

Poetry and Prayer:
Stotras in the Religious and Literary History of Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation investigates the close connection between poetry and prayer in South Asia by studying the history of Sanskrit hymns of praise (*stotras*) in Kashmir. It offers a broad introduction to the history and general features of the *stotra* genre, and it charts the course of these literary hymns in Kashmir from the ninth century to the present. Historically, Kashmir was one of the most dynamic and influential centers of Sanskrit learning and literary production in South Asia. This dissertation focuses on a number of innovative texts from this region, such as Kṣemarāja's eleventh-century commentaries and Sāhib Kaul's seventeenth-century hymns, which have received little scholarly attention. In particular, it offers the first study in any European language of the *Stutikusumāñjali*, a major work of religious literature dedicated to the god Śiva and one of the only extant witnesses to the trajectory of Sanskrit literary culture in fourteenth-century Kashmir. This dissertation also contributes to the study of Śaivism by examining the ways that Śaiva poets have integrated the traditions of Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*) and poetics (*alankāraśāstra*), theology (especially non-dualism), and Śaiva worship and devotion. It argues for the diverse configurations of Śaiva *bhakti* expressed and explored in these literary hymns and the challenges they present for standard interpretations of Hindu *bhakti*. More broadly, this study of *stotras* from Kashmir offers new perspectives on the history and vitality of prayer in South Asia and its complex relationships to poetry and poetics.

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To my mother,

1953-2012

&

my daughter,

2013-

Chapter One

Introduction: Poetry, Prayer, *Stotras* and Kashmir

Poetry and Prayer

In his work on the poetics of Tamil devotion, Norman Cutler observes that “in India it is not true that all poetry is religious, nor that all religious expression takes the form of poetry; yet the relationship between the two is an especially close one.”¹ This is as true for Sanskrit as it is for Tamil and other regional languages. Perhaps the most striking examples of this are the Sanskrit hymns of praise known as *stotras*. These compositions, popular across religious traditions for millennia in South Asia, usually address a deity with direct, devotional, and poetic language. Due in part to the unique flexibility of the *stotra* genre, some of these hymns contain ambitious and self-conscious displays of religious and poetic expression, including explicit engagement with the rich tradition of Sanskrit poetics. *Stotras*, therefore, offer a particularly fruitful avenue for exploring one of the oldest and most predominant features of religious life in South Asia: the close and compelling connection between poetry and prayer. This dissertation studies this connection by investigating the history of *stotras* in Kashmir, historically a dynamic and influential center of Sanskrit learning and literary production. It focuses on literary hymns and commentaries that have received little or no attention from scholars, and it offers new perspectives on *bhakti* and other central features of religious life in South Asia.

¹ *Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 111.

Poetry of course is well represented within religious traditions beyond South Asia. In general, such heightened use of language is set apart from normal speech; “in a variety of ways poetry estranges itself from the familiar and creates a measure of creative disorientation.”² Poetry highlights a dichotomy that has been discussed in varying terms—the dichotomy of imagination and information, the “workly” and the documentary, expression and content, and so on.³ In India, poetry (*kāvya*) has been theorized from its beginnings as a special, distinct kind of composition. *Kāvya* too distinguishes itself from the ordinary usage of language. In a discussion of innovations within Sanskrit aesthetics and literary theory, Sheldon Pollock notes:

With its figures of sense and sound and intentionally patterned sound qualities differentiating it from all other forms of usage, literary language, we might say, defamiliarizes the discourse so as to differentiate it from the everyday world and its real referentiality [...].⁴

It is not surprising that religious traditions have harnessed the power of literary language to “defamiliarize” or “estrangle.” This disorientation allows for new kinds of *orientation*, giving poetic language the potential to affect transformation, identity-formation, and other functions within religious traditions.

The functions of religious poetry depend upon its context. Sometimes poetry is seen as the expression of an individual’s experience or emotions, while other times the poetic

² Frank Burch Brown, “Poetry: Poetry and Religion” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 11 (2nd ed), ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 7204.

³ See Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit: Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 3.

⁴ “What Was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka Saying? The Hermeneutical Transformation of Indian Aesthetics” in *Epic and Argument in Sanskrit Literary History: Essays in Honor of Robert P. Goldman*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Delhi: Manohar, 2010), 147.

nature of a text is interpreted as a sign of its divine origin. In many Sanskrit *stotras*, poetic language can be interpreted as an offering of speech appropriately beautified, analogous to fragrant flowers, pure foods, and other preferred offerings to a deity. Often poetic language expresses or embodies theological ideas in ways that expository language cannot. As I will show throughout this dissertation, *stotras* provide evidence for the range of functions poetic language can serve in religious contexts.

For the sake of analysis and comparison, I use the term prayer in the present context as an overarching category that encompasses most of the functions carried out by Sanskrit hymns. As a general term, prayer suggests various ways of using language to relate directly to some type of divinity. Prayer implies a relationship between the speaker and the implied or direct addressee of prayer, a relationship that can include such acts as petition, praise, adoration, thanksgiving, and homage. Despite the widespread practice of these ways of using language, the nature and history of prayer has received less treatment by scholars than it deserves. While theologians have lingered over questions of prayer, historians of religion have more often hurried by, accepting reductive psychological or functional explanations. For instance, a great deal more could be learned about individual and communal religious life by paying closer attention to how religious practitioners have performed and interpreted prayers, how the meaning of prayers is deeply context-dependent, and what kinds of relationships and human audiences are implied by prayer. For some, there is an epistemological dimension to prayer and praise; some Christian authors argue that “there is a knowledge of God that only comes in praising him.”⁵ The content and form of laudatory

⁵ Daniel W. Hardy and David F. Ford, *Praising and Knowing God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 10.

prayer is very suggestive, since it involves a recognition and affirmation of value and meaning: whom or what is worth praising, and why? Nevertheless, scholarship on religion, and Hinduism in particular, often skirts the complexity of prayer. Despite some notable exceptions,⁶ Sam Gill's assessment in 1987 is hardly less accurate today:

The most striking fact is that in the past half century the general study of prayer has received little attention. This is in spite of the advancements in the study of language, speech acts, and religious language made in several fields. [...]

While the study of prayer remains undeveloped, the fact is that prayer is among the most peculiarly remarkable of religious phenomena. It is foremost, and undeniably, religious. It has not been taken nearly seriously enough by students of religion. Can we claim to know much about religion while having ignored such a central and crucial act as prayer?⁷

One could easily replace "religion" with "Hinduism" in this appraisal, for the phenomenon of prayer in South Asia has not received scholarly attention nearly commensurate with its variety, vitality, and historical and contemporary prominence.

Scholarship on prayer in South Asia has faced a number of challenges. Most immediately, the sheer quantity and variety of source materials has complicated efforts to discuss prayer in this region. But other challenges are conceptual and historical. To begin with, there is a perceived association of the term prayer with the study of Christianity. No doubt this is due in part to the quantity of theological literature on Christian prayer, and the history of Christian missionary efforts in South Asia during the colonial period. Historically, there is some truth to this perception: the majority of scholarship on prayer has focused on

⁶ See, for instance, the forthcoming scholarship included in the Social Science Research Council program, "New Directions in the Study of Prayer" (<http://www.ssrc.org/programs/new-directions-in-the-study-of-prayer/>), supported by funding from the John Templeton Foundation.

⁷ *Native American Religious Action: A Performance Approach to Religion* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 94-95.

Christianity (and to a lesser extent, Islam and Judaism), often revolving around the Book of Psalms.⁸ Friedrich Schleiermacher asserted that “to be a religious man and to pray are really the same thing,”⁹ and William James went so far as to say that prayer, in the wide sense of the term, “is the very soul and essence of religion.”¹⁰ In general, this high estimation of prayer meant that first Christian theologians and then scholars of Christianity have dominated the discourse around prayer, including how it is defined. For the most part the classical definitions of prayer have remained operative. James characterizes it “as meaning every kind of inward communion or conversation with the power recognized as divine,” while Friedrich Heiler, in his classic monograph on prayer, exuberantly describes it as “a living relation of man to God, a direct and inner contact, a refuge, a mutual intercourse, a conversation, spiritual commerce, an association, a fellowship, a communion, a conversy, a oneness, a union of an ‘I’ and a ‘Thou.’”¹¹ Such descriptions reflect Judeo-Christian

⁸ While only a small part of the Bible, the Book of Psalms has often been given a privileged position, no doubt due to its popularity in Christian worship and contemplation. One scholar, for instance, argues that the psalms “have always been regarded as poetic prayers and praises by and of the people. Whereas the rest of the Bible taught man the Word of God, the Book of Psalms not only taught man how to speak to God but also encapsulated the teaching of the entire Bible” (Rivkah Zim, *English Metrical Psalms: Poetry as Praise and Prayer, 1535-1601* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], ix).

⁹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, “The Power of Prayer in Relation to Outside Circumstances,” in *Selected Sermons of Schleiermacher*, trans. Mary F. Wilson [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890], 38; quoted in Sam D. Gill, “Prayer,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol 11* [2nd ed], ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7370.

¹⁰ *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature, Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1902), 464.

¹¹ Ibid., 464; Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion*, trans. and ed. Samuel McComb (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 357 (the latter is also quoted in Gudrun Bühnemann, “Some Remarks on the Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotras,” [Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Südasiens 28, 1984], 79).

conceptions of divinity, as well as specific kinds of relationships to God, such as the confessional. Only recently have scholars broadened their definition of prayer to include the wide variety of practices and texts that share great continuities despite their different contexts and signification. One of the most significant developments in the study of prayer has been the infusion of ideas and frameworks from ritual and performance studies. No longer can the textual and performative aspects of prayer be conflated, as they frequently were before the latter half of the twentieth century, and this means that the interpretation of prayers has benefitted from closer attention to context.¹² In addition, progress in the study of non-Abrahamic religious traditions continues to provide evidence for prayer as a universal religious phenomenon, and therefore a valuable cross-cultural, comparative category.

Despite these promising developments, there have been few contributions to the study of prayer and praise in South Asia. Ethnographers and textual scholars alike have generally avoided the phenomenon of prayer.¹³ One possible explanation is that scholars have been hesitant to rely on prayer as a central analytic category because of translation challenges. In many South Asian languages there is no one translation for the term prayer, and the specific term generally used to translate “prayer” often has a narrower signification. The Sanskrit and Hindi term *prārthanā*, for instance, is often translated as “prayer,” but it has a smaller scope and less historical significance than many other terms. A variety of

¹² See Gill, *Native American Religious Action*.

¹³ It is significant that Jan Gonda’s excellent study, *Prayer and Blessing: Ancient Indian Ritual Terminology* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), has not been complemented by similar studies of these phenomena in later Indian history.

religious concepts and compositions can be interpreted in terms of prayer, including Sanskrit hymns. The inclination to avoid the use of English-language categories such as prayer may stem in part from a desire to circumvent the pitfalls of Orientalism, ethnocentrism, neo-Colonialism, and so on. Such avoidance, however, implies a rejection of the comparativism inherent in the study of religion as a field and naively tries to sidestep complex questions of knowledge and power raised by the practice of English-language scholarship by only using terms perceived as somehow having direct translations in another language. Part of our task as scholars of various religions and regions is the practice of translation as interpretation. Through translation we make the unfamiliar intelligible for the sake of analysis and comparison. The benefits of analytic categories such as prayer allow for movement from the specific to the general, from the singular to the comparative, and thereby facilitate knowledge valuable beyond a highly distinctive context.

Yet the study of prayer still wrestles with a persistent presumption it has inherited from early scholarship on Christian prayer. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century theologians and scholars alike emphasized prayer's "spiritual" and psychological character. In his major work on the topic, Heiler privileges what he considers as original, "free" prayer, in contrast to the empty formalism he sees in ritualized prayer:

Prayer is at first a spontaneous emotional discharge, a free outpouring of the heart. In the course of development it becomes a fixed formula which people recite without feeling or mood of devotion, untouched both in heart and mind. At first prayer is an intimate intercourse with God, but gradually it becomes hard, impersonal, ceremonial, a rite consecrated by ancestral custom.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Prayer*, 65. In his nineteenth-century early anthropological work, *Primitive Culture* (1873), E.B. Tylor attributed a psychological and "spiritual" character to prayer. He called it "the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed" and "the address of personal spirit to personal spirit" (quoted in Gill, "Prayer," 7368).

Such descriptions established prayer as something deeply personal, emotional and spontaneous, and thus, by this logic, genuine or “real.” Such an understanding of prayer, however, stands in contrast to the textual and performative realities of prayer, which can be, for example, prescribed and repetitive, or complex and sophisticated.¹⁵ As Gill notes, “Heiler's predisposition for the psychological nature of prayer, conjoined with his failure to make any clear or useful distinction between prayer as text and prayer as act, placed his consideration of prayer in a nonproductive position, one that has generally discouraged the academic study of prayer, especially beyond particular prayer traditions.”¹⁶ This disjunction has hindered the study of prayer in general, and in South Asia in particular. Scholarship on Hindu traditions largely has embraced the ideal of heartfelt, spontaneous prayer, specifically in the form of devotional poetry. Sources that present devotion and prayer in ways that contradict the presumption of spontaneous, heartfelt expression have been side-lined or derided. If emotion and spontaneity are the predominant criteria for genuine religious expression, then many compositions, including the majority of *stotras*, can be disregarded as less worthy of study and analysis, despite their popularity and prevalence. This problem persists among Indian scholars as well as those working outside of India. In a lengthy dissertation on *stotra* literature, one Indian scholar, describing the *stotra* form, claims that “here, the expression of the various devotional moods will be in their natural form, in the sense, that no external aid of an artificial character is required. The devotee rapt in ecstasy,

¹⁵ See Bühnemann, “Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotras,” 78-81, for a discussion of the contrast between Heiler’s conception of prayer and the formulaic use of many *stotras*.

¹⁶ “Prayer,” 7368.

extolls the attributes of his Chosen Deity."¹⁷ In words that Heiler would surely have approved of, this scholar also explains: "Vedic Stotras are simple and sublime outpourings of the God-intoxicated heart."¹⁸ Meanwhile, the repetitive, formulaic nature of many *stotras* has deterred international scholars from studying their important place in the history of South Asian religions.¹⁹ In short, a Romantic legacy that privileges inner experience and heartfelt emotional expression has dominated the discourse around poetry and prayer in South Asia. One of the primary objectives in this dissertation is to consider poetry, prayer, and devotion without this presumptive Romantic lens, in part by bringing new perspectives on prayer, such as the discourse of Sanskrit aesthetics, into the conversation about religious poetry in South Asia.

At the same time, scholars certainly have recognized and investigated the popularity of devotional poetry in South Asia, and there are authors and traditions that emphasize—at least rhetorically²⁰—direct emotion and apparently spontaneous expression. Some of the greatest contributions to our understanding of religious history in South Asia have focused on poetry and communities that both Indians and international scholars have interpreted in

¹⁷ P.K. Gāyathri, "Stotra-Kāvya in Sanskrit: Origin and Development" (PhD diss., University of Mysore, 1981), 28.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁹ Jan Gonda notes: "As to their literary merit and quality the—older as well as later—*stotras* are very unequal. Many of them—especially many of the late ones which are much more numerous—composed of time-worn phrases and traditional figures of speech, make for a modern Westerner dull and monotonous reading" (*Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit, A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II/1, ed. Jan Gonda [Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977], 234).

²⁰ See Steven Paul Hopkins, *Singing the Body of God: The Hymns of Vedāntadeśika in Their South Indian Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144 ff., where he discusses the rhetorical claim for certain poems as "outpouring of spontaneous emotion."

terms of *bhakti*. This term, very familiar to students of religion and culture in South Asia, encompasses a rich complex of meanings, from devotion and loyalty to sharing and participation. A commonly repeated narrative links the production of vernacular poetry at different times in India history, starting with Tamil devotional poetry in the middle of the first millennium CE and climaxing in the developments of sophisticated poetry to Krishna in the middle of the second millennium. Various unifying features are adduced to support this compelling story of a “*bhakti* movement,” including the expression of intense devotion, a general populism, and a tendency to offer social critique or suggest religious reform. But many scholars have worked to challenge the coherence of this neat and idealistic narrative. When we look at the so-called *bhakti* movement historiographically, as John S. Hawley has argued, we can see that this idea has its own history, one that cannot simply be ignored.²¹ New scholarship on regional traditions of poetry and performance, such as Christian Novetzke’s work on Namdev, has shown some of the complex relationships between personal devotion, communal identities, and the interpretation and narrativization of the past.²² Overall, the study of *bhakti* in vernacular contexts—both as a phenomenon and as an historiographical category—has been one of the most dynamic and productive areas of scholarship on South Asian religions.

The problem, however, is that the vibrancy of this subfield often colors the interpretation of *bhakti* in other contexts. Despite the fact that devotional poetry has been

²¹ “The Bhakti Movement—From Where? Since When?” *IIC Occasional Paper #10* (New Delhi: India International Centre, 2009). See also Hawley’s forthcoming book, which is sure to reset the conversation: *India’s Real Religion: The Idea of the Bhakti Movement*.

²² *Religion and Public Memory: A Cultural History of Saint Namdev in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

composed in Sanskrit consistently for thousands of years, its trajectory and major developments are not well understood. In part this is because discussions of vernacular *bhakti* have dominated academic discourse. To realize this one only needs to consider the vast quantities of Sanskrit *stotras* that have never been studied, translated, or even properly edited. Scholars have had good reasons to focus on vernacular expressions and explorations of *bhakti*, including the accessibility and popularity of vernacular poetry among modern South Asians. But debates about the narrative of a *bhakti* movement unifying the vernacular languages of South Asia often disregard the trajectory of Sanskrit expressions of and reflections on *bhakti*.²³ Thus, in addition to critiquing the coherence and dominance of this narrative, scholars must also consider what this narrative has crowded out. Sanskrit did not simply cease to be important, even if there were important changes taking place in the second millennium. It continued to be the medium for innovation, particularly in the form of *stotras*. The present work on Sanskrit *stotras*, therefore, contributes to the re-thinking of the history of *bhakti* in South Asia by bringing to light developments in the realm of Sanskrit previously underappreciated.

Notably, the few exceptions that do study *bhakti* poetry in Sanskrit in the second millennium focus on examples that are closely linked to vernacular practices and are themselves exceptions within Sanskrit literary culture. The *Gītagovinda*, for instance, enjoyed great popularity first in eastern India, where it was composed, and then throughout

²³ In his work on Vedāntadeśika, who self-consciously composed poetry in multiple languages, Steven Hopkins notes that the “equation of bhakti with the vernacular alone is also an inadequate model to use in assessing the Sanskrit and Tamil devotional poetry of the later generation of Ācāryas and is perhaps partly responsible for their relative neglect in the study of South Indian bhakti literature until fairly recently” (*Singing the Body of God*, 40).

the subcontinent. But part of its success was because of the uniqueness of this text, based on a Sanskrit lyricism that drew both from classical Sanskrit sources and vernacular poetic traditions.²⁴ Yet some prominent scholars have treated this text as representative of developments with Sanskrit poetry as a whole, rather than as an exceptional text that stands out in large part because of the lack of previous and subsequent works with the same style.²⁵ Scholars have also studied the Sanskrit discourse around *bhakti* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition centered on the incarnate god Krishna and the region of his youth, Braj. In the sixteenth century, the religious teacher and reformer Caitanya invigorated the worship of Krishna in eastern India and Braj in particular. The tradition he founded combined Sanskrit and vernacular literary traditions and was developed by his followers, chiefly the Gosvāmins. The texts they produced radically revised and reoriented theories about *bhakti* and aesthetic experience developed in Sanskrit over many centuries. They elevated *bhakti* as the premier aesthetic quality²⁶ and dissolved boundaries between aesthetic, religious, and worldly experience. The religious and aesthetic contours of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world have received ample attention by contemporary scholars, and many students of South Asian

²⁴ For the best introduction to the text, see Barbara Stoler Miller's introduction and translation: *Love Song of the Dark Lord: Jayadeva's Gītagovinda* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977). See also Lee Siegel, *Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love in Indian Traditions as Exemplified in the Gītagovinda of Jayadeva* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978) and Stella Sandahl-Forgue, *Le Gītagovinda: Tradition et innovation dans le kāvya*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis: Stockholm oriental studies 11 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1977).

²⁵ See Lawrence McCrea's critique of Edwin Gerow's interpretation of the text in this way in *The Teleology of Poetics in Medieval Kashmir*, Harvard Oriental Series 71 (Cambridge, MA: Published by the Dept. of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2008), 11-19.

²⁶ The sixteenth century was not the first time *bhakti* was considered as an aesthetic category, but the most dramatic and successful attempts to do so were articulated during this period.

religions and aesthetics have some familiarity with this tradition.²⁷ But the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava vision of religious aesthetics is not the only such vision in South Asia. As we will see, poets and scholars in Kashmir composed texts that embodied or suggested their own interpretations of the relationship between poetry and religious experience. Central to these alternative visions, and key to a revitalized response to many of the challenges I have outlined here, are the compositions at the heart of this project: Sanskrit *stotras*.

Thus far I have presented the broad contours of the relationship between poetry and prayer in South Asia, as well as the interpretative challenges they may raise. The remainder of this introduction explores the nature and history of the *stotra* genre in particular, discusses the most important scholarship on *stotras* to date, and provides an overview of the history of religion and aesthetic discourse in Kashmir as a distinct region. It concludes with a chapter-by-chapter description of the trajectory of the present work.

What is a Stotra?

Stotras are some of the most popular and versatile compositions in Sanskrit. In general, these hymns praise and appeal to a divinity with direct, devotional, and poetic language. *Stotra* literature ranges from simple, formulaic prayers to sophisticated poetry, from strings of names and epithets to elaborate theological compositions. Some of the most famous authors of premodern South Asia—Śaṅkarācārya, Vedāntadeśika, Abhinavagupta, etc.—composed *stotras* (or have had *stotras* attributed to them), while countless other

²⁷ See, for instance, David L. Haberman, *Acting as a Way of Salvation: A Study of Rāgānuḡā Bhakti Sādhana* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), and V. Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas* (Madras: Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1975).

authors remain anonymous or obscure. The dates of their composition are also almost always unknown. To this day, *stotras* remain one of the most prominent ways that Sanskrit enters the religious life of modern Hindus. They are often memorized and sung in both personal and public Hindu worship (e.g., in *pūjā*, temple rituals, and festivals). The great versatility of the *stotra* form is one of the main reasons for its popularity within Hinduism.

Much scholarship on Hinduism discusses such compositions as if there were a well-defined genre of religious poetry to which they belong. Upon closer consideration, however, it is difficult to identify what exactly it is that defines a *stotra*. The synonyms *stotra*, *stuti*, and *stava* are all nouns derived from the Sanskrit root \sqrt{stu} : “to praise, to eulogize,” and also more specifically “to celebrate in song, to hymn.” Various translations include “hymns of praise,” “praise-poems,” “devotional hymns,” “prayers,” “devotional lyric poems,” and “hymns of adoration.”²⁸ Jan Gonda gives one of the most detailed discussions of *stotras* available, yet never offers a definition of a *stotra*.²⁹ Gudrun Bühnemann suggests that “the majority of stotras which are included in popular collections and are recited today are hymns that praise a personal deity and promise material benefits to the reciter.”³⁰ Yigal Bronner offers another useful generalization:

We can say that *stotras* are relatively short works in verse, whose stanzas directly and repeatedly address a divinity in the vocative case. Furthermore, *stotras* are

²⁸ For some weaknesses of “hymn of praise” as a standard translation, see Bühnemann, “Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotras,” 76 ff.

²⁹ *Medieval Religious Literature*, 232-270.

³⁰ *Budha-Kauśika's Rāmarakṣāstotra: A Contribution to the Study of Sanskrit Devotional Poetry* (Vienna: Indologisches Institut der Universität Wien, 1983), 9.

typically not divided into chapters or sections and tend to consist of a round or auspicious number of verses (e.g., 8, 16, 50, 100).³¹

This basic characterization does hold true for the majority of *stotras*, yet there are still many exceptions. There are a small minority of *stotras* in prose, for example (Bronner notes this as well).³² In addition, some *stotras* do not use the vocative case at all, consisting solely of benedictions (*āśīs*) or declarations of homage (*namas*) to a particular deity. At the core of all *stotras*, however, is the act of praise itself, seen as efficacious for the one who recites a given hymn of praise. As a simple working definition, therefore, we can say that *stotras* are usually short poems, almost always in verse, that directly and indirectly praise and appeal to a deity (or some other religious addressee, such as a pilgrimage site) and are considered efficacious in obtaining religious or material benefits when recited or sung. They are often devotional and personal (frequently using first- and second-person pronouns), but not necessarily so. It is worth emphasizing, however, that there is no strict delineation of what counts as a *stotra* or not, either in traditional Sanskrit scholarship or in modern writings by Hindus and non-Hindus alike. There is also a good deal of overlap between *stotras* and other genres of literature, such as *māhātmyas* (usually “glorifications” of religious sites) and *gītās* (lyrical or didactic “songs”).³³ Unlike these texts, however, *stotras* generally do not include a sustained narrative, focusing instead on directly or indirectly addressing their

³¹ “Singing to God, Educating the People: Appayya Dīkṣita and the Function of *Stotras*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127 (2)(2007): 2.

³² *Ibid.*, 2n7; see also Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 250 and 257, and Bühnemann, *Budha-Kauśika’s Rāmarakṣāstotra*, 13.

³³ Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 271-286.

object of praise. Despite some ambiguity around the edges, the *stotra* genre has been a loose but recognizable category in South Asia for centuries.

As for the importance of *stotra* literature, the eminent Sanskrit scholar V. Raghavan called it “the most prolific and popular among the branches of Sanskrit literature.”³⁴ While the relationship between *stotras* and Sanskrit literature as a whole has often been unclear or heavily context-dependent, the popularity of the genre is readily apparent. Collections of *stotras* continue to be published today with titles like the *Bṛhatstotraratnākara*, The Great Ocean of *Stotras*.³⁵ Even more *stotras* are published in small booklets designed for ritual purposes.³⁶ Nevertheless, these published *stotras* are far outnumbered by those that survive in manuscript archives throughout South Asia. For instance, the multivolume catalogue of manuscripts in the library of the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University in Varanasi includes an entire volume in four parts, each an independent book of several hundred pages, devoted to *stotra* manuscripts.³⁷ This is no anomaly; manuscript libraries of all sizes often have a high percentage of *stotra* manuscripts. The same is true for collections that have ended up

³⁴ *Stotrasamuccaya: A Collection of Rare and Unpublished Stotras [I]*, ed. K.P. Aithal (Madras: Adyar Library and Research Center, 1969), x; also cited in Bronner, “Singing to God, Educating the People,” 2.

³⁵ N.R. Ācārya, *Bṛhatstotraratnākaraḥ*, Vol. 1-2 (Varanasi: Chaukhambha, 1983).

³⁶ K.P. Aithal, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit and Other Indian Manuscripts of the Chandra Shum Shere Collection in the Bodleian Library, part 3: Stotras* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), ix.

³⁷ *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts Acquired for and Deposited in the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (Sarasvatī-Bhavana) Library Varanasi during the Years 1951–1981*, Vol. 5, parts 1-4 (Varanasi: Sampurnanand Sanskrit University Library, 1996).

abroad, like the Chandra Shum Shere collection in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, whose catalogue includes an entire volume dedicated to *stotras*.³⁸

The wide appeal of *stotras* can be seen also in the range of their addressees. In fact, surveying whom and what *stotras* address suggests the rich diversity of Hinduism itself. Not surprisingly, the largest number of *stotras* are dedicated to some form of Śiva, Viṣṇu, and the Goddess.³⁹ *Stotras* to Gaṇeśa are well represented, as are hymns to the sun god (Sūrya) and planets (*navagraha*). It is difficult to find Hindu deities *not* addressed in such hymns of praise. Conventionally, *stotras* are classified in manuscript libraries and catalogues according to the deity to whom they are addressed. Hymns to Gaṇeśa are usually listed first as a group, followed by hymns to Śiva or Viṣṇu and so on. Yet this far from exhausts the range of this literature. *Stotras* also frequently praise religious teachers (*gurus*, *ācāryas*), pilgrimage sites (*tīrthas*, *pīṭhas*), and religious events or actions like Śiva's cosmic dance (e.g., the *Śivatāṇḍavastotra*). Hymns to rivers are particularly popular, such as Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja's *Gaṅgālaharī*, and at least in modern times are often recited as part of *pūjās* to them. Some *stotras* address a very specific aspect or feature of a deity. Umāpati Śivācārya's *Kuñcitāṅghristava*, for example, praises the upraised, curved foot of Śiva in the form of the lord of dance (Naṭarāja) enshrined in the south Indian temple at Cidambaram.⁴⁰ Other *stotras* are philosophical or abstract, praising an impersonal reality or idea. Not

³⁸ Aithal, *Descriptive Catalogue*, 1999.

³⁹ Bhairava, Ardhanārīśvara, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmī, Kālī, Lalitā, etc.

⁴⁰ David Smith, *The Dance of Śiva: Religion, Art and Poetry in South India* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

infrequently, *stotras* praise a *mantra*, such as [oṃ] *namaḥ śivāya*,⁴¹ or a concept like *bhakti*, or even praise itself (e.g., the *Stutipraśamsāstotra* in the *Stutikusumāñjali* collection by Jagaddhara⁴²). Even this longer list of examples does not exhaust the range of addressees found in this extensive and creative body of literature. *Stotra* literature includes “within its orbit [...] almost every being and object worth adoring and worshipping,” and yet there is a marked tendency among poets to praise and worship only one of these addressees at a time.⁴³ The focused attention on a specific addressee in a given *stotra* goes side by side with the remarkable variety within *stotra* literature overall.

In general, the titles given to *stotras* reflect their subject matter and suggest some basic distinctions within this vast body of literature. The *Gaṅgāstava* praises the river (and goddess) Gaṅgā, the *Viṣṇustotra* praises Vishnu, and so on. Some *stotras* take their titles from a repeated phrase in the composition, or from its first word. The most famous example of the latter is the *Mahimnaḥstava*,⁴⁴ “The Hymn to Śiva’s Greatness,” which begins with the word “*mahimnaḥ*.” A tendency in *stotra* literature is for some compositions to echo the

⁴¹ See the *Śivapañcākṣarastotra*, often included in collections such as Ācārya, *Bṛhatstotraratnākaraḥ*.

⁴² See Chapter Five.

⁴³ Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 239.

⁴⁴ There is a good deal of confusion surrounding the name of this text. The most common error is to assign to it the name *Mahimnastava* (or the equivalent *Mahimnastotra*)—see, for example, the most well-known edition and translation by W. Norman Brown (*The Mahimnastava, or Praise of Shiva’s Greatness* [Poona: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1965]). The masculine “mahiman,” however, takes the stem form “mahima,” and thus *Mahimnastava* is grammatically incorrect. The hymn takes its title from the first word of the first verse—“*mahimnaḥ*,” as a genitive—which means the title should be *Mahimnaḥstava* or *Mahimnasstava*—“The Praise of [Śiva’s] Greatness” (listed correctly, for example, in *Prayers, Praises and Psalms*, trans. V. Raghavan [Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1938]). Often the title is given with Śiva appended before it: the *Śivamahimnasstava*, *Śivamahimnasstotra* etc.

name of a famous *stotra* and imitate its style and meter. Thus there are hymns in praise of the greatness of Viṣṇu and Gaṇeśa called the *Viṣṇumahimnaḥstotra* and *Gaṇeśamahimnaḥstotra*. Also popular are titles using a stock word as their final element, such as those ending in “-mālā” and “-laharī” (e.g., *Mukundamālā*, *Saundaryalaharī*, *Gaṅgālaharī*). Other titles indicate the number of verses in the *stotra*, usually by ending in a round or auspicious number such as six (“-ṣaṭka”), eight (“-aṣṭaka”), fifty (“-pañcāśikā”), or one hundred (“-śataka”). Almost always, however, such compositions contain slightly more (or occasionally less) than the indicated number; the *Caṇḍīśataka* means “One Hundred [Verses in Praise of] Caṇḍī,” although it actually consists of 102 verses.⁴⁵ Other hymns take their titles from specific poetic meters, like the *Sūryāryāstotra*, “Hymn to [the sun-god] Sūrya in Āryā Meter.” Some take their names from an unusual incorporation of the alphabet or mantras; the *Śivapañcākṣarastotra*, for instance, praises the “five syllables” (*pañcākṣara*) of the mantra *namaḥ śivāya*. There has been very little scholarship on the significance of these various types of *stotras* and the differences between them.⁴⁶

In addition to being distinguished by such formal features, *stotras* can also be classified according to content. There are *stotras* explicitly designated for worship (*pūjā*), for waking up the deity in the morning (*suprabhāta*), and for performing a particular religious act like begging for forgiveness for sins (*aparādhakṣamāpaṇa*). Many hymns consist solely of a series of names (*nāmastotras*), and these are often considered a subgenre

⁴⁵ *The Sanskrit Poems of Mayūra*, ed. and trans. George Payn Quackenbos (New York: Columbia University Press, 1917), 245 ff.

⁴⁶ The best starting places for thinking about the classification of *stotras* are two works by Gudrun Bühnemann: *Budha-Kauśika's Rāmarakṣāstotra* and “Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotras.”

of *stotra* literature. The most famous of these is the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, the Hymn of the One Thousand Names of Viṣṇu. Many other hymns were modeled on this famous hymn, such as the *Gaṇeśasahasranāma*. The various hymns recited for the sake of protection, indicated by words like *kavaca* (“armor”), *varman* (“defensive armor”), and *rakṣā* (“protection”) in their titles, can also be considered a subgenre of *stotra* literature. Lastly, there are a small number of *stotras* in prose, and this distinguishing feature is usually indicated in their titles, such the *Śrīmahādevagadya*, Prose [Hymn] to the Great God.⁴⁷ Thus the title of a *stotra* can offer basic information not only about its content but also its formal and poetic features: the number of verses, meter, and so on.

Stotras are versatile texts and are used for many purposes. The immediate goal often seems to be pleasing a deity, which then leads to more specific benefits. One way to interpret a *stotra* is as an offering in speech, as sweet words of praise to please the deity in a way analogous to physical offerings in worship like fragrant flowers. Talented poets frequently express extreme humility in their *stotras* and question the very possibility of offering praise that can please a deity. The author of the *Mahimnaḥstava*, for example, claims that the real reason for praising Śiva is simply to purify his own mind:

Could even the speech of the *guru* of the gods be a source of amazement for you, O Brahmā [Śiva as the creator], who have created the supreme nectar of speech filled with sweetness [the Vedas]? But my mind is resolved on this task: I will purify this speech of mine through the merit of describing your qualities, O destroyer of [the three] cities. // *MahSt* v. 3 //

This suggests that the purpose of some *stotras* might be to affect the state of the reciter—to purify his or her mind, for example, or to augment the experience of devotion. Overall,

⁴⁷ Bühnemann, *Budha-Kauśika's Rāmarakṣāstotra*, 12-13.

however, *stotras* simply offer praise to a deity and seek protection, prosperity, health, and divine favor. While some *stotras* are said to lead to liberation and/or heaven, most promise worldly benefits. *Stotras* can be recited to overcome a sickness or curse, for example; hymns to the sun in particular are associated with the power to heal. While they are often recited privately as part of personal worship, they can also be liturgical and communal. Like Vedic hymns, *stotras* can be recited during temple rituals; the *Śivamahimnaḥstotra*, for instance, is recited in certain temples during the ritual bathing (*abhiṣeka*) of a *śivaliṅgam*.⁴⁸ Public recitations of *stotras* can have other functions rarely acknowledged within the hymns themselves, such as unifying a religious community, or serving as a tool for preaching or religious instruction.⁴⁹

Much information about the recitation and function of *stotras* can be gleaned from the verse or set of verses usually found at the end of a *stotra* (as well as some other genres of literature) called the *phalaśruti* (literally, “hearing the fruits”). This is primarily a statement of the benefits that accrue from properly reciting the *stotra* at hand. A *phalaśruti* can also describe how a *stotra* should be recited (the proper time, place, and so on), and extol its power and greatness. For instance, the last two verses of the *Mahālakṣmīstotra* say:

Whosoever reads this hymn once a day
Is freed from sin,
He who reads it twice a day
Has ever abundance of paddy and wealth.

Whosoever reads this hymn thrice a day,
All his great enemies perish;
Mahālakṣmī ever bestows Her grace on him,

⁴⁸ Bühnemann, “Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotras,” 83.

⁴⁹ Bronner, “Singing to God, Educating the People.”

Grants him all boons,
And does him all good.⁵⁰

Phalaśruti verses often indicate the rewards of *specific* numbers of repetitions. This suggests some similarities between the perceived efficacy of *stotras* and *mantras*,⁵¹ which are also seen as efficacious based on the number of repetitions (although *stotras* are sung more often than *mantras*). It is worth noting that while music plays a central role in many Hindu traditions, it is often overlooked or underappreciated in studies of Hinduism. *Stotras* “are traditionally not read from a book but recited (by heart) in a semi-musical tune, i.e. every metre in a set of particular tunes.”⁵² The appeal of such musical and metrical recitations must be added to the list of features that have made *stotras* such popular texts in the past two millennia.

One last feature permeates most *stotra* literature: *bhakti*. Many *stotras* invoke and express *bhakti*, in the general sense of love and devotion, often referring to themes, characters, and incidents found in other genres. Frequently *stotras* reflect on the nature and role of *bhakti*, or pray for even stronger devotion, as in these verses of the *Mukundamālā*⁵³ in praise of Mukunda (Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa):

⁵⁰ *Hymns to the Goddess*, trans. Sir John Woodroffe (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1973 [1913]), 231-32. I have deliberately included translations of *stotra* verses by other translators in this introduction in order to suggest some of the variety of translation styles.

⁵¹ Bühnemann, *Budha-Kauśika's Rāmarakṣāstotra*, 9-10.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 109; see 109-19 for musical notations of eleven common meters.

⁵³ The hymn is attributed to Kulaśekhara, but there is some debate over the identity and date of this author; see Sigfried Lienhard, *History of Classical Poetry: Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1984), 143.

O Mukunda! Bowing down in full, I beseech you for just this one thing: through your grace, in life after life may I never forget your two lotus-feet!

I have no interest in *dharma*, or the accumulation of wealth, or the experience of pleasures; whatever is to be, will be, O lord, in accordance with my past *karma*. This is my greatest wish: may my devotion to your lotus-feet be unwavering, even in life after life! // *MukMā* vv. 1, 3 //⁵⁴

Such prayers do not always stay focused on the speaker of such hymns. Occasionally they extend to the implied human audience for such compositions, indicating the perception that *stotras* have the power to generate and cultivate *bhakti*. We see this, for example, in the *Bhagavadbhaktistotra*⁵⁵ (*BhBhSt*) of Avadhūtasiddha. This independent hymn praises (and argues for) the greatness of Śiva using language and imagery steeped in both the theology of the Śaiva scriptures (*āgamas*) and the narratives found in the Purāṇas. While the *BhBhS* covers a variety of aspects to Śiva's greatness, it emphasizes *bhakti* most of all. The final two verses of the hymn present *bhakti* both as what facilitates the composition of this hymn and as its goal. In other words, Avadhūta composed this hymn with *bhakti* in the hope of inspiring the same in his human audiences:

Even the lotus-born Brahmā is worn out praising you,
despite the fact that he plainly has four mouths.
So who am I, when it comes to the act of praising your qualities?

⁵⁴ *mukunda mūrdhnā praṇipatyā yāce bhavantam ekāntam iyantam artham / avismṛtis tvaccaraṇāravinde bhave bhave me 'stu bhavatprasādāt // MukMā 1 // nāsthā dharme na vasunicaye naiva kāmopabhoge yad yad bhavyaṃ bhavatu bhagavan pūrvakarmānurūpam / etat prārthyaṃ mama bahumataṃ janmajanmāntaro 'pi tvatpādāmbhoruhayugagatā niścalā bhaktir astu // MukMā 3 //*

⁵⁵ It is also identified sometimes as simply the *Bhaktistotra*. Its author, Avadhūtasiddha, was well versed in the Śaiva Āgamas and exoteric Śaivism more broadly. Its precise date is unknown, but the *Yaśastilaka* of the South Indian Jain Somadeva Sūri, composed in 959 CE, quotes from it (Mark Dyczkowski, *The Stanzas on Vibration: the Spandakārikā with Four Commentaries* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1992], 295). While we know where Avadhūta flourished and he was clearly known outside of Kashmir, he was popular among non-dualist Śaivas and Śaiva Siddhāntins alike in Kashmir.

Devotion is our only authority (*pramāṇa*),⁵⁶
so forgive all of this! // *BhBhSt* v. 64 //⁵⁷

O friend of the world!
Whatever small merit I, Avadhūta, have gained here
from composing this praise-poetry (*nuti*) to you
with devotion, to the best of my ability,
may the world have devotion to you, O lord,
because of it! // *BhBhSt* v. 65 //⁵⁸

These concluding verses acknowledge the tripartite context for such hymns, namely the relationship between the poet, the deity he or she addresses, and the hymn's human audience. Avadhūta points to the potential of such hymns to propagate the worship of a specific deity, rooted in a rich scriptural tradition, by inspiring an emotional response through devotional poetry. This is just one of the many ways that *stotra* authors include and explore *bhakti* in their hymns. While not every *stotra* can be said to express, invoke, or reflect on *bhakti*,⁵⁹ it remains a central feature to this genre based on a communication between a speaker and his or her human and divine audiences.

⁵⁶ The word *pramāṇa* is a technical term in Indian philosophical discourse. It refers to valid means of knowing, such as inference and perception (the number of *pramāṇas* is a hotly contested topic). Here Avadhūta once again relies on *bhakti* to justify his attempts to praise Śiva.

⁵⁷ *yat khidyate kamalayanir api stuvānaḥ sākṣāccaturbhir api nāma mukhair bhavantam / tat ke vayaṃ tava guṇastavanakriyāsu bhaktiḥ pramāṇam iti sarvam idaṃ kṣamasva // BhBhSt v. 64 //*

⁵⁸ *kṛtvā mayā tava nutim jagadekabandho bhaktyā svabuddhisadrṣīm avadhūtanāmnā / puṇyaṃ yad alpam api kiñcid upāttam atra lokasya tena bhagavaṃs tvayi bhaktir astu // BhBhSt v. 65 //*

⁵⁹ Some *stotras* attributed to Śāṅkarācārya, for instance, extol abstract, philosophical truths without a hint of emotional or personal connection.

On the History of Stotras

The few scholarly works that address the history of *stotras* as a genre remain limited. Some scholars have surveyed the voluminous corpus of *stotras* with some basic chronological organization,⁶⁰ but a sustained investigation into the major developments of these compositions and their function and interpretation in South Asia remains to be written. Such a history is beyond the scope of the present study, and much work needs to be done on regional traditions before a more complete history can be constructed.⁶¹ Nonetheless, in what follows I discuss important trends within the genre and raise some of the broad historical questions that will benefit from future research on *stotras* and their complex history.

The frequent translation of *stotra* as “hymn” suggests an appropriate starting point: what is the relationship between Vedic hymns and the wide variety of post-Vedic *stotras*? There are certainly many continuities. The basic act of praise is essential to both, and both usually celebrate the power of a specific deity and appeal for some kind of intervention. They generally include vocatives that directly address the deity or expressions of homage and benediction. References and allusions to well-known narratives and exploits of the gods are common in hymns from both the Vedic and later periods. Such hymns sometimes include declarations of their own efficacy—for instance, in removing a disease or obtaining progeny, wealth, or victory over one’s enemies. It is also possible (but not necessary) for the recitation of both Vedic hymns and *stotras* to be accompanied by the performance of

⁶⁰ E.g., Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 232-270, and Lienhard, *History of Classical Poetry*, 128 ff.

⁶¹ I intend to return to this larger project at a later date.

rites or worship. Moreover, some of the hymns of the *Sāmaveda*, which are sung, are actually called *stotras*.⁶²

While some Vedic hymns were used in Vedic rituals, others were not. Jan Gonda has argued that many of the Vedic hymns not specifically employed in the liturgy of the Vedic rituals functioned as adoration, prayer, and other uncomplicated forms of worship in pursuit of specific, private benefits. These features, Gonda concludes, are shared with later *stotras*, and suggest that Vedic religion encompassed more than just the sacrificial rituals.⁶³ Some *stotras* recited today may even reproduce or be based explicitly on earlier Vedic hymns. Gonda provides the example of a *stotra* called the *Sūryāryādvādaśaka*, Twelve Ārya Stanzas in Honor of the Sun, which begins “with a nearly literal reproduction” of *Ṛg Veda* 1.50.11.⁶⁴ This popular *stotra*, used in the worship of the sun and believed to cure a sick person who recites it, indicates at least some textual continuity between Vedic hymns and *stotras*. Moreover, associations between *stotras* and Vedic eulogies may have boosted the authority of the *stotra* form in the eyes of Hindu communities, which may help to explain its popularity in certain contexts.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the differences between Vedic hymns and post-Vedic *stotras* mean that only a very flexible, inclusive definition of a *stotra* unambiguously includes Vedic hymns in

⁶² Jan Gonda, *Hymns of the Ṛgveda Not Employed in the Solemn Ritual* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1978), 25; Nancy Ann Nayar, *Poetry as Theology: The Śrīvaiṣṇava Stotra in the Age of Rāmānuja* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 16-17.

⁶³ *Hymns of the Ṛgveda*, 125; also Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 16-17.

⁶⁴ Gonda, *Hymns of the Ṛgveda*, 32.

⁶⁵ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 16-18.

this category. As one would expect, the deities addressed in *stotras* generally differ from those in Vedic hymns, as do the theological and liturgical traditions surrounding them.

Vedic hymns were not used for the visualization of temple icons (*mūrtis*), for example.

Stotras also incorporate elements of post-Vedic Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*), and are often said to belong to a wide variety of larger texts like the Purāṇas and *mahākāvyas*.

Theological interpretations of these hymns differ as well. The Mīmāṃsā tradition of Vedic exegesis interpreted the narrative and eulogistic elements of the Vedas as *arthavāda*—a technical term meaning statements that are not to be taken as directly injunctive, but rather are meant to commend or discourage certain actions on the part of the listener—and this contrasts with the devotional interpretations of theistic traditions. Overall, the differences between the Vedic and post-Vedic hymns preclude any grouping within a single genre, but it is clear that they are closely related and part of a long history of praise and prayer in South Asia.

The loose relationship between *stotras* and Vedic hymns, along with the vast number of extant Hindu hymns, tends to obscure an important historical point: some of the earliest, most prominent examples of *stotras* that we know of are Buddhist and Jain. Perhaps the earliest independent *stotras* still extant are the hymns to the Buddha by the poet Mātr̥ceṭa (second or third century CE). They circulated as far as Central Asia, “to the northern branches of the Silk Road, where the surviving fragments of his texts outnumber all others.”⁶⁶ His *Śatapañcāśatkastotra* and *Varṇārharvarṇastotra* (both known by other names

⁶⁶ Sheldon Pollock, “Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out,” in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 75.

as well⁶⁷) were respected widely for their literary merit and recited for their religious benefits. Based on the testimony of I-tsing, who translated the *Śatapañcāśatkastotra* into Chinese and gave an account of its author, these hymns were popular components of monastic recitation, and the benefits of reciting them were said to include learning the Buddha's virtues and obtaining a long and healthy life.⁶⁸

In the case of Jainism, there is evidence for devotional activities involving *stotras* from an early date, such as the tradition of reciting the *Caturviṃśatistava* ("Hymn to the Twenty-four [*Jinas*]"), one of the six daily obligations (*avasyakas*), which was expanded to include the recitation of other hymns as well.⁶⁹ Two of the most famous Jaina *stotras* are the *Bhaktāmarastotra* of Mānatuṅga and the *Kalyāṇamandirastotra* of Siddhasena Divākara.⁷⁰ The fame of the former is due in part to the many stories that place it in competition (both in terms of its literary merit and miraculous efficacy) with the well-known *Caṇḍīśataka* of Bāṇa and *Sūryaśataka* of Māyura (discussed below). Overall, these Buddhist and Jain hymns share many similarities with Hindu *stotras* of high literary quality. Only their addressees (and related narrative elements and technical vocabulary) seem to mark them

⁶⁷ See *Das Varṇārharvarṇastotra des Mātṛceṭa*, ed. and trans. Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 22-25.

⁶⁸ *The Śatapañcāśatka of Mātṛceṭa*, ed. and trans. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 5.

⁶⁹ John Cort, "Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition: Understanding Devotional Religion in South Asia," *History of Religions* 42/1 (2002): 71, 79.

⁷⁰ Hermann Jacobi, "Zwei Jaina-Stotra," *Indische Studien* 14 (1876): 359-91; John Cort, "Devotional Culture in Jainism: Mānatuṅga and His *Bhaktāmara Stotra*," in *Incompatible Visions: South Asian Religions in History and Culture, Essays in Honor of David M. Knipe*, ed. James Blumenthal (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison Press, 2005).

distinctly as Buddhist and Jain, although more detailed comparative work might yield a more nuanced view. Notably, both the Buddhist and Jain *stotras* praise and appeal to religious teachers. This may have helped to expand the range of subjects appropriate for *stotras* in general, since hymns in praise of one's teacher (*guru*, *ācārya*) became popular among Hindus as well.

The earliest post-Vedic hymns that came to be considered Hindu are incorporated into larger compositions. There are many *stotras* included in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, although it is unlikely that these belong to the older strata of the texts.⁷¹ Well-known *stotras* in the *Mahābhārata* include Bhīṣma's praise of Kṛṣṇa while he lies on his deathbed of arrows (in *Mahābhārata* 12.47), and two hymns to Durgā, the *Durgāstava* (usually near or at the end of *Mahābhārata* 4.5) and the *Durgāstotra* (near the end of *Mahābhārata* 6.22). The latter two are relegated to appendices in the critical edition, however, and there are at least seven different versions of the *Durgāstava*.⁷² Although excised from the critical edition, these hymns are most likely older than the *Devīmāhātmya* (c. 6th century CE) and thus provide valuable information about early perspectives on goddess worship.⁷³

While a greater number of *stotras* are embedded in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* contains perhaps the most famous, commonly known as the *Ādityahṛdaya* (The Heart of the

⁷¹ Some later *stotras* even suggest or summarize the full stories of the epics (Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 239; Bühnemann, *Budha-Kauśika's Rāmarakṣāstotra*).

⁷² Thomas Coburn, *Devī-Māhātmya: The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), 267-75.

⁷³ Thomas Coburn, *Encountering the Goddess: A Translation of the Devī-Māhātmya and A Study of Its Interpretation* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 20-21.

Sun). This popular passage is found in most southern recensions of the epic and is placed after the ninety-third chapter of book six (*Yuddhakāṇḍa*) in the critical edition. When Rāma appears exhausted and anxious during the climactic battle with the demon Rāvaṇa, the sage Agastya teaches him a hymn of praise to the sun god Āditya. After a number of verses praising the sun, there are several *phalaśruti* verses:

Even if a man be in distress, difficulty, or danger, or if he be lost in the wilderness, he shall not, Rāghava, so long as he praises the sun, succumb to any harm. Therefore, with a focused mind, you should worship that god of gods, the lord of the worlds. For, having intoned this hymn three times, you will be victorious in all your battles. This very hour, great-armed warrior, you shall slay Rāvaṇa.⁷⁴

Rāma memorizes the hymn, gazes at the sun and recites it; rejuvenated, he returns to battle and of course defeats Rāvaṇa. This hymn is a good example of praise winning the favor of a deity, who then bestows strength and ultimately victory upon the reciter (although some interpreters stress that Rāma was not *actually* exhausted, but only appeared to be⁷⁵).

Literary hymns are also found within many of the “great poems” or “court epics” called *mahākāvya*,⁷⁶ and Kālidāsa’s poems include early examples of such *stotras*. In the *Kumārasaṃbhava* (2.4-15), the gods, led by Indra, praise and appeal to Brahmā to help them escape the oppression of the demon Tāraka. In the last two verses, for example, they extol:

⁷⁴ *Ādityahr̥daya* vv. 49-53ab, translated in *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, Volume VI: Yuddhakāṇḍa*, trans. Robert P. Goldman *et al.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1343.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1342.

⁷⁶ For example, when Śiva reveals himself to Arjuna in the climactic fight scene of Bhāravi’s *Kirāṭārjunīya* (based on an episode in the *Mahābhārata*), Arjuna’s immediate response is to offer a *stotra* to the great god (*Kirāṭārjunīya* 18.20-43). The hymn ends with an appeal for forgiveness for fighting with Śiva and a request for the powerful *pāśupata* weapon, once again showing praise as effective in winning the favor of the gods. Another *mahākāvya*, the *Haravijaya* of Ratnākara, includes two long *stotras* at key points of the narrative, as I discuss in Chapter Two.

You are the ancestor of the ancestors,
the deity of the gods,
higher than the high,
creator of creators.

You alone, eternally,
are the oblation
and the maker of the oblation,
what is enjoyed and its enjoyer,
both the known and the knower,
the meditator
and the supreme object of meditation.⁷⁷

Their efforts please Brahmā, although in the end they must turn to Śiva and Pārvatī for help.

In the *Raghuvamśa*, the gods praise Viṣṇu in a similar scene.⁷⁸ Stylistically, however, the *stotras* embedded in Kālidāsa's *mahākāvya*s are simpler, with fewer poetic figures, than the surrounding poetry. The fact that this is not true for *stotras* in later poems like the *Haraviḥāra* suggests that *stotras* were slower to incorporate developments taking place in Sanskrit poetry (*kāvya*) and poetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*).⁷⁹

The *stotras* most often celebrated as high-quality poetry are not embedded in larger poems, but rather are independent works. These are often classified as *laghukāvya*—short or “light” literature, usually with minimal narrative elements—as opposed to lengthy *mahākāvya*.⁸⁰ Over time these literary hymns were also classified sometimes as belonging

⁷⁷ *Kumārasambhava* 2.14-15, trans. David Smith, *The Birth of Kumāra* (New York: NYU Press, 2005), 65.

⁷⁸ *Raghuvamśa* 10.16 ff.

⁷⁹ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 18-19.

⁸⁰ Additionally, like all *kāvya*, *stotras* share some features with the royal poetry of Sanskrit inscriptions (*praśasti*). Moreover, *praśastis* and *stotras* both consist in poetic language used to publically praise and glorify.

to an additional category called *stotrakāvya* (“hymn-literature”). The development of the term *stotrakāvya* as a distinct category remains unclear and awaits further research, but the seventh century was a particularly important period for the composition of poems later included within this category. Bāṇa, the famous poet at the court of King Harṣa (606-647 CE), composed the *Caṇḍīśataka* during this time, and it is likely that Mayūra, the author of the *Sūryaśataka*, was his contemporary. Bāṇa’s poem praises the goddess Caṇḍī (whom he refers to with a variety of names, including Devī, Durgā, Kālī, and Pārvatī), and especially her left foot, victorious in crushing the buffalo-demon Mahiṣa. The *Sūryaśataka* praises the sun god Sūrya and has many similarities with Bāṇa’s poem, and Mayūra’s may have even “enjoyed a greater reputation than its rival.”⁸¹ Like the *Caṇḍīśataka*, it is filled with allusions to Vedic literature, the epics and the Purāṇas, and primarily uses the benedictive form. Both are packed with poetic figures (*alaṃkāras*). Traditionally, Mayūra is said to have been cured of leprosy by reciting his hymn to the sun.⁸² The *Sūryaśataka* and *Caṇḍīśataka* are examples of, and probably partially responsible for, a major development

⁸¹ Quackenbos, *Sanskrit Poems of Mayūra*, 265.

⁸² This miraculous recovery is associated with the sixth verse in particular; see Quackenbos, *Sanskrit Poems of Mayūra*, 114-115. The tradition of praising Sūrya to cure an illness or weakness and to absolve oneself of sins is common throughout *stotra* literature. The *Ādityahṛdaya* has already been discussed, which restores Rāma to strength when recited. The author of the *Sāmbapañcāśikā* is also said to have been cured of leprosy by worshiping Sūrya (see Chapter Three), and one of its verses in particular is interpreted to support this: “Those who, intent on enjoyment and *yoga*, say that the Lord grants freedom from disease when worshipped are both wise and fortunate. Who else but the immortal Sun gives people both enjoyment and liberation, the sum of all happiness?” (*Sāmbapañcāśikā* v. 46)

Hymns to the sun are not the only ones that are said to facilitate miraculous cures, of course. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, a Brahman from Kerala, composed the *Nārāyaṇīya* near the end of the sixteenth century. This extended devotional poem presents the entire *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* in 1036 verses and became quite popular in Kerala. According to tradition, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa successfully freed himself from disease by reciting it; each subdivision of the work ends with a prayer for a relief from suffering (Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 263).

in *stotra* literature: the composition of independent, short, *kāvya*-style hymns that consist entirely in praise and adoration of a deity for the sake of benediction. The fact that these two poems were widely celebrated and disseminated within the Sanskrit literary world suggests the growing appeal of such high quality literary hymns.

The actual number of such well-known literary hymns is small, but they have enjoyed great popularity and been influential on the history of *stotras* as well as other genres. Perhaps the paradigmatic literary *stotra* is the *Mahimnaḥstava* (also *Śivamahimnaḥstava* or *Śivamahimnaḥstotra*), attributed to a celestial musician (*gandharva*) named Puṣpadanta. It is frequently quoted by Sanskrit authors, and, as we have seen, a number of other compositions derive their titles and style from it, such as the *Viṣṇumahimnaḥstava*. The text was inscribed on a stone at the Amareśvara temple on the Narmadā river, either in the year 1063 or 1163 CE (the second digit is damaged) and it is illustrated in detail in an extant manuscript.⁸³ The poem is a good example of an elegant *stotra* that combines allusions to a deity's exploits, references to iconographic features, and well-crafted poetic figures. The *Mahimnaḥstava* also develops themes that continue to be explored by *stotra* authors for centuries, such as the impossibility of adequately praising God.⁸⁴ Consider this elegant verse, here in Pollock's translation:

If the inkwell were the ocean and the ink as black as the Black Mountain,
if the pen were a twig of the Wishing Tree and the manuscript leaf the earth,
if the writing went on forever, and the Goddess of Learning herself were to write,
even then the limit of Your powers could never be reached. // *MahSt* v. 32 //⁸⁵

⁸³ Brown, *Praise of Shiva's Greatness*.

⁸⁴ See *Mahimnaḥstava* vv. 1-3.

⁸⁵ Trans. Pollock, "Sanskrit Literary Culture," 88. Note that this verse was probably an addition; it is not found in the inscription at the Amareśvara temple (Brown, *Praise of Shiva's Greatness*, 6-7).

Overall, short poems like the *Caṇḍīśataka*, *Sūryaśataka*, and *Mahimnaḥstava* have been very influential on the general interpretation and development of *stotras*. They circulated widely, received many commentaries, and stood as exemplars of the possibilities of highly poetic, devotional hymns in Sanskrit.

While some *stotra* literature developed in close connection with the larger world of Sanskrit *kāvya*, different kinds of *stotras* or closely related compositions evolved in other contexts. A significant number of *stotras* are embedded within Purāṇas and Tantras, although some that claim to belong to these texts are not actually found in most editions. Sometimes they are woven into the narrative, or simply taught as part of a program of worship. As poetry, these hymns are usually a far cry from hymns like the *Mahimnaḥstava*, although they are often more poetic than the text that surrounds them. In other cases, these hymns consist in a series of names and epithets for the deity (*nāmastotras*), or protective formulae (*kavaca*, *rakṣā*). Often these *stotras* are extracted as separate texts. For example, the periodical entitled simply *Purāṇa* publishes a *stotra* from a Purāṇa at the beginning of each edition.⁸⁶ Within the narrative structure of the Purāṇas, they usually model what the text's audience itself should do. For instance, there are a number of hymns within the popular *Devīmāhātmya* section of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*. When the Goddess kills the demon Mahiṣa, the overjoyed gods praise her in a hymn;⁸⁷ pleased, she grants them their request that she will help anyone who remembers and praises her.⁸⁸ Similarly, when she

⁸⁶ Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 233.

⁸⁷ *Devīmāhātmya* 4.2-26.

⁸⁸ *Devīmāhātmya* 4.4.28-33.

kills the demon Śumbha, the gods respond with a hymn,⁸⁹ and once again she makes the same promise: “He who, with composed mind, will always praise me with these hymns, / For him I will destroy all misfortunes; of this there is no doubt.”⁹⁰ The Purāṇas are filled with examples of hymns praising a god or goddess for eliminating some demon or danger, often culminating in the god or goddess bestowing some divine favor on the devotees.

As in the Purāṇas, *stotras* in the Tantras (and related texts like the Āgamas and certain Saṃhitās) are frequently incorporated into the text’s narrative. The *vidyāpāda* section of the *Kiraṇatantra*, for example, begins with a hymn to Śiva in which Garuḍa alludes to some of Śiva’s famous exploits, like killing the demon Andhaka and destroying the triple city of the gods:

Victory [to you who showed] skill in splitting the knot of the extensive shoulders of Andhaka! Victory, burner of the [triple] city occupied by those chiefs among heroes to whom a great boon [had been granted]!

Victory [to you who are] fearsome, because of cutting off a head of [Brahmā], the overlord of all the gods! Victory, destroyer of the body of the god of love whose power is spread [everywhere]!⁹¹

Garuḍa continues like this for six more verses, and only after offering praise to Śiva in this way (and thus winning his favor) does he begin to ask for knowledge.

In general, the last part of Tantric worship consists in singing hymns of praise to the deity. Sometimes *stotras* are prescribed with specific actions; the *Śāntistava* to Bhairava

⁸⁹ *Devīmāhātmya* 11.2- 34.

⁹⁰ *Devīmāhātmya* 12.1, trans. Coburn, *Encountering the Goddess*, 79.

⁹¹ *Kiraṇatantra*, *Vidyāpāda* vv. 2-3; trans. Dominic Goodall, *Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s Commentary on the Kiraṇatantra*, volume I: chapters 1-6, ed. and trans. Dominic Goodall (Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, École française d’Extrême-Orient, 1998), 166.

and other Kula deities is meant to precede ritual drinking.⁹² Other *stotras* in these texts function more like *mantras*. They are efficacious when repeated, and are used in regular worship as well as to obtain specific goals. Some *stotras* even provide the *mantras* for a particular Tantric practice. The *Karpūrādistotra*, for instance, not only praises the goddess Kālī and gives instructions for her visualization (*dhyāna*), but also provides the *mantras* for worshipping her and instructions for their repetition (*japa*). For example, the third verse of this hymn gives instructions for reciting the *bīja* or “seed” syllable *hrīm*:

O Kālikā, O auspicious Kālikā, with dishevelled hair, from the corners of whose mouth two streams of blood trickle, they who recite another doubled *Bīja* of Thine composed of *Íśa* [i.e., “ha”], *Vaiṣvānara* [i.e., “ra”], *Vāmanetra* [i.e., “ṛ”], and the lustrous *Bindu* [i.e., “ṃ”], destroy all their enemies, and bring under subjection the three worlds.⁹³

The Tantric practitioner, in other words, is instructed to recite *hrīm hrīm*. In this way, Tantric hymns frequently encode the main features necessary for worship of a particular deity. They are also found in collections of five types of short texts (*pañcāṅga*) relevant for the worship of Tantric deities: a *paṭala* (containing information on the use of *mantras* in particular), a *pūjāpaddhati* (a ritual manual for worship), a *kavaca*, a *sahasranāma*, and a *stotra*, most often in this order.⁹⁴ *Kavaca* (“armor”) and *sahasranāma* (“a thousand names”) hymns belong to two distinct *stotra* subgroups.

⁹² Teun Goudriaan and Sanjukta Gupta, *Hindu Tantric and Śākta Literature*, A History of Indian Literature, Vol. II/2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1981), 95.

⁹³ Trans. Woodroffe, *Hymns to the Goddess*, 290.

⁹⁴ Goudriaan and Gupta, *Hindu Tantric and Śākta Literature*, 156; Bühnemann, “Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotras,” 84.

Hymns that consist primarily of a series of names and epithets for a deity are usually considered part of the group of hymns called *nāmastotras*.⁹⁵ The popularity of such hymns, particularly as part of worship, has only grown in the history of Hinduism. They developed “on a large scale into a literary and liturgical form of praise, adoration and magnification [...] based on the doctrine of the divine name as a means of protection or salvation.”⁹⁶ Historically, the most likely prototype for such hymns is the *Śatarudrīya* from the *Yajurveda* (often called the *Śrīrudram* or just the *Rudram*). This composition gives “one hundred” (*śata*) names and epithets for Rudra (Śiva), and is frequently recited in Śaiva temples, particularly in south India, during temple rituals such as the ritual bathing of temple icons (*abhiṣeka*). *Nāmastotras* usually consist of any generally auspicious number of names, including eight, twelve, one hundred, and one thousand.⁹⁷ The well-known *Viṣṇusahasranāma* or *Viṣṇusahasranāmastotra*—Hymn of the Thousand Names of Viṣṇu—is usually attributed to the *Mahābhārata*, and a popular commentary on the text is attributed to Śaṅkara. The hymn itself consists of a thousand names and epithets to Viṣṇu,⁹⁸ and there are many reiterations of its format (thus there are also *sahasranāmas* to Śiva, Gaṇeśa,

⁹⁵ Names have long been significant within Hinduism; for a detailed study of early materials, see Jan Gonda, *Notes on Names and the Name of God in Ancient India* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1970). The precise history of *nāmastotra* as a recognized category remains unstudied.

⁹⁶ Gonda, *Notes on Names and the Name of God*, 68.

⁹⁷ Bühnemann, *Budha-Kauśika's Rāmarakṣāstotra*, 13; Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 268.

⁹⁸ For example, the first five epithets of the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* praise him as “the universe” (*viśva*), “all-pervasive” (*viṣṇu*), “the expression *vaṣaṭ*” (a technical word with which oblations are offered into a ritual fire), “the lord of the past, present, and future” (*bhūtabhavyabhavatprabhu*), and “the creator of beings” (*bhūtakṛt*).

various goddesses, and so on). One of the many Indian publications of the

Viṣṇusahasranāma includes a description of “the method of repeating this hymn”:

The ancient custom, still observed in villages, especially of the south, is to repeat each name of the *Sahasranāma*, offering Tulasi leaves or any available flowers of the season to the idol of Viṣṇu in his various incarnations as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, etc. This is done for the fulfilment of one’s desires, or to ward off the evil influence of planets. Many merely repeat the whole list sitting before the idol with *bhasma* (sacred ashes) in a plate by their side, which is afterwards distributed among the village people.⁹⁹

Among the various types of *nāmastotras*, series of one thousand or one thousand and eight names and epithets are particularly common. The *Lalitāsahasranāma*—a “popular and highly praised product of religious poetry” attributed to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*—praises the Śrīvidyā goddess Lalitā, also known as Tripurāsundarī.¹⁰⁰ In such Tantric traditions the association between *stotras* and *mantras* is especially clear. The *śrīvidyā mantra* is seen as the “condensed” name of the goddess in the Śrīvidyā tradition, while the thousand names of Lalitā in the *Lalitāsahasranāma* are considered her “diffuse” *mantra*.¹⁰¹ Sometimes an abbreviated form of these compositions is published along with the full *stotra* for shorter recitations and worship, along with pronunciation guides and other supporting materials to aid the worshipper.¹⁰² There are also extended poems based on such *nāmastotras*, such as

⁹⁹ *Viṣṇusahasranāma with the Bhāṣya of Śrīśaṃkarācārya*, trans. R. Anathakrishna Sastry (Madras: Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1980), xxiii.

¹⁰⁰ Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 270.

¹⁰¹ Douglas Renfrew Brooks, *The Secret of the Three Cities: An Introduction to Hindu Śākta Tantrism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 104.

¹⁰² See, for example, Kusum N. Desai, *Śrī Lalitā Sahasranāma Stotra* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1998).

the *Devīnāmavilāsa* of Sāhib Kaul, expanding on the thousand names of the Goddess.¹⁰³

Part *nāmastotra*, in that it provides and explains the thousand names of Devī, and part *kāvya*, in that it is an extended narrative replete with complex poetic figures, the *Devīnāmavilāsa* shares many features with *stotra* literature but resists strict classification.

A common but less often studied group of hymns is composed and recited to obtain protection, as indicated by the designations *kavaca* (“armor”), *varman* (“defensive armor”), *rakṣā* (“protection”) and *pañjara* (“cage”). *Kavacas*, for example, aim “to neutralize evil influences, to propitiate the planets, to protect children, to ward off death etc.”¹⁰⁴ Such hymns are frequently found in or attributed to Purāṇas and Tantras (see, for example, the *Nārāyaṇavarman* in *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 6.8). A *kavaca* is also one of the subsidiary texts (*aṅgas*) attached to the beginning of the *Devīmāhātmya*.¹⁰⁵ In the Tantras these protection hymns are closely associated with *mantras*, *yantras*, and practices such as *nyāsa*, the sequential installation of *mantras* in the parts of one’s body.¹⁰⁶ Sometimes they are associated with physical amulets designed for protection as well.

A good example of a protection *stotra* is the *Rāmarakṣāstotra* (Hymn to Rāma for His Protection), “perhaps the most popular Sanskrit *stotra* in Mahārāṣṭra today.”¹⁰⁷ While

¹⁰³ See Chapter Two.

¹⁰⁴ Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 247.

¹⁰⁵ Coburn, *Encountering the Goddess*, 104-6, 175-79.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, a description of the *Hanumatkavaca*, devoted to Hanumān, in Philip Lutgendorf, “Five Heads and No Tale: Hanumān and the Popularization of Tantra,” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 5/3 (2001).

¹⁰⁷ Bühnemann, *Budha-Kauśika’s Rāmarakṣāstotra*, 7.

there are many versions of this hymn, its core section (vv. 4-9) is structured as a *kavaca* (“armor”): the verses ask Rāma to protect the limbs of the reciter’s body from head to foot. The unique feature of this particular *kavaca* is that the sequence of names and epithets with which it refers to Rāma summarizes the main events of Rāma’s life, as described in Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*. Thus this section begins by saying, “May the descendant of Raghu protect my head, Daśaratha’s son my forehead” (v. 4), and ends: “May he who built the bridge (to Laṅkā) protect my knees, he who killed the ten-headed (Rāvaṇa) my shanks, he who bestowed prosperity on Bibhīṣaṇa my feet; may Rāma project my whole body.”¹⁰⁸ Although such hymns have received a minimal amount of scholarly attention, they are relatively well represented in manuscript archives. Any thorough history of *stotra* literature must consider the development of both protection hymns and *nāmastotras*.

If the wide variety of compositions that are often classified as *stotras* were placed on a spectrum based on their content, *nāmastotras* and protection hymns would be near one end and a group of philosophical and theological *stotras* would usually be on the far end. Historically, philosophical *stotras* such as those attributed to Śaṅkarācārya develop the style and content of hymns found in early *mahākāvyas*, which often used archaic language and emphasized ideas over poetry. This subgenre of *stotras* is “more argumentative than eulogistic in character, and was often clearly directed to an elite audience.”¹⁰⁹ Such hymns are usually included in *stotra* collections and manuscript libraries within a section called

¹⁰⁸ *Rāmarakṣāstotra* v. 9, trans. Bühnemann, *Budha-Kauśika’s Rāmarakṣāstotra*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰⁹ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 17.

Vedāntastotras.¹¹⁰ Theoretically the hymns in such sections form a distinct subgenre whose content is oriented toward Vedāntic philosophy and theology. Gonda, for example, attempts to distinguish between “reflective and speculative *stotras* [...] typically represented by the Vedāntic hymns ascribed to Śaṅkara and the later, mainly Viṣṇuite impassioned devotional eulogies, especially those dealing with the Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā legend.”¹¹¹ It is difficult, however, to classify compositions as *Vedāntastotras* simply based on their content. It might be more accurate to say that there are generally two possible criteria for grouping such *stotras*: some Vedāntic content (like the *Tattvamasistotra*), or else attribution to Śaṅkara or another prominent Vedāntin author.

There are approximately one hundred hymns ascribed to Śaṅkara (8th cent. CE), and a great deal of dispute still remains about which were composed by him, which were composed by later Advaita Vedāntin teachers holding the institutional position of a *śaṅkarācārya*, and which have been attributed to him for the sake of prestige, authority, or fame.¹¹² Attributing such hymns to philosophical authors may have also been used to present their teachings in condensed form, or to add personal or emotional elements to their rational arguments.

What is remarkable about the hymns attributed to Śaṅkara is their content, which ranges from basic philosophical texts to devotional and Tantric hymns to Śiva and several

¹¹⁰ See, for instance, Aithal, *Descriptive Catalogue*.

¹¹¹ Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 235-6.

¹¹² Lienhard, *History of Classical Poetry*, 139-40; Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 252-55; Robert E. Gussner, “A Stylometric Study of the Authorship of Seventeen Sanskrit Hymns Attributed to Śaṅkara,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 96/2 (1976).

goddesses. Many scholars have noted that Śaṅkara's doctrine of a higher and lower truth could accommodate the devotion and anthropomorphism of popular *stotras*. Hindus often interpret his authorship of *stotras* as evidence for the compatibility of devotional worship and philosophical non-dualism. Nevertheless, it is striking that a number of Tantric hymns in particular are traditionally accepted as authentic. The most popular is the *Saundaryalaharī* (whose first forty-one verses are known separately sometimes as the *Ānandalaharī*), "one of the most widely used devotional texts of modern Hinduism."¹¹³ This famous hymn praises the Goddess and belongs in particular to the Tantric Śākta tradition of Śrīvidyā.¹¹⁴ Its fame must be due in part to its rich combination of religious sentiment and poetic quality. The *Dakṣiṇāmūrtistotra*, which pays homage to Śiva in the form of the *guru*, may also have some Tantric associations; it has long been noted that it employs some of the technical terms and analogies of the Śaiva philosophical and theological tradition called Pratyabhijñā.¹¹⁵ This hymn, according to Robert Gussner (based on painstaking "stylometric" analysis), may be the only hymn actually composed by Śaṅkarācārya himself—but this, too, remains in doubt.¹¹⁶

Many of the other hymns attributed to the great philosopher are more squarely Vedāntic. The *Mohamudgara* (Hammer [for Destroying] Ignorance), for example, extols

¹¹³ *The Saundaryalaharī or Flood of Beauty, Traditionally Ascribed to Śaṅkara*, ed. and trans. W. Norman Brown (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), v.

¹¹⁴ Manuscripts of it are found throughout India, and "there are numerous lists of magic diagrams (yantra) and mystic seed syllables (bījākṣara) for use with the separate stanzas and prescriptions of accessory paraphernalia and methods for reciting the stanzas" (Brown, *Flood of Beauty*, v).

¹¹⁵ T.M.P. Mahadevan, *The Hymns of Śaṅkara* (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1970), 6-7, 13, 17.

¹¹⁶ Gussner, R.E., "A Stylometric Study," 259-267.

the knowledge that leads to liberation. Rather than addressing a deity, it calls out to a human audience, to those people who might stray from the path of true knowledge.¹¹⁷ This appeal to a human audience supports the argument that some *stotras* have important public dimensions.¹¹⁸ The *Mohamudgara* in particular strikes one as a tool for conveying the basic teachings of Advaita Vedānta. Verse nine, for example, says:

Through the company of the good, there arises non-attachment; through non-attachment, there arises freedom from delusion; through delusionlessness, there arises steadfastness; through steadfastness, there arises liberation in life.¹¹⁹

There is a popular story about the authorship of this hymn. Śaṅkara was walking with his disciples in Varanasi when he heard a scholar reciting grammatical rules. He approached him, and with twelve verses (plus the refrain, quoted above) he urged the scholar to turn from grammar to worship. The fourteen disciples with him are said to have each added a verse of their own.¹²⁰ Both the story and the poem itself suggest this hymn may have functioned as a tool for preaching or teaching.

The list of *stotras* attributed to Śaṅkara goes on and on.¹²¹ This group of texts raises many of the same challenges hindering the study of *stotras* and their history: uncertain

¹¹⁷ Traditionally, the *Mohamudgara* is often called the *Bhajaḡovindastotra*, after the key phrase in its refrain, *bhaja govinda*: “Worship Govinda!” or “Be devoted to Govinda!” The whole refrain, in Mahadevan’s translation, says: “Adore the Lord, adore the Lord, adore the Lord, O fool! When the appointed time (for departure) comes, the repetition of grammatical rules will not, indeed, save you.” (trans. Mahadevan, *Hymns of Śaṅkara*, 46).

¹¹⁸ Bronner, “Singing to God, Educating the People.”

¹¹⁹ Trans. Mahadevan, *Hymns of Śaṅkara*, 66.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹²¹ Among the many other hymns attributed to Śaṅkara are the *Śivānandalaharī*, which praises Śiva in rich poetic verses (Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 254-55; Mahadevan, *Hymns of Śaṅkara*, 115-243); the short *Annapūrṇastotra*, still recited in Varanasi, where there is a major temple to this

authorship and provenance, the accretion of frame stories (many of which are hagiographical), the complex and shifting textual record of these compositions, and their sheer number and diversity. To be blunt, the *stotras* attributed to Śaṅkara represent a significant weakness in the scholarly understanding of India's religious history.

Unfortunately, the tangled origins of these compositions have prevented many scholars from asking more interesting questions, such how they have been interpreted over time and how they have shaped perceptions of Śaṅkarācārya and Advaita Vedānta. Overall, the ascription of such a diverse range of hymns to this one author, along with their great popularity, remains a fascinating and understudied feature of *stotra* literature.

We know very little or nothing about the majority of the poets who composed *stotras*. Yet some of the most recognizable authors in the history of Hinduism wrote *stotras* along with their other works (or had *stotras* attributed to them). Śaṅkara is the most notable example, but others include Utpaladeva,¹²² Abhinavagupta, Rāmānuja and other early Śrīvaiṣṇava poets, Vedāntadeśika, Appayya Dīkṣita, Rūpa Gosvāmin, and Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja.¹²³ Their hymns provide evidence for this genre's potential to express, develop,

goddess; the *Gurvaṣṭaka*, eight stanzas praising devotion to one's religious teacher; the *Bhavānyaṣṭaka* and *Devyaṣṭaka*, both addressed to Devī and praised as being among "the finest specimens of Sanskrit hymnic poetry" (Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 253); and the *Harimīdestotra*, whose title comes from the phrase "I praise Hari" (*harim īde*). And the list goes on.

¹²² I look closely at Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta's hymns in Chapters Two and Three.

¹²³ Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja, the famous seventeenth-century scholar from Varanasi patronized by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, composed five highly poetic hymns called *laharīs* ("waves" or "billows") to the gods Viṣṇu and Sūrya, the goddess Lakṣmī, and the rivers Yāmuna and Gaṅgā (*Karuṇālaharī*, *Sudhālaharī*, *Lakṣmīlaharī*, *Amṛtalaharī*, and *Gaṅgālaharī*). They hearken back to the *Saundaryalaharī* attributed to Śaṅkara. A famous story is associated with the last of these, the *Gaṅgālaharī*. Jagannātha is said to have married a Muslim woman at the court of Shah Jahan, for which he was excommunicated by his Brahman community. But when he recited the *Gaṅgālaharī*

and disseminate theology. In south India, for instance, early Śrīvaiṣṇava theologians composed *stotras*,¹²⁴ and Nancy Ann Nayar argues that they used these hymns to bring together disparate streams of religious literature.¹²⁵ These hymns are dedicated to specific iconic forms of Viṣṇu, such as Lord Varadarāja at Kāñcīpuram, and they “are recited even today in their appropriate temples as an integral part of Vaiṣṇava temple ritual.”¹²⁶ Bhaṭṭar’s *Śrīraṅgarājastava* even depicts the Śrīraṅgam temple layout, beginning with a eulogy to the area surrounding the temple, then proceeding through the various gateways and areas of the temple complex, culminating in a eulogy to the form of Viṣṇu and Śrī within the inner sanctum.¹²⁷

Vedāntadeśika (c. 1268-1369), another prominent Śrīvaiṣṇava poet, also used *stotras* to bring together potentially disparate aspects of the tradition: Tamil and Sanskrit, the local and translocal, the emotional and the reflective. Steven Hopkins argues, for example, that the *stotra* form—more personal and emotional than many other genres—gives

Vedāntadeśika the space to resolve pivotal Śrīvaiṣṇava debates about self-effort and

on the steps of the Ganges, the river is said to have risen fifty-two steps (for the poem’s fifty-two verses, other than one *phalaśruti* verse) and washed over Jagannātha and his wife, purifying them. According to the story, they both drowned, but the poem achieved fame throughout India. While this is historically problematic, since Jagannātha quotes his own *Gaṅgālaharī* in later works, it dramatizes the esteem given to this poet (Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 265; *Works of Panditaraja Jagannath’s Poetry [Stotra Kavyas: Five Laharis]*, ed. K.N. Shastri [Jaipur: Publication Scheme, 1987], 4-7).

¹²⁴ Yāmuna and Rāmānuja (eleventh-twelfth centuries) are both said to have composed *stotras*, the latter’s in prose, and Rāmānuja’s disciples Kūreśa and Bhaṭṭar also composed *stotras*.

¹²⁵ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, xi.

¹²⁶ *Praise-Poems to Viṣṇu and Śrī: The Stotras of Rāmānuja’s Immediate Disciples*, trans. Nancy Ann Nayar (Bombay: Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute, 1994), 3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-12, 175-225.

grace.¹²⁸ Like the earlier poets, Vedāntadeśika also focuses on the iconic images of Viṣṇu enshrined in temples, and on the relationship of the Śrīvaiṣṇava devotee to that form.¹²⁹ Such verses seem to suggest a personal and intimate relationship between Viṣṇu and his devotee. Yigal Bronner, however, has argued that at least in the case of the Śaiva theologian and philosopher Appayya Dīkṣita there are also important public dimensions to the composition and recitation of *stotras*. He proposes that Appayya was attracted to the *stotra* form because it useful to him as a teacher, giving him a means of reaching a wider audience with his teachings on a variety of topics.¹³⁰

A number of *stotras* were also composed by the followers of Caitanya (1485-1533), most notably Rūpa Gosvāmin and Raghunātha Dāsa. Rūpa Gosvāmin's short works were compiled by his nephew Jīva Gosvāmin into a collection called the *Stavamālā*.¹³¹ The hymns of these poets reflect the distinct features of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, such as what is called *rāgānugā bhakti*, devotion that involves acting out of a particular dramatic role in the divine play with Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.¹³² The *Aṣṭakālīyalīlāsmaraṇamaṅgalastotra* (Auspicious Praise of the Remembrance of [Krishna's] Play Divided into Eight Time Periods) of Rūpa Gosvāmin divides Krishna's divine play in Vraja (*vrajalīlā*) into eight

¹²⁸ Hopkins, *Singing the Body of God*, 22, 236.

¹²⁹ E.g., *Devanāyakaṇṭhācāsat* v. 14, trans. Hopkins, *Singing the Body of God*, 199.

¹³⁰ Bronner, "Singing to God, Educating the People," 15.

¹³¹ Lienhard, *History of Classical Poetry*, 147.

¹³² Examples of these dramatic roles include Krishna's friends and lovers; see Haberman, *Acting as a Way of Salvation*, and Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature*, 262.

parts, which structures the corresponding temple schedule.¹³³ In other words, the events described in this hymn—Krishna’s activities like sleeping, eating, and his love-play with the *gopīs*—are matched by the temple routine that wakes and feeds Krishna, dresses him for his departure for the forest, and so on. Rūpa Gosvāmin makes it clear that his *stotra* is designed for worship at its very start: “I praise Kṛṣṇa’s eternal activities in Vraja in order to explain now the mental worship to be performed by those travelling on the path of passion (i.e., Rāgānugā).”¹³⁴ This poetry was produced both *as a result* of meditation on Krishna’s *līlā* and also *for* it.¹³⁵ Such hymns are frequently memorized and used as the basis for the visualization and worship of Krishna in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition.

The *stotras* I have discussed so far have been used in both public rituals and personal worship, including the visualization of specific deities. Some are particularly designed to accompany worship and perhaps should be called “liturgical *stotras*.”¹³⁶ *Suprabhāstotras*, for instance, are morning hymns to awaken a deity with praise, and are commonly used to awaken temple deities. Others seem designed for mental worship or visualization, such as the *Śivamānasapūjā* ([Hymn] for the Mental Worship of Śiva). The *Pañcāvaraṇastava* of Aghoraśiva, a prominent twelfth-century Śaiva Siddhāntin theologian, presents “all that is done with the mind in the course of the daily obligatory worship of Sadāśiva and his retinue

¹³³ Haberman, *Acting as a Way of Salvation*, 128.

¹³⁴ Trans. Haberman, *Acting as a Way of Salvation*, 161.

¹³⁵ Haberman, *Acting as a Way of Salvation*, 129-30.

¹³⁶ *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya: A twelfth-century South Indian prescription for the visualisation of Sadāśiva and his retinue*, ed. Dominic Goodall *et al.* (Pondicherry: Institut français de Pondichéry; École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2005), 15.

(*yāga*) by an initiate to the Śaiva Siddhānta.”¹³⁷ At least some *stotras*, therefore, were explicitly composed for worship and set out specific programs of meditation and visualization.

Thus far I have discussed some important Sanskrit *stotras* and their history, and the rest of this dissertation focuses on Sanskrit sources. Yet the relationship between Sanskrit *stotras* and vernacular devotional poetry poses a particularly complex and intriguing challenge. The history of this relationship is too complex, and too varied, to be analyzed in detail here. Nevertheless, it is important to note the mutual influence that Sanskrit and vernacular hymns had on each other. As Norman Cutler observes in his study of Tamil *bhakti* poets:

If, in the saints’ poems, we hear echoes of classical Tamil poems of love and war, of folk songs, of Sanskrit *stotras*, and even of Vedic hymns, there is good reason for this. These are among the many sources from which the Tamil poets drew inspiration. It is also important to keep in mind that Tamil and Sanskrit thrived for many centuries side-by-side in south India, and that southern authors of Sanskrit texts were also influenced by the themes and forms of Tamil literature.¹³⁸

The case of Tamil poetry has been particularly well studied in this regard, at least in comparison to other vernacular languages. In her study of the Śaiva Tamil poets, Indira Peterson notes that “in terms of subject matter and some formal characteristics, as well as in terms of their function as sacred utterances in a ritual context, the *patikams* [Tamil hymns] are closely associated with early Sanskrit *stotra* (‘praise poem’) hymns.”¹³⁹ Sometimes

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹³⁸ Cutler, *Songs of Experience*, 6.

¹³⁹ Indira Vishwanathan Peterson, *Poems to Śiva: The Hymns of the Tamil Saints* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 25-26.

Tamil hymns were even referred to in Sanskrit literature as *draviḍastotras* (“Dravidian” or Tamil *stotras*). As for the influence of Tamil hymns on Sanskrit literature, the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* remains the most well-studied case and includes a number of hymns indebted to earlier Tamil poetry.¹⁴⁰ Nancy Ann Nayar notes that “the general literary milieu of both the Āḷvārs and the early Ācāryas was one in which the poetry of praise flourished. Many devotional praise-poems in Tamil resembled the Sanskrit *stotra* both in structure and in style.”¹⁴¹ And for Vedāntadeśika, Hopkins argues, “a full praise of the deity demands more than one tongue.”¹⁴²

Stotras were important for poets composing in other vernaculars as well. The fourteenth-century female poet Lal Ded (Lalleśvarī), for example, wrote poetry in Kashmiri indebted to earlier Śaiva poetry in Sanskrit. Much more could be said about specific vernacular poets and their relationship to Sanskrit literature,¹⁴³ but in the present context a few generalities must suffice. Vernacular hymns share many of *stotras*’ general features outlined above, including the basic act of praise and the frequent use of vocatives, epithets, and allusions to texts like the Purāṇas to describe the deity’s iconography, exploits, and powers. They are recited, sung, and often memorized. They are frequently used in worship

¹⁴⁰ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 20-21; Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti: The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

¹⁴¹ Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 19-20.

¹⁴² *Singing the Body of God*, 6.

¹⁴³ One could add that the two most important poems of the Indian nationalist movement—Rabindranath Tagore’s *Jana Gana Mana* (now the national anthem of India) and Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay *Bande Mataram* (originally published in the novel *Ānandamaṭha*)—were written in Bengali but heavily influenced by Sanskrit. They suggest how the *stotra* form—as a public eulogy capable of unifying a speaker and audience—can be turned into a powerful political tool.

and are almost always devotional. One could argue, therefore, that *stotras* are the closest form of Sanskrit literature to vernacular devotional poetry, and their respective popularity stems precisely from their shared characteristics.

In this section I have outlined some of the major historical developments in the history of *stotras* and suggested some of the challenges and questions that remain promising avenues for future research. It is clear, for instance, that the seventh century was a landmark period for *stotra* literature, as professional poets composed short, devotional poems using the full arsenal of formal Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*). Other aspects of this history remain indeterminate but tantalizing; were Buddhist or Jain authors, for example, the first to write *kāvya*-style hymns? In part, a full history of *stotras* remains a desideratum because of the diversity of the genre itself. As we have seen, there are distinct types of hymns—protective, philosophical, and so on—that converge under the umbrella the *stotra* as a broad, flexible category, but these subtypes have their own trajectories that require more attention. They are found, moreover, in a huge array of texts, from Sanskrit court poetry to esoteric Tantric scriptures. In the end, the brief consideration of *stotras* I have presented here highlights the need for more research on specific contexts and lines of development, which can then contribute to our understanding of the rich, long history of *stotras* in South Asia. This is precisely what I present in this dissertation: a diachronic investigation into *stotras* from Kashmir in order to introduce new evidence and perspectives into the study of poetic, devotional prayer and hymnal literature in South Asia.

Stotra Scholarship

The survey of *stotras* I have presented thus far draws on the research of numerous scholars working in various languages and regions of South Asia. They have taken a variety of approaches in their study of *stotras* and related genres, depending on their source materials and their own intellectual inclinations. While I have referred to much of this work already, let me briefly highlight some of the scholarship that has influenced my own study of *stotra* literature before I proceed to the history of *stotras* in Kashmir.

At first glance, *stotras* may actually appear to be *overstudied*—both scholars and religious practitioners have translated popular hymns and surveyed their long history. Beyond such translations and descriptive surveys, however, the amount of serious research on *stotras* remains minimal, despite their great quantity and popularity. This paucity may be precisely *because* of the perception of *stotras* as “popular” texts. This trend extends to much Indian scholarship, which generally sticks to surveys and translations as well.¹⁴⁴ This is not to disparage such work—I have certainly benefitted greatly from it, and no doubt many others have as well. But translations and general surveys hardly exhaust the richness of the *stotra* genre and its long history.

Exceptions to this general trend have studied *stotras* from several different angles. Some of the best work on *stotras* focuses on their relationship to theology. In *Poetry as Theology: The Śrīvaiṣṇava Stotra in the Age of Rāmānuja*, Nancy Ann Nayar argues that Rāmānuja’s disciples used *stotras* to merge three streams of literature: the Sanskrit Veda

¹⁴⁴ Two exceptions have been particularly useful as I have analyzed and thought about *stotras* from Kashmir: Vidyārānī Agravāla, *Stutikusumāñjali kā Dārśanika evaṃ Kāvyaśāstrīya Anuśīlana* (Bodhagayā: Kañcana Publications, 1982) and Kedāra Nātha Śārmā, *Kaśmīrī Stotraparamparā evaṃ Dīnākrandana Stotra* (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 2004).

(and its auxiliaries), the Tamil Veda (the verses known collectively as the *Divya Prabandham*), and the Pāñcarātra Āgamas. In other words, the *stotras* of Rāmānuja’s disciples Kūreśa and Bhaṭṭar, “when analysed as a corpus, are the earliest extant documents in Śrīvaiṣṇava literature to reflect the tradition’s unique, unified, and encompassing theological vision.”¹⁴⁵ As the title of her books suggests, the *stotra* form has the potential to embody and express a theological tradition. Similar themes are explored by Steven Hopkins in his study of Vedāntadeśika’s *stotras*: he too considers how a Śrīvaiṣṇava author uses Sanskrit hymns to bring together different aspects of the tradition—Tamil and Sanskrit, the local and the translocal, the emotional and the reflective—and he too treats *stotras* “as primary theological texts.”¹⁴⁶ For instance, Hopkins argues that the *stotra* form—often more personal and emotional than other genres—gives Vedāntadeśika the space to resolve a contentious theological debate about self-effort and grace. According to Hopkins, this poet is able to express fully the helplessness of the devotee, while maintaining a tiny degree of self-effort “in the poetic act of praying itself, *wherein one claims one can simply do nothing to earn or deserve salvation*” (italics original).¹⁴⁷ These studies illustrate how praise-poetry offers a means of theological reflection that can be public, devotional, and carefully crafted to address central concerns within a tradition.

Even such sophisticated and doctrinal *stotras*, however, are never simply theology.

¹⁴⁵ *Poetry as Theology*, xi.

¹⁴⁶ *Singing the Body of God*, 47.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

Both Nayar and Hopkins deal with *stotras* related to specific temple icons, and they show how such hymns also function as aids to meditation, visualization, and worship (both external and internal). For instance, Hopkins argues that many of Vedāntadeśika’s hymns—“in their detailed descriptions of the god’s body from head to foot—become ‘verbal icons’ of the icon of Vishnu at Tiruvahīndrapuram;” the poet literally “sings the body of god” through such poems.¹⁴⁸ As liturgical texts, *stotras* are performed, and this performance changes based on context. Gudrun Bühnemann explores this flexibility in her important work on the *Rāmarakṣāstotra*, a composition within the sub-genre of “protection” (*raṁṣā*) or “armor” (*kavaca*) hymns.¹⁴⁹ The core verses of this *stotra* appeal to Rāma to protect all the limbs of the body of the reciter, using a series of names that suggest the main events of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. While Bühnemann’s work here is primarily descriptive, her methodology is thought provoking. She collates the many versions of this popular hymn—modern printed editions, versions in manuscripts from various areas of India, versions in the *Padmapurāṇa* and the *Ānandarāmāyaṇa*, a Balinese version, and so on—and discusses their different interpretations and applications. Her painstaking work shows the popularity and textual flexibility of this *stotra* as it was adapted to new contexts and new usages.

Bühnemann’s early work on *stotras* is particularly valuable because it investigates the form and function of *stotras*, rather than their theology, and charts some broad guidelines for classifying the large corpus of extant *stotras*.¹⁵⁰ Her analysis implicitly

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 4. See also *ibid.*, 139.

¹⁴⁹ *Budha-Kauśika’s Rāmarakṣāstotra*.

¹⁵⁰ Bühnemann, “Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotras,” 73-104.

demonstrates that there are multiple and overlapping classificatory schemes relevant to the study of *stotras*, based on factors such as their nomenclature, structure, content, and application. Many *stotras*, for instance, function more like *mantras*. They are seen as efficacious when recited in specific ways, often indicated by *phalaśruti* verses.¹⁵¹ Both are perceived as language that, when repeated, is efficacious at procuring practical benefits, such as the curing of a disease.¹⁵² *Stotras*, in other words, often seem to function as ritually efficacious formulas whose power lies not in the meaning of their words but in the performance of their recitation. The functional link between *stotras* and *mantras* derives in large part from the heritage of Vedic hymns and their use in later ritual contexts.¹⁵³ There is also a close relationship between *stotras* and the auspicious verses (*maṅgala*) which traditionally open Sanskrit works. An example from Kashmir makes this particularly clear: the *Ardhanārīśvarastotra* attributed to the twelfth-century poet Kalhaṇa actually consists of *maṅgala* verses extracted from his larger works.¹⁵⁴ Such editing practices suggest that at least for some authors, the content of many individual *maṅgala* and *stotra* verses is comparable or indistinguishable, and only the compositional context determines the

¹⁵¹ Nayar also notes this in the context of Śrīvaiṣṇavism and Pāñcarātra: texts which recommend “the recitation of *stotras* often, although not always, treat them as if they were *mantras* by assigning to them certain potencies ranging from the granting of *mokṣa* to the cure for specific diseases” (*Poetry as Theology*, 23).

¹⁵² Discussing *stotras* as “hymns of praise,” Bühnemann notes that “there is a tendency to use the ‘praise’ for the achievement of a particular purpose” (“Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotras,” 78).

¹⁵³ See Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 24.

¹⁵⁴ We have no evidence that this editing was done by Kalhaṇa himself. But even if it were not, this would still demonstrate the close connection between *maṅgala* and *stotra* verses.

category to which these verses belong. Thus *stotras* function in a wide variety of ways based on their form and context, from liturgical texts with ritual efficacy comparable to that of *mantras* to invocations of auspiciousness to guides for the visualization of and meditation on a deity. Bühnemann's work overall suggests the context-dependent, performative aspect of *stotras*, inviting the use of new frameworks for interpreting these texts, such as those that draw on developments in performance studies and the discourse around speech-acts. In this dissertation I interpret *stotras* in terms of prayer partly to invoke such developments and the limited but promising scholarship that has begun to study religious uses of language in such terms.

Interpreting *stotras* in terms of prayer draws attention to the communication between the poet and the implied or direct addressees of his or her praise-poetry. Yet the formal addressee of such poetry is not its only audience. Scholars of vernacular *bhakti* poetry in India have made great strides in thinking about the human audiences for these hymns and the kinds of publics that they create. Normal Cutler, for instance, has analyzed the triangular relationship between poet, deity, and human audience in the case of Tamil hymns,¹⁵⁵ and Christian Novetzke's work on the Maharashtrian poet-saint Namdev underscores the complex public nature of *bhakti*.¹⁵⁶ In general, the progress made in the study of vernacular *bhakti* poetry has not significantly influenced scholarship on Sanskrit hymns.¹⁵⁷ Some scholars, however, have begun to think about *stotras* in new ways that

¹⁵⁵ *Songs of Experience*, 19 ff.

¹⁵⁶ *Religion and Public Memory*.

¹⁵⁷ This is less true in scholarship on south Indian, such as in Nayar's work on Śrīvaiṣṇava *stotras*.

place the focus squarely on the human audience for such texts. Yigal Bronner’s work on the *stotras* of Appayya Dīkṣita offers compelling arguments about the purpose and audiences of these hymns. He argues that Appayya was attracted to the *stotra* form because it facilitated his pedagogical agenda; it allowed him “to reach out to some community of listeners and instruct them on a variety of topics: from purāṇas to speech ornaments to piety and surrender.”¹⁵⁸ This new perspective on *stotras*—focusing on their public dimensions, their “marketability and community appeal”¹⁵⁹—challenges some of the presumptions underlying much scholarship, such as the tendency to see *stotras* as concerned primarily with private expressions of devotion. While it remains unclear how typical or distinct Appayya’s use of *stotras* was, Bronner’s work has expanded the range of questions that can and should be explored in the study of *stotras*. All of the scholars I have discussed here emphasize that hymns cannot be understood simply as private communications with a deity or spontaneous outpourings of the soul; depending on the context they can be interpreted as theological syntheses, or as texts for teaching and preaching, or as strategies for remembering the past and publicly shaping communal identity. Such possibilities, moreover, can be multiplied, for the flexibility of the *stotra* genre means that poets and communities have continued to find new meanings and uses for them up to the present day.

Finally, the best scholarship on *stotras* also never lets us forget that these hymns are poetry, and often self-consciously poetic. Whatever their primary concerns are, from the theological to the liturgical, *stotras* are recited and sung, enjoyed and shared. Their appeal

¹⁵⁸ “Singing to God, Educating the People,” 15.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

to and circulation among diverse communities over long periods of time derives in part from their poetic qualities.¹⁶⁰ Throughout this dissertation I follow Hopkins' lead in foregrounding these "literary textures of such ritual poetry," what he felicitously calls "the poetry of *pūjā*."¹⁶¹ *Stotras* are both poetry and prayer, and in Kashmir they often reflect invested interest in the power and appeal of this distinct combination. Moreover, certain authors, like Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, also composed poetry that intervenes in the world of poetics, challenging or recasting earlier aesthetic traditions and offering new visions for the future of religious poetry. In the chapters that follow, therefore, I address both the "poetry of *pūjā*" itself and its engagement with various religious and literary traditions.

The scholarship I have discussed in this section, while far from exhaustive, demonstrates some of the most fruitful avenues for approaching *stotras* in South Asia. There is also a small but important body of scholarship on *stotras* in Kashmir, by both Indian and international scholars, which I engage throughout this dissertation (and directly discuss below, in brief).¹⁶² While *stotras* have been popular across a huge geographic region, and there are many unifying features within this corpus, there are also distinct traditions of *stotra* composition in specific regions, where poets addressed localized theological and ritual concerns. As we have seen, some of the best scholarship on *stotras* explores the

¹⁶⁰ Even those that lack the sophistication of *kāvya* may be appreciated for their simple repetition or metrical qualities when recited or sung.

¹⁶¹ Hopkins, *Singing the Body of God*, 139.

¹⁶² It is worth noting that a major lacuna in scholarship on *stotras* remains the historiography of *stotras*; in other words, scholarship on how Indians have understood and interpreted *stotras* (e.g., through textual practices of transmission and anthology), and how international scholars have shaped the perception of these compositions through their own frameworks and scholarship.

distinct history of these Sanskrit hymns in south India, where they developed in close relationship to Tamil poetry and emerging traditions, particularly Śrīvaiṣṇavism. There are very few such studies, however, that address the history of *stotras* in north India. It is surprising that there have not been more studies focused on *stotras* from north India, such as those of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, which, like the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, includes a complex interplay between Sanskrit and vernacular hymns. The net result of this is that our understanding of Sanskrit *stotras* and their history is based largely on southern traditions and contexts, despite important sources from north India—hence the focus of this study: Kashmir and its rich history of literary hymns.

Stotras and Kashmir

Kashmir offers one of the most promising opportunities to study the history, popularity, and interpretation of *stotras* in north India. Authors from Kashmir produced a trove of *stotras* and related literature ripe for complex analysis. There are at least three benefits of focusing on the history of these hymns in Kashmir. First, Kashmir has had a relatively strong regional identity since at least the middle of the first millennium CE, partly due, no doubt, to the topographical distinctness of the Vale of Kashmir. This regional identity can be seen in the Kashmirian *Nīlamata Purāṇa*, for example, which tells of the mythical origins of Kashmir, and later in the *Rājataranṅī* of Kalhaṇa and its continuations by Śrīvara, Jonarāja, and so on.¹⁶³ This long and continuous regional identity allows for in-depth historical analysis of its religious literature.

¹⁶³ See Walter Slaje, *Medieval Kashmir and the Science of History* (Austin: South Asia Institute, University of Texas at Austin, 2006).

Second, Kashmir has a remarkable history of literary production (and transmission¹⁶⁴) across intellectual and religious fields, justifying its frequent designation as the abode of Śāradā, the goddess of learning. Between the ninth and twelfth centuries it was arguably the most dynamic hub of Sanskrit literary production in South Asia, and it continued to be the site of new production even after this heyday. Sophisticated and innovative works of literature, Tantric theology, philosophy, and aesthetic theory produced during this period circulated far beyond the Kashmir valley. Classical Indian aesthetics, for example, continues to be dominated by theories that came out of Kashmir. Moreover, some of the most well-known authors from this period—the literary theorist Ānandavardhana (c. 850), for example, and the celebrated polymath Abhinavagupta (fl. 975-1025)—composed *stotras*. Other important figures such as Kṣemarāja (fl. 1000-1050) wrote learned commentaries on popular hymns, which have yet to be analyzed for what they indicate about the reception and interpretation of these compositions. Kashmir, therefore, offers a chance to study *stotras* within a remarkably rich and influential literary and religious milieu.

Lastly, studying *stotras* in Kashmir promises discrete benefits since it is a circumscribed, feasible project. The history of *stotras* as a whole is complex and daunting, and this has deterred many scholars from tackling it. Focusing on *stotras* in this distinct region makes the scope of this project reasonable. At the same time, Sanskrit works produced in Kashmir were influential and popular far beyond the snowy peaks of the Kashmir valley. In the last few decades there have been great advances in the study of this region, and this has fuelled developments in the study of aesthetics, philosophy, and in

¹⁶⁴ The transmission of manuscripts in Kashmir, like in Nepal, has been facilitated by weather conditions more conducive to preservation than other parts of India.

particular Śaivism and Tantrism, “Indology’s current growth sector.”¹⁶⁵ Yet the history of *stotras* in Kashmir remains largely unstudied. This dissertation, therefore, has a manageable scope that nonetheless allows for contributions to the study of larger trends within the religious and literary history of South Asia, and it builds upon some of the most cutting-edge scholarship transforming the study of South Asian religions.

Kashmir can boast of a rich and active religious history.¹⁶⁶ Those less familiar with Kashmir may associate it primarily with Śaivism and then Islam, but Kashmir was also an important site of Buddhism, brahmanical Smārtism, the worship of the sun-god, and Vaiṣṇavism, not to mention an astonishing and complex diversity of Śaiva and Śākta-Śaiva traditions.¹⁶⁷ The earliest firm evidence for religion in Kashmir is Buddhist. The Sarvāstivādin Buddhist tradition was well established by the first centuries of the Common Era,¹⁶⁸ and Kashmir was “closely connected with the strongly Buddhist traditions of the

¹⁶⁵ Andrew Ollett, “Sanskrit in 2012,” *Baraza*, March 23, 2012, <http://www.barazaonline.org/blog/item/33-sanskrit-in-2012>

¹⁶⁶ The definitive work on the pre-Islamic religious history of Kashmir, as well as the Sanskrit-based religious activity during Islamic rule, has been done by Alexis Sanderson over the last three decades. See in particular “The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir” in *Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner*, ed. Dominic Goodall and André Padoux (Pondicherry: Institut français d’Indologie / École française d’Extrême-Orient, 2007) and “The Hinduism of Kashmir,” available at <http://www.alexissanderson.com/publications.html>. The latter was apparently published with various editorial errors or changes as “Kashmir” in *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism, Volume One: Regions, Pilgrimage, Deities*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen (Leiden: Brill, 2009). I cite Sanderson’s original, unedited version in what follows.

¹⁶⁷ Many Kashmirian sources directly or indirectly acknowledge the vibrant diversity of Kashmir’s religious culture. See, for instance, the satirical play by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, the *Āgamaḍambara* (*Much Ado about Religion*, trans. Csaba Dezső [New York: New York University Press, 2005]).

¹⁶⁸ Sanderson, “Hinduism of Kashmir”, 4-5.

regions of Kāpiśī, Gandhāra, and Taxila to the west.”¹⁶⁹ Brahmanical traditions were well established by the middle of the first millennium and may go back much further. The worship of the sun-god, seen most dramatically in the great Mārtaṇḍa temple at modern day Maṭaṇ,¹⁷⁰ flourished for a time before fading and becoming assimilated into later Śaiva traditions.¹⁷¹ For centuries it was actually Vaiṣṇavism that was the dominant religion among the elites of Kashmir, particularly during the rule of the Kārkoṭa kings (c. 626-855), which was also “the period of Kashmir’s greatest prosperity and power.”¹⁷² There was a Vaiṣṇava orientation to the brahminical tradition in Kashmir, as well as the program of calendric rites and festivals, until they were later reframed with a Śaiva orientation.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, while the Vaiṣṇavism in Kashmir was vibrant and influential,¹⁷⁴ the Śaivism that came to dominate between the ninth and fourteenth centuries was even more so.

The history of Śaivism in Kashmir, as in north India in general, remained tangled and obscure to scholars until relatively recently. Great progress has been made in recent decades, most notably through the scholarship of Alexis Sanderson and several of his former students,

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁷⁰ Alexis Sanderson, “The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period,” in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. Shingo Einoo, Institute of Oriental Culture Special Series, 23 (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, 2009), 57; Bettina Bäumer, “Sūrya in a Śaiva Perspective: the *Sāmbapañcāśikā*, A Mystical Hymn of Kashmir and Its Commentary by Kṣemarāja,” in *Saḥḍaya: Studies in Indian and South East Asian Art in Honour of Dr. R. Nagaswamy*, eds. Bettina Bäumer et al. (Chennai: Tamil Arts Academy, 2006), 2.

¹⁷¹ See Chapter Three.

¹⁷² Sanderson, “Hinduism of Kashmir,” 13.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 19.

¹⁷⁴ As Sanderson notes, there were at least two different forms of Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavism in Kashmir, and these influenced Vaiṣṇava developments outside of Kashmir. Ibid., 14-17.

and this progress is compounding and accelerating. This is not the place to attempt a summary of such a vast and complex body of scholarship, but some of the broad trends in this history provide important background information for the chapters that follow. Most scholarship on Kashmir has focused on the period between the ninth and the twelfth centuries, certainly the most creative period of Kashmirian Śaiva literature. This is not to say that Śaiva traditions did not flourish in Kashmir before this period; the *Haravijaya* of Ratnākara, composed in the first part of the ninth century, demonstrates knowledge of multiple Śaiva and Śākta-Śaiva traditions. Śaiva Siddhānta, in particular, seems to have been well established by this time, for Ratnākara echoes several of its scriptures as well as some of its early exegetes.¹⁷⁵ But in the ninth century we see evidence for numerous innovations in both scriptural and post-scriptural Śaivism. Non-dualistic Śaivism emerged in Kashmir in the ninth century, as did the Śaiva-Śākta Krama tradition propagated by Jñānanetra. The *Netratantra*, a Kashmirian Śaiva scripture teaching the popular cult of Amṛteśvara, was likely produced during this period as well.¹⁷⁶ During the latter half of the ninth century, Śaiva-Śākta texts like the *Śivasūtra* and the *Spandakārikā* presented “a non-dualistic metaphysics and gnostic soteriology in opposition to the dualistic and ritualistic exegesis of the Śaiddhāntika Śaiva scriptures.”¹⁷⁷ Distinct to this trend, particularly in its early phase, was the view that these teachings came not from Śiva directly, but from the

¹⁷⁵ Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 425.

¹⁷⁶ Sanderson, “Hinduism of Kashmir,” 31; also Alexis Sanderson, “Religion and the State: Śaiva Officials in the Territory of the Brahmanical Royal Chaplain (with an appendix on the provenance and date of the *Netratantra*),” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47 (2004) [actual publication date: 2005], 273 ff.

¹⁷⁷ Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 426.

enlightened state of certain enlightened beings, usually called *siddhas*. As Sanderson points out, “it is not without good reason, then, that the historian Kalhaṇa speaks of the reign of Avantivarman (c. 855/6-883) as one that was marked by the descent of Siddhas among men for the benefit of the world.”¹⁷⁸

The tenth and eleventh centuries were a time of remarkable exegetical activity in various Śaiva traditions. The tenth century was the heyday of Kashmirian Saiddhāntika exegesis,¹⁷⁹ and some of the most famous non-Saiddhāntika theologians and exegetes wrote extensively during the time. Somānanda (fl. c. 900-950), a Kashmirian Śaiva-Śākta tāntrika, “not only founded the highly influential Pratyabhijñā school, the philosophical tradition most commonly associated with ‘Kashmiri Shaivism,’ but he was also a pioneer of the post-scriptural Trika,” a goddess-centered Śaiva tradition that was established in Kashmir by the beginning of the ninth century.¹⁸⁰ Somānanda’s disciple Utpaladeva became even more well-known for his rigorous exposition of the Pratyabhijñā tradition. The latter’s grand-disciple, Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025), became one of the most famous polymaths in India’s history for his brilliant exegesis in multiple fields, including Tantra, Pratyabhijñā philosophy, and aesthetics. His monumental *Tantrāloka* stands as one of the most ambitious and far-reaching works on Śaivism, looking back on several centuries of scriptural and exegetical composition and synthesizing these in a new, complex vision of Śaiva-Śākta non-

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 427.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ John Nemeč, *The Ubiquitous Śiva: Somānanda’s Śivadṛṣṭi and His Tantric Interlocutors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2; one of the most accessible accounts of the Trika is found in Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 370-381.

dualism. Jayaratha, a scholar at the court of Kashmir in the first part of the thirteenth century, wrote a learned commentary on the *Tantrāloka*, although even by that time some of the sources used by Abhinavagupta were no longer available. Abhinavagupta's disciple Kṣemarāja continued his teacher's non-dualistic exegesis, extending this vision to encompass a range of other texts and genres in Kashmir, from the central scriptures of the popular cults of Svacchandabhairava and Amṛteśvara to several devotional hymns.¹⁸¹ Most scholarship on Śaivism in Kashmir has gravitated toward these seminal figures, particularly Abhinavagupta. There is certainly merit in this, for the brilliant vision of these authors has survived down to present times in Kashmir, even if the ritual systems that undergirded it did not.¹⁸² But Śaivism during this remarkable period was vibrant and complex, and scholars continue to bring this diversity into focus.

Śaivism in Kashmir continued to evolve in the second millennium. After the twelfth century this often meant contraction and revision in the face of major demographic changes—in particular, the large-scale adoption of Islam—but there were also areas of expansion and innovation. Śaiva Siddhānta declined precipitously, probably (like Buddhism) because of a decline in patronage to its public institutions that formed the core of its religious life.¹⁸³ The Śaiva-Śākta traditions of the Trika and Krama, along with the philosophical Pratyabhijñā school, eventually came to survive only “as textual resources of

¹⁸¹ See Chapter Three.

¹⁸² Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 433-434.

¹⁸³ Sanderson, “Hinduism of Kashmir,” 3.

exegetical and spiritual inspiration,” rather than as living systems of ritual worship.¹⁸⁴ But another Śaiva-Śākta tradition, focused on the goddess Tripurasundarī, was introduced into Kashmir in the eleventh century and dominated the Śākta-oriented Śaivism of the valley down to modern times. In part this is due to the influx of immigrants to Kashmir from northern Bihar who brought their own tradition of east Indian Śāktism. The most outstanding member of this community was the seventeenth-century author Sāhib Kaul, whose poetic hymns I analyze in Chapter Two. But this development is only one among many interesting features of the trajectory of Śaivism in Kashmir after the thirteenth century. Ongoing work, such as that of the *Mokṣopāya* project (initiated by Walter Slaje) and Luther Obrock’s research on Śrīvara’s fifteenth-century history of Kashmir,¹⁸⁵ promises to reshape our interpretation of religion in Kashmir.

Alongside and intermeshed with this dynamic religious history were developments in a wide variety of scholarly disciplines. Important philosophical works were composed on Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, for example, such as Jayanta Bhaṭṭa’s *Nyāyamañjarī*. But most importantly for this study, Kashmir was the home to the production of some of the most influential works on Indian aesthetics since the composition of Bharata’s foundational *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Histories of Sanskrit aesthetics often turn to Kashmir near the start of the ninth century and hardly leave for the three centuries that follow, as they describe the debates and innovations pursued by an impressive series of Kashmirian intellectuals, including Udbhaṭa, Vāmana, Rudraṭa, Ānandavardhana, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, Mukulabhaṭṭa, Kuntaka,

¹⁸⁴ Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 433.

¹⁸⁵ The current title for his forthcoming dissertation is “The Sanskrit Imagination in a Sultanate Court: Pandit Śrīvara and Early Modern Kashmir” (University of California, Berkeley).

Abhinavagupta, Mahimabhaṭṭa, and Ruyyaka, to name only the most well-known figures. There was what Randall Collins describes as a “structural crunch,” leading to the production of highly sophisticated works in a variety of disciplines over a number of generations.¹⁸⁶

Since the dynamic discourse on aesthetic theory serves as an important backdrop for the present study, let us briefly chart some of its major developments taking place in Kashmir. In South Asia the early discourse on aesthetics focused primarily on classifying, defining, and illustrating individual figures of speech (*alaṃkāras*) as comprehensively as possible, and the primary unit of analysis was the single verse. The status of “aesthetic moods” (*rasas*), however—based as they were on an emotional *content*—were already problematic for the early theorists’ formalist analysis of aesthetic features (simile, etc.), as Lawrence McCrea has argued.¹⁸⁷ A crucial shift occurred in the ninth-century *Dhvanyāloka*¹⁸⁸ of Ānandavardhana. McCrea has argued that Ānanda’s innovations represent a revolutionary re-envisioning of poetics that significantly altered the future of the discourse. Ānandavardhana applied “to the analysis of poetic language a teleological approach to textual interpretation modeled on that of the Mīmāṃsakas” [Vedic hermeneuts],

¹⁸⁶ A structural crunch refers to conditions of competition and compounding creativity that lead to exceptional intellectual production. As Collins describes it, “the structural crunch is a pattern of both network density and creativity driven by conflict” (*The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* [Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998], 76).

¹⁸⁷ McCrea, *Teleology of Poetics*, chapter two, and in summary, 52-54. As he points out, this tension was so pronounced that Rudraṭa abandons any attempt to present an integrated approach, and instead offers separate formalist and *rasa*-based analyses (*ibid.*, 51-52).

¹⁸⁸ Though this is how the text is commonly known, Daniel H.H. Ingalls has argued that its original title was most likely *Sahṛdayāloka* (*The Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana, with the Locana of Abhinavagupta*, trans. Daniel H.H. Ingalls *et al.* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990], 12-13).

an approach that took unity of purpose—and specifically the communication of a single, predominant *rasa*, ideally through the semantic process of poetic suggestion (*dhvani*)—as the key to interpreting poetic texts.¹⁸⁹ In other words, *rasa* (especially suggested *rasa*), which is based on emotional content, took the place of formalist features (*alaṅkāra*, *riti*, *guṇa*) at center stage in the discourse around aesthetics. Moreover, the analysis of literature became modeled on the analysis of scripture, as developed in Mīmāṃsā, and as a result this analysis became teleological and increasingly focused on the cognitive processes by which poetic meaning is understood.¹⁹⁰ The importance of these innovations for the study of religion becomes clearer in the work of two subsequent Kashmirian figures: Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka¹⁹¹ and Abhinavagupta.¹⁹²

As Sheldon Pollock has explained in detail, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka brought about a paradigm shift in aesthetic discourse by transferring the focus of analysis from the characters of the play or work of literature to the audience or reader as the locus or substratum of *rasa*.

Building on Ānandavardhana’s application of Mīmāṃsaka terminology to the analysis of

¹⁸⁹ McCrea, *Teleology of Poetics*, 442.

¹⁹⁰ As McCrea discusses, however, Ānandavardhana himself opened up new possibilities in literary criticism (see *Teleology of Poetics*, chapter six).

¹⁹¹ Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s specific dates are uncertain; he wrote sometime between 850-1000 CE, probably around 900 CE (see Pollock, “What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka Saying?,” 138).

¹⁹² I do not have space to discuss the interesting case of Bhoja (r. ca. 1011-1055) in detail. Sheldon Pollock has argued, though, that scholars have misread Bhoja because of their presuppositions ingrained by reading Abhinavagupta and post-Abhinavagupta writers. When we look at Bhoja without accepting these, it seems more likely that Bhoja held the *older*, pre-Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka view: *rasa* is located in the actor/character. In other ways, however, Bhoja is strikingly original—particularly in his argument for a “higher order Passion” underlying the full range of affective states, a kind of “capacity for emotional intensity as such” (Sheldon Pollock, Bhoja’s *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* and the Problem of Rasa: A Historical Introduction and Translation” in *Asiatische Studien / Etudes asiatiques* 70.1 [1998], 126).

poetic language, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka argued that *rasa* is a unique experience, different from normal worldly experiences based on perception and inference. In his bold and creative analysis, the literary process (which he calls *bhāvanā*,¹⁹³ based on Mīmāṃsā), is threefold:¹⁹⁴ the nature of literary language¹⁹⁵ first demolishes the historical referentiality of a narrative, then “reproduces”¹⁹⁶ its emotions for the reader in a “universalized” or “commonalized” form,¹⁹⁷ which the reader finally experiences and enjoys as *rasa*.¹⁹⁸ While there are different ways of interpreting Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s explanation of this third part, the key is that

all interpreters agree that for Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, ‘experiencing’ the emotions that have been made ‘common’ by the power of literary ‘expression’ and thus rendered

¹⁹³ Literally “production,” “causing to be or come into being,” but also a technical term in Mīmāṃsā by which the content of scripture becomes teleologically oriented as injunction for the reader. As Pollock makes clear, *bhāvanā* is a specifically hermeneutic form of knowledge, in the three-fold sense Gadamer explored in such depth. It is understanding that necessarily involves interpretation *and application*, i.e. such understanding includes the relation of what is understood to the present context of that understanding/interpretation (“What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka Saying?,” 162).

¹⁹⁴ What follows is based on Pollock’s article as a whole, but for a concise summary see “What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka Saying?,” 161.

¹⁹⁵ I.e., poetic language set off from normal discourse (as well as the language of scripture). Note that he uses the term *abhidhā* for this literary language, but, as Pollock argues, this is different from the standard usage of the term for “denotation” (i.e., *not* literary, figurative usage) (ibid., 153).

¹⁹⁶ This second step is sometimes confusingly called *bhāvanā* as well, but also *bhāvakatva* (ibid., 151). Pollock describes *bhāvakatva* as “the literary process whereby the emotional states represented in the literary work are made into something in which the reader or spectator can fully participate” (ibid., 154).

¹⁹⁷ This occurs through the process of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* (ibid., 156).

¹⁹⁸ This third part is called “experience” (*bhoga*) or “experientialization” (*bhogīkṛtva*), but an experience that is more than “enjoyment” (the common translation), involving disengaged reactions to the various emotions being produced. Note that I have used Pollock’s translations for these key terms, which are, when necessary, neologisms to indicate Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s own innovative terminology.

accessible to the reader—horror without the danger of real horror [...]—leads to a kind of absorption in or even cathexis on the literary event.¹⁹⁹

As we shall see shortly, this gets at the heart of the most common arguments about religion and aesthetics in South Asia: aesthetic experience and its relationship to religious experience. Pollock argues, though, that for Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka this absorptive experience is unique to the aesthetic realm, and even is to be regarded as being beyond religious experience, in contrast to Abhinavagupta’s view.²⁰⁰

Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s radical move—“to put the subjective experience of the reader front and center in his aesthetic analysis”²⁰¹—paved the way for Abhinavagupta’s aesthetic theory, which came to dominate the field to a large extent. Abhinavagupta’s work is deeply indebted to both Ānandavardhana (on whose *Dhvanyāloka* he wrote an influential commentary) and Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (whose creativity and innovation has largely been overlooked because of its absorption into Abhinavagupta’s synthesis). He argued for a *rasa*-directed valuation of poetry and represented most of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s ideas about the location of *rasa* in the reader and the way we come to know *rasa* as a unique experience. Scholarship on Abhinavagupta’s aesthetic theory has suffered from some confusion, particularly in explicating his presentation of the relationship between religious and aesthetic experience. Consider the discussion of this relationship in the pioneering work of

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 156.

²⁰⁰ One of the extant direct (or probable) citations from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s lost *Hṛdayadarpaṇa* says: “Nothing can compare with [aesthetic *rasa*], not even the *rasa* spiritual adepts bring forth” (ibid.).

²⁰¹ Ibid., 162.

J. L. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan.²⁰² On one hand, they explicitly discuss the differences between the “relishing of *rasa*” (*rasāsvāda*) and the “relishing of *brahman*” (*brahmāsvāda*).²⁰³ They translate at length from a passage of Abhinavagupta’s commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka* that ends by asserting the superiority of the joy that comes from finding repose in God to any aesthetic experience: “[...] aesthetic pleasure (*rasāsvāda*) is only the reflection (*avabhāsa*) of a drop (*vipruṣ*) of that mystic bliss.”²⁰⁴ On the other hand, they criticize Abhinavagupta for confusing “art and life,” and they claim that he sees *śāntarasa* as a “universal experience” lying behind literature, and thus *not* something unique to the aesthetic realm.²⁰⁵ Their confusion can be seen in their own statement of surprise that Abhinavagupta “never thought of extending his theory to purely religious texts. After all the most obvious and in a sense the best examples of *śāntarasa* are to be found in religious and philosophical literature, and not in *belles lettres*.”²⁰⁶ This lack of clarity within scholarship marks later reflections on Abhinavagupta’s aesthetics as well,²⁰⁷ and much work remains to be done on these seminal authors and their views on the relationship between

²⁰² In particular, J.L. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta’s Philosophy of Aesthetics* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1969), vi.

²⁰³ Ibid., 162-3. I do not have space here to critique their conflation of *advaita* Vedānta with *advaita* Śaivism as found in Kashmir during the time of Abhinavagupta, but it suffices to say they are certainly not the same, and thus Masson and Patwardhan’s frequent analyses of Abhinavagupta’s work in terms of *advaita* Vedānta are quite dated in this regard.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 158.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., xvi.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., xii.

²⁰⁷ E.g., in Edwin Gerow, “Abhinavagupta’s Aesthetics as a Speculative Paradigm,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 114, No. 2 (Apr. – Jun., 1994).

literature, aesthetics, and religion. *Stotras*, with their combination of poetry and prayer, offer one of the most promising angles with which one can explore this relationship.

Stotras were composed, recited, and transmitted throughout the complex religious and literary history of Kashmir. This is true not just for the heyday of Sanskrit literary production in the region—namely, the ninth to the twelfth century—but also for the centuries of change and general contraction that followed. Based simply on folio count, *stotras* may seem less important than other kinds of texts produced in Kashmir, from Śaiva scriptures to philosophical treatises to *mahākāvyas*. Yet when we look at the long history of religious life and literary activity in Kashmir, *stotras* stand out for their popularity, creativity, and adaptability to the changing circumstances of what came to be considered Kashmirian Hindus, “the Kashmiri Pandits.” In fact, the brevity of *stotras* has contributed to their success: they are more easily read, recited, studied, copied, and disseminated than longer texts, and as poetry they are specifically designed to say less while doing more. Throughout Kashmir’s history, *stotras*’ economy of words brings together complex theology, devotional practice, communal identity, and aesthetic theory. They were recited publicly in temples and included in manuals for personal study and devotional worship. Some were styled on sophisticated court poetry while others preached esoteric and ecstatic Tantric teachings. Some of the earliest extant commentaries on *stotras* were composed in Kashmir. Most strikingly, many Kashmirian authors reflect on the *stotra* genre itself, pondering its potential and limitations, and some sought to dramatically expand its scope and stature. As I show in Chapter Two, *stotras* have had a vital place in the history of religion and literature in Kashmir.

Given the popularity of *stotras* throughout South Asia and the ambitious creativity of many *stotras* from Kashmir in particular, it is surprising that they have not received more attention. Several scholars have studied and translated a few of the most well-known hymns from Kashmir, but these studies are focused and generally isolated from the history of the genre. They are valuable contributions nonetheless, and my debt to their work is apparent in my many citations and footnotes. Constantina Rhodes Bailly's *Shaiva Devotional Songs of Kashmir*²⁰⁸ introduces and translates the collected *stotras* of Utpaladeva. The second half of Bettina Bäumer's *Abhinavagupta: Wege ins Licht* translates and discusses in German Abhinavagupta's *stotras*, and she has several relevant articles in English as well.²⁰⁹ Lilian Silburn published several translations of *stotras* from Kashmir in French,²¹⁰ and Andre Padoux discusses and translates the *Sāmbapañcāśikā* in French.²¹¹ Jürgen Hanneder has done some excellent work on hymns from seventeenth-century Kashmir.²¹² As for

²⁰⁸ *Shaiva Devotional Songs of Kashmir: A Translation and Study of Utpaladeva's Shivastotravali* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1987).

²⁰⁹ *Abhinavagupta: Wege Ins Licht, Texte des tantrischen Śivaismus aus Kaschmir* (Zurich: Benziger, 1992); relevant articles include "Sūrya in a Śaiva Perspective" and "Abhinavagupta's Anuttarāṣṭikā" in *The Variegated Plumage: Encounters with Indian Philosophy (A Commemoration Volume in Honour of Pandit Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal')*, ed. N.B. Patil and Mrinal Kaul 'Martand' (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007).

²¹⁰ *Hymnes de Abhinavagupta* (Paris, Institut de civilisation de l'Université de Paris: E. De Brocard, 1970); *La Bhakti: Le Stavacintāmaṇi de Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* (Paris: Boccard, 1964); *Hymnes aux Kālī: La Roue des Energies Divines* (Paris: Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 1975).

²¹¹ "Sāmbapañcāśikā, Les cinquante strophes de Samba [a la gloire du soleil]" in *Le parole e i marmi: studi in onore di Raniero Gnoli nel suo 70 compleanno*, ed. Raffaele Torella (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente).

²¹² In addition to forthcoming editions of the *stotras* of Ratnakaṇṭha and Sāhib Kaul, Hanneder has published on the latter's extended poem, the *Devīnāmavilāsa* ("Sāhib Kaul's Presentation of Pratyabhijñā Philosophy in his *Devīnāmavilāsa*," in *Le parole e i marmi: Studi in onore di Raniero*

scholarship in India, there have been a number of editions and translations of a few Kashmirian *stotras*, but these are often synchronic or repeat standard historical inaccuracies. However, several Indian scholars have published useful works in Hindi and English on the *Stutikusumāñjali*, in stark contrast to the dearth of scholarship outside of India on this important text (see Chapters Four and Five).²¹³ Overall, despite their many strengths, the current scholarly works on *stotras* in Kashmir share certain limitations. Aside from a few exceptions, they focus primarily on a single text or author from a limited period of time in Kashmir (mostly the tenth and eleventh centuries) using published sources, and they are primarily translations. One of the central arguments of the present study is that the importance of the *stotra* genre in Kashmir becomes most clear when viewed over Kashmir's long history.

The major exception to this scholarly pattern of limited focus is the work of Alexis Sanderson. As we have seen, it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of his work for the study of Śaivism and the history religion in Kashmir. His work on *stotras*, while secondary to his overall historical project, offers vital insight into the diverse and evolving role of *stotras* in the religious and literary history of Kashmir. Sanderson has shown that such hymns played a far greater role in this history than previously understood. For example, *stotras* seem to have been important in the transmission of teachings in the

Gnoli nel suo 70°, Serie Orientale Roma 92.1-2 [Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2001]).

²¹³ In particular: Ācārya Paṇḍit Śrīmahāvīraprasādañjali Dvivedī, “Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa ki Stutikusumāñjali,” in *Kalyāṇ (Śivāṅka)* (Gorakhpur, India: Gita press, 1933); B.N. Bhatt, “The position of ‘Stutikusumanjali’ in Sanskrit Stotra literature,” in *Oriental Institute Journal (Baroda)* 21, no. 4 (June 1972); and Agravāla, *Stutikusumāñjali kā Dārśanika evaṃ Kāvyaśāstrīya Anuśīlana*.

esoteric Śaiva-Śākta tradition known as the Krama, and specifically the Krama's meditative worship (see Chapter Two).²¹⁴ Sanderson draws extensively on unpublished manuscript materials and thus brings previously unknown or underappreciated sources in play. His careful work on the relationship between texts and lineages has laid the groundwork for further research on religious practice and literature in Kashmir, and my debt to his scholarship is evident throughout this dissertation.

Stotras, as we have seen, are an integral part of Kashmir's dynamic history. They combine literature, literary theory, theology, and religious practice in compelling ways, which helps to explain their enduring popularity over long periods of time. Building on the translations and studies scholars have done of select hymns, as well as Sanderson's disentanglement of the complex relationships between various texts and traditions, this dissertation offers the first study of the nature and history of *stotras* in Kashmir.

Dissertation Outline

At the core of this dissertation are a series of questions about the relationship between literary and religious expression, seen with particular clarity in the history of *stotras* in Kashmir. In the chapters that follow I discuss many individual *stotras*, but I have had to be selective, for such hymns have been composed in Kashmir for at least twelve hundred years. Because my primary concern is the *stotra* genre itself and its unique combination of literary and religious features, I have chosen to focus on those *stotras* whose authors show commitment to the literary quality of their hymns. There are many such

²¹⁴ Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 262-3.

hymns from Kashmir, and usually their authors are known; occasionally they are attributed to a semi-mythical figure. They are distinct from the many *stotras* of unknown origin and authorship, found in various manuscripts archives, that may have been composed in Kashmir. The hymns that I study in detail are often self-consciously poetic and ambitious. They are familiar with literary conventions and often engage with them in creative ways. Indeed, this is one of the distinguishing features of the most well-known and popular Kashmirian *stotras*: creative engagement with literary conventions and a dynamic literary tradition.

The scope of this project is ambitious, and requires familiarity with many complex sources. Inevitably, there are limits to what I can include. There are many *stotras* I have not been able to discuss here. Hundreds of unpublished *stotras* sit in various archives that may or may have been composed or popular in Kashmir. Most of these have no known author and are said to belong to larger scriptures, such as the *Bhṛṅgīśasaṃhitā*. Moreover, the quality of these *stotras* varies significantly, and their dates of composition remain very difficult to determine. Many are connected with local temples, pilgrimage sites, or festivals, and thus such *stotras*, along with local *māhātmyas*, offer valuable information about local practices and traditions. Yet the quantity and obscure origins of such *stotras* makes them a difficult corpus to study, and there is a general divide between most of these anonymous hymns and those composed by various religious and literary luminaries in Kashmir over the centuries. While I focus on the latter in the chapters that follow, I still have had to impose some additional limits. I have translated hundreds of *stotra* verses for this dissertation and quoted many of them, but in general I have not included full translations here. One of my

main sources, the *Stutikusumāñjali*, consists of almost 1500 verses and a full translation would have run for hundreds of pages! Similarly, while I have collected dozens of *stotra* manuscripts from both Indian and international archives, and have consulted these whenever possible to assist my research, I have not included any critical editions in this dissertation. This does not mean I am uninterested in producing full translations and critical editions; just the opposite. I have great respect and gratitude for the translations and critical editions that scholars have produced, and I fully intend to contribute to scholarship in this way in future phases of my work on *stotras*.

As this dissertation proceeds, the scope for each chapter becomes increasingly focused, beginning with a broad view of the history of *stotras* in Kashmir and ending with two chapters centered on a single, pivotal text. Chapter Two charts the general trajectory of Kashmir's poetic hymns from the ninth to the twenty-first century, demonstrating how *stotras* have reflected the diversity and complexity of the religious culture in Kashmir as well as its rich traditions of Sanskrit literature and literary theory. This survey is necessarily selective, but it highlights some of the most outstanding *stotras* produced in Kashmir and what they indicate about the *stotra* genre itself. It begins with a discussion of the early hymns of Ratnākara and Ānandavardhana, which combine religious sentiment, knowledge of diverse religious traditions, and complex poetic technique. This chapter dwells on the hymns of two of Kashmir's most celebrated authors, the polymath Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025) and his most prominent disciple, Kṣemarāja (c. 1000-1050). Additionally, it considers the importance of the *stotra* form in the articulation and propagation of the Śākta-Śaiva tradition known as the Krama, looking closely at the *Cittasaṃtoṣatrimśikā*, an

eleventh-century hymn by Nāga. It also introduces the sources central to the chapters that follow: the *Sāmbapañcāsikā*, *Stavacintāmaṇi*, and *Śivastotrāvalī*, which all received commentaries by Kṣemarāja, and the *Stutikusumāñjali* of Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa. As most scholarship on Kashmir centers on the period between the ninth and the twelfth centuries, one of the most valuable contributions of this chapter is its discussion of *stotras* in the centuries that follow. The seventeenth-century poetry of Sāhib Kaul is particularly important for its innovative engagement with Kashmirian religious and literary traditions. The chapter concludes by considering some features of *stotras* in the centuries after Sāhib Kaul, including the vitality of *stotras* among contemporary Kashmiri Pandits. Overall, Chapter Two charts three broad themes in these Kashmirian sources: the complex relationship between poetry and theology, and particularly non-dualistic theology; a persistent concern—often pedagogical—with engaging their human audiences in creative ways; and the marked difference between the trajectory of *stotras* in Kashmir and that of other genres.

Chapter Three considers three different texts and their commentaries, composed by the theologian and scholar Kṣemarāja in the eleventh century. Two of his root texts are independent *stotras*—the *Sāmbapañcāsikā* (attributed to the legendary Sāmba) and the *Stavacintāmaṇi* of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa—while the third is a collection of Utpaladeva’s hymns and verses called the *Śivastotrāvalī*. These hymns, along with Kṣemarāja’s commentaries, reflect on many issues central to the *stotra* genre, including the nature of *bhakti*, praise, and prayer, and the relationship between theology, poetry, and poetics. In his commentaries, Kṣemarāja relies on a variety of hermeneutic strategies to produce a meaning for his root

texts that aligns with his own tradition's form of non-dualism. In Chapter Three I analyze both the ways that Kṣemarāja frames the *Sāmbapañcāsikā*, *Stavacintāmaṇi*, and *Śivastotrāvalī*, and also what these hymns themselves indicate about the history of *stotras* in Kashmir. By examining these popular literary hymns along with Kṣemarāja's commentaries, this chapter explores the relationship between theology, poetry, and aesthetics during Kashmir's most influential period of literary production.

The second half of this dissertation focuses on a crucial text from fourteenth-century Kashmir: the *Stutikusumāñjali* (*SKA*) of Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa. After the twelfth century Kashmir underwent a series of political and religious transformations that profoundly altered its literary culture. As Sheldon Pollock has argued, there was a rapid decline in Sanskrit literary production around this time.²¹⁵ Yet as he notes, the *stotra* genre stands as an exception, and the best example of this is the *Stutikusumāñjali*,²¹⁶ a collection of thirty-eight *stotras* (with an additional chapter on the poet's lineage) that totals almost 1500 verses. Manuscripts of the text are located in archives throughout India and histories of Sanskrit literature have briefly noted its importance, but it has never been translated or studied in depth by non-Indian scholars.²¹⁷ In Chapter Four, I argue that the *SKA* is an ambitious literary and religious experiment designed to bring the *stotra* form and its devotional concerns into the realm of classical Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*) and poetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*).

²¹⁵ "The Death of Sanskrit," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43.2 (Apr., 2001).

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 396, 418n7.

²¹⁷ Indian scholars have recognized its importance and the need for more work on the text; indeed this is the central theme of Bhatt's article on the *SKA* ("The position of 'Stutikusumanjali' in Sanskrit Stotra literature").

In this sense, the *SKA* represents a reversal of and resistance to the broad trend in the history of Sanskrit that Pollock analyzes in his major work, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*. The chapter analyzes the *SKA*'s poetic features, its own perspectives on *kāvya*, and the implied audience of Śaiva devotees and aesthetic connoisseurs it seeks to cultivate. It showcases the ambition and creativity of the *SKA* as a piece of religious literature that seeks to recast the relationship between poetry, poetics, and religion through the innovative use of the flexible *stotra* form.

While Chapter Four addresses the *Stutikusumāñjali*'s engagement with poetry and poetics, Chapter Five considers its reflections on the nature of prayer (loosely conceived in this context as the general term for various ways of using language to relate directly to a deity). Throughout the *SKA*, Jagaddhara unpacks and explores various language-based practices, such as the offering of blessings and the act of taking refuge, which are encompassed by the *stotra* form. In the first part of this chapter I describe the Śaiva vision and theological orientation of the text. I then turn to the *SKA*'s presentation of *bhakti*, a crucial topic for the *stotra* genre, and argue for its double significance as a religious and literary category. Finally, I consider several examples of religious practices accomplished through language, and how the *SKA* both facilitates and self-consciously reflects upon practices. These include the offering of praise, homage, and blessings, invocations of auspiciousness, taking refuge, meditation on the deity's form, and worship. Chapter Five shows how both poetry and poetics are integrated into the vision of Śaivism offered by the *SKA*, and illustrates Jagaddhara's expanded view of the *stotra* form as a type of literature that encompasses a host of religious practices rooted in language.

The Conclusion summarizes the unique perspectives on poetry, prayer, and *bhakti* I discuss throughout the dissertation, and uses these as a starting point for thinking broadly about hymns and devotional literature as a central part of religious life in South Asia. As a whole, *stotra* literature can be both fascinating and overwhelming in its diversity, complexity, and volume. Through this study of literary hymns, I hope to contribute not just to our understanding of Kashmir's religious and literary history, but also to our appreciation of and insight into the dynamic *stotra* genre and the close relationship between poetry and prayer in South Asia.

Chapter Two

Literary Hymns from Kashmir: An Overview

A long view of Kashmir's religious and literary history reveals that the *stotra* has been (and remains) a vibrant genre. Since the ninth-century works of Ratnākara, *stotras* have reflected the diversity and complexity of the religious culture in Kashmir as well as its rich traditions of Sanskrit literature and literary theory. In this chapter I survey some of the outstanding *stotras* produced in Kashmir from this time onward and analyze what light they cast on the history of the *stotra* genre in this important hub of religious and academic learning. I begin with the complex poetry of Ratnākara and Ānandavardhana, and then introduce the *Sāmbapañcāśikā*, *Stavacintāmaṇi*, and *Śivastotrāvalī*, which take center stage in Chapter Three. Next I consider the importance of *stotras* in the Krama lineage, looking closely at one of Nāga's eleventh-century hymns, the *Cittasaṃtoṣatrimśikā*. I then turn to the *stotras* of the polymath Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025) and his most prominent disciple, Kṣemarāja, before considering the trajectory of *stotras* in the centuries that follow, which has received almost no scholarly attention. Since I analyze the fourteenth-century *Stutikusumāñjali* in depth in Chapters Four and Five, I only introduce it briefly here. I do, however, look closely at the hymns of Sāhib Kaul from the seventeenth century, and end with some observations on the history of *stotras* in Kashmir's recent history.

This survey spans approximately twelve hundred years, and thus it is necessarily selective. I have chosen to focus on *stotras* whose authors are known, or which are attributed to specific authors, rather than look at anonymous *stotras*, many of which are said

to belong to specific scriptures. Moreover, I pay particular attention to *stotras* that demonstrate literary ambition. By this I mean hymns that are self-consciously poetic, that are concerned with *how* they express as an essential part of *what* they express. This does not limit my sources greatly, for the majority of Kashmirian *stotras* with known or attributed authors are highly poetic. In fact this is one of the distinguishing features of *stotras* from Kashmir: attention to literary concerns and a propensity for poetic experimentation. The general focus of this chapter provides important background and perspective for the three chapters that follow.

Of course, there is a great deal that I cannot discuss, including many *stotras* that do indeed warrant scholarly attention. I have deliberately left out some *stotras* known to Kashmirian authors that were most likely composed outside of Kashmir, or those that, like the *Pañcastavī*, have tangled and obscure histories. Some, like the *Bahurūpagarbhastotra*,²¹⁸ are anonymous texts closely associated with a particular scripture and are distinct from the literary hymns at the heart of this project. A number of anonymous *stotras* of varying (but often limited) literary quality have been popular in Kashmir, particularly those associated with specific pilgrimage sites or festivals, as even a cursory examination of the manuscript catalogues of Indian archives will reveal. But it is usually difficult to determine the date and provenance of such texts, and the influence and fame of any given text that falls in this category are usually minimal. In other cases I do not have the space to discuss all the texts I

²¹⁸ See Hemendra Nath Chakravarty, “Bahurūpagarbhastotra: An Annotated Translation,” in *Sāmarasya: Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy, and Interreligious Dialogue, in Honour of Bettina Bäumer*, ed. Sanananda Das and Ernst Furlinger (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2005), 37-48.

could—the *Bhāvopahārastotra*,²¹⁹ for example, or the hymns included in Jayadratha’s twelfth-century *Haracaritacintāmaṇi*, which contains accounts of Śiva’s deeds in the world; nor do I discuss several of the post-twelfth century hymns, such as the *Īśvaraśataka*, in any depth. Rather than trying (and inevitably failing) to be exhaustive, I look closely at a selection of the most influential, sophisticated, and challenging *stotras* from the long history of Kashmir. They suggest certain trends within this history and provide context to support the close readings of key texts that I will provide in the three chapters that follow.

My approach to the texts introduced in this chapter is chronological rather than conceptual, and for that reason it is appropriate at this point to flag three broad themes that will make their appearance throughout my discussions of these *stotras*. The first is the complex relationship between theology and literature, and more specifically, theology and hymnology. Many Kashmirian authors chose the *stotra* form for creative literary experiments that challenged contemporary conventions or re-envisioned earlier traditions. But as I demonstrate in this chapter, most of these Kashmirian authors are even more concerned with exploring subtle theological questions. In particular, many of them address the nature of non-dualistic praise and prayer, as well as non-dualistic Śaiva *bhakti*. This is often where they show the most creativity and complexity. Overall, these hymns indicate that *stotras* were seen to have a unique power to express, demonstrate, and disseminate theology in ways that other genres simply did not.

Second, these *stotras* directly or indirectly express concern with their complex audiences. On one hand, like most *stotras* they have a divine audience with whom they

²¹⁹ On this hymn by the Śaiva ascetic Bhaṭṭāraka Cakrapāṇīnātha, see Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 323-328.

interact by such means as calling out directly and indirect praise. But on the other hand, these hymns have deep and self-conscious concern for their human audiences. Some *stotras*, like those from the Krama tradition, are highly technical and sectarian, requiring and transmitting specific and often esoteric knowledge. Others parallel the exoteric orientation of traditional Sanskrit literature. In both cases, however, these hymns engage with their multiple audiences in creative ways. Many, for instance, have potential as pedagogical texts, and some explicitly reveal this agenda. Collectively considered, these *stotras* raise the question of audience more insistently and productively than other genres.

Third, the trajectory of this genre is markedly different from that of other genres. The popularity of the *stotra* form has lasted for centuries, and the form remained a medium for great creativity even as the production of other types of texts dwindled. As the religious culture of Kashmir changed, it was the inherent flexibility of the *stotra* genre, I argue, that enabled it to retain its appeal—right down to the present day. Only if we consider the long trajectory, beginning in the ninth century and going beyond the most influential early period, can we appreciate the *stotra*'s full value for expressing and maintaining Hindu traditions in Kashmir. No doubt there was much contraction over the centuries as the primary religious affiliation of the population shifted toward Islam, but the history of *stotras* over the long haul reveals a great deal about the ongoing vitality of Hindu religious life in Kashmir. This vitality can be seen from the first datable literary hymns composed in Kashmir in the ninth century down to the present day.

The Ninth-century Hymns of Ratnākara and Ānandavardhana

The dynamic literary activity taking place in Kashmir during the ninth century—indeed, literary activity unprecedented for the region—included the composition of several literary hymns notable for their relationship to both Sanskrit literature and the history of religious traditions in the region. The poet Ratnākara placed two hymns at crucial moments of his great court poem (*mahākāvya*), the *Haravijaya* (*HaVi*), composed around 830 CE at the court of Cippaṭa-Jayāpīḍa.²²⁰ Ānandavardhana—famous for his revolutionary work on poetics, the *Dhvanyāloka*—composed a hymn to the goddess, the *Devīśataka*. Ratnākara and Ānandavardhana remain two of the best known authors from Kashmir, and their hymns attest to the prominence of the *stotra* genre within the literary world of ninth-century Kashmir.

Ratnākara's *Haravijaya* (Śiva's Victory) is often considered the longest of the classical Sanskrit court poems, a designation that has earned it both praise and revilement.²²¹ The basic plot of the poem is as follows. Having conquered the gods (*devas*), the demon Andhaka oppresses the world. The Seasons come to Śiva's abode, which is described in detail in the first chapters, and worship Śiva, after which Spring offers him a hymn of praise that ends with the news of Andhaka's fierce oppression. Śiva's assembly reacts with anger to the news, and Śiva sends an envoy to Andhaka. While the envoy is on his mission, Śiva,

²²⁰ On this dating, see Alexis Sanderson, "History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pañcarātra and the Buddhist Yoginītantras" in *Les Sources et le temps. Sources and Time*, ed. François Grimal, Publications du département d'Indologie 91 (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2001), 5-6n3, and also Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 425.

²²¹ David Smith, *Ratnakara's "Haravijaya": An Introduction to the Sanskrit Court Epic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3. The poem consists of fifty chapters and 4351 verses.

Pārvatī, and their followers sport with pleasure. The envoy reaches Andhaka, but even after many speeches in the demon's assembly hall war is inevitable. During the peak of battle, just before Śiva appears to slay Andhaka himself, a hymn to the fierce goddess Caṇḍī is offered on the battlefield.²²²

As this brief description highlights, two hymns occur at crucial moments in the narrative.²²³ The hymn to Śiva serves as a conclusion to the first six chapters, offering what David Smith characterizes as a summary of the status quo, a static presentation of Śiva's supreme nature, before Andhaka's oppression is mentioned at the hymn's end.²²⁴ The *Caṇḍīstotra*, on the other hand, is offered during the intensity of battle, as befits the fierce form of the Goddess. Theologically, they suggest both the transcendent and the immanent aspects of divine power.²²⁵

Alexis Sanderson has drawn attention to the significance of these hymns for our understanding of the history of religion in Kashmir. They offer the earliest dateable evidence we have for the traditions that comprise the broad stream of Śaivism in Kashmir called the Mantramārga.²²⁶ While the *Śivastotra* demonstrates knowledge of Śaiva

²²² For more on this progression, see *ibid.*, chapter five.

²²³ Smith's discussion of the *HaVi*'s overall structure makes this clear (*ibid.*).

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 252.

²²⁵ See *ibid.*, 135 and 275-276.

²²⁶ Literally "the path of mantras," the Mantramārga refers to Śaivism open to both ascetics and married householders who may pursue worldly pleasures and extraordinary powers in addition to liberation (in contrast to the other main branch of Tantric Śaivism, the Atimārga, which is only open to ascetics who pursue liberation alone). For an introduction to these Śaiva streams, see Alexis Sanderson, "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions," in *The World's Religions*, ed. S. Sutherland, L. Houlden, P. Clarke and F. Hardy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), 660-704.

Siddhānta scriptures and commentarial literature, the *Caṇḍīstotra* alludes to the Śaiva-Śākta tradition known as the Trika.²²⁷ But beyond the importance of this historical evidence, these hymns demonstrate a remarkable combination of literary and theological expression. Both hymns are long and complex: the *Śivastotra* and *Caṇḍīstotra* constitute almost the entire sixth and forty-seventh cantos of the *HaVi*, respectively, for a combined total of over 350 verses. They are the earliest evidence we have for one of the central concerns of Kashmirian authors: the nature of *stotras* as a pivotal point of contact between religious traditions and the realm of literature and literary theory.

In the ornate and complex language of Sanskrit *mahākāvya*, the *Śivastotra* expounds upon Śiva's supreme nature as the one god underlying all reality. In doing so, it makes reference to numerous religious and philosophical traditions, and richly evokes Śiva's iconographic features and salvific activities. Allusions to Śaiva soteriological systems, and in particular Śaiva Siddhānta, make the hymn theologically dense. Many of its verses refer to specific doctrinal points. For instance, one of its verses evokes three of the cuirasses (*kañcukas*) in the Śaiva Siddhānta ontology of thirty-six levels or principles of reality (*tattva*), echoing the *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṃgraha*,²²⁸ an early scripture of this tradition:

²²⁷ “Śaiva Exegesis,” 425. Sanderson also argues that the lack of references to the Kālīkula system suggests that the Kālīkula and specifically “its Krama refinement had not yet come to the fore of the Kashmirian Śākta domain of the court, whereas the Trika was already well established there” (426). For the correlations between verses of the *Śivastotra* with specific Śaiva Siddhānta texts, see Sanderson, “History through Textual Criticism,” 5-6n3 and 18-19n21. On the Trika, Krama, and Kālīkula, see Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” especially 250-381, and on the Trika in particular, Alexis Sanderson, “Mandala and Āgamic Identity in the Trika of Kashmir,” in *Mantras et Diagrammes Rituelles dans l’Hindouisme*, ed. Andre Padoux (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986).

²²⁸ Sanderson identifies this parallel in “History through Textual Criticism,” 5-6n3.

It is well known that limited consciousness is established
 through the power of limited action (*kalā*),
 limited objects of knowledge arise from limited knowledge (*vidyā*),
 and the mind is colored by intense passion (*rāga*).
 Through your will, this individual soul experiences limited existence.
 // *HaVi* 6.126 //²²⁹

Such verses make reference to standard Śaiva Siddhānta doctrines. But this hymn does not only praise Śiva in terms of this Śaiva tradition. Theologically it links Śiva with a number of earlier traditions, interweaving references to Yoga and Sāṃkhya, the Vedas and Upaniṣads, and even Buddhists.²³⁰ For example, it praises Śiva as the one who really sings the Sāmaveda (through Brahmā),²³¹ and it equates Śiva with the ineffable reality to which Yājñavalkya gestures in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*:²³²

O you who are praised by all,
 the celebrated sages of old referred to you as "not—, not—",
 beyond all secondary descriptions.
 Your supreme nature is amazing! // *HaVi* 6.39 //²³³

In this way Ratnākara presents a vision of Śiva that embraces earlier soteriological traditions but establishes Śiva as their apex by showing how the views of others are, in the end, linked with Śiva as the supreme god.

²²⁹ *kalayā kilodvalitacetanasthiṭṭh pratipadyamānaviṣayaś ca vidyayā / dṛḍharāgarāñjitamanā bhavaty ayaṃ bhavadicchayā prakṛtibhogabhāg aṇuḥ // HaVi 6.126 //* On the *kañcukas*, see Raffaele Torella, "The Kañcukas in the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Tantric Tradition: Some Considerations Between Theology and Grammar," in *Studies in Hinduism II: Miscellanea to the phenomenon of tantras*, ed. Gerhard Oberhammer (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998), 55-86.

²³⁰ *HaVi* 6.94, for instance, refers to the views of the Mādhyamikas (*mādhyamikadarśana*).

²³¹ *HaVi* v. 6.33.

²³² E.g. at *BU* 4.2.4 and 4.4.22.

²³³ *prathitāḥ parāparadr̥śaḥ purāvidaḥ kathayanti viśvanuta neti neti yat / sakalair vinākṛtam upādhisādhanaiḥ paramaṃ tad eva tava tattvam adbhutam // HaVi 6.39 //*

Many other verses simply focus on describing Śiva's iconographical form. Such verses offer highly poetic meditations on his perceptible appearance, evoking a vision of Śiva through praise. They visualize and substantiate Śiva's embodiment and relate it to the rich narratives associated with him,²³⁴ as in this verse on Śiva's third eye:

Your third eye blazes on your forehead,
glittering like a ray of light from the moon that adorns you.
It has an odd, fiery light, as though it were
white from the leftover ashes from when
you torched Smara, the god of love. // *HaVi* 6.173 //²³⁵

Such verses do not offer simple, transparent descriptions; they require careful attention and sophisticated skills and knowledge to be fully appreciated. This verse, for example, uses a classic literary figure known as *utprekṣa*, an imaginative ascription that contains an implicit comparison, to evoke both Śiva's iconography (his third eye, the crescent moon on his head, etc.) and one of his most well-known exploits (when he burned up the god of love). For poet, reciter, and listener alike, such verses facilitate the rich evocation of a complex deity and sustained meditation on his form and nature. The experience associated with such poetry, therefore, is one of appreciating complexity. This is particularly true for the *Śivastotra* and *Caṇḍīstotra*, since they are intricate parts of a lengthy *mahākāvya*, unlike the rest of the hymns we will consider in this chapter. Yet this tendency to express theology and devotion in complex ways extends to almost all of these hymns.

²³⁴ For more on the depiction of Śiva in this hymn, see Smith, *Ratnākara's "Haravijaya,"* chapter eight.

²³⁵ *bhavato 'vataṃsaśaśiraśmimaṇḍalacchuritaṃ virājati lalāṭalocanam / smarabhasmaśeṣaracitām iva śriyaṃ dadhatā kṛtāspadam ayugmarociṣa // HaVi 173 //*

The descriptions and praises of Śiva are a prelude to the main event of the canto: the speaker of the hymn, Spring, finally shares the news of Andhaka's oppression, which initiates the action that follows. This *Śivastotra* thereby serves an important narrative function.²³⁶ The hymn praises Śiva, dwelling on his greatness as the supreme deity encompassing all earlier traditions, and thereby impels him to action. It is almost as if the hymn establishes his identity as the hero of this *mahākāvya*, showcasing his qualifications and authority (*adhikāra*) as he who conquers the demon Andhaka. Moreover, the praise serves implicitly as a kind of theological pressure: logically, how could such a great lord sit by idly while Andhaka oppresses the universe?²³⁷ The hymn wins Śiva to the cause of his supplicants. Theologically, of course, this is more complicated—Śiva is free and independent, not controlled by his devotees—but in practice the logic of *stotras* often suggests that they are effective at persuading Śiva to take action. Thus in the *Śivastotra* we see Śiva celebrated for his various attributes and activities, established as the supreme deity underlying the many systems known at that time, and finally compelled to act on behalf of his supplicants.

The second of Ratnākara's *stotras* occurs much later in the *Haravijaya* and showcases the divine power that encompasses violence, leading ultimately to victory, in the form of the fierce goddess Caṇḍī. She appears at the height of the battle. Seeing her, the celestial beings (Siddhas and Sādhyas) offer a hymn of praise that constitutes the forty-

²³⁶ In Smith's words: "The hymn of praise to Parameśvara concludes the first part of the *Haravijaya*, the description of the status quo. In its final verses Śiva is informed of the depredations of the demon Andhaka. The poem is shaken out of its timelessness" (*Ratnākara's 'Haravijaya,'* 252).

²³⁷ Moreover, as Smith notes, Śiva is reminded that he gave birth to the demon who is now oppressing the world (*ibid.*, 255).

seventh chapter of the *HaVi*.²³⁸ Like the *Śivastotra*, this *Caṇḍīstotra* presents its addressee as the supreme truth behind other religious traditions. Two verses, for instance, depict her as the reality behind the Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇava tradition,²³⁹ and in another her celebrants proclaim: “the Buddha’s profound eightfold path to liberation was revealed by you alone.”²⁴⁰ We have already seen that this hymn reveals Ratnākara’s technical knowledge of the Trika tradition. It mentions, for instance, the visualization of the goddess enthroned on a lotus above a trident—central features of the distinctive *maṇḍala* of the Trika.²⁴¹ The trident is a pregnant image here because it foreshadows Śiva’s slaying of Andhaka with this famous weapon of his. As Smith puts it, “the trident of spiritual power transcends and foreshadows the actual implement of the mythological Śiva.”²⁴² In many verses Caṇḍī is also closely linked with the power of language, reflecting the increasing emphasis on this aspect of the goddess in Kashmirian Śaiva-Śākta circles, especially the Trika.²⁴³ Thus she is referred to as *mātrkā*, the “mother” or matrix of the syllables, and called the pericarp of Brahmā’s seat,

²³⁸ It is likely that Ratnākara was self-consciously paying homage to Bāṇa with this hymn. Bāṇa’s *Caṇḍīśataka* (A Hundred Verses to the Goddess Caṇḍī) was a celebrated poem from the seventh century, and Ratnākara explicitly looked back to Bāṇa as his forerunner (see Smith, *Ratnākara’s ‘Haravijaya,’* 15ff).

²³⁹ *HaVi* 47.55-56.

²⁴⁰ *aṣṭāṅga eṣa parinirvṛtaye tvayaiva saṃdarśito ’tigahanaḥ sugatasya mārgaḥ* / *HaVi* 47.53cd //

²⁴¹ See *HaVi* 47.99, translated in Sanderson, “History through Textual Criticism,” 18n21, where he also gives other examples. For more on the visualization of the goddesses of the Trika on Śiva’s trident, see Sanderson, “Mandala and Āgamic Identity.”

²⁴² Smith, *Ratnākara’s ‘Haravijaya,’* 276.

²⁴³ On the goddess Mālinī, see Somadeva Vasudeva, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottarantra, Chapters 1-4, 7, 11-17*, Collection Indologie Pondichéry—19 (Pondicherry: Institut français de Pondichéry; École française d'Extrême-Orient. 2004).

the lotus of all language.²⁴⁴ An extended syntactical unit (*kulakam*) praises the syllable “*om*” as her mouth.²⁴⁵

But the *Caṇḍīstotra*, like its earlier counterpart to Śiva, also combines theological reflections with iconographical meditations. Here, however, the focus is specifically on her terrifying features appropriate to the battleground. This is juxtaposed with references to her as the mother who is benevolent and loving toward her devotees:²⁴⁶

O supreme goddess,
 your necklace of snakes has been driven off
 by your garland of twitching skulls—
 this form of yours is terrifying!
 But your heart, (like a treasure)
 tied up in the end of your garment that
 bestows both heaven and the enjoyment of the seven worlds,
 is compassionate. // *HaVi* 47.156 //²⁴⁷

Devotion to such a goddess is particularly important to ensure this benevolent side of her personality. Ratnākara compares devotion to her to the blade of an axe in the forest of *saṃsāra*,²⁴⁸ and says that Yama refrains from tightening his noose on her devotees after seeing the devastation she has wreaked upon her enemies.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴ *HaVi* vv. 47.114 and 47.118; *HaVi* v. 47.109.

²⁴⁵ *HaVi* vv. 47.61-92. See Smith, *Ratnākara's 'Haravijaya,'* 26.

²⁴⁶ E.g., the poet calls out to her as mother explicitly in *HaVi* 47.144.

²⁴⁷ *preṅkhatkapālakusumasragapoḍhabhogihāraṃ bhayānakam adhīśvari rūpam etat / cetaḥ punas tava dayāmṛdu saptalokabhogāpavargaphalasādhanabaddhakakṣam // HaVi 47.156 //*

²⁴⁸ *HaVi* 47.31.

²⁴⁹ *HaVi* 47.149.

The final verses of the *stotra* present the speakers' hopes about the fruitfulness of their praises and their final pleas for her assistance:

These, so they say, are the descriptions of your qualities.
O mother, whatever merit has been gained because of this,
make this *bhakti* toward you ever bear fruit for us
in the pleasure of worshipping your feet. // *HaVi* 47.167 //²⁵⁰

Quell the fever of great delusion,
make my vision ever clear,
banish this false affliction, and
tear asunder the firm bonds of those who are entangled in *saṃsāra*.
For those who bow (to you),
the memory of your lotus feet is never fruitless. // *HaVi* 47.168 //²⁵¹

Overall, Caṇḍī represents a theological response to the violence at the heart of this *mahākāvya*. She encapsulates the terrifying and fierce aspects of the battle but also neutralizes them for her devotees. Foreshadowing Śiva's final and inevitable victory over Andhaka, this hymn presents a vision of cosmic order not bereft of violence but rather encompassing and going beyond it. Unlike the *Mahābhārata*, for example, which continues to express disenchantment after the war, the *Haravijaya* celebrates the military victory of its hero, the god Śiva. The hymn to Caṇḍī offered on the bloody battlefield invokes this form of the goddess, closely associated with Śiva, which is seen as underlying other soteriological systems and embodying the manifest power that triumphs in the end. This fierce goddess's unique combination of violence and grace allows the narrative to transition into Śiva's ultimate victory.

²⁵⁰ *iti tava guṇavādāḥ kilāsmāj janani yad arjitam asti puṇyajātam / pratisamayam iyaṃ tvadaṅghripūjābhiratiphalā tvayi tena no 'stu bhaktiḥ // HaVi 47.167 //*

²⁵¹ *praśamaya mahāmohātāṅkaṃ vidhatsva sunirmalāṃ dṛśam anudinaṃ kūṭībhūtaṃ tiraskuru kilbiṣam / vighāṭaya dṛḍhān pāśagranthīn bhavavyatiṣaṅgiṇo na tava viphalā pādāmbhojasmṛtiḥ praṇatātmanām // HaVi 47.168 //*

Taken together, Ratnākara's *Caṇḍīstotra* and *Śivastotra* suggest several important features of the history of *stotras* in Kashmir. They provide dateable evidence for the flourishing of the Śaiva Siddhānta and Trika traditions in ninth-century Kashmir, as Sanderson's careful historical work has made clear. But they also demonstrate the perception of *stotras* as key links between religious and literary traditions. It is no accident that it is the *stotras* within this *mahākāvya* that allude to these theological traditions. While these particular hymns are embedded in a long and complex piece of Sanskrit literature produced at the court of Kashmir, most hymns, full of devotional praise for specific deities, are more closely linked to ritual and worship. Ratnākara's representations of the offering of such hymns allows him to invoke specific theological positions and allude to more esoteric ritual contexts, like that of the Trika.²⁵² Moreover, Ratnākara uses these hymns, and their positioning in the text as a whole, as an occasion to embrace the wide range and history of religious traditions present in varying degrees in the Kashmir of his day, organizing them within a hierarchy crowned by Śiva (and the goddess inextricably linked with him).

These hymns also stand out for their originality, theological density, and poetic sophistication. When *stotras* occur within earlier *mahākāvyas*, they generally employ less poetic language and imagery than the surrounding sections.²⁵³ The *stotras* in Kālidāsa's

²⁵² Such allusions probably functioned in multiple ways. Ratnākara demonstrates his impressive learning throughout his *mahākāvya*, and references to sophisticated and esoteric traditions were probably an additional means of exhibiting his remarkable and wide-ranging erudition. At the same time, such allusions may have only been fully comprehensible to certain elites, so that Ratnākara's poetry operated on multiple levels, according to the specialized knowledge of his audience.

²⁵³ See Nayar, *Poetry as Theology*, 18-19.

Kumārasambhava and *Raghuvamśa* are good examples of this.²⁵⁴ When the poet switches to the *stotra* form, the register of his language shifts from a highly poetic one to an archaic and more philosophical style. With Ratnākara, by contrast, we find *stotras* that contain the same level of poetic elegance as the surrounding sections of the text.²⁵⁵ As Smith observes, discussing Ratnākara’s place within the history of *kāvya* poets: “entirely original is the way in which Ratnākara introduces a new philosophical level into *kāvya* in his sixth *sarga*, a new level of devotionism in his forty-seventh.”²⁵⁶ Of course there are earlier examples of independent poems like the *Sūryaśataka* and the *Caṇḍīśataka* that praise a specific deity using the poetic techniques of *kāvya*. But the hymns in the *Haravijaya* stand out for their prominence within a *mahākāvya*. Not only are they long *stotras* of highly poetic style, they are also theologically complex and central to the development of the narrative within the work as a whole. These hymns infuse a new level of theological reflection and devotional expression into this *mahākāvya*.

These features of the *Haravijaya*’s hymns stand out in particular because of the trajectory of *stotras* in Kashmir. The combination of poetic ambition, theological reflection, and devotional meditation on a specific deity found in Ratnākara’s hymns runs throughout many of the most influential hymns from Kashmir in various configurations, from the technical Śaiva-Śākta hymns of various Krama authors to the fourteenth-century

²⁵⁴ *KumSambh* vv. 2.4-15; *RaghVa* vv. 10.16ff.

²⁵⁵ The difference between *stotras* in the work of later poets like Ratnākara from those in the work of earlier poets like Kālidāsa suggests that perhaps *stotras* were slower to incorporate developments taking place in Sanskrit poetry (*kāvya*) and poetics (*alāṅkāraśāstra*).

²⁵⁶ Ratnākara’s ‘*Haravijaya*,’ 7.

Stutikusumāñjali of Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa. From at least the ninth century onward, there was a tendency in Kashmir to engage with the *stotra* form as literature, drawing on the power and potential of Sanskrit *kāvya*, particularly embodied in the elaborate use of literary figures. Of course the *Haravijaya*'s hymns were included within a *mahākāvya* and therefore likely were appreciated in different ways than independent *stotras*. But its experiments with the content and style of its two hymns foreshadow broader developments within the history of *stotras* in Kashmir. It therefore can be seen as a trailblazer for the kind of literary *stotras* that were composed in the centuries that followed.

Two other short praise-poems from ninth-century Kashmir attest to the literary creativity of ninth-century Kashmir. Ratnākara's *Vakroktipañcāśikā* (Fifty Verbal Perversions²⁵⁷) ends each verse with a benediction, but the real focus of the poem is Ratnākara's experimentation with (and perhaps creation of²⁵⁸) a specific literary figure (*vakrokti*) and its deployment for the poem's plot and characterization. Yigal Bronner and Lawrence McCrea have shown how the use of deliberate verbal distortions (*vakrokti*) in Ratnākara's representation of a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī develops its plot and characters. The *Vakroktipañcāśikā* is a praise-poem²⁵⁹ about Śiva and Pārvatī, but it is directed toward a human audience able to appreciate the poet's depiction of divine word-

²⁵⁷ See Yigal Bronner and Lawrence McCrea, "The Poetics of Distortive Talk: Plot and Character in Ratnākara's 'Fifty Verbal Perversion' (*Vakroktipañcāśikā*)," in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 29 (2001).

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 439-440.

²⁵⁹ Classifying this poem raises certain problems, which attests to its creative sophistication. While most *-pañcāśikā* texts are indeed *stotras* (e.g., the *Sāmbapañcāśikā*, discussed in Chapter Three), Ratnākara's emphasis on narrative and character (as analyzed by Bronner and McCrea) blurs the (admittedly weak) line between *stotra* and *laghukāvya*.

play. In fact, Ratnākara assures this audience that one who contemplates this poem without envy “will become skilled in the composition of poetry, like Ratnākara himself.”²⁶⁰ Here he points to the instructive potential of such poetry. Considering this poem in light of the hymns in the *Haravijaya*, one can see that the praise-poem was a flexible and powerful genre for Ratnākara’s innovative interventions in the literary world of ninth-century Kashmir.

One of Ratnākara’s contemporaries also composed an elaborate praise-poem. While Ānandavardhana is renowned for his work on aesthetic theory, the *Dhvanyāloka*, he also composed a hymn of “a hundred verses”²⁶¹ to the goddess called the *Devīśataka*. This poem has received some attention because of the apparent discord between its poetic style and the literary criticism in Ānandavardhana’s expository work. Ānandavardhana famously classifies *citrakāvya*—“brilliant” or virtuosic poetry, often including pictorial elements—which he defines as poetry devoid of aesthetic suggestion, as the lowest of three kinds of *kāvya*. As Ingalls notes, “it therefore comes as a surprise to find that this same author wrote, in the *Devīśataka*, a work that exactly fits the definition of this execrated category of literature. Almost every stanza of the poem contains a verbal display of some sort.”²⁶² Ingalls explains this by drawing on the verse hidden within the final verses, only to be reconstructed by the correct interpretation of the image (*citra*) of a wheel that can be

²⁶⁰ *kāvya-bandhe sa bhavet ratnākaravad pravīṇaḥ / VP v. 51.*

²⁶¹ The total number of verses is 104, including the *phalaśruti* verses and the additional verse created out of the inner rim of the “great wheel” created in the final set of verses (see Daniel H.H. Ingalls, “Ānandavardhana’s *Devīśataka*,” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109, no. 4 [Oct.-Dec., 1989], 575).

²⁶² “Ānandavardhana’s *Devīśataka*,” 565.

constructed out of syllables from the hymn's verses. This secret verse claims that the poet composed this hymn to the goddess because she instructed him in a dream:

The son of Noṇa has thus performed his worship of the Goddess under the title of "The Goddess's Century" as instructed in a dream, a worship unsurpassed by reason of her having been the instructress. (Ingalls' translation)²⁶³

Ingalls proposes that this command from his chosen deity would have allowed him to compose such a poem, drawing on his skill in composing *citrakāvya* poetry, without incurring criticism for composing a poem that seems to contradict his own practice of literary criticism.²⁶⁴ This explanation is only partially satisfying; why would the goddess command her devotee to compose a form of poetry he abhorred? *Citrakāvya* has long been popular in South Asia, and Ānandavardhana may have felt obligated to demonstrate his own virtuosity in this arena. Or perhaps the pictorial element of *citrakāvya* appealed to his religious sensibilities; the secret verse in the middle of the wheel of verses parallels the placement of one's chosen deity in the center of a *maṇḍala*. In addition, I suggest that this situation reflects a general liberty surrounding poetry dominated by *bhakti* that has a long life in Kashmir. In his commentary on the *Stutikusumāñjali*, for instance, the seventeenth-century poet Ratnākara frequently wards off potential criticisms of Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa's poetry simply by claiming that its topic is *bhakti* (*bhaktiviśaya*).²⁶⁵ Perhaps Ānandavardhana deliberately composed his own *citrakāvya* in the *stotra* genre because the centrality of *bhakti* in such compositions shielded his work from some of the criticisms his own followers or

²⁶³ Ibid., 575.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 566.

²⁶⁵ See Chapter Five.

opponents might levy. According to the logic of such *bhakti*, if the goddess wants *citrakāvya*, the devotee must comply—just as in other contexts, devotees must offer her blood sacrifices, even if they have their reservations, because that is what she wants.

Overall, Ratnākara and Ānandavardhana’s poetry shows that some of the smartest poets in ninth-century Kashmir took this genre seriously as a site for literary experimentation. They combine traditional features of *stotra* literature—praise for deity’s qualities and legendary activities, supplication, and so on—with the sophistication of *kāvya* and theological reflection. In this way they look back to earlier exemplars in Sanskrit literature, particularly Bāṇā, but also contribute to the dynamic evolution of Sanskrit literature in the second half of the first millennium. Their hymns also mark the beginning of an enduring trend in composition of *stotras* in Kashmir: the potent mixture of ambitious literary strategies, theological reflection, and devotion. As we will see in Chapters Four and Five, the poetry of Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa in particular picks up the strategies of both of these poets, including the devotional use of *citrakāvya*. Chapter Three focuses on three hymns—the *Sāmbapañcāśikā*, *Stavacintāmaṇi*, and *Śivastotrāvalī*—that are also poetic but are more explicitly concerned with the nature and power of the *stotra* genre itself, along with prayer and devotion more generally, than Ratnākara and Ānandavardhana’s poems.

The Sāmbapañcāśikā, Stavacintāmaṇi, and Śivastotrāvalī

The *Sāmbapañcāśikā*, *Stavacintāmaṇi*, and *Śivastotrāvalī* are unique, independent compositions, differing in both style and content. The *Sāmbapañcāśikā*, for instance, is a hymn to the sun-god, while the *Stavacintāmaṇi* and *Śivastotrāvalī* both praise Śiva. Yet they

share many of the same concerns with the possibilities of poetic praise and prayer. They each use literary figures, such as rhetorical doubt, puns and paradox, to praise a particular deity and self-consciously reflect on the *stotra* genre itself. What marks them as a set, however, are the commentaries Kṣemarāja wrote for each of them in the eleventh century. These *stotras*, and Kṣemarāja's commentaries, are particularly rich sources for studying the history and interpretation of *stotras* in Kashmir, and I analyze them in detail in Chapter Three. For now, let me briefly foreshadow some features of my analysis. As we will see, Kṣemarāja consistently applies specific hermeneutic strategies to frame these three texts and bring them into alignment with his own tradition's specific form of non-dualism. In doing so, he downplays the literary features of the text in favor of his own theological readings, while, at the same time, he relies on literary figures like metaphor and suggestion as tools to help him anchor his interpretation in the text. He also pays special attention to practices like praise and the experience of *bhakti*, which, at first glance, appear to establish ontological dualities. Together, these hymns and Kṣemarāja's commentaries offer a fruitful window into the vitality of the *stotra* genre during a crucial period of Kashmir's history.

Before moving on, however, let us consider an important piece of evidence for the way such hymns may have been used in practice. Thanks to an eleventh-century satirical work by Kṣemendra, we have a unique perspective on the *Stavacintāmaṇi* (*StC*), one of the hymns Kṣemarāja commented upon. The attention that Kṣemarāja and Kṣemendra, two prominent intellectuals in Kashmir, gave to this hymn to Śiva indicates its renown by the eleventh century. But Kṣemendra's satire also suggests some ways that the *StC* may have been involved in religious life in Kashmir. In his *Narmamālā* (Garland of Satire),

Kṣemendra incorporates the *StC* into his satire on the hypocrisy and corruption of government officials in Kashmir. In the relevant scene, a cruel official recites this Śaiva hymn in the first half of each verse, but breaks up his recitation in the second half with vicious commands to his henchmen. His orders are about a Brahman hunger fast he has orchestrated to manipulate the current political situation. The elegant language and religious sentiments of the *StC*'s verses are contrasted in this way with the official's religious hypocrisy harnessed for political ends. Here are the first of these unique and provocative verses (in Fabrizia Baldissera's translation):

I.38. Surrounded by hundreds of servants
he always recites hymns
in his hypocritical worship of Śiva,
exclaiming "Hā! Hā!"
with tears in his eyes.

I.39. "Through Paśyantī²⁶⁶ of beautiful words,
who captivates the mind as soon as she is seen" —
how many fasters unto death
did I put in place in the temple of Vijayeśvara
yesterday?

I.40. "His infinite majesty shines forth
Glory to Parameśvara!" —
let these seventy three people
be added to those who are already there.²⁶⁷

He continues in this way for several verses, and his orders get crueler as he goes.

Right after singing a verse praising Śiva as the cause of all auspicious things, for example,

²⁶⁶ *Paśyantī*, the "seeing" word, refers to a subtle level of speech originally described by the grammarian and philosopher Bhartṛhari. It became popular among the Śaivas of Kashmir, who adopted and changed Bhartṛhari's original formulation (see Chapter Three).

²⁶⁷ *The Narmamālā of Kṣemendra*, ed. and trans. Fabrizia Baldissera, Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung 197 (Heidelberg: Südasiens-Institut Ergon Verlag, 2005), 48-49.

he orders that “those who defy punishment should be killed, and all their wealth confiscated!”²⁶⁸ Kṣemendra concludes this sequence by saying:

I.45. So he loudly recited
 this and other hymns,
 deafening everyone with his bell
 and after issuing these orders
 he entered quickly into the assembly hall
 crowded with officers (*niyogin*).²⁶⁹

This episode indicates that the *StC* was familiar within elite political and literary circles in eleventh-century Kashmir—otherwise the satire of the scene would lose its edge. In addition, it suggests that such *stotras* were indeed recited or sung, with real or fake emotions and sometimes physical signs like tears. And at least in this case, the *StC* was recited with a large group of people in attendance. Kṣemendra’s *Narmamālā* provides evidence, therefore, for the potentially performative, public nature of such hymns. Moreover, the harsh satire of this scene contrasts sharply with the lofty devotional content of the hymn, and certainly offers a grain of salt to any saccharine consideration of *stotras* overall.

As I discuss in Chapter Three, the *StC* is not particularly sectarian or esoteric, promoting instead devotion to Śiva and accessible practices, including the offering of praise and the recitation of exoteric mantras, such as [*om*] *namaḥ śivāya*. As Kṣemarāja and Kṣemendra’s texts suggest, this hymn to Śiva was probably well established within mainstream intellectual culture in Kashmir by the eleventh century. But there are other

²⁶⁸ Ibid., v. I.43, p. 49.

²⁶⁹ Trans. Fabrizia Baldissera; *ibid.*, 50.

stotras from Kashmir that were far more technical, sectarian, and in some ways revolutionary, particularly those of one influential tradition: the Krama.

Stotras in the Krama Tradition

Stotras played a vital role in the early transmission of the tradition known as the Krama.²⁷⁰ While the Krama was a division of Śaivism, it was centered on the worship of the goddess Kālī, specifically as “she who devours time” (*kālasaṃkarṣiṇī*). Because of this emphasis on the goddess, the Krama is most accurately categorized as a Śaiva-Śākta tradition, and technically a subdivision of the Kālīkula.²⁷¹ The Krama was one of the most well developed religious traditions in the region from at least the ninth century onward. Unlike the hymns we have considered thus far, Krama texts develop a highly antinomian system that involves transgressive practices, a radical non-dualism, and the worship of female deities at the center of its pantheon. The Krama tradition is also notable for including female Tantric gurus in its lineage, although we do not have any extant texts from these women.²⁷² The term *krama* means “sequence,” “cycle,” or “process.” This designation refers to the Krama tradition’s most remarkable characteristic: the worship of Kālī as the power of consciousness “devouring” the various features of temporal existence. This is accomplished by worshipping a series of deities that embody her powers as they unfold in the process of cognition itself. In the penultimate cycle of her worship, twelve

²⁷⁰ Also known as the Mahānaya (Great Way) or Mahārtha (Great Truth) tradition.

²⁷¹ On these general divisions, see Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis.”

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 273-275.

Kālīs are worshipped, embodying the processes of emission, persistence, and withdrawal (*sr̥ṣṭi*, *sthiti*, and *saṃhāra*) in consciousness, each of which is subdivided according to four phases, namely emission, persistence, withdrawal, and rest. The final “nameless cycle” (*anākhyacakram*) of worship focuses on a thirteenth Kālī, she who is beyond the previous cycles and brings all this diversity together as one.²⁷³ Thus the sequence (*krama*) of cognition is embodied in the sequence of worship, and it also includes the oneness or coherence underlying this multiplicity.²⁷⁴ This program of worship is based on a radical non-dualism that considers the supreme deity to be dynamic consciousness, worshipped as the goddess who consumes and thus encompasses all facets of experience.

As this brief description suggests, the details of Krama worship are complex and technical. What is important in the present context, however, is that the *stotra* form became a prominent and distinctive feature of this tradition’s transmission. Alexis Sanderson carefully charts the history of this period in one of his most important essays, “The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir,” where he draws attention to many unpublished Krama hymns.²⁷⁵ What his work clarifies is the development of the Krama tradition through specific teaching lineages and the central importance of the *stotra* form for both innovation and transmission during this process. As we will see, the flexibility of the *stotra* form offered Krama authors

²⁷³ Sanderson, “Maṇḍala and Āgamic Identity,” 195-196.

²⁷⁴ See Sanderson, “Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions,” 696-699. In Sanderson’s words, the tradition developed “a liturgy which could be thought of as the unfolding of the imperceptible sequence of cognition (*saṃvit-krama*) in the perceptible sequence of worship” (*ibid.*, 696).

²⁷⁵ It will be clear in the analysis and footnotes that follow that my work here is greatly indebted to Sanderson’s work. On the post-scriptural exegesis of the Krama specifically, see “Śaiva Exegesis,” 260-369.

unique opportunities to convey their radically non-dualistic theology and program of worship. This trend begins with the first datable author in the Krama tradition,²⁷⁶ the guru Jñānanetra[nātha] (c. 850-900), also known as Śivānanda[nātha].

All Krama authors who mention their lineages eventually trace it back to Jñānanetra,²⁷⁷ who is said to have received the Krama teachings as revelation directly from Yoginīs in the region called Uḍḍiyāna (in what is now Pakistan).²⁷⁸ His only known work is a hymn called the *Kālikāstotra* (*KāSt*). Its twenty verses in Āryā meter glorify Kālī's nature as consisting in the pure, non-dualistic consciousness that encompasses all diversity. While the hymn alludes to the Krama system of worship, the details of this system are developed more explicitly in his successors' works.²⁷⁹ The overall import of Jñānanetra's hymn is to emphasize the pure, natural unity of consciousness underlying the multiplicity of the world and to equate this essential unity with the nature of the speaker himself. According to Jñānanetra himself, this understanding is based on his experience of the goddess' nature, revealed to him in the great cremation ground in Uḍḍiyāna.²⁸⁰ In his final verse he claims that he offers this hymn out of his own experience of religious rapture:

I, who am Śiva, have offered

²⁷⁶ Earlier Krama scriptures, such as the *Kālikulapañcaśataka*, have no known authors.

²⁷⁷ Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 263.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.; on Uḍḍiyāna, see ibid., 265-269.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 270; for the specific allusions Jñānanetra makes, see ibid., 270-272.

²⁸⁰ *mahāśmaśāne dṛṣṭaṃ devyāḥ svarūpam* / *KāSt* v. 19a.

this hymn of praise on (my own²⁸¹) true nature
 by the power of my state of total immersion.²⁸²
 O goddess named Auspiciousness,
 may this hymn bless the whole world
 that truly is no different from me. // *KāSt* v. 20 //²⁸³

With this verse, Jñānānētra concludes his hymn by dramatically restating the essential identity between himself, the deity, and the manifest world. By using the *stotra* form, Jñānānētra is able to point to multiplicity—to himself as the speaker, to Śiva, to the Goddess, to the world—and then overthrow such dichotomies by asserting their essential unity.

Jñānānētra's *stotra* marks the beginning of a tradition among Krama authors in Kashmir, who continued to compose such hymns as a way of elaborating the teachings first presented in the Krama scriptures.²⁸⁴ No strictly exegetical texts on Krama scriptures survive, but as Sanderson notes, these hymns construct a tradition of interpretation that develops the Krama teachings and program of worship.²⁸⁵ There are at least two reasons later authors may have chosen the *stotra* form over others: the exceptional authority of

²⁸¹ The meaning here is underdetermined: *svarūpastutiḥ* just combines “own nature” with “hymn of praise.” The emphasis of the verse, however, is the identity between the speaker and both the goddess and Śiva, and thus I have supplied the description of this as the speaker's own nature.

²⁸² See my extended discussion of the term *samāveśa* in Chapter Three.

²⁸³ *itthaṃ svarūpastutir abhyadhāyi samyaksamāveśadaśāvaśena / mayā śivenāstu śivāya samyañ mamaiva viśvasya tu maṅgalākhye // KS 20 //* (Em. *maṅgalākhye*; Ed. *maṅgalāya* [Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 272n127]).

²⁸⁴ Jñānānētra's hymn is not explicitly exegetical, yet he combines and develops elements from earlier Krama scriptures. According to Sanderson, “the result, to judge from the more detailed accounts to be seen in the works of his successors, is a harmonious and original whole carefully designed to express a coherent model of the cyclical unfolding and reversion of cognition pervaded by its non-sequential core, producing perhaps for the first time in Śaivism a model for a form of contemplative ritual entirely fashioned by and subservient to the terms of a doctrine of liberating gnosis” (“Śaiva Exegesis,” 273).

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 262-263.

Jñānānētra within the tradition may have inspired his pupils and future generations to compose in the same genre as he did; and the *stotra* form itself, with its flexibility and potential for use in verbal or internal worship free from external ritual action, must have appealed to these authors teaching the liberating power of knowledge and the worship of the goddess as the phases of cognition. For such non-dualists, these *stotras* facilitate a shift away from external ritual toward expression that functions as both worship and a theological statement that undercuts the duality implied by worship.

Stotras also served as useful compositions for disseminating—through individual instruction but also perhaps selective proselytization—the Krama teachings. According to later sources, the teachings Jñānānētra received were passed down to a number of disciples, three of whom are described as female Yoginīs—Keyūravatī, Madanikā, and Kalyāṇikā. No works of theirs survive, but according to Abhinavagupta the latter two passed on the teachings they had received from Jñānānētra to three disciples.²⁸⁶ One of these was named Eraka[nātha] (c. 900-950). His only known work is a hymn called the *Kramastotra*, a work deeply respected by later authors.²⁸⁷ The full text of this hymn is lost, as is Abhinavagupta’s commentary on it called the *Kramakeli*,²⁸⁸ but parts of both survive in quotations included within other works. These quotations reveal, among other things, that Eraka claims to have been inspired to benefit the rest of humanity by passing on the esoteric teachings of the

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 273.

²⁸⁷ Sanderson notes that “later authors refer to [it] reverentially as the *Kramastotrabhāṭṭāraka*, using an honorific otherwise reserved for scriptures” (ibid., 274).

²⁸⁸ On the *Kramakeli*, and its possible identification with Abhinavagupta’s commentary on a certain *Devīstotra*, see ibid., 352-359. Jayaratha claims that Hrasvanātha (/Vāmana/Vāmanadatta/Vīranātha) also composed a commentary on Eraka’s *Kramastotra*, but no other evidence corroborates this (ibid., 276).

Krama in the form of a hymn.²⁸⁹ *Stotras* thus serve as a means of disseminating (both in writing and through oral recitation) specific teachings, even those as esoteric as the Krama's.

There are many other Kashmirian hymns related to the Krama tradition. The ascetic Prabodhanātha (c. 950-1000) composed the *Aṣṭikā*, a hymn to the goddess in eight verses, as well as another unnamed hymn (or possibly two different hymns) to the goddess attributed to him in quotations by later authors.²⁹⁰ Nāga (c. 1025-1075) composed two hymns of thirty verses each that depict enlightenment through immediate absorption in pure consciousness.²⁹¹ While the *Bhāvopahārastotra*, a hymn by the ascetic Bhaṭṭāraka Cakrapāṇinātha, praises Śiva and has no explicit Krama content, Sanderson has suggested that the double meanings in some of its verses indicate its connection to the Krama tradition. In addition, Ramyadeva, in his commentary on the hymn, interprets various parts of the hymn as related to the Krama.²⁹² Another hymn, the *Kramavilāsastotra*, presents an alternate form of Krama worship,²⁹³ as does the *Khacakrapañcakastotra*, also likely to have been composed in Kashmir.²⁹⁴ Such hymns suggest not only the appeal of the *stotra* form

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 274.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 293-294.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 295; see also my detailed discussion of Nāga's poetry below.

²⁹² Ibid., 323-324.

²⁹³ Ibid., 317-318.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 321-322; see also Mark Dyczkowski's edition and translation, which at present he has made available online at <http://markdkashi.com/files/Khacakrapañcakastotra.pdf>

for Kashmirian Krama authors but also the latitude it provided them for presenting terse and innovative reformulations of Krama worship.²⁹⁵

Krama hymns are primarily concerned with worshipping one's own consciousness as the supreme deity through internalized cycles of worship. They emphasize non-duality by depicting multiplicity but then revealing its underlying unity. Unlike Ratnākara's hymns, which referred to a variety of theological positions, Krama *stotras* present the specific views of a single tradition. They are, however, also designed for an elite, sophisticated audience, just like Ratnākara's hymns. Some of the later Krama authors in particular are highly accomplished poets, and the complexity of their poetry matches the complexity of Krama worship and theology. Let us look more closely at the work of Nāga, one of the poets I have already mentioned, which combines bold religious ideas with elegant poetic composition.

In the eleventh century, Nāga composed two poetic and complex Krama hymns, neither of which has been published.²⁹⁶ These praise pure consciousness and its worship using the language of the Krama. Unlike most earlier Krama hymns, like the *Kālikāstotra*, which allude to specific phases of Krama worship, Nāga's hymns focus on enlightenment as the constant experience of immersion in this pure consciousness. His *Paramārcanatriṃśikā* (Thirty Verses on Supreme Worship) characterizes true worship by this experience:

²⁹⁵ The composition of hymns in the Krama tradition extended beyond Kashmir. The lengthy *Cidgaganacandrikā* of Śrīvatsa is a hymn to Kālī closely related to the *Mahānayaṣṭakā* of Arṇasiṃha (Nāga's disciple). According to Sanderson, "more than a third of its 312 verses are closely related to Arṇasiṃha's text, and these parallels are best understood as rephrasings of Arṇasiṃha's formulations in a more poetic, tighter style" ("Śaiva Exegesis," 297). Śrīvatsa's lineage is apparently Kashmirian, but the manuscripts and citations of the text suggest it was composed in the south (ibid., 298-299).

²⁹⁶ On his dates, see Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 411. The translations below are based on the following manuscript: *Cittasaṃtoṣatriṃśikā*, SOASL 44390 ('Śaiva Hymns'), ff. 41v1-49r7.

Is that [true] worship if in it one does not experience the surge of expanded consciousness within each and every movement of cognition, taking hold of the trance of sudden enlightenment, flooded with radiant, pure awareness? // v. 7 // (trans. Sanderson)²⁹⁷

Nāga’s second hymn, the *Cittasaṃtoṣatrimśikā* (Thirty Verses on the Satisfaction of the Mind), depicts the transformation of the poet’s own awareness from contraction in the experience of limited existence (*saṃsāra*) to the contentment and bliss of repose in this pure consciousness that underlies and transcends all differentiation. A close examination of this *stotra* suggests several ways that this genre may have appealed to such authors.

Nāga describes the attainment of his own enlightenment as the result of the oral transmission from his guru, which in the Krama marks a higher means of liberation than the sequence of Krama worship.²⁹⁸ He begins the *Cittasaṃtoṣatrimśikā* (*CST*) by praising the gaze or vision (*dr̥ś*) of his guru:

Unblinking, perfectly clear, and attractive with the bliss of the self,
it rolls, smiling at the experience of the transcendent.
Because of its expansion, even a bound soul attains godhood.
Supreme is that extraordinary gaze of the best of gurus! // *CST* 1 //²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ “Śaiva Exegesis,” 295.

²⁹⁸ This transmission is described in *CST* v. 29: “By great good fortune I stand today flooded with the blissful relish of the nectar of the unlocated consciousness that surges up from [its] unfettered, spotless ground, astonished by the fruition of the instruction in the inexpressible practice that I obtained from the heart of my true teacher’s oral teaching. (Sanderson’s translation; “Śaiva Exegesis,” 296).

²⁹⁹ *lokottarānubhavasamītaghūrṇamānasvānandasundaravinirmalanīrṇimeṣā | yat sphārataḥ paśur apīśvaratām upaiti sā kāpi dr̥g vijayate gurupuṅgavānām // CST 1 // Conj. gurupuṅgavānām; ms. paṅgavānām.* The manuscript reading (*paṅgava*) may be a variation on what seems to have been Nāga’s guru’s name, Paṅkaka (see Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 295). The reference to his guru’s gaze also suggests one of the means of initiation within Śaiva traditions.

In the verses that follow Nāga depicts a contrast between an earlier time and the present. In the former, his mind or limited consciousness (*cetas, citta*) experienced various afflictions and fears, while in the latter it has attained the satisfaction and peace indicated by the poem's title. This transformation occurs through some great good fortune (*diṣṭyā*) because of the experience and repose in the pure consciousness or awareness (*cit, saṃvit*) that is beyond all of the vicissitudes of the limited experience of differentiation. The following selection of verses develops this theme:

Through great good fortune this very mind,
scorched by the heat of hundreds of flames from the fire of limited existence
and abused on the rough paths of rebirth,
now, plunged into the midst of the nectarian ocean of pure consciousness,
basks in an incomparable peace. // CST 2 //³⁰⁰

This same mind, which was a receptacle for the misery of limited existence,
defiled by wrong views and doubts, as though churned up in confusion,
now has brought forth the great clarity of pure discernment
by serving at the guru's lotus-feet. // CST 3 //³⁰¹

Unsteady because of the arrows of the god of love,
it was drunk in, struck down, devoured, and ravished by doe-eyed women.
That same mind became competent through the succession of glances
flooded with the nectar of affection from Lakṣmī, the wealth of supreme liberation.
// CST 5 //³⁰²

It was worn out by the struggles involved in suppressing the flow of breath,
in the mumbling of mantras and harsh yoga.

³⁰⁰ *diṣṭyā bhavānalaśikhāśatatāpataptaṃ janmāṭavīṣu viṣamāsu kdarthitaṃ yat / cetas tad etad
adhunāmalacitsudhābdhimadhye nimagnam asamāṃ bhajate praśāntim // CST 2 //*

³⁰¹ *vyāmūḍhamantham iva saṃśayadoṣaduṣṭaṃ ceto yad etad abhavad bhavaduḥkhaṭram /
jātaṃ tad adya gurupādasarojasevāsañjātanirmalavibodhamahāprakāśam // CST 3 //*

³⁰² *kandarpabānaviṣamaṃ hariṇekṣaṇābhiḥ pītaṃ hataṃ kavalitaṃ muṣitaṃ yad āsīt / tat pātratām
upagataṃ paramokṣalakṣmīpremāmṛtāplutakataḥkṣaparamparaṇāt // CST 5 //* Here the poet contrasts
the glances of normal women with those of Lakṣmī as the embodiment of the liberation.

Now that same mind reposes, inebriated from the liquor that is the intoxicating nectar born from the universal flavor (*sāmarasya*) of supreme non-duality. // *CST 6* //³⁰³

That mind was an enfeebled bee,
terrified by the advancing blows of the severe winter of differentiation.
Now, having obtained the fragrant nectar of Śiva's teachings,³⁰⁴
it reposes forever, inebriated
from the nectar of the flower on the vine of pure consciousness. // *CST 7* //³⁰⁵

Even while served by religious observances such as yoga and vows,
she did not even enter the range of its vision.
Now this beloved in the form of pure consciousness never abandons
the lucky lover that is this mind, who has the good fortune
of intense conjugal felicity, even for a moment. // *CST 10* //³⁰⁶

saṃsāra used to be something this mind had to abandon through great effort,
for it is said that it is terrifying and its essence is suffering.
Now, enlivened by the universal flavor, the nectar of supreme consciousness,
that very *saṃsāra* has become the same as liberation! // *CST 11* //³⁰⁷

Alas, neither in meditation nor in worship nor in anything else
did it ever attain any kind of contentment.
Now, by great good fortune,
even though it is submerged in the midst of daily activities,
this mind never abandons the state of plenitude. // *CST 15* //³⁰⁸

³⁰³ *kliṣṭam yad etad abhavaj japakaṣṭayogaprāṇapravāhavinirodhakadarthanābhiḥ / cetas tad adya paramādvayasāmarasyasañjātasammadarasāsavamattam āste // CST 6 //*

³⁰⁴ The word *dhāman* can mean teachings, but also abode or light, both of which suggest refuge from the harsh winter.

³⁰⁵ *yo bhedaṭivraśīśiraprasaropaghātabhīto manomadhukaro hataśaktir āsīt / āsādyā so 'dya śivadhāmamadhūṃ sadāste saṃvillatākusumasaurabhapānamattaḥ // CST 7 //* Var. *āsīt*; ms. corr. *āset*.

³⁰⁶ *yogavratādinīyamair upasevitāpi nāvāpa darśanapathaṃ kila yasya jātu / saṃvitpriyā subhagam ūrjītabhāgyasampac cetas tad adya na jahāti muhūrtam ekam // CST 10 //*

³⁰⁷ *duḥkhaikasāra iti bhīma iti prayatnāt saṃsāra eṣa kila yasya babhūva heyah / diṣṭyā sa eva paracidrasasāmarasyasañjīvitaḥ śrayati tasya vimuktisāmyam // CST 11 //*

³⁰⁸ *dhyāne 'rcane pi na kadā cana kām canāpi kutrāpi nirvṛtīdaśāṃ bata yan na lebhe / diṣṭyā nimagnam api samvyavahāramadhye cetas tad adya na vimūncati pāriṇyāyam // CST 15 //* Em. *diṣṭyā*; ms. *ciṣṭyā*

The bee of my mind ever strayed among the trees of sensory objects,
 but now, through good fortune, its cravings have ended and
 it has attained the wish-granting tree of the supreme lord.
 Satisfied, it gives up its fickleness as if curled up to sleep. // *CST* 16 //³⁰⁹

In these verses Nāga emphasizes the efficacy of the guru's grace, which led him to real contentment, while the observance of vows, the repetition of mantras, and other laborious practices only left him unsatisfied. Rather than escaping the challenges of *saṃsāra*, however, the poet claims to have transformed his life into something blissful through the realization of the pure consciousness that underlies and transcends all experience. He compares this experience to sexual enjoyment (v. 10) and the ecstasy of inebriation that arises from the fusion of all experiences, all flavors, into the inherent bliss of consciousness (vv. 6, 7, 11).

The literary quality of the *CST* is as striking as its theological boldness. Nāga uses language carefully to create elegant and dramatic verses. We have already seen how the structure of his verses repeatedly stresses a contrast between an experience of limitation or contraction sometime in the past with his immediate, direct insight “now.” This repetition emphasizes the dramatic transformation that can occur in an instant, infusing the theological views he presents with intense immediacy. Nāga fills his poetry with alliteration and other basic literary figures. But he is most adept at crafting suggestive metaphors that weave throughout one or more verses. For example, in verse 3 (quoted above), Nāga describes the mind as a vessel whose contents are defiled by wrong views and doubts, as though churned up in confusion. But serving the guru's lotus-feet leads his mind to clarity, and this evokes a

³⁰⁹ *sarveṣu cittamadhupo viṣayadrumeṣu babhrāma yaḥ satatam astamitābhilāṣaḥ / daivād avāpya parameśvarapārijātaṃ tṛpto vilīna iva muñcati cañcalatvam // CST 16 //*

classic trope: the lotus that rises above the muddy waters below, beautiful and pure.

Moreover, this suggestion of pure, clear water builds upon the imagery in the previous verse (*CST 2*, quoted above), which describes the mind, previously scorched by the fire of limited existence, as peaceful now that it is plunged in the cool, refreshing ocean of pure consciousness. The complex metaphors and poetic language Nāga uses gives his poetry texture and elegance that enhances the sense of rich, immediate experience.

The literary features of the *CST* serve a particularly distinct theological position. The primary recipient of Nāga's praise and glorification in this hymn is pure consciousness itself. This consciousness, however, is not seen as something outside or separate from the speaker in any way. Nāga demonstrates this by addressing his own mind absorbed in this pure consciousness:

What enormous good deed has resulted in this?
 Where has this arising of merit come from,
 which can't be obtained by any other means?
 (O mind,) you are not abandoned even for one second
 by the good fortune that is pure consciousness,
 in which the dichotomizing thoughts of differentiation have fallen away.
 // *CST 13* //³¹⁰

Where am I not, O mind?
 How do I not prosper, by great good fortune?
 When am I not delighted? Amazing!
 O friend, I see that you are most thrilled through
 the enjoyment of Śaiva perfection, supreme and unsurpassed. // *CST 14* //³¹¹

O mind, previously you were overcome by the senses,
 as though you were defeated by powerful enemies.

³¹⁰ *kasyorjitasya sukṛtasya phalaṃ tad etat puṇyodayas tava kuto 'yam ananyalabhyaḥ / saṃvicchriyā galitabhedavikalpayā yad ekaṃ muhūrtam api naiva vimucyase tvam // CST 13 //*

³¹¹ *vartāmahe kvacana nāma na citta diṣṭyā vardhāmahe vayam aho muditā bhavāmaḥ / yat tvāṃ sakhe paraniruttaraśaivasampatsambhogamantharataram parilokayāmaḥ // CST 14 //*

Now, by good fortune, you are beautified by those same senses,
like a ruler by attendants partaking fully of the flavor of supreme consciousness,
which is pure and beyond limiting characteristics. // CST 17//³¹²

Shall I praise you? Honor you?
Or does great joy overwhelm me, O mind?
Or, since you have obtained the Śaiva perfection
known as the great arising, difficult to obtain,
shall I just look at you with wonder, friend? // CST 21 //³¹³

His own mind, formerly his tormenter, has become his friend through a sudden shift in his experience through what he describes as a repose in pure consciousness. It is striking to see a poet praising his own mind, and this highlights some of the complexities of non-dualistic praise. While acts like praise may imply duality, Nāga turns this duality on its head by equating the subject and object of praise. Rather than praise or appeal to a particular deity, he lauds his own mind for realizing Śiva's own state. Language has limits, but using the *stotra* form he attempts to circumvent them. At the same time, as he suggests, perhaps all he can do is wonder and take delight in this experience, like savoring an astonishing flavor.

As Nāga's hymn progresses, it becomes increasingly personal and immediate. Such intimacy is unusual in most Sanskrit poetry, and reflects the Krama's emphasis on internal processes, direct experience, and close guru-disciple relationships. The hymn climaxes in a poetic and powerful verse on the immediate, blissful immersion in pure consciousness, Śiva's state:

This mind was a wanderer, exhausted in the desert of *saṃsāra* out of delusion,

³¹² *yair indriyair api vaśīkṛtaśakti cetaḥ pūrvaṃ kadarthitam abhūr ahitair ivoccaiḥ / svacchāniketaparacidrasasaṃvibhaktaiḥ diṣṭyādyā tair anucarair iva rājase tvam // CST 17 // Em. – cetaḥ; Ms. –ceta; Em. ivoccaiḥ; Ms. ivaiścaiḥ.*

³¹³ *vandāmahe kim u numāḥ kim u gauraveṇa harṣeṇa citta kim u nāma nipīḍayāmaḥ / saṃprāptadurlabhamahodayaśaivasampat tvāṃ kautukena kim u mitra vilokayāmaḥ // CST 21 //*

overpowered by an obsession with ever-growing craving for terrible things.
 Now, by good fate it has found that ocean of nectar, Śiva's state.
 This mind, with reverence and great joy, plunges in,
 diving deeper and deeper, right now. // *CST* 30 //³¹⁴

As a whole, the *CST* serves as a testimony and an implicit invitation: you too can dive deep, at this very moment; you too can experience a profound transformation in your immediate experience through the realization of the non-dual teachings taught by the gurus and scriptures of the Krama tradition.

Overall, Nāga's *CST* illustrates many important features of the various Krama *stotras* composed in Kashmir. It demonstrates the particular importance of the guru-disciple relationship in the transmission of teachings within the Krama tradition.³¹⁵ It is radically non-dualistic, and shows how *stotras* may be ideally suited for the expression of such a theological position—as when Nāga addresses his own mind, as if his poetry doubles back on itself to eliminate the duality implied by praise itself. In doing so this poet glorifies the Krama's internalized worship and, more directly, the enlightened state of immersion in the pure consciousness that underlies and transcends all differentiation. *Stotras* may be recited in ritual contexts, but they can also be savored as expressions of a particular state, most likely as part of personal worship or contemplation.³¹⁶ In addition, such hymns also serve to persuade and instruct their human audiences. As one reads or recites such hymns, one takes

³¹⁴ *bhavamarubhuvi śrānto mohād ya eṣa mano'dhvago viṣamaviṣayaprodyattṛṣṇāniveśavaśīkṛtaḥ / śivapadasudhāsindhuṃ daivād avāpya sa sādaraṃ kim api sukhitaṃ majjaṃ majjaṃ nimajjati sāmpratam // CST 30 //*

³¹⁵ On the importance of oral transmission in the Krama, see Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 332ff.

³¹⁶ Given the Krama traditions antinomian tendencies, its hymns were probably shared in intimate settings or used in personal worship.

on the voice of the poet, and in the case of Nāga's hymns, this means learning ways of articulating a radically non-dualistic understanding. The *CST* testifies to the power of enlightenment, as taught by the Krama tradition, which transforms one's experience of this very world into one of constant bliss. In doing so it was also promotion for this tradition, a proclamation of its power and appeal. The success of this message was surely facilitated by the high quality of Nāga's poetry. In addition to being short and lucid, his hymns are full of complex images, elegant constructions, and rich language, which would have contributed to their ability to appeal to an elite audience. While hymns like the *Kālikāstotra* suggest some of the distinctive features of Krama worship and describe the basic theological position of the tradition, Nāga's hymns praise and advertise the transformation and contentment that comes with the realization of the Krama's teachings. The beauty of such hymns, and the kind of enjoyment they facilitate in the right audience, suggests the very savoring of all experience described by this poet.

Two additional authors who were deeply influenced by the Krama tradition deserve special consideration. Both Abhinavagupta and his foremost disciple, Kṣemarāja, wrote Krama-inflected texts as part of their synthesis of various religious traditions known in Kashmir.

The Stotras of Abhinavagupta

In addition to his erudite works on Tantric ritual, Śaiva theology, philosophy, and aesthetics, the polymath Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025) composed his own *stotras* and had many more attributed to him. Two of his *stotras* are dated, and thus provide some of the

only specific anchors we have for the dating of Kashmirian texts and authors from this period. The concluding verses of his *Kramastotra* and *Bhairavastotra* claim he composed these hymns in 991 C.E. and 993 C.E., respectively.³¹⁷ There has been some disagreement among scholars as to the total number of *stotras* Abhinavagupta actually composed. In his landmark study of Abhinavagupta, K.C. Pandey included an appendix with nine *stotras* attributed to him, including the two dated *stotras*.³¹⁸ While some scholars have accepted the attribution of many of these,³¹⁹ Alexis Sanderson has argued persuasively against his authorship of several—the *Paramārthadvādaśikā*, *Mahopadeśaviṃśatika*, and *Rahasyapañcadaśikā*, as well as the *Paryantapañcāśikā*, which is not found in Pandey’s work but is attributed to Abhinavagupta in a South Indian manuscript edited by V. Raghavan³²⁰—and cast doubt on others.³²¹ The only *stotras* unanimously accepted as

³¹⁷ He dates one other work, his *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtivismarśinī*, to 1015 C.E. See Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 411.

³¹⁸ These are: *Anuttarāṣṭikā*, *Paramārthadvādaśikā*, *Paramārthacarcā*, *Mahopadeśaviṃśatikā*, *Kramastotram*, *Bhairavastavaḥ* [also known as *Bhairavastotra*], *Dehasthadevatācakraṣṭotram*, *Anubhavanivedanam*, and *Rahasyapañcadaśikā*. See Appendix C in K.C. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study*, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Studies Vol. I (Varanasi: Chaukhamba Amarabharati Prakashan, 2000 [1963]), 943-956.

³¹⁹ Translations of hymns attributed to Abhinavagupta into European languages include: Paul Muller-Ortega’s English translation of the *Anubhavanivedanam* (“On the Seal of Śambhu: A Poem by Abhinavagupta” in *Tantra in Practice*, ed. David Gordon White [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000], 573-586); Bettina Bäumer’s translation of the *Anuttarāṣṭikā* into English and a number of hymns into German (“Abhinavagupta’s *Anuttarāṣṭikā*” in *The Variegated Plummage*, 168-174, and *Abhinavagupta, Wege ins Licht* [Zürich: Benziger, 1992]); and Lilian Silburn’s French translations (*Hymnes de Abhinavagupta* and *Hymnes aux Kālī*).

³²⁰ *The Paryanta Pañcāśikā of Abhinavagupta*, ed. V. Raghavan (Madras: Thompson & Co., 1951).

³²¹ He argues:

The attribution of the *Anubhavanivedanastotra* and the *Dehasthadevatācakraṣṭotra* rests on oral report alone, and the subject of the latter, the mental worship of Ānandabhairava and his

Abhinavagupta's are the *Bhairavastotra* and *Kramastotra*. These hymns are dense and dynamic texts, as one would expect from such an accomplished author, and while their poetic qualities do not match those of Ratnākara or Nāga's hymns, they have been popular and respected paragons of the *stotra* genre in Kashmir since their composition.³²²

The *Bhairavastotra* identifies and celebrates Śiva (in his fierce form, Bhairava) as the supreme deity and also one's own self. The *Bhairavastotra* is short; it consists of only nine verses, plus a tenth that identifies Abhinavagupta as the author and its date of composition as 993 C.E. But the progression of these verses is quite deliberate. They articulate a strong non-dual theology, describe the realization of this for one's self, and finally articulate the joy and freedom from fear that arises from this realization. The hymn is directed at Bhairava, but as the poem proceeds the distance between the speaker and the deity being praised—the “I” and “you” of the poem—dissolves. In the end, Abhinavagupta uses the *stotra* form in the same way as Nāga; rather than arguing for a theological position—in this case a radical non-dualism—these *stotras* put it into action, demonstrating how it can be articulated in language, even though that language seems to imply duality.

The *Bhairavastotra* begins by laying out its basic theological position:

consort Ānandabhairavī surrounded by the eight Mothers, has no parallel in Abhinavagupta's other works. [...] The *Anuttarāṣṭikā* and the *Paramārthacarcā* survive in Kashmirian manuscripts with colophons that assert that Abhinavagupta is their author. But I know of no evidence that confirms this assertion. Nor am I aware of any that refutes it. However, the fact that Jayaratha cites a line from the former without attribution does not inspire confidence, since this goes against his usual practice when quoting Abhinavagupta. (“Śaiva Exegesis,” 381.)

³²² No doubt in part this is due to the fame of their author. There are more manuscripts of Abhinavagupta's *stotras* than any other from Kashmir, with the possible exception of Utpaladeva's hymns to Śiva.

I worship in my heart lord Bhairava,
 the refuge for those who have no other lord,
 who pervades all living and non-living things,
 who consists in pure consciousness,
 one, eternal, and beginningless,
 as the consciousness that is you, (Bhairava). // *BhSt* 1 //³²³

The next verses flesh out this position. The second verse establishes an important progression: because of the power of Śiva's favor, the poet realizes the whole universe consists in Śiva; and since Śiva is identical with the self, the poet realizes the entire universe as the manifestation of his own self.³²⁴

For non-dualistic Śaivas like Abhinavagupta, Bhairava is Śiva as supreme consciousness—seen, for example, in the title of the *Vijñānabhairava*, which equates Bhairava with consciousness—and, iconographically, as a particularly fearsome form of Śiva. The terrifying features of such a deity represent, in part, his or her power to destroy whatever terrifies one, such as death. Abhinavagupta's hymn to Bhairava stresses how the proper understanding of this terrifying forms leads one to overcome all fear. In the fourth verse the poet asserts that he himself possesses all of the powers of terrifying Bhairava, since Bhairava is no different from his own self. He explains:

Therefore, since the light of consciousness that is you
 has arrived and destroyed my great darkness,
 I am not afraid at all of death, Yama, Antaka, karma, demons, etc.
 Homage, O lord! // *BhSt* 5 //³²⁵

³²³ *vyāptacarācarabhāvaviśeṣaṃ cinmayam ekam anantam anādim / bhairavanātham
 anāthaśaraṇyaṃ tvanmayacittatayā hṛdi vande // BhSt 1 //*

³²⁴ *tvanmayam etad aśeṣam idānīm bhāti mama tvadanugrahaśaktyā / tvaṃ ca maheśa sadaiva
 mamātmā svātmamayaṃ mama tena samastam // BhSt 2 //*

³²⁵ *itthaṃ upoḍhabhavanmayasaṃviddīdhitidāritabhūritamisraḥ / mṛtyuyamāntakakarmapiśācair
 nātha namo 'stu na jātu bibhemi // BhSt 5 //*

The last verses of the hymn characterize the movement from a state of fear to the experience of non-differentiation from Bhairava:

Just when a state of distress, tormenting like the hot season,
afflicts my mind, O lord,
a shower of supreme nectar arises from
offering this praise (*stotra*)³²⁶ without any differentiation from you. // *BhSt 7* //³²⁷

You are the beloved, beautiful to behold, and one.
You are difficult to obtain by many; only you know the right time.³²⁸
O lord Bhairava, having obtained you
this consciousness of mine dances, sings, rejoices! // *BhSt 9* //³²⁹

These verses offer what could be considered a *phalaśruti*—they describe the great benefits not just of reciting the hymn but also of realizing its teachings. Those who offer praise-poetry (*stotra*) without any sense of difference from the one being praised (v. 7) experience a bliss that is compared to a shower of nectar in the midst of the hot season. The one who attains Śiva, through his grace, rejoices in delight (v. 9). Consistent with his rejection of the ontologically transforming and soteriologically effective power of ritual, Abhinavagupta claims in these final verses that the effect of reciting such hymns with the awareness of non-duality leads not to any ontological change but to an epistemological

³²⁶ In this context *stotra* suggests both praise in general and this *Bhairavastotra*.

³²⁷ *mānasagocaram eti yadaiva kleśadaśā 'tanutāpavidhātī / nātha tadaiva mama tvadabhedastotraparāmṛtavṛṣṭir udeti // BhS 7 //*

³²⁸ In other words, it is impossible to realize Śiva without his grace. Śiva is the supreme agent and knower; only he knows the “right time” at which one can obtain him. While my translation places this phrase (*samayajñam*) in the middle of the verse, Abhinavagupta actually puts it last, thereby stresses that all of this is only possible because of Śiva’s grace.

³²⁹ *nṛtyati gāyati hr̥ṣyati gādham saṁvid iyaṁ mama bhairavanātha / tvāṁ priyam āpya sudarśanam ekaṁ durlabham anyajanaiḥ samayajñam // BhS 9 //*

transformation. After progressing through some core theological teachings, this hymn dwells (like Nāga's *CST*) on the experience of realizing these teachings.

The *Bhairavastotra* praises Bhairava as consciousness and the self, but does not present any strong sectarian affiliation. The *Kramastotra*, on the other hand, is aligned explicitly with the Krama tradition. As we have seen, Abhinavagupta composed a commentary called the *Kramakeli* on the earlier *Kramastotra* of Erakanātha (900-950 CE), but no manuscripts of this text have been found.³³⁰ Abhinavagupta's own *Kramastotra*, which closely follows Erakanātha's *Kramastotra*, consists of thirty verses celebrating the Krama vision of true worship: the contemplation of the powers of cognition embodied in the series of Kālīs.³³¹

While the body of the hymn teaches the internalized worship of Śiva through his Śaktis manifested as the phases of consciousness, the first section contains reflections on praise and worship that are illuminating for the *stotra* genre in general. These verses offer justification for praise as a joyful activity devoid of any striving for a particular goal, since the poet is already one with the one being praised. Non-dual authors often emphasize the effortlessness of true praise, and delight in offering praise for its own sake, rather than for a particular objective. As Abhinavagupta says in verse two:

Having realized one's own self, one realizes that its activities are praiseworthy.
Thus the one who offers praises makes these activities clear
in a hymn of praise on oneness and differentiation,

³³⁰ There are, however, quotations from it in other works; see Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 352-356.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 356. As Sanderson notes, however, in his own hymn Abhinavagupta presents his revised number (twelve) and order of the Kālīs (beginning with *Śṛṣṭikālī* in verse fifteen, *Raktākālī* in sixteen, and so on), as well as the unusual depiction of *Manthānabhairava* as the lord of these Kālīs (*ibid.*, 353-357).

and one's own self is realized upon fully understanding this topic.
Hence this is what I do here in this hymn of praise to you,
constantly, without any effort. // *KrSt 2* //³³²

This is how Abhinavagupta presents the act of offering praise-poetry: the poet recognizes his own supreme self as identical with Śiva, and understands the praiseworthy nature of Śiva's deeds and characteristics, and so he manifests them in praise-poetry that shows the true nature of the appearance of multiplicity. Moreover, since this is a Krama hymn, he emphasizes that the self is realized through the cognitive activities that manifest Śiva's powers, personified as the set of Kālīs worshipped in this system. Finally, Abhinavagupta explains that this is what he himself is doing, and in the next verse he addresses Śiva, saying: “my heart is devoted to your praise (*stotra*) and eternally delighted.”³³³

He shifts dramatically in the next verse, however, and calls out to his own heart³³⁴
directly:

Other followers only managed
such praise-poetry (*stotra*) to the omniscient one
after wandering through a series of rebirths.
O heart, you have achieved it without any effort!
Now, having put it into splendid language within
that flows from the stream of your own awareness,
make this poetry to the lord manifest. // *KrSt 4* //³³⁵

³³² *vimṛśya svātmānaṃ vimṛśati punaḥ stutyacaritaṃ tathā stotā stotre prakāṣayati bhedaikaviṣaye / vimṛśtaś ca svātmā nikhilaviṣayajñānasamaye tad itthaṃ tvatstotre 'ham iha satataṃ yatnarahitaḥ // KrSt 2 //*

³³³ *tato 'ham tvatstotre pravaṇahṛdayo nityasukhitaḥ / KrSt 3d.*

³³⁴ For Abhinavagupta, the term *hṛdaya* or *hṛd* (“heart”) refers to the core of the individual that is essentially no different from the supreme reality. On the complexity of the heart as a term and symbol, see Paul Muller-Ortega, *The Triadic Heart of Śiva: Kaula Tantrism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-dual Shaivism of Kashmir* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

This movement between the object and agent of praise amplifies the theme of non-duality. Moreover, for anyone reading or reciting this hymn, it immediately becomes reflexive: one follows in Abhinavagupta's footsteps and places one's own self at the center of this verbal worship. Abhinavagupta uses the feature of address, central to the *stotra* form, to place consciousness itself at the heart of his poem, just as Nāga does in his *CST*, roughly two generations later. This verse also frames the verses that follow as the expression of his own skill and enthusiasm in composing praise-poetry that flows from the nature of his own consciousness.

Abhinavagupta continues to reflect on the nature of praise-poetry in this opening section of the *Kramastotra*. In the fifth verse he describes *stuti* as a fire that burns up differentiation, before questioning the very possibility of praise in verse six:

O Bhava! If the various activities of the lord,
 whose many powers are manifested through his great sovereignty,
 are based in one's own heart,
 then how could that heart offer praise?
 And yet this heart offers it enthusiastically!
 Homage to Śiva is the primary means of obtaining oneness with Śiva. // *KrSt* 6 //³³⁶

Like many other *stotra* authors before him, Abhinavagupta rhetorically questions the possibility of praising Śiva or his deeds, since ultimately he holds there is no difference between his own heart and Śiva. Yet here in this hymn he offers energetic praise, which he

³³⁵ *vicitrair jātyādibhramaṇaparipāṭīparikarair avāptaṃ sārvaññaṃ hṛdaya yad ayatnena bhavatā / tad antas tvadbodhaprasarasaraṇībhūtamahasi sphuṭaṃ vāci prāpya prakāṭaya vibhoḥ stotram adhunā // KrSt 4 //*

³³⁶ *bhava prājyaiśvaryaprathitabahuśakter bhagavato vicitraṃ cāritraṃ hṛdayam adhiśete yadi tataḥ / kathaṃ stotraṃ kuryād atha ca kurute tena sahasā śivaikātmyaprātau śivanatir upāyaḥ prathamakaḥ / KrSt 6 //*

justifies by explaining that praise or homage (*nati*) is a means, an expedient method for realizing identity with Śiva. In the end, moreover, that very praise or homage is no different from Śiva himself.

Abhinavagupta continues to reflect on the theme of praise itself. In verse nine he prays that he may continue to offer praise to Śiva:

O you who answer prayers, it is well known that
your form, lord, appears as variegated through such manifestations,
differentiated in this universe that is a portion of the self.
May I always offer speech that is externalized and ever-enthusiastic
in order to praise this very form that is the heart. // *KrSt* 9 //³³⁷

Verse twelve also depicts Śiva's manifestation of diversity through his powers, and, like the *Bhairavastotra*, suggests the freedom from fear that comes from offering praise:

Amazing! Out of your perfect fullness,
fresh with the great play of delight (*rasa*),
you take on differentiation through your own power (*śakti*),
according to the flow of your own will.
Praising your pure sovereignty,
your power that is so astonishing,
my fear melted, for I am Śiva! // *StKr* 12 //³³⁸

The verses in this opening section do two things: they explore and justify the act of offering prayer and praise-poetry, and they provide a general introduction to the praise of the specific Kālīs as the phases of cognition in the verses that follow.³³⁹ The latter explains the

³³⁷ *iīdrkṣair rūpair varada vividhaṃ te kila vapur vibhāti svāṃśe 'smin jagati gatabhedaṃ bhagavataḥ | tad evaitat stotuṃ hṛdayam atha gīrbāhyakaraṇaprabandhās ca syur me satatam aparityaktarabhasaḥ // KrSt 9 //*

³³⁸ *amuṣmāt saṃpūrnāt vata rasamahollāśasarasān nijāṃ śaktiṃ bhedaṃ gamayasi nijecchāprasārataḥ | anarghaṃ svātantryaṃ tava tad idam atyadbhutamayīṃ bhavacchaktiṃ stunvan vīgalitabhayo 'haṃ śivamayāḥ // KrSt 12 //*

³³⁹ This beings with praise of Sṛṣṭikālī in *KrSt* 15.

emphasis on the nature of multiplicity and differentiation, for the Krama, as we have seen, is radically non-dualistic and yet worships various sequences of deities. The bulk of the verses that follow praise the Kālīs of the Krama system, and conclude by praising consciousness (*citi*), as the supreme goddess, and Śīva, as the possessor of the powers that make up the phases of cognition, in the hopes of winning supreme favor.³⁴⁰ But it is the introductory and reflexive section I have focused on here, consisting of almost half of the text, that shows Abhinavagupta’s concern with the nature of the *stotra* genre itself. As a whole, the hymn serves to express a truth these authors claim underlies both *stotras* and consciousness itself. While appearing dualistic, their underlying reality is unity—between the one who praises, the one who is praised, and praise itself; between the objects, process, and agent of cognition, which for Abhinavagupta all consist in consciousness.

As for the many other *stotras* attributed to Abhinavagupta, it is unlikely that most were composed by him. Of these, the *Anuttarāṣṭikā* and *Paramārthacarcā* have stronger manuscript evidence in support of Abhinavagupta as their author.³⁴¹ The former celebrates the joy of experiencing one’s innate identity with the “unsurpassable” (*anuttara*) and directs its listeners to abandon various external religious activities and realize this experience for themselves.³⁴² The latter praises Śīva as Bhairava, but emphasizes the theological

³⁴⁰ Abhinavagupta presents his revised sequence of the Krama Kālīs in verses 15-26. He prays for the dynamic goddess of consciousness (*citi*) to reside in his own heart in verse twenty-seven, pays homage to Śīva as the possessor of the *śaktis* that make up the phases of cognition in verse twenty-eight, and argues that Śīva should show his favor on the poet in verse twenty-nine. Verse thirty, the last of the poem, identifies Abhinavagupta as the author and gives the date of composition for the *stotra*.

³⁴¹ Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 381.

³⁴² See Bäumer, “Abhinavagupta’s *Anuttarāṣṭikā*.” Also cf. *ŚSĀ* v. 1.1.

understanding of reality as the fusion of Śiva and Śakti embodying “the self-manifest light of reality (*prakāśaḥ*) and its innate power of creative ideation (*vimarśaḥ*).”³⁴³ The term *prakāśa*, which can simply mean “light,” appears in each of the first three verses of the *Paramārthacarcā*, and the poem plays with the imagery of light, based on the possibility in Sanskrit for verbs related to light (“to shine” and so on) to also mean “to appear, to manifest,” and therefore also “to be, to exist.”³⁴⁴ Like Abhinavagupta’s other *stotras* (as well as Kṣemarāja’s *Bhairavānukaraṇastotra*), the *Paramārthacarcā* and the *Anuttarāṣṭikā* both stress the non-dualistic reality underlying all diversity. The content of both hymns accords with Abhinavagupta’s other writings, but without further evidence their attribution remains tentative.

However one adjudicates the claims about Abhinavagupta’s authorship of these and other *stotras*, the fact remains that many Kashmirian scribes and authors (not to mention those in other parts of South Asia) have attributed *stotras* to this celebrated author. Why does there seem to have been such an impulse to claim that he composed *stotras* in particular, just as there has been in the case of Śaṅkarācārya?³⁴⁵ There are, of course,

³⁴³ Sanderson, “Saiva Exegesis,” 413. For the *Paramārthacarcā*, cf. the *Dakṣiṇāmūrtistotra* attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, which uses similar imagery to make related theological points.

³⁴⁴ Raffaele Torella, discussing Abhinavagupta’s predecessor Utpaladeva, notes: “Prakāśa forms, together with a large group of synonyms or quasi-synonyms (from the roots *bhā-*, *pratibhā-*, *bhās-*, *avabhās-*, *ābhās-*, *pratibhās-*, *prath-*), a close-knit constellation of ‘luminous’ terms indicating the notions of being manifested, emerging from the dark, coming to consciousness or, more in general, of being the object of knowledge and finally simply ‘being’ [...]”; *The Īśvarapratyabhijñārikā of Utpaladeva, with the Author’s Vṛtti*, ed. and trans. by Raffaele Torella (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2002), xxiii-xxiv.

³⁴⁵ The history and significance of the attribution of approximately a hundred *stotras* to Śaṅkarācārya is a fascinating and complex topic, as we saw in the Introduction. An analysis that disentangles this history (beyond the reductive question of which hymns were authored by the historical Śaṅkarācārya) remains a major lacuna in contemporary scholarship. On the question of authenticity,

practical reasons. *Stotras* are often collected, and it is easy to imagine several anonymous *stotras* in a collection being attributed to the author of another *stotra* in that collection. Like Śaṅkara, Abhinavagupta was a famous, learned, and highly respected author and teacher. Associating a given text with him would have ensured a greater chance of its preservation and dissemination. It also may have been a way to connect him with a tradition otherwise removed from his writings, as in the case of the *Dehasthadevatācakrastotra* and its mental worship of Ānandabhairava and his consort Ānandabhairavī, which Sanderson notes is unparalleled in Abhinavagupta's other writings.³⁴⁶ His writings on Tantric theology and philosophy are also exceptionally complicated; one can speculate that there was a desire for more accessible and personal formulations of his teachings. Moreover, such devotional hymns are applicable in worship and ritual contexts—including the worship of Abhinavagupta himself as a revered guru³⁴⁷—in ways that complex theological treatises are not. One does not even need to understand the precise meaning of such hymns to recite them and invoke Abhinavagupta as a guru and symbol of a celebrated tradition of religious practice and scholarship. Finally, one might expect Abhinavagupta to have composed more than two *stotras* (if we accept only the most conservative account), given some of his own comments. As we saw in *KrSt* v. 4, for example, he urges his own heart to make his own praise-poetry, which he claims arises effortlessly for him, available to all in the form of

see Robert E. Gussner, “Hymns of Praise: A Textual-Critical Analysis of Selected Vedantic Stotras Attributed to Sankara with Reference to the Question of Authenticity” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1974), and by the same author, “A Stylometric Study.”

³⁴⁶ “Śaiva Exegesis,” 381.

³⁴⁷ E.g. in *Sunday Puja* (Ishber, Kashmir: Ishwar Ashram Trust, 2002), the hymnal used by the followers of Swami Lakshman Joo.

stotras. We do know, however, that his practice of composing dense non-dualistic hymns was continued by at least some of his successors, most notably his prolific student Kṣemarāja.

Kṣemarāja's Bhairavānukaraṇastotra

Kṣemarāja (c. 1000-1025), Abhinavagupta's main disciple, exerted a great influence on the future of Śaivism in Kashmir through his commentaries on a wide range of works. In addition to his commentaries on several hymns (see Chapter Three), Kṣemarāja also wrote commentaries on the *Netratantra* and the *Svacchandatantra*, the scriptures at the heart of two major traditions of Śaiva worship in Kashmir. The second of these scriptures focuses on the form of Śiva called Svacchandabhairava.³⁴⁸ In addition to his commentary on the *Svacchandatantra*, Kṣemarāja composed a hymn to its central deity, the *Bhairavānukaraṇastotra*, which presents a non-dualistic interpretation of the details of Svacchandabhairava's visualization.³⁴⁹ The bulk of this *stotra's* forty-eight verses systematically describes and interprets the iconography of Bhairava.³⁵⁰ This includes the many weapons he holds in his hands, such as the noose (v. 18) and elephant goad (v. 19), the hand gestures dispelling fear and granting wishes (v. 21-22), and various terrifying

³⁴⁸ On the cult of Svacchandabhairava, see Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 385-398. For the hymn itself, see Raniero Gnoli, "Miscellanea Indica," in *East and West*, Vol. 9 No. 3 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958).

³⁴⁹ Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 398.

³⁵⁰ The popularity of hymns to various forms of Bhairava in Kashmir mirrors the centrality of these deities in the religious life of the region, particularly within the cults of Amṛteśvarabhairava and Svacchandabhairava, rooted in the *Netratantra* and *Svacchandatantra* scriptures, respectively.

accouterments, such as his garlands of bones and skulls (vv. 13, 35) and the bloody elephant hide that he wears (v. 15). The hymn seeks to reconcile the iconographical form of Bhairava with a non-dualistic theology, interpreting the various aspects of Bhairava's form in terms of the nature and activities of supreme Śiva as consciousness.

As in Abhinavagupta's *Kramastotra*, the opening section of this verse hymn address some of the underlying theological issues involved in offering such praise poetry and the worship of a deity within a non-dualistic framework. The second verse lays out the explicit identification of supreme Śiva with Bhairava and consciousness:

I offer homage to Śiva,
to that Bhairava who is consciousness, supreme and one,
whose nature is supreme nectar, who is resplendent,
the one by whom everything grasped by the wheel of sense organs
shines forth. // *BhAKSt 2* //³⁵¹

The verse that follows immediately addresses the apparent duality involved in the offering of such praise poetry:

"The one who praises, the one to be praised, and the praise itself"—
even here there is nothing separate.
Just as some form you perceive has the form of consciousness,
you have the form of consciousness (alone). // *BhAKSt 3* //³⁵²

Kṣemarāja quotes this verse in his commentary on the *Sāmbapañcāśikā*, which expresses a very similar idea using much of the same language.³⁵³ In both cases, the poet offers a

³⁵¹ *cidbhairavam eva paraṃ paramāṃṛtarūpaṃ ekam atidīptam / ullasitakaraṇacakraḡrastasamaṣṭaṃ śivaṃ vande // BhAKSt 2 //*

³⁵² *stotā stutyaḡ stutir iti yad api vibhinnaṃ na kiṃcid astīha / mṛśasi yathā yad rūpaṃ cidrūpatayā tathā bhavaṣy etat // BhAKSt 3 //* I have translated the reading of *BhAKSt* v. 3 found in Kṣemarāja's commentary on *Sāmbapañcāśikā* v. 15. Gnoli's edition tries to emend the reading of the manuscript available to him using the *SP*'s reading, keeping some differences: *stutyaḡ stotā stutir iti yad api vibhinnaṃ na kiṃcid astīha / mṛśati yathā yadrūpaṃ cidrūpatayā tathā bhavaty etat // BhAKSt 3* [Gnoli Ed.] //

theological justification for and interpretation of the verses that follow. For Kṣemarāja, it is the understanding that anything one perceives still has the form of consciousness, so there really is no separation between the one offering praise, the one being praised, and the praise itself.

The most interesting and unique way that Kṣemarāja presents a non-dualistic theology is through the term *anukaraṇa*, most prominently in the title of this *stotra*. In general, the verb *anu√kr̥* means “to do afterward” or “to imitate.” Terms based on this verb have significance in other contexts—notably in aesthetics, in which the idea of *rasa* as an imitation of the emotions of the characters in a drama or text, attributed to Śaṅkuka, was rejected by later authors, particularly Bhaṭṭa Tota and Abhinavagupta.³⁵⁴ Kṣemarāja, however, apparently intended a different meaning with this and related terms. In this *stotra*, *anu√kr̥* means to create something that is not separate from the creator, to create something that follows after (*anu-*) the one doing the creating, in the sense of not being different from it. The title of the hymn thus suggests the manifestation of one reality, understood as pure consciousness, as both the iconographic form of Bhairava and the full diversity of existence.

I offer homage to your form (*tvadākṛti*), O lord,
 the manifestation (*anukṛti*) of your reality,
 the uninterrupted bliss of consciousness,
 which dissolves all differentiation (and yet)
 consists in all differentiation. // *BhAKSt* 4 //³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Kṣemarāja’s commentary on *SP* v. 15. Note the textual issues raised in the preceding footnote.

³⁵⁴ See Pollock, “What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka Saying?”, 139 and 165n9, and Sheldon Pollock, *A Reader on Rasa: An Historical Sourcebook of Classical Indian Aesthetics* (forthcoming).

³⁵⁵ *vīgalitasarvavibhedam sarvavibhedātma cidghanānandam / yat tava tattvam bhagavaṃs tasyānukṛtiṃ tvadākṛtiṃ vande // BhAKSt* 4//

The same point appears in Kṣemarāja’s commentary on the *Svacchandatantra* chapter on Bhairava’s iconographical features. In his introduction to this chapter, he says:

It gives form to the manifestations (*anukṛti*) of Śambhu that are the expansions of consciousness as this or that. Supreme is that “seal” (*mudrā*) of the all-pervasive lord that consists in form that can be engaged through worship and so on.³⁵⁶

In other words, Kṣemarāja praises the manifestation or embodiment of the lord in a specific form, accessible for worship, contemplation, visualization, and so on, but which is still not ontologically separate.

The doctrine of one consciousness becoming manifest as all of reality repeats in the other uses of words based on the verb *anu√kr*. For instance, in verse twenty-six Kṣemarāja addresses Śiva, saying: “O lord, you manifest your great power externally” (*mahāśaktim devānukaroṣi bahis*).³⁵⁷ Other verbs suggest the taking on of form. In verse forty, the poet says:

Since you, O lord, who are supreme *brahman*,
resort (*āśrayasi*) to the form of Bhairava,
you, who understand reality, are totally free
even when there is differentiation. // *BhAKSt* 40 //³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ *tattatsaṃvitsphārānanukṛtirūpān vyanakti yā śambhoḥ / ākṛtirūpā mudrā jayati vibhor arcanādinirvartyā //* This is the second of Kṣemarāja’s introductory verses to the 14th *paṭala* of the *Svacchandatantra*. The first verse glosses the word *mudrā* by interpreting its individual syllables (*nirvacana*).

³⁵⁷ Here we see the overlaying of Trika theology, in the form of the triad of three Śaktis beginning with Parā on Śiva’s trident, onto the worship of Bhairava. For the two other verses that use words based on the root *anu√kr*, see *BhAKSt* vv. 29 and 33.

³⁵⁸ *paramabrahmamayas tvam deva yad āśrayasi bhairavākāram / tat prathayasi tattvajñāḥ saty api bhede vimukta iti // BhAKSt* 40// Em. *yadāśrayasi*; Ed. (Gnoli) *yadāśrayasi*.

The verse presents a contrast between pure, abstract *paramabrahma* and the terrifying, iconographical form of Bhairava. This contrast suggests the freedom of the lord to manifest himself without constraint by apparent dualities, such as purity or impurity, or form itself. As we have seen, for Kṣemarāja Bhairava is also consciousness itself; in the final verse of the poem, the poet calls out to *cidbhairava* directly, to “Bhairava who is consciousness” (v.48). The upshot of the hymn as a whole is precisely this relationship between the abstract and personal, the transcendent and immanent, oneness and diversity. For Kṣemarāja, as for many of these authors, the nature of praise itself became an ideal context for exploring these themes, since it invokes dualities such as the object and subject of praise, and the specificity of a deity’s features and activities.

The trends that Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja’s *stotras* demonstrate continue in the work of Kṣemarāja’s disciple, the ascetic Yogarāja (c. 1025-1075). While he is best known for his commentary on Abhinavagupta’s *Paramārthasāra*, he also composed a short hymn to Śiva called the *Śivāṣṭikā*. It praises Caitanyaśiva, “Śiva who is consciousness,” just as Kṣemarāja’s *stotra* praises Bhairava who is consciousness (*cidbhairava*), and it “reflects the Krama-oriented idiom of the author’s teacher.”³⁵⁹

Collectively, these *stotras* suggest the power of such hymns to reflect upon—and demonstrate in language—specific theological positions. In particular, they address the nature of multiplicity within a non-dualistic tradition. They also offer indirect exegesis on particular traditions of worship and theology, particularly the Krama tradition and the cult of Svachchanda Bhairava. In this way these hymns were probably part of Abhinavagupta and

³⁵⁹ Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 380.

Kṣemarāja's larger project of synthesizing religious traditions popular in Kashmir and framing them within a non-dualistic theology. While not as poetic as some poems, such as those of Nāga, their *stotras* incorporate various semantic and aural poetic features that would have made them appealing and memorable. Finally, as we have seen repeatedly, they often dwell on the topic of prayer and praise-poetry itself, reflexively interpreting the nature of their own language in an attempt to transcend and encompass its apparent dualities and limitations. Overall, when we consider the series of hymns we have surveyed so far, from Ratnākara to Nāga to Kṣemarāja, we see the sophistication and appeal of the *stotra* genre to some of Kashmir's most innovative authors.

Stotras in Kashmir after the Twelfth Century

As we have seen, *stotras* were composed by some of the most outstanding poets, scholars, and theologians in Kashmir between the ninth and the eleventh century. While the overall quantity of Sanskrit texts produced in Kashmir decline after the twelfth century, *stotras* continued to be composed, often with fresh creativity and unique agendas. From the twelfth century itself, we have Loṣṭaka's³⁶⁰ *Dīnākrandanastotra*. This *stotra* offers a poetic lament on the vicissitudes of life, addressed to Śiva, and eventually expresses the peace that came from taking refuge in Śiva alone.³⁶¹ Kalhaṇa, author of the famous *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*

³⁶⁰ He is also known as Loṣṭhadeva, Loṣṭha, and Loṣṭhaka, son of Ramyadeva. His dates are approximately 1125-1175, since he and his father are mentioned in the 25th chapter of Maṅkha's *Śrīkaṅṭhacarita* (see vv. 25.31-36). This Kashmirian poet apparently visited Varanasi and became a renunciant (*Dīnākrandanastotra* v. 51).

³⁶¹ See *Kāvyaṃālā*, *A collection of old and rare Sanskrit Kāvya, Nātakas, Champūs, Bhāṇas, Prahāsanas, Chhandas, Alaṅkāras, etc.*, Part VI [2nd edition], ed. Paṇḍit Durgāprasād and Kāśīnāth Pāṇḍurang Parab (Bombay: Nirnay Sagar Press, 1930), 21-30; Śarmā, *Kaśmīrī Stotraparamparā*

(written between 1148/49 and 1149/50), is said to have composed a hymn to Ardhanārīśvara, but at least part of this consists in verses extracted from his *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*.³⁶²

By the thirteenth century, however, we have fewer examples of literary *stotras*. Jayadratha's³⁶³ *Haracaritacintāmaṇi*—"a collection of accounts of Śiva's deeds in the world of men, the majority of which are told in versions that associate them with local sites of pilgrimage and the local religious calendar"³⁶⁴— includes some *stotras* within its narrative. An independent *stotra*, the *Paridevitadvādaśikā*, is also attributed to Jayadratha.³⁶⁵ But by the beginning of the thirteenth century, Sanskrit production in Kashmir had begun to decline, and this included the production of literary hymns.³⁶⁶ Yet new authors in Kashmir repeatedly returned to the *stotra* genre, reinvigorating it so that it remained a vital genre for literary and religious innovation to the present day.

evaṃ Dīnākrandana Stotra; and Navjivan Rastogi, *The Krama Tantricism of Kashmir, Vol. I: Historical and General Sources* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), 193-195 (although the latter, as one would expect, needs updating, and also apparently refers to *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* 25.26 instead of 25.36 for Loṣṭadeva's description).

³⁶² Thus the following correlations (with some variant readings) are readily apparent: *Ardhanārīśvarastotra* (*ANĪSt*) 1 = *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* (*RT*) 1.2; *ANĪSt* 3 = *RT* 3.1; *ANĪSt* 4 = *RT* 2.1; *ANĪSt* 5 = *RT* 6.1; *ANĪSt* 6 = *RT* 5.1; *ANĪSt* 10 = *RT* 4.1; and *ANĪSt* 11 = *RT* 8.1.

³⁶³ On the date of Jayadratha, brother of Jayaratha (well-known for his commentaries on Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* and the *Vāmakeśvarīmata*), see Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 418-419.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 378n475.

³⁶⁵ Unfortunately I have not yet been able to examine the manuscript of this unpublished work. See classification number 175 in *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Akhila Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad, Lucknow* (Second Series), Vol. 3 (Bhakti), ed. K.A. Subramania Iyer *et al.* (Lucknow: The Parishad, 1970), and also Rastogi, *Krama Tantricism*, 212-213.

³⁶⁶ See Pollock, "Death of Sanskrit," and also Jürgen Hanneder, "On the Death of Sanskrit," in the *Indo-Iranian Journal* 45 (2002).

The fourteenth-century *Stutikusumāñjali* (*SKA*) of Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, perhaps the best example of this trend, stands out as a major work of literature from post-twelfth century Kashmir. This coherent and ambitious collection of *stotras* to Śiva embraces the full tradition of Sanskrit poetry and poetic theory, which I chart in detail in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five I explain how this important work presents and reflects upon the nature of *bhakti*, praise, and prayer. This large and complex composition has much to offer to the study of Sanskrit devotional poetry, the history of religion and literature in Kashmir, and Hinduism more broadly. Its ambitious creativity develops the *stotra* form even as other literary forms were waning in Kashmir. In doing so this text provides a valuable window into a crucial period of Kashmir's history and provides a basis for interpreting later trends in religious literature from this region, such as Sāhib Kaul's *Devīnāmavilāsa*. In brief, Jagaddhara's work greatly expanded the scope and complexity of the *stotra* form to assimilate key features of Sanskrit *kāvya*, and this creative consolidation allowed for this form to accomplish a wide variety of functions.³⁶⁷

Beyond the *SKA*, *stotras* continued to be used for innovative engagement with Kashmir's rich literary heritage. The *Devīstotra* of Yaśaskara, a short poem in honor of Pārvatī, systematically illustrates the poetic figures in the *Alaṅkāraratnākara*, a work on poetics by Śobhākaramitra.³⁶⁸ The hymn received a learned commentary by Rājānaka

³⁶⁷ In this sense, Jagaddhara's work builds upon the earlier innovations in Ratnākara and Ānandavardhana's poetry, discussed above.

³⁶⁸ *Yaśaskarakave Ratnakaṅṭhakaviyojitaṃ Ratnākarasūtravṛttikaṃ Devīstotram*, ed. Kālīprasāda Dube (Vārāṇasyām [Varanasi, India]: Sampūrṇānanda Saṃskṛta Viśvavidyālaye [Sampurnanand Sanskrit University], 2001). See also *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, Vol. 16 (Bombay: Asiatic Society of Bombay, 1883), 12.

Ratnakaṅṭha, who also composed a commentary on the *SKA*, in the seventeenth century. The *Īśvaraśataka* of Avatāra (early 17th century),³⁶⁹ harkening back to Ānandavardhana's *Devīśataka*, contains a variety of complex *citrakāvya* poetic features, including poetic repetition (*yamaka*), punning (*śleṣa*), and specific visual representations formed from the arrangement of the syllables in certain verses (*citrabandha*).³⁷⁰ In the seventeenth century the learned scholar and poet Rājānaka Ratnakaṅṭha composed a number of *stotras*, including a hymn to Śiva called the *Śambhukṛpāmanoharastava* and two hymns to Sūrya, in addition to his learned commentaries on the *Stutikusumāñjali*, the *Devīstotra* of Yaśaskara, the *Kāvya prakāśa* of Mammaṭa, and the *Yudhiṣṭhiravijayamahākāvya* of Vāsudeva.³⁷¹ I discuss his hymns in more detail in Chapter Five. In brief, they are highly poetic compositions that reflect Ratnakaṅṭha's wide-ranging learning in the field of literary criticism and are indebted to earlier compositions like the *SKA*, although they are generally devoid of the esoteric content found in many earlier hymns.

Overall, these compositions evince the continued popularity of *stotras* not just as expressions of devotion or pedagogical tools, but as ways of creatively engaging with a

³⁶⁹ This Avatāra was probably the same Avatāra whose grandson Rājānaka Ratnakaṅṭha composed commentaries on the Yaśaskara's *Devīstotra* and Jagaddhara's *SKA* (among others), the latter finished in 1681. See Śarmā, *Kaśmīrī Stotraparamparā evaṃ Dīnākrandan Stotra*, 28-32. The *Īśvaraśataka* has been published in *Kāvya mālā, A collection of old and rare Sanskrit Kāvya, Nātakas, Champūs, Bhāṣas, Prahāsanas, Chhandas, Alaṅkāras, etc., Part IX*, ed. Mahāmahopādhyāya Paṇḍit Shivadatta and Vāsudeva Laxmaṇ Śāstrī Paṇaśīkar (Bombay: Nirnay Sagar Press, 1916), 31-63.

The poetic quality of this hymn has been called into question by Pollock, "Death of Sanskrit," 419n13. While the poem and its literary merit deserve more debate, what is important in the present context is that its author chose to compose a *hymn* over other forms to present his literary ambitions.

³⁷⁰ See Śarmā, *Kaśmīrī Stotraparamparā evaṃ Dīnākrandan Stotra*, 28-32.

³⁷¹ See Jürgen Hanneder, Stanislav Jager, and Alexis Sanderson, *Ratnakaṅṭha's Stotras (forthcoming)*. I am very grateful to Jürgen Hanneder for sharing a pre-print version of their publication.

literary past in order to create a new literary future. Perhaps the most dramatic exemplar of this general trend is the work of Ratnakaṅṭha's contemporary, Sāhib Kaul, whose learned compositions demonstrate both continuity with the past and striking innovation.

The Stotra Literature of Sāhib Kaul

Sāhib Kaul (1642-1667+)³⁷² stands out for the quantity, creativity, and ambition of his compositions. He wrote a number of short devotional works, several ritual manuals (*paddhatis*), and the *Devīnāmavilāsa*, “a tour de force of devotional poetry in the most refined and complex style based on the *Bhavānīsahasranāmastotra*.”³⁷³ The latter is a creative and sophisticated interpretation of the *Bhavānīsahasranāmastotra*, which gives the thousand names of the goddess, in the style of classical Sanskrit *kāvya*. This lengthy *stotrakāvya* and his shorter hymns speak to the continued relevance and appeal of the *stotra* genre in Kashmir. Moreover, they actively engage with early literary traditions in Kashmir and facilitate the creation of a distinctly Kashmirian Śaiva-Śākta religious identity.³⁷⁴

Alexis Sanderson has argued that Sāhib Kaul and his lineage are important in the religious history of Kashmir because they introduced Śākta elements prevalent in east India into Kashmir's religious culture:

³⁷² Sanderson, “Hinduism of Kashmir,” 124.

³⁷³ Alexis Sanderson, “The Śaiva Religion Among the Khmers, Part I,” in *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, 90-91 (2003-2004), 365. Like many of the texts I discuss in this chapter, Sāhib Kaul's *stotras* await more extended analysis.

³⁷⁴ For a detailed analysis of the assimilation of one text in particular, the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* of Kṣemarāja, see Hanneder, “Sāhib Kaul's Presentation of Pratyabhijñā Philosophy,” 399-418.

The Kauls, though subsequently integrated as a distinguished division of Kashmirian brahmin society, were Maithila Mādhyandinīya Yajurvedins who had come to Kashmir from northern Bihar during the period of Muslim rule, probably after the incorporation of Kashmir into the Mughal empire in 1586 [...].³⁷⁵

Sāhib Kaul’s ritual manuals for the worship of the goddesses Dakṣiṇā Kālī, Tripurasundarī, and Bhuvaneśvarī show, according to Sanderson, no connection to the Śaiva-Śākta traditions of Kashmir in their rituals, sources, and theology; moreover, they include elements foreign to these Kashmirian traditions, such as the consumption of a particular intoxicating drink.³⁷⁶ Yet as Sanderson notes, Sāhib Kaul “venerated the Kashmirian goddess Śārikā as his lineage deity and wrote a number of devotional works in which the Śākta Śaiva tradition of his adopted homeland rooted in the non-dualistic doctrines of Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta is fully integrated.”³⁷⁷ I suggest that the *stotra* form was a particularly potent medium for Sāhib Kaul’s negotiation of his community’s identity and its transmission. As the following discussion of his works will show, Sāhib Kaul creatively uses the *stotra* form for a variety of theological, pedagogical, and literary purposes.

Sāhib Kaul’s *Devīnāmavilāsa* (The Play of the Goddess’ Names), dated to 1666, consists of an interpretation and reformulation of the *Bhavānīsahasranāmastotra* (*BhSN*), a

³⁷⁵ “Śaiva Exegesis,” 409-410; see also: Sanderson, “Hinduism of Kashmir,” 124-126, and Sanderson, “Śaiva Religion Among the Khmers,” 361-366.

³⁷⁶ Sanderson, “Śaiva Religion Among the Khmers,” 365.

³⁷⁷ Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 410. He also expands on this, arguing that the Kauls integrated themselves in the religious world of Kashmir by means of “their adoption of the metaphysical and soteriological theory of the Kashmirian Śākta tradition and their inclusion of the local goddesses in a new, hybrid pantheon. But there is indirect evidence that they also integrated themselves into the purely Kashmirian ritual tradition by adopting the practice of Śaiva initiation and the like based on the tradition of the *Svacchandatantra* and seen in such detailed manuals as the *Kalādīksā paddhati* and *Agnikāryapaddhati*” (“Hinduism of Kashmir,” 125).

non-Kashmirian hymn to the Śrīvidyā goddess Bhavānī in the style of the famous *Viṣṇusahasranāmastotra* (Hymn of the Thousand Names of Viṣṇu). It offers an expanded presentation of each of her thousand names in a highly poetic style, as well as a complex literary version of the *BhSN*'s frame story. Thus the first five chapters describe the scene on Mt. Kailāsa and Śīva's chief attendant Nandin, and present Nandin's hymn of praise to Śīva, and Śīva's praise of the goddess. Chapters 6 through 15 present and interpret her thousand names, and the final chapter serves as *phalaśruti* for the work as a whole.

As this brief description suggests, the *DNV* is a literary hybrid, a creative work that challenges standard attempts at categorization. It combines elements of *mahākāvya* literature, Śaiva-Śākta scriptures and theological expositions, and devotional *stotras*. Sāhib Kaul explicitly refers to it as a work of *kāvya*.³⁷⁸ Both the content and style of the first five chapters reflect the tradition of Sanskrit *mahākāvya*, and some later chapters include various types of "brilliant" or virtuosic poetry (*citrakāvya*). For example, *DNV* 14.74 presents the name Dolā ("swing" or "the swinging one") using only the two consonants "d" and "l", thereby expressing in language the power of oscillation conveyed by this name for the goddess. Other types of *citrakāvya* include *citrabandhas* or verbal images, such as the image of a lotus (*padmabandha*) formed by the syllables of verse 15.1. In this way the *DNV*, following in the footsteps of the fourteenth-century *Stutikusumāñjali*, incorporates a variety of *kāvya*'s narrative and figurative features.

At the same time, much of the *DNV* consists in Śīva's teachings to Nandin, and in this way it also parallels Śaiva scriptures. Such texts often consist of a dialogue between

³⁷⁸ See his concluding verses for most chapters, e.g., *DNV* 1.90.

Śiva and Pārvatī or another disciple. The *BSN* itself is said to belong to the *Rudrayāmalatantra*, although this was something of an open-ended, catch-all scripture to which many individual compositions are said to belong. Moreover, as Hanneder has demonstrated in detail, the third chapter of the *DNV* adapts the entire *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* of Kṣemarāja, a Śākta-inflected summary of the Pratyabhijñā theology which has remained very popular since its composition.³⁷⁹ In this way the *DNV* also reflects the rich scriptural and exegetical traditions of Kashmir.

Finally, there are many features of the *DNV* that traditionally are associated with *stotras*. As I discussed in the Introduction, compositions that consist of the “thousand names” (*sahasranāma*) of a deity belong to a popular subcategory within the *stotra* genre (although this classification is far from unanimous or standardized). Nandin’s hymn of praise to Śiva in the final part of chapter 2 (vv. 2.52-73) consists of almost all vocatives and epithets, and it only switches to a theological reflection on Śiva’s nature, adapting the entirety of the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, when it continues in chapter 3.³⁸⁰ Between this hymn to Śiva, Śiva’s praise of the goddess in chapters 4 and 5, and the poetic verses praising the various names of the goddess in chapters 6-15, the majority of the *DNV*’s verses consist in praise, glorification, and homage to either Śiva or the goddess. Finally, like most *stotras*, the *DNV* concludes with a section detailing the benefits of reciting and hearing this text (chapter 16). Here Sāhib Kaul refers to this work as the best of “king of praise-poems”

³⁷⁹ Hanneder, “Sāhib Kaul’s Presentation of Pratyabhijñā Philosophy.”

³⁸⁰ In this way the *DNV* harkens back to a tradition of dense, theological hymns, especially those in the *Haravijaya*

(*stavarāja*).³⁸¹ Overall, the *DNV* is a unique and ambitious composition that stands out for its originality in the history of religious literature in Kashmir³⁸² and testifies to a rich and varied tradition of literary experimentation rooted in the *stotra* form.

A number of short devotional works are attributed to Sāhib Kaul.³⁸³ His *DNV* confirms a number of these by mentioning their titles in the closing verses of its chapters, and therefore these at least were composed prior to this major literary work.³⁸⁴ Overall these poems suggest much about the vitality of *stotras* in seventeenth-century Kashmir. They creatively marshal and adapt the features of this flexible genre, engage the rich history of theology and worship in Kashmir, and present a distinctly pedagogical agenda.

Before I discuss Sāhib Kaul's short poems individually, it is important to note these works stretch the bounds of the *stotra* genre, even though they are often identified as *stotras*. Some, like the *Śārikāstava* devoted to the Kashmirian goddess Śārikā, identify themselves as being *stotras* or *stavas*, but others are less explicit.³⁸⁵ For example, while the poet begins

³⁸¹ *DNV* 16.4.

³⁸² As I argue in Chapter Five, the *Stutikusumāñjali* is an important predecessor to the *DNV*.

³⁸³ I am very grateful to Jürgen Hanneder for generously sharing his unpublished critical edition of Sāhib Kaul's *stotras* with me and encouraging my work on them.

³⁸⁴ Sāhib Kaul gives the following references to earlier *stotra* compositions: *DNV* 3.25 → *Citsphārasārādvaya*; *DNV* 4.235 → *Saccidānandakandalī*; *DNV* 5.91 → *Śivaśaktivilāsa*; *DNV* 6.110 → *Śārikāstava*; *DNV* 8.101 → *Sahajārcanaṣaṣṭikā*; *DNV* 9.101 → *Nijātmabodha*; *DNV* 10.101 → *Candramaulistava*; *DNV* 11.101 → *Suprabhātastava*.

³⁸⁵ The title of this poem refers to it as a *stava*, and in verse 17 Sāhib Kaul says he composed this *stotra* to Śārikā, his lineage-deity. The *Sahajārcanaṣaṣṭikā* and *Śivajīvadaśakam* follow the practice of many earlier texts, usually accepted as *stotras*, that identify the number of verses in the body of the poem; the former also refers to itself as a *sūkti* ("beautiful [praise-]poem") (v. 61).

the *Śivaśaktivilāsa* (*ŚŚV*) by paying to homage to Śiva directly,³⁸⁶ the rest of the poem is devoid of vocatives, second-person pronouns or verbs, and the usual formulations of praise, homage, and so on usually found in *stotras*. Instead it describes the play (*vilāsa*) between Śiva and his various Śaktis, moving first through the traditional group of five (*cit*, *ānanda*, *icchā*, *jñāna*, and *kriyā*) and then describing additional Śaktis.³⁸⁷ In its depiction of the playful interplay between Śiva and his many Śaktis, this poem is less a prayer than an exposition, probably intended to teach about the nature of the relationship between Śiva and Śakti.

Several of Sāhib Kaul's poems diverge so strikingly from the *stotra* genre that they can barely be included in the category, although they include features common to much praise-poetry. These poems experiment with the structure of such hymns, and in doing so, they draw attention to their pedagogical features. Consider the *Citsphārasārādvaya* (*CSSA*), “a dialogue between a disciple desperately seeking for enlightenment and the teacher.”³⁸⁸ In its dramatization of such an exchange, this poem differs from the majority of *stotras*, which usually do not contain such narratives. Instead of beginning with some kind of *maṅgalaśloka*, for instance, it starts with the student approaching the teacher:

A certain student approached the best of teachers,
the lord whose nature is consciousness,
a sprout for the great storehouse of complete bliss,
incomparable, beneficent (*śambhu*), established in the supreme, and supreme.
He had seen a great host of miseries, whose defilement

³⁸⁶ “I offer homage to you, the lord” (*namāmi prabhuṃ [...] bhavantam*) (*ŚŚV* v. 1ab).

³⁸⁷ E.g., *ŚŚV* v. 9 describes the power of vibration (*spandaśakti*), while *ŚŚV* v. 12 depicts the power of great illusion (*mahāmāyā*).

³⁸⁸ Hanneder “Sāhib Kaul's Presentation of Pratyabhijñā Philosophy,” 416.

stretched back before the womb, and was overwhelmed.

And so he humbly spoke these broken words in front of the teacher. // CSSA 1 //³⁸⁹

The student proceeds to ask the teacher a series of questions, decry his own troubled state, and beg him to teach him about the lord who is one's own self (vv. 2-3). The "true teacher" (*saddaiśika*), speaking from "his own experience" (*svānubhavād*) (v. 4), responds:

Through good fortune the pure lotus of your mind
has risen up out of the mud by its own power.
and yet, though it is sprinkled with the waters of dispassion, it remains closed.
Receiving the rays of the sun that are my teachings (*vacana*) will be sufficient:
it will be empowered to blossom on its own ever after. // CSSA 5 //³⁹⁰

In the next verse the poetic narrator breaks in once again and introduces the text as the *Citsphārasārādvaya* of Sāhib Kaul (v. 6).

After this introductory section, the teacher presents his teachings to the troubled student, often addressing him directly. The content of the poem is partially inflected by Advaita Vedānta, and as Hanneder has argued it gives a glimpse of Sāhib Kaul's view of the relationship between Vedānta and Śrīvidyā.³⁹¹ Throughout these verses the teacher encourages the student to give up his worry by realizing his own identity with Śiva, the supreme lord. "You are not the body, or the senses, or the mind, or the vital energy, or a

³⁸⁹ *kaś cic chiśya upetya daiśikavaraṃ saṃvitsvarūpaṃ vibhuṃ pūrṇānandanidhiprakāṇḍamatulaṃ
śaṃbhuṃ parasthaṃ paraṃ / drṣṭvā garbhanivāsapūrvakamalaṃ duḥkhavrajaṃ vyākulo vāṇyā
gadgadayā cakāra vinato vijñaptim itthaṃ puraḥ // CSSA 1 //*

³⁹⁰ *diṣṭyā te matipadminī suvimalā pañkātsvaśaktyodgatā siktā cāpi viraktabhāvasalilaiḥ kiṃ cit
paraṃ mīlitā / yāvanmadvacanaprabhākarakarasparśaḥ kilāsyā bhavet eṣā tāvad alaṃ
vikāsavibhavaṃ prāpnoti śāśvat svayam // CSSA 5 //*

³⁹¹ See Hanneder, "Sāhib Kaul's Presentation of Pratyabhijñā Philosophy," 415-416, where Hanneder translates CSSA vv. 7-8, which allude "to the three steps in Vedāntic soteriology, i.e. *śravana*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*," and fill these labels with a Śaiva content. Elsewhere, Sāhib Kaul uses the distinctly Vedāntic phrase *saccidānandai* (SCĀK 26), or close synonyms, such as *sacciddharṣa* (CSSA v. 11d).

man; you are not a momentary or empty awareness, you are not a limited agent or enjoyer, you are not insentient,” the teacher explains; “you are that indescribable, pure one who consists in being, consciousness, and bliss. Do not fret in vain!”³⁹² After verse 47 the teacher pauses, observes his student, declares him free from ignorance, and commands him to speak immediately of his own state.³⁹³ The student’s response, which manifests (*prakaṭīcakāra*) his ultimate experience of his own self (*svātmānubhūtiṃ parāṃ*) (v. 49), ends in verse 60. In this response, the generic student (*kaś cit*) reiterates the teachings given earlier, but from a first-person perspective. At the climax of his response the student expresses the identity of his own self with the lord who is the agent of all volition, knowledge, and action, and he offers homage to this, his own self (*me namaḥ*).³⁹⁴

As this brief description shows, this poem offers the narrative of a pedagogical moment. It dramatizes the assimilation of a major theological teaching, namely the identity between the supreme lord, his manifestation as all of existence, and the self accessible to every human being. In this simple narrative, the student has the experience of this self, and perhaps even more importantly, he articulates that experience in speech. This narrativization of (successful) instruction has significant pedagogical implications. As one recites or hears the *CSSA*, one implicitly takes the place of the student directly addressed by the teacher in the first part of the poem. But when the student speaks, the poem’s audience

³⁹² *no deho ‘si na cendriyaṃ na ca manah prāṇo na vā no pumān na jñānaṃ kṣaṇikaṃ na śūnyam api no kartā na bhoktā jadaḥ / [...] sacciddharṣamayo ‘si ko ‘pi vimalaś cintāṃ vṛthā mā kṛthāḥ // CSSA 11ab, d //*. Cf. *Nirvāṇaṣaṭkam* v. 1.

³⁹³ *vada vibho svīyāṃṃ daśāṃ satvaram; CSSA v. 49.*

³⁹⁴ *CSSA v. 60.* On the phrase *me namaḥ*, see below.

takes on the student's first-person perspective as he articulates his assimilation of the teachings he has been given. The *CSSA*, therefore, offers one example of the pedagogical potential of the *stotra* form. Yet it also defies some of the basic conventions that provide a weak boundary for this genre. Most *stotras* are not narrative, and they do not usually consist of a dialogue—or rather, they usually consist of a *one*-sided conversation between a devotee and a particular divine addressee. Since this poem depicts a conversation, it does not contain the usual direct or indirect addresses to a deity one usually finds in a *stotras*. Moreover, the second-person addresses throughout the poem are directed toward the two main characters, depending on which one is speaking. In general, these features mark this poem as distinct from other *stotras*. Yet at the same time, it indirectly praises Śiva with devotion. Many of its verses contain the vocatives and second-person verbs often found in *stotras*, but they are directed at the student. The central point of the poem, however, is precisely the identity between the student's own self and Śiva, so the poem creatively adapts the *stotra* form to emphasize its theological and pedagogical agenda. Finally, the *CSSA* ends by describing and praising the benefits obtained by means of this poem—but Sāhib Kaul says that the benefit of this poem is the experience of its meaning, namely the “non-duality at the essence of the expansion of consciousness” (*citsphārasārādvaya*).

Some of Sāhib Kaul's other poems also present the first-person voice of one who has attained the realization praised in that poem, just as the student does in the *CSSA*. But in these hymns there is no dialogue providing context for this first-person expression. Instead, the development of the poem itself justifies it. For instance, in the *Svātmabodha* (Realization of the Self) (*SvĀB*), the speaker first describes himself as taking refuge in

supreme Śiva, but the poem emphasizes the unity of this supreme lord and the speaker's own Self, privileging this experience (*nijānubhūtiḥ*) (v. 7). The speaker thereby takes on the voice of identification, even calling out to others:

Because of the power of just a tiny bit of my true favor,
the resplendent (*prakāśī*) lord of the planets moves constantly through the sky,
and the moon produces pleasure for people.
Therefore, wise ones, pay homage to the supreme lord who is me! // *SvĀB* 15 //³⁹⁵

In such verses the speaker adopts the voice of total identification with the supreme lord praised in this poem. This practice occurs in his other poems as well, and especially the *Śivajīvadaśakam* (Ten Verses on the Individual [Self] that is Śiva) (*ŚJD*). Here the speaker repeatedly offers homage to his own Self:

What exactly is the body?
Whose is it? Where is it?
That which has a body is not bound, nor is the body bound.
I myself am Śiva, Viṣṇu, the sun-god, Gaṇeśa, the creator, Śakti;
indeed all the Śaktis are mine.
Homage to me! (*namo me*) // *ŚJD* 2 //³⁹⁶

Variations of this last phrase are repeated several times in this short poem (vv. 2-5, 10). The tenth verse at the climax of the poem concludes: “homage to me, this individual Self (who is also) Śiva.”³⁹⁷ Some modern audiences may be startled by such expressions of self-directed praise and glorification.³⁹⁸ Perhaps Sāhib Kaul's immediate audiences would

³⁹⁵ *matsatkr̥pālēśavaśātprakāśī caraty asau vyomny aniśaṃ grahendrah | candro janāhlādakaraś ca tasmān māṃ sarvanāthaṃ namata prabuddhāḥ // SvĀB 15 //*

³⁹⁶ *kas svid dehaḥ kasya dehaḥ kva deho dehī dehe naiva baddho na baddhaḥ | so 'haṃ śambhur viṣṇur arko gaṇeśo dhātā śaktis sarvaśaktir namo me // ŚJD 2 //*

³⁹⁷ *jīvāyāsmāi me namo vā śivāya / ŚJD 10d / Em. jīvāyāsmāi; Ed. jīvāyasmāi.*

³⁹⁸ For a similarly dramatic example of this, see the *Saccidānandakandalī* v. 99: *so 'haṃ sarvatra sarveśo jayāmi bhayahāraḥ | māṃ jñātvā na punar moham upāyānti kadācana //*

have been struck by them as well, but earlier non-dual *stotras* from Kashmir, such as those by Nāga, provide some important precedents. Sāhib Kaul’s statements clearly refer to a very different “I” or “me” than usually intended by such statements.³⁹⁹ In fact this seems to be precisely the point of such verses: they expand the meaning of the “I” with which one naturally identifies so that one’s self-understanding breaks its normal bonds and one experiences a state of identification and self-awareness as Śiva and all that entails. In this way such poems seem to function as exercises for the experience and assimilation of a particular understanding— in this case, the identify of the individual self with supreme Śiva. Perhaps the closest Sanskrit correlate in this case is *bhāvanā*—the use of creative powers to “bring something in being,” specifically the realization of oneness. In these poems Sāhib Kaul creatively develops the logic of non-dualistic praise and worship to the extent that they become explicitly self-directed practices.

Sāhib Kaul’s *Śārikāstava* shows a different kind of creativity. To begin with, it reflects the Maithila Kauls’ assimilation of local Kashmirian religious tradition, as Sanderson has discussed, for Śārikā is a distinctly Kashmirian goddess.⁴⁰⁰ In the penultimate verse of the *Śārikāstava*, Sāhib Kaul identifies himself as the author of this

³⁹⁹ Of course, Sāhib Kaul is not the first to advocate such a reevaluation of self-identity. Many of his Śaiva predecessors, as well as Advaita Vedāntins and others, taught a transformation of consciousness through identification with a supreme reality or stripping away temporary identity until one realizes one’s identity with something transcendent (e.g., *śivo’ham* for Śaivas, *aham brahmāsmi* for Advaita Vedāntins).

⁴⁰⁰ See Sanderson’s discussions of Sāhib Kaul in “Śaiva Exegesis,” 409-410, “Hinduism of Kashmir,” 124-126, and “Śaiva Religion Among the Khmers,” 361-366.

hymn and refers to her as his lineage deity (*vaṃśadevī*).⁴⁰¹ Such *stotras* not only indicate the assimilation of such local traditions but also the process by which this assimilation occurred. For these hymns also have currency as public expressions that may have advertised the affiliation of a particular community, and as we have already seen they have distinct pedagogical potential.

But the *Śārikāstava* also has another level of meaning. Its verses (vv. 2-9) give the coded instructions for constructing the goddess Śārikā's mantra (*mantroddhāra*).⁴⁰² The final verse describes the benefits of reciting this *stotra*:

One who recites this rich *stotra*,
or who listens to it or teaches it, with true devotion,
even if he is without your mantra, O goddess,
will obtain the great fruit born of mantras, without a doubt. // *ŚāSt* 18 //⁴⁰³

In other words, reciting or even hearing this *stotra* bestows the benefits of repeating her mantra because this mantra is encoded in its verses. In this way this poem elides some of the boundaries between mantras and *stotras*, making the former—which requires initiation for their esoteric practice—more accessible through the devotional recitation of the latter. Moreover, encoding Śārikā's mantra in this way also allowed for its transmission to other members of Sāhib Kaul's community. The *Śārikāstava* thereby reflects not only the Kauls'

⁴⁰¹ *jñānasvāmi prāptasadbuddhisāraḥ jñātajñeyaḥ sarvataḥ svātmabhāvī / stotraṃ mantroddhāryadaḥ śārikāyāḥ sāhibkaulo vaṃśadevyāś cakāra // ŚāSt 17 //*

⁴⁰² The poet says that “he, Sāhib Kaul, composed this hymn to his lineage deity, the goddess Śārikā, which [provides the means for] constructing her mantra” (*stotraṃ mantroddhāryadaḥ śārikāyāḥ sāhibkaulo vaṃśadevyāś cakāra; ŚāSt 17cd*).

⁴⁰³ *yo vāpy etaṃ kīrtayet stotraṃ ādhyam samyagbhaktyā śroṣyati śrāvayed vā / nirmantro 'pi prāpnuyād devadevi niḥsandehaṃ mantrajam satphalaṃ saḥ // ŚāSt 18 //*

adoption of local Kashmirian religious traditions, but also how Sāhib Kaul used the *stotra* form to make such traditions more accessible.

Another of Sāhib Kaul's hymns, the *Sahajārcanaṣaṣṭikā* (Sixty Verses on Natural Worship) (*SAṢ*), praises and performs a specific type of worship for Śiva. In this worship the identity between Śiva and the worshipper is made manifest, and the external aspects of ritual worship are homologized to non-material virtues:

I worship the supreme lord with that worship
in which the nectar of contemplation is
the water for washing (your) feet, O great god,
self-restraint is the sandalwood,
sexual restraint is the offering of respect,
and quiescence is the pure flower blossoming forth. // *SAṢ* 7 //⁴⁰⁴

He calls this worship *sahaja*, a word which means “natural” or “spontaneous” but has many connotations within Tantric circles.⁴⁰⁵ It is a central term for Sāhib Kaul and occurs in many of his works. In the *Saccidānandakandalī*, for instance, he goes through the six parts of Śaiva yoga, praying that each may be *sahaja* and express the non-duality between the speaker and Śiva.⁴⁰⁶ In the *SAṢ*, he says there is no other means (*upāya*) than this supreme, natural worship (*paramāṃ sahajāṃ saparyāṃ*) (v. 23). It brings about all desired fruits:

The mind becomes tranquil, the fear of death dissipates,
knowledge arises, and the intellect becomes certain.
Fruitless thought constructs that have formed dissolve away.

⁴⁰⁴ *pādyaṃ vicārasuraso 'sti maheśa yatra dāntiś ca candanam athoparatir mahārghyam | yatrāsti śāntir amalaṃ kusumaṃ praphullaṃ tenārcanena parameśvaram arcayāmi // SAṢ 7 //*

⁴⁰⁵ Sāhib Kaul's family roots in eastern India may also have encouraged his emphasis on the concept of *sahaja*, since it was a major theme for the Tantric Sahajīya Vaiṣṇavism from that region. But the term *sahaja* is prominent in many contexts, including the devotional poetry of northern poets like Kabir.

⁴⁰⁶ *Saccidānandakandalī* vv. 92-97.

What is not obtained through your natural worship? // SAṢ 45 //⁴⁰⁷

In particular, it leads the state of bliss beyond normal limitations:

I sing, I dance without restraint, I am happy,
I relish the supreme, indescribable taste (*rasa*).
Everything is the same for me whether I cry or laugh—
all through the power of your natural worship, O lord. // SAṢ 50 //⁴⁰⁸

The SAṢ praises both Śiva and his true worship, which consists in the natural identification between worshipper and the one being worshipped. Moreover, this hymn performs this worship by praising and glorifying Śiva while establishing this identification.

While Sāhib Kaul may rhetorically question the logic of praise poetry itself, just as many authors did before him, he asserts that the natural worship of Śiva, which consists simply in identification with Śiva, is praised in all speech:

There is no place separate from it,
no speech that does not praise it,
no thought that does not produce it.
It is this natural worship that I constantly perform. // SAṢ 12 //⁴⁰⁹

In other words, this worship occurs spontaneously at all times, in all places, in all speech. It is ongoing and natural to everything; it is *sahaja*. As a whole, this hymn reflects upon the nature of non-dualistic worship but also demonstrates this same worship through its verses.

⁴⁰⁷ *cittaṃ prasādati kṛtāntabhayaṃ vyapaiti vidyā ca siddhyati suniścayam eti buddhiḥ / dūraṃ galanti kalitā viphalā vikalpāḥ kiṃ kiṃ bhaven na bhavataḥ saḥajārcanena // SAṢ 45 //*

⁴⁰⁸ *gītaṃ ca nṛttaṃ amitaṃ ca karomi tuṣṭaḥ pūrṇaṃ rasaṃ ca rasayāmi kam apy avācyam / sarvaṃ samaṃ ca nanu rodimi vā hasāmi samyak taveśa saḥajārcanavaibhavana // SAṢ 50 //* Such verses echo the poetry of Utpaladeva, which also lists various psychological states and enthusiastic activities that spring from a state of devotional bliss.

⁴⁰⁹ *deśo na kaś cid api yadvyatiriktarūpo vāṇī na kācid api yatstutiriktabhāvā / śaṣpīkṛtendravibhavaḥ khalu tatpadasthaḥ so 'haṃ śivārcanaparo viharāmi nityam // SAṢ 12 //* Em. *yatstutiriktabhāvā*; Ed. *yat stutiriktabhāvā*.

While the content and variety of Sāhib Kaul’s hymns are often striking, their poetic features are less distinctive. Like most *stotras* from Kashmir, they often incorporate literary figures such as alliteration⁴¹⁰ and “apparent contradiction” (*virodhābhāsa*). Consider this example from the *Saccidānandakandalī*, which uses words derived from the root $\sqrt{dhṛ}$ in four different ways:

When I fix (*dhārayāmi*) my heart on you
 who are the support for all (*sarvādhāraṃ*)
 (and yet) beyond all support (*nirādhāra*),
 then, being beyond contemplation (*dhāraṇātītaḥ*),
 established in *samādhi*, I am every joyful. // SCĀK 42 //⁴¹¹

The verse describes Śiva as both *sarvādhāra* and *nirādhāra*, adjectives that appear contradictory until properly interpreted. At the same time the speaker says that he holds or fixes upon (*dhārayāmi*) Śiva in the heart in order to go beyond *dhāraṇā* to *samādhi*—a reference to the stages of six-part (*ṣaḍaṅga*) Śaiva yoga. The apparent contradictions involved in the use of these four different words derived from the root $\sqrt{dhṛ}$ amplifies the praise and glorification of Śiva by suggesting his wondrous or astonishing nature that seems to encompass various paradoxes. While such literary figures are found throughout Sāhib Kaul’s poems, they are not as prominent as they are in his *Devīnāmavilāsa* and they seem secondary to the other kinds of creative features in these poems discussed above.

Like earlier *stotras* from Kashmir, Sāhib Kaul’s hymns occasionally use terms that are prominent in Sanskrit aesthetics in ambiguous ways. In Chapter Three I discuss the

⁴¹⁰ E.g., *Citsphārasārādvaya* v. 164d; *Saccidānandakandalī* vv. 2-3, 36, 41.

⁴¹¹ *Sarvādhāraṃ nirādhāraṃ dhārayāmi hṛdā yadā / tvāṃ tadā dhāraṇātītaḥ samādhistaḥ sukṛtī sadā // SCĀK 42 //*

ambiguous use of the term *bhaktirasa* within several early texts, and in the seventeenth century this tradition continued. Thus in the *SCĀK* we find:

O you whose great power is pleasing
 through the fullness of being, consciousness, and bliss,
 once the stream of nectar that is your devotion (*tvadbhaktirasaniṣyanda*)
 has been tasted (*āsvādyā*), nothing else is pleasing! // *SCĀK* 26 //⁴¹²

Such usage had become standard by this time, so here it marks only the continued appeal of this set of metaphors for talking about the experience of devotion in the context of praise poetry.

In summary, Sāhib Kaul's *stotras* show both continuity and innovation within the history of *stotras* in Kashmir. While they are not particularly striking as poetry, their experimentation with the possibilities of the *stotra* form demonstrates much poetic creativity. They are part of Sāhib Kaul's assimilation of a Kashmirian heritage and facilitate the transmission of various teachings. They boldly embrace the unique logic of non-dualistic praise, and seem to serve as a means of assimilating the theology of non-duality into one's own experience. More than anything, the choice of this prominent scholar and teacher in the 17th century to compose texts within the flexible *stotra* genre suggests its continued appeal as a religious and literary form in Kashmir.

A Few Observations on the Period after Sāhib Kaul

A number of other authors in Sāhib Kaul's tradition composed *stotras*. According to Sanderson these include:

⁴¹² *saccidānandasandohasundarāmandavaibhava / tvadbhaktirasaniṣyandam āsvādyānyan na rocate // SCĀK 26 //*

the *Gurubhaktistotra* and *Gurustuti* of his pupil Cidrūpa Kaul, the *Sadānandalāsyā* of Sadānanda Kaul, another of his pupils, the *Bhairavīśaktistotra* (modeled on Abhinavagupta's *Bhairavastotra*, the *Śrīnāthastotra* and *Tripurasundarīstotra* of Gaṇeśa Bhaṭṭāraka, the *Gurustotra* of Jyotiṣprakāśa Kaul, and, by Jyotiṣprakāśa Kaul's pupil Govinda Kaul of the Dār lineage (*dāravamśodbhavaḥ*), a commentary (-*padapradīpikā*) on that hymn, a *Gurustutiratnamālā*, and a hymn to Svachandabhairava, the *Svacchandamaheśvarāṣṭaka*, the last another indication of the Kauls' assimilation of the local Śaiva tradition.⁴¹³

In addition to continuing themes found in Sāhib Kaul's work, such as the adaption of local Kashmirian traditions, these hymns emphasize the role of the guru, which continued as a dominant feature of *stotra* literature in the twentieth century.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw major religious developments in Kashmir. From the middle of the nineteenth century onward, the religious culture of Kashmir was greatly influenced by the patronage practices of the Hindu Dogra rulers of Jammu, who ruled Kashmir from 1846-1947. The cult of Rāma was central to this lineage and can be seen most dramatically in the massive Raghunath temple in Jammu. Through practices such as state-sponsored festivals, temple construction and repair, and the commissioning of new texts, the Dogras succeeded in creating strong ties with Hindus in Kashmir that were essential to their political administration (to the detriment of most Muslim communities in the region).⁴¹⁴ One of the developments during this period indebted to the patronage of the Dogra rulers was the consolidation of the tradition surrounding a specific goddess known as Mahārājñī Khīr Bhavānī,⁴¹⁵ which has been charted by Madhu Bazaz Wangu.⁴¹⁶ The ruler

⁴¹³ "Śaiva Exegesis," 410.

⁴¹⁴ See Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁴¹⁵ There are many synonyms or variant spellings, such as Ragnya Kheer Bhawani.

Pratap Singh, apparently responding to recent veneration of a form of the goddess in a natural spring near the village of Tulmul (14 km from Srinagar), sponsored the construction of a temple to the goddess and commissioned the composition of an accompanying text (*māhātmya*) to tell her stories, praise her greatness, and give details about her worship.⁴¹⁷ This goddess remains popular among Kashmiri Hindus to this day.⁴¹⁸ Various hymns to Rājñī or Mahārājñī⁴¹⁹ are found throughout manuscript archives in India, sometimes collected into “five-part” bundles (*pañcāṅga*) that include a frame story in the form of a dialogue (*paṭala*), a ritual manual (*paddhati*), a protective hymn (*kavaca*), a hymn of the thousand names of the goddess (*sahasranāma*), and finally her main *stotra*.⁴²⁰ While such *stotras* are usually anonymous and attributed to such open-ended texts as the

⁴¹⁶ See Madhu Bazaz Wangu, “The Cult of Khir Bhavani: Study, Analysis and Interpretation of a Kashmiri Goddess” (PhD diss., University of Pittsburg, 1988), and also her two subsequent summaries of this work: “Hermeneutics of a Kashmiri *Māhātmyā* Text in Context,” in *Texts in Context: Traditional Hermeneutics in South Asia*, ed. Jeffrey R. Timm (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), and Wangu, *Images of Indian Goddesses: Myths, Meanings and Models* (New Delhi: Abhinava Publications, 2003), 135-152.

⁴¹⁷ Wangu, *Images of Indian Goddesses*, 142-143.

⁴¹⁸ It is one of several local Kashmirian temples or shrines that has been recreated outside of Kashmir in places like Delhi. One can now visit the Khir Bhawani Temple in I.P. Extension, New Delhi. See “Exiled, Pandits build new valley in Delhi” in the Hindustan Times, Manoj Sharma, March 8, 2010: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Exiled-Pandits-build-new-valley-in-Delhi/Article1-516341.aspx>

⁴¹⁹ E.g., *Rājñīstotra*, *Mahārājñīstotra*, *Mahārājñīstavarāja*, *Rāgyīstava*, *Mahārājñībhagavatīstavarāja* and so on (many of which are, no doubt, duplicate names for the same texts). For some sample listings see the catalogues of the Oriental Research Library (Srinagar), the Akhila Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad (Lucknow), and the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (Pune).

⁴²⁰ For example, see the following manuscripts of the *Rājñīdevīpañcāṅga* (said to be from the *Rudrayāmala*) in the archive of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute: No. 250 of A. 1883-84, No. 249 of A. 1883-84, and No. 1142 of 1886-1892 (the latter two are missing the *paddhati*).

Rudrayāmalatantra and the *Bhṛṅgīśasaṃhitā*, they indicate the perceived importance of having *stotras* for a deity—no deity worth his or her salt, whether new or old, lacks hymns of praise devoted to him or her—and the popularity of these hymns outside of the elite world of classical Sanskrit *kāvya*.

In the twentieth century, the popularity of *stotra* literature continued, although new compositions to rival those of earlier poets were not produced. Instead a great deal of energy went into publications, translations, and studies of *stotras*. For instance, Swami Lakshman Joo (1907-1991), the well-known Śaiva guru and scholar from Kashmir, published editions of several *stotras*: Utpaladeva's *Śivastotrāvalī* with a Hindi commentary, the *Sāmbapañcāśikā* with a Hindi commentary, the *Pañcastavī* with Hindi translation, and the *Amṛteśvarabhairavamahimnaḥstotram*.⁴²¹

But perhaps the most interesting development in the twentieth century was the role of *stotras* in the creation of liturgical traditions. *Stotras* have long been collected for personal use, and likely communal use as well, but the twentieth century saw the creation of more formal and publicly available Hindu hymnals (clearly indebted to the institution of the Christian hymnbook) throughout India and also in Hindu communities throughout the world. Swami Lakshman Joo, for example, directly shaped the formation of the hymnal (*Sunday*

⁴²¹ *The Śivastotrāvalī of Utpaladevāchārya, With the Sanskrit Commentary of Kṣemarāja*, ed. (with a Hindi commentary) Rājānaka Lakṣmaṇa (Varanasi: Chaukhamba Amarabharati Prakashan, 2008 [1964]); *Sāmbapañcāśikā with Bhāṣā Tīkā*, ed. Sri Swami Īśvarasvarūpa Ji (Srinagar: Ishwar Ashram Trust, 1976); *Śrī Dharmācāryakṛtā Pañcastavī*, trans. (into Hindi) Śaivācārya Mahātmā Śrī Lakṣmana jī Mahārāja (Delhi: Ishwar Ashram Trust, 2008); *Śrī Amṛteśvara-Bhairava Mahimnastotram*, ed. Īśvarasvarūpa Lakṣmana ji Maharaja (Kashmir: Ishwar Ashram Trust, 1993).

Puja)⁴²² used by his community for weekly worship, which has continued to be developed and republished after his death. *Stotras*, including many that I have discussed in this chapter, are central to this collection. These include: the *Śrīgurustutiḥ* composed by Rameshwar Jha in the mid-twentieth century in honor of Swami Lakshman Joo; the *Dehasthadevatācakrastotram* attributed to Abhinavagupta; the *Kālikāstotra* of Jñānānētra; a collection of unidentified verses that includes six from the *Stutikusumāñjali* of Jagaddhara;⁴²³ the *Kramastotra*;⁴²⁴ the *Bahurūpagarbhastotra*; the *Mahimnahstotra*; Abhinavagupta's *Bhairavastotra*;⁴²⁵ and a devotional composition expressing homage to Swami Lakshman Joo, titled the *Sadgurulakṣmaṇadevasya Aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvalī*. The collection ends with a highly Sanskritic hymn (*ārati*) in Hindi to Swami Lakshman Joo.

These hymns connect this contemporary community with the great poet-teachers of Kashmir's past, particularly Abhinavagupta, and link these with Swami Lakshman Joo as the twentieth-century equivalent. They are accessible, recited by members of the community regardless of their level of comprehension. Reciting from this "Sunday worship" book on a weekly basis surely demands less of the busy, modern devotee than the daily ritual requirements prescribed by the Śaiva scriptures. While many of the *stotras* are theologically dense and thereby suggest the practice of contemplating or assimilating

⁴²² In doing so, Swami Lakshman Joo—like many contemporary Hindus—was surely influenced by Christian models of regular congregational worship with a common hymnal.

⁴²³ *Sunday Puja*, 27-34; *SKA* 1.6, 1.7, and 1.9 are numbered verses 1-3, *SKA* 11.38 is numbered verse 14, and *SKA* 11.32 is numbered verse 15.

⁴²⁴ Not the *Kramastotra* of Abhinavagupta; on this hymn, see Silburn, *Hymnes aux Kālī*, 111-115.

⁴²⁵ It is identified only by its first verse, starting on p. 129.

various aspects of a complex non-dualistic theology, they also constitute a devotional offering. These days the front and center of the main halls in Swami Lakshman Joo's ashrams have a picture of Swamiji himself, and devotees offer flowers before him (and other figures represented throughout the room) at the end of the communal worship. This community, following the teachings of Swami Lakshman Joo, places high value on scholastic engagement with Śaiva theology. And yet it is devotion to the guru, and the identity between the *guru* and Śiva, that is stressed in much modern practice within this community. Thus the *Sadgurulakṣmaṇadevasya Aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvalī* begins:

Homage to you, the beloved guru Lakṣmaṇa!
Homage to you, the beloved guru who is Śiva,
Śiva the guru, supreme Bhairava,
beloved Lakṣmaṇa whose nature is the lord!⁴²⁶

This veneration of the guru and the general orientation of this hymnal reflect one of the major trends within the Śaivism of Kashmir, what Sanderson describes as the gradual “separation of gnosis from ritual.”⁴²⁷ In other words, the theology and exegetical practice based on Śaiva scriptures gradually became disconnected from the rituals and other practices prescribed by these scriptures. Among modern Kashmiri Pandits, ritual life stems primarily from exoteric Smārta traditions and trends within modern Hinduism more generally, rather than from esoteric Śaiva scriptures, even though this community still looks to such scriptures (and more frequently their exegesis by Abhinavagupta, Kṣemarāja and

⁴²⁶ *tubhyaṃ namaḥ śrīgurulakṣmaṇāya / tubhyaṃ namaḥ śrīgurave śivāya / guruve śivāya
puarabhairavāya / īśvarasvarūpāya śrīlakṣmaṇāya // 1 //* (*Sunday Puja*, 113)

⁴²⁷ “Śaiva Exegesis,” 434.

others) for theological authority.⁴²⁸ But they also locate this authority in the guru himself, emphasizing devotion to the guru, as we see in this hymn. Overall, this hymnal suggests that these *stotras* are popular in part because they are a way of engaging on some level with a complex religious heritage that is, at the same time, conducive to the still-evolving guru-centered devotional worship of this community.

Conclusion

Inevitably, such a diverse set of texts from a period spanning the ninth century to the present resists neat conclusions. Yet as I outlined at the start, this overview does offer some general insights into the history of Kashmir's *stotra* literature. We have seen how *stotras* are important intersections for the rich religious and literary developments taking place in Kashmir, a theme that recurs in detail in the following chapters. Various authors, from Ānandavardhana to Nāga to Sāhib Kaul, chose to express, demonstrate, and disseminate their religious visions through creative uses of *stotras*. In part, this is because *stotras* are performative texts that stand between scripture, exegesis, worship, and literature. Their unique structure, involving (usually) the address of a recipient of praise but also an implied or explicit human audience, allows authors to engage with their audiences in creative ways, as in Sāhib Kaul's *Citsphārasārādvaya*. Such hymns demonstrate and reflect upon their own pedagogical potential, and indicate the role *stotras* can play in the dissemination and transmission of a tradition. Moreover, this survey indicates the impressive flexibility of the *stotra* form, which has remained central to its appeal throughout the religious, intellectual,

⁴²⁸ "Hinduism of Kashmir," 126.

and social transformations that have transpired in Kashmir. While the inclination or ability to compose in many genres has waned, the *stotra* form has continued to thrive, invigorated time after time by new compositions.

This overview also illustrates some of the recurring themes and concerns of Kashmirian *stotras*. Many of these hymns are used for literary or theological innovations. While they certainly look back to the rich traditions that preceded them, Kashmirian *stotras* are often challenging compositions that reinvigorate the present with new visions for the future. In general, they are highly self-conscious, reflecting on their own operation as praise-poetry with rhetorical or theological implications. Their ability to express theological complexity even in the midst of praise or worship itself helps to explain their popularity among non-dualistic Śaivas, and perhaps, in part, the gradual success of this theological tradition within Kashmir. Finally, many Kashmirian *stotras* challenge or stretch the conventions of the genre, thriving on its blurry boundaries—something we will see most clearly in Chapter Four. For centuries, therefore, *stotras* have reflected the rich literary and religious traditions of Kashmir while demonstrating a resiliency, creativity, and appeal rooted in the flexibility of this genre.

Chapter Three

Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Non-dualism: *Stotras* and the Eleventh-century Exegesis of Kṣemarāja

In Chapter Two we charted the history of literary hymns in Kashmir, many of which used the *stotra* form to express particular forms of non-dualism. One of the most influential periods in this history was the first half of the eleventh century, when the Kashmirian theologian and scholar Kṣemarāja (fl. 1000-1050)—the most prolific and influential disciple of the great polymath Abhinavagupta—wrote commentaries on many texts popular in Kashmir at the time. Through his exegesis on these texts, Kṣemarāja sought to bring diverse features of religious life in Kashmir into alignment with his own religious tradition. This consisted of a radical Śaiva-Śākta non-dualism inflected primarily by the Pratyabhijñā philosophical and theological tradition, the Trika tradition at the center of the writings of his teacher Abhinavagupta, and the Krama tradition that Kṣemarāja highlights in his own writings.⁴²⁹ Abhinavagupta focused his exegesis on the central scriptures of the Trika tradition (influenced by the language and theology of both the Pratyabhijñā and Krama). But Kṣemarāja extended his own exegesis to the scriptures of two Śaiva cults popular in Kashmir,⁴³⁰ and, more importantly for our purposes, to a number of devotional texts open to

⁴²⁹ For more on these traditions, see the Introduction and Chapter Two. As I note throughout these chapters, Alexis Sanderson’s work remains the definitive reference point for any discussion of these traditions. For the texts and traditions relevant to Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja’s own positions and exegesis, see in particular his lengthy article, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 231-442.

⁴³⁰ Namely, the scriptures of Svachchandabhairava and Amṛteśvarabhairava.

a wider audience of Śaivas, including uninitiated lay practitioners.⁴³¹ Two of these commentaries are on individual hymns: the *Sāmbapañcāśikā* (attributed to Sāmba) and the *Stavacintāmaṇi* of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. A third is on the collection of Utpaladeva's hymns and verses called the *Śivastotrāvalī*. These commentaries can be seen as a subgroup within Kṣemarāja's writings. They present a distinct perspective on a body of *stotra* literature and address issues central to the genre, including the nature of *bhakti*, praise, and prayer, and the relationship between theology, poetry, and poetics. Both the hymns themselves and Kṣemarāja's commentaries engage theological challenges (and opportunities) created by using language to praise a deity in the form of a hymn. As a whole, these hymns and their commentaries offer a valuable starting point for analyzing the relationship between aesthetic reflection and religious expression during the most influential period of Kashmir's history as a hub for the production of religious literature.

The *Sāmbapañcāśikā* (*SP*), *Stavacintāmaṇi* (*StC*), and *Śivastotrāvalī* (*ŚSĀ*) have distinct theological commitments, which I analyze below. But as a commentator, Kṣemarāja seeks to bring this diverse group of texts into alignment with his own particular tradition. This is simpler in some cases than in others. The *ŚSĀ*, for instance, was composed by his own great-grand-teacher, Utpaladeva, and most naturally accords with Kṣemarāja's exegesis. But sometimes Kṣemarāja totally refigures a text, as he does with the *SP*—a work dedicated to the sun-god, rather than to Śiva, Kṣemarāja's central deity. In order to accomplish this refiguration, Kṣemarāja uses consistent hermeneutic strategies that draw on the tradition of Sanskrit poetics.

⁴³¹ Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 427.

Such exegetical projects are certainly not unusual in South Asia. The literary qualities of certain compositions, including *stotras*, provide commentators additional leeway for creative interpretations. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (16th-17th cent.), for instance, used his commentary on the *Mahimnaḥstava*—perhaps the best-known literary hymn to Śiva—to recast the text as a hymn to Viṣṇu. Such interpretations raise challenging questions about how to adjudicate between interpretations, long a contentious issue within hermeneutics and literary theory. In the case of South Asia, Yigal Bronner has discussed at length how one particular literary figure called *śleṣa*—“simultaneous narration,” or conveying two (or more) meanings with one set of syllables—has served as a powerful hermeneutic tool for commentators.⁴³² Some authors use such literary figures to the extreme, multiplying meanings for texts that had previously been understood in singular terms. In other cases, exegesis may serve as a means of enjoying a text. Steven Hopkins argues that in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, “to comment on a text is not so much to dissect it into minute doctrinal particulars, but rather to *reexperience* it” [*italics original*].⁴³³ Yet commentators do not simply appreciate a text as if its meaning and beauty are transparent and readily available. In his own commentaries on the *SP*, *StC*, and *ŚSĀ*, Kṣemarāja takes advantage of the literary features of his root texts to interpret layers of meaning that bring all three into alignment with his own tradition of Śaiva non-dualism. Historically, his project has been largely successful: his commentaries have been highly influential in shaping how later

⁴³² See Yigal Bronner, *Extreme Poetry: The South Asian Movement of Simultaneous Narration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), especially Chapter Six, “*Śleṣa* as Reading Practice,” 155-194.

⁴³³ Hopkins, *Singing the Body of God*, 139.

Kashmiri Hindus and scholars have interpreted these texts. In order to further our understanding of the history of *stotras* in Kashmir, this chapter considers the *SP*, *StC*, and *ŚSĀ* as individual texts. But it also analyzes Kṣemarāja's commentaries as valuable evidence for the reception and interpretation of *stotras* during an influential time in Kashmir's history. In these commentaries, we see Kṣemarāja's use of terms from Sanskrit aesthetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*), his interpretation of key terms such as *bhakti*, and his skillful framing of these hymns within a radical Śaiva non-dualism.

This chapter progresses by analyzing Kṣemarāja's exegesis after and distinct from the text on which he comments. The *Sāmbapañcāśikā* was probably composed earlier than the other texts, but it is the *Stavacintāmaṇi* that offers the most convenient starting point for thinking about these *stotras* and their relationship to Kṣemarāja's commentaries. The other two root texts represent opposite ends of a spectrum. The *Sāmbapañcāśikā* is a Saura text—that is, it is devoted to the sun-god, rather than to Śiva—and therefore Kṣemarāja's commentary uses distinct strategies for recasting the original text. In contrast, the *Śivastotrāvalī* was composed within Kṣemarāja's owned inherited tradition of Śaiva non-dualism. It is also unique in that it is a collection of hymns redacted posthumously, rather than a single, relatively short work. As a whole, these hymns and their commentaries constitute a crucial body of evidence for the trajectory and interpretation of *stotras* in Kashmir.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁴ This chapter has benefitted from a number of conversations with my colleague Ben Williams, currently a PhD candidate at Harvard University. He explores some of the same themes and texts as this chapter in his excellent unpublished paper, "Suggesting Similitude: The Śaiva Poetics of Kṣemarāja" (which engaged questions and texts I discussed in an earlier paper of my own).

The Poetry and Theology of the Stavacintāmaṇi of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa

The *Stavacintāmaṇi* (*StC*)—The Wish-fulfilling Gem of Praise—consists of 120 verses⁴³⁵ in the flexible *anuṣṭubh* meter in praise of Śiva as the supreme god. It was composed by the Kashmirian Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, and we have no other texts by this author.⁴³⁶ Kṣemarāja says that, according to “those who know the history” (*ākhyāyikāvidah*), Parameśvara was the name of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa’s paternal grandfather, Aparājita was his father’s name, Śrīdayā his mother’s, and Śaṃkara his older brother’s.⁴³⁷ His *stotra* is usually dated to the tenth or late ninth century.⁴³⁸ Abhinavagupta quotes it respectfully, so in all likelihood Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was at least his elder contemporary. Since no earlier citations have been identified (so far), Abhinavagupta’s references remain the primary evidence for the *terminus ante quem*.

One tentative connection could shift Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa’s date slightly earlier. In the concluding verses of his commentary, Kṣemarāja mentions that there was an earlier

⁴³⁵ The Kashmir Series in Texts and Studies (KSTS) edition actually contains 121 verses, since there are two different verses numbered 47. All numbering and references to the *StC* and Kṣemarāja’s commentary in this chapter refer to the KSTS edition, unless otherwise noted (*The Stava-Chintāmaṇi of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa with Commentary by Kṣemarāja*, ed. Mukunda Rāma Shāstrī, KSTS No. X [Srinagar: Kashmir Pratap Steam Press, 1918]).

⁴³⁶ The earliest (and majority of) references to the *Stavacintāmaṇi* come from Kashmirian authors, the majority of manuscripts of the text come from Kashmir, and Bhaṭṭa was a common title (and later name) for Kashmirian Brahmans, hence Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was almost certainly from Kashmir. Note that his name is sometimes rendered as Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa or Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa (e.g., in Dyczkowski, *Stanzas on Vibration*, 28, 304, 313n3). Attempts to identify this Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa with other authors bearing similar name have been tentative at best.

⁴³⁷ These identifications are based on Kṣemarāja’s interpretation of puns (*śleṣa*) in the first three verses of the *Stavacintāmaṇi*, discussed below. See *StC*, p. 10.

⁴³⁸ See, for example, Silburn, *La Bhakti*, and *Stavacintāmaṇi of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇ with the Commentary of Kṣemarāja*, trans. Boris Marjanovic (Varanasi: Indica Press, 2011), 19.

commentary on the *StC* by one (Śrī-) Rāma. There is some ambiguity about this Rāma. Some scholars have suggested that he is the same Rāma (also called Rājānaka Rāma and Rāmakaṇṭha) who wrote commentaries on the *Spandakārikā* and *Bhagavadgītā*, composed his own hymn or hymns, and collected and arranged Utpaladeva's poetry into the *Śivastotrāvalī* (if indeed all of these authors are one and the same). If this is the case, then he was a disciple of Utpaladeva (fl. 925-975). This would mean this Rāma wrote in the latter half of the tenth century, so the date of the *StC* could then be pushed back to the middle of the tenth century or earlier. But the identification between these Rāmas is far from certain, and we simply do not have enough evidence (most notably, Rāma's commentary on the *StC*) to decide one way or the other.

As for the *StC*'s *terminus post quem*, we have less certainty.⁴³⁹ There are no definitive clues in the text itself about its relative date. However, *StC* verses 117-8 hint at a theological debate between what were most likely Śaiva Siddhāntins and non-dualist Śaivas. While this allows for no precise dating, it suggests that the *StC* was composed sometime after the rise of non-dualism in Kashmir in the ninth century,⁴⁴⁰ and most likely during the prolific period of learned exegesis and philosophical debate in tenth-century Kashmir.⁴⁴¹ The evidence, therefore, while far from conclusive does point toward the tenth century, or perhaps late ninth century, as the time of the *StC*'s composition.

⁴³⁹ Mark Dyczkowski notes: "As Abhinavagupta quotes this work with reverence, Nārāyaṇa is at least his older contemporary. As no reference to him prior to Abhinavagupta has been traced, there is no certain evidence that Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa predated him" (*Stanzas on Vibration*, 304).

⁴⁴⁰ Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 428.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 427.

We also have some information about how the *StC* may have been used and perceived within elite circles in Kashmir, thanks to the eleventh-century satirical work by Kṣemendra called the *Narmamālā* (Garland of Satire). As we saw in detail in Chapter Two, Kṣemendra contrasts a government official's sanctimonious recitation of the *StC* with his cruel orders to manipulate the political scene in Kashmir. Like most satirists, Kṣemendra frequently uses hyperbole to criticize hypocrisy. Nevertheless, this episode, which only quotes from the *StC* without ever mentioning it by name, indicates that this hymn was familiar to elite political and literary circles in eleventh-century Kashmir. It also suggests that this *stotra* was indeed recited or sung in public or semi-public contexts. The popularity of this hymn most likely derived from its content, which combines appealing literary figures with devotional, exoteric Śaivism.

Over the course of its 120 verses, the *StC* lays out a vision of Śaivism rooted in the Śaiva scriptures (*Āgamas*) but focused on general, devotional practices. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa praises Śiva as the one supreme god, the culmination of all other religious traditions. Often the literary features of the poem support its theological content. For instance, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa suggests wonder at Śiva's paradoxical nature: "(O lord), you fulfill all desires (*kāma*) even though you are beyond all desire (*niṣkāma*)!"⁴⁴² The hymn is full of simple but elegant literary figures, from alliteration to metaphor to apparent contradictions.

Throughout these verses, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa makes reference to various standard features of Śaivism taught in the Śaiva Siddhānta scriptures, such as the defilements (*malas*) that keep

⁴⁴² *niṣkāmayāpi kāmānām anantānaṃ vidhāyine / StC 63ab /*

one bound in limited existence.⁴⁴³ But while Śaiva Siddhānta is a dualistic form of Śaivism, the theology of the *StC* is generally non-dualistic. The poet prays, for instance, to eventually go beyond all dualities by offering whatever he says, thinks, and does to Śiva.⁴⁴⁴ He addresses Śiva throughout the poem as the highest god, the supreme reality (*paramārtha*).⁴⁴⁵ He depicts Śiva as both the ultimate, transcendent reality and an anthropomorphic deity associated with various stories and iconic features, such as his matted hair and trident. Moreover, Śiva is described as supreme consciousness, which, in the end, is no different from one's own Self (*ātmā*).⁴⁴⁶ Śiva, therefore, represents a complex of ideas: an abstract ultimate reality, supreme consciousness, an anthropomorphic deity, and the conscious Self. This Śiva is described as being beyond all dualities (*nirdvanda*) and secondary limiting qualities (*nirupādhi*),⁴⁴⁷ as being omniscient and omnipotent (*sarvajña*, *sarvakṛt*), and as facilitating the arising and withdrawing of the universe through his power, Śakti.⁴⁴⁸ Due to Śiva's own veiling power, ordinary beings experience duality. Thus the poet says:

You create delusion for those
 who are totally bewildered in mundane existence—
 and then you smash it!
 You conceal the non-dual bliss of true knowledge—

⁴⁴³ *StC* v. 76.

⁴⁴⁴ *StC* v. 17.

⁴⁴⁵ *StC* v.11.

⁴⁴⁶ *StC* v. 85.

⁴⁴⁷ *StC* v. 54.

⁴⁴⁸ *StC* v. 31.

and then reveal it!
Homage to you, O lord. // *StC* 71 //⁴⁴⁹

This particular verse is quoted repeatedly by non-dual Śaiva authors to exemplify Śiva’s supreme power. The *StC*, however, does not go into the many detailed and often technical arguments that support these theological positions. But it does present bondage and the experience of duality as functions of ignorance, rather than any ontological bonds, and it depicts liberation as a function of knowledge. In this, the hymn aligns more closely with the stream of non-dualism that emerged in ninth-century Kashmir and that eventually outlived the Śaiva Siddhānta in Kashmir.

While many of the *StC*’s verses praise Śiva in terms of Śaiva theology, as the poem proceeds it places more emphasis on a variety of devotional Śaiva practices. These include the offering of homage, service to Śiva, and, most importantly, devotion and the offering of praise. In part, this may have been a way to appeal to a large lay population of Śaivas in Kashmir in a public way, since other aspects of Śaivism, such as the use of esoteric mantras, were only available to initiates. As ways of connecting to Śiva, general practices like service and praise are far removed from the complex, formalized rituals prescribed by most Śaiva scriptures. Similarly, the *StC* stresses the repetition of Śiva’s names and his exoteric, Purāṇic mantra “*namaḥ śivāya*.”⁴⁵⁰ In one verse, for example, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa extols those who recite this mantra:

“Homage to Śiva, homage to Śiva”—

⁴⁴⁹ *namas te bhavasambhrāntabhrāntim udbhāvya bhindate | jñānānandaṃ ca nirdvandvaṃ deva vṛtvā vivṛṇvate // StC 71 //*

⁴⁵⁰ Although there may be at least one reference to a more specific Tantric mantra, called the *vyomavyāpinī* mantra, in *StC* v. 8.

Those who resort to the power of this mantra,
intent on enjoying Śiva's splendor,
should be praised. // *StC* 20 //⁴⁵¹

Such verses not only offer praise to Śiva; they also celebrate those who offer such praise, and thereby encourage such activity. In this way the text is self-reinforcing. It offers devotional praise and extols the value of this very practice. This is most clear in the hymn's title—the *Stavacintāmaṇi*—which equates the offering of praise-poetry (*stava*) to a wish-fulfilling gem (*cintāmaṇi*, literally a 'thought-gem'). In this way the *StC* promotes the very practices accomplished by the recitation of the *StC* itself.

Overall, the *StC* emphasizes the internal elements of religious practice. Frequently it does this by symbolically interpreting external acts or elements of action, particularly through the use of metaphor. *StC* verse 48 says:

Amazing! O lord,
who among us, from Brahmā down to an insect,
does not have the authority (*adhikriyeta*)
to perform this great rite, your contemplation (*bhāvanā*),
for the sake of liberation? // *StC* 48 //⁴⁵²

The verb “*adhikriyeta*,” suggests having the official authority, qualification or fitness to perform a specific rite, i.e., having the necessary prerequisites. But this verse argues that, unlike Vedic rituals for which only the twice-born are authorized, the contemplation (*bhāvanā*)⁴⁵³ of Śiva is an action open to everyone. Here, external ritual action (*karma*) is

⁴⁵¹ *namo namaḥ śivāyeti mantrasāmarthyam āśritāḥ / ślāghyās te sām̐bhavīm̐ bhūtim upabhokutṃ ya udyatāḥ // StC 20 //*

⁴⁵² *aho mahad idaṃ karma deva tvadbhāvanātmakam / ābrahmakrimi yasmin no muktaye 'dhikriyeta kaḥ // StC 48 //*

⁴⁵³ *Bhāvanā* has a range of meanings. Derived from the causative of the root $\sqrt{bhū}$, “to be,” it literally means “production,” “causing to be or come into being.” In the context of Śaivism it

internalized by being equated with the contemplation of Śiva, and thus it becomes a function of knowledge.⁴⁵⁴ One may still perform external activities, but it is the internal meditation on Śiva that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa praises as the great rite.

The poet explores this relationship between external and internal features of worship throughout the *StC*. He asks, for instance:

When, O lord, will I worship you
with the lamp of knowledge
that burns (even) the wicks that are the impressions made by *saṃsāra*,
moistened by the oil of the defilements? // *StC* 113 //⁴⁵⁵

The verse suggests that the ultimate worship is inner worship, the one done with knowledge, rather than external actions. Again, this does not mean one must necessarily abandon external actions.⁴⁵⁶ Rather, such verses *enhance* such action by correlating them to inner worship.⁴⁵⁷ The hymn thus uses metaphors and other strategies to shift the primary site of worship from the external to the internal, privileging knowledge and devotion over ritual

usually refers to a kind of creative contemplation, but one that leads to the realization or “production” of whatever is contemplated. But Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa also plays upon the fact that *bhāvanā* has a much narrower, technical meaning in the tradition of Vedic hermeneutics (Mīmāṃsā), related to the injunctive power of scriptural language. In this verse, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa suggests moment from the world of Vedic ritual, available only to the elite, to the practice of contemplating Śiva and the world of Śaiva devotion accessible to all. For more on *bhāvanā*, see Pollock, “What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka Saying?”

⁴⁵⁴ Here Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa also plays upon the fact that *karma* came to encompass a wide range of meanings beyond “ritual action.”

⁴⁵⁵ *malatailāktasaṃsāravāsanāvartidāhinā / jñānadīpena deva tvāṃ kadā nu syām upasthitāḥ // StC 113 //*

⁴⁵⁶ As we saw in Kṣemendra’s satire in Chapter Two, the *StC* was apparently recited along with a external features of worship, such as the use of a bell (*NM* v. 1.45).

⁴⁵⁷ Kṣemarāja, however, does make this stronger argument: “with the lamp of knowledge” means “with the lamp that is the knowledge of reality, but not with external flowers and so on” (*tattvāvadbodha eva dīpaḥ tena, na tu bāhyakusumādinā; StC* p. 119).

action. In addition, such verses frame how such external worship should be understood. In this way, the hymn also teaches a non-dualistic approach to religious activity by offering and celebrating its own interpretation of external worship.

Much of the *StC* grapples with the discord between the idea of non-duality and the experience of duality. Thus the poet ponders:

What direction are you not in?
 All time consists of you.
 Even though I understand this, O lord,
 tell me: when will I (really) be with you? // *StC* 56 //⁴⁵⁸

In other words, Śiva encompasses all time and space, so from that perspective there can be no separation from him; Śiva is already attained. But the limited individual, whose full identity with Śiva is concealed, experiences this separation. In fact, most of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's verses focus on the means to overcome this illusory experience of separation, and this highlights some of the dominant features of the *stotra* genre, including devotion, the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, and the acts of poetic praise and prayer. These enunciate the gap between the god and the supplicant, even if there is also a close, intimate connection between them.

The *StC* has no narrative progression per se, but its tone becomes more personal and insistent in its second half.⁴⁵⁹ As I discussed in the Introduction, one of the central features of the *stotra* genre is the direct or indirect address of a hymn's principal subject.

Approximately two-thirds of the verses in the *StC* use second-person pronouns or verb

⁴⁵⁸ *yā yā dik tatra na kvāsi sarvaḥ kālo bhavanmayah / iti labdho 'pi karhi tvaṃ lapsyase nātha kathyatām // StC 56 //*

⁴⁵⁹ See, for instance, *StC* v. 89, quoted below.

forms, and even more contain epithets in the vocative case. These features create the sense of an intimate dialogue between the speaker or singer of the hymn and Śiva as the addressee. But despite this intimacy, they still set up a relationship between the two that articulates a duality. For example, *StC* verse 89 says:

Give me that one state
beyond fear, full of bliss, and imperishable!
Come quickly, lord!
Why are you delaying? // *StC* 89 //⁴⁶⁰

The urgency of this appeal, while pointing to a close connection between the speaker and Śiva, serves to heighten the impression of separation between them, between the “you” and “I” of the text. In this way the *StC* paradoxically presents a non-dualistic theology while focusing on dualistic relationships as the means. It is only key verses, like the penultimate verse of the hymn, that begin to dissolve some of these relationships:

O lord, by your grace
may my speech, my thoughts, my deeds and my body
all be adorned only
by being one with you. // *StC* 119 //⁴⁶¹

Constant identification with Śiva is the goal, yet even this verse relies on the relation between the supplicant and Śiva, and the latter’s favor toward the former.

The *StC* places great importance on *bhakti*, and it too raises the specter of dualism.

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa uses the term *bhakti* thirteen times throughout the *StC*. The most common feature of all these uses is the fact that *bhakti* is efficacious. It is called a wish-fulfilling gem

⁴⁶⁰ *nirbhayaṃ yad yad ānandamayam ekaṃ yad avyayam / padaṃ dehy ehi me deva tūrṇaṃ tat kiṃ pratīkṣase // StC 89 //*

⁴⁶¹ *vacaś cetaś ca kāryaṃ ca śarīraṃ mama yat prabho / tvatprasādena tad bhūyād bhavadbhāvaikabhūṣaṇam // StC 119 //*

(*bhakticintāmaṇi*),⁴⁶² a wish-fulfilling tree (*bhaktikalpapādapa*),⁴⁶³ and a seed that bears endless fruit.⁴⁶⁴ Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa says it is a collyrium that clears the obscuration from the eye of knowledge⁴⁶⁵ and a flame that removes the affliction of darkness, burns up cyclical existence (*saṃsāra*), and illumines the awareness of the lord (*tvadbodhadīpikā*).⁴⁶⁶ And while Śiva produces everything, both pure and impure, Śaiva *bhakti* produces only pure results.⁴⁶⁷ Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa depicts *bhakti* as useful for overcoming the sea monster-like troubles in the ocean of existence,⁴⁶⁸ for obtaining extraordinary powers, sovereignty, and freedom from rebirth,⁴⁶⁹ and for liberation.⁴⁷⁰ The poet suggests in one verse that there are two types of *bhakti*—contrived (*kṛtrima*) and sincere (*akṛtrima*)—but even the former is efficacious:

Your *bhakti*, even if contrived,
yields real, uncontrived (*akṛtrima*) results.
Tell me—what would this *bhakti* produce

⁴⁶² *StC* v. 26 By using the phrase *bhakticintāmaṇi*, which so closely parallels the hymn’s title (*Stavacintāmaṇi*), this verse highlights the close relationship between devotion (*bhakti*) and praise, prayer, and hymns (*stava*).

⁴⁶³ *StC* v. 55.

⁴⁶⁴ *StC* v. 43.

⁴⁶⁵ *StC* v. 88.

⁴⁶⁶ *StC* v. 58.

⁴⁶⁷ *StC* v. 116.

⁴⁶⁸ *StC* v. 26.

⁴⁶⁹ *StC* v. 55.

⁴⁷⁰ *StC* v. 30.

if it were free from pretense? // *StC* 108 //⁴⁷¹

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa suggests that the key difference between these two types of *bhakti* is sincerity—the presence or absence of some kind of pretense or deceit (*chadman*), which calls to mind Kṣemendra’s hypocritical character—and Kṣemarāja explains that artificial *bhakti* is accomplished through external worship, meditation, mantra repetition, and so on.⁴⁷² While no single translation of the term *bhakti* will come close to conveying the richness of its multiple, overlapping meanings, translating it as devotion in these verses does seem to be reasonable. Devotion can be contrived, in the form of external, perfunctory motions; but “real, uncontrived” *bhakti* refers to some kind of inner state or experience in relation to Śiva, which can be expressed through words and characterizes verses of praise and homage, and in fact the *StC* itself is called the abode for a wealth of devotion (*bhaktīlakṣmyālayam*).⁴⁷³

In one respect, however, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa’s usage of the term *bhakti* requires more thought. In two verses he uses the phrase “*bhaktirasa*.”⁴⁷⁴ *Rasa* is famously difficult to translate with a single word, and in various contexts its meanings include sap, juice, water, nectar, flavor, mercury, pleasure—and aesthetic sentiment. Thus Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa’s use of the phrase *bhaktirasa* raises the question—to what extent does it have aesthetic significance here? In other words, what is its relationship to *bhaktirasa* as a technical term, namely, the

⁴⁷¹ *kṛtrimāpi bhavadbhaktir akṛtrimaphalodayā / niśchadmā ced bhaved eṣā kiṃphaleti tvayocyatām*
// *StC* 108 //

⁴⁷² *StC*, pp. 114-5.

⁴⁷³ *StC* v. 120.

⁴⁷⁴ *StC* vv. 50 and 68.

aesthetic “flavor” or “sentiment” of devotion as a specific and contested category within Sanskrit aesthetics?

Before addressing this issue and introducing the relevant verses, let us review the relevant history. It is well known that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* only mentions eight *rasas*, and a ninth, *śāntarasa* was accepted later by many authors. Yet there was far from consensus, and the position of *bhakti* in aesthetic discourse was a blurry and contested issue.⁴⁷⁵

Abhinavagupta, whose *Dhvanyālokalocana*⁴⁷⁶ came to dominate much aesthetic discourse in South Asia, did not accept *bhakti* as a distinct *rasa*. Rather, he argues that *bhakti* supports—and is subsumed within—*śāntarasa*.⁴⁷⁷ If Abhinavagupta went to the trouble to argue against *bhakti* as an independent *rasa*, then it is more than likely that some predecessor had espoused exactly this position. The importance of *bhakti* as a category in aesthetics may have been on the rise (as the *stotras* discussed in this chapter suggest), and Abhinavagupta must have considered it necessary to argue against its status as an independent *rasa*. Later authors, beginning with Bopadeva and Hemādri in the *Bhāgavatamuktāphala* and its commentary, the *Kaivalyadīpika*, criticized Abhinavagupta’s position on *bhaktirasa*, a trend that culminated in the major new visions of religious aesthetics developed in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition.

But when we return to the period before Abhinavagupta and his critics, there is a great deal of ambiguity around *bhakti* as an aesthetic category. This brings us to the *StC*.

⁴⁷⁵ For a basic discussion, see Raghavan, *Number of Rasas*.

⁴⁷⁶ His *Abhinavabhāratī* was known far less widely.

⁴⁷⁷ For translations of the relevant sections of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, see Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta’s Philosophy of Aesthetics*, 139 and 143.

The *StC* reflects this ambiguity, and, moreover, tries to assimilate the rich and evolving language of aesthetic discourse into its Śaiva worship and devotion. This is even more true for the *Śivastotrāvalī*, which depicts the experience of the Śaiva devotee using the metaphors and rhetoric developed in the discourse of Sanskrit aesthetics. In the *StC*, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa proclaims:

Such a thousand-fold expansion
of the experience of relishing (*āsvāda*) to the very end
is not seen anywhere other than
the nectar (*pīyūṣa*) of your *bhaktirasa*, O lord. // *StC* 50 //⁴⁷⁸

This verse suggests the primary metaphor of relishing developed within Sanskrit aesthetics, which by the tenth century was centered on the subjective experience of the *audience*, rather than the characters or actors in a play or poem. There are dangers in presenting *bhaktirasa* as a set phrase—a technical term, so to speak—as I have done in my translation of this verse. Perhaps *rasa* here simply refers to the “pleasure” or “flavor” of *bhakti*, or compares *bhakti* to nectar. But more likely, the verse suggests aesthetic discourse, and there are multiple instances of such terminology in these hymns. Elsewhere, for instance, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa refers to those who are “inspired by *bhaktirasa*” (*bhaktirasādhmātās*).⁴⁷⁹ I would argue that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa (and Utpaladeva even more so) depicts *bhaktirasa* as a specific sentiment, the distinctive experience of the Śaiva devotee, particularly in relation to Śaiva devotional poetry. The *stotra* form, with its combination of poetic features and explicitly religious, devotional content, provided a particularly fertile context for assimilating the

⁴⁷⁸ *yāvad uttaram āsvādasahasraguṇavistarah / tvadbhaktirasapīyūṣān nātha nānyatra drśyate // StC 50 //*

⁴⁷⁹ *StC* v. 68.

metaphors of aesthetic terminology into the expression and depiction of Śaiva devotion and worship.

Overall, the *StC* presents a generally accessible Śaivism which may lean toward non-dualism but still highlights the experience of dualism and the means of overcoming it. It emphasizes the internal over the external, knowledge over formalized ritual, but this focus on inner worship can enhance the performance of external worship. Perhaps the central thrust of the hymn is the praise of devotion and praise itself, occasionally mixed with terminology borrowed from Sanskrit aesthetics. Ultimately, as its title suggests, the *StC* celebrates devotional praise to Śiva as the means to fulfill all ends, like a wish-fulfilling gem.

The Stavacintāmaṇivivṛti of Kṣemarāja

As Alexis Sanderson has argued, Kṣemarāja, through his commentaries on several texts, sought to propagate the doctrines of his tradition among a larger constituency, namely, those who were Śaivas by conviction and devotion but who had not necessarily received the formal Śaiva initiation allowing them access to esoteric Śaiva scriptures and the rituals they prescribed.⁴⁸⁰ In his commentary (*vivṛti*) on the *StC*, Kṣemarāja uses several hermeneutic strategies to bring this hymn into accord with his larger exegetical project. While these strategies overlap, they nevertheless can be productively disaggregated. His standard approach is to give technical and sectarian interpretations of most verses, aligning them more closely with the complex theology of his own tradition. In doing so he privileges an

⁴⁸⁰ “Śaiva Exegesis,” 399.

esoteric understanding of the text. Second, he consistently makes the underlying non-duality he sees in the text come to the fore, particularly in his analysis of *bhakti* and praise, which might otherwise suggest duality. Lastly, he discusses the poetic features of the text and incorporates terminology from the discourse of Sanskrit aesthetics into his commentary. Most often, these ways of reading make explicit what was only implicit or ambiguous in the *StC* itself.

The *StC*, as we have seen, is not a particularly technical or sectarian poem, focusing instead on practices and concepts accessible to a larger audience of Śaiva devotees. While it espouses a non-dual theology, the religious practices and ideas it depicts remain relatively exoteric, without assuming prior knowledge of technical Śaiva scriptures or rituals. But Kṣemarāja presents the *StC* as having a more fixed and esoteric meaning that accords with his own tradition, a practice that is consistent throughout his many commentaries. This approach is apparent in his lengthy exposition of the first verse of the *StC*, which mentions the level of speech known as “*paśyantī*,” the “seeing” word. The grammarian and philosopher Bhartṛhari, who argued for *paśyantī* as the third and final level of speech, was criticized harshly by non-dual Śaiva philosophers in Kashmir, who proposed a fourth level identical with the supreme transcendent reality (*parā vāk*).⁴⁸¹ It is unclear whether Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa intended *paśyantī* as the third and highest level of speech or assumed a fourth level of supreme speech, but Kṣemarāja assumes the latter and interprets the verse in terms of four levels of speech (*parā vāk*, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā*, and *vaikharī*). Moreover, he correlates these four stages with another set developed within the Trika tradition, namely the

⁴⁸¹ For a description of this debate, see Nemeč, *The Ubiquitous Śiva*, 59-64.

seven levels of perceivers (*pramātr*).⁴⁸² The details of these technical sets and their correlation are not relevant in the present context. What is important is that Kṣemarāja locks in a technical meaning for Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's ambiguous reference to a well-known level of speech, and goes even further by integrating it into a larger theological system, even though the *StC* itself gives little or no support for this move. Such sectarian and technical aspects of Kṣemarāja's commentary are more esoteric than the *StC* itself and in all likelihood not intended for the average lay Śaiva devotee. In this way, Kṣemarāja repeatedly reframes the *StC* as having fixed, sectarian, and esoteric meanings.

In tandem with this approach to the text, Kṣemarāja consistently emphasizes the non-dual theology he sees underlying the *StC*. He does this in a variety of ways, including the kind of expositions I have already mentioned. But the most important and pervasive interpretive tool in Kṣemarāja's commentary on all three of the texts under discussion in this chapter is the concept of *samāveśa*. He uses it throughout these commentaries to interpret and emphasize the non-dualistic nature of almost every aspect of these hymns. Scholars have recognized the general importance of this term before, and they have charted some of its crucial evolutions.⁴⁸³ In Śaiva and Śākta scriptures the term (and more frequently the closely related term *āveśa*) referred to possession *by* something, such as possession by

⁴⁸² *StC* pp. 2-5. On the seven perceivers and the Trika tradition, see Vasudeva, *Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra*, especially 151-178.

⁴⁸³ See in particular: Torella, *ĪPK*, xxxii-iii; Christopher Wallis, "The Descent of Power: Possession, Mysticism, and Initiation in the Śaiva Theology of Abhinavagupta," in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 36 (2) (2008); and Frederick Smith, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), *passim*.

goddesses or *yoginīs* in some Kula contexts.⁴⁸⁴ But during the development of non-dualistic Śaiva (and Śākta-Śaiva) exegesis in Kashmir, the meaning was expanded to include both the transitive and intransitive sense of the root $\sqrt{viś}$, i.e., ‘to enter, to penetrate’ and ‘to be entered, to be penetrated, to be possessed.’⁴⁸⁵ Thus for authors like Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta, and Kṣemarāja, *samāveśa* refers to the *inter*-possession or interpenetration between the Śaiva devotee’s own consciousness and Śiva.⁴⁸⁶ Thus it can mean immersion or absorption, which suggests unity, rather than possession, which implies multiple entities.

The specific significance of *samāveśa* in Kṣemarāja’s commentaries, however, and especially in *stotras*, has not been fully appreciated. For Kṣemarāja, *samāveśa* (and less frequently *āveśa*, which he almost always uses interchangeably) is the most efficient hermeneutic tool for casting almost any external or internal action in a non-dualistic light. He introduces Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa’s first verse by saying that “here, at the beginning of this *stotra*, the poet [...], in order to reflect on absorption in the nature of Parameśvara, the supreme reality that is one’s own self, even in the midst of daily life, says” this verse.⁴⁸⁷ Elsewhere, when Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa says “we praise,” Kṣemarāja glosses it as “we become absorbed in the nature of Śiva, the possessor of Śakti, preceded by absorption in the reflexive awareness of that,” or else simply as “we become absorbed in.” Similarly, when

⁴⁸⁴ Wallis, “Descent of Power.”

⁴⁸⁵ Torella, *ĪPK*, xxxii.

⁴⁸⁶ For an example of Abhinavagupta’s interpretation of *bhakti* and worship in terms of *samāveśa*, see Bettina Bäumer, *Abhinavagupta’s Hermeneutics of the Absolute: An Interpretation of his Parātriśikā Vivaraṇa* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2011), 252-253.

⁴⁸⁷ *iha stotrāḍau stotrakāraḥ [...] svātmaparamārthaparameśvarasvarūpasamāveśaṃ vyutthāne vimraṣṭum āha; StC*, p. 2.

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa offers “homage,” Kṣemarāja interprets it as “we become absorbed by means of a subjugation of our body and so on,” and when the poet expresses hope that “we might perceive” Śiva, his commentator explains that “we become absorbed in” Śiva.⁴⁸⁸ Basically, the term *samāveśa* enables Kṣemarāja to cast anything in non-dualistic terms, from homage to praise to devotion. At the end of his commentary on the final verse of the *StC*, he marks *samāveśa* as the supreme wealth (*lakṣmī*) embraced by devotees by means of listening to and reciting this *stotra*.⁴⁸⁹ Overall, *samāveśa* serves as a kind of global gloss on the text, a flexible concept that summarizes his overarching interpretation of the text and can also be applied to a wide variety of acts or states to depict them as inherently non-dualistic.

One of the major concepts in the *StC* that has a potentially dualistic meaning is *bhakti*. Kṣemarāja makes *bhakti* a central part of his commentary. He frequently introduces Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa’s verses by referring to it in some way. For instance, he describes the poet as having an abundance of *bhakti* (*bhaktiyudreka*), being absorbed in *bhakti* (*bhaktibharāviṣṭa*) and impelled by *bhakti* (*bhaktibharocchalita*).⁴⁹⁰ In general, his commentary stresses that *bhakti* is a cause (*hetu*)⁴⁹¹ or effective means of obtaining various goals, following the emphasis of the *StC* itself. While occasionally Kṣemarāja stresses the non-duality of *bhakti*

⁴⁸⁸ *stumaḥ tadvimarśāveśapurāḥsaraṃ śaktimatsvarūpaṃ samāviśāmaḥ*, *StC* p. 17; *stumaḥ samāviśāmaḥ*, *StC* p. 43; *namas śarīrādīprahvībhāvayuktyā tad eva tattvaṃ samāviśāmaḥ*, *StC* pp. 7-8; *paśyema samāviśema*, *StC* p. 22.

⁴⁸⁹ *StC*, p. 129. He actually says “by listening, reciting, and so on” (*etatstotraśravaṇapaṭhanādīnā*); presumably he means reflecting on the *stotra*, since he mentions this near the end of his commentary on the *Sāmbapañcāśikā* (*etatstotrapāṭhāvamarsābhyām*; p. 31).

⁴⁹⁰ *StC*, pp. 22, 33, and 98.

⁴⁹¹ E.g., in his commentary on *StC* v. 101, p. 107.

itself (something much more common in his other commentaries discussed in this chapter), more often he focuses on how it produces great results, especially the realization of oneness with Śiva. Thus when *StC* verse 43 compares *bhakti* to a seed whose fruits are endless, Kṣemarāja explains that as the fruit of this *bhakti* one obtains oneness with Śiva.⁴⁹² Elsewhere he says that the poet prays for *bhakti* alone, out of a desire to obtain the highest perfection from the lord, and shows through his homage to Śiva that *bhakti* culminates in the highest perfection.⁴⁹³ When Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa describes the obtainment of extraordinary powers, sovereignty, and the cessation of rebirth as the sprouts on the wish-fulfilling tree of *bhakti*, Kṣemarāja clarifies that they are only nascent buds, not full-blown flowers or fruits. The flower of this tree is identity with Śiva's Śakti, and the fruit is identity with Śiva himself.⁴⁹⁴ Finally, Kṣemarāja goes so far as to claim that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa shows that *bhakti* is superior even to Parameśvara. This is a rhetorical claim based on *StC* v. 116, which says:

You yourself produce everything,
both auspicious and inauspicious.
But your *bhakti*, O lord,
only produces the auspicious. // *StC* 116 //⁴⁹⁵

According to Kṣemarāja, “the auspicious” means that which manifests unity with Śiva.⁴⁹⁶ In other words, while *bhakti* might seem to imply duality, Kṣemarāja explains that it leads to

⁴⁹² *tvadaikyāvāptirūpaṃ phalaṃ yasyām tām; StC* p. 52.

⁴⁹³ Introduction and commentary on *StC* v. 99, p. 106.

⁴⁹⁴ On *StC* v. 55, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁹⁵ *śubhāśubhasya sarvasya svayaṃ kartā bhavān api / bhavadbhaktis tu jananī śubhasyaiveśa kevalam // StC 116 //*

the realization of non-duality. Thus Kṣemarāja follows the *StC*'s presentation of *bhakti* as an effective means, but stresses that the ultimate result of this *bhakti* is the state of identity with Śiva.

Finally, Kṣemarāja's commentary also addresses the poetic language and literary figures in the *StC*. This is a significant aspect of his commentary. On the most basic level, the poetic features of this hymn enable him to interpret the text in multiple ways, thereby giving him the interpretive space to frame the text according to his own tradition. His commentary privileges an esoteric Śaiva explanation of each verse, spending most of its time giving an exposition steeped in non-dualistic Śaiva theology. The last part of his commentary on a given verse, however, often includes some mention of the poetic features of the text. If the verse contains a suggested comparison, for instance, he briefly explains this at the end of his commentary on that verse. This latter interpretation is sometimes referred to as external or exoteric (*bāhya*). His commentary on *StC* v. 51, for example, first glosses the verse according to an inner or esoteric method of interpretation (*āntareṇa krameṇārthaḥ*), and then according to an external or exoteric one (*bāhyena*).⁴⁹⁷ In general, Kṣemarāja downplays the poetic meanings of the *StC* in favor of his interpretation of its internalized, esoteric Śaiva meaning. Nevertheless, he does pay some attention to the poetic elements of the text, interpreting them according to classical Sanskrit poetics. Such analysis

⁴⁹⁶ *bhavadbhaktis tu tvadabhedaprathātmanaḥ śubhasyaiva paraṃ jananī*; *StC*, p. 122.

⁴⁹⁷ For example, the verse describes Śiva as *upasamhṛtakāmāya*, "he by whom *kāma*[s] have been destroyed;" Kṣemarāja first explains this means Śiva is without any desires (*kāma*) because he is perpetually satisfied from relishing his own inner bliss (*svānandacamatkāranīyatṛptaḥ*), and only later explains that Śiva is also the destroyer of Kāmadeva, the god of love (*dagdhamanmathāya*) (*StC*, pp. 60-61).

opens the text to multiple levels of interpretation, which becomes particularly important in his commentary on the *Sāmbapañcāśikā*.

Kṣemarāja also uses the poetic elements of the hymn to make specific theological points. At the end of his commentary on the third verse, for example, he claims that the first three verses of the *StC* use *śleṣa* to encode the names of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa’s family members. The first verse of the *Stavacintāmaṇi* praises Parameśvara, the supreme lord. The second verse praises Aparājita, “the unconquered one,” an epithet applicable to Śiva, whose fullness unfolds through his splendour (*śrī*) and compassion (*dayā*).⁴⁹⁸ In the third verse, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa pays homage to Śaṅkara, another name for Śiva. Many of the words in these first verses are rich with possible associations, and Kṣemarāja unsurprisingly spends a long time unpacking what he presents as the most important meaning of these verses. At the end of his lengthy commentary on verse three, he explains that, according to “those who know the history” (*ākhyāyikāvidah*), Parameśvara was the name of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa’s paternal grandfather, Aparājita was his father’s name, Śrīdayā his mother’s, and Śaṅkara his older brother’s. Thus the first three verses were also praising his grandfather, his father and mother together, and his elder brother, respectively.⁴⁹⁹ As Kṣemarāja explains: “this praise (*stuti*) is also for his family members, who are immersed in non-duality with the supreme

⁴⁹⁸ The phrase *śrīdayā* is actually part of a larger compound (*śrīdayābodhaparamānandasamṣpadā*), which Kṣemarāja, in typical style, interprets in terms of Śiva’s five powers (*śaktis*) (*StC*, pp. 6-7).

⁴⁹⁹ Other authors in medieval Kashmir, notably Abhinavagupta, also use *śleṣa* in the opening verses of non-dualistic texts to praise respected family members. See, for example, Alexis Sanderson, “A Commentary on the Opening Verses of the *Tantrasāra* of Abhinavagupta,” in *Sāmarasya: Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy, and Interreligious Dialogue in Honour of Bettina Bäumer*, ed. Sadananda Das and Ernst Furlinger (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2005), 89-148.

lord.”⁵⁰⁰ In this way, the double meaning of these words embodies the unity or identity understood as the reality underlying apparent differences; the poetic “embrace” (*śleṣa*) of two meanings parallels the embrace between these individuals and Śiva. In poetry, *śleṣa* can demonstrate a non-dualism that theological expositions can only talk about.

Kṣemarāja’s interpretation of *śleṣa* in these first verses (whether it is historically true or not) helps to praise and establish a specific theological position—in this case, the identification between true Śaiva devotees and Śiva.

Kṣemarāja offers a formal analysis and classification of the poetic features of the *StC* in his commentary on many verses. This is not, however, the only way that he uses the language of poetics. Often he invokes central terms from Sanskrit aesthetics related to the aesthetic experience of a poem or drama’s audience. We have already seen the ambiguous use of the term “*bhaktirasa*” in the *StC* itself. For Kṣemarāja, true *rasa* refers to the blissful experience of the Śaiva devotee, rather than to that of the aesthetic connoisseur. Hence he characterizes “your *bhaktirasa*” as “consisting of absorption” (*samāveśātmā*).⁵⁰¹ He explicitly says that *StC* v. 48 suggests *adbhutarasa*, the wondrous *rasa*.⁵⁰² This refers to the experience of devotees who are amazed by the power of the lord, since he makes everyone, from an insect to Brahmā, eligible for the contemplation on him that leads to liberation.⁵⁰³

The metaphor of relishing or savoring (*camatkāra*, *āsvāda*, and related words) is also central

⁵⁰⁰ *tataḥ teṣāṃ api parameśvarābheda bhājām iyaṃ stutiḥ, iti ākhyāyikāvidah; StC*, p. 10.

⁵⁰¹ On *StC* v. 50, p. 190.

⁵⁰² *adbhutaraso dhvanyate; StC*, p. 188.

⁵⁰³ This full verse is translated above.

in his commentary. When Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa praises those who are “eager to enjoy Śiva’s majesty” (*śāmbhavīm bhūtim upabhoktuṃ ya udyatāḥ*), Kṣemarāja glosses “to enjoy” as “to relish without differentiation from one’s own self” (*svātmābhedenā camatkartum*).⁵⁰⁴ In such instances, Kṣemarāja adopts the metaphors of Sanskrit aesthetics—specifically, the metaphor of certain experiences being like the relishing of a flavor or taste that produces joy or bliss—but he leaves aside the essential feature of the aesthetic experience: the demarcation of an aesthetic realm, distinct from normal experience, through a variety of elements (a stage, costumes, poetic language, etc.). Kṣemarāja uses terms like *camatkāra* and *rasa* in the context of poetry, where one might expect them, but for him they refer to the blissful experience of the Śaiva devotee.

At the same time, Kṣemarāja also uses aesthetic language to characterize the experience of Śiva himself. His commentary is based on a non-dualistic theology that seeks to reinterpret anything that might be seen as creating a division between the individual and Śiva. But it also follows the emphasis of the *StC* itself and concentrates on the experience of the individual. Occasionally, both Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and Kṣemarāja suggest that Śiva is the ultimate agent and enjoyer. In *StC* v. 63, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa pays homage to Śiva as the enjoyer of the universe in general terms (*bhoktre*); Kṣemarāja specifies that Śiva is the “relisher” (*camatkartre*).⁵⁰⁵ When Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa depicts Śiva united with Umā (even though he has incinerated Kāmadeva and destroys all desires), Kṣemarāja describes Śiva as “immersed in the extraordinary erotic sentiment brought to perfection by the supporting and

⁵⁰⁴ *StC* v. 20 and commentary, pp. 29-30.

⁵⁰⁵ *StC* p. 73.

stimulating factors.”⁵⁰⁶ Thus he uses standard terms from Sanskrit aesthetics to explain the vision of Śiva presented in this hymn. While the majority of Kṣemarāja’s commentary focuses on the experience of the Śaiva devotee, it also applies the terminology of Sanskrit aesthetics to Śiva himself. This shift in focus from the Śaiva devotee to Śiva himself is not surprising, given the ontological identity between the devotee and Śiva espoused by non-dual Śaivas.⁵⁰⁷

Kṣemarāja’s commentary on the *StC* evinces his basic interpretive strategies in dealing with *stotras*, which combine poetic expression with devotion and prayer. His commentaries on the *Śivastotrāvalī* and *Sāmbapañcāśikā* share many features with his exegesis of the *StC*, but they also have different emphases and objectives that provide additional evidence for the nature and history of *stotras* and their interpretation in Kashmir.

Rethinking the *Śivastotrāvalī* of Utpaladeva

“There are, it is true, everywhere thousands of rivers of beautiful verses, but none of them resembles the divine river of the *Stotrāvalī*.”⁵⁰⁸

This well-known and oft-quoted verse (at least since it was cited by K.C. Pandey in 1963) from the *Śāstraparāmarśa* of Madhurāja testifies to the popularity and fame of the

⁵⁰⁶ *ālambanoddīpanavibhāvasaṃpūrṇāsāmānyaśṛṅgāraniviṣṭatvam*; *StC* v. 51 and commentary, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁰⁷ For a parallel movement in the realm of philosophy, see the opening verses of the *Pratyabhijñārikā*, where Śiva is identified as the supreme knower and agent identical with the limited knower and agent.

⁵⁰⁸ Trans. Torella, *ĪPK*, xlin65; verse from *Śāstraparāmarśa* of Madhurāja (v. 8), cited in Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, 163n3.

Śivastotrāvalī (ŚSĀ), a collection of hymns and verses to Śiva by Utpaladeva (c. 925-975).⁵⁰⁹

Many manuscripts of the text survive, and it has been edited and published numerous times.⁵¹⁰ Swami Lakshman Joo (1907-1991), the Śaiva guru and scholar from Kashmir, published a Hindi gloss on the text in 1964, and his English comments on each verse were edited and published posthumously by his disciples in 2008. The ŚSĀ continues to be recited by Kashmiri Pandits today.⁵¹¹

The text itself did not originally have the form it does now. According to Kṣemarāja, the hymns and individual verses composed by Utpaladeva were redacted at least twice after their composition. In his commentary, Kṣemarāja says (in Sanderson’s translation):

[Utpaladeva] composed the *Samgrahastotra*, *Jayastotra*, and *Bhaktistotra*, and also a number of single-verse poetic hymns for his daily devotions. Some time thereafter Rāma and Ādityarāja received the latter mixed up with the former and then edited them in the form of a series of [multi-verse] hymns. It is reported that Viśvāvarta then [re-]arranged them as twenty hymns with titles of his own invention.⁵¹²

Part of the fame of these hymns derives from Utpaladeva’s renown as a philosopher and theologian, a central figure in an influential tradition of Śaiva non-dualism “that proved to have a pan-Indian appeal and influence that extends from the Kashmir Valley of the tenth

⁵⁰⁹ On this dating, see Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 411.

⁵¹⁰ E.g., Bailly, *Shaiva Devotional Songs of Kashmir* and Lakṣmaṇa, *Śivastotrāvalī of Utpaladevācharya*. My quotations from the ŚSĀ and Kṣemarāja’s commentary, the *Śivastotrāvalīvivṛti* (ŚSĀvi), refer to the latter. Interestingly, there is no edition of the *Śivastotrāvalī* in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies.

⁵¹¹ According to Bettina Bäumer, many Kashmiri Śaivites “recite at least one *stotra* daily” and “know many verses by heart” (“Introduction” to *Śivastotrāvalī of Utpaladeva: A Mystical Hymn of Kashmir*, exposition by Swami Lakshman Joo, transcribed and ed. Ashok Kaul [New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2008], 4).

⁵¹² Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 399-400n563.

century to contemporary times.”⁵¹³ This tradition came to be referred to as the Pratyabhijñā, based on the prominence of “recognition” (*pratyabhijñā*) in Utpaladeva’s formulation⁵¹⁴ of this non-dualistic doctrine—recognition of Śiva as the one supreme lord, who is conscious, dynamic, blissful, and identical with one’s own consciousness.⁵¹⁵ Utpaladeva’s most well-known philosophical/theological composition is the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* (Verses on the Recognition of the Lord), along with his auto-commentary, only partially extant. While his teacher Somānanda has been seen as the founder of this tradition, Utpaladeva’s own work became the normative expression of Pratyabhijñā philosophy.⁵¹⁶

Scholars have long observed the distinct tones Utpaladeva adopts in his philosophical writings and his hymns. The bulk of the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* employs the pan-Indian language of philosophical discourse to argue with its main philosophical opponents, the Buddhists (saving its theological arguments based on scripture to the shorter third and fourth *āhnikas*). The *ŚSĀ*, on the other hand, is a collection of hymns often full of emotion, poetic expressions, and direct, personal addresses to Śiva. In Raffaele Torella’s terms, Utpaladeva “passes from the noetic register of the *ĪPK* to the emotional register of the *bhakti* in the *ŚSĀ*.”⁵¹⁷ Ernst Fūrlinger asserts that “in his hymns, the atmosphere changes

⁵¹³ Nemeč, *The Ubiquitous Śiva*, 3.

⁵¹⁴ It is in Utpaladeva’s formulation of this non-dualism that *pratyabhijñā* gains the prominence it has since retained; the term does not occur with its later technical meaning in Somānanda’s extant work (Torella, *ĪPK*, xx).

⁵¹⁵ For the basic positions of this tradition, see the introductions to Nemeč, *Ubiquitous Śiva*, and Torella, *ĪPK*.

⁵¹⁶ Nemeč, *Ubiquitous Śiva*, 3.

⁵¹⁷ *ĪPK*, xxxi.

completely: here Utpaladeva talks poetically and ecstatically, as a *bhakta* [devotee], free from the controlled character of philosophical argumentation.”⁵¹⁸ Scholars have recognized, of course, that the *ŚSĀ* does address topics found in Utpaladeva’s philosophical works,⁵¹⁹ but as Bettina Bäumer observes:

No attempt has been made so far to relate the philosophical texts of Utpaladeva to his mystical and devotional hymns. The reason is the generally accepted dichotomy between philosophy and devotion, and mysticism is considered too emotional to be mixed with technical philosophy.⁵²⁰

Analyzing Utpaladeva’s body of work as a whole is beyond the scope of this project. But I do want to revise these descriptions of Utpaladeva’s poetry by looking more critically at some of his devotional hymns and verses. As we shall see, the registers of theology and poetry may not be as distinct as one might expect.

According to the standard interpretation, Utpaladeva’s collected *stotras* and verses are “mystical” hymns expressing his “spiritual experiences” of non-duality and devotion. They are often characterized as spontaneous, emotional outpourings.⁵²¹ Such depictions

⁵¹⁸ Ernst Furlinger, *The Touch of Śakti: A Study in Non-dualistic Trika Śaivism of Kashmir* (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2009), 73.

⁵¹⁹ Furlinger, for example, observes that “the *Śivastotrāvalī* also presents many philosophical and theological topics, as for example the relation between the transcendence and the immanence of the Divine,” adding that these topics “do not unfold out of argumentation, but rather arise almost playfully, like haikus” (ibid., 74).

⁵²⁰ Bäumer, “Introduction to *Śivastotrāvalī*,” 5.

⁵²¹ Here is one of Furlinger’s descriptions: “in their conciseness and intensity the hymns seem like spontaneous exclamations with the colours, moods and times of different *rāgas*” (*Touch of Śakti*, 73). Similarly, Bäumer says: “We know that many Indian philosophers have also composed devotional hymns, thus complementing their more dry argumentative philosophical texts. But few of them have attained the spontaneity, the uninhibited outburst of mystical experience, the intensity of feeling, and the immediate touch of personal experience as the *Śivastotrāvalī*...” (“Introduction” to *Śivastotrāvalī*, 2-3); and also: “since most of these verses were the spontaneous outpouring of their author in states of ecstasy and devotional emotion, they do not follow any logical order or, with a few exceptions, a

rightly point out the often personal and intense tone of this poetry and its deep theological undercurrents. Yet interpretations of this rich, influential collection cannot and should not stop here. Utpaladeva does far more than just “spontaneously” express his own “mystical” experience. Such interpretations downplay the potential audiences for his poetry, which is deliberately crafted to complement the pedagogical agenda of his philosophical writings. The evidence we have that Utpaladeva’s devotional poetry is “spontaneous”—beyond a Romantic legacy in the interpretation of poetry—is primarily Utpaladeva’s own depiction of the ecstatic, unrestrained offering of praise within the *ŚSĀ* itself. But this can and should also be interpreted as a specific kind of rhetoric, one that may well be crafted to model and instruct as much as to express. And of course, by composing his devotional poetry, Utpaladeva provides others with a text that can be performed in the manner he depicts in his hymns. Thus it is important to consider the rhetoric he deploys when speaking about devotional activities, and particularly the offering of devotional praise and prayer. Utpaladeva’s poetry does not simply express emotion; it demonstrates and dramatizes the same non-dualism he teaches in his expository treatises. While his philosophical writings aim to persuade his audience with logic and argumentation, his poetry exemplifies his teachings and demonstrates for his human audience how his non-dualistic theology can be implemented in speech. This can be seen in how both Utpaladeva and Kṣemarāja deal with key issues relevant to the study of *stotras*, including poetry and poetics, the acts of praise and prayer, and *bhakti*.

single theme. The irregularity of meters within a *stotra*, or even irregular metres, show that his concern was not poetry (of which he was perfectly capable), but the spontaneous expression of his inner experience, which could not be bound even by the exigencies of Sanskrit metre” (ibid., 3-4).

As one would expect in a collection of *stotras* and individual devotional verses, the *ŚSĀ* is full of praise, both for Śiva and his devotees. Yet it also wrestles with the very possibility of praise and prayer, a rhetorical practice found in many *stotras*.⁵²² Clearly this can be a poetic way of offering even greater praise, but it can also suggest some of the limitations and potentialities of the *stotra* genre itself. For example, when he challenges the point of praising a ubiquitous Śiva who is not separate from that praise or the one who offers, he highlights both the dichotomizing nature of language and its power to point beyond distinctions:

Since there is nothing at all distinct from you,
and even the lords of the universe
are only your manifestations,
there is no need for praise,
even for your amazing deeds. //ŚSĀ 11.4//⁵²³

Elsewhere Utpaladeva suggests Śiva’s ineffable (or nearly ineffable) beauty by claiming that only the very rare person could actually praise Śiva:

[O Śiva,] no one has the power to praise you!
But perhaps someone can, since you are so beautiful.
In any case, this is my constant prayer:
may I ceaselessly behold the lord. // ŚSĀ 18.21 //⁵²⁴

⁵²² Perhaps the most well-known example is the opening section of the *Mahimnasstava*.

⁵²³ *yena naiva bhavato ‘sti vibhinnaṃ kiñcanāpi jagatāṃ prabhavaś ca / tvadvijrmbhitam ato ‘dbhutakarmasv apy udeti na tava stutibandhaḥ // ŚSĀ 11.4 //* Kṣemarāja adds that there is no need for praising Śiva “since there is no difference between the one offering the praise, (the praise itself, and the one being praised)” (*stotrādibhedābhāvān*); in other words, they are all Śiva already (*ŚSĀ*, pp. 153-154).

⁵²⁴ *tvayi na stutiśaktir asti kasyāpy athavāsty eva yato ‘tisundaro ‘si / satataṃ punar arthitaṃ mamaitad yad aviśrānti vilokayeyam īsam // ŚSĀ 18.21 //* This verse has been interpreted in multiple ways. According to Kṣemarāja, only one who recognizes Śiva as one’s own Self is able to describe his great beauty (*ŚSĀ*, p. 323). The second quarter may also suggest that Utpaladeva himself is that “someone” capable of praising Śiva’s great beauty.

Here the poet eschews the challenge of actually praising Śiva by resorting instead to an act of prayer, the wish to perceive Śiva directly.

Of course, despite this occasional rhetoric on the difficulty of praising Śiva, the ŚŚĀ is full of praise. Utpaladeva repeatedly expresses his desire or prayer that he may continue to praise (and worship, glorify, etc.) Śiva. For instance, he says: “may I always offer verses to you” (*upaślokayeyam*), and “may I worship you and sing your praises” (*pūjayeyam abhisamstuvīya*).⁵²⁵ Many of his verses describe or praise Śaiva devotees instead of Śiva himself. Thus according to Utpaladeva, whatever state true devotees may be in, they offer praise to Śiva:

Whether crying or laughing,
these devotees address you loudly,
worshipping you with hymns of praise.
They certainly are unique! // ŚŚĀ 15.3 //⁵²⁶

Such verses hold up these devotees and their actions, and specifically the offering of devotional hymns, as exemplary. This is reinforced by the depiction of the pleasure Śiva takes in such offerings:

Glory to you who delight in offerings
steeped in the *rasa* of devotion (*bhaktirasa*)!
Glory to you who are pleased with the dance-like words
of devotees unrestrained through the intoxication of devotion! // ŚŚĀ 14.10 //⁵²⁷

⁵²⁵ ŚŚĀ 7.7 and 13.20; cf. 18.20.

⁵²⁶ *rudanto vā hasanto vā tvām uccaiḥ pralapanty amī / bhaktāḥ stutipadoccāropacārāḥ pṛthag eva te*
// ŚŚĀ 15.3 //

⁵²⁷ *jaya bhaktirasārdrārdrabhāvopāyanalampaṭa / jaya bhaktimadoddāmabhaktavānnṛtatoṣita* // ŚŚĀ
14.10 //

This is one of many instances in which Utpaladeva links the devotional offering of hymns or prayers with the spontaneity and abandon of intoxication. Such verses have been read too readily as a description of what Utpaladeva himself has done. While he may have composed his verses in a state of unrestrained devotion, as if drunk, the evidence we actually have consists in the descriptions he offers in his poetry. These descriptions cannot simply be read as autobiographical and descriptive; more likely, they are rhetorical or prescriptive. They praise the devotee who offers such devotional poetry with great love and devotion, thereby encouraging and cultivating certain kinds of devotional worship.

One also can see the prescriptive nature of Utpaladeva's poetry in the verses that indirectly argue for the proper use of prayer, and petitionary prayer in particular. A number of verses praise those who do not praise and worship Śiva in order to fulfill mundane requests. For instance:

Bravo! The unique form of worship
of those devotees whose hearts are full of devotion for you,
unsullied by requests, is praiseworthy,
O bestower of boons. // ŚSĀ 17.24 //⁵²⁸

As Kṣemarāja points out, even though Śiva (the “bestower of boons”) grants all wishes, these devotees do not ask him for anything. This is what makes their worship so unique and praiseworthy. Similarly:

Some consider worship as
the wish-fulfilling cow.
Others, turning inward, drink a milk (*rasa*)
that is better than nectar. // ŚSĀ 17.37 //⁵²⁹

⁵²⁸ *aho bhaktibharodāracetasām varada tvayi / slāghyaḥ pūjāvidhiḥ ko 'pi yo na yācñākalaṃkitaḥ // ŚSĀ 17.24 //*

⁵²⁹ *pūjām ke cana manyante dhenuṃ kāmādughām iva / sudhādhārādhikarasām dhayanty antarmukhāḥ pare // ŚSĀ 17.37 //*

In a parallel example, Utpaladeva says that while one could appeal to the wish-fulfilling tree of the gods for mundane requests, Śiva bestows benefits beyond all normal prayers.⁵³⁰ Thus Utpaladeva values prayers and worship that are not rooted in a sense of lack or desire, but rather a sense of fullness based on the realization of identity with Śiva.

In all of this, Utpaladeva is not simply expressing his “spiritual experiences” in an outpouring of emotion. His verses are crafted to guide and teach others how specific theological ideas can be experienced and articulated in language. While his philosophical treatises argue for a radical non-dualism, his poetry models and praises the celebration of this non-duality in speech. Thus the continuity between Utpaladeva’s philosophical works and his poetry lies in his effort to teach his formulation of Śaiva non-dualism. His objective in his poetry remains the same as in his philosophical works, except that his approach is different, since poetry can do things that expository argumentation cannot. As a kind of verbal action it enacts specific theological positions in prayer, worship, and so on. Poetry can be internalized, recited, shared, and enjoyed in ways that expository texts cannot.

Consider this final example of the ŚSĀ’s reflection on speech and praise:

You are beyond mental constructs,
and full of great bliss.
May my speech, praising you,
become the same way! // ŚSĀ 6.4 //⁵³¹

How could speech be beyond conceptualization, beyond dichotomizing mental constructs (*vikalpas*)? Yet here Utpaladeva prays that his praise-poetry gestures toward that supremely

⁵³⁰ ŚSĀ 19.1

⁵³¹ *nirvikalpo mahānandapūrṇo yadvad bhavāms tathā / bhavatstutikarī bhūyād anurūpaiva vān mama // ŚSĀ 6.4 //*

blissful Śiva who is beyond all the normal distinctions created through language. In doing so, he demonstrates the kind of speech that points beyond the limits of language.

Utpaladeva also models a specific kind of *bhakti*. Addressing the nature of *bhakti* in a non-dualistic context is one of the most prominent themes running throughout Utpaladeva's poetry.⁵³² Scholars have rightly noted this centrality. Bäumer, for example, refers to “the emphasis on *bhakti*, repeated again and again,” and “the constant theme of the relationship between *bhakti* and *advaita*” [non-dualism].⁵³³ We have already seen how devotion is part of what Utpaladeva's poetry models for his audiences. ŚSĀ 17.24 extols those devotees who worship without making petitions and whose hearts are full of *bhakti*; ŚSĀ 14.10 describes Śiva as he who is pleased with offerings steeped in devotion and offered with abandon, as if drunk through devotion. A characteristic feature of Utpaladeva's depictions of *bhakti* is this sense of unrestrained ecstasy, like what might come from intoxication. Numerous verses mention the intoxication or madness of *bhakti* (*bhaktimada*), modeling or prescribing specific kinds of behaviors. Consider this verse:

Intoxicated by devotion,
may I rage against the world of *saṃsāra*
and embrace it.
May I laugh and cry and shout out “Śiva!” // ŚSĀ 16.7 //⁵³⁴

⁵³² By my count, he uses the term *bhakti* or *bhakta* almost 150 times in the ŚSĀ.

⁵³³ “Introduction” to *Śivastotrāvalī*, 16, 15. Utpaladeva literally repeats *bhakti*: ŚSĀ 16.24 uses the word four times, while ŚSĀ 16.25 uses it four times in the first hemistich, and once more in the latter.

⁵³⁴ *bhaktikṣīvo 'pi kupyeyaṃ bhavāyānuśayīya ca / tathā haseyaṃ rudyaṃ ca raṭeyaṃ ca śivety alam*
// ŚSĀ 6.4 //

Utpaladeva's prayer depicts and encourages a specific kind of emotional worship, one steeped in devotion and unrestrained as if because of intoxication.

But Utpaladeva envisions *bhakti* as something more nuanced than simply unrestrained emotion and devotion. He presents *bhakti* as something that is both an expedient means and an end in itself, a process to be enjoyed:

For some, worship is only a step, a means of serving
in order to obtain your state.
But for devotees it is the manifestation of repose
in the state of oneness with you.⁵³⁵ // ŚSĀ 17.40 //⁵³⁶

Verses like this one frame *bhakti* in a distinctly non-dualistic way. Various verses hold up *bhakti* as more desirable than asceticism or even liberation, or else redefine liberation as the maturation of devotion.⁵³⁷

Utpaladeva explores the place of *bhakti* in the context of a non-dual theology, and also models and indirectly prescribes a specific kind of devotion, particularly in relation to the offering of prayers and praise poetry. But I think this analysis can go further. *Bhakti* in the ŚSĀ can be understood as a stand-in for a variety of other acts, such as the offering of praise, that may at first look dualistic. In other words, Utpaladeva's careful presentation of *bhakti* suggests to his audiences how they might understand and practice other aspects of religious life. *Bhakti*, therefore, becomes paradigmatic for a non-dualistic approach to religious life.

⁵³⁵ Literally the "flow" or "activity" (*prasara*) of the "final beatitude" (*nirvṛtti*) that is the "state of oneness with you" (*bhavadaikātmya*).

⁵³⁶ *upacārapadaṃ pūjā keṣāṃ cit tvatpadāptaye / bhaktānāṃ bhavadaikātmyanirvṛttiprasaras tu saḥ*
// ŚSĀ 17.40 //

⁵³⁷ See ŚSĀ 15.4, 16.4, and 16.19.

Bhakti is particularly suited for such a role. On a basic level, it involves duality, since whether it is translated as love, devotion, sharing, participation or enjoyment it is based on a relationship between things. Unlike worship, festivals, and other practices and events, *bhakti* is generally recognized as an internal phenomenon, some kind of feeling, stance, or experience, and therefore even if it seems relational and hence dualistic, it is more easily reframed to fit into a non-dualistic framework. For Utpaladeva, *bhakti* does not really mean a relationship between one thing and another. It means an experience of pleasure at a shared state, an essential unity. Thus for Utpaladeva, singing hymns with *bhakti* means offering those hymns while relishing the underlying identity between the deity being praised, the manifest world, and one's own nature. From this perspective, *bhakti* is superior to the standard view of liberation as some kind of ontological state, since *bhakti* is actually the enjoyment of a state that does not need to be obtained, only recognized and realized in every moment.

The way that Utpaladeva depicts the relationship between *bhakti* and Śiva's grace suggests the paradigmatic nature of *bhakti* for Utpaladeva. They are paired, one associated with the devotee, and the other with Śiva:

When will the small amount of favor (*prasāda*)
that exists in the lord
and the bit of *bhakti* that I have obtained
be joined and come to fruition in such a form? // ŚSĀ 8.1 //⁵³⁸

⁵³⁸ *yaḥ prasādalava īśvarasthito yā ca bhaktir iva mām upeyuṣī / tau parasparasamanvitau kadā tādṛṣe vapuṣi rūḍhim eṣyataḥ // ŚSĀ 8.1 //* I have deliberately left the phrase “in such a form/body” (*tādṛṣe vapuṣi*) somewhat ambiguous, since it is in the Sanskrit as well. Bailly takes it as “that unique form—The blissful body of Śiva” (*Shaiva Devotional Songs*, 56). Kṣemarāja glosses it as “one's perfect nature, which is undivided, supreme bliss” (*paramānandaghanataikamaye pūrṇe svarūpe*) (ŚSĀ, p. 105). The verse overall suggests the longing between two young lovers, since the favor (*prasāda*) and devotion (*bhakti*) are grammatically male and female, respectively. Kṣemarāja suggests the comparison to young lovers in his commentary (ŚSĀ, p. 105). Perhaps the best

Similarly:

You are pleased by devotion, O lord,
and devotion arises when you are pleased.
You alone understand how
this mutual dependence is reconciled! // ŚSĀ 16.21 //⁵³⁹

In these verses, *bhakti* is juxtaposed with Śiva's favor. The relationship between these is complex, but Utpaladeva emphasizes the importance of devotion:

Once there is devotion to you,
union with you is certain.
Once a large pitcher of milk has been obtained,
vain is a concern about yoghurt. // ŚSĀ 15.12 // (Bailly's translation)⁵⁴⁰

In this analogy, if we understand it with the previous verse in mind, Śiva's grace is presumably the initial culture that will turn the milk into yoghurt, and this is out of the devotee's control. The devotee only has some influence over the devotion alone, since the lord's will and grace are independent and self-willed. In each of these examples, *bhakti* relates to what the devotee does and experiences, and it is the common link between worship, ritual, festivals, prayer, and so on. Therefore it is important to see *bhakti*'s prominence in the ŚSĀ not simply as a single theme, but as a way of reframing and reinterpreting a host of religious practices.

interpretation of “such a form”, then, is a reference to a union of these two that is so close it is like the union of lovers, or perhaps even like Śiva's form as Ardhanārīśvara. But on the other hand, it is possible that Utpaladeva refers to the coming together of these things while he is in his own human body.

⁵³⁹ *tvam bhaktyā prīyase bhaktiḥ prīte tvayi ca nātha yat / tad anyonyāśrayaṃ yuktaṃ yathā vettha tvam eva tat // ŚSĀ 16.21 //*

⁵⁴⁰ Bailly, *Shaiva Devotional Songs*, 86. *bhavadbhāvaḥ puro bhāvī prāpte tvadbhaktisambhave / labdhe dugdhamahākumbhe hatā dadhani ḡḍhnūtā // ŚSĀ 15.12 //*

Finally, we come to the most striking way that Utpaladeva presents *bhakti*: in connection with *rasa*, in the compound *bhaktirasa*.⁵⁴¹ He does this much more than Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, and once again this usage prompts an investigation into the extent to which Utpaladeva engages the discourse of Sanskrit aesthetics. What is surprising is that secondary literature on the *ŚSĀ* has not addressed this feature of the collection with any depth. The prominence Utpaladeva gives to terminology shared with aesthetic discourse needs more analysis, especially since he composed his devotional poetry in the middle of the tenth century. This was a dynamic time in the interpretation of poetry. In the ninth century, Ānandavardhana's ground-breaking *Dhvanyāloka* had sparked major transformations and debates in the field of aesthetics.⁵⁴² No one, however, has considered the relationship between Utpaladeva's use of aesthetic terminology and the larger discourse on aesthetics taking place in Kashmir during the tenth century.

Utpaladeva uses the specific phrase *bhaktirasa* ten times in the *ŚSĀ*,⁵⁴³ and these verses are highly suggestive of Sanskrit aesthetic discourse in general. The clearest example is his reference to the relishing (*āsvāda*) of *bhaktirasa*.⁵⁴⁴ *Āsvāda* is a central term

⁵⁴¹ Utpaladeva also uses various words for nectar or elixir that are closely related to *rasa*, such as *amṛta*, *sudhā*, and *rasāyana*.

⁵⁴² For a thorough analysis of Ānandavardhana's influence, see McCrea, *Teleology of Poetics*.

⁵⁴³ Almost every time the phrase *bhaktirasa* is used, Utpaladeva also uses a second person pronoun as the first member of the compound (*tvad-*, *bhavad-*, *tāvaka-*). The ambiguity of the genitive here seems deliberate—it is both the devotee's feelings of love and devotion for Śiva, and also Śiva's for the devotee. Bailly notes this as well, and even says that *tvadbhakti* and *tvadbhaktirasa* are probably most common recurring phrases in *ŚSĀ*, but she does not address the aesthetic implications of these terms (*Shaiva Devotional Songs*, 15).

⁵⁴⁴ *ŚSĀ* 17.42, which refers to the “relishing of sweet *bhaktirasa*” (*svādubhaktirasāsvāda-*).

in the analysis of aesthetic experience, and its importance only grew. When Abhinavagupta discusses the parallel nature of religious experience and aesthetic experience, he does so in terms of *āsvāda* (*brahmāsvāda* and *rasāsvāda*, respectively).⁵⁴⁵ *Āsvāda* is not the only major term from aesthetics incorporated into the *ŚSĀ*. Another verse, for instance, uses the terms *carvaṇā* and *camatkāra*, both of which can be synonyms for *āsvāda*:

Turned inward, with eyes closed,
relishing (*carvaṇā*) the rapture (*camatkāra*) of devotion,
may I constantly worship even blades of grass in this way:
"Homage to Śiva, that is, to me!" // *ŚSĀ* 5.15 //⁵⁴⁶

The verse makes an implicit comparison between the devotee delighting in the praise of Śiva, understood as no different from his own self and the whole universe, and the connoisseur who relishes an aesthetic experience. The devotee, however, enjoys (*āsvādayan*) a “special, great *rasa*” (*kam api mahārasam*) that never grows old or redundant (*apunaruktam*).⁵⁴⁷

Utpaladeva also characterizes *bhaktirasa* as something that is nourished (e.g., *ŚSĀ* 16.5). Some earlier theorists in India, such as Ānandavardhana, use the concept of nourishment (*paripoṣa*) to distinguish regular emotions from aesthetics sentiments (*rasas*):

⁵⁴⁵ For two pioneering but dated essays on the topic, see Gerow, “Abhinavagupta’s Aesthetics as a Speculative Paradigm,” and Gerald Larson, “The Aesthetic (Rasāsvāda) and the Religious (Brahmāsvāda) in Abhinavagupta’s Kashmir Śaivism,” in *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Oct., 1976). See also Bettina Bäumer, “Brahman,” in *Kalātattvakoṣa. Vol. I: Pervasive Terms—Vyāpti*, ed. Bettina Bäumer (Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts/Motilal Banarsidass, 1996), 143-187.

⁵⁴⁶ *antarbhakticamatkāracarvaṇāmīlitekṣaṇaḥ / namo mahyaṃ śivāyeti pūjayan syāṃ ṭṭṇāny api // ŚSĀ 5.15 //* Here *carvaṇā* refers to the act of relishing and *camatkāra* refers to the state of bliss or enjoyment that comes from this act. But there is generally some slippage between the two terms; *camatkāra*, in particular, can refer to both the act of relishing and the experience that comes from that relishing (hence rapture).

⁵⁴⁷ *ŚSĀ* 5.23.

the former become the latter when they are “enhanced” or “nourished” by the full array of aesthetic elements, such as descriptions of a scene or the costumes used in a drama. More frequently, however, Utpaladeva simply relies on the central metaphor behind the use of the term *rasa* in aesthetic discourse—the comparison of aesthetic sentiment or experience to a flavor that is tasted. *Bhaktirasa* is something that is enjoyed; it is sweet, nectarian, and fluid.⁵⁴⁸ Such characterizations infuse Utpaladeva’s devotional poetry with terminology pregnant with aesthetic overtones.⁵⁴⁹

There are, however, undeniable differences between Utpaladeva’s uses of terms like *bhaktirasa* and their technical usages in aesthetic discourse. To begin with, it does not seem to be related in any direct way to specifically aesthetic elements. It is not produced by experiencing the theater or a hearing a poem, with all of the specific dramatic and literary elements they include; rather, it arises because of Śiva’s will or grace. This means it is also not limited to contexts in which those elements are present; in fact Utpaladeva prays that *bhaktirasa* may be with him always.⁵⁵⁰ He also characterizes *bhaktirasa* as something totally unique, previously unknown to him:

In the same way that your *bhaktirasa*,
which I had never known before,
arose for me,

⁵⁴⁸ See, for example, ŚSĀ 16.4 and 5.16.

⁵⁴⁹ This is not unique among Śaiva authors, and it is especially common among later authors like Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja. But it is not clear when this practice really become so common. Further research may be show that Utpaladeva was one of the first to heavily incorporate aesthetic language into Śaiva poetry, thereby infusing it with connections to aesthetic discourse.

⁵⁵⁰ ŚSĀ 5.22.

may that same *bhaktirasa* be nourished. // ŚSĀ 16.5 //⁵⁵¹

Overall, Utpaladeva is not concerned with the basic problems of Sanskrit aesthetic discourse, such as the formal analysis of poetry and the mechanics and typologies of aesthetic experience.

How, then, should we interpret his frequent use of terms that so clearly seem to invoke aesthetic discourse? Surely such a learned figure as Utpaladeva, an accomplished poet whose expository writings indicate an extensive knowledge of many bodies of philosophical literature, must have been at least somewhat familiar with such literature. Does he use such terms as a metaphor, proposing aesthetics as an analogy? Does he want to create “resonances” or connotations between his poetry and aesthetic discourse—and if that is the case, why?

Utpaladeva does not use terms like *rasa* and *āsvāda* simply to connote aesthetic experience, or to suggest a formal analogy. His work addresses questions and issues quite different from aesthetics. He simply has a different project, in both his philosophical writing and his poetry. Yet aesthetics offered powerful ways of talking about compelling, meaningful experiences. In my reading, Utpaladeva’s poetry does not connote or analogize Sanskrit aesthetics; it digests it. He assimilates terminology that fits the needs of his project and simply ignores the rest. The ŚSĀ is not a contribution to Sanskrit aesthetics; rather, it presents extensive reflections on the nature of religious experience, and specifically non-dualistic expressions of devotion, that assimilate the central metaphors popular and well-developed in the discourse of Sanskrit aesthetics. Moreover, I think it is no coincidence that

⁵⁵¹ *yathaiṅvājñātapūrvō ’yaṃ bhavadbhaktiraso mama / ghaṭitas tadvad īśāna sa eva paripuṣyatu // ŚSĀ 16.5 //*

Utpaladeva's depiction of *rasa*, *āsvāda*, *camatkāra*, and so on are all related to his characterization of the devotee's experience of Śiva. This mirrors the shift in Kashmirian aesthetics at that time toward an analysis of the reception of poetry, rather than focusing on its formal features.⁵⁵² Put more strongly, I would argue that the major shift taking place in Sanskrit aesthetics—the shift in focus from the work of art to its subjective reception—made aesthetic terminology far more appealing for authors like Utpaladeva (and Kṣemarāja), who were not concerned with aesthetic experience as something distinct from the world, but rather with religious experiences that transformed everyday life. We saw this trend in Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's poetry, but Utpaladeva makes it much more explicit and pervasive in his ŚSĀ, which Kṣemarāja develops in his commentary.

The Śivastotrāvalīvivṛti of Kṣemarāja

Kṣemarāja employs many of the same exegetical practices in his commentary on the ŚSĀ (ŚSĀvi) as he does in his commentary on the *StC*. He expands upon the esoteric meaning of its verses, often interpreting them in terms of the Trika and Krama traditions. In his exposition of the first verse, for instance, he quotes the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*, the Trika scripture so central to his teacher Abhinavagupta's writings, and interprets standard religious practice (meditation and the repetition of mantras) in doctrinal, gnostic terms (the light of consciousness and reflexive awareness [*prakāśa* and *vimarśa*]).⁵⁵³ Similarly, he overlays the ŚSĀ with the classification of seven levels of perceivers, just as he did the

⁵⁵² See Pollock, "What was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka Saying?"

⁵⁵³ ŚSĀ, p. 3.

StC.⁵⁵⁴ In both cases, this privileges an esoteric, internalized interpretation of these hymns that frames them within his own non-dual tradition.

Kṣemarāja relies heavily on *samāveśa* as a flexible conceptual tool in this context as well, especially in his interpretations of *bhakti*. His commentary on the first occurrence of *bhakti* in the *ŚSĀ*, the very first verse of the collection in which Utpaladeva offers homage to the one who is full of *bhakti*, is a prime example. Here, according to Kṣemarāja, *bhakti* means “interpenetration” or “absorption” (*samāveśa*),⁵⁵⁵ and to be full of *bhakti* means to be offering praise without being tainted by the desire for some result different from that same *bhakti*.⁵⁵⁶ In other words, *bhakti* consists in an interpenetration or immersion in Śiva that is its own reward. This explanation wards off two kinds of dualistic interpretation: that *bhakti* is a relationship between two distinct things, and that *bhakti* produces some result that is distinct from *bhakti* as the means.⁵⁵⁷ In his commentary on *ŚSĀ* 16.13, he makes it clear that *samāveśa* is the defining feature of non-dualistic *bhakti*: “one obtains Śiva by means of both dualistic and non-dualistic *bhakti*,” says Kṣemarāja, “but non-dualistic *bhakti* is immediate, consisting as it does in absorption, whereas dualistic *bhakti* consists in the longing for Śiva’s state because it is not like that,” i.e., it does not consist in absorption but rather in

⁵⁵⁴ For example, see the commentary on *ŚSĀ* 1.12.

⁵⁵⁵ *ŚSĀ*, p. 2; later he glosses “devotees” (*bhaktāḥ*) as “those who are possessed of interpenetration” (*samāveśasālinaḥ*) (commentary on *ŚSĀ* 15.3).

⁵⁵⁶ *ślāghamānaṃ na tu tadatiriktaphalākāṅkṣākālāṅkita*; *ŚSĀ*, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁷ In his commentary on *ŚSĀ* 17.40, Kṣemarāja makes a similar point about worship (*pūjā*)—for those who are stuck in a dualist framework, worship is a means, but for true devotees it is an activity, rather than an accomplishment, which consists in oneness.

separation.⁵⁵⁸ Both Kṣemarāja and Utpaladeva celebrate and teach a type of *bhakti* that is an immediate experience of immersion and full of pleasure, like the savoring of nectar.

Kṣemarāja consistently glosses *bhakti* in terms of *samāveśa*,⁵⁵⁹ even more so than he does in the *StCvi*, but he also uses the latter concept to explain many other aspects of the ŚSĀ. He interprets “I bow” (*naumi*) as “I am immerse myself in” (*samāviśāmi*), “may I honor” (*arcayeyam*) as “may I be immersed in,” and both “enjoyment” (*sambhoga*) and “the great festival of worship” (*pūjāmahotsava*) as “having the nature of interpenetration” (*samāveśātmā*).⁵⁶⁰ Such examples span diverse internal and external practices and experiences, but the common denominator is that they all could be interpreted dualistically. As in the *StCvi*, therefore, *samāveśa* serves as a global interpretive tool for framing Utpaladeva’s poetry in order to ensure a non-dualistic reading of a host of practices and experiences.

Kṣemarāja’s commentary also relies on terms and concepts from Sanskrit aesthetics. In fact, he often uses it to explain terms like *samāveśa*, and vice versa. In his introduction to the first verse of the ŚSĀ, for example, he characterizes immersion in the supreme lord (*parameśvarasamāveśa*) as “consisting in the relishing of the *rasa* that comes from embracing the wealth [or the goddess Lakṣmī] that is liberation.”⁵⁶¹ As in his *StCvi*, Kṣemarāja uses aesthetic language in his ŚSĀvi in two general ways: to analyze the poetic

⁵⁵⁸ *dvaitabhakter advaitabhakteṣ ca śivaprāptir bhavaty eva kintv advaitabhaktiḥ sadyaḥ samāveśamayī dvaitabhaktis tv atathātvaḥ chivatākāṅkṣāmayī*; ŚSĀ, p. 257.

⁵⁵⁹ E.g., his commentary on ŚSĀ 9.4 and 15.12.

⁵⁶⁰ On ŚSĀ 16.29 (p. 268), 18.20 (p. 322), 9.1 (p. 115), and 17.1 (p. 271).

⁵⁶¹ *mokṣalakṣmīsamāśleṣarasāsvādamayasya parameśvarasamāveśasyaiva*; ŚSĀ, p. 2.

features of a specific verse, and to expand on specific theological points, particularly the experience of the true devotee who realizes and enjoys his or her identification with Śiva. The former deploys the basic terms and concepts of classical Sanskrit poetics, such as specific poetic figures or varieties of suggestion. In his commentary on ŚSĀ 16.2, for instance, he points out the use of apparent contradiction (*virodhābhāsa*), since Utpaladeva says that Śiva appears with various qualities at various times to aid devotees, yet he also exists at all times as the pure self, beyond specific qualities and sequence.⁵⁶² In his commentary on ŚSĀ 7.4, he categories the literary figure in the verse as *śleṣopamādhvani*—the suggestion of a simile through *śleṣa*—and in his explanation of ŚSĀ 13.13, he says there is *dr̥ṣṭāntālankāradhvani*—the suggestion of the poetic figure of an example. Often he simply explains what a given word or section of a verse “suggests” (*dhvanati*).⁵⁶³ Overall, this aspect of his commentary indicates that, at least in some way, Kṣemarāja considered these hymns poetry, since it is only for poetry that such technical terms, strictly taken, were relevant. In other words, he regards these *stotras* as poetry worthy of an interpretation based on classical Sanskrit poetics (*alankāraśāstra*), and in doing so he makes an implicit argument about the status of this genre. This practice, combined with the fact that he composed commentaries at all on these *stotras*, may reflect the growing importance of *stotras* as popular literature among Śaivas in Kashmir during the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is also evidence for how the poetic features of the text support its theological and devotional content. Various types of suggestion, as well as literary figures like apparent

⁵⁶² See the commentary on ŚSĀ 16.2.

⁵⁶³ E.g., in his commentary on ŚSĀ 1.26, 10.13, 11.9, 13.3, and 14.1.

contradiction, can indirectly point beyond the normal usage of language and thereby skirt some of the limitations of language—and thus of ontology—that Utpaladeva and Kṣemarāja wish to avoid, namely the reification of separation and difference.

But as often as Kṣemarāja uses poetic terms to analyze the verses of the *ŚSĀ*, he also uses it to serve another purpose, distinct from the formal analysis of poetry. As in his commentary on the *StC*, Kṣemarāja uses terms and concepts from Sanskrit aesthetics to characterize and cultivate a distinct Śaiva experience of non-duality. In the *ŚSĀvi* he emphasizes that this is separate from normal experience. It is *alaukika*—extraordinary or beyond the mundane. Traditionally it is the world of the theater or literature that is considered *alaukika*, a space separate from the normal world (*loka*). Seeing grief in the theater, for instance, is not like seeing grief in everyday life. Kṣemarāja is interested in what is *alaukika*, but he is not concerned with the world of literature or the theater as a distinct space (at least in his commentaries on *stotras*). So when Utpaladeva refers to a special *rasa* one experiences when repeating the name “Śiva,” Kṣemarāja calls it *alaukika*, and does the same elsewhere for the special worship of devotees who pray to Śiva without asking for anything.⁵⁶⁴ Śaiva devotion, like literature and drama, creates an extraordinary experience, and both are facilitated in part by poetic language, but there is a crucial difference. For Kṣemarāja, the extraordinary experience facilitated by Śaiva devotion does not necessarily remain distinct from the world. It can transform one’s experience of the entire world into something *alaukika*, something extraordinary and beyond normal experience. In his view, one’s experience of the world (*loka*) can be entirely *alaukika* for

⁵⁶⁴ For other examples, see his commentary on *ŚSĀ* 1.26 and 17.24, and his introduction to *ŚSĀ* 13.4.

the devotee. This transformation, this radical re-envisioning of the world, is what Kṣemarāja attempts to cultivate in his commentary, through the help of terminology from aesthetics (*rasa*, *āsvāda*, *camatkāra*, *dhvani*, etc.) and the deployment of hermeneutic theological tools like the concept of *samāveśa*. For both Utpaladeav and Kṣemarāja, poetry and aesthetics are ways of moving beyond the normal, dualistic language and understandings to cultivate an extraordinary experience for their audiences grounded in a radical theology of non-dualism.

The Sāmbapañcāśikā, a Hymn to the Sun-god

The *Sāmbapañcāśikā* (*SP*)—Sāmba’s Fifty Verses—is a poetic hymn to the sun-god in fifty-three verses, all but the first and fifty-third in the elegant *Mandākrānta* meter. It has been well known in Kashmir since at least the eleventh century, but this is primarily because of its assimilation into the Śaivism that came to prevail among Kashmiri Pandits.⁵⁶⁵ The *SP* is attributed to “Sāmba” (both in the title and in verses 51-52), but Sāmba, son of Kṛṣṇa, is a semi-legendary figure in the cult of the sun-god, known as the Saura tradition.⁵⁶⁶ The forty-sixth verse of the *SP* suggests what become a trope in Saura worship, namely that the author worshipped the sun-god to free himself of disease:

⁵⁶⁵ Bettina Bäumer reports that she has “heard it recited with a slow and impressive rhythm in Kashmir during the annual *yajña* at Ishvar Ashram and Guptaganga Temple” (“Sūrya in a Śaiva Perspective,” 1).

⁵⁶⁶ According to Padoux, tradition considers Kṛṣṇa the author of the first ten verses and his son Sāmba as the author of the remaining forty-three, but there is no evidence internal to the text itself to suggest this dual authorship or any divisions within the text. As he notes, Sāmba has an *Upapurāna* devoted to him (the *Sāmbapurāna*), and he appears as a figure in the *Mahābhārata* and other *Purānas* (“*Sāmbapañcāśikā*, Les cinquante strophes de Samba,” 565).

Those who, intent on enjoyment and yoga, say that the Lord grants freedom from disease when worshipped are both wise and fortunate. Who else but the immortal Sun gives people both enjoyment and liberation, the sum of all happiness?
 // SP 46 //⁵⁶⁷

In this way the *SP* echoes two other famous hymns to the sun-god—the *Ādityahṛdaya* and the seventh-century *Sūryaśataka* of Mayūra.⁵⁶⁸ The former is a popular passage found in most southern recensions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and placed after the 93rd chapter of book 6 (*Yuddhakāṇḍa*) in the critical edition. When Rāma appears exhausted and anxious during his climactic battle with Rāvaṇa, the sage Agastya teaches him a hymn of praise to the sun-god. After memorizing it, gazing at the sun, and reciting it, he returns to battle rejuvenated.⁵⁶⁹ As for the latter, tradition holds that Mayūra was cured of leprosy through his composition of a hymn to the sun-god, and interpreters have found this frame story suggested within the *Sūryaśataka* itself.⁵⁷⁰ All three of these poems associate praising the sun-god with revitalization, a common theme in much *stotra* literature.

⁵⁶⁷ *ye cārogyaṃ diśati bhagavān sevito 'py evam āhus te tattvajñā jagati subhagā bhogayogapradhānāḥ | bhukter mukter api ca jagatām yac ca pūrṇaṃ sukhānām tasyānyo 'rkād amṛtavapuṣaḥ ko hi nāmāstu data // SP 46 //* Unless otherwise noted, all references are to the edition in *Tantrasaṃgraha, Part I*, ed. Gopinātha Kavirāja, Yogatantra-Granthamālā Vol. III (Varanasi: Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, 2002).]

⁵⁶⁸ The *SP* echoes these earlier poems to Sūrya in other ways as well, especially the *Sūryaśatakam* [*SS*]. For instance, the *SP* and the *SS* both use complex imagery and poetic figures including *śleṣa*. Both *SP* v. 9 and *SS* v. 7, for instance, use *śleṣa* to invoke the image of Viṣṇu as a dwarf or youth. In fact, in light of such close parallels, I consider it highly likely that the author of the *SP* was quite familiar with the *SS* and was deliberately building upon it.

⁵⁶⁹ See Goldman *et al.*, *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki* (VI), 1341-1348.

⁵⁷⁰ Specifically, *SS* v. 6, here in Quackenbos' translation:

The Hot-rayed (Sūrya) alone makes anew and cures those who, because long rank with
 multitudes of sins,
 Have shriveled noses, feet and hands, whose limbs are ulcerous, and who make gurgling
 indistinct noises

As for the date of the *SP*, we have little textual evidence, aside from the upper limit of the eleventh century, when Kṣemarāja composed his commentary. But as scholars have noted, there is evidence that the Saura tradition flourished in Kashmir in the eighth century, exemplified by the magnificent temple to the sun-god and his consort at Mārtāṇḍatīrtha (modern Maṭan), built by King Lalitāditya in the mid-eighth century.⁵⁷¹ It is likely, therefore, that the *SP* was composed during this flourishing of the Saura tradition in the eighth century, and it may have been associated with the Mārtāṇḍa temple.⁵⁷²

The content of the *SP* draws heavily on Vedic imagery and practices, yogic physiology, and a theology of speech and sound.⁵⁷³ The second verse, for example, praises the sun within the body as the sound “*om*” and as what stabilizes the in-breath and out-breath. Kṣemarāja introduces this verse by saying that “the poet, having praised the supreme sun as all-pervasive (in verse one), now praises the sun as pervading the central channel in the body.”⁵⁷⁴ Both Kṣemarāja’s commentary and the *SP* itself embrace the rich potential of imagery related to the sun, from whiteness and light to narrative allusions—much of which can be depicted as both external and internal, symbolic phenomena.

He alone makes them new, his conduct being free from restrictions, and subject [only] to the abundant compassion [that exists] in two-fold measures in his soul.

May the Hot-rayed (Sūrya’s) rays, to which oblations are offered by hosts of Siddhas, quickly cause the destruction of your sins! (*Sanskrit Poems of Mayūra*, 114-115)

⁵⁷¹ Sanderson, “The Śaiva Age,” 57; Bäumer, “Sūrya in a Śaiva Perspective,” 2.

⁵⁷² Bäumer, “Sūrya in a Śaiva Perspective,” 2.

⁵⁷³ Padoux, “Les cinquante strophes de Samba,” 566. For some examples of Vedic references, see *SP* vv. 10, 24, and 27; for examples of yogic physiology, *SP* vv. 2, 5, 14, 19, 29, 35, and 50; for the theology of speech and sound, *SP* vv. 1, 2, 4, 13, 21, 23, and 32.

⁵⁷⁴ *evaṃ sāmānyavyāptyā paramārkaṃ stutvā dehasṭhamadhyānāḍīvyāptyā stauti*; *SP*, p. 2.

Kṣemarāja’s commentary clearly interprets the *SP* according to his own non-dual tradition, but one can also discern a strong non-dual trend within the *SP* itself. This surely must have been one of the features of this Saura poem that appealed to Kṣemarāja. For example, the thirty-second verse suggests the unity of the speaker and the addressee:

Since you are the cause of the universe, all things exist eternally in your body, and you in each one of theirs simultaneously, like a possessor of qualities who is at the same beyond all qualification. When you are like this, O lord, truly I am nothing other than you—but still you are the omniscient, supreme person (*puruṣa*), and I am a limited knower by nature (*prakṛti*).⁵⁷⁵

Despite this ontological unity, however, there remains an epistemological difference between them, which the poet addresses throughout the poem. Several verses, for instance, explore the (ontological) falseness in the distinction between the poet who offers praise and the one being praised, yet maintain the usefulness of such praise in uprooting ignorance.⁵⁷⁶ From verse to verse, the poem shifts between different conceptions of Sūrya as the supreme deity, the physical sun, and a light or energy within the body.⁵⁷⁷

Despite the fascinating content of the *SP*, we only have access to it at all because it was incorporated into the Śaiva traditions of Kashmir through the commentary of

⁵⁷⁵ *lokāḥ sarve vapuṣi niyataṃ te sthitās tvam ca teṣām ekaikasmin yugapad aguṇo viśvahetor guṇīva / itthambhūte bhavati bhagavan na tvadanyo ‘smi satyaṃ kintu jñās tvam paramapurūṣo ‘haṃ prakṛtyaiva cājñāḥ // SP 32 //* The verse is full of references to the Sāṃkhya tradition—the deity possesses qualities like omniscience, but is also separate from the three *guṇas* that constitute limited existence; and the references to the paired categories of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* suggest that the poet is separated from the deity by means his involvement with the material basis of the universe, needing only to overcome this limiting entanglement to realize his identity with the deity.

⁵⁷⁶ See *SP* vv. 11 and 15, discussed below.

⁵⁷⁷ As Padoux notes: “Throughout, the hymn mingles or alternates forms of homage or worship with micro- and macro-cosmic identifications and correspondences, the sun being at once the supreme deity, a star, and an aspect of the energy that is both cosmic and human” (“Les cinquante strophes de Samba,” 568; my translation).

Kṣemarāja. It is an excellent example of the “etiolation and subsumption of the cult of the Sun-god” within Śaivism, a trend that has been charted by Alexis Sanderson.⁵⁷⁸ Bettina Bäumer likewise notes that the absorption of this tradition within Śaivism “was surely facilitated in the case of the Advaita Śaiva tradition of Kashmir because the Sun became a symbol of the Supreme Light of Consciousness (*cit, saṃvit, prakāśa*) and was hence identified with Śiva.”⁵⁷⁹

Many of the *SP*’s verses address issues relevant to the study of *stotras*, including *bhakti*, the possibility of praise, and the efficacy of poetic praise. One of the significant differences between the *SP* and *Sūryaśatakam* of Mayūra (probably the text most closely related in content and style to the *SP*) is the *SP*’s degree of self-awareness toward the *stotra* genre itself. Mayūra’s verses contain elaborate poetry and vivid descriptions, but lack the kind of self-conscious reflection on the act of praise that one finds in the *SP*. The latter often addresses what it means to offer praise poetry and prayers in light of the text’s theological non-dualism, a position that seems logically incommensurate with the subject-object dichotomy of eulogy. One of the most interesting examples says:

“I will praise you with hymns of praise (*stuti*)”—my understanding of difference in this way is actually ignorance. Still, this understanding is even more useful for the eradication of that ignorance. I *do* praise that which is described in three ways: as

⁵⁷⁸ “Śaiva Age,” 53-58. His treatment is necessarily brief, due to the dearth of Saura scriptures available to us.

⁵⁷⁹ Bäumer, “Sūrya in a Śaiva Perspective,” 3.

gross, subtle and supreme.⁵⁸⁰ Indeed, the wise call ignorance the supreme means to knowledge.⁵⁸¹ // *SP* 11 //

The verse identifies the straightforward intention behind such praise as ignorance, yet justifies it as a means to an end. Praise may falsely rely upon a division between the one who praises, the object of praise, and the praise itself, but it is still efficacious epistemologically.⁵⁸² Both Kṣemarāja and the author of the *SP* are concerned with showing that praise relies upon a dualistic framework but that it can lead beyond that to a non-dualistic realization. In other words, the nature of true praise for these authors is that it can point beyond the limitations underlying its own operation. The same is true for Utpaladeva, as well as several of the authors we considered in Chapter Two (e.g., Nāga), marking this an important, recurring theme among Kashmirian authors and interpreters of *stotra* literature.

Nevertheless, the tone of the *SP* often conveys some hesitation about the possibility of knowing—and thus being able to describe and praise—the supreme deity directly. By the

⁵⁸⁰ Bäumer notes that this is a standard framework of the Āgamas (“Sūrya in a Śaiva Perspective,” 12). In *SP* v. 20, the poet wonders that if Sūrya’s gross form cannot be perceived fully since it is infinite, and his subtle form is inconceivable because it is neither existent nor non-existent, then how can Sūrya be contemplated?

⁵⁸¹ *tvāṃ stoṣyāmi stutibhir iti me yas tu bhedagraho ‘yaṃ saivāvidyā tad api sutarāṃ tad vināśāya yuktaḥ | staumya evāhaṃ trividham uditāṃ sthūlasūkṣmaṃ paraṃ vā vidyopāyaḥ para iti budhair gīyate khalv avidyā // SP 11 //*

⁵⁸² The same theme is taken up in *SP* v. 15, which begins: “You are the one who praises, the object of praise and the praise itself”—in this way you alone sport as the agent, object and action” (*stotā stutyāḥ stutir iti bhavān kartṛkarmakriyātmā krīḍaty ekas tava nutividhāv asvatantras tato ‘ham*). Cf. *SP* v. 48, which begins: “What speech can be spoken whose speaker is not you? What could be said by any speech which is not you, O you who has the form of all?” (*kiṃ tannāmoccarati vacanaṃ yasya noccārakas tvāṃ kiṃ tadvācyāṃ sakalavacasāṃ viśvamūrte na yat tvam*).

end of the first millennium this was a common theme in literary *stotras*.⁵⁸³ Verse thirteen, for instance, says:

Sages, repeatedly saying “not—, not—” with respect to you as ultimate reality, became completely exhausted, and they didn’t even say “you” or “like this”! Since words born from knowledge flow more freely,⁵⁸⁴ I will only say simple utterances like “Homage to you!”⁵⁸⁵ // SP 13 //

In other words, the sages in the *Upaniṣads* did not even explicitly say, “You are like [X]”; they just said “not—, not—” and then gave up. For this reason the poet indicates his own reticence to praise God directly, based on the objection that praise relies upon a description of qualities, and describing God’s qualities is impossible because one cannot know them in full. The poet seems to mark a certain kind of arrogance or presumption in any intention to praise God, one that underlies the very structure of the *stotra* genre.

At the same time a theology of non-duality also justifies *all* praise. Thus the poet says:

You alone, who have the nature of the agent, the object of action, and the action itself, play as the one who praises, the one to be praised, and the praise itself. Therefore I have no independence in the act of praising you. On the other hand, whatever

⁵⁸³ Cf. *Mahimnasstava* v. 2.

⁵⁸⁴ My translation of this line attempts to render a somewhat awkward construction in Sanskrit into readable English. The poet implies that he is reluctant to speak about the addressee because does not have sufficient knowledge about him. Usually, he says, words flow freely and with confidence when the speaker has sufficient knowledge; i.e., when the place from which they come—their source or “womb” (*garbha*)—is knowledge. My interpretation relies upon interpreting *jñānagarbhā* as a *ṣaṣṭhī bahuvrīhi* compound. I think the whole phrase is just a rather abstruse ways of saying that he is hesitant to speak about something he does not understand or know in full, hence he will just repeat the mantra-like phrase “Homage to you.”

⁵⁸⁵ *tattvākhyāne tvayi munijanā neti neti bruvantaḥ śrāntāḥ samyak tvam iti na ca tair īdṛśo veti coktaḥ | tasmāt tubhyaṃ nama iti vacomātram evāsmi vacmi prāyo yasmāt prasaratitarāṃ bhārati jñānagarbhā // SP 13 //*

pleasing prayers I offer, O lord of the rays,⁵⁸⁶ are real, for anything in the universe that seems different from you would be meaningless. // *SP* 15 //⁵⁸⁷

The poet may have no independent power to praise God, yet he is still encouraged, since there is nothing that is separate from God. Hence his prayer must be real or true in that sense. The author of the *SP* also validates the act of praise by praising its power:

It seems to me that because of praising you, my intentions, desires, and so on, as well as all of my sense organs, inner energies (*prāṇa*), and speech, have been perfected, and this life has become a refuge for me. Moreover, that twosome, merit and sin, seems to be heading toward its end. Otherwise, how could there be such devotion and faith at your two feet? // *SP* 33 //⁵⁸⁸

In other words, devotion and faith in this life are proof of previous good deeds becoming manifest; this life is a refuge because these other things have matured due to praising the supreme deity, in this case the sun-god.

Not surprisingly, *bhakti* is closely linked with the act of offering praise and prayer.⁵⁸⁹

While the supreme deity may be beyond the mind or the senses, this deity is somehow accessible through *bhakti*:

For people like us, knowledge is only obtained through the inner organs, but you are inconceivable because you are totally beyond any organ. You are beyond meditation.

⁵⁸⁶ The term used here—*gopati*—can mean either the “lord of the rays,” i.e., the sun, or “lord of speech.”

⁵⁸⁷ *stotā stutyaḥ stutir iti bhavān kartṛkarmakriyātmā krīḍaty ekas tava nutividhāv asvatantras tato ‘ham / yad vā vacmi praṇayasubhagaṃ gopate tac ca tathyaṃ tvatto hy anyat kim iva jagatāṃ vidyate tanmṛṣā syāt // SP 15 //*

⁵⁸⁸ *saṃkalpecchādyakhilakaraṇaprāṇavāṇyo vareṇyāḥ saṃpannā me tvadabhinavanāj janma cedam śaraṇyam / manye cāstaṃ jīgamiṣu śanaiḥ puṇyapāpadvayaṃ tad bhaktiśraddhe tava caraṇayor anyathā no bhavetām // SP 33 //*

⁵⁸⁹ E.g., in *SP* v. 48.

Hence you cannot be obtained except by *bhaktiyoga*. Therefore I have taken refuge in *bhakti* in order to obtain the nectar of immortality. // *SP* 16 //⁵⁹⁰

The verse draws upon the multivalence of the term *bhakti*, and particularly the sense of participation. While the supreme deity may be beyond the senses, *bhakti* allows a kind of participation in or with that deity. And in this verse the sun-god associated with the nectar of immortality in particular, hence *bhakti* also suggests the consumption or obtainment of this nectar, which is then enjoyed by the devotee. In other words, *bhakti* is crucial to praise and prayer, and the *stotra* genre itself, because of the limitations of the mind, senses, and language to adequately encompass and comprehend the supreme deity. *Bhakti* is what connects the devotee to this deity even when language fails.

The *SP* also offers some interesting perspectives on the efficacy of *stotras*. Toward the end of the poem, its verses tend to reflect on the fruits of offering such praise poetry, and the last two verses could be described as a *phalaśruti*, an appendix articulating the benefits of reciting the hymn. The second half of the penultimate verse states: “He who constantly recites this *stotra* to the sun, seeing all beings as his own self at the time of death, obtains the orb of the hot-rayed sun.”⁵⁹¹ The last verse says:

These fifty verses on the supreme, subtle teaching are favorable because of their praise for the sun, and they reflect on the supreme reality (*brahman*), along with the scriptural tradition (*agama*). May they remove your misfortunes when we recite and

⁵⁹⁰ *jñānaṃ nāntaḥkaraṇarahitaṃ vidyate ’ smadvidhānāṃ tvaṃ cātyantaṃ sakalakaraṇāgocaratvād acintyaḥ / dhyānātītas tvam iti na vinā bhaktiyogena labhyas tasmād bhaktiṃ śaraṇam amṛtaprāptaye ’haṃ prapannaḥ // SP 16 //*

⁵⁹¹ *yaḥ sāvitraṃ paṭhati niyataṃ svātmavat sarvalokān paśyan so ’nte vrajati [...] maṇḍalaṃ caṇḍaraśmeḥ // SP 52cd //*

listen to them, and may they grant devotees the auspicious perfection, like a mother.
 // SP 53 //⁵⁹²

These verses emphasize the efficacy of reciting and also hearing such hymns. But the *SP* overall suggests a wide range of benefits. The penultimate verse quoted above suggests a desirable destination after death, while the last verse suggests the removal of sin. But earlier verses suggest the goal of the poem is to bring about a yogic state of equanimity or balance (*samatā*) between various dualities.⁵⁹³ The poet describes this praise-poem as being “fit for bringing about liberation from the bondage of the jaws/eclipse (*grasana*) of *dharma* and *adharmā*.”⁵⁹⁴ Other verses suggest the power of such hymns to release one from the cycle of rebirth, but in verse thirty-four the poet prays *not* to be released from this cycle right away, asking instead for his praise and worship to give him another birth to help others across the ocean of *saṃsāra* (a concept analogous to the Mahāyāna Buddhist ideal of the *bodhisattva*). Finally, the poet suggests the power of such hymns to the sun-god to grant immediate and visible results as well.⁵⁹⁵ The most well-known example of this is verse forty-six, in which he praises the power of the sun-god to cure diseases (as well as grant liberation). This liberation of diseases allows one to experience the joys of existence; hence Sūrya bestows both *bhukti* (enjoyment) and *mukti* (liberation).⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹² *iti paramarahasyaślokaṇcāśad eṣā tapananavanapuṇyā sāgamabrahmacarcā / haratu duritam asmadvarṇitākarṇitā vo diśatu ca śubhasiddhiṃ mātrvad bhaktibhājām // SP 53 //*

⁵⁹³ *SP* vv. 49-51.

⁵⁹⁴ *dharmādharmagrasanarāśanāmuktaye yuktivyuktām; SP* v. 51.

⁵⁹⁵ In *SP* v. 45 he says that other gods are invisible and give invisible results, but Sūrya is visible or manifest, and he asks for the benefits of his prayers to be that way as well!

⁵⁹⁶ *SP* v. 46, translated above.

In this way the *SP* depicts the diverse benefits of reciting and hearing hymns to the sun, and perhaps this can be analyzed in terms suggested by the text itself: these benefits are gross, subtle, and supreme like the sun-god himself. Some are physical, manifesting on the level of the body; others are subtle, like the liberation from the cycle of rebirth; but ultimately, the text suggests that there is no difference between the one offering praise and the one being praised. In this case, the supreme benefit of such praise-poetry is nothing more than the balanced enjoyment of that state that already exists ineluctably.

The self-reflective features of the *SP* stand out for the perspectives they cultivate toward the nature of the devotional, poetic praise at the heart of the *stotra* genre. Such awareness of the challenges and possibilities of the genre, such as the paradox of devotion and prayer within a non-dualistic theology, indicate a level of maturity within the tradition of *stotra* composition. Moreover, they model and promote such devotional prayer. By praising the rejuvenating power of praising the sun, for instance, and possibly implying that the author experienced the benefits of this efficacy, the poem demonstrates this efficacy. In this way one might say that it becomes its own proof text. Other verses, like those that rhetorically question the possibility of praise, turn a potential theological challenge into an instrument of even greater praise. Overall, the *SP* presents a mature appreciation for the possibilities of the *stotra* genre and seeks to cultivate this same appreciation in its human audiences.

The Sāmbapañcāsikāṭīkā of Kṣemarāja

As a Śaiva, Kṣemarāja had a generally clear connection with the *StC* and *ŚSĀ*, both of which are dedicated to praising Śiva. Moreover, Utpaladeva was his great-grand-teacher. But Kṣemarāja had no connection (that we know of) with the *Sāmbapañcāsikā* (*SP*) or its author beyond his appreciation for the content of the poem. The rich visual elements of the *SP*, its non-dual orientation, and its own tendency to move between macro- and microcosmic visions must have appealed greatly to Kṣemarāja, whose own non-dual tradition relied heavily on metaphors relating to light (*prakāśa*, *ābhāsa*, etc.).⁵⁹⁷ Kṣemarāja's commentary on the *SP* (*SPṭ*) offers some of the most interesting examples of the relationship between poetics and Śaiva hermeneutics, as well as the interpretation of *stotras*. Through both literary and theological techniques, Kṣemarāja reframes the *SP* in a fully non-dualistic Śaiva light and subsumes a dynamic Saura composition within his own tradition. In doing so, he takes advantage of key features of *stotra* literature.

Kṣemarāja's commentary on the *SP* uses many of the same interpretive practices found in his *StCvi* and *ŚSĀvi*, as well as others that rely more explicitly on literary features of the text or on metaphorical readings of its Saura elements. Here, too, Kṣemarāja consistently interprets various terms that could be construed dualistically in terms of *samāveśa*, absorption or immersion in Śiva. For instance, *SP* v. 1 says, "I offer homage to that supreme *brahman*;" Kṣemarāja explains: "By eliminating the state of being a limited subject, which consists in having a body and so on, I become absorbed in (*āviśāmi*) that

⁵⁹⁷ For an overview, see Bettina Bäumer, "Light and Reflection: The Metaphysical Background of Aesthetics in Kashmir Śaivism," in *Aesthetic Theories and Forms in Indian Traditions*, ed. Kapila Vatsyayan and D.P. Chattopadhyaya (Delhi: Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture, 2008), 128-146.

(supreme *brahman*).”⁵⁹⁸ Similarly, his commentary on *SP* v. 2 glosses “I surrender” (*prapadye*) with “I am absorbed in” (*samāviśāmi*),⁵⁹⁹ and such examples could be multiplied.

Despite his frequent use of *samāveśa* to emphasis non-duality, however, Kṣemarāja also emphasizes that *bhakti* and praise can function instrumentally. This follows, in part, the content of his root text, which we saw in his commentary on the *StC* as well. On *SP* v. 11, for instance, he glosses *stuti* as “the reflecting on the greatness of the supreme Self that is the undivided bliss of consciousness,” and says that it *bestows* immersion in the supreme.⁶⁰⁰ His commentary on *SP* v. 16 likewise suggests that *bhakti* helps one obtain the nectar that is immersion (*āveśa*).⁶⁰¹ These interpretations are rooted in the *SP*’s verses, which present praise and *bhakti* as instrumental means. When compared with Kṣemarāja’s commentary on the *ŚSĀ* in particular, we see how he can interpret *bhakti* and praise as both the means and the goal of his non-dualistic theology; they lead to *samāveśa* and also represent the enjoyment of that state.⁶⁰² In the end, though, praise and *bhakti* involve no differentiation for Kṣemarāja. Consider his commentary on *SP* v. 15. The verse itself reads:

You alone, who have the nature of the agent, the object of action, and the action itself, play as the one who praises, the one to be praised, and the praise itself. Therefore I have no independence in the act of praising you. On the other hand, whatever

⁵⁹⁸ *dehādipramātrtāpraśamanena tad evāviśāmīty arthaḥ; SP, p. 1.*

⁵⁹⁹ *SP, p. 2.*

⁶⁰⁰ *cidānandaghanaparamātmotmotkarṣaparāmarśātmā stutiḥ paramasamāveśapradety arthaḥ; SP, p. 9.* He glosses *stuti* as *parāmarśa* in other places as well, such as his commentary on *SP* v. 33.

⁶⁰¹ *SP, p. 12.*

⁶⁰² The latter is suggested by his gloss on *SP* v. 37: “Make me one who enjoys the rasa of immersion in the supreme” (*nirvyutthānasamāveśarasāsvādinaṃ māṃ kurv ity arthaḥ; SP, p. 25*).

pleasing prayers I offer, O lord of the rays,⁶⁰³ are real, for anything in the universe that seems different from you would be meaningless. // *SP* 15 //⁶⁰⁴

Kṣemarāja explains:

“I” is only something constructed by you. Therefore, “I”—in the sense of a limited perceiver dominated by contraction, and dependent on this *stotra* as a means that is still no different from you—“praise” (*staumi*) the self that is consciousness and you alone. “I” does not mean anything separate. And whatever pleasing prayers, that is, beautiful supplications, I offer as one who is identical with you, those are all real, i.e., they are nothing but the supreme reality that is you. For what in the world is different from the self that is consciousness and you alone? Nothing. And if something like that were imagined, it would be meaningless. It is impossible. [...] Thus, logically, the essence of praise (*stutiḥ*) is non-differentiation from you.⁶⁰⁵

The key point is that for Kṣemarāja, the “I” that offers praise is no different from the supreme “I”—Śiva as the dynamic consciousness underlying all existence. Throughout his commentary, Kṣemarāja uses passages such as this one to systematically reframe basic elements of *stotra* literature, such as *bhakti* and praise.

There are also a variety of ways that Kṣemarāja takes advantage of literary features of the *SP* to do this, or uses literary frameworks to interpret its verses. The most basic and pervasive of these is the metaphor of the sun as consciousness.⁶⁰⁶ In the opening verse

⁶⁰³ The term used here—*gopati*—can mean either the “lord of the rays,” i.e., the sun, or “lord of speech.”

⁶⁰⁴ *stotā stutyah stutir iti bhavān kartṛkarmakriyātmā krīḍaty ekas tava nutividhāv asvatantras tato 'ham / yad vā vacmi praṇayasubhagaṃ gopate tac ca tathyaṃ tvatto hy anyat kim iva jagatāṃ vidyate tanmṛṣā syāt // SP 15 //*

⁶⁰⁵ *yato 'ham iti bhavatkalpitam eva / tato 'ham iti saṃkocapradhāno māyāpramātā tvatstotrakaraṇe 'svatantras tvām eva cidātmānaṃ staumi / na tv ahaṃ nāmānyaḥ kaś cid ity arthaḥ / yac ca kiñ cit tvadātmaivāhaṃ praṇayasubhagaṃ prārthanāsundaraṃ vacmi tat sarvaṃ tathyaṃ tvatparamārtham eva / yatas tvattaś cidātmano vyatiriktaṃ jagatāṃ kim iva vidyate ? na kiñ cid asti / yadi vā tathāpi kiñ cit saṃkalpyate tanmṛṣā syāt / naiva bhavet / [...] itthaṃ yuktitas tvadabhedasāraiva stutiḥ; SP, p. 11-12.*

⁶⁰⁶ While he equates the sun with consciousness most frequently, he also identifies it as the self, as in his introduction to *SP* v. 1: “Illustrious Sāmba, for the benefit of the world, begins his praise-poem

(*maṅgalaśloka*) of his commentary he says: “I bow to the one sun that is consciousness” (*naumi cidbhānum ekam*).⁶⁰⁷ In his commentary on *SP* v. 7 he explicitly equates Sūrya with Paramaśiva (although as Bäumer notes, this is a rare occurrence).⁶⁰⁸ In his commentary on *SP* v. 11, in which the poet says “I offer praise” (*staumy evāhaṃ*), Kṣemarāja glosses it emphatically: “I praise you alone, the sun that is consciousness, but not as some limited deity.”⁶⁰⁹ The equation of the sun with consciousness permeates Kṣemarāja’s commentary, and it is facilitated by the well-established tradition of using metaphors associated with light within non-dualistic Śaiva theology. Often Kṣemarāja interprets the *SP*’s verses in multiple ways, and he consistently gives consciousness as the supreme form or meaning of “sun.”

Kṣemarāja systematically interprets the *SP* in ways that multiply its meanings, giving theologically-inflected depth to each verse. This is no surprise, given that he composed a Śaiva commentary on a Saura text. Equating the sun and its light with consciousness is only the beginning of his esoteric interpretation of the *SP*. He often explicitly acknowledges the difference between such interpretations and his explanation of the “external” (*bāhya*) elements of the verse. His commentary on *SP* v. 9 is paradigmatic. The verse praises the sun-god, but uses *śleṣa* to compare him to Viṣṇu in the form of a Brahman youth. Both

to the sun-god who is the self by saying...” (*śrīsāmba svātmavivasvatstutiṃ jagato ‘nugrahāya vaktum upakramate*; *SP*, p. 1).

⁶⁰⁷ *SP*, p. 1.

⁶⁰⁸ “Sūrya in a Śaiva Perspective,” 9. While consciousness is often described in terms relating to light, the equation of the sun-god (Sūrya), a specific deity, with supreme and all-encompassing Paramaśiva is unusual. Sūrya is more often related to a specific form of Śiva, Mārtaṇḍa-Bhairava, or else interpreted as the light of consciousness (*prakāśa*).

⁶⁰⁹ *tvām eva cidarkaṃ staumi na tu parimitāṃ kāñcana devatām*; *SP*, p. 9.

spread throughout the universe by means of their *pādas*—in the case of the sun, his “rays;” in the case of Viṣṇu, his “feet.” This refers to a well-known and old story, in which Viṣṇu takes on the form of a young (or dwarf) Brahman to trick the powerful demon Bali into giving him whatever land he can cover in three steps, which end up covering far more than Bali expects. Kṣemarāja’s commentary, however, does not begin by addressing either the literal meaning of the verse, or the comparison with Viṣṇu suggested by the *śleṣas* it contains. Rather, he begins by explaining what he calls the ultimate or supreme meaning (*paramārthaḥ*).⁶¹⁰ This equates the sun with *sattva*, the quality of lucidity and the very existence of all things, whose form consists in the great light (*mahāprakāśa*), which is the nature of consciousness and the ground for all existence. He goes on to gloss the various parts of the verse with technical terms from his own tradition; for example, he interprets the “seven worlds” (*saptaloka*) as the seven levels of perceivers (*pramātr*), from Śiva down to the most limited perceivers called *sakalas*. Only near the end of his commentary does he acknowledge that the verse is also referring to the external (*bāhya*) sun/sun-god, whose rays are traditionally described as seven horses. After briefly discussing this meaning of the verse he ends by explaining its *śleṣa* suggesting the comparison between the sun-god and Viṣṇu.⁶¹¹ Kṣemarāja repeats this general format in the rest of his commentary, and often signals a switch from an esoteric or “supreme” (*para*) reading to an exoteric or mundane one with the word “external” (*bāhya*).⁶¹² In this way his commentary presents internalized

⁶¹⁰ *SP*, p. 7.

⁶¹¹ *SP*, pp. 7-8.

⁶¹² E.g., *SP* vv. 8, 24.

interpretations, or rather, interpretations that break down the distinction between internal and external.

Elsewhere Kṣemarāja uses a tripartite classification to establish levels of meaning in the text. The *SP* itself suggests such a classification—in *SP* v. 11, quoted above, we saw that this Saura poet praises the sun as having three forms, namely manifest (*sthūla*), subtle (*sūkṣma*) and supreme (*para*). Kṣemarāja identifies the first as the sun whose existence is external, the second as the supreme *brahman* existing within the body as the central channel,⁶¹³ and the third as the unbroken bliss that is consciousness, the nature of the universe.⁶¹⁴ He invokes this tripartite classification in his commentary on other verses as well,⁶¹⁵ and it opens the doorway to a hierarchy of interpretations that Kṣemarāja uses to assimilate the dominant Saura elements of this poem into his own tradition.

Like the *StCvi* and *ŚSĀvi*, Kṣemarāja’s commentary on the *SP* frequently uses terms that overlap with aesthetic discourse in ambiguous ways. This is particularly true of *rasa*, as in his opening verses:

With words burst forth out of the abandon of this immersion (*āveśa*),
I will reflect a little on this hymn of praise (*stuti*), the illustrious *Sāmbapañcāśikā*.
May this supreme nectar (*rasa*) be relished (*rasyatām*) by connoisseurs (*rasajñaiḥ*)
// *maṅgalaśloka*s 2-3ab //⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ On the idea of the supreme sun as having the form of *brahman* as the central channel within the body, see Kṣemarāja’s commentary on *SP* v. 2 (*SP*, pp. 2-3), especially: *taṃ paramādityaṃ parabrahmasvarūpaṃ eva dehassthitaṃ madhyanāḍīgataprāṇabrahmaniviṣṭam ādyaṃ viśvacitrabhittibhūtaṃ sapadi prapadye abhisandhyavadhānena samāviśāmi*.

⁶¹⁴ *sthūlaṃ bāhyaprāṇārkarūpaṃ / sūkṣmaṃ madhyanāḍīgataṃ prāṇabrahmarūpaṃ / paraṃ cānavacchinnaṃ viśvātmacidānandaghanam; SP*, p. 9.

⁶¹⁵ E.g., *SP* vv. 12, 22.

⁶¹⁶ *etadāveśavaivaśyapronmiṣaddhiṣaṇā vayam / vimṛśāmo manāk chrīmatsāmbapañcāśikāstutim // so ’yaṃ parāmṛtaraso rasajñair iha rasyatām / maṅgalaśloka*s 2-3ab // *SP*, p. 1.

Thus Kṣemarāja associates this hymn of praise (*stuti*), the *SP*, with *rasa*, and hopes that it is enjoyed by those who appreciate *rasa* (*rasajña*). As we have seen, Kṣemarāja does not conceive of this audience as spectators like those in a theater; rather, he (and Utpaladeva) present these connoisseurs as devotees who are able to hear and recite these poems in theologically-inflected ways. But there is also the implication that Śiva himself appreciates the *rasa* of the poem. In his commentary on *SP* 42, in which the poet requests the lord to listen to his pathetic (*karuṇa*) plea, Kṣemarāja explains that “pathetic” means being dominated by the *karuṇarasa*, a specific poetic sentiment.⁶¹⁷ Elsewhere, this is how Kṣemarāja glosses the poet’s prayer for help: “make me one who relishes the *rasa* of absorption in the supreme,”⁶¹⁸ in which case it is the speaker of the hymn who enjoys this *rasa*. This ambiguity about the site of *rasa* as a subjective experience accords with the non-dualistic theology underlying the poem. This ambiguity, in other words, is resolved when the distinctions between the deity being praised and the devotee offering praise dissolves.

Kṣemarāja uses many other concepts and terms from Sanskrit aesthetics to analyze the *SP*. He identifies figures such as apparent contradiction (*virodhābhāsa*), complex puns (*śleṣa*), and simile (*upamā*), in addition to instances of poetic suggestion (*dhvani*). Usually his explanations of such features of the *SP* occur briefly near the end of his commentary on a given verse, and they gloss the basic operation of the poetic features of the hymn.

However, they also allow for complex interpretations of the *SP*, and in this way they are part of his strategy of multiplying the meanings of the text in order to align it, ultimately,

⁶¹⁷ *SP*, p. 27.

⁶¹⁸ *nirvyutthānasamāveśarasāsvādinaṃ māṃ kurv ity arthaḥ*; *SP*, p. 25.

with his own tradition. In other words, discussing the layers of meaning created by *śleṣa* or *dhvani* open the text to the kind of complex, multi-leveled interpretation Kṣemarāja espouses. In this way his analysis of the *SP* as poetry, in particular, supports his complex theological readings of the text.

Simply discussing the poetic features of the text and the multiple meanings that they create lends credence to complex readings of the text. But Kṣemarāja sometimes uses literary readings of the text to justify a specific theological interpretation. For instance, by consistently glossing the word “sun” with “the sun of consciousness” he imposes a metaphor onto the text as a whole, creating multiple layers of meaning with every usage of this term (and related ones). Sometimes his interpretation of *śleṣa* or *dhvani* in a given verse extend this use of metaphor to create multiple meanings for the *SP*. Consider *SP* v. 37:

Even though you terminated the darkness that seemed to swallow up the whole world, your heart is scented with compassion, so you maintain the night and the day by separating the light and dark paths. O sun-god, save me as well from the disgrace of my wicked deeds! // *SP* v. 37 //⁶¹⁹

The verse itself simply praises the sun, without explicitly triggering a multivalent interpretation. But for Kṣemarāja, darkness always suggests ignorance as well, so he analyzes the verse as containing a *śleṣopamā*—a comparison by means of punning. What is striking, however, is that he takes the literal reading of the verse as secondary. In other words, he explains that the verse means the inner sun of consciousness removes the darkness of ignorance, just as the external sun removes darkness.⁶²⁰ Thus his analysis of the

⁶¹⁹ *yena grāsikṛtam iva jagat sarvam āsīt tad astaṃ dhvāntaṃ nītvā punar api vibho tad dayāghrātacittaḥ | dhatse naktamdinam api gatī śuklakṛṣṇe vibhajya trātā tasmād bhava paribhave duṣkṛte me 'pi bhāno // SP 37 //*

⁶²⁰ *SP*, p. 25.

SP's poetic features serves to reinforce and develop the hierarchized layering of meaning he creates for this Saura poem.

As a whole, Kṣemarāja's *SP* is concerned with framing things that seem to involve duality—*bhakti*, *stuti*, *namas*, and so on—in ways that highlight both their potential as means to an end and at the same time as expressions or enjoyments of that end. Since Kṣemarāja is commenting on a Saura text, he also stresses a hierarchized layering of meaning in each verse. He does this by interpreting verses primarily in metaphorical terms, and by drawing on the frameworks of inner and outer meaning as well as a tripartite classification of mundane, subtle, and supreme. His interpretations of the literary features of the text, such as *śleṣa* and *dhvani*, not only unpack the meaning of each verse but also reinforce and support the overall multiplicity of meanings. Sometimes his readings of the verse as poetry find layers of meaning beyond what seems suggested by the *SP* itself. Kṣemarāja's commentary is a fascinating case study for the power of literary hermeneutics to facilitate the subsumption of a text of one tradition within the theology of another.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered the first study of Kṣemarāja's three commentaries on *stotras*, a distinct subgroup within his exegetical oeuvre. Despite their differences, each of the hymns he comments upon—the *StC*, *ŚSĀ*, and *SP*—directly and indirectly addresses central features of *stotra* literature. They frequently reflect on the nature *bhakti* and praise within a non-dual context, for instance, and use paradoxes to point beyond their own limitations. In his commentaries, Kṣemarāja uses a variety of hermeneutic strategies to bring these texts

into alignment with his own larger project. For instance, while his root texts often present *bhakti* in terms of devotion and loving worship of a deity as an efficient means of obtaining religious benefits, Kṣemarāja relies on the concept of “absorption” (*samāveśa*) to recast *bhakti* (and anything else that might suggest duality) as being essentially non-dualistic. He also takes advantage of the multivalence often created by literary figures to read layers of meaning into these hymns. This is particularly important in the case of the *SP*, a hymn to the sun-god, rather than Śiva. While he notes the literary features of the hymn, he is more concerned with his own metaphorical reading of the text that transforms its Saura references into esoteric Śaiva ones. Moreover, Kṣemarāja, and to a lesser degree Utpaladeva and Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, actively applies the compelling metaphors developed in the field of Sanskrit aesthetics to Śaiva devotional practices. But at least in the context of these devotional poems these authors ignore the distinctive separation between an aesthetic realm and normal existence. Instead, they emphasize the experience of the Śaiva devotee who hears, recites, or composes such hymns. Thus aesthetic terminology has become a way of analyzing and describing religious experience without necessitating a specific theory of art as a distinct realm of human experience. For Kṣemarāja in particular, this description of the devotee’s experience parallels (and ultimately merges with) the experience of Śiva as the ultimate enjoyer, for whom the dynamics of the universe are nothing but his own play to be relished.

Many of the themes I have explored in this chapter are common to other non-dual *stotras* from Kashmir. For many Kashmirian authors, from Utpaladeva to Nāga, *stotras* were a way of addressing particular theological problems, such as how to express non-

duality in speech, which seems to necessitate duality. The poetic features of these hymns allows for such authors to subvert or point beyond such limitations. Many of these themes and strategies repeat in the *stotras* composed after the eleventh century. But in the next two chapters we will also see a very different way of approaching *stotras*. In his *Stutikusumāñjali*, Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa shows far more concern with the literary status of his poetry and its relationship to formal aesthetic discourse. In this chapter we saw how the *StC*, *ŚSA*, and *SP*, along with Kṣemarāja's commentaries, indicate the vitality and potential of the *stotras* genre during the most influential period of Sanskrit literary production in Kashmir. The next two chapters will explore Jagaddhara's major re-envisioning of this genre in the midst of a very different religious and literary landscape in Kashmir.

Chapter Four

The Language of Men in the World of the Gods: The Poetry and Poetics of the *Stutikusumāñjali*

The period between the ninth and the twelfth centuries constitutes the most influential, and most studied, period of Sanskrit literary production in Kashmir. In contrast, the period that followed, as far as Sanskrit literary culture is concerned, has fallen almost completely off the historical map. The most important literary text from this period—the fourteenth-century *Stutikusumāñjali* of Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, a large collection of *stotras* in highly poetic verse—remains virtually unknown even to Sanskrit literary historians. This text actively engages with the traditions of classical Sanskrit poetry (*kāvya*) and poetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*) in Kashmir and develops them in creative ways. In particular, the *Stutikusumāñjali* offers a revised vision of the status and scope of the *stotra* genre itself.

The title for this chapter suggests my central argument: the *Stutikusumāñjali* self-consciously attempts to harness the well-developed conceptual and linguistic resources of the Sanskrit literary world for religious, devotional purposes. Or, inverting Sheldon Pollock’s vivid phrase, it strives to bring a revamped language from the world of men squarely back into the world of the gods. We can see this when we consider the *Stutikusumāñjali*’s relationship to Sanskrit literature and poetics as well as political and divine power. As we will see, the *Stutikusumāñjali* looks back at the rich traditions of poetry and poetics in Kashmir as it seeks for new ways of constituting religious literature as part of a project of creative consolidation. In doing so, it refigures the relationship between religious poetry and poetics, dramatically presenting them as mutually constitutive. This

chapter thus contributes to an interpretation of the history of Sanskrit literature and poetics in Kashmir, in addition to the *stotra* form specifically. Chapter Five also analyzes this important text, but there I focus on the Śaiva theology of the text, its characterizations of *bhakti*, and its reflections on the nature and power of poetic prayer. In this way, these chapters offer a wide-ranging interpretation of this pivotal text's contribution to the history of poetry and prayer in Kashmir.

Why the Stutikusumāñjali?

The *Stutikusumāñjali* (*SKA*) warrants detailed analysis for several interrelated reasons. First, as I will demonstrate in this chapter and the next, the *SKA* serves as a useful starting point for considering many of the central features of *stotra* literature. It explores praise and prayer as well as Śaiva devotion and worship. Moreover, various experimental features of the *SKA* highlight different aspects of the *stotra* genre, and thus this collection of *stotras* also serves as a reflection on the meaning of the genre itself.

Second, the *SKA* is a major literary achievement. It is an ambitious and creative composition that engages the established tradition of Sanskrit poetics that preceded it while experimenting boldly with its content and form. This is all the more remarkable because the *SKA* was composed during a crucial period in Kashmir. We do not know the precise date of the *SKA*'s composition. However, we can infer that Jagaddhara flourished during the fourteenth century because of information in Śitikaṇṭha's commentary on the *Bālabodhinī*, Jagaddhara's own commentary on the *Kātantra* grammar.⁶²¹ Śitikaṇṭha composed his

⁶²¹ The *Stutikusumāñjali* and *Bālabodhinī* are the only two extant works of Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa of Kashmir. Note that this Jagaddhara is not the same Jagaddhara who composed commentaries on

commentary during the reign of Ḥasan Šāh (r. 1472-1484), and he identifies himself as the son of Jagaddhara’s grandson’s granddaughter (*tannapṭṛkanyātanayātānūjo*),⁶²² most likely putting Jagaddhara in the latter half of the fourteenth century. As we will see, this was a period of time when earlier patterns of literary and religious textual production were changing dramatically, and new cultural and religious formations—in particular the rise of Islam in Kashmir—were emerging that would have a long-lasting influence on the region. There are few Sanskrit voices from this time, and the *SKA* is one of the most vocal and interesting.

Lastly, the *SKA* has received various kinds of attention since its composition, mostly in South Asia. In Kashmir it was anthologized by later scholars and received a learned commentary in the seventeenth century. Manuscripts of Jagaddhara’s poetry spread far beyond Kashmir over the centuries. In the twentieth century, verses from the *SKA* were incorporated in the liturgical hymnals used by the famous Śaiva guru, Swami Lakshman Joo,

such texts as the *Vāsavadatta* and *Mālatīmādhava*. Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa was the son of Ratnadhara and grandson of Gauradhara, while the other Jagaddhara was also the son of one Ratnadhara, but the grandson of Vidyādhara. Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa lived in Kashmir, while the other Jagaddhara almost certainly did not. Neither author gives any indication in their works of knowledge of the other’s works, and their writing styles are quite different. The confusion clearly arises because they share the same name, as do their fathers, and they both seem to have flourished in the fourteenth century. On the second Jagaddhara, author of numerous commentaries, see P.K. Gode, *Studies in Indian Literary History, Vol. I*, Shri Bahadur Singh Singhi Memoirs (Bombay: Singhi Jain Śāstra Śikshāpīṭh, Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavan, 1953), 364-375.

⁶²² See Premavallabha Tripāṭhī’s introduction to Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, *Stutikusumāñjali, with the Laghupañcāśikā commentary* [Sanskrit] of *Rājānaka Ratnakaṇṭha and the Premamakaraṇḍa translation* [Hindi] of Premavallabha Tripāṭhī, ed. Śrīkr̥ṣṇa Panta, Premavallabha Tripāṭhī, and Govinda Narahari Vaijāpurakara (Kāśī: Acyuta Granthamālā-Kāryālayaḥ, 1964 [*saṃvat* 2021]), 24. According to Sanderson, however, Śītikaṇṭha was the son of the daughter of Jagaddhara’s grandson (Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 332n329, and also 300). Nevertheless, either assessment puts Jagaddhara roughly in the latter half of the fourteenth century.

and his followers.⁶²³ Scholars outside of India have often referenced the *SKA* in surveys of Indian poetry or the history of religion in Kashmir, and as I will discuss below it has been invoked in scholarly debates about the history of Sanskrit literature and learning in Kashmir. Indian scholars have long recognized the importance and achievement of the *SKA*.⁶²⁴ Several Indian scholars have studied the work and written about it in Hindi,⁶²⁵ but there is almost no work on it in English or any other European language. Therefore, given the importance of the *SKA* as a literary, religious, and historical text worthy of study, especially in relation to *stotras*, and given the lacuna of scholarship on it, there is ample reason for a detailed analysis of the text in the present context.⁶²⁶

The Title and Organization of the Stutikusumāñjali

To begin, let us consider the basic content of the *SKA*. It is a large and complex composition, but the title itself provides a useful entrée into the text. “*Stutikusumāñjali*” is a compound of three words. An *añjali* is a particular gesture of the hands that creates a space, either by cupping the hands to create a bowl shape, or by placing the hands together, fingers pointed upward, with an enclosed cavity between the hands. The gesture is one of respect

⁶²³ See Chapter Two.

⁶²⁴ They have also long called for more scholarship on this work. B.N. Bhatt, for example, tried “to draw the attention of scholars to the literary excellence of the ‘*Stutikusumāñjali*’” and noted that “according to the opinion of Ācārya Paṇḍit Śrīmahāvīraprasādaḥ Dvivedī [author of an earlier article in Hindi on the *SKA*] there is no other Stotra in Sanskrit Stotra literature which excels the ‘*Stutikusumāñjali*’” (“The Position of ‘*Stutikusumanjali*’ in Sanskrit Stotra Literature,” 323, 321).

⁶²⁵ E.g., Dvivedī, “Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa ki *Stutikusumāñjali*,” Agravāla, *Stutikusumāñjali kā Dārśanika evaṃ Kāvyaśāstrīya Anuśīlana*, and Śārmā, *Kaśmīrī Stotraparamparā evaṃ Dīnākrandana Stotra*.

⁶²⁶ I present a detailed treatment of the legacy of the *SKA* in Chapter Five.

and often used in worship. The bowl or cavity created by the hands can be filled with flowers that are then offered in respect or worship. *Kusuma* means flower, and thus *kusumāñjali* refers to the offering of a handful of flowers. *Stuti* means praise, or more specifically a poem or hymn expressing praise. According to this metaphor, therefore, the flowers being offered *are* praises or hymns of praise—hence the title of this text can be translated as “flower-offerings of praise.”

Stuti in the title means both praise in the general sense and also hymns of praise, that is, individual *stutis* or *stotras*. The title, therefore, indicates that the *SKA* is a unitary offering made up of multiple parts, like a collection of flowers in two cupped hands. Various verses refer to or play with this metaphor.⁶²⁷ One verse uses the compound “*stutikusumāñjali*” itself:

This flower-offering of praise (*stutikusumāñjali*)
has been prepared here at the lotus-feet
of the lord adorned by the crescent moon
by this servant, who collected it
from the vine of fresh, beautiful praise-poetry
watered by uninterrupted devotion.
May it make the hearts of the virtuous
full of longing with its fragrance. // *SKA* 38.26 //⁶²⁸

⁶²⁷ E.g., *SKA* 5.3, 36.2, and 37.12. The *SKA* was published in 1891 as part of the *Kāvyaṃālā* series (Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, *The Stutikusumāñjali of Śrī Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, with the Commentary of Rājānaka Ratnakaṇṭha*, ed. Paṇḍit Durgāprasāda and Kāśīnātha Pāṇḍuraṅg Parab, *Kāvyaṃālā* 23 [Bombay: Nirṇaya Sāgara Press, 1891]). However, all references to the *SKA* in the present work, unless noted otherwise, refer to Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, *Stutikusumāñjali, with the Laghupañcāśikā commentary* [Sanskrit] of *Rājānaka Ratnakaṇṭha and the Premamakaraṇḍa translation* [Hindi] of *Premavallabha Tripāṭhī*. Ratnakaṇṭha’s commentary, called the *Laghupañcāśikā*, is included in this edition, and this is the text to which I refer. However, since it is included as a distinct text after the *SKA*, with its own pagination, I refer to the *Laghupañcāśikā* specifically with its own page number.

⁶²⁸ *ayam iha kiṅkareṇa racitaś caraṇāmbujayoḥ stutikusumāñjalir bhagavatas taruṇendubhṛtaḥ / viralabhaktisiktanavasūktilatāvacitaḥ kalayatu saurabheṇa sukṛtāṃ sṛḥayālu manaḥ // SKA 38.26 //*

This verse makes the central metaphor explicit: Jagaddhara offers his praise-poems at Śiva’s feet like a collection of beautiful flowers and hopes to inspire his human audience through its “fragrance.” In this sense, Jagaddhara’s poetry is an offering analogous to other offerings in worship, like fresh flowers or fruit. The beauty and quality of such offerings are far from irrelevant. Moreover, this offering is first enjoyed by the deity and then by a religious community as *prasāda*—a term often translated as “grace,” but which also refers to the blessed offerings returned to and shared by devotees at the end of worship. Jagaddhara’s *SKA*, therefore, becomes verbal or aural *prasāda*, an interpretation useful for the study of devotional poetry in general.⁶²⁹

Internally, the *SKA* consists of thirty-eight *stotras*, plus an additional poem describing and praising the poet’s lineage (*vamśavarṇanam*), totaling almost 1,500 verses.⁶³⁰ Unlike the tenth-century *Śivastotrāvalī* of Utpaladeva, which was compiled into a single collection by later editors,⁶³¹ the *SKA* is clearly a unified text. Several types of evidence corroborate this. There is a logical progression between many of the *stotras*—*stotras* twenty-three through thirty, for example, systematically explore the literary figure called “twinning” (*yamaka*), the repetition of identical syllables with different meanings. Moreover, instead of having a single statement indicating the benefits of reciting a particular

⁶²⁹ For more on this, and specifically in relation to *bhakti*, see Chapter Five.

⁶³⁰ In *SKA* 39.14 Jagaddhara depicts his own composition as containing 1,425 verses. It is unclear whether this number includes the thirty-ninth poem describing Jagaddhara’s lineage, which consists of sixteen verses. The edition of Panta, Tripāṭhī, and Vaijāpurakara lists 1,439 verses (including the thirty-ninth poem) in its table of contents.

⁶³¹ This is clear from Kṣemarāja’s commentary on the first *stotra* of the *Śivastotrāvalī* in the 11th century; see Sanderson, “Śaiva Exegesis,” 399-400n563.

stotra—a section usually called the *phalaśruti*, literally the “hearing of the fruits,” which is common for many individual *stotras*—the *SKA* has a section comparable to a *phalaśruti* near the end of the collection as a whole. The seventeenth-century commentary of Ratnakaṅṭha treats the work as a whole, as do both of the anonymous, unpublished commentaries I discovered in my search for manuscripts of the text. In addition, the colophons of all the manuscripts I have been able to examine identify Jagaddhara’s individual *stotras* as part of a larger work called the *SKA*. Lastly, there is no counter-evidence that the *stotras* were not composed as part of a single, unified text—except for the uniqueness and innovation of such a large, ambitious collection.

The individual *stotras* of the *SKA* cover a wide range of topics and styles. One can see this simply by looking over the titles to its thirty-nine subdivisions:

1. Hymn Introducing Praise
2. Hymn of Homage
3. Hymn of Benediction
4. Hymn of Eight Auspicious Verses
5. Hymn in Praise of Poetry and Good Poets
6. Hymn of Eight Verses for (Hari-)Hara
7. Hymn Rejoicing in Service
8. Hymn of Taking Refuge
9. Cry of the Pitiabie
10. Cry of the Pathetic
11. Cry of the Wretched
12. Hymn on the Destruction of Darkness
13. Hymn on the Grace of the Lord
14. Hymn of Good Fortune
15. Prayer for Compassion
16. Hymn of Instruction
17. Hymn on Devotion
18. Hymn on Perfection
19. Hymn Describing the Lord
20. Hymn Describing (Śiva’s) Smile
21. Hymn for the Lord Who is Half-male, Half-female
22. Hymn Composed of Words Beginning with “K”

23. Hymn Composed as an Overlapping Chain of Words
24. Hymn with Repetition in Two Places
25. Hymn of Delightful Beauty
26. Hymn with Repetition at the Beginning of Its Quarter Verses
27. Hymn with Repetition in the Middle of Its Quarter Verses
28. Hymn with Repetition at the End of Its Quarter Verses
29. Hymn with Repetition in Every Other Verse
30. Hymn with Great Repetition
31. Hymn of Instruction for the Humble
32. Hymn for the Uplifting of Those Who Have Come for Refuge
33. Hymn to Fill Up the Ears
34. Hymn by One of the Foremost Class
35. Hymn Praising the Lord
36. Hymn on Obtaining the Fruits of Praise
37. Hymn in Praise of Praise
38. Hymn on the Maturation of Merit
39. Description of (the Poet's) Lineage

The first five *stotras* form a kind of introduction to the work as a whole. Jagaddhara begins by extolling poetic praise itself. He then proceeds through various ways of traditionally beginning a Sanskrit text: offering homage (*namas*), offering benediction (*āśīrvāda*), and expressing auspiciousness (*maṅgala*), all of which implicitly involve praise. The fifth *stotra* establishes the criteria by which poetry should be judged and lauds the greatness of poetry by praising the work of good poets. In doing so, Jagaddhara locates his own work within the world of the high literary register of Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*) and within the purview of Sanskrit poetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*).

From the sixth to the twenty-first *stotra*, Jagaddhara offers hundreds of verses of praise to Śiva in a variety of tones and styles. Sometimes he triumphantly proclaims Śiva's greatness; in other instances—such as the eleventh *stotra*, the longest in the collection—he degrades himself and cajoles and argues with Śiva, trying to persuade the god to favor and rescue him. As I discuss in Chapter Five, Jagaddhara's *stotras* cover various types of prayer,

and they often celebrate devotion to Śiva. They also highlight different aspects of Śiva's personae, as well as that of the poet, and they continually depict well-known features of Śiva's iconography and refer to his famous deeds. The twenty-first *stotra* praises a specific form of Śiva, the paradoxical and fantastic Ardhanārīśvara, the lord who is half-male and half-female, while the twentieth *stotra* focuses on his smile alone. These *stotras* often involve detailed visualizations of the deity and an intimate, personal relationship between the speaker and that deity. Various literary figures are employed, but they are secondary to the subject being explored and developed in each *stotra*.

This trend shifts in the next group of *stotras*, from the twenty-second to the thirtieth. These *stotras* are best described as *citrakāvya*—poetry that dramatically emphasizes and explores a particular poetic figure, such as alliteration. We can see this clearly in the twenty-second *stotra*, whose title (Hymn Composed with Words Beginning with “K”) explains the alliteration in the poem. These poems continue to praise Śiva, but they are markedly different from the other *stotras* in the *SKA* because they highlight a specific literary figure that unifies that individual *stotra* as a whole.

The final group of *stotras* (thirty-one to thirty-eight), as well as the final poem describing the poet's lineage, form a kind of concluding section. They praise the power of poetry and praise itself, and describe the benefits that accrue to those who engage in such praise. I look at some of these more closely in Chapter Five. The final poem glorifies Jagaddhara's ancestors as well as Jagaddhara himself.

The organization of the *SKA* that I have briefly given here is significant in several ways. As far as I know, there are no earlier examples of such a large and cohesive

collection of *stotras*, and certainly none in Kashmir. In size, scope, and style it is an unprecedented and ambitious attempt to extend the purview of the *stotra* form, placing it within the larger category of Sanskrit *kāvya* and subjecting it to the analytic categories of traditional Sanskrit poetics. Moreover, the organization and content of the *SKA* present a series of reflections on the *stotra* form itself. The subject of many verses, for example, is the nature and power of praise, and the *SKA*'s individual *stotras* unpack the potential uses of the *stotra* form (benediction, homage, taking refuge, expressing devotion, etc.). It is possible, I think, to see a specific “content to the form” in the case of the *SKA*.⁶³²

Jagaddhara chose to compose a cohesive, lengthy collection of *stotras* devoted to Śiva in a wide range of sophisticated meters. This form inscribes a great deal of content, including an expanded view of the literary status of a *stotra* and an implicit argument about the proper use of poetry and eulogy. As a whole, therefore, the *SKA* offers an ambitious new vision for the *stotra* form and its future.

The Language of Men

In his monumental work, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*, Sheldon Pollock analyzes the beginnings of Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*), arguing for an “astonishing expansion of the discursive realm of Sanskrit in the century or two around the beginning of the Common Era.”⁶³³ Until that time Sanskrit had been socially bounded through “ritualization (the restriction of Sanskrit to

⁶³² See Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990).

⁶³³ Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, 75.

liturgical and related scholastic practices) and monopolization (the restriction of the language community, by and large, to the ritual community).”⁶³⁴ The book’s title suggests one of Pollock’s central arguments: “it was only when the language of the gods entered the world of men that literature in India began;” the language of liturgy became the language of literature.⁶³⁵ The result of this process of desacralization was Sanskrit’s immensely successful and creative career as a literary language closely related to political self-presentation.

As one would expect (but scholarship often ignores), the capacities and resources of Sanskrit as a literary language evolved over the course of its history. Yigal Bronner has argued persuasively, for instance, that Sanskrit was not simply equipped with a natural potential for certain kinds of complex literary expression. Rather, its capacities were actively developed and cultivated by a variety of literary and hermeneutic practices, from

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 12. Pollock notes that this occurred at the same time that western and central Asian peoples were entering into the Sanskrit cultural world of South Asia, and suggests that “the radical reinvention of Sanskrit culture seems to have occurred [...] precisely where one might expect it, in a social world where the presuppositions and conventions of *vaidika* culture were weakest: among newly immigrant peoples from the far northwest of the subcontinent (and ultimately from Iran and Central Asia [...])” (ibid., 67).

It is interesting to note that the *SKA* was composed during a period of immigration into the valley of Kashmir from western Islamic regions. It is possible, although highly speculative, that some of the dramatic innovations in the *SKA* are also a response to a changing demographic world. Perhaps as the socio-political climate of Kashmir changed with increasingly influential immigration to Kashmir, Jagaddhara chose to articulate a vision of divine power constituted through cultural, aesthetic practices independently from the worldly political realm. In other words, perhaps Jagaddhara’s poetry represents Sanskrit’s retreat from the political realm to the religious precisely because of demographic changes taking place at that time. Yet there are counter examples from the fifteenth century, notably the Sanskrit poets and historians Jonarāja and Śrīvara at the court of Kashmir.

⁶³⁵ Ibid., 75. It is worth reiterating Pollock’s own cautionary note that the phrase “language of the gods” as an epithet for Sanskrit “may not be attested until relatively late, perhaps not before Daṇḍin’s seventh-century work on literary theory, *Kāvyaḍarśa* (Mirror of Literature)” (ibid., 44).

the creation of lexicons to the composition of commentaries. Thus developments like the “movement of simultaneous narration” (*śleṣa*) that he traces represent the accumulation of linguistic and conceptual resources for Sanskrit as a literary language.⁶³⁶ By the second millennium of the Common Era, therefore, the aesthetic power of Sanskrit had been greatly expanded. The growing popularity of simultaneously narrating the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* that Bronner studies is one example; others include experiments with *citrakāvya* and transformations in the field of literary theory and criticism.

Examining the history of *stotra* literature, and particularly the *SKA*, suggests a process complementary to those discussed by Pollock and Bronner, a process I would characterize as a kind of resistance to or inversion of the first moment Pollock chronicles in *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*. The *SKA* is a striking example of a specifically religious poem⁶³⁷—one that is independent from and relatively dismissive of political power—that appropriates and harnesses the vast resources developed for the deployment of Sanskrit in “the world of men” for religious purposes. Thus it represents an attempt to bring Sanskrit, revamped by centuries of evolution in the world of men, back into the world of gods.⁶³⁸ It is a full-scale, self-conscious attempt to make the language of

⁶³⁶ See Bronner, *Extreme Poetry*, especially 13-16.

⁶³⁷ Myriad features, such as a predominance of devotional prayers, confessions, and petitions to god, as well as descriptions and praises of theological positions and modes of worship, mark the *SKA* as an explicitly religious text.

⁶³⁸ I think it is useful to invoke and reference this metaphor in the present context, but I do not mean to overemphasize the importance of the *SKA* or convey the sense of a cohesive movement. The *SKA* is one of many disparate and distinctive reactions to larger trends in the history of Sanskrit literature, a point I return to in the conclusion to this chapter.

literature not the language of liturgy, but the language of praise, worship, and devotion.⁶³⁹

In the fourteenth century Jagaddhara marshalled the aesthetic power of Sanskrit, well developed in the preceding millennium, for religious praise and prayer that stands in parallel contrast to political eulogy and self-presentation. Recognizing this process in the *SKA* makes it easier to identify other such cases in the history of Sanskrit literature, an argument I return to in this chapter's conclusion.

I substantiate these claims in the sections that follow by examining the *SKA*'s relationship to political power and patronage, and to the traditions of Sanskrit poetry and poetics in Kashmir. In doing so, I investigate the multiple audiences inscribed in Jagaddhara's text, as well as some of its underlying assumptions about the nature of religious poetry, and *stotras* in particular.

Poetry and Patronage

Pollock's work has shown the intimately intertwined relationship between *kāvya* and *rājya*, between literature and literary practices on one hand and political power and self-expression on the other. One only has to consider the *Rāmāyaṇa*—traditionally recognized as the first piece of Sanskrit literature (*ādikāvya*)—or Rudradāman's inscription at Junāgarh in 150 CE—our first evidence for the use of Sanskrit in public royal eulogy (*praśasti*)⁶⁴⁰—to see this clearly. Yet there many exceptions in the centuries that follow, texts that resist and critique this relationship. The *SKA* is a primary example. Not only does it stand entirely

⁶³⁹ It is precisely these latter functions that I analyze in Chapter Five.

⁶⁴⁰ See Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, 67-74.

apart from royal patronage, it also seeks to disentangle *kāvya* and *rājya* by presenting religious eulogy as the one and only proper function of poetry.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, Jagaddhara received no royal patronage. Such patronage is certainly not necessary, but it is somewhat surprising in this case because of the size and scope of the *Stutikusumāñjali*. None of the customary places one might find reference to a king or some kind of patronage gives any such hint. His introductory *stotra*, the opening verses of each hymn, and the final poem praising his lineage and his own accomplishments are silent on the topic of patronage.⁶⁴¹ My perusal of the manuscripts of the *Stutikusumāñjali* available to me has not revealed any new evidence either. I also have been able to conduct cursory examinations of some manuscripts of Jagaddhara's other known work on grammar, the *Bālabodhinī* commentary, which have not yielded any further evidence either. While he praises or alludes to several legendary or mythical kings who are paradigmatic devotees of Śiva,⁶⁴² I have not been able to identify a single reference to a contemporary or near-contemporary Kashmirian king in the *SKA*. This, however, is not surprising. The political climate in fourteenth-century Kashmir was a far cry from what it was in previous centuries. No longer were state-sponsored Sanskrit poets producing major works, as Ratnākara did in the ninth-century and Kalhaṇa did in the twelfth. Given the stark

⁶⁴¹ The first verses of the first *stotra*, however, talk about pleasing Śiva who is the lord (*svāmin*), which could be interpreted as a reference to a king as well, but this is not developed in the poem.

⁶⁴² Occasionally he refers to kings famous for other reasons; in *SKA* 30.55, for example, he references the capitol of King Bhoja, legendary for his learning and patronage of literature and the arts.

landscape of political patronage in fourteenth-century Kashmir,⁶⁴³ therefore, it is not surprising that Jagaddhara seems to have composed his *SKA* independent from such royal support.

But Jagaddhara's verses depict a mistrust of kings that goes beyond an independence from royal patronage. This was not a new theme, particularly in Kashmir. As Pollock has argued, poets in the twelfth-century Kashmir voiced harsh disregard for royal power and its relevance to the composition of poetry, probably responding to deteriorating patterns of political patronage in the region. Consider these verse from Mañkha's *Śrīkañṭhacarita*, here in Pollock's translation:

How fortunate am I that Sarasvatī, Goddess of Speech, willful though she may be, has prompted me to praise no one but Śiva.

Away with those whose speech, though immersed in Sarasvatī, Goddess of Speech [bathed in the river Sarasvatī], dirties itself like a drunken woman with the filth of praise given to kings.

The vision belonging to Sarasvatī is befouled by a poet when rendered subservient to kings.⁶⁴⁴

Jagaddhara expresses similar sentiments in his *SKA*. For example, in this set of verses he dramatizes the turn away from the world of the king toward that of Śiva:

Troubled by the menacing sounds of the gatekeepers of the royal palaces, blessed ones devote themselves to Śiva, who is adorned with the young moon and resides among the young creepers on the banks of the heavenly Ganges

⁶⁴³ As Sheldon Pollock as has argued: "With accelerating intensity during the first centuries of the millennium what we might identify as the courtly-civic ethos of Kashmir came undone" ("Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out," 93).

⁶⁴⁴ *Śrīkañṭhacarita* 25.5, 8, 9, trans. Pollock, "Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out," 117-118.

strewn with wise beings peaceful through detachment. // SKA 7.37 //

Devoted to serving Śiva, adorned with the digit of the moon,
good people on the banks of the heavenly Ganges remember
the misfortunes that come from the transgressions of foolish kings
whose drunken pride blazes with a bit of royal glory (*lakṣmī*). // SKA 7.38 //

Here is the worldly wealth one acquires through impure and dreadful deeds:
this poison that starts as nectar but steals one's life a moment later;
this food, unsuitable for digestion, that agitates the body;
this pit, covered with grass, that traps one in an instant. // SKA 7.39 //

Therefore, abandoning the disgrace and bombast
that comes with petitioning kings whose great arrogance
has burgeoned because of some insignificant power,
the virtuous, who have settled on the banks of the heavenly Ganges,
are devoted to Śiva, the lord adorned by a slice of the moon. // SKA 7.40 //⁶⁴⁵

The depiction of space in these verses establishes a structure for the organization of value:
on one side is the king's palace, harsh words, transgressions, drunken pride, bombastic and
disgraceful flattery, a tiny bit of worldly power and glory, and the king himself; on the other,
the bank of the Ganges with all its connotations of purity, peaceful religious adepts,
detachment, devotion, and Śiva himself, beautifully adorned with the crescent moon.

In other verses, Jagaddhara characterizes kingship as something worthless, like a
piece of grass (SKA 14.12), or something to be rejected (SKA 23.5). He tells Sarasvatī that
she should be devoted to powerful Śiva, not some other pathetic (*dīna*) lord (*nātha*) (SKA

⁶⁴⁵ *dhanyā bhajanti nṛpaveśmasu vetrivaktrahuṅkarakātaradhiyas taruṇendumaulim /
vairāgyanirvṛtamanasvijanāvākṛṇasvargāpagāpulinabālalatālayeṣu // SKA 7.37 // santāḥ smaranti
śaśikhaṇḍaśikhaṇḍasevāhevākinaḥ surasaritpulinasthaleṣu /
lakṣmīlavollasadamadamadāvālepabhūpālāliśavilaṅghanaviplavānām // SKA 7.38 // idaṃ
madhumukhaṃ viṣaṃ harati jīvitam tatkaṣṇād apathyam idam āśitam vyathayate vipāke vapuḥ / idaṃ
tṛṇagaṇāvṛtam vilam adho vidhatte kṣaṇād yad atra malinolbaṇair draviṇam arjitam karmabhiḥ //
SKA 7.39 // ataḥ pratanuvaibhavodbhavadakharvagarkṣamāpatipraṇayasamḥbhavaṃ bhuvī
vidambanādambaram / vihāya suravāhinīpulinavāsahevākino bhajanti kṛtināḥ
tamīramaṇakhaṇḍacūḍāmanim // SKA 7.40 //*

24.3). His interest overall is to contrast worldly, royal power with Śiva's divine sovereignty. In one verse, for example, Jagaddhara boldly claims that one can forget about the insignificant fame of kings—not even Indra's fame and power are worth any regard in comparison to Śiva's majesty (*SKA* 17.5). Jagaddhara even goes so far as to hint occasionally at the image of kings worshipping Śaiva devotees (*SKA* 3.22). In the face of such verses, it is hard to imagine that Jagaddhara's systematic disregard for the power and status of kings would have found a receptive audience in whatever troubled court may have existed in Kashmir in the fourteenth century.

Sometimes Jagaddhara's poetry voices a personal bitterness or regret over wasted praise to kings. He laments:

I have revered wicked lords (*duṣṭeśvarāḥ*)
 who are fickle like lightning,
 instead of *gurus* whose weight
 comes from the abundance of their virtues.
 I have wasted my days in vain, alas!
 Struck down by the blindness of great ignorance,
 I am exhausted. // *SKA* 11.74 //⁶⁴⁶

And elsewhere:

We praise, we debate various things,
 we are ashamed, we partake of impure things,
 we desire, we endure slanderous words,
 we are consumed by sins—
 all to fill our stomachs. // *SKA* 9.51 //⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁶ *ārādhitāḥ pracapalāś capalāvad eva duṣṭeśvarā na guravo guravo guṇaughaiḥ / yātāni tāni mama hānim ahāni mithyā śrānto 'smi hā vitatamohatamohato 'ham // SKA 11.74 //*

⁶⁴⁷ *vandāmahe ca vividhaṃ vivadāmahe ca lajjāmahe ca kaluṣāni bhajāmahe ca / ihāmahe ca kuvacāmsi sahāmahe ca dahyāmahe ca duratair jaṭharasya hetoḥ // SKA 9.51 //*

These verses hint that Jagaddhara himself may have served and eulogized kings. And yet these may simply be rhetorical statements critical of other poets or human beings in general. Whether his criticism of royal power is a topos or based on actual experience, by the time he composed the *SKA* he took a dismissive and sometimes sharply critical attitude toward kingship and royal eulogy.

In part, such verses express a strong opinion about the proper use of poetry. While the opening verses of the *SKA* praise Sarasvatī with a series of *śleṣa* verses, the final verse of the whole *SKA* criticizes the use of poetry in political eulogy by personifying Sarasvatī as a woman who should save her coquetry and intimacy for Śiva alone:

This is the truth:
 you were humiliated because you were dedicated to the false praise
 of vulgar chiefs who cannot discriminate between good and bad.
 That's why you have been afraid.
 O mother, give up your timidity!
 Praises to the one lord of the universe, O goddess of speech,
 have given rise to this coquetry that climaxes
 in the pleasure of full satisfaction.⁶⁴⁸ // *SKA* 39.16 //⁶⁴⁹

Jagaddhara links praise for anyone but Śiva with a woman's promiscuity and subsequent humiliation, reminiscent of Mañkha's tone in his verses quoted above. Poetry, Jagaddhara argues, should be devoted to its one proper lord, just as a wife should be devoted to her husband alone. This is what will culminate in the appropriate pleasure and happiness. In making such claims, Jagaddhara also seeks to establish the supremacy of a specific form of

⁶⁴⁸ In my translation I use English words that may suggest erotic overtones to match the use of such words in Jagaddhara's verse. For instance, the term *saubhāgya*, which I have translated as "full satisfaction," can refer specifically to conjugal happiness in addition to good fortune in general.

⁶⁴⁹ *yat satyaṃ sadasadvivekavikalagrāmīnakagrāmañimithyāstotraparā parābhavabhuvam nītāsi bhītāsy atah / mātaḥ kātaraṭam vimuñca yad asau saubhāgyabhāgyāvadhiḥ sañjāto jagadekanāthanutibhir vāgdevi te vibhramaḥ // SKA 39.16 //*

literature: devotional, poetic praise-poetry devoted to Śiva. He uses the metaphor of poetry as a woman repeatedly in the *SKA*, sometimes dwelling on the theme of Sarasvatī's shame.

Here is another example:

She sighs hotly, scratches at the ground,
holds her face in her hands,
and doesn't celebrate the love of her beloved lord
with beautiful poetry.
The goddess of speech has been overcome
with a great fever in her heart
since wicked poets have pointlessly made her endure
the shame of praising compassionless, angry kings. // *SKA* 5.34 //⁶⁵⁰

Through such depictions of poetry as a woman or goddess, Jagaddhara offers a powerful metaphor for the appropriate use of poetry: the praise of Śiva alone.

In verses like those I have translated here, Jagaddhara offers a critique of the relationship between *kāvya* and *rājya*. He rejects the project of political eulogy, and belittles political power in comparison to Śiva's might. With occasionally sharp words and metaphors he seeks to delimit the proper subjects of poetic praise. In this way, Jagaddhara seeks to establish the "world of the gods" as the appropriate domain for Sanskrit poetry, with all its aesthetic power and prestige from centuries of evolution in the "world of men."

Stotra and Kāvya: The Poetry of the Stutikusumāñjali

The history of the relationship between *stotra* literature and *kāvya* (particularly *laghukāvya*) is ambiguous and barely addressed in scholarship. The *SKA* takes a strong stance on this relationship and therefore marks an important moment in its history. For the

⁶⁵⁰ *uṣṇaṃ niḥśvasiti kṣitiṃ vilikhati prastauti na preyaśaḥ prītiṃ sūktibhir īśituḥ karatale dhatte kapolasthalaṃ / vāgdevī hrdayajvareṇa guruṇā krāntā hatāśair vṛthā nītāviṣkṛtakopaniṣkṛpanṛpastotrātrapāpātratām // SKA 5.34 //*

SKA clearly presents itself as both religious praise-poetry—the word *stuti* is part of its title, its internal divisions are all called *stotras*, and its verses frequently refer to the larger composition with terms like *stava*—and as classical Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*). The *SKA* self-consciously positions itself in relation to *kāvya* as a whole and shares many features with standard Sanskrit *kāvya*.

There are a number of ways that Jagaddhara indirectly positions his own poetry as *kāvya*. The fifth *stotra* is called the *Kavikāvya-praśaṃsāstotra* (Hymn in Praise of Poetry and Good Poets). He repeatedly extols those poets who praise Śiva with beautiful poetry, and of course this is what he himself is trying to do throughout the *SKA*. For example, he says:

Reflecting on the poetry (*kāvya*) of great poets,
people's half-closed eyes abandon their natural fickleness.
But their eyebrows, leaving behind their inborn gentleness,
take it up! // *SKA* 5.14 //⁶⁵¹

Elsewhere he describes Śiva as being “celebrated eagerly by groups of poets experienced in the skills of poetry (*kāvya*) and the arts,” and since the entire *SKA* attempts to praise and “eagerly celebrate” Śiva, he implicitly includes his own poetry in this category.⁶⁵²

Jagaddhara also positions his poetry in relation to the Sanskrit literature that came before him. While he recognizes that there is an abundance of Sanskrit poetry preceding his

⁶⁵¹ *kāvyaṃ vibhāvya nijam ardhanimīlitāni naisargikaṃ jahati cāpalam īkṣaṇāni / gṛhṇanti tan masṛṇatāṃ sahaṃ vihāya bhrūvallayas tu kṛtināṃ kavipuṅgavānām // SKA 5.14 //* In his commentary on this verse, Ratnakaṇṭha interprets the people in this verse as the poets themselves, who contemplate their own (*nija*) poetry. In either case, the point remains the same: Jagaddhara explicitly celebrates good poetry (*kāvya*).

⁶⁵² *kāvya kauṣalalāsu kovidaiḥ kīrtitaiḥ kavikulaiḥ kutūhalāt (SKA 22.1ab).*

own, he justifies his own composition by saying it will be dear to people like Jagaddhara himself, those who love to praise Śiva and who suffer in this world:

How can my words win the hearts of the learned,
since they are spoiled by the sport (*krīḍā*) of drinking the nectar
of the various compositions offered by earlier poets?⁶⁵³
Nevertheless, it will be attractive for certain special people in the world
who are devoted to the expression of praise-poetry (*stuti*) to the lord
and are experiencing the affliction of worldly existence—
people like me. // SKA 5.36 //⁶⁵⁴

Jagaddhara claims that while the learned may be spoiled (*durlalita*) from the sport or loveplay (*krīḍā*) that consists in the experience or act of enjoying earlier poetry, his poetry will be attractive or desirable (*sprhaṇīya*) for some people. In a world of many poems, what makes Jagaddhara's desirable is its devotion to and praise for Śiva which can overcome the suffering of worldly existence. Thus Jagaddhara recognizes a continuity between his own poetry and the vast world of Sanskrit literature that precedes him, except that his attains a special desirability because of its religious sentiments and efficacy.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵³ Here Jagaddhara does not explicitly use the word *kāvya*, but refers instead to the compositions of earlier poets (*pūrvakavipraṇītavividhagrantha*). But the simplest definition of *kāvya* had long been whatever is produced by good poets (*kavi*).

⁶⁵⁴ *etāḥ pūrvakavipraṇītavividhagranthāmṛtāsvādanakrīḍādurlalitaṃ haranti hṛdayaṃ vācaḥ kathaṃ dhīmatām / keṣāñ cit punar īśvarastutipadavyāhārahevākinām yāsyanti sprhaṇīyatām bhuvi bhavakleśasprṣāṃ mādrśām // SKA 5.36 //*

⁶⁵⁵ It is worth noting that Jagaddhara hints at a relationship between *stotra* poetry and Sanskrit theater (*nāṭya*). It is well known that many of the central categories of poetics originated not in the analysis of literature but of theater. The discussions of *rasa* and other aesthetic features associated with the theater discussed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, roughly dated to the first centuries of the first millennium and attributed to Bharata, became canonical for later writers on theater and also literature more broadly. Occasionally, Jagaddhara gestures to this early history by using metaphors relating to dance and theater; for instance:

Those poets who perform the dance of words before you
make praising you the doorway to the abode of their hearts,
uproot the tree of suffering rooted in misfortune,
and search the world for your affection like a child. // SKA 36.5 //

But Jagaddhara goes further than this. He sees his poetry revitalizing interest in

kāvya:

As the beauty of spring refreshes a pleasure-grove,
as the rainy season replenishes a lake dried up by the heat,
so will this collection of praise-poems (*stava*) will revitalize good people's
appetite for poetry (*kāvya*), which has wasted away before its time. // SKA 38.19 //⁶⁵⁶

More literally, the verse says these praise-poems will make the interest in poetry “young” again (*taruṇīkariṣyati*), since it had grown “old before its time” (*akārajīrṇam*). This may simply be a rhetorical statement, but it may also reflect Jagaddhara's attempt to revive the composition and appreciation of poetry in fourteenth-century Kashmir. Overall, we can see Jagaddhara affirming Sanskrit *kāvya* even as he re-envisioning it as being justified and revitalized by devotional praise of Śiva.

Jagaddhara's implied claim to *kāvya*-status for the *SKA* is not simply rhetorical. The *SKA* includes many literary features that show continuity between this unique set of *stotras* and *kāvya*. Many of these are formal features, like meter. The *SKA* employs a wide variety of meters. The bulk of the seventeenth *stotra*, for example, is in the Mandākrāntā meter, but the twenty-seventh and twenty-eight are in Sragdharā, the penultimate twenty-ninth verse is in Śārdūlavikrīḍita, and the final verse is once again in Sragdharā. Like *mahākāvya* poets, Jagaddhara consistently switches meter to signal the end of a larger section. While many earlier *stotras* used complex and varied meters, the sheer number and diversity in the *SKA* is notable, and indicates a reformulation of the *stotra* form along the lines of *kāvya*.

te tvatstutiṃ hṛdayadhāmnī kapāṭayanti duḥkhadrumaṃ ca dr̥ḍham āpadi pāṭayanti / bhāvaṃ tavaiva bhūvi bālam ivāṭayanti ye vāṇaṭīm abhimukhaṃ tava nāṭayanti // SKA 36.5 //

⁶⁵⁶ *iyaṃ madhuśrīr iva kelikānanaṃ sarovaraṃ prāvṛḍ ivātapakṣatam / stavāvalī kāvyakutūhalaṃ satām akārajīrṇam taruṇīkariṣyati // SKA 38.19 //*

Another feature the *SKA* shares with much Sanskrit *kāvya*, but not with the majority of *stotras*, is the use of extended syntactically dependent groupings of verses (*kulaka*). Such groupings are especially common in the great court poems (*mahākāvya*s). Kalidāsa’s *Kumārasambhava*, for instance, opens with a well-known *kulaka* describing the Himālaya mountain, father of Pārvatī. The *SKA* frequently includes short units of syntactically dependent verses and also contains a number of lengthy ones. The twentieth *stotra*, for instance, consists of a series of such syntactical units. The first twenty-five verses all praise Śiva’s playful smile, but they are syntactically dependent on the first verse—except that verses sixteen through twenty-five refer to a dream that Pārvatī had about Śiva and form a nine-verse *kulaka* within the larger set. Such complex composition across a number of verses is unusual for *stotras* and clearly resembles the literary practices of *mahākāvya* composition.⁶⁵⁷

But the most obvious parallel between the *SKA* and Sanskrit literature more generally is the ubiquitous use of literary “ornaments” or figures (*alaṅkāras*). Such figures adorn every one of Jagaddhara’s verses. Simple and sophisticated similes and metaphors abound, as do various types of alliteration, consonance, and assonance.⁶⁵⁸ He incorporates and combines an impressive array of specific literary figures in his poetry, such as complex instances of “poetic fantasy” (*utprekṣā*). He speculates, for instance, that the heavenly bodies in the night sky, jealous of the crescent moon on Śiva’s head, seem to have resorted

⁶⁵⁷ For examples of other such groupings in the *SKA*, see *SKA* 8.9-33, 9.61-79, 10.9-24, and 22.1-11.

⁶⁵⁸ For some particularly clear examples of these types of *anuprāsa*, see *SKA* 2.2, 2.5, 3.6, 3.8, 3.10, 13.6, 14.7, and 17.1. Such figures, especially the repetition of the same words with different meanings (*lāṭānuprāsa*), are closely related to the figure of *yamaka*, which I discuss below.

to his toenails, which have been colored gold by the filaments falling from the flower-garlands on the heads of gods, demons, and kings bowing at Śiva's feet.⁶⁵⁹ Other figures include “rhetorical doubt” (*saṁśaya* or *saṁdeha*)⁶⁶⁰ and “the appearance of paradox” (*virodhābhāsa*). Exemplifying the latter, he says that terrifying Śiva (*bhairava*), who is both *bhava* (another name for Śiva) and *abhava* (which looks like “not *bhava*” but here means “beyond limited, cyclical existence”), destroys one's fears.⁶⁶¹ Jagaddhara's extensive application of and experimentation with a wide variety of literary figures aligns his poetry with the larger tradition of Sanskrit *kāvya*. His poetry engages with all of the major literary figures and often combines them to create complex poetic expressions, as one can see in the many of the examples I give in this section.

One of the most complex and systematic figures that Jagaddhara employs is *śleṣa*—what Yigal Bronner glosses as “simultaneous narration.”⁶⁶² Literally, *śleṣa* means an “embrace” and refers to the use of a single sequence of phonemes to express two or more meanings. It benefits from the compilation of dictionaries and other language resources, as well as literary practices like the resegmentation of syllables to form different words. The *SKA* begins and ends with *śleṣa*. In its first five verses, Jagaddhara uses a series of *śleṣas* to

⁶⁵⁹ *pāyād vas trijagadguruḥ smaraharaḥ sopagrahāṇāṃ śiraḥśyāmākāmukamatsareṇa caraṇau pañktir grahāṇām iva / yasya prahasurāsuresvaraśiromandāramālāgalatkiñjalkotkarapiñjaronmukhanakhaśreṇīnibhenāśritā // SKA 3.48 //*

⁶⁶⁰ See, for example, *SKA* 37.7.

⁶⁶¹ *sa yasya cāpāt sapadī cyuto 'cyutaḥ śikhābhir ugro viśikhaḥ śikhāvataḥ / purāṇy akārṣīd apurāṇi bhairavo bhayāni bhindyād abhavo bhavaḥ sa vaḥ // SKA 7.3 //*

⁶⁶² See Bronner, *Extreme Poetry*.

compare his poetry (*sarasvatī*) to the Sarasvatī river, a stringed instrument, a virtuous woman, a royal goose, and Pārvatī.⁶⁶³ The final verse of the last *stotra* in the *SKA* (39.16, translated above) returns to the subject of *sarasvatī*, both the goddess of speech and poetry itself, using *śleṣa* to suggest that Jagaddhara has saved her from degrading promiscuity and returned her to amorous fealty and felicity. Simple and complex *śleṣas* occur throughout the *SKA* with such frequency and centrality that it is worth considering their role more closely.

Śleṣa is a powerful literary and aesthetic tool. Much of its potential can be seen in Jagaddhara's eleventh *stotra* (Cry of the Wretched), an emotionally climactic poem that is also the longest individual section of the *SKA*—about ten percent of the whole text. Jagaddhara uses *śleṣas* throughout this hymn's one hundred and forty-three verses.

Consider the hymn's third verse:

I am blessed! Even though my views are blinded
by the darkness of delusion, by fate and by grace
I have composed this beautiful, skillfully indirect poetry
endowed with good qualities to worship mountain-dwelling Śiva. // *SKA* 11.3 //

This translates the verse's primary meaning, but through the multivalence of several words and compounds it contains a second, "skillfully indirect" meaning:

I am blessed! Even though my eyes are blind
with the disease of darkness, by fate and by grace
I have taken up this sweet-sounding *vīṇā*, curved and stringed,
in order to worship mountain-dwelling Śiva. // *SKA* 11.3 //⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶³ *SKA* 1.1-1.5. In 1.1-1.3 the word *sarasvatī* itself has two meanings, while in 1.4 and 1.5 it is only the adjectives describing it that have multiple meanings.

⁶⁶⁴ *dhanyo 'smi mohatimirāndhadṛśo 'pi yasya sānugraheṇa vidhinā parikalpitā me / valgusvanā guṇavatī dhṛtavakrabhaṅgir ārādhanāya giriśasya sarasvatīyam // SKA 11.3 //*

The verse implicitly compares the poet and his poetry to a blind musician and his offering of music from the string instrument called the *vīṇā*. While the verse denigrates both poet and musician as blind in their own way, it opens with the clear statement that they are actually blessed, since they make offerings in the worship of Śiva.

Jagaddhara's use of *śleṣa* in this *stotra* often allows him to adopt an insistent or even argumentative tone beyond the basic meaning of his words. Thus he challenges Śiva:

"This fickle idiot⁶⁶⁵ has strayed from his own high place and will wander on many bad paths"—
If you abandon me, thinking such thoughts,
then why do you hold the Ganges river on your head?
She is just like this! // SKA 11.39 //⁶⁶⁶

The verse does not make sense unless you understand the second meaning conveyed by *śleṣa* in its first half. The following translation shows how the verse first narrates two things at once, culminating in the singular statement in the second half of the verse:

<p><i>"This fickle idiot has strayed from his own high place and will wander on many bad paths"—</i></p>	<p><i>“She has descended from her own lofty abode, she moves here and there, her nature is water, and she follows different courses on earth”—</i></p>
<p>If you abandon me, thinking such thoughts, then why do you hold the Ganges river on your head? She is just like this! // SKA 11.39 //⁶⁶⁷</p>	

The section in italics translates the same set of syllables twice. Here Jagaddhara uses *śleṣa* to argue with Śiva, using logic based on a play of words and Śiva's standard iconography

⁶⁶⁵ Sanskrit poets generally allow the interchangeability of the consonants “ḍ” and “l”; in one reading of the verse, the compound must be read as *jaḍaprakṛtiḥ* (“one whose nature is idiotic”), and in the other as *jalaprakṛtiḥ* (“one whose nature is water”).

⁶⁶⁶ *atyunnatān nijapadāc capalaś cyuto 'yaṃ bhūrīn bhramiṣyati jaḍaprakṛtiḥ kumārgān / matveti cet tyajasi mām ayam īdrg eva gāṅgas tvayā kim iti mūrdhni dhṛtaḥ pravāhaḥ // SKA 11.39 //*

⁶⁶⁷ *atyunnatān nijapadāc capalaś cyuto 'yaṃ bhūrīn bhramiṣyati jaḍaprakṛtiḥ kumārgān / matveti cet tyajasi mām ayam īdrg eva gāṅgas tvayā kim iti mūrdhni dhṛtaḥ pravāhaḥ // SKA 11.39 //*

(in this case, the Ganges river that descends from the heavens to Śiva’s head before flowing on to the earth) to obtain his chosen deity’s favor.

In some cases Jagaddhara’s *śleṣas* govern the majority or entirety of a verse. Here are the two meanings of one verse:

What can I say about my great misfortune?
After forcibly teaching me about being unsupported,
shunned by the wise, lusterless, ineffectual, and devoid of any joy,
it deposited me at Sthāṇu’s feet.

*What can I say about my great misfortune?
After quickly pointing out that it had no branches,
flowers, shade, fruits or sap,
it left me at the base of a bare trunk (sthāṇu). // SKA 11.82 //*⁶⁶⁸

In the first meaning, fate has made Sthāṇu—another name for Śiva—the poet’s only refuge. The second heightens the perception of his pitiable state with the image of the forlorn and bare tree trunk (*sthāṇu*). On one hand the verse expresses the poet’s devotion and complete dependence on Śiva, but on the other it contains a veiled criticism that Śiva has to be more than simply a bare trunk for his devotees. In such verses the poet enriches the emotional content of his poetry and also indirectly challenges Śiva himself.

Jagaddhara participates in a long tradition of “skillfully indirect” poetry in Kashmir, going back at least to the ninth century. As we saw in Chapter Two, Ratnākara used deliberate distortion and word-play in his *Vakroktipāñcāśikā* (The Fifty Verbal Perversions). Moreover, these distortions develop the characters of the poem’s hero and heroine and also

⁶⁶⁸ *kiṃ varṇayāmi gurutāṃ vipadaḥ pade māṃ sthāṇor nyayunkta yad iyaṃ sahasopadiṣya / niḥśākhātāṃ sumanasāṃ anupeyabhāvaṃ vicchāyatāṃ viphalatāṃ rasahīnatāṃ ca // SKA 11.82 //*

advances its plot, as McCrea and Bronner have argued.⁶⁶⁹ In general, this applies to Jagaddhara's use of *śleṣa* and intentionally distortional speech as well. Śiva's features and deeds are praised through Jagaddhara's verses, as is Jagaddhara's wretchedness. There is no plot per se in his work as a whole, but *śleṣa* serves the themes and tone of individual *stotras*. As we have seen in the examples from the eleventh *stotra*, *śleṣa* highlights Śiva's greatness and Jagaddhara's low state, but in doing so it supports Jagaddhara's arguments that Śiva must help the poet.⁶⁷⁰

Overall, Jagaddhara uses *śleṣa* to make explicit or implicit comparisons, to facilitate intimate and often bold exchanges with Śiva, and to develop the themes of individual *stotras*. *Śleṣa* is one of the basic threads Jagaddhara uses to weave his poetry, and his *śleṣa* verses are often very creative and sophisticated. But he uses many other types of wordplay as well, combining self-conscious use of language with intense emotional appeals. Consider this striking verse:

You grant a boon (*varam*) to the one who calls (*ravam*) out to you,
and you punish (*damam*) the one who is arrogant (*madaṃ*).
You enjoy flipping syllables around,
so why don't you pay heed (*manas*) to me,
who offers you homage (*namas*)? // SKA 11.79 //⁶⁷¹

Here Jagaddhara turns his observations about small differences in language—specifically, the order of certain syllables—into a passionate plea for Śiva's favor. Thus he asserts that

⁶⁶⁹ See Bronner and McCrea, "Poetics of Distortive Talk," and also Bronner's paraphrase of their work in Bronner, *Extreme Poetry*, 158.

⁶⁷⁰ As in SKA 11.39, translated above, in which Jagaddhara asks how Śiva could reject him when he is just like the Ganges river goddess he bears on his head.

⁶⁷¹ *yas te dadāti ravam asya varam dadāsi yo vā madaṃ vahati tasya damam vidhatse / ity akṣaradvayaviparyayakeliśīlaḥ kiṃ nāma kurvati namo na manaḥ karoṣi* // SKA 11.79 //

his homage (*namas*) should lead to Śiva's attention (*manas*), according to the logic of language exemplified in Śiva's other actions (giving a boon [*vara*] to one who calls [*rava*] out to him, and punishing [*dama*] one who is arrogant [*mada*]). Such verses present interesting and creative prayers to Śiva that rely on the self-conscious use of clever, poetic language.

The fact that Jagaddhara uses *śleṣa* and other poetic figures in his *SKA* is not new in and of itself. Many of the *stotras* I discuss in earlier chapters contain such figures, and they have been a common and compelling feature of *stotras* in general. But it is worth dwelling on what *is* new in Jagaddhara's poetry. The size, scope, and complexity of the *SKA* far exceeds that of earlier *stotra* literature. While there are a few features of *kāvya* that the *SKA* does not adopt, such as a sustained narrative,⁶⁷² it ambitiously incorporates the dominant features of *kāvya* within the *stotra* genre. The question of the relationship between *stotra* and *kāvya* did not have a canonical or even clear response for centuries, but for Jagaddhara, *stotras* belong within the broad category of *kāvya*, and the *stotra* directed at Śiva is in fact the best kind of *kāvya*. Moreover, if *stotras* can be considered *kāvya*, then the same analytic categories used to interpret *kāvya* must apply to *stotras* as well. For instance, if the *SKA* is *kāvya*, one should be able to analyze it in terms of *rasa* and *dhvani*—arguably the most important concepts for interpreting poetry in Kashmir after the ninth century.

⁶⁷² This may be because a sustained narrative is structurally at odds with eulogy, the heart of the *stotra* genre. Of course, as I discuss in the Introduction, many *kāvya* narratives include *stotras* at key moments, such as the hymns in Ratnākara's *Haravijaya* (see Chapter Two). Such hymns sometimes advance the narrative of the larger work in which they are embedded, but this is usually secondary to their primary function of eulogy. Independent *stotras* usually contain even less narrative elements.

It can be difficult, however, to ascertain the relationship between *rasa* and a given work of art. *Rasa*, according to the dominant theory of poetics developed in Kashmir by Ānandavardhana and his followers, is not expressed directly; it can only be suggested. It cannot be analyzed in the same way that other features, such as *śleṣa*, can be analyzed. By the fourteenth century, the dominant position in literary theory took *rasa* as a subjective experience of the audience for a given work of art.⁶⁷³ One cannot, therefore, simply point to the existence of *rasa* in the *SKA*. But as I will demonstrate below, Jagaddhara explicitly identifies *rasa* as a key component of good poetry, which leads us to expect the same for his own poetry. It is also notable that Ratnakaṅṭha periodically refers to *rasa* and *dhvani* in his commentary on the *SKA*, so at least one interpreter saw them as important to the text.⁶⁷⁴ But one could certainly make the argument that the verses of the *SKA* suggest various *rasas*. For instance, both the fourth and the nineteenth *stotras* suggest the amazing or fantastic *rasa* (*adbhutarasa*). The fourth *stotra* describes the form of Hari-Hara, the deity that is half Viṣṇu and half Śiva. The nineteenth *stotra* describes the form of Ardhanārīśvara, the deity who is half Pārvatī and half Śiva. In both poems, Jagaddhara lingers over the features of these deities that might seem contradictory or paradoxical but are reconciled somehow in this form of the divine. In the world of Sanskrit literary criticism such verses are usually interpreted in terms of *adbhutarasa* and I think Jagaddhara's poetry is no exception.

⁶⁷³ See the Introduction.

⁶⁷⁴ For instance, in his commentary on the first verse of the *SKA* he identifies the specific kind of suggestion at work, namely suggestion based on the suggestive power of a set of words (in this case through *śleṣa*) through a simile (*śabdaśaktimūla upamādhvaniḥ* [*Laghupañcāśikā*, 2]).

Jagaddhara's wholesale application of *kāvya* literary techniques and his affirmation of *rasa* and *dhvani* (discussed in more detail below), as well as the possibility of interpreting *rasa* and *dhvani* in his poetry (evidenced both by Ratnakaṇṭha's reading and my own), indicate that the *SKA* demonstrates continuity with Sanskrit *kāvya* in terms of *rasa* and *dhvani*, as well as the other features I have discussed here. So far, therefore, we have seen that the *SKA* presents itself as continuing in and revitalizing the tradition of Sanskrit *kāvya*, that it shares many features with *kāvya*, including the widespread and ambitious use of literary figures, and that the analytic categories of *rasa* and poetic suggestion (*dhvani*) may apply. There is one final feature of the *SKA* as poetry worth addressing in detail in this context: *citrakāvya*.

Citrakāvya in the Stutikusumāñjali

The term *citrakāvya* means “brilliant” or “flashy poetry,” or in some cases “picture-poetry.” It can refer to various kinds of wordplay, including puzzles, riddles, and verses that encode instructions for creating a specific image (e.g., a lotus).⁶⁷⁵ In general, *citrakāvya* involves some specific poetic virtuosity, either by emphasizing a particular poetic figure or presenting some kind of challenge for its audience. Jagaddhara includes nine *stotras* in the *SKA* that can be classified as *citrakāvya*. The names of these *stotras* themselves suggest they should be interpreted differently than the others, as we shall see below. But they have also been understood as *citrakāvya* by later readers. Ratnakaṇṭha explicitly identifies them

⁶⁷⁵ For an overview, see Edwin Gerow, *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*, Paris: Mouton, 1971), 175-189.

as *citrakāvya* in the opening lines of his commentaries on each,⁶⁷⁶ and in his twentieth-century Hindi translation/commentary on the *SKA*, Premavallabha Tripāṭhī, who generally follows Ratnakaṅṭha's interpretations, introduces most of these *stotras* by explicitly calling them *citrakāvya*.⁶⁷⁷

This *citrakāvya* section of the *SKA* begins dramatically with the twenty-second *stotra*, which is markedly different from the hymns that precede it. While the first twenty-one *stotras* deploy a variety of poetic figures to do things like offer homage and praise Śiva, often focusing on specific themes like service or devotion, the twenty-second *stotra* self-consciously elevates the use of poetic figuration, and specifically alliteration. The title of this *stotra* makes this clear: it is called the *Kādīpadabandhastotram* (Hymn Composed of Words Beginning with 'K'). Consider the first verse, given here with the separate words divided by a hyphen:

*kāvya-kaśala-kalāsu kovidaiḥ kīrtitaiḥ kavi-kulaiḥ kutūhalāt /
kaumudī-kumuda-kānta-kīrtibhiḥ kāmītaiḥ kuśala-kārya-kāribhiḥ // SKA 22.1 //*

He is celebrated eagerly by groups of poets
experienced in the skills of poetry and the arts,
and desired by those who produce auspicious results
whose fame is beautiful like moonlight or white lotuses. // *SKA* 22.1 //

While such verses have generally pleasing literal meanings, their main poetic appeal derives from their aural components, their poetic figures based on qualities of sound (*śabdālāṅkāras*). The virtuosity displayed in the poem, and the prominence given to a specific poetic figure, make it a clear case of *citrakāvya*.

⁶⁷⁶ Except for the twenty-eighth *stotra*, which he does not explicitly identify as *citrakāvya*.

⁶⁷⁷ His translation/commentary, called the *Premamakaraṇḍa*, is integrated in his edition of the *SKA*.

No other parts of the *SKA* parallel the twenty-second *stotra*'s consistent alliteration, but the eight *stotras* that follow present a different kind of *citrakāvya*. This set begins with the twenty-third *stotra* (Hymn Composed as an Overlapping Chain of Words), in which a verbal chain is formed by the repetition of the three syllables that end each quarter verse (*pāda*) at the beginning of the next quarter verse, including from the end of one verse to the beginning of the next. The final verse ends with the same three syllables with which the poem begins. This can be classified as a type of *yamaka*, and this poetic figure dominates the seven hymns that follow, from the twenty-third to the thirtieth.

There are three types of translation of the term *yamaka*. Edwin Gerow explains that “the etymology of the word can be traced either directly to the root *yam-* (‘restrain’) or to the derived form *yama-* (which can mean ‘twin’) from the same root.”⁶⁷⁸ Hence there are two kinds of translations: “restraint” on one hand, and “doubled” or “twinning” on the other. A third type of translation describes the function of the figure in a verse; Gerow translates it as “cadence,” and it can also be translated as “rhyme.” None of these is particularly clear or useful, however. “Rhyme,” for instance, is confusing, since the point of *yamaka* is not to have two units that sound similar but to repeat an identical string of syllables with a different meaning; it is “a pun spelled out.”⁶⁷⁹ Hence I have chosen to translate the literary figure *yamaka* simply as “repetition.”

⁶⁷⁸ *Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*, 223.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Jagaddhara employs *yamaka* systematically from the twenty-third to the thirtieth *stotra* (295 verses, roughly 20% of the *SKA*).⁶⁸⁰ The titles given to these *stotras* indicate the general approach taken in each. I have already mentioned the twenty-third, which uses *yamaka* to link its twenty-seven verses into a verbal “chain.” In the twenty-fourth *stotra* (Hymn of Repetition in Two Places), a set of at least two (but usually more) syllables is repeated at the end of the first and third quarter verses and another set at the end of the second and fourth. Most of the verses in the twenty-fifth *stotra* (Hymn of Delighting Beauty) repeat five or more syllables at the end of the first and the second quarter verses, and another five or more at the end of the third and fourth quarter verses. The twenty-sixth *stotra* (Hymn with Repetition at the Beginning of Its Verses) involves the repetition of syllables at the beginning of each quarter verse. Similarly, the twenty-seventh (Hymn with Repetition in the Middle of Its Verses) and the twenty-eighth (Hymn with Repetition at the End of Its Verses) contain repetition of syllables within and at the end of their quarter verses, respectively. The twenty-ninth *stotra* (Hymn with Repetition in Every Other Verse) uses *yamaka* in alternating verses, with four or more syllables repeating at the end of each quarter verse. The second and fourth verses demonstrate such *yamaka*, for example, while the first and third do not.⁶⁸¹ This sequence of *stotras* culminates in the thirtieth *stotra*

⁶⁸⁰ For a dense but useful discussion on various systematic analyses of *yamaka*, see Renate Sohnen, “On the Concept and Presentation of “yamaka” in Early Indian Poetic Theory,” in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (1995).

⁶⁸¹ This does not mean the alternating verses contain *no* instances of *yamaka*; the third verse, for instance, rhymes the end of each *pāda* by repeating the last two syllables. But the majority of these alternating verses do not contain any systematic usage of *yamaka*.

(Hymn with Great Repetition); this final hymn is the densest and most complex in this section of the *SKA*.

One can see a logical progression in the sequence of *stotras* in this section, and also within most of these individual *stotras* themselves. In general, the end of these hymns is signalled by changes and crescendos in the use of *yamaka*. An internal progression is especially apparent in the thirtieth *stotra*. Over the course of the entire hymn, the difficulty and ambition of the *yamaka* that Jagaddhara employs increase. It begins with partial *yamakas*, i.e., repetition of part of a quarter verse in another quarter verse. The difficulty of the *yamakas* increases, so that by the forty-second verse each verse contains eight repetitions of the same two syllables (e.g. *manyā*), once at the start and once at the end of each quarter verse; by the fifty-ninth verse, each verse contains eight repetitions of the same *three* syllables (e.g. *sahasā*) at the beginning and end of each quarter verse. The sixty-eighth verse repeats a different set of two syllables four times at the beginning of each quarter verse (e.g., *kalakalakalakala*), and in the seventy-first, the last half of each quarter verse is the first half of the next. In the seventy-second, the first and second quarter verses are the same, as are the third and fourth, and in the seventy-third and seventy-fourth, the first half of each verse is identical to the second half. This progression culminates in the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth verses, which are identical. In the other words, the same set of syllables makes up two verses with entirely different meanings. This particular repetition exemplifies the specific figure known as *mahāyamaka*, “great repetition,”⁶⁸² which gives this hymn its name (*Mahāyamakastotra*).

⁶⁸² This figure is sometimes referred to as *ślokābhyāsayamaka*; Gerow, *Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*, 233-4.

Why does Jagaddhara give *yamaka* such a prominent role, to the extent that the formal features of the poetry in this section sometimes seem to overshadow its semantic content? The systematic organization of Jagaddhara's *yamaka*-focused *stotras* is crucial for understanding its significance. This organization creates a progression, a dramatic crescendo that creates movement within the lengthy *SKA* overall, and also within individual *stotras*. This is perhaps particularly important in such a lengthy *stotra* composition, where it would seem to be a literary ornament rather than the sustained narrative of other forms of poetry that governs internal movement. Jagaddhara's systematic presentation of *yamakas* also suggests the inheritance and preservation of a body of knowledge. This may have been part of a project of creative consolidation and preservation of knowledge at a time of transition, as I will argue in greater depth below. Another reason may have been pedagogical. Following Bronner's lead, it is possible to recognize the pedagogical potential for a collection of *stotras* that also encodes systematic information about the formal analysis of poetry.⁶⁸³ Like his commentary on the *Kātantra* system of grammar, which was clearly intended to instruct others, the *SKA* may have been intended as a tool for teaching students.

The inclusion of a significant *citrakāvya* section also suggests that Jagaddhara was attempting to be inclusive in his appropriation of Sanskrit literary traditions. Many literary critics—pre-modern and modern, South and non-South Asian alike—may have denigrated *citrakāvya* over the centuries,⁶⁸⁴ but Sanskrit poets frequently composed *citrakāvya* poetry,

⁶⁸³ See Bronner, "Singing to God, Educating the People."

⁶⁸⁴ Gerow presents the standard view: "After the triumph of the *dhvani* theory, *yamaka* comes to be considered the type par excellence of *citrakāvya*, the lowest of the three varieties of poetry, which embodies nothing of poetic value and displays mere virtuosity" (*Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*, 225). But there are exceptions, of course. The ongoing research of Isaac Murchie at the

and the use of extensive *yamaka* was common. In his influential *Dhvanyāloka*, for instance, Ānandavardhana assigned *citrakāvya* the lowest category of poetry, seeing it as poetry in which there is no poetic suggestion—but he himself composed a *citrakāvya* hymn called the *Devīśataka*, as we saw in Chapter Two.⁶⁸⁵ Indeed, as Pollock notes, Ānandavardhana’s criticism of *citrakāvya* hardly influenced the practice of poets, and “if anything, the popularity of *citrakāvya* only increased in the following centuries.”⁶⁸⁶ Jagaddhara’s presentation of *yamaka*-based *citrakāvya* makes the *SKA* inclusive of multiple styles of poetry. It also demonstrates a certain resistance to literary theory found among many poets. In other words, studying the *SKA*, along with much other Sanskrit literature, warns against relying too heavily on Sanskrit literary theorists when interpreting Sanskrit literature. Overall, Jagaddhara’s poetry seeks to synthesize earlier traditions of poetry and poetics within the devotional context of the *stotra*.

Of course, the *citrakāvya* parts of the *SKA* also demonstrate Jagaddhara’s virtuosity, his mastery of a complex and erudite style of composition. His work is perhaps the most ambitious instance of devotional *citrakāvya* in the history of Sanskrit literature in Kashmir. Furthermore, just because Sanskrit literary theorists had considered *citrakāvya* devoid of poetic suggestion and sentiment does not mean that Jagaddhara himself did. In fact I would argue that Jagaddhara often employs *yamaka* in support of them. Consider this verse, in which the second and fourth quarter verses are identical:

University of California-Berkeley in particular promises to challenge the standard interpretations of *citrakāvya* (see his forthcoming dissertation).

⁶⁸⁵ On Ānandavardhana’s divisions of poetry, see McCrea, *Teleology of Poetics*, 232-246.

⁶⁸⁶ Pollock, “Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out,” 52n28.

*tava savahariṇaṃ ghnatī maharṣiṃ yam akṛta cāpalatā navāsamādhim /
punar api drg alambhayat tavainaṃ yamakṛtacāpalatānavā samādhim
// SKA 30.12 //*

Your bow (*cāpalatā*), which killed the sacrificial animal,
caused that great sage (Dakṣa) unprecedented mental anxiety (*asamādhi*).
On the other hand, your glance,
which humbled Yama's insolence (*cāpalatā*),
caused this same sage (Dakṣa) to obtain mental peace (*samādhi*). // SKA 30.12 //

In his commentary, Ratnakaṇṭha says this verse suggests (*vyajyate*) the total freedom of Śiva's anger and favor, and that it is amazing (*adbhuta*) how Śiva is able to both cause and relieve mental anxiety (*samādhi* and *asamādhi*). The repetition of the syllables in the second and fourth quarter verses aids in this suggestion: the syllables are the same, yet the meanings are so different. We cannot know for sure, of course, how Jagaddhara himself understood the operation of these various features of his poetry, but I agree with Ratnakaṇṭha's gloss. Jagaddhara deliberately combines the extensive use of *yamaka* and other poetic figures with the *dhvani*- and *rasa*-centered view of poetry of the dominant Kashmirian tradition of poetics.

There is one final explanation for Jagaddhara's extensive use of *yamaka* that warrants attention. *Yamaka*, and poetic figures based on sound (*śabdālankāra*) in general, can produce aesthetic pleasure for an audience even if that audience does not comprehend the meaning of that poetry. One can speculate that Jagaddhara may have intended for his poetry to be appreciated even by those who did not fully understand his complex Sanskrit. In his fifth *stotra*, he hints that some poetry can produce delight just by being heard: he praises those poets "whose sweet poetry produces rapture when it is heard, even if its *rasa*

isn't appreciated, like a nectar that hasn't yet been savored."⁶⁸⁷ Ratnakaṅṭha's commentary explains that poetry rich with suggestive meaning can produce wonder just by being heard. Jagaddhara does not often circumvent the actual experience of *rasa* in this way, and consistently stresses its importance in good poetry. But occasionally he does hint at a different way of appreciating poetry. Later in the fifth *stotra* he provides an even more dramatic example:

Even those who don't understand the bare meaning of its words
listen to it, like deer hearing a melody,
and become transfixed, as if in a painting.
We praise that poetry of the best of poets! // SKA 5.17 //⁶⁸⁸

Perhaps, therefore, Jagaddhara's extensive use of *yamaka* can be seen as part of a larger attempt to create poetry that is pleasing even for those who are not able to understand their meaning.

Rasa, Dhvani, and the Poetics of the Stutikusumāñjali

Thus far I have focused on the *SKA* as poetry (*kāvya*), and in particular, its use of literary figures and its incorporation of *citrakāvya*. But the *SKA* also includes a number of reflections on the nature of poetry, and these can be interpreted as engagements with the tradition of Sanskrit poetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*) in Kashmir. This is markedly different from Utpaladeva and Kṣemarāja's texts, which I discussed in Chapter Three. Unlike Jagaddhara, they were not seriously interested in engaging with this tradition of poetics and its strategies

⁶⁸⁷ *yeṣāṃ acarvitarasāpi camatkaroti karṇe kṛtaiva bhaṇitir madhurā sudheva // SKA 5.5cd //*

⁶⁸⁸ *śabdārthamātram api ye na vidanti te 'pi yāṃ mūrchanām iva mṛgāḥ śravaṇaiḥ pibantaḥ / saṃruddhasarvakaṇḍasārā bhavanti citrasthitā iva kavīndragiraṇ numas tām // SKA 5.17 //*

for interpreting art. Jagaddhara, on the other hand, frequently incorporates elements of poetic theory into his verses. Indeed, in the *SKA*, the central analytic categories of Sanskrit poetics become values that are interwoven into the general project of praising Śiva. Through his incorporation and affirmation of poetic theory in his poetry, Jagaddhara attempts to establish a broad, inclusive perspective on poetry that allows for the full acceptance of his *stotras* within the framework of Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*), and therefore poetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*) as well. We have already seen how the *citrakāvya* sections of the *SKA* present a systematic view of such poetry, based on the formal analysis of the type, location, and regularity of repeated syllables (*yamaka*). By affirming categories from poetics and using them to create poetry, Jagaddhara connects his own poetry to the tradition of Kashmirian aesthetics.

Like almost all writers on poetics in Kashmir after Ānandavardhana, Jagaddhara pays tribute to the importance of *rasa* and *dhvani*. Thus he says that learning is only fruitful when it blossoms in poetry (*vāṇī*) that is sweet and full of *rasa* (*sarasamadhurā*) (*SKA* 17.5), and he lauds that praise to Śiva that always produces *rasa* (*rasakṛt*) for connoisseurs (*SKA* 23.26). Elsewhere he states that in the end there is no true friend or support other than the nectarian praise of Śiva in which there is sweet suggestion (*madhuradhvani*) (*SKA* 30.4). As with many of these statements, this can be interpreted technically or not; *madhuradhvani* could simply mean “whose sounds are sweet,” but the technical meaning of *dhvani* (“suggestion,” “implicature”) is also present. Sweetness (*mādhurya*) is also an important category for poetics, one of the three poetic qualities generally accepted by Sanskrit writers. Jagaddhara often implies that only poetry with such literary figures has religious efficacy.

For instance, he says that only speech (*sarasvatī*) fresh with *rasa* (*sarasā*) and intent on the lord is capable of destroying the affliction of rebirth (*SKA* 7.15). The importance of both *rasa* and *dhvani* can be seen in this elegant *śleṣa* verse comparing poetry for Śiva to fresh rain-clouds for peacocks (whose breeding season is linked to the rainy season, and who, according to the conventions of Sanskrit poetry, sing and dance with the onset of rain clouds):

Surely, this pure sequence of numerous praises (*nava*)
 full of poetic suggestion (*dhvani*) with *rasa* at its core
 will make the blue-throated, majestic Śiva,
 decorated by a digit of the moon, totally happy,
 just as this unbroken row of new clouds,
 thundering loudly and laden with water,
 delights the blue-throated peacock
 decorated by plumes of abundant beauty. // *SKA* 38.10 //⁶⁸⁹

Through such verses, Jagaddhara characterizes *rasa* and *dhvani* as the key features of devotional poetry that successfully pleases Śiva.

Jagaddhara does not, however, identify and praise specific *rasas*. As we saw in the *StC*, *ŚSĀ*, and Kṣemarāja's commentaries on these hymns, *bhaktirasa* has particular appeal to *stotra* authors. This is true for Jagaddhara as well, and I analyze the *SKA*'s presentation of *bhakti* in detail in Chapter Five. In most of the *SKA*, Jagaddhara depicts *rasa* and *dhvani* in general terms as essential features of the best Śaiva poetry. He certainly sees himself composing poetry that employs *dhvani* and gives rise to *rasa* for some audiences. He says that he does not produce *rasa* for those who do not have Śaiva devotion, implying that he *does* for those who do (*SKA* 17.8), and elsewhere he explicitly describes himself as

⁶⁸⁹ *dhruvaṃ navānāṃ rasagarbhanirbharadhvanir ghanānām anagheyam āvaliḥ / pṛthuprabhāvaṃ śaśikhaṇḍamaṇḍitaṃ praharṣiṇaṃ nīlagaṇaṃ kariṣyati // SKA 38.10 //*

producing *rasa* (SKA 30.77). He often refers to his own Śaiva poetry as being full of *rasa* (e.g., *uditarasā*, SKA 23.10). He hopes that good people (i.e., poetic connoisseurs) will relish (*rasayantu*) the *rasa* he has created (SKA 39.10). Such statements usually emphasize two things: the devotion of his poetry to Śiva, and the fact that it is full of *rasa* or *dhvani*.

Many of Jagaddhara's verses combine affirmations of *rasa* and *dhvani* with other central concepts of Sanskrit poetics. The third verse of the first *stotra*, for example, uses *śleṣa* to compare poetry to a woman who can please her husband:

This poetry (*sarasvatī*) of mine
 has a beautiful style (*ramyarīti*).
 It is faultless (*anaghā*) and shines with the poetic qualities (*guṇojjvalā*).
 It is sweet with pleasing meters, full of *rasa*,
 and adorned (with literary figures) (*alankṛtā*).
 May it please the heart of the lord
 as a beloved wife of noble conduct,
 sinless and shining with good qualities,
 sweet and pleasing in appearance,
 devoted and beautifully adorned,
 pleases the heart of her husband! // SKA 1.3 //⁶⁹⁰

Jagaddhara's characterization presents a synthesizing view of good poetry, combining concepts including the poetic styles or "ways" (*rīti*), poetic qualities (*guṇa*), prosody, *rasa*, and poetic figures (*alankāra*). This general and inclusive depiction is seen in many other verses, such as SKA 5.31, which introduces an extensive list of concepts as it uses *śleṣa* to praise both the poet and his poetry: the standard poetic qualities (*guṇa*) of vigor (*ojas*), sweetness (*mādhurya*), and clarity (*prasāda*); the poetics ways or styles (*rīti*, *mārga*); the three functions of language, namely direct denotation (*abhidhā*), secondary expression (*bhakti*, a synonym for *lakṣaṇā*), and suggestion or implicature (*vyakti*, a synonym for

⁶⁹⁰ *ramyarītir anaghā guṇojjvalā cāruvṛttarucirā rasānvitā / rañjayatv iyam alankṛtā manah svāminah praṇayinī sarasvatī // SKA 1.3 //*

dhvani); appropriateness (*aucitya*); adornment with poetic figures (*alaṅkāra*); prosody; and refinement, including the implied use of Sanskrit (indicated here by the epithet *aprākṛta*, “refined” or “not vulgar”).⁶⁹¹

Since Jagaddhara picks up on so many central concepts from Sanskrit poetics it is worth emphasizing what he does *not* reiterate. Most importantly, he never refers to *dhvani* as the soul of poetry, as Ānandavardhana and his followers had done. Nor does he subscribe to the tripartite classification of poetry, based on the role of suggestion, into higher poetry (in which *dhvani* is predominant), intermediate poetry (in which *dhvani* is secondary), and lower poetry (*citrakāvya*, in which there is no *dhvani*). As I demonstrated above, Jagaddhara shows interest in including *rasa* and *dhvani* within the *citrakāvya* sections of his work, just as he does in the rest of the *SKA*. Overall, the *SKA* affirms the centrality of *rasa* and *dhvani*, the importance of other categories from poetics like the three poetic qualities (*guṇas*), and the combination of *citrakāvya* with other styles of poetic composition. Jagaddhara seems far more concerned with incorporating and preserving these various features of the tradition of Sanskrit poetics in Kashmir than he is with adjudicating between competing positions.

At the same time, Jagaddhara attempts to go beyond an inclusive vision of earlier concepts and traditions. In part this has to do with one of the distinctive features of the *stotra* form, namely the direct or indirect address of the one being praised. As we saw repeatedly in Chapters One and Two, *stotras* often engage their multiple audiences in

⁶⁹¹ *ojasvī madhuraḥ prasādaviśadaḥ saṁskāraśuddho ’bhidhābhaktivyaktiviśiṣṭarītir ucitair arthair dhṛtālaṅkṛtiḥ / vṛttasthaḥ paripākavān avirasaḥ sadvṛttir aprākṛtaḥ śasyaḥ kasya na satkavir bhuvi yathā tasyaiva sūktikramaḥ // SKA 5.31 //*

complex ways. For the *SKA*, Śiva is the official audience and principal addressee.

Jagaddhara often highlights this in creative ways, and he offers some unique reflections on the power of poetry and the relationship between the poet and god.

The Courtship of Śiva and Sarasvatī

The *SKA* explores the power of language and the potential of religious poetry. Many of its verses extol the efficacy of poetic praise for Śiva, and indicate the centrality of the power to please Śiva. We have already seen that the title of the *SKA* (Flower-Offerings of Praise) introduces an analogy found frequently in its verses: a poet offers beautiful poetry, just as devotees present other offerings such as flowers or fruit, in order to please a deity. The propitiated deity then fulfills the desires of the supplicant. Language, therefore, is able to function as a go-between, a link, between the poet and his or her audiences, and thereby win favor.

At first this may seem relatively simple and straightforward, but Jagaddhara invites more subtle and complex readings of this process that have implications for the study of religious poetry more broadly. His poetry provides a compelling and somewhat unusual way to think about the capacity of poetry to mediate: a number of verses in the *SKA* suggest a romantic relationship between Śiva and the goddess of speech. Called by a variety of names (Sarasvatī, Uktidevī, Bhāratī etc.), she is the embodiment of poetry, including his own. For example, in *SKA* 1.3 (translated above), Jagaddhara uses complex puns (*śleṣa*) to compare poetry to a woman who can please her husband. Sometimes Jagaddhara suggests more erotic possibilities. Another verse in the first *stotra* says:

The goddess of speech,
 even though she is used to dwelling
 on the mount of Brahmā, a swan beautiful
 like the rays of the full moon,
 reposes playfully in my impure mind.
 The happiness that arises for Śiva, the moon-crested lord,
 because of this is supreme. // SKA 1.26 //⁶⁹²

In other words, when Sarasvatī dwells in the mind of the poet (even though it is less pure than her usual abode), he produces beautiful poetry and this pleases Śiva. But this is only the basic meaning; the real energy of the verse is in its suggested meaning. Almost every word in the verse has erotic overtones. Here is another translation of the same verse that draws these out:

The goddess of speech,
 even though spoiled⁶⁹³ by her intimacy
 with Brahmā, whose mount is a swan,
 beautiful like the rays of full moon,
 playfully resorts to my impure mind.
 The pleasure that comes to Śiva, the moon-crested lord,
 because of this is supreme. // SKA 1.26 //

In this interpretation, Śiva's pleasure comes from his sexual union with Sarasvatī in the mind of the poet.⁶⁹⁴ The commentator Ratnakaṅṭha explains that the pleasure referred to here is the result of the success or good fortune of a lover. The reason Sarasvatī comes to the poet's mind is to be united with her lover, and Śiva is certain of being sexually united

⁶⁹² *yat pārvaṇendukarasundaravāhahaṃsasaṃvāsadurlalitayāpi vacodhidevyā / viśramyate manasi naḥ samale salīlaṃ tat saubhagaṃ bhagavato jayatīndumauleḥ // SKA 1.26 //*

⁶⁹³ This could also mean that she is “tired” or “bored” of her sexual relationship with Brahmā. Note that while there is sometimes confusion about the relationship between Brahmā and Sarasvatī, Jagaddhara displays no such ambiguity, consistently depicting Sarasvatī as Brahmā's consort.

⁶⁹⁴ Since the poet is devoted to and focused on Śiva, Śiva dwells in his mind.

with his beloved.⁶⁹⁵ Even the second translation provided here, however, does not fully capture the sexual resonance of many words.⁶⁹⁶ In sum, Jagaddhara often links Śiva and Sarasvatī in ostensibly romantic or sexual ways, and this suggests the power of poetic praise to win divine favor.

Stotras are often addressed directly to a deity, and Jagaddhara takes advantage of this in his depiction of the relationship between Śiva and the goddess of speech. He pleads and argues with Śiva directly, even scolding him on occasion—all of which, of course, also functions as praise. A set of verses in the eleventh *stotra* shows this clearly. The sixteenth verse presents the goddess of speech as a new bride that Śiva has led to their new home in the poet’s heart, only to leave her there without satisfying her. Jagaddhara scolds Śiva, saying this is inappropriate (*ayuktam*)—implying that he should accept her and consummate their new marriage. The next verse (*SKA* 11.17) challenges Śiva to reconcile his promise to Pārvatī that she would be his only beloved when he lovingly holds Gaṅgā and Indulekhā (the celestial river-goddess and the embodied, slender digit of the moon) on his head and Dayā (the embodiment of compassion) in his heart. The implication is that since Śiva has already broken his monogamous commitment to Pārvatī, he should accept the goddess of

⁶⁹⁵ *Laghupañcāśikā*, 8.

⁶⁹⁶ For example, the standard meaning of *bhagavat* is “illustrious,” “glorious,” or simply a noun, “god.” Yet in this verse it comes directly after the word *saubhagam*, “pleasure,” which has sexual connotation here. This calls attention to the underlying structure of the word *bhagavat*, which literally means “one who possesses *bhaga*.” In the word *bhagavat*, *bhaga* means “good fortune, majesty, excellence,” and thus refers to the greatness of the one described. Yet *bhaga* can also mean love, sexual pleasure, or in certain contexts, female genitalia. Clearly this is not what *bhagavat* explicitly means in this verse, but the choice and placement of the word draws attention to this possibility. This is not the only example from this verse, either. The imagery of the moon, too, has a sexual resonance; it is a white, luminous “drop” (*indu*), which in some contexts is a euphemism for semen.

speech, the embodiment of Jagaddhara's poetry. In the following verse (SKA 11.18) the poet uses *śleṣa* to express two meanings simultaneously. The first questions why Śiva is moved to be compassionate again and again towards sycophants but ignores the poet's sincere devotional poetry; the second questions why Śiva would ignore a young, beautiful, virtuous woman to sport with some older woman (in this case, Karuṇā, the embodiment of compassion). Jagaddhara continues this theme in the nineteenth verse, exclaiming that this young woman (i.e., his poetry) just begins to speak some tentative, innocent words of praise, but they do not please Śiva because he is too used to the words of Kātyāyanī—another name for Pārvaṭī, but *kātyāyanī* can also mean a middle-aged woman (SKA 11.19).

More verses in this section characterize the relationship between Śiva and the goddess of poetry in romantic terms. Consider the following verse, in which Jagaddhara uses *śleṣa* to argue that Śiva has to accept his words of praise, just as a husband should not turn away a blameless woman:

You bear on your head
the celestial river overflowing with white, rolling waters,
descending from her own heavenly abode.
Yet you abandon this poetry in beautiful meters
which has no other goal but you.
What can be said?
Your actions are totally free-willed! // SKA 11.22 //

At the same time, the verse also means:

You respectfully accept Gaṅgā,
who has transgressed with handsome, fickle idiots
and has fallen from her proper station.
Yet you abandon this Vāc (the embodiment of poetry),
whose conduct is noble and who is devoted only to you.
What can be said?

Your actions are totally unpredictable!⁶⁹⁷ // SKA 11.22 //⁶⁹⁸

In other words, he implies that Gaṅgā is a loose woman, while the poet's own poetry, embodied as the goddess of speech, is virtuous and beautiful. Logically, therefore, Śiva should accept Jagaddhara's poetry as well. Yet Śiva is also beyond logic and totally free from normal expectations. Hence Jagaddhara's verse also celebrates Śiva in all his amazing power and incomprehensibility.

Jagaddhara also calls out frequently to Sarasvatī, entreating *her* to be faithful to Śiva alone. Be devoted to Śiva, he says, not some other pathetic (*dīna*) lord (*nātha*)—meaning that poetry should praise Śiva, not other gods or worldly kings.⁶⁹⁹ Another verse says that only poetry/the goddess of speech that is devoted to Śiva and full of *rasa* is capable of destroying the affliction of rebirth.⁷⁰⁰ For Jagaddhara, a faithful, loving relationship between Śiva and Sarasvatī, as the beautiful embodiment of speech, is a powerful metaphor for the capacity of poetry devoted to Śiva to win his loyalty and affection in return.

Occasionally when Jagaddhara addresses Sarasvatī he refers to her as his mother.

While this also is not a new topos among Sanskrit poets, it takes on a stronger implication in Jagaddhara's poetry because of the relationship between Śiva and Sarasvatī that he develops.

⁶⁹⁷ The key term Jagaddhara uses to describe Śiva's actions is *svatantra*, which means independent. In this second translation, however, I have rendered it as unpredictable because this highlights how Śiva's actions seem (rhetorically) illogical or confusing to the poet.

⁶⁹⁸ *gr̥hṇāsi mūrdhani jalair dhavalair vilolair udvalitāṃ nijapadaskhalitāṃ dyusindhūm / etāṃ ananyagatim ujjhasi sādhuṣṛtāṃ vācaṃ svatantracaritasya kim ucyate te // SKA 11.22 //*

⁶⁹⁹ *dātum anuttamahāvapuṣaṃ yaḥ prababhūva nadīnam / nātham anuttamahāvapuṣaṃ taṃ bhaja devi na dīnam // SKA 24.3 //*

⁷⁰⁰ *ramāpi devī mama no manoramā kṣamāpi māmabhyavapattumakṣamā / mama kṣamaikā bhagavatparā punarbhavārtibhaṅge sarasā sarasvatī // SKA 7.15 //*

In other words, Jagaddhara implicitly positions himself, the poet and devotee, as the offspring of Sarasvatī and Śiva.

Jagaddhara's suggestion of a relationship between Śiva and Sarasvatī offers several insightful ways of thinking about *stotra* literature. To begin with, it dramatizes the uniqueness of poetry. Poetry does not function like other usages of language. From its beginnings in South Asia, it was differentiated from other forms of language use. Hence the old formulation that "the Veda acts like a master in commanding, the seers' texts like a friend in counseling, and *kāvya* like a mistress in seducing."⁷⁰¹ Jagaddhara simply expands upon and personifies this formulation, drawing out its implications. Poetry, as we see in the *SKA*, persuades and pleases like a lover, and thus functions differently from other uses of language. Its aim is to satisfy and delight, to beguile and captivate, and thereby to win divine favor.

Personifying poetry's interactions with Śiva also emphasizes the agency of the poet and his poetry. Jagaddhara imagines language to be the key link between the human and the divine: human beings create poetry, which also constitutes a deity, and this embodied poetry interacts with the supreme deity. The personification of poetry gets at the intimacy between religious language and divinity that has a long history in South Asian religious traditions and Kashmir in particular.⁷⁰² What Jagaddhara does that is new and provocative is combine the Śaiva emphasis on the relationship between Śiva and Śakti (and specifically goddesses associated with language and mantras, such as Mālinī) with the metaphor of adornment and

⁷⁰¹ Pollock, "Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out," 52.

⁷⁰² See Andre Padoux, *Vac: The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*, trans. Jacques Gontier (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

the personification of poetry found in Sanskrit literary culture. Poetry, for Jagaddhara, constitutes the interaction between devotee and divine. A lot is at stake, therefore, in the quality of one's poetry. In taking this position, Jagaddhara implicitly rejects the logic that it is the emotion or sentiment behind devotional poetry that really counts. For Jagaddhara, better poetry is more effective at winning divine favor.

The verses I have discussed in this section are also characteristic of Jagaddhara's distinctive poetic voice. Unlike most earlier *stotras* composed in Kashmir, his are erudite without being highly philosophical or doctrinal. Like the traditional *kāvya* that informs its style so strongly, his poetry does not shy away from worldly, romantic, or erotic themes. His tone ranges from deep respect to a barely veiled brashness (as we see in the verse about Gaṅgā above). Often his *stotras* take the form of one-sided conversations with Śiva that argue and plead more than eulogize; or rather, they praise indirectly, even as they attempt to cajole. Overall, his poetry expresses a familiarity with Śiva that I would argue is a defining feature of devotion in general.⁷⁰³ Jagaddhara has a personal relationship with Śiva, and in many verses the closeness of the triad of actors—the triad of Śiva, the goddess of speech, and Jagaddhara himself—shows this.

Lastly, the courtship of Śiva and Sarasvatī serves as an apt metaphor for the interactions between Śaivism and Sanskrit poetics that Jagaddhara's poetry embodies and, moreover, encourages. No earlier text in Kashmir had so clearly tried to interweave poetic

⁷⁰³ Often this intimacy is expressed through simple, direct language. But for Jagaddhara, complex literary figures such as *śleṣa* allow him to include thinly veiled admonishments and criticisms of Śiva, as well as emotional pleas and lamentations.

theory with Śaiva devotion. By suggesting that Śiva and Sarasvatī—both the beautiful, nubile goddess of speech and poetry itself—should be mutually devoted, Jagaddhara makes a statement about the proper use of poetry and the nature of poetry as the medium between devotee and deity. For Jagaddhara, the rich tradition of Sanskrit poetics should be harnessed to praise and please Śiva alone. The logic of this view, combined with the direct address central to most *stotras*, suggests that Śiva himself is the central audience for such poetry. At the same time, the *SKA* has multiple, complex audiences, both human and divine.

The Stutikusumāñjali's Human Audience

The question of audience is central to the *stotra* genre in general and the *SKA* in particular. As we saw in the Introduction, the work of scholars like Norman Cutler, Yigal Bronner, and Christian Novetzke has highlighted the role of multiple audiences for devotional poetry like *stotras*.⁷⁰⁴ In his work on Tamil devotional poetry, Cutler investigates the triadic relationship between the poet, the deity addressed, and the implied human audience involved in the recitation or singing of such poetry. Bronner has drawn attention to the pedagogical function of *stotras*, their ability to instruct and appeal to a human community even as they ostensibly are focused on a deity alone. Novetzke's work on the figure of Nāṁdev has demonstrated the public dimensions of *bhakti* and the importance of memory in analyzing the significance of such figures. These scholars fruitfully analyze the rhetoric of religious poetry and its human audiences.

⁷⁰⁴ See Cutler, *Songs of Experience*; Bronner, "Singing to God, Educating the People"; and Novetzke, *Religion and Public Memory*.

The *Stutikusumāñjali* inscribes and imagines a human audience more explicitly than most *stotras* and religious poetry in general. In some ways it is even prescriptive, crafting both an audience and its reaction. This audience consists of a community of Śaivas whose reactions to poetry are based on both Śaiva devotion and the capacity for aesthetic appreciation.

Jagaddhara is explicit about his human audience in several ways. The most obvious is when he occasionally addresses his human audience directly: “O fortunate ones! (*kṛtinaḥ*),” he calls out in one verse.⁷⁰⁵ In another, at the end of an extended syntactic unit, he says:

What is the use of more verbal hoopla?
You who have suffered for so long,
listen to this final statement that is much more useful:
abandon all worldly attachment, which gives pleasure at first but ends in sorrow.
Take up the pure water of the Ganges river and be devoted to Śiva! // SKA 17.26 //⁷⁰⁶

In such verses, Jagaddhara’s rhetoric aims to engage his human audience and encourage them to worship and be devoted to Śiva. They often include vocatives explicitly identifying his human addressees and use second-person imperative verbs enjoining his audience directly. Other verses address the same audience without injunction, such as by offering blessings to them. Each verse of the third *stotra* (Hymn of Benediction), for example, ends with a benediction: “may Śiva’s power be beneficial for us,” “may Śiva, the lord of the three

⁷⁰⁵ *haram upeta rasād amalaṃ ghaṇaṃ damalaṅghanaṃ tanuta mā kṛtinaḥ / tanutamākṛti naḥ śrayatādṛtaṃ śrayatād ṛtaṃ bhavata ity uditam // SKA 30.71 //* Ratnakaṅṭha prefaces his commentary on this verse by saying: “Now the poet offers a blessing to those devotees fixed on Śiva” (*śivaikatānānbhaktajanān prati kaviḥ sāsīrvādaṃ vakti*) (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 217).

⁷⁰⁶ *kiṃ bhūyobhir vacanaracanāḍambarair dīrghaśokā lokā yuktaṃ śṛṇuta sutarāṃ paścimaṃ vākyam etat / duḥkḥodarkaṃ pramukhasukhadaṃ saṅgam utsrjya sāṅgam gāṅgam labdhvā salilam amalaṃ śambhubhaktiṃ bhajadhvam // SKA 17.26 //*

worlds, protect you,” and so on.⁷⁰⁷ While this is the standard format for the auspicious verses (*maṅgalācaraṇas*) that often begin Sanskrit texts, Jagaddhara dwells on this function.⁷⁰⁸ Such verses express concern about the Śaiva orientation and religious life of a community of devotees in which Jagaddhara includes himself. At the same time, this can be differentiated from another feature of the *SKA*’s reception: the perception of the *SKA* as poetry by scholars and poetic connoisseurs.

Jagaddhara frequently characterizes his ideal audience as those who are sensitive to the subtlety of sophisticated poetry. He uses a variety of terms or phrases to refer to his aesthetically-oriented audience. Many of these are synonyms for the term *sahṛdaya*, which is used widely in Sanskrit poetics to refer to the sensitive audience, the aesthetic connoisseur. He describes good poetic praise as spreading joy “in the hearts of the learned” (*jñānām hṛdi*),⁷⁰⁹ and elsewhere in “the heart (*hṛdayam*) of the wise (*budhānām*).”⁷¹⁰ Other synonyms for *sahṛdaya* include *sujana* (“excellent person”), *dhanya* (“fortunate person”), *sat* (“good

⁷⁰⁷ *vyomnīva nīradabharah sarasīva vīciviyūhaḥ sahasramahasīva sudhāmśudhāma / yasminn idaṃ jagad udeti ca līyate ca tac chāmbhavaṃ bhavatu vaibhavam ṛddhaye naḥ // SKA 3.2 // sarvaḥ kilāyam avaśaḥ puruṣāṅkarmakālādikāraṇagaṇo yadanugraheṇa / viśvaprapaṅcaracanācaturatvam eti sa trāyatām tribhuvanaikamaheśvaro vaḥ // SKA 3.4 //*

⁷⁰⁸ See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of such verses.

⁷⁰⁹ *santy anyāḥ kṛtinām anāmaya girah kā nāma nāmantharā na jñānām hṛdi vāstavās tava mudam ke vā stavās tanvate / vāg eṣā tv atisādhvasādhvapatitā yat sādvasādhv abhyadhāt tan manye mahimānam ānayati te sthemānam ānandakṛt // SKA 24.28 //*

⁷¹⁰ *kāntā kāntāramadhye sarid iva sakulakṣmādhārāyām dhārāyām yātā yā tāratamyam kva na vimalamatiprekṣaṇena kṣaṇena / sābhāsā bhāratīyam tanur iva taraṇer andhakāre ’ndhakāreḥ stutyā stutyā budhānām madayatu hṛdayam glānitāntam nitāntam // SKA 30.80 //* In this particular example, *budhānām* refers to both the “learned” in Jagaddhara’s audience and the “gods” who have been afflicted by the demon Andhaka.

person”), *dhīmat* (“wise person”) and *sacetas* (“intelligent” or “good-hearted person”).⁷¹¹

Ratnakaṅṭha regularly glosses these with the term *sahṛdaya* in his commentary.⁷¹²

Occasionally Jagaddhara even uses the term *sahṛdaya* explicitly. He compares his praise-poems, for example, to rain showers, and says that *sahṛdayas* are like the peacocks that get excited in the rainy season.⁷¹³ Near the end of the *SKA*, in the poem describing his lineage, Jagaddhara refers to himself as a *sahṛdaya*: “He is without jealousy, a connoisseur (*sahṛdaya*) fully familiar with scripture. He is extremely humble, speaks sweetly, and his conduct is noble.”⁷¹⁴ The surface level meaning of *sahṛdaya* in both of these verses may simply be “intelligent” or “good-hearted,” and yet using such terms invokes the rich terminology of Sanskrit poetics. Through such verses, Jagaddhara demonstrates his deep concern with the reception of his poetry among a learned human audience.

Sometimes Jagaddhara actually depicts the reaction that good poetry has on its ideal audience. For instance, he states that those who offer fresh praises to Śiva “bring the learned to tears in the assembly hall, banish the great anger of their enemies, and melt the

⁷¹¹ For examples, see *SKA* 5.18 (*sujana*), 5.27 (*dhanya*), 36.34 (*sat*), 5.36 (*dhīmat*), and 39.6 (*sacetas*).

⁷¹² E.g., in his commentary on *SKA* 5.18 (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 36).

⁷¹³ *varṣāvarṣāyamāṇā saḥṛdayasīkḥināṃ saṃhitānāṃ hitānāṃ dātrī dātrī tṛṇānāṃ iva lavanaṇaṭur duṣkṛtānāṃ kṛtānāṃ / kalyā kalyāṇadāne nutir iyam aśubhaṃ tarjayantī jayantī viśvaṃ visvambharāntaṃ prasaratu surabhīnandanasyandanasya // SKA 30.81 //*

⁷¹⁴ *nirmatsaraḥ saḥṛdayaḥ śrutapāradṛśvā viśvātiśāyivinayaḥ priyavāk suśīlaḥ / SKA 39.9.* Interestingly, Ratnakaṅṭha does not explain *sahṛdaya* in aesthetic terms, glossing it instead as “intelligent, or equanimous toward (both) enemies and friends” (*sahṛdayaḥ śatrau mitre ca samaḥ sacetanaś ca; Laghupañcāśikā*, 254). However, in many other parts of his commentary he uses *sahṛdaya* in the sense of an aesthetic connoisseur.

hearts of good people.”⁷¹⁵ One verse vividly imagines the goddess of speech, embodied in good poetry, as the dance instructor for the eyebrows, earrings, head-dresses, and necks of the audience members whose heads and faces are moving to and fro in their enjoyment.⁷¹⁶ Another verse says that poets please the ears of their audience with beautiful poetry, and that audience pleases the poets’ ears with exclamations of applause filled with sincere wonder (*akṛtrimacamatkṛtisādhuvādaiḥ*).⁷¹⁷

All of this indicates that there are at least two human audiences inscribed in the *SKA*, or rather, two different ways of conceiving of the same audience. Sometimes Jagaddhara directly or indirectly refers to his audience in markedly religious terms—he enjoins them to be devoted to Śiva, he warns them of the danger of worldly pleasures, he offers them blessings and so on. But in other instances he expresses concern over the reception of his poetry by scholars and critics, and he even depicts how his ideal audience would react to his work. Thus the verses of the *SKA* not only inscribe but also prescribe an audience that is both solidly Śaiva and explicitly aesthetic in orientation. This human audience, however, is only part of the picture.

⁷¹⁵ *te sabhyānām sadasi nayanāny aśru visrāvayanti krodhotkarṣaṃ gurum ururuṣāṃ dūram utprāvayanti / cetaḥ sūktair maṇim iva satām aindavaṃ drāvayanti svāmin ye tvām abhinavanavavyāhṛtīḥ śrāvayanti // SKA 36.34 //*

⁷¹⁶ *jihvāgraraṅgabhuvi satkavitur vilāsalāsyotsavavyasaninī svayam uktidevī / bhrūkāṇḍakuṇḍalakirīṭaśīrodharāṇām nṛttopadeśagurutām kṛtinām upaiti // SKA 5.7 //*

⁷¹⁷ *śrotrāṇy anargalagalanmadhubindugarbhasandarbhāsundarapadopacitair vacobhiḥ / dhanyāḥ satām sukavayaḥ sukhayanti te ’pi teṣāṃ akṛtrimacamatkṛtisādhuvādaiḥ // SKA 5.4 //*

The Stutikusumāñjali's Divine Audiences

Despite periodic verses addressing a human audience explicitly, many more of the verses in the *SKA* call out to a divine audience. Some verses call out to Sarasvatī, the goddess of poetry herself. The other deity who recurs throughout the work and sometimes gets addressed directly is Yama, the god of death. In part, this emphasizes the urgency of the poet's prayers, painting a dire picture of his fate. Often, it also serves to highlight Śiva's power over death. An extended section in the ninth *stotra*, for instance, consists of a long reproach directed at Yama,⁷¹⁸ telling him to give up his disregard for Śiva and explaining to him Śiva's great power.⁷¹⁹

But unsurprisingly, the vast majority of verses in the *SKA* are focused on Śiva. After all, the central feature of the work as a whole is the praise and propitiation of Śiva. Hundreds of verses call out to this deity, using the full arsenal of names and epithets relevant to the god, and many use second-person pronouns, second-person verbs, or injunctions aimed at Śiva. In hundreds of other verses he is the implied subject being praised or described.

Śiva's role as the primary audience for the *SKA* is central to the efficacy assumed in the text. The poet offers his *stotras* just as a devotee may offer flowers, fruits, incense and other objects used in worship. Each of these offerings should be of the highest quality affordable by the devotee, and they are all beautiful or appealing to the senses. The deity receives these offerings, partakes of them, and then gives the "leftovers" to the devotees

⁷¹⁸ Ratnakaṅṭha calls the section a *kālopāmbha*, a reproach or censure of Kāla, another name for Yama (*Laghupañcāsikā*, 74).

⁷¹⁹ *SKA* 9.61-9.79.

who partake of them and thereby participate in a sharing with the deity and with their own community. Central to this exchange is the presumed ability of these offerings to please the deity with their quality and beauty. In the case of poetry, they engender an aesthetic experience for the primary audience: Śiva himself. Śiva, therefore, can be said to have taste, to be a sensitive aesthete affected by excellent poetry. Śiva himself is the supreme *sahṛdaya*.

Such a theology of poetry is not explicit, yet it can be drawn out from numerous verses. For example, Jagaddhara exclaims that it does not matter if all the gods are pleased and all the learned are happy; if Śiva does not consider his poetry, there is no liberation (*mukti*).⁷²⁰ For this poet, it is Śiva's attention that matters for the ultimate goal, not what the audience of scholars and lesser gods thinks or experiences because of his poetry. As we have seen, of course, Jagaddhara *is* very concerned with his human audience and their reception of his poetry, but at least rhetorically the ultimate audience for his poetry is Śiva.

As we saw earlier, the five opening verses of the *SKA* emphasize the power of poetry to please Śiva, each relying on extended puns on the word *sarasvatī* to make comparisons about poetry. We saw that poetry, refreshing like the Sarasvati river, is capable of captivating the heart, and like a beautiful stringed instrument it makes Śiva's mind abandon its wandering.⁷²¹ These fascinating verses are important in the present context for two reasons: they each show that Jagaddhara's composition aims to please and captivate his divine audience, namely Śiva; and they each emphasize the *poetic* features of this composition. In doing so, Jagaddhara presents his *stotras* as aligned with the tradition of

⁷²⁰ *SKA* 11.140. As Ratnakaṇṭha explains in his commentary, this verse also compares Śiva to a judge, without whose judgment no one will obtain "release" (*mukti*).

⁷²¹ See *SKA* 1.1-1.5.

Sanskrit poetics and implies that the poetic features of his composition are essential to its efficacy, at least in terms of achieving its explicit goal of pleasing Śiva. The poetic features of the *SKA*, just like the rest of its content, are (at least ostensibly) for the deity. Such verses, and many others throughout the *SKA*, imply that Śiva himself is a *sahṛdaya* deeply affected by good poetry.⁷²² When we consider this in light of the relationship Jagaddhara suggests between Sarasvatī and Śiva, I propose that in this poetry Śiva is best described as the “erotic aesthete” (adjusting Wendy Doniger’s famous characterization of Śiva as the “erotic ascetic”). The seductive power of poetry and the model of aesthetic appreciation and pleasure borrowed from classical Sanskrit literature are essential components of Jagaddhara’s vision of Śaiva devotion. For this author, the poetic features of prayers, petitions, and so on are not secondary, but rather essential to their efficacy.⁷²³

Creative Consolidation: *The Stutikusumāñjali and the “Death of Sanskrit”*

I have argued that *SKA* adopts the dominant features of Sanskrit *kāvya* and subscribes to the central positions of Sanskrit poetics to a far greater extent than earlier *stotra* literature. I have examined some of its poetic features in detail and considered its inclusive vision of Sanskrit poetics. Beyond these specificities, the *SKA* also serves as a key witness in an influential debate about the history and nature of Sanskrit literary production

⁷²² This idea can be seen as an extension of earlier trends in the traditions of Śaivism and poetics that preceded Jagaddhara in Kashmir, but it had not been articulated or exemplified, to the best of my knowledge.

⁷²³ There are certainly many theologians and poets who take the opposite view, namely that it is only the emotion or intention behind a poem that is important—but usually it is great poets saying this. Rarely does one find poems devoid of beauty claiming that beauty is not important at all.

in Kashmir. In his provocative article, “The Death of Sanskrit,” Sheldon Pollock analyzes the dramatic shifts in the quality and quantity of Sanskrit texts, and particularly of Sanskrit literature and treatises on poetics, that occurred during certain phases of Indian history. He considers four cases in particular:

the disappearance of Sanskrit literature in Kashmir, a premier center of literary creativity, after the thirteenth century; its diminished power in sixteenth-century Vijayanagara, the last great imperial formation of southern India; its short-lived moment of modernity at the Mughal court in mid-seventeenth-century Delhi; and its ghostly existence in Bengal on the eve of colonialism.⁷²⁴

His analysis uses the strong metaphor of death to describe the collapse or decay he chronicles, and he tries to explain the deep and complex factors that may have led to the demise of a certain kind of Sanskrit vitality in each case.

Pollock’s bold arguments have certainly garnered their share of criticism as well as misinterpretation. Even as careful a reader as Sudipta Kaviraj seems to have interpreted too readily the “death of Sanskrit” as a singular event closely tied to modernity, even though Pollock chronicles multiple cases of a rapid decline in Sanskrit production that span from the pre-modern and pre-Mughal to colonial rule in Bengal.⁷²⁵ In his own response to Pollock’s essay, Jürgen Hanneder argues for the inappropriateness of the metaphor of death,

⁷²⁴ Pollock, “Death of Sanskrit,” 395.

⁷²⁵ About Pollock’s article, Kaviraj writes: “It was a wonderfully provocative thesis, and split historical and critical opinion productively. Some thought the report that Sanskrit died was greatly exaggerated. Certainly, it was not true that after the 16th century no Sanskrit poems or texts were written, or that people entirely renounced Sanskrit as the vehicle of serious reflexive composition.” He goes on to give the example of Bharatcandra Ray, “the pre-eminent Bengali poet of the 18th century,” for whom Sanskrit was an “essential part” of his “theoretical and artistic universe” (“The Sudden Death of Sanskrit Knowledge,” in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* [2005] 33, 119). The point of Pollock’s article, I would argue, is not that Sanskrit *died*, but rather that it *dies* or has died in various periods, and these are instructive about the conditions necessary for certain kinds of Sanskrit learning and literary production.

suggesting instead a weaker discourse of “change”—changes in the types of Sanskrit texts produced and in their circulation and consumption.⁷²⁶ More than anything, Hanneder tries to cast doubt on any argument based on negative evidence, such as the lack of literary works from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Kashmir. Overall, Pollock’s essay has generated a great deal of productive debate about the historical conditions surrounding the vitality of Sanskrit literary production and it has necessitated the careful consideration of our sources, including many that had been ignored.

This is certainly true in the case of Kashmir. Pollock vividly describes the rich literary culture of twelfth-century Kashmir, home to Sanskrit poets and scholars accomplished enough to rival those of any other period in Indian history. Yet by the end of that century, the brilliance of those literati had all but died out, never to be revived to anything close to its former glory:

The production of literature in all of the major genres (courtly epic, drama, and the rest) ceased entirely, and the vast repertory of Sanskrit literary forms was reduced to the *stotra* (hymn). The generation of poets immediately following Mañkha’s [fl. 1140] is almost a complete blank, and we know of only one work from the entire following century and a half. As for new literary theory, which had been produced in almost every generation from 800 on [...]—this was over. The last work to circulate outside of Kashmir was the *Alaṅkāraratnākara* (Mine of Tropes) of Śobhākaramitra, probably from the end of the twelfth century. When in the fifteenth century Sanskrit literary culture again manifested itself, it was a radically-altered formation, in respect to both what people wrote and how, historically, they regarded their work.⁷²⁷

I quote Pollock’s description at length because this chapter speaks directly to his argument.

For the “one work” known during this period is the *SKA* itself, from the latter half of the

⁷²⁶ Hanneder, “On the Death of Sanskrit,” 298.

⁷²⁷ Pollock, “Death of Sanskrit,” 296.

fourteenth century. Thus it stands as a solitary witness to Sanskrit literary culture during this period,⁷²⁸ and the bulk of this chapter describes the kind of testimony the *SKA* offers.

Pollock claims here that “the vast repertory of Sanskrit literary forms was reduced to the *stotra* (hymn),” and elsewhere he remarks that “in terms of new literary works, the great experiments in moral and aesthetic imagination that marked the previous fifteen hundred years of Sanskrit literature have entirely disappeared, and instead, creativity was confined within the narrow limits of hymnic verse.”⁷²⁹ It is inevitable that if the *SKA* is our only extant literary text for a century and a half period of time, it will represent a major reduction of literary forms. Yet as this chapter has shown, the *SKA* is a highly creative and experimental text that is self-conscious about its own status as literature and its relationship to the discourse of Sanskrit poetics. Jagaddhara is rooted in the traditions of Sanskrit literature and poetics (in addition to related disciplines like grammar and prosody) and he honors many of the conventions of the *stotra* form, even as he creates a strikingly innovative religious and literary text. Far from narrowly limiting creativity, the *stotra* form was uniquely able to accommodate great experimentation in content, form, and style, embodying what I would call a creative consolidation of earlier traditions, combined with striking innovation. In the *SKA*, we see not stagnation but a great flourishing of literary value, as the text inherits and refigures the traditions of Sanskrit poetry and poets through the flexible *stotra* form.

⁷²⁸ This does not mean that it is the only text composed during the period, or that it will remain the only witness, as Hanneder argues (“On the Death of Sanskrit,” 301ff.).

⁷²⁹ Pollock, “Death of Sanskrit,” 398.

While this analysis suggests the need for some minor revisions in Pollock’s argument about Sanskrit literature in Kashmir, overall I think that it supports his argument.

Jagaddhara’s experimentation with the *stotra* form and his appropriation of the strategies of Sanskrit *kāvya* and *alaṅkāraśāstra*—in other words, what had become the language of men—makes sense in a context in which the earlier patterns of literary culture seem to have fallen apart, perhaps reflecting the socio-political upheaval of this period in Kashmir.

Conclusion

This chapter has made a series of arguments about the poetry and poetics of the *SKA*. I have argued that the *SKA* is a religious and literary experiment, an ambitious attempt to bring the *stotra* form and its devotional, religious concerns squarely into the purview of *kāvya*, and thus into the purview of Sanskrit poetics as well. I have examined the *SKA*’s perspective on *kāvya* and analyzed its poetic features, including the prominent use of literary figures. I have demonstrated the *SKA*’s relationship to earlier traditions of poetry and poetics and shown how it incorporates and expands upon these traditions in innovative ways. Part of this has been an argument about the prominence Jagaddhara gives to *citrakāvya*, “brilliant poetry” that emphasizes particular literary figures. In addition, I discussed two creative ways that Jagaddhara reflects on the role of poetry. In the first, Jagaddhara uses the relationship between Sarasvatī and Śiva as a compelling metaphor and argument for the unique capacities of religious poetry and the proper relationship between Sanskrit literature and Śaivism. In the second, he articulates a theology of poetry underlying the text that

inscribes both a human audience of Śaiva aesthetes and a divine audience in Śiva as the supreme and exemplary aesthetic connoisseur.

These arguments highlight a number of features of the *stotra* genre itself. First, the *SKA* suggests that the flexibility of the *stotra* form has been crucial for its persistence through times of change. Jagaddhara's *stotras* draw together traditions of *kāvya* and *alankāraśāstra* with Śaiva devotion, iconography, and theology, all based on a rigorous knowledge of Sanskrit grammar and prosody. As we saw in Chapter Two, in the centuries after Jagaddhara Kashmiri authors, such as Sāhib Kaul and Ratnakaṅṭha, continued to compose *stotras* that engaged with earlier traditions in innovative ways, relying heavily on the flexibility of this genre.

Second, the *SKA* deliberately calls attention to its own multiple, complex audiences. Since *stotras* by definition indirectly or directly offer praise, they encode a primary audience. But as Jagaddhara shows repeatedly, *stotras* engage a human audience or audiences as well. His poetry makes explicit some of the complexities involved in understanding this triadic, performative feature of *stotras*. Moreover, this dynamic indicates some of the potential for *stotras* to serve as teaching tools capable of presenting and expounding upon complex information. We saw that the *SKA*, for example, systematically presents the literary figure *yamaka*, and also offers guidelines for what can and should be considered good poetry. Such strategies suggest that the *SKA* may have been used to instruct a human audience on a variety of literary and religious traditions, even as it offers devotional praise directed toward Śiva.

In addition, the *SKA* challenges the persistent Romantic legacy in the interpretation of Indian poetry. Through sophisticated literary figures, and particularly through the *citrakāvya* section of the *SKA*, Jagaddhara presents devotional poetry that is far from effortless and spontaneous. Instead it is complex and rich, contemplative and deliberate, even as it expresses deep emotion. It requires an aesthetic appreciation that is deeply knowledgeable and mature, best exemplified in Śiva himself. Such poetry also reminds us to look beyond the mainstream theoretical texts of Sanskrit poetics to understand and interpret poetry. For instance, like so many poets before and after him, Jagaddhara was not deterred by the critical judgements of many literary theorists and chose to compose enthusiastic *citrakāvya*. Scholarship on Indian literature too often privileges the theorist over the poet, overlooking the same trends in poetry that the theorists themselves ignore or denigrate.

Lastly, the *SKA* represents a sustained attempt to interweave two discourses, that of Sanskrit poetics and Śaiva worship.⁷³⁰ While earlier authors had written texts related to both (Abhinavagupta is the paradigmatic and most well-known case), they maintained distinctions between them. Modern scholars have tried to link these two discourses with interesting but usually unsatisfying results, as we saw in Chapter Three. Jagaddhara's poetry, however, clearly tries to tie them together, even if its theological interpretation of poetry and poetics is not systematic or fully developed. While it is not expository analysis, the *SKA* is still an argument, embodied in the practice of poetry, about the mutually constitutive relationship between Śaiva worship and Sanskrit poetics.

⁷³⁰ While the former has taken center stage in my discussion of the *SKA* thus far, Chapter Five focuses on Śaiva worship and devotion.

To conclude, I want to return to the overarching argument of this chapter. I suggested that the *SKA* represents a reversal of and resistance to the broad trend in the history of Sanskrit that Pollock charts in *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*. Vernacularization was not the only trend taking place in the second millennium. I would argue that we need to pay more attention to efforts to resist and reverse the entrance of the language of the gods into the world of men through appropriation and delineation, as in the *SKA*. This does not negate Pollock's central argument; rather, I see this trend as a reaction to and therefore affirmation of the large-scale processes that he explicates. Moreover, I would argue that the *SKA* is but one instance of a larger pattern of such resistance and appropriation.⁷³¹ For example, one might fruitfully think about the uniqueness of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* in this way, or the striking reformulations of Sanskrit poetics by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in the sixteenth century.⁷³² I am not arguing that such instances represent some kind of large scale movement or unified trend; rather, I think they are individual reactions and appropriations of the overall trajectory of Sanskrit literature in South Asia. They can be interpreted as partial or indirect arguments about the proper use of Sanskrit, and they are, I would argue, struggles over the deployment of the aesthetic power of Sanskrit. Considering these cases in the terms I have suggested may yield new insights

⁷³¹ However, Jagaddhara's attempts to "return" Sanskrit to the world of the gods does not mean he seeks to recreate its early ritualized Vedic usage. As we will see in Chapter Five, he encourages and exemplifies the use of Sanskrit for devotional prayer, broadly conceived, that embraces the literary developments of *kāvya* but harnesses their power for the worship of Śiva.

⁷³² It is interesting that in some ways the frequent institutional subsumption of Sanskrit within Religious Studies Departments in the United States represents a different kind of limitation of Sanskrit to "the world of the gods." Pollock has certainly been one of the most vocal and influential voices in the effort to resist this Orientalizing delineation.

into the history of both religious and literary expressions, and my hope is that this close analysis of the *SKA* will make it easier to recognize and interpret such trends elsewhere.

In Chapter Five I build upon the arguments I have made in this chapter and consider the *SKA* more thoroughly as a *stotra*. I analyze its presentation of praise and prayer, as well as devotion and devotionalism (*bhakti*), and their relationship to Sanskrit poetics. This includes a re-evaluation of the history of *bhaktirasa* (“the aesthetic sentiment of devotion”). It concludes with a consideration of the legacy and influence of the *SKA*. Together, these chapters offer the first analysis of the *SKA*’s dynamic perspective on religion, literature, and poetics.

Chapter Five

Bhakti, Śaivism, and the Language of Prayer in the Stutikusumāñjali

The *SKA* shows deep concern with presenting itself as poetry and engaging with the history of Sanskrit poetics in Kashmir, as we saw in Chapter Four. At the same time, it offers reflections on the nature of prayer, loosely conceived in this context as the general term for various ways of using language to relate directly⁷³³ to a deity. Jagaddhara demonstrates how the *stotra* form encompasses language-based practices, such as the offering of blessings or the taking of refuge, by unpacking and exploring them throughout the *SKA*. Moreover, poetry and poetics are not secondary to these aspects of the text. The poetic features of the *SKA* are central to the religious vision that it presents.

Unlike some of the *stotras* discussed in Chapter Two and Three, the *SKA* presents a general Śaivism unified by the loving worship of Śiva through praise-poetry and other kinds of prayer. The first part of this chapter lays out this vision of Śaivism and the theological orientation of the text in general. This provides the background for the two sections that follow. In the first, I analyze the *SKA*'s presentation of *bhakti* as a crucial topic for the *stotra* genre, arguing for its double significance as a religious and literary category. In the second I consider several examples of religious practices accomplished through language that the *SKA* both facilitates and reflects upon. These include offering praise, homage, and

⁷³³ Of course, some types of prayer are more direct than others. Often Jagaddhara lauds the power of devotion to Śiva, for instance, without directly addresses or praising Śiva. But clearly such praise is ultimately for Śiva himself. In the present context I am deliberately interpreting prayer in a broad sense to include such praise and homage, which establish a relationship between the deity and the devotee.

blessings, invocations of auspiciousness, taking refuge, meditation on the deity's form, and worship. Overall, this chapter develops the arguments presented in the previous chapter. It shows how both poetry and poetics are integrated into the vision of Śaivism offered by the *SKA*, and it illustrates Jagaddhara's expanded view of the *stotra* form as a type of literature that encompasses a host of religious practices rooted in language.

The Śaivism of the Stutikusumāñjali

Given the important history of non-dualistic *stotras* in Kashmir, one might expect Jagaddhara to develop this theme throughout his poetry. There are, in fact, scattered verses that suggest a non-dualistic framework for the *SKA*. Yet these isolated instances are overshadowed by the majority of verses that explore the relationships between the poet, Śiva, and the community of Śaivas who read or hear the hymns of this text. In contrast to earlier poets like Nāga and Utpaladeva, Jagaddhara generally does not probe the nature of non-dualistic *bhakti*, praise, and so on. Despite his occasional references to the identity between Śiva and the self, for instance, he is more concerned with depicting fruitful interactions between himself, Śiva, and his human audiences that rely on at least a functional duality. In many verses Jagaddhara asks Śiva to rescue him as he rescued devotees in the past, or pleads with him to be true to the meaning of his names and epithets, such as Śambhu, "the benevolent one." Such verses highlight the relationship between them and their individual personalities, and often stress the distance between them. A set of verses in the eleventh *stotra*, for example, uses a series of puns to show how they are ostensibly alike. They are both *nirguṇa*, for instance, but for Śiva this means he is beyond

the three *guṇas* or qualities that pervade the manifest universe, while for the poet it means he is devoid of any good qualities.⁷³⁴ The final line of each verse makes this distance explicit: Jagaddhara laments repeatedly that despite their specious similarities, “this is the problem: you are auspicious Śiva, but I am inauspicious (*aśiva*), struck down by fate.”⁷³⁵ Thus, while the puns in these verses ostensibly suggest some similarity between Śiva and the speaker, in the end they only accent the sharp difference between them revealed in the last line of the verse.

Jagaddhara’s frequent focus on the body illustrates this trend well. He exalts the loving worship and service of Śiva not only through various types of prayer, but also bodily actions. The following verses, from the seventh *stotra* in praise of service to Śiva, are exemplary in this respect:

How great are these two feet,
which are meritorious because they are useful for approaching Śiva’s temples?
And how great are these two hands,
which worship, serve, and offer libations to Śiva
with various ointments, unguents, and applications? // SKA 7.25 //

How great indeed is this tongue,
which day after day celebrates the repetition of the lord’s names?
And how great is this head,
resplendent with shining streaks of dust, like pollen,
from Śiva’s lotus-feet? // SKA 7.26 //

How great are these eyes,
which for so long have been eager to look upon
good fortune embodied in moon-crested Śiva?
How great are these ears,
purified from constantly hearing about Śiva’s various activities? // SKA 7.27 //

⁷³⁴ See SKA 11.93.

⁷³⁵ *kaṣṭam śivas tvam aśivas tu vidhikṣato ’ham*, which recurs as the final quarter of SKA 11.93-97.

How great is the mind
 intent on meditating on three-eyed Śiva,
 after shaking off the challenge of endless mental constructs?
 How great is the final beatitude that is beyond all worldly attainments
 since it consists in the bliss of serving Śiva? // SKA 7.28 //

Wise ones who know this and are free from fear,
 even those who are dedicated to *samādhi*⁷³⁶ as that which uproots misfortunes,
 understand fully that their own bodies are truly useful
 in paying homage, offering praise, meditation, and worshipping the lord.
 // SKA 7.29 //⁷³⁷

These verses play on the “eight-limbed” (*aṣṭāṅga*) yoga of Patañjali, which culminates in *samādhi* or total meditative absorption. Jagaddhara reconstitutes the metaphor of limbs, replacing the various parts of Patañjali’s yoga with limbs of the human body (feet, hands, tongue, head, eyes, ears, and the mind, culminating in a final beatitude, *apavarga*), the bliss of embodied service to Śiva, that parallels and competes with the ideal of *samādhi*. Rather than promoting union with Śiva or some kind of abstract meditative state, such verses celebrate the bliss of worshipping Śiva that relies on at least a functional duality between servant and lord.

⁷³⁶ *Samādhi* generally means a meditative state of total absorption or concentration. It is also the eighth constituent of the yoga taught by Patañjali in the *Yogasūtra*. In his commentary on this verse, Ratnakaṅṭha glosses it as “the union of the self and the mind through [Patañjali’s] eight-fold yoga” (*aṣṭāṅgena yogenātmamanasor aikyaṃ samādhiḥ*; *Laghupañcāsikā*, 48). The point in the present context is that *samādhi* would preclude worship with the body.

⁷³⁷ *kva nīlakaṅṭhāyatanopasarpaṇasphuṭopakārau caraṇau mahāguṇau / kva cāñjanodvartanacarcanaḍibhiḥ purāripūjārpaṇatarpaṇau karau // SKA 7.25 // kva nāma nāmagrahaṇotsavaṃ vibhor abhi pravṛttā rasanā dine dine / kva cādrīputrīpatipādapaṅkajasphuradrajorājīvirājītaṃ śīraḥ // SKA 7.26 // kva dṛk ciraṃ pāritacandraśekharasvarīpasaubhāgyavilokanasphṛhā / kva santatākarnītadarpakadvīṣadvicitracāritrapavitritā śrutiḥ // SKA 7.27 // kva nīrdhutānalpavikalpavīplavatrilocanadhyānanibandhanaṃ manaḥ / kva cāpavargo ’yam amārga eva yaḥ smarārisevāsukhasarvasampadām // SKA 7.28 // idaṃ vidantaḥ sudhiyo bhīyojjhitāḥ samādhim ādhicchidam āśritā api / prabhupraṇāmastuticitānārcanasphuṭopayogaṃ bahu manvate vapuḥ // SKA 7.29 //*

In general, the *SKA* celebrates an exoteric set of Śaiva practices, foremost of which are praise and praise-poetry. These tie together a host of other practices. In one of the last hymns of the *SKA*, for example, Jagaddhara says:

There is meditation, there is *samādhi*,
there is the great sacrifice, there is all worship,
there truly is supreme initiation
where one hears Śiva's praise. // *SKA* 37.11 //⁷³⁸

In this verse, as in the majority of the *SKA*, Jagaddhara refers to general features of Śaivism without marking his poetry as sectarian or diving deep into technical terminology. He mentions Śaiva initiation (*dīkṣā*), for example, but does not elaborate on what kind, or into what tradition.⁷³⁹ Moreover, this verse suggests that one obtains the benefits of initiation (and the other practices he lists) simply by praising Śiva. In other words, when Jagaddhara does gesture toward more technical Śaiva practices, he does so by bringing them under the umbrella of devotional prayer.

Thus the *SKA* presents an exoteric Śaivism for Śaiva devotees who have not necessarily been initiated and therefore follow the kind of general prescriptions found in Śaiva scriptures like the *Śivadharmottara*. These focus on the worship of Śiva primarily in pan-Indian forms recognizable across exoteric Śaiva scriptures, especially the Purāṇas, as well as Sanskrit literature more broadly. In addition to his basic form as the husband of Pārvatī, these include his manifestations as the lord who is half-male and half-female

⁷³⁸ *tad dhyānaṃ sa samādhiḥ sa mahāyāgas tad arcaṇaṃ sakalam / sā khalu paramā dīkṣā yatra nutiḥ śāmbhavī śrutiṃ viśati // SKA 37.11 //*

⁷³⁹ Ratnakaṇṭha, on the other hand, does not hesitate to interpret such references in light of specific scriptures and traditions. His commentary on this verse, for instance, relies on the *Svacchandabhairavatantra*, even though there is no indication in Jagaddhara's text that this is what he had in mind. See Sanderson, "Śaiva Exegesis," 431.

(Ardhanārīśvara), the cosmic dancer (Naṭarāja), and his fierce incarnation (Bhairava). It is these generic forms to which Jagaddhara refers most frequently throughout the *SKA*. He alludes repeatedly to well-known stories of Śiva’s compassion and to his basic iconography, including such standard features as the snakes and ash that covered his body; the dark color of his throat, stained after he consumed the cosmic poison to save the universe; his three eyes, where the sun, the moon, and fire reside; and the Ganges river, the crescent moon, and the matted locks that adorn his head. The exoteric nature of this form is matched in the realm of mantras by his invocations of the Purāṇic mantra [oṃ] *namaḥ śivāya* (“[Oṃ], Homage to Śiva”), which is accessible to all, rather than to limited circles of Śaiva initiates.⁷⁴⁰

A relatively stable vision of Śiva’s personality emerges throughout the *SKA*. He has many of the characteristics of a king, such as being the protector, the punisher, and the one who answers petitions. This verse summarizes many of these functions:

He protects those in fear.
 He is the lord of all things conscious and unconscious.
 He eliminates the difficulties of the virtuous who praise him.
 He makes devotees understand their own identification with the self.⁷⁴¹
 He punishes the wicked.
 His bestows enjoyment and liberation on those who serve him.
 He playfully manifests creation, maintenance, and withdrawal
 in the form of the triad *bhūr bhuvah svaḥ*.
 May that gracious lord protect you! // *SKA* 3.51 //⁷⁴²

⁷⁴⁰ See, for example, his praise of this mantra in *SKA* 7.20-22.

⁷⁴¹ Ratnakaṇṭha interprets this differently. According to him, this means that Śiva “produces the identification with the self desired by devotees” (*bhaktis tadvatām matām abhimatām svasya samatām svasāyujyaṃ kartā*) (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 27).

⁷⁴² *trātā bhūtibhṛtām patiś cidacitām kleśaṃ satām śamsatām hantā bhaktimatām matām svasamatām kartāpakartāsatām / devaḥ sevakahuktimuktighaṭanābhūr bhūrbhuvahsvastrayānirmānasthitisamhṛtiprakatitakrīdo mṛḍaḥ pātu vaḥ // SKA 3.51 //*

Particularly important for Jagaddhara is Śiva's power to save one from death, embodied in the figure of Yama. Many of his appeals to Śiva emphasize his terror and desperation in the face of Yama's imminent appearance.⁷⁴³

For the devotee, what matters most is Śiva's compassion and grace (*krpā*, *anugraha*, *prasāda*), from which all other benevolent functions spring. Whatever weaknesses or faults a devotee may have, whatever particular suffering a devotee may experience, if Śiva is compassionate then he bestows his favor, which has the power to uplift anyone, no matter how wretched. Throughout the *SKA* Jagaddhara walks a fine line: he recognizes Śiva's total independence and the impossibility of influencing him through any means, on one hand, and yet on the other hand he suggests that devotional poetry can win his favor. Verses such as this one stress how difficult it is to actually obtain this favor:

Even the illustrious wish-fulfilling tree could not produce it.
Once one has it, there is no thirst for the nectar of ambrosia.
One cannot get it even by profound yoga or Vedic sacrifices.
May this extraordinary favor (*prasāda*) given by Hara take away your impurity!
// *SKA* 3.43//⁷⁴⁴

And yet others boldly suggest that Śiva cannot refuse to help those who come to him for protection:

The whole universe, including the gods and demons, is subject to you.
You, O lord, are subject to compassion.
That compassion is subject to the wretchedness of the humble,
and that wretchedness has fallen to me without any effort! // *SKA* 12.5 //⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴³ See, for instance, *SKA* 11.103 and 32.1 (both translated below).

⁷⁴⁴ *śrīmān akalpata na kalpatarur yadāptyai tṛṣṇā rasāyanarasāya na yaṃ sametya / labhyo na yo gahanayogahavaiḥ sa vo 'gham aprākṛto harakṛto haratu prasādaḥ // SKA 3.43 //*

⁷⁴⁵ *jagad vidheyaṃ sasurāsuraṃ te bhavān vidheyo bhagavan kṛpāyāḥ / sā dīnatāyā namatām vidheyā mamāsty ayatnopanataiva seti // SKA 12.5 //* This verses appears early in the twelfth *stotra*, after the

Jagaddhara, in other words, presents himself as so wretched that Śiva has no option but to save him because he cannot ignore his own compassionate nature. Hence while Jagaddhara does refer to the impossibility of winning Śiva’s favor, these references are often rhetorical. The overall impression one receives from the *SKA* is precisely the power of devotional poetry to inspire Śiva’s compassion and win his favor.

Another significant aspect of Śiva’s nature recurs throughout the *SKA*: its amazingness, its ability to produce wonder. Countless verses use poetic figures to highlight the astonishing features of Śiva’s nature, and Jagaddhara even explicitly describes Śiva as “he who produces wonder” (*uttamacamatkṛtikṛt*).⁷⁴⁶ He often resorts to figures of speech, such as puns (*śleṣa*) and apparent contradictions (*virodhābhāsa*), to convey this point. Consider this verse, which puns on the two meanings of the word *sthāṇu* (Śiva and tree trunk), presented here with the puns translated side by side:

He has no origins.	It has no roots.
He is adorned by a digit of the moon.	It has no buds.
He can relieve all of the suffering of devotees.	It somehow provides relief from the heat for those beneath it.
He consists in great good fortune, he is immediately beneficial, and he is worshipped by the wise.	It is covered in sprouts, it provides fruit instantly, and it abounds with flowers.
May that Śiva (<i>sthāṇu</i>), whose nature is amazing, be auspicious for you!	May that tree trunk (<i>sthāṇu</i>), whose form is amazing, be auspicious for you! // <i>SKA</i> 3.12 // ⁷⁴⁷

eleventh emphasized Jagaddhara’s own low state (*dīnatā*). In that sense it indicates continuity in the flow of the *SKA*: the eleventh hymn demonstrates Jagaddhara’s wretchedness, and the twelfth builds upon this established idea.

⁷⁴⁶ *SKA* 3.12

⁷⁴⁷ *mūlojjhitena kalikākalitena tāpaśāntikṣameṇa namatām avipallavena / sadyaḥphalena sumanobhir upāsitenā sthāṇuḥ śriye ’stu bhavatām vapusā ’dbhutena // SKA 3.12 //* As Ratnakaṇṭha points out, features such as the ability to provide shade and the presence of spouts, flowers, and fruit (but no

In such verses Jagaddhara is far less concerned with theology than he is with literary strategies that can suggest the marvel of Śiva's nature. In this production of wonder, Śiva is like poetry itself, and thus poetry becomes the ideal means of best expressing that nature.

Overall, therefore, Jagaddhara depicts Śiva as a deity who is wondrous and produces wonder, who is compassionate, omnipotent, and omniscient, and whose favor enables devotees to overcome all difficulties. He presents a supreme deity who is accessible through his forms within the realm of thought, speech, and action, even as they simultaneously point to a reality that transcends what can be apprehended in these ways. *Bhakti*, furthermore, is central to this Śaivism. Jagaddhara repeatedly describes Śiva as favoring his devotees (*bhaktas*).⁷⁴⁸ Moreover, not only does Jagaddhara characterize his own verses as being full of *bhakti*, but he prays that his poetry might spread *bhakti* among those who hear it.⁷⁴⁹ Moreover, he depicts an embodied *bhakti* as preferable to liberation. For instance, he praises the lowly body since it can worship Śiva but disavows the liberation (*mukti*) that takes one away from the “festival of service” (*niṣevanotsava*) to Śiva and “does not lead to union” (*ayuktipātini*).⁷⁵⁰ This *bhakti* infuses a host of religious practices, including all of those performed through the poetry of the *SKA* itself, such as praise, the

buds) are all amazing since they are normally impossible for a bare tree trunk (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 17-18).

⁷⁴⁸ E.g., in *SKA* 2.15, where he describes Śiva as the one “who favors his devotees” (*bhaktānugrahakāriṇe*).

⁷⁴⁹ See *SKA* 38.29, and my extended discussion below.

⁷⁵⁰ *varam bhaved apy avaram kalevaram param harārādhanasādhanam hi yat / na tu kratudhvamsiniṣevanotsavam vinighnatī muktir ayuktipātini // SKA 7.24 //* See also *SKA* 3.44, translated below.

offering of homage, and the act of taking refuge. The emphasis of the *SKA* is squarely on the relationships created through such acts based in language. Despite its non-dualistic framework, therefore, the *SKA* stresses the subjective realities of dualistic relationships.

Nevertheless, a small number of verses indicate the non-dualistic perspective underlying the text as a whole. Some refer to the identity between Śiva and the self.⁷⁵¹ In other verses Jagaddhara demonstrates some of the same concerns we saw in the works of earlier authors who were explicitly non-dualistic in orientation. One verse in particular reiterates not just a theme but also much of the language of a verse found in two earlier versions, one in the *Sāmbapañcāśikā* and another in the *Bhairavānukaraṇastotra* of Kṣemarāja:

You alone are the one to be praised, you alone are the one who praises,
you alone are the praise itself. There is nothing other than you.
The idea that I might praise you with praise-poetry is ignorance,
a false understanding based on differentiation. // *SKA* 12.2 //⁷⁵²

Like many stotra authors before him, Jagaddhara offers his own response to this doubt about the possibility of praise:

Despite this, I do praise you again and again,
for only ignorance can destroy ignorance.
There is no other means (*upāya*) to wipe off dirt (*rajas*)
stuck on a mirror, except for dirt (*rajas*).⁷⁵³ // *SKA* 12.3 //⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁵¹ See, for example, *SKA* 38.8, in which this identification is explicit (*mamāntarātmā vibhur eva*).

⁷⁵² *stutyas tvam eva stutikṛt tvam eva stutis tvam eva tvadṛte 'sti nānyat / iyaṃ tv avidyā yad ahaṃ stuve tvāṃ stutyeti mithyā pṛthagarthabuddhiḥ* // *SKA* 12.2 // Cf. *SP* 15 and *BhAKSt* 2.

⁷⁵³ The general maxim Jagaddhara provides is a bit strange. Both Ratnakaṇṭha and the twentieth-century Hindi commentator simply gloss both instances of the term *rajas* as dirt or dust (*dhūli*). This may just be an idiom, something like the English “fight fire with fire.” An alternative interpretation would be that the second usage of the word *rajas* is a pun, and means “mist” (in the sense of small particles of water), which could also be used to clean a mirror.

According to this justification, praise does indeed involve a false dichotomy rooted in ignorance, and yet it is a useful means of overcoming that ignorance.⁷⁵⁵ Occasionally, therefore, Jagaddhara does explicitly address the theological issues raised by the potentially dualistic implications of praise and prayer.

More often, Jagaddhara explores the theme of oneness and multiplicity. He stresses Śiva's nature as the one reality underlying all of the differentiation found in the universe. He illustrates this fundamental unity through such classic examples as the gold used in various ornaments, and water found in various bodies of water.⁷⁵⁶ The universe arises and dissolves in Śiva, like clouds in the sky or waves in the ocean.⁷⁵⁷ It is Śiva who performs various functions in the universe by manifesting as different deities, as he depicts in this verse:

Sporting in the maintenance, dissolution, and creation of the triple universe,
he becomes Hari, Hara, and Brahmā through his effects.
His power surpasses the speech and thought of all people.
May that god grant you eternal, imperishable good fortune (*śiva*). // SKA 3.3 //⁷⁵⁸

Such verses generally describe forms of Śiva common to the Purāṇas, Sanskrit *kāvya*, and other exoteric texts. Yet occasionally Jagaddhara does refer to forms of Śiva specific to

⁷⁵⁴ *staumya eva tatrāpi punaḥ punas tvāṃ naśyaty avidyā yad avidyayaiva / rajaḥ prarūḍhaṃ mukure
pramārṣtuṃ rajo vinā na hy aparo 'sty upāyaḥ // SKA 12.3 //*

⁷⁵⁵ This argument develops the argument found in *SP* 11.

⁷⁵⁶ *SKA* 2.24

⁷⁵⁷ *SKA* 3.2

⁷⁵⁸ *lokatrasthithilayodayakelikāraḥ kāryeṇa yo hariharadruhiṇatvam eti / devaḥ sa
viśvajānavānmanasātivrtaśaktiḥ śivaṃ diśatu śaśvad anaśvaram vaḥ // SKA 3.3 //* For a similar example, see *SKA* 2.23.

traditions or regions. Some of his verses allude to the form of Śiva known as Amṛteśvara from the *Netratantra*, whose cult has been very popular in Kashmir.⁷⁵⁹ Others refer to Sadāśiva, the five-faced Śiva of the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition,⁷⁶⁰ and in some places he praises the eight-fold form of Śiva called the *aṣṭamūrti* that goes back to the Vedic tradition.⁷⁶¹ He also alludes to one of the foremost temples to Śiva in Kashmir, called Vijayeśvara, which was apparently under Śaiva Siddhānta control until at least the thirteenth century.⁷⁶² These various references indicate his familiarity with a range of Śaiva traditions, as well as his residence in Kashmir. He may have been an initiate into a specific tradition, but the *SKA* does not provide any clear evidence for this. Instead, it promotes a Śaivism that seeks to be inclusive and general, rather than accessible only to specific Śaivas.

The *SKA*, in other words, is not particularly tantric. It is not rooted in the technical practices and theologies of specific, esoteric tantric scriptures. This may be surprising, given the prominence of tantric Śaiva and Śākta traditions from Kashmir. Jagaddhara does allude to concepts or practices common to many tantric traditions, but he does so without limiting the orientation of the text as a whole. His references to *śaktipāta* illustrate this

⁷⁵⁹ E.g., *SKA* 2.28 and 19.30. Amṛteśvara is generally “crowned, white, one-faced, three-eyed, and four-armed, sitting on a white lotus at the centre of a lunar disc. In the proper right of his two inner hands he holds a vase of nectar [*amṛta*] at his heart and a full moon held at head height in the left, the upper arm horizontal and the forearm vertical. The outer right and left hands show the gestures of generosity and protection” (Sanderson, “Religion and the State,” 240n21).

⁷⁶⁰ E.g., *SKA* 11.116.

⁷⁶¹ E.g., *SKA* 33.36ff. See Barbara Stoler Miller, “Kālidāsa’s Verbal Icon: Aṣṭamūrti Śiva,” in *Discourses on Śiva: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Nature of Religious Imagery*, ed. Michael W. Meister (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1984).

⁷⁶² Sanderson, “Hinduism of Kashmir,” 121. *devyāṃ bhramadbhruvi jayāvijayārcitāyāṃ saktā tavāstavijayā vijayāya drṣṭih / vṛṣṭyeva bhūr divijayā vijayākhyayā te mūrtyā trasadravijayāvi jayāhvayā ca // SKA 30.70 //*

well.⁷⁶³ *Śaktipāta* literally means “the descent of power,” and it has an important history within Śaiva and Śākta-Śaiva traditions.⁷⁶⁴ It was a major topic among tantric authors and the subject of much debate between dualist Śaiva Siddhāntins and non-dualistic authors like Abhinavagupta.⁷⁶⁵ Despite a history of dense theological reflection on the term, for Jagaddhara *śaktipāta* refers simply to Śiva’s grace, his compassionate favor toward his devotees. In this sense it parallels Śiva’s *darśana*, his “seeing” of, and being seen by, his devotees. Thus Jagaddhara uses a number of loosely synonymous phrases that parallel his use of *śaktipāta*, including *dr̥ṣṭipāta*, *dr̥kpāta*, and *rudradr̥kpāta*, all of which refer to the descent of Śiva’s “glance” as a way of showing his favor for his devotees.⁷⁶⁶ When he uses the term *śaktipāta* itself, he sidesteps the complex theological debate surrounding it. This debate among Śaivas revolved around the question of causation. Does *śaktipāta* occur because of some particular event, such as the accumulation of merit or the maturation of karma? Or does it happen spontaneously at the will of the lord, totally independent of additional causes? Śaiva Siddhāntins generally argued the former, while non-dualists such as Abhinavagupta argued the latter. Jagaddhara does not address this debate directly, but he indirectly offers his own perspective:

This is what I know:
the mind that performs the worship of the lord is (these three things):

⁷⁶³ To the best of my knowledge he only uses this distinct phrase twice, in *SKA* 13.7 and 38.5.

⁷⁶⁴ See Wallis, “Descent of Power.”

⁷⁶⁵ See, for example, Kṣemarāja’s summary of the non-dualistic position in his commentary on *StC* 117-118.

⁷⁶⁶ For *dr̥ṣṭipāta*, see *SKA* 8.19 and 12.28; for *dr̥kpāta*, *SKA* 17.29 and 33.25; and for *rudradr̥kpāta*, *SKA* 18.5.

a great accumulation (*upacaya*) of good fortune,
 the very descent of the supreme lord's power (*śaktipāta*),
 and the most precious grace (*anugraha*) of the great. // SKA 38.5 //⁷⁶⁷

This verse invokes the key positions of the debate: the accumulation (*upacaya*) of merit, Śiva's divine favor (*anugraha*), and *śaktipāta* itself. But rather than taking a particular side, Jagaddhara emphasizes the value of simply worshipping Śiva. In other words, he bypasses the theological debate, focusing instead on praising the one who worships Śiva.

The second verse in which Jagaddhara explicitly mentions *śaktipāta* links this experience with poetic inspiration:

Supreme is your descent of power (*śaktipāta*), O lord of the universe!
 Because of it⁷⁶⁸ the goddess of speech produces an independent *rasa* for the poet
 that gives rises to incomparable wonder and
 leads to a totally unique attainment. // SKA 13.7 //⁷⁶⁹

The ability to compose beautiful poetry had long been considered one of the signs of *śaktipāta*.⁷⁷⁰ Jagaddhara is more invested in exploring the relationship between poetry and

⁷⁶⁷ *avaimi bhāgyopacayaḥ sa puṣkalaḥ sa śaktipātaḥ khalu pārameśvaraḥ / sa vā mahārḥo mahatām anugraho yad īśvarārādhanasādhanam manaḥ // SKA 38.5 //* Ratnakaṅṭha interprets *mahatām anugraho* as “the grace of true gurus” (*sadgurūṇām anugrahaḥ*). While this is possible, it is more likely that it refers to Śiva himself using the honorific plural, or else to those who become great because they receive Śiva's favor. Nothing in the surrounding verses supports Ratnakaṅṭha's interpretation, and in fact they dwell on Jagaddhara's good fortune and his relationship to Śiva. Given that Jagaddhara uses the phrase *śaktipāta* just before this in the verse, which refers to the actual bestowing of Śiva's favor, it is more logical to interpret *anugraha* as Śiva's divine favor, rather than the favor of “true gurus,” as Ratnakaṅṭha does.

⁷⁶⁸ Here I follow Ratnakaṅṭha's interpretation of *yad* as *yasmāt* (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 122). An alternate translate would interpret *śaktipāta* as the very *rasa* that the goddess of speech produces.

⁷⁶⁹ *sa jayati jagadīśa śaktipātas tava kavitur yad asaktam uktidevī / rasam asamacamatkṛtiprasūtiṃ vitarati kām cana siddhim eti yena // SKA 13.7 //* Puns in the verse also suggest an alchemical meaning: this descent of power creates the quicksilver (*rasa*) that leads to the transmutation of gold (*kāncana*). See *Laghupañcāśikā*, 122-123.

⁷⁷⁰ Wallis, “Descent of Power,” 258 and 265.

religious experience than he is with any theological debates. For Jagaddhara, *śaktipāta* is the favor of the lord that inspires the experience of the poet that is both aesthetic and devotional. Here we see Jagaddhara using a Śaiva theological term to explain poetic inspiration and experience, and this complements what he does elsewhere, namely the characterization of religious experience using terms from aesthetics, as we will see in the discussion of *bhakti* below. For Jagaddhara, aesthetic and religious experiences are intertwined and mutually constitutive.

Overall, the *SKA* does not present a rigorous theological position or engage with a particular theological tradition in the same way as many of the *stotras* from Kashmir discussed in Chapter Two. It is not sectarian like the *stotras* popular in the Krama tradition or as densely theological as Abhinavagupta or Kṣemarāja's hymns; nor does it look back to specific texts, as Sāhib Kaul's *Devīnāmavilāsa* does. Theologically, its closest precedent is probably the *Stavacintāmaṇi*, which also emphasizes devotional worship and praise of Śiva as the supreme lord while eschewing polarizing theological debates. The *SKA* also harkens back to the *stotras* contained within Sanskrit *kāvya*s, especially those of Ratnākara—not surprisingly, given its dual claim to be both *stotra* and *kāvya*. As a whole, the *SKA* presents an inclusive vision of Śaiva worship that emphasizes commitment to Śiva, as well as a host of general religious practices enacting this. In this way the theological underpinnings of the *SKA* parallel its creative consolidation of Kashmir's literary traditions I argued for in Chapter Four. Jagaddhara's poetry brings together and celebrates the basic tradition of efficacious worship of Śiva. Central to his vision of this Śaivism are fine-grained understandings of *bhakti* and various kinds of prayer.

Bhakti in the Stutikusumāñjali

Bhakti stands out as one of the dominant themes of the *SKA*. In general, its meaning, based on the root \sqrt{bhaj} , is familiar—love and devotion, sharing and participation—yet the prominence Jagaddhara gives to it invites more nuanced readings. *Bhakti* appears early in the *SKA*, in the last of the five verses that introduce the text using complex puns to describe poetic speech (*sarasvatī*):

Out of devotion in this very moment
my own reflection has awakened this fully auspicious speech
that seeks to propitiate the lord
to obtain the desired boon,
just as the fully auspicious Pārvatī,
although admonished by her very own reflection, her mother Menā,
out of devotion went ahead and propitiated the lord Śiva
to obtain the marriage she desired. // *SKA* 1.5//⁷⁷¹

From the beginning, Jagaddhara presents *bhakti* as the condition out of which poetic praise arises. There may be obstacles, just as Pārvatī’s parents opposed her pursuit of Śiva’s hand in marriage, but loving devotion overcomes these to triumph in the end.

Throughout the *SKA*, Jagaddhara characterizes the best poetry as that which is steeped in devotion.⁷⁷² This poetry is also “purified by Śiva’s devotion” (*śivabhaktipavitritāni*).⁷⁷³ He speaks frequently of himself as a devotee (*bhakta*, *bhaktajana*), and considers how Śiva should treat his devotees in general, as he does in this verse using puns (here translated side by side) to compare devotees to Śiva’s necklaces:

⁷⁷¹ *bhaktitaḥ sapadi sarvamaṅgalā bodhitā nijadhiyaiva menayā / ārirāghayiṣatīśvaram varam labdhum īpsitam iyaṁ sarasvatī // SKA 1.5 //* Note that the syllables in *menayā* must be parsed in two ways (*menayā* and *me ‘nayā*) to provide the two meanings translated here.

⁷⁷² E.g., in *SKA* 1.29.

⁷⁷³ *SKA* 38.24.

They are free from disease,
they have great virtues,
they are of good conduct,
they are pure,
they enjoy the prosperity
from the fruits (of their good deeds).

They consist of pearls,
they have long strings,
they are beautifully rounded,
they are stainless,
they showcase the perfection
of the fruits (of the pearl-oysters).

Devotees are like necklaces—
so why don't they also enjoy (*bhajanti*)
a place near Śiva's heart? // SKA 12.10 //⁷⁷⁴

Jagaddhara repeatedly praises the greatness of devotion to Śiva, and goes so far as to hold it higher than liberation:

There is one supreme goal of man known as liberation (*mokṣa*),
yet those who know the secret of *bhakti* consider that liberation an obstacle.
What more can be said?
May your devotion to Śiva, whose crest-jewel is
the crescent of the nectarian moon, be unending! // SKA 3.44 //⁷⁷⁵

Moreover, Jagaddhara sees devotional poetry, such as his own SKA, engendering devotion in others. For instance, he praises “poetry that causes devotion to blossom” (*gīr bhaktivikāśadā*).⁷⁷⁶ The final two verses of the SKA⁷⁷⁷ both pray for the cultivation of *bhakti* in the text's audience. The blessing in verse 38.29 ends with this prayer: “may Śiva's devotion, which destroys the suffering of those afflicted by fierce difficulties, expand to perfect fullness within each and every person!”⁷⁷⁸ In the next verse, the last of the SKA's

⁷⁷⁴ *muktāmayā dīrghaguṇāḥ suvṛttā nairmalyabhājo dadhataḥ phalaraddhim / katham na hārā iva bhaktimantaḥ padaṃ hr̥dīśasya bhajanti santaḥ // SKA 12.10 //*

⁷⁷⁵ *muktir hi nāma paramaḥ puruṣārtha ekas tām antarāyam avayanti yadantarajñāḥ / kiṃ bhūyasā bhavatu saiva sudhāmayūkhalekhāśikhābharaṇabhaktir abhaṅgurā vaḥ // SKA 3.44 //*

⁷⁷⁶ SKA 30.17.

⁷⁷⁷ The thirty-eighth hymn, however, is followed by the short poem on the poet's lineage (SKA 39).

⁷⁷⁸ *mathitogravyāpadāpānnatāpā nari nari paripūrṇā jṛmbhatāṃ sambhubhaktiḥ // SKA 38.29d //*

proper before the description of Jagaddhara’s lineage, the poet prays that the “wonder” or “rapture” of Śiva’s devotion (*śivabhakticamatkṛti*) be unwavering in the hearts of the virtuous.⁷⁷⁹

While such verses indicate that *bhakti* is an experience or state of the devotee directed toward Śiva, *bhakti* is not unidirectional. As the root \sqrt{bhaj} implies, *bhakti* involves sharing, participation, and mutual affection. Jagaddhara, like Utpaladeva and other authors from Kashmir, usually construes the term *bhakti* with a genitive, such as “Śiva’s *bhakti*,” or “your *bhakti*” when the speaker addresses him directly. As in English, this Sanskrit construction is ambiguous, depending on whether it is interpreted as a subjective or objective genitive—Śiva’s *bhakti* can mean *bhakti* for Śiva, or the *bhakti* Śiva himself has for his devotees. For Jagaddhara this a productive ambiguity, for this *bhakti* is precisely what is “shared” between the devotee and Śiva. Jagaddhara substantiates this idea in his usage of verbal forms related to *bhakti*. He frequently calls out to his human audience to be devoted or resort to Śiva. The first five verses of the thirty-first *stotra*, for instance, all end with the same phrase: “Be devoted to the lord, Pārvatī’s lover” (*vibhuṃ bhajadhvaṃ girijābhujāṅgam*).⁷⁸⁰ Similarly he entreats his human audience to literally “partake of Śiva’s devotion” (*śambhubhaktiṃ bhajadhvam*).⁷⁸¹ Elsewhere he calls out to the goddess Sarasvatī, telling her to be devoted to Śiva (as we saw in Chapter Four).⁷⁸² But Jagaddhara also uses

⁷⁷⁹ *iti śubhaṃ bhagavaccaritastutiviyatikareṇa yad arjitam ūrjitam / bhavatu tena manasy anapāyiniṃ sukṛtināṃ śivabhakticamatkṛtiḥ // SKA 38.30 //*

⁷⁸⁰ See the fourth quarter of *SKA* 31.1-5.

⁷⁸¹ *SKA* 17.26.

⁷⁸² See, for example, *SKA* 24.2-3.

this language of *bhakti* in relation to Śiva. He describes Śiva as “sharing” (*bhajasi*) his beneficence with his devotees,⁷⁸³ and calls out to Śiva directly, urging him to “share” (*bhaja*) his compassionate glance or words with his devotees and thereby favor them.⁷⁸⁴ Such verses demonstrate that how Śiva participates in this *bhakti*, even if the primary weight of the term is on the disposition or experience of the devotee.

Jagaddhara composed an entire hymn on the theme of *bhakti*, called the *Bhaktistotra*, which provides a coherent series of verses on this theme.⁷⁸⁵ This hymn consists of thirty verses dense, like the rest of the *SKA*, with poetic figures, complex imagery, and allusions to Śiva’s attributes and deeds. Most of its verses call out to Śiva directly, but the first addresses the goddess of speech herself, and another enjoins the poem’s human audience to give up all worldly attachment and simply be devoted to Śiva.⁷⁸⁶ Let us consider this *stotra* in more detail, for it presents *bhakti* in both familiar and surprising terms.

The explicit aim of the poem is to praise *Śivabhakti*. In the first verse Jagaddhara asks Sarasvatī to amuse herself in his heart and to know that he is “eager to praise

⁷⁸³ *bhajasi* [...] *kāmadayā natajanam* [...]; *SKA* 24.19ab.

⁷⁸⁴ *SKA* 30.15 and 24.20, respectively. See also *SKA* 30.39.

⁷⁸⁵ There are two earlier *bhaktistotras* known to have circulated in Kashmir before Jagaddhara. The earliest is probably the *Bhaktistotra* of Avadhūtasiddha, also called the *Bhagavadbhaktistotra*. It is unknown where it was composed, but it was quoted with respect by Śaivas in Kashmir. The *stotra* is deeply rooted in the Śaiva Āgamas, and argues for the greatness of Śaivism over other religious systems. Avadhūta says that *bhakti* justifies his humble attempts at praising Śiva, and he hopes to engender *bhakti* in his listeners through his poem (*BhBhSt* 2, 64-65; see also the Introduction).

Another *Bhaktistotra* was composed by the famous 10th century Śaiva philosopher and theologian Utpaladeva, and it was compiled with other poems into the popular collection called the *Śivastotrāvalī*. Utpaladeva’s *Bhaktistotra* presents the bliss that comes from *bhakti*; the devotee becomes drunk on it (*ŚSĀ* 15.4). It expresses the personal side of Śaiva theology and wrestles with the nature of *bhakti* in a non-dualistic tradition (see Chapter Two).

⁷⁸⁶ *SKA* 17.1 and 17.26.

*Śambhubhakti*⁷⁸⁷ now that his delusion has ended. Shortly after this, he praises this *bhakti* by describing a Śaiva devotee:

The bold cry “Śarva! Śarva!” arises in his throat
like the sound of a roaring lion.
Tears arise in his eyes and
his *Śivabhakti* manifests extensive thrills
breaking out as if from love-play.
He alone, full of confidence,
scorns the very dwelling of Indra. // SKA 17.4 //⁷⁸⁸

Thus he depicts *bhakti* as something expressed through physical responses, reminiscent of the *anubhāvas* or aesthetic responses in Sanskrit aesthetics. The comparison to love-play is also noteworthy, since it too echoes Sanskrit *kāvya*. Lastly, the verse indicates a certain audacity that comes from *Śivabhakti*: *bhakti* is beyond even the realm of the gods.

The majority of Jagaddhara’s *Bhaktistotra* praises *bhakti* as efficacious in two main ways: it is an antidote for worldly attachment and entanglement, and it eliminates the fear of death because it leads ultimately to liberation. *Bhakti*, in other words, protects one from Kāmadeva and Kāla or Yama, the gods of worldly love and death. These themes intertwine; as he says in one verse:

Kāmadeva should hide his flower-bow every night, and
Yama should keep in check the snake-noose he holds in his hand,
since now, in this world, I have obtained *bhakti* to Śiva,
the wish-fulfilling vine for every prayer.
How many nooses of suffering has it not tied up?
How many desires has it not struck down? // SKA 17.14 //⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁷ *analaśaṃ śaṃsitaṃ śambhubhaktim*; SKA 17.1.

⁷⁸⁸ *kaṇṭhe kaṇṭhīravaravasadr̥g dṛksamudgodgatāśror helonmūladvipulapulakodbhūtabhūteśabhakteḥ / yasyodeti dhvanir anibhṛtaḥ śarva śarvety akharvaṃ garvaṃ bibhṛadd hasati vasatiṃ vāsavīyāṃ sa ekaḥ // SKA 17.4 //*

In other words Kāmadeva and Yama should be careful, for *Śivabhakti* has the power to strike down their primary weapons. Later in the hymn, a five-verse section contrasts *bhakti* with the worldly desire for women,⁷⁹⁰ and other verses describe it as one's sole refuge, especially at the time of death. Forget logic, and politics, and even one's livelihood, he says; only *bhakti* can really save one from suffering.⁷⁹¹ Near the end of the *stotra* he suggests the great power of *bhakti* with a striking image: he says *bhakti* makes Śiva, the lord of the universe worshipped by all other gods, act like a caged bird one keeps for sport (*krīḍā*)! That is the amazing power and greatness of *bhakti*, lauds Jagaddhara.⁷⁹²

Aside from this striking image, there is nothing particularly surprising about the general depiction of *bhakti* I have given so far. *Bhakti* has physical manifestations; it involves a close connection with Śiva; it helps conquer worldly desires and the fear of death; and it has the power to win Śiva's favor and affection. But Jagaddhara also depicts *bhakti* as a unifying feature among various types of Śaivas. One verse in particular makes this explicit:

Śivabhakti arises in many forms to liberate all of these fortunate ones:
those whose hearts are attached to their favorite solitary place,
those ascetics who wear garments made of bark,
those whose impurities are cleansed by the waters of knowledge,
those who worship on the banks of the Ganges,

⁷⁸⁹ *kāmaḥ kāmaṃ dhanur anuniśaṃ kausumaṃ saṃvṛṇotu vyālaṃ kālaḥ svakarakuhare bhagnabhogaṃ vidhattām / bhārgī bhaktiḥ sapadi sakalapārthanākalpavallī labdhā ṛḍbdhā jagati kati na kleśapāsā hatāsāḥ // SKA 17.14 //*

⁷⁹⁰ SKA 17.22-26.

⁷⁹¹ SKA 17.19.

⁷⁹² SKA 17.29.

and those adorned with bundles of matted locks
exuberantly displayed // *SKA* 17.16 //⁷⁹³

Jagaddhara sees *bhakti* taking different forms for different practitioners—for various kinds of hermits and ascetics, for scholars, for lay devotees—but they are connected through *bhakti*'s power to lead to liberation. In general, Jagaddhara's vision of *bhakti* remains largely free of technical Śaiva terminology that would indicate a specific affiliation or theology limiting the audience for the text. Jagaddhara's presentation of *bhakti*, as well as the *SKA* as a whole, aims to be theologically inclusive and thereby bring together the Śaiva community of his day. The rhetoric of Jagaddhara's poetry, emphasizing *bhakti* and praise for Śiva, forms a kind of indirect argument for a non-sectarian Śaiva community.

At the same time, however, the erudition and poetic proficiency of the *SKA* make it inaccessible to a non-learned audience. Jagaddhara is scholar's poet. As I argued in Chapter Four, his poetry self-consciously adopts the complex style of Sanskrit *kāvya*. His poetry is not some spontaneous overflowing of emotion, easily accessible to all, that a persistent Romantic legacy might lead one to expect from devotional poetry. The *SKA*, rather, is well crafted and deliberate, emotional but also contemplative and sophisticated, requiring real study to fully digest. What Jagaddhara does is mix a generally neutral Śaiva theology, an inclusive vision of *bhakti*, and a complex appreciation of Sanskrit literary culture. The result is a distinct arrangement of Śaiva devotion and Sanskrit poetics.

In his *Bhaktistotra* Jagaddhara shows this in how he aestheticizes *bhakti*. One could even say he *bhakti*-cizes aesthetics, despite the awkward neologism. Jagaddhara says that

⁷⁹³ *kāntaikāntavyasanamanasāṃ valkalālaṅkṛtānāṃ jñānāmbhobhiḥ kṣapitarajasāṃ
jāhnavītūrabhājām / gāḍhotsekaprakṛtitaḥaṅgamaṅḍalīmaṅḍanānāṃ nānākārā bhavati kṛtināṃ
muktaye bhargabhaktiḥ // SKA 17.16 //*

he, the poet, cannot produce *rasa* for those in whom *bhakti* is not manifest. The key term *rasakṛt*, ‘producing *rasa*’, can simply mean producing pleasure or delight, but of course *rasa* by this time was the central concept in the analysis of the subjective experience of poetry and drama.⁷⁹⁴ Thus Jagaddhara suggests that *bhakti* itself is a prerequisite for an experience of the beauty of poetry devoted to Śiva.

This *Bhaktistotra* culminates in a provocative verse exemplifying these themes. Using the Sanskrit literary figure *śleṣa*, this verse means two things at once, based on several key puns: *gāvas* can mean cows or words, or in this case poetry; *rasa* can refer to an aesthetic experience, but also milk; *bhakti* can mean something like devotion, but also consumption, or the partaking or enjoyment of something. Translating such puns as suggesting a comparison, the verse means:

First, poetry produces *rasa*, just as cows produce milk,
 which is closely related to the savoring of an unparalleled nectar.
 Then *bhakti* toward Śiva, the consumption of the milk,
 produces the unique experience of rapture that naturally neutralizes one’s fatigue.
 Finally, because one’s own self shines forth,
 which alone causes a repose in consciousness
 surging with incomparable, supreme bliss,
 there is contentment, a complete satiation.
 What can misfortune, that malicious servant, do now? // SKA 17.30 //⁷⁹⁵

Many of the terms in this verse echo both Śaiva theology and Sanskrit poetics in Kashmir: *rasa*, *āsvāda*, *camatkāra*, *svātmāvabhāsa*, *saṃvid*, *viśrānti*, and so on. The verse suggests

⁷⁹⁴ *yeṣāṃ antaḥ sukṛtasaraṇiḥ sthānavīyā na bhaktir vyaktiṃ dhatte rasakṛd asakṛn nāsmi teṣu smiteṣu / lokaḥ śokaṃ tyajati sahasā yatra tad bhaktiyuktaṃ yuktaṃ manye ruditam uditaślāgham ullāghahetum // SKA 17.8 //*

⁷⁹⁵ *gāvas tāvad duhānā rasam asamasudhāsodarāsvādabandhuṃ bhaktir bharge nisargaklamaśamanacamatkārabhogaikebhūmiḥ / tṛptiḥ svātmāvabhāsād anupamaparamānandaniḥsyandasamvidviśrāntyekāntahetor iti sapadi vipatkiṅkarī kiṅ karotu // SKA 17.30 //*

that *bhakti* is the consumption or enjoyment of the aesthetic experience produced by poetry devoted to Śiva. *Bhakti*, in this sense, is a sharing, a participation, but one that is markedly aesthetic. For Jagaddhara, poetry is offered to the deity, enjoyed by the deity, and then also enjoyed by the communal audience for that poetry. In this way I suggest that it might be useful to think about religious poetry as analogous to *prasāda*, a verbal or aural *prasāda*. While *prasāda* can refer to a deity's grace in general, it often means offerings of food and the like that are first enjoyed by the deity and then shared among devotees. Devotional poetry works in a similar way: like food offerings, it can be offered to the deity and then enjoyed communally. Just as the semantic range of *bhakti* includes the suggestion of food shared within a community, thus bringing that community together through participation and sharing, it can also include the participation and sharing involved in aesthetic experience. This hymn indicates the importance of considering the aesthetic dimensions of *bhakti* poetry and the communal participation envisioned in its consumption. For some Sanskrit poets, at least, beauty is central to both the personal and communal aspects of *bhakti*.

Bhakti forms an important link between aesthetic and religious experience in the *SKA* beyond the *Bhaktistotra*. Jagaddhara hints at the view that *bhakti* is a distinct aesthetic sentiment or flavor to be savored (*rasa*). Nowhere does Jagaddhara clearly indicate his views on *bhaktirasa*, yet he offers many hints. I am not arguing that specific verses might evoke or suggest *bhaktirasa* for their audiences. Rather, I contend that there places in the *SKA* at which Jagaddhara suggests his own views on *bhaktirasa*.

Jagaddhara repeatedly relies on the comparison between *bhakti* and a nectar that is enjoyed.⁷⁹⁶ He also celebrates poetry that is “steeped in devotion” (*bhaktisiktā*), and compares it to a beautiful creeper “watered by devotion” (*bhaktisiktā*).⁷⁹⁷ For Jagaddhara, the best poetry is full of both *rasa* and *bhakti*, as verses like this one indicate:

The best human birth is high-born in a good family,
 the best high-born birth leads to the fame caused by learning,
 the best learning blossoms forth in poetry that is sweet and full of *rasa*,
 and the best poetry is full of devotion (*bhakti*) to Śaṅkara that spreads happiness.
 // SKA 17.5 //⁷⁹⁸

Such verses do not explicitly identify *bhaktirasa*, and one might argue that *rasa* and *bhakti* can be associated without necessitating the idea of *bhaktirasa* as a unique aesthetic category. Yet they invite more speculation and suggest the possibility that Jagaddhara sought to evoke *bhaktirasa* through his poetry.

While most of his references to *bhakti* as a nectar are indirect, Jagaddhara also uses the phrase *bhaktirasa* or closely related phrases on several occasions. For instance, he says:

Supreme is your *bhaktirasa*, O lord,
 which is pleasing for the virtuous because of its great nectar.
 It saves those who dwell at your feet

⁷⁹⁶ See, for example, SKA 25.19, where he refers to “one who is delighted by the nectar that is devotion” (*mudītasya bhaktisudhayā*).

⁷⁹⁷ SKA 1.29 and 38.26, respectively.

⁷⁹⁸ *tan mānuṣyaṃ prabhavati satām uttamā yatra jātiḥ saikā jātiḥ prasaratī yaśo yatra pāṇḍityahetu / tat pāṇḍityaṃ sarasamadhurā jṛmbhate yatra vāṇī vāṇī sāpi prathayati ratim śāṅkarī yatra bhaktiḥ // SKA 17.5 //* In his commentary on this verse, Ratnakaṅṭha supplies the word “fortunate” (*dhanya*) to describe the best of each type (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 142). Following this reading, the verse could also be translated:

A human life is fortunate when it is high-born in a good family.
 That high-born birth is fortunate when it produces the fame caused by learning.
 That learning is fortunate when it blossoms forth into poetry that is sweet and full of *rasa*.
 That poetry, too, is fortunate, when its devotion (*bhakti*) to Śaṅkara spreads happiness.
 // SKA 17.5 //

from a pool of impurity in the Kali age. // SKA 24.4 //⁷⁹⁹

While this verse explicitly uses the phrase *bhaktirasa*, Jagaddhara is too accomplished a poet to state baldly what he wants to evoke through his poetry. Here the phrase does not have the technical meaning of a specific type of *rasa*; it refers instead to pleasure that comes from the nectar extracted from the Śiva's metaphorical lotus-feet. And yet the sentiment of *bhakti* is in fact what Jagaddhara seeks to cultivate through his poetry, and the image of dwelling at Śiva's feet certainly evokes this. Moreover, the term Jagaddhara uses to refer to Śiva's devotees, *sat*, can mean simply "good" people, but it can serve also as shorthand for *sahṛdaya*, the aesthetic connoisseur or ideal audience (as Ratnakaṇṭha makes explicit throughout his commentary). Given Jagaddhara's sustained engagement with the tradition of Sanskrit poetics, it is doubtful that he used such terminology accidentally. Instead, he cleverly suggests the very *rasa* he names in the verse, except that this designation must be interpreted differently for the basic meaning of the verse. In other words, when he uses the phrase *bhaktirasa* in this and related verses it does not mean *bhaktirasa* in the technical sense, since that would be too direct. And yet, the same verses suggest *bhaktirasa* in the technical sense, so the audience's appreciation is two-fold: the explicit phrase *bhaktirasa* does not mean *bhaktirasa* (in the technical sense), and yet that technical meaning is indeed suggested by these verses.⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁹ *bhaktirasas tava deva satām jayati mahāmṛtahṛdyah / caraṇatale bhavato vasatām kalimalapalvalahṛd yah // SKA 24.4 //* The verse occurs in one of the *SKA*'s *stotras* that highlights the poetic figure called *yamaka*, "twinning" or repetition. The first and third quarter end with the syllables *va-sa-tām*, while the second and fourth end with *-a-hṛd-yah*.

⁸⁰⁰ For other examples, see *SKA* 37.2, where he compares praise poetry to a beautiful vine that bears fruit when it is watered by the nectarian water of Śiva's *bhakti* (*śivabhaktisudhārasāsekaiḥ*) and *SKA*

In these features of the *SKA*, Jagaddhara develops the tradition of using aesthetic terminology to talk about Śaiva religious experience established by earlier Śaiva *stotra* authors in Kashmir.⁸⁰¹ Yet in comparison to authors like Utpaladeva and Kṣemarāja, Jagaddhara is more invested in the traditions of Sanskrit literature and literary theory. His presentations of *bhakti* and *bhaktirasa* are more aesthetic and linked to Sanskrit poetics. The hints found throughout the *SKA* suggest that Jagaddhara was more committed to *bhakti* as an aesthetic sentiment. It may not work the same as other *rasas*, but it dominates *stotra* literature. And yet like Utpaladeva and Kṣemarāja, Jagaddhara does not suggest that *bhaktirasa* is separate from the one who recites a *stotra*. It does not reside only in an audience that appreciates a *stotra* as a work of literature. Instead, Jagaddhara hints at *bhaktirasa*, and *rasa* in general, as something experienced and shared between the poet or reciter of such hymns and their audience, including Śiva himself. Thus Jagaddhara demonstrates a unique combination of views: he honors the history of Sanskrit poetics throughout his work, while he subsumes this within a Śaiva devotionalism that breaks down distinctions between artist and audience. Once again, we see the importance of *bhakti*'s multivalence, with all its implications of devotion, participation, and sharing.

Writing in the seventeenth century, the scholar and poet Rājānaka Ratnakaṇṭha offered more frequent and explicit references to *bhaktirasa* in his commentary on the *SKA*,

9.25, where Śiva's devotees are described as being constantly satisfied because of enjoying the nectar of Śiva's *bhakti* (*bhāvatkabhaktirasapāraṇanīyatṛptam*).

⁸⁰¹ See Chapter Two.

repeatedly interpreting phrases of the *SKA* in terms of *bhaktirasa*.⁸⁰² When Jagaddhara refers to poetry “steeped in devotion” (*bhaktisikta*), Ratnakaṅṭha expands this to “steeped in the nectar that is *bhaktirasa*” (*bhaktirasāmṛtasikta*).⁸⁰³ He does the same when Jagaddhara exuberantly claims that he is creating *rasa* through his poetry, explaining that this means *bhaktirasa*.⁸⁰⁴ Such examples could easily be multiplied.⁸⁰⁵ In general, Ratnakaṅṭha interprets the *SKA* as cultivating *bhaktirasa* in its human audience.⁸⁰⁶ In the third *stotra*, Jagaddhara offers various blessings (*āśīrvāda*) to his human audience, and when he uses verbs based on the root \sqrt{pus} , “to nourish,” Ratnakaṅṭha usually explains them in terms of *bhaktirasa*. For instance, in verse 3.32 Jagaddhara prays that Śīva’s radiant chest will nourish his audience, and Ratnakaṅṭha comments: “may it nourish you by producing *bhaktirasa*.”⁸⁰⁷ There is one illustrative exception to this practice of glossing *puṣṇātu* in terms of *bhaktirasa*. In one of the final verses of this hymn, Jagaddhara offers a blessing that his own poetry praising Śīva may nourish his human audience. Ratnakaṅṭha explains this as “causing them to flourish by means of the *rasa* that is the nectar of oneness with Śīva” (*śivekatāmṛtarasena vardhayantu*).⁸⁰⁸ Like Jagaddhara, Ratnakaṅṭha interprets *bhakti* as an

⁸⁰² Less frequently, however, he does interpret the *SKA* in terms of *śāntarasa*, the aesthetic sentiment of quiescence. See, for example, his commentaries on *SKA* 1.3, 17.30, and 38.10.

⁸⁰³ See his commentary on *SKA* 1.29 (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 9).

⁸⁰⁴ See his commentary on *SKA* 30.77 (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 219).

⁸⁰⁵ See, for instance, Ratnakaṅṭha’s commentary on *SKA* 5.3, 11.30, and 24.1.

⁸⁰⁶ *Bhaktirasa* is not the only *rasa* he identifies in his commentary, however.

⁸⁰⁷ *bhaktirasotpādanena poṣayatv ity arthaḥ* (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 22).

⁸⁰⁸ *SKA* 3.58 and its commentary (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 29).

experience of shared love and connection, and ultimately identification, with Śiva, and relies on the metaphor of *rasa*—as a nectarian pleasure but also an aesthetic enjoyment—to characterize this experience.

There is an interesting point of tension between Jagaddhara and Ratnakaṇṭha's views on *bhakti*. Frequently Ratnakaṇṭha wards off potential criticisms of the *SKA* by arguing that its subject matter is *bhakti*, and therefore it is beyond the normal assessment of poetic virtues and faults. He makes this argument in his commentary on the very first verse, which one might criticize for beginning with a syllable (*hlā-*) that is harsh to the ear (*śrutikaṭu*). Ratnakaṇṭha argues that there is no fault, for the subject of the text is *bhakti* (*bhaktiviśaya*).⁸⁰⁹ He resorts to this defense periodically throughout his commentary to sidestep a variety of potential criticisms of the *SKA*, such as a clumsy word order or a poor choice of words.⁸¹⁰ While Ratnakaṇṭha is not the first to use this reasoning in the defense of devotional poetry, Jagaddhara himself certainly cared about the quality of his poetry. Jagaddhara was deeply invested in elevating the status of the *stotra* form to that of *kāvya*, as I argued in Chapter Four. He indicates repeatedly that the quality of such devotional poetry varies, and that the best among such compositions—including his own *SKA*—deserve praise for their poetic merit. So it seems more likely that Jagaddhara himself would disagree with Ratnakaṇṭha's bracketing of *bhakti* poetry to avoid potentially critical poetic analysis.⁸¹¹

⁸⁰⁹ *Laghupañcāśikā*, 2.

⁸¹⁰ E.g., in his commentary on *SKA* 3.50, 5.11, and 20.41.

⁸¹¹ Occasionally Jagaddhara does disparage his own poetry in ways that suggests its flaws do not matter (e.g., *SKA* 11.28), but these are highly rhetorical verses exhibiting literary merit that belies their affected humility.

Jagaddhara did see *bhakti* as central to his poetry, but he also sought to embrace the world of Sanskrit literary culture, including literary criticism.

Jagaddhara interwove Śaiva *bhakti* and Sanskrit poetics far more ambitiously than earlier authors in Kashmir. Rather than following the positions laid down by theorists who rejected the independent status of *bhaktirasa*, such as Abhinavagupta, he developed the theme of *bhaktirasa* as both an aesthetic and religious experience. As a whole, the *SKA* points to the complicated relationship between poetry and poetic theory. While the latter can be both descriptive and prescriptive, poets will not necessarily follow its prescriptions. Jagaddhara holds up *bhakti* as an aestheticize experience connecting the poet, his human audience, and Śiva, and demonstrates how this complex theme is central to *stotra* literature in general.

The Language of Prayer

Bhakti, with all its semantic complexity, is interwoven throughout the *SKA* with the many language-based practices that can be heuristically classified as prayer, in the broad sense of language used to relate directly to a deity. The *SKA* is about prayer in multiple ways. On the most basic level, its verses perform various types of prayer. It also serves as a model text for others to use in their own performance of prayer, and it reflects upon the nature and efficacy of prayer in general. The *SKA* is filled not just with praise for Śiva, but also with praise for practices centered on him. The text as a whole can be seen as an argument or advertisement for the devotional Śaivism I have been discussing. Moreover, Jagaddhara unifies the vision of this Śaivism under the umbrella of the *stotra*, which he

shows to encompass a host of religious practices, including praise itself, the offering of homage and blessings, the invocation of auspiciousness, and petitionary prayer. Analyzing these practices in detail reveals not only the versatility of the *stotra* form and its potential to mediate between the poet, Śiva, and a community of aesthetically-oriented Śaiva devotees, but also Jagaddhara's self-conscious exploration and promotion of these features of *stotra* literature.

Praise as Prayer

The central theme of the *SKA* is praise itself, as its title suggests. Paying close attention to the many verses in the *SKA* that develop this theme yields several important insights into the nature of this religious practice. Jagaddhara's presentations of and reflections on praise highlight the role of poetic freshness and the ability to delight, for example. Most importantly, Jagaddhara develops two interrelated kinds of praise. The first consists in some kind of praise for Śiva, such as that which refers to his various activities, powers, and characteristic features. The second consists in the praise of praise for Śiva. The latter still constitutes a celebration of Śiva himself, but it also indicates the wider implications of this text and, moreover, this genre.

According to the overarching metaphor of his text, Jagaddhara offers his bundle of praise-poems (*stuti*) in loving worship of Śiva just as devotees offer handfuls of flowers (*kusumāñjali*).⁸¹² The synonyms *stuti*, *stotra*, and *stava* have two meanings, both of which are usually at play in Jagaddhara's verses: praise in general, but also hymns of praise. On

⁸¹² See, among other verses, *SKA* 36.2.

the most basic level this praise involves the celebration of Śiva's deeds, qualities, and features. Thus the *SKA* includes countless allusions and references to Śiva's activities, which illustrate his greatness and his compassion, as well as repeated descriptions of his iconographical features, such as the moon that adorns his matted locks.

This praise works on several levels. On one level, it appeals to its primary addressee, Śiva himself. Jagaddhara suggests that praise has the power to win Śiva's favor by delighting him with its beauty and quality, just as a beautiful, virtuous woman can delight her husband, as I discussed in Chapter Four.⁸¹³ But he also suggests other ways that this relationship might work. Often Jagaddhara praises Śiva by alluding to his compassionate actions on behalf of his devotees or invoking his many names and epithets, only then to challenge Śiva to live up to his own reputation. Consider this verse from the eleventh *stotra*:

Omniscient one, benevolent one, auspicious one,
 beneficent one, lord of the universe, conqueror of death,
 the lord, the merciful one, and so on—
 O glorious god, these names of yours bear fruit for others,
 but I have awful luck:
 you are only *sthāṇu* (=Śiva/a bare trunk) for me! // *SKA* 11.83 //⁸¹⁴

In other words, while Śiva has numerous forms, the poet laments that he has been fruitless for him like a bare tree trunk (*sthāṇu*), punning on a common name for Śiva.

Śiva, particularly in his fierce forms, such as Bhairava, must be appeased in order to assure his benevolence.⁸¹⁵ Jagaddhara manipulates this logic to great effect, using subtle

⁸¹³ *SKA* 1.3.

⁸¹⁴ *sarvajñaśambhuśivaśaṅkaraviśvanāthamṛtyuñjayeśvaramṛḍaprabhṛtīni deva | nāmāni te 'nyaviṣaye phalavanti kiṃtu tvam sthāṇur eva bhagavan mayi mandabhāgye // SKA 11.83 //*

rhetorical devices to cajole Śiva into bestowing his favor. One cannot help but note the psychological dimension to this: Jagaddhara uses any means at his dispose to compel Śiva to help him, including trying to make him feel guilty for not saving him. Whatever some theologians might say about the impossibility of influencing a deity conceived of as free willed and independent from the actions of limited beings,⁸¹⁶ Jagaddhara frequently depicts the efficacy of praising Śiva.

Jagaddhara builds an image of what such praise looks like through his verses. As we saw Chapter Four, such praise is expressed in poetic terms, and not just any poetry: it should embody the various poetic ideals of the Sanskrit literary tradition. Moreover, the best praise is fresh and new, an idea best seen in the multivalence of the word *nava*, which can mean praise (or a hymn of praise) as well as “fresh.” Jagaddhara delights in this felicitous meeting of sound and sense, frequently using doubling phrases, such as *navaiḥ navaiḥ*, “with fresh praises.”⁸¹⁷ His valuation of creativity and freshness provides one key for interpreting his wide-ranging and ambitious poetic style. This freshness has such appeal in part because of its ability to amaze the audience for such poetry. On one hand, Jagaddhara recognizes the theological impossibility of delighting an omniscient, omnipotent deity, as

⁸¹⁵ This has long been associated with Śiva and his forms; consider, for instance, the appeals to Rudra in the *Svetaśvatara Upaniṣad*, such as at *ŚvUp* 4.22: “Do not hurt us in our offspring or descendants, in our life, in our cattle or horses. Do not slay in anger, O Rudra, our valiant men. Oblations in hand, we invite you to your seat” (trans. Patrick Olivelle, *Upaniṣads* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 261).

⁸¹⁶ In Kashmir, this was a controversial issue in the discussion around *śaktipāta*, the “descent of [Śiva’s] power” (see above). *Stotra* authors in other parts of South Asia also explored the theme of self-effort and divine grace; see Steven Hopkins’ discussions of how Vedāntadeśika addresses this debate in his *stotras* in *Singing the Body of God*, 235-236.

⁸¹⁷ E.g., in *SKA* 30.31.

many *stotra* authors did before him.⁸¹⁸ Yet on the other hand he sees the power to amaze and delight as the key characteristic of praise-poetry. In fact, the poetic features of the *SKA* can, in large part, be understood in terms of the power to amaze through their freshness and originality.⁸¹⁹ And while Śiva himself may be theoretically beyond surprise, the human audience for the *SKA* is not.

Jagaddhara is very concerned with the reception of his poetry by his human audience. Not only does he try to please Śiva, he also seeks to delight his human audience and also cultivate an audience of aesthetic connoisseurs, as we saw in Chapter Four. At the same time, his poetry serves as an argument for the value in worshipping Śiva. In other words, his poetic celebrations of Śiva function almost like advertisements for Śaiva worship. This is most clear in the many verses in which Jagaddhara glorifies Śiva by praising praise to him, such as this one:

It pours down rain for the peacocks⁸²⁰ who are the learned (*sahṛdaya*)
and bestows great benefits.
It is fit for cutting asunder sins that have been committed,
like a sickle for grass.
Readily it gives good fortune and banishes misfortune.
It surpasses all.
May this praise to Śiva,
who travels on the bull Nandin, the delight of Surabhī, the cow of plenty,
extend to the ends of the universe! // *SKA* 30.81 //⁸²¹

⁸¹⁸ See, for example, the opening verses of the *Mahimnaḥstava*.

⁸¹⁹ See *SKA* 38.11, where Jagaddhara rhetorically claims that if poetry is unworthy for Śiva, at least it “will produce wonder” (*camatkariṣyanti*) for his attendants, just as various styles of singing produce wonder for common folk.

⁸²⁰ Peacocks are conventionally understood as rejoicing at the coming of the rainy season.

⁸²¹ *varṣāvarṣāyamāṇā saḥṛdayaśikhināṃ saṃhitānāṃ hitānāṃ dātrī dātrī tṛṇānāṃ iva lavanaṣaṭur duṣkṛtānāṃ kṛtānāṃ / kalyā kalyāṇadāne nutir iyaṃ aśubhaṃ tarjayantī jayantī viśvaṃ viśvambharāntaṃ prasaratu surabhīnandanasyandanasya // SKA 30.81 //* Note that this verse, which

Such verses certainly praise Śiva indirectly by extolling the value of praising him. But they also encourage their own propagation. *Stotras* usually include such verses near their conclusion in a section generally called the *phalaśruti*, “the hearing of the fruits” of reciting or listening to a particular hymn. Jagaddhara includes several *stotras* near the end of the *SKA* that form a large *phalaśruti* section. The thirty-sixth *stotra*, for instance, is entirely dedicated to praising those devotees who worship and praise Śiva. Among his many descriptions of them, Jagaddhara says:

They foil the desires in the hearts of enemies and
spread the nectar of knowledge among those who are pitiable.
Even kings do not overstep their words.
Such are those who worship you
with a bouquet of flowers that are expressions of praise!
(*stavoktikusumarddhibhir*) // *SKA* 36.2 //⁸²²

They make praising you the doorway to the abode of their hearts,
they deracinate the tree of suffering rooted in misfortune, and
they roam the earth searching for the experience of you,
as if searching for a lost child.
Such are those who perform the dance of words in front of you. // *SKA* 36.5 //⁸²³

But he also incorporates verses in praise of Śiva throughout the *SKA*. Combined with Jagaddhara’s many descriptions of what makes good poetry, such verses extolling the efficacy of praise to Śiva function serve as a model and provide guidelines for the

concludes the thirtieth *stotra* dense with poetic repetition (*yamaka*), repeats different sets of syllables at the beginning and end of each quarter verse (*varṣāvarṣā...hitānām hitānām* and so on).

⁸²² *te vidviṣām abhimataṃ hr̥di moghayanti jñānāmṛtaṃ ca kṛpaṇeṣu samarpayanti / teṣāṃ vacaḥ kṣitibhujo ’pi na laṅghayanti ye tvām stavoktikusumarddhibhir arcayanti // SKA 36.2 //* Note that the final compound is a synonym for *stutikusumāñjali*.

⁸²³ *te tvatstutiṃ hr̥dayadhāmnī kapāṭayanti duḥkhadrumaṃ ca dṛḍham āpadi pāṭayanti / bhāvaṃ tavaiva bhūvi bālam ivāṭayanti ye vāñnaṭīm abhimukhaṃ tava nāṭayanti // SKA 36.5 //*

reproduction of the *SKA* through recitation and dissemination, and also the reproduction of Śaiva devotional poetry in general. For some verses celebrate the value of composing one's own poetry, and teaching it to others. For instance, while addressing Śiva Jagaddhara praises “those who teach even the young to recite your praises”⁸²⁴ and celebrates “those who teach your praises like scripture to your devotees.”⁸²⁵ Through such verses the *SKA* urges its listeners and readers to treasure and disseminate such poetry, and also to offer their own praise to Śiva. Thus the *SKA* not only offers praise to Śiva, it also celebrates what good praise is and does, and urges the recitation, composition, and dissemination of such praise to Śiva.

The *SKA* depicts how Śiva and its human audience are affected by its praise, but it also hints at how the poet or speaker is affected as well. Praise can function as a kind of meditation or visualization for the poet, a way to contemplate Śiva's nature and characteristics. For Jagaddhara, praise is a *sādhana* or *upāya*, a means for religious attainment. In the thirty-seventh *stotra*, entitled the *Stutiprasāmsāstotra* (Hymn in Praise of Praise), he says:

If you are thinking of doing difficult yogic practices,
such as various self-restraints, observances, and breathing exercises,
then instead take up this easeful means of obtaining the supreme state:
Śiva's praise! // *SKA* 37.17 //⁸²⁶

⁸²⁴ *ye bālakān api navaṃ tava jalpayanti // SKA 36.19d //*

⁸²⁵ *tvadbhaktān ye śrutim iva nutim tāvakīm śikṣayanti // SKA 36.41d //*

⁸²⁶ *yadi manuṣe yamaniyamaprāṇāyāmādi durghaṭaṃ kartum / tad imaṃ sugamam upāyaṃ śraya paramapadāptaye nutim śambhoḥ // SKA 37.17 //*

In the next *stotra*, near the end of the *SKA*, he characterizes his own good fortune as a result of his affinity for praising Śiva:

Being a human being, a male, a brahman,
intelligent, a good poet, and one with Śiva—
this series of good fortune has only been accomplished
through my attachment to praising the lord! // *SKA* 38.9 //⁸²⁷

In this way Jagaddhara depicts praise as that which has made his own life bear fruit. Of course when the *SKA* is recited or read, its many first person references effectively shift from referring to Jagaddhara as the poet to whomever recites or reads it. Thus the line blurs between the poet as the original speaker and the reciter as the speaker at any given moment.

Overall, praise stands out as the most dominant theme in the *SKA*. Not only does it consist almost entirely of verses in praise of Śiva (as one would expect from a collection of *stotras*), it also repeatedly praises and reflects upon the nature of praise.⁸²⁸ This amounts to a celebration of Śiva that transforms the speaker and seeks to persuade a human audience. Like the concept of *bhaktirasa*, therefore, praise in the *SKA* develops a complex relationship between the poet and his audiences, both human and divine.⁸²⁹

⁸²⁷ *manuṣyatā pūruṣatāgryavarṇatā manīṣitā satkavitā śivaikatā / iyaṃ mama kṣemaparamparā vibhoḥ stutiprasaṅgena gatā kṛtārthatām // SKA 38.9 //*

⁸²⁸ In this way the *SKA* continues in the vein of the *Stavacintāmaṇi*, which also identifies praise as its central metaphor and celebrates its efficacy in numerous verses.

⁸²⁹ The relationships between these three are often combined developed in a single verse, such as *SKA* 30.81, translated above.

Dimensions of Prayer: Homage, Blessings, and the Invocation of Auspiciousness

From the very beginning, the *SKA* explores the dimensions of religious language. Its first verses use a series of puns on the word *sarasvatī* to paint a complex picture of how praise-poetry works.⁸³⁰ The first *stotra* introduces the topic of praise, and then the *stotras* that follow focus on three specific functions language can serve: paying homage, offering blessings, and invoking auspiciousness. It is appropriate that he spotlights these functions in the first hymns of the *SKA*, for traditionally they are each considered a favorable way to begin a Sanskrit text. By isolating and expanding upon these functions, Jagaddhara unpacks how they are all subsumed within the *stotra* form. Developing the logic of these individual functions, he nuances his own presentation of the *stotra* genre and how it consists of, and reflects upon, prayer in general.

The second *stotra* in the *SKA*, called the *Namaskārastotra* (Hymn of Homage), explores the offering of homage, obeisance, and respect (*namaskāra*) to a deity. As in the two *stotras* that follow, here Jagaddhara dwells on a particular way of using language common to *stotra* literature in general. Stylistically, the *Namaskārastotra* is simpler than many of the *stotras* in the *SKA*—while the majority of the *SKA* employs a variety of complex meters, for example, the *Namaskārastotra* is almost entirely in the simple and flexible *anuṣṭubh* (standard *śloka*) meter.⁸³¹ On the other hand, along with the third *stotra* it offers more theological formulations than the rest of the *SKA*. In this way it parallels many

⁸³⁰ See my discussion of *SKA* 1.1-5 in Chapter Four.

⁸³¹ The verses are in the *anuṣṭubh* meter until *SKA* 2.25, which switches to the *vaṃśasthavali* meter, which continues until the final verse (*SKA* 2.30) in the *nardāṭaka* meter.

of the *namaskāra* verses that begin Sanskrit theological or scientific treatises, which often suggest the doctrinal content that follows in poetic opening verses.

Theologically, the *Namaskārastotra* explores the theme of the one and the many. It stresses the underlying unity behind apparent diversity through such examples as the categorical unity of gold used in various ornaments and water found in various bodies of water.⁸³² It is Śiva who manifests himself as various deities, including Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra.⁸³³ The first verse of the hymn offers an expanded version of the basic formula *namaḥ śivāya* by providing doctrinal descriptions of Śiva:

Om, homage to Śambhu, the benevolent one,
the supreme self whose nature is the one supreme reality,
the one who manifests himself as differentiated
because of the appearance of duality according to his own will. // SKA 2.1 //⁸³⁴

As the title of this hymn indicates, this format runs throughout its thirty verses. Each verse offer homage to Śiva and develops the image of both his abstract and personal nature. Thus he is the supreme self but also the one who removes the fear of his devotees.⁸³⁵ Repetition dominates the poem, both poetically and semantically. Specific syllables are often repeated within each verse with different meanings, and the word *namas* itself occurs with increasing frequency, reiterating the hymn's central act, the offering of homage. Thus verse 2.26 ends

⁸³² SKA 2.24.

⁸³³ SKA 2.23, which expresses a similar idea to SKA 3.3.

⁸³⁴ *om namaḥ paramārthaikarūpāya paramātmāne / svecchāvabhāsītāsatyabhedabhinnāya śambhave*
// SKA 2.1 //

⁸³⁵ SKA 2.1 and 2.7, respectively.

with a repetition of the word *namas*, verse 2.27 uses it five times, and verse 2.28, the last in the *anuṣṭubh* meter and the climax of this poetic crescendo, uses it eight times:

*namo namas te 'mṛtabhānumaulaye namo namas te 'mṛtasiddhidāyine /
namo namas te 'mṛtakumbhapāṇaye namo namas te 'mṛtabhairavātmane //*

Homage, homage to you who are crowned by the nectarian moon (*amṛtabhānu*).
Homage, homage to you who bestows imperishable attainment (*amṛtasiddhi*).
Homage, homage to you who holds a pitcher of ambrosia (*amṛta*).
Homage, homage to you, Amṛtabhairava. // SKA 2.28 //

The shift to a second-person pronoun here makes this verse more personal and direct, thereby increasing the intensity at the climax of the hymn. A change of meter in verse 2.29 signals that the hymn is almost finished, and the hymn appropriately concludes with the phrase *namaḥ śivāya* at the end of verse 2.30.⁸³⁶ The basic function of the hymn is to express homage to Śiva, but in doing so it also establishes Śiva's nature and personality, particularly as the supreme lord underlying all diversity. The repetition found throughout the hymn reinforces this by suggesting the paradoxical sameness and difference found in the use of the same syllables with different meanings, and in the use of rhymes throughout the hymn. As a whole, the hymn expands upon a standard kind of prayer—the offering of praise and homage directly to a deity—showing how it can combine the doctrinal presentation of a deity with a poetic crescendo that intensifies the basic act at the heart of such *namaskāra* verses.

The third *stotra* of the *SKA*, called the *Āśīrvādistotra*, consists in sixty verses offering blessings to its human audience. The term *āśīrvāda* means a statement of blessing

⁸³⁶ *vijayajayapradāya śabarāya varāya namaḥ sakalakalaṅkasaṅkaraharāya harāya namaḥ /
jagadagadapragalbhavibhavāya bhavāya namaḥ pravaravaraprakāśitaśivāya śivāya namaḥ // SKA
2.30 //*

or benediction, and it has a long history in South Asia.⁸³⁷ In the *Āśīrvādashloka*, this offering of blessings is expressed through the feature that unifies the hymn: the use of a distinctive grammatical form, the third person imperative (usually translated in English as “may this...” or “let this...”). Each verse ends with some blessing or benediction in this format. This marks a distinct shift from the preceding *Namaskāraśloka*, which primarily offers homage directly to Śiva. The first parts of the *Āśīrvādashloka* describe specific features of Śiva’s nature, or more often, his physical form. The verses invoke Śiva’s distinctive identity and then pray that it is beneficial for the its audience. This verse, for instance, begins a long section describing Śiva’s body and iconographical features:

It is white like the snow from the plentiful autumnal clouds,
its resplendent appearance delights because of its mass of luminous ashes,
and its throat is dark like a black bee.
Thus it resembles the spotted full moon of autumn,
since both are adorned with a dark spot.
May this body of Śambhu give you auspiciousness. // SKA 3.10 //⁸³⁸

Whiteness is associated with purity, but in the Sanskrit literary world white is also the color of fame (*kīrti*), which spreads in all the directions like the light of the sun. In Śiva’s case, this auspicious radiance is created by the white ashes on his body, but it is made even more beautiful by the dark color of this throat, stained when he consumed the cosmic poison to save the world. Thus his form suggests both his pervasive and auspicious brilliance and also his compassion for those who seek his protection. Jagaddhara pairs the imagery and

⁸³⁷ The concept of *āśīs/āśīr* is central to the Vedic tradition. See Gonda, *Prayer and Blessing*.

⁸³⁸ *śambhor adabhraśaradabhratuṣāraśubhram bhrājiṣṇubhūtibharaśībharabhāsvarābham / diśyād vapur bhasalanīlagalaṃ kalaṅkālaṅkāraśāradaśaśāṅkanibhaṃ śubhaṃ vaḥ // SKA 3.10 //*

suggestion in the verse with extensive alliteration. Notice the repetition of sibilants and the consonant *bh* throughout the verse (as well as the consonant *k* in the last quarter):

*śambhor adabhraśaradabhratuṣāraśubhraṃ bhrājiṣṇubhūtibharaśibharabhāsvarābham
diśyād vapur bhasalanīlagalaṃ kalaṅkālaṅkāraśāradaśaśāṅkanibhaṃ śubhaṃ vaḥ
// SKA 3.10 //*

The key words in the verse are *śambhu*, a name for Śiva meaning “benevolent,” and *śubha*, a word for “auspiciousness” that also suggests brightness, whiteness, and light. Thus the repetition of the syllables *ś* and *bh* amplifies these two key concepts that bookend the verse. Sound and sense here combine to invoke Śiva’s form, and the verse prays for this to benefit “you,” the human audience for the hymn.

The verses that follow continue to describe Śiva’s nature and specific features of his body, such as his three eyes.⁸³⁹ Often Jagaddhara resorts to complex puns (*śleṣa*) in these descriptions, such as in this beautiful verse that compares Śiva’s glance to the sky at the turning of the season:

<p>Its brightness is created by the moon, the sun, and fire. Without any veils, it is immediately clear and favorable.⁸⁴⁰</p>	<p>Its loveliness is enhanced by royal geese and peacocks. Without the covering of clouds it is clear every day.</p>
<p>May Śiva’s glance produce the maturation of your desired fruits, like the sky during the days at the end of the rainy season at the beginning of autumn. // SKA 3.35 //⁸⁴¹</p>	

⁸³⁹ Usually Jagaddhara invokes Śiva’s compassionate nature, but he also describes Śiva’s fierce side, praying that this too will be benevolent for devotees. *SKA* 3.54, for instance, describes Śiva’s wild, cosmic *tāṇḍava* dance at the time of the dissolution of the universe.

⁸⁴⁰ I have translated the word *prasāda* here both in terms of clarity and favor, since both meanings are equally relevant for Śiva’s eyes.

⁸⁴¹ *yā rājahaṃsaśikhisaṃbhṛtakāntir eti sadyas tirohitaghanāvaraṇā prasādam / sā
prāvṛḍantaśaradādidineṣv iva dyauḥ śambhor abhīṣṭaphalapākakṛd astu dṛḡ vaḥ // SKA 3.35 //*

The puns in the verse double the auspiciousness of the blessing, for the sky, here the standard of comparison for Śiva’s glance, is also indicative of good fortune and prosperity, as the rainy season transitions into the bountiful autumn. Śiva’s eyes are particularly important for the devotee, and Jagaddhara spends extra time describing and invoking them in this hymn.⁸⁴² The eyes suggest the bidirectional act of seeing (*darśana*)—the devotee’s vision of Śiva’s auspicious form, and Śiva’s revealing of his form to the devotee, which indicates his grace and favor.

Toward the end of the *Āśīrvādistotra*, Jagaddhara shifts from descriptions of Śiva to celebrations of praise-poetry dedicated to Śiva and the poets who compose it. He facilitates this shift using *śleṣa*: verse 3.57 praises Śiva’s bull but also praise-poetry, since the word *gaus* can mean either, and the adjectives in the verse are puns that apply to both.⁸⁴³ The hymn concludes by describing Śiva’s greatness and praying that the poetry in praise of that greatness will be beneficial. The last line ends in a poetic decrescendo offering blessings to its audience: “may that praise to Śiva produce auspiciousness for you” (*śārvaḥ stavah śaṃsa vaḥ*).⁸⁴⁴ The movement in the last few verses connects all of Śiva’s greatness and auspiciousness described throughout the hymn with poetry and its power to make these

⁸⁴² See SKA 3.35-3.39

⁸⁴³ *yasyaikasya suvarṇasaṃbhṛtapadanyāsānavadyakramavyaktiḥ preṅkhati gaur anargalagatisvācchandyahṛdyākṛtiḥ / prakhyātādbhutasargabandharacanāsaṃrabdhir ojasvinaḥ kāvyasyodayabhūr asau bhavatu vaḥ prītyai purāṇaḥ kaviḥ // SKA 3.57 //* See also SKA 3.58, which continues to laud praise-poetry.

⁸⁴⁴ *yat sargābharaṇāyamānavapuṣaḥ kecit kakupkāmīnikarṇālaṅkaraṇāyamānayaśasaḥ svargāyamānaśriyaḥ / duṣkālānalasannasajjanasudhāvarṣāyamāṅktayaḥ prekṣyante mahimā sa yasya kurutāṃ śārvaḥ stavah śaṃsa vaḥ // SKA 3.60 //*

features of Śiva beneficial for the devotee, in this case specifically through the offering of blessings (*āśīrvāda*). The repetitive grammatical constructions used throughout the hymn establish a particular kind of relationship between the poet, Śiva, and the hymn's audience. The language of the hymn invokes Śiva's auspiciousness and then serves as the medium by which that becomes beneficial for a specific audience. Moreover, anyone who recites the hymn then shares these blessings with others. Finally, the poetic features of the hymn are essential to its success. As we have seen, puns allow the poet to amplify the auspiciousness invoked in a particular verse or to shift between praising Śiva to praising the praise of Śiva itself.

The fourth *stotra* in the *SKA*, entitled the *Maṅgalastotra*, develops a theme closely related to the offering of blessings (*āśīrvāda*) explored in the preceding *stotra*: *maṅgala*, or auspiciousness.⁸⁴⁵ The *Āśīrvādistotra* focused primarily on the offering of blessings and uses various terms to refer to good fortune, felicity, auspiciousness, Śiva's favor, and so on throughout its sixty verses. The *Maṅgalastotra*, in contrast, consists of only eight verses, each of which ends with the same key phrase invoking the auspiciousness of a single form of Śiva. This particular form is called Hari-Hara, for Hari (=Viṣṇu) makes up half its body, while Hara (=Śiva) makes up the other. In his introduction to his commentary on this verse, Ratnakaṅṭha explains that Śiva has taken on this amazing form called Hari-Hara, which is like Ardhanārīśvara, by sharing half of his own body with Viṣṇu out of love for him, since

⁸⁴⁵ On *maṅgala* verses, see Christopher Minkowski, "Why should we read the Maṅgala verses?," in *Śāstrāmbha: Inquiries into the Preamble in Sanskrit*, ed. Walter Slaje (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008).

he is Śiva's foremost devotee.⁸⁴⁶ The eight verses of this hymn describe the striking and often paradoxical results of this unique pairing, and each ends with this quarter verse: "May that body of Hari-Hara give you auspiciousness" (*tan maṅgalaṃ diśatu hāriharaṃ vapur vaḥ*).

Wonder and amazement are central to this hymn and its invocation of auspiciousness for its audience. In the first verse, Jagaddhara describes the paradoxical co-existence of various things that emerged during the famous churning of the cosmic milk-ocean:

In this one place there is the joyful experience of friendship for Śrī, (Viṣṇu's divine) conch, the (jewel named) Kaustubha, the nectarian moon, the cosmic poison, and the nectar of immortality, since they all arose from the same place.⁸⁴⁷ Firmly established in the *dharma* of truthfulness (*satya*), it exists without any problem both Garuḍa (*satya*) and Nandī (*dharma*).⁸⁴⁸ May that body of Hari-Hara give you auspiciousness. // SKA 4.1 //⁸⁴⁹

Other verses explore the peculiar implications of this form. In one, Jagaddhara imagines that Brahmā wishes he too had only half a body, since he feels cramped in his dwelling, the lotus of Viṣṇu's navel that is now half as large.⁸⁵⁰ In another, the final verse of the hymn,

⁸⁴⁶ *śivabhaktamukhyaṃ hariṃ premṇā nijaśarīrārdhapradānenānuḡṛhṇatā ardhanārīśvaravad adbhuṭaṃ harihararūpaṃ yad vyadhāyi* (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 30).

⁸⁴⁷ All of these extraordinary things emerged from the churning of the cosmic ocean. The first three are linked with Viṣṇu, and the second three with Śiva; hence in the present context they coexist in the same place, the body of Hari-Hara.

⁸⁴⁸ On *dharma* as a bull, see *Mānavadharmasāstra* 8.16. Ratnakaṅṭha glosses *satya* as *garuḍa*, the great eagle who serves as Viṣṇu's mount, but only quotes an unnamed lexicon (*satyas tu garūde caiveti koṣaḥ*)(*Laghupañcāśikā*, 30).

⁸⁴⁹ *śrīkambukaustubhasudhāṃśuviṣāmr̥tānāṃ saudaryasauhṛdasukhānubhavaikadhāma / yat satyadharmakṛtanīṣpratighapratīṣṭhaṃ tan maṅgalaṃ diśatu hāriharaṃ vapur vaḥ* // SKA 4.1 //

⁸⁵⁰ *hīnārdhanābhinalinālayasaṅkaṭatvasātāṅkasāṅkucitavṛttikadarthitāṅgaḥ / arthīcīkīṛṣati tanuṃ druhiṇo 'pi yatra tan maṅgalaṃ diśatu hāriharaṃ vapur vaḥ* // SKA 4.5 //

Jagaddhara marvels at how the Ganges river flows in reverse order on this form, from Viṣṇu's foot to the top of Śiva's head (drawing on the Vaiṣṇava view that the Ganges is sacred because it first flowed from Viṣṇu's foot).⁸⁵¹ These verses, like those about Ardhanārīśvara, suggest Śiva's ability to encompass apparent contradictions and inspire wonder and amazement in all who behold him in this form. The *Maṅgalastotra* harnesses auspiciousness that comes from this and prays it is beneficial for its audience.

In some ways the *Maṅgalastotra* continues the *Āśīrvādistotra*. Grammatically, it uses the same third-person imperative forms. Both hymns describe Śiva's form and they pray for that to be auspicious for their human audience. But the *Āśīrvādistotra* never uses the term *maṅgala*, instead expressing the idea of auspiciousness, felicity, good fortune, and Śiva's favor using other terms, such as *śubha*. The *Maṅgalastotra*, on the other hand, *only* uses the term *maṅgala* to express the idea of auspiciousness. Thus the latter hymn should be interpreted as a reflection on this particular concept and the practice of beginning compositions with such verses. It consists of a short meditation on the power and wonder of one of Śiva's particular forms, rather than covering a wide range, as the *Āśīrvādistotra* does. A verbal action—the offering of various types of blessings—unifies the *Āśīrvādistotra*, while the *Maṅgalastotra* is distinguished by the repetitious invocation of auspiciousness that emerges from a particular form of Śiva. The *Āśīrvādistotra* focuses on relating Śiva's features to its audience in specific ways; the *Maṅgalastotra* focuses on repeatedly calling forth the auspiciousness of a particular form. Both are oriented toward a human audience and mediate between Śiva and that audience, but one emphasizes the *act* of offering

⁸⁵¹ *pādāgranirgatam avāritam eva vāri yatrādhirohati śiras tridaśāpagāyāḥ | atyadbhutaṃ ca ruciraṃ ca niraṅkuṣāṅ ca tan maṅgalaṃ diśatu hāriharaṃ vapur vaḥ || SKA 4.8 ||*

blessings or prayers while the other emphasizes the auspiciousness itself. While the difference between *āśīrvāda* and *maṅgala* may be quite subtle, and open to debate, Jagaddhara seeks to differentiate them by exploring them in these two *stotras*.

Overall, the *Namaskārastotra*, *Āśīrvādistotra*, and *Maṅgalastotra* show fine-grained reflections on the language of prayer. They are distilled, concentrated examples of how poetic, prayerful language can function, and they offer new perspectives on the ways language has been used in countless texts that precede them. Such an exposition, particularly within a set of Sanskrit hymns, is unique, and shows Jagaddhara's concern with unpacking the potential of this genre. In these *stotras* he highlights the inherent versatility of the *stotra* form and suggests how this genre develops the logic inherent in the different ways Sanskrit authors usually begin any text: *namaskāra*, *āśīrvāda*, *maṅgala*, or some kind of praise in general (*stuti*). Exploring these functions through his sophisticated poetry, Jagaddhara also demonstrates how they are at least partially mutually constitutive. The auspiciousness invoked in the *Maṅgalastotra*, for instance, derives from the amazement produced by Śiva's form as Hari-Hara expressed through literary figures such as complex puns (*śleṣa*) and poetic imagination (*utprekṣā*). Finally, they also serve as an auspicious opening section to the *SKA* by invoking his awesome and compassionate deeds as well as his iconographic forms.

Petitionary Prayer

Jagaddhara petitions Śiva repeatedly throughout the *SKA*. He asks, prays, and even begs for Śiva's favor, for his compassionate glance, for relief from his afflictions, and for

protection from Yama, the god of death. His petitionary prayers use a variety of techniques, from abject humility to aggressive confrontation to subtle argumentation. Often such requests go hand and hand with praise. In other words, by offering praise the poet hopes to please Śiva so that he will answer the poet's petitions. While this is an overly simplistic description of a complex text, it gestures toward one of the most basic functions of the *SKA* as a whole.

Petition plays a dominant role in several *stotras* within the *SKA*. Two are particularly illustrative: the *Dīnākrandanastotra* (Cry of the Wretched) and the *Śaraṇāgatoddharaṇastotra* (Hymn for the Uplifting of Those Who Have Come for Refuge). The first is not only the longest hymn in the *SKA*, but also one of the most poetically rich and creative. We saw in Chapter Four, for instance, how many verses in this *stotra* portray poetry as a goddess who courts Śiva. This *stotra* harkens back to another well-known hymn with the same title: the *Dīnākrandanastotra* of Loṣṭhadeva.⁸⁵² The poets of both hymns appeal to Śiva by rehearsing their own abject state. But Jagaddhara's hymn does much more. Much of his *Dīnākrandanastotra* self-consciously reflects on the implications of his own act. Thus he calls the whole enterprise into question, chalking his own words up to the "insolence of flattery" (*cāṭucāpala*). But while this may transgress the bounds of Śiva's affection, it does so as the insolence of child might offend a parent who ultimately loves that child unconditionally.⁸⁵³ He goes on to cite Śiva's great magnanimity: even though the purifying waters of the Ganges flow from his head, he still accepts the humble water of the

⁸⁵² See my brief discussion of this hymn in Chapter Two.

⁸⁵³ *yac cāṭucāpalam alaṅghyabhavabhramo'haṃ moḥaṃ vahann iha muhurmuḥur ācarāmi / tatra sṛḥāvaham ahāryam ahāryaputrībhartuḥ parārdhyam aparādhyati saukumāryam // SKA 11.6 //*

devotee's ritual bathing of his images.⁸⁵⁴ After providing a variety of justifications for his prayers, he entreats Śiva:

For all of these reasons I cry out *something*, despairing.
 O trident-bearing Śiva, you who provide deliverance from intense affliction,
 I am suffering, stuck in this horrible difficulty, the wilderness of ignorance.
 O Śiva! Consider my plea, so that it might be auspicious (*śiva*)! // SKA 11.9 //⁸⁵⁵

He continues to debate the merits or foolishness of offering such prayers in many of the verses that follow. For instance, he laments that his flattery will not earn Śiva's favor, just as a dog's movements here and there, done in order to win affection, do not earn it any respect.⁸⁵⁶ And yet he vacillates and tries to justify his own attempts to please Śiva:

On the other hand, even the actions of a fool cannot fail to elicit
 the favor of the lord who is an ocean of compassion.
 O lord! You yourself are devoted to play in your mountain city.
 Do not the leaps and bounds of a young boy steal your heart? // SKA 11.12 //⁸⁵⁷

Jagaddhara uses praise to invoke Śiva's benevolent side so that his reputation is on the line—he must be compassionate or prove the devotee's praises false.⁸⁵⁸ Such verses

⁸⁵⁴ SKA 11.7.

⁸⁵⁵ *krandāmy ataḥ kim api nāma pinākapāṇe tīvrārtinistarāṇakāraṇa kātaro 'ham / mohāṭavivikaṭasaṅkaṭasaṁsthitasya tan me'vadhāraya śivāya śivāturasya // SKA 11.9 //*

⁸⁵⁶ *asmādr̥śair aśucibhiś caṭucāpalāni klṛptāny avaimi na manas tava nandayanti / āvarjanāya vihitāny api candramaule kauleyakasya laḍitāni kim ādriyante // SKA 11.11 //* Jagaddhara cleverly uses the word *kauleyaka* for “dog,” but it can also mean “someone from a good family,” such as Jagaddhara himself. The pun, like an “embrace” (*śleṣa*), makes the comparison between the poet and the dog even closer. Later in the same hymn Jagaddhara uses a similar image. He says that everything he has said here is pathetic, but even the leaping of a monkey can be amusing. The image suggests Hanumān's amazing leap across the ocean to Laṅkā in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and thus Jagaddhara subtly compliments his own poetry even as he disparages it (SKA 11.112).

⁸⁵⁷ *yadvā na mugdhacaritāny api na prasādam utpādayanti bhavataḥ karuṇārṇavasya / svāmin daratpuravihāraparasya kiṁ na ceto haranti tava bālakavalgitāni // SKA 11.12 //*

⁸⁵⁸ SKA 11.14, for example, praises Śiva for accepting even the most humble offerings from his devotees.

establish Śiva's compassionate nature and set up a framework for some of his more insistent verses, such as this one:

O lord, when someone like you, an ocean of compassion,
has disregard for those like me who have no other refuge,
it is like lightning appearing from the orb of the moon,
or darkness coming from the sun. // SKA 11.66 //⁸⁵⁹

In other words, in light of Śiva's reputation (invoked by Jagaddhara praise), Śiva's failure to be compassionate would be a bolt from the blue.

As the *Dīnākrandanastotra* progresses, Jagaddhara grows increasingly desperate and contentious. The specter of death, embodied in figure of Yama, looms large for him. Feeling death is close, he repeatedly challenges Śiva, as when he says: "Don't you feel shame for abandoning one who has come to you for refuge?"⁸⁶⁰ His tone is surprisingly critical when we remember that he has already spent hundreds of verses praising the greatness of Śiva. Consider this pointed verse:

Are you ignorant? Are you weak? Are you confused?
Are you distracted? Are you uncompassionate? Are you incapable?
Are you sleepy? Are you drunk?
Why else would you ignore this plea
full of distress because of the terror of Yama, the god of death?
// SKA 11.103 //⁸⁶¹

Jagaddhara presents himself as so far lost that all he can do is resort to bitter sarcasm. In a series of verses near the end of the hymn, he uses *śleṣa* to sarcastically criticize his own

⁸⁵⁹ *abhyudgamo 'yam aśaner amṛtāṃśubimbāt svāminn asau dinamaṇes timirapraroḥaḥ /
yuṣmādrśasya karuṇāmbunidher akasmād asmādrśeṣv aśaraṇeṣv avadhīraṇaṃ yat // SKA 11.66 //*

⁸⁶⁰ *āḥ kiṃ na rakṣasi nayaty ayam antako māṃ helāvalepasamayāḥ kim ayaṃ maheśa / mā nāma bhūt
karuṇayā hrdayasya pīdā vrīḍāpi nāsti śaraṇāgatam ujjhatas te // SKA 11.102 //*

⁸⁶¹ *ajño 'si kiṃ kim abalo 'si kim ākulo 'si vyagro 'si kiṃ kim aghṛṇo 'si kim akṣamo 'si / nidrālasaḥ
kim asi kiṃ madaghūrṇito 'si krandantam antakabhayārtam upekṣase yat // SKA 11.103 //*

foolishness, since he resorts to Śiva who does not seem to hear his plea. This example puns on alternative names for Śiva, Pārvatī, and their son Skanda:

Oh, I'm really smart—
to get the fruit I wanted I entered the home in which
the husband is *sthāṇu* (Śiva/a bare trunk),
the bride is *aparṇā* (Pārvatī/leafless),
and their son is *viśākha* (Skanda/branchless). // SKA 11.117 //⁸⁶²

While the surface meaning of the verse simply names three of the members of Śiva's family, the punned meaning criticizes Śiva for not making the poet's plea fruitful. Such verses fall under the category of *vyājastuti*, "feigned praise," in that their sarcasm offers thinly veiled critiques.⁸⁶³ Jagaddhara's very personal appeals to Śiva cover a wide range of tones and strategies, from exaltation to pleading to censure.

Again and again, Jagaddhara bemoans his own state in order to awaken Śiva's pity, and at the same time he addresses the various criticisms of this very practice. Jagaddhara concludes the *Dīnākrandanastotra* in the same way: he first reiterates his own sorry state and then prays for Śiva, the ocean of compassion, to hear his pathetic cry (*dīnām ākranditam*) in his heart and forgive his mistakes.⁸⁶⁴ Jagaddhara's poetry invokes Śiva's nature and then appeals to that nature in highly personal terms. Throughout the *Dīnākrandanastotra*, he praises and pleads, argues and criticizes, and ultimately surrenders

⁸⁶² *sthāṇuḥ sa yatra vibhur asya vadhūr aparṇā sā yatra yatra ca tayos tanayo viśākhaḥ / prajñāvatām aham aho pravaraḥ praveṣṭum icchāmi dhāma tad abhīṣṭaphalāptaye yat // SKA 11.117 //*

⁸⁶³ On this poetic figure, see Yigal Bronner, "Change in Disguise: The Early Discourse on *Vyājastuti*" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129.2 (2009). Note that Jagaddhara's cynicism here echoes Bhāmaha's early characterization of *vyājastuti* far better than the revised one of later authors who sought "to sanitize Bhāmaha's sarcasm" (ibid., 184-185).

⁸⁶⁴ SKA 11.143.

entirely to Śiva's will. He demonstrates a recognition that there is something wrong with even making such petitions; it is presumptuous, obsequious, useless. And yet over and over he makes his appeals in highly poetic verses.⁸⁶⁵ Whatever theologians or logicians might say, Jagaddhara's poetry suggests that petitionary prayer is effective and appropriate.

Like the *Dīnākrandanastotra*, the *Śaraṇāgatoddharaṇastotra* petitions Śiva directly. But it stands in contrast to the former in its brevity (only eight verses) and its repetition of a single line at the end of each verse, like a chorus: "O Hara! Quickly rescue this Jagaddhara, who is destitute and has come to you for refuge!" (*caturam uddhara hara jagaddharam aśaraṇaṃ śaraṇāgatam*). This refrain, which gives the *stotra* its title, contains an ironic reference to the poet himself: it asks Śiva to "lift up" (*uddhara*) Jagaddhara, whose name means "upholder of the universe." The name refers to an epithet of Śiva, and thus Jagaddhara asks his namesake to live up to his designation. The repetition of this refrain is matched throughout the poem by the repetition of sounds, as in the first verse:

*bhavamarubhramaviṣamaśambhramasamuditaklamaviklavam
kuliśakarkaśahṛdayadurjanakṛtaparābhavaviplavam /
atibhayaṅkararavijakiṅkaravikṛtahūṅkṛtikātaram
caturam uddhara hara jagaddharam aśaraṇaṃ śaraṇāgatam //32.1//⁸⁶⁶*

He is overcome by the fatigue arising
from the terrible confusion of wandering in the desert of *saṃsāra*.
He has been shipwrecked by the contempt of wicked people
whose hearts are harsh like lightening.
He is terrified by the menacing sounds
made by the petrifying servants of Yama.

⁸⁶⁵ Often the poetic figures in these verses govern their specific logic, as in *SKA* 11.117, in which Jagaddhara implies that Sthāṇu (=Śiva) is being fruitless like a bare tree trunk (*sthāṇu*).

⁸⁶⁶ Note, for example, the repetition of the conjunct *-nik-* in the third quarter, and the rhymes at the end of the first two quarters (*-klamaviklavam*, *-bhavaviplavam*) and second two quarters (*-kātaram*, *-śaraṇāgatam*) of the verse.

O Hara! Quickly rescue this Jagaddhara,
who is destitute and has come to you for refuge! // SKA 32.1 //⁸⁶⁷

The hymn retains this general structure in each of its verses. But it becomes increasingly personal and direct, reaching its climax in the final verse:

Take away my fear!
Get rid of my deception!
Place your foot on my head!
Make this mouth speak and beautify my words!⁸⁶⁸
O bestower of boons, don't shun one who has surrendered to you!
He has made countless intense efforts, without rest.
He cannot bear this extreme exhaustion.
O Hara! Quickly rescue this Jagaddhara,
who is destitute and has come to you for refuge! // SKA 32.8 //⁸⁶⁹

By using numerous vocatives and imperative verbs, Jagaddhara creates a highly charged plea that culminates in the final reiteration of the refrain. While the *Dīnākrandanastotra* offers a wide variety of poetic appeals to Śiva that often self-consciously comment on the act of petition itself, the *Śaraṇāgatoddharaṇastotra* presents an intense, personal appeal that derives its power from its repetitions of both sound and sense.

⁸⁶⁷ *bhavamarubhramaviṣamasambhramasamuditaklamaviklavam
kuliśakarkaśahṛdayadurjanakṛtaparābhavaviplavam /
atibhayaṅkararavijakiṅkaravikṛtahuṅkṛtikātaram caturam uddhara hara jagaddharam aśaraṇam
śaraṇāgatam // SKA 32.1 //*

⁸⁶⁸ Here I follow Ratnaṅṭha, who glosses *vacanam añcaya* as *śobhaya*, “make it shine beautifully” (*Laghupañcāśikā*, 225).

⁸⁶⁹ *abhayam arpaya kapaṭam alpaya śirasi kalpaya me padaṃ mukham udañcaya vacanam añcaya
varada vañcaya mā natam / bhṛśam aviśramakṛtapariśramaśatam atiśramaniḥsahaṃ caturam
uddhara hara jagaddharam aśaraṇam śaraṇāgatam // SKA 32.8 //*

Additional Types of Prayer

Many of the *stotras* in the *SKA* both praise and enact specific religious practices through their verses, such as those focused on homage, blessings, and petition. Let us consider a few more examples in brief. The *SKA* as a whole can be seen as a meditation on Śiva's nature and forms, but certain *stotras* within it focus on describing and praising his iconographical features. The nineteenth *stotra* is called the *Bhagavadvarṇanastotra* (Hymn Describing the Lord). Its first verses distinguish between Śiva's transcendent, supreme form (*paraṃ rūpam*) and his embodied form (*mūrti*), using this distinction to justify praise for Śiva in a form that can be appreciated by the senses.⁸⁷⁰ The remainder of the hymn describes Śiva's form systematically in the traditional sequence from foot to head.⁸⁷¹ The bulk of the hymn, therefore, consists in praise, but it is devoid of many of the features of other hymns, such as petitions or the offering of blessings. Instead, the hymn functions primarily as a visualization of Śiva's form. In offering praise to the features of Śiva's embodied form, from his toenails to his chest to his matted hair, the hymn invites its human audiences to contemplate them with sustained focus. The two hymns that follow the *Bhagavadvarṇanastotra* continue this practice. In the twentieth *stotra*, called the *Hasitavarṇanastotra* (Hymn Describing [Śiva's] Smile), Jagaddhara praises his chosen deity's playful smile, especially when he takes on a disguise to tease Pārvatī.⁸⁷² While Jagaddhara does pray periodically that this smile be beneficial for his human audience, the

⁸⁷⁰ *SKA* 19.1-3.

⁸⁷¹ The hymn as a whole describes Śiva's generic, exoteric form, but *SKA* 19.30 refers to Śiva as Amṛteśa, a form of Śiva taught in the *Netratantra* popular in Kashmir.

⁸⁷² In both its style and subject matter this *stotra* pays tribute to the *Kumārasambhava* of Kālidāsa.

thrust of the hymn is on the evocation and savoring of Śiva's smile. Similarly, the *Ardhanārīśvarastotra* (Hymn for the Lord Who is Half-male, Half-female), Jagaddhara describes with amazement the unusual implications of this particular form (Ardhanārīśvara), thereby inviting his audience to dwell upon and experience this wonder as well. Taken together, such hymns illustrate additional ways in which the *SKA* includes practices, such as the visualization of Śiva's wondrous forms, that rely on its use of poetic language.

The eighth *stotra* offers another illustration of this. This hymn focuses on the act of seeking Śiva's protection, and hence it is entitled the *Śaraṇāśrayaṇastotra* (Hymn of Taking Refuge). Jagaddhara begins this *stotra*, as he often does, by praising the power of praise-poetry itself. But the bulk of the *stotra* consists in verses that perform the act of taking refuge in Śiva. A twenty-five verse description of Śiva⁸⁷³ concludes with this declaration: "I take refuge in that (lord Śiva), a refuge who relieves the suffering of those who seek his protection."⁸⁷⁴ In most of the verses that follow, Jagaddhara enacts various expressions of this sentiment. Through such first-person, personal statements, Jagaddhara (and anyone who recites the hymn) takes refuge in Śiva again and again. Near the end of the hymn, he switches his addressee to his human audience. After a number of verses characterizing Śiva's greatness, he says: "therefore, resort to that lord (Śiva) in whatever way you can."⁸⁷⁵ Thus one who recites this hymn takes refuge in Śiva through its first-person language and

⁸⁷³ *SKA* 8.9-33.

⁸⁷⁴ *taṃ saṃśritārtiharaṇaṃ śaraṇaṃ śrayāmi // SKA 8.33d //*

⁸⁷⁵ *tasmād upeta vibhum eva yathātathāpi // SKA 8.49d //* This shift marks the climax of the hymn as well. In the three verses that follow, Jagaddhara pulls back from the actual act of taking refuge and reflects rhetorically on the possibility of describing and talking about this lord in whom he wants to take refuge (*SKA* 8.50-52).

also encourages the human audience for that recitation to do the same through its second-person language. Other *stotras* in the *SKA* work in similar ways with respect to related but distinct practices, such as the offering of worship. Thus the *SKA* consists primarily in devotional practices enacted through poetic language, various reflections on the nature of these practices, and communications with two primary audiences, one human and one divine.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Jagaddhara offers a particular vision of Śaivism in his *SKA*. His poetry lacks the technical, sectarian language found in many earlier *stotras* from Kashmir, resorting instead to the complex but non-sectarian language of Sanskrit *kāvya*. At the heart of this Śaivism is an aestheticized *bhakti* and a collection of religious practices based in language brought together under the umbrella of the *stotra* form. The organization and content of the *SKA* spell out what is implicit in *stotra* literature in general, namely the potential for this versatile genre to embody a host of language-based religious practices. These practices, moreover, are not separable from the poetry with which he describes, praises, and performs them. Using poetic language they establish specific types of relationships between the poet, Śiva, and his human audiences. The *SKA* is both a collection of *stotras* and an extended commentary on the nature of this genre, from its status as literature to the many efficacious practices it is seen as encompassing. Thus this ambitious text functions simultaneously as the expression of a particular kind of Śaivism, a model intended to inspire and guide others, and a self-conscious reflection on its own nature that argues for the advantages of following its example.

It is risky to speculate about the possible reasons for promoting this particular vision of Śaivism. And yet it does fit with what we know of Kashmir's history at this time. We know that the exceptional diversity and depth of the Śaivism that thrived in Kashmir around the turn of the millennium contracted in the centuries that followed. The Śaiva Siddhānta, for instance, largely disappeared as a distinct soteriological system, so much so that it was usually assumed to be exclusively a southern tradition by scholars.⁸⁷⁶ Jagaddhara may have been sponsoring a consolidated Śaivism not limited to a particular scriptural tradition as a response to this general contraction, parallel to his creative consolidation of Sanskrit literary traditions within the *stotra* form. More than anything else, the *SKA* serves as a celebration of and argument for the value of commitment to Śiva and Śaivism in general.⁸⁷⁷

Furthermore, we know that the second half of the fourteenth century, the time when Jagaddhara likely composed the *SKA*, was a time of transition in Kashmir. Kashmir came under Muslim rule in 1320 CE, and fourteenth-century figures like Lal Dēd (Lalleśvarī) point to religious developments indebted to Śaiva, Śākta, and Muslim influences. We do not have much reliable data about the conversion of the Kashmirian population to Islam during this time, but even without knowing the details it is clear that the demographics were shifting during the fourteenth century. There were Muslim preachers in the region, and

⁸⁷⁶ The work of Dominic Goodall, in particular, has rectified this misconception (see the introduction in his critical edition and translation, *Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's Commentary on the Kiraṇatantra*).

⁸⁷⁷ This can be seen in earlier *stotras* as well, such as the *Mahimnaḥstava*, and they too were probably participating in debates with other traditions and attempting to assert the supremacy of Śaivism.

popular devotional movements around figures who came to be known as the Rishis.⁸⁷⁸ In the fourteenth century, the future of Śaivism in Kashmir was uncertain. It seems possible, therefore, that Jagaddhara's promotion of a non-sectarian, elite but inclusive Śaivism was designed to consolidate a community in competition with an increasingly successful Muslim community in Kashmir. Moreover, it is tantalizing that his emphasis on a personal relationship to Śiva, based on devotional praise, worship, and surrender parallels Muslim patterns of relating to Allah more closely than the majority of earlier Śaiva religious expressions, at least in Kashmir. Such speculations remain tentative, but Jagaddhara's silence on such issues does not preclude his indirect engagement with them. Many Sanskrit intellectuals chose to exclude Islam and Islamic culture from the Sanskrit literary world,⁸⁷⁹ and in Kashmir it was not until the reign of Zayn al-Ābidīn (r. 1418-1470)⁸⁸⁰ that Sanskrit intellectuals directly engaged with the new prominence of Islamic cultural and political power in the valley. So perhaps Jagaddhara's lengthy celebration of Śaivism in the fourteenth century can be viewed also as a sophisticated argument, aimed at a general community of Śaiva elites, to take up a revamped and consolidated version of Śaivism in the face of great change.

⁸⁷⁸ The lack of reliable scholarship on this period remains lamentable. For a two starting places, see Slaje, *Medieval Kashmir and the Science of History*, and M. Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis* (New Delhi: Manohar 2002).

⁸⁷⁹ For a discussion of this history in north India, including prominent exceptions, see Audrey Truschke, "Cosmopolitan Encounters: Sanskrit and Persian Encounters at the Mughal Court" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012), chapters one and two.

⁸⁸⁰ On the dating of his reign, see Slaje, *Medieval Kashmir and the Science of History*, 22.

Postscript: The Legacy of the Stutikusumāñjali

A variety of indicators adduce evidence for the influence and respected status of the *SKA* among critics and later authors. Despite its length and complexity, it continued to be copied and transmitted from generation to generation. Manuscripts of the *SKA*, many of them complete and accompanied by Ratnakaṅṭha's commentary, can be found in archives not only in Srinagar and Jammu, but also farther afield in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, in both Sharada and Devanagari scripts. Jagaddhara's poetry was also anthologized by later scholars in collections such as the *Suktimuktāvali* of Jalhaṇa.⁸⁸¹

Several features of the literary activity in seventeenth-century Kashmir also indicate the prominence of the *SKA*. The most direct is the learned commentary on the *SKA* by Rājānaka Ratnakaṅṭha, one of the leading scholars from this period. Moreover, his own poetry is heavily indebted to Jagaddhara's. In his commentary he often quotes his own verses to support his explanations, and frequently they are markedly similar to Jagaddhara's own verses. Consider these two verses, the first Jagaddhara's and the second

Ratnakaṅṭha's:

Even though you once gave away the ocean of milk,
 you accept a drop of milk (offered during worship).
 Even though your eyes are abode for the three sources of light,
 you receive the light of a lamp (offered by devotees).
 Even though you are the source of all speech,
 you listen to the words of simple folk.
 What will you not do
 out of consideration of your humble devotees? // *SKA* 1.14 //

Even though you bear the Ganges river,

⁸⁸¹ See *The Subhāṣāvali of Vallabha*, ed. Peter Peterson and Pandit Durgāprasāda (Bombay: Education Society's Press, Byculla, 1886), 36-37, for a list of Jagaddhara's verses included in this anthology.

you accept the ritual bathing with water (by devotees).
 Even though you are beyond value (*anarghya*),
 you receive the tiny valuables (*arghya*) (offered by devotees).
 You are the supreme light,
 and yet you accept the light of lamp (offered by devotees).
 What will you not do
 out of consideration of your humble devotees?⁸⁸²

Here are the verses in Sanskrit, with the vocabulary shared between them in bold:⁸⁸³

*dugdhābdhido 'pi **payasaḥ** pṛṣataṃ **vṛṇoṣi** **dīpaṃ** tridhāmanayano'py **urarīkaroṣi** /
 vācāṃ prasūtir apī mugdhavacaḥ śṛṇoṣi **kiṃ kiṃ karoṣi na vinītajanānurodhāt**
 // SKA 11.14//*

*gaṅgādharo 'pi **vṛṇuṣe** **payaso** 'bhīṣekaṃ gṛhṇāsi cārghyakanīkāḥ svayam apy anarghyaḥ /
 jyotiḥ paraṃ tvam asi **dīpaṃ urīkaroṣi kiṃ kiṃ karoṣi na vinītajanānurodhāt** //*

Such continuities in both meaning and wording suggest that the *SKA* was a source of inspiration for Ratnakaṅṭha. His near contemporary, Sāhib Kaul, composed the *Devīnāmavilāsa*, which, like the *SKA*, is a long, ambitious hymn that engages earlier traditions in creative ways.⁸⁸⁴ It is unlikely that Sāhib Kaul was not familiar with the *SKA*, given Ratnakaṅṭha's commentary on it in the seventeenth century. We can speculate, therefore, that Jagaddhara's *SKA* may have been an important predecessor for the *DNV*, influencing its combination of the *stotra* form with poetic and structural features of *kāvya*. As a whole, the *SKA* forms a particularly strong link in the chain of *stotras* that fashioned a loose tradition for successive authors in Kashmir.⁸⁸⁵

⁸⁸² *Laghupañcāśikā*, 94.

⁸⁸³ This only includes words that are identical or almost identical between the verses. If I were to put synonyms in bold as well, it would include almost the entire verse.

⁸⁸⁴ See my discussion of the *DNV* in Chapter Two.

⁸⁸⁵ We saw earlier that the *SKA* too looks back to earlier *stotras*, such as the *Dīnākrandanastotra* of Loṣṭhaka.

In modern times, the *SKA* has not had the popular appeal of some other *stotras* from Kashmir, such as those in Utpaladeva's *Śivastotrāvalī*. As far as I know, it is not a central text for any Śaiva community. And yet Swami Lakṣmaṇ Joo incorporated (without attribution) verses from the *SKA* into the hymnal used in his ashrams, as I discussed in Chapter Two.⁸⁸⁶ The *SKA* has also been appreciated outside of Kashmir. It was published by the Nirṇaya Sāgara Press in 1891 as the twenty-third installment of the *Kāvyaṃālā* series, and the text subsequently received more attention from scholars in India.⁸⁸⁷ Throughout my own travels to libraries and universities in India, scholars often spoke about the *SKA* with appreciation, sometimes quoting specific verses.⁸⁸⁸ In general, Jagaddhara's poetry is appreciated for its devotion and its literary merit, even if its length and complexity may have deterred its use in popular Śaiva worship.

In many ways Jagaddhara was right to champion the *stotra* form. He rightly perceived (and developed) the flexibility of this genre, which not only weathered the centuries of change in Kashmir but was also the site for frequent innovation. This trajectory was not contained to Kashmir. In the far south, for instance, prominent authors like Vedāntadeśika and Appayya Dīkṣita developed religious ideas and practices through *stotras*, and texts like the *Nārāyaṇīyam* held up the literary potential of the *stotra* while creatively engaging with earlier literature. The *SKA*, therefore, was part of the broad, ongoing

⁸⁸⁶ See *Sunday Puja*, 27-34, where *SKA* vv. 1.6, 1.7, and 1.9 are numbered vv. 1-3, *SKA* v. 11.38 is numbered v. 14, and *SKA* v. 11.32 is numbered v. 15.

⁸⁸⁷ See, for instance, Dvivedī, "Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa ki Stutikusumāñjali," and Bhatt, "The Position of 'Stutikusumanjali' in Sanskrit Stotra Literature."

⁸⁸⁸ Dr. Ramakant Shukla at the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan in Delhi was kind enough to recite and sing several of the *stotras* in the *SKA* for me.

development of this genre based on its inherent versatility and unique combination of religious and literary features. At the same time, Jagaddhara's concern with revitalizing Sanskrit literature by elevating the literary prestige of the *stotra* form was not unfounded, for the rich literary tradition he could look back upon in the fourteenth century would not be mirrored in the centuries that followed.⁸⁸⁹ The *SKA*, therefore, stands as an important witness to the changes taking place in Kashmir and a key influence in the success of the *stotra* genre in the centuries that followed.

⁸⁸⁹ This is not to say that Sanskrit literary activity ceased, but it certainly does not compare with the activity between the ninth and twelfth centuries.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Sanskrit *stotras* demonstrate and often reflect upon what Norman Cutler characterized as the close link between religious and poetic expression in India, the relationship between poetry and prayer at the heart of the present work.⁸⁹⁰ This is a particularly rich relationship for *stotras* from Kashmir, a region whose reputation as the land of Śāradā, the goddess of learning, was justified by remarkable centuries of literary production in a host of fields. My investigation of *stotras* from Kashmir has taken two different tacks: on one hand, I have examined the long trajectory of *stotras* in the region, from the ninth century to the twenty-first; on the other, I have analyzed two specific cases within this history: Kṣemarāja's commentaries on Sanskrit hymns in the eleventh century, and Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa's major literary work, the *Stutikusumāñjali*, from the fourteenth century. Neither this extended history nor these specific texts have received much scholarly attention, while both offer fruitful perspectives on the history and nature of the *stotra* genre, and more broadly, on the complex connections between poetry and prayer in South Asia.

Historically, *stotras* have played a prominent role in Kashmir's influential literary culture. Many of the most prominent Kashmirian poets and intellectuals, from Ratnākara and Ānandavardhana to Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, composed their own *stotras*. These hymns have served a number of different functions. In the case of the Krama tradition, for example, *stotras* were an important part of the development and transmission of its central

⁸⁹⁰ See the Introduction, and Cutler, *Songs of Experience*, 111.

teachings, as successive generations of Krama teachers composed their own hymns. In the twentieth century, *stotras* were a means for some Kashmiri Pandit communities to connect their own devotional practice and teaching lineage with a heritage of sophisticated theology. Sāhib Kaul's seventeenth-century *stotras* demonstrate and perhaps helped to facilitate the assimilation of the Maithila Kauls—recently immigrated from eastern India—into Kashmiri culture. As these examples suggest, *stotras* have often enabled the negotiation of identity. The reception of *stotras* facilitates this as well. Kṣemarāja's commentary on the *Sāmbapañcāśikā*, for instance, recasts this hymn to the sun-god as a non-dualistic Śaiva text, subsuming it within his own tradition. As I have highlighted throughout the present work, the flexibility of the *stotra* genre has contributed to its popularity throughout the many changes in Kashmir's religious and literary history.

The history of literary hymns in Kashmir also highlights the complex relationship between *stotra* and *kāvya*. Traditionally, *stotras* were not considered at the same level as classical Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*). Literary theorists rarely discussed them, and *stotra* authors are almost never included among the exemplary poets praised (*kavipraśamsā*) in many Sanskrit texts. Poets from Kashmir suggest a range of responses to this situation. Ratnākara includes two extended hymns in his major work, the *Haravijaya*, and other poets, such as the semi-mythical Sāmba, seem to deliberately echo earlier works of short Sanskrit literature (*laghukāvya*). Utpaladeva appropriated the terminology of Sanskrit aesthetics without showing much interest in the discourse itself. Most dramatically, in the *Stutikusumāñjali* Jagaddhara aggressively expands the scope of the *stotra* form in structure, content, and style by adopting features of traditional *kāvya*. He also self-consciously

positions his collection of *stotras* as *kāvya*, and sees his work revitalizing a tradition of literature that had “grown old before its time” (*SKA* 38.19). But Jagaddhara does more than this, as I argued in Chapter Four: this poet sought to harness the well-developed conceptual and linguistic resources of the Sanskrit literary world for religious, devotional purposes, reorienting the “language of the gods” so that it once more was focused on the divine, rather than mired in the “world of men.” He does this in part through frequent descriptions of Sarasvatī, such as those that depict her as a beautiful woman or goddess who must be faithful to Śiva alone, rather than devoted to lesser lords (i.e., human kings), like a wife to her rightful husband. Such a relationship serves as a useful metaphor for the close connection between an inclusive, devotional Śaivism and a dynamic Sanskrit literary culture that the *Stutikusumāñjali* both embodies and seeks to encourage. Through this striking collection of *stotras*, Jagaddhara sought to consolidate earlier religious and literary traditions, perhaps in response to the major changes taking place in Kashmir during the fourteenth century, even as he also presented innovative ways of envisioning the future of religious literature. As a whole, *stotras* from Kashmir suggest that Sanskrit literature and aesthetics are contested systems of meaning that can be productively incorporated into the sphere of devotional worship. Individual poets may have done this in their own ways, but the many developments within Sanskrit literature and aesthetics were far too compelling to be ignored or deemed irrelevant to the sphere of theology and devotional worship.⁸⁹¹

The *stotras* I have discussed here indicate another striking feature of such hymns, at least in Kashmir: *stotras* are often *about stotras*, or praise and prayer more generally. The

⁸⁹¹ This of course is shown by poets outside of Kashmir as well, such as the author(s) of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

Stavacintāmaṇi and the *Stutikusumāñjali*, for instance, both celebrate praise (*stava*, *stuti*) in their titles, and most of the literary hymns from Kashmir reflect on the genre itself. They explore the many functions *stotras* encompass, from the offering of homage and blessings to petitionary prayer to the taking of refuge. Through the use of countless literary figures, they explore the possibilities of poetic language, and the potential for poetic language to point beyond its own limitations. For non-dualist authors, this was crucial. They were able to demonstrate and articulate non-duality using poetry that circumvents the duality implied by the standard use of language. Poetry can express and suggest what expository language cannot, and this has proven to be particularly appealing to religious authors seeking to articulate complex theology and sophisticated visions of divinity. Literary figures, for instance, may be able to evoke a god whose paradoxical nature is both immanent and transcendent, or both singular and multiple, in ways that descriptive language cannot. Some authors use the address inherent in the *stotra* to establish non-duality; Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta offer homage to the lord who is no different from their own Self, for example, and Nāga praises his own consciousness immersed in the experience of unity. Many poets even question the possibility of offering real praise to God, albeit rhetorically. As a whole, Kashmirian poets show a remarkable tendency for self-conscious reflection in their *stotras* that develops both the praise they offer and the *stotra* genre itself.

In general, *stotras* are about relationships. They share this with other devotional poetry, what A.K. Ramanujan called “a poetry of connections.”⁸⁹² Praise and prayer act out these relationships, establishing who or what is worth praising and appealing to, and in what

⁸⁹² *Hymns for the Drowning: Poems for Viṣṇu by Nammālvār*, trans. A.K. Ramanujan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 166; see also Cutler, *Songs of Experience*, 19.

way. As poetry of connections, *stotras* frequently draw attention to their complex audiences, both human and divine. In the *Stutikusumāñjali*, Jagaddhara praises and seeks to cultivate an audience of Śaiva devotees who are also aesthetic connoisseurs, able to appreciate complex theology precisely because of their ability to savor complex poetry. He also implies that Śiva himself has aesthetic taste, preferring beautiful poetry just as he prefers other types of beautiful offerings. In other cases, *stotras* seem designed to serve pedagogical functions, or to be exemplars for others to imitate. Through reciting *stotras*, or perhaps through composing one's own, devotees may be able to internalize specific ways of experiencing the world, such as the non-dual vision proclaimed by Utpaladeva in his *Śivastotrāvalī*. In each case, *stotras* affirm specific identities and relationships between human and divine actors, whether by establishing hierarchies or emphasizing ultimate unity.

Finally, in this study of Kashmirian *stotras* I have also analyzed various expressions of and reflections on *bhakti*, certainly one of the most important categories in the study of religion in South Asia. On a basic level, I have argued that any assessment of the history and historiography of various perspectives on *bhakti* must not neglect the fact that many Sanskrit authors have continued to express and explore *bhakti* to the present day. Sanskrit *stotras* implicitly and explicitly showcase a multitude of perspectives on *bhakti*. Some poets, like Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, depict *bhakti* as an efficacious means, while Utpaladeva also characterized the highest *bhakti* as a state of enjoyment, a relishing of unity between the devotee and God, borrowing metaphors from poetics to present an image of non-dualistic Śaiva devotion. *Stotras* are depicted as arising from *bhakti* and also as tools for cultivating *bhakti* in their human audiences. For Jagaddhara, *bhakti* and aesthetics are inextricably

linked; only true devotees will be able to appreciate the aesthetic power of his poetry, while devotion is best expressed poetically. For many *stotra* authors, *bhakti* is important in large part because it is what is shared, what is appreciated, between the poet or speaker and both human and divine audiences. I have argued, for instance, that for Jagaddhara, poetry is offered to the deity, enjoyed by the deity, and then also enjoyed by the communal audience for that poetry in an analogous manner to the food offered by devotees and then received and enjoyed as *prasāda*. Many of the literary hymns from Kashmir position themselves as verbal and aural offerings that establish paradigmatic relationships of devotion, sharing, and participation—all encompassed by the term *bhakti* and linked to poetry as a beautiful offering.

Looking more broadly at devotional poetry in South Asia, the Kashmirian *stotras* I have discussed offer a vision of Śaiva *bhakti* markedly different from many other versions of *bhakti*. As part of his characterization of Tamil *bhakti* poetry, Ramanujan says: “to the extent that the poetry espouses *bhāva* or ‘natural,’ ‘spontaneous’ feeling, it tends to draw on the common stock of speech, local dialect, colloquial tones, and turns away from the standard literary language or poetic diction.”⁸⁹³ Similarly, Christian Novetzke notes that *bhakti* is often “contrasted with other options within the sphere of religious action and sentiment, especially between *bhakti* and technical or scholastic modes of approaching God.”⁸⁹⁴ Consider these words of Basavaṇṇa, a Śaiva devotee whose claims could not be further from those made by Jagaddhara:

⁸⁹³ *Hymns for the Drowning*, 164.

⁸⁹⁴ Novetzke, *Religion and Public Memory*, 11.

I don't know anything like timebeats and metre
nor the arithmetic of strings and drums;

I don't know the count of iamb and dactyl.
My lord of the meeting rivers,
as nothing will hurt you
I'll sing as I love.⁸⁹⁵

In contrast, for many poets in Kashmir *bhakti* also went hand in hand with scholasticism and complexity. For Jagaddhara, Ratnākara, Abhinavagupta, Nāga, and others, theologically and poetically sophisticated expressions of devotion mirror the complexity of God and religious approaches to divinity. *Bhakti* does not necessarily need to be spontaneous or natural, in the sense of effortless and easily accessible. Neo-Romantic sensibilities that privilege poetry that seems to overflow the heart may be fruitful when considering some (but certainly not all) vernacular *bhakti* poetry, but they fall short when it comes to much Sanskrit poetry that is no less concerned with *bhakti*. Sanskrit *stotras* often demonstrate that *bhakti* can require great learning and sensitivity. *Bhakti* can be a relishing described in aesthetic terminology, as it is in Utpaladeva's poetry, or it can be seen as relying heavily on aesthetic sensibilities, as it does in Jagaddhara's *Stutikusumāñjali*. *Bhakti* can consist of sustained contemplation and appreciation; it can require time, thought, and concentration. Dwelling on complex descriptions of God's nature that require subtle appreciation may be an elite practice, but it is certainly a part of India's religious history, and one that has continued to the present day. In part, therefore, I have striven throughout this dissertation to rehabilitate alternative ways of conceiving of *bhakti* in South Asia to complement the great progress that has been made in the study of vernacular expressions of and reflections on

⁸⁹⁵ Trans. A.K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1973), 37.

bhakti. I have tried to give voice to Sanskrit *bhakti* in the second millennium, albeit in one particular region. At least in Kashmir, Sanskrit *bhakti* was not flat or static; it has continued to evolve, sometimes dramatically, even as it interacted in complex ways with the developments taking place in Kashmir and beyond.

Given the work of various scholars on the “poetics of *bhakti*,”⁸⁹⁶ it is tempting to talk about the poetics of Sanskrit devotion in Kashmir. In other words, one might reasonably seek to identify a specific theory about the relationship between poetry and Śaiva devotion running throughout the many literary hymns produced in Kashmir. In this dissertation, however, I have tried to show something a little different: the tradition of *stotras* in Kashmir is not unified by any single such theory, but rather by the range and complexity of its exploration of the *stotra* form, including the relationship between poetry, poetics, devotion, and prayer. While I have discussed many shared themes and strategies among these *stotras*, the history of these hymns in Kashmir is full of innovation and reflection. Poets in Kashmir repeatedly turned to the *stotra* form to engage boldly with the world of Śaiva devotion and worship, the broad tradition of Sanskrit literature, and in many cases the well-developed tradition of aesthetics in Kashmir. Studying the history of *stotras* in this region, one is struck both by the shared themes raised in part by the genre itself and by the innovative reinterpretations of these themes that were developed to meet the changing needs of new contexts. A particularly important example is the category of *bhaktirasa*, both in the technical sense as the aesthetic sentiment of devotion, and in the general sense of the “taste”

⁸⁹⁶ E.g., “the poetics of Tamil devotion” (Cutler, *Songs of Experience*), and “the poetics of [Gujarati] devotion” (Rachel Dwyer, *Poetics of Devotion: the Gujarati Lyrics of Dayārām* [Richmond: Curzon, 2001]).

or experience of devotion. Kashmirian poets do not offer one perspective on *bhaktirasa*, and yet many of them incorporate it into their poetry or imply its importance as a poetic category. Sometimes this consists in an engagement with Sanskrit poetics, while in the other cases it represents a deliberate appropriation of its metaphors, or in some cases simply a vague tone of devotional, poetic enjoyment. A “poetics of Sanskrit devotion” certainly has a history in Kashmir, but its developments and complexity resist simplistic formulations.

To conclude, let me briefly review some of the contributions I believe I have made through the present work. To begin with, it offers a broad introduction to and history of the *stotra* genre, one that draws together the most recent scholarship to assess the current state of the field and chart possible avenues for progress. This includes a general definition and description of the *stotra* form and its central features. This dissertation also offers, to the best of my knowledge, the first detailed history of *stotras* for any region in north India, highlighting major themes and developments over time. This history included discussion of *stotras* during the most well-studied period of Kashmir’s history—roughly from the ninth to the twelfth century—but also an analysis of *stotras* in the almost uncharted centuries that follow. Over the course of this study, I have focused on many important texts that have barely been addressed in contemporary scholarship. These include Kṣemarāja’s commentaries, important and influential texts in their own right, on two *stotras* and a third collection of hymns, as well as the first study in any European language of the *Stutikusumāñjali*, a major work of religious literature from Kashmir and one of the only witnesses to the trajectory of Sanskrit literary culture in fourteenth-century Kashmir. Taking a long view of Kashmir’s history, I have also been able to study specific ways that

different generations of Kashmirians, from the ninth century to the present, have been able to engage their own literary and religious history.

My analysis of *stotras* from Kashmir also contributes to the evolving body of scholarship on Śaivism by drawing attention to ways that Śaiva authors have integrated theology and poetics with Śaiva worship and devotion. Moreover, this investigation into the many configurations of Śaiva *bhakti* explored in Sanskrit *stotras* brings a number of new texts and challenging themes into the vibrant discourse around the history of *bhakti* within South Asian religions. Like scholars who have studied the history of *stotras* in south India, I hope to have provided new opportunities for comparative work within the study of South Asian religious literature.⁸⁹⁷ More broadly, *stotras* provide some of the best textual sources for examining the history and present vitality of prayer in South Asia, as well the complex relationship between religious and artistic expression, and hopefully this, too, allows for productive comparative work within the field of religious studies.

Inevitably, there are some relevant lacunae I have not been able to address in this dissertation. In particular, the study of *stotras* in Kashmir and elsewhere awaits more systematic collation and editing of manuscripts. This is true both for the literary hymns of known authorship I have focused on in the present study, and for countless anonymous *stotras* of unknown original and varying quality sitting in manuscript archives all over India

⁸⁹⁷ As Steven Hopkins wrote near the end of his study of Vedāntadeśika's hymns:

By focusing on the work of one such literary figure here, I hope to have contributed to an area of study that begs for comparative work within South Asia literatures. Comparing and contrasting Deśika's synthesis of poetry and philosophy with analogous syntheses in the work of a Rūpa or a Jīva Goswāmi in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, or in Śaiva poet-philosophers like Abhinavagupta or Appayya Dīkṣita, for instance, would shed light on common patterns that cross regional, genre, and linguistic traditions in Indian literatures (*Singing the Body of God*, 236).

or being actively used by contemporary Hindus. There remain other exciting avenues to pursue as well, such as how *stotras* are incorporated into various ritual manuals (*paddhatis*) and the history of the practice of collecting *stotras* into eclectic anthologies that eventually informed the organization of manuscript archives as well as the publication of collections such as the *Bṛhatstotraratnākara*. Moreover, the present study of the rich history of Sanskrit hymns in one region in north India draws attention to the lack of such histories for many other parts of India.

As a whole, I hope that this dissertation has shown some of the reasons why the *stotra* has remained such a compelling genre for religious practice and reflection, including its poetic features, its flexibility, and its potential to integrate complex, overlapping features of human existence, from theology and worship to art and aesthetics. For centuries, *stotras* have embodied and explored the often complex relationship between poetry and prayer, and all evidence suggests that they will be as central to South Asia's future as they have been throughout its past.

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