

Karl Baier / Philipp A. Maas / Karin Preisendanz (eds.)

# Yoga in Transformation

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Titelbild: Four-armed Patañjali holding a sword. Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, Pune.

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## Chapter 4: Yoga and Sex: What is the Purpose of *Vajrolīmudrā*?

### 1. Introduction

Predominant among the techniques which characterise the Haṭha method of yoga taught in Indic texts from at least the eleventh century CE onwards are its *mudrā*-s, physical methods for manipulating the vital energies. In the earliest systematic description of the *mudrā*-s of Haṭha Yoga, on which most subsequent teachings are based, the last and, by implication, the most important is *vajrolīmudrā*,<sup>1</sup> a method of drawing liquids up the urethra, which, through enabling *bindudhāraṇa*, the retention of semen, is said to lead directly to Rāja Yoga, the royal yoga.<sup>2</sup> In the course of fieldwork among male ascetic practitioners of Haṭha Yoga, I have met two exponents of *vajrolī*, both of whom are held in high esteem by their ascetic peers for their mastery of its practice.<sup>3</sup> Confirming the teachings of the texts, the two ascetics, who have been doggedly celibate all their

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\* Some of the research for this chapter was carried out as part of the Hatha Yoga Project ([hyp.soas.ac.uk](http://hyp.soas.ac.uk)). This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 647963). I thank Śrī Rām Bālak Dās Yogirāj, Rodo Pfister, Naren Singh, Ian Duncan, Richard Darmon, Sarkis Vermilyea and Timothy Bates for their help with this chapter, together with the organisers of the conference on "Yoga in Transformation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on a Global Phenomenon" held in Vienna on 19–21 September 2013, at which I presented an earlier draft. Particular thanks are due to Jason Birch, who provided me with scans and transcriptions of several of the manuscripts referred to herein and gave me useful comments and corrections on an earlier draft, Lubomír Ondračka whose insightful and tactfully critical remarks about the same earlier draft obliged me to rethink – and temper – many of my conclusions, and Philipp A. Maas whose comments and corrections during the editing process were invaluable. I thank also the chapter's two reviewers.

1 See n. 53 on p. 197f. for an analysis of the name *vajrolī*.

2 DYŚ 160. Cf. HR 2.104–105.

3 These are my guru, Śrī Rām Bālak Dās Ji Yogirāj (henceforth Rām Bālak Dās), a senior ascetic of the Terah Bhāi Tyāgī subdivision of the Rāmānandīs, with whom I have had extensive discussions about yoga practice since meeting him in 1992, and a Daśanāmī Nāgā Saṃnyāsī with whom I spent one afternoon in Gangotri in October 2006. I have also been in indirect communication with Naren Singh, a non-ascetic practitioner of *vajrolī* from Jammu.



lives – they were initiated as boys –, say that they practise *vajrolī* in order to prevent the loss of semen through involuntary ejaculation.<sup>4</sup>

By contrast, some editors and translators of Sanskrit manuals of Haṭha Yoga have chosen to omit the texts' treatments of *vajrolīmudrā*. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu does so because "it is an obscene practice indulged in by low class Tantrists".<sup>5</sup> Hans-Ulrich Rieker, in a translation of the *Haṭhapradīpikā* (HP) later approved by B. K. S. Iyengar,<sup>6</sup> concurs:

In leaving out these passages, we merely bypass the description of a few obscure and repugnant practices that are followed by only those yogis who lack the will power [*sic*] to reach their goal otherwise. In these 20 slokas, we encounter a yoga that has nothing but its name in common with the yoga of a Patanjali or a Ramakrishna.<sup>7</sup>

Modern scholarship on yoga is in widespread agreement that Haṭha Yoga owes its origins to sexual rituals, in particular those of certain Kaula Śaiva tantric traditions.<sup>8</sup> For example,<sup>9</sup> Joseph Alter, drawing on the work of David Gordon White, writes (2011: 130) that

there would seem to be no question but that hatha yoga developed between the ninth and fourteenth centuries as a form of practice directly linked to the subtle hydraulics and symbolic significance of ritualized sex.

This understanding of Haṭha Yoga's origins is necessarily explained with references to *vajrolīmudrā*, which is the only haṭhayogic practice that has any possible connection with sex. I myself have written that *vajrolīmudrā*'s "unorthodox 'left-hand' tantric origins are obvious" (2005a: 114). But, as shown by the statements of the two *vajrolī* practitioners I have met – neither of whom would ever consider himself a *tāntrika* – and the texts which teach it, *vajrolī*'s relationship with sex is

4 In recent fieldwork as part of the Hatha Yoga Project, Daniela Bevilacqua met three more ascetic practitioners of *vajrolīmudrā*, all of whom also say that its aim is *bindudhāraṇa*, the preservation of semen. Two popular modern Indian yoga gurus, Shri Yogeshvara and Swami Sivananda, say the same (Shri Yogeshwaranand Paramahansa 2011: 383, Sivananda 1998: 77).

5 Vasu 1914: 51.

6 Rieker's 1957 German translation was translated into English by Elsy Becherer in 1971. This English translation was republished in 1992 with a new foreword by B. K. S. Iyengar.

7 Rieker 1992: 127.

8 Claims by scholars that yoga's origins lie in sexual rituals allowed the prominent yoga journalist William Broad to write in the *New York Times* in 2012 that the many recent sexual scandals involving yoga gurus are not surprising since yoga "began as a sex cult" (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/28/health/nutrition/yoga-fans-sexual-flames-and-predictably-plenty-of-scandal.html>, accessed 18 October 2017).

9 See also Muñoz 2011: 125: "probably sexual practices had always been an integral element of haṭha yoga, on account of the tantric origins of this system", and Lorenzen 2011: 36: "The rejection of ritual sexual activity was never complete among the Nath yogis, however, as is evident from the vajrolī mudra, a technique of sexual control, described in the Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā."

not so straightforward. In this paper I shall draw on textual, ethnographic, experiential and anatomical data in order to determine the history, method and purpose of *vajrolīmudrā*. In doing so I shall show how the history of *vajrolī* epitomises the history of Haṭha Yoga as a whole.

## 2. The Mechanics of *Vajrolī*

I shall first explain the mechanics of the practice, my understanding of which has been helped considerably by conversations with Timothy Bates, a urologist. I shall restrict my comments to the practice of *vajrolī* by men. Several texts say that it is possible for women to practise it but they do not explain how and I have not heard of any modern female practitioners nor have I read of any in ethnographic reports.

Some scholars have suggested that it is not possible to suck liquids up through the penis,<sup>10</sup> but I have personally verified that it is. The method is fairly simple. A tube is inserted into the urethra as far as the bladder. Yogis have traditionally used a pipe made of copper, silver or gold, which is in an elongated s-shape.<sup>11</sup> The curves are necessary for the pipe to pass through the urethral sphincter, in the process of doing which the yogi rotates the tube through 180°. Inserting these rigid metal pipes into the urethra is at first quite painful, particularly during the preliminary stages in which pipes of progressively increasing diameters must be used. The two ascetic practitioners of *vajrolī* that I have met prefer to use these metal pipes, which they have specially made for them, but other modern practitioners of *vajrolī* of whom I am aware use latex catheters widely available from medical retailers.

In order to draw liquids up the urethra, after inserting the tube the yogi places the exposed end in a vessel of liquid, contracts his perineum and performs *madhyamā naulī*, in which the central abdominal muscles are contracted in isolation, making the lower abdomen stand forward in a column, thereby reducing the pressure in the lower intestine and bladder. The liquid in the vessel, propelled by the external atmospheric pressure, rises up into the bladder.<sup>12</sup>

The pipe or catheter is essential because the urethral sphincter must be open for liquids to pass through it. We have no voluntary muscular control over this

10 E.g., White 2003: 295–296, n. 88, misunderstanding Darmon 2002.

11 For illustrations see Ānandsvarūpji 1937: 45.

12 Filliozat (1953: 32–33) is incorrect in his assumption that the yogi must somehow draw in air through the urethra before performing *vajrolī*.

sphincter and performing *nauli* would pull it tightly closed were there no pipe or catheter to keep it open.<sup>13</sup>

Corroborating this anatomical inference of the necessity of a pipe for the performance of *vajrolīmudrā* is the absence of experiential or ethnographic reports of it being done without one, and of texts saying that it is possible to do so.<sup>14</sup> Two scholar–practitioners who have written on *vajrolīmudrā*, Richard Darmon and Mat Rozmarynowski, both address the matter. Darmon (2002: 229), who did his fieldwork among tantric *sādhaka*-s at Tarapith in West Bengal, never heard of *vajrolī* being done without a catheter.<sup>15</sup> Rozmarynowski writes: “Supposedly the urethra is enlarged by this process to the point where it is possible to do Vajrolī without any tube at all; this, however, I have not yet verified” (1979: 37). Rām Bālak Dās tells me that he cannot perform *vajrolī* without a pipe and nor could his guru.<sup>16</sup>

The reason for *vajrolī*’s notoriety is that it is said to confer the ability to absorb the commingled fluids produced in sexual intercourse. The first time I saw Rām Bālak Dās was at the Kumbh Mela festival in Ujjain in 1992. A fellow *sādhu* pointed at him as he walked through the camp, turned to a woman devotee and said: “Beware of that yogi: if he gets inside you he will suck out all your energy.”

In the light of the apparent impossibility of performing *vajrolīmudrā* without a pipe in the urethra, however, this widespread understanding of the purpose of *vajrolī* must be reconsidered.

### 3. *Vajrolī* in Texts

I shall now turn to textual descriptions of *vajrolī*. I have identified passages which teach it in sixteen texts, but shall restrict myself here to analysing those which are most important for understanding *vajrolī*’s history and purpose.<sup>17</sup>

13 Richard Darmon (personal communication, 26 March 2014) suggested that *vajrolī* might be possible without a pipe if the urethra is stretched enough, but he thought it unlikely that anyone would have done it and added that “it would not be advisable”.

14 A book on *vajrolī* published in Jodhpur in 1937 says that it is possible for advanced practitioners to practise *vajrolī* without a pipe and prescribes three methods of learning to do so, but they are only for the absorption of *vāyu*, air, not liquids (Ānandsvarūpī 1937: 21–26).

15 Cf. Roṣu 2002: 308.

16 Rām Bālak Dās told me that some Gorakhnāthīs in the Gorakhpur district may be able to perform *vajrolī* without a pipe, but he has not verified this himself. Swami Sivananda claims that *vajrolī* can be done without a pipe (1998: 77).

17 These sixteen passages (and passages from nine other texts containing information relevant to the study of *vajrolīmudrā*) are given in full in a document entitled “Textual Materials for the study of *Vajrolīmudrā*” available for download from [http://www.academia.edu/4515911/Textual\\_Materials\\_for\\_the\\_study\\_of\\_Vajrolimudra](http://www.academia.edu/4515911/Textual_Materials_for_the_study_of_Vajrolimudra) (accessed 18 October 2017). An ap-

### 3.1. *Vajrolī* and Haṭha Yoga

The earliest mention of the practice of *vajrolī*<sup>18</sup> (although it is not named) is in verse 32 of the circa twelfth-century CE second chapter of the *Amanaska*. It is an oblique dismissal of those who “take upwards” (*ūrdhvaṃ nayanti*) “semen that is falling into/from a young woman’s vagina” (*yuvatibhagapatadbindum*). The probable meaning is that these yogis are turning back their semen as it begins to fall during sexual intercourse, i. e., they are preventing ejaculation. As we have seen above, it is physiologically impossible to draw semen upwards once it has fallen into a vagina, but the verse may not refer to this: thanks to the ambiguity inherent in the case relationships of members of Sanskrit compounds, the yogis could be using pipes to draw semen upwards as it falls *from* young women’s vaginas rather than into them. This possibility is supported by an instruction to do exactly this in the *Vajroliyoga* (c 1800) (on which see below, p. 192).<sup>19</sup>

The next text to mention *vajrolī*, and the first to mention it by name, is the circa thirteenth-century *Dattātreyaयोगśāstra* (DYŚ), which is also the first text to teach a Haṭha Yoga named as such:<sup>20</sup>

pendix at the end of this paper lists the sixteen texts and gives transcriptions of the teachings on *vajrolī* from those of them which have not previously been published.

18 I omit here BĀU 6.4.10–11, which, in giving instructions for the resorption of sperm through the penis to avoid conception, is suggestive of *vajrolī*. The passage is cited in the prose section at the end of the *Vajroliyoga*, a transcription of a manuscript of which is given at the end of this chapter.

19 A parallel of sorts is found in the Buddhist *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇatantra* (6.150–151) in which the male partner in a sexual ritual is instructed either to lick from his consort’s vagina the combined products of intercourse or to inhale them into his nose through a pipe (*nāsayā nalikāyogāt pibet*).

20 DYŚ 150c–159b: *vajrolīm kathayīṣyāmi gopitaṃ sarvayogibhiḥ* || 150 || *atīvaitad rahasyaṃ hi na deyaṃ yasya kasya cit* | *svaprāṇais tu samo yaḥ syāt tasmai ca kathayed dhruvam* || 151 || *svecchayā varttamāno ‘pi yogoktaniyamair vinā* | *vajrolīm yo vijānāti sa yogī sid-dhibhājanaḥ* || 152 || *tatra vastudvayaṃ vaksye durlabhaṃ yena kena cit* | *labhyate yadi tasyaiva yogasiddhikaraṃ smṛtam* || 153 || *kṣīram āṅgirasam ceti dvayor ādyaṃ tu labhyate* | *dvitīyaṃ durlabhaṃ pumsām śtribhyaḥ sādhyam upāyataḥ* || 154 || *yogābhyāsaratām strīm ca pumān yatnena sādhayet* | *pumān strī vā yad anyonyaṃ strītvapumstvānapekṣayā* || 155 || *svaprayojanamātraikasāadhanāt siddhim āpnuyāt* | *calito yadi bindus tam ūrdhvam ākṛṣya rakṣayet* || 156 || *evaṃ ca rakṣito bindur mṛtyuṃ jayati tattvataḥ* | *maraṇaṃ bindupātēna jīvanaṃ bindudhāraṇāt* || 157 || *bindurakṣāprasādena sarve sidhyanti yoginaḥ* | *amarolis tad yathā syāt sahaḥ tato yathā* || 158 || *tadabhyāsakramaḥ śasyaḥ siddhānām sampradāyataḥ* | . The conventions and symbols used in the apparatuses of this and other passages in this chapter edited from manuscripts are the same as those in my edition of the *Khacarividyā* (on which see Mallinson 2007: 62–64). Here I shall only indicate important features that are relevant. Where there are multiple witnesses, the apparatus is positive unless there is just one variant. Separate lemmata within the same *pāda* are separated by the symbol •. Crux marks (†...†) enclose passages which do not make sense to me and for which I cannot provide a suitable conjectural emendation. Square brackets [...] enclose material not found in the witnesses but supplied by me. The symbol ° indicates that a lemma or variant is part of a

I shall teach *vajrolī*, which is kept hidden by all yogis, (151) for it is a great secret, not to be given to all and sundry. But one certainly should teach it to him who is as dear to one as one's own life. (152) The yogi who knows *vajrolī* is worthy of success, even if he behaves self-indulgently, disregarding the rules taught in yoga. (153) I shall teach you a pair of items (necessary) for it which are hard for anyone to obtain, [and] which are said to bring about success in yoga for a [yogi] if he does obtain them: (154) *kṣīra* and *āṅgirasa*. For men, the first of the two may be obtained [easily but] the second is hard to get; they must use some stratagem to procure it from women. (155–156) A man should strive to find a woman devoted to the practice of yoga. Either a man or a woman can obtain success if they have no regard for one another's gender and practise with only their own ends in mind. If the semen moves then [the yogi] should draw it upwards and preserve it. (157) Semen preserved in this way truly overcomes death. Death [arises] through the fall of semen, life from its preservation. (158–159b) All yogis achieve success

longer word or compound. The symbols [...] indicate that a manuscript has supplied the enclosed material in a marginal reading (often indicated in the manuscript by a *kākapāda*). Raised small asterisks (\*...\*) enclose text which is unclear in a manuscript. A single large asterisk (\*) denotes an illegible syllable in a manuscript. The abbreviation *cett.* (i. e., *cetera*) means the remaining witnesses, i. e., those which have not yet been mentioned. The abbreviation *unm.* stands for unmetrical. The following abbreviations are used: *cod.* for *codex*, i. e., the only available witness; *codd.* for *codices*, i. e., all the available witnesses; *a.c.* for *ante correctionem*, i. e., “before correction”; *p.c.* for *post correctionem*, i. e., “after correction”; *corr.* for *correxerit*, i. e., “[the editor] has corrected”; *em.* for *emendavit*, i. e., “[the editor] has emended”; *conj.* for *coniecit*, i. e., “[the editor] has conjectured”. “fol. 103r<sup>11</sup>” means line 11 on folio 103 recto. I often do not report minor corrections or standardisations such as changing final *anusvāra* (*m̐*) to *m*, the gemination or degemination of consonants (e. g., *tatva* > *tattva*, *ardha* > *ardha*), and the addition or removal of *avagraha*. Witnesses: B = *Dattātreya-yogaśāstra* ed. Brahmamitra Avasthī, Svāmī Keśavananda Yoga Saṁsthāna 1982 • J<sub>1</sub> = Mān Siṃh Pustak Prakāś 1936 • W<sub>1</sub> = Wai Prajñā Pāṭhaśālā 6–4/399 • V = Baroda Oriental Institute 4107 • M = Mysore Government Oriental Manuscripts Library 4369 • W<sub>2</sub> = Wai Prajñā Pāṭhaśālā 6163 • T = Thanjavur Palace Library B6390 • U = *Yogatattvopaniṣad*, ed. A. M. Śāstrī in *The Yoga Upaniṣads*, Madras, Adyar Library, 1920 • H = *Haṭhpradīpikā*. Readings: 150c vajrolim̐ | vajroli J<sub>1</sub> 150d gopitaṃ | gopitaṃ J<sub>1</sub>, yoṣitaṃ V 151a ativaitad | BW<sub>2</sub> V; ativetad J<sub>1</sub>, ativa tad W<sub>1</sub> 151c yaḥ syāt | W<sub>1</sub>W<sub>2</sub>; yo syāt B, yasyā J<sub>1</sub>, ya syāt V 151d tasmai ca | tasmai va W<sub>2</sub>, tasyaiva V • kathayed | B; kathaye J<sub>1</sub>W<sub>1</sub>, kathayet | W<sub>2</sub> V 152a sve° | sva° J<sub>1</sub> 152b° okta° | °oktair H 152c vajrolim̐ | vajroli J<sub>1</sub>, vajroli V • yo vijānāti | abhyased yas tu U 152d° bhājanaḥ | °bhājanam UH 153b yena kena cit | yasya kasya cit H 153d yogasiddhikaram̐ smṛtam̐ | yogasiddhiḥ kare sthitā U 154a āṅgi° | āṅgi° V 154c dvetiyaṃ durlabham̐ | BW<sub>1</sub>; dvayaṃ varṇanam̐ J<sub>1</sub>, dvetiyaṃ varṇanam̐ W<sub>2</sub>, dvetiyaṃ varṇanam̐ V 154d strībhyāḥ | strībhīḥ W<sub>1</sub> 155a° ratām̐ strīm̐ | conj.; °ratā strī codd. 155b pumān | J<sub>1</sub>W<sub>1</sub>V; puṃsā B, pumān W<sub>2</sub> 155c anyonyam̐ | anyoyam̐ J<sub>1</sub> 155d strītvapuṃs° | W<sub>1</sub>; strīpuṃs° B (unm.), strītvam̐ puṃs° J<sub>1</sub>, strītvapuṃs° W<sub>2</sub>, strītvam̐ puṃs° V 156c calito yadi bindus tam | BW<sub>1</sub>; calito yadi padaṃs tadam̐ tam J<sub>1</sub> (unm.), calito yadi vipadas tam W<sub>2</sub> (unm.), calitaṃ tu svakaṃ bindum V, calitaṃ ca nijaṃ bindum H 157a ca rakṣito | ca rakṣite W<sub>2</sub>, saṃrakṣayad H • bindur | BW<sub>1</sub>V; vimdu J<sub>1</sub>, bindu W<sub>2</sub>, bindum H 157b tattvataḥ | yogavit H 157d jivanam̐ | jivitaṃ W<sub>1</sub> • °dhāraṇāt | °rakṣaṇāt J<sub>1</sub> 158b sarve sidhyanti | W<sub>1</sub>W<sub>2</sub>; sarvaṃ sidhyati B, sarva sidhyam̐ti J<sub>1</sub>, sarvaṃ sidhyam̐ti V 158c tad yathā syāt | BW<sub>2</sub>V; tathā syāt yāt J<sub>1</sub>, tad yathā sā W<sub>1</sub> 159a° kramah | BW<sub>1</sub>; °kramo J<sub>1</sub>W<sub>2</sub>, °krame V • śasyaḥ | śasya W<sub>2</sub><sup>p.c.</sup> V, syaśasyaḥ W<sub>2</sub><sup>a.c.</sup> (unm.) 159b siddhānam̐ | siddhinam̐ J<sub>1</sub>

through the preservation of semen. The method of practice by which *amaroli* and *sahajoli* arise is taught in the tradition of the Adepts.<sup>21</sup>

In the *Dattātreyaśāstra vajrolī* is one of nine *mudrā*-s, physical techniques which are the defining characteristics of early Haṭha Yoga, and which, in their earliest textual teachings, are for the control of the breath and semen, and hence the mind. *Vajrolīmudrā*'s purpose is the control of *bindu*, semen. Two substances are needed for its practice, *kṣīra* and *āṅgīrasa*. The usual meaning of *kṣīra* is milk, but because the text says that it is hard for any person to obtain both substances (v. 153) it seems unlikely that this is its meaning here. In the light of Bengali tantric usage,<sup>22</sup> in which the names of dairy products are often used as an allusion to semen, the referent of *kṣīra* in this passage may also be semen.<sup>23</sup> The meaning of *āṅgīrasa* is also obscure. Like *kṣīra*, it is not defined but must be procured from

21 *Amaroli* and *sahajoli* are taught as variants of *vajrolī* in several Haṭha texts. They are first explained in detail in the *Śivasamhitā* and *Haṭhapradīpikā* (but *vajrolī*, *amaroli* and *sahajoli* are perhaps obliquely referred to in *Amanaska* 2.32, which dates to the twelfth century. The two texts give different definitions, and it is one or other of these definitions which is usually adopted in subsequent works. In the *Śivasamhitā* (4.96; cf. *Yogamārgaparakāśikā* 147–154, YBhD 7.296ab, *Jogpradīpakā* 560) *amaroli* is another method of *bindudhāraṇa*, semen retention, for which the yogi trains by repeatedly checking the flow of urine when he urinates. The same contraction is then used to resorb semen should it start to flow. In the *Haṭhapradīpikā* (3.92–94; cf. *Haṭhatattvakaumudī* 16.17) *amaroli* is primarily the practice of drinking urine through the nose, but it is also said to be the massaging of the body with a mixture of ash and *cāndri*. The latter is likely to be a bodily fluid but its identity is unclear. *Jogpradīpakā* 677–683 teaches the *varaṇak mudrā* which is also called *amaroli* and involves taking various herbal preparations to master *vajrolī*. In a verse near the end of the *Vajroliyoga amaroli* is said to be the absorption through a pipe of the mixed products of sexual intercourse. *Sahajoli* in the *Śivasamhitā* (4.97; cf. YBhD 7.296cd, *Yogamārgaparakāśikā* 145–146, *Vajroliyoga* [verse section near end]) is the contraction of the perineal region (using *yonimudrā*) in order to resorb semen. In the *Haṭhapradīpikā* (3.90a–91b = HR 2.113–115, cf. *Haṭhatattvakaumudī* 16.15–16) *sahajoli* is the smearing of the body with ash after intercourse using *vajrolī*.

22 I thank Lubomír Ondračka for this information (personal communication, 11 July 2014).

23 A commonplace of modern teachings on *vajrolī* is that in order to master it the yogi should practise by drawing up liquids of increasing density (e.g., water, milk, oil, honey, ghee and mercury). The earliest reference I have found to this is Ānandsvarūpī 1937: 16–17 (later examples may be found at Rozmarynowski 1979: 39 and Svoboda 1986: 280). The only premodern text to mention the absorption of liquids other than water or milk is the *Brhat-khecarīprakāśa* (fol. 103v<sup>6</sup>), which prescribes milk then mercury. To draw mercury into the bladder as prescribed by Svoboda (1986: 280–281) would presumably be very dangerous because of mercury's toxicity and I prefer the inference of Rozmarynowski (1979: 39), namely that mercury is to be drawn only a short distance up the pipe in order to confirm the power of the vacuum created by the yogi. In textual sources for *vajrolī*'s preparatory practices from before the eighteenth century, no mention is made of the absorption of even water, although some texts do say that air is to be blown through the pipe in the urethra in order to purify it (HP 3.85, HR 2.85). The *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati*, a late Haṭha text, instructs the yogi hoping to master *vajrolī* to absorb air, then water, and then water infused with various herbal preparations (fol. 26v, ll. 9–13); milk is to be drunk (otherwise the body will waste away, fol. 27r, ll. 10–11).

a woman “by means of some stratagem” (*upāyataḥ*, v. 154). The only definition of *āṅgirasa* that I have found is in a commentary on the *Khecarīvidyā* called the *Brhatkhecarīprakāśa*, which postdates the *Dattātreya yogaśāstra* by some 500 years but cites it frequently. *Āṅgirasa* is glossed by Ballāla, the commentator, with *rajas*, female generative fluid.<sup>24</sup> In the *Dattātreya yogaśāstra* women are said to be able to achieve *siddhi*, success, by means of *vajrolī*. There are no instructions for the yogi or yogini to have sex but it is implied (vv. 155–156). Nor are there instructions for either the yogi or yogini to draw up a mixture of *bindu* and *rajas*; the implication is rather that they are to conserve their own *bindu* or *rajas* and optionally draw up the other.

The next text that I shall mention is perhaps the most important for understanding the history – if not the true purpose – of *vajrolī*. It is the *Śivasamhitā* (ŚS), a work on yoga composed in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries CE which is derivative of the Vaiṣṇava *Dattātreya yogaśāstra* but whose Haṭha Yoga is taught within a framework of Śrīvidyā Kaula Śaivism, a relatively tame form of Kaulism, some of whose practices are developments of the Love Magic of the earlier Nityā Tantras (Golovkova 2010). Unlike the *Dattātreya yogaśāstra*, the *Śivasamhitā* teaches that the purpose of the *mudrā*-s of Haṭha Yoga is the raising of Kuṇḍalinī (which is not mentioned in the *Dattātreya yogaśāstra*). In its teachings on *vajrolī* (4.78–104) the *Śivasamhitā* praises the technique’s usefulness in bringing about *bindusiddhi*, mastery of semen, but its description of the practice starts with instructions for the yogi to draw up a woman’s *rajas* from her vagina through his penis<sup>25</sup> (which, as we have seen, is physiologically impossible).<sup>26</sup> Should his semen fall during the process, he must draw that upwards too, and the mixing of the two substances within the yogi’s body is the mixing of Śiva and Śakti. Unlike other early texts which teach *vajrolī*, the *Śivasamhitā* does not say that it can be practised by women. In keeping with its Love Magic heritage, however, the *Śivasamhitā* does say that the *bindu* of one who has mastered *vajrolī* will not fall even if he enjoys himself with a hundred women.

24 Fol. 103v, l. 5. On the possible identities of *rajas*, which in the texts of Haṭha Yoga seems to mean “women’s generative fluid” but in other contexts, in particular Bengali tantric practice, means “menstrual blood”, see Das 2003 (cf. Doniger 1980: 33–39).

25 ŚS 4.81: *liṅganālena*. One could take *liṅganālena* to mean “through a pipe in the penis” but that would be a rather forced interpretation, particularly as there is no mention anywhere in the text of inserting a *nāla* into the *liṅga* (and *liṅganāla* means urethra in the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati* [fol. 26r, ll. 13–14]).

26 There are other examples of impossible practices being taught in yogic texts. Perhaps the most unlikely is the *mūla śiśna śodhana* taught at *Jogpradīpikā* 838, in which water is to be drawn in through the anus and expelled through the urethra. *Gheraṇḍasamhitā* 1.22 teaches a practice in which the intestines are to be pulled out through the anus, washed and reinserted into the body. The durations of breath-retention taught in many texts are far beyond any that have ever been verified in clinical trials.

The next passage is from the fifteenth-century *Haṭhāpradīpikā* (3.82–99), which is for the most part a compilation of extracts from earlier texts, including the three already cited. The *Haṭhāpradīpikā*'s teachings on *vajrolī* borrow from the *Dattātreyayogasāstra*<sup>27</sup> and repeat that text's extensive praise of the preservation of semen. At 3.86, the yogi is told to draw up *nārībhage patadbindum*. Unlike in the *Amanaska* passage cited earlier, here *-bhage* is the final member of a compound and so has a case ending, which is locative: the semen to be drawn up is falling into the vagina.<sup>28</sup> Women are yoginis, says HP 3.95, if they use *vajrolī* to preserve their *rajas*, and *vajrolī* and sex are explicitly linked in the description of *vajrolī*'s *sahajolī* variant, which is to be practised after sexual intercourse (HP 3.90).

Later texts, though more extensive in their treatment of the practical details of *vajrolī*, add little to our understanding of its purpose, with most teaching both the preservation of semen and, to a lesser extent, the absorption of mixed semen and generative fluid. Some give details about, for example, the shape and size of the pipe (e.g., *Haṭharatnāvalī* [HR] 2.91), but often it appears that the authors of the texts are not fully acquainted with the practice.<sup>29</sup> A curious omission from *all* textual teachings on the mechanics of *vajrolī* is any instruction to perform *nauli*, without which it is impossible to draw liquids into the body.<sup>30</sup> The terse teachings of earlier texts like the *Dattātreyayogasāstra* clearly need to be elucidated by an expert guru, but some later works such as the *Bṛhatkhecariṇīprakāśa* and the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati* go into great detail about all the stages of the practice. Nevertheless, they teach that the drawing up of liquids through the penis is accomplished by clenching the perineal region or manipulating the *apāna*

27 HP 3.82a–83b = DYŚ 152a–153b (3.82b = ŚŚ 4.79ab); HP 3.86c–87d = DYŚ 156c–157d (3.87cd = ŚŚ 4.88ab).

28 In the passage as found in the Kaivalyadhama edition, one verse (3.96), which is not found in the majority of witnesses of the text and is said in Brahmānanda's nineteenth-century commentary (the *Haṭhāpradīpikājyotsnā*) to be an interpolation, contains instructions for the yogi to draw up through his penis a woman's *rajas* or generative fluid.

29 Thus Brahmānanda says (*Haṭhāpradīpikājyotsnā ad 3.84*) that the milk mentioned in the *Haṭhāpradīpikā*'s description of *vajrolī* is for drinking, since if it were to be drawn up by the penis it would curdle and not come out again: *kṣīram iti | ekaṃ vastu kṣīram dugdham pānārtham, mehanānantaram indriyanairbalyāt tadbalartham kṣīrapānam yuktam | ke cit tu abhyāsakāle ākarṣaṇārtham ity āhuḥ | tad ayuktam | tasyāntargatasya ghanībhāve nīrgamanāsambhavāt |*. "kṣīra: one substance is kṣīra, which is milk, for drinking. After urinating, the senses are weakened, so one should drink [milk] to strengthen them. Some, however, say that the [milk] is for drawing up when practising [*vajrolī*]. That is wrong, because once it is in [the body] it curdles and cannot come out." This is not the case: Rām Bālak Dās regularly practises *vajrolī* with milk and it does not curdle while in his bladder.

30 Thus one can infer from mentions of *vajrolī* which predate the first textual mention of *nauli* (HP 2.34–35) that *nauli* was already being practised by yogis.



breath; that they make no mention of *nauli* suggests that their authors did not fully understand how *vajrolī* is to be carried out.

From these later texts I shall mention only those passages which add information relevant to this paper and not found elsewhere. The first is in the seventeenth-century *Haṭharatnāvalī* of Śrīnivāsa (2.80–117). By the time of the composition of the *Haṭharatnāvalī*, the awakening of the goddess Kuṇḍalinī, absent in early Haṭha works such as the *Amṛtasiddhi* (AS) and *Dattātreyayogaśāstra*, had become a key aim of the practices of Haṭha Yoga, and the *Haṭharatnāvalī* is the first text to state explicitly that *vajrolīmudrā* awakens her (2.82). Despite this apparent turn towards Kaula Śaivism (in whose texts yogic visualisations of Kuṇḍalinī first reached the form found in later haṭhayogic works), *vajrolī* is not taught as a method of absorbing the mixed products of sex (at least not by a man). The *Haṭharatnāvalī* gives instructions for a man to have sexual intercourse with a woman, but tells him to draw up only *bindu*, not *rajas* (2.97). This is followed by instructions for a woman to have sex with a man and to draw up both *bindu* and *rajas* (2.100).

In the instructions for male practitioners Śrīnivāsa includes HP 3.86, but there is an important variant in the *Haṭharatnāvalī*'s version of the verse (2.96). Instead of the *Haṭhapradīpikā*'s locative *-bhage*, “into the vagina”, there is the ablative *-bhagāt* (which is not to be found in any of the manuscripts collated for the Lonavla edition of the *Haṭhapradīpikā*): the semen to be drawn up is falling “from the vagina”. Here, as noted earlier, is the only possible way that *vajrolīmudrā* might be performed as part of sexual intercourse (by a man, at least): the fluid or fluids to be drawn up are collected (or perhaps left in the vagina) and the yogi uses *vajrolī* to absorb them through a pipe. A preference for the *Haṭharatnāvalī*'s reading over that of the *Haṭhapradīpikā* is supported by the fact that elsewhere Śrīnivāsa provides accurate practical details about yogic techniques not found in other texts; moreover he sometimes explicitly contradicts the *Haṭhapradīpikā*, voicing clear disapproval of the lack of practical knowledge of Svātmārāma, its author.<sup>31</sup>

A verse towards the end of the *Vajroliyoga* (c 1800) supports the notion that, whatever its purpose, *vajrolī* must be performed with a pipe. It identifies *amarolī*, a variant of *vajrolī*, as the combination of the sun and the moon (i. e., *bindu* and *rajas*) that occurs should the yogi happen to let his *bindu* fall, and that it should be sucked up “with a pipe” (*nālena*).<sup>32</sup>

31 E. g., HR 2.86–87 (in the section on *vajrolī*): *haṭhapradīpikākāramataṃ haṭhayogābhyāse jñānavilasitam ity upekṣaṇīyam*. “The teachings of the author of the *Haṭhapradīpikā* as regards the practice of Haṭha Yoga display his ignorance and should be disregarded.” Cf. HR 1.27.

32 It is possible, as Lubomír Ondračka has pointed out to me (personal communication, 11 July

For the purposes of this chapter, the key points to be drawn from texts which include teachings on *vajrolīmudrā* are as follows. Sexual intercourse is always mentioned in textual teachings on *vajrolī*, whose main purpose is said to be *bindudhāraṇa*, the preservation of semen, or, when women are said to be able to perform it, *rajo dhāraṇa*, the preservation of their generative fluid. Preservation of these vital principles defeats death. Some texts which postdate *vajrolī*'s earliest descriptions teach the absorption during sexual intercourse of a mixture of semen and menstrual fluid, but such instructions are fewer and given less prominence than the teachings on *bindudhāraṇa*. Some texts teach that the male yogi should suck up a woman's *rajas*, but after, not during, sexual intercourse, and by means of a pipe. No text giving practical details on how to perform the technique says that it can be done without a pipe.

### 3.2. *Vajrolī* and Rāja Yoga

Almost all the texts that teach *vajrolī* open their teachings with a declaration that it enables the yogi to succeed in yoga while flouting the *niyama*-s or regulations elsewhere said to be essential prerequisites for its practice. The regulation implied is that of *brahmacarya*, sexual continence.<sup>33</sup> One of the main aims of the *mudrā*-s that were the defining feature of Haṭha Yoga as taught in its early texts is *bindudhāraṇa*, the retention of semen. This would of course preclude ejaculatory sexual intercourse and many texts of Haṭha Yoga go as far as telling the aspiring male yogi to avoid the company of women altogether.<sup>34</sup>

But mastery of *vajrolīmudrā* will enable the yogi to indulge in ejaculatory sex, to have his cake and eat it, as it were, by, if necessary, resorbing his *bindu*. The method usually understood, however, namely the resorption of ejaculated semen into the penis during sexual intercourse, is, as I have shown above, anatomically impossible. It would be possible – albeit hard to imagine – for a yogi to make partial amends using a pipe, but I believe that *vajrolī*'s true purpose is otherwise and is in accordance with a hypothesis put forward by the andrologue, or spe-

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2014), that in this case *nālena* means “through the urethra” (cf. n. 23), but in all other instances in yoga texts of *nāla* on its own, it always means “pipe” (“urethra” is *liṅganāla*).

33 Note that in the five-*yama*, five-*niyama* system of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, *brahmacarya* is a *yama*, while in the ten-*yama*, ten-*niyama* system of the *Śārādātīlaka* and several other texts (see Mallinson & Singleton 2017: 51), it is a *niyama*, so these passages on *vajrolī* in Haṭha Yoga texts appear to be referring to the latter systems, not that of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. I am grateful to Philipp A. Maas for pointing this out to me.

34 E.g., AS 19.7; DYŚ 70, 86; *Amaraughaprabodha* 44; HP 1.61–62; ŚŚ 3.37; *Gheraṇḍasaṃhitā* 5.26. Cf. *Gorakhbāṇī pad* 68. The *pad*-s and *sakhī*-s found in the latter work are reproduced at Callewaert & Op de Beeck 1991: 489–510, whose verse numbering I have used.

cialist in male sexual health, Richard Darmon, in his article on *vajrolī*.<sup>35</sup> He suggests that passing a pipe through the urethra sensitises an erogenous region near the mouth of the bladder called the verumontanum, which is key to ejaculation. Through repeated practice the yogi develops a memory for the sensation, his verumontanum becomes desensitised and he gains control of the ejaculatory impulse.<sup>36</sup>

This concurs with what the two *vajrolī* practitioners I have met in India say about its purpose. Rām Bālak Dās, after describing the therapeutic benefits of rinsing out the bladder, says that *vajrolī* gives him control of his *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra*, which prevents him from ever shedding his semen. Thanks to his mastery of *vajrolī*, he says, he has never even had *svapn doṣ* (a “wet dream”). Similarly, a yogi I met in 2006 at Gangotri told me that mastery of *vajrolī* is essential when raising Kuṇḍalinī otherwise she will bring about involuntary ejaculation as she passes through the *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra*.<sup>37</sup>

As we have seen, rather than the ability to resorb semen, it is this ability to prevent it from falling in the first place with which *vajrolī* is most commonly associated in our textual sources. I know of only one mention of *vajrolī* in texts other than manuals of yoga and their commentaries. The passage, in Vidyāraṇya’s *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* (9.90), says that desires cannot overcome one who is unattached, just as, thanks to *vajrolī*, Kṛṣṇa, the lover of 16,000 Gopīs, does not lose his seed.<sup>38</sup> Similar statements are found in Haṭha Yoga texts: ŚŚ 4.103 says that he who knows *vajrolī* will not shed his semen even after enjoying one hundred

35 Darmon 2002: 232 (cf. Roṣu 2002: 309). Like Darmon, Andre van Lysebeth, in his treatment of *vajrolī* (1995: 326), says that its purpose is control of the ejaculatory impulse and that this is brought about “by desensitizing the nerves of the ejaculatory tract” through repeated insertion of a pipe or catheter.

36 When I asked Darmon if men who use latex urinary catheters for medical reasons experienced a desensitisation of the verumontanum he replied that medical research suggests that they do (personal communication, 26 March 2014) and added that in a similar fashion regular practice of *vajrolī* can eventually make the yogi unable to ejaculate. He also concurred with my suggestion that the rigid metal pipes used by ascetic yogis would be more efficacious than latex catheters in desensitising the verumontanum. The desensitisation of the verumontanum cannot be *vajrolī*’s sole purpose, however. Otherwise there would be no point in learning to draw liquids up the urethra. In addition to being a method of ensuring the preservation of semen, *vajrolī* is also taught as a method of cleansing the bladder (e.g., HR 1.62; the same has been said to me by Rām Bālak Dās) and perhaps this was the original purpose of drawing liquids up the urethra (cf. the haṭhayogic auto-enema, *basti* [e.g., HP 2.27–29] whose method is very similar to that of *vajrolī*).

37 See also Das 1992: 391, n. 23 on a *vajrolī*-type practice used by Bengali Bauls as part of *coitus reservatus*.

38 Cf. *Bindusiddhānta* verse 11: *solah sahaṃs gopī syūṃ gop, cālī jatī aisī bidhi jog*. I am grateful to Monika Horstmann for sending me her scan, transcription and translation of the *Bindusiddhānta* of Prithināth (ms. 3190 of the Sri Sanjay Sarma Samgrahalay evam Sodh Samsthan, Jaipur, fol. 631 [r and v], dated VS 1671/1615 CE).

women, and the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati* says that once the practice of *vajrolī* is well established, the yogi can have sex with sixteen women a day (fol. 28r, ll. 6–9), adding that his continence, his *brahmacarya*, is firm and that he is dispassionate towards women.<sup>39</sup>

It is this ability that accounts for the connection between *vajrolī* and *rājayoga*, which, in the light of the modern understanding of *rājayoga* as meditation,<sup>40</sup> might be surprising to some. In the seventeenth-century Braj Bhasha *Sarvāṅgayogapradīpikā* of the Dādūpanthī Sundardās, *rājayoga* is the ability to sport like Śiva with Pārvatī and not be overcome by Kāma (“desire”, i. e., the god of love). *Vajrolī* is not named in the passage but the yogi is to raise his semen having pierced the *nāḍī cakra* and the final verse says: “Rare are those who know the secrets of *rājayoga*; he who does not should shun the company of women” (2.24). In another Braj Bhasha text, the *Jogpradīpakā*, which was written in 1737, *vajrolīmudrā*, taught under the name of *vīrya mudrā*, i. e., “the semen *mudrā*”, is said to bring about *rājayoga*, which is the ability to enjoy oneself with women without losing one’s seed. A Braj Bhasha work which probably dates to a similar period, the *Jog Mañjarī*, equates *vajrolī* with *rāja joga* and says that the yogi who does not know it must not make love, adding that Śiva used it when sporting with Umā (71–72). Nor is this a late or localised development. The *Dattātreyayogaśāstra* follows its teachings on *vajrolī* by saying that the *mudrā*-s which have been taught are the only means of bringing about *rājayoga* (160), and the *Haṭharatnāvalī* (2.104) says that one becomes a *rājayogī* through control of semen.<sup>41</sup> The implication of the name *rājayoga* here is that to achieve success in yoga one need not renounce the world and become an ascetic; on the contrary, one can live like a king, indulging oneself in sensory pleasures, while also being a master yogi.<sup>42</sup> In a similar fashion, in tantric traditions kings may be given special

39 The *Haṭhāpradīpikā* makes a similar claim about *khecarīmudrā*. By sealing it in his head with his tongue, the yogi’s *bindu* will not fall even if he is embraced by an amorous woman (3.41). This verse is also found in the *Dhyānabindūpaniṣad* (83c–84b), commenting on which Upaṇiṣadbrahmayogin says that *khecarīmudrā* bestows *vajrolīsiddhi*. As taught in the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* (*mūlasūtra* 3.11), the ability to have sexual intercourse with large numbers of women results from a visualisation of Prajāpati.

40 On the now commonplace identification of *rājayoga* with the yoga of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, see De Michelis 2004: 178–180.

41 See also the definition of *rājayoga* as the yoga of the Kaulas in the nineteenth-century Gujarati *Āgamaparakāśa* and the *Yogaśikhopaniṣad*’s definition of *rājayoga* as the union of *rajas* and *retas*, both noted by Bühnemann (2007: 15–16). Cf. Haṃsamīttu’s designation of *rājayoga* as a *śākta* form of the *rāsālilā* which involves sexual rites (Vasudeva 2011: 132).

42 The *Rājayogabhāṣya* says that *rājayoga* is yoga fit for a king (p. 1: *rājayogo rājña upayukto yogas tathocyate*) and Divākara, commenting on the *Bodhasāra*, says that *rājayoga* is so called because kings can accomplish it even while remaining in their position (section 14, verse 1: *rājayogo rājñam nrpāñam svasthāne sthitvāpi sādhatayitum śakyatvāt*); see also Birch 2013: 70, n. 269.

initiations that do not require them to carry out the time-consuming rituals and restrictive observances of other initiates, while still receiving the same rewards.<sup>43</sup>

Here lies the key to understanding *vajrolīmudrā*, and to understanding the history of Haṭha Yoga as a whole. I have argued elsewhere that the physical practices of Haṭha Yoga developed within ascetic milieux, with records of some perhaps going back as far as the time of the Buddha.<sup>44</sup> The composition of the texts that make up the early Haṭha corpus during the course of the eleventh to fifteenth centuries CE brought these ascetic techniques, which had never previously been codified, to a householder audience.

There are no references to *vajrolī* in texts prior to the second millennium CE, but there are descriptions of a technique that appears to be part of the same ascetic and yogic paradigm. This is the *asidhārāvratā* or, as translated by Shaman Hatley (2016) in an article in which he presents the *Brahmayāmala*'s teachings on the subject, "the razor's edge observance". This practice, which involves a man either lying next to or having intercourse with a woman but not ejaculating, is attested from the early part of the first millennium, before the likely date of composition of the earliest tantric texts, and its practitioners probably included brahmin ascetics of the Śaiva Atimārga tradition.<sup>45</sup> The *asidhārāvratā* is subsequently taught in early tantric works, including the oldest known tantra, the *Niśvāsataṭṭvasaṃhitā*, and is the first tantric ritual to involve sexual contact.<sup>46</sup> *Vajrolī* and the *asidhārāvratā* are never taught together (the latter is more or less obsolete by the time of the former's first mention in texts), but both involve sexual continence, and *vajrolī* would nicely complement the *asidhārāvratā* as a method of mastering it.<sup>47</sup>

43 Sanderson forthc.

44 Mallinson 2015.

45 Hatley 2016: 12–14. In the *Haṭhāpradīpikā* the *amarolī* variant of *vajrolī* is said to be from the teachings of the Kāpālikas, an Atimārga ascetic tradition. The verse, which is found in most *Haṭhāpradīpikā* manuscripts but, perhaps because of the reference to Kāpālikas, is not included in the Lonavla edition (in between whose verses 3.92 and 3.93 it falls) reads: "Leaving out the first and last parts of the flow of urine (because of an excess of *pitta* and a lack of essence respectively), the cool middle flow is to be used. In the teachings of [the siddha] Khaṇḍakāpālika, this is *amarolī*" (*pittolbaṇatvāt prathamāmbudhārām viḥāya niḥsārayāntyadhārām | niṣevyate śītalamadhyadhārā kāpālike khaṇḍamate 'marolī ||* ).

46 Hatley 2016: 4.

47 There are also parallels in the histories of *vajrolī* and the *asidhārāvratā*. Over the course of the first millennium the *asidhārāvratā* transformed from an Atimārga ascetic observance for the cultivation of sensory restraint into a Mantramārga method of attaining magical powers (Hatley 2016: 12). Likewise *vajrolī*, which in its earliest textual descriptions is an ascetic technique for preventing the loss of semen, is transformed (in texts if not in reality) into a means of both absorbing the combined products of sexual intercourse, the *siddhi*-bestowing *guhāmrta* or secret nectar of earlier tantric rites, and enabling the yogi to enjoy as much sex as he wants.

### 3.3. *Vajrolī* and Tantra

Like almost all of the central practices of Haṭha Yoga, *vajrolī* is not taught in tantric texts that predate the composition of the Haṭha corpus. Nor is it found in the early works of the Haṭha corpus associated with the tantric Siddha traditions, namely the *Amṛtasiddhi*, *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*, *Goraḥṣaśataka* and *Jñāneśvarī*,<sup>48</sup> works, which do not call their yoga *haṭha*.<sup>49</sup> The Haṭha corpus is evidence of not only the popularisation of ancient and difficult ascetic practices (their difficulty accounting for the name *haṭha*) but also their appropriation by tantric traditions. It is this process of appropriation that brought about the superimposition of Kuṇḍalinī Yoga onto the ancient Haṭha techniques, together with the re-fashioning of *vajrolī*. It is seen most clearly in the *Śivasamhitā*, the first text to teach that the haṭhayogic *mudrā*-s are for the raising of Kuṇḍalinī rather than the control of breath and *bindu*, and the first text to teach that *vajrolī* is for the absorption of the combined products of sexual intercourse.

One reason for the widespread assumption of continuity between Tantra and Haṭha Yoga is their shared terminology.<sup>50</sup> What we in fact see in the Haṭha corpus is a reworking of tantric terminology. Words such as *mudrā*, *vedha*, *bindu* and *āsana* have meanings in the Haṭha corpus quite different from those which they have in earlier tantric works. It is a fruitless task to search tantric texts for Haṭha techniques under the names they are given in Haṭha texts. Tantric *mudrā*-s, for example, are physical attitudes, most commonly hand gestures, which are used for propitiating deities, while the *mudrā*-s taught in early Haṭha texts are methods of controlling the breath or semen. Similarly, semen is called *bindu* in Haṭha texts but in those of tantric Śaivism *bindu* is the first *tattva* (element) to evolve from Śiva, and/or a point on which to focus meditation.<sup>51</sup>

*Vajrolī*'s use in Haṭha texts may also be a new application of an older tantric term. The etymology and meaning of the word *vajrolī* are unclear but a derivation from the compounds *vajrāvalī* (*vajra* + *āvalī*) or *vajrauvallī* (*vajra* + *ovallī*<sup>52</sup>), both of which mean "Vajra lineage", seems most likely.<sup>53</sup> I have found no in-

48 Kiehnle 2000: 270, n. 31: "Exercises like *vajrolī* that allow for keeping [*bindu* in the head], or taking it back, during sexual intercourse do not occur in the material handed down within the Jñānadeva tradition."

49 The *Amaraughaprabodha*, perhaps the first text of the Gorakṣa tradition to teach a Haṭha Yoga named as such, dismisses the physical practice of *vajrolī* (vv. 8–9).

50 Another reason for the assumption of continuity and a progression from Tantra to Haṭha Yoga is the chronology of their textual corpora. Some of the practices that the Haṭha Yoga corpus encodes, however, predate the texts of Śaivism (Mallinson 2015).

51 In the *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* we find references to *bindu* as a drop of fluid in the body (e.g., 5.23), but it is yet to be equated with semen.

52 On *ovallī* see Sanderson 2005: 122, n. 82.

53 Cf. the Marathi *Līlācaritra*, *uttarārḍh* 475, which talks of the Nāths' cheating of death (*kā-*

stances of the word *vajrolī* in Śaiva texts, but a Buddhist tantric work called the *Avalokiteśvaravajrolī* is found in a circa fourteenth-century manuscript.<sup>54</sup> The practices it teaches are obscure but have nothing to do with the haṭhayogic *vajrolīmudrā*, supporting the hypothesis that the name of the haṭhayogic *vajrolī*, like the names of other haṭhayogic practices and principles, was appropriated from a tantric practice of a completely different nature. In addition to this reference, a connection between *vajrolī* and specifically Buddhist tantric traditions is suggested by the *vajra* element in *vajrolī*'s name (and also by the *amara* and *sahaja* elements in *amarolī* and *sahajolī*) and further supported by the *Amṛta-siddhi*, a circa eleventh-century tantric Buddhist text which contains the earliest teachings on the practices and principles of Haṭha Yoga, and is the first text to assign many of their names (although it does not mention *vajrolī*).<sup>55</sup>

Certain aspects of *vajrolīmudrā* facilitated its appropriation and refashioning by tantric traditions. Some tantric texts teach rites in which the products of sexual intercourse (and other bodily fluids) are mixed with alcohol and consumed.<sup>56</sup> Tantric texts also speak of the union of male and female principles within the body of the yogi, most famously in Paścimāmnāya Kaula works in which the goddess Kuṇḍalinī rises from the base of the spine to union with Śiva in the head. Some, in particular Buddhist tantric works, also teach visualisations of the union of the products of sex and their rise up the body's central column. Despite assertions in secondary literature,<sup>57</sup> however, none of these Buddhist visualisations is accompanied by *vajrolī*-like physical techniques, nor are speculations

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*lavamcanā*) and names their four *oḷī*-s or lineages: *vajrolī* | *amarolī āti* | *siddholī* | *divyolī* | *iyā cyāhī oḷī nāthānciyā* (of which only the first two are said to remain in this *kali yuga*); see also Feldhaus 1980: 104, n. 11. Because *vajrolī*'s meaning is uncertain, I am unsure whether to write *vajrolīmudrā* as a compound or as two words. By analogy with *khecarīmudrā*, “the *mudrā* of [the class of yoginis called] *Khecarī*”, I have chosen to write it as a compound. The compound *khecarīmudrā* can be and sometimes is written as two words, however, with *khecarī* an adjective describing the *mudrā*: “the sky-roving *mudrā*”. I see no possibility of taking *vajrolī* as an adjective in a similar fashion. Like the texts themselves (and yogis who speak modern Hindi), but contradicting my reasoning for writing *vajrolīmudrā* as a compound, for brevity I often write *vajrolī* rather than *vajrolīmudrā*. There is also some disagreement amongst our textual sources over whether the name is *vajrolī* or *vajrolī*. The latter is more common and I have adopted it accordingly.

54 NGMPP C17/4. I thank Péter-Dániel Szántó for drawing this manuscript to my attention and providing me with his transcription of it, which may be found at [http://www.academia.edu/4515911/Textual\\_Materials\\_for\\_the\\_study\\_of\\_Vajrolimudra](http://www.academia.edu/4515911/Textual_Materials_for_the_study_of_Vajrolimudra).

55 See Mallinson forthc.

56 For references see Sanderson 2005: 113, n. 63. Such rites are still performed in Rajasthan by groups related to Nāth traditions (Khan 1994 and Gold 2002). Oort (2016) analyses St Augustine's descriptions of the Manichean eucharist in which a combination of semen and menstrual blood is consumed. Connections between Buddhism and Manicheism are well-known; perhaps this is another example.

57 E.g., Gray 2007: 120–121; White 1996: 63, 201–202.

that *vajrolī* was practised in first-millennium China corroborated by what is found in Chinese texts of that period.<sup>58</sup> Some modern tantric practitioners do believe that they can absorb their partner's *bindu* or *rajas* during sex by means of *vajrolī*.<sup>59</sup> Sexual practices in which men absorb (or at least imagine absorbing) their female partners' vital essences (but which do not involve *vajrolī*) have been used in China since at least the second century BCE<sup>60</sup> and a connection between such practices (as well as Chinese alchemical methods) and those of Indian tantric practitioners seems possible.

In an internalisation of earlier tantric rites involving the consumption of sexual fluids, two early Haṭha texts of the Siddha tradition (neither of which teaches *vajrolī*), the *Amṛtasiddhi*<sup>61</sup> and *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*,<sup>62</sup> say that both *rajas* and

58 Pace assertions by White (ibid.) et al., there is no evidence of *vajrolī* being part of Daoist or Buddhist sexual yoga in pre-modern Tibet, China or Japan. White cites Needham in the context of China, but the only physical practice for the retention or resorption of semen in the early Chinese texts discussed by Needham (1974: 198) very clearly involves pressing on the perineum and nothing more. Umekawa (2004) does not mention *vajrolī* in her analysis of Daoist and Buddhist sexual techniques in China and Japan in the early part of the second millennium, nor is it found in earlier Chinese texts (personal communication Rodo Pfister, 16 July 2014). I have found no references to *vajrolī* being practised in Tibet until the modern period (e.g., David-Neel [1931: 141] who reports how Tsang Yang Gyatso, the sixth Dalai Lama, is said to have publicly resorbed his urine in response to accusations of sexual incontinence).

59 Vaiṣṇava *tāntrika*-s in Bengal (whose tradition is distinct from that of the Tarapith *tāntrika*-s studied by Darmon, most of whom are *svātantrika*, i. e., not part of guru lineages [2002: 223]) claim to absorb the combined essences of sex by means of *vajrolī* (personal communication Lubomír Ondračka, 2 December 2013). Naren Singh says that through *vajrolī* and other means semen's downward movement may be reversed and it can be led back, through subtle channels, to "the *bindu cakra* near the *sahasrāra*" (personal communication via Ian Duncan, 8 December 2013). He adds that vaginal secretions may be absorbed into the "sperm sacks" and then raised through *ūrdhvaḡamaṇa kriyā*. Svoboda (1986: 281) says that *vajrolī*'s main purpose is to prevent ejaculation during intercourse, but adds that it is used to suck up female secretions (and provides much additional detail on its practice by men and women). Das (1992: 391) says that Baul men draw up menstrual blood through the penis in sexual rituals, explaining this statement with a reference to the haṭhayogic *vajrolīmudrā*, but he adds that his understanding is unclear and remarks on how Bauls often mislead enquirers (Das 1992: 395).

60 I thank Rodo Pfister for this information (email communication, 16 July 2014, the purport of which is as follows). Absorption of *jing* ("essence", a life sap, in liquid form [which equals] female seed in many other Eurasian traditions, but having the same name as male seminal essence) is mentioned in the *\*He yin yang* ("Uniting yin and yang", the title given it by modern editors), a bamboo text found in Mawangdui tomb three, which was sealed in 168 BCE. See also Pfister 2006 and 2013.

61 AS 7.8–13: *sa bindur dvividho jñeyah pauraṣo vanitābhavaḥ | bījaṃ ca pauraṣaṃ proktaṃ rajas ca strisamudbhavam || 8 || anayor bāhyayogena sṛṣṭiḥ samjāyate nṛṇām | yadā-bhyantaratō yogas tadā yogīti giyate || 9 || kāmarūpe vased binduḥ kūṭāḡarasya koṭare | pūrṇaḡirīm mudā sparśād vrajati madhyamāpathe || 10 || yonimadhye mahākṣetre javāsindūrasannibham | rajo vasati janṭūnām devitatvasamāśritam || 11 || binduḥ candramayo jñeyo rajah sūryamayam tathā | anayoḥ saḡgamaḥ sādhyah kūṭāḡare 'tidurghaṭe || 12 ||*. Witnesses:



*bindu* exist within the body of the male yogi and that their union is the purpose of yoga.<sup>63</sup> When the Haṭha technique of *vajrolī* was adopted by tantric lineages, the idea – if not the actual practice – of uniting the external products of sex within the yogi’s body would have been a natural development from these earlier teachings – which are then used in a later commentary to explain *vajrolī*<sup>64</sup> – despite its practice being alien to the milieu in which those texts were originally composed.

The absence of quintessential haṭhayogic techniques such as *vajrolī* and *khecarī* from the tantric corpus is symptomatic of the absence also of

C = China Nationalities Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities 005125 (21) • J<sub>1</sub> = Mān Simh Pustak Prakāś (MSPP) 1242 • J<sub>2</sub> = MSPP 1243 • K<sub>1</sub> = Nepal–German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) 655/39 • K<sub>2</sub> = NGMPP 1501/11 • K<sub>3</sub> = NGMPP 233/6 • M = Government Oriental Manuscripts Library Mysore AS4342 (folios 21b–40b). Readings: 8a dvi-vidho | K<sub>1</sub>K<sub>2</sub>K<sub>3</sub>; dvi-vidho C, vividho J<sub>1</sub>J<sub>2</sub> 8d °bhavam] °bhavaḥ C 9cd yadābhyantarato yogas tadā yogīti gīyate] *Haṭhapradīpikāyotsnā* ad 4.100; yadā abhyantarato yogas tadā yogīti gīyate C (*unm.*), yadā tv abhyantare yogas tadā yogo hi bhaṇyate *cett.* 10a kāmarūpe] C; kāmarūpo *cett.* • vased] dvased C 10b kūṭāgārasya° ] C; kūṭādhāraṇya J<sub>1</sub>J<sub>2</sub>, kūṭādhārasya K<sub>1</sub>K<sub>2</sub>K<sub>3</sub> 10c pūrṇagirim | C (*Tibetan transcription* only); pūrṇagiri *cett.* • mudā] C; sadā *cett.* 10d vrajati] C; rājanti *cett.* • °pathā] C; °pathe *cett.* 11b javā° ] yavā° B, jāvā° K<sub>5</sub> • °sindūra° ] K<sub>1</sub>K<sub>2</sub>K<sub>3</sub>; °sindura ° C, °bindūra° J<sub>1</sub>J<sub>2</sub>, °bandhū\* M • °jantūnām] °jantunām B 11c vasati] vasatiḥ K<sub>2</sub> 11d ° samāśritam ] *conj.* SZANTO; °samādhṛtam C, °samāvṛtam M, °samāvṛtaḥ *cett.* 12b sūryamayam smṛtam] M; sūryamayam tathā *Haṭhapradīpikāyotsnā* ad 4.100, sūryamayas tathā *cett.* “(8) Know that *bindu* to be of two kinds, male and female. Seed is said to be the male [*bindu*] and *rajas* is the *bindu* which is female. (9) As a result of their external union people are created. When they are united internally, one is declared a yogi. (10) *Bindu* resides in Kāmarūpa in the hollow of the multi-storeyed palace [in the head]. From contact, with delight it goes to Pūrṇagiri by way of the central channel. (11) *Rajas* resides in the great sacred field in the *yoni*. It is as red as a Javā flower and enveloped in the goddess element. (12) Know *bindu* to be lunar and *rajas* to be solar. Their union is to be brought about in the very inaccessible multi-storeyed palace.”

62 *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*, Central Library, Baroda Acc. No. 4110 (dated 1534 *saṃvat*), with variants from Fausta Nowotny’s edition of a later recension of the text called *Goraḥśasātaka* (GŚ = *Das Goraḥśasātaka*, Köln 1976, Dokumente der Geistesgeschichte): *sa eva dvidvidho binduḥ pāṇduro lohitas tathā* | (= GŚ 72ab) *pāṇduram śukram ity āhur lohitaḥkhyam mahārajaḥ* || 54 || (= GŚ 72cd) *sindūradravasamkāśam yonisthānasthitam rajaḥ* | śāśithāne vased *bindur dvayor ekyam sudurlabham* || 55 || (= GŚ 73cd) *binduḥ śivo rajaḥ śaktir bindur indū rajo raviḥ* | (= GŚ 74ab) *ubhayoḥ saṃgamād eva prāpyate paramam padam* || 56 || (= GŚ 74cd) *vāyunā śakticālena preritam khe yadā rajaḥ* | (= GŚ 75ab) *bindor ekatvam āyāti yo jānāti sa yogavit* || 57 || (= GŚ 75cd). Readings: 55a *bindur vidrumasamkāśo* ms. 55b *ravisthāne sthitaḥ rajaḥ* GŚ 57cd *bindunaiti sahaikatvam bhaved divyam vapuḥ tathā* GŚ. “*Bindu* is of two kinds, white and red. White [*bindu*] is said to be semen, red the great *rajas* (female generative fluid). (55) *Rajas* resembles liquid vermilion and is situated at the *yoni*. *Bindu* resides in the place of the moon. It is very difficult to join the two. (56) *Bindu* is Śiva, *rajas* is Śakti. *Bindu* is the moon, *rajas* is the sun. It is only through uniting them both that the highest state is attained. (57) When *rajas* is propelled into the void [in the head] by means of the breath [and] the stimulation of Śakti, then it unites with *bindu*.”

63 Cf. *Gorakhbānī pad* 12.5, *sabā* 141b.

64 *Haṭhapradīpikāyotsnā* ad 4.100.

teachings on the preservation of semen. Despite popular notions of “tantric sex” as forsaking orgasm, a key purpose of tantric sexual rites is the production of fluids to be used as offerings to deities.<sup>65</sup> Some texts, particularly Buddhist tantric works, do teach that sexual bliss is to be prolonged, but orgasm is still required to produce the substances necessary in ritual.<sup>66</sup> The only tantric sexual rite not to end in orgasm is the *asidhārāvratā* mentioned earlier. The *asidhārāvratā* finds its last textual teaching in the seventh to eighth-century *Brahmayāmala*. By the eleventh century it has been sidelined by orgasmic sexual practices; Abhinavagupta “apparently viewed it as a form of penance (*tapas*) not specifically tantric in character”.<sup>67</sup>

Like the *asidhārāvratā*, the hathayogic *vajrolīmudrā* most probably originated in a celibate ascetic milieu. The yoga traditions associated with the early Haṭha texts were all celibate, even those that developed out of Kaula lineages which had practised ritual sex.<sup>68</sup> The purpose of the composition of most of the texts of the Haṭha corpus seems to have been to bring the yogic techniques of these ascetic traditions to a non-celibate householder audience. *Vajrolīmudrā*, which was originally a method for ascetics to ensure their celibacy, was taught as a method for householders to remain sexually active while not losing the benefits of their yoga practice. It is difficult, however, to imagine normal householders learning *vajrolī*, and I know of only one example of this having happened.<sup>69</sup> I suspect that it was, as it still is, a technique practised by a very small number of ascetic yogis<sup>70</sup> which their householder disciples know of and might aspire to practising,<sup>71</sup> but

65 See Sanderson 1988: 680 and 2005: 113, n. 63, and *Brahmayāmala* ch. 22, 24, 25 on the *guhīyāmṛta*, “the secret nectar of immortality”, i. e., combined sexual fluids, which is “among the most important substances utilized in ritual” (Hatley 2016: 11).

66 Semen retention (*avagraha*) is prescribed in the *Brahmayāmala* during certain practices other than the *asidhārāvratā* but is to be abandoned in order to obtain the substance necessary for *siddhi*. The same text prescribes a *prāyaścitta* (expiatory rite) if the practitioner does not reach orgasm during a sexual rite (see *Tāntrikābhīdhānaśāstra* III, s. v. *avagraha*).

67 Hatley 2016: 11.

68 See, e.g., *Gorakṣaśataka* 101 (Mallinson 2011).

69 Through a third party I have been in contact with Naren Singh of Jammu, a *vajrolī* practitioner who has not been initiated as an ascetic.

70 I know of only one premodern external reference to the practice of *vajrolī*, from the merchant Shushtarī, who travelled throughout India in the late eighteenth century. “When he interrogated one such jogi in Ḥaydarābād about the reasons for his success, he was told that behind all the legends is the practice of retention of semen as a means to perfect breath control. The jogi recommended that Shushtarī try practising breath control during sexual intercourse to prevent ejaculation, since loss of semen is the primary cause of aging. The jogi also claimed to have such control over breath as to be able to empty a cup of milk through vascular [*sic*] suction” (Ernst 2007: 419).

71 Householder wrestlers in Kota, Rajasthan, for whom the refinement and preservation of *bindu* is an important part of their practice, speak highly of *vajrolī* but do not practise it (personal communication Norbert Peabody, 11 June 2010).

will never actually accomplish, in much the same way that a student of modern yoga might admire the advanced postures of a skilled yoga teacher.<sup>72</sup>

As noted above, many scholars have pointed to *vajrolī* as evidence that Haṭha Yoga developed from tantric practices of ritual sex. But Darmon has reported that the *vajrolī*-practising *tāntrika*-s of Tarapith do not use it as part of their sexual rites (or at least they do not go through the mechanics of its practice – they may of course reap its benefits). And when *vajrolī* is taught in texts as a means to sexual gratification it is not associated with ritual sex but with the more mundane variety. Just as the partner in the *asidhārāvratā* need not be a tantric initiate, the consort of the *vajrolī*-practitioner needs only to be a woman who is under one's control.<sup>73</sup> In the textual teachings on *vajrolī* that I have seen there is just one phrase which praises sex itself: the *Yuktabhavadeva* (YBhD) (7.239) says that *vajrolī* was taught by Gorakṣanātha for those householders who practise yoga but are devoted to the pleasure of sex because through it they obtain *brahmānanda*, the bliss of *brahman*.

Thus sex itself is not part of the practice of Haṭha Yoga, in which the preservation of semen or *rajas* is crucial to success. The techniques of Haṭha Yoga that help their preservation, of which *vajrolī* is the most efficacious, may be enlisted to ensure sexual continence, but sex itself is of no yogic benefit. Proclamations of *vajrolī*'s ability to allow yogis to have sex yet remain continent and to draw up the commingled products of sex did not sit well with those modern advocates of yoga who wanted to present it as a wholesome means to health and happiness, hence *vajrolī*'s removal from twentieth-century texts and translations.<sup>74</sup> Such an overtly censorious attitude towards *vajrolī* is nowhere to be found in premodern texts.<sup>75</sup>

72 Some of the teachings on *vajrolī* found in texts are enough to put off all but the most dedicated student. At the beginning of its teachings on *vajrolī* (fol. 25v, l. 14 – fol. 26r, l. 8), the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati* says that during its preliminary practice the yogi experiences such pain that he fears an imminent death. His skin erupts in boils, he becomes extremely thin and his attendants must do their utmost to keep him alive.

73 Some texts do say that the female partner should be expert in yoga: DYŚ 155 mentions a *yogābhyāsaratā strī*, “a woman well versed in yoga practice”, as the source of *āṅgirasa*, i. e., women's generative fluid; the *Bṛhatkhecarīprakāśa* (fol. 103v) instructs the yogi to propitiate a “sixteen-year old virgin woman who is well versed in yoga practice” (*yogābhyāsaratām abhuktām ṣoḍaśavarsikīm striyam*) and then to have intercourse with her.

74 See page 184 for references; cf. Ānandavarūpī (1937: *u*) who says that *vajrolī* can be mastered without a woman and that those who say one is necessary for its practice are sinners.

75 Some texts do teach sanitised forms of *vajrolī*. Thus the circa fourteenth-century *Amarāghaprabodha*, which disparages other Haṭha techniques, says that *vajrolī* is the balanced state of mind which arises when the breath enters the central channel (v. 9) and the seventeenth or eighteenth-century *Gheraṇḍasaṃhitā* teaches a *vajrolīmudrā* which is a relatively simple *āsana*-type practice quite different from the *vajrolī* found in other texts (3.45–48). The *Gheraṇḍasaṃhitā*'s description might be considered a puritanical refashioning of the original *vajrolī* similar to those perpetrated in the twentieth century. However the

Western scholars, on the other hand, have viewed yoga and sex as inseparable.<sup>76</sup> This is based on the incorrect assumption that Haṭha Yoga is a direct development from tantra, in particular its sexual and alchemical rites. I have shown above how sexual rites are distinct from Haṭha Yoga; the same is true of alchemy. In the few instances in which texts on Haṭha Yoga mention alchemy, they do so disparagingly.<sup>77</sup> Nor is there anything in our textual sources to justify the claim found throughout Western scholarship (which perhaps results from drawing unwarranted parallels with Chinese sources) that Haṭha Yoga is itself a sexualised inner alchemy, in which, in an internalisation of orgasmic ejaculation, semen is raised from the base of the spine to its top and is sublimated into *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality, along the way.<sup>78</sup>

The distinction between the celibate ascetic milieu in which *vajrolī* originated and the tantric traditions which appropriated it should not, however, be seen as a simple distinction between puritanical ascetics and licentious libertines. Why, for example, should the *Dattātreyayogaśāstra*, a text that explicitly denigrates the tantric *sādhaka* and teaches a Haṭha Yoga full of practices for preserving semen, tell the aspiring *vajrolī*-practitioner that he needs to get hold of some female generative fluid (or semen if she is a woman)?<sup>79</sup> And Dattātreyā may be the tutelary deity of an ancient lineage of celibate ascetics which flourishes to this day, but he is also the archetypal *avadhūta* yogi who can do what he wants. In the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* he hides in a lake in order to avoid a group of young men seeking his tuition. When they do not go away even after a hundred years of the gods, he decides to put them off by openly drinking and making love with a beautiful woman, which, says the text, is all right, because as a master of yoga he is not at fault.<sup>80</sup> Kapila, meanwhile, is an ancient sage long associated with asceticism, celibacy and yoga. In the *Dattātreyayogaśāstra* he is said to be the first to have taught the hathayogic *mudrā*-s and in the *Haṭhatattvakaumudī* he is specifically said to have been the first to teach *vajrolī*. But Kapila is also associated with unorthodox practices and antinomian behaviour. The eleventh-century or

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*Gheraṇḍasaṃhitā* adds that *vajrolī* leads to *bindusiddhi*, “mastery of semen”, and that if one practises it while enjoying great indulgence, one will still attain complete perfection (*bhogena mahatā yukto yadi mudrāṃ samācāret | tathāpi sakalā siddhis tasya bhavati niścītam || 3.48 ||*). A more puritanical – and much more improbable – reworking of *vajrolī* can be found in Digambarji & Sahai 1969, in which with much linguistic casuistry they attempt to show that the teachings on *vajrolī* in Sanskrit texts have nothing to do with drawing liquids up the penis.

76 See page 184 for references.

77 See Mallinson 2014: 173, n. 32.

78 See, e.g., White 1996: 40–41.

79 The power and importance of *rajas* (female generative fluid) in the context of Baul practice are explained by Knight (2011: 73); such a notion may account for the *Dattātreyayogaśāstra*'s reference to *āṅgirasa*.

80 *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa adhyāya* 17.

earlier *Bṛhatkathāślokaśamgraha* says of Caṇḍasiṃha's city: "There the vices that usually terrify those who want to be liberated from the wheel of rebirth are prescribed by Kapila and others in treatises on liberation" (20.153).

#### 4. Conclusion

I have drawn on all the verifiable textual, ethnographic and experiential data that I can find in my analysis of *vajrolī*, but my conclusions might require revision should new information come to light. As I have noted above, *vajrolī* is likely to have at least some roots in tantric Buddhist traditions and I think it probable that it is from these traditions that new information might be obtained. The vast majority of tantric Buddhist texts remain unstudied (Isaacson n. d.); among them are many Tibetan manuals of yogic practice. Some modern practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism claim that *vajrolī* has been used by Tibetan adepts to absorb the combined products of sexual intercourse as part of an unbroken yogic tradition that is more than a thousand years old.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the most advanced of these practitioners are said to be able to perform *vajrolī* without a pipe. Clinical studies of yogis have shown that they can control muscles that others cannot. Might it in fact be possible to hold open the urethral sphincter and draw up the combined products of sexual intercourse? And might my conclusion that *vajrolī* originated as a practice of celibate ascetics and was later appropriated by non-celibate tantric practitioners present too neat a historical progression? Might it in fact have evolved simultaneously among both types of practitioner? The information now at my disposal leads me to answer "no" to these questions. But my answer could change to a "yes" through the study of manuscripts of Sanskrit, Middle-Indic and Tibetan tantric Buddhist works,<sup>82</sup> or observation of the practices of living yogis. Many tantric Buddhist practices have remained secret for centuries, but recently, in part as a reaction to political circumstances in Tibet, some have been revealed.<sup>83</sup> If this revelation continues, perhaps we may learn of a Tibetan tradition of *vajrolī* practice that is still current.

81 Personal communication Sarkis Vermilyea, March 2015.

82 As Dan Martin has suggested to me (personal communication, 18 July 2016), study of the many references to *rdo rje chu 'thung*, "vajra-drinking," in Tibetan works may shed light on the practice of *vajrolī* in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

83 Thus the *Tibet's Secret Temple* exhibition at London's Wellcome Institute (November 2015 – February 2016) included a recreation of a previously secret temple from the Lukhang in Lhasa which was authorised by the present Dalai Lama, and at a presentation associated with the exhibition on 3 December 2015, a Tibetan rinpoche gave a demonstration of *rtsa rlung 'khrul 'khor* practices which have also been kept secret until very recently. The murals in the Lukhang temple include depictions of *'khrul 'khor*, some of which are reproduced in the chapter by Ian Baker in this volume.

With the caveats given above, my conclusions about the method, purpose and history of *vajrolīmudrā* are as follows. The history of *vajrolīmudrā*'s representation in textual sources epitomises the textual history of Haṭha Yoga as a whole. The physical practices which distinguish Haṭha Yoga from other forms of yoga developed within ancient ascetic traditions for which the preservation of semen was paramount. Texts composed from the beginning of the second millennium show how these practices were, firstly, opened up to an audience beyond their ascetic originators and, secondly, appropriated by Śaiva tantric traditions. Thus *vajrolīmudrā* was refashioned from a technique aimed at ensuring that an ascetic did not shed his semen into one that allowed a householder to enjoy the pleasures of sex and also be a yogi. It was then further remodelled in the light of two tantric concepts: an early notion of sexual fluids being the ultimate offering in ritual, and – as an interiorisation of the former – the visualisation of the combined products of sex being drawn up the central channel. As a result, certain tantric traditions made the fanciful but catchy claim that *vajrolī* allows one to absorb one's partner's sexual fluids during intercourse. Ethnography shows that among Haṭha Yoga-practising ascetics *vajrolī* remains one of a set of techniques used to prevent ejaculation, while tantric practitioners of ritual sex use *vajrolī* both to prevent ejaculation and, they believe, to absorb their partners' sexual fluids.

### Appendix 1: Text Passages Which Teach or Mention *Vajrolīmudrā*

7th–6th century BCE	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad</i> 6.4.10–11
12th century CE	<i>Amanaska</i> 2.32
13th century	<i>Dattātreyayogaśāstra</i> 150c–160d
14th century	<i>Amaraughaprabodha</i> 8–9 <i>Tirumantiram</i> 825–844 <i>Śaṅkaradigvijaya</i> 9.90
15th century	<i>Śivasamhitā</i> 4.78–104 <i>Haṭhapradīpikā</i> 3.82–99
17th century	<i>Yuktabhavadeva</i> 7.239–296 <i>Haṭharatnāvalī</i> 2.80–117 <i>Sarvāṅgayogapradīpikā</i> 3.13–24

(Continued)

18th century	<i>Haṭhatattvakaumudī udyota</i> -s 16 and 17 <i>Brṛhatkhecarīprakāśa</i> fol. 103r11 – fol. 104r6 <i>Yogamārgaparakāśikā</i> 3.138–154 <i>Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati</i> 2.13 <i>Gheraṇḍasaṃhitā</i> 3.45–48 <i>Jogpradīpakā</i> 552–561 and 677–684 <i>Vajroliyoga</i> <i>Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati</i> fol. 25v9 – fol. 28r15 <i>Jog Mañjarī</i> fols. 103–107, vv. 66–85
19th century	<i>Haṭhapradīpikājyotsnā</i> 3.83–103

## Appendix 2: Editions and Translations of the Descriptions of *Vajrolīmudrā* in the *Brṛhatkhecarīprakāśa* and the *Vajroliyoga*

This appendix contains editions and translations (which are in many places tentative) of descriptions of *vajrolīmudrā* in two circa eighteenth-century unpublished sources. The first is a passage from the *Brṛhatkhecarīprakāśa* (a commentary on the *Khecarīvidyā*) and the second is the entire text of the *Vajroliyoga*. Each text has just one manuscript witness. Verse numbering and punctuation are as found in the manuscripts unless otherwise reported.

*Brṛhatkhecarīprakāśa*. Scindia Oriental Research Institute Library (Ujjain) ms. no. 14575, fol. 103r11 – fol. 104r6

atha vajrolī tadbhedau amarolīśahajolyau | vajram iva u vismayena na liyate  
kṣarati vīryam anayeti<sup>84</sup> | amara iva u na liyate 'nayā sahajā iva u na liyate 'nayeti  
ca tat<sup>85</sup> tannirukteḥ |

(fol. 103v) tatrāntime haṭhapradīpikāyām<sup>86</sup> |

sahajolīś cāmarolir vajrolyā bheda ekata<sup>87</sup> iti |  
amarolis tu

84 vismayena na liyate kṣarati vīryam anayeti] vismayelna na liyate lkṣarati vīryam anayeti *cod.*  
85 tat | [tal t *cod.*

86 haṭhapradīpikāyām] haṭha°yām *cod.*

87 The manuscript reads *ekabhedataḥ*. At the suggestion of Philipp A. Maas, I have adopted *bheda ekataḥ* (which becomes *bheda ekata* before *iti* as a result of sandhi) from among the

jale bhasma viniḥkṣipya dagdhagomayasambhavam ||  
 vajrolīmaithunād ūrdhvaṃ strīpuṃsoḥ svāṅgalepanam iti |  
 āsīnayoḥ sukhenaiḥ muktavyāpārayoḥ kṣaṇāt ||  
 sahajolir iyaṃ proktā sevyate yogibhiḥ sadeti | [HP 3.90a–91b]

yadbhedau imau yā<sup>88</sup> vajrolī yathā | sā tu bhoge bhukte 'pi muktyartham sevyate |  
 tatropāyaḥ | yogābhyāsaratām abhuktām ṣoḍaśavarṣikīm sajjātiyām<sup>89</sup> striyaṃ  
 dravyadānena sevādinā paramayatnena sādhayitvānyonyaṃ strītvapumstvāna-  
 pekṣayā vidhim ārabhetām || yathā || prathamaraḥjodarśane prathamam dṛṣṭam  
 pittolbaṇam rajo viḥyā dviṭiyadine rajasvalayā<sup>90</sup> tayā saha gupteṣṭim<sup>91</sup> kṛtvā  
 tasyāḥ strīyoner āṅgirasam raja ākrṣya<sup>92</sup> ṣaṇmāsam

svamūtrotsargakāle yo balād ākrṣya vāyunā  
 stokaṃ stokaṃ tyajen mūtram ūrdhvaṃ ākrṣya vāyunā | [ŚS 4.101]

tataḥ dugdhākaraṣaṇam tataḥ pāradākaraṣaṇam | tena tattadākaraṣaṇena pūrvaṃ  
 †\*pu†kilapraveśena<sup>93</sup> sādhitalinganālena pūrvaṃ svaśarīre svareto bindum  
 ākuñcanena saṃbodhya svaśarīre nābher adhobhāge tadraja ākrṣya<sup>94</sup> praveśayet  
 tasya nābhau granthau tu śatāṅganopabhoge 'pi tasya bindur na patati<sup>95</sup> naśyati |

yadi rajasa ākaraṣaṇāt pūrvaṃ svabodhito bindur adhaḥ patati tadāṅḍakośād  
 adhastanayonisthāne kṛtavāmahasto<sup>96</sup> madhyamānāmikāgrābhyām<sup>97</sup> saṃmar-  
 dya nirodhayet |

tatra svaliṅgavāmbhāge striyo yonau taddakṣiṇabhāge yady antaḥ sprīṣati tadā  
 tam liṅganiṣkāśanena viḥyā svaliṅgadakṣiṇabhāge striyāś ca vāmbhāge yaḥ sa  
 grāhya iti sūkṣmadṛśāvadheyam iti rajaḥsaṃprākaraṣaṇam tv apānavāyubalena<sup>98</sup>  
 huṃ huṃ kṛtvā kāryam iti | rajasa ākaraṣaṇānantaram yonimadhye<sup>99</sup> liṅgacāla-

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variant readings given in the Kaivalyadhama edition of the *Haṭhapradīpikā* (which has *eva bhedataḥ* in the *editio princeps*).

88 yā | \*yā *cod.*

89 sajjātiyām | [sajātiyām] *cod.*

90 rajasvalayā | *em.*; rajasvalāyā *cod.*

91 gupteṣṭim | *conj.*; gupteṣṭam *cod.*

92 āṅgirasam raja ākrṣya | *em.*; āṅgīrasam rajaḥ [ākrṣya] *cod.*

93 †\*pu†kilapraveśena | [†\*pukilapraveśena] *cod.*

94 tadraja ākrṣya | *em.*; tadrajaḥ [ākrṣya] *cod.*

95 patati | *cod. p.c.*; naśyati *cod. a.c.*

96 °hasto | *em.*; °hasta *cod.*

97 prāṇaḥ *added in margin.*

98 apānavāyubalena | apānavāyu\*†\*liṅgenal balena *cod.*

99 yonimadhye | *conj.*; yonitāye *cod.*



nam ācaret | etat sarvaṃ guruṃ sampūjya tadāññayā tatsmaraṇena ca gav-  
yadugdhabhug eva kuryād iti |

bindur vidhuma(fol. 104r)yaḥ śivarūpaḥ | rajaḥ sūryamayaṃ śaktirūpam | ata  
ubhayaor melanaṃ svanābher adhobhāge prayatnena kāryam [cf. ŚS 4.86] | tena  
tatrobhayaśammelanena granthau satyāṃ anantalalanāsaṅge 'pi bindu<sup>100</sup> pāta-  
marāṇe na syātām<sup>101</sup> | yadi rajaḥsamprākaraṣaṇāt<sup>102</sup> striyo maraṇaprasaṅge vara-  
dānādīnāvairiṇiṃ kuryāt | nirvairāḥ sarvabhūteṣu yaḥ sa māṃ etīti gītakteḥ  
[*Bhagavadgītā* 11.55] | yadi ca tajjīvane samarthas tadauśadhādīnā svasāmar-  
thyena gāyatrīrḥṛdayapāṭhapūrvakaṃ darbhaprokṣaṇena vilomasiddhamṛtyum-  
jayena<sup>103</sup> ca jīvayed iti | idam uktam api gurusānnidhyādīnaiva kāryam [|] anya-  
thā yaḥ karoti tasya śivaśaktyor guroś ca pādānāṃ śapatha iti | atra pramāṇaṃ  
śivasamhitādayas tadadhikaṃ tu guruvacanāl likhitam anubhavad avaganta-  
vyam iti | †śivas tu † gataṃ svakaṃ binduṃ liṅganālenākaraṣayed iti cāmarolī  
tathā tam eva yonimudrayā bandhayed iyaṃ sahaḥajolīti tayoḥ saṃjñābheda  
pṛthagbhedaḥ kārye tulyā gatir ity āha || iti vajrolyādayaḥ ||<sup>104</sup>

### *Bṛhatkhecarīprakāśa*

Next *vajrolī* and its divisions *amarolī* and *sahaḥajolī*. [*Vajrolī*] is like a *vajra*, by means of it semen (*vīrya*) is not dissolved by intense emotion [and] it does not melt; [*amarolī*] is like an immortal, by means of it [semen] is not dissolved; [*sahaḥajolī*] is like the natural state, by means of it [semen] is not dissolved: that [analysis] is from etymological interpretation of those words.

At the end of the [passage on *vajrolī*] in the *Haṭhapradīpikā*:

*Sahaḥajolī* and *amarolī* are each variations of *vajrolī*. *Amarolī* is when after sexual intercourse using *vajrolī* the woman and man smear their bodies with ashes made from burnt cowdung mixed with water. When they sit comfortably for a moment free from activity that is said to be *sahaḥajolī*; it is regularly used by yogis. [HP 3.90a–91b]

100 'pi bindu° ] *conj*; 'bindu° *cod*.

101 na syātām ] *conj*; syātām *cod*.

102 rajaḥsamprākaraṣaṇāt ] *em*; vrasaṇprākaraṣaṇā *cod*.

103 vilomasiddhamṛtyumjayena ] [vilomasiddhamṛtyumjayena] *cod*.

104 Along the bottom margin of fol. 103v is added in a later hand *Vivekamārtaṇḍa* 54–57 as found in Nowotny's edition of the *Goraḥśaśataka* and including the latter's verse 76, which is not found in the 1477 CE Baroda manuscript of the *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*.

The two variations are like *vajrolī*, which is used to achieve liberation even after enjoying pleasure. Their means is as follows. Having won over with great effort by means of gifts, service and so forth a sixteen-year old virgin woman of his own caste who is devoted to the practice of yoga, they should undertake the practice with no regard to each other's femininity or masculinity. Thus, for six months, at the first sight of *rajas*, having rejected the first menstrual fluid, in which there is an excess of *pitta*, on the second day he should perform the secret ritual with that menstruating woman and extract the *āṅgirasa rajas* from her vagina.

When urinating the yogi should forcefully use the [inner] breath to draw up urine and release it little by little after drawing it up by means of the [inner] breath. [ŚS 4.101]

Then there is the drawing up of milk, then of mercury. Through his urethra, which has been previously prepared by this drawing up of these [substances and] the insertion of a probe, the yogi should first, having awakened in his own body *bindu*, his own semen, by means of contraction, then draw up the *rajas* in the region below the navel in his own body, and make it enter the knot in his navel. Even if he makes love to a hundred women his *bindu* is not lost.

If his *bindu*, having been awakened by him, falls downwards before the drawing up of the *rajas*, he should stop it by rubbing the perineal region below the scrotum with the tips of the middle and ring fingers of the left hand. In that situation, if there is contact in the woman's vagina between the left side of the penis and the right side of the vagina then, leaving it by withdrawing the penis, it is to be taken on the right side of the penis and on the left side of the woman. This is to be concentrated upon with subtle sight. The extraction of *rajas* is to be performed using the power of the *apāna* breath while making the sound "*hum hum*". Immediately after extracting the *rajas* he should move his penis in the vagina. All this should be done after worshipping the guru, in accordance with his instruction and while remembering him, and while having a diet of nothing but cow's milk.

*Bindu* is lunar and takes the form of Śiva. *Rajas* is solar and has the form of Śakti. And their mixing is to be done carefully in the region below one's navel. When there is a knot there as a result of those two mixing, then even when there is desire for an endless number of women there will be neither the fall of *bindu* nor death. If as a result of the extraction of *rajas* the woman is close to death, then one should appease her with favours and so forth. As it is said in the *Gītā*: he who is without enemies among all living beings goes to me. And if he is capable of reviving her, then he should do so by means of herbs and other [medicines], his

own best efforts, the sprinkling of *darbha* grass preceded by a recitation of the *Gāyatrīhṛdaya*<sup>105</sup> and the reverse perfected *Mṛtyumjaya* [mantra].

Even though this has been taught [here] it should only be performed in the presence of the guru. He who does otherwise insults the feet of Śiva and Śakti, and his guru. The authorities in this are texts such as the *Śivasamhitā* and, in addition to them, what is written from the teachings of the guru and that which must be understood from experience.

... [The yogi] should draw up his own *bindu* through the urethra when it has moved. This is *amarolī* and when he holds that same *bindu* by means of the *yonimudrā*, that is *sahajolī*. The two are differentiated by a difference in name [but] in effect their actions are said to be equal. Thus [are taught] *vajrolī* and the other [*mudrā*-s].

*Vajroliyoga*. Wai Prajñā Pāṭhaśālā ms. no. 6-4/399<sup>106</sup>

atha yogaśāstraprārambhaḥ || śrīḥ ||  
 śrīgaṇeśāya namaḥ || śrīkṛṣṇāya gurave namaḥ || ||  
 svecchayā vartamāno 'pi yogoktair niyamair vinā ||  
 vajrolīm yo vijānāti sa yogī siddhibhājanam || 1 ||  
 tatra vastudvayaṃ vakṣye durlabhaṃ yasya kasya cit ||  
 kṣīraṃ caikaṃ dvitīyaṃ tu nārī ca vaśavartinī || 2 ||  
 mehanena śanaih samyag ūrdhvākuñcanam abhyaset ||  
 puruṣo vāpi nārī vā vajrolisiddhim āpnuyāt || 3 || [3-5 = HP 3.82-84]  
 cittāyattaṃ<sup>107</sup> nṛṇāṃ śukraṃ śukrāyattaṃ<sup>108</sup> tu jīvitam ||  
 tasmāc chakraṃ manaś caiva rakṣaṇīyaṃ prayatnataḥ || 4 ||  
 nārīm ramyām avasthāpya rahasye tu digambarām<sup>109</sup>  
 svayaṃ digambaro bhūtvā uttānāyās tathopari ||  
 aṅganyāsaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā mantratantravidhānataḥ || 5 ||  
 pādoruyoni<sup>110</sup> nābhīṣu stanayoś ca lalātake ||  
 śīrṣe nyāsaṃ vidhāyātha mūlamantreṇa tattvavit || 6 ||

105 A text called *Gāyatrīhṛdaya* is found in several manuscripts (e. g., Oriental Research Library, Srinagar Acc. Nos. 782 and 2315-99, NGMCP A1215-39, Berlin Staatsbibliothek 5882.5).

106 This manuscript contains several minor errors which I have corrected without reporting.

107 *cittāyattaṃ* ] *corr.*; *cittāyataṃ cod.*

108 *śukrāyattaṃ* ] *em.*; *śukrāyataṃ cod.*

109 5ab, which is needed to make sense of 5cd, is not found in the manuscript, but is found, together with 5cd, at YBhD 7.243ab and (with *adhaḥ sthāpya* for *avasthāpya*) HR 2.94ab.

110 °yoni° ] *em.*; °ṇoni° *cod.*

māyāmūlaṃ samuccārya reto muñceti yugmakam ||  
 hrīṃ muñca muñca || 6 ||<sup>111</sup>  
 vāgbhavaṃ kāmabijaṃ ca samuccārya manuṃ<sup>112</sup> japed ||  
 aiṃ klīṃ svāhā ||  
 tataḥ śaktim nijāṃ kṛtvā†kuñcaṃ dhṛtvā† manuṃ paṭhet || 7 ||  
 liṅge yonau tathā paścāt<sup>113</sup> prāñyāmān samabhyaset ||  
 śītalīkumbhakaṃ kuryāt vāmadakṣiṇayogataḥ || 8 ||  
 saṃketena svaraṃ pītvā nārī mandaṃ ca niḥśvaset ||  
 ayonau dṛḍham āliṅgya yonau liṅgaṃ na cārpayet || 9 ||  
 tatas tv adharapānaṃ ca parasparam athācāret ||  
 parasparam athāliṅget yāvāt prasvedasaṃbhavaḥ<sup>114</sup> || 10 ||  
 yadi skhaled bahir vīryaṃ tadā svedena mardayet ||  
 yadi bindur na skhalati punar āliṅgya kāmīnīm || 11 ||  
 yonau liṅgaṃ cārpayed vā yathā binduḥ pated bahiḥ ||  
 patite ca punaḥ svedajalena parimardayet || 12 || [9–12 = YBhD 7.244–247]  
 sarvāṅgāni tataḥ paścāt tu liṅgavīryeṇa yatnataḥ ||  
 evaṃ dinatrayaṃ kṛtvā trivāraṃ<sup>115</sup> pratyahaṃ tataḥ || 13 || [13cd = YBhD 7.248cd]  
 iti śrāntiḥ ||  
 trivāraṃ pratyahaṃ kuryān nyāsam ekaṃ prayatnataḥ ||  
 jātaśramāṃ tatas tāṃ tu<sup>116</sup> viparītāṃ nijopari ||  
 kṛtvā kucau tu saṃpīḍya śītalī kārayet tataḥ ||  
 pāyayec ca svaraṃ tadvad vāmadakṣiṇayogataḥ ||<sup>117</sup>  
 śaranālena phūtkāraṃ vāyu<sup>118</sup> saṃcārakāraṇāt || 15 ||  
 kuryāc chanaiḥ śanair yogī yāvāc chaktiḥ prajāyate ||  
 tato maithunakāle tu patadbinduṃ samunnayet || 16 ||  
 vajrakandaṃ<sup>119</sup> samāpīḍya kumbhayitvā tu mārutam ||  
 caladbinduṃ samākṛṣya manas tatraiva dhārayet || 17 ||  
 [15c–17d = YBhD 7.248c–250d]  
 jātiphalaṃ ca kṣīraṃ ca navanītaṃ tathaiva ca ||  
 bhakṣayed uttamaṃ vāsa<sup>120</sup> tāmbūlaṃ rasasaṃyutam || 18 ||  
 vāraṃ vāraṃ tato mantraṃ japed eva raman mudā ||  
 brahmākṣaraṃ lakārakāyeti śaktiḥ || bindunādasamanvitam || 19 ||

111 Verse numbering is as found in the manuscript.

112 manuṃ ] *conj.*; bhe\*†h\*o *cod.*

113 paścāt ] *em.*; paścā *cod.*

114 °saṃbhavaḥ ] *em.*; °saṃbhava *cod.*

115 trivāraṃ ] *corr.*; strivāraṃ *cod.*

116 jātaśramāṃ tatas tāṃ tu ] *conj.*; jātaśramāṃ tataḥ stātuṃ *cod.*

117 This hemistich is added in the margin.

118 vāyu° ] *em.* (cf. HP 3.85); vā yo *cod.*

119 vajrakandaṃ ] *em.* (cf. YBhD 7.250a); vajrabandhaṃ *cod.*

120 vāsa° ] *conj.*; vastra° *cod.*

bijam etat priyaṃ devyāḥ sarvaiśvaryapradāyakam ||  
 siddhidam durlabham loke japed tataḥ<sup>121</sup> punaḥ punaḥ || 20 ||  
 evam abhyāsato bindur na yonau patati kva cit ||  
 itthaṃ maithunaśaktiḥ syād durmadām api kāmīnīm<sup>122</sup> ||  
 mardayed yogayuktātmā śataśo nātra saṃśayaḥ || 21 ||  
 evaṃ bindau sthira jāte mṛtyuṃ jayati sarvathā ||  
 maraṇaṃ bindupātena jīvanaṃ bindudhāraṇāt || 22 ||

[21–22 = YBhD 7.251a–253b]

evam abhyāsato nārī yadi retasam uddharet ||  
 dehe sthiratvam āyati vajrolyābhyāsayogataḥ || 23 ||  
 abhyāsasya kramaṃ vaksye nārīṇāṃ ca śanaīḥ śanaīḥ ||  
 bahiḥ śīśnagataṃ śukraṃ yadi skhalati kāmataḥ || 24 ||  
 ṭāṭikā<sup>123</sup> mukham ākuñcya maṇim tatra praveśayet ||  
 tam uddharet<sup>124</sup> samākṛṣya vāyunā tena vartmanā || 25 ||  
 tadā reto<sup>125</sup> rajo nāśaṃ na gacchati kadā cana ||  
 mūlādhāre ca nārīṇāṃ sabindum nādatāṃ vrajet || 26 ||  
 ayaṃ yogaḥ puṇyavatāṃ siddhaḥ saṃsāriṇāṃ na hi ||

[23a–27b = YBhD 7.254a–258b]

amunā siddhim āpnoti yogād yogaḥ pravartate<sup>126</sup> || 27 ||

ayaṃ bhāvo nirvāte vilāsamandire nānāprakāreṇa priyayā saha vilāsaṃ kurvan  
 patadbindum apānena huñkārasahitena balād ūrdhvam ākrṣya śītalīm  
 kuryāt ||<sup>127</sup> idam atra paryavasitaṃ yogī yadā ramastryaṃ gacchan yogaṃ ca  
 vāñchaty ākrṣya<sup>128</sup> mānenāpānena retaḥ samānīyate<sup>129</sup> [] garbham ādadhāmīty  
 abhidhāya liṅgam yonau viniḥsipet || yadi tasyā garbhaṃ na vāñchati tadā  
 †kriṣi†prāṇena vīryam ūrdhvam ākarṣayet || te retasā reta ādadāmīty<sup>130</sup> abhi-  
 dhāya yogī jitareṭā bhavati ||

tad uktaṃ bṛhadāraṇyake ||

121 japed tataḥ ] *conj.*; japa tatra *cod.*

122 durmadām api kāmīnīm ] YBhD; durmadāv api kāmīnī *cod.*

123 ṭāṭikā° ] *cod.*; ṭiṅṭikā° YBhD.

124 tam uddharet ] YBhD; samuddharet *cod.*

125 reto ] YBhD; sṛtau *cod.*

126 This *pāda* may be a quotation of an unidentified quotation found at *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* 3.6 (as *yogo yogāt pravartate*). I am grateful to Philipp A. Maas for this suggestion.

127 Cf. YBhD 258–259.

128 ākrṣya° ] *corr.*; akrṣya° *cod.*

129 samānīyate ] *corr.*; samānīrayate *cod.*

130 ādadāmīty ] *em.*; ādadhāmīty *cod.*

atha yām icchen na<sup>131</sup> garbhaṃ dadhīteti tasyām arthaṃ<sup>132</sup> niṣṭhāya mukhena mukhaṃ sandhāyābhiprāṇyāpānyād<sup>133</sup> indriyeṇa te retasā reta<sup>134</sup> ādada ity aretā bhavati ||

atha yām icched garbhaṃ<sup>135</sup> dadhīteti tasyām arthaṃ niṣṭhāya<sup>136</sup> mukhena mukhaṃ sandhāyāpānyā<sup>137</sup>bhiprāṇyād indriyeṇa te<sup>138</sup> retasā reta ādadhāmiti garbhīṇy eva bhavati || [= BĀU 6.4.10–11]

śivayoge ||

stokaṃ stokaṃ tyajen mūtram ūrdhvam ākr̥ṣya tat punaḥ ||

gurūpadeśamārgeṇa pratyahaṃ yaḥ samācaret ||

bindusiddhir bhavet tasya sarvasiddhipradāyini ||

etasya ṣaṇmāsābhyaśena śatāṅganopabhoge 'pi na bindupātaḥ [|] anyac ca puriṣatyāga aṅgulibhir yonisthānaṃ svasya prapīḍayet || dvtīyahastena liṅgaṃ bandhayet || evaṃ mūtrarodho 'py abhyasanīyaḥ || evaṃ mūtratryāgakāle gudākuñcanaena<sup>139</sup> puriṣarodhaḥ śanaiḥ śanaiḥ kāryaḥ [|] evaṃ tāvad abhyased<sup>140</sup> yāvat svayaṃ mūtrapuriṣakālabhedena<sup>141</sup> bhavataḥ || etadabhyāsato 'pi bindusiddhir bhavati || [= YBhD 7.288–289]

prathamo 'yaṃ yogaḥ paścād vajrolīkāmukayoḡī †vāṃ† seyaṃ vajroly eva kiṃcidviśeṣavati amarolī ca na bhidyate ||

yena kena prakāreṇa binduṃ yatna dhārayet ||

daivāc ced bhavati bhage melanaṃ candrasūryayoḥ ||

amarolī samākhyātā enāṃ nālena śoṣayet ||

gataṃ<sup>142</sup> binduṃ svato yogī bandhayed yonimudrayā ||

sahajoli samākhyātā sarvatantreṣu gopitā ||

saṃjñābhedaḥ bhaved bhedaḥ kārye tulyagatitrayam || [= ŚS 4.95c–98b]

tathā ca svabindor ūrdhvaṃ nayanam vajrolī || bhage raktena saha mīlitasya

131 icchen na ] BĀU; icched *cod.*

132 arthaṃ ] BĀU; ardhaṃ liṅgaṃ *cod.*

133 °prāṇyāpānyād ] BĀU; °prāṇāpānyād *cod.*

134 te retasā reta ] BĀU; retasā retasyā reta *cod.*

135 garbhaṃ ] *om.* BĀU.

136 niṣṭhāya ] BĀU; niṣṭhā *cod.*

137 °pānyā° ] BĀU; °prāṇyā° *cod.*

138 te ] BĀU; *om. cod.*

139 gudākuñcanaena ] *conj.*; gudākuñcane *cod.*

140 abhyased ] abhyaset || *cod.*

141 °puriṣakālabhedena ] YBhD; °puriṣe kābheda *cod.*

142 gataṃ ] Śivasamhitā; dattvā *cod.*

bindor ūrdhvaṃ nayanam amarolī || svadehe saraktasya kevalasya svabindor ūrdhvaṃ nayanam sahajolīti vivekaḥ ||<sup>143</sup> = YBhD 7.295–296.

### *Vajroliyoga*

Now the beginning of the yoga treatise.

Homage to glorious Gaṇeśa! Homage to the guru, glorious Kṛṣṇa!

(1) Even though he behaves according to his desires without [observing] the rules taught in yoga, the yogi who knows vajrolī obtains success. (2) I shall teach two things for that which are hard for anyone to obtain. One is *kṣīra*, the second is a woman under one's control. (3) He should slowly and correctly practise upward suction by means of the penis. Either a man or a woman can master *vajrolī*. (4) In men, semen is dependent upon the mind and life is contingent upon semen, so semen and the mind should be carefully protected.

(5) [The yogi] should have a beautiful naked woman lie down on her back in a secret place, sit on her naked himself and perform an installation of mantras on her body according to the rules of mantra and tantra – (6) he who knows the levels of reality should perform the installation with the root mantra on her feet, thighs, vagina, navel, breasts, forehead and crown. He should recite the Māyā root mantra “Release semen!” (*reto muñca*) twice, [then] *hrīm muñca muñca*. (7) Having recited Vāgbhava (*aiṃ*) and the seed mantra of Kāma (*klīm*), he should repeat the mantra *aiṃ klīm svāhā*.

Then he should make her his own *śakti*, †embrace her† and repeat the mantra. (8) He should next perform repeated breath controls in the penis and vagina; he should practise *śitalī kumbhaka* through the left and right [nostrils]. (9) At a signal the woman should inhale and slowly exhale. The yogi should press tightly against her but not her vagina: he should not put his penis in her vagina. (10) Then they should kiss one another; then they should embrace one another until sweat arises. (11) If semen should be emitted then he should rub [his body] with sweat. If semen is not emitted, he should embrace the woman again (12) and put his penis in her vagina so that semen is emitted. When it has fallen he should

143 After the teachings on *vajrolī*, the manuscript has the following before it ends: *ikṣabhikṣu-tilavaṅgamāraṇam tālakābhraṇiṣasūtataṅkaṇam || bhānuvajriyayasānumarditambho narendrakutāraparvatam || || cha || ||*.

again rub with sweat (13) all his body and then carefully with his semen. He should do this for three days, three times a day. [Practising] thus, fatigue [arises].

(14)<sup>144</sup> [The yogi] should carefully perform one mantra-installation three times a day. When [the woman] is exhausted he should turn her over, put her on top of him, squeeze her breasts and then practise *śītalī* [*kumbhaka*]. (15) He should make her breathe in the same way [as before] through the left and right [nostrils] or blow through a reed pipe to make the breath flow [in those nostrils]. (16) The yogi should do this very gently until energy (*śakti*) arises [again]. Then during sexual intercourse he should draw up the falling *bindu*. (17) [The yogi] should squeeze the *vajrakanda*,<sup>145</sup> hold the breath, draw up the moving *bindu* and hold the mind in that very place.

(18) [The yogi] should eat nutmeg, milk, and ghee, and the finest scented betel together with liquid (*rasa*?). (19) Then while happily making love he should recite over and over again the mantra, the syllable of *brahman*, Śakti containing the syllable *la*, together with the dot (*bindu*) and the resonance (*nāda*). (20) This is the seed syllable beloved of the goddess, which gives complete sovereignty. It bestows success and is hard to obtain in the world, so [the yogi] should recite it over and over again. (21) As a result of practising in this way *bindu* never falls into the vagina. Thus sexual power arises and he who is engaged in yoga may penetrate (*mardayet*?) even an insatiable lover hundreds of times. In this there is no doubt. (22) When *bindu* has thus become steady, [the yogi] completely conquers death. Death comes from the fall of *bindu*, life from holding on to it.

(23) By practising in this way a woman may extract semen [and] attain steadiness of the body through the practice of *vajrolī*. (24) I shall very carefully teach the sequence of practice for women. If through passion the semen in the penis should be emitted, (25) then [the woman] should contract the aperture of the *ṭāṭikā* (?) and insert the jewel [i. e., semen] there. Pulling it with the breath, she should draw it upwards along that passage. (26) Then [neither] semen [nor] *rajas* is ever lost, and *rajas* together with *bindu* becomes *nāda* in the *mūlādhāra* of women. This yoga is successful for those who have religious merit, not for worldly people. By means of that one obtains success. Yoga results from yoga.

This is what is intended. In a pleasure pavilion out of the wind, while making love with his sweetheart in various different ways, the yogi should perform *śītalī*

144 The number 14 is not given in the manuscript.

145 The location of the *vajrakanda* is unclear. In the *Khecarīvidyā* it is situated in the head (*Khecarīvidyā* 2.26 and Mallinson 2007: 215, n. 293), which does not fit the context here.



*kumbhaka* and forcefully draw up his falling *bindu* using the *apāna* breath together with the syllable *hum̐*. On this matter, the following has been settled: when a yogi wants to achieve yoga while having sex with a lovely woman, by means of the *apāna* breath being drawn up the semen should be drawn up. He should insert his penis in her vagina and say “I deposit the embryo”. If he does not want her to become pregnant, then he should draw up his semen using the *kriṣi* (?) breath. Saying “I take your semen with semen” the yogi conquers his semen.

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* the following is said:

If he does not want her to become pregnant, then he should put his penis in her, join [her] mouth with his, breathe [into her mouth] and then breathe out, saying “with my penis I take your semen by means of semen”. She becomes free from semen.

And if he wants her to become pregnant then he should put his penis in her, join [her] mouth with his, breathe out and then breathe into her, saying “with [my] penis I deposit semen in you by means of semen”. She is certain to become pregnant. [BĀU 6.4.10–11]

In the *Śivayoga* [it is said]:

[The yogi] should emit urine little by little having drawn it upwards again. He who does this every day in the manner taught by his guru gains mastery of *bindu*, which bestows all powers. [= ŚS 4.101a–102b, YBhD 7.286a–287b]

By practising this for six months *bindu* should not fall even when sex is had with one hundred women. And another thing: when defecating, the yogi should press his perineum with his fingers and lock (*bandhayet*?) his penis with his other hand. In this way restraint of urine should be practised. In the same way, when urinating faeces should be very gently restrained by contracting the anus. [The yogi] should practise thus until both happen automatically when urinating and defecating. Practising thus is another way of achieving mastery of *bindu*.

This is the first yoga. Afterwards [the yogi becomes] the amorous *vajrolī* yogi. It is this that is *vajrolī*. *Amarolī* has some particularities, [but in practice] is not different.

[The yogi] should carefully hold his *bindu* by any possible method. If it happens to go into the vagina and there is mixing of the moon and sun, then what he sucks up with a pipe is called *amarolī*. If his *bindu* moves [out] from him, the yogi should bind it by means of *yonimudrā*. [This] is called *sahajolī*, which is kept secret in all the tantras. The difference is in name; in effect the three are equal.

Thus the drawing upwards of one's own *bindu* is *vajrolī*. The drawing upwards of *bindu* mixed with blood in the vagina is *amarolī*. *Sahajolī* has been determined to be the drawing upwards of one's own *bindu* alone together with blood [i. e., *rajas*] from one's own body.

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