namely *āveśa*, *samāveśa*, and *śaktipāta*. The work focuses on both the independent meaning and the intersection of these key terms, incorporating also the terms *dīkṣā* and *vedha* in the latter endeavor. The intersection of these terms constitutes a complex set of relationships, a nexus of ideas that lie at the very heart of the Śaiva tradition and which, due to the latter’s widespread influence, came to be important in Tantric Buddhism and later forms of Hinduism as well. This thesis contends that *samāveśa*—meaning the fusion or commingling of one’s self with the energy of one’s deity and/or the consciousness of one’s guru—is *the* key term that distinguishes Tantric Shaivism from mainstream (esp. Vaidika) Indian religion. This constitutes a reinterpretation and overcoding of the earlier meaning of *āveśa*, i.e. self-induced controlled possession by a deity.

Samāveśa is important to all forms of Shaivism, whether dualistic and ritualized (the Siddhānta) or nondual subitist charismatic forms (the Kaula). This thesis further contends that a philological study of *samāveśa* and related terms like *śaktipāta* demonstrates that *religious experience* (or evidence thereof) was considered central and indispensable to initiatory Shaivism throughout the medieval period. *Śaktipāta* was requisite to receive the basic level of initiation, and in the Kaula branch of the tradition, *samāveśa* denoted forms of religious experience that were necessary for aspirants to demonstrate in order to receive higher-level initiations. The former term is still commonly used in many Hindu communities today to designate a “spiritual awakening” or initiatory experience that is transmitted by a qualified guru.

Part One of this work is a comprehensive overview of the nature and structure of the Śaiva religion, providing important context to what follows. Part Two studies the key terms of (*sam*)*āveśa*, *śaktipāta*, etc. in a) early Sanskrit literature generally, b) Śaiva scriptures, and c) the abundant exegetical literature based on those scriptures.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ā	ātmanepada
acc.	accusative case
ad	commenting on
ad loc.	in the place cited
aka	also known as
ARE	Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy
BCE	before the common era
BORI	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
BY	<i>Brahmayāmala</i>
c.	circa
CE	common era
cen.	century
cf.	compare with
ch.	chapter
CMSS	<i>Cinciṇīmatasārasamuccaya</i>
CNRS	Le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (www.cnrs.fr)
comm.	commentary
conj.	conjecture
conj. em.	conjectural emendation
corr.	correction
cr. ed.	critical edition
CSL	Clay Sanskrit Library
DDŚ	<i>Devīdyardhaśatikā</i>
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (of the American Psychiatric Association)
EC	Epigraphia Carnatica
Ed.	editor / edition (i.e., the reading of the printed edition)
EFEU	Ecole française de'Extrême-Orient (www.efeo.fr)
EI	Epigraphia Indica
em.	emendation
Fig.	figure
fol.	folio
f./ff.	folio(s)
ff.	and following (when preceded by a page or verse number)
fl.	flourished
GRETIL	Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages (http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de)
HC	<i>Harṣacarita</i>
HIML	History of Indian Medical Literature -> MEULENBELD 1999-2002
Ibid.	in the same source
IEP	<i>Inscriptions of the Early Pāṇḍyas</i> -> KRISHNAN 2002
IFI	Institut français d'indologie (same as below)
IFP	Institut français de Pondichéry (www.ifpindia.org)
ĪPK	<i>Īśvaraṇṇatyabhijñā-kārikā</i>
ĪPv	<i>Īśvaraṇṇatyabhijñā-vimarśinī</i>
ĪPvv	<i>Īśvaraṇṇatyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī</i>
J	Jayaratha (<i>Tantrāloka-viveka</i>)

JY	<i>Jayadrathayāmala</i>
K	Kauṇḍinya (<i>Pañcārthabhāṣya</i>)
KuT	<i>Kulārṇava-tantra</i>
KMT	<i>Kubjikāmata-tantra</i>
KP	<i>kriyāpāda</i>
KT	<i>Kiraṇa-tantra</i>
KSTS	Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies
l./ll.	line(s)
LiPu	<i>Liṅga-purāṇa</i>
loc. cit.	loco citato (in the place cited)
Mbh.	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
MNP	<i>Mahānayaprakāśa</i>
MS/MSS	manuscript(s)
MVT	<i>Mālinīvijayottara-tantra</i>
MVV	<i>Mālinīvijayavārttika</i>
n	footnote
NAK	National Archives of Kathmandu
NB	nota bene (note well)
NGMPP	Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project
no.	number
NŚT	Nondual Śaiva Tantra
NT	<i>Netra-tantra</i>
NTS	<i>Niśvāsa-tattva-saṃhitā</i>
NW	northwest
op. cit.	opere citato (in the work cited)
ORL	Oriental Research Library, Śrīnagar
p./pp.	page(s)
PH	<i>Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya</i>
r	recto (front of a folio)
SII	South Indian Inscriptions
sg.	Singular
SJ	Sadyojyotiḥ
SK	<i>Spandakārikā</i>
Skt.	Sanskrit
śl.	śloka
SkP	<i>Skanda-purāṇa</i>
SP	<i>Sāmbapañcāśikā</i>
SPṭ	<i>Sāmbapañcāśikā-ṭīkā</i>
ŚS	<i>Śivasūtra</i>
SSP	<i>Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati</i>
SSS	<i>Svāyambhuva-sūtra-saṅgraha</i>
s.v.	sub voce (under the word)
ŚV	<i>Śāktavijñāna</i>
SvT	<i>Svacchanda-tantra</i>
SvTU	<i>Svacchandodyota</i>
SYM	<i>Siddhayogeśvarīmata</i>
TĀ	<i>Tantrāloka</i>
TaiBrā	<i>Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa</i>
TaiĀr	<i>Taittirīyāraṇyaka</i>

TAK I	<i>Tantrābhīdhānakośa</i> I -> BRUNNER et. al. 2000
TAK II	<i>Tantrābhīdhānakośa</i> II -> BRUNNER et. al. 2004
TAK III	<i>Tantrābhīdhānakośa</i> III -> RASTELLI & GOODALL 2013
trans.	translated by
TS	<i>Tantrasāra</i>
TSB	<i>Tantrasadbhāva</i>
TU	<i>Timirodghāṭana</i>
ŪKA	<i>Ūrmikaulārṇava-tantra</i>
Up.	Upaniṣad
v	verso (back of a folio)
v./vv.	verse(s)
VāPu	<i>Vāyu-purāṇa</i>
VP	<i>vidyāpāda</i>
VBT	<i>Vijñānabhairava-tantra</i>
YS	<i>Yogasūtra</i>

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As always with a work of this size, many people were helpful, supportive, and indeed instrumental to its completion. I was fortunate to have a dissertation committee of very intelligent scholars and fine Sanskritists: Robert Goldman, Alexander von Rospatt, and Jacob Dalton. Their perspacacious comments were always helpful. In a rare stroke of luck, I also had on my committee an expert in twentieth-century *śaktipāt* traditions, Kurt Keutzer, who is the author of the very first “Kundalini FAQ” to appear on the internet. Kurt furnished me with a number of materials relating to the Tīrtha lineage, and challenged me even as he supported me, for which I am grateful.

Many scholars were helpful in various ways, especially by sending me PDFs of their work, including Alexis Sanderson, Diwakar Acharya, Junglan Bang, Matthew Kapstein, James Mallinson, John Nemeč, Isabelle Ratié, Hamsa Stainton, Christopher Tompkins, Judit Törzsök, and Somadeva Vasudeva. I am also very grateful for the existence of the INDOLOGY email list, and warmly thank all the generous scholars who made helpful comments regarding the alchemy references in the ĪPvv, including Jan Houben, Ashok Aklujkar, Dominic Goodall, Isabelle Ratié, Raffaele Torella, and especially Dominik Wujastyk, who is always very helpful despite an extremely busy schedule. I would also like to thank my friend Chetan Pandey, whose extraordinary generosity in furnishing me with PDFs of rare materials saved me much time. His archive and his kindness are impressive.

For moral and material support of various kinds, thanks to Sheldon Thieszen, Gail Matheson, Christopher Tompkins, Cristina Star Ryan, and especially to Laura Gomez Dapena, for getting the ball rolling in the last phase, and Tamara Vodovoz, for unstinting and unconditional support. Also thanks to Chris Haumesser, and to Ilia Talalai for putting up with me. Of enormous help with eleventh hour edits were Ellen Lauck Strzalkowski and Luma Muhtadie. Finally, great gratitude to Kate and Peter (Mum and Dad), and to GM, without whom none of this would have happened.

Epigraph

The workings of the actual past + the *virtual* past may be illustrated by an event well known to collective history, such as the sinking of the *Titanic*. The disaster as it *actually* occurred descends into obscurity as its eyewitnesses die off, documents perish + the wreck of the ship dissolves in its Atlantic grave. Yet a *virtual* sinking of the *Titanic*, created from reworked memories, papers, hearsay, fiction—in short, belief—grows ever “truer.” The actual past is brittle, ever-dimming + ever more problematic to access/reconstruct: in contrast, the virtual past is malleable, ever-brightening + ever more difficult to circumvent/expose as fraudulent.

— David Mitchell

Introduction: topic, format, methodology, and thesis

This is a dissertation on the textual sources of the esoteric (“tantric”) Śaiva tradition which flourished throughout South Asia (and much of Southeast Asia) between the sixth and thirteenth centuries of the common era. The enormous success of this esoteric tradition, as witnessed by a vast body of Sanskrit literature as well as inscriptions recording royal patronage, was founded on a widespread exoteric popular tradition of the worship of Śiva and his retinue. Such worship was the dominant form of theistic religious devotion in South Asia from the first century BCE through at least the thirteenth, a fact only recently recognized by scholars, since it had previously been obscured by the myth of a premodern “Hinduism” of which Śaivism was only one branch. Furthermore, the ascendancy of Vaiṣṇavism after 1500 and the lack of sufficient statistical data before that concealed the reality of the dominance of the Śaiva religion throughout the medieval period.¹ Thus Śaivism is worth studying in its own right. The major obstacle to this study is that, in comparison to the Vedic, classical, and epic materials, the literature of Śaivism is largely unpublished, unedited, and untranslated.²

Therefore, as the field slowly grows, new scholars of Śaivism are not so much making new arguments on the basis of well-known material, as happens in other branches of philology and literary criticism, but rather seeking to make available the primary sources of the tradition by transcribing manuscripts, collating them, critically editing the text, creating etexts, and only then attempting tentative translations. The translations are tentative because we are rarely able to establish the text with a great degree of certainty, and if philology survives as a discipline, we

¹ See n14 below and Alexis SANDERSON’s “The Śaiva Age” (2009) and “The Impact of Inscriptions” (2013) (both available on his website) for evidence of this. Though the Vaidika tradition was equally successful during this period, it was largely nontheistic (except where it was mixed with theistic cults of worship) since, following Kumārila, deities were not thought to have any reality apart from their names. If we define religion in terms of interactions with culturally postulated superhuman beings, then pure Brahmanism was nonreligious, and thus we can confidently refer to Śaivism as the dominant religion in the medieval period (500-1300 CE). These points will be treated further below.

² The size of the task ahead of us can be indicated by the fact that the longest Śaiva scripture, the *Jayadratha-yāmala*, is 24,000 verses, a quarter the length of the vulgate *Mahābhārata*.

will need several more generations of work to do so. Many doctoral theses on this subject coming out of Europe consist of nothing more than an edition and annotated translation of a previous unavailable text, since on the philological view, to advance theoretical arguments seems premature at this stage of the data-gathering process.³

There is however another useful kind of contribution to be made at this point in the development of the field, and that is a comprehensive survey of the primary sources on a specific topic. This is the approach of the present study. It seeks to be a comprehensive and detailed resource for any scholar wishing to investigate the issues denoted by the following interrelated terms (in order of the degree of attention devoted to them in the present work):

- *āveśa, samāveśa*: possession by, or immersion into, the energy of a deity
- *śaktipāta*: the Descent of Power (religious conversion)
- *dikṣā*: initiation (ritual and otherwise)
- *sākṣātkāra, anubhāva, āvirbhāva*: direct experience

Four key terms are here addressed instead of one because the present author found that none of these specific terms can be studied in isolation, since each is so intimately bound up with the others. Trying to fully explicate one key word leads one further and further into an intertextual labyrinth, until one realizes that it is a closely interrelated nexus of ideas that must be explicated. The intersection of these particular terms constitutes a complex set of relationships, a nexus of ideas concerning the role of spiritual experience in the religious life—a nexus that lies at the very heart of the Śaiva religion. Though this work does make specific arguments, it does not seek to be the final word on these important topics, but merely a survey of the relevant sources. This author believes that it is better to let each scholar draw their own conclusions, rather than risk distorting the evidence by pushing his own too strongly.

Seeking to be a useful resource for other scholars, the present study focuses primarily on passages that have not been previously published in English. The original Sanskrit is also made available here, often with suggested emendations to the text or discussion of textual problems. Many of these emendations were made by other, senior scholars that I have been fortunate to read these passages with, thus increasing the value of the present work.

Though this study is largely confined to Śaiva literature, its value is increased by the fact that esoteric Śaivism exerted considerable influence on the Vaiṣṇava Pañcarātra, the Buddhist Yoginī-tantras, and the Jaina *mantra-śāstra*, as well as the development of rituals of worship in India generally, and therefore may be of value to scholars studying any of those areas as well. Finally, students of language and semiology may be interested in this work as a study of the semantic drift of a word (viz., *āveśa*) over the course of centuries, a drift that in this case was accelerated by the hermeneutic needs of specific religious communities.

³ For anyone except Alexis SANDERSON, who is probably the only living person to have read all the extant Śaiva literature in manuscript.

Hypotheses explored by the present work and their significance

This thesis contends that *āveśa*—meaning controlled possession—and the related term *samāveśa*—meaning the fusion or commingling of one’s self with one’s deity—constitutes one of a handful of key concepts that distinguishes Tantric Śaivism from mainstream (Vaidika/Paurāṇika) Indian religion and thereby gives it its specificity. The present work will demonstrate that (*sam*)*āveśa* was important to all forms of Śaivism, whether dualistic and ritualized (the Siddhānta or “right current”) or nondual esoteric/charismatic forms (the Kaula or “left current”), though as we will see, the literature of the former usually shies away from the actual word *āveśa*, perhaps to avoid an association with primitive possession rites in the mind of the reader. For *āveśa* in its earliest religious uses indeed denotes a powerful psychic penetration of one’s being by superhuman beings such as Bhairava, the ferocious form of the Goddess, or her *ḍākinīs*. We will trace the semantic shift of the word, and those that share in its constellation of meanings, through the early medieval period, up until it becomes a term that serves as a generalized rubric for “spiritual experience.” Thus the present study strongly disagrees with David Gordon WHITE, a prominent American scholar of the Hindu Tantra, who contends that it was “ritual transactions in sexual fluids . . . that gave Tantra its specificity in medieval South Asian religions.”⁴ This statement is overly influenced by ill-informed Western conceptions of Tantra as primarily sexual that formed over the colonial period, and further suggests a lack of wide reading in the primary sources of the Tantric traditions, in which sexual practices of any kind are usually conspicuous by their absence. A general survey of the Tantric literature reveals that these sources are primarily concerned with ritual and yoga, and only very rarely with transgressive or sexual practices. It is hoped that the present work is a small step toward overturning the mistaken idea that Tantra is primarily marked by transgression and sexuality, an idea that circulates in both the general public and the American academy. Of course, for this to happen, we first need to have clarity concerning what is “tantric.”⁵ The present study follows the tradition itself by defining as Tantric those teachings and practices found in the *tantras* (scriptures), works that were only accessible to a person after (and as a result of) having received a special initiation (i.e., the kind taught in the same scriptures).⁶ Having defined it in this way (emically rather than etically, that is to say with historic accuracy rather than as a category of the Western scholarly imagination), it is not “ritual transactions in

⁴ This is how he summarizes the thesis of his book, *Kiss of the Yoginī*, on his academic webpage (<http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/people/faculty/david-white/>).

⁵ The majority of American scholars of the subject seem strangely unaware that the non-transgressive Śaiva Siddhānta is not only a Tantric tradition, but actually forms the ritual, yogic, and doctrinal basis for all of Tantric Śaivism and further gave the tradition its primary institutional structure (by founding *maṭhas* and universities and propagating standardized ritual manuals). But even so, the scriptural sources for many non-Saiddhāntika lineages (such as those of the popular cults of Svachchanda-bhairava and Netranātha/Amṛteśvara) are also free of sexual practices. Indeed, such practices are only found in the Krama and Kaula lineages, some of which cannot even be properly identified as Tantric since they do not use the Tantric ritual forms.

⁶ Thus we treat “Āgamic” as a perfect synonym of “Tantric”.

sexual fluids” but rather *samāveśa* among a handful of other categories—such as unique cosmological maps, a liberating initiation ritual, and a unique yogic technology⁷—that gave Tantra its specificity, these categories being the focus of the great majority of textual sources as well as key features that differentiate Tantra from Brahmanism/Vedism.

This thesis further contends that a philological study of *samāveśa* and related terms like *śaktipāta* demonstrates that religious experience (or rather, evidence thereof) was considered indispensable to initiatory Śaivism throughout the medieval period. In the Kaula branch of Śaivism, which is the primary influence in modern imaginations of the category “Tantra,” *samāveśa* is a term that represents forms of spiritual experience that were necessary for aspirants to actually demonstrate in order to receive higher-level initiations; and evidence of *śaktipāta*, a near-synonym of *samāveśa*, was requisite for even the basic initiation into the broad base of the tradition. By “religious experience” I mean of course an affective experience understood by the one who has it (and/or by his guru) in religious terms. Therefore this study serves to disprove or at least problematize the well-known thesis of Robert SHARF that religious experiences “were not considered the goal of practice” in Asian religions, and that they “were not deemed doctrinally authoritative, and did not serve as reference points for [religious practitioners’] understanding of the path” (2000: 272), a thesis based in part on the incorrect supposition that the concept of religious experience “turns out to be of relatively recent, and distinctively Western, provenance” (Ibid.: 271). These claims are discussed and at least partially refuted in the present work (see Conclusions).

What is the significance and value of the present work to scholars of South Asia and Sanskrit theological-philosophical literature? In South Asian culture and religions, the concept of *āveśa*—which has a much greater multivalence than the English word usually used to translate it (“possession”)—is crucially important but surprisingly understudied. A landmark attempt to rectify this situation was Frederick SMITH’s 2006 volume, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization*, an accomplished and important yet partially flawed work, in which the author’s ambition to cover *āveśa* in the whole of South Asian literature resulted in an inadequate grasp of some of his primary source material, particularly that of Tantric Śaivism. Chapter 10, “Possession in Tantra,” is the weakest of the book, and is filled with errors of understanding and mistranslations.⁸ This is unfortunate, because it is specifically within the vast edifice of Śaiva Tantra that *āveśa* achieves its apotheosis, becoming elevated to a central term of discourse in the arenas of theological doctrine, religious praxis, and the sophisticated intellectual philosophy of the tradition. The present work thus fills the indicated gap. The need for this study is also indicated by Loriliai BERNACKI in her 2007 article “Possession, Absorption and the Transformation of *Samāveśa*”, which anticipated

⁷ That is, the *ṣaḍ-adhvan* or six cosmological-cum-cosmogonic maps (of which the 36-*tattva* map is one); the *nirvāṇa-dikṣā*; and a yogic method whose central innovation was the focused entrainment of mantra, breath, *mudrā*, and visualization.

⁸ As discussed in the introduction to Part Two of the present work.

some of the conclusions of the present work in a rudimentary way.⁹ This 12-page article makes a number of minor errors that are corrected here, but more importantly it calls for (and illustrates the need for) further research into (*sam*)*āveśa*, a need partially filled by the present work.

The other term greatly in need of clarification is *śaktipāta*. The term is widespread in Hindu-based spiritual communities today, due to its adoption by twentieth-century Hindu teachers, one of whom, Swāmī Muktānanda, popularized it in the West in the 1970s and 80s. Several million people around the world (including hundreds of thousands of Americans at the least¹⁰) are now conversant with this previously esoteric term, as an internet search quickly reveals. Yet there is little clarity about its modern meaning (let alone the ancient one), which seems to range from “initiation” to “magical transference of spiritual energy” to “spontaneous spiritual awakening.” My 2007 article, “The Descent of Power,” represented a first step toward clarifying the use of the term in the original Sanskrit sources, and showing how its modern meanings are derived from the term’s original usage. This dissertation is a second step, going deeper into the primary sources to uncover more precisely the multiple valences of the term, whose fundamental meaning (I will argue) is something like “an act of grace by which God awakens an individual to the spiritual life and instigates the process which will ultimately cause that individual to realize his identity with Him.” Thus *śaktipāta* is more closely linked to *anugraha* than is *samāveśa*, yet, as a conversion experience, *śaktipāta* can be seen as a special form of *samāveśa*, for as mentioned the latter term comes to denote any spiritual or mystical experience of communion with the Divine. When the terms are contrasted, *samāveśa* is used to refer to a more powerful experience than *śaktipāta*, and/or one that comes to a more advanced practitioner.¹¹

The third key term, *dīkṣā*, is well known and understood in and of itself, but less well known is its complex relationship with the above two terms. *Śaktipāta* impels one to seek, and qualifies one for, Tantric *dīkṣā*, which in turn uses a technology of ritualized *samāveśa* as a central component; but a powerful enough *śaktipāta* entails *samāveśa* and thus obviates the need for *dīkṣā* altogether (at least according to the Kaula left current). Furthermore, a nonritual or “subitist” initiation by a Kaula guru (through word, look, touch, etc.) is understood as a transmission of energy (*saṅkramaṇa*) that penetrates (*vedha*) the disciple and triggers a *samāveśa*. These doctrines pave the way for the conflation of these terms by the twentieth century. Modern Hindu movements see *śaktipāta*, now understood as a transmission of energy from a human guru, as a *dīkṣā* in and of itself, thereby completely eliding

⁹ My research on the topic began in 2004, and the conclusions of the first stage of research were published in an extensive article that appeared both in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* and in *Evam: Forum on Indian Representations* vol. 4 (*Abhinavagupta*), in 2008 and 2007 respectively. Thus, in a kind of “morphic resonance,” SMITH, BIERNACKI, and I were working on some of the same material, and asking some of the same questions, but unaware of each other, during the period 2004-06.

¹⁰ Since this is the number of people that have received “shaktipat diksha” from Muktānanda and his successor, Swāminī Cidvilāsānandā, in the U.S. alone.

¹¹ These are conclusions not found to my knowledge in any previous published work.

the baroque ritual that the term *dīkṣā* traditionally denoted. Here we are of course only briefly adumbrating the conclusions that emerge from the present work.

Methodology

This dissertation seeks to be relevant to the field of Religious Studies on the one hand and that of South Asian studies and specifically Sanskrit scholarship on the other. My religious studies training (at Rochester and Santa Barbara) included much reading in anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and history; but becoming increasingly disillusioned with “the hypertrophy of theory over the past two decades, which often wound up displacing its object of analysis” (POLLOCK 2009: 934), I gravitated instead to the historical-philological method more prevalent in the European academy and at Berkeley, which suits a Sanskritist particularly well. Philology is the primary methodological tool of this dissertation, but not in the sense of semiology or linguistics, the two fields which largely took over the vectors of 19th-century philology, but rather in the sense of something in between those two, i.e., historical-grammatical and textual criticism: philology as “the discipline of making sense of texts” and “the history of textualized meaning” (POLLOCK 2009: 934). Philology seems to be slowly gaining ground once again in academia; Richard LARIVIERE (1995) and Sheldon POLLOCK (2009) have both advocated for a return to philological techniques and values, and the new *Zukunftsphilologie* program sponsored by the Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin and the Freie Universität Berlin “endeavours to promote and emphasise primary textual scholarship beyond the classical humanistic canon by a critical recuperation of philology” and cites “the increasingly growing concern with the global significance of philology and its potential to challenge exclusivist notions of the self and the canon.”¹² This last comment, though it has a different context than the present work in Indic religion, is curiously apropos since the primary sources that we will philologically analyze are very much concerned with the meaning of the terms *self* and *canon*, and serve to problematize the received notions about both in mainstream Hinduism and the scholarship thereon.

For premodern Indian religious history, texts are almost all we have to go on; yet my philological training at Berkeley and Oxford taught me to interrogate those texts with the contextual questions of the social historian. While being cognizant of the impossibility of certain knowledge of the past and the dangers of even trying to approach it—deftly outlined by David Mitchell in the epigraph at the beginning of the present work—I believe it is a worthwhile endeavor to carefully construct a partial understanding of the past through reading its documents in their intertextual context. *Intertextuality* refers to a) the fact that any given Sanskrit source in this body of literature can usually be shown to incorporate material from other sources, and shares related material with parallel sources, and itself is incorporated in later works in turn; and b) the scholarly process of ascertaining the meaning of a text by reading as many related texts as possible, i.e., earlier texts that a given author might have been exposed to (the direct and indirect sources for the given work), and contemporary (coeval) texts that address similar topics. The field of Tantric Studies,

¹² <http://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de/en/zukunftsphilologie/profil/long-version.html>; accessed August 30, 2013.

like other philologically-based fields, has recently undergone (and is still undergoing) major shifts as computer tools like the GREP command-line utility (“Globally search a Regular Expression and Print”) allow scholars to search a huge and increasing number of electronic versions of Sanskrit texts (etexts) for key terms or phrases; developments that are taking intertextual research to a new level and making possible a renaissance in philology.

The present work is very much indebted to such approaches. In conducting this research, the key terms that I “grepped” to find and study the passages that form the bedrock of the current work were not only *āveśa*, *śaktipāta*, and *dīkṣā*, but also their various synonyms (such as *āviṣṭa*, *śaktinipāta*, and *anugraha*¹³ respectively). Since many hundreds of Śaiva texts now exist in electronic form, such “grepping” turns up a vast wealth of interesting material, and only careful study of the organization, dating, and importance of the various works of the Śaiva canon makes it possible to narrow down the hundreds of passages one discovers through this method to those that are truly significant.

These terms, then, need clarification in order to better understand Śaivism, the religion that dominated South and Southeast Asia for centuries in the early medieval period and strongly influenced the formation of both Tantric Buddhism and modern Hinduism. But the structure and nature of Śaivism itself is not well understood by modern scholars who have not specialized in it. Since Śaivism was subsumed into Hinduism over five centuries ago, and is not recognized by modern Hindus as ever having been separate from Hinduism, it has not received the scholarly attention it deserves. It merits this attention because, in its own time, it matched the popularity of Buddhism in Southeast Asia, eclipsed it by a wide margin in India, and nearly matched the levels of patronage given to the Vedic/Brahmanical religion that would later subsume it.¹⁴ Therefore, due to the lack of understanding of the nature and structure of Śaivism that I have often found among many scholars of Indian religion and culture (especially in the U.S.), the present work includes a 150-page overview of Śaivism (Part One), providing needed context for the more original research that follows. This section seeks to incorporate the latest research breakthroughs in its account, and does not merely summarize what is found in the secondary literature, though it does rely heavily on the pioneering work of Professor Alexis SANDERSON of Oxford University.

¹³ “The use of the verb *anu-grah* (‘to favour’) indicates the concept of divine grace through initiation (*dīkṣā*),” BISSCHOP 2006: 36.

¹⁴ In his Kyoto Lectures on Śaivism and Brāhmanism (2012-13), Alexis SANDERSON argued that the records of the foundations of temples and other religious grants documented in the volumes of the Epigraphia Indica (EI) so far published were statistically significant enough to represent the popularity of religions in the early medieval period, at least in terms of their patronage. In this period, the EI shows 660 grants to Brāhmanical orders, 596 to Śaiva temples or maṭhas, 164 to Vaiṣṇava ones, 111 to Jaina monasteries or shrines, 63 to Bauddha ones, and 38 to Saura temples. The Indian Antiquary shows almost exactly the same distribution. This data will be published by SANDERSON in his forthcoming book, *Śaivism and Brahmanism*, while his article “The Śaiva Religion Among the Khmers” (2004) demonstrates the tradition’s significance to the cultural development of Southeast Asia.

In Part Two, after briefly exploring theoretical approaches to the study of “possession” (section 2.1), we dive into a study of the textual sources that are important for understanding the key terms discussed above. First we investigate *āveśa* in pre-Śaiva sources (such as the Epic and Āyurvedic materials), as well as the hints of *śaktipāta* in pre-tantric Śaiva sources (section 2.2). Then we spend nearly 100 pages on a detailed exploration of our key terms in the Śaiva scriptural corpus, those texts that purport to be divine revelation and establish orthodoxy and orthopraxy for those branches of the religion that accept them (section 2.3). Section 2.4 explores *dikṣā* and *āveśa* in a pivotal ritual manual of the tradition, the *Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati*. The longest and most important section of the present work is 2.5, which investigates all our key terms in the abundant exegetical literature of Śaivism, meaning those often sophisticated philosophical writings strictly or loosely based on the scriptural materials, most of them composed in Kashmir during the ninth through eleventh centuries. This is followed by a Conclusions section that summarizes what we have learned and how it nuances our view of Indian religions, and an Epilogue on the modern survivals of these religious doctrines.

Part the First. The Context: An Introduction to Śaivism

1.1 What is Śaivism?

Śaivism is the name scholars use for a religion that flourished in India from about the beginning of the common era through to the Muslim period, when it was subsumed, along with Vaiṣṇavism, under the umbrella of Brāhmanism (*vaidika-dharma*),¹⁵ giving rise to Hinduism in the 15th century.

This first sentence already demands an explanation of terms and of methodology before we can focus in on our specific subject. Firstly, as an Indologist, my primary methodological orientation is that of philology. As a corollary of that orientation, I hold that the application of terms of identity to historical and religious agents that were not used self-referentially by those agents are invalid in our enterprise, that of historically accurate description and analysis of Indian culture. Another way of saying this is that as a philologist I hold that “emic” identifiers are valid, not “etic” ones. Back-projecting complex and heavily weighted terms from one historical era to a previous one in which they were not used creates obscured perception, selective reading of the evidence, and significant errors.

Therefore I hold that Hinduism came into existence in the 15th century. Though the exact Anglicism “Hinduism” was not used until 1816 (by Rammohan Roy; see LORENZEN 1999: 631), “Hindu” was used as a self-designation by Indians beginning in the 14th century, and as a specifically religious self-designation throughout the 15th century and beyond.¹⁶ Since “Hindu” in the 15th century denotes much the same collection of religious phenomena as “Hinduism” does in the 19th, as shown by LORENZEN (1999), I am not concerned about the addition of an –ism to form an English abstract noun, either here or in the case of Śaivism, to which we will come.

The term “Hindu” emerges specifically in contrast to “Muslim,” and in the context of Muslim rule. Lorenzen anticipates my argument when he says, “In practice, there can be no Hindu identity unless this is defined by contrast against such an Other. Without the Muslim (or some other non-Hindu), Hindus can only be Vaishnavas, Saivas [*sic*], Smartas or the like” (LORENZEN 1999: 648). Therefore, I argue that Śaivas, and hence Śaivism, existed until the 14th or 15th century; and this is not merely terminologically true, but also institutionally, for a substantial number of Śaiva institutions, both literal (temples, *maṭhas*, etc.) and figurative (lineages,

¹⁵ By Brāhmanism we mean the body of practice and belief that claims to derive its authority from Śruti and Smṛti (where *smṛti* effectively means *vedavit-parigraha*).

¹⁶ Cynthia TALBOT has shown that Andhra inscriptions use the phrase “Sultan among Hindu kings” beginning in 1352 CE—our first documented use of the word “Hindu” in an Indian language—in response to Muslim incursions into the region beginning in 1323 (1995: 700, cited in LORENZEN 1999: 652). This corresponds to one of the earliest Muslim uses of the word Hindu in a specifically religious sense (‘Abd al-Malik ‘Isami, 1350; LORENZEN 1999: 653). In the early 15th century the Apabhraṃśa author Vidyāpati contrasts Hindu and Turk dharma, i.e., religion (*hindū dhamma* and *turaka dhamma*), as does Kabīr a couple of generations later (LORENZEN 1999: 650-52). Note that a) from the beginning, the term Hindu is defined in contradistinction to a Muslim “other” and b) both “Hindu” and “Turk”, often paired in late medieval poetry, are originally ethno-geographical terms that became religious designators.

schools, etc.) had been destroyed by the Muslims by this period, both violently and through lack of patronage.

The next question that emerges in the explication of the first sentence is, What is it about Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism that allowed them to be subsumed under the umbrella of Brāhmanism, unlike Buddhism and Jainism, and thereby give rise to Hinduism? The answer to that question also serves as a definition of what I mean by Brāhmanism. We may define the latter simply in two dimensions: valid sources of knowledge and social structure. In the first instance, Brāhmanism (derived of course from *brāhmaṇa*) is a religion (*dharma*) based on the Veda and the traditions and conduct of those who know the Veda, as clearly stated in both the *Gautama-dharma-sūtra* (1.1-2: *vedo dharmamūlaṃ tadvidāṃ ca smṛtiśīle*) and the *Manu-smṛti* (2.6ab).¹⁷ Therefore, we can also call Brāhmanism by the name Vedism (*vaidika-dharma*). In the second instance, that of social structure, we can define Brāhmanism in terms of the *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Medhātithi, a 9th-10th cen. authoritative commentator on the *Manusmṛti*, tells us that a territory fit for Vedic rites (*yajñīyo deśaḥ*) is one in which a conquering king who observes brāhmanical practice (*sādhvācaraṇa*) enforces the *varṇāśrama-dharma*, imposing the status of *caṇḍāla* (untouchable) on all those indigenous to the region who do not fit into that system.¹⁸ Therefore, the reader will be unsurprised to learn, the reason that Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism were able to be subsumed by Brāhmanism in the late medieval period is precisely because a) both acknowledged the authority of the Veda to some degree, and b) they did not, in that period, transgress the norms of the *varṇāśrama-dharma*.¹⁹ But this situation was not always the case for either, and most especially for Śaivism, as well shall see. In fact, the latter had been undergoing a process of increasing Veda-congruence, with the progressive etiolation or separation out of its transgressive Śākta elements, since at least the 12th century.

Thus, even if we were using an etic definition of “Hinduism” and applying it to the early medieval period, I argue that it would be inappropriate to include Śaivism under that rubric. The reasons for this will be given below; here I will confine myself to the generalization that the broad sweep of the history of Śaivism may be seen as a millennium-long process (roughly, 400 to 1400 CE) in which an explicitly anti-brāhmanical religion, that initially characterized itself in terms of a wholesale rejection of the brāhmanical worldview, was slowly brought within the

¹⁷ References provided by SANDERSON. See also Medhātithi’s *Manubhāṣya* on 2.6, where he specifies that whatever other practices are followed by those who correctly enact the rites of *śruti* are also Vedic by extension, for the primary reason to think any practice valid is that it is adopted by knowers of the Veda (*prāmāṇyakāraṇaṃ mukhyaṃ vedavidbhīḥ parigrahaḥ*).

¹⁸ *Manusmṛti-bhāṣya* on 2.23, cited at SANDERSON 2005: 400; see also SANDERSON 2009: 41n1, where many citations of inscriptions are given to prove that a righteous (*dhārmika*) king is precisely one who rigorously imposes the *varṇāśrama-dharma* on his subjects.

¹⁹ A passage from a lost text much cited by conservative exegetes in Śaivism’s classical period (the 9th-11th centuries) reads: *varṇāśramācārān manasāpi na laṅghayet / yo yasminn āśrame tiṣṭhan dīkṣitaḥ śivaśāsane / sa tasminn eva samtiṣṭhec chivadharmam ca pālayet* (See SANDERSON 2007b: 231n1). This injunction came to be followed by virtually all Śaivas beginning in the 13th century.

confines of the brāhmanical system of values, to the point where it could rightly be lumped together with the latter under the name Hinduism.

Finally, I intentionally called Śaivism a religion in the first sentence, by which I mean “an institution consisting of culturally pattern interactions with culturally postulated superhuman beings” (SPIRO 1966). In the context of South Asia, where religious boundaries are often blurred in various ways, we must also ask what distinguishes a religion from other religions. I hold that in the period in question (500-1300 CE), Śaivism possessed the traits I associate with a distinct and self-contained religion, which are: 1) a body of texts that belong to that system and no other; 2) authoritative teachers consecrated in that system and no other, propagating pan-Indian doctrine from within a transregional ecclesiastical hierarchy; 3) the fact that the system itself makes an effort to distinguish itself from others;²⁰ 4) competition with other religious systems, including especially the claim to offer definitive salvation above and beyond them.²¹ Space does not permit me to explore these four points in detail here, but the reader is referred to the oeuvre of Alexis SANDERSON, which provides ample evidence. One such piece of evidence may be mentioned briefly: the doctrine of the unity of the Śaiva scripture (over and against the Vaidika), typified in the assertion that the entire Śaiva canon is a single complex statement made by God (SANDERSON 2005: 23).²²

1.2 Key dates in the early centuries of Śaivism

This section owes much to SANDERSON’s lengthy lecture series on “Śaivism and Brahmanism” delivered at the University of Kyoto in late 2012 to early 2013, therefore the interested reader is directed to the forthcoming book based on those lectures.²³ Many of the references cited here were brought to my attention by these lectures.

Having briefly touched on the *terminus ante quem* of Śaivism, we must examine the evidence for its *terminus post quem*. In the first sentence I claimed that its point of origin lies near to the beginning of the common era (CE). More precise is

²⁰ For example, Śaiva exegete Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha distinguishes “those of our own religion” (*samāna-tāntrikas*) from the views of other religions (*tantrāntaras*). See WATSON et. al. 2013: 40.

²¹ These four criteria emerged in discussions with Prof. SANDERSON while I was his M.Phil. student. For primary sources in which this sense of a discrete religious identity is evident, see (e.g.) Kṣemarāja’s *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam* and Rāmakaṇṭha’s *Paramokṣanirāsakārikā-vṛtti* (WATSON et. al. 2013).

²² This doctrine is exemplified in an interesting quote from Vairocana, Rājaguru of King Nirbhara and author of the *Pratiṣṭhā-lakṣaṇa-samuccaya*, where he describes himself as a lion whose eyes are the Siddhānta-tantras, whose huge sharp fangs are the Gāruḍa-tantras, whose tongue and hair are the Vāma- and Dakṣiṇa-tantras, and whose massive claws are all the Bhūta-tantras, for these are the principal divisions of the Śaiva canon (*siddhānta-dvaya-dṛk ca gāruḍa-brhat-tikṣṇogra-damṣṭraś ca yaḥ | jihvā + + ca keśarāṇi + tathā savyāpasavyāgamau | vistīrnākhila-bhūta-tantra-nakharo vairocano keśarī |*) Reference provided by SANDERSON. Note that Vairocana also uses the phrase *śaivāntaḥpātinaḥ*, “those who fall within the Śaiva religion” (e.g. 2.169).

²³ The findings presented in the first few lectures in the series have already been published as “The Impact of Inscriptions on the Interpretation of Early Śaiva Literature,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 56 (2013), pp. 211–244.

the statement that we can provide firm evidence for the existence of *devotion to Śiva* on the part of concrete religious actors from the beginning of the common era onwards. Since, as demonstrated clearly below (section 1.3), Śaivism must be defined in terms of its adherents, it is just such evidence that we are concerned with, especially evidence of *exclusive* devotion and/or *sectarian* devotion (i.e., that which takes Śiva as the supreme deity). Thus we will pass over all discussion of the Vedic deity Rudra, who came to be identified with Śiva, since we lack such evidence with regard to him in the Vedic period.²⁴ We must also pass over the absurd notion that we can meaningfully connect Mohenjo-dāro seal number 420 (prematurely called “Proto-Śiva” by Sir John MARSHALL) to the deity Śiva as documented in Sanskrit texts of nearly two millennia later.²⁵

Another erroneous notion that must be rejected, one long held by scholars, is that Megasthenes’ (c. 300 BCE) mention of devotion to Heracles and Dionysus in India—observed during his ambassadorship from Seleukos I Nikator to the court of Candragupta Maurya—refers to early versions of sectarian devotion to Kṛṣṇa and Śiva respectively. During his lecture series in Kyoto (2012), SANDERSON presented convincing evidence that these are most likely an *interpretatio graeca* of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma/Saṅkarṣaṇa respectively.²⁶ Briefly, the Dionysian habits of Balarāma are well-attested in early literature, but we lack similar evidence vis-à-vis Śiva for this period.²⁷

Our earliest firm evidence for Śaivism, then, is that provided by Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya* (c. 140 BCE).²⁸ In his commentary on *sūtra* 5.2.76 he mentions a group of people who venerate Śiva as the Lord (*bhagavān*), i.e. *Śiva-bhāgavatas*, who often carry a spear or iron pike (*ayaḥśūla*). Nonetheless, he tells us, they cannot be called *āyaḥśūlikas* (“iron-pikers”) because that adjective is reserved to describe those who use violent means to obtain their aim when a gentler method would do (*yo mṛdunopāyenānveṣṭavyān arthān rabhasenānvicchati sa ucyata āyaḥśūlikah*), not for those who literally carry around a spear.²⁹ Perhaps even more important is the

²⁴ However, we must note two connections between the Vedic corpus and Śaivism (indeed, they are virtually the only two meaningful textual connections between them): first, that the mantras found in the *Taittirīyāranyaka* 10.43-47 constitute the five key mantras of Pañcārtha-Pāśupatism (see 1.5.1 of this dissertation and BISSCHOP 2006); and second, that the text which has become known as the *Śata-rudriya* or, more colloquially, the *Rudram Camakam* (*Taittirīya-saṃhitā* 4.5, 4.7), became a central text for recitation by the *rudra-bhaktas* or lay devotees of Śaivism (see 1.3.1 below). Though Rudra is praised as supreme in that text, it must be understood (in its original context) as the typical Vedic henotheistic hyperbole, and in this context was particularly meant to ward off the caprices of a deity seen by the Vedic people as potentially malevolent or at best ambiguous.

²⁵ Comparing the seal to seals number 222 and 235 problematizes Sir John MARSHALL’s assessment of seal 420 as the “prototype of the historic Śiva” (1931:52-56). Cf. SRINIVASAN 1975.

²⁶ See also Klaus KARTTUNEN’s *India in Early Greek Literature*, pp. 210-19.

²⁷ The *Mahābhārata* and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* both explicitly depict Balarāma as a drunkard, as does Kuṣāṇa-period sculpture (see SANDERSON 2013).

²⁸ For this date see BHANDARKAR’s “On the date of Patañjali and the king in whose reign he lived”, *Indian Antiquary* I (1872), and CARDONA 1976: 263-66.

²⁹ Here I follow SANDERSON’s interpretation of Patañjali (2013: 14n35) as opposed to that of MONIER-WILLIAMS.

evidence found in *Mahābhāṣya* 5.3.99, in which we learn that small images of deities such as Śiva and Skanda were sold to householders in the later Maurya period (c. 200 BCE). In the context of a discussion of the application of the rule of *luP* or elision, Patañjali tells us that the Mauryas, in need of funds (*mauryair hiraṇyārthibhiḥ*), fashioned and sold images of Śiva, Skanda, and Viśākha (*arcāḥ prakalpitāḥ*), which should not be sold (*apaṇya*) as if they were toys; if they are, then the suffix *-ka* should not be elided (giving us *śivaka* etc.) as it is when the image is one destined for full-time proper worship (*sampratipūjā*) by a professional priest.³⁰ The significance of these comments is considerable, for they tell us that worship of Śiva was sufficiently commonplace by the end of the Mauryan period (c. 185 BCE) for there to be a market for images of him, and furthermore that there was a distinction already in place between private/household worship and public/civic worship. That the worship of Śiva was commonplace from this time onwards is further confirmed by the substantial number of theophoric names (e.g. Śivadatta, Śivadāsa, Śivadhara, Śivanandin) attested in donative inscriptions throughout the subcontinent, from the Swāt valley to the Andhra region, from the 2nd century BCE onwards.³¹ But of course this evidence does not tell us that this worship was sectarian or exclusive at this time.

The third mention of Śiva in the *Mahābhāṣya* is at 6.3.26, where he is paired with Vaiśravaṇa (later called Kubera), as he often is in very early sources (such as early Jaina texts, some of which may be contemporaneous with Patañjali³²). The Pāṇinian rule in question, in which the lengthening of the final vowel of the first member of a *dvandva* compound is taught (e.g. *indrāvaruṇa-*), is said to be overruled in the case of deity pairs that have such a close relation that they are paired together more often than not, such as Śiva-and-Vaiśravaṇa. Since Vaiśravaṇa (Kubera) is the lord of *yakṣas*, and has (like Rudra in the Veda) an ambiguous and potentially malevolent character early on, we might be led to conclude that both deities have a non-*āryan* origin, and/or an origin outside of the *Āryāvarta* region. The evidence is certainly not conclusive in this regard; however, the data cited next also point to this possibility.

The earliest attested epigraphical evidence for the worship of Śiva is a Kharoṣṭhī Prākṛt inscription from Panjtār in the Swāt region (now in Pakhtunkhwa, northwest Pakistān) dated to 65 CE.³³ It records the founding of a *Śiva-sthala* (site sacred to Śiva), giving the names of the patron and his father, both of which are recognizably East Iranian (Moīka & Urumuja), rather than Indo-*Āryan*. Panjtār is a

³⁰ *Mahābhāṣya* 5.3.99: *apaṇye iti ucyate. tatra idam na sidhyati. śivaḥ. skandaḥ. viśākhaḥ iti. kim kāraṇam? mauryaiḥ hiraṇyārthibhiḥ arcāḥ prakalpitāḥ. bhavet tāsu na syāt. yāḥ tu etāḥ sampratipūjārthāḥ tāsu bhaviṣyati.* This interpretation follows that of the *Kāśikāvṛtti*.

³¹ SANDERSON 2013: 29 and n81, citing the indices in TSUKAMOTO 1996, vol. 2, *Epigraphia Indica* 1:43-44 and 2:14 (1892 and 1894), and LÜDERS 1961. These names are attested in Buddhist and Jaina inscriptions that record donations by laypeople; the fact of their support of those religions does not compromise the evidence of worship of Śiva that their names (which, after all, were given by their parents) suggest.

³² E.g., the *Āṇuogaddārāṃ*, which mentions Śiva as separate from Rudra, the *Nāyādhammakahāo*, the *Viyāhapaṇṇatisutta*, and the *Āṅgavijjā*; see SANDERSON 2013: 30-31.

³³ *Select Inscriptions*, vol. 1, 2:32. Reference furnished by SANDERSON.

few dozen kilometers south of modern Mingora; it is perhaps significant that centuries later, this precise area was a deeply venerated, if remote, pilgrimate site (*pīṭha*) for both Tantric Śaivas and Tantric Buddhists (Mingora is the modern name for Maṅgalāpura, the former capital of the small kingdom of Uḍḍiyāna in Swāt). In this context, it is worth noting that in the same century (the 1st), Maheśvara [Śīva] appears in a list of primarily Vedic deities given in the Vinaya of the Dharmaguptakas, composed in Gandhāra (modern Afghanistan).³⁴

In considering early numismatic evidence, many speculative claims have been made; the most significant of these are the ones that find Śīva on the reverse of Kuṣāṇa coins beginning either with the reign of Wima II Kadphises (c. 100 CE) or that of Kaniška (c. 125-150). Iconographically, the deity depicted is the spitting image of Śīva: four-armed, holding a trident, sometimes three-faced, sometimes with a bull, sometimes ithyphallic; but we are prevented from concluding that it is Śīva by the fact that the Bactrian legend on all these coins reads not Śīva but *Wēš*. Furthermore, we know that the Kuṣāṇas worshipped the Iranian deities of their homeland, not Indic ones. If it be objected that this image proves an exception to the rule, we point to the troubling fact that *Wēš* cannot be derived from Śīva or Maheśa by any plausible linguistic means. Indeed, Katsumi TANABE has argued that *Wēš* is a Kuṣāṇa wind god, related to the Sogdian *Wēš-parkar*,³⁵ but here we have the reverse problem, that of the iconography depicted, which does not seem to be that of a wind god. These coins, then, remain a significant mystery to be solved.

In the second century, evidence for a Śaiva temple cult in the Deccan begins to accumulate. We have a Sātavāhana inscription from Dharwad, Karnāṭaka, which mentions a temple (*āyatana*) of Caṇḍaśīva Mahādeva, dedicated during the reign of Vāsiṣṭhīputra, Śrī Puḷumāvi (II), who ruled circa 90-130 CE.³⁶ This is our earliest certain evidence for the cultic worship of Śīva. A late 3rd-century inscription, this one from Pallavan Andhra, records the Pallava king's support of the staff of a temple of Bhagavān Jīvaśivaswāmin.³⁷ In the 4th century, again in Andhra, we see the first epigraphical evidence of the use of the adjective *paramamāheśvara* ("completely devoted to Maheśvara," i.e., Śīva) with reference to a monarch (viz., Devavarman of Veṅgīpura), an adjective which invariably denotes patronage of the religion by that monarch and which also designates him as either an initiate or as worthy of initiation (SANDERSON 2013: 45n124). Also in that century, we have inscriptions from Bagh in Madhya Pradesh attesting to temple worship with Pāśupata Śaivas as temple functionaries (*devakarminah*) (RAMESH and TIWARI 1990). In fact, from this date (4th cen.) onward, we have abundant evidence, in terms of texts (e.g., the *Pāśupatasūtra-bhāṣya* and later strata of the *Mahābhārata*), inscriptions, and archaeological sites.

³⁴ See s.v. "Daijizaiten" in *Hōbōgirin*, p. 723a.

³⁵ *Wēš* can easily be shown to derive from Avestan *Vayuš*, and *Wēš-parkar* (Sogdian *wyšprkr*, a name witnessed in that region from the 7th to the 9th centuries) from Avestan *vayuš uparōkairyō*. See TANABE, "OHPO: Another Kushan Wind God," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology 2* (Studies in Silk Road Coins and Culture series, 1991-92), pp. 51-71; and TANABE 1997. (Note also that the Sogdian derivation of Mahādeva/Śīva is My'tyβ.)

³⁶ *Epigraphia Indica* 41:16; cf. SANDERSON 2013:22 and n56-58.

³⁷ Though some of the relevant *aḱṣaras* are questionable; see *Epigraphia Indica* 32:8B.

Next we turn to the Mathura Pilaster inscription of 380 CE (Gupta year 61), documenting the creation of a Pāśupata Guru-temple by one Uditācārya, who is said to be tenth in direct lineage from Bhagavān Kuśika.³⁸ We know that Kuśika was the first disciple of the quasi-mythical founder of Śaivism (in its earliest, Pāśupata form: see 1.5.1 below), later called Lakulīśa (ACHARYA 2011 and 2013). Therefore, if the 10-generation lineage given in the inscription is reliable, that puts the founding figure called Lakulīśa at about 150 CE (as also concluded by BHANDARKAR; see n22).

Though we know worship of Śiva became widespread by the end of the Maurya period, it is in the common era that we find evidence that he was worshipped exclusively or at least as preeminent. For the sake of convenience, I take the beginning point of Śaivism as a religion to be the beginning of the common era.

1.3 Śaivism: its adherents and key divisions

Now that the other terms of our opening sentence are clear, we may turn to the key term, that of Śaivism. It is formed from *śaiva* as Brāhmanism is from *brāhmaṇa*. And what is a Śaiva? Here we may turn to the careful grammatical explanation given by Aparāditya in his 12th-century *Yājñavalkyasmṛti-ṭīkā*, where he tells us that a Śaiva is one who studies or who knows the *śaivam*, which is in turn defined as the scriptural system propounded by Śiva (*śivaproktaṃ śāstram*).³⁹ He invokes three rules of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* to explain the formation: first, 4.3.101, which indicates that the use of the aṅ suffix (i.e., *taddhita* formation) can mean "taught by him" (*tena proktaṃ*), giving us the word *śaivam*; secondly, 4.2.59 in conjunction with 4.2.64 explain the relationship of *śaivaḥ* to *śaivam* (i.e., *tad adhīte tad veda*). He notes that Pāśupata is formed in precisely the same way.⁴⁰

Śaivism, then, is the religion comprised of those who study and practice the teachings of Śiva as revealed in his scriptures. This definition of a Śaiva, however, implies an initiate (*dīkṣita*), one who has access to these scriptures as a result of a special rite of initiation defined by those scriptures as a purification of his whole being (*dīkṣā = ātma-saṃskāra*). So we must first take a step back to see a wider picture, for Śaivism as I wish to define it here includes, though in a peripheral way, the religion of non-initiates known as *Rudra-bhaktas*, *Śiva-bhaktas*, *upāsakas*, or *māheśvaras*.⁴¹

1.3.1 Śaivism of the uninitiated 'laity'

Probably always the great majority of the devotees of Rudra/Śiva/Maheśvara, the *Rudra-bhaktas* (note that in their literature, the preferred name of

³⁸ Though the inscription does not use the word Pāśupata, since Kuśika is named in all sources as the first of the Pāśupatācāryas, we can assume the sectarian affiliation. See BHANDARKAR, *Epigraphia Indica* 21 (1931-2), pp. 1-9, and *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* 3 (1981), pp. 235-42.

³⁹ Reference furnished by SANDERSON.

⁴⁰ *Tena proktaṃ ity [4.3.101] aṅi kṛte śivaproktaṃ śāstram śaivam. Punaś ca śaivaśabdāt tad adhīte tad veda ity [4.2.59] utpannasyāṅaḥ proktāl luk iti [4.2.64] luki kṛte śaivam vetty adhīte vā śaivaḥ. Evam pāśupatādīḥ.*

⁴¹ The first three are strictly used for uninitiated devotees (*aprāpta-dīkṣāṅām*); the fourth may be used for any follower of the religion, but often refers to non-initiates, while *śaiva* is used almost exclusively for initiates.

Śiva is Rudra, which not coincidentally connects their worship to Vedic texts like the *Śata-rudriya*) were instructed on the basis of a small corpus of texts intended especially for them, most prominently the *Śivadharmā*, *Śivadharmottara*, *Śivopaniṣad*, and the original *Skanda-purāṇa*.⁴² They were called *Rudra-bhaktas* because they focused primarily on the discipline of devotion (*bhakti-yoga*), as opposed to the ritual, yogic, and knowledge-based path of the initiate. An important passage in the *Śivadharmā* teaches:

Unswerving devotion to God is the essence of the religion of Śiva. He has said that its eight aspects are to be practiced diligently and incessantly.

The Lord said:

- 1) show affection towards My devotees, like that of a cow for her calf;
- 2) rejoice in others' worship;
- 3) practice your own worship⁴³ with devotion;
- 4) offer selfless service to Me;
- 5) be devoted to listening to My tales;
- 6) [cultivate a devotion so strong that you are] affected in voice, eye, and limb (*svaranetrāṅga-vikriyā*);
- 7) always remember Me; and
- 8) do not live off My revenues.

*One who practices this eight-fold devotion, even a foreigner, is [as good as] a foremost brāhmin, a venerable sage, an ascetic, and a scholar.*⁴⁴

These devotees probably constituted the primary base from which initiates would be drawn, and thus the eight-fold devotion above might illustrate the type of practice that was considered a prerequisite for initiation, though we know initiates could theoretically come from any background.

Lay devotees would also participate in the great devotional festivals called *utsavas*, sponsored by a king devoted to Śiva. These, the second chapter of the *Śivadharmottara* tells us, involved a night vigil: an all-night celebration featuring playing of musical instruments, singing, dancing, relating the stories of Śiva and Pārvatī, Vedic recitation, theatrical performances (*prekṣaṇaka*), and even games and rides (*krīḍā-yantrāṇi*) for the children. The next day, a scripture of Śaivism specially

⁴² Śaiva exegete Rāmakaṇṭha specifies (*Mataṅgavṛtti* ad *Vidyāpāda* 26.45c-48) that non-initiated devotees are characterized by *śraddhā* and *bhakti* and follow the *Śivadharmā* texts. He glosses *rudrabhakta* with *upāsaka* at *Kiraṇavṛtti* ad 6.11d-12. References provided by SANDERSON. By the 'original' *Skanda-purāṇa* I mean the text edited and published first by BHATṬARĀI (1988) on the basis of an early 9th-century Nepalese MS. This version of the text, probably redacted in the 6th or 7th century, is coherent and free of the unwieldy accretions of those redactions from later centuries. See ADRIAENSEN, BAKKER, and ISAACSON 1994 and 1998.

⁴³ The ritual of worship envisioned here is that of simple *liṅga-pūjā*, as also prescribed in the Śaiva-influenced *Purāṇas*. Cf. *Tantrāloka* 8.157: *dīkṣā-jñāna-vihīna ye liṅgārādhana-tatparāḥ*.

⁴⁴ *Śivadharmā* 1.19-22: *śiva-dharmasya sāro 'yaṃ śive bhaktiḥ suniścalā | sā cāṣṭāṅgī śivenoktā kāryā nityaṃ prayatnataḥ || 19 || bhagavān uvāca | mad-bhakta-jana-vātsalyaṃ pūjāyās cānumodanam | svayam abhyarcanaṃ bhaktyā mamārthe cāṅga-ceṣṭitam || 20 || mat-kathā-śravaṇe bhaktiḥ svaranetrāṅga-vikriyā | mamānusmaraṇaṃ nityaṃ *yac ca mām nopajīvati (em. SANDERSON : yaś ca mām upajīvati MS) || 21 || bhaktir hy aṣṭavidhā hy eṣā yasmin mlecche 'pi vartate | sa viprendro muniḥ śrīmān sa yatīḥ sa ca paṇḍitaḥ || 22 ||*. Reference courtesy of SANDERSON.

copied for the purpose would be paraded through the city on a three-tiered shrine or on an elephant, with scented water offerings, flowers, and rice scattered wherever it went. The citizenry wore white and flew colored banners from their rooftops, also throwing flower petals and rice. The king forbade all violence for the duration of the festival (even towards plants!), and granted amnesty to prisoners.⁴⁵

This sort of celebration could take place only in a town with a consecrated temple of Śiva. The temple complex was an important part of life not only for devotees, but all the citizenry, for it owned large tracts of land, employed large numbers of people, and was a major center of civic and cultural life, commissioning architects, sculptors, painters, dancers, musicians, and scholars. (One such Śaiva temple in South India, the so-called Bṛhadīśvara (really Rājarājeśvara) temple in Tañjāvūr, boasted 49 initiated chanters and more than two thousand (!) resident dancers, with one thousand servants devoted to their care, as the lengthy inscription about its base tells us.⁴⁶) The temple complex always centered on a shrine of Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*, in which Śiva's presence had been invoked and installed in the form of his living mantras. The deity was treated as a living presence in a very literal sense: it had the status of legal entity and was considered the owner of the lands and employer of the temple staff.⁴⁷

The temple complex increased its social significance through its various ancillary institutions, which often included welfare facilities such as an Āyurvedic medical clinic (*ārogyaśālā*), a maternity ward (*prasūtiśālā*), and a charitable food dispensary (*sattram*). The temple complex nearly always included a *maṭha* or *āśrama*, a monastery where *samayins*, initiated practitioners in their probationary period, would live with a guru or *ācārya*. The temple complex was sometimes connected to something like a full-fledged religious university, as at the once-famous sites of Mattamayūra and Golaḡī (SANDERSON 2009: 263–64). These were major Śaiva centers of learning, literary production, debate, and practice, housing large numbers of scholar-practitioners, comparable to the Buddhist university at Nālandā. Unfortunately, like Nālandā, they were destroyed in the Muslim invasions.

1.3.2 Initiatory Śaivism: four primary divisions

Our focus in this dissertation, however, is on the religion of the initiated, which as SANDERSON notes, exerted a widespread influence on the religious life of the Indic world that was disproportionate to its numbers (2004: 231). In a diverse array of primary sources (both Śaiva and Vaidika), we find throughout the medieval period a four-fold classification of Śaivism, with all four categories referring to initiates following a rigorous daily practice, whether householders (*bhautikas*) or ascetics (*naiṣṭhikas*). Above we said that *Śaiva* refers to any initiated follower of the religion, and it may, but this is actually a case of synecdoche—for as we will now see, *Śaiva* more specifically refers to those initiated into the Tantric phase of the religion (the fourth in the list below). These four are tabulated here with their various

⁴⁵ This paraphrase of the contents of *Śivadharmottara* 2.14–83 is drawn from SANDERSON forthcoming: *Religion and the State: Initiating the Monarch in Śaivism and the Buddhist Way of Mantras*, pp. 9–10.

⁴⁶ *South Indian Inscriptions* 2, no. 65.

⁴⁷ SANDERSON forthcoming p. 5.

alternate names listed; we will discuss what these names refer to afterwards. The names in bold are the most common ones, that we will be using regularly here. The plural form of most of these names is used to refer to the followers of that particular branch.

Table 1. Four divisions of Śaivism in the primary sources

1. Pāśupata ; Pañcārtha-Pāśupata; Pāñcārthika; Pañcaka; Kevalārthavid; Kevalārtha; Kevalin; [Vaimala?] (Atimārga I)
2. Kālamukha ; Kālāmukha; Kālavaktra; Asitavaktra; Mahāpāśupata; Mahāvratā; Mahāvratā-dhara; Lokātīta; Lākula ; Nākula; Lāguḍa; Pramāṇa; Pramāṇa-liṅgin; Kārūka-siddhānta (Atimārga II)
3. Somasiddhānta ; Kāpālīka ; Kāpāla; Kaṅkāla; Mahāvratīn; Kālarātrīn; Sauma; Saumya; Mausula (Atimārga III)
4. Śaiva , followers of the <i>Mantramārga</i> or <i>Māntram</i> , sometimes called the <i>Tantram</i> , and known as “Tantric Śaivism” by scholars

Some sample sources for this four-fold classification will be briefly examined.⁴⁸ We will leave aside the numerous Vaidika sources for now, except to briefly cite examples such as the *Kūrma-purāṇa* (1.13.112-13 and 2.145-46) and Vācaspatimīśra’s *Bhāmatī*—which says “There are four types of Māheśvara: Pāśupatas, Kārūka-siddhāntīn, Kāpālīkas, and Śaivas. These four are called Māheśvaras because they follow doctrines taught by Maheśvara.”⁴⁹ In the satirical play of the Kaśmīrī Naiyāyika Jayantabhaṭṭa, “Much Ado About Scripture”⁵⁰ (*Āgama-ḍambara*, c. 900) we see the four divisions enumerated as: *tad ime Śaiva-Pāśupata-Kālamukhā Mahāvratīnāś ca [yathāsukham āsatam]*. Turning to Śaiva scriptural sources, on the non-Saiddhāntika side (for these divisions, see 1.6 below) we have the *Bhairavaṅgalā-kalpa*,⁵¹ attested in a c. 9th century Nepalese MS, in which we find the following: “The Goddess, who may bear any form she desires, instigates creation by her Will. Therefore she did bestow [on us] a shower of many scriptures through the [power of her] Word: first and foremost, the doctrine of the Śaivas in three divisions,⁵² and the Kevalin, Lākula, and Somasiddhānta [teachings].”⁵³ On the

⁴⁸ These references provided by SANDERSON in a number of lectures and handouts.

⁴⁹ *Bhāmatī* ad Śaṅkara’s *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 2.2.37: *māheśvarāś catvāraḥ: śaivāḥ pāśupatāḥ kārūka-siddhāntīnaḥ kāpālīkāś ceti. Catvāro’py amī maheśvara-praṇīta-siddhāntānuyāyitayā māheśvarāḥ. Kārūka em. SANDERSON : kārūnika Ed.*

⁵⁰ Translated under that title by Csaba DESZŐ for the Clay Sanskrit Library, 2005.

⁵¹ A text of the Yāmala division of the Bhairava-tantras. For more on these divisions, see section 1.6 below.

⁵² This refers either to the Rudra-bheda, the Śiva-bheda (both Saiddhāntika), and the Bhairava-tantras, or to the Siddhānta, Vāma, and Dakṣiṇa divisions. See 1.6.

⁵³ *icchārūpadharī devī icchā-sṛṣṭi-pravarttanī | tataḥ sā varṣate vācā śāstra-vṛṣṭīr anekadhā || prathamam śaiva-siddhāntam bheda-traya-samanvitam | kevalī lākulam caiva somasiddhāntam eva ca ||*. Minor corrections to the text by SANDERSON, as well as the emendation *kevalī* for *kaivalī*. Text provided in Handout 6 of the “Śaivism and Brahmanism” lecture series at Kyoto University, 20 November 2012.

Saiddhāntika side, one of the first known Śaiva exegetes was Sadyojyotiḥ, who wrote circa 675-725 CE (SANDERSON 2006b). In his *Paramokṣanirāsa-kārikā*, he tells us of four doctrines of how divinity equal to that of God's comes to be expressed in the soul of the liberated Śaiva: "The transcendent equality [of the soul with Śiva] comes about, according to those of other views, through production, transference, or possession; [but] the highest teaching of those who speak [true] wisdom is that of [the] manifestation [of what is latent]" (*samatā samutpatti-saṅkrānti-āveśa-pakṣataḥ | abhivyaktiḥ parā*⁵⁴ *gītā buddhivācām agocarā*). Rāmakaṅṭha's commentary of about 250 years later clarifies which schools fit with which doctrines: those who hold to the *saṅkrānti-vāda* (doctrine of transference) are the Pāśupatas, and those who hold to the *utpatti-vāda* (doctrine of production) are the Kālamukhas. Since the *abhivyakti-vāda* (doctrine of manifesting what is already present but latent) is claimed for the Śaivas, that leaves only the *āveśa-vāda* (doctrine of "possession"), which must be attributed to the Kāpālikas, as corroborated by later commentators (see below).

In later attestations of the four-fold classification, we see the Vaiṣṇava Yamunācārya of South India making this antagonistic statement in his 11th century *Āgama-prāmāṇya*: ". . . much contradictory [nonsense] is jabbered in the Māheśvara Tantra, [which comprises] the four-fold division of those who follow the path of the observances of the *siddhas* of those [tantras]; that is, the Pāśupatas, Kālamukhas, Kāpālikas, and also the Śaivas, . . ." ⁵⁵ which is closely paraphrased by Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhāṣya* ad *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.35. Near the end of the Śaiva Age (as called by SANDERSON 2009), around the 15th century, Īśānaśiva-gurudeva's ritual manual (*paddhati*) quotes the *Svāyambhuva* as saying: "The highest Lord taught, through [different] revelations (*avatāra*) according to his will, the [Śaiva] Tantra, the Pāśupata doctrine, the Lākula and the Soma Tantra. Of those, the Śaiva is primary, which was spoken by Śiva in the beginning. These tantras of the Śaivas and the rest are marked by four categories: doctrine (*jñāna*), yoga, observances (*caryā*), and beneficial rites (*satkriyā*) such as initiation and so on. Through them Maheśvara rescues those purified souls from the ocean of transmigration, from the mire of suffering." ⁵⁶ A 12th-century Śaiva Siddhānta exegete from Tamiḷnāḍu but writing in Vārāṇasī, Jñānaśivācārya, similarly tells us: "The Śaiva doctrine was revealed first, then the Pāśupata, then the Kālarātrin, and fourth the Kālavaktra. This is the four-fold teaching of Śambhu, and there are [likewise four groups] who adhere to them: the Śaivas, Pañcārthas, Somasiddhāntins, and Kālavaktras [respectively]." ⁵⁷ Jñānaśiva is correct in his typology, but quite incorrect in his chronology (as we shall see), which is motivated by his membership in the first group named. He goes

⁵⁴ em. SANDERSON 2006:180 : *abhivyaktiparā* ed.

⁵⁵ *...māheśvare tantrē viruddham bahu jalpitaṃ. caturvidhā hi tat-siddha-caryā-mārgānusāriṇaḥ yathā kāpālikāḥ kālāmukhāḥ pāśupatas tathā śaivas...* (p. 46 of the Rāma Miśra ŚĀSTRĪ 1937 ed.)

⁵⁶ *Punaḥ svecchāvatāreṣu tantraṃ pāśupataṃ tathā | lākulaṃ* [em. SANDERSON following variant reading *ka : vākula* Ed.] *somatantraṃ ca jagāda paramēśvaraḥ || tatra śaivaṃ hi mukhyaṃ syād yad ādau śivabhāṣitaṃ | ebhiḥ śaivādibhis tantraiś caturbhedavilakṣitaiḥ || dikṣādisatkriyā-caryā-jñāna-yogair maheśvaraḥ | duḥkhaḥpañkād bhavāmbhodhes tārayaty amalān aṇūn || Īśānaśivagurudeva-paddhati, Kriyāpāda I, p. 6.*

⁵⁷ *Jñānaratnāvalī* (Pondicherry IFI MS T.231), p. 307. Kālarātri is a name for Cāmuṇḍā, the principle Goddess of the Somasiddhānta.

on to tell us that the Pañcārtha-Pāśupatas adhere to the *sāmya-saṅkrānti-vāda*, the Mahāvratas/Kālamukhas adhere to the *sāmyotpatti-vāda*, the Kāpālikas adhere to the *samāveśa-vāda*, and the Śaivas to the *abhivyakti-vāda*, agreeing with Rāmakaṅṭha (10th century) and Sadyojyotiḥ (8th century), displaying the consistency of this tradition over time.⁵⁸

We have seen ample evidence for the four-fold classification in a diverse range of sources. As the last two citations show, the division called Śaiva became the most prominent and successful, such that Īśānaśiva could call it *the* Tantra (“system”) and claim (along with Jñānaśiva) that it was the first. Though it was in fact the last phase of Śaivism to develop, it became so successful that it could lump the other three divisions together under the rubric of the Atimārga as opposed to the Mantramārga, as it sometimes called itself. These two basic streams will now be addressed and differentiated.

1.4.1 Initiatory/esoteric Śaivism: two streams . . . plus one?

An important question that concerns us here is whether there is any historical reality to the concept of “Tantric Śaivism” or its synonym “Śaiva Tantra.” I will argue that there is. Specifically, it is both historically accurate and pedagogically useful to distinguish the Śaivism based on the *tantras* and *āgamas* from the popular Śaivism (described in 1.3.1 above) *and* from earlier (non-tantric) initiatory Śaivism (see 1.5.1 below). This despite the fact that there are considerable continuities between the two types of initiatory Śaivism—indeed, far more continuities than have previously been suspected.

A brief excursus here on the usage of the word “Tantric,” derived from the Sanskrit *tāntrika*, seems necessary. Scholars use the phrases “Tantric Śaivism,” “Tantric Buddhism” and “Tantric Vaiṣṇavism,” as opposed to the indigenous terms Mantramārga, Mantranaya/Vajrayāna, and Pañcarātra, to link each of these to the respective religions of which they form a part while simultaneously acknowledging that they share a common ritual grammar and semiotic structure designated by the word “Tantric.” This has led some scholars to reify a purely heuristic entity, i.e. “Tantra,” which is then assumed to have existed in some primitive ur-form prior to any of the religions in which specific inflections of it are found. This imagined “Tantra” requires an origin, and so we are supplied with an unverifiable hypothesis of its origin in tribal cultures, Central Asian shamanism, and the like.⁵⁹ However, this baseless and sometimes wild speculation concerning the “origins of Tantra” has only proceeded because of incomplete information concerning the nature and breadth of pre-tantric Śaivism. Now that the work of SANDERSON, BAKKER, BISSCHOP, and others have uncovered key data about pre-tantric Śaivism, we can trace the

⁵⁸ But note that Jñānaśiva writes towards the end of that period of consistency, because he does not identify with what had been the mainstream Saiddhāntika view (*abhivyakti-vāda*), which he attributes to “some Śaiva teachers” (*śaivaikadeśinaḥ*); and within another century, the Siddhānta in Tamiḷnāḍu submitted to the philosophical encroachment of Advaita Vedānta.

⁵⁹ This process of scholarly invention, and some of the reasons for it, is intelligently reviewed by WEDEMEYER (2013). He does not give a very complete inventory of the scholars who have held this view, however it is certain that ELIADE’s once-influential work (1958 and 1964), specifically linking shamanism with yoga and “Tantra,” was a key player.

origins of practices and orientations considered quintessentially “Tantric” to early Śaivism itself. To put it more accurately, we can account for the evidence best with the hypothesis that Tantric Śaivism developed organically from pre-tantric Śaivism and without a strong reliance on any other source (apart from an influence from Brahmanism on some of the forms of the Tantric Śaiva ritual). In the fifth to the ninth centuries, Śaivas developed an array of internal and external ritual practices, scripturalized them in works they called *tantras* and *āgamas*, and those practices were subsequently imported (without their associated Śaiva doctrines) by all the other Indian religions extant at the time, and overcoded with the doctrines of the importer.⁶⁰ We can make a list of “Tantric” practices and themes by simply asking which features are found in all the Indian religions subsequent to this borrowing (and re-lending, in some cases), as seen on p. 75. But that does not necessitate the view that “Tantra” as an abstract category corresponds to any specific reality. We can confidently say, following SANDERSON’s ground-breaking work just cited, that in the year 600 CE, what scholars now call “Tantra” was not to be found with all its features anywhere except within Śaivism. And there is no evidence that Śaivism acquired its Tantric practices from elsewhere; they were a wholly Śaiva innovation, organically evolving out of the pre-tantric Śaivism (see Fig. 1 on the next page).

The latter thesis is explored in SANDERSON’s article “The Lākulas” (2006). There he demonstrates key continuities between non-tantric and Tantric Śaivism that I shall summarize below. Then we shall explore the differences between the two primary streams of initiatory Śaivism so that we can see why it still makes sense to consider them separately. First of all, though, we will take a brief look at the names of these two streams. As already noted, Tantric Śaivism did not call itself by that name. When it did identify itself as a larger tradition subsuming many *sampradāyas* (which was not often), it usually called itself the *Mantra-mārga*,⁶¹ presumably because in it mantras, always important in Indian religion, achieved their full apotheosis (note that Tantric Buddhism initially called itself the *Mantranaya*—apparently calqued on the earlier Śaiva term *Mantramārga*—before the term *Vajrayāna* became a more common self-designator⁶²). By contrast, the *Mantramārga* labeled pre-tantric Śaivism as the *Atimārga*, though the three main *Atimārgic* groups (listed above at 1.4.1) did not use that term for themselves. The *Atimārga* is generally called Pāśupatism by scholars, and not without historical grounds, though that term is usually used without awareness that that this name is a case of synecdoche (calling all three sects by the name of the first and most well-known of the three). For convenience we may adopt the Tantric terminology of *Atimārga* vs. *Mantramārga*; and we can investigate briefly how these terms are used in the literature.

⁶⁰ For this claim, the reader is referred to SANDERSON 2009 *passim* and the forthcoming book version of the same, which present a huge quantity of evidence.

⁶¹ For example, at *Brahmayāmala* 38.36, *Mālinīvijayottara* 9.81, *Tantrasadbhāva* 3.57, and *Matāṅga-pārameśvara VP* 20. Thanks to Christopher TOMPKINS for these references.

⁶² Somadeva VASUDEVA, personal communication, 15 November 2012. Cf. Anthony TRIBE’s chapter on Tantric Buddhism in WILLIAMS and TRIBE (2000).

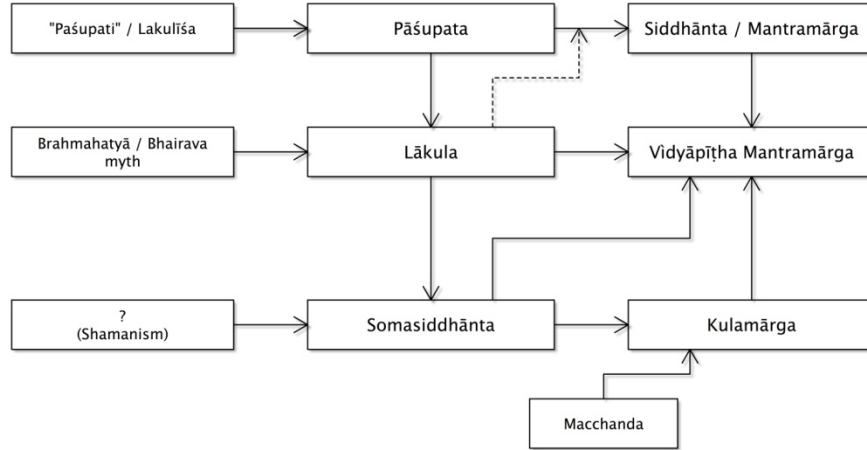


Fig. 1. Map of Influence

(middle column = Atimārga; right-hand column = Mantramārga aka Tantric Śaivism)

The first text to use the distinction, unsurprisingly, is the very first scripture of the Mantramārga, the *Niśvāsa-tattva-saṃhitā*, c. 450-550 CE (NAK MS 1-277). Specifically, the introduction to that large work, the *Niśvāsa-mukha* (appended near the end of its development, c. 550), posits a five-fold division of Indian religion that we find repeated many times in subsequent Mantramārgic literature:⁶³ *śṛṇvantu ṛṣayaḥ sarve pañcadhā yat prakīrtitam | laukikaṃ vaidikaṃ caiva tathādhyātmikam eva ca | atimārgaṃ⁶⁴ ca mantrākhyam* (1.21-22a). The newly emerging *siddhānta* of the Mantramārga positions itself at the top of a hierarchy of what it considers valid forms of Indian religion. *Laukika*, at the bottom, denotes both popular religion (e.g., calendrical observances, pilgrimages to *tīrthas*, accumulation of *puṇya*) and all non-soteriological Vedic ritual performed by *gr̥hasthas*; *vaidika*, then, here denotes all soteriologically oriented Vedic practice, such as that of a *sannyāsin*. *Ādhyātmika* refers to the highest expression of Brāhmanical religion (from the Śaiva point of view), the Sāṅkhya and Yoga schools, whose *tattva* system and some of whose practices were incorporated by the Śaivas. Adherents of these three levels, while winning the goals their religions promise, do not attain true or definitive liberation, which is the province of Śaivism alone in its two divisions.

The *Niśvāsa-mukha* summarizes the *Atimārga* in terms of its primary text, the *Pāśupata-sūtra* (already well known to scholars), after which the *Niśvāsa* reveals that it knows two primary divisions of the *Atimārga*: *atyāśrama-vrataṃ khyātaṃ lokātītaṃ ca me śṛṇu* (4.87cd). The *atyāśrama-vrata* refers to Pāñcārthika Pāsupatism (#1 of our four-fold typology above), for its distinctive claim is that it goes beyond (*ati* = *atīta*) the *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The *lokātīta*, glossed later in the text (4.128cd) as the *mahāpāśupata-vrata*, refers to the Kālamukha/Lākula division of the *Atimārga*, labeled as #2 in our four-fold typology. It is called *lokātīta* because it goes beyond conventional modes of religious conduct in an even more radical and thorough

⁶³ Such as in *Mṛgendra-tantra kriyāpāda* 8.78-79, the *Svacchanda-tantra* 11.43-45, and the *Jayadratha-yāmala* 1.35.71-72; see SANDERSON 2006: 157.

⁶⁴ *atimārgaṃ em.* SANDERSON : *atomārgaś* MS. See SANDERSON 2006: 156.

manner than the *atyāśrama-vrata* of the Pāñcārthikas. (All of these branches will be elucidated further below.) At 4.130cd, the *Niśvāsa* confirms that it views these as two divisions of a larger *Atimārga* (*atimārgaṃ samākhyātaṃ dviḥprakāraṃ varānane*⁶⁵). The third division, that of the Kāpālika Somasiddhānta, is not mentioned here, perhaps because its practices, the most extreme of all *Atimārga* groups, are not acceptable to the author(s) of the *Niśvāsa*; or, more likely, because it had not yet developed in a substantial way by this date and thus was simply not known to those authors.

What is the justification for the *Niśvāsa*'s use of the term *Atimārga* for the types of Śaivism that preceded it? In Kauṇḍinya's 4th or 5th-century *bhāṣya* on the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, aka the *Pañcārtha*, the term *atyāśrama* occurs two or three times as a name for Pāśupata practice, and it is doubtless from this source that the *Niśvāsa*'s author has drawn it. For example, we have ad 1.1 *atyāśrama-prasiddhaṃ liṅgaṃ āsthāya pravacanam uktavān*, “Śiva spoke this teaching after adopting the religious marks (*liṅga*) established by the *atyāśrama*.” And *pūrvāśrama-niyama-pratiśedhārtham atyāśrama-yama-niyama-prasiddhyarthaṃ ca vidhiḥ prathamam vyākhyāyate*, “He explained this practice in the first instance in order to overrule the rules of the previous *āśramas* [i.e., the four stages of life acceptable to Brāhmanism] and to establish [in their place] the major and minor rules of the *atyāśrama*.” Here we see explicitly that the *atyāśrama-vrata* is conceived as transcending, even in some sense rejecting (*pratiśedha*), the *varṇāśrama-dharma* of the Vedic religion. There is a third occurrence of *atyāśrama* in the text, ad 1.6, if we accept SANDERSON's proposed emendation of *ityāśrama-*, which gives precisely the opposite meaning than the one that fits the context. Thus we have *liṅgam atyāśrama-prativibhāgakaram bhasma-snānānusnāna-nirmālyaikavāsādi-niṣpannam svaśarīra-līnaṃ pāśupata*⁶⁶ *iti laukikādi-jñāna-janakam*, “The religious marks allotted to the *atyāśrama* appear on his [an initiate's] body because he has performed the [enjoined] ash-baths, the self-adornment with flowers used in worship of Śiva (*nirmālya*), the wearing of a single [loin-]cloth, etc.—by this ordinary people and [Vaidikas] know “This is a Pāśupata.””

In a contemporaneous passage, we see a slightly different definition of *atyāśrama*. This passage occurs in the Northern Recension of the *Mahābhārata*, and did not make it into the Poona critical edition (which suggests a 4th or 5th century date for it as well), but is found in Appendix 1 (no. 28, p. 2073):⁶⁷ *vedāt ṣaḍaṅgād uddhṛtya sāṅkhyayogāc ca yuktitaḥ | tapaḥ sutaptaṃ vipulaṃ . . . apūrvam . . . gūḍham aprājña-ninditam | varṇāśrama-kṛtair dharmair viparītaṃ kvacit samam | . . . atyāśramam idam smṛtam | mayā pāśupataṃ dakṣa yogam utpāditaṃ purā |*. “In ancient times, O Dakṣa, I performed a vast intense *tapas*, and, drawing on the Veda with its six ancillaries, and on Sāṅkhya-yoga and on reason, I created the unprecedented Pāśupata Yoga known as the *atyāśrama*: esoteric, scorned by the ignorant, in some ways opposed (*viparīta*) to the deeds appropriate to the [Vedic] caste-classes and stages of life, in some ways identical with them.” This passage exhibits the greater conservatism that accords with its locus of interpolation, eager as it is to point out

⁶⁵ *dviḥprakāraṃ varānane em. SANDERSON : dviṣprakāraṃ [+]nare MS (2006: 156).*

⁶⁶ *em. SANDERSON : pāśupatam Ed.*

⁶⁷ Reference courtesy of SANDERSON.

that Pāśupatism drew on the Veda in part, and is only opposed to *varṇāśrama-dharma* in part. But it evidently understands the latter as the reason for the name *atyāśrama*.

If we skip forward in time several centuries to a classical Śaiva *tantra*, the *Svacchanda-tantra* (c. 7th-9th cen.), we find a *nirukta* definition of the Atimārga that again reflects a similar understanding. “It is known as the Atimārga because it is beyond (*atīta*) the [usual] states of [the religious] mind (*buddhi-bhāvas*, = *buddhi-guṇas*).⁶⁸ That teaching is [also] called Atimārga because it is beyond the *loka* (*lokātīta*), and *loka* means ‘bound souls (*paśus*) in the cycle of birth and death.’ Those established in the Atimārga—the Pāśupatas and those who follow the skull-observance (*kapāla-vratins*, i.e. the Kālamukhas)—are beyond them.”⁶⁹

Skipping forward another half a millennium or thereabouts, we find in the *Siddhānta-prakāśikā* of one Sarvātmaśambhu, a Saiddhāntika, the five-fold classification of the *Niśvāsa* (which is also seen in the *Svacchanda*) integrated with the four-fold one discussed earlier (1.4.1), displaying again a remarkable textual consistency in Śaivism’s self-understanding over time. “These scriptures have five divisions: *laukikam*, *vaidikam*, *ādhyātmikam*, *atimārgam*, and *māntram*.⁷⁰ . . . The Atimārga scriptures, i.e. the Pāśupata, Kāpāla, and Mahāvratā [texts] were revealed by Rudra; the Māntra, i.e. the Siddhānta scriptures, were revealed by Śiva.”⁷¹ Incidentally, here we see an important distinction: for Śaivism, the figures of Rudra and Śiva never fully coalesced. Rudra is much the preferred name in the Atimārga and for the Māheśvara laity in the early medieval period, while Śiva is much the preferred name for the Mantramārga, which considers Rudra (actually, the Rudras, for there were many) as a lower emanation of Śiva. And it is not just an issue of names, but also their meanings; the Atimārga observances are considerably more arduous, intense, and fearsome than the Mantramārga ones (with the important caveat that Mantramārga ascetics seeking *siddhi* could be indistinguishable from their Atimārgic counterparts). Certainly the fully developed, sanitized, courtly version of the Mantramārga is more at home with all the connotations of the word *śiva* than with those of *rudra*. But now we are running before our horse to market.

To come full circle back to the earliest Śaiva text, the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, we may note that the term Atimārga, while not found there, is also suggested by the

⁶⁸ The *buddhi-bhāvas* are *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, and *aiśvarya*. These, the *tantra* tells us, in various combinations characterize the *Laukika*, *Vaidika*, *Pañcarātra*, *Ādhyātmika*, *Bauddha*, and *Jaina* (SVT 11.79c-81; SANDERSON 2006: 160).

⁶⁹ *Svacchanda* 11.182-4ab: *atītaṃ buddhibhāvānām atimārgaṃ prakīrtitam | lokātītaṃ tu taj jñānam atimārgam iti smṛtam || lokāś ca paśavaḥ proktāḥ sṛṣṭiṣaṃhāravartmani | teṣāṃ atītās te jñēyā ye ’timārge vyavasthitāḥ || kapālavratino ye ca tathā pāśupatāś ca ye |*

⁷⁰ *māntram* corr. SANDERSON, following the reading found in the IFI MS (T.433, p. 21) instead of the edition’s unmeaning *amārgaṃ*.

⁷¹ Ed. T.R. DAMODARAN in *Journal of the Tanjore Maharaja Serfoji’s Sarasvati Mahal Library*, vol. 33 (1984), p. 6 (with the emendation in the note above): *tāni ca śāstrāṇi pañcavidhāni laukikam vaidikam ādhyātmikam atimārgaṃ māntraṃ ceti . . . atimārgaṃ tu śāstraṃ rudra-praṇītāni pāśupata-kāpāla-mahāvratāni māntraṃ tu śiva-praṇītaṃ siddhānta-śāstram*. Note that Sarvātmaśambhu is a Saiddhāntika writing at a time when only the Veda-congruent Śaiva scriptures (denoted by the word Siddhānta) were accepted as canonical by his school. Note that this is also the time (c. 1400) of the formation of Hindu identity.

characteristic recurrence of the *ati-* prefix, which commentator Kauṇḍinya repeatedly tells us is used in the sense of “excelling” or “distinguishing” (*atīśabdo viśeṣaṇe*). In 2.15 we find *atidattam atīṣṭam*, which Kauṇḍinya tells us means “the highest giving” (*atidānam*)—which is the giving of oneself (*ātma-pradānam*)—and “the highest sacrifice” (*atīyajanam*)—which is the Pāśupata practice—respectively. In 2.16 we have *atitaptam*, “the highest austerity,” which brings one to (2.17) *atyāgatim*, “the highest path” (Kauṇḍinya glosses it with *atīgatīḥ*), i.e. the method and result respectively of Pāśupata Yoga. *Atyāgati*, it would seem, is the direct forerunner of the term *Atimārga* used by the later sources.

Key continuities between the Atimārga and the Mantramārga

Let us now look at the considerable continuities between the *Atimārga* and the *Mantramārga*, by virtue of which we can characterize them as the pre-tantric⁷² and Tantric phases of a single religion, Śaivism.⁷³

1. First and foremost, they share the same fundamental goal of *śivatvābhivyaktīḥ*, or manifestation of one’s innate divinity, through which one’s equality or unity with Śiva is realized (depending on whether the given school is dualist or nondualist respectively). We will review the other major continuities, drawing primarily on SANDERSON’S “Lākula” article (2006) and ACHARYA’S 2007 translation of the newly discovered Pāśupata text, the *Samskāra-vidhi*.

2. Both streams of Śaivism are fundamentally *scriptural*, and attribute their scriptures to direct revelation(s) from Śiva. Specifically, they hold that liberation is accomplished through a) practicing the methods revealed in Śiva’s scriptures (*yoga, caryā, kriyā*, though the third term, referring to ritual, applies primarily to the *Mantramārga*) and b) internalizing the knowledge (*jñāna*) revealed in Śiva’s scriptures.

3. The later *Atimārga* (II & III) viewed liberation as a yogic-cum-gnostic *ascent through a hierarchy of worlds*. In the sole surviving source (SANDERSON 2006: 163) that describes the doctrine of the early Kālamukhas (= *Atimārga* II), i.e. the fourth chapter of the *Nīśvāsa-mukha*, we are told that only once the initiate understands the eleven levels of reality (*adhvan*) taught in this doctrine can he (successfully) practice the *kapāla-vrata* (= *lokātīta-vrata*) (4.91cd). “Knowing this [hierarchy], he is liberated,” (*etaḥ jñātvā vimucyate*, 4.95d) we are told. We will return to this topic below (1.5.2). The idea that liberation can be attained through a yogic-cum-gnostic ascent through a hierarchy of worlds becomes central in the *Mantramārga*, where it exists in tension with the view that lower worlds are transcended through ritual means. Whatever the means, in the *Mantramārga* we see the mature form of this doctrine articulated in terms of six *adhvans*, where *adhvan* now means “hierarchy of levels” rather than the individual levels themselves. The six *adhvans* are grouped into two sets of three: an internal path, utilizing linguistic mysticism to represent inner

⁷² Though it is convenient to designate the *Atimārga* as “pre-tantric,” it continued for centuries after the advent of Tantric Śaivism, for example in Karṇāṭaka, as documented LORENZEN 1991. Furthermore, as well shall see, the *Atimārga* is full of proto-tantric doctrines and practices.

⁷³ Note that Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha explicitly identifies all three *Atimārgic* groups as “belonging to our religion/system” (*samāna-tāntrika*). See WATSON et. al. 2013: 40.

realities (*varṇādhvan*, *padādhvan*, *mantrādhvan*) and an external path, representing the structure of the Śaiva cosmos (*kalādhvan*, *tattvādhvan*, *bhuvanādhvan*).⁷⁴ While the hierarchy of worlds (*bhuvanas*) is the only hierarchy known in the Atimārga, the great proliferation of worlds in the Mantramārga—which arose from the assimilation of the varying Atimārgic and early Mantramārgic systems—meant that the *adhvans* that were most often used were the *tattvādhvan* (in the yogic context) and the *kalādhvan* (in the ritual context). While there were 118 *bhuvanas* in the mature Mantramārga, there were only 36 *tattvas* and five *kalās*.

4. In the Mantramārga, a “descent of [the Lord’s] power” (*śaktipāta*) is considered a prerequisite for initiation (WALLIS 2007). This is seen as a kind of spiritual experience in which the grace (*anugraha*) of God descends on a person, often as a bolt from the blue, causing him to feel reverence for the Śaiva path and to seek out a guru to initiate him on that path. In the Atimārga, we see at least two antecedents that must have combined to create the *śaktipāta* doctrine. Since this subject is the focus of the present dissertation, it will be explored in great detail further on, but we can at least briefly name these two antecedents: first, the idea that the prospective initiate is “impelled by God” (*rudra-codanā*) to seek out a Śaiva guru;⁷⁵ and second, the idea that initiation entails a powerful transmission from the guru, acting as Śiva’s agent, to the disciple: a transmission characterized either as “the fall of Śiva’s glance” (*śiva-dṛṣṭi-nipāta*)⁷⁶ or as “the descent of the word *atha*” (*atha-śabda-nipāta*—probably referring to a transmission of the essence of scripture, since *atha* is the first word of the *Pāśupata-sūtra*).

5. In both streams, initiation is a *saṃskāra*; that is, it is a rite of passage that is required to obtain qualification (*adhikāra*) one for some further action. Specifically, initiation qualifies one to study the scriptures with a guru and practice the techniques that those scriptures describe. As we shall see below, in the Atimārga it is nothing more than that, while in the Mantramārga it is the initiation ritual itself that guarantees liberation within a single lifetime.

6. Both streams hold the same view of the five basic elements of the *dīkṣā* rite: that the agent of initiation is God, acting through the person of the *ācārya* (*Saṃskāra-vidhi* v. 5 and *Gaṇakārikā* pp. 8-9); that the primary instrument of initiation is a liturgy of mantras (*Saṃskāra-vidhi* v. 4-5); that initiation must entail the removal of the candidate’s former socio-religious identity;⁷⁷ that initiation features the laying of the guru’s hand onto the initiand’s head, thus installing the key mantras of the

⁷⁴ Many Śaiva scriptures speak of the Six Paths or Courses (*ṣaḍ-adhvan*), and these sources are summarized by PADOUX in chapter six of *Vāc* (1990), p. 330ff.

⁷⁵ *Saṃskāra-vidhi* v. 10 in ĀCHĀRYA 2007. “Since it is said to Rudra himself that impels him to seek this rite of entry, it is likely that the examination of the candidate stressed in [the] texts [of the Atimārga] was to identify signs of this divine intention. In this respect, then, [the Atimārga] would be comparable to [the] Āgamic Śaivism [of the Mantramārga].” SANDERSON 2006: 184.

⁷⁶ *Saṃskāra-vidhi* v. 21 in ĀCHĀRYA 2007.

⁷⁷ Called *utpattiliṅga-vyāvṛtti* in the Atimārga and *liṅgoddhāra* in the Mantramārga.

sect;⁷⁸ and that initiation both qualifies and requires the initiate to take up the daily practice of a specific Śaiva mantra.

7. Both streams advocate the veneration of the guru or *ācārya* (*Śaṃskāra-vidhi* v. 92), though this veneration is more marked in the Mantramārga, probably because of the greatly increased significance of the initiation rite in that tradition.

Key differences between the Atimārga and Mantramārga

Having established that the Atimārga is the pre-tantric Śaivism of the Pāśupatas, the Kālamukhas, and the Kāpālikas (all of which are explained further below), then how can we characterize the Mantramārga, aka Tantric Śaivism? I will attempt to ostensibly define the Mantramārga below when we come to its specific exploration; here I will simply sketch the important differences between the two streams of the religion. Though we will note five points of differences as opposed to the seven points of commonality enumerated above, the five differences are far reaching in their impact on the character of the religion.

1. *Membership.* Where initiation into the Mantramārga was theoretically available to all, regardless of caste, social standing, gender etc., admission to the Atimārga was restricted to brahmins.⁷⁹ This also entailed a kind of paradox: while the Atimārga rejected or transcended the Brāhmanical *varṇāśrama-dharma* more thoroughly than most forms of the Mantramārga, it was more closely linked to it as well by the fact of only accepting members from its upper ranks. That is, the Atimārga conceived itself specifically as a means to transcend the *karmans* of the regenerate Brāhmanical world, whereas the Mantramārga saw itself in a broader context, as the means to transcend all *karman* and *śaṃskāras* whatsoever, as well as a means to live in the world more successfully.⁸⁰ Having said this, the Mantramārga did link itself more strongly to Brāhmanism than to the other Indian religions, as seen in the fact that converts from any specifically soteriological domain (e.g. Buddhists, Vaiṣṇavas, etc.) underwent a special ceremony called the *liṅgoddhara* to strip them of their former religious identity whereas converts from the *laukika* brāhmanical domain were accepted without further ceremony. But since those who had received a Vaidika *śaṃskāra* with soteriological purpose (i.e., *vanaprasthas* and *sannyāsins*) also underwent this *liṅgoddhara* ceremony, I think that this configuration can be explained by the simple fact that Brāhmanism constituted the broad base of

⁷⁸ The *śiva-hasta-vidhi*, as it came to be known; see *Śaṃskāra-vidhi* vv. 82-85 for the Atimārga version of the rite.

⁷⁹ This is certainly true for the Pañcārthikas; from the inadequate evidence we can speculate that the Kālamukhas may have expanded membership to twice-born males, and literary sources suggest that the Kāpālikas initiated women, at least in the roles of consorts to male practitioners.

⁸⁰ I refer here to the two-fold goal acknowledged in the Mantramārga: *mokṣa* and *bhoga*. The *dīkṣā* ceremony was thought to eliminate all *karman* other than *prārabdha*, which was eliminated by living out one's life, while performing the daily *nityapūjā* prevented the accumulation of further *karman*.

Indian culture, as opposed to a special preference for Brāhmanism over other forms of Indian religion on the part of the Śaivas.⁸¹

2. *Householders vs. ascetics; life-orientation vs. death-orientation.* The Atimārga had two basic kinds of initiated members, *ācāryas* and *sādhakas*. While the former—who were a minority responsible for initiations, relations with the supporting laity, and managing the religion’s institutional life—were generally householders, the latter were exclusively ascetics, renunciants of a rather extreme variety. This is intimately connected to the fact that the Atimārga was radically oriented towards death and the after-life; indeed, if SANDERSON is correct, it began as nothing more than a means to secure a liberative death, a process which begins at the moment of initiation and culminates in the voluntary exit from the body through yogic means (*utkrānti*). As we will see, the three divisions of the Atimārga may be analyzed in terms of increasing intimacy with death, and fascination with all things mortuary and sanguinary.

By contrast, the Mantramārga was primarily oriented towards initiated householders who were at least as concerned with how to live a good and happy life as with how to die a good death. This fundamental difference goes a long way towards explaining both the substantial differences in the character of their respective canons and the greater success of the Mantramārga. As the latter entered more deeply into mainstream society and the world of the court, its exegetes became increasingly uncomfortable with the seeming death-obsession of the earlier phase of Śaivism and began to explain it in terms of a sophisticated symbolic structure through which they explicated the powers of consciousness (SANDERSON 1985: 202). The nondual exegetes patronized by the royal court (e.g., in Kashmir) heavily emphasized the sensual and aesthetic strains of the Tantric religion over the mortuary and sanguinary, which nevertheless was never purged completely.

The fact that the Mantramārga was primarily oriented toward householders constituted a substantial shift in Indian religion, which had before this time consistently presumed that spiritual liberation and enlightenment was attainable only by those who had embraced both renunciation (*tyāga*, *sannyāsa*) and detachment (*vairāgya*). To allay the suspicions of a public that thought of achieving liberation as a full-time task and thereby unattainable by householders, the Mantramārga’s lynchpin was an elaborate *dīkṣā* (initiation) ritual designed to eliminate the vast majority of the initiate’s karma, bringing liberation within his grasp in a single lifetime. See #4 below for more on this topic.

3. *Goal: mokṣa vs. siddhi and mokṣa.* As part of the life-orientation of the Mantramārga, a two-fold goal was articulated, that of both *siddhi* and *mokṣa*, where the Atimārga presented only the latter as a goal. *Siddhi* here is a magical-cum-ritual means to attain *bhoga*, or greater enjoyments in life. *Siddhi* figures prominently in early Tantric texts (such as the *Niśvāsattattva-saṃhitā* and the *Brahma-yāmala*), though with the Mantramārga’s upward social mobility in the ninth through eleventh centuries, we see the pursuit of *siddhi* marginalized, with the exception of the

⁸¹ And note that the *Svacchanda-tantra* (11.68-74) adds Buddhism and Jainism to the bottom of the five-fold list examined on p. 22 above, thus including them as levels of revelation below the Vedic ones, levels on which some degree of truth can be found.

apotropaic and hostile rites performed by Tantric *rāja-purohitas* for the benefit of kings (SANDERSON 2005b). In the Tantric context, siddhi rites are generally the province of full-time ascetics (*sādhaka, tapasvin, vratin*), demanding a supererogatory ritual regimen, whereas teachings on liberation were oriented toward householders. This is a partial reversal from the Atimārga, where *mokṣa* was explicitly the domain of ascetics. However, anyone who peruses the *Pāśupata-sūtra* (see below, pp. 38-47) will notice in the first chapter that the initiate is promised eight siddhis and ten or twelve siddhi-like “qualities” (*dharma*), thus apparently belying the statement here that pursuit of siddhi is found only in the Mantramārga. But in the *Pāśupata-sūtra* these siddhis are in fact a side-effect of achieving *mokṣa*, for by doing so he attains the status of a *siddha* and a *mahāgaṇapati*, and thereby acquires all the qualities of Mahādeva other than the sovereignty of his office as creator and destroyer of the universe. By contrast, in the Mantramārga, one is free to pursue siddhi/bhoga as an end in itself, postponing liberation until the next incarnation.

4. *Practice: tapas vs. ritual.* In the Atimārga, practice is almost entirely within the realm of *yoga* (in a more or less Patañjalian sense of that word) and *tapas*, whereas in the Mantramārga, it is ritual (and, for some schools, gnosis) that predominates.⁸² Certainly there are many yogic practices detailed in Mantramārgic texts, and forms of *tapas* called *vrata* or *caryā*, but for the average householder initiate, it was his daily ritual that dominated his experience of the religion.⁸³ Underscoring this difference we may note that the Atimārgic *vidhi* was always fireless, while every Śaiva of the Tantric Mantramārga did at least a short *homa* as part of his *nitya-pūjā* or daily ritual. Lasting 60 to 90 minutes once (optionally twice or thrice a day, non-optionally on certain lunar days), the daily Tantric ritual was a significant obligation, but still a far cry from the constant *tapas* of the ascetic who lived homeless and practiced virtually all day. Nor did the householder’s practice include self-mortification, unless for a special purpose he took up the *vrata* of a particular deity for a particular length of time (which was generally not overlong). The *tāntrika*’s ritual required a material investment, both in implements and offerings, something impossible for the Atimārgic ascetic who has given up all possessions.

5. *Initiation liberates vs. not.* Initiation is not mentioned in the *Pāśupata-sūtra* (the root-text of the Atimārga), and only mentioned cursorily in its commentary. By contrast, initiation occupies a central place in the Mantramārga, in which it is the *dīkṣā* ceremony itself, divinely revealed by Śiva, that accomplishes liberation.⁸⁴ It does so by a) purifying the initiand’s karma on all levels of reality, leaving only the karma destined for fruition in this life (*prārabdha-karman*), and b) temporarily fusing

⁸² Note that the *Mṛgendra-tantra* (*kriyāpāda* 8.78-79), when it gives the five-fold classification of religion discussed above, particularly associates the Atimārga with *yoga* (SANDERSON 2006: 162).

⁸³ We should note however that the daily ritual (*nitya-pūjā*) incorporates many yogic elements, possessing as it does both an internal, meditative element (*antar-yāga*) and an external worship element (*pūjā, bahir-yāga*). The yogic elements of course can be performed in a more or less ritualized and perfunctory manner; in the rituals that have survived to the present day, we can observe that they have been attenuated and are usually perfunctory in the extreme.

⁸⁴ “Liberation is bestowed by Śiva’s initiation” (*muktis ca śivadīkṣayā*), *Mālinīvijayottara-tantra* 4.8.

the initiand's soul with Śiva (*śiva-yojanikā*) through *yoga*, here understood as a combination of mantra, *mudrā*, and visualization. The purpose of the initiate's daily ritual after his initiation is simply to finish the last little bit of the job that initiation has mostly accomplished, resulting in his liberation at death (SANDERSON 1995: 40-41). As I suggested above, this doctrine that initiation liberates was perhaps necessary to convince householders that liberation could be secured without total renunciation and arduous discipline. It also served to obviate what had become an oppressive problem in Indian religious philosophy: the enormous burden of karma. In light of the claims made for it, the *dīkṣā* ceremony had to be impressive and convincing: and the attention given in the scriptures to its elaborate detail, its aesthetic power, and its precisely worded mantras is indeed considerable, and even more so in the ritual manuals (*paddhatis*).

We have explored the seven primary continuities and the five main differences between the Atimārga and the Mantramārga. Later we will delve into the three primary *sampradāyas* of the former (1.5.1-3 below) and the nine primary *sampradāyas* of the latter (1.6 below).

The Problem of the Kulamārga

Scholars have long debated the role that the Kaula lineage(s) played in the development of Tantric Śaivism. The Kula or Kaula tradition, founded by Macchanda-nātha and Koṅkanāmbā and continued by their six lineage-holding sons (detailed at 1.7 below), came to “colonize” several of the Mantramārga traditions, which then displayed both Kaula and non-Kaula forms. In such traditions, then, one could be initiated via the *tantra-prakriyā* or the *kula-prakriyā*, where the first denotes a ritual that purifies a hierarchy of *tattvas* or worlds through offerings into a consecrated fire (*hautrī dīkṣā*) as prescribed by one of the non-Kaula tantras, and the second denotes a Kaula form of initiation that features an essentialized fireless form of the ritual.

But what was Kaulism? Was it just a more transgressive form of Śaiva Tantra? We do not consider it a *sampradāya* of the Mantramārga because the distinguishing features of the latter's *sampradāyas* is that each prescribed the worship of a different deity (e.g., Amṛteśvara, Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī, Kubjikā, etc.) while Kaulism prescribed a method of worshipping *any* of those deities under the name Kuleśvarī (if female) or Kuleśvara (if male) or both. Thus Kaulism positioned itself as a kind of meta-discourse: a higher and more refined version of Tantric practices that eschewed pedantic ritualism in favor of visionary, liminal, subversive, and subitist⁸⁵ forms of

⁸⁵ Subitism is a term borrowed by scholars of religion from the field of psychology, where it appears as the verb *subitize* (from Latin *subit-(us)* ‘sudden’ or Late Latin *subit-(āre)* ‘to appear suddenly’), denoting the immediate apprehension of the number of a small group of objects without counting them (e.g., one can look and see “there are four marbles” without counting them). Paul DEMIÉVILLE was the first to use it in the context of Buddhism, to denote “sudden enlightenment.” (See also its use in Peter N. GREGORY, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, 1991.) But in this work we do not use it to refer to sudden enlightenment (which in my view takes the word too far), rather we follow SANDERSON (*passim*) and VASUDEVA (2004) in using it adjectivally to refer to the immediate apprehension of the truth underlying a specific religious doctrine, a nonconceptual realization that arrives fully

practice. Yet Kaulism was not a late development but had ancient roots (as we shall see). Furthermore, it was highly successful: after the period of classical Tantra (c. 800-1200), the Kaula practices continued where many properly Tantric practices died out, and in the late medieval to early modern period the word Kaula itself became a kind of free-floating signifier for virtually any unorthodox, transgressive, or sexualized religious practice with Śākta overtones (as clearly seen in the work of David WHITE). As we have already seen in the distinction of *tantra-prakriyā* and *kula-prakriyā*, the original tradition saw “Tantric” and “Kaula” as near-antonyms, the former denoting Śiva-centered orthopraxy, controlled ritualism, and a transcendent-focused theology, while the latter denotes Śakti-centered transgression, quasi-shamanic rites of possession, and an immanent-focused theology.⁸⁶ But because Kaulized forms of Tantra survived while non-Kaula forms disappeared (or were absorbed, post 1200 CE, into forms of Vedānta), we eventually arrived at the modern situation whereby the word “tantric” is popularly used to denote practices that were in fact Kaula in origin.

After more than twenty years of considering this issue, SANDERSON has recently decided that Kaulism is best understood as a third distinct stream of Śaivism, one that at first influenced and eventually dominated the Goddess-worshipping sects of the Mantramārga.⁸⁷ He has labelled it the *Kulamārga*, a name occasionally found in the primary sources, to maintain a consistency with the names of the other two streams. The *Kulamārga*, then (based as it is in the Somasiddhānta branch of the Atimārga; see below), is distinguished by the following characteristics:

- initiation through *āveśa*;
- worship of Bhairava and the Goddess, esp. the latter, in a wide variety of emanations (such as *māṭṛkas*, *yoginīs*, and *ḍākinīs*);
- worship of *siddha-santānas* (lineages of perfected masters);
- *ādyayāga* (sexual ritual);
- animal (and possibly even human) sacrifice;
- orgiastic ritual (*vīra-melāpa*);
- other antinomian acts, such as rejection of caste; and
- “subitism” (practices said to yield rapid or immediate results).

Despite the transgressive character of this list, the *Kulamārga* was not only practiced by marginal elements of society, but also found a place at its pinnacle, that of the royal court, in which context it existed in a refined aestheticized form. Probably for this reason, the *Kulamārga* usually prohibited the display of elements of the cremation-ground culture characteristic of the *kapāla-vrata*.

formed and all at once; or to denote a form of initiation in which there is a sudden→ transmission of energy from guru to disciple that awakens the latter (a transmission that need not be consciously intended by the guru).

⁸⁶ We see the terms being used as antonyms with these meanings by 11th-century Kaula Trika author Kṣemarāja Rājānaka in chapter eight of his *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*. There he describes his own lineage as a synthesis of the path of the transcendentalist Tāntrikas and the pantheist Kaulas, making Kṣemarāja’s school effectively panentheist.

⁸⁷ “Śaivism and Brāhmanism” lecture series, University of Kyoto, Fall 2012.

This being an initial overview, we will return to the Kulamārga (and its four primary transmission-streams) later (see p. 122).

We end this section with a schematic overview of the various branches of initiatory Śaivism (Table 2), some of which we have already named, and others of which are discussed below. The schematic also demonstrates the overlap of the Mantramārga and the Kulamārga mentioned above.

- I. Atimārga
 1. Pāśupata / Pañcārtha
 2. Kālamukha / Lākula
 3. Somasiddhānta / Kāpālika
- II. Mantramārga
 1. Śaiva Siddhānta
 2. Vāma
 3. Yāmala
 4. Mantrapīṭha
 5. Amṛteśvara
 6. Trika (in both Kaula and non-Kaula forms)
 7. Kālīkula (= III.4. below)
 8. Kaubjika (= III.2 below)
 9. Śrīvidya (= III.3 below)
- III. Kulamārga
 1. Kuleśvarī (“Eastern Transmission”)
 2. Kubjikā (“Western Transmission”)
 3. Kālīkula (“Northern Transmission”)
 4. Tripurasundarī (“Southern Transmission”)

Table 2. The structure of initiatory Śaivism

1.5.1 The Atimārga: Pañcārtha Pāśupatism

Now we turn to a more detailed exploration of the structure of initiatory Śaivism. We have dealt at some length with the basic terminology, but have not yet addressed the doctrines and practices that differentiate the sub-divisions of each of the three Mārgas (for which see Table 2 above). We will attempt to do so now in as simple and clear a manner as possible.

The first subdivision of the Atimārga is that of the Pāśupatas, also known as the Pañcārthika Pāśupatas to differentiate them from the Mahā-pāśupatas or Kālamukhas which succeeded them (see 1.5.2). The Pāśupata tradition has long been known to scholarship because of the sixth chapter of the *Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha* (*Nakulīśa-pāśupata-darśana*), but it became much better known with the 1940 publication of the root-text of the Pāśupatas, the *Pāśupata-sūtra* with the *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya* commentary of Bhagavān Kauṇḍinya.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ I refer to the Anantakrishna ŚĀSTRĪ edition, published in the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series on the basis of a single manuscript discovered in Vārānasī. We now know of three manuscripts, of which two are complete. These are being edited by Peter BISSCHOP.

The earliest possible evidence for the Pāśupatas comes in the form of a late 2nd century inscription from Junāgaḍh in Kathiawar (*Epigraphia Indica* 16:17c) which refers to *kevali-jñāna*, the teaching of the Kevalins. Now this could either be a reference to the Jainas or the Pāśupatas, since the latter's scripture is sometimes referred to as *kevalārtha*, and its adherents as *kevalārthavids* or *kevalins*. The likelihood of this being a reference to Pāśupatas is increased by the fact that, while we do see *kevala-jñāna* in early Jaina texts, the compound *kevali-jñāna* is not to be found there.⁸⁹ But it is impossible to be sure.

The earliest certain evidence for the Pāśupatas are a series of inscriptions dated to 374-77 CE recording grants made by Mahārāja Bhulūṇḍa of Valkhā (Bāgh in Madhya Pradesh, due east of Baroda; RAMESH and TIWARI 1990). Seven of these copper-plates mention Pāśupatas in the role of temple priests (*devakarmin*), not only of temples of Śiva, but also Skanda, the Mothers, and an otherwise unknown deity Bappapiśācadeva. The latter points towards Śiva's ancient association with spirits of the cremation ground and other dangerous sites.

We find images of Lakulīśa, as the founding figure of Pāśupatism came to be known, from the fifth century onward, initially pictured with two disciples;⁹⁰ then, from the sixth century, with four disciples, which became the standard image. It is also in the sixth century that the name Lakulīśa first appears, e.g. in the original *Skanda-purāṇa* (BHAṬṬARĀI 1988).⁹¹

The same *Skanda-purāṇa* features the story of the descent (*avatarāṇa*) of Śiva as Lakulīśa, including some details that match the version found in *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya*, which is approximately one to two centuries earlier. Combining these early versions of the story, we are told that Śiva entered and animated the body of a freshly deceased brahmin in the cremation ground of Kāyāvatāra/Kāyāvarohaṇa/Kārohaṇa (clearly the name is a later derivation from the story itself), very near modern Varodara (Baroda) in Gujarāt, then walked the 350 kilometers to the cremation ground of Ujjayinī,⁹² where he covered himself with ashes and took up a burning brand like a club in his left hand. There he was approached by one Kuśika, who asked him if there existed a definitive end to suffering. The Lord (*bhagavān*) answered in the affirmative, whereupon Kuśika asked for and received initiation from him.⁹³ Lakulīśa (the name only occurs in the *Skanda-purāṇa* version) then recited the 112 *Pāśupata-sūtras*⁹⁴ after which he said to Kuśika:

⁸⁹ SANDERSON, Śaivism and Brāhmanism Lectures, University of Kyoto, 2012, Handout 6, p. 11.

⁹⁰ E.g., at Svāmighāṭ, Mathurā; KREISEL, *Die Śiva-Bildwerke der Mathurā-Kunst* (1986), fig. 124.

⁹¹ Possibly earlier, if HAZRA is right to date the *Śivadharmaśāstra* to before 500 CE, since the name appears in that text; but the date is probably too early.

⁹² Kauṇḍinya (p. 3): *brāhmaṇakāyam āsthāya kāyāvataraṇe 'vatīrnas tathā padbhyām ujjayinīm prāptaḥ*.

⁹³ Kauṇḍinya: "The disciple asked, 'O lord, is there a complete and permanent end of all suffering, whether caused by oneself, other beings, or divine entities [= mental, material, and supernatural suffering] or not?' In consideration of this first question asked by the disciple, he said *atha*. Thus this word *atha* has the sense of the answer to what was asked. It is the end of suffering."

⁹⁴ This numbering according to the new critical edition of BISSCHOP; the 1940 ŚĀSTRĪ edition divides the same content into 168 sūtras.

“This supreme secret known as Pañcārtha is given to you in order to release brahmins from the bond of death. By this initiation (*dīkṣā*) you shall lead the brahmins to the highest stage.” (SkP 130)⁹⁵

We shall return to the significance of this statement. The story also occurs with variants in the *Vāyu-* and *Liṅga-purāṇas* among other sources (LORENZEN 1991: 176), none as early as the original *Skanda*. Peter BISSCHOP, whose recent work has been instrumental in creating a firmer foundation for future Pāśupata studies, notes the probable influence of Buddhism on this earliest form of Śaivism:

. . . the iconography and life-story of Lakulīśa and the Buddha have shared characteristics. Both icons depict a human being in a seated posture, possessed of various divine or auspicious attributes. But for the distinctive features of the erect penis, the club and the matted hair, there is a strong resemblance between early depictions of Lakulīśa and the Buddha, which suggests that Buddhist (but possibly also Jain iconography) had a big impact in this formative period on the iconography of Lakulīśa. When we look at the life-story of Lakulīśa, the most striking feature is its emphasis on the humanity of God’s descent. This is not a cosmic type of *avatāra*, as tends to be the case with the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, but it is the story of a God taking on human form, who wanders from place to place, initiates his four pupils at different places in the north of India and instructs them in His (Paśupati’s) teachings. This conjures up the image of the Buddha wandering through Magadha (BISSCHOP 2010: 486).

In the *Skanda-purāṇa* version, we are told that subsequently Lakulīśa/Paśupati initiated three more disciples, alluded to in the above quote: Gārgya was initiated in Jambumārga, Mitra or Maitrya in Mathurā, and Kauruṣya in Kanyakubja. Since 4th- and 5th-century sources know only the Kuśika lineage, we can assume that the story of there being four disciples reflects the growth of the movement and the need to accommodate new centers.

Now we turn to the question of the specific doctrine of the Pāśupatas. In the *Skanda-purāṇa* quote on the previous page, Lakulīśa is said to have referred to the “supreme secret known as Pañcārtha,” and this is the name by which Pāśupata doctrine most commonly went (note the name of Kauṇḍinya’s commentary on the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, i.e., the *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya*). The number five is indeed central to the organization of the doctrinal materials. There are five aspects of initiation; five stages (*avasthās*) in the Pāśupata’s ascetic practice; five places where he dwells (one in each of the five stages); there are five *yamas* and five *niyamas* that he follows;⁹⁶ five primary practices; five attainments; and so on. These are conveniently laid out in tabular form by LORENZEN (1991: 186). Eight sets of five form the eight verses of the

⁹⁵ Cited and translated at BISSCHOP 2006: 36.

⁹⁶ The five *yamas* are: *ahiṃsā*, *brahmacarya*, *satya*, *asaṃvyavahāra* (no commercial activity), and *asteya*. The five *niyamas* are: *akrodha*, *guru-śuśrūṣā*, *śauca*, *āhāra-lāghava*, and *apramādā* (vigilance) (LORENZEN 1991: 189). Since these appear in the *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya*, they are contemporaneous with the *yamas* and *niyamas* of the *Yoga-sūtra*.

Ḡanakārikā, which is the only scriptural text we have from the Pāśupatas other than the *sūtras*. The most important set of five, the principal *pañcārtha* in the *Pañcārthabhāṣya*, is the following:

1. **Kāraṇa**: the primordial Cause (= Rudra; He is both *sakala* and *niṣkala*)
2. **Kārya**: the effect (= everything else, namely *kalās*, cognitions, and souls)
3. **Vidhi**: the practice of the path outlined in the *Pāśupata-sūtra*
4. **Yoga**: union with Rudra (*rudra-sāyujya*; = *ātmeśvara-saṃyoga* [K])
5. **Duḥkhānta**: the end of suffering (= *siddhi*, *aiśvarya* [Raṭī]; cf. PāSū 1.19-23)

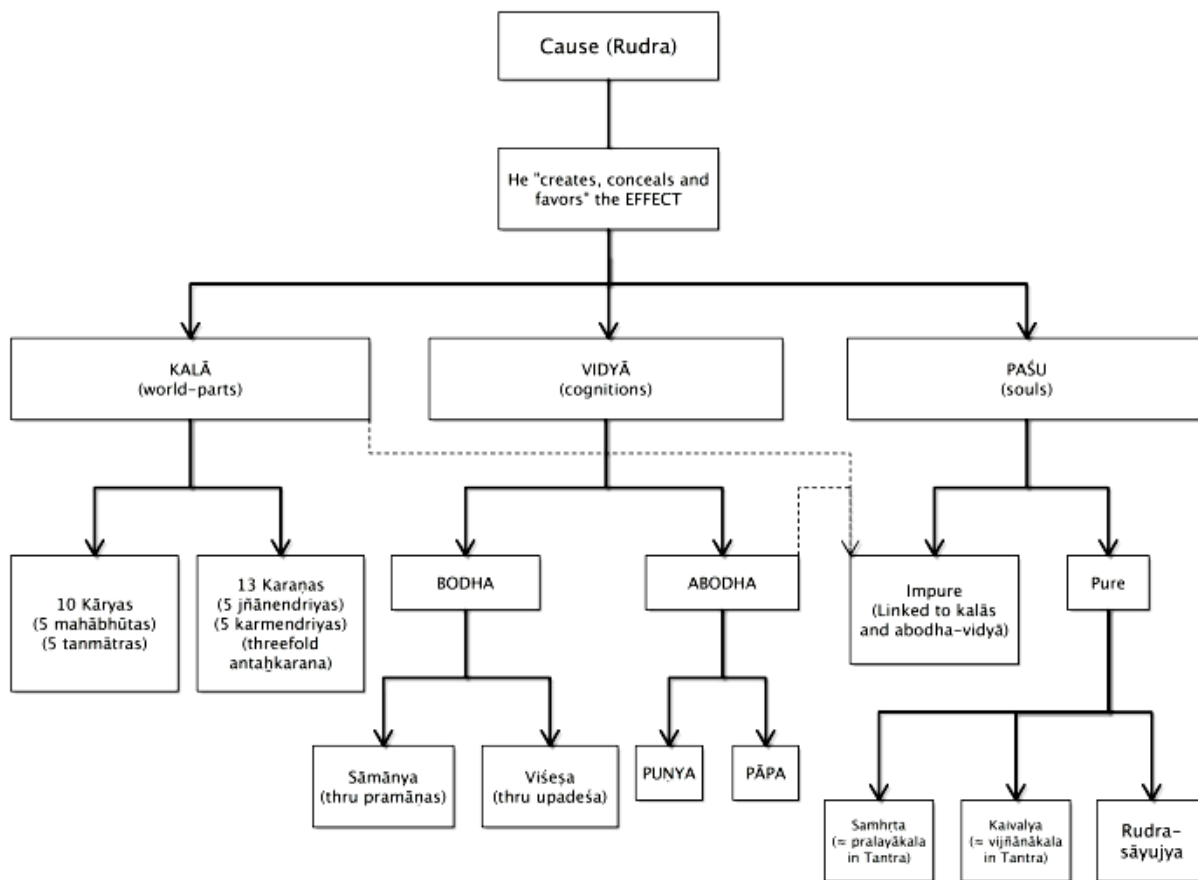


Fig. 2. The structure of the Pāśupata doctrine.

Number two, Kārya, consists of the manifest world, which subdivides into three basic categories: *kalā*, consisting of 23 of the 25 *tattvas* of the Sāṅkhya system (5 *mahābhūtas*, 5 *tanmātras*, 5 *jñānendriyas*, 5 *karmendriyas*, and the three-fold *antaḥkarana*); *vidyā*, which here means cognitions, divided into *bodha* and *abodha* types; and *paśus* or souls, divided into impure (bound) and pure (liberated) categories. This schema, with additional details, is mapped in Fig. 2 above.

The difference between items number four and five in the main list (*yoga* and *duḥkhānta*, see previous page) is unclear; five must follow immediately on the heels of four if it is not actually identical with it. Sometimes one suspects that the framers

of the tradition felt bound to make sure there were five items in a list whenever possible. We find the same pattern in the list of the five stages of Pāśupata practice, as we shall see below: the fifth stage immediately and automatically follows on from the fourth, for the fifth stage simply describes the state of the *siddha* who has completed the Pāśupata *sādhana*.

The Pāśupata-sūtra and its real meaning

The Pāśupata tradition is highly significant for the history of Indian religions, being the earliest form of yoga that is thoroughly documented, as well as being the earliest known form of monotheistic Śaivism. The most direct approach to the tradition is through its root-text, the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, elements of which were formative for the subsequent Śaiva traditions. I therefore present below a complete translation of the text. I have attempted to translate it according to its original meaning—as far as that can be known currently—as opposed to simply following the cues of Kauṇḍinya’s rather pedantic *bhāṣya*, which often forces a more complex theological meaning onto a text that was clearly, first and foremost, a practice manual.

First a word about how our understanding of the text has changed substantially over the recent decades. We have seen a move away from a kind of “pure” textuality that emphasized Sanskrit scriptures and virtually ignored epigraphy, as scholars have become more interested in the social history of Indian religions rather than pure philosophy and theology. As scholars began examining more and more inscriptions relating to the Pāśupatas, a picture started to emerge that was very much at odds with the extreme ascetic practice described in the *Pāśupata-sūtra* with its *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya*, and the *Gaṇakārikā* with its *Ratnaṭīkā*: a picture of well-endowed temple complexes enshrining many deities and run by sometimes powerful and wealthy Pāśupatācāryas who cultivated a relationship with a substantial laity. BISSCHOP states, “The Pāśupata system as outlined by Kauṇḍinya involves a lifelong career of extreme asceticism, which is hard to reconcile with other early references to Pāśupatas, in particular epigraphical records” (2010: 485). We saw above that already in the very first inscriptions that mention the Pāśupatas, we have evidence of a temple culture that contradicts the exhortation of the *sūtras* and their commentary to abandon all other deities and put one’s faith in Rudra alone. However, there is a solution: scholars like BISSCHOP, BAKKER, and SANDERSON have increasingly seen the documents that have come down to us as just one strand in a complex religious culture. Furthermore, we now have an idea as to the true purport of that particular strand. SANDERSON, in a lecture series in Oxford in 2004,⁹⁷ put forth the proposition that we must understand the Pāśupata ascetic’s practice as being entirely oriented to securing a liberative death through yogic means (*utkrānti*).⁹⁸ As he has shown, this is merely implied by the *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya*, but it is

⁹⁷ “The Yoga of Dying. The Śaiva Atimārga.” A lecture series with handouts, University of Oxford, Michémas term, 2004 (available at alexissanderson.com).

⁹⁸ Cf. the use of the term *yoga* in the narrative portions of the *Mahābhārata*: “. . . the most common epic use of the term *yoga*, when construed as a practice undertaken by human practitioners, depicts “dying as a yogic event” (Mbh 13) by means of which the luminous soul is made to rise up out of the body” (WHITE 2004: 615).

explicit in two other sources: the Tantric *Mataṅga-pārameśvara*, which teaches a *rudra-vrata* clearly based on the *Pāśupata-sūtras*, and the Pāśupata-influenced *Pampā-māhātmya*, a text from Karṇāṭaka, where the Atimārga traditions flourished down to the 13th century. These two sources inform us that the culmination of the *sādhaka's sādhanā* is his exit from the body.⁹⁹ If we recall the *Skanda-purāṇa* quote above, in which Lakuliśa is said to have said, “This supreme secret . . . is given to you in order to release brahmins from the bond of death,” we now understand it more clearly: a liberative death is one that defeats ordinary death and the cycle of *saṃsāra* of which it is a part. With this perspective, we can now understand the meaning of the name of the fourth stage of the Pāśupata ascetic’s practice, *chedāvasthā*, as referring to the voluntary cutting of the bonds that tie the soul to the body (see n152 below). The fifth stage, *niṣṭhāvasthā*, then, is simply the completion and culmination of the whole process: having shed his body, he has become a *siddha* and a *mahāgaṇapati*, and is both united with Rudra and the equal of Rudra.¹⁰⁰ There is no *jīvanmukti* doctrine in the Pāśupata tradition. Furthermore, in light of this information, we can finally understand better the bizarre behavior prescribed in stage two of the Pāśupata’s practice, pondered by many scholars over the years.¹⁰¹ The act of actively courting abuse and contempt from all classes of society (see *Pāśupata-sūtra* Part 3 below) makes sense in the context of a practice of radical detachment preparatory to leaving this world behind. We see this clearly in the *Mataṅga-pārameśvara* version of the *pāśupata-vrata*: “Rejecting (*bahiṣkṛtya*) the whole world, and rejected by all . . . the *sādhaka* should abandon the body” (*caryāpāda* 9.30-31c).

Since, by my reading, the *sūtras* envision a timeline of about two years all told for the *sādhanā*,¹⁰² and since liberation in this system entails exit from the physical body, we are left with the conclusion that the follower of the Pāśupata tradition *only took initiation when he was ready to die*, whether because he was filled with distaste for *saṃsāra* or because his longing for liberation was more intense than his desire to enjoy bodily experience. Pāśupatism was, then, a religion that encouraged properly performed yogic suicide as the solution to the problem of

⁹⁹ *Pampā-māhātmya Uttarabhāga* 11.62c-63b: “Thus, his soul purified (*puṇyātmā*), his mind unwaveringly fixed on Śiva, he should abandon the body (*śarīraṃ saṃtyajet*) through yoga (*yuktyā*). This is the stage of ‘cutting’ (*chedāvasthā*).” *Mataṅga-pārameśvara, caryāpāda* 9.31-32b, concluding the discussion of the *rudra-vrata*: “The *sādhaka* who is completely detached from the unbearable, terrifying, impermanent, impenetrable jungle of *saṃsāra*, and who has conquered his *prāṇa* may, by controlling it, easily abandon the body.” Citations courtesy of SANDERSON.

¹⁰⁰ This *rudra-sāyujya* or *ātmeśvara-samyoga*, as Kaunḍinya glosses it, is not a union of total absorption as in some forms of Vedānta. Rather, it signifies communion or intimate connection, primary through the acquisition of all Rudra’s qualities (except his office of creator, maintainer, and destroyer of the universe).

¹⁰¹ E.g., Daniel H.H. INGALLS, “Cynics and Pāśupatas: the Seeking of Dishonor,” *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962).

¹⁰² We are told (at 5.6) that the third stage takes about six months if the *sādhaka* is concentrated. The nature of the practice given in stage two and four cannot be prolonged much beyond that time frame. Only the first stage could last an indefinite period; but my suspicion is that the intensive nature of the practice makes sense in the context of a shorter time frame.

suffering. In the cultural context, this is not really so bizarre. If we turn to the story literature, as exemplified by the *Kathā-sarīt-sāgara*, we find many clues that in ancient Indian society, people of all ages and from many walks of life sought an auspicious death and believed in its rewards, and while they were often motivated by “world-weariness,” we certainly do not always see the association of suicide with morbid depression that is common in Western society. I argue that the renunciant values of Indian religions supported a choice to leave this world for reasons that would not be considered sufficient in the West. There are countless examples in the story literature,¹⁰³ as well as the well-known example of the Jaina tradition’s advocacy of voluntary starvation (*sallekhanā*) as the ideal way to depart this life,¹⁰⁴ and there is inscriptional evidence to suggest that religious suicide in particular was highly respected.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, let us remember that there is now abundant epigraphical evidence that the Pāśupata religion had a whole civic dimension not apparent to us from the texts discussing the ascetic’s *sādhana*. There must have been texts and rituals now lost that described the facets of the religion that won the support of the laity. But there can be little doubt that initiatory Śaivism began as a way to secure a liberative death.

A new translation of the Pāśupata-sūtra

The numbering of the sūtras below follows the new standard created by Peter BISSCHOP’s critical edition of the *sūtrapāṭha* (which is the name given by the manuscripts to the sūtras when presented separately from the commentary). In the translation, starting from sūtra 1.18, the reader will notice superscripted numbers that immediately precede a word or phrase: these refer to the sūtra number of the 1940 ŚĀSTRĪ edition, still in common use. The reader must be careful to distinguish these from the footnotes, which of course immediately follow a given word or phrase and have a different numbering. The footnotes add clarifying comments and quotes from Kaunḍinya’s commentary where those seemed helpful or important. There are also a few quotes from the *Ratnaṭīkā* commentary on the *Gaṇakārikā*, which is the only other exegetical Pāśupata text that has come down to us.

Part 1

1: *athātaḥ paśupateḥ pāśupataṃ yogavidhiṃ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ*

Now, then, we will describe the practice of the Pāśupata Yoga of Paśupati.

¹⁰³ Examples taken at random from the *Kathāsaritsāgara*: “I went to have darshan of Vindhyaśinī. When I beheld that goddess I thought to myself, ‘People propitiate this boon-giving goddess with animal sacrifices, but I shall kill none other than myself here’” (1.6.80). “I went out of the city and for your good was about to cut off my head before the goddess Caṇḍikā when a voice from the sky forbade me . . .” (1.6.155). “The ascetic worshipped the goddess there and then said, ‘If you are pleased with me, o goddess, then grant me the boon I desire. If not, I shall win your favor by sacrificing myself’” (3.4.161). Translations by J. MALLINSON from the CSL ed.

¹⁰⁴ See the Encyclopedia of Religion’s article s.v. *Suicide*, p. 8828 and 8831 (in vol. 13).

¹⁰⁵ See THAKUR’s *History of Suicide in India* (1963:xii-xiv), cited in VASUDEVA 2004:438.

[Stage One: *vyaktāvasthā*¹⁰⁶]

2: *bhasmanā triśavaṇaṃ snāyīta*

He should bathe with ashes for his three ablutions [at the three *sandhyās*].¹⁰⁷

3: *bhasmani śayīta*. He should sleep on ashes.

4: *anusnānam*. Extra ash-baths [on certain occasions].

5: *nirmālyam*. [He should wear] the offerings to the deity.

6: *liṅgadhārī*. Bearing the sect-marks.

7: *āyatanavāsī*. Living in [the grounds of] the temple.

8: *hasita-gīta-nṛtya-huḍumkāra-namaskāra-japyopahāreṇopatiṣṭhet*

With the offerings of laughing, singing, dancing, the sound *huḍ[ḍ]uṅ*

[bellowing¹⁰⁸], obeisance,¹⁰⁹ and mantra repetition,¹¹⁰ he should reverently

¹⁰⁶ The five stages are discussed in Kauṇḍinya’s commentary on 5.30. In each of the five, the *sādhaka* lives in a different place. Strangely, the five stages do not correspond to the five chapters of the text. The name of the first stage is explained by sūtra 1.6: the *sādhaka* is displaying his sect-marks, as opposed to the next stage, where he will conceal his identity as a Pāśupata.

¹⁰⁷ From Bhāsarvajña’s *Ratnaṭīkā*, we receive details on how this ash is to be purified: “After purifying it with mantras before the south face of Śiva, and after doing *pradakṣiṇa*, he should meditate on the Lord having the form of the sun, with three eyes, looking upon the ash with a kindly gaze. And after that, he should offer [it] to a preceptor whose gaze is dyed [i.e., permeated] with the reality (*tattva*) of Śiva, or to an elder brother [i.e., senior initiate under the same guru, with a similarly powerful gaze]. After that, he should remain in an isolated, clean spot free of creatures and plants, simply repeating the five ‘Purifiers’ [i.e., the *brahma-mantras*] until the juncture of Rudra [i.e., the last 16 minutes prior to sunrise]. Then, having bowed to the Lord, and resolving ‘I perform your command,’ still repeating [the mantras], he should bathe, repeatedly rubbing—with great effort—his body and limbs with abundant ash, from the soles of the feet to the head.” (Commentary on *Gaṇakārikā* 1.7, *Ratnaṭīkā* lines 29-34: *bhasmārjitaṃ śiva-dakṣiṇamūrtau mantraiḥ saṃskṛtya pradakṣiṇaṃ ca dattvā sūrya-rūpiṇaṃ bhagavantaṃ locana-trayeṇa prasanna-dṛṣṭyā bhasma paśyantaṃ dhyāyet. tadanu cācāryāya śiva-tattvānurañjita-dṛṣṭaye jyeṣṭha-bhrātre vā nivedayet. tadanv ekānte śucau pradeśe jantu-sthāvara-hīne pañca-pavitṛānyāvartayataiva stheyam raudra-savaṇaṃ yāvat tato bhagavantaṃ praṇamya tvad-ājñāṃ karomīty abhisandhāya japaṃ naivāpāda-tala-mastakaṃ yāvat prabhūtena bhasmanāṅgaṃ pratyāṅgaṃ ca prayatnātiśayena nighṛṣya nighṛṣya snānam ācared.*) We will see that a gaze “permeated with the reality of Śiva” is thought to not only purify but even initiate in some branches of the Mantramārga.

¹⁰⁸ In a recent article, Diwākar ĀCHĀRYA (2013) convincingly argues that “making the sound *huḍḍuṅ*” refers to the practice of bellowing like a bull, a practice that may go back to the Indra cult that he considers to be the immediate antecedent of early Pāśupatism. Cf. sūtra 4.8.

¹⁰⁹ K(auṇḍinya’s commentary): *namaskāra* = *ātma-samarpaṇa* or self-surrender.

¹¹⁰ A more thorough explanation of Pāśupata worship in Stage One (*vyaktāvasthā*) is found in the *Ratnaṭīkā*: “Having completed the bath thus, still reciting [the mantras], having gone to the temple, having prostrated with great devotion to Śiva, and having dedicated his bath [to the deity], he should enter the inner sanctum (*garbha-gṛha*) slowly. After that, in an area to the south of the *mūrti* [he should] fall to his knees, folding the hands in *añjali* at the heart, looking at Śiva in his image (*mūrtistha*) as if He was there in front of one’s eyes. Some [say] that, if his state of [meditative] withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*) has not ceased, then immediately upon coming [into the shrine] he should make the [ritual] laughter. But we hold that, if the meaning of the commentary [of Kaundinya] is considered, then definitely, having reached [the sanctum] he

approach

9: *mahādevasya dakṣiṇāmūrtim*. the southern face of Mahādeva.¹¹¹

10: *ekavāsāḥ*. Having one garment;

11: *avāsā vā*. or else naked.¹¹²

12: *mūtrapurīṣaṃ nāvekṣet*. He should not see urine or faeces.¹¹³

13: *strīśūdraṃ nābhibhāset*. He should not speak to a woman or *śūdra*.

14: *yady avekṣed yady abhibhāset*. If he should see [one], if he should speak to [one],

15: *upaspr̥śya*. he should sip water,

16: *prāṇāyāmaṃ kṛtvā*. do *prāṇāyāma*,

17: *raudrīṃ gāyatrīṃ bahurūpīṃ vā jayet*.

[and] repeat the Raudrī Gāyatrī or the Bahurūpī [Ṛc].¹¹⁴

should repeat [the mantras] facing north, with controlled mind, for the sake of a superior [meditative] withdrawal. Having recited, only [when] he is [fully] immersed in his meditation on Śiva, he should laugh loudly and repeatedly. After that, he should begin the song. Still singing, he should rise up. Then he should dance accompanied by his song. Having completed the song, he should then finish the dance. After that, having seated himself in the manner previously stated, still meditating on Śiva, he should make the *huḍḍuk* sound and bow. After that, *japa*. The *japa* and obeisance should be done silently . . . and the *huḍḍuk*, singing, and laughing out loud. He should laugh for three long exhales . . . make three deep *huḍḍuk* sounds, perform sixty prostrations and three repetitions of the five ‘Purifiers’ (= *brahma-mantras*).” (Ratnaṭikā Lines 37-45: *evaṃ snānaṃ nīrvartya japann evāyatanaṃ gatvā śivaṃ bhaktyatiśayena praṇamya snānaṃ nivedya ca śanair garbha-gr̥haṃ praviśet. tadanu mūrti-dakṣiṇe deśe jānuni pātayitvā hr̥di cāñjaliṃ baddhvā mūrti-sthaṃ sāḁśād iva śivaṃ paśyan, yady anivṛtta-pratyāhāras tadā gata-mātra eva hasitaṃ kuryād ity eke. vayaṃ tu paśyāmo “bhigamya ca yat pūrvaṃ japatīyādi” bhāṣyasyārtho yadi vicāryate tadāvaśyaṃ gatvā saṃyatātmanottarābhimukhena pratyāhāra-viśeṣārthaṃ japtavyaṃ japtvā tu śiva-dhyānāsakta evāṭṭahāsaṃ punaḥ punaḥ kuryāt. tadanu gīta-ārabhya gāyann evottiṣṭhet. tato gīta-sahitaṃ eva nṛtyaṃ kuryāt. tatrādaḥ gītaṃ parisamāpya paścān nṛtyaṃ samāpayet. tadanu pūrvokta-vidhinopaviśya śivaṃ dhyāyann eva huḍḍukkāraṃ kṛtvā namaskāraṃ kuryāt tadanu japam iti. atra japa-namaskārau mānasāv eva nṛtyaṃ kāyikam eva hasita-gīta-huḍḍukkārā vācīkā eveti niyama iṣṭaḥ. tatra dīrghocchvāsa-trayaṃ yāvadd hasitaṃ daṇḍaka-trir āvartanaṃ yāvadd gīta-nṛtye gambhīra-huḍḍukkāra-trayaṃ ṣaṣṭi namaskārān pañca-pavitṛṇāṃ trir āvartanaṃ kuryād.*) We presume there is some thematic connection between this strange behavior and the transgressive acts of the left-current Mantramārga; note that the behavior is highly ritualized in this description.

¹¹¹ K: “*Deva* is derived from *div*, in the sense of play, because His inherent nature is play (*krīḍā*).” Precisely the same *nirukta* is given in the Mantramārga. K’s commentary gives us a sense of the nature of Śiva’s image in his time (the Gupta era): “Holding a spear, having a bull-banner, flanked by Nandin and Mahākala, having an erect phallus, etc.” But note this describes not the physical image, which was almost certainly a *liṅga*, but the image the Pāsupata visualizes as he faces north. Note also that here Nandin is not the name of Śiva’s bull, but one of his *gaṇapatis*.

¹¹² K: “Two purposes are to be recognised [for this nakedness]: for the sake of possessionlessness and for the sake of proclaiming ‘inauspiciousness’.” Cf. sūtra 2.3.

¹¹³ Also a Vedic injunction; this and the following sūtra are probably quoting *Baudhāyana-dharma-sūtra* 3.8.17 (cited BISSCHOP 2006: 5). Cf. *Taittirīya-samhitā* (Black Yajurveda), 3.1.1.

¹¹⁴ Found at the end of Part 4 and Part 3 respectively; the Bahurūpī Ṛc is the better known as the Aghora mantra.

18: *akaluṣa-mateś*¹⁹ *caratas*²⁰ *tato 'sya yogaḥ pravartate*
With his mind pure, practicing, from that his yoga progresses.

[These eight *siddhis* result:]

19: ²¹*dūrād darśana-śravaṇa-manana-vijñānāni cāsyā pravartante*
Seeing, hearing, thinking, and knowing from a distance commence for him.¹¹⁵

20: ²²*sarvajñatā*. He can know anything,

21: ²³*manojavitvam*. can [move at] the speed of thought,¹¹⁶

22: ²⁴*kāmarūpitvaṃ*²⁵ *vikaraṇa-*²⁶ *dharmitvaṃ ca*.

can take on any form he desires; and [in all this] he is free of [reliance on] the sense organs.

[These further attainments accrue to him after leaving his body¹¹⁷]:

23: ²⁷*sarve cāsyā vaśyā bhavanti*. All creatures are subject to his will,

24: ²⁸*sarveṣāṃ cāvaśyo bhavati*. but he is not subject to anyone;

25: ²⁹*sarvāṃś cāviśati*. and he can enter anyone,

26: ³⁰*sarveṣāṃ cānāveśyo bhavati*. but he cannot be entered by anyone;

27: ³¹*sarve cāsyā vadhyā bhavanti*. and anyone can be killed by him,¹¹⁸

28: ³²*sarveṣāṃ cāvadhyo bhavati*. but he cannot be killed by anyone;

29: ³³*abhīto*³⁴ *ḥṣayo*³⁵; *jaro*³⁶ *marah*³⁷ *sarvatra cāpratihata-gatir bhavati*.

fearless, indestructible, ageless, and deathless, he moves unimpeded anywhere.

30: ³⁸*ity etair guṇair yukto bhagavato mahādevasya mahāgaṇapatir bhavati*

Endowed with these qualities, he becomes a *mahāgaṇapati*, a great lord of the *gaṇas*¹¹⁹ of Bhagavān Mahādeva.¹²⁰

31: ³⁹*atredaṃ brahma japet*. Here is the *brahma*-[*mantra*]¹²¹ he should repeat.¹²²

¹¹⁵ K clarifies that “thinking” means perceiving the thoughts of others, while “knowing” refers to knowledge of what is in all scriptures.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Yogasūtra* 3.48: *tato manojavitvaṃ vikaraṇabhāvaḥ pradhānajayaś ca*.

¹¹⁷ In 1.19-30, the rewards of the path are delineated. The qualities listed from 1.23 on, it seems, are only attained upon successful completion of the *sādhana*, which entails the shedding of the physical body. Whether 1.19-22 are also meant to be understood as *siddhis* attained after death is an open question.

¹¹⁸ This ability seems at odds with Kauṇḍinya’s description of the *sādhaka*’s practice in life, for a radical level of *ahiṃsā* is repeatedly stressed there.

¹¹⁹ Or “Endowed with these qualities of Bhagavān Mahādeva, he becomes . . .” For a parallel and nearly contemporaneous expression, see *Mahābhārata* 10.7.4, *śmaśānavāsinam dṛptaṃ mahāgaṇapatiṃ prabhūm*, referring of course to Śiva. Note that K interprets the title *mahāgaṇapati* differently, glossing *mahāgaṇa* as “the multitude of bound souls.”

¹²⁰ This seems to have been the original meaning of this *sūtra*, but K stresses that the *siddha* becomes the equal of Mahādeva, in every respect except that of office (*adhikāra*). (This doctrine appears later in precisely the same form in the Śaiva Siddhānta branch of the Mantramārga.) An alternative interpretation would be that the attainment of becoming a *mahāgaṇapati* is not considered the final state here, but rather is the culmination of stage three (*jayāvasthā*; see 5.6).

¹²¹ K: “It is called *brahma* because a) it is great (*bṛhat*) and b) it fortifies (*bṛṃh*); since it fortifies the *sādhaka* who is repeating it through [an increase of] dharma etc.” (*bṛhattvād bṛṃhṇatvāt brahma | bṛṃhayate yasmāt sādhakaṃ japantaṃ dharmādibhiḥ*.)

¹²² K: during the first and second stages of practice.

32 ⁴⁰SADYOJĀTAṀ PRAPADYĀMI ⁴¹SADYOJĀTĀYA VAI NAMAḤ

33 ⁴²BHAVE BHAVE NĀTIBHAVE ⁴³BHAJASVA MĀM¹²³

34 ⁴⁴BHAVODBHĀVAYA NAMAḤ

["I take refuge in the Eternally Unborn (Śiva); reverence, indeed, to the Eternally Unborn! In existence after in existence, in not too many existences, prefer me!¹²⁴ Reverence to the one who gives rise to existence."]

Part 2

1: *vāma²devasya³jyeṣṭhasya [śreṣṭhasya]⁴rudrasya⁵kalitāsanam*

The throne of Rudra, the Beautiful God, the Elder, [the Exalted One,] is prepared [for him].

2: *⁶sarvakāmika ity ācakṣate*. It is said that all his desires [are fulfilled].

3: *⁷amaṅgalaṃ cātra maṅgalaṃ bhavati*.

And in this [practice], the inauspicious becomes auspicious.

4: *⁸apasavyaṃ ca pradakṣiṇam*. The left becomes the right.¹²⁵

5: *⁹tasmād ubhayathā yaṣṭavyo¹⁰devavat pitṛvac ca*.

Therefore,¹²⁶ He should be worshipped as both, [i.e.] as [encompassing all] the gods and as the ancestors,¹²⁷

6: *¹¹ubhaye tu rudre devāḥ pitaraś ca*. [since] gods and ancestors are both in Rudra.

7: *¹²harṣāpramādī*. Sober with regard to the delights [that his practice confers],¹²⁸

8: *¹³caryāyāṃ caryāyāṃ¹⁴māhātmyam avāpnoti*.

in each and every observance he attains greatness.

9: *¹⁵atidattam atīṣṭam*.¹²⁹ The highest giving;¹³⁰ the highest sacrifice;

¹²³ The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* version of the mantra (10.43) has *bhavasva mām*, which seems difficult to interpret.

¹²⁴ So K; Sāyaṇa, by contrast, takes the *na* as negating *bhajasva* and glossing the latter with *preraya* reads something like "Do not stimulate the cause of various births, i.e. do not dispatch me into birth after birth."

¹²⁵ This sūtra is difficult to interpret; K takes it in the same sense as the previous sūtra, and explains that it indicates, for example, that the Pāśupata's nudity is, in this context, perfectly appropriate (*nagnatvaṃ ca sādhanam ity arthaḥ*). But the original meaning of the sūtra was probably that the Pāśupata should do his circumambulation counter-clockwise, which fits in with his counter-cultural program of worship. In this context, we would translate "and the reverse is the right circumambulation" (Peter C. BISSCHOP, email, 25 February 2013).

¹²⁶ K says that the sense of the word "therefore" is that since God's qualities are such that even what is usually inauspicious becomes auspicious for those who have taken refuge in him (see previous note), he is worthy of exclusive worship.

¹²⁷ K: "This brahmin's qualification and obligation (*adhikāra*) to worship the gods and the ancestors applied [only] before [his initiation]. Therefore, withdrawing loyal devotion (*bhakti*) from the gods and ancestors, and in place of both fixing his religious feeling (*bhāva*) on Maheśvara, he should worship Him and no other. . . . [Realizing that] the agency that he thought they had does not exist, he should no longer worship them. This is the meaning [of the sūtra]." (Translation follows that of SANDERSON, Śaivism and Brahmanism Lecture Series Handout 4, 30 October 2012.) Cf. *Samskāra-vidhi* v. 37cd: "May those gods and ancestors forgive me. I have taken refuge in Śiva [alone]." (*kṣamantu pitṛdevās te gato'haṃ śaraṇaṃ śive*)

¹²⁸ K says that this means he should not become intoxicated (*māda*) by his attainment of supernatural powers; that is, *harṣāpramādī* means he should be careful of getting over-excited.

- 10: ¹⁶*atitaptam tapas tathā*. the highest austerity as well.
 11: ¹⁷*atyāgatim gamayate*. He is led to the Higher Path.
 12: ¹⁸*tasmād* ¹⁹*bhūyas tapaś caret*. Therefore, he should perform intense austerity.
 12¹³¹: ²⁰*nānyabhaktis tu śaṅkare*. Loyally devoted to none but Śaṅkara.
 13: ²¹*atredaṃ brahma japet*. Here is the *brahma*-[*mantra*] he should repeat:
 14: ²²VĀMADEVĀYA NAMO JYEṢṬHĀYA [NAMAḤ ŚREṢṬHĀYA] NAMO RUDRĀYA NAMAḤ
²³KĀLĀYA NAMAḤ ²⁴KĀLA-VIKARAṆĀYA NAMO [BALA-VIKARAṆĀYA NAMO BALĀYA
 NAMO] ²⁵BALA-PRAMATHANĀYA NAMAḤ ²⁶SARVA-BHŪTA-DAMANĀYA NAMO
²⁷MANONMANĀYA NAMAḤ¹³²
 (“Reverence to Vāmadeva, reverence to the Elder, [reverence to the Exalted,] reverence to Rudra. Reverence to Time. Reverence to he who transforms the World-parts. [Reverence to the destroyer of Bala. Reverence to the Mighty.] Reverence to the churner of the powers. Reverence to he who subdues all beings. Reverence to he who is the mind and yet beyond the mind.”)

Part 3

[Stage Two: *avyaktāvasthā*]

- 1: *avyaktaliṅgī* ²*vyaktācārah*. His sect-marks concealed, his behavior visible,
 2: ³*avamataḥ* ⁴*sarvabhūteṣu*. despised by all people,
 3: ⁵*paribhūyamānaś caret*. he should wander about being abused.
 4: ⁶*apahata-pāpmā* ⁷*pareṣāṃ parivādāt*.
 Free from defects because of the reproach of others,
 5: ⁸*pāpaṃ ca tebhyo dadāti*. he gives them [his] sin,
 6: ⁹*sukṛtaṃ ca teṣāṃ ādatte*. and receives their merit.¹³³
 7: ¹⁰*tasmāt* ¹¹*pretavac caret*. Therefore, let him behave like a wandering outcaste,¹³⁴
 8: ¹²*krātheta vā*. or let him [feign] snores,
 9: ¹³*spandeta vā*. or let him [feign] spasms,
 10: ¹⁴*maṅṭeta vā*. or let him limp,
 11: ¹⁵*śṛṅgāreta vā*. or let him make amorous gestures.¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Following K in reading *atīṣṭam* instead of the *atigūḍham* in the *sūtrapāṭha*.

¹³⁰ K: “The highest charity is giving oneself. Why? Because when one is the giver of oneself, because there is no ulterior motive in the giving, since one obtains no objects for the senses or the body or a particular state, due to the lack of any common result, giving oneself is the ultimate giving.”

¹³¹ Following the published edition for consistency, which numbers 2.12 twice.

¹³² The parts of the mantra in brackets do not appear in K’s commentary.

¹³³ For a Vedic antecedent, cf. *Apastamba-śrauta-sūtra* 10.15.15: “Let no one say no evil of him [the *dikṣita*], . . . [lest] they take on his sin.” And *Tāṇḍya-brāhmaṇa* 5.6.10: “One who speaks of the sin of a *dikṣita* takes on one-third of his sin.”

¹³⁴ K: “He should appear as though mad, like a pauper, his body covered with filth, letting his beard, nails and hair grow long, without any bodily care. Hereby he becomes cut off from the respectable castes and conditions of men (*varṇāśrama*), and intensifies his renunciation [of the world]” (trans. INGALLS (LORENZEN 1991: 188) except the italicized phrase (*vairāgyotsāhaḥ*)).

¹³⁵ These five sūtras (3.7-11) are translated as per Kaunḍinya. ĀCHĀRYA (2013) argues, on the basis of the parallel passage in *Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa* II.3.9.9, that this practice of transferring *pāpman* and *puṇya* originally formed part of a *go-vrata* in which one imitated the behavior of a

- 12: ¹⁶*apitatkuryāt*. Let him do even that,
 13: ¹⁷*apitadbhāset*. let him say even that,
 14: ¹⁸*yena parebhyaḥ paribhavaṃ gacchet*.
 which will earn him the contempt of others.
 15: ¹⁹*paribhūyamāno hi vidvān kṛtsna-tapā bhavati*
 For the wise one, being abused, accomplishes all austerity.
 16: ²⁰*atredaṃ brahma jayet*. Here is the *brahma*-[*mantra*] he should repeat.¹³⁶
 17: ²¹AGHOREBHYO ²²THA GHOREBHYO ²³GHORAGHORATAREBHYAŚ CA
 18: ²⁴SARVATAḤ ²⁵ŚARVA SARVEBHYO ²⁶NAMAS TE ASTU RUDRA RŪPEBHYAḤ¹³⁷
 [“To the benevolent ones, then to the fierce ones, to the fiercer than fierce,
 in every way, O Śarva, to all of them, may there be reverence to you
 [singular], who are [all] the forms of Rudra!”]

Part 4

- 1: *gūḍhavidyā taponantyāya prakāśate*.
 This hidden wisdom shines for an infinity of *tapas*.
 2: *gūḍha-vrato* ³*gūḍha-pavitra-vāṇiḥ*.
 [With] his vow hidden, his knowledge of the Pure Speech concealed,
 3: ⁴*sarvāṇi dvārāṇi pidhāya* ⁵*buddhyā*.
 having closed all the doors [of his senses] through his understanding,
 4: ⁶*unmattavad eko vicareta loke*. let him wander alone in the world like a madman.
 5: ⁷*kṛtānnaṃ utsṛṣṭam upādādīta*.
 Let him take cooked food that has been thrown out.
 6: ⁸*unmatto mūḍha ity evaṃ manyante itare janāḥ*.
 Thus, other people [will] think “He is a madman, a fool;”
 7: ⁹*asaṃmāno hi yantrāṇāṃ sarveṣāṃ uttamaḥ smṛtaḥ*.
 for humiliation is [here] held to be the highest of all disciplines.¹³⁸
 8: ¹⁰*indro vā agre asureṣu pāśupatam acarat*.
 Indra himself practiced the Pāśupata [vow] in the beginning amongst the
asuras.
 9: ¹¹*sa teṣāṃ iṣṭāpūrttam ādatta* ¹²*māyayā sukṛtayā samavindata*.
 He took the merit of their sacrificial rites; he obtained it by a well-formed
 trick.
 10: ¹³*nindā hy eṣāṃ anindā*. For this abuse is irreproachable for these,¹³⁹

bull or cow. He suggests that 7-11 above originally read *preva calet. krātheteva. spandeteva. maṅṭeteva. śṛṅgāyeteva*. (this is closer to the TaiBrā passage), which would mean “He should enact thrashing about, he should enact injuring [others], he should enact kicking or twitching of his limbs, he should enact getting agitated/hobbling (*maṅṭeteva*), he should enact butting [with his head]” (ĀCHĀRYA 2013: 110). See also n146 (on sūtra 5.9) below.

¹³⁶ The Aghora mantra occurs not only in *Taittirīyāranyaka* 10 but also in the (earlier) *Maitrāyaṇī-saṃhitā* 2.9.10: 130.1–2 (BISSCHOP 2005: 544n101). In the later *Mantramārga*, this is the mantra of [Sakala-]Svacchanda-bhairava.

¹³⁷ Following the TaiĀr and K over BISSCHOP here. *Astu* appears to be original, despite the lack of sandhi, and despite the fact that it makes the verse hypermetrical.

¹³⁸ Reading *yantrāṇāṃ* with K instead of *jantūnām*. Cf. *Skandapurāṇa* (1988) 122.81 and 83cd-84ab (BISSCHOP 2006: 12-13).

- 11: *tasmān*¹⁴ *nindyamānaś caret*.
therefore, let him go about being blamed; [¹⁵his actions are (actually) blameless.¹⁴⁰]
- 12: ¹⁶*sarva-viśiṣṭo 'yaṃ panthāḥ*¹⁷ *satpathaḥ*.
Exceeding all others, this path is the true path.
- 13: ¹⁸*kupathās tv anye*. The others are wrong paths.
- 14: ¹⁹*anena vidhinā rudra-samīpaṃ gatvā*²⁰ *na kaścid brāhmaṇaḥ punar āvartate*
Having attained the presence of Rudra through this practice, no brāhmin whatsoever [will] return again.
- 15: ²¹*atredaṃ brahma jayet*. Here is the *brahma*-[*mantra*] he should repeat.¹⁴¹
- 16: ²²TAT PURUṢĀYA VIDMAHE ²³MAHĀDEVĀYA DHĪMAHI
- 17: ²⁴TAN NO RUDRAḤ PRACODAYĀT
[“We know this in order to [attain] Being. May we meditate for the sake of [attaining] the Great Divinity. May Rudra impel us to That.”¹⁴²]

Part 5

[Stage Three: *jayāvasthā*]

- 1: ¹*asaṅga-*²*yogī*³ *nityātmā*⁴ *ajo*⁵ *maitro*⁶ *bhijāyate*.
He is reborn as an unattached *yogī* (= united one) of eternal self, unborn, [and] equanimous.
- 2: ⁷*indriyāṅām abhijayāt*. [This occurs] due to [his] total conquest of the senses.
- 3: ⁸*rudraḥ provāca tāvat*. Thus Rudra has taught. [1-3 = *śl.* #1]¹⁴³
- 4: ⁹*śūnyāgāra-guhāvāsī*. Dwelling in an empty building or a cave,
- 5: ¹⁰*deva-nityo*¹¹ *jitendriyaḥ*. constantly [focused] on God, his senses conquered.
- 6: ¹²*ṣaṅmāsān nitya-yuktasya*¹³ *bhūyiṣṭhaṃ sampravartate*.
For one who is constantly disciplined for six months, it¹⁴⁴ arises in the highest degree. [4-6 = *śl.* #2]
- 7: ¹⁴*bhaikṣyaṃ*¹⁵ *pātrāgataṃ*¹⁶ *māṃsam aduṣyaṃ lavaṇena vā*
Gathering his alms into a vessel; no faulty meat,¹⁴⁵ optionally with salt;

¹³⁹ K has *nindā hy eṣānindā* (literally “for this abuse is non-abuse”), which is perhaps less awkward than the Sūtrapāṭha’s reading.

¹⁴⁰ This sūtra is found in K’s bhāṣya but not in the Sūtrapāṭha.

¹⁴¹ The Tatpuruṣa mantra occurs not only in *Taittirīyāranyaka* 10 but also in the (earlier) *Maitrāyaṇī-saṃhitā* 2.9.1: 119.7–8 and *Kāṭhaka-saṃhitā* 17.11: 253.20–21. “The different historical origin of the Aghora and Tatpuruṣa mantra may be reflected in the fact that only these two mantras – referred to respectively as Bahurūpī Ṛc and Raudrī Gāyatrī – are enjoined in the Pāsupatasūtra in other contexts as well” (BISSCHOP 2005: 544n101). As BISSCHOP implies, it is possible that the other three *brahma*-mantras were retroactively interpolated into the *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka*.

¹⁴² But note that K takes the last line to mean “May Rudra impel those [powers of cognition and action] for us.”

¹⁴³ Part five is all in meter (*anuṣṭubh* with a concluding *vaiśvadevī* verse, which points to the possibility that the text once existed in a different form.

¹⁴⁴ K says 1.30 above is the antecedent of ‘it’. This argues against these qualities being attained after death.

¹⁴⁵ Meaning, he should not accept meat if he has reason to believe the animal was bought for him, cooked for him, or killed for him, as in Buddhism.

- 8: ¹⁷*āpo vāpi yathākālam aśnīyād anupūrvaśaḥ*
he should eat, or else [just drink] water, according to [what he receives on each] occasion, in the proper manner. [7-8 = śl. #3]
- 9: ¹⁸*go-dharmā mṛga-dharmā vā*
[He should cultivate] the quality of a cow or a wild animal.¹⁴⁶
- 10: ¹⁹*adbhir eva śucir bhavet.*
He will become pure, just [as though washed] by water.
- 11: ²⁰*siddha-yogī na lipyeta.* A perfected yogī cannot be stained
- 12: *karmaṇā pātakena vā.* by action or by sin. [9-12 = śl. #4]
- 13: ²¹*ṛcam iṣṭām adhīyāta.* He should recite the chosen Ṛc verse [i.e., the Aghora]
- 14: *gāyatrīm ātma-yantritaḥ.* [or] the Gāyatrī, self-controlled,
- 15: ²²*raudrīm vā bahurūpīm vā.* either the Raudrī [Gāyatrī] or the Bahurūpī [Ṛc].
- 16: ²³*ato yogaḥ pravartate.* From this, *yoga* (union) commences. [13-16 = śl. #5]
- 17: ²⁴*oṃkāram abhidhyāyāta.* He should meditate on the syllable Oṃ;
- 18: ²⁵*tat sad iti hṛdi kurvīta dhāraṇām.* he should hold [it and] TAT SAT in the heart.¹⁴⁷
- 19: ²⁶*ṛṣir vipro mahān* ²⁷*eṣa vāg-viśuddho* ²⁸*maheśvaraḥ*
This is the seer, the sage (*vipra*), the great one, the purifier of speech, the Great Lord [himself]. [17-19 = śl. #6]

[Stage Four: *chedāvasthā*]

- 20: ³⁰*śmaśāna-vāsī* ³¹*dharmātmā* ³²*yathālabdhopajīvakaḥ*
Dwelling in a cremation ground, an embodiment of *dharma*, subsisting on whatever he finds there,
- 21: ³³*labhate rudra-sāyujyam.* he attains union (*sāyujya*) with Rudra
- 22: ³⁴*sadā rudram anusmaret.* [by] always remembering Rudra.¹⁴⁸ [20-22 = śl. #7]
- 23: ³⁵*chittvā doṣāṇām hetujālasya mūlam*
Having cut the root of the manifold causes of his impurities
- 24: ³⁶*buddhyā* ³⁷*svaṃ cittaṃ* ³⁸*sthāpayitvā tu rudre*
with [concentrated] mind, he establishes his innate awareness¹⁴⁹ in Rudra.

¹⁴⁶ I.e., free from distress concerning heat or cold and other pairs of opposites. However, this sūtra may also refer to the *go-vrata*, an observance mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, and which may be the archaic source of Pāśupata practice, as argued by ĀCHĀRYA in his 2012 article “How to Behave Like a Bull.” Imitating the behavior of a bull or wild animal acknowledges one’s status as a *paśu* vis-à-vis the one and only Pāśupati. The nature of this vow is described by a passage in the *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa*: “We [bulls] have neither fatal sin nor theft. We do not distinguish at all what is to be eaten and drunk, and what is not. And we truly do not [distinguish] what should be done and what not, nor who is fit for sexual relation and who not. We are not sinners, because all this is known from tradition as the nature of bulls” (ĀCHĀRYA 2013: 115). ĀCHĀRYA notes that the Vedic *go-vrata* was restricted to the final years of one’s life, and we have argued the same for the Pāśupata-vrata.

¹⁴⁷ On Oṃ TAT SAT cf. Mbh 6.39.23-28. But K does not have *tat sad iti*, so in that case we would translate (following SANDERSON) “he should focus [his awareness] in his heart.”

¹⁴⁸ Following the reading *anusmaran* over *anusmaret*, primarily on the basis of the testimony of the *Liṅgapurāṇa* as quoted by Lakṣmīdhara in his *Tirthavivekanakāṇḍa* (p. 107): *śmaśānavāsī dharmātmā yathālabdhena vartate | labheta rudrasāyujyam sadā rudram anusmaran* (BISSCHOP 2006: 16).

[Stage Five: *niṣṭhāvasthā*]

25: ³⁹*ekaḥ kṣemī san*¹⁵⁰ *vīta-śokaḥ*.

Being¹⁵¹ solitary,¹⁵² at ease & secure, free of sorrow,

26: ⁴⁰*apramādi gacched duḥkhānām antam īsa-prasādāt*

[and] careful, he certainly attains the end of suffering, through the grace of the Lord. [23-26 = śl. #8]

27: ⁴¹*atredaṃ brahma japet*. Here is the *brahma-[mantra]* one should repeat:¹⁵³

28: ⁴²ĪŚĀNAḤ SARVAVIDYĀNĀM ⁴³ĪŚVARAḤ SARVABHŪTĀNĀM

29: ⁴⁴BRAHMĀDHIPATIR BRAHMAṆO'DHIPATIR BRAHMĀ ⁴⁵ŚIVO ME ASTU ⁴⁶SADĀ⁴⁷ŚIVOM

["The Lord of all wisdom. The Lord of all beings. The Lord of Brahmā. The Lord of the Absolute. May Brahmā be śiva (benevolent) to me. O Eternal Śiva! OM!"]

*iti pāśupata-sūtrāṇi saṃpūrṇāṇi | śrībhavānī-śaṅkarārpaṇam*¹⁵⁴ *astu ||*

¹⁴⁹ Here there is a problem in the text. The edition has *saṃcittam* (unattested), two manuscripts have *saṃ cittam*, and BISSCHOP's Sūtrapāṭha edition has *saṃcintya* (which he himself admits is probably the result of contamination). The present translation follows SANDERSON's emendation to *svaṃ cittam*, since this is implied by Kauṇḍinya's commentary, which explains that after one's awareness is separated from its defects (*doṣādi-viśliṣṭam*) it is spontaneously grasped as an innate property (*svayam eva svaḡuṇatvena pariḡrhyate*), eternally connected to the self, as fire is to heat (*agnyuṣṇatvavan nityānubandhitvāt*). The *Ratnaṭikā* also has *svaṃ cittam* in exactly the same context, as does the *Pampā-māhātmya* (BISSCHOP 2006: 17). Since the text seems to differentiate between *buddhi* and *citta* (with the latter innate and the former adventitious), we could also syntactically detach *buddhyā* from *chittvā* in the previous sūtra, and construe it here (*buddhyā svaṃ cittam sthāpayitvā ca rudre*), translating (following the parallel in the *Ratnaṭikā*, *vidyānuḡrḡhitayā buddhyā svaṃ cittam nirālambanam karoti . . . tayā dhāraṇayā nirmalikṛtam cittam rudratattva sthāpitam*) "Establishing his innate awareness in Rudra with the mind [as the instrument of that process]." If we followed BISSCHOP's Sūtrapāṭha reading (*buddhyā saṃcintya sthāpayitvā tu rudre*), we would translate "having reflected with his mind, he should establish [it] in Rudra" which seems less satisfactory.

¹⁵⁰ Reading *ekaḥ kṣemī san* with the ŚĀSTRĪ edition.

¹⁵¹ K comments on the word *san* separately (as is his wont): 'Likewise, when the ritual activities, both subtle and gross, external and internal, similar and dissimilar, have ceased, [the Siddha] whose mind is fixed in Rudra [and] is non-active is called "existing".' (trans. BISSCHOP)

¹⁵² K: "At this point, when the operations of merit and demerit (*dharmādharma*) have ceased, the effects (*kārya*) and instruments (*karaṇa*) are nearly gone, since their purpose has been served, like a fruit that has ripened or a slough [thrown off] by a snake; his awareness is fixed [only] on Rudra; he is free of the *kalās*. This is the meaning of 'solitary'" (trans. following SANDERSON). The *kalās* are the *kāryas* (the five coarse elements and the five subtle elements that constitute the body) and the *karaṇas* (the *jñānendriyas*, *karmendriyas*, and the three-fold *antaḡkaraṇa*). In other words, Kauṇḍinya here implies that the *sādhaka* now abandons the body. (The implication is made explicit in the *Pampā-māhātmya*.) Thanks to SANDERSON for explaining this passage.

¹⁵³ K clarifies that the mantra need not be repeated in the *niṣṭhāvasthā*, since in that stage the goal is won; the mantra is here in order to maintain the convention that each of the five chapters end with a *brahma-mantra*.

1.5.2 Initiatory Śaivism: the Atimārga: Kālamukha/Lākula branch

Only recently has it come to be understood that the Kālamukhas of LORENZEN's pioneering study (*The Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects*, 1972) were a sect of the Atimārga and identical with the Lākulas. This was finally firmly established by SANDERSON's 1997 Ramalinga Reddy Memorial Lectures, published in 2006 as "The Lākulas: New evidence of a system intermediate between Pāñcārthika Pāśupatism and Āgamic Śaivism."

The Kālamukha (spelled Kālamukha only in the South) sect explicitly looked to Lakulīśa as their founder, referred to their canon of scripture as the *Lākulāgama* and called themselves Mahāpāśupatas, a term which no doubt referred to the intensification of their transgression of brāhmanical norms over and above that of the Pāśupatas. The most salient feature of the Kālamukha ascetics is their observance of the *kapāla-vrata*, also known as the *mahāvratā* and the *lokātīta-vrata*. This entails the wearing of a variety of bone ornaments, smearing their body with ashes from the funeral pyre (unlike the Pāśupatas, who used ash from a normal fire), and carrying both the skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) and the skull-bowl (*kapāla*). Specifically, the initiated Kālamukha ascetic wore "six seals" (*ṣaṅ-mudrā*) consisting of 1) a necklace, 2) earrings, 3) bracelets, 4) a hair-pin, all carved from human bone, and 5) a sacred thread made from human hair, preferably from a corpse, as well as 6) smearing his body with ashes from the funeral pyre.¹⁵⁵ To these are added the *upamudras* of the skull bowl and skull-staff. A half-verse quoted by Yāmunācārya immediately after this list says "One whose body is sealed (*mudrita*) by these [eight] is not born again here [in this world]." A common ninth accoutrement, mentioned by a number of sources, is a crown or chaplet with eight miniature skulls mounted on it, each carved from a piece of a human skull. For example, in the third *ṣaṭka* of the *Jayadrathayāmala*, we find: "I will tell you of another vow, the fearsome Vow of the Skull. A chaplet of skulls on one's head, adorned with a garland of heads, one's ears and feet ornamented with pieces of bone, and a skull-staff in his left hand and a skull-bowl in the right."¹⁵⁶

It might be objected by one who has read LORENZEN's early study that these are surely the accoutrements of the Kāpālika, not of the Kālamukhas. But as we shall see, the 5th-century *Niśvāsa* knows only the latter, not the former, and it describes exactly these accoutrements for the Kālamukha ascetic. The south-Indian *Samayabheda* provides independent corroboration, associating bone-ornaments

¹⁵⁴ These words, appended at the end of one of the manuscripts, clearly originate from a later doctrinal environment, since both Śiva and Śakti are praised, whereas the Pāśupata ascetic worshipped only Rudra, as we have seen. That later environment is of course Tantric Śaivism.

¹⁵⁵ The many sources for this include *Svacchandoddyota* ad 3.2b; *Brahmayāmala* 21.104; Yāmunācārya's *Āgama-prāmāṇya* p. 93; *Somaśambhu-paddhati* vol. 3, p. 681n7; and many passages in the *Jayadratha-yāmala*. Note that the *mahāvratā* was adopted by the Buddhists from Tantric Śaiva sources that were themselves redacted from Atimārga materials, which is why we see these identical *mudrās* (minus the ashes, i.e. the *pañca-mudrā*) in many Tantric Buddhist sources, such as *Laghuśaṃvara* 51.2, *Abhidhānottara* 3.18, *Yoginīsaṃcāra* 6.12c-13d, *Herukābhyudaya* 15.27, *Hevajra* 1.3.14, etc. (references courtesy of SANDERSON).

¹⁵⁶ *Dvitiyaṃ tu vratam vakṣye ghorakāpālarūpiṇaṃ | śire kapālamukutaṃ śiromālā-vibhūṣitam | kare karṇau tathā pādaṃ asthikhaṇḍair vibhūṣitau | vāme kapālam khaṭvāṅgaṃ tathā vai dakṣiṇe kare |*

(*narakāsthi*) and the skull-staff with the “vow established by the Kālamukha tradition” (*vratam kalamukhasthitam*).¹⁵⁷ Confusion easily arises because the Kālamukha *ācāryas*, which are the figures addressed in the inscriptions studied by LORENZEN, do not take on these eight *mudrās* (in fact they take on only one, the ashes, or none). As in the case of the Pāśupatas, the Kālamukhas maintained a lively relationship with a laity and with royal patrons through the office of their *ācāryas*, much more worldly figures who managed (in the later period, anyway) substantial institutions (SANDERSON 2013:48-51).

The first unambiguous reference to this phase of the Atimārga occurs in the Chinese translation of the “Bodhisattva Womb Sūtra” (*Pusa chu tai jing*), which mentions ascetics who clothe themselves in bones and make their food vessels out of [human] bone. This translation is reliably dated to the later Chin dynasty, under the patronage of the Yao family, 384-417 CE.¹⁵⁸ So by the 4th century we have examples of Atimārgic ascetics pursuing the *mahāvratā* (whether or not they were yet called Kālamukhas).

The earliest passage to describe the *vratā* of the Kālamukhas is in the *Niśvāsa-mukha*, the introductory section of the *Niśvāsa-tattva-saṃhitā* (see p. 22 above). It occurs in the context of the text’s account of the Atimārga prior to introducing the new revelation of the Mantramārga, an account we have already discussed above. Here is a translation of the relevant *śloka*s (4.87c-91, 95c-98a):

atyāśrama-vratam khyātam lokātītam ca me śṛṇu || 87cd
ālabdhaḥ pañcabhir guhyair ddikṣitaś caiva so bhramet
khaṭvāṅgī ca kapālī ca sa jaṭī muṇḍa-m eva vā || 88
vālayajñopavīti ca śiromuṇḍaiś ca maṇḍitaḥ
kaupīna-vāso bhasmāṅgī divyābharaṇa-bhūṣitaḥ || 89
jagad rudra-mayam matvā rudra-bhaktō dṛḍha-vrataḥ
sarvādas sarva-ceṣṭaś ca rudra-dhyāna-parāyaṇaḥ || 90
rudraṃ muktvā na cānyo sti trātā me devataṃ param
viditvaikādaśādhvānaṃ nirviśaṅkaḥ samācaret || 91
 < . . . >
avīcyādi dhruvāntaṅ ca etaj jñātvā vimucyate || 95
krīḍārtha-siddhaye caiva prakriyā-dhyānam āśrita[h]
 + + *vai prakriyādhvānam atha-śabdena dikṣayet || 96*
atha-śabda-nipātena dikṣitaś cāpaśur bhavet
kriyāvāṃś ca durācāro mucyate nātra saṃśayaḥ || 97
lokātītam samākhyātam kim anyat paripṛcchasi | 98ab

I have taught you the [Pāśupata] vow that takes one beyond the brāhmanical life-stages (*atyāśrama-vratā*); now hear from me the [vow] that takes you beyond the conventional world [of religion] (*lokātīta*). Touched with the five Secrets [i.e., the *brahma-mantras*] and [thus] initiated, he should begin to wander with skull-staff and skull-bowl, his hair dreaded or else shaven-headed, with a sacred thread of [human]

¹⁵⁷ *Samayabheda* p. 364; reference provided by SANDERSON, who also emended the textual corruptions in the passage.

¹⁵⁸ See *Taishō* 12:1044c14-15, trans. LEGITTIMO 2006: 57, cited in SANDERSON 2013: 60n163.

hair, and adorned with [a chaplet of] human heads [carved from bone]. He should wear [only] a loincloth, his body dusted with ash, and adorned with the “divine ornaments” [necklace, earrings, bracelets, and hair-jewel made of human bone]. Devoted and loyal to Rudra, considering the whole world as nothing but Rudra, firm in his vow, eating anything, doing anything, intent [solely] on his meditation on Rudra, [he knows] “Apart from Rudra, none can save me; he is the Supreme Deity.”¹⁵⁹ Having understood the Eleven Levels [of Reality] (*adhvan*), he should practice [this vow], free from inhibition (*nirviśaṅka*). [A brief account of these eleven is omitted here; they are given below.] Having known this [hierarchy of Worlds] from the Avīcī Hell [at the bottom of the Net] to the level of Dhruva [at the pinnacle of the Pure Universe], he is liberated. In order to accomplish his goal of sporting [in ever higher levels of the universe], he should take refuge in meditation on that hierarchy (*prakriyā*). [Then], by means of the word *atha* [first word of the *Pāśupata-sūtra*], he should initiate [others] into the levels of that hierarchy. Initiated by the Descent of the word *atha*, one ceases to be a bound soul. Practicing [this vow], [even] one of bad conduct attains liberation, of that there is no doubt. The Lokātīta has been explained.¹⁶⁰

Here we see important continuities both with Atimārga I and the Mantramārga. In support of the first, we see: that the five *brahma-mantras* figure prominently in the Kālamukha’s initiation; a radically renunciant ascetic practice; an orientation to mortuary imagery; a monotheistic devotion to Rudra; and an implied connection to the Pāśupata-sūtra. In support of the second, we see: a *sādhanā* that does not necessarily culminate in death, but implicitly holds out the possibility of liberation-in-life; a removal of restrictions for the initiate and an encouragement to practice without inhibition (*nirviśaṅkācāra*, aka *nirvikalpācāra*), i.e., without a fear that breaking brāhmanical taboos will have negative consequences for him; the notion of a mystic Descent of Śiva’s power (in the form of scripture) as the key feature of initiation; but most of all, the idea that liberation can unfold as a yogic-cum-gnostic ascent through a hierarchy of worlds or levels of reality. This last feature was believed to be an exclusive defining feature of the Mantramārga before the discovery of the text of the *Niśvāsa*. “Knowing this [hierarchy], he is liberated,” (*etaḥ jñātvā vimucyate*) we are told, but this is not real knowledge until it is actualized by yogic practice: “Having understood (*viditvā*) the Eleven Levels, he should practice,” and “he should take refuge in meditation on this hierarchy (*prakriyā-dhyānam āśritaḥ*).” For the later Mantramārga, the levels of reality (usually conceived in terms of *tattvas*) correspond to states of consciousness and yogic attainments, and one’s

¹⁵⁹ SANDERSON notes that *rudraṃ muktvā na cānyo’sti trātā me daivatam param* can also be rendered “None can save other than Rudra. For me there is no other God,” or “None can save other than Rudra. [He is] my supreme God,” and argues for the latter on the basis of parallels (Śaivism and Brahmanism, Handout 5, 13 November 2012).

¹⁶⁰ Following the text as established and explained by SANDERSON (2006: 163-65), with reference also to the as-yet unpublished critical edition prepared by Dominic GOODALL. For *atha* see above p. 26.

ascent through those levels is driven not only by yogic practice by also the exercise of *tarka* or discernment, by which one realizes one's current level is non-ultimate and is to be discarded (*heya*), since only the state of absolute Śiva is finally acceptable (*upādeya*).¹⁶¹ Hence we call it a yogic-cum-gnostic ascent. Below we investigate briefly the hierarchy of worlds in the Kālamukha system.

The Kālamukhas had a substantial scriptural corpus, known to authors of the 11th century but now unfortunately all lost. The eight scriptures of the *Lākulāgama* were called the *pramāṇas*. Their individual titles are given by Kṣemarāja in his commentary on *Svacchanda-tantra* 10.1134-35b: *Pañcārtha-pramāṇa*, *Guhya-pramāṇa*, *Rudrāṅkuśa-pramāṇa*, *Hṛdaya-pramāṇa*, *Vyūha-pramāṇa*, *Lakṣaṇa-pramāṇa*, *Ākarṣa-pramāṇa*, and *Ādarśa-pramāṇa*. A total of only seven verses, from the first of these texts, survives to the present. They are quoted by Kṣemarāja (op. cit.) and translated below. There were six more texts of this school, Kṣemarāja informs us, that were focused on ritual, while the main corpus of eight was focused on gnosis. These six, said to be based on the *Hṛdaya-pramāṇa*, were called the *Purakalpa-pramāṇa*, the *Kanaka-pramāṇa*, the *Śāla-pramāṇa*, the *Niruttara-pramāṇa*, the *Viśva-pramāṇa*, and the *Prapañca-pramāṇa*. This putative emphasis on ritual and gnosis in the Kālamukhas' scriptural canon¹⁶² aligns them more closely with their Mantramārga successors than with their Pāśupata predecessors. A *pūjā-paddhati* making up a chapter of the *Pampā-māhātmya*, while undoubtedly late and influenced by Tantric developments, suggests that ritual became important for the Kālamukhas at some point.

The seven verses from the *Pañcārtha-pramāṇa*, all that is left of the voluminous Kālamukha corpus, confirms everything we have said before, showing us that later Atimārgic developments closely paralleled Mantramārgic ones. The verses are of unknown date, but they certainly could have preceded the main scriptural period of the Mantramārga, since the text they come from is evidently the earliest of the Kālamukha corpus. The content of the verses show us once again that Tantra developed organically out of an Atimārgic base, and that the seeds of everything we consider Tantric were already present in the Atimārga. The seven verses are an exegesis of the Aghora mantra, which we have already encountered in the Pāśupata-sūtra (where it is often called the Bahurūpī Ṛc):

AGHOREBHYO 'THA GHOREBHYO | GHORAGHORATAREBHYAŚ CA |
SARVATAḤ ŚARVA SARVEBHYO | NAMAS TE RUDRA RŪPEBHYAḤ.

ghoreti pāsajālākhyam pāpayuktaṃ bhayānakam |
tad yeṣāṃ tu na vidyeta hy aghorāḥ parikīrtitāḥ || [1]
vāmeśvarādayo rudrā jālamūloparisthitāḥ |
te hy aghorāḥ samākhyātāḥ śṛṇu ghorān samāsataḥ || [2]
proktā gopati-pūrvā ye rudrās tu gahanāntagāḥ |
te tu ghorāḥ samākhyātā nānā-bhuvana-vāsinaḥ || [3]

¹⁶¹ This description draws on Abhinavagupta's discussion in *Tantrāloka* chapter 15, but the basic principles are explicitly scriptural (they are central to the yoga of the *Svacchanda-tantra* and the *Mālinīvijayottara-tantra*).

¹⁶² But note that Kṣemarāja (11th cen.) associates the six ritualistic texts with the Mausulas, who descend from Musulendra, a putative disciple of Lakuliśa, which may mean that they formed part of the canon of the Somasiddhānta; cf. p. 59 below.

vidyeśvarādyanantāntā mahāmāheśvarās ca ye |
 ghoraghoratarās tv anye vijñeyās tv adha āśritāḥ || [4]
 ete aghorā ghorās ca ghoraghoratarās tathā |
 eteśv avasthitā nityaṃ śaktayaḥ pārameśvarāḥ || [5]
 sthiti-pralaya-sargeṣu bandha-mokṣa-kriyāsu ca |
 sarvārtha-prerakatvena rūpeṣv eteṣu śaktayaḥ || [6]
 rūpebhya ebhyaḥ sarvebhyo namaskāraṃ karoty aṇuḥ |
 namaskāraḥ parityāgaḥ kārya-kāraṇa-lakṣaṇaḥ || [7]

“Those [forms of Rudra] who do not consider the wicked terrifying Net of Bonds [i.e., the manifest world] to be terrible (*ghora*) are known as the Aghoras [the “not-terrible ones”], a class of Rudras that begins with Vāmeśvara and that dwells above the root of the Net [i.e., above Māyā in the *śuddhamārga*]. They are called the Aghoras; hear briefly about the Ghoras. That class of Rudras beginning with Gopati and ending with Gahana are called the Ghoras [“fierce ones”], and they dwell in various worlds. The Great Devotees of Śiva (*mahāmāheśvaras*)—from Vidyeśvara to Ananta—are known as the Ghoraghorataras [“fiercer than fierce”]; they dwell [in worlds] below the others. These Aghoras, Ghoras, and Ghoraghorataras are powers (*śaktis*) of the Supreme Lord, eternally engaged in creation, maintenance, and dissolution, and in the acts of bondage and liberation. The powers in these forms [of Rudra] set all things in motion. The individual soul (*aṇu*) offers obeisance to [Rudra in] all these forms (*sarvebhyo rūpebhyah*). Obeisance [here] means offering [oneself]; it is marked by cause and effect.”

The Mantramārga is characterized by (among other things) a baroque vision of a cosmic hierarchy, one in which there are many “worlds” or dimensions of reality (*bhuvanas*), each ruled over by an emanation of Parameśvara who occupies that particular “office” (*adhikāra*) as an expression of the will of Parameśvara, and executes the duties particular to that office (see, e.g., chapter 3 of the 11th-cen. *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya*). Such an “emanationist” doctrine is clearly operative here as well. Remarkably, we see further that these Rudras are characterized as *śaktis*, powers that “set all things in motion,” including the bondage and liberation of individual souls. This should not be taken, in the Atimārga context, to imply Śākta worship, but we may see the seeds of such worship in this early doctrinal statement. Finally, the term *aṇu* is used to refer to the *jīva*—an unusual usage except in the Mantramārgic context, where it is common. At the end of the quote, the terms cause and effect are technical terms in the Atimārga, as we have seen (p. 35): the Cause is Rudra, and the *aṇu* is part of his Effect.

We see a connection between the passage from the *Pañcārtha-pramāṇa* just analyzed and the earlier *Niśvāsa-mukha* quote in the focus on knowledge of worlds as significant. In the *Niśvāsa*, we are told that knowledge of eleven *adhvas*, or the *adhvan* of eleven [worlds], is liberative. These eleven are briefly listed, followed by an explanation of them in greater detail, and there is clearly some correspondence—but not identity—of this world-system with that of the *Pañcārtha-pramāṇa*. Like all

the cosmic maps of the Mantramārga, this one is divided into the “pure realm,” attainment of any level of which constitutes liberation, and the “impure realm.”

Śuddhamārga

Dhruva (= Parameśvara)

Tejīśa

Dhyāna

Dhātṛ

Praṇava (= OM)

Yoni (= Vāgīśvarī)

Aśuddhamārga

8 Vighras

Pāśas (Gahana -> Gopati -> Ananta¹⁶³)

Paśus

Mūrtis (Śatarudrāḥ, 8 Devayonis, 8 Yogas, etc.)

Jāla (the Net = the rest of the world)

As we see from the *Niśvāsa*'s more detailed account (4.98-129), this is in fact a summary, for there are five more levels in the *śuddhamārga* alone that are not listed here. Those levels include the Eight Vidyeśvaras, which were carried over into the Mantramārga unaltered as the Mantramaheśvaras, and the Eight Pramāṇas, divine personifications of the eight Kālamukha scriptures mentioned earlier.

Earlier we mentioned that the various Rudras as seen as holding office, ruling various worlds and enacting the Will of the Supreme Lord. Since an office (*adhikāra*) is understood in Sanskrit as entailing both privilege and obligation, this leads to the inevitable conclusion that the Rudras are bound by their obligation, and that therefore the liberated Siddha is beyond them. That the Kālamukhas did indeed conclude this is verified by Abhinavagupta in his *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī*. SANDERSON speculates that Parameśvara himself must likewise have been seen as occupying a limiting office, and that therefore the Kālamukhas must have held the unique doctrine that the Siddha was superior even to Parameśvara, the Ādirudra (2006: 198). We do not know this for sure, but we do know that the Kālamukhas, alone amongst all Śaivas, sided with the Sāṅkhyas in teaching that the soul is omniscient but inactive in its real nature, i.e. possessing *jñāna-śakti* or *vibhu-śakti* but not *kriyā-śakti* or *prabhu-śakti*. This is attested by Rāmakaṇṭha's *Paramokṣanirāsa-kārikā-vṛtti* (pp. 6-7) and his *Mokṣakārikā-vṛtti* ad 118-122 as well as by the *Śivaratnākara* of Basvarāja (9.6.92-95). This doctrine seems to correspond to the radical renunciation displayed by Kālamukha ascetics, a renunciation that evidently

¹⁶³ The more detailed account (*Niśvāsa-mukha* 4.98-129) lists the 26 Rudras that occupy the Pāśa level, from Gahana up to Ananta; in the middle of these is Gopati, who I cite here because he is mentioned in the *Pañcārtha-pramāṇa* account, where we are told that the Ghoras begin with Gopati and end with Gahana. This agrees with the parallel passage in the *Svacchanda-tantra* of the Mantramārga, which tells us that the lower half of the Māyātattva is ruled by Rudras ranging from Gopati down to Gahana (SvT 10.1124; Bakker 2000: 3). But note that in the Somasiddhānta (Atimārga III), Gahana is rather one of the eight Vighraheśvaras.

extended to agency itself. Thus the liberated Kālamukha is one who has attained omniscience and shed the illusion of agency.

We have been focusing our attention on what can be known of the early Kālamukha tradition. But what did it eventually become? LORENZEN's book focuses on the Kālamukha presence in Karṇāṭaka in the 9th-13th centuries. He notes that at least some of the significant *ācāryas* of the tradition in that region and time were immigrants from the Pañjāb and Kashmīr (1991: 108). This could be because this was the era of great Mantramārgic success in those regions, thus pushing their Atimārgic rivals south; but it could also be because of Muslim conquests in those regions. Regardless, the picture of things we gain from reading the Kannaḍa and Sanskrit inscriptions is that of flourishing religious institutions that featured a startling degree of tolerance and ecumenical dialogue. It seems that Kālamukha *ācāryas* were expected to be conversant with every branch of śāstraic learning, and rarely is a mentioned made of opposing or overcoming other doctrines. The most exemplary inscription in this regard is one from the Kedāreśvara temple of Belgaum in 1162 CE:

There is . . . a place devoted to the observances of Śaiva saints leading perpetually the life of celibate religious students, a place for the quiet study of the four Vedas . . . a place where commentaries are composed on . . . grammatical works [and] on the six systems of philosophy, namely the Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṅkhya, Bauddha [!], etc., [and] on the Lākula-siddhānta, and the Pātañjala and other Yoga-śāstras, a place for (studying) the eighteen Purāṇas, the law books, and all the poetical compositions . . . a place where food is always given to the poor, the helpless, the blind, the deaf, and to professional story-tellers, singers, musicians . . . and to (Jain and Buddhist) mendicants [*kṣapaṇakas*], to *ekadaṇḍins* and *tridaṇḍins* [brāhmanical ascetics], to *haṃsa* and *paramahaṃsa* ascetics . . . a place where many helpless sick people are harboured and treated, a place of assurance of safety for all living creatures. (LORENZEN 103-4)

We are naturally struck, in this passage, by the ideal of religious charity and tolerance that this Kālamukha temple and associated *maṭha* apparently upheld. But something seems strange here: how do we reconcile this doctrine of harmony with all the *darśanas* with the stark fact of the Kālamukha ascetic's practice? For, as we shall explore further in the next section, the *kapāla-vrata* that he takes up has one and only one known prototype in all the Sanskrit literature: that of the accursed brāhmin-slayer, doing penance for twelve years while carrying the skull of his victim. The Kālamukha's vow, while not identical with that of an actual brāhmin-slayer, was close enough that it would seem to represent a wholesale rejection of the brāhmanical order, as suggested also by the fact that he is advised to disregard brāhmanical taboos "without fear or hesitation" (*nirviśaṅka*). Is it possible that the Kālamukha *sampradāya* advocated an anti-brāhmanical ascetic practice while its *ācāryas* simultaneously embraced the study of the Vedas and their auxiliary disciplines? LORENZEN doubted this possibility so strongly that he presumed that Yamunācārya's description of the Kālamukhas in his *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (composed

mid-12th century in Tamiḷ Nāḍu) must have been a dastardly attempt to discredit his flourishing rivals by linking them with the practices of the unacceptable Kāpālikas:

The Kālāmukhas too are entirely outside the Veda, claiming [as they do] the miraculous power of manifesting (*siddhi*) whatever they desire, whether tangible or intangible, by eating from a skull-bowl, bathing in the ashes of the dead, consuming them, carrying a club (*laguḍa*), installing a pot of liquor and worshipping their deity in it, and so on—[practices] condemned by all the śāstras.¹⁶⁴

But we have seen in other sources (not available to LORENZEN in 1972) that some, at least, of these practices are indeed central to the Kālāmukha's *kapāla-vrata*. We have not seen references to the Kālāmukha eating ashes or worshipping his deity in a pot of liquor, and here LORENZEN might be correct that there is a possible confusion with the Kāpālikas. This confusion is understandable, for the Kāpālikas also observed the *kapāla-vrata*—but they went considerably further than the Kālāmukhas in their rejection of the brāhmanical world. It is to them we now turn.

1.5.3 Initiatory Śaivism: the Atimārga: Somasiddhānta

As suspected by LORENZEN (1972), and later confirmed by SANDERSON (1997), the antinomian quasi-ascetics known as the Kāpālikas were, as a sect,¹⁶⁵ identical to the followers of the mysterious Somasiddhānta doctrine, and further these Somasiddhāntin Kāpālikas were a kind of Pāśupata—that is to say, they constituted part of the Atimārga. Some of the evidence for this has already been given above, and we will see even stronger evidence below. First let us explore the practices that distinguished this branch of the Atimārga. The Kāpālikas, as their name implies, also adopted the *kapāla-vrata* of their Kālāmukha predecessors, with the accoutrements of the *ṣaṇ-mudrā* and so on,¹⁶⁶ but they went much further in their antinomian practices and their radical rejection of brāhmanical values. These are the features that distinguish them:

- cults of Bhairava and his consort Cāmuṇḍā¹⁶⁷ + the Mothers,¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Cf. SANDERSON 2006:183. Rāmānuja quotes this same passage in his *Śrībhāṣya*, ad 2.2.35-37 (LORENZEN 1991: 4-6).

¹⁶⁵ I add the phrase “as a sect” because there were also *sādhakas* known as Kāpālikas in the later Mantramārga, but they formed part of the Yāmala and Kālikula *sampradāyas*, as we shall see; only in the Atimārga does the term Kāpālika denote *all* the initiates of a particular sect, i.e. the Somasiddhānta.

¹⁶⁶ The *pañca-mudrā*, i.e. the *ṣaṇ-mudrā* minus the cremation ground ashes, seems to have been adopted by Tantric Buddhism direct from Kāpālika sources of the Somasiddhānta. For this see SANDERSON 2009: 179n435, which cites almost a dozen Buddhist texts that drew on Śaiva sources for their account of the *pañca-mudrā*.

¹⁶⁷ Indeed, Soma (of Somasiddhānta) is traditionally understood as *sa* + *Umā*, for example in the commentaries on the *Prabodhacandrodaya* of Kṛṣṇamiśra (LORENZEN 1991: 83).

¹⁶⁸ The Kāpālikas signaled their transcendence of the brāhmanical Mother-goddesses (Brahmāṇī/Brāhmī, Rudrāṇī/Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Aindrī/Māhendrī/Indrāṇī and

- centrality of possession (*āveśa*) by the above deities;
- sacrifice (even human?) and offerings of blood and flesh to the deities;
- erotic ritual with a consort;
- initiation through consumption of consecrated wine;¹⁶⁹ and
- forms of what might be called “black magic” and exorcism.

Comparing this list to the one found on p. 31 above reveals some marked similarities; this is because, as we shall see, the Kulamārga is directly based on the Somasiddhānta tradition. But we must immediately offer a significant caveat to the above list of features: the corpus of scripture which the Somasiddhānta must have possessed has not survived to the present (excepting some passages redacted into the Mantramārga scriptures), and therefore our picture of Kāpālika practice is based largely on the reports of others. Since these others are the authors of satirical plays, sensationalized narrative fiction, and doxographical writers often hostile to the Kāpālikas, we cannot be sure of the accuracy of their reports. But at least some of the features they cite must correspond to truth in some broad sense, because we see these features attested in Mantramārga and Kulamārga sources that are evidently based on Somasiddhānta antecedents. On the other hand, it is hard to believe that all of what these sources report is true, since one can hardly credit that royal patronage would be given to a sect known to be practicing human sacrifice and black magic—and we know with certainty that the Somasiddhānta was patronized.

The first reference to the Kāpālikas is probably that found in Agastyaśiṃha’s fifth century (DUNDAS 2002:6) Prākṛit commentary on the Jain *Dasaveyāliya-sutta* (Gāthā 237), where Kāpālikas are grouped with so-called *dravya-bhikṣus*, or ascetics who do not practice celibacy. Though the dating of this text is not certain, we can be more certain of the date of the *Bṛhat-saṃhitā* of Varāhamihira (500-550 CE), which tells us that the approach from the southwest of a cow, a person playing, or a Kāpālika is a good omen (*usrākrīḍa-kāpālikāgamo nairṛte samuddiṣṭaḥ*, 86.22). References are common from the 6th century forward. Amongst early literary references, we might note the pleasingly poetic passage found in Subandhu’s *Vāsavadattā* (550-600), which includes the following in a long list of similes describing the qualities of the setting sun: “The sun-jewel sank into the Western ocean . . . like the skull-bowl of the skull-bearer Time brimming with wine.”¹⁷⁰

Vārāhī [who in some sources is supplanted by Yāmī/Vaivasvatī]) by adding Cāmuṇḍā/Carcikā (often known in brāhmanical sources and story literature as Caṇḍikā) as the leader of the other six. The widespread success of the Seven Mothers from the fifth century onward can perhaps be seen as evidence of the influence of the Kāpālikas. Later, many Tantric sources attest eight Mothers by adding either Mahālakṣmī, or, in more transgressive sources, Aghorī/Bhairavī. See HATLEY 2011.

¹⁶⁹ Initiation through this means might be unique to the Kāpālikas, but according to Yamunācārya, the Kālamukhas too worshipped their deity in a pot of consecrated wine (*Āgamaprāmānya* p. 94).

¹⁷⁰ *madhu-pūrṇa-kapāla-pātram iva kāla-kapāliṇaḥ . . . bhagavān dinakaramaṇiś caramārṇava-payasi . . . mamajja*. This is SANDERSON’s edition of the passage, given in Śaivism and Brāhmanism lecture series Handout 7, 27 November 2012. Note that in GRAY’s 1913 edition of the same passage (p. 170), we have the skull-bearer Space (*gagana-kapālin*) instead, personifying the sky as the skull-bearer and the setting sun as his wine-filled skull-bowl. The reading chosen by

Other, more substantial, early literary references are found in the works of Bāṇabhaṭṭa (7th cen.), court poet to King Harṣavardhana of Thanesar (later of Kanyakubja). Of these passages, by far the most significant is the lengthy description of a Kāpālika guru named Bhairavācārya in the *Harṣa-carita*. The traits of the Kāpālikas made them a favorite choice for the villain in early medieval narrative literature, so it is particularly striking that here the Kāpālika character is portrayed as worthy of the highest praise.¹⁷¹ Indeed, it is because of his relationship to this ācārya that Harṣa’s forefather Puṣpabhūti becomes the founder of his dynasty. In chapter three of the text, this Puṣpabhūti, described as *paramamāheśvara* (“completely devoted to Śiva”) hears of the saint (*bhagavat*) Bhairavācārya and immediately conceives a devotion to him. The king is visited by one of the saint’s disciples, who is described as carrying a skull-bowl for alms (*bhikṣā-kapālaka*). The king resolves to meet Bhairavācārya the next day. Though I have read the Sanskrit, I can do no better than to quote Hans BAKKER’s summary of the long narration that follows:

Puṣpabhūti is depicted in the *Harṣacarita* 3 (pp. 49–55) as being deeply involved in a Śaiva ritual of black magic (*vetālasādhana*) in the cremation ground (*mahāśmaśāna*), under the guidance of a Mahāśaiva preceptor (*bhuvanaguru*) hailing from the South (*dākṣiṇātya*), Bhairavācārya.

[n14:] Bāṇa gives a flowery description of this teacher (HC 3, pp. 169–73), who, wrapped in a black woollen cloth, sits on a tiger skin encircled by a line of ashes (*bhasmarekhā*), with the whole of the Śaiva scriptures (*śaivasamhitā*) at the tip of his tongue, his head purified by the dust of Paśupati’s feet, with a following of a throng of Māheśvaras, being a temple of grace (*prāsādam prasādasya*), like another Lord (*bhagavantam*). This teacher . . . resides temporarily in a Bilva-vāṭikā north of an old Mātr temple . . . His sectarian affiliation is undefined, although the macabre ritual which he performs in the cremation ground—a fire sacrifice in the cavity of the skull/mouth of a corpse on which he is seated (*śavasyorasy upaviśya jātajātavedasi mukhakuhare prārabdhāgnikāryam*)—rather suggests a Tantric Śaiva¹⁷² of the Kāpālika variety (HC 3, p. 182).

In this ritual the deity (*vāstunāga*) of the land (*janapada*) Śrīkaṇṭha in which Sthāṇvīśvara (Puṣpabhūti’s capital) is situated, the Nāga Śrīkaṇṭha, is conjured up by the ācārya and forced into submission by the king, who is about to kill him with the magic sword Aṭṭahāsa, a gift of Bhairavācārya.

SANDERSON is supported by the fact that the deity of the Kāpālikas was Bhairava, also known as Mahākāla; if we do not accept this reading, then the passage may well refer to a Kālamukha, not a Kāpālika.

¹⁷¹ He is “every man’s benefactor, chaste from boyhood, supreme in austerities (*atitapasvin*), surpassing in wisdom; restrained in anger, unrestrained in kindness; graced with unfailing native nobility (*adīna-prakṛti-śobhita*). . . [etc.]” COWELL and THOMAS’ translation (1897: 265)

¹⁷² An earlier draft of this article had “Pāśupata” here rather than “Tantric Śaiva”—I submit that Prof. BAKKER was correct the first time in identifying this figure as belonging to the Atimārga.

Then, when the king is prepared to let him [the Nāga] go, because of his brahminhood, a goddess dressed in [red and] white, evidently Lakṣmī (Rājyaśrī), emerges from the sword, anoints the king and grants Puṣṭabhūti to become the founder of a mighty dynasty. This dynasty is therefore believed to have acquired its legitimacy and authority over the land thanks to the magic of the Śaiva ascetic.¹⁷³

Many elements of this description correspond to what is known of the Kāpālikas from other sources. The early Mantramārga text known as the *Brahmayāmala*, which incorporates substantial material from the Somasiddhānta, describes in its second chapter a *vetāla-* or *śava-sādhanā* similar to this, one which also envisions the participation of the king (see p. 161ff below). Significantly, the *vetāla-sādhanā* is depicted in the *Harṣa-carita* as the concluding part of a longer *sādhanā* of the *mahāmantra* called the Mahākāla-hṛdaya (HC 3 p. 178, 184ff.), in which context Bhairavācārya is depicted doing *japa* in the cremation ground while wearing “garlands, clothes, and unguents all of black as enjoined in the Kalpa” (*kr̥ṣṇa-srag-ambarānulepanenākalpena kalpakathitena*). A *kalpa* is indeed the name given in the *Brahma-yāmala* and the *Jayadratha-yāmala* to a scriptural source explaining the propitiation of a mantra-deity, and a *kalpa* for the worship of Mahākāla and the Eight Mothers is given in the *mudrā-pīṭhādihikāra-ṣaṭala* of the former (chapter 52; SANDERSON 2001: 208n11). When offering black sesame seeds in the concluding *vetāla-sādhanā*, it is said of Bhairavācārya: “it seemed as though in eagerness to become a Vidyādhara he were annihilating the atoms of defilement which caused his mortal condition” (COWELL and THOMAS 1897: 92). This concept of ritual as a process of destroying the “atoms of defilement” (*kāluṣya-paramāṇu*) carried over into the Mantramārga, where *mala* (= *kāluṣya*) is a *dravya* that must be removed through ritual worship. Furthermore, becoming a *vidyādhara*, a semidivine spell-master who can fly beyond the mortal realms, is an explicit goal in the *siddhi*-oriented *sādhanās* of the Somasiddhānta and the related portions of the Mantramārga (e.g., the *Brahmayāmala*). Finally, the text tells us that the king receives Śaiva initiation (*śaivena vidhinā dikṣitaḥ*) prior to joining in the *sādhanā*. As we will see, initiation of kings that were *paramamāheśvara* was central to the patronage, and therefore to the success, of the religion in the early medieval period.

More important than all the points just made is the fundamental one that for Bāṇabhaṭṭa to write about a Kāpālika guru as he does, the Somasiddhānta must have been well-established and successful in some regions by the seventh century (further evidence supports this below). This despite the extremely unorthodox practices it undoubtedly espoused. While the passage we have discussed is certainly the most significant one for us, there are many other allusions in Bāṇa’s works to Śaiva practices of his time, particularly of a Kāpālika kind. We might mention:

- a Śabara tribe of the Vindhya forest whose “one religion is offering human flesh” to Caṇḍikā (*Kādambarī*; LORENZEN 1991: 16)
- shrines of the *siddhas* and *mātrkās* (*Kādambarī*; LORENZEN 1991: 16)

¹⁷³ BAKKER 2007: 4; cf. LORENZEN 1991: 20-22 and COWELL and THOMAS 1897: 87-97.

- propitiation of the Mothers through self-mortification, not only performed by the commoners but also by courtiers (*Harṣa-carita*; LORENZEN 1991: 17)
- servants pacifying Mahākāla by burning *guggulu* on their heads (*Harṣa-carita*; LORENZEN 1991: 17)
- a satirical depiction of a *Drāviḍa-dhārmika* who sacrifices animals in a temple of Caṇḍikā, is crippled by his penances, and who had “written down the doctrine of Mahākāla, which is the ancient teaching of the Mahāpāśupatas,” and who is further depicted as practicing *rasāyana* and *dhātuvāda* (badly) and obsessed by all manner of superstitions (*Kādambarī*; LORENZEN 1991: 17-18)

In Bāṇa’s work, Kāpālika practices are repeatedly associated with south India. Indeed, our earliest evidence for the worship of Bhairava (aka Mahākāla) is a fourth-century inscription of Vākāṭaka monarch Pravarasena II which informs us that his great-grandfather, Rudrasena I, was “absolutely devoted to Lord Mahābhairava” (*atyanta-svāmi-mahābhairava-bhaktah*).¹⁷⁴

In Dakṣiṇa Kosala (which Bāṇa certainly would have considered part of the South), we find our most direct evidence yet: a recently discovered copper-plate inscription of the mid-seventh-century (contemporaneous with Bāṇa), recording the grant by Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna to one Bhīmasoma for the maintenance of a hermitage (*tapovana*) attached to the temple of Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka in his capital of Śrīpura (Sirpur in modern Chattisgarh). (The full text of the inscription is given, and translated, at BAKKER 2001.) Now we know that the Somasiddhāntin/Kāpālikas most often had initiation names ending in *-soma* (see, e.g. the Kāpālika characters in Mahendravarman’s seventh-century farce, the *Mattavilāsa*, who are named Satyasoma and Devasomā). But we have much more to go on here, for this inscription is unusual in presenting significant doctrinal information. We are told that there are eight Vīgraheśvaras (see p. 53), emanations of Śīva, among which one Gahaneśa himself has sixty-six Rudra embodiments which take birth in different ages (*yuge yuge*) to grace bound souls with initiation (*anugrahakāh*). The Rudra embodiment for the current *Kali* age is none other than Lakulīśa. Here, however, unlike in the other forms of the Atimārga we have discussed, Lakulīśa is said to have been born in the family of one Somaśarman, who initiated him into the *mahāvratā*. Lakulīśa, who became “a moon [to cool the fever] of the world,” then initiated Musalīśa, from whom an unbroken line of descent (*pāramparya-krama*) leads to Bhīmasoma, the recipient of the grant (BAKKER 2001: 8-10). Here, then, we have evidence that explicitly links Lakulīśa with the Somasiddhānta and with the *mahāvratā*, as well as connecting to doctrinal material we saw attested in connection with the Kālamukhas (pp. 51f above). This is our clearest and simplest piece of evidence (apart from the simple assertions in doxographical passages that we saw in section 1.4) that the Somasiddhānta is part of the Atimārga. We may note in the inscription the interesting move by which the Somasiddhānta asserted its superiority over the earlier Atimārga by extending the lineage *back* one generation

¹⁷⁴ SANDERSON, Śaivism and Brāhmanism lecture series handout #6, 20 November 2012.

to a putative Somaśarman, who becomes as it were John the Baptist to Lakulīśa's Jesus.

SANDERSON has discovered that the ninth chapter of the unpublished *Śiraśccheda*, which comprises the first book of the *Jayadratha-yāmala*, also knows a tradition of sixty-six Rudras, also described as “initiators” (*anugrahakarāḥ*). These it divides into a group of 28 and another of 38. The first group, associated with the *Pramāṇa-sāstras* of the Kālamukhas, begins with Śveta and ends with Someśa and Lakulīśa, which clearly matches our inscription above. This same group of 28 is also known to the *Līṅga-* and *Vāyu-purāṇas* as the “Yogeśvaras” (LiPu 1.7.30-35 and VāPu 1.23.106-213). The second group is associated with a corpus of Bhairava scriptures (*bharavāptapravaktārah*) and are said to be bestowers of “sudden grace” (*sadyo'nugraha-kāritāḥ*).¹⁷⁵ The associations of this group of 66 Rudras, then, demonstrate that they are the same as those of our Sirpur inscription while giving us a little bit more information about the Somasiddhānta.

It is certain, then, that the Somasiddhānta received royal patronage: we have another seventh-century inscription from Nasik district, Mahārāṣṭra that records a royal donation to support the *guggulu-pūjā* of the Mahāvratins of a Kāpāleśvara temple (LORENZEN 1991: 27-28), as well as two grants from the 9th century (EI 37:8 and EC 12 Si 38, Andhra and Karṇāṭaka respectively) and two from the 10th (SII 9:32 and IEP 103, Andhra and Tamiḷnāḍu respectively). Again we wonder how to reconcile this fact of royal patronage, which we presume necessitates a degree of public approval, with the frequent depictions of black magic and human sacrifice. Two plays constitute good examples of the latter. In Bhavabhūti's eighth-century *Mālatimādhava*, the villains are a pair of Kāpālikas named Aghoraghaṇṭa and Kapālakunḍalā (a consort pair, as in the *Mattavilāsa*). In Act V, verse 25, they play to sacrifice Mālatī as a *pūjā* to Bhagavatī Cāmuṇḍā to complete their *mantra-sādhanā*. Previous to that, Kapālakunḍalā arrives on the scene by flying through the air, and tells us of her powers of black magic (verse 2):

*īyam aham idānīm—
nityaṃ nyasta-śaḍaṅga-cakra-nihitaṃ hṛt-padma-madhyoditaṃ
paśyanti śiva rūpiṇaṃ laya-vaśād ātmānam abhyāgatā |
nāḍīnām udaya-krameṇa jagataḥ pañcāmṛtākaraṣaṇād
aprāptotpatana-śramā vighaṭayanty agre nabhombho-mucaḥ || 2*

“Behold, I have now come—constantly gazing on my inner being in the form of Śiva revealed within the heart-lotus, situated in [the center of] the circle (*cakra*) of the six ancillary [mantras] that I have installed [within], by the power of which absorption I activate the channels of vital energy (*nāḍīs*) and thereby [possess the ability to] extract the Five Nectars of living beings—thus I feel no fatigue from my flight, driving apart the clouds before me.”

In language that owes much to the Mantramārga and the Kulamārga—or else demonstrates how much those two owe to the Somasiddhānta—Kapālakunḍalā tells us that her yogic powers grant her a state of absorption (*laya*) that enables her to

¹⁷⁵ BAKKER 2000: 11 and SANDERSON, Śaivism and Brāhmanism Lectures, handout 6, pp. 17-19.

extract the vital essences of living beings to augment her own store of energy. It is this concept of stealing vital energy from others that I loosely label as “black magic.”

In the *Prabodhacandrodaya* of Kṛṣṇamiśra (11th cen.), Act III, we see a character named Somasiddhānta (for all the characters of this allegorical play are named for *darśanas* and *bhāvas*) who tells us that he sees the world as it really is, non-different from God (*abhinnam īśvarāt*), with eyes cleansed by yoga’s balm (*yogāñjana-śuddha-caḥṣuṣā*). He is satirically depicted as using this nondual doctrine as justification for indulging his addiction to wine and women. When asked by the Jain ascetic to describe his religion, Somasiddhānta, aka Kāpālīka, tells him that it centers on human sacrifice to Mahābhairava and drinking consecrated liquor from a brāhmin’s skull. He boasts of his power and ability to summon any god. When met with incredulous reactions, he flies into a rage and threatens to sacrifice the Jain ascetic to the Goddess. Pacified, he consents to answer questions about his doctrine. The ascetic asks him to describe the “blissful freedom” (*saukhya-mokṣa*) said to be the goal of his path. The Kāpālīka responds by comparing it to the state of sexual ecstasy achieved when the congress includes a ritual which identifies the male with Śiva and the female with Pārvatī. Doubted by the ascetic, the Kāpālīka summons his half-naked consort and asks her to embrace the ascetic, which effects an instant conversion. He requests initiation, along with his friend the Buddhist monk, both praising the Somasiddhānta.¹⁷⁶ The initiation centers on drinking consecrated liquor from a skull-bowl. The liquor is referred to as *pavitrāmṛta*, and credited with the power to sever the bonds of the *paśu* (the bound soul pictured as a domesticated animal), or “release the beast from his snare” as KAPSTEIN translates (2009: 129), as taught in the scriptures of Bhairava. The monk and ascetic hesitate, for the Kāpālīka drinks first, making the wine *ucchiṣṭa*. (In the context of the Kulamārga, food or drink previous tasted by the guru are thought to be specially blessed, i.e., *gurorucchiṣṭa* = *prasāda*, and perhaps this is suggested here.) Persuaded to drink by the Kāpālīnī, they are intoxicated with delight. The Kāpālīka promises that this path leads to the attainment of the eight *mahāsiddhis*, while avoiding lower powers which become obstacles, and boasts of his ability to win any kind of woman with his spells.¹⁷⁷ Though the material is presented satirically, we are given important clues about Kāpālīka practice, which was undoubtedly presented by their scriptures in a different light. Kṛṣṇamiśra wrote at a time when the Kāpālīkas, and the Tantric groups they influenced, were still thriving. Thus his work constitutes more reliable evidence for the Kāpālīkas than, say, the *Śaṅkara-digvijāya* (prob. 15th cen.), much discussed by LORENZEN (1991) but almost definitely written after the sect had disappeared.

In our initial bullet-point list, we mentioned exorcism as well. In the narrative literature, we see Kāpālīkas repeatedly depicted as experts in the management of malevolent spirits and other occult arts, such as locating forgotten

¹⁷⁶ KAPSTEIN, not knowing what Somasiddhānta refers to (as he admits in his introduction), simply translates it as “Shaivite philosophy.”

¹⁷⁷ The foregoing is a summary of Act III, lines 75-150, including verses 12-23; critically edited Sanskrit text and translation by Matthew KAPSTEIN (2009).

buried treasures (*nidhivāda*). One of the best examples is the depiction in the Nemicandra's *Ākhyānakamaṇikośa* of a Mahāvratin named Ghoraśiva who is “an expert in the control of Grahas, Piśācas, and Ḍākinīs, in curing fevers and other illnesses with herbal amulets, in propitiating Yakṣiṇīs, in alchemy (*dhātuvāda*), in counteracting poisons, and in all the aggressive magical arts.”¹⁷⁸ These associations are largely part of the “cremation ground” culture associated with the Atimārga and particularly the Kāpālikas. We may note that the epigraphical record from Tamilnāḍu shows that Somasiddhāntins were routinely employed as the Sthānācāryas at memorial temples (*piḷḷai-paṭai*) built over the remains of a member of the royal family.¹⁷⁹ We will see further confirmation of these associations shortly.

We turn now to the evidence of a remnant of the Somasiddhānta text-corpus, identified as such by SANDERSON in his Śaivism and Brāhmanism lecture series.¹⁸⁰ This is the so-called *Yoginīsañcāra-prakaraṇa*, a text of 1158 verses in 11 chapters preserved within third book (*ṣaṭka*) of the *Jayadratha-yāmala*, a Kaula text of the Kālīkula (see p. 94). The *Jayadratha-yāmala*, along with the *Brahma-yāmala*, preserve the lion's share of material redacted from the Somasiddhānta. This material is not very difficult to identify because its language and content is more archaic, it does not appear to know the mature doctrines and rituals of the Mantramārga, and it references the *ṣaṇ-mudrās* and other accoutrements of the *mahāvratā*. The eighth chapter of the *Yoginīsañcāra* details an initiation rite unlike the usual Mantramārga *dīkṣā* (e.g., without *homa* or *adhva-śuddhi*), one that points to a quasi-shamanic exorcistic world that tallies well with what we know about the Somasiddhānta. In this initiation, the guru—described as wearing Kāpālika ornaments (e.g. the *ṣaṇ-mudrā*, the chaplet of miniature skulls, etc.)—touches the initiand's head with his skull-bowl, touches his limbs with his skull-staff, rings his *ghaṇṭā* and rattles his *ḍamaru*. These are all features not paralleled in any other Mantramārgic sources. Then the guru leads the blindfolded initiand to the *maṇḍala* with eight segments (one for each of the eight Mothers), which has been drawn on the floor with ash from a cremation pyre after having been framed with cords made from the hair or sinews of a corpse and soaked in blood. The guru has the initiand cast a flower into the *maṇḍala* to determine which *māṭṛkula* he will belong to. Then he gives the new initiate a *tilaka* of blood (8.3-28). This (except for the *tilaka*) was carried over into the Mantramārga and Kulamārga, and if we are correct in thinking that the *Yoginīsañcāra* was redacted from the Somasiddhānta text-corpus without much significant alteration, then the source for this important part of Tantric *dīkṣā* is clearly the ritual culture of Atimārga III.

That culture is also an important source for the Buddhist Yoginītantras. As SANDERSON demonstrates in his monumental *The Śaiva Age*, one of the two most important Yoginītantras, the *Laghuśaṃvara*, redacts at least 30% of its material from known Śaiva sources, including the *Yoginīsañcāra* passage we have been discussing. Or rather, it is more likely that both the *Yoginīsañcāra* and the *Laghuśaṃvara* are

¹⁷⁸ SANDERSON, Śaivism and Brāhmanism Lectures, Handout 6, 20 November 2012.

¹⁷⁹ SII 8:529 and ARE 1926-7 pp. 76-78; though with initiation names in *-paṇḍita*, it is also possible that these were Kālamukha *mahāvratins*, which would not invalidate the main point.

¹⁸⁰ See also SANDERSON 2009: 134.

redacted from the original Somasiddhānta source (or a source immediately dependent on it), in the first case with little to no alteration and in the second with more substantial changes. That source may have been the now lost **Yoginījāla-śaṃvara*, for the *Yoginīsañcāra* declares in its opening verses (1.1 and 1.72) that it is a simplification of the teachings found in that source (SANDERSON 2009: 187n451). The passage we have been discussing, with its Buddhist parallel, is presented and discussed at 2009: 203-11.

To finish our description of the *Yoginīsañcāra*'s Kāpālika initiation we must describe the arrangement of the mantra-deities installed in the *maṇḍala*. Here we see even more clearly the cremation ground culture of the Kāpālikas. In the center we have Mahābhairava with his consort Aghorī (= Cāmuṇḍā) facing him, with ten circuits (*āvaraṇas*) of supernatural creatures surrounding them. The first circuit consists of a set of eight deities not seen elsewhere: Nandin, Gaṇapati, Karṇamoṭī, Umā, Ghoravadanā, Krodhāmūrtijā, Krodharaudrā, and Yogasambhavā. These must be assimilated to the eight Mothers,¹⁸¹ which is typical in Tantric initiation *maṇḍalas* with Somasiddhānta influence,¹⁸² but what is strange here is that two of the deities are male. I surmise that this set of eight has some connection with the eight Gaṇeśvaras, since three of the deities are the same in both lists (Gaṇapati, Nandin, and Umā¹⁸³). The second circuit of the *maṇḍala* consists of twenty-four *yoginīs*, the third circuit of *pretas*, *rākṣasas*, and *bhūtas* (!), and the fourth of *aṅgas*, which usually refers to the mantras of six body parts of the main deity. The fifth circuit consists of demigoddesses, the sixth of demigods, the seventh of *śākinīs* and *guhyakās*, the eighth of *grahas*, the ninth of *nakṣatras*, and the tenth of the oceans (8.10c-17b). This *maṇḍala* is unparalleled, and unusual for the proliferation of spirits usually considered harmful: spirits of the cremation ground are featured prominently, but also planets and constellations. The idea seems to be that the initiand seeks mastery over all the forces that otherwise might harm him; these potentially malevolent forces will now do his bidding. Later Tantric *maṇḍalas* will generally feature only deities in their circuits, though they sometimes have an outer circuit of cremation grounds, clearly a holdover from the phase of the religion we are now examining.

In the final part of the initiation prescribed here, the initiand learns the mantra of the Mother whose family he now belongs, and listens to the post-initiatory rules (*samaya*) (8.25a, 26cd). Then, unusually, he receives a consecration (*abhiṣeka*) before a purely Śākta *maṇḍala* of Aghorī/Cāmuṇḍā and the twenty-four *yoginīs* already mentioned. He will now adopt one of two¹⁸⁴ *vratas* (8.34-41¹⁸⁵): if he

¹⁸¹ Note that Karṇamoṭī appears as one of the Eight Mothers at *Siddhayogeśvarī-mata* 16.43.

¹⁸² See *Brahmayāmala* 4.890-94, cited in HATLEY 2012: 107n22.

¹⁸³ The other five Gaṇeśvaras are Mahākāla, Caṇḍeśvara, Skanda, Brūṅgin, and Vṛṣabha. Note that these eight form an *āvaraṇa* in Saiddāntika *maṇḍalas*. These eight may also be called Mahāgaṇapatis, which was the promised reward of the *sādhanā* of the Pāśupata-sūtras. Cf. *Brahmayāmala* 171.119-20b, where Śiva is made to say to the Mātṛs, “Your *bhaktas* will, after death, become my ageless immortal *gaṇas*.”

¹⁸⁴ Here I disagree with TÖRZSÖK (2013), who sees the two vows as being those of Cāmuṇḍā on the one hand and of Bhairava on the other, seeing the “vow born from the 63 families [of the Mothers]” as another name for the Bhairava-vrata (n45). I am confident that a close reading of the passage following the relevant verse—*tataś cared vrata-varam triṣaṣṭi-kula-sambhavam* //

chooses that of Bhairava and Cāmuṇḍā, he will first wear black, with a black garland and black unguents adorning his body, exactly like Bhairavācārya in Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita* above; then he will wear all red and take on the appearance of a woman in imitation of his goddess, Bhairava’s consort (*divya-strī-rūpa-dhārin*, 8.37), practicing this vow for one to twelve months in silence (8.38), with the usual hyperbolic rewards promised (8.39). If he adopts the vow of the 63 families of the Mothers (*triṣaṣṭi-kula-vrata*),¹⁸⁶ also known as the *kāpāl[lik]a-vrata*, then: “He should have a skull-crown on his head and be adorned with a garland of [miniature] heads [made of bone]. His hands, ears, and feet should be adorned with pieces of bone. In his left hand he should hold a skull-bowl and in his right a skull-staff. He should wander in silence in a cremation ground for sixty-three days. It is certain that at the end of this observance the Mothers enter into his body and grant the ultimate *siddhi*. Unaging, deathless, with the power to bless and curse, he becomes the best of all *sādhakas* in all three worlds (8.41-44).”¹⁸⁷

All the data points we have been examining come together in this single textual passage (with the exception of human sacrifice). The picture of Somasiddhāntin/Kāpālika practice that has emerged is remarkably consistent and we lack only the philosophical justifications for their practice that their scriptures must have contained, such as the doctrine of nonduality of the world and God suggested by the Somasiddhānta character in the *Prabodha-candrodaya*.

As an addendum, we may mention two more items in the social sphere that differentiated the Kāpālikas from the Kālamukhas. First, the latter were putatively celibate, as established by inscriptions (EI 7:28D, EI 17:2, EI 12:32B), while the former were clearly not. Secondly, the latter were probably exclusively brāhmins, as suggested by the epigraphical record in the Deccan, and the former may have initiated people of all castes, like their Mantramārgic successors. We see evidence of this in Rāmānuja’s *Śrībhāṣya* (2.2.35-37), evidently citing a lost Kāpālika text: “They state that even men belonging to lower castes can attain the status of a brāhmaṇa and the highest *āśrama* by means of certain special rites. (For it is said): ‘One instantly becomes a brāhmaṇa merely by the process of initiation. A man becomes a great ascetic (*sannyāsin*) by undertaking the Kāpāla vow.’”

bhairavaṃ vā mahābhāge cāmuṇḍā-vratam eva ca / (8.34c-35b)—yields the understanding of the two vows that I present here. Cf. also SANDERSON 2009: 134.

¹⁸⁵ 8.34-41 of the *Yoginī-saṅcāra* = 3.31.36-43 of the *Jayadratha-yāmala* (the latter is the numbering used by TÖRZSÖK 2013).

¹⁸⁶ As TÖRZSÖK (2013: n47) also notes, this number is strange, for we would expect 64 (= 8 x 8). She opines that the practitioner himself completes the count. She regards the presence of the Mothers as a “step away” from the Somasiddhānta-Kāpālikas, but we view the present passage as part of a body of evidence that the Kāpālikas venerated the Eight Mothers.

¹⁸⁷ [*dvitīyaṃ tu vratam vaksye ghoram kāpāla-rūpiṇam* | 40cd |] *śire kapāla-mukutaṃ śira-mālā-vibhūṣitam* | *kare karṇau tathā pādaū asthi-khaṇḍair vibhūṣitam* || 41 || *vāme kapālaṃ khaṭvāṅgaṃ tathā vai dakṣiṇe kare* | *śmaśāne vicaren maunī triṣaṣṭi divasāni tu* || 42 || *vratānte tu varārohe śarīre mātaro dhruvam* | *viśante devadeveśi dadante siddhim uttamām* || 43 || *ajarās cāmarās caiva śāpānugraha-kāraḥ* | *trailokyasyāpi sarvasya bhavate sādhakottamaḥ* || 44 || Passage found on f. 288r7-v6 of the MS; transcription courtesy of SANDERSON.

Thus we have seen evidence of the key characteristics of the Somasiddhānta listed on p. 55f; the characteristic of *āveśa* was not addressed in detail because we will be discussing it at length in Part Two of the present work.

1.5.4 *Summing up the Atimārga*

We have seen that the Atimārga consistently portrays itself as a transcendent path. It seeks to transcend the Veda-determined world of brāhmanical values (*varṇāśrama-dharma*) and beyond that to transcend death: whether by securing a liberative death in which one becomes a *mahāgaṇapati* and *siddha* (Atimārga I), or by voluntarily taking on the features of the denizens of the cremation ground, signaling one's power over death (Atimārga II), or by sacrificing living beings and copulating with a partner, both acts sanctified by being offered to the deity, signaling an awesome transcendence of the whole cycle of life and death and the attainment of ultimate power (Atimārga III).¹⁸⁸ We have seen, in terms of the practice of initiated *sādhakas*, an increasing level of transgression in each phase of the religion. This is mitigated by office of the *ācāryas*, who engage in public relations and represent the religion in a non-offensive way.¹⁸⁹ The trend toward greater transgression in the Atimārga is reversed in the Mantramārga, which increasingly accommodates brāhmanical values and marginalizes the role of the *sādhaka* or power-seeking ascetic. The Mantramārga can be understood in part as the domestication of the Atimārga.

A final word about the *mahāvratā* is apropos. The reader who is familiar with the Dharmaśāstra literature will of course be aware that most of the *mahāvratā*'s features constitute an imitation of the penance of the brāhmin-slayer, specifically the brāhminicide who is himself a brāhmin (since non-brāhmin brāhminicides were simply executed). This penance is described in *Baudhāyana-dharmasūtra* (2.1.1.2-3), *Āpastamba-dharmasūtra* (1.24.11-20), *Gautama-dharmasūtra* (3.4.4-5), as well as the *Manusmṛti* (11.71). It is also mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*, where after killing his father Arjuna (though the latter is not a brāhmin, the following words implicitly accord him that status), Babhruvāhana tells us that his *prāyaścitta* is to take his food in his father's skull for twelve hard years (14.80.11-12; cf. 12.36.2-3). These texts and their commentaries tell us that the *brahma-han* must carry a skull-bowl and skull-staff, wear a donkey's hide and live in the cremation ground outside of town (*kapālī khaṭvāṅgī gardabha-carma-vāsā aranya-niketanaḥ śmaśāne . . . kuṭīm kārayet*), entering the village to beg for food at no more than seven households, saying "Who will give alms to one who is damned?" (*ko 'bhiśastāya bhikṣāṃ dadyāt; Āpastamba-dharmasūtra*

¹⁸⁸ As in the case of the *Prabodhacandrodaya*'s Kāpālīka, who claims he can coerce all the gods and even arrest the motion of the stars (Act III, verse 14).

¹⁸⁹ See the *Gaṇakārikā*'s *Ratnaṭikā*, which says: "The guru or *ācārya* destroys his *pāpa* and creates an abundance of *puṇya* through giving audience to and conversing with those within the *āśrama* system who have faith [in the Pāsupata path]" (p. 3, *gurur ācāryaḥ śraddhāvātām āśramaṇām darśana-sambhāṣaṇādibhir api pāpa-ghnaḥ puṇyātīśayakāri*). Curiously, the *ācārya* is understood in this tradition to be one who lacks the capacity to carry out the injunctions incumbent on the *sādhaka* (p. 2, *samasta-niyogānuṣṭhāna-śakti-vikalena*). He acts as the gatekeeper, as it were, helping others through the door to the end of suffering while remaining on its threshold until death.

1.24.15) It would seem, then, that the *mahāvratin* is voluntarily taking on the appearance of the most despised member of society in order to cultivate *vairāgya*, annihilate his ego, and signal his rejection of brāhmanical norms. And while these latter were no doubt the reasons for his vow, a moment's thought will reveal that he is not attempting to fool people into thinking that he is an actual *brahmahan*. For he smears himself with ashes, unlike the *brahma-han*; he wears a loincloth or nothing, not a donkey's hide; he wears a skull-crown and many other bone ornaments, none of which are mentioned in connection with the *brahma-han*; and finally, he wanders about and behaves however he likes (see p. 50 above). So people seeing the *mahāvratin* doubtless did a double-take, and on the second look quickly realized that they were seeing a Śaiva ascetic engaged in a mimetic vow in imitation of the primordial brāhmin-slayer, Bhairava. We have seen that mimetic vows form an important part of the tradition, and the attributes of the *mahāvratin* that he does not share with the *brahma-han* are precisely those seen depicted in the person of Bhairava. Bhairava, as is well known from many Purāṇic and belletristic sources, is the form Śiva takes as voluntary penance for slaying not just any brāhmin, but the very embodiment of Brāhmanism, Brahmā himself. A brief and especially intriguing version of the story is found near the beginning of the *Kathā-sarit-sāgara*.¹⁹⁰

“Why, O Lord, are you so fond of skulls and cremation-grounds?” Asked this by the Goddess, Bhagavān said this: “In ancient time, when the eon had come to an end and the world had become nothing but water, I then split my thigh and let fall a single drop of blood. Striking the water, it became an egg, which split in two, and from it emerged a man. From him, I created Nature (*prakṛti*), in order to create [the rest of the world], and those two created other progenitors (*prajāpatis*), and they [created all] creatures. Thus that man is known in the world as the Grandfather (= Brahmā), beloved. Thus, having created all things, both animate and inanimate, that man become arrogant, so then I cut off his head. Remorseful over that, I took up the Great Vow (*mahāvratā*), which is why I carry a skull and am fond of cremation-grounds. Furthermore, this skull in my hand is the world, O Goddess, for the two skull-bowls [made from] the afore-mentioned egg are known as heaven and earth.”

The last sentence suggests that this version derives from a Śaiva source; we cannot imagine anyone but the Mahāvratins picturing heaven and earth as two skull-bowls. In the *Mahābhārata* version of the story, we see a personification of Brāhminicide, Brahmahatyā, described thusly:

¹⁹⁰ 1.2.9-15: *kapāleṣu śmaśāneṣu kasmād deva ratis tava | iti pṛṣṭas tato devyā bhagavān idam abravīt || 9 || purā kalpa-kṣaye vṛtte jātaṃ jala-mayaṃ jagat | mayā tato vibhidyoruṃ rakta-bindur nipātitaḥ || 10 || jalāntas tad abhūd aṇḍaṃ tasmād dvedhā-kṛtāt pumān | niragacchat tataḥ sṛṣṭā sargāya prakṛtir mayā || 11 || tau ca prajāpatīn anyān sṛṣṭavantau prajāś ca te | ataḥ pitāmahaḥ proktaḥ sa pumān jagati priye || 12 || evaṃ carācaram sṛṣṭvā viśvaṃ darpam agād asau | puruṣas tena mūrdhanam athāitasyāham acchidam || 13 || tato 'nutāpena mayā mahā-vratam agrhyata | ataḥ kapāla-pāṇitvaṃ śmaśāna-priyatā ca me || 14 || kiṃ cāitan me kapālātma jagad devi kare sthitam | pūrvoktāṇḍa-kapāle dve rodasī kīrtite yataḥ || 15 ||.*

Brāhminicide is terrifying (*mahāghorā*) and wrathful (*raudrā*); she evokes fear in all people, with gaping mouth/protruding teeth, awful, deformed, red-black, her hair wild, and her eyes fierce (*ghora-netrā*), O Bhārata, with a garland of skulls (*kapāla-mālinī*), emaciated, smeared with blood, and dressed in rags, O knower of dharma.¹⁹¹

This sounds like nothing so much as Cāmuṇḍā, the consort of Bhairava whose worship the Kāpālikas added to the Atimārga to signal their absolute transcendence of the world of Veda-determined values. The *Mahābhārata* being antecedent to all appearances of Cāmuṇḍā, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Brahmahatyā is the latter's model. The increasing success of the model of the seven Mothers headed by Cāmuṇḍā in the later Gupta period (and beyond) thus betokens the impending dominance of Śaivism in the early medieval period (Cf. BISSCHOP 2010 *passim*).

If we now look back to the section that summarized the five main differences between the Atimārga and the Mantramārga as commonly understood by scholars (pp. 27-30), we can see that our study of the Somasiddhānta has problematized nearly all of them. 1) Like the Mantramārga, the Somasiddhānta seems to have opened up its membership to lower castes and women, setting them all (or rather, the men) on an equal footing by granting them the status of brāhmins. 2) The Somasiddhānta maintained the Atimārga's fascination with death, but introduced a new connection to life, vitality, and virility by including a sexual rite. Furthermore, we see abundant epigraphical evidence that *ācāryas* of the Atimārga were at some point permitted to marry and procreate, though it remained true that *sādhakas*, whether celibate or not, were never householders. Nor were they in the Mantramārga, so the real innovation of the latter was to create a place and a practice for initiated householders. 3) Clearly, the Somasiddhāntins were pursuing *siddhi* and *bhoga* as diligently as possible, so we cannot say these goals were only found in the Mantramārga. 4) We have seen evidence that a ritual culture was present to some degree in Atimārga II, and vigorously present in Atimārga III. 5) As we saw on p. 50, it is suggested that the Kālamukha is guaranteed eventual liberation as a result of his initiation, as in the Mantramārga.

In summary, then, the more we know about the Atimārga, the more difficult it is to find features that are unique to the Tantric layer of the religion, aside from the significant one of creating a place for initiated householders. Fundamentally, then, the Mantramārga is "tantric" mainly in that its scriptures are called *tantras*. Its features are not unique to itself, but can be described as amplified, gentrified, and sophisticated versions of elements found in varying degrees of development in the Atimārga.

Lastly, interesting information may be gleaned from Mantramārgic accounts of the liberations attained by the various Śaiva sects. These accounts place the liberation promised by each group at a specific point in the *tattva* schema, telling us how a given scripture or author saw the relation of that group to his own. If we collate four such accounts, we see a pattern begin to emerge, whereby Atimārga II is

¹⁹¹ Mbh 12.273.10c-12: *brahmahatyā mahāghorā raudrā loka-bhayāvahā || karāla-daśanā bhīmā vikṛtā kṛṣṇa-piṅgalā | prakīrṇa-mūrdhajā caiva ghora-netrā ca bhārata || kapāla-mālinī caiva kṛśā ca bhātarāṣabha | rudhirārdrā ca dharmajña cīra-vastra-nivāsini ||*.

ranked above I, and Atimārga III, where acknowledged, is ranked above I and II. The important issue for these authors is whether a given group makes it into the “pure universe” of the top five *tattvas*, which constitutes liberation. So the Sarvajñānottara grants liberation to the Kāpālikas but not the Pāśupatas, Somaśambhu grants it to the Kālamukhas but not the Pāśupatas, the *Nīsvāsa* grants it to both the Pāśupatas and the Kālamukhas (perhaps since it is considerably closer to both, being the ur-text of the Mantramārga), while the conservative Saiddhāntika Jñānaśiva grants it to none of the Atimārgins, but nonetheless places the Kāpālikas above the other two.¹⁹² Since it is Mantramārgic sources doing the ranking, this tells us that the Mantramārga regards the Somasiddhānta as closer to itself than the other two; or, where the latter is not acknowledged (as in Somaśambhu), regards the Kālamukhas as closer than the Pāśupatas. This fits the evidence we have accumulated, though a more thorough study of these hierarchies of liberation is certainly a desideratum.

Table 3. Dates referenced in the main text
(Key dates are in bold)

185 BCE	End of the Mauryan period
100s BCE	Theophoric names in Śiva- begin appearing Mention in Jaina texts: Śiva paired with Vaiśravaṇa, separate person from Rudra
140 BCE	Patañjali’s <i>Mahābhāṣya</i>: first textual attestation of devotion to Śiva
65 CE	Inscription in NW Prākṛt (Kharoṣṭhī script) records that one Moika had a <i>śiva-sthala</i> made at Panjtār near Swāt, Pakhtunkhwa, modern Pakistān
c. 100 CE	Maheśvara [Śiva] appears in a list of primarily Vedic deities given in the Vinaya of the Dharma-guptakas, composed in Gandhāra
90-130 CE	First evidence of a Śaiva temple: grant to a temple of Caṇḍaśivamahādeva, during (Sātavāhana) reign of Puṣumāvi II, Dharwad district, Karṇāṭaka
c. 150 CE	Putative date of the advent of Paśupati/Bhagavat Lakuliśa
c. 200 CE	Inscription from Junāgaḍh in Kathiawar (<i>Epigraphia Indica</i> 16:17c) which refers to <i>kevali-jñāna</i> , the teaching of the Kevalins; = Pāśupatas?
c. 300 CE	Mañcikallu inscription of Pallava Siṃhavarman records grant to temple of Bhagavat Jīvaśivaswāmin, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh
300s	First evidence of a monarch “exclusively devoted to Śiva” (<i>parama-māheśvara</i>): Devavarman of Veṅḡpura, Andhra First evidence of a monarch exclusively devoted to Bhairava: Rudrasena I of the Vākāṭakas (r. c. 335-360) First Buddhist passage hostile to Śaivism: in the <i>Ratnaketu-parivarta</i> of the Mahāsannipāta Sūtra collection
376	Bagh copper plate grant of Mahārāja Bhulunḍa to Pāśupatācārya Bhagavat Lokodadhi for support of the worship of the Mothers
380	Mathura pillar inscription recording foundation of <i>gurvāyatana</i> by Uditācārya, tenth in line from Bhagavat Kuśika
384-417	Chinese translation of the “Bodhisattva Womb Sūtra” (<i>Pusa chu tai jing</i>)
350-450	First dateable Śaiva text: Kauṇḍinya’s <i>bhāṣya</i> on the Pāśupata-sūtra
400s	Images of Lakuliśa begin appearing
450-550	<i>Nīsvāsa-tattva-saṃhitā</i>, first Mantramārga scripture

¹⁹² SANDERSON, Śaivism and Brāhmanism lectures, Handout 6 (20 November 2012), pp. 12-13.

c. 500	First mention of Kāpālikas: Agastyasiṃha's Prākṛit commentary on the Jain <i>Dasaveyāliya-sutta</i>
500-550	<i>Bṛhat-saṃhitā</i> of Varāhamihira mentions Kāpālikas
c. 550	Earliest evidence of the non-Saiddhāntika Mantramārga: Vāma- or Bhaginī-tantra MS found in Gilgit dateable to the mid-6th century
600	Atimārga and Mantramārga widespread in India; Āmardaka monastic university in existence
550-650	Probable date of original Skanda-purāṇa; teaches a Pāśupata yoga and describes the genesis of the Mātṛtantras
600-650	Senakapāṭ inscription testifying to patronage of the Śaiva Siddhānta Dharmakīrti criticizes the Dākinī- and Bhaginī-tantras
650	Malhar/Junwani copper-plate grant to Bhīmasoma from Śivagupta Bālārjuna, Śrīpura, Dakṣiṇa Kosala; evidence of Somasiddhānta doctrine
600s	Fundamental scriptural corpus of the Siddhānta forming Bāṇabhaṭṭa writes of Kāpālika practice in the <i>Harṣa-carita</i> Mahendravarman, a Śaiva, satirizes the Kāpālikas in his <i>Mattavilāsa</i> Western Cālukya grant from Nāgavardhana (nephew of Pulakeśin II) to Kāpāleśvara temple for <i>guggulupūjā</i> by Mahāvratins (= Kāpālikas)
660	First initiated Śaiva king on record: Cālukya Vikramāditya
681	Eastern Gaṅga king Devendravarman given Śaiva initiation
675-725	Sadyojyotiḥ, first Śaiva Siddhānta commentator
700s	Bhavabhūti's <i>Mālatimādhava</i> Vākpāti refers to the Kaulas
810	Earliest MS of the Saiddhāntika <i>Pauṣkara-pārameśvara</i>
830	The <i>Haraviḅaya</i> mentions the Trika in its Caṇḍī-stotra
c. 900	Satirical play of the Kaśmīrī Naiyāyika Jayantabhaṭṭa, "Much Ado About Scripture" (<i>Āgama-ḍambara</i>)
900s	Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, Śaiva Siddhānta exegete Memorial temple (<i>paḷli-paṭai</i>) of Āditya Coḷa maintained by Mahāvratins Medhātithi, a commentator on the Manusmṛti
960	Rājor inscription testifies to the presence of Saiddhāntika initiates in Rājasthān
975-1025	Abhinavagupta, greatest Kaula exegete
1000-1050	Kṣemarāja, prolific disciple of Abhinavagupta, author of <i>Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam</i>
1000s	Vaiṣṇava Yamunācārya of South India, author of the <i>Āgamaprāmānya</i> <i>Prabodhacandrodaya</i> of Kṛṣṇamiśra
1018-1060	Bhojadeva (Paramāra monarch), author of <i>Siddhāntasārapaddhati</i>
1096	Definitive Saiddhāntika paddhati: the <i>Karmakāṇḍa-kramāvalī</i> of Somaśambhu, abbot of the Golagī monastic university
1100s	Aparāditya, commentator on the <i>Yājñavalkyasmṛti</i> Rāmānuja's <i>Śrībhāṣya</i> Jñānaśivācārya, Śaiva Siddhānta exegete from South India
1162	Inscription from the Kedāreśvara temple of Belgaum declaring universal religious tolerance on the part of the Kālamukhas
c. 1200	Decline of Tantric Śaivism begins; in the South, its philosophy overtaken by Vedānta
1352	First documented use of the word "Hindu" in an Indian language
1400s	Formation of Hinduism
c. 1650	Vaiṣṇavism surpasses Śaivism in popularity in Tamil Nādu
1816	First documented use of the word "Hinduism", by Rammohan Roy

1.6 The Mantramārga, aka Tantric/Āgamic Śaivism

1.6.1 *Defining the Mantramārga: initial observations*

Given the evidence discovered to date, we can say that the Mantramārga seems to have emerged primarily from a Kālamukha background (Atimārga II), which necessarily entails a liberal dose of the Pañcārtha (Atimārga I); it also displays features of the Somasiddhānta (Atimārga III). The scriptural corpus of the Mantramārga consists of texts called *tantras* or *āgamas* (the names are used interchangeably, contrary to earlier scholarly opinion, which incorrectly associated the former with northern Śākta works and the latter with southern Śaiva works, following the conceptions of 19th-century *paṇḍits*), hence the Mantramārga is commonly called Tantric or Āgamic Śaivism.¹⁹³ Here we immediately run into a terminological problem: the Western scholarly construction of Tantra as an abstract category encompasses both the Mantramārga and the Kulamārga, despite the fact that the contrast between *tāntrika* and *kaula* is clear in the primary sources.¹⁹⁴ SANDERSON himself, while aware of this distinction, for a long time considered it as simply referring to different initiatory traditions within the Mantramārga, but recently decided that the evidence demanded a taxonomy in which the Kulamārga is considered as a distinct stream which exerted such a tremendous influence on the non-Saiddhāntika (aka “left current”) Mantramārga that it was hard to tease them apart.¹⁹⁵

The Mantramārga is so called because in it mantras attain their final apotheosis; the deities of the various cults are propitiated as *mantra-devatās*, i.e., in the form of their mantras. The mantra of the deity is considered its most essential form (*atisūkṣma-rūpa*), as opposed to its *maṇḍala* (its *sūkṣma-rūpa*) or its iconic image (its *sthūla-rūpa*). In fact, the latter two are *not* considered to be forms of the deity at all unless the *mantra-devatā* is installed in them. Thus to be a *tāntrika* means, first and foremost, the daily propitiation of a mantra-deity.

Mantras derive from the Omniscient and are capable of ending this transmigration. They are unfailing, pure and still, devoid of inauspicious times and the like. They are made of Time and they give rise to the *nāḍīs*. They perform initiation, and Sadāśīva is also formed with mantras. –
Bhairava-maṅgalā 254c-6b (trans. TÖRZSÖK 2007)

For the *tāntrikas*, the deities are contacted primarily in the form of their mantras, which are understood as their “sonic bodies.” But this doctrine is unlike that of the Kaumārila *mīmāṃsakas*, who believe that the Vedic deities have no reality apart from their mantras. For the *tāntrikas*, the mantra is simply the primary contactable form of an existent being that is ultimately transcendent of all form.

¹⁹³ We may note here that on one occasion each the *Brahmayāmala* (95.29) and the *Purāścaryārṇava* (1.149) use the term *Tantramārga* as a synonym of *Mantramārga* (HATLEY 2007: 3n5).

¹⁹⁴ E.g., Kṣemarāja, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* ch. 8: “The *tāntrikas* hold that the reality of the Self is all-transcending. Those who hold to traditions (*āmnāya*) of the Kula and [Kaula] say it is all-embodying.” *viśvottīrṇam ātma-tattvam iti tāntrikāḥ. viśva-mayam iti kulādyāmnāya-niviṣṭāḥ.*

¹⁹⁵ Śaivism and Brāhmanism Lectures series, University of Kyoto, October 2012.

The Mantramārga inherited and amplified the complex cosmology and divine hierarchy already seen in Atimārga II and III. When sophisticated Kaula exegesis began reinterpreting fundamental Mantramārga categories, it did so through a process of essentialization and interiorization, where those categories are reinterpreted as aspects of the consciousness possessed by every sentient being. We see this in Kṣemarāja’s reinterpretation of the very name Mantra-[mārga] (commenting on a passage of the *Svacchanda-tantra* [11.43c-45b] that distinguishes the Mantramārga [*mantrākhyā*] from the Atimārga): “[The wisdom-teaching of the Tantras] is termed *mantrākhyā*, which [really] means ‘fully (*ā*) manifest (*khyāna*) in mantras’ . . . because it *bestows the power which animates the mantras*. . . it reveals that those mantras have pure sentience (*anubhava*) as their essence.”¹⁹⁶ In the Kaulized form of Tantra, then, the ritual propitiation of the mantra-deity is no longer seen as the key element; rather, that element is the power of awareness which enlivens and empowers the mantras and the rituals.

1.6.2 *Defining the Mantramārga: fundamental characteristics*

The Mantramārga added several features above and beyond what we saw in the Atimārga, though not as many as we once thought when all we knew of the latter was Pāñcārthika Pāśupatism. Additionally, the Mantramārga developed, nuanced, and refined what it inherited from the Atimārga. These are the three most prominent features of the Tantric tradition over and above its antecedent:

- It was nominally open to both genders, all castes, and people in all stages of life (*āśrama*); and, more importantly, it did not require initiates to change their life-stage, i.e., it did not require householders to become ascetics or mendicants.¹⁹⁷
- Its ritual and yoga featured a complex “choreography of spiritual transformation”¹⁹⁸ using mantra, *mudrā*, and visualization (*dhyāna*).
- Its initiation ritual featured *homa* as a central element (as opposed to the *homa*-less Atimārga¹⁹⁹), for which reason it was sometimes called *hautrī dīkṣā*. In this respect the Mantramārga took a step towards the Vaidika religion.

A fundamental characteristic of the Mantramārga is that it divides into two streams, which we can classify (following the tradition itself) as *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*, or the (relatively) exoteric common base and the specialized revelation. These two are

¹⁹⁶ *Svacchanda-tantra-uddiyota*, translation SANDERSON 2006: 159-160, emphasis mine. Here Kṣemarāja actually denies Atimārga and Mantramārga their usual meanings, instead regarding the former term as pertaining to the Tantric teachings on ritual, yoga, and observance, and the latter as pertaining to the Tantric wisdom-teachings (*jñānapāda*).

¹⁹⁷ This is reflected in new initiatory terminology. While Atimārga initiates were always called *sādhakas*, as are the ascetics of the Mantramārga, householder initiates of the Mantramārga are designated as *putrakas*.

¹⁹⁸ SANDERSON’s phrase. Śaivism and Brāhmanism Lectures series, Kyoto, Sept. 2012 – Jan. 2013.

¹⁹⁹ Unless we consider as reliable the literary references to Kāpālikas making sacrificial offerings of animal and/or human flesh into a consecrated fire. Cf. *Prabodhacandrodaya* Act III v. 13.

more commonly referred to as “right-handed” and “left-handed” Tantra respectively, synecdochically referring to the fact that the former embraces only forms of practice non-offensive to brāhmanical standards (*dakṣiṇācāra*) while the latter embraces transgressive forms of worship (*vāmācāra*). The *sāmānya* branch teaches the worship of gentle forms of Śiva, either without a consort or with a subordinate consort, while the *viśeṣa* branch teaches the worship of Bhairava and fierce forms of the Goddess, sometimes picturing the latter as dominant or even worshipping her exclusively. These are their primary characteristics:

- *Sāmānya* subdivides into two: 1) the Siddhānta (much the more important of the two subdivisions), the ritualistic broad base of the religion, featuring both private and public worship (i.e., *bahih-pratiṣṭhā* of the deity in a public *liṅga*) and Veda-congruence (*veda-saṃhitā*). Its primary social concerns were regular piety, legitimation of the state, and stability of society; and 2) the cult of Amṛteśvara with his consort (Amṛta-)Lakṣmī, popular in Kashmīr, was essentially a domesticated and inoffensive Bhairava-cult that featured a remarkable ritual flexibility²⁰⁰ probably intended to extend the reach of Tantric *ācāryas* into the previously Vaidika domain of the *rāja-purohita*. (For this see SANDERSON 2005b.)
- *Viśeṣa*: seven Bhairava/Goddess-worshipping systems (that featured greater Somasiddhānta influence than the *sāmānya* division), for private worship only, featuring varying degrees of antinomian practice (*Sampradāyas* #2-4 and 6-9 in Table 2). These cults attracted patronage partially through developing magical rituals for use in times of emergency. All the cults that worshipped the goddess as predominant came under increasing Kaula influence (the last two Mantramārga cults to develop—#8 and 9 in Table 2—were wholly Kaula, i.e., there the overlap with the Kulamārga was complete).

We shall seek to define Tantric Śaivism more completely and more precisely below.

1.6.3 *Dating the Mantramārga*

We have already introduced the earliest Tantric scripture above (p. 30), the *Niśvāsa-tattva-saṃhitā*, the five divisions²⁰¹ of which are dated by careful and conservative scholars to a time period spanning c. 450-550 CE (GOODALL and ISAACSON 2007). We can characterize this scripture as proto-Tantra: it is closer to the Atimārgic world, and though it is considered by doxographical sources to be a scripture of the Siddhānta, in fact the primary division of the Mantramārga into the *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* branches mentioned above is not evident in the *Niśvāsa*. Additionally, key Tantric doctrines were apparently not yet developed (e.g., *mala*). The cosmology and the mantra-system of the *Niśvāsa* was soon supplanted by those

²⁰⁰ It offered modifications of its basic cult appropriate for other contexts, including that of the Siddhānta, Vāma, Mantrapīṭha, Kulamārga, and even Pañcarātra, Vaidika, and Bauddha.

²⁰¹ In probable chronological order, these five divisions are the Mūlasūtra, Uttarasūtra, Nayasūtra, Guhyasūtra, and Niśvāsa-mukha, the last of which contains the passages we have already discussed.

of other scriptures, and we do not have any surviving exegesis of the text.

Inscriptional evidence shows us that the Śaiva Siddhānta existed as a well-established institution by the end of the sixth century. I refer to the Senakapāṭ inscription (near Sirpur in modern Chattisgarh), issued under the same Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna mentioned above (p. 59) and testifying to patronage of the Siddhānta between 590 and 650, the dates of that king's reign (SANDERSON 2013: 61). The inscription records a grant from a district governor (who shared his king's "complete devotion to Śiva") to one Sadāśivācārya and tells us that the latter's guru's guru was the brother of one Sadyaśśivācārya of Āmardaka monastery (*tapovana*; it became in time a monastic university).²⁰² This is the keystone Saiddhāntika establishment to which all subsequent lineages traced their authority; we conclude from the inscription that it was in existence by 600 at the latest.

Our earliest evidence of the non-Saiddhāntika (or *viśeṣa*) Mantramārga also comes from the sixth century. The original Skanda-purāṇa (BHAṬṬARĀI 1988) knows the Yāmala *sampradāya* (#3 in Table 2) and names its texts as "the holy Mother Tantras" (*divya-mātr-tantrāṇi*, = *yāmala-tantras*), thus linking it explicitly to the Somasiddhānta's cult.²⁰³ One of the texts named in this passage is the *Brahma-yāmala*, which survives to the present, and indeed features the *kapāla-vrata* prominently and contains much material that was most probably redacted from Somasiddhānta sources. The latest possible date for the ur-Skandapurāṇa is the eighth century, but Yuko YUKOCHI has argued for a sixth-century date on the basis of iconographic evidence (1999: 74-75). This date agrees with the detailed depiction of Vārṇasī in the text, as shown by BAKKER and ISAACSON (2004). If these scholars are correct, then we are led to surmise that the Yāmala branch of the Mantramārga was in fact coeval with the Somasiddhānta, which can scarcely have begun much before 500 (see 1.5.3 above). This raises the possibility that its Somasiddhānta-like passages are parallels rather than redactions, and further suggests the possibility that the Yāmala was not initially seen as part of the Mantramārga at all. After all, the ur-Skandapurāṇa knows the Atimārga, but does not know the Mantramārga, with sole the exception of these Yāmala-related passages. More research in this area is needed.²⁰⁴

²⁰² EI 31:5, v. 16-17; cf. SHASTRI 1995, Part 2.

²⁰³ *Skandapurāṇa* 171.127-31b; cf. HATLEY 2012. Further confirmation comes from the *Jayadrathayāmala* (which, despite its title, is a tantra of the Kālīkula, not the Yāmala), which speaks of seven *Mātryāmala-tantras* at 1.36.16-25 (HATLEY 2007: 240).

²⁰⁴ SANDERSON has alerted me to the existence of the South Indian Māṛtantras, which share names with the North Indian Yāmala-tantras (e.g., the *Brahmayāmala*), but describe a temple cult of the worship of Cāmuṇḍā with meat and wine (this despite the tantric prohibition on a public temple cult dedicated to a transgressive tantric deity). Amongst these texts, the *Māṛtsadbhāva* preserves a Somasiddhānta context: *arcayet paramāṃ śaktiṃ somasiddhānta-pāraḡaḡ* we are told on p. 102 of the MS; and *dhyāyen mahāvratā-dharaṃ haram . . . pañcamudrā-dharaṃ kapāla-khaṭvāṅga-dharam* etc. on p. 98; on p. 231, *saśiṣyaṃ lakuliśānam abhipūjya* (Śaivism and Brāhmanism lectures, Handout 7, 27 November 2012). This evidence supports my hypothesis that the Yāmala *sampradāya* was originally Atimārgic. However, the North Indian *Brahmayāmala* as we have it now certainly considers itself part of the Mantramārga.

The evidence we have reviewed so far compels us to say that Tantric Śaivism was widespread in India by 600 CE.²⁰⁵ Both this revised date and the assertion of geographical spread are confirmed by the discovery of a MS of the Vāma *sampradāya* (#2 in Table 2) amongst the Gilgit MSS (#41) which cannot be later than the end of the sixth century on paleographical grounds (SANDERSON 2009: 50n22). Making the date even more certain is the fact that Dharmakīrti (c. 550-650) knew the Vāma scriptures (known as the *Bhaginī-tantras* since the Vāma tradition teaches the worship of four sister-goddesses). He writes in his *Pramāṇa-vārtika*, “We have evidence of [mantras that can be effective] even though they are opposed to dharma in the Dākinī- and the Bhaginī-tantras, which are full of cruelty, theft, sex, and other base acts.”²⁰⁶ Dharmakīrti also attacked the Śaiva doctrine that their initiation bestows liberation (*Pramāṇa-vārtika-kārikā*, *Pramāṇa-siddhi*, v. 259c-69c; cf. SANDERSON 2001: n7), commonly asserted in Saiddhāntika texts. Saiddhāntika scriptures probably or certainly in existence in the seventh century, besides the *Niśvāsa*, comprise these five: (some version of) the *Kālottara*,²⁰⁷ the *Rauravasūtra-saṅgraha* (commented on by Sadyojyotiḥ, fl. c. 675-725 CE), the *Paṣkara-pārameśvara* (earliest MS 810 CE), the *Svāyambhuvasūtra-saṅgraha* (also commented on by Sadyojyotiḥ), and the *Sarvajñānottara* (attested in Cambodia in the ninth century; SANDERSON 2001: n5).

Our earliest evidence of royal initiations also comes in the seventh century. The Cālukya Vikramāditya was initiated in 660 (EI 32, pp. 175-84), the Eastern Gaṅga king Devendravarman in 682 (EI 26, pp. 62-65), and the Pallava Narasiṃhavarman II, aka Rājasimha, at some time between 680 and 731 (SII I: 24) (SANDERSON 2001: n6).

Evidence is abundant from the eighth century onwards. For a tabular presentation of the all the dates discussed in the Introduction, see Table 3 above.

1.6.4 *Defining the Mantramārga: Western Categorical Lists*

As already mentioned, defining the Mantramārga brings us to the American academy’s discussion of the definition of “Tantra” or “Tantrism.” I have little interest in prolix discussions concerning the definition of an invented category, but in this case the invention has some grounding: the attempt to ascertain what Tantric Śaivism, Tantric Buddhism, and Tantric Vaiṣṇavism all have in common (Tantric Jainism has been little addressed), and thus what constitutes the Tantric style of religion. In exploring this question, scholars have invoked the notion of “polythetic definition” popularized by Jonathan Z. SMITH (on the basis of the work of biologists SOKOL and SNEATH).²⁰⁸ This constitutes a list of features that are seen as

²⁰⁵ SANDERSON (2001: 11): “These facts reveal that Tantric Śaivism of this relatively public and strongly soteriological variety was not merely present in the seventh century but well established.”

²⁰⁶ *Pramāṇa-vārtika-svavṛtti*, GNOLI Ed. (1960), p. 163: *dharmaviruddhānām api kraurya-steya-maithuna-hīnakarmādi-bahulānām ḍākinī-bhaginī-tantrādiṣu darśanāt*. The commentator Karṇakagomin glosses with *caturbhaginī-tantra* (SANDERSON 2001: 206).

²⁰⁷ This keystone practice text exists in ten pre-12th-century recensions (GOODALL 2007: 125), such as those in 100, 200, 350 verses and more. The second of these is the basis for many later *paddhatis*, and the third received an important commentary (the *Sārdhatrīśati-kālottara-vṛtti*).

²⁰⁸ See SMITH, *Imagining Religion*, pp. 4-5, citing Robert SOKOL and Peter SNEATH’s *Principles of Numerical Taxonomy*. In this method of classification as used in the natural sciences, “no single

descriptive of Tantra, without specifying how many of these need to be present for the text or phenomenon in question to be classed as Tantric.²⁰⁹ Here I wish to combine the lists presented by five different scholars (TRIBE 2000, HODGE 2003, GOUDRIAAN 1979, BROOKS 1990, and LOPEZ 1996) to create a master list of Tantric features.

Table 4. List of features of “Tantra”

- alternative path / new revelation / more rapid path
- centrality of (non-Vedic) ritual, esp. evocation and worship of deities
- proliferation in the number and types of deities (compared to the antecedent tradition)
- visualization and self-identification with the deity
- centrality of mantras
- ontological identity of mantras and deities
- necessity of initiation and importance of esotericism/secretcy
- ritual use of *maṇḍalas*, esp. in initiation
- microcosmic/macrocosmic correlation, esp. relating to the body
- importance of the teacher (*guru*, *ācārya*)
- lay/householder practitioners
- transgressive/antinomian acts *
- addition of mundane aims, achieved through largely magical means
- revaluation of the body *
- revaluation of 'negative' mental states *
- revaluation of the status and role of women *
- utilization of 'sexual yoga' *
- importance of *śakti* *
- spiritual physiology (i.e. subtle body)
- yoga, especially [what came to be known as] *kuṇḍalinī* yoga
- the cultivation of bliss *
- spontaneity (*sahaja*, a technical term) *
- special types of meditation that aim to transform the individual into an embodiment of the divine after a short span of time *
- special (Śākta) religious geography of India, also mapped onto the body *
- linguistic mysticism
- bipolar symbology of god/goddess
- nondualism *

* Does not apply, or does not apply well, to the influential Śaiva Siddhānta; applies only in nondualist contexts and/or in the case of Kaula influence.

feature is either essential to group membership or is sufficient to make an organism a member of the group” (SOKAL and SNEATH 1963: 291 cited in NEEDHAM 1975: 355), and, as a corollary, “no property is necessarily possessed by all individuals in the group, and no organism necessarily has all the properties generally characteristic of members of its group” (Ibid.: 356).

²⁰⁹ Though the possession of a “large number“ of the given features is sometimes specified as a requisite by these scholars (apparently following BECKNER, cited in NEEDHAM 1975), this is too vague. I prefer to require a least a majority (follower MAYR, cited ibid: 357).

If we are considering the largest-scale picture, in which our taxa are Tantric Śaivism, Tantric Buddhism, etc., then it is safe to say that nearly all these features apply in each case. But if we step down one level of granularity to the scale of the *sampradāyas* that make up each religion (which is the most important scale from the tradition’s own perspective), then we immediately see a bias reveal itself. Western scholarship has focused its attention on the “left-handed” manifestations of Tantra, and that has influenced the definitional picture. In the case of Tantric Śaivism, eleven out of the twenty-seven qualities above (41%) apply only or mostly to the left current or *viśeṣa* revelation, which is mostly Śākta, nondualist and transgressive to some degree or another. However, by the majority rule, this is not sufficient to exclude the *sāmānya* Śaiva Siddhānta.

1.6.5 Defining the Mantramārga: Nine Sampradāyas in Two Streams

Now we will sketch the characteristics of the nine *sampradāyas* or lineage groupings that have emerged from the evidence relating to the Mantramārga that has reached us from the early medieval period (500 – 1200). First let us get more precise about the *sāmānya/viśeṣa* distinction already introduced, a distinction frequently articulated by SANDERSON and his students as Saiddhāntika/non-Saiddhāntika, a terminology chosen to emphasize the importance of the Siddhānta (*sampradāya* #1) in the overall structure of the religion. The following table illustrates, in a broad and simplified form, the primary distinctions these two currents of Śaiva Tantra.

Table 5. Contrasting the two streams of Tantric Śaivism.

<u><i>Sāmānya</i></u>	<u><i>Viśeṣa</i></u>
More exoteric	More esoteric
Veda-congruent (= <i>dvaitācāra</i> , <i>dakṣiṇācāra</i>)	Transgressive (= <i>advaitācāra</i> , <i>vāmācāra</i>)
Observant of caste distinctions	Rejecting caste distinctions
Presiding over public institutions	Private worship, even secrecy
Liberation attained through ritual	Possibility of liberation through gnostic and/or yogic means
Gradualism (in the attainment of the goal)	Tending towards subitism (possibility of immediate realization)
Gentle deities	Deities are often fierce
Little to no worship of the Goddess	Emphasizing Goddess-worship
Women not allowed to practice	Women allowed to practice, and even become gurus in some cases
Suppression of the mortuary and sanguinary (e.g., <i>kapāla-vrata</i>)	Permitting or emphasizing the mortuary and sanguinary
Guru seen primarily as ritual functionary	Guru often seen as source of the transmission of charismatic power
Ecclesiastical hierarchies organized into institutions (e.g. <i>maṭhas</i>)	More informal, non-institutional lineage groupings
Patronage won through initiation of monarchs and consecration of temples and public works	Patronage won through providing aggressive or protective magical rites

This binary distinction is oversimplified, however. More accurate is the image of a spectrum, with the various *sampradāyas* positioned along it:

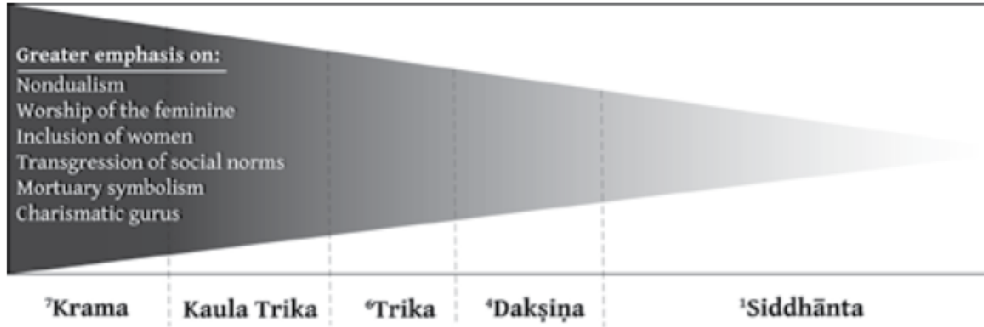


Fig. 3. The spectrum of practice

The *sampradāyas* named in the figure above are those we will especially focus on. The Amṛteśvara cult would fit between the Dakṣiṇa (aka the Mantrapīṭha) and the Siddhānta. The Yāmala would be just to the right of the Krama in terms of transgression, but to the right of the Trika in terms of emphasis on the Goddess; it does not fit neatly in the spectrum as stipulated.

With this orientation, we can now present the key data points for each *sampradāya*. The reader should remember that this division into nine *sampradāyas* is necessarily neater than what we find in the primary sources; for the non-Saiddhāntika sects often display an extraordinary fluidity of nomenclatures and means of categorization.

Sampradāya #1: ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

Earliest certain evidence: c. 550 (textual), 647 (inscriptional)

Primary deity: Sadāśiva

Visualization: white-bodied, five-faced, three-eyed, and ten-armed, handsome, smiling, sixteen years old, in the posture of a meditating yogī

Mūla-mantra(s): HAUM / HAUŪM / HSKṢMVRYŪM

Root text: *Niśvaasa-tattva-saṃhitā*

Other key texts (published texts in bold):

- *Kaalottara* in six recensions: **Śatika** (aka **Kārajñāna**, ed. GOODALL), *Sārdhaśatika*, *Dviśatika* (commented on by Aghoraśiva and the basis for many Saiddhāntika *paddhatis*), **Sārdhatriśatika**, *Saptaśatika*, *Trayodaśaśatika*
- *Rauravasūtra-saṅgraha* (commented on by Sadyojyotiḥ, fl. c. 675-725 CE)
- **Svāyambhuvasūtra-saṅgraha** (also commented on by Sadyojyotiḥ)
- *Pauṣkara-pārameśvara* (earliest MS 810 CE)
- **Mataṅga-pārameśvara-tantra**
- **Kiraṇa-tantra** (with Rāmakaṅṭha's commentary; chapters 1-6 edited and translated by GOODALL)
- **Mrgendra-tantra** (with Nārāyaṇakaṅṭha's commentary)
- **Parākhya** (GOODALL 2004)
- *Sarvajñānottara* (with Aghoraśiva's commentary)

Key *paddhatis*:

- *Naimittikakarmānusandhāna* of Brahmaśambhu. (The MS held by the Asiatic Society of Bengal is the *codex unicus* of part of the earliest surviving Saiddhaantika Paddhati (939 CE). Contains instructions for the "Saiva consecration of the king after his initiation.)
- *Siddhāntasāra-paddhati* of Bhojadeva (Paramāra monarch c. 1018-1060); oldest MS 1077 CE (NAK 5-743); text syncretically draws on the *Svacchanda-tantra*
- *Karmakāṇḍakramāvalī* of Somaśambhu, abbot of the Golaḡī monastic university (= *Kriyākāṇḍapadakramāvalī* = *Śaivakarmakramāvalī* = *Somaśambhupaddhati*, 1096 CE, commissioned by Kalacuri monarch Yaśaskarṇa), with *vyākhyā* by Trilocanaśivācārya
- *Kriyākramadyotikā* of Aghoraśivācārya (South India, 1157 CE)
- *Jñānarātnāvalī* of Jñānaśiva (South India, 12th cen.)

Key texts of exegesis and theory:

- Sadyojyotiḥ, *Svāyambhuvāsūtra-saṅgraha-vṛtti*, *Nareśvaraparīkṣā*, exegesis of the *Rauravasūtra-saṅgraha* in the form of the *Mokṣakārikā*, *Bhogakārikā*, and *Paramokṣanirāsa-kārikā*.
- Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha, *Mṛgendravṛtti*
- Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, *Nareśvaraparīkṣā-prakāśa* and commentaries on the *Mataṅga-pārameśvara*, *Kiraṇa*, and *Sārdhatrisati-kālottara*

Key points of doctrine²¹⁰

The Śaiva Siddhānta was a dualistic school throughout the early medieval period, though this fact was not widely recognized until recently because it survived into the modern period only in the South, where its philosophy was transformed and ultimately subsumed by that of Advaita Vedānta. We should really call it a pluralistic school, for it held that there are three fundamental, eternal, separate and irreducible classes in existence: 1) Śiva, the Creator (*nimitta-kāraṇa*), 2) the world (mental as well as material), fashioned from Māyā (the *upādāna-kāraṇa*), and 3) souls, which are equal to Śiva in their real nature (*śiva-tulya*), but are enmeshed in the world. Thus these three are called *pati*, *pāśa*, and *paśus* respectively (i.e., Lord, bond, and bound souls; echoes of the Pāśupata doctrine). The liberation of souls is accomplished by solely by God (*iśān mokṣo 'nyathā naiva puṃsām*²¹¹), never through the soul's own power (*na mokṣam yāti puruṣaḥ svasāmarthyāt kadācana*²¹²). Śiva liberates the soul—whose innate Godlike quality is concealed by its embodiment—from bondage by bestowing his grace, first through the *śaktipāta* that causes one to seek a guru for initiation, and second through the initiation itself. The guru performing the initiation is merely the locus or the vehicle of Śiva's grace, while the mantras are His instruments (*ācāryādihikaraṇasya paramēśvarasyānuḡrāhyān anuḡrḥṇataḥ karaṇam mantrāḥ*²¹³). The mantras of the initiation ritual, revealed by Śiva in his scriptures, destroy nearly all of the initiand's karma (leaving only the

²¹⁰ The following paragraph roughly follows the outline of Saiddhāntika doctrine given at SANDERSON 1992: 282-5.

²¹¹ *Nareśvara-parīkṣā* 3.150.

²¹² *Paṣkara* quoted in Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary ad loc.

²¹³ *Mṛgendravṛtti*, *kriyāpāda* p. 112.

prārabdha portion) and guarantee that he will be liberated from *saṃsāra* at the time of death. Liberation means the full manifestation of the divinity of the soul (*śivatvābhivyakti*).

Liberation, then, is achieved through ritual means. This is because the bonds connected with *māyā* and *karman* proceed from a fundamental “impurity” (*mala*) that is conceived as an imperceptible but material substance (*dravya*) obscuring the soul that only the ritual acts (*kriyā*) revealed by Śiva in his scriptures can remove. These acts are initiation (*dīkṣā*) and the post-initiatory daily ritual (*nitya-pūjā*).

Since the Siddhānta is the *sāmānya* foundation for mature Tantric Śaivism, all its doctrines just mentioned—excepting its dualism—appear in some form in the other *sampradāyas* that post-dated it. In nondualist contexts, the same terms appear but are reinterpreted: for example, *mala* is now taken to mean simply incomplete or incorrect cognition (*ajñāna*), not a substantial impurity. This will be discussed further below.

Originating in the north of India and spreading across the subcontinent, as well as to Kambuja (Cambodia)²¹⁴ and Java, the Siddhānta survived to the present day in south India in a form that preserves many of the ritual acts of the earlier tradition but no longer maintains the doctrinal points just made. In the Tamil country, it has been for many centuries connected to Śaiva saints known as the Nāyaṃmārs, representatives of an originally independent devotional movement beginning in the sixth century. The Siddhānta has also been for some seven centuries philosophically tied to Advaita Vedānta. Thus the Saiddhāntika rituals of today are connected to the *bhakti* poetry of the Nāyaṃmārs, the temple cults with which the latter are loosely associated, and the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta. In other words, it has become part of Hinduism. This substantial contextual shift necessitated the production of a new religious literature, both scriptures (*āgamas*), which often took the names of ancient texts that had not survived (e.g., *Kāmika*, *Kāraṇa*, *Raurava*, *Ajita*, *Suprabhedā*, etc.) and new exegesis like that of Jñānaśiva. Today, most practitioners and even many scholars of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta do not realize that it is a *direct* descendent of the earlier dualistic Tantric tradition that we have been discussing.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ The *Niśvāsa* and the *Sarvajñānottara*, both Saiddhāntika texts, are mentioned in Cambodian inscriptions of the tenth century as scriptures that the king’s *Hotar* was well-versed in (See GOODALL 2004: xx and SANDERSON 2004).

²¹⁵ GOODALL 2004: xiii; the reasons why are found on pp. xxix-xxx: ignorance of the early Sanskrit sources, mostly unpublished until recently; disappearance of the Śaiva Siddhānta from all regions except Tamilnāḍu and Kerala after the 13th century; the continued usage of the name Śaiva Siddhānta only in Tamilnāḍu; and a wilful lack of interest in pre-12th century pan-Indian Sanskritic Śaiva Siddhānta on the part of Tamilian scholars.

Sampradāya #2: VĀMA OR CATURBHAGINĪ

Earliest certain evidence: 7th century, but well-known by that time

Primary deities: Jayā, Vijayā, Jayantī, Aparājitā, the four sisters of subordinated male deity Tumburu-bhairava

Visualization: White, red, golden, and black respectively; with a corpse, owl, horse and flying car as vehicles respectively.

Root-mantra: AUṂ KṢAṆ KṢIN KṢEṆ KṢUṆ (in Javanese sources)

Root-text: *Vīṇāśikhā-tantra* (only surviving complete text)

The name Vāma is not a self-designation of the *sampradāya* but a term that relates to an early classificatory schema of Vāma versus Dakṣiṇa (the latter signifying the Bhairava-tantras, especially the cult of Svachanda-bhairava; see #4 below), where the former is taken by the exegetes to be representative of a sensual and feminine form of practice (associated with the Vāmadeva face of Śiva, proper left) and the latter a masculine and aggressive form emphasizing the mortuary (associated with the Aghora face, proper right). We might do better to use the name by which Dharmakīrti knew this cult, the (Catur-) Bhaginī or Four Sisters. There is some evidence that the cult did specialize in love-magic (a function that, upon the disappearance of the Vāma, was taken over by the Nityā cult [see *sampradāya* #9 below]); for example, Dharmakīrti's commentator Karṇakagomin (commenting on the passage cited on p. 74 above) associates the Bhaginī-tantras with sexual congress (SANDERSON 2001: 207n10). Dharmakīrti was, from his perspective, right to criticize the Vāma/Bhaginī cult, for it was not too much later that it was absorbed into Buddhism through incorporation into the *Mañjuśriya-mūla-kalpa*.²¹⁶

Our evidence suggests that this cult was most successful on the margins of Indian civilization. Like the Siddhānta, it was exported to Cambodia (where it was the cultic basis of the state founded c. 800²¹⁷), Java, and Bali;²¹⁸ one of its manuscripts was found in Gilgit, north of Kashmir; the male deity of the cult has a non-Sanskritic name (Tumburu); and, according to the *Mañjuśriya-mūla-kalpa* (as well as the Śaiva *Piṅgalāmata*), the four sister-goddesses are to be visualized in a sailing ship with Tumburu the [international] Trader (*sārthavāha*) as their helmsman.²¹⁹

The Catur-bhaginī cult is probably our earliest example of goddess-worship in a Tantric mode. The *Vīṇāśikhā-tantra* tells us that the four goddesses, whose names indicate that they were probably originally worshipped in order to secure victory (in battle or in love), are to be visualized respectively as white, with *śava-vāhana*; red, with an owl vehicle; golden, with a horse vehicle; and black with a *vimāna-vāhana*. Their four-faced brother Tumburu is visualized as a composite of his four sisters, indicating his subordination.

²¹⁶ See chapters 47, 52, and 54 of that work (SANDERSON 2009: 51n22).

²¹⁷ SANDERSON 2004: 355-58 and 374n76.

²¹⁸ SANDERSON 2004: 373-4 n76 and 377.

²¹⁹ *Mañjuśriya-mūla-kalpa* 47.24, cited in SANDERSON 2009: 51n22.

Sampradāya #3: YĀMALA

Earliest certain evidence: 6th- 7th century (ur-Skandapurāṇa)

Primary deity: Aghoreśvarī (aka Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī or Bhairavī) with her consort Kapālīśa-bhairava

Visualization: pale yellow and white respectively, naked and wearing ornaments of human bone

Other key deities: Raktā, Karālī, Caṇḍākṣī, and Mahocchuṣmā (*devīs* known as Guhyakā-s); Karālā, Danturā, Bhīmavaktrā, and Mahābalā (the *dūtīs*)

Mūla-mantra: OM HŪM CAṆḌE KĀPĀLINĪ SVĀHĀ

Root text: *Brahmayāmala* aka *Picumata*

As we have seen, the Yāmala tradition is attested early on, though as far as we can tell, like the Vāma/Bhaginī it did not survive much into the classical period of Tantra (900-1100 CE). It is, in large part, a Mantramārga redaction of “primitive” Somasiddhāntin/Kāpālīka material. In terms of the left-right spectrum pictorially represented above, it is positioned on the spectrum just to the left of the Mantrapīṭha tradition (see below), and thus here the female deity is slightly emphasized over the male. The Yāmala does not fit neatly into the spectrum, however, for it features some of the most intense mortuary imagery and transgressive cremation ground practices of any of the sects, as we would expect given its Somasiddhāntin background. While liberation is promised to the adept here, it is magical powers and transactions with the spirits that grant them which receive the greatest emphasis.

The primary text of this tradition that has come down to us, the *Brahmayāmala*, is undoubtedly very old and frequently textually corrupt. Its 12,000 verses contain a huge amount of material on magical technologies and transactions with both embodied and disembodied female spirits (*yoginīs*, *yogeśvarīs*). It is also the sole surviving scriptural source in the first millennium Śaiva canon to describe a sexual ritual (apart from some vague allusions in the *Niśvāsa*). Indeed, its alternate title, the *Picumata* (literally “the cotton doctrine”) is in fact code for teachings (*mata*) centered on the magical properties of mingled sexual fluids ritually obtained (*picu*) (HATLEY 2007: 244-250). The most authoritative study on the *Brahmayāmala* to date is the magisterial doctoral dissertation by Shaman HATLEY (2007), which has shed huge amounts of light on the text and its cult of *yoginīs*.²²⁰ HATLEY presents a polythetic definition of the *yoginīs* featured in the Mantramārga, enumerating the following eight characteristics (2007: 11-17):

- *Multiplicity*. *Yoginīs* travel in bands or hordes (*vṛnda*, *gaṇa*). “*Yoginīs* are in fact characterized more by their multiplicity than their individual identities, for there exists remarkable fluidity in the composition of *yoginī* sets.”

²²⁰ While “*yoginī* cult” corresponds to no specific emic term, HATLEY rightly groups the *Brahmayāmala* thematically with the *Siddhayogeśvarī-mata* and *Tantra-sadbhāva* of the Trika and the *Jayadrathayāmala* of the Kālikula as “works of the *kāpālīka* *yoginī* cult” (2007: 153). These four are also sources for the Buddhist *Laghuśaṃvara-tantra*, as SANDERSON has shown.

- *Manifestation in/as mortal women*—a human female adept may become a *yoginī*.
- *Organization into clans* which shape their natures and identities. Yoginīs are often regarded as *aṃśāvātāras* of the Seven or Eight Mothers, as are those who are initiated into their one of their clans through the casting of a flower onto an ogdoadic *maṇḍala*.
- *Theriomorphism* and shape-shifting. Yoginīs are frequently depicted with animal heads (horse, lion, bird, snake, etc.) and take on animal forms.
- *Kāpālīka cult and iconography*. Cremation grounds are a favorite haunt of the *yoginīs*.
- *Danger, impurity, and power*. The power of the *yoginīs* is available to those “heroes” (*vīras*) who face danger, endure arduous rituals, and negotiate impurity successfully. Success entails a direct encounter (*melāpa*) with the disembodied *yoginīs*.
- *Protection and transmission of esoteric teachings*. They are said to guard and transmit the most secret and powerful of teachings (also a hallmark of the Krama school).
- *Flight*. “The archetypal *yoginī* is the autonomous sky-traveller (*khecari*).”²²¹

As esoteric (*rahasya*) traditions, the Mantramārgic *sampradāyas* are supposed to keep a rigid boundary that disallows the performance of their rites and mantras in public temple environments, and generally this was the case; but, as has been recently discovered, the Yāmala tradition was translated into a transgressive temple cult in South India described in *Māṭṛtantras* (one of which also has the title *Brahmayāmala*) (SANDERSON 2007c: 277). An eleventh-century inscription from the Tamil/Andhra/ Karṇāṭaka border region confirms a temple cult that included worship with meat and wine (Ibid.: n140). We might speculate that, since this cult was explicitly for the benefit of the king and his kingdom (Ibid.: n143), it was not

²²¹ This list may be contrasted with David WHITE’s misleading eight-point polythetic definition of *yoginīs* (2003: 27), which includes these three points: “(2) their power was intimately connected to the flow of blood, both their own sexual and menstrual emissions, and the blood of their animal (and human?) victims; (3) they were essential to Tantric initiation in which they initiated male practitioners through fluid transactions via their ‘mouths’; and (8) they were never portrayed as practicing yoga for the simple reason that yoga as we know it had not yet been invented.” The last of these is bizarrely wrong; the first is confused, and the middle one has no basis in Tantric Śaivism whatsoever (WHITE may here be thinking of the *dūtī* in Tantric Buddhist *abhiṣeka* initiation rites; but this hardly characterizes Tantra in general). HATLEY comments: “There is undoubtedly a sanguinary dimension to the cult of *yoginīs*, and to the powers attributed to their most dangerous varieties. But as for *yoginīs*’ ‘sexual and menstrual emissions,’ the supposed significance of these remains mysterious to me; while the fluids of female practitioners are certainly significant in some rituals, the women concerned are seldom referred to as ‘*yoginīs*,’ while references in primary sources to the fluids of *yoginīs*, as goddesses, appear rare and ambiguous [at best]. Similarly, I am presently unaware of a Śaiva tradition in which *yoginīs*—presumably WHITE has in mind female ritual consorts—were ‘essential to Tantric initiation,’ and certainly not one in which they transacted with initiands in the manner suggested” (2007: 11n33).

really public in the sense of offering worship on behalf of whoever walks in the door.

Lastly, we might see evidence for the significance of the *Brahmayāmala* in the fact that it is quoted or cited fifteen times by the later sophisticated exegete Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka*, despite the fact that its *milieu* is distant from his (for example, he preached against grasping after magical powers, seeing them as antithetical to spiritual liberation).²²² Though Abhinavagupta was not in full accord with the kind of practice presented in much of the *Brahmayāmala* he can cite it in support of any given point because of a doctrine found in the nondual tradition: that Śiva has hidden nuggets of truth even in dualistic and power-obsessed scriptures, nuggets that reveal themselves when the given text is “bathed in nondual awareness” by the reader.

Sampradāya #4: MANTRAPĪṬHA

Primary deity: Svachanda-bhairava aka Svachanda-lalita-bhairava

Visualization: white, five-faced and three-eyed, 18-armed, wearing dreadlocks and a garland of human skulls; with his consort Aghoreśvarī on his lap

Other key deities: Siddhā, Raktā/Cāmuṇḍā, Śuṣkā/Alambuṣā, and Utpalā

Mūla-mantra: HŪM

Root text: *Svacchandabhairava-tantra* (6th-9th cen.;²²³ earliest MS 1068 CE)

Exegesis: *uddyota* by Kṣemarāja (in Kaula Trika school)

Paddhati: *Kalādīkṣāpaddhati* of Manodaguru (and many others)

This *sampradāya*, which is known as the *Svacchanda* and as the *Mantra-pīṭha* or “Throne of Mantras,”²²⁴ is the foremost of the Dakṣiṇa division of the canon. It is of interest primarily because of its great popularity for many centuries in Kashmīr and Nepāl (where remnants of its practice survive to the present day). Its central text, a vast work called the *Svacchanda-tantra*, tells us much about Tantrik practice and cosmology, but little about philosophy. The Mantrapīṭha occupied a kind of middle ground between the Siddhānta and the non-Saiddhāntika Śākta traditions: here the Goddess is worshipped, but as subordinate; and mildly transgressive offerings are used (such as wine or rice-beer) but not consumed by the practitioner. The relative status of the God and Goddess here is precisely inverted from that of the Yāmala; and it is significant that Svachandabhairava’s consort is Aghoreśvarī, which is one of the commonest names for the Caṇḍā Kāpālinī, the central deity of the Yāmala.²²⁵ In support of this connection, one of the four *devīs* of the deity’s innermost retinue (in sources from Kashmīr) has the same name in both the Yāmala and the

²²² E.g., in TĀ 27 Abhinavagupta quotes BY 4; and in TĀ 4’s passage on self-consecration, he paraphrases BY 21. TĀ 28 paraphrases BY 44 (HATLEY 2007: 211n57).

²²³ The text is dated to the 6th or 7th century by Serbaeva (2010: 212), but it seems likely that it was expanded up to the 9th century.

²²⁴ Though it appears there were originally five Mantrapīṭha scriptures, only this one survived.

²²⁵ But note that in later Newari *paddhatis*, Kubjikā is pictured as the consort of Svachanda-bhairava. See DYCZKOWSKI’s *A Journey in the World of the Tantras*, chapter six, “The Cult of the Goddess Kubjikā.”

Mantrapīṭha (i.e., Raktā). The colors of these four *devīs* are the same as those of the Catur-Bhaginī, indicating a possible connection there too.²²⁶

The Mantrapīṭha was just characterized as mildly transgressive; we see this also in its treatment of caste. Whereas caste boundaries are still maintained after initiation in the Veda-congruent Siddhānta, the Mantrapīṭha sides with the left-handed schools in forbidding acknowledgment of former caste amongst initiates. As can be seen in the following passage, one's level of initiation functions as one's "caste" within the community of initiates (*kula*):

All those who have been initiated by this ritual are of equal nature, whether they be brahmins, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras, or others. [For] they have been brought into a state of fusion with the nature of Śiva. [In assembly] they may not sit according to the divisions of their former castes; [for] they are said to form but a single caste of Bhairava, auspicious and eternal. Once a person has taken up this Tantric system he may never mention his former caste. . . . O Empress of the Gods, it is through [this] freedom from discrimination that one will certainly attain both siddhi and liberation. – *Svacchanda-tantra* 4.539-545 (SANDERSON 2009: 293-4)

The Mantrapīṭha did not have a clearly defined philosophy, thus, in an probable attempt to win adherents from this very popular school, both the dualist Saiddhāntikas and the nondualist Śāktas produced commentaries on the *Svacchanda-tantra*, interpreting it in light of their own doctrines. We may infer that the nondualists won this debate, as their commentary is preserved while the Saiddhāntika one is not. I am referring to the commentary called the *Svacchanda-tantra-uddyota* written by the prolific Kṣemarāja of the Trika school (see *sampradāya* #6 below). A critical edition of the *Svacchanda-tantra* and its *uddyota* is a major desideratum for the field, though at least there exists a dissertation on it, that of William ARRAJ (1988).

We may note the success of the Mantrapīṭha in two respects: firstly and most importantly, it influenced the formation of the standard pan-Indian Saiddhāntika ritual system, despite the fact that Saiddhāntika authorities stressed that texts from the Bhairava division of the canon were not to be drawn upon. We see its influence clearly, for example, in the *Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati* of the Paramāra monarch Bhojadeva (mid-11th cen.), which was then absorbed into the *Somaśambhu-paddhati* (late 11th cen.), the largest and most important of the early Saiddhāntika paddhatis (SANDERSON 2004: 359-60).

Secondly, the *Svacchanda*, along with the *Netra* (see below), was the basis for nearly all surviving Kashmirian paddhatis down to recent times (SANDERSON 2005b: 240). We may also note that the recitation of the *Bahurūpa-garbha-stotra*, a hymn to

²²⁶ This hypothesis is strengthened by a passage of the *Mokṣopāya* which pairs the two sets of four *devīs* (as the primary representatives of the Vāma and the Dakṣiṇa canonical divisions) and asserts that these eight are the foremost of all the Mother goddesses (SANDERSON 2005b: 278, citing HANNEDER 1998a: 69). These eight are also presented as a group in the *Jayadrathayāmala* (see SANDERSON 1986: 186n84).

Svacchanda-bhairava, was a standard preliminary to Śaiva ritual in Kashmīr down to the late twentieth century (SANDERSON 2007b: 293).

Sampradāya #5: AMṚTEŚVARA

Primary deity: Amṛteśvara aka Mṛtyuñjaya

Visualization: white, one-faced and four-armed, with his consort [Amṛta-]Lakṣmī

Mūla-mantra: OM JUM SAḤ

Root text: *Netratantra* aka *Sarvasrotah-saṅgraha-sāra* (c. 800)

Exegesis: *uddyota* by Kṣemarāja (in Kaula Trika school)

Paddhatis: *Amṛteśvara-pūjā-paddhati* and *Amṛteśvaradīkṣāvidhi* of Viśveśvara (the latter a guide in verse to the performance of royal initiation into the cult of Amṛteśvara)

There is no solid evidence that this tradition was popular outside of the regions of Kashmīr and the Kaṭhmāṇḍu valley of Nepāl, nor did it seem to command exclusive devotion even in those regions. As already noted, second-millennium Kashmirian paddhatis tended to conflate material drawn from the *Netra-tantra*, the central text of this school, with material drawn from the *Svacchanda-tantra*. The central feature of historical interest here is what appears to be an unusually broad-minded and nonsectarian attitude peculiar to the *Netra-tantra*, which teaches that the Amṛteśvara mantra may be used in the worship of any deity without distinction. In other words, one may venerate Amṛteśvara in the form of his mantra (OM JUM SAḤ) in conjunction with the worship and/or visualization of any form of Śiva, but also of Vāsudeva, Brahmā, the Sun, the Moon, Bhadrakālī, Skanda, Gaṇeśa, the Buddha, and other deities (SANDERSON 2005b: 245). In its eighth chapter the *Netra-tantra* says:

Though One, he can be meditated upon in many forms, all of which will bestow their fruit. He can be worshipped alone or with his consort, as expressing duality, nonduality, or both, using any of the methods described in the scriptures; all will bear their fruit [when combined with Amṛteśvara's mantra]. (8.56-7)

SANDERSON has argued that this seeming ecumenism and ritual flexibility is best explained by the hypothesis that the *Netra* constituted the manual for “a new class of Śaiva officiants working in what was traditionally the professional domain of the brahmanical royal chaplain (*rāja-purohita*), specializing in rituals for the protection of the monarch and his family and taking over the performance of worship on the king's behalf of the full range of deities whose worship is prescribed in the brahmanical calendar.”²²⁷

Kṣemarāja wrote a full commentary (*uddyota*) on this text as well. In the spirit of his teacher, Abhinavagupta, he used his commentary to overcode nondual teachings not native to the text. An example of this is his analysis of the prescribed visualization of Amṛteśvara. The latter is to be visualized, we are told in chapter three of the *tantra*, as brilliant white, one-faced, three-eyed, wide-eyed, and four-armed, sitting on the lunar disc in the center of a white lotus. In two of his four hands he holds a jar of nectar and a full moon. The other two display the gestures of

²²⁷ 2007: 386; this subject is the principal topic of SANDERSON 2005b.

boon-granting (*varada-mudrā*) and protection (*abhaya-mudrā*). Kṣemarāja comments on this as follows:

When the scripture says “one should visualize the Lord of gods in his own form” or essential nature, it means you should contemplate one’s own form as white and translucent, as the pure, joyful light of unlimited consciousness, delightful because it manifests the entire universe on its own canvas through the power of its autonomy. The Deity is described as “one-faced” because he is one with the extraordinary Power of Freedom; and he is “three-eyed” because he is united with the three Powers of Willing, Knowing, and Acting, which are manifested through the greatness of that freedom. He is “wide-eyed” to express the fact that the universe manifests from these three powers. His four hands display the gestures of boon-granting and protection and hold the jar of nectar and the full moon to indicate respectively that the Divine bestows worldly success, uproots all fear, and unfolds the true nature of the Self as consisting of the divine powers of knowing and acting. – *uddyota ad Netra* 3.17-22 (translation follows SANDERSON 1995: 65)

Thus Kṣemarāja translates the visualized features of the deity to the various powers and capacities of the individual practitioner who is an embodiment of that deity. We see this strategy of micro-macrocosmic correlation in internal worship again and again in the Tantras and their exegesis. Whatever features are present in the deity are thought to be present in each individual as well, and Tantric exegesis is interested *inter alia* in mapping those features in detail and realizing each of them internally.

Sampradāya #6: TRIKA

Earliest certain evidence: in the *Caṇḍīstotra* of the *Haravijaya* (c. 830)

Primary deities: Parā, Parāparā, and Aparā

Visualization: respectively white and benevolent, displaying *cin-mudrā* and holding a manuscript; red and wrathful; and red-black and terrifying; the latter two with mortuary imagery

Other key deities: alphabet deities Māṭṛsadbhāva and Mālinī

Mūla-mantra(s): SAUḤ, HRĪM

Root text: ***Mālinīvijayottara***

Other key texts: *Siddhayogeśvarī-mata-tantra*; *Tantrasadbhāva*; *Parātrīśikā*; *Vijñāna-bhairava-tantra*; **Devyāyāmala*; **Trikasadbhāva*; **Vīrāvalikula*.

Exegesis:

- *Tantrāloka* of Abhinavagupta (early 11th cen.), with *-viveka* by Jayaratha (mid-13th cen.)
- *Tantrasāra* of Abhinavagupta
- *Mālinīśloka-vārtika* of Abhinavagupta
- *Parātrīśikā-vivarāṇa* of Abhinavagupta
- *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-kārikās* (Pratyabhijñā school) of Utpaladeva with *svavṛtti* and *svavivṛti*, and Abhinavagupta’s commentaries on both
- (For Spanda works see under the Krama, #7a)

A misnomer still much used by scholars is that of “Kashmīr Shaivism,” first coined by J.C. Chatterji in his 1914 introductory volume to the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies (1911-47). The term is used to refer to the literature of the Spanda and Pratyabhijñā philosophical doctrines that arose in Kashmīr on the ostensible basis of the Trika. Beginning with Chatterji and for more than seventy years after him, the term has been used to artificially separate these sophisticated philosophies from their embarrassing Tantric roots.

In fact, the Trika was pan-Indian, like most of the Śaiva *sampradāyas*. We have evidence of it from an early period in both Orissa and Mahārāṣṭra (SANDERSON 2005 and 2007b), and it seems that the latter may have been its homeland. Abhinavagupta’s guru’s guru came from Mahārāṣṭra, and the Jain Somadeva confirms the presence of the Kaula form of the Trika in the Deccan in the tenth century in his *Yaśastilaka* (DYCZKOWSKI 1988: 6). The founder of the Trika is traditionally said to be a sage named Tryambaka, who might have been associated with the ancient Tryambakeśvar temple site in Nasik District, Mahārāṣṭra.

Though never very popular numerically, the Trika had ancient roots and considerable durability: its first known scripture, the *Siddhayogeśvarī-mata-tantra*, has been dated to the seventh century (TÖRZSÖK 1999), and worship of its central deity, Parādevī, was still current in Tamiḷ country in the fourteenth century. Doctrinally, the Trika was unusual because its doctrine encompassed duality, nonduality, and—in its exegetical phase—the inexpressible reality beyond both duality and nonduality (*paramādvaya*). Though this doctrinal diversity reflects the sect’s diachronic development, since scripture was regarded as timeless revelation Abhinavagupta could use it to explicate an inclusive theology of levels of reality whose reach was no less than the whole of Tantric Śaivism.

The basis of Abhinavagupta’s exegesis was the Kaulized form of the Trika which he received from his guru Śambhunātha. In the traditional account of the three-and-a-half *maṭhikās* that will be described later in the section on canon, the Kaula Trika is said to have been founded by the daughter of Tryambaka, making it the only major lineage group to have been founded by a woman. Since some of the nine basic *sampradāyas* resisted Kaula influence, and others absorbed it totally, it is perhaps in the Trika that we see most clearly the co-existence of Kaula and non-Kaula forms of the same cult (SANDERSON 1995: 23). Briefly, the Kaula Trika incorporates more transgressive practice, radical nondual teaches, and constitutes a more essentialized, interiorized, and aestheticized version of the Trika, while the non-Kaula form is closer to the Śaiva Siddhānta.

Adherents of the Trika worshipped three goddesses: the sweet and gentle Parādevī, flanked by two lower, fierce Kālī-like emanations of the central Goddess, called Parāparā and Aparā. Their generic names were perhaps intended to allow for identifications with extant goddesses, and SANDERSON has demonstrated that Parā is indeed an ectype of Sarasvatī, while Parāparā has occasionally been linked to Lakṣmī in the South, and Aparā iconographically resembles Kālī (SANDERSON 1990: 54). These three are understood by Abhinavagupta and his lineage as the embodiments of the following categories:

<u>Parā</u>	<u>Parāparā</u>	<u>Aparā</u>
<i>pramātr</i>	<i>pramāṇa</i>	<i>prameya</i>
knower	knowledge	known
<i>icchā</i>	<i>jñāna</i>	<i>kriyā</i>
Will	Knowledge	Action
<i>abheda</i>	<i>bhedābheda</i>	<i>bheda</i>
unity	unity-in-diversity	diversity
<i>sṛṣṭi</i>	<i>sthiti</i>	<i>saṃhāra</i>
emission	stasis	reabsorption

Table 6. The symbology of the three goddesses of the Trika

These three Goddesses are to be visualized on lotus-thrones positioned on the tips of a trident, the staff of which is visualized as co-extensive with the meditator's spine. All thirty-six *tattvas* of the classical schema are mapped on to this trident: the swelling at the base of the staff represents the five fundamental elements (*pañca-mahābhūtas*), the staff constitutes the *tattvas* up to *Māyā*, the knot of the banner at the level of the palate is *Māyā-tattva*, the plinth at the level of the third eye is *Śuddhavidyā-tattva*, the lotus above that is *Īśvara-tattva*, and lying on the lotus in *śavāsana* is *Sadāśiva*, pictured as a blazing corpse (*mahāpreta*), laughing as he gazes upward to the higher light of the Trika above him (SANDERSON 1986: 180). The trident itself emerges from the practitioner's fontanelle (which is coterminous with *Sadāśiva*'s navel), and expresses *Śiva-Śakti* in three aspects: the all-pervasive power (*vyāpinī*), the equalizing power (*samanā*), and the Transmental Power (*unmanā*). With this last power, the level of the three white lotuses on the tips of the trident and the goddesses seated on them, we have left the universe behind; that is, we are "outside" time and space. The Transmental is what remains after the whole of manifest reality dissolves: the ultimate "ground of being." On this level, the meditator is to see the three Powers (*icchā, jñāna, kriyā*) represented by the three goddesses abandoning their difference and fusing into the heart of his consciousness. This Heart, the invisible Fourth Power, is the point of repose within the pure autonomy of the Self which finally reabsorbs the distinction between Power and "I" as the Holder of Power (*śakti* and *śaktimān*), between the worshipped and the worshipper (SANDERSON 1986: 192-93).

The three goddesses of the Trika are then considered expressions of one esoteric deity, often named as *Māṭṛsadbhāva* in the scriptures, but also confusingly called *Parā* (perhaps in the same sense that the word *prāṇa* can mean one of the five *prāṇas* or all five together). In the esoteric form of the Trika in which its doctrines are fused with those of the *Krama* (see below), *Māṭṛsadbhāva* is glossed with *Kālī Kālakarṣiṇī*. We see these exegetical strategies clearly in *Abhinavagupta's Tantrasāra* chapter four:

*tisṛṣu tāvat viśvaṃ samāpyate yayā idaṃ śivādidharanyantam avikalpya-
saṃvin-mātra-rūpatayā bibharti ca paśyati ca bhāsayati ca parameśvaraḥ sā
asya śrī-paraśaktiḥ | yayā ca darpaṇa-hastyādivat bhedābhedaḥ sa sā asya
śrī-parāparaśaktiḥ | yayā paraspara-viviktātmanā bhedenaiiva sā asya śrīmad-
aparaśaktiḥ | etat trividhaṃ yayā dhāraṇam ātmany eva kroḍikāreṇa*

*anusandhānātmanā grasate sā asya bhagavatī śrī-paraiva śrīman-
māṭṛsadbhāva-kālakarṣiṇyādi-śabdāntara-niruktā |*

The whole of reality is encompassed by three basic Powers. She by whom the Highest Divinity (*parameśvara*) supports, perceives, and manifests all this—from Śiva down to Earth—as pure undifferentiated Consciousness, is his sacred Transcendent Power, the Supreme Goddess (*Parā-śakti*). She by whom [he supports, perceives, and manifests all] as diversity within unity is his sacred Intermediate Power (*Parāparā-śakti*). She by whom [he supports, perceives, and manifests all] as entirely differentiated, characterized by [apparent] mutual separation, is his sacred Lower Power (*Aparā-śakti*). She by whom he devours this three-fold process, embracing it to himself alone as unitary awareness, is simply his Blessed Goddess Śrī Parā [in her higher all-encompassing form], denoted by other names [in the scriptures], such as Māṭṛsadbhāva [“The Essence of the Mothers”], Kālakarṣiṇī [“The Projector and Withdrawer of Time”] or Vāmeśvarī [“The Goddess who Emits (Reality)”].

In the preliminaries to all forms of Tantric worship, Vāgīśvarī is venerated, and it is in the Trika that she ascend to the place of supreme deity; for Parā is short for Para-vāk, “the Supreme Word.” This points us towards the most unique feature of the Trika’s doctrine and practice: a complex system of what can only be called *linguistic mysticism*, whereby the phonemes of Sanskrit are thought to be concretizations of patterned vibrations of divine energy that are simultaneously the foundation for all human thought and the building blocks of the entire manifest universe. That is to say, on this view, the apparently dualistic division of words and objects (signifier vs. signified) is ultimately grounded in a single nondual matrix of subtle vibration, i.e. Parā. This doctrine finds its expression especially in the *Parātrīśika* and Abhinavagupta’s *vivaraṇa* thereon as well as in chapter three of his *Tantrāloka*. Parā has two main mantras, one of creation (*śṛṣṭi-bīja*) and one of dissolution (*saṃhāra-bīja*). The first is the seed-syllable SAUḤ, while the second is the especially esoteric KHPREM.



Fig. 4. SAUḤ in the Śāradā script

The Trika is the first group we have encountered in our survey thus far that offered a privileged place to female practitioners. The slight privileging it afforded to women places it between the Siddhānta, which in general did not allow women to practice (giving them only the *nirbīja* variety of *dīkṣā*), and the Krama, which promoted women to the position of guru. The earliest text of the Trika, the *Siddha-yogēśvarī-mata*, even specifies that its most powerful mantra (KHPREM, here called the *yoginī-hṛdaya*

mantra) is especially intended for women, having been handed down orally from woman to woman (28.41-42).

The Vijñāna-bhairava Tantra

Another scripture of the Trika, probably the most unusual of all the pre-tenth-century scriptures, is called the *Vijñāna-bhairava-tantra* or “Scripture of the Wisdom-Bhairava.” This text teaches an esoteric form of the Trika in which a practitioner of high *adhikāra* cultivates deceptively simple methods for directly accessing the state of expanded consciousness generally referred to as Bhairava or Bhairavī by the text. The text repeatedly articulates a subitist²²⁸ goal of accessing the natural state of awareness that results from dissolving all thought-constructs into their ground. Like most Tantrik scriptures, the text takes the form of a dialogue between Śiva and Śakti, but here appears a kind of textual self-consciousness not seen in other scriptures. It begins with the Goddess asking Bhairava:

śrutaṃ deva mayā sarvaṃ rudra-yāmala-sambhavam |
trika-bhedam aśeṣeṇa sārāt sāra-vibhāgaśaḥ || 1 ||
adyāpi na nivṛtto me saṃśayaḥ parameśvara |
kiṃ rūpaṃ tattvato deva śabdarāśi-kalā-mayam || 2 ||
kiṃ vā navātma-bhedena bhairave bhairavākṛtau |
triśiro-bheda-bhinnaṃ vā kiṃ vā śakti-trayātmakam || 3 ||

O Lord, I have heard the entire teaching of the Trika that has arisen from our union, in scriptures of ever greater essentiality, but my doubts have not yet dissolved. What is the true nature [of Reality], O Lord? Does it consist in the powers of the alphabet (*śabdarāśi-kalā*)? Or, amongst the terrible forms of Bhairava, is it Navātman? Or is the trinity of *śaktis* [Parā, Parāparā, and Aparā] that constitute the three heads of Triśiro-bhairava? . . . Etc.

and she proceeds to name other esoteric technical terms from the higher yogas taught in the scriptures (v. 2-4). She argues that if Parā is to be visualized with a particular color and form, then she cannot really be Absolute (*para*), and entreats Bhairava to clear up the confusion (v. 5-7a). Bhairava replies,

sādhu sādhu tvayā pṛṣṭaṃ tantrasāram idam priye || 7 ||
gūhanīyatamam bhadre tathāpi kathayāmi te |
yatkiṃcit sakalaṃ rūpaṃ bhairavasya prakīrtitam || 8 ||
tad asāratayā devi vijñeyaṃ śakrajālavat |
māyā-svapnopamaṃ caiva gandharva-nagara-bhramam || 9 ||
dhyānārtham bhrānta-buddhīnāṃ kriyādambara-vartinām |
kevalaṃ varṇitam puṃsāṃ vikalpa-nihatātmanām || 10 ||
tattvato na navātmāsau śabda-rāśir na bhairavaḥ |

Bravo! Bravo, my dear one. You have asked about the very essence of the Tantra(s). I shall relate this most hidden of teachings to you, virtuous one. Know that the embodied (*sakala*) forms of Bhairava I have taught in the scriptures are not the real essence, O Goddess. They are

²²⁸ See note 85.

like a magic trick, like dreams or illusions or castles in the sky, taught only to help focus the meditation of those men who are debilitated by dualistic thought, their minds confused, entangled in the details of ritual action. In reality Bhairava is not Navātman, or the alphabet, or . . .

and he reiterates the various technical terms she introduced, continuing:

*aprabuddhamatīnām hi etā balavibhīṣikāḥ |
māṭṛmodakavat sarvaṃ pravṛttyarthaṃ udāhṛtam || 13 ||
dikkālakalanonmuktā deśoddeśāviśeṣinī |
vyapadeṣṭum aśakyāsāv akathyā paramārthataḥ || 14 ||
antaḥsvānubhavānandā vikalponmuktagocarā |
yāvasthā bharitākārā bhairavī bhairavātmanaḥ || 15 ||
tad vapus tattvato jñeyam vimalam viśvapūraṇam |
evaṃvidhe pare tattve kaḥ pūjyaḥ kaś ca tṛpyati || 16 ||
evaṃvidhā bhairavasya yāvasthā pariḡyate |
sā parā pararūpeṇa parā devī prakīrtitā || 17 ||*

These were taught to help unenlightened people make progress on the path, like a mother uses sweets and threats to tempt her children. Know that in reality, the one pure universe-filling ‘form’ of Bhairava is that absolutely full state called [Goddess] Bhairavī: beyond reckoning in space or time, without direction or locality, impossible to indicate, ultimately indescribable, a field free of mental constructs, blissful with the experience of the innermost Self (*antaḥsvānubhavānandā*). When this is the ultimate Reality (*para-tattva*), who is to be worshipped, who gratified? This state of Bhairava is hymned as supreme; it is proclaimed to be Parā Devī in her ultimate nature.

The text goes on to impart a number of unconventional techniques for entering into expanded and intensified states of consciousness (*avasthā bharitākārā bhairavī*).

These include:

- gazing at a blank wall, a vast open space, or the clear blue sky (vv. 33, 60, 84);
- spinning around and around and falling down (v. 111);
- becoming aware of the space between the thoughts or between the breaths (vv. 24, 61);
- gazing at the pattern of sunlight on the floor (v. 76);
- meditating on the liminal state between waking and sleeping (v. 75);
- accessing intensified awareness through the pain of a piercing (v. 93);
- contemplating that the sky is in your head (v. 85);
- just repeating the vowel ‘a’ (v. 90);
- simply sitting and doing “nothing” (non-conceptual meditation).

Some of the teachings of this peculiar scripture cannot even be called techniques; rather, the text invites us to notice daily-life opportunities for accessing that expanded state that we might otherwise let slip by:

- listening to the vibration of live instrumental music or becoming one

- with the joyous feeling of a song (v. 73);
- the feeling of wonder from watching a magic show (v. 66);
- the aftermath of an orgasm (v. 69);
- following desire back to its source;
- the arising of inner delight when savoring fine food and drink (v. 72);
- the repetitive gentle motion of a swing or a carriage (v. 83);
- the energy of sharpened and heightened consciousness in any intense experience (vv. 74, 101, 118).

The text seems to exhibit a strong Buddhist influence, for one of the most common themes is meditating on the “voidness” (*sūnya*) of things: the inside of the body as empty space, the space of the heart, the senses as voids, the whole universe as pure open spacious expansive void. Yet this is not syncretism, for the scripture maintains throughout a theology of Śiva-Śakti, where Śiva is defined as unbounded spaciousness and Śakti as energy. Either one can be the means of accessing the other, for they are inseparable, like fire and its heat (v. 18-19). But it is easier for most, the text tells us, to access the non-conceptual space of Śiva through the energy of Śakti than the other way around (v. 20-21). The *Vijñāna-bhairava* frequently stresses that the state it describes is wide open and free of any mental constructs, even if a mental construct was used to get there.

We have dwelt on this text at some length because though it was atypical, it was also seminal, for it laid the groundwork for a “gnostic” version of the Trika, in which traditional ritual could be overcoded with gnostic meaning, or dispensed with altogether for those qualified. The final verses of the text state:

*idaṃ yadi vapur deva parāyās ca maheśvara || 142 ||
 evamuktavyavasthāyāṃ japyate ko japaś ca kaḥ |
 dhyāyate ko mahānātha pūjyate kaś ca tṛpyati || 143 ||
 hūyate kasya vā homo yāgaḥ kasya ca kiṃ katham |*

“If, O Lord, this is the true form of Parā, how can there be mantra or its repetition in the [nondual] state you have taught? What would be visualized, what worshipped and gratified? And who is there to receive offerings?”

śrī bhairava uvāca:

*eṣātra prakriyā bāhyā sthūleṣv eva mṛgekṣaṇe || 144 ||
 bhūyo bhūyaḥ pare bhāve bhāvanā bhāvyate hi yā |
 japaḥ so 'tra svayaṃ nādo mantrātmā japyā idṛśaḥ || 145 ||
 dhyānaṃ hi niścalā buddhir nirākārā nirāśrayā |
 na tu dhyānaṃ śarīrākṣi-mukha-hastādi-kalpanā || 146 ||
 pūjā nāma na puṣpādyair yā matiḥ kriyate dṛḍhā |
 nirvikalpe mahā-vyomni sā pūjā hy ādarāl layaḥ || 147 ||
 mahāśūnyālaye vahnau bhūtākṣa-viṣayādikam |
 hūyate manasā sārḍhaṃ sa homaś cetanā-srucā || 149 ||
 yāgo 'tra parameśāni tuṣṭir ānanda-lakṣaṇā |
 kṣapaṇāt sarva-pāpānāṃ trāṇāt sarvasya pārvati || 150 ||
 rudra-śakti-samāveśas tat kṣetram bhāvanā parā |
 anyathā tasya tattvasya kā pūjā kāś ca tṛpyati || 151 ||*

The revered Bhairava said, “In this [higher way], O doe-eyed one, external procedures are considered coarse (*sthūla*). Here ‘japa’ is the ever greater meditative absorption (*bhāvanā*) into the supreme state; and similarly, here the [‘mantra’] to be repeated is the spontaneous resonance [of self-awareness], the essence of [all] mantras. As for ‘meditative visualization’ (*dhyāna*), it is a mind that has become motionless, free of forms, and supportless, not imagining a deity with a body, eyes, face and so on. *Pūjā* is likewise not the offering of flowers and so on. A mind made firm, that through careful attention dissolves into the thought-free ultimate void [of pure awareness]: that is *pūjā*. . . . Offering the elements, the senses, and their objects, together with the mind, into the ‘fire’ that is the abode of the Great Void, with consciousness as the ladle: that is *homa*. Sacrifice (*yāga*) is the gratification characterized by [innate] bliss. That which comes from destroying (*kṣap*) all sins and saving (*tra*) all beings is the [true] holy place (*kṣetra*), i.e. the state of being immersed in the Power of Rudra, the supreme meditation. Otherwise (i.e., without this inner realization), what worship could there be of that Reality, and whom would it gratify?”²²⁹

This passage was of great significance to Abhinavagupta, who expanded on it in the fourth chapter of his *Tantrasāra*. We will return to it in Part II of the present work.

The Pratyabhijñā Lineage

In the domain of philosophy and philosophical theology, the most significant outgrowth of the Trika was undoubtedly the Pratyabhijñā or “Recognition” school. When modern surveys of Indian philosophy cite any school of Śaiva Tantric philosophy, it is most commonly this one; and the production of secondary literature on it continues unstintingly.²³⁰ Though the Pratyabhijñā was explicitly grounded in the Trika, it was written in the language of pan-Indian philosophical discourse (especially of the Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā varieties) and thus tended to transcend sectarian boundaries. Its first known author was Somānanda (c. 900-950), who wrote *The Vision of Śiva (Śiva-dṛṣṭi)*, now edited and translated by John Nemeč (2011). Somānanda’s disciple was Utpaladeva (c. 925-975), the key author of the Pratyabhijñā. Utpala wrote many works, but is best known for the *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-kārikās* or *The Stanzas on the Recognition of [Oneself as] the Lord*, from which the Pratyabhijñā school gets its name. This monumental yet concise work of philosophical dialectic is deeply engaged with Buddhist thought, and not only that: it paraphrases or alludes to arguments of the Sāṅkhyas, Kaumārīlas, Vijñānavādins, Sautrāntikas, Vaibhāṣikas, Prāmāṇikas, and Vaiyākaraṇas, especially the figures of Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and Bhartṛhari. These *pūrvapakṣins* are sometimes agreed with and other times opposed. It is a dense and intellectually challenging work that also includes some remarkably mystical passages in its last quarter.

²²⁹ My translation of this passage in some places follows that of SANDERSON (1990: 74-76).

²³⁰ See especially the recent articles of TORELLA (several in 2007) and Isabelle RATIÉ (spanning 2007-present).

Utpala's disciple was Lakṣmaṇagupta, whose writings, if any, have not survived. The latter's disciple was Abhinavagupta, who we have already had occasion to mention. Abhinava was the most prolific author of the lineage; he wrote not one but two major commentaries on Utpaladeva's work. His second and longer commentary, running to several volumes in the Sanskrit, was probably his last work (completed, he tells us, on a dark December night in the year 1015). It is a daunting *magnum opus*, and the only book of his that can rival his *Tantrāloka*.

Abhinava Gupta's disciple Kṣemarāja wrote a short work—twenty *sūtras* plus a detailed auto-commentary (*svavṛtti*) of about fifty pages in Sanskrit—that clearly summarized the Recognition teachings for readers that are “spiritually inclined but not trained in the rigorous discipline of logical philosophy.” This is the *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam* or “The Heart of the Doctrine of Recognition.” It displays well the great perspicacity of Kṣema's thinking, as it summarizes complex doctrines in a concise and lucid manner. It accomplished its goal admirably, for this is one of the few exegetical texts produced in Kashmīr that has been studied down to the present day.

Sampradāya #7: KĀLIKULA

Primary deity: Kālī Kālasaṅkarṣaṇī

Visualization: beautiful, golden-limbed and 20-armed, with five faces of different colors

Mūla-mantra(s): HRĪṀ MAHĀCAṆḌAYOGĒSVARĪ ṬHRĪṀ DHRĪṀ THRĪṀ PHAṬ 5

Root text: *Jayadrathayāmala* aka *Tantrarāja-bhaṭṭāraka*

Exegetical: *Jayadrathayāmala-prastāra-mantra-saṅgraha* aka *Jayadrathayāmala-mantroddhāra-ṭippaṇī* (decodes mantras and diagrams of JY); *Tantrarāja-tantrāvatāra-stotra* of Viśvaavarta (on the transmission and deities of JY)

The Kālīkula designates a number of closely interrelated north-Indian sects that venerate Kālī in iconic and aniconic forms that significantly predate the well-known late medieval east-Indian form of Dakṣiṇakālī. Around the tenth century, various textual sources for the worship of Kālī were synthesized into the longest of all Mantramārga scriptures, the vast *Jayadrathayāmala* in 24,000 verses. This important text has thus far proved too intimidating in size, complexity, and textual corruption for in-depth study by anyone apart from SANDERSON. He informs us that of the works four *ṣaṭkas* of 6,000 verses each, the first, entitled *Śiraścheda*, was originally a separate work and was composed prior to 800 in an unknown location. Parts of it appear in the Buddhist *Laghuśaṃvara-tantra*, which was redacted around that date (SANDERSON 2002: 2). The other three *ṣaṭkas* were probably composed in Kashmīr (SANDERSON 2005b: 278-83). Each *ṣaṭka* teaches the propitiation of countless deity-forms, but later each of the four was taken to have a principal deity, for the *Tantrarāja-tantrāvatāra-stotra* (c. 11th-12th cen.) tells us that the primary Kālī of each *ṣaṭka* is 1) Kālasaṅkarṣaṇī, 2) Siddha-lakṣmī, 3) Sāraśakti (venerated as the essence of three *vidyās*), and 4) Siddhayogeśvarī and the *śāktaṃ cakram*. The first of these four is the principal deity worshipped in the Krama (#7a below), the second has received worship (under the name Siddhilakṣmī) down to the present day in Nepāl, and the fourth is found as a form of Parā in the early Trika. This hints at the complex intertextuality of these cults. The author of the *Tantrarāja-tantrāvatāra-stotra* sees the teaching of the *śāktaṃ cakram* of thirteen Kālīs in the fourth *ṣaṭka* of the

Jayadrathayāmala, which is identical with the circuit of Kālīs in the Krama’s phase of the Nameless (*anākhyā-cakra*), as the culmination of that text.

The vast arrays of *vratas*, *mantra-sādhanas*, and various esoteric and even bizarre practices in the text testify to an era of religiosity in medieval India that can have endless fascination for the historian, even if the great majority of these practices did not survive into the modern period. However, some of the deities of the *Jayadrathayāmala* did survive: commenting on the relevance of the text to the wider religious culture, SANDERSON writes, “The importance of this text in Kashmir is evident in the fact that a number of the forms of Kālī whose Kalpas it teaches have found their way beyond the esoteric context of this literature into the Paddhatis used by Kashmirian Śaiva officiants until recent times for the fire-sacrifice that accompanied their major ceremonies, being included in the section of that sacrifice reserved for the female deities (*devīnām ājyahomaḥ*)” (SANDERSON 2007b: 253).

Sampradāya #7a: KRAMA OR MAHĀRTHA

Primary deity: Kālī Kālasaṅkarṣaṇī aka Maṅgalā

Visualization: none (aniconic)

Mūla-mantra(s): KHPHREM MAHĀCAṆḌAYOGĒŚVAR

Key texts: *Kālīkula-krama-sadbhāva*, *Kālīkula-pañcaśataka*, *Devīdvyardhaśatikā*, *Yonigahvara*, **Mādhavakula*, and the **Prākṛta-triṃśika/Trimśaccarcā-rahasya*

Exegetical:

- *Chummā-saṅketa-prakāśa* of Niṣkriyānanda
- *Cidgagana-candrikā* of Kālidāsa
- *Kālīkulakramārcana* of Vimalaprabodha (Nepāl, c. 1200)
- *Mahānaya-prakāśa* of Arṇasiṃha
- *Mahānaya-prakāśa* in Old Kashmiri with Skt commentary of Śitikaṅṭha
- Anonymous *Mahānaya-prakāśa* (Trivandrum MS)
- *Mahārthamañjarī* in Prākṛt, attributed to a Yoginī, with Sanskrit commentary (*-parimala*) by Maheśvarānanda (c. 1300, Cidambaram)
- *Vātūlanātha-sūtra* attributed to “the Yoginīs” with the *-vṛtti* of Someone, a.k.a. Anantaśakti (13 sūtras with commentary)

Spanda school, based in a Trika-Krama synthesis:

- *Śiva-sūtra* of Vasugupta with comm. of Bhāskara and Kṣemarāja
- *Spanda-kārikā* of Kallaṭa with seven commentaries

The Krama originated as a school of the Kālīkula, for we see proto-Krama teachings given in the second, third, and fourth *ṣaṭkas* of the *Jayadrathayāmala*. The fourth *ṣaṭka* specifically teaches an initiation before a *maṅḍala* of the thirteen Kālīs (SANDERSON 2007b: 260n84). Yet the Krama was a paradox from our perspective. On the one hand, from the perspective of modern scholarly and popular definitions of Tantra, the Krama is the Tantric *sampradāya par excellence*, for it was unequivocally the most transgressive, (occasionally) orgiastic, Goddess-worshipping, feminine-oriented, and nondualistic of all the Śaiva groups; but on the other, from the perspective of the deeper understanding of Tantra gained in the last 25 years, it appears to not be very Tantric at all. To explain the latter statement, the scriptures of the Krama teach no rituals of initiation, no deity visualizations, no *mudrās*, no iconography, no *homa*, and “none of the elaborate ascetic observances characteristic

of the Mantramārgic Kalpas of the *Jayadrathayāmala*” (SANDERSON 2007b: 260). A quote from one of the two most fundamental Krama scriptures, the *Kālikula-Kramasadbhāva*, is illustrative of this. Bhairava entertains Bhairavī in this way:

“Tell me the perfect, unthinkable, ultimate secret. Make plain, O Śaṅkarī, what remains hidden in the heart of the Yoginīs, [the practice] that is free of [restriction by] lunar day and [auspicious] hour, without [specified] place or time, free of the conventions of [sacred] sites, without Mudrās and Mantras, the coloured powders [of the initiation Maṇḍala] and all other [paraphernalia of ritual], the fire-sacrifice and [oblations of] unhusked grains and sesame seeds, the summoning [of the deities] and other [ritual forms], the post-initiatory ascetic observance and other [ancillary practices], above all free of the exhalations, inhalations and retentions [of breath-restraint].” (translation SANDERSON 2007b: 262)

This passage points the Krama’s antinomian rejection of all forms of Tantric religion that resemble Vedic ceremony and that participate in the conventions of normal religious society. But we cannot say that the Krama was anti-ritual, for while eschewing the baroque ritual details of the Tantramārga generally, the Krama scriptures give meditative rituals of their own devising that do at least feature that most fundamental of all Tantric acts, the propitiation of mantra-deities. But here the deities—seen as forms of Kālī, who is understood as *Bhagavatī Saṃvit*—are thought to embody phases of the cognitive process itself. “Krama” in this context refers to the sequential unfolding of the phases of consciousness present in every cognition whatsoever, which the Krama initiate venerates as emanations of the supreme deity of his cult, Kālī Kāla-saṅkarṣaṇī, here understood as the insatiable void in the heart of consciousness that the limited self cannot enter and survive (SANDERSON 1988: 675). The Krama’s doctrine focuses on essentialization, interiorization, and gnostic overcoding, and thus is clearly thoroughly Kaula in nature. Indeed, the evidence we have so far reviewed makes us question whether it should be properly understood as a sect of the Kulamārga rather than the Mantramārga, for unlike the other *sampradāyas* of the Mantramārga it had no non-Kaula variant.

For the historian of religion, the Krama is interesting for several reasons. Not only did it combine refined and sophisticated philosophical thinking with radically transgressive practice, it carefully assimilated its philosophical ideas with its ritual practice in a determined attempt to make the latter truly meaningful. It thus successfully resisted, for nine generations or more, the normal routinization of Indian religions that stressed conformity to scriptural injunction without the need for spiritual understanding. Furthermore, despite its serious challenges to the social order, the Krama rose to a place of prominence in Kashmīr and Nepāl, counting many highly placed people (such as royal ministers) amongst its initiates. It influenced the Trika, which adopted some Krama doctrines, and the two schools finally became fused in the theology of Abhinavagupta, who essentially propagated an esoteric Kaula Trika with a Krama core. SANDERSON writes, “In comparison with the Trika the Krama appears to have been much more widely developed in Kashmir.

While we have only the works of a single if famous author for the Trika, here we have a plethora of writers from the middle of the ninth century onwards, producing works in both Sanskrit and Old Kashmiri, and exercising throughout the most creative period of Kashmirian Śaivism a profound influence not only on the Trika but also, through the works of Kṣemarāja, on the understanding of the Svacchanda, the Netra, and a broad range of Śaiva texts aimed at a wider audience” (2007b: 432). We shall review the works of the writers SANDERSON refers to below. Finally, we should note that the Krama did not flourish only in the Himālayan region, for its last truly original work was composed c. 1300 in Cidambaram, Tamiḷnāḍu, by an author who clearly had access to a wide range of north Indian sources, for he quotes liberally from nearly all his predecessors in Krama exegesis.

The History of the Krama Lineage

The documented history of the Krama begins with a figure known as Jñānānētra-nātha or Śivānanda, probably from Kashmīr, who, tradition tells us, in the mid-9th century made a pilgrimage to the small kingdom of Uḍḍiyāna in the Swat valley (now in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistān), a site later considered one of the four most important Tantric *pīṭhas*. (Note that Uḍḍiyāna is also said to be the homeland of Padmasambhava.) The capital of Uḍḍiyāna at that time was Maṅgalāpura (Modern Mingora, 34°46’34” N, 72°21’40” E), outside of which was a great cremation ground (*mahāśmaśāna*) called Karavīra. This cremation ground was said to be the dwelling place of the Goddess Maṅgalā, a form of Kālī, together with the sixty-four Yoginīs that made up her primary retinue. It was here the Jñānānētra experienced some kind of epiphany or revelation that he interpreted as the grace of the Goddess. As he informs us in the closing of his only self-referential work, the *Kālikā-stotra*:

Through your grace, O Mother, may the whole world abide as the essence of the Goddess within the transcendent Śiva, just as She was experienced by myself in the Great Cremation Ground. || 19

The group of sixty-four Yoginīs headed by Maṅgalā, known as the *pīṭheśvarīs*, were considered in Krama tradition to be the holders of the secret teachings (SANDERSON 2007b: 343), transmitting them in an ongoing revelation “conceptualized in these texts as the sudden unfolding in the meditator’s visionary consciousness of his own inner reality” (SANDERSON 2007b: 307).

Jñānānētra became the first guru of the Krama lineage and the transmitter (*avatāra*) of the principal Krama scriptures. We may assume that this means he authored them, though there is never explicit attribution of authorship in the case of a scripture. An account in Old Kashmīrī says:

The Nātha, after being taught in the Praṇavapīṭha [= Uḍḍiyāna], was filled with compassion for living beings, and as the Promulgator [he] emitted the internal and external silence of ultimate reality as the corpus of the Krama. (SANDERSON 2007b: 265)

Jñānānētra directly initiated seventeen disciples, beginning a lineage which continued unbroken for at least nine generations. His three primary disciples were women, including his successor, the *siddhā yoginī* named Keyūravatī (“she who wears

a bracelet”). Unfortunately, we have no works from Keyūravatī, though some of the oral teachings of the Krama tradition recorded in Old Kashmīrī (*chummās*) may be hers. Her foremost disciple was an intriguing figure named Hrasvanātha, aka Vāmana, aka Vīranātha, Minister of War and Peace under King Yaśaskara in mid-tenth century Kashmīr. Vīranātha wrote a work that has come down to us called *The Bouquet [of Teachings] on the Arising of one’s Innate Consciousness (Svabodhodaya-mañjarī)*. This meditation manual, probably influenced by the *Vijñāna-bhairava*, teaches a “new and easy method” (*sukhopāya*, a phrase that characterizes the Krama) for attaining the Bliss of Consciousness (*cidānanda*). Vīranātha clarifies his project while explicitly setting himself against the earlier yoga of Patañjali, writing:

The nature of the mind is unsteady, being inundated by the subliminal impressions arising from false mental constructs; realizing this, one sets out to dissolve it. This process of dissolution (*nirodha*) was taught by the ancients as coming about through the yoga of renunciation and arduous practice (*vairāgyābhyāsa-yogataḥ*). Here I will teach dissolution through the release of effort (*ayatnena nirodhaḥ*). (v. 11-12)

SANDERSON writes about Vīranātha’s method with his usual precision as follows: “[The text offers subtle] practices to bring about liberation-in-life through the dissolution of contracted awareness by means of insight into the emptiness of [all] objective and mental phenomena and reversion into the uncontracted inner ground [of Consciousness] by observing the process of the arising and dying away of cognition, especially where the latter is particularly intense, as in the perception of the beautiful [or] meditation on the sensation of orgasm (SANDERSON 2007b: 277). To put it simply, Vīranātha’s uniquely Tantric “easy method” was to allow oneself to become totally absorbed in a sensual object that naturally dissolves or fades away. The more complete one’s absorption in the object, the more complete the dissolution of mind that would be achieved. These verses of the *Svabodhodaya-mañjarī* may serve to clarify:

Focus the mind upon something that then dissolves. Because it is not grasping anything else [other than the dissolving object], the mind comes to rest in one’s Self. || 13

It is similar to the case of a powerful thunder-clap gradually fading: when it dies away, the mind, due to being focused on it, comes to rest. || 14

In precisely the same way one may meditate on the beauty of the visible and other [objects of the senses]; after the object-perception has dissolved, one should let one’s awareness remain clear, not thinking on what has dissolved, [but remaining] full of the intensified sense of one’s own being (*ātmabhāva*). || 16

The text also includes other methods, from meditating on the aftermath of orgasm or a dissolving sweet to hovering right on the edge of sleep to asking “Where is my mind?” Some indebtedness to the *Vijñāna-bhairava* would seem to be indicated, and indeed Vīranātha says:

The means to the dissolution of that very [mind] was taught by the Gurus of previous times. Due to fear that this sacred teaching (*āgama*) will be

lost, it is [here] clarified by me. || 4

Vīranātha's primary disciple and successor was his nephew Cakrabhānu, who wore the Kāpālīka ornaments of the *mahāvratā* (only the Kālīkula was exempt from the Kaula prohibition on such outer marks of transgressive religious identity). This display cannot have been popular at court, and indeed the Kashmirian chronicler Kalhaṇa (12th cen.) reports that in 948 CE the king punished Cakrabhānu for presiding at the orgiastic *cakra-melāpas* that were the most controversial feature of the Krama by branding him on the forehead with the mark of a dog's foot (SANDERSON 2007b: 281). This brand was usually reserved for grand theft, not sexual misconduct, the brand for which was that of a vulva; so perhaps the king disapproved of the *dakṣiṇās* collected by Cakrabhānu for presiding at these ceremonies. The historicity of this account seems to be verified by one of the few surviving verses written by Cakrabhānu: "When [again] may I follow the path of the Devī-kula in the company of proud Vīras at the onset of night, my mind made blissful through dissolution [of contracted thought-forms]?" (SANDERSON 2007b: 291).

Cakrabhānu became a highly regarded Guru in his own right, initiating eight key disciples, three of whom became renowned gurus: Īśānī (a female Kāpālīka), Prabodha the Tapasvin (an excellent poet), and Bhūtīrāja, who became the Krama guru of Abhinavagupta when the latter was a young man. All these Krama masters eventually became so revered that the later tradition worshipped them (from Jñānanetra up to and including Cakrabhānu's eight disciples) were worshipped as the *Paramparā* or succession of masters embodying a single awakened consciousness.

Cakrabhānu began three different productive lineages, as the lineage chart on the next page shows. One of these was headed by Prabodha, two of whose verses survived the demise of Śaivism in Kashmīr and are still recited amongst Kashmiri brahmins today. They are probably the only two verses from the entire Krama tradition still preserved in practice, though their author and the Krama itself is long forgotten. They now form the conclusion of the *Bahurūpa-garbha-stotra* or "Hymn to the Multiform Womb [of Reality]," which as noted above is a standard preliminary to Śaiva ritual.²³¹

The Mahārtha: the final phase of the Krama

After the tenth century, the teachings of the Krama were primarily transmitted under the name of Mahārtha or Mahānaya, "the Great Teaching" or "the Great Way."²³² In the 11th and 12th centuries, three texts were composed by different authors on the teachings of the Mahārtha, all with the same title: *Illumination of the Great Way (Mahānaya-prakāśa)*. All three have considerable intrinsic

²³¹ Although Śaiva ritual amongst Kaśmīrīs died out in the twentieth century, the hymn is still well-known and was recently translated by CHAKRAVARTY in DĀS & FÜRLINGER 2006.

²³² In fact the Krama went by many names: those meaning "the Krama teaching, viewpoint, or way," i.e. *krama-śāsana*, *kramārtha*, *krama-darśana*, and *krama-naya*; those meaning "the Great teaching, way, or tradition," *mahārtha*, *mahānaya*, *mahāmnāya*, and *mahā-śāsana*; those meaning "the way of the Goddess or the way of Kālī," *kālī-naya*, *kālīkā-krama*, *devatā-naya*, and *devī-naya*, one meaning "the tradition of the ecstatic gathering," *melāpa-darśana*, and finally one meaning "the secret (or esoteric) tradition," *rahasyāmnāya*.

interest for the student of religious philosophy. The first was by Arṇasiṃha (active c. 1050-1075) of Prabodha's lineage. His text explains how the structure of Krama worship reflects and embodies the core structures of consciousness itself (see below). The second *Illumination of the Great Way* is in two parts: the root text in Old Kaśmīrī and the commentary in Sanskrit by Śitikaṇṭha, of unknown lineage. The text contains some unique features, such as detailed instructions on a nine-day intensive course of training in Krama worship. It also innovates by reading the structures of worship not only in terms of the natural flow of cognition, but also mapping them on to the flow of energy within the human body (SANDERSON 2007b: 307).

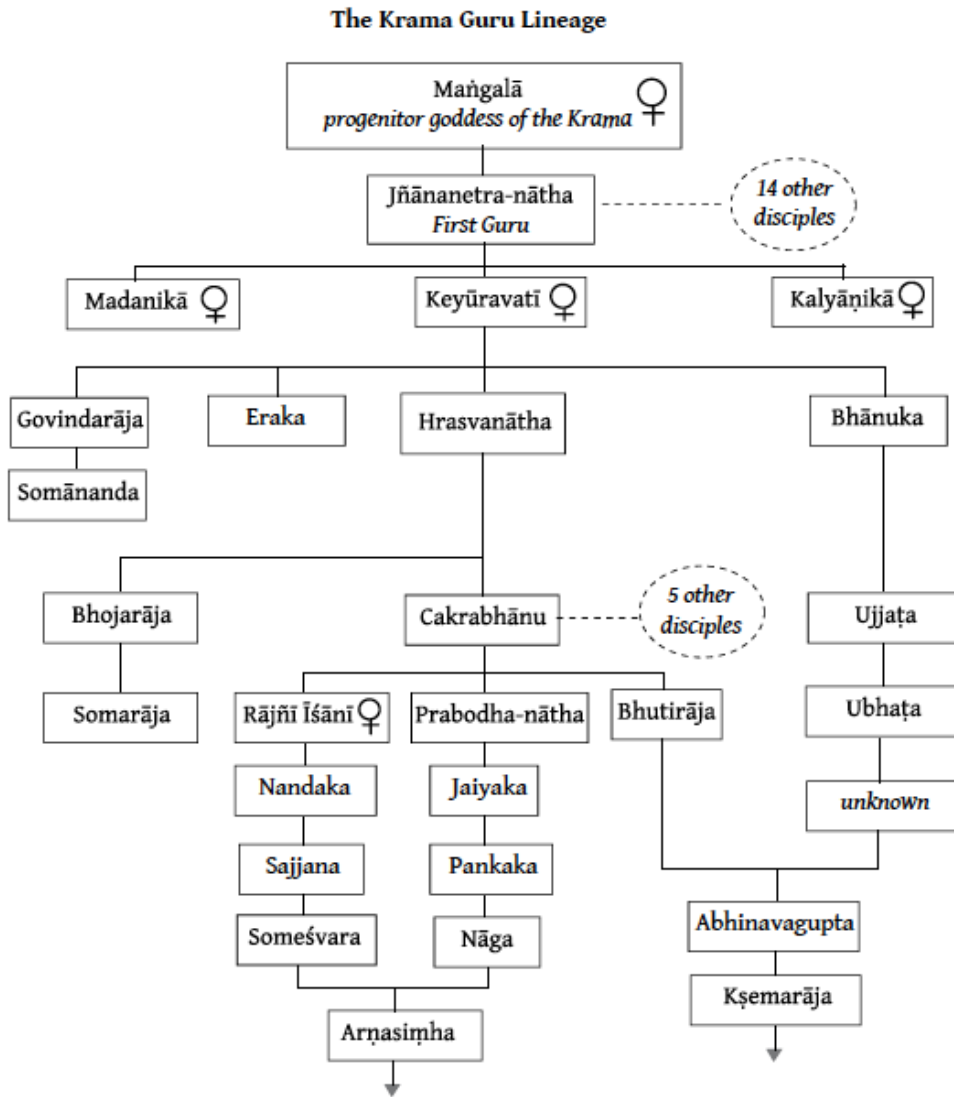


Fig. 5. The Krama Guru Lineage

The third *Illumination* was anonymously authored. It must have been influential, for though it was written in Kashmīr, its one surviving manuscript was discovered in Trivandrum. Of all three, this is the most sophisticated *Illumination*, and the one which most clearly shows the influence of Abhinavagupta, as well as earlier authors like Utpaladeva and Vīranātha. The text presents an extremely subtle explanation of Krama worship, presenting it as “embodying a process of the unfolding of sudden enlightenment in which consciousness devours its own content and subjectivity (*alamgrāsa*) to burst forth into the mind and senses as a transfigured mundane experience in which the polarity of liberation and bondage is obliterated” (SANDERSON 2007b: 309). The anonymous *Illumination* thus analyzes the process of each and every cognitive act in terms of the veneration of its phases as the five Flow Goddesses of the Krama (see below). Finally, it also presents an innovative take on the relationship between Śiva and Śakti, whereby the latter is defined as the absolute center-point of the former, the point within Śiva (i.e., consciousness) that he himself cannot make an object of perception, for it is the point of ultimate groundedness within consciousness from which all seeing is done (Ibid.).

The Structure of Krama Worship

We have alluded to the Krama’s innovation in ritual form above, and the fact that it encoded the Krama’s philosophy by conscious design (rather than, as usually happens in this traditions, an after-the-fact overcoding of gnostic insight onto organically evolved and relatively meaningless ritual forms). What, then, was the structure of this esoteric Krama worship? It is complex, but can be simplified as follows. There were two primary cycles of worship. The first was articulated as ten stages, divided into two sets of five, with an additional preliminary stage at the beginning. Though we can do no more than give an impression here, what follows is an outline of the first cycle:

0. *Pīṭha-cakram*. Worship of the **SACRED SITE**, i.e. Uḍḍiyāna, together with its cremation-ground, *kṣetrapāla*, its assembly (*melāpa*) of Yoginīs, and their Great Sacrifice of the brahminical deities to the Goddess (*mahāyāga*); the site and its deities are worshipped in the microcosm of the body, thus this phase is also a consecration of the worshipper’s body.
1. *Pañcavāha-cakram*. Worship of the circle of the **FIVE FLOW GODDESSES**: 1) She Who Emits the Void (*Vyoma-Vāmeśvarī*, understood as the inner ground of pure potential before the arising of object-cognition), 2) She Who Moves in the Sky (*Khecarī*), 3) She Who Moves in All Directions (*Dikcarī*), 4) She Who Devours Dissolution (*Samhāra-bhakṣiṇī*, aka *Gocarī*), and 5) the Fierce Goddess (*Raudreśvarī*). The first of these is especially emphasized, for she is the ground of the following process; thus the worship of the other four here is a foreshadowing of that process.²³³

²³³ Here we follow Arṇasiṃha’s *Mahānaya-prakāśa* for the *pañcavāhadevīs*; note that different Krama sources give different accounts of these Five Flow Goddesses (who are also known as the Five Voids): for example, Kṣemarāja tells us “The [Great] Goddess, who is simply the Power of Awareness, is called *Vāmeśvarī* . . . She vibrates as the totality, in the form of the goddesses

2. *Prakāśa-cakram*. Worship of the circle of **ILLUMINATION** (consisting of 12 goddesses/rays, understood to be aspects of Khecarī and the sun, and embodying the five senses of cognition, the five senses of action, and the mind's faculties of attention and discernment). This is the phase of the sense faculties reaching out to the object of awareness and thus illuminating it; it is associated also, therefore, with the exhale, the sun, and creation.
3. *Ānanda-cakram*. Worship of the circle of **BLISS** (16 goddesses/rays, understood as expressions of Dikcarī and the moon, embodying the ten senses, the mind's faculty of attention, and the five subtle elements). This is the phase in which the sense faculties incorporate the object of awareness; associated also therefore with the inhale, the moon, and stasis.
4. *Mūrti-cakram*. Worship of the circle of **EMBODIMENT** (17 goddesses, understood as expressions of Saṃhārabhakṣiṇī, embodying the senses, the subtle elements, the mind's faculty of discernment, and the mind's faculty of identity-construction); this is the phase in which objective awareness gives way to awareness of self as perceiver; associated with fire and withdrawal.
5. *Vṛnda-cakram*. Worship of the circle of the **MULTITUDE**, also called the **CELESTIAL ORDER** (the 64 Yoginīs); in this stage the Yoginīs dissolve the subtle traces of the preceding process, and "self-awareness reverts fully to its enlightened core" (SANDERSON 2007b: 296).

This phase subdivides into six as follows:

- a) worship of the sixteen yoginīs that dissolve the subtle traces (*saṃskāras*) remaining from phase 4;
- b) of the twenty-four yoginīs that dissolve the *saṃskāras* of phase 3;
- c) of the twelve yoginīs that penetrate the field of consciousness with pure non-discursive awareness;
- d) of the eight yoginīs that purify the traces of the eight-fold subtle body;
- e) of the four yoginīs that purify the impression of the sensation of contact of the three aspects of mind with the object of cognition;
- f) of Mangalā as the non-relational ground of the 64 Yoginīs.

Pristine consciousness follows.

The foregoing is the iteration of the process on the introversive level. Then the worshipper explores a similar pattern extroversively.

6. Worship of the **GURU-LINEAGE** as embodiments of the realization of the foregoing process:
 - a) the Supreme group (*paraugha*), = the five Flow Goddesses;
 - b) the Divine group (*divyaugha*), = the Yoginīs of phases 2-4 above;
 - c) the Great group (*mahaugha*), = the 64 Siddhā Yoginīs;
 - d) the Perfected group (*siddhaugha*), = Goddess Mangalā;

Khecarī, Gocarī, Dikcarī, and Bhūcarī, who respectively embody themselves as the subjective knower, the inner instrument [= tripartite mind], the 10 external faculties, and the objects of awareness" (*Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*, ch. 12). We see the same list of *devīs* in Jñānanetra's *Kālikā-stotra*, though without these associations.

- e) the Human group (*mānavagha*), = the first three gurus of the Krama lineage;
- f) the Disciple group (*śiṣyagha*), = Cakrabhānu and his eight disciples.
- 7. Worship of the circle of **CREATION** (of any given cognition)
- 8. Worship of the circle of **STASIS**
- 9. Worship of the circle of **WITHDRAWAL**
- 10. Worship of the circle of the **NAMELESS**; in this final phase, “perfect interpenetration (*sāmarasya*) of the inner and outer states is fully realized” (Ibid.)

The circle of the Nameless (*anākhyā-cakra*) constitutes the final iteration of the process of cognition plus its ineffable ground, worshipped as twelve forms of the goddess Kālī, plus a thirteenth, who embodies the unity of the other twelve. The circle of the Nameless came to occupy a position of great importance for the Krama generally and for Abhinavagupta specifically. In the standard Krama analysis, the twelve Kālīs signify the phases of the arising and subsiding of each and every cognition. The number twelve is arrived at by multiplying a set of three by a set of four. The set of three is the sequence (*krama*) of *sṛṣṭi*, *sthiti*, and *saṃhāra*, esoterically labeled as *udaya*, *avabhāsa*, and *carvaṇa* in the Krama. The set of four is the same three plus the timeless ground of the *sṛṣṭisthitisamhārakrama*. This ground is variously called “the resting point” (*viśrama*, *viśrānti*), “the Nameless” (*anākhyā*), and “that which devours time/sequentiality” (*kālagrāsa*).²³⁴ Jñānanetra describes it as “the utterly transcendent Goddess, the level within which dissolution itself is completely dissolved” in verse 18 of the *Kālikā-stotra*. A twelve-fold process emerges, then, because there is an arising of emission (*sṛṣṭiyudaya* or *sṛṣṭisṛṣṭi*), a remaining of emission (*sṛṣṭyavabhāsa*), and a devouring of emission (*sṛṣṭi-carvaṇa*), plus the ground of that process, that into which emission dissolves (*viśrānti*). This cross-fades into the arising of stasis (*sthityudaya*), the remaining of stasis, and so on, all the way through to the devouring of dissolution and the final iteration of the timeless ground. The thirteenth Kālī is simply the unity that coheres the whole process (a role elsewhere assigned to Śiva, but here we are in a purely Śākta world), a unitary divine consciousness that is nothing but pure potentiality until it manifests the twelve as expressions of its innate dynamic structure (*Tantrāloka-viveka* vol. 3, p. 129). Without this manifestation of the cycles of consciousness there would be no universe, because the Krama holds that there is no reality to the cognized object apart from the cognition itself.²³⁵

²³⁴ E.g., *Mahānaya-prakāśa* 3.110, which has *kālagrāsa-viśrānti*.

²³⁵ See, e.g., Kṣemarāja, *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam* ch. 20: “Whatever one is aware of in this world, its nature is nothing but that awareness.”

Sampradāya #8: KAUBJIKĀ

Primary deity: Kubjikā

Visualization: black, fat-bellied, six-faced and twelve-armed, adorned with snakes, jewels, human bones and a garland of severed heads

Other key deities: Navātma-bhairava; Manthāna-bhairava

Mūla-mantra(s): AIM HRĪM ŚRĪM PHREM HSAUM and HSKṢMLVYRŪM

Root text: *Kubjikāmata-tantra*

Other key texts: *Manthānabhairava-tantra* (*Kumārīkhaṇḍa* recently published in 12 volumes by DYCZKOWSKI)

Exegesis: *Nityāhnika-tilaka* of Mukta

The Kaubjika tradition is named for the Goddess Kubjikā, a complex figure who incorporates features of earlier Tantrik deities. She is sometimes considered as an emanation of Parā, connecting her with the Trika above, and indeed much of the root-text of the Kubjikā is adapted from the scriptures of the Trika.²³⁶ On the other hand, one of Kubjikā's emanations is that of Tripurā, connecting her closely with the Śrīvidyā discussed below. The Kaubjika scriptures have garnered attention from scholars since they appear to be the main source for the theory and practice of *kuṇḍalinī-yoga* and the *cakra* system which later appeared in the texts of haṭha-yoga (HEILJGERS-SEELEN 1994).

Kubjikā's myth of origin is sufficiently interesting to be summarized here (drawing primarily on the summary of the *Kubjikā-mata-tantra*'s account found in DYCZKOWSKI 2004). Once, Bhairava visited the residence of Himālaya, where he met the Mountain's daughter, here named as Kālikā ("little Kālī"). Enamored of her, Bhairava gives her a vision of the universe blazing with the bliss of the Empowering Transmission (*ājñā*, a key technical term of this sect), a vision which profoundly impacts her. He then tells her she must attain her essence-nature beyond all qualities, then disappears. She is confused and disoriented, and in a state of wonder asks "Who are you, and what am I doing?" (KMT 1.54-5). After deliberation, she travels to the Mountain of the Moon in the West to look for Bhairava. Here, in a paradise filled with all manner of exquisitely beautiful birds, bees, and flowering plants, where the power of passionate love resides, she comes upon a magical stone. She mounts the stone and enters a yogic trance, having received the energy of the Empowering Transmission. She becomes the "female *liṅga*," a fusion of masculine and feminine principles (DYCZKOWSKI 2004: 179). In this form she is independently blissful, and is thus sometimes depicted as doubled over and licking her own vulva, which is one reason she is called *Kubjikā*, "the Hunchback" (DYCZKOWSKI 1988: 89). Bhairava appears and praises her in this androgynous form of the female *liṅga*, thereby arousing the goddess from her introverted contemplation, and she bursts forth into the form in which she is worshipped, said to be "beautiful and ugly and multi-faceted." Bhairava asks her for the Empowering Transmission (signaling that she is now in the dominant role), and she bends over with embarrassment, for she knows it must be given through conjugal union (DYCZKOWSKI 2004: 179). This posture of bending over in embarrassment is another explanation for her name. Ultimately,

²³⁶ For example, large portions of the *Kubjikā-mata* are redacted from the Trika's *Tantrasadbhāva*, *Siddhayogeśvarī-mata*, **Kularatnamālā* and **Triśirobhairava* (SANDERSON 2002:1).

though, the explanation of *kubjikā* that would become dominant is that she is a personification of *kuṇḍalinī*, the “coiled power.”

The union of Śiva and Śakti gives rise to the immortal Ultimate Point, a singularity blazing with the light of ten million suns. The explosion of this Point (*bindu*) through the Goddess’s empowering command (*ājñā*) generates the universe in a series of emanations. We should note that in the Kaubjika tradition, there is a higher Divinity than the sexually conjoined pair of Śiva and Śakti, and this is the point of their absolute fusion: the power of bliss called “the Neuter,” which is the potential, unmanifest state, the timeless Void of Consciousness, what exists before and after the manifestation of the Point, and pervades the universe that manifests out of it. In the first stage of the emanation of the Point, it expands out into the triangular generative *yonī*, its three points the powers of Willing, Knowing, and Acting, the same pattern as seen in the Śrīvidyā as well (see below). We do not have space in this overview to explore the successive stages.

In the following passage, we have a clear example of the influence of the Krama on the Kaubjika, since we see specific Krama technical terms being used. Here Kubjikā is, like Kālī, the seemingly terrifying radiant Void underlying all things that awakens the aspirant to reality, after which she sees all form as an expression of the imperishable formlessness. This Void is paradoxically experienced as flowing even as it is the place of supreme rest.

In the Center is the ground of perfect repose (*viśrama-bhūmi*); it is the experience of flowing Presence, the evidence (*pratyaya*) that constitutes one’s own qualification (*svādhikāra*).

The power of bliss is said to be dissolved between the exhale and the inhale; in the center of the staff of space (i.e., the central channel), She pervades the conscious power of the individual soul. The limbs of her slender (i.e., transcendent) body are variegated by time and tide; dissolved in the level beyond bliss, imperishable and terrifying, She awakens one to reality (*tattva-prabodhakī*). – *Manthāna-bhairava-tantra*, *Kumārikhaṇḍa*, 1.3cd, 2.5-6b

We will close this section with an historical note based on new research. There is some evidence that Kubjikā’s tradition arose in the Himālayan region in the late tenth century, but if so, its base soon became the city of Candrapura (modern Chandor) in the Koṅkan region, from which locale it was transmitted to the far South (DYZKOWSKI 1988: 91). In the South, an alternate form of the Kaubjika flourished, called the Śāmbhavānanda lineage, in which worship of Kubjikā’s consort Navātman (or the worship of them as a couple) prevailed, as seen in the *Śāmbhu-nirṇaya-tantra*. The Śāmbhavānanda lineage was syncretistic in that it incorporated the Śrīvidyā worship of Tripurā as well. This subsect is of crucial significance for the history of yoga because it is one of the primary sources for the *haṭha-yoga* system which came after the decline of classical Tantra. Recent scholarship has been done on a scripture that is transitional between Tantra and *haṭha-yoga*, a thirteenth century text called the *Matsyendra-saṃhitā* that is associated with the

Śāmbhavānanda lineage.²³⁷ Furthermore, this lineage influenced the Tantric-Vedāntic syncretism associated with the Śāṅkarācāryas of Śṛṅgerī and Kāñcī, as seen in the *Ānanda-laharī* section of the *Saundarya-laharī* (SANDERSON 1988: 687).

We also see evidence for the connection of the Śāmbhavānanda with early *haṭha-yoga* in the archaeological site of the caves of Panhāle-Kāji (originally Praṇāḷaka), found in the Sindhudurg district of Mahārāṣṭra, near the heartland of the Kaubjika sect in Goa. In these caves, also dated to the thirteenth century, we find a wealth of images of the Nāthas, who were the primary holders of the *haṭha-yoga* tradition in its first few centuries. Cave 29 contains images of 84 Nātha-siddhas and also contains images of Tripurā. This region may be that which the *Matsyendra-saṃhitā* envisions as the place where Gorakṣa found Matsyendra after wandering around India looking for him, and where he finally received initiation from him (KISS 2009).

Sampradāya #9: ŚRĪVIDYĀ OR TRAI PURA

Primary deity: Lalitā Tripurasundarī

Visualization: beautiful, sixteen years old, reddish skin, four arms with goad, noose, flower arrows, and sugarcane bow, in lotus posture atop Sadāśiva

Mūla-mantra(s): KA E Ī LA HRĪM HA SA KA HA LA HRĪM SA KA LA HRĪM

Root text: *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava/Vāmakeśvarīmata*

Exegesis: -*vivaraṇa* by Jayaratha and -*artha-ratnāvalī* by Vidyānanda, -*rjuvimarsīni* by Śivānanda (13th cen.), and the *Setubandha* by Bhāskaraṛāya

Other key text: *Yoginīhr̥daya* with comm. of Amṛtānanda

We have seen that the theology of Kubjikā includes a divinization of passion and sexual desire, since the coupling of the Goddess and Śiva is responsible for the creation of reality. This theme comes to its fruition in the ninth and last *sampradāya*, known as the Traipura, better known as Śrīvidyā. The Goddess is here pictured as the young and beautiful Lalitā (“the coquette” or “the playful one”) or Kāmeśvarī (“the goddess of erotic desire”), her skin the red color of passion. She is pictured seated atop the prostrate Śiva, indicating that in the origins of this sect, passionate desire trumps the quiescent introversive meditative state; for the Śrīvidyā arose out of an older cult of love-magic (called the *Nityā* cult) that sought to develop rituals to secure the affections of a prospective sexual partner (SANDERSON 2009: 47-48).

In the older form of the cult, Kāmeśvarī (as she is exclusively known at this point) was worshipped in a *maṇḍala* consisting of Kāmadeva and eleven *Nityā* goddesses, whose names nearly all relate to sex and romance.²³⁸ This soon gave way to the cult of Tripura-sundarī detailed in the *Nityā-ṣoḍaśikārṇava*, still a relatively unsophisticated text that taught the *siddhi* of control over women and added

²³⁷ See Čšaba KISS’s 2009 Oxford D.Phil. thesis, “Matsyendra’s Compendium.”

²³⁸ They are Hr̥llekhā (Heart-impression), Kledinī (Wet), Nandā (Delighted), Kṣobhanī (Agitating), Madanāturā (Love-sick), Nirañjanā (Pure), Rāgavatī (Passionate), Madanāvati, Khekalā (?), Drāvaṇī (Melting/Dripping) and Vegavatī (Impetuous). Note that in the *Manthāna-bhairava Siddhakhaṇḍa*’s version of the cult, we see a circle of nine *Nityās* with entirely different names (SANDERSON 2009: 48n15).

liberation almost as an afterthought. The spiritual development of the sect is seen in the thirteenth-century *Yoginī-hṛdaya*, which paraphrases Kṣemarāja's *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*. We can be certain that the Traipura was the last of the nine *sampradāyas* to develop, since none of the canonical accounts found in the other *sampradāyas* mention the Traipura or its central text.

The most salient feature of the Traipura is the three-fold form of its central goddess, Tripurā or Tripura-sundarī (“beautiful in the form of the three citadels”). The first of the three *purās* is her coarse (*sthūla*) form, that is, her iconographic depiction as a 16-year-old woman just come into her sexual power, bare-breasted or (in the modern depiction) wearing a red *sārī* and garlanded with red flowers, symbolic of passion. Tripurā's second, subtle (*sūkṣma*) form is that of the Śrī-cakra or Śrī-yantra, today the most popularly known *maṇḍala* of the Tantric tradition; or rather, she is the mantric energies that are installed in the diagram. The nine interlocking triangles of the diagram depict the sequences of the emanation and resorption of reality from and into a central Point of Ultimacy (*bindu*) which contains them all in unmanifest form. It is thus seen by Traipura practitioners as a dynamic map of reality, a substrate for ritual, and a focal point for meditation simultaneously.

The third and most subtle (*atisūkṣma*) form of this Goddess is her mantra, the Śrī-vidyā itself. Because it has sixteen syllables, she is also known as Ṣoḍaśī. The Śrīvidyā subdivides into three parts, which each express one of three goddesses, whose combined essences make up Tripura-sundarī (note the structural parallel with the Trika). Not counting OM, the first five syllables are said to express the Power of Insight (*jñāna-śakti*), are associated with Vāgīśvarī, and bring about liberation; the second five express the Power of Action (*kriyā-śakti*), are associated with Kāmeśvarī, and bring about the attainment of one's romantic and sexual desires; and the third set of five express the Power of the Will or Creative Urge (*icchā-śakti*), associated with Parā-devī, and remove obstacles (GOLOVKOVA 2010: 35).

The Traipura/Śrīvidyā became very successful and widespread throughout India, from Kashmir to Tamilnāḍu, in time eclipsing the traditions which nurtured its development, the Trika and Kaubjika sects. The Trika flourished for a time in the South side by side with the Śrīvidyā, and when it eventually disappeared, it nonetheless survived there through the incorporation of the principal mantra of Parā-devī (SAUḤ) into the core of the Śrīvidyā liturgy, being preserved as the heart-mantra of Tripurā (SANDERSON 1990: 54). This is appropriate, given the substantial influence of the Trika's doctrine, practice, and philosophy on the Śrīvidyā.

The last to develop, the Śrīvidyā is also the only sect of original Śaiva Tantra to survive to the present day, though the cost of doing so was the loss of its independence, it being assimilated and “sanitized” by the conservative Smārta Brāhmins of the South, and practiced today exclusively by them. It nonetheless kept some of its doctrines and rituals intact (though the transgressive elements were wholly excised). This is the form of Śrīvidyā studied by BROOKS (1990, 1992), though without clear awareness of its antecedents or original Kaula context. Today we see a Vedānta-Tantra syncretism (as expressed, for example, in the *Saundarya-laharī* scripture) practiced by the Śaṅkarācāryas of Śringeri and Kāñcī and their followers, who perform the Śrīcakra-pūjā of the Śrīvidyā.

1.6.6 *The Unity of the Tantric Śaiva Canon*

One of the most interesting of Abhinavagupta's doctrines is his elaboration of a view already implied in the scriptures, namely, that the entire corpus of Sanskrit scriptures (*āgama*), indeed, all valid knowledge received from authority (*āgama*), constitutes the self-expression of the Supreme Being (*parameśvara*). *Āgama* is thus the highest of *pramāṇas*. Since a set of words can never fully capture reality, all scriptures possess only a degree of truth and can be arranged in a hierarchy according to how great that degree is (GRANOFF 1992). Furthermore, for Abhinavagupta the purpose of scripture is to produce in the appropriate person at the appropriate time a stable and firm conviction (*vimarśa*) regarding the nature of reality and what he is to do in relation to it. We see this doctrine in *Tantrāloka* 35, but it is even better elaborated in a fascinating passage found in his *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī* (Kriyādhikāra, KSTS vol. 33, pp. 80-83).²³⁹

*āgamas tu nāmāntaraḥ śabdana-rūpo draḍhīyastama-vimarśātmā cit-
svabhāvasya īśvarasya antaraṅga eva vyāpāraḥ pratyakṣāder api jīvita-kalpāḥ
tena yat yat āmrṣtaṃ tat tathaiva yathā naitat viṣaṃ māṃ mārayati garuḍa
eva aham iti*

Āgama is an entirely internal function of God, whose essence is awareness. It is a inner expressing (*antara-śabdana*) that takes the form [in the appropriate hearer] of a completely stable and firm conviction (*vimarśa*). It is like the lifeblood of the [other] valid means of knowledge (perception etc.). Whatever is realized by its means, that corresponds precisely to reality, as in the conviction "This snake-poison cannot kill me—I am Garuḍa himself!" [which is effective if stable and firm].

*tatra tu tathāvidhe śabdanātmani vimarśe ānukūlyaṃ yo bhajate śabda-rāśiḥ
so 'pi pramāṇaṃ, yathā veda-siddhāntādiḥ anyo 'pi vā bauddhārhatāgamādiḥ.
tena hi yat śabdanam utpāditaṃ jyotiṣṭoma-kārī ahaṃ svargaṃ gantā iti dikṣito
'ham apunarāvṛtti-bhāgī iti kāruṇiko 'haṃ buddha-padaṃ gantā iti gāḍha-
kleśa-sahiṣṇur aham arhat-padaṃ prapattā iti tatra na viparyaya udeti
tadāśvas tasyaiva tatra anuṣṭhāna-yogyatvāt anyasya tu dṛḍha-pratipatti-
rūpatvābhāvāt apramāṇam eva tathāvimarśanātmakaṃ śabdanam.*

Regarding that, a verbal structure (*śabdarāśi*, i.e. a scripture) . . . is also a valid means of knowledge, such as the Veda, the Siddhānta, and other [orthodox scriptures], or on the other hand the Buddhist and Jaina scriptures and other [heterodox texts]. For, by this [principle], whatever expression has suddenly arisen [within one], such as "I will perform the Jyotiṣṭoma and go to heaven" (Vedic example), or "I am initiated and so am free of rebirth" (Saiddhāntika example), or "I am compassionate and (so) will attain the state of the Buddha," or "Enduring terrible austerity, I will attain the state of an Arhat," it shall not be contradicted [but will come to pass in exactly that way], because only one who trusts in it will properly and fully engage in it. But for someone else, because there is no

²³⁹ My attention was drawn to this passage by GRANOFF 1992, and my translation is in places influenced by hers.

firm realization on his part, [a given scripture] is not authoritative (*apramāṇa*); it is [for him] an expression lacking conviction (*avimarśana*).

nanu evaṃ tad eva śāstram kaṃcit prati pramāṇam kaṃcit prati na iti syāt, na caitad yuktam apakṣa-pātitvāt pramāṇasya iti atattvajño 'si pratīti-vṛttasya tathāpi nopekṣyase apakṣapāti pramāṇam iti kaḥ asya vacanasya arthaḥ, kiṃ yat ekasya nīla-jñānam pratyakṣa-rūpaṃ tat kiṃ sarvasya nīlaṃ bhāsayati dhūma-jñānam vā agnim, tvam prātar nidhim anena vidhinā labdhāse iti ca yaḥ siddhādeśa-rūpa āgamaḥ sa kiṃ sarvān prati pramāṇam atha kasyāpi kadācit kiṃcit tathā ihāpi

Objection: “If this is so, the very same scripture can be a valid means of knowledge for one person and not for another, and this is not proper, because the means of knowledge are [necessarily] impartial.” If you say this, you know nothing of how knowledge functions; nevertheless, I will not dismiss your objection. What is the meaning of this statement “the means of knowledge are impartial”? If someone becomes aware of the color blue through direct perception, then that will manifest blue to everyone? Or, if he perceives smoke [and infers fire, that inference will manifest the fact that there is] fire [to everyone]? And if reliable verbal testimony (*āgama*) comes in the form of the teaching of a *siddha* who says “In the morning, you will find a treasure by following these instructions,” is that valid for everyone? So, [you must admit that] it is something for some specific person at some specific point in time. It is just so in the case of scripture as well.

ḍḍha-vimarśana-rūpaṃ śabdanam ā samantāt arthaṃ gamayati iti āgama-samjñakaṃ pramāṇam sarvasya tāvat bhavati.

The expression that takes the form of an firm [inner] conviction (*vimarśana*) causes one to thoroughly know (*ā-gam*) its object—thus it is called *āgama*, and to that extent is a means of knowledge for anyone [who has such a conviction].

He goes on to say that when *āgama* does not produce a proper conviction in the hearer, that is only an appearance of *āgama*, one which does not in any way suggest a defect in *āgama*.

sarva eva hi āgamo niyatādhikāri-deśa-kāla-sahakāryādi-niyantritam eva vimarśam vidhatte vividharūpo niṣedhātāmā

For each and every scripture (*āgama*) produces a conviction restricted to a particular qualified person (*niyatādhikāri*), particular place, time, and other factors; [only then does it serve] as [a valid] injunction or prohibition.

In other words, to sum up, scripture is only valid and effective for the one who hears it as a truth which applies to himself: a startlingly modern idea, it would seem. It is an idea that makes sense in the context of Abhinavagupta’s doctrine that everything is consciousness. The true *āgama* is a transmission that produces a *vimarśa* — translated as “conviction” above, but the word also means *reflection* in Abhinava’s doctrine, for it is when a contracted form of awareness (like a human being)

properly reflects within himself, microcosmically, a pattern called knowledge that originated within completely expanded awareness (i.e. God) that the transmission that constitutes *āgama* can be said to have taken place.

Now, all other forms of *āgama* are thought to be wholly transcended by the Śaiva canon, which is seen as a single complex utterance (*ekavākyatā*) by Śiva. We have seen evidence of this above (p. 11) and we shall see more evidence below in the “Structure of the Canon” section (1.6.7). We also see evidence of it in the rule of supplementation. This is the teaching that, when one’s root-text (*mūla-sāstra*) does not provide adequate information for the performance of a prescribed action, then one can and must supplement it by turning to other texts within the canon; first to other texts within one’s *sampradāya* (*samāna-tantra*), then (if necessary) to other texts of proximate *sampradāyas* (*samāna-kalpa*), then (if necessary) to texts of a completely different character (*atyantāsamāna*) within the canon. Commenting on *Tantrāloka* 4.251cd, Jayaratha gives the example of an instruction from the *Mālinī* for worshipping the threshold of one’s ritual space, then explains that to gather all the information necessary for this act, one must first turn to the Trika *Triśirobhairava-tantra* (*samāna*); then to the Mantrapīṭha *Svacchanda-tantra* (*samāna-kalpa*); then to the Saiddhāntika *Anantavijaya* (*atyantāsamāna*) (SANDERSON 2005: 98-99 and n57). The detail Jayaratha gives shows us that the tripartite hierarchy can be understood in terms of degrees of *sāmānya* versus *viśeṣa*: the Siddhānta is the broad base of the tradition, while the Bhairava-tantras are more specialized and thus override the injunctions of the Siddhānta in the manner of exceptions to a general grammatical rule (just as the injunctions of the Siddhānta override the Veda, which applies only to the mundane sphere; see Abhinavagupta’s *Tantrasāra*, chapter one).²⁴⁰ Thus, in Jayaratha’s example, one turns finally to the Saiddhāntika text only to supply the most trivial detail, the formation of a particular *mudrā* which is part of the common ritual grammar of the whole tradition.

Having established the unity and integrity of the Śaiva canon, we may remind the reader that there were doctrines that were held across Śaivism. Abhinavagupta gives the example that all Śaivas hold that Śiva is no more separable from his *śakti*(s) than is fire from its heat (TĀ 1.157-8). But there were many more practical “common core” doctrines, which follow.

The individual soul is innately divine, that is, of the same nature as God, but exists in a veiled state, so that it is ignorant of its own true nature. Out of his compassion, the Lord has revealed scriptures that explain how the soul can be liberated from this bound state. These scriptures teach a ceremony of initiation (*dīkṣā*), in which mantras that are in fact aspects of Śiva’s own consciousness burn away all the *karma* that would otherwise destine one to take birth many more times, thereby granting the capacity to attain spiritual perfection and freedom during or at the conclusion of this very life.

²⁴⁰ Never at any point is one advised to turn to the Vedic canon in the process of textual supplementation, which supports my identification of Śaivism as a distinct religion in our period. All prescribed actions in a Śaiva scripture can be understood solely with reference to the Śaiva canon.

Anyone who was fit could be initiated, including women and *sūdras*. One was considered fit if he had received *śaktipāta*, by which God awakens the longing for liberation by infusing a person with his power (*śakti*). That is the sole qualification for initiation (along with the required *dakṣiṇā*). The guru performs the *dikṣā* as a vehicle of the Lord, who is the true initiator. Initiation removes most of the *mala* or impurity that clouds one's perception and limits the scope of one's activity. Initiation also empowers the initiate to undertake a daily practice aimed at bringing about both spiritual liberation and success in worldly goals.

These doctrines, variously interpreted, unite the entire Śaiva canon.

1.6.7 *The Structure of the Tantric Śaiva Canon*

In his most recent work, SANDERSON has offered a slightly reorganized schema in the interest of arriving at the clearest and most accurate structural presentation of the Śaiva religion (2013: 1-6). It may be presented in a tabular form as follows:

- 1) Religion of the Rudrabhaktas / lay Māheśvaras
- 2) Initiatory Śaivism
 - 2a) Atimārga
 - 2a1) Pāñcārthika Pāśupatas
 - 2a2) Kālamukha/Lākula
 - 2a3) Somasiddhānta/Kāpālika
 - 2b) Mantramārga
 - 2b1) Siddhānta (*sāmānya*)
 - 2b2) Śākta-Śaiva (*viśeṣa*) cults for the propitiation of:
 - 2b2a) Catur-bhaginī
 - 2b2b) Svachanda-bhairava
 - 2b2c) Caṇḍā Kāpālinī & Kapāliśa-bhairava
 - 2b2d) Trika Goddesses
 - 2b2e) Kālī-kula
 - 2c) Kulamārga
 - 2c1) Pūrvāmnāya (Kuleśvarī)
 - 2c2) Uttarāmnāya (Kālī)
 - 2c3) Paścimāmnāya (Kubjikā)
 - 2c4) Dakṣiṇāmnāya (Kāmeśvarī + the Nityās)

Table 7. Structure of the Śaiva religion (SANDERSON)

Compared to our Table 2, the changes this reorganization introduces are that it leaves out the Amṛteśvara *sampradāya* as unimportant to the overall structure and it categorizes the Kaubjika and Traipura *sampradāyas* as exclusively part of the Kulamārga. We shall see the reasons for this below. In attempting to understand the structural relationships in the largest part of the Śaiva canon, that of the Mantramārga, a graphic schematization of the latter that SANDERSON introduced in 1988 is still very useful. My version of that graphic, slightly altered for clarity, is presented here:



Fig. 6. The structure of the Tantric Śaiva canon.

The graphic’s primary utility lies in the amount of information presented in a single image, which necessarily involves some simplification. As SANDERSON writes, “Whatever is above and to the left sees whatever is below it and to the right as lower revelation. It sees itself as offering a more powerful, more esoteric system of ritual (*tantra*) through further initiation” (1988: 669). Now we will briefly examine some of the primary source data that gave rise to this graphic schema, and in so doing we will explain the few terms in Fig. 6 which remain obscure to the reader.

The Śaiva corpus discusses the divisions of its canon in countless places, none of which agree perfectly since a) accounts of canon are organized in such a way as to privilege the tantra in which the account occurs, b) tantras often have more than one name, and c) canonical lists are often filled out with mythical titles. Here we will only look at a few key sources that bring clarity to this exceedingly complex issue. In his *Tantrāloka* (37.14-17), Abhinavagupta tells us that the Śaiva-śāsana is divided into two main currents (*pravāha*), that associated with Lakulīśa (i.e., the Atimārga) and that which came forth from Śrīkaṇṭha—obviously a name for Śiva—in five streams (i.e., the Mantramārga). The classification of the Tantric corpus into five streams is one of oldest known. We may assume that it was first articulated by the Siddhānta, since it is that sect which has the privileged place in the *pañca-srotas* classification.

Direction	Face of Śiva	Canonical division
West	Sadyojāta	Bhūta-tantras
North/left	Vāmadeva	Vāma-tantras
South/right	Aghora	Dakṣiṇa-tantras
East	Tatpuruṣa	Gāruḍa-tantras
Zenith	Īśāna	Siddhānta-tantras

Table 8. The five streams of the canon

We may summarize the contents of these texts as follows. The *Bhūta-tantras*, all now lost, covered exorcistic matters concerning possession by *bhūtas*, *pretas*, *piśācas*, and so on, and contained material that was most likely redacted from Somasiddhānta sources.²⁴¹ The *Gāruḍa-tantras*, likewise now lost, described the procedures for the magical cure of snakebite; some of this material was redacted into the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* (e.g. chapter 197; DYCZKOWSKI 1988: 40-41). These two streams disappeared early on, and both came to be represented by the *Kriyākālaguṇottara*, the subject of a recent dissertation by Michael SLOUBER. The *Vāma-tantras* are those of the Catur-bhaginī discussed above. Vāmadeva is Śiva's most feminine face, and within the early *pañca-srotas* model, the Vāma category originally referred to Goddess-oriented texts that taught the attainment of nonaggressive *siddhi*; the category was made obsolete by the disappearance of the Catur-bhaginī cult and the appearance of numerous Śākta-oriented scriptures that were not categorized as part of the Vāma-srotas but rather as Vidyāpīṭha texts in the *pīṭha* model described below; thus the Vidyāpīṭha effectively replaced the Vāma category. Likewise, the *Dakṣiṇa-tantras* are those spoken by Śiva's fierce Aghora face, and thus consist primarily of Bhairava-centered texts featuring mortuary imagery. This category was effectively replaced by that of the Mantrapīṭha in the *pīṭha* system. The upper category consists of the 28 Siddhānta-tantras, of which there is a long-established list; six survive from the original list (with pre-twelfth century MS witnesses), and eight may never have existed. Four major Saiddhāntika scriptures with early witnesses and commentaries survive that do not feature in the traditional list of twenty-eight (the *Mṛgendra*, *Mataṅga-pārameśvara*, *Sarvajñānottara*, and the *Kālottara* in various recensions), as well as two early *pratiṣṭhā-tantras* (*Mohacūḍottara* and *Mayasaṅgraha*) (GOODALL 2004: xxiii-xxv).

This description of the five streams is immediately problematized by simply examining some canonical lists, such as that of the ninth-century *Pratiṣṭhā-lakṣaṇa-sāra-samuccaya* of Vairocana, which gives, apart from the twenty-eight Siddhāntāgamas, the names of twenty-eight Gāruḍa-tantras, twenty Bhūta-tantras, twenty-four Vāma-tantras (including the *Vīṇāsikhā*, which survives, the [*Sam-*] *mohana*, known from several other canonical lists, and tantras named after each of the Catur-bhaginīs); and thirty-two Dakṣiṇa-tantras, headed by the *Svacchanda-tantra* and including other texts we have independent evidence of, e.g., the *Siddhayogeśvarī*, **Nīśisañcāra*, **Ucchuṣma*, **Triśirobhairava*, **Yoginījālaśaṃvara*,

²⁴¹ Abhinavagupta notably associates the Bhūta-tantras with cultivators of *vairāgya* who live in cremation grounds and wearing skull-ornaments and leave the body voluntarily (MVV 1.232-34), clearly Atimārgins and probably Kāpālikas.

**Pañcāmṛta*, etc. (DYCZKOWSKI 1988: 33-35; starred titles have not survived except in the form of quotations). It is the last category that problematizes the description of the Dakṣiṇa-tantras given in the previous paragraph, for the *Siddhayogeśvarī* is a Goddess-oriented Trika text and the *Yoginījālaśaṃvara* was likewise an early (proto-Kaula) text on the Mothers and Yoginīs.

Abhinavagupta presents another traditional classification, that of three divisions: ten Śiva-tantras, eighteen Rudra-tantras (= 28 Siddhānta-tantras), and sixty-four Bhairava-tantras. (This division is reflected in Fig. 6 above.) Here the Vāma-srotas and Dakṣiṇa-srotas combine to make the Bhairava-tantras, though if we follow the enumeration of the *Pratiṣṭhā-lakṣaṇa-sāra-samuccaya* given above, we arrive at 56 and thus are missing one set of eight (the sixty-four Bhairava-tantras are usually understood in terms of eight sets of eight, e.g. in the *Jayadratha-yāmala*; DYCZKOWSKI 1988: 121-23).

More illuminating is the account of the hierarchy of scriptural revelation found in the first book of the *Jayadrathayāmala*, which calls itself the *Śiraścheda*. The thirty-fifth chapter of that book addresses the notion of canon generally, situating the Śaiva revelation in the broader sphere of the total Sanskrit scriptural corpora. It also teaches a theology of revelation and its effect, for example: “It is through scripture that Śiva’s divine vitality (*vīrya*) is made to fall into the wombs of liberation, fertilizing them to issue forth into the new life of the liberated state” (DYCZKOWSKI 1988: 103). The hierarchy here has four levels: *sāmānya* (common and universal), *sāmānya-viśeṣa* (common but restricted), *viśeṣa* (specialized), and *viśeṣatara* (extra-specialized). The first of these is the *itihāsa-purāṇa* (epics and mythic lore); the second constitutes *śruti* and *smṛti* (the Vedas and the Dharma-śāstras); the third are the sectarian traditions of dedicated spiritual practice: Saura, Śaiva, Pañcarātra, Kālamukha, Sāṅkhya/Yoga, Bauddha, and Jaina. The fourth level is that of the putative higher revelation within these initiatory traditions: the Bhairava- and Guhyā-tantras (= Dakṣiṇa- and Vāma-srotas) in the case of Śaivism, and the Vajrayāna in the case of Buddhism (See SANDERSON 2007b: 232-36).

The text goes on to explain that, in terms of Śaivism, its *viśeṣa* level is the Siddhānta corpus (which we labeled *sāmānya* in our general orientation on p. 72; these terms are of course relative), while its *viśeṣatara* level can be analyzed in terms of two *pīṭhas* or three *srotases*. The non-Saiddhāntika part of the canon is commonly divided into the Mantrapīṭha and Vidyāpīṭha by those groups that associate themselves with the latter. (See Fig. 6 above.) The term *pīṭha* means “seat” or “throne” and so by extension “sacred place,” but the *tāntrikas* also gloss it with the meaning “collection” (*samūha*). The *pīṭha* division is theoretically between the non-Saiddhāntika texts that are focused Bhairava and those focused on the Goddess—as suggested by the genders of the words *mantra* and *vidyā* respectively. The word *vidyā* is commonly used in these sources to denote a female mantra-deity. The Mantrapīṭha commonly refers to eight Bhairava texts, of which four may never have existed, and only one survives today. Four of the eight are the same in virtually all lists, thus I conclude that they all once existed: the *Svacchanda-bhairava*, *Caṇḍa-bhairava*, *Krodha-bhairava*, and *Unmatta-bhairava*. The other four vary from list to list, but the most commonly seen are the *Asitāṅga* and *Kapālīśa*, with *Ruru* and *Mahocchuṣma* good contenders for the seventh and eighth position (DYCZKOWSKI 1988:

45). Of all the actual and putative Mantrapīṭha texts, only the *Svacchanda* survived into the exegetical period of the tenth century, and thus I have used the term Mantrapīṭha to designate the *Svacchanda*-bhairava cult in the overview of the Mantramārga.²⁴²

In the *Śiraścheda* account we are considering here, the Vidyāpīṭha is said to consist of fifteen tantras: this subdivides into three Vāma (= Catur-bhaginī) tantras, five Yāmala-tantras (the *Brahma-yāmala*, *Rudra-*, *Viṣṇu-*, *Skanda-*, and *Umā-yāmala*), and seven Śakti-tantras. The latter are texts of the Trika and the Kālikula. In the former category we have the *Siddhayogeśvarī-mata* and the **Sarvavīra-samāyoga* (aka *Sarvācāra*), and in the latter the **Pañcāmṛta*, the **Yoginījālaśaṃvara*, and the *Śiraścheda* itself. The other two texts (*Viśvādyā* and *Vidyābheda*) are “future scriptures,” said to be destined to be revealed at the end of the present age (apart from a small section of the *Vidyābheda*, called the **Jñāna-prasūti*, said to be already revealed) (SANDERSON 2007b: 236n22). In reality the Vidyāpīṭha, though a fluid category, comprises three dozen sources or more, for all the texts of the Trika, Yāmala, and the Kālikula can be subsumed within it.

Śiraścheda chapter 35 also presents a *srotas* division; in this account, the Vāma-srotas is, as usual, the Catur-bhaginī scriptures, while the Dakṣiṇa-srotas comprises the four Mantrapīṭha texts, the five Yāmalas, and six of the seven Śakti-tantras just mentioned. The missing seventh is the *Śiraścheda*, which in this schema pictures itself as *ubhaya-srotas*, a scripture that combines the best of both the Vāma- and Dakṣiṇa-srotas.

We have examined the *Śiraścheda*’s canonical account as an example of how the scriptural sources deal with canon: in a fluid manner, presenting multiple forms of classification that generally privilege the present school and the present scripture as ultimate. But since the Śaiva canon was held to be a single utterance by Śiva, each account has to validate the whole while presenting a convincing hierarchy that differs from others by positioning its school at the top.²⁴³ (HANNEDER 1998: 25)

Abhinavagupta’s exegetical writings on the canon also pursue this goal. In his *Mālinīśloka-vārtika*, the Vāma- and Dakṣiṇa-srotases are rather reductively correlated to *siddhis* associated with the feminine and the sensual on the one hand and those associated with mortuary imagery, (*a*)*ghora* forms, and destructive rites on the other. Abhinavagupta (in the MVV and TĀ 37) also correlates the Vāma and

²⁴² Canonical accounts of the Mantrapīṭha can be found at *Brahmayāmala* fol. 199v5-200r4, *Jayadrathayāmala* 1, fol. 169r4-177r1 and 179v6-183r4, and *Nityādisaṅgrahābhīdhāna-paddhati* fol. 16r4-17v3 [quoting *Śrīkaṇṭhīya-saṃhitā*] (SANDERSON 1986: 182n67).

²⁴³ Some later accounts eschewed logic in this endeavor: for example, in the *Manthāna-bhairava* (*Kumārī-khaṇḍa*, *Mukti-saṅgraha-sūtra*), we see different sects assimilated to different *tattvas*: Pāsupatas reach Īśvara-tattva, Saiddhāntikas reach Sadāśiva, followers of the Nityā cult reach Śiva-tattva, above which is only Bhairava, the *nityānanda* attained by the adherents of the eight Bhairava-tantras. But beyond this, the text places three Trika scriptures and three Kālikula scriptures, and beyond that, the Kaubjika scriptures. These levels have no basis in the established *tattva* schema (SANDERSON 2009: 47-48 n13).

the Dakṣiṇa with the left and right channels of the subtle body and the associations that come along with those.²⁴⁴ To spell out his homologies:

<u>Vāma</u>	<u>Dakṣiṇa</u>
Feminine	Masculine
Sensual <i>siddhi</i>	Destructive <i>siddhi</i>
Creation (<i>śṛṣṭi</i>)	Dissolution (<i>saṃhāra</i>)
Left channel (<i>iḍā</i>)	Right channel (<i>piṅgalā</i>)
Inhale	Exhale
<i>Jñāna-śakti</i>	<i>Kriyā-śakti</i>

Now, the last four of these are homologies well-known in the yoga literature of the tradition. The purpose of correlating these with the Vāma- and Dakṣiṇa-srotas respectively is to argue for the Kaula way as the middle path (*suṣumna-nāḍī*), the power of pure Impulse (*icchā-śakti*), into which these streams feed and which constitutes the harmonious balance of the two extremes (expressed ritually through the Kaula worship of Śiva and Śakti equally). And the Kaula Trika is pictured as the summit and perfect fusion point of these three streams, the undifferentiated Bliss of Consciousness (yogically located above the crown of the head) which through its dynamic oscillations creates these polarities in lower realms.²⁴⁵ (MVV 1.167-171; SANDERSON 1986: 186)

We may conclude the section on canon with a note concerning the contraction of the Śaiva tradition of textual study after the Muslim conquest and subsequent loss of patronage. As we have observed, Śaiva ritual survived in the far South and in Nepāl, but stripped of its doctrine, while Śaiva doctrine survived in Kashmīr, largely stripped of its ritual and its yoga.²⁴⁶ We can summarize the contraction of the tradition in terms of its scriptures in this way: there were once

²⁴⁴ There is some scriptural basis for this: the *Vīṇāśikhā* itself associates the right channel with aggressive (*raudra-*) *siddhi*, and the left with gentle (*śuci-*) *siddhi*; but the *Vīṇāśikhā* teaches both types, hence my comment about the somewhat reductive quality of Abhinava's associations.

²⁴⁵ Note that Abhinava places the *Brahma-yāmala* and its cult just below the Kaula Trika, where the three streams begin to oscillate and differentiate (from the *śṛṣṭi-krama* or top down perspective). This is because the *Brahmayāmala* describes itself as a mixture of the Left and Right streams, as does the *Jayadrathayāmala*. Doubtless this reflects an earlier stage in the development of the canon in which there were only three main streams of the tradition, and the *Jayadrathayāmala* had not yet evolved from a Yāmala text to a Kālīkula one. The Yāmala could position itself above the Left and Right because it evolved directly from the Somasiddhānta, which asserted its transcendence over the other Atimārga sects. Here we see Abhinavagupta's Kaula Trika continue the same process by positioning itself above the Yāmala. Abhinava could argue that this was logical and natural because the Yāmala still featured the *siddhi*-obsession that his Kaula Trika transcended (among other reasons).

²⁴⁶ When BÜHLER was in Kashmīr in the late 19th century, the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* was still being performed, but other than that, the practice of Śaiva brāhmins was entirely *smārta*, nor did they attribute any significance to their Śaiva *dīkṣā* unless they were also students of Śaiva philosophy, which was a small minority. When SANDERSON asked Kaśmīrī informants in the 1970s when the last *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*s had been performed, they guessed about fifty years before. See SANDERSON 2007b: 434 and 2007a *passim*.

more than 200 Śaiva scriptures (at a bare minimum²⁴⁷), as a collation of citations in *Tantrāloka* shows; of these, 80 survived to the present in manuscript libraries around India and Europe; of these, eight survived in Kashmīr.²⁴⁸ These eight are the *Mataṅga* and *Mṛgendra* amongst Saiddhāntika scriptures (the latter only partially); the *Netra*; the *Svacchanda*; the *Mālinīvijayottara*, *Parātrīśika*, and the *Vijñāna-bhairava* amongst Trika scripture; and the *Vātulanātha-sūtra* amongst Krama scriptures. By examining the more recent composite codices that compiled texts for home study (*adhyayana*), now existing in the MSS libraries (EHLERS 2006), we can discover which of these surviving texts had a tradition of active study down to recent times. From a preliminary survey of these codices (SANDERSON 2007: 107n28), we find just one of the scriptures (the *Vijñāna-bhairava*), as well as three exegetical texts (the *Paramārthasāra* of Abhinavagupta, the *Spandakārikā* of Kallaṭa, and the *Mahārthamañjarī-parimala* of Maheśvarānanda) and two *stotras* (the *Bodha-pañcadaśikā* of Abhinavagupta, and the *Śivastotrāvalī* of Utpaladeva). In terms of scripture, then, the contraction of knowledge in Kashmīr can be mapped numerically as 200:80:8:1.

In Kashmīr, however, when the tradition contracted and partially atrophied under Muslim rule (1339-1819), a concern for essentialization led to a shift of attention from the sprawling scriptural corpus to the more coherent exegetical material of Abhinavagupta, which came to be regarded as possessing liberative power if correctly internalized. Specifically, I have in mind the evidence of the *Mṛti-tattvānusmaraṇa*, a well-attested Kaśmīrian text composed between the fifteenth and the nineteenth century on the destiny of the soul after death, to be recited for the twelve days after someone's passing (SANDERSON 2007: 116-120). This text declares that salvation from the pains of the hell-realms may be obtained through the *karma*-, *yoga*-, or *jñāna-mārga*. The first is correct brāhminical observance; the second, the activation of *kuṇḍalinī* through the practice of *uccāra* (a Śaiva innovation of a thousand years prior); and the third is a gnostic realization (*śivajñāne samāveśaḥ*) of the truth of the nonduality of God (*śivādvaya*) as expressed in the statement *śivo'ham*, which should be experienced as an all-encompassing wordless reality (*sarvatra bhāvayed avikalpataḥ*)—this is realization before death (*jīvanmukti*) (9.72-73, 81c-82). This realization is here to be accomplished through the three *upāyas* that form the basic theoretical superstructure of Abhinavagupta's exegesis: *sāmbhava*, *śākta*, and *āṇava* (9.74-77). Now, the *Mṛti-tattvānusmaraṇa* does not explicitly refer to Abhinavagupta, since it purports to be scripture; but it is only in Abhinavagupta that these three terms denote three *upāyas*. In the original scriptural source for the terms, the *Mālinī-vijayottara*, they denote *samāveśas* (more on this later). Furthermore, the *Mṛti-tattvānusmaraṇa* quotes the relevant verses of the *Mālinī* in the order given by Abhinavagupta, which is the reverse of the order given in the original text.

²⁴⁷ A collation of all the titles referenced by the extant works produces a list of over 1,000 titles. Some of these are undoubtedly spurious, but it seems likely that there were well over 500 scriptures in the tradition, not all of which were acknowledged by all practitioners at any time, of course.

²⁴⁸ SANDERSON lecture handout, "Rolling Up One's Sleeves in the Archives," 28 June 2012, CSMC, Hamburg (available at alexissanderson.com); and SANDERSON 2007a: 105-107.

As SANDERSON observes in 2007b, the teachings of the *Mṛti-tattvānusmaraṇa* correspond to the twentieth century instruction of Swāmī Lakṣmaṇ Jū, often called the last Śaiva guru of Kashmīr (d. 1991), in which gnosticism with a dash of yoga was the order of the day, and the rituals and more complex yogas of classical Śaivism were nowhere to be seen. This explains the modern emphasis on unusual scriptural material like the *Vijñāna-bhairava*, which eschews ritual. This situation is only to be expected when we understand that the Śaiva ritual culture, as baroque in its own time as pre-Reformation Catholicism, could not survive without the generous patronage it enjoyed before Muslim conquest (DYCZKOWSKI 1988: 10-12).

1.6.8 *The Mantramārga's relation to the Mantranaya (aka Tantric Buddhism)*

Initiating what will doubtless be seen in retrospect as a new era in Tantric studies, especially with regard to the understanding of the sources of Tantric Buddhism, SANDERSON published in 2009 his historical *magnum opus*, “The Śaiva Age.” In this 300-page monograph, SANDERSON amasses reams of evidence to demonstrate a) that Śaivism was by a significant margin the dominant religion of the early medieval period, and b) that Buddhism adopted its Tantric forms directly from Śaivism in order to effectively compete for royal patronage. He writes:

Now, this co-existence of Buddhism and Śaivism under royal patronage was surely facilitated by the fact that the form of Buddhism adopted and developed was one that had equipped itself not only with a pantheon of ordered sets of deities that permitted such subsumptive equations but also with a repertoire of Tantric ceremonies that paralleled that of the Śaivas and indeed had modelled itself upon it, offering initiation by introduction before a Maṇḍala in which the central deity of the cult and its retinue of divine emanations have been installed, and a system of regular worship animated by the principle of identification with the deity of initiation through the use of Mantras, Mudrās, visualization, and fire-sacrifice (*homa*) . . . (2009: 124)

We can review the evidence SANDERSON presents in the briefest possible way, following the chronological sequence of the well-known pentadic textual categorization of Buddhist Tantra (which, for its first three categories, parallels the common Śaiva topical division of its tantras into *kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga*, and *jñāna*).

The foremost²⁴⁹ of the Kriyā-tantras is the *Mañjuśrīya-mūla-kalpa*, probably of the seventh century. As we have seen, the Catur-bhaginī cult occupies an important place in this work, which is primarily devoted to *siddhi*. But there also exist strong parallels with the Śaiva *Niśvāsa*, dated a century earlier. In their survey of the latter text, GOODALL and ISAACSON write, “[T]he *Guhyasūtra* [of the *Niśvāsa*] provides evidence of common ground with the non-soteriological Tantric magic of Buddhist *kriyā-tantras*. For, like the *Mañjuśrīya-mūla-kalpa*, it contains a grimoire of recipes in prose for attaining magical *siddhis*. The recipes of both are couched in extremely similar language, with many identical elements identically phrased” (2007: 124-125).

²⁴⁹ In this section the word “foremost” is repeatedly used to denote the text that attracted the greatest number of commentaries and so-called satellite texts (*upatantras*) in its class.

Given the dates of these works, it is highly probable that the *Mañjuśrīya* drew on some version of the *Niśvāsa*. As the first Buddhist work to draw on Śaiva sources, the *Mañjuśrīya* must justify this, and it does so, by having Mañjuśrī declare that “It was I that first taught, in this vast Kalpa, everything that the inhabitants of earth without exception refer to as the teaching of Śiva” (2009: 130). In other words, since Mañjuśrī is the true source of the Śaiva revelation, there is no problem with him teaching parts of it for the benefit of Buddhists. In this way, as SANDERSON puts it, “the strict division between the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist has dissolved within a higher Buddhist intertextual unity” (2009: 131).

The foremost of the Caryā-tantras and the first soteriologically oriented Buddhist Tantra (i.e., one that claims to teach a path to liberation) is the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-[tantra]*, from the seventh century, which features an array of Śaiva mantra-deities. It justifies this with a similar statement: “in time to come there will arise people of inferior understanding and no faith who will not believe this teaching . . . they will say that this is not the teaching of the Buddhas but belongs to the outsiders” (2009: 128). The author anticipates objections from his co-religionists through the device of prophecy.

The foremost of the Yoga-tantras is the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha*, found in a shorter redaction dateable to c. 700, and an expanded redaction c. 800. Here we see the influence of Kaula Śaivism appear on the scene (for which see the next section), for in this *tantra* it is taught that candidates must achieve *āveśa* in their initiation, exactly as in Kaulism (2009: 133). The term is used repeatedly in the text to denote the state the practitioner must induce in himself in order to accomplish both his *siddhi* and his *bodhi*; most typically we see the compound *vajrāveśa*, emphasizing that this is a Buddhist possession, however much it might resemble the state sought by Kaulas (2009: 138-9). The manual for initiation into the *maṇḍala* of this *tantra*, Ānandagarbha’s *Sarvavajrodaya*, gives a detailed account of the means by which the Vajrācārya brings about this state of possession in the initiand, and there we see that the procedures involved are exactly parallel to the Kaula ones (but have no precedent whatsoever in earlier Buddhism) (2009: 135). Furthermore, in this text we see the rite of casting a flower onto a consecrated *maṇḍala* while in a state of possession (sections 224-34), the hallmark of all Śākta forms of Śaivism (2009: 134), as witnessed in numerous earlier Śākta-Śaiva text but no Buddhist ones.

In the foremost of the Mahāyoga- or Yogottara-tantras, the *Guhyasamāja* (eighth century), we see the elements of the Śaiva Vidyāpīṭha come to the fore: the deities, “now multi-faced and multi-armed in a fusion of Śaiva and Buddhist iconography, are represented and visualized copulating with their consorts” (2009: 142). We also see a sexual rite incorporated into the initiation ritual and a concomitant sacralization of impurity. Also in this class we have the *Sarvabuddha-samāyoga-ḍākinī-jāla-saṃvara* (eighth century), though it is considered a bridge text to content of the Yoginī-tantras. Its name is clearly calqued on two earlier Vidyāpīṭha texts, the *Sarvavīra-samāyoga* and the *Yoginī-jāla-saṃvara* (2009: 156). In this text we see the advent of the full complement of Kāpālika imagery, and a deity (Heruka) calqued on Bhairava, worshipped in a *maṇḍala* of fierce goddesses precisely characteristic of the most transgressive forms of the Vidyāpīṭha (2009: 148-54). In the *Sarva-kalpa-samuccaya*, an appendix to the *Sarvabuddha-*, we see our first

evidence of direct textual redaction from a Śaiva source: a passage drawn from the *Vīṇāśikhā* (2009: 154-5).

Finally, in the fifth and last phase of the Mantranaya/Vajrayāna, that of the Yoginī-tantras, the sourcing of both inspiration and specific textual passages from Śaivism reaches its zenith. Here we see a sharper break from antecedent Buddhism than ever before, and the creation of a world whose visual aesthetic is almost indistinguishable from that of Śaivism. The primary deity here, Heruka, is clearly calqued on Bhairava, all of whose iconographical features are adopted. SANDERSON has identified fourteen features that are indisputably found in Śaiva iconography centuries before they appear here (2009: 170). The only feature present deriving from antecedent Buddhism is the vajra. In the practice taught, we see the same pattern: all twelve of the major innovations in *caryā* and yoga (most notably the theory of the three *nāḍīs* and associated practices) found in these textual materials derive from earlier Vidyāpīṭha sources. Furthermore, one of the two foremost texts of this class, the *Laghu-śaṃvara* aka *Cakra-śaṃvara* aka *Herukābhidhāna* (c. 900),²⁵⁰ is almost totally redacted on the basis of these Śaiva sources.²⁵¹ Indeed, the only element of antecedent Buddhist doctrine contained in the original version of this text (apart from a handful of occurrences of the terms Buddha, Tathāgata, and Bodhisattva) is a section of four verses (10.1-4) (2009: 159). The original version (which ends with 50.19) is that seen with the earliest two commentaries; subsequently another chapter was added, presumably by parties uncomfortable with the un-Buddhist feel of the text, since the added chapter strives to give the text more of a Buddhist context.²⁰⁴ Finally, the ceremony of initiation itself (and its *maṇḍala*), through which a candidate becomes qualified to practice the tantra's rites and observances, is drawn from precisely that section of the *Yoginīsaṃcāra* that we had occasion to discuss earlier (p. 62ff), with the result that this phase of Buddhism becomes characterized by archaic elements of the Kāpālika Somasiddhānta that the Mantramārga, for the most part, had already eschewed in its process of refinement.

Buddhist scholars whose commitment to the tradition they study goes beyond the academic, of which there are many in the American academy, tend to react to these findings with disbelief, even prior to actually examining the evidence. Some of those who do take a look at SANDERSON's evidence challenge it by distorting fundamental principles of textual criticism (e.g. DAVIDSON [2002]'s misuse of the maxim of *lectio difficilior potior*, thoroughly refuted by SANDERSON at 2009: 189-92 and n455, 457, and 461) rather than offering a different reading of the same evidence. But to anyone who reads Sanskrit fluently, and has no vested interest in a particular conclusion, it is apparent that:

Comparison of the textual parallels reveals that it is the Cakrasaṃvara corpus that has adopted and adapted the Śaiva sources rather than the other way round. For the Buddhist versions abound in instances in which it can be seen that Śaiva material has been misunderstood, crudely, artificially, and incompletely modified, or rendered contextually

²⁵⁰ The other being the *Hevajra-tantra*.

²⁵¹ See SANDERSON's detailed lecture handout "How Buddhist is the Herukābhidhāna?", Pondicherry, 21 July 2009 (available online at alexissanderson.com).

incongruous. The Śaiva versions, on the other hand, seem . . . to be entirely free of signs of textual dependence on Buddhist originals. (2009: 189)

We need not, however, see this as a “Śaivization” of Buddhism, since the techniques and ritual structure adopted from Śaivism are generally reframed and given a new context in the form of Mahāyāna doctrine (witness the frequent use of the doctrine of *śūnyatā* in Tantric Buddhist sources). As SANDERSON noted in his first article on Buddhist adoption of Śaiva Tantric ritual, “When we consider Tantric Buddhism in terms of its origins we see Śaiva influences at every turn; and the higher one goes up the hierarchy of the Buddhist Tantras, the more pervasive these influences become. However, Tantric Buddhism is, of course, entirely Buddhist in terms of its function and self-perception; and in transforming Śaiva elements it gave them meanings which obscure these origins” (1994: 96). We may understand this phenomenon better through invoking the dichotomy of form vs. content; when other religions began importing the ritual technologies developed by the Śaivas, they did so in a way that generally preserved the structure of those technologies while filling them with different content. The “content” here is not only the doctrinal frame, but more importantly the mantra-deities which constitute the central object of any Tantric cultus. The “form” is what the practitioner does, and the “content” is the conception he has about the purpose and goal of what he does, a conception signified by the symbol of his deity. To put it simply, one can fairly easily rewrite a Tantric practice manual and simply “fill in the blanks” with the mantras of one’s own deity and similarly revise the elements of the visualization that constitute identifiers of the deity in question; and this is often precisely what was done. Even those changes were not always made as thoroughly as one would suspect; for example, some key mantras (like HŪM) were taken over unchanged, and as we have seen deity iconography could be almost identical as well. Just as it can be difficult to tell visual representations of different deities from the same time and region apart without formal art-historical training, it would be difficult, circa the tenth century, to tell apart some Tantric Śaivas from some Tantric Buddhists, not only in terms of outer ritual performance but in terms of the structure of mentally enacted ritual as well.

The Yoginī-tantras are the final phase of the process of borrowing we have been discussing, for Muslim conquest followed and put an end to state support for both Tantric Buddhism and Tantric Śaivism, hastening the former’s demise in India and initiating the latter’s contraction, a process that would eventually yield the *haṭha-yoga* systems.

1.7 The Kulamārga, a.k.a. Kaulism

The Kulamārga, which could also simply be called Śāktism,²⁵² denotes the sometimes loosely related traditions of practice said to be inaugurated by Macchanda-nātha, his consort Koṅkanāmbā, and six of their sons.²⁵³ If these were historical figures, they probably lived around the eighth century, the date of our first documented reference to the Kaulas (SANDERSON 2006: 149). Already by the time of Abhinavagupta, Macchanda could be acknowledged as foremost among all human gurus (*Tantrāloka* 1.8) and Lord of the current Age (*yuga-nātha*). As we have seen (pp. 31f above), the Kulamārga derived directly from the Somasiddhānta, and preserved most of its practices, modifying some and adding others (see the list of Kulamārga characteristics on p. 31). Though much study still remains to be done in this area, we can outline the basics with some confidence.

The fundamental contrast within the Kulamārga is between the early Kula phase and the later Kaula phase (though in practice these terms are often used interchangeably). In all likelihood, we may accurately picture a crossfading spectrum of Somasiddhānta → Kula → Kaula. For as we saw, the Somasiddhānta is characterized by the worship of Bhairava surrounded by the Eight Mothers, with special emphasis on the fierce Cāmuṇḍā. In the Kula phase, Bhairava is worshipped as Kuleśvara, together with his consort Kuleśvarī, and the Eight Mothers get associated with sixty-three families (*kula*) of Yoginīs, of which they are the matriarchs. For this reason, the Kula is also referred to (e.g., by SANDERSON) as the Cult of the Yoginīs. Here we are in a strange, wild, visionary, and liminal world, in which the practitioner (who maintains the Kāpālīka observances of his forebears) seeks contact (*melāpa*) with these Yoginīs in embodied or disembodied form.

SANDERSON writes of this phase in the following evocative passage:

“When the initiate passed into this subjacent tradition he found that the masculine hierarchy [of the Mantramārga] was replaced by ranks of wild, blood-drinking, skull-decked Yoginīs. Radiating out from the heart of the Deity as an all-pervasive network of power (*yoginī-jāla*), they repopulated this vertical order of the Śaiva cosmos . . . and irradiated sacred space by sending forth emanations enshrined and worshipped in power-seats (*pīṭha*) connected with cremation grounds throughout the sub-continent.

²⁵² The Kulamārga may be termed Śāktism in the same sense that we are using the term Śaivism in the present work: a specific and self-contained religious tradition, requiring initiation and divided into separate lineage-traditions with their own sectarian insignia and practices could not be conflated with those of other lineages (at least not without an additional initiation). In the late medieval period, Śāktism ceased to be an -ism of this kind. Also note that just as Śakti could be worshipped within the Mantramārga (usually as subordinate), Śiva could be worshipped within the Kulamārga (usually as subordinate).

²⁵³ These sons are given Prākṛt names that suggest tribal associations (Pulinda/Śabara, Aḍabilla, Paṭṭila, Karabilla, Ambilla, and Śarabilla) and as well as Sanskrit (Amara, Varadeva, Citra, Ali, Vindhya, and Guḍikā), and the first set of sons is exalted over the second. Their consorts have (mostly) Prākṛt names (Sillāi, Eruṇā, Kumārī, Bodhāi, Mahālacchī, and Aparamekhalā). See TĀ 29.38.

. . . they were believed also to possess women and thereby to enter into the most intimate contact with their devotees” (1988: 671).

We have little documentation of the Kula phase, but we see elements of it both in early Mantramārga materials (parts of the *Brahma-yāmala* and the *Jayadratha-yāmala*) and in its own Kula-śāstras, possessing a very different character from Mantramārga sources and written in a register of Sanskrit that is frequently extremely deviant from the Pāṇinean norm, texts such as the *Kula-sāra*, the *Kula-pañcāśikā*, the *Kula-ratna-mālā*, the *Kula-gahvara*, and the *Kula-sūtra*.

The Kaula phase, much more thoroughly documented, is definable as the domestication and essentialization of the Kula.²⁵⁴ By domestication I mean a suppression of the mortuary and an increased emphasis on refined sensuality. To put it colloquially, Kaulism is (in part) the move out of the cremation ground and into the bedroom. Though its transgression and nondualism causes most Western scholars to view Kaulism as the Tantric tradition *par excellence*, in fact it is markedly distinct from the Tantric sects we have considered by the fact of its rejection of external ritual, including all *homa* and even the nearly ubiquitous *liṅga*-worship (TÖRZSÖK 2007: 473-5), a rejection we will explore below. (Internal ritual is generally not rejected by Kaulas.) This brings it a step further from Brahmanism and a step closer to the Atimārgic roots of the religion. TÖRZSÖK argues that this rejectionism is at least partially based in a spirit of questioning the basic meaning and purpose of ritual acts that characterizes Kaula sources but not properly Tantric ones (2007: 478-79). This questioning is seen in linguistically unrefined Kaula sources as well as the more polished ones.

Kaulism is most notably characterized by the *decontamination*, *interiorization*, and *aestheticization* of Kula rituals and transgressive acts, in which their elements are reinterpreted in terms of the aesthetics of inner experience. SANDERSON characterizes this shift with this example:

The Kāpālīka [of the Kula *yoginī* cult] sought the convergence of the Yoginīs and his fusion with them through a process of visionary invocation in which he would attract them out of the sky, gratify them with an offering of blood drawn from his own body, and ascend with them into the sky as the leader of their band. The Kaulas translated this visionary fantasy into the aesthetic terms of mystical experience. The Yoginīs became the deities of his senses (*kaṛaṇeśvarīs*), revelling in his sensations. In intense pleasure this revelling completely clouds his internal awareness: he becomes their plaything or victim (*paśu*). However, when in the same pleasure the desiring ego is suspended, then the outer sources of sensation lose their gross otherness. They shine

²⁵⁴ “The distinction between Kula and Kaula traditions mentioned *passim* but not clarified (see *Tantrāloka* 13.301; 320-21b; *Mahānayaṅprakāśa* 1.30; etc.) is best taken to refer to the clan-structured tradition of the cremation-grounds seen in *Brahmayāmala*, *Jayadrathayāmala*, *Tantrasadbhāva*, *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, etc. (with [their] *Kāpālīka kaulikā vidhayaḥ*) on the one hand and on the other its reformation and domestication through the banning of mortuary and all sect-identifying signs (*vyaktaliṅgatā*), generally associated with Macchanda/Matsyendra” (SANDERSON 1985: 214n110).

within cognition as its aesthetic form. The Yoginīs of the senses relish this offering of ‘nectar’ and gratified thereby they converge and fuse with the Kaula’s inner transcendental identity as the Kuleśvara, the Bhairava in the radiant ‘sky’ of enlightened consciousness (*cidvyoma-bhairava*). (1988: 680; emphasis original)

In the Kaula phase, we also see a condensation and intensification of ritual for the purpose of attaining sudden enlightenment(s) wherever possible (SANDERSON 1995: 87-90). The Kaula forms of initiation (*kula-prakriyā*) greatly condensed the Mantramārgic forms (*tantra-prakriyā*), eliminated the *homa*, and generally added three elements that distinguished them from the non-Kaula forms: 1) the consumption of transgressive substances as a test of nondual awareness; 2) the initiand’s possession (*āveśa*) by a form of Bhairava or the Goddess as a requirement of initiation; and 3) the presence of a charismatic, putatively enlightened Guru, who because of his mastery of spiritual energies could circumvent laborious ritual processes and even bestow initiation merely through a touch or a penetrating gaze (TÖRZSÖK 2007: 475, citing the *Kulasāra*).

The Kaula way, as the most subtle and essentialized version of the path, was of course considered the highest by its adherents. It was a meta-tradition in the sense that any Tantric cult could be inflected in a Kaula version and re-interpreted in its terms. In his discussion of canon in *Tantrāloka* 35, Abhinavagupta identifies it with the Trika (which indeed has a Kaula form), in a transparent attempt to similarly elevate the latter; but he quotes a passage from a Krama scripture which is useful in that it tells us how adherents of the Kula/Kaula path regarded it:

There is only one revelation (*āgama*) within which all [scriptures] are grounded, from the mundane scriptures [i.e., the Vedas] to the Vaiṣṇava, Bauddha, and Śaiva. Its [true] abode (*dhāma*), and the ultimate goal, is described within [the scriptures of] the Trika. Because of its indivisible nonduality it is called the Kula. Just as there is one vital breath in [all] the limbs of the body . . . so the [Kaula] Trika is present in all scriptures. And this is declared in the sacred *Kālīkula[-pañcaśataka]*: “It has been declared that this is the essence that transcends the five streams . . . The Kula resides within the scriptures [of other traditions] like the scent in a flower, the oil in a sesame seed, the soul in the body, or nectar in water.” (Tantrāloka 35.30-34; translation follows SANDERSON 2005: 97)

In Kaula worship, summarily described in chapter twelve of the *Netra-tantra*, Kuleśvara and Kuleśvarī are worshipped together or separately, surrounded by the eight Mothers (and their eight Vīra counterparts, if Bhairava is present), attended by Gaṇeśa and the *kṣetrapāla* Vaṭuka, along with ancillary worship of the primordial *siddha* lineages (usually, the revealers of the Kula in each of the four world ages [*avatāraka, yuganātha*] and their consorts, plus their sons and their consorts).

The mature Kaula path appears, according to the canonical account in the *Ciñciṇīmata-sāra-sammuccaya*, in four “transmissions” (*āmnāya, anvaya*) or “lodge-teachings” (*gharāmnāya*), associated symbolically with the four directions:

- E: Pūrvāmnāya; main deity Kuleśvarī (≈ Trika)
 (cp. *Ciñciṇimata* 7.38-100 and TĀ 29.1-55)
- W: Paścimāmnāya; main deity Kubjikā (+ Navātman)
 (see *Ciñciṇimata* 1.1-7.37²⁵⁵)
- S: Dakṣiṇāmnāya; main deity Kāmeśvarī → Tripurasundarī²⁵⁶
 (see *Ciñciṇimata* 7.101-154)
- N: Uttarāmnāya; main deity Kālī Kālasaṅkarṣaṇī
 (see *Ciñciṇimata* 7.155-250)

The first of these is the earliest to develop, and it resembles closely the version of the Kaula Trika we see in chapter 29 of the *Tantrāloka*. The other three have been covered above as *sampradāyas* #7, 8, and 9 of the Mantramārga. This almost total overlap of the Mantra- and Kula-mārgas is indicative of the inseparability of most forms of Śaivism and Śāktism in this period.

We have used the terms domestication and decontamination to describe the Kaula phase of the Kulamārga, which dominates the scriptural record. One of the best examples of this is the prohibition of the *kapāla-vrata* in all forms of Kaulism except the Northern Transmission. Indeed, all forms of external marking of sectarian affiliation are forbidden, which indicates the shift of context from the ascetic practicing in the wilds or the charnel ground to the respectable householder practicing at home or at *kula* gatherings. See, e.g., the *Kula-pañcāsikā* (20-21b), where Śiva says: “If one engaged in the practice of ascetic observance, wearing matted locks [or] shaven head, the hairtuft, covered with ashes and adorned with the five *mudrās* [of the Mahāvratā], has [ritual] intercourse and enjoys the drink of [Kaula] heroes [then] he does harm to Me, O Goddess Maheśvarī.”²⁵⁷

In a fascinating passage that concludes the fourth chapter of his *Tantrāloka*, Abhinavagupta (who, incidentally, attributes his realization to a Kaula Trika guru) contrasts the Kula with the Kaula, emphasizing the latter’s abjuration of external forms of religion as characteristic. As SANDERSON writes, “When these two Kaula levels, with discipline and without, are distinguished the first is termed the Kula and the second the Kaula or . . . the Mata” (2005c: 106). The term *mata* appears to be used as a synonym for Kaula only by the *Jayadratha-yāmala* and Abhinavagupta. In this passage, Abhinavagupta positions his own view as the most all-inclusive in that it resists dogmatic adherence to both injunction and prohibition, or rather it allows for *any* injunction or prohibition to be applied according to its utility for a given practitioner while denying that it could be regarded as universally applicable. He writes,

In the Siddhānta, worship of the *liṅga* is taught, with the intention of coming to see it as embodying the whole universe (*viśvādhvamayatāvide*); but in the Kula and [the Kaula systems], it is forbidden, so that one may

²⁵⁵ The CMSS describes the Paścimāmnāya first and at greatest length because that is the *āmnāya* with which the text identifies itself.

²⁵⁶ To clarify, while the cult of Kāmeśvarī and the eleven Nityās is called the Southern Transmission in the CMSS, the mature Traipura *sampradāya* of Tripurasundarī never calls itself the Southern Transmission, but rather the Higher (*ūrdhvāmnāya*).

²⁵⁷ Following the text as established by SANDERSON at 2005c: 109n74.

come to see the essence (*ātmatā*) of the universe in one’s own body.²⁵⁸ [But] here in the all-inclusive [way of supreme nonduality] what reason could there be either for [requiring] the ritual or forbidding it? [The Kula texts prescribe the wearing of] matted locks and the like, so that by constantly adhering to these rules one may realize one’s identity [with Śiva]. The Kaula system renounces these, for it teaches an “easy method.” (256-8b)

Here Abhinavagupta’s commentator Jayaratha adds,

“He means that in the Kaula system, there is a prohibition of wearing matted locks, ashes, and the rest, as taught [in the scripture that says]: ‘He should not associate in act, thought or speech with anyone in the world who wears such insignia (*cihna*) as matted locks and ashes, the banner, the [human bone ornaments of] the Kāpālika observance, the trident and the terrible skull-staff.’ For in this [system] is taught a method of realizing one’s identity with the Divine Essence (*pārameśvara-svarūpa*) easily, without effort, even while one is immersed in [the experience of] the objects of the senses, as taught in [the *Svabodhodaya-mañjarī* of Vīranātha v. 12]: “Cessation’ (*nirodha*) [of contracted awareness] was taught by previous [masters] through the method of renunciation [of the mind and senses] and arduous practice. Here I will teach cessation through the release of effort.”²⁵⁹

Abhinavagupta continues,

[The Kula texts prescribe] the practice of [mimetic] ascetic observance (*vrata-caryā*) as the means of achieving identity with the [deity] denoted by [one’s] mantra. But [the Kaula texts] forbid this practice [of impersonation], so that one may realize that the [deity] denoted by the mantra is all-embodying (*sārvātmya*). [The Tantras and the Kula texts prescribe] going to *kṣetras*, *pīṭhas*, etc., as a means of overcoming obstacles; or, in the case of an initiate engaged in propitiating a [particular] mantra[-deity], [such residence in holy sites] is taught as the means of achieving that [mastery]. But [in the Kaula texts,] these injunctions to visit holy places are null and void, so that one may realize that one’s self is all-encompassing (*svātmanah pūrṇatvam*) because it is embodied in everything (*vaiśvarūpya*).²⁶⁰ (258c-61b) . . . [A Kula initiate] must keep to his own lineage (*santāna*) in order to achieve identity with [his deity]. (268cd) . . . But these distinctions are rejected in the Mata texts since they introduce dualities into the ultimate reality that is truly undivided. (269c-70b)

²⁵⁸ MVT 18.3: *yajed ādhyātmikam liṅgam bāhyam liṅgam na pūjayet.*

²⁵⁹ Here the translation follows SANDERSON, 2005c: 108n74.

²⁶⁰ *Timirodghātana* f. 45v: *dehastham pīṭhakṣetre tu nānyakṣetram paryatate*, “when the sacred sites exist within the body, one need not wander to any other site (*kṣetra*).” Cf. *Kulasāra* f. 80v.

The contrast Abhinava describes here is (for him) fundamentally a contrast between on the one hand the dualist (*bheda*) and dualist-cum-nondualist (*bhedābheda*) positions of the Tantras and early Kula texts and the nondualism (*abheda, advaya*) of the Kaula sources. We can safely assume that the contrast he sets up is not as clear-cut as he makes it, as strongly suggested by the fact that the Kālīkula, while thoroughly Kaula and usually nondualist, does not in fact renounce external display of signs including that of the *kapāla-vrata*. The passage concludes with Abhinavagupta asserting his own position, which he characterizes as a “higher nondualism” (*paramādvaya*) because it does not forbid dualistic practices the way normal nondualism but is all-inclusive. Another way of saying the same thing is that Abhinava refutes both the dogmatism of injunctions characteristic of the Tantras and Kula texts *and* the dogmatism of the overturning of those injunctions that characterizes (most of) Kaulism.

In our way, none of this—from going to holy sites to lineage restrictions—is enjoined [for all initiates], because none are a [guaranteed] means of direct access to God (*sākṣān naupayikaṃ śive*), and none of these is specifically prohibited, because they can do nothing to divide or diminish that Reality. For the Lord is universal, so injunction and prohibition are merely differential constructs (*vikalpas*) [freely manifested] within his nature; they cannot divide that nature itself. If one desires to penetrate ultimate reality one has only to adopt whatever method one feels to be most conducive [in a given circumstance]; and one may abandon that method as one sees fit. No specific system (*yantraṇā*) is required [or forbidden] here. As it is said in the sacred Trika teachings: “All goddesses, lineages (*ovallī*), mantras, scriptures and methods are equal, since all are Śiva. One can clearly see that the reality of Śiva is an undivided existence.” (270c-75²⁶¹)

Abhinavagupta’s position here is based on an unusual passage in the *Mālinī-vijayottara*, the existence of which is one of the key reasons that he chose this text as the basis for his exposition of the Tantric corpus:

Here there is no purity and no impurity . . . neither dualism nor nondualism . . . nothing is enjoined nor prohibited in this [Kaula system]. Or, everything is enjoined, and everything forbidden here! In fact, there is but one commandment on this [higher path], O Queen of the Gods: the yogin is to make every effort to steady his awareness on Reality. He must practice whatever makes that possible for him. (18.74a, 74c, 77c-79)

The “higher” Kaula view, then, is that all systems and all scriptures have an equal claim to validity; that is, any of them is *potentially* valid, in that any of them may offer a *sādhana* that may benefit a given practitioner, and none can claim to be authoritative for everyone. This is the view we saw Abhinava representing in the “Unity of the Canon” section above. It is also discussed by the Naiyāyika Jayanta Bhaṭṭa in his *Āgama-prāmāṇya*, where he represents it by saying, “It cannot be [said that] other scriptures are invalid because they teach actions that arouse strong

²⁶¹ Translation follows SANDERSON 2005c: 109-112.

feelings of revulsion (*hṛdaya-krośana*), for that is not sufficient to invalidate them. For if a person is revolted by the thought of eating from a human skull and the like, it is only because he has been mentally conditioned by constant exposure to a different *darśana*.”²⁶² This displays a perspicacity in cultural analysis that strikes us as unusual for any pre-modern period, and is seen elsewhere in Kaula sources as well (e.g. in the argument that caste is merely a cultural construct²⁶³).

Much work remains to be done on the Kulamārga, which is not as well understood as the Mantramārga. Desiderata include: clarifying further the Kula/Kaula distinction, and how far it is actually warranted; editing key passages from the frequently corrupt Kaula sources; mapping the Kaula lineages and their associated insignia (*cihna*), code-phrases (*chomma*), lodges (*ghara, palli*), etc.; and differentiating between the relatively organized Kaulism we see pre-Muslim conquest and the more amorphous Kaulism that appears post-conquest.

1.8 Definition of Nondual Śaiva Tantra

We have seen that Tantra as an abstract category is a scholarly construction. Here I offer another construction, one that is useful for the present dissertation: a definition of the particular body of Tantric teachings that I will be focusing on, and which for the sake of convenience I call Nondual Śaiva Tantra (NŚT). My definition of this category is: “A refinement of Śaiva Tantric philosophy and practice in a nondual mode (*parameśvarādaya-vāda; advaitācāra*) that reached its peak in the 10th to 11th centuries and is primarily characterized by—

- 1) emphasis on direct experience (*sākṣātkāra*) of a divine reality that has transcendent (*viśvottīrṇa*) and immanent (*viśvarūpa*) aspects, often called Śiva and Śakti respectively, with Śiva primarily understood as the ultimate ground of being, and Śakti as the energy making up the entire manifest universe;
- 2) initiation into a guru-disciple relationship and an ostensibly caste-free *kula*;
- 3) gnostic teachings generally combined with a ritual and/or yogic practice utilizing mantras, meditative visualization, breath regulation and subtle-body practices, as well as the aesthetic cultivation of the senses, aimed at accessing and assimilating the divine energy in all things, in order to achieve power, pleasures, and liberation.”²⁶⁴

²⁶² *Na ca hṛdaya-krośana-hetu-karmopadeśād āgamāntarāṇām aprāmānyaṃ tasyāprāmānyatāyāṃ aprayojakatvāt. Vicikitsā hi nṛ-śiraḥ-kaṭāḍyaśaneṣu yā sāpy anya-darśanābhyāsa-bhāvanopanibandhanā.* Cited and translated in SANDERSON, Śaivism and Brāhmanism lecture series Handout 8, 4 December 2012. Jayanta Bhaṭṭa himself only approved the Veda-congruent forms of Śaivism, i.e. the Siddhānta, and parodied the others in his farce *Āgama-ḍambara*.

²⁶³ *Pauṣkarapārameśvara* quoted in *Nityādisaṅgraha* (SANDERSON 2009: 289n689) and *Cintyaviśva* quoted in the *Dikṣādarśa* of Vedajñānaguru: *kalpanā-mātram jāti-bhedam* (Ibid.: n690).

²⁶⁴ This definition is slightly influenced by the definition of Tantra as a general category offered by David WHITE in his introduction to the book *Tantra in Practice*: “Tantra is that body of beliefs and practices which, working from the principle that the material universe is

Nondual Śaiva Tantra, for our present purposes, constitutes the textual materials where these features can be found. They are, by and large, texts of the Kaula Trika and the Krama, as well as the quasi-independent Kashmiri school known as the Spanda. These will be discussed further in Part Two.

1.9 Conclusion to Part One

While it is impossible to summarize every important point that has been discussed in the present overview of Śaivism, I wish to draw the reader's attention to a few significant points. This overview, primarily founded on the groundbreaking work of Professor SANDERSON and his students (GOODALL, VASUDEVA, HANNEDER etc.), has presented us with:

- a clearer map of the traditions of initiatory Śaivism than has hitherto been seen (see Table 2),
- a firmer set of key dates than has hitherto emerged (see Table 3),
- the fact that Tantric Śaivism was, in all nine of its primary *sampradāyas*, a pan-Indian tradition in our period (as opposed to the recent regional designations such as “Kashmir Shaivism” and “Tamiḷ Śaiva Siddhānta”)
- the fact that the Śaiva Siddhānta (originally a dualist Tantric system originating in North India) coexisted with the non-Saiddhāntika systems focused on Bhairava and the Goddess; “in spite of some mutual opposition on the theoretical level the various forms of Śaivism were co-functional from the point of view of their patrons and many practitioners”;²⁶⁵
- the fact that all known Tantric traditions are mutually intertextual, with borrowings on both conceptual and liturgical levels amongst the Śākta-Śaivas and the Buddhist Tantras (especially the Yoginī-tantras).

This concludes Part One of the present dissertation, constituting an overview of Śaivism that provides the necessary context for what follows. Part Two is an examination of the interrelated concepts of *āveśa*, *śaktipāta*, and *dīkṣā* in the primary sources of the Śaiva religion, as well as in relevant antecedent sources.

nothing other than the concrete manifestation of the divine energy of the godhead that creates and maintains that universe, seeks to appropriate and channel that energy, within the human microcosm, in creative and emancipatory ways” (2000: 9). This definition, while intending to subsume the whole of Tantra, in fact only applies to nondual Śaiva Tantra, but in that context is worth quoting. It emphasizes Tantra as a ritual technology that allows its practitioners to appropriate *śakti* and use it to attain *mokṣa* and *bhoga*.

²⁶⁵ SANDERSON lecture handout, “Rolling Up One’s Sleeves in the Archives,” 28 June 2012, CSMC, Hamburg (available online at alexissanderson.com).

Part the Second

Possession, Conversion, Religious Experience, and Initiation:

Research on *samāveśa*, *śaktipāta*, *dikṣā*, and their synonyms
in the primary sources of Tantric Śaivism and its antecedents

<*āveśa*> *m. joining one's self (KātyŚr.); entering, entrance, taking possession of (MBh. Śak. Prab. etc.); absorption of the faculties in one wish or idea, intentness, devotedness to an object (BhP.); demoniacal frenzy, possession, anger, wrath (Bālar. Kād.); apoplectic or epileptic giddiness L.*

— Sir Monier MONIER-WILLIAMS' Sanskrit Dictionary (1899)

2.1 Theoretical reflections: what is “possession”?

A large part of the text-critical exploration that follows is focused on the word *āveśa*, commonly translated as “possession,” generally referring to possession of a human agent by a superhuman one. That translation is only sometimes appropriate with regard to the Śaiva texts we will consider, but since it is certainly the case that *āveśa* signifies possession in the earliest period of our sources, and that the semantic shift of the term takes place against that background, we will begin by considering theoretical approaches to the study of possession and the extent to which they are relevant here.

There is no shortage of studies on the phenomenon of possession in South Asia and elsewhere, the great majority of them anthropological. The anthropological perspectives on the issue are summarized by Leslie SHARP (1993: 14ff) and critiqued and reevaluated by Morton KLASS (2003). Very few if any of these studies are helpful here, because they almost exclusively cover oracular possession and related forms (such as instructional or protective possession), in which specific ritual agents ordained for the purpose are said to be possessed by specific deities in order to give a blessing, solve a problem, or exorcize a evil spirit (see, e.g., INGLIS 1985: 90). By contrast, the type of *āveśa* that will most concern us here does not fit these categories, for it is described as an experience of the penetration of one's being by the generalized “power of God.” Indeed, it would not be going too far to say that this latter kind of *āveśa* seems to have more in common with American Pentacostal or Baptist experiences of the “holy Spirit” than with most other forms of “possession” in South Asia. And yet the language of possession is apposite, for this “entry of the power of God” (*rudra-śakti-samāveśa*, *śiva-śakti-pāta*) constitutes an intense and consuming experience that can take a person over and even direct his actions, with the personal will temporarily in abeyance. Furthermore, some of the symptoms of possession in the ethnographic sources (such as shaking, swaying or reeling, fainting, etc.) tally with those described in the Śaiva scriptures we will consider.

Therefore we will briefly consider some definitions of possession from the literature. For HARPER (1963: 166): possession is “[a] type of complete-identification role playing [that] involves temporarily taking the identity of . . . a personified supernatural being.” This definition does not correspond to the primary sources examined here, in which there is no performative enacting of the personality of a specific deity. Also inappropriate for us is GARRETT's (1987: 4) more recent definition

of possession as “a kind of spectacular body language for expressing convictions or emotions too profound, too painful, or too dangerous to be expressed verbally.” Indeed, the common anthropological argument that possession is a ritualized pressure-release valve that allows subalterns (such as women and low-caste people) to express what is usually forbidden to say (an argument problematized in KLASS 2003) has nothing whatever to do with the type of possession examined here, which has to do largely with tapping and assimilating a spiritual energy or power that enlarges the initiate’s sense of self and capacity for action. One might say that possession in any form is frequently about empowerment, and certainly the type we examine here is, but none of the sociopolitical overtones seen in modern anthropological studies are apparent in our sources.

Morton KLASS’ landmark 2003 monograph that reevaluates the nature of spirit possession in the context of anthropological studies defines it as a subtype of “dissociate identity phenomena” called *patterned dissociative identity* (PDI), described in this way:

Individuals exhibiting PDI present alters [viz., alternative identities] deriving from and recognizable as entities of their society’s belief system (variously, spirits, demons, divinities, ancestors, and so forth) who speak an act in known, predictable, and recognizable ways. Thus . . . the alter manifestations are culturally patterned. . . . the patterned dissociative identities may be viewed as beneficent or community empowering on either or both transcendental (universe-maintaining) and pragmatic (problem-solving) levels. (2001: 119)

While not irrelevant to the materials we will consider, this definition is also not very germane, because in the Śaiva form of *āveśa*, one does not take on the personality of a specific divinity, since in our sources the concern is overwhelmingly with accessing the power or energy (*śakti*) of a universal Divinity. The effect of *āveśa* is therefore described in terms of a phenomenology of trance or emotional experience, and at no point are specific speech acts attributed to those who become “possessed.” So what definitions of possession do we find that do correspond to the Śaiva Tantric sources? Though a bit vague, Janice BODDY’s definition is quite appropriate:

[Possession is] a broad term referring to an integration of spirit and matter, force or power and corporeal reality, in a cosmos where the boundaries between an individual and her environment are acknowledged to be permeable, flexibly drawn, or at least negotiable. (1994: 407)

Our kind of possession is further unlike that documented in ethnographic studies in that there is little disassociation or displacement of consciousness; corresponding to what David SHULMAN observed in Tamiḷ Nāḍu, the energy of the deity enters “without destroying his empirical, sensually motivated, autarchic being” (1991: 51), though there may be a temporary displacement of personal agency, and subsequent to his liberation the autarchy of his being is thought to be fused with that of deity. Most appropriate of all, though, is probably Rich FREEMAN’s thesis (formulated with respect to northern Kerala’s *theyyam* rituals): “To be possessed means to perform

the possession rituals correctly and manifest possession behaviors” (1993: 134). For Śaiva *āveśa* takes place nearly always in a ritual context, specifically initiation rituals, and is assumed to have occurred when the initiands manifest specific behaviors described in the scriptures as the signs (*cihnas, lakṣaṇas*) of possession.

By far the most relevant single secondary source for the present study is Frederick SMITH’s *The Self Possessed* (2006), from which several of the above citations were drawn. Since SMITH also pursues a philological method, and is surveying premodern Sanskrit texts, his findings are dovetail best with those of the present study, though here we go well beyond his conclusions, especially with regard to his incomplete and often erroneous understanding of the Śaiva sources. Despite the many errors of chapter 10 of his work (“Possession in Tantra: Constructed Bodies and Empowerment”),²⁶⁶ the book on the whole is a major contribution, especially for its study of oracular childhood possession (*svasthāveśa*, ch. 11) and the critical/theoretical reflections in the introduction and conclusion sections of the book. SMITH argues, and I mostly agree, that possession as we see it in the Sanskrit texts is “an act of social subversion as well as an act of social confirmation, at least within a small but informed circle” (58). While unsure of what kind of social subversion he has in mind, the *āveśa* connected with the initiation rituals in our sources is a kind of confirmation of membership in a circle of cognoscenti. Also mostly apropos is SMITH’s assertion that “what is cultivated [in possession] is a heightened awareness and spontaneity that is exciting and attractive to both performer and audience” (60), though in our sources, there is no audience for these nonpublic rituals. But he sometimes contradicts himself, as when he rightly says that in (Kaula) Tantric texts *samāveśa* indicates “a state of complete absorption in an object or deity” (580) but then footnotes that statement with the mostly incorrect (and inverse!) statement that *samāveśa* “indicates blissful pervasion by an external force” (602 n2). There are two somewhat distinct usages in the Tantric sources: when *āveśa* means something like “possession” (in the earliest sources), it construes with an agent in the instrumental case; when *samāveśa* means something like “absorption” or “immersion” (in the mature tradition), it construes with a locative or genitive. In other words, there is no adequate discussion in SMITH 2006 of the question of the *direction* of entry; the verbal root allows for the denotation of both the act of being entered (by a supernatural force) or entering into (the deity).²⁶⁷ This is fully explored in the present work.

²⁶⁶ Even the chapter epigraph is mistranslated and wrongly contextualized (i.e. the view presented is not Śivāgrayogin’s, but rather one he is criticizing). The error is actually compounded in the full citation at p. 369: SMITH misunderstands the meaning of the verse, and calls the 16th century *Śaivaparibhāṣā* a Kāpālika text of the Atimārga! (See p. 296 below.) This can only mean he did not read beyond (or before) the verse he quotes, and further indicates a deep confusion about both the taxonomical terminology *and* the chronology of the whole Śaiva tradition. Further mistranslations, misinterpretations, and terminological errors abound in this chapter; perhaps the most egregious of the latter is the constant misuse of the term *saiddhāntika*, to the great detriment of any reader not already well educated in the structure of the Tantric Śaiva canon. Note that all SMITH’s mistranslations from pp. 367-78 are corrected in the present study.

²⁶⁷ As already noted in TORELLA 1994: xxxii.

In his conclusion, SMITH defines the lexical item *āveśā* as follows, attempting to capture both its religious and non-religious meaning:

āveśā suggests self-induced pervasion of a distinct and attractive force within the personality [such as intense emotion] . . . More appositely, it is self-induced possession of a celestial or ethereal being . . . indicat[ing] a significant shift in personality. This is usually a learned and controlled dissociative behavior that is consuming, integrative, and seamless, with little trace of inner conflict . . . In these two varieties of *āveśā*, the experiences of emotional absorption and that of spirit or deity possession are nearly indistinguishable. (2006: 580)

With this I mostly can agree, though I am uncomfortable with the application of psychiatric language (“dissociative”) and the definition perhaps infers a little more from the sources than is strictly supported by their evidence. But I think he makes a good point in saying that the emotional connotations of the term (see p. 139 below) cannot be separated from the mystical ones. He notes that *āveśā*, like other forms of “positive” possession, emerges from ritual; but the Tantric rituals we will examine do not fit neatly into either of the two mutually exclusive types of ritual that he identifies (brahmanical vs. non-brahmanical/non-Sanskritic). They are like the first type in that one “inculcates a controlled state of possession through the observance of complicated and precise processes” (591) but in the rituals of initiation we will examine, the one possessed is a passive recipient, while the guru, who is not possessed, is the one performing the ritual and performing the precise processes in question. On the other hand, they are like his second type of ritual in that they often include “a wholesale submersion into an idealized form of a deity” in which “the intentionality and decision making capabilities of the [one possessed] are ambiguous and often absent” (592). But our rituals of initiation-cum-possession are unlike both his ritual types in significant ways, as we shall see. However, we can here wholeheartedly agree with SMITH’s statement that in Sanskrit sources possession is often seen as modification of personality, not as a psychological aberration: “an undermining, shifting, or transforming of the identity of the possessed” (584-5) in a positive sense. In the Tantric materials, *āveśā* in general constitutes a religious experience in which the personality-code of the initiand is partially overwritten by that of the deity, resulting in a temporary or permanent transformation of his sense of self. SMITH rightly suggests (*passim*) that these accounts point us toward an implicit understanding of selfhood in South Asia which is radically different from the Western one (at least since Descartes): here the self/identity is mutable, fluid, porous, and permeable, its boundaries can blur and overlap with those of other beings and energies, and thus it exhibits what might be called a multidimensional multivalency. In other words, the self in South Asian discourse (and much of the rest of Asia too, for that matter) exhibits greater continuity with the whole of reality than it does in the Western view. As a result, it is sometimes a contested site, but more importantly it is one that can be *shared*. Self-induced possession that is seen as salutary is really nothing more (or less) than the sharing of self with a deity or divine power that has the qualities that one seeks to internalize. Therefore the individual is not necessarily fractured by “possession” as he is in the Western

psychiatric context of Dissociative Identity Disorder or Dissociative Trance Disorder.²⁶⁸ Of course, we must hasten to add that this vision of permeable and porous selfhood does not only contrast with the Western one, but also with the brahmanical paradigm in India of the monadic, inviolable and unchanging self, as exemplified by the Sāṅkhya *puruṣa* and the *ātman* of the Vedāntins and Mīmāṃsakas.²⁶⁹ But though this self was posited as inviolable (e.g., in the *Gītā*), the fact that in practical life no brahmin thought it actually was inviolable is seen in the brahmanical obsession with purity laws, for through his conformity to *dharma* the brahmin maintained the barrier protecting his metaphysical self. SANDERSON precisely articulates this mainstream brahmanical view and its terror of possession when he writes:

Any relaxation of the inhibition and self-control that this conformity required was seen as opening up a chink in the armour of the integral self through which these ever alert and terrible powers of the excluded could enter and possess, distorting his identity and devouring . . . his essences.²⁷⁰ It will readily be recognised that the orthodox anthropologies were in themselves a defence against such forces, admitting as they did in the sphere of action no powers external to the individual's karma-causality. Possession, therefore, was doubly irrational: it obliterated the purity of self-control and contradicted the metaphysics of autonomy and responsibility. (1985: 200)

And he cogently argues that the development of the Tantric rites of possession emerged in this context and as a reaction against it, as *tāntrikas* seized the opportunity for a kind of power that was denied the Vaidika brahmin but also made possible by the exclusive values of his worldview:

It was precisely because these forces threatened the [brahmin's] "impotent purity" that they invited a visionary mysticism of fearless omnipotence, of unfettered super-agency through the controlled assimilation of their lawless power . . . The high Tantric soteriology which obliterated the extrinsicism of Brahmanical purity in the privacy of an ecstatic, all-devouring self-revelation of consciousness came out of the traditions of orders of exorcistic visionaries who, knowing the emanative clan-systems and hierarchies of the powers of impurity, freed and protected the uninitiated from their assaults and at the same time cultivated the practice of controlled possession, seeking permeation by the forms of Bhairava and Kālī which stood at the centre of, and

²⁶⁸ See the DSM-IV's definition of the latter (which includes "possession trance," which is a pathological mental disorder when it is "not accepted as a normal part of a collective cultural or religious practice") at SMITH 2006: 49 and the important discussion of it at KLASS 2003: 93-125. I have not yet checked the newly issued DSM-5 (2013) to see if this category still appears.

²⁶⁹ SANDERSON on the latter: "in his self-representation, the most orthodox of Brahmans was the most individual of individuals. For him there were no external powers which moulded his life" (1985: 195).

²⁷⁰ Citing TĀV, vol. 11, *āhnika* 29, p. 13, ll. 17-18 and p. 19, ll. 19-20; and *Netra-tantra* 20.1-40.

controlled as their emanations, the clans of these impurity-embodiment and impurity-addicted obsessors of the orthodox identity. (1985: 200-1)

The present study agrees strongly with SMITH when he regards the permeable, porous, and mutable self as the dominant discourse of selfhood in South Asia, the brahmanical schools referred to above being rather the exception, a fact obscured by disproportionate Western scholarly attention toward them up until recent times. It may be that SMITH goes too far when he calls possession “perhaps the region’s most widespread form of spiritual expression” (2006: 597), but it is doubtless far more significant than heretofore generally realized, and it is in Tantric Śaivism specifically that possession and the religious ideas developed out of it achieve their apotheosis, at least within the context of the vast body of Sanskrit literature. Therefore a study of *āveśa* and related ideas in the textual sources of Tantric Śaivism is a desideratum for all those who wish to understand South Asian religion. The present work partially fills that need. Through our exploration of the sources, we will discover that the range of meanings encompassed by (*sam*)*āveśa* is greater than that attested by the dictionaries. By careful consideration of context and usage, I have so far identified these meanings: entry (= *praveśa*), possession, infusion, pervasion (\approx *vyāpti*), penetration (= *vedha*), copenetration, fusion (= *sāmarasya*), immersion, emergence (= *unmagna* of one’s true nature), communion (= *sāyujya*) or consubstantiation, absorption (= *samāpatti/samādhi*), spiritual experience (= *sākṣātkāra, anubhāva*), and enlightenment or realization (*nityodita-samāveśa*). This constitutes the true semantic range of the word, a range not reflected in our dictionaries (and is *pace* SMITH (2006: 580), who surprisingly regards *āveśa* as having “much less polysemy” than *praveśa* or *grahaṇa*). In general I will not translate (*sam*)*āveśa*, so the reader can herself track the multivalence of the term.

Lastly, in the foregoing I used the word “experience” in relation to *āveśa* a number of times. If I refer to *āveśa* as a “religious experience,” it does not indicate that I argue that there are forms of experience that are uniquely religious (though the Śaiva authors certainly thought so), but rather that *āveśa* refers to an experience taking place in a religious context. Moreover, I agree with significant parts of Robert SHARF’S 1998 essay on experience (SHARF 2000), in that I am not proposing that the inner experience of religious agents is amenable to scholarly study, but only that evidence of experience is a central concern of our sources. He argues that “modern Buddhist communities judge ‘claims to experience’ on the basis of the meditator’s particular lineage, the specific ritual practice that engendered the experience, the behaviour that ensued, and so on. In other words, a meditative state or liberative experience is identified . . . on the basis of eminently public criteria” (2000: 279-80). This applies rather perfectly to our premodern sources as well. It is precisely because subjective experience by its very nature is unverifiable by anyone else that our sources focus on the legitimate (i.e., scripturally determined) “signs” of *āveśa*, which is to say the “public criteria” that are couched in, and rendered meaningful by, the very context that SHARF describes. (For more discussion of this, see the Conclusions.)

Now we turn to the history of our key terms.

2.2 *Āveśa (and hints of śaktipāta) in the antecedent sources*

Amongst our key terms, *āveśa* and *dikṣā* have a long history before the advent of Tantric Śaivism in the historical record (c. 500 CE), while *śaktipāta* is a term unique to Śaivism. The pre-Śaiva history of the term *dikṣā* is already well summarized by GONDA (1965: 315-462), so here we focus on *āveśa*. Though this term is discussed at length in SMITH 2006, I find his use of the primary sources problematic,²⁷¹ and it seemed best to lay that work aside and conduct my own research, cursory though it is with regard to the pre-tantric sources here summarized.

The following presentation of sources proceeds chronologically as far as possible. Amongst the materials that merit attention, the early medical literature and the *Mahābhārata* are roughly coeval (100 BCE-100 CE),²⁷² followed by the *Pāśupatasūtras*, the *Brahmasūtras*, and the *Yogasūtras*.

2.2.1 *Āveśa and related concepts in the medical literature*

The earliest of the Āyurvedic texts is the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, dated to about 100 BCE or shortly thereafter (WUJASTYK 2012),²⁷³ followed by the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, dated to the early centuries of the common era (WEISS 1977). The concept of influence or possession by nonhuman beings appears in both, though only rarely in association with the root *āviś*. Possession in Āyurveda has previously been addressed in some detail by WEISS (1977) and has received a fine treatment by SMITH (2006: 471-578). WEISS adventurously but intelligently attempts to assimilate the Āyurvedic categories of *bhūta* and *graha* influence to modern Western categories of mental illness as described in the psychiatric Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, not unreasonably assuming that the former are culturally-specific descriptions of the latter.²⁷⁴ For our present purposes, the emic categories will be sufficient to show that the notion of permeable selfhood has an ancient pedigree in Indian culture.

Caraka²⁷⁵ distinguishes between two types of etiology in his discussion of pathological states of madness (*unmāda*), i.e. *nija-* and *āgantū-unmāda* (6.9.16), or what we might call endogenous and exogenous types respectively (WEISS 1977: 1). In *Suśruta* we see the term *amanuṣa-upasarga* (6.60) instead of *āgantū-unmāda* for exogenous mental illness, stressing the role of nonhuman entities more strongly. We will address the more systemized presentation in *Caraka* first. There we see eight types of *bhūtas* (nonhuman beings) or *grahas* (seizers, afflictors) enumerated, in order from less to more terrifying and base: *deva*, *ṛṣi*, *guru-vṛddha-siddhādi*, *pitṛ*,

²⁷¹ Specifically, I discovered so many errors of substance and mistranslations in chapter 10 (on “Possession in Tantra”) of his book that I began to wonder whether other chapters dealing with primary sources might be similarly afflicted (though to be fair, perhaps chapter 10 is the weak point of the work).

²⁷² In his *Rethinking the Mahābhārata* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), Alf HILTEBEITEL proposes 100 BCE as a kind of “center of gravity” date for the text.

²⁷³ MEULENBELD argues, with extensive evidence, that the core of the text dates to 50-150 CE (HIML IA: 105-115).

²⁷⁴ WEISS’ efforts are evaluated by SMITH at 2006: 497ff.

²⁷⁵ For the sake of convenience, I will use this name to refer to the text of the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, which in fact appears to have been the product of three individuals: Agniveśa, Caraka, and Dṛḍhabala. See WUJASTYK 2012.

gandharva, *yakṣa*, *rākṣasa*, and *piśāca*.²⁷⁶ These beings afflict humans, either through possession or influence (and here there is no clear distinction between the two), for one of three reasons: out of a desire to injure, to enjoy sense-pleasures, or, curiously, to experience piety (*abhyarcana*) (2.7.15). They take the opportunity to mount (*āruh*), enter (*āviś*), or seize (*grah*) humans when the latter are in liminal space-times: at an empty crossroads at twilight, in an empty isolated house, near a lone tree, in a cremation ground, having intercourse with a menstruating woman, at a battle, at a religious ritual, childbirth, etc. (2.7.14).²⁷⁷ They also are given an opportunity to enter/seize if someone breaks a vow (*vratabhāṅga*) or commits a transgression (*aparādha*) and fails to perform the proper expiation (*prāyaścitta*); or as a fruition of *pāpa-karman* from a past life; or they may afflict simply because of a defect in one’s mind (*prajñāparādha*) (here the exogenous blurs into endogenous) (2.7.10). “By virtue of their own powers and attributes (*guṇa-prabhāvaiḥ*), the gods and the rest enter (*viś-*) the body of a man quickly and imperceptibly, without defiling it, like a reflection in a mirror or sunshine in a crystal (*sūryakānta*).”²⁷⁸ Each of the different classes bring about *unmāda* in different ways: *devas* and *pitṛs* through visions, *gurus* et. al. by cursing, *gandharvas* by touching, *yakṣas* by entering (*samāviś-*), *rākṣasas* by making one smell one’s own body-odor (!), and *piśācas* by mounting and riding a person (2.7.12). (Note that WEISS 1977 instead takes these as referring to prodromal symptoms in the initial onset of mental illness.) On the basis of this description, we might be tempted to suppose that only *yakṣas* and *piśācas* actually possess a person, but Cakrapāṇidatta’s (eleventh century) commentary on 6.9.16 glosses the word for “attacks” by all these various beings (*abhidharṣaṇāni*) with the word *āveśa*.²⁷⁹

Turning to *Suśruta*, we find much the same material in a less systematic form. He tells us that *grahas* can enter embodied beings unseen (6.60.19), and further that they have trillions and trillions of terrible assistants that can enter/possess a person and feed on his blood, fat, and flesh (6.60.22: *teṣāṃ grahāṇāṃ paricārakā ye koṭī-sahasrāyuta-padma-saṃkhyāḥ | asṛg-vasā-māṃsa-bhujāḥ subhīmā niśāvihārās ca tam āviśanti*). (One can hardly help but think of germs or viruses here, which of course exist in countless numbers, and which also enter us, feed on us, and can even alter

²⁷⁶ Note that at *Caraka* 6.9.21, we see the *brahmarākṣasa* added and the *ṛṣi* lumped in with the *gurvādi* category to keep the total at eight *bhūtas*. These beings are in some ways parallel to, but clearly distinct from, the *grahas* that appear in the *Mahābhārata* in association with Skanda and the *gaṇas* and *mātr̥s* (see HATLEY 2012, esp. pp. 100-103 and n3); note that the *mātr̥s*, initially seen as predominantly malevolent *grahas* and later as benevolent deities, were eventually standardized (by the fifth century) at eight as well.

²⁷⁷ Tellingly, these and other opportunities for possession are called *chidras*, “chinks, openings” (*Caraka* 6.9.21.1 and *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya* 6.4.6-8; the same word is used in the Tantric literature, e.g. *Netra-tantra* 19.46).

²⁷⁸ *Caraka* 6.9.18, trans. SMITH 2006: 488. Cf. *Suśruta* 6.60.19.

²⁷⁹ Though it is by no means certain that all the ancient authorities thought these pathological conditions were literally due to the influence of other beings with independent agency. Note the definition of *apasmāra* (epilepsy) given in the dramaturgical *Daśarūpa*: “Epilepsy, which is [due to] possession by a *graha*, by suffering, or by [another cause], is depicted by falling to the ground, shaking, sweating, foaming at the mouth, etc.” (*āveśo graha-duḥkhādyair apasmāro yathāvidhiḥ bhūpāta-kampa-prasveda-lālāphenodgamādayaḥ*, cited in HARA 1979: 271n69). Here the same word—*āveśa*—is used with both a *graha* and *duḥkha* as “agent.”

our mental functioning.) However, the verse just before this surprises us by saying: “They do not cohabit (*saṃviś*) with men, nor do they ever possess (*āviś*) men. People who say that they ‘possess’ out of delusion can be disregarded when it comes to demonology.”²⁸⁰ In the context, this may well be an interpolation of a later redactor, but even so, the ambiguity it expresses about whether these conditions of mental illness (*unmāda*, *unmatta*) are really attributable to possession is significant.

All three of the classic Āyurvedic texts (the third being Vāgbhaṭa’s *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya*, c. seventh century) describe the behaviors and demeanor of a person seized or possessed by each of these *bhūtas*. These accounts are clearly modeled on the behaviors of the respective being as known from mythology (interest in religion and purity in the case of the *deva-graha*, sensuality in the case of the *gandharva*-, aggression in the case of the *rākṣasa*-, etc.); or, to take the view of WEISS (1977), biologically-based mental illnesses are here made sense of with reference to these known cultural categories. For example, the *deva-graha* is afflicted with obsessive-compulsive disorder, the *gandharva* is hypomanic, the *yakṣa*’s symptoms indicate bipolar affective psychosis, and so on. Certainly it is the case that the eight *bhūta*-types are arranged by Caraka in order of increasing antisocial aggression, disorganization of the personality, and loss of competence, as WEISS says (1977: 150), whose analysis is too persuasive to dismiss entirely but fails to take account of the fact that Western psychoanalytic categories are themselves cultural constructions that change with culturally-determined views of normativity (witness the multiple revisions of the DSM) and that therefore his enterprise is reductionistic. What is interesting here for our present purposes is that despite the scale of normativity implied in the *devādi-piśācānta* spectrum, all eight types are treated as thoroughly pathological and in need of treatment and/or exorcism. By contrast, in the Tantric context, possession by deities is considered beneficial and is therefore sought, while possession by *piśācas* etc. is considered pathological and to be avoided.²⁸¹

What is the relevance of these discussions for our primary topic? This evidence demonstrates that from a very early date we confront a cultural milieu in which the human being is seen as permeable, and in which the consequences of sharing your self with other beings can be considerable (see *Netratantra*²⁸² 19.46 and 20.1–40 and SANDERSON 1985: 200, cited above on p. 134). The behaviors of the allegedly possessed in these Āyurvedic texts most frequently demonstrate marked rebellion against the strictures of Brāhmanic society (as is also seen in possession cross-culturally; see section 2.2) and a taste for the forbidden (e.g., meat, fish, wine, and women are several times mentioned, especially in the more demonic end of the

²⁸⁰ 6.60.21: *na te manuṣyaīḥ saha saṃviśanti na vā manuṣyān kvacid āviśanti | ye tv āviśantīti vadanti mohāt te bhūtavidyā-viṣayād apohyāḥ*; but the ablative case in *-viṣayāt* is odd when we would expect a locative, and I wonder if *apohyāḥ* was originally meant to refer to the *grahas*, with a meaning something like “people speak of ‘possession’ because they can be ‘removed’ through the techniques of exorcism,” but perhaps this is a stretch. Cf. WEISS 1977: 54.

²⁸¹ We should note that beneficial possession in Tantric yoga and ritual is not really possession in the Western sense of that word, as the consciousness of the person “possessed” is never displaced or turned off (except perhaps in the special case of oracular possession or *svasthāveśā*).

²⁸² This eighth-century text is coeval with the *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya*.

spectrum). I propose that, in the logic of inversion that Tantric works sometimes feature, tasting the forbidden invites possession. As we will see, some Tāntrikas and all Kaulas seek a salutary and controlled form of possession (if we can call it that) by the deity. The Āyurvedic sources do not acknowledge a salutary kind of possession, however. As noted, possession by a *deva* is here just as pathological as by a *rākṣasa*, if less frightening. As we will see, Tāntrikas sought *samāveśa* by/into the benevolent Supreme Deity or his Power in the context of liberation-practice, and only sought *āveśa* by spirits (*yoginīs*, *ḍākinīs*, *mātr̥s*, *nāyakas*, etc.) in the context of practice for *siddhi*—and it was precisely his ability to negotiate such a dangerous ‘possession’ without losing control that granted him the powers he sought.

2.2.2 Āveśa in the epic sources

When we turn to the *itihāsa* literature, we see the real flexibility and yet specificity of the term *āvīś* and its synonyms. It is of course usage that determines the semantic range of a term, so we will present a variety of non-technical usages of *āvīś* and then discuss them. First we will see a list of instances found in the *Rāmāyaṇa* assembled by Frederick SMITH (2006: 277, 282), and then a more thorough list of instances in the *Mahābhārata* assembled by Minoru HARA (1979). The translations given in SMITH’s list are all from the unabridged translation of the critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* supervised by R. GOLDMAN and S. SUTHERLAND-GOLDMAN, and translated by the same two plus S. POLLOCK and R. LEFEBER.

Instances of *āvīś* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (incomplete list):

- *vīryam āviveśa* “filled with virility” 5.1.33
- *rāvaṇaṃ manyur āviśat*, “rage consumed Rāvaṇa” 6.62.35d
- *brahmahatyā yadāviśat*, “when overcome by [the gravity of] killing a brāhmaṇa” 1.23.18
- “heartache over the exile of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa once more swept over (*āviveśa*) him” 2.57.2
- “But then we began to experience intense sweating, fatigue, and fear. And we were seized by confusion (*samāviśata mohah*) . . .” 4.60.10
- “Then Rāma’s consternation gave way to a feeling of fear that shot through (*āviveśa*) him with sharp pangs” 3.42.20
- “fear overwhelmed (*āviśat*) Sugrīva” 6.36.24
- “Rāvaṇa was overcome (*āviśat*) with fear” 6.91.4
- “Tell me once again, monkey, of the characteristic marks of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa so that sorrow shall not overwhelm (*samāviśet*) me” 5.33.3
- “Grief overcame (*samāviśat*) Sītā, anxious . . .” 7.47.17d
- “The brothers were absorbed (*samāviśan*) in the precepts of dharma” 7.10.2cd

When we look at the English words with which these reputable Sanskritists render *āvīś*—filled, consumed, overcome, swept over, seized, shot through, overwhelm, and absorbed—we see that despite the diversity of usages, they usually have something in common, i.e., that which gives coherence to the semantic field of *āvīś*. These usages denote emotional states that are sufficiently intense to “take possession” of one’s consciousness completely, as if, for that moment, one’s selfhood is

experienced as nothing but a mass of fear, anger, sorrow, etc. But not only emotions; other states that encompassing the whole being, like concentration/absorption or sleep (4.26.7: “Nor would sleep come (*āviveśa*) to him”—I would translate “overtake him”) also construe with the verb. In his survey of the uses of *āviś* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, SMITH finds only one instance of actual possession, that in which Daśaratha is said by his people to be possessed by a *sattva* (being, spirit) at 2.30.10. But here he is following POLLOCK’s translation of a problematic passage without commenting on the problems. For the grammar (*daśarathaḥ sattvam āviśya . . . bhāṣate* is the relevant phrase) does not yield the meaning here demanded of it; or if it does, it is only under duress. While I concur that POLLOCK’s translation probably aligns with the original author’s intent, the passage requires emendation to support that translation.²⁸³ Without such, I would tend to side with the commentator Śivasahāya who takes the hemistich to mean that Daśaratha clings (overmuch) to *dharma* (= *sattva*) in this matter and thus cannot say otherwise but banish his beloved son.²⁸⁴

Turning to the *Mahābhārata*, our needs are anticipated by Minoru HARA, who in his usual thorough style sought to arrive at the exact meaning of the phrase *śraddhāviveśa* in the Kaṭhapaniṣad by collating as many different nominal subjects (*karṭṛ*) that construed with the verb as he could find in the *Mahābhārata*, with additional citations from the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This resulted in the following list of sixty nominal items denoting things or states that enter/possess/overwhelm/seize/fill human beings as they are represented in Sanskrit:

adharma, ahaṅkāra, alakṣmī, anartha, asukha, asura, avamāna, avṛṣṭi, ārti, bhaya, bhī, cintā, darpa, dānava, duḥkha, durbhikṣa, dainya, ghrṇā, harṣa, hrī, jvara, kali, kāla, kaśmala, kāma, kautūhala, kopa, krodha, kṛpā, kṣudh, lobha, mada, manmatha, manyu, māna, mātsarya, moha, mṛtyu, nidrā, pāpman, pauraṣa, pipāsā, prajāgara, rajas, rāga, rākṣasa, roṣa, ruṣ(ā), sambhrama, sattva, śoka, śrama, tamas, tuṣṭi, vepathu, vismaya, viṣṇu, vyādhi, yakṣa, yakṣman (HARA 1979: 264-9)

²⁸³ Thus Pollock puts *Daśaratha* in the accusative and supports the emendation by noting that the northern recension has *sattvenāviśa-* (1986: 382n10). But Pollock’s *daśarathaṃ sattvam āviśya* does not solve the problem entirely, for *sattva* in the meaning he wants (“a spirit”) is masculine, not neuter.

²⁸⁴ Robert GOLDMAN, personal email communication, 28 June 2013. GOLDMAN points to a more unambiguous instance of possession in the text, in sarga 57 of the critical edition (64 in the “vulgate”) where, he says, we find “a compressed and garbled version of the MBh story of Kalmāṣapāda. In the Mbh it is a very clear case of *āveśa* in which a *rākṣasa* possesses the king and makes him a man eater. In the Rām. version, a *rākṣasa* takes the form (*veśa*) of a cook to feed the king human flesh. The story is vague as to whether there is one cook or two. Again Śivasahāya tries his best. He says that while the chief cook was fretting as to how to prepare a kingly meal fit for a guru as well so well, the *rākṣasa* took the form of a second cook and chucked some human chuck into the pot. I see it as a kind of confused account of possession perhaps deriving from a confusion between *veśa* and *āveśa*.”

Then HARA analyzed these sixty items into eight classes, an analysis which we accept. These, with some of his citations from the *Mahābhārata* noted, are (1979: 269-70):

1. intense emotion: anger (*krodha* [e.g. 12.249.5], *kopa* [e.g. 3.11.30], *roṣa* [e.g. 3.21.18], *manyu* [1.204.17]); agony (*ār̥ti*); valor (*pauruṣa* [e.g. 9.10.24]); joy (*harṣa* [e.g. 3.162.10]); grief (*śoka* [e.g. 3.2.15]); fear (*bhī* [e.g. 3.168.16], *bhaya*); agitation (*sambhrama* [e.g. 1.73.25]).
2. selfishness: ego (*ahaṅkāra*), arrogance (*darpa*), haughtiness (*māna*), contempt (*avamāna*), malice (*mātsarya*), greed (*lobha*)
3. desire: *kāma* [e.g. 1.204.15], *rāga* [e.g. 14.42.51], *madana*, etc.
4. suffering or disease: *duḥkha* [e.g. 4.18.8], delusion (*moha* [e.g. 7.31.32]), fever (*jvara* [e.g. 12.27.12]), depression (*kaśmala*), seizure (*vepathu*), etc.
5. actual possession: *yakṣa* [e.g. 3.219.51], *rākṣasa* [e.g. 3.240.33], *asura* [e.g. 3.240.11], *kali*, etc.
6. bodily impulse: sleep (*nidrā*), fatigue (*śrama* [e.g. 13.70.6]), intoxication (*mada* [e.g. 16.4.31]), thirst (*tr̥ṣṇa*), hunger (*kṣudh* [e.g. 14.57.19]), etc.
7. mental impulse: anguish (*cintā*), astonishment (*vismaya* [e.g. 3.289.23]), compassion (*kṛpā* [e.g. 5.180.36]), bashfulness (*lajjā*), shame or modesty (*hrī*)
8. calamity: misfortune (*alakṣmī*), draught (*avr̥ṣṭi*), epidemic (*vyādhi*), etc.

Seeking to unite these eight kinds of usage into a pattern, HARA rightly characterizes them in this way: “overpowering impulse, psychological and physiological as well, which [can] originate either from outside or inside the human being” (1979: 270). He adds perceptively, “These impulses overtake human beings especially when they are off-guard, who, once overtaken, can hardly resist” (Ibid.). For “off-guard,” we could gloss “unaware, careless, negligent” (*pramāda*), the enemy of yogī and brāhmin alike, which opens up a chink or psychic orifice (*chidra*) through which a possessing entity may gain access. The brāhmin seeks to prevent this unilaterally; the Tantric yogī seeks to allow it to happen in a controlled and conscious manner, as we shall see.

HARA goes on to say that “all those under the impact of *force majeure* are termed *āviṣṭa*,” and that this form is “almost synonymous with *ākrānta* (seized), *grasta* (stricken), *grhīta* (overtaken), *abhibhūta* (overpowered), and *ārūḍha* (ridden).” (1979: 271) What is very significant for us here, however, is that in the Sanskrit, none of these verbs necessarily imply independent agency. The metaphor being a governing form of thought in South Asian culture means that it is normal to attribute agency to virtually anything for the purposes of dramatization or analogy, but we cannot suspect our authors of actually thinking that each of our emotions and bodily impulses like hunger and thirst have independent agency any more than an English poet means it literally when he says “so-and-so was Fury incarnate.” Since precisely the same verbs are also used to indicate what we translate as “possession” or influence by a demon or deity, to what extent can we be sure that our authors regarded this in the literal sense in which Western culture tends to understand possession? This seems to me to be a question that is not easily resolved. We must look carefully at the language in each case. By doing so, we will conclude

that there are a range of possibilities for the usage of these verbs, and that in many cases we would be wrong to read the “possession” as literal. For example, in a *Mahābhārata* story, when Lord Viṣṇu is said to enter (*āviś*) King Kuvalāśva with his energy²⁸⁵ to give him the strength to defeat the demon Dhundhu, need we understand this as a case in which Viṣṇu is posited to act as a volitional agent of possession? Or can we instead see it as a culturally-specific and poetic way of saying that the king drew strength from his feeling of connection to his chosen deity? In the birth of Skanda narrative a little later in the same *parvan*, Rudra and Umā are said to merge with (*samāviś*) Agni and Svāhā respectively in order to give birth to Skanda (3.220.9). This is more a case of temporary unity or spiritual coalescence than possession. However, there are other cases which unambiguously must be read as possession or more precisely the sharing of a single body by two (or more) conscious agents. At Mbh. 12.278, Uśanas (termed a *yogasiddha*) projects himself into Kubera to steal his wealth (BLOOMFIELD 1917: 9 and WHITE 2009: 149-50), and in a well-known passage at Mbh. 13.40.40-58, Vipula enters the body of his guru’s wife to prevent her conjugal union with Indra (see below). Therefore, we must always depend on a careful reading of the context to inform us which meaning in a wide spectrum of possibilities to ascribe to a given usage of *āviś*: entry, possession, penetration, infusion, pervasion, immersion, coextensivity, or even, as we shall see later, spiritual experience or enlightenment itself.

The story of Vipula found in the *Mahābhārata* has been recently discussed by David WHITE²⁸⁶ (2009) though without acknowledgment that it was already well discussed by Maurice BLOOMFIELD in a 1917 article on *para-sārīrāveśa*. In the latter source we find a distinction made between a “philosophical” kind of possession and a “folkloric” kind. The second kind, often found in the story literature, depicts the possession and animation of a corpse (or a living body whose owner is temporarily absent) through yogic means, while the first describes the sharing of a single body which BLOOMFIELD associates with the theory outlined at *Yoga-sūtra* 3.38 (to which we shall come) (1917: 7). BLOOMFIELD does not say so, but I find that when a corpse or an “empty” living body is being possessed, *praviś* is often used, whereas when “sharing of self” is happening, *āviś* is generally seen. The folkloric type has abundant examples (Ibid.: 10-12), one of the most famous being the story of “King Vikrama’s Adventures in the Body of a Parrot,” dealt with at length by BLOOMFIELD (Ibid.: 12-43). The “philosophical” type of possession is found only in one instance in the body of literature known to BLOOMFIELD, that being the story of Vipula in Mbh. 13.40, which he briefly summarizes (Ibid.: 7-8). Here we will present a translation of the relevant portion of the story.

The story of Vipula occurs in a series of misogynistic tales in the Anuśāsana Parvan, and is introduced by phrases that recur in this unfortunate section of the epic: “A wanton woman is a blazing fire; born of Maya, she is Māyā; [such] women are the razor’s edge, poison, a serpent, and Death combined” (13.40.4). The moral of these tales is that, as in the *Manu-smṛti*, women cannot be trusted to be faithful and must be guarded carefully since they have no power to resist their baser impulses if

²⁸⁵ *tam āviśat tato viṣṇur bhagavāṃs tejasā prabhuh*, Mbh. 3.195.12ab

²⁸⁶ With whom I read the passage in 2006.

the temptation is sufficiently enticing. Our story involves the incomparably beautiful wife of the Vedic sage Devaśarman. The latter wishes to perform a sacrifice for a distant patron but fears to leave his wife alone, so upon considering the problem he decides to place his wife Ruci in the care of his beloved disciple Vipula. Devaśarman warns Vipula that Indra may come to make love to Ruci, and may take on any form: a man of any *varṇa*, wise, stupid, tall, short, pale, or dark; animal, bird, divine, demonic, an insect, or even the wind (40.10-37). “When invisible, he can only be seen with the eye of wisdom. . . . So you must make a great effort to protect her. He must not lick Ruci like a wretched dog [would lick] the offerings laid down for the sacrifice,” he tells Vipula, and departs (40.37-40). We continue with a literal translation of the section immediately following.

vipulas tu vacaḥ śrutvā guroś cintāparo 'bhavat |
rakṣāṃ ca paramāṃ cakre deva-rājān mahābalāt || 41
kiṃ nu śakyam mayā kartuṃ guru-dārābhirakṣaṇe |
māyāvī hi surendro 'sau durdharśas cāpi vīryavān || 42
nāvidhāyāśramaṃ śakyo rakṣituṃ pākaśāsanāt |
uṭajaṃ vā tathā hy asya nānā-vidha-sarūpatā || 43
vāyu-rūpeṇa vā śakro guru-patnīm pradharṣayet |
tasmād imāṃ saṃpraviśya ruciṃ sthāsyē 'ham adya vai || 44
atha vā pauraṣeṇeyam aśakyā rakṣituṃ mayā |
bahu-rūpo hi bhagavān chrūyate hari-vāhanaḥ || 45
so 'ham yoga-balād enāṃ rakṣiṣye pākaśāsanāt |
gātrāṇi gātrair asyāhaṃ saṃpravekṣye 'bhirakṣitum || 46
yady ucchiṣṭām imāṃ patnīm ruciṃ paśyeta me guruḥ |
śapsyaty asaṃśayam kopād divya-jñāno mahā-tapāḥ || 47
na ceyam rakṣituṃ śakyā yathānyā pramadā nṛbhiḥ |
māyāvī hi surendro 'sāv aho prāpto 'smi saṃśayam || 48
avaśya-karaṇīyam hi guror iha hi śāsanam |
yadi tv etad aham kuryām āścaryam syāt kṛtam mayā || 49
yogenānupraviśyeha guru-patnyāḥ kalevaram |
nirmuktasya rajo-rūpān nāparādho bhaven mama || 50
yathā hi śūnyāṃ pathikāḥ sabhām adhyāvaset pathi |
tathādyāvāsaiṣyāmi guru-patnyāḥ kalevaram || 51
asaktaḥ padma-patra-stho jala-bindur yathā calaḥ |
evam eva śarīre 'syā nivatsyāmi samāhitaḥ || 52
ity evaṃ dharmam ālokya veda-vedāṃś ca sarvaśaḥ |
tapaś ca vipulaṃ dṛṣṭvā guror ātmana eva ca || 53
iti niścītya manasā rakṣāṃ prati sa bhārgavaḥ |
ātiṣṭhat paramaṃ yatnaṃ yathā tac chrṇu pārthiva || 54
guru-patnīm upāsīno vipulaḥ sa mahā-tapāḥ |
upāsīnām anindyāṅgīm kathābhiḥ samalobhayat || 55
netrābhyāṃ netrayor asyā raśmīn saṃyojya raśmibhiḥ |
viveśa vipulaḥ kāyam ākāśam pavano yathā || 56
lakṣaṇam lakṣaṇenaiva vadaṇam vadanena ca |
aviceṣṭann atiṣṭhad vai chāyevāntargato muniḥ || 57

*tato viṣṭabhya vipulo guru-patnyāḥ kalevaram |
 uvāsa rakṣaṇe yukto na ca sā tam abudhyata || 58
 yaṃ kālaṃ nāgato rājan gurus tasya mahātmanaḥ |
 kratuṃ samāpya svagrhaṃ taṃ kālaṃ so 'bhyarakṣata || 59*

Now Vipula, having heard these words of the guru, became absorbed in thought. “I [must] give [Ruci] the highest protection from the mighty king of the gods (41). Yet how can I protect the guru’s wife? For the best of the gods [i.e., Indra] is a trickster, as well as heroic and difficult to assail (42). Not having prepared (for such an occasion), I am not capable of protecting the hermitage from the Punisher of Pāka, nor likewise our grass hut; for he has many various forms (43).²⁸⁷ Śakra might violate the wife of the guru in the form of wind; therefore, having entered this Ruci, I will now indeed remain [in her] (44). It may be that she cannot be protected by me through human deeds, for it is taught that the Lord Harivāhana has many forms (45). It is I who will protect her from Punisher of Pāka by [my] power of yoga. I will enter her limbs with [my] limbs, to protect [her] (46).²⁸⁸ If my guru, of great austerity and divine knowledge, should see his wife Ruci as defiled (*ucchiṣṭa*), he will without doubt curse me in his rage (47). It is no more possible to protect her than any other young wanton woman [can be protected] by men. For the best of the gods is a trickster. Oh, I am filled with doubt, for the Guru’s teaching must be followed here! If I would accomplish this, I must do something extraordinary (48-9). Entering the body of the guru’s wife yogically, I shall not be committing an offence, being free of passions²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Grammatical notes: I have adopted two alternate readings for this problematic verse: *avidhāya*, from MSS D₄₋₆, as a negated gerund, here meaning ‘not having prepared’; and the reading of *Pākaśāsana* in the ablative, represented in all the manuscripts of the Southern recension bar one and two of the D MSS. If I was forced to accept the readings in the critical edition, then the first phrase could be read as either *na āpi-dhāya-āśramaṃ*, meaning ‘the hermitage having its friends’ or ‘together with its allies’, contextually unlikely and requiring the reading of *āpi* as ‘friend, ally’, an archaic term. The second way of breaking it up would be *na apidhāya āśramaṃ*, where ‘apidhāya’ is a gerund meaning ‘having concealed’ which as a dependent verb form I take to be negated by the ‘na’ (which thus does double duty), giving us something like “I am not capable of concealing and protecting the hermitage.” This awkward reading requires us to use another archaic Vedic form, *apidhā*. Finally, if forced to use *Pākaśāsana* in the nominative, I would then take *rakṣ* in the sense of ‘avoid’ and translate “Pākaśāsana is not capable of avoiding the hermitage, together with its friend (i.e. Ruci).” These awkward readings explain why I chose to emend the text.

²⁸⁸ Grammatical notes: I prefer the reading *asyāḥ* for *asya* here, as it makes more sense in the context. Note that ‘limbs’ for *aṅga* is an imperfect translation, perhaps ‘bodily constituents’ is better but clunky.

²⁸⁹ Since he will enter her only psychically, not physically. This verse is added below the line: “Just as a son in the womb is not polluted by being born, in the same way a gnostic is not defiled by actions nor by mundane things.” (*garbhasamstho yathā putro jāyamāno na lipyate evaṃ jñānī na laukyaś ca karmabhir naiva duṣyate*)

(50). For just as a traveller on the road may dwell in an empty hall,²⁹⁰ in that way I will now inhabit the body of the guru’s wife (51). Just as a trembling drop of water on a lotus petal is unattached, in the very same way I, completely absorbed in concentration (*samāhita*), will dwell in her body” (52). Having in this way thoroughly considered *dharma* and the teachings of the Vedas, and having observed the massive austerity [*vipulam tapas*, a pun] of the Guru and of himself especially (53); having mentally pondered thus on the [means of] protection, that Bhārgava made a great effort—listen to this, Pārthiva! (54) Sitting near the guru’s wife, Vipula of great austerity enticed with stories the woman of faultless limbs who was sitting near [him] (55). Having united her eyes with his, her senses (*raśmi*) with his, Vipula entered (*viś*) her ethereal body (*ākāśa-kāya*), like the god of wind (56).²⁹¹ [Uniting] sexual organ with sexual organ,²⁹² and mouth to mouth, not moving, the sage remained within [her], like a shadow (57). Thence, having pervaded the body of the guru’s wife, Vipula, yoked (*yukta*), dwelt in protection, and she was not aware of him (58). That great-souled one [resolved to] protect [her] as long as his guru had not returned home from his ceremony (59).

The story continues in Chapter 41: a concise paraphrase of verses 1-27 will suffice for our needs.

When Indra inevitably shows up bearing a divinely handsome form (41.1), he enters the hermitage and sees Vipula’s body, motionless, its eyes frozen (3), and also sees the beautiful Ruci (4). She wants to rise to meet him and say “Who are you?”, amazed by his beauty (5), but Vipula restrains her from moving or speaking (6). Indra propositions her (7-8), but Vipula keeps her paralyzed and binds her faculties with the bonds of *yoga* (10-11). Seeing her as impassive, Indra is ashamed (12). Ruci wants to say “Come, come here!” but Vipula prevents her (13); what emerges from her moon-like face is instead “Why have you come?” (14). She realizes she is under another’s control and becomes frightened and upset (15). Indra simultaneously realizes something is strange, and looks with his divine eye and sees that Vipula is inside her body, like a reflection in a mirror (16-17). Realizing the awesome *tapas* such a feat requires, he becomes frightened of a possible curse (18). Releasing Ruci, Vipula re-enters his own body and chides the frightened Indra (19), calling him a

²⁹⁰ This is a standard metaphor for possession (cf. Mbh. 12.308.190ab) but the Cr. Ed. notes that seven MSS omit this verse.

²⁹¹ This is clearly an early articulation of what would come to be called the “subtle body” (*sūkṣma-śarīra*). For *raśmi* in the meaning “senses” cf. MBh 12.197.13-15, cited below. We find this use of *raśmi* in early Kāpālika sources as well. This is clearly the precedent for the later Tantric idea that the subtle body has a circulatory system of *nāḍīs* or “subtle channels,” for each sense-organ is said to have an associated *nāḍī* (TS ch. 5).

²⁹² This phrase is interesting in light of Vipula’s earlier concerns about the propriety of entering Ruci even in a non-physical form. Evidently in this process he must unite all his *raśmis/nāḍīs* to hers; this foreshadows the account in *Tantrāloka* 29 we will see later.

sinner with no self-control, bent on his desires, and thus no longer worshipped by gods and men (20). Upon being upbraided and threatened by Vipula at some length, Indra, ashamed, vanishes. (21-27)

Clearly, the word “possession” is appropriate here. We see a notion that the *citta* or *jīva* is not—for yogins at least—bound to the body but may be separated from it to enter into another body. This entry takes place through all of the “gates” or orifices of the body; more precisely, through the joining (*saṃyuj*) of each of the “rays” (*raśmi*) of the possessor with those of the possessed. To clarify this concept, we may turn to Mbh. 12.197, in which it is said:

udyan hi savitā yadvat srjate raśmi-maṇḍalam |
sa evāstam upāgacchaṃs tad evātmani yacchati || 13
antarātmā tathā deham āviśyendriya-raśmibhiḥ |
prāpyendriyaguṇān pañca so 'stam āvṛtya gacchati || 14

For the Sun, rising, emits a circle of rays. As he sets, those very rays return to him. In the same way, the inner Self, entering (*āviś*) the body, grasps the fivefold objects of the senses with the rays of the senses. Withdrawing them again, his consciousness “sets” [each night in deep sleep].²⁹³

The senses, then, are conceived as the rays of the sun that is consciousness, and in the Indian theory (as in the scholasticism of medieval Europe) the rays of consciousness travel out to touch the sense-objects and return to the subject, conveying their impressions. It is thus a relatively small step to imagine the possibility of the life-force of one subject departing along the flows of these five or more rays and entering another subject. This can happen in different ways with different results. In the story of Vipula (and in the story of Sulabhā below), we have a case of two consciousnesses sharing a body, but not merging. This is not, then, the notion of co-extensive selves we will see in the Tantric materials.

The story of Sulabhā’s possession of King Janaka occurs in the *Mokṣadharmā* section of the *Śānti-parvan* (specifically, 12.308). It has been treated in detailed by James FITZGERALD in his 2002 article “Nun Befuddles King, Shows *Karmayoga* Does Not Work.” We reproduce here the relevant sections of his translation. (NB: In the passage that follows I place the verse number after the verse it refers to, as I do throughout the present work, while in FITZGERALD’s article the verse number is placed before the verse it refers to.)

On this they recite this ancient account of a conversation between Janaka and Sulabhā (3). Once upon a time there was a king of Mithilā known as Janaka ‘Dharmadhvaja’ who sought the fruit of renunciation (4). He had studied the Veda and the science of Absolute Freedom and his

²⁹³ Cited in GOUDRIAAN 1992: 169. Note the parallel passage at *Maitrī Upaniṣad* 6.31, where the rays (*marīci*, *raśmi*) of the senses are said to be the instruments by which the conscious self “eats” (*atti*) sense-objects. This presages the deification of the sense-faculties as goddesses or *yoginīs* in the Tantric tradition (as noted by GOUDRIAAN 1992: 168), where they are pictured as the spokes of a wheel (*cakra*) where the hub is the conscious self.

own science, and so, regularly unifying his senses in meditation (*indriyāṇi samādhāya*), he ruled the earth (5). Other men in various regions, wise men learned in the Vedas, heard about this king's behaving like a holy man and were jealous of him (6). Now this was the Age of Right and a woman named Sulabhā, who practiced the Rule of Yoga (*yogadharmā*) and lived by begging alms, wandered the earth by herself (7). As she wandered all over the earth, here and there she heard other renunciators who carried the triple staff talk about how the king of Mithilā was in the state of Absolute Freedom (*mokṣa*) (8). When she heard this paradoxical report she doubted it, thinking, "It is not so," and she decided to go see Janaka (9). By her yoga power she cast off her body and put on a flawlessly beautiful one (10). Her eyes like lotuses below her lovely brows, she went to the capital city in Videha in the wink of an eye, traveling as swiftly as the lightest arrow (11). She reached the lovely capital Mithilā that was thronged with prosperous people, and she gained an audience with its lord on the pretext of begging alms from him (12). When the king saw her extreme delicacy and her beauty he was overcome with amazement: "Who is she? Whose is she? Where has she come from," he said (13). He welcomed her, showed her the best seat, honored her by having her feet washed, and had the best foods brought as refreshments (14). Pleased by the food, the alms-seeking renouncer then, amidst men who knew all the learned commentaries on the learned teachings, challenged the king who was surrounded by his advisors (15). Wondering, "Has he really gained Absolute Freedom in the midst of all his Lawful Duties," Sulabhā used her knowledge of yoga and entered his being with her being (*sattvaṃ sattvena yogajñā praviveśa*) (16). Just as he was on the point of addressing her, she fused the rays (*raśmi*) of his eyes to the rays of her own two eyes and she bound him with the bonds of her yoga power (17). Janaka, the highest of kings, smiled haughtily, and, keeping his own thought distinct from hers (*bhāvam asyā viśeṣayan*), he received her thoughts with his thoughts (*pratijagrāha bhāvena bhāvam asyā*) (18). Hear the conversation that took place in that one locus, a conversation between a man who had gained Absolute Freedom in the midst of the royal parasol and such things and a woman who had gained Absolute Freedom with the triple staff of renunciation (19).

< . . . [long dialogue follows] . . . >

Sulabhā said: "If you are completely Free, what wrong did I do you when I made entry into you with my being? (167) There is a special stricture in the rules for ascetics: They must dwell in an empty house. What violation did I commit, and to whom, when I came to stay in this empty house? (168) . . . I am going to dwell here in you, king of Mithilā, without touching you, as a drop of water on a lotus-leaf stands on the leaf without touching it (173). . . . There is no mixing of social Order in the loveless union (*bhāvābhāva-samāyoge*) of one who is Freed with another who is Freed, because the soul is single and separate (*jñasya ekatva-prthaktvayoḥ*) (176). . . . A bowl is in one's hand, milk is in the bowl, flies

are in the milk — through the connection between ‘receptacle and ‘occupant’ (*āśritāśraya*). We are two separate ‘receptacles’ (178). The being of the milk is not in the bowl, nor are the flies the milk; the beings of these things are based within themselves and not upon some other receptacle (179).

This account, I would argue, like the Vipula story, is based in early Sāṅkhya notions of the self. Here the Sāṅkhya self becomes explicit when Sulabhā asserts the singleness (*ekatva*) and separateness (*prthaktva*) of the conscious self (*jñā*, in a rare usage of the *upapāda* as a stand-alone term). Due to this doctrine of the monadic self, two souls can occupy the same body without “touching” each other, like the flies in the milk. This idea probably also obtains in the *Caraka-saṃhitā* discussed above (p. 137), where it is said that gods and demons can enter the human body “without defiling it, like a reflection in a mirror” (6.9.18); though they play havoc with the body, the soul is untouched. However, this is in direct opposition of the Tantric doctrine, which conceives the soul as an “experiencer” (*bhoktr*) not a “witness” (*draṣṭr*), which actually contacts (*sparsā*) the world through the expansion of its faculties.²⁹⁴ It is this key doctrinal difference that makes the *āveśa* experience transformative for the Śaivas, an actual “modification of the self” (*ātma-saṃskāra*), as we shall see.

Next we turn to instances in the *Mahābhārata* of “possession” in quite a different sense, and one much closer to the Tantric materials. This different sense of *āveśa* is only rarely noted in the secondary literature. In the examples of Bharadvāja in Mbh. 13.31 and of Vidura in 15.33,²⁹⁵ we see the idea that a powerful yogin can infuse his energy or essence into someone else, temporarily or permanently merging it with the other person and thereby augmenting the latter’s physical and mental power. In the first example, which is very brief, Bharadvāja is seen to infuse himself into Prince Pratardana, son of King Divodāsa, whose birth Bharadvāja had magically accomplished on the king’s behalf through a sacrificial ceremony (*iṣṭi*). After causing the prince’s supernaturally rapid growth to adolescence, Bharadvāja penetrates (*samāviś*) him through *yoga*; gathering up the energy of the world (*tejo laukyaṃ*), he infused (*samāviś*) it into the body of the prince.²⁹⁶ Here possession is not indicated, for Bharadvāja is not leaving his own body; rather, he is filling/permeating/penetrating the prince with his personal power as well as energies endemic to this world. Reading the narrative which follows, in which the prince defeats the sons of Vītahavya, reveals that Bharadvāja is not here seen as animating or controlling the prince’s body as in the case of actual possession.

In our second example of this type of “possession,” or rather “infusion,” we see Vidura infuse all his powers and faculties into Yudhiṣṭhira just before the

²⁹⁴ Cf. VASUDEVA 2012 and FÜRLINGER 2009, the latter of which explores at length the great significance of touch (*sparsā*) to the Śaiva tradition.

²⁹⁵ Already briefly addressed in WHITE 2009; I read these passages with him in my year at Santa Barbara (2005-06), and started thinking about *āveśa* in the Mbh. at that time.

²⁹⁶ 13.31.30: *yogena ca samāviṣṭo bharadvājena dhīmatā | tejo laukyaṃ sa saṃgrhya tasmin dehe samāviśat* // Reading *dehe* for *deśe*, following MSS D_{1,3}.

former's voluntary exit from the body.²⁹⁷ In fact it is not entirely clear whether the author intends to depict Vidura completely merging himself with Yudhiṣṭhira, or instead giving the latter all his *tejas* which he no longer needs since he is about to attain final liberation. The textual ambiguity allows us to infer either possibility. A literal translation of the relevant passage (15.33.14-34) follows. Here Yudhiṣṭhira has arrived at the forest retreat of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī. The usual formalized inquiries after each party's welfare (*kuśala*) proceed at some length (33.1-13), followed by these words of Yudhiṣṭhira:

*kva cāsau viduro rājan nainaṃ paśyāmahe vayam
saṃjayaḥ kuśalī cāyaṃ kaccin nu tapasi sthitaḥ || 14
ity uktaḥ pratyuvācedaṃ dhṛtarāṣṭro janādhipam
kuśalī viduraḥ putra tapo ghoraṃ samāsthitaḥ || 15
vāyubhakṣo nirāhāraḥ kṛśo dhamanisaṃtataḥ
kadā cid dr̥śyate vipraiḥ śūnye 'smin kānane kva cit || 16
ity evaṃ vadatas tasya²⁴² jaṭi vīṭāmukhaḥ kṛśaḥ
digvāsā mala-digdhāṅgo vana-reṇu-samuḥṣitaḥ || 17
dūrād ālakṣitaḥ kṣattā tatrākhyāto mahīpateḥ
nivartamānaḥ sahasā janaṃ dr̥ṣṭvāśramaṃ prati || 18
tam anvadhāvan nṛpatir eka eva yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
praviśantaṃ vanaṃ ghoraṃ lakṣyālakṣyaṃ kva cit kva cit || 19
bho bho vidura rājāhaṃ dayitas te yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
iti bruvan narapatīsaṃ taṃ yatnād abhyadhāvata || 20
tato vivikta ekānte tasthau buddhimatāṃ varaḥ
viduro vṛkṣam āśritya kaṃ cit tatra vanāntare || 21
taṃ rājā kṣīṇa-bhūyiṣṭham ākr̥tīmātra-sūcitam
abhijajñe mahābuddhiṃ mahābuddhir yudhiṣṭhiraḥ || 22
yudhiṣṭhiro 'ham asmīti vākyam uktvāgrataḥ sthitaḥ
vidurasya śrave rājā sa ca pratyāha saṃjñayā || 23*

“And where is that Vidura, O king? We do not see him! We hope he is well and successful, established in his asceticism.” (14) Dhṛtarāṣṭra, addressed thus, replied to the Lord of the people, “Vidura is well, son, engaged in awesome (*ghora*) austerity. (15) He survives on air, without any food, emaciated, his veins strained like cords. Sometimes he is seen by brāhmins in certain places in this desolate forest.” (16) While he was speaking thus,²⁹⁸ the Chamberlain was beheld from afar, dreadlocked, emaciated, holding the *vīṭā* in his mouth, sky-clad, his limbs smeared with filth, sprinkled with the dust of the forest; this was reported to the king.²⁹⁹ [Vidura] stopped suddenly, looking toward the hermitage and seeing the people [there]. (17-18) King Yudhiṣṭhira, all alone, ran after him as he plunged into the terrifying forest, sometimes seeing him

²⁹⁷ Briefly discussed already in WHITE 2004.

²⁹⁸ A hemistich or two seems to have dropped out here. The Kashmīrī recension awkwardly tries to clarify the narrative flow by adding at this point: “Yudhiṣṭhira entered the forest and there saw Vidura—” (*jaḡāma sa vanaṃ rājā dharmarājo yudhiṣṭhiraḥ - - - - - dr̥śyate viduras tatra*)

²⁹⁹ A Telegu MS adds here: “He gazed at Vidura who was quietly approaching, one-pointed.”

[ahead] and sometimes not (*lakṣyālakṣyaṃ kvacit kvacit*). (19) The king pursued him strenuously, saying “Bho! Bho, Vidura! It is I, Yudhiṣṭhira, your beloved king!” (20) Then Vidura, the best of wise men, stopped and stood alone in an isolated place, leaning on some tree there in the middle of the forest. (21) Wise King Yudhiṣṭhira recognized that wise one, [though] he was nearly wasted away, only a suggestion of his form remaining. (22) “I am Yudhiṣṭhira!” Speaking these words within the hearing of Vidura, standing in front of him, the king called his name. (23)

*tataḥ so ’nimiṣo bhūtvā rājānaṃ samudaikṣata
 saṃyojya viduras tasmin drṣṭim drṣṭyā samāhitaḥ || 24
 viveśa viduro dhīmān gātrair gātrāni caiva ha
 prāṇān prāṇeṣu ca dadhad indriyāṇindriyeṣu ca || 25
 sa yogabalam āsthāya viveśa nṛpates tanum
 viduro dharmarājasya tejasā prajvalann iva || 26
 vidurasya śarīraṃ tat tathaiva stabdha-locanam
 vṛkṣāśritaṃ tadā rājā dadarśa gata-cetanam || 27
 balavantaṃ tathātmānaṃ mene bahuguṇaṃ tadā
 dharmarājo mahātejās tac ca sasmāra pāṇḍavaḥ || 28
 pauraṇam ātmanaḥ sarvaṃ vidyāvān sa viśāṃ pate
 yogadharmam mahātejā vyāsenā kathitaṃ yathā || 29
 dharmarājas tu tatrānaṃ saṃcaskārayiṣus tadā
 dagdhukāmo ’bhavad vidvān atha vai vāg abhāṣata || 30
 bho bho rājan na dagdhavyam etad vidura-saṃjñakam
 kalevaram ihaitat te dharmā eṣa sanātanaḥ || 31
 lokāḥ saṃtānakā nāma bhaviṣyanty asya pārthiva
 yatidharmam avāpto ’sau naiva śocyāḥ paraṃtapa || 32
 ity ukto dharmarājaḥ sa vinivṛtya tataḥ punaḥ
 rājñō vaicitravīryasya tat sarvaṃ pratyavedayat || 33
 tataḥ sa rājā dyutimān sa ca sarvo janas tadā
 bhīmasenādayaś caiva paraṃ vismayam āgatāḥ || 34*

His gaze unblinking, concentrated (*samāhitaḥ*), Vidura looked intently at the king, uniting gaze with gaze. (24) Wise Vidura entered [him], placing limbs in limbs, *prāṇas* in *prāṇas*, and sense-faculties in sense-faculties. (25) Resorting to the power of *yoga*, as if blazing with energy, Vidura entered (*viś*) the body of the king, the lord of *dharma*. (26) Then the king saw the body of Vidura, leaning on the tree just as it was, [but with] its eyes motionless [and] its consciousness departed. (27) Then the Pāṇḍava who was king of *Dharma*, radiant with energy, felt himself [more] powerful and virtuous, like [Vidura], and he remembered (28) [his] ancient past, everything about himself, and the religion (*dharma*) of *yoga* as taught by Vyāsa,³⁰⁰ [becoming] possessed of wisdom (*vidyāvān*) and radiant splendor. (29) Then the king of *Dharma* wished to perform the [final] *saṃskāra* rite for him there. The wise one wanted to cremate

³⁰⁰ Note that Sulabhā is also said to be a master of *yogadharmā* in the *Mokṣadharmā* account (12.308) of her possession of King Janaka discussed below.

[him], when suddenly a Voice [from the sky] said: (30) “Ho, king! This body that was known as Vidura should not be burned! This [body] is [also] yours, for this is the eternal Dharma [himself]. (31)³⁰¹ His will be the worlds called *Santānaka*, O king. He attained the *dharma* of an ascetic [and thus] needs no lamenting, enemy-burner.” (32) Thus addressed, the king of Dharma then returned again. He told all to the king, the son of Vicitravīrya. (33) Then the resplendent king and all the people [there], Bhīmasena and so on, became exceedingly amazed. (34)

As in the stories of Vipula and Sulabhā, here the means of merging the life-force of one person with that of another is the connecting of each of the respective elements of life-force—*prāṇas*, senses, etc.—in a one-to-one correspondence. Though the theory of *nāḍīs* is not yet articulated,³⁰² the description obviously anticipates the notion of joining each respective subtle channel, a salient idea in the Tantric texts that we will see later (e.g. *Tantrāloka* 29). In the present passage, when all the faculties and *prāṇas* of the two individuals are joined through the power of *yoga* (here probably meaning both “union” and “magical power gained through *tapas*”), then the transfer of Vidura’s power (*tejas*) in its fullness can take place. This transfer, once completed, leaves Yudhiṣṭhira feeling greatly amplified, his virtue and power increased by this *prāṇa*-infusion. He also receives a download of knowledge from the transfer, including the “*dharma* of *yoga* taught by Vyāsa.” When we come to look at the Śaiva Tantric *dīkṣā* ceremony, we will see that the merging of the guru’s *jīva* (= *prāṇa* + *citta*) with the initiand’s is instrumental in accomplishing the transformative effect of the rite. The idea there, already present in this *Mahābhārata* account, is that the self is a kind of permeable field of energy with fluid boundaries; and connecting or merging two such selves, even temporarily, has a significant impact. Power and wisdom automatically flows from the fuller container (the guru, or Vidura in the above account) into the “partial vacuum” of the less *tejasic* receiver (the initiand, or Yudhiṣṭhira above) in a kind of diffusion. This picture of things rather flies in the face of the brāhminical world view, with its monadic selves each bound to their individual *karma*. In the brāhminical *karma* theory, all power and knowledge must be earned through the appropriate actions (*tapas*, *svādhyāya*, etc.); the fruits of such actions cannot be transmitted from one person to another. And, despite the above narrative, when the *Mahābhārata* is in its didactic mode, it decidedly affirms the traditional *karma* theory, for example in the same chapter we cited four pages back (12.197):

praṇītaṃ karmaṇā mārgaṃ nīyamānaḥ punaḥ punaḥ
prāpnoty ayaṃ karmaphalaṃ pravṛddhaṃ dharmam ātmavān (15)

³⁰¹ The Kashmīrī recension adds: “Burning again a body [already] burned by knowledge is not done.” (*jñāna-dagdhasya dehasya punardāho na vidyate*)

³⁰² Leaving aside the brief and rudimentary Upaniṣadic passages describing subtle channels/rays, which in fact are due to a homology of the heart with the sun, such as at *Chāndogya Up.* 8.6.2-6.

Repeatedly led along the path that is created by acts, the [embodied] soul obtains the fruits of his acts, the maturation of his *dharma* [or: increased merit].

When the Mahābhārata’s narrative portion contradicts its didactic portion, we may surmise that the narrative preserves non-brāhminical “folk” beliefs, often of the kind that exerted a formative influence on the development of early Tantra. Part of the heterodoxy of Tantra is to deny the universal necessity of *karma*; it can be altered, alleviated or removed through Tantric ritual, through God’s grace, or through the transmission of the guru’s *śakti* (which are in fact all interrelated), an idea that we see an embryonic precedent for here in the epic.

2.2.3 *Āveśa* in the *Bhagavad-gītā*

The opening of the twelfth chapter of the *Gītā* is a passage that uses the verb *āviś* in a religiously significant manner, and not coincidentally, Abhinavagupta comments on this very passage in the course of his discussions of *samāveśa* in his *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, which we will examine later.

In the second verse of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa declares:

*mayy āveśya mano ye māṃ nityayuktā upāsate
śraddhayā parayopetās te me yuktatamā matāḥ* (2)

Those who absorb (*āviś*) their minds in me, ever-disciplined, serving me, endowed with supreme faith: they are considered by me as the most fully disciplined and connected (*yukta*, lit. yoked).

Note that here *ā+viś* is used in its causative form, indicating unambiguously that the yogin is the agent of the action: he who causes his heart/mind (*manas*, *citta*, *cetas*) to become absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. When we look five verses later, we again see a causative form of *ā+viś*, when Kṛṣṇa says:

*teṣāṃ ahaṃ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṃsāra-sāgarāt
bhavāmi na cirāt pārtha mayy āveśita-cetasām* (7)

I quickly extract from the ocean of death and transmigration those who absorb their minds in me, O Pārtha.

Here the verb *ā+viś* (here: absorb) is more or less synonymous with *ā+dhā* (focus), as seen in the very next verse (8), which has *mayyeva mana ādhatsva*. Interestingly, in verse 12.9, the Kashmiri rescension has *ā+viś* where the standard version has *ā+dhā*. In the standard version, 12.9 reads

*atha cittam samādhātuṃ na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram
abhyāsa-yogena tato māṃ icchāptuṃ dhanamjaya* (9)

Dhanañjaya, if you are not able to completely focus the mind steadily on me, then seek to reach me through the discipline of practice.

but the Kashmiri rescension (commented on by Abhinavagupta), has *athāveśayituṃ cittam* for the first *pāda*, replacing “completely focus/concentrate” (*samādhā*) with “absorb/immerse” (*āviś*). Therefore, the *Gītā*’s author probably has nothing more than “focus” in mind when he uses *āviś*, though Abhinavagupta reads it explicitly in terms of the Śaiva theology of [*sam-*]*āveśa*. What is important here is that in the *Gītā*,

āviś is used in a religious sense that is very different from the usage in the epic and Āyurvedic sources. The translation “possession” is clearly impossible here, unless the devotee is possessing himself of God, as it were. The obvious translation is that of absorbing or immersing his heart/mind in God, not being entered or possessed by an outside agency. This usage is made possible by the fact that *āviś* can be used actively or passively: ‘to enter’ as well as ‘to be entered’. The *Gītā* is the earliest text I am aware of in which these two features come together in the usage of this verb: 1) the human being is the agent of the verb, and 2) God is that which is entered, that which the human being becomes immersed in. Thus the *Gītā* is a key stepping stone to the Tantric concept of *āveśa*, as Abhinavagupta himself was well aware.³⁰³

2.2.4 *Āveśa in the Pāśupata-sūtra*

Next we turn to the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, which was discussed and translated in the Introduction to the present work. The *sūtras* themselves can be dated to the second century CE, and are thus clearly after the *Gītā* and before the *Yoga-sūtra*. In Part One of the text, we saw a description of the eight qualities (*dharma*s) possessed by the *mahāgaṇapati*, i.e., one who has attained the goal of the Pāśupata yoga and left his body (1.23-29). One of these qualities is that he can enter anyone’s body: *sarvāṃś cāviśati* (1.25). The commentary specifies that he can enter the body of any bound soul (*paśu*). We can only presume that possession of the kind envisioned in the coeval Vipula story is here intended, in which the possessing agent can cohabit a body with its owner and override the owner’s control.³⁰⁴ (Since possession of a recently deceased body is considered the less difficult yogic feat, that ability too is presumably intended.) The *bhāṣya*, however, adds an interesting comment: “The sense [of the *sūtra*] is that since he possesses sovereign powers of knowledge and action, by joining these powers he is able to enter [other embodied beings] and interrupt their cognitions.”³⁰⁵ Perhaps Kauṇḍinya is here trying to justify the power of entering others’ bodies by imagining a salutary reason for doing so, since in accord with *yoga* philosophy, when the stream of cognition ceases (*nirodha*) then the true self reveals itself (*Yoga-sūtra* 1.2-3). He does not say anything further, however.

It seems that Pāśupata ascetics were particularly associated with the power of *para-śarīrāveśa* or entering another’s body: the *Vetāla-pañcaviṃśati*, the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, and the vernacular tales *Baitāl Pachīsī* and *Vedāla Cadai* all relate the story of a decrepit Pāśupata ascetic who leaves his body and enters that of a young brāhmin who has just died, then destroys his old body (BLOOMFIELD 1917: 10 and WHITE 2004: 624). But as we will see next, *para-śarīrāveśa* was widely associated with spiritual/yogic attainment at this period in Indian history.

³⁰³ See p. 327f below.

³⁰⁴ Something like the depiction of possession in the fiction film, *Being John Malkovich* (Jonze, 1999).

³⁰⁵ *sa tasya jñānakriyayor vibhutve 'pi śaktisamyogād āviśya pratyayalopaṃ kartuṃ samartho bhavatīty arthaḥ*

2.2.5 *Aveśa in the Brahma-sūtra*

The *Brahma-sūtra* attributed to Bādarāyaṇa, also known as the *Vedānta-sūtra*, is of uncertain date but probably composed around the third century CE. The fourth section of the text, the *phalādhyāya*, details the various powers and enjoyments that the liberated soul experiences. Sūtra 4.4.15 reads *pradīpavad āveśas tathā hi darśayati*: “just as one lamp [may light several others], entry [into several bodies is possible for the liberated one]: for thus [scripture] declares.” This instance of *āveśa* is not clearly about possession at all, since the context suggests that the liberated soul can create multiple bodies for itself and enter into all of them simultaneously. However, it is an example of the use of *āveśa* to mean “penetration,” for here the *citta* of the liberated one penetrates the various bodies he has created and animates them and enjoys experiences through them.

2.2.6 *Āveśa in the Yoga-sūtra*

Similarly, the *Yoga-sūtra* (c. fourth century CE) in its third *pāda* details the various supernatural powers that the yogin may attain through the practices laid down in the second *pāda* and the beginning of the third. These powers are said to be problems (*upasarga*) when it comes to the attainment of *samādhi*, yet they are perfections (*siddhi*) in the active state (*vyutthāna*) (YS 3.37). (This caution seems to echo Pāśupata-sūtra 2.7.) In fact, the reader cannot easily tell if Patañjali intends sūtra 3.37 to refer to all the supernatural powers listed in the *vibhūti-pāda*, in which case it would also apply to the *āveśa* sūtra which immediately follows (3.38), or whether the author intended his caveat to apply only to the powers listed just previously in sūtra 3.36, which concerns the supernaturally heightened senses (viz., *prātibha*, *śrāvaṇa*, *vedanā*, *ādarśa*, *āsvāda*, and *vārta*) that arise from knowledge of the real Self (*puruṣa-jñāna*).³⁰⁶

Sūtra 3.38 (39 in some recensions) reads: *bandha-kāraṇa-śaithilyāt pracāra-saṃvedanāc ca cittasya para-śarīrāveśaḥ*, “By loosening the cause of bondage and by understanding of [the mind’s] movements, one’s mind may enter another’s body.” The *bhāṣya* clarifies that the cause of bondage is karma, and it is loosened by *samādhi*. The knowledge of how the mind (*citta*) moves also arises from *samādhi*. Thus, as in the *Pāśupata-sūtra* and the *Brahma-sūtra*, the ability to enter another body (*para-śarīrāveśa*) comes about as a result of intensely diligent spiritual practice, and is a sign of very high attainment indeed. Such a yogī, the *bhāṣya* tells us, “extracts the *citta* from his own body and deposits it in other bodies” (*yogī cittam sva-śarīrān niṣkṛṣya śarīrāntareṣu niṣīpati*). The *vivaraṇa* commentary attributed to Śaṅkara clarifies what “understanding of how the mind moves” (*pracāra-saṃvedana*) means: it consists of psychological insight such as “from this cause it is thrilled, or it is deluded, or it is disturbed on account of that cause” (LEGGETT 340). But Vijñānabhikṣu’s (sixteenth century) commentary, the *Yoga-vārttika*, has a different explanation that is more relevant to our concerns. For in that text, this knowledge is instead a direct perception of the mind’s actual movements (*citta-gati-sākṣātkāra*),

³⁰⁶ Note the text of sūtra 3.36 is problematic because it contains a mix of adjectives and nouns and presents the otherwise unattested *vārta* in the meaning “smelling.” In my opinion the text is not secure.

where one perceives how it flows along particular subtle channels (*nāḍī*) and may leave or enter the body through certain of those channels (*anayā nāḍyā evaṃ-prakāreṇa cittam śarīre praviśati nirgacchati*). This is more germane to the Tantric accounts, and undoubtedly influenced by them.

Probably not coincidentally, the next Yoga-sūtra (3.39) mentions the practice that was the goal of the Pāśupata yoga, viz., *utkrānti*, the ability to exit out the fontanelle at the time of death and thereby ascend to the highest plane. It reads *udāna-jayāj jala-pañka-kaṇṭakādiṣu asaṅga utkrāntiś ca*: “By conquest of *udāna*-[vāyu], [one can levitate and thereby] not contact water, mud, thorns etc. [when walking], and can exit upward [out the crown at the time of death].” The additions in brackets are secured by the commentaries. There is no reason for us to dwell on this sūtra other than to note the collation here of *para-śarīrāveśa* and *utkrānti*, both practices strongly associated with the Pāśupata Śaivas.

Sūtra 3.43 and *bhāṣya* teaches a meditative exercise (*dhāraṇā*) called *mahā-vidhā* or “the Great Bodiless” in which one attempts to locate one’s mind outside the body. At first, we are told, it is purely an exercise of the imagination (*kalpitā*), but with practice, one may succeed in actually separating the mind from the body (*bahir akalpitā vṛttir mahāvidhā*). As a result, the *bhāṣya* says, the yogin may enter other(s) bodies (*yayā paraśarīrāṇy āviśanti yoginaḥ*). No details of how to perform this practice are given, however.

2.2.7 Antecedents of śaktipāta in pre-Tantric Śaiva sources

Though *śaktipāta* is very much a term particular to the Tantric phase of Śaivism, hints of the doctrine may be found in pre-Tantric sources, as mentioned on p. 26 *supra*. The recent discovery of four previously unknown Atimārga *vidhi* texts by Diwākar ĀCHĀRYA is significant in this regard. The date of these texts—called the *Prāyaścitta-vidhi*, *Pātra-vidhi*, *Anteṣṭi-vidhi*, and *Samskāra-vidhi*—is unknown. The manuscripts have been dated to the fourteenth century by ĀCHĀRYA, but the texts (or portions of them) are clearly considerably older, because quotations from them have been found in the *Ratnatīkā* and Kauṇḍinya’s fourth-century *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya* (ĀCHĀRYA 2007: 27), though the possibility of a common source, now lost, cannot be ruled out. All four texts invoke Lakulīśa, and align with what is known of the Pāśupatas from the previously extent sources.

The *Samskāra-vidhi*, which treats Atimārgic initiation, tells us that only the initiated are qualified to practice this system (*saṃskṛtasyādhikāro’smin*, v. 9a), and the process of initiation begins when “someone who wishes to know [the truth revealed by Śiva] and no other [doctrine], impelled by Śiva himself, approaches a guru” (v. 10abc).³⁰⁷ The relevant verb here is “impelled” (*pravṛcud*), with God as the agent; I argue that this usage constitutes a precursor to the notion of *śaktipāta* and present further evidence to support this in what follows. We might pay scant attention to this statement of divine intervention in verse 10 but for the fact that when we reach the end of the present text, we find listed seven stages of the guru-disciple relationship, and there the first two stages are *codanā caiva jijñāsā*, “being impelled”

³⁰⁷ *yo jijñāsati* (em. ĀCHĀRYA : *jijñāsyati* MS) *nānyāni śivenaiva pracoditaḥ | upasanno* (em. ĀCHĀRYA : *upasannor* MS) *guroḥ samyak* (v. 10abc)

and [therefore] “desiring to know,” which indicates clearly that this is an important doctrine.³⁰⁸ Furthermore, we find similar language in Kauṇḍinya’s *bhāṣya* when he describes the meeting of Lakulīśa and his first disciple, Kuśika: “Then the blessed Kuśika, impelled by Rudra, approached the master. Observing signs of a superior state in him, such as complete contentment, and the opposite in himself, he took hold of his feet . . .”³⁰⁹ Thirdly, in the *Maṭaṅga-pārameśvarāgama*’s *caryāpāda* chapter nine, which we discussed on p. 37 because of its preservation of a text-passage redacted from Atimārga sources, we find at the beginning of its description of the *rudra-vrata*: “wisdom arises [in him] spontaneously, impelled by the will of the Cause [i.e., God]” (*buddhir utpadyate ’kasmāt kāraṇecchā-pracoditā*, v. 4ab), because of which, we are told, he becomes “devoted to the worship of Rudra” (*rudrārādhana-tatparaḥ*, v. 4d). The first *pāda* of this verse recurs in the text’s *vidyāpāda* (4.45c), where the context is explicitly that of *śaktipāta*.

Finally, we should note the significant use of the verb *prav/cud* in one of the two key Pāśupata mantras, the famous Raudrī Gāyatrī ending in *pracodayāt*, “may He impel [us along the path]” (which mantra was evidently the model for the all the many Gāyatrī mantras that proliferated in the medieval and early modern period and are still in use today). Kauṇḍinya’s commentary on this mantra further underscores the significance of the root *cud* in this context.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ The other stages are: presenting oneself to the guru (*guror ātma-nivedanam*), examination and acceptance (*parigrhya parikṣetaḥ*; the wording is in the opposite order of what we would expect), initiation conferring qualification for practice (*saṃskāro vidhiyogyatā*), learning (*vaiduṣyam*), and *guru-pūjā*, called the “secret stage” (*rahaḥ padam*). Note how much of the Tantric model is already in place.

³⁰⁹ *ato rudra-pracoditaḥ kuśika-bhagavān abhyāgatyācārye paripūrṇa-paritrptyādy-utkarṣa-lakṣaṇāni viparītāni cātmani dṛṣṭvā pādāv upasaṃgrhya . . .*

³¹⁰ Kauṇḍinya: “*Cud* in the sense of ‘impelling’. Impelling [here] means [bringing about the eventual] union with the [divine] powers of knowledge and action” (*cuda prerāṇe. codanam nāma jñāna-kriyā-śakti-saṃyogaḥ*). He goes to quote an unnamed source: “The union with the powers of knowledge and action, preceded by the will of Rudra, is called ‘impelling’ by the masters” (*rudrasyecchā-pūrvako yo yogo jñāna-kriyā-śaktibhyāṃ . . . tac codanam āhur ācāryāḥ*). Thus God is credited with providing the motive force not only for the impulse to come to the Śaiva path, but also progress on that path through to its completion.

In this connection, we may also note a verse of unknown origin quoted in a different part of the *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya* (ad sūtra 1.9):

*apracodyaḥ pracodyais tu kāma-kāraḥ prabhuḥ |
kriḍate bhagavāṃl lokair bālaḥ kriḍanakair iva ||*

The Almighty is not impelled, but acting as He pleases, the Lord plays with people, who are the ones that are impelled, like a child plays with his toys.

This verse, it should be noted, occurs in the context of explaining the word *deva* as deriving from *√div*, “to play,” and thus has a broader context than the *codanā* doctrine, which intends primarily to explain how the aspirant comes to seek the path. But the latter case can be considered a specific application of the former, which undoubtedly evolved into the nondual Śaiva doctrine that there is in fact a single agent of all action, a sole *karṭṛ* whom we call God by virtue of that fact.

Finally, note this parallel in the *Naya-sūtra* of the *Niśvāsa*: *prerakaḥ puṇyapāpābhyāṃ sarvasya hr̥di saṃsthitāḥ*, “Abiding in the hearts of all, he stimulates them [on the path] with

In other words, it is God who is in this system credited with the initial awakening of the aspirant, which out of the blue (*akasmāt*) inspires him (*codanā*, *pracodita*) with a longing for spiritual teachings (*jjñāsā*) and to approach a guru for initiation (*guror ātma-nivedanam*). This parallels and presages the Tantric doctrine of *śaktipāta*, according to which someone conceives faith in the Śaiva path and its rites, and approaches a guru, due to God’s power of grace “falling” upon him (*śakti-pāta*). This correspondence between *codanā* and *śaktipāta* is strengthened by an expression that, amongst the Atimārga materials, is found only in the *Samskāra-vidhi*. In verse 21, the guru is said to pray in the following manner before undertaking the initiation: “If this brahmin is purified by a fall of Śiva’s glance, then by your command, O best of gods, I will initiate this best of brahmins.”³¹¹ Here, the “fall” of God’s “glance” (*śiva-dṛṣṭi-nipāta*) is both what impels (*codanā*) the devotee towards the spiritual path, and what qualifies him for initiation. Thus it is undoubtedly a direct antecedent of *śaktipāta/śaktinipāta*.

There is one more parallel to explore amongst the Atimārgic materials, which is found in the Kālamukha passage of the *Niśvāsa-mukha* already cited on pp. 49-50 above. In that passage, we met with the curious expression *atha-śabda-nipāta*, “the descent of the word *atha*,” with reference to initiation. The relevant lines are:

* * *vai prakriyādhvānam atha-śabdena dikṣayet* || 96cd

atha-śabda-nipātena dikṣitaś cāpaśur bhavet | 97ab

Indeed [the liberated one] should initiate [others] into the levels of that cosmic hierarchy by means of the word *atha*. Initiated by the descent of the word *atha*, one ceases to be a bound soul.³¹²

Atha is of course the first word of the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, and our suspicion³¹³ that this is what is meant here is confirmed by a passage in Kauṇḍinya’s *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya* on the first sūtra (which follows immediately on from the passage quoted in note 285):

śiṣyaḥ prṣṭavān bhagavan kim eteṣām ādhyātmikādhībhautikādhidaivikānām sarva-duḥkhānām aikāntiko ’tyantiko vyapoho ’sty uta neti . . . śiṣyenoḍīritam pūrvaṃ praśnam apekṣyoktavān atheti. evam ayam athaśabdaḥ prṣṭa-prativacanārtho. ’sti. sa duḥkhānta ity arthaḥ.

The disciple [Kuśika] asked, ‘O Lord, is there a complete and permanent end of all sufferings, whether mental, material, and supernatural, or not?’ . . . in reference to the first question asked by the disciple, he said *atha* [‘now’ or ‘yes’]. Thus this word *atha* has the meaning of an answer to what was asked. It means ‘Yes. There is an end to suffering.’”

merit and demerit” (1.90), with the second half of the verse connecting it to the present context by mentioning the Pāśupata-vrata as the instrument of God’s grace (*anugraha*).

³¹¹ *śiva-dṛṣṭi-nipātena pūto ’yaṃ yadi brāhmaṇaḥ | tavājñayā sura-śreṣṭha saṃskaromi dvijottamam* ||

³¹² However, the interpretation of the passage is not unproblematic. We are missing two *akṣaras* in the MS, which perhaps contained the verb of which *prakriyādhvānam* is the object. I have here translated the latter term as if it were a locative receiving the action of *dikṣayet*.

³¹³ The third person plural possessive pronoun is intended literally here, since Professor SANDERSON was the first to propose this idea, and I discussed it with him while at Oxford.

Clearly, the word *atha* acquired considerable mystic significance for the tradition as signaling the entry to the path that would lead to the end of all suffering.³¹⁴ By a century or so later, in the Kālamukha context at least, that significance was even imagined in terms of a mystic “descent of the word *atha*” that occurred in initiation. We need not wonder if the later Tantric tradition connected this to their own concept of *śaktipāta*, for a quotation that Abhinavagupta reproduced from a lost text by Somānanda in the former’s *Parātrimśikā-vivarāṇa* (first noticed by SANDERSON [2006: 192]) gives an esoteric reading of *atha*, in which it is said that ‘a’ signifies Śiva, and ‘tha’ means Śakti (*akāraḥ śiva ity uktas thakāraḥ śaktir ucyate*), giving us *śiva-śakti-nipāta* as the inner meaning of *atha-śabda-nipāta*. SANDERSON (Ibid.) speculates as to whether the original source for this esoteric reading might be Atimārgic, but that would perhaps be surprising, because it is only in the Somasiddhānta (= Atimārga III) that Śiva’s consort is worshipped. We simply don’t know, and will probably never know, Somānanda’s source for this half-verse (for Abhinavagupta himself confesses ignorance as to its source³¹⁵). Nonetheless, as argued in the introduction, we find that the more we examine the Atimārga, the more we find antecedent traces of fundamental Tantric doctrines in its materials.

2.3 Āveśa, samāveśa, and śaktipāta in the scriptural sources

In this section we enter into the heart of the present work: an examination of the uses of our key terms in the scriptural body of literature claiming to be revealed by Śiva. These texts were authored anonymously, often using a Prākṛit-influenced register of Sanskrit called *Aiśa* (“God’s [language],” from *Īśa*) whose deviations from the norm seem to indicate origins outside the literate brāhminical heartland known as Āryāvarta.³¹⁶ Roughly speaking, the scriptures of the conservative Siddhānta exhibit more “pukka” Sanskrit and the Śākta texts are more likely to show the abberations of style, grammar, and vocabularly denoted by the term *Aiśa*. To make another broad generalizing for the sake of orienting the reader, we may say that the Siddhānta sources are more likely to feature the terms *śaktipāta* while the Śākta sources are more likely to focus on the term (*sam*)*āveśa*. We may also observe that when it comes to what the guru offers to the disciple or initiand, Siddhānta sources use the term *anugraha* (grace, favor) while the term *saṅkramaṇa* (transmission) and its synonyms are reserved for Śākta sources. The term *dīkṣā* (initiation) is equally important to both streams.

2.3.1 The Brahma-yāmala aka Picumata

As already noted (see pp. 73 and 81), the *Brahma-yāmala* (BY) is one of our earliest scriptural sources for the *viśeṣa* branch of Śaivism (that which emphasizes worship of Bhairava and the Goddess, and is not Veda-congruent), probably from the late sixth or early seventh century. As we have seen, it preserves some of the *outré* practices of the Somasiddhānta, and seems to harken back to a very archaic

³¹⁴ Cf. Śaṅkara’s discussion of the word *atha*, to which he also attributes great significance, in his *bhāṣya* on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.1.

³¹⁵ *Parātrimśikā-vivarāṇa* pp. 99–100, cited in SANDERSON 2006: 192.

³¹⁶ The grammatical features of *aīśa* Sanskrit are discussed by Judit TÖRSZÖK in her unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis (1999: xxvi–lxix).

shamanistic visionary world. The following passage is exemplary of this indebtedness to older sources: its understanding of *āveśa* is similar to that found in the antecedent sources discussed above, and also similar to modern understandings of spirit possession when these are conceived as salutary (as, for example, in Haitian Vodou³¹⁷). It is much simpler than the multivalent mystico-theological uses of (*sam*)*āveśa* we shall encounter later.

In chapter 21 of the text, the Mahāvratā that we know from the Atimārga is described, here also called the Bhairava-vratā. Additional details are given that take this observance well beyond the Atimārga II version we are familiar with—or perhaps this account actually preserves information from lost Somasiddhānta sources.³¹⁸ In addition to the usual ash-smearing body, matted locks, bone ornaments, a *yajñopavīta* made from hair (preferably that of a corpse), the carrying of a skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), and the beating of a *ḍamaru*, we are told that he should paint a third eye on his forehead and howl like a jackal (*śivā*). He should wander, observe the *sandhyās*, do *mantra-nyāsa*, and eat only at night. The passage continues in this way:³¹⁹

śmaśāne kānane ghore mahodadhi-taṭeṣu ca || 108cd
cared bhairava-nāmaṃ hi vratam siddhi-pradāyakam |
yo na siddho vratāir anyaiḥ tasyedaṃ hi mahāvratam || 109

In a cremation ground, a terrifying jungle, or on the ocean's shore, he should perform this observance called Bhairava, bestowing *siddhi*. This Great Observance is [prescribed] for one who is not successful in other observances.

sa sidhyati na sandeho abhāgyo bhāgyavarjitaḥ |
*ekāmaṃ yaś cared yuktas tasya siddhiṃ*³²⁰ *śṛṇuṣva me* || 110

That luckless unfortunate will be successful, without doubt. Hear from me [about] the *siddhi* that will be his if he practices, committed (*yukta*), for [even] one day.

sakṛd uccārite mantrē vratātmā yas tu yojayet |
asādhyam sādhyaty āśu-r-iti te nātra saṃśayaḥ || 111

³¹⁷ For a modern anthropological account of Vodou, see MCCARTHY BROWN 1991.

³¹⁸ As also independently argued by Judit TÖRZSÖK in a new article on this passage (2013) that was published after my own work on it was completed.

³¹⁹ Since the *Brahmayāmala* is unpublished, I have benefited greatly from the draft critical edition prepared by Cšaba KISS on the basis of the two extant MSS (I viewed the version of the edition dated 21 August 2008); the chapter and verse numbering is provisional and may be different in the final published version. NB: the text contains many *aiśa* features (non-standard grammar influenced by Middle Indic forms, indicating authorship well outside the 'pukka' brāhminical community of Āryāvarta). Epenthesis occurs, and is marked as in French, e.g. *āśu-r-iti* in verse 111. Corrections are by KISS unless otherwise noted. Simple corrections, as the addition of a missing *anusvāra* or *visarga*, are noted in brackets in the main text. See also the translation of part of the present passage (21.114c-17) in SANDERSON 2009: 133n311.

³²⁰ *siddhiṃ* corr. ĀCHĀRYA : *siddhi* MS A

[If] one who undertakes this observance, totally intent on it, raises³²¹ the mantra just once, he attains quickly [even] the unattainable—of this you should have no doubt.

*tasya sidhyanti vai devyas tuṣyanti³²² ca marud-gaṇāḥ |
svayam āgatya vai devaḥ kapālī guhyakair vṛtaḥ || 112*

He will master the goddesses, and the hordes of Maruts will gratify him. The God Kapālī[śa Bhairava] himself comes, surrounded by the Guhyakās.³²³

*marutaiḥ³²⁴ stūyamānas tu variṣṭho varam āpnuyāt |
sādhu sādhu mahāsattva vratanānena suvrata[h] || 113*

The excellent one will attain his boon, being praised by the Maruts. “Well done! Well done, courageous one! By this observance, you have become one of proper observance [and will earn the reward].³²⁵

*duścaram deva-gandharvais tvayā cīrṇa[m] mahāvratam |
varam varepsitam vatsa udyatam tu bravīhi me³²⁶ || 114*

“You have performed the Great Observance, difficult to practice [even] for gods and gandharvas. Choose the desired boon you have striven for, dear one: tell me.”

*yadi tuṣṭo 'si bhagavān praviśya mama vighram |
vaktram prasāraya-ś-ceti praviśya bhagavān prabhuḥ || 115*

“If you are pleased [with me], Blessed Lord, enter my body.” [Saying] “open your mouth!”, the Lord enters.

*hṛdaye bhairavo devo guhyakās tu gale sthitāḥ
mātaro hy aṅga-m-aṅgeṣu³²⁷ yoginyaḥ sandhiṣu sthitāḥ || 116*

God Bhairava [enters] into his heart; the [four] Guhyakās in his throat; the [eight] Mothers³²⁸ in his primary and ancillary limbs; the [six] Yoginīs³²⁹ in his joints;

*śākinyo roma-kūpeṣu pūtanādyās³³⁰ tathaiva ca |
sa evaṃ tu śivas sāksād bhavet sakala-niṣkalaḥ || 117*

and the Śākinīs,³³¹ Pūtanās, and so on in his hair follicles. Thus he becomes Śiva incarnate, in both his immanent and transcendent aspects.

³²¹ *uccārīta* probably does not mean ‘utter’ here, but refers to the Tantric practice of *uccāra*, or raising a mantra up the central channel, for which see p. 174 below.

³²² *tuṣyanti* em. : *tuścanti* A *stuvanti* B

³²³ See p. 81 above.

³²⁴ *marutaiḥ* corr. : *merutai* A *mārutai* B

³²⁵ Note that this speech is not spoken by the Maruts but by Bhairava, as soon becomes clear.

³²⁶ Note the *aīśa* forms here: *vara* for imperative *vṛnuhi* and *bravīhi* for *brūhi*.

³²⁷ *hyaṅgamaṅgeṣu* corr. ISAACSON : *hyaṅgamāṅgeṣu* B *hṛdgam-* A. The construction is in any case problematic.

³²⁸ Maheśvarī, Brāhmī, Vaiṣṇavī, Kaumārī, Vaivasvatī, Indrāṇī, Caṇḍikā, and Aghorī.

³²⁹ Kroṣṭukī, Vijayā, Gajakarṇā, Mahāmukhī, Cakravegā, and Mahānāsā.

³³⁰ *-ādyās* corr. : *-ādyā* MSS

*vyāpī hy avyakta-rūpī ca amanasko manonmanaḥ*³³² |
anekākāra-rūpais tu vidyā-mantra-gaṇair vṛtaḥ || 118

[He becomes] all-pervasive, of unmanifest form, free of volitional mind (*manas*),³³³ transmental,³³⁴ surrounded by hordes of *vidyās* and *mantras* of every variety.³³⁵

<...>³³⁶

varadaḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ yoginīnāṃ mahodayaḥ |
divi bhuvī-s-tu pātāle kha-madhye tattva-gocare || 121
ḍṛśyate sarvato devi yathā devo kapāla-dhṛk |
*eṣā vratakarī siddhir na kasyacid udāhṛtā*³³⁷ || 122

A boon-giver to all beings, greatly blessed by the Yoginīs; throughout the *tattvas* (i.e., all manifest reality)—in the heavens, on earth, in the subterranean paradises, [and] in the sky—he is everywhere seen as the God Kapālīśa (lit., the God bearing a skull), O Goddess. This is the *siddhi* created by the [Bhairava] observance, which has not been told to anyone else.

This account is parallel in significant ways to the *Mahābhārata* narratives we have examined. A salutary and permanent possession/infusion is presented, like that of Vidura into Yudhiṣṭhira. Kapālīśa-bhairava³³⁸ enters through a primary aperture of the *sādhaka*'s body and takes up residence in his heart, as the center of a Śiva-*maṇḍala* that includes his retinue of ancillary deities, who each take up an appropriate position in the *sādhaka*'s body, central or peripheral, corresponding to their status relative to the central deity, all the way down to his hair follicles. In this way it is parallel to the *Mahābhārata* accounts' trope of "placing limbs in limbs, and faculties in faculties." As in the *Atimārga* and the *Siddhānta*, the successful practitioner here becomes absolutely equal to the supreme Deity, though separate: he is "everywhere seen as God Kapālīśa," though he is not actually him.

³³¹ Śākinī sometime appears as an apotropaic term for Ḍākinī; in other passages they are distinguished (e.g. BY ch. 96). In sources concerned with possession rather than *nyāsa*, the following terms are more or less interchangeable: Śākinī, Śāvī, Śāvarikā, Ḍākinī, Ḍāmarikā, Ḍāmārī, Ḍāginī, etc. These are also found in proto-tantric Buddhist texts like the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*. These comments derive from a discussion with Shaman HATLEY and Professor SANDERSON at the first international conference on early Śaiva Tantra held in Kathmandu, 2008.

³³² *amanasko manonmanaḥ* CORR. HATLEY : *amanaskonmanonmanaḥ* MSS

³³³ This translation of *manas* derives from discussions with SANDERSON.

³³⁴ *Manonmanaḥ* (lit., "the Mind beyond the mind") is a common technical term in the Tantras; this translation of SANDERSON's has become standard.

³³⁵ In Śaiva Tantra, both mantras and their feminine equivalent, *vidyās*, are understood to be conscious beings, emanations of Śiva, that are analogous to angels and archangels in the Western monotheisms, though not always wholly beatific.

³³⁶ I have omitted 21.119-120 because the text is not secure and the meaning is at any rate not immediately relevant for us.

³³⁷ *udāhṛtā* CORR. : *udāhṛtam* MSS

³³⁸ TÖRZSÖK comments: "borrowing [from *Atimārga* sources] is perhaps also shown by the fact that it is not Female Powers, but Bhairava himself who enters the practitioner, as is the case in the practice of the Kāpālikas. By contrast, later *śākta* tantric literature usually speaks of one or several *śaktis* that possess the practitioner" (2013).

In chapter 47 of the BY, we see a much stranger and more disturbing cremation ground practice that exhibits the horrifying extreme of the mortuary culture of Śaivism—if indeed this rite was ever actually performed. Significantly, it bears a strong resemblance to the rite fictionalized in Bāṇa’s *Harṣa-carita* (see pp. 57f above). Unfortunately, the text of the BY not only deviates significantly from standard Sanskrit grammar, but also is highly corrupt at this point. I benefited greatly from reading it with Shaman HATLEY in Kathmandu in 2008, on which occasion we agreed on several emendations; other corrections that appear here were suggested by Cšaba Kiss in his draft edition. The translation which appears below, in accordance with our present purposes, glosses over minor textual problems that do not affect the overall meaning of the passage, while major problems are put in crux marks. Their translation is uncertain at best.

*ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi siddha-maṇḍalakaṃ śubham [corr. : śubhām MS] /
yāgaṃ kṛtvā mahā-vīraṃ trailokyam sādhayet kṣaṇāt || 1 || aghoryā [em. :
aghoryān MS] tu purā cīrṇaṃ bhairaveṇa tathaiva ca | vāsudevāsuraīḥ siddhaiś
[em. : vāsudevāsuraḥsiddhaiś MS] cīrṇam etan mahā-makham || 2 || tantra-jñō
[corr. : tantrajñā MS] sādhaḥ vīraḥ mahāvraṭa-tanu-sthitaḥ | pūrvokta-nyāsa-
yogena praviśeta mahā-vanam || 3 || śivā-ravaṃ pramuñcanto bhairavābhimukha-
sthitaḥ | yogeśī-saṃmatātmā vai sakhāyaiḥ śobhanair vṛtaḥ || 4 || suvisuddha-
mahībhāgaṃ picunāloḍya [corr. : picunāloḍya MS] lepitaṃ | yāgaṃ kṛtvā tu
pūrvoktaṃ tataḥ karma samārabhet || 5 || purasya dakṣiṇe dvāre śavair nānā-
vidhaiś tathā | kuryān maṇḍapikāṃ ghorāṃ †kabandhāṃ tām [em. :
kadandhāmtām MS] vilambinām† || 6 || †śūlaprotāṃ svam-udbaddhāṃ tatra
kuryān manepsitām† | evaṃ kṛtvā mahā-vīro mahā-sādhanam ārabhet || 7 ||
†pañca pakvārim ādāya† śavān vai lakṣaṇānvitān [corr. : śavāṃ vai lakṣaṇānvitām
MS] | mantra-bhaśmāmbu-susnātā[h] tritattva-pariśodhitāḥ || 8 || evaṃ
narādhipaṃ pūrvam śiva-sthāne nidhāpayet | śavārūḍhāṃ tato devyo [as acc. pl.]
digdisāsu nidhāpayet || 9 || evaṃ sthāpya mahā-vīraḥ purasyābhimukhaḥ sthitaḥ |
astra-mokṣaṃ ca kurvīta samantā[t] (f. 227r) disi sādhaḥ || 10 || picunā madya
devyās tu arghan datvā prasādhayet | anujñāṃ dada [for dehi] me devi siddhi-
maṇḍapikāṃ prati || 11 || praviśen maṇḍapikā[m] divyā[m] namaskṛtvā tu
bhairavaṃ | udaraṃ sphoṭayet tatra śavānāṃ pūrvva-saṃsthitāṃ || 12 ||
sabāhyābhyantaram devī carmma-cchādena maṇḍapaṃ | †anyaṃ parihate
carmm[e?] any[e]na siraveṣṭanaṃ† || 13 || anyaiś ca bahubhis carmaiḥ paṭāṃ
kṛtvā tu prāvaret |*

[47. Chapter on the *Siddhi-maṇḍala*.] Next I will teach the auspicious *siddha-maṇḍala*. A great Hero (*vīra*), having done this worship, will immediately attain the three worlds (1). In ancient times this great rite was performed by Aghorī and Bhairava, by *siddhas*, gods, and *asuras* (2). The *sādha* [who performs it should be] a Hero (*vīra*³³⁹) and a knower of the Tantras. With [the marks of] the *mahāvraṭa* on his body, and having done the *mantra-nyāsa* previously taught, he should enter the deep

³³⁹ This is a technical term in the Tantras for one who is *niḥśaṅka*, i.e. has shed brāhminical inhibitions; see verse 37 below.

wilderness (3). Standing facing Bhairava (i.e. facing north), letting out a jackal's howl (*śivā-rava*), accepted by the *yoginīs*, surrounded by handsome attendants (4), he should mix the consecration fluids (*picu*³⁴⁰) and smear them on a very pure sacred piece of ground and worship the *yāga* (= deity-retinue) on it as has been taught before, and then begin the [main] rite (5). He should [then], at the southern gate of the *maṇḍala*, make a horrific temple-pavilion (*maṇḍapikā*) out of various corpses, †having a headless trunk [?] suspended (6) [and] having an impaling stake set up however he likes. † Having done this, the great Hero should begin the great *sādhana* (7). †Taking five cooked enemies, † and corpses with the [correct] characteristics, bathing them well with water, mantras, and ash, they are [then] completely purified with the three *tattvas* [see ch. 44] (8). He should first place the king (*narādhipa*) in the place of Śiva [in the center], then he should place the goddesses [embodied as human women (?)], mounted on the corpses, in the various directions (9). Having thus done the installation, the great Hero firmly faces the *maṇḍala*. The *sādhaka* should release the weapon-mantra in every direction (10). Offering wine with *picu* as an *arghya*-offering to the goddesses, he should accomplish [their propitiation, saying] “Give me your blessing, O Goddess, for this temple constructed for *siddhi*” (11). Doing homage to Bhairava, one should enter the divine temple-pavilion. Rupturing the stomach of the corpses that he has put there (12), and making sheets with many other [pieces of] skin [joined together from corpses] †slain by another, † he should cover the pavilion with skin-coverings both outside and inside (13-14b).³⁴¹

*mānasaṃ yāgam āsthāya śavasyopari sādhaḥ || 14 || saṃpuṭitvā nyased vidyāṃ
sarva-karmeṣu nityaśaḥ | prāṇeśvareṇa devena krodhāstreṇa nirodhitam || 15 || eṣa
saṃpuṭanaṃ devi devatām api durlabham | sādhyākṣare [corr. : sādhyakṣare MS]
tu vinyastām pātaye[t] tridaśāny api || 16 || vandanitvā mahesānaṃ śavasyopari
ālikhet | tataḥ ekāgra-cittas tu avadhūtā-tanu-sthitaḥ [corr. : avadhūta- MS³⁴²] || 17
|| nirācāreṇa³⁴³ bhāvena smared vidyāṃ suyantritaḥ | kṣaṇa-mātraṃ smared yāvad
aghoryā pūrvacoditā || 18 || smareta tāvad [conj. HATLEY : smare tad yāvad MS]
yuktāmā | sarva-dikṣu [em. HATLEY : sarvādikṣu MS] samantataḥ | āgacchanti
mahā-bhāgā śākinyo vikṛtānāḥ || 19 || na bhetaḥ tu vai tena [sg. for pl.]
†argha-pātraṃ [corr. : -pātraṃ MS] tu pūrvavat† | arghe datte prasidhyanti varadās
ca bhavanti hi || 20 || pūrvoktāni tu vighnāni pūrvoktena prabhodayet |
vibodhayet[t] mahādevi yathā-manthāna-saṃbhavām || 21 || pratyūṣe yāva tiṣṭheta
ardharātre vyavasthitaḥ | svayaṃ paśyati vai siddhā sayakṣoraga-rākṣasāḥ || 22 ||
dṛṣṭvārghaṃ tu pradātavyaṃ arghaṃ dattvā punaḥ smaret | madhyāhnaṃ yāva*

³⁴⁰ For an informed discussion on what *picu* might be, see HATLEY 2007: 243-250.

³⁴¹ The text is very confused at this point, but something along the lines of the translation given must be intended.

³⁴² NB: *avadhūtā* is an occasional synonym for the *vidyā-mantra*.

³⁴³ Note that BY ch. 2 describes *nirācāra* as the *Bhairava-pada*. Thanks to S. HATLEY for the reference.

tiṣṭheta ṣaḍ yoginyām sa paśyati || 23 || *dina-kṣaye tataḥ paśye[t] śmāsāne devyayā saha* | *arghayitvā tu vai tāsām madireṇātma-ś[r]oṇite[na]* || 24 || *tato vadanti tam* [em. : *tām* MS] *hr̥ṣṭā varam vṛṇīṣva sādhakah* | *yadi tuṣṭātha mām devi maṇḍapam mām prasiddhyatu* [em. : *maṇḍam pasām prasidhyatu* MS] || 25 ||

Resorting to his mental visualization of the deity-retinue, the *sādhaka* should install the *vidyā*, enclosed [with the proper *bījas*], on the [main] corpse. As in all rites, [the mantra should be accompanied] with the Lord of Prāṇa [*bīja* at the beginning] and sealed with the anger-weapon [*bīja* at the end] (14c-15). This enclosure (*saṃpuṭana*) is difficult to get, even for the gods. He must install the letters of his *sādhya-mantra*; [with it,] he can cause even the gods to fall (16). Venerating Śiva, he should write [the mantras] on the corpse. Then, his mind one-pointed, the *vidyā* installed on his body (17), restrained, he should remember the *vidyā* with the feeling that he is doing nothing (18ab). While remembering Aghorī, who he has already summoned, totally focused, suddenly powerful female spirits (*mahābhāgā śākinī*) with strange faces arrive from every direction (18c-19). He should not be afraid of them, †but [offer from] his chalice as before. † For when the *arghya* is offered, they are won over, and become boon-granters (20). One should dispel the obstacles as previously described and awaken, as taught in [the chapter on] Manthāna-bhairava [ch. 45] (21). He should rise at dawn, and remain standing half the night. He will [continue to] see *siddhas*, *yakṣas*, *nāgas*, and *rākṣasas* (22). Having seen them, he should offer them *arghya*, and remember the *vidyā*. Should he remain [standing and practicing] up until midday [of the following day], he will see the six Yoginīs (23). At the waning of the day, he will see the [four Guhyakā] goddesses in the cremation ground. Offering to them alcohol [mixed] with blood (24), then, delighted, they say to him: “Choose a boon, *sādhaka*.”—“If you are now pleased with me, O goddess[es], make my temple successful” (25).

ardha-rātram yadā tiṣṭhe aghoryā bala-darpitā | *tām dr̥ṣṭvā tu praṇaśyanti sayakṣoraga-rākṣasāḥ* || 26 || *tām dr̥ṣṭvā tu tejavaram argha-hasto vicakṣanaḥ* | *aṣṭāṅgam vandayitvā tu †kṣamāpeta† yathā-vidhiḥ* || 27 || *rakṣayitvā tu saṃtiṣṭhet sādhakam putravat yathā madhyāhna yāva tiṣṭheta trailokyam jvalate kṣaṇāt* || 28 || *dr̥ṣṭvotkaṭa-mahākāyā[ṃ] vetālām vikṛtānanām* [acc. pl.] | *āgacchanti mahāvīrā bhairavā rūpadhāriṇī* || 29 || *na teṣām vacanam kuryān na cargham na ca mantrayet* | (f. 227v) *piṇḍikṛtvā tato vidyām astra-rūpam vinikṣipet* || 30 || *praṇaśyanti kṣipenaiva bhairavasya vaco yathā* | *kṣaṇa-mātram yāva tiṣṭheta ekāgra-manasaḥ sthitaḥ* || 31 || *cāmuṇḍānām sahasrāṇi lakṣa-koṭyo hy anekāśaḥ* | *āgacchanti mahāvīrāḥ sādhakasya vara-pradāḥ* || 32 || *yācayasva* [10Ā for 1Ā] *mahāsattva varam ekaṃ yathepsitam* | *trailokyāni sarvāni siddhīni* [neu. for fem.] *vividhāni ca* || 33 || *tāsām ekatamaṃ vāpi yācayasva mahāmati* | *arghayitvā prasādeta maṇḍapam me prasidhyatu* || 34 || *ardha-rātram yāva tiṣṭheta tato gacchati bhairavaḥ* | *trailokyā-vijayam* [corr. : *trailokyam vijayan* MS] *devam viśvatomukha-saṃsthitam* || 35 || *vara-hastam mahādevam sūrya-koṭi-samaṃprabham* | *tām dr̥ṣṭvā bhairavam devam sādhakātmā mahātapah* || 36 || *niḥśānika ekacittas tu idaṃ vākyam udīrayet* | *yadi tvam bhairavo devo maṇḍapam*

*praviṣet tataḥ || 37 || saṃpūrṇena kapālena picunā pūritena tu | vidyayā
mantrayitvā tu padbhyāṃ arghaṃ nivedayet || 38 || †vigṛhya dāpayed arghaṃ
picunā surayāthavā† | datte 'rghe tu prahr̥ṣṭātmā sādhaḥkaṃ cabhibhāṣate || 39 ||
varaṃ vṛṇīṣva vai vatsa yat te manasi vartate | sādhaḥkovāca: yadi tuṣṭo 'si [corr. :
tuṣṭāsi MS] māṃ deva varaṃ dadasi sūlina || 40 ||*

When midnight [comes], should he remain up, proud and strong Aghorī [herself will appear]. [Upon] seeing her, the *yakṣas*, *nāgas*, and *rākṣasas* will vanish (26). Seeing her, beautiful and radiant, the skilful *sādhaḥka*, *arghya* in hand, should make obeisance to her with all eight limbs, according to rule, †totally submissive† (27). She protects that *sādhaḥka* like a son. He should remain there, standing, until the following midday. Suddenly the three worlds burst into flame (28). After seeing zombies (*vetālas*) with deformed faces, and creatures with huge and fierce forms, the “Great Heroes” come, bearing the appearance of Bhairava (29). He should not speak to them, nor offer *arghya* or mantras. Making the *vidyā* into a ball [of energy], he should release it as a weapon (30). They are instantly destroyed simply by that casting, just as Bhairava’s words [can do], as he remains standing, fixed, his mind one-pointed (31). [Then] thousands of Cāmuṇḍas and millions of Great Heroes come, bestowing boons on the *sādhaḥka* (32). “Ask for a boon, courageous one! Whatever you desire. All three worlds, and various *siddhis*! (33) For one of these, ask, wise one!” Offering an *arghya*, he should [then] propitiate Me. His temple will be successful (34). Stay up half the [following] night, then God Bhairava comes: conqueror of (all) three worlds, facing in all directions (35). Having seen the Great God, his hands [extended to] grant boons, his splendor equal to ten million suns, the *sādhaḥka* whose asceticism is great (36), free of doubts, single-minded, should pronounce this speech: “If you are God Bhairava, then enter my temple!” (37) With a skull-bowl completely full of *picu*, consecrated with the *vidyā*, he should offer the *arghya* to [Bhairava’s] feet (38). †Taking up the *arghya*, he should cause it to be offered, with *picu* or else with liquor.† When the *arghya* has been given, delighted, He says to the *sādhaḥka* (39): “Choose a boon, dear child, whatever is in your heart.” The *sādhaḥka* replies: “If you are pleased with me, grant a boon, trident-carrier! (40)

*putraṃ māṃ gṛhṇa vai deva maṇḍapaṃ māṃ prasidhyatu | sādhu sādhu
mahāsattva sādhaḥkendra mahātapah || 41 || muktvā tvaṃ puruṣeśāna ko 'nyo
putratvam arhati | vaktraṃ prasāryatāṃ vatsa guhyaṃ hṛdi viśāmy aham || 42 ||
bhavase yena vai śīghraṃ mama tulya-bala-vīryavān | pradakṣiṇaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā
vaktraṃ prasārya mantravit || 43 || praviṣen nātra saṃdeho praviṣṭe bhairavo
bhavet | utpateta mahāvīro maṇḍapyā sahito prabhuḥ || 44 || sa vai sakhāya-sahito
bhavet[t] devo maheśvaraḥ | kāmarūpo mahāsattvaḥ sūrya-koṭi-sama-prabhaḥ || 45
|| †maṇḍapā bhairavī devī† ātmanena sa bhairavaḥ | śivādy-āvici-paryante yāvato
kiṃci[t] vartate || 46 || pratyakṣaṃ vartate tasya śivavat pūjyate tu saḥ | sakalo
niṣkalaś caiva tathā sakala-niṣkalaḥ || 47 || sūkṣmo †bhinno† mahādevi
pañcāvastha śivo bhavet | ye dharmā bhairave [corr. : bhairavo MS] deve tair
dharmaiḥ sa samanvitaḥ || 48 || atra [conj. : ava MS] loke mahādevi vicareta*

yathāsukham / aprakāśyaṃ sagoptavyam [conj. : *cagoptavyam* MS] *ājñā-siddhis tathaiva ca* || 49 || *na dātavyaṃ tu vai devi bhairavasya vaco yathā* | 50ab |
 “Take me as your son, O Lord—let me and my temple be successful.”—
 “Well done, well done, courageous one, best of *sādhakas*, whose asceticism is great (41). Who else is worthy to be my son other than you, O lord of men? Let your mouth be opened, my child—I will enter into the secret [chamber of your] heart (42), by which you will very quickly become my equal in strength and vitality.” Then, having circumambulated, the knower of mantras [i.e. the *sādhaka*], opening his mouth (43), shall certainly be entered, on this there is no doubt. Entered, he becomes Bhairava. The Great Hero will fly up as the Lord, together with his temple (44). That great soul (*mahāsattva*) will become [equal to] the God Maheśvara, with his retinue, taking whatever form he desires, with splendor equal to ten million suns (45). †The temple [becomes] Goddess Bhairavī, † [and] he is Bhairava himself; he roams anywhere, from the Śiva-tattva to the Avīci hell (46). He wanders as Śiva incarnate, and he is worshipped as such. [Śiva] has form and is formless; likewise, he is both immanent and transcendent (47). He is subtle, †set apart, † O Goddess; he has become Śiva in [all] five states. He is endowed with all the qualities of Lord Bhairava (48). Here in this world, he may act however he pleases. [But] the accomplishment of this Command (*ājñā-siddhi*) should be undisclosed, kept secret (49), not given to anyone, O Goddess. Such are the words of Bhairava (50).

This bizarre and astonishing account reads like something out of the popular fantasy genre of Sanskrit literature.³⁴⁴ Taken together with the preceding *Brahmayāmala* passage, it demonstrates clearly that early conceptions of *āveśa* in Śaivism are parallel to other early accounts we have seen, and that the translation of *āveśa* as “possession” is more or less appropriate at this stage, though something like “infusion” would be equally appropriate, for the *sādhaka* gains the powers and qualities of Maheśvara/Bhairava without losing himself in the process (or so it seems). These early Śākta materials betray no hint of the repurposing of the word (*sam*)*āveśa* that became a hallmark of Śākta nondualist exegesis in subsequent centuries, in which context it became a term for experiencing one’s “true self”.

But what does this macabre story tell us? First, it implies that to reach an awesome (*bhairava*) goal, an awesome undertaking is required. Rudra-Śiva-Bhairava’s early character as being entirely outside of the Vedic world³⁴⁵ is here

³⁴⁴ But since much of that literature has a later date than the early phase of Śaivism that includes the BY, we can presume that the fantasy genre (such as Budhasvāmin’s *Bṛhatkathā-śloka-saṅgraha*) is influenced by Śaivism, not the other way round.

³⁴⁵ He is mentioned in Vedic sources only in terms of his exclusion (*Laugākṣi-grhya-sūtra* vol. 1, p. 115), or the need to placate him so that he will go away (*Kāthaka-saṃhitā* 36.14, *Taittirīya-saṃhitā* 1.8.6, *Kāṇva-saṃhitā* 3.8.6, etc.), or as the receiver of offerings that are impure and unfit to be offered to other gods (*Taittirīya-saṃhitā* 2.6.3.4, *Kātyāyana-śrauta-sūtra* 25.2.3, etc.). Even mentioning his name requires a ritual purification (*Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 1.7.4.9, *Āpastamba-śrauta-sūtra* 24.3, etc.). These references courtesy of SANDERSON. Note that, in iconography and epithets, Bhairava can be seen as the early medieval transformation of Rudra much more

stressed, for the *sādhaka* must intimately engage with the impurity of death to a degree unimaginable to an observant brāhmin.³⁴⁶ As in the *Harṣa-carita* account, the participation of the king is here envisaged as ideal, but mentioned only in passing. Various other accomplices are also mentioned, but ultimately the real *tapas* must be performed by the *sādhaka* to whom the passage is obliquely addressed: he is expected to undergo several sleepless nights in the corpse-*maṇḍapikā*, concentrating on his mantra while standing for dozens of hours on end, undoubtedly while fasting.³⁴⁷ As a result, he begins to hallucinate (we presume), seeing hordes of both beautiful semidivine beings like *siddhas*, and horrifying creatures like *rākṣasas*. He is enjoined to not succumb to fear, but stand his ground whatever comes. If he maintains his *tapas*, his visions begin to climb the hierarchy of the pantheon of the *Brahma-yāmala*. Eight stages of visionary experience are described, separated by approximately half-day periods of intense *tapas* (standing and not sleeping at night are repeatedly mentioned). He is enjoined to make an *arghya*-offering³⁴⁸ to most of the beings who appear, but not to a certain class of Mahāvīra³⁴⁹ who resemble Bhairava—these are to be dispelled as a kind of final test before the climatic visions. The eight stages, then, are these:

1. Śākinīs – offering
2. Siddhas, yakṣas, nāgas, rākṣasas – offering
3. The six Yoginīs³⁵⁰
4. The four Guhyakās – offering
5. Aghorī – offering and obeisance
6. Vetālas, Mahākāyas, and Mahāvīras – dispel
7. Thousands of Cāmuṇḍās with consorts – offering
8. Bhairava – final offering

The fact that Bhairava crowns this hierarchy rather than Aghorī points to the strong likelihood of redaction from Somasiddhānta sources.³⁵¹ The passage has not been imported unaltered, however, since the central mantra here is called a *vidyā*, which can only mean a goddess-mantra, probably OM HŪM CAṆḌE KĀPĀLINI SVĀHĀ, the *mūla-mantra* of the text. At any rate, the whole visionary experience culminates in a meeting with Bhairava, who is greatly pleased with the *sādhaka*'s determination, and proposes to enter him through his mouth and take up residence in the secret

clearly than Śiva can. Śiva is, as his name suggests, the “Hindu” domestication of the Rudra→Bhairava character.

³⁴⁶ Though he himself need not kill anyone for the rite; see verse 13 in the above passage. Scavenging in the cremation ground or the battlefield is presumably intended.

³⁴⁷ While this is not explicitly mentioned, it is typical for this kind of *vrata*; cf. SYM 13.11.

³⁴⁸ The traditional offering to a “deserving guest” consists of water with rice, durva grass (or bilva leaves for Śaivas), flowers, and sometimes other substances. In the present case *picu* or liquor might be envisioned as part of the *arghya*.

³⁴⁹ The gender of these is uncertain in the text (*mahāvīrāḥ*); they are said to bear the appearance of Bhairava, or is Bhairavī meant?—*bhairavā rūpadhāriṇī*. The use of *aīsa* forms and disregard of standard grammar means increased ambiguity.

³⁵⁰ Kroṣṭukī, Vijayā, Gajakarṇā, Mahāmukhī, Cakravegā, and Mahānāsā.

³⁵¹ As also argued in TÖRZSÖK 2013.

chamber of his heart (*vaktraṃ prasāryatāṃ vatsa guhyaṃ hṛdi viśāmy aham*). This is a permanent infusion of Bhairava-essence that makes the *sādhaka* his equal in power and vitality (*mama tulya-bala-vīryavān*). Merging of selves is not here envisioned; we have some ways to go in our journey to *samāveśa* as “immersion.”

Before concluding our discussion of the BY, we should mention that TÖRZSÖK (2013) sees an instance of possession in chapter 46 as well; but we see the verse in question (46.106) as describing the entry (*√viś*) of the mantras he has been propitiating, not of deities. Thus the verse is actually about attaining *mantra-vīrya*.³⁵²

2.3.2 *The Siddhayogeśvarīmata-tantra*

Another of our earliest scriptural sources for the *viśeṣa* branch of Śaivism is the *Siddha-yogeśvarī-mata* (SYM), a text of the Trika, the title of which we can translate as “Doctrine of the Perfected Yoginīs,” since *yogeśvarī* is a common synonym for *yoginī* where the term is used to denote female spirits that are usually understood as emanations of Mahādevī Bhairavī. The antiquity of this text is established by several points: other Trika texts cite it as the lineage’s root-text, it displays archaic language and teachings, and it was superseded within the Trika by the *Mālinīvijayottara-tantra* (MVT), which Abhinavagupta in the tenth century takes to be the central Trika scripture. But there is more specific evidence that suggests the SYM was composed before 700. The MVT explicitly claims to be based on the SYM, and the MVT was almost certainly known to Sadyojyotiḥ (c. 675-725), who paraphrases it in his *Mokṣakārikā*.³⁵³ Additionally, one of the two manuscript witnesses for the SYM is a Devanāgarī transcript of a palm-leaf manuscript written in Gupta characters which was still available in the early 20th century but is now lost (TÖRZSÖK 1999: lxxix). The Gupta script also suggests a seventh-century or even sixth-century date for the text.

The SYM opens with an allusion to the Aghora mantra discussed earlier (p. 51f) which it takes as establishing the three aspects of the divine (gentle, frightening, and utterly terrifying) which in the Trika are personified as the three primary goddesses from which the sect gets its name. Then Bhairavī bows to Bhairava, who is another form of herself, and asks an intriguing question: she says that many people do not succeed in the practice of yoga and ritual even with great effort (*kleśenāpi na sidhyante narā yogādisādhane vidhināpi na sidhyante*, 1.5cd-6a) and

³⁵² “When the offering has been given, they are rendered effective, and they enter the *sādhaka*.” (*datte ’rghe tu prasidhyanti sādhakasya viśanti ca*) The question turns on the identity of the agents of the verb *√viś* here. Since deities are not generally described as being “rendered effective” (*pravśidh*), but mantras often are, I conclude that it is the mantras that are here entering the *sādhaka*. The logical objection here is that mantras *are* deities in Śaivism; but functionally speaking, when a *mantra-devatā* is under discussion, *either* its mantric nature (as a means of accomplishment) *or* its divine nature (as that which is propitiated) is highlighted at any one time. Since instrumentality is here highlighted, with no mention of independent divine agency, I conclude that this is not an instance of *āveśa* (supported by the lack of any *upasarga* before the verb [e.g., *ā, samā, pra*], almost universally present in instances of actual possession). My reading is supported by 46.121, also cited by TÖRZSÖK (2013: n42), where it is explicitly mantras entering (*√viś*) the *sādhaka*.

³⁵³ See the evidence discussed at GOODALL 1998: lxxv and *ibid*: 184n71.

thus lack experiential evidence of that which they seek (*pratyayo naiva jāyate*, 1.6b). Why, she asks, do the great mantras taught by God himself not succeed (*kim ete na prasiddhyanti tvat-proktā mantra-nāyakāḥ*, 1.7cd)? Two things emerge from this audacious opening. First, the text suggests that it is commenting on a tradition already well established in the seventh century. Second, it wishes to address head-on a question that threatens to invalidate its teaching: why do the mantras and *sāadhanās* taught in the Śaiva scriptures frequently fail to work? Bhairava’s answer to this question blazes a trail in the direction that nondualist exegetes would later elaborate: that mantras and rituals without Power (*śakti*) are inert, and that that Power’s primary form (for the exegetes, at any rate) is heightened and expanded awareness, which derives from direct experience of the Divine. Specifically, Bhairava says that the mantras He has taught can indeed fulfill desire for both *bhukti* and *mukti*, but that they are protected (*gopita*) by a secret principle (1.11) because so many people violate the sacred pledge (*samaya*) that they are initiated into (1.12). The secret principle is *mantra-vīrya*, the vitality or energy of all mantras, without which (*kevala*), it is implied, they are inert and fruitless (1.13), even if they are used according to the correct rules (*vidhināpi prayojitāḥ*, 1.14b). Bhairava continues:

tad-graḥaṃ yo ’pi jānāti tathā cātma-parigrahaṃ |
guruṃ gurutaraṃ caiva tasya siddhir na dūrataḥ || 1.15

But for one who knows how to obtain this [*vīrya*], and likewise knows how to obtain the Self, [and knows the nature of] the guru and the “higher guru” (i.e. the mantra), success is not far.

śakti-hīnaṃ guruṃ prāpya kalpokta-phala-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ |
abhiyuktā na sidhyanti prayatnenāpi sādhakāḥ || 1.16

[If] those who desire the fruits taught in the scriptures obtain a guru without *śakti*, they will not succeed even with much effort.³⁵⁴

tasmāt siddhiṃ samanvicchec chiva-saṃskāra-dīkṣitaḥ |
rudra-śakti-samāveśaṃ jñātvā tad-graḥaṃ ācaret || 1.17

Therefore, [if] someone initiated with Śiva’s rite desires success, he should know how to become possessed/penetrated by the Power of Rudra, and having done so, he should perform the grasping of the [mantra].³⁵⁵

This crucial passage first moots a theme that would become important in the nondualist camp, that of concern with mitigating the routinization of their religion and privileging spiritual experience, especially of the powerful, mind-altering (or mind-stopping) variety. The passage argues that one’s guru and oneself must be acquainted with the techniques to bring about *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*, the infusion of

³⁵⁴ As documented by TÖRSZÖK *forthcoming* pp. 10-12, part of this verse is redacted into an early Kaula text, the *Timirodghāṭana* (11.18cd), from whence it is borrowed by the *Kubjikāmata-tantra* (3.48) and cited in *Tantrāloka* 13.336. See below, p. 209.

³⁵⁵ Translation of this verse follows that of TÖRSZÖK 1999: 106.

God’s power into one’s body and mind.³⁵⁶ This enables the “grasping of the mantra” (*tad-graha*), where as Somdev VASUDEVA has argued (personal communication), *graha* is tantamount to a synonym for *āveśa*. Note the usage of the term *graha* in verse 1.15 above, upon which success in practice is made contingent. It clearly does not mean “comprehend,” but rather is something that one “practices” (*āvcar*), as in verse 1.17. The term continues to be used in the second chapter, in which the Goddess asks for more information concerning categories mentioned in 1.15, specifically the guru and the “higher guru,” and the success (*siddhi*) attained by those who know them (2.1). Bhairava replies that guru refers to the teacher (*ācārya*) and “higher guru” to the initiation mantra (2.2cd), and goes on to say:

tena dīkṣita-mātrasya bhaved ātma-parigrahaḥ |
tad-grahe mantra-sadbhāva-prāptir atra varānane || 2.3
 Simply from being initiated by [him with] it, the experience of the Self occurs. In our system (*atra*), when one is grasped by that [Self], one attains the essence of mantras [= *mantra-vīrya*], O fair-faced one.

Here we see more evidence that *graha* means something akin to *āveśa*. The mantra infused with *vīrya*, transmitted by the guru in initiation, triggers an *ātma-parigraha* or “experience of the Self,” as a result of which the initiand him- or herself³⁵⁷ now has access to *mantra-vīrya*, that essence which animates mantras and makes them functional for the attainment of *bhukti* and *mukti*. The next logical question is how one can know that one has found a teacher who has this kind of power (i.e., whose mantras have *vīrya*). Bhairava says:

rudra-śakti-samāveśād divyācaraṇa-lakṣaṇam |
ācārye lakṣayet tatra tato mantra-grahaḥ smṛtaḥ || 2.4
 Due to possession by the Power of Rudra, the ‘divine behavior’ is observed. It may be observed in the teacher; [when it is,] it is taught that one may receive a mantra from him for that reason.
rudra-śakti-samāveśād ācāryasya mahātmanaḥ |
śaktir utpadyate kṣipraṃ sadyaḥ-pratyaya-kāriṇī || 2.5
 Due to possession by the Power of Rudra, *śakti* arises instantly in a great master, producing immediate evidence [of its presence].

Here we see the Śākta Śaivas’ concern with evidence that a consubstantiation with God’s power has indeed taken place. Possession (or penetration, or infusion) by the *rudra-śakti* results in *divyācaraṇa* or “divine behavior,” where “divine” was probably originally a euphemism for “odd.”³⁵⁸ However, here five marks of an empowered master are enumerated which emphasize not the strange behavior often associated with possession but rather the *ācārya*’s power, charisma, and dedication to the

³⁵⁶ Note that the following half-verse suggests the indispensability of *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* when it says “In this system, one is not initiated merely by the rite involving ritual tools, measurements, etc.” (*na kārika-pramāṇādi-samayenātra dīkṣitaḥ*, 1.18ab).

³⁵⁷ The SYM is the earliest text to acknowledge female initiated practitioners.

³⁵⁸ Cf. the use of *divyābharaṇa* to denote the strange bone ornaments of the Kālamukhas and Kāpālikas.

path—as well as the all-important fact that mantras *work* for him. The importance of this passage (quoted below) is underscored by the fact that it is imported into the *Mālinīvijayottara* and from there into the *Tantrāloka*.

*prathamam lakṣaṇam proktaṁ rudre bhaktiḥ suniścalā |
dvitīyam mantra-siddhis tu sadyaḥ-pratyaya-kārikā || 2.6*

The first sign [of *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*] that is taught is unwavering devotion to God. The second is the efficacy of mantras (*mantra-siddhi*), producing immediate evidence [of their effect].³⁵⁹

*ṭṛtīyam sarva-sattvānām kiṁkurvāṇa-vidheyatā |
prārabdha-kārya-niṣpattiś caturtham lakṣaṇam smṛtam³⁶⁰ || 2.7*

The third [sign] is the [power to] make all beings one’s servants. The fourth mark is taught to be the [successful] fulfillment of [all] tasks that are begun.³⁶¹

*kavitvam pañcamam proktaṁ sālaṅkāram manoharam |
paravāk-śakti-stambham ca lakṣaṇam pañcamam smṛtam || 2.8*

The fifth [sign] is said to be [the composition of] poetry that is enchanting and well-ornamented; and this fifth mark is taught [to have the capacity to] render others speechless [or: paralyze (others’) power of speech].³⁶²

*ācāryasya samākhyātam etal lakṣaṇa-pañcakam |
evam lakṣaṇa-samyukto dikṣābhijño ’tha tattvavit || 2.9*

These are declared as the five marks of a master. Thus, one who is endowed with these marks, expert in initiation, who knows reality [as it really is],³⁶³

*guhya-maṇḍala-sūtra-jño lokānugraha-kāraḥ |
rudra-śakti-samāveśād bhaktānām vāñchita-pradaḥ || 2.10*

³⁵⁹ Paraphrased at MVT 2.14, the first hemistich of which is paraphrased at TĀ 13.214cd (in the chapter on *śaktipāta*).

³⁶⁰ Paraphrased at MVT 2.15, which has *sarva-sattva-vaśitvam ca ṭṛtīyam lakṣaṇam smṛtam* for the first hemistich; the TĀ quote thereof (at 13.215ab) changes this to *sarva-tattva-vaśitvam*, conveniently eliding the emphasis on power over others seen in the original text in favor of the more abstract concept of power over all the principles of reality (*tattva*); a typical exegetical move on Abhinavagupta’s part. However, we do find two MSS of the MVT that read as Abhinavagupta does; but this might be a case of scribal emendation on the basis of the TĀ.

³⁶¹ This is SANDERSON’S interpretation of pāda c, which I accept; but *prārabdha-kārya-niṣpattiḥ* could also refer to the resolution of karmas already in process. Mitigating against this interpretation is the fact that such resolution is generally seen as causing the death of the physical body.

³⁶² Pādas ab quoted at MVT 2.16ab, with the problematic pādas cd replaced by *sarva-śāstrārthavetṛtvam akasmāc cāsyā jāyate*, “For him, knowledge of what is contained in all the scriptures arises spontaneously.” For the reading in SYM, the translation given here is provisional, following VASUDEVA’S suggestion; the intent also could be something like: “Sarasvatī [= *paravāk śakti*] remains permanently [on one’s tongue],” i.e. he is very eloquent.

³⁶³ *Tattvavit* could in this context mean “knowing the reality levels [to be purified in initiation]” as suggested by TÖRSZÖK 1999: 107 and n6.

[and] who knows how to draw the secret mandala, [can] bestow grace [through initiation] on anyone. Because of his immersion into the Power of Rudra, he [can] grant the wishes of the devotees.

*rudra-śakti-samāveśo yatrāyaṃ lakṣyate priye |
sa gurur mat-samaḥ prokto mantra-vīrya-prakāśakaḥ || 2.11*

O dear one, the one in whom this infusion of the Power of Rudra is seen is said to be a [true] guru, equal to Me, revealing the [secret] power of [all] mantras (*mantra-vīrya*).³⁶⁴

*labdhvā gurutaraṃ tasmāt tat-parigraha-saṃsthitāḥ |
tad-bhaktō 'cira-kālena sarvāvastho 'pi sidhyati || 2.12*

Having obtained the 'higher guru' [i.e., mantra] from him, one therefore becomes established in [the state of] being in its possession,³⁶⁵ devoted to it, one succeeds quickly, regardless of his [previous] state.

The five marks evidently are intended to describe a charismatic and self-possessed individual who has access to unusual power. One who has such power, repeatedly described as *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*, and who further understands how to initiate in accordance with the Tantric scriptures is here pictured as the ideal guru who manifests the *mantra-vīrya* that is so necessary to the initiate's success in *sādhana*. Receiving a "living" mantra from such a *siddha*, one is possessed by it as much as one possesses it (*tat-parigraha-saṃsthitā*). Now we have our answer to the question posed by Devī in 1.7 (p. 169 above): mantras and rituals are empty and useless unless they are infused with the energy of God called Rudraśakti, and they are only so infused if the guru wielding them has himself been "possessed" or filled with that very power. As TÖRSZÖK comments (2013), this makes *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* the very *raison d'être* of the text.

What is the nature of the kind of possession that the SYM has in mind? The next topic addressed in chapter two of the text is the "doctrine of the *siddha-yogeśvarīs*" from which the text draws its title. The source of all the powerful *yogeśvarīs* is said (at 2.21) to be the same Rudra-śakti we have been discussing, now described as pervading reality through the countless beings that she emanates and empowers:

*tayaivodbalitāḥ sattvāḥ krīḍante te 'viśaṅkitāḥ |
sā parāpara-rūpeṇa vyāpya sarvam idaṃ sthitā || 2.22*

Living beings, empowered by Her alone, play without inhibition; She abides, pervading this whole [reality] with her transcendent-cum-immanent (*parāpara*) form.

This verse seems to imply that Śakti empowers all beings, not only her *yogeśvarīs*. Śakti, also called *Yogeśvarī* in the following verse, is said to have a threefold form: Aghorā, Ghorā, and Ghoratarā (2.23-24, 26, 29). These three (later assimilated to Parā, Parāparā, and Aparā, the primary goddesses of the mature Trika) are given in

³⁶⁴ Pādas cd are quoted at MVT 2.10cd.

³⁶⁵ A intentionally ambiguous translation that matches the Sanskrit's ambiguity. One could also interpret *tat-parigraha* as 'grasping that', i.e. having attained the essence of the mantra and actualized its power.

the plural because they each have many forms, and these are said to possess/penetrate (*āviṣṭa*) their male counterparts, the Rudras. Here we discover that the SYM considers the term (*sam*)*adhiṣṭhita* as a synonym to the *āviṣṭa*, since the expressions alternate in exactly parallel contexts, since there are three set of Rudras who are possessed/penetrated by the three sets of goddesses.³⁶⁶ This sheds light on how the SYM understands the verb *āviś*. *Adhiṣṭhita* means “inhabited, governed,” whereas *samadhiṣṭhita* has the same meanings but also that of “mounted upon, ridden by, guided by;” and “filling, penetrating,”³⁶⁷ making the latter term very close indeed to *āviṣṭa*. We also see the term *upodbalita* (empowered) used for the relationship between the “possessing” spirit-energies and the beings “possessed.” So the SYM envisions the feminine powers filling, inhabiting, empowering, and guiding the masculine deities, who in turn influence the soul’s destiny (as do the feminine powers; that is, the latter sometimes act by proxy and sometimes not).³⁶⁸ The Rudras are said to “play in the [human] body like children do with clay bulls” (*krīḍante vai tanau rudrā bālā mṛdvṛṣabhair iva*, 2.27), where “play” is another euphemism for possession. Curiously, despite the undesirable influence of the two lower classes of Powers (see footnote 341), we are told that possession by all three Powers is “auspicious in every way” (*śakti-traya-samāveśo . . . sarvatra śaṅkaraḥ*, 2.30), though perhaps this just means it is all the will of Śiva (= *śaṅkara*).

To sum up, the rest of chapter two’s detailed discussion of Śakti’s emanations³⁶⁹ problematizes the translation of (*sam*)*āveśa* as “possession.” For it teaches that all beings are influenced by these various classes of spirits or energies; there is no one who is not “possessed.” We are clearly far distant from folk traditions of spirit possession here. The human being is permeable to all kinds of forces and universal energies; the goal, then, becomes to get “possessed” by the source of it all, Rudraśakti Herself. And this occurs through the transmission of a living mantra from a guru himself “possessed” by Rudraśakti. Let us remember the crucial fact that for the *tāntrika*, all these Yogeśvarīs and Rudras of varying types are embodied and expressed in mantras, and therefore to feel the full power of a mantra

³⁶⁶ *Yogeśvarīti vikhyātā tasyā mūrtis tridhā priye | tāsāṃ bhedaṃ pravakṣyāmi yathā viśve vyavasthitāḥ || 23 || pramṛjyājñāna-timiraṃ paśudehe vyavasthitaṃ | yāḥ śaktayo ’nuḡrḥṇanti aghorās tāḥ śiva-pradāḥ || 24 || rudrās tābhir aghorābhīḥ śaktibhīḥ samadhiṣṭhitāḥ | sadāśivārpita-dhiyo bandhanān mocayanty aṇum || 25 || < . . > āviṣṭāḥ śaktibhis tābhiḥ sarga-pralaya-kāriṇaḥ | krīḍante vai tanau rudrā bālā mṛd-vṛṣabhair iva || 27 || < . . > ghorataryās tu tāḥ smṛtāḥ | upodbalita-caitanya rudrās tābhir adhiṣṭhitāḥ || 29 ||.*

³⁶⁷ In MONIER-WILLIAMS’ dictionary, s.v. the words noted.

³⁶⁸ The benevolent Aghorā spirits and their associated Rudras “wipe away the darkness of ignorance in the body of the bound soul” (2.24ab, see the note above) “grant the state of Śiva” (*śiva-pradāḥ*, 2.24d), and “liberate the soul from bondage” (2.25), while the Ghorās and consorts “obstruct the path to liberation” (*mukti-mārga-nirodhinīyaḥ*, 2.26), maintaining the soul in a holding pattern; and the Ghoratarās (aka the Ghoraghoratarās) “gratify the soul with experiences and the state of being bound” (*bhogeṣv eva paśutve ca pudgalaṃ rañjayanti*, 2.28) and thereby “cause souls attached to the experiences of creaturehood to fall lower and lower” (*paśu-bhogeṣu saṃsaktān adho’dhaḥ pātayanti*, 3.30). These verses are paraphrased at MVT 3.31-33, where the language has been cleaned up and clarified somewhat.

³⁶⁹ It is reiterated in 2.31-33b that all *yogeśvarīs* are established (*vyavasthita*) in Rudraśakti and empowered by her alone (*tayaivodbalitāḥ*), and that She is the source (*yonī*) of all *śaktis*.

is itself *samāveśa*. But what mantra in the SYM might represent the source power, Rudraśakti herself? We conclude that it must be the Parā mantra,³⁷⁰ for that is said to “produce immediate evidence” (*sadyaḥ-pratyaya-kārikā*, where *pratyaya* can also mean “conviction”), a phrase commonly associated with *samāveśa*; i.e., a visible *samāveśa* is usually the evidence required. Indeed, in chapter three we read that through *uccāra* of the Parā mantra, “evidence [of *samāveśa*] immediately arises here [in the body]” – “the body trembles, then suddenly jumps [or: flies up].”³⁷¹

The term *uccāra* refers to a specialized yogic practice central to Śaiva Tantric yoga, that of enunciating a mantra (usually mentally) while “raising” it from the base of the body to the crown; i.e., one seeks to feel the phonemic elements of the mantra vibrating within, and rising along, the central channel to the space above the crown.³⁷² The verse immediately following the one just quoted states:

mātrāsatenā cāveśam śarīre tasya jāyate |
yaḥ samuccārayed bhaktyā namaskārābhir udyataḥ || 3.50

He who does proper *uccāra* [of Parā’s mantra], making an effort with devotion and homages, his body becomes ‘possessed’ <by hundreds of Mothers> [or: <within seconds>].³⁷³

Clearly, this “possession” is salutary; as in the *Mahābhārata* accounts we examined, this is an influx of power that enhances the faculties and magnifies the capacities of the practitioner, allowing him to achieve all his goals. This is emphasized in 2.31, which tells us:

uccāre tu kṛte tasyā mantra-mudrā-gaṇo mahān |
vidyā-gaṇas ca sakalaḥ sarva-kāma-phala-pradaḥ |
*sadyas tanmukhatām eti svadehāveśa-lakṣaṇam ||*³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ That Parā is Rudraśakti is explicitly stated at MVT 3.52b, and probably at SYM 3.43 (*guhatarāṃ sūkṣmāṃ rudra-śaktiṃ parāṃ śṛṇu*).

³⁷¹ SYM 3.48cd-49ab: *tatkṣaṇoccāraṇād vāpi pratyayaś cātra jāyate || kampate dehapiṇḍas tu drutaṃ cotpatate tathā* (and see the parallel at MVT 3.52c-53b). Notes: *samāveśa* is unstated, but it is clearly implied here; as we will see, trembling and sudden jumping are common signs of it. *Dehapiṇḍa* could refer to the torso, or the heart region, rather than the whole body (but the MVT parallel has *gātrayaṣṭi*). *Utpatate* probably does not mean levitate, but a sudden small jump into the air widely known in the Śaiva yogic literature as an *udghāta* (see, e.g., *Svacchanda-tantra* 7.301c-2b). The MVT parallel adds to these symptoms of successful *uccāra* the following (3.53c-54b): *mudrā-bandhaṃ ca geyaṃ ca śivā-ruditam eva ca || atitānāgatārthasya kuryād vā kathānādikam |* “[Spontaneous] *mudrās* and *bandhas* (= postures), singing, howling like a jackal, and [the capacity] to speak of or [know] whatever is in the past or future.” (The last hemistich is a redaction of SYM 3.52cd, so only the first hemistich is unique to the MVT.) See also SYM 2.41 below.

³⁷² An account is given at PADOUX 1990: 399-401, but Christopher TOMPKINS’ forthcoming work is rather more clear and thorough on the subject. See also s.v. *uccāra* in *Tantrābhidhānakośa* vol. 1.

³⁷³ The first option presumes *mātrā-* is an *aśa* form for *mātr-*; but Olga SERBAEVA suggests (TÖRZSÖK 2013: n69) that we take it as the measure of time (*mātrā* = one *mora*), in which case 100 *mātrās* equals about 40 seconds. My only hesitation in accepting this interpretation is that it does not seem to jibe with the word *udyataḥ*, “effort”; cf. 3.47c, where we are instructed to do the practice for seven days (*saptāhāt*).

When *uccāra* is performed [correctly], the great mass of *mudrās* and mantras—both male and female—all bestow whatever fruits he desires. [He shows] the signs that indicate bodily ‘possession’ [by the power of the mantras], and immediately thereupon becomes one with his Deity.

Here, then, *uccāra* causes [mantric] *āveśa*, and *āveśa* directly manifests union with the deity. If we understand the deity as not different from her mantra, then *āveśa* of/by the mantra’s power is necessarily union with the deity. This is our first hint of the dominant understanding of (*sam*)*āveśa* in the exegetical materials of the nondualists, where it predominantly denotes nondual union with the deity.

TÖRZSÖK (2013) sees the acquisition of supernatural powers as the primary concern of the SYM; but this view largely hinges on the meaning of the word *siddhi* (and other *√sidh/sādh* derivatives). In my view, the text does not clearly distinguish goals of worldly power and of spiritual freedom as later and more conservative texts do. The goal of the *sādhaka* is pictured in terms of power, but also in terms of playful ease and freedom (as at 13.22 and 15.4-5). Indeed, at 29.8 *mokṣa* is actually listed as a *siddhi*, and at 14.1 the “success” (*√sidh*) the text speaks of is explicitly both *bhukti* and *mukti*. And this twofold success is explicitly contingent on Rudraśakti being thoroughly established in the practitioner’s inner being (*sādhakātme samyuktām rudra-śaktim . . . drṣṭvā siddhim avāpnuyāt*, 14.4).

In closing, we should note that *āveśa* is not posited as a requirement in initiation by the SYM, and in this sense it is not a Kaula text, unlike the scripture we will examine next.

2.3.3 The *Mālinīvijayottara-tantra*

As we have seen, the next phase in the development of the Trika is evidenced by the MVT, a seventh-century work of far greater sophistication and complexity than the SYM. The MVT introduces detailed technical presentations of *yoga* systems lacking in the SYM;³⁷⁵ but it retains the earlier text’s fascination with the concept of *samāveśa*. In its second chapter, it introduces the topic of the kind of guru from whom one should seek initiation. As in the SYM, the guru envisioned by this Śākta system is not the rule-bound ritual functionary that we see in the Siddhānta, but a charismatic liberated master whose mere touch can serve as a kind of initiation and transmission of spiritual power. The following four verses introduce the presentation of the five marks (*pañca-lakṣaṇa*) of such a master that we already saw in the SYM (p. 171 above).

yaḥ punaḥ sarva-tattvāni vetty etāni yathārthataḥ |
*sa gurur mat-samaḥ prokto mantra-vīrya-prakāśakaḥ*³⁷⁶ || 2.10

One who knows all the Principles of Reality exactly as they are is said to be a [true] guru, equal to Me, revealing the [secret] power of [all] mantras.

³⁷⁴ Pādas ef are quoted at *Tantrasadbhāva* 3.165cd and *Parātriṃśikā* 11cd (thanks to TÖRZSÖK 2013: n22 and n23 for these references), underscoring the importance of the connection between *svadehāveśa* and the experience of becoming one with the deity.

³⁷⁵ See S. VASUDEVA’s *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottara* (2004), which successfully explicates the almost staggering complexity of the yoga systems homologized in this ambitious scripture.

³⁷⁶ This hemistich is a quote from SYM 2.11, where the context is *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*.

*dr̥ṣṭāḥ sambhāṣitās tena spr̥ṣṭās ca pr̥ita-cetasā |
narāḥ pāpaiḥ pramucyante sapta-janma-kṛtair api || 2.11*

Those people who he sees, converses with, or touches, with a delighted heart, are released from [the *karma* of] evil deeds committed in the past seven births.

*ye punar dikṣitās tena prāninaḥ śiva-coditāḥ |
te yatheṣṭaṃ phalaṃ prāpya gacchanti paramaṃ padam || 2.12*

Those living beings who further are impelled by Śiva [to request formal initiation and subsequently] are initiated by him [and] obtain whatever fruit they desire; they [then] go to the highest state.

*rudra-śakti-samāveśas tatra nityaṃ pratiṣṭhitaḥ |
sati tasmimś ca cihnāni tasyaitāni vilakṣayet || 2.13*

The state of being infused with God's Power is always established in him.³⁷⁷
When that [*samāveśa*] is present, these are the signs that one may observe.

The next three verses are redacted from the SYM as noted (SYM 2.6-8 ≈ MVT 2.14-16). Here we see a greater emphasis on gnosis (*jñāna*) than in the SYM: knowing all the *tattvas* in their real nature is clearly primary here (though it was also present as a criterion in the SYM), and we may recall that the last hemistich of the three verses redacted from the SYM was altered to change a magic power of paralyzing speech to “knowledge of the subject-matter of all the scriptures” (see n363). Note further the recurrence of the term *codita* (impelled) already discussed above in relation to initiation (yet another example of the considerable textual continuity that characterizes the Śaiva tradition in our period). After the SYM verses on the five marks of the *śakti*-possessing master, the MVT continues:

*rudra-śakti-samāveśaḥ pañcadhā paripaṭhyate |
bhūta-tattvātma-mantreśa-śakti-bhedād varānane || 2.17*

Possession by God's Power is said to be fivefold, O fair-faced one, divided into Elements, Principles, Self, Mantra-lords,³⁷⁸ and Powers.

*pañcadhā bhūta-saṃjñas tu tathā triṃśatidhā paraḥ |
ātmaḥkhyas trividhaḥ prokto daśadhā mantra-saṃjñakaḥ || 2.18*

The subtype called Elements is itself fivefold, while the other [that of Principles] is thirty-fold.³⁷⁹ That called Self has three kinds, and that known as Mantra is tenfold.

dvididhaḥ śakti-saṃjño 'pi jñātavyaḥ paramārthataḥ |

³⁷⁷ That is, in one who has attained the *paramaṃ padam*. I take the author to have in mind the evidence that one should look for when seeking a guru whose initiation will lead one to “the highest state”—but one could also take this verse and the five signs that follow to be descriptive of one who has reached that state (whether or not he is a guru).

³⁷⁸ This refers to emanations of Śiva from the Pure Universe that break down into three classes: Mantras, Mantra-lords (*mantrēśvara*), and Great Lords of Mantra (*mantra-maheśvara*), all discussed in the MVT, as well as the third chapter of the *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*.

³⁷⁹ The five elements are of course the *pañca-mahābhūtas*; when these are subtracted from the thirty-six *tattvas*, we have thirty-one. Perhaps Śiva and Śakti are here conflated into a single *tattva* as they sometimes are, giving us thirty.

pañcāśad-bheda-bhinno 'yaṃ samāveśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ || 2.19

The subtype known as Power should be known as having two kinds, as it is in reality. Divided into fifty divisions [in total], this is known as *samāveśa*.

These fifty types are then inflected through a three-fold classification, relating to the individual soul, Śakti, and Śiva (*āṇava*, *śākta* and *śāmbhava* respectively), a trinity that was central to the mature Trika.

*āṇavo 'yaṃ samākhyātaḥ śākto 'py evaṃ-vidhaḥ smṛtaḥ |
evaṃ śāmbhavam apy ebhir bhedair bhinnaṃ vilakṣayet || 2.20*

One observes that it is also divided by these divisions: this [first of the three meta-types] is called the Individual (*āṇava*); the [second] is taught as Empowered (*śākta*), having such a nature [as *śakti*]. Thus the Divine (*śāmbhava*) [type is the third].

*uccāra-karaṇa-dhyāna-varṇa-sthāna-prakalpanaiḥ |
yo bhavet sa samāveśaḥ samyag āṇava ucyate || 2.21*

The *samāveśa* that arises through the practices of *uccāra*, *karaṇa* (= *mudrā*), visualization (*dhyāna*), subtle mantra practice (*varṇa*), and ritual offerings to a substrate (*sthāna-prakalpana*) is correctly called Individual.³⁸⁰

*uccāra-rahitaṃ vastu cetasaiva vicintayan |
yam āveśam avāpnoti śāktaḥ so 'trābhidhīyate || 2.22*

[Simply] reflecting on [the nature of] reality with one's mind, without [the necessity for] the practice of *uccāra* [and so on], he attains that *samāveśa* which is here called Empowered (= Śakti's).³⁸¹

*akimcic-cintakasyaiva guruṇā pratibodhataḥ |
jāyate yaḥ samāveśaḥ śāmbhavo 'sāv udīritaḥ || 2.23*

The *samāveśa* that arises in one who is thinking of nothing, due to an intense [nonconceptual] awakening, is called Divine (= Śiva's).³⁸²

*sārdham etac chatam proktaṃ bhedānām anupūrvaśaḥ |
saṅkṣepād vistarād asya pariśamkhyā na vidyate || 2.24*

These are taught as the 150 kinds [of *samāveśa*] in due order.³⁸³ [Whether analyzed] briefly or extensively, the total number is not reached.

samvitti-phala-bhedo 'tra na prakalpyo maṇiṣibhiḥ | 2.25ab

The various fruits of this knowledge cannot be settled in this matter [even] by the wise.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁰ Quoted at TĀ 1.170.

³⁸¹ Quoted at TĀ 1.169.

³⁸² Quoted at TĀ 1.168.

³⁸³ So the *samāveśas* of 5 *bhūtas*, 30 *tattvas*, 3 *ātmans*, 10 *mantras*, and 2 *śaktis* are inflected three times, according to whether they function on the *śāmbhava*, *śākta*, or *āṇava* levels, giving 150 total.

³⁸⁴ The text continues (trans. VASUDEVA 2004: 209): "A further classification is now taught in brief. Pay heed! The wise should know that each level of penetration (*āveśa*) is subdivided differently into five [stages] by the divisions of waking, dreaming, [deep sleep, the Fourth] and [the state beyond the Fourth], in accordance with the mode of operation that distinguishes it."

These three types of *samāveśa* become absolutely central for the tradition of Śākta Tantric exegesis that flourished in Kashmīr, for Abhinavagupta turned them into three *upāyas* and made them the central organizing principle of his *magnum opus*, the *Tantrāloka* (“Light on the Tantras”), which was studied and cited for centuries afterward, even after the tradition was transplanted to the far South. The classification is probably ancient, however, for we find the same three terms (*āṇava*, *śākta*, *śāmbhava*) in Saiddhāntika materials as a classification of three types of mantra.³⁸⁵ Here, though, the terms (compounded with *samāveśa*) describe three levels of spiritual experience: when one’s practice primarily highlights the techniques that emphasize the physical body, yoga, and external ritual, one attains an immersion into (or communion with) one’s individual soul-essence (*jīva*, = *aṇu*, from whence *āṇava-samāveśa*). Clearly, at this point in the semantic development of the *āveśa* term, the “direction” of “entry” is no longer relevant; what is meant is a kind of consubstantiation of one’s ordinary awareness (*citta*) with a deeper level of one’s being. When, by contrast, the practice eschews yoga and ritual and involves a refined contemplation of the nature of reality (what Abhinavagupta would come to call *vikalpa-saṃskāra*), then it results in a communion with the transindividual Śakti inhering in all existent things (*śākta-samāveśa*). When one has an intense awakening that bypasses the ordinary mind altogether and brings about a realization that is immediate and nondiscursive, that constitutes an immersion into Śiva-nature, which transcends both being and non-being (*śāmbhava-samāveśa*). Here, clearly, we have three different types of spiritual experience, a distinction that Abhinavagupta later tries to eliminate by suggesting that all three lead to the same goal through an inevitable process of the “lower” forms of experience leading to and merging into the “higher” ones.

These three types inflect the fifty kinds of *samāveśa* already presented, which unfortunately are not elaborated. It is apparent that two older systems are being combined here (a central agenda for the MVT), since the *ātma* and *śakti* categories of the 50-fold series seem redundant with the *āṇava* and *śākta* categories of the three-fold series. At any rate, the idea of 150 types of *samāveśa*, which, we are told, do not at all exhaust the number of possibilities (2.24cd), seems to point toward a desire to accommodate a wide range of spiritual experiences, acknowledging that textual maps cannot cover the diverse territory of human experience, while at the same time providing a framework that allows most practitioners to “find” their individual experience somewhere in the map, should they care to.

Āveśa in Kaula Initiation according to the MVT

The MVT has much more to say about *samāveśa*. Like the SYM, but even more so, the text shows Kula/Kaula influence; but unlike the SYM, it also shows heavy Saiddhāntika influence. As we will see, the MVT evinces significant intertextuality with a coeval Saiddhāntika text, the *Svāyambhuva-sūtra-saṅgraha*. In fact, as VASUDEVA as noted in his authoritative book on the text, one of its central enterprises is to

If the text intends that we multiply the 150 already mentioned by these five, we now have 750 types of *āveśa*.

³⁸⁵ See, e.g., the lost scripture quoted in Aghoraśiva’s *Dīpikā* on Nārāyaṇakaṅṭha’s *vṛtti* on *Mṛgendra-tantra vidyāpāda* 22: *taduktam: . . . āṇavāḥ śāmbhavāḥ śāktāḥ tathānyā mantrakoṭayaḥ*.

“create a synthesis of Saiddhāntika and Kaula teachings which could be assimilated to Trika doctrine” (2004: xli). This is precisely why Abhinavagupta made it the primary scriptural basis for his *Tantrāloka* three hundred years later: it functions effectively as a bridge text that unites the two main streams of the tradition. This twofold nature of the MVT means that *samāveśa*, a Kaula concept that the Saiddhāntikas prefer to avoid, has a central place, yet *śaktipāta*—a term not exclusively Saiddhāntika but very important to them—also figures prominently.

The MVT’s account of Kaula initiation in chapter 11 is one of the earliest text passages that suggests that we must understand *śaktipāta* as a particular type of (*sam*)*āveśa*. The exact term *āveśa* occurs only once (and once we have *āviṣṭa*), but it is everywhere implied. Perhaps the hesitation to use the word derives from the fact that the MVT is attempting to bridge the Kaula and Saiddhāntika worlds. Before looking at the passage, we should clarify that the complex Śaiva initiation rite, which we will examine later, is not presented in this chapter. Rather, the points which make Kaula initiation (usually known as initiation according to the *kula-prakriyā*) different from standard Tantric initiation (that according to the *tantra-prakriyā*) are briefly covered. All these points of difference exemplify *āveśa*, which was central to all forms of Kaula initiation. This passage gives an early account of what kind of forms this *āveśa* was expected to take within the maturing Kaula Trika.³⁸⁶

tataḥ śiṣyaṃ samāhūya bahudhā suparīkṣitam |
rudra-śaktyā tu samprokṣya devāgre viniveśayet || 11.17

Then, accepting a student who has been well examined in various ways, sprinkling him with [water infused with] Rudra-śakti, [the guru] should lead him into the presence of the deity [in the form of the maṇḍala].

bhujau tasya samālokya rudra-śaktyā pradīpayet |
tayāvāpy³⁸⁷ arpayet puṣpaṃ karayor gandha-digdhayoḥ || 11.18

Focusing attention on the [initiant]’s arms, [the guru] should irradiate them with Rudra-śakti. By means of that very [power], [the initiand] will [soon] cast a flower [onto the maṇḍala] from hands anointed with sandal paste.

These verses serve to introduce the form the initiation will take; the “narrative” of the initiation proper begins with the following verse. Note that the casting of a flower onto a *maṇḍala* with eight segments (one for each of the eight Mothers) while possessed is the hallmark of Kaula initiation (originally deriving from the Somasiddhānta). Here we also see the power of the Kaula guru highlighted in the fact that his concentrated gaze, conjoined with the power of his enlivened mantras, is thought to be sufficient to cause the *śakti* to come alive in the disciple’s body, casting him into a state of “possession” in which the *śakti*—here conceived impersonally—will direct his bodily movements.

³⁸⁶ We have dated the MVT to the seventh century because it was known by Sadyojyotiḥ. By 830 CE the Trika was so well established that it was well-known to the Kashmiri court, as evidenced by clever allusions to it in the Ratnākara’s sophisticated courtly poem the *Haravijaya*.

³⁸⁷ *tayā* em. SANDERSON : *tathā* ed.

*nirālambau tu tau dhyātvā śaktyākṛṣṭau vicintayet |
śakti-mantrita-netreṇa baddhvā netre tu pūrvavat || 11.19*

Meditating on [the initiand's] two [arms] as being “supportless,” he should contemplate them as being attracted by the śakti, [thereby] binding his eyes with an blindfold consecrated by śakti.

The disciple's arms are not supported, i.e. controlled, by him, but rather by the śakti, and therefore his movements, such as putting on the blindfold, are (supposed to be) involuntary. In the standard Tantric form of the ritual, such as found in the *Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati*, there is no “possession,” and the guru simply applies the blindfold himself.

*tataḥ prakṣepayet puṣpaṃ sā śaktis tatkarasthitā |
yatra tat patate puṣpaṃ tat-kulaṃ tasya lakṣayet || 11.20*

Then, the śakti in [the initiand's] hands will cause [him] to throw the flower. Wherever the flower falls, that [place] signifies the Family [of the Mother-goddess to which he will now belong and which he will propitiate].

*mukham udghāṭya taṃ paścāt pādayoḥ pratipādayet |
tato'sya mastake cakraṃ hastayoś cārcya yogavit || 11.21*

Uncovering his face [and seeing the maṇḍala], She causes him to fall backwards to [the guru's] feet; then that knower of yoga [= the guru] worships the circuit [of deities] on [the disciple's] two hands and on his head.

Falling down suddenly is considered another sign of successful possession;³⁸⁸ the initiand is overwhelmed by the power contained in the initiatory maṇḍala, into which the guru has earlier installed the mantras of the cult. Next, the guru would usually install the mantras onto his own hand preparatory to placing it on the initiand's head;³⁸⁹ but here in this Kaula form, he installs them onto the disciple's hand, since the latter, if possessed, can perform his own initiation.

*taddhastau prerayec chaktyā yāvan mūrdhāntam āgatau |
śiva-hasta-vidhiḥ proktaḥ sadyaḥ-pratyaya-kāraḥ || 11.22*

With the śakti, he should impel [the initiand's] two hands to come up to his head. This is called the Rite of Śiva's Hand, which produces immediate evidence [of its efficacy].

The initiand who then places his own hand(s) on his head is understood to still be in a “possessed” state (though one imagines that in reality, at least some initiands knew what they were supposed to do at this point, the śiva-hasta-vidhi being well-known as a central element of all Tantric initiations). We should note again here the preoccupation with “evidence” (*pratyaya*) in these scriptural Kaula Trika texts,

³⁸⁸ See esp. the *Tantrasadbhāva* passage given below, pp. 218ff.

³⁸⁹ See *Dīkṣottara* 7.110 and *Somaśambhupaddhati* 4.2.123.

signifying their concern with verifying that something was actually happening in the subjective experience of the aspirant.³⁹⁰

*carukaṃ dāpayet paścāt kharjūrādi-phalodbhavam |
śaktyālabhāṃ tanuṃ kṛtvā sthāpayed agrataḥ śiśoḥ || 11.23*

He should then give consecrated food (*caru*), such as that made from the fruit of the date-tree and so on. Making his body supported by the *śakti*, he should stand in front of his ‘child,’ [the initiand].

*puṣpa-kṣepa-prayogena hastam ākṛṣya dakṣiṇam |
carukaṃ grāhayen mantrī tad-dhyāna-gata-mānasaḥ || 11.24*

Having ‘attracted’ his right hand by the [same] method [as the disciple used] for casting the flower, the Mantrin [i.e. the guru] should give him the blessed food (*caru*), his mind deeply focused in meditation on it.

Since the putatively powerful Rite of Śiva’s Hand has just occurred, I conjecture that “making his body supported by the *śakti*” in 11.23 means that the guru wills the initiand to remain standing, as opposed to collapsing to the ground. In 24a, since the guru never casts a flower, the *prayoga* mentioned must simply mean “by the same method that the flower was cast [earlier],” meaning through the power of the *śakti*. The same goes for the *prayoga* mentioned in the next verse.

*śiva-hasta-prayogena samāropya mukhaṃ nayet |
anenaiva vidhānena kṣīra-vṛkṣa-samudbhavam || 11.25
danta-kāṣṭhaṃ daded devi ṣoḍaśāṅgulaṃ āyatam |*

Raising it through the [same] method [as] of Shiva’s Hand, he should bring [the *caru*] to his mouth. By this same procedure, he should give [him] a tooth-stick sixteen finger[-widths] in length, obtained from a Ficus tree.

The first hemistich here seems redundant, and perhaps something has dropped out, because the use of the tooth-stick is not specified.³⁹¹ A tooth-stick was a part of Śaiva initiation from the Atimārga period (see the *Samskāra-vidhi*); it was used for augury.

*eteṣāṃ cālanān mantrī śaktipātaṃ parīkṣayet || 11.26
mandatīvrādibhedena mandatīvrādikād budhaḥ |
ityayaṃ samayī proktaḥ saṃsthitoktena vartmanā || 11.27*

Because of mild, intense, or [medium] movements in these [actions],³⁹² the wise Mantrin (= guru) may verify the Descent of Power [received by the

³⁹⁰ As briefly noted earlier, *pratyaya* also means “conviction”; significantly, Abhinavagupta’s commentator Jayaratha (12th cen.) equates *āveśa* with *pratyaya*, thus making it explicit that the experience of “possession” or “immersion” was the key piece of evidence that can produce real religious conviction (see *Tantrāloka-viveka* ad 29.271).

³⁹¹ Abhinavagupta supplies the missing action: *śiṣyeṇa dantakāṣṭhaṃ ca tatpātaḥ prāgvad eva tu*, TĀ 29.195cd. The fall of the tooth-stick is prognosticatory.

³⁹² Or we could read this to be saying: “because of the loosening (*cālana*) of these [bonds of the souls by initiation, as demonstrated by all the above signs] . . .”

disciple] as being of mild, intense, or [medium] degrees.³⁹³ Thus he is said to be a *samayin* initiate³⁹⁴ by the procedure taught.

Though *śaktipāta* is alluded to in chapter one (in language typical of the Siddhānta), the exact term occurs only here, where it is clearly a synonym for *samāveśa*, which as we have seen is everywhere suggested in the present passage. The only discernible difference for the MVT is that the term *śaktipāta* is used in connection to the lower *samaya-dīkṣā* and whereas we see *āveśa* in connection with the higher *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* (below). Or, as Abhinavagupta seems to take it in his explanation of this passage, *āveśa* is the primary evidence that *śaktipāta* has occurred when the context is specifically Kaula initiation (TĀ 29.197 and comm.; see p. 348 below).

The power of the mantras and the transmission of the guru are here understood to “loosen” (a technical term in the literature, usually *√cal* or *pra-√cal*) the bonds of *mala*, *māyā*, and *karma*. This loosening opens the initiand to an infusion of divine *śakti*, resulting in the signs discussed above (automatic movements and spontaneously falling to the ground). The initiating guru is to gauge these signs and decide whether they indicate a mild, medium, or intense Descent of Power. Though it is not clearly specified, when we connect verse 27 above with 28 below, the implication is that if (and only if) the initiand has received a stronger grade of *śaktipāta*, then the guru may choose to proceed with the higher form of initiation known as *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*.

cikīrṣuś ca yadā dīkṣām asyaivārpita-mānasaḥ |
tad-iṣṭvā pūrvavad yogī kuleśaṃ tam anukramāt || 11.28

sampūjya pūrvavac chiṣyam rju-dehe vilokayet |
śaktiṃ sañcintya pādāgrān mastakāntaṃ vicakṣaṇaḥ || 11.29

When he wishes to perform the [further] initiation of one whose mind is [thus] cast [into *āveśa*], the yogin (= guru) should consecrate him as before, [then] worship the Lord of the Kula (= Śiva) in due order; [then] the wise one should look at the disciple, visualising the *śakti* in [his] extended body,³⁹⁵ from his feet to his head,

śodhyādhvānaṃ tato nyasya sarvādhva-vyāpti-bhāvanām |
śakti-tattvādi-bhedena pūrvoktena ca vartmanā || 11.30

upaviśya tatas tasya vidhānam idam ācaret |

[and visualizing] the Path [of Reality] to be purified [in his body]. Then, meditatively placing his awareness along the entire Path, in terms of all the *tattvas* from Śakti to [Earth], in the way described before, [and] sitting down, [he may] then perform this ceremony [for him].

³⁹³ Note that when Jayaratha cites the verse, he gives a different reading of 11.27ab: *mandatīvrādibhedena mandatīvrādikaṃ budhaḥ*, which allows him to read in Abhinavagupta’s nine levels of *śaktipāta* here (3 x 3 grades).

³⁹⁴ The first level of initiation is the *samaya-dīkṣā*, followed after a probationary period (which may be omitted in the case of exceptional candidates) by the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, which as the name implies is thought to bestow (delayed) liberation.

³⁹⁵ Perhaps the sense of *rju-deha* (“straight body”) is that the disciple is prostrating to the guru due to the intensity of his experience; or it simply indicates that the disciple is standing at this point.

mūla-śodhyāt samārabhya śaktiṃ dīptānala-prabhām || 11.31
yojayec chodhya-saṃśuddhi-bhāvanā-gata-mānasah |

In order to purify [the whole Path] from the root [on up], he should activate the Power radiant with blazing fire, mentally absorbed in a purifying meditation on those [tattvas] to be purified, [then] he should unite [the initiand with Śiva-tattva].

evam sarvāṇi śodhyāni nirdahantīm anāmayām || 11.32
śive saṃcintayel līnāṃ niṣkale sakale 'pi vā |

Thus [in summary], he should contemplate all those [principles] to be purified [as being one with the śakti, which is] blazing with beneficial fire, [and then contemplate it] dissolved into Śiva, either formless or with form [depending on whether the initiand wants to be a *putraka* (= *mumukṣu*) or *sādhaka* (= *bubhukṣu*) respectively].

yoginā yojitā mārge svajātiyasya poṣaṇam || 11.33
kurute nirdahaty anyad-bhinna-jāti-kadambakam |

anayā śodhyamānasya śiṣyasyāsya mahāmatih || 11.34

The [śakti] united by the guru to the Path [of tattvas] causes the preservation of what is innate (*prārabdha-karma* or *caitanya*);³⁹⁶ with it [i.e., the śakti] the wise one burns the tree of various [future] births of the disciple being purified.

This passage is a difficult one, largely because of the compressed, telegraphic language with which the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* is summarized. The basic elements are all here, however: the guru selects one of the three Paths (*adhvan*) that each completely map the universe,³⁹⁷ and along which all *karma* is located. Here the Path of Tattvas is selected, and the guru visualizes the hierarchy of *tattvas* in the initiand's body, with *śakti-tattva* at the crown and Earth at the feet. He then visualizes a blazing fire sweep through the initiand's body, incinerating the *karmas* destined to bear fruit on all those levels, leaving intact only those *karmas* already in the process of fructifying in the current life. Usually this is accomplished through an elaborate series of fire-offerings combined with mantras (*hautrī dīkṣā* or *homa-dīkṣā*), but here the charismatic Kaula guru can evidently accomplish it through visualization and willpower alone. The sequel to this is the uniting of the initiand with his goal, the

³⁹⁶ Usually, in initiation, the *prārabdha-karma* of the current life is left untouched, while that destined for fruition in future lives is destroyed, and this is probably what is intended here. But when Abhinavagupta quotes these verses, his commentator Jayaratha glosses *svajātiya* with *caitanya*—i.e., the purification process eliminates what is a hindrance to the spiritual process while leaving untouched what is truly essential and innate, one's Śiva-consciousness. Jayaratha, then, understands *svajātiyasya poṣaṇam* as referring to the act of *Śiva-yojanikā*; he wants to read it this way, I imagine, because the latter is scarcely mentioned here, but is so central to the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*.

³⁹⁷ The *kalādhvan*, *tattvādhvan*, and *bhuvanādhvan*; usually the first of these is selected, since with only five *kalās* as opposed to 36 *tattvas* or 118 *bhuvanas*, it makes the ceremony more manageable. In fact there are six *adhvans* in total, but the “inner” Paths (*varṇa-*, *mantra-*, and *padādhvan*) seem to have been used more rarely (note the allusion to initiation through *varṇādhvan* in TĀ 29.241c-2 and comm.).

Śiva-tattva (a process called *śiva-yojanikā*), another feature that in the ritual manuals is spelled out in great detail. Here it is alluded to only with the verb *yojayet* in 32; and it seems to me that when verse 33 speaks of the *śakti* (which is the governing principle here, this being a Kaula initiation) being “united to the path” (*yojitā mārge*, the latter term being a synonym for *adhvan* here), it has in mind the idea that the *śakti* purifies the initiand’s karma on all levels of reality up to Śakti-tattva and then unites him with Śiva-tattva as the culmination of that process. That the *śiva-yojanikā* is indeed intended here is evident not only from the fact that it could hardly be left out of any *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, but also from the following verse, which gives the possible experiential results of such union.

lakṣayec cihna-saṅghātam ānandādikam ādarāt |
ānanda udbhavaḥ kampo nidrā ghūrṇiś ca pañcamī || 11.35
evam āviṣṭayā śaktyā manda-tīvrādi-bhedataḥ |

He should carefully note the collection of signs beginning with Bliss [that result from this higher initiation]: Bliss, Ascent, Trembling, Sleep, and ‘Whirling’ as the fifth. Thus [these signs are occasioned] by the Power which has entered [the initiand] in the degree of mild, intense, or [medium].

This set of five signs (*cihna*) are particularly associated with *āveśa* (the term finally appears in verse 37 below). They will be discussed further (pp. 342ff, 349). Note that the MVT uses the term *śaktipāta* when discussing the *samaya-dīkṣā*, and uses *āviṣṭa-śakti* and *āveśa* in the exact same context when discussing the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* (and again giving a breakdown into mild, medium, and intense), suggesting their synonymy. Perhaps the MVT understood *āveśa* as suggesting a more powerful experience than *śaktipāta* (and indeed the five signs listed above would presumably be harder to fake).

pāśa-stobha-paśu-grāhau prakurvīta yathecchayā || 11.36
grhītasya punaḥ kuryān niyogaṃ śeṣa-bhuktaye |

He should grasp the soul [of the initiand and unite it with Śiva, after] rendering inert (*stobha*) the bonds [of that soul] according to the will [of God]. He should [then] perform the binding (*niyoga*) of the soul he has grasped to the experience remaining to him [in this life].

This verse corroborates the analysis above in that *paśu-grāha* or “grasping of the limited soul” is a key element of the *śiva-yojanikā* phase of the *dīkṣā*,³⁹⁸ just as *pāśa-stobha* (“rendering inert [lit. ‘paralyzing’] the bonds [of *mala*, *māyā*, and *karma*]”) denotes the previous phase characterized by terms of purification (e.g. *śodhya*) above. The second hemistich, if I have interpreted *niyoga* correctly, refers to the non-elimination of the *prārabdha-karma* (this is also how Abhinavagupta takes it at 29.209cd). The context suggests that these two key elements of the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* are responsible for the *āveśa* experience: see the next verse.

³⁹⁸ Abhinavagupta also understands *śiva-yojanikā* here, as seen in his paraphrase of the verse at TĀ 29.209 (pāda b: *yojitasyātmanaḥ śive*). See also the account of *dīkṣā* in the *Siddhānta-sāra-paddati* below, p. 240.

athavā kasyacin nāyam āveśaḥ samprajāyate || 11.37

tad enaṃ yugapat chaktyā sabāhyābhyantare dahet

If this *āveśa* does not arise for someone, he should simultaneously ‘burn’ his physical and subtle bodies³⁹⁹ with [the] *śakti* [-mantra].

tayā samdahyamāno ’sau cchinna-mūla iva drumah || 11.38

patate kāśyapī-prṣṭhe ākṣepaṃ vā karoty asau |

yasya tv evam api syān na taṃ caivopalavat tyajet || 11.39

Burned by that [Power], he falls to the ground like a tree cut off at the root; or else he should give him up. If it (*āveśa*) does not happen for him [after this further step], he should be abandoned like a stone.⁴⁰⁰

A more powerful mantra should now be deployed if the candidate did not achieve *āveśa*; this is expected to result in the physical collapse of the initiand. If such does not occur, the initiation is not complete, and the candidate is to be abandoned or at the very least remain at the *samayin* level. This doctrine, cited in Abhinavagupta’s *Tantrāloka* (29.210-11b), demonstrates clearly that for the Kaulas, admission to their ranks was dependent upon a degree of spiritual sensitivity that allowed for direct experience (*sākṣātkara*) of the realities their scriptures eulogized, most especially *śakti*, which as we have seen throughout this section is conceived more in terms of spiritual energy or power than an anthropomorphic goddess.

This requirement of palpable religious experience with visible signs is so important that in the following chapter (12), the MVT specifies that if someone who has only received *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* in its non-Kaula form (= the *tantra-prakriyā*) wishes to undertake the *tattva-jaya* practice that is central to its *yoga-pāda*,⁴⁰¹ then that person must first undertake a yogic practice designed to bring about *āveśa* within seven days. This tells us two vital things: first, that *āveśa* is clearly the *sine qua non* of Kaula initiation (= *kula-prakriyā*), and second, *āveśa* is thought necessary for a person to have the *adhikāra* (qualification) for yoga in the MVT. Since the MVT is a Trika text, the practice taught in chapter 12 is specifically *Parāveśa*, “possession by / consubstantiation with the Goddess Parā.” My translation of the relevant passage (12.15-21b) is indebted to Somadeva VASUDEVA (2004: 303f.), who solved the textual problems therein.

homa-dīkṣā-vīsuddhātmā samāveśopadeśavān |

yam siṣādhayīṣur yogam ādāv eva samācaret || 12.15

One who wishes to succeed at yoga, who has [already] been purified by [the standard Tantric] *homa-dīkṣā*, and who has received teachings relating to [the fact that] *samāveśa* [is necessary for such success], should first practice [the following rite].

hastayos tu parābījaṃ nyasya śaktim anusmaret |

³⁹⁹ *Bāhyāntara* or *bāhyābhyantara* is a standard term in Śaiva ritual for the physical and subtle bodies, or *sthūla-* and *sūkṣma-sarīra*.

⁴⁰⁰ “Like a stone” is here meant to suggest insentience (*jaḍa*) on the part of the disciple. For a parallel in the Buddhist sources, see *Sarvavajrodaya* f. 61r4-v1, cited and translated at SANDERSON 2009: 135.

⁴⁰¹ This practice forms the primary subject-matter of VASUDEVA’S 2004 book on the MVT.

mahāmudrā-prayogena viparīta-vidhau budhaḥ || 12.16

jvalad-vahni-pratikāśam pādāgrān mastakāntikam

That wise one should install the seed-mantra of Parā onto both his hands and meditate on that Power as a blazing fire while performing the *mahāmudrā* in reverse,⁴⁰² beginning at the toes and ending at the head.

namaskāraṃ tataḥ paścād baddhvā hṛdi dhṛtānilaḥ || 12.17

svarūpeṇa parābījam atidīptam anusmaret

Then, after [folding his hands in the gesture of] homage, [and] restraining his retained breath in the heart region, he should meditate on the seed-mantra of Parā (SAUH), shining in its natural form.

tasya mātṛā-trayaṃ dhyāyet ka-kha-traya-vinirgatam || 12.18

tatas tāla-śatād yogī samāveśam avāpnuyāt

brahma-ghno 'pi hi saptāhāt prativāsaram abhyaset || 12.19

He should [then] visualize its three syllables (SA, AU, and AH) [rising up and] entering the three voids in the head (i.e., the space just above the palate, the space behind the mid-brow point, and the fontanelle). Then the yogin will attain *samāveśa* after a hundred measures.⁴⁰³ Even a brāhmin-killer [will succeed] after seven days, should he practice daily.⁴⁰⁴

evam āviṣṭa-dehas tu yathoktaṃ vidhim ācaret

yaḥ punar guruṇaivādau kṛtāveśa-vidhi-kramaḥ || 12.20

sa vāsanānubhāvena bhūmikā-jayam ārabhet

He whose body has been ‘possessed’ in this way should proceed with the aforementioned practice [of *tattva-jaya*]. Or again, if the sequence of the possession-rite (*āveśa-vidhi-kramaḥ*) was performed by the guru at the beginning [of his spiritual career (= *dīkṣā* in the *kula-prakriyā*)], then he may begin the conquest of the levels by [simply] experiencing the latent impressions [of that rite].

Since the Goddess is embodied in her mantra, purifying one’s body-image with it and then intensely meditating on it as vibrating in one’s head (while holding the breath) necessarily brings about (*sam*)*āveśa*. One leaves behind one’s ordinary sense of self and is elevated into a temporary fusion of one’s consciousness with that of

⁴⁰² What the MVT means by *mahāmudrā* is explained at 7.13c-15b: it involves moving the open hands up the body in sync with the rise of the fire visualized within the body. The phrase “in reverse” (*viparīta-vidhi*) seems to indicate that the MVT knows an older source in which the *mahāmudrā* is performed from the head to the feet.

⁴⁰³ A *tāla* is the time it takes to move the hand in a circle about the knee, then snap the fingers (see MVT 17.11-13b), about 1 to 1.5 seconds. Therefore, one hundred *tālas* equals roughly two minutes, a long breath hold but not too difficult with practice.

⁴⁰⁴ Translation follows VASUDEVA (2004: 304). *Vinir-vgam*, here translated as “enter,” usually means “depart from”; and this may be compressed language for the idea of the three syllables reaching the three voids in the head, then departing from them and moving upward to the three voids above the head that the MVT discusses elsewhere. VASUDEVA thinks not, however, because should the yogin reach the highest void above the head, he will already have attained the goal of the whole practice.

one's deity. This is merely implied here, but this definition of *samāveśa* becomes explicit in the exegetical period.

We conclude our examination of the MVT by turning to chapter one. Here a brief précis of the spiritual journey is given. The language used to describe the beginning of that journey is closely reminiscent of the Saiddhāntika description of *śaktipāta*, but that term curiously does not appear here: instead we find *rudra-śakti-samāviṣṭa*, “entered by the Power of Rudra.” This further implies that for the MVT, *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa* are synonymous, and it prefers the former term in the context of initiation, despite the fact that the text's author(s) must have known that *śaktipāta* is instead considered the *prerequisite* for initiation in the Saiddhāntika sources.

The following passage (which concludes chapter one) occurs after a description of the various emanations of Śiva in the pure universe, Mantrēśvaras and Mantra-beings who bestow grace upon the multitude of bound souls (*anugrhyāṇusamghātaṃ*, 1.41c). The result of such grace is as follows:

*evam asyātmanaḥ kāle kasmimścid yogyatā-vaśāt
śaivī sambadhyate śaktiḥ śāntā mukti-phala-pradā || 1.42*

Thus, at a particular time, because of a soul's readiness [for liberation], it is connected with Śiva's transcendent Power (*śāntā śaktiḥ*), which grants the fruit of liberation.

*tat-saṃbandhāt tataḥ kaścit tatkṣanād apavṛjyate
ajñānena sahaikatvaṃ kasyacid vinivartate || 1.43*

Due to that connection, some [may] be instantly liberated. For others, their oneness with ignorance comes to an end [and thus they are enlightened, becoming a guru].

*rudra-śakti-samāviṣṭaḥ sa yiyāsuḥ śivecchayā
bhukti-mukti-prasiddhyarthaṃ nīyate sad-guruṃ prati || 1.44*

Entered by the Power of Rudra, [a third type of person] longs to go to a true guru, for the sake of attaining enjoyment and liberation; [and] he is led by Śiva's will to such a master.

*tam ārādhya tatas tuṣṭād dikṣām āsādyā śānkarīm
tatkṣanād vopabhogād vā dehapāte śivaṃ vrajet || 1.45*

Having propitiated him [and been accepted by him], he then—because he has satisfied [the guru with the signs of *samāveśa/śaktipāta* that he displays]—obtains Śaiva initiation. He will attain Śiva when the body drops, either at that moment or after [a period of] enjoyment [in one of Śiva's paradises].

*yoga-dikṣām samāsādyā jñātvā yogaṃ samabhyaset
yoga-siddhim avāpnoti tadante śāśvataṃ padam || 1.46*

[Another,] having obtained initiation into yoga, and having understood [its practice], should practice yoga. He attains success through yoga (*yoga-siddhi*, = magical power), and after that, the eternal realm.

*anena krama-yogena saṃprāptaḥ paramaṃ padam
na bhūyaḥ paśutām eti śuddhe svātmani tiṣṭhati || 1.47*

By any of these [four] ways, one attains the supreme state. He will never again become a bound soul; he will remain established in his own pure Self.

This passage describing four types of recipients of grace (*ātmā caturvidho hy eṣa*, 1.48a) becomes the basis for Abhinavagupta's nine-fold classification of *śaktipāta* that we will examine later (section 2.5.2). That fact in and of itself demonstrates that no less an authority than Abhinava understood this passage to be talking about *śaktipāta*, despite the absence of the term. The key elements of Abhinava's classification are all here (and in fact he has a hard time expanding four to nine, effectively expanding to six and eliding discussion of the last three types). To summarize:

1. The recipient of the most intense infusion of Power is instantly liberated, which entails the death of the physical body.⁴⁰⁵
2. The second type receives a transmission that destroys his unawareness (*ajñāna*), leading to an enlightenment that needs no initiation to validate it or enable it.⁴⁰⁶
3. The third type, much the most numerous in actual practice,⁴⁰⁷ receives a transmission of grace that causes him to feel a longing to seek out a true master (*sadguru*) who can empower him to attain both happiness and liberation (*bhukti-mukti*), and by Śiva's will (*śivecchā*, = *rudra-pracodita* in the earlier sources) he finds such a master and receives initiation, attaining liberation at death.
4. The fourth type is that of the *sādhaka*, who is primarily focused on attaining *yoga-siddhi* and content to attain liberation at some later point.⁴⁰⁸

The text stresses that all of these recipients of grace (*anugraha*) attain the highest state (*paramaṃ padam*) eventually; the difference amongst them is only temporal, that is, of how long they wait to attain that state. Though *rudra-śakti-samāviṣṭa* is used only with reference to the third type, it is clearly intended in all cases. Therefore, it is the infusion/transmission of God's power, in varying degrees, that directly causes all the different sequences of events (*krama*) by which souls attain liberation.

⁴⁰⁵ The latter clause is explicit only in Abhinava's exegesis, but it is undoubtedly implicit in the MVT's account, since that text predates the *jīvanmukti* doctrine.

⁴⁰⁶ This type, according to Abhinava, becomes a *sāmsiddhika-guru*, with spontaneous knowledge of the wisdom contained in all the scriptures. This category was not accepted by the Saiddhāntika orthodox.

⁴⁰⁷ By which I mean that the majority of the adherents of the religion were put into this category; in other words, the *putraka* type of initiate that verses 44-45 describe is the default category envisioned by the religion.

⁴⁰⁸ That later point is usually envisioned as the end of the following lifetime: after the death of his current body, he sports in a Rudra-paradise, then is incarnated on Earth as a dharmic king, then attains the highest liberation at the end of that lifetime.

2.3.4 Śaktipāta in the Saiddhāntika sources

We can see the parallels between the last MVT passage examined and the Saiddhāntika sources if we turn to those now, which necessarily entails shifting our focus from *samāveśa* to *śaktipāta* (since the former term does not approvingly in Saiddhāntika sources). The earliest occurrence of the latter term is undoubtedly that in the *Niśvāsa-tattva-saṃhitā*'s *Naya-sūtra* (c. late 5th cen.), which also contains our earliest detailed account of Tantric yoga (in its fourth chapter). In this brief mention in chapter one, *śaktipāta* is connected to both *anugraha* and *dīkṣā*, showing us that these terms are inextricably interconnected from the very beginning of Tantric Śaivism. We are told (*Niśvāsa-naya* f. 31v2):

*śraddadhāno dharmavataḥ*⁴⁰⁹ *śubha-karmasu ceṣṭate |*
vidyānveśī svarga-gatiḥ svarga-loke tu krīḍate || 1.87

One who has faith, possesses dharma, who makes an effort to perform auspicious rites [/good deeds], and who seeks wisdom is on the Path to Heaven, and he [will] sport in paradise.

tatraiva tu paribhraṣṭo jāyate cottame kule |
śiva-śakti-nipātena dīkṣā-jñānaṃ prayacchati || 1.88
so 'nugrahaḥ smrto hy eva[m] dātā caiva sadāśivaḥ |

When he falls from there, he is born in the best [kind of] family. Through the Descent of Śiva's Power, he is granted [both] initiation and knowledge. Grace is taught thusly; Sadāśiva himself is its Giver.⁴¹⁰

The passage describes the fruits of being a Rudrabhakta (uninitiated devotee): after a time in Rudraloka, he takes birth in a good family that affords the opportunity for spiritual pursuits, and he receives the transmission of grace known as the Descent of Power (here, in its first known occurrence, the compound is seen in its fuller form: *śiva-śakti-nipāta*, specifying that it is Śiva's Power that is meant). The passage is ambiguous, however, since the key phrase at 88d (*dīkṣā-jñānaṃ*) can be variously interpreted. Does the Descent of Power connect him with both initiation and (subsequent) knowledge, or is he granted the gnosis that is initiation?⁴¹¹ Or, thirdly, if we view *dīkṣā-jñānaṃ* as not compounded at all, then the hemistich would read very differently: "Initiation grants knowledge *through* the descent of Śiva's Power." This is perhaps more grammatically plausible, for it gives us an explicit subject governing the verb, instead of requiring us to borrow a subject from the following

⁴⁰⁹ It seems that, in the peculiar *aiśa* register of the text, both words in pāda a are intended as nominative singular.

⁴¹⁰ For the reader's interest, the passage continues in this way: *īśvara-sṛṣṭi-pāśena yojayet sarva-jantavān [aiśa acc. pl.] || 89 || prerakaḥ puṇya-pāpābhyāṃ sarvasya hr̥di saṃsthitaḥ | vratam pāśupatam proktam anugraha-nimittaye || 90 || dadāti ca parān niṣṭhāñ jñāna-mokṣān [acc. pl.] prayacchati |* "He [viz., Sadāśiva] yokes all beings with the bond of Īśvara's creation; residing in the hearts of all, he impels them to good acts and bad. The Pāśupata vow was revealed to bestow grace [on them]. He gives understanding and liberation, and the supreme state." See also note 311 above.

⁴¹¹ I.e., reading it as either a *dvandva* or a *karmadhāraya* compound. I favor the former in my translation, but this is tentative.

verse (viz., *Sadāśiva*). This is the interpretation favored by SANDERSON,⁴¹² despite the fact that it contradicts the later Saiddhāntika doctrine that *śaktipāta* is the prerequisite for being accepted for initiation in the first place (see below); but that doctrine may not have formed at this early date. According to this third interpretation, then, *śakti(ni)pāta* is the means by which spiritual knowledge is transmitted during the *dīkṣā* rite, thus giving it an even more central place. The following hemistich (89ab) emphasizes that such transmission is an act of grace (*anugraha*), and that the source is Śiva (*dātā sadāśivaḥ*).

The *Svāyambhuva-sūtra-saṅgraha* (SSS) is a condensation of the older lost scripture, the **Svāyambhuvāgama*; but this summary text is itself quite early, for it is commented on by Sadyojyotiḥ (c. 675-725). An important passage early in the first chapter (1.16-19) summarizes the spiritual path in a manner parallel to MVT 1.42-47 above, for it outlines the sequence of events (*krama*) that constitute the spiritual journey. These two texts are undoubtedly coeval and VASUDEVA plausibly argues that the SSS is “the source for much of the material that the MVT has adopted from the Śaiva Siddhānta” (2004: 167 *inter alia*). We will footnote elements of Sadyojyotiḥ’s commentary (*tīkā*) on the passage, since it sheds intriguing light on the passage and became authoritative for later writers, but note that my translation of the scripture does not always agree with the commentator’s reading.

śivecchayā purānantā śaivī śaivārtha-dāyikā |
sā śaktir āpataty ādyā puṃso janmany apaścime || 1.16

By Śiva’s will, the ancient,⁴¹³ eternal, and primordial⁴¹⁴ Power of Śiva which bestows the Śaiva goal⁴¹⁵ “falls” on a person in his final birth.⁴¹⁶

tan-nīpātāt kṣaraty asya malaṃ saṃsāra-kāraṇam |
kṣiṇe tasmin yiyāsā syāt paraṃ niḥśreyasam prati || 1.17

Because of its descent,⁴¹⁷ it erodes one’s Impurity, which is the cause of the cycle of suffering (*saṃsāra*). When that has waned, the desire to go to the highest beatitude (*niḥśreyas*) comes into being.

sa deśikam anuprāpya dīkṣā-vichinna-bandhanaḥ |
prayāti śiva-sāyujyaṃ nirmalo nirupaplavaḥ⁴¹⁸ || 1.18

⁴¹² Personal communication, 2012.

⁴¹³ Sadyojyotiḥ (SJ) takes *purā* not as an adjective but as an adverb indicating that the *śakti* descends “prior to initiation” (*pūrvam dīkṣātaḥ*).

⁴¹⁴ Again, SJ takes the adjective *ādyā* to mean that *śaktipāta* occurs prior to, and in fact causes, both *dīkṣās* (*kāraṇabhūtā dīkṣāyoh*). Note that FILLIOZAT, confused by the dual, simply translates it as singular without comment (1994: 27), but SJ undoubtedly intends *samaya-dīkṣā* and *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* here; therefore, for him, *each* initiation is preceded by a *śaktipāta*, receipt of which is the key qualification for the rite of initiation (he glosses *ādyā* with *pradhāna-bhūtā*).

⁴¹⁵ I.e., the goal taught in Śiva’s scriptures. SJ defines “the Śaiva goal” as the acquisition of Śiva’s qualities (*guṇa*) and equality with Śiva (*śiva-tulyatā*).

⁴¹⁶ SJ: “Dīkṣā necessarily comes about for one on whom this [śakti] ‘falls’” (*yam asāv āpatatīti tasyāvaśyaṃ dīkṣā bhavati*).

⁴¹⁷ SJ glosses: “Due to the coming together of the bestower and the recipient of grace” (*anugrāhyānugrāhaka-lakṣaṇa-saṃśleṣāt*).

Having obtained a guide (= *guru*), his bonds cut by initiation, he [eventually] attains equality with Śiva, free from impurity and affliction.
anena kramayogena parāṃ kevalatāṃ gataḥ |
anādyā-suddhi-sūnyatvāt prāpnoti no bhavāntaram || 1.19

Through this sequential process (*krama-yoga*), he attains the highest liberation. Because he is [now] devoid of beginningless Impurity, he does attain another birth.⁴¹⁹

The passage describes the sequence of events that leads inevitably to liberation in terms of cause and effect: *śaktipāta* is necessary to erode one's Impurity (*mala*), the presence of which blocks one from even having the desire for liberation (or "the highest good" (*niḥśreyas*)). When that desire arises, one seeks a guru qualified to initiate, and the rite of initiation enables and instigates the process that culminates in equality with Śiva (*śiva-sāyujya*). In Sadyojyotiḥ's commentary, he fixes on the term *krama-yoga* to sum up the process in terms of being joined (*yoga*) with the series of stages just outlined, where each implicitly makes possible the next. He writes:

kramaṇa yogaḥ krama-yogaḥ pūrvam śaktyā saha yogaḥ, tato mala-kṣaraṇena
yogaḥ, tato yiyāsayā, tato deśikena, tato dīkṣayā, tato vicchinna-bandhanatvena.
Krama-yoga means being joined with a sequence [of spiritual events].
First there is union with [Śiva's] *śakti* (i.e. *śaktipāta*), then union with the melting away of Impurity, then with the desire to go [to the highest], then with the teacher, then with initiation, then with the cutting of bonds.

Śaktipāta initiates this sequence, and thus is of prime importance (*śaktir pradhāna-bhūtā* in the commentary). This sequence becomes standard Saiddhāntika doctrine, though the later author Rāmakaṇṭha (tenth century), who in turn became authoritative for the Saiddhāntika writers who followed him, adds one more stage to the beginning of the sequence: that of *mala-paripāka* or the "ripening of Impurity," which in his view makes *śaktipāta* itself possible.⁴²⁰ We will discuss this doctrine later.

The Siddhānta-tantra called *Mataṅga-pārameśvara*, probably of the early ninth century, also describes the significance of *śaktipāta* in initiating the spiritual journey in the fourth chapter of its *vidyāpāda*:

bhramaty ajñāna-mohena duḥkhādi-paritāpitam || 4.43cd ||
yāvat sonmīlanī śaktiḥ śiva-rāgeṇa saṃyutā |
na pataty atitejasvi-nityānugraha-śālinī || 4.44 ||

⁴¹⁸ Reading *nirupaplavaḥ* for the unattested *niranuplavaḥ*, though Sadyojyotiḥ read (and tries to make sense of) the latter.

⁴¹⁹ Note the close parallel of the last verse cited with MVT 1.47 above (language and meaning parallel in *pādas* ab, and meaning only in *pādas* cd).

⁴²⁰ See GOODALL's discussion at 1998: 215n171.

[A person] wanders, tormented by suffering due to his ignorance and delusion, so long as the Awakening Power--extremely radiant, full of eternal grace, endowing one with passion for God--does not descend.

*tan-nipātāc ca tasyettham ajñasyāpy abhilāṣiṇaḥ |
buddhir utpadyate 'kasmād'⁴²¹ vivekenātma-vartinā || 4.45 ||*

Because of its descent onto a person, though he be ignorant and desirous, wisdom (*buddhi*) arises spontaneously, together with discernment and [ability to] abide in the Self.

*vivekino viraktasya jijñāsā copajāyate |
jijñāsoṣeta-caitanyaṃ paśuṃ saṃsāra-sāgarāt || 4.46 ||
jighrṅṣayā yunakty enaṃ yuktaṃ prerayati prabhuḥ |
preraṇe prerakaḥ śrīmān dvayor api sa mantra-rāṭ || 4.47 ||*

A longing to know the Truth is born in that discerning and detached one. [Then arises in one destined to be a preceptor] a desire to lend a hand (*jighrṅṣayā*) to bound souls whose consciousness is approaching that [same] desire to know the Truth [and deliver them] from the ocean of *saṃsāra*. Yoked [with these laudable desires], the Lord impels him [to seek initiation and to initiate respectively]. That illustrious King of Mantras is the impeller in the impelling of both [the guru and the disciple].

*anugrāhyasya vinaye tathānugrāhakasya ca |
kāruṇye tv anayor yasmāt tayor yogaḥ sudurlabhaḥ || 4.48 ||*

Likewise in the training of he is who fit to receive grace, and in the compassion of he who provides such grace; [He is the impeller] of both, since a union of such two is hard to find.

Here the power that “descends” in the *śaktipāta* experience is named as *unmīlanī śaktiḥ*, the Awakening Power. It gives rise to spontaneous insight and connects a person to his deeper nature (*ātma-vartin*), and instigates a hunger to directly know the nature of being. Here we learn that *śaktipāta* impels some to take the path, and others to go further and become an *ācārya* of the tradition. These precise verses (but lacking 4.44) are found in a later Saiddhāntika compilation, the *Śata-ratna-saṅgraha*, an anthology of verses from many sources. These verses begin the section on *śaktipāta* and *dīkṣā*, where they receive a commentary that clarifies their meaning.⁴²² These verses are immediately followed in that text by SSS 1.18, which we saw above.

Since the receipt of *śaktipāta* became the prerequisite for the acceptance of a candidate for initiation, it became important to establish what the signs (*cihna*, *liṅga*) or external evidence of this inner spiritual event might be. The *Mṛgendrāgama*, a text that probably dates to the ninth century, is an early source for the description of the basic signs that the Saiddhāntika guru would look for. These signs are primarily

⁴²¹ This *pāda* occurs also at *Matāṅga caryāpāda* 9.4a, where it is followed by *kāraṇecchā-pracoditā*. See above, p. 156.

⁴²² This commentary, the *ullekhanī*, was composed by one Umāpatiśivācārya in Cidambaram (Tamiḷ Nāḍu), probably during the late 12th or early 13th century, which period was something of a Southern renaissance for Tantric Śaivism.

those of a psychological shift; they describe what we might call a “conversion experience,” not at all dissimilar to what is called “getting religion” in the context of American Christianity. The *vidyāpāda* of the *Mṛgendra* tells us:

sthitau yān anuḡrḥṇāti gurum āsthāya cidvataḥ || 5.3cd

yeṣāṃ śarīriṇāṃ śaktiḥ pataty api nivṛttaye |

teṣāṃ talliṅgam autsukyaṃ muktau dveṣo bhava-sthitau || 5.4

bhaktiś ca śiva-bhakteṣu śraddhā tacchāsake vidhau |

Those whom He favors with grace (*anugraha*),⁴²³ [newly] endowed with awareness (*cidvat*), resort to a guru. Those embodied souls on whom Power descends, for the cessation [of their bondage], show these signs: [1.] eagerness for liberation; [2.] aversion to remaining in the world [of transmigration]; [3.] devotion towards the devotees of Śiva; [4.] faith in their Teacher and [5.] in [His] rites.

When compared with the signs of *samāveśa* described in the Trika texts above, these signs are markedly more “exoteric,” less problematic, easier to manifest, and less magical. In fact, they do not differ greatly from the devotion to be cultivated by any committed lay devotee (see p. 16). A subtle sign is implied by the word *cidvat*, which suggests a kind of awakening or clarifying of awareness, but this is not part of the formal list of five characteristics. As we see at *Kiraṇa* 5.13 (see below), it is the spontaneous arising of strong devotion (*bhakti*) in one who did not exhibit it previously that is considered the key sign of the receipt of *śaktipāta* in the *Siddhānta*.⁴²⁴

The Kiraṇa-tantra

Some Saiddhāntika texts, like the eighth-century *Kiraṇa-tantra*, become concerned with the question of why *śaktipāta* happens at the particular time that it does. In its first chapter, after describing the nature of the bound soul, Śiva tells us:

same karmaṇi sañjāte kālāntara-vaśāt tataḥ || 1.20

tīvra-śakti-nipātena guruṇā dīkṣito yadā |

sarvajñāḥ sa śivo yadvat kiñcij-jñatva-vivarjitaḥ || 1.21

śivatva-vyakti-sampūrṇaḥ saṃsārī na punas tadā |

When equal *karmas* arise [simultaneously] due to the power of intervals of time,⁴²⁵ for that reason there is an intense Descent of Power, by which (i.e., because of verifying which) he is initiated by the guru; he then [in due course] becomes Śiva, omniscient like him, free of incomplete

⁴²³ The term *anugraha* is usually a euphemism for initiation, but here it must refer to *śaktipāta*.

⁴²⁴ Cf. *Matāṅgapārameśvara Caryāpāda* 4.10cd: “Steady devotion is the clear sign of the Descent (of Power)” (*nipātād yat sphuṭaṃ cihnaṃ bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*, cited at SANDERSON 1992: 286n24). Cf. Kṣemarāja’s SvTU: “initiation is accomplished following the Descent of Power which is inferred by devotion, desire to approach a guru out of the blue, and so on” (*ākasmika-guru-yiyāsā-bhaktiyādi-vaśonnīta-śaktipātānusāra-nirvartyamānayā dīkṣayā*, p. 76).

⁴²⁵ That is, because some *karmas* take a long time to find the right conditions to fructify, and others do so almost immediately, it is possible that two equal and opposing *karmas* may come to fruition at the same time, thus blocking each other.

understanding, filled with the manifestation of divinity (*śivatva*), never again a wanderer in *saṃsāra*.

This translation is in accord with Saiddhāntika doctrine before Rāmakaṇṭha,⁴²⁶ but perhaps we can detect here an even earlier doctrine that is more in accord with what we saw in the MVT (ch. 11), for the most natural interpretation of *tīvra-śakti-nipātena guruṇā dikṣitaḥ* is surely “initiated by the guru by means of an intense Descent of Power.” If this was the originally intended meaning, then it would suggest that *śaktipāta* occurred *during* initiation and was indeed central to it (as in one possible reading of the *Niśvāsa-naya*, p. 189 above). But this proposal is seemingly vitiated by the fact that at *Kiraṇa* 5.1 (see below), *śaktipāta* clearly precedes *dikṣā*.

The entire fifth chapter of the *Kiraṇa* is devoted to the topic of *śaktipāta*. As is typical for this text, which (atypically for scripture) shows the influence of the sphere of philosophical discourse, the chapter attempts to address objections and problems with the doctrine of *śaktipāta*. It begins with this objection:⁴²⁷

śaktipātād bhaved dikṣā nipāto na vibhutvataḥ |
śivasya samavetatvāt sarvadaiva sthitā paśau || 5.1

Initiation occurs because of a Descent of Power; [but surely] there can be no ‘descent’, due to the fact that [*śakti*] is all-pervasive. Because it inheres in Śiva, [and Śiva is all-pervasive, it must be the case that] it exists eternally in the individual soul.

To which the Lord (*bhagavān*) replies:

upacāreṇa śabdānāṃ pravṛttir iha dṛśyate |
yathā pumān vibhur gantā nityo ’py ukto vinaśvaraḥ || 5.3
pāśacchedo yathā prokto mantra-rāḍ bhagavāñ chivaḥ |
evaṃ śakti-nipāto ’pi procyate sopacārataḥ || 5.4

Here we see words employed figuratively. Just as an individual soul is said to move, though it is all-pervasive, and said to be perishable, though it is eternal, [and] likewise a “cutting” of bonds is taught, and Lord Śiva is said to be “king of mantras,” in the same way, though a “descent” of Power is taught, it is a figure of speech.

nipāto bhaya-do yadvad vastunaḥ sahasā bhavet |
tadvac chakti-nipāto ’pi prokto bhava-bhaya-pradaḥ || 5.5
tasmād anyatra yāty eva tathātmā deśikaṃ prati |

[“Why this particular figurative usage?”] Just like the sudden falling of an object can create fear, in the same way the Descent of Power is

⁴²⁶ Rāmakaṇṭha’s interpretation of 1.20c-22b is this: “When [good and bad] actions have become [as if] equal [to a person] because he has received an intense Descent of Power [which comes about] through the power of the maturation of *mala* (= *kālāntara-vaśāt*), the soul is initiated by his guru and becomes omniscient like Śiva . . .” (My translation follows that of GOODALL 1998).

⁴²⁷ Quoting here from the excellent critical edition prepared by Dominic GOODALL (1998); translations mine, though not because of any fault with GOODALL’s translation.

described as granting fear of mundane worldly existence. Because of it, such a person goes somewhere, to [find] a guide.

gurur yathāgrataḥ śiṣyān suptān daṇḍena bodhayet || 5.6

śivo 'pi moha-nidrāyāṃ suptān chaktyā prabodhayet |

yadā svarūpa-vijñānaṃ patiteti tadocyate || 5.7

Just as a guru awakens sleeping disciples in front of him with a stick, Śiva too, with his Power, awakens those asleep in the sleep of delusion. When one has [spontaneous] understanding of one's true nature, then Power is said to have “descended.”

tasmāc chakti-nipātaḥ syān nipātaś cihna-vācakaḥ |

tan-nipātasya saḥ kālaḥ karmaṇāṃ tulyataiva ca || 5.8

Therefore it is a Descent of Power. [This] Descent expresses [certain] signs [of awakening]; and the occasion for its descent is the equality of *karmas*.

tulyatvaṃ karmaṇaḥ kālaḥ kṣiṇaṃ vā yadi vāsamaṃ |

evaṃ sūkṣmaṃ samānatvaṃ yasmin kāle tadaiva sā || 5.9⁴²⁸

svarūpaṃ dyotayaty āśu bodha-cihna-balena vai | 5.10ab

The time is that of an equality of *karma*[s coming to fruition]; [the *karmas*] are either destroyed or made unequal [by the Descent]. Thus when this imperceptible equilibrium [of *karmas* arises], at that very moment [Śiva's power] manifests its own nature suddenly, [evinced] through the sign that is [the soul's] awakening.⁴²⁹

Here the doctrine of *karma-sāmya* is introduced. This theory attempts to account for why *śaktipāta* occurs at one time and not another. It postulates that on very rare occasions in a soul's journey, two discrete bits of *karma* that are of exactly equal strength and opposing nature come to fruition at precisely the same moment, creating an impasse whereby all experience must cease for the subject. This impasse is called a “hole in time” (*kālacchidram*), an opportunity Śiva instantly seizes, releasing his power to unblock the *karmas*, and further taking advantage of the situation by “awakening” the given subject, i.e. granting him the religious conversion experience connoted by *śaktipāta*, in order to release him from suffering.

⁴²⁸ I omit here 5.9cd and print only ab and ef because the verse reads much more naturally without the extra hemistich. It seems to me that the text has become disordered here, for 5.9cd poses an objection which goes unanswered, and 5.10cd answers it rather well. 5.9cd reads: *samatvaṃ tat kathaṃ gamyāṃ nyūnādhika-tuṭiḥ katham*, “[But] how is this state of [karmic] equilibrium reached? How can the moment [of fruition] be [arbitrarily] short or long?” and 5.10cd reads *karmāṃśo yo 'dhikaḥ pūrvaṃ bhogadas tv itaraḥ punaḥ*, “The portion of *karma* that is stronger confers experience first (i.e. more quickly), while the other [does so] later” (Translation follows GOODALL, cf. 1998: 336 and 340). Note also that 5.9a is redundant with 5.8d, further indicating a textual problem here. But if the text is disordered as I suspect, it happened very early on, for Rāmakaṇṭha comments on it in the order given.

⁴²⁹ My translation of 5.9-10b closely follows GOODALL (1998: 337 and n516), and I was helped by his discussion of this problematic passage. We could also read 5.10ab as “[Śiva's power] illuminates [the soul's] true nature suddenly, [an illumination discernable] through the signs of awakening.” But it is perhaps slightly more awkward.

This event cannot take place within the normal karmic framework, since it initiates the liberative process that transcend *karma* entirely.

However, this theory did not change the arbitrary character of *śaktipāta*, and it is also unsatisfactory since it seems to limit God's power; and indeed, Rāmakaṇṭha, one of the principal Saiddhāntika exegetes, did not accept the *karma-sāmya* theory but rather advocated the *mala-paripāka* theory. The latter teaches that *śaktipāta* occurs only when there has been “ripening of innate Impurity,” in the sense that a ripe fruit is ready to fall from the tree. On this view, when Śiva sees that the Impurity of a given individual has “ripened” and is ready to be removed, he initiates *śaktipāta*. Ripening takes place through the accumulation of *puṇya* (merit). Since this theory is unknown to the *Kiraṇa*, in his commentary thereon Rāmakaṇṭha must engage in some quite inventive and sometimes convoluted verbal gymnastics to try to represent it in the text (under the onus of the idea that doctrine represents unchangeable truth, therefore the point at issue, if it is true, must be hidden somehow in the text).

The *Kiraṇa* goes on to summarize and defend the validity of the *karma-sāmya* doctrine:

*adhika-nyūna-sūnyatvāt tat sthānam abhigacchati |
sa pāta iti mantavyas tasya bhaktir vilakṣaṇā || 5.13*

Due to the absence of [*karmas*] that are [relatively] stronger or weaker, he reaches that situation [of *karma-sāmya*]. That should be understood as [the occasion for] a Descent. Its distinguishing mark is loyalty/devotion.⁴³⁰

*kāla eva sa niṣṇātaḥ śakter ātma-parigrahaḥ |
anādi-karma-sambandhāc chivaḥ kālam apekṣate || 5.14
kāla-cchidram iti proktaṃ taj-jñās ca bhagavāñ chivaḥ |*

That very time is “skillful,” [as] it is a gracing of the soul by the Power [of the Lord]. Because [the soul] is connected to beginningless *karma*, Lord Śiva waits for the time called “the hole in time,” [and] he knows that [time].

That is, because *karma* is beginningless, there is no earlier opportunity for Śiva to show his grace. But the text goes on (5.17c-20f) to stress that though *karma-sāmya* is the opportunity for the bestowal of grace—since at that moment the karmic process is stalled—it must be understood that Lord Śiva is the agent of *śaktipāta* (*prabhur atra śivo jñeyah*, 5.17c), since agency depends on sentience (*prabhutvaṃ jñā-svabhāvatvād*, 5.18a). An analogy is given: just as the sun is the awakener of lotuses (*padma-bodhakaḥ*), though it must happen at the appropriate time (*na kālād rte*), similarly Śiva is established as the agent of the Descent of Power (*tathāpi prabhur atreśaḥ śaktipātasya saṃsthitaḥ*, 20ef), even if he acts only at the appropriate time (*kālo 'pi yogyatā sā ced*, 20a). This explanation does not entirely succeed, for Śiva is here clearly bound to operate within the terms of the karmic matrix, and thus he is not

⁴³⁰ Or, as GOODALL has it (1998: 345), “Extraordinary (*vilakṣaṇā*) devotion arises in the soul [who has received it].” We should also remember that during our period, *bhakti* meant “loyalty” as much as it meant “devotion,” which is important in the context of an exclusivist, quasi-monotheistic religion, which is how Śaivism presented itself in the early medieval period.

the absolutely independent agent that the terms *prabhu* or *īśvara* would generally connote. As we will see, the nondual Trika exegetes assert the absolute priority of Śiva's independence and freedom (*svātantriya-śakti*) and therefore could not accept the *karma-sāmya* doctrine that held sway for several centuries of the first millennium. The *Kiraṇa* goes on:

evaṃ śakti-samāyogaḥ proktaḥ sūkṣmo 'tra śāsane | 5.22ab

< . . . >

tirobhāvāya pāto na yato 'nugraha-dharminī || 5.25cd

yenāsannatamaḥ kālas tenātmānaṃ prakāśayet |

prakāśya yāti vidyudvat sā śaktiḥ puṃ-prabodhini || 5.26

Thus the imperceptible union with *śakti* has been explained according to this scripture. . . . Its descent does not cause concealment (*tirobhāva*), since its nature is to bestow grace. Exactly when the [right] time arrives, it illuminates the [real] Self. After doing so, that *śakti* which awakens souls departs like lightning.⁴³¹

Again the event of *śaktipāta* is presented as an act of God's grace (*anugraha*). Its interior nature is stressed by the word *sūkṣma* (subtle, imperceptible by the normal senses). Here in the *Kiraṇa*, the metaphor of awakening (*prabodha*) is prominent, as is it in the nondualist sources. The section omitted here (5.22c-25b and 27-29) concerns the problem of occlusion or concealment (*tirobhāva*); that is, how do we explain the fact that some who seem to have received *śaktipāta* and subsequent initiation then fall from the path? In response to this, the text stresses that even if someone falls into darkness (*dīkṣito 'pi tirohitaḥ*, 27b) and ends up in a hell-realm after death, the impression (*vāsanā*) of his initiation ensures that after expiating his sins he will again take a good birth and complete the process, attaining liberation (5.28). If this did not occur, the *śaktipāta* and *dīkṣā* conferred by Śiva would be pointless (*ānarthakya*), which is impossible in the case of actions performed by the Lord (5.29 and commentary).

2.3.5 Śaktipāta and samāveśa in Kaula and Kaula Trika Texts

Now we will address Kaula materials, and a Trika text that exhibits heavy Kaula influence. These materials are crucial for filling out our understanding of the range of meanings covered by the terms *āveśa*, *śaktipāta*, and *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* in the scriptural period.

The evidence of the Timirodghāṭana

First we will look at the *Timirodghāṭana*, an intriguing and early Kaula text first "discovered" by Diwākar ĀCHĀRYA in the National Archives at Kāthmāndu (NGMPP A35/3) and transcribed by Somadeva VASUDEVA, with whom I first looked at the text in 2000. It is written in a late Licchavi or early Kuṭila script (see Fig. 7), but includes some archaic Gupta-style *akṣaras* (noted by VASUDEVA).

⁴³¹ Translation follows GOODALL 1998: 350-51.

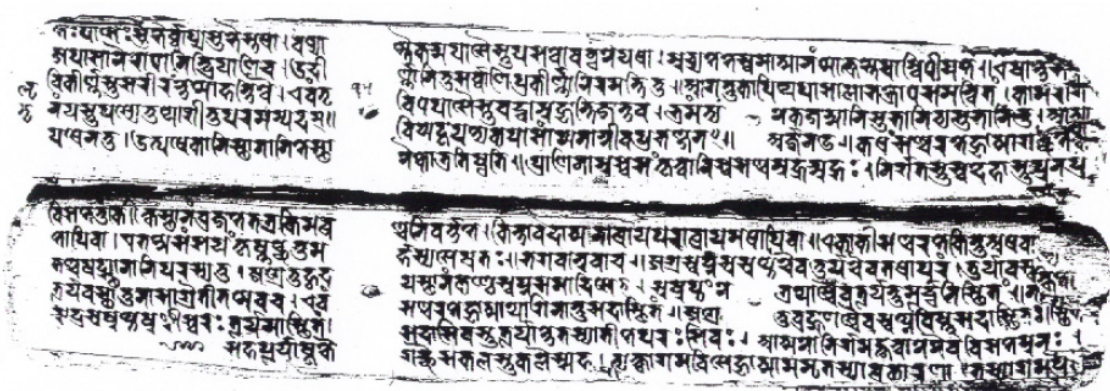


Fig. 7. Two folios of the *Timirodghātana*

I would date the text to the early eighth century. Significant for us is the fact that it redacts substantial material from the Trika root-text, the *Siddha-yogeśvarī-mata-tantra* (SYM), thus linking it implicitly to the Trika (TÖRSZÖK *forthcoming*).⁴³² The sectarian affiliation of the *Timirodghātana* (TU) has not been determined; I wish to propose here that it is one of the earliest known texts of what would come to be called the *Pūrvāmnāya* or Eastern Kaula Transmission, which as the name implies is the original (*pūrvā*) Kaula tradition. The *Pūrvāmnāya* has a special connection to the Trika, and this is seen here not only in the redaction of material from the SYM, but also the occasional mention of *Parā* (the primary goddess of the Trika) where no other goddesses are mentioned by name.⁴³³

A central theme in the TU is the concept of *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*, a term it mentions almost as frequently as the SYM does. The thesis of the TU, if there is one, is that a guru who has *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* also has *mantra-vīrya*, and by virtue of both is capable of transmission (*saṅkrānti*) of the *rudra-śakti* into the body of the disciple, thus bringing about the experience of *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* for him. *Saṅkrānti* (transmission, transference) and its variants seems to be the central technical term in the TU, occurring more than a dozen times. I wish to argue, to my knowledge for the first time in print, that this text presents us with the earliest example of a charismatic guru transferring *śakti* into the body of a disciple, i.e. the

⁴³² As TÖRSZÖK comments, the description of Bhairava at the beginning of the first chapter of the TU is almost entirely taken over from chapter 20 of the SYM, in which it is a visualization (*dhyāna*) of Bhairava in his half-male half-female form (*ardha-nārīśvara*).

⁴³³ Of course it can be hard to be sure in the case of a name like *Parā* (which can simply mean “supreme”), but when it occurs in a compound like *parāśakti*, when the author easily could have written *paraśakti* with the same meaning, I take it to be a reference to *Parā*, unlike in the case of ambiguous compounds like *parānanda* or *parāvasthā*. I count about 10 likely references to *Parā* in the TU. A few, like *parāgrantha*-, I cannot make sense of at all unless they are references to *Parā* (in this case, a reference to *Parā*’s scripture, i.e. the SYM).

earliest example of what would later be described as “*kuṇḍalinī* awakening” (with the guru as the agent).⁴³⁴

Here we present a draft edition of TU chapters 4 and 6, and a small selection of passages from other chapters. I cannot claim credit for any of the improvements made on the readings of the *codex unicus*, for nearly all the corrections and emendations were made by Somadeva VASUDEVA and Alexis SANDERSON when I read the text with them in 2000 and 2004 respectively. The conventions used here include the following:

- brackets enclose an *akṣara* or *anusvāra* that is difficult to make out and therefore possibly doubtful, such as *śakti[r]* or *dehinā[m]*;
- angle brackets denote a mistakenly omitted *akṣara*, added here for clarity, such as *sṛṣṭi<h>*;
- curly brackets denote an *akṣara* that the scribe added by mistake, such as *sureśvara{h}* (when the latter is vocative);
- asterisks denote completely illegible syllables;
- crux marks († . . †) are used to enclose text or translation which is doubtful, whether due to corruption or inconstruable grammar; and
- corrections and emendations are documented in the footnotes.

Note that as with other early Kaula texts, the language here represents a “low” register of Sanskrit, clearly written by someone who either does not know or does not care about many grammar rules. Of course, part of the character of this so-called *aiśa* (or scriptural) register is an influence from Prākṛt forms, as already noted in the skilful discussions of *aiśa* forms given by Judit TÖRSZÖK in her Oxford D.Phil. thesis (1999: xxvi-lxix) and Dominic GOODALL in several of his published works (1998: lxx-lxx and 2004: lxxviii-lxxxv). Many forms that we might wish to label as bad grammar are in this light seen to be instances of a medieval Prākṛtized Sanskrit, or what might be called Śaiva Hybrid Sanskrit.

Chapters 1 through 3 of the TU (or what we have of them; two missing folios robs us of much of chapter 2 and 3) are introductory, giving us the visualization of the primary deity in chapter 1 (a five-faced, sixteen-armed Bhairava) and a brief discussion of the spiritual superiority of the Kaula to the ordinary Tantric Śaiva, here called a *vaineya* (a rule-follower, one who needs to be led, or perhaps one who ought to be converted). So chapter 4 begins the text’s subject-matter proper, which begins with a discussion of the signs of the entry of the *śakti* (here called Sarvavyāpī) into the disciple’s body. Note that an interest in the body, and in bodily signs or symptoms, is a particularly Kaula preoccupation. These signs (*pratyaya*, *cihna*) are apparently discussed in order that the guru or disciple may know what to expect when transmission of *śakti* is successful; they implicitly constitute evidence that the Kaula way is superior to the *tantra-prakriyā*, in which such signs are not required and therefore in which spiritual transformation in this life is not assured. Though the term *āveśa* does not appear with great frequency, it is everywhere implicit, as the reader will see for himself in what follows.

⁴³⁴ Unless the coeval *Ūrmikaulārṇava* (see below) is earlier than the TU, which I doubt—but at any rate these two texts constitute the earliest evidence that I am aware of on the concept of (this kind of) *saikrānti*.

[The Goddess said:]

[f. 30r⁴³⁵] . . . *dehe katham bhavet |*

saṃśayo me mahādeva & etat kathaya sureśvara{h} || 4.1

[lacuna] . . . how is She [i.e. śakti] [manifest] in the body? I have a doubt (on this point). Tell me this, Lord of gods.

bhairava uvāca Bhairava said:

sarvva-vyāpī tu sā devi⁴³⁶ hṛdaye sarva-dehinā[m] |

jñānopadeśa-ratnena bodhitā sā⁴³⁷ vibudhyati || 4.2

She is the All-Pervasive Goddess, [especially found] in the hearts of all embodied beings. By this jewel among wisdom-teachings, that Awakened Goddess awakens [one].

yo 'sau vyāpaka-rūpeṇa śiva-śakti-samek[ś]atau |

rudra-śaktir iyaṃ devi āveśa-guru-mukhe sthitam || 4.3

†Śiva and Śakti are understood to be equal in terms of [their] pervasion;† [but] the Power of Rudra [is more important here because it] is established in the mouth of the guru [who displays] possession (āveśa-guru).

yo 'sau acintyam ity āhu<h>⁴³⁸ śivaṃ parama-kāraṇaḥ |

tasye[ś]ā nirgatā śakti[r] nāda-bindu-prabhedinī || 4.4

That which they call 'inconceivable' is Śiva, the supreme cause. His Power, the Goddess, arises in various forms like the Resonance (nāda) and the Point (bindu).

tasyocārita-mātreṇa pratyayaś copajāyate |

ka[m]ate [d]ehapiṇḍan tu tasya stobha prajāyate || 4.5

Merely through [the practice of] uccāra, [experiential] evidence (pratyaya⁴³⁹) arises: the body trembles and becomes 'paralyzed.'⁴⁴⁰

ābhyāse divya<m> vidyate divya<m> devi tanu-sthitam |

tasya māse{s} trbhīr devi yoginī-[bheda]-darśanam || 4.6

In practice, divinity is found; divinity is established in the body, O Goddess. In three months of practice, visions of various goddesses [occur].

paśyate divya-devāś ca vimāna-stho varānane |

yathābhyāsatayā devi yathā sṛṣṭi<h> pravarttate || 4.7

⁴³⁵ The folio number is only given in the first instance.

⁴³⁶ *devī* em. WALLIS : *devi* MS (see 6.4d below).

⁴³⁷ *sā* conj. WALLIS : *sa* MS

⁴³⁸ This pāda is also found as *Brahma-yāmala* 1.222a, but it is probably too generic to draw any conclusions from that fact.

⁴³⁹ TÖRSZÖK translates *pratyaya* as "proofs of possession"; *forthcoming* 9. Again, *pratyaya* ≈ *āveśa*.

⁴⁴⁰ The ambiguous *aḥśaras* in the verse were confirmed by TÖRSZÖK on the basis of the SYM parallel passages (3.48cd-49ab), in which the body levitates instead of becomes paralyzed: *tatkaṣaṇocāraṇād vāpi pratyayaś cātra jāyate || kampate dehapiṇḍas tu drutam cotpatate tathā |* She finds another parallel at *Tantrasadbhāva* 4.53-4: *uccāre tu kṛte tasya pratyayaś copajāyate | udghātaiḥ pañcabhiś caiva svayaṃ jānāti tatkaṣaṇāt || mantra-mudrā-gaṇam caiva nātra kuryād vicāraṇāt | śarīre stobham āyāti drutam cotpatate kṣaṇāt ||* 'Paralyzed' (*stobha*) can mean motionless, but as we saw in the MVT 11 passages above, it can mean involuntary movement as well.

The divine gods are seen on their sky-chariots, O fair-faced one; in accordance with one's practice, [various] manifestations proceed, O Goddess.

*hṛdayaṃ kampate pūrvvaḥ tālukoccāram eva ca |
śirañ ca bhramate tasya⁴⁴¹ sṛṣṭi-saṃkrānti-lakṣaṇaṃ || 4.8⁴⁴²*

First the heart trembles, and the mantra rises (*uccāra*) through the [soft] palate.⁴⁴³ The head spins, marked by the transmission of the [seed-mantra of] creation.⁴⁴⁴

*ekaikaṃ bhrāmayed [evaṃ] aṅga-pratyāṅga-sandhiṣu |
ghūrmmītā sarvva-deho 'yaṃ kaula-vidyā-prabhāvataḥ⁴⁴⁵ || 4.9*

She agitates each of the limbs, subsidiary limbs and the joints. The whole body shakes, due to the power of the Kaula goddess-mantra (*vidyā*).

*yāni yāni⁴⁴⁶ vikārāṇi avasthā kuruteṣayā⁴⁴⁷ |
teṣu teṣu na bhetaṣyaṃ krīdate parameśvarī || 4.10
na ca bhūta-piśācāṃ vā na mohena ca pīḍitā | 4.11ab⁴⁴⁸*

All these perturbations are [spiritual] states brought about by Her desire. One should not be afraid with regard to any of these [occurrences]: the Supreme Goddess is [only] playing. And it is not due to spirits or demons; nor is She oppressed by delusion.

Here the two fundamental elements that precede the spiritual experiences mentioned are the presence of a guru who displays “possession” by the Power of Rudra (*aveśa-guru*) and the practice of *uccāra* (raising a *bīja-mantra* through the central channel), presumably after initiation by said guru. This is said in a general way to lead to bodily trembling, *stobha*, and divine visions (4.5-7); then a more specific enumeration of five signs proceeds (4.8-9). First, we are told, the heart trembles; then the mantric resonance rises above the palate, causing the head to spin; then the *śakti* agitates each of the limbs and joints (or causes them to quiver), and finally the whole body shakes. These *vikāras* were no doubt alarming to anyone who experienced them, hence the reassurance in 4.10-11ab. We may note here that

⁴⁴¹ Corrected from the *Śāktavijñānam* parallel (19c) : *na sā* MS

⁴⁴² 4.8–10 are paraphrased in the *Śāktavijñānam* (attributed to Somānanda) 19–21, which verses describe the ninth of that text's thirteen stages of spiritual development, i.e. the *bhūmikāgamana* stage. I take TU 9cd ≈ ŚV 20cd as ample evidence of the direction of redaction.

⁴⁴³ The parallel passage at *Śāktavijñānam* 19ab has *hṛdayaṃ kampate pūrvvaṃ tāluka-dvāram eva ca*, which supports the present translation.

⁴⁴⁴ The parallel passage at *Śāktavijñānam* 19d has *drṣṭi-* for *sṛṣṭi-*, thus reading “marked by the transmission of [divine] vision.” If *Parā*'s *sṛṣṭi-bīja* is meant in the TU verse, that of course is SAUḤ, which MVT 12 recommended for *uccāra* practice in order to bring about *Parāveśa* (see above).

⁴⁴⁵ *Śāktavijñānam* 20cd has *ghūrṇate hṛdayaṃ cāsyā samyag-vidyā-prabhāvataḥ*, which seems to be a “cleaned-up” version of the TU hemistich.

⁴⁴⁶ Filled in from *Śāktavijñānam* 21a: ***ni MS

⁴⁴⁷ *Śāktavijñānam* 21b: *avasthā kurute sataḥ*.

⁴⁴⁸ The second hemistich of the verse is unreadable.

the verb in modern Hindī denoting possession is *khelnā*, literally “play” (akin to *krīdate* in 4.10).

*icchā-śakti-svarūpeṇa gurum bhavati yoginaḥ |
ratyānanda-karī dehe sarvva-pāpa-harim parā || 4.12*

The yogin⁴⁴⁹ becomes a guru through innate Will-Power. [Goddess] Parā removes all [his] vice and triggers sexual pleasure in the body.

iṣṭā aniṣṭatā yānti yoga-svādita-mānasā || 4.13cd⁴⁵⁰

Things desired and not desired come to pass with a mind delighted by yoga.

*mantra-tantra-kṛtāveśā ** *ṣṭam acetanam || 4.14cd⁴⁵¹*

. . . †possession is accomplished by the mantras and tantras†. . .

*rudra-śakti-samāveśam nityāveśam acetanam |
divya-devaiś ca samyogā paramānanda-kāraṇam || 4.15*

‘Possession’ by Rudra’s power is an inconceivable ‘possession’ by the Eternal (*nityāveśa*)⁴⁵²—[it is] the cause of supreme bliss and union with the divine gods.

brahmāṇḍā[dara]pra[kṛ] bhukti-mukti-phala-pradā |
rudra-śakti-samāveśam śabda-dṛṣṭiṣu jāyate || 4.16*

. . . †respect for the whole universe†. . . it gives the fruit of both enjoyment and liberation. ‘Possession’ by Rudra’s Power arises in the glances or words [of the guru].

It may or may not be the case that Parā as a proper name is intended in 4.12, but the possibility that it is strengthened by the phrase *icchā-śakti-svarūpeṇa* in the same verse, for Parā is especially associated with *icchā-śakti* in the Trika system. The term *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* is then introduced, and in 4.16 is specifically linked to the guru’s power of transmission through a word or glance (a typical Kaula theme). Next more signs of *samāveśa* in the disciple are enumerated.

*na jānāti divārātrau yukta-yogo varānane |
kṣudhā-trṣṇaṃ na jānanti aṅga-pīḍā na tasya vai || 4.17*

One whose yoga is [truly] engaged does not notice whether it is day or night, O fair-faced one. They do not know hunger or thirst; truly he has no affliction of the limbs.

*jāyate hrṣṭi-tuṣṭiṅ ca sadā ānandam eva ca |
kurute cetanā-yukto mudrā-bandham anekadhā || 4.18*

Joy and contentment arise, and certainly permanent bliss. One yoked to consciousness [in this way] performs *mudrās* and *bandhas* of many kinds.

*kampanam geya-nṛtyaṅ ca vikāra-bahu-vidhas tathā |
kurute mala-vikāreṇa bahu-janyā-svayaṅkṛtam || 4.19*

⁴⁴⁹ *Yoginaḥ* is here an extended-stem nominative singular (as regularly found in *aiśa* Sanskrit).

⁴⁵⁰ 13ab is incomprehensible: *putramitrakala*ṇi śā*idhanasa*yaṃ*

⁴⁵¹ 14ab duplicates 4.7ab, probably by mistake.

⁴⁵² Or the sense of *nityāveśa* may be that this is a *samāveśa* that can become permanently established, rather than a passing experience.

Trembling, singing and dancing, and many kinds of strange passions (*vikāra*⁴⁵³) [arise] as well. Through the transformation (*vikāra*) of impurity, She creates many [instances] of spontaneous happiness.⁴⁵⁴

< . . . >⁴⁵⁵

*yoga-cihnan na paśyete na vidyā kramitā*⁴⁵⁶ *kvacit |*
kramitā yadi bhavet tasya tataḥ paśyati niścitaṃ || 4.21

[If] they two [viz., guru and disciple] do not see [in each other] the ‘signs of yoga’, the *vidyā* has not succeeded. If it has succeeded for him, by virtue of that he certainly sees [the signs].

anyathā śāstra-koṭiṣu evaṃvin na pravartate | 4.22ab

One who knows thus does not proceed to the ends of scripture in any other way.

In the latter part of the chapter, signs are given that suggest the success of the aspirant’s practice. His yogic focus intensifies to the point that he does not notice hunger or pain, resulting in an intensification of his affective experience: devotional joy and happiness expressed through dancing, singing, spontaneous performance of *mudrās* and *bandhas*, etc. The final verses warn us that both guru and disciple (if we are to take the dual form *paśyete* seriously) should look for these “signs of yoga” in each other to verify that the *vidyā*—the Goddess in the form of her mantra(s)—has taken hold or succeeded (*kramitā*).

The short chapter five discusses the higher and lower rewards of this instruction in Kaula wisdom (*kaula-jñānopadeśika*) which can be obtained (only) from the guru (5.1). Verse 5.2ab leaves us in no doubt that the wisdom in question centers on the transmission of *śakti*: *yadā saṃkrāmita-jñānaṃ tadā muktiḥ suniścitaṃ*, or “liberation certainly results from the transmission of [experiential] knowledge [from the guru],” and 5.3b (*jñāna-vīrya-prakāśitaṃ*) suggests the inseparability of what is here intended by the words *jñāna* and *vīrya* (mantric power). But it is chapter six which particularly draws our attention, because that chapter is a response to the following questions of the Goddess: “What is this Power which is transmitted? What are the signs which are shown [by one ‘possessed’ by Her]? [How does] She, established in the body, produce strange experiences (*vikāra*) such as ‘paralysis’ and so on?”⁴⁵⁷ As well as the questions which follow in two more verses:

kathaṃ saṃkramitā jñeyā saṃkrāntā kā vidhīyate |
*kathaṃ coṭ-kramate dehāt*⁴⁵⁸ *adhordhvena kathaṃ vrajet || 6.2*

⁴⁵³ Though *vikāra* generally means change, transformation, perturbation, or deformity, here the term is clearly used as a catch-all to describe the signs which are being enumerated in this chapter, hence the tentative translation “strange passion(s).”

⁴⁵⁴ *janyā* in the feminine is attested (according to MONIER-WILLIAMS) in the sense of “affection, happiness,” though it is rare. Here that meaning is the only thing that can make sense of the *pāda*, as far as I can tell.

⁴⁵⁵ Though verse 4.20 is too corrupt for interpretation, we should note the expression *parāśaktiḥ tanusthitaṃ* (20b) as further evidence for the connection of the text to the Trika.

⁴⁵⁶ *Kramitā* for *krāntā*; see 6.2 below, where both forms appear.

⁴⁵⁷ *kā sā saṃkrāmate śaktiḥ kāni cihnāni darśayet | saṃstobhādi-vikārāni kurute deha-saṃsthitā* [em. SANDERSON : sa*stobhā-vikārāni . . . MS] ||.

⁴⁵⁸ Conj. SANDERSON : coṭ-krama[ṇa]ratnā MS.

How does one know [when] she has been transmitted? What is she called [when] she has been transmitted? How does her ascent out of the body [occur]? How does she wander up and down [in the body]?

* * **ti kathaṃ jñeyā kena kālena siddhidā |*
siddhasya kāni cihnāni etat katha paramēśvara{h} || 6.3

How is she to be known? After how long does she grant success (*siddhi*)?
(6.18) What are the signs of a *siddha*? Tell [me] that, Supreme Lord.⁴⁵⁹

To which Bhairava responds (*bhairava uvāca*):

*yā sā vyāpaka-rūpeṇa brahmāṇḍe*⁴⁶⁰ *sacarācare |*
vyāpayitvā adhordhvena sarvvavyāpi tu sā smṛtā || 6.4

She who pervades the whole universe (*brahmāṇḍa*) with her all-pervasive nature, all things moving and unmoving, up and down, is taught as Sarvavyāpinī (the All-Pervasive Goddess).⁴⁶¹

sabāhyābhyantare dehe sarva-jantuṣu saṃsthitā |
sadācāryopadeśena para-dehe tu saṃkrānti<t> || 6.5

She abides in the bodies of all beings, both [their] coarse and subtle [bodies].⁴⁶² She may pass into another body at the command (*upadeśa*) of a true teacher.

sthiti-gati<r> *adhordhvena deha-saṃkrānti-lakṣaṇam |*
adha<ḥ>-*saṃhāra-saṃkrānti*<r> *ūrdhva-sṛṣṭi*<r> *varānane* || 6.6

†Staying and going, [moving] up and down, is the sign that transmission [of *śakti*] into the body [has occurred]. † The movement toward dissolution is down; creation is up, O fair-faced one.⁴⁶³

< . . . >⁴⁶⁴
*deha-vyāpyam adhordhvena*⁴⁶⁵ *parāśakti*<ṃ> *praveśayet |*
*yasyaitāni tu cihnāni sa gurur mokṣadaḥ smṛtaḥ*⁴⁶⁶ || 6.8

Having pervaded the body up and down, one should cause the Supreme Power (*parā-śakti*) to enter [the disciple]. One who possesses these signs is known as a guru who grants liberation.

*kṛtvā sarvvopacārāni ātmanānyadhanena*⁴⁶⁷ *vā |*
*grāhyaṃ tat paramaṃ jñānaṃ guru-vaktreṣu saṃsthitam*⁴⁶⁸ || 6.9

⁴⁵⁹ Some but not all of these questions are answered in the verses that follow, raises the question of whether some material has been lost.

⁴⁶⁰ *brahmāṇḍe* em. VASUDEVA : *brahmāṇḍo* MS

⁴⁶¹ For this name, cf. MVT 1.26.

⁴⁶² *bāhyābhyantara-deha* = *sthūlasūkṣma-deha*.

⁴⁶³ Opposite of the usual Āgamic paradigm. Cf. *Parātrimśika* p. 98.

⁴⁶⁴ 6.7 is corrupt: *sthiti-gati-sthitāma* ṛdhā yoga*<ḥ> *pravarttate | evaṃ krameṇa vedhavyaṃ trivir ekena-m-ādīśet* || Yoga acts in three ways—steady, moving, and . . .? Thus, one ought to pierce [the subtle body centers?] in sequence. . .?

⁴⁶⁵ *Metri causa* for *dehaṃ vyāpyādhordhvena*.

⁴⁶⁶ *sa gurur mokṣadaḥ smṛtaḥ* em. VASUDEVA; *sa guru*ḥśadā smṛtā* MS

⁴⁶⁷ *ātmanānyadhanena vā* conj. SANDERSON; *ātmanena dhanena vā* MS

Having performed all the offerings of worship with his own or another's wealth, one ought to obtain the supreme wisdom that abides in the mouths of the gurus.

Here the charismatic Kaula guru is more clearly positioned than in chapter 4 as essential to the awakening of *śakti* in the disciple. Despite the textual problems in 6.6-8a, we can gather that the awakened *śakti* is said to move about the body, both up and down, becoming still and then moving again. 6.7c (see n465) fleetingly suggests the idea of the *śakti* piercing the subtle centers (*cakra*, *ādhāra*), which would become prominent later in the literature. The text goes on to describe the visionary experiences that come to the aspirant whose *śakti* is awakened by the guru.⁴⁶⁹

*kaulopadeśa-ratnena yogino*⁴⁷⁰ *divya-darśanam*
*paśyen nimīlitākṣas*⁴⁷¹ *tu punaḥ pratyakṣa-darśanāt* || 6.10

By means of this jewel of Kaula teachings, the yogin will see a divine vision with eyes closed, and again by seeing directly (i.e., with open eyes).

*yoginīm prathamam paśyet chāyā-mātram*⁴⁷² *punaḥ punaḥ* |
yathā cābhyāsate yoga<ṁ?> *tathārūpaṃ pravarttate* || 6.11

First, one will see a *yoginī* merely [in the form of] colored light (*chāyā*), again and again. The form [of the *yoginī*] appears in accordance with his practice of yoga.

[lacuna]----- *paśyate*⁴⁷³ *kr̥ṣṇa-rūpiṇī* |
raudrī vā saumya-rūpeṇa nānābharaṇa-bhūṣitā || 6.12

She is seen in a black form, fierce, or with a benevolent appearance, adorned with various ornaments.

*dr̥ṣṭa-naṣṭā*⁴⁷⁴ *sthitā caiva bahu-rūpeṇa* [*dr̥*]śyate |
antarikṣa-sthitā<ṁ> *nityam sarvve paśyanti mātaram* || 6.13

She remains but for a moment, then vanishes, and is seen in many forms; all those [who succeed in this practice] always see the Mother abiding in the sky [of consciousness].

raudra-bhairava-rūpeṇa bahu-yogi-parivṛtām |
yogeśvara-purañ caiva ātmānanda[h] *sa paśyati* || 6.14

She is surrounded by many *yogīs*⁴⁷⁵ with wrathful and fearsome forms. Delighting in himself, [the *sādhaka*] sees the world of the Lords of Yoga.

⁴⁶⁸ *grāhyaṃ tat paramaṃ jñānaṃ . . . saṃsthitam* em. SANDERSON : *grāhya tat parasamjñānaṃ . . . saṃsthitā* MS

⁴⁶⁹ For a broadly parallel chapter on visions of *yoginīs*, see SYM 13.

⁴⁷⁰ *yogino* conj. SANDERSON (as nominative with extended *aiśa* stem) : *yoginā* MS

⁴⁷¹ *divyadarśanam* . . . *nimīlitākṣas* em. SANDERSON : *divyadarśanām* . . . *nimīlitākṣes* MS

⁴⁷² *Yoginīm prathamam paśyet chāyāmātram punaḥ punaḥ* conj. SANDERSON/WALLIS : *yoginī prathamam chāyāmātra punaḥ punaḥ* MS (hypometrical)

⁴⁷³ *paśyate* em. : *paśyati* MS

⁴⁷⁴ *dr̥ṣṭanaṣṭā* em. SANDERSON : *dr̥ṣṭānaṣṭe* MS. Note this term is used in the last of the 105 secret instructions (*chummā*) of the Krama. SANDERSON translates “no sooner seen, then gone.”

⁴⁷⁵ Though SANDERSON argues that “*yogī*” here means “*yoginī*” and is attested elsewhere in this meaning.

*kaulika-yoga-ratnena*⁴⁷⁶ *samprāptena varānane* |
*pr̥thivyām nāsti taṃ dravyaṃ yan dattvā nirṛñibhavet*⁴⁷⁷ || 6.15

O fair-faced one, having attained this jewel of Kaula yoga, he becomes free from debts (*r̥ṇa*), without need for worldly riches [lit., having not been given that which is the wealth of the earth].

*kaulopadeśa-dātāraṃ durlabhaṃ*⁴⁷⁸ *guru-mokṣadaṃ* |
*chedayed yas tu saṃsāraṃ tasyādeyaṃ mataṃ param*⁴⁷⁹ || 6.16

A giver of Kaula teaching who is a liberation-bestowing guru is difficult to find. The highest doctrine should be received from one who can cut through *saṃsāra*.

kaula-jñānāmṛtaṃ divyaṃ bahu-bhedeṣu saṃsthita<ṃ> |
tan mayā kathitaṃ svalpaṃ koṭi-bhedeṣu dṛśyate || 6.17

The divine nectar of the Kaula wisdom (i.e., the transmission of *śakti* into the body) exists in many different forms. I have only taught a small portion of this; it can be seen in countless forms.

*sapta-viṃśati-varṣeṣu kathitaḥ siddha-khecarī*⁴⁸⁰ |
nityābhilyukta-yogīśa<ḥ> śīghraṃ eva sa siddhyati || 6.18

In 27 years, it is taught, he becomes complete (*siddha*), a roamer in the sky [of consciousness]. A lord of yogīs who is always engaged in practice succeeds very quickly.

evaṃ sarvva<ṃ> mayākhyātaṃ ya[t tva]yā pr̥cchitaṃ priye | 6.19ab

All that you've asked, I've explained, my beloved.

Upon first reading this passage, I was struck by the teaching that the *yoginīs* may appear to the practitioner in the form of a colored light or the like (*chāyā*) as well as in anthropomorphic forms. I take this as part of the text's overall non-sectarian tenor: unlike any strictly Tantric text, a named pantheon of deities does not appear in the TU as we have it (apart from the description of Bhairava in chapter 1 lifted from the SYM). Instead, it is *śakti* in the abstract (i.e. power, energy), especially manifest in the bodily experiences of the meditator, that is venerated here. It is for this reason that I regard the TU as a "pure" Kaula text, due to its near-exclusive focus on *śakti* and because it seems to predate the confluence of the Mantramārga and the Kulamārga (which was complete by the turn of the millennium). We would be tempted to regard the TU as a complete anomaly if we did not have a few parallel scriptures, such as the *Ūrmi-kaulārṇava* (discussed below).

A few more verses of the TU are relevant for us here. After chapter 7, which discusses the various worlds that the *sādhaka* has visions of (such as subterranean

⁴⁷⁶ *kaulikayogaratnena* em. SANDERSON : *kaulikaṃ yogaratnena* MS

⁴⁷⁷ *nirṛñibhavet* corr. SANDERSON : *nirañibhavet* MS

⁴⁷⁸ *durlabhaṃ* corr. VASUDEVA : *durūbhaṃ* MS

⁴⁷⁹ *tasyādeyaṃ* em. WALLIS : *tasya deyam* MS; *metaṃ param* conj. SANDERSON : *atatparaṃ* MS

⁴⁸⁰ *kathitaḥ siddhakhecarī* em. SDV : *kathitā siddhikhecarī* MS

paradises and a triple world in or beyond the sky⁴⁸¹), chapter 8 presents us with the “five jewels” of Kaula wisdom. At the beginning of that chapter, we are told:

*kaula-sṛṣṭy-avatāre tu parā-granthārtha-lakṣaṇam
rudra-śaktyopadeśan tu guru-vakreṣu labhyate || 8.2*

The teaching on the Power of Rudra—†which contains all that is found in the scriptures of Parā in the Kaula stream†—can [only] be obtained through oral instruction from the guru.

*sarvāṇi mantra-tantrāṇi devatā-kalpa-jalpanam
mahato ‘pi na sidhyante rudra-śakti-vivarjitam || 8.3*

All the mantras and tantras (= systems of practice) discussed in the scriptures, however great, do not succeed if they are devoid of the Power of Rudra.

*hṛdayam sarva-vidyānām mantra-vīrya[m] para[m] smṛtam⁴⁸²
rudra-śakti-samāveśa[m] yo na vetti na sidhyati || 8.4*

Mantra-vīrya is the heart of all *vidyās*; it is held to be the highest [in this system]. He who does not know ‘possession’ by Rudra’s Power does not succeed.⁴⁸³

This is the strongest statement yet that *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* is necessary for success in the Kaula system, that mantras and other Tantric practices do not work without it, and that it must be obtained from a living guru. This *kaulika-jñāna*, we are told, should not be written (8.5a⁴⁸⁴), but is transmitted (*saṅkrāmet*) directly from the guru’s mouth to the disciple’s ear in person (8.5bcd). It is equivalent to *vidyā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* (mantra, visualization, and meditative trance) as well as *yoga* and *nāda*. The *kaulika-jñāna* (= *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*) manifests in five aspects, the *pañca-ratnopadeśāni*, which are as follows:

- 1) the state of Parā (*parāvasthā*, which arises upon incinerating the body in visualization, 7cd);
- 2) worship of the circle of yoginīs (*yoginī-cakra-saṃmānya*,⁴⁸⁵ 8c);
- 3) transmission of the *śakti* from the guru’s body into the disciple’s (*paradehan tu svadehe śakti-saṃkrāme*, 9ab), causing first agitation, then *samādhi* and great power (*kṣobhayanti puraḥ sarve samādhi-stho mahā-balaḥ*, 9cd);
- 4) *bhūcarī-siddhi* (10a); and
- 5) *khecarī-mudrā* (10c).

Unfortunately, we are told next to nothing about these “five jewels,” which seem to

⁴⁸¹ Note that 7.13cd has *darśayanti parāśakti trailokyam sacarācaram*, clearly giving *parāśakti* as the agent of the causative verb, thus suggesting Parādevī is meant. In 7.14c-15b, *Parāśakti* is vaguely linked to *Sadāśiva* (who is glossed as *sāntaḥ śivaḥ*), perhaps as consort.

⁴⁸² *smṛtam* em. VASUDEVA : *smṛtaḥ* MS

⁴⁸³ For parallels to these verses in the SYM (1.5, 13ab, 2.11), see TÖRSZÖK *forthcoming* p. 7.

⁴⁸⁴ Assuming that *ālekhyā* means *alekhyā*; but in 8.6d we have *granthārthena tu lekhayet*.

⁴⁸⁵ Or ought we to understand the phrase to mean that the *sādhaka* is worshipped by the *yoginī-cakra*? This would fit better with a list of mystic experiences, as this seems to be.

be arranged in a chronological sequence. Later, in the exegetical literature (e.g. *Tantrāloka* 32), *khecari-mudrā* is explicitly described as the rise of *śakti* up the central channel (whether spontaneously or in meditative visualization). Here in the TU we have only one *pāda* of description of this internal *mudrā*: “having concentrated [the *śakti* at the base of the central channel], it rises upward” (*baddhvā cordhvā nigacchati*, 8.10d; the bracketed phrase derives from reading TĀ 32). The evidence here, while tenuous, supports my thesis that in the TU we have an early and still inchoate account of what would later be described as the awakening and rise of *kuṇḍalini-śakti*.

The phrase *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* occurs twice more in the TU. In chapter 9, it is affirmed once again that all yogic practices follow from this infusion of divine power, which is a transmission of experiential knowledge (*jñāna-saṅkrānti*). This statement comes in a discussion of three types of *śakti* (which are, as usual in the TU, ill-defined):

dvitiyā madhyamā śakti yogi-nī>nām mukhe sthitā
vidyā-dhyāna-samādhiś ca yoga-nāadopadeśikaṃ || 9.15 [repeats 8.6ab]
rudra-śakti-samāveśa-jñāna-saṅkrānti-kāraṇaṃ | 9.16ab

The second or middle type of *śakti* resides in oral instruction from the *yoginīs*. [In this teaching,] mantra, visualization, meditation, and understanding of yoga and *nāda*—all are brought about by the transmission of [the experiential] knowledge that is Possession by Rudra’s Power.

Our final TU passage occurs in the eleventh chapter, which discusses different types of yoga, such as the so-called *kāṣṭha-yoga* and *aṃṛta-yoga*. The first half of this two-verse passage (below) was redacted into the *Kubjikā-mata-tantra* and quoted by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka*, signaling to us that the TU was not entirely obscure in the late first millennium (as the very fact of its survival in the Nepāla archives also indicates). The verse immediately before our passage gives us the context: that success in any of the “divine yogas” depends on “directly ‘seeing’ the Power of Rudra.”⁴⁸⁶ This leads the author to comment on what kind of guru is necessary to empower the *śiṣya* in this way.

śakti-hīnaṃ guruṃ prāpya śiṣya-siddhi-ḥ> kutaḥ priye || 11.18cd
mūle naṣṭe drumā devi kutaḥ puṣpa-phalādiṣu |
*rudra-śakti-samāveś-āḥ>*⁴⁸⁷ *guruḥ gurutaram param* || 11.19
*viditātmā priyed yuktaḥ sa guruḥ mokṣadaḥ padam*⁴⁸⁸ |

How could there be success of a disciple who has obtained a guru without *śakti*, O dear one? When the root of a tree is destroyed, whence [could come] the fruit, flowers, and so on? The guru who is possessed of the Power of Rudra, who knows himself and is fully engaged, should propitiate the supreme mantra—such a guru bestows the state of liberation.

⁴⁸⁶ 11.17c-18b: *evaṃ paśyati pratyakṣe rudra-śakti-ṃ> gurupriye* || *yad uktaṃ divya-yogeṣu sidhyate nā-nya>thā priye* |.

⁴⁸⁷ *samāveśaḥ* conj. WALLIS : *samāveś** MS

⁴⁸⁸ *yuktaḥ . . . mokṣadaḥ* em. WALLIS : *yuktaṃ . . . mokṣadam* MS

The passage is partially corrupt, and partially lacunose, and thus not easy to construe. The translation above takes the problematic *priyet* to mean “propitiate,” but TÖRSZÖK proposes another solution. If we take *priyed* as a corruption, through an unknown number of stages, of *āpnuyād*, and read 11.20a as *viditātmāpnuyād*, and further take the missing syllable of *samāveṣ** to be *ād* and not *aḥ* (giving us an ablative), then we have “the guru who knows himself obtains the supreme mantra due to being possessed of/by the Power of Rudra” (see TÖRSZÖK *forthcoming* p. 10). This intuitively feels more satisfying but remains speculative.

The perspicacious reader has already noticed that the term *gurutara* is here taken over from the SYM, the TU’s primary source text (see SYM 1.15, p. 169 above). Furthermore, 18c (*śakti-hīnaṃ gurum prāpya*) exactly duplicates SYM 1.16a, as already noted (n355). But there is more to this line of textual transmission: the first two hemistiches cited above (11.18c-19b) are redacted into the *Kubjikā-mata-tantra* (KMT) as 3.48 of that text:⁴⁸⁹

śakti-hīnaṃ gurum prāpya śiṣye muktiḥ kutaḥ priye |
mūlacchinne yathā vṛkṣe kutaḥ puṣpa-phalādikam ||

Here, clearly, there has been some normalizing of the grammar of the source text (assuming that it was the TU), though the intended meaning remains the same. Intriguingly, when this verse is quoted by Abhinavagupta at *Tantrāloka* 13.336 (in the chapter on *śaktipāta*), it seems clear that he has conflated his two sources (the TU and KMT):⁴⁹⁰

śakti-hīnaṃ gurum prāpya mokṣa-jñāne kathaṃ śrayet |
naṣṭa-mūle drume devi kutaḥ puṣpa-phalādikam ||

With characteristic subtlety, he has also added a typically Abhinavaguptan twist: by changing *śiṣye muktiḥ kutaḥ priye* to *mokṣa-jñāne kathaṃ śrayet*,⁴⁹¹ he links the possession of *śakti* with liberating insight.

The evidence of the Ūrmikaulārṇava

Our exploration of the intertextuality of the Kaula sources has only begun. We turn now to the *Ūrmi-kaulārṇava* (ŪKA), a text that challenges the reader by the degree of corruption it exhibits and in the same measure fascinates with its rich content and its complex intertextual and intersectarian features. The colophon claims that the text was divinely revealed (*avatārīta*) by Mīnanātha, aka Macchanda- or Matsyendra-nātha, then brought to Kaulagiri (= Kolhapur) in an abridged form called the *Bhogahasta* (the form in which we have it).⁴⁹² Macchanda is of course the founder of the Kaula lineages, and the text declares itself an investigation (*nirṇaya*)

⁴⁸⁹ See TÖRSZÖK *forthcoming* p. 11.

⁴⁹⁰ Though Abhinavagupta never cites the TU by name, the reading of pāda c here proves that he knew the TU version of this verse; and furthermore, his immediate disciple Kṣemarāja does cite the TU by name in his commentary on *Śiva-sūtra* 1.4.

⁴⁹¹ “[If one’s guru lacks *śakti*] how could one rely on him with regard to the knowledge [that leads] to liberation?”

⁴⁹² *iti śrī-nīla-tantra śrī-ūrmi-kaulārṇave mahā-śāstre lakṣa-pādoddhṛte parama-rahasye śrī-bhogahasta-kramāmnāye śrī-kaulagiri-pīṭha-vinirgate śrī-mīnanātha-pādāvatārīte kula-kaula-nirṇaye*

into Kula and Kaula teachings, but specifically positions itself within the Krama transmission (*kramāmnāya*, ≈ III.3. in Table 2). Yet, like the TU, it displays a surprising degree of intertextuality with the Trika, specifically with the MVT (unlike the TU, which knows only the SYM). Thus we can date it to (approximately) the late eighth century. It cannot be later than Abhinavagupta, who cites it.

The ŪKA brings together all of the terms we have been exploring: (*sam*)*āveśa*, *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*, *śakti(ni)pāta*, *saṅkramaṇa/saṅkrānti*, and discussion of *cihnas* (signs). It also adds a new term: *vedha* (penetration) and its participle *viddha* (pierced, penetrated), a term that apparently describes a forceful entry of *śakti*. We will encounter this term again. Most interesting is the way in which the ŪKA incorporates the three-fold *āveśa* classification of the MVT (*śāmbhava-*, *śākta-*, and *āṇava-*). Or should we perhaps consider the possibility that the MVT acquires these categories from the ŪKA or some parallel Kaula source? At any rate, the presentation of these categories in the ŪKA is by no means systematic, but we can gain some important insights into their signification within the Kaula sphere of discourse. Our passage begins with a discussion of *śākta-vijñāna* (“experiential wisdom pertaining to *śakti*”), a term which is here equivalent to *śākta-samāveśa*, as we shall see. We start with folio 19 verso of the *codex unicus*, line 3:

*anena kramayogena vedha-saṅkramaṇaṃ param |
matsamai<r> gurubhiḥ sākṣāt karttavyaṃ parameśvari || 2.229*

By the [following] means, the supreme ‘transmission through penetration’ ought to be performed directly by gurus who are equal to Me, O Supreme Goddess:

*dṛṣṭi-pātena toyena puṣpa-pātena vā punaḥ |
śiṣya-hasta-gataṃ puṣpaṃ svayam āruhya mastake || 2.230*

by the fall of a glance, by water,⁴⁹³ or by the fall of a flower, [or by] a flower in the hand of the disciple spontaneously rising to [the crown of] his head,

*ājñā-sāmarthya-yogena mudrā-saṅketakena vā |
pracalanti mahā-pāsā āveśaṃ tasya jāyate || 2.231*

or by means of the power of [the guru’s] command,⁴⁹⁴ or by [showing] the *mudrā*-symbol—the great bonds are loosened [by any of these] and he (viz., the disciple) attains *āveśa*.

*ānando hy udbhavaḥ kampo nidrā ghūrmis tu pañcamī |
tatva-viddhasya deveśi pañcāvasthā bhavanti hi || 2.232*

[The signs of this are:] Bliss, Ascent, Trembling, [Yogic] Sleep, and Whirling as the fifth: these are the five states of one who has been ‘pierced by reality,’ O Queen of Gods.

*sa viddhaḥ patate bhūmau vajra-pātād ivācala<ḥ> |
etat samarasībhāvaṃ śāktaṃ vijñānam †sābalaṃ† || 2.233*

⁴⁹³ Or should we read the first two terms together: “by water that has been sanctified by the guru’s glance”?

⁴⁹⁴ We may note that in the *Kubjikā-mata* (on which see below), *ājñā* means “mystical transmission” as least as often as it means “command.”

pañcāvasthasya deveśi . . .

The ‘pierced’ one falls on the ground like a massive rock struck by lightning. This state of oneness⁴⁹⁵ is the †powerful† Śākta-wisdom [arising] in one showing [any of] the five states [mentioned above], O Goddess.

Here the five signs of *āveśa* we saw at MVT 11.35 (in the chapter on Kaula initiation) reappear, and indeed the half-verse listing them is exactly the same in both sources (apart from particles and the spelling *ghūrmi* vs. *ghūrṇi*). Here the guru’s “transmission through penetration” (*vedha-saṅkramaṇa*) results in the disciple being “pierced by reality” (*tattva-viddha*), which (we are told) is equivalent to *āveśa*, and more specifically constitutes *śākta-vijñāna* (= *śākta-samāveśa*), which is here an experience of oneness or overflowing of boundaries (*samarasībhāva*) that is expected to express as one of the five mystical states (*pañcāvasthā*) listed in verse 232.⁴⁹⁶ This verse is redacted into the *Ciñcīni-mata-sāra-samuccaya* as 9.42, where it receives a different explanation (see below, p. 214). We will also have an opportunity to discuss these states further when we come to look at Abhinavagupta’s commentary on them in *Tantrāloka* 5 (section 2.5.4.g below).

The next section of the ŪKA addresses *śāmbhava-(vi)jñāna*, which is explicitly glossed as *śāmbhavāveśa*. Here, as in the MVT, it is associated with an intense (*tīvra*) awakening, and is said (despite its name) to arise from *rudra-śakti*.

. . . athavā rudra-śakti-jaṃ |

śāmbhavaṃ varttate jñānaṃ tīvram āveśa-lakṣaṇam || 2.234

Further, arising from Rudra’s Power is the intense Śāmbhava-wisdom, [which is also] a kind of ‘possession’.

hāsyā-mudrodbhavaṃ kāvyāṃ kasyacit śāstra-bodhanam⁴⁹⁷ |

†yathā piṇḍānusāreṇa puṣpādi-krama-yogataḥ† || 2.235

romāñca-stobha-vikṣobha-†viṣṇu-bhakti†-unmanā-gatī⁴⁹⁸ |

pañca-lakṣaṇam āveśaṃ śāmbhavaṃ parikīrtitam || 2.236

[It manifests as] the arising of [spontaneous] laughter and *mudrās*; [of] poetry; [or of] spontaneous knowing of [what is contained in] anyone’s scriptures . . . Horripilation, ‘paralysis’, shaking, †devotion to Viṣṇu†, and attaining the superconscious state (*unmanā*)⁴⁹⁹—these are the five marks of the possession called Śāmbhava.

manas cānyatra kṣīpya ca drkṣā-r-anyatra pātitaṃ |

⁴⁹⁵ *samarasībhāva* is also seen as the merging of guru and disciple at TĀ 29.273ff in the discussion of the higher *vedha-dīkṣā*, following the lost *Vīrāvalī-kula*.

⁴⁹⁶ Note that these same five states appear in the *Ciñcīni-mata-sāra-samuccaya* (11th cen.?), where they seem to correspond to (or result from) the *prāṇa* reaching a particular center in the subtle body (see below, pp. 214ff). This is exactly as in Abhinavagupta’s work; see TS 5 and TĀ 5 (see section 2.5.4.g below).

⁴⁹⁷ *śāstrabodhanam* conj. SANDERSON : *samabodhanam* MS. Cf. MVT 2.16.

⁴⁹⁸ *bhaktiunmanāgatī* conj. SANDERSON : *bhaktomarīgatī* MS

⁴⁹⁹ *Unmanā* is the highest of eleven states in the (initially Saiddhāntika) classification of phases of *mantroccāra* (psycho-somatic mantra/breath practice) seen in, for example, *Svacchanda-tantra* 4.375-95 and *Tantrasadbhāva* 1.163-4.

*tathāpi yogināṃ yogo hy avyucchinnaṃ*⁵⁰⁰ *pravarttate* || 2.237

And [when] his mind is elsewhere and his gaze too has fallen elsewhere [than his object of concentration], even in that case the yoga of [such] yogis indeed continues unabated.⁵⁰¹

†*ekaṃ bahu syān madhuram ekasya bahutir yathā*† ||

*pīḍyate kṣīvanam*⁵⁰² *nānā-bhāvanānuplavas tathā* || 2.238

plavaś cakra-bhramaḥ pātaḥ †*krama-vedhasya divyatā*†⁵⁰³ |

. . . He is [as if] afflicted [or] drunk, [and] further frequently plunges into contemplative trance; one †‘pierced by the Krama’† [may] jump, his *cakras* rotate, [or] collapse—[but these experiences are] divine.

The reader proficient in Sanskrit will have noticed that the ŪKA is unfortunately the least coherent of the texts we have examined so far, which is probably to do with its transmission rather than its authorship. This passage has many cruxes, and some of them, like *viṣṇubhakto* in 236, can only be the result of a scribe trying to correct a nonsense reading which itself is a corruption of the original reading through one or more intervening stages. (In this case, we could emend the impossible *viṣṇubhakto* to *śivabhakto* or *-bhakti*, but that would gloss over the problem of figuring out how the corruption happened.) Nonetheless, an intriguing list of *cihnas* is evident. Where we have five signs for the *śākta-vijñāna*, here we have sixteen or more, though five of them are here singled out as the five (primary) marks of *sāmbhavāveśa*: horripilation, ‘paralysis’ (involuntary movements), shaking, devotion, and the *unmanā* state (though the last of these is a conjecture). It seems hard to distinguish the *sāmbhava* from the *śākta* state: both include trembling or shaking as a primary sign and collapsing to the ground (*pāta*) as an ancillary sign; both include a “jump” (*udbhava* = *plava*), and being “afflicted [or] drunk” might be parallel to “whirling”. The overall sense of the signs of *sāmbhavāveśa* here is that one who displays them might be considered mad—yet they are divine (*divyatā*). Shades of the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, though here the “madness” is not feigned, but it is likewise salutary.

satyata iti mokṣāya bhūtāveso ’nyathā vṛthā || 2.239

Truly, possession by the spirits (elements?) for any purpose other than liberation is in vain.

pratyakṣeṇa parokṣaṃ vā āveśaṃ rudra-śakti-jam |

*sa gurur mokṣadaḥ*⁵⁰⁴ *samyak karoti yadi siddhi-daṃ* || 2.240

Possession arising from the Power of Rudra (= *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*) may be obvious or inferred [lit., invisible]. He is a true guru who grants liberation if he gives [this] attainment (*siddhi*).

mano-dhyānena saṅkrāmyaṃ yojanānāṃ śatair api |

puṣpa-piṇḍa-śiśuḥ śākṣāt saparokṣe tu bhājanam || 2.241

śaṅkhaḥ †*śikhāmayaṃ vajraṃ*† *pratyakṣaṃ vedhayet iti* |

⁵⁰⁰ *avyucchinnaṃ* corr. SANDERSON : *adyucchinam* MS

⁵⁰¹ For a parallel, see *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-kārikā* IV.12.

⁵⁰² *pīḍyate kṣīvanam* corr. SANDERSON : *pīḍyata kṣībanam* MS

⁵⁰³ *kramavedhasya* conj. DYCZKOWSKI : *kramavaivassa* MS

⁵⁰⁴ *sa gurur mokṣadaḥ*: note the parallel with TU 6.8 and 11.20 above.

iti satyaṃ jagan-mātaḥ vidhir eṣa prakīrttitaḥ || 2.242

It may be transferred through mental concentration even from [a distance of] hundreds of leagues. The disciple who is the recipient [of the transmission may be represented] as a ball of flowers, whether he is present or not, [or as a] conch, [or] †a crested *vajra*; † [in this way] he will cause the ‘piercing’ [of the disciple] directly. Thus this rite has been correctly described, O Mother of the Universe.

†*prayoge parayogatvam* † *arūpe rūpa-darśanam* |
†*apraveśa praveśe* † *tu kauliko ’yaṃ savismayaḥ || 2.243*

†Supreme yoga in [mere] practice; † the vision of form in the formless; lack of possession in possession: this is the wondrous Kaula [way].

samāveśaḥ puṣpa-pātā<n> mudrayā †kara-samplavān† |
tīvra-śakti-nipātena samyag-gurvāvalokanāt || 2.244
vedhayan nātra sandehaḥ pātayet parvvatāny api |

Samāveśa [occurs] due to the fall of a flower, through a *mudrā*, [or] due to the †flooding of the hands [with *śakti*]; † through the intense Descent of Power [occurring] due to the compassionate look of a true Guru, he will cause the ‘piercing’ [of his disciple], without doubt, [for] he can cause even mountains to fall.

The liberating guru can transmit *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* (240), even from a distance (unlike in the TU: *dūrastho hi na saṃkramet*, 8.5d). In verse 243, we have for the first time an admission (if the text be sound) that ‘possession’ (*praveśa* for *āveśa*) is not being used in a literal sense (*apraveśa*). The passage closes with a summary, in which *śakti(ni)pāta* is pictured as the cause of, or equivalent to, *samāveśa*. To explain: the glance of a “true” (here meaning a liberated, charismatic) guru causes *tīvra-śaktipāta*, which itself causes “piercing” (*vedha*) of the disciple; and we are clearly meant to understand *samāveśa* as equivalent to either *śakti(ni)pāta* or *vedha* (or perhaps both, if it is being used to refer to a two-stage process). We have not yet addressed what exactly “piercing” might mean, since we have not seen enough evidence yet; but the suggestion seems to be that the *śakti* that is transmitted “pierces,” i.e. opens up, the subtle centers of the disciple—or perhaps we are to understand the piercing to refer to breaking the hold of the *pāśas* on the soul; but this is usually accomplished only by initiation.

Our final passage, as one might expect, addresses *āṇava-samāveśa*. The ŪKA agrees with the MVT (2.21) in associating the *āṇava*- category with ritual activity (and concomitant visualization practice).

kevalaś ca samāveśaḥ āṇavaḥ parikīrttitaḥ || 2.245
viddhasya śiṣya-dehasya gurūṇām avalokanāt |

Only the possession pertaining to the individual (*āṇava-samāveśa*) [remains to be] explained, [occurring] due to the glance of the gurus on the ‘pierced’ body of the disciple.

amṛtādi-vibhāgena nyāsa-yogena bhairavi || 2.246
paścāt tasya kalā<ṃ> sūkṣmā<ṃ> saṃcintyāmṛta-varṣiṇī<m> |
†*prothāpya bhumau* † *deveśi mantram karṇāntare nyaset || 2.247*

*pūrvoktam argha{ṃ}pātraṃ ca śiṣya-mūrdhni pradāpayet |
mantra-grāmaṃ tataḥ paścād ājñā-cakrānusārataḥ || 2.248*

O Bhairavī, [āṇava-samāveśa] takes place through [mantra]-nyāsa, which is divided into stages beginning with ‘nectar’. [The Guru] next imagines on the [body of the disciple] a subtle energy that pours forth nectar, then he installs the mantra inside his ear, and pours the contents of the aforementioned chalice on his head. He should also give him the collection of mantras, in accordance with [the condition of] his ājñā-cakra.

*mahā-śunyādi śubhage vāmeśvaryāvadhī-kramān |
sac-chiṣyasya varārohe sad-guruś ca samarpayet || 2.249*

*piṇḍasthādi-vibhāgena darśayet krama-saṃbhavam |
kramājñāṃ ca tataḥ paścāt śrīnāthādy-ādi-pādukām || 2.250*

The true guru should offer the true disciple the sequence beginning with the Great Void and ending with [Krama Goddess] Vāmeśvarī. He should teach him the creation (origin?) of the Krama, with its division into the [five] states of piṇḍa, [pada, rūpa, rūpātīta] and [sarvātīta],⁵⁰⁵ as well as the Transmission of the Krama, i.e. the primordial ‘sandals’ (= the feet of the guru-lineage) beginning with Śrīnātha.

Here a more involved ritual process is involved to bring about samāveśa. The chapter goes on to delineate much more ritual activity without circling back to the issue of āveśa, except to reaffirm (in a discussion on dīkṣā forty verses later) that rudra-śakti-samāveśa is necessary for both a proper (Kaula) guru and a proper (Kaula) initiation:

*guhya-vijñāna-vibhavāt manaḥ samarasīkṛtaḥ |
rudra-śakti-samāveśāt sā dīkṣā gurur ucyate || 2.291*

Because of the power of the secret gnosis, the mind attains oneness. Both [true] initiation [and] the [true] guru [arise] from ‘possession’ by the Power of Rudra.⁵⁰⁶

Here too the experience of “fusion” or “oneness” (samarasa, lit. “same taste”) is implicitly linked to rudra-śakti-samāveśa. The latter term, which has been important in our investigation of Trika and Kaula sources, rarely appears in the scriptures of other sampradāyas. The evidence we have seen suggests that it refers to an intense variety of āveśa, giving rise to some particularly extreme bodily expressions of mystical experience. We get the impression that these expressions, called “signs” (cihna) or “evidence” (pratyaya) were even sought out and worn as a badge of pride by the virtuoso or supererogatory practitioner. We need hardly say that Western psychologists would doubtless view some of these signs as pathological. In our

⁵⁰⁵ These are the four (or five) “Kaula trances” (so-called by Somadeva VASUDEVA [2004]) which are important features of Kaula yoga. The Kulasāra and Kula-pancāśikā each have chapters on these states—piṇḍa-(stha), pada-, rūpa-, rūpātīta-, with sarvātīta as the fifth—homologized to the four or five states of consciousness (jāgrat-svapnādi) and the five primary cakras.

⁵⁰⁶ For the reader’s interest, the following verse says: “Kaula initiation must be understood as the vidyā (wisdom/goddess-mantra) that grants liberation. The vidyā is the guru, and the guru is Śiva incarnate.” yā dīkṣā kaulikī jñeyā sā vidyā mokṣa-lakṣaṇā | yā vidyā sā guruḥ sāksād yo guruḥ sa śivaḥ smṛtaḥ || 2.292

sources, they are often associated with the “loosening of the bonds,”⁵⁰⁷ the idea being that when spiritual bondage as fundamental as that represented by the terms *mala*, *māyā*, and *karma* (= *pāśāḥ*) is suddenly destabilized, it can result in dramatic reactions from the mind and body. Even if those reactions render one nonfunctional, they are temporary, and, we are assured, the overall impact of the experience is salutary.

The evidence of the *Ciñciṇi-mata-sāra-samuccaya*

Another text of the Kālikula, the *Ciñciṇi-mata-sāra-samuccaya* (CMSS), certainly postdates the ŪKA and draws on it. It is a syncretistic scripture focusing on the Kaula sect of Kubjikā but giving information on the other three major Kaula lineage-groupings as well (see p. 125). Its ninth chapter presents a different version of the “five [mystical] states” (*pañcāvasthā*) that are found in several Kaula sources (see pp. 184 and 210 above and pp. 342ff below). The text lists the same five states as given in the MVT and the ŪKA (indeed, verse 9.42 must be a redaction of ŪKA 2.232), though SERBAEVA (2010: 214) wrongly reads the third state as “going around” (*bhrama*) in place of Ascent (*udbhava*, or “the Leap,” *plava*). SERBAEVA (Ibid.) claims that “Each of these [five] states corresponds to the *prāṇa* reaching a particular centre in the body,” but this is explicit in only two or three of the five cases. I quote the relevant text passage from the provisional edition by Mark DYCZKOWSKI, made available through muktabodha.org.

labdhvā bhujya dayānandaṃ pañcāvasthā pravartate || 9.41

*ānandaś codbhavaḥ kampo*⁵⁰⁸ *nidrā ghūrmis tu pañcamaḥ |*
*tattva-viddhasya*⁵⁰⁹ *deveśi pañcāvasthā pravartate* || 9.42

Having attained and enjoyed the bliss of compassion, the Five States are [then] produced: Bliss, Ascent, Trembling, Sleep, and Whirling as the fifth. O Queen of the Gods, the five states arise for one who has been ‘pierced by reality.’

*devyuvāca: avasthā kīdrśī nātha svānubhavaṃ*⁵¹⁰ *kathaṃ bhavet |*
*kathayasva*⁵¹¹ *prasādena yena tuṣyāmyahaṃ tava* || 9.43

The Goddess said: O Lord, what is the nature of those state[s] and how does one experience [them] for oneself? Tell me, please; I propitiate you.

bhairava uvāca: śrṇu devi pravakṣyāmi avasthā-lakṣaṇaṃ śubham |
ānanda-janaṇaṃ pūrvaṃ parāhlādāntaraṃ sukham || 9.44
divyaughaṃ ūrdhva-romāṇi ājñā-siddhiḥ pravartate |

Bhairava said: Listen, Goddess, I will tell you of the auspicious characteristics of those states. First arises happiness born of Bliss, containing unsurpassed delight [in] a divine flood, thrilling the body; [thus] the *ājñā-siddhi* proceeds.

⁵⁰⁷ See, e.g., ŪKA 2.231 above.

⁵⁰⁸ *Kampo* em. DYCZKOWSKI : *kampa* MSS

⁵⁰⁹ *viddhasya* em. DYCZKOWSKI : *vidvasya* MSS; perhaps this is an Aśa form for *vidvataḥ*, but *viddhasya* agrees with the testimony of the ŪKA.

⁵¹⁰ *Svānubhavaṃ* em. DYCZKOWSKI : *-nubhāvaṃ* MSS

⁵¹¹ em. DYCZKOWSKI : *kathayaśva* MSS

marīci-cakra-dravitaṃ nābhi-randhra-vikāsitam || 9.45
dhvaniḥ kampaḥ plavo nityaṃ hāsyā-rāvaṃ pramucyate |
eṣāvasthodbhavo yogī ājñā-siddhiḥ pravartate || 9.46

‘Melting’ the *marīci-cakra* [and] expanding the navel aperture always [results in, respectively, the state of] Trembling, which is [a kind of] resonance (*dhvani*), [and] the Leap, [during which] the yogin [may] let loose a howl of laughter. This is the state [also called] the Ascent; [by it], the *ājñā-siddhi* proceeds.

dvāsaptati-sahasrāṇi nāḍī-randhraṃ prapūrayet |
svānandaughena divyena mahāpiṇḍaṃ prakampayet || 9.47

He should fill the nexus of 72,000 channels⁵¹² with a divine flood of his own joy; [thus] he will cause that great mass [of energy] to tremble [triggering the Leap].

The last 2.5 verses occasion some confusion due to their obscure meanings and primitive syntax. Certainly only two subtle centers are referred to here (since there are only two states), causing us to identify the *nābhi-randhra* with the *nāḍī-randhra* (which is further glossed as *mahāpiṇḍa*), but which center is to be connected with which state? Since the order of the five mystic states is fixed, and is here implicitly correlated with a rise by stages through the stations (*cakra*, *ādihāra*) of the central channel, we can presume that the *nābhi-randhra* correlates with the Leap/Ascent (about which no information is given, but which is probably equivalent to an *udghāta*), and the *marīci-cakra* (which is probably just below or at the level of the heart, as suggested also by *Mālinī-śloka-vārttika* 1.938-39) is connected with Trembling. But what would it mean to “expand” or “melt” a *cakra*? Clearly a yogic practice is intended, but no information is given beyond those verbs. Another mystery is that the practitioner is advised to make the *nāḍī-randhra* (aka the *mahāpiṇḍa*, aka the *kanda*?) tremble, but we have already seen that Trembling is associated with the heart, here and elsewhere (e.g. TS ch. 5, p. 342f below). And why are *dhvaniḥ*, *kampaḥ*, and *plavaḥ* seemingly in apposition? Since we can only have five states, I take *dhvani* to be a gloss on *kampa*, possibly implying the practice understood at this stage is *uccāra* (mantric elevation).⁵¹³ *Plava* is undoubtedly a gloss on *udbhava*, though the syntax is confusing. Possibly the text has become jumbled here, for the following verse further comments on Trembling.

vyomavad bhramate⁵¹⁴ bhūmau bhava-bandhaṃ vimardayet |
nidrāvasthā⁵¹⁵ bhaved eṣā ājñā-siddhiḥ pravartate || 9.48

⁵¹² Here the *nāḍī-randhra* must refer to the *kanda* (usually located below the navel but here probably identical with the *nābhi-randhra* of the previous verse), since that nexus is said to connect to all the 72,000 channels of the subtle body (TAK II: 44f.).

⁵¹³ Note that Abhinavagupta’s discussion of the five mystic states in *Tantrasāra* chapter five occurs in the context of *uccāra*.

⁵¹⁴ *bhramate* em. DYCZKOWSKI : *bhumate* MSS

⁵¹⁵ *nidrāvasthā* conj. em. : *kampāvasthā* Ed. Based on all the parallels, we expect the state of Yogic Sleep here, so the emendation restores sense to the passage. The occurrence of *nidrāvasthā* at 9.50 is not an illogical redundancy here. Note that the expression *vyoma-vyomāntara-sthitaḥ* at 9.49 can only refer to the final two levels.

Possessed of the void, he wanders on the earth, and destroys the bonds of worldly existence. The state of Yogic Sleep arises; [thus] this *ājñā-siddhi* proceeds.

sarva-bhāvaṃ parityajya śānta-bhūmau samāviśet |
*grāhyāgrāhya-grahāntastho*⁵¹⁶ *vyoma-vyomāntara-sthitaḥ || 9.49*

Having renounced all mental-emotional states and ended [all] grasping after knowables or unknowables, he will fully enter (*samāviś*) the quiescent ground [of being], established within the void and beyond the void.

tadāhlāda-parānando yoga-nidrātma-bodhakaḥ |
*nidrāvasthā bhavet hyeṣā*⁵¹⁷ *ājñā-siddhiḥ pravartate || 9.50*

Supreme joy and delight follow as he awakens to his Self through Yoga-nidrā (conscious sleep). Attaining the state of Sleep (*nidrā*), this *ājñā-siddhi* proceeds.

catur-avasthā-saṃtrpto yogī brahmāṇḍa-bhedakaḥ |
parānanda-rase pūrṇo ghūrmyamāno’pi nityasāḥ || 9.51

Contented with these four states, the yogin pierces the Egg of Brahmā (= *brahmarandhra?*). Full with the flavor of unsurpassed joy, he is as if Whirling [with drunkenness] constantly.

ājñā-saṃkramaṇaṃ divyaṃ nityānanda-karaṃ param |
eṣā ghūrmodayāvasthā ājñā-siddhiḥ pravartate || 9.52

The divine transmission of the Command (*ājñā*) creates eternal bliss. This is the [fifth and final] state arising as Whirling; [thus] is *ājñā-siddhi* produced.

avasthā kathitā devi rudra-śakti-prabhāvataḥ |
*rudra-śakti-samāveśāt siddhyate*⁵¹⁸ *svātma-maṇḍalam || 9.53*

anākhyam ca nirābhāsam nistattvaṃ ca nirāśrayam |
avyakta-maṇḍalānta-sthaṃ kramātitaṃ kramodayam || 9.54

O Goddess, I have told you of the state[s] that arise from the Power of Rudra. Due to Immersion into the Power of Rudra, the whole sphere of one’s Self is attained: unnamable, beyond appearances, beyond the *tattvas*, [needing] no foundation [but itself], situated at the extremity of the Sphere of the Unmanifest—beyond sequentiality yet the source of it.

It is perhaps worthy of note that trembling, jumping, fainting and whirling (of the head) are commonly attested as signs of possession in cross-cultural anthropological studies on the subject—see, e.g. MÉTRAUX 1972: 120 (cited in KCLASS 2003: 59)—and doubtless these signs date from a period when possession in Śaivism was conceived much as it is in the cultures studied by anthropologists, i.e. as the entry of a discrete spirit being who asserts control over the body entered. However, for the most part the texts examined in the present work do not intend the word possession (or *āveśa*) in this sense. As we have seen repeatedly, *rudra-śakti* refers not to a discrete entity

⁵¹⁶ MSS ka and gha have *grāhyagrāhyagrahāgrasta*, “devoured grasping and various knowables.”

⁵¹⁷ *hyeṣā* corr. DYCZKOWSKI : *hyeṣa* MSS

⁵¹⁸ *siddhyate* corr. DYCZKOWSKI : *siddhate* MSS

that assumes control of a *sādhaka* and speaks prophetically or clairvoyantly through him, as seen in Indian village religion (*grāmya-dharma*)⁵¹⁹ and many other traditional cultures (e.g. in Haiti, Madagascar, etc.) but rather denotes the power of God in general, in much the same sense that some Christian groups use the phrase “the Holy Spirit.” The parallel is apropos because those groups (e.g. Pentacostal, Baptist) display many of the signs of possession as described by the scholarly literature, but they do not attribute those signs to discrete entities but to the entry or activation of the power of God within the faithful.

To return to the present passage: though only two *cakras* are explicitly mentioned by the author of the CMSS, we may presume that “piercing the Egg of Brahmā” means exiting out the crown of the head, the body being seen as a microcosm of the whole universe (which is the usual meaning of *brahmāṇḍa*). It follows then that Bliss is the first of the five states because it is associated with the sexual center. This is certainly the schema in *Tantrasāra* chapter five (to which we shall come in the exegetical section of the present work), where the five states are explicitly associated with five *cakras*. Though we must be careful to not back-project the exegetes’ assertions onto the scriptures themselves, here such an association seems strongly suggested by the text.

As in the MVT and the ŪKA, the five states are associated here with *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*, which brings about an awakening to the whole of one’s real being (*siddhyate svātma-maṇḍalaṃ*, 9.53), an attainment here equivalent to *ājñā-siddhi*, which means both “fulfillment of the Command” and “attainment of the Śakti”. Taking the evidence all together, I propose that we have here an early articulation of the process that would become known as the rising of the *kuṇḍalinī*, in which the latter energy pierces or opens the *cakras* in turn, giving rise to various spiritual experiences. We also see here the appearance of the characteristic Kaula word *saṅkramaṇa* or transmission of the *śakti*, which suggests the agency of the guru and the lineage he represents. Eventually such transmission would come to be thought of as instrumental for the rising of *kuṇḍalinī-śakti*.

The evidence of the Tantrasadbhāva

Next we turn to a Trika text that exhibits considerable Kaula influence (moreso than the MVT), the *Tantrasadbhāva*, which we could date to roughly the late eighth century (as some of its material is redacted into the [probably ninth century] *Kubjikā-mata*). Chapter three of this text redacts substantial material from SYM 3. At 3.158c-67 is a passage on Parā’s seed-mantra, which is said to produce immediate evidence of its efficacy (158d). In this passage we find several lines from SYM 17,⁵²⁰ description of spontaneous bodily movements that in the source text are called *siddha-līṅgas* (17.29-34), such as hopping like a frog (*darduraplutyā*, 3.163c), writhing, creeping on the ground (like a snake? *prṣṭhata avasarpaṇam*, 163d), eyes rolling up in the head (*ūrdhva-drṣṭiḥ*), etc. The term *āveśa* does not occur in the source text, but does occur in the *Tantrasadbhāva* passage immediately after the one we are discussing (at 3.174cd, which tells us that *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* becomes constantly

⁵¹⁹ Though any number of studies of this could be cited, I was able to observe it first-hand in the *Theyatṭam* rituals of rural northern Kerala, in 2008.

⁵²⁰ As already noticed by TÖRSZÖK (2013).

established [*nityam pratiṣṭhitaḥ*] in one who does this *mantra-sādhana*). This connects *āveśa* with the SYM's *siddha-liṅgas*, as noted by TÖRSZÖK (2013), but not as strongly as she argues for, since 3.167 concludes the Parā section and the following verse introduces another *mantroddhāra*, in which the *āveśa* reference appears.

The primary *Tantrasadbhāva* passage that we are concerned with, however, occurs in chapter nine. This passage (9.327-52) teaches an *abhiṣeka-vidhi*, a rite of consecration usually reserved for *ācāryas*. That may be the case here, but the text does not make explicit the *adhikāra* conferred by the rite. If it is consecration of an *ācārya* which is here described, then we have evidence that an aspirant was expected to display *śaktipāta* as qualification for each level of initiation, not just the first. We have already seen in a number of passages that collapsing to the ground (presumably due to being overwhelmed by the energy) is a sign of *samāveśa* or *śaktipāta*, but the present passage takes *pāta* (falling, collapse) as the key piece of evidence for *śaktipāta*, even requiring it in order to proceed further.

Our study of this passage benefits from the provisional unpublished critical edition prepared by Junglan BANG, who generously provided it to me, as well as from a brief study of some of the verses in an article by Judit TÖRSZÖK (2007). I have also consulted the readings in Mark DYCZKOWSKI's draft edition, released through the Muktabodha Indological Research Institute website. Please note that this edition is not to be taken as finished or final. All three of the scholars just mentioned number the verses differently; below I use DYCZKOWSKI's numbering, since his edition is most readily available online, and I note the other scholars' numbering in brackets with subscripted initials of their names. However, the readings, unless otherwise noted, are those of Junglan BANG, with alternate readings noted only where I find them plausible possibilities.

athānyam sampravakṣyāmi abhiṣeka-vidhiṃ śubham |
sāmpradāyikam etat tu nābhāgyāḥ prāpnuvanti hi || 9.327 [325_{JB}]

Now I shall teach you something else: the auspicious rite of consecration.
Only those who are fortunate receive this traditional [rite].

gandha-digdhou⁵²¹ karau kṛtvā śiṣyasya susamāhitaḥ |
śaktyāsanam nyaset tatra gandhāmbu-pūritaṃ tataḥ || 9.328 [326_{JB}]
kalaśam vāthavā śamkhaṃ sahirānyam tu vinyaset |
somaṃ prapūjayet tasmin aṣṭavarga-samanvitam || 9.329 || [327_{JB}]

Having anointed the disciple's hands with unguent, [the guru,] with great concentration, should then install [the mantras of] the power-throne there, [in a] pitcher filled with fragrant water; or [in] a gilded conch. There he should worship [that water which has become] *soma*, full of [the mantras of] the eight classes.⁵²²

vartulīkṛtya śaktiṃ tu uccaret tat punaḥ punaḥ |
tataḥ stutyā [stutya_{MD}] hy asau hastam kalaśam caiva kampati || 9.330 [328_{JB}]
Having made the *śakti*-mantra into a ball [of energy at the *mūlādhāra*,

⁵²¹ *gandha-digdhou* conj. J. BANG : *gandha-dignau* MSS

⁵²² That is, the eight *vargas* of the Sanskrit syllabary—see *Tantrasadbhāva* 6.155 for the definition of the *aṣṭavarga*.

through *kumbhaka*],⁵²³ he should do *uccāra* [of that mantra] again and again.⁵²⁴ Then, through that praise, this hand [of the guru] and the pitcher [he holds] tremble.⁵²⁵

Here we see that, unusually, not only the disciple but the guru too is expected to tremble with the power of the mantra(s).

*dhārā-saṃpāta-nirghoṣaḥ patate śiṣya-mūrdhnani [-mūrdhani] |
dhārā-saṃpāta-yogena brahmahatyā [-hatyām] vyapohati || 9.331 [329_{JB}]*

The sound of the descent of the stream [of consecrated water] falls on the disciple's head; by that fall of water he expiates [even] the sin of brāhminicide.

*etat pratyaya-saṃvedyaṃ drśyate yasya kasyacit |
sa eva pūjayed devi siddha-vidyādharaḍibhiḥ || 9.332 [330_{JB}]*

That special person (*kasyacit*) to whom this conviction (*pratyaya*) is intelligible is worshipped by *siddhas* and *vidyādhara*s, O Goddess.⁵²⁶

*devyuvāca: < . . . >*⁵²⁷

bhairava uvāca:

likhed bhūmyāṃ tu tāṃ śaktiṃ kuṭilākāra-rūpiṇīm || 9.334 [332_{JB}]

*nirīkṣānimiṣā*⁵²⁸ *drṣṭvā upasannas tu suvrate |*

Bhairava said: He [the guru] should write that *śakti*-mantra on the ground in its “coiled” (*kuṭila*) form.⁵²⁹ The disciple who has approached him for initiation should gaze at it with open eyes.

bhavitātmā yadā paśyec chaktiṃ vai kuṭilākṛtiṃ || 9.335 [333_{JB}]

śatena patate yas tu tīvra-pātaḥ prakīrtitaḥ | [327_{JT}]

Fully absorbed in it, he should look at the *śakti* in its coiled form. One who collapses to the ground after one hundred [repetitions of the mantra] is said to have had an intense Descent [of Power].

evaṃ sahasram ekena athavaivāyutena ca || 9.336 [334_{JB}]

yasya pāto bhaved devi madhyamaḥ parikīrtitaḥ | [328_{JT}]

⁵²³ For the explanation in brackets, see the parallel passage at *Parākhya-tantra* 14.30-32, which includes the phrase *pūraṇe vartulikṛtaṃ kumbhakena nirodheta*. Translated at GOODALL 2004: 360.

⁵²⁴ For *uccāra*, i.e. raising a *bīja* mantra up the central channel, see TAK 1, pp. 224f and PADOUX 1990, ch. 7.

⁵²⁵ Note the extremely aberrant *aīśa* grammar, showing the influence of Middle Indo-Āryan: the nominative pronoun *asau* construes with both *hastam* and *kalaśam* and governs the verb *kampati* twice, as it were.

⁵²⁶ The translation is provisional. Construe *pūjayet* as a passive.

⁵²⁷ Here the goddess asks a question that is scarcely intelligible in the text as we have it: *aśyaiva rūpakaṃ kiṃ tu yasya varṇo na vidyate | varṇahīno yadā deva †kautārthaṃ† pratipadyate || 333 || yathā taṃ jñāyate vīryaṃ ko vīryasya ca bhājanah |*. The last *pāda*, at least, is both meaningful and relevant: “Who is a worthy recipient of this mantric power (*vīrya*)?”

⁵²⁸ Double sandhi for *nirīkṣa animiṣā* (BANG p. 45).

⁵²⁹ This may refer to the *bīja* mantra HRĪM, which has a “coiled” appearance in its written form. It is likely that this is the origin of the term *kuṇḍalinī*, which originally explicitly referred to a mantric power. See Christopher TOMPKINS’ forthcoming doctoral dissertation.

One who falls after 1,000 to 10,000 repetitions is said to have had a medium Descent, O Goddess.

dvyayutais [JT: *dvyutais* JB] *tryayutair vāpi tathā pañcadaśaiḥ priye* || 9.337
patate vartanair yas tu so 'dhamaś ca tv iti smṛtaḥ | [329_{JT}]

One who falls after 20,000, 30,000, or 50,000 repetitions is held to have had the lowest [kind of Descent], O dear one.⁵³⁰

*pātānāṃ ca vibhāgo 'tra vivṛṇvedamśakānvaye*⁵³¹ || 9.338 [336_{JB}]
patitaṃ dikṣayed devi pāta-hīnaṃ tu varjayet | [330_{JT}]

Here is the division of Descents I reveal, in the order of decreasing quality.⁵³² He [the guru] should initiate those who have fallen, O Goddess; those without a Descent should be rejected.

What has been described is a rite to determine the candidate's qualification for initiation. Thus the pouring of consecrated water on the disciple's head in 331 cannot be the actual *abhiṣeka*, unless the ritual is described out of order. Note that here, especially in the last verse cited, the word *pāta* has come to mean both a physical collapse to the ground and the Descent of Power that it is (taken to be) evidence of. So *pāta-hīna* means both "without a fall" and "without a Descent."

pāta-hīno durātmāno na dikṣā-phalam arhati || 9.339 [337_{JB}]

*pūrva-jāty-asmarā*⁵³³ *mantrās tatvaṃ bhāvanti* [for *bhavanti*] *svrate* |

Those without a Descent are bad-natured, and do not merit the fruit of initiation [i.e., liberation]. In fact, their [initiation] mantras were forgotten [i.e. spurned] in a previous life, O woman of integrity.⁵³⁴

bhāvitānāṃ tu cihnedam calate kampate dhunet || 9.340 [338_{JB}]

pāśa-cchede tu saṃjāte patate kāśyapī-tale | [332_{JT}]

This is the sign of those who have been transformed [by *śaktipāta*]: he moves about, he trembles, he might roar.⁵³⁵ When the severing of the bonds [of the soul] occurs [during initiation], he [again] falls to the ground.

The context now is the initiation itself, possibly the moment in which the initiand sees the initiation maṇḍala.

saṃmukhaṃ patate yas tu chinna-pāśo na saṃśayaḥ || 9.341 [339_{JB}]

uttamo 'sau samuddiṣṭa uttāno madhyamo mataḥ | [333_{JT}]

[If] he whose bonds have been cut falls on his face, he is shown to be [of the] best [kind]; [one who falls] on his back is thought to be middling.

⁵³⁰ One is of course hard pressed to imagine how anyone could *not* collapse after the length of time required for 20,000+ repetitions. The words for high numbers in Sanskrit are fairly well established, but perhaps our author understood *ayuta* to mean 1,000 instead of 10,000?

⁵³¹ Double sandhi for *vivṛṇva idaṃ* or *vivṛṇve damśakānvaye* (BANG p. 45); latter is TÖRSZÖK's reading.

⁵³² This translation of *damśakānvaye* from TÖRSZÖK 2007: 514.

⁵³³ Conj. WALLIS : *pūrvajātismarā* Ed.

⁵³⁴ An attempt to make sense of apparent nonsense; I take 340ab to be explaining why the candidate is to be rejected as *durātman*, thus requiring the emendation in the previous note.

⁵³⁵ Taking *dhunet* as an *aiśa* form of \sqrt{dhvan} rather than \sqrt{dhu} to avoid redundancy.

*tiryak-pāto*⁵³⁶ 'dhamah prokto devadevena śambhunā || 9.342 [340_{JB}]
sūkṣma-pāśo varārohe kartaryā naiva chidyate |

One who falls on his side is said by Śambhu, the god of gods, to be the lowest [acceptable type]. O fair-hipped lady, these subtle bonds [of the soul] cannot be cut by a knife.

< . . . >

*kāṣṭhavat tiṣṭhate yas tu pāśāṇo vā sureśvari || 9.344 [342_{JB}]
*tasya dīkṣā na kartavyā †yadi nirmānuṣī matā† [MD : nirmānuṣe prajā JB] |**

O Queen of the gods, initiation should not be given to he who remains like a stone or a block of wood [and does not fall].

*tīvreṇa khecaraṃ yāti pātena vara-varṇini || 9.345 [343_{JB}]
*madhyamena tu pātālaṃ adhame sukha[m.]jīvati*⁵³⁷ |*

O fair-faced one, by an intense Descent, he becomes a Sky-walker (*khecari*);⁵³⁸ by a medium [one], he attains a subterranean paradise; by a lower one, he lives happily [in this world].

*evaṃ pratyayam ākhyātaṃ pāśa-stobhaṃ karoti yaḥ || 9.346 [344_{JB}]
*na jñānena vinā stobho na vīryeṇa sureśvari |**

Thus [a true guru is] one who can stun the bonds [of the initiand]; this is said to be the evidence [of his mastery]. [Such] stunning [will not take place] without [both] insight and [mantra]-power.

*siddha-yogī karoty evaṃ saṃpradāyena saṃyutam || 9.347 [345_{JB}]
*saṃpradāya-vihīnas tu yo dīkṣāṃ kartum icchati |**

*niṣphalaṃ pariśramaṃ tasyāpi*⁵³⁹ *dīkṣā narakam vrajet || 9.348 [346_{JB}]
*vratinas tu punar devi kṣetra-pālā bhavanti hi |**

Thus [i.e., through *jñāna* and *vīrya*] is a perfected yogin connected to tradition (*saṃpradāya*). Without [connection to] tradition, one who wishes to perform initiation [for others] will labor fruitlessly; though he [himself] has initiation, he will go to hell.⁵⁴⁰ †Those who keep to their vows, however, become Site-protectors [or better], O Goddess.†

*yadi dīkṣā bhaven muktiḥ sarveṣu cāgameṣu ca || 9.349 [347_{JB}]
*tasmād dīkṣā tu boddhavyā pāśa-stobho yadā bhavet | [340_{JT}]**

*dharmādharmānibaddhas tu piṇḍo tatra patet priye || 9.350 [348_{JB}]
If initiation accomplishes liberation, [as taught] in all Śaiva scriptures,*

⁵³⁶ *tiryakpāto* TÖRSZÖK : *tiryakṣāto* BANG : *nirpakṣāto* DYCZKOWKSI.

⁵³⁷ DYCZKOWKSI : *pātāle adhamasukhajīvati* BANG

⁵³⁸ The translation Sky-walker has the advantage of implying both possible meanings of *khecari*: one who can fly (in *siddhi*-focused sources), or one who roams in the Sky of Consciousness (in exegetical sources).

⁵³⁹ Conj. WALLIS : *tasya na* BANG. Note that the verse is hypermetrical either way. I don't think JB's reading can be made to yield sense, since the (ungrammatical) statement "without initiation, he will go to hell" (*na dīkṣā narakam vrajet*) does not tally with Śaiva doctrine; and if we read it as "initiation does not lead to hell" we have a *non sequitur*.

⁵⁴⁰ As noted above, one who has received initiation and who goes to a hell-realm due to unexpiated transgressions will, after burning off his karma, receive a human birth again and have the opportunity to complete his *sādhana*.

then [here] initiation is understood [to be accomplished] when the bonds [of the soul] have been stunned, [and] the body, unchained from merit and demerit (*dharmādharma*) collapses [then and] there.

tadā nirvāṇa-dā dīkṣā yaḥ karoti sa deśikaḥ | [341_{JT}]

Then [one knows that] liberation-giving initiation [has indeed] occurred.
The one who gives it is a [true] teacher.

In other words, the text is arguing (in a Kaula fashion) that the collapse itself is all the evidence you need that the bonds of the soul have been “stunned” (= rendered inert), and if that has occurred, then it is a proper initiation, even without all the ritual and paraphernalia. And the very fact that a guru can transmit enough power to cause a collapse in the initiand is sufficient evidence of *his* qualification.

yenaivālabdha-mātrasya stubhyate pāśa-pañjaram || 9.351 [349_{JB}]

sa gurus tu samākhyātaḥ saṃsārārṇava-tārakaḥ | [342_{JT}]

He who banishes the cage of bonds merely by his touch is called a [true] guru, who saves [people] from the ocean of *saṃsāra*.

tasya pāda-rajo devi śirasā dhārayed yadi || 9.352 [350_{JB}]

tat-kṣaṇād eva mucyate sarpasya kavacaṃ yathā | 9.353ab

One should place the dust of his feet on one’s head [i.e., bow to him]; then one is immediately freed, like the serpent shedding its skin.

Only in Kaula scriptures, we should remember, do we see such veneration of the guru. In the Siddhānta the guru, while highly respected, is a ritual functionary and cannot dispense with the ritual acts and mantras at any time. The Kaula guru certainly uses mantras in his transmission, but does not always require them. As a liberated master, the way he moves and speaks itself carries the power of transmission.

The evidence of the Kubjikā-mata-tantra

The *Kubjikā-mata-tantra* (KMT) is the root-text of the Kaubjika *sampradāya* (#8 in Table 2), which is also the Western Transmission of the Kulamārga in the four-fold classification of Kaula worship and practice (also in Table 2). The text is probably of the late ninth century (see SANDERSON 2002 for discussion). It redacts substantial material from earlier Trika and Kaula sources, and indeed one suspects that if there had not been considerable losses of scriptures from this period, we would see that the great majority of the text is a compilation.⁵⁴¹ This is evident in the both the relative incoherence of sections of the text with each other, and in the sometimes readily apparent “seams” or places where sections of text from different sources are imperfectly or even jarringly joined.

Significant for our purposes is use of the word *ājñā*, a key technical term in the KMT. It means not only “command” (e.g. of Śiva), but also “transmission” and even simply “power.” We can see this in verse 3.86, where *ājñā-nipāta* is synonymous with *śakti-pāta* (the latter term occurs three verses later):

⁵⁴¹ SANDERSON (2002: 1) notes that the KMT “has drawn extensively on the *Tantrasadbhāva*, *Siddha-yogeśvarī-mata*, *Kula-ratna-mālā*, and *Triśirobhairava*”.

*tenedaṃ siddha-santānaṃ gurudevopalakṣitam |
yasya cājñā-nipātena sambodhaḥ śāmbhavo bhavet || 3.86*

Thus this is the lineage of *siddhas*, marked by divine gurus, by the descent of whose transmission one attains the Śāmbhava awakening.

This is also an interesting verse since the *ājñā-nipāta* is said to descend not from Śiva as usual, but from the *siddha* lineage (a mark of strong Kaula influence).

In its tenth chapter, the KMT presents a six-fold classification of *āveśa* that I know from no other source: that of *bhūta-*, *bhāva-*, *śākta-*, *māntra-*, *raudra-*, and *śāmbhavāveśa* (in ascending order of progress). These six are code words for segments of the map of *tattvas*: respectively the five primary elements, the five subtle elements, the organs of perception, the organs of action, the *antaḥkaraṇa* and *prakṛti*, and lastly *śāmbhava* corresponds to all the higher, uniquely Śaiva *tattvas*. Each of them has a set of corresponding *cihnas* by which the guru can discern that that level of *āveśa* has been reached. The *śāmbhava* level constitutes final liberation. This, then, is a unique six-fold path (*ṣaḍ-adhvan*) that is said to correspond to or subsume the usual Śaiva six-fold path (for which see 10.69 below). For the first time in the scriptural record, *āveśa* (in the *śāmbhava*- variety) has become a term for liberation itself. The forty-verse passage which follows draws its text from the 1988 critical edition of T. GOUDRIAAN and J. A. SCHOTERMAN. My translation benefits from a rapid but very useful read-through of the passage with Professor SANDERSON (Leipzig, 2009); errors that remain are of course my own.

*bhūtaṃ bhāvaṃ tathā śāktaṃ māntraṃ raudraṃ ca śāmbhavam |
ājñātaḥ sampravarteta ṣaḍadhvedaṃ kulānvaye || 10.68*

This is the six-fold path that arises due to [Śiva's] transmission (*ājñā*) in the Kula lineage: *bhūta*, *bhāva*, *śākta*, *māntra*, *raudra*, and *śāmbhava*.

*bhūtaṃ bhuvanāvaraṇaṃ padaṃ bhāvaṃ prayujyate |
śāktaṃ varṇāḥ samākhyātā māntraṃ dvādaśa kīrtitāḥ || 10.69
raudraṃ kalādhvaraṃ proktaṃ śāmbhavaṃ tattva-lakṣaṇam |*

The *bhūta* corresponds to the World-circuit; *bhāva* to the Word-(*adhvan*); the *śākta* is said to be [equivalent to] the Phonemes; *māntra* is known as the twelve [elements of the *mantrādhvan*], the *raudra* is the *kalādhvan*; and the *śāmbhava* is characterized as the *tattva*-[*adhvan*].

Here the six categories are assimilated to the usual Śaiva *ṣaḍ-adhvan* (for which see PADOUX 1990) in order to assure the reader that the Kaubjika *ṣaḍ-adhvan* presented here covers the same ground and accomplishes the same aims.

*ājñānalavati dīkṣā mantrāṇāṃ sādhanē hitā || 10.70
sā cājñā-pūrvikā siddhā anyathā tila-ghātakī |*

The initiation which possesses the ‘fire’ of the Command (*ājñā*) is suitable for [all] *mantra-sādhanas*. This perfect [*dīkṣā*] has the Command as a prerequisite; otherwise [the guru] is only wasting sesame seeds [in performing *hautrī dīkṣā*].

sā ca tattvavatām⁵⁴² caiva tattvaṃ vai śāmbhavaṃ padam || 10.71

⁵⁴² Perhaps we should emend to *tattvavitām*, “those who know reality.”

*tat padaṃ vidyate yasya sāmārthya-jñāḥ*⁵⁴³ *sa sarvaśaḥ* |
Initiation [can only be obtained] from those who possess Reality; Reality is verily the *śāmbhava* state. That state is known [only] by one who completely understands Power (*sāmārthya* = *ājñā* = *śakti*).

jñāna-mārga-prasiddhy-arthaṃ dīkṣā vedhavatī śubhā || 10.72

yogyatātaḥ pradātavyā subhaktasya kulādhvare |
sarvāsām eva dīkṣānām cottamā parikīrtitā || 10.73

This auspicious *vedha-dīkṣā*, which has the purpose of attaining the path of [direct] knowledge, is to be given according to suitability, i.e. [only] to one who is very devoted to the Kula path. This is proclaimed as the highest of all initiations.

tena vedho na kartavyo na jñātaṃ yāva[t] niścayam |
śāmbhavājñābhīmānena lobha-mohaḥ prakīrtitaḥ || 10.74

He must not perform the *vedha*-[*dīkṣā*] if there is no certain knowledge [of this suitability on the part of the candidate]. [If] he has a false idea that the *Śāmbhava* Transmission [has been received by the disciple, when in fact it has not], that is known to be [a case of] either greed or stupidity [on the part of the guru].

The ubiquitous Tantric *hautrī dīkṣā* is here criticized as useless without *ājñā* (\approx *śakti*), a standard Kaula position. In other words, ritual forms, even though prescribed in the tantras, are empty unless empowered by awakened consciousness, here called the “divine state of those who possess/know reality” (*tattvatatāṃ śāmbhavaṃ padam*). Such a one can confer an initiation which “pierces” (*vedha*) the disciple (the exact meaning of which is as yet unclear). Since this is a higher initiation than the ritual one, the guru is enjoined to examine the candidate carefully to ensure that his devotion is genuine and that he has been primed by a transmission from Śiva. Here *śāmbhavājñā* (74c) is clearly equivalent to *śaktipāta*.

*sa martyo*⁵⁴⁴ *'nyo na me tulyo ya evaṃ manyate kudhīḥ* |
ājñātaḥ sampravarteta kiṃtu bhūtavati bhavet || 10.75

The other foolish person who thinks thus [i.e., that he can read the signs when he cannot] is not My equal. He may proceed in accordance with a [lower] Transmission [of power], but that [initiation] would pertain [only] to the *bhūta* level.⁵⁴⁵

< . . . >⁵⁴⁶

ṛthivyādīni bhūtāni cāviśanti ca yasya vai || 10.76
bhūtāveśaṃ tu tad viddhi bhāvāveśam ataḥ śṛṇu |
śabdaḥ sparśas tathā rūpaṃ raso gandhaś ca bhāvajam || 10.77

⁵⁴³ *sāmārthya-jñāḥ* corr. : *sāmārtha-jñāḥ* Ed.

⁵⁴⁴ *sa martyo* conj. SANDERSON : *sāmārthyo* MS

⁵⁴⁵ I suppose this to mean that the fruit of such initiation would not reach past the first of the six levels; but the translation is uncertain.

⁵⁴⁶ Unintelligible hemistich: *atha †cet paripakvasya ṣaḍvidho hy alpasvalpavit†* (Reading *alpasvalpavit* with MSS C, D, H, K : *alpasvalpavat* Ed.) “Now, if he knows the six-fold [path] only a little bit, then [even] a very ripe [disciple should be initiated only into the *bhūta* level (?)].“

[If] one is entered by the [five primary] Elements beginning with Earth, know that as *bhūtāveśa*. Now hear about *bhāvāveśa*, [in which] sound, touch, appearance, taste, and odor arise from the *bhāva* [level of experience and permeate one's being].

*śrotraṃ tvak cakṣuṣī jihvā ghrāṇaṃ śaktimato*⁵⁴⁷ *viduḥ |*
vācā pāṇis tathā pādaṃ pāyūpasthaṃ tu māntra-jam || 10.78
*mano buddhis tathā garvaḥ prakṛto*⁵⁴⁸ *guṇa raudra-jam |*

[If one is possessed by the organs of sense, i.e.] the ear, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose, they know [it to be the *āveśa*] of one possessing *śakti* (i.e. the *śākta* level).⁵⁴⁹ Speech, hands, feet, anus and reproductive organ arise on the *māntra* level. Attention (*manas*), imagination (*buddhi*), ego (*garva*), *prakṛti*, and [the three] *guṇa*[s] arise on the *raudra* level.

puruṣādi †nivr̥t[t]yantam† unmanatvaṃ parāntikam || 10.79

etat te śāmbhavaṃ jñānaṃ bhuvanādyaṃ mahāhradam || 10.80

Beginning with *Puruṣa*-[*tattva*] and ending at the transmental (*unmanā*) level of *Parā*: this is the *śāmbhava* gnosis. [All of this] is the Great Lake [of consciousness],⁵⁵⁰ beginning with the (level of) the Worlds (which corresponds to the *bhūta* level in the present schema).

This Kaubjika *ṣaḍ-adhvan*, then, is essentially a map of the *tattva*-system. The inclusion of *guṇa* as a *tattva* shows that this varies slightly from the standard map. When addressing the highest levels of the universe, our text departs from the *tattva*-map entirely and references the stages of *mantroccāra*,⁵⁵¹ the last of which is *unmanā* (which SANDERSON translates as “transmental”), which in the Trika cosmology denotes the divine reality which lies “outside” the universe of time and space (*brahmāṇḍa*), and thus is equivalent to the “secret” *tattva* #37.⁵⁵² As in Trika texts, here *unmanā* is associated with *Parā*, which must be due to an oversight on the part of the text's redactor, since the high Goddess of this work is of course *Kubjikā*. We can see that there is a textual problem in 79cd, since *nivr̥ttyantam* does not fit the context at all, *nivr̥tti* being the lowest of the five *kalās*, when we would instead expect the highest here (i.e., *śāntiyātīta*).

Next the text describes the evidence (*pratyaya*) or signs (*cihna*) of “possession” on each of these levels. We can only imagine what *āveśa* means with reference to the *tanmātras*, *jñānendriyas*, *karmendriyas*, etc., but clearly it has little to do with the literal sense intended when possessing spirits are involved (but see note

⁵⁴⁷ *śaktimato* corr. : *śaktimano* Ed.

⁵⁴⁸ *prakṛto* corr. : *prakṛtau* Ed.

⁵⁴⁹ Since one obviously cannot be possessed by one's ears etc., we can safely assume that a state of heightened sense-perception is here suggested, in which what one hears etc. dominates one's consciousness.

⁵⁵⁰ For a parallel, see *Śiva-sūtra* 1.22: *mahāhradānusandhānān mantravīryānubhavaḥ*, “Experiencing the potency of mantras arises from merging with the Great Lake [of Consciousness].”

⁵⁵¹ These are nine or eleven or twelve, depending on the source: see Tables 22 and 23 in VASUDEVA 2004: 290-1 (citing *Svacchanda* ch. 4 and other sources).

⁵⁵² See also 10.95 below.

490 below). It seems that here the descriptions simply connote the experiential stages of a very intense spiritual practice that effectively destabilizes the usual sense of self, triggering reactions that here are thought of as part of a process of “purification,” however pathological some of them might appear from our cultural frame.

Śrī-kubjikā uvāca the Blessed Kubjikā said:

*bhūtādi-śāmbhavāntasya vedhopāyaṃ⁵⁵³ pṛthak pṛthak |
kathitaṃ tu yathā nātha tathā tat-pratyayaṃ vada || 10.81*

You have described the several individual methods of ‘piercing’ (*vedha*), from the [*pañca-mahā*]-*bhūtas* up to the *śāmbhava* [level]. In same way, O Lord, speak of the evidence (*pratyaya*) of each of those.

śrībhairava uvāca the Blessed Bhairava said:

*sādhu devi mahāprājñe kathayāmi sapratyayam |
anyathā tat kathaṃ tasya bhrānti-jñānaṃ vinaśyati || 10.82*

Well said, O Goddess of great wisdom. I will speak about evidence; otherwise, how will erroneous views concerning it be laid to rest?

*kampate bhramate rodec cotpaten nipated vadet |
anibaddha ravonmādī †sasaṃjñō bhūtavad yathā† || 10.83*

bhūtāveśasya cihnedam bhāvāveśam ataḥ śṛṇu |

He trembles, he is dizzy, he might weep, fly up,⁵⁵⁴ fall down, speak incoherently,⁵⁵⁵ shouting as one mad . . . These are the signs of *bhūtāveśa*.⁵⁵⁶ Now hear about *bhāvāveśa*.

yāni cihnāni jāyante bhāva-viddhasya bhāvinī || 10.84

*ghūrmaṇaṃ sveda-romāñca-aśrupātāṅga-moṭanam |
ārādhyam smaraṇād evaṃ sampadyante svabhāvataḥ⁵⁵⁷ || 10.85*

O *Bhāvinī*, these are the signs that arise in one who is pierced by a *bhāva*: Whirling/shaking (*ghūrmaṇa*), sweating, horripilation, weeping, and crushing [pain] in the limbs (?). By meditating on the one worthy of worship, [these signs⁵⁵⁸] will arise thus naturally.

*bhramate cakravat pātaḥ kāṣṭhavat kṣubhitekṣaṇaḥ |
paśyate vibhramāpannaḥ śakti-vedhopalakṣayet⁵⁵⁹ || 10.86*

Spinning like a wheel, falling like a log, seeing with agitated eyes, disorientation: one should mark [these] as the [signs of] piercing by Power.

kampate bhramate caiva jalpate vadate ’khilam |

⁵⁵³ *vedhopāyaṃ* conj. : *bhedopāyaṃ* Ed.

⁵⁵⁴ Referring to *udghāta*?

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. *anibaddha-pralāpin*.

⁵⁵⁶ Note that though earlier *bhūta* was specifically defined as an abbreviation for *pañca-mahā-bhūta*, here the signs of *bhūtāveśa* are remarkably similar to the signs we would expect if *bhūta* means “spirit.”

⁵⁵⁷ *ārādhyam smaraṇād . . . svabhāvataḥ* em. SANDERSON : *ārādhyam smaraṇād . . . svabhāvadhṛk* Ed.

⁵⁵⁸ NB: *Amṛteśa-dikṣā-vidhi* reads *guṇā ime* in pāda d. A *paddhati* by one Viśveśvara (NAK 5-4867), the *Amṛteśvara-dikṣā-vidhi* is a *Netra-tantra* *paddhati* but incorporates Kubjikā’s *vedha-dikṣā*.

⁵⁵⁹ for *śaktivedham upalakṣayet*.

mantrāveśasya cihnedam kathitam tava śobhane || 10.87

He trembles, is dizzy, murmurs, and speaks everything [that comes into his head]: these are the signs of *mantrāveśa* taught to you, O beautiful one.

raudram caivam ato brūmi pañcāvasthā<s> tu raudra-jāḥ |

anādhītāni śāstrāṇi granthataś cārthataḥ sudhīḥ || 10.88

atītānāgataṃ sarvaṃ vartamānasya yat phalam |

Now I will tell you of *raudra-[āveśa]*: there are five states that are born from *raudra-[vedha]*: the wise one, without studying the scriptures, [1.] knows [any] text (i.e., can recite it) and [2.] knows its meaning; [and] all that is [3.] past and [4.] future, and [5.] what will be the result of what is happening now.

raudra-śakti-samāveśāt sarvam eva prapadyate || 10.89

yasyedam vartate cihnam raudrāveśam tad ucyate |

śāmbhavana tu vedhena sarvāṇy etāni suvrate || 10.90

He understands all [these five things] through the total immersion into Rudra's Power. When these signs occur, that is called *raudrāveśa*. O faithful one, all these [signs can also occur] through the *śāmbhava* piercing.

The reader will immediately notice that the set of signs is not coherent. Assuming that this passage is intended to aid the guru's diagnosis of the level of the disciple's attainment, it would be difficult for him to reach any certainty if these are indeed the original readings of the text. For example, *kampate* (trembling) occurs at both the *bhūta* and *māntra* levels, *anibaddha vadet/vadate 'khilam* (babbling) at the same two levels; *bhramate* (dizziness, probably) occurs at the *bhūta*, *māntra*, and *śākta* levels, and *nipatet/pātaḥ* (falling) at the *bhūta* and *śākta* levels. The signs for the first four levels in general can be said to connote madness. We should of course note that the concept of "holy madness" is of course strong in Indian culture throughout our period and into the modern period: see, e.g. MCDANIEL's *The Madness of the Saints* (1989) and FEUERSTEIN's *Holy Madness* (1992). When we reach the fifth or *raudra* level, however, the signs given abruptly shift to a gnostic attainment tantamount to omniscience. Note that the phrase *raudra-śakti-samāveśa* appears at this level; a general term for the infusion of divine power in the SYM and TU has here become just one level of six. The *śāmbhava* attainment which now follows constitutes highest liberation itself—here the *sādhaka* knows the whole of reality, sees all beings as an expression of himself, and yet senses how he stands above and apart from them. He further acquires the qualities of Śiva (as is standard in Śaiva liberation), such as the eight supernatural powers beginning with *aṇimā*.

śuddha-śāmbhava-vedhasya sāmpratam nirṇayam śṛṇu |

yena viddhasya loke 'smin sarvajñatvaṃ prapadyate || 10.91

Hear now the conclusion, concerning the pure *śāmbhava* piercing, by which the one 'pierced' attains omniscience in this world.

pūrvoktena tu vidhinā⁵⁶⁰ śodhitas tu yadā śiśuḥ |

tadā sampadyate tasya śāmbhavaṃ guṇa-dāyakam || 10.92

⁵⁶⁰ *vidhinā* em. SANDERSON : *kālena* Ed.

When the disciple is purified through the process already described (i.e., the previous five levels), then the *śāmbhava*-[*āveśa*] comes to him, granting the [eight supernatural] qualities.

*kubjīso yaṃ yadāyātaḥ puṃso janmany apaścime |
tadā sampadyate tasya śāmbhavaṃ kubjike tanau || 10.93*

When the Lord of Kubjī (= Navātma-Bhairava) reaches him in his soul's final birth, then the *śāmbhava* state arises in his body, O Kubjikā.

*bahvarthakālena viśodhitātmā ātmaiva so paśyati sarvabhūtān<i>⁵⁶¹ |
na me samāno bhuvanāntarāle viśuddha-bhāvo bhavate hy akāle || 10.94*

After a long time, his soul is purified and he sees all beings as himself alone. [Yet he realizes:] “Within [all] the worlds, there is no one identical to me”⁵⁶²—for he becomes a pure being beyond time.

*ekaikaṃ bhuvanaṃ paśyet puṃsādau conmanāvadhim |
viśuddha-tanuko⁵⁶³ hy evaṃ dehenānena cotpatet || 10.95*

He can see each individual world, from Puruṣa to Unmanā; his body purified, he can fly up [into the sky] with this very body.

*na kampa-dhunane tasya īśad-ghūrmih pravartate |
viṣonmūrchāgatas tv evaṃ tiṣṭhate bhr̥ta-kumbhavat⁵⁶⁴ || 10.96*

No trembling or shaking for him; [only] a slight sense of whirling (*ghūrmi*). Becoming stupefied as if by poison, he remains thus [unmoving], like a full pot.⁵⁶⁵

*paśyate cāgrataḥ sarvaṃ tattva-vrātaṃ sadoditam |
tatkṣaṇād viśayān mucyej jir̥ṇa-kañcuṃ⁵⁶⁶ yathoraḡaḡ || 10.97*

He sees before him the whole mass of eternally arising *tattvas*. In that very instant, he will release [attachment to] sense-objects, like a snake [sloughs off] its old skin.⁵⁶⁷

*sadānanda-madonmattaḥ sarvajña-guṇa-bhūṣitaḥ |
śāmbhavana tu viddhasya cihnedam sampravartate || 10.98*

He is drunk on the wine of continual bliss, [and] adorned with the qualities of the omniscient one (Śiva). This sign arises for one pierced by *śāmbhava*.

*bhūta-bhāvana-śaktinām mantrāveśa<ṃ> saraudrajam |
krameṇa śāmbhavas teṣām viśuddhatvaṃ yathā yathā || 10.99*

⁵⁶¹ -*kālena* . . . *so paśyati* em. SANDERSON : *kāle'pi* . . . *sau paśyati* Ed.

⁵⁶² Except, presumably, Śiva: cf. Kṣemarāja *ad Svacchanda-tantra* (vol. 2, p. 279), *ekasyāpi śivanāthasyetthyam vyāvṛtti-bhedena sarvajñatvādayaḥ ṣaṭ guṇā vyākhyeyāḥ*.

⁵⁶³ -*tanuko* corr. : *tanujo* Ed.

⁵⁶⁴ reading *bhr̥takumbhavat* with *Amṛteśa-dikṣā-vidhi* and several MSS : *bhūta*- Ed. But another possible reading is *bhūtakampanam*, “trembling like a ghost.”

⁵⁶⁵ It is unclear how to reconcile this statement with the previous verse, in which the *sādhaka* flies free.

⁵⁶⁶ -*kañcuṃ* em. : -*kañcur* Ed. Note that the *Amṛteśavidhi* reads -*tvacaṃ* here.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf. *Tantrasadbhāva* 9.353ab above (p. 223).

[These are] the 'possessions' of *bhūta*, *bhāva*, *śakti*, *mantra*, together with the *raudra*: purified gradually [and ever more intensely] by them in this way, the *sāmbhava* [state follows].

Our text then becomes more incoherent, wanders into repetitions and superfluous information. Two more verses, however, round out the picture of *āveśa* in this text:

pratyaye sati mokṣo 'sti piṇḍa-pātena [instr. for loc.] *sarvathā* |
viṣayeṣu [loc. for abl.] *na mucyeta siddha-bhāvaṃ na gacchati* || 10.103

When there is evidence [of the first five *āveśas*], there is complete liberation [only] when the body drops. He is not freed from the sense-objects, nor does he reach the Siddha-state [in this life].

anuṣṭhāna-tapopāyair yadānanda-bhṛtas tanuḥ |
tadādhikāraḥ kartavyo yasyājñā tasya tat-pade || 10.111

When his body is filled with bliss due to his spiritual practice and *tapas*, then qualification (*adhikāra*) should be conferred on he who has the Transmission on that level.

Only *sāmbhavāveśa*, then, constitutes final liberation, yet each level of *āveśa* confers a degree of *adhikāra* (for what is not mentioned).

In summary, this long KMT passage sometimes seems to equate *vedha* with *āveśa*,⁵⁶⁸ but in general sees *vedha-dīkṣā* as the cause of an *āveśa* experience that in turn grants a particular level of *adhikāra* (aptitude, qualification). The six levels of *āveśa* here are progressive and hierarchical; through *vedha-dīkṣā*, one can climb the ladder of the *tattvas* (= *tattva-jaya*) in six steps instead of thirty-six, which is consonant with the Kaula claim to offer a faster, more direct path to liberation.

A short excursus on brief mentions of *vedha-dīkṣā* in related sources follows.⁵⁶⁹ The compound also appears in a Krama scripture called the *Devī-dvyardha-śatikā* (DDS; a short text of the Northern Kaula transmission),⁵⁷⁰ in a verse and a half that connects to the theme of falling to the ground that was so central in the *Tantrasadbhāva*:

tatkṣaṇāt patate bhūmau chinna-mūla iva drumah |
vedha-dīkṣā-prayogena saṃkrāntā yasya hṛd-guhā || 191
tatkṣaṇāj jāyate so 'pi dīpād dīpam ivoddhṛtam |

In an instant,⁵⁷¹ he falls on the ground like a tree cut at the root. He whose heart-space receives transmission through the process of *vedha-dīkṣā*, like a flame lit from another flame, is [re]-born in an instant.

The text goes on to say that the initiand who makes his mind free of the need for any external support, dissolving it in the stainless sky (of awareness), and who

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. Abhinavagupta's near-equation of *viddha* and *abhiniviṣṭa/āviṣṭa* in the ĪPv, p. 333 below.

⁵⁶⁹ See also Appendix Two, on *vedha-dīkṣā* in *Tantrāloka* 29.

⁵⁷⁰ Aka the *Sārdhaśatikā* (quoted as such by Jayaratha ad TĀ 4.149). Note that this text shares much material with the *Yonigahvara* (for which it was probably the source) and was redacted as the *Siddhakhaṇḍa* of the *Manthānabhairava-tantra* (MS ff. 179v1-86v3).

⁵⁷¹ The previous line appears to be corrupt, but involves lineage-transmission: DYCZKOWSKI's provisional edition has *rañjikākṣara-yogena pāraparya-mukhāgame* (?) ||.

contemplates his mind as completely pure collapses to the ground in accordance with the success of that practice (193-4). Then the subtle grace-bestowing power enters his heart, and when he rises from the ground, the guru should give him the esoteric mantra (195). This, we are told, is the kind of initiation that connects the initiand to the action of “penetration” (*vedha-karman*, 196).⁵⁷² Here at least we are given some sense of an actual practice thought to bring out an *āveśa*-type experience, something most of our scriptural texts have been surprisingly vague about. We should note that the verse quoted above (191c-2b) also appears in the *Ūrmikaulārṇava* (which is also of the Northern Kaula transmission) as 3.103 (but reading *vindate* for *jāyate* and *ivoditam* for *ivoddhṛtam*).

Vedha also occurs in connection with *śakti(ni)pāta* in a purely Kula/Kaula text, the obscure and fragmentary *Kulānanda-tantra*.⁵⁷³ This text is unfortunately highly corrupt, but it speaks (in v. 32) of a *ūrdhvaśaktinipāta* (“Descent of the Upper Power”) that is triggered by *vedha*-[*dīkṣā*] performed by the guru. In the next verse, *ūrdhvaśakti* is metaphorically glossed with *acala* and made the object of a denominative gerund, *cakrayitvā* (to form into a wheel?), and a causative optative, *bhrāmayet* (to turn round), in an apparent allusion to the churning of Mount Meru by the *devas* and *asuras* in the well-known myth:

athānyaṃ paramaṃ devi durā-vedhaṃ vadāmy aham |
jvalaj-jvalana-saṃdhyasthaṃ tatraiva lakṣayed devi || 31 ||
taṃ tritakoṭi-samaprabhā ūrdhva{ṃ}-śakti-nipātataḥ⁵⁷⁴
bedhayed vicakṣaṇaḥ bedhayitvā tu {taṃ} lakṣayet || 32 ||
jvalanā-kāṣṭha-prabhāṃ ūrdhva-śaktiṃ cakrayitvācalaṃ bhrāmayet punaḥ |
bedhayet sā manaḥ-sahasrāṇi samakāni tu kā kathā || 33 ||

Here, the churning stick is the central channel, which is compared to a blazing log (*jvalanākāṣṭha*). The process culminates in the “piercing” of the “thousand-[petalled lotus] of the heart-mind.” What we seem to have here is an early version of the later doctrine that *śaktipāta* triggers a rise of energy from the base of the subtle body.⁵⁷⁵ No further information is given, however. This concludes our short excursus on *vedha*.

Before leaving the KMT behind, we should note a mysterious passage that opens chapter 21 of the text:

lakṣācāra-mano-rūpāḥ śaktayo vīrya-saṃsthitāḥ |

⁵⁷² *tāvat saṃdahyate devi pāśaṃ caivordhvādho-gatam | nirādhāraṃ manaḥ kṛtvā nirmale gagane pade || 193 || yāvat cintayate tasya viśuddhena manā priye | tāvat saṃpatate bhūmau kāṣṭha-pāṣāṇavat sthitāḥ || 194 || paścāt tasya kalā sūkṣmā citte hy amṛta-varṣiṇī | tataś cotthāpya bhūmes tu mantram tasyaiva dāpayet || 195 || eṣā dīkṣā mahesāni vedha-karmaṇi yojayet |* From the provisional etext edition by Mark S.G. DYCZKOWSKI, based on two MSS: MS K, NAK #1-242 / NGMPP A 161/12 (paper, Newārī script, incomplete); MS Kh, NAK #5-5184 (*śaivatantra* 655) / NGMPP A 161/14 (paper, devanāgarī, complete). DYCZKOWSKI notes: “what is noted on the NGMPP index cards as NAK #1-252 / NGMPP A 1177/11 is MS K. The MS number has been noted wrongly.”

⁵⁷³ This text was brought to my attention by Somadeva VASUDEVA, who transcribed its manuscript (NAK 1-135 / NGMPP A40/5) and very kindly shared the etext with me.

⁵⁷⁴ em. Somadeva VASUDEVA : *śaktinipātānyataḥ* MSS

⁵⁷⁵ Note that in Kaula sources, the triangle or *trikoṇa* (here *tritakoṭi*) is the symbol associated with the *mons pubis* area of the body; see TĀ/TS 5, treated below, pp. 342ff.

rudra-śakti-samāveśās tābhir ātmani-br̥ṃhaṇam || 21.1

śiva-caitanya-yogena śakti-caitanya-br̥ṃhaṇam |
śakti-caitanya-yogena jīva-caitanya-br̥ṃhaṇam || 21.2

jīva-caitanya-yogena mantra-caitanya-br̥ṃhaṇam
mantra-caitanya-yogena piṇḍa-caitanya-br̥ṃhaṇam || 21.3

piṇḍa-caitanya-yogena bāhyācārasya br̥ṃhaṇam
caitanyaena vinā sarvam asvatantram śilādivat || 21.4

The powers that reside in potency (*vīrya*) are the forms of a mind practicing toward a specific goal; they are the Immersions into Rudra's Power (*rudra-śakti-samāveśāḥ*). By them, there is self-enhancement. By means of [or: by the yoga of] Śiva-consciousness, Śakti-consciousness is increased. By means of Śakti-consciousness, Jīva-consciousness is increased. By means of Jīva-consciousness, Mantra-consciousness is increased. By means of Mantra-consciousness, Piṇḍa-consciousness is increased. By means of Piṇḍa-consciousness, external practice is increased. Without consciousness, everything is devoid of autonomy, like a rock.

The passage is obscure, not least because we would expect the progression from Śiva to Śakti to jīva etc. to take place in precisely the reverse order. What is interesting for our purposes is that here *rudra-śakti-samāveśās* (in the plural) are themselves conceived of as powers (*śaktis*) by which one achieves a kind of increase or enhancement (*br̥ṃhaṇa*) of one's individual power. It is possible, even likely, that here mantras are intended, because these *śaktis* are said to reside in *vīrya*, which almost definitely means *mantra-vīrya*.⁵⁷⁶ Thus, as was suggested in the MVT, *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* can refer to a particularly powerful mantra as well as its effect.

Āveśa in the Vijñāna-bhairava-tantra

The *Vijñāna-bhairava-tantra* (VBT) is a text of the esoteric Kaula Trika already introduced on pp. 90-93 above. It is a highly elliptical text, meant to be taught with the oral commentary of a guru. It includes some interesting if mysterious verses on *samāveśa* which we will briefly examine.

The first occurrence of *āveśa* in the text is surprising: if I am interpreting the verse correctly, here the word means physical entry in the act of copulation, with the word *śakti* denoting a female consort:

śakti-saṃgama-saṃkṣubdha-śaktyāveśāvasānikam |
yat sukham brahma-tattvasya tat sukhaṃ svākyam ucyate || 69

The conclusion of entry into *śakti*, the [orgasmic] excitation resulting from union with *śakti*, is the joy of the Absolute Reality; that is said to be one's innate joy.

Of course the verse can be explained in nonsexual terms, and that is probably intentional, but the verses framing this one (68 and 70) are implicitly and explicitly sexual respectively, making it very unlikely that verse 69 was not intended sexually. However, I think it is clear that here the author intends us to understand that

⁵⁷⁶ Thanks to Christopher TOMPKINS for this interpretation.

copulation with a consecrated consort (*śaktyāveśa*) is equivalent to absorption into the Goddess' power (*śaktyāveśa*). Otherwise he could hardly associate it with “the joy of the Absolute Reality” (*brahma-tattvasya sukham*). A later commentator, however, interprets the verse as speaking of the “culmination of absorption into the power of bliss (*ānanda-śakti-samāveśah*) that comes from the excitation of union with a *śakti*-consort” which is hardly different apart from reserving the term (*sam*)*āveśa* to a not-specifically-sexual meaning, i.e. absorption into a feeling or energy-state that happens to be triggered by sexual union.

In a later verse, the phrase *śakti-samāveśa* occurs in a very different context:
ādihāreṣv athavā 'śaktyā 'jñānāc citta-layena vā |
jāta-śakti-samāveśa-kṣobhānte bhairavaṃ vapuḥ || 112

When the mind dissolves in unknowing, or else through a lack of ability in [cognizing any specific] objects of focus, then *śakti-samāveśa* arises, and at the termination of that excitation, the Bhairava-body [of pure spaciousness manifests].

In this verse, *śakti-samāveśa* refers to an immersion into the “energy” or immediate uninterpreted quality of any particular experience, made possible by the suspension of the analytical discursive mind. A lack of ability to properly cognize or understand any particular object of attention (*ādihāra*) is here seen as an opportunity to allow the thinking mind to dissolve, which makes way for *śakti-samāveśa*, the intuitive immediate nondiscursive apprehension of the energy of the moment.⁵⁷⁷ However, in light of verse 69, we see a suggested sense (*dhvani*) or perhaps even a double meaning (*śleṣa*) here, for *√kṣub* (excite) appears in both verses, and *kṣobhānte* is easily read as “at the end of lovemaking” or “at the end of orgasm.” In this reading, then, the mind dissolves and releases its focus because of union with a consort (*śakti-samāveśa*), in the aftermath of which the *nirvikalpa* spaciousness (that Bhairava denotes in this text) arises. But this cannot be the primary meaning, because it would be redundant with verses 69-70.

The last occurrences of *samāveśa* in the VBT are near the end of the text, in the passage that redefines the fundamental elements of Śaiva practice in terms of internal gnostic experience (see p. 93).

kṣapaṇāt sarva-pāpānāṃ trāṇāt sarvasya pārvati || 150
rudra-śakti-samāveśas tat-kṣetraṃ bhāvanā parā |

The [true] holy place of pilgrimage (*kṣetra*) is the state of being immersed in the Power of Rudra, the supreme meditation, which arises due to starving (*kṣap*) all sins and saving (*tra*) all beings.

Here the key phrase *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*, so significant in earlier Trika and Kaula texts, is defined as the both “the supreme meditation” (*parā bhāvanā*, where *parā* also refers to the Goddess Parādevī) and “the holy place of pilgrimage” (*kṣetra*, *≈ tīrtha*)

⁵⁷⁷ Note that this is different from the sense that Abhinavagupta applies to these terms, since for him this would be a *sāmbhava-samāveśa*, as the *śākta* state does not for him entail the dissolution of the mind but rather the active use of *vikalpas* (that spontaneously dissolve into *nirvikalpa* awareness when the practice is successful).

which is attained by “starving all the sins” and vowing to save all beings (through one’s practice). These acts, the text implies, place one in a kind of state of grace which opens one up to the experience of *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*. By comparing the latter to a place of pilgrimage, the author implies that it is indeed a state of being (*avasthā*) or experience (*anubhava*). The text goes on to say:

anyathā tasya tattvasya kā pūjā kāś ca tṛpyati || 151
 Otherwise, what worship could there be of that Reality, and whom would it gratify?

This is an illusion to the pan-Śaiva doctrine that only having *become* Śiva can one worship Śiva (*śivībhūyaḥ śivaṃ yajet*). The injunction is usually taken to refer to a ritual process by which the practitioner identifies himself with Śiva (about which more will be said in section 2.4); but here the teaching is given a stronger, typically Kaula variant: that one must be possessed/immersed in Rudra’s Power to do proper worship, and that in such a state one is oneself the recipient of that worship. The logical extension of this line of thought is that outer ritual performances need not be done if one experiences the internal states to which they correspond. The next verse says:

svatantrānanda-cin-mātra-sāraḥ svātmā hi sarvataḥ |
āveśanaṃ tat-svarūpe svātmanaḥ snānam īritam || 152 ||
 In every way, the essence of one’s own self is simply the awareness of the bliss of one’s [innate] freedom. Immersion into that essence-nature of oneself is [here] proclaimed as the [true] ‘purificatory bath’ (*snāna*).⁵⁷⁸

Here again, a traditional practice, that of the purificatory bath, is recoded in terms of inner experience, specifically that of immersion into one’s true nature (*āveśanaṃ tat-svarūpe*), here defined as awareness of the bliss of one’s innate freedom.

The final verse that uses ectour key term is that which gives the penultimate teaching of the whole text:

asyām anucaran tiṣṭhan mahānanda-maye ’dhvare |
tayā devyā samāviṣṭaḥ paraṃ bhairavam āpnuyāt || 155 ||
 Serving Her, remaining on the path consisting of great joy—‘possessed’ by that Goddess, one attains supreme Bhairava.

Curiously for such an esoteric and essentializing text, here a phrase appears that can be interpreted in terms of straightforward possession. This verse adds little to our understanding, however, for we have already seen that the infusion of goddess-power (*devyā samāviṣṭaḥ*) can be a means to access the awe-inspiring state of consciousness denoted by the term Bhairava.

Conclusions to 2.3: scriptural sources

Our exploration of the scriptural sources has taken us on a journey through primitive early materials in which “possession” is intended more or less literally (BY), through Trika sources in which *āveśa* denotes any kind of powerful spiritual experience, and one that is specifically required for efficacy of mantras (MVT, SYM),

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. NEMEC 2011: 47.

through Kaula sources in which signs that resemble madness are thought to demonstrate an infusion of divine power, called *śaktipāta* or *samāveśa* more or less interchangeably (TU, ŪKA, TSB, KMT), to Saiddhāntika sources which seemingly divorce *samāveśa* from *śaktipāta*, making the latter term denote a wholly benign act of grace that awakens the soul but does not result in the more extreme signs (MVT, SSS, KT). Now we will summarize what we have learned from these sources, synthesizing the relevant points where they naturally converge.

In the BY (pp. 158-168), we saw the *siddhi*-seeking *sādhaka* conduct bizarre cremation ground rites to summon Bhairava, who then entered the *sādhaka*'s mouth and took up residence in his heart (with the deity's retinue arrayed throughout the *sādhaka*'s body), granting him all His powers and making him into a duplicate of Himself. This is an infusion of the deity's power (as we saw in the Vidura and Bharadvāja stories in the Mbh.), not a merging of selves: the verbs *√viś* and *pra-√viś* are used (as opposed to *ā-√viś* and *samā-√viś* in the sources discussed below).

In the Trika sources (pp. 168-189), we encountered the term *rudra-śakti*, meaning something like "God's power," and *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*, meaning "infusion with (or possession by) God's power," as opposed to the physically defined entry of specific named deities as we saw in the BY. The SYM claimed that *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* was necessary for mantric efficacy (*mantra-vīrya*) and thus for the *siddhi* such efficacy brings; therefore one should look for evidence of this *samāveśa* in the guru. Five signs are given as the evidence (which are later repeated in the MVT). Such a teacher permeated by *rudra-śakti* can bestow grace on anyone through initiation (even a low-caste sinner) through the power of mantra that he manifests (*mantra-vīrya-prakāśakaḥ*). Here, as in the Kaula sources, *āveśa* can signify an influx of power through the transmission of a mantra. Finally, the SYM implied that the experience of one's real Self (*ātma-parigraha*) is a type of *samāveśa*, because it too brings *mantra-vīrya*. Thus the significance of spiritual experience is emphasized. The MVT continued this theme, but raised the bar of sophistication, adding a gnostic element: for example, in one passage redacted from the SYM, "knowing all the principles of reality" (*sarva-tattvāni vetti*) replaces *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*. But the MVT is very concerned with spiritual experience, introducing (but not explaining) in its second chapter a typology of 150 types of *samāveśa*, and then assuring us that in fact there are far more than this, seemingly an attempt to validate a wide range of experiences. In its first chapter, we learned that it is the transmission of God's power (*rudra-śakti-samāveśa*), in varying degrees, that directly causes the different sequences of events by which souls attain liberation. Thus the MVT explicitly takes *samāveśa* and *śaktipāta* as synonyms or near-synonyms. When teaching a Kaula variety of initiation, we saw the term *śaktipāta* used in the context of entry-level initiation (*samaya-dīkṣā*) and *samāveśa* used in the same context in the more advanced *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*. In the former case, the sign that it has occurred is that the initiand moves through the ritual without a sense of personal will, i.e. with the feeling that his movements are controlled by *śakti*. In the latter case, we are given five (new) signs of *samāveśa*: Bliss, Ascent, Trembling, Sleep, and Whirling (which also appear in the ŪKA and CMSS). At the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* level, the candidate must be abandoned if he does not show any of these signs; in other words, evidence of *samāveśa* is required for Kaula initiates to proceed. The same is true in the TSB (pp.

218-223), in which we saw that collapsing due to the intensity of the energy transmitted by the mantra in initiation was absolutely required of the candidate.

In the purely Kaula sources (such as the TU and ŪKA, pp. 197-214), we meet the term *saṅkrānti* or transmission, as an apparent equivalent for *samāveśa* (for example, in the TU, *jñāna-saṅkrānti* was defined as *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*). We also find the term *āveśa-guru*, signifying one who can bestow this transmission. One in whom *rudra-śakti* has entered experiences various bodily symptoms (like shaking) and ecstasies (TU 4) that give way to various visions of *yoginīs* and other worlds. In a typical Kaula statement emphasizing religious experience over rites, we were told that all the mantras and tantras are void and useless without *rudra-śakti*, which is consistently discussed in experiential terms. The ŪKA continued this line of thought, including all the same elements as the TU, but also introducing the terms *vedha-dikṣā* and *vedha-saṅkramaṇa* to denote an intensely powerful transmission from the guru that results in *samāveśa*. The term *śaktipāta* is also used to denote the cause of *samāveśa*; all these terms overlap in ambiguous ways in the ŪKA. When it comes to classification, we saw a synthesis of terms from the TU and the MVT (whether those were sources for the ŪKA or not). In the KMT (pp. 223-232), we saw all the same themes repeat: *vedha-dikṣā* causes *āveśa*, and *āveśa* can occur in many different forms. Here, though, we met with a hierarchy of six levels of *āveśa* which was coterminous with the *tattva* map; that is, one can theoretically be “possessed” by any of the *tattvas* (abstract principles of reality). Clearly, possession in the usual sense is not intended. *Āveśa* on any level below *manas-tattva* results in symptoms resembling madness (shaking, weeping, babbling); from *manas* up to *prakṛti* the result is omniscience, and from *puruṣa* up to *unmanā* the result is Śivahood.

In the Saiddhāntika sources we saw none of this, or almost none; but *śaktipāta* (divorced from *samāveśa*) holds an important place. In our earliest Tantric source (the NTS) we saw that *śaktipāta* is held to grant both initiation and gnosis (or that initiation grants gnosis through *śaktipāta*). In the mature Siddhānta, *śaktipāta* is an act of grace on the part of God that awakens the soul (*ātmānaṃ prakāśayet, puṁ-prabodhini*) and greater awareness (e.g. of one’s real nature and of the fruitlessness of worldly life) is evidence that it has taken place (*cidvat, bodha-cihna*). *Śaktipāta* is held to be that which causes a previously indifferent person to seek a guru and initiation; but there are subtle traces of the idea that *śaktipāta* is also something that can occur during initiation. The SSS tells us that *śaktipāta* is a bestowal of grace that erodes enough of a person’s *mala* to give rise to the desire for liberation in him. The KT is concerned with the occasion for *śaktipāta* or the question of why it happens at some particular time and not another (a question that does not occur in the non-Saiddhāntika sources), and therefore posits the doctrine of *karmasāmya*. The term *āveśa* does not occur in these Saiddhāntika sources, excepting as a rare passing mention.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁹ As at Parākhya 14.97, where *samāveśa* is one of several glosses on the term *yoga*: *yogo vā tat-samāveśas tat-svarūpa-vibhāvanāt | vibhutvān na pater yogaḥ proktas tad upacārataḥ ||* “Or yoga is immersion into Him arising from the contemplation of His nature. [In fact] union (*yogaḥ*) with the Lord is impossible, because He is all-pervading. [When] it is spoken of [in scripture], then [it is spoken of] in a figurative sense” (trans. GOODALL 2004: 384).

In sum, we can say that the ideas represented by the terms *śaktipāta*, *samāveśa*, *saṅkrānti*, and so on all converge in privileging the phenomenology of religious experience, whether that is conceived as mild, dramatic, or bizarre. Some form of religious transformation is required by all branches of scriptural Śaivism: the Saiddhāntikas require *śaktipāta* for *dīkṣā* to take place, and the Kaulas require *āveśa* to occur during initiation, and also suggest that further *āveśas* must take place (on three or more levels) for the aspirant to reach the goal, which itself can be conceived as a kind of stabilized, ongoing *samāveśa* (MVT, TU). The Saiddhāntika tendency is to view *śaktipāta* as a transmission of grace direct from God, while the Kaulas prefer to view both *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa* as triggered (at least initially) by the power and presence of a charismatic Kaula guru (whose power is largely derived from his own *samāveśa*). The former gives rise to relatively mild exoteric symptoms while the latter manifests more dramatic and strange psychophysical states (*vikāras*). But all Śaivācāryas are instructed by Śiva in his scriptures to look for evidence that some form of divine grace or power has descended on an aspirant, and in absence of that evidence, are not to grant him the liberating initiation. In this way, Śaivism positions itself as an esoteric initiatory tradition that calls for, even demands, the presence of the interior dimension of the religious life, thus reserving membership to those for whom liberation (*mokṣa*) is a real possibility. How successful this practice was in actual practice is of course unknown to us, and unlikely to ever be known.

2.4 *Dīkṣā and āveśa in the ritual manuals (paddhati)*

The literature denoted by the term *paddhati* is not scriptural, being composed by named human authors; but it is closer to the scriptural materials than any other exegetical material, being a detailed description of ritual procedures that are often only alluded to in outline in the scriptures themselves. SANDERSON translates a definition of *paddhati* given by Rāmakaṅṭha:

For any scripture a *paddhati* is a text which enables the performance of the rituals [of that scripture] along with the mantras [that accompany them] by succinctly arranging in the order [of performance] (i) the [instructions] explicitly stated [in that scripture but] dispersed in various places [throughout its length], and (ii) whatever [else] those explicit statements imply.⁵⁸⁰

As we have seen, the scriptural material can be exceedingly vague and lacking in concrete description, therefore the large corpus of *paddhatis* demands our attention. Unfortunately, these texts are currently the least studied textual stratum of the tradition. Pioneering work was done in French by Hélène BRUNNER on the crucial *Somaśambhu-paddhati* aka the *Kriyākāṅḍa-kramāvalī* (late 11th cen.), but the lion's share remains to be done. SANDERSON has begun to look at the issue of *paddhatis* governing regional practice versus transregional *paddhatis* that became near-universal reference works, like the *Somaśambhu-paddhati*. The most important source for the latter work is *Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati*, composed in the mid-eleventh century by (or more likely under the patronage of) Paramāra King Bhojadeva of Dhārā. It is the

⁵⁸⁰ *Sārdhatrisāti-kālottara-vṛtti* p. 45, ll. 6–7, quoted in SANDERSON 2005c: 356n19.

latter that we will study in this section, due to its brevity and clarity. The two *paddhatis* just mentioned are the primary sources for a twelfth-century *paddhati* by South Indian Aghoraśivācārya, the *Kriyākramadyotikā*, which is the subject of a thorough dissertation by Wayne SURDAM (1984), which I have also consulted.

What I wish to show—and this has not been demonstrated in print to my knowledge—is that the concept of *āveśa*, understood as the temporary fusion of beings ordinary considered distinct (such as guru and disciple) is central to the *dīkṣā* rite even in the orthoprax version promulgated by the Saiddhāntikas. More than anything we have seen thus far, the centrality of the idea of *āveśa* in the standard pan-Indian model of Śaiva *dīkṣā* demonstrates its significance to Śaivism as a whole. I say the *idea* of *āveśa* because of course in Saiddhāntika contexts initiands were not expected to show evidence of *āveśa* in the manner required by the Kaula texts (but recall that they *were* expected to show evidence of *śaktipāta* in order to receive *dīkṣā* in the first place). In fact the initiand may feel nothing at all during his (non-Kaula) initiation, because the orthoprax *dīkṣā* is held to be valid not on the basis of *cihnas* or *pratyaya*, but simply because the mantras and rituals revealed by Śiva for this purpose are infallible.⁵⁸¹ The *āveśa* which occurs in the standard *dīkṣā* is formalized in ritual actions that the initiand need not understand the meaning of. Nonetheless, it is crucially important that the culminating act of *dīkṣā*—that of fusion with Śiva—is clearly an instance of a type of *āveśa*, and it is this very act that lays down the *saṃskāra* that fructifies at the moment of death as the attainment of full Śivahood.

Furthermore, there are other instances of *āveśa* in the *dīkṣā* rite that we will examine. It might not be overextending the argument to say that *āveśa* (whether or not that term is used) must be understood as the driving force of *dīkṣā* as an efficacious ritual technology. As SANDERSON writes,

The distinctive essence of the rituals of initiation is that the officiant is believed by means of mantras, ritual gestures, visualizations and the control of breathing to pass into the body of the initiand, to take hold of the soul, and raising it out of that body unite it with Śiva. [In] this technique consciousness is materialized and manipulated through imagination reinforced by utterance and gesture . . . in initiation the Guru's manipulation of his own soul and that of the initiand flow together, since the latter's [future] liberation is achieved when the Guru takes the initiand's soul into his own body, fuses it with his soul and then raises them up as one through his body to unite them with Śiva above it.⁵⁸²

As we have seen, *āveśa* among other things can denote the temporary unity of two apparently separate conscious entities; and the related term *para-śarīrāveśa* is also

⁵⁸¹ But note that the term *pratyaya* can also be used in the sense of “faith-inspiring miracles” (which include stopping the effects of poison and curing malefic/afflictive possession), whereby observers become convinced that because Śiva's mantras can accomplish these magical acts, liberation through His mantras, rites, and yoga is also possible. See *Sārdhatrisātikālottara* 21, *Tantrasadbhāva* 9.242c-3b, and the discussion at TAK 3 s.v. *pratyaya*. So in *this* sense *pratyayas* are part of the orthodox argument for the efficacy of *dīkṣā*.

⁵⁸² *Śaivism, Society, and the State*, unpublished manuscript dated May 1, 2004, pp. 17-18.

relevant here (though it is not used), for the guru must enter the disciple's body in a subtle form in order to draw out his soul and unite it with Śiva. Before proceeding to our examination of the *Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati*, a brief review of the role of *dīkṣā* seems appropriate, which will also allow us to recap several key concepts.

2.4.1 *The role of initiation (dīkṣā) in Śaivism*

Initiation was the central rite of all forms of Śaivism throughout its history. It served a crucial role in the psychology of the religion, for it addressed the problem of the deep-seated cultural belief in *karma*. Since the number of previous incarnations was held to be incalculable, one's storehouse of *karma* was vast, far more than could be resolved in a single lifetime. This belief made the goal of radical freedom (*mokṣa*) seem unreachably remote for most. One of the most significant features of the Tantric ceremony of initiation (*dīkṣā*), then, was that the divinely revealed mantras, mudrās, and dhyanas employed during the ceremony were thought to liberate one from all *karma* destined to bear fruit in future lives, thereby bringing the goal of the path within the reach of a single lifetime.

As already noted, those who demonstrated their *adhikāra* (qualification) through displaying the signs of *śaktipāta* were initiated on that basis alone, for the receipt of *śaktipāta* was held to mean that Śiva wanted them to be initiated. There were two levels of initiation: the *samaya-dīkṣā* or probationary initiation for novices, and the full *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, or initiation that ensures liberation at the moment of death or sooner. As we have seen, this elaborate two-day ceremony was sometimes dispensed with in the more radical Kaula branch of the tradition, in which initiation can be granted by a fully awakened master with a word, a glance, a touch, a thought, etc. The Kaulas believed that initiation, to be effective, must trigger an *āveśa* (sometimes also called *śaktipāta*) observable in the degree to which the initiate is affected in body and mind by the ceremony.

The first form of initiation, the *samaya-dīkṣā*, granted the initiate the right and obligation to study the scriptures and begin a daily practice. Samayins, as they were called, were required to take a vow that they would follow a strict code of conduct (or *samaya*) with eight or more elements. Unmarried samayins would often live in the home of the guru (*gurukula*) to receive instruction, and also to be observed during their probationary period. After some time (probably one to five years, though our sources don't stipulate), if they felt ready and were judged ready, they would take the full *nirvāṇa* initiation, usually after they became independent householders.

A close study of the two initiations reveals that the *samaya-dīkṣā* was based on an earlier Atimārgic form once considered complete in itself, and that the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* is a more elaborate form unique to the Tantric phase of the religion, with which it sought to distinguish itself as more complete and efficacious. We can see this in the fact that the elements considered to define the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*—the cutting of bonds (*pāśa-ccheda*) and union with Śiva (*śiva-yojanikā*)—are already present in a much abbreviated form in the *samaya-dīkṣā*.

2.4.2 *Dikṣā in the Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati (SSP)*⁵⁸³

We will briefly summarize the steps of initiation that do not relate to our theme, and translate the specific passages that do. I should note here that my understanding of the SSP was assisted by outlines prepared by Christopher TOMPKINS, who has been working on this text for some time, as well as by unpublished work by Professor SANDERSON (cited below).

First we should note that since the first quarter (approximately) of the *nirvāṇa-dikṣā* is the same as the *samaya-dikṣā*, they would generally be performed together, with aspirants taking the *samaya* “graduating” partway through the first day, while those taking the more advanced *nirvāṇa* initiation finished out the day, slept in the ritual space, and continued the next morning with an even more intense day of ritual activity (see the outline at Table 9 below). Furthermore, the daily meditation and ritual (*nitya-pūjā*) that the initiate was to perform for the rest of his life is in the main a condensed reiteration of key elements of the initiation. For this reason, the *paddhatis* often treat the two initiations and the daily worship all at the same time, making it difficult to parse the various elements (as in the case of *Tantrāloka* chapter 15). However, the SSP has the advantage of relative clarity in this regard and is terse as well, making it ideal for our purposes, since we do not have the space here for a thorough examination of *dikṣā*, which merits an entire dissertation in itself.

Now we will summarize the steps of the ritual. In preparation for the two-day ceremony, the guru created a sacred space centered on the initiatory maṇḍala of his lineage. The maṇḍala, usually square and anywhere from 12 to 35 feet on a side, was carefully drawn with chalk and filled in with various colored powders (much like the Tantric Buddhist maṇḍalas still seen today). A white canopy was suspended over the maṇḍala, with curtains of multi-colored cloth hanging from it on all four sides, concealing the maṇḍala from view and creating a container for the energy to be generated. The inner side of the curtain-walls were decorated with flags, pennants, garlands of flowers, strings of little bells, protective threads of five colors, and mirrors. Ghee-burning lamps were arranged around the perimeter of the whole space, casting the warm glow of many dozens of flames. Also placed at various points around the maṇḍala were parasols, yak-tail whisks, and consecrated bronze vases containing a gold coin, filled with water and flowers, and with a belt of cloth around them as well as a garland of flowers.⁵⁸⁴

At dawn on the morning of the first day of the ceremony, the guru completes various preliminary rites, then installs the deities in the form of their mantras at the

⁵⁸³ Text of the SSP sourced from an etext provided to me by Christopher TOMPKINS, which consists of an edition prepared (probably by Sanderson) on the basis of two manuscripts: A = NAK 1-1363, NGMPP B 28/29, completed in Saṃvat 197 (1077/8 CE), B = NAK 5-743, NGMPP B 28/19, completed Saṃvat 231 (1111/2 CE). When referring to these MSS, folio and line numbers are used, e.g. 25r2 means folio 25 *recto* (front side) line 2.

⁵⁸⁴ This description of the ritual space is paraphrased from SANDERSON’s *Śaivism, Society, and the State*, which account draws on *Jayadratha-yāmala*’s *Saṅkas* 1 and 2 and the *Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati*, with details added from *Netra-tantra* 18.52 and *Hara-carita-cintāmaṇi* 31.77-79. See also SURDAM 1984: lxxxii-iv.

appropriate points on the maṇḍala, thus “enlivening” it.⁵⁸⁵ Next he seeks the permission of the deity to proceed with the initiation, and it is here that the first instance of something like *āveśa* occurs. The guru must meditate on the fusion of his agency with Śiva’s, thus becoming the locus and the instrument through which Śiva acts. This is equally true whether the *ācārya* is dualist or nondualist in outlook and is a pan-Śaiva doctrine. In fact it would only be in a radically nondual context that we would expect this step to be eliminated, since it would be unnecessary to accomplish what is always already true.

In the SSP, the fusion of the guru’s agency with Śiva’s is accomplished through prayer consecrated with mantra repetition:

*bhagavan madīyaṃ deham āviśyānugrāhya-guṇa-sampannasyāsyānugrahaṃ
kurv ity anujñāṃ prārthya evaṃ karomīti bhagavato labdhānujño mūla-
mantraṇa saptakṛtvo ’bhimantritaṃ*

He should pray for Śiva’s permission [to proceed] thus: “O Lord, enter (*āviśya*) my body and bestow grace [through initiation] on this initiand who is worthy of being graced.” Feeling that the Lord has granted his permission (*evaṃ karomīti*), he should consecrate it with seven repetitions of the root-mantra.⁵⁸⁶

*tato maṇḍale sarva-karma-sākṣitvena śiva-kumbhe yajña-rakṣakatvena vahnau
homādhikaraṇatvena śiṣya-dehe tat-pāśa-sīthilikaraṇatvena svātmany
anugrāhakatvena ity adhikaraṇa-pañcake ’py aham eva śiva iti sadāśivād
apṛthag-bhūtam ātmānaṃ tat-samāna-guṇaṃ mama caite hrdayādi-mantrāḥ
karaṇa-bhūtā iti saṃcintya svatantra-patitvam ātmani sambhāvya śiśor
anugrahātma⁵⁸⁷ karma kuryāt. (MS A 16r-v; B 24r-v)*

Then he affirms that he is indeed Śiva (*aham eva śiva*) with regard to five loci of action: witnessing all the rites performed in the [presence of] the maṇḍala, maintaining the offerings into the consecrated vessel (*śiva-kumbha*), superintending the offerings into the fire,⁵⁸⁸ loosening the bonds in the disciple’s body, and favouring Himself [in the form of the

⁵⁸⁵ See *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 1, pp. 175-77 (KSTS ed.). The mantras are paradoxically both the primary instruments of worship and that which receives the worship being offered (which of course is not a problem in a nondual context).

⁵⁸⁶ For a close parallel, cf. MVT 9.37-38 (cited by Jayaratha ad TĀ 15.451ab): *gurutvena tvayaivāham ājñaptaḥ parameśvara | anugrāhyās tvayā śiṣyāḥ śiva-śakti-pracoditāḥ || tad ete tad-vidhāḥ prāptās tvam eṣāṃ kurv anugrahaṃ | madīyaṃ tanum āviśya yenāhaṃ tvat-samo bhava ||*. Note especially the use of the phrase *śiva-śakti-pracodita* to express the idea of *śaktipāta*, by which the disciple becomes *anugrāhya* (worthy of initiation); cf. 2.3.7 above. Cf. also Rāmakaṇṭha’s *vṛtti to Sārdhatrisīti-kālottara* 8.8 (*guruḥ śiva iti dvayoḥ kartṛtva-śruteḥ tatsiddhyarthaṃ maṇḍala-sthaṃ śivam evaṃ jñāpayet*), and *Svacchanda-tantra* p. 167.

⁵⁸⁷ °hātma corr. : °hāṭma B : °hāya A

⁵⁸⁸ Or perhaps the intended meaning of *homādhikaraṇatvena* is “as the locus of offerings,” i.e. the *śivāgni* itself. For Śiva is present in three primary ritual substrates here: the maṇḍala, the kumbha-vessel, and the consecrated fire; thus the guru is identifying himself with all three.

disciple].⁵⁸⁹ He should contemplate himself as nondifferent from Sadāśiva in this way, [and that] his qualities are equal to His, [and that] the mantras [used in the ritual] are his instruments; having honored the independent Lord as himself [in this way], he may [now] perform the ceremony that bestows [the Lord's] grace (*anugraha*) on His child [i.e., the initiand].

Here the confluence of the guru's agency with Śiva's, by virtue of which the latter acts through the former, is explicitly denoted by the term that elsewhere means possession (*āviś*). However, this is nothing like the seemingly uncontrolled possession resembling madness we have seen in the Kaula sources,⁵⁹⁰ but rather is a linguistically affirmed and ritually enacted conviction, namely, that a properly consecrated *ācārya* can act as the Lord's instrument simply by inviting Him to act through him.⁵⁹¹ What sort of confirmation that Śiva has indeed given his permission does the Saiddhāntika *ācārya* seek? It seems he simply has the feeling that the Lord has responded affirmatively, a feeling characterized by the phrase *evaṃ karomi* ("I will act thusly"), implicitly attributed to the deity. He reinforces this feeling by contemplating (*saṃcintya*) the fusion of his agency with Śiva's in terms of the five loci of action (*adhikaraṇa-pañcaka*) mentioned above. But the most salient examples of *āveśa* within initiation are yet to come.

Next the initiand(s)⁵⁹² would arrive for the ceremony, and standing outside the canopied sacred space, he or she was consecrated with mantras, holy water, and the act of being tapped by *darbha* grass (*Poa cynosuroides*) dipped in sacred ash (a ritual act which goes all the way back to the Atimārga).⁵⁹³ Then he was blindfolded and led into the sacred space, where he was invited to throw a flower onto the maṇḍala. Then the initiand's blindfold was removed and he saw the initiation maṇḍala for the first time, radiant with the mantra-powers that had been installed into it. In the Kaula context, this moment is described in terms of *āveśa*, as exemplified in Abhinavagupta's account of initiation in his *Tantrāloka*:

dṛṣor nivārayet so 'pi śiṣyo jhaṭiti paśyati |
jhaṭity ālokite māntra-prabhāvollāsīte sthale || 15.451
tad-āveśa-vaśāc chiśyas tanmayatvaṃ prapadyate |
yathā hi rakta-hṛdayas tāṃs tāt kāntāguṇān svayam || 452
paśyaty evaṃ śaktipāta-saṃskṛto mantra-sannidhim |

⁵⁸⁹ These five are meant to suggest the Five Acts (*pañca-kṛtya*) of Śiva: creating, maintaining, dissolving, obscuring, and bestowing grace (in that order). It is unclear how "loosening the bonds" corresponds to obscuration (*tirodhāna*) except insofar as the existence of the bonds in the first place expresses that power.

⁵⁹⁰ Though it is interesting to note the similarity of language with sources all the way on the other end of the spectrum of orthopraxis: cf. *bhagavan madīyaṃ deham āviśya* . . . here with *bhagavān praviśya mama vīgraham* in the *Brahma-yāmala* (p. 160 above), where the context is literal possession.

⁵⁹¹ Cf. Sadyojyotiḥ's *Mokṣakārikā* 96ab: *ācārya-saṃsthito devo dikṣā-śaktyaiva muñcati*.

⁵⁹² There could in fact be up to five individuals initiated at once, but for convenience we assume one initiand here.

⁵⁹³ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 1, pp. 208-12.

The guru should remove the blindfold such that the disciple suddenly sees [the enlivened maṇḍala]. When he suddenly sees the worship-ground (= maṇḍala) radiant with the power of the mantras [that have been installed there], the mantras penetrate (*āveśa*) him, and because of this, he attains oneness with that [power]. For just as one whose heart is dyed with love spontaneously sees the various virtues of her beloved, so does one purified by the Descent of Power see the presence of the mantras [in the maṇḍala].⁵⁹⁴

Note that here *śaktipāta* enables the initiand to feel the presence of the mantras in the maṇḍala, which in turn makes it possible for them to enter him and merge with him. Thus (in this Kaulized context) *śaktipāta* makes *āveśa* possible.⁵⁹⁵ But even in the Saiddhāntika context, an experiential element is envisioned: the *Mṛgendrāgama* describes the initiand's eyes brimming with tears at the sight of the mantra-radiant maṇḍala.⁵⁹⁶

The next key element of the ritual is the *Śiva-hasta-vidhi*, the rite of laying on a mantra-empowered hand.⁵⁹⁷ The guru or *ācārya* installs the mantras in his right hand, worships them, and when he feels his hand vibrating with energy, he places it upon the initiand's head. This furthers the process becoming one with the mantric powers of one's divine identity. Next, offerings are made to the initiand as an embodiment of the divine and to a consecrated sacred fire. He pours part of a ladle-full of ghee onto the initiand's head and part into the fire. These oblations are called *sampātāhuti*; note the connotation of the word *sampāta* as the "fall" of a blessing onto the initiand.

Next comes the rite of *nāḍī-sandhāna*, or fusing of the channels, by which the disciple's subtle body is connected to his guru's.⁵⁹⁸

*darbha-mūlaṃ mūla-mantreṇa śiṣya-kara-tale dattvā darbhāgraṃ svajāṅghā-sandhau samniyojya, iḍā-piṅgalā-madhya-nāḍī*⁵⁹⁹ *śiṣya-dehād viniḥsrtya svanāḍyāṃ vilīneti sambhāvya nāḍī-sandhānārtham āhuti-trayaṃ mūla-mantreṇa deyam. tayā nāḍyā caitanya-grahaṇāya praveśa-nirgamau vidhātavyau.* (A 16v, B24v-25r)

He places the root of a stalk of *darbha* grass in the hand of the disciple, and places the tip in the crook of his own knee. Then he imagines the channel

⁵⁹⁴ For a parallel in the Buddhist Tantras, see *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha*, section 231, translated at SANDERSON 2009: 135.

⁵⁹⁵ Abhinavagupta further notes that by virtue of senses enhanced by a Descent of Power (*akṣais tat-sahakāribhiḥ*), one can perceive the presence of mantras that have been installed in a worship-ground, a human body, etc. Thus *śaktipāta* makes one able to perceive what was previously invisible: see the fuller translation of this passage on p. 306f below.

⁵⁹⁶ *Kriyāpāda* 7.61; citation courtesy of SANDERSON.

⁵⁹⁷ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 1, pp. 177-81 and 218-20; and *Somaśambhu-paddhati* III.1.108-9.

⁵⁹⁸ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 1, pp. 220-24 and BRUNNER 1994: 450.

⁵⁹⁹ *iḍā-piṅgalā-madhya-nāḍī* B : *suṣumnā-madhyamā-nāḍī* A. *nāḍīḥ* (B) is here corrected to *nāḍī* (A) to agree with *vilīnā*.

between the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā* (i.e. the *suṣumnā*)⁶⁰⁰ issuing forth from the body of the disciple [along the stalk of grass] and merging with his own [central] channel.⁶⁰¹ Then he offers three oblations with the root-mantra to stabilize the fusion of the channels. By means of this [connection of the] channel he will [later] enter and exit [the disciple's body] in order to grasp his consciousness.

The entry and exit (*praveśa-nirgamau*) referred to comes later in the ritual; this is simply the step that makes it possible.

This is the end of the rites that are common to both the *samaya-* and *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*. Those receiving only the *samaya* finish out their day of ritual with four more rites: removal of caste (*jāty-uddhāra*),⁶⁰² bestowing the state of brāhminhood (*dvijatvāpādana*), linking to Rudra (*rudrāṃśāpādanam*),⁶⁰³ and purification of consciousness (*caitanya-saṃskāraḥ*). The last of these particularly interests us here:

*tataś cāstreṇa prokṣaṇa-tādane kṛtvā recakena śiṣya-dehe praviśya viśleṣa-
cchedāv astreṇa vidhāya ankuśa-mudrayā tac-caitanyam ākṛṣya dvādaśānte
samānīya dhruvena samputya OM HAM OM saṃhāra-mudrayā sva-hṛdaye
pūrakeṇa praveśya kumbhakena samarasīkṛtya recakena brahmādi-devatāḥ
saṃtyajya dvādaśānte samānīya⁶⁰⁴ saṃputya OM HAM OM saṃhāra-mudrayā
saṃgrhya śiṣya-hṛdi saṃniveśya mūla-mantreṇa yajñopavītam abhimantrya
śiśor dadyāt. śataṃ sahasraṃ vā hutvā pūrṇāhutim dadyāt. evaṃ samaya-
saṃskāra-saṃskṛtaḥ . . . (A 17r, B 25r-v)*

Then, tapping the disciple with [*darbha* grass] consecrated with the weapon-mantra, he should enter his body with his exhale and then loosen and cut [his psychic bonds] with the weapon-mantra. Attracting his consciousness (visualized as a point of brilliant light⁶⁰⁵) with the goad-mudrā, he unites it with the *dvādaśānta*⁶⁰⁶ and encloses it firmly with the mantra OM HAM OM. He should then draw it into his own heart on the inhale, using the retraction-mudrā, and fuse it (*samarasīkṛtya*) with his own consciousness while retaining his breath. Then, exhaling, [and rising up the central channel,] leaving behind the five Cause-deities⁶⁰⁷ and

⁶⁰⁰ Or perhaps we are meant to understand that all three of the disciple's primary *nāḍīs* are connected to the guru's, in which case we would correct *vilīneti* to *vilīnā iti*. SANDERSON'S reading mitigates against this, however.

⁶⁰¹ Cf. the *nāḍī-sandhāna* described at TĀ 29.273-4.

⁶⁰² For this and the following two rituals, see *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 27-30.

⁶⁰³ The name of this rite undoubtedly goes back to the Atimārga, in which the supreme being is called Rudra and not Śiva. Note the use of the compound *rudrāṃśa*, literally "Rudra-aspect"; *X-aṃśa* is used to denote a special connection to a particular deity.

⁶⁰⁴ Reading *samānīya* with A against the etext edition's *dhruvena* from B.

⁶⁰⁵ *sphurat-tārakākāra*; this detail comes from the reiteration of this action in the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*.

⁶⁰⁶ This is the psychic space about a foot above a person's head, the upper limit of his "subtle body."

⁶⁰⁷ The *kāraṇa-devatāḥ* are Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśvara, and Sadāśiva; they have their seats along the central channel, at the heart, throat, the center of the palate, the eyebrow-center, and the crown of the head respectively (but see TAK 2, pp. 90-91).

uniting [the fused souls] with the *dvādaśānta*, he encloses [them] with the mantra OM HAM OM. He then grasps [the initiand's *caitanya*] with the retraction-mudrā and deposits it in his heart [once again]. Finally, he gives his 'child' a sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) consecrated with the root-mantra. Then he should finish by offering a *pūrṇāhuti* with one hundred or one thousand oblations. Thus is [the disciple] purified by the *samaya* rite.

Thus the *samaya-dikṣā* concludes with a rite that foreshadows in condensed form (*saṅkṣepāt*) the liberating *śiva-yojanikā* that culminates the *nirvāṇa-dikṣā*. Here the guru manipulates the soul or center of consciousness (*caitanya*) of the initiand by entering his body (*praviśya*) and drawing his *caitanya* up to the *Śiva-pada* above his head, then draws it into himself and fuses it with his own soul, again raising it to *dvādaśānta*. This clearly combines *para-sarīrāveśa* with *samāveśa*. The *samāveśa* is the union of the guru and disciple; union with Śiva is not explicitly stated here, but is implied by attaining the upper *dvādaśānta*. The final liberating union is reserved for the more advanced initiation.

Now the *samayins* hear the rules of their discipline (see n634) and depart, and the *nirvāṇa-dikṣā* proper begins.⁶⁰⁸ It is in this rite that Tantric innovation centers; the *samaya-dikṣā* is in fact a Tantric elaboration of the Atimārgic initiation.⁶⁰⁹ The first step is to intensify the power of the mantras (*mantra-dīpana*) that they may succeed in completely severing the bonds of the initiand's soul.⁶¹⁰ Then comes the crucial rite of *pāśa-sūtra-vidhi*,⁶¹¹ whereby once again the guru enters the disciple's heart (*nāḍī-mārgeṇa hṛdi tasya sampraviśya*) and draws out his soul, this time depositing it (and its associated karmic traces) into a "cord of bonds" that he has fastened between the big toe and the topknot of the initiand. Into the cord he installs the initiand's central channel as well as the five tranches or segments of the universe (*kalā*, each associated with a segment of the body as well⁶¹²) in relation to which the initiand has karma.⁶¹³ Then the cord is placed in the *śiva-kumbha* to marinate in the consecrated water overnight.

Various other minor rites (such as augury for obstacles and eating of blessed food) close out the day, then the disciple lies down to sleep on specially consecrated and protected ground. The next morning, after a dream-augury, the ceremony continues with *pāśa-ccheda*, one of the two most salient elements of the *nirvāṇa-*

⁶⁰⁸ For which see also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 47-141. Except for the most extraordinary candidates, those receiving the *nirvāṇa-dikṣā* have previously undergone the *samaya-dikṣā*.

⁶⁰⁹ As can be seen in the fact that the SSP says that *samaya-dikṣā* bestows the state of Rudreśa (*dikṣaiṣā sāmāyī proktā rudreśa-pada-dāyini*).

⁶¹⁰ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 1, pp. 224-27.

⁶¹¹ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 1, pp. 227-33.

⁶¹² *Śāntyatīta* is at the crown, *śānti* from the forehead to the pit of the throat, *vidyā* from the pit of the throat to the navel, *pratiṣṭhā* from the navel to the ankles, and *nivṛtti* at the feet. These are associated with the elements from space down to earth, and their seed-mantras are HŪAUM (or HAUM), HYAIM, HRŪM, HVĪM, and HLĀM respectively. Each of the *kalās* covers part of the tattva-map, so together they constitute the whole universe. Thus this *dikṣā* utilizes the *kalādhvan* as opposed to any of the other five *adhvans*.

⁶¹³ See SSP A f. 20v3-22v3, B f. 29r5-31r4; see also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 1, pp. 234-43 and SURDAM 1984: lxxxviii.

dīkṣā.⁶¹⁴ This consists of a complex ritual process that incinerates all the disciple's *karma* destined to bear fruit in future incarnations, as well as *karma* from past incarnations that is unresolved and is not already bearing fruit in the present life (*prārabdha-karma* is left untouched). The *karmas* are burned through a precisely calibrated entrainment of visualization, mantra, fire-offerings, and the manipulation of visualized consciousness. To summarize the process: each *kalā* (with its associated bonds of *mala*, *karma*, and *māyā*) is in turn lifted out of the cord of bonds and placed into the fire. Then the guru imagines the endless wombs in which this soul is destined to be incarnated (in that section of the universe) and summons the Goddess of the Supreme Word (Vāgīśī, = Parāvāk⁶¹⁵), visualizing her as pervading those wombs. Then he enters the initiand's body through his outbreath, separates his consciousness (*caitanya*) from his heart, draws it out through the top of his head with the *aṅkuśa-mudrā*, breathes it down into his own heart with the *saṃhāra-mudrā*, and retains his breath while meditating on the root-mantra. He then raises the initiand's consciousness to the *dvādaśānta* point above his head, takes hold of it and with the gesture of throwing forward from the upturned fist (*bhava-mudrā*), incarnates it simultaneously in all those wombs. Then, with fire-offerings, he rapidly fast-forwards through the lives of all those incarnations simultaneously, accomplishing their conception, birth, growth, and death, causing their *karmas* to fructify and then dissolve harmlessly.⁶¹⁶ Thus is the soul detached from its bonds.⁶¹⁷

SANDERSON summarizes the antepenultimate stage of (this segment of) the ritual process in this way: "He [the guru] then visualizes that in the absence of any possibility of further life-experience the soul is being detached from the bond of *Māyā*, then from that of *Karma*, and finally from *Mala* itself, pouring oblations after each meditation. He then meditates on this disjunction of the soul [from its bonds] as the absolute absence of the acts that have been eliminated (*viśuddhasyāpy atyantābhāva-rūpaṃ viśleṣaṃ saṃcintya*) and pours oblations invoking Śiva to accomplish the soul's [complete] disjunction from the three bonds" (*forthcoming a*: 31-2). Then (as the penultimate act of the *pāśa-ccheda-krama*), the guru meditates on the unity of the consciousness of the initiand (*caitanyaśaikatvam*) in this state in which all its incarnations have been eliminated (*aśeṣa-sārīra-vināśe*), and seals the rite with a Full Oblation (*pūrṇāhuti*) with the root-mantra. Finally, the guru

⁶¹⁴ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 66-77.

⁶¹⁵ This goddess serves in this role in all Tantric initiations; but in the Trika she rises to the position of Supreme Goddess (Parādevī).

⁶¹⁶ The six stages named in the text are: conception (*garbha-niṣpattim*), birth (*jananam*), the acquisition of *karmas* that grant various kinds of experience (*nānā-bhoga-dāyakaṃ karmārjanam*), the fruition of that experience (*bhoga-niṣpattim*), the dissolution of that experience into unconditioned joy (*bhogeṣu parama-prīti-rūpaṃ layam*), and the final purification of all *karmas* through their total resolution in this process (*niṣkṛtyā sarva-karma-śuddhim*).

⁶¹⁷ About half of this paragraph (starting from "To summarize") is a close paraphrase of SANDERSON's forthcoming *Religion and the State: Initiating the Monarch* (2005 draft) p. 31, which itself is a close paraphrase of the relevant section of the *Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati*. After reading the SSP myself, I concluded that SANDERSON's summary account of this section could not be bettered.

visualizes the initiand at the pinnacle of the pure *tattvas*, translucent and shining like a pure crystal, freed from the net of the *kalā* that has just been purified. He then extracts the initiand's consciousness from the cord of bonds with the retraction-mudrā and breathes it into himself for a moment (*uddhṛtya saṃhāra-mudrayā pūraka-vṛttyā ātma-sthaṃ kṛtvā*), then on an exhale causes it to re-enter the cord of bonds or "thread-body" extracted from the central channel of the disciple (*recakenoddharita-śiṣya-sūtra-dehe praveśayet*).⁶¹⁸ Then Vāgīśī, who evidently has supervised the whole process, is given leave to depart.⁶¹⁹

But this is just the first iteration; the whole process is then repeated four more times, for the four remaining *kalās*. Each purified *kalā* is dissolved into the next highest *kalā* before proceeding.⁶²⁰ Additionally, as part of this process, the five Cause-deities are gratified (one at each stage), and the eight elements of the initiand's subtle body are offered to them.⁶²¹

The *pāśa-ccheda* phase of Tantric initiation, as we have seen, utilizes the principles of *para-sārīrāveśa* and *samāveśa*, and indeed could not be effected without them.⁶²² The guru can, through the mantras and mudrās revealed by Śiva, enter the disciple's body and extract his soul, either to place it in the cord of bonds or unify it with his own consciousness, an act which implicitly confers blessings and transmission of *śakti*, for the guru embodies Śiva in the rite.⁶²³ But the most important example of the role of *āveśa* within formal *dīkṣā* is the final act of the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*: the *śiva-yojanikā*, unification with Śiva (or with one's innate Śiva-nature). We will translate this section of the SSP in full.

*idānīm śiṣyaṃ saṃyojayāmi ājñā me diyatāṃ prabho iti prārthya evaṃ kurv ity
anujñātaḥ prahr̥ṣṭo 'rgha-pātram ādāya śiṣyam āhūyāgni-sadanaṃ yāyāt. tatra
pūrvavac chīṣya-prokṣaṇa-sakalīkaraṇa-nāḍī-saṃdhāna-mantra-tarpaṇāni
sakalīkaraṇa-mantrāṇāṃ ekaikāhuti-dānena sakalīkaraṇa-sādhanam kṛtvā,*

⁶¹⁸ Unless it is the fifth and final iteration, in which case he casts the disciple's soul back into his heart.

⁶¹⁹ These two paragraphs cover SSP A f. 23r2-29r2, B f. 31v3-38r1. Bhojadeva gives us three and a half verses for memorization that neatly summarize the whole process: *ādau śaktis tatas tattvaṃ vāgīśī yonyanekatā | śiṣyasya cetanādānaṃ yojanaṃ sarva-yoniṣu || garbha-janma tad-aiśvaryaṃ tad-bhogāpādanaṃ tathā | layo niṣkṛti-viśleṣau mala-karma-viyojanam || pāśacchedo 'tha pūrṇā ca kāraṇeśa-samarpaṇam | uddhāro grahaṇam caiva śiṣya-dehe niyojanam || visarjanaṃ ca vāgīśyāḥ śuddha-tattvāvalokanam |*. The penultimate hemistich suggests that the *caitanya* is cast back into the disciple's actual body at the end, so perhaps I am misreading the intent of the compound *uddharita-śiṣya-sūtra-dehe*.

⁶²⁰ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 96-98.

⁶²¹ Sound and sensation are offered to Brahmā, taste is offered to Viṣṇu, vision and odor are offered to Rudra, intellect and ego to Īśvara, and mind to Sadāśiva. These are the eight parts of the eightfold subtle body (*puryaṣṭaka*). Each Cause-deity is associated with a particular *kalā* (Brahmā with *nivṛtti*, etc.), so the elements of the *puryaṣṭaka* are offered up in five stages.

⁶²² Though the specific synonyms used here are *praveśa* and *sāmarasya* respectively.

⁶²³ For example, in the final act of each iteration of the *pāśa-ccheda* described above, the guru inhales the disciple's soul into his own heart for a moment, and no reason is given for this act. As in the *caitanya-saṃskāra* of the *saṃyā-dīkṣā*, it must be to confer blessings.

*śivātmani śiṣya-caitanyaṃ yojayet. tatrācāryo vidyātattvam āspadaṃ*⁶²⁴
saṃcintya bindu-tattvāsanāsināḥ Indhikā Dīpikā Rocikā Mocikā Ūrdhvagāmini
Sūkṣmā Susūkṣmā Amṛtā Amṛtāmṛtā śaktir iti nāda-śakti-kalā-tanur; Vyāpini
Vyomarūpā Anantā Anāthā Anāśriteti kalā bahiḥ-karaṇaḥ; samanāntaḥkaraṇaḥ;
śuddhātma-tattvaṃ Unmanaśiveti. tattva-trayeṇāpūrīta-tanuḥ pūraka-
kumbhakau kṛtvā jihvāṃ tāluke saṃyojya iṣad-vyāvṛtta-vaktro dantair dantān
asprśan samunnata-kāyaḥ, śiṣyātmānam ātmani yojya suṣumnāyāṃ nāḍi-
prāṇān ekībhūtān saṃcintya, tatra śiṣya-caitanyaṃ śuddha-sphaṭika-prakhyam
saṃbhāvya, mantram uccārya, hṛdayādi-sthita-brahmādi-kāraṇa-tyāgena
paramaśive śiṣya-caitanyaṃ pūrṇāhutyā bahiḥ kumbhakena saṃyojya.

OM HŪṂ ĀTMAN SARVAJÑO BHAVA SVĀHĀ OM HŪṂ ĀTMAN TRPTO⁶²⁵ BHAVA SVĀHĀ
 OM HŪṂ ĀTMAN ANĀDIBUDDHO BHAVA SVĀHĀ OM HŪṂ ĀTMAN SVATANTR O BHAVA
 SVĀHĀ OM HŪṂ ĀTMAN ALUPTA-ŚAKTIR BHAVA SVĀHĀ OM HŪṂ ĀTMAN ANANTA-
 ŚAKTIR BHAVA SVĀHĀ *iti śaḍbhir āhutibhir guṇān āpādyārgha-pātrodakena*
abhiṣicya, aṣṭau samayān śrāvayet. (A 29v3-30r6, B 38v3-39r6)

He should pray: “Now I will unite the disciple [with his Śiva-nature]. Grant me permission, O Lord.” Feeling with a thrill that the Lord has granted his permission (*evaṃ kuru*), he takes the offering-chalice and calls the disciple, seating him before the consecrated fire. As before, he should do the *sādhana* of the whole [*yāga*⁶²⁶], consisting of blessing the disciple [with ash], installing the *yāga* (= *sakalīkaraṇa*), performing fusion of the channel(s), and gratifying the mantras, each act accompanied by an oblation into the fire with the complete mantra-retinue; then he proceeds to unite the consciousness of the disciple with his Śiva-self. The *ācārya* imagines himself located in the *śuddha-vidyā-tattva* [above the Impure Universe]. His body consists of the segments of *nāda-śakti*, i.e. the [nine] *śaktis* from *Indhikā* to *Amṛtāmṛtā*, seated on the throne of *bindu-tattva*. His external faculties are [to be seen as] the [five] *kalā*-goddesses from *Vyāpini* to *Anāśritā*. His inner faculties (*antaḥkaraṇa*) are *samanā*, and the pure reality of the Self (*śuddhātma-tattva*) is *Unmanaśivā* (= *unmanā*).⁶²⁷ Thus his being is filled with the triad [sic] of *tattvas*. He inhales and retains his breath, places his tongue on the palate, his mouth slightly open, his teeth not touching, his body drawn up (= *divya-karaṇa*). He joins the disciple’s self with himself and visualizes that the vital energies (*prāṇāḥ*) in [all] the channels have fused into the *suṣumnā*. Then he visualizes the consciousness of the disciple shining like a flawless crystal [within the *suṣumnā*] and does *uccāra* of the [root]-mantra.⁶²⁸ Then with [an exhale and] an external *kumbhaka*, he pours a Full Oblation and raises

⁶²⁴ *āspadaṃ* or *āsyedaṃ* A : *āspandaṃ* B

⁶²⁵ *trpto* em. SANDERSON (following the *Somaśambhu-paddhati*) : *trpti[r]* MSS

⁶²⁶ *Yāga* is a technical term in the Śaiva literature meaning a mantra-retinue: the principal mantra with its various ancillaries, such as the *aṅga-mantras*, the *lokapālas*, etc. (*ijyate iti yāgaḥ mantra-gaṇaḥ*).

⁶²⁷ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 235, 243, and 248ff.

⁶²⁸ So each *uccāra* rises up the central channel is empowering the disciple’s soul. See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 160-67 and 271-73.

the disciple's consciousness from the heart up the central channel, transcending the five Cause-deities [and their *cakras*],⁶²⁹ and uniting it with Supreme Śiva.⁶³⁰ Then he pours six oblations and recites the six mantras beginning OM HŪM ĀTMAN that bestow [the seeds of] the divine qualities of omniscience, contentment, beginningless awokeness (*anādibuddha*), freedom (*svatantra*), unlimited energy (*alupta-śakti*), and infinite power (*ananta-śakti*).⁶³¹ Then [after returning his soul to his body] he baptizes him (*abhiṣicya*) with water from the offering-chalice,⁶³² and [concludes the ceremony by] reciting the eight rules of conduct for initiates (*samaya*).⁶³³

Here, as before, the guru plucks the disciple's soul out of his heart and inhales it into his own, situating it in the center of the central channel. He then visualizes all the ten *prāṇa-vāyus* concentrating in the central channel—and of course, the operative belief here is that whatever the yogic adept visualizes intensely actually does occur. Then he performs *uccāra*—the raising of a *bija-mantra* up the central channel (a process powered by the focused entrainment of sound, light visualization, breath, and attention). Since the disciple's consciousness-bindu is located in the guru's central channel, the *uccāra* intensifies, enlivens, and empowers it. Then, after an indeterminate number of *uccāras*, he raises the consciousness-bindu up the central channel, piercing through and leaving behind the five primary centers (heart, throat, palate, eyebrow-center, and crown⁶³⁴) ruled by the five Cause-deities mentioned above, reaching the highest subtle center twelve finger-widths above the head (*śiva-dvādaśānta*) in which all limited experiences of reality are finally transcended. At this

⁶²⁹ See note 529 above. See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 167-70.

⁶³⁰ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 191-200.

⁶³¹ See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 277-80.

⁶³² See also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 280-81.

⁶³³ These rules encompass two categories, the *samaya* and the *samayācāra*. The first follows: “1. Do not speak ill of Śiva, 2. or of his teachings, 3. or of those who teach [the Śaivism], 4. or of his worshippers; 5. Do not step on the shadow of a *liṅga*, 6. or on any substance that has been offered to God, 7. or eat any such substance, 8. or eat food touched by an unclean woman.” And the second, given only to *nirvāṇa-dīkṣitas*: “1. Do not teach the mantras or rituals to uninitiated persons, 2. Do not allow them to be copied down, 3. Do not initiate someone without *śaktipāta* (*apatitaśaktikaṃ na dīkṣayet*), 4. Perform *pūjā* and *homa* once a day or more, and repeat the mantra-retainue (*śiva-saṃhitā*), 5. Do not eat without offering the food to Śiva, the fire, and one's guru, 6. Feed guests, the poor, and the unfortunate, and scavenging animals too; 7. Offer extra worship on festival days; and 8. Be loyal to one's fellow-initiates at all times, regardless of rank; protect lay devotees and anyone in danger, sick, or mentally ill” (Summary of SSP A 30r6-v4, B 39r6-v5). Additionally, on *aṣṭamī*, *caturdaśī*, and the full and new moon days, he should abstain from fish, meat, sex, anointing the body with oil, and shaving. These are the *samayas* for Saiddhāntikas, however; Kaula initiates had a substantially different set of rules (which emphasize honoring one's guru and honoring women; see *Tantrasāra* ch. 13). Cf. also *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 36-38 and 328-32 (for parallels to the Saiddhāntika *samaya*), and vol. 3, pp. 38-43 (for a more Kaula *samaya*).

⁶³⁴ These are the five primary centers in a Saiddhāntika context; for (some) Kaulas they are instead the *trikoṇa* (pelvic floor/genital area), *kanda* (the “bulb” situated below the navel), heart, palate, and crown (see *Tantrasāra* ch. 5).

level the disciple’s consciousness is united with Supreme Śiva.⁶³⁵ This must be visualized at the same time as the guru pours a Full Oblation (*pūrṇāhuti*) and refrains from inhaling until the oblation is complete (= *bahiḥ-kumbhaka*), indicating that an impressive mastery of yogic breath control (*prāṇāyāma*) is required here. Then he blesses him to attain the six qualities of Śiva, and pours the consecrated water from the offering-chalice over his head, thus restoring and revivifying his subtle body which likely became desiccated from the intense “heat” of the mantras installed in it earlier.

In the Siddhānta context, the ritual is thought to be invariably efficacious simply because it is revealed by Śiva. Thus the *ācārya* who follows the *śāstras*’ instruction in performing the initiation, and does a *prāyaścitta* afterward to cancel out any mistakes, was certain of its success. The disciple was not required to have any particular emotional or spiritual experience to prove its efficacy, as in the Kaula environment. Therefore, the elements suggestive of *āveśa* that appear here are conceptual and ritualized. The uniting of the disciple’s consciousness with the guru’s, and subsequently with Śiva, is accomplished ritually—a ritual marked as much by inner yogic exercises and acts of empowered imagination as by external observable acts.

To review the uses of *viś* in the SSP passages above, we saw that *praviś* was used to denote the guru’s entry into the disciple’s body, while *āviś* or a synonym was used to denote the fusion of the disciple with the deity. Thus, as already noted, *praviś* tends to be used when entry does not involve the two beings becoming coterminous (as in the Mbh.’s story of Vipula), while *āviś* tends to denote a fusion of agency or a merging of vital energy (as in the story of Vidura).

Though we have been examined the initiation rituals in a specifically Saiddhāntika source, we should remember that all Tantric schools derive their fundamental ritual forms from the Siddhānta. Thus the ritual sequence outlined below in Table 9 is closely (but never exactly) followed by nearly all Tantric Śaiva sources that treat initiation. For example, the footnotes above citing the *Svacchanda-tantra* (a Bhairava-tantra) demonstrate the close correspondence between that text and the SSP, though the *Svacchanda* includes a wealth (or a welter) of alternative and supplemental procedures. A summary of the steps in the SSP follows.

1. Preliminaries, including fusion of guru’s agency with Śiva’s
2. Consecration of the disciple
3. Maṇḍala-darśana
4. Śiva-hasta-vidhi
5. Nāḍī-sandhāna
6. Mantra-tarpaṇa

⁶³⁵ We can clearly see that historically the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* is a later addition to a previously already complete *samaya-dīkṣā*, since the *śiva-yojanikā* of the former in fact simply recapitulates the *caitanya-saṃskāra* of the latter with the addition of a *pūrṇāhuti*. Yet the *śiva-yojanikā* was thought to guarantee liberation at the end of the present life, while the *caitanya-saṃskāra* did not. This can of course be explained by the fact that the *śiva-yojanikā* is preceded by the cutting of all the disciple’s bonds in all future and past lives (*pāśaccheda*), which makes that ritual act the real key to the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*.

7. jāty-uddhāra*
8. dvijatvāpādana*
9. caitanya-saṃskāraḥ*
10. rudrāṃśāpādanam*
11. Mantra-dīpana
12. Pāśa-sūtra-vidhi
13. Closing rites of the first day:
 - a. pañca-gavya-prāśana,
 - b. caru-prāśana, and
 - c. augury by *danta-kāṣṭha-pāta* (fall of the tooth-stick)
14. Sleep in the sacred space (“incubation”⁶³⁶)
15. Second day: dream augury and *sānti-homa* if necessary⁶³⁷
16. Pāśa-ccheda
17. Śikhā-ccheda⁶³⁸
18. Śiva-yojanikā
19. Samaya-śrāvaṇa

Table 9. The basic sequence of initiation in the SSP

*only in *samaya-dīkshā*, which ends with #10

In closing, we should note that in the *samayācāra* to which a *nirvāṇa-dīkṣita* pledges himself (step 19 in Table 9), we find the following instruction: *apatita-śaktikaṃ na dīkṣayet*, he should not initiate anyone on whom the *śakti* has not descended, i.e. he should not initiate someone that does not show signs of having received *śaktipāta*. This rule, like the two preceding it (see n634), presumes that the initiate will go on to become an *ācārya*, which in fact only a minority did. But it serves to highlight the importance accorded to *śaktipāta* by even the most conservative branch of the tradition, since one of only eight *samayācāra* rules forbids initiation to be given without evidence that the aspirant has received *śaktipāta*—so for the Siddhānta it is here, prior to the *dīkṣā* ritual, that religious experience is required of a candidate to allow him to proceed. This is in direct contrast to the Kaula situation, in which the initiand is expected to demonstrate signs of religious experience within the *dīkṣā* ritual itself; as TAKASHIMA has noted (1992: 45), “Kaula *dīkṣā* . . . is a direct means for the experience of unity with Śiva.”⁶³⁹ The Saiddhāntikas did not expect this mystical experience in the ritual setting, despite enacting that unity in the ritual forms, and looked forward to it only at death.

⁶³⁶ SANDERSON’s term, based on parallels of initiation practices in Greek sources.

⁶³⁷ See *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 2-11.

⁶³⁸ See *Svacchanda-tantra* vol. 2, pp. 135-38.

⁶³⁹ He also notes that after the lengthy chapter on standard Tantric initiation (*Tantrāloka* 15), Abhinavagupta gives alternate forms of initiation in chapter 16, including a *pratyaya-dīkṣā*, held to give immediate evidence of its efficacy (TĀ 16.244, cited at 1992: 61).

2.5 *Āveśa, samāveśa, dīkṣā* and *śaktipāta* in the exegetical sources

Now we turn to the exegetical layer of the Śaiva literature. It bears emphasizing that in this tradition, the exegetical material came to assume enormous significance, as with Augustine and Aquinas in the mediaeval Christian tradition, but unlike them even came to displace the scriptural material itself in centrality by the time of the early modern period. As in the case of Buddhist Tantra, the increasing veneration of guru and lineage meant that works regarded as authored by perfected gurus came to have the valence of scriptures themselves, and were assiduously studied. These works were usually written in a “higher” register of Sanskrit (more polished and conformable to the pan-Indian literary standards), were often more relevant to the needs of liberation-seeking practitioners, and were easier to follow by virtue of the fact that they tended to spell things out more clearly than the abstruse scriptures. Exegetical works took the form both of commentaries on scriptures and independent works inspired by the scriptural corpus in conjunction with earlier exegesis. The principal body of learned exegetical writing in the period 900-1050 was composed in Kashmir. For further information, the reader is referred to SANDERSON’s *magnum opus*, the 200-page “Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir” (2007). Immediately after this period, we see the composition of authoritative *paddhatis* or ritual manuals in central India (1050-1100). Subsequent to this, the center of exegetical writing shifted to the far south, where Tamil Śaivas of both the right and left currents wrote significant works in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

2.5.1 *Saiddhāntika exegesis concerning śaktipāta*

The modern term “Kashmir Shaivism” refers to the writings of the nondualist Kashmirian exegetes of the Trika (and its philosophical branch the Pratyabhijñā), and thus neglects the significant exegetical writings by Kashmirian Śaiva Siddhāntins in the same period. These authors, especially Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha and his son Rāmakaṇṭha (tenth century) were hugely influential on the writings of the Tamil Siddhāntins. Their writing is crucial even for a student of the nondualist authors, because the two Kashmirian groups were actively engaged in dialectical debate, seeking the ideological loyalty of a philosophically uncommitted majority through competing exegesis of key scriptures (SANDERSON 1988: check).

The Saiddhāntika exegetes served to clarify the role of *śaktipāta* in the spiritual life of an aspirant. As is typical, ideas that were fluid at first tended to solidify into doctrine and then dogma over time. The Saiddhāntika material concerning *śaktipāta* ranges from philosophical disputations over why *śaktipāta* happens when it does to practical concerns around determining the *adhikāra* (qualification or aptitude) of an applicant for initiation.

We saw above (pp. 190-92) scriptural sources that concisely outlined the soul’s spiritual journey according to the Siddhānta. An important parallel source in the exegetical materials is a passage in Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha’s *Mṛgendra-vṛtti* (ad VP 3.5c-6b), summarizing the spiritual journey thusly:

Tattad-yoni-śarīropabhoga-bhukta-vicitra-karma-kṣayatas tat-sāmyād vā atyutkaṭa-mala-paripāka-vaśa-pravr̥tta-śaktipātāpasārīta-malasya avāptānugrahasya jantor nirasta-samasta-pāśatvād āvirbhūta-sarvārthajñatva-karṭṛkasya bhuktātmanah saṃsāryatā-hetoḥ paśutvasya abhāvāc chivārūpa eva bhagavān bhavati.

Due either to the destruction of various *karmas* through experiencing them in various births, or to an equality of *karmas* [that block further experience], a living being obtains [God's] grace, his Impurity flowing away through a Descent of [God's] Power whose activity (*pravr̥tta*) is due to the powerful ripening of Impurity. Because all his bonds are destroyed [by the initiation that follows], his power to know anything and do anything is revealed [in due course]; because that experiencer's (*bhuktātmanah*) animal nature (*paśutva*)—which is the cause of wandering in *saṃsāra*—is no more, he becomes [what he truly innately is,] a Lord (*bhagavān*) with the [same] nature as Śiva [, when the body drops].⁶⁴⁰

Here we see the appearance of the doctrine of *mala-paripāka* (“ripening of Impurity”) which was unknown to the *Kiraṇa-tantra* and the SSS (and indeed all the early Siddhānta *tantras*), and which was probably first introduced by Sadyojyotiḥ (c. 700 CE).⁶⁴¹ The metaphorical term “ripening” (*paripāka*) here refers to the Impurity's readiness to be removed, like a ripe fruit is easily picked from the tree, and also refers to a soul's maturity (*paripāka*) through life experience (over many lifetimes). However, it is unclear whether Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha holds the view that a salvific *śaktipāta* can only take place if one's Impurity has fully ripened (the view of his son Rāmakaṇṭha), or whether he thinks that the intensity of one's *śaktipāta* is proportionate to the degree of the ripening of one's Impurity. The ambiguity here turns on the intended sense of the word *pravr̥tta*. I tentatively translate it as if he held the second view; if we supposed he held the first, we would translate *pravr̥tta* as “activation” instead of “activity” in the passage above. In other words, Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha may be saying here that a *śaktipāta* must occur to unblock a *karmasāmya*, but it is not powerful enough to lead one to seek salvific initiation unless one's innate Impurity has fully ripened; or he may be saying that a *karmasāmya* triggers salvific *śaktipāta*, the subjective strength of which is proportionate to how ripe one's Impurity is. The latter view is closer to the nondualists' camp, as we shall see, but the problem with assuming he held the former view is that he also gives as a possible reason (*vā*) for the Descent of Power the simple exhaustion of sufficient *karma* by the living out of many lives (*tat-tad-yoni-śarīropabhoga-bhukta-vicitra-karma-kṣaya*) such that one's appointed time for liberation has finally arrived (presumably this is possible because the mature soul is wise enough to accumulate less karma through selfless action while still exhausting old karma). This statement would seem to suggest that he cannot have held the strict view of his son Rāmakaṇṭha, who sees *mala-paripāka* as the one and only cause of *śaktipāta*—unless we understand the statement just cited (*tat-tad...*) as simply another way of describing *mala-paripāka*. But if that is the case, why would he offer

⁶⁴⁰ My translation follows that of GOODALL (1998: 216n171).

⁶⁴¹ See, e.g., his *Tattva-traya-nirṇaya* v. 21 and *Nareśvara-parīkṣā* 3.152c-54b.

(with the particle *vā*) *karmasāmya* as a possible cause of *śaktipāta*? In the analysis of these few sentences, we begin to enter into the minutiae of hermeneutic interpretation which was so important to the intellectuals of the tradition, and so unimportant to the great majority of practitioners.

At any rate, it was Rāmakaṇṭha's clearly enunciated view on this issue that became authoritative for later exegetes. How then did he deal with scriptural passages like *Kiraṇa* 1.20-22 (see above, p. 193f), which clearly give *karma-sāmya* as the reason for *śaktipāta* and made no mention of *mala-paripāka*? His solution displays the ingenuity of the intelligent exegete under pressure: the phrase *same karmaṇi sañjāte* in the scripture (1.20c) does not mean "when [two] *karmas* have become equal" as it would seem but rather "when the soul has become equanimous with reference to *karma*" which Rāmakaṇṭha says occurs *as a result* of *śaktipāta*, which itself has occurred due to *mala-paripāka*, which he reads as the real meaning of the phrase *kālāntara-vaśāt* (1.20d)! But here I am only summarizing the thorough and competent analysis of Rāmakaṇṭha's exegesis in GOODALL 1998 (see esp. p. 215 n171; see also n429 and n430 *supra*). His commentary on the fifth chapter of the *Kiraṇa-tantra* contains a more elaborate defense of the doctrine of *mala-paripāka*, carefully translated and thoroughly annotated by GOODALL, to which the reader is referred. Though Rāmakaṇṭha's view became dominant in the Śaiva Siddhānta,⁶⁴² its influence spread slowly, since one generation after him we see Abhinavagupta spend thirty *śloka*s criticizing the doctrine of *karmasāmya* (in *Tantrāloka* 13.67-97), which obviously still held sway.⁶⁴³

We have considered briefly the cause of *śaktipāta*, which being empirically unverifiable can be endlessly disputed. But what of its effect? To return to Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's words above, we see that for him,⁶⁴⁴ the key effect of *śaktipāta* is that it brings about an erosion or a melting away (*apasārita*) of a small portion of one's Impurity (*mala*), an obscuration that, while in place, prevents one from seeing the value of the path. Though he does not specify it here, we know that *śaktipāta* could only destroy a small portion of *mala*, because the majority of it is destroyed by the scripturally prescribed ritual of *dikṣā*. From the beginning of Saiddhāntika exegesis, *śaktipāta* is strongly linked to *dikṣā*. Sadyojyotiḥ asserted that the whole purpose of Śiva's *śaktipāta* is to lead a soul who is ready for it to initiation: "*Dikṣā necessarily comes about for one on whom this [śakti] 'falls'*" (*yam asāv āpatatīti tasyāvaśyaṃ dikṣā bhavati*, ad SSS 1.16). *Śaktipāta* is also necessary to qualify one for the daily practice that follows initiation, says Aghoraśiva: "Due to *śaktinipāta*, one may perform the worship of the One who knows how to eliminate [the remainder of] one's bonds" (*śaktinipāta-vaśāt tad-ucchedopāya-jñasya śivasyārādhanaṃ upapadyate*⁶⁴⁵).

⁶⁴² See Aghoraśiva's citation of Rāmakaṇṭha's interpretation of *Kiraṇa* 1.20 in the former's *Mṛgendra-vṛtti-dīpikā* ad *Mṛgendra* VP 8.6, cited by GOODALL (1998: 215n171, 218n178, and 219n182). Aghoraśiva was an important South Indian commentator on the Siddhānta, who wrote exactly 200 years after Rāmakaṇṭha (i.e., mid-12th century).

⁶⁴³ For *karmasāmya*, see also *Mataṅga-pārameśvara vidyāpāda* 13.15-20 and *Ratnatraya-parikṣā* 315. Note that many Siddhānta tantras do not address prerequisites for *śaktipāta* at all.

⁶⁴⁴ As for the scriptural *Svāyambhuva-sūtra-saṅgraha*, 1.17 on p. 190 *supra*.

⁶⁴⁵ *Dīpikā* on Nārāyaṇa's *Mṛgendra-vṛtti vidyāpāda*, 1.2 (KṚṢṆAŚĀSTRĪ & SUBRAHMAṆYAŚĀSTRĪ ed.).

The idea that *śaktipāta* necessarily results in formal *dīkṣā* is in contradistinction to the nondualist position, according to which if a *śaktipāta* is strong enough, no formal *dīkṣā* is necessary (which we will discuss further below). However, the nondualist Śāktas agreed whole-heartedly with the orthodox Saiddhāntikas that *śaktipāta* was absolutely necessary: see, e.g., the *Kālikula-pañca-śatikā* (aka the *Devī-pañca-śatikā*) attributed to Jñānanetra, the founder of the Krama lineage, in which it is said that the divine secret (*deva-rahasya*) hidden in the heart-lotus of the Pīṭheśvarīs (= Yogeśvarīs) is not obtained through good karma etc., but only

*tathā ca śaktipātena kṛśodaryā anugrahāt |
nānyathā prāpnuyāt kaścīd yadi rudrasamo bhavet || 7.12 ||*

through the Descent of Power [that comes about] because of the grace of the emaciated Goddess (Kālī). In no other way whatsoever may [this secret] be attained, [even] if one be Rudra's equal.

But let us first complete our investigation of the Saiddhāntika materials before turning in the latter direction.

The idea of the relative “strength” of a given *śaktipāta* was raised in the last paragraph. This idea, while present in the scriptural materials, becomes much more important in the exegetical materials, and is used to explain such things as the rapidity of one's spiritual progress (in the nondualist camp) or the deficiencies in the *ācārya*'s performance of the *dīkṣā* (in the Saiddhāntika camp). We see the latter idea in the following passage of the *Mrgendra-vṛtti* of Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha (*kriyāpāda*, chapter 8):

*tac ced avikalaṃ ko 'rthaḥ sādhyo yo nāpyate naraiḥ |
vaikalya-yogyatā-mūlam aṅga-nyūnatva-lakṣaṇam || 8.84 ||*

If that [rite of *dīkṣā*] is unimpaired, what attainable goal can men not attain [through it]? A root of flawed fitness (*yogyatā*, = *adhikāra*) is marked by deficiency in [one or more of] its [*dīkṣā*'s] ancillaries.

Vṛtti: *vaikalya-yogyatā-mūlam iti vaikalyasya yogyatā mandatarā-śaktipātatvenānugrahānarhatvaṃ, tivratarā-śaktipātāghrātasya paramēśvara-prasādād eva dīkṣā-vidhi-vaikalyāsambhavāt |*

“A root of flawed fitness” refers to the fitness of a defective individual, [which means] the state of not meriting [much] grace, as [shown by receipt of] a very weak Descent of Power; as opposed to one who has been smitten by a very intense Descent of Power, [which is ascertained] due to the absence of any defect in the rite of initiation, which can only be due to the grace of the Supreme Lord.

yatra tu niratīśayam aṅjana-paripākaḥ sañjātas tatra mandatarā-śaktipāta-vaśād avāśyam aparipūrṇa-sāmagrīko dīkṣākhyo 'nugraho bhavati |⁶⁴⁶

That person in whom the ripening of Impurity is not of the highest order experiences the [form of] grace called Initiation that is necessarily

⁶⁴⁶ Reading *avāśyam aparipūrṇa-* against the edition's *avāśyaṃ paripūrṇa-*, which does not yield sense in light of *mandatarā-śaktipāta-vaśāt*.

imperfect in its totality due to the influence of a very weak Descent of Power.

atas tathāvidha-yogyatā kāraṇam aṅga-nyūnatva-lakṣaṇasya dīkṣā-vaikalyasyeti sthitam ||

Hence, fitness of such a [flawed] nature is the cause of a defect in Initiation, marked by deficiency in [one or more] parts.

A convenient loophole for the Saiddhāntika *ācāryas* here, it would seem (though one can also read it more charitably by imagining that an especially dedicated and reverent initiand might indeed inspire a more assiduous ritual performance by the *ācārya*). We should note here, however, that BRUNNER's reading of the Saiddhāntika *Somaśambhu-paddhati* (c. 1049 CE) gives the opposite proposition: that if the *dīkṣā* does not produce an observable degree of beatification of the initiate, it is due to some flaw in the *ācārya*'s performance that prevented Śiva's grace from descending (1977: viii).⁶⁴⁷ I am not however aware of any scriptural statement to this effect prior to *Somaśambhu*.

We see gradations of *śakti(ni)pāta* formalized in Bhojadeva's *Siddhānta-sāra-paddhati*, a seminal ritual manual completed c. 1030 CE.⁶⁴⁸ At the outset of the *dīkṣā-svarūpa-nirūpaṇam* section, Bhoja defines initiation:

tatra bandha-hetu-mala-karma-māyādi-pāsa-viśleṣo jñānaṃ cānuḡrhyasya yayā kriyayā janyate sā dīkṣā | . . . yā tv ācārya-mūrti-sthena bhagavatā manda-mandatara-tivra-tivratara-catūrūpa-śaktinipātena yā kriyate sā sādḥikaraṇā sakalātmanām.

Dīkṣā is [the name of] the ritual [performed] for one qualified to receive grace (*anuḡrhya*), [and] which effects the knowledge that dissolves the bonds of *mala*, *karma*, and *māyā* which are the cause of bondage. . . . That type [of *dīkṣā*] called "with substrate" (*sādḥikaraṇā*) is performed for embodied beings by the Lord in the person of the *ācārya*, by means of a Descent of Power of four kinds: gentle, very gentle, intense, and very intense.⁶⁴⁹

We will return to the idea of gradations of *śaktipāta* in treating Abhinavagupta's work, in which such gradations become much more significant. Here we are struck by the statement that *śaktipāta* is performed by means of the Descent of Power. Surely we have already seen that the latter is the *prerequisite* for the performance of *dīkṣā*? Yes indeed, but it is possible that Bhojadeva is here preserving another stream of thought which might date back to the *Niśvāsa-naya-sūtra* (see p. 189). For we see it also in the *Somaśambhu-paddhati*, if we can trust H  l  ne BRUNNER's interpretation of

⁶⁴⁷ "Si un disciple ne pr  sente pas apr  s la *dīkṣā* les caract  ristiques d'un lib  r   imminent, on dira que la *dīkṣā* a   t   faite irr  guli  rement, alors que la Gr  ce n'  tait pas descendue sur le d  vot." She does not, unfortunately, cite the passage she was thinking of.

⁶⁴⁸ This is the primary source text for *Somaśambhu*'s *paddhati*.

⁶⁴⁹ A verse from an unknown source cited in the later *Siddh  nta* texts *  aiva-paribh    * and *Pau  kara-bh    * also regards *  aktip  ta* as fourfold: *  c  rya-m  rtim   sth  ya caturdh     aktip  tatah | bhagav  n anu  r  n  ti sa eva sakal  n api ||*

the text. She is at great pains to explain, in two lengthy footnotes,⁶⁵⁰ that Somaśambhu held that the Descent of Power occurs *during* initiation, rather than before.⁶⁵¹ Unfamiliar at that time (1977) with the earliest commentators, she presumes that this was the original view and that it changed to the doctrine exhibited by Aghoraśiva (12th cen.) and his immediate predecessors and followers, i.e. that *śaktipāta* is the prerequisite for initiation. But as we have seen, the latter view is the norm across the board in the Śaiva Siddhānta. Upon what passages in Somaśambhu did she base her view? The only one she mentions is the seventh verse of the *Samaya-dīkṣā-vidhi* section (1977: 7), which reads:

ācārya-mūrtim āsthāya manda-tīvrādi-bhedayā |
śaktyā yāṃ kurute śambhuḥ sā sādhipikaraṇocyate || 7 ||

Mounting⁶⁵² the body of the *ācārya*, Śiva enacts the *dīkṣā* with [his] Power, whether in gentle, intense, or [other] gradations: this is called the [initiation] ‘with support’.

The term *śaktipāta* is not explicit here, and BRUNNER seems to be assuming that since gradations of Power are mentioned, *śaktipāta* must be intended. As we will continue to see, the terms *manda* and *tīvra* are indeed typical when describing *śaktipāta*, but this in itself might not mean much. For *śakti* here might refer to the power of the mantras wielded in the initiation ceremony. In verse 240 of the *Nirvāṇa-dīkṣā-vidhi* section (1977: 410), as BRUNNER herself notices, we encounter the pāda *tīvrāṇu-śakti-saṃpāta*, referring to the fall of intense mantric power onto the initiand during the ceremony (here *aṇu* is code for *mantra*). It is conceivable that sometimes this “fall” is not intense but gentle, depending on the *ācārya* and initiand in question. BRUNNER discusses at some length, but inconclusively, whether this fall of mantric power in *dīkṣā* can be separated from *śaktipāta* (1977: 410-12, n449). The evidence we have gathered allows us to say that they are clearly separated in most cases. Thus we conclude that BRUNNER’s basic hypothesis rests on insufficient evidence, though we cannot rule it out; recall that a *śaktipāta* or *samāveśa* during initiation is rather the norm for the Kaulas.

As we are touching on the *Somaśambhu-paddhati*, we should here note a curious feature found in Trilocana’s commentary (*vyākhyā*): he (seemingly) quotes a source that associates the four grades of *śaktipāta* (seen first in Bhoja’s text cited above) with four signs, signs which we are already familiar with from Kaula discussions of *samāveśa*! This source, quoted approvingly by Trilocana just after

⁶⁵⁰ n13 on pp. 7-8 and n449 on pp. 410-12 of volume three of her *magnum opus* (1977).

⁶⁵¹ She says that Somaśambhu considers *śaktipāta* “the very essence of *dīkṣā*” and wrongly adds “C’est l’opinion des textes anciens en général” (p. 8 n13).

⁶⁵² We could translate *āsthāya* as “using,” of course, but I am struck by the parallel usage of verbs meaning “mount” and “ride,” referring to possession (with the spirit being as agent of the verb) in the vernacular languages of India (see SMITH 2006: ch. 4) as well as in other cultures where beneficial possession is religiously significant, e.g. in Haitian Vodou (KLASS 2003: 59, citing MÉTRAUX 1972: 120; see also MCCARTHY BROWN 1991, *passim*). It is perhaps significant that the pāda *ācārya-mūrtim āsthāya* goes all the way back to Kauṇḍinya’s *Pañcārtha-bhāṣya* (ad 1.9, p. 28 of the ed.), or even earlier, since it is part of a quote there. See it also in n650 above.

quoting *Mrgendra-tantra* VP 5.4-5 without attribution (cited above, p. 193), declares that *tīvratarā-śaktipāta* results in *sadyomukti* (instant liberation), *tīvra-* has the sign of *mūrcchā* (fainting), *manda-* has the sign of *kampa* (trembling), and *mandatarā-* has the sign of *romāñcaka* (horripilation).⁶⁵³ The first of these matches Abhinavagupta's strongest grade of *śaktipāta*, and the others are all found as signs of *samāveśa* in Kaula sources we have investigated. But here they are cited in a Saiddhāntika context. So it seems we have more evidence, tenuous though it is, that these two branches of the tradition were once much closer (as they are in the first tantra, the *Niśvāsa*) and that the terms *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa* were almost interchangeable in some contexts.

Another piece of slight evidence of this connection is found in Aghoraśiva's *Dīpikā* sub-commentary on Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Mrgendra-vṛtti* (*vidyāpāda*), where we are surprised to find *śaktipāta* associated with *āveśa*, which is normal in a Kaula context but exceedingly rare in the Siddhānta. In commenting on the root-text's use of the phrase *paraṃ bhāvam* (VP v. 7), Aghora tells us that

*paraṃ bhāvam iti vyācaṣṭe tadīyaṃ bhakti-prakarṣam iti | śaktipāta-yogyataiva
tan-niṣṭhatvaṃ bhaktiḥ yogyatāveśa-lakṣaṇo jñāna-viśeṣaḥ |*
The highest state refers to extraordinary devotion. Devotion is the state of being intent (or dependent) on Him; it is fitness for *śaktipāta*. [Such] fitness is [constituted by] a special kind of insight, characterized by *āveśa*.

This statement is surprising on a couple of levels. First, we are used to seeing extraordinary devotion as a sign (*cihna*) of *śaktipāta*, and here it is said to indicate suitability for it. Secondly, this suitability is described in terms of superior insight and *āveśa*, which Aghora likely takes to mean a devotion so strong it affects one in “voice, eye, and limb” (see p. 16 *supra*), for as we have seen, *āveśa* is sometimes simply used to indicate strong emotion.⁶⁵⁴ But again, both of these are more readily seen as signs of *śaktipāta* rather than indicating suitability for it. Because of this, I think we must understand *yogyatā* as “the state of having been made fit by” *śaktipāta*, since these signs are nowhere else said to *precede* the Descent of Power, but are perfectly appropriate as signs that it has occurred. And what of the use of the word *āveśa* here, so unusual in a Saiddhāntika context (apart from opprobrius

⁶⁵³ BRUNNER 1977: 6, n13. BRUNNER does not unfortunately cite the passage in question, but I was able to locate it thanks to the collaboration between the IFP and Muktabodha Indological Research Institute, due to which the paper transcript collection of the former has been put online (http://muktalib5.org/digital_library.htm). The passage to which BRUNNER refers can be found in IFI MS T.170, pp. 181-2: *caturtha-śaktipātena tulyenaiva phalaṃ prati | - - tīvratarā-sthitā tīvro mandatarāpi vā || sadyomūrtā mūrcchayā vā kampād romāñcatas tathā ||*. For *sadyomūrtā* we must of course read *sadyomuktyā*, as is confirmed by the first pāda, i.e. that “the fourth [and strongest] grade of *śaktipāta* is itself equivalent to the fruit (i.e. liberation).” The lost *aḥśaras* must have read *mandas*, which is the missing grade. As for the linking of the four grades of *śaktipāta* with their respective signs, I agree with BRUNNER's arrangement, which corresponds to what we see in the Kaula sources.

⁶⁵⁴ But the exact phrase is “a special kind of insight *characterized* by *āveśa*,” so the implication may be that in a state of great affectedness, the practitioner sees directly into the nature of things.

usages)? It seems that Aghora knew of a verse he considered scriptural from which his last sentence above is derived, for he immediately supports it by introducing this quotation from an unnamed source:

*yad uktam—anyo 'pi योग्यावेसा-लक्षाणो परा⁶⁵⁵ उच्यते |
bhaktitvena samākhyāto vijñānāvayavo 'py atha | iti ||*

As it is said: “Another, higher [level of] fitness (or preparedness) is said to be characterized by *āveśa* and is described in terms of devotion, and as an aspect of wisdom.”

Without knowing the origin or context of this verse, it is difficult to speculate as to the precise meaning. Aghoraśiva connects it to the ripening of impurity (*ata evedānīm mala-pariṇatis sampannā*, immediately following the verse). More importantly, we can discern that the significance of *śaktipāta* for Aghoraśiva is great, since he goes on to say that “the Power of the Supreme Lord operates in terms of the signs of the Descent of Grace” (*śaktipāta-cihna-bhūtā parameśvara-śaktir vartate*); and in his commentary on the previous verse (VP 6), he said:

*śaktipāta-vaśād īśvara-viśaya-saṁśaya-viparyaya-jñāna-vināśena prakāśita-
tadastitva-niścayānām ity arthaḥ |*

The Descent of Power brings about conviction concerning the certainty of what has been revealed [in Śiva’s scriptures] by destroying wrong understanding and doubts concerning God.

Thus, for Aghoraśiva, the Descent of Power is akin to a religious conversion experience, inspiring faith and strong devotion, banishing doubt, and giving rise to insight that is in alignment with the scriptures. These signs are visible also to others.

Next we turn to an important and much-cited passage in Rāmakaṇṭha’s *Mataṅga-pārameśvara-vṛtti*. This author, the son of Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha, is probably the most cited and most influential of all the Kashmirian Saiddhāntika exegetes. In the *kriyāpāda* section of this work, we find a valiant defense of the necessity of ritual initiation and a concomitant attack on the nondualists’ position that insight into the nature of reality is what liberates. This passage is not only important for what it tells us about the Descent of Power’s relation to initiation, but also because it is a kind of *locus classicus* for the Saiddhāntika view on *dikṣā-vidhi*. It begins with the first verse of the KP.

*athātaḥ taṁ⁶⁵⁶ pravakṣyāmi dikṣā-vidhim anuttamam |
sāṅgaṁ samāsataḥ sarvam aṅūnām anukampayā || 1 ||*

Thus next, out of compassion for bound souls, I will briefly explain that entire unsurpassed ritual of initiation, together with its essential components (*aṅga*).

⁶⁵⁵ *para* conj. : ‘*para* Ed. I suspect that the *avagraha* snuck in at a later date, perhaps due to an editor’s discomfort with associating the term *āveśa* with a “higher” level of fitness.

⁶⁵⁶ Reading *taṁ* for *saṁ*-, following the commentary.

Rāmakaṅṭha's vṛtti: The word 'next' clarifies that the topic of the means [to liberation] (i.e., *dīkṣā*) comes immediately after [that of] the Descent of Power [because the latter is a prerequisite for the former], as was stated here above:

“[One wanders in *saṃsāra*] as long as the Awakening Power, which endows one with passion for God, does not descend.” (VP 4.44abc)⁶⁵⁷

The word “thus” states that this [method] is the cause of the supreme⁶⁵⁸ goal that was explained in the Initial Sūtra (VP 2.1-2b).⁶⁵⁹ Since this [means] alone is the cause [of liberation] here [in our system], [and] none of the other doctrines [regarding the cause] in other philosophical systems [are acceptable], therefore [he says] “I will explain that alone”. And that [cause] is simply initiation. Ritual (*vidhi*) refers to the topic of means (*upāya*), [because the word may be analyzed as] ‘that which accomplishes (*vidhatte*) this supreme goal.’ That “I will explain in brief [yet] in its entirety (*sarvam*),” i.e., up to the completing bath, together with its essential components which will be explained. The word “supreme” is used because this (i.e., ritual initiation) is the most important amongst the various other [aspects of] the method, i.e. knowledge, [yoga] and [caryā].

Objection: ‘for whom is this procedure [of initiation] more important than knowledge? Surely all followers of the path are seen to take knowledge as primary in [the attainment of] liberation.’ To this it is said:

yeṣāṃ adhyavasāyo 'sti na vidyāṃ praty aśaktitah |
sukhopāyam idaṃ teṣāṃ vidhānam uditam guroḥ || 2 ||
adhikāre niyuktasya lokānugraha-vartmani |

For those who have no conviction with regard to knowledge, due to its incapacity, this procedure is taught as the means to happiness, [that] of [initiation by] the guru who has been appointed in that office as a way for [Śiva to bestow his] grace on people.⁶⁶⁰

“Those who” = those followers of the path who have no conviction that wisdom, i.e. knowledge, constitutes an effective means to liberation. Why? “Because of the incapacity” of knowledge in that regard. This is the substance [of the nondualists' doctrine]: knowledge is the cause of liberation for men, bringing to an end the ignorance that is its obstruction.⁶⁶¹ And there are two

⁶⁵⁷ *yāvat sonmīlanī śaktiḥ śiva-rāgeṇa saṃyutā na patati*. See p. 192 *supra*.

⁶⁵⁸ *parasmin upeye* em. SANDERSON (following the *ādisūtra*) : *asminn upeye* Ed.

⁶⁵⁹ The supreme goal being *sattābhivyakti*. The *ādisūtra* referred to is: *athāṅor bandha-sopāna-pada-paṅkti-nivṛttaye / sattābhivyaktaye caiva varṇyate ca bubhukṣuṇā (2.1) / jñānāmṛtam asandigdham bhūtyartham atulaṃ param (2.2ab)*

⁶⁶⁰ Such is Rāmakaṅṭha's interpretation; the undistorted meaning of the verse is clearly “For those who cannot apprehend spiritual knowledge, due to **their** incapacity, an easier method has been taught . . .”

⁶⁶¹ This and the next sentence are startlingly close to the opening words of Abhinavagupta's *Tantrasāra*. I say startling because the *Tantrasāra* was not yet written; though there is a slim possibility the two works were closely contemporaneous, the *Tantrasāra* could not have been

kinds of ignorance: that which consists of wrong information, and that type of ignorance characterized by the absence of knowledge. [But our view is that] regarding these, knowledge is proven capable of eliminating only the first kind [of ignorance], which consists of a superimposition of the self and [the idea of ‘mine’] onto what is not the self or [one’s own], as in the case of [mentally] superimposing silver onto mother-of-pearl. It [knowledge] is not [capable of eliminating] the other [kind of ignorance], because it has been established in the chapter on “The Soul, Bonds, and God” (VP 6), that souls are produced with [an innate ignorance that inheres in them as] a *substance*, characterized by impurity, which veils one’s [true nature]. And that which is produced as a substance must be eliminated by eliminating the substance, [as in the case of] an absence of visual cognitions in those who are blind, [which is only corrected] by eliminating the cataract or whatever else [may be the problem]. No capacity is observed on the part of knowledge to eliminate substances; on the contrary, [such capacity is observed] on the part of action alone, as in the [example] of the active performance of the eye-doctor. Here the procedure called initiation is connected with “the guru who is appointed to that role” who favours [people with Śiva’s grace], here standing in the place [of the eye-doctor in the example]. The elimination of bondage and the manifestation of one’s [innate] divinity [which come about through *dīkṣā*] constitute the “means of happiness” (*sukhopāya*), [that happiness] which is characterised by complete fulfillment; because of which this [doctrine] is taught by the Supreme Lord to those who are the true Śaivas. Thus their superiority to other followers of the path is indicated.

Why then are knowledge and [*yoga* and *caryā*] taught here under the topic of means [at all]? Because they accomplish for initiates [1.] the severing of bonds, which was not completely accomplished by initiation—in order to facilitate the experience of *karmas* whose effects are already underway [in the current life]—gradually diminishing them day by day, and [2.] the manifesting of their [innate] divinity [at the time of death⁶⁶²]. But they are not equal to *dīkṣā* [in their significance, since the latter makes them possible].⁶⁶³ Thus it is said in this text: “Now liberation or [enjoyment] is due to the set of four . . .” (VP 26.63d). So there is no contradiction.

Now the interpretation [offered by some] that this procedure called initiation is for those such as children who because of their complete ignorance “have no conviction with regard to knowledge due to their incapacity,” would hold if initiation were taught in the scriptures with reference to them alone. But initiation is taught here with reference to those excellent people for whom the word *sādhaka* is employed, [e.g.] in the summary of the [six] essential components [of initiation]. As He will say after naming those components:

earlier, since Rāmakaṇṭha belonged to Abhinavagupta’s father’s generation, and the *Tantrasāra* was not one of Abhinava’s early works.

⁶⁶² See *Kiraṇa* 6.20-21.

⁶⁶³ SANDERSON emends to *na tu dīkṣātulyatayā*, following MS P. Otherwise we would read: ‘they are equal to *dīkṣā* because they accomplish . . .’

“And the *sādhakas* that are to be initiated in this system (*tantré*) are those whose minds are fixed on Śiva . . . otherwise neither the initiand nor the initiator is qualified.” Thus [the objection based] on the ignorance of children and others is refuted.⁶⁶⁴

[Objection:] ‘Surely it is said in some places [in the scriptures] that initiation is for these [ignorant ones] also.’ Granted. For that very reason the first interpretation is superior, because of the lack of any grounds to restrict [initiation to those designated by the word ‘also’]. Also, in that [scriptural] statement, a completely ignorant child is not intended, because such a one would not be qualified here, due to uncertainty regarding his Descent of Power. Furthermore, “One should be [considered] a child up to the sixteenth [year]”—in accordance with such *smṛti* [passages] the [‘child’ referred to in these contexts is probably a teenager,] one endowed with the power of knowledge, as we have shown in the commentary on the *Kiraṇa*. Therefore [the latter] ought to be consulted.

In this fascinating polemical passage, Rāmakaṇṭha asserts the pan-Śaiva view that *dīkṣā* is the sole cause of liberation. But for him—and for the majority of Śaivas, but not all—that *dīkṣā* is and must be a ritual performance as described in the scriptures. That a ritual could be the sole cause of liberation⁶⁶⁵ makes sense on two fronts. First, it was the sole qualification for the practice of Śaiva yoga and daily ritual (*nitya-pūjā*), and was also necessary to gain access to the Śaiva scriptural literature. Secondly, and more importantly for the tradition, if *mala* is understood as a substance that literally obscures the soul’s freedom and divinity (*śivatva*), then only an action could affect that substance. The fact that it is an intangible (*sūkṣma*) substance makes no difference; a subtle substance must be *acted* upon by a subtle (but very real) force. That force is the mantras embedded within the ritual and revealed by Śiva himself for this purpose. A verse quoted by Aghoraśiva says: “Revelation declares that Śiva becomes mantra for bestowing grace on the world; [in other words,] the grace-bestowing power has entered this world in the form of mantra” (*anugrahāya lokasya śivo mantra iti śrutiḥ | yā tv anugrahikā śaktiḥ sā mantratvam ihāgatā ||*). And as we have seen, “bestowing grace” (*anugraha*) is a common periphrasis in Śaivism for “giving initiation.”⁶⁶⁶ From Rāmakaṇṭha’s perspective, to know is not enough; one must act. This is a natural result of a doctrine which, unlike Vedānta, takes the world and our bodies as real, in which context action is necessarily called for. The Śaiva Siddhānta view also takes plurality

⁶⁶⁴ The view of initiation refuted here was apparently advanced by some Kaula sources, for we find in the *Nandiśikhā-tantra* the argument that ritual initiation is specifically a means of liberation for children, the mentally disabled, and women, i.e. those who cannot perform spiritual practice. See the citation of that tantra at *Tantrāloka* 13.193c-95.

⁶⁶⁵ This is asserted in non-Saiddhāntika traditions as well, such as in the *Trika Mālinī-vijayottara-tantra*, 4.8: *muktiś ca śiva-dīkṣayā*.

⁶⁶⁶ See, e.g., *Kiraṇa* 6.4, where *dīkṣā* is glossed with *cidrūpānugraha* (“the gracing of [the soul, which has] the nature of consciousness”). We should note that *anugraha* can also refer to *śaktipāta*, creating some confusion; but here the context demands the meaning of *dīkṣā*.

as fundamental: God, souls, and bonds (*pati*, *paśu*, and *pāśa*) are three real and separate things. So of course the bonds need to be acted on.

However, initiation, in which the *ācārya* is metaphysically “possessed” by Śiva and acts as his instrument (see section 2.4 above) can only proceed if Śiva wants a particular person to be graced at this particular time. That such is His desire is ascertained through observing the signs of *śaktipāta*. Towards the end of the passage, Rāmakaṇṭha makes a revealing comment: when the scriptures speak of initiating a child (*bāla*), a teenager must be intended, because with a very young child, one would not be able to discern that a *śaktipāta* had indeed occurred. This statement, made in passing, is reiterated in the same author’s commentary on the *Kiraṇa* (ad 6.5-6, GOODALL 1998: 141-3) where again he affirms that where the guru cannot reliably infer that a *śaktipāta* has taken place (due to age or mental illness), the person is for that reason disqualified from initiation (*anadhikāritvāt*). He reiterates it yet again, even more clearly, a few pages on in the same *vṛtti*: “Should one not be able to discern in those [aspirants the signs of] devotion and [distaste for remaining in *saṃsāra*⁶⁶⁷], which are the effect of the descent of Śiva’s power . . . they would not be entitled to receive initiation” (*teṣāṃ . . . śaktipāta-kāryasya bhaktyāder aniścayād dīkṣāyām anadhikāra eva*).⁶⁶⁸ These statements are significant because they confirm that *śaktipāta* is a kind of psychological shift, a “conversion experience” in religious language, or what from the emic perspective is called an awakening of the soul (*punḥ-prabodhini, ātmānaṃ prakāśayet*, etc.). They also stress that the psychological shift in question must be dramatic enough to produce signs (e.g., *bhaktyādi*) that are *discernable* to the *ācārya* considering a candidate for initiation. Indeed, it is *śaktipāta*, the unpredictable grace of God, that produces a noticeable shift in one’s orientation to life, not the institutionally controlled and routinized *dīkṣā-vidhi*. No wonder, then, that the latter must be frequently extolled and described as indispensable.

2.5.2 *Kaula exegesis concerning śaktipāta*

We turn now to a consideration of the discussion of *śaktipāta* in the work of the Kaula-influenced nondualists who flourished in Kashmīr in the tenth and eleventh centuries (whose work goes by the misnomer “Kashmir Shaivism” in the modern period, a term coined by Jagdish CHATTERJI in 1914). These authors were principally connected with the Trika lineage-grouping, though many of them were also secretly initiated into the Krama as well. Foremost amongst these was Abhinavagupta (fl. c. 970-1020), whose prodigious body of work—constituting about 10,000 or more *ślokas* and nearly 2,000 pages of prose—encompassed Śaivism’s entire range of philosophical and theological issues and its ritual praxis. Here we shall explore three works of Abhinavagupta, his *Mālinī-śloka-vārttika*, *Tantrasāra*, and

⁶⁶⁷ This being the second most commonly cited sign of *śaktipāta*, I infer that the *ādi* implies it.

⁶⁶⁸ See GOODALL 1998: 147. Rāmakaṇṭha immediately goes on to protest against the idea that *śaktipāta* can be inferred to have come to someone who has died by the fact of the fervent pleas for ritual intercession made to an *ācārya* by the son or relative of the deceased person, supporting his statement by saying “Smoke in a Dhava tree does not cause one to infer fire in a Khadira tree as its cause. And the Descent of Power has been taught to be the cause of devotion and such, but not of becoming a suppliant [begging for another’s initiation]” (trans. GOODALL 1998: 376).

Tantrāloka. The first of these was written some time before the other two. In it we first encounter Abhinava’s nine-fold classification of *śaktipāta*, which will be elaborated in the other two works. We also encounter Abhinava’s characteristic theology of “totalization” (my term), in which he attempts to understand the whole range of Indian philosophical theology in the terms of his system. For example, in the following passage he lists a variety of reasons that *śaktipāta* is said to occur, and in so doing alludes to a range of religio-philosophical traditions, most of which do not in fact use the term *śaktipāta*. This demonstrates, I believe, Abhinava’s conviction that the spiritual phenomena described in Śaivism—since they are innate in conscious beings and not a cultural construct (*akṛtrima*)—must exist in other contexts as well, where they often go by other names. While Abhinava certainly believed in the preeminence of his own system, he acknowledged that those who belong to other traditions, if they have the perspicacity to see the true nature of reality, may thereby attain to the same fruit promised by Śaivism.⁶⁶⁹ This, it seems to me, is a necessary corollary of the nondualist doctrine that insight alone liberates, not ritual action. However, what is at stake in the following passage is not liberation, but the initial awakening connoted by the term *śaktipāta*, which may or may not lead the aspirant to liberation in the same lifetime. Since Abhinavagupta teaches absolute freedom (*svāntarya-śakti*) as the fundamental characteristic of the Divine, he must allow that Śiva’s grace could descend anywhere at any time, without a cause fathomable by the human mind. Though *śaktipāta* is uncaused (*animitta*), there are ways in which people may open to it and make room for it, even unknowingly. Therefore all reasons given for *śaktipāta* can be said to be true to a limited extent, and yet they are all inadequate in the end as explanations. Abhinava tells us:

śiva-yogārham ātmānaṃ yasyām ātmābhimanyate
yato vaicitrya-yogena tathātmānaṃ sa manyate || 1.686 ||
śaktipātasya tenoktā navadhātra vyavasthitih
anyathā neśvarasyāsti rāgo dveṣo 'tha vā kvacit || 1.687 ||
yena kvāpy eṣa niyatāṃ svāṃ śaktiṃ pātayed vibhuḥ
animittas tathā cāyaṃ śaktipāto maheśituḥ || 1.688 ||
tena rāga-kṣayāt karmasāmyāt sukr̥ta-gauravāt
mala-pākāt suhr̥d-yogād bhakter bhāvāc ca sevanāt || 1.689 ||
abhyāsād vāsanodbhedāt saṃskāra-paripākataḥ
mithya-jñāna-kṣayāt karma-saṃnyāsāt kāmya-vicyuteḥ || 1.690 ||
sāmyāc cittasya sā śaktiḥ patatīti yad ucyate
tadāsan nanu tatrāpi nimittāntara-mārgaṇāt || 1.691 ||
anavasthātiprasaṅga-saṃbhavābhāva-yogataḥ

⁶⁶⁹ While Abhinava alludes to this notion in not-fully-explicit terms here and there in his work, it is explicitly seen in his disciple Kṣemarāja’s *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*, where the auto-commentary on sūtra eight organizes other systems into a logical hierarchy in which it is acknowledged that those who perceive the same truths as the nondualist Śaivas thereby attain the same corresponding liberation (though they never reach all the way to Śiva-tattva, they still enter the “Pure Universe” (*śuddhādhvan*) by reaching *śuddha-vidyā-tattva*, *īśvara-tattva*, etc., and thus are free of *saṃsāra*). See also Phyllis GRANOFF’s article “Tolerance in the Tantras” (1992) and pp. 108ff *supra*.

anyonyāśraya-†niḥśreṇi†-cakrakādyupapātataḥ || 1.692 ||
asmim̐s tu pakṣe sarveṣāṃ pravādānām api sthitiḥ
yuktā sarvaṃsahe pakṣe na kiṃcit kila duṣyati || 1.693 ||

A self considers itself worthy of Śiva's yoga [or not]. Since a person thinks of himself in a variety of ways, thus *śaktipāta* has here been taught to occur in nine ways (lit., a nine-fold arrangement of *śaktipāta* has been here taught).⁶⁷⁰ It could be no other way, for otherwise there would sometimes be attachment or aversion on the part of the Lord. Because the Lord may cause his own constant (*niyata*) Power to Descend anywhere [and anytime], this *śaktipāta* of Maheśvara is [essentially] uncaused. Thus, that Power is said to descend [by others due to the following reasons]: because of the dissolution of desire (the Sāṅkhya view), because of an equal opposition of karmas (scriptural Śaiva Siddhānta), because of the weightiness of good works (Vaidika or Paurāṇika), because of the 'ripening of Impurity' (Śaiva Siddhānta exegetes), because of meeting a saint (lit., good-hearted person), because of devotion (*bhakti*), birth (cf. *Yogasūtra* 4.1), or service [to a *sadguru*], because of practice (Yoga), because of breaking through a conditioned pattern (*vāsanā*), because of the maturation of one's *saṃskāras* (Yoga), because of the removal of false knowledge (Vedānta), because of renouncing karma (Jaina?), because of letting go of what is desired (Bauddha?), and because of equanimity of mind (*Gītā*). Surely even in the absence of one of these reasons, another would be sought [by questioning minds]. Because of this, and because of the impossibility of the overextension of logic towards infinite regress [that that could entail], and because of the logical disasters of mutual dependence, circular reasoning, and so on on this side [of the argument], all these sayings (*pravāda*) must be true—[or else none of them]. [But] on [our] side [of the argument], capable of encompassing and transcending all the other systems (*sarvaṃsaha*), there is said to be none of these faults whatsoever.

Unfortunately, Abhinava does not elaborate here on what makes his system faultless, but familiarity with his work suggests that it is simply the doctrine of *svātantrya-śakti* already mentioned. According to that doctrine, Śiva can appear to bestow his grace in connection with any of the reasons mentioned without any of them actually being a cause. Let us remember that in the Indian philosophical understanding, a cause and effect relationship is only established when a given cause *always* brings about its effect; without such invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*, *pratibandha*, *vyabhicāra*) the proposed cause is simply creates favorable conditions

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. *Kiraṇa-tantra* 6.7ab: "The Lord bestows grace on people exactly to suit the way they are" (*ye yathā saṃsthitāstārṅsya tathaiveśaḥ prasādakṛt*), translation GOODALL 1998: 366. To be clear, Abhinava does not hold that an invariable concomitance could be mapped between how a person thinks of himself and the degree of *śaktipāta* he receives, just that the diversity of *śaktipātas* is appropriate in light of the diverse values people place on their inner being. This intriguing statement does not receive elaboration in his later writing as far as I am aware.

for a given effect, at most. Abhinava’s doctrine of the absolute freedom of consciousness allows for all other views (*sarvaṃsaha*) without affirming them in any absolute sense. For him, the Divine can never be bound by any rule and thus, for example, a previously unrepentant criminal could suddenly be graced by the Descent of Power and authentically take up the path. He sees Rāmakaṇṭha’s view as a case of projecting limited human intellectual understanding onto what is really an unfathomable divine mystery. And, since Abhinava (as a nondualist or follower of what he calls the *parameśvarādvaya-vāda*) does not understand God as a separate person, there is no question of judgment or deliberation over who “should” receive *śaktipāta*:

śaktipāta-samaye vicāraṇaṃ prāptam īśa na karoṣi karhicit | 1.696ab |
tasyaiva hi prasādena bhaktir utpādyate nṛṇāṃ | 1.697ab |

O Lord, you never deliberate over the proper occasion for the Descent of Power. . . . For devotion arises in men by his grace alone.

Though a doctrine of nondualism does not seem explicitly required by the *Mālinīśloka-vārttika* passage we have been examining, it is certainly explicit in the more lengthy discussions found in the *Tantrasāra* and *Tantrāloka*.

The *Tantrāloka* (TĀ) is an encyclopedic work, comparable in some ways to Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*, and it runs to over 5,800 verses. Upon its publication, Abhinava discovered that the work was too sophisticated and complex for some readers, so at the behest of his students he composed the more readable *Tantrasāra* (TS).⁶⁷¹ Thus the title of the latter work is a pun: both “the essence of the tantras” and “a summary of the *Tantrāloka*.” For our current purposes, then, it makes sense to examine the *Tantrasāra* first. However, since the two works are so closely connected, we cannot but cite some relevant verses from the TĀ to further explain certain matters that are adumbrated in the TS, even before we come to a consideration of the TĀ in and of itself. Chapter 11 of the *Tantrasāra* is devoted wholly to *śaktipāta*, therefore we translate it in full below.⁶⁷²

TANTRASĀRA: EKĀDAŚAM ĀHNIKAM

tatra yāvat idam uktam tat sāksāt kasyacit apavargāptaye yathokta-saṅgraha-nītyā bhavati, kasyacit vakṣyamāṇa-dīkṣāyām upayoga-gamanāt. iti dīkṣādikaṃ vaktavyam | tatra kaḥ adhikārī iti nirūpaṇārthaṃ śaktipāto vicāryate |

Regarding [what has been said so far], someone could attain liberation directly through [grasping] the teachings given up to this point. For others, it comes about due to understanding the utility in initiation, which will be explained below [in Chapter 15]. Thus initiation and what follows it has to be taught. On this point, [we must ask] who is qualified [for initiation]? In order to ascertain the answer to this question, we will investigate [the topic of] the Descent of Power.

At the outset we see Abhinava toeing the party line, as it were: *śaktipāta* is what qualifies a person for initiation. But his view is more nuanced, and more unorthodox,

⁶⁷¹ See *Tantrasāra* introductory verse 2.

⁶⁷² An earlier version of this translation appeared in my published article WALLIS 2007.

then this opening paragraph suggests. Even here, though, he has subtly suggested a radical teaching, for the first sentence can only mean this: if the student gains an intuitive insight into the nature of reality by reading (or hearing the teachings of) the first ten chapters, and allows that insight to take root, he has no need of initiation, since well-established insight is the sole cause of liberation in this doctrine, as explained in the present work's introduction (*upodghāta*). Abhinava's wording seems careful not to proclaim this idea too loudly here.

tatra kecit āhuḥ jñānābhāvāt ajñāna-mūlaḥ saṃsāraḥ, tad-apagame jñānodayāt śaktipāta itī teṣāṃ samyak-jñānodayaḥ eva kiṃ-kṛta itī vācyam.

On this topic, some say that because of an absence of knowledge, the cycle of worldly suffering, which has ignorance as its root, exists. When that ignorance is removed, due to the arising of spiritual knowledge, it is termed *śaktipāta*. For people who argue thus, [*śaktipāta*] is simply the arising of correct knowledge. [Granted.] We object that what ought to be addressed is, *how* is that accomplished?

karma-janyatve karma-phala-vat bhogatva-prasaṅgaḥ,⁶⁷³ bhogini ca śaktipātābhyupagatau atiprasaṅgaḥ.

[The consideration of various views:] If it [viz. the arising of knowledge] is produced by action (*karma*), like the [ordinary] result of any action, then we have the unacceptable conclusion of [*śaktipāta* remaining within] the domain of ordinary experience [as opposed to being an act of God]. And further, [we would then have] the entirely unwarranted outcome of having to accept that *śaktipāta* is applicable to an ordinary experiencer, [a *bhogin*, caught up in the world and/or sense-experiences].⁶⁷⁴

īsvarecchā-nimittatve tu jñānodayasya anyonyāśrayatā vaiyarthyam ca, īsvare rāgādi-prasaṅgaḥ.

On the other hand, if the cause [of the arising of spiritual knowledge] is the will of the Lord, then the arising of knowledge is purposeless [because the Lord could just will *śaktipāta* directly] and logically mutually dependent.⁶⁷⁵ Further, partiality on the part of the Lord is an undesired consequence [of this view].

viruddhayoḥ karmaṇoḥ sama-balayoḥ anyonya-pratibandhe karma-sāmyam tataḥ śaktipāta itī cet, na – kramikatve virodhāyogāt, virodhe 'pi anyasya aviruddhasya karmaṇo bhoga-dāna-prasaṅgāt, aviruddha-karmāpravṛtttau tadaiva deha-pāta-prasaṅgāt.

'Equality of karmas' is the theory that *śaktipāta* occurs because of two opposing karmas of equal strength blocking one another. If this [theory is proposed], we deny it, because karmas are successive and so it is impossible for them to be in opposition. Even if such a 'karmic blockage' were possible, [it could not be the cause of *śaktipāta*] because of the logical problem that another, unopposed karma could [equally well] grant [the

⁶⁷³ *bhogatvaprasaṅgaḥ* em VASUDEVA : -*prasaṅge* ed.

⁶⁷⁴ Cf. TĀ 13.10-22.

⁶⁷⁵ That is, the arising of knowledge is dependent on the will of the Lord, and the will of the Lord, in the form of *śaktipāta*, is dependent on the arising of knowledge—a circular argument.

recommencement of] experience. In the absence of an unopposed karma to re-initiate [experience], then [your theory is unworkable] due to the unacceptable consequence of the falling away of the body (i.e., death would occur, because experience is no longer possible).

jātyāyuṣ-pradam karma na pratibadhyate bhoga-pradam eva tu pratibadhyate iti cet, kutaḥ? tat-karma-sadbhāve yadi śaktiḥ patet tarhi sā bhoga-pradāt kiṃ bibhiyāt? |

“Karma as the bestower of caste and life-span cannot be blocked [in this way], but only as the bestower of experience can it be blocked”—if this is argued, we say “why?” If Power can descend in spite of the existence of those [types of] karma, then why would She be worried about bestowing [the recommencement of] experience?⁶⁷⁶

In other words, God’s Power need not operate in terms of the karmic matrix; it is free and independent. It need not wait for a *karmasāmya* or any other condition. In the corresponding passage in *Tantrāloka*, Abhinava clarifies this by adding, “When Śiva manifests within a particular individual soul in his true form, he does not thereby depend on Impurity or *karma* [or the lack thereof]. How could they, which are part of the nature of the individual soul alone, become causes with regard to him? Thus he brings it about totally independently of *māyā* [and its correlates]” (13.115-6ab).

atha mala-paripāke śaktipātaḥ. so’pi kiṃ-svarūpaḥ? kiṃ ca tasya nimittam? iti, etena vairāgyam dharma-viśeṣo vivekaḥ sat-sevā sat-prāptiḥ deva-pūjā ity ādi-hetuḥ pratyukta iti bheda-vādinām sarvam asamañjasam |

Now [we will address the theory of] *śaktipāta* occurring when there is a ‘ripening of impurity’. What is the nature [of that ripening]? And what is its cause? In answer to this, [it is said to occur] through [one or more of] these: renunciation, special religious practices, discernment, devoted service to holy people, attaining [the company] of holy people, worship of God, and so on. These are [variously] answered as being the cause—and all this is the nonsensical prattle of the dualists.

Here Abhinava gives an amusing dismissal to this theory, but in *Tantrāloka* he argues against it much more carefully:

nanu pūjā-japa-dhyāna-śaṅkarāsevanādibhiḥ || 13.259

te mantrāditvam āpannāḥ kathaṃ karmānapekṣiṇaḥ |

maivam tathāvidhottīrṇa-śiva-dhyāna-japādiṣu || 13.260

pravṛttir eva prathamam eṣām kasmād vivicyatām |

karma-tat-sāmya-vairāgya-mala-pākādi dūṣitam || 13.261

īśvarecchā nimittam cec chaktipātaika-hetutā |

‘But surely,’ [an objector might say,] ‘those who attain the [liberated] state of Mantra-beings and so on, do so through worship (*pūjā*), mantra repetition (*japa*), meditative visualization (*dhyāna*), zealous service to God (*śaṅkarāsevanā*), and so on. How then can their attainment be independent of actions?’ Not so, [we say]. Let us begin first by investigating *why* they

⁶⁷⁶ Cf. TĀ 13.71-2.

engage in mantra repetition, visualization of transcendent Śiva, and things of that nature. [All the arguments for] the [theory of the] equality of *karmas*, growing disgusted with the world (*vairāgya*), the ripening of impurity, and so on [as causes] have been found faulty. If you say the cause is the Lord’s will, then the one and only [form of that] cause is the Descent of Power.

Thus Abhinava makes the interesting argument that rather than “good works” drawing God’s grace, it is only through grace itself (in the form of *śaktipāta*) that one can have any real capacity for, or sustained interest in, such spiritual practices. This accords with his idea that *śaktipāta*—taking place as it does when the Lord spontaneously “decides” to reveal his divine nature through the vehicle of an apparent individual—marks the beginning of the committed spiritual path, not some point of merit reached along it. Further, all activities on that path are a expression of divine power (*kriyā-śakti*), and thus are not part of the karmic setup, as their purpose is, according to him, to effect a temporary (and eventually permanent) identification with one’s true nature, and not to produce change within the matrix of ordinary reality as actions are generally intended to do. For he adds, “Thus *japa* and so on are [the Lord’s] Power of Action, not *karma*. For ‘karma’ in general usage is that which grants lower forms of experience and obscures the true nature of the experiencer” (TĀ 13.262c-3c). All the Lord’s Powers, by their very nature of total freedom, operate outside the normal boundaries of the circumscribed realm of differentiated “reality.”⁶⁷⁷

Now that he has refuted the opponent’s views, he goes on to state that of his own tradition.

svatantra-parameśādvaya-vāde tu upapadyate etat, yathāhi - parameśvaraḥ svarūpācchādāna-kriḍayā paśuḥ pudgalo ’nuḥ sampannaḥ, na ca tasya deśa-kāla-svarūpa-bheda-virodhaḥ tad-vat svarūpa-sthagana-vinivṛtṭyā svarūpa-pratyāpattiṃ jhaṭiti vā kramaṇa vā samāśrayan śaktipāta-pātram aṇuḥ ucyate, svātantrya-mātra-sāras ca asau parama-śivaḥ śakteḥ pātayitā.

By contrast, in our tradition that teaches the nonduality of the independent Supreme Lord, it occurs in this way: the Highest Divinity, as a play of hiding his true nature, becomes a bound soul—an individual—an individuated entity, and yet there is no contradiction to his true nature [in manifesting] within the [circumscribed] divisions of space, time, and particularity. In the same way (i.e., as an independent play), when bringing to an end the concealment of his true nature, and experiencing a return to that true nature instantly or gradually, He is called an individual soul that is a fit vessel for *śaktipāta*. And he is Supreme Śiva [throughout this process], whose essence is simply his [total] autonomy: the One who causes Power to descend.

⁶⁷⁷ Further, as in all coherent nondual philosophies, Abhinava argues that the state of liberation is accessed through an epistemological shift, not an ontological one. Thus, for him, even ritual is a form of mystical knowing, and can have no other valid purpose but the revelation of the eternally and singularly existent transindividual Consciousness that has ever been both subject and objects of one’s experience.

In this beautifully written passage, Abhinava argues that “the Supreme Lord” and “the contracted individual soul” are just different names for one Consciousness in two different phases. Thus, though *śaktipāta* remains here an act of grace, it is in fact an act of gracing *oneself* (though its recipient, not yet in touch with his true nature, may well subjectively experience it as coming from some “higher” source). This is implied in the last phrase, which hinges on the fact that the Sanskrit word *śaktipāta* is grammatically causative (through *vṛddhi* derivation from *pat*) and thus requires an agent. In nondual ontology, there is of course only one agent, whether in an expanded or contracted phase of being.

*iti nirapekṣa eva śaktipāto yaḥ svarūpa-prathā-phalaḥ, yas tu bhogotsukasya sa karmāpekṣaḥ, lokottara-rūpa-bhogotsukasya tu sa eva śaktipātaḥ
parameśvarecchā-prerita-māyā-garbhādhikāriya-rudra-viṣṇu-brahmādi-
dvareṇa mantrādi-rūpatvaṃ māyā-puṃ-vivekaṃ puṃs-kalā-vivekaṃ puṃ-
prakṛti-vivekaṃ puṃ-buddhi-vivekaṃ anyac ca phalaṃ prasnuvānaḥ tad-
adhara-tattva-bhogaṃ pratibadhnāti.*

Thus the Descent of Power is entirely independent, and results in the manifestation of one’s true nature. But for one who desires worldly enjoyment, its results do depend on action (*karma*). Now that *śaktipāta* received by one desiring enjoyment in a supernatural form [in another world] takes place through [the agency of other divine powers]: Rudra,⁶⁷⁸ Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and so on, beings who hold office within the realm of differentiated reality (*māyā*), directed by the will of the Supreme Lord. [Such a ‘lower grade’ *śaktipāta*], granting [various] other fruits—e.g., discrimination between the soul (*puruṣa*) and the faculty of judgment (*buddhi*), between the soul and materiality (*prakṛti*), between the soul and the limited power of action (*kalā*), between *māyā* and the soul, [culminating in] existence in the form of a Mantra-being and [as a Lord of Mantras or Great Lord of Mantras]—binds one to experience in a Level of Reality (*tattva*) below that [of Śiva].⁶⁷⁹

Here Abhinavagupta enumerates the levels of attainment reached by those who want to enjoy existence as a super-powerful entity in a higher dimension of reality. Some of these entail liberation, some do not; but none are ultimate. He first alludes to the attainment that is the pinnacle for the Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems, *kaivalya* or “isolation” (= *puṃ-buddhi-viveka* or *puṃ-prakṛti-viveka* respectively), then to the higher states of being called *Pralayākala* and *Vijñānākala* in Śaivism (attained through *puṃs-kalā-viveka* and *māyā-puṃ-viveka* respectively). The former are those free of *karma*, existing in dimensions (*bhuvanas*) above the *kalā-tattva*, but still within *māyā*. The latter are free of both *karma* and *māyā*, and exist just below the Pure Universe, in the gap as it were between it and *māyā*. Then he lists the three levels of attainment that entail liberation, or in the older terminology, entry into the Pure Universe (*śuddhādhvan, asitādhvan*). In Śaivism, mantras are conscious entities that

⁶⁷⁸ Note that Abhinava uses the name Rudra when referring to Śiva as a member of the Purāṇic trinity. For him, there is no identity of Rudra with Maheśvara (except insofar as all beings are to be identified with the latter).

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. TĀ 9.184-9, 13.270f.

exist in the Pure Universe—where nothing is separate from Śiva, since everything that exists “there” does so as a phase of Śiva’s divine awareness—specifically on the level of Pure Wisdom (*śuddhavidyā*, the fifth *tattva*), while *Mantrēśvaras* and *Mantra-maheśvaras* are higher phases of being that exist respectively on the Īśvara and Sadāśiva levels of the Pure Universe (fourth and third *tattvas*).⁶⁸⁰ The latter then are the highest phase of being other than Śiva/Śakti. (In the ancient scriptural conception, all this resembles nothing so much as the hierarchies of angels and archangels in medieval Christian and Islamic theology.) Abhinava stresses here that all these levels of divine enjoyment stop short of that ultimate reality, suggesting to the reader that the latter is the only worthwhile goal.

bhoga-mokṣobhayotsukasya bhoge karmāpekṣo mokṣe tu tan-nirapekṣaḥ, iti sāpekṣa-nirapekṣaḥ |

[The *śaktipāta* which takes place] for one desiring both enjoyment and liberation is dependent on action with reference to enjoyment, but with reference to liberation, it is independent of action. Thus it (*śaktipāta*) is both dependent and independent.

Abhinava explains in the *Tantrāloka*, “The Descent of Power and devotion to God of those who do not desire fruits [of worldly enjoyment] are independent of family, caste, body, actions, age, religious practices, and wealth, while the devotion of those who do desire fruits does depend on actions (*karma*) and so on. Therefore there is a variation in the kinds of [worldly] fruits attained, but it is not so regarding liberation, [which is the same for all those who attain it]” (13.117c-119b).

na ca vācyam -- kasmāt kasmimścid eva puṃsi śaktipāta iti sa eva parameśvaraḥ tathā bhāti iti satattve ko'sau puṃnā nāma yad-uddeśena viṣaya-kṛtā codanā iyam? |

Why *śaktipāta* occurs to some particular person [and not another] need not be discussed. He [the individual who receives it or does not] himself is the Supreme Lord [who] appears like that [in the form of one who is a vessel for *śaktipāta* and one who is not]. When this is the reality, who indeed is that person with reference to whom this objection is made an issue?⁶⁸¹

THE NINE DEGREES OF ŚAKTIPĀTA

sa cāyam śaktipāto navadhā -- tīvra-madhya-mandasya utkarṣa-mādhyasthya-nikarṣaiḥ punas traividhyāt, tatra utkrṣṭa-tīvrāt tadaiva deha-pāte parameśatā

Now this Descent of Power is of nine types, because the three types of ‘intense,’ ‘medium,’ and ‘gentle’ are again [multiplied] by [the three variants of] ‘intensified,’ ‘middling,’ and ‘reduced.’

⁶⁸⁰ For more information on these categories, see *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam* chapter 3, and cf. TĀ 13.271cd-76ab and 9.184-189; see also VASUDEVA 2004 *passim*.

⁶⁸¹ Cf. TĀ 13.106-7, cited *infra*.

[1.] First, ‘accelerated intense’ [*śaktipāta*] immediately causes the falling away of the body, [and the attainment of] the state of the Supreme Lord.⁶⁸²

madhya-tīvrāt śāstrācāryānapekṣiṇaḥ sva-pratyayasya prātibha-jñānodayaḥ yad-udaye bāhya-saṃskāraṃ vinaiva bhogāpavarga-pradaḥ prātibho gurur ity ucyate, tasya hi na samayyādi-kalpanā kācit.

[2.] ‘Middling intense’ [*śaktipāta*] causes a spontaneous arising of intuitive insight in one whose conviction is thus based [only] on himself, without any need for scriptures or teachers. When this intuitive insight arises, he is said to be—without any external qualification rite—a ‘Self-revealed Guru,’⁶⁸³ and can give both enjoyment and liberation. For he does not need any such ritual activities whatsoever, whether the basic form of initiation or [higher initiations].⁶⁸⁴

Now we see the elaboration of the nine types of Descent first mentioned in the *Mālinīśloka-vārttika*. The first variety matches Trilocana’s *sadyomukti* mentioned above (who could well have derived it from Abhinava). The second variety of Descent either results in living liberation (*jīvanmukti*) or very rapidly leads to it, for unfailing divine insight (*prātibhā*) guides the recipient from within. He or she needs no evidence (*pratyaya*) for this attainment other than the inner experience it engenders. Such a person needs no formal ritual of initiation, because he already possesses the best of what that could bestow. Nor does he need a consecration (*abhiṣeka*) to be a guru; he is a “natural/intuitive teacher” (*prātibha-guru*). In TĀ, Abhinava comments,

*na cāsya samayitvādi-kramo nāpy abhiṣecanam |
na santānādi no vidyā-vrataṃ prātibha-vartmanaḥ || 13.140
ādividvān-mahādevas tenaiṣo ‘dhiṣṭhito yataḥ |
saṃskārās tad-adhiṣṭhāna-siddhyai tat tasya tu svataḥ || 13.141*

For one on the path of divine intuition, there is no [necessity for] the procedure of the several initiations, no [formal] consecration [as a guru], no [necessity for] lineage etc., and no [ritual] vow of mantras,⁶⁸⁵ since he is directed (*adhiṣṭhita*⁶⁸⁶) by the primal sage, the great God. It is for the attainment of such inner direction that [all such] rites [are offered]; but it is [already] his own nature.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸² Cf. TĀ 13.130c-31b.

⁶⁸³ For Abhinava, *prātibha-guru*, *sāṃsiddhika-guru*, and *svayaṃbhū-guru* are all synonyms. Cf. TĀ 13.132 and 135ab.

⁶⁸⁴ Cf. TĀ 4.78-79, 13.131c-32, and *Kiraṇa* 9.14 (Vivanti ed.). Note that *svapratyaya* (self-validated) is equated with *sāṃsiddhika* in the *Nīśāncāra* (4.41), and this is probably Abhinava’s source for the term.

⁶⁸⁵ *Vidyā-vrata* does not mean “vow of wisdom” but rather an ancillary ritual that qualifies one for an elaborate mantra practice, and involves five days of observing silence, doing *japa*, and wearing a white garment with limbs smeared with ashes, as described in the tenth chapter of the *Siddhayogeśvarī-mata*.

⁶⁸⁶ We saw already that in the SYM, the word *adhiṣṭhita* could mean “possessed, controlled” as well as “directed, governed, superintended.” See p. 173 above.

⁶⁸⁷ Cf. TĀ 13.140-1, 151c-53 (citing *Parātrimśikā* 25 and 18cd-20) and 155ab.

The various elements listed here are those generally thought necessary to qualify one to hold office as a guru or *ācārya*. For example, the term *samayitvādi* in 140a refers to *samaya-dīkṣā*, followed by *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* and the optional *sādhakābhīṣeka*. The idea of an authoritative Guru not formally consecrated must have been controversial, and certainly would not have been admitted in many Śaiva communities. In Indian religious culture generally, rites (*saṃskāra*) were considered necessary to grant the qualification (*adhikāra*) to teach or undertake esoteric practices. Therefore Abhinava argues that this type of recipient of *śaktipāta* is in fact initiated, through the goddesses that embody the potencies of his own consciousness rather than through an external intermediary (for this phraseology, see TĀ 4.78-79 and *Nīśisañcāra* 4.41). This esotericizing exegesis does more than validate such a person; it elevates him beyond the level of those who require formal initiation and consecration. In practice, one imagines, this doctrine of *utkrṣṭa-tīvra-śaktipāta* was used to explain the existence of masters of apparent power and charisma but who lacked lineage, institutional affiliation, or formal ritual initiation. I suspect that Abhinava's Kaula Trika guru Śambhunātha, to whom he attributes his full awakening, was one such, thus explaining his concern with this category (discussed at greater length in the TĀ). The *Tantrasāra* continues:

*atrāpi tāratamya-sadbhāvaḥ icchā-vaicitryāt iti, saty api prātibhatve sāstrādy-
apekṣā saṃvādāya syād api, iti nirbhitti-sabhitty-ādi-bahu-bhedatvam
ācāryasya prātibhasyāgameṣu uktam, sarvathā pratibhāṃśo baliyān - tat-
sannidhau anyeṣām anadhikārāt | bheda-darśana iva anādi-śiva-sannidhau
mukta-śivānām sṛṣṭi-layādi-kṛtyeṣu.*

[2. cont'd] Even here, though, there are relative gradations, due to variations in the Will. Though spontaneous intuition is present, there may also be [in some] a necessity for scripture and [teachers] for the sake of corroborating it.⁶⁸⁸ Many divisions, such as 'without support' and 'with support' are described in the scriptures with regard to the Self-revealed master (*prātibhācārya*). [But even] a portion of intuitive insight is stronger in all cases [than book learning etc.], because, in its presence, no other form of knowledge has authority,⁶⁸⁹ just as in dualist philosophy, the 'Śivas by liberation' have no authority in the acts of creation, dissolution and so on in the presence of the eternal Śiva.

In this last statement, Abhinava refers to the Śaiva Siddhānta doctrine that the "Śivas by liberation" (*mukta-śivāḥ*) are equal to the original, primordial Śiva (*anādi-śiva*) but lack the authority of office (*adhikāra*) that the latter has. He compares learned knowledge to these beings who have become Śiva-like, and spontaneously arising intuitive insight to the original Śiva; a powerful statement, but it is an analogy, as he does not in fact hold the dualistic view. Further explaining the variations on this category of the *sāmsiddhika-guru* or *prātibhācārya*, he writes in *Tantrāloka*, "Therefore such a devotee of the teachings of Śiva is initiated [directly] by the goddesses [of his own faculties]. Depending on the steadiness or shakiness [of

⁶⁸⁸ Cf. TĀ 13.136-7.

⁶⁸⁹ Cf. TĀ 13.139 and 4.70cd-73.

his intuition] even he should perform self-refinement (*svasaṃskāra*), through austerity, *japa*, sacred observance (*vrata*) and so on, either by himself or directed by a guru” (13.142-3ab). This is what he means by “with support” or “without support” in the TS passage above.

manda-tīvrāt śaktipātāt sad-guru-ṣayā yiyāsā bhavati, asad-guru-ṣayāyām tu tirobhāva eva, asad-gurutas tu sad-guru-gamaṇaṃ śaktipātād eva |
 [3.] From a ‘reduced intense’ Descent of Power, there arises the desire to approach a true guru (*sadguru*). [The desire to approach] a false guru, on the other hand, is nothing but [the Lord’s power of] Obscuration. But leaving a false guru and going to a true guru occurs only because of *śaktipāta*.

sad-gurus tu samastaitac-chāstra-tattva-jñāna-pūrṇaḥ sāksāt bhagavad-bhairava-bhaṭṭāraka eva, yogino ’pi svabhyasta-jñānatayaiva mocakatvaṃ tatra yogitvasya⁶⁹⁰ saubhāgya-lāvṇyādi-mattvasyevānupayogāt | asad-gurus tu anyāḥ sarva eva |

Now a true guru, perfectly full with the insights into reality [expressed] in all these scriptures, is none other than the reverend Lord Bhairava incarnate. Even a Yogin liberates others only by means of his well-practiced knowledge; with regard to that [capacity of liberating others], his status as a yogin (*per se*), like his other intrinsic qualities, such as fortune, good looks, and so on, is useless. But all others [who do not have such liberating knowledge] are false gurus [despite any attractive qualities they may possess].

Abhinava clearly has in mind in this section MVT 1.42-7 (see above, pp. 187f). The first three categories here mirror those in the MVT precisely, and he will expand the latter’s fourth category into his #4-6. Here we learn that it is only *śaktipāta* that gives rise to the desire to approach a guru, and that gives one the discernment to recognize a *sadguru*. This gives Abhinava the opportunity to discuss what makes someone a *sadguru*, and that for him is a single quality: *svabhyasta-vijñāna*. He puts it most succinctly in the *Tantrāloka*: “One thing alone marks one a Guru: wisdom that is expertly put into practice” (*tasmāt svabhyasta-vijñānataivaikaṃ guru-lakṣaṇam*, 13.333ab). The *sadguru* must live what he knows, express it in every action, and be able to transmit it to others. And, “The variation in capacity for [this true] knowledge [seen in various gurus] is due solely to the strength of *their śaktipāta*” (*śaktipāta-balād eva jñāna-yogya-vicitratā*, 13.326cd).

evaṃ yiyāsuḥ guroḥ jñāna-lakṣaṇaṃ dīkṣāṃ prāpnoti yayā sadya eva mukto bhavati, jīvaṇn api. atra avalokanāt kathanāt śāstra-sambodhanāt caryā-darśanāt caru-dānāt ity ādayo bhedaḥ |

Thus one who desires to approach [such a true master] obtains the initiation characterized by insight from the Guru, by which he is liberated quite quickly, while living [in the body]. In this matter, the different ways [the disciple may receive this initiation are]: through a look [from the

⁶⁹⁰ Read *mocakatvaṃ tatra yogitvasya* (conj. SANDERSON) for the edition’s nonsensical *mocakatve tatra yogyatvasya*.

Guru]; through conversing [with him]; through [his] explanation of scripture; through seeing his observances (or daily conduct); through giving the [transgressive] oblation; and so on.

In the first sentence above, Abhinava may be thinking of the definition of initiation we have seen in the *Niśvāsa-naya*, “Initiation through the descent of Śiva’s Power bestows knowledge” (*śiva-śakti-nipātena dīkṣā jñānaṃ prayacchati*), though similar statements about initiation bestowing knowledge are found in various places. By *jñāna* both Abhinava and the scriptures must intend a kind of experiential realization, not conceptual knowledge, for there is no spiritual instruction given as part of the Śaiva *dīkṣā* ceremony (unlike in its Buddhist counterpart), apart from the list of rules for initiates given at the end. However, here Abhinava is envisioning not only the formal *dīkṣā-vidhi* but also (and especially) the uniquely Kaula forms of initiation by a charismatic guru, several of which he lists.⁶⁹¹ These Kaula “initiations” are best characterized by the term *saṅkramaṇa*, for they are instances in which the guru “transmits” his awakened state.⁶⁹² Or rather, since the guru need not intend a transmission for one to occur, we may say that according to the Kaula teaching, being in the presence of an awakened master one may as it were catch the flavor of his or her state as it expresses through almost any given action. Hence, simply conversing with him or seeing him perform his daily observances (*caryā*), this transmission that sparks an awakening in the aspirant may occur. For the nondualist Kaulas, such a transmission legitimately takes the place of ritual initiation because it confers the insight into one’s real nature that is the true aim of initiation. Recalling the current context, we know that this higher form of transmission-initiation applies to those who have received a *śaktipāta* of the third degree, labeled *manda-tīvra-śaktipāta*. Unlike those of the second degree, these aspirants definitely need a guru (and their ability to humbly recognize that need is itself a function of their *śaktipāta*), but are capable of receiving liberative initiation from merely a look etc. Further, they are capable of attaining liberation before death (*jīvanmukti*). Let us compare this passage with the parallel one in *Tantrāloka*:

kiṃ tattvaṃ tattva-vedī ka ity āmarśana-yogataḥ || 13.222

pratibhānāt suhṛt-saṅgād gurau jigamiṣur bhavet |

evaṃ jigamiṣā-yogād ācāryaḥ prāpyate sa ca || 13.223

tāratamyādi-yogena saṃsiddhaḥ saṃskṛto 'pi ca | 13.224ab

‘What is the Truth? Who knows that Truth?’ Due to having these reflections, through intuition or the company of [spiritually-inclined] friends, one conceives a desire to approach a guru. Thus, because he possesses that [authentic] desire, he finds a [real] master. And [the master], by the specific gradation [of *śaktipāta* with which he is] endowed, is [either] self-perfected or liberated through spiritual practice (*saṃskṛta*).

⁶⁹¹ Cf. MVT 2.11, ŪKA 2.230-1, 241ab, and 244cd, already cited *supra*.

⁶⁹² The earliest passage to teach this charismatic subitist initiation is found in the *Niśvāsa’s mūla-sūtra*, chapter nine: “Whoever a knower [of the truth] touches with his hand, or gazes at with his eye, that person he takes as an initiate, having contemplated reality” (*yaṃ yaṃ sprśati hastena yaṃ yaṃ paśyati cakṣuṣā | dhyātvā tattvaṃ tu medhāvī dīkṣitaṃ taṃ vinirdiśet*; fol. 22v3, cited in VASUDEVA 2004: 19).

asyāṃ bhedo hi kathanāt saṃgamād avalokanāt || 13.227cd
śāstrāt saṃkramaṇāt sām̐ya-caryā-saṃdarśanāc caroḥ |
mantra-mudrādi-māhātmyāt samasta-vyasta-bhedaṭḥ || 13.228
kriyayā vāntarākāra-rūpa-prāṇa-praveśataḥ |

These are the varieties of [charismatic] initiation: from [the guru's] discourse; from being in [his or her] company; from a compassionate look; from [his explanation of] scripture; through a spontaneous transmission [of *śakti*]; from seeing him do the basic practices;⁶⁹³ from [receiving] the [transgressive] oblation;⁶⁹⁴ from the mystic power of mantra or sacred hand gesture (*mudrā*); due to one of these or all of them. Or by ritual [initiation] or [yogic] penetration (*praveśa*) into the *prāṇa* of the [disciple's] subtle body.

After listing the forms of initiatory transmission of awakened *śakti* that we call charismatic or subitist, Abhinava also mentions ritual and yogic forms of initiation, almost as an afterthought. We will discuss the yogic penetration he mentions when we look at *Tantrāloka* 29, where he discusses it in detail. Returning to the TS, Abhinava now adds a kind of footnote, mentioning that the third degree of *śaktipāta* is the one received by those who are qualified for *sadyo-nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, which is only given at the time of death:

abhyāsavato vā tadānīm sadya eva prāṇa-viyojikāṃ dīkṣāṃ labhate, sā tu maraṇa-kṣaṇa eva kāryā iti vaksyāma, iti tīvras traidhā.

Or [one who has received 'reduced-intense' *śaktipāta*] may then obtain an initiation, from one practiced in it, that immediately deprives one of his vital force. However, that initiation may be done only at the moment of death. We will discuss this later. This ends the [discussion of the] three kinds of intense [*śaktipāta*].

The category of *sadyo-nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, which frees the soul from the body and grants instant liberation, is also taught in the Śaiva Siddhānta. Saiddhāntika commentator Narāyaṇakaṇṭha writes (ad *Mṛgendra-tantra*, *Kriyāpāda*, 8.145ab):

yā tu sadyaḥ tat-kṣaṇenaiva nirvāṇadā mukti-hetuḥ tad-dīkṣārthaṃ
siddha-mantra guruḥ śiṣya-yogyatāṃ tīvra-śaktipātāghrātatva-lakṣaṇāṃ
vīkṣya tāṃ dīkṣāṃ kuryāt.

Seeing the fitness of the disciple for initiation, marked by the fact of his having been kissed by an intense Descent of Power, the guru, whose [expertise in] mantra is perfect, should perform that initiation which is the cause of liberation, which grants *nirvāṇa* immediately, at that very moment.

⁶⁹³ Or, as the commentator Jayaratha has it, from observing that his daily conduct exhibits equanimity, i.e. ignoring false divisions such as caste etc. (*sām̐yena jātyādi-bheda-tiraskāreṇa bāhya-caryāyāḥ saṃdarśanād vimarśanād*).

⁶⁹⁴ Jayaratha glosses this with *kuṇḍagolaka*, which is a transgressive drink prepared with mingled sexual fluids; consumption of it without inhibition (*śāṅkā*) is considered tantamount to initiation in some Kaula circles (see TĀ 29).

As this topic really belongs under the topic of Initiation, Abhinava takes it up there (chapter 15 of the TĀ). Now he turns to the medium grades of *śaktipāta*, which result in liberation at death (the norm for the Śaiva Siddhānta) or in one's next incarnation in a paradisaical realm.

utkr̥ṣṭa-madhyāt śaktipātāt kṛta-dīkṣāko 'pi svātmanaḥ śivatāyāṃ na tathā dṛḍha-pratipattiḥ bhavati, pratipatti-paripāka-krameṇa tu dehānte śiva eva.

[4.] When one receives an 'intensified medium' Descent of Power, though he takes initiation, his realization of the divinity of his own nature is not as firm [as those who receive the more intense *śaktipātas*]. However, through the gradual ripening of his realization, he certainly becomes Śiva at the end of the body.

madhya-madhyāt tu śivatotsuko'pi bhoga-prepsuḥ bhavati, iti tathaiva dīkṣāyāṃ jñāna-bhājanam, sa ca yogābhyāsa-labdham anenaiva dehena bhogaṃ bhuktvā dehānte śiva eva | nikṛṣṭa-madhyāt tu dehāntareṇa bhogaṃ bhuktvā śivatvam eti, iti madhyas tu tridhā.

[5.] Now, one who receives 'middling medium' [*śaktipāta*], though possessing a desire for divinity, [still] has a desire for enjoyment. Thus he is worthy of [being granted] knowledge, in his initiation, of that very kind (i.e., that leads to enjoyment then liberation). Having experienced enjoyment obtained through the practice of yoga, in this very body, he certainly becomes Śiva at the end of the [same] body.

[6.] From 'reduced medium' [*śaktipāta*], having experienced enjoyment in another body, he becomes divine [in that next life]. Such are the three varieties of medium [*śaktipāta*].

Clearly, Abhinava is much less interested in discussing the paths of those who desire enjoyments (*bhoga*) and powers (*siddhi*). He repeatedly privileges the longing for liberation (*mumuṣā*) over the desire for enjoyment, though his scriptural texts make no such judgment, regarding *siddhi* as a perfectly acceptable goal. Abhinava argues in the *Tantrāloka* that it is only when a yogin becomes indifferent to the exercise of power over others that he is finally liberated and can then liberate others (13.185cd). Categories five and six here correspond to the MVT's fourth category, the aspirant who seeks *yoga-dīkṣā* (MVT 1.46).

bhogotsukatā yadā pradhāna-bhūtā tadā mandatvaṃ – pārameśvara-mantra-yogopāyatayā yatas tatra autsukyam, pārameśa-mantra-yogādeś ca yato mokṣa-paryantatvam ataḥ śaktipāta-rūpatā | tatrāpi tāratamyāt trai-vidhyam, ity eṣa mukhyaḥ śaktipātaḥ |

[7.-9.] When desire for enjoyment is predominant, then [*śaktipāta*] is 'gentle'. Because that desire is [fulfilled] by means of Śaiva mantras and yoga, and because Śaiva mantras, yoga, and [other practices necessarily eventually] culminate in liberation, thus it [still] has the nature of a *śaktipāta*. Regarding that [type of *śaktipāta* also], because it has gradations, there are three varieties. Thus the Descent of Power is most important [even for one desiring enjoyments].

He does not bother to enumerate the differences among grades seven through nine, but wishes to distinguish them as still putting the recipient on a Śaiva path, as opposed to the *śaktipāta*-like experiences that lead people to other paths, which he briefly treats now.

*vaiṣṇavādīnāṃ tu rājānugrahavat na mokṣāntatā iti na iha vivecanam |
śivaśaktyadhiṣṭhānaṃ tu sarvatra iti uktam, sā param jyeṣṭhā na bhavati api tu
ghorā ghorātayā vā*

The [*śaktipāta*] of the Vaiṣṇavas and others, on the other hand, are like the favor (*anugraha*) of a king, and do not result in liberation. Thus they have not been considered here. However, the influence of the Power of Śiva is universal, as has been said [in the scriptures]; but She does not become the supreme [Goddess] Jyeṣṭhā [for the Vaiṣṇavas and others]; on the contrary [she is for them only either] Ghorā or Ghoratarā.

Here Abhinava refers to a very old classification of the three aspects of Śakti that operate to grant different types of beings the destiny they knowingly or unknowingly pursue. We saw this same classification in the SYM (see n369). Jyeṣṭhā, the Eldress, also known as Aghorā, ‘the Not-terrible Goddess,’ is the aspect of Śakti who continuously uplifts those on the path of enlightenment. Ghorā, ‘the Terrible Goddess,’ also known as Raudrī, is that Power who keeps those who desire enjoyment on the wheel of transmigration, content with the higher pleasures of existence on Earth or in the higher planes of the impure universe. Ghoratarā, ‘the Most Terrible Goddess,’ also known as Vāmā (because she ‘vomits forth’ *saṃsāra*), is she who drags those who are addicted to the lower pleasures into lower and lower hells.⁶⁹⁵ But, Abhinava next goes on to explain, anyone pursuing a non-liberating path could at any time receive a *śaktipāta* that makes them seek the true path:

*sa eṣa śakti-pāto vicitro 'pi tārātamyā-vaicitryāt bhidyate, kaścit vaiṣṇavādi-
sthaḥ samayyādi-krameṇa srotāḥ-pañcake ca prāpta-paripākaḥ sarvottīrṇa-
bhagavat-ṣaḍ-ardha-śāstra-paramādhikāritām eti*

This very *śaktipāta*, though diverse [in its nature], is divided in accordance with the variety of grades [of aspirants]. Someone established in [traditions] such as the Vaiṣṇavas, [who enters our path] through the basic initiation and what follows, becoming [spiritually] ripe in the Five Streams [of our scriptures], then may become supremely qualified through [the study of] the scriptures of the Trika, [authored] by the Blessed Lord and [having the power of] rescuing all beings.

*anyas tu ullāṅghana-krameṇa ananta-bhedena, ko'pi akramam iti ata eva
adharādhara-śāsana-sthā guravo 'pi iha maṇḍala-mātra-darśane 'pi
anadhikāriṇaḥ*

Another [aspirant may attain this status] by passing over [some of the usual stages] in [any one of] countless ways. Some extraordinary person [may attain the highest immediately,] without any stages. For this very

⁶⁹⁵ TĀ 6.52-57 (cf. 13.279).

reason, those established in one or another of the lower teachings, even if they are gurus, are not qualified even to see our *maṇḍala*.

“Seeing the *maṇḍala*” is a fairly common periphrasis for the basic initiation ceremony (*samaya-dīkṣā*), where the initiand is shown the secret initiation *maṇḍala* at the appropriate time.⁶⁹⁶ Abhinava seems to be saying here that each person who comes to the Trika passes through their own unique set of stages of development, under the influence of Śiva’s Power, and therefore it is not appropriate to give even the basic initiation to those of other traditions who are simply curious but not yet ready to leave behind their former practice and move on to the next stage. If Śiva wishes to favor them with a transmission of grace that gives them a more advanced level of insight, he will do so regardless, and the person will then manifest the appropriate signs that qualify them for initiation, if such be needed. Speaking in the *Tantrāloka* of this kind of person who slowly realizes the value of higher and yet higher philosophies,⁶⁹⁷ he writes, “A gradual Descent of Power [is one where] a person in the Siddhānta school then enters the Vāma school, [then] the Dakṣiṇā, the Mata, Kula, and Kaula, then the Trika, the Heart [of Śaivism]. Or, by skipping over, [one may reach the Trika] without following [all the steps in] this order or even immediately” (13.300cd-301).⁶⁹⁸ Since the higher teachings are by definition more all-encompassing, a guru versed in them can also comment on the dualistic scriptures and the scriptures of the bound (*pāśava-śāstra*, i.e. the Veda). Such a guru is described in the next TS passage:

*ūrdhva-śāsana-sthas tu guruḥ adharādharma-śāsanaṃ pratyuta prāṇayati --
pūrṇatvāt iti sarvādhikārī | sa ca daiśiko guruḥ ācāryo dīkṣakaḥ cumbakaḥ, sa
cāyaṃ pūrṇa-jñāna eva sarvottamaḥ -- tena vinā dīkṣādy-asampatteḥ |*
On the other hand, a guru who is established in the higher teachings breathes life into the lower teachings, due to his perfection. Thus he is qualified with respect to all [the scriptures]. He is [called] a guide, a guru, a master, an initiator, a ‘kisser,’ and he is the best of all, as his knowledge is complete and all-encompassing: without it, he could not perform initiations and so on.

A ‘kisser’ (*cumbaka*) is simply a name for a Śaiva guru, perhaps one that emphasizes oral transmission of knowledge. It seems the designation was in origin a Kaula one, in which oral transmission was often held to be higher than textual transmission.⁶⁹⁹ But what of the fact that many people are attracted to gurus who seem to have supernatural powers? Abhinava now articulates a subtle critique:

⁶⁹⁶ For the Trika, this is the *triśūlābja-maṇḍala* or *maṇḍala* of Śiva’s trident surmounted by four symbolic lotuses.

⁶⁹⁷ From the nondualist perspective, a teaching is “higher” when it is more all-encompassing and more radically nondual.

⁶⁹⁸ *kramikaḥ śaktipātaś ca siddhānte vāmake tataḥ | dakṣe mate kule kaule śaḍardhe hṛdaye tataḥ |
ullaṅghana-vaśād vāpi jhaṭity akramam eva vā ||*

⁶⁹⁹ See *Kulasāra* 15 for the five types of Kaula guru and *Svacchandatantra* 5.46 and commentary for the *cumbaka*.

*yogī tu phalotsukasya yukto yadi upāyopadeśena avyavahitam eva phalaṃ
dātuṃ śaktaḥ, upāyopadeśena tu jñāne eva yukto mokṣe 'pi abhyupāyāt jñāna-
pūrṇatā-kāṅkṣī ca bahūn api gurūn kuryāt |*

But a yogin is appropriate [as a teacher] for one desiring [worldly or supernatural] fruits only if [the former] is capable, by teaching the [correct] means, to grant the fruits [of yogic practice] *immediately* upon [the completion of that practice]. And he is appropriate with regard to that [specific kind of] knowledge alone, by teaching those means. One who desires [to attain] fullness of knowledge with regard to liberation as well, through [the appropriate] means, may approach many teachers [until he finds such knowledge].

Here a yogin refers to one who has mastered supernatural attainments (*siddhi*) as opposed to a *jñānin*, one who teaches the path of liberating knowledge. Abhinava seems to be rhetorically saying that a yogin is *not* appropriate as a teacher, because he can only teach the means, not grant the fruit (though he may promise it will come at some later date). This becomes more clearly apparent when considering this passage in the light of *Tantrāloka* 13.340: “In contrast to a yogin, who cannot grant the fruits of practice but only teach the means (to attain them), the preferable *jñānin* is one who can point out the means and further can liberate one” (*phala-dānākṣame yoginy upāyaikopadeśini | varam jñāni yo 'bhyupāyaṃ diśed api ca mocayet ||*). Regarding the assertion of the validity of approaching many teachers for knowledge, we know that Abhinava himself did this (“like a bee wandering from flower to flower in search of fragrance,” TĀ 13.335) and learned much from a variety of gurus, yet he also revered his guru Śambhunātha above all others as the one whose knowledge was perfect and complete. Thus, after meeting Śambhunātha, he stopped searching, or so he implies below (and cf. TĀ 1.13 and 1.16).

*uttamottamādi-jñānabhedāpekṣayā teṣu tu vartate, sampūrṇa-jñāna-guru-tyāge
tu prāyaścittam eva | nanu so'pi abruvan viparītaṃ vā bruvan kiṃ na tyājyaḥ,
naiva iti brūmaḥ, tasya hi pūrṇa-jñānatvāt eva rāgādy-abhāva iti avacanādikaṃ
śiṣya-gatenaiva kenacit ayogyatvānāśvastatvādinā nimittena syāt iti, tad-
upāsane yatanīyaṃ śiṣyena, na tat-tyāge |*

He may attend on them, with the hope [of attaining] various kinds of higher and higher wisdom [until he is satisfied]. But when one leaves a guru whose insight is complete and all-encompassing, [it is a transgression, for which] a penance is definitely [required]. [Objection:] ‘Surely, should not even such a guru be abandoned if he does not speak or speaks contradictions?’ Not at all, we say. For precisely because of his perfect insight (*pūrṇa-jñāna*), he lacks attachment and [aversion]. His not speaking or [speaking contradictions] may be due to some cause in the *disciple*, such as unfitness [for knowledge], untrustworthiness, unreliability, and so on. The disciple ought to make an effort in his service, not in his abandonment!⁷⁰⁰

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. *Svacchanda-tantra* 1.12c-17b for the characteristics of true and false gurus.

*evam anugraha-nimittam śaktipāto nirapekṣa eva – karmādi-niyaty-
anapekṣaṇāt*⁷⁰¹ |

Thus śaktipāta is caused by grace, and entirely independent, because it does not depend on binding fate (*niyati*), *karma* and so on.

The five Acts of God (*pañcakṛtya*) in Śaivism are creation (*sṛṣṭi*), maintenance (*sthiti*), dissolution (*saṃhāra*), obscuration (*tirobhāva*), and grace (*anugraha*). The last two are complementary opposites, thus Abhinava briefly treats obscuration here, as it is the inverse of the act of grace that manifests as *śaktipāta*. Obscuration is the power in operation within one who turns away from the spiritual path, whether through apostasy or through continuing to practice outwardly but despising it within. What is significant for us here is the assertion that even such a person eventually attains liberation, after a period of self-created suffering, as Śiva's grace cannot go to waste.

*tirobhāva iti, tirobhāvo hi karmādy-anapekṣa-gāḍha-duḥkha-moha-bhāgitva-
phalaḥ,*⁷⁰² *yathāhi prakāśa-svātantryāt prabuddho 'pi mūḍhavad ceṣṭate
hṛdayena ca mūḍha-ceṣṭām nindati, tathā mūḍho 'pi prabuddha-ceṣṭām
mantrārādhanādikām kuryāt, nindec ca |*

[Now to address] the topic of 'obscuration'. For obscuration [is a power of the Lord that] has as its fruit a share in delusion and intense misery; it is not based on *karma* and [binding fate, (but rather, from the highest perspective, it is the free exercise of one's own divine capacity for contraction and self-concealment)]. Just as a person, though an awakened being, may behave like a fool out of the freedom of the Light of Consciousness, yet scorn the foolish behavior in his heart, similarly another person, though a fool, may behave like an awakened one, propitiating a mantra-deity and so on, and [yet] he may scorn [such behavior in his heart].

*yathā ca asya mūḍha-ceṣṭā kriyamāṇāpi prabuddhasya dhvaṃsam eti tathā asya
prabuddha-ceṣṭā, sā tu nindyamānā – niṣiddhācaraṇa-rūpatvāt svayaṃ ca
tayaiva viśaṅkamānatvāt enaṃ duḥkha-moha-paṅke nimajjayati*

And just as, though he practices the behavior of a fool, [such action] is destroyed for an awakened one (i.e., it generates no karmic result), similarly the behavior of an awakened one [bears no meritorious fruit for a fool]. Despising this [Tantric practice], because it has the form of prohibited [i.e. non-Vedic] action, and because he himself doubts it and feels inhibited regarding it, it drags him down into the mud of misery and delusion.

These doubts and inhibitions (*śaṅka*) may arise, especially for a brāhmin, because of brāhminical criticisms of the Śaiva path as non-Vedic and its ritual as transgressing Vedic norms (and because that individual's weak level of *śaktipāta* does not give him sufficient faith to ignore such criticisms). Even the claim that initiation bestows liberation goes strongly against the traditional Vedic grain as represented by bastions of orthodoxy such as Kumārila.

⁷⁰¹ Following the alternate reading given in the edition, *niyatyanapekṣaṇāt* for *niyatyapekṣaṇāt*.

⁷⁰² Following the alternate reading given in the edition, *karmādyanapekṣa* for *karmādyapekṣa*.

na tu utpanna-śaktipātasya tirobhāvo 'sti, atrāpi ca karmādy-apekṣā pūrvavat niṣedhyā, tatrāpi ca icchā-vaicitryāt etad-deha-mātropabhogya-duḥkha-phalatvaṃ vā dīkṣā-samaya-caryā-guru-devāgny-ādau sevā-nindanobhaya-prasaktānām iva prāk śiva-śāsana-sthānām tat-tyāginām iva |

But [this power of] obscuration does not exist for one in whom the Descent of Power has occurred. In this case as well, dependence on *karma* and [binding fate] is disallowed as before. And even in the case [of those referred to above, initiated but inhibited], due to the variations in the Will, the fruition of suffering is to be experienced only in this body; as in the case of those who are simultaneously inclined to reverence and criticism regarding [the central tenets of Śaivism, such as] initiation, the basic prescribed discipline (*samaya-caryā*), the guru, the deity, the [sacred] fire, and so on. And similarly for those who were previously established in the teaching of Śiva and then renounced it.

The doctrine that such obscuration is temporary and the soul will eventually attain liberation is expounded also by Śaiva Siddhānta authority Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, in his commentary on *Kiraṇatantra* 5.26-29 (see p. 197 above). He argues that even one who has fallen from and rejected the path to such an extent that he is born as a flesh-eating demon in a hell realm, after a period of time (the *Pauṣkara* suggests it is a hundred years), the subtle trace (*vāsanā*) of his initiation will bear fruit and he will return to the spiritual path and attain liberation. Thus both authors defend the doctrine that *śaktipāta* is always a successful act of grace, and the initiation that follows always liberates. However, here Abhinava denies that an initiated Śaiva who apostasizes could go to hell—he will rather “experience suffering only in this body.” Then he will receive another *śaktipāta*, either in this life or after death:

tatrāpi icchā-vaicitryāt tirobhūto 'pi svayaṃ vā śaktipātena yujyate, mṛto vā bandhu-gurvādi-kṛpā-mukhena ity

Even in that case, due [once again] to variations in the Will, though a person has become ‘obscured’, he is endowed with the Descent of Power either independently, or if he is dead, through the compassion of his guru or a relative [of the deceased who importunes a guru on their behalf].

evaṃ pañca-kṛtya-bhāgitvaṃ svātmani anusandadhat parameśvara eva iti na khaṇḍitam ātmānaṃ paśyet |

Thus, considering in himself his participation in the Five [divine] Acts [of creation, maintenance, dissolution, obscuration, and grace], he is nothing other than the Supreme Lord. Thus let him not see himself as broken (i.e., limited and separate from Śiva).

The “variations in the Will” (*icchā-vaicitrya*) spoken of here (and above) refer to the Lord’s will, of course, but it has already been established that there is no ontological difference between Śiva and any other conscious agent. Therefore the variations of will referred to include also the desires of the apparently individual agent. These desires influence which *śaktipāta* a person receives and the course taken subsequently (about which more will be said in the next section). The will (*icchā*, which SANDERSON translates as “precognitive impulse”) is not causative here in the ordinary sense; rather, what comes to pass is correlated to it, just as one will always

receive an answer to the question that one asked, and not any of the others that one putatively could have asked.

Abhinava ends the chapter, as he always does in this work, with a summary verse:

*yathā nirargala-svātma-svātantryāt parameśvaraḥ |
ācchādayen nijaṃ dhāma tathā vivṛṇuyād api ||*

Just as the Supreme Lord, through the unrestrained freedom of his own Self, may conceal his glory, in the same way he may reveal it as well.⁷⁰³

All the conceptual problems one might have with the theory of *śaktipāta* fall away in light of the fact that there is only one agent, he asserts. This concludes our exploration of *Tantrasāra* chapter eleven. Next we will look a little more closely at *Tantrāloka* chapter thirteen.

Śaktipāta *and* āveśa in *Tantrāloka* 13

Abhinavagupta, like the poet Puṣpadanta, can at times exhibit “an impudent degree of verbosity” (*dhṛṣṭā mukharatā*) and chapter 13 of the TĀ is no exception. The much shorter *Tantrasāra* 11 ably summarizes every important point of the 361 verses in TĀ 13, apropos of its name. Thus TĀ 13 need not detain us too long. Furthermore, a very thorough treatment of TĀ 13 would be redundant with the forthcoming dissertation on that very chapter from Alberta FERRARIO (U.Penn). We will therefore note only the most salient points of the chapter not already addressed.

After an extremely lengthy, hair-splitting, and exhaustive philosophical disputation about *karma*, *mala*, *māyā*, and Saiddhāntika views of the reasons for *śaktipāta* (TĀ 13.3-101; for a hint of the nature of this material, see Appendix Two, which translates 13.1-15 with Jayaratha’s commentary), Abhinava turns to the articulation of his own view in verse 102. This is not only a topical shift, but one of tone as well: at once his language is more poetic, lucid, and mellifluous, as if to create a pleasurable *bhāva* in the reader that he did not want when discussing opponents’ views.

*itthaṃ bhrānti-viśāveśa-mūrcchā-nirmoka-dāyinīm |
śrīśambhu-vadanodgīrṇāṃ vacmy āgama-mahauśadhīm || 13.102*

Thus I now speak of the great medicinal herb of wisdom-transmission (*āgama*) which flowed forth from the mouth of the glorious Śambhu, granting surcease from the stupor arising from the entry (*āveśa*) of the poison of confusion:

*devaḥ svatantraś cidrūpaḥ prakāśātmā svabhāvataḥ |
rūpa-pracchādāna-kriḍā-yogād aṇur anekakaḥ || 103*

God, in essence, is autonomous Awareness, the manifesting Light of Consciousness. Through the *yoga* of his divine play—an expression of his

⁷⁰³ Abhinava usually gives a summary verse in *Apabhraṃśa* Prākṛt as well. My tentative translation of the *chāyā* of the Prākṛt verse that follows the Sanskrit summary verse in the KSTS edition is: “Even if one’s [inner] splendour remains unawakened, he may behave like an awakened one; or he may [actually] awaken again [to his true nature]: such is the independent Descent of Power.”

essence-nature—he conceals his [natural] form and so becomes each of the manifold individual souls.

*sa svayaṃ kalpitākāra-vikalpātmaka-karmabhiḥ |
badhnāty ātmānam eveha svātantryād iti varṇitam || 104*

He himself binds himself in this world, out of his own freedom, through the *karmas* that consist of [artificially] fashioned thought-structures—as has been explained (in TĀ 9.144ff).⁷⁰⁴

*svātantrya-mahimaivāyaṃ devasya yad asau punaḥ |
svaṃ rūpaṃ parīśuddhaṃ sat spṛśaty apy aṇutāmayaḥ || 105*

The greatness of God’s freedom is such that, despite having become a contracted individual, he again touches [and enters into] his own true completely pure form.

*na vācyam tu katham nāma kasmiccit puṃsy asau tathā |
na hi nāma pumān kaścid yasmin paryanuyujyate || 106*

Yet it cannot be asked ‘Why, pray, does this [happen only] to certain souls?’ and the like. For indeed there is no such [separate] soul whatsoever about which such an objection could be raised.

*deva eva tathāsau cet svarūpaṃ cāsya tādrśam |
tādrk-prathā-svabhāvasya svabhāve kānuyojyatā || 107*

If God himself is like that (i.e. unitary, autonomous, etc.), and his true nature is the same [in either case], what objection can there be regarding the intrinsic nature of one whose essence it is to appear in that way [both bound and free]?

In this passage, our eye is first drawn to the use of the word *āveśa* in verse 102: the poison of confusion as it were possesses one, dictating one’s thoughts and actions. The word has not lost its original meaning in Abhinava’s lexicon. In contrast to this metaphorical poison, the teachings flowing from an authoritative source (*āgama*) are like a medicinal herb that restores health and well-being. And for the reader who slogged through the previous 100 verses, the ones that follow do feel like a refreshing balm. In verses 103-7, he adumbrates the view the underlies the whole chapter: that the one divinity that alone exists appears in the form of one who is bound, one who is shaking off bonds, and one who is free, and all are equally expressions of God in his real nature (*svabhāva*). It is His very essence to sport by appearing in these different ways. Therefore the whole question of causation is missing the point; it is simple a game (*krīḍā*) of appearances. The apparently bound soul has not after all relinquished his divine nature (though he may himself believe otherwise), therefore no cause need be sought, and the same goes for the return to the full and complete awareness of his real nature. Abhinava quotes Somānanda to corroborate the point: “Since his Divinity is described in terms of the Five Acts (of creation, stasis, dissolution, concealment, and revelation) why seek for other causes for one [simply] engaged in his natural conduct?”⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰⁴ The commentator Jayaratha gives as simple examples of *vikalpas idam kāryam* and *idam akāryam*: “this should be done” and “this should not.”

⁷⁰⁵ TĀ 13.108c-9b, quoting *Śivadṛṣṭi* 1.12c-13b: *pañca-prakāra-kṛtyokti-śivatvān nija-karmaṇe | pravṛttasya nimittānāmapareṣāṃ kva mārḡaṇam |*

Having given this overview, now we will examine specific verses of interest. In the discussion of *mala*, we find this:

tasya roddhrī yadā śaktir udāste śiva-raśmibhiḥ |
tadāṅṅṅ sprśyate spaṣṭaḥ svake jñāna-kriye sphuṭe || 50
samāviśed ayam sūryakānto 'rkeṇeva coditaḥ |

When the obstructing power [finally] overlooks him, then the soul is touched by Śiva's rays [of power]; touched, one certainly penetrates into one's own [powers of] knowledge and action, [now] blossomed and evident, like the sunstone incited by the sun.

Now, as the commentary makes clear, Abhinava has *śaktipāta* in mind here,⁷⁰⁶ so we are interested to see the word *samāviśet*: one is said to penetrate into or take possession of one's capacities as a result of the Descent of Power. The soul is certainly the agent here; one is not possessed by the *śaktis* of knowing and acting (which are in the locative). We are also interested to note the word *codita*, which as previously noted has a special connection to *śaktipāta* in the Śaiva context. As before, the agent of this participle is Śiva, who "incites/impels/awakens" the soul to its divine qualities, just as the sun incites like qualities in the mythical sunstone.

The nine grades of *śaktipāta* receive a lengthy discussion (13.129-253), with a long excursus on the nature of *pratibhā* or divine intuition (13.146-98). Part of this excursus is a long paraphrase from the lost Kaula scripture, the *Nandiśikhā-tantra* (13.164c-95). Within this close paraphrase⁷⁰⁷ we find this verse:

sa eva pratibhā-yuktaḥ śakti-tattvaṃ nigadyate || 186
*tatpātāveśato muktaḥ śiva eva bhavārṇavāt |*⁷⁰⁸

[When] the soul is conjoined with divine intuition, it is said to be the Principle of Power incarnate. Penetrated by its Descent, he becomes Śiva, liberated from the ocean of worldly existence.

Here we have a clinching confirmation that in the Kaula sources at least, there is a strong overlap if not identity of the terms (*sam*)*āveśa* and *śaktipāta*. The Descent of Power is a powerful religious experience, one in which divine grace enters, penetrates, even possesses one, and it is unfailing in its effect: the recipient realizes his identity with the Divine either immediately or after some indeterminate (but not lengthy) amount of time. According to the *Nandiśikhā*, when the charismatic guru is the instrument of an aspirant's powerful awakening, that process depends on the guru having himself been penetrated by Śiva's power:

śiva-śakti-karāveśād guruḥ śiṣya-prabodhakaḥ ||
adharottaraḡair vākyaiḥ prabhu-śakty-upabrṃhitaḥ |
tac-chaktyā suprabuddhasya dhvasta-māyā-malasya ca ||

⁷⁰⁶ Jayaratha ad. loc.: *tathāyam api śiva-śaktipāta-pūtaḥ svake pūrṇe jñāna-kriye samabhivyakta-svasamvid-vaibhavo bhaved ity arthaḥ*

⁷⁰⁷ We know Abhinava often preferred close paraphrases of his sources because his commentator Jayaratha quotes those sources verbatim wherever he has access to them. The *Nandiśikhā-tantra* was evidently not yet lost at Jayaratha's time (c. 13th cen.).

⁷⁰⁸ The original hemistich paraphrased here reads *tatpātāveśato jantur mucyate tu bhavārṇavāt |*, as cited by Jayaratha.

*dīkṣāsi-cchinna-pāsasya bhāvanā-bhāvitasya ca |
vikāsaṃ tattvam āyāti yat taj-jñānam idaṃ priye ||*

Due to penetration by the rays of Śiva's Power, the guru, energized by the Lord's power, awakens the disciple with his words, whether higher or lower (i.e., mantras or discourse). Fully awakened by that Power, his *mala* and *māyā* destroyed, his bonds cut away by the sword of initiation, and developed by meditation, his insight⁷⁰⁹ reaches its fullest expansion, O dear one.

The final verse here appears as TĀ 13.174c-5b, with the other verse and a half appearing in Jayaratha's commentary ad. loc. Here we see *āveśa* as a requirement for the guru's authority, as is typical for Kaula sources. The *āviṣṭa* guru becomes a medium for the *śakti* to flow to the aspirant, which triggers his awakening. Even the everyday discourse of such a guru can accomplish this transmission. The term *śaktipāta* is clearly implicit here (e.g., in the phrase *tacchaktyā suprabuddha-*). Not only does the guru's authority depend on *śivāveśa*, in Abhinava's view, but that of all non-Śaiva deities: he tells us that Viṣṇu and the others may bestow grace on someone because they are penetrated by the Lord's Power!⁷¹⁰ We will not linger overlong in considerations of *samāveśa* here, however, for we will explore the relevance of that term for Abhinavagupta's lineage at length further on.

In the final third of this long chapter, Abhinava comments on the key MVT passages we have examined above and in so doing teaches his nine-fold classification of *śaktipāta*, which we already saw above in *Tantrasāra* 11. It will doubtless be helpful at this point to tabulate the nine types, identifying what distinguishes them from each other in the simplest possible words.

<u>Type of śaktipāta</u>	<u>Result</u>
#1 <i>tīvra-tīvra</i>	immediate or very rapid <i>mukti</i> and fall of the body
#2 <i>madhya-tīvra</i>	<i>jīvanmukti</i> through intuitive awareness, then guruhood subdivides into: a) "without support," a <i>sāṃsiddhika/prātibha-guru</i> ; b) "with support," one whose <i>pratibhā</i> needs the <i>śāstra</i> or a guru to be perfected; ⁷¹¹ aka an <i>akalpita-kalpaka-guru</i>
#3 <i>manda-tīvra</i>	seeks a guru, receives Kaula-type initiation, attains <i>jīvanmukti</i> . subdivides into: a) finds <i>sāṃsiddhika</i> guru b) finds <i>saṃskṛta</i> guru c) receives <i>sadly-nirvāṇa-dīkṣā</i> if close to death
#4 <i>tīvra-madhya</i>	liberation at death (receives ordinary <i>nirvāṇa-dīkṣā</i>)
#5 <i>madhya-madhya</i>	<i>sādhaka/bubhuksu</i> ; receives initiation into yoga and attains liberation after enjoying the fruit thereof in an after-death realm

⁷⁰⁹ Abhinava reads "intuition" here, the final pāda being *prātibhaṃ tad udāhṛtam* in his version (TĀ 13.175b).

⁷¹⁰ *anugrṇāti kañcana | śa-śakti-samāveśāt tathā viṣṇvādayo'pyalam ||*, TĀ 13.270d-71ab.

⁷¹¹ Abhinava describes a self-initiation ritual for this purpose at TĀ 4.51-58.

#6	<i>manda-madhya</i>	<i>sādhaka/bubhukṣu</i> with liberation after enjoyment on several other planes ⁷¹²
#7	<i>tīvra-manda</i>	<i>bubhukṣu</i> with automatic liberation in some future life ⁷¹³
#8	<i>madhya-manda</i>	<i>bubhukṣu</i> who will need re-initiation in some future life
#9	<i>manda-manda</i>	<i>bubhukṣu</i> who will pass through many stages before being reinitiated; even he will attain oneness with Śiva eventually

Table 10. The nine levels of *śaktipāta*.

Note that the subdivisions also appear as *utkrṣṭa*, *madhya*, and *nikrṣṭa* respectively (such that type #1 is also called *utkrṣṭa-tīvra*, which is more descriptive).

The first of the MVT passages Abhinava comments on in this section is 1.42-5 (please see above, pp. 187f), in which four types of recipient of Śiva's *śaktipāta* are described (Abhinava expands these four to the first six of his nine-fold classification). These MVT verses are cited at TĀ 13.199c-203, followed by this commentary (with words from the source text in inverted commas in the translation):

asyārtha ātmanaḥ kācit kalanāmarśanātmikā |
svaṃ rūpaṃ prati yā saiva ko 'pi kāla ihoditaḥ || 204
yogyatā śiva-tādātmya-yogārhatvam ihocyate |
pūrvaṃ kiṃ na tathā kasmāt tadaiveti na saṃgatam || 205
tathābhāsanam ujhitvā na hi kālo 'sti kaścana |
svātantryāt tu tathābhāse kāla-śaktir vijṛmbhatām || 206
na tu paryanuyuktyai sā śive tan-mahimoditā |

The 'particular time' [for the soul to receive *śaktipāta*] which is referred to (in MVT 1.42) is specifically that of a particular *activity* (*kalanā*)⁷¹⁴ of the soul, consisting of reflective awareness (*āmarśana*), directed toward one's own nature. We hold that 'readiness' (*yogyatā*) is the state of being [made] capable [by this self-reflection] for the spiritual process (*yoga*) of identification with Śiva. Thus the question "Why [did it happen] only then, why not before?" is not appropriate. For aside from manifesting in this way, there is no occasion (*kāla*) [for the Descent of Power] whatsoever. But when it manifests in this way, [totally] independently, [what we call] the Power of Time arises within Śiva as an expression of

⁷¹² The commentator Jayaratha identifies this level with the category of the *śivadharmin sādharma* taught in the scriptures.

⁷¹³ The distinctions of the last three types are drawn from Jayaratha's commentary, since Abhinava does not distinguish them other than to say that they are proportional to the aspirant desire for pleasures (13.245cd-6ab). Jayaratha identifies these three types with the category of the *lokadharmin sādharma*.

⁷¹⁴ Deriving *kāla* and *kalanā* from \sqrt{kal} , an esoterically significant verbal root for Abhinava's lineage because of its connection with Kālī. See the discussion of this root at TĀ 3.252c-3b and 4.173c-75.

his majesty, and [therefore] cannot contradict his expansion [in the form of the soul's awakening].⁷¹⁵

In other words, when a soul (= individuated consciousness) is spontaneously drawn to reflect on its own nature, it makes itself ready for, and capable of, the *yoga* of identifying itself with God. It thus draws *śaktipāta* to itself. In this nondual theology, we have a coherent reversal of the dualistic concept of grace descending from a transcendent deity on high. Insofar as one can speak of Śiva and an individual soul as two aspects of one reality, their underlying unity requires that the individual is as much an agent of this process as God; or even more so, Abhinava implies, because the process pertains to him. Like the sun, Śiva is beaming his grace to everyone, and it is when the soul opens to that grace that it seems to “descend.” To be even more accurate to Abhinava’s view, it is when Śiva-appearing-as-soul begins to reflect on his own nature that he acquires and develops his readiness for the process of identifying with his greater self (Śiva-appearing-in-fullness), which is really a process of expansion (*vijṛmbhatā*) into his ultimate nature. This readiness draws *śaktipāta* like a well-placed lightning rod draws lightning. So there is no “occasion” for *śaktipāta*; it is simply what happens when Śiva, having freely chosen to appear as a contracted individual, freely chooses to appear in the process of expansion or realization.⁷¹⁶ *Kāla-śakti* is thus subordinate to, and an expression of, Śiva; it cannot dictate the “correct moment” for a process that transcends *karma* and causality. Abhinava continues:

nanu śaivī mahā-śaktiḥ sambaddhaivātmabhiḥ sthitā |
satyaṃ saccchādanātmā tu śāntā tv eṣā svarūpa-dṛk || 207
kṣobho hi bheda evaikyaṃ praśamas tanmayī tataḥ || 208
tayā śāntyā tu sambaddhaḥ sthitaḥ śakti-svarūpa-bhāk |
tyaktāṇu-bhāvo bhavati śivas tac-chakti-dārḍhyataḥ || 209

“But surely Śiva’s great Power remains entirely connected with souls [at all times]?” True; but [sometimes] its nature is to conceal. However, [when it becomes] ‘tranquil,’ it [reveals] insight into one’s nature. For agitation (*kṣobha*) is differentiation itself; unity is tranquility, and therefore [the liberative power] consists of that. One who abides in ‘connection’ with this tranquil power shares in the essence of that power. Giving up the feeling of being a limited separate individual (*aṇu*),

⁷¹⁵ Cf. Utpaladeva’s *Śivastotrāvalī* (13.11): “O Lord, you never bother about the ‘right time’ for the Descent of [your] Grace—so what [calamity] has befallen me today that you delay in revealing yourself?” *śaktipāta-samaye vicāraṇaṃ prāptam īśa na karoṣi karhicit | adya māṃ prati kim āgataṃ yataḥ svaprakāśana-vidhau vilambase ||*

⁷¹⁶ Compare *Tantrasāra* chapter four (line 21 in the text): “The ultimate Reality, illuminating its own nature, having gradually laid aside its condition of ignorance—which it freely took on itself—manifests in these [three] stages: turning towards expansion, then expanding, then expanded. Revealing [himself] in this way is simply the nature of the Supreme Lord” (*ayaṃ paramārthaḥ svarūpaṃ prakāśamānam akhyāti-rūpatvaṃ svayaṃ svātantryāt gṛhītaṃ krameṇa projjhyā vikāsonmukham atha vikasat atha vikasitam ity anena krameṇa prakāśate tathā prakāśanam api parameśvarasya svarūpam eva*).

he becomes Śiva, due to the strength and stability (*dārḍhya*) of this Power.⁷¹⁷

Here he explains why the liberative power is called *śāntā śaktiḥ* in the source text. *Kṣobha* is the standard word in Śaiva cosmology for the “stimulation” of the homogenous primordial *māyā* which thereby creates the differentiated universe.⁷¹⁸ Agitation creates apparent differentiation, and differentiation creates the agitation of suffering in embodied beings, whereas in unity there is peace. Hence the liberative power is tranquil in the sense that it brings one to the tranquility of unity. Abhinava here has in mind the fourth and fifth of the Five Acts (*pañca-kṛtya*), those of *tirodhāna* (concealment) and *anugraha* (revelation or grace); the former giving way to the latter is marked by the event of *śaktipāta*. This sense of temporal succession is intended but not explicit in the passage.

Turning to the last sentence of this passage, in Jayaratha’s commentary we find *dārḍhyam* glossed with *tad-āveśa-vaivaśyam*, “surrendering to immersion in that [Power],” surprising because the terms *dārḍhya* and *vaivaśya* are so nearly opposite. *Vaivaśya* would usually connote loss of self-control, helplessness, deprivation of will, and these are qualities associated with *āveśa* in the sense of involuntary possession, but the context here requires a different meaning—unless we understand this case of *utkrṣṭa-tīvra-śaktipāta* (for that is how this passage is understood by Abhinava) as precisely one of being so totally inundated with divine power that one’s habitual sense of identity is swept away, helpless to resist the power of the awakening. But however intense the experience, it terminates in tranquility. Perhaps Jayaratha means to imply that in surrender is strength and stability. Note that Kṣemarāja at one point attributes his inspiration to *āveśa-vaivaśya*.⁷¹⁹ Next Abhinava comments on MVT 1.43ab:

tatrāpi tāratamyādi-vaśāc chīghra-cirāditaḥ |
deha-pāto bhaved asya yad vā kāṣṭhādi-tulyatā || 210
samasta-vyavahāreṣu parācīnita-cetanaḥ |
tīvra-tīvra-mahā-śakti-samāviṣṭaḥ sa sidhyati || 211

Regarding that, due to [subtle] gradations [of the Lord’s will that subdivide this level of *śaktipāta*], the fall of the body may thus occur quickly or after some time, or he may [enter an insensate state], similar to a block of wood or the like. Penetrated (*samāviṣṭa*) by the great Power in the intense-intense variety, he attains the goal, his mind becoming disinclined to all worldly activity.

Again we see that *śaktipāta* is something that fully penetrates or possesses one, at least in its stronger varieties. To have received a strong *śaktipāta* is to be *samāviṣṭa*.

⁷¹⁷ Jayaratha identifies the *kṣobha*- and *śānta-śaktis* here with *Vāmā* and *Jyeṣṭhā* respectively. See above, p. 278.

⁷¹⁸ See SANDERSON 1992: 283 n13, citing *Mataṅga-pārameśvara* VP 8.53 and 9.1. For *māyā* as the material cause of the universe in Śaivism, see *ibid.*: 282 n11.

⁷¹⁹ In the second *maṅgala-śloka* of Kṣemarāja’s *Sāmbapañcāśikā-ṭikā*: *etad-āveśa-vaivaśya-pronmiṣaddhiṣaṇā vayam*. STAINTON (2013: 226) translates *vaivaśya* as “abandon” (as in “out of the abandon of this immersion”), and “surrender(ing)” would also work here.

The *utkr̥ṣṭa-tīvra*- grade of *śaktipāta* is so powerful that it impels one to leave the body behind immediately (or after a short time), or else one plunges so deep within that one becomes as insensate as a block of wood. But it is the following two grades that Abhinava is the most enthusiastic about discussing, as we have already seen. The recipient of *madhya-tīvra-śaktipāta* is identified with the person mentioned in MVT 1.43cd (*ajñānena sahaikatvaṃ kasya cid vinivartate*), about which Abhinava says:

ajñāna-rūpatā puṃsi bodhaḥ saṃkocite hṛdi |
saṃkoce vinivṛtte tu svasvabhāvaḥ prakāśate || 213
 When the Heart is contracted, the “awareness” in a man is in fact ignorance.⁷²⁰ But when the contraction comes to an end, one’s innate nature shines forth.

His source text clearly intends 1.44 all of a piece (p. 187 above), describing its third type of recipient, but Abhinava construes *rudra-śakti-samāviṣṭaḥ* from 44a with verse 43, thus connecting it to his grade #2. Furthermore, he then cites MVT 2.14-16 as the signs thereof. This hermeneutic move is enabled by the fact that both passages feature the phrase *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*. As usual, he does not quote but paraphrases:

rudra-śakti-samāviṣṭa ity anenāśya varṇyate |
cihna-vargo ya ukto 'tra rudre bhaktiḥ suniścalā || 214
mantra-siddhiḥ sarva-tattva-vaśitvaṃ kṛtya-sampadaḥ |
kavitvaṃ sarva-śāstrārtha-boddhṛtvam iti tatkrāmāt || 215
svatāratamya-yogāt syād eṣāṃ vyasta-samastatā |
tatrāpi bhuktau muktau ca prādhānyam carcayed budhaḥ || 216
 The phrase ‘penetrated by the Power of Rudra’ relates to the set of qualities described here [at MVT 2.14-16], in order [of significance], as: steady devotion to God, effectiveness of mantras, influence over all principles of reality, completion of one’s undertakings, skill in poetry, and [intuitively] knowing the teachings of all the scriptures.⁷²¹ Due to one’s [particular] sub-gradation [of *śaktipāta*], they may appear singly or all together. Among these, a wise person will observe that some are predominantly related to liberation and others to enjoyment.⁷²²

These five or six signs (see n722) are the signs of both *śaktipāta* #2 (for Abhinava) and of a Kaula guru (for both Abhinava and the source text). It is possible for them to

⁷²⁰ In the introduction to his *Tantrasāra*, Abhinava defines *ajñāna* on two levels: intellectual (*buddhigata*) and personal (*pauruṣa*). The first is of two kinds: lack of conviction and wrong conviction (*aniścaya-svabhāvaṃ viparīta-niścayātmakaṃ ca*), i.e. absence of knowledge and erroneous belief. The second (viz., *pauruṣājñāna*) is *vikalpa-svabhāvaṃ saṃkucita-prathātmakaṃ*, the state of being manifest as a contracted individual that generates differential thought-constructs; i.e., it is *mala* itself (as that term is defined in the nondual exegesis of the Trika).

⁷²¹ Since the MVT counts five signs, perhaps we are to understand *sarva-śāstrārtha-boddhṛtvam* as a gloss of *kavitvam*, which would then mean “sageliness” or “intelligence” rather than “skill in poetry.” However, the composition of poetry, especially *stotras*, was highly valued in the nondualist Kashmirian lineages with which we are concerned.

⁷²² Abhinava in this case compresses in his paraphrase, dropping some descriptive details from the original passage. The only significant changes he makes are *sarva-sattva-vaśitvam* -> *sarva-tattva-vaśitvam* and *prārabdha-kārya-niṣpattiḥ* -> *kṛtya-sampadaḥ*.

apply to both because a recipient of *śaktipāta* #2 usually goes on to become a guru in a relatively short amount of time, precisely because of the strength of the Descent he has received. Now let us recall the approximately 400-year journey of this textual passage. It first appeared in our sources as SYM 2.6-8 (p. 171 above), then was redacted into the MVT and from thence to the TĀ. In this process of redaction, it maintained its basic referent: to the signs of a Kaula-type guru who can transmit *śakti*, having himself been penetrated by it. Changes were minor, apart from one significant one: *sarva-sattvānāṃ kiṃkurvāṇa-vidheyatā* (the ability to make all beings one's servants) in the SYM became *sarva-sattva-vaśitvaṃ* (influence over all beings) in the MVT, which became *sarva-tattva-vaśitvaṃ* (influence over all principles of reality) in the TĀ. We can clearly see a gradual move away from interest in occult magic towards more esoteric and subtle qualities, which reflects a general trend in the literature.⁷²³

Next Abhinava turns to the *manda-tīvra* or third level of the Descent, which he sees in MVT 1.44b-45. This is the level that inspires one to seek a *sadguru*; for an description of what constitutes a *sadguru*, Abhinava turns to MVT 2.10-12 (in addition to the passage just cited). This time he cites the verses verbatim, so we refer the reader to their translation on pp. 175f above.⁷²⁴ After moving rapidly through the *madhya* and *manda* levels of *śaktipāta* (13.240-45b and 245c-46b respectively), Abhinava returns to the *madhya-tīvra* (#2), his favorite, to discuss an alternative interpretation. Here he characterizes the recipient of that level as *pratibhayāviṣṭaḥ*, “penetrated by divine intuition,” (247cd) further confirming the strong connection between the terms *śaktipāta* and *āveśa*. But note that this connection only obtains with reference to the higher grades of *śaktipāta*; the others are not sufficiently intense to be linked with the term *āveśa*.

Finally, Abhinava sums up his discussion of the grades of *śaktipāta* by boiling it down to two kinds: *para* and *apara*. He says:

idaṃ sāram iha jñeyaṃ paripūrṇa-cidātmanah || 254
prakāśaḥ paramaḥ śaktipāto 'vaccheda-varjitaḥ |
tathāvidho 'pi bhogāṃśāvacchedenopalakṣitaḥ || 255
aparaḥ śaktipāto 'sau paryante śivatā-pradaḥ |

Here is the essence [I wish the reader] to understand: the higher Descent of Power is [simply] the luminous manifestation⁷²⁵ of the Self-that-is-awareness in its fullness, free of division.⁷²⁶ Although the lower Descent

⁷²³ We know, for example, that there were many manuals of magic in the tradition that were classed as the *Bhūta-* and *Garuḍa-tantras*, only one of which survives (the *Kriyākālaguṇottara*).

⁷²⁴ The only change is *saṃbhāṣitāḥ* to *saṃbhāvitāḥ*, “those he thinks of” rather than “those he converses with,” which change includes the possibility of transmission or initiation at a distance.

⁷²⁵ It is difficult to capture in English the sense of *prakāśa* in Abhinava's usage, since it fuses the meanings “to illuminate” and “to manifest.” In this philosophy, consciousness is the source of manifestation: since there is only consciousness, to cognize and to manifest are one and the same. We could translate it as “luminous cognition” but that too would fail to convey the full sense of *prakāśa* to the English speaker.

⁷²⁶ Cf. his *Paramārthasāra*, verse 9: “Just as a face appears in a stainless mirror, likewise this [Self] shines, expressing its radiance, in the mind made transparent by the Descent of God's

is of the same nature, [in that] it bestows the state of Divinity in the end, it is marked by the limitations [that naturally apply to] aspects of worldly experience (*bhoga*).

In other words, the significant distinction to be made for Abhinava is between the *śaktipāta* that constitutes a participation in one's real divine nature, resulting in liberation from the constructed self, and that which enables one to practice the yogas that bring about *siddhi/bhoga*. While the tradition from its inception recognized the validity of both *mokṣa* and *siddhi* as goals of practice, one gets the feeling that Abhinava would jettison the latter if he could. He almost begrudgingly admits here that the lower *śaktipāta* does eventually lead to liberation. It is curious, then, that while the MVT had four types of recipient, with three being liberation-focused and one *siddhi*-focused, of Abhinava's nine types, four are liberation-focused and five are *bhoga*-focused. But this nine-fold classification is not his own, he tells us, but his teacher Śambhunātha's. This may explain why he enumerates types (#7-9) that he does not bother to discuss. Since he seems to view his teacher as an example of type #2, that might also explain his obvious enthusiasm in discussing that type (if Śambhunātha lacked formal consecration as a guru, Abhinava could have sought to validate him through this discussion).

Before leaving *Tantrāloka* 13 behind, we may wish to look at one more passage, in which Abhinava relates the four types of initiation in Śaivism to the Descent of Power. It is the latter, he tells us, that governs which kind of initiation and corresponding fruit a given aspirant receives. The four kinds of initiation common to all of Śaivism are 1) *samaya-dīkṣā* (the entry-level initiation), 2) *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* (the liberative initiation, which presupposes #1), 3) *sādhakābhiṣeka* (consecration for *siddhi*-seekers, which presupposes both #1 and #2), and *ācāryābhiṣeka* (which also presupposes #1 and #2 but not #3). The names of each initiate are *samayin*, *putraka*, *sādhaka*, and *ācārya* respectively.

kaścīd rudrāṃśatā-mātrāpādanāt tat-prasādataḥ || 296

śivatvaṃ kramaśo gacchet samayī yo nirūpyate |

kaścīc chuddhādhva-bandhaḥ san putrakaḥ śīghram akramāt || 297

bhoga-vyavadhinā ko 'pi sādhakaś cira-śīghrataḥ |

kaścīc sampūrṇa-kartavyaḥ kṛtya-pañcaka-bhāgini || 298

rūpe⁷²⁷ sthito guruḥ so 'pi bhoga-mokṣādi-bheda-bhāk |

samayyādi-catuṣkasya samāsa-vyāsa-yogataḥ || 299

kramākramādibhir bhedaiḥ śaktipātasya citratā |

One who achieves the state only of the aspect [of Śiva called] Rudra

[through his initiation] and therefore reaches the Śiva-state gradually,

through His grace, is called a *samayin*.⁷²⁸ Another is the *putraka* (spiritual

Power." *ādarśe mala-rahite yadvad vadanaṃ vibhāti tadvad ayam | śiva-śaktipāta-vimale dhī-tattve bhāti bhārūpaḥ ||*

⁷²⁷ *rūpe* conj. : *rūpaṃ* Ed.

⁷²⁸ The *samaya-dīkṣā* was adapted from the earlier Atimārga, while the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* that makes one a *putraka* was the innovation of the Mantramārga. For the former, the preferred name for

son), who being bound to the Pure Universe [through his initiation] [attains the Śiva-state] quickly (i.e., at the end of the body) [or] immediately (i.e., in this very life).⁷²⁹ Another is the *sādhaka*, [who attains it] quickly or slowly, depending on the intervention of the enjoyments [he craves]. Some [attain the status of] *guru*, partaking of enjoyment, liberation, and more; all that was to be accomplished is fulfilled [for him], [and] he abides in the nature [of Śiva], participating [constantly] in the Five Acts. The wondrous diversity of the Descent of Power in all its divisions [means that] these four classes of initiation may proceed sequentially or not, and all of them may be [attained] or only some.⁷³⁰

In other words, the Descent of Power, that unpredictable act of grace, is what is primary, for it determines what initiation a person receives and the course of his subsequent spiritual life. This is what the Saiddhāntikas try to militate against in their constant emphasis on the significance and indispensability of *dīkṣā*, for if *śaktipāta* is the primary thing, the institutional and ecclesiastical structure central to the Siddhānta is undermined. But they were fighting a losing battle, since *śaktipāta* is necessary for their *dīkṣā* as well and was seen as guaranteeing it and thus liberation too.⁷³¹ Therefore it is unsurprising that in many modern Hindu *sampradāyas* descended from the Tantric tradition the elaborate ritual *dīkṣā* is long forgotten,⁷³² and the term *śaktipāta* has become entirely conflated with *dīkṣā*, such that *śaktipāta* itself constitutes the sole *dīkṣā*.⁷³³ Returning to the passage above, Abhinava also leaves the door open as to whether a person may receive multiple Descents of Power. He never explicitly affirms or denies this, but it seems to me that he certainly thinks it is possible. For example, in the passage just following this one, already

the deity is Rudra and for the latter, Śiva. The Mantramārga takes these names to refer to two different deities (or, more accurately, they regard Rudra as a lower emanation of Śiva).

⁷²⁹ Grammatically, it would make more sense to translate *śīghram akramāt* as “not gradually, [but] quickly”—however, the standard Śaiva doctrine is that the great majority of initiates attain liberation at the end of the current life (which is quick compared to other paths that span many lifetimes), and that liberation is preceded by many years of daily practice, which I think could hardly be described as *akramāt*. The translation speculates, following a suggestion by DYCZKOWSKI, that *śīghram* is hyperbole for *dehāpāta-mukti* and *akramāt* is hyperbole for *jīvanmukta*, which a possibility for *putrakas* (if initiated according to the *kula-prakriyā*).

⁷³⁰ Due to the unpredictability of *śaktipāta*, Jayaratha implies, it could (rarely) happen that someone attains the fruit of being a *putraka* while only having the *samaya-dīkṣā*, and someone else becomes an *ācārya* without the usual initiations, etc.

⁷³¹ *yathā bheṣaja-sāmarthyād aśaktānām balaṃ param | tena tac-chakti-yogena sāmārthyam amitam bhavet ||*. This verse comes from the *Kiraṇa-tantra*, chapter four (but the second hemistich is found only in the Nepalese MSS); the reading here comes from its citation in the *Śataratna-saṅgraha*, v. 60.

⁷³² Elements of it survive in the initiation given to the Dīkṣitars of Cidambaram Temple, Tamil Nāḍu, where Śaiva Tantra once flourished; now *dīkṣita[r]* (“initiate”) is a hereditary caste name there.

⁷³³ As in Siddha Yoga Meditation®, which uses the phrase *śaktipāt-dīkṣā*, or at the Oneness University (Andhra), which uses the word *deeksha* to mean “an energy transfer that brings about growth in consciousness,” i.e. *śaktipāta* or *saṅkramaṇa*. See the Epilogue to the present work for more details.

cited on p. 279 above, he seems to suggest that when a person leaves an “inferior” path (e.g., Vaiṣṇavism) and requests initiation to a higher path, it is a *śaktipāta* that prompts him; and he alludes to the possibility of multiple such events in a single lifetime.

We have seen a significant connection between the terms *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa* in Abhinavagupta’s *Tantrāloka* 13, which has a scriptural precedent in the MVT. The two terms largely overlap: each denote spiritual experience, and each is closely linked to *dikṣā*, with the former emphasized in Saiddhāntika discourse, and the latter dominant in the Kaula sphere. Since Abhinavagupta seeks to unite those spheres in a totalizing pan-Śaiva discourse, he uses both terms, though *śaktipāta* is dominant in the more exoteric chapter 13 (≈ TS 11), while *samāveśa* is dominant in the esoteric chapter 29 (to which we shall come). By now the reader has become acutely aware that all key technical terms in this complex body of literature have a semantic range rather than a fixed meaning. In order to fix a meaning we first need a specific context. For example, from the perspective of the MVT, we can say that *samāveśa* is a general term for spiritual experiences of all varieties (150 subtypes being listed in chapter two of that text), and therefore *śaktipāta* must be considered a specific kind of *samāveśa*, specifically the kind that causes one to seek an initiatory guru. To have received *śaktipāta* is to be *śakti-samāviṣṭa*. In the context of initiation, though, the MVT reserves the term *samāveśa* for recipients of Kaula initiation, and in that sense it can look like a subtype of *śaktipāta* (the more intense variety), as it does in *Tantrāloka* 13. In sum, we are in a landscape of floating signifiers.

The relationship between the two terms is further nuanced by Kṣemarāja, the disciple and successor of Abhinavagupta, in the introduction to his *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*, in which he says:

iha ye sukumāra-matayo 'kṛta-tikṣṇa-tarka-śāstra-pariśramāḥ, śaktipāta-vaśonmiṣat⁷³⁴-pārameśvara-samāveśābhilāṣāḥ,⁷³⁵ katicid bhakti-bhājas teṣāṃ iśvara-pratyabhijñopadeśa-tattvaṃ manāg unmīlyate.

Here, the essence of the Recognition teachings will be unfolded concisely for [the benefit of] those rare devotees whose minds are tender and delicate (*sukumāra*), who have not labored in the science of difficult [philosophical] reasoning, and whose longing for Immersion into the Highest Divinity is expanding under the influence of the Descent of Power.

Here, in one of very few sources to explicitly state a relationship between *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa*, the latter is clearly the more advanced attainment. Kṣemarāja’s intended audience (and may I point out the extreme rarity in this literature of an explicit description of the same) have all received *śaktipāta*, and therefore initiation. Under the influence of their *śaktipāta*, their longing for *samāveśa* is growing. Here, the latter term means something very close to both “mystical experience” and “union with God” (cf. his usage of the term in chapter 19 of the same work, which we

⁷³⁴ Our preferred reading (*śaktipātavaśonmiṣat*) is that of MS K₄ in HANNEDER’s unpublished critical edition (on file at Oxford University). HANNEDER’s edition prefers *śaktipātonmiṣat*; the KSTS ed. has *śaktipātonmiṣita*.

⁷³⁵ em. SANDERSON, following MSS K₃, A₁, and A₂: *abhilāṣiṇaḥ* HANNEDER ed. and KSTS.

will explore later). But since *samāveśa* for Kṣemarāja can be either a temporary experience or a permanent state, the usage seen here does not disallow the understanding that the initial *śaktipāta* is itself often a taste of *samāveśa*.

A textual note is necessary here. Of the two emendations to this PH citation mentioned in the footnotes, the second is significant. It enables us to read the compound (*śaktipāta-vaśonmiṣat-pārameśvara-samāveśābhilāṣāḥ*) as a *bahuvrīhi*. The KSTS edition has *śaktipātonmiṣita-pārameśvara-samāveśābhilāṣiṇaḥ*, which would have to mean “[those devotees] who desire an immersion into the Highest Divinity, [of the sort] revealed through a Descent of Power.” But this reading is near-impossible, since Kṣemarāja could not have written this esoteric work for an audience who had not received *śaktipāta*, nor would such an audience be at all likely to be desirous of *samāveśa*. The diversity of manuscript readings for this sentence testifies that corruption of the text here is nearly certain, and we are confident in the readings adopted.⁷³⁶

2.5.3 *Saiddhāntika exegesis concerning (sam)āveśa*

Now we come to what is, in many ways, the final piece of the puzzle in the process of ascertaining the meaning of the all-important term *(sam)āveśa* in Śaivism—the consideration of its significance in philosophical materials. Before proceeding to the detailed exploration of the term in the work of the nondualists, we can briefly consider its occurrence in Saiddhāntika philosophical works. As already noted, the term *āveśa* figures hardly at all in Saiddhāntika scriptures or exegesis, though of course the concept is not far removed from *śaktipāta* and its antecedent term, *codanā*. In early Saiddhāntika exegesis, *āveśa* appears primarily as the doctrine of a unnamed rival Śaiva sect (in later exegesis identified as the Kāpālikas [= Atimārga III]). In Sadyojyotiḥ’s *Para-mokṣa-nirāsa-kārikā* (“An Enquiry into the Nature of Liberation,” c. 700 CE) with the *vṛtti* of Rāmakaṇṭha (c. 950 CE), twenty rival views are presented and refuted, with three of these labeled as “belonging to those of our system” (*samāna-tāntrika*), i.e. Śaivism. According to these three, liberation is becoming equal to God (*iśvara-samatā*) by attaining his qualities of omniscience and omnipotence, with which view the Saiddhāntikas wholly agree; but they do not agree with the mechanism of liberation asserted by these three groups, viz., that the divine qualities arise ex nihilo (*utpatti-vāda*), or are transferred into the soul by God, like one lamp lighting another (*saṅkrānti-vāda*), or penetrate the soul like possessing spirits (*āveśa-vāda*). These three views undoubtedly belong to subsects of the Atimārga, very probably the Kālamukhas, Pāśupatas, and Kāpālikas respectively. The first two identifications are explicit in Rāmakaṇṭha’s work, and the third is not, but is made by later authors.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁶ The plural pronoun here is literal, since I benefitted from a discussion of the textual problems in this passage with Professor SANDERSON when he was a guest lecturer at the University of Leipzig.

⁷³⁷ In the comprehensive introduction to the recently published translation of the text (WATSON et. al. 2013), Alex WATSON expresses doubts about the identification of the *utpatti-vāda* with the Kālamukhas (2013: 63-5 and n234), because it blatantly contradicts another doctrine said to be espoused by the Mahāvratas, which term is generally taken to be synonymous with the Kālamukhas (at least since SANDERSON’s groundbreaking 1997 lectures on the subject

The seventh *kārikā* of Sadyojyotiḥ's text⁷³⁸ says:

*samatā ca samutpatti-saṅkrānty-āveśa-pakṣataḥ |
nābhivyaktiḥ parā gītā baddha-vācām agocarā || 7*

That equality [with the Lord] is the manifestation [of his qualities]—the highest view beyond the scope of the scriptures of the bound—is not proclaimed by holders of the views of arising, transference, and possession.

Upon which Rāmakaṅṭha has this to say about the *āveśa-samatā-pakṣa*: “. . . others hold the possession-view, that a Siddha is one who is ‘possessed’ by the qualities of the supreme lord, which remain in their own substrate, as [in the case of] a person [possessed] by *grahas*” (*anyais tu tadā parameśvara-guṇaiḥ svāśraya-sthair eva siddhāḥ samāviśyate grahair iva puruṣa ity āveśa-pakṣaḥ*, section 2.18.3 in WATSON 2013). The refutation of this view is given in a single *pāda* (13b): *āveśe na svatantratā*, which is elaborated upon by Rāmakaṅṭha as follows: “In the view that equality [to the Lord] in liberation is due to possession by the Lord's qualities, the soul would not be autonomous in liberation, like someone possessed by spirits [is not autonomous], and [thus would] not [be] equal to the Lord at all” (*īśvara-guṇāveśān mukti-sāmya-pakṣe 'pi bhūtāviśṭasyeva puṃso muktāv asvātantryam eva, na tv īśvara-samateti*, section 3.8 in WATSON 2013). But this exact view does not appear in our Mantramārgic sources, despite the centrality of *āveśa* to the Kaulas; therefore we conclude it was an ancient view held by a subset of Atimārgic Kāpālikas (who were of course the forerunners of the Kaulas). This receives confirmation in the sixteenth-century *Pauṣkara-bhāṣya* of Umāpati and the coeval *Śaiva-paribhāṣā* of Śivāgrayogīndra Jñānaśivācārya (though it is probable that the Kāpālikas had died out by this time, it is likely these authors knew of an older source that made this attribution). The latter text reads in its fifth chapter (pp. 341-2 of the edition):

30. . . . *tac ca sāmyam utpatti-saṅkrānti-samāveśābhivyaktibhiś caturdhā
sambhavati | tatra mahāvratinaḥ utpattiyā sāmyam upagacchanti | . . . tac ca
sarvajñatvādi-rūpam | tacca tadaivotpadyate | . . . tasmāc chiva-guṇa-sadrṣa-
guṇotpattyaiva śiva-sāmyam iti ||*

And that equality [with Śiva] has four forms: arising, transference, possession, and manifestation. The Mahāvratins reach equality by the arising [of Śiva's qualities]. And that takes the form of omniscience and [omnipotence]. And that is attained only then [upon liberation]. Therefore, equality with Śiva occurs only through the arising of qualities similar to Śiva's qualities.

31. *pāśupatāḥ saṅkrāntiyā sāmyam upagacchanti | tathā hi - kastūrikādy-
āmodaḥ paṭādāv iveśvara-sṭham sārvañjñyādikaṃ mukta-puruṣe saṅkrāmati |*

[published as SANDERSON 2006]). But his problem is solved if we understand that *mahāvratāḥ* can also refer to the Kāpālikas, who also took up that vow. Thus if the view of *akartā sarvavedyavit* was held by a subset of Kāpālikas, there is no problem in assigning the *utpattivāda* to the Kālamukhas, which Rāmakaṅṭha explicitly does in his *Mataṅga-vṛtti* ad KP 8.10c-12b.

⁷³⁸ Note that Sadyojyotiḥ's *Para-mokṣa-nirāsa-kārikā* is itself a commentary on two and a half verses of a lost Siddhānta-tantra, the *Raurava*.

The [Pāñcārthika] Pāśupatas reach equality through transference. To explain: like the smell of musk etc. [is transferred] to a cloth etc., omniscience and [omnipotence], situated in the Lord, is transferred to a liberated being.

32. *kāpālikāḥ samāveśena sāmīyam upagacchanti | tathā hi - yathā grahāḥ puruṣeṣv āviśanti tathēśvara-guṇā mukteṣv āviśanti |*

The Kāpālikas reach equality by “possession.” To explain: just as Seizers enter-and-possess people, in the same way the qualities of the Lord enter-and-possess the liberated (i.e., by that entry they are liberated).

33. *śaivaika-deśinaḥ⁷³⁹ abhivyaktyā sāmīyam upagacchanti | tathā hi - śivasyeva jīvānām api sāvajñyādikaṃ pūrvam evāsti | kintu saṃsāra-daśāyāṃ mala-ruddhaṃ na prakāśate | muktau tu mala-vigamenābhivyajyate | tasmāt svīya-guṇābhivyaktyā śiva-sāmīyam iti ||*

Certain Śaiva masters (= the earlier Saiddhāntikas) attain equality through manifestation. To explain: the qualities of Śiva such as omniscience exist in souls too from the beginning; but they do not appear, being blocked by Impurity in the state of *saṃsāra*. But in liberation, they manifest, due to the disappearance of Impurity. Therefore, equality with Śiva is attained through the manifestation of innate qualities.

36. . . . *bhūtāviṣṭasyevāsvātantryāpattyā puruṣārthatvāyogāt . . .*

. . . [the *āveśa-vāda* of the Kāpālikas] cannot constitute a valid goal for men because of the recognized loss of independence [it entails], as in the case of one possessed by a spirit.

This *āveśa-vāda*, then, has little to do with the kind of *āveśa* we explored in Kaula scriptures sources in section 2.3.5 above. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note as an antecedent, and as evidence of the association of *āveśa* with at least one branch of Śaivism from the earliest times.

2.5.4 *Āveśa in Kaula-influenced exegesis*

Now we will survey different uses of (*sam*)*āveśa* in the writings of the “left current,” where the term achieves its full apotheosis. This will lead us to some specific conclusions about the nature of this key term. Firstly, in the *Tantrāloka-viveka* Jayaratha cites (ad 13.302) an intriguing and significant verse from the lost *Vīrāvalī-kula* (a Kaula Trika work):

hautrī⁷⁴⁰ dīkṣā tu siddhānte tantrē yojanikā smṛtā ||

trike samāveśavatī kule stobhātmikā matā ||

sāmarasyamayī kaule dīkṣā pañca-vidhoditā ||

Initiation is taught to be five-fold: in the Siddhānta, initiation is through fire-ritual; in the Tantra, it is taught to be the ‘uniting’ [of the deity with the individual soul at the culmination of that ritual]; in the [Kaula] Trika, it [necessarily] possesses a *samāveśa*; and in the Kula, it takes the form of

⁷³⁹ em. SANDERSON : *dauvaikadeśinaḥ* ed.

⁷⁴⁰ *hautrī* em. SANDERSON : *hotrī* Ed.

automatism; [and] in the Kaula [system], it consists of [an experience of] fusion [with the guru or deity].⁷⁴¹

This verse-and-a-half purports to identify what is most essential in the initiations given by these different Śaiva groups. The author starts with the right current and cross-fades (as it were) to the left. Note that here, as is relatively common in such lists, “the Tantra” refers specifically to the system of the *Svacchanda-tantra*, which commanded a numerically greater following in the Kashmir valley (and likely the Kathmāndu valley as well) in our period than did the Siddhānta, Trika, or Kaula systems (SANDERSON 2007b: 386). *Hautrī dikṣā* is a common name for the standard ritual initiation described above in section 2.4. Associating it with the Siddhānta and *śiva-yojanikā* with the Svachchanda system is artificial, for the latter is the culminating act of the *hautrī dikṣā*, and the two systems were sufficiently close that little distinguished them in the ritual domain apart from the offering of liquor to Svachchanda in that system. But perhaps interest in the significance of the *śiva-yojanikā* was greater for the Svachchanda-tāntrikas; we do not know, because no exegesis from within their system survives.⁷⁴² The author of the *Vīrāvalī* regards *samāveśa* as central in the Kaula Trika initiation, which matches what we saw in MVT 11 and will see in TĀ 29. The mystery category of the Kula surfaces here; we have described it as the immediate forerunner to Kaulism. We are told that *stobha*, a technical term for automatism, or involuntary movement of the limbs according to the will of the *śakti*, is central in the Kula; and indeed we saw the term prominently in early Kaula materials. In the mature Kaula, the term *sāmarasya* (an abstract noun from *sama-rasa*, lit. “same flavor”)⁷⁴³ becomes important, and seems usually to refer to a mystical experience of fusion with the guru or deity, as seen in TĀ 29.272-5.

This passage is seemingly echoed by a similar line in the much-used ritual manual of the second millennium, the *Kalādikṣā-paddhati*:⁷⁴⁴ “Having offered the oblation, he should accomplish the Śaiva *yojanikā*, i.e. unite [the initiand] to highest Śiva. Or [this union comes about] due to *āveśa* born of the Kula [of goddesses], or due to the *sāmarasya* [experience], which is the essence of the Kaula [way]” (*hutvā yojanikāṃ kuryāc chaivīm pare śive / āveśāt kulajāt kaulasārād vā sāmarasyataḥ*)⁷⁴⁵. We can see that these terms are not fixed, but what is important in both verses is that mystical experience is cited as central to the initiations of the left, and indeed can supplant the need for ritual initiation (N.B. *sāmarasyamayī . . . dikṣā* in the *Vīrāvalī* quote, and *vā* in *Kalādikṣā* quote).

We have spoken of *āveśa* as mystical experience. The reader may wonder whether this is too general a gloss; surely some vestige of the verbal root *√viś*

⁷⁴¹ Cf. SANDERSON 2014: n231. SANDERSON says that the “Kula” here refers to the text called the *Bhairava-kula* (not the Kula system in general), and sees the *sāmarasya* mentioned as a “state of spontaneous fusion [with the consciousness of the initiator],” taking TĀ 29.272-5 as paradigmatic (see Appendix Two).

⁷⁴² The surviving commentary on the *Svacchanda-tantra*, Kṣemarāja’s *uddyota*, is a work of Kaula Trika exegesis.

⁷⁴³ Cf. *samarasībhāva* (ŪKA 2.233, cited on p. 211) and *samarasīkr̥tya* (SSP).

⁷⁴⁴ For this text, composed in 1336 on the basis of earlier works, see SANDERSON 2007b: 386-7 and 2003-2004: 362 n34.

⁷⁴⁵ MS A, f. 170r15-v4. Citation courtesy of SANDERSON.

“enter” is left in the usage of the word in the exegetical writings? I think not, or rather, not always. The term becomes the rubric of choice for religious experience in these authors’ works, as already foreshadowed, I believe, in the MVT. The key verse in this regard, a *locus classicus* for the many modern scholars’ understanding of (*sam*)*āveśa* (e.g., BIERNACKI 2006: 491 and SMITH 2006: 372), is *Tantrāloka* 1.173c-4b. This verse comes at a rather crucial stage in Abhinava’s introductory exposition of the path. *Samāveśa*, he tells us, is taught in the MVT as that which allows us to see through the veil of *mala* and thus disperse it (1.166-7).⁷⁴⁶ He quotes the MVT verses on the three basic kinds of (*sam*)*āveśa* (i.e., *śāmbhava*, *śākta*, and *āṇava*).⁷⁴⁷ He then seeks to define (*sam*)*āveśa*, and this is the aforementioned key verse, which SMITH incorrectly calls “the only definition of *āveśa* found in Sanskrit literature” (2006: 372).⁷⁴⁸

āveśaś cāsvatantrasya sva-tadrūpa-nimajjanāt || 173
para-tadrūpatā śambhor ādyāc chakty-avibhāginah |
Āveśa is that state which conforms itself [only] to the Supreme ([which initially appears] as ‘other’), due to a prior act of suppressing conformity to the individual self (*sva*-), which lacks autonomy.⁷⁴⁹ It is [the state] of the primordial Lord, united with his Power.

The verse is a bit difficult, being in elliptical *kārikā*-style, and has been translated various ways.⁷⁵⁰ The most interesting (and initially confusing) feature is the contrast of *svatadrūpa* and *paratadrūpa*. *Para* must mean “supreme” here, for it refers to Śiva, but contrasted with *sva*, one cannot help but think of *para* in the sense of “other” (and I think it likely that Abhinava intends this pun). It seems that what the author wants to do here is suggest that what conventionally and habitually seems like

⁷⁴⁶ Or perhaps, it is seeing through that veil.

⁷⁴⁷ TĀ 1.168-70 = MVT 2.23, 22, and 21 respectively.

⁷⁴⁸ The other definition being the one that inspired this verse, ĪPK III.2.12, discussed below.

⁷⁴⁹ Jayaratha’s commentary explains that what lacks autonomy is that which is insentient in and of itself, i.e. the *buddhi* etc., i.e. the limited knower, the contracted self which is not common to all. This is to be submerged, i.e. seen for what it is, a *guṇa* not the *guṇin* (*asvatantrasya jaḍasya buddhyāder mitasya pramātuḥ svam asādhāraṇam tat saṃkucitaṃ yad rūpaṃ tasya nimajjanam guṇibhāvas . . .*). Prof. Alexander von ROSPATT pointed out to me that *asvatantra* also means “conditioned.”

⁷⁵⁰ SMITH ignores the grammar entirely when he translates it, yet manages gets the gist of it right through knowledge of the context: “*Āveśa* is the submerging of the identity of the individual unenlightened mind and the consequent identification with the supreme Śambhu who is inseparable from the primordial Śakti” (2006: 372). GNOLI (1980: 92) tries to follow the grammar, translating “La penetrazione consiste nell’assunzione della natura suprema, preceduta e determinata dalla sparizione della nostra natura individua di essere non liberi. Tale assunzione proviene da Śambhu, l’originale, inseparato dalle sue potenze” (*Penetration* is to assume the supreme nature, preceded and determined by the disappearance of our individual nature to be not free. This ‘assumption’ comes from Sambhu, the primordial, undivided from his power). BIERNACKI closely follows GNOLI (though without saying so): “*Āveśa* occurs from submerging one’s limited form which lacks freedom, so that one identifies with the supreme form which comes from the primordial Śiva, inseparable from his Energy” (2007: 499). DYCZKOWSKI translates similarly in his as-yet unpublished translation of *Tantrāloka* 1.

“self” (body, mind, etc.) is actually not, and what initially seems “other” is actually the Supreme Self, i.e. that which one ultimately is. The second important grammatical question here is whether *śambhoḥ* is in the ablative case, as previous translators have taken it, or in the genitive, as I take it here. To take it in the genitive, we must somewhat awkwardly construe *ādyāt* with *nimajjanāt* to mean “prior” rather than construing it with *śambhoḥ* to mean “primordial.” But construing it in the latter manner means that we are forced to take *śambhoḥ* in the ablative, awkwardly assuming the meaning “*āveśa* [comes] from Śambhu.” However, the latter is not impossible; if I were to adopt the interpretation of previous translators, I would render the verse as:

Due to submerging that which has the quality of the self—[yet] lacks autonomy—there comes about a state which has the quality of the Supreme: this is *āveśa*, [which comes] from the primordial Lord, united with his Power.

Putting grammatical nuance aside, the main conceptual point holds either way. All that is required for an *āveśa* that is *paratadrūpa*, that “conforms to the nature of the Supreme” or “has the quality of the Divine ‘Other’” is the temporary suppression of identification with the limited, adventitious, impermanent, and superficial aspects of the self (body etc.). This formulation is obviously indebted to *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-kārikā* III.2.12, which will explore in detail later on. What is clear here is that Abhinava is formulating a general definition of spiritual experience under the rubric of (*sam*)*āveśa*. For he goes on to say:

tenāyam atra vākyaṛtho vijñeyam pronmiṣat svayam || 174
vināpi niścayena drāṇ mātr-darpaṇa-bimbitam ||
*mātāram*⁷⁵¹ *adharikuryāt svām vibhūtiṃ pradarsayat* || 175
āste hrdaya-nairmalyātīśaye tāratamyataḥ |

Thus the meaning of the statement here is this: the Truth,⁷⁵² unfolding spontaneously without intellection, suddenly subordinates the “subject” who is [merely] reflected in the mirror of the [real] Subject, and remains continuously revealing ever greater degrees of its innate glory (*vibhūti*) within the abundant purity of the Heart.

This adequately clarifies the previous verse cited. *Samāveśa*, for Abhinava, is nothing less than the revelation of one’s real nature, an awakening to that transindividual Subject that holds all constructions of identity (even the seemingly basic feeling of being a separate individual called _____) as appearances within itself, like a mirror holds its reflections, simultaneously being their unifying ground yet unsullied by

⁷⁵¹ Abhinava often uses *mātr* to mean *pramātr*. The ending here is therefore that of the agentive noun, not the kinship noun. Cf. Jayaratha’s commentary.

⁷⁵² A key term in TĀ 1 is *jñeyam*, lit. “that-which-is-to-be-known.” Abhinava uses it to mean 1) the absolute truth, as it is known directly, without the mediation of the conditioned mind; 2) the goal of the path; and 3) God. Hence the translation “the Truth.”

them.⁷⁵³ Abhinava further seeks to clarify his usage of the term and distance it from the sense of “possession”:

jñeyam dvidhā ca cin-mātram jaḍam cādyam ca kalpitam || 176

itarat tu tathā satyam tad-vibhāgo 'yam idrśah |

jaḍena yah samāveśah sapratichchandakākṛtiḥ || 177

caitanyaena samāveśas tādātmyam nāparam kila |

The Truth exists in two modes: as Awareness itself, which is primordial, and as insentient [objects], which are fabricated [to be the objects of Awareness]. One is ultimately real (*satya*), while the other appears to be divided from it. “Possession” by something insentient [and apparently other] has the form of a reflected image [within one’s consciousness]; “possession” by Awareness is [simply] oneness with it, [in which state] there is verily no other.⁷⁵⁴

In rather a clever hermeneutical move, Abhinava argues that there are only two “things” that exist, objects and subject(s)—and “possession” by an insentient object cannot mean anything but a reflection of the image of that object in consciousness, (e.g., the mind obsessing over something), while possession by awareness, which is one’s innate being, can only mean oneness with it. In this *advaita* view, there is only one undifferentiated Awareness that all sentient beings participate in, thus possession as generally conceived is meaningless: there is no separate being that could enter you.⁷⁵⁵ *Samāveśa*, then, is the form of (enlightened) consciousness that naturally arrives at oneness with God, the single Subject (*saṃvittir . . . śiva-tādātmyam āpannā*, 1.178c-9a). Kṣemarāja, Abhinava’s successor, takes this understanding of *samāveśa* as spiritual experience and runs with it. BIERNACKI (2006: 500) notes that Kṣemarāja finds *samāveśa* in a verse of the *Spanda-kārikā* that is explicitly about spiritual experience.⁷⁵⁶ She is skeptical of his interpretation,⁷⁵⁷ but thereby misses the point: finding *samāveśa* here is part of his lineage’s conscious participation in the semantic shift of that term, a shift that had already been going on for generations;

⁷⁵³ The metaphor of the mirror is a favorite of Abhinava’s: cf. the summary verse of TS 3.

⁷⁵⁴ The last phrase is a translation of *nāparam kila* suggested by Alexander von ROSPATT; we could also take it to mean “Indeed, it could not be otherwise!” But lack of otherness specifically supports Abhinava’s argument that understanding *samāveśa* as “possession” makes no sense.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. TS 2: liberation cannot be “the entry into That, because nothing other than it exists to enter it” (*na tad-anupraveśo ’nupraveṣṭuḥ vyatiriktasyābhāvāt*).

⁷⁵⁶ SK 3.11 (or 43): “When, with the desire to see all things [as they really are], one abides, pervading them [with one’s awareness], then what is the use of much discussion?—He will experience it for himself” (*didrśayā iva sarvārthān yadā vyāpyāvatiṣṭhate | tadā kiṃ bahunoktena svayam evāvabhotsyate ||*). Note that DYCZKOWSKI, SINGH, and BIERNACKI all translate *avabhotsyate* as *experience*, though one could render it as *know* or *recognize*; but I sympathize with their translations because the semantic range of *avabudh* includes *perceive* and *feel*.

⁷⁵⁷ I.e., his interpretation of the verse cited in the previous note, namely that the fruit one will spontaneously experience as a result of this process of contemplation is a state of wonder arising from immersion into the transindividual Subject which encompasses all knowables—that is to say, one will experience one’s innate awareness itself (*vedya-grāsikāri-mahāpramāṛtā-samāveśa-camatkāra-rūpaṃ yat phalaṃ tat svayam evāvabhotsyate – svasaṃvid evānubhaviṣyati*).

thus we cannot accuse Kṣema of a disingenuous or artificial hermeneutic. Furthermore, this interpretation of *samāveśa* does have scriptural precedent—not only MVT ch. 2, but also this statement in the *Parākhya-tantra* (in a consideration of various interpretations of the word *yoga*, nearly all of them experiential): “Or, yoga is immersion into Him, arising from contemplation of His nature” (*yogo vā tat-samāveśas tat-svarūpa-vibhāvanāt*, 14.97ab).⁷⁵⁸

Kṣemarāja’s understanding of *samāveśa* as spiritual experience is most explicit in his *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*. There he gives it as a synonym (*pariyāya*) to *samādhi* and *samāpatti*, both in the introduction to sūtra 19 and in his poetic explanation of that sūtra,⁷⁵⁹ which follows:

āsādita-samāveśo yogi-varo vyutthāne 'pi samādhi-rasa-saṃskāreṇa kṣība iva sānandaṃ ghūrṇamāno bhāva-rāsiṃ śarad-abhra-lavaṃ iva cid-gagana eva līyamānaṃ paśyan bhūyo bhūyaḥ antarmukhatāṃ eva samavalambamāno nimīlana-samādhi-krameṇa cidaikyam eva vimṛśan vyutthānābhimatāvasare 'pi samādhy-ekarasa eva bhavati.

The best of yogīs⁷⁶⁰ who has attained *samāveśa*, in the post-meditative state as well, swaying⁷⁶¹ blissfully—as if drunk—with the impression of the sweet taste of *samādhi*, sees the mass of existent things dissolving into the sky of Consciousness like wisps of autumn cloud; again and again taking the support of that [state of] introversion, reflecting on his oneness with Consciousness alone through the method of introvertive *samādhi*, even when missteps or egoic desires arise, becomes one for whom *samādhi* is the One Taste.

He then cites the lost *Krama-sūtra* to demonstrate that a *sādhaka* can, with practice, remain immersed (*samāviṣṭa*) even while aware of sense-data (*bahirmukha*). He then glosses “immersed” with “direct experience of the expansion of the Supreme Power” (*sākṣātkṛta-paraśakti-sphāraḥ*). He explains that in his system, there are two kinds of *samāveśa*, introversive and extroversive.⁷⁶² The former is well known; the latter he characterizes as “manifesting the [reality that all ‘objects’ are the] coagulation⁷⁶³ of the liquid essence of consciousness” (*cid-rasāśyānatā-prathanātmā samāveśaḥ*). In Kṣemarāja’s *bāhya-* and *abhyantara-samāveśa* we have nothing other than categories of religious experience studied as “ecstatic” and “enstatic” by scholars of religion.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵⁸ Of course, we could translate “yoga is possession by Him” here, but the point remains that *samāveśa* refers to spiritual experience.

⁷⁵⁹ *samādhi-saṃskāravati vyutthāne bhūyo bhūyaḥ cidaikyāmarśan nityodita-samādhilābhaḥ* || 19 ||

⁷⁶⁰ I.e., the nondual Tantrik yogi.

⁷⁶¹ Recall that *ghūrṇa* or *ghūrmi* was a sign of high attainment in the Kaula scriptural sources.

⁷⁶² Cf. Abhinavagupta’s account of *turya* and *turyātīta*, also called “two forms of *samāveśa*,” pp. 324 and 326 below.

⁷⁶³ Though MONIER-WILLIAMS does not attest this as a meaning of *āśyāna*, APTE does, citing *Kādambarī* and *Kirātārjunīya* 16.10 as attestations.

⁷⁶⁴ And let us remember that the word *ecstasy* itself has roots in the possession rituals of the Hellenistic world.

Furthermore (and finally), in the culmination of the same work (i.e., sūtra twenty of the *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*), (*sam*)*āveśa* is central in Kṣemarāja’s account of the final realization of the path:

*tadā prakāśānanda-sāra-mahā-mantra-vīryātmaka-pūrṇāhantāveśāt
sadā sarva-sarga-saṃhāra-kāri-nija-saṃvid-devatā-cakreśvaratā-praptir
bhavatīti śivam || 20 ||*

Then, due to immersion in the perfectly full & fully expanded I-ness— which is in essence the bliss of the Light of Consciousness and is the great potency of [all] mantras—one attains the state of being the Lord of the Circle of the goddesses that constitute one’s innate powers of awareness, who are constantly engaged in the creation and dissolution of all things. All this is Śiva.

Thus, (*sam*)*āveśa* is liberation itself, for repeated *āveśa* culminates in an ever-arising or *nityodita-samāveśa* (cf. sūtra 19), which is simply *jīvanmukti* under another name.

To close this overview, we would do well to note that though use of the term *samāveśa* to mean unity with the Godhead or immersion into the Divine is most associated with Abhinavagupta by modern scholars (BIERNACKI 2006: 491), such usage is in fact much earlier. We first see it, I believe, in the *Kālikā-stotra* of Jñānānendra, also known as Śivānanda, the founder of the Krama lineage (c. 850 CE⁷⁶⁵). At the conclusion of this hymn, Śivānanda declares that it is through the experience of *samāveśa* that he was able to compose it:

*itthaṃ svarūpa-stutir abhyadhāyi samyak-samāveśa-dāśā-vaśena |
mayā śivenāstu śivāya samyañ mamaiva viśvasya tu maṅgalākhye || 20*

Thus, this hymn to essence-nature is sung by myself—Śiva—through the influence of the state of full immersion. O Goddess [Kālī, also] called Maṅgalā, may it be a blessing (*śiva*) to the whole world that is simply my complete self.⁷⁶⁶

Here *samāveśa* is both union with the deity and the state of liberation, the latter implied by the phrase *samyak-samāveśa* as well as the fact that the hymn contains revelations about the fundamental nature of reality—that is, he identifies the enlightenment that made these revelations possible as his state of immersion in the Goddess. What is interesting to us about this verse is that Śivānanda manages to make no less than four references to the nonduality which is his central teaching. First, he says the hymn is sung by me-who-am-Śiva (*mayā śivena*, also a pun on his proper name); second, the term *samāveśa*; third, “may it be a blessing for the world that is my complete self” (*samyañ mamaiva viśvasya*); and fourth, his hymn is to *svarūpa*, which due to the inherent ambiguity of the prefix *sva-* can mean “my real nature” or “Her real nature” or the “essence-nature” of all beings.

Having given this overview of (*sam*)*āveśa* in the exegetical writings, we can now explore them in more detail.

⁷⁶⁵ SANDERSON 2007b: 411.

⁷⁶⁶ Cf. SANDERSON 2007b: 272.

2.5.4.a Āveśa and mantric efficacy

We can further observe the semantic shift of *samāveśa* in light of the concept of *mantra-vīrya* or mantric potency. We have seen that from the earliest times, a Śaiva guru of the left current was thought to wield mantras that are powerful and efficacious by virtue of his *rudra-śakti-samāveśa*. That is, *samāveśa* (at least in the person of a guru) confers *mantra-vīrya*. If we interpret this statement in light of the five signs given for *samāveśa* at MVT 2.14-16, we do not learn much, for there is a redundancy here: the signs describe a powerful, charismatic, and efficacious person, so of course the mantras he transmits are likelier to be perceived as powerful and efficacious by a disciple, for reason of psychological transference if nothing else. But in the exegetical literature, the discussion becomes more sophisticated. The idea that becomes standard is that an efficacious guru or *ācārya* should be *śivāveśa-śālin*, “endowed with [the state of] immersion into Śiva.” We see this term (or a variant thereof) in many of the nondual exegetical sources, which is unsurprising in light of the Kaula view that only such a guru can transmit mantras that are enlivened (*caitanya*) as opposed to inert (*jaḍa*). We have just seen these terms in the citation on p. 301, in light of which we can understand that *śivāveśa* must for these exegetes mean something like “centered in one’s real nature as awareness itself” (because *śiva* = *caitanya*). Furthermore, Abhinavagupta tells us in the *Tantrasāra* that the phonemes of language, even when they form Sanskrit mantras, are to be seen as similar to inert “bodies” that must be enlivened (*ujjivana*) with forms of awareness (*parāmarśa*) that function as the *prāṇa-śakti* that vitalizes the otherwise lifeless “māyic” syllables.⁷⁶⁷ Only then are the mantras potent (*savīrya*), and have the power to bestow enjoyment and liberation (Ibid.). It is specifically the awareness conferred by *samāveśa* that gives an *ācārya* the power to potentize mantras in this way. The *Svacchanda-tantra* says, “A guru who is immersed in Śiva is a knower of the principle of mantra—he can immediately destroy one’s bonds.”⁷⁶⁸ This is of course in contradistinction to the Saiddhāntika position, in which a properly ritually consecrated *ācārya* properly following the correct ritual procedure laid down in the revealed scriptures will manifest the fruit of that procedure regardless of his state of mind or level of realization. For the nondualists, though, the *śakti* can be flowing or not in any given ritual performance, and even revealed mantras can be inert (the SYM first put forward this idea). Thus their doctrine was designed to resist routinization and maintain the power of transmission in the teacher-student relationship. Of course it makes sense that this is a concern in a tradition oriented to a *jīvanmukti* doctrine; otherwise it could hardly be an issue.

Abhinava’s disciple Kṣemarāja frequently uses the term *śivāveśa-śālin* in this context. For example, in his *Svacchanda-tantra-uddyota*, he says: “In our system, mantras are purifiers [when] they vibrate with the essence of their own power for a guru who knows mantric potency (*vīrya-vid*), and is endowed with immersion into

⁷⁶⁷ *Māyīya-varṇatām bhajante . . . te ca māyīyā api śarīra-kalpatvena yadā dṛśyante yadā ca teṣāṃ ukta-nayair etaiḥ jīvita-sthānīyaiḥ śuddhaiḥ parāmarśaiḥ pratyujjīvanam kriyate tadā te savīryā bhavanti te ca tādrśā bhoga-mokṣa-pradāḥ* (TS 3 [3.33 in HELLWIG’s etext on GRETIL]).

⁷⁶⁸ *pāśānām mantraiḥ kavalanaṃ dhruvam karoti mantra-tattva-jñāḥ śivāveśī guruḥ kṣaṇāt*, 4.152. Since this is a scriptural source, one could also translate “penetrated by Śiva,” but the effect is the same.

Śiva.⁷⁶⁹ For another example, let us look at a brief passage from his *Netra-tantra-uddyota* (which also explains what the “essence of their own power” is):

Netra-tantra:

*śiva-śakti-niyogāc ca mantrāṅām udayaḥ paraḥ |
sarvatra phaladā mantrā yatas te 'taḥ śivāḥ smṛtāḥ || 16.46 ||
tasmāc chiva-samāḥ sarve nityānugraha-kāriṇaḥ |*

The higher [nature] of mantras arises due to the command of Śiva's *śakti*. Since mantras bestow the fruit in every way, they are taught to be Śiva. Therefore they are all equal to Śiva, [and] invariably bestow divine grace.

*Uddyota: śiva-śakti-niyogaḥ para-prakāśānandopodbalitvatm, tato
mantrāṅām vācya-vācakābheda-sphurattā-sārāṅām para udayo bhavati, ataś
ca sarvatra phaladāḥ | yata evam atas te smṛtā evaṃ-rūpatayā vimṛṣṭāḥ
śivaika-rūpāḥ | tasmād iti idṛśena śiva-samānatvena ete nityam anugrahaṃ
tācchilyena kurvanti ||*

The ‘command of Śiva's *śakti*’ = the state of being empowered by the joyous self-awareness⁷⁷⁰ of the supreme Light of Consciousness. ‘Mantras’ = that which have as their essence the vibration of the nonduality of signifier and signified. This essence arises due to that empowerment, and for this reason mantras can bestow the fruit in every way. Since it is thus, they are taught to be “reflected” as forms of that [power, and thus] to be of one nature with Śiva. ‘Therefore’ = because of their state of being equal to Śiva in this way, they always bestow grace as is their nature.

śivāveśajñasyaivācāryasyaite śiva-rūpāḥ santaḥ phalanti

These [mantras], being forms of Śiva, give rewards (i.e. are efficacious) [only] for that *ācārya* who has experienced immersion into Śiva:

śivaś cācārya-rūpeṇa tenaite phaladāḥ smṛtāḥ || NT 16.47 ||

And Śiva [acts] as the *ācārya*, therefore they are said to be fruitful.

rūpa-śabdaḥ śivācāryayor na adhiṣṭhātradhīṣṭheyatā mantavyeti bodhayati |

The use of the word *rūpa* [in the verse] clearly shows the relationship of Śiva and *ācārya* is not to be understood as that of possessor and possessed.

Several things emerge from this interesting passage. The scripture declares that mantras are forms of Śiva, and Kṣemarāja agrees, *as long as* they are empowered (*upodbalita*) by the blissful self-awareness that the Light of Consciousness has of itself, which is the typical language this lineage uses to refer to an enlightened state of being. When the empowerment of such a state is present, then the real essence of mantras can arise, which is to be one with that which they signify. Only insofar as

⁷⁶⁹ ad 4.196 (p. 121 of the KSTS ed.): *iha mantrāḥ śivāveśa-śālino vīrya-vido guroḥ nija-śakti-sāratayā sphurantaḥ śodhakāḥ*. He then adds: “But by contrast they need to be ‘purified’ [when] they remain with their essential nature veiled, their potency hidden to bound souls” (*paśūnām tu gūhita-svavīryāḥ sva-svarūpāvaraṇatayā tiṣṭhantaḥ śodhyā eva*).

⁷⁷⁰ Kṣemarāja frequently understands the compound *cid-ānanda* as *prakāśa-vimarśa*, following Pratyabhijñā philosophy. The strong association between *vimarśa* (self-reflective awareness) and *ānanda* in his work justify this translation. Note the word *vimṛṣṭa* in the next sentence.

they are reflections (*vimṛṣṭāḥ*) of that enlightened awareness are they of one nature with Śiva (for such awareness is his very nature). This corresponds well with Abhinavagupta's teaching in the previous section. Introducing the next half-verse (above), Kṣemarāja tells us that for a guru to wield this kind of empowered mantra, he must be *śivāveśajña*, a knower of the state of immersion into Śiva, which here can only mean one who experiences that state (not one who merely knows about it). After citing 16.47cd, Kṣema argues that the relation of such an *ācārya* with Śiva is one of identity, not that of controller and controlled or possessor and possessed (*adhiṣṭhātr̥/adhiṣṭheya*), as might be the case in the rituals of the Saiddhāntikas. We see here that Kṣema is very conscious of the history of the term *āveśa*, and is explicitly signaling to his audience the semantic shift that has been in progress for some time. A *śivāveśin* or *śivāveśa-sālin*, for him, is someone who is immersed in his true divine nature, someone who is awakened and abiding in nondual awareness.

Lastly, we will look at a passage from *Tantrāloka* 15 that describes the effect of such potent and empowered mantras in the context of the *dikṣā* ceremony. At this point in the rite, the guru has blindfolded the disciple(s) and led them to the edge of the consecrated area, which centrally featured the initiatory *maṇḍala* made of colored powders, onto which the mantras of the cult were installed. Filling their cupped hands with flowers and pearls, he then—

prakṣepayed añjaliṃ taṃ taiḥ śiṣyair bhāvitātmabhiḥ |
añjaliṃ punar āpūrya teṣāṃ lāghavataḥ paṭam || 450 ||
dṛṣor nivārayet so 'pi śiṣyo jhaṭiti paśyati |
jhaṭity ālokite māntra-prabhāvollāsīte sthale || 451 ||
tad-āveśa-vaśāc chiśyas tanmayatvaṃ prapadyate |
yathā hi rakta-hṛdayas tāṃs tān kāntāguṇān svayam || 452 ||
paśyaty evaṃ śaktipāta-saṃskṛto mantra-sannidhim |
cakṣurādīndriyāṇāṃ hi sahakāriṇi tādrśe || 453 ||
saty atyantam adrṣṭe prāg api jāyeta योग्याता |
kṛta-prajñā hi vinyasta-mantraṃ dehaṃ jalaṃ sthalaṃ || 454 ||
pratimādi ca paśyanto viduḥ saṃnidhyasaṃnidhī |
nyasta-mantrāṃśu-subhagāt kiṃcid-bhūtādi-mudritāḥ || 455
trasyantīveti tat tac cid akṣais tat-sahakāribhiḥ |
 should cause the devoted disciples to cast their handful [of flowers onto the maṇḍala]. He should fill their hands again, and remove the blindfold from their eyes rapidly such that the disciple sees [the maṇḍala] all at once. Suddenly seeing the worship-ground radiant with mantric power, the disciple is penetrated by those [enlivened mantras], as a result of which he becomes one with them. For just as one with a passionate heart sees all at once the various beautiful qualities [of his beloved], in the same way one who has been sanctified by a Descent of Power sees the presence of the mantras. For when such a [Descent] assists the senses of sight etc., they become able to perceive what was completely invisible before. Those who have acquired wisdom [in this matter], seeing a body, a worship-ground, a water-pot, an image etc. onto which mantras [may or may not] have been placed, know whether they are present or not. [Likewise,] those who are impressed with some [malefic] spirit or other

tremble in fear at [the sight of a guru] beautiful with the rays of the mantras [he has] installed [on his body]. Thus, with senses assisted by the [Descent of Power], there is awareness [of the presence of mantras] in each case.

Here again we see the close connection of *āveśa* and *śaktipāta*. The latter is required to sense the presence of the enlivened mantras, which makes possible their entry (*āveśa*) into the initiand and his resulting consubstantiation (*tanmayatvam*) with them. Often the interpretation of the agent and the direction of *āveśa* is ambiguous, but here we must understand the entry of the mantras into the disciple. Still, Abhinava is quick to emphasize that due to this entry, he becomes of one nature with them, i.e. he is enlivened and empowered.

This “possession” by the mantras of the cult continues in daily practice, culminating in unity with the deity that they embody (SANDERSON 1986: 174-5). Having fused with the mind of the worshipper, when they dissolve, his conditioned mind dissolves as well, opening him to the nondiscursive direct awareness of his innate being (Ibid., n23).⁷⁷¹ SANDERSON notes that “the worshipper’s mantras often extend into (first person) indicative sentences which *verbalize* this possession” (Ibid.). Here he is referring to the exegetes’ glosses on those mantras, in which words like *naumi* and *prapadye* are glossed with *samāviśāmi*.⁷⁷² It is in Kṣemarāja’s exegesis, especially, that the root *samāvīś* becomes a comprehensive hermeneutical tool, capable of subsuming a wide variety of words into a single totalizing concept: that the purpose of *all* spiritual practice whatsoever is to attain *samāveśa*, understood as communion, consubstantiation, and/or oneness with the Deity.⁷⁷³ In this he was following his teacher, for Abhinavagupta says (ad *Dhvanyāloka* 3.43b): “Immersion in Him arises from the sequence of worship presupposed by faith etc.” (*śraddhādi-pūrvaka upāsanā-krama-jas tad-āveśaḥ*).

2.5.4.b Kṣemarāja’s commentaries: glossing as hermeneutic

Let us explore some examples of this hermeneutic. In commenting on the first two verses of the *Netra-tantra*, Kṣemarāja tells us that *namaḥ śivāya* really means “I enter into (or merge with, or become one with) the Supreme Self.” Specifically, he says: *tasmai śivāya cid-ānanda-ghana-śreyo-rūpāya paramātmāne namo deha-prāṇādi-mitātma-prahvībhāvena taṃ samāviśāmi*, “Obeisance to Śiva’ [in the verse] means ‘I merge into the Supreme Self, whose auspicious nature is replete with the joy of awareness, by subordinating (lit., causing to bow) the limited selfhood associated with the body etc.’”⁷⁷⁴ There are countless examples of this kind of glossing in

⁷⁷¹ See *Spanda-kārikā* 2.2: *tatraiva sampraliyante śānta-rūpā nirañjanāḥ | sahārādhaka-cittena tenaite śiva-dharmināḥ ||*.

⁷⁷² SANDERSON (1986: 177 n33): “Abhinavagupta understands *samāveśaḥ* to mean not the act of being entered but that of entering (into one’s true nature) and it is in this sense that it is used in Trika [phase] III’s glosses on first person active verbs expressing worship, praise, obeisance, etc.”

⁷⁷³ Except when spiritual practice (*upāsanā*) is an expression of a *samāveśa* already attained, the other possibility for these authors.

⁷⁷⁴ Cf. the similar gloss on *namas ad Sāmbapañcāśikā* v. 1: *dehādi-pramāṛṭā-prasāmanena tad evāviśāmiti arthaḥ*.

Kṣemarāja’s work, and it will serve our purposes to enumerate a few of them here. In this we are fortunate to have Hamsa STAINTON’s recent dissertation on *stotras* and *stutis* in medieval Kashmīr, for he has there collated a number of examples of Kṣemarāja’s commentarial use of *samāvṛiś*.⁷⁷⁵ STAINTON examines Kṣemarāja’s commentaries on the *Śiva-stotrāvalī*, *Stava-cintāmaṇi*, and the *Sāmba-pañcāśikā* (SP) in the third chapter of his work. There he characterizes *samāveśa* as a “global gloss” on these texts not only because of the frequent use of the term but even more the way in which Kṣema uses it to subsume a number of otherwise dualistic terms (relating to devotion, praise, and worship) in a totalizing nondualistic discourse (2013: 182). Central here is a reinterpretation of *bhakti* in nondual terms; for example, *bhakti-rasa* is glossed as “having immersion as its nature” (*samāveśātmā*)⁷⁷⁶ and *bhaktāḥ* (devotees) as *samāveśa-sālinaḥ* (those endowed with immersion).⁷⁷⁷ Kṣema explicitly contrasts dualistic and nondualistic *bhakti* in these terms: *advaita-bhaktiḥ sadyaḥ samāveśamayī, dvaita-bhaktis tv atathātṛvāc chivatākāṅkṣāmayī*, “Nondualistic devotion [bears its fruit] immediately, as it consists in immersion [into the deity], but dualistic devotion consists in longing for the divinity, [precisely] because it does not have that nature.”⁷⁷⁸ Indeed, Kṣema attributes his ability to comment on these devotional hymns to his own *āveśa*!⁷⁷⁹ Here he is, as usual, following his guru Abhinavagupta, who explicitly defines *bhakti* for God as *tad-āveśa* (“immersion in Him”).⁷⁸⁰ The specific terms that Kṣema repeatedly glosses with some form of (*sam*)*āvṛiś* in these hymns are as follows: *naumi* (I bow), *stumahaḥ* (we praise), *namas* (obeisance), *arcayeyam* (may I honor), *prapadye* (I surrender), *paśyema* (may we perceive), each glossed with the appropriate form of *samāvṛiś*. It might be thought that Kṣema is simply using a catch-phrase from his lineage to artificially push the poems he comments on into the realm of his own theology; but in fact he has a rationale for this exegesis, expressed in rather beautiful and compelling terms as follows (addressed directly to the deity):

*yato 'ham iti bhavat-kalpitaṃ eva | tato 'ham iti saṃkoca-pradhāno māyā-
pramātā tvat-stotra-karaṇe 'svatantras tvām eva cid-ātmānaṃ staumi | na tv
ahaṃ nāmānyaḥ kaścīd ity arthaḥ | yac ca kiñcit tvad-ātmaivāhaṃ praṇaya-
subhagaṃ prārthanā-sundaraṃ vacmi tat sarvaṃ tathyaṃ tvat-paramārtham
eva | yatas tvattaś cid-ātmano vyatiriktaṃ jagatāṃ kim iva vidyate? na kiñcid
asti . . . itthaṃ yuktitaṃ tvad-abheda-sāraiva stutiḥ.*

⁷⁷⁵ *Poetry and Prayer: Stotras in the Religious and Literary History of Kashmir*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 2013.

⁷⁷⁶ STAINTON 2013: 186, citing *Stavacintāmaṇi* v. 50.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 206, citing Kṣemarāja ad *Śivastotrāvalī* 15.3. Cf. Abhinavagupta’s phrase *tad-eka-bhakti-samāveśa-sālinaḥ* in TS 16 (where *tad-* refers to Śiva).

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 207 n558, citing Kṣemarāja ad *Śivastotrāvalī* 16.13.

⁷⁷⁹ *etad-āveśa-vaivaśya-pronmiśaddhiṣaṇā vayam / vimśāmo manāk chrīmat-sāmba-pañcāśikā-stutum* ||, “With words burst forth out of the abandon of this immersion, I will reflect a little on this hymn of praise, the illustrious *Sāmbapañcāśikā*” (trans. STAINTON 2013: 226).

⁷⁸⁰ *Dhvanyāloka-locana* ad 3.43b: commenting on Ānandavardhana’s line *naiva ca labdham abdhīśayana tvad-bhakti-tulyaṃ sukham*, “I never found, O God recumbent on the Ocean, a joy like that which comes from love (*bhakti*) of thee” (trans. INGALLS 1990: 653), Abhinava says *tasya bhaktiḥ śraddhādi-pūrvaka upāsana-krama-jas tad-āveśas*.

“I” is only something constructed by you. Therefore, “I”—in the sense of a limited perceiver dominated by contraction, and dependent on this *stotra* as a means that is still no different from you—“praise” the self that is consciousness and you alone. “I” does not mean anything separate. And whatever pleasing prayers, that is, beautiful supplications, I offer as one who is identical with you, those are all real (*tathyam*), i.e., they are nothing but the supreme reality that is you. For what in the world is different from the self that is consciousness and you? Nothing. . . . Thus, logically, the essence of praise (*stutiḥ*) is non-differentiation from you.⁷⁸¹

To love truly, then, is to merge with what is loved, where “I” and “you” is but Śiva’s language-game. When *bhakti* is instrumental, it is a means to this higher *bhakti* that is simply (*sam*)*āveśa*.

Before leaving behind Kṣemarāja’s commentaries on these hymns, our attention is drawn to the *ṭikā* on the verse just prior to the one just cited, i.e. *Sāmba-pancāsika* v. 14, for there Kṣema cites a striking Kaula verse from an unknown and lost source:

*sarvāṅgīnaḥ sakala-vapuṣām antare yo ’ntarātmā
tiṣṭhan kāṣṭhe dahana iva no dṛśyase yukti-śūnyaiḥ |
yaś ca prāṇāraṇiṣu niyatair mathyamānāsu sadbhir
dṛśyaṃ jyotir bhavasi paramāditya tasmai namas te || 14 ||*

You are the inner self within the beautiful bodies of all individuals, pervading them; remaining [there] like fire in wood, you cannot be seen by those who lack the proper method. You are the light which is to be seen in the fire-sticks of *prāṇa*, being rubbed together by disciplined sages (*sant*); O Supreme Sun, obeisance to you!

*ṭikā: yaś ca tvam prāṇāraṇiṣu sarva-vāha-mārgodaya-viśrānti-padeṣu sadbhir
yogibhir niyatair abhiyuktair mathyamānāsu -
ūrdhva-śakti-nipātāc ca adhaḥ-śakti-nikuñcanāt |
rudra-śakti-samāveśaṃ yo jānāti sa paṇḍitaḥ ||*

*ityāmnāyādiṣṭa-yuktyā ’navaratāndolanataḥ praśamita-marud-vyāpikāsu
dṛśyaṃ jyotir bhavasi svaprakāśa-cid-rūpaḥ sphurasi | atra paryāyeṇa
prāṇāpānāv ūrdhvādharāraṇi-rūpau | yogi-prayatno mathana-kāṣṭham.*

And you who exist ‘in the fire-sticks of *prāṇa*’ = in the sites of repose (*cakras*?) arising on the paths of all the winds, [winds which are] ‘being rubbed together by sages’ = by yogīs, who are ‘disciplined’ = intent [on their practice], as taught in the [Kaula] tradition (*āmnāya*):

“He who has [experiential] knowledge of the immersion into *rudra-śakti* due to the Descent of the Upper Power and the contraction of the Lower Power is a [truly] wise one.” ||

‘You are the light which is to be seen’ in that which pervades when the winds are stilled, because it continues to oscillate [gently]; i.e., you vibrate as the self-luminous consciousness. Here the upper and lower

⁷⁸¹ *Sāmbapañcāsikā-ṭikā* ad v. 15, trans. STAINTON 2013: 223.

‘fire sticks’ are synonyms for *prāṇa* and *apāna*. The rubbing of the wood is the effort of the yogin.

Here we see the esoteric Kaula teaching of two liberative *śaktis*: a “lower power” that must rise and an “upper power” that must descend, resulting in *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* (a phrase that here is tantamount to liberation). This verse was much-cited in Kaula sources, both early and late.⁷⁸² The context for the citation, clearly, is esoteric yogic practice. The only source (from our period) I have found that sheds any light on this verse occurs in Kṣemarāja’s *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam* ch. 18, where he says the following, discussing the yogic practice of “contracting and expanding the energy” (*śakteḥ saṅkoca-vikāśau*):

*nāsāpuṭa-spandana-kramonmiṣat-sūkṣma-prāṇa-śaktyā bhrū-bhedanena
kramāsāditorhva-kuṇḍalinī-pade prasara-viśrānti-daśā-pariśīlanam |*
[Expansion of energy constitutes] the cultivation of the state [that comes
about] due to the coming to rest of the flow [of energy] at the level of the
Upper Kuṇḍalinī, [which is] gradually reached by piercing the [point
between the] eyebrows with the subtle *prāṇa-śakti*, which blossoms
gradually through the vibration [of the mantra] in the nasal cavity.
*adhah-kuṇḍalinyām ca saṣṭha-vaktra-rūpāyām praguṇīkṛtya śaktim
tanmūla-tadagra-tanmadhya-bhūmi-sparśāveśah |*
And [contraction of energy means] nourishing, and [thereby]
‘straightening’ (?), the energy in the [place of] Lower Kuṇḍalinī, at the
[level of the] sixth mouth,⁷⁸³ [due to which] there occurs an immersion
into sensation in the levels of its root, tip, and center.⁷⁸⁴

We cannot delve into the knotty problem of the coded language of these extremely esoteric yogic practices here. We may simply note that in the view of (some?) Kaulas, liberation seems to be the result of the descent of the upper power and the rise of the lower power (note the word *kuṇḍalinī* here, which is only very rarely found prior to Kṣemarāja, who wrote in the early eleventh century), presumably resulting in a merger of the two energies at the level of the heart. But none of this is certain, for though we do see the “descent of the Upper Power” in the Kaula verse cited ad SP 15, we do not see any implication of descent of the Upper Kuṇḍalinī in the PH 18 passage just cited, nor do we see the rise of the Lower Power explicitly mentioned in

⁷⁸² E.g., it is found in the *Kulānanda, Matsyendra-saṃhitā* (c. 12th cen.), and *Śarīṅgadāra-paddhati* (14th cen.).

⁷⁸³ A reference to the five faces of Śiva (or the Goddess), the “sixth mouth” (a.k.a. the *yoginī-vaktra*) is an esoteric term for the lower extremity of the torso, from the *kanda* to the pelvic floor (perineum).

⁷⁸⁴ Cf. *Vijñāna-bhairava* v. 68, which Kṣemarāja quotes immediately after the passage cited. If we interpret this passage in terms of the yoga taught the *Vāmakeśvarī-mata* (4.23-24, with Jayaratha’s commentary), we can perhaps approach an understanding of the meaning. It seems certain that a practice of working with the sexual energy [= “Lower Kuṇḍalinī”] is intended.

either source, though contraction is referred to in both,⁷⁸⁵ a contraction that was probably thought to “pump” the energy up the central channel.⁷⁸⁶ We may see a suggestion of the rise of the Lower Kuṇḍalinī in the gerund *praguṇīkṛtya*, which means either “nourishing” or “straightening.” The “immersion into sensation” (*sparśāveśā*) seems to refer to the activation of sexual energy, which is then sublimated by drawing it into the central channel.⁷⁸⁷ But little is certain when we are confronting elliptical and coded material involving the yogic practices that seek to harness sexual energy. We may or may not see here an antecedent of the idea of the rising of *kuṇḍalinī* from the base of the torso (*brahma-granthi*, *janma-sthāna*, *mūlādhāra*) common in later *haṭha-yoga* texts.

2.5.4.c *The Śiva-dṛṣṭi of Somānanda and its commentary by Utpaladeva*

The founder of the Trika-Pratyabhijñā lineage, Somānanda, was active around 900 CE.⁷⁸⁸ In the opening verse (*maṅgala-śloka*) of his most famous work, the *Śiva-dṛṣṭi*, we find a similar statement to that which concluded Śivānanda’s hymn (p. 303 *supra*):

asmad-rūpa-samāviṣṭaḥ svātmanātma-nivāraṇe |
śivaḥ karotu nijayā namaḥ śāktyā tatātmane || 1.1

First deflecting [the obstacles which are nothing but] himself, let Śiva—who has completely penetrated my form—perform obeisance to his greater Self by means of himself, through his innate Power.⁷⁸⁹

In an admirable attempt to express nonduality in language, Somānanda here plays with the conventions of the *maṅgala-śloka*. The two primary conventions are praise of one’s deity (*iṣṭa-devatā*) and the dispelling of obstacles to the completion of the work,⁷⁹⁰ both of which imply duality. Thus Somānanda clarifies that on his view, the

⁷⁸⁵ *Nikuñcana* in the verse cited in the SPT, and *anupraveśa-krameṇa saṃkoca-bhūḥ* in PH 18 (immediately after the passage cited), where *anupraveśa* probably refers to the entry of the *prāṇa-śakti* into the *mūlādhāra* (or *kanda*) through *kumbhaka*.

⁷⁸⁶ This is what we see in modern schools of *kuṇḍalinī-yoga* that claim to be descended from the original Tantric tradition, such as Satyānanda’s Bihar School of Yoga.

⁷⁸⁷ Cf. the different but not unrelated use of *sparśāveśa* in one of the methods of awakening listed in the *Jñāna-kriyādvaya-śataka* of the Krama: “Or, by immersion into the feeling of wonder at [each] new cognition” (*navīna-cic-camatkāra-sparśāveśa-vaśena vā*); see SANDERSON 2007b: 327.

⁷⁸⁸ SANDERSON 2007b: 411. Note that Somānanda and his successors (at least through Kṣemarāja, four generations later, were also Krama initiates, though they often concealed this fact; SANDERSON 2007b: n492).

⁷⁸⁹ Cf. NEMEC 2011: 100, who takes the locative in the first line as an instrumental, thus translating “. . . who has penetrated my form by warding himself off by means of his own self”. His construal of *svātmanā* with *-nivāraṇe* seems opposed to Utpaladeva’s reading, where *svātmanā* refers to the means of performing *namas* (see below).

⁷⁹⁰ See SANDERSON 2005a: 79. A lack of awareness of these conventions, together with a lack of attention to Utpaladeva’s commentary, cause some scholars to translate this verse wrongly (e.g., BIERNACKI 2006: 496, who renders *svātmanātmanivāraṇe* as “having covered up his Self with [what is really] his own form” and SMITH 2006: 371, who has “Let Śiva, who is realized as our true nature, as a result of overcoming ourself with his, . . .”, a glaring mistranslation).

(implied) obstacles which are to be deflected (*nivāraṇa*) are nothing but Śiva's own self, and that furthermore any obeisance (*namas*) performed can only be Śiva bowing to himself. In order to do this he enters into or fully penetrates (*samāviṣṭa*) the author's form, such that Śiva animates him, causing himself to bow to his wider Self (*tatātman*), by means of his *kriyā-śakti* which is inseparable from himself. Now this might be most easily interpreted as a claim of liberation (BIERNACKI 2006: 496), and perhaps it is, but another interpretation is possible. The other interpretation I have in mind is the one Utpaladeva argues for in his *Pada-saṅgati* commentary on the *Śiva-dṛṣṭi*. As Somānanda's direct disciple and successor, Utpala's interpretation carries considerable weight. In a nutshell, it is this: Somānanda is not claiming a special status for himself, because the ultimate truth is that *everyone* is "possessed" by Śiva at all times, since Śiva is the sole knower and actor in the universe; thus anyone performs any action whatsoever only by virtue of this "possession" by Śiva and his inseparable Śakti.⁷⁹¹ But on this view, *possession* cannot be the correct translation of *samāveśa*, because it is not a case of two beings sharing a body (let alone an alien entry); rather, the very autonomous consciousness that people regard as most central to their selfhood is wholly and eternally an expression of Śiva-Śakti. We have come far, then, from the frank possession of the *Brahma-yāmala* and related texts; but hopefully we have shown that this semantic shift is organic. To trace it briefly: possession by the power of a deity is clearly a kind of spiritual experience, and when that power becomes non-specific (i.e. God's power instead of a specific power of a specific deity) it is a small step from there to understanding (*sam*)*āveśa* as a general term for spiritual experience; and in a totally nondual yet theistic view, by definition, *every* experience is a spiritual experience. Therefore, in Utpaladeva's interpretation, the primary term for liberation/enlightenment shifts to *pratyabhijñā*, the *recognition* that Śiva already has "penetrated" you, and every cognition and action has always been an expression of His power, without which you would be an insentient organic robot if you existed at all.⁷⁹²

Let us examine Utpala's commentary on *Śiva-dṛṣṭi* 1.1 to explore this theme further. In the translation of this passage, I was assisted by the fortunate receipt of a prepublication draft of John NEMEC's critical edition and translation of the work, now published as *The Ubiquitous Śiva: Somānanda's Śivadṛṣṭi and his Tantric Interlocutors* (Oxford, 2011).⁷⁹³ Utpala explains the verse as follows (we will present his entire commentary, interspersed with clarifying comments):

yo 'haṃ namas-karomi sa śivo 'smad-rūpeṇaikyaṃ prāptaḥ; vastu-sthityā hi sarva-tattva-vigraho vakṣyamāṇa-nītyā śivaḥ. sa saṃsārārthaṃ māyā-śakti-

⁷⁹¹ In the case of action, it is *kriyā-śakti* that is dominant, though Utpaladeva argues in his ĪPK that *jñāna-* and *kriyā-śakti* are necessarily inseparable; if there is no knowing (including a non-discursive kind of knowing, *paśyantī vāk*), there can be no acting.

⁷⁹² But Utpala never discards (*sam*)*āviś* as an privileged term of his discourse (see ĪPK III.2.12 and IV.16, discussed below); and Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja continued to use the word with reference to mystical experience.

⁷⁹³ Though I have corrected the text of the KSTS edition with reference to NEMEC's critical edition, I have sometimes kept the *sandhi* separation of the KSTS for the sake of clarity.

kṛtaikyākhyātyā bhāvān anātma-sthān ābhāsayati īśvara-pratyabhijñā-prapañcita-nyāyena.

I, who perform obeisance, am that Śiva who has attained oneness with my form. For, as things really stand, Śiva embodies the whole of reality (or: all the *tattvas*), as will be explained [in the first chapter]. For the sake of [giving rise to and perpetuating the whole cycle of] *saṃsāra*, he causes entities to appear [as if] outside himself by means of [his⁷⁹⁴] non-discernment of the [true state of] oneness, generated by [his] Power of *Māyā*⁷⁹⁵—as argued in greater detail in my [stanzas on] “The Recognition of the Lord.”⁷⁹⁶

tatas tān prāṇādīn punaḥ kāmścil loka-yātrāsv asmad-rūpa-pramāṭṛ-bhedena sthāpayiṣyan bhinnīkṛtān prameyān api ghaṭa-paṭādi-vailakṣaṇyena ātmābhedenā paśyan samāviśatīty ucyate.

Then, wishing to further establish⁷⁹⁷ certain of those [entities, i.e. the ones with] life-force and so on, as the class of knowing agents in worldly life with forms such as mine, [and therefore] seeing them as—despite being differentiated knowables—markedly distinct from pots, cloths, and so on, and not different from himself, he fully enters into them. This is what he means to say.

So runs a literal translation. To express Utpala’s thought in clearer English: “Then Śiva, wishing to separate some of those entities—the living beings—into the class of knowing agents such as you and I, chooses to see them as distinct from other objects and not from himself, an act of will necessary because they are, firstly, objects of his awareness.⁷⁹⁸ With such a view, he infuses himself into them, becoming their fundamental animating principle, i.e. *cit*.”⁷⁹⁹ He continues:

yāvatyā ca mātrayā samāveśas tāvan-mātra-siddhi-saṃbhavaḥ. prathamāstāvāt karṣṭānusārī jñāna-kriyā-yogaḥ.

Indeed, the possibility of accomplishing *anything* exists precisely insofar as there is this infusion [of God’s consciousness into bodies].⁸⁰⁰ To begin

⁷⁹⁴ Is it Śiva’s non-discernment (*akhyāti*) or the beings’ non-discernment that makes them appear to be situated outside himself? In a nondual view, this question is irrelevant.

⁷⁹⁵ *Māyā* is here the power of differentiation (or “self-concealment-in-plurality,” as SANDERSON translates it) rather than delusion. See NEMEC 2011: 100 n10.

⁷⁹⁶ See esp. *ĪPK* (and *vṛtti*) I.4.8 and I.8.7.

⁷⁹⁷ Note that the related word *sthāpana* is a word common used for ritually establishing a *mūrti* or concrete image of a deity.

⁷⁹⁸ Which, incidentally, explains why we as embodied forms of Śiva encounter others first as objects and must infer that they are also subjects like us (see RATIÉ 2007).

⁷⁹⁹ Note that the MVT (1.25) also asserts that the Lord creates the manifest universe for beings to have experience through “penetrating (*āviśya*) *Māyā* with his energies.” Thus both subjective and objective reality exist only through the power of *śivāveśa* and/or *śiva-śaktyāveśa*.

⁸⁰⁰ Cf. NEMEC 2011: 101 and n15. TORELLA (1994: xxxiii) takes *siddhi* here in the sense of “extraordinary powers”; we respectfully disagree (except insofar as those powers are included under the wider rubric of all action) and point out that it is in the next paragraph that such powers are addressed, under the label *ṛddhi*.

with, the first [*samāveśa*]⁸⁰¹ is that which connects [us] to [the divine powers of] cognition and action suitable to [and necessary for] agency. *yathoktaṃ spanda-śāstre:*

na hīcchā-nodanasyāyaṃ prerakatvena vartate |

api tv ātma-bala-sparśāt puruṣas tat-samo bhavet || iti. [SK 1.8]

As it is taught in the Spanda scripture: “For a person does not function through [independently] instigating an impulse of will, but rather by contacting the power of the [innermost] Self, and [thus] becoming equal [in power] to it.”

How the “person” (*puruṣa*) is different from his *ātman* is left ambiguous in the *Spanda-kārikā*, but in the context of Utpala’s discussion it is clear that he has his doctrine of the four layers of embodied consciousness in mind,⁸⁰² and thus he understands the verse to be saying that any given level (body, mind, or *prāṇa*) functions only insofar as it is in contact with the *cid-ātman*, which is a contracted form of Śiva, who is the only source of the *śaktis* of cognition and action.

*tathānyatroktam aiśvarī pravṛttir iti. anayaiva drṣṭyā tat-tad-ṛddhy-artham
adhikatarah samāveśo 'bhyasanīyaḥ svaprayatnenāpīty etad api sūcitam.
samāviṣṭaś ca śivo 'pīty ucyate devadattādir api ca ubhayor aikya-
gamanāviśeṣāt.*

Similarly, it is taught in another text that “[all] activity is the Lord’s”.⁸⁰³

This view implies that a further *samāveśa* ought to be practiced with one’s own effort if one seeks to attain the various powers (*ṛddhi*).⁸⁰⁴ It is said that Śiva too is [thereby] “penetrated,” as well as John Doe or whoever (*devadattādi*), because they both attain oneness [with each other] in the same manner.

In other words, the startling idea here is that just as Śiva has entered into and become each human being, any human who wishes to attain the full range of Śiva’s powers (e.g., *sarvajñādi*, *aṇimādi*) must in his turn enter into the wider nature (*tatātman*) of Śiva, and take possession as it were of that wider nature.⁸⁰⁵ Śiva’s

⁸⁰¹ See NEMEC 2011: 101 n16 and SANDERSON 1986: 176.

⁸⁰² Where void (*śūnya*), vital energy (*prāṇa*), mind/subtle body (*buddhi/puryaṣṭaka*), and physical body (*deha*), are all animated by, and increasingly coarse expressions of, *cit*.

⁸⁰³ Or, “all activity springs from *īśvara-tattva*.” See NEMEC 2011: 102 n19.

⁸⁰⁴ Another interpretation is suggested by the KSTS edition’s first footnote on p. 3 (*yathā bhinnīkṛtān api prāṇādīn prameyān ātmābhedenā paśyati tathaiva sarvam api vyāpyam ity arthaḥ*). It was the editor’s practice to include marginalia found in his MSS as footnotes in the edition, though without ever noting them as such, and such is likely the case here. Following this reading, we would remove the period after the *iti* and thereby translate “What is implied here is that the superior [discipline] to be practiced with one’s own effort is that of penetrating [everything] with this very vision [of reality, i.e. that all activity is truly the Lord’s, and all beings are oneself], for the sake of whatever success [one wishes to attain, whether worldly or spiritual].” But this seems a less natural reading, even if it accords with Utpala’s doctrine.

⁸⁰⁵ See TORELLA 1994: xxxii, where he mistakenly characterizes *viś* as having a “dual transitive and intransitive sense”; he meant of course (English being his third language) that it can have an active or passive sense. The ambiguity between the two obtains in its nominal forms.

possession of an individual human form constitutes a contraction, but not a relinquishment of his essential nature, while the *sādhaka*'s "possession" of Śiva is an expansion into the fullness of that nature. In other words, Śiva and the embodied being are of the same nature but do not have the same degree of limitation. But why does Utpala mention the attainment of various *ṛddhis*, a near synonym of *siddhi*, instead of liberation or both goals (*bhukti-mukti*)? I think it is because he regards a substantial effort as necessary to attain Śiva's supernatural potencies, while he regards the attainment of liberation through the recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) that one's nature (*svarūpa*) already is Śiva as easy by comparison (the *sukha-mārga* of the ĪPK). Thus, what Utpala sees Somānanda as saying in the verse is:

*sa tathā-vidhaḥ śivas tatātmane parāpara-rūpa-bhagavat-sadāśivādi-
prasaraṇa-mukhenānanta-vistārāya nija-svarūpāya paramaśiva-saṃjñāya
namaskarotu iti.*

May Śiva, having such a[n embodied] nature, perform obeisance to his greater Self known as Paramaśiva, his own essence infinitely expanded by the flowing forth of [all the tattvas] that begin with the intermediate form of the Blessed Sadāśiva.⁸⁰⁶

*loṭ nimantraṇādaṁ yathā namas te 'stu iti. vyaṁ śivātmānaḥ parameśvarāya
namaskaravāmeti arthah. paratvena prathama-puruṣa-prayogo 'kiñcid-
rūpatvena kṛtrimāhaṁ-bhāvasya kartṛtā-mātraṁ tattvam iti darśanārthaḥ.*
The imperative [is used] in the sense of invitation etc., as in the phrase "may there be homage to you" (*namaste 'stu*). The meaning is: may I, being Śiva, perform obeisance to Parameśvara. The third person is used with the meaning of another [agent] in order to demonstrate that the [only] reality to the artificial sense of self is simply [God's] agency, since it has no specific form [of its own].

The sense of a separate self is a fictitious construct (*kṛtrima*); the only reality it has is its agency, which is not its own but an expression of Śiva's *kriyā-śakti*. Therefore Somānanda avoids the normal form of a *namaskāra-śloka*, with a first-person (*uttama-puruṣa*) verb. As NEMEC cogently sums it up, "since there is only one agent, Śiva, to act is to be Śiva."⁸⁰⁷ Thus by using the third person (*prathama-puruṣa*) verb, he also invites the reader into the act of obeisance, because Śiva's power constitutes the only reality that pertains to his agency as well.⁸⁰⁸ Note that here Utpala uses Paramaśiva/Parameśvara to distinguish the fully expanded and unlimited form (*tatātman*) of Śiva. He continues:

*sarvaṁ ca śiva-mayam iti namaskāre vān-manas-ādi karaṇam api śiva eva, tad
āha svātmanā iti. vighnā api tad-ātmāna eva nivāryāḥ, tad āha ātma-nivāraṇe
iti. namaskāre cāsmādiyecchādi-śaktiḥ śaivy evety āha nijayā śaktyā iti. etena
sarvā eva kriyāḥ sakārah saphalās ca gamana-bhojanādikā evam
evānugantavyā iti darśitam.*

⁸⁰⁶ See NEMEC 2011: 103 n23.

⁸⁰⁷ NEMEC 2011: 103 n27, emphasis mine.

⁸⁰⁸ The issue of grammatical persons and their normative usage in *maṅgala-ślokas* is badly confused in BIERNACKI 2007: 496.

And all is composed of Śiva; thus the instruments of performing obeisance—speech, mind, and [body]—are also Śiva alone; so he says ‘by means of himself’. The obstacles to be deflected too have only Him as their nature; so he says ‘deflecting himself’. And the powers [exercised] in performing obeisance—our will etc.—are Śiva’s alone; thus he says ‘with his innate Power’. By this [verse], he shows that *all* actions—e.g. walking, eating—along with their accompanying factors (*kāraṇa*) and their results are to be understood in this way.

And thus the reinterpretation is complete: Utpala leaves no ambiguity about the fact that all actions are performed by Śiva alone, and that what needs to be cultivated is simply an understanding of this fact. We find a precise parallel in Utpala’s ĪPK:

*tad evaṃ vyavahāre 'pi prabhur dehādīm āviśan |
bhāntam evānta arthaugham icchayā bhāsayed bahiḥ || 1.6.7*

Thus the Lord, even in ordinary life, enters into [the levels of] the body etc., and then [appears to] manifest externally—by his own free Will—the multitude of objects that are [actually] shining within him.⁸⁰⁹

Thus, says Somānanda (returning to the root-text, the *Śiva-dṛṣṭi*):

*ātmaiva sarva-bhāveṣu sphuran nirvṛta-cid vibhuḥ |
aniruddhecchā-prasaraḥ prasaraḥ-dṛk-kriyāḥ śivaḥ || 1.2*

The Lord Śiva of tranquil awareness is the very Self vibrating in all beings, his will flowing unimpeded and his [powers of] knowledge and action expanding [everywhere].

And Kṣemarāja sums up this view the most pithily of all in his *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya*: “Nothing whatever can be manifest without being penetrated by (or immersed in) the ultimately real Manifesting Light of Consciousness” (*na hi pāramārthika-prakāśāveśaṃ vinā kasyāpi prakāśamānatā ghaṭate*). Here we see the increasing abstraction typical of the later generations of this lineage: rather than penetrated by Śiva, it is the Light of Consciousness that is infused into all things (*prakāśāveśa*). Of course there is perfect identity of these terms in this system (note that Abhinavagupta uses the phrase *parameśvara-prakāśa*), but the word Śiva connotes Deity however it is glossed.⁸¹⁰

We have explored Utpaladeva’s interpretation of Somānanda’s *maṅgala-śloka*; but what about the other reading of the verse, that it refers to an enlightenment experience that makes possible the work which follows? While certainly Abhinavagupta agreed with the nondual doctrine Utpala sets out above, it is probable that he read the verse in this latter sense, i.e. as expressing a immersion into the Divine that is the means by which the obstacles (*vighnāḥ*) to the completion

⁸⁰⁹ Utpala’s auto-*vṛtti* on this verse clarifies: “At the moment of the original creation, as in the course of everyday reality, Maheśvara, by virtue of the power of Māyā, by entering the body etc. conceived of as self, creates the [limited] knower” (*ādi-sarge vā vyavahāre 'pi vā maheśvaro māyā-śaktyā dehādīm ātmatvena abhiniviśya pramātāraṃ kurvann*, trans. TORELLA 1994: 133).

⁸¹⁰ One could make the argument that we see decreasing theism and increasing emphasis on *cin-mātra* as “deity” from Somānanda -> Utpaladeva -> Abhinavagupta -> Kṣemarāja.

of the work are deflected. For this is precisely what he argues in a passage near the beginning of his longer commentary (*vivṛti-vimarśinī*) on Utpala's ĪPK, cited and translated by SANDERSON (2005: 80-82). In this passage, Abhinava implies that one's awakening must be reinforced through repeated acts of *samāveśa*, or immersion into the *śiva-svabhāva*, and further that *samāveśa* is a specifically a prerequisite to composing a spiritual treatise, both for the inspiration it provides and the power to deflect obstacles that it generates. He writes:

te ca prakṣiṇa-mohasyāpi māyā-saṃskārā-vinivṛtta-śarīra-prāṇa-prabhṛti-gata-pramātr-bhāvasya pratyag-ātmanah prabhaveyur api icchā-ighātāya . . . iti pratyag-ātmani śarīrādau tadrūpatā-tiraskāreṇāvanati-rūpeṇa prathama-samaye parameśvara-svarūpotkarṣa-parāmarśātmā samāveśah . . . svikāryah | tatra hi sati viśvam api svātma-bhūtam abhinna-svatantra-saṃvin-mātra-paramārthaṃ bhavatīti kaḥ kasya kutra vighnaḥ | anantaram tu grantha-karaṇa-kāle yady api pratyag-ātma-prādhānyam eva anusandheya-manyathā vaikharī-paryanta-prāpti-nirvāhya-śāstra-viracānānupapatteḥ, tathāpi tat-samāveśa-saṃskāra-mahaujo-jājvalyamāna-nijaujaḥ-samujjihāsita-bheda-grahatayā na prabhanti vighnāḥ.

[The hindering powers (*vighnāḥ*)] are able to impede a person's will even if he is free of delusion. For [while he remains in the world] the latent impressions of differentiated reality (*māyā*) continue to influence him, with the result that he still projects the sense of {separate} self on to {the feeling of being a knower which inheres within} his body, vital energy, and [mind]. . . . So initially, [before composing the treatise,] one should suppress identification (*tadrūpatā-tiraskāra*) with the body and the other levels of the individual self—this is the 'bowing down' [that characterizes homage]—and so enter the state of immersion in which one realizes the supremacy of the nature of Parameśvara. During this [immersion] the universe too is one with this true self, being nothing in its ultimate reality but undivided and autonomous consciousness. So [while the state continues] what can impede whom, and where? Thereafter, when one is producing the text, one has to focus on the individual self, since otherwise one would be incapable of composing the treatise, which can be accomplished only if it is brought down to the level of articulate speech. But [then] the hinderers have no power [to impede one], because one's inner force (*nijaujas*), which [now] blazes [more] intensely under the influence of the greater power (*mahaujas*) of the impression of that state of immersion, has inspired one to abandon one's [earlier] faith (*grahatā*) in the state of differentiation.⁸¹¹

Thus *samāveśa* is necessary for one who wishes to produce a *śāstra* that points towards the truth of being. If one sought to produce such a treatise without the experience of *samāveśa*, i.e. as an intellectual exercise, the hindering powers would overcome one prior to the work's completion. The beneficial *saṃskāra* of *samāveśa*,

⁸¹¹ ĪPv vol. 1, p. 18, trans. SANDERSON *loc. cit.* The curly brackets enclose material left untranslated by SANDERSON.

however, is the ultimate prophylactic against this outcome, and further inspires the work to a higher level.

2.5.4.d *The Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā of Utpaladeva (with a brief excursus on the same author's Śivastotrāvalī)*

The only formal definition of (*sam*)*āveśa* in the exegetical writings apart from the one at *Tantrāloka* 1.173c-4b is found in *kārikā* III.2.12⁸¹² of the ĪPK, upon which the *Tantrāloka* verse is clearly dependent. Therefore this *kārikā* is the *locus classicus* for understanding *samāveśa* in the exegetical phase of the tradition. We will translate it along with the previous verse that provides context:

*kalodbalitam etac ca cit-tattvaṃ kartṛtā-mayam |
acid-rūpasya śūnyāder mitaṃ guṇatayā sthitam || III.2.11*

And this Awareness-principle, consisting of [unlimited] agency, [becomes] limited, [though] it is strengthened by partial agency (*kalā*),⁸¹³ abiding as a [mere] attribute in a person whose [primary] selfhood is unconscious, [residing as it does in] the void, [mind,] and [body].

*mukhyatvaṃ kartṛtāyās tu bodhasya ca cid-ātmanah |
śūnyādaḥ tad-guṇe jñānaṃ tat-samāveśa-lakṣaṇam || III.2.12*

By contrast, the insight characterized by full immersion into that [Awareness-principle] is [the insight of] the primacy of the Self-that-is-awareness as the [only] true Knower and Agent, and [a concomitant insight] into [the other layers of individuality,] the void, [*prāṇa*, mind] and [body], as mere attributes of it.⁸¹⁴

While these verses have been translated a number of times (cf. TORELLA 1994: 202-3), they are not easy to translate in such a way that the reader clearly understands what is being said. Here I capitalize words that are equivalent, on this view, to the Deity. An unobtrusive but important word here is *tat*, which is translated as “that” (referring to *cit-tattvaṃ*) but could also have rendered “Him.” Assuming that it is to be taken as compounded with what follows, it denotes what one is immersing in. The use of a gender-neutral pronoun that could as well denote neuter *tattvaṃ* as masculine Him (= Śiva) is exemplary of the decreased theism of the Pratyabhijñā phase of the tradition.

We are fortunate that Utpala wrote a brief auto-commentary (*vṛtti*) at the time of the composition of the *kārikās*, and which is always transmitted with them. The *vṛtti* on verse III.2.12 runs as follows.

⁸¹² 3.23 if we number without regard to chapter divisions; but I follow TORELLA’s authoritative critical edition of the text in all citations of the ĪPK.

⁸¹³ Without *kalā* or partial agency (a technical term in Śaivism), the soul would have no power of action whatsoever.

⁸¹⁴ The alternative translation would obviously be “Insight is the distinguishing mark of full immersion into That . . .” Either way, insight (*jñāna*) and *samāveśa* are being defined in terms of each other.

*etad eva punaḥ śūnyādi kartṛtātmano bodhasya yadopasarjanatvenāste tadāsya
pramātur etad-bodha-mayatām āpannasya jñānaṃ tac-chakti-samāveśa-
lakṣaṇam ucyate ||*

However, when the void etc. becomes subordinate to the Awareness that has [unlimited] agency as its nature, then insight arises in the knower who has achieved the state consisting of this Awareness, an insight whose distinctive feature is immersion into His Power.⁸¹⁵

Being aware of the scriptural background (and this is, after all, the *Āgamādhikāra* of the *ĪPK*), we cannot read *tac-chakti-samāveśa* as meaning anything but “immersion into Śiva’s Power,” clearly recalling the *rudra-śakti-samāveśa* central to the Kaula Trika from the beginning. Here, of course, we are 180 degrees removed from the visionary and magical world in which a *sādhaka* sought to be possessed by spirits (or by Rudra’s power) that literally entered him, for Utpala’s *samāveśa* is the reassertion of the true Self, the eternal core of one’s being, which has become buried as it were under the layers of identification with body, mind, *prāṇa*, and void. As SANDERSON concisely put it, “[*Samāveśa*] is the absence of this subordination of one’s essence to these projections” (1986: 176). But this is an epistemological shift, not an ontological one, because the Self-that-is-awareness never ceased to be the power by which anything is known and done. In the insight characterized by *samāveśa*, it is the primacy (*mukhyatva*) of this Self that is recognized; it is correctly seen as the *guṇin* while body etc. are seen as the *guṇas* (attributes) of it. This is best characterized as *self-possession*, and thus is the opposite of possession as generally conceived and as presented in the earliest sources. But a trace of the mystical remains: since the view here is nondual, *self-possession* is possession of God. And since before this insight a person is thoroughly convinced that he is his body etc., this insight can come as a powerful revelation, with all the force and totalizing influence that the word *āveśa* suggests in wider Sanskrit usage. Such is suggested by Utpala’s devotional poetry in the *Śiva-stotrāvalī*, which is as emotive and passionate as his philosophical writing is dry and abstract. Brief examples follow.

*bhavad-āveśataḥ paśyan bhāvaṃ bhāvaṃ bhavan-mayam |
vicareyaṃ nirākāṅkṣaḥ prahaṛṣa-paripūritaḥ || 6.5*

Due to immersion in you,⁸¹⁶ may I be free of desires and utterly filled with delight, considering every thing and being I see as consisting [only] of you.

*laghu-masṛṇa-sitāccha-śītaḥ bhavad-āveśa-vaśena bhāvayan |
vapur akhila-padārtha-paddhater vyavahārān ativartayeya tām || 8.6*

By the force of immersion into you, may I contemplate your beautiful form—light, mild, pure, clear, and cool—and [thereby] pass beyond the legalistic details of scriptural categories and ritual manuals.⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁵ Or: “. . . that is the sign of penetration by His Power.”

⁸¹⁶ BAILLY translates “from the experience of union with you” (1987: 52).

⁸¹⁷ The categories taught in the Śaiva scriptures are often called *padārthas*; a rejection of baroque elaboration of doctrine and ritual is characteristic of the Krama, and the eighth hymn of the *Śivastotrāvalī* shows the most Krama influence of any in the collection.

*satyena bhagavan nānyaḥ prārthanā-prasaro 'sti me |
kevalam sa tathā ko 'pi bhaktyāveśo 'stu me sadā || 16.6
bhakti-kṣīvo 'pi kupyeyaṁ bhavāyānuśayīya ca |
tathā haseyaṁ udyāṁ ca raṭeyaṁ ca śivety alam || 16.7*

Truly, O blessed Lord, there is no other prayer that arises within me but this: may the extraordinary [state of] immersion into devotion be ever mine. Intoxicated with love, let me be enraged by worldliness yet also intimate with it (i.e., a non-renunciate). May I laugh, and sing, and cry “Śiva!” and fall silent.

These verses show us that the term *āveśa* did not entirely lose its earlier connotations even as it was repurposed as a technical term in Śaiva philosophy—even for those who were responsible for that repurposing. Utpala characterizes the experience of (*sam*)*āveśa* as being intoxicated (*kṣīva*) and filled with delight (*prahaṛṣa-paripūrīta*), and as enabling the realization that all being are Śiva (6.5). The passion and effusiveness of his language here enable us to conclude that his description of *samāveśa* as a type of *jñāna* in ĪPK III.2.12 does *not* mean it is a thought or concept, but an experiential insight. This insight can become strong enough to override the *saṁskāras* of dualistic conditioning (*bheda-vikalpa*), culminating in *jīvanmukti*. In the antepenultimate verse of the ĪPK (and its *vṛtti*), he characterizes living liberation as a continual state of immersion:

*iti prakāṭito mayā sughaṭa eṣa mārgo navo
mahāgurubhir ucyate sma śiva-drṣṭi-śāstre yathā |
tad atra nidadhat padaṁ bhuvana-kartṛtām ātmano
vibhāvya śivatāmayīm anīśam āviśan siddhyati || IV.16*

Thus this new, easy path has been explained by me just as the great master [Somānanda] expounded it in the *Śiva-drṣṭi* treatise. One who places his feet on it, discovering in himself that the agency of all living beings consists of [the same] Divinity, and becoming immersed in it unceasingly, is perfected.

*Vṛtti: yatra yathāvasthita eva vyavahāre pratyabhijñā-mātrāc chivatā-lābhaḥ |
sa ayam avakra evābhinavo mārgaḥ sāḁṣāt-kṛta-parameśvara-bhaṭṭārakākārair
bhaṭṭāśrī-somānanda-pādaiḥ . . . etat pariśīlanena śivatāveśāj jīvan eva mukto
bhavati ||*

In the context of ordinary life as it is, the state of Divinity is only attained through [an act of] recognition. This very new direct path was [first] taught by the reverend Bhaṭṭāśrī Somānanda, who had direct experience of the nature of Bhaṭṭāraaka Parameśvara . . . By cultivating this [recognition], one becomes liberated in this very life due to [continuous] immersion into Divinity.⁸¹⁸

In fact, there is much that is original to Utpala’s ĪPK; indeed, it is one of the most original works in the exegetical canon. However, though he even disagrees strongly with his teacher on some important points (most notably concerning Bhartṛhari’s

⁸¹⁸ On translating *śivatā* as Divinity, cf. *Śivadṛṣṭi* 3.18ab, *svanīṣṭhe śivatā deve pṛthivyādāv apīdṛśam*, “Divinity is present in oneself, in God, and even in earth etc. in the same way.”

philosophy⁸¹⁹), he here attributes great significance to the transmission he received from Somānanda, who, he tells us, had the direct experience (*sākṣātkāra*) of God. It was Somānanda's state of immersion, then, that superseded all philosophical differences between teacher and student.

2.5.4.e *Abhinavagupta's commentaries on the Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā (with a brief excursus on his Bhagavad-gītārtha-saṅgraha)*

We turn now to Abhinavagupta's commentaries on this key verse of the ĪPK in his *vimarśinī* (ĪPv) and his *vivṛti-vimarśinī* (ĪPvv). The former is his commentary on the *kārikās* themselves, the latter is his commentary on Utpaladeva's lost *vivṛti* or longer auto-commentary. I will translate his ĪPv on III.2.12 in full, and excerpts of his ĪPvv on the same. In this way we will encounter multiple layers of commentary on a single verse.⁸²⁰ For the ĪPv, we will use PANDEY's edition, noting where it deviates from the KSTS.⁸²¹ First, though, we will again quote the relevant verses from the ĪPK for ease of reference while reading the commentary. Note that Abhinava comments on both verses in the same passage.

*kalodbalitam etac ca cit-tattvaṃ karṣṭā-mayam |
acid-rūpasya śūnyāder mitaṃ guṇatayā sthitam || III.2.11*

And this Awareness-principle, consisting of [unlimited] agency, [becomes] limited, [though] it is strengthened by partial agency (*kalā*), abiding as a [mere] attribute in a person whose [primary] nature is unconscious, [residing as it does in] the void, [mind,] and [body].

*mukhyatvaṃ karṣṭāyās tu bodhasya ca cid-ātmanah |
śūnyādau tad-guṇe jñānaṃ tat-samāveśa-lakṣaṇam || III.2.12*

By contrast, the insight characterized by full immersion into that [Awareness-principle] is [the insight of] the primacy of the Self-that-is-awareness as the [only] true Knower and Agent, and [a concomitant insight] into [the other layers of individuality,] the void, [*prāṇa*, mind] and [body], as mere attributes of it.

*ĪPv: etac ceti, yat tridaśādīnāṃ bhavināṃ caitanyaṃ karṣṭāśāsya
prādhānyān malena saṃvid-bhāgasya nimajjitatvāt karṣṭā-mayam cid-
rūpasya tattvaṃ svātantryam,*

And this is thus: the awareness of worldly beings, from gods on down, which is [in reality an expression of] the autonomy-principle of consciousness, consisting of [unlimited] agency, [exists in a limited state

⁸¹⁹ See TORELLA 1994: xxiii and TORELLA 2008 ("From an Adversary to the Main Ally: the place of Bharṭṛhari in the Kashmirian Shaiva Advaita").

⁸²⁰ Though we will not go so far as to consider Bhāskara's commentary on Abhinava's ĪPv, included in PANDEY's edition.

⁸²¹ PANDEY, K.C. *Bhāskari: A commentary on the Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī of Abhinavagupta*. Princess of Wales Sarasvati Bhavana Text Series no. 70, Allahabad: 1938. The KSTS, easily available online through muktabodha.org, may also be consulted, for the two texts differ in only minor respects for this passage.

(*mitam sthitam*)] due to the predominance of partial agency and the suppression of a [significant] portion of consciousness by Impurity.⁸²² *kalākhyena paramēśvara-śaktyātmanā tattvena upodbalitam anuprāṇitam, malena nyakkṛtam sad udbodhitam, śūnyāder deha-paryantasya māyā-pramātuḥ sambandhi, tat guṇatvena apradhānatvena sthitam, yato mitam.* [That limited form of consciousness is] strengthened, i.e. supported, by the principle called *kalā* that is a power of the Supreme Lord.⁸²³ Degraded by Impurity, it [nevertheless] exists [in a partially] awakened [state], as a *māyā*-perceiver ranging from the Void to the body.⁸²⁴ It (viz., consciousness) abides as a subordinate quality, whence ‘limited’ (in v.11). *idantāpanna-dehādi-śūnyānta-prameya-bhāga-nimagnatvāt prameyam, yo gauro, yaḥ sukhī, yas tṛṣṭito, yaḥ sarva-rūpa-rahitaḥ so 'ham,* The levels from body to the Void are objects of awareness (lit., have attained ‘thisness’), [but] because of the submerging of a portion of that objectivity, [there arise the erroneous cognitions] “I am the one who is pale” (body), “who is happy” (mind), “who is thirsty” (*prāṇa*), “who was devoid of all appearances” (void)—*iti hi idantaivāntarnītāhaṃ-bhāvā*⁸²⁵ *saṃsāriṇāṃ parisphurati | seyaṃ jāgrat-svapna-suṣupta-rūpā saṃsārāvasthā |* for thus what is really objective vibrates within *saṃsārins* as the states of “I” that are obtained within [these levels]. This is [what defines] the condition of *saṃsāra*, [and] it exists in the waking, dream, and deep sleep states.

Explaining verse III.2.11, Abhinava first describes how consciousness—which in its real nature is primordial, *a priori*, unlimited and free—come to be in the degraded state we consider as normal. Through the power of his *māyā* expressed as the three *malas*, Śiva contracts himself into a limited form (*aṇu*), then equips himself with the five *kañcukas* beginning with *kalā* (cf. ĪPK III.1.9), resulting a being that identifies himself with what is actually objective, that is, the body, mind, *prāṇa*, and void (cf. ĪPK III.1.8). Identification with the void (*śūnya*) can be, as Abhinava states it here,

⁸²² Impurity (*mala*) being cognitive for Abhinava, not actual. The fundamental *mala* is *āṇava-mala*, which Kṣemarāja glosses as *apūrṇa-manyatā*, “thinking oneself incomplete/imperfect,” which gives rise to *māyīya-mala*, glossed as *bhinna-vedya-prathā* (subject-object distinction), and *kārma-mala*, glossed as *śubhāśubhānuṣṭhāna-maya*, “performing actions that are [seen as] good and bad” (PH ch. 9). Utpala considers *āṇava-mala* as fundamental because it obscures either *bodha* or *svātantrya* at all times, occluding their natural unity; cf. ĪPK III.2.4-5 with *vṛtti*, and TORELLA 1994: xxxi and n46.

⁸²³ The first of the five *kañcukas* which veil Śiva in the form of the individual soul, yet also armor him in the world of *māyā*, *kalā* is often translated as “limited power of action.” The word serves as a key technical term in a number of Śaiva contexts; in ritual, it refers to segments of the universe. See ĪPK III.1.9 *vṛtti*.

⁸²⁴ The *māyā-pramātr*, as opposed to the *para-pramātr*, is a term of Utpala’s invention for the perceiver that it identified with one or more of the levels of limited selfhood: void, *prāṇa*, mind, and body. See ĪPK III.1.8 and PH ch. 7: *śūnya-prāṇa-puryaṣṭaka-śarīra-svabhāvatvāt catur-ātmā*.

⁸²⁵ The KSTS edition has *idantaivāntarlināhaṃbhāvā*.

identification with the state of deep dreamless sleep (“I am the one who was devoid of all appearances” in modern parlance might be “I slept like a rock”) but also, and more importantly, the void is the considered the primary locus of the limited “I” (see ĪPK III.2.13)—thus the nondual Śaivas agree with the Buddhists that there is literally nothing to the sense of separate self. It is void, and therefore, drawing on the remnant of consciousness available to it, it vainly seeks to reify itself through identification with the body, mind, and *prāṇa*.⁸²⁶ This identification persists in all three states of ordinary consciousness.⁸²⁷

Note that the real “I” is not here the core of an individual being as in Sāṅkhya, but the transindividual Self of all beings. The individual soul *per se* only exists as part of the contracted state of bondage. Thus, as TORELLA, SANDERSON, and others have noted, the nondual Śaiva’s “I” is closer to the view of the (Vijñānavāda) Buddhists than it is to the *ātman* of Vedānta.⁸²⁸ (Even the dualistic Śaivas, who did posit an eternal soul, distanced their view of the *ātman* from those of the brāhmanical schools, as shown by Alex WATSON [2006].)

Next Abhinava charts the trajectory from bondage towards liberation, commenting on our key verse, ĪPK III.2.12.

*yadā tūkta-gurūpadeśādi-diśā tenaivāhaṃ-bhāvena svātantryātmanā
vyāpakatva-nityatvādi*^{p. 231 (KSTS)} *dharmā-parāmarśam ātmani vidadhatā
tataḥ śūnyādeḥ prameyād unmajjya iva āsyate tadā turyāvasthā*⁸²⁹ |

But when, through realizing [that the divine] qualities such as all-pervasiveness and eternity apply to oneself, by having the experience of the [real] “I” whose nature is [unqualified] freedom—[an experience] pointed out by the guru’s instruction and other methods that I have explained—[and] having therefore emerged as it were from [identification with] the objective knowables of the Void etc. and [as a result] abiding [in one’s real nature], then that is the [transcendent] state [called] the Fourth.

*yadāpi parāmr̥ṣṭa-tathābhūta-vaibhava-nityaiśvaryādi-dharma-saṃbhedenā*⁸³⁰
*eva ahaṃ-bhāvena śūnyādi-deha-dhātv-antaṃ siddharasa-yogena vidhyate,
tadāsyāṃ turyātīta*⁸³¹ *daśāyāṃ tad āpi prameyatām ujjatīva* |

When further [the layers of the objective “self”] from the Void to the [very] tissues of the body are transmuted by means of the “alchemical

⁸²⁶ Identification with the body is primary in the waking state (hence we perceive otherness and experience attachment and aversion), with the mind in the dream state (hence we do not realize we are dreaming), and with the *prāṇa* and the void in the deep sleep state (which thus subdivides into two, *savedya-sauṣupta* and *apavedya-sauṣupta* [ĪPK III.2.15 *vṛtti*]).

⁸²⁷ The illusion of separate individuality persists even in the deep sleep state because of the presence of the *saṃskāras* (see ĪPK III.2.13).

⁸²⁸ This is perhaps why the usage of *ahaṃbhāva* and the like is more common than *ātman* in this literature (when the latter appears, it is usually in the compound *cid-ātman*). See also PH ch. 8, where Kṣemarāja ranks other *darśanas* according to what they think the real “self” is.

⁸²⁹ *turyāvasthā* conj. em. TORELLA : *turyātītavasthā* Ed.

⁸³⁰ *vaibhava-nityaiśvaryādi-dharma-saṃbhedenā* KSTS ed. : *vaibhavādi-nityaiśvarya-saṃbhedenā* PANDEY.

⁸³¹ *Turyātīta* conj. em. TORELLA : *turya* Ed.

elixir,⁸³² i.e. by the [fundamental] “I”-sense which is certainly conjoined with the qualities of magnificent power (*vaibhava*), eternal sovereignty, [and others] of such nature that are cognized [as aspects of that “I”], then in this state beyond the Fourth they abandon (as it were) their objectivity.

Having introduced the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, Abhinava now discusses *turya* and *turyātīta*, which complete the set (of “phases of lucidity” as VASUDEVA [2004] calls this set of five). In this brief passage, Abhinava seeks to reconcile the gnostic and yogic approaches, which also means validating both sudden and gradual realization. The Fourth state is the gnostic realization that one has wrongly taken objective realities to be the self; a sudden waking up out of the trance of “I am the body” etc. It can be sudden because it requires no transformation, only a recognition of what is already the case, including a reflective awareness (*parāmarśa*) of the qualities (*dharmas*) of one’s real self. AS TORELLA puts it, “the adept, after becoming aware of the supreme nature of the I, becomes as though withdrawn from the knowable which formed his fictitious identity” (1994: xxxiv). *Turya* is then an exclusive (in the literal sense) realization. By contrast, the process of *turyātīta* (“beyond the Fourth,” but not a fifth state), here described as penetrating the layers of that constructed identity with this fundamental awareness, is inclusive and gradual. Now the objective layers of the limited self are seen as expressions of the transindividual divine consciousness, and thus are recovered as part of a greater “I” than the one they were excluded from in the previous *turya* state. This process by which *cit* penetrates the layers of body etc. is likened to alchemical transformation (*siddha-rasa*, a particular esoteric preparation of mercury, is the Indian equivalent of the European “philosopher’s stone” that turns base

⁸³² Āyurveda scholar Dominik WUJASTYK of the Wellcome Institute recommended this translation of *vidh-* as “transmuted” (over that of “penetrated”) based on his reading of the *rasāyana* literature, especially the *Rasa-ratna-samuccaya* 8.94-95 and the *bodhinī* thereon (email communications, 7 and 9 July 2014). Ashok AKLUJKAR also sent a citation from the same text (5.11: *vedhajaṃ suvarṇam - pārada-vedhena saṃjātaṃ suvarṇam*), which I believe verifies that *vedha* must mean transmutation (or similar), not piercing or penetration, though he wishes to retain the latter translation (email, 7 July 2014). (See also n865 and n868 below.) The alchemical metaphor here (elaborated further in the ĪPv below) is of course not original to Abhinavagupta; we see it most prominently in the eighth century *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 1.10cd: *rasajātaṃ atīva vedhanīyaṃ sudṛḍhaṃ gr̥hṇata bodhicitta-saṃjñam*, “Firmly take hold of the alchemical elixir called Intent to Awaken (*bodhicitta*), which must be thoroughly transmuted.” Vesna WALLACE (1997: 19) translates almost identically; in this verse, it appears, *rasajāta* is unmodified mercury that must be properly transmuted to be safe for consumption, implying some refinement of the initial raw *bodhicitta* is necessary. (However, Matthew KAPSTEIN [email, 9 July 2014] points out that both the Sanskrit commentator and the Tibetan translation do not take *vedhanīyaṃ* as translated just above, but rather in the active sense, “able to transform [this *aśuci-pratimā* to a *jīna-ratna-pratimā*, 1.10ab]”—Prajñākaramati glosses *atyuccavedhakāritvād--atīva vedhanīyam*.) In our passage, we certainly have *siddharasa* denoting a mercury preparation that can transmute base metals into gold (or more accurately, extract gold from base metals). The pure dynamic power of awareness called *cit* is here compared to a chemical catalyst: it needs no refinement or alteration, but can alter that which it contacts.

metals to gold).⁸³³ TORELLA writes, “[here] the various components of the levels of the limited subject are gradually penetrated by the elixir of the I, until they become, so to speak, transfigured, removed from their nature of [being merely] knowable realities” (Ibid.).⁸³⁴ The use of the word *iva* (last word of the passage cited) denotes that the body etc. do not actually cease to be knowables when they come to be seen as nothing but concretizations of the dynamic “liquid” essence of consciousness in *turyātīta*,⁸³⁵ just as the previous *iva* denoted that emerging from identification with knowables does not mean completely leaving them behind (which would entail physical death).

Now, the coherence of this passage only emerges after the emendation to the edition suggested by TORELLA and adopted here, that of swapping the words *turya* and *turyātīta*. This may seem a dramatic emendation, but it would make little sense for Abhinava to list the three states of ordinary consciousness, then proceed to *turyātīta* when what is obviously called for is *turya*, “the Fourth.” Further, it would make no sense to argue that *turya* is an extension of the *turyātīta* state without completing ignoring the meaning of the words; but the other way around exactly matches the meaning of the words. If even the reader with no Sanskrit goes back to the last passage and swaps the terms “Fourth” and “beyond the Fourth” (as they are in the edition), what was fairly clear becomes confusing. But what would occasion such a confusion in the first place? It may well be that the editor(s) of the KSTS, influenced by the more mainstream transcendentalist Indian philosophies, simply could not imagine that *turya* could denote the transcendent state while *turyātīta* embraced immanence. But this is precisely in line with Abhinavagupta’s Kaula view, for with the text emended as TORELLA suggests, we have here a model that is central to the Kālīkula, which SANDERSON characterizes as “transcendence followed by an expansion that causes the state of enlightenment to pervade the transcended” (2007b: 402-3). The *Śivasūtra* (well known to Abhinava) inherits this model, teaching the “establishing of this realization first through withdrawal into the heart of consciousness and then through its expansion into the states that constitute the mundane awareness of the bound” (Ibid.: 402), which precisely characterizes our ĪPv passage. For example, in the *Śivasūtra* we find the teaching that the Fourth state can spread to the ordinary states of *jāgrat*, *svapna*, and *suṣupta*, imbuing them with awakened consciousness,⁸³⁶ which is *turyātīta* without the name (i.e. *turyābhoga* = *turyātīta*). Of course, an examination of the extant ĪPv manuscripts, preferably after

⁸³³ Cf. *Kulārṇava-tantra* 14.89: *rasendreṇa yathā viddha-mayaḥ suvarṇatām vrajet | dīkṣā-viddhas tathā hy ātmā śivatvaṃ labhate priye ||*, “Just as [a metal] penetrated by mercury becomes gold, even so a soul penetrated by initiation becomes divine.”

⁸³⁴ Elsewhere he summarizes the process this way: “The objective realities with which the I had identified himself are themselves transformed on contact with the I which is finally recognized as endowed with the divine qualities of sovereignty, permanence etc., so that they continue to subsist, but as though they have ceased to be objects; they are compared to copper which on contact with mercury is transformed into gold” (TORELLA 1994: 209 n35).

⁸³⁵ Kṣemarāja’s phrase: *cidrasāśyānatā-prathanātmā samāveśaḥ*, in the context of a parallel discussion, in *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam* ch. 19 (already cited *supra*).

⁸³⁶ ŚS 1.7: *jāgrat-svapna-suṣupta-bhede turyābhoga-saṃbhavaḥ*

forming a critical stemma, is necessary to make a final ruling on the reading of the passage.

To return to our text, Abhinava concludes the discussion by informing us that *turyā* and *turyātīta* are forms of *samāveśa*, which when continuous and stable (*āsya*) is itself liberation.

*seyam dvayy api jīvanmuktāvasthā samāveśa ity uktā śāstre | samyag-
āveśanam eva hi tatra tatra pradhānam, tat-siddhaye tūpadeśāntarāṇi |*
This two-fold state of one who is liberated while living is called *samāveśa* in the scriptures. For complete entering⁸³⁷ is itself primary in each of these; other teachings are [only] for its attainment.

A surprising statement, perhaps, for I know of no scriptural passage in which these two states are called *samāveśa*, though of course many of them have been lost. What Abhinava wants us to understand, I think, is that when the scriptures use the term *samāveśa*, they are often (always?) referring to one of these two states. In *turya*, then, one fully and directly penetrates into one's true nature, while in *turyātīta*, one causes that nature to fully and gradually penetrate the objective levels of one's limited selfhood; for which reason they can both be appropriately referred to with the word *samāveśa*. Here then, that term indicates the goal of the path, toward which all the teachings point.

Next Abhinava introduces some citations from the *Gītā*. This seems surprising, but he is citing the verses early in chapter twelve that use the verb *āvīś*. This in itself does not justify the (rather banal) citations, however. I believe that Abhinavagupta introduces these references here because he wants to find his three *upāyas* in them. A short excursus, then, on those *upāyas*.

As we have seen, the scriptural tradition of the Kaula Trika taught three main forms of *samāveśa*, i.e. *śāmbhava*, *śākta*, and *āṇava*. Unwilling to accept the obvious implications of these terms in the scriptural register, namely that they denoted possession by (or immersion into) Śiva, Śakti, and the individual soul (*aṇu*) respectively, he recast these three as three *upāyas* or types of method leading to one and the same goal. This is (arguably) the primary hermeneutic project of his *Tantrāloka*. He effectively argues there that (for example) *āṇava-samāveśa* really means *āṇavādyupāya-samāveśa*, an immersion that is the result of a method beginning with the individual, i.e. one involving yogic and ritual practice. For him, *āṇavopāya* necessarily gives way to *śāktopāya*, because for the former to be effective, it must in effect be an enacted form of *vikalpa-saṃskāra*, which is the primary feature of *śāktopāya*, except that the latter is purely mental. *Śāktopāya*, likewise, gives way to *śāmbhavopāya*, a cultivation of one's transmental nondiscursive direct awareness, and that method culminates in liberation, which is necessarily the same for all.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁷ Abhinava is telling us that the *sam-* in *samāveśa* is in the sense of *samyāñc*.

⁸³⁸ See TĀ 1.142 and comm. One need only resort to a less direct method if a more direct one does not work, thus Abhinava presents the *upāyas* in the opposite order. Thus in the *Tantroccaya* he says of the *śāktopāya*, *yasya tu ittham apy avikalpakāḥ (= śāmbhavaḥ) samāveśo nodeti, sa savikalpa-bhāvanayā sat-tarka-rūpayā saṃskurute vikalpam*; and of the *āṇava* he says *yas tu sat-tarkeṇa na nirmala-svabhāvam āsādayati, tasya dhyānādikam ucyate*.

Thus there is one *samāveśa*, attained in three ways.⁸³⁹ He implicitly finds these three ways alluded to in the *Gītā*, therefore its citation here becomes appropriate.

Here his life-long exegetical project comes full circle, for a commentary on the *Gītā* was one of the first publications of Abhinavagupta as a callow and somewhat pedantic young scholar, and the *ĪPv* was one of his latest writings. Since the *ĪPv*'s *Gītā* citations receive little to no commentary, we will cite a few statements from his *Bhagavad-gītārtha-saṅgraha* to adumbrate the running themes in a long career of exegesis, one of which is *samāveśa*.

yathā gītām: mayy āveśya mano ye māṃ . . . [nitya-yuktā upāsate | śraddhayā parayopetās te me yuktatamā matāḥ] | (12.2) iti

As said in the *Gītā*: “Those whose minds are absorbed in me, [ever-disciplined, worshipping me, endowed with supreme faith: they are considered the most fully connected to me.”]⁸⁴⁰

Abhinavagupta cites this verse at the point we have reached in the *ĪPv* but does not comment on it. In his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha*, he claims this verse “acknowledges that those who have [experienced] *samāveśa*, a natural state of unity that is Śaiva in scope (or: that has Śiva as its object), are ‘considered the most fully connected to Me’.”⁸⁴¹ This seems to be straightforward exegesis, because those who have absorbed their hearts or minds (*manas*) in the Lord have by his definition experienced *samāveśa*; but a sectarian twist is added because that term is, he seems to think, the special province of Śaivism. (Ironically, in Abhinava’s reading, those immersed in Śiva are those most fully connected to Kṛṣṇa, implying that Śiva is Kṛṣṇa’s inner nature.) However, what the *Gītā*’s author clearly has in mind are yogins who are rigorously and consistently concentrated (*nitya-yukta*) and practice in a disciplined manner, while Abhinava here uses the word “natural/spontaneous” (*akṛtrimah*), implying an uncontrived state that is a gift of grace. Thus, for Abhinava, those who are “most fully connected” are not those who strive mightily in their practice but those who have, by grace, spontaneously and intuitively merged with their object of devotion. Note that this, his earliest gloss on *samāveśa*, understands it as a state of unity with the deity (*tanmayībhāva*). The citation of the verse at this point in the *ĪPv* suggests a connection with *sāmbhavopāya* (a concept not yet formulated at the time of the *Gītārtha-saṅgraha*), which involves a nondiscursive repeated contemplation of the eternal and singular Supreme Lord as shining in everything (including oneself), manifested by the power of autonomy experienced as the pulsation of “I”.⁸⁴²

Abhinava’s hermeneutic involves a “stepping down” to a less direct *upāya* when the more direct (and subtler) one does not work, and he assimilates this

⁸³⁹ See *Tantrasāra* ch. 1, summary verse. For more on the *upāyas*, see the present author’s U.C. Berkeley master’s thesis (2003).

⁸⁴⁰ Our authors often cite only the beginning of a verse, expecting the reader to be able to fill in the rest from memory or a copy at hand—which tells us something about their audience.

⁸⁴¹ *māheśvara-viśayo yeṣāṃ samāveśaḥ akṛtrimas tanmayībhāvaḥ, te yuktatamā mama matāḥ ityanena pratijñā kriyate* (p. 259 of the MARJANOVIC edition).

⁸⁴² *Tantroccaya* pp. 162 and 163: *kasyacit tu parameśvara-prakāśas tadīyāyāṃ svātantrya-śaktau nirjñātāyāṃ prakāśate . . . ahaṃ-svātantrya-śakti-bhāsita-viśvābhāsaḥ parameśvaro vibhur eko nitya iti muhur muhur bhāvayan sa eva.*

approach to the similar stepping down pattern (i.e., “if you cannot do X, do Y”) found in these verses of the *Gītā*, reinforcing his implication that the *Gītā* secretly alludes to the structure of the *upāyas* here, just as (he tells us) it secretly teaches the nature of Kālī in the famous *kālo’smi* verse (11.32)—for, as valid *āgama*, it must validate the Śaiva revelation. Thus the next verse he cites in the ĪPv is:

athāveśayitum cittam . . . [na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram | abhyāsa-yogena tato mām icchāptum dhanamjaya] (12.9) *ityādi ca |*

“Dhanañjaya, if you are not able to absorb the mind steadily in me, then resolve to reach me through the discipline of practice.”

Here we see a difference in the Kashmiri recension of the *Gītā*, for the first pāda of 12.9 is here *athāveśayitum cittam* whereas the standard reading is *atha cittam samādhātum*.⁸⁴³ And in his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha*, Abhinava takes full advantage of the verb *āvīś* here, commenting, “*Āveśa* is difficult to attain without a very intense Descent of the Lord’s power, and without the grace of the Guru’s feet [through initiation], when [he is] pleased [with one’s service] for a long time – thus, practice!”⁸⁴⁴ In this early stage of his writing, *āveśa* is the result of *śaktipāta* and *dīkṣā*; as we have seen, his view becomes more complex and open to various possibilities. We are here in a different world from the *Gītā* itself, which simply states that those who do not have the strength of will or power of concentration to remain absorbed in contemplation of God should at least undertake a daily ritual practice (*abhyāsa-yoga*, cf. *Yogasūtra* 1.12-14). But the citation at this point in the ĪPv implies that Abhinava sees the *abhyāsa* in question as the *vikalpa-saṃskāra* characteristic of *śāktopāya*. Continuing with the text of the ĪPv, he introduces the next *Gītā* verse with words that indicate that he sees it as teaching *āṇavopāya*:

samāveśa-pallavā eva ca prasiddha-dehādi-pramātr-bhāga-prahvībhāva-bhāvanānuprāñitāḥ paramēśvara-stuti-praṇāma-pūjā-dhyāna-samādhi-prabhṛtayaḥ karma-prapañcāḥ |

The proliferation of [spiritual] actions [that constitute *āṇavopāya*]*—e.g.,* hymns to Parameśvara, obeisance, worship, visualization, meditative absorption, and so on, [all] sustained by a meditative contemplation that subordinates the aspects of the knower that are associated with the body etc.—are simply modes of *samāveśa*.⁸⁴⁵

yad gītāṃ api—p. 232 (KSTS) abhyāse 'py asamarthaḥ san mat-karma-paramo bhava | [mad-artham api karmāṇi kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi] (12.10) *iti |*

As the *Gītā* also [says]: “If you have not the strength even for practice, be solely occupied with my rites, [performing actions for my sake, and you will obtain success.]”

⁸⁴³ We know that for the author of the *Gītā*, unlike Abhinava, *āvīś* and *āvdhā* are more or less synonymous, for verse 12.2 has *mayyāveśya mano* while 12.3 has *mayyeva mana ādhatsva*. Is the Kashmiri reading reflective of a greater concern with *āveśa* in that region?

⁸⁴⁴ *tīvratara-bhagavac-chaktipātāṃ ciratara-prasādita-guru-caraṇānugrahaṃ ca vinā durlabha āveśaḥ ity abhyāsaḥ* (p. 259 of the MARJANOVIC edition).

⁸⁴⁵ This translation of *samāveśa-pallavāḥ* from SANDERSON 1986: 177 (cited without acknowledgment at SMITH 2006: 371); *pallava* literally means blossom, sprout, shoot, or bud. Without SANDERSON’s insight, we might take the phrase to mean “expressions of *samāveśa*.”

The acts that constitute the greater part of religion are “modes of *samāveśa*”—i.e. either a means to or an expression of that state—insofar as they are sustained or enlivened (*anuprāṇita*) by a contemplation of the nature of one’s being according to the teaching given in ĪPK III.2.12. Properly speaking, then, all forms of worship flow forth as expressions of one’s intuitive regard for the Self-that-is-awareness (or as modes of interaction with that awareness), rather than propitiations to an external deity. Here the *Gītā* itself means not religious practices (*karma*) but the dedication of everyday actions (*karma*) to the Lord. Note that in his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* commentary, before he had developed his *upāya* doctrine, Abhinava follows the obvious meaning of the *Gītā* more closely, seeing yoga in 12.9 and *pūjā* etc. in 12.10.

Before continuing with the ĪPv, we should perhaps mention two more interesting features of this section of the *Gītārtha-saṅgraha*. In his commentary on 12.12 (the verse that tell us that better than *abhyāsa* is *jñāna*, better than *jñāna* is *dhyāna*, and better than *dhyāna* is *karma-phala-tyāga*), Abhinava glosses *jñāna* with *āveśa* (which, he says, is the fruit of *abhyāsa*), and glosses *dhyāna* (the fruit of *āveśa-jñāna*) as *bhagavan-mayatvam*, because only when a person is one with God can true surrender of the fruits of action take place, for how can one surrender something to someone who is unknown? *Āveśa* is primary, he tells us, because it is the root of all this.⁸⁴⁶ In commenting on 12.8, he quotes from his otherwise lost *Krama-keli-stotra*, and in this passage we see what might very well be a description of Abhinava’s own *samāveśa* experience. This possibility is suggested by the intimate and quasi-autobiographical nature of the stotra form, in which the devotee directly addresses the deity. The verse in question, the second of the quotation, reads:

*yadā tu vigatendhanaḥ svavaśa-vartitām saṁśrayann
akṛtrima-samullasat pulaka-kampa-bāṣpānugaḥ |
śarīra-nirapekṣatām sphuṭam upādadānaś citaḥ
svayam jhagiti budhyate yugapad eva bodhānalaḥ ||*

Taking refuge in the [flow of goddess-consciousness⁸⁴⁷] that has been brought under control and which is clearly independent of the body, the Fire of Awareness of its own accord suddenly blazes forth (lit., is known) without any fuel (= yogic practice), sporting spontaneously—an experience of consciousness which is followed by thrilling sensations, trembling, and tears.⁸⁴⁸

Though this may be a reference to a spiritual experience, we know that it is not referring to his enlightenment, because he attributes that to meeting the Kaula Trika guru Śambhunātha (see, e.g., TĀ 1.16). At the time of writing his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha*, Abhinava was an initiate only in the Krama.

We return now to the ĪPv. Immediately after the citation of *Gītā* 12.10, Abhinava continues:

⁸⁴⁶ . . . *sati dhyāne – bhagavanmayatve karma-phalāni saṁnyasitum yujyate | anyathājñāta-rūpe kva saṁnyāsaḥ?* / . . . *sarva-mūlatvād āveśātmakam jñānam eva pradhānam.* p. 264 of the MARJANOVIC edition.

⁸⁴⁷ *Svarasavāhini*, from the previous verse.

⁸⁴⁸ p. 261 of the MARJANOVIC edition.

dehāpāte tu paramēśvara evaikarasaḥ, iti kaḥ kutra kathaṃ samāviśet |
But at the fall of the body, there is only one essence: the Supreme Lord.
Thus, who could enter (or immerse), where and how?

In other words, it is only meaningful to speak of *samāveśa* in the context of embodiment, for only in that context are there apparently differentiated layers of selfhood such that there can be an “entry” of the locus of identity (*ahambhāva*) from the body into *cit*, or an “entry” of *cit* into one of the layers of limited selfhood (*dehādi*); the former being *turyā* and the latter *turyātīta*.

tad etad āha - yat punaḥ kartṛtāyā mukhyatvaṃ tannāntariyakaś ca śūnyāder guṇa-bhāvaḥ, tasmimś cāpy acidrūpe guṇībhūte “svātantryasyāpy abodhatā” iti
Further, [Utpaladeva] says there is “a lack of awareness of autonomy as well” (ĪPK III.2.4) in reference to the fact that the Void etc. are qualities (*guṇa*), but since [divine] agency is their inseparable substrate, though they are unconscious [in and of themselves] any of them can [appear to] become a quality-holder (*guṇin*).⁸⁴⁹

mala-vyāpārasyāpahastanāt cito yo 'paro'⁸⁵⁰ 'py ātma-bhāgo bodha-lakṣaṇo malena nyakkṛto 'bhūt tasyāpy adhuronmagnatvena mukhyatvam |
Due to expelling⁸⁵¹ the activity of Impurity, the part of the self that is characterized by awareness as well as that which not other than consciousness (i.e., agency), that had been suppressed by Impurity, now emerges as ‘primary.’

yac ca tat kartṛtāyā mukhyatvam unmagnatā, idam eva jñānam ajñānātmaka-mala-pratipakṣatvāt, tad etan mukhyatvaṃ samāveśasya lakṣaṇaṃ yena deha-sthito 'pi patiḥ iti muktaḥ iti śāstreṣūktaḥ || 12 ||

And that emergence of ‘the primacy of [autonomous] agency’ is itself ‘insight,’ due to the fact that it opposes Impurity, which is [nothing but] ignorance. This primacy is the ‘distinguishing mark of *samāveśa*,’ by [sufficient repetition of] which that which dwells in the body is declared by the scriptures to be “the Lord,” and “freed.”

This section is an close exegesis of specific terms in ĪPK III.2.11-12. That which is unconscious in and of itself (*śūnyādi-dehāntam*) appears as the self only because it is inseparable from the dynamic power of consciousness which animates it (v. 11). When that dynamic consciousness-principle (*bodha-kartṛtā, = prakāśa-vimarśa*) reveals itself as primary and fundamental, that is *samāveśa* (v. 12). Now, *śaktipāta* is implicit here in the phrase “the expelling of Impurity,” since as we have seen the dissolution of *mala* is the primary function of *śaktipāta* in many scriptures, and further the initial

⁸⁴⁹ Here I am trying to convey the gist of Abhinava’s telegraphically compressed Sanskrit.

⁸⁵⁰ *yo 'paro* KSTS ed. : *yaḥ paro* PANDEY. The text does not seem to be secure at this point; perhaps a word has dropped out. In the parallel ĪPv passage, we see a simplification (presumably for the sake of clarity): *yo mala-vyāpāro 'bhūt tasya apahastanāt bodhasya api cid-ātmanas cid-rūpatāyām pradhāna-svabhāvasya mukhyatvam* (KSTS vol. III, p. 327).

⁸⁵¹ Note that *apahasta* can refer to a hand placed on the neck by an exorcist to drive out a *bhūta* (personal communication with H.N. CHAKRAVARTY, with whom I was fortunate to read this passage in Vārāṇasī a year or so before his passing).

emergence of the primacy of the Self-that-is-awareness is there linked to the expelling of Impurity, thus strengthening the case that *śaktipāta* (as a special type of *samāveśa*) is intended. But not all the *mala* is dissolved, so further *samāveśa* experiences are need to eradicate it. Since, for the nondualists, *mala* is just ignorance, it is fair to characterize *samāveśa* as “insight” (*jñāna*), as Utpala does in v. 12. When *samāveśa*-driven insight becomes stronger than the *mala-saṃskāras*, one is liberated (*mukta*). Thus ends the ĪPv passage.

The Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī

The parallel ĪPv passage (KSTS vol. III, pp. 327-31) is very similar but sheds more light on some important points. We will translate excerpts from it here. Specifically, Abhinava addresses the distinction of the *turyā* and *turyātīta* states, and seems to posit that there are two kinds of *turyātīta*, one yogic and one gnostic. He writes:

*etad ajñānarūpa-mala-pratidvandvitayā samāveśa-lakṣaṇaṃ satya-svarūpe
samyag āsamantāt praveśa-lakṣaṇaṃ jñānaṃ, yal-lābhena jñānī, yad-
abhyāseṇa ca deha-prāṇādāv ananta-saṃvid-dharmātmaka-vibhava-
samāsādanāt yogī bhavati |*

The ‘distinguishing mark of *samāveśa*’ is ‘insight,’ since it is opposed to the Impurity that is ignorance [insofar as] it is characterized by a perfect (*samyag*) and complete (*āsamantāt*) entry into one’s true nature,⁸⁵² obtaining which one becomes a gnostic (*jñānī*), and practicing which, on the levels of body, *prāṇa*, etc., one becomes a yogī, due to attaining the power (*vibhava*) that is an intrinsic quality of infinite Consciousness.

Reading this in light of the ĪPv passage we studied above, Abhinava seems to be saying here that *turyā*, characterized as an entry into one’s true nature through a spontaneous leap of insight (active sense of *viś*), pertains to the gnostic, and *turyātīta*, the penetration/infusion of the power of that insight into the layers of limited selfhood (passive sense of *viś*), pertains to the yogī. But we will see problems with this interpretation below. He explains this distinction further, repeating what he said in the ĪPv but adding some important information.

*etad uktaṃ bhavati - yadā ahaṃbhāvaḥ svātantrya-diśaiva vyāpitva-
nityatvādi-^{KSTS p. 328} parāmarśa-balāt sūnyādeḥ prameyikṛtād unmajjya iva āste,
tadā turyatā;⁸⁵³ tadāpi ca sūnyādi-saṃskāro 'pi asti, - iti avyatiṛeka-turyātīta-
samatā eva |*

This is said [already in the ĪPv] – when the [true] I-sense, due to the power of the realization of its all-pervasiveness, eternality, etc. through the [scriptural] indication of its [innate] autonomy, emerges as it were from the objectified [levels of self]—Void etc.—and abides [in its real

⁸⁵² Abhinava gives a *nirukta* here: *samyag* and/or *āsamantāt* + *praveśa* = *samāveśa*.

⁸⁵³ *turyatā* conj. em. TORELLA : *turyātītātā* Ed. “If I have understood correctly what is the gist of Abh.’s discourse, for sure this is not satisfactorily reflected in the edited texts” (email communication, 16 July 2014). NB that without this emendation, the following comment *turyātīta-samatā eva* makes no sense.

nature], then that is the state [called] the Fourth. Nevertheless [in that state] the impressions of the Void etc. still remain. Thus this has exactly the same [nature] as [that which is called] the “unseparated *curyātīta*.”

Now we learn that there are two kinds of *curyātīta*. The gnostic who does no yoga passes from the *turya* state to the *avyatireka-curyātīta*, in which he is authentically immersed in his essence, but the impressions of limited selfhood remain (thus his social self might exhibit little to no change).⁸⁵⁴ This obviously sets up the possibility of a yogic *vyatireka-curyātīta*, in which one dissolves those impressions through practice. Abhinava continues by elaborating further on the alchemical metaphor briefly introduced in the ĪPv; here, though, if we do not emend the published text, he appears to have changed his view from that seen in the ĪPv. There the alchemical metaphor was reserved for the *curyātīta* state, while here it appears to denote the yogic process as opposed to the gnostic (and note that the latter distinction did not appear in the ĪPv), for below we see two stages of the alchemical metaphor, corresponding to both *turya* and *curyātīta*.⁸⁵⁵ This suggests that he now posits two different tracks for both states, *pace* Torella’s 1994 hypothesis that a single *turya* bifurcates into two kinds of *curyātīta*. Note that the first part of the following paragraph closely parallels the ĪPv (p. 323f above) and the second part is new data.

*yadā tu parāmrṣṭa-nityatva-vyāpītvādi-dharmakaiśvarya-ghanātmanā
ahambhāva-siddharasena śūnyādi-deha-dhātv-antaṃ⁸⁵⁶ vidhyate yena
prameyatvāt tat cyavata iva, tadā turyadaśā;*

But when [all the layers of limited selfhood] from the Void to the tissues of the body⁸⁵⁷ are penetrated by the “alchemical elixir” that is the [true] I-sense—replete with the sovereignty in which the qualities of eternity, all-pervasiveness, etc. are cognized [as aspects of that “I”]—through which [penetration] one leaves behind (as it were) the objective [layers of the self], then that is [called] the Fourth State.⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵⁴ But TORELLA proposes (email, 15 July 2014) an emendation of *avyatireka-* to *vyatireka-*, apparently taking it in the sense of *kevala/kaivalya*, a spiritual state which is separated from the *saṃskāras* but does not dissolve them. This seems plausible, and perhaps even probable, but I have retained the edition’s reading of *avyatireka-*, taking it to refer to the fact that the *saṃskāras* are still present (and therefore still influence behavior when this transcendent character comes out of *samādhi* and operates his body-mind) as opposed to a *vyatireka-curyātīta* in which the *saṃskāras* are effectively absent. If we adopted TORELLA’s emendation here, then *vyatireka* would refer to a transcendent state, and *avyatireka* one in which the practitioner is “not-separated” from the body, mind, etc., i.e., an immanentist state of liberation.

⁸⁵⁵ Though TORELLA proposes an emendation which would bring the ĪPv in line with the ĪPv (see below).

⁸⁵⁶ ORL MS #2403 has *śūnyādi-deha-dhāturtvaṃ* here, which is almost better; we would prefer *śūnyādi-dehānta-dhāturtvaṃ*.

⁸⁵⁷ Perhaps we should read *śūnyādi-dehānta-dhātum*, in parallel with *prānadehādi-dhātuḥ* further on, rather than the edition’s *śūnyādi-deha-dhātv-antaṃ*. *Dhātu* can mean layers, as it would in the proposed reading, or tissues etc. of the physical body, as seems required by the current reading.

⁸⁵⁸ The problem with this translation (which follows the ĪPv parallel, which has *prameyād unmajjya iva āsyate*) is that the subject (*karṭṛ*) of *cyavate* appears to be *tat* (which must refer to

yadāpi viddho 'sau prāṇadehādi-dhātuḥ saṃvid-rasena abhiniviṣṭo 'tyantaṃ kanaka-dhātur iva jīrṇaḥ kriyate yena sa druta-rasa iva ābhāti kevalaṃ tat-saṃskāraḥ, tadāpi turyātīta-dasā sā bhavati |

When, further, these elements of *prāṇa*, body, etc., penetrated by the elixir of Consciousness, are thoroughly permeated [by it], they are [then] “digested” like the element of gold [is by mercury], by which the “liquefied essence” [of consciousness], their purifier, alone appears – then too it becomes the state Beyond the Fourth.

A very important addition, that perhaps indicates a development of Abhinavagupta’s thought (the ĪPv is his last dated work, completed in December of 1015 CE). Here a yogic version of the Fourth state can be developed into the state Beyond the Fourth. In the *turya* phase, we see the verb *√vidh* (penetrate⁸⁵⁹), and in the *turyātīta*, we have *abhini√viś*, which is here synonymous with *√vidh*, since *turyātīta* is really a further extension of *turya* (an extension indicated by the adverb *atyantam*, construing with *abhiniṣṭa*). To explain in more detail my understanding of this rather difficult passage, the process goes like this: having inundated/penetrated/infused (*√vidh*) the objective layers of selfhood with the elixir of one’s ultimate nature (*saṃvid-rasa*, autonomous dynamic consciousness), the “gold” hidden within them is extracted, i.e. their dependence on consciousness as their substrate is revealed,⁸⁶⁰ and thus (it may be implied) they become like gold (possibly in the sense of being soft, malleable, and radiant, like that consciousness). When those layers have become completely permeated/penetrated (*abhini√viś*), through, one presumes, further practice,⁸⁶¹ all trace of their objectivity is “worn away” or “digested” (*jīrṇa*) by the elixir. Our understanding of Abhinava’s vision of this process depends in part on grasping his use of an alchemical metaphor rooted in the complex and often ambiguous and even contradictory *rasāyana* (alchemy, proto-chemistry) theories of medieval India. In this I was fortunate to receive the helpful comments of Drs WUJASTYK and HOUBEN (of the Wellcome Institute and the Sorbonne respectively), who clarified that *jīrṇa* here stands in for *jāraṇa*, one of the sixteen *rasa-saṃskāras* (alchemical processes). *Jāraṇa*

śūnyādi-dehāntam) when what we want is a *sa*, because in the Fourth state, one transcends the objective layers of the self, rather than those layers losing their objectivity. To solve this problem, we could either emend *tat* to *sa* or we could emend *turyadaśā* to *turyātīta*-. The latter solution, tentatively proposed by TORELLA, seems to me to ignore the grammar that suggests two stages here (the first structured around the relative/correlative *yadā tu . . . tadā*, and the second around *yadāpi . . . tadāpi*); or rather, he sees the grammar (after his emendation) as referring not to two stages but to the two kinds of *turyātīta*, the *api* in *tadāpi* informing us that “this also is [another kind of] *turyātīta*.”

⁸⁵⁹ Note that the verb is here being used in a more precise sense than in the ĪPv passage, in which it means “transmute.” See also the extended discussion on *vedha-dīkṣā* in TĀ 29 (Appendix Two).

⁸⁶⁰ Cf. *Sarvajñānottara* 1.5: *tāmrasyaiva tu hematvam antarlīnaṃ yathā sthitam | antarlīnaṃ tathā jñeyaṃ śivatvaṃ pudgalasya tu.*

⁸⁶¹ In the present context, the nature of the yogic practice alluded to is very likely the proto-*kunḍalinī-yoga* that Utpaladeva outlines at ĪPK III.2.19-20 and which was presumably elaborated in the *vivṛti*. For Abhinava, such practice must be animated by *bhāvanā* to be truly effective.

can mean digestion, assimilation, or swallowing (in much the same sense that we speak of an acid “eating away” at a metal). Here the alchemical elixir of the metaphor is of course prepared mercury (*siddha-rasa*), which can indeed “digest” gold (the modern term is amalgamate).⁸⁶² That this is intended is confirmed by Abhinavagupta’s use of the compound *druta-rasa*, for according to Dr HOUBEN, “initially the mercury remains as fluid as before it started to ‘eat’ the gold etc. but at a certain point its viscosity increases significantly . . . [it] remains fluid or *druta* as long as it is not saturated.”⁸⁶³ Clearly, Abhinava wishes to emphasize that here this saturation does not occur, that this Consciousness is purely a catalyst (something that effects change but is not itself affected): it remains as it is, a dynamic “fluid” essence (*druta-rasa* = *cid-rasa*). First, then, in this alchemical vision, the mercury transmutes the base metal into gold,⁸⁶⁴ then “digests” or absorbs it without a perceptible trace (as can be seen in the chemistry video cited in n863).⁸⁶⁵ Though he does not explicitly say it, this must be the *vyatireka-turyātīta* foreshadowed above, as perhaps implied by the word *kevalam* in the passage. It is *vyatireka* in the sense of being now without the *saṃskāras* of *śūnyādi-dehānta*; what remains is only a single mass of awareness (*druta-rasa* [= *cid-ghana, eka-rasa*] *iva ābhāti kevalam*).

To summarize, if we are constituting and interpreting the text correctly, Abhinava has changed his view as follows: in the ĪPv, *turya* is a gnostic and transcendental state and *turyātīta* a immanent yogic one (exemplifying the Kaula model of transcendence followed by pervasion), with the alchemical metaphor denoting only the latter; whereas here in the ĪPvv, there is a gnostic version of *turya* -> *turyātīta* (in which *saṃskāras* are not dissolved) and a yogic version of the same (in which they are dissolved), both stages of the latter being described in terms of the alchemical metaphor. To be sure of this meaning, however, we would need to consult all available manuscripts for variant readings, which I plan to do in future but is beyond the scope of the present work.

But we have another problem with this reading: how to interpret the final term of the phrase *sa druta-rasa iva ābhāti kevalam tat-saṃskārah*. TORELLA (1994: 209 n35) seems to interpret it to mean that only the *saṃskāras* (impressions) of *śūnyādi-*

⁸⁶² This can be clearly seen in a video made by Dr Andrea SELLA (Dept. of Chemistry, University College London), who says in it “[In ancient times] mercury was absolutely essential . . . in extracting gold and purifying it. . . what gold can do is, it can actually dissolve in mercury” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKxCw889qck&feature=youtu.be>).

⁸⁶³ Email communication from Dr Jan E.M. HOUBEN, 7 July 2014.

⁸⁶⁴ Even though professional alchemists must have known that mercury actually extracts gold from a base metal, rather than magically transmutes that metal into gold, *vedha* is certainly used in the sense of transmute or transform – see the citations in n833, in one of which *vidh* is glossed with *parivṇam* (*Rasa-ratna-samuccaya-bodhinī* ad 8.95), as well as Arion ROȘU’s statement in his article “Yoga et alchimie” (*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1982, no. 132, p. 366), “la transsubstantiation [alchimique] du corps (*deha-vedha*) étant calquée sur la transmutation des métaux vils (*loha-vedha*).” He cites *Rasārṇava* 12.165-66 in support.

⁸⁶⁵ The reader who has German and wishes to know more about this arcane world of Indian alchemy is referred to Oliver HELLWIG’s *Wörterbuch der mittelalterlichen indischen Alchemie*, Groningen 2009 (supplements to eJIM.2).

dehāntam remain. However, that case was already specified for the first, gnostic *turyātīta* (*tadāpi ca śūnyādi-saṃskāro 'pi asti*, above), and if that were intended here we would have nothing to differentiate the two *turyātītas* described. Thus I take *tat-saṃskāraḥ* in apposition to *druta-rasaḥ*, in the meaning “the purification (or refinement, or even consecration) of that,” or as a *bahuvrīhi* meaning “their purifier,” the antecedent of the neuter pronoun *tat* being *śūnyādi-dehāntam* in either case. TORELLA argues (email, 10 July 2014) that the *saṃskāras* of *śūnyādi-dehāntam* cannot be entirely dissolved here because then there would be no possibility of *samāveśa*, since, consciousness having become a single unitary mass (*prakāśa-ghanam eva saṃvid-rūpam*, ĪPv III p. 330), there would be nothing that could enter or be entered (*kaḥ kutra kathaṃ samāviśet*, cited above). However, while Abhinava unambiguously says this with regard to the after-death state (*dehapāte tu eka-ghanā eva śivateti tadā samāveśādi-vyavahāro na kaścīd*, ĪPv III p. 328) I am not sure that he thinks going beyond *samāveśa* is impossible while alive, and there is evidence to suggest that does regard it as possible. That evidence is found a little further on in the ĪPv (vol. III p. 348), in his commentary on ĪPK III.2.19, where he recaps his earlier discussion (our most recent passage above) but also adds new information:

ahamity eka-rasena anuvēdhe tu, yadā idantā ācchādītā bhavati, bhāvanā-sātmyād īśvara-sadāśiva-saṃvidi iva turya-daśāyāṃ rasa-viddha-tāmra-kanaka-nyāyena, yadā vā sarvathaiva pradhvaṃsitā vidrāvītā vā bhavati turyātīta-daśāyāṃ śākta-saṃvidi iva tan-nija-rūpa-samyag-viddha-kanaka-rūpatātyanta-jaraṇāpādita-tat-saṃskāra-vaśa-pītatā⁸⁶⁶-avaśeṣa-vidruta-rasanyāyena; tadā pūrṇa-svātantryollāsa eva deha eva sati api . . . |

In the [process of] transmutation by the “one taste” that is [the fundamental] “I”, when a) objectivity is covered, i.e. in the Fourth state [that arises] due to becoming habituated to meditative contemplation [on reality] and in which one possesses the consciousness of Īśvara or Sadāśiva as it were, according to the maxim of gold [arising] from copper due to being penetrated by mercury,⁸⁶⁷ or when b) [objectivity] is

⁸⁶⁶ *pītatā* conj. em. RATIÉ : *pītalatā* Ed. Another possibility is to not emend the text, and take it instead to be speaking of the digestion/dissolution of the brass or copper (*pītala*) that remains after gold has been extracted from it. This has not been adopted on the assumption that the present passage recaps that translated above on p. 332f. Also, I presume that Abhinavagupta not being himself an alchemist, he viewed the process of *vedha* as one of transmutation more than extraction—and if it is the former, there would be no brass (or copper) left to digest. Further, the metaphor of transmutation suits his purposes better.

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. TĀ 5.151: *svayaṃ-bhāsātmanānena tādātmyaṃ yāty ananya-dhīḥ | śivena hematāṃ yadvat tāmraṃ sūtena vedhitam ||* and TĀ 14.12 (thanks to Isabelle RATIÉ for these references), and Yogarāja’s comm. ad *Paramārthasāra* 96, a verse on *anupāya* and *atitīvra-śaktipāta*, the effect of which is compared by the commentator to alchemical transformation by means of *siddharasa* (*yathā tāmra-dravyaṃ siddharasa-pātāt suvarṇibhavati | . . . [later the aspirant is referred to as] anugraha-śakti-viddha-hṛdayasya*, “one whose heart has been penetrated/transmuted by the power of grace [i.e., *śaktipāta*]”). The same terminology is used with reference to *dikṣā*, e.g. in the *Kulārṇava-tantra* (14.89): *rasendreṇa yathā viddha-mayaḥ suvarṇatām vrajet | dikṣā-viddhas tathā hy ātmā śivatvaṃ labhate priye ||*, “Just as [a metal] penetrated/transmuted by mercury becomes gold, even so a soul penetrated/transmuted by initiation becomes divine.” Cf. also

completely destroyed or “liquefied,” i.e. in the state Beyond the Fourth in which consciousness attains the level of Śakti-tattva, according to the maxim of liquid mercury thoroughly digesting the gold that remains— i.e. the power of the impression(s) of that [objectivity that remains]— which has the form of gold due to having been well penetrated by the innate form of that [“I”/rasa], then c) there is simply the delightful blossoming of full autonomy, even while the body exists.

This passage features a piling on of parenthetical phrases that is rather easier to understand in the Sanskrit than in literal English translation;⁸⁶⁸ the basic structure here is “when a) or b), then c).” Several things come clear from this paragraph. First, if our translation is correct, it corroborates our reading of the previous alchemical passage. Second, it confirms that the *saṃskāras* are indeed “thoroughly digested” in the state Beyond the Fourth (*atyanta-jaraṇāpādita-tat-saṃskāra-*), and that this can occur with the body still existing (*deha eva sati api*). But “thoroughly digested” does not mean “entirely destroyed” if Abhinavagupta is holding strictly to the terms of his metaphor, for when mercury absorbs gold leaf such that the gold is entirely dissolved and thus completely invisible, it is in fact still present in the mercury and can be retrieved by evaporating the latter in a retort. Thus Prof. TORELLA can well be correct in arguing that a subtle trace of the *saṃskāras* (which are themselves subtle traces) can remain in the *turyātīta-dasā*. What certainly is entirely dispelled or dissolved (*sarvathaiva pradhvaṃsitā vidrāvītā vā*) in that state is *objectivity*, which was only “covered” (*ācchādītā*) by subjectivity in the *turya* state. Thus, according to the Pratyabhijñā schema, the stabilization of *turya* means achieving the *īśvara-* or *sadāśiva-tattva* (depending on the degree of “covering”) and entering *turyātīta* means reaching the *śakti-tattva*. In either case the result is the “delightful blossoming of full autonomy” (*pūrṇa-svātantryollāsa*), i.e. liberation.

GOODALL 2004: 402 n904: “The conception that gold can be created out of copper with an alchemical preparation is, as Dr. ISAACSON has pointed out to me, commonly used in tantras as an image for the irreversible transformation that takes place in *dīkṣā*. See, e.g., *Kiraṇa* 59.36c-38b . . . And cf. *Sarvajñānottara* 1.6 (Devakoṭṭai ed.): *rasa-viddhaṃ yathā tāmraṃ hematvaṃ pratipadyate | tathātmā jñāna-sambandhāt śivatvaṃ pratipadyate ||*. Cf. also *Hara-vijaya* 6.137 . . . In his commentary thereon Alaka cites the following verse: *rasa-ghṛṣṭaṃ yathā tāmraṃ na bhūyas tāmratāṃ vrajet | evaṃ yuktaḥ śivatvena na bhūyaḥ paśutām vrajet. . .* [and] in Buddhist tantric texts: verse 51 of the *Citta-viśuddhi-prakarāṇa* attributed to Āryadeva . . . and a verse cited in Vajragarbha’s commentary on the *Hevajra-tantra* . . . With this last verse cf. *Kubjikā-mata-tantra* 3.104 and *Sekoddeśa* 134. In the transmission of these various works we find the compounds *rasasiddha*, *rasaviddha*, *rasasikta*, and *rasaghrṣṭa*.” NB the meaning of the verse cited in Alaka’s commentary: “Just as copper rubbed with mercury [becomes gold and] does not again become copper, in the same way one united with Divinity (*śivatva*) does not again become a bound soul” (my translation). GOODALL informs me (email, 13 July 2014) that the *Sarvajñānottara* verse cited in this footnote is the most typical form of the maxim.

⁸⁶⁸ And I wonder if the largely redundant first part of the long compound—*tan-nija-rūpa-samyag-viddha-kanaka-rūpatā*—might have been a marginal annotation in a MS that got incorporated into the main text. However, it is probably more likely that Abhinava is here incorporating language that Utpala used in his lost *vivṛti*, as he tends to repeat Utpala’s compounds with added glosses.

Before summarizing all that we have learned about *turya*- and *turyātīta-dasā*, which are here said to be forms of *samāveśa*, let us return to our primary textual passage (ĪPv ad ĪPK III.2.12). What more data of significance can we retrieve from it? In this question we are hampered by the fact that the ĪPv is a commentary on a commentary (Utpala’s *vivṛti* or *ṭikā*) which is now lost. Therefore, when Abhinava engages in a close *vṛtti*-style reading of that text (as he does on KSTS pp. 330-1 of our passage) it can be hard to grasp what he is saying without access to the original.⁸⁶⁹ However, two rather important tidbits emerge from this section. First, he again returns to the issue of the gnostic vs. the yogic *turyātītas*, elliptically distinguishing them as follows (p. 331):

*turya iti etad-dasā-samāpatti-paryanta-rūpā api turyātītātā tatraiva uktā,
vyatirekeṇa tu śūnyāder avasthāpane bodhasya turyātītātā tatraiva uktā
śuddhātmatā niṣkalatā śuddha-caitanyam iti sāmānya-darśaneṣu
sarvottīrṇaika-tadrūpa-vedakeṣu darśiteti sūcayati |*

The *turyātīta* taught [above] with reference to that [blossoming of insight⁸⁷⁰] is simply the [further] extension of the realization of the [gnostic] state called *turya*. But that *turyātīta* is a state of awareness in which Void etc. remain, but is separated from them.⁸⁷¹ This is the state referred to as “the pure Self,” “the Formless,” and “pure consciousness” in the Saiddhāntika scriptures. It is taught with reference to those who know the Deity⁸⁷² solely as [being] all-transcendent; so [Utpaladeva] indicates [in his *vivṛti*].

Thus the alchemical-cum-yogic *turyātīta* that we have been discussing at length is contrasted with the one first presented (p. 331f above), in which there is no transformation of the layers of limited selfhood but rather transcendence of them. The transcendentalist view (*viśvottīrṇa-darśana*) of the Saiddhāntikas is criticized by Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja, since as nondualists they wish to reconcile it with the Kaula immanentist view (*viśvarūpa-darśana*). (Kṣemarāja famously defines his lineage as that which holds the view that the Divine is simultaneously transcendent of all and immanent in all.⁸⁷³) Now, the since the transcendental *turyātīta* is

⁸⁶⁹ As Isabelle RATIÉ (an accomplished French scholar specializing in the Pratyabhijñā) wrote to me (informally), “there is much in the ĪPv that does not make sense to us simply because we don’t have the *mūla*-text (compare for instance ĪPv ad ĪPK 1.3.6 to 1.5.3 with the *vivṛti* fragments now at our disposal thanks to Raffaele TORELLA’s editions . . . So much that sounded like gibberish before makes sense now.” (email, 13 July 2014).

⁸⁷⁰ From the previous line: *jñānollāsa iti ajñāna-vigamād advaya-bodha-prasaraṇād ullāsa iti*.

⁸⁷¹ Exactly how to construe the grammar of this sentence is not clear to me, nor am I convinced that the text is secure. If we construe *vyatireka* as describing the type of *turyātīta* here (rather than simply functioning as an adverb), then we must adopt the emendation of *avyatireka* to *vyatireka* discussed in n855 above.

⁸⁷² For Abhinava’s use of *tadrūpa* to mean the Deity, see TĀ 1.173c-4b.

⁸⁷³ From ch. 8 of his *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam*: “The Tāntrikas (= Saiddhāntikas and other ritualists) hold that the reality of the Self is all-transcending. Those attached to traditions such as the Kula say it is all-embodying. Those who hold [our] viewpoint of the Trika and [the Krama] hold that it is [simultaneously] all-transcending and all-embodying” (*viśvottīrṇam ātma-tattvam iti*

identified with the *sāmānya-sāstra* (right-current Śaiva Siddhānta) above, we would expect the yogic-cum-alchemical *turyātīta* to be identified with the *viśeṣa-sāstra* (left-current Śākta streams),⁸⁷⁴ and such identification is found by TORELLA (1994: xxxiv n52) on the same page of the ĪPv as the passage just quoted, but to me the text is not so clear. Apparently glossing *viśeṣa-darśaneṣu* in Utpala’s lost *vivṛti*, Abhinava says (p. 331): “The specialized Views are those which predominantly teach the nonduality of Power [and consciousness]; they are superior (*viśeṣa*) because they teach the Power-characteristics of the Self, [and thereby] lead one to the direct experience [of that]” (*viśeṣa-darśaneṣu iti śāktādvaita-pradhāneṣu, viśeṣaḥ śakti-lakṣaṇa ātmano darśyate sāksātkāraṃ nīyate yeṣu*). There is no direct correlation with the second, yogic *turyātīta*, but perhaps we can assume it because the power element of the self (*vaibhavādi*) is repeatedly stressed in connection with that *turyātīta*.

Now we can summarize all that we have learned about these two states of immersion (*sā iyaṃ dvayī api daśā samāveśo*, p. 328). They are two, not three or four, because though there are two *turyātītas*, they are effectively the same state (highest liberation) reached by different means. The primary distinction Abhinava wishes to make is that *turya* -> *turyātīta* #1 constitutes an active entry/immersion into one’s ultimate nature (*cidānanda, prakāśa-ghana, ekarasa, ahaṃbhāva, satya-svarūpa*) and *turya* -> *turyātīta* #2 denotes the “passive” process by which the various layers of selfhood are permeated by that ultimate I-sense (it is passive only in the grammatical sense, for the yogic process involves considerably more work). This distinction is summed up as *āveśyāveśaka-bhāvaḥ* (p. 331). Since the yogic process is a gradual one, differences are noted between *turya* and *turyātīta*, whereas the gnostic *turyātīta* is said to be identical in nature (though presumably not in degree) to the *turya* that precedes it (*turyatā . . . turyātīta-samatā*). Now to summarize the data from the last twenty-odd pages in a tabular form (items in parentheses are not explicit in the text):

Turyātīta 1	Turyātīta 2
gnostic (realization)	yogic (practice)
sudden	gradual
<i>āveśaka</i>	<i>āveśya</i>
knowables transcended	knowables transmuted
(objectivity transcended)	objectivity dissolved
	(objectivity covered in the <i>turya</i> stage)
avyatireka (?)	(vyatireka)
(Śiva-tattva)	Śakti-tattva
	(Īśvara- or Sadāśiva-tattva in <i>turya</i> ⁸⁷⁵)

tāntrikāḥ, viśva-mayam iti kulādy-āmnāya-niviṣṭāḥ, viśvottirṇaṃ viśvamayaṃ ca iti trikādi-darśana-vidāḥ).

⁸⁷⁴ See p. 72 *supra* for this division.

⁸⁷⁵ Note that the ĪPK itself (III.2.20) lists the levels of *turya*-attainment as those of the Vijñānākalas (= level of Mahāmāyā, just outside the *śuddhādhvan* and therefore not yet liberated), Mantras (= *śuddhavidyā-tattva*, lowest level of liberation), and Īśvara; but Abhinava takes *mantrēśa* in that verse to refer to the Mantra-lords of Īśvara-tattva, then reads *-īśa* a second time, taking it to refer Lord Sadāśiva (TORELLA 1994: 208 n33). Here he is making the correlation correspond to what is found in Trika scripture: the MVT teaches that “the

qualities of the Self:
vyāpaka, nitya
(emptiness)
sāmānya-darśanas

qualities of the Self:
vaibhava, aiśvarya
fullness
(*viśeṣa-darśanas*)

Table 11. Turyā and Turyātīta in the ĪPv

We have seen that Abhinava’s style includes recapitulation of previous information with a little bit of new data. This happens again on p. 330 of the ĪPv, where he reviews the yogic-chemical *turya* -> *turyātīta* process (#2 in the table), but adds something surprising:

yadā tu dehādeḥ kiṃ tattvam iti cintopakramaṃ prakāśa-ghanam eva saṃvid-rūpam iti, tadā bodha-svarūpikṛtaṃ tad-rasānuviddham eva śūnyādi-dehāntam avabhātīti abhyāsāt tasya saṃvid-dharmāḥ śakti-viśeṣāḥ samyag āviśanto vibhūtīr uthāpayanti. anabhyāse ‘pi tu tat-kṣaṇāveśa eva ānandodbhava-kampa-nidrā-vyāpti-rūpa-ghūrṇy-āvirbhāvana-kramaṇa jīvanmuktatā-lābhaḥ |
When one begins to contemplate “What is the reality of the body etc.?” [and subsequently realizes] “it is simply a form of awareness, replete with the Light of Consciousness,” then those [levels] from the Void to the body manifest as [they really are,] having awareness as their essence, i.e. they are transmuted by the elixir of that [awareness]. Thus, due to practicing [this insight], the qualities of His/one’s consciousness, which are aspects of *śakti*, fully permeate [those levels], causing the [various] powers (*vibhūti*) to arise. But even without practice, in the [rare] case of an instantaneous immersion into That, one may obtain the state of liberation-in-life through the process of the direct experience of [the Five States]: Bliss, Ascent, Trembling, Sleep, and “Whirling” which means Pervasion.

Here we see some crucial evidence that the distinction between yogic and gnostic is not as clear-cut in this context as it is in the brāhmanical tradition. For the process we have been calling yogic-chemical begins, we are told, with a contemplation (*cintā*) on the nature of reality, leading to a realization that entails a spiritual transformation metaphorically described as alchemical transmutation (*turya* stage), which then needs to be stabilized with practice such that the qualities of this deeper awareness (e.g., *svātantrya-śakti*) come to permeate or infuse (*samāvīś*) all the layers of limited selfhood (*turyātīta* stage). The paragraph serves as an explanation of *tat-śakti-samāveśa* in Utpala’s *vṛtti* on III.2.12; the bolded words in the Sanskrit above are the ones that correspond to that compound. Incidentally, this paragraph confirms for us that Abhinava sees *samāvīś* (= *atyantam abhiniṅviś* in the previous iteration of the alchemical metaphor) as denoting the further development of the process first denoted by *vīdh*. It is interesting to note the gnostic elements he describes as part of the yogic process here, but even more surprising is the last sentence, which describes the gnostic realization attained without spiritual practice (*turyātīta* #1) as

Mantras, Mantreśas and Mantramahēśvaras occupy the Fourth state” and “Śakti and Śiva exist in the state Beyond the Fourth” (2.28c-29b, trans. VASUDEVA 2004: 209-10).

comprising five levels of spiritual experience (the *pañcāvasthā* or Five States that we have seen repeatedly in the scriptural register). This emphasis on direct experience (*āvīrbhāvana*) demonstrates that Abhinava’s understanding of the path of the *jñānī* is not one of intellectual or conceptual realization, but rather one of insights into the nature of reality so powerful that they spontaneously bring on psychophysical experiences. Curiously, he uses the phrase “instantaneous immersion” or *kṣaṇāveśa* in describing gnostic realization, but then immediately follows it with the term *krama*, denoting a sequential process of passing through the Five States! So perhaps we are to understand *kṣaṇāveśa* as denoting spontaneity here, rather than a sudden realization that is complete. I would hypothesize that Abhinava is saying that each of the Five States is (or can be) an example of *kṣaṇāveśa*; even though there is a process, it unfolds spontaneously in connection with the *jñānī*’s contemplation of reality. Nor are we to take the phrase “without practice” (*anabhyāsa*) literally: Abhinava is here referring to his category of *anupāya*, which as he explains in TĀ 2 and TS 2, entails very little practice (*alpoṣāya*) and none of the yogic sort. We will return to the matter of the Five States in the next section.

To close this section, I will briefly discuss the interesting ambiguities and difficulties of these sections of the ĪPv and ĪPvv (apart from those already discussed in the footnotes). The first problem is the one raised (but not discussed) by TORELLA (1994: xxxv n52), who tells us that Abhinavagupta’s inclinations lie towards *turyātīta* #2 (the yogic-alchemical one). This seems evident from the passages we have translated here, but on the other hand it is surprising, because in general Abhinava tends to privilege the gnostic over the yogic in his work. Perhaps the context of a clearly liberation-focused yoga outlined in ĪPK III.2.19-20 allows him to endorse a term that otherwise so commonly denotes the pursuit of *siddhi* and *bhoga* in the Śaiva literature. But we have another problem: the implication in these passages is that *turyātīta* #1 reaches the Śiva-tattva, while #2 explicitly reaches the Śakti-tattva. Since the term *turyātīta* refers to the highest liberation where only the absolute “I” remains, and in the tattva-system that attainment is identified only with the top two tattvas, *turyātīta* #1 must be the Śiva-tattva, which also matches its transcendent nature (the Śiva of tattva #1 is often called *Anāśrita-śiva*⁸⁷⁶). It doesn’t seem altogether likely that Abhinavagupta would favor an attainment that reached only to tattva #2 (Śakti). However, he may have held the view explicitly articulated by his successor Kṣemarāja, i.e. that Śiva and Śakti “take turns” being tattva #1, or rather, that there is no reality to hierarchy with regard to Śiva/Śakti, they being two aspects of one reality, one or the other of them being more prominent in the liberated experience at any given moment. In other words, Abhinava may have held the view that since Śiva and Śakti are in fact inseparable except heuristically, to attain one is to attain the other.

The other issue with these passages (as well as many previous ones we have looked at) is a philosophical one, not yet addressed by any scholar as far as I know. To state it as clearly as I can, it revolves around the question of who is the agent of the various verbs used here, most especially *√viś*. For example, when it is said that “there is an entry into one’s true nature,” who or what is the agent of that entry,

⁸⁷⁶ E.g., in *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam* chapters 4 and 5.

since the *svarūpa* that is entered is the only real source of both awareness and agency? This problem is not glaringly obvious because of the nature of the Sanskrit language, in which nouns or pronouns denoting the agent can be omitted entirely, the verb conjugation itself communicating a generic third-person agent. The frequent use of the passive further obscures agency. Even when a first-person active verb is used, for example when Kṣemarāja glosses *namas* or *naumi* as *samāviśāmi*, the problem is still evident: what exactly is the “I” that enters? Obviously it cannot be mind, body, etc. (since they have no agency of their own), nor can it be *cit*, for it would make no sense to say that consciousness, which is undivided, enters into itself. Two possible solutions occur. First, that what enters the Self (or is entered by the Deity) is a kind of “locus of identity” or *ahaṃbhāva*. But Abhinava seems to use this term in the passages we have considered to mean the *true* I-sense, the Self-that-is-awareness. The second and more likely solution is that this language of entry is purely metaphorical, derived from the phenomenology of the experience it denotes (i.e., what it *feels like* to have that experience), and that in actuality there is no entry: the true “I” simply realizes itself or wakes up to itself. It seems likely to me that Abhinava addresses this question explicitly somewhere in his vast body of work, and I simply have not yet come across it.

This concludes our study of the ĪPv, but the next passage we consider (briefly) is directly related.

2.5.4.f Samāveśa and turya in Tantrāloka 10

The estimable book by Somadeva VASUDEVA, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottara-tantra*, alerted me to Abhinavagupta’s discussion of *turya* and *turyātīta* in *Tantrāloka* 10.264-84. Though this passage is not directly a commentary on the ĪPK (being instead a commentary on the phenomenological categories of MVT ch. 2 and *passim*), it clearly has in mind Utpaladeva’s phrase *tat-śakti-samāveśa* in the *vṛtti* on ĪPK III.2.12 and very likely also alludes to his lost *vivṛti* on the same.⁸⁷⁷ For *Tantrāloka* 10.265 informs us that *turya* is in fact *śakti-samāveśa!*⁸⁷⁸ (This seems to imply that *turyātīta* is *śiva-samāveśa*, which could match the ĪPv account but not the ĪPv; again, perhaps Abhinava changed his view between the two.) Abhinava goes on to subdivide this *śakti-samāveśa* into four stages, corresponding to the four epistemological categories of knower, knowing, known and the autonomous pure awareness which is the source and ground and coherence of the previous three (VASUDEVA 2004: 230).⁸⁷⁹ When immersion into this *parā saṃvit* is only proximate (*tat-*

⁸⁷⁷ This supposition receives support from the fact that Abhinava explicitly comments on ĪPK III.2.15-17 further on in the same chapter (TĀ 10).

⁸⁷⁸ *pūrṇatāgamanaunmukhyam audāsīnyāt paricyutiḥ | tat turyam ucyate śakti-samāveśo hy asau mataḥ ||*, paraphrased by VASUDEVA (2004: 229) as “In the fourth state . . . knowable entities appear as awareness on the verge of reaching plenitude because [the] indifference [that characterized the third state of deep sleep] is abating. Abhinavagupta further identifies this state as an immersion into Śakti.”

⁸⁷⁹ For the fourth category of pure awareness, see TĀ 10.269: *pramāṭṛtā svatantratva-rūpā seyaṃ prakāśate | saṃvit turīya-rūpaivaṃ prakāśātmā svayaṃ ca sā ||* and Jayaratha ad loc.: *parā saṃvid evaṃ aṃśa-trayottīrṇā . . . svātantrya-mayī para-pramāṭṛtā . . . sā hi para-pramāṭṛ-rūpā śuddhā saṃvit svayaṃ prakāśate na tu paśyāmītyādi-vikalpollekha-bhūmiḥ*. That there are four epistemological

samāveśa-naikatyaṭ), object-consciousness is dominant (TĀ 10.270d-71a). When there is contact (lit., “coloring”⁸⁸⁰) by this immersion, the process or faculties of knowing are dominant (*tat-samāveśoparāgān mānatvam*, 270cd). In identification with this immersion, the state of the knower becomes clear (*tat-samāveśa-tādātmye mātrtvam bhavati sphuṭam*, 270ab). Beyond this, in the state of the so-called pure awareness in which all three previous categories have perfectly fused, in which there is perception but no sense of a separate perceiver or perceived (see n880) the Light of Consciousness is self-manifest and we cannot speak of an immersion except metaphorically (10.269). This helps us understand that the movement into the transcendent Fourth State can indeed happen in stages, the first three of which (*prameya*, *pramāṇa*, *pramātr*) are an expression of Her grace (*trayaṃ tat tad-anugrahāt*, 270b). We can infer that speaking of grace is meaningless in the fourth stage, where there is no duality (though the ĪPv and vv accounts tell us that there are still *saṃskāras* of duality at this stage). It is interesting that here Abhinava clearly states that even everyday object-consciousness occurs due to *śakti*’s grace (cf. 10.277a), and implies it is possible only due to proximity to immersion in Her; this corresponds, at least roughly, to the *Śiva-dṛṣṭi* (and commentary) passage we have seen, in which embodied consciousness of any kind is an example of *samāveśa*.

Abhinava then defines *turyātīta* at 10.278: “that [state] whose beautiful nature is full and undivided, overflowing with joy, is called Beyond the Fourth; that alone is the supreme state” (*yat tu pūrṇānavacchinna-vapur ānanda-nirbharam | turyātītaṃ tu tat prāhus tad eva paramaṃ padam*⁸⁸¹). His discussion goes on, but it reaches beyond the purview of the present work.

2.5.4.g The Five States in TS 5 and TĀ 5

This section presents material in which all the categories we have discussed—(*sa*)*māveśa*, *śaktipāta*, *vedha*, *dikṣā*, and *sākṣātkāra*—finally come together in a more or less coherent way. Above (p. 339) we saw the reappearance of the Five States that we encountered repeatedly in the scriptural materials.⁸⁸² These five palpable-cum-mystical experiences—Bliss, Ascent, Trembling, Yogic Sleep, and Whirling—are clearly important to the Kaula tradition, so much so that Abhinava asserted that even the *jñānī* (let alone the yogī) experiences them as a result of the power of his insights. Indeed, Abhinava implies that they are requisite experiences along the path. They are clearly connected to the categories of *āveśa* and *vedha* in the scriptural register, but they remained largely undefined. To understand them better, we turn to Abhinava’s discussion of them in three places: *Tantrasāra* chapter 5, *Tantrāloka* chapter 5, and *Tantrāloka* chapter 29. In studying the place of these Five

categories, not three, is due to the influence of the Krama, in which Kālī is identified with the fourth. Abhinavagupta’s theology is a Trika-Krama synthesis.

⁸⁸⁰ *Uparāga* seems a strange word to use here; its commonest use is “eclipse” or “affliction”—perhaps we should emend to *upayoga*.

⁸⁸¹ Or we could take *pūrṇānavacchinna-vapur* as a *bahuvrihi* meaning “in which every beautiful embodiment is full and unlimited,” the implication being that every part is now experienced as containing the whole (*akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalākāram*).

⁸⁸² MVT 11.35, ŪKA 2.232, and CMSS 9.42 have the exact set of five Abhinava presents; TU 4.8 has two of the five.

States in these three sources, one falls down a rabbit hole as it were, and discovers a web of connections that interlinks every layer of the tradition in a complex intertextuality. At the heart of this web, at least in Abhinava’s understanding of it, there is a fundamental pattern that organizes all the endless detail of this baroque tradition such that it appears not only coherent but even transparent, as various expressions of that fundamental pattern. Whether the present writer has grasped that pattern is for the reader to judge as we continue.

In TS 5, Abhinava presents a “gnosticized” version of the *uccāra* practice that is central to most forms of daily Tantric yoga-sādhanā. He specifically gives us a *prāṇoccāra* practice, although he briefly alludes to the related and more common *mantroccāra* practice. The complex details of the *prāṇoccāra* practice need not concern us here,⁸⁸³ but we can summarize the key homologies that are organized in a fascinating piece of hermeneutic synthesis in this chapter (see Table 12), homologies that include the Five States and the five phases of lucidity (including *turya* and *turyātīta*). In this hermeneutic, Abhinava is pursuing two key goals: 1) the reconciliation of diverse categories presented in different scriptures, in order to demonstrate a unitary vision at the scriptural level (which did not really exist); and 2) the reconciliation of the apparently opposed yogic and gnostic paths. We are told that synthesizing one’s (scripturally-determined) spiritual understanding with the stages of yogic practice will quickly purify and refine one’s mental model of reality (...*anusamdadhat vikalpaṃ saṃskuryāt āsu*, TS 5.21), such that it corresponds sufficiently closely to reality so as to no longer pose an obstacle to direct experience. This exemplifies Abhinava’s vision of the path in terms of the three *upāyas*, whereby *āṇavopāya* (= *kriyopāya* = yoga) collapses into *śaktopāya* (= *jñānopāya* = *vikalpa-saṃskāra*), which itself dissolves into *śāmbhavopāya*, the direct means (*icchā/pratibhā*). This too is what Abhinava meant when he stressed that the most important quality of a guru is that he has *practiced* his knowledge well (*tasmāt svabhyasta-vijñānataivaikaṃ guru-lakṣaṇam*, TĀ 13.333ab), for of course a guru must be versed in all the *upāyas* for the sake of his disciples; even if he did not need the *āṇava*- and *śāktopāya*, they apply to the great majority of aspirants.

<u>Prāṇa</u>	<u>Phase of Lucidity</u>	<u>Mystic Exp.</u>	<u>Subtle Center</u>
prāṇa	Waking	Bliss	Trikoṇa ⁸⁸⁴
apāna	Dreaming	Ascent	Kanda ⁸⁸⁵
samāna	Deep sleep	Trembling	Heart ⁸⁸⁶
udāna	Fourth	Yogic Sleep	Palate ⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸³ They are covered in my 2003 U.C. Berkeley M.A. thesis, which is being thoroughly revised and expanded for publication.

⁸⁸⁴ Note that *prāṇa* means exhale in classical Tantra. This row is also associated with the solar right channel (*piṅgalā nāḍī*), *śṛṣṭi* (creation), and the sense-faculties (*pramāṇa*).

⁸⁸⁵ Note that *apāna* means inhale in classical Tantra. This row is also associated with the lunar left channel (*iḍā nāḍī*), *saṃhāra* (dissolution), and object-consciousness (*prameya*).

⁸⁸⁶ This row is also associated with repose in the central channel (*suṣumnā nāḍī*), *sthiti* (stasis), and fusion of *pramāṇa* and *prameya*.

⁸⁸⁷ This row is also associated with rising like fire up the central channel, and subject-consciousness (*pramātr*).

Table 12. Homologies in Tantrasāra 5

These are not all the associations that Abhinava makes; most of the rest are listed in the footnotes. Altogether he homologizes nine categorical lists in TS/TĀ 5: the five *prāṇa-vāyus*, the five phases of lucidity (*jāgradādi*), the Kaula Five States (*ānandādi*), the five *cakras* of the Trika, the Five Acts (*śṛṣṭyādi*), the four epistemological categories (*prameyādi*), the three primary channels of the subtle body, the six levels of bliss (*nijānandādi*), and the Pratyabhijñā's five layers of selfhood (*dehādi*). The five elements (*pañca-mahābhūta*) are implicit in the *cakra* list, making ten homologized categories in total. Nor are these homologies entirely Abhinava's invention, for just enough of them are found in the scriptural materials to make his schema plausible. Indeed, his task is made harder by having to respect the various scriptural associations while filling out the schema. But what is most astonishing is that Abhinava makes it all make sense, in masterful exegesis we cannot cover in full here. We will simply examine the presentation of the Five States and their connection to the five phases of lucidity and the five *cakras* in TS 5.

viśrāntiṣu pratyekaṃ pañcāvasthā bhavanti, praveśa-tāratamyāt | tatra prāg ānandaḥ pūrṇatāṃśa-sparśāt, tata udbhavaḥ kṣaṇaṃ niḥsarīratāyāṃ rūḍheḥ, tataḥ kampaḥ svabalākrāntau deha-tādātmya-śaithilyāt, tato nidrā bahirmukhatva-vilayāt | ittham anātmani ātma-bhāve līne svātmanaḥ sarvamayatvāt ātmani anātma-bhāvo viliyate iti ato ghūrṇiḥ mahāvīḍyāpti-udayāt | tā etā jāgradādi-bhūmayaḥ turyātītāntāḥ | etās ca bhūmayaḥ trikoṇa-kanda-hṛt-tālūrdhva-kuṇḍalinī-cakra-praveśe bhavanti⁸⁸⁹

Corresponding to each of these states of grounded repose [in the five *prāṇas*], there are Five States, due to there being a hierarchy of degrees of [mystical] penetration (*praveśa*). Of these, the first is Bliss, which occurs due to touching an aspect of [divine] Fullness. Next is Ascent, due to attaining bodilessness for a moment. Then, Trembling, due to destabilization of body-identification upon being overcome by [the magnitude of] one's [inner] power. Then Yogic Sleep, due to dissolving the extroversive movement. Thus [through this process] one ceases to attribute selfhood to what is not the self (i.e., *dehādi*); [but] because the true self [in fact] comprises all things, subsequently the feeling of [anything] not being the self is dissolved (*svātmanaḥ sarvamayatvāt ātmani anātmabhāvo viliyate*), from which [experience] there occurs [the state called] Whirling, due to the arising of the Great Pervasion [of all things by the one Self]. These [five states] are [associated with] the levels [of awareness] from the waking state to Beyond the Fourth. These levels are [experienced] when one enters (*praveśa*) the subtle centers called the

⁸⁸⁸ This row corresponds to the attainment of highest liberation through centering in absolute consciousness (*pramiti*).

⁸⁸⁹ Lines 5.21-25 of the GRETIL etext.

Triangle (*mons pubis*), the Bulb [below the navel], the Heart, the Palate, and the Upper Kuṇḍalinī [respectively].

Much comes together for us in this passage. The Five States are given an explanation that subtly echoes Pratyabhijñā and Kālikula ideas. We see the former, for example, in the idea that one must penetrate the sensationless void (*śūnya*, = *nidrā*) to access the dynamic transindividual core of consciousness, and we see the latter in the pattern of “transcendence followed by pervasion” reflected in this *kramayoga*. He also engages in subtle rationalization here. For example, in this sophisticated exegetical register, readers might have been surprised to see Whirling (*ghūrṇi*) topping the hierarchy of mystic States, given its connotations of dizziness and head-spinning intoxication, and might have been inclined to see it as the lowest state,⁸⁹⁰ with Bliss as the highest (as even Jayaratha misreads it in his *viveka* ad TĀ 29.207-8). But Abhinava suggests, by associating Bliss with the Trikoṇa (genital area), that it refers to a bodily experience of pleasure, thus is appropriate as the lowest level. As for Whirling, he explains that one transcends and negates that which one formerly had wrongly identified as self—body, mind, etc.—then subsequently discovers, upon realizing one’s true nature as awareness, that it manifests as all things, including body etc., and thus he really is what he had previously negated as other: which, Abhinava implies, is enough to make anyone’s head spin! This is the master of *dhvani* (poetic suggestion, or the power of words in a particular arrangement to convey what they do not explicitly say) at work. But, he also implies, this Whirling is characteristic only of the onset (*udaya*) of the state of highest liberation, the Great Pervasion—here identified with *turyātīta*—in which *citi-śakti* is seen to permeate the whole of reality as its source and ground.

There is a close correspondence between this passage and the one from the scriptural CMSS (p. 214 above). To recap, in the CMSS we saw Bliss associated with the body level, the Leap occurred from expanding the *nābhi-cakra*, Trembling from melting the *marīci-cakra*, and Sleep and Whirling from becoming established within the void and beyond the void (the latter associated with breaking the *brahmāṇḍa*). Is Abhinava incorporating all known sources for the Five States into his schema, even if they are not central for him, or is the CMSS passage in fact based on the TS/TĀ passage (which is just possible)? Even if the latter, his homologies correspond to many other scattered scriptural passages: for example, at TU 4.8 trembling is specifically associated with the heart level, and at KMT 10.96, *ghūrmi* is associated with the highest state of *śāmbhavāveśa*.

But perhaps Abhinava’s subtlest hermeneutical move is associating these Five States with the five layers of selfhood that we are familiar with from the ĪPK. He does this with a very brief line in which he says, immediately before the passage translated above, “Having reposed in each of these levels of *uccāra*, one [finally] attains the highest quiescent Reality,⁸⁹¹ beyond those [levels of] body, *prāṇa*, [mind] and [void]” (*anyat tad-deha-prāṇādi-vyatiriktam viśrānti-tattvam āsādayati*). Clearly this implies that those levels correspond to the first four of the Five States, though he says so explicitly nowhere in the chapter (but note that he does make the

⁸⁹⁰ Even the word itself sounds a bit barbaric, being undoubtedly of non-Sanskrit origin.

⁸⁹¹ NB SANDERSON understands *anyad . . . viśrānti-tattvam* as “higher centeredness.”

connection explicit at TĀ 29.207-8, which we will see below). Thus we can present a revised version of Table 12, in which these associations are made explicit:

<u>Level of Self</u>	<u>Phase of Lucidity</u>	<u>Mystic State</u>	<u>Subtle Center</u>
Body	Waking	Bliss	Trikoṇa
Mind	Dreaming	Ascent	Kanda
Prāṇa	Deep sleep	Trembling	Heart
Void	Fourth	Yogic Sleep	Palate
Cit	Beyond the Fourth	Whirling	Upper Kuṇḍalinī

Table 12a. Suggested homologies in TS 5

In the parallel passage in TĀ 5, we get a little more information. The Five States are clearly depicted as a progressive transcendence of identification with the body etc.:

atra bhāvanayā dehaḡatopāyayaiḡ pare pathi || 100

vivikṣoḡ pūrṇatā-sparśāt prāḡ ānandaḡ prajāyate |

Here on the higher path, through meditation [and other] methods pertaining to the body [and subtle body] (= āṇavopāya), when one who seeks to enter [his true nature] touches the fullness [of his real nature], Bliss is the first [state] to arise.

tato 'pi vidyud-āpāta-sadrśe deha-varjite || 101

dhāmni kṣaṇam samāveśād udbhavaḡ prasphuṭam plutih |

Then, like a sudden strike of lightning, when one becomes [momentarily] free of the body due to a sudden immersion into the radiant abode [of the central channel], there is the Ascent, [also] known as the Leap.

jala-pāṃsu-vad abhyaṣta-saṃvid-dehaikya-hānitaḡ || 102

svabalākramaṇād deha-sāithilyāt kampam āpnuyāt |

Due to abandoning identification with the body through cultivated awareness, one is overcome by [the sense of] one's inner power, resulting in a relaxing of [identification with] the body, like [compacted] sand [dissolving] in water, due to which one attains the state of Trembling.

galite deha-tādātmya-niścaye 'ntarmukhatvataḡ || 103

nidrāyate purā yāvan na rūdhaḡ saṃvid-ātmani |

When one's conviction of identity with the body has melted away, due to turning within [in deep meditation], one "Sleeps" [in the Void], having not yet reached the Conscious Self.

tataḡ satya-pade rūdho viśvātmatvena saṃvidam || 104 ||

saṃvidan ghūrṇate ghūrṇir mahāvyāptir yataḡ smṛtā |

Then, attaining the True State, i.e. being aware of awareness as consisting of everything, one "Whirls." [The state of] Whirling is also known as the Great Pervasion.

I think we must understand *dehādi* for *deha* in all cases. The movement through the Five States is described in terms of the progressive dissolution and falling away of identification with body, mind, *prāṇa*, and *sūnya*, with the first of these emphasized

because it is the strongest. These Five States, we are told (5.107c-8b), are exactly those mentioned but not described at MVT 11.35. Abhinava goes on to clarify that

pradarśite 'sminn ānanda-prabhṛtau pañcake yadā || 108 ||

yogī viśet tadā tat-tac-cakreśatvaṃ haṭhād vrajet |

When a yogin should enter into these Five [States] beginning with Bliss taught here, he automatically attains the corresponding *cakra*.

yathā sarveśinā bodhenākrāntāpi tanuḥ kvacit || 109 ||

kiñcit-kartaṃ prabhavati cakṣuṣā rūpa-saṃvidam |

tathaiva cakre kutrāpi praveśāt ko'pi saṃbhavet || 110 ||

Just as the body is everywhere possessed (*ākrāntā*) by an awareness that is the sovereign of all, [yet] controls specific things, [such as producing] awareness of appearance by means of the visual faculty, in the very same way, due to entering a particular *cakra*, a particular [corresponding State] can arise.

And he lists the five *cakras* in 5.112, explicitly associating them with the Five States as seen in Table 12a; this time he credits the homology to the (unfortunately lost) *Triśiro-bhairava-tantra*. What is interesting here is that according to Abhinava, one may penetrate a particular *cakra*, triggering the corresponding Kaula State, or one may spontaneously experience the State, which causes the automatic attainment of the that *cakra*. This clearly foreshadows the concept of the rise of *kuṇḍalinī*, piercing each *cakra* as it goes, and giving rise to various experiences; a concept very important to the yogic tradition(s) of the second millennium.

Now we come to our penultimate key passage, one which connects our key terms more clearly, and tightly, than anything we have seen before.

2.5.4.h Śaktipāta, samāveśa, and the Five States in *Tantrāloka* 29

The reader will recall that these Five States occurred in the context of the MVT's chapter on Kaula initiation, in which we learned that they were understood as signs of (*sam*)*āveśa*, a connection explicitly reinforced by the TĀ 5 passage above. The TĀ 5 passage refers to not to the context of initiation but of post-initiatory practice, so we can be sure that these mystic states were spiritual experiences that could occur in different contexts, and were seen as significant whenever they occurred.

Abhinavagupta elaborates on the Kaula initiation ritual described in MVT 11 in the twenty-ninth chapter of his *Tantrāloka*, immediately after describing the infamous *kula-yāga* or Kaula sexual rite (ending with 29.187b). He quotes and paraphrases MVT 11.17-27 at 29.187c-197b (adding in the code for the secret mantra to be used⁸⁹²), ending with the verse (MVT 11.26c-27b) in which the guru is advised to gauge the degree of the initiand's *śaktipāta* (which, it should be noted, Jayaratha glosses as *śaktyāveśaḥ* here),⁸⁹³ at which point Abhinava adds this interesting detail:

⁸⁹² He supplements the main text by drawing on the (now lost) *Trika-kula-ratna-mālā*, which give the special *codanāstra* (impelling-weapon) mantra in code, which deciphered yields RĶṢRUAUṢ (192c-3b). Installing this on the disciple's hands impels them to rise to his head; this is the "spontaneous Hand of Śiva, that gives immediate evidence of its efficacy" (194).

⁸⁹³ In the commentary introducing TĀ 29.196.

“In the scripture preceded by the word *śrī* (the MVT), he is said to be (i.e. qualify as) a *samayin* by the [automatic or *śakti*-impelled] movement of the hand(s)” (*ity eṣa samayī proktaḥ śrī-pūrve kara-kampataḥ*, 197cd).⁸⁹⁴ Abhinava then teaches the most notorious Kaula ritual act (this is not found in the MVT):

carv eva vā gurur dadyād vāmāmṛta-pariplutam || 29.198cd

niḥśaṅkaṃ grahaṅc chakti-gotro māyōjjhito bhavet |

sakampas tv ādadānaḥ syāt samayī vācanādiṣu || 29.199

The Guru should give [the initiand] the ‘oblation’, submerged in the “nectar of the left” (i.e. wine). If he takes it without inhibition or hesitation (*niḥśaṅka*), he becomes a member of a clan of *śakti*, freed from the realm of differentiation (*māyā*). However, if he should tremble while receiving it, he [should remain] as an ordinary initiate (*samayin*), (and should take up a practice of) reciting and [hearing the scriptures].⁸⁹⁵

Is this a test by which one qualifies to proceed to the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, or is it an initiation in and of itself?⁸⁹⁶ The text is not clear. At any rate, Abhinava is here making the initiation rite more transgressive than what is found in the MVT, and grounding his interpretation in more radical Kaula scriptures.⁸⁹⁷ For Jayaratha clarifies in his commentary that the “oblation” (*caru*) here consists of the “Five Jewels” or small amounts of urine (*śivāmbu*), semen (*retas*), menstrual fluid (*rakta*), phlegm (*nālājya*), and feces (*viśvanirgama*),⁸⁹⁸ which explains why the candidate’s hand might tremble.⁸⁹⁹ If the initiand takes the chalice—in which these substances are immersed in wine—unhesitatingly, knowing the “oblation” to be nothing but a form of his own consciousness, it is taken to indicate that he has reached a level of awareness free of the artificial need to interpret the world through discursive, dualistic mental constructs (such as pure/impure and “should be done”/“should not be done”), and instead experiences the reality of a consciousness formed solely from the immediacy of direct perception (J: *sākṣātkr̥tāvikalpa-nirupāya-saṃvit-tattvaḥ*). In other words, unhesitatingly drinking the contents of the chalice is taken as a sign of *āveśa* (specifically, immersion into the reality of consciousness, *saṃvit-tattvāveśa*, though doubtless it was originally a sign of possession). That this is understood here is verified by Jayaratha’s introduction to the verse immediately following (201cd):

⁸⁹⁴ Here *kampa* = *stobha*, as verified by a citation immediately afterward from the *Bhogahasta*: *samayī tu kara-stobhāt* (198a), a pāda that Jayaratha says is also found in the *Kālikula-pañcāsikā*.

⁸⁹⁵ After some time, the next verse adds, if he protects and stays steady within his pledge (*samaya*), he will, through receiving *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, become a “receptacle of success,” as taught in the (lost) *Ānandēśvara* (*kālāntare 'dhva-saṃsuddhyā pālanāt samaya-sthiteḥ | siddhi-pātram iti śrīmad-ānandēśvara ucyate* ||, 29.200). Jayaratha ad loc. explains that such faithful adherence to his *samaya* over a period of time will be taken as evidence that a *tivra-śaktipāta* (!) has taken place (*tat-tac-chāstriya-samaya-paripālana-sūcita-tivra-śaktipātaḥ*).

⁸⁹⁶ In the Kāpālika/Somasiddhānta tradition of the Atimārga, one is initiated by the guru’s leftover (*ucchiṣṭa*) wine (as seen in the *Prabodha-candrodaya*).

⁸⁹⁷ He cites the *Bhogahasta*, a rescension of the ŪKA, at 29.198ab, and the *Ānandēśvara* at 29.200 (see previous two footnotes).

⁸⁹⁸ My understanding of three of these terms is indebted to SANDERSON (2005: 100-4 n63).

⁸⁹⁹ However, the *Mahānaya-prakāśa* says that only two of the Five Jewels is sufficient; but this text postdates Abhinavagupta.

“*samāveśa* is taught in all the scriptures unanimously” (*samāveśaḥ sarvaśāstreṣv avigānenoktaḥ*), by which, presumably, he means all the Kaula-influenced scriptures, several of which are cited in this passage.

The following verse (TĀ 29.201c-2b) cites another (alternative?) qualifying rite from the *Trika-kula-ratna-mālā*, which teaches that the guru should install the fifty phonemes of the activated *Mālinī* mantra, visualized as blazing with fire, all over the aspirant’s body in the appropriate sequence; the collapse or swoon of the aspirant indicates his qualification for *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*. This collapse is another sign of *samāveśa*, as indicated in Jayaratha’s commentary just mentioned. Perhaps uncomfortable with the connotations of possession here, Jayaratha is careful to specify that here the initiand is entering into the Power of Rudra (not the other way round), due to abandoning identification with the body etc. (*patatīti dehādy-ātma-graha-parihāreṇa rudra-śaktim evāviśatīty arthaḥ*). But in the original source, what is surely intended is the intense penetration of the initiand by *Mālinī* (= *rudra-śakti*⁹⁰⁰). We must understand that when we are dealing with two layers of commentary layered atop a scriptural source, a text-chronology spanning 500 years, we are seeing archaeological strata of meaning as it were, and as philologists we seek to understand each layer and its relationship to the others.

Abhinava then quotes and paraphrases MVT 11.29-34, which outlines the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* ceremony that the aspirant has qualified himself for (already translated *supra*), ending with the description of the Five States, and adding more information not found anywhere in the MVT (the second and third lines following):

anayā śodhyamānasya śiśos tivrādi-bhedataḥ |
śaktipātāc citi-vyoma-prāṇanāntar-bahis-tanūḥ || 29.207
āviśantī rudra-śaktiḥ kramāt sūte phalaṃ tv idam |
ānandam udbhavaṃ kampaṃ nidrāṃ ghūrṇiṃ ca dehaḡām || 29.208
 ‘As a result of a Descent of Power in one of its varieties such as intense,’
 the Power of Rudra enters the awareness, void-space, *prāṇa*, inner body,
 or outer body of the disciple being purified by Her, and gives rise to
 these results respectively: ‘Bliss, Ascent, Trembling, Yogic Sleep, and
 Whirling in the body.’

Here, then, the association of the Kaula Five States with the Pratyabhijñā’s layers of selfhood is explicit, while in the TS 5/TĀ 5 passages it was only implicit. Coherently assimilating two branches of the tradition that (textually at least) are polar opposites in terms of sophistication of philosophical thought is an audacious masterstroke that exhibits Abhinava’s whole synthetic exegetical strategy.

More importantly, though, we see here an immediate causal chain of *samaya-dīkṣā* -> *śaktipāta* -> *samāveśa* -> (one of the) Five States -> qualification for *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*. Specifically, due to the *śaktipāta* triggered by the basic *dīkṣā*,⁹⁰¹ there is a *rudra-*

⁹⁰⁰ To be more precise, *rudra-śakti* here signifies *Mālinī* enclosed by *Parā* (SAUḤ NA . . . PHA SAUḤ) (SANDERSON, personal communication).

⁹⁰¹ That Kaula *samaya-dīkṣā* triggers *śaktipāta* is clear from the MVT 11 account, and from Jayaratha’s comment ad TĀ 29.208: *evam asya dagdha-pāśasya śiṣyasya tivrā-tivrāc chaktipātāt citiṃ sākṣād ātmānam āviśantī rudra-śaktir* (*dagdha-pāśa* being an unambiguous periphrasis for *dīkṣita*).

śakti-(sam)āveśa on one or more of the five levels of selfhood (or in one of the five *cakras*),⁹⁰² and this penetration of spiritual power results in the visible manifestation of the corresponding *avasthā* (Bliss etc.), which qualifies one for the higher initiation.⁹⁰³ But here Abhinava is just parsing out the elements of what is really a single experience. The degree of *śaktipāta* explicitly corresponds to the level at which the *śakti* enters or penetrates, and the resulting State is simply the visible sign (*cihna*) of that penetration. The implication here is that only higher grades of *śaktipāta* result in *āveśa*. *Āveśa* qualifies the aspirant for *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, as clearly verified by Jayaratha,⁹⁰⁴ and we understand from the present passage that one or more of the Five States constitutes the necessary evidence (*pratyaya*) of that *āveśa*.

When I cited these verses in my 2007 article, I made the mistake of interpreting them according to Jayaratha’s commentary, which inverts the associations, relating Bliss with Awareness, Ascent with the void, Trembling with the *prāṇa*, Yogic Sleep with the inner body or *puryaṣṭaka*, and Whirling with the physical body. But we have seen in the TS 5 and TĀ 5 passages (see Table 12a) that it is the other way round, with Bliss the lowest of the five, associated with the body, and Whirling the highest, associated with *cit*. It seems incredible that Jayaratha should make this error, but I believe he was thrown off by the word *dehagām* construing with *ghūrṇim* in v. 208—he thought it signaled Whirling’s association with the body level. But the fact that Whirling, connected with awareness itself, should be felt also in the body is not contradictory for Abhinava, because Whirling is the sign of having reached *turyātīta*, and as we have seen, that highest state is not the most transcendent, but one that integrates the transcendent with the immanent. That Jayaratha is confused here is confirmed by his assertion that Whirling is the result of the lowest grade of *śaktipāta* (i.e., *manda-manda*) when in fact only the higher grades yield an *āveśa* of any kind. We have already seen that a lower-grade *śaktipāta* does not trigger any *āveśa* (MVT 11 and here in TĀ 29), and only the four highest grades result in liberation during or by the end of this life, with which attainment *āveśa* is invariably associated. Furthermore, Jayaratha himself says, a few lines further on, that a *manda-śaktipāta* does not give rise to an *āveśa*, and thus none of these (five) signs will appear!⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰² See the quote in the previous note.

⁹⁰³ Jayaratha adds (ad TĀ 29.208), after listing the Five States, “The guru, [perceiving] directly [through one or more of] these [Five States] that his disciple’s initiation has been successfully [completed], is encouraged/relieved (*evaṃ hi sāṅkṣād asya dīkṣā vṛtteti guror āśvāso bhaved*). Thus in this *śaktipāta/samāveśa* is simultaneously the evidence that the *samaya-dīkṣā* has been fully successful, and that the initiate is qualified to continue on to the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*. (But note that MVT 1 takes *śaktipāta* as a *prerequisite* for non-Kaula initiation. That is, it follows the Saiddhāntika pattern in its non-Kaula chapters.)

⁹⁰⁴ J ad 29.201ab: “[The guru] should not grant [the higher] initiation to a student who has not experienced *āveśa*; thus [evidence of] *āveśa* should be produced first, by which the guru knows that he is fit for [nirvāṇa-] *dīkṣā*, upon which [realization] he should bestow that rite” (*vināveśaṃ śiṣyasya dīkṣā na kāryeti prathamam āveśa evotpādaniyo yenāsyā dīkṣā-yogyatve jñāte gurus tatprakriyām anutiṣṭhet*). Our authors are rarely so crystal clear! But this is apparent in the *Tantrāloka* itself as well.

⁹⁰⁵ Introducing 29.210: *etac-cihnānūdayān manda-śaktipātavataḥ kasyacin nāyam evam āveśo jāyate*.

Above I said that in this Kaula context, (*sam*)*āveśa* qualifies one for *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*. But in MVT 11, *āveśa* is rather the *result* of receiving that *dīkṣā*. However, there is no strong disjunction here, because though the MVT does not demand *āveśa* prior to initiation, it does demand that it occur at some point during the ceremony (11.37c-39, in which the implication is that *āveśa* will occur near the climax of the *dīkṣā*). Presumably Abhinava is following a tradition that raised the stakes by requiring *āveśa* both as a prerequisite and during the ceremony. If *āveśa* does not occur during the ceremony, Abhinava quotes the MVT (TĀ 29.210-11b ≈ MVT 11.37c-39) which offers the initiand one more chance—he is to be “burned” by an extra-intense application of the Mālīnī (J. gives the visualization which is necessary to intensify the transmission), as a result of which he will fall to the ground; if he does not, he is to be “cast aside like a stone” (*tam atropalavat tyajet*, 211b) because he is simply too “dense” (*jaḍiman*, J. ad loc.). Here we have an unambiguous statement that the (*sam*)*āveśa* experience really was absolutely required for full membership in a Kaula community. Indeed, Abhinava is so keen on it that despite the MVT’s advice to just give up on the candidate at this point, Abhinava nevertheless offers yet one more opportunity for him to enter *āveśa* (because, Jayaratha tells us, of his intense desire to bestow grace) through the application of an even more powerful procedure which he was taught by his *sadguru* Śambhunātha on the basis of the *Tantrasadbhāva* (211c-18). This form of initiation-cum-transmission is said to include direct evidence of its efficacy (*sapratyayāṃ dīkṣām*, 211c) in the form of *stobha* or automatism, i.e. possession by the *śakti* (213cd). Here Jayaratha quotes the TSB verses Abhinava has in mind, which states that for the unfortunate individual who cannot attain *āveśa*, the guru should lead him to the path of awakening through one of the three *piṇḍa* mantras, which will result in a *śaktyāveśa* that has visible signs in the body.⁹⁰⁶ The initiand himself will have a mystical experience in which he sees himself rapidly connected with one *tattva* after another, until he reaches the highest *tattva*, at which point he sees no more, for there are no more objects (217). Through this procedure (*krama-yoga*), he has a vision of the entire order of reality (*sarvādhvānam sa paśyati*, 218b). Then the guru supports him in re-emanating all the *tattvas* in a pure form, that he may continue to experience (209cd).

What is fascinating about *Tantrāloka* 29 is how much it preserves of the old Kula possession cult (Abhinava quotes over a dozen texts that are now lost), combined with the sophisticated mental visualization-and-mantra rituals that characterize the more esoteric level of the Mantramārga. It is this combination that is usually referred to as Kaula. Something that looked like actual possession—the involuntary movements called *stobha*—is not only retained in Abhinavagupta’s sophisticated world of aesthetically refined ritual, it is central. Again and again we see that a possession that is strong enough to manifest signs visible to the guru is

⁹⁰⁶ *athaivam api yasya syān nāveśaḥ kaśmalātmanah | tam piṇḍatritayād ekenodbodhapadavim nayet || . . . tribhir ebhir bhaved vyastaiḥ śaktyāveśaḥ śarīragaḥ ||*. The three *piṇḍa* mantras are SRYŪṂ, ḌDHMRŪṂ, and RSHKṢRYŪṂ. The exact procedure is described in TĀ 29.214-16: it involves visualizing the initiand’s heart-lotus, each of its twelve petals marked by a *bīja-mantra* (HAM, HĀM, HĪM, HĪṂ, etc.) with a red bindu in the center representing his consciousness; this *cakra* ignites in flames and spins rapidly while the guru repeats the *piṇḍa-mantra* enclosing the initiand’s name. As a result, the disciple attains *stobha* “in the blink of an eye.”

required. Of course, this is not the possession of anthropological ethnographies in which a specific named deity takes over a human body to interact with an audience, it is rather a kind of trance state in which one experiences the falling away of the personal will and the Power of God directing one's movements. One could argue that the only difference between this experience and the state of liberation in this system is that there is no longer any otherness to God in the latter; but that is a big difference. That is, rather than being an entranced automaton controlled by a higher power (which really only happens in the initiation ritual), in the liberated state one's personal will perfectly fuses with that of the Divine, such that one exists in a seemingly (from the non-liberated perspective) paradoxical state in which one does not have a personal will (as something separate from the whole) and yet experiences total freedom and autonomy (*svātantriya-śakti*). Or, one could say, one feels that one has a personal will, but it always aligns with God's will. This, at least, is my understanding of Abhinavagupta's basic message; because in studying the theology of his lineage we must reconcile the basic apparent dichotomy between the centrality of the power of independent freedom and the centrality of possession.

As we near our conclusion, we consider now the importance of initiation-by-penetration (*vedha-dikṣā*) and come to some conclusions regarding it.

2.5.4.i *Vedha-dikṣā in Tantrāloka* 29

Several of the scriptural texts (esp. ŪKA and KMT) referred to a mysterious kind of initiation known as *vedha-dikṣā*. The term *vedha* (from √*vidh*, the weak form of √*vyadh*) denotes the action of piercing, penetrating, perforating, and breaking through (in less educated registers of Sanskrit, *vedha* is sometimes confused with *bheda*); but as we have seen, it can also connote transmutation, at least in alchemical contexts. We are fortunate that Abhinavagupta preserved text-passages discussing *vedha-dikṣā* from Kaula scriptures now lost by redacting them into his *Tantrāloka* (29.236-81). This section of the *Tantrāloka* is translated in Appendix Two; here we will discuss just a few of the most salient points.

Ad TĀ 29.200, Jayaratha quotes an untraced Kaula verse that extols *vedha-dikṣā* by saying “One who performs a *dikṣā* that does not include *vedha-dikṣā*, they both (guru and disciple) go to hell—this is the doctrine of the Śāktas.”⁹⁰⁷ This rather surprising statement indicates the great importance attached to *vedha-dikṣā* in some Kaula circles. It seems odd, then, that Abhinavagupta introduces the topic by saying that *vedha-dikṣā* is specifically for those who seek *bhoga* and *siddhi* (29.236), and odder still that many of the verses he quotes contradict him by teaching a form of *vedha-dikṣā* that is explicitly said to confer highest liberation (242, 256, 262, 266, and 271; while 251, 253 and 264 seem to imply liberation). What is clear is that in Abhinava's understanding, *vedha* usually entails the “penetration” in ascending sequence (*ūrdhvordhva-praveśataḥ*, 237d) of subtle centers arrayed along the central channel, a penetration accomplished by a *mahāyogī* or *siddha-guru*. Thus *vedha-dikṣā* constitutes a precursor to the modern Hindu understanding of *śaktipāta* as the awakening of a disciple's *kuṇḍalinī* by a *sadguru* or *siddha guru*.

⁹⁰⁷ *vedha-dikṣāṃ vinā dikṣāṃ yo yasya kurute priye | dvāv etau narakam yāta iti śāktasya niścayaḥ |*; but Jayaratha takes this to mean that one must show signs of *āveśa* as a prerequisite to receiving Kaula *dikṣā*, a much more accepted doctrine.

According to the *Kularatnamālā* (Abhinava informs us) the evidence of having pierced the *cakras* (*cakra-sambheda-pratyayaḥ*, 238ab) is the attainment of the supernatural powers (*aṇimādikā*); but if one does not proceed onward to the higher centers (*ūrdhva-cakra-daśālābhe*), then those powers should be considered the result of possession by a demon (*piśācāveśa*, 239b)!⁹⁰⁸ He then presents two lists of *vedha-dīkṣā*, tabulated below.

<u>In the <i>Kulagahvara</i></u>	<u>Acc. to “esoteric gurus”</u>
mantra-vedha	mantra-vedha*
nāda-vedha*	bhuvana-vedha
bindu-vedha	rūpa-vedha*
śakti-vedha	śākta-vedha
bhujāṅga-vedha	vijñāna-vedha
para-vedha	piṇḍa-vedha*
	sthāna-vedha
	nāḍī-vedha
	para-vedha*

Table 13. Typology of *vedha-dīkṣā* in TĀ 29

* explicitly said to grant liberation

These *vedhas* are then explicated with reference to other scriptures, such as the *Dikṣottara* and the *Vīrāvalikula*. Some of these yogic rites do not in fact feature an ascent through the *cakras*, but other forms of mental penetration, such as the projection of a deity-image (*rūpa-vedha*) or of the guru’s subtle body (*vijñāna-vedha*). But ascent through the centers is the norm, and the proto-kuṇḍalinī hypothesis is strengthened by the description of *bhujāṅga-vedha* or “cobra-penetration” in verses 248-51: we are told that the supreme Power takes the form of a five-hooded cobra and rises from the pelvic floor to the crown of the head.⁹⁰⁹ “Having entered,” we are told, “she penetrates the [subtle] body, and causes the soul to burst open (i.e. disclose its nature)” (*praviṣṭā vedhayet kāyam ātmānaṃ pratibhedayet*, 251ab). Jayaratha, living a couple of centuries later when the *kuṇḍalinī* doctrine was well established (13th cen.), clearly sees it here, for he cites a verse-and-a-half from an unnamed source describing *bhujāṅga-vedha*, in which the *śakti* is said to dwell below the navel, having the appearance of a coiled serpent (*bhujāṅga-kuṭīlākāro 'dho nābher vyavasthitā*); when awakened, she moves like a cobra (*prabuddhā phaṇivad gacchet*) and penetrates in five stages, undoubtedly referring to the five *cakras* (this number of subtle centers was the norm in the earlier period of Tantric yoga).

The verses describing *śākta-vedha* (257-8) tell us that the initiating guru enters (*āviśya*) one of the disciple’s lateral channels, and focuses his consciousness in the place of the *kanda* (below the navel), gathering it into a ball of energy which he

⁹⁰⁸ But SANDERSON reads *ūrdhva-cakra-daśā-lābhe* and understands it as “when one attains the states proper to the higher centers [in the lower ones].”

⁹⁰⁹ Jayaratha cites an unnamed source that calls the former (*janmasthanā*) the *ādhāra-maṇḍala* (it would later be called *mūlādhāra*) and the latter (*dvādaśāntam*) *paramākāśaṃ paraṃ nirvāṇa-maṇḍalaṃ*.

then makes rotate rapidly, and placing it on the tip of an “energy-spear” (*śakti-śūla*) he drives it upward and unites it with whichever *cakra* the initiand has specified. This yogic rite is said to give “immediate evidence of its efficacy” (*sadyah-pratyaya-kāraḥ*) a phrase we have seen repeatedly in the Kaula sources indicating a concern with verifiable experiences. Jayaratha (ad loc.) understands this evidence to be the signs (*lakṣaṇa*) of *āveśa*.

While the *para-vedha* of the first list certainly means “higher penetration,” for the practice/state described most closely resembles *śāmbhavāveśa*, the *para-vedha* of the second list may well be a pun, meaning both “higher penetration” and “penetrating another” for the practice given under that rubric, astonishingly, exactly matches the *Mahābhārata* stories of Vipula and Vidura we presented nearly 250 pages (CHECK) earlier in the present work. Quoting the *Vīrāvali-kula*, TĀ 29.273c-75 speaks of the guru penetrating the mouth of the disciple with his mouth (*vaktraṃ vaktre tu vedhayet*⁹¹⁰), and penetrating form with form (*rūpaṃ rūpe*) until their minds become fused (*citte samarasībhūte*) and they perceive exactly the same sense-objects (this is the *sāmarasya* referred to at p. 297f above). Then they rise as one to the highest state (*unmanā*). Jayaratha tells us that “mouth” means the central channel, and this is not unreasonable (see n983), and further that *rūpa* refers in fact to the visual faculty (i.e., that which perceives *rūpa*), and that the other four faculties follow, which corresponds with the Mbh. narratives. This scriptural source thus confirms for us that *āveśa* narratives like those found in the *Mahābhārata* were believed to be literally possible, at least by some.

After quoting the sources that describe these fifteen *vedha-dīkṣās* (see Appendix Two for more details), Abhinava makes a statement that perhaps explains why some verses emphasize liberation, and others *siddhi*: these “penetration-initiations” are ideally to be performed by guru who has “devoured” (*grasate*) both *bhoga* and *mokṣa*, and thus (it is implied) can grant both simultaneously (276c-7b). Such a guru grants a *vedha-dīkṣā*, he tells us (apparently contradicting his opening remarks at 236-7), that results in the liberation that remains steady in all beings (who attain it), bringing to an end the dualistic oscillation between subject and object through their union (277c-8b).

2.5.4.j Vedha-dīkṣā, śaktipāta, and the Five States in the Kulārṇava-tantra

We come now to the final textual passage of the present work, one that in some ways serves to bridge the classical period of Tantra (900-1100 CE) and its modern survivals. This is the *Kulārṇava-tantra*, a Kaula text probably of the 12th-14th centuries. Its publication by Sir John WOODROFFE (aka Arthur AVALON) in 1916 focused attention on it, but a lack of extent commentaries suggest it was not particularly widely read, though according to WOODROFFE it was “constantly cited as an authority,” presumably among the Bengali *paṇḍits* of his acquaintance in the late nineteenth century (AVALON 1965: 3). The text perpetuates many key Kaula doctrines, while exhibiting an early stage of the process of the tradition’s simplification and contraction that characterized the period of Muslim rule. The

⁹¹⁰ Note the Prakṛtization whereby locative stands in for instrumental.

fourteenth chapter of the work focuses on *dīkṣā*, and includes some important points about the nature of *vedha-dīkṣā* and its connection to the Five States (*ānandādi*).

Two different categorizations of initiation are somewhat awkwardly assimilated in this chapter: three types of charismatic subitist initiation and seven types of ritual initiation. The first is said to be devoid of ritual or effort (*kriyāyāsādi-rahitā*, 34c); it is implicitly a transmission of energy from the guru that initiates. It is threefold in that it is said to happen through a touch, a look, or a thought (*sparśākhyā ḍṛk-saṃjñā mānasākhyā*). These three are each given an animal example: the bird nourishes her young through touch, the fish through sight (how is not explained), and the turtle merely through focusing her attention on them (*dhyānamātreṇa poṣayet*, 37b). The synonym for the third, *mānasa-dīkṣā*, is none other than *vedha-dīkṣā* (37c). The next verse tells us that the guru should bestow grace (i.e., grant *dīkṣā*) to the disciple in accordance with the Descent of Power he has received (*śaktipātānusāreṇa śiṣyo ’nugraham arhati*, 38ab),⁹¹¹ because there is no possibility of success in *sādhana* if the Descent has not occurred (*yatra śaktir na patati tatra siddhir na jāyate*, 38cd). This of course means that *śaktipāta* is a prerequisite for *dīkṣā*, but also that the guru should give the initiation that corresponds to (*anusāreṇa*) the degree of *śaktipāta* that the aspirant exhibits. The fact that the text lists three degrees of fitness or qualification (*yogya*) bestowed by *śaktipāta* (27-30) and three types of *upadeśa* (teaching) immediately before the three types of subitist *dīkṣā* seems to suggest that they should be bestowed accordingly (see Table 14).

<u>Fitness level</u>	<u>Teaching</u>	<u>Initiation</u>
ādi-yogyāḥ ⁹¹²	karmopadeśaḥ	sparśa-dīkṣā
madhya-yogyāḥ	dharmopadeśaḥ	ḍṛg-dīkṣā
anta-yogyāḥ (vv. 27-30)	jñānopadeśaḥ (vv. 31-33)	mānasa-dīkṣā (vv. 34-37)

Table 14. Associations in Kulārṇava 14

The association of the first two columns in the table is explicit in the text, while the third is implicit. I think we are probably meant to assume it, but mitigating against this view is the problem that, according to the descriptions of the levels of fitness, the guru would have to give the lowest level of initiation to the aspirant that exhibits the greatest devotion at the outset and vice versa (see n913), which seems quite impractical. Additionally, it would seem that these three types of subitist initiation happen very spontaneously, not as a calculated act (see v. 56, cited below). Finally, if the *śaktipāta* verse (38) actually refers forward to the seven types of

⁹¹¹ This is the hemistich whose mistranslation famously give the modern style of postural yoga called Anusāra its name; scholar Douglas BROOKS took the verse-half to mean “Flowing with grace, we experience our inner worth . . .”

⁹¹² The level of *ādi-yogya* is the lowest, because they are said to exhibit devotion only at the beginning in order to get initiation, but their enthusiasm soon wanes (*ādau bhaktir bhaved devi dīkṣārthaṃ samudanti ye | punar vilupta-hṛṣṭās te*, 14.28, following the reading of MS Kha for the latter compound over the edition’s *vipula-hṛṣṭāḥ*), whereas the *anta-yogyāḥ* are the best, because though they have little devotion at the outset, their devotion keeps growing, becoming very mature in the end (*anta-pravṛddha-bhaktāś*, 30c).

ritualized *dīkṣā* rather than back to the three subitist types, then we need not include the third column in the above table. In this case the text would be telling us that the guru should select whichever of the seven forms of standard *dīkṣā* corresponds best with the aspirant's *śaktipāta*.

The seven types of liberation-bestowing ritualized initiation are: through *kriyā* (ritual in general), through ritually purifying the *varṇādhvan* or *kalādhvan*, or through touch, word, look, or thought.⁹¹³ But the touch, look, and thought mentioned here are *not* of the subitist variety previously described. Each of these seven is described in some detail (vv. 41-63), and we learn that *sparsā-dīkṣā* in this list is a ritual procedure equivalent to what was called *śiva-hasta-vidhi* in classical Śaiva Tantra (v. 53), *vāg-dīkṣā* involves uttering mantras empowered through meditation (v. 54), and *dr̥g-dīkṣā* likewise involves meditating on the supreme reality, then gazing intently at the disciple in the correct manner (55). Evidently conscious of the possible confusion of these with the subitist types previously described, the author clarifies with a verse that labels the latter as subtypes of *śāmbhavī dīkṣā*: “When insight arises spontaneously [in the student] as a result of merely a glance from the guru, or a phrase, or a touch, that is held to be a Divine Initiation” (56).⁹¹⁴ The text goes on to describe the seventh and final type in this list, *mānasa-* or *mano-dīkṣā*, which has two subtypes, “intense” (*tīvrā*) and “really intense” (*tīvratarā*). Both are described as *vedha-dīkṣā*, but the first requires knowledge of the *ṣaḍ-adhvan*, one of which is to be visualized as coextensive with the initiand's body in a set sequence (vv. 57-58). The second, by contrast, is a subitist initiation: due to merely being thought of by a guru who is a *saṃvedhin*, the disciple is freed of sin and “external affairs,” and falls suddenly to the ground, arising in a “divine state,” unable to speak for joy (60-61).⁹¹⁵ “Pierced by this penetration,” the next line says, “he is Śiva incarnate, and does not participate in rebirth” (*vedha-viddhaḥ śivaḥ sākṣān na punarjanma-bhāg bhavet*, 63ab).

We should note that the *kalā-dīkṣā* that comes third in the list of seven is likewise associated with *vedha*: the guru is advised to join the disciple to the *kalādhvan* then “penetrate” him in some undefined way (*śiṣye saṃyojya vedhayet*, 51d). This results in the “divine state” (*jāyate devatā-bhāvaḥ*, 52a) and a meeting with the *yoginīs* and *vīras* (*yoginī-vīra-melanam*, presumably referring to a mystical experience and not the secret orgiastic rite that phrase originally denoted).

Immediately after the description of the two types of *mānasa/vedha-dīkṣā*, we meet again our old friends the Five States, who are now joined by a sixth:

⁹¹³ *kriyā-varṇa-kalā-sparsā-vāg-dr̥g-mānasa-saṃjñayā | dīkṣā mokṣa-pradā devī saptadhā parikīrtitā ||* (14.39). These seven types are inflected through five levels: the four of classical Śaiva Tantra (*samaya*, *putraka-* aka *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*, *sādhaka*, and *ācāryābhīṣeka*) plus a new fifth, *vedhaka-dīkṣā* (14.40), yielding 35 types. But logically *vedha-dīkṣā* should not be included here, since it is a means of initiation not a level thereof, unless the text's author intends to say that there is a *dīkṣā* that produces a type of tāntrik called a “penetrator” (*vedhaka*), which seems unlikely.

⁹¹⁴ *guror āloka-mātreṇa bhāṣaṇāt sparśanād api | sadyaḥ sañjāyate jñānaṃ sā dīkṣā śāmbhavi matā ||*. Cf. the higher initiation called *śārvīya* (a parallel formation to *śāmbhavi*) at TĀ 29.277ab.

⁹¹⁵ *devī tīvratarā cāpi guruṇā smṛtamātrataḥ | samyak saṃvedhinaḥ śiṣyaś chinna-pāpas tadā bhavet | bāhya-vyāpāra-nirmukto bhūmau patati tatkaṣaṇāt | sañjāta-divyabhāvo 'sau sarvaṃ jānāti śāmbhavi |*

ānandaś caiva kampaś codbhavo ghūrṇā kuleśvari |
nidrā mūrccā ca vedhasya ṣaḍ-avasthāḥ prakīrtitāḥ || 64
ḍṣyante ṣaḍ-guṇā hy ete vedha-kāle kuleśvari |
vedhito yatra kutrāpi tiṣṭhen mukto na saṃśayaḥ || 65

The Six States of one who has been “penetrated” are known to be Bliss, Trembling, Ascent, Whirling, Sleep, and Fainting. These six qualities are seen at the time of “penetration,” O Kuleśvari; wherever the one “penetrated” is,⁹¹⁶ he is liberated, without a doubt.

It seems that the hierarchy important to Abhinavagupta has been lost here, but the connection of these *avasthās* to *vedha* and *āveśa* is clear: as Jayaratha said in his commentary on TĀ 29.258, the sign(s) of *āveśa* constitute the evidence of the success of *vedha-dīkṣā*—and in light of this passage, it is likely that he had the Five States in mind.⁹¹⁷ The importance of these states is underscored by the fact that they appear also in a Buddhist source: specifically, a *paddhati* for *abhiṣeka* authored by the seventh Dalai Lama, which when seeking to specify the signs by which one may know that the wisdom-beings have entered the initiand, draws upon Nāgabodhi’s commentary on the *Guhya-samāja-tantra*, which states: “One should know that the signs of entrance are shaking, elation, fainting, dancing, collapsing, or leaping upward.” Though I do not have access to the Sanskrit for this quote—here I am citing an unpublished translation of the Tibetan by John DUNNE that is quoted by Fred SMITH (2006: 392)—there can be little doubt that here we have *kampa*, *ānanda*, *mūrccā*, *naṭana* (or *ghūrṇā*?), *pāta*, and *udbhava* respectively, or four of the KuT’s six states, and one other major sign we have seen repeatedly, i.e. collapse or *pāta*. *Ghūrṇā/ghūrmi* has here been dropped in favor of whichever word is translated as “dancing”; or, just possibly, dancing is a mistranslation of *ghūrṇā* in the Tibetan. After this Nāgabodhi quote, the VIIth Dalai Lama continues: “many signs are said to arise, from leaping—to a height of one cubit, two cubits or even eight cubits—to hair standing on end, trembling and so on” (ibid.).

Returning to the KuT, the text goes on to inform us that a guru who can perform *vedha-dīkṣā* is hard to find, and equally hard to find is a disciple fit to receive it, for it should not be given to just anyone (v. 66). It summarizes its account by saying that there are, fundamentally, two kinds of *dīkṣā*, inner and outer (more and less esoteric): ritual initiation is the outer form, and *vedha* the inner form (v. 78). As we have seen, *vedha* can be subitist or not. But initiation alone liberates one from bondage (*bandhāt . . . dīkṣaiva mokṣayet*, v. 84).

⁹¹⁶ Meaning *vedha* can be performed at a distance.

⁹¹⁷ Note that *yad asti vedha-kāle tat svayam evānubhūyate* (KuT 14.62) can be read as periphrasis of the classic Kaula phrase *sadyaḥ-pratyaya-kāraka*, commented on by Jayaratha when it occurs in the TĀ verse cited.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

As noted in the introduction, the primary purpose of the present study is to bring together all the important passages for understanding the concepts of *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa* (that is, the primary terms that refer to religious experience), especially regarding their relationship to *dīkṣā*, the initiation which practitioners of premodern Tantra took to be the central feature of their religion. Although the compilation, translation, and explication of these key passages provides sufficient value to justify the existence of this study, we also have some particular arguments that, we think, serve to nuance scholarly understanding of South Asian religion in general and Tantra in particular.

First we will review the most salient points that have emerged in the second half of the study. This discussion primarily covers sections 2.4 and 2.5 (for a summary of section 2.3, see pp. 234ff), but also seeks to tie together the work as a whole. These are the topics we will review and discuss (with analysis appearing under topics 2. and 4. as well as at the end):

1. *Samāveśa* as the distinguishing characteristic of Śaivism
2. The centrality of religious experience for the initiatory tradition
 - a. Evidence of *śaktipāta/samāveśa* required for initiation
 - b. Degree of *śaktipāta* corresponds to level of *adhikāra* for initiation
 - c. Defining religious experience and its role
3. Relationship of *samāveśa* and *śaktipāta*
4. *Samāveśa* reinterpreted by the Kaula exegetes as general rubric for spiritual experience
5. *Samāveśa* understood as the path (purpose of all spiritual practice)
6. *Samāveśa* required to empower mantras (esp. for initiation)
7. *Samāveśa* understood as the goal (liberation)
8. *Samāveśa* as the conceptual model for the embodiment of consciousness

1. Our first thesis is that (*sam*)*āveśa* is one of the primary signifiers that distinguishes Tantric Śaivism (and, one could argue, Tantra generally) from mainstream Indian religion. While this may be too broad a statement to actually prove in a single work, the evidence we have examined certainly demonstrates that (*sam*)*āveśa* is central (though not equally prominent) to all forms of Śaiva Tantric initiation,⁹¹⁸ and that initiation is central to Tantric Śaivism. In section 2.4, we looked in some detail at a paradigmatic initiation manual, in which a ritualized form of possession was preserved, with the initiating *ācārya* inviting the deity to enter his body and act through him. However, this was purely formal; he did not expect to experience any preternatural sensations. Also formalized is the ritual process by which he fuses his central channel to the disciple's (*nāḍī-sandhāna*) and "enters" the latter's body. Through ritual gestures (*mudrā*), visualization (*dhyāna*), and breath control he ritually enacts plucking out the initiand's consciousness (*caitanya*, visualized as a *bindu*) and draws it into himself, fusing it with his own (*samarasikṛ-*)

⁹¹⁸ As *vajrāveśa* is to many forms of Buddhist Tantric initiation, though we did not have the space to explore it here.

and then raising that fused consciousness to the highest point of the subtle body (the *dvādaśānta*) in order to unite it with Śiva. This ritual *dīkṣā* was standard throughout South Asia for many centuries, and we may safely assume that the actions just described were in the great majority of cases highly routinized, since there was no pressure within the mainstream of the tradition against routinization—simply performing correct ritual actions in the correct sequence was thought to accomplish initiation successfully. However, we can hardly doubt that this ritual has its roots in possession rites: the *ācārya* prays “O lord, enter my body and bestow grace” (*bhagavan madīyaṃ deham āviśya . . . anugrahaṃ kuru*), language that echoes the frank invitation to literal possession in the archaic BY (section 2.3.1). Furthermore, Somaśambhu asserts that the *dīkṣā* is performed by Śiva “having mounted (or using) the body of the *ācārya*” (*ācārya-mūrtim āsthāya*),⁹¹⁹ and the archaism of this precise expression is proven by its appearance in a verse quoted by Kauṇḍinya (c. 400 CE). Furthermore, the two key actions of the *dīkṣā* are ritualized expressions of *para-sārīrāveśa*: in both the “cutting of bonds” (*pāśa-ccheda*) and “uniting to Śiva” (*śiva-yojanikā*), the *ācārya* must enact (again, through *mudrā-dhyāna-mantra-prāṇāyāma*) the entering the initiand’s body by means of one of his *nāḍīs* and plucking out his conscious essence. And, if we take the fusing together of the consciousnesses of guru and disciple as a kind of *samāveśa* (though that word does not appear, *sāmarasya* is one of its synonyms), we cannot avoid the conclusion that *āveśa* in various forms is central to Śaiva *dīkṣā*. For section 2.4 covered the most conservative, standardized, routinized form of *dīkṣā* in Śaivism (the Saiddhāntika form): all forms further to the “left” of the spectrum are explicitly marked by the increasing presence of *āveśa* of a kind verifiable through specific behaviors, as we saw clearly in many scriptural sources and in *Tantrāloka* 29 (sections 2.5.4.h and i). The initiand in the Saiddhāntika version of the rite sits (or stands) still, remaining entirely passive, and need not experience anything in particular; while in the Kaula versions he is expected to feel intense energy, energy that even can take him over and direct his actions (the automatism technically known as *stobha*): here too he is passive, but in a very different way, for he performs his own initiation under the influence of the *śakti* (for example, his own hand, not the guru’s, becomes the initiatory “Hand of Śiva”). We saw that the esoteric *Vīrāvalikula* teaches that the initiations of the left current are marked by *samāveśa*, *stobha*, or *sāmarasya*, all understood experientially (the third term features briefly in Saiddhāntika initiation too, but there the initiand is not expected to actually feel that his consciousness has become fused with his guru’s). Though we did not have space to include it in the present work, Kṣemarāja’s fascinating essay (*prakaraṇa*) appended to the end of chapter five of his *Svacchandodyota* specifically claims that unlike in the case of the Saiddhāntika form of initiation, those receiving Kaula *dīkṣā* frequently actually experience the manifestation of their innate divinity at the time of initiation itself.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁹ Section 2.5.1. Cf. Sadyojyotiḥ’s *Mokṣakārikā* 96ab: *ācārya-saṃsthito devo dīkṣā-śaktyaiva muñcati*, “God, in the person of the *ācārya*, liberates through the power of initiation.”

⁹²⁰ “If the objection is, ‘Why does this manifestation of divinity due to initiation not take place at that very time?’ [then we reply]: In fact, we *have* seen that occurring, countless times, in the case of those [initiations] being performed by [Gurus] endowed with the highest wisdom.” (*tat-*

It is because of the great importance of the word (*sam*)*āveśa* that it came to have so many meanings in these materials. We saw it in the sense of:

entry (= *praveśa*), possession (= *adhiṣṭheya*), infusion (with mantras or *śaktis*), permeation/pervasion (\approx *vyāpti*), penetration (= *vedha*), fusion (= *sāmarasya*, *saṅghaṭṭa*), immersion (into the Deity), emergence (of one's true nature), communion (= *sāyujya*) or consubstantiation, absorption (= *samāpatti/samādhi*), spiritual experience (*sākṣātkāra*, *anubhāva*), and liberation (*nityodita-samāveśa*).

2. We have seen that *āveśa* (in various forms) is central *within* initiation, and our second thesis is an extension of the first, for the centrality of *āveśa* to the religion is further demonstrated by the fact that it is also (in varying degrees) a *prerequisite* to initiation: as a general rule, one had to demonstrate *śaktipāta* for more exoteric initiations (such as the *samaya-dīkṣā*), while *samāveśa* had to be verified for one seeking a higher-level initiation like the Kaula *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* (and we have seen that *śaktipāta* was frequently understood as a weaker form of *samāveśa*). Specifically, in its *samāyācara* section, the SSP commands initiates who become gurus “thou shalt not initiate someone who is without *śaktipāta*” (section 2.4.2), while Rāmakaṅṭha, a major authority, teaches that one cannot construe the scriptural injunction to initiate a child to mean anything but a teenager, because otherwise one would be unable to verify his *śaktipāta* (section 2.5.1). He adds that if the guru cannot infer *śaktipāta* through observable (and scripturally-determined) signs (such as a strong devotion that wasn't there previously), then the candidate is *anadhikārin*, not qualified for initiation.⁹²¹ And the doctrine of the relation between *śaktipāta* and *dīkṣā* cuts the other way too: Sadyojyotiḥ teaches that “*dīkṣā* necessarily comes about for one on whom the Power descends,” because *śaktipāta* causes one to desire initiation and leads one to a guru. While those on the left sometimes dispensed with ritual initiation, they too saw the *śaktipāta* awakening as indispensable: the *Kālikulapañcaśatikā* teaches that the divine secret hidden in the hearts of the Yogeśvarīs is obtained only through *śaktipāta*, which occurs by the grace of the Goddess. In the Kaula context, one frequently had to demonstrate *āveśa* in order to receive the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*: Jayaratha tells us that “[the guru] should not grant [the higher] initiation to a student who has not experienced *āveśa*” and therefore if he is interested in that student he should help him reach *āveśa* (n905 *supra*).

2b. Not only is *śaktipāta* the standard prerequisite for initiation, but Abhinavagupta, a major authority for the left, argues that the precise *degree* of one's *śaktipāta* awakening determines the level of initiation one is qualified for; that is to say, it grants a specific *adhikāra* (section 2.5.2). He lists nine degrees: the lower confer *adhikāra* for pursuing *siddhi* (so one may receive the *sādhakābhīṣeka*), the

kālam eva dīkṣātaḥ śivatvābhivyaktiḥ kiṃ na bhavatīti cet, prakṛṣṭa-jñāna-śālibhiḥ kriyamāṇāyām sahasraśo bhavanti asāv api drśyate eva, p. 78 of the KSTS.)

⁹²¹ That this is a pan-Śaiva doctrine can be seen in the fact that the same statement is made by the exegetes of the left: for example, Kṣemarāja, in the essay cited in the previous footnote, says “initiation is accomplished following the Descent of Power which is inferred by devotion, desire to approach a guru out of the blue, and so on” (*ākasmika-guru-yiyāsā-bhaktiyādi-vaśonnīta-śaktipātānusāra-nirvartyamānāyā dīkṣayā*, p. 76).

middle ones for pursuing liberation (so one may receive the *samaya-* or *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*), and the highest ones actually confer liberation, or qualify one for a “subitist” or nonritual charismatic kind of initiation that culminates in liberation after a short time. We learned that those with lower *śaktipātas* are not qualified for subitist initiation, while the highest *śaktipātas* are synonymous with *samāveśa*, for one is said to be *samāviṣṭa* by an intense *śaktipāta*.

In the Kaula system taught by the MVT (section 2.3.3) and elaborated by Abhinavagupta (2.5.4.h), a candidate who did not demonstrate (*sam*)*āveśa* before or during the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* was to be “cast aside like a stone,” because (like a stone) he was too “dense,” or insufficiently psychically sensitive, if he failed to feel the effect of the guru’s application (*nyāsa*) of the intensely powerful Kaula mantras. One who could not feel such a transmission of Śiva’s *śakti* was clearly not going to succeed in Kaula practice, so rejecting the candidate for the higher initiation was only logical and saved both guru and disciple time and effort (and the disciple who stuck to his *samaya* for a long time despite this rejection was given the initiation eventually, on the theory that such persistence must be the result of a strong *śaktipāta*; see n896). Again and again we see the requirement of an *āveśa* that is strong enough to manifest signs visible to the guru. The primary evidence that the guru looked for to verify (*sam*)*āveśa* was either a collapse to the ground, or one of the Five States (*pañcāvasthā*). After listing those states (*ānandādi*), Jayaratha says (ad TĀ 29.208) “The guru, [perceiving] directly [through one or more of] these [Five States] that his disciple’s initiation has been successfully [completed], is encouraged/relieved (*evam hi sākṣād asya dīkṣā vṛtteti guror āśvāso bhaved*).” A telling comment that this criterion was taken seriously by some. And we know that *śaktipāta* too was considered an perceptible transformation of consciousness: for example, one who has received it (Abhinavagupta tells us) is able to feel whether or not enlivened mantras have been installed in a particular substrate before he arrived to the site of worship (section 2.5.4.a; in other words, s/he can feel whether *prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā* has been done to an icon by virtue of his own *pratiṣṭhā* (infusion) of Śiva’s *śakti* through the Descent of Power).⁹²² We saw the clearest articulation of relationship amongst all these key terms in TĀ 29 (section 2.5.4.h), in which there was a causal chain of *samaya-dīkṣā* -> *śaktipāta* -> *samāveśa* -> (one or more of the) Five States -> qualification for *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*. But as noted there (p. 350), this is really an abstract analysis of a single experience. What is crystal clear in that passage is that *śaktipāta/samāveśa* is simultaneously the evidence that the basic initiation has worked and that the candidate is qualified for the full initiation.

2c. Now, insofar as we understand the terms *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa* as denoting religious experience, no one could deny that religious experience was considered indispensable to initiatory Śaivism throughout our period. But what do we mean by the phrase? As scholars, we do not hold with the theologians that religious experience is a distinct class of human experience, but rather simply use the phrase

⁹²² Another example comes from Kṣemarāja (*op. cit.*, p. 78), who says that those who have been purified by a very intense Descent of Power experience a quelling of their attachment and aversion immediately after *dīkṣā*, a change that is perceptible to others (*tīvratama-śaktipāta-pūtānām ca dīkṣānantaram rāga-dveṣādi-prasamaḥ śataśo 'pi drśyante*).

to refer to an experience understood in religious terms by the one who has it, and/or by his spiritual guide (since sometimes a neophyte practitioner does not understand a strange experience in specifically spiritual terms until his or her teacher frames it as such). But what do we mean by *experience*? Of course I agree with Robert SHARF when he says “Scholars of religion are not presented with experiences that stand in need of interpretation but rather with texts, narratives, performances, and so forth” (2000: 283). I am not making the absurd claim that these Sanskrit texts give us a window on the “inner experience” of real practitioners of these systems over one thousand years ago. Nor is such a claim at all necessary for the argument that the prescriptive/textual aspect of the tradition consistently represents that tradition as requiring evidence (*pratyaya*) of an inner experience, evidence that *something* was really going on inside the person, in order to initiate that person at either the basic or advanced level. Therefore we disagree strongly with SHARF when he asserts “In the end there is simply no evidence of an indigenous Indian counterpart to the rhetoric of experience prior to the colonial period” (2000: 273). What we have in the many sources we have examined is *precisely* a rhetoric of experience. The initiatory Śaiva tradition wished to reserve membership for those who not only performed spiritual acts, but were powerfully moved by them or cathected them in some way; but at the same time Śaiva gurus would have agreed with SHARF that “personal experience could not serve as a reference point precisely because of its ambiguous epistemological status and essentially indeterminate nature” (Ibid.: 272), which is why there was a *scripturally-determined* rhetoric of experience. The scriptures and authoritative exegetes set down the signs, or specific behaviors, by which a guru or *ācārya* could verify that “something was really happening.” Of course these signs could be faked, and doubtless often were, but that is not the point. SHARF follows HALBFASS (1988, ch. 21), who seems to have directly inspired the former’s article on “Experience” (1998/2000), in arguing that the mainstream Indian tradition was always wary of claims to authority based on personal experience; and of course HALBFASS is absolutely right in saying that personal experience or conscience was, in premodern Brāhmanical religion, one’s guide to action only when it did not conflict with scriptural injunction and the opinion of one’s learned elders. But here in Tantric Śaivism we see a scriptural validation of, even requirement for, certain forms of experience (or the appearance thereof), therefore we have no direct contradiction of HALBFASS’ argument. Nor do we dispute many of SHARF’s very intelligent points, for we do not here attempt to step beyond scholarly bounds and argue a “perennialist” thesis or any other thesis that claims access to the subjective world of experience (since we only have prescriptive sources); but we certainly do dispute his broad generalization that in Asian religions, spiritual experiences “were not deemed doctrinally authoritative, and did not serve as reference points for their understanding of the path” (Ibid.), for most of this dissertation constitutes evidence to the contrary. As it turns out, it is not the concept but the *phrase* “religious experience” that is of “relatively recent, and distinctly Western, provenance” (Ibid.: 271). Indeed, Utpaladeva claims that the entire Pratyabhijñā lineage is based on, and instigated by, its founder’s direct experience of God (*sākṣātkṛta-parameśvara*)!

Here is a partial list of the roles served by religious experience in the materials we have examined (with only a few relevant sources cited):

- a) Leads one to seek guru for initiation (MVT, SSS)
- b) Constitutes evidence that Guru is qualified for charismatic/subitist *dīkṣā* (TU, MVT, ŪKA)
- c) Constitutes evidence that charismatic Guru's transmission to or penetration of the disciple is successful (TU, MVT, TĀ 29) [Sometimes the same as d) below]
- d) Constitutes evidence that *dīkṣā* has achieved metaphysical goals (TU, MVT)
- e) Verifies that one is making progress (TU, ŪKA, KMT)
- f) Is a prerequisite for wielding mantric power (SvT, SvTU)
- g) Grants insight or realization (PH, TS, TĀ)
- h) Becomes continuous as the liberated state itself (MNP, ŚD, ĪPK)

Why, exactly, did the authors of this tradition decide to articulate a rhetoric of experience, sustained over centuries? We cannot know for sure, but one reason (apart from that of distancing themselves from Brāhmanism) might have been to create communities of spiritual elites, those engaged in serious practice for liberation as opposed to the mass of uninitiated *Śivabhaktas* who propitiated the deity for good luck, a better rebirth, etc. Aghoraśiva tells us that “The Descent of Power brings about conviction concerning the certainty of what has been revealed [in Śiva's scriptures] by destroying wrong understanding and doubts concerning God” (section 2.5.1); in other words, he wants initiates to have faith and conviction of the kind that comes from a religious conversion. Indeed, the tradition implicitly holds *śaktipāta* to be more central than *dīkṣā* itself, for a) it inevitably leads to the liberating *dīkṣā*, b) according to some (Bhojadeva, the NTS) *śaktipāta* is the very means of initiation, for it is the grace that makes the latter effective, and c) for the Kaulas, a sufficiently strong *śaktipāta* obviates the need for ritual initiation altogether. No wonder, then, that the doctrine of *śaktipāta* survived to the present (see the Epilogue), while the *dīkṣā-vidhi* did not. The Kaulas raised the bar by requiring (*sam*)*āveśa*, construed as a kind of overwhelming mystical experience with verifiable signs (trembling, collapse, dizziness, etc.), thereby attempting to reserve membership to a community of mystics. If this was their intention, we have no way of knowing how successful it was, for map is not territory; but the present study has adequately demonstrated that the literature does have a rhetoric of experience, and that it was further considered a central and defining feature of the tradition.

3. Next we turn to the relationship of *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa*. It is a fluid relationship, shifting around based on context. As already noted, when *samāveśa* is a general rubric for religious experience, *śaktipāta* must be considered a specific kind of *samāveśa*, specifically the kind that causes one to seek a guru for initiation (to have received *śaktipāta* is to be *śakti-samāviṣṭa*). Within the context of initiation, though, the MVT specifically reserves the term *samāveśa* for recipients of Kaula initiation, and in that sense it can look like a subtype of *śaktipāta* (the more intense variety), as it does in *Tantrāloka* 13. We are in a landscape of floating signifiers. But a comprehensive survey of the literature such as the present study allows us to say

what is most often the case. In general we can say that *śaktipāta* is more exoteric, while *samāveśa* is more esoteric (i.e., the former is treated in more mainstream religious language, the latter in more mystical language); that the entry-level disciple displays signs of the former, while the guru displays signs of the latter; that the former is more Saiddhāntika, the latter more Kaula; and the former may bring on the longing for the latter (says Kṣemarāja). But there are exceptions to each of these.

4. More important to explore is the reinterpretation of *samāveśa* as a philosophically precise definition of spiritual experience articulated by the Kaula exegetes of Kashmir. Abhinavagupta's definition of *āveśa* in *Tantrāloka* reframed it as a direct experience of one's true nature as Śiva (section 2.5.4), inspired by Utpaladeva's definition of the term as the revelation of the transindividual Self-that-is-awareness as the only real knower of all cognition and agent of all action (2.5.4.d; whether Utpala is defining gnosis in terms of *samāveśa* or *samāveśa* in terms of gnosis makes no difference to the argument). We know Abhinava was talking about experience and not conceptual cognition, because he speaks of the realization of one's nature "unfolding spontaneously without intellection" (*pronmiṣat svayam vināpi niścayena*). Kṣemarāja follows the lead of his teacher when he glosses *samāviṣṭa* with *sākṣātkṛta-paraśakti-sphārah*, "a direct experience of the expansion of the Supreme Power" that is one's true nature. He teaches that there is both an introversive and an extroversive kind of *samāveśa* (p. 378), the former being what is generally called *samādhi* or *samāpatti*, and the latter, the extroversive kind, being the unique contribution of Tantra: a non-static state of unity in which everything is seen as an expression of the one consciousness that alone exists.⁹²³ These two *samāveśas* are very probably identical to (Abhinavagupta's version of) *turya* and *turyātīta*, which he likewise calls "the two *samāveśas*" (section 2.5.4.e). For both teachings exemplify the pattern of "transcendence followed by pervasion," a keystone teaching of the nondual left: penetrating fully into the Heart of being, followed by the infusion of that awareness into every level of selfhood that was previously excluded (note the language of both "movements" is that of *samāvīś*). Finally, when Abhinavagupta distinguishes a higher and lower *śaktipāta*, it is clear that the higher one is equivalent to *samāveśa*, for though he doesn't use the latter word, he defines the higher *śaktipāta* as *paripūrṇa-cidātmanaḥ prakāśaḥ*, "the manifestation of the all-encompassing Self-that-is-awareness" (2.5.2, p. 364).

What is going on with this wholesale reinterpretation of *samāveśa*? It certainly has to do with the domestication of the wild and woolly possession cult of the early Kulamārga into the interiorized, refined, intellectually rich and spiritually subtle world of the court-patronized tāntrika-cum-aesthetes of Kashmir, as scholars have noted (see SANDERSON 1985 and 1988), but it seems to me that this reinterpretation is also logically required by a nondualist doctrine. As Abhinavagupta argues in TĀ 1 (p. 376 *supra*), what does possession mean when there is no "other"? The only meaningful distinction in his world is that between

⁹²³ But not in the Vedāntic sense, because a) here difference is real, i.e. each thing is a different form of the One, and b) the absolute consciousness is inherently dynamic, not static, i.e. it is *śaktimat*.

sentience and insentience (sentient beings exhibit both *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, insentient entities only *prakāśa*). Possession by something insentient would only mean that the image or thought of that thing is stuck in your mind, while possession by sentience (*caitanyaena samāveśaḥ*) is simply oneness with it, for it is your very nature. When he says “sentience” here, he of course means Śiva, for in his view there is only one consciousness in all existence.⁹²⁴

5. Having established that on this exegetical level of the religion, *samāveśa* is the experience of one’s true (divine) nature, it is no surprise that for these exegetes, the purpose of all post-initiatory religious practice is the attainment of *samāveśa*. Abhinava teaches that all spiritual actions are “modes of immersion” (*samāveśa-pallavāḥ*) when they are sustained by a meditative contemplation that subordinates the aspects of the knower that are associated with the body etc. (section 2.5.4.e). One’s initial awakening, he teaches, must be reinforced through repeated acts of *samāveśa*, defined as immersion into the *śiva-svabhāva* (2.5.4.c; and he further teaches that *samāveśa* is a prerequisite to composing a spiritual treatise, thus obliquely informing us of his own *samāveśa(s)*, which is *pace* SHARF a clear claim to personal experience). In TS 5 and TĀ 5 (section 2.5.4.g), he taught a proto-*kuṇḍalinīyoga* in which penetrating (*praveśa*) each of the five primary *cakras* respectively brings on the Five States (*pañcāvasthā*) commonly cited as evidence of (*sam*)*āveśa* (see Table 12a). The five *cakras* also correspond to the Pratyabhijñā’s five layers of selfhood, so *āveśa* on any of those levels also triggers the respective *avasthā*. Since these five also correspond to the five phases of lucidity (waking, dreaming, etc.), we can understand Yogic ‘Sleep’ and Whirling as the signs corresponding to *turya* and *turyātīta* as well as to penetration of the Void and the all-encompassing Awareness respectively—and to Kṣemarāja’s introversive and extroversive *samāveśas* respectively. The movement up these fivefold hierarchies is a *kramayoga* which can be driven either by a series of gnostic realizations or by yogic practice (2.5.4.e), therefore (Abhinava tells us) one who enters a particular mystic State automatically attains the corresponding *cakra* (2.5.4.g). But if one moves the wrong way in the fivefold hierarchy, then the *āveśa* in question may be literal—i.e. the experience might be caused by demonic possession (*piśācāveśa*)! (2.5.4.i)

6. We have also seen that, from the earliest days of the left current of the tradition, the *samāveśa* experience was considered necessary to potentize or enliven mantras, which were likely to be ineffective without it (2.3.2). In the scriptural phase, something close to actual possession was meant, while in the exegetical phase the term usually means immersion into the Deity. Kṣemarāja reflects this difference of registers when he says that the lower *ācārya* is controlled (*adhiṣṭheya*) by Śiva while the higher *ācārya* is one with Śiva (*tanmaya*). (2.5.4.a) In either meaning, though, *samāveśa* makes possible *mantravīrya*. The guru who wields powerful, enlivened mantras is said to be *śivāveśa-śālīn*, “endowed with immersion into Śiva.” The synonym of the latter term is *śivāveśajñā*, one of many terms that

⁹²⁴ This does not necessarily mean he did not believe in possession by distinct conscious agents like ghosts or ghouls (*bhūta, piśāca*), but he doubtless understood this phenomenon as a permutation of consciousness, currents in the singular ocean as it were, rather than the invasion of an alien being; because, as he says, “there is in truth no Other” (TĀ 1.178b).

demonstrate that *vjñā* is used in this tradition to mean “know” in the sense of “have direct experience of,” because understanding the concept of *śivāveśa* could hardly bestow *mantravīrya*. Kṣemarāja teaches that the mantras become one with that which they signify (i.e. the deities or Deity) only when they are empowered by the blissful awareness of the Manifesting Light of Consciousness (*prakāśānanda-upodbalitva*), i.e. by *śivāveśa* (p. 381f). The significance of this teaching cannot be overstated, for in general in Śaivism mantras are thought to be effective simply by virtue of the fact that they are revealed in Śiva’s scriptures, which is to say that they are seen as being equivalent to magic technologies: if wielded correctly, they will work regardless of the mental state of the wielder. But the left current put forward the more plausible doctrine that only one who is firmly rooted in Śiva-nature can actually potentize the mantras and grant them efficacy. That empowerment causes the collapse of signifier and signified, precisely because the *śivāveśin* is one with what the mantras signify, i.e. Śiva (or some aspect thereof). In more real-world language, the charismatic or “enlightened” guru’s mantras were seen to have a much stronger impact on those to whom they were transmitted (whether through psychological transference or some mystical power makes no difference to our argument). Finally, Kṣemarāja’s phrase quoted above helps us understand better what these authors thought *śivāveśa* was an experience of, something rarely discussed: it is the blissful awareness that Consciousness has of itself (*prakāśānanda*, = *prakāśa-vimarśa*). As Jayaratha confirms (ad TĀ 29.208), in this system Consciousness is the Self that one directly experiences but cannot objectify (*citim sākṣād ātmānam*).

The importance of this issue of *mantravīrya* is found in the fact that such potentized mantras can be used for the powerful forms of Kaula initiation, such as several of the *vedha-dikṣās* found in TĀ 29. These authors clearly believed (and presumably witnessed) that such enlivened mantras, when properly wielded, could actually cause the initiand to collapse to the ground, overwhelmed by the intensity of the energy s/he is experiencing.

7. We have also seen *samāveśa* used to mean “final liberation” by the nondual exegetes. For Kṣemarāja (in the PH), *jīvanmukti* is nothing other than a *samāveśa* which becomes *nityodita* or constant (lit., ever-arising). This is not his innovation: in the penultimate verse of Utpaladeva’s ĪPK, we saw that the attainment which constitutes perfection is “immersing unceasingly in the Divinity which is the [sole] agency of all beings” (*bhuvana-kartṛtām . . . śivatāmayīm anīsam āviśan siddhyati*, IV.16), and the author’s *vṛtti* thereon explicitly says “due to immersion in [the one] Divinity, which comes about through cultivating this [recognition], one is liberated in this very life” (*etat pariśīlanena śivatāveśāj jīvanm eva mukto bhavati*) (2.5.4.d). We have also seen that in Abhinava’s ĪPv and ĪPvv, the *turyātīta* attainment, characterized as a *samāveśa*, is living liberation under another name (2.5.4.e). Indeed, *samāveśa* can only indicate the *jīvan* kind of *mukti*, for as Abhinava says, there can be no *samāveśa* without the body; it is in the context of the layers of embodiment (*śūnyādi-dehāntam*) that “penetration” or “infusion” is possible, not when awareness has become an undifferentiated mass (*prakāśa-ghana*).

8. Lastly, the meaning of *samāveśa* reached its furthest extent when it functioned as the central term in the ontology and cosmogony articulated by

Utpaladeva on the basis of Somānanda's *Śiva-dṛṣṭi*. The latter's assertion that his *namaskāra* was nothing but Śiva bowing to himself after having "possessed" the author's form led Utpala to explain that because Śiva is consciousness itself, all sentient beings are by definition "possessed" by Śiva and always have been; the sense of separate self is but a fictitious construct. This is of course a language-game, for the authors do not mean that Śiva secretly cohabits the individual's body, but rather that what seems mostly intimately one's own, i.e. the direct awareness that one has of oneself, is not personal or individual after all but is the same as the Self of all beings: the undifferentiated Light of Consciousness. We proposed that the logic of this semantic shift was as follows: possession by the power or energy of a deity is clearly a kind of spiritual experience, and when that power becomes non-specific (i.e. God's power instead of a specific power of a specific deity) it is a small step from there to understanding (*sam*)*āveśa* as a general term for spiritual experience; and in a totally nondual yet theistic view, by definition, *every* experience is a spiritual experience. Therefore, in Utpaladeva's interpretation, enlightenment is simply the recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) that God already has "entered" you, indeed *is* you, and every cognition and action is and always has been an expression of His power. As an aside, we noted that Kṣemarāja took this teaching even further, applying it not only to sentient beings but to everything: "Nothing whatever can be manifest without being penetrated by (or immersed in) the ultimately real Light of Consciousness (*pāramārthika-prakāśāveśam*)" (p. 394). Finally, probably taking some delight in startling his readers, Utpaladeva proposed a novel understanding of the nature of *sādhana*: that it is the act of "possessing" Śiva. In other words, just as Śiva has possessed himself of these physical forms, any of us may in turn possess ourselves of Śiva's expanded nature by penetrating into it, stage by stage, thereby acquiring His full power; for the only difference between the average embodied being and what most people call God is one of degree, not of quality.

The ultimate apotheosis of a word, then: for these authors, everything is *āveśa*-ed. Everything is penetrated by God. The first movement has already occurred, and the second is up to each individual penetrated with awareness: to return the favor by penetrating into the very heart of the nature of that awareness, completing the complementarity that Abhinavagupta called *āveśyāveśaka-bhāvaḥ*.

The South Asian vision of selfhood

What have we learned here? Certainly that *samāveśa*, however interpreted, is central to Tantric discourse; and that, by extension, spiritual experience (or rather, convincing evidence of it) is requisite for membership in a Tantric community—and the more esoteric the community, the more that requisite is emphasized. But we have also learned much about a South Asian understanding of selfhood that is not revealed in the Brahmanical texts with their vision of an inviolable, unchanging monadic self. The selfhood revealed by the Tantric materials is, as we have noted, not only mutable and fluid but also porous and permeable: it can overlap and intermingle with other beings, powers, and energies. Selfhood is never single, and subjectivity is always inescapably intersubjective: on this view, we share ourselves with other beings or other aspects of Being, whether we know it or not. Since human persons in constant interaction with their environment will never

successfully erect an impermeable psychic barrier around themselves, and since all attempts to do so will necessarily be fraught with anxiety (*śāṅkā*) as one compulsively patrols that artificial boundary, the question of real significance for a *tāntrika* becomes: who or what are you going to share yourself with? Self-induced salutary possession is really nothing more (or less) than choosing to share one's self with a deity or divine power that has the qualities that one seeks to internalize. Indeed, it is the most powerful way to attain those qualities. Thus the Tantric self is multidimensional, multivalent, and polysemous, yet it has an integrity as well, for in essence it is a field of awareness that, however much it is colored by different experiences or influxes of energy, still retains certain essential characteristics: its autonomy, its porosity, its dynamism, and its capacity for enjoying self-awareness (ĪPK 1.4.13-14). Whatever form it has contracted into, whether compelled by influences it considers foreign or not, it retains the capacity to release that contraction and expand into back into the domain of infinite possibilities. As it cognizes and absorbs various sentient and insentient phenomena that arise and subside within it, it oscillates dynamically (*spandana*, *sphurattā*) between contraction into particularity and expansion into possibility, becoming active (*udita*) and quiescent (*śānta*) in turn. This capacity of consciousness to remain aware while being dynamic and porous, and remain dynamic while being aware of itself, is its essential feature.

We here argue that this permeable, porous, and mutable self is simply a philosophical refinement of the dominant discourse of selfhood in South Asia. The literature of nondual Tantra presents a vision of selfhood that better accords with the behavior of South Asian religious agents, and makes sense of a wide range of those behaviors, from the purity/impurity obsessions of *brāhmaṇas* to the *nyāsa* rites of *tāntrikas* to the exorcistic rites of experts in *bhūtavidyā*. We might think that Fred SMITH is overstating the case when he calls possession “perhaps the region’s most widespread form of spiritual expression” (2006: 597), but if we understand that it is not possession narrowly conceived, but the principle of the *shared self* that he means to invoke, then we can whole-heartedly agree. The present study becomes particularly valuable to students of South Asian cultures when we realize that it is in Tantric Śaivism specifically that this concept of the shared self is most prominent, at least within the context of the vast body of Sanskrit literature. It is in fact a master key to understanding so much of South Asian culture.

The real nature of “Tantra”

The present study has also improved our understanding of what Tantra actually is, or rather what distinguishes it from other streams of South Asian religion. We have been using the abstract term Tantra to denote the teaches and practices taught in the Śaiva (and Śākta-Śaiva) *tantras* and *āgamas* and their commentaries, teachings and practices that were available only to those who had taken Tantric initiation as taught in those scriptures. In a wider sense, we can take Tantra to denote the esoteric traditions of all the Indian religions that were influenced by these innovations within Śaivism: thus Tantra collectively can denote Tantric Śaivism, Tantric Buddhism, and Tantric Vaiṣṇavism. What gave Tantra (so defined) its specificity in the medieval period was:

- a) the liberative initiation ritual (called *nirvāṇa-dīkṣa* in Śaivism) that utilized an innovative technology featuring the entrainment of mantra, breath, ritual gesture, and visualization in elaborate sequences that operated in terms of both theologically defined micro-macrocosmic correlations and complex cosmologies that were mapped onto initiatory diagrams called *maṇḍalas*;
- b) yogic practices for daily *sādhana* that utilized the same ritual technologies and recapitulated the actions of the initiation rite, gradually displacing the socio-culturally constructed self in favor of identity with the Deity; and
- c) specific yogic and charismatic techniques that triggered altered states of consciousness in initiates, including but not limited to experiences construed as being the penetration of the layers of one's being by the energy of the Deity and/or the dissolution of limited selfhood into the Deity itself.

These are the central features that define Tantra and that distinguish it from other forms of Indian religion, in sum: a) liberating initiation, b) innovative yogic technologies, and c) *samāveśa*. It is simply not that case that, as David WHITE has it, “sexualized ritual practice is the sole truly distinctive feature of South Asian Tantric traditions” (2003: 13). The above features are distinctive, especially if one realizes that these specific technologies (*maṇḍalas*, *mudrās*, *uccāra*, *bīja-mantras*, etc.) are only found in non-tantric religious spheres due to Tantric influence (*pace* WHITE 2003: 13). WHITE does state that sexual practices “never constituted the mainstream of Tantric or Kaula practice,” but he considers that the mainstream practice in question was “satisfying multiple and petulant divinities by feeding them” (2003: 14). Certainly gratifying one's mantra-deity with offerings was central to daily Tantric practice (see p. 70 *supra*), but the idea of gratifying “multiple petulant divinities” can only apply to the Kaula Yoginī cult, which was not in fact part of the mainstream of the tradition (SANDERSON's distinction of the Kulamārga from the Mantramārga is relevant here). But there are deeper misunderstandings at work here, for WHITE effectively takes this Yoginī cult to be the whole of the tradition. He posits a distinction between “hard-core” Tantra (which is original, in his view) and “soft-core” Tantra (which is a bowdlerized, aestheticized, and “semanticized” version of the “hard core”) and then asserts that

In both cases, the female Yoginī ‘seizes’ or ‘possesses’ her counterpart. However, whereas in the former case [the “soft core” of the Tantric mainstream], she simply preys upon her human victim (*paśu*), in the latter [the Kaula “hard core”], the male partner takes an active role, inducing a sort of ‘mutual possession’ (*samāveśa*) in a sexual mode. (2003: 14).

The present study has surveyed virtually all the relevant Śaiva literature for the first six centuries of the documented existence of Tantra and did not turn up a single piece of evidence that corresponds to what WHITE describes here. First, we never saw any mutual possession involving Yoginīs, let alone “mutual possession in

a sexual mode.”⁹²⁵ Second, *samāveśa* almost never denoted sexual intercourse of any kind in our sources. Third, *samāveśa* means (lit.) thorough or complete entry (*samyag āveśana*), not mutual entry. Fourth, possession forms no part of the daily practice of the non-Kaula Tantrics (= WHITE’s “soft core,” as per 2003: 16). Fifth, we never saw the use of the term *graha(ṇa)* (“seize”) in connection with salutary possession. Sixth and seventh (the most egregious errors), Yoginīs are never invoked by non-Kaulas, nor do they “prey on” the Tantric practitioner, who by definition is not a *paśu*, since that term can only refer to non-initiates. In the latter assertion, WHITE is confusing Tantric propitiation of Yoginīs with occasional assertions in the literature that Yoginīs suck the vital essences from *paśus* (non-*tāntrikas*) (e.g., *Netratantra* ch. 20), an extraction said to be ritually imitated by certain extreme worshippers of Bhairava and Kālī described in the far-left scriptures (the JY and BY),⁹²⁶ accounts which he seems to conflate with fictional fantasy stories of Yoginīs such as those in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. Furthermore, even WHITE’s categories of “hard core” and “soft core” are confused, for he associates Abhinavagupta’s lineage with the latter category (2003: 14-15), even though Abhinavagupta himself strove mightily to defend and endorse the Kaula sexual practices, and did not bowdlerize them in the slightest, as can be seen in the rather explicit account of TĀ 29, which is the only Śaiva exegetical source to teach the sexual rite or *kulayāga*. Thus Abhinava’s practices did not “shade into those of orthoprax brahmanic ritual” (2003: 15) in any way. Finally, WHITE claims that the “soft-core” practice of the “high-caste Hindu practitioners” is greatly outnumbered by the “Tantric mainstream” (Ibid.), a statement based on the erroneous (and completely unsupported) notion that the “cults of (predominantly female) village deities whose worship was often conducted by the socially and culturally marginalized” were, by that very definition, Tantric cults (2003: 5). This obviously neglects the central feature of the Tantric tradition, that of initiation without regard to caste into specifically circumscribed communities of spiritual elites who performed a rigorous daily ritual practice for their own benefit. Conflating Tantra with the worship of village deities not taught in Tantric texts allows one to say virtually anything one likes about “Tantra,” including that it was the “predominant religious paradigm . . . of the great majority of the inhabitants” of India (2003: 3)! There are countless other errors in WHITE’s book that we could unpack, but suffice to say that I agree with Hugh URBAN in his characterization of WHITE’s view of Tantra as “Kaulo-centric” and his view of Kaulism as “sexo-centric” (2006: 283).⁹²⁷

⁹²⁵ The closest approach to this might be the *Vijñāna-bhairava* verse (69) in which *śaktyāveśa* denotes sexual intercourse with a consort, but this is with a human woman not identified as a Yoginī in the text or its commentary.

⁹²⁶ See SANDERSON 1985: n89.

⁹²⁷ However, we should also note that WHITE gave a much more salient and historically grounded account of Tantra in 2000, when he defined it as “that body of beliefs and practices which, working from the principle that the material universe is nothing other than the concrete manifestation of the divine energy of the godhead that creates and maintains that universe, seeks to appropriate and channel that energy, within the human microcosm, in creative and emancipatory ways” (2000: xxiii). The main problem with this definition, however, is that the key clause beginning “the material universe” excludes the Śaiva

Criticizing other scholars' misunderstandings is not something I take any pleasure in. The purpose of it here is to point out how far the discipline of Religious Studies has to go in understanding Tantra (for WHITE is considered a foremost scholar of the Hindu Tantra by many in that discipline), and how well served they would be by putting aside their assumption about what Tantra is and examining the careful philological work being done on Tantric texts and inscriptions. Such work, while painstaking, slowly builds up a picture of things that constitutes a significantly closer approach to whatever degree of historical truth can be determined from textual materials.

EPILOGUE: on subitist initiation and modern survivals of Tantric *śaktipāta*

We have been using the term “subitist” as defined in n85: an instantaneous apprehension or transmission, or a spontaneous realization. This usage of the term brings it back toward the meaning it has in cognitive science (whence it originated), as opposed to being indebted to the usage of the word in Buddhist studies, where it has been made to mean “sudden enlightenment.”⁹²⁸ Subitist initiation, though overshadowed by ritual initiation, was not a late development in the tradition; we first see it in the *Niśvāsa's mūla-sūtra* (c. 500 CE; see n693). It is also taught in the *Jayadratha-yāmala's* fourth *ṣaṭka* (c. 900 CE), which tells us that in the Krama way, the guru's glance leads one to union, paying reverent attention to his ordinary speech leads to eternal brahman, and whoever he touches while in an elevated state is liberated.⁹²⁹ But the *locus classicus* for the idea of subitist initiation during the second millennium was probably the late Saiddhāntika (!) *Cintyāgama*, which mentions seven kinds of initiation, among which four are subitist (*cākṣuṣī sparśa-dīkṣā ca vācīkī mānasī tathā*, 13.40ab) and the rest are not (*śāstrī ca yoga-dīkṣā ca hauṭrīty ādir anekadhā*, 40cd). This list of four—initiation through a look, touch, word, or thought—are those cited by modern Hindu *sampradāyas*. So the notion of subitist initiation paved the way, it would seem, for what we see in *sampradāyas* of the modern period, in which *śaktipāta* and *dīkṣā* have become synonymous.⁹³⁰ How did

Siddhānta, which as noted is not only Tantric, but constitutes the broad base of the tradition (*sāmānya-śāstra*), establishing the ritual forms, yogas, and even doctrines which other lineage-groupings nuance or deviate from in varying degrees.

⁹²⁸ There is no term for “sudden enlightenment” in Śaivism (the nearest approach is *sāhasa-samādhi*), and, one could argue, no term for “enlightenment” either (only awakening, awareness, realization, etc.).

⁹²⁹ JY 4.4.87-89: *puroktāṃ vṛttim ālambya yasya yasyāvalokayet | taṃ taṃ nayati sāyojyaṃ vacas tv avitathaṃ mama || atra krame yadāsaktaḥ kuryād vāg-vyavahāraṃ | yasya yasya sadaivaṃ hi taṃ nayed brahma śāśvatam || atrārūḍhaḥ sparśayeta yaṃ yaṃ vā prīta-cetasā | sa mukto nātra sandehaḥ satyaṃ satyaṃ gaṇāmbike ||*. (Thanks to Somadeva VASUDEVA for the reference.) Cf. the parallel at TĀ 15.545-6. Note that in the JY passage, some ritual is required: it is only subsequent to the rite taught in the previous section (*puroktāṃ vṛttim ālambya*) that the guru's glance is sufficiently empowered to initiate.

⁹³⁰ See Swāmi Viṣṇu Tīrth's Hindi work *Śaktipāta: Kuṇḍalinī Mahāyoga* (sūtra 5 of which is *śaktipāta eva dīkṣā*, p. 38) and his English *Devātma Shakti* (ch. 9). Viṣṇu Tīrth was a huge influence on Swāmi Mukṭānanda, whose teaching (which he also characterized as a *kuṇḍalinī*

this happen? Subitist initiation in the classical tradition is best characterized as a transmission (*saṅkramaṇa*) or a psychic “piercing” (*vedha*) and thus was conceptually close to *śaktipāta*, with the only difference being that the former comes from the guru and the latter direct from Śiva. But as the charismatic guru, already central in the Kaula context (as the JY citation above shows), rose in importance in Tantra and throughout the Indian religions in the late medieval and early modern periods, the idea that Śiva acts through the guru gave way to the notion that the guru is Śiva embodied (as exemplified by the KuT, ch. 13), and at some point he came to be seen as the origin point of *śaktipāta*.⁹³¹ If Śiva and the guru are not distinct, not just in ritual contexts but in general, then the collapse of *śaktipāta* and *dīkṣā* becomes inevitable. Of course, even in the earlier tradition, one is supposed to see one’s guru as Śiva as a spiritual practice or a point of discipline (*samaya*), but that does not entail the view that *śaktipāta* is bestowed by the guru (we do not see the latter idea in any premodern Sanskrit source). But by the twentieth century, *śaktipāta* certainly is seen as something bestowed by a *siddha* guru (Viṣṇu Tīrth 1948: 79, using the term in the sense of “perfected” not “possessing *siddhis*”), and as equivalent to *dīkṣā* (hence Viṣṇu Tīrth’s phrase “shaktipāt deekshā”). We see this development exemplified in M.P. PAṆḌIT’S 1916 (incomplete) translation of the KuT, in which he renders *yogyāḥ śaktinipātītāḥ* (14.27b) as “competent due to transmission of the guru’s shakti” (AVALON 1965: 103), despite the fact that the original text does not mention the guru at all, and undoubtedly sees *śaktipāta* as coming direct from Śiva.

When considering the survival and alteration of the doctrines of *śaktipāta*, *dīkṣā*, and *samāveśa* in the modern period, the most salient lineage is the Tīrtha Siddhayoga lineage founded by Swāmī Gaṅgādhara Tīrth in the nineteenth century (see Appendix Three). His twentieth century successors published voluminous writing on the subject,⁹³² mostly in Hindi, though in English we have Viṣṇu Tīrth’s *Devātma Shakti* (1948), based in part on his teacher’s Hindi *Mahāyoga Vijñāna*. In this work, he writes:

Shaktipāt can be affected by sight, touch, *mantra*, or simply by the will power of the master; in the last case it works at long distances as well. Shaktipāt is in a way an injection of *Shakti*. The master injects in the astral body of the initiated a current of psychic power . . . by the touch of his hands, by casting a look or by speaking out to him some word or words called *mantras*, or any one of God’s holy names, or simply by a mere thought. (1948: 77)

Here we see the fourfold classification of subitist initiation found in the *Cintyāgama* and many earlier Kaula sources. The correspondence is so close, it calls for further research to demonstrate whether this constitutes a modern revival on the basis of earlier textual sources, or whether these teachings and practices

mahāyoga) popularized the term “Shaktipāt” in the West, for which see BROOKS et. al. (1997), *Meditation Revolution: A History and Theology of the Siddha Yoga Lineage*, esp. MULLER-ORTEGA’S article, “Shaktipāt: The Initiatory Descent of Power” (ch. 6 *op. cit.*).

⁹³¹ See Viṣṇu Tīrth, *Devātma Shakti* (1948: 79-80).

⁹³² For a bibliography, see

<http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/~keutzer/kundalini/publications.html> .

actually survived the intervening centuries. Viṣṇu Tīrth alludes to the KuT account of *vedha-dīkṣā* when he says:

Shaktipāt Deekshā is also known as *Vedha Deekshā*. The term *vedha* literally means piercing through, because the Guru rouses the kundalini and makes Her pierce through the six *chakras*. (1948: 78)

Further research is needed to pinpoint when the identification of *śaktipāta* with the rousing of *kuṇḍalinī* came about, for it is not found in the original Tantric sources. However, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that we saw references to the rise of *kuṇḍalinī*, a term rarely mentioned by Abhinavagupta, in the context of *vedha-dīkṣā* in TĀ 29 (see Appendix Two).

Just as the Tantric sources were concerned with signs of *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa*, Viṣṇu Tīrth presents us a list of signs (drawing on his guru's *Mahāyoga Vijñāna*), but one which is vastly enlarged over the lists in the Sanskrit sources, this being only an excerpt:

“When your body begins trembling, hair stand on roots, you laugh or begin to weep without your wishing, your tongue begins to utter deformed sounds, you are filled with fear or see frightening visions, semen passes out, think that the Kundalini Shakti has become active. . . . When with the closing of eyelids your body falls to the ground . . . the body squatted on the floor crosslegged begins to jump from place to place like a frog . . . hands may not be lifted even if so desired . . . know that *Yogamaya* Kundalini has come into action. When your mind gets influenced spiritually as if some spirit has taken possession of your body and under that influence different postures of yoga are involuntarily performed, without the least pain or fatigue and you feel increasingly buoyant, and simultaneously strange sort of breathing exercises start, think that the Divine Power of Kundalini has come into action. . . . your speech begins to utter sounds like those of animals, birds and frogs or of a lion . . . you feel intoxicated without taking any drug . . . When you are in meditation, future unfolds its secrets to you or the hidden meaning of scriptures . . . you acquire an insight into the abstruse meaning of the works on spiritual science even at their first glance . . . understand then that Kundalini the bestower of *siddhis* has come into action.” (1948: 103-5)

In this rather astonishing list, we see many signs that also appeared in the *Timirodghāṭana*, *Ūrmikaulārṇava*, *Mālinīvijayottara*, etc, such as *kampa*, *romāñca*, *stobha*, *pāta*, etc. The metaphor of spirit possession is even invoked. There are many more signs detailed by the author, such as spontaneous poetry and glossolalia. Some of these signs closely resemble signs of madness in the Āyurvedic materials, and the relation between the symptoms of madness, signs of *āveśa*, and signs of extreme *bhakti* in South India is a desideratum of further research. Curiously, the emphasis in VIṢṆU TĪRTH's work is on signs that were, in the original tradition, associated with (*sa*)*āveśa*, not *śaktipāta*, but the latter term is exclusively (and pervasively) used by VIṢṆU TĪRTH and his successors. We have here, then, an interesting conflation of

Kaula spontaneous religiosity (*sāhasa-samādhi*, *sahaja-yoga*) emphasizing phenomenological experience (*sākṣātkāra*) and more mainstream Hinduism, for unlike Abhinavagupta, Viṣṇu Tīrth asserts that if you have not been able to receive *śaktipāta* from a Guru capable of giving it, you can increase your receptivity through pious deeds, religious acts, and selfless service.⁹³³

In the early 1960s (*saṃvat* 2019 *vikramī*), Shivom Prakāś Brahmacārī (later known as Swāmī Shivom Tīrth, the successor of Viṣṇu Tīrth) published *Śrī-Nārāyaṇa-upadeśāmṛta: Śaktipāta-pravartaka paramahaṃsa svāmī śrī Nārāyaṇa-tīrtha-deva jī mahārāja kī saṅkṣipta jīvanī evaṃ upadeśa*, which was, as the title states, an account of the life and teachings of Nārāyaṇ Tīrth (1870–1935), his *parameṣṭhī guru* (teacher’s teacher’s teacher). Though my Hindi is extremely poor, it is clear that in this work Shivom legitimates Nārāyaṇ Tīrth’s teaching of *śaktipāt dīkṣā* with reference to the *Kulārṇava-tantra*’s account of *vedha-dīkṣā* (he quotes KuT 14.64–65 on p. 54). Thus he sees the subitist varieties of the latter as equivalent to *śaktipāt*. The KuT citation he gives is that of the Five (+1) States; so the signs originally explicitly associated with *samāveśa* are now signs of *tīvra-śaktipāta*. Thus the Tīrtha Siddhayoga lineage conflated and collapsed together the concepts of *śaktipāta*, *dīkṣā*, *samāveśa*, and the rise of *kuṇḍalinī*, and furthermore effectively elided the agency of Śiva, making the guru the bestower of *śaktipāt/dīkṣā* (= *vedha-dīkṣā* of TĀ 29 and KuT 14). This conflation, and the loss of the many subtle but important distinctions among these various terms, is probably to be seen as part and parcel of the general contraction of the intellectual/doctrinal dimension of the tradition during the period of Muslim and British rule. However, as noted above, the number of signs of *śaktipāt(a)* has actually expanded to a baroque degree in Viṣṇu Tīrth’s account.

Also in the early 1960s, Swāmī Muktānanda of Ganeshpurī (1908–82), a disciple and successor to Bhagavān Nityānanda (both originally from the South Kanara district) adopted wholesale the terminology of the Tīrtha Siddhayoga lineage (even branding his own teaching Siddhayoga), and enthusiastically recommended Viṣṇu Tīrth’s *Devātma Shakti* and other works to his students until he began publishing his own books on the subject of *śaktipāt* and the guru-disciple relationship.⁹³⁴ Muktānanda defined *śaktipāt* this way (translated from the original Hindi by Swāminī Prajñānandā and Swāminī Cidvilāsānandā respectively):

For countless ages, *shaktipāt* has been used as a secret means of initiation by the great sages. To transmit one’s own glory and luster of divine enlightenment into a disciple and give him an instantaneous, direct experience of Brahman, the Eternal Spirit, is the secret meaning of *shaktipāt*. (1994c: 13)

⁹³³ To be more accurate, Abhinavagupta asserts that none of these can cause *śaktipāta* to occur (just as no impious act can prevent it, if it is divine will), but he seems willing to allow for the possibility that they create more favorable conditions for the Descent to occur, while stopping short of explicitly saying so: see p. 265 *supra*.

⁹³⁴ Such recommendations are recorded in *Conversations with Swami Muktānanda: the Early Years* (SYDA, 1998), originally published as *Paramārtha Kathā Prasang*; see also PRAKĀŚĀNANDA 2007: 146.

Śaktipāt is simply another name for the full grace of the supreme Guru, the blessing of a Siddha, or *śāmbhava* initiation. People who have experienced it call it the awakening of the Kundalini. (1994a: 91)

All our key terms appear here: *śaktipāta*, initiation, transmission, and grace are wholly conflated as the cause, and direct experience of the Absolute is the effect. It is noteworthy that Mukṭānanda appears to allude to the *Kulārṇava-tantra*'s classification of subitist initiation as *śāmbhavī dikṣā* (14.56). SHARF (2000) argues that twentieth-century Asian spiritual teachers' emphasis on "direct experience" is due to Western influence. But Mukṭānanda had no Western education and neither read nor spoke any English at all at the time of writing the above words, so we can discount the possibility of influence by English authors like John WOODROFFE. His textual sources were Hindi translations of the Śaiva texts, and the writings of the Tīrtha lineage.

Mukṭānanda made the concept of *śaktipāt dikṣā*—which he believed himself to have received from Nityānanda (though the latter did not use that term)—central to his teaching. He claimed that as a *siddha guru*, he could bestow *śaktipāt* on an aspirant through a look, a word, or a touch, or it could even take place through him without his conscious volition (1994d: 60). This *śaktipāt* awakened the aspirant's *kuṇḍalinī* (assuming he was sufficiently ripe), triggering signs such as those described at length in *Devātma Shakti*. And these signs were in fact exhibited by Mukṭānanda's disciples in large numbers.⁹³⁵

Years prior to becoming a guru, Mukṭānanda's first contact with the Tīrtha lineage is described in dramatic terms in his spiritual autobiography, *Play of Consciousness*,⁹³⁶ in which he relates that when the intense and strange experiences of awakened *kuṇḍalinī* began to make him doubt his sanity, he by chance discovered a copy of *Mahāyoga Vijñāna* in the farmer's hut that he had been gifted for his *sādhana* (PRAKĀŚĀNANDA 2007: 78). Its account of the signs of *śaktipāt* enormously reassured Mukṭānanda that what was happening to him was beneficial; and it was doubtless in this work that he first discovered the word *śaktipāt*.⁹³⁷ Indeed, Mukṭānanda's later interest in the scriptures of Tantric Śaivism was probably sparked by the discovery that they were the source for the word.⁹³⁸

Today, "shaktipat" is ubiquitous, primarily due to Mukṭānanda, who conducted three major world tours from 1970-80, in which he it is claimed he gave *śaktipāt* to hundreds of thousands of people in "intensive" meditation retreats. The

⁹³⁵ The present author (as an eight-year-old child) was brought by his parents to meet Mukṭānanda and witnessed firsthand many of these bizarre signs, called *kriyās* in Mukṭānanda's Siddhayoga, which usually took place in intensive meditation sessions. Those displaying them invariably claimed that they were spontaneous and involuntary, and they certainly seemed free of artifice on the many occasions I witnessed them.

⁹³⁶ Originally published in the West as *Guru* by Harper and Row in 1969, and in India as *Chitshakti Vilās* in 1972.

⁹³⁷ See Mukṭānanda's *Play of Consciousness* (1994), pp. 114-116.

⁹³⁸ It was largely due to his influence that Motilal Banarsidass has undertaken the publication of so many books on "Kashmir Shaivism" and partially due to his influence that SUNY Press has published many of the most important scholarly books on Tantric Śaivism. Mukṭānanda's most "Śaivite" books are *Secret of the Siddhas* and *Nothing Exists that is Not Śiva*.

following is an “experience report” of one person who received *śaktipāt* from Mukṭānanda:

On the last day of the Intensive during meditation, I experienced a piercing of the lower *cakra*, and it was like a laser beam, just a tiny point—very, very pointed like a laser beam.⁹³⁹ It was white and it went “shhhh” into that *cakra*. Well, . . . it was like an earthquake, and I started literally rumbling, like “bruuu” at the base of the spine. Then I saw a shaft, it was like a *śiva-liṅga*, but white—pure white—light at the base of my spine, beginning to push up my spine. The light was really exactly like the shape of a *śiva-liṅga*. It was a very powerful, solid light. It started pushing up my spine. At the second *cakra*, it found tremendous resistance to go through. I really started shaking up and down, very strongly. Then it finally got through and went very easily up until the heart *cakra*. There I felt resistance again, and pushed again, very, very forcibly. Then it moved up to the throat *cakra*. There again resistance and pushing, pushing, pushing. Then it got to the crown *cakra*, to the head *cakra*, and there it became tiny, little blue lights that were falling like a fountain out of the crown *cakra*. It was just pure bliss, just complete bliss. (MULLER-ORTEGA 1997: 415)

Such experiences were not atypical in Mukṭānanda’s Siddha Yoga. Needless to say, this account reminds us of the piercing of the *cakras* in *vedha-dīkṣā* as described in TĀ 29 (though that text did not form a part of the Siddha Yoga curriculum), as well as the Five States (*ānanda*, *kampa* etc.). Writing as a scholar-theologian in the context of the Siddha Yoga culture of Mukṭānanda’s successor (Swāminī Cidvilāsānandā), Paul MULLER-ORTEGA articulates this understanding of *śaktipāt*: “[it] involve[s] a fundamental spiritual transmission that carries a powerful and, in many cases, immediate experiential impact” (1997: 417) . . . “shaktipat is felt as an opening to an ongoing, intense, and highly positive journey into spirituality and the evolving transformation of life” (Ibid.: 415) . . . “if shaktipat is understood as a discrete initiatory even, it is an even with continuously operative and persistent consequences” (Ibid.: 418). The last two quotes certainly reflect the view of *śaktipāta* in the original Śaiva tradition, and the first reflects specifically that which was sought by the Kaulas. The point of these citations is not to argue for the “reality” of the phenomenon of *śaktipāta*, a point which the reader can consider for himself, but simply to illustrate that the terminology and concerns of the 1000+ year old tradition we have studied are very much alive and well in our era.

In fact, today, in both India and the West, the word “shaktipat” is part of the lexicon of several million individuals. On the internet one can easily find *śaktipāt* being offered by not only by Indian gurus, but by many American gurus as well, and even by a rabbi!⁹⁴⁰ Wikipedia (“the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit”) defines

⁹³⁹ Cf. the verse quoted by Jayaratha when introducing TĀ 29.236, which compares *vedha*, defined as piercing the *cakras* with the “central energy,” with a diamond drill piercing a jewel.

⁹⁴⁰ The latter claims that “shaktipat initiation” is equivalent to “S’micha m’shefa/Haniha” in the Judaic tradition, and that one can receive it simply by gazing at his picture online. See <http://treeoflifecenterus.com/gabriel-cousens-m-d/shaktipat/>.

“shaktipat” as “the conferring of spiritual ‘energy’ upon one person by another. *Shaktipat* can be transmitted with a sacred word or mantra, or by a look, thought or touch . . .”,⁹⁴¹ the fourfold subitist classification being well-established in the modern period. Again, the agency of the guru is primary in this popular understanding, but the article does go on to say that “*Saktipat* is considered an act of grace (*anugraha*) on the part of the guru or the divine.” The article even lists Abhinavagupta’s ninefold classification of *śaktipāta*. What the modern understanding has in common with the original tradition is that *śaktipāt(a)* is an experience of divine grace that triggers a spiritual awakening in a person, usually leading him to take a guru and a spiritual path, often with great zeal. In my 2007 article, I noted the startling similarity of the “signs” of *śaktipāta* and *samāveśa* that we have examined with signs of the Holy Spirit (including shaking, falling, and ‘drunkenness’) in some charismatic Christian groups that have no knowledge of these Asian ideas (2007: 293), pointing to the possibility that these phenomena may be in part rooted in human neurobiology, a possibility that I may take up in a future work.

⁹⁴¹ Accessed 5 August 2014.

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Appendix One: Translation of *Tantrāloka* 13.1-15
(with a large part of Jayaratha's commentary thereon)

The following translation is provisional at certain points.

*athādhikṛti-bhājanaṃ ka iha vā kathaṃ vety alam |
vivecayitum ucyate vividha-śaktipāta-kramaḥ || 1 ||*

Now, in order to discern either who is a worthy vessel [for initiation] and how [he becomes so], we will discuss the classification of different types of *śaktipāta*.

*tatra kecid iha prāhuḥ śaktipāta imaṃ vidhim |
taṃ pradarśya nirākṛtya svamataṃ darśayiṣyate || 2 ||*

On this subject, others have taught this sacred ceremony [of initiation] with reference to *śaktipāta*. Examining and refuting their views, we will demonstrate [the validity of] our doctrine.

Jayaratha's *viveka*—*nanv iha prakṛti-puruṣa-viveka-jñānān muktis tasya ca vairāgyādi
nimittam iti kim adṛṣṭasya śaktipātasya parikalpitenety*

Surely, here, liberation is due to the knowledge of the distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, and that is caused by renunciation and so on. What's the use of imagining this invisible *śaktipāta*?

*tatredaṃ drśyamānaṃ sat sukha-duḥkha-vimoha-bhāk |
viśamaṃ sat tathābhūtaṃ samaṃ hetuṃ prakalpayet || 3 ||
so 'vyaktaṃ tac ca sattvādi-nānārūpam acetanam |
ghaṭādivat kāryam iti hetur eko 'sya sā niśā || 4 ||*

This visible existence, which experiences happiness, misery, and delusion, is unequal and painful. Being of such a nature, one wants to postulate a cause that is equal, and that is the unmanifest [primordial materiality], insentient, having a manifold nature consisting of *sattva* and [*rajas* and *tamas*]. It is an effect, like a pot. Its sole cause is the Night (i.e. *Māyā*).

Jayaratha—*nanv evam asmākam iva prakṛtir māyaiva bhavatāṃ viśvakāraṇam astu kiṃ
tadadhiṣṭhātreśvareṇāpīty āśaṅkyāha*

Surely, then, this *prakṛti* of ours may be [considered as the same as] your *Māyā*, i.e. the cause of the universe. What then is the need for a superintending Lord as well? With this objection in mind, Abhinava writes:

*sā jaḍā kāryatādrūpyāt kāryaṃ cāsyāṃ sad eva hi |
kalādidharaṇīprāntaṃ jāḍyāt sā sūtaḥ 'kṣamā || 5 ||
teneśaḥ kṣobhayed enāṃ kṣobho 'syāḥ sūtiyogyatā |*

That [*Māyā*] is insentient, because its products are insentient; and its products always [constitute] *Kalā*[-*tattva*] down to Earth. Because of its insentience, it is unable to create [all this]. Therefore, the Lord must stimulate Her (i.e., *Māyā*), and this stimulation of it is capable of creating [the manifest universe].

Jayaratha—*nanu kāryajāḍyād yady api māyāyā api jāḍyaṃ tat kumbhakārasyaṅpi kumbhavat tat prasajed ity āśaṅkyāha*

Surely, though its products are insentient, why must *Māyā* be insentient, like a pot, though made by a potter [is insentient, when its maker is not]. With this objection in mind, he writes [the above verse].

Jayaratha—*evaṃ ca prakṛtipuruṣādivivekajñānād eva muktir na syād ity āveditam. na hīśvaraśaktipātam antareṇa tadvivekajñānam evodiyād iti*

Thus, liberation could not be due solely to the knowledge of the distinction of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The very knowledge of that distinction could not arise without the *śaktipāta* of the Lord.

pumṣaḥ prati ca sā bhogyam sūte 'nādīn pṛthagvidhān || 6 ||

And it produces experience for [all] the various beginningless beings (or individual souls).

Jayaratha—*nanu yady evaṃ tat puṃstvāviśeṣān muktāṅūnpraty api kiṃ na tat suvīteyāha*

[Objection:] As it is the case that there is no [essential] difference between these individual souls (*pumṣ*) and liberated souls (*muktāṅū*), why should it [i.e., experience in the manifest universe] not [be generated] for them [also]? He says:

nimittam karmasaṃskāraḥ sa ca teṣu na vidyate || 7 ||

iti cet karmasaṃskārābhāvas teṣāṃ kutaḥ kila |

[Some argue that] the cause [of this experience] is the subtle impressions of action (*karma-saṃskāra*)⁹⁴² and these are not present in these [liberated souls].

If this [be argued], [we say,] what is the reason for the absence of the subtle impressions of action in them?

Jayaratha—*kuta iti na kutaścid ity arthaḥ || yato na tāvad bhogāt karmakṣayaḥ | dvidhā hi bhogaḥ sambhāvvyate krameṇākrameṇa vā | tatra krameṇa bhoge karmāntaraprasaṅgo durnivāra iti kadācid api nāsyā kṣayaḥ syāt | akrameṇa punar eṣāṃ bhoga eva na bhavet | evaṃ hi karmaṇā kramaphaladānātmā svabhāva eva tyakto bhavet | na caitad ity ubhayathāpi na karmakṣayaḥ siddhyet | tad āha*

‘What is the reason’ is a rhetorical question: no reason is given. Whence, obviously, there is no [possibility] of exhausting *karma* through experience.⁹⁴³ (There will always be more *karma*, because experiencing its fruits generates further action, with its own consequences.) Experience [of *karma-phala*] may be conceived in two ways: sequential or immediate. Regarding those two, if experience is sequential, it is

⁹⁴² Note that “subtle impressions” of actions are simultaneously “subtle propensities” to further action.

⁹⁴³ “Experience” (*bhoga*), refers to “experience of the fruits of actions” (*karma-phala-bhoga*), i.e., karmic fruition or retribution.

difficult to avoid the undesired consequence of further *karma* [being generated]. Thus there is never [total] destruction of action (so the problem of liberated souls being free from actions still stands). But [in the case of] immediate [fruition of all action], the very experience of these actions is not possible [simultaneously]. In this way, actions would abandon their very intrinsic nature, which is to bear fruit in due sequence. And it is not the case [that they can abandon their essence]. Thus in neither of these ways may the destruction of *karmas* be accomplished. Then he says,

na bhogād anyakarmāmśaprasaṅgo hi duratyayaḥ || 8 ||
yugapat karmaṇām bhogo na ca yuktaḥ krameṇa hi |
phaled yat karma tat kasmāt svaṃ rūpaṃ samtyajet kvacit || 9 ||
jñānāt karmakṣayaś cet tat kuta īśvaracoditāt |
dharmād yadi kutaḥ so 'pi karmataś cet tad ucyatām || 10 ||

Not through experience [may *karma* be claimed to be destroyed], [because then] it would be difficult to avoid the undesired conclusion of further *karma* elements [being generated]. And it is not possible that the fruition of the actions [takes place] simultaneously, for why would action, which bears fruit sequentially, ever abandon its own nature? If [you say] that the destruction of *karmas* comes from knowledge, then [we say] from what [does that knowledge arise]? [If the reply be] because of the merit [deriving from religious practices that are known to be] enjoined by the Lord,⁹⁴⁴ [we ask] similarly, what is the cause of it? If [you say] from action (or rites), [then] that must be stated (i.e. what actions?).

Jayaratha—*atha: “jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna” ityādyuktyā yadi jñānāt karmakṣaya iṣyate taj jñāne 'pi kiṃ nimittam ity uktaṃ tat kuta iti | tasya hi ṣaṭ-ṣoḍaśa-padārtha-pariśīlanādy-aneka-prakāram anyair nimittam uktaṃ tat katarat tāvat tad eka-niyatam iti na jānīmaḥ | tatra seśvaramīmāṃsāvādādhikāreṇa tāvad āha—īśvaretyādi | dharmād ity apūrvādisabdavyapadeśyād yajetyādicodanālakṣaṇād arthād ity arthaḥ | tasyāpi kiṃ nimittam ity uktaṃ kutaḥ so 'pīti | karmata iti vihitaṃ hi karma kṣaṇikatvāc cirabhāvi phalaṃ dātum asamartham iti tatsiddhaye 'ntarā puṃsām saṃskāraviśeṣaḥ kalpanīyo yo dharmā ity apūrvam iti ca vyapadiśyate yadvaśād iyaṃ nikhilaiva krama-phala-vyavasthā siddhyet | yad āhuḥ —*

phalāya karma vihitaṃ kṣaṇikaṃ cirabhāvīne |

tatsiddhir nānyathety evam apūrvam adhigamyate || iti |

tad iti karma yena saṃskāra-dvārikā jñānāvāptiḥ syāt | ucyatām iti sākṣepaṃ praśnenātyantam asambhāvyatvaṃ sūcitam ||

Now [there is this quote]: “O Arjuna, the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes,” (*Gītā* 4.37) and so on. If, on the basis of this statement, the destruction of *karmas* through knowledge is argued, [then,] concerning that knowledge in turn, what is the cause? Thus he has said, ‘Then from what [does that knowledge arise]?’ For the cause has been stated by others to be of several kinds, such as constant study of the six or sixteen Categories [in the scriptures (*padārtha*)] and so on. So having said that (*tāvat*), we do not know which one of those is [here] being fixed upon [as

⁹⁴⁴ Alluding to *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* 1.1.2; see below. Another interpretation is “from the pious religious acts enjoined by the Lord.”

the specific cause]. There, addressing the authority of the school of the theistic *Mīmāṃsakas* (and *Naiyāyikas*), he first of all says ‘the Lord...’ and so on. ‘Because merit[orious practice]...,’ i.e. because of worthy goals that are known to be enjoined with statements like “let him sacrifice,” and are described with words like “unseen” (*apūrva*, the unseen results of the sacrifice).⁹⁴⁵ And what is the cause of it [this religious merit]? Addressing this, he said, ‘Similarly, what is the cause?’ ‘From action’, [it is replied by the opponent]. For enjoined action, due to its momentariness, is unable to bear fruit a long time in the future [due to there being no connective factor]. Thus for its accomplishment, a particular subtle impression within souls must be postulated, which is designated as *dharma* (in the sense of ‘merit’), and “unseen.” Because of it, the whole [metaphysical] law of actions and their results is established. About which they say:

“Enjoined action, [though] momentary, accomplishes a result far in the future. So in this way the learned infer [the existence of] *apūrva*, knowing that it could not be otherwise [without contravening scripture].” (source unknown)

‘That’ (towards the end of the verse) refers to action, by which one might obtain knowledge, through the subtle impression [left by the action]. ‘Let it be stated’: with this question, he sarcastically alludes to the total impossibility [of an effective rejoinder].

*na hi karmāsti tādrkṣaṃ yena jñānaṃ pravartate |
karmajātve ca taj jñānaṃ phalarāśau pated dhruvam || 11 ||*

Action is not of such a nature that it could catalyze knowledge. And if that knowledge did arise from action, it would surely fall among the mass of effects [of action].

Jayaratha—*co hetau | phalarāśau pated iti phalarūpaṃ bhaved ity arthaḥ*
And with reference to the cause: ‘it would surely fall among the mass effects’. It would have the nature of an effect—this is the meaning.

na ca karmāntaraphalena karmāntarasya prakṣayo nyāyā ity āha
Nor is it proper that the destruction of one action [could take place] by the fruition of another action. He says:

anyakarmaphalaṃ prācyam karmarāśiṃ ca kiṃ dahet | 12ab |
And why would the result of another action burn the mass of one’s previous karma?

Jayaratha—*evaṃ hi phalatvāviśeṣāt svargapaśvādirūpaṃ api phalaṃ jñānanakaṃ
karmāpi dahet ity āśayah ||*
Thus, because they are equally effects (lit., due to the non-difference with regard to result-ness), would [not] the fruit [of some other action], even heaven, livestock, etc. [by the same token have the power to] burn even the *karma* that brings about knowledge?—this is the sense.

⁹⁴⁵ Direct reference to *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* 1.1.2.

nanu karmaphalatvāviśeṣe 'pi tatheśvarecchāvaśāj jñānam eva karmāntaradāhakaṃ na svargapaśvādy apīty āśaṅkyāha

Surely [the objector states], though equally the effect of an action, because the will of the Lord is thus, knowledge alone may destroy other actions, unlike [the effects of other actions, such as] heaven, livestock, and so on. To address this doubt, he says:

*īśasya dveṣarāgādīśūnyasyāpi kathaṃ kvacit || 12 ||
tathābhisaṃdhir nānyatra bhedahetor abhāvataḥ |*

How could the Lord, though he is free of aversion, attachment, and so on, have this kind of a purpose (or: opinion) in one case and not in another case? [The objection is raised] because there is no reason for this difference.

Jayaratha—kvacid iti jñāne | anyatreti svargapaścādau | bhedahetor abhāvata iti | na hi rāgadveśādivirahabhāja īśvarasyaivaṃ kaścid viśeṣo 'sti yena vināpi nimittam ekaṃ dāhakatvenābhisaṃdadhyād itarac ca dāhyatveneti ||

‘In one case’: refers to knowledge (as a special kind of fruit). ‘In another case’ refers to [fruits of action such as] heaven, livestock, etc. ‘Because there is no reason for this difference.’ There is no preference whatsoever of this kind of the Lord, who is free of attachment, aversion, and so on, without which one would acknowledge [one] cause as the burner of one [karma], and another as the burner [of another karma].

na ca karmaphalatve 'pi jñānasyeśvarecchopanātam eva karmāntara-dāhakatvaṃ kiṃ tu yuktibalopanītam ity āha

Nor can the burning of one action be effected by the will of the Lord through knowledge, with respect to the fruit of another action. But rather, it is adduced through the strength of reason. He says:

*nanv itthaṃ pradahej jñānaṃ karmajālāni karma hi || 13 ||
ajñānasahakārīdaṃ sūte svargādikaṃ phalaṃ |
ajñānaṃ jñānato naśyed anyakarmaphalād api || 14 ||*

Surely, for the following reason, knowledge can destroy the matrices of action. For action, when accompanied by ignorance, produces its fruit, such as heaven and so on. Ignorance is destroyed due to knowledge, though it (the latter) is the fruit of another action.

iha tāvad anuṣṭhīyamānam agnihotrahanādīlakṣaṇaṃ karma kartary abodhe kārmaṃ tu ityādyukter ajñānasahakāritvaṃ eva tattatsvargādikaṃ phalaṃ janayed ajñānaṃ ca karmāntarahetumattayoditāj jñānān naśyed iti vastutaḥ sahakāryabhāvāt pratiruddhaphalajananasāmarthyam karma jāyata ity etāvad ucyata jñānaṃ karmajālāni pradahed iti ||

Here, then, ritual actions—such as the Agnihotra sacrifice—being carried out will give rise to the various results, such as heaven, only when assisted by ignorance, in accordance with such teachings as: “. . . but *kārma[mala]* pertains to the unawakened agent” (ĪPK 3.5). And ignorance can be destroyed by knowledge, which is taught as the effect of some other action. So in reality, the *karma* is no longer able to give rise

to its effect (lit., becomes one whose capacity to give rise to its effect has been blocked), because of the absence of the concomitant cause (i.e. ignorance). For this reason it is said that knowledge burns the networks of *karma*.

*nanu yadi nāma phaladānasahakāribhūtājñānanivartanadvāreṇa
niruddhaphalajananasāmarthyam karma sampādyate tad yatrājñānam ca na nivāryate
karma ca niṣphalīkriyate tatra kiṃ pratipattavyam ity āśaṅkyāha*
(Objection:) Surely, if indeed a *karma*'s capacity to give rise to its fruit is blocked by means of the cessation of the ignorance which is the necessary concomitant cause of bestowing the fruit [of *karma*], then how are we to understand that case (*tatra*) in which (*yatra*) ignorance is not blocked and a *karma* is rendered fruitless?⁹⁴⁶ With this doubt in mind, he says:

*nopavāsādikam cānyad duṣṭakarmāpahaṃ bhavet⁹⁴⁷ |
niṣphalīkurute duṣṭam karmety aṅgīkṛtam kila || 15 ||*

And/moreover, other [actions], such as fasting and the like (i.e. other forms of penance or *prāyashcitta*) would not [have the power to] remove tainted actions, and it is said that you accept that [they] can render tainted actions fruitless.

*iha khalv anyat smṛtyādiśāstrāntaroddiṣṭam upavāsādikam | ādiśabdād anaghatvādīty
evamprakāram karmaphalam duṣṭam bhavet | karmaphalavyavasthā tatrotsīded ity arthaḥ |
kila yato vināpy ajñānanivṛttim arthād upavāsādi prāyaścittakarma duṣṭam śvadaṃśādy-
ātma viruddham karma niṣphalīkurute pratiruddha-phalotpādanasāmarthyam karoty evam
karmavādibhir bhavadbhir evābhyupagatam | yac chātātapaḥ -- suvratam tu śunā daṣṭam
trirātram upavāsayet |*

Here indeed such fruits of *karma* [granted by] such [acts] as fasting and so on [the 'and so on' referring to other types of purification], taught in the *smṛtis* and other texts, would be ruined/refuted in this way. The [whole] system of action and its fruit would collapse in that case—this is the [intended] meaning. Whence they say, even without the cessation of knowledge, of course, fasting and so on—i.e. expiatory actions—renders fruitless—i.e. causes their capacity to give rise to their fruits to be blocked—bad actions, i.e. actions opposed [to one's goal], such as being bitten by a dog. This is accepted by you, who hold with the theory of *karma*. As said in the *Śātātapa* – “One should one a person who has been observed his vow but has been bitten by a dog to fast for three days.”

tan naitad yuktam ajñānavivartanadvāreṇa karma niṣphalīkriyate na veti dūradūrā cintā
This is not right. One could go on thinking forever about whether or not a *karma* is rendered fruitless by means of eliminating ignorance.

⁹⁴⁶ E.g., in the case of one performing a sacrifice who is bitten by a dog and thus rendered impure, despite the fact that he followed all the rules. According to one of the *smṛtikāras*, the *yajamāna* must fast for three days in this circumstance. Such act eliminates the capacity of the dog-bite to give rise to its (impure) fruit.

⁹⁴⁷ *nopavāsādikam cānyad duṣṭakarmāpahaṃ bhavet* diag. conj. SANDERSON : *upavāsādikam cānyad duṣṭakarmaphalam bhavet* Ed. Jayaratha's reading is *duṣṭam karmaphalam bhavet*, “the [capacity of] fasting and the like to give their fruit would be ruined’, but this is very awkward.

Appendix Two: partially annotated translation of *Tantrāloka* 29.236-278b

*sadya eva tu bhogepsoṛ yogāt siddhatamo guruḥ |
kuryāt sadyas tathābhīṣṭa-phala-daṃ vedha-dīkṣaṇam || 236 ||*
But for one who wishes to attain enjoyments (*bhoga*) immediately, a guru who is totally perfected (*siddha-tama*) through yoga should perform the “penetration-initiation” (*vedha-dīkṣā*), which immediately grants results in accordance with one’s desire.

*vedha-dīkṣā ca bahudhā tatra tatra nirūpitā |
sā cābhyāsavatā kāryā yenordhvordhva-praveśataḥ || 237 ||*
Initiation by penetration is explained in various places (i.e. scriptures) as being of many kinds. It must be done by one who is practiced [in yoga] so that [the initiand] may enter higher and higher [centers].

*śiṣyasya cakra-sambheda-pratyayo jāyate dhruvaḥ |
yenāṇimādīkā siddhiḥ śrī-mālāyāṃ ca coditā || 238 ||
ūrdhva-cakra-daśālābhe piśācāveśa eva sā |*
There arises for the student certain evidence⁹⁴⁸ of the piercing of the *cakras*, by which the [supernatural] attainments beginning with “atomization” (*aṇimā*) [come about]. And it is taught in the sacred *Garland* (i.e. the *Kularatna-mālā*) that when the state of the higher center[s] is not attained, that [supernatural power] is actually [the result of] possession by a demon (*piśāca*).⁹⁴⁹

*mantra-nāda-bindu-śakti-bhujāṅgama-parātmikā || 239 ||
ṣoḍhā śrī-gahvare vedha-dīkṣoktā parameśinā |*
Initiation by penetration is taught by the Supreme Lord in the sacred *Gahvara* (i.e. the *Kulagahvara*) to be of six kinds: *mantra*, sound (*nāda*), point (*bindu*), power (*śakti*), cobra (*bhujāṅga*), and supreme (*para*).

(1. *mantra-vedha* or MANTRA-PENETRATION)
*jvālākulaṃ sva-śāstroктаṃ cakram aṣṭarakādīkam || 240 ||
dhyātvā tenāsya hṛc-cakra-vedhanān mantra-vedhanam |*
Meditating on a circle of flaming [*śaktis*], with eight rays or [whatever number is] specified in his own authoritative text,⁹⁵⁰ [he then] pierces the heart-center of [the disciple] with it, because of which it is [called] “mantra-penetration.”⁹⁵¹

⁹⁴⁸ DUPUCHE (2003: 325) notes that *pratyaya* probably refers to an *āveśa* experience, but the primary referent of *pratyaya* must be *aṇimādīkā*, though given v. 239ab, there clearly is a connection with *āveśa* as well.

⁹⁴⁹ See n909 above.

⁹⁵⁰ Or one may take the phrase *svaśāstroкта* as more generally applying to the whole visualization.

⁹⁵¹ It seems probable that particular *mantras* are visualized on the eight spokes and the center of the wheel.

(2. *nāda-vedha* or SOUND-PIERCING)

ākāraṃ navadhā dehe nyasya saṃkramayet tataḥ || 241 ||

nyāsa-yogena śiṣyāya dīpyamānaṃ mahārcaṣam |

pāśa-stobhāt tatas tasya para-tattve tu yojanam || 242 ||

Placing the phoneme ‘ā’ on his body in nine ways (i.e. on the nine apertures [J: *randhra*), he should then transmit it, blazing with a great lustre, to the disciple by the process (*yoga*) of mantric installation (*nyāsa*). Then, because of the “paralysis” of the [disciple]’s bonds, he is unified with the Supreme Reality.⁹⁵²

iti dīkṣottare dr̥ṣṭo vidhir me śambhunoditaḥ |

nādoccāreṇa nādākhyāḥ sṛṣṭi-krama-niyogataḥ || 243 ||

Thus is taught in the *Dīkṣottara* the ritual explained to me by [my own guru] Śambhu[-*nātha*]. Due to employing the order of creation (J: *nādiphānta*) in the enunciation (*uccāra*) of the sound-vibration (*nāda*), it is called [penetration by] sound.

†nādena vedhayec cittaṃ nāda-vedha udīritaḥ† |

He should penetrate the mind [of the disciple] with sound. It is called “penetration by sound.”⁹⁵³

(3. *bindu-vedha* or POINT-PENETRATION)

kanda-sthāna-gataṃ⁹⁵⁴ cittaṃ bhrū-madhya-patha-saṃsthitam || 244 ||

hṛl-lakṣye vā mahesāni binduṃ jvālākula-prabham |

tena saṃvedhayet⁹⁵⁵ sādhyam bindvākhyo 'yaṃ prakīrtitaḥ || 245 ||

Awareness [should be centered] in the place of the “bulb” (*kanda*), [or] situated in the [central] channel midway between the eyebrows, or in the focus-point (*lakṣya*) of the heart, O Great Queen.⁹⁵⁶ [Meditating upon] the Point [in any of these three places] with a radiance full of fire, he should penetrate [awaken?] the *sādhaka*-to-be with it. This is known by the name “[penetration by] the Point.”

(4. *śakti-vedha* or POWER-PENETRATION; the following is SANDERSON’S hypothetical reconstruction of a problematic passage.⁹⁵⁷)

śakti-śaktimad-uccārā⁹⁵⁸ gāntoccāreṇa⁹⁵⁹ sundari |

śṛṅgātakāsana-sthaṃ tu kuṭilaṃ kuṇḍalākṛtim || 246 ||

⁹⁵² J cites a verse that explicitly considers *nāda-vedha* as a means of purifying the *varṇādhvan* and thus as a form of liberating *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*. Cf. *Kulārṇava-tantra* 14.42-45 (*varṇamayī dīkṣā*).

⁹⁵³ Some kind of textual corruption is present here; perhaps a marginal note has crept in, or else something has dropped out.

⁹⁵⁴ *kandasthāna*- em. SANDERSON : *bindusthāna*- Ed.

⁹⁵⁵ *saṃvedhayet* em. SANDERSON : *sambodhayet* Ed.

⁹⁵⁶ There is possible loss of text at this point; note that Jayaratha must supply *bhāvayitvā* to make sense of the passage. The use of a vocative shows that Abhinava is quoting a scriptural source, so it is probable that this whole section is quoted from the *Kulagahvara*, *Dīkṣottara*, and/or *Kularatnamālā*.

⁹⁵⁷ When we read the passage together in Leipzig in 2010.

⁹⁵⁸ *śaktiśaktimad*- conj. em. SANDERSON : *śaktaṃ śaktimad*-

⁹⁵⁹ *gānta*- conj. em. SANDERSON : *gandha*- Ed. But see n964 below.

*anuccāreṇa coccārya vedhayen nikhilaṃ jagat |
evaṃ bhramara-vedhena śākta-vedha udāhṛtaḥ || 247 ||*

Due to enunciation (*uccāra*) of the ‘Power-holder’ (i.e. Śiva, the phoneme H) and the ‘Power’ (the phoneme s) with the enunciation of the *gānta* (the phoneme KH), curved (R?⁹⁶⁰) in the shape of an earring (PH⁹⁶¹), O beautiful one, on the throne of the triangle⁹⁶² (the phoneme E). Enunciating [this mantra] without enunciation [at the end] (i.e. with nasal enunciation alone, i.e. M),⁹⁶³ he should penetrate the whole world [of the disciple’s body with it]. Thus, because it is “penetration by the [sound of a buzzing] bee,”⁹⁶⁴ it is called “Power’s [mantric] penetration.”

(5. *bhujāṅga-vedha* or COBRA-PENETRATION)

*sā caiva paramā śaktir ānanda-pravikāsinī |
janma-sthānāt paraṃ yāti phaṇa-pañcaka-bhūṣitā || 248 ||*

And that very supreme Power (*paramā śakti*), which manifests/expands bliss, [in her serpentine form] adorned with five hoods travels from the birth-place (i.e. the lowest *cakra*, at the pelvic floor) to the highest (i.e. the *dvādaśānta*).

*kalās tattvāni nandādyā vyomāni ca kulāni ca |
brahmādi-kāraṇāny akṣāṇy eva sā pañcakātmikā || 249 ||*

Her [five hoods represent her] fivefold nature: the [five] *kalās* (*śāntyatitādi*); the [five] *tattvas* (either the *mahābhūtas* or the *śuddhādhvan*); [the *kāla-śaktis* or

⁹⁶⁰ Problematic; perhaps denoting *repha* in its hook form? But it does not take that form in Śāradā script. “Curved” could go with *kuṇḍalākṛtim*, but then we are missing the code for ‘R’.

⁹⁶¹ is there an intentional reference to *kuṇḍalinī*?

⁹⁶² lit., “water-nut,” according to SANDERSON a triangular nut found in Kashmir, hence the phoneme E; he further informed me that “on the throne of x” is a common code for denoting the vowel of a *bīja-mantra* (personal communication).

⁹⁶³ This could mean the spontaneous arising of the mantra, as J takes it (*svayam . . . uccāra-prayatna-nirapekṣatayā*), but we need an indication of *anusvāra* at the end. The whole is (probably) mantric code (*mantra-uddhara*) for the secret *piṇḍa-mantra* HSKHPHREM. Note that Jayaratha has a completely different interpretation, trusting as he does the reading *gandha*. He explains, in brief, that the guru performs *matta-gandha-saṅkocana*, i.e. what will later be called *mūla-bandha*, thus raising the “central *śakti*” to the level of Śiva at *dvādaśānta*, thus enabling him to penetrate the “whole world” of the disciple’s body. This interpretation is based on reading *gandha* as *matta-gandha* (i.e., anus or pelvic floor (though our dictionaries do not attest this sense, it perhaps derives from the musk deer)); see PADOUX 413 n89, citing this verse (and cf. DUPUCHE 2003: 328 n218)). Do we see early hints at *kuṇḍalinī* here? Jayaratha (by whose time the *kuṇḍalinī* doctrine was established) tells us that the H which initiates the mantra rises from the pelvic floor (*janmādhāra*), and is coiled like an earring (a reference to the written form of the character) because it is undifferentiated from *prāṇa-śakti* (*prāṇaśaktyabhedatayā kuṇḍalākṛtim*); and the following verse (248) must have some connection to later *kuṇḍalinī* doctrine.

⁹⁶⁴ *Bhramara* can refer to the prolonged hum of the *anusvāra*; but Jayaratha takes it as circulating (*bhrama*) through the locations of the *tattvas* (*tattva-sthāna-gatyā*), which DUPUCHE (2003: 330) takes as a reference to the guru moving the *visarga* around (the disciple’s body).

five auspicious *tithis* called] Nanda and so on; the [five] voids (i.e. *cakras*);⁹⁶⁵ the [five] *kulas* (?);⁹⁶⁶ the [five] cause-deities, from *Brahmā* [to *Sadāśiva*]; and the [five] senses.

*evaṃ pañca-prakārā sā brahma-sthāna-vinirgatā |
brahma-sthāne viśantī tu taḍil līnā virājate || 250 ||*

Thus she, fivefold, departs from the place of *Brahmā* (i.e. the *janma-sthāna*) and entering the place of *Brahmā* (i.e. the *dvādaśānta*), she merges [there], shining like lightning.⁹⁶⁷

*praviṣṭā vedhayet kāyam ātmānaṃ pratibhedayet |
evaṃ bhujāṅga-vedhas tu kathito bhairavāgame || 251 ||*

Having entered, she penetrates the [subtle] body, [and she thereby] causes the soul to pierce [the highest centers]. In this way the “cobra-penetration” is taught in the scripture of *Bhairava*.⁹⁶⁸

(6. *para-vedha* or SUPREME PENETRATION)

*tāvad bhāvayate cittaṃ yāvac cittaṃ kṣayaṃ gatam |
kṣiṇe citte sureśāni parānanda udāhṛtaḥ || 252 ||*

He should meditate on the mind until the mind dissolves. O Queen of the gods, when the mind has dissolved, [that state] is called supreme bliss.

*nendriyāṇi na vai prāṇā nāntaḥkaraṇa-gocaraḥ |
na mano nāpi mantavyaṃ na mantā na manikriyā || 253 ||*

[In that state] there are no sense-organs, no vital energies; no mental field (i.e., no cognitions), no mind (*manas*, lit., faculty of attention), nor object of thought, nor thinker, nor activity of thinking. This disappearance of all mental-emotional states (*bhāva*) is called Supreme Penetration (= *sāmbhavāveśa*).

manu-śakti-bhuvana-rūpa-jñā-piṇḍa-sthāna-nāḍi-para-bhedāt || 254 ||

navadhā kalayanty anye vedhaṃ⁹⁶⁹ guravo rahasya-vidah |

Other esoteric (*rahasya*vid) gurus reckon “penetration” as ninefold, according to the division into [1] *mantra*,⁹⁷⁰ [2] *śakti*, [3] world, [4] form, [5] knowledge, [6] body, [7] place, [8] channel, and [9] supreme.

⁹⁶⁵ The *trikoṇa*, *kanda*, *hṛdaya*, *tālu*, and crown, as taught in TĀ 5, or perhaps, as J has it, the *janmasthāna* (= *trikoṇa*), *nābhi*, *hṛdaya*, *bindu* (= *bhrū-madhya*), and *nāda* (in the upper forehead; J simply has *sthāna*), as taught in *Netratantra* 7.1, 27-9 and *uddiyota* thereon.

⁹⁶⁶ Which J gives as *mahākaula*, *kaula*, *akula*, *kulākula*, and *kula*.

⁹⁶⁷ SANDERSON takes *pañcaprakārā* with *taḍit*, and takes *virājate* as “shines,” not “looks like,” yielding a different meaning: that the five-fold lightning surges up, enters *dvādaśānta*, and then appears to “merge” but doesn’t fully (hence *virājate*), but rather shines in her “inmost point of involution.” My reading assumes an *iva*, but the main problem with my translation is, how can she shine if she has merged (*līnā*), i.e. dissolved? And the possibility that she shines then vanishes (like lightning) seems to be disallowed by the fact that *virājate* is the final verb.

⁹⁶⁸ Meaning, presumably, the *Kularatnamālā*.

⁹⁶⁹ *vedhaṃ* corr. WALLIS : *vedaṃ* Ed. Note that the Kashmirī language does not distinguish between aspirated and non-aspirated consonants.

(1. *mantra-vedha*)

māyā-garbhāgni-varṇaughā-yukte tryasrīṇi maṇḍale || 255 ||

dhyātvā jvālā-karālena tena granthīn vibhodayet |

puṣpair hanyād yojayec ca pare mantrābhido vidhiḥ || 256 ||

Meditating [on the disciple, seated] within a [downward-pointing] triangular maṇḍala radiating (*karāla*) flames endowed with a mass of fire-phonemes (RAM), with *māyā* (= HRĪM) in the center, he should pierce the [subtle] knots [with it]. He should strike [those points] with [consecrated] flowers, and unite [the disciple] with the highest.⁹⁷¹ This is called the mantra rite.

(2. *śākta-vedha* OR POWER'S PENETRATION)

nāḍyāviśyānyatarayā caitanyaṃ kanda-dhāmani |

*piṇḍikṛtya paribhrāmya*⁹⁷² *pañcāṣṭa-śukhayā haṭhāt* || 257 ||

śakti-sūlāgra-gamitaṃ kvāpi cakre niyojayet |

śaktyeti śākto vedho 'yaṃ sadyaḥ-pratyaya-kāraḥ || 258 ||

Having entered (*āviśya*) one or the other of the two channels (*iḍā* and *piṅgalā*), he should gather [the disciple's] consciousness into a compacted mass in the radiant abode of the “bulb,” [surrounded] with thirteen flames,⁹⁷³ and spinning it rapidly, [and then] placing it on the tip of a spear (trident?) of *śakti*, he should unite it⁹⁷⁴ to any *cakra* [the disciple desires to master]. [This occurs] by means of *śakti*, thus this is [called] the *śākta* penetration, giving immediate evidence [of its efficacy].⁹⁷⁵

(3. *bhuvana-vedha* OR WORLD-PENETRATION; switch to Ārya meter)

ādhārān nirgatayā śikhayā jyotsnāvadātayā rabhasāt |

aṅguṣṭha-mūla-pīṭha-kramaṇa śiṣyasya līnayā vyomni || 259 ||

dehaṃ svacchikṛtya kṣādīn āntān smaran purokta-puryoghān |

nija-maṇḍala-nirdhyānāt pratibimbayate bhuvana-vedhaḥ || 260 ||

With an intensely [visualized] flame bright-white as moonlight, departing from the [lowest] psychic center (*ādhāra*), gradually [rising] from the root-site (*mūla-pīṭha*) or the big toe, [until] it merges in the [highest] void, [the guru] makes the body of the disciple crystal-clear. [He then] mentally recites [the syllables] from *kṣa* to *a*, [manifesting] the mass of worlds [as] previously described [in TĀ 8]. Due to meditating [on them in] the *maṇḍala* of his own [body], he [can] mirror [them in the disciple's body]: [this is the] “penetration of the worlds.”

⁹⁷⁰ Manu = mantra. Cf. *Svāyambhuvasūtra-saṅgraha* 21 (*japen manum*); *Svāyambhuva-vṛtti* 2.26 (*manunātha* glossed as *mantrēśvara*); *Mataṅga VP* 7.47 (*manoś ca paratantratvāt*); and Upādhyāya Śivarāma in his *Śrīvidyāmantra-vivṛti* (*mahāmanu* = *mahāmantra*). References courtesy of SANDERSON.

⁹⁷¹ Equivalent to *tattva-śuddhi* and *śiva-yojanikā* in the usual *dikṣā* rite.

⁹⁷² *paribhrāmya* em. WALLIS : *paribhramya* Ed.

⁹⁷³ Jayaratha says these represent/embody the *antaḥkaraṇa*, *jñānendriyas*, and *karmendriyas*.

⁹⁷⁴ SANDERSON takes *haṭhāt* with this verb (*niyojayet*) rather than with *paribhramya*.

⁹⁷⁵ Jayaratha comments that the evidence in question are signs of *āveśa* (*pratyaya* is glossed as *āveśa-lakṣaṇaḥ*).

(4. *rūpa-vedha*)

bhrū-madhyodita-baindava-dhāmāntaḥ kām̐cid ākr̐tiḥ rucirām |
tādātmyena dhyāyec chiṣyaḥ paścāc ca tanmayīkuryāt || 261 ||

iti rūpa-vedha uktaḥ sā cehākṛtir upaiti dṛśyatvam |
ante tat-sāyujyaḥ śiṣyaś cāyāti tanmayībhūtaḥ || 262 ||

He (the guru) should meditate on some particular beautiful form (i.e. deity) within the sacred abode of the Point (*baindava* = *bindu*) manifest between the brows, identifying himself with it. Next, he should make the disciple one with it. This is the “penetration with visible form.” And the form [actually] becomes visible in this case. In the end, the disciple who has become absorbed (*sāyujya*) in that [deity] becomes completely one with it.

(5. *vijñāna-vedha*)

vijñānam aṣṭadhā yad ghrāṇādika-buddhi-saṃjñā-karaṇāntaḥ |
tat sva-sva-nāḍi-sūtra-krameṇa saṃcārayec chiṣye || 263 ||

abhimāna-dārḍhya-bandha-krameṇa vijñāna-saṃjñako vedhaḥ |
hṛdaya-vyomani sadyo divya-jñānārka-samudayaḥ dhatte || 264 ||

The wisdom[-body] is eightfold, [consisting of] the five senses-faculties and the inner instrument (*karaṇāntaḥ*, = *ahaṃkāra*), the faculty of attention (*saṃjñā*, = *manas*), and the *buddhi*.⁹⁷⁶ [The guru] should cause that to be transferred through the “threads” of [the eight respective] *nāḍīs*. Through firmly fixing his conviction of identity (*abhimāna*) [with this purified subtle body], this is the penetration called “wisdom-[-body].” It immediately causes the rising of the sun of divine insight in the space of the heart.

(6. *piṇḍa-vedha*)

piṇḍaḥ paraḥ kalātmā sūkṣmaḥ puryaṣṭako bahiḥ sthūlaḥ |
chāyātmā sa parāṇmukha ādarśādau ca saṃmukho jñeyah || 265 ||

iti yaḥ piṇḍa-vibhedas taḥ rabhasād uttarottare śamayet |
tat-tad-galane kramaśaḥ parama-padaḥ piṇḍa-vedhena || 266 ||

The higher body (*para-piṇḍa*) consists of the *kalās* (i.e. *kalā* down to *puruṣa*), the subtle [body] is the “eight-part fortress” (see above), [and] the material [body] is the external [form]. [This body] faces away, but should be visualized as facing one, [as] in a mirror etc.(?)⁹⁷⁷ These different bodies should be forcefully “eliminated,” each [dissolved] into the one above it (i.e. *sthūla* → *sūkṣma* → *para*) in stages; [thus one attains] the highest state [beyond even the *para-piṇḍa*] through “body-penetration.”

⁹⁷⁶ The expression *buddhi-saṃjñā-karaṇāntaḥ* is peculiar.

⁹⁷⁷ J regards this hemistich as spurious and ridicules those who try to interpret the text as given instead of emending, in a rare instance of text-critical commentary (*ity arddham asaṃgatatvād antargaḍuprāyam ity upekṣyam, yathāsthita-vyākhyānahevākinām etat tu saṃgatim yady upeyāt tadāstām asmākaḥ punar iyatī nāsti dṛṣṭiḥ*: “. . . those who are [foolishly] dedicated to interpreting the text just as they receive it, let them try to construe this. Our insight is not so great”).

(7. *sthāna-vedha*)

*yad yad dehe cakram tatra śisor etya viśramaṃ kramaśaḥ |
ujjvalayet tac cakram sthānākhyas tat-phala-prado vedhaḥ || 267 ||*

Having rested his awareness on each center (*cakra*) in the body of the disciple in sequence, he should inflame each center [successively]. This is called “site-penetration”; it bestows the benefit of each [center] (i.e. the Five States?).

(8. *nāḍī-vedha*)

*nāḍyaḥ pradhāna-bhūtās tisro 'nyās tad-gatās tv asaṃkhyeyāḥ |
ekikāras tābhir nāḍī-vedho 'tra tat-phala-kṛt || 268 ||*

There are three principal channels, and innumerable others connected to them (*tadgata*). He should make himself one with those [of the disciple]. This is channel-penetration, which creates that result (?).

*abhilaṣita-nāḍī-vāhāmukhyābhiś⁹⁷⁸ cakṣurādi-niṣṭhābhiḥ |
tad-bodha-prāptiḥ syān nāḍī-vedhe vicitra-bahu-rūpā || 269 ||*

By means of the minor channels—connected to the eye etc.—that flow into a desired [major] channel, he [causes the disciple to] attain understanding of that [faculty]. There are many different forms of channel-penetration.⁹⁷⁹

*lāṅgūlākṛti-balavat sva-nāḍī-saṃveṣṭitām apara-nāḍīm |
āspṛotyā siddham api bhuvī pātayati haṭhān mahā-yogī || 270 ||*

[Further,] a great *yogī* may envelop someone else’s channel with his own powerful tail-like channel, shake it violently, [and thus] make even a *siddha* fall to the ground.⁹⁸⁰

(9. *para-vedha*)

*para-vedhaṃ samasteṣu cakreṣv advaitam āmrśan |
paraṃ śivaṃ prakurvīta śivatāpatti-do guruḥ || 271 ||*

The guru who [can] grant the state of Divinity should bring about the “higher penetration” by meditating on nondual supreme Śiva in each of the [subtle] centers.

*śrīmad-vīrāvalikule tathā cetthaṃ nirūpitam |
abhedyam sarvathā jñeyam madhyam jñātvā na lipyate || 272 ||*

tad-vibhāga-krame siddhaḥ sa gurur mocayet paśūn |

And it is explained thus in the sacred *Vīrāvalikula*: having completely understood the central [channel], difficult to penetrate [yet] worthy of being known, he cannot be defiled; perfectly accomplished (*siddha*) in the sequence of its stages, he is a guru who can liberate bound souls.

⁹⁷⁸ *abhilaṣita-nāḍī-vāhāmukhyābhiś* Sand. conj. em. : *abhilaṣita-nāḍī-vāho mukhyābhiś* Ed. Without this emendation, we would translate “[The guru], who flows along the desired channel, by means of the primary [channel] connected [indirectly] to the eye etc., [causes him to] attain understanding of that (faculty),” which may also be correct, but is awkward, not least because the channel connected to the eye must be a minor channel, there being only three primary channels.

⁹⁷⁹ Specifically 15, if we assume three primary channels multiplied by five senses.

⁹⁸⁰ A very strange use of the word *ākṛti*, and the syntax is bizarrely awkward, as is not uncommon for the works Abhinava cites in this section.

guror agre viśec chiṣyo vaktraṃ vaktre tu vedhayet || 273 ||

rūpaṃ rūpe tu viśayair yāvat samarasībhavet |

The disciple should sit before the guru, then [the guru should] penetrate mouth with mouth,⁹⁸¹ then form (*rūpa*) with form [etc.],⁹⁸² until he becomes fused [with him] with [regard to all] the sense-objects (i.e., they are *samarasa*, ‘tasting’ [or perceiving] exactly the same things).

citte samarasībhūte dvayor aunmanasī sthitiḥ || 274 ||

ubhayoś conmano-gatyā tat-kāle dikṣito bhavet |

śaśi-bhāskara-saṃyoge jīvas tanmayatām vrajet || 275 ||

When [their] minds are fused (and of one flavor), the transmental (*unmanā*) state [arises] for both. Because both have reached the *unmanā*, at that moment, [the disciple] is initiated. When the moon and sun unite,⁹⁸³ the soul attains oneness (*tanmayatā*) [with the central *śakti*].

atra brahmādayo devā muktaye mokṣa-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ |

nirudhya raśmi-cakraṃ svaṃ bhoga-mokṣāv ubhāv api || 276 ||

grasate yadi tad-dikṣā śārvīyaṃ parikīrtitā |

Longing for liberation, the [five] gods from *Brahmā* to [*Sadāśiva*] are in this [central channel] for the sake of [their own] release. If he arrests his own circle of rays (= mind and senses), and “devours” both worldly experience and liberation, his initiation (i.e., the initiation he gives) is said to be [truly] Śaiva.⁹⁸⁴

sa eṣa mokṣaḥ kathito niṣpandaḥ sarva-jantuṣu || 277 ||

agnīśoma-kalā-ghāta-saṃghātāt spandanam haret |

This is the liberation that is said to be unchanging in all beings.⁹⁸⁵ As a result of the fusion due to the collision of the energies of fire and moon (= subject and object),⁹⁸⁶ he may bring to an end the [state of constant dualistic] flux [between object-consciousness and subject-consciousness].

⁹⁸¹ J takes “mouth” to mean the *śakti* of the central channel, and cites the *Vijñāna-bhairava* in support (*śaivī mukham ihocyate*). Indeed, the base of the torso, where the central channel terminates, is sometimes called the *yoginī-vaktra* (a usage that either privileges women practitioners or derives from male practitioners visualizing themselves as the Goddess).

⁹⁸² J takes *rūpa* to refer to the visual faculty, i.e. that which perceives *rūpa*.

⁹⁸³ This could refer to the psychic union of guru (sun) and disciple (moon), or the fusing of the left and right channels (*prāṇāpāna*) into the central channel (as J takes it), or perhaps both: the guru and disciple could be seen to embody the right and left channels respectively, their psychic union a *para-vedha*.

⁹⁸⁴ Or perhaps *śārvīya* is meant here as a synonym of *śāmbhavī*, the highest of three types of initiation. In support of this hypothesis, J takes this to refer to *jīvanmukti*.

⁹⁸⁵ J: *niṣpanda iti sarva-daśāsv apy avicalad-rūpa ity arthaḥ*.

⁹⁸⁶ J, expecting the typical reading of sun and moon (*prāṇa* and *apāna*) here, forces the text to say that, uncomfortable with the asymmetry of a “collision” of the central and left channels; but Abhinavagupta is here concerned with the corresponding epistemological categories of subject and object (*pramāṭṛ* and *prameya*) and the description of liberation as bringing to an end the oscillation (*spandana*) between them.

Appendix Three: lineages and dates

Lākula / Pāsupata

Somaśarman / Someśa (see Malhar Plates of Mahāśivagupta; 27th in the *guru-pankti* described in the JY [4.449 and 453-4b]; said in the Vāyu and Linga Purāṇas [23.214-7 and 1.24.120-4 respectively] to be the 27th incarnation of Śiva, born in Prabhāsatīrtha, Saurashtra; see BAKKER 2001) ->

Lakulīśa (*avatāra* of Rudra Gahaneśa?; 28th in the *guru-pankti* of Śivas in the JY; said to descend at Kārohaṇa/ Kāyāvarohaṇa/ Kāyāvātāra on the Narmadā river and then walk to Ujjayinī) ->

- Kuśika/Kauśika (associated with Ujjayinī), plus three other, possibly apocryphal, disciples:
- Gārgya (Jambumārga; this and the next two locations attested only in the SkP),
- Mitra/Maitrya (Mathurā),
- and a fourth from the land of the Kurus, sometimes known as Kauruṣya/Kauruṣa (of Kānyakubja) [For more info see BISSCHOP 2006]

Saiddhāntika

Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha (I) -> Bhaṭṭa Vidyākaṇṭha (I) -> Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha -> Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha (II) -> Bhaṭṭa Vidyākaṇṭha (II)

Pratyābhijñā / Trika

[Govindarāja? ->] Somānanda (c. 900-950; he knew Pradyumnabhaṭṭa below) -> Utpaladeva (c. 925-75) -> Rājānaka Rāma & Lakṣmaṇagupta (c. 950-1000) -> Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025) -> Kṣemarāja (c. 1000-1050) -> Yogarāja (c. 1025-75)

Spanda (Trika/Krama)

Vasugupta (c. 825-875) -> Kallaṭa (c. 850-900; Kalhaṇa puts him in the reign of Avantivarman) -> Pradyumnabhaṭṭa (c. 875-925) -> Prajñārjuna -> Mahādevabhaṭṭa -> Śrīkaṇṭhabhaṭṭa -> Bhāskara (c. 975-1025)

Krama

Maṅgalā / Vīrasimhā Svāminī (prob. mythical) -> Jñānanetra[nātha] / Śivānanda[nātha] (c. 850-900) -> **Keyūravatī**/Kakāradevī (c. 875-925) -> Govindarāja [-> Somānanda], Bhānuka [-> Ujjaṭa -> Ubhaṭa -> ... Abhinavagupta], Eraka, Naverakanātha, **Hrasvanātha** (aka Vāmana/Vīravāmanaka/Vāmanavīra/Vīranātha, King Yaśaskara's minister of war and peace) (c. 900-950) -> **Cakrabhānu**, Bhojarāja [-> Somarāja], (and 3-4 others) (c. 925-975 [Cakrabhanu's punishment by Yaśaskara, according to Kalhaṇa: c. 948 CE]) -> Rājñī Īśānī, Prabodhanātha, Bhūtīrāja [-> Abhinavagupta] and 5 others (c. 950-1000) -> [lineage splits here then rejoins:]

- Rājñī Īśānī -> Nandaka (c. 975-1025) -> Sajjana (c. 1000-1025) -> Someśvara (c. 1025-75) -> Arṇasiṃha (c. 1050-1100) -> ... author of comm. on Old Kāśmīrī *Mahānayaṇaparakāśa*
- Prabodha -> Jaiyaka (c. 975-1025) -> Paṅkaka (c. 1000-1025) -> Nāga (c. 1025-75) -> Arṇasiṃha (same as above)

Kaula

Macchanda + Koṅkaṅāmbā -> Śabara/Pulinda, Aḍabilla, Paṭṭila, Karabilla, Ambi/Ambilla, Śarabilla [their six sons; see TĀ and V 29.38]

Tīrtha (modern)

Gaṅgādhara Tīrtha -> Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha -> Yogānanda Mahārāja (d. 1959) -> Viṣṇu Tīrtha (d. 1969) -> Shivom Tīrtha (1924-2008) -> Shiv Maṅgala Tīrtha (b. 1945)

Siddha Yoga (modern)

Nityānanda (d. 1961) -> Muktaṅgana (1908-82) -> Cidvilāsaṅgana (b. 1955)