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Protective Rites in the *Netra Tantra*

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Abstract

This thesis examines the rites of protection as laid out in the *Netra Tantra* and its accompanying commentary by Kṣemarāja. This text and commentary help us to understand the ontological role of the court priest, who acts to preserve and improve the health and well-being of the monarch through constant ritual observance. This also leads to a discussion of power as religious, ritual, and social experience.

I first examine ritual components, such as mantra, *maṇḍala*, and iconography to understand how the *mantrin* builds and maintains the tantric world. Within the iconography of practice, the *Netra Tantra*, allows for and even encourages the worship of its main deity, Amṛteśa, through the worship of a host of other deities. This brings about an examination of the conflict between public and private practice, especially within the tantric sphere.

To further examine this conflict, I then explore initiatory rites, during which the practitioner finds himself reborn in both body and consciousness. Further, his rebirth forces him to reconsider his social place, with his caste now supplanted by his position as an initiated member of the religious group. I engage with both ideas of the body and identity to question how the newly initiated practitioner navigates the world with this new perspective, including his involvement, real or visualized, with the transgressive ritual behaviors so often associated with tantric practice.

Finally, I consider specific practices, examining the technicalities of the rights and the meaning assigned to various ritual elements within this and related texts. The rites of *nīrājana* and those meant to conquer death, directly involve the *mantrin* who performs them on behalf of the monarch. This allows for an

examination of what exactly is intended in such rites and what purpose they have for both the monarch and the *mantrin*.

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This study would have impossible without the generous support of many people. First and foremost, I want to thank my thesis supervisors. Dr. Ulrich Pagel, Dr. Renate Söhnen-Thieme, and Sir James Mallinson all guided me in the production and completion of this thesis. I would like to extend my special thanks to each of them for the many hours they took painstakingly editing, reiterating fine points of Sanskrit grammar, and urging me to read the texts in different ways.

I also want to extend a special thank you to Alexis Sanderson and the Movement Center in Portland, Oregon. Professor Sanderson read several difficult passages of the *Netra Tantra* with me and was generous enough to allow me to attend his lectures on the *Tantrāloka*. I cannot express how helpful this was to the completion of this thesis and I was sad to leave Portland and its vibrant Śaiva community.

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Dr. Kengo Harimoto allowed me to access to the NGMCP's manuscript copies of both the *Svacchanda* and *Netra Tantras*, which I hope to examine with more depth in the future. I would also like to thank all my Sanskrit teachers, Drs. James Carey, Renate Söhnen-Thieme, Alastair Gornall, Paolo Visigalli, Sadananda Das, Sir James Mallinson, and Alexis Sanderson for their patience and persistence. Dr. David Gray and Jun Lan Bang offered clarifications to several of my questions in the course of casual conversation and I appreciate their willingness to discuss their work with me. I am particularly indebted to Lorilliai Biernacki, who unwittingly set me on this path many years ago. My friend Dr. Chloe Peacock offered her expertise and, more importantly, her encouragement and friendship.

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ॐ जुं सः Max & David & el Jefe सः जुं ॐ

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Corey Pein: Du bist meine Lieblingsperson. Danke!

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Preface

Throughout the writing of this thesis, the approach and methodology changed course rather dramatically. I began the project with a solely historical outlook in mind, having little previous exposure to philology and recently re-entered academia from the field of journalism. I believe the influences of a number of highly respected and generous people from whom I learned during the writing of this thesis greatly inform the work. Sometimes those approaches and ideas are in conflict with one another. At other times, my own early resistance to the highly philological approach that has dominated the field of Śaiva Tantric studies still shines through. For this reason, I both embrace and reject the approach taken by so many in my field. On the one hand, we gain vast amounts of knowledge and material from the work of those who gather, collate, and critically edit manuscripts. Without them there would be no Tantric studies. On the other hand, I believe we need to begin to apply socio-historical and theoretical methodologies to the study of Tantra in order to humanize and contextualize Tantric practitioners and beliefs.

With this in mind, I chose to use a widely circulated edited edition of the *Netra Tantra* as my main primary source material. This edition has been criticized but used by many scholars and practitioners of modern Kashmir Śaivism but has not been translated in full. This edition was put together using manuscripts from Kashmir that were no older than the 17th century. Others would have used this edition alongside several 13th century and later Nepalese manuscripts. That is a very different project from this one. It is also well underway, though currently unpublished.

My translations follow, with only minor amendments, the *ślokas* of the *Netra Tantra* as published in the 20th century by the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies. This

approach allows me to easily utilize previous published scholarship, which is largely based on this edition, while focused on the contents of the text as they have been known for some 90 years. Rather than seek the urtext, I wanted to examine the actions of the individuals described within the text itself. In other words, socio-historical rather than historical linguistics; critical theory rather than grammatical analysis.

For this reason too, in my discussion of the yogic body I focus only on the gross (*sthūla*) body rather than the triad of *sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, and *para* bodies. The latter two chapters are worthy of study but focused on cosmological explanation rather than practice that involves the physical body. Of course, the three bodies are inseparable. The *Netra Tantra's* chapters on the subtle (*sūkṣma*) and highest (*para*) bodies gives only a cursory sketch of these bodies and does not add enough useful information for a full translation here.

For the most part, this thesis focuses on the *ślokas* of the *Netra Tantra* and I rely on Kṣemarāja's commentary to assist in the translation. One exception is the translation of the *Netra Tantra's* fourth chapter, found in Chapter Two, where the commentary fleshes out the discussion of initiation in such a way that to exclude it would have meant a superficial description. Kṣemarāja himself describes the chapter as abridged and described in depth elsewhere. In this, his commentary adds the necessary information from those other texts and descriptions to give us a comprehensive summary of the initiatory process.

Introduction

I. Summary

In ninth-century Kashmir, spirit possession caused illness, sudden death, and the obstruction of worldly gains. Only through a series of optional rites (*kāmya*) meant to bring about worldly enjoyments (*bhoga*) could a practitioner assuage these evils. The *Netra Tantra*, a text with at least two clear layers of redaction,¹ sought to alleviate these ills.

Like other texts categorized as Tantra, the early ninth century² *Netra Tantra* presents itself as a work of divine origin in the form of a dialogue between the god Śiva and the goddess Pārvatī. The *Netra Tantra* is a fairly conservative Tantra that does not explicitly call for heterodox practices. It belongs to the *mantramārga* stream of Śaiva texts. This means its rites are accessible to ascetics and married householders.³ Like other texts in this stream, the *Netra Tantra* offers salvation (*mokṣa*), the attainment of supernatural powers (*siddhi*), and other worldly enjoyments (*bhoga*).⁴ It clearly derives from the *Svacchanda Tantra*, which White dates to the seventh century at the latest.⁵ This places the *Netra Tantra* well after the earliest *mantramārga* Śaiva Tantras, the fifth century *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*,⁶ and several hundred years prior to its eleventh century commentator, Kṣemarāja. The

¹ David Gordon White, 2012, "Netra Tantra at the Crossroads of the Demonological Cosmopolis," *The Journal of Hindu Studies*. Vol. 5.2, p. 145.

² Alexis Sanderson, 2004, "Religion and the State: Śaiva Officials in the Territory of the King's Brahmanical Chaplain," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. 47, p. 273.

³ Alexis Sanderson, 1988, "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions," in *The World's Religions*, Eds. S. Sutherland, L. Houlden, P. Clarke and F. Hardy, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 664.

⁴ Sanderson, 1988, p. 664.

⁵ White, 2012, p. 1, 145.

⁶ Judit Törzsök, 2014, "Nondualism in Early Śākta Tantras: Transgressive Rites and Their Ontological Justification in a Historical Perspective," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 42, p. 196

Netra Tantra often alludes to the *Svacchanda Tantra* and assumes familiarity with the ritual technicalities that appear throughout the *Svacchanda Tantra*. The *Netra Tantra*'s audience is the Śaiva officiant who performs the monarch's ritual duties on his behalf, protects the king and his family through rites of appeasement, and carries out a lustration (*nīrājana*) to empower the monarch and his armies.⁷

Both the *Svacchanda* and *Netra Tantras* belong to the category of Bhairava Tantras. Their main deities are manifestations of Śiva in his fierce Bhairava form. In the *Netra Tantra*, Bhairava's ultimate manifestation is Amṛteśa, a formless deity who bestows relief from ailments to a ritual benefactor and conquers death. Amṛteśa carries many names, including Mṛtyujit and Mṛtyuñjaya.

This thesis explores the iconographies, initiations, and rites described in the *Netra Tantra*. The text describes a world in which invisible supernatural beings cause illness, and where the appeasement of a deity leads to the aversion of death. It examines the relationship between the professional *mantrin* and the benefactor on whose behalf he performs these rites. It explains how Tantra functioned in the Himalayan courts and reveals the role of the *mantrin* in the operation of the kingdom.

Large parts of *Netra Tantra* remain uncharted. A two-volume edition appeared in 1926 and 1939. It relies on two privately held manuscripts from Kashmir. According to the editor, neither manuscript is very old, dating perhaps to the early nineteenth century.⁸ The Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloging Project

⁷ Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Medieval Period," in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, Ed Shingo Einoo, Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, Institute of Oriental Culture Special Series, 23. 273.

⁸ Paṇḍit Madhusudan Kaul Shāstrī, 1926, *Netra Tantra*, Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies, no. 46, Bombay: Tatva Vivechaka Press, preface.

holds microfilms of twenty manuscripts that bear the title *Netrajñānārñavatāntra*,⁹ and three manuscripts that carry the names *Amṛteśatantra*,¹⁰ *Mṛtyujitāmṛtīsamahābhairavatāntra*,¹¹ and *Mṛtyujidamṛteśatantra*.¹² Unfortunately, the termination of the NGMCP's copy orders in 2014 meant that I received digital versions of five *Netrajñānārñavatāntra* manuscripts too late to properly collate them for this project.¹³ Fortunately, Gavin Flood is currently undertaking this work, and is nearing a complete semi-critical edition and translation of the Nepalese manuscripts.¹⁴ Brunner's (1974) summary of the *Netra Tantra* is the first substantial study of the text since its editions in the 1920s and 1930s. While hugely helpful as a navigational tool, Brunner is quite dismissive of the text as being less polished than the *Svacchanda Tantra*. This may explain why it has yet to receive the same level of attention as the *Svacchanda Tantra*.

Padoux's (1990) study of mantras relies on the *Netra Tantra* as well as a wide-range of other Tantric literature to understand the power and energy of language in Tantra. Much of Padoux's focus is on the *Netra Tantra's* Twenty-first Chapter. Sanderson's (2004) article on religion and the state provided the first in-depth translation of part of the text and provides a likely date of final redaction. More recent work by White (2012) and Bäumer's (2018) just-released translation of

⁹ NAK MS 9-32, 5-689, 1-280, 1-1076, 5-1976, 5-689; Microfilm E139-2, E789-47, H 388-18, E 711-17, I 32-22, E 928-25, H 937-20, E 128-41, E 770-2, E-78-9, H 397-8, H 334-19, E 2082-2, A 1298-5.

¹⁰ NAK MS 1-285.

¹¹ NAK MS 9-305.

¹² NAK MS 5-4866.

¹³ I thank Kengo Harimoto for sending me these manuscripts and hope to examine them thoroughly in the future.

¹⁴ Bettina Sharada Bäumer, 2018, "The Yoga of the Netra Tantra: A Translation of Chapters VII and VIII with Introduction," in *Tantrapuṣpāñjali: Tantric Traditions and Philosophy of Kashmir*, Eds. Bettina Sharada Bäumer and Hamsa Stainton, New Delhi: Aryan Books, p. 4; Private correspondence with Bjarne Wernicke-Olesen.

Chapters Seven and Eight advance our knowledge of the *Netra Tantra*. White's focus on the demonological aspects of the *Netra Tantra* helps to reveal the sorts of spirits that might cause various illnesses and presents the *Netra Tantra's* own mythology about Śiva. Bäumer's translation presents the highest two levels of yoga and offers a much needed introduction to the text. My thesis builds on their work though is in no way meant to be a comprehensive study of the text as a whole. Instead, I focus on practice within the text. I expand on Padoux's study of Tantric mantras through a translation and analysis of the *Netra Tantra's* discussion of the nature of mantra. This enables me to argue in favor of the view that Kṣemarāja sees mantras themselves as speech acts, at least as described in the *Netra Tantra*. Where Padoux employs the *Netra Tantra* as one of many texts that offers him the opportunity to weave together a comprehensive study on Tantric mantras, I focus on the *Netra Tantra* and its own discussion of mantra. This approach allows me to apply Padoux's findings on the mantric system, to an individual mantra and demonstrate its unique properties. I also follow Sanderson's work on the *Netra Tantra*, which centers on the relationship between the monarch and the *mantrin*. In Chapter Three, I translate and analyze passages of the text that describe the rites to vanquish death (*mṛtyu vañcana*). Here I argue that the lowest, gross form of practice (*sthūla*) is the most important to the monarch as it offers him good health, prosperity, and the continued rule over his kingdom. I also demonstrate that the king himself need not be present for much of the ritual. This gives responsibility for the efficacy of the rite solely to the *mantrin*. It also demonstrates that the *maṇḍala* acts as a microcosm for the physical body. This offers the *mantrin* an outlet for constant practice while the monarch continues the affairs of the kingdom.

This thesis explores the protective rites laid out in the *Netra Tantra*. It examines ritual elements, the production of Tantric identities, and yogic practices.

In each case I examine the physical elements and changes that occur during practice.

Iconographies are vital to the Tantric rites of the *mantramārga*. The large body of Sanskrit texts associated with the *mantramārga* present an archetypal Śiva who lives in the cremation ground and bears human skulls. In the Bhairava Tantras, Śiva takes on a terrifying and ecstatic form. He surrounds himself with goddesses, *yoginīs*, demons, and other supernatural creatures.¹⁵ Within the Bhairava Tantras, deities appear in multiple forms, sometimes manifesting as mantras and at others resembling their Purāṇic forms. The practitioner uses these scriptural depictions of deities to call forth a visualized form that appears on the ritual diagram, the *maṇḍala*. He then performs sacrificial rites in which he presents the deity ritual offerings and asks for salvation (*mokṣa*) or worldly enjoyments (*bhoga*).

Chapter One focuses on the mantras and forms used in the worship of Amṛteśa, the main deity of the *Netra Tantra*. The *Netra Tantra* is a scripture of divine revelation that consists of a dialogue between Bhairava and Pārvatī, in which the former instructs the latter on metaphysics, cosmology, and soteriology. In Chapter One, I utilize these dialogues to examine ritual iconographies of Amṛteśa and his various forms. This includes discussion about the nature of mantra, how the practitioner uses the mantra of the *Netra Tantra* to worship the multifarious deity, and a brief introduction to the ritual diagrams, *maṇḍalas*, used in conjunction with mantras and visualized deities.

¹⁵ Alexis Sanderson, 1988, p. 688-670; Shaman Hatley, 2007, *The Brahmayāmalatantra and early Śaiva Cult of Yoginīs*, (Doctoral dissertation: University of Pennsylvania), Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI Number 3292099), p. 8.

First, I chart the ritual elements of mantra, iconography, and *maṇḍala*. Chapter One discusses the arguments that Staal (1989), Padoux (1989, 1990), Alper (1989), and Wheelock (1989) put forward about the form and function of mantras. I then examine whether mantras are in fact speech acts and draw on Kṣemarāja's commentary for guidance. I begin Chapter One with an exploration of mantric theory. I introduce mantras and examine their ritual function. This means identifying the differences between magical, ritual, and ordinary language. I elaborate on the form and function of mantras. I then ask whether mantras are speech acts. To answer this question, I turn to both scholarly debate and Tantric scripture to discuss mantric syntax, structure, and expression. Further, I examine the nature of mantras — their composition, characteristics, and power. Here, I explain the threefold nature of mantras as unmanifested Śiva, potentially manifested Śakti, and manifested *aṇu*. This demonstrates that mantras exist as both unlimited and limited objects that impact all levels of existence.

I then turn to the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra of the *Netra Tantra*. This mantra, *om juṃṣaḥ*, appears in the text in an encoded form. The *Netra Tantra* and Kṣemarāja use semantic analysis (*nirvācana*) to linguistically correlate the deity with his role as a protector. It then connects the mantra to the deity through the same etymological evidence. This demonstrates the divinity of the mantra and explains the purpose of its use. I then investigate the phonemic makeup of the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra as it is encoded within the *Netra Tantra* and Kṣemarāja's commentary. Here I demonstrate the technicalities the scripture and its exegete find within the mantra's constituent parts. Each change in sound furthers cosmological ideation. Again, the text uses *nirvācana* to demonstrate the inherent meaning and power that permeates the mantra.

I then turn to the different manifestations of Amṛteśa. The *Netra Tantra* describes various Brahmanical deities to be worshiped as Amṛteśa during calendrical rites. This permits the *mantrin* to continually protect the monarch while he adheres to the prescriptions for festival rituals. I examine the iconography of these deities and demonstrate their unique features in the *Netra Tantra*. For example, many of the deities form the gestures (*mudrā*) of wish-fulfillment and protection. The illustrations of the deities situates the text within the Tantric system. The deities connect to the streams of revelation and create a hierarchy in which the Bhairava Tantras, such as the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras*, rank the highest. This allows the text to justify its worship of Amṛteśa at all times. Additionally, I examine Kashmiri and Nepalese statuary that correlates to the descriptions found in the *Netra Tantra*. Bühnemann¹⁶ and Sanderson¹⁷ note several sculptures of Mṛtyujit that had earlier been misidentified. This enables me to trace the influence of the *Netra Tantra* and contextualize it within the larger Sanskrit literary canon. I compare these images with the ancient and medieval Sanskrit narratives. I conclude that the *Netra Tantra's* Mṛtyujit is no more transgressive than the Purāṇic Śiva. This shows that Śaiva Tantric heterodoxy is very much part of orthodox Śaiva mythology. I also relay non-Tantric myths that explain how Śiva attained the names Mṛtyujit, Mṛtyuñjaya, and Amṛteśa. This attests to Śiva's influence as a carrier of immortality beyond the Tantric fold.

¹⁶ Gudrun Bühnemann, 2009, "The Identification of a Sculpture of Mṛtumjaya / Amṛteśa and Amṛtalakṣmī in the 'Royal Bath' in Patan (Nepal)," in *Prajñādhara: Essays of Asian Art, History, Epigraphy and Culture in Honour of Gouriswar Bhattacharya. Volume I*, Eds. Gerd J.R. Mevissen and Arundhati Banerji, New Delhi: Kaveri Books, p. 110.

¹⁷ Sanderson, 2004, p. 240.

Next, I examine how Amṛteśa appears within the visual world. I examine the physical evidence for the worship of Amṛteśa as Mṛtyujit throughout the Himalayan region. I compare the visual evidence, found in bronzes and statuary, with Purānic representations of Śiva. This allows me to demonstrate the position of Śiva as a non-Vedic deity whose outsider status extends beyond the bounds of Tantric theology. This helps to explain the role of the Tantric practitioner as heterodox rather than heretic, a theme I revisit in Chapter Two.

Utilizing this information, I then introduce the form of Amṛteśa called Mṛtyujit or Mṛtyuñjaya. This allows me to establish a connection between Mṛtyujit, the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra, and rituals that aim to conquer death in Vedic, Purānic, and Tantric literature. The iconographic narratives of Śiva allow me to analyze the forms of the deity presented in the *Netra Tantra*. The appearance and name of Amṛteśa develops from the formless to the manifestations of other deities, said in the *Netra Tantra* to be forms of Amṛteśa. The practice of worshipping Amṛteśa in the guise of other Brahminical deities allows the practitioner to use the protective *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra while simultaneously adhering to calendrical rites and festivals that center on those other deities. To do this, I translate the texts' descriptions of deities, from Amṛteśa to Mṛtyujit, to different forms of Viṣṇu, Sūrya, and even the Buddha. I then compare these accounts with the physical records of the Himalayan region. Many of these depictions are unique to the region. This demonstrates the limited geographic influence of the *Netra Tantra*. It also corroborates evidence that the *Netra Tantra* had a place of prominence in Himalayan court life.

Finally, I outline the form and ritual application of *maṇḍala*. This includes a discussion of the four types of *maṇḍalas* found in Tantric texts. This lays a

foundation for discussion of the *Netra Tantra's maṇḍalic* instruction, to which I return in Chapters Two and Three.

Religious practitioners assume new identities when they are initiated into their religious sect. For the practitioner himself, other members of his religious order, and outsiders, this new identity informs social interaction. Often it supersedes his old identity. In a sect with secret membership, outsiders may not be aware of this new identity. Knowledge of the new religious identity informs social interactions with other members and outsiders.

Chapter Two examines the interrelationship between religion and society for followers of the non-dual Tantric Śaiva tradition. First, I examine the creation of the Tantric identity as separate from social and religiously orthodox identities. I explore the new Tantric identities created through initiation and ask how these new identities impact the larger social experience of practitioners. I do this by analyzing the function of transgression within the Tantric milieu. This leads to a discussion of the ways in which its members negotiate or retain caste status. I then reflect on the origin of Tantric practice and map how Tantra seeks to subvert the social caste paradigm. I examine the theories about the historical spread of Tantric practice — whether it was a practice that began with kings and priests, reaching the lower castes in discourse, or a practice that commenced among the lower castes and worked its way up through society. For this, I consult textual descriptions of practices that are prescribed for members of different castes. This leads to an examination of the removal of caste by means of initiation. I also reflect on the internal hierarchy of initiatory statuses that replaces caste. This offers a humanizing look at the individual needs and actions of practitioners. I contrast this with the non-Tantric sphere. Social and religious ties existed between Tantric

writers and the upper echelons of Kashmiri society. I argue that caste erasure was limited to the ritual sphere and therefore symbolic. I compare the philosophical ideal of the vanquishment of caste distinction with the social necessity for hierarchy. This illuminates the ways in which Tantric practice bestows power to the individual religious initiate. I also explore the nature of auspicious and inauspicious symbols related to initiation. These symbols appear in the *Svacchanda Tantra* when it charts the preliminary rites that precede initiation and help explain how the *mantrin* judges the initiand's preparedness for entry into the Tantric sphere. I then translate and analyze Chapter Four of the *Netra Tantra*. Chapter Four describes the process of initiation. It explains the intended outcome of the rite and provides an ontological framework for the initiatory rituals. Finally, I explore the relationship between the *mantrin* and the monarch. I investigate royal patronage and the rites of lustration (*nīrājana*) through which the Tantric guru protects the king. Each of these rites help practitioners to develop their Tantric identities.

I investigate caste in Tantric and non-Tantric social circles. I examine the place of the new practitioner within the secret Tantric community using theoretical models of secrecy. These models provide a base for the examination of shifts between caste and states of impurity that occur in Tantric practice. The *Rājataranṅiṇī* offers a useful guide here. Its narratives demonstrate how practitioners who have shed caste identity through initiation still retain it in the social world. Kalhaṇa focuses largely on monarchs, disapproving only of transgressive Tantric rites that involve cross-caste pollution. This leads to a discussion of purity and impurity in Tantric traditions, and their roles in Tantric practice. Finally, I turn to the analysis of the initiand's dreams that his initiating guru conducts before the *dīkṣā* rite takes place. The symbols of these dreams are

steeped in pure/impure dichotomies. Auspicious dreams often contain imagery that would normally be considered impure and vice versa. This signals to the guru that the initiand is ready to accept his new Tantric identity.

In Chapter Two, I then turn to the act of *dīkṣā* itself. I translate Chapter Four of the *Netra Tantra* as well as Kṣemarāja's accompanying commentary to explain the *Netra Tantra*'s description of the initiation process. Here I show that the guru separates the subtle body of the initiand from his physical body. The guru removes the initiand's subtle body or soul, places it inside his own heart, and returns it, purified, to the newly initiated practitioner. This transforms the initiand into a twice-born, purified devotee of Rudra and cuts the bonds of rebirth. Newly initiated, the devotee then awaits liberation upon death and is able to take part in both daily and occasional rites as required by his tradition. I then examine the impact of transgressive rites. Building upon Taussig (1989) and Douglas (1966), I explore the pivotal role of secrecy, this time in relation to transgression. Then, I discuss the relationship between the monarch and the *mantrin*, and the ways in which each are socially affected by their perceived transgressions.

Monarchs and *mantrins* approach rites to conquer death in very different ways. For a monarch, these rites should allow him to continue to rule through the prolongation of life, attainment of wealth, and a prosperous family. To achieve these aims, the king employs a *mantrin* to perform complex rituals. When the *mantrin* seeks to conquer death for himself, he turns to contemplative practice. Rather than draw *maṇḍalas* and deposit offerings into a ritual fire, he uses visualization techniques and breath control. Chapter Three discusses rites that lead to the conquest of death (*mṛtyu vañcana*). First, it explores how the *Netra Tantra* and related texts define death and its conquest. I ask whether the text means release from rebirth, immortality, or the avoidance of an improperly timed death. I also

examine rites to alleviate disease, the pain of death, and disease itself. These rituals rely heavily on mantra and *maṇḍala* in tandem. In addition to an exploration of rites relating to the conquest of death (*mṛtyu vañcana*) in the *Netra Tantra*, I examine a visualization to conquer time and death in the *Svacchanda Tantra*. The former focuses on the king and the latter the *mantrin*.

The two techniques have divergent outcomes. First, the ritual found in the *Netra Tantra* aims to prolong life and to terminate pain and suffering. The text is specifically concerned with the longevity of kings. Its rituals can, however, easily be adapted to other members of society. The ritual also sets out to relieve the suffering of those who have already died. The *mantrin* uses *maṇḍalas* and mantras to bring the physical body of the afflicted into the Tantric fold. He connects those bodies to the divine and offers release from disease and death. The performance of these semi-secret rites gives the *mantrin* a social cachet; he is able to influence the progression of life.

Death rites dominate Chapter Six of the *Netra Tantra* and Chapter Seven of the *Svacchanda Tantra*. Their performance reveals the spiritual and social power of the *mantrin*. The *Netra Tantra* describes mantras and *maṇḍalas* that the priest conducts on behalf of the dying. This contrasts with a visualization practice found in the *Svacchanda Tantra*. It contains instructions for meditation that offers its user a direct means to conquer death and overcome time.¹⁸ The *Netra Tantra* sets out to grant success in the world of men, to confer benefits, to bring an end to sickness, to destroy untimely death, and to bring about peace and nourishment.¹⁹

¹⁸ Bäumer, 2018, p. 14, 18, briefly discusses the synonymy of death and time in Chapter Nine of the *Netra Tantra*.

¹⁹ NT 6. 2b-3: *yathā siddhipradaṃ loka mānavānāṃ hitaṅkaram || 2 ||*
pūrvoktaduṣṭaśamanam apamṛtyuvinaśanam |
āpyāyanam śarīrasya śāntipuṣṭipradaṃ śubham || 3 ||

The *Netra Tantra's* *mṛtyu vañcana* rituals rely heavily on mantra and *maṇḍala*. I examine here the specific *maṇḍalas* and their accompanying mantras. I discuss how these *maṇḍalas* and mantras are encoded in the text. Mantras are often employed within ritual without *maṇḍalas*. In these rites the mantra must be used alongside the *maṇḍala* for the ritual to be successful.

The second technique requires a deeper understanding of the symbolic lexicon of the tradition. Through knowledge of imagery that unfolds in meditation, the *yogin* is able to attain the highest levels of consciousness. The first practice targets the afflictions of the body and aims to prolong life; meditation attempts to gain immortality independent of the physical body. Prior to his death, the *yogin* attains unparalleled spiritual powers, including supernatural abilities (*siddhi*).

I trace Śaiva Tantric rituals to their *kāpālika* roots. In doing so, I connect the exorcistic and apotropaic rites found in the *Netra Tantra* to orthodox texts, including the *Atharva Veda* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. I compare the *mṛtyu vañcana* rites of the *Netra Tantra* to complementary rituals found in the Buddhist *Cakrasamvara*. This allows me to compare ritual specifics, such as colors and sacrificial ingredients. Further, I compare the yoga of the *Netra Tantra* with meditative practices of *Svacchanda Tantra*. Meditation becomes a tool to conquer death. I compare the imagery of the *Netra Tantra's* yoga to the visualization practice found in the *Svacchanda Tantra*.

II. Importance of Study

This study adds to the scholarly understanding of the *Netra Tantra*. It translates and analyzes a large number of key passages in this important text. The analysis that accompanies the translation contextualizes the practices with other Tantric works. This gives a fuller picture of medieval Tantric practice and the development of religious ideas.

In addition, I examine the details of religious practice across the tradition. This too gives access to the development of Tantric religion. Not only does such detail reveal ontological truths, it demonstrates the metaphysical circumstances in which practitioners worshipped. The diversity of practices described in Tantric texts indicate a vibrant tradition that was constantly interpreted and reinterpreted.

My thesis also examines the conception of the body in medieval India. It demonstrates how the body was vulnerable to demons and reliant on deities for its continued existence. I do not attempt to chart ideas about the Tantric body across the Śaiva tradition; I focus on the body in the *Netra Tantra*. For the Tantric practitioner, the divinized body is part of a psychophysical organism. Through practice, the *mantrin* moves from the gross (*sthūla*) body to the subtle (*sūkṣma*) through breath practices and consciousness until he reaches its highest manifestation (*para*). The body (*deha*) is less important than form (*rūpa* or *svarūpa*). Form includes the physical body as only a small part of the individual. A person's form includes their *sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, and *para* manifestations as well as their social bodies, including caste and name. The protective rites of the *Netra Tantra* reveal that the name of an individual overcome with illness works as a ritual substitute for that person. This is not to say that the physical body of the person is not important. The body is central to ritual practice. When the *mantrin* places the mantra upon the body (*nyāsa*), he creates a Tantric body that itself becomes a ritual tool. The body and the mantra become fused. This allows the mantra to heal the body.

My study of the protective rites of the *Netra Tantra* offers new insight into Tantric practice as a whole. The *Netra Tantra* and its commentary rely on the corpus of Śaiva Tantric teachings to develop their ideas and rituals. Kṣemarāja's commentary reinterprets the text as work that explains the non-duality of the

universe. Throughout this study, I refer to texts that both precede and follow the *Netra Tantra* to help us understand it in an ever-shifting Tantric context. It should however be noted that the study utilizes the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies edition of the *Netra Tantra*. Published in 1927 and 1939, this text is based on manuscripts much later than those preserved in Nepal. Therefore, my focus is on the text as it has been transmitted recently, rather than an examination of the earliest edition and may have been changed at a later date to reflect subsequent innovation. In this respect, I look forward to the forthcoming semi-critical edition and translation being prepared by Flood.

Chapter One: Mantra and Deity Visualization

I. *Oṃ Jum Sah*: decoding the mantra

A. Overview of Tantric Mantras

Mantra has been an integral part of Indian religious traditions since the Vedic period. Staal has demonstrated that comparison of the similarities between Vedic and Tantric mantras is more fruitful than a focus on the differences.²⁰ Both are used in ritual and meditation — two practices that are sometimes impossible to distinguish — and can be recited aloud, inaudibly, mentally, or can be left unenunciated.²¹ Further, though Vedic mantras are often verses of the Vedas themselves, Tantric mantras do not directly come from Sanskrit verses, being instead made of phonemes that have no obvious syntactic value. When used in ritual, neither type of mantras are treated as verse.²² Instead, practitioners use both Vedic and Tantric mantras as ritual objects connected to, but not defined by, the meanings assigned to their words or phonemes.

Vedic and Tantric mantras diverge in the Tantric use of phonemes. In the Tantric system, practitioners consider the mantric phonemes to be identical to the deities themselves. In addition to aural expression, the *mantrin* performs the placement (*nyāsa*) of the mantra. Here, he manifests the mantric phonemes on the bodies of other practitioners as well as on *maṇḍalas*, *cakras*, and *yantras*.²³

²⁰ Frits Staal, 1996, *Ritual and Mantras: Rules Without Meaning*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 223-236.

²¹ Staal, 1996, p. 225.

²² Staal, 1996, p. 224.

²³ Andre Padoux, 2011, *Tantric Mantras*, London: Routledge, p. 7. See below for a discussion on the distinction between the three categories of ritual drawing.

The *Netra Tantra* instructs the *mantrin* to both recite and write the primary mantra in the various rites. This mantra, *om jum saḥ*, appears encoded in Chapter Two of the *Netra Tantra*. Its phonemic technical associations appear in Chapter Twenty-two. The mantra *om jum saḥ* is not unique to the *Netra Tantra*. It also appears in a variety of Tantric texts where it is closely associated with *mṛtyuñjaya*, both as a rite and a deity.²⁴ The *Netra Tantra* itself also appears under the names *Mṛtyuñjaya* and *Mṛtyujit Tantra*.²⁵ The mantra of the *Netra Tantra* differs from the Vedic *mahāmṛtyuñjaya* or *trayambaka* mantra.²⁶

The *Netra Tantra* first introduces the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra in the context of *maṇḍala* protection rites. The text focuses on the shape of the letters in *śāradā* script to help the practitioner create the *maṇḍala*. It then elaborates on the powers of the individual components that make up the mantra, picking up these meanings again in the twenty-second chapter. This introduction to the mantra not only illustrates the meaning and power associated with the mantra but establishes the way in which it will be used throughout the remainder of the *maṇḍala* practices.

²⁴ Including the seventh century *Kālottara*, written by the Tamil Brahmin writer Yāmunācārya and influential on the development of later Tantric ritual; tenth century Kaula *āgama Āgamaprāmāṇya*; eleventh or twelfth century text on temple worship, *Īśānaśivoagurudevapaddhati*; post-twelfth century Kashmiri *Agnikāryapaddhati*; late medieval period Kashmiri *Devīrahasya*; sixteenth century *Brhat Tantrasāra*. Additionally, a handful of texts that have not yet been studied or dated also include the mantra. These texts include *Siddhilakṣmīkoṭyāhutidinakṛtya*, *Acintyaviśvasādākhyam*, *Ugracaṇḍapūjāpaddhati*, *Kāmikāgama*, *Kṛtyakramādyotikā*, *Tantracintāmaṇi*, *Dīkṣāprakāśa*, *Vāruṇapaddhati*, *Vimalāvātī Tantra*, *Parākramapūjā*, and *Hāhārāva Tantra*.

²⁵ Hélène Brunner, 1974, "Un Tantra du Nord: le Netra Tantra," *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, Tome 61, p. 125.

²⁶ RV 7.59.12 [om] *trayambakaṃ yajāmahe sugandhim puṣṭivardhanam | urvārukam iva bandhanān mṛtyor mukṣīya māmṛtāt | |* This mantra is also found at YV 3.60 and AV 14.1.17. The use of both mantras offer the practitioner protection from death. The *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra of the *Rg Veda* appeals to Rudra while that in the *Netra Tantra* implores Śiva.

During initiatory rites (*dīkṣā*), *ācaryas* place mantras on both *maṇḍalas* and the bodies of initiands.²⁷ This empowers and Tantrifies the place on which the *ācaryas* position the mantras, demarcating the Tantric ritual space.²⁸ Religious marking of bodies occurs in various forms across world religions.²⁹ In Hinduism, we often find such markings on the forehead. This indicates one's alliance to Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava religious orders.³⁰ Other such identity-markers include clothing and religious ornaments. These identifications are temporary and can be supplanted in the case of conversion, excommunication, or change in institutional position. They also indicate the acceptance of the practitioner by other members of the religious group. In such instances, the body acts as the indicator of acceptance and also demonstrates the potential of bodily modification. LaFleur offers two categories of possible modification: modification that does not violate the surface of the body (such as cutting, piercing, or fasting) and modification that does.³¹ The placement of mantra (*nyāsa*) in the Tantric context clearly conforms to this first category. In fact, unlike many types of religious marking, *nyāsa* does not leave any visible markings at all. Here the *mantrin* uses his hands, formed into specialized gestures (*mudrās*), to place mantras onto the body.³² It is only when mantras are written on

²⁷ Andre Padoux, 1990, *Vāc: the Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*, trsl Jacques Gontier, Albany: SUNY Press, p. 54-80.

²⁸ Loriliai Biernacki, 2016, "Words and Word-Bodies: Writing the Religious Body," in *Words: Religious Language Matters*, Eds. Ernst van den Hemel and Asja Szafraniec, New York: Fordham University Press, p. 71-72.

²⁹ Yudit Korberg Greenberg, 2018, *The Body in Religion: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, London: Bloomsbury, p. 183.

³⁰ Axel Michaels, 2015, *Homo Ritualis: Hindu Ritual and Its Significance for Ritual Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 110-112.

³¹ William R. LaFleur, 1998, "Body," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Taylor, Mark C., ed Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 38.

³² Padoux, 1990, p. 63.

the *maṇḍala* that one can see the mantras with the physical eye.³³ Both the visible and non-visible mantras transform the physical world that they interact with because the deities they call forth are inherent within them. These deities are embodied within the mantras and can therefore protect the bodies of practitioners from the epidemics and illnesses inflicted upon them by demons. Like the deities and the mantras, these demons too are invisible but physical. I discuss the iconography of the deities as they appear in the *Netra Tantra* below. For now it is important to note that there has been as an eagerness on behalf of Western art historians to sanitize such images in order to make them more presentable to the modern viewer.³⁴ For the Śaiva practitioner, these deities and their imagery does not represent something else (i.e., symbolic). It is instead imbued with significance and agency.³⁵ For the medieval Śaiva practitioner, the deities, mantras, icons, and *maṇḍalas* are aesthetic manifestations or corporalizations of that which already exists, rather than a creation of something new.³⁶ The complexity of such a world reinforces the Tantric tendency toward a professional class of practitioners who work in secrecy. These gurus are first initiated and then trained to call upon and interact with deities and demons.³⁷

³³ Here I indicate the physicality of mantric optics because, of course, visualization is an important part of Tantric practice and practitioners are guided through various practices in which they visualize mantras in various ways.

³⁴ LaFleur, 1998, p. 47.

³⁵ Padoux, 2011, p. 36.

³⁶ Flood, 2006, p. 75.

³⁷ White, 2003, p. 2.

B. Encoding the Mantra: NT 2.17-33

The *Netra Tantra's* Second Chapter begins with the goddess Pārvatī's request that Śiva reveal to her the remedy for the ailments that afflict divine and worldly beings. Among these maladies she lists anxiety, (*ādhi*), fear of disease (*vyādhībhaya*), terror (*udvigna*), poison (*viṣa*), demons (*bhūta*), fear (*bhaya*), tetanus (*ardita*), sudden death (*apamṛtyu*), a hundred injuries (*śatākṛṇa*), fever (*jvara*), cough (*kāsa*), and wasting away (*kṣaya*).³⁸ Śiva responds that no one has ever before asked such a question and therefore he has never before revealed the answer.³⁹ He emphasizes the importance of the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra and the *Netra Tantra's* tripartite approaches of mantra, yoga, and knowledge.⁴⁰ Śiva adds to the list of maladies a group of supernatural beings that cause illness: Bhūtas, Yakṣas, Grahas,⁴¹ Unmādas, Śākinīs, Yoginīs, Gaṇas, Bhaginīs, Rudramātr̥s, Ḍāvīs, Ḍāmarikās, Rūpikās, Apasmāras, Piśācas, Brahmaṛṣas, Grahas, as well as the afflictions of sudden (*apamṛtyu*) and natural death (*kālapāśa*).⁴² Finally, Śiva reveals that protective practices should be carried out first for the king, then the king's sons, all living creatures beginning with Brahmins, and all those tormented with the fear of faults (*doṣa*).⁴³ That Śiva discusses supernatural beings that cause such disease demonstrates how invisible forces affect the world in observable ways. In order to counter these forces, Śiva reveals another invisible but observable element, mantra. This also demonstrates how mantras cross boundaries to affect the gross (*sthūla*) and subtle (*sūkṣma*) bodies of practitioners. Śiva himself acts as a representative of

³⁸ NT 2.3.

³⁹ NT 2.9.

⁴⁰ NT 2.11.

⁴¹ The list contains two types of Grahas, seizers and planets.

⁴² NT 2.13-15a.

⁴³ NT 2.15b-16a.

the *para* body to encapsulate the tripartite nature of the world. We find this threefold pattern throughout the *Netra Tantra* and connected to its practices of mantra, yoga, and *jñāna*.⁴⁴

In addition to revealing the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra, *om juṃ saḥ*, Śiva speaks about two other important elements of mantric practice. First he describes the *mātrkā*, the source for all mantras, and explains how to write the *mātrkā* mantra on a lotus flower. Kṣemarāja uses the *mātrkā* to explain the technicalities of the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra.

The description of the mantra in the *Netra Tantra* relies on several aspects of the gross world: the earth, organic matter, and the phonemes of the *mātrkā*⁴⁵ (*a*, *ka*, *ca*, *ṭa*, *ta*, *pa*, *ya*, and *śa*). The *mantrin* uses organic matter to create a ritual space on a pure plot of earth by drawing a lotus and places the *mātrkā* onto the petals at the eight cardinal and inter-cardinal directions. Padoux notes that the five gross physical elements⁴⁶ spring from the gross (*sthūla*), the senses from the subtle (*sūkṣma*), and vital breath (*prāṇa*) from the highest (*para*).⁴⁷ As I demonstrate, even the written form of the mantra utilizes power of *prāṇa* to imbue it with divine power.

The pure-souled *ācārya* should draw an eight petaled lotus, in smooth, pure earth [that is] smeared with sandal and aloe wood [and] scented [with] fragrant camphor and strong saffron. After he has drawn [the lotus] with a great undertaking, [the *ācārya*,] decorated and adorned with a crown,

⁴⁴ Navjavin Rastogi, 1992, "The Yogic Disciplines in the Monistic Śaiva Tantric Traditions of Kashmir: Threefold, Fourfold, and Six-Limbed," in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism*, Ed Teun Goudriaan, Delhi: Sri Satguru, p. 259.

⁴⁵ The *mātrkā* consists of all fifty phonemes of the Sanskrit alphabet though in this case the first letter of each category, save for the aspirate, stands in for the rest.

⁴⁶ earth, water, fire, air, and ether.

⁴⁷ Andre Padoux, 1989, "Mantras — What Are They?," in *Understanding Mantras*, Ed Harvey P. Alper, Albany: SUNY Press, p. 35.

smearred with sandalwood, [writes] the *mātrkā*. Having placed *om*⁴⁸ in the middle [on the pericarp of the lotus], he should draw [the phonemes of the *mātrkā* on the petals] starting in the East. (NT 2.17-19)⁴⁹

The *mātrkā* mantra appears in many Tantric texts.⁵⁰ Most explain it as the source of all other mantras.⁵¹ Each phoneme of the mantra represents the first phoneme of its traditional phonological category. Therefore, it contains the complete alphabet.⁵² By associating each phoneme with a cardinal direction, the categories of vowel, velar, palatal, etc., correspond to the compass points, here in the shape of a lotus flower. The lotus commonly forms the core of *maṇḍalas* and *yantras* with the petals oriented toward the directions. This allows for the placement of the deities in the correct position.⁵³ The *mantrin* first draws the *om* in the center of the lotus before then placing the *mātrkā* phonemes in their respective positions. As I demonstrate, during protective rites, rather than write *om*, the practitioner writes the name of the

⁴⁸ Here called *tritanu*.

⁴⁹ *bhūpradeśe same śuddhe candanāgurucarcite |
karpūrāmodagandhādhye kuṅkumāmodasevite | |17| |
ācāryas tu prasannātmā candanāgurucarcitaḥ |
uṣṇīṣādyair ābharaṇair bhūṣitaiḥ sumahāmatih | |18| |
padmam aṣṭadalaṃ kṛtvā mātrkāṃ tatra cālikhet | |
tritanuṃ madhyato nyasya vargān prāgādito likhet | |19| |*

⁵⁰ For example, the *Mrgendra Tantra*, *Svacchanda Tantra*, *Uttarasūtra*, *Nayasūtra*, *Guhyasūtra*, *Brahmayāmala Tantra*, *Siddhayogeshvarīmata*, and the *Tantrāloka*.

⁵¹ Judit Törzsök, 2009, "The alphabet goddess Mātrkā in some early śaiva Tantras," Second International Workshop on Early Tantras, Pondicherry, India, hal-00710939, p. 1.

⁵² In his translation of Abhinavagupta's *Yoginīhr̥daya*, Padoux gives several charts associating each phoneme of the *mātrkā* with the *tattvas*, demonstrating some of the intricacies of the technical meanings associated with the phonemes. See Andre Padoux with Roger-Orphé Jeanty, 2013, *The Heart Of The Yogini: The Yoginīhr̥daya, a Sanskrit Tantric Treatise*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 130, 132-133, 145-146.

⁵³ Gudrun Bühnemann, 2003, "Maṇḍala, Yantra and Cakra: Some observations." In *Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Hindu Traditions*, Ed Gudrun Bühnemann, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, p. 21. There are also instances in which one substitutes the lotus with a spoked wheel (*cakra*) on which the deities are assigned to the hub and spokes. Bühnemann, 2003, p. 24. This *cakra* appears in Chapter Six of the *Netra Tantra*.

person afflicted with illness in the center of the lotus. His name is thus surrounded, and thereby protected, by the mantra.

Through the physical creation of the mantra, the practitioner extracts and worships the *mātrkā* as a goddess. Both the *Siddhayogēśvarīmata* and *Svacchanda Tantra* also worship the goddess Mātrkā as the power of Rudra. Rudra possesses all the letters of the alphabet and hence is the source of the categories of phonemes (*vargas*).⁵⁴

[The *mantrin*] should worship the mother of mantras with the highest *bhakti*, by spreading flowers and perfume, O Devī. He should extract the deity invoked by the mantra (*mantradevatā*) [with the mantra]. Beginning with the all-pervading (*viśva*) and ending with manifold (*viśvarūpa*) [*om*], [he should] always [worship with] the nectar of the white flower. The bright sound is highest Śakti, [who] resembles one-in-the-same Śiva. By this [worship] the pearls [of the mantra] are all bound in a cord. (NT 2.20-22ab)⁵⁵

Once *om*, from which seventy-million mantras emanate, is in place, the *mantrin* then constructs the rest of the *Netra Tantra*'s mantra. Though the text does not give the mantra outright in Chapter Two, it reveals the mantra based on a description of the attributes of the phonemes and by common associations, such as that of *saḥ* with *amṛta*, as I demonstrate below.⁵⁶

The exposition of the mantra concludes with two references to the cessation of death. The first is the association of *amṛta* with *sa*, a common connection found

⁵⁴ Törzsök, 2009, p. 10-11.

⁵⁵ *pūjayet parayā bhaktyā puṣpadhūpādivistaraiḥ | |
mantrāṇāṃ mātaraṃ devī proddharen mantradevatāṃ | |20 | |
viśvādyāṃ viśvarūpāntaṃ viśvahāmṛtakandalam |
jyotir dhvaniḥ parāśaktiḥ śiva ekatra saṃsthitāḥ | |21 | |
anena grathitaṃ sarvaṃ sūtre maṇigaṇā iva |*

⁵⁶ Annette Wilke and Oliver Moebus, 2011, *Sound and Communication: An Aesthetic Cultural History of Sanskrit Hinduism*, Berlin: De Gruyter, p. 725.

throughout Tantric literature.⁵⁷ The second is the *visarga*, the sixteenth vowel. The *Netra Tantra* equates *visarga* with the *kalā* nectar, or the nectar of the sixteenth phase of the moon. The nectar of the moon is *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality.⁵⁸

From this authority, the seventy-million (*saptakoṭi*) mantras⁵⁹ arise. The terminal letter shining with various light,⁶⁰ [which is the] split belly of the moon [j], is placed upon a hook [u], and yoked with the last rising horizon [i.e., the wind or last labial nasalization]⁶¹ [ṃ]. That which is described is celebrated in the world as the supreme *amṛta* [sa], this is the highest dwelling place. It is the highest *amṛta*. Joined with the *kalā* nectar [*visarga*], filled with the splendor of the moon. It is the highest abode [of Śiva]. That is the supreme word. That is supreme strength, that is supreme *amṛta*. The highest of splendors is highest light of light. The divine Lord is the supreme cause of all the world. The creator (*sraṣṭṛ*), supporter (*dharṭṛ*), and destroyer

⁵⁷ See Lynne Bansat-Boudon and Kamaleshadatta Tripathi, 2011, *An Introduction to Tantric Philosophy: The Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Yogarāja*, New York and London: Routledge, p. 203; Andre Padoux, 2003, "Maṇḍalas in Abhinavagupta's Tantrāloka," in *Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Hindu Traditions*. ed Gudrun Bühnemann, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, p. 75; Lillian Silburn and Andre Padoux, 2000, *Abhinavagupta La Lumière Sur Les Tantras chapitres 1 à 5 du Tantrāloka*, Paris: Collège de France, p. 102, 177.

⁵⁸ This phase, which is added to the moon's fifteen stages of waxing or waning, is the *anṭrakalā*, in which the moon does not die. See James Mallinson, 2007, *The Khecarīvidyā of Ādinātha: A critical edition and annotated translation of an early text of haṭha yoga*, New York and London: Routledge, p. 213n277.

⁵⁹ Kṣemarāja explains, they are called the seventy million *saptakoṭi* mantras because they came into being "in the beginning of the world after authority was manifested" *saptakoṭyo mantrā iti prathamāsarge tāvātāmevādhikāro'bhūt*.

⁶⁰ Kṣemarāja adds that this follows the place of fire (*agni*), after the first group of letters, starting with *ka* (*kavarga*). In other words, it is a letter in the second (*tālavya*) group.

⁶¹ According to Kṣemarāja who adds *tathā tiryaggo vāyus tatpatre yo 'ntaḥ pavargāpekṣayā makārastena*.

(*saṃhartṛ*) are not as strong as this. This receptacle of mantras is the word of all perfections (*siddhi*) and characteristics (*guṇa*). (NT 2.22cd-28ab)⁶²

The text describes *j* as hanging on the hook of the letter *u*. If we examine the written form of these letters we see that, in *śāradā*, which was used in Kashmir beginning in the eighth century, *j* consists of two semicircles that the text appears to read as two split halves of the moon with its tail set upon the hook of the *u*. However, it may also refer to the shape the tongue takes when it produces the *j*, with the tongue curved toward the top of the palate into a half circle. The hook of *u* is then either the brushstroke that signifies *u* or the forward momentum of the lips and breath as they move from *j* to *u* in a hook-like shape. Finally, this component of the mantra ends on the *anusvāra*. It is written as a dot rising above the horizon of the characters or with the closing of the resting lips. It is likely that the text intentionally references both the written and mouthed shapes of the sounds. This

⁶² *asmān mantrāḥ samutpannāḥ saptakoṭyo 'dhikāriṇaḥ* | | 22 | |
citrabhānupadāntaṃ tu śasāṅkaśakalodaram |
tadaṅkuśordhvoavinystaṃ tiryaggāntordhvojayitam | | 23 | |
etat tat paramaṃ dhāma etat tat paramāmṛtam |
yat tat paramam uddiṣṭam amṛtaṃ lokaviṣṭutam | | 24 | |
pīyūśakalayā yuktaṃ pūrṇacandrāprabhopamam |
etat tat paramaṃ dhāma etat tat paramaṃ padam | | 25 | |
etat tat paramaṃ vīryam etat tat paramāmṛtam |
tejasāṃ paramaṃ tejo jyotiṣāṃ jyotir uttamam | | 26 | |
sarvasya jagato devam īśvaraṃ kāraṇaṃ param |
sraṣṭā dhartā ca saṃhartā nāsty asya sadṛśo balī | | 27 | |
mantrāṇāmālayo hy eṣa sarvasiddhiguṇāspadam |

The interpretation of phonemes found in the *Netra Tantra* differs greatly from a similar mantric exposition in the *Uttarasūtra* of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*. "The syllable JUṂ awakens mantras; with the syllable OM he should kindle them; with NAMAḤ he should perform purification [of them] (*amalaṃ kuryāt*); with SVĀHĀ he should make them flame (*dīpayet*); the syllable SAḤ, positioned at the beginning and end, is to be used for 'cutting'. They [*scil.* *Mantras*] bestow all objects of desire when this rite has been performed as prescribed (*yathokte karmaṇā kṛte*)." Trsl. Dominic Goodall, 2015, *The Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā: The Earliest Surviving Śaiva Tantra. Volume 1. A Critical Edition & Annotated Translation of the Mūlasūtra, Uttarasūtra & Nayasūtra*, Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry / École Française d'Extrême-Orient, p. 379.

gives the mantra greater depth and importance. It demonstrates that in both its written and spoken form, its physical shape and characteristics are important and meaningful.⁶³ Through the connection of the components of the mantra and its written form, the text gives the mantra a body in the physical world. At the same time, it places the mantra into the body of the speaker through kinesis of the tongue and lips. The mantra then becomes inseparable from its user, after which the text shifts to connect mantra with Śiva.

The *Netra Tantra* utilizes the common association of *sa* with the abode of the divine to reveal the final mantric component. Here, the text describes both *sa* and *visarga* as the highest abode (*paramaṇi dhāman*). The connection between the abode of Śiva and the body appears in the *Paramārthasāra*. Abhinavagupta explains,

The divine abode for him is his own body — endowed with the thirty-six principles, and replete with œils de bœuf [viz., the sense-organs], constructions inset in the body — or [if not his own, then] the body of another, or even an object, such as a jar. (PS 74)⁶⁴

Of course, Abhinavagupta's reading is non-dualistic. The original text of the *Netra Tantra* has dualistic elements. However, the *Netra Tantra* focuses on rites in which the deity removes illnesses from the bodies of those afflicted by demons. These demons possess the body and cause physical torment. In the next section I explain that a practitioner cannot speak the mantra without the thirty-six *tattvas* if he wishes it to be effective. The *tattvas*, which also bring meaning to the mantra, are

⁶³ I would like to thank Professor Sanderson for bringing this interpretation to my attention. The sound *s* is described in *Tantrāloka* 3.168-396, which cites the as yet undiscovered *Kulagahora* in which *s* is described as "that which has no vowel (*anackākhyā*)." This allows for an interpretation of the phones as either in their written or mouthed forms. I agree with Sanderson that it makes more sense to focus on the shape of the mouth as the vocalic sound is inherent in the written form of the phoneme and changes the shape of the mouth when uttered. However, the resemblance to the written form cannot be discounted.

⁶⁴ Trsl. Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, 2011, p. 252-253.

thus an inherent aspect of the mantra. In order to heal the afflicted, the deity has to manipulate the body and ritual objects with his will. This allows the deity to drive away the demons and cause an end to illness. As I demonstrate below, this occurs spontaneously through use of the mantra. Other bodily associations occur in the non-dualist *Kulagahvara*, cited by Abhinavagupta in the *Tantrāloka*. This text connects *sa* with the "essence of poison" (*viṣatattva*).⁶⁵ Jayaratha, in his commentary on the *Tantrāloka*, explains that when someone immerses his awareness in this poison and experiences the highest non-duality, nothing can manifest itself to cause him harm.⁶⁶ Though the *Kulagahvara* is no longer extant and we have no date for it, quotations found elsewhere make it clear that it is a Kaula text and more transgressive than the *Netra Tantra*. However, Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja also cite the *Netra Tantra* often. In doing so, they allow for the reading of Kaula interpretations of the text.

The last phoneme of the mantra, *visarga*, appears in written form as two dots, stacked on top of one another. This signifies the inhalation and exhalation of breath.⁶⁷ The word *visarga* also indicates a final emission of that breath as well as liberation. *Visarga* completes the mantra, which begins with highest sound of Śiva and Śakti and ends with the *amṛta*.

Next, as shown above, the *Netra Tantra* praises the deity: he is the supreme cause of the world. This renders him more powerful than the creator (*sraṣṭṛ*), traditionally associated with Brahmā, the supporter (*dhartṛ*) Viṣṇu, and the destroyer (*saṃhartṛ*) Śiva. As I show in Chapter Three, as the practitioner meditates

⁶⁵ Silburn and Padoux, 2000, p. 177-178.

⁶⁶ TĀ 3.173-174.

⁶⁷ Jaideva Singh, 1979b, *Vijñānabhairava, or Divine consciousness*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 20.

on the *haṃsa* mantra during his quest to vanquish death (as described in the *Svacchanda Tantra*) he first gains the power of Brahmā, then Viṣṇu, and Rudra/Śiva. When he attains Śiva's power, he conquers death, called *amṛta*.⁶⁸ The *Netra Tantra* places the deity Mrtyujit higher than Śiva, though he is also a manifestation of, and therefore the same as, Śiva.

Finally, the text discusses the six limbs of the *aṅgamantra*, which *mantrins* use to place mantras (*nyāsa*) in ritual use and bring forth the deity.⁶⁹ They act as subordinate steps that a practitioner must perform before the main rites.⁷⁰ If not done at all or performed incorrectly, subsequent rites are ineffective. The six *aṅgamantras* are eye (*netra*), heart (*hṛd/hṛdaya*), head (*śiras*), topknot (*śikhā*), cuirass or breastplate (*kavaca*), and weapon (*astra*).⁷¹ They emanate from, and are identical with, Śiva's own body. Through their use, the worshipper aligns his body with that of the deity. The practitioner places the phoneme of each *aṅgamantra* on the corresponding part of his body, often onto the hands.⁷² The twelfth century *Kāmikāgama*, composed in South India, focuses on temple construction. This text says placement of the *aṅgamantras* begins with the palm and moves either from the little finger to the thumb or in the reverse depending on whether one is a forest-dweller/renouncer (*mumukṣu*) or a householder (*bubhukṣu*).⁷³ The *Svacchanda Tantra* simply says a practitioner is to begin with the thumb and end with the little

⁶⁸ SvT 7.212b-217.

⁶⁹ Padoux, 2011, p. 70; Richard H. Davis, 2000, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Siva in Medieval India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 48.

⁷⁰ Davis, 2000, p. 49.

⁷¹ For a detailed discussion of the *aṅgamantras* throughout the Śaiva tradition see Hélène Brunner, 1986b, "Les membres de Śiva," in *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*, Vol 40(2). pp, 89-132.

⁷² Davis, 2000, p. 49.

⁷³ Davis, 2000, p. 49-50.

finger.⁷⁴ The practitioner offers foods such as sesame and mustard seeds while he recites the mantras associated with each *aṅga*.⁷⁵ The *aṅgamantras* transform the practitioner's body. They prepare the body for further ritual by enveloping it in protective mantras and creating a body that Davis describes as "parallel to that of Śiva."⁷⁶ This body, which coexists with Śiva, can then act as Śiva when the worshipper performs his rites. The *Svacchanda Tantra* says that once the worshipper has been consecrated with the *astramantra*,⁷⁷ the last of the *aṅgamantras*, the clay he inhales will blaze like the sun. Kṣemarāja adds that this means the practitioner should allow the clay to be touched by the rays of the sun or to touch it with his breath.⁷⁸ The worshipper then covers his body from head to foot with clay mixed with water while he recites *om* and performs a *saṃdhya* rite. The latter consists of mantra repetition and drinking water in order to remove impurities (*mala*).⁷⁹ Once he has performed the *nyāsa*, he is able to personify the embodied mantra.

Aṅgamantras vary based on deity and *bīja* mantra. The *Netra Tantra* explains,

Now, I shall explain the limbs (*aṅga*) of the mantra, with which, tied together, he achieves perfection. The *hrdaya* mantra, [which] confers all perfections, is the letter that terminates⁸⁰ in the middle [*j*], followed by the fifth sovereign vowel [*u*], and summits with the conclusion of wind [*m*].

⁷⁴ SvT 2.32.

⁷⁵ Anna Aleksandra Ślaczka, 2007, *Temple Consecration Rituals in Ancient India: Text and Archaeology*, Leiden: Brill, p. 74, 117.

⁷⁶ Richard H. Davis, 1992, "Becoming a Śiva, and Acting as One, in Śaiva Worship," in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism*, Ed Teun Goudriaan, Delhi: Sri Satguru, p. 114.

⁷⁷ *Tāntrikābhidhānakośa*, Vol. I: *A Dictionary of Technical Terms from Hindu Tantric Literature*, 2000, Eds., Hélène Brunner, Gerard Oberhammer, and Andre Padoux, Vienna: Verlag Der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften describes the *astramantra* as simple formulas used for common rites to perform homage, specific acts, or for protection.

⁷⁸ SvT 4b–12a.

⁷⁹ SvT 2.4b–7a.

⁸⁰ *Ānta* here is used to describe consonants that do not have an adjoining vowel.

The *śiras* is terminal *soma* [v] joined with that from *anala* [y] and yoked with *om*. *Śikhā* is taught as *māyā* [ī] joined with the cessation of wind [ṃ]. [The *kavaca* is] the closed *īśa* [h], rising *īśvara* [ṃ] and joined with an elevated half of twelve [ū]. Now with *nāda* joined with Śiva and Śakti he is enveloped and supreme. The *netra* [*aṅgamantra*], [which is] most powerful and destroys all faults, begins with Bhairava [j], and an *om* [and] situated with a head always in motion [y]. That *astra* mantra is proclaimed *ajīvaka* [pha] joined with *ṭa*. The six *aṅgas* of the *mantrarāṭ* [i.e., the *mṛtyuñjaya mantra*], which confers *siddhis*, is declared (NT 2.28cd-33)⁸¹

The *aṅgamantras* then are: *hṛdaya* (juṃ), *śiras* (vyom), *śikhā* (īṃ), *kavaca* (hūṃ), *netra* (jyom), and *astra* (phaṭ). While it is unusual to list the *netra* before the *astra*,⁸² Kṣemarāja does not comment upon this discrepancy.

The chapter ends with a reinforcement that the *mṛtyuñjaya mantra*, also called the *mantrarāṭ*, confers supernatural powers (*siddhis*) on those who use it. In this case, the user is both the *ācarya* who performs the rites and the client on whose behalf he carries out the *pūjās*. The text does not directly discuss mantra again until the Twenty-First Chapter, in which Śiva and Pārvatī discuss the nature of mantras.

⁸¹ *adhunāṅgāni vakṣyāmi saṃnaddho yais tu siddhyati* | |28| |
kṛtāntamadhyaṃ varṇaṃ svararāṅpañcamānugam |
prabhañjanāntaśirasam hṛdayam sarvasiddhidam | |29| |
somāntamanalād yena yuktaṃ praṇavayojitam |
etac chirah anilāntena yuktā māyā śikhā smṛtā | |30| |
īśāntam īśvarordhvaṃ ca dvādaśārdhordhvayojitam |
śivaśaktyātha nādena yuktaṃ tad varma cottamam | |31| |
sabhairavādyam praṇavam sadāgatiśirahsthitam |
netramantro mahograś ca sarvakilviṣanāśanaḥ (em. *sarvakilviṣanāśanaḥ*) | |32| |
ajīvakaṭasamyuktam astram etat prakīrtitam |
aṅgaṣaṭkaṃ samākhyātaṃ mantrājasya siddhidam | |33| |

⁸² See Dominic Goodall, 2004, *The Parākhyatantra: A Scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta*, Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry / École Française D'Extrême-Orient, p. 223n288; SvT 1:60c-65b;

II. Language, the Body, and Mantra

A. The Nature of Mantra

In the simplest terms, mantras are thought instruments.⁸³ According to traditional sources, mantras are to be spoken and not written.⁸⁴ As demonstrated above, a text will encode the mantra within it so as to emphasize the importance of vocalization.⁸⁵ Mantras are the most effective means of reaching salvation because their nature is that of the divine Word, which itself is synonymous with the deity.⁸⁶ In most cases, mantras are also considered to be equivalent to ritual acts.⁸⁷ However, Tantric and Vedic traditions understand mantric repetition (*japa*) differently. The Vaidika's foremost concern is accurate vocalization of the mantra during rites that involve the ritual fire (*homa*).⁸⁸ Tantric innovation adds a concern with mantric repetition as inner visualization to the technicalities of semiotic insight taught in authoritative texts and by traditional teachers.⁸⁹

The word "mantra" contains the root \sqrt{man} , meaning "to think," and the suffix "-tra," which signals instrumentality.⁹⁰ Padoux notes that in Tantric texts, -tra relates to the root \sqrt{tra} , meaning "to save." This makes mantras salvific thoughts.⁹¹ In the following section I demonstrate that for practitioners who follow

⁸³ Patton E. Burchett, 2008, "The 'Magical' Language of Mantra, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 76. No. 4. (Dec.), p. 813.

⁸⁴ Burchett, 2008, p. 814.

⁸⁵ Burchett 2008, p. 814.

⁸⁶ Padoux, 1990, p. 374.

⁸⁷ Guy Beck, 1993, *Sonic Theology: Hinduism and Sacred Sound*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, p. 31.

⁸⁸ Timalsina, 2005, "Meditating Mantras: Meaning and Visualization in Tantric Literature," in *Theory and Practice of Yoga: Essays in Honour of Gerald James Larson*, Eds. Gerald James Larson and Knut A. Jacobsen, Leiden: Brill, p. 214.

⁸⁹ Timalsina, 2005, p 214.

⁹⁰ Burchett, 2008, p. 813; Padoux, 1990, p. 373.

⁹¹ Padoux, 1990, p. 373.

the *Netra Tantra*, mantras are the deities they conjure. Further, I show that salvation comes from the will of that deity. As such, mantras must be treated with care. This means one must use and understand mantras according to the proper procedure. It is not enough to simply know that the mantra is identical to the deity but to recognize how the divine manifests in its mantric form.

To understand mantric forms, one must understand not only what mantras are made of but also how practitioners use them during ritual. In this section, I investigate two scholarly discussions of mantra to critique the categories scholars use to describe mantra. First, I address whether or not mantras should be considered "magic" and how such a categorization impacts the academic approach to the study of mantra. Second, I examine the discourse surrounding mantras as speech acts. Again, defining mantras in this way changes the way one understands the function of mantras within their ritual context.

The main focus for both practitioners and scholars has been the soteriological function of mantra. However, mantras also serve non-redemptive functions, such as those found in the six acts (*ṣaṭkarmāni*). These six acts are appeasement (*śanti*), subjugation (*vaśya*), immobilization (*stambha*), enmity (*dveṣa*), eradication (*uccāṭa*), and liquidation (*māraṇa*).⁹² Dundas describes the *ṣaṭkarmāni* as part of a system of "black magic" found in medieval India.⁹³ Though this phrase

⁹² Burchett, 2008, p. 817.

⁹³ Paul Dundas, 2000, "Jain Monk, Nath Yogi," in *Tantra in Practice*, Ed David Gordon White. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 235.

exists mainly as a pejorative in English,⁹⁴ he points out that the thirteenth century Jain monks who chronicled such activities did not find moral struggles when it came to engaging with black magic.⁹⁵ The *Netra Tantra* prescribes mantric recitation of appeasement, the only of the *ṣaṭkarāni* not to be considered malevolent (*abhicāra*) by the sixteenth century *Mantramahodadhi*.⁹⁶ Consequently, questions regarding the relationship between mantra and magic arise.

Ritual language typically differs from ordinary language. As Burchett points out, academic descriptions of magic focus on the claim that magic comes from a belief that words have inherent efficacy.⁹⁷ Early academic work that examines magic describes it as an act in which people do not distinguish between word and object. Cassirer says magical belief occurs when one concludes "word and name do not merely have a function of describing or portraying but contain within them the object and its real powers."⁹⁸ By considering mantras as objects that contains the salvific nature of Śiva, one could say that Cassirer's definition applies to mantra. However, definitions of magic tend to focus on the worldly, pragmatic outcomes of rites, rather than the spiritual and redemptive.⁹⁹ Mantras, especially within the Tantric tradition, "can be used to different ends — ends that, though

⁹⁴ Johnathan Z. Smith, 2004, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 218 argues that the term "magic" should be abandoned in academic discourse as those things termed "magic" "have better and more precise scholarly taxa." While Smith correctly identifies that there is a problem with the term magic, I believe abandoning it completely denies an important distinction between religion and magic, which exist on a spectrum that is more subjective than many other academic categories. The pejorative nature of the term magic in Western tradition demonstrates how the meaning and usage of the term shifts over time and with perspective. One might apply the term to the actions of another in order to marginalize or condemn such practices and often those who perform them. Consequently, there exists an overlap between religion and magic.

⁹⁵ Dundas, 2000, p. 235.

⁹⁶ Burchett, 2008, p. 817.

⁹⁷ Burchett, 2008, p. 817.

⁹⁸ Cassirer, 1925 [1955], p. 40.

⁹⁹ Burchett, 2008, p. 818.

different, are not necessarily incompatible...liberation, supernatural powers, and even destructive magical abilities can not only be taught in the same text, but even be bestowed to an adept through the performance of one ritual only."¹⁰⁰ In other words, Tantra does not see a contradiction or distinction between rites for liberation (*mukti*) and those for enjoyment (*bhukti*). This means, as Burchett points out, the categories of religion and magic cannot apply to mantras as the categories themselves are faulty.¹⁰¹ However, Timalisina explains that, "some Tantras relegate audible chanting to the performance of black magic [which] suggests again that audible repetition is considered by Tāntrikas to be a lesser form of mantra practice."¹⁰² Burchett is correct that the categories have fault but it must be considered that Tantric texts do make a distinction between higher and lower mantric practice. Such a definition of magic focuses on the form the rite takes rather than the results. Mantras then can provisionally be described as religious language that contains magical characteristics.

However, the above definition inspires an important question: Are mantras actually language? Understanding both sides of this theoretical argument helps us to ascertain the *Netra Tantra's* own description of mantra and allows analysis of the text. Though the nature of mantra given in the *Netra Tantra* does not directly speak to this issue, it does shed light on the theoretical. Austin recognized that language goes beyond the communicative and that words or utterances are themselves action.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Padoux, 1990, p. 381.

¹⁰¹ Burchett, 2008, p. 819.

¹⁰² Timalisina, 2005, p. 215. KP 57.88 and LT 39.35 emphasize the importance and prominence of silent *japa*.

¹⁰³ J.L. Austin, 1962, *How to Do Things With Words*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Staal argues that, while mantras and language share phonological and pragmatic properties, the use of mantra in ritual and meditation brings about effects that are "ineffable" and "beyond language."¹⁰⁴ Further, he does not believe that mantras have the power of transformation or the ability to bring about new existences because they allow their users to access what already exists.¹⁰⁵ Staal does concede that mantras, and in fact most utterances, are speech but not speech acts, which he defines as "language utterances by which an act is performed,"¹⁰⁶ and that "depend on context and on the speaker, and are therefore indexicals."¹⁰⁷ As indexicals, that which they reference shifts from one context to another. They also contain two kinds of meaning, linguistic meaning or character and content.¹⁰⁸ In this way, he likens mantras to bird calls, the "babblings and presleep monologues" of children, and glossolalia, giving access to a pre-linguistic state of mind.¹⁰⁹ Wheelock also points to a pre-linguistic state. However, he shares the view of Eliade and Padoux, that mantras do not signify an outside referent in the objective world but instead point to the source of language, which is itself the source of all creation.¹¹⁰ As such, he says that mantras need not adhere to communicative function and that the most essential feature of ritual utterances is that they "are speech acts that convey little or no information."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴ Staal, 1989, "Vedic Mantras," in *Understanding Mantras*, Ed Harvey P. Alper. Albany: SUNY Press, p. 74, 80.

¹⁰⁵ Staal, 1989, p. 80.

¹⁰⁶ Frits Staal, 2008, *Discovering the Vedas: Origins, Mantras, Rituals, Insights*, New York: Penguin Books, p. 250.

¹⁰⁷ Staal, 2008, p. 250.

¹⁰⁸ David Braun, 2015, "Indexicals," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/indexicals>.

¹⁰⁹ Staal, 1989, p. 75-84.

¹¹⁰ Wade T. Wheelock, 1989, "Mantra in Vedic and Tantric Ritual," in *Understanding Mantras*, Ed Harvey P. Alper. Albany: SUNY Press, p. 120.

¹¹¹ Wheelock, 1989, p. 57-58.

Using Staal's rubric, Tantric mantras cannot be considered speech acts because they do not have differing references. One cannot use the mantra *om jum saḥ* to call forth any deity other than Amṛteśa because the mantra *is* the deity it summons. Later in Chapter One, I show that the practitioner can visualize the body of different deities using this mantra but ultimately this worship is one in which he honors Amṛteśa through the deity's multifaceted nature. Any perceived difference in reference simply comes from the user of the mantra misunderstanding its nature. The meaning and content of a mantra is also not variable nor does it fluctuate with context. Staal also claims that, "in Sanskrit, a mantra is *never* called an act (i.e., *karman* or *kriyā*)."¹¹² However, we find *japa kriyā*, the act of reciting the mantra, in a handful of Tantric texts¹¹³ as well as *japa karman*.¹¹⁴ This contradicts Staal's thesis and indicates that medieval Sanskritists were at least open to considering mantra as speech acts. These writers emphasize the activity of mantric recitation through the addition of these verbal elements. Alper points out that in the *Śiva Sūtra Vimarśinī*, Kṣemarāja argues that mantra is something one does.¹¹⁵ Quoting the *Svacchanda Tantra*,¹¹⁶ Kṣemarāja says,

ātmano bhairavaṃ rūpam bhāvayed yas tu puruṣaḥ |
tasya mantrāḥ prasiddhyanti nityayuktasya sundari | |

[Only] the mantras of a man who is united with the eternal, that is, one who has realized he is Bhairava, are successful, O Goddess.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Staal, 1996, p. 239.

¹¹³ KĀ 2.45.93, 2.64.70, 2.65.58, PhT 3.95, 3.99.

¹¹⁴ KĀ 2.75.12.

¹¹⁵ Harvey P. Alper, 1989, "The Cosmos as Śiva's Language-Game: 'Mantra' According to Kṣemarāja's *Śivasūtravimarśinī*." in *Understanding Mantras*. ed Harvey P. Alper. Albany: SUNY Press, p. 260.

¹¹⁶ In a verse not found in the published edition of the SvT but that, according to Alper, 1989, p. 287n23, may be a variant of SvT 2.142[cd-143ab].

¹¹⁷ Trsl. Alper, 1989, p. 259.

Kṣemarāja explains the verb to become or to realize (*√bhū*) refers to cognition, which itself is the inner emergence of Bhairava.¹¹⁸ Alper is correct in arguing that Kṣemarāja believes mantras to be effective redemptive personal activities for those who understand that they are tools for recognition.¹¹⁹ For those who do not comprehend mantras in this way, mantras appear to be magical spells that offer their users the ability to impose one's own will upon the world, rather than the will of the deity.¹²⁰ Further, both the *Svacchanda Tantra* and Kṣemarāja's *Netra Tantra Uddyota* use *mantra karaṇa* to denote mantra as action.¹²¹ Kṣemarāja is most clear on this point asking, *kurvanti mantrakaraṇāni katham prayuñjīta*.¹²² "In what manner do [the users of mantras] perform the [act of] practicing mantras?" The answer to this question is less important than the fact that it has been asked at all. The question refers to mantric procedure while Kṣemarāja finds nothing extraordinary about mantra as an action. A *mantrin* must perform mantra in the same way that he conducts ritual observances, yoga, etc., in order for the mantras to be effective. Similarly, the *Svacchanda Tantra* says, *mantrakaraṇakriyāyogād yojayāmi pare śive*.¹²³ "From the efforts of mantric actions, ritual observances (*kriyā*), yoga, etc., [he finds results] in highest Śiva." Again, the text emphasizes that mantras, like other religious behaviors, have a performative, active quality. This example is important because, while the *Tantrāloka* includes the phrase *mantrakriyā* in several places,¹²⁴ Abhinavagupta uses it in a compound to refer to mantra and ritual observance tied

¹¹⁸ Alper, 1989, p. 260.

¹¹⁹ Alper, 1989, p. 260.

¹²⁰ Alper, 1989, p. 260.

¹²¹ NTU 16.43, SvT 4-400.

¹²² NTU 16.43. Note here that the root *√prayuj* can refer not only to practice but also recitation, performance, and production in addition to unification.

¹²³ SvT 4-400cd.

¹²⁴ TĀ 19.26-27, 21.34.

to yoga and knowledge (*jñāna*). However, the *Svacchanda Tantra* is clear when it applies *karaṇa* to mantra as a way to refer to the act of doing.

Staal may be correct that *some* mantras are not speech acts. These mantras do not involve intention¹²⁵ or express thought,¹²⁶ possess meaning,¹²⁷ and sometimes accompany acts,¹²⁸ but others do in fact have these qualities. As I demonstrate below, Śiva's response to Pārvatī shows that mantras are made of unbounded energy, contain the *tattvas*, have meaning, and are synonymous with Śiva and Śakti. Further, mantras are intimately tied to Śiva's will and therefore have intentionality because they are Śiva. For Staal, it is the user whose speech must contain intention, thought, and meaning in order to qualify as a speech act. However, when the practitioner focuses upon the deity invoked by and equivalent to the mantra, he finds these qualities present. Further, it is irrelevant whether or not mantras accompany other acts. Mantric recitation (*japa*) and the placing (*nyāsa*) of mantras are acts in the same way as shouting and gesturing are acts. Such acts characterize and accompany ordinary speech without changing the nature of that speech. They help to accentuate and focus speech, they tell us something about the intention and meaning of the speech but they are not synonymous with that intention or meaning.

Mantras vary in form. Vedic mantras are taken directly from texts while Tantric mantras are often series' of phonemes that do not adhere to ordinary grammar or vocabulary. This makes them appear nonsensical to those untrained in their semantic technicalities. Taber describes mantras as "indicators not strictly as

¹²⁵ Staal, 1989, p. 66.

¹²⁶ Staal, 1989, p. 67.

¹²⁷ Staal, 1989, p. 67.

¹²⁸ Staal, 1989, p. 68.

assertions but in the most general sense; not only can they take on various syntactic forms, they often depend on mythologic and symbolic associations."¹²⁹ It is these associations that, for the initiated practitioner, provide the mantra's meaning in the form of what I call mantric technicalities. As we saw above, the text discloses the components of the mantra by associating them with objects. Below I demonstrate that the phonemes of the *mantrarāṭ* are connected to life, sacrifice, and Śiva. These mythological and symbolic links not only provide meaning to the individual units of the mantra but also convey its outcome.

Staal argues that Vedic mantras do not convey information despite the fact that those taken directly from texts are syntactically capable of doing so. He says that prose mantras, chanted interjections (*stobha*), and "the numerous sounds and noises that pervade the other ritual uses of the Vedas" are not used like ordinary language.¹³⁰ Further, he argues that even those mantras that do come directly from texts are not treated like verse by their users and therefore it is impossible to try to attain any syntactical meaning from them.¹³¹ Mīmāṃsā philosophers addressed this idea and adopted the viewpoint that the meanings of words found in the Vedas is the same as that in ordinary language. This demonstrates the Mīmāṃsā efforts to emphasize the importance of Vedic ritual. Were Vedic and ordinary language not the same, men would be unable to understand Vedic injunctions and therefore could not follow them.¹³² In this Mīmāṃsā interpretation, the intentionality of the Vedic injunction is a speech act even without the injunction

¹²⁹ Taber, 1989, "Are Mantras Speech Acts? The Mīmāṃsā Point of View," in *Understanding Mantras*, Ed Harvey P. Alper. Albany: SUNY Press, p. 150.

¹³⁰ Staal, 1996, p. 224.

¹³¹ Staal, 1996, p. 224.

¹³² Taber, 1989, p. 157.

itself being articulated, because inherent in these dictums is a promise.¹³³ Mantras, however, do not have this inherent illocution but express their intended meanings by using the language of injunctions. Therefore, in the Mīmāṃsān view, mantras too are utterances with intention as well as speech acts, because speech acts involve actions in which intention is expressed and realized.¹³⁴

In his discussion of Tantric mantras, Padoux says that while mantras have no semantics, their connection to ritual gives them structure and syntax. This means that while mantras do not themselves have meaning in an ordinary linguistic manner, they are used in a meaningful way in rites with intention and purpose.¹³⁵ Further, Staal's argument relies on the notion that mantras accompany other actions and therefore are not acts on their own. Padoux uses the example of *mantrasuddhi* or *mantrasodhana* rites. Here the *mantrin* purifies the mantras by drawing the *mātrkā* on a lotus. This demonstrates that mantras are in fact speech acts as they are the focal point of the practice that puts them into an active state.¹³⁶ If one simply utters the mantra without intention or without putting it into action first through purification and activation, the mantra will not be effective. Through bodily action, whether that be writing the mantra on the drawing of a lotus or touching the written mantra with flowers or leaves,¹³⁷ the practitioner imbues the mantra with the divine, its meaning, and its objective. This is what allows the mantra to become a speech act.

¹³³ Taber, 1989, p. 158.

¹³⁴ Taber, 1989, p. 153, 158.

¹³⁵ Padoux, 2011, p. xi.

¹³⁶ Padoux, 2011, p. 94.

¹³⁷ Padoux, 2001, p. 93

B. Mantric Physicality: Śiva, *aṅu*, and consciousness, NT 21.1-19

Now that I have touched upon the functionality of mantra, I turn to the constitution of mantras. The *Netra Tantra* presents a dialog between Śiva and Pārvatī in which she enquires about the nature of mantra. Additionally, she asks Śiva to explain what gives mantras their vitality. Hers is not a question regarding procedure, but instead a query into the cosmological nature of mantras.

O Deva, what are mantras composed of? What are their characteristics? What do they look like? What power [do they] possess? What makes them powerful? How are they able [to be effective] and who impels them [to be productive]? (NT 21.1)¹³⁸

Pārvatī's line of inquiry indicates that mantras have some sort of physicality. As such, she speculates that mantras must have components and characteristics. They are things a person can see. This means that they are more than simply a sum of their vocalized phonemes. Padoux says, "mantra is sound (*śabda*) or word (*vāc*); it is never, at least in its nature, written,"¹³⁹ and though the practices of the *Netra Tantra* focus on the written form of the mantra, the text always focuses on the act of writing the mantra, not the written form itself. This written mantra acts as an extension of the sound, which itself is both inseparable from the mind of its user but also consciousness itself.¹⁴⁰ However, focusing on the written aspect of mantras brings the attention to individual mantras. I believe that Pārvatī's question does not contradict Padoux, but instead offers us another framework with which one can think about the visualized form of mantras. By asking "what do mantras look like?"

¹³⁸ *mantrāḥ kim ātmakā deva kiṃsvarūpās ca kīdṛśāḥ |
kiṃprabhāvāḥ katham śaktāḥ kena vā sampracoditāḥ | | 1 | |*

¹³⁹ Padoux, 1989, p. 297.

¹⁴⁰ Padoux, 1989, p. 298.

Pārvatī acknowledges that there are circumstances in which mantras have a visible embodied form as part of their essential nature.

It is important here to remember that in the medieval Indian worldview, the Cartesian dualism between mind and body, spirit and matter, etc., does not exist. Instead, the human body contains both gross (*sthūla*) and subtle (*sūkṣma*) elements that encompass the mental and physical. The Tantric body is one that exists in a spectrum from gross to subtle to highest, in which the outermost bodily sheath (*kośa*) is the material (*anna*) and the innermost is bliss (*ānanda*).¹⁴¹ Sāṃkhya expands on this idea to describe the psychophysical body through twenty-five *tattovas*. The *sthūla* body consists of the five gross elements (*mahābhāuta*), while the *sūkṣma* body consists of five subtle elements (*tanmātra*), five organs of action (*karmendriya*), five sense organs (*buddhīndriya*), the mind (*manas*), ego (*ahaṃkāra*), and intellect (*buddhi*).¹⁴² Here the mind has the capacity for both sense and action. Tantra builds upon Sāṃkhya's twenty-five *tattovas* for a total of thirty-six.¹⁴³ For now we need only focus on those directly associated with the *sthūla* and *sūkṣma* bodies. Here, sound (*śabda*) is included in the *tanmātras*. This does not mean that mantras are this single *tattva* but indicates that the text wants to call the *tattovas* to attention when Pārvatī asks about the nature of mantras. Her questions include those about the agency of mantras. That Pārvatī's question even asks about mantric agency means

¹⁴¹ TU 2.2.1-5 The five sheaths (*pañcakośa*) that make up the body are food (*anna*), breath (*prāṇa*), mind, (*manas*), understanding (*vijñāna*), and bliss (*ānanda*).

¹⁴² Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, 1987, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies. Volume IV. Sāṃkhya: A dualist tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 49.

¹⁴³ See Dominic Goodall, 2016, "How the Tattvas of Tantric Śaivism Came to Be 36: The Evidence of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*," in *Tantric Studies: Fruits of a Franco-German Project on Early Tantra*, Eds. Dominic Goodall and Harunaga Isaacson, Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry / École Française d'Extrême-Orient, p. 77-111 for the development of the *tattva* system within early Śaiva literature.

the composer of this Tantra allowed for an agent — someone or something — who impels mantras and makes them active.

If the human body exists on a spectrum of *sthūla* to *sūkṣma* to *para*, then embodied mantras must as well. The ritual officiant utters or visualizes mantras in rites. Like bodies, mantras are intimately tied to the *tattoas*, which make their use effective. Both the *Vijñāna Bhairava*¹⁴⁴ and Somanānda's *Śivadṛṣṭi*¹⁴⁵ define recitation (*japa*) as contemplation and ceaseless awareness of one's identification with Śiva. Thus, *japa* expresses the spontaneous and internal repetition of the primordial sound (*nāda*). This definition means that true concentration during recitation requires the practitioner to focus on an abstraction rather than a particular name or mantra. The primordial sound itself is the form of everything.¹⁴⁶ The *Vijñāna Bhairava* and *Śivadṛṣṭi* view mantras from a more esoteric perspective than the *Netra Tantra*. Their heterodox position is fully aniconic, whereas texts such as the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, *Svacchanda Tantra*, and *Netra Tantra* rely on physical representations of deities. This includes the installation of mantras onto idols, in which one installs the mantras of the deity onto the appropriate material object, which has been bathed and purified in the same way as the disciple during initiatory rites.¹⁴⁷ In the *Tantrāloka*, Abhinavagupta seeks to explain the contradiction, saying that installation onto an idol does not apply to the essential nature of Bhairava to the material. Instead, officiants should only perform mantric installation on idols that do not come from Bhairava texts and to mantras of the

¹⁴⁴ VBh 145.

¹⁴⁵ ŚD 7.84-85b.

¹⁴⁶ Alexis Sanderson, 1990, "The Visualization of the Deities of the Trika," in *L'image divine: Culte et méditation dans l'hindouisme*, Ed André Padoux, Paris: Éditions du CNRS, p. 76; Nemeč, 2011, *The Ubiquitous Śiva: Somanānda's Śivadṛṣṭi and his Tantric Interlocutors*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 46.

¹⁴⁷ Sanderson, 1990, p. 78-80.

Siddhānta system.¹⁴⁸ In other words, Abhinavagupta proposes that the *Netra Tantra* refers to an icon that is only a physical representation of the deity and not one that is embodied with the essential nature of Bhairava.¹⁴⁹ In noting Abhinavagupta's effort to refute this inconsistency, I wish to highlight that the *Netra Tantra* does allow for the essential Bhairava to physically manifest and it is only in the Trika interpretation where this view becomes problematic.

O Deva, if [mantras] consist of the nature of Śiva, [which is] ubiquitous, formless (*śūnyarūpin*), and [if he] does not perform action, how can [mantras] be agents of action? And how do they create a state [in which one] performs them [when they are] formless (*amūrtatva*)? Who does [that performance] without an individual body? Speak, O Lord. An action of [one who is] bodiless cannot be seen, O Parameśvara. When having a body [results in a condition] in all living beings of [being] bound, how does the agency of the bound [individual] contradict those agents [who are] devoid of power? Thus, [because] mantras consist of the nature of Śiva, how do they actually accomplish [anything]? (NT 21.2-5)¹⁵⁰

The *Netra Tantra* describes a Śiva who is all-pervading and formless. This Śiva does not act as the performer of action. In other words, Pārvatī understands Śiva as unconstrained by the *tattvas* and yet able to impact the *sthūla* and *sūkṣma* realms. Pārvatī describes the nature of Śiva as formless (*śūnyarūpin*) or immaterial

¹⁴⁸ Sanderson, 1990, p. 78.

¹⁴⁹ Sanderson, 1990, p. 78.

¹⁵⁰ *śivātmakās tu ced deva vyāpakāḥ śūnyarūpiṇaḥ |*
kriyākaraṇahīnatvāt katham teṣāṃ hi kartṛtā | | 2 | |
amūrtatvāt katham teṣāṃ kartṛtvaṃ copapadyate |
vigraheṇa vinā kāryaṃ kaḥ karoti vada prabho | | 3 | |
na dṛṣṭo hy aśarīrasya vyāpāraḥ parameśvara |
śarīriṇo yato bandhaḥ katham baddhasya kartṛtā | | 4 | |
śaktihīnasya kartṛtvaṃ viraddhaṃ sarvavastuṣu |
evaṃ śivātmakā mantrāḥ katham sidhyanti vastutaḥ | | 5 | |

(*amūratva*).¹⁵¹ In other words, not only is Śiva amorphous, he is, in fact, disembodied altogether. The text enquires as to whether something that is disembodied, and therefore something that one cannot see, is capable of being an agent of action. Somānanda offers the clearest refutation of this conception. In his *Śivadṛṣṭi*, Somānanda argues that consciousness does not appear to have material form¹⁵² and that consciousness does not operate in the same way that the physical body does.¹⁵³ Instead, like the *yogin* in meditation, Śiva creates by means of his will. "Omnipresence and multiplicity of nature exist by means of will. It is not the case here that [Śiva] produces the universe by transforming himself, since his nature is as it is in immediate conformity with his will."¹⁵⁴ In other words, Śiva does not act as an agent of action in the same way that embodied beings do. What he creates is simply the product of his consciousness. Mantras then are both made of Śiva's nature and creations produced by the will of his formless consciousness. This creation is also a spontaneous by-product of his will.

The next set of questions suggest that mantras are made of Śakti. Where before the *Netra Tantra* questioned how the disembodied could act, it now focuses on a Śakti defined by motivated performance. The text takes for granted that Śakti is capable of performance and implies, through the use of the phrase *śaktirūpa*, that

¹⁵¹ John Nemeč, 2018, "The Body and Consciousness in Early Pratyabhijñā Philosophy: Amūrtatva in Somānanda's Śivadṛṣṭi," in *Tantrapuṣpāñjali: Tantric Traditions and Philosophy of Kashmir*, Eds. Bettina Sharada Bäumer and Hamsa Stainton. New Delhi: Aryan Books, p. 218, demonstrates that Somānanda conceived of Śiva as a disembodied yet active agent and that *amūrtatva* is the immateriality that characterizes both Śiva and all of existence. Nemeč, 2018, p. 216n1, also notes that while Somānanda uses the term *amūrtatva* often, those who follow him rarely use it, even by Somānanda's disciple Utpaladeva. This supports the dating given by Sanderson, 2004, that places the *Netra Tantra* before Somānanda.

¹⁵² Nemeč, 2018, p. 217, quoting ŚD 2.76.

¹⁵³ Nemeč, 2018, p. 218.

¹⁵⁴ Nemeč, 2018, p. 220, Trsl. of ŚD 3.35-36.

Śakti has an embodied form. This Śakti has substance and exists in a definable state.¹⁵⁵

But, if [mantras consist of] the forms of Śakti, whose Śakti and of what kind? O Deva, what [does] Śakti cause, what is her purpose, and of what kind is she? If [mantras] do not possess Śakti, what is worshipped with Śakti? Independence (*svatantra*) cannot be accomplished by anyone without perfection (*siddha*). What is conquerable [by one who is] imperfect (*asiddha*)? One supposes that [which is] imperfect. Somewhere Śakti exists. In this sense she is not empty of substance. The incorrect perception (*viparyaya*) [is] that the pure form of Śakti [constitutes] the mantras. (NT 21.6-9ab)¹⁵⁶

The ninth century *Śiva Sūtra*, contemporary with the *Netra Tantra*,¹⁵⁷ explicates the nature of Śakti. The *Śiva Sūtra* describes "the production of a body in unification with Śakti."¹⁵⁸ In the *Netra Tantra*, one aims for a body free from illness and death. This is, of course, accomplished through the use of mantra. If the mantra does in fact consist of Śakti, unification with the mantra is fusion with Śakti, which in turn gives rise to this healthy body. This newly created body does not depend on the will of Śakti but, according to Kṣemarāja's commentary on this verse, the will of the practitioner. Kṣemarāja then quotes the *Lakṣmīkaulārṇava*,¹⁵⁹ which says that,

¹⁵⁵ The *Netra Tantra* describes Śiva and Śakti in their purest forms. as such I have kept the capitalizations of both terms but do not intend for them to refer to their deific forms.

¹⁵⁶ *atha cecchaktirūpās te kasya śaktis tu kīdrśī |*
śaktiḥ kiṃ kāraṇaṃ deva kāryaṃ tasyās ca kīdrśam | | 6 | |
yāvan na śaktimān kaścit kasya śaktir vidhīyate |
svatantrā na prasidhyet tu vinā siddhena kenacit | | 7 | |
asiddhena tu yat sādhyam
tad asiddham pracakṣate |

vastuśūnyā na caivātra śaktir vai vidyate kvacit | | 8 | |
śaktirūpās tu te mantraḥ kevalās tu viparyayaḥ |

¹⁵⁷ Jaideva Singh, 1979a, *Śiva Sūtras: The Yoga of Supreme Identity*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. xvii.

¹⁵⁸ ŚS 1.19 *śaktisaṃdhāne śarīrotpattiḥ | |*

¹⁵⁹ To my knowledge the only verses we currently have from the *Lakṣmīkaulārṇava* are quoted in Kṣemarāja's commentary on the *Śiva Sūtra*.

without unification (*saṃdhāna*), initiation and the attainment of *siddhis* are not effective, nor is mantra, the application of mantra, and the practice of yoga.¹⁶⁰ Though the *Netra Tantra* does not always conform to the non-dual view of its commentator, this passage is still useful. The non-dual texts focus on unification with Śakti while the *Netra Tantra* describes a state in which the mantra is possessed with Śakti. Both agree that it is the coupling of Śakti and mantra that impacts the mantra's effectiveness.

Whereas Śiva lacks agency, Śakti the second sentence of this passage assumes that Śakti is one who causes, i.e., acts. Elsewhere, the *Netra Tantra*, which Kṣemarāja cites in his commentary on *Śiva Sūtra* verse 19, says, "she is the source of all the gods and Śaktis in various ways. She has the characteristic of the source of *agni* and *soma*. All originates from her."¹⁶¹ For Kṣemarāja, this demonstrates the non-duality of Śiva and Śakti. But it can also be read in a non-dualistic view that, as separate entities, Śiva is the unmoving *puruṣa* while Śakti is the agent of action, the material world, and *prakṛti*. The thirteenth century Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta *Śivajñānabodha*¹⁶² describes the independence of Śakti as a sunbeam, inseparable from Śiva, the sun, and yet distinct. In this metaphor, the text says the sun "is called 'sunbeams' when shining on those objects [that it illuminates] but 'sun' when shining on itself."¹⁶³ The *Netra Tantra* too uses the metaphor of the sun, saying that the highest Śakti is made of Śiva because the beams of the sun, fire, and heat are

¹⁶⁰ LK *na saṃdhānaṃ vinā dīkṣā na siddhīnāṃ ca sādhanam |
na mantrō mantrayuktiś ca na yogākarṣaṇam tathā | |*

¹⁶¹ NT 7.40 *sā yoniḥ sarvadevānāṃ śaktīnāṃ cāpy anekadhā |
agnīśomātmikā yonis tasyāḥ sarvaṃ pravartate | |*

¹⁶² Jan Gonda, 1977, *A History of Indian Literature, Volume II: Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, p. 161.

¹⁶³ H.W. Schomerus, 2000 [1912], *Śaiva Siddhānta: An Indian School of Mystical Thought*, trsl Mary Law, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 59.

inherent and situated in the sun.¹⁶⁴ Here, the *Netra Tantra* does not say if those beams are distinct from the sun. However, it does say that, following the will of Śiva, those who obey become free of passion and transform so that they are no different from Śakti.¹⁶⁵ At minimum, the practitioner can become identical with Śakti, if not with Śiva.

It is easy enough then to understand Śiva as unmanifest potential and Śakti as Śiva's potential in its inextricable but embodied form. If read from a non-dualistic viewpoint, the sunbeam or rays of the sun are an emanation of the sun that is wholly dependent upon it in order to shine. Consequently, Śiva is the unmanifest mantra and Śakti the manifest. The *Netra Tantra* itself is ambiguous about the independence of Śakti but, as I demonstrated using the above metaphor, it is not contradictory to the text's analysis of mantra. However, it is important to consider both views since Kṣemarāja reads the text through his own *advaita* beliefs, though the text itself does not always conform to his point of view.

Finally, Pārvatī questions how imperfection influences one's independence. If Śakti is the manifestation of Śiva, she must be prone to the imperfections found in the manifest world. A *siddha* attains independence because he has become perfected. Therefore, one who is not yet a *siddha* can only conquer the imperfect. He can reach the state of Śakti but not that of Śiva. To truly become *svatantra*, independent or self-dependent, he must go beyond the imperfect. This is why even the purest form of Śakti cannot form the mantras. Were Śakti alone sufficient no

¹⁶⁴ NT 21.30 *kāryaṃ tasya parā śaktir yathā sūryasya raśmayah | vahner uṣm eva vijñeyā hy avinābhāvini sthitā | |*

¹⁶⁵ NT 21.31-32a *sarvānandakarī bhadrā śivasyecchānuvartini | taddharmadharmiṇī śāntā nityānugrahaśālinī | | 21-31 | | vivarta etat sarvaṃ hi tacchakter nānyato bhavet |*

one would be able to go beyond the imperfect. Śakti's will is limited Only the will of Śiva is truly independent.

Pārvatī then considers a third possibility: that mantras are *aṇu*.¹⁶⁶ Generally meaning "fine" or "minute" and more specifically an atomic unit. Here *aṇu* refers to something that is embodied and therefore limited Though, as we saw above, Śakti has the potential for embodiment and contains substance, she is still embodied in the most abstract of ways. In the metaphor of the sunbeam, Śakti is embodied and therefore visible but not never so fully embodied that one is able to grasp Śakti in his hands. Something that is *aṇu*, no matter how small, exists in the limited, gross world. That which is *aṇu* lacks the potential for embodiment because it is already material. When speaking about the individual's relationship to *aṇu* texts often connect it to impurity (*mala*). Singh does so, saying,

the bondage of the individual is due to the innate ignorance or *āṇava mala*. It is this primary limiting condition which reduces the universal consciousness to an *aṇu* or a limited creature. It comes about by the limitation of the *Icchā Śakti* of the Supreme. It is owing to this that the *jīva* considers himself to be a separate entity cut off from the universal stream of consciousness. It is consciousness of self-limitation and imperfection.¹⁶⁷

In Singh's assertion, the limited creature (*aṇu*) is that which creates the impression of individuality since it acts as a barrier for the practitioner. This keeps the practitioner from realizing the purity and indistinguishability of himself and the divine. Where Śakti is susceptible to the imperfections of the manifest world, the limited creature is innately imperfect. Can this mean that mantras in their most

¹⁶⁶ The text uses *aṇu* and or *āṇava* synonymously.

¹⁶⁷ Singh, 1979a, p. xxii.

gross form are imperfect? I return to this question below. First, it is important to understand how a mantra manifests in the gross world.

The *KiraṇaTantra* describes the relationship between Śiva and mantra as follows,

He is in primal unvoiced sound [*nāda*], in almost gross sound [*bindu*], in (the sound of) ether, in (the gross sound of) mantras (that express Śiva Himself), in (the coarser mantra-souls called) *aṇus* in the power (which controls those), in the seed(-syllables such as *Om* that precede the enunciation of mantras) [*bija*], in the sound units (of the seeds) [*kalā*], and in the end(-sounds such as the final nasalization of the seed syllable *Om*).¹⁶⁸

Here, Śiva manifests himself in all moments, those just before utterance, those of utterance, and those in which sound reaches its final resting place. Through this process Śiva controls everything through sound.

The *Mālinīvijayottara* touches on the limited condition (*aṇu*) in its teachings about a three-fold yogic practice, which is similar to that found in the *Netra Tantra*. As I demonstrate in Chapter Three, the *Netra Tantra* teaches the *sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, and *para* yogas. It emphasizes the manipulation of the physical world. The yoga of the *Mālinīvijayottara* emphasizes three types of absorptions (*samāveśa*) that allow the practitioner to realize his identity. The three are *āṇava*, *śākta*, and *śambhava*. The first, *āṇava*, includes bodily and breath practices such as mantra, *mudrā*, *maṇḍala*, and *nyāsa*.¹⁶⁹ *Śākta* yoga focuses on the mind. It contains meditation on visualized

¹⁶⁸ Trsl. Dominic Goodall, 1998, *Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's Commentary on the Kiraṇatantra. Volume I: chapters 1-6. Critical edition and annotated translation*, Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry / École Française d'Extrême-Orient, p. 290-291.

¹⁶⁹ Rastogi, 1992, p. 252.

objects. Pure consciousness, associated *śāmbhava* yoga, allows the devotee to reach inner awakening.¹⁷⁰

If mantras are *aṇu*, they are limited objects of the gross world. They are both physical and finite. This means that mantras are impure. This leads Pārvatī to question how something limited by impurity can cause someone to become pure. The gods view mantras as Śiva rather than *aṇu*, because of mantras have the ability to confer benefits on those who use them. This apparent contradiction is at the heart of the *Netra Tantra*'s query into the nature of mantra.

But if mantras were *aṇu* [they] would be embodied forms of separation. The essential selves (*ātmasvarūpa*) are known as impure [and are] by no means powerful. Whose impurity does the impure remove? *Aṇu* mantras [and] *devalas* are not perfected, O Parameśvara. Without existence, the three kinds of *tattvas* are kept from a multitude of objects. There, union is declared to be the desire for another living being's welfare. The gods and *āsuras* view mantras are seen as powerful and invincible. [mantras] confer benefits [because they are] all-favoring, all-bestowing, all-pervading, and Śiva. Briefly, O Mahadeva, speak to my question. There is not anyone higher than yourself, O Lord of the World. Please tell all, O Great Śiva, if I please you, O Lord. (NT 21.9cd-14)¹⁷¹

In order to utter a mantra, the disciple requires that it be limited and embodied. But, because mantras are *aṇu*, Pārvatī questions how they can remove

¹⁷⁰ Rastogi, 1992, p. 252.

¹⁷¹ *atha ced āṇavā mantrā vighrahākārarūpiṇaḥ* | | 9 | |
ātmasvarūpā vikyāta malinā balino nahi |
malino malinasyeva prakṣālyati kasya kaḥ | | 10 | |
na siddhā hy āṇavā mantrā devalāḥ parameśvara
tattvatrayaṃ vināstitvaṃ viruddhaṃ vastusantateḥ | | 11 | |
yuktir evātra vaktavyā prāṇināḥ hitakāmyayā |
drśyante balino mantrā apradhṛṣyāḥ surāsuraiḥ | | 12 | |
sarvānugrahakatvena sarvadāḥ sarvagāḥ śivāḥ |
saṃkṣepato mahādeva saṃśayaṃ tu vada sva me | | 13 | |
tvattaḥ parataro nānyaḥ kaścīd asti jagat pate |
brūhi sarvaṃ mahēśāna yadi tuṣṭo 'si me prabho | | 14 | |

impurity. She also provides the answer. Just as mantras are threefold, there are three kinds of *tattvas*: pure (*śuddha*), pure-impure (*śuddhāśudha*), and impure (*aśuddha*). The *tattvas* from *śiva* to *śuddhavidyā* belong to the first category, those from *māyā* to *puruṣa* to the second, and from *manas* to *prthivī* to the last. They move from the most ethereal to abstraction to gross physical objects. This mirrors the *Netra Tantra*'s description of mantra.

In Śiva's response, the text evinces that the nature of mantra contains all three aspects simultaneously. They have the nature of Śiva from which the form of Śakti emerges. This makes them *aṇu*. Mantras, like everything else, exist in all three states.

Ah! The question [you have] asked me is not answered elsewhere, [although] I declare it in all teachings. The foolish, [those] always concealed with illusion, do not know. It is not worship [if] you speak the mantra [devoid of] the three kinds of *tattvas*. Meanwhile, let it be. A world lacking the *tattvas* does not accomplish [anything]. Everything that is seen is made out of the three *tattvas*. O Devī, without three kinds of *tattvas*, no meaning of a word [can be] known. From this are all three kinds of *tattvas*, [from] highest to lowest. Mantras possess the nature of Śiva, are to be known as the form of Śakti, [and] in that manner [are] *aṇu*. Unbounded energies proceed [through] the distribution of the three kinds of *tattvas*. (NT 21.15-19)¹⁷²

¹⁷² *aho praśno mahāgūḍho na pṛṣṭo 'haṃ tu kenacit |*
coditaṃ tu mayā sarvaṃ sarvaśāstreṣu sarvadā | |15| |
na vindanti vimūḍhās tu māyayā cchāditāḥ sadā |
tattvatrayaṃ vinā vas tu mantrō vaktuṃ na yujyate | |16| |
āstāṃ tāvat jagat sarvaṃ tattvahīnaṃ na sidhyati |
tritattoanirmitaṃ sarvaṃ yat kiṃcid iha drśyate | |17| |
tattvatrayaṃ vinā devi na padārtho hi vidyate |
tasmāt tattvatrayaṃ sarvaṃ paraṃ cāparam eva ca | |18| |
śivoātmakāḥ śaktirūpā jñeyā mantrās tathāṇavāḥ |
tattvatrayavibhāgena vartante hy amitaujasah | |19| |

The central aim of my study of the *Netra Tantra's* twenty-first chapter is to understand how the text describes the nature of mantra. The remainder of the chapter continues to describe Śiva, Śakti, and *aṅḡu* but does not add much to our understanding of mantras. The text describes both what is *aṅḡu* and what is Śakti as dependent on Śiva. It characterizes Śakti as will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and action (*kriyā*),¹⁷³ as she is in many other texts of the Śaiva tradition. The *Netra Tantra* also reiterates that impurities suppress *ātman*s and a practitioner can only be saved through the will of Parameśvara.¹⁷⁴ It tells of a Śiva who is disembodied potential while Śakti plays the role of material cause.¹⁷⁵ The practitioner draws on mantras in their three-fold pronounced (recited or written), mental (*dhyāna*), and bodily (*mudrā*) forms to approach Śiva and seek his divine grace.¹⁷⁶

C. The *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra: Exposition on the components of *oṃ juṃ saḥ*, NT 22.5-18

The *Netra Tantra's* twenty-second chapter returns once more to the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra. Here the text spells out the components of this mantra without encoding it. Śiva explains that there are countless mantras, all of which are comprised of Śiva and made manifest by Śakti. They bring about earthly enjoyments (*bhoga*), including health, wealth, and power as well as spiritual liberation (*mokṣa*).

Listen! I will speak to the question that remains in your heart. All the innumerable mantras, on all occasions, have the majesty of Śiva and Śakti, all are endowed with Śakti, all grant rewards (*bhoga*) and liberation (*mokṣa*),

¹⁷³ NT 21.35-37.

¹⁷⁴ NT 21.46b-47a.

¹⁷⁵ NT 21.56.

¹⁷⁶ NT 21.80-82.

and [all] are nourished by one's own Śakti. However, the highest *deva* is tranquil, in possession of imperceptible *guṇas*, [namely] Śiva who consists of all, who is pure, and who is to be understood as unsurpassed. This Parameśvara is the ultimate substrate of [the mantras]. They have arisen through his will [i.e., they are self-arisen or self-illuminated consciousness (*bhāvagrāhyaś cidghanatvena svaprakāśaḥ*)] and [the mantras are] impelled [to act] through his Śakti. [Therefore,] all [mantras] become successful because they have authority everywhere. Wherever [there is] grounding (*ālaya*) [there is] Śiva, [that] is the highest ground (*dhāman*) of all . Mantras and fruitful [because their] power arises from him. (NT 22.5-10ab)¹⁷⁷

Of the countless mantras, the *Netra Tantra* says the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra, which it calls Parameśvara here, is the highest. Its power springs from Śiva's will (*icchā*) and becomes active through Śakti and leads to dissolution into the divine. Here, the concept of dissolution (*ālaya*) refers to absorption (*laya*).¹⁷⁸ The practitioner achieves this dissolution and absorption when he becomes undifferentiated from the divine.

¹⁷⁷ *śrūyatāṃ saṃpravakṣyāmi saṃśayaṃ te hṛdi sthitam |*
mantrakṛtyo hy asaṃkhyātā sarvāḥ sarvādhikārikāḥ || 5 ||
śivaśaktiprabhāvāś ca sarvaśaktisamanvitāḥ |
bhogamokṣapradāḥ sarvāḥ svaśaktibalabrṃhitāḥ || 6 ||
kintu devaḥ paraḥ śānto hy aprameyaguṇānvitāḥ |
śivaḥ sarvātmakāḥ śuddho bhāvagrāhyo hy anuttamaḥ || 7 ||
āśrayaḥ paramas teṣāṃ vyāpakāḥ parameśvaraḥ |
tadicchayā samutpannāstac chaktyā saṃpracoditāḥ || 8 ||
bhavanti saphalāḥ sarve sarvatraivādhikāriṇaḥ |
yadetatparamaṃ dhāma sarveṣāṃ ālayaḥ śivaḥ || 9 ||
asmād eva samutpannā mantrāś cāmoghaśaktayaḥ |

¹⁷⁸ NT 22.23b refers to the six causes (*kāraṇa*): Brahman, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Ísvara, Sadāśiva, and Śiva. NT 7.21 introduces the *kāraṇas* as part of its yogic practice. The verse above adds a seventh *kāraṇa*, that of *laya* or *ālaya*, dissolution or refuge in the divine . Mantras and Śaktis arise from the divine, so at their most powerful and perfect they can lead those who use them back to that unchanging state of Śiva. Śiva here does not refer to the divine Śiva but instead a state of Śiva that must be surpassed in order for the attainment of liberation. See NT 7.23-24. Here one might expect to find Śakti among the list of *kāraṇas* and NT 7.26 does, in fact, list Śakti amongst them as an implicit part of Śiva. *brahmāṇaṃ ca tathā viṣṇuṃ rudraṃ caiveśvaraṃ tathā | sadāśivaṃ tathā śaktiṃ śivasthānaṃ prabhedayet*

The *Netra Tantra*'s mantra can be used for a variety of tasks, unlike some other mantras that have very narrow and specific usages.¹⁷⁹ Most of the rites described in the *Netra Tantra* are *kāmya*, those performed in order to gain an object or a personal advantage (such as wealth, children, driving out of enemies, or the alleviation of disease). Kṣemarāja explains that the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra brings about the spoils of war, offers freedom from disaster, casts out impurities,¹⁸⁰ and conquers death. As a universal mantra (*mahāsāmānyā*), *oṃ juṃ saḥ* is less impacted by the impurities of improper use than other mantras. The text does give very precise instructions on how to interlock the mantra with the person on whose behalf it is used in order to maximize its effectiveness. Like many mantras, the *mṛtyuñjaya* is activated spontaneously by the power of Śiva. It relies on his autonomy, which makes it successful in all its various tasks.¹⁸¹ However, despite its universality and immunity from certain impurities, correct usage is still an important factor in mantric ritual performance.

The *Netra Tantra* describes eleven types of interlocking in which the mantra (A) and the name of the person on whose behalf the rite is performed (*nāman*), or the action or goal of the ritual (*abhidheya*, *sādhyā*) (B) follow particular patterns.¹⁸² The sequences found in the *Netra Tantra* sometimes differ slightly from those found

¹⁷⁹ For example, Michael Slouber, 2017, *Early Tantric Medicine: Snakebite, Mantras, and Healing*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.60,-63, demonstrates that the *vipati* or Gāruḍa mantra, *kṣi pa oṃ svā hā*, has, in both textual and modern tradition, been associated with the cure of snakebites or immunity to infestation by snakes. As such, the *vipati* mantra is not as versatile as the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra though this does not mean it is more or less powerful. Here he also demonstrates how modern practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism have expanded the use of the *Vipati* mantra to protect against cancer and other illnesses. Though somewhat more generalized than the original usage, this appears to be a very recent and Western-focused interpretation.

¹⁸⁰ NTU 22.11 *ataśca pradhānabhūto nāyako'pi anupaplava ityāṇavādīmalebhyo niṣkrāntaste ca niṣkrāntā yataḥ*

¹⁸¹ NUT 22.11.

¹⁸² Padoux, 2011, p. 96-99.

in texts such as the *Agnipurāṇa*, *Phetkārīṇī Tantra*, or *Tantrarāja Tantra* among others,¹⁸³ though just as often the texts give the same definitions as those found in the *Netra Tantra*. Padoux also notes that the *Netra Tantra* is unique in its eleven types of practices as most texts include only six.¹⁸⁴ In brief, these eleven varieties are:

<i>saṃpuṭa:</i>	when spoken the pattern follows BAB ¹⁸⁵ with the mantra enclosed by the other mantric elements when written it appears as the mantra written above, below, to the left, and to the right of the <i>sādhya</i>
<i>grathita:</i>	wherein the syllables of A and B are alternated in order to bind them together in written form appears as the letters of the alphabet inscribed to make a border around the diagram
<i>grasta:</i>	writing the mantra on all four sides of the <i>nāman</i> or <i>sādhya</i>
<i>samasta:</i>	writing or uttering the <i>nāman</i> before the mantra with one repetition BABA
<i>vidarbhita:</i>	<i>nāman</i> before mantra ¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Padoux, 2011, p. 97.

¹⁸⁴ Padoux, 2011, p. 99.

¹⁸⁵ Padoux, 2001, p. 96 points out that the pattern for *saṃpuṭa* in the NT differs from that in the eleventh century *Śāradātilaka* in which the syllables of the two mantric parts making the pattern b1, a1, b2, a2, etc.

¹⁸⁶ Kṣemarāja does clarify this further but Padoux, 2011, p. 97 points out that the PhT describes the pattern as b1, a2, b2, a3, b3, etc, whereas the *Agnipurāṇa* describes the pattern as a1, a2, b1, a3, a4, b2, etc. Therefore from Kṣemarāja's commentary alone we cannot determine the pattern intended here.

<i>ākṛānta:</i>	placing the mantra around the name, which is at the center
<i>ādyanta:</i>	usually meaning "beginning and end," here Kṣemarāja says that the <i>nāma</i> follows the mantra, which is then followed by three more mantra repetitions, ¹⁸⁷ ABAAA
<i>garbhastha:</i>	the reverse of the written <i>saṃpuṭa</i> , with the <i>sādhyā</i> surrounding the mantra above, below, and to the left and right
<i>sarvatoṽṛta:</i>	BAB, though the pattern here is the same as in <i>saṃpuṭa</i> , here the <i>mantrin</i> places the <i>sādhyā</i> or <i>nāma</i> before and after the mantra
<i>yuktividarbha:</i>	BABBB (the opposite of <i>ādyanta</i>)
<i>vidarbhagrathita:</i>	repeating the mantra three times after the <i>nāman</i> for the pattern BAAA ¹⁸⁸

Though described in the text, the *Netra Tantra*'s rites do not call for the use of all eleven varieties. The *saṃpuṭa*, *samasta*, *ākṛānta*, and *ādyanta* kinds appear most often in the *Netra Tantra* and *yuktividarbha* and *vidarbhagrathita* appear only in the section of the text and commentary that describe the different mantric patterns. Of all eleven types, only *saṃpuṭa* and *grathita* have distinct written and spoken forms. Though mantras are intrinsically an acoustic phenomenon, within the ritual context

¹⁸⁷ NTU 18-11 *mantrād anantaraṃ nāma tatas trirṇmantra iti ādyantam.*

¹⁸⁸ NT 18.10b-11 *saṃpuṭaṃ grathitaṃ grastaṃ samastaṃ ca vidarbhitaṃ || 10 || ākrāntaṃ ca tathādyantaṃ garbhasthaṃ sarvatoṽṛtaṃ | tathā yuktividarbhaṃ ca vidarbhagrathitaṃ tathā || 11 ||*

See also NTU 18-11 and Padoux, 2011, p. 96-99 for detailed explanations regarding the patterns in the NT and related Tantras. This list is adapted from Padoux's model.

they have power in their written manifestation because they are imbued with the power of the spoken form.¹⁸⁹

Whether they are written or spoken, mantras arise by the will of the deity. As such, the act of enveloping mantras emulates the cycle of creation and destruction or that of birth and death.¹⁹⁰ I return to this discussion shortly. Suffice to say for now, that this cycle instantly removes impurities, thus leading to the attainment of earthly enjoyments or liberation.

Finally, the *Netra Tantra* describes the deity and how he goes about protecting the practitioner. Kṣemarāja expands on this through a rhetorical analysis (*nirvacana*)¹⁹¹ that explains why it uses the word "netra" to name the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra. This analysis plays with the root $\sqrt{nī}$, including its forms of *netra* and *netr*, which focuses on the root's association with leadership and protection. Śiva is the leader who brings one away from fear and toward liberation. By doing so, he protects and the mantra is the weapon he uses to safeguard those who follow him.

The leader [Śiva] of these [mantras] is eternal, restraining, untroubled, unexpanding (*niṣprapañca*), without appearance (*nirābhāsa*), and causes protection (*trāyaka*). He does all, he protects the trembling minds [of those who are afraid of *saṃsāra*]. He leads. From [Śiva's] leading, [the practitioner] shall attain liberation from great fear. Thus, [the mantra] is called "netra," because [it] protects. It is called *netra* [because] it leads to *mokṣa*. It shall save [the disciple] from the great terror. It is called *netra* from the roots leading

¹⁸⁹ Padoux, 2011, p. 100.

¹⁹⁰ See Robert A. Yelle, 2003, *Explaining Mantras: Ritual, Rhetoric, and the Dream of a Natural Language in Hindu Tantra*, New York and London: Routledge, p. 21-24.

¹⁹¹ *Nirvacana* help to explain both why a particular word is the right word for the thing that it describes and also why the words used are in harmony with what they say. For Kṣemarāja this allows him to justify the non-dualistic exegesis and interpretation of the text. He reads the names of both the SvT and NT as demonstrating the lack of true externality that would allow for a dualistic reading. See Eivind Kahrs, *Indian Semantic Analysis: The Nirvacana Tradition*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1998, p. 61.

and saving. [Moreover,] it is said to be *netra*, being that which gives life to all creatures. [Just as *netra* in the sense of the eye makes everything clear because it illuminates everything, it is also referred to as *netrabhūta*, from this [comes] all life].¹⁹² Parameśvara is like the Lord [i.e., the owner or controller] of the entire multitude of all mantras. (NT 22.10cd-13)¹⁹³

The narrative Kṣemarāja offers in his commentary on this passage demonstrates his non-dual perspective on the nature of Śiva. This differs greatly from the original text, in which the deity can clearly be read as separate from that which he protects.

[Śiva is] he who exists in a fixed condition, who brings about all conditions [in all] time[s] and direction[s] but is not touched by [those conditions]. He controls them. He is their leader, [he leads] quickly,¹⁹⁴ he wishes it, and he quickly brings [that which is wished for into being. He] projects [all conditions] outward and he also causes them to be made one with himself [internally, inside his consciousness]. And for this reason, he can also be understood as their leader. Untainted, transcending the impurities (*mala*), beginning with minuteness (*āṇava*),¹⁹⁵ and free of afflictions (*upaplavas*). In the same way, one should construe *niṣprapañco* and *nirābhāsa*. The diversity of the world has passed away from him, [as have] contracted manifestations [such as persons or things]. He is called the threefold protector (*trāyaka netrā*) because he protects all and he is the liberating (*tāraṇa*), because he is the savior. Śiva is Mṛtyujit, whose nature is Paramaśiva, which is salvation. He

¹⁹² NTU 22-13 *yathā netraṃ cakṣur bhāvoprakāśakam tathedaṃ cinnetraṃ aśeṣaprakāśakatoān netrabhūtam ity uktam atah sarveṣāṃ jīvanam.*

¹⁹³ *nityo niyāmakō hy eṣāṃ netāraṃ [em. netāro] nirupaplavaḥ || 10 ||*

niṣprapañco nirābhāsas trāyakas tāraṇaḥ śivaḥ |

trāṇaṃ karoti sarveṣāṃ tāraṇaṃ trastacetasām || 11 ||

nayate mokṣabhāvaṃ tu tārayen mahato bhayāt |

nayanāc ca tathā trāṇān netraṃ ity abhidhīyate || 12 ||

jīvanam sarvabhūteṣu netrabhūtam prakīrtitam |

samastamantrajātasya svāmivat parameśvaraḥ || 13 ||

¹⁹⁴ Here Kṣemarāja has read *netāraṃ* from verse 22.10b as *netā + aram* whereas I suggest *netāraṃ* be emended to *netāraḥ* to agree with *eṣāṃ*.

¹⁹⁵ The first of the three *malas*, the other two being karma and *māyā*.

protects those whose minds are terrified And this is the *nirvacana* of *netranātha* on the basis of similarity of syllables and vowels (NTU 22.11).¹⁹⁶

Where the *Netra Tantra* says that Parameśvara controls the mantras, it does not indicate that mantras emanate from him. In fact, aside from leading and protection, the Śiva of the *Netra Tantra*'s verses does not perform any creative actions. Conversely, Kṣemarāja interprets the text by declaring that in his role as protector, the deity projects his wishes outward and therefore causes things to be both internally and externally part of his own divine consciousness. For Kṣemarāja, the deity does not liberate another that needs saving, but instead frees the other of its impurities and afflictions in order to eradicate the distinction between the afflicted and himself. To justify this reading, Kṣemarāja takes the words in the original verse, *nitya*, *niyāmaka*, *netṛ*, *nirupaplava*, *niṣprañca*, and *nirābhāsa* and makes the claim that because all begin with the root $\sqrt{nī}$ (meaning "to protect" or "to lead"), all protect. This proves to Kṣemarāja that his understanding of the nature of the divine is correct because the protective quality is inherent. *Nirvacanas* of this type are common in Tantric literature.¹⁹⁷ They allow exegetes to analyze literature to bring about deeper scriptural revelations. In the case of Tantric literature, this often means the commentators's goal is to "enforce or modify beliefs by encoding meaning into already existing terms."¹⁹⁸ This allows for an overlap in meaning where Kṣemarāja does not adjust the text itself but encodes meaning that logically

¹⁹⁶ *niyatam bhavaḥ sarvadikkālākrāntikṛt tadaparāmṛṣṭaś ca, eṣāṃ mantrāṇāṃ niyāmako niyoktā aram śīghram icchām ātrādeva netā bahirābhāsakaḥ svātmasātkāraḥ ca ataś ca pradhānabhūto nāyako 'pi anupaplava ity ānavādi malebhyo niṣkrāntas te ca niṣkrāntā yataḥ | evaṃ niṣprapañco nirābhāsaśceti yojyam prapañco jagadvaicitryam ābhāsāḥ saṃkucitāḥ prakāśāḥ trāyakaḥ sarvarakṣākaras tāraṇo mocakaḥ ataś ca śivaḥ śreyomayaparamaśivasvarūpo mṛtyujinnāthaḥ | etadeva trāṇam ity ardhena sphuṭikṛtam | trāṇam rakṣā trastacetāsāṃ saṃsārabhītānām | etac cākṣaravarṇasārūpyeṇa netranāthasya nirvacanam ||*

¹⁹⁷ Kahrs, 1999, p. 57.

¹⁹⁸ Kahrs, 1999, p. 62.

adhere to his system of thinking. In doing so, Kṣemarāja has not undermined the divine revelation found in the *Netra* and other Tantras. Instead, he has uncovered further revelations hidden in the text.

Kṣemarāja's use of *nirvacana* offers inherent justification for the name of the text.¹⁹⁹ The *Netra Tantra*, because of the very nature of its name, actively leads. Like Śiva, it protects and leads its reader away from physical affliction, demonic possession, and the terror of *saṃsāra*.

Once the text has revealed Śiva as the leader and protector it explains each element of the *mṛtuñjaya mantra* without any encoding whatsoever, beginning with *om*.²⁰⁰

Om (*praṇava*) exists as the vital energy [i.e., life] (*prāṇa*) of living beings. It is established as that which keeps [living beings] alive. *Praṇava* enables [those beings] with all [their] parts. He [who knows this] shall know Śiva. (NT 22.14)²⁰¹

[*Praṇava* is the universal pulse or throb that is unstruck, active ideation (verbalization that is not the result of contact with organs) which is like *kalpa*, the first acceptance of the cognition and action of all that is to be known and done for all living beings, because there could be no knowing and no doing without [*praṇava*]. For when [*praṇava*] is present, life becomes fully established The life [of living beings], which is the flow of the in-breath (*prāṇa*) and out-breath (*apāṇa*), etc., is *ātman*.²⁰² Otherwise, that life would be unestablished, like the wind that drives a bellows. [*Praṇava*] grasps

¹⁹⁹ Though the *Netra Tantra* goes by several other names, most connected to the name of the deity, such as *Netrajñānārṇāvatāntra*, *Amṛteśatantra*, *Mṛtyujitāmṛtīśamahābhairavatāntra*, and *Mṛtyujidamṛteśatantra*.

²⁰⁰ Though the commentary follows the whole of *ślokas* 22.14-28, for ease of reading I have included relevant parts here in tandem with the *ślokas* they explain. The commentary is bracketed and in a slightly smaller font.

²⁰¹ *praṇavaḥ prāṇinām prāṇo jīvanam saṃpratiṣṭhitam |
grhṇāti praṇavaḥ sarvaṃ kalābhiḥ kalayecchivam | | 14 | |*

²⁰² See below for Kṣemarāja's connection of the three constituent parts of the mantra *om jum saḥ* to the three *tattoos* *ātman*, *vidyā*, and *śiva*, respectively.

everything with its constituent parts (*kalā*). [*Prāṇava*] is unestablished, has become manifest by means of [Śiva's] internalized autonomy, is without [anything] remnant, [and composed of] the constituent elements that will be taught. [*Prāṇava*] begins with the letter *a* (*akāra*) and *u* (*ukāra*), etc. In the same way [i.e., because he is made of the same constituent parts], [the *mantrin* is able] to grasp everything up to *samanā*²⁰³ (he internalizes all levels of the sound). [*Prāṇava*] also brings about [in the *mantrin* an] awareness of Śiva. And by means of that, [the *mantrin*] will become aware of Śiva [not in the usual way of knowing] but through the power of *paravāk*²⁰⁴ in its highest non-dual nature.]²⁰⁵

[*Prāṇava* enables him to grasp] the great six-fold path [of emanation and reabsorption].²⁰⁶ [This path is] established by the six causes²⁰⁷ [of the great sounds]. [The *mantrin*] makes sacrifices [into fire] with all knowledge (*vidyā*), which has been propelled by the sound *juṃ*. (NT 22.15)²⁰⁸

[The middle syllable (*juṃ*) is the middle *tattva* (*vidyā*). [By the word] propelled [the text means to] say, [the *mantrin*] offers into fire by the method

²⁰³ In other words, he internalizes all of the nine levels of sound up to *samanā*, beginning with *bindu*. The nine levels are *unmanā*, *samanā*, *vyāpini*, *śakti*, *nādānta*, *nāda*, *nirodhika*, *ardhacandra*, and *bindu*.

²⁰⁴ Of which there are four levels: *vaikharī* (sounds at the *sthūla* level, i.e., words, sentences, the articulation of air or utterances), *madhyamā* (unarticulated sounds that reside in the mind), *paśyanti* (sensation without differentiation), and *para* (the supreme or soundless sound). See Swami Laksman Joo, 1998, *Kashmir Shaivism: The Supreme Secret*, Albany: SUNY Press, p. 41-43 for detailed descriptions of the four levels.

²⁰⁵ *prāṇināṃ sarvajīvātāṃ*

*sarvajñeyakāryajñānakaraṇaprathamābhyupagamakalpānāhataparāmarśātmasa amānyasbandarūpaḥ
prāṇava eva prāṇāstaṃ vinā jñānakriyā 'ghaṭanāt | etasmin hi sati teṣāṃ jīvanam
prāṇāpānādiprasarātma samyak pratiṣṭhāmeti anyathā bhastrāvāyuvadapraṭiṣṭhitameva syāt |
tadevaṃbhūto 'py ayamantaḥkṛtamaśeṣaṃ vākṣyamānākārokārādikalābhiḥ saha svātantryāt
prthagābhāsya tābhīreva gṛhṇāti vimarśayuktyā samanāntamātmasāt karoti śivaṃ ca kalayet
parāvāgorttyā vimṛśet atha ca kalayed ekaviṃśādhikāranirūpitadrśā 'varohakrameṇa hṛdante kṣipet
tatparāmṛtasiktaṃ viśvaṃ vidadhīta*

²⁰⁶ *tattova, bhuvana, kalā, pada, mantra, varṇa*. Flood, 2006, p. 129.

²⁰⁷ *brahmā, viṣṇu, rudra, īśvara, sadāśiva, anāśrita*. Alexis Sanderson, 2007b, "Atharvavedins in Tantric Territory: The Āngirasakalpa Texts of the Oriya Paippalādins and their Connection with the Trika and the Kālīkula, with critical editions of the Parājapavidhi, the Parāmantravidhi, and the Bhadrakālī-mantravidhiprakarana," in *The Atharvaveda and its Paippalāda Śākhā: Historical and Philological Papers on a Vedic Tradition*, edited by Arlo Griffiths and Annette Schmiedchen, Aachen: Shaker Verlag, Geisteskultur Indiens: Texte und Studien, 11, Indologica Halensis, p. 393n541.

²⁰⁸ *ṣaṭprakāraṃ mahādhvānaṃ ṣaṭkāraṇapadaṣṭhitam |
juhoti vidyayā sarvaṃ juṃkāreṇa pracoditam | | 15 | |*

of ascending and descending the central domain. That is to say, by this means he casts everything (i.e., the entire universe) into the great fire.]²⁰⁹

Descriptions of *praṇava* can be found throughout Sanskrit literature. It is central to Brahmanical and Buddhist ritual and yogic practices and commands a wide variety of interpretation and usage.²¹⁰ Here, Kṣemarāja associates it with the breath, saying *om* is itself to be interpreted as the breath exercise (*prāṇayāma*). In his commentary on the *Svacchanda Tantra*, Kṣemarāja provides a more detailed description of the power of *praṇava*,

Having recited the *praṇava* constantly, one should burn the three fires in the extraction of caste of the limited soul's body, while reciting, "I perform the extraction of caste of such and such a person *svāhā*." Then also while reciting, "I perform the effecting of the state of being a twice-born, *svāhā*" one should burn the three fires for the purpose of effecting the state of being a [true] twice-born that has as its essential function the production of abode of the *śuddhavidyā*²¹¹ [sic] with mantras which have an unfathomable power, for the purpose of the suitability of effecting a portion of the manifesting of Rudra.²¹²

Kṣemarāja sees *praṇava* as a purifier. It leads its users to the knowledge of non-distinction. When the text focuses on non-distinction in the world it teaches *praṇava*'s ability to remove caste from a practitioners' physical body. Thus, the caste impurities that separate people from one another disappear. The body is then reborn in a purified, twice-born state in which a practitioner rests in knowledge of

²⁰⁹ *madhyamantrākṣarātmanā vidyayā vedanapradhānāyā śaktyā pracoditaṃ madhyadhāmordhvārohāvarohayuktyā juhōti paradhāmamahānāle kṣipati*

²¹⁰ See James Mallinson and Mark Singleton, 2017, *Roots of Yoga*, London: Penguin Books, p. 260, for various interpretations of *om* in Vedic and Yogic texts.

²¹¹ Here *śuddhavidyā* does not refer to the *tattova* but to pure, divine knowledge.

²¹² Trsl. Simone Barretta, 2012, *Tantric Selves: Body, Mind, and Society in the Religious Cultures of Medieval Kashmir*, (Doctoral dissertation. University of Pennsylvania). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI Number 3542777), p. 208.

the divine. Though the *Netra Tantra*'s focus is largely on a king and the *mantrin* in his employ, the mantra and the rites, even when performed on behalf of a monarch, have an affect on society at large, regardless of caste distinctions.

Next, the text offers a semantic analysis (*nirvacana*) of the mantra's final component, *saḥ*. The *Netra Tantra* associates the phoneme *sa* with various characteristics. These words, *svarūpa*, *samyak*, *savisarga*, etc., describe *sa* and begin with the sibilant *s*. Kṣemarāja then adds that *sa* and *visarga* (*saḥ*) fuse to reveal the truth that Śakti's true nature is undifferentiated from Śiva's nature. According to the *Netra Tantra*, the full oblation (*pūrṇāhuti*) occurs when the *mantrin* utters *saḥ* at the end of the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra. Here he realizes Śakti's fusion with Śiva. Kṣemarāja interprets full oblation as the fusion between Parameśvara and Śakti, and adds that it is through this union that the universe achieves completion.²¹³

Sa is that which is self-perceived (*svarūpa*), true (*samyak*), possesses the attribute of gratification (*saṃtṛptilakṣaṇa*)²¹⁴, the receptacle of all *amṛta* (*sarvāmṛtapadādhāra*), together with *visarga* (*savisarga*), and the highest auspicious thing (i.e., Śiva), which is full and uninterrupted, without any breaks. (NT. 22.17ab)²¹⁵

[Then, that which is Śiva, that domain that consists of nothing but consciousness and is named Paramaśiva, which is denoted by such terms as *svarūpa*, which has been previously explained Together with *visarga*, fused with highest truth (*samarasa*) together with [the highest level of mantra] *unmanāsakti*,²¹⁶ which is the highest autonomy. By means of that bliss of the

²¹³ *pūryate paramaśivatacchaktisāmarasyamāpādyate 'nayaḥ viśvam iti vyutpattyā paripūrṇā pūrṇāhutistayā*

²¹⁴ This can also be read as a compound, *samyaksamṛpti*, that which has a nature that is true gratification.

²¹⁵ *svarūpaṃ yatsoasamvedyaṃ samyaksamṛptilakṣaṇam | sarvāmṛtapadādhāraṃ savisargaṃ paraṃ śivam || 16 || pūrṇaṃ nirantaraṃ*

²¹⁶ Thus he surpasses *samanā*, which was the highest level reached in the previous mantric constituent part.

nectar of Śiva, which has been obtained by firmly settling oneself in the practice of the third seed (*sa*).]²¹⁷

By means of that [*saḥ*], she [*śakti*] is constantly full, [she is] the full oblation (*pūrṇāhutyā tu pūrṇayā*). He is known as Śiva, the holder of power, who acts through her. Namely, [she is] the one supreme Śakti, whose nature is will (*icchā*), knowledge, (*jñāna*), and action (*kriyā*). [She] arises spontaneously [and her] utterance is automatic. [She] exists in one's very nature, is one's very nature, and is self-arisen. NT 22.17cd-18)²¹⁸

[The *mantrin* who has achieved the highest practice through the internal recitation of the mantra, is manifestly Śiva himself, the holder of power. This is [how everything that appears] separate, connects.]²¹⁹

It is unclear what exactly the text means here by *pūrṇaṃ nirantaraṃ tena pūrṇāhutyā tu pūrṇayā*. Descriptions of *pūrṇāhuti* occur through Śaiva literature. It is usually connected to a *mūlamantra* and may be performed at the conclusion of oblations, rites of atonement, before the dismissal of a deity during fire rites and others.²²⁰ In his commentary on the *Netra Tantra*, Kṣemarāja describes *pūrṇaṃ nirantaraṃ* as the moment in which "the *ātman* consists of all essences, contains Paraśakti, and is the *ātman* of all immortals."²²¹ Further, he says, "in the perfect *pūrṇāhuti* she brings about Paramaśiva. [*Pūrṇāhuti*] is called all pervading (*viśva*)

²¹⁷ *tato'pi*

pūrvanirṇītasvarūpādīśabdavācyaṃ yat śivoṃ paramaśivākhyam cidghanam dhāma, savisargam iti arasvātantryātmonmanāśaktisamarasaṃ tena tr̥tīyab̥t̥jayuktyavaṣṭambhāsāditena śivāmṛtarasena

²¹⁸ *pūrṇaṃ nirantaraṃ tena pūrṇāhutyā tu pūrṇayā |*

svocārā yā svabhāvasthā svasvarūpā ca svoditā || 17 | |

icchājñānakriyārūpā sā caikā śaktir uttamā |

tayā prakurute nityaṃ śaktimān sa śivaḥ smṛtaḥ | | 18 | |

²¹⁹ *taditthaṃ mantrocārāyuktyā prāptaparadhāmā yo mantrī sa sākṣāt śaktimān śiva eva smṛta iti vyavahitasambandhāḥ*

²²⁰ See Marion Rastelli and Dominic Goodall, 2013, *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa Vol. III: A Dictionary of Technical Terms from Hindu Tantric Literature*, Beitrage zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens, no. 44, Vienna: Verlag Der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, p. 498, for a detailed description of how one is to perform the *pūrṇāhuti*.

²²¹ *sarvarasātmaparaśaktitadvat sāmāsyātma kurute*

because she brings the Śakti of all immortals."²²² In other words, through the utterance of the syllable *saḥ*, which here is the final oblation, everything becomes Paramaśiva and Śakti.

Kṣemarāja next reintroduces the *mantrin*. The individual who performs the rites is largely absent from the main text, but Kṣemarāja takes the opportunity to introduce a non-dualistic idea, namely that the *mantrin* himself is Śiva. Practically, this means that the person for whom the rights are performed understands that the *mantrin* should be treated as the deity. This, of course, gives the *mantrin* significant social power. The *Kulārṇava Tantra* says,

Whoever regards the guru as a human being, the mantra as mere letters, and the images [of deities] as stone, goes to hell....The guru is the father, the guru is the mother, the guru is God, the supreme Lord. When Siva is angry, the guru saves [from his wrath]. When the guru is angry, nobody [can help].²²³

Though the *Kulārṇava*²²⁴ is more esoteric and transgressive in outlook than the *Netra Tantra*, Kṣemarāja appears to share its viewpoint. The idea of guru as God is so common throughout Indian traditions that there is no need to make such a belief explicit. What is relevant here is that the *Kulārṇava* equates the *mantrin* with the mantra. This means that the will of Śiva is identical to that of the *mantrin* and the mantra.²²⁵ The *Kulārṇava Tantra* allows the guru to retain his human

²²² *pūryate paramaśivatac chaktisāmarasyam āpādyate 'naya viśvam iti vyutpattyā paripūrṇā pūrṇāhutistayā*

²²³ Padoux, 2000, "The Tantric Guru," in *Tantra in Practice*, Ed David Gordon White, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 43.

²²⁴ Dating the *Kulārṇava* is difficult, but Padoux, 2000, p. 43 says it is likely pre-15th century. This means it may be later than Kṣemarāja but the ideas held within the text are likely much earlier than the earliest written text.

²²⁵ The *Kulārṇava Tantra*, quoted in Padoux, 2000, p. 48, says, "The glorious mantra that bestows the fruits of all accomplishments is rooted in the grace of the guru. It leads to the supreme Reality."

characteristics, such as anger, at the same time that it identifies him with the divine. Though it may seem contradictory, this interpretation recognizes that the guru attains his divinity during ritual. He is inherently divine but only recognizes such during *dīkṣā* and consecration (*abhiṣeka*). During these two events, divinity is conferred upon him.²²⁶ Even when he officiates the *dīkṣā* of another, the guru must first purify himself with mantras. Only then can he perform *dīkṣā* for the initiand.²²⁷

Abhinavagupta takes the idea of guru even farther, saying that those gurus who are self-arisen or have attained spontaneous liberation (*svayambhu*) are higher than those for whom *dīkṣā* is performed (*kalpita*). The former guru attains his initiation through the goddesses within his own consciousness while the latter attains initiation by means of his own human teacher.²²⁸ Regardless of the manner in which a guru obtains his *dīkṣā*, that initiation is intimately tied to the power of the mantra. As we will see in the next chapter, this mantra permeates the various bodies of the initiand in order to bring him into the Tantric fold and thereby change him at the *sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, and *para* levels.

III. Iconography: the various forms of Amṛteśa

A. Visual Representations in Art History

The medieval period in Kashmir proved transformative for religious thought. The composition of the Tantras, the commentaries upon them, and the original works by writers such as Somānanda, Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta, and Kṣemarāja offered an ever evolving system of religious practice. Though many

²²⁶ Padoux, 2000, p. 44.

²²⁷ Alper, 1989, p. 239.

²²⁸ Padoux, 2000, p. 45.

texts alluded to by these writers and commentators have been lost, there still remains a rich corpus of material, only some of which scholars have studied in depth. The physical history of medieval Tantric practice, however, is much more difficult to access.

Several temples dedicated to Śiva dating to the medieval period remain but their sectarian affiliations are unclear. For example, the Shankaragaurishvara Temple near Patan has been identified by its carvings as a Śaiva temple but not as one with Tantric affiliations.²²⁹ The Archaeological Survey of India lists several medieval Śaiva temples as part of its Srinagar circle but makes no mention of Tantric deities found at the sites.²³⁰ One must look beyond Kashmir to find representations of Tantric deities at temples, and I return to these examples below.

Much of the academic focus on Tantric temple architecture concentrates on areas outside of Kashmir. The approximately eleventh century Orissan *Śilpa Prakāśa* remains the only surviving text to focus on Hindu temple architecture from a Tantric viewpoint.²³¹ White has catalogued medieval Tantric temples in the Deccan plateau, and in modern-day Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha.²³² He cites no examples from Kashmir save for a reference to the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, which mentions a cite containing "circles of mothers," surrounded by an image of either Śiva or Bhairava.²³³

²²⁹ Manohar Kaul, 1971, *Kashmir: Hindu, Buddhist & Muslim Architecture*, New Delhi: Sagar Publications, p. 85.

²³⁰ These temples include a c. tenth century temples at Pandrethan, a c. ninth century temple at Fatehgarh, a ninth century temple built by King Avantivarman, and a twelfth century temple cave at Bumzuva. See ASI, 2018.

²³¹ Michael D. Rabe, "Secret Yantras and Erotic Display for Hindu Temples," in *Tantra in Practice*, Ed David Gordon White, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2001, p. 434.

²³² White, 2003, *Kiss of the Yogini: "Tantric Sex" in its South Asian Contexts*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 136-140.

²³³ White, 2003, p. 137.

Several museums house examples of Tantric images from Kashmir. The British Museum holds a stone standing image of Śiva Maheśamurti that dates from approximately the ninth century. One of its three faces appears to be Bhairava, with fanged teeth and a headpiece that bears skull images and severed arms.²³⁴ The Metropolitan Museum of Art houses a late sixth or seventh century copper alloy or brass ritual mask that has been identified as Bhairava because of the small fangs that protrude from the mask's mouth and its exposed upper teeth. The earlobes of the mask are stretched in a style often found in Buddhist statuary and has facial features that recall the Greco-Roman influenced Gandhara style.²³⁵ Though only two examples, these images demonstrate the diversity found within representations of Bhairava. The older image, that of the mask, is rather benign in appearance compared to the statue, which looks more like the fierce Nepalese depictions of Bhairava that are more common. While these images demonstrate that Tantric deities are found in physical culture, texts such as the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras* rely on mental visualizations of the deity rather than the worship using bronze or stone statuary.

Sanderson²³⁶ has identified three representations of Amṛteśa and his consort Amṛtalakṣmī from the Himalayan region that correspond to descriptions of the deities in the *Netra Tantra*. These small bronzes, which were most likely used in shrine room *pūjās*,²³⁷ are all assigned to the tenth or eleventh century and have been previously labeled Umā-Maheśvara or Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī. Bühnemann adds

²³⁴ Unknown. Representation of Śiva. 9th century. Stone. British Museum, London. Museum number 1988,0312.1.

²³⁵ Unknown. Mask of Bhairava. Late 6th-7th century. Copper alloy, possibly brass. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. Accession number 2013.249.

²³⁶ Sanderson, 2004, p. 240.

²³⁷ Bühnemann, personal email correspondence, November 2017.

to this a fourth bronze sculpture from the eleventh century also identified as Umā-Maheśvara or Umā-Maheśvara as Kumbheśvara.²³⁸ The characteristics of these images are shared in amongst the icons of Nepal's Tusā Hiti (Royal Bath), which dates to approximately the seventeenth century. Like the bronzes, these images closely correspond to descriptions of the deity as found in *Netra Tantra*, especially at 3.17-23cd and 18.63-69ab. Though manuscripts of the *Netra Tantra* made their way to Nepal as early as the thirteenth century,²³⁹ Bühnemann demonstrates that the images of Mṛtyuñjaya²⁴⁰ do not begin to appear until the seventeenth century in Nepal. Therefore, she argues that the Tusā Hiti sculpture is more likely based on descriptions of the deity from manuals that follow the *Netra's* tradition rather than from the *Netra Tantra* itself.²⁴¹ She also theorizes that the iconographic form might have come from an artist's model-book. This statue, and a presumed second statue at Mohancok Hiti in Kathmandu,²⁴² are thus far the only images of Mṛtyuñjaya found in Nepal that appear to correspond to the description of the deity in the *Netra Tantra*.²⁴³ Unfortunately, both are largely inaccessible, making further identifications of the unusual iconographic representations of deities difficult.

²³⁸ Gudrun Bühnemann, 2009, "The Identification of a Sculpture of Mṛtuñjaya / Amṛteśa and Amṛtalakṣmī in the 'Royal Bath' in Patan (Nepal)," in *Prajñādhara: Essays of Asian Art, History, Epigraphy and Culture in Honour of Gouriswar Bhattacharya. Volume I*, Eds. Gerd J.R. Mevissen and Arundhati Banerji, New Delhi: Kaveri Books p. 110.

²³⁹ Sanderson, 2004, p. 241.

²⁴⁰ Bühnemann, 2009, uses the spelling Mṛtyuñjaya for the deity. I have changed the spelling to conform to that used within this thesis though have retained the name she uses for the deity despite myself using Mṛtyujit throughout this text. This is, of course, the same deity.

²⁴¹ Bühnemann, 2009, p. 110.

²⁴² The fountain at Mohancok Hiti is located in a private section of the Hanūmāṇdhokā Palace and is inaccessible. Photographs indicate that many of the seventy-two extant sculptures at Tusā Hiti have counterparts at Mohancok Hiti. Bühnemann, 2009, p. 107. Both palaces sustained damage during a major earthquake on 25 April, 2015 and the condition of the Tusā or Mohancok Hitis sites remains unclear.

²⁴³ Bühnemann, 2009, p. 110-111.

Similarities between text and object demonstrate the importance of the text and the descriptions of the deities within those texts.²⁴⁴

Bühnemann traces a very different iconographical representation of Mr̥tyuñjaya outside of Kashmir and the Kathmandu Valley. Found in Odisha, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Bihar and many other regions in modern-day India as well as available for purchase online, this Mr̥tyuñjaya bathes himself in the nectar that flows from pots that he holds above his own head or is showered from moon discs. According to Bühnemann, these images likely come from descriptions in the twelfth century *Prapañcasāra* and begin to appear in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Such images are found today in popular figurines as well as calendar art.²⁴⁵ Though the main deity of the *Netra Tantra* is always Mr̥tyuñjaya / Amṛteśa, I demonstrate below that this deity has more than one form. I also explore how the text describes the attributes of other deities, such as Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Buddha, as part of Amṛteśa worship.

B. The Mythology of Śiva

There are echoes of the mythology of Śiva in the iconography of the *Netra Tantra*. I first explore traditional representations of Śiva in order to contextualize the varying forms — from Amṛteśa, Netra, Mr̥tyujit, Bhairava, Tumburu, Kuleśvara, and so forth — found in the *Netra Tantra*. I will also examine a Purānic

²⁴⁴ Gudrun Bühnemann, 2017, "The Iconography of Śiva Mr̥tyuñjaya," Presentation, Boston, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. The Jageshvar Temple in Uttarakhand houses an eighth century Mr̥tyuñjaya temple worshipped in Śiva's liṅga form. James Lochtefeld, 2002, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, New York: Rosen Publishing Group, p. 309; Jageshwar Temple Organization, (accessed February 17, 2018) mahamritunjayjageshwar.com.

²⁴⁵ Bühnemann, 2007.

story from the medieval period that includes several elements typically found in Tantric representations of the deity. This helps to place Tantric worship in the medieval period and shows that its heterodoxy found roots in orthodox depictions of Śiva.

There is no mention of Śiva in Vedic literature.²⁴⁶ The word first appears in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*²⁴⁷ and an adjective meaning auspicious.²⁴⁸ Michaels warns against the common assumption that Śiva originated in the Vedic deity Rudra. Michaels notes that the association between the two only begins in the fifth or fourth century BCE.²⁴⁹ In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, Rudra appears as the supreme deity who dwells alone in the mountains and though a master archer, does not use his arrows to harm.²⁵⁰ Later works attribute to him the characteristics of an ascetic, such as matted hair and body smeared with ash.²⁵¹ Eventually, the myths of Śiva and Rudra are conflated and Rudra becomes one of the many names of Śiva. In their mythology, both are excluded from Vedic rites, Rudra for being a foreign deity²⁵² and Śiva because of his asceticism.²⁵³ This exclusion makes the gods *vedabāhya*, outside the Veda and Śiva's outsider status is carried through into the Tantric tradition, itself at least beyond Vedic orthodoxy if not outside of it completely. The earliest recorded Śaivas are the Pāśupatas, who first appeared in

²⁴⁶ Lochtefeld, 2002, p. 633.

²⁴⁷ C. fifth to fourth century BCE, Gavin Flood, 1996, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 153 or sixth to fifth century BCE, Paul E. Muller-Ortega, 1998, *The Triadic Heart of Śiva: Kaula Tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-dual Shivaism of Kashmir*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 27.

²⁴⁸ Lochtefeld, 2002, p. 633.

²⁴⁹ Michaels, 2003, *Hinduism Past and Present*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 217.

²⁵⁰ Lochtefeld, 2002, p. 633.

²⁵¹ Lochtefeld, 2002, p. 633.

²⁵² Michaels, 2003, p. 218.

²⁵³ Michaels, 2003, p. 218.

approximately the second century CE.²⁵⁴ The group worshipped Rudra as the cause of the world and flourished from about the fourth to seventh century, spreading beyond the Indian subcontinent.²⁵⁵

A second narrative relating to the ancientness of Śiva deserves attention if only to dispel its widespread misidentification of Śiva as an ancient native deity. In the 1920s, archaeologists found an early seal from the Indus Valley Civilization²⁵⁶ at Mohenjo-Daro. Sir John Marshall claimed the seal was "recognizable at once as a prototype of the historic Śiva."²⁵⁷ Marshall describes the figure as having three-faces, seated in a yoga-like position, arms and neck adorned with jewelry, a headdress featuring a pair of horns and a tail, and surrounded by an elephant, tiger, rhinoceros, and buffalo. He then compares this iconographical image to medieval representations of Śiva in order to justify his identification.²⁵⁸ Marshall's identification of the seal as Śiva requires that Śiva be a pre-Aryan, Dravidian deity who was appropriated into the Vedic pantheon.²⁵⁹ Bryant points out that scholars have also interpreted the seal as the buffalo demon Mahiṣa, a goddess, or a servant of the deity.²⁶⁰ Others identify the seal as proof of the Indo-Aryan identity of the Indus Valley Civilization, interpreting the seal as representing Agni, Indra, Rudra, the sage Rṣyaśṛṅga, or Śiva as an Indo-Aryan deity, rather than pre-Aryan.²⁶¹

²⁵⁴ Gavin Flood, 2003, "The Śaiva Traditions," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, Ed Gavin Flood, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 206.

²⁵⁵ Rastelli and Goodall, 2013, p. 446.

²⁵⁶ C. 2300-1750 BCE. Doris Srinivasan, 1975/76, "The So-Called Proto-Śiva Seal from Mohenjo-Daro: An Iconological Assessment, *Archives of Asian Art*. Vol 29, p. 47.

²⁵⁷ Marshall, 1931, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization Vol. 1*, London: Arthur Probsthain, p. 52.

²⁵⁸ Marshall, 1931, p. 52-56.

²⁵⁹ Edwin Bryant, 2001, *The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture: The Indo-Aryan Migration Debate*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 162.

²⁶⁰ Bryant, 2001, p. 163.

²⁶¹ Bryant, 2001, p. 163.

Suffice to say, the evidence does not favor the identification of the seal as representing a proto-Śiva, however, the identification persists. The National Museum of India's website identifies the seal as Śiva and says, the "anthropomorphic form of ithyphallic Shiva is one of the most significant Indus finds attesting the prevalence of Shiva-cult."²⁶² It further claims, "this seal with [its] buffalo-horned figure [is] almost unanimously identified as Shiva in his form as Pashupati, Lord of animals - Shiva's earliest representation preceding Vedas by far."²⁶³ My goal is not to wade into the controversy surrounding the identification of the Mohenjo-Daro seal. Instead, I include this example to demonstrate that the origin of Śiva remains a topic of lively scholarly debate. The attributes of the deities are not static and it appears from the textual evidence that Śiva attained some of Rudra's characteristics, so much so that the two can be read in later texts as the same deity.

I return now to the mythology of Śiva. The story of Śiva's exclusion from a Vedic sacrifice by the other deities demonstrates Śiva's role as an outsider deity even within Purāṇic literature. The *Vāyu Purāṇa*²⁶⁴ tells one of the earliest versions of this story. In the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, Śiva learns about the *prajāpati* Dakṣa's plan to hold a sacrifice without him and sets out to destroy it. From his mouth, Śiva creates Vīrabhadra, who has a thousand heads, feet, and eyes. Vīrabhadra also holds a thousand clubs and arrows as well as a conch, discus, mace, bow, axe, and sword. The association with Śiva is clear from the tiger skin, which drips with blood, the

²⁶² See Pasupati Seal, National Museum of India, New Delhi, Acc. No. DK 5175/143, <http://www.nationalmuseumindia.gov.in/prodCollections.asp?pid=42&id=1&lk=dp1>.

²⁶³ See Pasupati Seal.

²⁶⁴ C. 300-500 CE. Ludo Rocher, 1986, *The Purāṇas*, Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, p. 245; Collins, Charles D. 1988, *The Iconography and Ritual of Śiva at Elephanta*, Albany: SUNY Press, p. 36.

elephant skin, and the serpents that adorn Vīrabhadra. The *Netra Tantra* describes an iconographic form of Sadāśiva who wears a tiger skin and holds a bow. It illustrates Bhairava covered with an elephant skin cloth and bearing a sword. At the command of Śiva, Vīrabhadra then destroys the sacrificial vessels and he and his army, which Vīrabhadra created from his pores, devour the sacrificial offerings of meat and medicinal liquids.²⁶⁵ Vīrabhadra's destruction of the sacrificial vessels subverts the Vedic order and brings him into control of the rites. This story also demonstrates an early example of the association of Śiva with the eating of meat.

Vīrabhadra announces that his sole purpose is to destroy the sacrifice on behalf of the fury of Rudra. Dakṣa then acquiesces to Śiva and begins to worship him with a thousand and eight names. Among the tributes to Śiva, Dakṣa calls him the protector of children, master of Sāṃkya and yoga, source of *sattva guṇa*, the *oṃkāra*, one who is celebrated by members of all castes, the ocean of milk, the wielder of the *khaṭvāṅga*, reciter of the *gāyatrī* and *oṃkāra* mantras, the vital airs, destroyer of death (*kāla*), preserver of living beings, protector of worlds, one who is unconquerable, the remover of ailments and diseases, and drinker of wine. Of these names we find many parallels to the Tantric Śiva practice. The main purpose of the *Netra Tantra*'s rites is the protection of the monarch, including his children and his kingdom.²⁶⁶ He does this by both protecting children and removing ailments and disease. Tantric worshippers shed their caste through the initiatory rites²⁶⁷ and Bhairava carries the *khaṭvāṅga* as he wanders in penance.²⁶⁸ Further, the

²⁶⁵ G.V. Tagare, 1987, *The Pratyabhijñā Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 204-205.

²⁶⁶ NT 6.46-48a.

²⁶⁷ See Chapter Two.

²⁶⁸ Louise Child, 2007, p. 57.

name Mṛtyujit is a *tatpuruṣa* compound (formed from *mṛtyu* "death" and *jit* "conquering") meaning conquerer of death.

Finally, Dakṣa tells Śiva that Śiva pervades all and is the inner soul of all beings. Therefore, Śiva did not need to be invited to the sacrifice as he was already present.²⁶⁹ In the later *Śiva Purāṇa*,²⁷⁰ the sage Dadhīci says that Śiva makes everything holy and without him the sacrificial sphere would be nothing more than a cremation ground.²⁷¹ Śiva presides over the charnel ground territory in much of the mythological canon.²⁷² For example, in the *Mahābhārata*, Śiva tells Umā that after searching for a pure place in which to dwell he became frustrated and created *piśācas* and *rākṣasas*. To protect people from these creations he kept them in the cemetery and chose to live with them. Further, he says that only heroes can live in such a place and those who seek liberation can find him there.²⁷³ As such, this location is not exceptionally transgressive for Śiva. In addition to being the place for seekers of liberation, the *Mahābhārata*'s Śiva says that the charnel ground is not for those in search of long life or the impure.²⁷⁴ This means that even in an orthodox text like the *Mahābhārata*, a purity within an impure place exists. When Śiva's practitioners move to the cemetery grounds they deliberately choose a

²⁶⁹ Tagare, 1987, p. 205-216; Diana L. Eck, 2012, *India: A Sacred Geography*, New York: Harmony Books, p. 194-197; Doniger, 1993, *Purāṇa Perennis: Reciprocity and Transformation in Hindu and Jaina Texts*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 23.

²⁷⁰ c. 900-1100 CE. Klaus K. Klostermaier, 2007, *A Survey of Hinduism: Third Edition*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 503. See Rocher, 1986, p. 222-228 for more detail on possible dating of the text.

²⁷¹ Eck, 2012, p. 195.

²⁷² By mythological canon I refer to stories about the gods from the *Purāṇas*, Epics, folktales, and devotional poetry.

²⁷³ Stella Kramrisch, 1988, *The Presence of Śiva*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 395.

²⁷⁴ Kramrisch, 1988, p. 395.

transgressive lifestyle that puts them at odds with the *mores* of larger society.²⁷⁵ This recasts the charnel ground as a place for literal and active defiance of standard religious rules. However, the Tantric does not go so far in his heterodoxy as to ignore the precedent set in the orthodox literary tradition. Śiva's traditional home is the cemetery ground, which makes it a natural place for his followers to perform rites. A truly transgressive act would be to chant the Vedas within the charnel grounds as the *Dharmasūtras* of Āpastamba, Gautama, Baudhāyana, and Vasiṣṭha all forbid Vedic recitation in cemeteries.²⁷⁶ This again demonstrates how Śiva exists outside of Vedic orthodoxy. Not only do the Vedas not mention Śiva but they cannot be recited in his dwelling place. As I demonstrated above, the mantras recited by Tantric Śaivas rarely stem from the Vedas, which places Śiva even further from Vedic tradition.

The themes found in these stores of Śiva have many parallels within the Tantric canon. As I demonstrated above in the discussion of mantra, the deities are not only lured to the sacrifice through the use of mantras but are themselves identical with those mantras. Dakṣa praises Śiva saying that he is both the *gāyatrī* mantra and the *om* itself. To recite the mantra is to call upon and to conjure the deity. Further, throughout the *Netra Tantra*, Śiva in his Amṛteśa, Mṛtyujit, and other forms appear. The *mantrin* calls upon these forms to protect in order to alleviate the suffering of disease but also to help conquer death.

²⁷⁵ David B. Gray, 2005, "Eating the Heart of the Brahmin: Representations of Alterity and the Formation of Identity in Tantric Buddhist Discourse," *History of Religions*, Vol. 45, p. 53.

²⁷⁶ Patrick Olivelle, 1999, *The Dharmasūtras: The Law Codes of Āpastamba, Gautama, Baudhāyana, and Vasiṣṭha*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 18, 80, 163, 282.

C. Mṛtyujit in Literature

The concept of conquering or cheating death appears in a wide variety of Sanskrit texts. It is unclear when exactly the idea became associated with the form of Śiva as Mṛtyujit, Mṛtyuñjaya, or Amṛteśa. Though a hymn often called *mṛtyuñjaya* appears in the *Ṛg Veda*, Witzel notes that there is no *padapātha* for the verse,²⁷⁷ which indicates that it is a later addition to the text. Further, texts often refer to the hymn as *tryambaka* rather than *mṛtyuñjaya*.²⁷⁸ The *Śiva Purāṇa* refers to it as the *mṛtyuñjaya mantra* in several places, and attributes its composition to Śiva.²⁷⁹ It is difficult to date the *Śiva Purāṇa*. Rocher notes that the text is more composite than many other *Purāṇas*. He dates some parts to as early as the ninth century and others to as late as the fourteenth.²⁸⁰ This makes early parts of the text concurrent with the *Netra Tantra* and others contemporary to and later than Kṣemarāja's commentary. The *Padma Purāṇa*, parts of which date to the eighth to eleventh century,²⁸¹ tells the story of a brahman called Karuṇamuni who gathered by a river with other sages to make offerings. When Karuṇamuni sniffed a lime meant as an offering, another brahmin cursed him, and turned him into a fly for a hundred years. One of his brothers killed him and a passing goddess, Arundhatīdevī, sprinkled ashes on the dead body of the fly while reciting the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra.

²⁷⁷ As cited in Einoo, 2005, "Mṛtyuñjaya or Ritual Device to Conquer Death," in *Indische Kultur im Kontext. Festschrift für Klaus Mylius*, ed L Göhler, Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, p. 109.

²⁷⁸ Einoo, 2005, p. 110.

²⁷⁹ Ludo Rocher, 1991, "Mantras in the *Śivapurāṇa*," in Alper, ed *Understanding Mantras*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 188. Here Rocher also notes several other names of the mantra within the text.

²⁸⁰ Rocher, 1986 p. 222-228.

²⁸¹ Wendy Doniger, 2010, *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, London: Penguin Books, p. 473.

The mantra brought the fly back to life.²⁸² Though this story does not involve Mṛtyujit as the deity, the goddesses use of the mantra demonstrates a similarity to the Mṛtyujit who appears in the *Netra Tantra*, a text that includes many descriptions of female figures and deities who surround and support the male gods.

Einoo notes that various texts refer to death conquering rituals as early as the *Arthava Veda*.²⁸³ Eventually, texts such as the *Garuda Purāṇa*, the *Netra Tantra*, and *Skanda Purāṇa* began to call Śiva Mṛtyuñjaya, Amṛteśa and other variations of the name Mṛtyujit.²⁸⁴ All three texts date to roughly the same time period. The *Skanda* is probably the oldest, with parts dating to the sixth century.²⁸⁵ Dalal dates the *Garuda Purāṇa* to around the ninth to eleventh centuries.²⁸⁶ Hazra and others claim the text dates to no earlier than the tenth or eleventh century.²⁸⁷ The association of Śiva with a deity called Mṛtyujit, etc., became common during this time. While it is beyond the scope of this study to pinpoint exactly when Mṛtyujit and Śiva merged, it remains an important question. What matters most here is that the *Skanda* and *Garuda Purāṇas* use both the name Mṛtyuñjaya for the deity and the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra.²⁸⁸ There is no doubt that the *Garuda Purāṇa* refers to the same mantra

²⁸² *Padma Purāṇa*, chapter 101 as cited in Vetta Mani, *Purāṇic Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Dictionary with Special Reference to the Epic and Purāṇic Literature*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1975, p. 220-221. The story continues with another relative killing the fly Karuṇamuni after a hundred years. Again ash and the mantra resuscitate him and he immediately becomes human again.

²⁸³ Einoo, 2005, p. 113. Like most early texts, dating the *Arthava Veda* remains a difficult task but the text clearly predates the common era. Olson says the acceptance of the text as the fourth Veda likely occurred sometime between 200BCE and 200CE. Carl Olson, 2007, *The Many Colors of Hinduism: A Thematic-Historical Introduction*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, p. 13.

²⁸⁴ Einoo, 2005, p. 118-119.

²⁸⁵ Richard Mann, 2012, *The Rise of Mahāsenā: The Transformation of Skanda-Kārttikeya in North India from the Kuṣāṇa to Gupta Empires*, Leiden: Brill, p. 187.

²⁸⁶ Roshen Dalal, 2011, *Hinduism: An Alphabetical Guide*, New York: Penguin, p. 145.

²⁸⁷ Rocher, 1986, p. 175-178.

²⁸⁸ Einoo, 2005, p. 118.

found in the *Netra Tantra* as it gives the mantra in its entirety, saying, *omkāraṃ pūrvam uddhṛtya juṅkāraṃ tadanantaram | savisargaṃ tṛtīyaṃ syān mṛtyudāridryam ardanam*.²⁸⁹ This demonstrates a familiarity with the mantra outside of the *Netra Tantra* at around the same time Kṣemarāja commented upon it. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*²⁹⁰ contains the most explicit story of how Śiva came to be known as Mṛtyuñjaya. Here, a man named Mṛkaṇḍu performs penance to Śiva in order to please him and to get a son. Śiva gives Mṛkaṇḍu the choice between a wise, pious, and virtuous son who would live to sixteen or a dull, evil son who would live a long life. Mṛkaṇḍu chooses the former. His wife gives birth to a son, Mārkaṇḍeya. Upon telling Mārkaṇḍeya that he will not live long, the boy becomes an ascetic, performing penance, wearing clothes made of tree bark, and allowing his hair to mat. On the day of his death, Mārkaṇḍeya is deep in meditation and the radiating heat keeps Yama's servants from approaching him. Eventually, Yama himself comes for Mārkaṇḍeya. Seeing Yama, Mārkaṇḍeya embraces a statue of Śiva and Yama encircles both with his rope. Śiva angrily emerges from the statue, killing Yama and saving Mārkaṇḍeya's life. Mṛkaṇḍu praises Śiva, and calls him Mṛtyuñjaya and Kālakāla when Śiva gives Yama his life back and makes Mārkaṇḍeya sixteen years old forever.²⁹¹ The *Netra Tantra* does not use the name Kālakāla to describe its main deity but the name appears in the *Vāyu Purāṇa* as an epithet for Śiva when he drinks the poison (*kālanāla*) that emerges from the Ocean of Milk.²⁹² The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* does not describe Mṛtyuñjaya in detail. The only known text other than the *Netra Tantra* dedicated mostly to Mṛtyujit is the *Mṛtyuñjaya Purāṇa*. The *Ekāmra*

²⁸⁹ GP 18.18.2

²⁹⁰ A major Purāṇa that dates anywhere from the fourth to tenth centuries, Rocher, 1986, p. 195-196.

²⁹¹ Mani, 1975, p. 488; Dalal, 2011, p. 245-246.

²⁹² Klostermaier, 1985, *Mythologies and Philosophies of Salvation in the Theistic Traditions of India*, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, p. 144.

Purāna, which may date from as early as the fifteenth century²⁹³ mentions the *Mṛtyuñjaya Purāṇa* in its list of *upapurāṇas*. Unfortunately, this is the only reference to this text and it has not survived²⁹⁴

D. Worshipping Amṛteśa

Now that I have explored the iconographic narrative of Śiva and the Purāṇic identification of Śiva with Mṛtyujit, I examine the worship of Śiva within the *Netra Tantra*. As I stated earlier, the main deity of the *Netra Tantra* bears several names. He is Śiva, Bhairava, Amṛteśa, and Mṛtyujit/Mṛtyuñjaya.²⁹⁵ Several chapters of the *Netra Tantra* are devoted to descriptions of a variety of brahmanical deities. These illustrations demonstrate that the *mantrin* is to perform worship to all deities using the mantra *oṃ juṃ saḥ*. Sanderson argues that the Śaiva officiant is to worship Amṛteśa as whichever deity the calendrical occasion requires. This demonstrates what he calls the "universality of Amṛteśvara."²⁹⁶ In other words, when the *mantrin* worships Indra, he actually worships Amṛteśa in the form of Indra (*indrarūpa*).²⁹⁷ Further, Sanderson notes that though these calendrical requirements center on

²⁹³ Heinrich von Stietencron, (chair); P. Flamm, J.L. Brockington, A. Malinar, P. Schreiner, K.P. Gietz, A. Kollman, S. Dietrich, R. Söhnen-Thieme, A.S. Pfeiffer, et al., 1992, *Epic and Purāṇic Bibliography (up to 1985) annotated and with indexes: Part I A-R*, Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, p. 405; Upendra Nath Dhal, 1986, *The Ekāmra Purāṇam*, New Delhi: Nag Publishers, p. 3.

²⁹⁴ Rocher, 1986, p. 200.

²⁹⁵ NT 7.52a and 8.55a also refer to the deity as Kālajit.

²⁹⁶ Sanderson, 2004, p. 253.

²⁹⁷ NT 19.103.

brahmanical worship, in the Kashmirian *Nīlamatapurāṇa*²⁹⁸ such worship includes the days of Buddha's birth and attainment of *nirvāṇa*.²⁹⁹ That worship of the Buddha within the brahmanical sphere demonstrates that the distinctions between what we now call Hinduism and Buddhism are a later development. Certainly, at the time of the *Netra Tantra* differences in philosophy and practice were known and acknowledged. Both Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta actively defend their points of view against Buddhist ideas in dialogic treatises. Through these dialogs, Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta acknowledge that their own system of thought has appropriated and been influenced by Buddhist philosophical concepts.³⁰⁰

The *Netra Tantra* does not go into great depth about how to perform such calendrical worship. It assumes that its *mantrin* is versed in such practice and so focuses on colorful descriptions of how one is to visualize the deities. Most importantly, it emphasizes that these deities are different aspects of Amṛteśa.

Now I shall explain the protection of the king (*rājarakṣā*) [with the mantra]. [The *mantrin*] should write the name [of the king] enveloped in the middle of the mantra. Above this, he should worship Bhairava, Deva and Amṛteśa, O Beautiful. The *devīs* and *dūtīs* are joined with him at the end [of the mantra] on the petals. Thus, the servants [become] bound to the root mantra. Outside of the lotus, [the *mantrin*] should draw the very white *śaśimaṇḍala*, and outside of that [he is to draw] a square endowed with the mark of a *vajra*. Thus, having written [all this] with saffron, bile, and white milk he

²⁹⁸ A local text that dates from the beginning of the Kārkoṭa period (c. 626-855), John Siudmak, 2013, *The Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir and its Influences*, Leiden: Brill,

p. 5, and which Kalhaṇa used as a source in the writing on his *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, Törzsök, 2012, "Tolerance and Its Limits in Twelfth Century Kashmir: Tantric Elements in Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*," *Indologica Taurinensia*. Vol. 38, p. 211.

²⁹⁹ Sanderson, 2004, p. 254.

³⁰⁰ See Isabel Raité, 2010, "The Dreamer and the Yogin: On the relationship between Buddhist and Śaiva idealisms," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 73, p. 438.

should worship in peace with an all white [offering]. In this way, he [gives] edible offerings and liquor to the appropriate, voracious form [of the deity]. He worships with a mixture of white sandalwood, dust-colored powdered camphor, seeds, grain, and sesame, [mixed together] with white sugar [that has been] combined with ghee and milk. All meditation done with effort and volition is the highest, etc. [and] causes one to thrive, etc. If, while [performing the agreed mediation], worshipping with Mr̥tyujit [in mind, the king] obtains great peace [*mahāśanti*] instantly. (NT 10.39-45)³⁰¹

At 21.72-73, the *Netra Tantra* reiterates that Śiva appears in the form of Amṛteśa, Mr̥tyujit, and Bhairava. Amṛteśa produces an *amṛta* of unparalleled strength while Mr̥tyujit offers escape from death, and Bhairava creates the universe. The mantras associated with these different versions of the deity produce boundless glory, successful authority in governmental matters, release from *saṃsāra*, and union with Śiva.³⁰² That the mantra is associated specifically with governmental authority demonstrates the strong connection between religious and political power. The *mantrin* gains social currency by his ability to produce successful results in the public sphere. Though the popular credit for such success lies with the ruler and not the *mantrin*, the monarch on whose behalf the *mantrin*

³⁰¹ *athedānīm pravakṣyāmi rājarakṣāṃ vidhānataḥ |*
mantrasaṃpuṭayogena madhye nāma samālikhet | | 39 | |
tadūrdhve bhairavaṃ devam amṛteśaṃ yajet priye |
devyo daleṣu tenaiṣa tathaiṣādyantayojitāḥ | | 40 | |
dūtyas tathā niyojyante mūlamantreṇa kiṅkarāḥ |
padmabāhye suśulkaṃ tu likhet tac chaśimaṇḍalam | | 41 | |
catuṣkoṇaṃ tu tadbāhye vajralāñchanalāñchitam |
rocanākuṅkumenaiva kṣīreṇa sitayā tathā | | 42 | |
likhitvā pūjayec chāntau sarvaśvetopacārataḥ |
yathānurūpanaivedyairghasmarairbalināsavaiḥ | | 43 | |
sitacandanasaṃmiśrān karpūrakṣodadhūsarān |
sākṣatāṃstaṇḍulatilān sitaśarkarayā saha | | 44 | |
ghṛtakṣīrasamāyuktān homayedyas tu yatnadhīḥ |
yatne parāpyāyanāḍau dhīrdhyānasaṃvidyasya | |
mahāśāntir bhavet kṣipraṃ grhīto yadi mṛtyunā | | 45 | |

³⁰² NT 21.72-75.

performs the rite will continue to employ him. Likewise, if his rites begin to fail and the ruler flounders in governmental matters, the *mantrin* may find himself replaced in the king's favor. Through the practice of worshipping Amṛteśa in the form of other deities during their established festivals, the *mantrin* ensures the continued protection of the king and kingdom while adhering to mainstream brahmanical practice. I will return to the specifics of worshipping Amṛteśa using the mantra and *maṇḍala* in Chapters Three and Four. Here I focus on the descriptions of the deities found in the *Netra Tantra*. This illustrates how the *Netra Tantra* imagines the pantheon of deities.

E. Deities in the *Netra Tantra*

In its first chapter, the *Netra Tantra* introduces Mrtyujit (1.34-36) as the conqueror of death. It does not supply a physical description of the deity, but focuses on the outcomes that accompany his worship. As I demonstrated above, Chapter Two of the *Netra Tantra* charts the visual and aural elements of the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra, but does not anthropomorphize the deity. Only when the text begins to describe the daily ritual, which requires meditation on the deity, does the *Netra Tantra* begin to elucidate upon Mrtyujit's appearance. The order of the rites in Chapter Two closely mirror those in the *Svacchanda Tantra*'s second chapter. In the *Netra Tantra*, the deity visualization occurs after the practitioner has performed the purificatory bath (*snāna*) and ritual oblations to the deities (*tarpaṇa*). After this, the *mantrin* enters the ritual space, burns up the impurities of the body and replaces them with a divine body made of the three *tattoas*, consisting of the conceptualized

mantra. The *mantrin* prepares for ritual offerings to the deity (*mūrti*) and his thoughts turn to meditation, and yoga.³⁰³

After the creation of a Tantric space and body, once the practitioner is about to present his offerings, the *Netra Tantra* introduces a meditation on Amṛteśa in his form as Mr̥tyujit.

And so now, having constructed the *amṛta mudrā*³⁰⁴ or the *padma mudrā*,³⁰⁵ [the *mantrin*] should meditate on the *ātman*. The deity is equal in splendor [to that] of ten million moons, as bright as pellucid pearls, and as magnificent as quartz stone, he resembles drop of cow's milk or jasmine, mountain snow, and is everywhere. One should think of him [dressed in] white clothes and ornaments, [draped in] a radiant garland of pearls, bulbs like moonlight, etc., his body is anointed with white sandalwood and dust-colored powdered camphor. In the middle of the *somamaṇḍala*, [he is] bathed in thick, abundant waves of *amṛta* [that make the] moon quiver. [He is] one-faced, three-eyed, seated on a white lotus, fixed in the bound lotus seat (*baddhapadmāsana*). [He is] four-armed, large-eyed, the hand [fixed in the position] of granting wishes and safety, [holding] a full moon, radiant, filled with *amṛta*, holding a water pot, [and] completely full of the world, the

³⁰³ NT 3.1-16.

³⁰⁴ Note here that the Sanskrit uses the feminine *amṛtā* as qualified by *mudrā*. This means that here we have the adjectival meaning of *amṛta*, immortal, not dead, or imperishable, and it cannot refer to the deity Amṛta (masculine), nor the nectar (neuter).

³⁰⁵ In his commentary at 2.32 of the *Svacchanda Tantra*, Kṣemarāja mentions both the *amṛta mudrā* and *padma mudrā* as part of *mūrti*.

moon in his lovely hand. [The *mantrin*] should remember him adorned with a reverence that is all white. (NT 3.17-23)³⁰⁶

This is the Mṛtyujit of the bronzes and stone statues mentioned earlier, whose right hands take the position of the wish-granting gesture and holds a water pot, while the single visible left hand cradles the full moon.³⁰⁷ When the *Netra Tantra* returns to the iconography of Mṛtyujit in Chapter Eighteen it adds the image of the consort Amṛtalakṣmī, and says nothing more about Mṛtyujit's appearance.³⁰⁸

After [the *mantrin*] has meditated on the beautiful form as indicated earlier, he should worship Mṛtyujit and Śrī Devī [Amṛtalakṣmī], seated on his lap in the middle [of the *somamaṇḍala*. She is] as clear as pure crystal, she possesses the same luster as mountain snow or a drop of jasmine. [She] resembles the swelling moon [and] shines forth like cow's milk. [She is as] white as pearls, covered in white clothes, adorned and resplendent with jewels, white garlands of pearls, moonstone, etc. [Amṛtalakṣmī is] beautifully adorned with white garlands, wreathes, *mālās*, [and] lotuses. [She] laughs, has beautiful limbs [and] a bright white smile. She is charming [and] wears a pure white crown. [She has] one face, three eyes, [and is] seated in the *baddhapadmāsana*, adorned with a yoga strap (*yogapaṭṭa*), a conch and lotus in

³⁰⁶ *mudrāṃ caivāmṛtāṃ baddhvā padmamudrāmathāpi vā |*
dhyāyed ātmani deveśaṃ candrakōṭisamaprabham | |17| |
svacchamuktāphalaprakhyāṃ sphaṭikādrisamaprabham |
kundendugokṣīranibhaṃ himādrisadrśāṃ vibhum | |18| |
śubhrahārendukandādisitabhūṣaṇabhūṣitam |
sitacandanaliptāṅgaṃ karpūrakṣodadhūsaram | |19| |
sphuraccandrāmṛtasphārabahulormipāriplutam |
somamaṇḍalamadhyastham ekavaktraṃ trilocanam | |20| |
sitapadmopaviṣṭaṃ tu baddhapadmāsanasthitam |
caturbhujāṃ viśālākṣaṃ varadābhayapāṇikam | |21| |
pūrṇacandranibhaṃ śubhram amṛtenaivo pūratam |
kalāsaṃ dhārayantaṃ hi jagadāpyāyakārakam | |22| |
paripūrṇaṃ tathā candraṃ vāmahaste 'sya cintayet |
sarośvetopacāreṇa pūjitaṃ tam anusmaret | |23| |

³⁰⁷ A drawing of the Tusā Hiti sculpture shows the gesture of protection in the remaining left hand, which corresponds to the description found here. Bühnemann, 2009, p. 108, 110.

³⁰⁸ I have not translated the descriptions most of the goddesses described in the *Netra Tantra*. This is because the imagery of the goddesses largely mirrors that of the male deities they accompany.

[her] hand, the hands [forming the gestures of] wish-granting and protection.³⁰⁹ Four armed, Mahādevī is marked with all auspicious signs. (NT 18.63-68)³¹⁰

Images of Mṛtyujit and Amṛtalakṣmī that correspond to those in the text appear in at least one of the royal baths in the Kathmandu Valley. This, along with the distribution of manuscripts of the *Netra Tantra* in Nepal demonstrate that the text had an impact outside of Kashmir.

Neither Mṛtyujit nor Amṛtalakṣmī possess any of the frightful characteristics of Tantric deities such as Bhairava. Bhairava often appears with fanged teeth, skulls, or severed arms. Mṛtyujit and Amṛtalakṣmī are delicate, pure, and unmoving save for the constant bath of nectar. The *Netra Tantra* describes another goddess, Maheśanī, who has eight arms. This goddess is an extension of Amṛtalakṣmī. Her four additional hands hold the bright gem that yields all desires (*cintāratna*), a water pot that is constantly full of *amṛta*, as well as the sun and moon. She stands on a white lotus that itself is above treasures and auspicious

³⁰⁹ Here the text also makes reference to *saumya*, soma or nectar but it is not clear what the goddess does with this nectar as she only has four hands with which to hold the attributed items.

³¹⁰ *tadutsaṅgagātāṃ devīṃ śriyaṃ vai viśvamātaram |*
viśuddhasphaṭikapradyaṃ himakundendusaprabhāṃ | |63| |
candrār budapratīkāśāṃ gokṣīrasadrśaprabhāṃ |
muktāphalanibhāṃ śvetāṃ śvetavastrānugūhitāṃ | |64| |
sitacandraliptāṅgīṃ karpūrakṣodadhūsarāṃ |
śuddhahārendukāntādiratnojjvalavimaṇḍitāṃ | |65| |
sitasradgāmamālābhīḥ kamalāḥ suvibhūṣitāṃ |
harahāsasubhrāṅgīṃ sitahāsāṃ manoramāṃ | |66| |
suśuklamukuṭopetāṃ ekavaktrāṃ trilocanāṃ |
baddhapadmāsanāsīnāṃ yogapattavibhūṣitāṃ | |67| |
śaṅkhapadmakarāṃ saumyaṃ varadābhayapāṇikāṃ |
canurbhujāṃ mahādevīṃ sarvalakṣaṇalakṣitāṃ | |68| |

elephants adorn her.³¹¹ Those who worship the goddesses in their home receive as rewards, life (*āyus*), power (*bala*), honor (*yaśa*), fame or glory (*kīrti*), wisdom (*medhā*), and beauty (*kānti*).³¹² Such worldly desires would be appealing to the monarch hoping to maintain or legitimize his rule. The *Netra Tantra* describes the practices by which one gains these rewards in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight. I discuss the gross (*sthūla*) yogic of practice of Chapter Six more in Chapter Three.³¹³

After the initial illustration of Mṛtyujit, the *Netra Tantra* spends Chapters Four through Eight on initiation and yogic practice. It then returns to iconography in Chapters Nine through Thirteen. What follows is a partial translation of these chapters that focuses on the main deity described therein. Most of the deities are accompanied by goddesses and other attendants, many of whom share their characteristics.³¹⁴

Chapter Nine begins with Pārvatī enquiring about the universality of Amṛteśa. She asks how he is able to confer *siddhis* on practitioners who follow other philosophical or textual traditions. This allows Śiva to explain that Amṛteśa himself is formless. When a disciple meditates on Amṛteśa he can do so using the image of any deity. Ultimately, the worship of all deities is the worship of Amṛteśa.

Amṛteśa is supreme. He is free of disease. His nature is inherent, fully enumerated, constant, eternal, and immovable. [He has] no form or color,

³¹¹ NT 18-74-75 *athavāṣṭabhujā devī cintāratnakarā śubhā |
kalaśaṃ dhārayennityamamṛtena samanvitam || 74 ||
somasūryakarā devī sitapadmoparisthitā |
nidhīnāṃ copariṣṭāttu gajamaṅgalabhūṣitā || 75 ||*

³¹² NT 18-80b.

³¹³ For a detailed study of the *sūkṣma* and *para* yogic practices of the *Netra Tantra* see Bäumer, 2018.

³¹⁴ I have not translated the descriptions of the goddesses and other attendants here but intend to do so later in a project that deals with representations of the feminine in the *Netra Tantra*.

and is the highest truth. Because of that, he is omnipresent. The splendid Deva delights in all *āgamas*, pervades all mantras, and grants all *siddhis*. In this way, he is like a transparent crystal sewn onto a colored thread, always reflected with its color, [and] seeking [to] look like this and that. Thus, in this way, Deveśa [is found in all] *āgamas*. He gives of all *sādhakas* the benefits [of worship] from all directions [i.e., no matter what their tradition]. Because of him, splendid gems light up [differently] under different conditions, giving the fruits of all *āgamas* in all streams. Thus, he is Śiva, Sadāśiva, Bhairava, Tumburu, Soma, and Sūrya, with his own form arising bearing no form. (NT 9.5-11)³¹⁵

Even Mṛtyuñjaya, described in the earlier passage, is only a specific form of the ultimate deity of the *Netra Tantra*, Amṛteśa. As this passage indicates, Amṛteśa takes the form of even Śiva and Bhairava, themselves often characterized as omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. As the *mantrin* visualizes these different deities, he is required to worship them in their correct manner. Not only does this allow for the *mantrin* to perform calendrical rites in accordance with tradition but it also allows for the worship of Amṛteśa to continue unabated. Sanderson notes that the attributes of Sadāśiva and Viṣṇu are unique to Kashmir, which demonstrates almost certainly that the text was written there.³¹⁶ This also helps to explain the

³¹⁵ *tad evaṃ paramaṃ devam amṛteśam anāmayam |*
svabhāvas tatsamuddiṣṭaṃ vyāpakaṃ śāsvataṃ dhruvam || 5 ||
na tasya rūpaṃ varṇo vā paramārthena vidyate |
yasmāt sarvagato devaḥ sarvāgamamayaḥ śubhaḥ || 6 ||
vyāpakaḥ sarvamantrāṇāṃ sarvasiddhipradāyakaḥ |
nirmalaṃ sphaṭikaṃ yadvat tantau protaṃ sitādike || 7 ||
pratibimbata sarvatra yena yena hi rañjitaṃ |
tattad darśayate 'nyeṣāṃ na svabhāvena rañjitaṃ || 8 ||
tathā tathaiva deveśaḥ sarvāgamaniyojitaḥ |
phalaṃ dadāti sarveṣāṃ sādhakānāṃ hi sarvataḥ || 9 ||
tasmāt srotaḥsu sarveṣu cintāmanir ivojjovalaḥ |
bhāvabhedenā vai dhyātaḥ sarvāgamaphalapradaḥ || 10 ||
śivaḥ sadāśivaś caiva bhairavas tumburus tathā |
somasūryas varūpeṇa vah nirūpadharo vibhuḥ || 11 ||

³¹⁶ Sanderson, 2004, p. 274, 284.

addition of Buddha, who, at the time, was worshipped in Kashmiri orthodox brahminical circles.

Again, the *Netra Tantra* offers a *nirvacana* to explain the variety of names attributed to the deity.

He is called Netra because he protects the restrained and bound. He who escapes death is called Mṛtyujit. Thus, he [who] grants immortality is called Amṛteśa. (NT 9.12cd-13)³¹⁷

The name Netra derives from \sqrt{ni} , the verbal root meaning "to protect"; Mṛtyujit stems from *mṛtyu*, with the verbal root $\sqrt{mṛ}$, "to die," combined with \sqrt{ji} , "to conquer;" and Amṛteśa from *amṛta*, again from the root $\sqrt{mṛ}$ with the negative prefix a, meaning "non-death." This is combined with the word "god," *īśa*. Though all are the same deity, these names demonstrate the different aims for which people worship him. Some seek relief from worldly ailments, others to overcome death, and finally *mokṣa*. In Chapter Three, I discuss what is meant by "immortality" in this system. For now, suffice to say that one attains *amṛta* in various ways, including living one's full life or living to the age of one hundred.³¹⁸ Further, we will see that one can have the rites of *amṛta* performed for one who is already dead. This demonstrates that the rite is not just for earthly immortality but for subsequent lives and complete liberation.

After the *nirvacana*, the text then describes Sadāśiva, on whose form the *sādhaka* can choose to meditate. The illustration of Sadāśiva here is not extraordinary. Brunner notes Kṣemarāja's quotation of the *Kālottara Tantra*, a text

³¹⁷ *niyantritānām baddhānām trāṇam tan netram ucyate | | 12 | |*
mṛtyor uttārayed yasmān mṛtyujit tena cocyate |
amṛtavoṣṭhaḥ dadāty evam amṛteśa iti smṛtaḥ | | 13 | |

³¹⁸ Einoo, 2005, p. 113-114.

that appears in at least the ninth century,³¹⁹ which she says is almost identical to that of the mid-eleventh century Kashmiri Śaivasiddhānta teacher³²⁰ Somaśambhu.³²¹ Though Somaśambhu clearly wrote long after the composition of the *Netra Tantra*, it is important to note the similarity between the depictions of the deity. This is not to suggest that either Somaśambhu or the writer of the *Kālottara* took the imagery from the *Netra Tantra*. Such a claim would require a philological analysis that is beyond the scope of this PhD.³²² Suffice to say, we know that Sadāśiva in the form found in both texts, played an important role in divergent Śaiva philosophical traditions.

The *Netra Tantra* instructs the *sādhaka* to meditate on the form of Sadāśiva, which describes it as made of Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, [Tat]Puruṣa, and Īśāna, the five *brahmanmantras* that also make up Sadāśiva's five faces. Several texts, including the *Tantrāloka*, describe Sadāśiva as *pancamantratanu*: one whose body consists of the five mantras.³²³ These mantras connect to five of the six *aṅgamantras*, namely *hṛd*, *śiras*, *śikhā*, *kavaca*, and *astra*,³²⁴ which we encountered earlier in the discussion of *nyāsa*. Further, the mantras also correspond to elements and cardinal directions and activities (see Chart 1).

³¹⁹ Dominic Goodall, 2007, "A first edition of the Śatika-Kārajñāna, the shortest of the non-eclectic recensions of the Kālottara," in *Mélanges tantriques a la mémoire d'Hélène Brunner / Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner*, Eds. Dominic Goodall and André Padoux, Pondicherry: Institut français d'Indologie / École française d'Extrême-Orient. Collection Indologie, p. 125.

³²⁰ Florinda De Simini, 2016, *Of Gods and Books: Ritual and Knowledge Transmission in the Manuscript Cultures of Premodern India*, Berlin: De Gruyter, p. 333.

³²¹ Brunner, 1974, p. 149.

³²² Goodall, 2007, describes various recensions of the *Kālottara*. At least ten of these date to before the twelfth century and have yet to be fully examined by scholars. A cursory comparison of relevant passages indicates that they do not appear to have come directly from the *Netra Tantra*.

³²³ Goodall and Rastelli, 2013, p. 353.

³²⁴ Davis, 2000, p. 49.

Chart 1: *Brahmamantras* and their correspondences³²⁵

<u>brahmamantra</u>	<u>direction</u>	<u>aṅgamantra</u>	<u>element</u>	<u>activity</u>
Sadyojāta	west	<i>hṛd</i>	earth	emission
Vāmadeva	north	<i>śiras</i>	water	maintenance
Aghora	south	<i>śikhā</i>	fire	reabsorption
Tatpuruṣa	east	<i>kaṇṭha</i>	wind	veiling
Īśāna	zenith	<i>astra</i>	ether	grace

After this cursory description of Sadāśiva's body, the *Netra Tantra* then instructs the *mantrin* to utilize the mantra to perform his rites. In other words, the practitioner is to visualize Sadāśiva in order to worship the formless Amṛteśa. To do this, the *mantrin* must use the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra. The text then elucidates on the image of the deity.

[He] resembles the swelling moon, a heap of mountain snow. Five-faced, large-eyed, ten-armed, [and] three-armed, [he] has a serpent as a sacred thread. He is covered in a garment made of tiger skin. [He] sits in the bound lotus pose atop a white lotus, [holding] a trident, blue lotus, arrow, *rudrākṣa*, [and] a mallet. The highest is done in the right and heard in the left. [Sadāśiva has] a shield, a mirror, a bow, a citron tree, and a water jar. At his head is a half moon. [He who meditates of Sadāśiva] should perceive the Eastern face as yellow; the Southern a wrathful, terrible black [that has] an unnatural, tusked mouth. [The Southern Sadāśiva] bears a skull rosary and makes the world tremble. [Sadāśiva's] Western [face] resembles snowy jasmine and the North as a beautiful red lotus. The face above the [other] Śiva [faces] resembles a crystal [i.e., colorless]. Thus, having meditated, [the *mantrin*] should worship Deveśa according to the rule [stated in the canon]. He should revere Īśāna, etc., and Sadyojāta, etc., in each's own form, in open,

³²⁵ Modified from lists and illustrations found in Davis, 2000, p. 48-51.

unoccupied ground, on a *liṅga*, in water, above a lotus, and in each's own direction. (NT 9.19cd-26)³²⁶

As Sanderson notes,³²⁷ the objects Sadāśiva holds here are unique to the Kashmirian tradition, with a more typical collection being a trident, axe, sword, thunderbolt, and fire in the right hand, a snake, noose, bell, *mudrā* of protection, and a Sadyojāta.³²⁸ Other deities described in the *Netra Tantra* also deviate somewhat from their more familiar forms. As I demonstrated earlier in my discussion of physical representations of Mṛtyuñjaya, the influence of the *Netra Tantra* did not extend much beyond the Himalayan region. Therefore, I focus solely on the *Netra Tantra*. Even the related *Svacchanda Tantra* differs in its description of gods such as Bhairava, demonstrating the lack of continuity in early Tantric literature. Törzsök has mapped some of these iconographical shifts in which some deities gain extra heads or faces in order to concur with the mantric technicalities required for worship.³²⁹ What remains consistent in the iconographic descriptions are the repeated characteristics that indicate a Śaiva affiliation for visualization. For

³²⁶ *candrārbudapratikāsaṃ himādrinicayopamam* || 19 ||
pañcavaktraṃ viśālākṣaṃ daśabāhuṃ trilocanam |
nāgayajñopavitam tu vyāghracarmāmbharacchadam || 20 ||
baddhapadmāsanāsīnam siddhapadmoparisthitam |
triśūlam utpalam bāṇam akṣasūtram samudgaram || 21 ||
dakṣiṇeṣu kareṣu evaṃ vāmeṣu śṛṅvataḥ param |
sphēṭakādarśacāpaṃ ca mātuluṅgam kamaṇḍalum || 22 ||
candrārdhamaulinaṃ devam āpītam pūrvavaktrataḥ |
dakṣiṇaṃ kṛṣṇabhīmograṃ daṃṣṭralaṃ vikṛtānanam || 23 ||
kapālamālābharaṇaṃ jagat saṃtrāsakārakam |
paścimaṃ himakundābhaṃ vāmaṃ raktopalaprabham || 24 ||
ūrdhvoaktraṃ mahesāni sphaṭikābhaṃ vicintayet |
evaṃ dhyātvā tu deveṣaṃ pūjayed vidhipūrvakam || 25 ||
svamūrtau sthaṇḍile liṅge jale vā kamalopari |
tīśānādyāṃś ca sadyontān svadikṣu pratipūjayet || 26 ||

³²⁷ Sanderson, 2004, p. 274.

³²⁸ Davis, 2000, p. 117.

³²⁹ Törzsök, 2013a, "The Heads of the Godhead: The Number of Heads/Faces of *Yoginīs* and Bhairavas in Early Śaiva Tantras," in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. 56, pp. 133-155.

example, many of the deities wear a *rudrākṣa*. This indicates their devotion to and being forms of Śiva. Others hold their hands in the *mudrās* of wish-granting and protection, as did Mṛtyuñjaya.

Following Sadāśiva, the *Netra Tantra* describes Bhairava and Bhairavī, a terrifying couple that the text reminds us should be kept secret. Though the text describes Sadāśiva before Bhairava, it gives much more attention to Amṛteśa as Bhairava. Like Amṛteśa and Sadāśiva, Bhairava appears in various colors. His frightening and screaming mouth is matched by his assortment of dangerous and deathly ornaments. Like many of the goddesses, Bhairavī has the same ornamentation and weaponry as her male counterpart. Due to this repetition I have often not translated descriptions of the goddess, though I do include Bhairavī here to demonstrate how the text presents female deities. Though I have not translated their descriptions in full, it is important to note the appearance of goddesses, *dūtīs*, and servants alongside and surrounding the deities. One must visualize these characters alongside the male deities as it is often these personalities who actually grant *siddhis* to the practitioners. In the ninth century Kashmiri *Sārādatilaka Tantra*, composed by Abhinavagupta's guru Desikendra, Bhairavī appears not as a fierce deity, nor as a consort of Bhairava, but as a smiling goddess with a beautiful face who is the source of both speech and the universe. She holds a jar of *amṛta* and is herself bathed in nectar.³³⁰ In the *Netra Tantra*, Bhairavī holds the medicinal *śatavārī* (*Asparagus racemosus*), a plant grown in the Himalayan region and used in Āyurveda to delay aging, improve mental faculties, and help fight disease.³³¹ Her

³³⁰ David R. Kinsley, 1998, *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: The Ten Mahavidyas*, Motilal Banarsidass: New Delhi, p. 169.

³³¹ Sukh Dev, 2001, "Ancient-Modern Concordance in Ayurvedic Plants: Some Examples." in *Development of Plant-Based Medicines: Conservation, Efficacy and Safety*, ed Praveen K. Saxena, Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media, p. 55-56.

worship then is preventative and suppresses that which brings about disease rather than simply curing them once they have manifested. Again, this makes worship of Amṛteśa, throughout the calendrical cycle, vital for the continued health and prosperity of the king and kingdom.

Now, at this moment, I shall explain the distinct appearance of Bhairava, [who] resembles an ointment [that clears the eye]. He has a nature that burns up and dissolves all things. Five-faced, atop a corpse, ten-armed [and] terrible, he resembles troops with demon mouths. He rumbles, [producing] a terrible noise, speaks with a gaping mouth [adorned with] with large tusks, [his face] bent in a frown. He [is] mounted on a lion, wears a snake garland, bears a *mālā*, and begging bowl. [He has] a torn mouth from [which he emits] a great roar. [His body is] covered by a cloth of elephant skin, a flower crown, [and] the moon. [Bhairava] holds a skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) and skull bowl. [He] bears a sword and shield, holds a hook and noose. [His] hand[s and posed] in the wish fulfilling and protection [*mudrās*. He] holds the thunderbolt of a great hero. [He also] holds an axe and a hatchet. Having worshipped Bhairava, [the *mantrin*] remembers being joined in union [with] him, [in the same way as] dissolution in fire. (NT 10.1-7ab)³³²

This reference to dissolution in fire mirrors the moment in initiation (*dīkṣā*) in which the bound soul becomes purified³³³ By calling attention to this moment, the

³³² *athedānīm pravakṣyāmi bhairavāgamabheditam |*
bhinnāñjanacayaprahyaṃ kalpāntadahanātmakam || 1 ||
pañcavaktraṃ śavārūḍhaṃ daśabāhuṃ bhayānakam |
kṣapāmukhagaṇaprahyaṃ garjantaṃ bhīṣaṇasvanam || 2 ||
daṃṣṭrakarālavadaṇam bhrukuṭīkuṭilekṣaṇam |
siṃhāsanapadārūḍhaṃ vyālahārair vibhūṣitam || 3 ||
kapālamālābharaṇaṃ dāritāsyam mahātānam |
gajatvakraṇvortapaṭam śaśāṅkakṛtasekharam || 4 ||
kapālakhaṭvāḍgadharam khadgakhetaḥkadhāriṇam |
pāśāṅkuśadharam devaṃ varadābhayapāṇikam || 5 ||
vajrahastaṃ mahāvīraṃ paraśvāyudhapāṇikam |
bhairavaṃ pūjayitvā tu tasyotsaṅgatām smaret || 6 ||
pralayāgnisamākārām

³³³ See Chapter Two for a detailed discussion of *dīkṣā*.

Netra Tantra reminds its reader that worship of any deity can bring about this same state of purification.

Like Sadāśiva, Bhairava has five-faces. However, these faces are not described in the same depth as those of Sadāśiva. This indicates that all of Bhairava's five faces are tusked and gaping. It is difficult to trace the emergence of Bhairava within the Tantric pantheon. Törzsök notes that deities bearing the name Bhairava and male deities accompanied by *yoginīs*, who she says are often called Rudras, appear in early Tantric Śaiva texts, such as the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, *Timirodghāṭana*,³³⁴ and the *Niśvāsa's Nayasūtra*.³³⁵ The earliest of these texts, the *Nayasūtra* does not describe Sadāśiva but instead discusses the four-faced deity Īśvara. It describes the southern face of Īśvara as "like a dark cloud, with tawny brows, moustache and eyes, with a face terrible by its wrinkled brow, skull-bearing and adorned with snakes; one should visualise the southern face as Bhairava / many-formed (?*bahurūpam*), bearing matted locks."³³⁶ Similarly, the above passage that describes the *Netra Tantra's* details Sadāśiva bearing a dark southern face, called Aghora, who wears skulls. The similarities between Aghora and Bhairava have been pointed out elsewhere.³³⁷ The *Netra Tantra's* Bhairava does appear to expand upon the characteristics of Aghora in its description of Bhairava. Further, it gives the goddess who accompanies him the name Aghoreśī. After a brief description of Bhairavī / Aghoreśī, the *Netra Tantra* returns to its description of Bhairava.

³³⁴ A pre-tenth century Kaula text. Törzsök, 2013a, p. 5.

³³⁵ Törzsök, 2013a, p. 5.

³³⁶ Goodall, 2015, p. 458. Here Goodall notes that the expression *bahurūpa* may mean that these faces were homologized with the *bramamantras*.

³³⁷ See Hatley, 2007, p. 185n176.

[Bhairavī]³³⁸ has the appearance of vermillion or *lac*. [She has] erect hair, a large body and is dreadful and very terrifying. [She has the medicinal plant] *śatavārī*, is five-faced, and adorned with three eyes.³³⁹ [Her hands bear] curved talons curved [She has] eyes like the hollow of a tree and wears a garland of severed heads. [Ten-]armed, like Bhairava [she also] bears Bhairava's weapons [of an axe and hatchet]. [She is] called *icchā śakti* [and she] moves toward union with one's own will. Having celebrated this form, [the *mantrin*] thinks of her as Aghoreśī. In all Tantras [this] is taught and secret. It is not made clear. My abode is visible by anyone on earth, [but] difficult to obtain. One should always worship [in times of] peace and prosperity, to suppress sickness and vice, [which are] the root cause of wasting away, [and] for the protection of cows, brahmins, and men. One meditates on [Bhairava] as having equal radiance to snow, jasmine, the moon, or pearls. [He is] as clear as the curved moon and similar to immovable quartz. [He is] clear like the burning of the end of time, resembles a flower on the sacred tree,³⁴⁰ appears red like innumerable suns or, rather, red like a lotus. [He is] equal in radiance to yellow orpiment. The *sādhaka* remembers Deva, who has the form of *icchā*, with whatever beautiful [form of the deity the *sādhaka* chooses]. [Thus, the deva] gives [the *sādhaka*] the fruits of *icchāsiddhi*. Any one [of the deity's] forms bestows, any one beautiful [form] grants *siddhis*. [The *sādhaka*] may meditate [on the deity] in the middle of a lotus, he should worship there with the corresponding

³³⁸ The name Bhairavī does not appear in the main text of the *Netra Tantra*. I use it here following Kṣemarāja's use in his commentary.

³³⁹ The description of a deity with five faces and three eyes is rather unusual. I take this to mean that the goddess has three eyes on each of her five faces, for a total of fifteen eyes. This is still abnormal though the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* describes Bhairava as having four faces and twelve eyes, three per face. The *Svacchanda Tantra* describes the deity Kālāgnirudra as four-faced with twelve eyes. Törzsök, 2013a, p. 10.

³⁴⁰ The *Butea frondosa*.

offerings [for the form of the he has chosen to visualize], such as edibles, flowers, perfume, and nectar.³⁴¹ (NT 10.7cd-17ab)³⁴²

Though the *Netra Tantra* does not give much in the way of a description of the goddess, it is clear that she shares many of his attributes. The *Netra Tantra* mentions her here because she is to be meditated on in conjunction with Bhairava. Kinsley notes that there appear to be no myths that explain the origin of Bhairavī.³⁴³ He does discuss several different descriptions of the goddess, one of which varies greatly from that found in the *Netra Tantra*. The ninth century *Śāradā Tilaka*, attributed to Abhinavagupta's guru Lakṣmaṇa Deśikendra, describes Bhairavī as beautiful. She has a single, white face with three eyes, and holds a book, a rosary, and a jar of *amṛta*.³⁴⁴ This example is notable as it is unique among

³⁴¹ This may refer to liquor but can also simply be read as nectar or juice.

³⁴² *lākṣāsindūrasaprabhām |*
ūrdhvaśeṣīm mahākāyāṃ vikarālāṃ subhīṣaṇām || 7 ||
mahodarīm pañcavaktrām netratravayavibhūṣitām |
nakharālāṃ (em. nakhārālāṃ) koṭarākṣīm muṇḍamālāvibhūṣitām || 8 ||
bhairavoktabhujāṃ devīm bhairavāyudhadhāriṇīm |
icchāśaktir iti khyātāṃ svacchandotsaṅgagāminīm || 9 ||
aghoreṣīti vikhyātāmetadrūpadharāṃ smaret |
sarvatanreṣu ca proktaṃ pracchannaṃ na sphuṭīkṛtam || 10 ||
mamāśayo na kenāpi lakṣito bhuvī durlabhaḥ |
vyādhinigrahaṇādyeṣu pāpeṣu kṣayahetave || 11 ||
gobrahmaṇeṣu rakṣārthaṃ śāntau puṣṭau sadā yajet |
athavā himakundendumuktāphalāsadyutim || 12 ||
candrakoṭisamaprakhyāṃ sphaṭikācalasamṇibham |
kalpāntadahanaprakhyāṃ japākīṃśukasamṇibham || 13 ||
sūryakoṭisamākāraṃ raktaṃ vā tamanusmaret |
athavā padmarāgābhaṃ haritālasamadyutim || 14 ||
icchārūpadharaṃ devam icchāsiddhiphalapradam |
yādṛśenaiṃ vapuṣā sādhaḥastam anusmaret || 15 ||
tādṛśaṃ bhajate rūpaṃ tādṛksiddhipradaṃ śubham |
padmamadhy asthitam dhyāyet pūjayed vidhinā tataḥ || 16 ||
yathānurūpanaivedyapūṣpadhūpāsavair vibhum |

³⁴³ Kinsley, 1998, p. 167.

³⁴⁴ Kinsley, 1998, p. 168.

descriptions of Bhairavī and yet belongs to the literary tradition of medieval Kashmir, though certainly after the writing of the *Netra Tantra*.

As the *Netra Tantras* iconography continues, it describes Bhairava and Bhairavī as surrounded by four *devīs* and four *dūtīs*. Here the *Netra Tantra* gives attributes to the *devīs* who sit at the four cardinal directions. All have four arms and one face. Siddhā stands in the East. She is peaceful, all white and rides an antelope. Raktā resembles Bhairava with her red body. She wears a garland of skulls, holds a head, stands upon a corpse, and wears an elephant skin around her shoulders, a tiger skin around her hips. Like Raktā and Bhairavā, Śuṣkā has a terrifying form. She is red, surrounded by a rope of nerves, and her hair stands erect. She wears a necklace of skulls, a tiger on her shoulders and a man's skin at her hips. She sits atop the demon Kumbhāra, who has the neck of a camel, the shoulders of an elephant, the ears of a horse, the face of a ram, snakes for legs, turtle claws, and a fish tail. Finally, in the North sits Utpalahastā, dressed in blue, blue skin, and riding atop a lion. The *dūtīs* sit at the inter-cardinal directions, beginning in the Southeast. The text gives little description of the *dūtīs* Kālī, Karālī, Mahākālī, and Bhadrakālī.³⁴⁵ The grinning servants Krodhana, Vṛntaka, Karṣaṇa, and Gajāna merit even less attention.³⁴⁶ Nevertheless, they are an important part of the meditation and this passage demonstrates the detail of the visualized *maṇḍalas*.

The *Netra Tantra* again reiterates that a practitioner may choose the form of the deity he wishes to worship. In making this choice, the *mantrin* must be sure to use the correct offerings for the chosen deity. Most important, worship is to take place regardless of circumstance. This is why it is so vital that the *mantrin* worship

³⁴⁵ NT 10.17b-34.

³⁴⁶ NT 37-38.

Amṛteśa in various forms. Amṛteśa provides the benefits of protection by preventing ills in addition to removing them once they have presented themselves.

Another form of Amṛteśa, Tumburu dominates Chapter Eleven of the *Netra Tantra*. Törzsök notes that earlier Tantric representations of Tumburu give him four heads, one facing in each of the cardinal directions.³⁴⁷ This allows him to look at the goddesses and recalls a tale in the *Mahābhārata* in which a goddess circumambulates Śiva. So that he may see her uninterrupted, he creates three additional heads.³⁴⁸ The *Netra Tantra* gives him a fifth head, saying that that he must appear like Sadāśiva.³⁴⁹ In many Tantric descriptions of Tumburu, he is called upon for his healing properties, as well as his ability to bestow powers of seduction, destruction through sorcery, subjugation, eradication of enemy armies. He can also protect a person and his health and offers other semi-magical results.³⁵⁰ Such aims clearly match the goals of the *Netra Tantra* so it is not surprising to find Tumburu connected to a special rite connected to the protection of a king. A Khmer inscription that dates to the reign of Khmer king Jayavarman II in the seventh century describes this rite.³⁵¹ In the Khmer inscription, four scriptures that increase the kingdom's prosperity issue from each of Tumburu's faces. It is unclear why the *Netra Tantra* insists on a correlation between Tumburu and Sadāśiva, but Tumburu's four lower heads may still face the *devīs* at the cardinal direction and the fifth atop these four. These *devīs* appear in the colors that belong to *maṇḍala* worship: White, red, yellow, and black. These colors agree with the facial colors of

³⁴⁷ Törzsök, 2013a, p. 6.

³⁴⁸ Törzsök, 2013a, p. 2, 6.

³⁴⁹ NT 11.13.

³⁵⁰ Geoffrey Samuel, 2008, *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic religions to the thirteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 306.

³⁵¹ Alexis Sanderson, 2003-2004, "The Śaiva Religion among the Khmers (Part 1)," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, Vol. 90-91, p. 356.

Sadāśiva, again establishing the connection between the two deities and Tumburu's retinue clear.

Now, at this moment, I will tell the highest-most teaching to be worshipped with this mantra, for the sake of peace from all calamities, resulting in the fruits of all *siddhis*. [He worships] Deva as Tumburu in the middle of an eight petaled lotus, in the *maṇḍala*, [starting] in the East, O Devī. [The *sādhaka*] honors the Lord who is ten-armed, five-faced, and three eyed, with the form and faces like Sadāśiva. He [has] a half-moon in his topknot, sits in the blue lotus *āsana*. [Tumburu is] white like a drop of frosty jasmine, similar to mountain snow. [He wears] a serpent as a sacred thread and is adorned with snake ornaments. [Tumburu is] adorned with all jewels, a tiger skin on the ground [below his] hips, a garment of elephant skin, mounted on a very strong bull, and wears a rhino hide. Adorning Deva is a white flower and a spade. [He] holds an elephant hook and noose. Deva [has] a thread with a *cakra* at the access, hand [held in the] wish-granting and protective [*mudrās*]. *Devīs* and *dūtīs* stand in all directions, beginning in the East, etc. Thus, the female servants are in their proper places at the entries [of the *maṇḍala*]. The *dūtīs* are called Jambhanī, Mohanī, Subhagā, and Durbhagā. The servants are called Krodhana, Vṛntaka, Gajakarṇa, and Mahābala. He installs Gāyatrī and Sāvitrī to the left and the right. [The *sādhaka*] installs a hook above and immediately after, *māyā* below. All this is always to be joined with the root mantra. The *devīs* are white, red, yellow, and black, four-faced, four armed, three eyed, and in [their] hands bear golden hatchets, sticks and rosaries. Mounted on a corpse, Jayā *devī* shines forth [in white]; four-armed, four-faced, three-eyed, red Vijayā holds grass, a bow, a shield and a sword, [while] standing upon an owl, O Devī. Ajitā [is yellow, like] the calyx of a lotus. Four-faced and four-armed, [she] bears a spear and a bell and rests on a flat hide. Seated on horseback, the Great Devī [Aparājītā] is adorned with many ornaments and resembles a broken sapphire [i.e., black]. [She is] adorned with four faces, four arms, three eyes, and holds a grass noose, a jewel, a bowl, and a mace. [She] stands firmly on a divine seat, clothed in gold clothes and gold ornaments. [When one] worships and meditates on [the *devīs*, as they] stand in the cardinal directions, [the *devīs* grant the practitioner] the fruits of *siddhi*. However, those who are *dūtīs* bear a form adorned with one face, two arms, and three eyes. Adorning [them is] hair,

shorn with scissors. They sit on a fish, a turtle, a *makara*,³⁵² and a frog. The servants are two-armed and hold a sword and a hide, [faces bent] in a crooked frown [on their] single faces, [which is adorned with] three eyes. [When] meditated on, [they] burst forth with white, etc., colors, giving the fruits of *siddhis*. *Gāyatrī* is a beautiful red color, adorned with one face, sitting in the bound lotus seat, the eye opened in meditation. *Sāvitrī* is the color white, eyes gone to inward meditation. The *devī Māyā* is dark and four

³⁵² A crocodile, shark, or dolphin.

armed [One of her] pair [of arms] hold a great cloth that conceals the world.
(NT 11.1-24ab)³⁵³

³⁵³ *athedānīṅ pravakṣyāmi Tantram uttaram uttamam |*
mantreṇānena yaṣṭavyaṅ sarvasiddhiphalodayam | |1| |
sarvopadravaśānty artham aṣṭapatre kuśeśaye |
pūrvāktamaṅḍale devi madhye devaṅ ca tumburum | |2| |
daśabāhuṅ sureśānaṅ pañcavaktraṅ trilocanam |
sādāśiveṇa vapuṣā vaktrāṅy asya prakalpayet | |3| |
taṅ cārḍhacandraśirasaṅ rājīvāsanasamaṅsthitam |
himakundendudhavalam tuhinācalasamṅnibham | |4| |
nāgayajñopavitam ca sarpabhūṣaṅabhūṣitam |
sarvābharaṇasaṅyuktam vyāghracarmakaṣiṣṭhalam | |5| |
gajacarmaparīdhānaṅ vṛṣārūḍhaṅ mahābalam |
khadgacarmadharaṅ devaṅ ṭaṅkakandalabhūṣitam | |6| |
pāsāṅkuśadharaṅ devaṅ cakrahastākṣasūtriṅam |
varadābhayahastaṅ ca sarvakilviṣanāśanam | |7| |
sarvadikṣu sthitā devyaḅ pūrvāḍau dūtya eva ca |
āgneyyādividikṣv evaṅ kiṅkarā dvāradeśataḅ | |8| |
jambhanī mohanī caiva subhagā durbhagā tathā |
dūtayas tu samākhyātāḅ kiṅkarān śṛṅvataḅ param | |9| |
krodhano vṛntakaś caiva gajakarṅo mahābalaḅ |
savyāpasavoye gāyatrīṅ sāvitrīṅ viniveśayet | |10| |
adha ūrdhve 'ṅkuśaṅ māyāṅ vinyasyet tad anantaram |
sarvāṅnyetāni yojyāni mūlamantreṅa sarvadā | |11| |
sitaraktapītakṛṣṇā devyo vai caturānanāḅ |
caturbhujā trinetrā ca ṭaṅkakandaladhārīṅ | |12| |
daṅḍākṣasūtrahastā ca pretopari virājate |
jayā devī tu vijayā raktavarṅā caturbhujā | |13| |
caturvaktrā trinetrā ca śarakārmukadhārīṅ |
khadgacarmadhrā devī hyulūkopari samsthitā | |14| |
ajitā padmagarbhā ca caturvaktrā caturbhujā |
śāktiḅghaṅṭādharā devī carmapaṭṭisadhārāṅ | |15| |
aśvārūḍhā mahādevī sarvābharaṅabhūṣitā |
bhinnendranīlasadrśī caturvaktravibhūṣitā | |16| |
caturbhujā trinetrā ca pāsāṅkuśadharaṅ tathā |
ratnapātragaḍāhastā divyāsanasusamaṅsthitā | |17| |
sauvarṅāmbarasamvītā svarṅabhūṣaṅabhūṣitā |
svadikṣu samsthitā iṣṭā dhyātāḅ siddhiphalapradāḅ | |18| |
dūtyas tadrūpadhārīṅyaḅ kiṅtu vaktraikabhūṣitāḅ |
dvibhujāś ca trinetrāś ca muṅḍakartaribhūṣitāḅ | |19| |
matsyaḅ kūrmas tu makaro bhekas tāsāṅ tathāsanam |
kiṅkarāḅ khadgahastāś ca dvibhujāś carmadhārīṅyaḅ | |20| |
ekavaktrāś trinetrāś ca bhrukutīkuṭilekṣaṅāḅ |
sitādivarṅabhedena dhyātāḅ siddhiphalapradāḅ | |21| |
gāyatrī raktavarṅābhā vaktraikena vibhūṣitā |

Within the *mantramārga* textual tradition, five streams of revelation emit from the mouths of Sadāśiva. From the upward facing, top head, Īśāna, comes the Siddhānta scriptures. The Vāma Tantras emerge from the North facing, mild Vāma face. These texts focus on Tumburu and his sisters. The Dakṣiṇa Tantras focus on Bhairava and emerge from the Southern Aghora face. Finally, the Gāruḍa Tantras from Tatpuruṣa's Eastern-facing mouth, and the Bhūta Tantras from Sadyojāta's face at the west.³⁵⁴ Sanderson notes that the works of the Vāma Tantras made some impact in Kashmir but does not appear to have taken hold in the same manner as texts of the Dakṣiṇa Tantra stream.³⁵⁵ Both the Vāma Tantras and Dakṣiṇa Tantras focus on goddesses, a characteristic that is reinforced in the above description of Tumburu. The Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti³⁵⁶ commented critically about texts he refers to as the Ḍākinī Tantras and Bhaginī Tantras.³⁵⁷ Dharmakīrti's commentator Karṇakogomin associates the Ḍākinī Tantras with the taking of life and identifies them, among others, as "Tantras of the Four Sisters." Sanderson identifies the sisters as Jayā, Vijayā, Ajitā/Jayantī, and Aparājitā.³⁵⁸ These, of course, are the *devīs* described above and associated with Tumburu. Further, Sanderson notes that in the *Netra Tantra*, Kṣemarāja refers to the Ḍākinī Tantras in reference to a method in which *yoginīs* kill their victims.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁴ Alexis Sanderson, 2013, "The Śaiva Literature," *Journal of Indological Studies*. No. 25, p. 32.

³⁵⁵ Sanderson, 2013, p. 50.

³⁵⁶ Seventh century. Hatley, 2007, p. 142.

³⁵⁷ Hatley, 2007, p. 142.

³⁵⁸ Alexis Sanderson, 2007b, "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir," in *Mélanges tantriques a la mémoire d'Hélène Brunner / Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner*, Eds. Dominic Goodall and André Padoux, Pondicherry: Institut français d'Indologie / École française d'Extrême-Orient. Collection Indologie, p.245n55.

³⁵⁹ Sanderson, 2007b, p.245n55.

Goudriaan has published the only known Vāma Tantra, based on a single extant Nepalese manuscript.³⁶⁰ This text, the *Vīṇāśikha Tantra* focuses on magic and describes rituals to subjugate kings and queens.³⁶¹ Unusually for a text focused on *yoginīs*, the *Vīṇāśikha Tantra* does not include deity possession and indicates that such practice was not part of early goddess worship.³⁶² The *Vīṇāśikha Tantra's* description of Tumburu differs from that of the *Netra Tantra*. As noted earlier, only in the *Netra Tantra* does Tumburu have five faces. In the *Vīṇāśikha Tantra*, Tumburu has only four faces and the goddesses who surround him have different attributes, though their colors and mounts are the same.³⁶³ The *Vīṇāśikha Tantra* describes the worship of its goddesses as mantric recitation that stems from a square *maṇḍala* that contains all the letters of the alphabet.³⁶⁴ The practitioner extracts the *bījas* from this *maṇḍala* and each *bīja* is associated with either the deity or one of the goddesses that surround him.³⁶⁵

The Māyā found in the *Vīṇāśikha Tantra* provides further evidence that the Vāma Tantras and Ḍākinī Tantras likely refer to the same set of texts. In the *Netra Tantra*, Māyā wields a large cloth that she uses to conceal the world. In the *Vīṇāśikha Tantra*, one gains power over another by locating the five *bījas* within the

³⁶⁰ Hatley, 2007, p. 144-145; Teun Goudriaan, 1985, *Vīṇāśikhatantra: A Śaiva Tantra of the Left Current*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 4-5.

³⁶¹ Andrea Acri, 2016, "Once More on the 'Ratu Boko Mantra': Magic, Realpolitik, and Baudha-Śaiva Dynamics in Ancient Nusantara," in *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*, Ed Andrea Acri, Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute p. 346.

³⁶² Judit Törzsök, 2013b, "Yoginī and goddess possession in early Śaiva tantras," in *Yoginī in South Asia: Interdisciplinary approaches*, New York and London: Routledge, p. 180-181.

³⁶³ Goudriaan, 1985, p. 21.

³⁶⁴ VST 51, 123.

³⁶⁵ VST 119-136.

victim's heart. The *yogin* uses Māyā to cover the victim internally and externally to render him powerless.³⁶⁶

After the *Netra Tantra* has described Tumburu and his attendants in detail, it affords less attention to the remaining deities. Viṣṇu, in the form of Nārāyaṇa, appears in two forms, one who sits atop a lotus and the other who is mounted on Garuḍa. These variations appear consistent with the physical record. The sculptural tradition of Nārāyaṇa in medieval Kashmir shows great variety and what Malla calls "peculiarities" that do not appear in the rest of the Indian subcontinent.³⁶⁷

Thus, [I have] spoken the *kaulika* rule of the *mantrarāt*. I again shall tell another method by which [the deity] grants fruits. He should always think of the four-armed Nārāyaṇa arising. [Nārāyaṇa has] two, long, lotus petal eyes, one face, has the appearance of a [blue] linseed flower, [and is] adorned with all [of his] instruments: a conch, discus, mace, and lotus. Deva bears divine garments [and] sits atop a divine flower [i.e., a lotus]. [He is] decorated with a gleaming crown of rubies, a small bell, and a net [and] wears heavenly earrings. Or, he should meditate [on Nārāyaṇa] atop Garuḍa, Śrī at his side. [He should visualize Viṣṇu] very white and beautiful [with] three faces [that] resemble the moon, six arms, decorated like Varāha Hari, [his hands] endowed with [the shapes of] wish-granting and protection. Śrī is of the same color and holds the same weapons, suitably beautiful and charming before the eyes of Devadeva. [The *mantrin*] places *devīs* at the four cardinal directions and members (*aṅga*) at the intermediate compass-points. Thus, he worships [the *devīs*] Jayā, Lakṣmī, Kīrti, and Māyā at the cardinal directions, [where they] hold a noose and hook, hands [in the *mudrās* of] granting wishes and protection. He meditates [on them] before the eyes of the Deva, assuming the shape of [whichever] goddess is chosen.

³⁶⁶ VST 201.

³⁶⁷ Bansi Sal Malla, 1996, *Vaiṣṇava Art and Iconography of Kashmir*, Abhinav Pubns: New Delhi, p. 43.

The members are similar to the Deva, [with] his color and hold [his same] weapons. (NT 13.1-9)³⁶⁸

The goddesses Jayā, Lakṣmī, Kīrti, and Māyā appear in the Pāñcarātra *Jayākhya Saṃhitā*,³⁶⁹ though there they have no cosmological function.³⁷⁰

Bhattacharyya notes, "a perfectly Tāntric atmosphere permeates through the whole work."³⁷¹ By this, he means rites of anointment (*abhiṣeka*) and a focus on *mudrā* and *maṇḍala* appear throughout the text.

The text continues with its visualization of Viṣṇu. First, in the form of a young boy and then in whichever of his avatars one chooses. Such flexibility allows the Śaiva to participate in Vaiṣṇava rites without imposing upon them a distinct Śaiva interpretation of the other deity. Thus, the Śaiva practitioner co-opts the other brahmanical deities as manifestations of Amṛteśa. Meditation on the forms of

³⁶⁸ *evaṃ vai mantrarājasya kaulikaścodito vidhiḥ |*
punaranyat pravakṣyāmi vidhānaṃ yatphalapradaṃ || 1 ||
nārāyaṇaṃ caturbāhuṃ padmapatrāyatekṣaṇaṃ (em. padmapattāyatekṣaṇaṃ) |
atasīpuṣpasamkāśaṃ ekavakraṃ dvilocanaṃ || 2 ||
śāṅkhacakraḡadāpadmasarvābharaṇabhūṣitaṃ |
divyāmbaṛadharaṃ devaṃ divyapuṣpopaśobhitaṃ || 3 ||
sphuraṇmukuṭamāṇikyakiṅkiṅjālamaṇḍitaṃ |
divyakuṇḡadaladhartāraṃ utthitaṃ tu sadā smaret || 4 ||
athavā pakṣirājasthaṃ suśvetaṃ tu manoramam |
trivakraṃ saumyavadanaṃ varāhaharibhūṣitaṃ || 5 ||
bhujaiḥ ṣaḡbhīḥ samāyuktaṃ varābhayasamanvitaṃ |
utsaṅge 'sya śriyaṃ dhyāyet tadvarṇāyudhadhāriṇīm || 6 ||
lāvaṇyakāntisadrṣīṃ devadevasya saṃmukhīm |
caturdikṣu sthitā devīr vidikṣv aṅgāni pūjayet || 7 ||
jayā lakṣmīs tathā kīrtir māyā vai dikṣu tā yajet |
pāśāṅkuśadharā devyo varadābhayapāṇikāḥ || 8 ||
devasya saṃmukhe dhyāyec chrīvarṇā rūpadhāriṇīḥ |
devasya sadṛśāṅgāni tadvarṇāstradharāṇi ca || 9 ||

³⁶⁹ The date of this text is unclear. Gonda, 1977, p. 89, notes that it is one of the oldest Pāñcarātra texts, dating perhaps as early as the fifth century.

³⁷⁰ Gonda, 1977, 89.

³⁷¹ B. Battacharyya, 1931, "Conclusion" in *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, Ed Embar Krishnamacharya, Baroda: Oriental Institute, p. 27.

Viṣṇu, or any deity, is then actually meditation on Bhairava and henceforth, on Amṛteśa.

Or, [the *mantrin*] worships a very handsome, eight-armed, yellow Deva. He is naked, sits on a ram, and is unadorned He rests on one horn [of a sheep and] offer up a pile of wheel spokes, the hand...³⁷² having the shape of a boy. [He is] constantly at play with a flock of beautiful, naked women. The goddesses Karpūrī, Candanī, Kastūrī, and Kuṅkumī stand at the cardinal directions, and have a similar form as the Deva. The *devīs* grant the fruits of the desired *siddhis*. What more should be said here? He remembers [Viṣṇu's] many forms. Thus, he thinks [of him] with a collection of many faces, many weapons and [many] arms [i.e., the cosmic Viṣṇu], reclining, taking a wife, joined with Lakṣmī,³⁷³ alone, [as] Narasiṃha, Varāha, or Vāmana, Kapila, or an honorable man, unadorned, or even without parts. With whatever his nature, one should recall him with any state of being. It is said Bhairava is made up of him. Pārameśvarī is called order. [This then is the abode of Mṛtyujit.] (NT 13.10-16)³⁷⁴

Sanderson points out that this version of Viṣṇu, riding a ram is likely an iconographic representation that is unique to Kashmir.³⁷⁵ Kṣemarāja says it comes

³⁷² Here we find missing text so it is unclear what he holds in the hand. I am also not certain that *ceyāra* is *ceya* + *ara* and suspect that the text may be corrupted here. The Muktabodha online transliteration reads *ceyā (kenā) rodyatapāṇīkam*.

³⁷³ Half Viṣṇu, half Lakṣmī.

³⁷⁴ *athavāṣṭabhujam devam pītavarṇam suśobhanam |*
meṣopariṣṭhitam devi digvastram cordhvaliṅginam || 10 ||
śṛṅgam vaṣṭabhya caikena ceyārodyata (?) pāṇīkam |
bālarūpam yajen nityam krīḍantam yoṣitām gaṇaiḥ || 11 ||
caturdikṣu sthitā devyo digambaramanoramāḥ |
karpūrī candanī caiva kastūrī kuṅkumī tathā || 12 ||
tadrūpadhārikā devya icchāsiddhiphalapradāḥ |
bahunātra kimuktena viśvarūpam tu tam smaret |
anekavaktrasaṅghātair anekāstrabhujais tathā || 13 ||
śayanastham vivāhastham ardhalaṣmīyutam tathā || 14 ||
kevalam narasiṃham vā varāham vāmanam smaret |
kapilo 'py athavā pūjyaś cāvyakto vāpi niṣkalah || 15 ||
yena yena prakāreṇa bhāvabhedenā saṃsmaret |
tasya tanmayatāmeti ityājñā pārameśvarī || 16 ||

³⁷⁵ Sanderson, 2004, p. 285.

from the *Māyāvāmanasaṃhita*, a text that has not survived³⁷⁶ A thirteenth-century Kashmiri text composed by Rājānaka Jayadratha called the *Haracaritacintāmani* is the only other known appearance of the deity in this form.³⁷⁷ The goddesses, whose names mean camphor, sandalwood, musk, and saffron, also do not appear as goddesses in any text that I am aware of.

The text next moves to a depiction of Sūrya, the sun deity. A ninth century sculpture of Sūrya, housed in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum in Srinagar, depicts Sūrya seated atop a chariot with seven horses.³⁷⁸ Ruins of an eighth century sun temple in Kashmir, about fifty kilometers from Srinagar, remain understudied. Historical descriptions by early archaeologists fail to describe statuary in detail,³⁷⁹ while modern studies show that those sculptures that do remain are worn down.³⁸⁰ This mean the *Netra Tantra* offers a unique illustration of Sūrya as imagined in medieval Kashmir. The size and location of this temple, which appears to have been in use until the fifteenth century, demonstrates its importance during the medieval period. Four of six temples that Kalhaṇa cites in the *Rājataranṅiṇī*, described by Stein and others, appear to have been smaller than the Martand sun temple.³⁸¹ Of these other temples, all ascribed to the reign of Lalitāditya (c. 725-761 / 2),³⁸² three are Buddhist and three Vaiṣṇava.³⁸³ Kalhaṇa praises Lalitāditya

³⁷⁶ NTU 13.9; Sanderson, 2004, 285.

³⁷⁷ Sanderson, 2004, p. 285.

³⁷⁸ Siudmak, 2013, p. 409.

³⁷⁹ Walter R. Lawrence, 1895, *The Valley of Kashmir*, London: Henry Frowde, p. 170-172; James Fergusson, 1899, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture. Volume I*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, p. 285-291.

³⁸⁰ Siudmak, 2013, p. 409-410.

³⁸¹ Ronald Inden, 2000, "Imperial Purāṇas: Kashmir as Vaiṣṇava Center of the World," in *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia*, Ronald Inden, Jonathan Walters, and Daud Ali. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 85-86.

³⁸² Sanderson, 2004, p. 255n60.

³⁸³ Inden, 2000, p. 85.

for building these and many other shrines, including those dedicated to Śiva and Jain saints.³⁸⁴

Unlike the previous deities, the *Netra Tantra's* description of Sūrya does not report a retinue of goddesses. Instead, the eight planets, Nakṣatras, and Lokapālas³⁸⁵ surround Sūrya, each on its own lotus. The Nakṣatras vary in number.³⁸⁶ They are either heavenly bodies, stars, constellations, or lunar mansions through which the moon moves.³⁸⁷ The Lokapālas are associated with the consecration of temples,³⁸⁸ the installation of deities, and consecration rites.³⁸⁹ They appear again in the *Netra Tantra's* nineteenth chapter, where they offer protection to the sleeping king.

Now, I explain that which consists of light [i.e., Sūrya]. He manifests the *siddhi* of man. [Sūrya] resembles a red flower, has equal splendor with red juice. [He is] the color of a heap of vermillion, as beautiful as a ruby, appears as the color of safflower. [He] looks like the flower of a pomegranate [and] resembles Soma at the end of time. [Sūrya has] one face, three eyes, four arms, possess a noble nature, and [holds his] hands in the shape of the wish-granting and protection [*mudrās*]. [The *mantrin*] should imagine [Sūrya] with one hand [holding] a *vajra* [and] one a bridle. [He is] mounted on a chariot [on which are yoked] seven horses. [He] wears a serpent as a sacred thread [and] a garland of red flowers [and is] anointed with red perfume. Or [the *mantrin* should visualize him with] eight arms, bearing the weapons of the Lokapālas. [Here Sūrya is endowed with] three terrible faces, [each with]

³⁸⁴ RT 4.181-211.

³⁸⁵ Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, and Īśāna.

³⁸⁶ We often find either 27, 28, or 64 Nakṣatras. von Stietencron, 2013, p. 75, 81, points out that this is problematic because the lunar and solar years do not match. He argues that 64, which corresponds to the number of celestial *yoginīs* allows for the insertion of a leap month, allowing for solar and lunar calendrical harmonization.

³⁸⁷ Bryant, 2001, p. 253; Heinrich von Stietencron, "Cosmographic buildings of India: The circles of the yoginīs," in *Yoginī in South Asia: Interdisciplinary approaches*, New York and London: Routledge, 2013, p. 76-81.

³⁸⁸ Ślaczka, 2007, p. 175, 304, 346.

³⁸⁹ Ślaczka, 2007, p. 243.

three eyes, [and he is] disfigured. One should worship him [visualized as] mounted on a horse in the middle of a lotus. [The worshipper] honors [his] heart, head, and topknot, enveloped with the weapon of sight. [The *mantrin*] is to worship Deva, the eight planets, in the middle of a second lotus, the Nakṣatras in a third, and the Lokapālas in a fourth. [The *mantrin*] worships the eight weapons [of the Lokapālas which] stand in a fifth lotus. (NT 13.17-25ab)³⁹⁰

This image differs greatly from an eighth century brass Kashmiri figure of Sūrya currently housed at the Cleveland Museum of Art.³⁹¹ This figure has one head, two arms, and holds a lotus flowers in both hands. He has two eyes and an inlaid sacred mark between his eyebrows that has been lost, his face is adorned with a mustache, and he wears a crown decorated with flowers. Most strikingly different from the Sūrya described in the *Netra Tantra* is that the bronze figure stands rather than sits mounted on a chariot or horse. Lee notes that the long, belted robe and boots is similar in style to those worn by Buddha statues from Afghanistan. The boots of the Cleveland image are identical in style to those found

³⁹⁰ *tejomayamato vakṣye yena siddhirbhaven nṛṇām |*
raktapadmanibhākāraṃ lākṣārasasamaprabham || 17 ||
sindūrarāśivarṇābhaṃ padmarāgasamaprabham |
kusumbharāgasamkāśaṃ dāḍimīkusumaprabham || 18 ||
kalpāntavahnīsadyśam ekavaktraṃ trilocanam |
caturbhujam mahātmānaṃ varadābhayapāṇikam || 19 ||
vajramekena hastena rāśmīmekena dhārayet |
saptāśvaratham ārūḍham nāgayajñopavītinam || 20 ||
raktamālyāmbaradharaṃ raktagandhānulepitam |
athavāṣṭabhujam devi lokapālāyudhānvoitam || 21 ||
trivaktraṃ ghoravadanaṃ trinetraṃ vikṛtānanam |
aśvoparisamārūḍham padmamadhya sadā yajet || 22 ||
hṛcchiraś ca śikhā varma locanāstraṃ prapūjayet |
padmamadhya yajed devaṃ grahān aṣṭau dvitīyake || 23 ||
nakṣatrāṇi trītye tu yathā sāmṅhyaṃ tribhis tribhiḥ |
dalāgre tritayam pūjyam lokapālāṃś caturthake || 24 ||
pañcame padmasamsthāne astrāṇy aṣṭau prapūjayet |

³⁹¹ Sherman E. Lee, 1967, "Clothed in the Sun: A Buddha and a Surya from Kashmir," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Feb.), p. 48.

on a seventh century marble statue of Sūrya in the National Museum of Afghanistan.³⁹² Like the description in the *Netra Tantra*, the Kabul Sūrya rides a chariot, though he has only four attendants.³⁹³ The Kabul Sūrya is also notable for its European style of sitting.³⁹⁴ A tenth or eleventh century Nepali relief found near Pātan also depicts Sūrya in this European sitting position. Shimkhada notes this figure shares other attributes with the Afghanistan Sūrya and may be based on Kushāṇa dynasty royal statues.³⁹⁵

Unlike the Kashmir and Kabul Sūryas, the Nepal relief finds its Sūrya surrounded by eight figures, likely the planets.³⁹⁶ As I stated earlier, the *Netra Tantra's* Sūrya remains unique. This is the only example of Sūrya I have been able to locate whose hands form *mudrās* and hold a *vajra* and bridle. Several of the attributes of the *Netra Tantra's* Sūrya echo those of Mṛtyujit, namely the wish-granting and protective *mudrās* and the sacred thread made of a serpent. Through worship of Mṛtyujit as Sūrya, the *mantrin* uses the *Netra Tantra's* mantra to honor the entire astronomical world.

The descriptions of deities in the *Netra Tantra* can be read as genuine embodiments of the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra itself. Each iconography depicts a different god but in fact each is a reflection of the colored thread, which shines forth through the crystalline nature of Amṛteśa. The more iconographies the text offers, the more it proves to its practitioner that the nature of the divine is in fact formless. It also

³⁹² Lee, 1967, p. 49; Francine Tissot, 2006, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Afghanistan: 1931-1985*, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, p. 355.

³⁹³ Lee, 1967, p. 49.

³⁹⁴ Lee, 1967, p. 49; Deepak Shimkhada, 1984, "The Masquerading Sun: A Unique Syncretic Image in Nepal," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 45, No. 2/3, p. 226.

³⁹⁵ Shimkhada, 1984, p. 226.

³⁹⁶ Shimkhada, 1984, p. 225.

allows for the continued protection of the king throughout the year, as all worship becomes worship of Mrtyujit.

The *Netra Tantra* then describes Viśvakarman, who gave form to the universe. Though the *Pūraṇas* include many stories about Viśvakarman, he plays almost no role in Śaiva Tantric ritual. His inclusion here simply acknowledges his existence and role as divine architect. The *Netra Tantra* says very little about his appearance. This allows the practitioner to pay him homage through whatever means he feels necessary. Viśvakarman's body exists solely as a focal point for visualization.

Furthermore, [I shall describe] Viśvakarman, the Lord of the world. [He] is bright as a ray of light, risen alone [i.e., from itself]. [Viśvakarman] has [either] two or four arms. [When he has four hands he] bears a stone cutter's chisel and a book with [his] beautiful right hand. [In the left he holds] a clamp and a cord. [The *mantrin*] must honor [him] by praising Devas, Siddhas, and Gandharvas. [The *mantrin* can choose to] worship [him] in a heap of [ritual] fire, or in water, or at mountains. In whatever place he thinks [of Viśvakarman], [the deity] grants the fruits of desire.

(NT 13.25cd-28)³⁹⁷

Finally, the *Netra Tantra* describes Rudra, Brahmā, and Buddha. Here Umā accompanies Rudra, Brahmā rides his goose Haṃsa, and the Buddha, fixed in meditation, offers his protection, especially to women. In several places the *Rājataranṅiṇī* points out that royal women constructed many Buddhist temples,

³⁹⁷ *utthitaṃ kevalaṃ vāpi dvibhujam raśmisaṃnyutam* || 25 ||
viśvakarmasvarūpaṃ vā viśvākāraṃ jagatpatim |
caturbhujam mahātmānaṃ ṭaṅkapustakadhāriṇam || 26 ||
saṃdaṃśaṃ vāmahastena sūtraṃ vai dakṣiṇena tu |
devaiḥ siddhaiḥ ca gandharvaiḥ stūyamānaṃ vicintayet || 27 ||
sthale 'nale jale caiva parvatāgre prapūjayet |
yatra vā rocate citte icchāsiddhiphalapradam || 28 |

stūpas and monasteries.³⁹⁸ Such royal patronage of Buddhism appears to have peaked during the reign of Lalitāditya.³⁹⁹ By the mid-ninth century, royal patronage appears to have come to an end. If Sanderson's dating of the *Netra Tantra* is correct, the practice would have nearly disappeared by the time of its composition. This may explain why Buddha appears last in the list of deities.

Assuming the form of Rudra, [Amṛteśa holds] a dazzling white conch shell bowl. [Rudra has the] form of Sadāśiva [and the *mantrin*] visualizes [him] with four arms, mounted on a man. [Rudra] has noble nature [and holds] a spike for safety. Carrying a citrus tree, mighty Deva [also] has a rosary. Now, [the *mantrin*] should think [so that] Deva appears, his many arms posed in a dance [position]. [The *mantrin* meditates on Rudra] who holds Umā at [his] side. Or [the *mantrin* visualizes Rudra] as half of Viṣṇu. [Or finally, the *mantrin* visualizes Rudra as] taking a bride. [The *mantrin*] worships him nearby.

The auspicious Brahmā [has] four faces, four arms, beautiful eyes, and a red complexion. [He holds] a bundle of very sharp grass [that] hangs down [from his hands]. [Brahmā is] mounted on Haṃsa, holds a stick and *rudrākṣa*, carries a water jar for protection, [and] the four Vedas. [He] gives the fruits of all *siddhis*.

The Buddha, the great yogi, sits on a lotus, [head] bent, listening, and wearing mendicant's rags. [He possesses] beautiful lotus eyes, has a lotus[-shaped] mark, and is fixed with a jewel. [He is] established in the world, positioned in *samādhi*, his hands [making the] wish-granting and protection [*mudrās*]. Deva holds a *rudrākṣa* and a lotus. Thus, [the *mantrin*] should

³⁹⁸ Sanderson, 2004, p. 254, 255n60.

³⁹⁹ Sanderson, 2004, p. 255n60.

worship and meditate upon Buddha, [who] grants the fruits of *mokṣa* to women. (NT 13.29-36)⁴⁰⁰

After it provides this detailed iconography of the different deities, the text lists various deities and schools of thought. To worship according to each school's particular rules with the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra allows the practitioner to obtain the benefits of the ritual. This takes place because Amṛteśa is present in all physical forms and also in all philosophical systems.⁴⁰¹ This allows the king's officiant to worship Amṛteśa during all calendrical festivals. The *mantrin* honors the deity of each particular festival and simultaneously performs rites in honor of Amṛteśa that ultimately protect and prolong the life of the monarch.

IV. Maṇḍala: locating the divine in the physical world

The *Netra Tantra* has little to say about the nature of *maṇḍala*. It presumes that the *mantrin*, a highly trained professional religious officiant, is versed in the use of *maṇḍala*. In Chapters Two and Three, I discuss the specific *maṇḍalas* laid out

⁴⁰⁰ *śaṅkhakundendudhavalam trinetram rudrarūpiṇam |*
sādāśivoena rūpeṇa vṛṣārūḍham vicintayet || 29 ||
caturbhujam mahātmānam śulābhayasamanvitam |
mātuluṅgadharam devam akṣasūtradharam prabhum || 30 ||
atho bahubhujam devam nātyastham cintayet prabhum |
umārdhadhāriṇam yadvā viṣṇor ardhārdhadhāriṇam || 31 ||
vivāhastham ca vā dhyāyet samīpastham prapūjayet |
brahmā caturmukhaḥ saumyo raktavarṇaḥ sulocanaḥ || 32 ||
lambakūrcaḥ sutejās ca haṃsārūḍhaś caturbhujah |
daṇḍākṣasūtrahastaś ca kamaṇḍalvabhaye dadhat || 33 ||
vedaiś caturbhīḥ saṃyuktaḥ sarvasiddhiphalapradah |
buddhaḥ padmāsanagataḥ pralambaśruticīvaraḥ || 34 ||
padmākṣaḥ padmacihnaś ca maṇibaddho jagaddhitaḥ |
samādhistho mahāyogī varadābhayapāṇikaḥ || 35 ||
akṣasūtradhara devaḥ padmahastaḥ sulocanaḥ |
evam dhyātaḥ pūjitaś ca strīṇāṃ mokṣaphalapradah || 36 ||

⁴⁰¹ NT 37-43.

in the *Netra Tantra* for use in its protective rites. Here I introduce *maṇḍala* as a general Tantric concept.

White describes the *maṇḍala* as, "the hallmark of Tantric theory and practice, mesocosmic template through which the Tantric practitioner transacts and appropriates the myriad energies that course through every level of the cosmos."⁴⁰² In other words, the *maṇḍala* is the cosmos made manifest so that the practitioner can engage with it. Further, he notes that the *maṇḍala* has its origins in royal power, coming from the Vedic notion of the king as *cakravartin*, he who stands at the center of the wheel, and turns the kingdom that surrounds him.⁴⁰³ This means that the king must watch over and expand his kingdom in all directions. In the *maṇḍalas* included in the *Netra Tantra*, the *mantrin* writes the name of the person who has commissioned the ritual in the central space of the *maṇḍala*. He then writes the mantra at each of the eight cardinal and inter-cardinal directions for protection. This allows the *mantrin* to envelop the person with protection. The lotus flowers described in the *Netra Tantra* have either eight, sixteen, or thirty-two petals. This allows the practitioner to place the letters of the alphabet around the afflicted in the same way that he places the deity and his protective elements around him during worship.

Brunner set out the principal elements of *maṇḍalas*. Her work distinguishes *maṇḍala*, *cakra*, and *yantra* and identifies the differences between the three.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² David Gordon White, 2000, *Tantra in Practice*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 25.

⁴⁰³ White, 2000, p. 25.

⁴⁰⁴ Hélène Brunner, 1986, "Maṇḍala et Yantra Dans le Śivaïsme Āgamique: Définition, description, usage rituel," in *Mantras et Diagrammes Rituels Dans L'Hindouisme*, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Paris; Hélène Brunner, 2003, "Maṇḍala and Yantra in the Siddhānta School of Śaivism: Definitions, Description and Ritual Use," in *Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Hindu Traditions*, trsl Raynald Prévèreau, ed Bühnemann, Gudrun, Brill, Leiden.

Bühnemann⁴⁰⁵ refines Brunner's distinctions, explaining that the three terms are often used interchangeably within texts.⁴⁰⁶ Brunner discusses three types of physical *maṇḍalas*: "seat *maṇḍalas*," "image *maṇḍalas*," "distributive diagrams," plus a fourth type that consist of mental objects.⁴⁰⁷ *Maṇḍalas* of the last type stand apart from the others.⁴⁰⁸ Seat *maṇḍalas* lack a clear physical structure and are used to protect the deities or ritual objects that are placed on them.⁴⁰⁹ Image *maṇḍalas* are geometric designs made with colored powders that are destroyed after their use. They are also called "powder *maṇḍalas*." Finally, distributive diagrams are surfaces divided into squares into which the *mantrin* invokes a divine or demonic power for placation.⁴¹⁰

The *Netra Tantra*'s death-conquering rituals, which I describe in Chapters Two and Three, use only image *maṇḍalas*. The *Svacchanda Tantra*'s rich visualizations do not draw on *maṇḍalas* at all. In one instance, the *Netra Tantra* describes the use of a *cakra* in addition to a *maṇḍala*. The *cakra* here is a diagram that

⁴⁰⁵ Bühnemann, 2003.

⁴⁰⁶ The terms *maṇḍala*, *cakra*, and *yantra* are each often translated as "mystical diagram." These diagrams serve as spaces for ritual practice and are created so that the deities can appear within them. Each type has its own frequent characteristics, such as *maṇḍalas* usually including lotus petals or being drawn as square grids. These diagrams are regularly, though certainly not always, made for ritual and destroyed afterward. At times they are big enough for practitioners to enter them and the colors used have symbolic ritual meaning. Bühnemann, 2003, p. 15, shows that cities are routinely said to be based on *maṇḍalic* mapping, but that the actual connection between architectural or city design and *maṇḍala* is much more tenuous than it is widely assumed. *Yantras* are small, usually portable diagrams that utilize geometric patterning. Further, *yantras* can be two- or three-dimensional, while *maṇḍalas* are mostly two-dimensional. Finally, *cakras* are diagrams that can be part of *maṇḍalas*, ritual diagrams in their own right, or are used as a synonym for *maṇḍala* or *yantra*. As ritual diagrams, *cakras* can be circles of deities or associated with particular places of energy within the human body.

⁴⁰⁷ These *maṇḍalas* can be drawn but are not. They also used for meditation rather than ritual. They can include *maṇḍalas* of the five elements as well as, sun, moon, fire, and *śakti maṇḍalas* that appear on Śiva's throne. Brunner, 2003, p. 161.

⁴⁰⁸ Brunner, 2003, p. 161.

⁴⁰⁹ Brunner, 2003, p. 156; Bühnemann, 2003, p. 20.

⁴¹⁰ Brunner, 2003, p. 160.

is drawn onto the *maṇḍala* and represents the divinities that are present. Törzsök discusses the use of the terms *maṇḍala* and *cakra* in the *Svacchanda Tantra* and other early Śaiva Texts where the distinction between the two is less clear.⁴¹¹ In the death-conquering ritual, no such ambiguity exists. It is clear that the two terms have different ritual functions. The *maṇḍalas* act as surrogates for physical bodies. The *mantrin* invokes the body of an individual by writing his name.

V. Conclusion

In Chapter One I examined three elements that are vital to the protective rites found in the *Netra Tantra*. Of the three, mantra is the most technical. Its sounds and written phonemes connect the practitioner and the divine. For this connection to provide protection for the afflicted, the *mantrin* must physicalize the mantra to connect it to the body that suffers ailments. The *mantrin* does this by speaking mantras, placing them on the physical body, and incorporates them into *maṇḍala* worship through recitation and writing. The threefold nature of mantra makes this possible: formless Śiva, manifest Śakti, and embodied *aṇu*. Being all three simultaneously, the *mantrin* is able to use the embodied form in order to harness the power of the formless and call forth the deity who, through no means other than his own will, offers the afflicted release from his ailments.

The second element is deity visualization. Sculptural depictions of Mṛtyujit found in the Kathmandu Valley align closely with those described in the *Netra Tantra*. The text provides this iconography not as a guide for the sculptor but as a means of visualization. In addition to Mṛtyujit, the *Netra Tantra* describes a

⁴¹¹ Judit Törzsök, 2003, "Icons of Inclusivism: Maṇḍalas in some early Śaiva Tantras," in *Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Hindu Traditions*, Ed Bühnemann, Gudrun Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, p. 181-182.

pantheon of deities suitable for worship in place of Mṛtyujit. Using his mantra, this is done to conform to the calendrical rites while maintaining the protective aspect of the *Netra Tantra's* practice. Many of the descriptions differ from those found elsewhere in India and the Himalayas. The example of Mṛtyujit depictions demonstrates the influence and reach of the *Netra Tantra*.

Finally, I sketched the definitions and ritual application of *maṇḍala*. Within the post-initiatory protective rites, the name of the person suffering from disease supplants the place of the deity within in the diagram, connecting his physical body with its illnesses to the formless divine. Such connection of formless, manifest, and bodily mirrors the threefold method of practice (*para*, *sūkṣma*, and *sthūla*) discussed in the *Netra Tantra's* chapters on yoga. The three methods aim to conquer death, be it by the attainment of final liberation, a prolongation of life, or the immediate elimination of illness.

By contextualizing mantra, iconography, and *maṇḍala* in the *Netra Tantra*, I have demonstrated the emphasis the text places on protection and wish fulfillment. In Chapter One, I argue that mantras, even those that are not vocalized, are speech acts. This makes the application of mantra in various rites the key element, regardless of the form the deity takes.

Unfortunately, I have only had the space to include the iconography of the main deities, rather than the deities and their attendants. I hope to expand this examination to include the accompanying figures, especially those with female forms. I believe this will open avenues of exploration into the *yoginī* practices alluded to in the *Netra Tantra*.

I also believe there is room for more investigation into the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra. In Chapter One I touched on the Vedic *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra and its

connection to the *mṛtyuñjaya* of the *Netra Tantra*. More work needs to be done that explores the relationship between these mantras and their ritual use. This would help to further explain the meaning of immortality in the Indian context. Such a study should also look beyond ancient and medieval Sanskrit texts to vernacular works that reference Śiva as Mṛtyuñjaya.⁴¹² This would allow us to trace worship of Mṛtyuñjaya from ancient to modern practice.

Finally, I believe that my discussion of the symbols of Tantric ritual demonstrates the unique outlook of the *Netra Tantra*. While the text clearly takes influence from other Tantric works that preceded it, its focus on the monarch and the *mantrin*, makes it unique. It is a Tantra that requires its practitioner to be aware of his role in society, though it does not state this directly. It does so through an assumption that its *mantrin* be versed in Vedic and Tantric ritual. As such, it offers scholars an opportunity to question the heterodoxy of Tantric texts and reminds us that Tantras build upon the Vedic tradition rather than reject it.

⁴¹² See Rachel Fell McDermott, 2011, *Revelry, Rivalry, and Longing for the Goddesses of Bengal: The Fortunes of Hindu Festivals*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 81 for a nineteenth century Bengali Śākta poem that refers to Mṛtyuñjaya as living in the cremation ground and Gilles Tarabout, 2012, "Sin and Flaws in Kerala Astrology," in *Sins and Sinners: Perspectives from Asian Religions*, eds Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara. Leiden: Brill, p. 314 for a Keralan rite of *mṛtyuñjaya* in the *Praśnamāggam*.

Chapter Two: *Dīkṣā* and *nīrājana*

I. Creating the Tantric Identity

Many of the practices and objects deployed in non-dual Śaiva Tantric ritual have roots in orthodox Vedic rites. Objects such as butter, milk, sesame seeds, etc., feature in both. Animal sacrifice, which fell out of favor in Brahmanic Hinduism, resurfaced in Śākta and Tantric practice; in fact, before that it had survived at the margins of medieval⁴¹³ India for centuries.⁴¹⁴

Much has been written about the origins of Tantric practice. Most scholars believe that it either stemmed from Vedic or folk/tribal practices.⁴¹⁵ Wedmeyer follows Woodroffe⁴¹⁶ in arguing that Tantra had its roots in orthodox Brahmanical practice. He rejects the view that links Tantra to primitive or lower caste foundations: "What very little evidence we have for the direction of transmission of Tantric culture suggests unmistakably that the tribal or marginal communities were in fact *targets* of Tantric transmission, not the source."⁴¹⁷ Following Sanderson,⁴¹⁸ he

⁴¹³ I use the term medieval here to describe the period of Indian history from approximately the eighth century to the early sixteenth. Despite Christian K. Wedemeyer's, 2013, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 58-66, many protestations against the use of this term for its lack of absolute construction and pejorative undertones, it allows us to quickly situate a particular place and time.

⁴¹⁴ Hugh B. Urban, 2010, *The Power of Tantra: Religion, Sexuality, and the Politics of South Asian Studies*, London: I.B. Tauris, p. 52, 57.

⁴¹⁵ Urban, 2010, p. 42-44 briefly outlines the history of this debate from the beginning of Western academic study of Tantra.

⁴¹⁶ On this point Urban, 2010, p. 43, includes Flood in this camp, though the passage he cites is itself a reference to the viewpoint of Robert Mayer, 1990, "The Origins of the Esoteric Vajrayāna," *The Buddhist Forum*. (October). Flood, 2006, p. 14, concedes that elements of Tantric practice may have their roots in pre-history but argues that "we simply do not have sufficient evidence to speculate in this way." Instead he focuses on the extant evidence as it exists in the textual record.

⁴¹⁷ Wedemeyer, 2013, p 26.

⁴¹⁸ Alexis Sanderson, 2001, "History through Textual Criticism in the study of Śaivism, the Pañcarātra and the Buddhist Yoginītantras." in *Les Sources et le temps. Sources and Time: A Colloquium*, Pondicherry, 11-13 January 1997, Ed François Grimal, Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry / École Française d'Extrême-Orient, p. 6n3 citing GS 8.11-16.

believes that Buddhist *yogins* initiated untouchable communities.⁴¹⁹ Urban argues, following Davidson,⁴²⁰ that Tantric development drew on interaction and mutual transformation between Vedic and non-Hindu traditions and practitioners.⁴²¹

I am inclined to agree with Urban and Davidson. The links between these communities were probably complex and in the transmission of ideas and practices bi-directional. This, for one, applies to Buddhist and Hindu cross-directional practice.⁴²² Wedemeyer holds that the literature in which transgressive practices are described required institutional support for its composition, transmission, and preservation.⁴²³ This, no doubt, is true.⁴²⁴ Yet it must be considered that the community might also support a variety of religious institutions. Furthermore, not all religious practitioners stem from the upper classes or castes.⁴²⁵ Sanderson points out that Śaivism, in particular, and Tantra in general was not completely dependent upon royal patronage. Its popularity remained steady through dynastic changes. In short, institutional support came from a variety of structures across all levels of society.⁴²⁶

⁴¹⁹ Wedemeyer, 2013, p. 26.

⁴²⁰ Ronald R. Davidson, 2002, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: a social history of the Tantric movement*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 234-235.

⁴²¹ Urban, 2010, p. 45.

⁴²² See Sanderson, 2009; Wedemeyer, 2013; Ratié, 2010; and Gray 2007, 2012, *The Cakrasamvara Tantra (The Discourse of Śri Heruka): Editions of the Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts* . ed David B. Gray, New York: The American Institute of Buddhist Studies. Bühnemann, 1996, "The Goddess Mahācīnakrama-Tārā (Ugra-Tārā) in Buddhist and Hindu Tantrism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. Vol. 59, No. 3, shows how the *Phetkārīṇī Tantra* not only adopted a Buddhist goddess into the Hindu pantheon, but was then cited as an authoritative text by later Hindu Tantras.

⁴²³ Wedemeyer, 2013, p. 191-192.

⁴²⁴ In Chapter Three I further investigate Wedemeyer's argument. The literary record does demonstrate an early connection between the upper castes and the *kāpālīka* practitioners. However, this does not prove a complete separation of influence between communities.

⁴²⁵ As Sanderson, 2009, p. 294-295, 294-295n699 notes, religious texts, poems, and chronicles all indicate the participation of people of all castes in Tantric ritual as more than simply a rhetorical device.

⁴²⁶ Sanderson, 2009, p. 298.

The *Svacchanda Tantra* allows for the initiation of members of many castes. A student may even become a member of the caste of Śiva through initiation. This new identity eclipses the caste status of the non-Tantric society. While this could, in theory, indicate the erasure of hierarchy within a society, these new Śaiva identities create, in fact, several new hierarchical categories. The first replaces caste distinction with initiatory status. The second, which I discuss below, involves power exchanges between Tantric and non-Tantric practitioners. Here, the Tantric practitioner simultaneously maintains multiple identities. Further, because his status as a Tantric would normally be concealed from the non-Tantric, he is in sole possession of knowledge that shapes the interaction with the non-Tantric. Secrets become the property of those who know them. This allows the bearers of secrets to control the exchange of those secrets within ritual. It also empowers them to compose their own histories by controlling access to information about themselves.⁴²⁷ The difference between Tantric and non-Tantric practitioners is more pronounced than these categories suggest.⁴²⁸ Simmel postulates that secret societies institute a system of graduated secrecy.⁴²⁹ Within this community, a practitioner

⁴²⁷ Gary Minkley and Martin Legassick, 2000, "'Not Telling'" Secrecy, Lies, and History," *History and Theory*, Vol. 36, No. 4. Theme Issue 39 (December). p. 2.

⁴²⁸ This also assumes a binary of openness and secrecy that I believe to be reductive. Often these two concepts appear to be in opposition when in fact they do not exclude one another. Such open secrecy can exist when multiple parties are aware of the existence and often contents of the secret but act as if the secret is still secure. An example of this from modern Hindu practice is found in the recitation of the Gāyatrī Mantra. Traditionally initiation is required in order for a practitioner to chant this mantra and that initiation has often been limited to Brahmin males. However, an internet search shows that the Gāyatrī is an extremely popular and well-known mantra. In addition to translations of the meaning, articles about its use, the internet holds thousands of recordings of the mantra available for anyone to listen to and the mantra is even featured in the opening theme song of a popular science fiction television series. See Jennifer DeLeo and Yun Tsai, 2008, "Battlestar Galactica's Cylon Dream Kit," *P.C. Magazine*. May 2, <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2290393,00.asp>.

⁴²⁹ Georg Simmel, 1906, trsl Albion W. Small, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies," *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 11:1, p. 488.

receives more knowledge over time. This, in turn, imbues the practitioner with increasing levels of insider knowledge. The greater the knowledge a practitioner holds, the farther removed he is from the non-Tantric.⁴³⁰ However, this view requires a concept of progress that does not exist within the Tantric perspective. For example, in Chapter One I described calendrical practice using the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra. During these rites the *mantrin* worships the deity appropriate for the seasonal festival but does so with a mantra that honors Amṛteśa. Thus, he appears to conform to orthodox practice but is, in fact, engaged in a Tantric sphere of worship. This practitioner appears to have gained more knowledge through practice. However, as I demonstrate in my examination of the initiation rite, the final outcome of initiation is liberation, regardless of initiatory status. What differs is the final reality (*tattva*) in which a practitioner rests after initiation. This is determined by the level of initiation received. For the Tantric practitioner, the continued practice of daily rites keeps him in the good graces of the deity. He need not learn the entire metaphysics of Tantra in order to achieve salvation unless he becomes initiated again at a different level.

Where Simmel's point applies is in his argument that secrecy affects individual interaction.⁴³¹ The person with the secret — here the Tantric initiate — is at a social and spiritual advantage. This is because he is aware of his Tantric affiliation and conceals that information from the non-initiate. This advantage changes if the non-Tantric becomes aware that there is a secret. Awareness of secrecy impacts the exchange. Gibson calls this "leakage."⁴³² In the case of leakage, both parties may be aware of the status of the other. For example, a Tantric initiate

⁴³⁰ David R. Gibson, 2014, "Enduring Illusions: The Social Organization of Secrecy and Deception," *Sociological Theory*. Vol. 32. No. 4, p. 286.

⁴³¹ Simmel, 1906, p. 462.

⁴³² Gibson, 2014, p. 285

may be aware that he is interacting with another initiate who does not know about the former's status. How each individual responds depends upon the ways in which that knowledge colors their interaction. It is also contingent upon whether the parties wish to retain their secrets. In the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, Kalhaṇa is aware of, or at least believes himself to be aware of, the Tantric allegiances of others. He does not directly reveal those religious affiliations. Instead he implies the Tantric initiatory status of various individuals.⁴³³ For example, he attributes the ability to transform metals into gold by means of magic to a King Jalauka in order to associate him with Tantric practice.⁴³⁴ In making these implications, Kalhaṇa contributes to the leakage of secrecy. For readers savvy enough to understand his implications, Tantric practices appear throughout the text. For those who are unaware of Tantric attributes, Kalhaṇa preserves the secret and does not openly disclose anyone's initiatory status.⁴³⁵

The relationship between Tantric practitioners, transgressive practice, and the monarchy is problematic for Kalhaṇa. As Törzsök demonstrates, Kalhaṇa disapproved of monarchs' involvement in transgressive Tantric rites.⁴³⁶ However, Kalhaṇa does not object to a king's use of mantras to obtain supernatural powers or indirectly makes ritual use of an impure practitioner.⁴³⁷ Kalhaṇa hints that the Kashmiri king Harṣa's⁴³⁸ downfall is due to his participation in transgressive

⁴³³ Törzsök, 2012, p. 232.

⁴³⁴ Torzsok, 2012, p. 232.

⁴³⁵ See Törzsök, 2012; Sanderson, 2007b, p. 280-281.

⁴³⁶ Törzsök, 2012, p. 225.

⁴³⁷ Torzsok, 2012, p. 228.

⁴³⁸ Who ruled Kashmir from 1098-1101 CE. Stein, 1900a, p. 6; This Harṣa is not to be confused with the earlier and more well-known Buddhist king by the same name whose empire ruled much of northern India after the fall of the Gupta Empire. That Harṣa reigned from approximately 590-647 C.E. and his kingdom did not include Kashmir. See Hermann Kulke and Deitmar Rothermund, 1986, *A History of India*, London: Routledge, p. 103-105

behaviors.⁴³⁹ However, Kalhaṇa does not directly place blame on the king or openly expose him as a Tantric initiate.⁴⁴⁰ Instead, Kalhaṇa attributes king's downfall to the efforts of those around him. Historically, scholars have linked Harṣa's behavior to extravagance and insanity rather than Tantric affiliation.⁴⁴¹ Kalhaṇa indicates the Tantric affiliation of another king, Kalaśa (ruled 1063-1089 C.E.), more directly. Kalhaṇa focuses on Kalaśa's disregard for caste rules and predisposition for sensual pleasures and overindulgence.⁴⁴² Kalhaṇa indicates these behaviors caused the king's downfall and attributes his Tantric involvement to his bad character.⁴⁴³ For non-Tantrics, such as Kalhaṇa, a king's affiliation with transgressive Tantric practice diminishes his power. He often blames exposure to Tantric teachers as the cause of royal misfortune, disease, and death.

However, the *Rājataranṅiṇī* reveals that Tantra and even transgressive Tantric practices were publicly tolerated at the Kashmiri court. Kalhaṇa's allusions to Tantric practice indicates that both he and his readers would have had enough knowledge about such practices as to decipher his indications. Törzsök has painstakingly documented some fifty examples from the *Rājataranṅiṇī* that suggest

⁴³⁹ Törzsök, 2012, p. 235.

⁴⁴⁰ RT 8.1331-1339.

⁴⁴¹ A.K. Warder, 1992, *Indian Kāvya Literature, Vol.* New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 614; M. A. Stein, 1900, Vol. 1, *Kalhaṇa's Rājataranṅiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, trsl M.A. Stein. 3 vols., London: Archibald Constable and Company, p. 36. Warder describes Harṣa as "extravagant, easily swayed by ministers and courtiers and unrealistic, even insane." Stein says "It is Fate to which Kalhaṇa attributes the failing of all resolve and wisdom in Harṣa at the close of his reign. Yet his own account of the latter shows plainly how little such qualities could be expected from a prince manifestly insane. Fate alone is the cause which turns the recipients of royal fortune into enemies of their relatives and trespassers against the moral laws."

⁴⁴² RT 7.697-699.

⁴⁴³ Törzsök, 2012, p. 222.

transgressive Tantric practices.⁴⁴⁴ This partial openness extends well beyond Kashmir. Sanderson has charted the spread of non-dual Śaiva Tantra throughout North India, the Himalayan regions and beyond.⁴⁴⁵ He notes three factors in the successful spread of Śaiva practice and philosophy: community support of initiates through the uninitiated, the cultivation of practices that accommodated brahmanical religion while claiming to transcend it, and allying Śaiva practice with kingship to assure royal patronage.⁴⁴⁶

A. Caste: initiation and purity

The *Rājataranṅiṇī* describes caste distinctions as an ordinary part of Kashmiri society.⁴⁴⁷ In some regions of India, caste differences could lead to varying punishments for one and the same crime. This does not appear to have been the case in medieval Kashmir. This does not mean that caste was not an important part of Kashmiri society. The account of Harṣa's interaction with low caste women

⁴⁴⁴ Törzsök, 2012, p. 232-237. Among these are references to circles of mother deities, mantric powers, the revival of a dead minister by *yoginīs*, forbidden animal oblations, a mock human sacrifice in front of an image of Bhairava, the use of menstrual blood, and rites involving intoxicating liquors.

⁴⁴⁵ See Sanderson, 2003-2004.

⁴⁴⁶ Sanderson, 2004, p. 232.

⁴⁴⁷ See Suman Jamwal, 2010-2011, "Change and Continuity in the Historical and Cultural Geography of Kashmir from Nilamatapurana to Rajataranṅini" *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*. Vol. 71, p. 135 for a detailed description in the change of social geography in Kashmir in the *Nīla Purāṇa* to the *Rājataranṅiṇī*. Jamwal notes that the *Rājataranṅiṇī* traces the process of tribal communities becoming important landed classes in the valley. For example, a tribal community called the Lavanyas appears in the first three books. Over time, this group settles into peasant communities, becomes established by the time of Harṣa, and takes on the name Damaras. Another tribe, the Nisadas, also refers to a caste of boatmen in the Kashmir Valley. The RT also refers to enslaved Ḍomba women on several occasions. In one story, RT 5.361-386, King Cakravarman becomes enamored with several Ḍomba singers and invites them into his harem, ignoring their low caste.

places purity as central to inter-caste sexual activity. The *Rājataranṅiṇī* also focuses on lesser types of physical contact, such as the ingestion of food prepared by a member of a lower caste.⁴⁴⁸ Such contact again leads to physical pollution. For Kalhaṇa then, religious practitioners must make clear distinctions between what is pure and impure. This agrees with the Siddhānta view in which one distinguishes between pure and impure substances and rejects the latter. I explore this topic in more depth in Chapter Three and contrast this dual (*dvaitācāra*) perspective of purity with the non-dual (*advaitācārā*), in which practitioners mix pure and impure substances. The latter approach appears in Bhairava Tantras, such as the *Netra Tantra*.⁴⁴⁹ The relationship between purity and impurity, from the *dvaitācāra* perspective, results in the belief that the pure is antithetical to the impure.

Marglin's study of purity demonstrates that this opposition is asymmetric. For the pure to remain so, the impure must be kept separate. However, the impure benefits from the commingling of the pure.⁴⁵⁰ This adheres more to the *advaitācārā* perspective. For example, milk and blood. If the pure substance (milk) becomes mixed with the impure (blood), the milk is no longer pure. However, if the impure substance (blood) becomes mixed with the pure substance (milk), the blood becomes diluted and less impure. This creates a hierarchical structure in which the pure only becomes impure through contact with the impure. Conversely,

⁴⁴⁸ Kalhaṇa expresses surprise at King Yaśakara, who he describes as performing Vedic purifications but not dismissing attendants who have eaten food abandoned by the low caste Ḍombas. RT 6.69. A few lines later Kalhaṇa explains that Yaśaskara becomes impure through contact with those who have taken the Ḍombas' food. He uses the metaphor of leprosy to explain how the impurity passes through the touch of the impure to the other. RT. 6.84.

⁴⁴⁹ Törzsök, 2013, p. 196.

⁴⁵⁰ Frédérique Apffel Marglin, 1985, "Types of Oppositions in Hindu Culture," in *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society*, eds. John B. Carman and Frédérique A. Marglin, Lieden: Brill, p. 66.

something that starts out impure corrupts as it comes into contact with that which pure. For example, a high caste person may give food to someone of a lower rank. In this case the food does not purify nor does it pollute. When the inverse occurs and a low caste person gives food to a higher caste person, the food causes impurity.⁴⁵¹ The relationship between what is pure and impure depends upon the initial status of the individual person or substance. The inferior class increases its purity and the superior becomes impure.⁴⁵² This means there no longer is a pure-impure binary in which only one or the other exists. Nor is there a state in which both exist simultaneously. Instead, what remains is a relational system in which levels of purity and impurity fluctuate in response to interaction with other levels of purity.⁴⁵³

The *Svacchanda Tantra* creates a new, relational category. Through initiation, practitioners abandon their caste distinction to become members of the caste of Śiva, i.e., Śaiva initiates. Members of all castes make up the Śaiva initiatory class. The new designation as a member of Śiva's caste supersedes the devotee's original caste. This new classification does not adhere to a pure-impure categorization. Instead the new caste is auspicious and eternal. Here, caste distinction only exists prior to initiation, as those rites purify and simultaneously remove caste identity.⁴⁵⁴ After initiation, the *Svacchanda Tantra* allows only for differences in initiatory status:

⁴⁵¹ Marglin, 1986, p. 66-67.

⁴⁵² Marglin, 1986, p. 68.

⁴⁵³ See Raffaele Torella, "Purity and Impurity in Nondualistic Śaiva Tantrism," in *Proceedings of the International Conference "Religions: fields of research, method and perspectives," Studia Religiologica*, Cracow Jagiellonian University, vol. 48, No. 2, 2015 for further discussion of the non-duality of the pure-impure categories in Śaiva Tantra.

⁴⁵⁴ SvTU 4.67.

O fair-faced one, all those who have been initiated by this ritual are of equal nature, whether they be brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, or others [of lower castes]. [For] they have been brought into a state of fusion with the nature of Śiva. All are said to be [Śivas,] wearers of [his] braids, their bodies dusted [like his] with ash. All Samayins should sit in a single row. Putrakas, Sādhakas, and Cumbakas [Ācāryas] should do the same. They may not sit according to the divisions of their former castes. [For] they are said to form but a single caste of Bhairava, auspicious and eternal. Once a person has taken up this Tantric system he may never mention his former caste. If any [initiate] mentions the former caste of any Putraka, Sādhaka, or Samayin he will have sinned and will be roasted in hell for three days of the life of Rudra, five of the life of Viṣṇu, and fifteen of the life of Brahmā. So, if he aspires to the highest Siddhi he must make no [such] discriminatory distinctions. O Empress of the Gods, it is [only] through [this] freedom from discrimination [*sic*] that one will certainly attain both Siddhi and liberation. (SvT 4.539c–545)⁴⁵⁵

The text mandates punishments for making reference to the previous caste of another but this does not extend to the world outside of ritual where one expects regular caste-conformity.⁴⁵⁶

Within practice itself we find initiates of different rank subject to different rules and applications. One such difference is the use of human bone rosaries (*mahāśaṅkhākṣasūtra*). The *Svacchanda Tantra* prohibits such practice only for householders saying that doing so can cause agitation or anxiety (*udvega*).⁴⁵⁷ The distinction between pure and impure varies with different perspectives. Though the *Netra Tantra* describes all practitioners as members of the same spiritual caste, i.e., Śiva's caste, there are still divisions between practitioners at different levels of

⁴⁵⁵ Trsl. Sanderson, 2009, p. 293-294.

⁴⁵⁶ Alexis Sanderson, 1985, "Purity and Power among the Brahmans of Kashmir," in Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, and Steven Lukes (eds.), *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 203.

⁴⁵⁷ Törzsök, 2014, p. 200; SvT 2.152cd–153ab.

initiation. In spite of these divisions, the elimination of caste distinction by initiation serves to subvert the social order in order to reinterpret and claim dominion over power. Rebellion against social distinction renders previous divisions less important than the new identities the *mantrin* confers through initiation. This process leads to a re-categorization of pure and impure. The lower castes become purer and the higher castes transcend their previous, purity-dependent, identities.⁴⁵⁸ Such differentiation allows the social hierarchy to survive without contradicting the internal erasure of caste distinction.

Again, the *Rājataranṅiṇī* explains why practices that transgress caste boundaries must remain secret. In *Rājataranṅiṇī* 6.108-112, Kalhaṇa describes an incident in which King Yaśaskara (ruled 939-948 C.E.) punishes the brahmin ascetic, Cakrabhānu, for breaching the socially expected conduct of a member of his caste. The king brands Cakrabhānu's forehead with a dog's foot. Cakrabhānu's uncle, a royal minister, performs a retaliatory rite against the king. This results in the death of the monarch seven days later.⁴⁵⁹ Sanderson points out that Cakrabhānu's transgression occurred during a *cakramelaka*, a Kaula ritual that involves low caste *yoginīs* and male initiates.⁴⁶⁰ Cakrabhānu thus acted in accordance with his initiatory status, which supersedes that of his social rank. Further, though the king traditionally holds the highest place in the social order, the royal minister overrules the monarch and performs rites that implore the deities to remove the unjust king. The Cakrabhānu episode demonstrates how the dangers of transgressive practice transcend ritual boundaries. These practices threaten participants in their ordinary lives if others discover their occurrence. In

⁴⁵⁸ Sanderson, 1985, p. 192.

⁴⁵⁹ RT 6.108-112; Sanderson, 2007b, p. 281; Kalhaṇa dismisses the effectiveness of the retaliatory ritual in favor of citing a longstanding illness as the king's cause of death.

⁴⁶⁰ Sanderson, 2007b, p. 282.

spite of this, Kalhaṇa demonstrates that many high-ranking members of the Kashmiri court engaged in such practice.⁴⁶¹ Marglin is thus correct when she says that the category of Śiva's caste offers purity to the lower castes but outside of the ritual space risks impurity for the higher castes.⁴⁶² Thus, public displays of Tantric rites, such as the *nīrājana*, cannot include heterodox elements. Only those rites that take place in secret can include the impure.

B. Purity and Interpretation: auspicious and inauspicious dream symbolism in the *Svacchanda Tantra*

Brahmins have long been interpreters of dreams, often doing so for kings.⁴⁶³ They look to dreams to uncover individualized symbols and desires and use predetermined cultural markers to assess dreams as auspicious (*śubha*) or inauspicious (*aśubha*).⁴⁶⁴ Once categorized, rites are performed to counter the negative effects of inauspicious dreams.

Such dream interpretation occurs the night prior to initiation. The *mantrin* creates a sanctified space in which the initiand sleeps on a pile of *kuśa* grass. Upon waking on the day of initiation, the *mantrin* interprets the initiand's dreams.⁴⁶⁵ I include a discussion of these details here to demonstrate that depth of the

⁴⁶¹ Törzsök, 2012, p. 232-237.

⁴⁶² Marglin, 1986, p. 66-68.

⁴⁶³ Serinity Young, 1999, *Dreaming in the Lotus: Buddhist Dream Narrative, Imagery, and Practice*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, p. 50-51.

⁴⁶⁴ Ronald Inden, 1985, "Kings and Omens." in *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society*, eds. John B. Carman and Frédérique A. Marglin, Leiden: Brill, p. 31

⁴⁶⁵ The *Tantrasāra* describes a slightly different process in which the teacher stays awake all night in an enlightened state. The initiand tells his teacher his dreams but the teacher does not interpret them for the disciple. This assures that the initiand does not become doubtful or afraid of the interpretations. H.N. Chakravarty and Boris Marjanovic, 2012, *Tantrasāra of Abhinavagupta*, Portland: Rudra Press, p. 165.

purification process and its focus beyond the physical body. Dream interpretation helps to build the disciple's Tantric identity.

Before interpreting dreams, the *mantrin* himself undergoes purification rites. In order to bring another person into the secret Tantric fold, he himself must already be unified with the divine. The student too becomes purified during the night as he witnesses the *mantrin's* performance of rituals prior to sleep.⁴⁶⁶ The *Svacchanda Tantra* tells us that the judgement of dreams begins,

In the bright morning, at daybreak, after purification, etc., one by one as [explained in the previous chapter, the *ācārya*] should enter the house. The pupil, who has sipped pure water, holds a flower in his hand. After bowing to the guru, delighted, he should tell his dreams to the guru. (SvT 4.1-2)⁴⁶⁷

As with most Śaiva texts, the *Svacchanda Tantra* is a dialogue between Śiva and his consort. Here, after it describes the actions of the student and *mantrin*, Śiva lists for Pārvatī the auspicious and then inauspicious symbols that appear in dreams. In both categories we see symbols organized into thematic groups, such as colors or animals, or similar actions, such as those that involve war.

In [auspicious] dreams [the dreamer] drinks wine, eats raw flesh, smears insect feces and sprinkles blood. He eats food of sour milk and smears a white garment. [He holds] a white umbrella over his head, decorates [himself] with a white garland or ribbon. [He sees] a throne, chariot or

⁴⁶⁶ SvT 3.

⁴⁶⁷ *pratyūṣe vimale kṛtvā śaucādyān pūroavat kramāt |
sakalīkaraṇaṃ kṛtvā pūroavat praviśed gṛham || 1 ||
śiṣyaś ca śucirācāntaḥ puṣpahastaḥ guruṃ tataḥ
praṇamya śirasā hr̥ṣṭo guroḥ svapnān nivedayet || 2 ||*

vehicle, the flag of royal initiation. He decorates [these things] with a coral, betel leaf fruit. [He also] sees Śrī or Sarasvatī. (SvT 4.3-6)⁴⁶⁸

The auspicious symbols begin with red and white objects and items associated with state power. The red symbols of drinking wine and eating raw flesh immediately call to mind Tantric activity, as Śaiva practice sometimes contains the use of both wine and flesh. Fecal matter and blood are usually associated with filth and impurity. Here they are auspicious and indicate that the dreamer's initiation will be successful. This also forces an inversion of the dreamer's typical understanding of symbols. It reverses the usual associations and focuses on different rules and attitudes toward purity. White food, a garment, an umbrella, and a garland are juxtaposed with the red symbols. Sour milk, which would not be used in ritual, demonstrates that the dreamer is ready to cross into a state of purity and worship that transposes the ordinary. However, one cannot always assume such subversion. The text tells us that, "[The disciple] achieves success after speaking in dreams with princes, *ṛsis*, gods, *siddhas*, *vidyāharas*, *gaṇas*, and teachers."⁴⁶⁹ Unlike the objects are typically categorized as impure, the hierarchy of society appears unchanged. The same people are powerful and auspicious in both realms.

⁴⁶⁸ *svapneṣu madirāpānam āmamāṃsasya bhakṣaṇam || 3 ||*
krimiviṣṭhānulepaṃ ca rudhireṇābhiṣecanam |
bhakṣaṇam dadhibhaktasya śvetavastrānulepanam || 4 ||
śvetātapatram mūrdhastham śvetasragdāmabhūṣaṇam |
siṃhāsanam ratham yānam dhvajam rājyābhiṣecanam || 5 ||
ratnāṅgābharaṇādīni tāmbūlaṃ phalameva ca |
darśanam śrīsarasoatyoh śubhanāryavagūhanam || 6 ||

⁴⁶⁹ SvT 4.7

narendrair ṛṣibhir devaiḥ siddhavidyādhair gaṇaiḥ |
ācāryaiḥ saha samvādam kṛtvā svapne prasiddhyati || 7 ||

As the *Svacchanda Tantra* continues with its list of auspicious dreams, it names typical symbols of good in the profane world. Among the auspicious symbols are celestial beings, places of power, animals, objects of worship and, medicines.

[The dreamer] crosses over the ocean and river. Likewise sunrise and indeed blazing fire [are auspicious. Also auspicious is when the dreamer] sees planets, constellations, stars and the disk of the moon. [When the dreamer] ascends the palace or a turret of the palace, climbs a mountain top, tree, elephant, young animal, bull, horse, or man. [In auspicious dreams one] sees a chariot and also sees the *siddha* mantra,⁴⁷⁰ obtains the perfected oblation and sees the gods, etc. [It is auspicious when one dreams of] a pill, wood for cleaning the teeth, yellow pigment on a sword or sandal, sacred thread, ointment, nectar, mercury, medicinal herbs, *śakti*, a water jar, lotus, rosary, red arsenic or blazing objects of *siddhas*, which have red chalk as their ends. (SvT 4.8-13)⁴⁷¹

The text then moves to the auspicious symbols of battle and worship. The *Svacchanda Tantra* describes the disciple as a hero when he enters the charnel ground to perform his ritual duties.⁴⁷² The association with the charnel grounds demonstrates the connection of the Śaiva cults to the earlier *kāpālika* Śaiva ascetics.⁴⁷³ Both the *kāpālikas* and later Tantric Śaivas, as well as Tantric Buddhist

⁴⁷⁰ This is the empowered mantra that becomes effective immediately.

⁴⁷¹ *nadīsamudrataraṇam ākāśagamanam tathā |*
bhāskarodayanam caiva prajvalantam hutāsanam || 8 ||
grahanakṣatratārāṇām candrabimbasya darśanam |
harmyasvyārohanam caiva prāsādaśikhare 'pi vā || 9 ||
narāśvavṛṣapotebhataruśailāgrarohanam |
vimānagamanam caiva siddhamantrasya darśanam || 10 ||
lābhah siddhacarōścaiva devādīnām ca darśanam |
guṭikām dantakāṣṭham ca khadgapādukarocanāḥ || 11 ||
upavītāñ janam caiva amṛtam pāratauśadhīḥ |
śaktim kamaṇḍalum padmam akṣasūtram manaḥśilām || 12 ||
prajvalatsiddhadravayāṇi gairikāntāni yāni ca |

⁴⁷² SvT 15.6a.

⁴⁷³ Sanderson, 1985; Wedemeyer, 2013.

sects, use the charnel ground for practice in order to generate a transgressive atmosphere and guarantee privacy.⁴⁷⁴ Cemetery grounds are not places into which the uninvited are likely to wander. Their danger and impurity are exactly what makes cremation grounds appealing and safe for transgressive practice.⁴⁷⁵ Such locations entice practitioners with the confidence to overcome their fears. However, spiritual confidence does not necessarily mean the purview of initiated and high-level practitioners. Sanderson points out that, "such is the power attributed to this contact with impurity that it is believed that it may take the place of the conventional process of initiation (*dīkṣā*) into the Kaula cult."⁴⁷⁶ In other words, the uninitiated practitioner with the confidence to enter the charnel ground for worship becomes initiated. This does not mean that all charnel ground practices took place within the physical space of an actual ground. Such rites appear in both symbolic manifestations, where they also work as a metaphor for internalized, mental visualizations, and as a very real setting for spiritual pursuits. The tenth century writer Rājānaka Rāma⁴⁷⁷ describes an internal practice in which he himself is the charnel ground, saying,

Show [your Bhairava form] to me, who am a hero (*vīra*) moving in this [dark] night of existence (*bhavanīśā*), in a body that is nothing but a cremation ground replete with abundance of flesh, blood, serum, and bones.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴ Shaman Hatley, 2013, "What is a *yoginī*? Towards a polythetic definition," in '*Yoginī*' in *South Asia: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Keul, ed London and New York: Routledge, p. 25.

⁴⁷⁵ David Gordon White, 1996, *The Alchemical Body*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 282.

⁴⁷⁶ Sanderson, 1995, p. 84.

⁴⁷⁷ Also known as Rāmakaṇṭha, the author of the SpV, Sanderson, 2007b, p. 411.

⁴⁷⁸ Trsl. Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, 2011, p. 257.

This passage demonstrates the trope of the hero, night, the body, and the charnel ground as a part of a coherent Tantric symbolism. Once the symbolic lexicon has been built, the practitioner then continues to view the whole world as a charnel ground, "made frightful in virtue of the fact that whatever has come into being is subject to destruction."⁴⁷⁹ Once in the charnel ground, the practitioner can then engage in transgressive practice with the female *yoginī*. The relationship between *yoginī* worship and charnel grounds is well-established⁴⁸⁰ Even though not a Kaula or Śākta text, the *Svacchanda Tantra* makes no secret of its own connection to the charnel grounds. Tantric texts such as the *Netra Tantra* use militaristic and battle motifs, especially in the *nīrājana* rite as described below. This martial aesthetic, alongside the imagery of the disciple as hero, demonstrates a clear metaphor between battle readiness and initiation. In dreams both are taken as auspicious symbols.

After [the dreamer] has seen these [images listed above], he is successful. Likewise, [success comes to those who] obtain the Earth and a [battle] wound. Victory in battle and crossing the battle field, which is an ocean of blood and blazes like a place of the departed [are auspicious]. [Someone who] commands heroes and persons who rule [with] victory [are fortunate signs]. [A dreamer] sells costly meat and partitions the sacrificial victim for the gods out of respect. [The fortunate dreamer] worships the god with his own self and also recites mantras, meditates, and praises. Then he observes

⁴⁷⁹ Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, 2011, p. 267.

⁴⁸⁰ Gray, 2007; Hatley, 2007; Davidson, 2002.

before his own eyes a beautiful honored blazing fire [i.e., he is prepared to take part in ritual]. (SvT 4.13-16)⁴⁸¹

In this passage, costly meat is a euphemism for human flesh. The *Harṣa Carita* describes the penances undertaken by the populace to avert the death of King Pabhakaravatdhana. Young nobles burnt their flesh with lamps to appease mother goddesses (*mātṛkā*), a Dravidian⁴⁸² offered a skull to solicit a vampire (*vetāla*), servants held melting guggula on their heads to pacify Mahākāla. The king's relatives cut their skin to offer it as an oblation and royal attendants openly sold human flesh.⁴⁸³ The *Kathāsaritsāgara* mentions both the sale of human flesh in the cremation grounds⁴⁸⁴ and flocks of *yoginīs* who meet in cremation grounds to kill and devour humans.⁴⁸⁵ The seventh century *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* says "after accepting human flesh from the hand of a hero (i.e., a *sādhaka*), the hero is given the boon he desires."⁴⁸⁶ While the imagery of war and human flesh trade may seem especially graphic to modern sensibilities, the above are just a few references from the literary tradition. This demonstrates that the imagery would not be out of the ordinary for the initiand.

⁴⁸¹ *dr̥ṣṭvā siddhyati svapnānte kṣītilābhaṃ vṛaṇaṃ tathā* || 13 ||
kṣatajārṇavasāṅgrāmataraṇaṃ vijayaṃ raṇe |
jvalat pitrovaṇaṃ ramaṃ vīravīreśibhir vṛtam || 14 ||
vīravetālasiddhaiś ca mahāmāṃsasya vikrayam |
mahāpaśoḥ saṃvibhāgaṃ labdhvā devebhya ādarāt || 15 ||
ātmanā pūjayan devam japan dhyāyan stuvannapi |
suhutaṃ cānalaṃ dīptaṃ pūjitaṃ vā prapaśyati || 16 ||

⁴⁸² According to David N. Lorenzen, 1972, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 17, the Dravidian was likely a *kāpālika* or other related ascetic practitioner.

⁴⁸³ Lorenzen, 1972, p. 17.

⁴⁸⁴ Lorenzen, 1972, p. 17.

⁴⁸⁵ Stietencron, 2013, p. 70.

⁴⁸⁶ Csaba Dezsö, 2010, "Encounters with *Vetālas*: Studies of Fabulous Creatures I," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung*, Volume 63 (4), p. 397.

The text then reveals its final auspicious sign. "After [the dreamer] sees Bhairava and Bhairavī, he accomplishes, there is no doubt."⁴⁸⁷ It remains unclear from the text how many of these auspicious motifs the student must see in order for the initiation to take place. The text also does not indicate whether the *mantrin* prompts the initiand prior to sleep.

Here we have seen the hero climb from Earth to the divine. The inauspicious dreams that follow mirror the auspicious. The hero descends from Earth into hell.⁴⁸⁸ As with the auspicious dreams, those deemed inauspicious appear in easily recognizable, multi-layered symbolic terms. Colors, meat, and war again play a large role in determining the unfortunateness of a dream. The *Netra Tantra* offers far fewer inauspicious dream symbols than auspicious ones.

The inauspicious signs begin, "Thus, [in his dreams he] drinks the anointing oil and enters into hell."⁴⁸⁹ This harkens back to the initial auspicious signs where the dreamer drinks wine and eats food of sour milk.⁴⁹⁰ In the auspicious dream the acolyte consumes things normally considered impure and in the inauspicious dream he ingests ritually pure substances. The antithetical nature of this action alerts to us, and the dream interpreter, whether the student is mentally prepared for the unexpected and transgressive.

Next, where the text previously described imagery of ascension, it tells of a dreamer who descends. "[He] falls in a well, then sinks in the mud, falls from a

⁴⁸⁷ SvT 4.18

*bhairavaṃ bhairavīm dr̥ṣṭvā siddhyatyatra na saṃśayaḥ |
śubhāḥ svapnā mayākhyātā aśubhāṃśca nibodha me || 18 ||*

⁴⁸⁸ SvT 4.19.

⁴⁸⁹ SvT 4.19 *tailābhyāṅgas tathā pānaṃ viśanaṃ ca rasātale |*

⁴⁹⁰ SvT 4.3.

tree, vehicle, or other transport. [He descends] from a palace or mountain."⁴⁹¹ After the body topples, various parts of the dreamer's body become mutilated as he dreams that he, "cuts off [his]⁴⁹² ear and nose or [his] hand or foot. [He] loses teeth or hair."⁴⁹³

Where auspicious dreams contain red and white images, the inauspicious focuses on darkness, unlucky animals, and the activities of war,

[The dreamer] sees a bear or monkey, demons, cruel beings, and dark men. [He sees those who] have erect hair, dirty ones, those who wear black garlands, clothes, and coverings. That man who, in his dream, embraces a red-eyed woman, he dies, there is no doubt, if he does not bring about peace. [He dreams of] the destruction of houses, palaces, beds, clothes, and seats; defeat of oneself in battle and theft of one's things. [He] ascends or is amongst donkeys, camels, dogs, jackals, and herons, vultures, and cranes. [He rides on] buffalos, owls, and crows, eats cooked meat, [wears a] red garland, and ointment for the body. [He] who sees black and red garments or an altered self [has inauspicious dreams]. In dreams [he] laughs and dances while [he] wears faded garlands, cuts up one's own flesh.⁴⁹⁴ [He

⁴⁹¹ SvT 4.19-20

andhakūpe ca patanam atha pañke nimajjanam || 19 ||
vr̥kṣavāhanayānebhyaḥ patanaṃ harṃyaparvatāt |

⁴⁹² Here ear and nose are in dual instrumental or ablative, *karṇanāsābhyām*, but there is nothing to cut off with or from these body parts.

⁴⁹³ SvT 4. 20-21

kartanaṃ karṇanāsābhyām atha vā hastapādayoḥ || 20 ||
patanaṃ dantakeśānām

⁴⁹⁴ One must be sacrificed but in the dream he cannot sacrifice himself.

dreams of] captivity, being eaten by a black snake, and [dreams of] a wedding. [If he] sees this in dreams, he is not successful. (SvT 4.21-27)⁴⁹⁵

Again, many of the auspicious symbols have inauspicious counterparts. The clothes that before were spotless and ready for worship are now dirty and impure. The enemy who was to be conquered is the self and ritual objects, are obtained instead of lost. Where the *Netra Tantra* describes raw meat and the self unaltered as auspicious, when it recounts the inauspicious, it details cooked meat and a transformed self. This final point is important because in the preparation for initiation, an activity that itself seeks to alter the individual, the initiand must not already be in the midst of change.

Upon the interpretation of inauspicious dreams, the *mantrin* performs various cleansing rituals to rid the initiand of the lingering impurities of bad luck.⁴⁹⁶ These actions negate the relationship between the images and meaning, leaving the

⁴⁹⁵ *ṛkṣavānaradarśanam |*
vetālakrūrasattoānām tathaiṣa kālapūruṣāḥ || 21 ||
kṛṣṇordhvakeśā malināḥ kṛṣṇamālyāambaracchadhāḥ |
raktākṣī strī ca yaṃ svapne puruṣaṃ tv avagūhayet || 22 ||
mīryate nātra saṃdeho yadi śāntiṃ na kārayet |
grhaprāsādabhedam ca śayyāvāstrāsaneṣu ca || 23 ||
ātmano 'bhibhavaṃ saṃkhye ātmadravyāpahāraṇam |
kharoṣṭraśvasṛgāleṣu kaṅkagrāhrabakeṣu ca || 24 ||
mahiṣolūkakākeṣu rohaṇam ca pravartanam |
bhakṣaṇam pakvāmsasya raktamālyānulepanam || 25 ||
kṛṣṇaraktāni vastrāṇi vikṛtātmā prapaśyati |
hasanam valganam svapne mlānasragdāmadhāraṇam || 26 ||
svamāṃsotkartanam bandham kṛṣṇasarpēṇa bhakṣaṇam |
udvāham ca tathā svapne dṛṣṭvā naiva prasidhyati || 27 ||

⁴⁹⁶ Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, *Tāntrikābhidhānakośa, Vol. II: A Dictionary of Technical Terms from Hindu Tantric Literature*, Beitrage zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens, no. 44, Vienna: Verlag Der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, p. 184. Most Śaiva Tantras allow initiation to occur for those who dream of bad omens. To combat the inauspicious, they prescribe extra rituals. However, Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, note here that the Pāśupata *SamVi*, verse 35, denies initiatory rites to initiands who have bad dreams. The *SamVi* does not appear in the *Tāntrikābhidhānakośa's* list of abbreviations. I believe it refers to the *Samvicchodana* but am not completely sure.

disciple purified and ready for entry into the Tantric space. By manipulating the signs in this way the *mantrin* replaces the signifiers and signifieds of the inauspicious signs. This helps prepare the initiand for the process of initiatory transformation by ensuring conditions are right for the adoption of his new Tantric body and identity.

C. *Dīkṣā*: building a new identity through initiation

The *Netra Tantra* offers a concise outline of initiation. This explains how the initiand becomes fused with various cosmic elements, such as the *tattvas*, mantras, and in Kṣemarāja's non-dualistic reading, the highest reality, i.e., Śiva. From both the *Netra Tantra* and Kṣemarāja's commentary, it becomes clear how the process of initiation completely separates the initiand from both his physical body and his social self. This separation occurs at the various stages of initiation, from *samayin* to *ācārya*, wherein each level is associated with different *tattvas*. The change that the initiand goes through during the rites are not, "a mere development of preexisting seeds but...a transformation *totius substantiae*."⁴⁹⁷ According to Durkheim, this change in one's entire essence stems from a literal death and rebirth wherein the newly initiated practitioner is instantly replaced by his new self.⁴⁹⁸ As I demonstrate below, though neither the *Netra Tantra* nor Kṣemarāja use the term "death," there is a clear rebirth as the individual adopts a new Tantric identity free from the bonds of his pre-initiated state and his place in the social caste hierarchy.

⁴⁹⁷ Emile Durkheim, 1995 [1912], *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trsl Karen E. Fields, New York: The Free Press, p. 37.

⁴⁹⁸ Durkheim, 1995 [1912], p. 37.

The text begins with the statement that one takes initiation for experience or enjoyments (*bhukti*) and for liberation (*mukti*) in the same manner.⁴⁹⁹ During the initiation process the *mantrin* takes the initiand through the various *tattvas*, the number of which depends upon the specificity and elaborateness of the rite. Such variations do not change the outcome and if we consider the *mantrin* to be a professional. We can conclude that the number of *tattvas* touched upon during the initiation depends upon the amount the initiand can afford. Kṣemarāja then lists the *tattvas* involved in each and coordinates them with those found in the *Svacchanda Tantra*, in which we also find initiations that include thirty-six, eighteen, nine, five, three, and one *tattva*.⁵⁰⁰ Kṣemarāja closely ties the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras*' chapters on initiation together through his commentary, making it clear that the two were meant to be understood together.

The *Svacchanda Tantra* spends much of its Third, Fourth, and Fifth Chapters on a discussion of the preliminary initiatory rites. A *mantrin* who performs the death conquering rites found in the *Netra Tantra* would be well-versed in these rites. Thus, it is vital here for the *mantrin* to understand the micro- and macro-cosmic effects of his ritual performance.

Now,⁵⁰¹ I will teach about initiation, [which] gives the fruits of experience (*bhukti*) and liberation (*mukti*). It may be done, for the expansion of the transcendent and immanent (*parāpara*) with thirty-six *tattvas* or with half

⁴⁹⁹ NT 4.1

⁵⁰⁰ SvT 5.1-17 mentions only four types of *tattvadīkṣā*, those with three, five, nine, and thirty-six though SvTU 2.150-151 discusses nine, eighteen, and thirty-six, while SvTU 5.17 adds one.

⁵⁰¹ I have translated the text and the commentary here in full with the commentary appearing in brackets.

that many [eighteen], half that [nine], or with five or three or one. (NT 4.1-2ab)⁵⁰²

[The thirty-six [are those] beginning with earth and ending with *śiva* [i.e., the complete set of thirty-six *tattvas*]. That halved, the eighteen elements [beginning with] the five elements [*prthvi*, *āpas*, *agni*, *vāyu*, *ākāśā*], *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *rāga*, *niyati*, *vidyā*, *kāla*, *kalā*, *māyā*, *śuddhavidyā*, *īśa*, *sadāśiva*, *śakti*, and *śiva*.⁵⁰³ Or [another] halved, the nine [are] *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *niyati*, *kāla*, *māyā*, *vidyā*, *īśa*, *sadāśiva*, and *śiva*. The five are the gross elements, which like the five *kalās* beginning with *nivṛtti* are seen as pervading everything. The three are *bhuvana*, *śakti*, and *śiva*,⁵⁰⁴ pervaded by *māyā*, *sadāśiva*, and *śiva*.⁵⁰⁵ The one is *śivatattva*, which pervades all.⁵⁰⁶ For the expansion of both transcendent (*para*) and imminent (*apara*) power means, both *mokṣa* and *bhoga* may be accomplished in all these without difference.]⁵⁰⁷

Once the text has expounded on *tattvadīkṣā*, it moves onto *kalādīkṣā*, the initiatory process that destroys the fetters that restrict the bound soul (*paśu*), and *padadīkṣā*, in which one draws the *maṇḍala* and its associated mantra. The text lists five additional paths for *dīkṣā*: the *kalās*, *padas*, speech sounds, mantras, or *bhuvanas*.

⁵⁰² During *dīkṣā*, the initiand experiences the various levels of the universe and becomes ritually purified upon reaching each *tattva*. Initiation rites that include fewer than the complete set of thirty-six *tattvas* still reaches the same ritual purification, just in a truncated initiation process.

⁵⁰³ The KSTS edition appears to have *śuddhavidyā* and *vidyā* transposed in this list, which I have rectified in my translation.

⁵⁰⁴ This reading is extremely unusual as *tritattvadīkṣā* almost always consists of *ātman*, *vidyā*, and *śiva*.

⁵⁰⁵ SvTU 5.14 says the *ātma*, *vidyā*, and *śiva tattvas* correspond with the more common *śuddhavidyā*, *īśvara*, and *sadāśiva*.

⁵⁰⁶ This section of commentary includes several oddities that suggest corruption, such as *vyāpīnī* and *vyāptīni*. Here one would expect *vyāptāni* in the second instance. Similarly, in *viśvādi*, we would expect *api* rather than *ādi* and I have not translated the *ādi*.

⁵⁰⁷ *atha dīksām pravakṣyāmi bhuktimuktiphalapradām |*
tattvaih śattriṃśatārdhena tadardhenātha pañcabhiḥ | | 1 | |
tribhir ekena vā kāryā parāparavibhūtaye |
prthivyādi śivāntāni śattriṃśat | tadardham aṣṭādaśabhūtāni pañca prakṛtiḥ puruṣo rāgo niyatīḥ
śuddhavidyā kālaḥ kalā māyā vidyā īśaḥ sadāśiva śaktiḥ śiva iti | tadardham api prakṛtiḥ puruṣo
niyatīḥ kālo māyā vidyā īśaḥ sadāśivaḥ śiva iti nava | pañca prthivyādīni
nivṛttyādikālāvadoṣavyāpīni | trīni bhuvanaśaktiśivākhyaṇi māyāsadāśivaśivaavyāptīni | ekaṃ tv
aśeṣam viśvādi śivatattvam | parāparavibhūtir mokṣabhogau saṃpādyau sarvatrāvīśiṣṭau | |

Kṣemarāja explains each of these and rearranges the order so that the *padas* follow the fifty speech sounds in the list order. He then clarifies the five *kalās* and instructs one to repeat the *mātrkā* mantra, which consists of all fifty phonemes in the inverse of their usual order, spelling out each individual phoneme to assure clarity, indirectly citing the *Mālinīvijayottara Tantra* as his source. His gloss on the *padas* is somewhat unusual as one would normally expect nine total *padas*, the eight consonantal⁵⁰⁸ and one vocalic *pada* but here the text deviates and Kṣemarāja describes ten total *padas*, presumably the *kṣa* standing alone as its own *pada*.⁵⁰⁹ He explains that by using the eighty-one *pada* mantra found in the *Svacchanda Tantra* one can create the *navātman*.⁵¹⁰ The *Svacchanda Tantra* teaches an unusual eighty-one *pada* mantra that utilizes the phonemes *oṃ*, *ha*, *ra*, *kṣa*, *ma*, *la*, *va*, *ya*, and *ū*. These are the same phonemes as those found in the *navātman* (with *oṃ* standing for *ṃ*) but with their attached vowel. The practitioner places *oṃ* at the eight compass points and the middle, with each of the other letters repeated throughout the mantra each nine times, making an eighty-one phoneme mantra.⁵¹¹

This is very different from the lengthy Śaiva Siddhānta mantra whose *padas* are not measured in phonemes but components. For example, one reads the six-syllable *oṃ namaḥ śivāyā*, traditionally the ending of the *vyomavāpin* mantra, as one *pada*.⁵¹² The *Guhyasūtra* tells us that the *vyomavāpin* mantra should be used, in

⁵⁰⁸ Guftural, palatal, retroflex, dental, labial, semivowel, sibilant, and aspirate.

⁵⁰⁹ See Dory Heilijgers-Seelen, 1994, *The System of Five Cakras in Kubjikāmatatantra 14-16*, Groningen: Groningen Oriental Studies, p. 85n44 for a brief discussion of other texts in which we find ten *padas*.

⁵¹⁰ See Chapter Three for a detailed description of this layout and the phonemes used within it.

⁵¹¹ See SvT, KSTS Volume II, page 57 and Padoux, 1990, p. 355 for diagrams showing the distribution of the phonemes.

⁵¹² Kahrs, 1999, p. 275.

reverse order, during post-mortuary rites.⁵¹³ Dualistic *āgamas* teach that the *vyomavyāpin* mantra consists of *padas*, split into one, eleven, twenty, twenty-one, and twenty-eight groups to make a total of eighty-one.⁵¹⁴ Like the *māṭṛkā* and *navātman*, the *vyomavyāpin* mantra contains all the letters of the alphabet. By pointing out the variations in form of this mantra, Kṣemarāja opens the *Netra Tantra* to varied readings and usages by practitioners of different school. He does, however, clearly favor that of the most esoteric Kaula school that stems from the *Mālinīvijayottara Tantra* by both placing it first in his commentary and referring to it covertly so that only one already versed in its contents would know the source.⁵¹⁵ Regardless of the mantra used, Kṣemarāja demonstrates the connection between the phonemes and the *tattvas*, with the vowels correlating to *śakti* and *śiva* while the consonants correspond to the remaining thirty-four *tattvas*. The *Mālinīvijayottara Tantra* then engages with sound theory as the practitioner utters the form, while the *Svacchanda Tantra* engages the body through the limbs and the paths that lead to the attainment of the *kalās*. Finally, Kṣemarāja emphasizes the numerical differences in the worlds (*bhuvana*) found within the three textual traditions he quotes. Through the commentary, Kṣemarāja assures that all six paths (*adhvan*), those of the word: *varṇa*, *mantra*, and *pada*, and those of what Padoux calls the "objective side,"⁵¹⁶ *kalā*, *tattva*, and *bhuvana*, are represented. The latter, those of the more experiential or empirical type, culminate in the *bhuvanas*. These are systematic subdivisions of the worlds or the cosmos, which vary greatly in different texts and include everything from the divine world to various hells.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹³ Goodall, 2015, p. 46.

⁵¹⁴ Padoux, 1990, p. 353.

⁵¹⁵ My thanks here to Alexis Sanderson for pointing out to me that this is the text to which Kṣemarāja refers.

⁵¹⁶ Padoux, 1990, p. 330.

⁵¹⁷ Padoux, 1990, p. 334.

[Now, after it has mentioned *tattvadīkṣā*, which has six varieties, the text now mentions the *dīkṣas*⁵¹⁸ of the *kalās*, etc.]

All *dīkṣās* may be done using the five *kalās* or the *padas* or the fifty speech sounds or with the mantras or the worlds (*bhuvana*). (NT 4.2cd-3ab)

[The *kalās* are *nivṛtti*, *pratiṣṭhā*, *vidyā*, *śāntā*, and *śāntyatītā*.⁵¹⁹ The [*Mālinīvijayottara Tantra* instructs the practitioner to recite the] *mātrka*, beginning with *kṣa*, etc.⁵²⁰ These are the nine *padas*. The tenth *pada* is the series of vowels beginning with *visarga* and ending with *a*. Following the teaching of the *Svacchanda Tantra* there are eighty-one *padas* beginning with *ū*, taught in the layout called the *navātman*.⁵²¹ Or, following the hierarchical mantric system of the *Svāyambhuva* [*Sūtra Saṃgraha* and other texts of the Śaiva Siddhānta school], then they are associated with the *vyomavyāpin* mantra. The fifty sounds that begin with *kṣa* [i.e., the consonants, are those that correspond to the] thirty-four *tattvas* that begin with earth and end with *sadāśiva*. The sixteen, which end with the sound *visarga* [i.e., the vowels, correspond to the *tattvas*, and are] considered the non-distinct *śakti* and *śiva tattvas*. In the [*Mālinīvijayottara Tantra*] the *padas* [are the] form of uttered sound expressed in the middle [of the *maṇḍala*] engaged in seeing the mantra with regards to the bonds of dualism and non-dualism. The *Svacchanda Tantra* [says] the heart, the head, the topknot, the armor, the weapon, and the eye are the limbs. Simultaneously, the first *vaktramantras*, in regard to being engaged in consideration of all *adhvans*, do [*dīkṣā*] by attaining the five *kalās*. The mantras are the limbs that produce existence from the non-existence of the *vaktramantras*. The *bhuvanas*, as observed in the [*Svāyambhuva Sūtra Saṃgraha*], are the subsequent one-hundred-eighteen. Additionally, [there] appear two-hundred-twenty-four forms in the

⁵¹⁸ Though the text uses *dīkṣā* in the singular, we can see from the following, the text mentions more than one *kalādīkṣā*.

⁵¹⁹ cessation, standing still, knowledge, peace, and supreme peace.

⁵²⁰ Here Kṣemarāja spells out the entire vocalic phonemes in reverse. Though Kṣemarāja does not designate how to group the letters, the typical categories of *vargas* can be followed so long as one classifies *kṣa* in its own class. Padoux, 1990, p. 155.

⁵²¹ SvTU 1-85 describes the mantra as *h-r-kṣ-m-l-v-y-ū-ṃ*. Here, again, Kṣemarāja says to recite the mantra in its inverse. As one cannot begin speech with the sound *ṃ*, he must instead begin with *ū*.

Svacchanda Tantra, of this, other *āgamas* are in agreement, saying *dīkṣā* is composed of six *adhvas*.]⁵²²

Kṣemarāja ends his commentary on this section with an explanation of his inclusion of different schools' interpretations. He says that the variations found within the text should not be seen as discrepancies or contradictions because the *Netra Tantra* summarizes the revelations found in various texts. This means the order and details of *dīkṣā* told in each *āgama* conform to what is taught within those *āgamas*. In other words, because each text is a revelation from the divine, they cannot be contradictory. Each practitioner should follow the rites for initiation that are detailed in the texts followed by his own school. This opens the *Netra Tantra*'s protective rites to practitioners from different schools. What is important to the text is not the theological background or the exact details of initiation but simply initiation itself.

Though the *Netra Tantra* simply states that *dīkṣā* brings about a state of *śakti* and *vyakti* for the initiand, Kṣemarāja uses his commentary to explain the remaining paths. Here he quotes the *Svacchanda Tantra*. Again, he demonstrates that

⁵²² *evaṃ ṣaṭprakārāṃ tattvadīkṣāṃ uddiśya kalādi dīkṣāṃ apy uddiśati kalābhiḥ pañcabhir vātha padair dīkṣāthavā punaḥ | 2 | | varṇaiḥ pañcāsatā vāpi mantrair vā bhuvanais tathā | nivṛttipratiṣṭhāvidyāśāntāśāntyatītāḥ kalāḥ | śrīpūrvādinītyā mātrkānusāreṇa kṣa ha sa ṣa śa va la ra ya ma bha ba pha pa na dha da tha ta ṇa ḍha ḍa tha ta ṇa jha ja cha ca ṇa gha ga kha ka iti nava padāni viśvaviśrāntisthānatvād visargādy akārāntaṃ tu daśamaṃ padam | śrīsvacchandaḍṣā tu navātmaprastāroktāny ekāśītir ūkāradīni padāni | śrīsvāyambhuvādi prakriyayā tu vyomavyāpisaṃbandhīni | varṇāḥ kṣādikāntāḥ catuṣtriṃśat pṛthivyādisadāśivāntavācakāḥ visargādyakārāntāstu ṣoḍaśa śaktiśivatattvābhedaṃmarśinaḥ | śrīpūrvasthityā madhyamavāgṛttyoktarūpāni padāni paśyantīvṛttyā āsūtritabhedābhedaṃmarśaprādhānyena mantrāḥ | śrīsvacchandaprakriyayā tu hṛt śiraḥśikhe kavacamastraṃ netraṃ ity aṅgānyeva sadya ādivoaktramantrāni nivṛttyādikalāpañcakavyāptikramenāśeṣādhvāmarśīni | mantrā ihatyaprakriyayā vaktramantrāṇāmbhāvādaṅgānyeva | bhuvanāni tu śrīpūrvoktaprakriyayāṣṭādaśottaraśatasamkhyāni svacchandadṛśā tu caturviṃśatyadhikadoṣitarūpāni asya śāstrasya sarvasrotahsaṃgraharūpatvāt tattadāgamoktaṣaḍadhvavibhāgakalpanayā dīkṣākramasyāvirodhāt | |*

the practitioner needs to understand the teachings of the *Svacchanda Tantra* in order to understand those of the *Netra Tantra*. As White points out, the *Netra Tantra* is both derivative of, and less comprehensive and systematic than, the *Svacchanda Tantra*.⁵²³ That it derives from the *Svacchanda Tantra* means that even though Kṣemarāja's commentary offers explanations that open the text up to practitioners of other schools of thought, the texts themselves are contextually tied together. However, this does not mean that Kṣemarāja's commentary necessarily captures the original meaning, simply that he reads and comments upon them together to bring them into the non-dual Śaiva fold. Such a reading becomes clear in the following section of commentary in which Kṣemarāja uses the *Svacchanda Tantra* to clarify his own understanding of the paths (*adhvan*), which do not occur anywhere in the original text's discussion of *dīkṣā*.

[Through *dīkṣā*, he is] prepared for all because through religious action [he becomes] the same [as the divine] in accordance with the nature of potential (*śakti*) and manifestation (*vyakti*). (NT 4.3cd-4ab)

[This means, he should contemplate each of these paths [that has to be purified]. After [he] makes it the principle [path of worship he becomes the] pervader, [i.e., that which permeates the others] with the form of [potential or manifest] explicitness in the remaining five paths (*adhvan*). Included within [the path], as it has spread, is the form of potential. As has been said in the *Svacchanda Tantra*, "[he should] visualize the *adhvans* as pervaded by [the others and the others] pervaded by it.]⁵²⁴

Once the text makes the purpose of *dīkṣā* clear, it discusses the major points of initiatory performance. These, of course, begin with the guru, who must be highly

⁵²³ White, 2012, p. 1.

⁵²⁴ *etaiḥ sarvaiḥ prakartavyā kāryā hy ekatamā 'thavā || 3 || sarvais tu samudāyena śaktivyaktisvarūpataḥ | ekatamaṃ saṃśodhyādhvānaṃ vyaktirūpeṇa vyāpakatayā prādhānyenāśritya tadantaritamadhvapañcakam śaktirūpeṇa vyāpyaṃ bhāvayeditiyarthaḥ | yathoktam śrīsvacchande "adhvāvalokanam paścād vyāpyavyāpakabhāvataḥ" (4-95) ityādi ||*

trained. However, the spiritual status of the *mantrin* who performs the initiation does not determine his compensation for such performance. Instead, the initiand provides what he can. That the *mantrin* takes whatever is offered to perform the initiation demonstrates his dedication and generosity. Similarly, the amount of payment the initiand can provide to the *mantrin* determines the number of *tattvas* the *mantrin* will take him through during the initiation rite. An initiand who provides more opulent offerings will receive a lengthier and more comprehensive initiation. Additionally, the efficacy of the rite depends upon the payment, often in the form of non-monetary gifts (*dakṣinā*) for the *mantrin*.⁵²⁵ The level of initiation sought, *putraka*, *samayin*, *sādhaka*, or *ācārya*, may also require different amounts of *dakṣinā*,⁵²⁶ though the *Netra Tantra* does not address this.

[And this *dīkṣā*,

[should] be set in motion by the highest teachers, in accordance with the best of the wealth [of the one for whom the *mantrin* performs the *dīkṣā*. (NT 4.4cd)

[People with wealth [should pay homage] with lavish ingredients; for others it may be done even with such meager ingredients as *dūrva* grass, water, and sprouts. For in this way there is a supremacy of our teachers [who] lack laziness and [are] free of greed]⁵²⁷

The *Netra Tantra* and Kṣemarāja then begin to explain how *dīkṣā* impacts the body. Again, we find a major difference between the commentary and the original text. Kṣemarāja elaborates on the preliminary details that must be done to the

⁵²⁵ Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, p. 138.

⁵²⁶ Rastelli and Goodall, 2013, p. 470.

⁵²⁷ *eṣā ca sarvaiva dīkṣā*

yathā vibhavasāreṇa kartavyā daiśikottamaiḥ | | 4 | |

*vibhavavatāṃ mahāsaṃbhāraiḥ | itareṣāṃ dūrvaṃbupallavādibhirapi | evaṃ hy anālasyanaiḥ
sprhyābhyāṃ daiśikānām uttamatā | |*

initiand's body. He also discusses visualization while the original text focuses on the presence of the goddess Vāgīśvarī, the goddess of speech.

[First of all, [the *mantrin*] attaches the threads of the bonds to the disciple's body, then infuses the parts [of the body into that thread]. Then [the *mantrin*] respectfully approaches the path (*adhvan*), and [performs] worship and *homa* to the [six] *adhvans*. Then, [he] visualizes the three bonds [inside the *adhvans*]. Then [the *mantrin* performs] such rituals as the installation [of] the *śakti*, which is the support of everything else.

[After he has done this,]

He should worship Vāgīśvarī. (NT 4.5ab)

[He should do that *pūjā*, [which] ends with offerings into the fire.

[The *mantrin*] should then install the bound soul (*paśu*) in her womb. (NT 4.5ab)

[Namely, [the *paśu* is] the initiand (*śiṣya*), whom the [*mantrin*] has already sprinkled, beaten, and taken hold of his consciousness].

[[Why should he put him in that womb?] Because he has been born in the fourteen diverse receptacles of experience [i.e., the first fourteen *saṃskāras*.]]⁵²⁸

This passage begins with Kṣemarāja's elaboration on the threads of bondage. He clarifies that during the initiation process, the *mantrin* attaches a physical thread to the initiand's body. The *mantrin* then visualizes a fusion of the threads and the initiand's consciousness. The *mantrin* then places that consciousness into the womb of Vāgīśvarī, the speech goddess. From there, the *mantrin* brings the initiand's consciousness into his own body to purify it and connect it to Śiva. He then returns the Śiva-fused consciousness to the body of the disciple to complete the initiation. Through this process, the *mantrin* separates three bonds, impurity (*mala*), action

⁵²⁸ *tatrāḍau śiṣyadehapāśasūtrāvalambanam adhvosaṃdhānam adhvopasthāpanam adhvapūjāhomāvadhvāntahpāśatrayabhāvanām ādhāraśaktinyāsādi ca kṛtvā*

vāgīśīpūjanam kāryam tadgarbhe yojayet paśum |

karmapāśavaśasaṃbhāvyaavicitracaturdaśavidhabhogāyatanotpattiyartham |

(*karma*), and illusion (*māyā*) from the disciple. This offers the disciple liberation. However, the *mantrin* does not only focus on the fusion of the initiand's consciousness with Śiva. Through the initiation process the *mantrin* also transforms the initiand's physical body. The transformation and initiation are marked as complete through the removal of the disciple's topknot. When the *mantrin* severs the threads, he also cuts off the disciple's hair. He then throws both into the sacrificial fire. Thus, the *mantrin* marks both the soul and the body of the disciple transformed into a wholly other self, one that has fused with the divine. Through the initiatory process, the disciple is reborn.

Once the *mantrin* has placed the consciousness of the disciple into Vāgīśvarī's womb, the initiand proceeds through the purification process. This transforms him into a twice-born devotee of Rudra. It is important to note here that initiation into this sect supplants the devotee's former caste, at least according to Kṣemarāja and the *Svacchanda Tantra*.⁵²⁹ Through the initiation the practitioner sheds the bonds that fetter him to the cycle of rebirth in the world by replacing himself with a purified, reborn self that has been yoked to the divine. He has been purified and reconstructed in a new and perfected form, his bonds thrown into the sacrificial fire.

[One goes through the *saṃskāras*:] conceived (*garbhādhāna*), born (*janana*), by virtue of taking up one's role (*adhikāra*), action (*laya*) and fruition (*bhoga*). Then [the initiand] atones (*niṣkṛti*) and [proceeds through the remainder of the *saṃskāras* that] follow. All this should] be done with the *mūla* mantra. (NT 4.5cd-6)

[Conceived (*garbhādhāna*) means taking root in various bodies, [*janana* is] to be born [out of that], *adhikāra* is the success of those who have grown to maturity and are suitable to experience *bhoga*. He's qualified to achieve

⁵²⁹ SvT 4.539cd-545.

karma, i.e., he can acquire its ability to bring about enjoyment matured by the great power of the mantras. It takes the form of being ready to perform results. After that comes *bhoga*, which is the experiencing of pleasure, pain, and delusion. The process of action (*laya*) [is to] of melt away any trace of fruition, which remains for a short period of time even though the *bhoga* has ceased. Then [comes] penance (*niṣkṛti*), which means the complete accomplishing of all *bhoga* that pertains to birth, life, and experiences. All this is to be done with sacrificial offerings into fire with the root mantra, three, etc., times. The penance should have a *homa* of one-hundred offerings. At the end of that, he should then meditate on the achievement of becoming twice-born and [his place as a] devotee of Rudra.

Once he has performed the *saṃskāra* [called] separation (*viśeṣākhyā*), whose nature is the absence of being the agent of experience, once all *bhogas* have been completed].

Then, as proclaimed by tradition, [he should] cut the bonds with the *astra mantra*.

[Then, after [he has] cut the binding ties (*pāśasūtra*) with the *astra mantra*, which is taught to follow immediately after this separation, with the same [mantra] he should]

burn [that thread by casting it into ritual fire].⁵³⁰

Next, the *Netra Tantra* explains in rather obtuse language how the bonds dissolve in fire. Kṣemarāja's commentary clarifies the passage, though even he

⁵³⁰ *garbhādhānaṃ tu jananaṃ adhikāro layas tathā || 5 ||*
bhogaḥ karmārjanaṃ caiva niṣkṛtis tadanantaram |
mūlamantreṇa kartavyaṃ
nānāśarīrāṇāṃ antaḥpraroho garbhādhānaṃ bahir niṣkṛtir jananaṃ bhogayogyānāṃ pravṛddhānāṃ
saṃpattir adhikāraḥ tadanantaraṃ mantramāhātmyaparipakvabhogasādhanatvasya karmaṇo 'rjanaṃ
bhogadānaun mukhyarūpam tadanantaraṃ sukhaduḥkhamohaprāptyaṣṭmā bhogaḥ tato niṣkṛte 'pi
bhoge kaṃcitkālaṃ bhogasaṃskāro layaḥ tato 'pi samastajātyāyurbhoganiḥśeṣasaṃpattyāṣṭmā niṣkṛtiḥ
ity etatsarvaṃ mūlamantrahomaḥ tryādisaṃkhyaiḥ kāryam niṣkṛtistu śatahomā tadante ca
dvijatoṣṭipattirudrāṃśāpattī cintayet ||
samāpteṣu bhogeṣu bhokṛtvoābhāvarūpaṃ viśeṣākhyāṃ saṃskāraṃ
kṛtvā
pāśacchedas tathā smṛtaḥ || 4-6 ||
astramantreṇa
tato viśeṣānantarabhāvitayā smṛtaṃ pāśasūtrasya chedam astramantreṇa
kṛtvā tenaiṃ pāśasya
dāhas tu

struggles to make sense of the phrase *tatsthite*. This he takes to mean the place inside the heart of the initiand.

[And after that,
[the bonds] have been reduced to ashes and reside there (*tatsthite*).
[He continues to use the same *astra* mantra [and] reduces to ashes the bonds, which completely cease and are without latent trace. [The locative of] *tatsthita* means he has visualized oneness of the consciousness of the disciple with the *mūla* [mantra]. The entirety [of the disciple's] body has ceased. [After that,] the place (*sthāna*) is established. [The *mantrin*] fuses the consciousness of his disciple with the mantra. Then, together with the disciple's consciousness, [the *mantrin*] causes [that consciousness] to enter into his own heart, raises it to *dvādaśānta*,⁵³¹ then projects it [back] into the heart of the *śiṣya*. *Tatsthitam* is to be analyzed as that standing (*sthāna*) [ie, the *śiṣya*'s consciousness brought to rest in the *śiṣya*'s heart]⁵³²

In other words, according to Kṣemarāja, once the bonds have been cut using the weapon (*astra*) mantra, thrown into fire, and reduced to ash, the *mantrin* fuses the consciousness of the now bodiless disciple with the mantra. He then brings the disciple's consciousness into his own heart and raises it up through his body and out of the top of his head in order to purify it. Finally, the *mantrin* projects the initiand's consciousness and the mantra back into the heart of the disciple, where it rests permanently. The initiand has cast aside his body for the rite and the *pāśasūtra* acts as a stand-in so that the physical body can be destroyed without harm to the

⁵³¹ A place twelve fingers breadth above the crown of the head where the out breath rests.

⁵³² *tato 'pi*

bhasmīkaraṇatathite |

bhasmīkaraṇaṃ niḥsaṃskārāṇāṃ pāśānāṃ śamanam astreṇaiva |

tatsthitam tu nivṛttāśeṣaśarīrasya śiṣyacaitanyasya mūlenaikyam

vibhāvya, svahr̥tpraveśena dvādaśāntaprāpaṇapūroam śiṣyahṛtthatvāpādanarūpaṃ sthānaṃ sthitam

tasya sthitam iti vyutpattyā tatsthitam | |

initiand.⁵³³ This does not mean that Tantric practitioners understand this as a symbolic act. The *mantrin* fuses very real bonds that tie the initiand to the world with the *pāśasūtra*. The process transforms the initiand's body through this process. The initiand then remains without fetters for the remainder of his life. The *pāśasūtra* is one of the most important aspects of the initiation rite.⁵³⁴ It consists of a cotton cord the same height as the initiand's body.⁵³⁵ The *mantrin* purifies the *pāśasūtra* with both water and mantra before he hangs it from the disciple's topknot to his feet.⁵³⁶ The *mantrin* then replaces the disciple's body with the cord by imposing the body's constituents onto the cord.⁵³⁷ As Davis notes, the initiand remains passive throughout this process as the bonds stifle his innate powers of knowledge, action, and will.⁵³⁸ This means that one cannot self-initiate and must utilize a *mantrin* who has himself been yoked to Śiva.

Along with his physical body and identity, the initiand's subtle body ceases to exist. This body, made of eight parts: (*puryaṣṭaka*) consists of the five primary elements of sense perception⁵³⁹ and intellect (*buddhi*), self-consciousness (*ahaṅkāra*),

⁵³³ Davis, 2000, p. 94.

⁵³⁴ Törzsök, 2014, p. 354-355 notes that the *Svacchanda Tantra* (SvT 4.88) teaches that children, fools, the elderly, women, and the sick do not receive full initiation. Instead they receive a "seedless" initiation, which means they are not obligated to follow post-initiatory rules. The initiation given to these practitioners is less powerful as they are not expected to become full-time practitioners. Further, Kṣemarāja notes at SvT 3.164 that some sources, he does not say which ones, state that male initiands hold the *pāśasūtra* in his right hand while females hold it in their left. Kṣemarāja says this is wrong because the initiand, regardless of gender, holds *darbha* grass as an extension of the *nāḍīs* in both hands. This means the *pāśasūtra* must be tied to the topknot, generally associated with male practitioners.

⁵³⁵ Davis, 2000, p. 94.

⁵³⁶ Davis, 2000, p. 94.

⁵³⁷ Davis, 2000, p. 94.

⁵³⁸ Davis, 2000, p. 94.

⁵³⁹ The *tanmātras*: sound (*śabda*), touch (*sparsā*), form (*rūpa*), essence (*rasa*), and odor (*gandha*)

and mind (*manas*). He must rid himself of this body in order to attain universal awareness. In Chapter Eight, the *Netra Tantra* says that the initiand,

does not need to meditate on [that which is] rising upwards, nor practice [that which] goes downward, or [rests] in the middle (i.e., the breath). He does not need to concentrate on [that which is] in front, or anything to the side or in other directions. [He needs focus upon] that which is inside the body or outside of it. He does not have to see the sky or that which is below. He does not have to close the eyes, nor open them.

He does not have to rest upon, lack support, or act as a support [for anything]. He need not concentrate on the five senses, what is real, sound, touch, essence, etc. Once he has abandoned all that he presides over, he becomes absorbed in *kevala*.⁵⁴⁰ (NT 8.41-44)⁵⁴¹

When he abandons everything, the practitioner loses his sense of individuation and becomes purified. Though the *Netra Tantra* does not define *puryaṣṭaka*, Kṣemarāja begins this purification process with the *kalātattva*. Often *puryaṣṭaka* is described as connected to the *tattvas*, from *pṛthivī* to *kalā* as in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*⁵⁴² or eight *tattvas* in the *Kallottara*.⁵⁴³ Using either reading, the *puryaṣṭaka*, which is synonymous with the *sūkṣma śarīra*, contains some but not all of the *tattvas*. This helps to explain why the initiand sheds his body as he passes through the lower *tattvas* into the higher. According to Mīmāṃsaka thought, the *puryaṣṭaka* equates to

⁵⁴⁰ I have left *kevala* untranslated here as the term is somewhat ambiguous and its meaning varies from text to text, sometimes meaning isolation and at others meaning whole. Here it has the sense of a cessation of individual perception.

⁵⁴¹ *nordhve dhyānaṃ prayuñjīta nādhastānna ca madhyataḥ |*
nāgrataḥ pṛṣṭhataḥ kiñcit pārśvayor ubhayor api || 41 ||
nāntaḥśarīrasaṃsthāne na bāhye bhāvayet kvacit |
nākāśe bandhayellakṣyaṃ nādho drṣṭiṃ niveśayet || 42 ||
na cākṣṇor mīlanaṃ kiñcin na kiñcid drṣṭibandhanam |
avalambaṃ nirālambaṃ sālambaṃ na ca bhāvayet || 43 ||
nendriyāṇi na bhūtāni śabdaspārśarasādi yat |
sarvaṃ tyaktvā samādhistaḥ kevalaṃ tanmayo bhavet || 44 ||

⁵⁴² Brunner, 1963, p. 161.

⁵⁴³ Brunner, 1936, p. 161.

a soul. This acts and experiences the fruits of those actions in both pleasure and pain. The *puryaṣṭaka* or soul is what reincarnates from one birth to the next.⁵⁴⁴ For Kṣemarāja, the Mīmāṃsaka understanding does not go far enough. He adds that the *puryaṣṭaka* does not differ in substance from Śiva. Instead a practitioner experiences the state of the *puryaṣṭaka*, in which he encounters the fruits of action, when he conceals his true nature, i.e., that of Śiva.⁵⁴⁵ When one reaches the point where the *puryaṣṭaka* is completely dissolved, he then attains true enjoyment and assimilates himself into all *tattovas*, from *pṛthivī* to Śiva. In this moment, he attains Śivahood within his manifest body (*deha*).⁵⁴⁶ Once the guru accomplishes this state in his disciple, he cuts off the disciple's topknot and places it into the sacrificial fire accompanied by the *mūla* mantra, which unites the disciple with Śiva.

[Next, after [the *mantrin* has] caused the cessation, etc. [of differentiation], as taught of the eight-fold subtle body (*puryaṣṭaka*) through the offerings of inviting, reverence and oblation, [and] after he has purified all the paths, after he has first united [the initiand] with all the other *tattovas*, beginning with *kalā*, he should then] cut off of the topknot and perform *homa*.⁵⁴⁷ [This means, after he cuts off the topknot, he should throw it into fire, and after [he has] cut [the topknot] with [that with which it] pervades (*vyāpti*) [i.e., he cuts the topknot and the *pāśasūtra*], he meditates on its correspondence to the flame [i.e., the fire consumes what is thrown into it

⁵⁴⁴ Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, 2011, p. 171n738.

⁵⁴⁵ Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, 2011, p. 341.

⁵⁴⁶ SpK 3.19; SpN 3.19.

⁵⁴⁷ The *Parātrīśikā Vivaraṇa* describes an external ritual in which the guru performs *nyāsa* on the skull, mouth, heart, genitals, and the whole body (of both himself and the *vīra*). The topknot (*śikhā*) is then tied with twenty-seven mantras. PTV 27; See Jaideva Singh, 1988, *Parā-trīśikā-Vivaraṇa: The Secret of Tantric Mysticism*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 247-248 for the list of these mantras. In the PTV, this *japa* is followed by the consecration of flowers with water, further *japa*, and *nyāsa*. This practice also indicates *nyāsa* on five parts of the body, the head, mouth, heart, genitals, body, and topknot.

and makes that which is thrown into it the same as fire], which has as its nature the power of vital energy, which is the basis of the cosmos.

Such a teacher, who is richly endowed with expertise and yogic ability, who knows the reality of the fifteen topics that the *Svacchanda Tantra* teaches [and], "has understood the span of the breath and the circulation of the breath," should then,]

unite [the initiand] with that same *mūla* mantra. (NT 4.7)

[the disciple, whose bonds cease to exist, [and]

"After he has let go of all mental activity, the [*mantrin*] should fuse [the disciple] with awareness. Then the bound soul attains Śivahood, rescued from the ocean of repeated incarnation." As said in the *Svacchanda Tantra*, he should make [that disciple] one with Paramaśiva by causing him to enter into the highest *tattva*].⁵⁴⁸

Once the *mantrin* has fused the initiand with Śiva, he must ensure that the disciple remains in the *tattva* appropriate to the level of initiation he has received. Again, Kṣemarāja turns to the *Svacchanda Tantra* for a more nuanced exposition of the distribution of the *tattvas*. These categories also explain the role of each initiatory level. For example, the *ācārya*, who has achieved the highest level of initiatory practitioner, reaches the highest *tattva* in the initiatory process but

⁵⁴⁸ *anantaram brahmāder āhvānapūjāhomapuryaṣṭakāṃśārpaṇaśrāvaṇa visarjanādi kṛtvā kalāditattoāntarānusandhipūrovaṃ sarvādhvasaṃśuddhiṃ kṛtvā śikhācchedaṃ tato homaṃ kuryāt viśvādhvāśrayaprāṇaśaktirūpaśikhāvyaṅgyā śikhāṃ chittoṃ juhuyād ity arthaḥ | | anantaram brahmāder āhvānapūjāhomapuryaṣṭakāṃśārpaṇaśrāvaṇa visarjanādi kṛtvā kalāditattoāntarānusandhipūrovaṃ sarvādhvasaṃśuddhiṃ kṛtvā śikhācchedaṃ tato homaṃ kuryāt viśvādhvāśrayaprāṇaśaktirūpaśikhāvyaṅgyā śikhāṃ chittoṃ juhuyād ity arthaḥ | | atha vidhyan yathā saṃpattivoāsaṃbhāvyaṅgyaprāyaścittahomānantaram "jñātvā cārapramāṇaṃ tu prāṇasañcārameva ca" (4-231) ity ādiśrīsvacchandoktaprameyapañcadaśakasatattvajñō jñānayogaśālī ācāryavaryaḥ praśāntapāśaṃ śiṣyam mūlenaiva tu yojayet | | 4-7 | | "vyāpāraṃ mānaṃ tyaktvā bodhamātreṇa yojayet | tadā śivatvaṃ abhyeti paśur mukto bhavārṇavāt | |" (4-437) iti śrīsvacchandoktadrśā paratattvasamāveśanayā paramaśivaikarūpaṃ kuryāt | | 7 | |*

permanently resides in the *tattva* just below it. This means that he has experienced the highest *tattva*, but he must not remain there or he cannot perform *dīkṣā* for others.

[Then,]

After [the *mantrin* has] united [the disciple] with the highest reality, he should cause him to dwell there.

[In this way [the initiand] will become one with that [*tattva*]. Now, [let us turn to] the differentiation of union with the *tattvas* (*yojanika*),]

Thus, the [initiand] should know the *dīkṣā* in such a way that the *ācārya* is established [in the appropriate *tattva* so that he can perform] his duties in the Śivahood that embraces both highest (*para*) and final emancipation (*parapada*). For the *sādhaka* [the final *tattva* resting place is] in *sadāśīva*. For the *putraka* it is in the highest *tattva* [and] for the *samayin* in *īśvara tattva*. (NT 4.8-9)

[Śivahood [is that] whose level is *parāparapada*, "but Śiva, the ultimate cause, engages in action established in that." Stated in the *Svacchanda Tantra*, "[for the initiation of] *ācāryas*, the [*mantrin*] should perform fusion with lower *śiva* after he has fused them with higher *śiva*. For *sādhakas*, immediately after fusion with *śiva*, the [*mantrin*] should perform unification with *sadāśīva*. For the *putraka*, [he should join him with] the highest *tattva*, [and for the] *samayin*, *īśvara tattva*. This is the distribution.]⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁹ *tadāha*

saṁyojya parame tattve saṁsthānaṁ tatra kārayet |

tathāsau tanmaya eva syāt | |

atha yojanikānāṁ vibhāgamāha

adhikārārtham ācārye parāparapade sthite | | 8 | |

śivatve sādhakānāṁ tu vidyād dīkṣāṁ sadāśīve |

putrake parame tattve samayinyaiśvare tathā | | 9 | |

parāparapade śivatve iti

"atrārūḍhas tu kurute śivaḥ paramakāraṇam" (10-1258)

iti svacchandoktanītyā paramaśivayojanānantaram ācāryāṇām aparāśivayojanā kāryā sādhakānāṁ tu śivayojanānantaram sadāśivayojanā kāryā putrakāṇām paratattova eva samayināmīśvaratattove iti vibhāgāḥ | | 9 | |

The newly initiated become permanently fused into one of three *tattvas*. Here, the highest *tattva*, *śiva*, is split into two: an impermanent highest state (*para*) and a permanent emancipatory one (*parapada*). The *puryaṣṭaka*, made up of the lower *tattvas*, then becomes permanently replaced and what remains of the individual resides in the appropriate *tattva* until death, unless he later becomes initiated into a higher level. Once the initiate sheds his physical body, he no longer differentiates himself from Śiva. In these highest states, the subtle (*sūkṣma*) body resembles the physical body.⁵⁵⁰ But, is not subject to the limitations of spacial dimension or bound by time.⁵⁵¹ From *śiva*, the I-ness (*ahantā*) expands into that-ness (*idantā*),⁵⁵² subject becomes object. *Śiva tattva* is where one experiences pure thought (*cit*). It does not distinguish between subject and object. *Śakti* complements this the state of pure thought. Here, the initiate experiences pure bliss (*ānanda*). The forces of *cit* and *ānanda* contract and manifest the *tattvas* that follow them.

The text then ends,

[To bring the matter to a close,]

Thus, *dīkṣā* has been explained in brief, the full explanation is elsewhere.
(NT 4.10)

[[The text says,] briefly and elsewhere because this ritual of *dīkṣā* is extremely long and because it has been merely touched upon [here] in an extremely abridged form. He teaches that after the [*mantrin* has] first, correctly understood this expansive [rite] from the *Svacchanda Tantra*, [and other texts], he should put it into practice. The eye of Śiva is greater than all.

⁵⁵⁰ Abhinavagupta, PTV 22 calls this the *brahmadeha* (*brahma* body).

⁵⁵¹ Lorilliai Biernacki, 2015, "Conscious Body: Mind and Body in Abhinavagupta's Tantra," in *Beyond Physicalism: Toward Reconciliation of Science and Spirituality*, ed Edward F. Kelly, Adam Crabtree, and Paul Marshall, Latham: Rowman & Littlefield, p. 355.

⁵⁵² Nemeč, 2011, p. 178n211.

It bestows on those rich in devotion, immersion in the highest abode, [and he] burns away of all the massive bonds.]⁵⁵³

Ultimately, Kṣemarāja reiterates that the will of Śiva bestows liberation upon the newly initiated through the correct performance of the rites. This also garners the attention of the deity, who bestows liberation. Once purified and initiated, the practitioner can take part in the daily and occasional rites his tradition requires.

D. Transgression: the benefits of breaking the rules

As I demonstrated earlier, Tantric practitioners and symbolism often subverts the dominant distinction between purity and impurity. Though not the norm, transgressive practices do play a part in Tantric rites.⁵⁵⁴ Such practice impact Tantra in both the sacred and profane realms.

Transgressive actions require their performers to maintain a plurality of concurrent identities. One maintains a position within the orthodox world while the other plays the role of the transgressor. Without some identification with the ordinary, the transgressive becomes the norm and is no longer capable of breaking taboo, therefore making it no longer transgressive. Where the practitioner's

⁵⁵³ *upasaṃharati*
evam uddeśato dīkṣā kathitā vistaro 'nyataḥ || 4-10 ||
uddeśata ity anyata ity anena cātivotato 'pyayaṃ
dīkṣāvidhir ihātisaṃkṣepeṇāsūtritattoāt śrīsvacchandādisāstrebyo
vitatya samyagavagamyā prayoktavya iti śikṣayati iti śivoam ||
jayatyaśeṣapāśaughaploṣakṛd bhaktiśālinām |
paradhāmasamāveśapradam netraṃ maheśituḥ || ||

⁵⁵⁴ White, 2000, p. 4-7 discusses the various definitions scholars and practitioners have given Tantra over time. In popular culture, Tantra is often associated with sexual practices. To rehabilitate Tantra's image, scholar-practitioners have emphasized the non-transgressive, philosophical side of Tantra. This makes a definition of Tantra difficult to agree upon, as what makes something Tantric depends largely on perspective. As I noted in the introduction and elsewhere in this work, the *Netra Tantra* does not overtly prescribe any transgressive practices. Yet, because it fits into an ontological canon of work that does call for such behaviors, questions of purity and impurity arise in discussion of the text.

multiple identities come into conflict, transgression occurs. Taussig points out that secrecy (especially public secrecy) and transgression are intertwined.⁵⁵⁵ Out of fear of punishment, the transgressor must not allow his act to be too widely known. At the same time, he must reveal the act for it to have any power. The revelation of the secret, transgressive action to trusted others leads to a shared secret.⁵⁵⁶ This strengthens the bond between members of the secret community while keeping their activities hidden from outsiders, and thus safe from external retribution.

Douglas notes four types of social pollutions that lead to danger: crossing external boundaries, transgressing internal boundaries, the marginal spaces surrounding the boundaries, and contradiction within the system.⁵⁵⁷ I focus primarily on the first: Tantric practice in conflict with external norms and rules. As a practice in opposition to the *mores* of larger society, Tantric activity must be clearly marked. Initiation rites help to delineate the boundaries between Tantric and non-Tantric membership. Once initiated, a Tantric practitioner may find himself exposed to transgressive behavior, offering him further membership in the Tantric community while maintaining the protective shield of that community's shared secrecy. This allows him to reaffirm his Tantric identity in stages and does not force him to cross into the transgressive immediately upon obtaining Tantric membership, though he is perfectly qualified to do so.

In Tantric practice, transgressive conduct often consists of three types of behavior: (1) the ritual consumption of, or contact with, forbidden and impure substances, (2) the designation of charnel grounds as sacred spaces, and (3)

⁵⁵⁵ Michael Taussig, 1998, "Transgression," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Taylor, Mark C., ed Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 354-355.

⁵⁵⁶ Taussig, 1998, p. 355.

⁵⁵⁷ Mary Douglas, 1966, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, New York and London: Routledge, p. 123.

participation in sexual rites. During the ritual itself, practitioners use several types of sacred language to interact with deities. One such kind is an encoded pattern of speech called *chommakā*. In order to provide a protective cover for speech that describes ritual elements, the text gives a *chommakā* word that replaces the ordinary technical term of the ritual object. For example, the *Svacchanda Tantra* calls meat, "increasing power."⁵⁵⁸ For a substance to be transgressive the practitioner must first believe it to be impure. This means he adheres to the rules and *mores* of Brahmanic society. His second identity, as a Tantric practitioner, allows for the covert ritual consumption of meat within the Tantric sphere. During this ritual, practitioners eat meat in the presence of others who bear witness to their increase of power. Similarly, the charnel ground (called "tumult")⁵⁵⁹ is the location at which all fear and afflictions of the mind are destroyed.⁵⁶⁰ The place of burial and decay then becomes the place of worship because it inverts the ordinary associations of danger.⁵⁶¹

Transgressive practice is not the main element of Tantric Śaiva ritual. However, such practice is the most socially dangerous. In her study of Tantra in the *Rājataranṅiṇī*, Törzsök shows that Tantric practitioners were widely associated with prohibited sex,⁵⁶² meat eating, etc.⁵⁶³ Such antinomian practices allows Kalhaṇa to paint a negative picture of Tantric practitioners. He correlates the downfalls of several kings to their Tantric associations and transgressive conduct.⁵⁶⁴ Several works describe punishments for specific behaviors. A comparison of the types of taboos found in Tantra with the punishments for prohibitions found in the

⁵⁵⁸ SvT 15.4a.

⁵⁵⁹ SvT 15.6.a.

⁵⁶⁰ SvTU 15.6.

⁵⁶¹ Douglas, 1966, p. 161.

⁵⁶² Törzsök, 2012, p. 222.

⁵⁶³ Törzsök, 2012, p. 224.

⁵⁶⁴ Törzsök, 2012, p. 225-227.

Arthaśāstra,⁵⁶⁵ reveals many links. The consumption of forbidden foods and beverages results in exile. Those who cause another to consume the forbidden incur a monetary fine. The value of the fine varies with caste. Those who cause a brahmin to ingest the banned items receive the highest penalty.⁵⁶⁶ The *Arthaśāstra* demands exile for those who consume the prohibited food and drinks of their own volition.⁵⁶⁷ Sex with a person's aunt, the wife of his teacher, daughter-in-law, daughter, or sister requires castration,⁵⁶⁸ which is then followed by execution.⁵⁶⁹ Cross-caste sexual relationships result in various punishments, from fines and the confiscation of property to loss of caste and execution.⁵⁷⁰ These punishments are particular to the *Arthaśāstra*, though the prohibitions themselves are fairly consistent across dharmic texts. Whether these injunctions targeted or inspired Tantric rites is beyond the scope of this study. However, not all Tantric texts prescribe the same types of transgressive behaviors. The *Mṛgendra Tantra*, an influential text in Śaiva Siddhānta circles, which influenced non-dual Śaiva texts,⁵⁷¹ prescribes very different punishments for transgressions. It calls for the performance of ten thousand recitations of eleven mantras for voluntary or

⁵⁶⁵ The authorship and exact dates of the *Arthaśāstra* are unclear but the text clearly precedes the spread of Tantrism, with allusions to it found as early as the fifth century A.D. Hartmut Scharfe, 1993, *Investigations in Kauṭilya's Manual of Political Science*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, p. 1. The text appears to have been influential up to as late as the fourteenth century. Scharfe, 1993, p. 11. The *Arthaśāstra* is only one of many surviving texts that describe the system of law. Among the most influential works of *dharmasāstra* are *Manusmṛti*, *Bṛhaspatismṛti*, *Nāradaśmṛti*, and *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti*.

⁵⁶⁶ Patrick Olivelle, 2013, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 250.

⁵⁶⁷ Olivelle, 2013, p. 250.

⁵⁶⁸ Including removal of the penis.

⁵⁶⁹ Olivelle, 2013, p. 251. Consenting partners are to receive the same punishment.

⁵⁷⁰ Olivelle, 2013, p. 251-252.

⁵⁷¹ Such as the *Brahmayāmala* and *Svacchanda Tantras*. See Törzsök, 2013a, p. 148 and Dominic Goodall, 2004, *The Parādhyatantra: A Scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta*, Pondicherry: Institut Française de Pondichéry École Française D'Extrême-Orient, p. xxxvii.

involuntary sins, including the consumption of alcohol or sex with a master's wife.⁵⁷² This demonstrates that similar prohibitions existed across social and religious boundaries, but the response to such behaviors varied widely with tradition.

The *Rājataranṅiṇī* does not reveal whether kings enforced the penalties spelled out in the *Arthaśāstra* or any other text. I highlight the punishments in the *Arthaśāstra* because of its seminal influence.⁵⁷³ The *Rājataranṅiṇī* implies that only brahmins were subject to caste-specific punishments.⁵⁷⁴ As the *Mrgendra Tantra* shows, punishments varied widely. However, killing a brahmin, drinking liquor, theft, sex with a teacher's wife, and criminal associations recur as crimes. Sex with a teacher's wife, a practice not unheard of in Tantric circles,⁵⁷⁵ is often categorized as incest.⁵⁷⁶ The *Arthaśāstra* does not give specific sanctions for kings, but the *Rājataranṅiṇī* calls for kings to be punished for their transgressions. Kalhaṇa records that Harṣa worshipped low caste slave girls as goddesses and had sex with them. He drank the magic potions they offered him,⁵⁷⁷ and had sex with his father's wives and his own sisters.⁵⁷⁸ While the king escaped official punishment for this behavior, Kalhaṇa describes him as sullied and ties his downfall to his transgressive acts.⁵⁷⁹ Though the punishments do not correspond to those of the *Arthaśāstra*, similar prohibitions existed in Kashmir, even for the king. Kalhaṇa

⁵⁷² Flood, 2006, p. 145.

⁵⁷³ Scharfe, 1993, p. 11.

⁵⁷⁴ V.N. Drabu, 1986, *Kashmir Polity (c. 600-1200 A.D.)*, New Delhi: Bahri Publications, p. 185; RT 4.96, 105.

⁵⁷⁵ June McDaniel, 2004, *Offering Flowers, Feeding Skulls: Popular goddess worship in West Bengal*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 107; Wendy Doniger O' Flaherty, 1980b, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 275

⁵⁷⁶ Scharfe, 2002, p. 208.

⁵⁷⁷ RT 7.1129-1133.

⁵⁷⁸ RT 7.1147-1148.

⁵⁷⁹ RT 7.11149.

does not find low caste women posing as goddesses⁵⁸⁰ particularly unusual. This demonstrates that he knew of such practices. If indeed the women he describes act as *yoginīs*, this open reference to Tantric practice demonstrates that the penalty for prohibited activities was not nearly as harsh as that laid out in the *Arthaśāstra*. Clearly, transgressive Tantric practice occurred within courtly circles. In fact, Kalhaṇa himself did not object to Tantric practices such as mantric recitation to increase the monarch's pleasure or his acquisition of supernatural powers. Instead, the transgressive rites that involve impure substances and sexual acts bring about the downfall of kings.⁵⁸¹ Törzsök hypothesizes that Kalhaṇa, himself a Śaiva, may have been particularly weary of such practices since they posed a risk to the reputation of Śaiva practitioners in general.⁵⁸² This would account for references to transgressive practice throughout the *Rājataranṅinī*. Clearly, outsiders knew of such practices. If they were meant to be secret, they were not well-guarded. This is attested through the spread of Tantric practice throughout the region. Regardless of Kalhaṇa's personal opinion, the *Rājataranṅinī*'s portrayal of Śaiva sexual practices suggests that they were an important part of Kashmiri religion. It contains several cautionary tales about the impact of transgressive practices on kings. This reveals a pattern of Tantric guru influence on the monarchy.

II. Religion of Monarchs

Evidence for Śaiva Tantric traditions begin to appear in approximately the sixth century.⁵⁸³ As Sanderson demonstrates, Tantra quickly spread through South and

⁵⁸⁰ Here likely a reference to them acting as *yoginīs*.

⁵⁸¹ Törzsök, 2012, p. 228.

⁵⁸² Törzsök, 2012, p. 230.

⁵⁸³ Sanderson, 2001, p. 2-14.

Southeast Asia to become a fundamental part of religious life.⁵⁸⁴ The Brahmanical Śaiva tradition continued to compose Purāṇic texts while their Tantric counterparts produced the corpus of texts also called Tantras. In texts such as the *Uttarabhāga*, *Kālikā Purāṇa*, *Devī Purāṇa*, and *Agni Purāṇa*, the distinction between Tantric and Brahmanical tradition is almost non-existent.⁵⁸⁵ The spread of Śaiva practice occurred largely due to royal patronage. Sanderson argues that Śaiva success was largely due to the extension of "a body of rituals and theory that legitimated, empowered, or promoted key elements of the social, political and economic process that characterizes the early medieval period."⁵⁸⁶ Geertz describes the relationship between monarchs and Brahmins as one in which brahmins, especially priests, did not hold local political power. Instead, brahmins maintained a sense of spiritual superiority through their monopoly on scriptural tradition and esoteric knowledge.⁵⁸⁷ Conversely, the political class maintained its own monopoly through governmental rulership.⁵⁸⁸ The priest offered his services to the monarch and in exchange he received political favor and social protection.⁵⁸⁹

I apply the Geertz' notion of the "theatre state," in which "kings and princes were the impresarios, the priests the directors, and the peasants the supporting cast, stage, crew, and audience"⁵⁹⁰ to medieval Kashmir. In doing so, I ask how the *mantrin's* ability to protect the monarch demonstrates his spiritual power and how that power impacts him socially. I also ask how the *mantrin's* relationship to the

⁵⁸⁴ Sanderson, 2009, p. 252.

⁵⁸⁵ Sanderson, 2009, p. 250.

⁵⁸⁶ Sanderson, 2009, p. 252.

⁵⁸⁷ Clifford Geertz, 1980, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 36-37.

⁵⁸⁸ Geertz, 1980, p. 37.

⁵⁸⁹ Geertz, 1980, p. 37.

⁵⁹⁰ Geertz, 1980, p. 13.

transgression found within Tantric practice impacts his role as royal officiant. Geertz' theatre state is one in which temple dedications, public rites, mobilization of the masses, and the attainment of wealth were the driving force of politics itself.⁵⁹¹ In this way, I ask whether the rites performed by the royal officiant were themselves a driving force for ritual. Certainly, scriptures such as the *Netra Tantra*, *Svacchanda Tantra*, and many others advocate for a genuine outcome. However, the implementation of the rites catalogued by these texts can be read as a theatre ritual. Ultimately, the outcome of all rites depend upon the grace of Śiva if they are to be successful.⁵⁹²

A. Kings, Poets, and Patronage

Royal patronage was important for many poets, playwrights, and philosophers in medieval Kashmir. Their families often possessed connections to the royal court. For example, the eleventh century poet Kṣemendra was the son of an affluent and prominent Śaiva brahmin.⁵⁹³ As I discussed earlier in Chapter Two, Kalhaṇa was familiar with Tantric ritual practice. His contemporary Kṣemendra's work was often critical of Tantric priests and teachers.⁵⁹⁴ Yet, Kṣemendra studied

⁵⁹¹ Geertz, 1980, p. 13.

⁵⁹² Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, 2011, p. 32.

⁵⁹³ Daniel James Bisgaard, 1994, *Social Conscience in Sanskrit Literature*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 56-58. Kṣemendra and Kalhaṇa were literary rivals. Kalhaṇa accused Kṣemendra's father of raiding the royal treasury for his wealth. Bisgaard points out that Kṣemendra gives a contrary account as to the provenance of Kṣemendra's family wealth. If Kṣemarāja's account is correct, such a theft would indicate close proximity to the court via the ability to access such funds. Though in dispute, this demonstrates Kṣemendra's family proximity to governmental affairs.

⁵⁹⁴ For example, in KV 1.10-95 the adept Mūladeva instructs a merchant's son in religious hypocrisy and deception. See Somadeva Vasudeva, 2005, *Three Satires: Nīlakaṇṭha, Kṣemendra, & Bhallaṭa*, trsl New York: Clay Sanskrit Library, p. 95-127; Bisgaard, 1994, p. 59-64. Further, Kṣemendra's *Narmamālā* and *Deśopadeśa* also contain satirical caricatures of Śaiva gurus. See Bisgaard, 1994, p. 64-68.

literature with the great Tantric exegete and aesthetic philosopher

Abhinavagupta.⁵⁹⁵ Abhinavagupta traces his ancestry to the great scholar,

Atrigupta, who King Lalitāditya invited to Kashmir in the eighth century.⁵⁹⁶

The twelfth century author of the Śaiva poem *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita*, Maṅkha,⁵⁹⁷ was the brother of a minister to Kashmir's King Jayasiṃha.⁵⁹⁸ At the end of the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita*, Maṅkha describes an assembly of scholars invited to hear his completed poem.⁵⁹⁹ These men, Maṅkha assures his readers, praised the work.⁶⁰⁰ He describes the assembly as made up on the most revered thinkers of his time. Among the scholars, Maṅkha lists Kalhaṇa and Jogarāja. The latter likely refers to Yogarāja, the commentator of Abhinavagupta's *Paramārthasāra*. Also present is Prakāṣa, who Maṅkha claims is better religious matters than even Abhinavagupta. Maṅkha also describes the attendance of a celebrated philosopher named Suhala, and various poets, Vedantins, Mīmāṃsāns, Buddhists, Vaidikas, grammarians, and logicians.⁶⁰¹ Pollock describes the assembly as a demonstration of the vibrant and innovative literary culture of twelfth century Kashmir.⁶⁰² However, according to Pollock, it also marks the end of the era of royal support of literature, and

⁵⁹⁵ Vasudeva, 2005, p. 17.

⁵⁹⁶ Muller-Ortega, 2000, p. 574.

⁵⁹⁷ Also sometimes spelled Maṅkhaka or Maṅkhuka.

⁵⁹⁸ KC 3.62, 25.61. Jayasimha ruled from 1128 to 1149. Jayaratha, who would later write the commentary on Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka*, was the grandson of a minister to a king widely assumed to be Jayasimha. Navjivan Rastogi, 1987, *Introduction to the Tantrāloka: A Study in Structure*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, p. 88.

⁵⁹⁹ KC 25:10-20.

⁶⁰⁰ KC 25:144-150.

⁶⁰¹ KC 25.94b-95a; 102; 106-134; Pollock, 2003, p. 92; Stein, 1900 (vol. I), p. 12; Bhatt, 1973, p. 8-9.

⁶⁰² Sheldon Pollock, 2003, "Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, Ed Sheldon Pollock. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 92.

subsequently the decline of Kashmir's literary tradition. No king is listed as present at the reading and Mañkha does not praise a royal benefactor in the poem.⁶⁰³

The *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* displays clear Tantric affiliation in its devotion to the worship of Śiva. The poem can be read from a Tantric perspective⁶⁰⁴ or as simply a poem of praise. Within the text, Mañkha describes the different philosophical schools that were most influential in Kashmir at the time.⁶⁰⁵ He maintains that the different schools merge into one, the non-dual Śaiva Tantra. This places non-dualism at the top of the philosophical hierarchy.⁶⁰⁶ This view is similar to that of Abhinavagupta, who says the Indian philosophical systems are hierarchical. Hanneder organizes the various lineages of Śaiva Tantric schools according to an increasing heterodoxy which he sees a being defined by,

the degree to which female and ferocious deities come to the foreground. On the lower end of the scale, in the Siddhānta, only the consortless mild Sadāśiva is worshipped — his power being personified in his throne — ; in the Krama, the most heterodox of the Kashmirian cults of [Abhinavagupta's] time, the ritual centers on groups of female, ferocious deities. We arrive at the following sequence: the Siddhānta; the cult of Netranātha represented by the *Netratantra*; the cult of the Svachhandabhairava based on the authority of the *Svachhandatantra*; the Trika with its sub-levels; and finally the Krama. The internal logic of this series is the notion that an increase of heterodoxy marks and increase of power and soteriological efficacy.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰³ Pollock, 2003, p. 117-118.

⁶⁰⁴ Rastogi, 1987, p. 1, points out the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita*'s clear reference to the Krama school of Tantra. Rastogi argues that this mention demonstrates the popularity of Krama outside of philosophical circles.

⁶⁰⁵ KC 17.18-28.

⁶⁰⁶ KC 17.19.

⁶⁰⁷ Jürgen Hanneder, 1998, *Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Revelation: Mālinīślokaṅkārttika I*, 1-399, Groningen: Egbert Forsten, p. 6-7.

This hierarchy culminates in Abhinavagupta's own school, the Trika. According to Abhinavagupta, practitioners attain incomplete liberation based on the limitations of the other schools. A practitioner can only realize the highest level of reality taught by each system. As Tantric Śaiva theology builds on the others and offers even a taxonomy of ever higher possible levels of attainment, it must be, by this logic, the ultimate teaching.⁶⁰⁸

B. Protecting the King: NT 19.84-133

Chapter Nineteen of the *Netra Tantra* describes the ritual that protect the king and his kingdom. This includes livestock, troops, and agriculture. The chapter focuses on possession and demons,⁶⁰⁹ from which the rites also protect. The king employs a *mantrin* to perform this protective ritual.

The protective rite begins with the invocation of Mṛtyujit, the physical manifestation of the *Netra Tantra*'s main manifestation of Bhairava. Mṛtyujit holds sway over the factors that bring about death (unhappiness, disease, barrenness, etc.) and offers protection from various demons.

The tradition is secret and confers happiness and the best of all fortune. The pleased and pious adepts strive to obtain the favor of [Mṛtyujit].⁶¹⁰ They are liberated from all suffering. What I say is true, not false. (NT 19.84-85ab)⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁸ Christopher Wallis, 2007, "The Descent of Power: Possession, Mysticism, and Initiation in the Śaiva Theology of Abhinavagupta," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 36:2, p. 249.

⁶⁰⁹ White, 2012.

⁶¹⁰ As is common in this text, the object is not named. Here I assume it is *mṛtyujit* from context.

⁶¹¹ *rahasyaṃ saṃpradāyaś ca sarvaśreyaḥ sukhāvahaḥ |
sādhakāś tu prasannā ye bhaktā hy ārādhayanti ca || 84 ||
sarvaduḥkhavimuktāś te satyaṃ me nānṛtaṃ vacaḥ |*

The text then emphasizes the rite's ability to prevent suffering. It specifies that the *mantrin* will attain the benefits of the rite when he performs it on behalf of others. The text limits the *mantrin* to a few people for whom he can execute the rite. This elite group includes the *mantrin*'s immediate family and pupils as well as kings and their progeny. A *mantrin* in the employ of a king was a professional whose singular occupation was the performance of rites on behalf of the monarch.⁶¹² His performance for members of his own immediate family ensure that the *mantrin* and those who surround him do not become afflicted by demons.

This [*pūjā*] should prevent all suffering to arise in [the one who performs it]. [The *mantrin*] should perform [it] for his devoted wives, children, and his devoted pupils;⁶¹³ he should not practice it otherwise. [When he conducts the *pūjā*, he should do so] on behalf of kings and their offspring because, the king is always the head [of the family] of all stages of life [i.e., the king is always the head of all families in the kingdom, regardless of the status of his subjects]. (NT 19.85cd-87)⁶¹⁴

The *Netra Tantra* begins its description with the physical demarcation of the body. The *mantrin* infuses white ash with the protective mantra. This act renders the mantra visible and purifies the body. He is to apply the forehead mark each time the king washes his face.

⁶¹² Sanderson, 2010, p. 12.

⁶¹³ The grammar is unclear, it can be understood either that the *ācārya* [teacher] performs the ritual on behalf of the monarch's devoted wives and children or that he does so on behalf of his own wives and children. Toward the end of this section we see that the *ācārya* receives the benefits of the ritual as a byproduct of performing it on behalf of another, making the first reading of this sentence more likely correct in this context.

⁶¹⁴ *anenaivātmanah kāryaṃ sarvaduḥkhanivāraṇam* || 85 ||
bhaktānāṃ svasutānāṃ ca svadārāṇāṃ ca kārayet |
svaśiṣyāṇāṃ ca bhaktānāṃ nānyathā tu prayojayet || 86 ||
sarvāśramagurutoāc ca bhūpatīnāṃ ca sarvadā |
tatsutānāṃ ca patnīnāṃ kartavyo hitam icchatā || 87 ||

One should always perform [the recitation of the mantra] for the sake of peace in obligatory rites, special rites, and for fulfillment of special wishes. [The *mantrin* should always] apply the forehead mark (*tilaka*) of white ash [infused] with seven recitations [of the Amṛteśa] mantra on [the king's] washed face. [This] removes the pollution caused by the mothers (*mātrdoṣa*). (NT 19.88-89ab) ⁶¹⁵

The king also receives a consecrated flower. This bestows protection upon him. The gestures of marking the forehead and presentation of a consecrated flower are physical indicators of mantric protection. These acts indicate to the gods to other people that the king is protected. Once the external marks of protection are complete, the king ingests food consecrated with the mantra. This brings the mantra into his body.

Enemies⁶¹⁶ [i.e., harmful spirits] do [the king] no harm [when the *mantrin*] gives him a flower or betel-leaf that is consecrated by the mantra. The *mantravid*⁶¹⁷ should consecrate [the king's] food with this mantra. Eating [the food while imagining himself situated] in the middle of two moons,⁶¹⁸ he

⁶¹⁵ *mātrdoṣa* here refers to the polluting attacks of female spirits called *mātr̥s*. At NT 19.98-99 the mothers appear in a list of dangers that includes the demons *yakṣas*, *rakṣasas*, *piśācas*, as well as bad dreams and terror that causes suffering.

nitye naimittike kām̐ye śāntyarthaṃ kārāyet sadā |
mukhe prakṣālite nityaṃ tilakaḥ śvetabhasmanā | | 88 | |
saptābhimantritaḥ kāryo mātr̥doṣanivṛttaye |

⁶¹⁶ I have translated *hiṃsaka* here as enemies but, as White, 2012, p. 4, points out that in an earlier section of this same chapter of the *Netra Tantra*, *hiṃsaka* can be read as, "a Brāhman skilled in the magical texts of the Atharva-veda": in other words, a black magician or sorcerer." I have used the more generic term "enemy" to denote a person or spirit. Sanderson, 2004, p. 247 translates this loosely as spirits.

⁶¹⁷ The text uses the term *mantravid*, a knower of mantra. I retain this term in the translation but use *mantrin* as I have in the remainder of this work for the sake of consistency, as it refers to the same guru.

⁶¹⁸ In its dual form *pārśvayoḥ* can be taken to mean heaven and earth. Sanderson, 2004 p. 248, gives the variant reading from the NGMPP NAK MS 1-285, as *candrayor madhye*, in the middle of two moons. Kṣemarāja's commentary also references the two moons, *candradvayamadhyasthitam*.

consumes the nectar (*amṛta*). The king stays on earth, liberated from all disease. (NT 19.89cd-91)⁶¹⁹

The *mantrin* then proceeds to perform rituals to protect the king. The *mantrin* does not engage directly with the king, but instead venerates a water pot in the king's place. The use of a surrogate⁶²⁰ is not unique to Tantric practice.⁶²¹ The water pot is a common symbol of purity and here represents the purified king. The *mantrin* demonstrates his commitment to the king and his kingdom as a whole through rites that protect objects such as animals and weapons.

When [the king] is at play with horses and elephants or in contests with weapons, [the mantrin] should venerate the water pot in order to protect him. [The *mantrin*] should perform this auspicious protection, which offers all benefits, whether [the king] is at play or for victory [in battle] in order to protect him from [the] many enemies that wish to destroy the king. (NT 19.92-94ab)⁶²²

The deity protects the sleeping king in the same way that the king protects his subjects, especially the sleeping troops in danger of attack, disease, and famine.⁶²³

⁶¹⁹ *samālabhanapuṣpaṃ vā tāmbūlenābhimantritam* || 89 ||
dīyate yasya tasyaiva na hiṃsantīha hiṃsakāḥ |
bhojanaṃ cābhimantreta mantreṇānena mantravit || 90 ||
ubhayoḥ pārśvayor madhye bhuiñjāno 'mṛtam aśnute |
sarvavyādhivirmuktas tiṣṭhate nṛpatīḥ kṣitau || 91 ||

⁶²⁰ AŚ 5:3 describes the compensation given to people performing various official duties. These include bureaucrats, soldiers, performers, and *mantrins*. AŚ 5:3.20 says, "In sacrifices such as the royal consecration, the 'king' should receive double the wage given to those of equal learning." (Trsl. Olivelle) According to Olivelle, this "king" is a guru who plays the role of the king during the ceremony.

⁶²¹ For example the *Dharmasūtras* describe this practice at DSĀ 2:3.22; DSB 6.1–7.10.

⁶²² *atha krīḍanakāleṣu gajāśvasahitasya ca* |
astrakrīḍāsu sarvāsu rakṣārthaṃ kalaśaṃ yajet || 92 ||
krīḍārthaṃ vijayārthaṃ ca rakṣārthaṃ hiṃsakādiṣu |
yasmād duṣṭāś ca bahavo jighāṃsanti nṛpādikam || 93 ||
tasmād rakṣā prakartavyā sarvaśreyaskarī śubhā |

⁶²³ AŚ 10:2.17 describes the vulnerabilities of infantrymen, themselves both symbolic and actual protectors of the kingdom.

Sleep can also protect from evil despite that it also brings about risks.⁶²⁴ In the *Netra Tantra*, the *mantrin* honors Mṛtyujit with pure substances that keep the king safe. He protects the king both in the waking world before sleep and in his dreams, where the king is exposed to various dangers.⁶²⁵

Then [the *mantrin*] should venerate the water pot in order to protect the sleeping king. [The water pot is] made of silver and contains herbs, smeared with sandalwood and aloewood, filled with milk and water. He should worship Mṛtyujit with an all-white offering, with rice boiled in milk, guest water, incense, and flowers. Great sleep (Mahānidrā), who bewilders the world, is there. For the king's well-being at night and for his digestion when he eats, etc., this worship should continue [throughout the night] by the order of the God of Gods. Then [the king] should sleep the entire night. He should remain at ease, free of the dangers of *yakṣas*, *rakṣas*, *pisācas*, fear of disrupted sleep — which bring about *mātr̥s* — and trembling from those afflictions. (NT 19.94cd-99ab)⁶²⁶

Once the king is asleep, the *mantrin* turns his attention to the world protectors (Lokapālas).⁶²⁷ These deities offer special protection to both the king and *mantrin*.

⁶²⁴ Angela Sumegi, 2008, *Dreamworlds of Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism: The Third Place*, Albany: SUNY Press, p. 40-48.

⁶²⁵ AŚ 14:3 focuses on esoteric practices, many of which cause the target to fall asleep where he is vulnerable.

⁶²⁶ *tataḥ suptasya nṛpate rakṣārthaṃ kalaśaṃ yajet || 94 ||*
raupyam cauśadhisamyuktaṃ candanāgurulepitam |
kṣīreṇa cāmbhasā pūrṇaṃ yajenmṛtyujitaṃ param || 95 ||
sarvaśvetopacāreṇa puṣpadhūpārghapāyasaiḥ |
agre sthitā mahānidrā jagatsaṃmohakāriṇī || 96 ||
sukhārthaṃ nṛpate rātrau jīrṇārthaṃ bhojanādike |
ārabdhā devadevena ājñāṃ dattveti bhāvayet || 97 ||
tato rātriṃ samagrāṃ tu tiṣṭhed vai nidrayā saha |
yakṣarakṣahpiśācādyair duḥsvapnair mātr̥ sambhavaṃ || 98 ||

bhayaḥ santrāsa duḥkhais tu muktas tiṣṭhed yathāsukham |
 The KSTS NT for *bhayaḥ santrāsa* reads *bhayaḥ santrāsa*, likely a typo.

⁶²⁷ In Buddhist imagery the Lokapālas sometimes trample demons, making them excellent protectors here. Robert Linrothe, 1999, *Ruthless Compassion: Wrathful Deities in Early Indo-Tibetan Esoteric Buddhist Art*, Boston: Shambhala Press, p. 21.

Through his performance of the rites, the *mantrin* receives the same benefits of protections as the king. This keeps the *mantrin* pure and allows him to continue his rites. He must be pure to perform the rituals. Impurity would put the sleeping monarch at risk.

Once [he has] venerated the water pot, [the *mantrin*] should worship the Lokapālas and their weapons with flowers, guest water, and [other ritual] offerings before the king. [The king] whose learned teachers constantly [perform these acts], [he] obtains what was said before [i.e. protection].⁶²⁸ (NT 19.99cd-101ab)⁶²⁹

The *mantrin* perpetually exists in a ritual state. He always acts to maintain an active protective sphere. The singular focus of his ritual sets the *mantrin* apart from other Tantric practitioners. Such prophylaxis fends off distant and even imagined dangers. Even when rituals call for the king's subjects to worship other deities, his *mantrin* continues to worship Mṛtuyit.⁶³⁰ This allows him to continue his rites aimed at royal protection.

Thus says Lord Siva,
The *mantrin* should worship Amṛteśa on all special occasions [and] on special dates in the form of *Kāma* [i.e., any deity that one wishes or is called for by a particular festival]. [He] shall always attain what he desires. He

⁶²⁸ The benefits of the ritual.

⁶²⁹ *lokapāleṣu sāstreṣu rakṣārthaṃ nṛpasamnidhau || 99 ||*
pūjanaṃ cārghapuspādyaḥ kalaśe pūjite sati |
yasyaivaṃ satataṃ kuryāj jñānavān daiśikottamaḥ || 100 ||
pūrvoktaṃ samavāpnoti...

⁶³⁰ In this case, Mṛtuyit is a form of Amṛteśa, who acts as a sort of personal deity for the king as worshipped by the *mantrin* on the king's behalf. See Sanderson, 2004, p. 253.

should worship [Amṛteśa] in the form of Indra⁶³¹ in order to achieve the protection of the population, to assure [an abundance of] grains of rice,⁶³² for the sake of protection in respect to wives and offspring, for the prosperity of his kingdom and for royal victory. [The *mantrin*] should worship [Amṛteśa] to benefit brahmins, cows, his own protection, and [the king's] own people, offering abundant oblations at home⁶³³ on the ninth day [of the light half of the month] *Mahānavamī*.⁶³⁴ As said before, [this brings] long life, freedom from disease, and perfect health. (NT 19.101cd-105ab)⁶³⁵

The *Mahānavamī* celebrations give the king an opportunity to display his authority.⁶³⁶ Descriptions of the ritual at Vijayanagara, near modern day Hampi, from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries record that lesser kings within the

⁶³¹ Sanderson, 2004, p. 251 gives this festival as occurring on "the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the month Bhādrapada (July / August)." Most sources list Śrāvaṇa as July-August and Bhādrapada as August-September. See Morgan, 1987, p. 96; Bühnemann, 1988, p. 124; and Lochtefeld, 2002, p. 93. Sanderson, 2004, p. 251-252, references the Viṣṇudharmottara, Khaṇḍa 2, chapter 155 and its description of a rite during Bhādrapada in which the king worships Indra. In this rite the king ceremonially enters the decorated city. He then fasts and holds a vigil with his chaplain, astrologer, and citizens. The *mantrin* performs a fire sacrifice. A ritual pole, which was erected and consecrated, is disposed of at the end of the rite.

⁶³² I.e. for the harvest.

⁶³³ I.e. the palace.

⁶³⁴ The celebration of *Mahānavamī* in medieval India has been most studied as it occurred in the southern capital of Vijayanagara, due to the abundance of epigraphs, travelogues, and descriptions in various literary sources.

⁶³⁵ *prāheti bhagavān chivaḥ |*
nimitteṣu ca sarveṣu amṛteśam yajeta ca || 101 ||
kāmarūpaṃ (em: kāmarūpe) sadā yasmāt sarvakāmān avāpnuyāt |
prajānāṃ rakṣaṇārthāya śālīnāṃ cāpi saṃpade || 102 ||
sutapatnīṣu rakṣārthamātmano rāṣṭravṛddhaye |
indrārūpaṃ yajet tatra vijayārtham nṛpasya ca || 103 ||
gobrāhmaṇeṣu rakṣārthamātmanaḥ svajaneṣu ca |
mahānavamyām pūjyeta bhūriyāgena veśmani || 104 ||
pūrvoktaṃ samavāpnoti āyurārogya-saṃpadam |

⁶³⁶ Hermann Kulke, 2010, "Ritual Sovereignty and Ritual Policy: Some Historiographic Reflections," in *Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual: State, Power, and Violence*, Ed Axel Michaels. Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, p. 612.

kingdom came to the capital to offer reverence to their royal overlord.⁶³⁷ In return, the reigning monarch pledged to protect the kingdom after the deities their approval for the king to continue with his reign.⁶³⁸ This royal ritual power reinforces the monarch's position in society. It demonstrates his wealth, royal fame, and identifies the king with the deity.⁶³⁹

Geertz' notion of the "theatre state" fails to capture the nuance and dynamics of Vijayanagara.⁶⁴⁰ The *nīrājana* and *Mahānavamī* celebrations allow the monarch to participate in a grand expression of moral and cosmic unity.⁶⁴¹ However, the rites are temporary and not the primary function of the state. In addition to public rites, the kings of Vijayanagara built numerous and monumental temples⁶⁴² and encouraged pilgrimage.⁶⁴³ For Geertz, court ceremonialism drives court politics and ritual does not reinforce the state, but is the state.⁶⁴⁴ But what about the Tantric practitioner who publicly participated in religious rites and celebrations?

For Geertz, the ritual life of court is paradigmatic of the social order.⁶⁴⁵ This means the religion of court must also be more than a mere reflection of society. As I demonstrated in Chapter One, creation is a spontaneous by-product of a deity's

⁶³⁷ See John M. Fritz and George Mitchell 1987, Fritz, John M. And Michell, George (1987) "Interpreting the Plan of a Medieval Hindu Capital, Vijayanagara." *World Archaeology*. Vol. 19. No. 1 (June); George Mitchell 1992, The Mahanavami Festival at Vijayanagara," *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 19. No. 3; George Mitchell 1993, "Reflections of Vijayanagara," *Journal of South Asian Studies* Vol. 16, sup. 1; and Carla M. Sinopoli and Kathleen D. Morrison 1995, "Dimensions of Imperial Control the Vijayanagara Capital." *American Anthropological Association*. Vol. 97, No. 1 (March).

⁶³⁸ See Fritz and Mitchell 1987; Mitchell 1992, 1993; and Sinopoli and Morrison 1995.

⁶³⁹ Kulke, 2010, p. 614.

⁶⁴⁰ Richard M. Eaton, 2005, *A New Cambridge History of India: A Social History of the Deccan, 1300-1761: Eight Indian Lives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 81.

⁶⁴¹ Geertz, 1980, p. 76.

⁶⁴² Eaton, 2005, p. 80.

⁶⁴³ Kulke, 2010, p. 615.

⁶⁴⁴ Geertz, 1980, p. 13.

⁶⁴⁵ Geertz, 1980, p. 13.

will. Appeasement rites, such as those that I describe in Chapter Three, gain the deity's attention so that his desire will be to fulfill the wishes of the *mantrin*. Rites, ritual objects, and holy places display the power of the divine in distinct forms.⁶⁴⁶ Further, the supernatural powers of these objects, the monarch, and the *mantrin* grow "out of imagining the truth, not out of believing, obeying, possessing, organizing, utilizing, or even understanding it."⁶⁴⁷ Clearly then, the Tantric practitioner's supernatural power, which relies on the emic. He believes in the power of the deity, obeys textual authority, possesses *siddhis*, organizes religious ceremony, utilizes his powers in those rites, and understands the technicalities of ritual elements. For the Tantric then, religion is not theatre that drives more religion but instead religion responds to and allows him to participate in the social order. The *mantrin* participates in ritual that drives society, not as an end itself.⁶⁴⁸ Further, religious sovereignty existed outside of jurisdictional apparatuses.⁶⁴⁹ With no centralized Tantric authority to uphold, teachers and exegetes were allowed to innovate, even when it came to their understanding of divine scripture.

This public demonstration of royal power and protection imparts victory on the king. This occurs when the *mantrin* honors the implements of battle. Mantric recitation infuses the weapons with magical powers (*siddhi*).⁶⁵⁰ It is important to note that though the *mantrin* performs the rituals on behalf of the king, it is the king himself, by the grace of Amṛteśa, who possesses the power.⁶⁵¹ The *mantrin* is the vehicle through which the deity transfers power onto the king.

⁶⁴⁶ Geertz, 1980, p. 106.

⁶⁴⁷ Geertz, 1980, p. 106.

⁶⁴⁸ Geertz, 1980, p. 13.

⁶⁴⁹ Kulke, 2010, p. 621.

⁶⁵⁰ NTU 19.105 *divyāny astrāṇi mantraprabhāvāt saṃpādayati*.

⁶⁵¹ Raj Balkaran, 2015, "Mother of Power, Mother of Kings: Reading Royal Ideology in the *Devī Māhātmya*, (Doctoral Dissertation. University of Calgary), p. 99-100.

The [*mantrin* takes] should take great pains to prepare the weapons for sacrifice [which brings about] *siddhis*. He obtains success with weapons [i.e., victory in battle]. He [who commissions the sacrifice] attains the fruit [of victory]. (NT 19.105cd-106ab)⁶⁵²

The text turns next to protection against internal woes. This mirrors the rites encountered earlier. The *mantrin* first marks the king externally before he entextualises him internally through the consumption of consecrated food. The *mantrin* divinizes the weapons in order to protect the kingdom from external threats of war. He then protects the kingdom from internal strife and calamity.

The [*mantrin*] is to perform the lustration (*nīrājana*) in order to secure prosperity of the king and in the kingdom when the king is touched by the power of death, when [the king], his sons, or his country are marked by signs of death, etc., when brahmins [and others] are [in danger] in all directions [i.e., in the capital and elsewhere], with the danger of loss of rice crops, grain, fruit, roots and water, and in times of famine, disease and great calamities.⁶⁵³ After sacrificing as before, the [*mantrin*] should perform the water pot consecration. (NT 19.106cd-109)⁶⁵⁴

Several texts prescribe the *nīrājana* rite as an antidote to both external threats as well as internal calamities.⁶⁵⁵ The *Arthaśāstra* says that the king, "should have the lustration rite performed on the ninth day of *Āśvayuja* (September-October), at the

⁶⁵² *astrayāgaḥ prakartaavyaḥ prayatnāt siddhihetave* || 105 ||
astrasiddhim avāpnoti prayoktā phalam aśnute

⁶⁵³ For example, natural disasters.

⁶⁵⁴ *yadā mr̥tyuvaśāghrātaḥ kālena kalito nṛpaḥ* || 106 ||
ariṣṭacihnitātmā vai deśo vā tatsutādayaḥ |
brāhmaṇādiṣu sarveṣu nāśe janapadasya ca || 107 ||
śālyādiṣu ca śasyeṣu phalamūlodakeṣu ca |
durbhikṣavyādihikāryeṣu utpāteṣu mahatsu ca || 108 ||
tadā nīrājanam kāryam rājño rāṣṭravivorddhaye |
pūrvavad yajanam kṛtvā kalaśenābhiṣecayet || 109 ||

⁶⁵⁵ Such as AŚ 2:30.51; BS chapter forty-three;

beginning or end of an expedition, or during a sickness."⁶⁵⁶ It also says, "in the case of disease or epidemic affecting farm animals, [the king] should have lustration rites of the stalls and equipment and the worship of their respective gods carried out."⁶⁵⁷ Royal astronomers and *mantrins* interpreted celestial, atmospheric, and terrestrial signs of danger. According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, the *nīrājana* should be performed at the sight of a double sun, a double moon, a red sun or a moon at sunrise or at sunset when there are no clouds, when it rains blood, marrow, bones, fat, or flesh, when fires flare up without fuel or fuel that does not catch fire, when forest animals enter a village and village animals enter a forest; water animals on land; when dogs take sticks, fire-brands, bones, or cattle horns to cremation grounds; or when cows smack servants and wives with their tails.⁶⁵⁸

The *Bṛhat Saṃhitā* offers a glimpse of the complexity of the *nīrājana* ritual in the sixth century C.E.⁶⁵⁹ Then it required the construction of a large wooden arch and ceremonial house, made of *sarja* (*Vatica Robusta*), *udumbara* (*Ficus Glomerata*), or *kakubha* (*Terminalia Arjuna*) wood. The *mantrin* covers the inside of the house with *kuśa* grass and decorates the door with fish and banners. He brings horses to the house, adorns them with sacred plants, and worships them. After eight days, the king has a hermitage built to the south of the house, also covered with *kuśa* grass. In the hermitage, the *mantrin* builds a fire into which he offers sacred food and twigs. The king, a horse-physician, and an astrologer sit facing east on a tiger skin while the chaplains read and interpret omens. Consecrated animals are led through the arch while the sound of musical instruments fills the air. Horses or

⁶⁵⁶ AŚ 2:30.51, Trsl. Olivelle.

⁶⁵⁷ AŚ 4:3.13-16, Trsl. Olivelle.

⁶⁵⁸ Inden, 1985, p. 32-33.

⁶⁵⁹ Ajay Mitra Shastri, 1969, *India as Seen in The saṃhitā of Varāhamihira*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 16

elephants, on their right legs or eating rice-balls consecrated with mantras, indicate victory. Fear or rejection of rice-balls signal defeat. At the end of the ceremony, a priest pierces the heart of a clay figure that represents an enemy in a mock military march.⁶⁶⁰

The *Netra Tantra* assumes the *mantrin* is already familiar with the *nīrājana*. Its description is simpler than those cited above but does have its own distinctive elements. For example, in the *Netra Tantra*, the *mantrin* sacrifices a goat. This is unique feature of the *Netra Tantra*. Like the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, it singles out white mustard as an important ritual element. The names the text gives different names for white mustard. These names, *siddhārtha*, *rakṣoghna*, contain double meanings that relate to the desired outcome. For example, white mustard, *siddhārtha*, plays on the compound *siddha + artha*, meaning the accomplishment of an objective or the achievement of magical power. Thus, the *mantrin* should use the name *siddhārtha* when he seeks accomplishment.

[The *mantrin*] who is free from doubt should consecrate [the king] in a solitary place at night and on a day of auspicious protection. With auspicious cries like "victory!" and the sounds of the auspicious Veda, he should consecrate [the king] with water and make oblations of white mustard seeds [while he] proclaims the name [of the king]. When [he has] perfected [the king] through the *nīrājana* rite, O beloved, the *mantrin*, in order to protect and with an eager mind focused on the fire, anoints many [male] goats to satisfy the spirit community [such as the *mātr̥s*, *yoginīs*, and deities]. Once he knows the auspicious words and day, then he goes forth in

⁶⁶⁰ For a more complete description of this ritual see Shastri, 1969, p. 181-182.

three directions [north, northeast, and west], conferring *siddhi* to all. (NT 19.110-113)⁶⁶¹

The king's consecration occurs at night and in a solitary place. The *Brhatsaṃhitā* prescribes that the *mantrin* build an arch and hermitage to the northeast of the city. Though it does not indicate how far from the city, this emphasizes the solitary aspect of the rites. The king arrives at the sanctum where the *mantrin* interprets omens. The *mantrin* then continues the ritual on the king's behalf. After the conclusion of the rites, the *mantrin* then proceeds to a more public place. The *Netra Tantra* contains a similar description, in which the *mantrin* moves the rite into a house (*grhe*). Kṣemarāja assumes this to be the royal palace (*rājño grhe*). Sanderson believes that *grhe* refers here to the *śāntigrha*. This is a temple for *śānti* rites that is often located in the northeast quarter of the palace or the residence of the Śaiva guru.⁶⁶²

Then [the *mantrin*] should carry out the sacrifice — [which] confers *siddhi* — within the palace [*grha*] using the method described earlier with abundant oblation, for as long as seven days, O Devi. [The king] then acquires great royal fortune [and an] unconquerable kingdom, as [he] desires. And the king will obtain the *siddhis* of the earth and sky. Then, the [*mantrin* who performs]

⁶⁶¹ *nīḥsaṃko nirjane rātrau śubharakṣe ca tathāṃśake |*
jayapuṇyāhaśabdaiś ca vedamaṅgalaniḥsvanaiḥ || 110 ||
abhiśiñcet tu rājānaṃ siddhārthān juhuyād bahūn |
nīrājanavidhānena nāmāṅke saṃskṛte priye || 111 ||
vahnau saṃruddhamanasā ajāṃś ca prokṣayed bahūn |
trptyartham bhūtasāṅghasya mantri rakṣārtham udyataḥ || 112 ||
śākunoktyāṃśagatyā vā vijñāya śakunaṃ hitam |
yakṣendraśivavāruṇyā niryātaḥ sarvasiddhidah || 113 ||

⁶⁶² Sanderson, 2004, p. 261n79.

the *nīrājana* achieves [for himself] all the very best things, [and] destroys the aforementioned faults. O Devi, this is certain to take place. (NT 19.114-116)⁶⁶³

Finally, the ritual moves beyond the palace into the kingdom. In the *Netra Tantra*, the king's weapons and soldiers are not consecrated, only the king and his animals.⁶⁶⁴ The solitary place (*nirjana*) is secret.⁶⁶⁵ The ritual itself is secret and calls for a separate *nīrājana*. The secondary rite enables the king to participate publicly in the ritual and allows for a concurrent Tantric version to take place. In the *Netra Tantra*, the *mantrin* focuses on Amṛteśa; the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* places the Sun, Varuṇa, the Viśvedevas, Prajāpati, and Indra, which surround Viṣṇu, in the center.⁶⁶⁶

The *mantrin* then performs further rites outside of the secluded ritual space. He places mantras (*nyāsa*) on cows, horses, elephants, and goats. Using Amṛteśa's mantra, he consecrates these animals with red powder, mantra-infused water, and white mustard seeds. The protective *nyāsa* of the kingdom's animals gives them the same security as the king. Every symbol of royal authority calls for systematic protection to strengthen and maintain the king's position of power.

The *mantrin* should honor [Amṛteśa] in the middle of the cows, from this the herd should increase. He applies vermilion (*sindūra*) or red chalk (*gairika*) infused with the mantra to the tips of the horns of the cow for [their] protection. He should perform the same rite to protect the horses. After he infuses the water jug with the mantra, he should pour it over their heads. White mustard seed (*siddhārtha*), empowered with the mantra [placed] on

⁶⁶³ *atha pūrvoktavidhinā gr̥he yāgaṃ tu kārayet |*
yāvot saptāhnikam̐ devi bhūrihomena siddhidam̐ || 114 ||
asyācalā mahālakṣmī rājyaṃ vā yadabhīpsitam |
bhaumāntarikṣa-siddhīs ca prāpnuyān nṛpatiḥ sukhī || 115 ||
tadā nīrājanam̐ khyātam̐ sarvaśreyaskaram̐ param |
pūrvoktān nāśayed doṣān devi nāstyatra saṃśayaḥ || 116 ||

⁶⁶⁴ Sanderson, 2004, p. 261.

⁶⁶⁵ NT 19.110 *nirjana iti guptasthāne*.

⁶⁶⁶ Shastri, 1969, p. 181.

the throat or head protects the elephants, [so that they] are liberated from all disease. In this way, he should conduct [rites of] protection for all goats and cows, etc. (NT 19.117-120)⁶⁶⁷

Once the *mantrin* has protected the material symbols of royal power, he guards the kingdom against environmental calamities. Earthquakes, famine, and storms can all lead to the downfall of a ruler. The king cannot control natural events yet they are a threat to his continued rule.⁶⁶⁸ In order to prevent natural disasters, the king needs to form allegiances with the deities.

[The *mantrin*] should [perform] rites and recitations to avert evil and famine, in times of great dangers, [such as] destructive earthquakes, meteors, massive rainfall and drought as well as threats of mice and other pests. He should conduct the ritual when flowers, etc., grow out of season, [when images of gods] are lost or break. [He performs the ritual when people are afflicted by] skin diseases, etc., fevers, untimely death or various sorts of pain, past faults or seizing spirits (*grahadoṣa*). Diseases from snake poison, etc., insect bites, etc., rheumatism, change in form, phlegm, hemorrhoids, eye diseases, skin diseases (*visarpaka*), etc., internal disease, and sickness caused by wounds, etc., by the thousands [can occur] if various sorts of evils touch the *maṇḍala*, a defect arises from offense [occurs]. When the deities curse brahmins, men, etc., interior diseases, anguish, and destructive

⁶⁶⁷ *goṣu madhye yajed yasmāt sadā vardheta gokulam |*
sindūraṃ gairikaṃ vāpi abhimantryaiṅva mantravit || 117 ||
yojayed goṣu rakṣārthaṃ śṛṅgordhve sarvadoṣajit |
aśvānām api rakṣārthaṃ pūrvoktavidhinā yajet || 118 ||
abhimantryaiṅva kalaśaṃ mūrdhni teṣāṃ prapātayet |
siddhārtho mantrajaptas tu kaṇṭhe kāryo 'tha mūrdhani || 119 ||
sarvadoṣavinirmuktān gajāṃś caiva tu rakṣati |
ajādiṣu paśuṣv evaṃ rakṣāṃ sarveṣu kārayet || 120 ||
sarvaprāṇiṣu rakṣārthaṃ yoktavyo nṛpateḥ sadā |

⁶⁶⁸ This may be best articulated by the Chinese in the idea of the Mandate of Heaven, in which the Gods judge the monarch's right to rule. If the Gods deem the king is just and virtuous, they allow him to continue his rule. If the Gods become displeased they indicate that disapproval through the infliction of environmental and economic calamities.

thoughts⁶⁶⁹ [occur], then, [the *mantrin* should] conduct the previous rite, for appeasement (*śānti*). (NT 19.121-128)⁶⁷⁰

The *Rājataranṅiṇī* offers several examples of the sort of disasters described here. Kalhaṇa does not set out specific *nīrājana* rites but does place blame on monarchs for natural disasters. For example, during the reign of Sussala, Kalhaṇa says that relief from disaster did not even occur in dreams.⁶⁷¹ Kalhaṇa describes Sussala as a great warrior but whom the goddess of victory, *Jayaśrī*, abandoned when his troops were attacked by an enemy army.⁶⁷² During Sussala's second reign, in 1123, an earthquake struck Srinagar.⁶⁷³ Sussala was not popular at the time and engaged in constant battle with his adversaries. Kalhaṇa says fire brought fear every day, brave soldiers died, and many other disasters overtook the kingdom. The fierce sun scorched the earth, repeated earthquakes destroyed the cities, and violent storms destroyed trees and rocks. Wind brought dust and severe storms.⁶⁷⁴ He describes the fire storms that destroyed the city: The *Vitastā*⁶⁷⁵ river was "lined

⁶⁶⁹ I.e., insanity.

⁶⁷⁰ *mahāśāntir bhavet teṣāṃ durbhikṣaṃ naśyati kṣaṇāt* || 121 ||
mahābhayeṣu sarveṣu bhūkampoḥkānīpātane |
atīvr̥ṣṭāu anāvr̥ṣṭau mūṣakādibhayeṣu ca || 122 ||
akālotpannapuṣpādau devair naṣṭaiś ca khaṇḍitaiḥ |
jvaralūtādidoṣaiś ca apamṛtyubhir eva ca || 123 ||
duḥkhair nānāvīdhaiś caiva āghrātaṃ maṇḍalaṃ yadi |
karmadoṣāś ca ye kecid graha-doṣāś tathā gatāḥ || 124 ||
tirobhāvas tathotpanno mantracchidraṃ tathāgatam |
nāgādiviṣadoṣāś ca kīṭavisphoṭakādayaḥ || 125 ||
vātapittavikārāś ca śleṣmadoṣāś ca sarvataḥ |
arśāṃsi cakṣūrogaś ca tathā visarpakādayaḥ || 126 ||
vyādhyanāraṇi doṣāś ca kṣatajādyāḥ sahasraśaḥ |
ābhyantarā vyādhayaś ca śokādyāś cittanāśakāḥ || 127 ||
abhiśaptāś ca devādyair brahmaṇādyā yadā janāḥ |
tadā tu pūrvavadyāgaḥ kartavyaḥ śāntihetave || 128 |

⁶⁷¹ RT 8.498.

⁶⁷² RT 8.668-671.

⁶⁷³ Iyengar, Sharma, and Siddiqui, 1999, p. 187-188.

⁶⁷⁴ RT 8.116-1168.

⁶⁷⁵ Known today as the Jhelum River.

on both banks with houses in flames, [and] looked like the sword of Death wetted with blood on both edges."⁶⁷⁶ He writes that the devastation resembled the "dawn which brings the destruction of the world."⁶⁷⁷ Only one hundred men remained under Sussula's command, and continued to fight until the end.

Deceived by fate[,] the king bestowed upon his son merely the insignia of sovereignty, but did not hand over to him the government. As soon as the prince had been crowned, the blockade of the City, the drought, the plague, the robberies, and other troubles ceased And so the earth, too, bore rich produce, and in due course the scarcity ceased in the month of Śrāvans. [*sic*]. (RT 8.1234-1236)⁶⁷⁸

Kalhaṇa blames Sussula for these tragedies, though he does not identify religion or specific religious practices mandated during Sussula's reign.

In addition to *nīrājana*, the *mantrin* performs daily rituals to maintain the kingdom. His mere presence suffices to dispense evil. The daily fires provide the *mantrin* with a routine task that requires regular royal sponsorship.⁶⁷⁹

[The *mantrin*] performs daily fire rites for the prosperity of the kingdom of kings. The [king] enjoys the kingdom happily, there is no doubt. [His] enemies, etc., disappear, even through one *pūjā*. Overcome, they escape into to the ten directions like deer etc., from a lion. Poverty disappears from the [king's] family through the continual application of the rites. In whichever place and time the *mantravid* lives, none [of the following] will arise near him: plagues, diseases, *khārkhodas*, *grahas*, *śākinīs* of various sorts, *yakṣas*, *piśācas*, *rākṣasas*, seizers of children, *visphoṭas*, *vyantaras* or *asparas*. Any of the

⁶⁷⁶ RT 8.1175. Trsl. Stein, 1900, Vol.2 , p. 93.

⁶⁷⁷ RT 8.1181. Trsl. Stein, 1900, Vol. 2, p. 94.

⁶⁷⁸ Trsl. Stein, 1900, Vol. 2, p. 98.

⁶⁷⁹ Sanderson, 2004, p. 268.

poisons that exist, famine and eclipses, none will arise because of the *mantrin* being there. (NT 19.129-133)⁶⁸⁰

The *mantrin* protects the king and the kingdom through worship. His presence acts as a conduit that connects the monarch with the deity; this turns him into a talismanic figure. His presence suffices to dispel many of the dangers that threaten a king.

C. Private *Nīrājana*: NT 15.1-19a

In the previous section, I examined *nīrājana* rites that protect the king and his kingdom through the enactment of bodily ritual. I now turn to an earlier chapter in the *Netra Tantra* that explains how the *mantrin* deploys mantra and objects in *nīrājana*. The text constructs a symbolism for these objects and teaches the *mantrin* how best to apply the mantra. The symbolic association of white mustard with its various magical powers is particularly important. The text introduces several varieties of mustard seed⁶⁸¹ and utilizes *nirvacana* to link these names with

⁶⁸⁰ *pratyahaṃ havanaṃ kāryaṃ rājñāṃ rāṣṭravivorddhaye |
sukhena bhujyate rājyaṃ nātra kāryā vicāraṇā | | 129 | |
sakṛtpūjanamātreṇa naśyante himsakādayaḥ |
naṣṭā daśa dīśo yānti siṃhasyeva mṛgādayaḥ | | 130 | |
satatābhyāsayogena dāridryaṃ naśyati kulāt |
yasmin deśe ca kāle ca nivāsen mantravit sadā | | 131 | |
ītayo vyādhayaś caiva khārkhodāstasya vā grahāḥ |
śākinyo vividhā yakṣāḥ piśācā rākṣasās tathā | | 132 | |
bālagrahāś ca visphoṭā vyantarās cāparās ca ye |
sarvāṇi viśajātāni durbhikṣaṃ grahapīḍanam | | 133 | |
sarvaṃ na prabhavet tatra mantravitsaṃnidhānataḥ |*

⁶⁸¹ Mustard seeds appear in descriptions of Hindu ritual, but not with the same frequency as other elements, such as sesame seeds. The *Suśrutasaṃhita* gives various medicinal uses of mustard seed and the *Arthaśāstra* describes it as a very powerful element of esoteric practice. See *Nidānasthāna* 16.5-8, *Cikitsāsthāna* 5.12-14, 14.16, 16.22-23, 22.30, 32.8, 37.38, and 37.44; *AŚ* 14:1.33, 14:1.36, 14:2.4, 14:2.8-9.

their effects. Most rely on semantic word play and aim to construe the symbolic dialectic of the ritual and serve as mnemonic devices to assist in the performance.

I shall now explain how the lord of mantra [Amṛteśa] provides all protection, [how] the protector of mantra is strong and great, and how white mustard (*rakṣoghna*) [becomes more effective] when infused with perfume. (NT 15.1)⁶⁸²

Many Buddhist and Hindu rituals use mustard seed to cure illness and drive away demons. Mantras render the seeds powerful. The *mantrin* then burns, tosses, or places the seeds on the head of the afflicted in order to chase off spirits.⁶⁸³ To begin the rite, the *mantrin* infuses the mustard seed with the mantra. This simple action allows the *mantrin* to perform *nyāsa*, which protects the practitioner.

A person who receives the white mustard seed, [over which the *mantrin*] has recited the mantra seven times, and who always keeps it on his head, he is freed of all faults. (NT 15.2)⁶⁸⁴

The text then explains why the *mantrin* draws on white mustard through, what Yelle calls, "fictitious (alliterative) etymologies."⁶⁸⁵ Such etymologies, also

⁶⁸² *ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi sarvarakṣākaro yathā |*

mantranātho mahogṛaṃ ca dhūpaṃ rakṣoghnacoditam || 1 ||

If we read *rakṣoghna* in its alternate form the passage can be read, "and how perfume quickly drives back demons." *Rakṣogha* will be elaborated further in NT 15.5.

⁶⁸³ RT 3.338; Robert Beer, 2003, *Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols*, Chicago: Serindia Publications, Inc., p. 25; James Gentry, 2010, "Representations of Efficacy: The Ritual Expulsion of Mongol Armies in the Consolidation and Expansion of the Tsang (Gtsang) Dynasty," in *Tibetan Ritual*, ed José Ignacio Cabezón. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 136; Koichi Shinohara, 2014, *Spells, Images, and Mandalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 52.

⁶⁸⁴ *saptaṅvārābhijaptas tu rakṣoghno yasya dīyate |*

śiraḥsthaṃ dhārayen nityaṃ sarvadoṣaiḥ sa mucyate || 2 ||

⁶⁸⁵ Yelle, 2003, p. 50. I follow Yelle's example and use fictitious etymologies rather than the more common false etymology as the latter does not capture the intentionality of the former. See also Paolo Visigalli, 2015, "The Buddha's Wordplays: The Rhetorical Function and Efficacy of Puns and Etymologizing in the Pali Canon," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, for an examination of the rhetorical function of such etymological analysis in the Buddhist Pali Canon.

known as *nirvacanas*, are quite common throughout Sanskrit literature.⁶⁸⁶ Texts do not deploy them because their writers possess a poor command of Sanskrit. They serve to explain language and add depth and additional meaning to words used within the text.⁶⁸⁷ Authors offer new ways to understand the words and their relationship to ritual objects through the invention of etymologies. While inaccurate from a historical linguistic point of view, they establish secondary associations between words and object. Such *nirvacanas* do not demonstrate misunderstanding or crude interpretation of language but signal a highly developed appreciation for language through plays on nuance and meaning.⁶⁸⁸ They reduce the appearance of arbitrariness by naturalizing the way one speaks of events.⁶⁸⁹ In other words, *nirvacanas* do not undermine the historical etymologies of words, instead they deepen the symbolic associations of words, and turn them into rhetorical devices that amplify their religious and philosophical meaning.

[The *mantrin*] says the [Amṛteśa] mantra and performs exorcism to destroy all demons and also all [those] full of all envy. It protects, therefore he calls [white mustard] *sarṣapa*. It protects from all sides. (NT 15.3-4ab)⁶⁹⁰

The remaining etymologies use metonymy⁶⁹¹ to create links between the meanings of words and ritual function that serve to explain the natural attributes of the mustard seed

⁶⁸⁶ Kahrs, 1999, p. 96.

⁶⁸⁷ Kahrs, 1999, xiv.

⁶⁸⁸ See Kahrs, 1999, p. 61-63.

⁶⁸⁹ Yelle, 2013, p. 45.

⁶⁹⁰ *sarvadaityakṣayārthaṃ tu maduktenaiva brahmaṇā |
serṣyāṇāṃ caiva sarveṣāṃ abhicāro yataḥ kṛtaḥ || 3 ||
tadāsau sarṣapaḥ proktaḥ pāti rakṣati sarvataḥ |*

⁶⁹¹ In which the name of a thing is substituted with an attribute or adjunct of that thing.

Since all *rakṣasas* run away and are killed, then O Devi, I call [white mustard seeds] *rakṣoghna*. They spread on Earth and in all battles between demons and the chiefs of gods. [Mustard seeds] are employed as killers of villains in order to accomplish (*siddhi*) the destruction of enemies. Since their purpose is accomplished then they are called white mustard (*siddhārthaka*) on Earth. They take away pride in evil-minded spirits. (NT 15.4cd-7ab)⁶⁹²

The passage introduces two compounds: *rakṣoghna* and *siddhārthaka*. When dissolved they mean "destroying of demons," *rakṣas* (demon) + *ghna* (destroying), and "whose purpose is perfection," *siddha* (perfection) + *arthaka* (*artha* [purpose] + *-ka* [an ending that denotes a doer, that which does]). These words, of course, also mean "white mustard." The etymology developed in the *Netra Tantra* gives white mustard as the primary meaning. It serves as an etymological explanation that describes the function of the mustard. The name given to the ritual object within the ceremony is important precisely because it denotes function. These are common names for white mustard, but the secondary, functional, meanings given here require the reader to understand the grammatical and semantic analysis. Such *nirvacanas* also highlight the power of naming as ritual action.

The *mantrin* who is present to achieve protection, should offer the mark of the name (*nāmāṅka*)⁶⁹³ to Agni in the fire. [He does this] through the performance of a *nīrājana* rite with a mind that is enraged, at a time when all

⁶⁹² *yadā rakṣāṃsi sarvāṇi vidrutāni hatāni ca || 4 ||*
tadā devī mayā proktā rakṣoghnaḥ prathitā bhūvi |
āhaveṣu ca sarveṣu daityaiḥ saha surottamaiḥ || 5 ||
nīyuktā duṣṭahantāraḥ siddhyartham ripunāśane |
teṣāṃ artho yadā siddhas tena siddhārthakā bhūvi || 6 ||
khyātā darpaharā devī bhūtānāṃ duṣṭacetasām |

⁶⁹³ It is not clear exactly how the naming is offered

beings everywhere [live in] fear and tremble. It is called *nīrājana* because it causes all good fortune. (NT 15.7cd-9ab)⁶⁹⁴

The noun *nīrājana* stems from the verb stem *nī-rāj* (*nis* + *√rāj* [to cause to illuminate, to shine upon], where *√rāj* also means to rule or to shine). Thus, the *nīrājana* illuminates like fire. It drives back evil, which causes radiance or good fortune.

The text continues to describe *nirvacanas*, its focus here turns to the colors white, red, yellow, and black.

[When the *mantrin*] confers benefits [during] different ages (*yugas*), [mustard seeds] appear in [different colors], bright white, etc.⁶⁹⁵ When white they are called all-bestowing (*sarvaprada*), when red they are granting the kingdom (*rājyapradāyaka*). When they are yellow they are [said to] cause protection (*rakṣākara*), and when black they cause the destruction of the enemy (*śatruvināśakṛt*). In the four *yugas*, [mustard seeds] always are bi-colored, yellow and black. That which is known as *rājasarṣapagaura*, O Beloved, this [other] bi-colored [seed] is not visible (NT 15.9cd-11).⁶⁹⁶

The names of the colors of mustard seeds derive from the outcome associated with their ritual use. The *mantrin* must use each color only for the symbolic purpose its name indicates. Such linguistic associations allow the different seeds to become the means to achieve what their names imply. Here a semiotic shift occurs. The signifier changes based on its signified The mustard seeds themselves (the sign) remain unchanged on the surface level, but achieve a new signification.

⁶⁹⁴ *yadā sarveṣu bhūteṣu bhayatrasteṣu sarvataḥ* || 7 ||
nīrājanavidhānena nāmāṅkaṃ juhuyāt priye |
vahnau saṅkrudhamanasā mantrī rakṣārtham udyataḥ || 8 ||
tadā nīrājanaṃ khyātaṃ sarvaśreyaskaraṃ param |

⁶⁹⁵ I.e. the four colors: white, yellow, red, and black.

⁶⁹⁶ *sitādir yugabhedena vartate 'nugrahe balī* || 9 ||
śuklaḥ sarvapradaḥ khyāto rakto rājyapradāyakaḥ |
pīto rakṣākaraḥ proktaḥ kṣṇaḥ śatruvināśakṛt || 10 |
caturyugeṣu sarvatra pītākṣṇau dvirūpakau |
rājasarṣapagaurākhyau dvirūpo 'ntarhitaḥ priye || 11 ||

After it reveals the symbolic attributes of the colors of the mustard seeds, the text describes the rituals that deploy them:

The *mantrin* should offer the oblation that grants all tranquility [with a] mixture of ghee, cow's milk, ground white sugar, and sesame seeds when one has come under the control of death [or has been] attacked by evil spirits. Indeed, he should offer the highest red mustard (*rājasarṣapa*) together with black sesame sprinkled with three kinds of oils.⁶⁹⁷ Instantly, [this] produces the fruit of universal tranquility. (NT 15.12-14ab)⁶⁹⁸

This ritual is a truncated version of the death aversion rite found in the sixth chapter of the *Netra Tantra*. I examine this rite in Chapter Three. The death aversion rite does not serve as an alternative to medical treatment but protects against decay and evil spirits. The *mantrin* seeks to free the afflicted from all disease. He rids the body of evil spirits to bring about peace.

Once the *mantrin* has prepared the offering, he hands it over to the beneficiary. The *mantrin* cannot perform the ritual on behalf of the king without the king's active involvement, even though that participation can take place through a paid proxy. Once the *mantrin* places the mantra into the hand of the beneficiary, the recipient achieves unrivaled prosperity.

If it is empowered by the [*mantrin*] and placed in his hand, that person shall attain unequalled prosperity (*saubhāgya*); there is no doubt. (NT 15.14cd-15ab)⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁷ *akta* means oil or ointment. Here it likely refers here to honey, ghee, and milk as these are the standard divine foods used in ritual alongside mustard seeds or rice, and sesame seeds.

⁶⁹⁸ *yadā mṛtyuvaśaṃ yātaḥ sarvabhūtair upadrutaḥ |
tadā tu ghr̥tasamyuktaṃ gokṣīrsitaśarkarā || 12 ||
tilair vimīśritaṃ kṛtvā juhuyāt sarvaśāntidam |
tilaiḥ kṛṣṇaiḥ samāyuktaṃ rājasarṣapam uttamam || 13 ||
tryaktaṃ vai juhuyāt sadyaḥ sarvaśāntiphalaḥ |*

⁶⁹⁹ *anenaivābhimantryaitad yasya haste pradīyate || 14 ||
saubhāgyam atulaṃ tasya jāyate nātra saṃśayaḥ |*

The *mantrin* protects against all things that might endanger a king's reign. The ritual offers specific benefits, such as safety for the kingdom's crops and livestock. It also bestows prosperity and freedom from faults (*doṣa*). *Saubhāgya* is here a vague sort of prosperity. It does not cover any one area of abundance but points to success, good luck, good fortune and happiness. *Doṣa* too, which I translate throughout this thesis as fault, encompasses different kinds of shortcomings that include, but are not limited to, vice, deficiency, disadvantage, and disease.

After [the *mantrin*] chants the mantra over [the mustard seed] seven times, he should drop it on the head of [the beneficiary], who then is released from all faults. (NT 15.15cd-16ab)⁷⁰⁰

The *mantrin* continues to infuse his surroundings with mantras. Verses 16 and 17 are incomplete, but indicate that cloth may be used as medicine to disable enemies.⁷⁰¹ The text speaks of the importance of both the *mantrin* and the ruler. The *mantrin* pledges himself to the king through the resolve to chant the mantra perpetually, even while asleep. This displays both respect and dedication to the ritual. His participation in the ritual is constant. Withdrawal would prove disastrous, it would bring the protective shield of the Tantric realm to an end.

⁷⁰⁰ *saptakṛtvo 'bhisammantrya mantreṇānena mantravit* || 15 ||

mūrdhni prapātayed yasya sarvadoṣaiḥ sa mucyate |

⁷⁰¹ *abhimantrya ...vāsāmsi cauṣadham* || 16 ||

samālabhena ... vābhimantritām |

dīyate yasya tasya ... hiṃsakaḥ || 17 ||

the commentary too, is incomplete and does not help fill in the gaps.

White, 2012, has claimed that these *hiṃsakas* can also be a brahmin practicing black magic. Certainly they should be included amongst the list of enemies, but there is no evidence in this particular chapter, that this specific type of enemy is being discussed rather than a more general one.

The *mantrin* should chant the mantra for the benefit of the consecrated person [the king], in all directions day and night, whether [the consecrated person is] awake or asleep. The [consecrated] man then stays on Earth, evil spirits cannot kill him. (NT 15.18-19ab)⁷⁰²

The *mantrin* seeks to maintain his ritual purity so that he can perform these rites for the monarch at all times. The king himself avoids impurity as long as he does not participate in such practices.⁷⁰³ This allows the *mantrin* to participate in transgressive rites without a king or his proxy. He prevents royal pollution through his ritual activities, even if performed on the king's behalf.

III. Conclusion

Chapter Two explores the different identities and roles of Tantric practitioners. First, I examine the ways in which the practitioner develops his Tantric identity. I argue that in doing so, he leaves his previous identity behind for good, even when he must adhere to social, caste rules. I then examine how the *Rājataranṅiṇī* helps us to contextualize the relationship between caste and purity during the medieval period in Kashmir. This leads to a discussion of purity within the Kashmir Śaiva system. Specifically, I focus on the inversion of the rules of purity for the Tantric initiate in preparation for his initiation. Here the symbols of purity and impurity appear in the initiate's dreams. They attest to his preparedness to enter into the Tantric clan where he may be exposed to transgressive rituals. I then analyze the text and commentary of the *Netra Tantra*'s

⁷⁰² *digvidikṣu japed yasya rakṣārtham prayatātmanah |
divā vā yadi vā rātrau svapato jāgrato 'pi vā || 18 ||
avadhyaḥ sarvabhūtais ca bhuvī tiṣṭhaty asau narah |*

⁷⁰³ Törzsök, 2012, p. 217, 221.

chapter that explains *dīkṣā*. Here, the text describes the metaphysical changes that the initiate experiences during the initiatory process. In these rites, the disciple transforms from an individual bonded to the world to a bodiless purified force that rests permanently in one of the highest *tattvas* and awaiting salvation at the time of death.

Once the disciple becomes a full member of his Tantric community, he benefits from the shared secrecy that accompanies membership in this group. This includes participation in transgressive behaviors that would have entailed impurity prior to his purificatory initiation.

I then briefly examine the relationship between both *mantrins* and kings and the writers on whom we rely for historical information about society. This offers an indication as to the social hierarchy and functions of religion and religious expression in medieval Kashmir. Though we lack historical accounts and documents created during the medieval period, literature indicates that Tantric practice was not as secret as the scriptures prescribe themselves to be.

Finally, I examine two *nīrājana* rites described in the *Netra Tantra*. The first is a step-by-step description of the *nīrājana* ritual, which instructs the *mantrin* on procedure. In many ways, it resembles those found in other Indian manuals, save for the place and time at which the rite takes place. The *Netra Tantra* says that the ritual must be conducted in a secluded place at night, perhaps with a more "Tantric atmosphere." It wards off dangers to the king and his kingdom, including disease, natural disasters, demons, and enemy armies. Though the text sketches how the ritual is to be performed, it does not give much detail. Clearly, the *mantrin* must have learned precise instruction elsewhere. The text focuses on the outcomes of the ritual and describes the many dangers from which it can protect.

The second account charts the different etymological analyses of the mustard seeds deployed in the *nīrājana* rite. These help to develop the symbolism of the ritual substance and explain the inherent power of the seeds. This detail demonstrates the focus of the ritual: it calibrates the names of the individual objects to match their outcome.

These discussions allow me to explore the symbolic re-categorization of the ordinary world in Tantric practice and to examine the impact these designations had in society. As the academic debate about the origins of Tantric practice continues, I hope that my efforts help us understand the impact of Tantric of identity on members of the upper classes. This study is limited to early medieval Kashmir. I do not intend for these conclusions to define the Tantric and social spaces of other places and times. I examine a specific product of Tantric culture in order to understand how the *mantrin* and monarch interact.

How Tantric practitioners build their identities and interact with the world is difficult to ascertain from texts alone. This study focuses on initiation (*dīkṣā*) because it is the moment in which the initiand becomes a full-fledged Tantric practitioner. However, it does not explore how initiation comes about. Without hagiographies, diaries, or literary works that chart one's entry into the Tantric sect, scholars will likely never know the individual path to initiation. Therefore, I focus on the moment of change, when the uninitiated takes on this new identity.

Similarly, a lack of textual materials that examine the role of the Tantric in society means that an in-depth, historical study of the relationship between the *mantrin* and monarch is not possible. Törzsök⁷⁰⁴ and others have begun to

⁷⁰⁴ Törzsök, 2012.

reexamine the *Rājataranṅiṇī*⁷⁰⁵ and its place in the literary tradition of Kashmir. Törzsök's work exploring instances of Tantra in the text has been extremely helpful in my own work. I hope to continue with this type of examination of Kashmiri and Śaiva literature in the hope that a more full picture of the Tantric practitioner comes to light.

The discussion of *nīrājana* rites in the *Netra Tantra* enable us to understand how the ritual differs in this text and others. Comparison reveals similarities in form and content but also significant differences. The similarities attest to a conformity in social norms. Tantric practitioners develop their rituals to go beyond conventional ceremonies without excessive deviation. In this case, *mantrins* clearly receive royal patronage for their protective services. Some of the protective rites are done in secret. This is a departure from ordinary *nīrājana* rites and connects the *nīrājana* to Tantric practice.

An in-depth examination of the relationship between *mantrin* and king in the *Netra Tantra* would shed light on Tantric practice at the highest level of society. The *Netra Tantra* offers rich descriptions of initiation, consecration, and possession. It would also chart the way in which the *mantrin* fortifies the power of his king.

I believe that my focus on Tantric identities has helped to humanize the individual practitioner, whether that be the religious officiant, the initiand, or the monarch. Each of these roles plays a vital part in religious practice and each comes to Tantra with an already existent identity. This study has demonstrated that through initiation, the previously held identity vanishes, replaced with a new,

⁷⁰⁵ See *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 2013, Vol 50, issue 2 in which David Shulman, Whitney Cox, Yigal Bronner, Lawrence McCrea, Chitrlekha Zutshi, Luther Obrock, and Daud Ali question past approaches to studying the *Rājataranṅiṇī*. They look beyond the chronicle as history, and often argue that it is not, to question its composition as a complete work, philosophical viewpoint, and place in the literary tradition. Further, this issue examines subsequent Sanskrit *Rājataranṅiṇīs*, composed in Persianate courts.

Tantric self. However, the monarch must still rule, and I have juxtaposed discussion of *dīkṣā* with that of *nīrājana* specifically to demonstrate that old identities are hard to shed. A water pot acts as a proxy for the monarch, who cannot discard his social role. He also cannot reject his religious obligations, which I have demonstrated are intimately tied with his governmental power.

Chapter Three: Yoga

I. Conquering Death Through Ritual

A. Impurities, *Kāpālikas*, and Exorcism

Purity and impurity are key elements in Tantric ritual practice. Where the orthodox Brahmin performs the rituals in order to retain purity, the Tantric transgresses purity. The latter's participation in rituals that use substances deemed impure, such as meat, fish, human blood, or skulls, is an important characteristic of Tantric practice.⁷⁰⁶ Törzsök notes an important difference in the way Siddhānta and Bhairava Tantras understand pure and impure substances. On the one hand, the dual (*dvaitācāra*) practices of the Siddhānta see purity and impurity as a binary. Practitioners determine what is pure and impure based on canonical and cultural expectations. They then make use of practices and substances deemed pure and reject the impure.⁷⁰⁷ On the other hand, the Bhairava Tantras teach a non-dual (*advaitācāra*) practice. *Advaitācāra* rites involve the mixing of pure and impure substances.⁷⁰⁸ In the Bhairava Tantras, including the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras*, binaries such as pure/impure, auspicious/inauspicious, and worshipped/sacrificed do not exist. Instead, such categories commingle. This leads to the creation of a new class that transcends binary classification.

The use of impure substances appears in the fifth century *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, the earliest extant Śaiva Tantra.⁷⁰⁹ This demonstrates an early Tantric association

⁷⁰⁶ Törzsök, 2013, p. 195.

⁷⁰⁷ Törzsök, 2013, p. 196.

⁷⁰⁸ Törzsök, 2013, p. 196. Törzsök notes that Siddhānta Tantras do not completely reject the use of impure substances. The *Guhyasūtra* prescribes the use of impure materials when a practitioner performs rites to obtain supernatural powers.

⁷⁰⁹ Törzsök, 2014, p. 196. The impure substances described in the *Guhyasūtra* of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* include offering cow flesh, blood, skulls, and charnel ground ashes.

with impure substances and raises the as-yet unanswered question as to what or who inspired the use of polluting materials within the ritual context. Sanderson⁷¹⁰ and Wedemeyer⁷¹¹ concur that Tantric practice stemmed from the cemetery ground rites of *kāpālikas*. Lorenzen traces the *kāpālikas* appearance in the literary tradition to the Prakrit poem, *Gāthāsaptasatī*. This text, traditionally ascribed to the first century, likely dates to the third to fifth century.⁷¹² In the *Gāthāsaptasatī*, a woman incessantly covers herself with ashes from her lover's funeral pyre.⁷¹³ The approximately fourth-century Buddhist *Lalitavistara*⁷¹⁴ contains "fools" who smear their bodies with ashes in search of purification. Though not called *kāpālikas*, they also wear red garments, have shaved heads, carry triple staffs, pots, skulls, and *khaṭvāṅgas*.⁷¹⁵ These objects call to mind the *kāpālikas*, ascetics who cover themselves in ashes, carry human skulls as begging bowls, and call forth fierce deities such as Bhairava. Wedemeyer argues that *kāpālika* practice developed from orthodox Brahminical ritual and not primitive society.⁷¹⁶ By the sixth and seventh centuries, literary references to *kāpālikas* become abundant.⁷¹⁷ During this same period, the *Niśvāsattvaśāṅkhitā* was disseminated and came into its final form

⁷¹⁰ Sanderson, 1985.

⁷¹¹ Wedemeyer, 2013.

⁷¹² Lorenzen, 1972, p. 13. Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi, 1947, "Date of the *Gāthāsaptasatī*." *Indian Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 23.

⁷¹³ Lorenzen, 1972, p. 13.

⁷¹⁴ Robert E. Buswell, 2004, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism: Volume One. A-L*, New York: Macmillan Reference, p. 450.

⁷¹⁵ Lorenzen, 1972, p. 14.

⁷¹⁶ Urban, 2010, p. 71, 194-201. Urban lays out the argument, which he traces to Benotosh Bhattacharyya, for Tantra's roots in a primitive, uncivilized, and barbaric state. In this view Tantra is seen as a religious disease that led to the destruction of Buddhism and the rise of Islam in India. As Wedemeyer notes, 2013, p. 24-25, early British anthropologists and modern academics such as Davidson and Samuel perpetuate a variation of this view when they label early Tantric practices as "tribal."

⁷¹⁷ Lorenzen, 1972, p. 14-24.

during the seventh century.⁷¹⁸ Wedemeyer contends that *kāpālīka* practice could not have existed without institutional support. This support that would have only been available to those of higher castes.⁷¹⁹ Further, Wedemeyer argues that *kāpālīka* activities also would have made little impression on high caste society if practiced by members of society's fringe or lower castes.⁷²⁰ This appears to be the case, as very little extant textual evidence that demonstrates a literary interest in the religious practices of low caste or tribal people.

Sanderson explains how Kaula secret societies split from *kāpālīka* cemetery groups. His study shows that Kaulas reduced *kāpālīka* ritual behaviors to their more erotic essentials.⁷²¹ This allowed the Kaulas to move almost entirely away from cremation ground activities. Kaulas turned to more internalized practices.⁷²² However, internalization still included orgiastic worship and casteless interactions.⁷²³ These practices penetrated court and intelligentsia circles. The satirist Kṣemendra judged them to be one of the most significant social evils of his time.⁷²⁴ The Kaula's apparent non-Vedic, heterodox rituals redefined impurity as the state of bondage and ignorance. Here, impurity and purity become illusory categories that bar the individual from the recognition of the divine.⁷²⁵ Rather the focus on the pure-impure dichotomy, the practitioner is to abolish all distinctions

⁷¹⁸ Goodall, 2015, p. 71.

⁷¹⁹ Wedemeyer, 2013, p. 194. See Chapter Three for a more detailed examination of the origins of Tantric practice.

⁷²⁰ Wedemeyer, 2013, p. 187.

⁷²¹ Sanderson, 1985, p. 203.

⁷²² Sanderson, 1985, p. 203.

⁷²³ Sanderson, 1985, p. 203.

⁷²⁴ Sanderson, 1985, p. 203.

⁷²⁵ Sanderson, 1985, p. 198-199, 203.

between the two.⁷²⁶ Flood explains the connection between the monarchy and the *kāpālīka*-like practices.

Although the [*Netra Tantra*] has connections with royalty, it also bears witness to popular possession and exorcism rites which were probably pervasive among lower social levels. Indeed, one of the main tasks of the orthopraxy of Brāhmaṇ was to prevent possession. These 'demons' (*bhūta*) and powerful female deities or 'mothers' (*mātrī*) enter through the 'hole' (*chidra*) of the shad of impure men and women whose behavior is bad (*durācāra*) and who have neglected their ritual obligations, so causing the evil eye (*ḍṛṣṭipāta*) to fall upon them.⁷²⁷

Flood argues that possession practices were the dominion of those at the lower end of the social scale. But this statement ignores the scriptural tradition of the Bhūta Tantras, which focuses on exorcism.⁷²⁸ Sanderson has compiled two lists of the canonical Bhūta Tantras, one taken from the *Śrīkaṇṭhīya* and the other from a text prefixed to the *Jñānapañcāśikā*.⁷²⁹ Unfortunately, few manuscripts of complete Bhūta texts survive.⁷³⁰ The *Netra Tantra*, is one of the few texts that survives to serve as an example of the exorcistic and apotropaic rites of the Bhūta Tantras.⁷³¹ Despite the loss of the Bhūta Tantra, they were at one time important enough to be classified

⁷²⁶ As Törzsök, 2014, p. 221, notes, early Bhairava Tantras struggle with this nonexistence of differentiation as non-dual practice ultimately implies the absence of purity and purification. Only anti-ritual texts can logically remove purification altogether without undermining the need for ritual in the first place. The *Kulasāra* takes the position that all differentiation is delusion and initiation a completely mental practice in which one recognizes the nondifferentiation of pure and impure.

⁷²⁷ Flood, 2003, p. 215.

⁷²⁸ Slouber, 2017, p. 40.

⁷²⁹ Sanderson, 2001, p. 14.

⁷³⁰ Sanderson, 2001, p. 14.

⁷³¹ Hatley, 2007, p. 144.

among the five major categories of Tantric Śaiva literature.⁷³² Sanderson traces the Gāruḍa and Bhūta Tantras as they become excluded in textual classification systems.⁷³³ The eighth century⁷³⁴ *Brahmayāmala Tantra* is an early example of a text that reduces the importance of the Gāruḍa and Bhūta categories.⁷³⁵ This indicates that the Bhūta Tantras became theologically less important over time. Flood's association of exorcism with lower society is not supported by literary evidence.⁷³⁶ Though pushed to the margins, the Bhūta Tantras were not dismissed completely. Kṣemarāja turns to the Bhūta *Kriyākālaguṇottara* in his commentary on the *Netra Tantra*.⁷³⁷ This demonstrates that, though marginalized, the Bhūta Tantras remained an important resource for exegetes.

⁷³² The other four are the Siddhānta Tantras, Bhairava Tantras, Vāma Tantras, and Gāruḍa Tantras. Hatley, 2007, p. 144. Each class of literature stems from one of the Sadāśiva's five mouths. The Siddhānta Tantras from the upper Īśāna face; the Vāma Tantras from the Northern face, the Bhairava Tantras from the Southern face, the Gāruḍa Tantras from the Eastern face, and the Bhūta Tantras from the Western face. Sanderson, 2014, p. 20. Hatley, 2007, p. 144. Each class of literature stems from one of the Sadāśiva's five mouths. The Siddhānta Tantras from the upper Īśāna face; the Vāma Tantras from the Northern face, the Bhairava Tantras from the Southern face, the Gāruḍa Tantras from the Eastern face, and the Bhūta Tantras from the Western face. Alexis Sanderson, 2014, "Śaiva Texts," in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Eds. J. Bronkhorst and A. Malinar. Leiden: Brill, p. 20.

⁷³³ Sanderson, 2014, p. 19-20.

⁷³⁴ Gray, 2007, p. 14.

⁷³⁵ Sanderson, 2014, p. 20.

⁷³⁶ For example, in addition to the Bhūta Tantras, exorcism appears in Vedic, Upaniṣadic, Epic, and Purāṇic literature. Frederick M. Smith, 2006, *The Self Possessed Deity*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 177-195 examines the root to enter (*āvis*) and its derivative forms, which "occurs almost entirely in the sense of entities of different densities or substantialities penetrating and pervading one another." Smith, 2006, p. 177. Smith argues that RV 10.30.5, 9.38.5, 9.95.3; AV 6.2.2, 7.79.3; ĀpŚS 5.1.7; TB 1.2.1.5-7, 1.3.6.2; TU 1.4.3; and many other passages refer to an early idea of *brahman*, *soma*, and other entities as able to enter into humans. He also charts early references to deities as able to shape shift and possess heaven and earth, p. 195-232. See TB 3.7.4-5; ŚB 2.2.3.1-3; BU 1.4.7; ŚvetU 3.9; ChU 6.3.1-3; ĪU 9, 12; and many others. MBh and Rām also include many instances of possession, especially through references to curses, boons, subtle interventions, the acts of gods and identity shifts. Smith, 2006, p. 245.

⁷³⁷ NTU 19.182

Apotropaic rites appear early in the textual record. The oldest sections of the *Atharva Veda* contain healing poems, magic, destructive sorcery, and other alchemical rituals.⁷³⁸ Slouber's study of early Tantric medicine reveals that Gāruḍa Tantras, which focus on snakebite venom and other poisons, share references with the *Atharva Veda*.⁷³⁹ Further, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* mentions *bhūtavidyā* as a possible pre-Tantric tradition of exorcism.⁷⁴⁰ These attestations demonstrate that exorcism did not set itself apart from the orthodox praxis of the Brahmanical tradition. They were not exclusively the domain of the lower classes.

The Vaiṣṇava Pañcarātrin *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*⁷⁴¹ calls for the king to appoint an Atharvavedin Brahmin as his personal priest.⁷⁴² The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* aims to convince monarchs of the Pañcarātrins truth rather than that of their Pāśupata Śaiva rivals.⁷⁴³ However, it also urges the monarch to perform devotional works and build temples in order to displace Vedic sacrificial customs.⁷⁴⁴ In other words, the *mantrin* is both an expert in the Vedas and introduces a new sacrificial paradigm to the court. This allows him to perform both Vedic and non-Vedic rites. Sanderson argues that Śaiva officiants legitimized dynastic power through the foundation of temples. They developed specialized rituals that drew upon their expertise in the Atharva Vedic rites to protect the

⁷³⁸ Michael Witzel, 2003, "The Vedas and Upaniṣads," in *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, Ed Gavin Flood. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 76

⁷³⁹ Slouber, 2017, p. 22.

⁷⁴⁰ Slouber, 2017, p. 40.

⁷⁴¹ Siudmak, 2013, p. 497, dates the text to the fifth or sixth century. Inden, 2000, p. 30 dates it to the seventh or eighth century.

⁷⁴² Sanderson, 2007a, p. 204n28.

⁷⁴³ Inden, 2000, p. 30.

⁷⁴⁴ Inden, 2000, p. 30.

monarch.⁷⁴⁵ With this legitimization in mind, I turn now to the rites of the *Netra Tantra*.

B. Vanquishing Death: *mṛtyu vañcana*

Rites that focus on the vanquishment of death appear in many Indian texts. Many rely upon mantras for protection from death. As I demonstrated in Chapter One, a mantra called *mṛtyuñjaya*, meaning conquering death, appears in the *Ṛg Veda*. It is unclear when the Vedic mantra was first called *mṛtyuñjaya*.⁷⁴⁶ Regardless, the purpose of the mantra is clear. The *mantrin* recites the mantra in ritual so that he or his benefactor overcomes death. The *Atharva Veda* also includes references to rituals that ward off or destroy (*apa-√han*) death.⁷⁴⁷ Gonda notes several references to early domestic rites that allow one to overcome death.⁷⁴⁸ The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says that the divine is far from death: "the divine is named *dūr* because death is far (*dūra*) from him. Death is far from him who knows this."⁷⁴⁹ It then explains how speech becomes fire when it crosses beyond death. Similarly, smell becomes air, sight becomes the sun, hearing becomes the directions, and mental perception becomes the shining moon.⁷⁵⁰ In other words, the senses have the ability to pass beyond death without becoming obliterated. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* then instructs the priest to recite the verses, "from the unreal lead me to the real,

⁷⁴⁵ Sanderson, 2007a, p. 233.

⁷⁴⁶ Einoo, 2005, p. 109.

⁷⁴⁷ Einoo, 2005, p. 113.

⁷⁴⁸ Jan Gonda, 1980, *Vedic Ritual: The Non-Solemn Rites*, Leiden: Brill, p. 17, 39, 353 identifies ĀgnG 2.5.4-5; YV 49.2.2, BGŚ 3.11, 1.7.1; ĀgnG 2.5.4; ṚVi 1.3.7.6; AVŚ 2.27, Kauś 38.18, 10.16, 58.3, 58.22; PG 2.6.9; JG 2.9, 35.4; VaiG 6.8, 6.10; SVB 3.1.12; BGP 2.7.3 as related to the overcoming of death.

⁷⁴⁹ BU 1.3.9.

⁷⁵⁰ BU 1.3.12-16.

from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality."⁷⁵¹ In this verse, death and darkness are the unreal; light and immortality are the real. Death, then, is something that can be bypassed. Einoo⁷⁵² charts a variety of verbs used in passages that develop ideas of how to overcome death. His work demonstrates how difficult it is to ascertain what constitutes overcoming death. Some texts simply use conquer (*√ji*), others draw on more complex verbal formulations such as "remove by means of an offering" (*ava-√yaj*), "conceal" or "render invisible" (*antar-√dhā*), or "repulse" (*prati-√nud*).⁷⁵³ Some Buddhist⁷⁵⁴ and Haṭha Yogic⁷⁵⁵ texts use conquer (*√ji*) or cheat (*√vañc*) to describe this process.⁷⁵⁶

Tantric Sanskrit texts that describe victory over death through ritual were translated into Tibetan in the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁷⁵⁷ These texts became part of Tibet's Buddhist tradition.⁷⁵⁸ As a result, these, the *mṛtyu vañcana* rituals found in Buddhist texts run close to those found in the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras*. This includes the goal to control death through mastery of disease and the use of mantras, *maṇḍalas*, and meditative imagery. The mantras, *maṇḍalas*, and meditative imagery in Buddhist and Śaiva traditions are also similar. Sanderson⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵¹ BU 1.3.28. The BU also indicates that overcoming death comes about from a unification with the divine. "He conquers repeated death, death cannot reach him, death becomes his self [and] he becomes one with the divinities." BU 1.2.7.

⁷⁵² Einoo, 2005, p. 113.

⁷⁵³ Einoo 2005, p. 113.

⁷⁵⁴ Such as the *Cakrasamvara* and *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa*.

⁷⁵⁵ Such as the *Kecharīvidyā*. This text, as well as the Tantric *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* and others also use *kālavañcana*, cheating death or time.

⁷⁵⁶ The latter are synonymous and are not meant in the pejorative sense that exists with the word "cheat" in English. Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, p. 99.

⁷⁵⁷ Imgard Mengele, 2010, "Chilu ('Chi bslu): Rituals for "Deceiving Death," in Cabezón, José Ignacio, *Tibetan Ritual*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 104. Mengele also notes that similar rites were a part of indigenous Tibetan Bön religion prior to the seventh century.

⁷⁵⁸ Mengele, 2010 p. 112.

⁷⁵⁹ Sanderson, 1994, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," in: *Buddhism into the Year 2000. International Conference Proceedings*, Bangkok: Dhammakaya Foundation; Sanderson, 2001.

argues that the *Cakrasamvara* is closely related to several early Śaiva Tantras, and that it may itself have originally been a Śaiva work that was transformed to comply with Buddhist conventions.⁷⁶⁰ In Tibetan, death ransom rituals are known as *chilu*.⁷⁶¹ *Chilu* rites are prescribed only when the beneficiary of the rite is about to die prematurely. To perform a *chilu* rite when death is irreversible or occurs at the proper time is a grave sin.⁷⁶² Like the practices found in the *Netra Tantra*, *chilu* rituals involve the invocation of the deity, mantras, *maṇḍalas*,⁷⁶³ and the performance of alchemical medicinal rituals.⁷⁶⁴ The Buddhist *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* (tenth or eleventh century)⁷⁶⁵ indicates there are always both signs of death and a fixed time for death.⁷⁶⁶ The *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* explains how to cheat death if the signs of imminent death are identified early enough. These signs may be external or internal. They include astrological changes, bodily symptoms of illness, and ominous dreams.⁷⁶⁷ It claims that, "some who have died in a number of ways can

⁷⁶⁰ Sanderson, 2001, p. 42-47 details similarities between the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* and the Śaiva *Picumata*, *Jayadrathayāmala*, *Siddhayogeshvarīmata*, and *Tantrasadbhāva Tantras*.

⁷⁶¹ Mengele, 2010, p. 104, explains that '*chi ba bslu ba* is the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit phrase *mṛtyu vañcana*. The Tibetan has the Tibetan term can be translated as "ransoming death" as well as "deceiving/cheating death". The exact phrase *mṛtyu vañcana* does not appear in the *Svacchanda Tantra* or *Netra Tantra* but occurs several times in the *Kālottara*, a Śaiva text shown by Sanderson, 2009, p. 144, to be used and mentioned by Buddhist works such as the (probably) eighth century *Guhyasiddhi*. The connection between Śaiva and Buddhist practice is clear and demonstrates that the practices, while not identical, are related.

⁷⁶² Mengele, 2010, p. 112.

⁷⁶³ Or yantras.

⁷⁶⁴ Mengele, 2010, p. 105-106. We also find (p. 107) that the *chilu* ritual involves the visualization of Heruka, the chief deity of the *Cakrasamvara* (among others such as the Mahāmāyā, Hevajra, and , a text that shares many commonalities with the SvT.

⁷⁶⁵ Geoffrey Samuel, 2012, "Amitayus and the Development of Tantric Practices for Longevity and Health in Tibet," in *Transformations and Transfer of Tantra in Asia and Beyond*. ed István Keul. Berlin: de Gruyter, p. 275.

⁷⁶⁶ Michael Walter, 2000, "Cheating Death," in *Tantra in Practice*, Ed David Gordon White. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 611.

⁷⁶⁷ Walter, 2000, p. 612-616.

be seen to live again."⁷⁶⁸ These rituals draw on a variety of impure bodily substances, including blood and urine. Practices listed in the *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* that draw on bodily substances are far more heterodox than anything in the *Netra* or *Svacchanda Tantras*.⁷⁶⁹ The *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras* belong to the category of Bhairava Tantras. They allow for impure substances to be mixed (*miśraka*) in ritual.⁷⁷⁰ However, neither the *Netra Tantra* nor *Svacchanda Tantra* prescribes antinomian practices. Instead, they hint at such practices and allow for their performance, but do not require them.

The *Netra Tantra* goes beyond death conquest to include:

Lifespan, strength, victory, loveliness, firmness, wisdom, a beautiful form, and good fortune, the highest kingdom for kings, all of these arise. Tormented by pain, [the ritual beneficiary] will be without pain; someone marked by disease will be without disease; a barren woman [will] obtain a

⁷⁶⁸ Walter, 2000, p. 619.

⁷⁶⁹ The *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* says, "Some who have died in a number of ways can be seen to live again. One example [of a method for achieving this] would be that of a man, or of a woman having her menses: their blood and other bodily elements, which have become mixed when they emerge in the course of their mutual exchange, are not connected strongly together. Extract two drops of such blood immediately upon the death of someone. These two drops will be released via a small, hollow cylinder smeared with butter, so as to be injected into the nostrils. When one drop emerges from a nostril, it should be rolled into the other. This is done, in turn, for each nostril. It has been seen that people become alive again in this way, so this is a recommended procedure for stopping death in this life." Trsl. Walter, 2000, p. 619. This example, though from a Buddhist text rather than a Bhairava Tantra, demonstrates the sort of mixing to which I alluded earlier. Here the *yogin* takes the pure substance, butter, and mixes it with the impure, blood. He then utilizes this new substance in his breath practice.

⁷⁷⁰ Törzsök, 2015, p. 196.

son; a girl [will] attract a husband. [The beneficiary] will surely attain whatever pleasures he wants. (NT 6.46-48ab)⁷⁷¹

Like immortality, these goals are not easy to attain. Beauty, good fortune, or offspring may appear to be within reach, but in reality they require the same level of ritual intervention as the conquest of death.

II. *Sthūla* Yoga

A. Maintaining the Physical Body

The *Netra Tantra* employs the terms *amṛta* or *amṛtatva* to describe its ultimate goal. Both can easily be translated as "immortal" or "immortality." Etymologically, both come from the root $\sqrt{mṛ}$, meaning "to die," with the inclusion of the negative *a*-prefix. Hence, both mean "non-dead," or "immortal." This etymology does little to clarify or add ontological nuance. In Vedic mythology immortality is the preserve of the gods.⁷⁷² Their immortality is defined by perpetual life.⁷⁷³ According to Scharfe, the Vedas also indicate that humans can attain life in heaven. Later Vedic thought says that life in heaven is not eternal.⁷⁷⁴ The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says, "[He

⁷⁷¹ *āyur balaṃ jayaḥ kāntir dhṛtir medhā vapuḥ śriyaḥ |
sarvaṃ pravartate tasya bhūbhṛtāṃ rājyam uttamam | | 46 | |
duḥkhārdito viduḥkhas tu vyādhimān gatarug bhavet |
vandhyā tu labhate putraṃ kanyā tu patim āvahet | | 47 | |
yān yān samīhate kāmās tān sarvān dhruvam āpnuyāt |*

Though the ritual is very similar, the aims are very different to those found in the Buddhist *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* in which a practitioner cheats death by prolonging life so that the practitioner can remain in non-attached meditation.

⁷⁷² Hartmut Scharfe, 2002, *Education in Ancient India*, Leiden: Brill p. 48.

⁷⁷³ Scharfe, 2002, p. 48.

⁷⁷⁴ Scharfe, 2002, p. 49.

who] stands in Brahman attains immortality."⁷⁷⁵ Immortality can also refer to fame or through offspring, though these too run the risk of transiency.⁷⁷⁶ The cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) also complicates the idea of immortality. Does immortality mean the cessation of a single death or of *saṃsāra*? As Scharfe demonstrates, there is not one answer to the question "what is immortality?"⁷⁷⁷ The *Netra Tantra* does not provide an answer to this question either. Einoo and Scharfe point out that immortality often means a life of one hundred years or a life that is lived to its full duration.⁷⁷⁸ The *Netra Tantra* often speaks of the aversion of sudden or untimely death (*apamṛtyu*).⁷⁷⁹ Therefore, this definition of immortality, as the full duration of one's life, makes sense in the context of the *Netra Tantra* with respect to non-salvific rites. I then assume this definition in my focus on the rites to conquer death (*mṛtyu vañcana*) as a supernatural power (*siddhi*) that both avoids sudden death and eliminates illness.⁷⁸⁰

The *Netra Tantra* contains three chapters that describe yogic methods. The three approaches (*upāya*) are: gross (*sthūla*), subtle (*sūkṣma*), and highest (*para*).⁷⁸¹ I focus only on the *sthūla* methods. First, this thesis sets out to explore ritual behavior as it impacts the world. I focus on rites that protect the living king. At the *sūkṣma* and *para* levels, the text shifts emphasizes the metaphysics of yoga, and

⁷⁷⁵ CU 2.23.1 *brahmasaṃstho 'mṛtam eti*. The eighth century writer Śāṅkara interprets *brahman* in this passage to refer to asceticism (*tapas*) while Vṛttkāra (date unclear) interprets the verse to mean "anyone who stands firm in the eternal attains eternal life." S. Radhakrishnan, 1992, *The Principal Upaniṣads*, Amherst: Humanity Books, p. 375.

⁷⁷⁶ Scharfe, 2002, p. 49.

⁷⁷⁷ Scharfe, 2002, p. 49.

⁷⁷⁸ Einoo, 2005, p. 117-118; Scharfe, 2002, p. 48, citing KauśS 10.19b, 10.16-18; ŚB 9.5.1.10.

⁷⁷⁹ NT 2.3, 2.15, 6.3, 6.5, 6.37, 19.123; NTU 1.35, 6.9, 6.38

⁷⁸⁰ NT 7.52 describes *mṛtyu vañcana* as a *siddhi* that results from the acquisition of a divine body.

⁷⁸¹ NT 6.6-8.

turns its focus away from worldly outcomes.⁷⁸² Second, the *sūkṣma* and *para* chapters say little about ritual. Neither chapter refers to the use of *maṇḍalas*. For example, Chapter Seven focuses on the vanquishment of death by the drawing of breath through the channels (*nāḍi*) and centers (*cakra*) of the *sūkṣma* body.⁷⁸³ Chapter Eight instructs the *mantrin* how to quiet the senses and mind in order to conceive of the universal essence of Amṛteśa.⁷⁸⁴

After brief preliminaries, the *Netra Tantra* begins introduces the three yogic methods:

The method is threefold: gross (*sthūla*), subtle (*sukṣma*), and highest (*para*). The *sthūla* [method consists of] sacrifice, oblation, mantra recitation, [and] meditation, together with *mudrās*, the *mohana yantras*,⁷⁸⁵ and so forth. The king of mantras (*mantrarāt*) [i.e., *om juṃ sah*] brings about [relief]⁷⁸⁶. The *sukṣma* [method contains] yoga of the *cakras*,⁷⁸⁷ etc., and by upward momentum [of breath] through the channels (*nāḍī*). The *para* [method], is Mṛtyujit, which is universal and bestows liberation. (NT 6.6-8)⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸² For a brief introduction to the yoga of the *Netra Tantra* and a full translation of the *sūkṣma* and *para* chapters, see Bäumer, 2018.

⁷⁸³ Rastogi, 1992, p. 259, Bäumer, 2018, p. 8-12.

⁷⁸⁴ Rastogi, 1992, p. 259, Bäumer, 2018, p. 12-18.

⁷⁸⁵ The name of a specific yantra, which is used to perplex an enemy.

⁷⁸⁶ Throughout Chapter Six, the subject of action must be assumed from previous verses. Here I assume that people who are approached by threats of untimely death, etc., from verse 36 are the one who are made powerful by sacrifice, etc.

⁷⁸⁷ In NT 7.1-2, describes the physical manifestation of these *cakras* as: six circles, seven supports, three objects, five elements, joined with twelve knots, endowed with three powers, approached by the paths to the three abodes, [and] endowed with three channels.

NT 7.1-2

ṛtucakraṃ svarādhāraṃ trilakṣyaṃ vyomapañcakam || 1 ||
granthidoādaśasaṃyuktaṃ śaktirayasamanvitam |
dhāmatrayapathākṛāntaṃ nāḍitrayasamanvitam || 2 ||

⁷⁸⁸ *trivīdhaṃ tadupāyaṃ tu sthūlaṃ sūkṣmaṃ paraṃ ca tat* || 6 ||
sthūlaṃ tu yajanaṃ homo japo dhyānaṃ samudrakam |
yantrāṇi mohanādīni mantrarāt kurute bhṛśam || 7 ||
sūkṣmaṃ cakrādiyogena kalānāḍyudayena ca |
paraṃ sarvātmakaṃ caiva mokṣadaṃ mṛtyujid bhavet || 8 ||

Rastogi explains that the three-fold yoga of the *Netra Tantra* mirrors the tripartite nature of mantra,⁷⁸⁹ which I discussed in Chapter One. *Sthūla* corresponds to the most embodied manifestation of mantra, the limited condition (*aṇu*). It also refers to Netra, as the protector.⁷⁹⁰ The etymology of *sthūla* is to become big, to grow, to increase (*√sthūl*).⁷⁹¹ *Sthūla* is synonymous with *pīna*, *pīva*, and *pīvara*, all meaning fat or dense.⁷⁹² These gross bodies are "one-time-only aggregations of the gross elements,"⁷⁹³ and subject to death and disease. This does not designate the transmigratory body but that which remains at the time of death. *Sthūla* practice focuses on the alleviation of illness and the defeat of death.

When [the *mantrin*] perceives the power of death, when death touches and sees [a person], then he should worship Amṛteśa with the aim to repulse [death]. He employs the name [of the afflicted],⁷⁹⁴ [and] should worship all-pervading *Mrtyujit* with entirely white ornaments, according to the rule taught before [in previous chapters focused on daily ritual]. He [who is ill] quickly escapes from death. My speech is true and not false. According to the rules for the great protection [rite, the *mantrin*] should make an oblation in the name of [the afflicted] into a fire fueled with holy wood. [This fire burns] in a round pot [adorned] with three girdles. [The *mantrin*] uses

⁷⁸⁹ Rastogi 1992, p. 260.

⁷⁹⁰ Rastogi, 1989, p. 261.

⁷⁹¹ H.N. Chakravarty, 1999, "Sthūla-Sūkṣma-Para," in *Kalātattvakośa: A Lexicon of Fundamental Concepts of the Indian Arts. Vol. IV: Manifestation of Nature Śṛṣṭi Vistāra*, Eds. Advaitavadini Kaul and Sukumar Chattopadhyay. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 275.

⁷⁹² Chakravarty, 1999, p. 276.

⁷⁹³ Larson and Bhattacharya, 1987, p. 53.

⁷⁹⁴ Though the text does not indicate it, we can safely assume that here the *mantrin* acts on behalf of the dying subject, who, being so close to death, would not be able to perform the oblations himself even if he knew how.

sesame seeds soaked in ghee and milk [mixed] together with white sugar.⁷⁹⁵ Even for someone gone to Yama's abode [i.e., someone who has died], great peace arises quickly. *Mrtyujit* is sure to destroy death when pleased with an oblation of fragrant ghee put into a fire fueled by milk-tree wood. (NT 6.9-15ab)⁷⁹⁶

This passage indicates that the daily rituals described in the *Netra Tantra*'s earlier chapters offer a quick escape from death. Why then another configuration? The rituals the *Netra Tantra* describes here are typical of rites performed in order to achieve a specific desire (*kāmya karman*) found throughout Indian religious literature.⁷⁹⁷ They are optional and practiced to obtain a specific result. Often they relate to the cult of a particular deity.⁷⁹⁸ Though escape from death may be quick, it is wholly dependent upon the will of the deity. Thus, the more difficult the objective, the more complex the rite becomes.⁷⁹⁹ Larivière points out that the optionality of *kāmya* rites does not mean the ritual specialist is free to perform or omit the rites. Instead, *kāmya* rites can only be performed if the *mantrin* is able to do

⁷⁹⁵ It is unclear from this text exactly what this regulation is. There are mentions of *rakṣāvidhāna* at *Netra Tantra* 6.33, 6.35 (preceded by *rājan*), 11.31 (*sarva*), 15.19 (*rājan*), and 17.19 (*rājan*) but they do not go into detail. In TĀ 3.112 and 3.215 Abhinavagupta references a lost text called the *Tattoarakṣāvidhāna*. Various other references exist scattered through the *Tantrarāja Tantra* and *Svacchanda Tantra*.

⁷⁹⁶ *yadā mṛtyuvaśāghrātaḥ kālena kalitaḥ priye |*
dr̥ṣṭas tatpratighātārtham amṛteṣaṃ yajet tadā || 9 ||
sarvaśvetopacāreṇa pūrvoktavidhinā tataḥ |
yasya nāma samuddiśya pūjayen mṛtyujidvibhum || 10 ||
mṛtyor uttarate śīghraṃ satyaṃ me nānṛtaṃ vacaḥ |
sitaśarkarayā yuktair ghṛtakṣīraplutaḥ tilaiḥ || 11 ||
punṇyadārvindhane vahnau kuṇḍe vṛtte trimekhale |
mahāarakṣāvidhānena juhuyād yasya nāmataḥ || 12 ||
mahāsāntir bhavet kṣipraṃ gatasyāpi yamakṣayam
sugandhighṛtahomena kṣīravṛkṣamaye 'nale || 14 ||
tarpito nāśayen mṛtyuṃ mṛtyujin nātra saṃśayaḥ |

⁷⁹⁷ Gonda, 1977, p. 214; Gonda, 1980, p. 471.

⁷⁹⁸ Padoux, 2011, p. 21.

⁷⁹⁹ Yelle, 2003, p. 10.

so completely and to perfection.⁸⁰⁰ *Kāmya* rites tend to be long rituals that often last for several days.⁸⁰¹ Public *kāmya* rites are only to be performed by those who have attained the highest level of initiation (*ācārya*). Those who hold a *sādhaka* initiation may perform the rites in private.⁸⁰² In the Śrīvidyā Tantric tradition, those who have not performed the obligatory rites (*nitya karman*) must not perform *kāmya* rites. Therefore, the *mantrin* must fulfill both the Vedic and Tantric obligations first, before he can perform desire-based rites.⁸⁰³ As I have already stated, in the *Netra Tantra*, the royal priest must be an Atharvavedin. This means he too must be able to perform Vedic and Tantric rites. The professional *mantrin* is a person who relies on a visible post-initiatory discipline in order to justify his own professional necessity.⁸⁰⁴ Initiation itself confers liberation, but the officiant must continue ritual repetition as proof of his own qualification to perform rituals for clients.⁸⁰⁵ It should also be noted that *kāmya* rites are never performed to gain liberation. Kumārila's famous verse confirms this:

if one desires liberation, one should not engage in motivated (*kāmya*) [rites] or forbidden acts. One should perform [only] one's regular and incidental

⁸⁰⁰ Richard W. Larivière, 1988, "Adhikāra — right and responsibility" in *Languages and Cultures: Studies in Honor of Edgar C. Polomé*, Eds. Mohammad Ali Jazayeri and Werner Winter. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., p. 363-364. This differs from the daily rites (*nitya karman*), which is obligatory for initiates and must be performed to the best of one's ability.

⁸⁰¹ Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, p. 158n9. This includes the preparatory rites that precede the public ritual.

⁸⁰² Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, p. 158n9.

⁸⁰³ Douglas Renfrow Brooks, 1992, *Auspicious Wisdom: The Texts and Traditions of Śrīvidyā Śākta Tantrism in South India*, Albany: SUNY, p. 175.

⁸⁰⁴ Alexis Sanderson, 2010, "Ritual for Oneself and Ritual for Others," in *Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual Vol. II: Body, Performance, Agency, and Experience*, Eds. Angeles Chaniotis, et al.. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, p. 12.

⁸⁰⁵ Sanderson, 2010, p. 12.

[duties. But one should do so not in view of any reward but simply] to avoid the negative consequences [of failing to perform them⁸⁰⁶.]

B. Easing the Pain of Death and Disease

The *mṛtyu vañcana* rite begins with a preparatory fire oblation. It consists of standard ritual offerings such as honey, milk, and ghee. The fire is fueled by the wood of milk trees (*kṣīravṛkṣa*).⁸⁰⁷ Milk trees come in four types, *uḍumbara* (*Ficus Glomerata*), *aśvattha* (*Ficus Religiosa*), *nyagrodha* (*Ficus Indica*), and *madhūka* (*Bassia Latifolia* or *Jonesia Asoka*). All have white sap. They are used in rites of pacification and prosperity.⁸⁰⁸ Additionally, the rites call for guggula resin (*bdellium*). The *Harṣa Carita* describes the use of guggula⁸⁰⁹ in a rite to avert the death of Harṣa's father, Pabhakaravatdhana.⁸¹⁰ The *Devī Purāṇa* relates how kings should honor *Indrāṇī* with clothing, ornaments, perfumes, milk-rice, ghee, and guggula resin. In return, the goddess fulfills all desires and gives the king longevity, health, and sovereignty.⁸¹¹ A donation grant from the seventh century refers to a Guggula-pūjā at a temple of the deity *Kāpāleśvara*.⁸¹² This ties the rites

⁸⁰⁶ Trsl. Sanderson, quoted in Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, p. 88.

⁸⁰⁷ Not to be confused with the African milk tree *Euphorbia trigona*. *Kṣīravṛkṣa* refers to an Indian ecological taxonomy.

⁸⁰⁸ Vesna A. Wallace, 2016, "Homa Rituals in the Indian *Kālacakra-tantra* Tradition," in *Homa Variations: The Study of Ritual Change across the Longue Durée*, Eds. Richard K. Payne and Michael Witzel, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 253.

⁸⁰⁹ Yael Bentor, 1996, *Consecration of Images and Stūpas in Indo-Tibetan Tantric Buddhism*, Leiden: Brill, p. 117-118, notes that guggula and white sesame are also used in Tibetan preparatory rituals to empower wrathful deities and eliminate obstructions during consecration.

⁸¹⁰ Lorenzen, 1972, p. 27-28; M.C. Joshi, 2002, "Historical and Iconographic Aspects of Śākta Tantrism," in *The Roots of Tantra*, Eds. Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown, Albany: SUNY, p. 49.

⁸¹¹ Shaman Hatley, 2014, "Goddesses in Text and Stone." In *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object*, Eds Benjamin J. Fleming and Richard D. Mann, New York and London: Routledge, p. 212.

⁸¹² Lorenzen, 1972, p. 27.

to the charnel ground *kāpālikas*. Once the offering has been issued, the *mantrin* writes the mantra *om̐ juṃ saḥ* around the name of the rite's beneficiary.

[Mṛtyujit] instantly destroys fever as a result of an oblation into a fire fueled with milk tree wood. This is the oblation that destroys all bad things. [It] consists of five *amṛtas*: sesame seed, rice, honey, ghee, and milk. Someone with a diminished body quickly becomes nourished through an oblation of chick-pea sized pellets of the resin of the guggula tree [that have been] oiled three times in strict religious observance. When a man is seen to be afflicted with 100 diseases [and] weak, [he] is released [when the *mantrin*] envelops his name [with the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra] and recites [it]. (NT 6.15cd-18)⁸¹³

This extract demonstrates that *mṛtyu vañcana* rites aim to alleviate illness as well as untimely death. The text calls for the guru to utilize the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra to protect the sick. However, as I noted in Chapter One, the text allows for any mantra to serve as the *mūla* mantra.⁸¹⁴ The act of enveloping (*samputa*)⁸¹⁵ protects from the use of an ineffective or mispronounced mantra.⁸¹⁶ To envelop, the *mantrin* simply recites the *mūla* mantra ahead of the name and again at the end, this time in reverse.⁸¹⁷ For example, *om̐ svaha saḥ* [name] *saḥ svaha om̐*. In addition to protection against a performative error, the palindromic enveloping disarms any counter rituals that one's enemies might undertake.⁸¹⁸ Here the *Netra Tantra* refers to

⁸¹³ *kṣītravṛkṣasamidhomāj jvaram̐ nāśayate kṣaṇāt | | 15 | |*
tilataṇḍulamākṣīkam̐ ājyakṣīrasamanvitam̐ |
eṣa pañcāmṛto homaḥ sarvaduṣṭanivārhaṇaḥ | | 16 | |
guggulor gulikābhiś ca tryaktābhiś caṇamātrayā |
homāt puṣṭir bhavaty āśu kṣīṇadehasya suvate | | 17 | |
yadā vyādhiśatākīrṇo hyabalo dṛśyate naraḥ |
tadāsyā samputīkṛtyā nāma japtvā vimucyate | | 18 | |

⁸¹⁴ NT 22.5-10a.

⁸¹⁵ As I noted in Chapter One, the *Netra Tantra* gives eleven different forms one can use to protect the mantra and nullify any counter-magic that may be used against his rite. *Samputa* is the most common type used in the *Netra Tantra*. Padoux, 2011, p. 95-96.

⁸¹⁶ Padoux, 2011, p. 89-94; Yelle, 2003, p. 20-21.

⁸¹⁷ Yelle, 2003, p. 20.

⁸¹⁸ Padoux, 2011, p. 95-96.

recitation (*japa*) of the mantra. Kṣemarāja adds that enveloping is also used when the *mantrin* writes the mantra and name on the *maṇḍala*.⁸¹⁹

Any mantra that a wise man should recite, is enveloped by Amṛteśa. This mantra quickly [brings] him success, even if he is without good fortune. (NT 6.19)⁸²⁰

The encapsulation of the name with the mantra or other ritual elements, including script and *maṇḍalas*, marks a transition of the mantra. It shifts from "language to non-linguistic, physical reality from within language itself, therefore virtually and figuratively."⁸²¹ In other words, when the *mantrin* envelops the name of the afflicted with the mantra, he surrounds the name (and thus the person himself) with the purified deity. The *Kulārṇava* and *Gandharva Tantras* explain:

At the beginning (of the mantra) is the impurity of birth, and at the end, the impurity of death. A mantra which is joined to these impurities does not succeed. Having removed the (impurities of) beginning and end, the wise one should chant the mantra. A mantra which is released from this pair of impurities leads to all success.⁸²²

After the *mantrin* has enveloped the mantra, it first protects the body. The *mantrin* also envelops medicine with the mantra to help to pull this body immediately

⁸¹⁹ *mantram ādau likhet*. Padoux, 2011, p. 96.

⁸²⁰ *yaṃ yaṃ mantram japed vidvān amṛteśena samputam | tasya siddhyati sa kṣipram bhāgyahīno 'pi yo bhavet | | 19 | |*

⁸²¹ Yelle, 2003, p. 20.

⁸²² KT 15.57-58; GT 29.19-21. Trsl. Yelle, 2003, p. 22.

away from death. For the *mantrin*'s continued spiritual power, the medicine needs to be supplemented by prayer.⁸²³

[The *mantrin*] envelops medicine [consisting of herbs]⁸²⁴ with the mantra. [He then] gives [the mantra wrapped medicine] to [the person whose⁸²⁵ body is weak. At that very moment, his body gains nourishment and [becomes] strong. (NT 6.20)⁸²⁶

The *Netra Tantra* does not cite any specific medicinal remedies. Nor does it say that the *mantrin* should diagnose illness or administer medical treatment. The passage does not reveal whether the *mantrin* contributes to some form of medical treatment or diagnosis. Neither does it spell out how the *mantrin* worked with an Āyurvedic physician.⁸²⁷

C. Maṇḍalas of Protection

Following its discussion of the use of the mantra, the *Netra Tantra* turns to *maṇḍalas*. The text only sketches their application. It does not disclose their overall

⁸²³ Even today in the West medicine is seen by many as insufficient to the healing process and prayers or thoughts are offered to the sick regardless of their own spiritual position. The history of medicine and the history of spirituality are inextricably linked. The ancient version of the Hippocratic Oath began by invoking various healing and other gods while the modern version calls on the medical practitioner to not play God. Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, "Hippocratic Oath, Modern Version - Bioethics - Guides At Johns Hopkins University". Guides.library.jhu.edu. N.p., 2015. Web. Accessed, 21 Sept. 2015.

⁸²⁴ *bheṣajam auśadham*

⁸²⁵ Supplied in the commentary by *yasya*.

⁸²⁶ *kṣīṇagātrasya deveśi bheṣajam mantrasamputam | dīyate tatkṣaṇād devi sa puṣṭim labhate balī | |20| |*

⁸²⁷ Dominik Wujastyk, 1998, *The Roots of Āyurveda*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India, p. 16-17, notes that early Vedic literature, especially the *Atharva Veda* focus on health and disease. Further, early Āyurvedic texts claim to descend from the Vedas. However, Wujastyk states that the medical ideas in these early texts do not form an obvious precursor to classical Āyurvedic practice. This indicates that the *mantrin* and the physician had very different roles in court and that the *mantrin* had little to no control over the contents of the medicine he administered

dimensions, but does specify the materials the *mantrin* should use to draw the *maṇḍala*. Once drawn, he places (*nyāsa*) the mantra and the name of the afflicted person on the *maṇḍala*. This empowers the *maṇḍala* and summons the deity.⁸²⁸

Törzsök examines the *maṇḍalas* used in the *Svacchanda Tantra*'s initiation process. The moment at which the initiand sees deities on the *maṇḍala* is the point when he transforms into an initiated practitioner.⁸²⁹ For many, the initiation rite is the only encounter with the *maṇḍala*.⁸³⁰ Though ritual manuals speak of *maṇḍalas* as optional in daily rites,⁸³¹ they are essential in occasional and initiation rites.⁸³² However, sight of the *maṇḍala* during initiation is not always required. The *Parā-trīśikā-Vivarāṇa* says that one who knows the *bija mantra* is initiated even if he has not seen the *maṇḍala*.⁸³³

Maṇḍalas, like mantras, are not symbolic representations of the divine. They are physical structures that function as devices through which a practitioner witnesses deities.⁸³⁴ During rites, the practitioner views the deities in the *maṇḍala*, not as icons but as literal manifestations of the deities.⁸³⁵ In the next section, I explain the technicalities of *maṇḍalas* in greater detail.

Let me turn first to the rites described by the *Netra Tantra*. The text first calls for preliminary visualization in which the living being (*jīva*) is connected to the mantra. In this case, the *jīva* is a diseased or dying person for whom the *mantrin*

⁸²⁸ Padoux, 2011, p. 70; Davis, 2000, p. 48.

⁸²⁹ Törzsök, 2010, p. 185.

⁸³⁰ Törzsök, 2003, p. 184-190.

⁸³¹ Törzsök, 2003, p. 185.

⁸³² Bühnemann, 2003, p. 14. Brunner, 2003, p. 157, points out that the Trika recommends using *maṇḍalas* in all rites, including the daily, while the Siddhānta advocate for their use only in occasional (*naimittika karman*) and optional (*kāmya karman*) rituals.

⁸³³ PVT 19.

⁸³⁴ Bühnemann, 2012, p. 560.

⁸³⁵ Rastelli, 2002, p. 142.

performs the ritual. The text says that the *jīva* exists in the heart lotus (*hṛtpadma*). This is a common non-dual Śaiva Tantra trope used for internal practice.⁸³⁶ The *hṛtpadma* is especially important in the *Svacchanda Tantra*'s yogic instruction.⁸³⁷ It designates the place within the body where the practitioner enshrines the deity. This practice is similar to the initiation (*dīkṣā*) rite described in Chapter Two, where the *mantrin* replaces the body of the initiand with a new, Tantrified body. Again, the text calls for a protective *saṃputa* as a preliminary measure:

The being (*jīva*), is enclosed with [the syllables] *saḥ*, etc. [This rests] in the middle of the lotus of the heart, [which] is in the middle of the orb of the moon. [This done, the *jīva*] escapes from death completely. After [the *mantrin* has] enclosed [the *jīva*] with syllables beginning with *saḥ*, etc.,⁸³⁸ [the *mantrin*] masters the procedure. [That is, he] should visualize [the encircled *jīva*] in the body. [The afflicted] is sure to become free from all disease, of this there is no doubt. (NT 6.21-22)⁸³⁹

After the *mantrin* connects the afflicted's body with the mantra, disease washes away. The *mantrin* then calls to mind the *amṛta* nectar that purifies and cleanses the diseased body.

⁸³⁶ Muller-Ortega, 1988, p. 157; TSB 6.221-222; KMT 5.134-135; ParT 14.57-60; TĀ 3.112, 3.215, 15.90-92, 16.42, 30.68, PTV 33.

⁸³⁷ SvT 3.24, 4.234-236, 4.370, 7.39, 7.57, 7.63, 7.83, 7.90, 7.111, 7.118, 7.136, 7.218, 15.28.

⁸³⁸ *Saḥ*, etc., refers to the reversed form of the *mūla* mantra *om svaha saḥ* or here *saḥ svaha om* according to Kṣemarāja's commentary. *sādyarṇaiḥ savisargasakārahomabījapraṇavair jīvanikaṭāt kramātkramaṃ bahirniḥsṛtaiḥ rodhitam.*

⁸³⁹ *hṛtpadmamadhyagaṃ jīvaṃ candramaṇḍalamadhyagam |
sādyarṇarodhitam kṛtvā mṛtyor uttarate bhṛśam | |21| |
sādyarṇarodhitam kṛtvā dhyāyed dehe tu yogavit |
sarvavyādhivirmuktaḥ sa bhaven nātra saṃśayaḥ | |22| |*

Delighted, [the *mantrin*] should visualize [the *jīva*] in his own or someone else's [body⁸⁴⁰] as being flooded by waves of *amṛta*, in the middle of a lotus on the ocean of milk, enclosed between two moons one above and one below, enclosed by the syllables *saḥ*, etc. He [visualizes his] body, beautiful inside and out, filled with nectar. [He is] freed without exertion and without trouble, and liberated from any sickness. (NT 6.23-25ab)⁸⁴¹

This passage is reminiscent of the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*:

And now the supreme secret, the acme of the *amṛta* of Śiva's gnosis is described for the destruction of disease and death in yogins. [The yogin] should visualise Parā in her own form pouring forth *amṛta* in the sixteen-spoked wheel in the void, whose hub is formed by the moon. Armed with the previously[-described] *nyāsa*, for an instant (?) the wise [yogin] should then lead his tongue to the uvula and insert it [there]. He should visualise the white heavenly *amṛta*, flowing from the orb of the moon...Drinking it, within six months he effortlessly becomes free of decrepitude and disease; after a year he becomes a conquerer of death. Once it has become sweet-tasting thenceforth his mouth fills up with whatever flowing substance he, with focussed mind, visualises in it, such as blood, alcohol or fat or milk to ghee and oil etc."⁸⁴²

In both passages the *mantrin* (or yogin) visualizes *amṛta* flooding the body. In the *Netra Tantra* the orbs of the moon envelop the *jīva* in much the same way as the mantric *saṃputa*. They surround and therefore protect him. In the

⁸⁴⁰ The commentary adds *yasya śarīraṃ*.

Unlike the earlier mantric practice, the *mantrin* can perform this meditation for his own dying body. However, we will see that the *Svacchanda Tantra* has a much more complex death-conquering meditation that offers the practitioner a much less physical release. The *maṇḍala* and meditation offered here is more likely done on behalf another whose aim is relief from physical ailments and death rather than for liberation, though there is no reason the guru could not perform this meditation first and the more complicated one later.

⁸⁴¹ *kṣīrodapadmamadhyastham amṛtormibhir ākulam |*
ūrdhvādahaśāsiruddham tu sādyarṇaiḥ saṃputīkṛtam | |23| |
dhyāyate suprahrṣṭātmā ātmano 'pi parasya vā |
sabāhyābhyantaram śubhram sudhāpūritavigraham | |24| |
anudvignam anāyāsam sarvarogaiḥ pramucyate |

⁸⁴² Trsl. Mallinson, 2007, p. 22.

Mālinīvijayottaratantra passage, *amṛta* flows directly from the moon. While the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* is clearly of a more transgressive nature than the *Netra Tantra*, the texts share symbolism. Kṣemarāja often cites the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* in his exegetical work.⁸⁴³ The importance of the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* in the Śaiva system is apparent. Abhinavagupta chose it as the foundational text for his work and it was the basis for the *Tantrāloka*.⁸⁴⁴

Kṣemarāja says that the *mantrin* should imagine the *jīva* seated on the moon disc at the pericarp of a white lotus, in the center of the ocean of milk. One moon is above and another is below the seated *jīva*. The *amṛta* flows from the upper moon. The *jīva* envisages the waves of the ocean filling his body inside and out, surging up with bright of moonlight. The body, enclosed by the mantra, then becomes free of disease.⁸⁴⁵ This visualization shares imagery with the *Svacchanda Tantra*'s meditation on *amṛta*.

The *Netra Tantra* then introduces the first *maṇḍala*. Here it instructs the practitioner to draw rather than imagine the image. The text retains its moon imagery through the moon (*candra*) *maṇḍala*. The *candramaṇḍala* occurs in many Buddhist Tantras.⁸⁴⁶ In the *Netra Tantra*, the person afflicted with disease is

⁸⁴³ Somadeva Vasudeva, 2004, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra: Chapters 1-4, 7, 11-17*, Pondicherry: Institut Française de Pondichéry École Française D'Étrême Orient, p. xxvi.

⁸⁴⁴ Mrinal Kaul, 2018, "Ontological Hierarchy in the *Tantrāloka* of Abhinavagupta," in *Tantrapuṣpāñjali*, Eds. Bettina Sharada Bäumer and Hamsa Stainton. New Delhi: Aryan Books, p. 243.

⁸⁴⁵ *kṣīrābdhimadhyasthasitasaroruhakarṇikāgatendūpaviṣṭam ūrdhvasthendvamṛtaiḥ sicyamānam aindavaprabhābharocchalatkṣīrodataraṅgair antar bahiś cāpūritam suśubhram ca proktayuktyā dhyātamantrarājasamputīkṛtam yasya śārīram bhṛśam dhyāyate sa nīrogo bhavati | |*

⁸⁴⁶ See *Mandala of Chandra*; Pratapaditya Pal, 1985, *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 208; John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel, 2003, *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art*, Chicago: Serindia Publications, p. 78-79.

encircled by lotus petals and *vajras*.⁸⁴⁷ The *yogin* writes the name of the afflicted person in yellow bile and saffron ink in the middle of a white lotus. This is enclosed by the *candramaṇḍala*, which protects in the same way as the enclosed mantra.

Enveloped by *saḥ*, etc., [the *mantrin* writes the name of the person] afflicted by all diseases in yellow bile and saffron mixed with milk on the middle of a white lotus with eight petals. [This he] encloses in the *candramaṇḍala*, set in a square, and decorates it with Indra's *vajras*. [The afflicted] is then cured of the torment of all diseases, there is no doubt. (NT 6.25cd-27)⁸⁴⁸

Kṣemarāja explains that the *maṇḍala* should be drawn on birch bark or another appropriate, surface using a mixture of cow bile, saffron and milk. The *mantrin* should write the mantra in full on each petal of a white lotus. He then inscribes the name of the afflicted on the lotus' pericarp and *vajras* in each corner. The *candramaṇḍala* is a moon disc with sixteen faces.⁸⁴⁹ The sixteenth phase of the moon is the *amṛtakalā*. It corresponds to the sixteenth *kalā* of the lunar fortnight when the moon is invisible. The *amṛtakalā* is portrayed as an immortal moon and corresponds to the *visarga*.⁸⁵⁰ It is the supreme energy of consciousness.⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴⁷ The *Svacchanda Tantra* and *Svacchanda Tantra Uddyota*, SvT, SvTU 5.62, 10.807, 10.927, 10.930, 12.87, refer to the *candramaṇḍala* in a section of the text that describes Śaiva cosmology, though there it could simply be a reference to the actual moon. It is also found in the *Netra Tantra Uddyota* at NTU 10.43, 11.28.

⁸⁴⁸ *rocanaṅkuṅkumenaiva kṣīreṇa ca samanvitaḥ* | | 25 | |
sitapadme 'ṣṭapatre tu madhye sādyarṇarodhitaḥ |
sarvoavyādhisamākrāntaś candramaṇḍalaveṣṭitaḥ | | 26 | |
catuṣkoṇapurākrānto vajrabhṛdvajralāñchitaḥ |
mucyate nātra saṁdehaḥ sarvoavyādhinipīdanāt | | 27 | |

⁸⁴⁹ *gorocanaṅkuṅkumakṣīrair bhūrjādau sitakamalamālikhya pratipatram uktayuktyollikhitamantreṇa rodhito 'rthāt karṇikāyāṃ nāmadvārollikhitaḥ sādhyo bahiḥ ṣoḍaśakalendubimbaveṣṭitaḥ savajrakacaturaśrapurastho vyādhyaṅkrānto 'pi sarvoavyādhinipīdanānm ucyate*

⁸⁵⁰ Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2000, p. 134.

⁸⁵¹ NTU 2.25a *parā vimarśasaktis*.

As the *mantrin* draws each *maṇḍala*, lotus petals double in number. The first *maṇḍala* has eight petals, the next sixteen, and finally thirty-two. In the eight-petalled lotus, each petal points toward the cardinal and intermediate directions. This allows each deity associated with a direction to be placed on the corresponding petal.⁸⁵² The structure of these *maṇḍalas* resembles the *siddhi maṇḍalas* in Chapter Nine of the *Svacchanda Tantra*.⁸⁵³ Here, the *maṇḍalas* and *yantras* protect the practitioner from death,⁸⁵⁴ though it calls upon different forms of Bhairava. The *maṇḍalas* that ward off death often place the name of the diseased person at the center. The *mantrin* focuses both on the afflicted and the deity in order to merge them. Though the text leaves room for the mantra to vary, the deity does not. The deity must appear in the most appropriate form of Bhairava for its specific purpose.⁸⁵⁵ In other words, the *mantrin* must pray to the correct deity, otherwise death may not be averted. Death rituals of other sects are ruled ineffective.⁸⁵⁶

The *Netra Tantra* then presents another *maṇḍala* whose name refers to the moon (*śaśin*): the *śaśimaṇḍala*. Its description is less precise than that of the *candramaṇḍala*. Its symbolism, which lists sixteen petals and sounds, features frequently in descriptions of the moon. The Tantric moon contains sixteen phases

⁸⁵² Bühnemann, 2003, p. 21.

SvT 5.38-39 describes a similar, eight-petaled lotus used during the initiation ritual in which Svachanda Bhairava sits in the middle, surrounded by eight deities as represented by sounds, beginning with ha, one on each petal.

*pūrvoktena vidhānena aṅgaṣaṭkasamanvitam |
 patrāṣṭake nyased varṇān pūrvādīśāms tataḥ kramāt || 5-38 ||
 sadāśivaṃ hakāreṇety evamādi varānane |
 prakṛtyantaṃ vijānīyān madhye pīṭheśakalpanā || 5-39 ||*

⁸⁵³ See Törzsök, 2003, p. 202-203 for detailed descriptions of these *maṇḍalas*.

⁸⁵⁴ In both the SvT and the NT rites can also be used to control or kill others though this is more prevalent in the SvT.

⁸⁵⁵ Törzsök, 2003, p. 203; Barretta, 2012, p. 14.

⁸⁵⁶ For example, If one were to perform a death ritual described in the *Cakrasamvara*, which is similar but honored Heruka in the place of Mṛtyujit, the ritual would be ineffective.

in its waxing and waning cycles.⁸⁵⁷ The last of these, again, is the *amṛtakalā*.⁸⁵⁸ The sixteen syllables correspond to the Sanskrit vowels:⁸⁵⁹

[The *mantrin*] should write the name [of the afflicted] in the middle of a great wheel [that] has sixteen petals. [He] adorns [the wheel] with the sixteen vowels, and encloses it with the mantra using the *ādyanta* pattern. The *mantrin* should draw, as before, the *jīva*⁸⁶⁰ in the middle of *saḥ*, etc., protected at the end with the covering [i.e., the mantra]. The *amṛteśā*⁸⁶¹ mantra envelops [him] on all sides, at each syllable, in the middle of all petals, in the middle of the lunar orb (*śaśimaṇḍala*). The twofold lotus outside follows the sequence [of consonants that] begins with *ka* and ends with *sa*. [This is] enclosed with the syllables *saḥ*, etc.. And in that, is the name of the person to be healed Outside [of this, the *mantrin* draws] the disc of the sun (*arkamaṇḍalam*), and below he should completely surround it on all sides beginning in the east. NT 6.28-32ab)⁸⁶²

Once again, the *mantrin* writes the name of the afflicted in the center of the *maṇḍala* and surrounds it with a protective wrap. The *ādyanta* pattern consists of the

⁸⁵⁷ Brooks, 1992, p. 125; John Nemeč, 2013, "On the Structure and Contents of the *Tridaśaḍāmaratantra*, a Kaula Scriptural Source of the Northern Transmission," *Journal of Hindu Studies*. Vol. 6, p. 314n58; Gavin Flood, 1993, *Body and Cosmology in Kashmir Śaivism*, San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, p. 118.

⁸⁵⁸ See Malinson, 2007, p. 213 n.277 and Padoux, 2011, p. 19.

⁸⁵⁹ beginning with *a* and ending with *visarga*.

⁸⁶⁰ The name of the afflicted.

⁸⁶¹ *oṃ juṃ saḥ*.

⁸⁶² *ṣoḍaśāre mahācakre ṣoḍaśasvarabhūṣite |*
ādyantamantrayogena madhye nāma samālikhet | |28 | |
jīvāntaḥ sāntamadhyasthaṃ varṇāntenābhirakṣitam |
pratyaṛṇam amṛteśena sampuṭitoā tu sarvataḥ | |29 | |
madhye dalesu sarvesu śaśimaṇḍalamadhyagam |
bāhye tu dviguṇaṃ padmaṃ kādisāntakrameṇa tu | |30 | |
pūrvavat tu likhen mantrī prati sādy arṇarodhitam |
varṇaṃ tadantaḥ sādhyasya nāma bāhye 'rkamaṇḍalam | |31 | |
purandarapureṇādhaḥ samantāt parivārayet |

mantra, followed by the sixteen vowels, then the mantra repeated again three times.⁸⁶³

This passage reveals that, the *Netra Tantra* is very specific about the way to write the mantra. Padoux argues that, "in principle mantras cannot be oral since their nature is that of the word, of the primal *vāc*, identical with the formless absolute."⁸⁶⁴ However, there are many instances in which written mantras occur, both in and outside of ritual.⁸⁶⁵ In these cases, the written form is linked to the nature of mantras themselves.⁸⁶⁶ For example, the *Nayasūtra* of the *Nīsvāsātattvasaṃhitā* introduces a series of physical gestures that correspond to the written form of the phonemes.⁸⁶⁷ The *Nayasūtra* connects the letters to the *tattvas* and explains:

Without knowing the *tattvas* [as] situated in the body, and all the letters as they are situated in the body, one cannot be liberated. All these I shall teach you [as they are] written visibly. Some have the shape of parts of the body; some have the shape of the [whole] body [arranged in particular ways]. Putting the hands against [the sides of] the body and the shanks next to one another, [with] the whole body stretched out [straight, one makes one's body] the shape of the "formless" letter *a* (*niṣkalākaravigramam*).⁸⁶⁸

In the *Nayasūtra*, even the formless letter assumes a "written" shape. This formless letter does not correspond to any written script, hence it is called "formless."⁸⁶⁹ The

⁸⁶³ Padoux, 2011, p. 98.

⁸⁶⁴ Padoux, 2011, p. 116.

⁸⁶⁵ Padoux, 2001, p. 116-118.-

⁸⁶⁶ Padoux, 2011, p. 116.

⁸⁶⁷ NS 1.1-82b

⁸⁶⁸ NS 1.29-31. Trsl. Goodall, 2015, p. 406-407.

⁸⁶⁹ Goodall, 2015, p. 407.

Nayasūtra then explains how to best position the body so that it corresponds to the written shapes of the characters of the Gupta alphabet.⁸⁷⁰

Similarly, the cosmological basis for *bindu* and *anusvāra* is rooted in their written and verbal articulations. Padoux describes the *bindu* as a "drop" of concentrated phonetic energy. It is the point at which the energy of the word gathers upon itself before it divides itself and spreads outwardly to manifest both its power and the universe.⁸⁷¹ The *bindu* is represented dot or drop. It constitutes the point that pierces the target at which the mantra aims.⁸⁷² The *anusvāra* appears as a dot above a nasalization to indicate its prolongation. It is the graphical and phonetic manifestation of the *bindu*.⁸⁷³ Likewise, the *visarga*, the sixteenth vowel, is graphically depicted as two dots, the division of *bindu*. It manifests sonically as the escape of breath after a vowel at the end of a word.⁸⁷⁴ Graphically then, the written mantra corresponds to the shape of the breath. When the *mantrin* commits the *mṛtyuñjaya* mantra to writing, he places the *śārada* letter and the shape of the mouth made during vocalization onto the *maṇḍala*.⁸⁷⁵ Thus, he connects the sonic with the physical to further empower the mantra and place it within the body of the practitioner.

⁸⁷⁰ See Goodall, 2015, p. 402 for a diagram of this script and p. 411, 413, 415, 417, and 420 for figures depicting these positions and their corresponding scriptural forms.

⁸⁷¹ Padoux, 2011, p. 117.

⁸⁷² Padoux, 2011, p. 117.

⁸⁷³ Padoux, 2011, p. 117.

⁸⁷⁴ Padoux, 2011, p. 117-118.

⁸⁷⁵ Padoux, 2011, p. 101 notes, "the prescription in tantras of such written procedures shows that these texts, though supposedly revealed, were originally written." It is clear that both the *Nayasūtra* and *Netra Tantra* use the scripts of their composition for their written form, thus corroborating Padoux's statement.

D. Mantra and Color

Maṇḍalas rely on the power of mantra to achieve an effect. The mantras that the *mantrin* writes on these diagrams constitute an integral part of *maṇḍalas*.⁸⁷⁶ The name of the afflicted, surrounded by petals infused with various phonemes and the mantra *om jum saḥ*, appears first. The *mantrin* then encloses this with characters of the alphabet from *ka* to *sa*. The first set of letters consists of the vowel sounds plus *aḥ* and *aṃ*,⁸⁷⁷ the second includes the consonants.⁸⁷⁸ Finally, the *mantrin* surrounds the whole diagram with the syllables.⁸⁷⁹ When the *mantrin* surrounds the name of the afflicted with the mantra he protects the afflicted person and activates the mantras. Yelle describes the process of enclosure of the central element, in this case the name used in ritual, as a transition, "between the 'outside' portions of the mantra and the 'inside' [which] is taken as analogous to the relationship between language and the physical reality: instead of simply stating that 'the word was made flesh,' mantras actually diagram this transition by degrees."⁸⁸⁰ In other words, the sounds that surround the mantra lead the *mantrin* into a place where language controls physical reality. The mantra transitions into the body of the

⁸⁷⁶ Padoux, 2011, p. 119.

⁸⁷⁷ *aḥ, am, ām, im, īm, um, ūm, ṛm, ṝm, ḷm, ḹm, em, aim, om, aum, aṃ*, these syllables are known as *kalās*, a word that is also a synonym for the phases of the moon. In addition to the phases of the moon, the sixteen *kalās* also represent the sixteen phases of Śiva. The Trika school of non-dual Śaiva Tantra, to which the NT is related (but it is not part of its canon), there is a 17th *kalā*. This additional *kalā* is transcendent *citkalā*, pure consciousness. TĀ 3.137; PTV 35; Padoux, 2011, p. 91; Mallinson, 2007, p. 213.

⁸⁷⁸ The consonant *ha* is not included in this set of consonants. We do find it included in the later mantra of *haṃsa* as the beginning of a different ordering of the alphabet. Jayaratha's commentary on the *Tantrāloka* at 5.144 describes *sa* as *amṛtavarṇa*, the letter of *amṛta*.

⁸⁷⁹ PTV 22 also notes that the phoneme *sa* represents the 31 *tattoas* from *pṛthivī* [earth] to *māyā*. The remaining *tattoas* *śuddhavidyā, īśvara*, and *sadāśiva* stand for *au* and *śiva* and *śakti* for *aḥ*, making the mantra *sauḥ*.

⁸⁸⁰ Yelle, 2003, p. 41.

afflicted As it is synonymous with the deity, the divine enters into and transforms the physical body.

A thirty-two petaled lotus, where each petal represents one of the Sanskrit phonemes, except *ha* and *kṣa*,⁸⁸¹ encircles the *śaśimaṇḍala*. This is the typical *śabdarāśi*, ordering of the alphabet.⁸⁸² The *mantrin* merges the name of the afflicted with the mantra and places (*nyāsa*) both on the *maṇḍala*. This fuses the three elements together.

The *Netra Tantra* does not explore the symbolism its *maṇḍalas*, but other texts do this. For example, the Buddhist *Cakrasamvara Tantra* discusses the ritual and symbolic elements that it shares with the *Netra Tantra*. It also describes a lunar (*śaśin*) *maṇḍala* that brings relief from ailments and disease.⁸⁸³ The *Cakrasamvara* describes the *śaśin* as visualized on the left hand of the practitioner.⁸⁸⁴ It is a lunar disc that includes a figure with nine parts, eight of which surround a center, which feature the syllable *om*. The parts that surround *om* — which may indicate an eight-petaled lotus — each contain a syllable.⁸⁸⁵ This is similar to the *candramaṇḍala* above, save for the *vajras* and the reference to the four directions. The *Cakrasamvara* says that after visualizing the *śaśimaṇḍala* in the left hand, the "crystalline

⁸⁸¹ Kṣemarāja adds the missing *ha* and *kṣa* in order to assure the complete set of phonemes.

⁸⁸² There is another, more secret, Tantric ordering called *mālinī* or *nādiphāntakrama*, in which the sounds are arranged from *na* to *pha*. The KubjT and MVUT describes this sequence as related to the goddess Mālinī. Alper, 1989, p. 266; Teun Goudriann and Sanjukta Gupta, 1981, *Hindu Tantric and Śākta literature*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, p. 53. Vasudeva, 2004; Somadeva Vasudeva, 2007, "Synaesthetic Iconography: 1. Nādiphāntakrama," in *Mélanges tantriques à la mémoire d'Hélène Brunner*, Eds. Dominic Goodall and André Padoux, Pondicherry: Institut français d'Indologie / École française d'Extrême-Orient. Collection Indologie, for variations on the sequence and analysis of the *nādiphāntakrama*. Kṣemarāja understood this *śabdarāśi* ordering of the alphabet as a Bhairava who is the male counterpart to the female alphabet goddess Māṭṛkā. Törzsök, 2009, p. 11

⁸⁸³ Gray, 2007, p. 347.

⁸⁸⁴ Gray, 2007, p. 347.

⁸⁸⁵ Gray, 2007, p. 347.

syllables"⁸⁸⁶ appear. The practitioner then places these five syllables "on all areas"⁸⁸⁷ presumably on the *maṇḍala*. According to Gray, this creates a diagram of five squares, laid out in the form of a cross, with four more squares at the corners creating a nine square grid.⁸⁸⁸ The points of the cross correspond to the *vajras* of the *candramaṇḍala*. Again, this *maṇḍala* is very similar in composition, though not identical in form to its counterpart in the *Netra Tantra*. These similarities reveal the close relationship between the two texts.

The *Cakrasamvara*, like the *Netra Tantra*,⁸⁸⁹ speaks of a "king of mantras" (*mantrarāṭ*). It is this that renders the ritual powerful. Unlike the *Netra Tantra*, though where the *mantrin* inscribes the *mantrarāṭ*, in the *Cakrasamvara* "a king of mantra is born in whatever place to which he directs his thoughts."⁸⁹⁰ It is a mental construct. The *mantrin* does not need to write the mantra, but is able to produce it through mediation. In both cases, the deity and the mantra are literally and figuratively identical. Irrespective of the way in which the mantra is generated, its use manifests the divine in the physical world.

The *Cakrasamvara* also explains the symbolic associations of the *maṇḍala*'s colors. The colors white, black, red, and yellow often appear as part of ritual diagrams in Tantric texts, including the *Netra Tantra*. It instructs the *mantrin* to write the name of the afflicted with red lotus and saffron ink mixed with milk. He then mutes yellow pigment with milk. The *Cakrasamvara* describes the symbolism of the colors thus:

⁸⁸⁶ *Om, hrīḥ, ha, hūṃ, and phaṭ*. Gray, 2007, p. 347n25.

⁸⁸⁷ Gray, 2007, p. 347.

⁸⁸⁸ Gray, 2007, p. 347.

⁸⁸⁹ See NT 6.7.

⁸⁹⁰ CS 43.21-22; Trlt, Gray, 2007, p. 348.

*athavā mantrarājam (xxx) yatra (xxx) cintayet | | 21 | |
(xxx) tadā jāyate [nātra saṃśayah] |*

One pacifies with [the color] white, and one kills instantly with black. With red one subjugates and summons in a moment. With yellow, all are subdued — this is the fixed opinion of the teaching. With yellow, one subdues an army with its boats, war machines, and elephants. Just by contemplating the white, the dead are revived (CS 43.22-25)⁸⁹¹

This extract contains a selection of the symbols connected with white, black, and yellow. Other texts, both Hindu and Buddhist Tantric associate yellow with the *bhūmaṇḍala* (earth *maṇḍala*) or simply with the Earth itself.⁸⁹² Vīravajra's *Padārthaprakāśikā-nāma-śrīsamvaramūlatantraṭīkā*, a commentary on the *Cakrasamvara*, associates yellow with enrichment⁸⁹³ and the defeat of enemy military forces.⁸⁹⁴ Control over armies enriches the monarch and extends his life and legacy. The *Netra Tantra* describes the symbolism of the color of mustard seeds in the *nīrājana* rite. White represents appeasement, red grants a kingdom, yellow causes protection, and black leads to the destruction of an enemy.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹¹ Trsl. Gray, 2007, p. 348. Here I have solely relied upon Gray's translation as there is not enough of the Sanskrit available to attempt any analysis. We have only three words in *ślokas* 22 and 23a and 23b-25 are missing. Gray works with two more complete Tibetan translations. As Gray points out here, these colors are associated with the deities invoked and substances used during various magical rites.

⁸⁹² Davis, 1992, p. 112; Fabio Rambelli, 2000, "Tantric Buddhism and Chinese Thought in East Asia," in *Tantra in Practice*, ed David Gordon White. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 373; Flood, 2006, p. 142; Vrajavallabha Dviveda, "Having Become a God, He Should Sacrifice to the Gods," in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism*, ed Teun Goudriaan. Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1992, p. 123; Lillian Silburn, 1988, *Kundalini: The energy of the depths*, trsl Jacques Gontier, Albany: SUNY Press, p. 128.

⁸⁹³ Gray, 2007, p. 312. Here black, a color not used in the drawing of the *maṇḍala* or *yantra*, is associated with the ability to destroy. Further, Vīravajra associates the colors with different castes and elements. Pacifying/white = *kṣatriya*/water, enriching yellow = *vaiśya*/earth, controlling/red = Brahmin/fire, destroying/black = *śūdra*/wind.

⁸⁹⁴ Gray, 2007, p. 348.

⁸⁹⁵ NT 15.9b-11

The ritual also calls for honey and white, jasmine flowers, camphor dust, sandalwood, and milk.⁸⁹⁶ Jasmine has a strong scent, which adds a sensory element to the rite.⁸⁹⁷ It is associated with the visualization of Rudra found in Chapter Two of *Svacchanda Tantra*.⁸⁹⁸ The *Svacchanda Tantra* also construes a relationship between ritual described here and the *nīrājana* I examined in Chapter Two. *Mantrins* perform both rites for the king protect his life and kingdom.

The text then returns to practical matters:

The *mantrin* should worship the *cakra* with white flowers, after [he] has written the *mantrarāt* in grey with camphor dust, together with white sandalwood, and after he has applied milk and yellow pigment, O great goddess. [The *mantrarāt*] provides great protection and bestows good luck and prosperity. [The *mantrin*] should place [the mantra] in the middle of honey, together with completely white offerings. After acting this way for seven days, he becomes Mṛtyujit. [The *mantrin*] explains to kings how best to

⁸⁹⁶ The materials here differ greatly from tantric charnel ground rites such as those found in the *Hevajra Tantra*, which gives a clear, transgressive origin for the materials used in *maṇḍala* practice. It says, "black colouring is obtained from charcoal of the cemetery, white from ground human bones, yellow from green lac, red from cemetery-bricks, green from caurya leaves and ground human bones, and dark blue from ground human bones and cemetery charcoal." David L. Snellgrove, 1959, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*, London: Oxford University Press, p. 51. Further, the text says to measure using a "cemetery thread," which Vajragarbha's commentary *Hevajrapīṇḍārthaṭīkā* says is made from the intestine of a corpse. Though the *Netra Tantra* only gives a few of the materials used for its *maṇḍalas*, we can see that they are innocuous substances such as saffron and milk. I provide the materials given in the *Hevajra Tantra* to demonstrate that the symbolism of the colors permeated the tradition though the actual organic material could differ greatly. This means the same *maṇḍala* could be drawn using both orthodox and heterodox materials for similar purposes. As the *Netra Tantra* is a largely conservative text I would expect to only find orthodox substances used within its rites.

⁸⁹⁷ See Aleksandra Wenta, 2018, "Smell: The Sense Perception of Recognition," in *Tantrapuṣpāñjali: Tantric Traditions and Philosophy of Kashmir*, Eds. Bettina Sharada Bäumer and Hamsa Stainton. New Delhi: Aryan Books, for a discussion of smell in the non-dual Śaiva tradition.

⁸⁹⁸ Barretta, 2012, p. 58.

protect kings. [Protection] removes the enemy's arrogance and grants favors at the time of battle. (NT 6.32cd-36ab)⁸⁹⁹

The *śaśimaṇḍala*, with its center and eight parts, is the locus for the *navātman* mantra.⁹⁰⁰ The latter corresponds to nine *tattvas*. Kṣemarāja associates the *tattvas* with the following phonemes: *śiva* (*ha*), *sadāśiva* (*ra*), *īśvara* (*kṣa*), *vidyā* (*ma*), *māyā* (*la*), *kāla* (*va*), *niyati* (*ya*), *puruṣa* (*ū*), and *prakṛti* (*aum*).⁹⁰¹ The *Svacchanda Tantra* explains how to place these *tattvas* onto the petals of the lotus.⁹⁰² The *mantrin* begins in the northeast (with *prakṛti*) at the upper left, moves clockwise to east, and ends in the center of the flower.⁹⁰³ Kṣemarāja describes this *maṇḍala*, which he calls

⁸⁹⁹ *sitacandanasaṃyuktaṃ rocanākṣīrayogataḥ* | | 32 | |
likhitvā mantrarājaṃ tu karpūrakṣodadhūsaram |
mahārakṣāvidhānaṃ tu puṣṭasaubhāgyadāyakam | | 33 | |
etac cakraṃ mahādevi sitapuṣpaiḥ prapūjayet |
sarvaśvetopacāreṇa madhumadhye nidhāpayet | | 34 | |
anenaiva vidhānena saptāhān mṛtyujid bhavet |
rājarakṣāvidhānaṃ tu bhūbhṛtāṃ tu prakāśayet | | 35 | |
saṃgrāmakāle varadaṃ ripudarpāpahaṃ bhavet |

⁹⁰⁰ SvT 5.19 also calls this mantra *vidyārāja*. Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, p. 255.

⁹⁰¹ NTU 4.1; Padoux 1990, p. 354. Singh, 1979a, p. 7, also gives an alternate of *śiva*, *śakti*, *sadāśiva*, *īśvara*, *śuddha*, *vidyā*, *mahāmāyā*, *māyā*, *puruṣa*, and *prakṛti*. He also says the letters for the given *tattvas* are *h*, *r*, *kṣ*, *m*, *l*, *y*, *ṇ*, and *aum*. Padoux 1990, p. 354n62 gives a similar mantra *rhrkṣvlyūṃ* without the supporting vowels and describes a variant found at TĀ 30.11-16 and YH 3.102. Singh also gives the sixth *tattva* as *kalā*, which is a mistransliteration of the text. According to Heilijgers-Seeleen, 1994, p. 27, it is understood that these nine *tattvas* include the remaining *tattvas* so that the full set of 36 are represented within the nine. Goudriaan and Gupta, 1981, p. 35 give a different set of *tattvas* from the Uttarasūtra, *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *niyati*, *kalā*, *māyā*, *vidyā*, *īśvara*, *sadāśiva*, and *dehavyāpin*. Padoux's reading of the PTV gives the nine as *sadāśiva* (*ka*), *īśvara* (*kha*), *śuddhavidyā* (*ga*), *māyā* (*gha*) *kalā* (*jña*), *vidyā* (*ca*), *rāga* (*cha*), *niyati* (*ja*), and *kāla* (*jha*).

⁹⁰² SvTU 4.103a

⁹⁰³ Padoux, 1990b, p. 354. Padoux also notes that this is the same layout/ order of a nine-by-nine grid that places OM at the eight cardinal and intermediate directions, and in the center. The remainder of the grid is composed of the letters associated with the nine *tattvas*. Padoux also notes that the syllables used (*h*, *r*, *kṣ*, *m*, *l*, *v*, *y*, *ū*, and *om*) are a variation on the *navātmamantra* (R H KṢ L V Y Ū M) given in TĀ 30.11-16 or in Padoux, 2013, p. 121 as H S KṢ M L V R Y Ū M.

navanābhamaṇḍala.⁹⁰⁴ It is used as part of the purification in the initiation ritual.⁹⁰⁵

The *Netra Tantra* reverses the direction of placement. The *mantrin* begins in the center, at *śiva*, and works his way outward. This connects the afflicted with the divine. The *navātman* mantra often appears without its supporting vowels.⁹⁰⁶ This renders it inarticulable.

Finally, the *mantrin* prepares a mixture of medicine, water, jewels, and a white lotus in his water pot and anoints the body of the diseased person. The *mantrin* uses additional white elements when he worships on the *maṇḍala*. Here, for the first time, the physical body of the afflicted person is actually present and involved in the ritual.

The *mantrin* [writes the name of the person] who wishes to become Amṛteśa as well as the nine *tattovas*, starting with *śiva*⁹⁰⁷ in the *śaśimaṇḍala*, from the middle going east, etc. When overcome with 100 illnesses or threats of untimely death, then [the *mantrin*] conducts worship with white implements, or with ghee mixed with milk, or with sesame seeds, or [he] uses fuel made of milk[-tree wood]. From [this] oblation [the afflicted] attains peace. Then, after [the *mantrin*] has honored [Mrtyujit], with a great and auspicious battle-cry, he anoints [the sick person] on the head, [with a substance from] from a pot with a spout that resembles a white lotus, filled with water that contains jewels, [and includes] all kinds of [medicinal]

⁹⁰⁴ SvT 4.41 and 5.34.

⁹⁰⁵ Padoux, 1990, p. 355.

⁹⁰⁶ See Brunner, Oberhammer, and Padoux, 2004, p. 261-262 for references to the vowelless *navātman*.

⁹⁰⁷ As noted above, it is unclear exactly to which set of nine *tattovas* the *Netra Tantra* refers.

herbs. [Originally] afflicted by various disease, he is [now] liberated, there is no doubt. (NT 6.36cd-45)⁹⁰⁸

The *mantrin* can perform the ritual on behalf of someone who has already died. The text does not indicate whether a proxy takes the place of the deceased or if the rite takes place prior to cremation.

III. Visualizing Amṛta: SvT 7.207-225

The *Svacchanda Tantra* assuages the threat of death through meditation. Here the practitioner conquers death through contemplation. He visualizes himself moving through the *tattvas*. As he proceeds through the various states, the

⁹⁰⁸ *śivādinavatattoāni pratyekaṃ śaśimaṇḍalam* || 36 ||
madhyāt pūrvādi aiśyantam amṛteśena mantriṇā |
yadā vyādhiśatākīrṇam apamṛtyuśatena vā || 37 ||
tadā śvetopacāreṇa pūjyaṃ kṣīraghṛtena vā |
tilaiḥ kṣīrasamidbhir vā homāc chāntiṃ samaśnute || 38 ||
evaṃ saṃpūjya kumbhe tu sarvaśadhisamanvite |
sitapadmamukhodgāre ratnagarbhāmbupūrite || 39 ||
sarvamaṅgalagoṣeṇa śīrasi hy abhiṣecayet |
sa mucyate na saṃdehaḥ sarvavyādhiprapīḍitaḥ || 40 ||

The section concludes with a description of the end of the ceremony. (NT 6.41-45) This explanation includes various numbers that refer to something not included in the text. I have not found any clues to this numbering system in any other text and do not know to what they refer. I must agree with Brunner, 1974, p. 141, who argues that this is a later addition to the text and does not make any sense within the current context. The numerical references and language is very different from the rest of the text. Kṣemarāja makes no attempt to explain the section and dismisses it.

dhyātva parāmṛtaṃ nityaṃ nityoditam anāmayam |
prakriyāntastham amṛtam avatārya parāc chivāt || 41 ||
caturnavāmṛtādhāraṃ navadhā navapūritam |
śatārdhakośobhitaṃ nityaṃ śaṭpañcaikasamanvitaṃ || 42 ||
anantādhāragambhīram aṣṭātrimśadvibhūṣitam |
pañcabhir vā prasiddhyarthaṃ pūrṇaṃ tena nirantaram || 43 ||
evaṃ dhyānaparo yas tu sabāhyābhyantarāmṛtam |
vikṣobhya kalaśaṃ mūrdhni daiśiko mantratatparaḥ || 44 ||
anugrahapadāvastho hy abhiṣiñcet prayatnataḥ |
sa mucyate na sandehaḥ saṃsārād duratikramāt || 45 ||

practitioner defeats both death and time. To do this, he focuses on the deified form of *amṛta*, Amṛteśa.⁹⁰⁹

The *Svacchanda Tantra* teaches *kālamṛtyujaya*. This compound can be read conquest (*jaya*) of time (*kāla*) and death (*mṛtyu*) or conquest of untimely death (*kālamṛtyu*).⁹¹⁰ Kṣemarāja gives no clarification. He describes *kālamṛtyu* as a supernatural state (*siddhi*) in which the practitioner achieves union with Bhairava.⁹¹¹ I prefer to leave the term *kāla* untranslated since it can convey both "time" and "death."⁹¹² The *Svacchanda Tantra* speaks of victory over the three times (*kālatrayaṃ vijānāti*): the past, present, and future. To conquer them is to vanquish death. Therefore, the ambiguity of the text's use of the word *kāla* reinforces the notion that victory over time and death are synonymous. I focus on the *Svacchanda Tantra* here rather than the *Netra Tantra* as the *Svacchanda Tantra* contains far more details and richer imagery than the *para* chapter of the *Netra Tantra*.

Barretta includes the *mṛtyu vañcana* rites in a list of the six acts (*ṣaṭkarmāni*) found in the *Svacchanda Tantra*. She labels all six "malevolent."⁹¹³ However, *mṛtyu vañcana* rites focus on appeasement (*śanti*), which is not generally considered malevolent (*abhicāra*).⁹¹⁴ It is unclear why Barretta describes *mṛtyu vañcana* as

⁹⁰⁹ SvT 7.225a is the only direct reference to the Bhairava in the form of Amṛteśa in the SvT or SvTU.

⁹¹⁰ SvT 7.225a.

⁹¹¹ SvTU 7.226a *siddhibhāgamṛteśabhairavatulya*.

⁹¹² In its chapter on the highest (*para*) yoga of the *Netra Tantra*, this ambiguity arises at NT 8.21-22a. Bäumer translates the passage thus, "The one who by this eightfold *yoga* is firmly established in his own supreme nature conquers Time with this realization and becomes the supreme Lord Amṛteśa (Lord of Immortality). O Goddess! He becomes the Conquerer of Death and Time cannot affect him any longer." 2018, p. 27. Kṣemarāja adds at NT 32c-33a that "being established therein, this person knows everything, past and future. With the senses under control, that reality has the quality of Energy." Trsl Bäumer, 2018, p. 28.

⁹¹³ Barretta, 2012, p. 197.

⁹¹⁴ Gudrun Bühnemann, 2000, "The Six Rites of Magic," in *Tantra in Practice*. ed David Gordon White, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 447.

malevolent.⁹¹⁵ She turns to malevolent practices to link the *Svacchanda Tantra* with heterodoxy. Her assumption that the conquest of death is somehow evil implies that it is unnatural. However, *mṛtyu vañcana* practices occur throughout Indian literature, as I demonstrated earlier. As far as I know, no text describes *mṛtyu vañcana* as malevolent.

Meditation, in the *Svacchanda Tantra*, focuses on breath control, drawing on the *haṃsa* mantra.⁹¹⁶ The *haṃsa* mantra allows the practitioner to move through the *tattvas* in order to conquer past, present, and future.⁹¹⁷ Through this practice, he vanquishes death. In this visualization, the *yogin* manifests *amṛta*, which floods the body.⁹¹⁸ It leads to the attainment of the *siddhis* and knowledge of the *tattvas*. This, in turn, leads to the command over death.⁹¹⁹ This meditation requires a seasoned *yogin* to devote himself to a difficult and esoteric practice that offers him an escape through death by way of liberation.

In order to conquer death, the practitioner must spend six months in meditation.⁹²⁰ Once achieved, the practice must continue indefinitely so that the practitioner does not risk a return to the world, or a return to time. The *Svacchanda Tantra*, like the *Netra Tantra*, sets out the purpose of the practice but conceals the

⁹¹⁵ Barretta, 2012, p. 197-198, mistakenly says that this practice is found in the SvT's tenth chapter, though quotes the seventh in her footnotes. The tenth chapter focuses on cosmology, including the thirty-two hells, and purification but not on ritual or meditation aimed at the vanquishment of death. Thus, I assume the attribution in the text is a simple error.

⁹¹⁶ *Haṃsa* literally translates as goose. Yelle, 2003, p. 28-30 describes *haṃsa* as the path of the breath in which *haṃ* is the sound made on inhalation and *sa* on exhalation. These syllables also contain all the sounds of the Sanskrit language as *ha* begins in the back of the throat and *sa* forward in the mouth to the teeth. The image of the goose is then a pun that leads to a visualization of the entirety of the world within the body.

⁹¹⁷ SvT 7.209, 213-214.

⁹¹⁸ SvT 7.221-222.

⁹¹⁹ SvT 7.226.

⁹²⁰ SvT 7.209a *dhyānayuktasya śaṅmāsāt sarvajñatvaṃ pravartate.*

method from the uninitiated Kṣemarāja writes that it is only intended for the highest, most experienced *yogins*.⁹²¹

*Mṛtyu vañcana*⁹²² rituals deploy material objects and physical action to eliminate death. Meditation practice seeks a different kind of bodily transformation.⁹²³ The *yogin* cannot perform meditation on behalf of another person. The individual finds release through his own practice.

Much of the meditation imagery of the *Svacchanda Tantra* mirrors what we encountered in the *Netra Tantra*. The *yogin* visualizes either Bhairava or the *haṃsa* mantra in order to gain control over *kāla*. The syllable *haṃsa* manifests as Śiva's creative and destructive breath.⁹²⁴ *Haṃsa* is combination of *ha* and *sa*, which represent Śiva and Śakti,⁹²⁵ respectively. It is also a palindrome of *saḥ aham*, or *so 'ham*, meaning "I am that," i.e., the divine.⁹²⁶ Abhinavagupta proposes *haṃsa* to represent the syllables *ka* to *sa*.⁹²⁷ The *Svacchanda Tantra*'s *yogin* enunciates the mantric phonemes through his breath. The connection with breathing (*haṃ* / in-breath and *saḥ* / out-breath)⁹²⁸ enables the *yogin* to emit the mantra constantly as he breathes. With each breath, the *yogin* creates and destroys the entire universe.⁹²⁹

⁹²¹ SvTU 7.227: *cintayet svābhedena vimṛśet, paraṃ tattoṃ hṛddvādaśāntasphuritaṃ cidānandaghanātmakam, kālacāreṇa bāhyenāntareṇa ca varjitam, kalākalaṅkena kalpanāmalena śūnyam, ata eva catuṣkalavad akārādikalāyogābhāvād niṣkalam paramaṃ padam anuttaraṃ dhāma* || 227 ||

⁹²² Sometimes also called *kāla vañcana*.

⁹²³ SvT 7.224b: *amṛtāpūritaṃ dehaṃ sarvam eva vicintayet* || 224 ||

⁹²⁴ Padoux, 1990b, p. 82, 140; SvT 7.27.

⁹²⁵ Heilijgers-Seelen, 1990, p. 50.

⁹²⁶ Yelle, 2003, p. 26.

⁹²⁷ TĀ 3.148.

⁹²⁸ Yelle, 2003, p. 27.

⁹²⁹ The mantras and their symbolism are encoded within the texts so as to assure correct use by only the *yogins* who can extract them. The practitioner is able to situate the mantra within the meditation through usage and by way of understanding the underlying meanings of the mantras. Without this knowledge, the meditation cannot be effective.

After [the *yogin* has] visualized Bhairava, who is the Lord of Time, or [has focused] on *haṃsa*, who is the Lord of all, [the breath], which travels through the pathways of the nostrils, emits and absorbs the universe. (SvT 7.207)⁹³⁰

The continual cycle creation and destruction constitutes time. There is no end to the breath as it waxes and wanes. It generates a deity that is both inside and outside of the practitioner's body. The life-sustaining nature of breath is the path to *amṛta*. This *amṛta* brings about a state that exists beyond physicality. Once the *yogin* "establishes himself in that state, he can make everything happen,⁹³¹ situated among all beings."⁹³² His presence amongst the world's beings — including those who have already died and those not yet born — demonstrates the *yogins* conquest of time.⁹³³ The *yogin* creates everything through the focus on his breath. This practice spreads the *haṃsa* mantra throughout the world. Time itself has no beginning or end. What is situated in time is located everywhere simultaneously.⁹³⁴ It is a form of practice that is similar to what is mapped in a later⁹³⁵ *haṭha* yoga text, the *Khecarīvidyā*. Here, the *yogin* is instructed to worship the *liṅga* "at the place where day and night are suppressed"⁹³⁶ This allows the *yogin* to conquer death. In the *Khecarīvidyā*, the *yogin* worships and focuses on the *liṅga*, but he cannot create it

⁹³⁰ *dhyātvā kāleśasvacchandaṃ haṃsaṃ vā sakaleśvaram |*
nāsikārandhramārgasthaḥ sa sṛjet saṃharej jagat | | 207 | |

⁹³¹ I.e. he should impel the entire world into existence.

⁹³² SvT 7.208a: *tatrasthaḥ kalayet sarvaṃ sarvabhūteṣv avasthitaḥ |*

⁹³³ While memory is considered a state of consciousness it can be connected with the present in order to transcend time, opening a path to Absolute understanding. Padoux, 2013, p. 178.

⁹³⁴ Mallinson, 2007, p. 132.

⁹³⁵ c. fourteenth century, Mallinson, 2007, p. 3.

⁹³⁶ Mallinson, 2007, p. 132; Mallinson, 2007, 232n416 says, "the *yogin* should hold his breath to stop it flowing in *Idā* and *Piṅgalā*. He thereby forces it into *Suṣumṇā*." In other words, the *yogin* holds his breath, suppressing the in- and out-breath in order to vanquish death.

because it is "free from the process of time."⁹³⁷ The *liṅga* is, of course, identical with Śiva in the same way as the mantra and *maṇḍala* are synonymous with Śiva.

Returning to the *Svacchanda Tantra*, the text describes the *yogin* situated in his breath so that he can conquer death.

[The *yogin*] dwells there [in breath]. He should impel all [creation], [and is] situated among all beings. After [he has] meditated upon [*haṁsa*], he conquers death. The powerful Lord does not create that which is not situated in *kāla*. (SvT 7.208)⁹³⁸

The destruction of death is the first step in the meditation process. Once the *yogin* has conquered death, he turns his attention to the higher states of cognition that bring him closer to the divine.

For one engaged in meditation, after six months, omniscience arises. The knower of yoga is yoked with *kāla*. He recognizes three times [the past, present, and future]. (SvT 7.209)⁹³⁹

The play on *kāla* in this passage is important. When the practitioner transcends time he simultaneously transcends death. *Kāla* also refers to one of the pure / impure (*śuddhāśuddha*) *tattvas*. When the *yogin* transcends the *tattvas*, and all they represent, he moves up the cosmological map toward the highest *śiva tattva*.

In the next verse, the *yogin* focuses on the *kālahamṣa*. This mantra, which can be translated as "time" or "death" *hamṣa*, allows its user to become Śiva. *Kāla* spans

⁹³⁷ Mallinson, 2007, p. 132.

⁹³⁸ *tatrasthaḥ kalayet sarvaṃ sarvabhūteṣu avasthitah |
tasthaṃ dhyātvā jayen mṛtyuṃ nākālasthaṃ kalet prabhuḥ || 208 ||*

⁹³⁹ *dhyānayuktasya ṣaṇmāsāt sarvajñatvaṃ pravartate |
kālatrayaṃ vijānāti kālayuktas tu yogavit || 209 ||*

time and death: to become Śiva is to be time and death, i.e., to create and to destroy.

In mythology, Śiva appears as Kālāntaka, the Destroyer of Death.

Śveta was a virtuous king, a devotee of Śiva; everyone in his kingdom was happy. Yama and Kāla came to take him one day when he was worshipping Śiva. Then Śiva, the Destroyer of Kāla, looked at Kāla with his third eye and burnt him to ashes in order to protect the devotee. Śiva said to Śveta, "Kāla eats all creatures, and he came here to eat you in my presence and so I burnt him. You and I will kill evil men who violate dharma, heretics who wish to destroy people." But Śveta said, "This world behaves properly because of Kāla, who protects and creates by destroying creatures. If you are devoted to creation you should revive Kāla, for without him there will be nothing." Śiva did as his devotee suggested, he laughed and revived Kāla with the form he had had. Then Kāla praised Śiva, the Destroyer of Kāla, and Kāla went home and told his wife Māyā and all his messengers never to bring any devotees of Śiva to the world of death, but to bring all other sinners.⁹⁴⁰

This extract, from the *Skanda Purāṇa*, suggests that only a devotee of Śiva is able to escape death fully. It is only possible because Śiva is dedicated to the act of creation. Through the revival of Kāla, he allows time to continue.

Either by reciting or meditating on the *kālahamṣa*, O Goddess, [the practitioner] becomes Śiva [who] has the form of *kāla* and acts freely (or as Svachanda) like *kāla*. (SvT 7.210)⁹⁴¹

Through time (or death, *kāla*) the world continues to flourish. Without the breath nothing is created or destroyed, and nothing at all exists. When the devotee becomes *kāla*, he creates and destroys through the *hamṣa* mantra.

⁹⁴⁰ SP 1.1.32.4-92. Trls. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, 1980a, *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, p. 234.

⁹⁴¹ *kālahamṣam sa tu japan dhyāyan vāpi maheśvari |
sa bhavet kālarūpī vai svachandaḥ kālavac caret || 210 ||*

Death has been destroyed, [the *yogin*] has abandoned old age, is free from all danger [caused by] disease, [he] knows, learns, and daydreams. [He] gains the all supreme *siddhis*, [which] arise constantly as a result of conquering *kāla*. (SvT 7.211-212ab)⁹⁴²

Following the attainment of the *kāla tattva*, the *yogin* moves through the series of hierarchical *tattvas* that confer the powers of the deities. First, he attains those of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra before he finally reaches the state of *sadāśiva*. This ranks among the highest of the thirty-six *tattvas*, and culminates in the dissolution of the individual into the divine. Once this occurs, a practitioner in "*parāvasthā* (the highest state) of Bhairava is free (*unmukta*) of all notions connected to direction (*dik*) [and] time (*kāla*). He cannot be particularized (*aviśeṣiṇi*) by some definite space (*deśa*) or designation (*uddeśa*)."⁹⁴³ En route to this unpredicated state, the *yogin* adopts the lifespan, qualities, and powers of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra.⁹⁴⁴

After [the *yogin*] has meditated [on *haṃsa*] in the right nostril, he obtains the powers of Brahmā. He obtains length of life [and] power equal to [Brahmā].⁹⁴⁵ As a result, he [the *yogin*] knows the past. (SvT 7.212cd-213ab)⁹⁴⁶

Brahmā, called Svayambhū, is the self-born or self-created Now equal in power to Brahmā, the *yogin* is entrusted with the act of creation. He knows the past because

⁹⁴² *hatamṛtyur jarāṃ tyaktvā rogaiḥ sarvabhayojjhitaḥ |
vijñānaṃ śravaṇaṃ dūrān mananaṃ cāvalokanaṃ | | 211 | |
sarvaiśvaryaḡuṇāvāptir bhavet kālajayāt sadā |*

⁹⁴³ VBh 4, Trsl. Singh, 1979b, p. 14.

⁹⁴⁴ MU 5.2.

⁹⁴⁵ Incidentally, in popular iconography, Brahmā is often shown riding a swan (*haṃsa*), a fitting vehicle for visualization in this particular meditation.

⁹⁴⁶ *dakṣaṇāsāpuṭe dhyātvā brāhmaiśvaryaṃ avāpnuyāt | | 212 | |
tadāyus tatsamaṃ vīryaṃ bhūtakālaṃ ca vetty ataḥ |*

he created it. The *yogin* then attains a lifespan that spans 36,000 Brahmā days.⁹⁴⁷ Each Brahmā day consists of two *kalpas* — one for the day and the other for night. Each *kalpa* is made up of 4.32 billion years.⁹⁴⁸ The total lifespan of Brahmā measures 311.04 trillion human years.⁹⁴⁹ Although his life will not be infinite, the *yogin* with a lifespan of Brahmā must continue his meditation in perpetuity.

Next, the *yogin* acquires the power and lifespan of Viṣṇu.

When he [visualizes *haṁsa*] in the left [nostril], he knows the future and is equal in strength to Viṣṇu. The king of *yogins* [gains] a life is as long as Viṣṇu's, [and] obtains power [equal to] Viṣṇu's. (SvT 7.213cd-214ab)⁹⁵⁰

Brahmā creates the world; Viṣṇu preserves it. The constituent parts of *haṁsa* — *ha*, *ṁ*, and *sa* — shows Brahmā represented by *ha* and Rudra designated *sa*. This leaves Viṣṇu as the *anusvāra* between the two phonemes. Viṣṇu is the master over past, present, and future. His life is 1,000 times longer than that of Brahmā.⁹⁵¹

The *yogin* who attains the lifespan and power of Viṣṇu then becomes equal to Rudra.

⁹⁴⁷ Kinsley, 2000, p. 140.

⁹⁴⁸ Lotchtefeld, 2002, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, New York: Rosen Publishing Group, p. 155. A single *kalpa* is also the largest accepted measure of time in Indian cosmology.

⁹⁴⁹ Kinsley, 2000, p. 140.

⁹⁵⁰ *bhaviṣyajñō bhaved vāme viṣṇutulyabalaś ca saḥ || 213 ||*
tatsamaṁ caitadaiśvaryaṁ tadāyur yogirāḍ bhavet |

⁹⁵¹ Anna J. Bonshek, 2001, *Mirror of Consciousness: Art, Creativity, and Veda*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 217.

When meditating [on *haṃsa*] in the middle [i.e., the retention of the breath in the central channel],⁹⁵² the *yogin* knows past, present, and future or by constant⁹⁵³ yoga and meditation. He becomes the same as Rudra. (SvT 7.214cd-215ab)⁹⁵⁴

Again, the phonemes *ha* and *sa* are linked to the states that the *yogin* enters in his meditation. Abhinavagupta connects the phoneme *sa* with the *īśvara tattva*.⁹⁵⁵ Here, the practitioner realizes that there is no otherness outside of his own I-ness.⁹⁵⁶ However, because his I-ness does not cease, he is not fully released from self, and/or death.

[He who possesses the] same longevity, strength, beauty, and power as [Rudra] obtains the state of *īśvara*. [He achieves this] because he [has attained] the highest state (*parabhāva*) of Brahmā. (SvT 7.215cd-216ab)⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁵² The two previous verses focused on meditation in the right and then left nostril. This type of breath control, called *prāṇāyāma*, is found throughout the textual tradition relating to yogic techniques. The *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, the earliest extant Tantric Śaiva text, outlines four types of breath control: Inhalation through the left, exhalation through the right, and retention of the in-breath. The fourth type is an internal breath control called *supraśāntai* in which one moves the vital energy from the heart to the navel and the mind from sense objects. Mallinson and Singleton, 2017, p. 144. See Mallinson and Singleton, 2017, p. 127-170 for a detailed account of various breath control practices throughout the Indian literary tradition.

⁹⁵³ *Nityam* here can mean "always," "constant," or "immutable" but may also be simply acting as a verse-filler. However, I have retained the word in the translation following SvT 7.59 which states that *haṃsa* cannot be produced or retained, that it is self-uttered, and it lives within the heart of all living creatures. See Padoux, 2005, p. 140-141 for further discussion of *haṃsa* in the SvT and Kṣemarāja's commentary.

⁹⁵⁴ *bhūtaṃ bhavyaṃ bhaviṣyac ca sarvaṃ jānāti madhyataḥ* | | 214 | |
nityaṃ vai dhyānayogena rudrasya samatāṃ vrajet |

⁹⁵⁵ Jaideva Singh, 1988, *Parā-trīśikā-Vivaraṇa: The Secret of Tantric Mysticism*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 132, 133, 143, 145, and 146. Certainly, this is not always the case, as these phonemes can be connected to other *tattvas* at various times but for the sake of our purposes here, it is important to note the relationship between *ha*, *sa*, and the various states of consciousness.

⁹⁵⁶ Raffaele Torella, 1988, "A Fragment of Utpaladeva's 'Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti,'" *East and West*, Vol. 38, No. 1/4 (December), p. 164.

⁹⁵⁷ *āyusā balavṛtyeṇa rūpaiśvareṇa tatsamaḥ* | | 7-215 | |
brahmāṇaḥ parabhāvena aiśvaraṃ padam āpnuyāt |

Finally, the *yogin* accomplishes the states of *sadāśiva* and *śiva*. In the *Parātrīśikāvivarāṇa*, Abhinavagupta links *ha* with *sadāśiva*.⁹⁵⁸ It closes the mantra.⁹⁵⁹ In *sadāśiva*, the *yogin* approaches the end of his practice. Only *tattvas* remain: the inseparable states of *śiva* and *śakti*.⁹⁶⁰ At *sadāśiva*, the *yogin* recognizes "I am this." In other words, he cognizes his union with the deity even though he retains a slight notion of I-ness.⁹⁶¹ It is only when he has shed this enduring sense of individuality, that he truly conquers death. Only pure knowledge remains; the physical body is irrelevant.

Because he [attains] the highest state of Viṣṇu, the *yogin* obtains the sovereignty of *sadāśiva*. A person who visualizes the highest state of *rudra* becomes Śiva. Thus, the conquest of death called *amṛta*, is called a "conquering meditation." (SvT 7.216cd-217)⁹⁶²

Now that it has laid the groundwork for mantric recitation, the text turns to visualization. In its imagery, the *Svacchanda Tantra* runs parallel to the *Netra Tantra*. However, rather than draw *maṇḍalas*, here, he visualizes the images. In the *Netra Tantra*, the body is represented within the *maṇḍala*, the central image of the rite. In the *Svacchanda Tantra*, the inverse takes place: the body becomes the object of meditation and the imagery springs from within.

⁹⁵⁸ Singh, 1988, p. 132, 133, 143, 145, and 146.

⁹⁵⁹ Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, 2011, p. 203

⁹⁶⁰ These final states are not dealt with at length in the SvT. The Śakti state is not mentioned at all as this state is only discussed in more esoteric Tantric texts. See Chapter Three for a discussion of the *tattvas* in the SvT.

⁹⁶¹ Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, 2011, p. 120.

⁹⁶² *viṣṇoḥ sadāśivaiśvaryaṃ parabhāvād avāpnuyāt || 216 ||*
rudrasya yaḥ paro bhāvo dhyātvā taṃ tu śivo bhavet |
evaṃ mṛtyujayaḥ khyātaḥ amṛtaṃ dhyāyato jayaḥ || 217 ||

After [this, the *yogin*] visualizes the heart lotus, with sixteen petals, situated in the opening of the channel that pierces the tube [i.e., the lotus stem. He imagines] a white, radiant, completely full moon, endowed with sixteen parts,⁹⁶³ and with his body in the shape of a lotus pericarp. [Then, he pictures] the self, It is to be imagined [as seated] in the middle of that [moon], and is as spotless as pure crystal. [The self is] pervaded with *amṛta*, [which washes over him] in a wave from the ocean of the milky nectar of immortality. (SvT 7.218-220ab)⁹⁶⁴

The heart lotus (*hr̥tpadma*) is a common image in Tantric literature. The Śaiva Siddhānta *Parākhya Tantra* describes eight tubes that reach into the eight petals of the *hr̥tpadma*. These stems link to various places in the body, all connected with the breath.⁹⁶⁵ In the *Netra Tantra* 6.21, the lotus sits in the middle of the moon. The practitioner visualizes the body, enchained by the *mūla* mantra *saḥ*, etc., in the middle of the *maṇḍala*. In *Svacchanda Tantra* 7.220, the practitioner focuses on the seed, itself the body of the moon — one single spot in an ocean of *amṛta*. For true immortality to occur, the seed dissolves into the ocean just as I-ness dissolves into the divine.

The *Netra Tantra* places the *jīva* of the afflicted in the midst of the *amṛta* flooded by two moons: one above and one below. The *Svacchanda Tantra* replaces the *jīva* with an *ātman* and substitutes a lotus for the moon. In the *Netra Tantra*, the *jīva* is encircled with the syllables *saḥ*, etc., while the *Svacchanda Tantra* reverses the mantra and surrounds the *ātman* with *haṃsa*. The *Netra Tantra*'s practitioner

⁹⁶³ I.e., the phases of the moon. See Mallinson, 2007, p. 213; John R. Dupuche, 2003, *Abhinavagupta: The Kula Ritual: As Elaborated in Chapter 29 of the Tantrāloka*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, p. 47.

⁹⁶⁴ *nāḍibhinnālarandhrasthaṃ hr̥tpadmaṃ ṣoḍaśacchadam |*
dhyātoā sitaṃ suvikacaṃ kalāṣoḍaśakānvitam || 218 ||
sampūrṇāvayavaṃ candraṃ karṇikākāraṅgraham |
tanmadhye cintyam ātmānaṃ śuddhasphaṭikanirmalam || 219 ||
kṣīrāmṛtārṇavāvasthakallolāmṛtapūritam |

⁹⁶⁵ Goodall and Rastelli, 2012, p. 266.

visualizes the body, the *Svacchanda Tantra's yogin* imagines *amṛta* as it surrounds and enters him.

[The *yogin*] should visualize a second lotus above him in the great ocean with the power of *amṛta* as well as a lotus with its full moon mouth⁹⁶⁶ pointed downward. In the middle of that, he should visualize *haṁsa* joined with the *bindu* and topknot. He should visualize a divine rain of *amṛta*, falling everywhere and imagine [it to] enter [his body] in the opening above himself [i.e., the path through the center of the body (*suṣumṇā*) through which the *ātman* rises to *śakti tattva*]. (SvT 7.220cd-222⁹⁶⁷)

The *yogin* conquers death through the visualization of his body flooded with *amṛta*.

In the *Svacchanda Tantra*, *amṛta* enters the meditative body from above.

He should visualize a white, very dense, unctuous *amṛta*, which destroys death and himself [when he is] flooded and filled with it. (SvT 7.223)⁹⁶⁸

The *yogin* allows the nectar to overwhelm his body, The nectar becomes his body.

Once *amṛta* has washed over him, he attains his goal of overcoming death.

He should visualize his entire body flooded with nectar entering through the openings and apertures of his channels, which are set in the stem of the lotus. (SvT 7.224)⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁶ I.e., its calyx.

⁹⁶⁷ *upariṣṭād dvitīyābjaṃ śāktāmṛtamahodadhau || 220 ||*
tac cādho mukhapadmaṃ tu paripūrṇendukaṅkāṃ |
tan madhye cintayed dhaṁsam adho binduśikhānvitam || 221 ||
varṣantam amṛtaṃ divyaṃ samantāt saṃvicintayet |
ātmordhvarandhramārgeṇa praviṣṭaṃ tac ca cintayet || 222 ||

⁹⁶⁸ *sitaṃ subahulaṃ sāndram amṛtaṃ mṛtyunāśanam |*
tenāplāvitam ātmānaṃ pūryamāṇaṃ vicintayet || 223 ||

⁹⁶⁹ *padmanālanibaddhaiś ca nāḍīrandhramukhaiḥ sadā |*
amṛtāpūritaṃ dehaṃ sarvaṃ eva vicintayet || 224 ||

When the *yogin* can no longer chant the *haṃsa* mantra, when his breath comes to an end and he has shed his physical body, he conquers death. His body is the mantric body. It secures the conquest of death. A *yogin* "whose self is constantly thus, becomes the same as Amṛteśa."⁹⁷⁰

The text then returns to the physical anxieties concerned with death. Even though the *yogin* continues to breathe, his activity does not exceed the experience of the power he attained through meditation. Since he is yet to shed his body, I-ness continues to exist. The *yogin* is advised to experience as little of that I-ness as possible. He continues his practice, visualizing himself as self, located within the single seed of the moon, reflected in the ocean of milky *amṛta*. "After he has abandoned diseases, death, and becoming old, he plays with minuteness,⁹⁷¹ etc."⁹⁷² Through this process, he attains and stays within *sadāśiva*, connected to the world through the slightest sense of an individual self.

Thus, from his meditation on *amṛta*, the *yogin* conquers time and death or stays in the highest *tattva*. He is no longer bound by any aspect of time (SvT 7.226).⁹⁷³

IV. Conclusion

The composers of the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras* offer two different pathways to immortality. In the former, a professional *mantrin* performs yoga on behalf of a patron afflicted with illness and impending death. In the latter, the *yogin*

⁹⁷⁰ SvT 7.225a: *evaṃ vai nityayuktātmā amṛteśasamo bhavet* |

⁹⁷¹ I.e. divine powers.

⁹⁷² SvT 7.225 *vyādhīn mṛtyuṃ jarāṃ tyaktvā kṛṇate tv aṇimādibhiḥ*

⁹⁷³ SvT 7: *evaṃ tasyāmṛtadhyānāt kālamṛtyujayo bhavet | athavā paratattvasthanī sarvakālair na bādhyate* || 226 ||

focuses on his own internal experience through which he visualizes his path to Amṛteśa. Both require a symbolic lexicon that prompt the practitioners to use and understand different ritual elements. They both draw on mantras, *maṇḍalas*, and visualization techniques.

In Chapter Three, I explore the yoga of immortality in the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras* to help us understand what the texts mean when they speak of immortality. To this end, I examine a number of theories about purity and the development of *mṛtyu vañcana* practices. I focus on the technical detail of these rites, not on their cosmological underpinnings.

I shall now briefly comment the social implications that spring from successful *mṛtyu vañcana* rites. For a monarch, the conquest of death means that he can continue to rule his kingdom with the help of the deities. The rites of appeasement that that *yogin* performs on his behalf safeguard his health and allow him to live to the end of his life.⁹⁷⁴ Even though the *mṛtyu vañcana* rites of the *Netra Tantra* are, in theory, available to all, the chief audience is here the royal chaplain.⁹⁷⁵ He benefits from their performance economically and in status. As a side effect, he too benefits through health and long life. The *yogin* in the *Svacchanda Tantra* does not accrue physical or economic rewards. He achieves liberation. He must already be highly practiced to perform the meditation. He continues with his practice to accomplish immortality in the highest states of consciousness.

My study of the conquest of death does not go beyond the *Svacchanda* and *Netra Tantras*. Many other texts discuss similar rituals. A thorough study of Buddhist and Hindu *mṛtyu vañcana* rites would provide a more nuanced understanding of immortality in Indian thought. Similarly, an expanded study of

⁹⁷⁴ Einoo, 2005, p. 114.

⁹⁷⁵ Sanderson, 2004, p. 241.

the yoga chapters of the *Netra Tantra* is necessary. Bettina Bäumer has begun this work through her recently published translation of Chapters Seven and Eight of the *Netra Tantra*.⁹⁷⁶ I hope that this new work, as well as my own, furthers interest in this rich and understudied text.

Finally, I agree, of course, with Sanderson that the literature of Śaiva Tantra reveals little historical information.⁹⁷⁷ Ironically, this presents an interesting opportunity to the historian. It is not possible to study the religious practice of women in the *Netra Tantra*, for example. This is so because the text does not speak of female practitioners. However, I can approach the text as a social historian. It is possible to examine the texts in conversation with one another in order to recreate the theological conversations that took place among the members of the different belief systems over time. I have attempted to do just this by comparing sections of texts with one another, such as the *Cakrasamvara* or the works of Abhinavagupta. To recreate the philosophical dialogues in the texts, allows us to better understand the world in which our subjects lived.

⁹⁷⁶ See Bäumer, 2018.

⁹⁷⁷ Sanderson, 2004, p. 230.

Conclusion

I. Summary

The goal of this thesis is to examine and contextualize the protective rites laid out in the *Netra Tantra*. To do this, I explore several themes: ritual elements and iconography, the development of Tantric identities, and rites related to the conquest of death. On their own, each of these subjects offers new insight into medieval Śaiva Tantra. Together, they provide a comprehensive picture of the position of the *Netra Tantra* relative to other medieval Śaiva Tantric treatises.

In Chapter One, I examine mantra and iconography in the *Netra Tantra*. This serves to the text within the corpus of medieval Tantric literature. To accomplish this, I analyze and translate, for the first time, several sections of the text and its commentary. I argue that Kṣemarāja, in his commentary on both the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras*, allows for mantras to be considered actions. This interpretation impacts how mantras are encoded within Tantric literature and their use in ritual. I also explain that the nature of mantra is tripartite: gross (*sthūla*), subtle (*sūkṣma*), and supreme (*para*). This corresponds to the three types of yoga charted by the *Netra Tantra*. The three methods offer the practitioner three levels of mantric practice. I also compare the text's presentation of mantra with other Tantric works, including the *Mālinīvijayottara*, *Svacchanda Tantra*, and *Kulārṇava Tantra*. This allows me to contextualize the *Netra Tantra* and map its mantric theory within the wider body of Tantric literature. In Chapter One, I also examine the visualized representations of deities worshipped as part of calendrical rites.⁹⁷⁸ Here, I discuss the factors common to descriptions of these deities in the *Netra Tantra*. Ultimately, the text explains that all deities are to be worshipped as *Netra Tantra*' main

⁹⁷⁸ Sanderson, 2004, p. 251n48, 253.

godhead, Amṛteśa or Mṛtyujit. For example, the *mantrin* is to visualize Amṛtalakṣmī, Bhairava, Tumburu, Nārāyaṇa, Māyā, Sūrya, as well as the Buddha in the hand-gestures (*mudrā*) of wish-fulfillment and protection. This allows the *mantrin* to worship Amṛteśa in his various forms while continuing his protective practices. The symbols of the divine in the *Netra Tantra* return time and again to protection and wish fulfillment. These constitute the main purpose of the rites described in Chapters Two and Three.

The production of Tantric iconography allows the practitioner to build a Tantric identity that exists in addition to, but separate from, his social self. The that the Tantric practitioner visualizes contain symbolic Tantric elements. Similarly, during the process of initiation (*dīkṣā*), the initiand is exposed to Tantric symbolism. In Chapter Two, I examine how the practitioner attains his Tantric identity and how it shapes his interaction in the non-Tantric world. I argue that the caste erasure that occurs during initiation is limited to the ritual sphere. This is attested in the practice of lustration (*nītrājana*) in which the monarch is honored. Clearly, in this rite the social hierarchy must remain in place. I also argue that caste hierarchies post-initiation are replaced with a hierarchy of initiatory status. Here, disciples hold different responsibilities and reside in different levels of reality (*tattva*) upon initiation. Though caste distinction disappears during practice, the *Rājataranṅiṇī* and other medieval Sanskrit works reveal that engagement across castes remains problematic for members of the upper echelons of court society. As a result, purity and impurity within ritual bleed into the social sphere with real-world consequences.

Chapter Three closes with a discussion of the *Netra Tantra's* gross (*sthūla*) yoga practices. Here, the *mantrin* performs rites (*mṛtyu vañcana*) on behalf of the king to secure him a long life and prosperity. I contrast this rite with the

visualization found in the *Svacchanda Tantra*. The *Svacchanda Tantra* shares imagery with the *Netra Tantra*, but focuses on the outcome of liberation rather than worldly gain. The *mantrin* performs both *nīrājana* and *mṛtyu vañcana* for the king. The monarch is not required to understand the symbols of the rite in order to benefit from it. To conquer death, the *mantrin* builds protective *maṇḍalas* that appease the deities. These constitute visual representations of the Tantric world. In them the *mantrin* writes the name of the king (or a member of the king's family) and surrounds it with the mantra. This imbues the object, here the king, with the protective power of mantra.

I compare the rite of protection to a meditation included in the *Svacchanda Tantra*. It serves to conquer death but does so through a visualization. Where the *Netra Tantra*'s protective rite focused externally on the kingdom, the rite of the *Svacchanda Tantra* focuses internally. For the practitioner, the Tantric world exists inside the body. He advances his spiritual progression with a mantra that is connected to breath. I explore the symbolism of the *haṃsa* mantra, used in this practice, in its physical and intellectual levels. Through breathing practice, the *haṃsa* mantra offers its user control over the cycle of creation and destruction. This allows him to control both death and time.

II. Empirical Findings

First, I examine the symbolism of pre-initiation dreams to explain how the *Netra Tantra* develops its Tantric lexicon. It introduces the initiand to Tantric concepts and practices. Next, I turn to royal association with Tantra. The *Rājataranṅiṇī* describes the presence of Tantric *mantrins* in medieval Kashmiri courts. Kalhaṇa's descriptions of rites and behaviors demonstrate that he was aware of the influence of Tantric practitioners. The rites then were, at least at court,

semi-public. The *mantrin* would have performed rituals for the monarch without suspicion. The *Netra Tantra* describes many of such rites. I focus on those of lustration (*nīrājana*) and death-conquest rituals (*mṛtyu vañcana*). In both, the *mantrin* performs rituals for the monarch to protect him from both worldly and supernatural dangers. The hazards range from military hostility, disease, famine, and poverty to supernatural threats. The *mantrin* also performs protective rites for the king's family. This assures the longevity of the kingdom and the royal line. In both cases, he performs the rituals away from public view. The lustration rite appears in several ancient Indian texts, but rarely in a religious treatise. The religionization of the practice legitimizes the *mantrin's* role in the rite and as a member of elite society.

Mṛtyu vañcana rituals draw on *maṇḍalas* onto which the *mantrin* places the Sanskrit phonemes. This creates mantras that encircle the *maṇḍala* as well as the monarch to protect from external dangers. This, in turn, allows the king to remain in control of his health, life, and the kingdom. These linguistic connections show that ritual in the non-dual Śaiva Tantric tradition of the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras* is more than just action. It is a complex system of ritual activity that relies on many layers of symbolism. The symbols imbue the ritual with power. To understand them allows the practitioner to develop his Tantric identity. I then turn to immortality. I compare the ways in which Sanskrit texts approach the conquest of death to produce health, good fortune, and other worldly achievements. This thesis demonstrates the importance of the *mantrin* to the continued social fabric of the kingdom through his unique circumstances in which he is always engaged in ritual practice.

III. Theoretical Findings

Scholars embark on the study of Tantra from a range of methodological and theoretical perspectives. Some seek to explore the philosophical questions posed by the texts, others set out to examine the genesis and spread of practice. I have attempted to align these approaches, following the socio-historical approach of Alexis Sanderson. I build upon Sanderson's own study of the *Netra Tantra* by reflecting on the social implications of the practices laid out within the text. Sanderson analyzes the relationship between the *mantrin* and the king; I explore the ritual implications of the practices and how they help tie society together. Tantric texts do not say much about the world outside of their own belief system. Yet, it is important to contextualize them in an attempt to understand their place in the wider society. I agree with Sanderson that academics should attempt to read Tantric texts through a social and historical lens, though I do so not through philological textual analysis but rather by comparing the rites in the work to the available information we have about Tantric practice in medieval India from both an insider and outsider perspective. Despite the limited availability of historical documents of the period, it is possible to contextualize the rituals and sociopolitical positions of the people who performed the rites cited in the Tantras. Such a technique humanizes both the practitioners and the practice. It reveals the way in which practitioners fit into society. This allows us to trace the development of both ideas and practices over time and to map the emergence of the different religious schools.

Through this approach, I have found the *Netra Tantra* to be a consistent and important work. It clearly lays out an important argument regarding the nature of mantra that adds a nuanced understanding to scholarly arguments and situates the text in a way that demonstrates the same questions that plague us today were

critical to the development of Tantric traditions in the past. While the philological approach has been crucial for the mapping of Tantra as it developed, a purely language-based approach ignores the impact practices and ideas had on the individuals who may have been impacted by them. In this way, I have gone beyond Sanderson to analyze the text within the context existing scholarship and theory about the Tantric world rather than simply the text's place within the canon or historical timeline. This reminds us that the text is part of a tradition of real-world practitioners who struggled to make sense of their tradition in some of the same ways as the modern academic. Thus, I have focused on the KSTS edition of the text, which remains widely cited by modern followers of the Kashmir Śaiva tradition.

IV. Practical Implications

This study focuses on the *Netra Tantra* in particular. It provides context through comparison with other texts. To achieve this, I sought similar ritual behaviors in other, related works. In order to unpack the encoded symbolism within mantra I ventured far afield to look to other works from the Śaiva tradition. This helps us understand the intellectual tradition that produced the *Netra Tantra*. Though we do not possess a firm historical record for the main texts themselves, comparative studies help us understand the practices described therein.

V. Recommendations for Future Research

The role of the feminine is, unfortunately, not systematically examined in these pages. Tantra scholars, such as Judit Törzsök and Lorillai Biernacki, have begun to study the goddesses, female spirits, and practitioners in Tantric texts.

More work of this kind is necessary if we are truly understand the ritual practices and theology of the tradition. The *Netra Tantra* instructs the *mantrin* to concentrate on the *nītrājana* rite in order to protect the king's wife and for her fertility. This establishes that women played a role in ritual practice even though the text does not speak of their participation. For this, we need to embark on a careful reading and analysis of our sources in order to identify those rites aimed specifically at women.⁹⁷⁹

The *Netra Tantra* contains a chapter devoted to *yoginīs* and female supernatural beings. I have begun to translate Chapter Twenty in the hopes that I may shed light on the feminine and contextualize the *Netra Tantra* in relation to other *yoginī* texts. The iconography and demonology of female deities, attendants, and spirits developed in the *Netra Tantra* is rich and hereto unexamined. The *yoginīs* in the *Netra Tantra* offer three paths that unite the bound soul (*paśu*) and Śiva. This echoes the tripartite nature of mantra and the three methods of yoga. The *yoginīs* offer the practitioner supernatural powers, such as the ability to enter the body of another in order to attain his knowledge.⁹⁸⁰ It calls for the use of a secret language (*chommakā*) also used by *yoginīs* in the *Svacchanda Tantra*,⁹⁸¹ *Cakrasamvara Tantra*,⁹⁸² *Brahmayāmala Tantra*,⁹⁸³ *Tantrasadbhāva*,⁹⁸⁴ and others. Study of both the

⁹⁷⁹ Devika Rangachari's 2009 essay, "Gender Relations in Medieval Kashmir," reprinted in 2011 as "Women and Power in Early Medieval Kashmir," in *Rethinking Early Medieval India*, ed Upinder Singh, Oxford: Oxford University Press, argues for a rereading of medieval Sanskrit literature that focus on the power and public presence of both royal and non-royal women in medieval Kashmir. Rangchari examines the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, *Samayamātrkā*, and *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, and effectively demonstrates that women played an important role in socio-political functions, including the king's coronation, pilgrimage, and annual festivals, p. 203.

⁹⁸⁰ NT 20.38.

⁹⁸¹ SvT 15.

⁹⁸² CS 15, 20, 24.

⁹⁸³ BraYā 50.

⁹⁸⁴ TSB 16, 18.

yoginīs and iconographic forms of the female attendants would offer more depth into the study of the *Netra Tantra*. Comparison of these female figures and those found in other *yoginī* texts and Śākta Tantras would allow for a better understanding of the genesis and development of female Tantric spirits.

Further research of the physical record is also necessary. Published investigations into the royal baths in Kathmandu have thus far focused only on Mṛtyujit, but should be expanded to the other deities represented there. Additionally, examinations of museum holdings may provide evidence of further misidentified statuary. I would like to verify whether other sculptures in the royal baths and in museum collections correspond to those descriptions found in the *Netra Tantra*. This would help scholars to better realize the *Netra Tantra's* reach and importance.

Finally, the study of Tantric texts should consider modern day interpretations. Many Western followers of Swami Muktananda and Osho refer to Abhinavagupta and a wide range of Tantric ideas. It would be helpful to understand how Tantric works are interpreted by, and incorporated into, the practices of the global middle-class New Age movement. How have these works been reinterpreted to sit in the modern world?

VI. Limitations of the Study

Constraints of time meant that I was able to examine only parts of the *Netra Tantra*. Where possible I referred to other relevant sections both in the *Netra Tantra* and beyond. Much of my comparative work drew on texts already available in English. I referred to the Sanskrit at every available opportunity and retranslated when necessary. William Arraj's PhD thesis, which translates selected portions of

the *Svacchanda Tantra* as well as Hélène Brunner's synopsis of the *Netra Tantra* helped me navigate to the comparative context. However, though we possess an edited edition of the *Netra Tantra*, it calls for collation with further manuscripts, re-edition, and translation. The *Netra Tantra* remains understudied. Brunner dismisses it as poorly edited, heterogeneous, and awkward, but this should not discourage future study. Bäumer's recent translation of Chapters Seven and Eight and this thesis will, I hope, bring the text more prominence and encourage others to reexamine it.

Appendix: Overview of Translated Passages

This thesis contains translated passages of the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies editions of the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras*. The *Netra Tantra* consists of twenty-two chapters and the *Svacchanda Tantra* fifteen. The editor of the KSTS editions, Pandit Madhusudan Kaul Shāstrī compiled these works on the basis of only a few manuscripts. For the *Netra Tantra* Kaul relied on only two manuscripts, the oldest of which was only a little more than one hundred years old upon the 1926 publication of volume one.⁹⁸⁵ For the *Svacchanda Tantra*, Kaul relied on two Kashmiri paper manuscripts and one leaf manuscript dated to 1608.⁹⁸⁶ In his preface to the *Svacchanda Tantra*, Kaul notes that his goal was to prepare an edition that is, “really useful and interesting...for the Sanskrit knowing public, especially for those who are keenly interested in the Tantrik lore.”⁹⁸⁷ It is in this spirit that I have chosen to translate passages from this nearly 100 year old Kashmiri edition. An edited edition collated from Nepalese manuscripts is needed and Professor Gavin Flood is nearing the end of just such a project. However, in the meantime, a study of the text as it has been understood in the Kashmir tradition offers us an entry point for the study of the text. I have made emendations where necessary to avoid unintelligibility. What follows is an overview of the passages I have translated from the *Netra* and *Svacchanda Tantras*.

Verse	Description	Page Number(s)
NT 2.17-19	placing the mantra on the lotus	33-34

⁹⁸⁵ Kaul, 1926, preface.

⁹⁸⁶ Kaul, 1921, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁸⁷ Kaul, 1921, p. 2.

NT 2.20-22ab	mother of mantras	35
NT 2.22cd-28ab	encoded mantra	36-37
NT 2.28cd-33	<i>aṅgamantra</i>	41-42
NT 21.1	questions regarding the nature of mantra	53
NT 21.2-5	questions regarding the agency of mantras	56
NT 21.6-9ab	questions regarding the form of mantras	58
NT 21.9cd-14	questions regarding the embodiment of mantras	63
NT 21.15-19	answers regarding the nature of mantra	64
NT 22.5-10ab	answers regarding the agency of mantra	65-66
NT 22.10cd-13	answers regarding the form of mantra	70-71
NTU 22.11	commentary on the nature of Śiva	71-72
NT 22.14-15/NTU 22.15	elements of the <i>mṛtyuñjaya</i> mantra	73-5
NT 22.17-18/NTU 22.18	attributes of the <i>mṛtyuñjaya</i> mantra	76-77
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Abbreviations

ĀgnG	<i>Āgniveśya Gṛhya Sūtra</i>
ĀpŚS	<i>Āpastamba Śrautasūtra</i>
AŚ	<i>Arthaśāstra</i>
AVŚ	<i>Atharva Veda Saṃhitā, Śaunakīya recension</i>
BGP	<i>Baudhāyana Gṛhya Paribhāṣa Sūtra</i>
BGŚ	<i>Baudhāyana Gṛhya Śeṣa Sūtra</i>
BraYā	<i>Brahmayāmala Tantra</i>
BS	<i>Bṛhat Saṃhitā</i>
BU	<i>Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad</i>
ChU	<i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i>
CS	<i>Cakrasamvara Tantra</i>
DSĀ	<i>Dharmasūtra of Āpastamba</i>
DSB	<i>Dharmasūtra of Baudhāyana</i>
GS	<i>Guhyasiddhi</i>
HT	<i>Hevajra Tantra</i>
ĪPPV	<i>Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Vivṛti Vimarśinī</i>
ĪU	<i>Īṣa Upaniṣad</i>
JG	<i>Jaiminīya Gṛhya Sūtra</i>
KĀ	<i>Kamikāgama</i>
KC	<i>Śrīkaṇthacarita</i>
KhV	<i>Khecarīvidyā</i>
KJ	<i>Kaulajñānirṇaya</i>
KP	<i>Kālikā Purāṇa</i>
Kauś	<i>Kauśika Sūtra</i>

KauśS	<i>Kauśikapaddhati on Kauśika Sūtra</i>
KubjT	<i>Kubjikā Tantra</i>
KV	<i>Kalāvīlāsa</i>
LK	<i>Lakṣmīkaulārṇava</i>
LT	<i>Lakṣmī Tantra</i>
MāU	<i>Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad</i>
MBh	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
MP	<i>Mṛgendrapaddatīkā</i>
MS	<i>Manusmṛti</i>
MU	<i>Maitrī Upaniṣad</i>
MVT	<i>Mālinīvijayottara</i>
NS	<i>Nayasūtra</i>
NT	<i>Netra Tantra</i>
NTU	<i>Netratantroddyota</i>
ParT	<i>Parākhya Tantra</i>
PBY	<i>Picumata Brahmayāmala</i>
PG	<i>Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra</i>
PH	<i>Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya</i>
PhT	<i>Phetkārīṇī Tantra</i>
PS	<i>Paramārthasāra</i>
PSC	<i>Paramārthasāra [commentary]</i>
PTV	<i>Parātrīśikā Vivaraṇa</i>
Rām	<i>Rāmāyaṇa</i>
Ṛg	<i>Ṛgveda</i>
ṚVi	<i>Ṛgvidhāna</i>
SP	<i>Skanda Purāṇa</i>

SpK	<i>Spanda Kārikās</i>
SpN	<i>Spanda Nirṇaya</i>
SpV	<i>Spandavivṛti</i>
SS	<i>Suśruta Saṃhitā</i>
SU	<i>Samvarodaya Tantra</i>
SVB	<i>Sāmaividhāna Brāhmaṇa</i>
SvT	<i>Svacchanda Tantra</i>
SvTU	<i>Svacchanda Tantra Uddyota</i>
SYM	<i>Siddhayogeshvarīmata</i>
ŚB	<i>Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa</i>
ŚS	<i>Śiva Sūtras</i>
ŚvetU	<i>Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad</i>
TĀ	<i>Tantrāloka</i>
TĀV	<i>Tantrāloka Vivarana</i>
TB	<i>Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa</i>
TS	<i>Taittirīya Upaniṣad</i>
TSB	<i>Tantrasadbhāva</i>
TU	<i>Taittirīya Upaniṣad</i>
VBh	<i>Vijñānabhairava</i>
VDhP	<i>Viṣṇudharmottara Purāna</i>
VaiG	<i>Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra</i>
VŚT	<i>Vīṇāśikha Tantra</i>
YH	<i>Yoginīhr̥daya</i>

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