

# 36 Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions

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The term Śaivism here refers to a number of distinct but historically related systems comprising theology, ritual, observance and yoga, which have been propagated in India as the teachings of the Hindu deity Śiva. A Śaiva is one who practices such a system. To understand the term to mean 'a worshipper of Śiva' or 'one whose deity is Śiva' is less precise; for a Śaiva may well be a worshipper not of Śiva but of the Goddess (Devī). Though she is commonly represented as the consort of Śiva and, theologically, as that god's inherent power (*śakti*), it is none the less the defining mark of certain forms of Śaivism that she is seen as transcending this marital and logical subordination.

The scriptural revelations of the Śaiva mainstream are called Tantras, and those that act in accordance with their prescriptions are consequently termed Tantrics (*tāntrika*). The term *tantra* means simply a system of ritual or essential instruction; but when it is applied in this special context it serves to differentiate itself from the traditions that derive their authority from the Vedas (direct revelation: *śruti*) and a body of later texts that claim to be Veda-based (indirect revelation: *smṛti*). This corpus of *śruti* and *smṛti* prescribes the rites, duties and beliefs that constitute the basic or orthodox order and soteriology of Hindu society. The Tantrics however saw their own texts as an additional and more specialised revelation (*viśeṣaśāstra*) which offers a more powerful soteriology to those who are born into this exoteric order. The Tantric rituals of initiation (*dīkṣā*) were held to destroy the rebirth-generating power of the individual's past actions (*karma*) in the sphere of Veda-determined values, and to consubstantiate him with the deity in a transforming infusion of divine power.

The Śaivas were not the only Tantrics. There were also the Vaiṣṇava Tantrics of the Pāñcarātra system, whose Tantras, considered by them to be the word of the deity Viṣṇu, prescribed the rituals, duties

and beliefs of the devotees of Vāsudeva in his various aspects (*vyūha*) and emanations (*vibhava*, *avatāra*). In addition to these two major groups of Tantrics there were Sauras, followers of Tantras revealed by the Sun (Sūrya); but while we have access to a number of Vaiṣṇava Tantras and to a vast corpus of Śaiva materials, the Saura tradition is silent. An early Śaiva Tantra (*Srīkaṅṭhīyasamhitā*) lists a canon of 85 Tantras of the Sun, but not one of these these nor any other Saura Tantra has survived.

The production of Tantric revelations was not limited to those who accepted the supernatural authority of the Vedas. It went on, though on a much smaller scale, among the Jains, while the Buddhists added an enormous Tantric corpus to their canonical literature during the period c. 400–750 CE. By the end of this period the system of the Tantras, called 'the Way of the Diamond' (Vajrayāna) or 'of Mantras' (Mantrayāna), was generally recognised among the followers of the Greater Way (Mahāyāna) as the highest and most direct means to liberation (*nirvāṇa*), and its esoteric deities were enshrined in the monasteries as the high patrons of the faith. The Tibetans, who received Buddhism at this stage of its development, preserve, in the Tantric section of their canon, translations from the Sanskrit of almost 500 revealed texts and over 2000 commentaries and explanatory works. Of these more than three quarters concern Tantras of the most radical kind, those of the Higher and Supreme Yogas (*Yogottara-tantras* and *Yogānuttara-tantras*).

All these Tantrics were similarly related to the traditional forms of religion, the Buddhists to the monastic discipline and the Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas to Vedic orthopraxy. They were excluded by the traditionalists because they went beyond the boundaries of these systems of practice. But the Tantrics themselves, while excluding these exclusivists, included their systems as the outer level of a concentric hierarchy of ritual and discipline.

In those communities in which it was possible or desirable to add to the exoteric tradition this second, more esoteric level, there might be forms of the Tantric cult in which this transcendence entailed the infringement of the rules of conduct (*ācāra*) which bound the performer of ritual at the lower, more public, level of his practice. Thus some rites involved the consumption of meat, alcohol and other impurities, even sexual intercourse with women of untouchable castes (*antyaja*). These practices originated as part of the magical technology of certain extremist orders of Śaiva ascetics. They passed over into the married majority; but when they did so, they survived unrevised only in limited circles. The general trend—and this was also so in the case of Tantric Buddhism—was to purify the rites by taking in everything except the elements of impurity. This left the essential structure intact: one worshipped the same deity, with the same complex of emanations or subordinate deities, *mantras*, deity-enthroning diagrams (*maṅḍalas*), and ritual gestures and postures (*mudrās*). The spread of the Tantric

cults in Indian religion is largely the history of this process of domestication and exoterisation.

The followers of these cults, even in their undomesticated form, should not be seen as rebels who rejected a ritualised social identity for a liberated cult of ecstasy. This popular view of Tantrism overlooks the highly-structured ritual contexts (Tantric and non-Tantric) of these un-Vedic practices. A person who underwent a Tantric initiation (*dīkṣā*) was less an anti-ritualist than a super-ritualist. He was prepared to add more exacting and limiting ritual duties to those which already bound him. Indeed he has much in common with the most orthodox of Hindus, the *śrauta* sacrificer, who transcended the simple and universal domestic rites prescribed in the secondary scripture (*smṛti*) to undertake the great rituals of the primary and more ancient revelation (*śruti*). Though the *śrauta* and the Tantric occupied the opposite ends of the spectrum of Hinduism they shared the character of being specialists of intensified ritual above the more relaxed middle ground of the *smārtas* (the followers of *smṛti*). This similarity is carried through into their doctrines of liberation from rebirth (*mokṣa*). Both the *śrauta* tradition articulated by the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas and the Tantric represented by the Śaivas stood apart from the mainstream by holding that the mere performance of the rituals prescribed by their respective scriptures is a sufficient cause of final liberation (see pp. 691ff.). It is this ritualism which largely accounts for the rapid decline of the Tantric traditions in recent decades. The complex obligations and time-consuming rituals which the Tantric takes on for life can hardly be accommodated within the schedule of the modern employee.

Un-Vedic though it was, the Tantric tradition was destined to have a far greater influence than the *śrauta* on the middle ground. While the *śrauta* tradition all but died out, the Tantric came to pervade almost all areas of Indian religion. The distinction between the Vedic and the Tantric in religion continued to be crucial, and it was drawn in such a way that the Tantric continued to be the tradition of a minority; but what was called Vedic here was essentially Tantric in its range of deities and liturgical forms. It differed from the properly Tantric principally in its *mantras*. This became the chief formal criterion: in Vedic worship (*pūjā*) the actions that compose the liturgy were empowered by the recitation of Vedic *mantras* drawn from the *Rgveda* and *Yajurveda* rather than by that of the heterodox *mantras* of the Tantras. At the same time these de-Tantrified reflexes of Tantric worship were non-sectarian. While properly Tantric worship was more or less exclusive, being emphatically centred in a particular deity, Vedic domestic worship was inclusive. Its most typical form is the *pañcāyatanapūjā*, the worship of the five shrines, in which offerings are made to the five principal deities, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Gaṇapati and the Goddess (Devī). The scriptural authority for these neo-Vedic rituals was provided by the indirect revelation (*smṛti*) and in particular by the ever-expanding Purāṇas, though the exact text of

worship is generally a matter of unascribed tradition. Such worship is therefore called *smārta* (*smṛti*-based) or *paurāṇika* ('Purāṇa-based'), or, where the properly Vedic or *śrauta* tradition is completely absent, simply *vaidika* ('Veda-based'). Its form in a particular community is largely the product of the history of the various Tantric traditions within that community. An example of this will be given below, when we consider the religion of medieval Kashmir (see pp. 701-4).

What follows falls into two parts. In the first I present Śaivism on the evidence of what survives, mostly unpublished, of its earliest scriptural sources. In most of this material the domestication of which I have spoken above has yet to begin. We shall therefore be looking in the main at traditions of Śaiva asceticism. Here the married man (*gṛhastha*) is altogether absent or at best subordinate. In the second part (pp. 690-704) we shall consider what happened to these traditions when they were domesticated. Our evidence here is the literature of the Śaiva community of Kashmir from the ninth century onwards.

This second body of texts is our earliest datable and locatable evidence for the Śaiva traditions. How much earlier than these Kashmiri works the scriptures to which they refer were composed cannot be decided yet with any precision. At best we can say that the main body of these early Tantras must have been composed between about 400 and 800 CE. To this we can add some relative chronology. We know even less about where these Tantras were composed or about the areas within which they were followed. However I incline to the view that when these traditions became the object of sophisticated Kashmiri exegesis between the ninth and thirteenth centuries they were widely represented throughout India. It is certain that the Kashmiri and the Newars of the Kathmandu valley looked out on much the same distribution and interrelation of Śaiva Tantric cults at this time, and it is highly probable that each community inherited these traditions independently by participating in a more widespread system, which may have included even the Tamil-speaking regions of the far south of the subcontinent.

The Kashmiri exegesis considered in the second part is a local tradition of much more than local impact. In a very short time it was acknowledged as the standard both in its theological metaphysics and in its liturgical prescription among the Śaivas of the Tamil south. This was the case in the Śaiva Siddhānta (see pp. 691-2), the Trika (see pp. 692-6), the Krama (see pp. 696-9), and the cults of Tripurasundarī (see pp. 688-9) and Kubjikā (see pp. 686-8). Consequently, while the Hindu culture of Kashmir declined in influence and vitality after the thirteenth century with large-scale conversion to Islam and periodic persecutions, the Tantrics of the far south continued the classical tradition, and through their many and outstanding contributions to Tantric literature guaranteed it a pan-Indian influence down to modern times. These southern and subsequent developments are unfortu-

nately beyond the scope of this essay.

### **The Atimārga and the Mantramārga**

The teaching of Śiva (*śivaśāsana*) which defines the Śaivas is divided between two great branches or 'streams' (*strotas*). These are termed the Outer Path (Atimārga) and the Path of Mantras (Mantramārga). The first is accessible only to ascetics, while the second is open both to ascetics and to married home-dwellers (*grhastha*). There is also a difference of goals. The Atimārga is entered for salvation alone, while the Mantramārga promises both this and, for those that so wish, the attainment of supernatural powers (*siddhis*) and the experience of supernal pleasures in the worlds of their choice (*bhoga*). The Atimārga's Śaivism is sometimes called Raudra rather than Śaiva. This is because it is attributed to and concerned with Śiva in his archaic, Vedic form as Rudra (the 'Terrible'), the god of wild and protean powers outside the *śrauta* sacrifice. It has two principal divisions, the Pāśupata and the Lākula.

#### *The Pāśupata Division of the Atimārga*

The ascetic observance (*vrata*) which is this system's path to salvation is the Pāśupata. It bears this name because its promulgation is attributed to Rudra as Paśupati (the 'Master [-pati] of the Bound [paśu-]'). Paśupati is believed by the followers of this tradition (the Pāśupatas) to have appeared on earth as Lakulīśa by entering and re-animating a brahmin's corpse in a cremation ground. Thus yogically embodied he gave out the cult's fundamental text, the *Pāśupata Aphorisms (Pāśupatasūtras)*. Our principal source for the detail of the tradition is Kauṇḍīnya's commentary on this text. It has been suggested on slender evidence that this commentator belongs to the fourth century. The Pāśupata cult itself, at least that form of it which derives itself from Lakulīśa, is at least two centuries older.

The Pāśupata observance (*pāśupata-vrata*) was restricted to brahmin males who had passed through the orthodox rite of investiture (*upanayana*), which gives an individual access to his Veda and full membership of his community. The stage of life (*āśrama*) from which such a brahmin became a Pāśupata was irrelevant. He might be a celibate student (*brahmacārin*), a married home-dweller (*grhastha*), a hermit dwelling in the wild (*vānaprastha*), or a peripatetic mendicant (*bhikṣu*). Transcending this orthodox classification he entered a 'fifth' life-stage, that of the Perfected (*siddha-āśrama*).

The final goal of the Pāśupatas was the end of suffering (*duḥkḥānta*). It means just this, but was also conceived positively as the assimilation of Rudra's qualities of omniscience, omnipotence and so forth at the time of one's death. This was the state of final liberation and it was to be

achieved through four stages of discipline. In the first the ascetic lived by a temple of Śiva. His body was to be smeared with ashes and he was to worship the deity in the temple by dancing and chanting, boisterous laughter (*aṭṭahāsa*), drumming on his mouth (*huḍḍukkāra*), and silent meditation on five *mantras* of the *Yajurveda*, the five *brahma-mantras* which in course of time would be personified as the five faces of Śiva.

In the second stage he left the temple. Throwing off all the outward signs of his observance he moved about in public pretending to be crippled, deranged, mentally deficient or indecent. Passers-by being unaware that these defects were feigned spoke ill of him. By this means the Pāśupata provoked an exchange in which his demerits passed to his detractors and their merits to him. By acting in this way he was simply making unorthodox use of a thoroughly orthodox principle. He was exploiting his ritual status as one who had undergone a rite of consecration (*dīkṣā*) to initiate an observance (*vrata*); for in the *śrauta* system one bound by the observance (*vrata*) consequent on consecration (*dīkṣā*) for the Soma sacrifice was similarly dangerous to anyone who might speak ill of him.

Purified by this period of *karma*-exchange, the Pāśupata withdrew in the third stage to a remote cave or deserted building to practise meditation through the constant repetition of the five *mantras*. When he had achieved an uninterrupted awareness of Rudra by this means, so that he no longer required the support of the *mantras*, he left his place of seclusion and moved into a cremation ground to wait for death. While previously the Pāśupata had begged for his sustenance he now lived on whatever he could find there. This fourth stage ended with his life. Entering the stage of completion (*niṣṭhā*) with the falling away of his body and the last traces of suffering, he was believed to experience the infusion of the qualities of Rudra. The cause of this final liberation was not thought to be any action of his, but simply the grace or favour of Rudra himself.

#### *The Lākula Division of the Atimārga*

The second division of the Atimārga, that of the Lākula ascetics, developed from within the original Pāśupata tradition. It accepted the authority of the *Pāśupata Aphorisms* and maintained both the *mantras* and the basic practices of its prototype. However, its special discipline required a more radical transcendence of Vedic values. After his consecration (*dīkṣā*) the ascetic

should wander, carrying a skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) and an alms-bowl fashioned from a human cranium. His hair should be bounded up in a matted mass (*jaṭā*) or completely shaved. He should wear a sacred thread (*upavīta*) [the emblem of orthodox investiture (*upanayana*)] made from snake-skins and he should adorn himself with a necklace of human bone. He may wear nothing but a strip of cloth to cover his private parts. He must smear himself with ashes and decorate himself with the ornaments of his God. Knowing that all things are Rudra in essence he should

hold firmly to his observance as Rudra's devotee. He may eat and drink anything. No action is forbidden to him. For he is immersed in contemplation of Rudra, knowing that no other deity will save him.

*Niśvāsātattvasamhitā* (MS), ch. 4.

Here the ascetic took on a more radical aspect of Rudra's nature as the outsider within the Vedic religion. He became Rudra the brahmin-slayer. For it is ruled in orthodox sources that one who is guilty of this terrible crime may exonerate himself only if he removes himself from society for twelve years, lives in a cremation ground and carries the skull-bowl (*kapāla*) and the skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) when he goes forth to beg for food. Thus the Lākula's observance, generally called that of the skull (*kapālavrata*), is also known as that of exile, 'of those that are outside the world' (*lokātītvavrata*). It is also referred to as the Greater Pāśupata Observance (*mahāpāśupatavrata*). While the Pāśupata ascetic's outsidership was limited to the system of life-stages (*atyāśramavrata*), the Lākula skull-bearer was to abandon the more basic notion of the pure and the impure.

The Kālamukha ascetics who are known from many south Indian inscriptions from the ninth to thirteenth centuries were part of this Lākula division of the Atimārga. Doxographic material from this region records among their practices bathing in the ashes of the cremated (their milder predecessors had been content with the ashes of cow dung), eating these ashes and worshipping Rudra in a vessel filled with alcoholic liquor. This mode of worship was common in the rituals of the Kaula Śaivas (see pp. 679–89), but there is no reason to think that it was connected here as there with rituals involving sexual intercourse. It appears that these followers of Rudra the solitary penitent were bound by strict vows of celibacy.

The Lākulas had their own canon of scriptures concerned with both theology (*jñāna*) and ritual (*kriyā*), the eight *Authorities* (*Pramāṇas*). Of these nothing survives but their names and a single quotation from one of them, the *Pañcārtha-Pramāṇa*, in the works of the Kashmiri Kṣemarāja. For their doctrines we have an account of Lākula soteriology and cosmography in the *Niśvāsātattvasamhitā* quoted above, and a few scattered discussions in later Śaiva sources from Kashmir. From this we can see that the Lākulas had already developed most of the detailed hierarchy of worlds (*bhuvanādhanvan*) which characterises the later Mantramārga. The Lākula ascends to his salvation through a succession of worlds, each governed by its own manifestation of Rudra. The highest of these is the world of the Rudra Dhruveśa. Reaching this he attains liberation, a state of omniscience void of activity.

In the closely clustered systems which form the Mantramārga the soul of the initiate is raised through such a world-hierarchy at the time of his consecration. The difference is that the hierarchy has been further extended. It contains that of the Lākulas, but adds a number of new worlds above Dhruveśa's. The Lākula cosmos was itself the outcome of such

a process of extension. For immediately below Dhruveśa is the world of the Rudra Tejīśa. This was the final goal of the Vaimalas, a superseded group about whom our surviving sources tell us little but this. Further down the scale are the worlds of the Rudras Kṣemeśa and Brahmaṇaḥsvāmin. These were the cosmic termini of two other obscure Pāśupata groups, the Mausulas and the Kārukās.

### The Mantramārga

It is clear that the cosmos of the Mantramārga grew out of that of the Atimārga by the same process of competitive extension which set the Lākulas above the Vaimalas, and the Vaimalas above the Mausulas and the Kārukās. And there are other continuities between the two Paths in the fields of ritual, iconography, *mantras* and observances (*vrata*). However, in spite of these continuities, there is a fundamental difference of character between the two main branches of the Śaiva tradition. While the Atimārga is exclusively liberationist, the Mantramārga, though it accommodates the quest for liberation, is essentially concerned with the quest for supernatural experience (*bhoga*).

This difference might be thought to correspond to that between the aspirations of the original ascetics and the newly admitted married householders. On the contrary, it corresponds to that between two varieties of ascetic. For in the Mantramārga it is the ascetics who are principally concerned with the attainment of powers, the path of liberation being largely the domain of the men in the world; and it is the methods by which power may be attained that are the main subject matter of the Mantramārga's scriptures. The gnostic home-dwellers, who would come in time to dominate the Mantramārga, are here the unmarked category of aspirant. They are defined by the fact that they do *not* involve themselves with the concerns which generated not only the greater part of their texts but also the system's internal diversity. For it was for the sake of the power-seeker that there developed the extraordinary variety of rites, deities and *mantras* which sets the Mantramārga apart from the purely gnostic Atimārga.

The history of the expanding hierarchy of the Rudra-worlds shows that the Mantramārga is later than the Atimārga. None the less, the dichotomy between the liberation-seeking and the power-seeking forms of Śaiva asceticism is more ancient than the present corpus of Mantramārgic texts. The latter contain more archaic strata at which the superior deities of the developed Mantramārga give way to the earlier Rudra. If we compare these text-elements with the Rudra cult of the Atimārga, we see that the dichotomy which underlies the later form of the division is between a solitary and celibate Rudra in the Atimārga and a Rudra associated with bands of protean and predominantly female spirits in the background of the Mantramārga. In the fully developed and diversified Mantramārga this

association is but one aspect of that with feminine power (*śakti*) conceived more universally. It is this association which most obviously marks off the Mantramārga from the *śakti*-less Atimārga. We shall see that within the Mantramārga the major divisions correspond to different representations of this association.

*The Tantras of the Śaiva Siddhānta*

While our evidence for the Atimārga is very sparse, the Mantramārga can be studied in an enormous body of Sanskrit texts. The scriptures of the Mantramārga fall into two groups. On the one hand is the well-defined and relatively homogeneous canon of texts (the ten *Śiva-Āgamas*, the eighteen *Rudra-Āgamas* and attached scriptures) that constitute the authority of the tradition known to itself and others both in the scriptures and later as the *Śaiva Siddhānta*. On the other hand is a much more diverse, numerous and variously listed body of revelations known as the scriptures of Bhairava (*Bhairava-Āgamas*) or collectively as the Teaching of Bhairava (*Bhairavaśāstra*).

The Śiva forms of both are visualised as skull-bearing denizens of the cremation grounds. In the Śaiva Siddhānta, however, the god lacks the aura of terrifying and ecstatic power which is emphasised in his manifestations in the tradition of Bhairava ('the Fearsome'). Similarly, while the concept of feminine power (*śakti*) is found throughout the Mantramārga, it tends in the Śaiva Siddhānta to move away from personification as the Goddess or goddesses towards metaphysical abstraction. It is seen here principally as the creative power of the male Deity, manifest in the cosmic and soteriological process and embodied in his *mantra*-forms. In the daily ritual of the initiate the deity is worshipped, like the Rudra of the Atimārga, without a female consort. Linked to this is the purity of the mode of his worship. There is none of the offering of alcoholic drinks, blood and meat that typifies the rituals of the rest of the Mantramārga, with its greater emphasis on feminine and transgressive power.

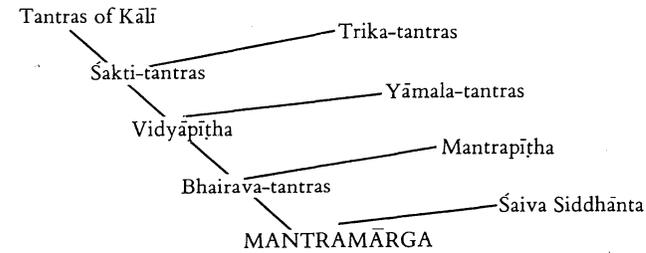
*The Tantras of Bhairava: Kāpālika Śaivism*

The Tantras of Bhairava, so called because they take the form of his answers to the questions of the Goddess (Devī, Bhairavī), have been variously listed and classified in different parts of the corpus. The classification given here corresponds, I believe, to the main structure of the Śaiva tradition outside the Śaiva Siddhānta at the time when the Kashmiri began their work of post-scriptural systematisation in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Within these Tantras there is a primary division between those of the Seat of Mantras (Mantrapīṭha) and those of the Seat of Vidyās (Vidyāpīṭha). The latter are either Union Tantras (*Yāmala-tantras*) or

Power Tantras (*Śakti-tantras*). Within the latter one may distinguish between the Tantras of the Trika (or rather of what was later called the Trika) and material dealing with cults of the goddess Kālī. Tantras which teach the cult of Tumburu-bhairava and his four sisters (Jayā, Vijayā, Jayantī and Aparā-jitā) are fitted into this scheme as a third division of the Vidyāpīṭha. But this is artificial. It accommodates a tradition whose importance had been superseded by that of the Mantrapīṭha (the cult of Svachanda-bhairava) to the extent that it was no longer part of the main structure. No more will be said of this minor tradition here.

Figure 36.1: The Structure of the Mantramārga



This arrangement is hierarchical. 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 (*dīkṣā*). As we ascend through these levels, from the Mantrapīṭha to the Yāmala-tantras and thence to the Trika and the Kālī cult, we find that the feminine rises stage by stage from subordination to complete autonomy.

*The Mantrapīṭha and the Cult of Svachandabhairava*

At the beginning of this ascent is the Seat of Mantras (Mantrapīṭha). This term expresses the fact that this group of Tantras emphasises the masculine, while in the Seat of Vidyās (Vidyāpīṭha) it is the feminine that predominates (the nouns *mantra* and *vidyā*, which both signify the sacred sound-formulas, being masculine and feminine respectively).

The basic cult of the Mantrapīṭha is that of Svachandabhairava ('Autonomous Bhairava') also known euphemistically as Aghora ('the Un-terrible'). White, five-faced (the embodiment of the five *brahma-mantras*) and eighteen-armed, he is worshipped with his identical consort Aghoreśvari, surrounded by eight lesser Bhairavas within a circular enclosure of cremation grounds. He stands upon the prostrate corpse of Sadāśiva, the now transcended Śiva-form worshipped in the Śaiva Siddhānta.

The traditions of the Bhairava Tantras are Kāpālīka, the basic form of their ascetic observance being that of the skull (*kapālavrata mahāvratā*). The difference between this and the Lākula form of this observance is largely a matter of the basic difference of the Mantramārga stated above. The term Kāpālīka is reserved here for this Mantramārgic segment of the Śaiva culture of the cremation grounds.

This Kāpālīka background is evident from the iconography of the divine couple. Worshipped within an enclosure of cremation grounds they themselves wear the bone ornaments and brandish the skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) of the Kāpālīka tradition. None the less these features are not emphasised here to the extent that they are in the Vidyāpīṭha. Though the *Svacchandatantra*, which is the authority for this cult, teaches the worship of certain secondary forms of Svacchandabhairava such as Koṣarākṣa ('the Hollow-Eyed') and Vyādhibhakṣa ('the Devourer of Diseases'), which, being visualised as terrifying, gross-bodied and black, are closer to the standard Bhairavas of the Kāpālīka tradition, Svacchandabhairava himself, the deity of daily worship, has milder elements that make him transitional in type between the calm Sadāśīva of the Śaiva Siddhānta and the gods of the Kāpālīka mainstream.

In the Śaiva Siddhānta, Śīva (Sadāśīva) was worshipped alone. In the Mantrapīṭha he is joined in worship by his consort as the personification of *śakti*. Iconically she is his equal. But the larger ritual context shows that she is still subordinate. Her feminine presence is not reinforced by secondary goddesses in the circuit (*āvaraṇa*) that surrounds the couple. Furthermore Svacchandabhairava is worshipped alone after he has been worshipped with his consort. His appearance with Aghoreśvarī is his lower form.

#### The Vidyāpīṭha

With the ascent to the Vidyāpīṭha the Śaiva entered a world of ritual in which these last restraints on *śakti* dissolved. He was consecrated in the cults of deities who presided in their *maṇḍalas* over predominantly female pantheons, and who passed as he ascended to the left from Bhairavas with consorts, to Goddesses above Bhairavas, to the terrible Solitary Heroines (*ekavīrā*) of the cults of Kālī.

If in the cult of Svacchandabhairava the Kāpālīka culture of the cremation grounds was somewhat in the background, here it is pervasive. The initiate gained access to the powers of these deities by adopting the observance of the Kāpālīkas. With his hair matted and bound up with a pin of human bone, wearing earrings, armllets, anklets and a girdle, all of the same substance, with a sacred thread (*upavīta*) made of twisted corpse-hair, smeared with ashes from the cremation-pyres, carrying the skull-bowl, the skull-staff and the rattle-drum (*ḍamaru*), intoxicated with alcohol, he alter-

nated periods of night-wandering (*niśāṭana*) with worship (*pūjā*) in which he invoked and gratified the deities of the *maṇḍala* into which he had been initiated. This gratification required the participation of a *dūtī*, a consecrated consort, with whom he was to copulate in order to produce the mingled sexual fluids which, with blood and other impurities of the body, provided the offering irresistible to this class of deities.

*The Cult of Yoginīs.* Accessible from the main cults of the Vidyāpīṭha, and underlying them in a more or less constant form, is the more ancient cult of Rudra/Bhairava in association with female spirits (Yoginīs). In the Atimārga and thence in the Mantramārga the series of cosmic levels (*bhuvanādhanvan*) is governed by Rudras. When the initiate passed into this subjacent tradition he found that this masculine hierarchy 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 re-populated this vertical order of the Śaiva cosmos, appropriated the cycle of time (ruling as incarnations in each of the four world-ages (*yuga*)), and irradiated sacred space by sending forth emanations enshrined and worshipped in power-seats (*pīṭha*) connected with cremation grounds throughout the sub-continent.

The goal of the initiate was to force or entice these Yoginīs to gather before him and receive him into their band (*yoginīgaṇa*), sharing with him their miraculous powers and esoteric knowledge. The time favoured for such invocations was the fourteenth night of the dark fortnight, the night of the day of spirits (*bhūtadina*); and the most efficacious site was the cremation ground, the foremost of their meeting-places. The Śīva worshipped in these rites is Manthāna-Rudra (or Manthāna-Bhairava), a four-faced and therefore secondary or archaic form. Not 'married' to the Goddess as in the cults of entry, he is rather the wild ascetic who leads the Yoginī hordes (*yoginīgaṇanāyaka*).

The cult of Yoginīs is not concerned with these protean powers only as the inhabitants of a theoretical and liturgical universe, and as goddesses enshrined in the cremation ground power-seats. For they were believed also to possess women and thereby to enter into the most intimate contact with their devotees. Of these incarnate Yoginīs some, having been conceived in the intercourse of the consecrated, are considered divine from birth. Others appear in girls of eight, twelve or sixteen who live in the vicinity of the power-seats, these being of three degrees of potency. Others are identified in untouchable women from the age of twenty-seven as *Ḍākinīs* and other forms of assaulting spirit.

All Yoginīs belong to the family (*kula*) or lineage (*gotra*) of one or other of a number of higher 'maternal' powers, and in any instance this parentage is ascribed on the evidence of certain physical and behavioural characteristics. An adept in the cult of Yoginīs can identify

members of as many as sixty-three of these occult sisterhoods, but is most vitally concerned with the eight major families of the Mothers (*mātr*) Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Indrāṇī, Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍā and Mahālakṣmī. For at the time of consecration he entered a trance in which the possessing power of the deity caused his hand to cast a flower into a *maṇḍala* enthroning these Mothers. The segment into which the flower fell revealed that Mother with whom he had an innate affinity. This established a link between him and the incarnate Yoginīs, for these families of the eight Mothers were also theirs. On days of the lunar fortnight sacred to his Mother the initiate was to seek out a Yoginī of his family. By worshipping her he aspired to attain supernatural powers and occult knowledge.

*The Union Tantras (Yāmala-tantras): the Cult of Kapāl'īśabhairava and Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī.* Above this Yoginī cult, in the front line of the Vidyāpīṭha, the first level of the ascent of Śakti towards autonomy is seen in the Union Tantras. The principal cult here is that of Bhairava Lord of the Skull (Kapāl'īśa-, Kapāleśa-, Kapāla-bhairava) and his consort 'the Furious' (Caṇḍā) Goddess of the Skull (Kāpālīnī). This is taught in the twelve thousand stanzas of the strongly Kāpālīka *Picumata-Brahmayāmalatantra* (MSS). In the cult of Svacchandabhairava, in the Mantrapīṭha, the secondary deities surrounding the couple in the *maṇḍala* were male and solitary. Here they are female, with subordinate male consorts in the densely populated *maṇḍala* installed for exceptional worship, and alone in the much simpler pantheon of the private daily cult (*nityakarma*). Bhairava rules these secondary deities as the unifying holder of power (*śaktimat*, *śakticakreśvara*), in accordance with the general Śaiva conception of the divine nature. But this supremacy on the iconic plane is transcended by *śakti* on that of the deity-embodiment *mantras*. For the essential components of the *mantras* of the nine deities who form the core of the greater *maṇḍala* and are the pantheon of daily worship are the syllables of the *mantra* of Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī: (OM) HŪM CAṆḌE KĀPĀLINI SVĀHĀ ('... O Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī ...!'). Thus Kapālīśabhairava (HŪM), his four goddesses (Raktā (CAM), Karālā (ḌE), Caṇḍākṣī (KĀ) and Mahocchuṣmā (PĀ)) and their four attendant powers or Dūtīs (Karālī (LI), Danturā (NI), Bhīmavaktrā (SVĀ) and Mahābalā (HĀ)), are aspects of a feminine power which transcends the male-female dichotomy which patterns the lower revelations.

*The Power Tantras (Śakti-tantras): the Cult of the Triad (Trika).* Above the Yāmala-tantras are the Śakti-tantras. These contain the scriptural authority for the system that in its later Tantras is called the Trika, and also that of the esoteric Kālī cults.

In the Tantras of the Trika (*Siddhayogeśvarīmata* (MSS), *Tantrasadbhāva* (MSS), *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*) the cult of Yoginīs permeates all levels; for the cult of entry is itself a development of that

tradition. The focus of the Trika is directly on the network of Yoginīs (*yoginījāla*) as the hierarchy of cosmic manifestation, from the innermost resonance of the deity's power to its gross transformations as the sense-data that populate individualised consciousness.

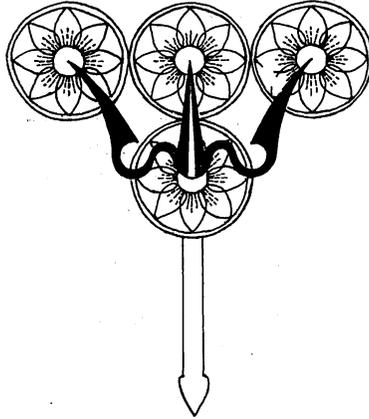
The Trika's system of ritual and yoga leads to liberation and power by treading the steps of this emanation in reverse. The worshipper ascends to the core within the circuits of lesser Yoginīs. This core is the triad of goddesses, Parā (see Figure 36.2), Parāparā and Aparā, worshipped alone or with subordinate Bhairavas and visualised as enthroned on three white lotuses that rest on the tips of a trident (*triśūla*) (see Figure 36.3). This trident is superimposed in imagination along the central vertical axis of the worshipper's body so that the trifurcation rises through a space of twelve finger breadths above his head, the whole from its base at the level of his navel to this summit being identified with the series of cosmic levels from gross matter to the Absolute. The central goddess, Parā, is white, beautiful and benevolent. Single-faced and two-armed she holds a sacred text and exhibits the gesture of self-realisation (*cinnudrā*). Parāparā and Aparā, to her right and

Figure 36.2: Parā



left, are red and black respectively. Raging Kāpālīka deities, they brandish the skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*). Externally the three are worshipped with offerings that must begin with alcoholic liquor and red meat, and on such 'thrones' as a *maṇḍala*, a square of ground prepared for this purpose (*sthaṇḍila*) or an image painted on cloth (*paṭa*) or incised on a human cranium (*tūra*).

Figure 36.3: The outline of the Maṇḍala of the Trident and Lotus (triśūlābjamaṇḍala) as prescribed in the Trika's Devyāyāmalatantra



Parā has two aspects, for she is worshipped both as one of the three and as their sum and source. In this higher aspect she is called Mātṛsadbhāva (Essence of the Mothers), the summit of the hierarchy of the female powers which populate the cult of Yoginīs. Later all this would be interpreted along more metaphysical and mystical lines. Mātṛsadbhāva was read as Essence of (All) Conscious Beings ([pra-]mātṛ-) and the three goddesses were contemplated as the three fundamental constituent powers of a universe which was consciousness only. Parā was the power of the subject-element (*pramātṛ*), Aparā that of the object-element (*prameya*) and Parāparā that of the cognitive field or medium (*pramāṇa*) by virtue of which they are related, while their convergence in Mātṛsadbhāva came to express the ultimate unity of these three within an Absolute of pure consciousness contemplated as the liberated essence of the worshipper.

*The Jayadrathayāmala and the Cult of Kālī.* Beyond the cult of the three goddesses, at the extreme left of the Mantramārga, is the *Jayadrathayāmalatantra* (MSS). Also known as the King of Tantras (*Tantrarāja bhāṭṭāraka*) it expounds in 24,000 stanzas the Kāpālika cults of over a hundred manifestations of the terrible goddess Kālī as the Destroyer of Time (Kālasamkarṣiṇī).

There are two main levels in the Tantra. The first, which is taught in the first quarter of the work (probably composed earlier than the rest), is that of the cult of a golden-limbed, twenty-armed Kālasamkarṣiṇī with five faces of different colours, that which faces the worshipper being black. Conventionally beautiful but holding such Kāpālika emblems as

the skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) and the severed head (*muṇḍa*), wearing a tiger skin dripping with blood, trampling the body of Kāla (Time) beneath her feet, she holds a trance-possessed Bhairava in a two-armed embrace in the centre of a vast, many-circuited *maṇḍala* of goddesses enclosed by cordons of male servant-guards and an outer ring of cremation grounds. In the elaborate form of worship both the goddesses and the guards embrace consorts. Here then is a Yāmala (Union) cult very similar to that of Kapālīśabhairava and Caṇḍā Kāpālīni taught in the *Picumata-Brahmayāmala* but centred in Kālī rather than Bhairava.

In the remaining three quarters of the text Bhairava is excluded from worship altogether. He is now just the highest of the male deities whose power Kālī transcends, the seventh at the summit of the hierarchy of the dethroned, coming above Indra, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśvara and Sadāśiva. Lying beneath her feet or dismembered to adorn her body, Bhairava suffers in his turn the humiliation which he inflicted on Sadāśiva in the Mantrapīṭha. With his fall the pantheons of worship are entirely feminised. But the femininity which remains is not that of the Yāmala systems. There *śakti* is worshipped in the form of beautiful and passionate consorts. Here the triumphant Goddess reveals herself to her devotees as a hideous, emaciated destroyer who embodies the Absolute (*anuttaram*) as the ultimate Self which the 'I' cannot enter and survive, an insatiable void in the heart of consciousness.

Typical of the conception of the Goddess in this second and more esoteric part of the Tantra is Vīrya-Kālī (Kālī of the [Fivefold] Power) (see Figure 36.4). Visualised in the centre of an aura of blinding light and contemplated as the innermost vibrancy (*spanda*) of consciousness she is black and emaciated. She has six faces and her hair is wreathed with flames. She is adorned with the severed heads and dismembered limbs of the lower deities. She rides on the shoulders of Kālāgnirudra (the Rudra of the Final Conflagration). In her twelve hands she carries a noose, a goad, a severed head, a sword, a shield, a trident-*khaṭvāṅga*, a thunderbolt (*vajra*), a ringing bell, a *ḍamaru*-drum, a skull-cup, a knife, a bleeding heart and an elephant-hide. The Rudra who is her vehicle (*vāhana*) is black on one side of his body and red on the other, symbolising the two breaths, the ingoing (*apāna*) and the outgoing (*prāṇa*), whose fusion and dissolution into the central axis of power reveals the state of thoughtless (*nirvikalpa*) awareness that holds the Goddess in its heart. The fivefold power (*vīrya*) that she embodies as 'the essence of the entire Vidyāpīṭha' is that by virtue of which the 'waveless' (*nistarāṅga*), self-luminous ground of reality projects itself as content in consciousness, and then re-absorbs this content, returning to its initial tranquility: this cyclical movement being the pulsation of consciousness from moment to moment as well as the pulsation of consciousness in cosmic creation and destruction. She passes from pure Light (*bhāsa* (1)) within the Śiva-void (*śivavyoma*), through incarnation (*avatāra* (2))

Figure 36.4: Virya-Kali

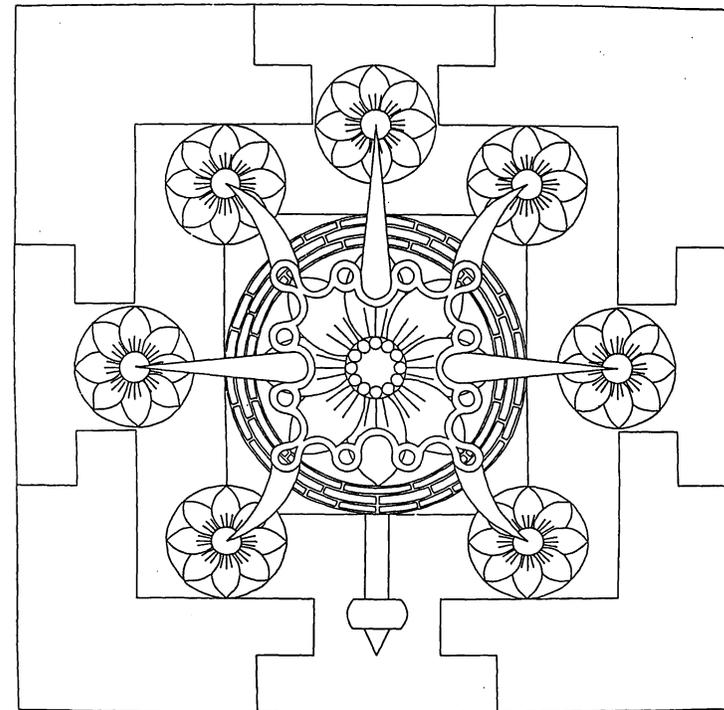


as the impulse towards extroversion, to actual emission (*śṣṭi* (3)) of content, which appears as though outside consciousness, to her Kālī phase (*kālikrama* (4)), in which she re-absorbs this content, and finally to the Great Withdrawal (*mahāsamhāra* (5)), in which she shines once again in her initial state as the pure Light. By contemplating this sequence (*krama*) in worship the devotee of Kālī is believed to realise the macrocosmic process within his own consciousness and thereby to attain omniscience and omnipotence.

In the fourth quarter of the *Jayadrathayāmala* tantra we are introduced to what the text claims to be the ultimate form of the Kālī cult. Here Mahākālī (Great Kālī) is worshipped in a black circle with a vermilion border surrounded by a ring of twelve such circles containing Kālīs who

differ from her in their names but are identical in appearance. The relation of dependence between the Goddess and Śiva-Bhairava has already been transcended in the pure *śakti* cult of the higher level of this Tantra. Now even the hierarchy of source and emanations which remained within *śakti* herself is ritually dissolved, in a *maṇḍala* which expresses the perfect identity in essence (*sāmarasya*) of the Absolute and its manifestations, of the state of liberated transcendental (*śarvottīrṇa*) consciousness (*nirvāṇa*) and its finite projections, as the state of transmigratory existence (*bhava*, *saṃsāra*). Worshipped externally in orgiastic rites, the thirteen Kālīs (12+1) are to be realised internally in mystical self-experience, flashing forth as the ego-less (*nirahankāra*) void through the voids of the senses during sexual union with the *dūtī*. This system known here as the Kālikrama or Kālikula, links this Tantra with the Krama to be described below (see pp. 683-4 and 696-9).

Figure 36.5: The Trika's Maṇḍala of the Three Tridents and (Seven) Lotus (tritrīśūlābja maṇḍala) with the twelve Kālīs in its centre, as prescribed by the *Trikaśādbhāvanā*



*The Kālī-based Trika.* The cult of the three goddesses and that of Kālī were not sealed off from each other in the manner of rival sects. The *Jayadrathyaṃala* shows that the devotees of Kālī had developed their own versions of the cult of the three goddesses. The Trika in its turn assimilated these and other new and more esoteric treatments from the left. Consequently we find a later Trika stratum in which Kālasaṃkarṣiṇī has been introduced to be worshipped above the three goddesses of the trident (*Devyaṃmalatantra*). Finally there is a radical reorientation in which a system of sets of deities, worshipped in certain forms of the Kālī cult as the embodiment of the phases of cognition, is superimposed on to an elaborated version of the ancient triad as the inner structure of the point in which the three goddesses converge into the mystical fourth power, which is their interpenetration (3×3) in unity. In the centre of this convergence are the twelve Kālīs of the Kālīkrama (or Kālīkula) in their twelve circles (see Figure 36.5).

*The Vidyāpīṭha and Esoteric Buddhism.* By the eighth century CE the Buddhists had accumulated a hierarchy of Tantric revelations roughly parallel in its organisation and character to that of the Mantramārga. Their literature was divided in order of ascending esotericism into the Tantras of Action (*kriyā-tantras*), of Observance (*caryā-tantras*), of Yoga (*yoga-tantras*), of Higher Yoga (*yogottara-tantras*) and Supreme Yoga (*yogā-nuttara-tantras*).

Leaving aside the lowest and miscellaneous category we can compare the relatively orthodox cult of the mild Vairocana Buddha in the Tantras of Observance (*Mahāvairocanasūtra* etc.) and Yoga (*Tattvasaṃgraha*, *Paramāḍya*, etc.) with the Śaiva Siddhānta's cult of Sadāśiva, and the more esoteric and heteropractic traditions of the Higher Yoga (*Guhyasamāja* etc.) and Supreme Yoga (*Abhidhānottarottara*, *Hevajra*, *Dākinīvajrapaṅjara* etc.) with the Mantrapīṭha and Vidyāpīṭha of the Tantras of Bhairava. Just as the Svacchandabhairava cult of the Mantrapīṭha is transitional between the more exoteric Śaiva Siddhānta and the Kāpālika Vidyāpīṭha, so that of Akṣobhya in the Higher Yoga stands bridging the gap between the Vairocana cult and the feminised and Kāpālika-like cults of Heruka, Vajravārāhī and the other *khaṭvāṅga*-bearing deities of the Supreme Yoga.

At the lower levels of the Buddhist Tantric canon there is certainly the influence of the general character and liturgical methods of the Śaiva and the Pāñcarātra-Vaiṣṇava Tantric traditions. But at the final (and latest) level the dependence is much more profound and detailed. As in the Vidyāpīṭha cults these Buddhist deities are Kāpālika in iconic form. They wear the five bone-ornaments and are smeared with ashes (the six seals (*mudrās*) of the Kāpālikas). They drink blood from skull-bowls (*kapāla*), have the Śaiva third eye, stand on the prostrate bodies of lesser deities, wear Śiva's sickle moon upon their massed and matted hair (*jaṭā*). And, just as in the Vidyāpīṭha, their cults are set in that of the Yoginīs. Those who are initiated

by introduction to the *maṇḍalas* of these Yoginī-encircled Buddhist deities are adorned with bone-ornaments and given the Kāpālika's *khaṭvāṅga* and skull-bowl to hold. Those who wish to do so may take on the long-term practice of the Kāpālika observance itself (Vajra-Kāpālikavrata), living in the cremation grounds, consuming meat and alcohol and offering erotic worship.

The Buddhist-Kāpālika Yoginī cult which gives these Tantras of Supreme Yoga their distinctive character and the greater part of their subject matter—indeed, they refer to themselves as Yoginī-tantras on the whole—borrows much of its detail and textual material directly from parallel Śaiva sources. Thus most of the material in the *Abhidhānottarottaratantra* and *Saṃpuṭodbhavatatantra* listing the characteristics by which Yoginīs of different sorts may be recognised, and the sign language and syllabic codes with which they must be addressed (*chommā*), has been lifted with some Buddhist overwriting from such Vidyāpīṭha texts as the *Yoginīsaṃcāra* of the *Jayadrathyaṃmalatantra*, the *Picumata-Brahmayāmalatantra* and the *Tantrasadbhāva*.

#### *The Kaula Reformation of the Yoginī Cult*

The Yoginī cult, like the main cults of entry into the Vidyāpīṭha, was the speciality of skull-bearing ascetics removed from conventional society. It might reasonably have been expected to remain so but for Kaulism. This movement within esoteric Śaivism decontaminated the mysticism of the Kāpālikas so that it flowed into the wider community of married householders. In that of Kashmir it found learned exponents who used it to formulate a respectable metaphysics and soteriology with which to stand against the Śaiva Siddhānta.

The rites of the Yoginī cults and the fruits they bestowed were called *kaulika* or *kaula* in the texts which prescribed them, these terms being adjectives derived from the noun *kula* in its reference to the families or lineages of the Yoginīs and Mothers. Thus a Kaulika rite was one connected with the worship of these *kulas*, and a *kaulika* power (*kaulikī siddhiḥ*) was one that was attained through that worship, above all assimilation into these families (*kulasāmānyatā*).

Kaulism developed from within these Yoginī cults. It preserved the original meaning of the term *kula* and its derivatives but it introduced a new level of esotericism based on a homonym. For *kula* was also taken to mean the body and, by further extension, the totality (of phenomena), the 'body' of power (*śakti*). This last meaning neatly encompassed the original, for this cosmic 'body' was said to consist of the powers of the eight families of the Mothers. One was believed to enter the totality (*kula*) through that segment of its power with which one had a special affinity, determined as before by the casting of a flower during possession (*āveśa*).

Furthermore, these eight Mothers of the families were made internally accessible by being identified with the eight constituents of the individual worshipper's 'subtle body' (*puryaṣṭaka*), these being sound, sensation, visual form, taste, smell, volition, judgement and ego. The worshipper was therefore the temple of his deities; the central deity, out of whom these Mother-powers are projected, in whom they are grounded and into whom they are re-absorbed, was to be evoked within this temple as the Lord and/or Lady of the Kula (Kuleśvara, Kuleśvarī), as the blissful inner consciousness which is the worshipper's ultimate and trans-individual identity.

In the cults of the Vidyāpīṭha the propitiation of the deities involved sexual intercourse with a *dūtī*. This practice is continued in Kaulism. Indeed it moves to the very centre of the cult. However while its principal purpose in the Vidyāpīṭha was to produce the power-substances needed to gratify the deities, here the ritual of copulation is aestheticised. The magical properties of the mingled sexual fluids are not forgotten: those seeking powers (*siddhis*) consumed it and even those who worshipped for salvation alone offered the products of orgasm to the deities. However the emphasis has now moved to orgasm itself. It is no longer principally a means of production. It is a privileged means of access to a blissful expansion of consciousness in which the deities of the Kula permeate and obliterate the ego of the worshipper. The consumption of meat and alcohol is interpreted along the same lines. Their purpose, like that of everything in the liturgy, is to intensify experience, to gratify the goddesses of the senses.

The Kāpālika of the Vidyāpīṭha sought the convergence of the Yoginīs and his fusion with them (*yoginīmelaka*, *-melāpa*) 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 (*karāṇeśvarīs*), 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 *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 (*cidvyomabhairava*).

Kaulism developed into four main systems. These were known as the Four Transmissions (*āmnāya*) or as the Transmissions of the Four Lodges (*gharāmnāya*) (eastern, western, northern and southern). Each has its own distinctive set of deities, *mantras*, *maṇḍalas*, mythical saints, myths of origin and the like.

*The Kaula Trika: the Eastern Transmission (Pūrvām-nāya)*. The first context in which we find this Kaula esotericism is the Trika. The Kaula form of the cult of the three goddesses of the trident was well established among the Kashmiri by the beginning of the ninth century; and our first detailed exegesis of the Kashmiri Trika, at the end of the tenth century, shows that there had long existed a hierarchical distinction between the lower, Tantric form of the cult (*tantra-prakriyā*) and the new Kaula tradition. Kaula sources outside the Trika, such as the *Ciñcinīmatasārasamuccaya* (MSS), indicate that the Kaulism of this branch of the Vidyāpīṭha is the closest to the origin of the tradition.

The basic Kaula pantheon consists of the Lord and/or Goddess of the Kula (Kuleśvara, Kuleśvarī) surrounded by the eight Mothers (Brāhmī etc.) with or without Bhairava consorts. Outside this core one worships the four mythical *gurus* or Perfected Ones (*Siddhas*) of the tradition (the four Lords of the Ages of the World (Yuganātha)), their consorts (*dūtīs*), the offspring of these couples and their *dūtīs*. The couple of the present, degenerate age (*kaliyuga*) are Macchanda (the Fisherman), venerated as the revealer (*avatāraka*) of Kaulism, and his consort Koṅkaṇā. Of their sons, the twelve 'princes' (*rājaputra*), six are non-celibate (*adhoretas*) and therefore specially revered as qualified (*śādhikāra*) to transmit the Kaula cult. They are worshipped as the founders of the six initiatory lineages (*ovalli*). At the time of consecration one entered one of these lineages and received a name whose second part indicated this affiliation. Hand-signs (*chommā*, *chomā*, *chummā*) enabled members of the *ovallis* to reveal themselves to each other (a remnant of the more elaborate code-languages [also called *chommā*] of the Kāpālika Yoginī cults and their Buddhist imitators); and each *ovalli* had lodges (*maṭha*) for its members in various parts of India. In this last respect they maintained the earlier tradition of Śaiva asceticism.

The Trika's Kaula cult added little to this matrix. It simply worshipped its three goddesses Parā, Parāparā and Aparā at the corners of a triangle drawn or visualised enclosing the Kuleśvara and Kuleśvarī of the centre. The worship could be carried out externally, on a red cloth upon the ground, in a circle filled with vermilion powder and enclosed with a black border, on a coconut substituted for a human skull, a vessel filled with wine or other alcohol, or on a *maṇḍala*. It may also be offered on the exposed genitals of the *dūtī*, on one's own body, or in the act of sexual intercourse with the *dūtī*. Later tradition emphasises the possibility of worshipping the deities within the vital energy (*prāṇa*)—one visualises their gratification by the 'nectar' of one's ingoing breath. We are also told that the seeker of liberation may carry out his worship in thought alone (*sāmvidī pūjā*). However even one who does this must offer erotic worship with his *dūtī* on certain special days of the year (*parvas*).

The Kaula tradition of the Trika saw itself as essentialising Tantric practice. In this spirit it offered a much condensed form of

the liturgy followed in the Tantra-system, emphasising spontaneity and intensity of immersion (*tanmayībhāva*, *samāveśa*) over elaborate ritual. Thus the usual preliminary purifications (*snāna*), the internal worship (*antaryāga*) which always precedes the external in Tantric rites and the offerings in the sacrificial fire (*homa*), which follow and repeat the worship of the deities, may all be discarded as superfluous. Moreover, the worshipper may advance from an initial stage in which he worships the full Kaula pantheon until eventually he worships only the central Kuleśvara.

The same condensation and intensification determines the form of consecration (*kaula-dīkṣā*). The guru opens the initiate's path to salvation and power by ritually annulling in advance whatever future experiences other than his present goal might await him at the various levels of the cosmos. He unites him with the deity at the summit of the subtle levels of the universe and then equips him with a 'pure' or divine body so that after this elevation to the immaterial plane of the deity he can re-enter the world as an initiate. In the Tantra-system of the Trika, as in all Tantra-systems, this destruction of karmic bonds involves an elaborate sequence of offerings in the sacred fire (*hautrī dīkṣā*). The initiate may be entirely passive during this process. In the Kaula system all this is achieved with minimal ritual, while the initiate is required to manifest signs of possession (*āveśa*) and is said to have direct experience during his trance of his ascent from level to level of the cosmos.

The Tantra-system with which this Kaulism is contrasted is not exactly the Trika-Tantrism of the ascetics. It is rather that tradition's domesticated form as it was practiced by the married householders from whom the Kaula Trika received its initiates. One might conclude, then, that this Kaulism, with its emphasis on possession and mystical experience, offered the married Tantric enthusiast an acceptable substitute for the intensity of the Kāpālika Tantric tradition to which he was directly linked through his deities and *mantras*, but from which he was necessarily excluded by his status as a married home-dweller.

*The Kaula Kālī Cult: the Mata, the Krama and the Northern Transmission (Uttarāmnāya).* After its appearance in the Trika, Kaulism next emerges in the Kālī cult. We must distinguish here three major traditions, (i) the Doctrine (Mata), (ii) the Sequence(-system) (Krama), also called the Great Truth (Mahārtha), the Great Way (Mahānaya), or the Way of the Goddess (Devīnaya), and (iii) the cult of Guhyakālī.

(i) *The Mata.* The Kaula Mata is rooted in the tradition of the *Jayadrathayāmalatantra*. Its essence or culmination is the worship of the twelve Kālīs, the *kālīkrama* which, as we have seen above, was believed to irradiate or possess the consciousness of the adept and his *dūtī* during sexual intercourse, obliterating the binding structures of differentiated awareness (*vikalpa*).

This Kaulism, like that of the Trika, rests upon a broader base of Tantric practice, but unlike that of the Trika this base is unrestrainedly Kāpālika. The most striking feature of this Tantric Mata is the prevalence of deities who have the faces of animals, or who have numerous such faces in addition to a principal anthropomorphic face. In the centre of its pantheon are three terrific goddesses of this second type, Trailokyadāmarā (Terroriser of the Universe), Matacakreśvarī (Goddess of the Circle of the Mata), and Ghoraghoratarā (She who is More Terrible than the Terrible).

Our only detailed account of the Kaula form of the Mata is the *Cīñciñīmatasārasamuccaya* (MSS). Given there as the Kaulism of the Northern Transmission (Uttarāmnāya) it is expounded through two mystical texts of twelve and fifty verses respectively associated with the probably mythical gurus Vidyānandanātha and Niṣkriyānandanātha. In style and content these are closely related to the Kālīkrama section in the *Jayadrathayāmalatantra*.

(ii) *The Krama.* A much more elaborate or rather better documented Kaula system of Kālī worship is found in the literature of the Krama. The outstanding characteristic of this tradition is that it worships a sequential rather than a simply concentric pantheon. A series of sets of deities (*cakras*) is worshipped in a fixed sequence as the phases (*krama*) of the cyclical pulse of cognition (*saṃvit*): These phases are Emission (*śṛṣṭīkrama*), Maintenance of the emitted (*sthītikrama*) (also called Incarnation (*avatārakrama*)), Retraction of the emitted (*saṃhārakrama*) and the Nameless fourth (*anākhyakrama*) (also called the Phase of the Kālīs (*kālīkrama*)), in which all trace of the preceding process is dissolved into liberated and all-pervading consciousness. This sequence differs somewhat from that seen below in the cult of Vīryakālī, and considerably as far as the actual deities who are worshipped in these phases are concerned. The final phase, that of the Nameless, is identical to that of the thirteen (12+1) Kālīs seen in the Mata. Indeed this set of deities is the feature which is most constant through the different forms of the Kālī cult.

The main scriptural authority for this form of the Krama is the *Devīpañcaśataka* (MSS). However there was a variant Krama tradition based on the *Kramasadbhāva* (MS). This adds a fifth sequence, that of pure Light (*bhāsākrama* (see p. 676)), to the four above. It also worships a system of sixty-four Yoginīs (also called Śakinīs) in five phases as the prelude to the cult of the Kālīs of the Nameless. In the period of the Kashmiri exegetes elements from each of these two traditions were brought together (see pp. 697-8 for the interpretation of this cycle of sixty-four Yoginīs). None the less there remained a permanent division in the tradition between tetradic and pentadic *krama*-worship, deriving from the *Devīpañcaśataka* and the *Kramasadbhāva* respectively.

The scriptures of this tradition considered themselves to be above the Vidyāpīṭha, and it is true that, though there are

continuities with the *Jayadrathayāmālatantra*, they are more sophisticated in a number of respects. Thus the cult has *mantras* but lacks the grosser level at which the deities take on iconic form. External worship is greatly simplified and looked upon as inferior to worship in the mind, it being understood that the order of worship (*pūjākrama*) is no more than a reflection of the ever-present order of cognition itself (*saṃvitkrama*).

This claim to superiority is also expressed by the fact that the two scriptures mentioned reject the universal convention of the Bhairava Tantras which Bhairava teach the Goddess. Here the roles are reversed. The Goddess teaches Bhairava. For she embodies what he cannot know, the cycle of cognitive power which constitutes his own self-awareness.

While on the whole it is not possible to say at present where the majority of the Tantras originated, the scriptural tradition and the later commentators are unanimous in attributing the Krama revelations to Oḍḍiyāna, the Northern Seat of Power (*uttara-pīṭha*). This was in the Swat valley in what is now Pakistan, some 300 kilometres north-west of the valley of Kashmir. The same place figures prominently in the hagiographical histories of Buddhism as the major centre from which the traditions of the Yoginī-tantras (= *Yogānuttaratantras*) were propagated. With the advent of Islam and the subsequent collapse of urban and monastic culture in that region, all traces of its Tantric traditions have disappeared.

(iii) *The Cult of Guhyakālī*. It is a common phenomenon in the history of the Tantric traditions that such refinements as those of the Krama are quickly written into the lower, more concretely elaborated rituals which they sought to transcend. So there has flourished, from at least the tenth century to the present, a cult in which the mystical deity-schemata of the Krama are fleshed out with iconic form as the retinue of the Goddess Guhyakālī. The source of this concretisation is the Tantric tradition of the Mata. In her three-faced and eight-armed form, Guhyakālī's faces are worshipped as the three Mata goddesses Trailokyāḍāmarā, Matakakreśvarī and Matalakṣmī (= Ghoraghoratara). Thus she is seen as the transcendent unity of that tradition. Further, in her principal form she is virtually identical with the third of these goddesses. Eight- and finally fifty-four-armed, black and ten-faced, she dances on the body of Bhairava in the centre of a cremation ground (see Figure 36.6).

The earliest datable evidence of this cult is also our earliest datable example of a Tantric ritual handbook providing detailed instructions on worship with all the *mantras* to be recited. This is the *Kālikulakramārcana* of Vimalaprabodha, an author first mentioned in a Nepalese manuscript dated 1002 CE. This and many other practical texts of her cult have circulated and circulate still in the Nepal Valley, where she is the esoteric identity of Guhyeśvarī, the major local Goddess from our earliest records (c. 800 CE) to the present. The Newars, who maintain the

Figure 36.6: Guhyakālī



early traditions of the region, preserve her link with the Northern Transmission. For them Guhyakālī is the embodiment of that branch of Kaulism. Linked with her in this role is the white Goddess Siddhalakṣmī (always written Siddhilakṣmī in Nepal), one of the apotropaic deities (Pratyāṅgira) of the *Jayadrathayāmālatantra* and the patron goddess of the Malla Kings (1200–1768 CE) and their descendants.

A version of the cult of Guhyakālī seems also to have flourished in Mithilā (in northern Bihar) on the authority of the *Mahākālasaṃhitā*. The connection with the Krama sequence-worship is very attenuated here. Though her icon is as elsewhere, she is unusual in being

worshipped with a consort and one who is not a form of Śiva, as one might have expected, but the Man-Lion (Narasimha) incarnation of the rival God Viṣṇu. But that too has its precedent in the *Jayadrathayāmala* tantra. For in its fourth quarter that Tantra teaches the cult of a Kālī Mādhavēsvārī to be worshipped as the consort of this same Viṣṇu-form. Indeed this seems to have been a major tradition in Kashmir, for Abhinavagupta, the great Kashmiri Tantric scholar, gives this cult in his *Tantrāloka* as one of two forms of Kaulism connected with the Trika.

*The Kaula Cult of Kubjikā: the Western Transmission (Paścimāmnāya).* Intimately connected with the Trika is the third form of Kaulism, the cult of the Goddess Kubjikā. It is distinct from the Trika in that it adds the cult of a new set of deities, so that the Trika recedes from the front line of devotion into the ritual, yogic and theoretical body of the system. Its dependence on the Trika is revealed by the fact that much of its principal and earliest scripture, the *Kubjikāmata*, consists of chapters and other passages taken with minor overwriting from the scriptural corpus of that tradition.

Figure 36.7: Kubjikā with Navātma on Agni, according to the visualisation text of the Nityāhnikatilaka



The high deity of the new pantheon is the goddess Kubjikā ('the Humpbacked' or 'Stooped'). Black, fat-bellied, six-faced and twelve-armed, adorned with snakes, jewels, human bones and a garland of severed heads, she embraces her consort Navātma ('the Nine-fold' [embodying the nine-part *mantra* H-S-KṢ-M-L-V-Y-R-ŪM]). He is five-faced and ten-armed. Also black, but youthful and handsome, he dances with her on a lotus which grows from the navel of Agni, the god of Fire, who lies in the centre of a lotus visualised by the worshipper in his cranial aperture (*brahmarandhra*) at the summit of an axis of brilliant light rising from the power-centre (*cakra*) in his genital region (*svādhiṣṭhāna*) (see Figure 36.7).

The tradition of the *Kubjikāmata* is *sākta*, which is to say that it is a Śaiva cult which emphasises the Goddess (*śakti*) rather than Śiva/Bhairava. In this sense all the Transmissions are *sākta*. However in the Western Tradition (*Paścimāmnāya*) there is a parallel system known as the Śāmbhava. It is Śāmbhava as opposed to *sākta* because it stresses Śāmbhu (equivalent to Śiva, i.e. Navātma) rather than *śakti* (=Kubjikā). Similarly masculinised variants existed in the Trika and the Krama. In the first there is the Kaula cult, in which Parā, Parāparā and Aparā are worshipped as the powers of Trīśirobbhairava (Bhairava the Three-headed); and in the second Manthāna-bhairava may take the place of the thirteenth Kālī in the Kālīkrama. This Śāmbhava system, however, was much more widely propagated. It is found in the *Śāmbhunirṇayatantra* (MS) and in much south Indian postscriptural literature (e.g. Śivānandamuni's *Śāmbhunirṇayadīpikā* (MS), Tejānandanātha's *Ānandakalpalatā* (MSS), and Umākānta's *Ṣaḍanvayaśāmbhavakrama*). It was even taken into the mainstream of the purified Kaulism propagated by the south Indian Śāṅkarācāryas of Śringerī and Kāñcīpuram, being the esoteric content of the ever popular *Ānandalahari* attributed to Śāṅkara.

In this system Navātma also called Naveśvara or Navaka is worshipped as Solitary Hero (*ekavīra*). Alternatively the divine couple (Navātma and Kubjikā) assumes six variant forms to preside over the Six Orders (*ṣaḍanvaya*-) located in the six centres (*cakras*) along the central power-axis of the body and equated with the five elements (earth, water, fire, wind and ether) and mind (*manas*). These six levels are further populated by six series of divine couples (*yāmala*), 180 in all (the 360 'rays'), drawn from the pantheon of Kubjikā in the earlier cult of the Western Transmission.

The system of the six power-centres (*cakras*) (*ādhāra*, also called *mūlādhāra*, in the anus, *svādhiṣṭhāna* in the genital region, *maṇipūra* in the navel, *anāhata* in the heart, *viśuddhi* in the throat and *ājñā* between the eyebrows) is also characteristic of the yogic rituals of the *Kubjikāmata*. Later it became so universal, being disseminated as part of the system of *kuṇḍalinī-yoga* beyond the boundaries of the Tantric cults, that it has been forgotten in India (and not noticed outside it) that it is quite absent in all the Tantric traditions except this and the cult of the goddess Tripurasundarī. The yoga of

these two traditions sets them apart from the earlier Kaula traditions of the Trika and the Kālī cult. It is noteworthy in this respect that these two newer forms of Kaulism also mark themselves off from the earlier by worshipping as their founding Siddhas Mitranātha, Oḍḍanātha, Ṣaṣṭhanātha and Caryānātha, while the Trika and the Kālī cults share the series Khagendranātha, Kūrmanātha, Meṣanātha and Macchandanātha also called Matsyendranātha.

*The Southern Transmission (Dakṣiṇāmnāya) and the Cult of Tripurasundarī.* Under the heading of the Southern Transmission the *Ciñcīṇimatasārasamuccaya* describes the cult of Kāmeśvarī (the Goddess of Erotic Pleasure), a slim, two-armed and single-faced maiden (*kumārī*) surrounded by a retinue of twelve. Eleven of these are goddesses with such appropriate names as Kṣobhinī (the Exciter) and Drāviṇī (the Melter). The twelfth is male, Kāmadeva, the Indian Eros.

This cult of erotic magic is the prototype or part of the prototype of the Kaula cult of Tripurasundarī (the Beautiful Goddess of the Three Worlds), also called Kāmeśvarī, the Goddess who is worshipped in and as the nine-triangled *śrīcakra*, red, red-garmented, garlanded with red flowers, single-faced and four-armed, carrying a noose (*pāśa*), an elephant-goat (*anikuśa*), a bow and five arrows (the five arrows of the Love God), and

Figure 36.8: Tripurasundarī on Sadāśiva

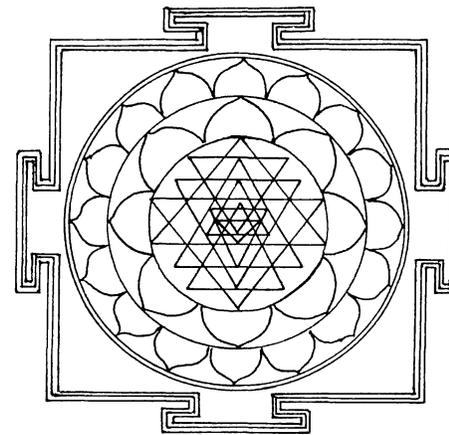


seated above the lower gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Īśvara, on the prostrate body of a white Sadāśiva (see Figure 36.8).

The classical form of this cult remembered that it had a special link with the older Southern Transmission; but it had come to see itself as transcending this quadripartition of the Kaula traditions. It called itself the Upper or Supreme Transmission and considered the four divisions to be subsumed within it. In a later elaboration of the cult known as the Kālī-Doctrine (Kālimata) worship of Tripurasundarī incorporated more or less artificial and inaccurate versions of the pantheons of these other systems. To these new liturgies corresponded the almost universal ascendancy of this form of Kaulism throughout the middle ages down to the present.

The cult of Tripurasundarī is certainly the latest of the traditions of the Mantramārga covered here. Its basic scripture, the *Nityāṣoḍaśīkārṇava*, clings to the edge of the Śaiva canon, being known in this canon only to itself. The southerners, who took this cult very seriously—it became so powerful that it was adopted, in a purified form, by the orthodox authority of the Śaṅkarācāryas of Śṛṅgerī and Kāñcīpuram—considered it to be Kashmiri in origin. However, this is quite possibly because they failed to distinguish the scriptural tradition itself from the Kashmiri theological and exegetical system within which they received it from the north and within which they continued to work. From Kashmir itself the evidence is inadequate. The Kashmiri Jayaratha (*fl. c. 1225–75 CE*), who wrote a learned commentary on the *Nityāṣoḍaśīkārṇava* (his *Vāmakeśvarīmatavivaraṇa*), refers to a long tradition of local exegesis, but we cannot conclude from his evidence more than that the cult was introduced into Kashmir at some time between 900 and 1100 CE.

Figure 36.9: Śrīcakra



The *Nityāśoḍaśīkārṇava* is an unsophisticated text which concentrates on external ritual and on the various supernatural effects which such ritual can bestow on the worshipper, particularly in the quest for control over women. For a deeper meaning the tradition had to turn to the *Yoginīhr̥daya*. Here one could find the internal correspondences of the external elements, the metaphysical meaning of the sequence of creation and re-absorption which the deity-sets of the densely populated *śrīcakra* were believed to embody (see Figure 36.9). Thus the text of the ritual, though apparently concerned with erotic magic—the names of many of the constituent goddesses make this clear enough—could become the vehicle of ritualised, gnostic contemplation. However, although the *Yoginīhr̥daya* is scriptural in form (a dialogue in which Bhairava teaches the Goddess), there is no evidence of its existence before the thirteenth century in south India, shortly before Amṛtānandanātha (fl. c. 1325–75) wrote the first known commentary. Certainly it was composed when the non-dualistic Śaiva system of the Kashmiri exegesis of the Trika and the Krama had become the norm in the reading of the Kaula cults in south India, that is after c. 1050 CE. This is clear from the fact that it frequently echoes such popular texts of the Kashmiri tradition as the *Pratyabhijñāhr̥daya* of Kṣemarāja (fl. c. 1000–50).

### The Post-scriptural Śaiva Traditions of Kashmir from the Ninth Century

#### *The Common Base*

From the middle of the ninth century these Tantric Śaiva traditions of the Mantramārga emerged from their scriptural anonymity into an extensive body of Kashmiri exegesis. In this literature we encounter two schools. On the left were the theoreticians of the Trika and the Krama. On the right was the staid and more Veda-congruent Śaiva Siddhānta. The doctrines of the former reached their definitive formulation in the works of Abhinavagupta (fl. c. 975–1025 CE) and his pupil Kṣemarāja. Those of the latter school culminated in the works of their contemporary, Rāmakaṇṭha.

The tradition of Abhinavagupta was recent. It looked back to Vasugupta (fl. c. 875–925 CE) and Somānanda (fl. c. 900–50 CE) as the founders of a new and anti-Śaivasiddhāntin movement among the learned. The Śaiva Siddhānta itself has preserved no records of its presence in Kashmir beyond Rāmakaṇṭha the Elder, a contemporary of Somānanda. We know that there was an already well established tradition in Kashmir at that time, but we do not know how long it had been there. It based itself above all on the works of Sadyojyoti (*Nareśvaraparīkṣā*, *Mokṣakārikā*, *Paramokṣa-nirāśakārikā*, etc.); and it has been assumed that he too was Kashmiri, and that he lived shortly before Somānanda. But there is no evidence that Kashmir was his home, and some that he may be considerably older.

Both schools addressed themselves principally not to the specialist seekers of powers so prominent in the scriptures themselves but to the seekers of liberation (*mumukṣu*), to those with no specific goal, who seek self-perfection through conforming to the physical and mental rituals of the Śaiva tradition. This, the unmarked category, was the sect's broad base in society, the community of married Śaiva householders. It is in accordance with this breadth that Śaivism appears in both schools not merely as a system of doctrines but first and foremost as a set of social facts independent of or presupposed by doctrine. Thus beneath the fundamental differences in theology which separate the schools there is complete solidarity in a basic faith that it is enough to be a Śaiva in a purely ritual sense, that the least gnostic (privity to special knowledge) of their common audience will attain liberation simply by being processed by the rituals of the community.

#### *The Kashmiri Śaiva Siddhānta*

The Kashmiri Śaiva Siddhānta enclosed and reinforced this exoteric base. It propagated an anti-gnostic ritualism which immunised the consciousness of the Tantric performer of ritual against the mystical and non-dualistic tendencies of the Kāpālika and Kaula left, and encouraged him to internalise without inhibition the outlook and values of non-Tantric orthodoxy.

According to Rāmakaṇṭha the scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta teach that salvation can only be attained by ritual. To be bound to the cycle of death and rebirth (*samsāra*) is to be ignorant of one's true nature, but knowledge of that nature cannot bring that bondage to an end. This is because the absence of liberated self-awareness is caused by impurity (*mala*). This cannot be removed by knowledge, because it is a substance (*dravya*). Being a substance it can be destroyed only by action and the only action capable of destroying it is the system of ritual prescribed in the Śaiva scriptures.

The rite of consecration (*dīkṣā*), through which one enters upon one's ritual obligations, destroys all the impurity (*mala*) which would otherwise be the cause of further incarnations. The daily (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) rituals which one is bound to perform after consecration cause, said Rāmakaṇṭha, the daily decrease of the impurity which the rite of consecration has left intact, the impurity which is the support of one's current physical and mental existence. But since the passage of time itself accomplishes this end, bringing one daily closer to the liberation at death which is the promised effect of consecration, it is hard to believe that this theory that ritual after consecration has a positive effect can have been in the forefront of the awareness of the Tantrics of the Śaiva Siddhānta. More compelling must have been the negative argument offered by Rāmakaṇṭha, as by the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas, that one performs one's ritual duties in order to avoid the evil consequences of not performing them. For if one omits

them, or breaks any other of the rules (*samaya*) which bind the initiate, one must perform a penance (*prāyaścitta*); and one is told that if this penance is neglected one's liberation guaranteed by the rite of consecration may be postponed by another incarnation, even by a period in hell.

*The Kashmiri Trika*

The Kashmiri authorities of the Trika attacked this ritualism of their Śaiva Siddhāntin contemporaries. They claimed that they had exaggerated certain tendencies in the scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta by means of sophistic exegesis. Thus, said the Trika, these scriptures place a greater emphasis on ritual than those of the left, but they do not go to the extent of claiming that salvation can be gained by no other means.

According to the left, the Śaiva Siddhānta contains the truth as modified by Śiva for the benefit of those not mature enough to enter the less conditioned and more demanding paths of his esoteric revelations. The extreme positions of the current Śaiva-Siddhāntin exegesis were believed to have arisen from failure to see this essential continuity of the Śaiva revelation. Thus the left attacked certain interpretations of these scriptures—and it must be said that in the main its criticisms are justified—but it never denied the efficacy of the religious practices of those who followed the prescriptions of these scriptures, even if they accepted the right's biased exegesis. The left was content to believe that the most hardened Śaiva-Siddhāntin ritualist would attain perfect liberation at death by the power of Śiva manifest in the mechanism of ritual. It drew its strength not from exclusion but from the propagation of a universally applicable theory of ritual. This theory promised liberation to all Śaivas while motivating ascent into the esoteric left through further consecrations in which the meaning of ritual proposed by the theory could be realised with ever greater immediacy and intensity. The culmination of this intensification is liberation, not at death but in life itself.

The left maintained that there are those who have attained this mystical transformation spontaneously or by means of gradual, ritual-less insight. Thus while the Śaiva Siddhāntins held that liberation could not be attained except through ritual, the authorities of the Trika maintained that liberation, while attainable by ritual alone (Śaiva-Siddhāntin or esoteric), could also, though more rarely, be attained by mystical experience and gnosis. Further, their theory divided the performance of ritual itself into two levels. Ritual without internal awareness would lead to liberation at death, as we have seen; but ritual could also be a means of liberation in life. Gnostic meaning encoded into the manipulations and formulas of the ritual could be so internalised through daily repetition that it would no longer require this external medium of expression in action. It could become purely mental, a ritual of self-definition in thought. The Tantric was exhorted by the left to see

the sequence of ritual (*pūjākrama*) as a mirror in which he could perceive and contemplate his ultimate nature. Thereby he could attain liberation, for to be fully aware of this ultimate nature is to be liberated as this nature. By means of daily repetition he was to achieve a state of mind in which he believed that he was and always had been that which his ritual defines.

The ritualist of the Śaiva Siddhānta maintained that the scriptures taught no self beyond that of a purified and blissless individuality. For him salvation was not a merging into a transcendental godhead. It was simply that state of the eternally individual self in which its equality with Śiva previously concealed by the substance of impurity had become fully manifest. He did not become Śiva; he became a Śiva, omniscient and omnipotent but numerically distinct. Thus the Kashmiri Śaiva Siddhāntins stressed the difference between the Śiva who had never been bound, the 'original Śiva' (*anādiśiva*), and those who were Śivas through liberation from bondage, 'released Śivas' (*muktaśivas*). The latter were held to be capable of performing the five cosmic functions (*pañcakṛtya*—: creation, maintenance of the created, retraction of the created, and the binding and liberating of other selves), but to refrain from so doing because of the non-competitive spirit inherent in liberation.

Equally absolute in the Kashmiri Śaiva Siddhānta was the doctrine that matter and consciousness are entirely separate. According to Rāmakaṇṭha, following Sadyojyoti's interpretation of the scriptures, selves know and act upon a world whose existence is entirely independent of them, though it is arranged to fulfil their karmic needs. Śiva causes the entities of our universe to emerge by stimulating an independently eternal, all-pervasive, and unconscious 'world-stuff' (*māyā*). Thus are created the various spheres, bodies and faculties by means of which eternal selves can experience the effects of their past actions (*karma*) and eventually attain release from their beginningless state of bondage through Śaiva consecration (*dīkṣā*).

In the Kashmiri Trika the seeker of liberation (*mumukṣu*) is to realise through his ritual a self which breaks through these exoteric barriers of pluralism, realism and reified impurity. For the self of his worship and meditation is an absolute and omnipotent consciousness which, by manifesting contraction of its infinite powers, appears as separate individuals, their streams of experience, and the 'outer' objects or 'causes' of those experiences. He thinks of the three goddesses convergent in the fourth as this infinite and all-containing self, seeing their structure as that of his own consciousness. As this awareness deepens through immersion in the ritual, his individual consciousness, which is these powers contracted without change of structure, dissolves into its uncontracted prototype (cf. p. 673).

*The Doctrines of Vibration (Spanda) and Recognition (Pratyabhijñā)*

According to the Kashmiri Trika these doctrines of the ultimate non-plurality of centres of consciousness, of the non-existence of any reality except as projection within this all-containing consciousness, and consequently of the immateriality of impurity (*mala*), have been revealed by Śiva in all the Tantras of Bhairava. This is to say that they were read into this corpus or presupposed in any reading, for the surviving texts themselves hardly support this sweeping claim.

None the less, these doctrines are not entirely post-scriptural. For the view that the Deity is non-dual, dynamic consciousness (*saṃvidadvayavāda*, *śaktādvayavāda*) was already present at the far left of this corpus, in the literature of the Kāpālika and Kaula cults of Kālī (in the Mata and the Krama). From the middle of the ninth century the Trika, which was then permeated by the Kālī cult (see p. 678), produced theological metaphysicians who elevated these doctrines towards respectability within the Śaiva mainstream by abstracting them from their heterodox ritual context, by formulating them in a less sectarian terminology and by defending them philosophically against the doctrines of the Buddhists. This new direction began precisely during the period at which royal patronage in Kashmir started to shift from Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavism to Śaivism.

The first stage of this development is seen in two works of the ninth century: the *Aphorisms of Śiva (Śivasūtra)* and the *Concise Verses on Vibration (Spandakārikā)*. The first was 'discovered' by Vasugupta. The second was composed by Vasugupta according to some, or by his pupil Kallaṭa according to others.

The *Śivasūtra* is too brief and allusive a work for us to be able to form a precise picture of its doctrine apart from its inevitably biased interpretation in the commentaries of Bhāskara (*fl. c. 925–75*) and Kṣemarāja (*fl. c. 1000–50*). We can see only that it sought to outline the non-ritual soteriology of an esoteric Śaiva tradition closely related to what we find in the *Jayadrathayāmala* and the Kālī-based Trika.

The *Spandakārikā*, being more discursive, can be much more clearly understood independently of the commentaries. The work's fifty-two verses, offered as the key to the theology of the *Śivasūtra*, proposed that Śiva is all-inclusive reality, a single, unified consciousness, which manifests itself as all subjects, acts and objects of experience by virtue of an inherent and infinite dynamism. This dynamism, the essential nature of the Deity, was termed the Vibration-Reality (*spanda-tattva*). Liberation was to be attained by realising this vibration (*spanda*) in the source, course and end of all states and movements of consciousness.

Kṣemarāja, the author of an important commentary on this work, was probably right when he claimed that the scriptural background of this text is the Krama and the Mata with some elements of the

Trika. For the concept of 'vibration', or rather the use of this term to denote the inherent dynamism of a non-dual consciousness, which is the signature of this doctrine, is well-established in the *Jayadrathayāmala* and other texts of the Kālī cults.

The second stage of this scholarly underpinning began in the early tenth century with the *Perception of Śiva (Śivadrṣṭi)* by Somānanda (*fl. c. 900–50*). While the *Spandakārikā* preserved some of the heterodox flavour of the goddess-orientated traditions of the far left, Somānanda, though he was certainly an initiate in those traditions, formulated a Śaiva non-dualism along more orthodox and rigorously philosophical lines. His pupil Utpaladeva, also a *guru* of the Trika and the Krama, gave this non-dualism its classical form in his *Concise Verses on the Recognition of the Deity (Īśvarapratyabhijñānakārikā)*. Claiming to follow his master he offered a 'new and easy path to salvation' through the recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) that it is one's own identity (*ātman*) which is Śiva, the Great Deity (Maheśvara). This transpersonal Self (*ātmeśvara*) is to be seen as that which contains all subjective and objective phenomena, holding this totality in a blissful synthesis of non-dual awareness. Through this recognition, which is forcefully defended against the Buddhist doctrine of impersonal flux, one is released from the cycle of death and rebirth (*saṃsāra*). For one's true identity is an already-liberated and never-bound 'I'-consciousness outside *time, form and location* (the three bases of (the appearance of) bondage in the continuum of transmigratory existence). This state of limitation is to be contemplated as the spontaneous play of this 'I'-consciousness. The pure autonomy (*svātantrya*) of the self expresses itself by manifesting its own 'contraction' in the form of limited centres of consciousness perceiving and acting within time, form and location, in accordance with the causal power of their acts (*karma*). Thus there arises the 'binding' appearance of essential differences between a world 'out there', a self 'in here' and other selves. Liberation is the realisation that all this is internal to the awareness which represents it as external. Consciousness thereby throws off its state of 'extrinsic contraction', and knows itself only as the pre-relational, pre-discursive unity of manifestation (*prakāśa*) and self-cognition (*vimarśa*).

The philosophical position of Utpaladeva's Doctrine of Recognition was analysed and supported in great detail by Abhinavagupta (*fl. c. 975–1025*), a pupil of his pupil Lakṣmaṇagupta, in a commentary of the *Concise Verses (Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī)* and in a much longer commentary on Utpaladeva's own exegesis of his verses (*Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtīvimarśinī*).

*The Doctrine of Recognition and the Trika*

The Kashmiri Trika is known to us principally through the works of this same Abhinavagupta, particularly through his *Tantrāloka*, *Tantrasāra*, *Mālinīvijayavārtika* and *Parātrīṣṭikāvivarāṇa*. In the first three of these he

expounds the doctrine and ritual of the Trika on the basis of the *Mālinīvijayot-taratantra*. In the fourth he develops a more concentrated form of Trika worship, which focuses only on Parā, the highest of the three goddesses. Because the goddess is worshipped here as Solitary Heroine (*ekavīrā*), that is without the customary offerings to aspects and emanations, this tradition is sometimes distinguished from the Trika proper as the *Ekavīra*. For the same reason it is known as the *Anuttara*, 'that above which there is nothing'.

His exegesis of both of these forms of the Trika is based on the Doctrine of Recognition. Utpaladeva's concepts and terminology provide his metaphysical groundwork and are fed into Trika ritual. Thus, to give but one example, the phases of the worshipper's divinisation of his person with *mantras* (*nyāsa*) is required to be understood within the framework of Utpaladeva's four levels of contraction in which the self manifests itself in progressively grosser forms as the sensation-less void (*śūnya*), internal sensation (*prāṇa*), the mind (*buddhi*) and the body (*deha*).

Thus we may speak of at least three major phases in the evolution of the Trika. At the beginning are the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* and related texts (see pp. 672–4) which teach the cult of the three goddesses alone. Then this triad is transcended and subsumed within Kālī (see p. 678). Finally we have the Pratyabhijñā-based Trika of the Abhinavagupta with its two aspects, the first being the Kālī-based cult of the *Tantrāloka*, and the second the condensed cult of Parā as Solitary Heroine.

#### The Kashmiri Krama

The Krama passed from its scriptural phase into chartable history with Jñānanetra *alias* Śivānanda in the first half of the ninth century. Said to have been instructed supernaturally by the Goddess herself in Oḍḍiyāna, he was the source of well-attested *guru* lineages in Kashmir and beyond. His tradition is remarkable for the theoretical structure of its ritual. It synthesised and adjusted the scriptural prototypes (principally those of the *Devīpañcaśataka* and the *Kramasadbhāva* (see pp. 683–4)) to produce a liturgy which could be thought of as the unfolding of the imperceptible sequence of cognition (*saṃvit-krama*) in the perceptible sequence of worship (*pūjā-krama*).

After contemplating various pentads as the structure of his bodily and mental existence and seeing them as emanations of a set of five goddesses representing the cycle of cognition—thus he consecrates his person as the true site of worship and seat of power (*pīṭha*)—the worshipper proceeds to a five-phased worship which enacts the progress of cognition from initial to terminal voidness. Each phase is equated with one of these same five goddesses.

In the first, that of the goddess Vyomavāmeśvarī (She who Emits the [Five] Voids), he worships the whole pentadic cycle (the

Five Voids) as condensed within the initial and eternal vibration of thoughtless consciousness.

In the second, the phase of the goddess Khecarī (She who Pervades the Void [of Cognition]), he worships the twelve Lords of the Wheel of Light (*prakāśa-cakra*). These are identified with the twelve faculties of cognition (the introvertive mental organ [*buddhi*] and the five senses) and action (the extrovertive mental organ [*manas*], speech, manipulation, locomotion, excretion and sexual pleasure). He mediates on these as illuminated by cognitive power as it moves from its initial vibration (*spanda*) in the five voids towards the extroverted representation of objects facing a subject.

In the third stage, that of the goddess Bhūcarī (She who Pervades the [Outer] Field), the constituents of the preceding phase have moved outwards and incorporated into consciousness the representation of the five external sense-data (sound, tactile sensation, visible form, taste and odour). This extroversion entails the suppression of the introvertive mental organ. Thus there are now sixteen constituents: the preceding twelve reduced to eleven and increased by five. These he worships as the sixteen Yoginīs of the Wheel of Sensual Bliss (*ānanda-cakra*).

The fourth stage is pervaded by the goddess Saṃhārabhakṣiṇī (She who Devours in Retraction). It represents the first stage in the reversion of cognitive power to its prediscursive source, the internalisation of the object of sensation that occurs in the awareness that one has perceived it. The extrovertive mental organ (*manas*) which was distinct in the preceding phase is now submerged and the introvertive mental organ (*buddhi*) re-emerges. These sixteen are increased to seventeen by the addition of ego-awareness (*ahaṅkāra*). They are worshipped as the Lords of the Wheel of Fusion (*mūrti-cakra*).

The fifth and final stage is that of the goddess Raudreśvarī (The Terrible). Here he worships the sixty-four Yoginīs of the Wheel of the Multitude (*vrnda-cakra*). The ego-awareness which emerged in the preceding phase is represented as suddenly expanding to obliterate all that conceals the radiant voidness of the transpersonal Absolute within consciousness. This obliteration is worshipped in five stages as sixteen, twenty-four, twelve, eight and four Yoginīs.

The first sixteen of these Yoginī emanations dissolve the latent traces (*vāsanā*, *saṃskāra*) of the field of objective sensation worshipped as the Wheel of Sensual Bliss (*ānanda-cakra*). In the second stage the traces of the twelve constituents of the cognitive Wheel of Light (*prakāśa-cakra*) are obliterated. Twenty-four Yoginīs are worshipped here, because each of the twelve has two aspects, a latent and an active. In the third phase twelve Yoginīs penetrate this cognitive field with pure, non-discursive awareness. Now there remain the latent traces of the subtle body (*puryaṣṭaka*) consisting of the five sense-data (sound, etc.) and the three internal faculties (the extrovertive and introvertive mental organs together with ego-

awareness). By worshipping eight Yoginīs here he enacts the elimination of these elements. The four Yoginīs worshipped in the fifth and last phase of the Wheel of the Multitude (*vr̥nda-cakra*) represent the obliteration of a subtle residue which the preceding eight left untouched: the deep latent impression of the threefold inner mind and of objectivity reduced to a single, undifferentiated sensation of contact (*sparśa*).

He now worships Raudreśvarī herself as the sixty-fifth power, the non-relational ground of these sixty-four Yoginīs, consciousness in its pristine purity. He identifies her with Maṅgalā *alias* Virasiṃhā, the goddess incarnate of Oḍḍiyāna. He thereby equates the Krama's Absolute with the lineage of teachers, male and female, who have embodied this Absolute and transmitted it to him. For after Maṅgalā he worships Jñānanetra and then the *gurus* who descend from Jñānanetra to himself.

Finally he worships the four Sequences (*krama*), those of Emission (*sr̥ṣṭi-*), Maintenance (*sthiti-*), Retraction (*saṃhāra-*), and the Nameless (*anākhyā-*) which pervades the three as their ground. The twelve Kālīs of this fourth sequence are to be worshipped during sexual intercourse with the *dūtī*. They are understood as the gradual withdrawal of cognitive power into Kālasaṃkarṣiṇī (Kālī the Destroyer of Time), the waveless void of the absolute Self. Here the worshipper realises the absolute autonomy (*svātantrya*) of the Goddess (Consciousness) through which she assumes the form of the universe without contamination or diminution of her nature.

Three major works of this Kashmiri Krama survive, all entitled *Mahānayaṃprakāśa* (Illumination of the Great Way), that of Śitikaṅṭha (in Old Kashmiri with a Sanskrit auto-commentary), that of Arṇasiṃha (MS) and the third anonymous. The last is the source of our exposition of the phases of pentadic worship leading up to that of the four Sequences.

The function of the ritual sequence of this tradition is said to be that it prepares the initiate for the non-sequential (*akrama*) intuition that will enable him to transcend it. It is designed to condition awareness with the image of its true nature, so that eventually it will provoke a spontaneous and instantaneous 'swallowing of dichotomising cognition' (*vikalpagrāsa*), the annihilation (*alamgrāsa*) of the mechanisms of individuation and projection through which the innate (*sahaja*) purity of awareness appears *as though* it were sullied in the natural processes of ideation and perception. The worshipper is to pass through the ritual to reach the liberating conviction that absolute reality is this pure awareness, and that the phases and levels of cognition are co-extensive with it as its innate vitality. Liberation (*mokṣa*) here is the resolution of the distinction in self-perception between a transcendental or internal state of *nirvāṇa* and an imminent or external state of finite, transmigratory existence (*bhava*, *saṃsāra*).

This system of contemplative worship was not the Krama's only means of enlightenment. It believed that there were those who were capable of reaching the goal without it. For these two higher paths are described. In the first, that of Oral Instruction (*kathana*), the *guru* was to provoke the disciple's intuition through certain mystical aphorisms (*kathā*, *chummā*). The emphasis here is on sudden enlightenment (*sāhasa*). In the second path the goal was believed to be attained without any instruction, either spontaneously or through some non-verbal stimulus such as the *guru*'s glance.

Both this intuitionism and this view of ritual as a mode of liberating insight are thoroughly in harmony with the position which Abhinavagupta expounds for the Trika. Indeed in this respect the Trika was greatly indebted to the Krama. It had already accommodated important elements of this system in the second phase of its development (see p. 678). In the third phase, during which this enriched Trika was grounded in the Doctrine of Recognition, we find Abhinavagupta drawing directly on the postscriptural Krama of the lineage of Jñānanetra, adapting it as the basis of the Trika's claim to be the ultimate in Śaiva revelation. Kṣemarāja, his pupil, who offered no detailed exegesis in the Trika itself, unambiguously asserts that it is the Krama that embodies this final truth. Clearly the prestige of the Krama-based Kālī cult was widely felt in esoteric Śaiva circles. The *Manthānabhairavatantra* places it above the Trika at the summit of the hierarchy of the Śaiva traditions, allowing it to be transcended only by the Western Transmission (Paścimāmnāya), the tradition of the text itself. Another work of that Transmission, the *Cīñcīṇīmatasārasamuccaya*, goes further. It gives the realisation of the Krama's Kālīs in the Sequence of the Nameless as the highest, internal worship within the cult of Kubjikā itself.

#### The Kashmiri Cult of Svacchandabhairava

We have seen that Śaivism in Kashmir was split between two centres of authority. On the right was the ritualistic Śaiva Siddhānta with its anti-mystical pluralism and extrinsicism. On the left was the gnostic non-dualism of the Trika and the Krama. The right saw the left as heretical while the left saw the right as the exoteric base of the Śaiva hierarchy, leading to liberation but only at death.

It might be imagined therefore that it was the tradition of the Śaiva Siddhānta which was the source of the practice of the greater part of the Śaiva community, and that the Trika and the Krama were the preserves of enthusiasts dependent on this exoteric or common Śaivism both for the candidates for these 'higher' initiations and as the form of their own more public identity in the wider society. This then would be the sense of the frequently quoted maxim of the left which requires one to be privately Kaula, publicly Śaiva and Vedic in one's social intercourse.

However, the interrelation of the traditions was more complex in Kashmir. For the Śaiva cult of the majority was not that of Sadāśiva taught by the Siddhānta, but that of Svachchandaḥairava. Since the latter derived its authority from the *Svacchandatantra* of the Mantrapīṭha section of the Tantras of Bhairava (see p. 670), it was, strictly speaking, a tradition of the Kāpālika-based left. None the less, the Kashmiri practised a thoroughly domesticated form of the cult, and in the tenth century the Śaiva Siddhānta, though not its source, had taken advantage of this to bring it under the sway of its doctrines. The Śaiva Siddhānta was, therefore, the principal doctrinal authority among the Śaivas of Kashmir, at least during the tenth century.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the non-dualistic tradition of the left should have tried to oust the Śaiva Siddhānta from this position of power once it had itself attained a degree of respectability during the course of the tenth century. This vital task of establishing the authority of the new exegesis beyond the confined territory of the Trika and the Krama was accomplished by the works of Kṣemarāja. While his teacher Abhinavagupta limited himself to the exposition of the esoteric traditions in harmony with the Doctrine of Recognition, Kṣemarāja (*fl. c.* 1000–50) popularised the essential doctrine and applied it through commentaries to the cult of Svachchandaḥairava and its annexes. In the first case we have such works as his *Essence of Recognition (Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya)* and his commentaries on two popular collections of hymns, the *Stavacintāmaṇi* of Bhaṭṭa-Nārāyaṇa and the *Stotrāvalī* of Utpaladeva. In the second case we have his elaborate analytical commentaries on the *Svacchandatantra* and the *Netratantra*.

In both of these commentaries Kṣemarāja states that his motive is to free the understanding of these texts from the dualistic exegesis that was traditional in his day. The importance of the *Svacchandatantra* has already been stated. The *Netratantra* was the authority for the cult of Amṛteśvarabhairava and his consort Amṛtalakṣmī. The worship of this pair was closely linked with that of Svachchandaḥairava and Aghoreśvarī in the Kashmiri tradition, as can be seen from the surviving ritual handbooks (*paddhatis*) in use until recently among the Tantric family priests.

In purely doctrinal terms Kṣemarāja's commentaries do violence to both of these texts, at least as much as that of which the dualistic commentaries must have been guilty. Neither Tantra fits either exegetical straitjacket. In the area of ritual, however, Kṣemarāja had a clear advantage. When, for example, he attacked the then current practice of substituting water for alcoholic liquor in Svachchandaḥairava's guest-offering, he was simply reinstating the text within the tradition of the Bhairava Tantras to which it properly belonged. This recontextualisation would have seemed all the more plausible in the light of the fact that when the deity-system of the Svachchanda cult of common Śaiva worship in Kashmir extends beyond its immediate boundaries, it does so not to the right and the

Śaiva Siddhānta but to the left and the goddess cults. Thus we find the *Picumata-Brahmayāmala*'s Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī with her eight *śaktis* (see p. 672), Kuleśvarī and the eight Mothers with the Bhairavas (see p. 681), the Kaula alcohol deity Ānandeśvarabhairava, the Trika's Parā and Mālinī (as Goddess of the Eastern Transmission), Kubjikā (as Goddess of the Western Transmission), several aspects of Tripurasundarī and a number of goddesses from the *Jayadrathayāmala*.

The literature of this common Śaiva worship current in Kashmir shows that this attempt to throw off the influence of the Śaiva Siddhānta was entirely successful. How quickly this was achieved cannot be seen from the evidence so far uncovered. We can say only that the corpus of the anonymous texts of Śaiva ritual in Kashmir is completely non-dualistic in the manner defined by Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja, that this corpus records a tradition which must go back at least five hundred years, and that there is no trace of any Kashmiri literature in the doctrinal or liturgical aspects of the Śaiva Siddhānta after the eleventh century. But the most striking indication of its ascendancy is its influence outside the sphere of the properly Tantric.

#### *Śaiva Non-Dualism and the Non-Tantric Tradition in Kashmir*

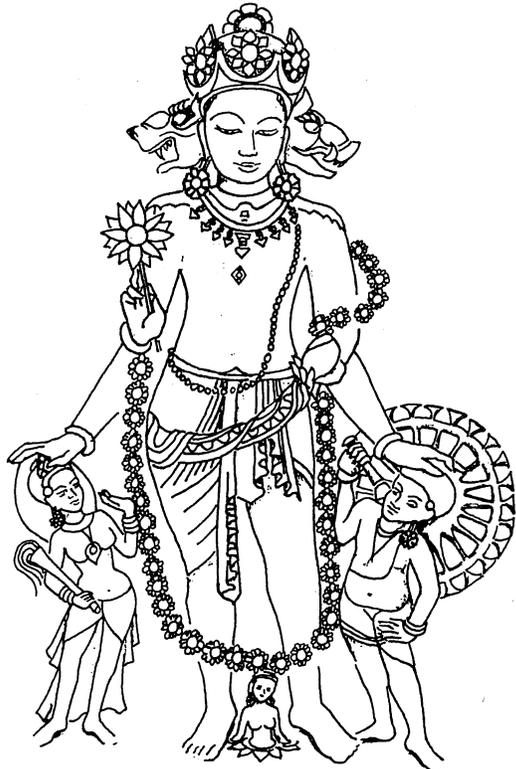
When the Pratyabhijñā-based Trika was emerging in Kashmir both the Vedic and the Tantric traditions were fully deployed. The first was active in both its *śrauta* and its *smārta* forms (see pp. 660–2), while the second could be seen not only in the various forms of Śaivism outlined above but also in the Vaiṣṇavism of the Pāñcarātra.

At some point, probably during the Muslim period from the fourteenth century, the Kashmiri *śrauta* tradition of the Kāṭhaka-Yajurvedins disappeared entirely. All that remained of the Vedic tradition were the domestic rites (following the ordinances of Laugākṣi) together with a repertoire of non-Tantric deity-worship (*devapūjā*). In Kashmir, as elsewhere, this *smārta* tradition of worship mirrors the Tantric at a safe distance. This is to say that it has borrowed Tantric deities and liturgical forms, but uses Vedic rather than Tantric *mantras* within this framework.

The Tantric Vaiṣṇavism of the Pāñcarātra also disappeared, but not without leaving behind clear evidence that it was once a powerful influence in Kashmiri religion. For the Tantric tradition mirrored in the *smārta* worship of the region is not the Śaiva as one might have expected but precisely the principal cult of the earliest scriptural Pāñcarātra, that of Vāsudeva in his form as Vaikuṇṭha (see Figure 36.10), in which a mild human face is flanked by those of his incarnations as the Man-Lion (Narasimha) and the Boar (Varāha), with that of the wrathful sage Kapila behind.

Thus there remained only the simple dichotomy between a *smārta* tradition influenced by the Pāñcarātra and the Tantric Śaiva

Figure 36.10: Vaikuṅṭha



tradition which, as we have seen, was itself simplified by the decline of the Śaiva Siddhānta.

It should not be imagined, however, that the non-Tantric excluded and condemned the Tantric in Kashmir. While this may have been the more usual position in the rest of India, as earlier in Kashmir itself, the evidence of recent centuries shows a more or less unified community. The Vedic tradition came to be outside the Śaiva only in the sense that the former comprised the rituals of those who had undergone the common investiture (*upanayana*) of the Brahmanical tradition but had not yet undergone or never underwent special consecration in the form of the Tantric Śaiva *dīkṣā*. Thus they were not bound by the additional and more exacting duties of Tantric worship. However, outside the special domain of ritual these brahmins were as Śaiva as the rest. Texts dealing with their duties teach side by side with non-Tantric ritual a thoroughly Tantric form of *yoga*. This is designed to cause *śakti* as macrocosmic power within the microcosm of the

body (*kuṇḍalinī*) to rise from her state of latency in the region of the anus (*mūlādhāra-cakra*), to ascend through the central channel (*suṣumṇā*) imagined along the internal vertical axis of the body, to transcend the body through the cranial 'aperture of Brahmā' (*brahmarandhra*), and finally to come to rest in union with Śiva at a point twelve finger-breadths above the head (*dvādaśānta*). This form of *kuṇḍalinī-yoga* is derived, as we have seen (see pp. 687–8), from the later Kaula tradition of the cults of Kubjikā and Tripurasundarī. As for duty in the form of the cultivation of liberating knowledge (*jñāna*), this is the study of the mystical soteriology of the Trika expounded by Abhinavagupta, which is to say the practice of all but the ritual of that system.

Thus the whole society of Kashmiri brahmins had become Śaiva. It was no longer necessary, as the earlier tradition had insisted, to take Tantric consecration, thereby binding oneself to perform Tantric worship, if one wished to have access to Tantric yoga and mystical doctrine.

This separation, which enabled Tantric Śaivism to pervade the community so completely, is not a recent phenomenon. Its roots can be seen at the turn of the millennium in the works of Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja themselves. For it is in the essence of their opposition to the Śaiva Siddhānta that they saw ritual as a lower and transcendable mode of self-knowledge (see pp. 700–1). The rule that only those who had been consecrated and bound to Tantric ritual could attain liberation was preserved only in the letter. For the definition of consecration was stretched into the metaphorical so that it could bypass ritual in the special case of 'consecration by the deities of one's own consciousness'. This sort of thinking was justified by appealing to the authority of the most heterodox area of the Śaiva Mantramārga; but it served in the end to make a private Tantric identity accessible to all Kashmiri, while the Śaiva Siddhāntins, for all their ostentatious orthopraxy, declined and disappeared from the scene. For though the Siddhānta argued that it was pure in the sense accepted by the non-Tantric, it did not do so out of any desire to extend its domain across boundaries of ritual qualification (*adhikāra*) into the wider community. Its concern was rather to claim high social status for its adherents as a distinct and exclusive group within that community. The Śaiva Siddhānta has survived to this day in south India among an endogamous community of Śaiva temple-priests, the Ādiśaivas, as the basis of their profession and the guarantee of their exclusive hereditary right to practise that profession. It seems very probable that the Kashmiri Śaiva Siddhāntins were protecting similar rights. If they died out it may have been because centuries of Islamicisation had deprived them of their institutional base. Certainly nothing survives in Kashmir that is remotely comparable to the richly endowed Śaiva temples which continue to provide the livelihood of the Ādiśaivas in the Tamil south.

Finally, just as the esoteric Śaiva traditions in Kashmir flowed into the non-specialised brahmin majority, so when these same traditions went south they took root among the Śaiva brahmin community

that surrounds the Ādiśaiva enclaves in that region. The cult of Tripurasundarī (see pp. 688–9) became particularly well established. In purely Tantric circles it was propagated within the theological system of the Pratyabhijñā-based Trika; but, much as in Kashmir, it came to pervade the wider community of Śaiva brahmins known as the Smārtas. Purged of its Kaula heteropraxy, it became there the special cult of the renunciate (*saṃnyāsīn*) Śaṅkarācāryas, who are the ultimate spiritual authorities of this community. Its emblem, the *śrīcakra* (see pp. 689–90), was installed in the major Śaiva temples to assert their claim to pre-eminence even within the domain of the Ādiśaivas.

#### Further Reading

On Pāśupata doctrines:

Hara, Minoru 'Nakulīśa-Pāśupata-Darśanam', in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, vol. II (1958), pp. 8–32

On the Pāśupatas, Kālāmukhas and Kāpālikas:

Lorenzen, David N. *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects* (Thomson Press (India), New Delhi, 1972)

On the doctrines of the Śaiva Siddhānta:

Brunner, Hélène, 'Un chapitre du *Sarvadarśanasamgraha: Le Śaivadarśana*', in *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, vol. XX (*Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*) (Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, Brussels, 1981), pp. 96–140

On the mysticism and ritual of the Śaiva Siddhānta:

Brunner, Hélène, 'Le mysticisme dans les āgama śīvaites', in *Studia Missionalia*, vol. 26 (1977) (Gregorian University, Rome), pp. 287–314  
— *Somaśambhupaddhati*, vols. 1–3 (1963–77) (Institut Français d'Indologie, Pondicherry). See the introductions to these volumes for an excellent account of Śaiva ritual. The other traditions of Tantric worship (the Pāñcarātra, the Trika, the cult of Svachchandabhairava, etc.) differ from this only in their deities, *mantras*, *maṇḍalas*, *mudrās* and such constituents. The ritual framework is largely constant.

On the Trika and related systems:

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## 37 Modern Hinduism

Glyn Richards

Any attempt to give an account of Hinduism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries within the compass of a short article must of necessity be selective. What I propose to do in the following essay is to select those leaders of thought who may be regarded as both inheritors of the Hindu religious and social traditions and contributors to the renewal of Hinduism and the development of modern India.

It is not without justification that Rāmmohan Roy (1772–1833) has been described as the father of modern India. His enthusiasm for reform may be attributed in part to the influence of Islamic thought and Western ideas, but, as his *Vedānta grantha* shows, he is also indebted to Vedāntic teaching concerning the unity and supremacy of *Brahman* as Eternal Being and One without a second. His defence of Hinduism against the attacks of Christian missionaries is an indication of the influence of his Brahminic upbringing and the part it played in moulding his desire to restore the religious purity of Hinduism. He endeavoured to do this through his journalistic and literary activities and through the formation of the *Brāhmo Samāj*, a society he founded in 1828 to promote the worship of the one eternal, immutable God and the rejection of image worship so characteristic of popular devotion. If the intellectual bent of the *Brāhmo Samāj* deprived it of popular appeal, it nevertheless succeeded in creating an atmosphere of liberalism and rationality in which a reinterpretation of the Hindu tradition could take place.

Roy's emphasis on logic and reason is reputed to have characterised one of his earliest Persian works entitled *Tuhfatul-Muwahhiddin* (Gift to Deists), in which belief in a Creator, the existence of the soul and life after death, are claimed to be the basic tenets of all religions (though such tenets could hardly be attributed either logically or reasonably, e.g. to Buddhism). The same work dismisses as irrational beliefs in miracles,

# *The World's Religions*

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