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Field Statement for Dr. Robert Goldman

The Philosophy of the Śaiva Religion in Context

Introduction

Modern scholarship now commonly acknowledges that “Hinduism” is primarily a construct of Western Orientalism, and that there was no such indigenous term until recently.¹ Yet such acknowledgment is often merely lip-service, for the term continues to be used to describe the entire complex Indian religious milieu, other than Buddhists and Jains, throughout the common era. Though there is utility to an etic term that scholars define clearly and use specifically, this is not such a term, and it remains true that we have not yet unpacked the manifold implications of the fact that “Hinduism” is fundamentally a fiction. And it is a fiction that has obscured our ability to discern clearly the complex interrelationships of the competing religions of the volatile and productive medieval period. For it was not a case of Buddhism vs. Hinduism, but of five primary religions, each seeing themselves as a distinct and complete path to liberation as well as a vital cultural institution deserving patronage: those of the Vaidikas (aka Brāhmanism), Śaivas (including the Śākta Śaivas), Vaiṣṇavas, Bauddhas, and Jainas.²

Part I: Evidence for Śaivism as a single religion in the early mediaeval period

Before contextualizing Śaiva thought in the broader sphere of Indian intellectual activity, we must define Śaivism as an entity. We may begin by examining evidence that

¹ See, e.g., the entry on “Hinduism” in the HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion, Jonathan Z. Smith, ed.

² Note that the Sanskrit terms do not suffix an ‘-ism’ (-tva, -tā) though such suffixes were common enough. Rather, the religions were defined in terms of their adherents, who in turn were defined in terms of the deity to whom they owed allegiance. Note also that there were yet other sects that did not attract sufficient patronage to develop into full-blown religions (such as the Sauras), as well as those often not associated with a particular theistic religion (such as the Sāṅkhyas and Pātañjala-yogins).

Śaivism was a single, self-contained religion and thought of itself as such. By 'religion' I mean of course an institution consisting of culturally patterned interactions with culturally postulated superhuman beings (Spiro 197), to which definition I add that it is also an institution that offers its adherents either salvation or heavenly rewards or both, and that operates in the spheres of both esoteric personal practice and civic, public religion. In the Indian milieu, where the landscape is often not so clearly defined, we must also ask what circumscribes and differentiates one religion from another. I see these five features as operative: 1) a body of texts that belong to that system and no other; 2) authoritative teachers consecrated in that system and no other; 3) the fact that the system itself makes an effort to distinguish itself from others; 4) competition with other religious systems, including the claim to offer definitive salvation above and beyond them; and 5) the belief in a founder, usually conceived as historical, and unique to that system. Śaivism possessed all of these in the period in question (ca. 550-1300 CE).

To take the last (and least important) first, Śaivism did have its putative founders, though unlike Buddhism they are either ahistorical or their historicity is heavily obscured by hagiography and myths. The earliest instantiation of sectarian monotheistic Śaivism for which we have certain evidence is that which became known as the Atimārga ('Higher Path'), more commonly designated by its three primary branches: the Pāśupatas, Kālamukhas, and Kāpālikas. All are part of one tradition, though, putatively founded by one Lakulīśa, thought to be an *avatāra* of Śiva, who descended in a cremation ground and animated the body of a deceased brāhmin to reveal his religion to the world.³ That Lakulīśa was possibly a historical figure can be seen in the believability of both his iconography, which consistently represents him as a physiologically normal human, and the accounts of his religious instruction to three or four primary disciples. If he lived, it would have been around the

³ See the account in *Skandapurāṇa*, BISSCHOP 2006.

second century CE, for by the mid-fourth century we see the earliest epigraphical evidence for Atimārgic Śaivism (in its Pāśupata branch), attesting to a multi-generational lineage.⁴ The second and substantially larger instantiation of Śaiva religion called itself the *Mantramārga* (known to scholars as Tantric or Āgamic Śaivism), putatively founded by the probably mythical figure of Śrīkaṇṭhanātha, also identified with Śiva. His teachings were the five 'streams' of the Śaivāgama scriptural corpus.⁵ As has been well documented in the rapidly growing corpus of work by the foremost scholar of the history of Śaivism, Alexis SANDERSON, these scriptures offered detailed cosmologies as well as rituals unique to Śaivism. Foremost amongst them was the unprecedented (*apūrva*) claim to offer an initiation (*dīkṣā*)—to be conferred only by a consecrated Śaiva guru temporarily or permanently identified with Śiva—that guaranteed liberation no later than at the time of one's bodily death.⁶ Further, the scriptures taught unique theological doctrines (e.g., the three *malas*, five *kañcukas*, 36 *tattvas*, and so on), and argued that only Śaiva liberation is true and final liberation. More specifically, in an inclusivist strategy, the texts allowed that the other Indian religious sects granted salvation up to a certain point, including freedom from rebirth, but their soteriological goals do not reach the highest levels of reality (*tattva*), the Pure Universe (*śuddhādhvan*) where only God exists.⁷

Buddhism and Jainism are generally regarded as separate religions from Brahmanism/Hinduism specifically because they explicitly reject the spiritual authority of the Veda and are

⁴ For example, the land grant of 356 CE to a Pāśupata priest for the support of a shrine (see RAMESH and TEWARI 1990: 4-6) and Pāśupata inscriptions in Valkhā with dates corresponding to 369, 374, and 375 CE (ibid: 6-7, 20; Sanderson forthcoming 13-14).

⁵ Including hundreds of texts, far too much material for one person to reveal or compose; but the attribution is given, e.g., at Tantrāloka 37.13-17. Note that the Kaula phase of Tantric Śaivism (or perhaps it should be called Śāktism) had its own founder, possibly historical: Macchanda, the Fisherman, later Sanskritized as Matsyendranātha (see Sanderson 2007: 264, n91).

⁶ Many references to this, for the simplest see Mālinīvijayottara-tantra 4.8: *mukṭiś ca śivadīkṣayā*, 'Liberation is bestowed by Śiva's initiation.'

⁷ I argue that the translation 'God' for Īśvara or Parameśvara is appropriate in monotheistic contexts; Śaivism was always either monotheistic or monistic (as opposed to 'Hinduism').

therefore labelled as heterodox (*nāstika*).⁸ But precisely such heterodoxy belongs to Śaivism in varying degrees (and especially in its Śākta dimension). First, all Śaiva sources agree that whenever Śaiva and Vaidika injunctions conflict, the Śaiva one must supercede.

Abhinavagupta writes in the *Tantrasāra* (ch. 1), “The capacity for annulment belongs only to the Śaiva injunctions, which have been established by reason and by countless scriptures.”

Further, even the more conservative Śaiva scriptures argue that Vaidika injunctions are valid *only* in the sphere of civic religion, and that the Veda has no soteriological value whatever to the initiated Śaiva.⁹ Though most texts do recommend that the initiate maintain his Vedic religious duties, these must be understood by him as being done purely for the sake of appearances, to uphold the established social order. In fact, if one makes the mistake of believing that it is the Vaidika observances in combination with the Śaiva that have religious value, then neither will bestow their respective benefits, for a hybrid practice (*śabala-karma*) is said to be fruitless.¹⁰ Abhinavagupta, an exegete on the heterodox (i.e. Śākta) side of things, goes further in asserting that the Vedas are not only soteriologically irrelevant, but in fact “drag down (into a hell-realm) those whose minds are deluded“ (TĀ 37), i.e., those who believe the Vedas will liberate them. Indeed, when Śiva’s blessing descends on a ordinary Vaidika, it

⁸ This entailing of course the rather absurd claim that all sects labeled ‘Hindu’ may be so called because they share a common denominator, that of deriving their teachings, deities, and authority from the Veda. With reference to the medieval period, this is hardly the case; it would be more accurate to say that almost all of the groups *now* labeled ‘Hindu’ at least payed lip service to the authority of the Veda (for this, see below). It was this that eventually enabled their assimilation into the Hinduism of the modern period; the exceptions were entirely weeded out.

⁹ See, e.g., the *Maṭaṅgapārameśvara-tantra* CP 2.2-8b.

¹⁰ See the *Maṭaṅga*, loc. cit., the *Sarvajñānottara* pp. 97-98 (IFP MS T334, available on the Muktabodha Digital Library website); see also *Tantrāloka* 4.249-51 and –*viveka* thereon. These references provided by Prof. Sanderson. Note here that in Śaivism, the way in which one *thinks* of the meaning and purpose of ritual action influences the outcome (possibly due to Buddhist influence), as opposed to the mechanistic ritual view of the (Mīmāṃsaka) Vaidikas. Note also that it is just such a Vaidik/Śaiva hybridization condemned in the early texts that one does see in the late medieval period, presaging the constitution of modern Hinduism.

takes the form of the realization that his Vedic practice is inadequate and leads him to seek a Śaiva Guru.¹¹

My scholarly *pūrvapakṣin* might claim that I am engaged in constructing a category just as artificial as 'Hinduism', and that instead of a single Śaivism I should see merely a collection of interrelated sects and cults. Yet as I suggested, the Śaivas themselves believed in the existence of a Śaiva religion (*śivadharmā*), for we have evidence that they viewed the members of the other Śaiva sects as co-religionists, no matter how far removed they were doctrinally. We see evidence of this in many places in the exposition of the exegetes; a key example Sanderson has brought to our attention is that of the rule of supplementation outlined by Jayaratha in his *Tantrāloka-viveka*.¹² This is the rule that whatever detail is missing from one's primary source-text (*mūlatantra*) is to be supplemented from other texts within the canon, even if a single ritual act thus requires a combination of information from multiple texts (four, in the example) even crossing sectarian and doctrinal boundaries. Thus the entire Śaiva canon of many hundreds of texts "is seen as a single complex utterance" by the Lord (2005: 23).

As further proof that Śaivas thought of themselves as constituting a separate religion, we may briefly mention the rite of *liṅgoddhāra*. This is a special ritual designed for those who wish to convert to Śaivism from another religion; it serves to remove one's former sectarian marks (*liṅga-*), i.e. religious identity, so that one may be initiated. Anyone performing a soteriological practice in another tradition prior to coming to Śaivism must undergo this rite; note that this is no less true for a Vaidika *sannyāsin* or *vānaprastha* as for a Buddhist or Vaiṣṇava.¹³

¹¹ *Mataṅga-pārameśvara, Vidyāpāda* pp. 56 and 98. Reference provided by Sanderson.

¹² TĀV ad 4.251cd, cited and discussed at Sanderson 2005: 23-24.

¹³ See *Tantrāloka* 22.42-48. Someone in the Vaidika sphere of the *brahmācārya* or *grhastha āśramas* did not undergo the *liṅgoddhāra*, but this was because such people were not involved in the practice of Brāhmanism for soteriological reasons, but belonged only to the sphere of civic religion.

Finally, clinching evidence is found in the fact that the Vaidikas also confirmed Śaivism's status as a separate religion: an inferior one to be repudiated. Texts such as the Medhātithi's *Manusmṛti-bhāṣya* condemned Śaivas as well as Jainas and others as 'outside the Veda' (*vedabāhya*) and having no religious value for that reason.¹⁴ The Purāṇas labelled Śaiva and other Tantric texts as 'scriptures of delusion' (*mohaśāstra*).¹⁵ The seventh-century exponent of Vedic orthodoxy, Kumārila, even argued that some (Kāpālīka) Śaivas were less Veda-congruent and thus more unacceptable than Buddhists and Jainas, because of their horrifically impure and 'barbaric' practices such as eating from a skull-bowl.¹⁶ Scholar and sovereign Aparāditya cautioned the true Vaidika against adopting Śaivism, and presents a detailed argument against Śaiva doctrines.¹⁷

Part II: Śaivism's Sources and Influences

Having surveyed evidence that Śaivism was a separate and distinct religion, that Brāhmanism resisted the encroachment of,¹⁸ we may begin to contextualize its sources (focusing on those of the much better documented Mantramārga). These may be divided into two main phases: the scriptural and the exegetical. The former consists of anonymously authored texts ascribed to Śiva or the Goddess, and often consisting of a dialogue between the two. Their subject matter is generally categorized in terms of ritual (*kriyā*), observances and vows (*caryā*), meditative and concentrative practices (*yoga*), and doctrine (*jñāna*), usually in that

¹⁴ See *Manusmṛtibhāṣya* vol. 1, p. 57 and *Āgamaprāmāṇya* p. 26.

¹⁵ E.g., *Varāha* and *Kūrma Purāṇa* (1.16.119-20).

¹⁶ See *Tantravārttika*, vol. 1, p. 94. Note that this was in the 7th century, before Buddhism took up these transgressive practices as well.

¹⁷ *Yājñavalkyasmṛti-ṭīkā* ad 1.7. Note that this is in the early 12th century, the height of widespread Śaiva influence in the political and religious spheres. Should we consider Aparāditya's arguments a desperate plea from the (temporarily) losing side? NB: the last four references were all provided by SANDERSON through personal communication and unpublished materials, Michelmas term, 2004.

¹⁸ See Sanderson 2004 for evidence that Śaivism reached such a level of success that its preceptors began to encroach upon ritual domains traditionally reserved for Vaidika brāhmins, such as the position of the *rājapurohita*, and the performance of śrāddhas for members of the (non-initiated) public.

order in terms of space devoted to each topic. The texts, numbering at least in the hundreds,¹⁹ could range from 100 to 24,000 *śloka*s,²⁰ and were composed from approximately 300 to 1200 CE, with the bulk of them in the 7th to 10th centuries.²¹ They were authored, in general, by non-brāhmins or (more likely) brāhmins far from the Sanskrit heartland, for their language is peppered by (regular) irregularities and vernacular influence, as well as sometimes suffering from an impoverished vocabulary and command of grammar. This contrasts greatly with the second phase of Śaivite texts, the exegetical phase. For these texts, composed from the ninth²² to the 14th centuries and also numbering in the hundreds, were in the main composed by learned brāhmins in sophisticated language and often utilizing the intellectual tools of pan-Indian rational debate. We will look at the possible sources and influences of these two strata of text in turn.

When we do a survey of the scriptural materials, we immediately confront a surprising fact: that the vast corpus of Śaiva scriptures almost never refers or even alludes to earlier non-Śaiva sources. This initial surprise is somewhat allayed but the realization that, as texts that professed to be a new divine revelation, they would attempt to conceal any indebtedness. Still, it seems unusual that amongst the panoply of new ideas of all sorts we find, in terms of precedents, only a vague conceptual continuity with some of the earlier Upaniṣads and with the Sāṅkhya and Yoga schools. Documentation of specific and sure allusions to earlier non-Śaiva

¹⁹ Many of these are lost now, but documented through citations and allusions.

²⁰ The first is exemplified by shorter recensions of the *Kālotara*, the second by the massive compendium redacted in Kāśmīr called the *Jayadrathayāmala-tantra*.

²¹ The first text of the Mantramārga (i.e. Tantric Śaivism), the *Niśvāsattva-saṃhitā*, is thought by Goodall et. al. (2007) to be composed in the early sixth century. The root-text of the earlier Atimārga, the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, is no later than 300 CE.

²² With the exception of our first documented commentator, the Saiddhāntika Sadyojyotis, who lived in the early eighth century. See Sanderson's "The Date of Sadyojyotis and Bṛhaspati" in *Cracow Indological Studies* 8 (2006), pp. 39–91.

texts is scanty. Sanderson, for whom such historical connections are central to his scholarship, writes:

“As for hard evidence of dependence on datable literary sources, I have as yet little to offer. The *Mataṅgapārameśvara* [*Tantra*, a scriptural text] paraphrases the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa (c. a.d. 350-400), and echoes the definition of sense-perception formulated in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of the Buddhist Dignāga (c. a.d. 480-540), and elaborated in the *Nyāyabindu* of Dharmakīrti (c. a.d. 600-660). The *Jayadrathayāmala* echoes the *Āgamaśāstra* of Gauḍapāda (c. a.d. 550-700).“ (2001: 16-17)

Aside from these few instances, if we ask the more general question of what earlier schools of thought would seem to have been requisite for the existence of Śaiva scriptural doctrine as we have it, then I would answer only those of Sāṅkhya and (for some of the later materials) Vijñānavāda/Yogācāra Buddhism; the first of these being much the easier to discern. Even the earliest Śaiva scriptures, such as the *Pāśupata-sūtra* attributed to the *avatāra* Lakulīśa (3rd cen.?) and the *Nīśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* (early 6th cen.), exhibit considerable originality in cosmology, soteriology, and praxis, and seem to be linked to existing ascetic or *śramaṇa* traditions dating from around the turn of the common era that remain undocumented except for cryptic or elliptical references in the *Mahābhārata*.²³ In the *Pāśupata-sūtra*, the Veda-congruent restriction of the practice to brāhmin males and the concern with purity and impurity is belied by the injunction to transgress brāhmaṇical norms in the proto-Tantric practices given in part two of the text, an example of its innovative praxis, which is combined with innovative doctrines, such as a strong monotheism. The debt Śaivism owes to Sāṅkhya, to which probably *all* forms of Indian philosophy owe a debt (Larson 1969), was greatest for it subsumed the Sāṅkhya ontology whole cloth within its own larger system (though it also

²³ I am thinking in part of the many references to two groups of Śaiva ascetics, one bald and the other bearing matted locks; mentioned, e.g., in the description of the gaṇas in the *Saṃtikaparvan* and in the *Śivasahasranāmastotra* recited by Dakṣa at 12.285 in the vulgate redaction.

reversed and reinterpreted some of its fundamental notions). Thus a brief review of the principles of Sāṅkhya is apposite.²⁴

Twenty-five *tattvas* in total are described in the system, and together they comprise a kind of Indian ‘periodic table’ in the sense that they attempt to exhaustively describe, and organize into a cohesive schema, all that exists in our universe of matter/energy and consciousness. The *tattvas* in the Sankhya system are the following:

- *Puruṣa*, pure contentless consciousness (Larson’s gloss), the knowing subject; equivalent to the term *sākṣin* in Yoga and certain versions of the Upaniṣadic *ātman*)
- *Prakṛti*, primordial materiality (from which come all other *tattvas*)
- *Buddhi*, discerning intellect and subconscious mind (in the sense that it is the repository of the traces of past experience [*saṃskāra*, *vāsanā*] including also the dispositions [*bhava*] of mind and the presented-ideas [*pratyaya*])
- *ahaṃkāra*, ego or identity-constructing aspect of mind;
- and *manas*, perceptual mind: together these three make up the *antaḥkāraṇa* or inner psychic instrument
- *Buddhīndriyas* or five sense-capacities
- *Karmendriyas* or five action-capacities (locomotion, reproduction, grasping, speaking, excretion)
- *Tanmātras* or five subtle elements (sound vibration, tactility, appearance, flavour, odor)
- *Pancamahābhūtas* (earth, water, fire, air, and space as such, but also solidity, liquidity, combustion, mobility, and vacuity as principles)

As is well known, this enumeration is tied to a dualistic philosophy in which the *puruṣa* is eternally ontologically distinct from *prakṛti*, and a soteriology in which the goal is to disentangle *puruṣa* from its apparent association with *prakṛti*, resulting the state of *kaivalya* or isolation. (This view of things was seemingly adopted by the Pātañjala Yoga school as well, which was also absorbed in certain respects by the Śaivas.)

²⁴ My discussion draws on the two best sources in book form, Larson’s *Classical Sankhya* (1979) and Johnston’s *Early Sankhya* (1937).

The 25 *tattva* hierarchy is capped by the Śaivas with 11 more *tattvas*;²⁵ thus by subsuming the Sāṅkhya *tattvas* into a larger list, the Śaiva scriptures attempt to show that the Sāṅkhya system encompasses only the lower levels of the universe and is therefore incomplete—an esotericizing theological stratagem we see repeatedly in the Śaiva texts. The list of *tattvas* that became standard in the post-scriptural Śaiva Siddhānta are (GOODALL lii):

1. Śiva—the supreme absolute and formless consciousness, aka Paramaśiva, Parameśvara, etc.
 2. Śakti—His power, potency, and energy
 3. Sadāśiva—an intermediate form
 4. Īśvara—the manifest (sakala) form of Śiva as agent
 5. Śuddhavidyā—pure knowledge or gnosis, i.e. mantras
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6. Māyā—primal matter, the creative power, and the source of the Impure Universe or *aśuddhādhvan* (all *tattvas* below the top five)
 7. kalā—limited power of action
 8. [aśuddha-]vidyā—limited power of knowledge
 9. rāga—‘nonspecific craving for worldly experience’ (Sanderson 1992: 285)
 10. kāla—time
 11. niyati—binding fate or necessity

Here, the top five *tattvas* constitute the Pure Universe (*śuddhādhvan*; also known as the ‘place above becoming’ or *udbhavapada*), which is in fact nothing but God, for we are told these five ‘different’ principles are all to be considered as phases of the divine Consciousness (see, e.g., the *Kiraṇa-vṛtti* of Rāmakaṇṭha). In summary, the first phase is Śiva (God) as the Absolute, without differentiation and utterly quiescent (*śānta*). We might compare this phase to the Upaniṣadic *brahman*, but the texts do not do so. It is formless and partless (*niṣkala*), ‘reabsorbed’ (*layavat*), and exists as pure potential (*śakta*) of all that is. To this is fused (in non-Saiddhāntika texts, originally) the Śakti or Power(s) of the Lord, who is the power-holder (*śaktimat*). They are not separable however, as *dharma* and *dharmī* are separable in

²⁵ Though this became the standard, early texts give different numbers, from five additional *tattvas* in the *Rauravasūtra-saṅgraha* to fourteen in the *Mṛgendra-tantra* (Goodall p. liv). The standard eleven are seen, e.g., in *Svāyambhūvasūtra-saṅgraha*, *Parākhya-tantra* ch. 5, *Diksottara*, and *Mataṅga-pārameśvara*.

Nyāya/Vaiśeṣika. The next phase is Sadāśiva, who is *sakala-niṣkala* or ‘unmanifest-cum-manifest’ (*vyaktāvyakta*), i.e. manifestation in an incipient stage (or ‘poised’, *udyukta*), neither entirely latent nor yet in process. The fourth phase is that of Īśvara, the manifest (*sthūla*) form of the Lord, and the locus of theistic devotionism. Īśvara is fully engaged (*pravṛtta*) and active, the creator with qualities (*sakala*), though he generally deputizes the actual act of creation. The fifth phase is God in the form of his mantras (= *vidyās*), which are considered knowledge (*vidyā*) in a *nirvikalpa* form.²⁶ These then are significant additions, that radically alter the Sāṅkhya universe, for a specifically theistic cosmology has here been created, one whose foundation is not insentient raw materiality. Indeed, *prakṛti* has in this system been usurped by *Māyā* (which does not mean illusion or delusion here, but the world-stuff) and made virtually redundant (it is labelled as ‘secondary materiality’: GOODALL lii).

Further, the status of the 25th tattva, *puruṣa*, has been significantly altered, for the Śaiva argument is that *puruṣa* is nothing but a *jīva* or *paśu*, a bound soul (compared to a domesticated beast), divine in essence as the Sāṅkhyas describe but severely circumscribed by the limiting factors called *kañcuka-tattvas*, numbered as 7-11 above. The Saiddhāntika branch of Tantric Śaivism adopts the Sāṅkhya view that the soul is eternally distinct from other souls, from the material world, and from God. For it, liberation is the casting off of the limiting *kañcukas* through ritual (the success of which is guaranteed by its provenance in texts uttered by Śiva) and subsequent attainment of the state of *śivatva*, that of being not one with Śiva, but equal to him (*śivatulyatā*). The nondual Śākta branch, rejecting Sāṅkhya dualism (as they rejected Veda-determined values), by contrast sees all the *kañcukas* as functions of ignorance, and liberation therefore as a realization of one’s eternal identity with the Lord.

²⁶ For these higher tattvas, see *Kiraṇatantra* 3.13 and 3.24-25, with *vṛtti*, and cf. *Mālinīvijayottara-tantra* 1.17c-18b, *Sarvajñānottara* 43-47 and *Parāṅkhyatantra* 2.95-98b. References given by Dr. Somadeva VASUDEVA in personal communication, Michelmas term, 2000.

Thus the additional *tattvas* are crucial and exemplify a very different theology. The Śaiva theological strategy is further exemplified in the assignation of the highest principles of other Indian schools of thought to specific lower *tattvas* in the Śaiva hierarchy of cosmic principles. That is, both major branches (Saidhāntikas and Śāktas) argued that other non-Śaiva schools of thought did indeed grant the liberation they promised, but that this was not the final or highest level of liberation, reaching as it did only to whichever *tattva* corresponded to that school's conception of the ultimate principle (as seen by the Śaivas), none of which were Śiva, the Supreme Lord. Thus all Śaivas reached the Pure Universe,²⁷ Sāṅkhyas reached the level of Puruṣa and Pātañjala Yogins just above it.²⁸ This constitutes more evidence that these two, whom the Śaivas collectively called *Adhyātmikas*,²⁹ were the most influential and respected of the other systems. Note that the Yogins are considered slightly superior, perhaps because of the emphasis on practice over theory in the early Śaiva texts (Brunner 1992). Also on the level of Puruṣa are found the *vivartavāda* Vedāntins, though these do not enter into many Śaiva discussions.³⁰ Below this, on the level of *Prakṛti* we find the Pāñcarātrikas (for, say the Saidhāntikas, they teach that God is the material cause of the world), the *pariṇāmavāda* Vedāntins, and the Vaidikas who worship Śiva. Below them, on the level of the *guṇas* (here taken as a separate *tattva*) we find the Jainas, and below them on the level of *buddhi* the (Yogācāra) Bauddhas, who hold that the only ultimately real thing is the

²⁷ This is further evidence that Śaivas thought of members of other sects as co-religionists, for among those that were 'saved' through reaching the Pure Universe at liberation are all tantric Śaivas and the non-tantric Pāśupatas of the Pāñcārthika, Vaimala, and Pramāṇa branches. Only the obscure Mausula/Kāruka Pāśupatas are excluded, according to the *Svacchanda*, due presumably to some schism which, along with the latter's texts, has been long ago lost and forgotten. Note that the schema is however different in the more conservative account in the *Sarvāgama*°, which demotes the Pāñcārthika Pāśupatas to the Māyā level, just below the Pure Universe.

²⁸ That is, they reach the level of Niyati, which I think is not significant in itself other than for the fact it is one level up from where the Sāṅkhyas reach.

²⁹ Cf. the use of the term *adhyātma-yoga* in Kaṭha Upaniṣad, chapter

³⁰ Perhaps because the exegetes prefer to engage with these Vedāntins' direct inspiration, the Vijñānavāda Bauddhas.

stream of cognition, as well as the Naiyāyikas. Yet other schools are arranged on this hierarchy, including the Vaiśeṣikas (who seem to be at *manas*) and the Smārtas, situated far down at the level of the *tanmātras*.³¹ Of course we must understand, despite verbs like 'reach' associated with the various 'levels' of the tattvas, that the latter do not so much denote planes of reality as states of consciousness or knowledge; yet the sense of vertical hierarchy is valid in the sense of the 'view' of reality one has from a given level, where the 'higher' one has reached, the more all-encompassing the ontological view—this, at least, is the Śaiva argument.

There are other early texts that seem to be sources for the formation of the Śaiva scriptures, specifically two Upaniṣads that are taken by many scholars to date from the beginning of the common era or earlier: the *Śvetāśvatara* and the *Maitrāyaṇīya*. The latter describes a *ṣaḍaṅga-yoga* or 'yoga (resulting) from six ancillaries' in its verse 6.18, consisting of the practices called *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, *tarka*, and *samādhi*. This type of yoga, with precisely this name and these components, is found in many Śaiva scriptural sources (and some tantric Vaiṣṇava ones, e.g. the *Jayākhyasamhitā*, as well as tantric Bauddha ones: see Grönbold 1996). Yet there is no reason to suppose, as some scholars have, that the *Maitrāyaṇīya* is its source. Van Buitenen (1962: 13) regards the sixth and seventh chapters of that text as later and full of accretions and interpolations. Further, we have no hard evidence that would compel us to date the text in its final recension to any earlier period than the earliest Śaiva sources (Vasudeva 2004: 375-6). I propose, then, that both the *Maitrāyaṇīya* and the Śaiva sources drew on a common complex yogic milieu of the classical period, which must have included many texts now lost to us. The *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* was part of this milieu and clearly developed independently of Patañjali's more famous *aṣṭāṅgayoga*, which was known to the

³¹ This account of the levels draws on Saiddhāntika exegete Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's *Sarvāgama-prāmāṇyopanyāsa* as well as the scriptural *Svacchanda-tantra* (see discussion at Watson 2006: 78-79, Goodall 1998: xxii-xxv, and Tórszók 197-98).

Śaivas but not incorporated by them, possibly because it lacked *tarka*, which became a central feature that prevented the *sādhaka* from getting 'stuck' on a lower level of attainment (see, e.g., the *Svāyambhuvasūtra-saṅgraha*'s *yogapāda*, recently translated by C. Tompkins). That the *aṣṭāṅgayoga* was known we can see from its incorporation in a single Śaiva scripture of Kāśmīr, the *Netratantra* (date and provenance established in the appendix of Sanderson 2005).

As for the *Śvetāśvatara*, many have taken it as our earliest evidence for sectarian Śaivism; but I propose, following a line of thought first suggested by Sanderson in a seminar series at Oxford, that this Upaniṣad is not as early as it appears, and that it in fact constitutes an (evidently highly successful) attempt on the part of the Pāśupatas to legitimize their sectarian doctrine by insinuating it into the Vedic corpus. We have no specific evidence that I am aware of that would require us to date this text any earlier than the *Pāśupata-sūtra*. The Upaniṣad makes itself appear ancient through the inclusion of verses from the Ṛgveda- and Taittirīya-Saṃhitā (2.1-7), which are however joined rather clumsily and jarringly with the yogic material that immediately follows and do not seem to bear on the actual doctrine of the text.³² In chapter one, we see verses that seem to echo specific passages in the *Pāśupata-sūtra*: “When he comes to know God, he is freed from all fetters.” (1.8 and 11) Further, in the colophonic conclusion of chapter six, we see the expression “by the grace of God” (*īśaprasādāt*), hardly characteristic of the Upaniṣads but very characteristic of the *Pāśupata-sūtra* (e.g., 5.40). Furthermore, the author says that he has proclaimed this doctrine to the *atyāśramins*, those who have passed beyond the (four brāhmaṇical) stages of life. This can only be a reference to the initiatory vow of the Pāśupatas, called *atyāśrama-vratam*, in which they renounce the *varṇāśrama* (in terms of its injunctions more than its ethos) in favor of total devotion to Rudra. It is this vow that gave the various Pāśupata traditions their name, i.e. the *Atimārga* (Sanderson

³² Olivelle (1996: 252) notes that “the numerous citations from older vedic texts indicate that the author is attempting to support his doctrines with vedic proof-texts.”

2006: 158). Finally, the Upaniṣad refers to “the Vedānta” (i.e. the early Upaniṣads) as being composed in “a former age”, and closes with an exhortation to deep love for God and equal love for one’s Guru that is uncharacteristic of the Upaniṣads (Olivelle 1996: 265). While a much more detailed and careful study is of course necessary, I hope I have shown the possibility that the putative author Śvetāśvatara was himself a (Pāñcārthika-) Pāśupata who skilfully built a bridge towards legitimacy, that, to judge from many medieval inscriptions and Pāśupata monuments, was part of a very successful agenda for wider acceptance.

Let us return briefly to the first scripture of the Pāsupatas, and thus of the Śaivas. That it was aware of and indeed was a part of a wider Indian philosophical discourse can be seen from juxtaposing its first *sūtra* with other, contemporaneous -*sūtra* texts:³³

- *athāto brahmajijñāsā* : Brahma-sūtra 1.1.1
- *athāto dharmajijñāsā* : Mīmāṃsā-sūtra 1.1.1
- *athāto dharmam vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* : Vaiśeṣika-sūtra 1.1.1
- *athātaḥ paśupateḥ pāśupataḥ yogavidhiḥ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* : Pāśupata-sūtra 1.1

Each of these texts aimed (successfully) at established itself as the fundamental source for its respective traditions. It is by no means certain that the Pāśupata-sūtra was the last of these. Hara has argued convincingly (1992) that its commentary, the *Pañcārthabhāṣya* of Kauṇḍinya, was known to the authors of the Sāṅkhya *Yuktidīpikā* commentary and the Vaiśeṣika *Praśastāpada-bhāṣya*. He has also shown that Kauṇḍinya’s commentary is very much indebted to Sāṅkhya categories, further exemplifying the association we have already seen above.

Part III: *The Exegetical Phase of Śaivism in Kāśmīr: Its Influences and Interlocutors*

In a lucid and perspicacious article, European scholar Johannes Bronkhorst discusses the appearance in India of a “tradition of rational debate and inquiry” that began in the

³³ First noticed by Minoru Hara in 1964; see Hara 1992: 210.

classical period and flourished especially in the early mediaeval period. He writes that this emergent tradition “obliged thinkers to listen to the criticism of often unfriendly critics, even where it concerned their most sacred convictions, such as those supposedly based on revelation, tradition, or inspiration.” (Bronkhorst 2001: 475) Eventually, learned proponents of every school of thought were drawn into this sometimes combative intellectual arena, possibility because of the stiff competition for patronage engendered by the volatile political arena. The latter is described at length by Ronald Davidson (2002), who argues that Buddhism’s involvement in the emerging world of pan-Indian debate (beginning with Dignāga) constitutes a significant turning point for that religion.

Once the Śaiva scriptures began to receive commentaries from learned exegetes, we see a wider and more specific awareness of the world of Indian philosophical discourse; yet still, the exegetes refer to these other texts very infrequently relative to their intra-sectarian references. We may get a sense of this by examining a list of citations in the encyclopedic Śaiva manual the *Tantrāloka* of Abhinavagupta. Probably around a third of this work of nearly six thousand verses consists of citations and paraphrases from well over a hundred other works, and yet among these only a small handful are non-Śaiva:

- Non-Śaiva texts quoted (Rastogi 280-4): *Aitareyopaniṣad* (once), *Gītā* (thrice), *Yogasūtra* (once)
- Non-Śaiva texts referred to (Rastogi 253-63, 275): *Gītā* (once), Purāṇic corpus (thrice), *Yogasūtra* (once), Veda (thrice, adversarially), *Smṛti* (twice), *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (once, J.)³⁴
- Other systems of thought specifically alluded to (Rastogi 270-3, 286-7): Sāṅkhya (aka Adhyātma, which includes classical Yoga; 13 times +11 J.), Vaiṣṇava (24+ times, usually adversarially), Bauddha (14 times + 4 J., e.g. *Vaibhāṣika* and *Vijñānavāda*), Śrauta (10 times, usually adversarially), Nyāya (thrice + 5 J.), Pāñcarātriṇa (6 times), Jaina (5 times), Smārta (4 times +1 J.), Mīmāṃsā (5 J., both Kaumārila and Prābhākara), Pātañjala (thrice, J.), Vaiśeṣika (thrice, J.), Cārvāka (once), Vaiyākaraṇa-darśana (once).

³⁴ J. indicates that the commentator Jayaratha has given us the source of the reference rather than Abhinavagupta himself. Not all of these can be considered certain.

Many of these references frequently do not indicate indebtedness, but rather dialectic. The exegetes were familiar with and often engaged the Indian intellectual tradition of setting forth an opponent (*pūrvapakṣin*)’s view (often with the particle *nanu*) and then refuting it in more or less detail, depending on the learning of the audience. This was part of a strategy to validate the Śaiva tradition and its scriptures on three levels: that of *yukti*, or reason (especially when addressing non-Śaivas); of *āgama*, or appeal to commonly held scripture (especially when addressing Śaivas of a rival school); and of *sākṣātkara*, or direct (spiritual) experience (especially when addressing the members of one’s own sect or initiatory group [*kula*]).³⁵

It was Dharmakīrti whom the Śaivas of several schools took on as their principal non-Śaiva interlocutor,³⁶ as well as Dharmottara, one of his successors. For example, Dharmakīrti is quoted no less than 44 different times in a single chapter of a work by dualist Śaiva exegete Rāmakaṇṭha (see below).³⁷ Raffaele TORELLA writes that the masters of Buddhist logic “are opponents, of course, but they are evoked so constantly and always with such profound respect, particularly Dharmakīrti, that the nature of their relationship is not immediately evident.” (1992: 327) Here he is referring mainly to nondual Śaivas (such as Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta) who engaged most frequently with the *Pramāṇavārttika*, *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, and *Nyāyabindu*, and were clearly aware of some of the commentaries on those works as well. Torella discusses this engagement and the resulting dialectic in two important articles (1992 and 2001).³⁸

³⁵ For these three strategies and their respective audiences, see MULLER ORTEGA 1998.

³⁶ Torella suggest that Dharmakīrti was more appropriate for this role than Dignāga because the former accepted the legacy of Bhartṛhari, another formative influence on Śaiva discourse, especially in the nondual sphere (1992: 338, fn 7).

³⁷ In the *Nareśvaraparīkṣāprakāśa* ch. 1; see Watson 2006: 87, fn 129.

³⁸ Though there is no scope in this paper to delve into the specifics of the complex intellectual debates in question, I wish to provide an example of the sort of dialectic to which Torella refers, to illustrate that I have attempted to grapple with it. In his article on “The Word” (2001) Torella shows how the Bauddhas deny any necessary association of discursive thought *per se* with the raw sensation of external objects. The nondual Śaivas

Rāmakaṇṭha

To take up the first example, this intellectual connection between Śaivas and Buddhists can easily be seen in the work of a dualist exegete of the Śaiva Siddhānta school, Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha. A scholar of the Oxford school of Tantric studies has recently published a thorough examination of the latter's views in a book version of his dissertation entitled *The Self's Awareness of Itself: Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's Arguments against the Buddhist Doctrine of No-Self* (Watson 2006). This work is a study primarily of a philosophical śāstra of Rāmakaṇṭha called the *Nareśvaraparīkṣā-prakāśa*. In it, Watson clearly shows Rāmakaṇṭha's "sympathy with and understanding of" the Buddhist position (2006: 214), for Rāmakaṇṭha positions his Buddhist interlocutor *above* other so-called 'Hindus' (like the Sāṅkhyas, Naiyāyikas etc.) in terms of their relative understanding of the true nature of being (216). In fact, Rāmakaṇṭha's strategy in the first two chapters of this text is to have his Buddhist *pūrvapakṣin* refute the arguments of all the other schools, so that when he himself refutes the Buddhist, he will be seen to have claimed the intellectual victory over all. This strategy clearly entails a vision of the Buddhist

agree, but (drawing I believe on Bhartṛhari) posit that the Word is present on the level of pure perception/sensation (which is prior to cognition) in the form of the *śabdāna-śakti* that inheres in the very *manaskāra* or mental attention which is necessary for any perception. The object awakens the potential verbal signification insofar as it is associated with a *samskāra* that constitutes an impulse towards signification (*śabda-bhāvanā*). The relevant distinction here is between *abhilāpa* (verbal expression, whether actually spoken or not) and *abhijalpa* (lit., murmur) or *antaḥsanjalpa* (inner indistinct discourse, triggered by the fact of *manaskāra*). The Śaivas argue that the latter is present from the first moment of perception and makes the former possible. (See pp. 101-2 in the Kaul version of the article.) We see in the ĪPK of Utpaladeva the notion that the Word in the form of *vimarśa-śakti* (expressed at least up to the Paśyantī level) must be present at the first moment of sensation, else (for example) how can one take off running with distinct purpose but without a thought? (ĪPK I.5.19) *icchā-śakti* must be present at Paśyantī level, indicating an exceedingly subtle 'discourse'. (This must be so also because the unfolding of the internal half of the *śaḍadhvan* [i.e. the Signifier half, consisting of varṇas, padas, and mantras] must mirror the unfolding of the external, Signified half [i.e. kalās, tattvas, and bhuvanas]. We should note that there is no *vikalpa* on the level of pure perception (perception-without-interpretive-cognition [Paśyantī]) and thus no subject/object split, indicating an agreement with (and influence by?) the Vijñānavāda Bauddha position.

interlocutor as a 'proximate other' rather than a 'remote other'.³⁹ Watson says, "He stands with Buddhism against the Brāhmaṇical realist traditions in denying a Self beyond cognition." (215) Indeed, in Rāmakaṇṭha's *Kiraṇavṛtti* he uses almost identically worded arguments to those of his Buddhist *pūrvapakṣin* in *Nareśvaraparikṣā-prakāśa*, but here attributes them to his own school! (215-6) It would appear that the only difference he has with the Buddhist is that while agreeing with his interlocutor that there is no perceiving self apart from consciousness, the Buddhist believes that consciousness to be a flux, different with each cognitive perception, while Rāmakaṇṭha believes that the same consciousness, stable and not contingent on its objects, witnesses different perceptions.⁴⁰ But this agreement on many points would not be sufficient for Rāmakaṇṭha to make the Buddhist his ally in argumentation if he perceived the latter as 'wholly other'.

Utpaladeva and Somānanda

We see a similar strategy utilized in a central work of Śaiva nondualist philosophy, the *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-kārikās* (ĪPK, early 10th cen.) of Utpaladeva. This monumental yet concise work of philosophical dialectic is also deeply engaged with Buddhist thought, and not only that: it paraphrases or alludes to arguments of the Sāṅkhyas, Kaumārīlas, Vijñānavādins, Sautrāntikas, Vaibhāṣikas, Prāmāṇikas, and Vaiyākaraṇas, especially the figures of Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and Bhartṛhari. These *pūrvapakṣins* are sometimes agreed with and other times opposed. Whole chapters are given over to present the Buddhist view, and as we saw with Rāmakaṇṭha, Utpala will sometimes have his closest Buddhist interlocutor do his arguing for

³⁹ To use the language of religion scholars such as William Scott Green and Jonathan Z. Smith (Green 1996).

⁴⁰ Watson writes, "It is not so much a dispute over the existence or non-existence of an entity, but rather over the nature of an entity they both agree to exist." (217) This fact is obscured (and thus overlooked by many scholars) by the rhetoric of the *ātmavāda* vs. *anātmavāda* positions, which appear diametrically opposed, and in some cases are, but not in this one.

him, such as in chapter two of section one. Torella writes in the annotations to his translation of the ĪPK:

“The target of Buddhist criticism here are some *ātmavādins* whose (various) positions are only partially shared by the Śaiva *ātmavādin*. One might almost say that Utpala sometimes uses the Buddhists’ own weapons to demolish doctrines which, though apparently closer to the Śaiva positions, remain, however, extraneous to what is their core and essential tenor.” (1994: 89 fn1)

Perhaps Utpala opposes Buddhists to the Naiyāyikas to avoid offending the latter, as many of them were Śaivas of the exoteric variety (1994: xxii-xxiii), and were well entrenched in Kashmirian society (as we see from the *Nyāya-mañjarī*, composed in Kāśmīr by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, a Vaidik Śaiva). This, incidentally, demonstrates that there were important links between exoteric and esoteric Śaivism, despite fundamental doctrinal differences, as illustrated by the well-known maxim *antaḥ kaulo bahiḥ śaivo lokācāre tu vaidikaḥ* (Sanderson 1985: 203-5). Note that Utpala also authored another work, the *Īśvarasiddhi*, written from a Naiyāyika viewpoint, arguing against Mīmāṃsā, Sāṅkhya, and Bauddha views (Torella 1994: xl).

Utpaladeva’s body of work served a crucial role in the developing Śaiva theology of the nondual current. He was an initiate into the sect of the Trika (with strong Kaula and Krama influences), a little-known Śākta Śaiva cult of three goddesses that nevertheless had a wide geographical distribution.⁴¹ The early Trika had no philosophical component as such, and Utpala—along with his followers and his own teacher—succeeded in bringing it into the realm of pan-Indian rational discourse and debate, thereby establishing its credibility and making it tenable in a wider sphere. In fact, long after the *cult* of the Trika had vanished, Utpala (and his successor and commentator Abhinavagupta) were cited as authorities that provided the philosophical framework for other Śākta Śaiva schools, such as that of the South Indian Krama

⁴¹ Sanderson shows in his 2005 article that it existed early on in Mahārāṣṭra, and that it was somewhat later found in Tamiḻ Nādu and Orissa (2007 article) as well.

and Śrīvidyā (aka Traipuradarśana).⁴² Utpala's work also serves to demonstrate the great importance accorded to Buddhist thought by so-called 'Hindus' in this period (ca. 925 CE), and that, in fact, the close proximity of his views to those of the Yogācārins, and sympathetic treatment of them, may be seen as evidence that certain sects that modern scholars would wish to label as branches of 'Hinduism' had in fact as much in common with the Bauddhas as they did with other such so-called 'branches' (as I have argued at length in my other field statement). As part of his demonstration of the degree to which the Śaivas internalize logical Buddhist discourse, despite their rhetoric of vehement opposition to the latter, Torella writes:

“This lengthy examination and criticism of the teaching of the Buddhist logicians resulted in, or at least was accompanied by, the peculiar phenomenon of a more or less conscious absorption of their doctrines and their terminology, that was to leave substantial traces in the structure of the Pratyabhijñā [philosophy]. This may have been a deliberate choice by Utpala: to increase his own prestige by assuming the ways and forms of a philosophical school which was perhaps the most respected and feared...” (1994: xxii)

One example, which I will treat briefly, is Utpala's innovative theory of *ābhāsas*. In the context of the doctrine that all objects of experience are projections within consciousness, *ābhāsas* are the Śaiva equivalent of the Bauddha theory of *dharma*s. That is, they are the constituents of which any object is made, the various universals such as blueness roundness etc. that make it up, each connected with a word. When these are mutually delimited and further particularized by the factors of space and time, we have an object present to the senses with apparently independent reality (such as a round blue pot), i.e. a *svalakṣaṇa*. Yet it is not independent, and as an object it is constituted through the unifying power (*anusandhāna*) of the mind and discourse (*vikalpa*) that (somewhat artificially) attributes a single word to this collection of

⁴² We see evidence of the former in numerous citations of these two and others in Maheśvarānanda's Mahārthamañjarī and allusions to Abhinava in both the scriptures of the Śrīvidyā (e.g. the Yoginīhṛdaya) and their commentaries, e.g. that of Jayaratha. Indeed, it is noteworthy that Jayaratha's massive commentary on Abhinava's *Tantrāloka* was apparently written from within a Śrīvidyā social context, as the commentator was an initiate of that school rather than the Trika.

*ābhāsa*s, which as the term implies are in fact simply 'illuminations' that shine forth within apperceptive consciousness. Now, clearly this theory draws heavily on Bhartṛhari (on which see more below), the Pramāṇa school and the Vijñānavāda. (Torella 1994: xxvii and 1992: 332) The first influence in the concept of each *ābhāsa* being a universal connected to a word, the second in the notion of *svalakṣaṇa*, and the third in each *ābhāsa* being an element of consciousness, which gives them their coherence. But the great Śaiva exegetes were not mere synthesizers, they were also innovators, and there is another, unique twist to the *ābhāsa* theory. For the Buddhists, *svalakṣaṇa* designates the unique place time and form of an object as its intrinsic nature; though it consists of specific *dharma*s, as an existent object in an instant of perception the *svalakṣaṇa* is an absolutely undivided reality. However, for the Śaivas, it is simply a particularization, a 'contraction' (*saṅkoca*) of a more expanded universal potential (*vikāśita-svabhāva*) within consciousness (its potential to become a pot, or manifest its potness, if you will). It is particularized by a specific place, time and form: the phrase used for this is *svarūpa-saṅkoca*.⁴³ And further, the *svabhāva* of 'potness' (or whatever) is itself a particularization of the transcendent nature of (the singular) consciousness, an instantiation of its capacity to represent itself to itself in any conceivable form: that is, its *vimarśa*, or self-reflective awareness. This is the fundamental Śaiva monistic doctrine the Vijñānavādins would never allow, for though they also assert that all objects are present only in consciousness (*cittamātra*) and that they are all co-dependent, theirs is a universe of co-dependent fragments of knowable reality, each known to a particular individual's consciousness at a particular time, and both the knower and the known are momentary and impermanent in their co-arising.⁴⁴ By (stark) contrast, Utpala wants a coherence and

⁴³ The last few sentences draw heavily on the discussion by Torella at 1994: 89-90.

⁴⁴ This is what Torella's presentation of the situation seems to imply, but I admit to confusion on this point, for Paul Williams' presentation of the Yogācāra defines the flux of consciousness or *paratantrasvabhāva* as "one mentalistic primary existent as substratum" of experience and apparent subject-object duality (2000: 158). The

unification to his universe, achieved through the positing of a single, transcendent subject (i.e. Paramaśiva) who is itself *avichinnābhāsa* though it simultaneously contracts into each particular *ābhāsa*. Torella writes:

“Utpala’s constant preoccupation is to show, in every context he deals with, the need for a single, dynamic subject that unifies and animates the discontinuity of reality and constitutes the substratum of every limited subject, as well as of every form and activity of everyday life.” (1994: xxix)

Furthermore, Utpala posits (against the Yogācārins) that the phenomenal world, though all consciousness, is nevertheless *real*, for each object is a coagulation of conscious energy in its objective aspect and each subject a contracted locus of the universal Subject; and both, while impermanent in the sense of ever-changing, do have duration and essentiality (*svabhāva*).

We turn now briefly to Utpala’s teacher, Somānanda, who in many ways is more narrowly sectarian, yet predated and informed Utpala’s efforts to legitimate Śaiva doctrine through logical debate. Somānanda was the author of the *Śivadr̥ṣṭi*⁴⁵ (which received a commentary by Utpala), in which he aggressively engages in vigorous dialectic with other schools. He attacks the dualism of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika (which Utpala carefully skirted), and also those who claim the phenomenal world is unreal (the Vijñānavādins) or merely *vivarta*, appearance (the Vedāntins). He further attacks the Vijñānavādins’ denial of an abiding subject, arguing that every action needs an agent, including the action of knowing (Torella 1994: xviii). Nevertheless, Somānanda is one of the first Śaiva authors (along with Vasugupta) in whom we see a strong Vijñānavāda influence in the central doctrine that “being” is being united with the manifestation of consciousness (*cidvyaktiyogitā*; 1994: xv). It is significant in this regard that some Buddhist scholars believe the *cittamātra* doctrine to have developed in Kāśmīr (Williams 2000: 229). This influence will be discussed slightly more below.

use of the word ‘one’ (he cites Vasubandhu’s use of the term *ekadravya* also) is the source of my confusion, for I cannot understand how the flux of consciousness can be one without positing one subject.

⁴⁵ Newly translated in a recent Ph.D. diss. by John Nemeć, now at the University of Virginia.

Bhartṛhari

The influence of Bhartṛhari on the Śaiva exegetes can hardly be overestimated, though once again they adopt many of his terms of discourse and ideas while altering or discarding the most fundamental ones. It is clear that they had read the *Vākyapadīya* and its (auto-?) *vṛtti*, for it is the basis for their exposition of the concept of the Word, a fundamental notion for Śaiva theology (1994: xxv). Bhartṛhari himself seems to be midway between Vijñānavāda (which I think clearly must have influenced him; see Lindtner 1993) and the Pratyabhijñā: he posits an absolute reality, a unified totality which is somehow greater than the sum of its parts (as the sense of a word is more than the combination of its phonemes), which is divided or carved up by language (“By force of this [discursive understanding], every produced thing is distinguished“ VāPa 1.133cd; “Things proceed from words; they create the distinctions (in the world)“ VāPa 3.14.198ab; cited in Bronkhorst 2001: 481-2). For Bhartṛhari, the phenomenal world is unreal insofar as it is constituted in our experience as an artificial division of an indivisible One (VāPa 1.1-2, cited in Isayeva 1995: 79-80). The Vijñānavāda is seen here in the notion of a conscious continuum of experience artificially divided into subject and object (*parikalpita-svabhāva*, in their terms) and the Pratyabhijñā is presaged in the notion of the delineation of aspects of the whole as a linguistic process.⁴⁶ But Bhartṛhari does not appear to posit the idealism of those schools. However, his link with the Śaiva side is stronger, for the ‘linguistic mysticism’ we find as a central doctrine of the Trika and its associated schools, both on scriptural and exegetical levels,⁴⁷ seems to proceed directly from (the spirit of) Bhartṛhari’s assertion “The power residing in words is the basis of this whole universe...” (VāPa 1.122). But note that when Bhartṛhari calls the whole universe a “transformation of the word“ (VāPa

⁴⁶ This is a feature of the *ābhāsa* theory, where each *ābhāsa* is considered an individualized form of the great light (*śivābhāsa*), carved out from it as it were (Torella 1994: xxviii).

⁴⁷ The most salient example being the scripture called *Parātriṃśikā* and its *-vivarāṇa* commentary by Abhinavagupta, entirely on linguistic mysticism.

1.124) he is thinking of the Veda, which is emphatically not what the Śaivas had in mind. We may see this in the fact that while Bhartṛhari posited a tripartition of the Word (into the divisions or planes called Paśyantī, Madhyamā, and Vaikhari, each modifying Vāc), he was criticized for this allegedly incomplete analysis by the Śaiva exegetes of the Trika, who took over his schema but added a wholly transcendent level, that of Parā Vāc—which they also worshipped cultically as their highest Goddess. Abhinavagupta wrote in one of his commentaries on Utpala's ĪPK: "For us, the totality of phonemes is the supreme Lord himself; the (linguistic) Goddess Mātrkā (in both distinct and indistinct forms) is his Power." (Torella 2001: 856) Thus though they agreed with Bhartṛhari's famous statement that there is no cognition in which the Word does not figure (VāPa 1.131), they argued that the Word completely transcended the discursive realm (as normally understood) in the form of the self-aware consciousness which possessed the *capacity to express*, the very potency of language. In other words, for these (Śākta) Śaivas, Vāc is not to be characterized as *śabda* but as *śabdana*: the very power of symbolization and verbalization which makes reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) possible and constitutes its very essence (Torella 2001: 858).

To summarize the Śaiva view of the four levels, Parā is totally beyond the distinction of the three planes and yet constitutes the deepest identity of each of them. That is, it actually coincides with no single plane, but is the 'level' from which the three other planes derive the capacity of performing their respective functions; it embodies the very divine will presiding over this free manifestation of contraction or particularization in the other three grades. (Torella 2001: 894) Paśyantī, then, is the plane of nirvikalpa awareness, without spatio-temporal differentiation, but possessing a subtle differentiation of *vācya* and *vācaka*. It is described as a kind of internal discourse like a murmuring; words are 'condensed'. This level is infused with the light of *icchā-śakti*. (Torella 2001: 861) Madhyamā is the substratum of the various vikalpas; discursive thought is brought about on this level in the three aspects of the

antaḥkaraṇa in the form of imagination, deliberation, and ego-reference (respectively). It is linked to ‘internal language’, the language of thought (*cintana*), as well as the *prāṇa* and the subtle body. (Torella 2001: 858) *Vaikhari*, of course, which can be translated as either ‘manifested’ or ‘organic’, is the level of articulate, ordinary speech. But given its source, it is no surprise that in this theory of *Mātrkā* even ordinary speech can shape our experience of reality.

We see, then, both similarities and significant differences with *Bharṭṛhari*’s ideas in the *Vākyapadīya*. An unsolved puzzle in the study of the Śaiva appropriation of *Bharṭṛhari* is the fact that *Somānanda* engages in a long and vituperative attack on the former (in *Śivadrṣṭi* ch. 2), and appears to have nothing good to say about him; yet *Somānanda*’s direct disciple *Utpala* has reverence for *Bharṭṛhari*, incorporating many of the latter’s teachings, and seems embarrassed by his teacher’s attitude; a shift unusual for its rapidity that Torella calls a “glaring reversal” (1994: xxiii). Another of *Bharṭṛhari*’s doctrines that *Utpala* incorporated and made central to Trika theology is that of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* (aka *pratyavamarśa*), where the former signifies the manifesting light of consciousness as the ground of all being, and the latter the dynamic self-awareness that makes cognition and representation possible. We see these terms, e.g., in *VāPa* 1.124 (in the edition used by Isayeva; 1.132 in that used by Torella) which reads in part “it is the Word that makes everything recognizable [*vārūpatā... pratyavamarśinī*]”. We cannot survey these rich terms in depth here, but they become two of the most central terms in *Abhinavagupta*’s voluminous theological writings.

Vedānta of Gauḍapāda, Bharṭṛhari, and Śaṅkara

We will close with a brief consideration of the possible influence of *Vedānta* on Śaiva thought. Many have assumed that Śaṅkara’s *Advaita Vedānta*—which become the most ‘famous’ variety of *Vedānta* in the late mediaeval and early modern periods—must have been

an influence on the Śākta Śaivas (or so-called “Kashmir Shaivism”), for they were also *advaitins* and monists. The only trouble with this assertion is that there is no evidence to support it. None of the Śaiva exegetes refer to Śaṅkara, either as inspiration or opponent. A *vivartavāda* does appear which might be Śaṅkara’s, but strictly in the role of opponent, and it is not given much consideration, nor named as his. Śaiva nondualism (*advaya*) could hardly be more different from Śaṅkara’s *advaita*, asserting as they do the reality of the world over and against any illusionist doctrines. The world is a transformation of consciousness, and each object a *real* form of one and the same consciousness. This might seem to put them in the *pariṇāma* camp, though the Trika avoids such classification by asserting that the doctrine that distinguishes their school is that the highest principle (*param tattvam, ātmatattvam, śivatattvam*) is for them simultaneously immanent (*viśvamayam*) and transcendent (*viśvottīrṇam*). That is, while it becomes the universe, it also remains itself, untouched by all the transformations. Nor do the Śaiva *advaitins* hold with a *māyāvāda* doctrine as espoused by Śaṅkara’s school, recognizing that it is philosophically incoherent for a monist doctrine to posit a *Māyā/avidyā* that is neither a part of nor different from Brahman (Śaṅkara’s invocation of the term *anirvacanīya* in this regard seems particularly weak). Rather, they follow Bhartṛhari in asserting that *avidyā* is a concealing *śakti* of the Lord, and *Māyā* is not delusion but rather the creative power of God. This further allows them to posit (with Śaṅkara, coincidentally) that liberation is a cognitive/epistemological shift, for though *Māyā* creates duality it is a cause of suffering only insofar as it is viewed with ignorance. This doctrine seems to owe something to Nāgārjuna’s *Madhyamaka*, for which the difference between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is simply cognitive.

Therefore when we speak of Vedānta’s influence on Śaivism, we must speak only of the Vedānta of Gauḍapāda and Bhartṛhari.⁴⁸ This phase of Vedānta may be seen as a bridge (or in-road) between the doctrines of Vijñānavāda Buddhism and those of the so-called ‘Hindu’

⁴⁸ This was first documented carefully by Natalia Isayeva in her 1995 book.

sphere (for even Śaṅkara was accused of being *pracana-bauddha*, and his teacher's teacher Gauḍapāda is much more Buddhist in outlook and language). We may see this influence in a key verse of Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*:

This duality...of the perception and the perceiver is only the vibration of consciousness. But consciousness [in its true or expanded state] is devoid of objects: that is why it is called eternally free from bonds. (4.72; trans. Isayeva 1995: 61)

This verse could have been penned by a nondual Śaiva, and indeed is echoed by Utpala at ĪPK I.5.15 and 19. Yet it also, with slight adjustments, could have appeared in a Yogācāra text. Its vision of reality dwelt at the core (but did not exhaust the scope) of Śaiva theology for many centuries. It may even be the case that the apparent strong Vijñānavāda influence with see on some nondual Śaiva doctrines came through the work of Gauḍapāda and Bhartṛhari.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to present evidence that demonstrates that Śaivism was a distinct and self-contained religion in the medieval period, influenced by but not formed out of other schools of thought in the Indian cultural milieu. We have seen that the Śaiva scriptures, while aware of earlier currents such as Sāṅkhya, constitute a unique and primarily self-referential genre of theology, cosmology, and praxis. By contrast, the Śaiva authors of the exegetical period worked hard to bring Śaiva discourse into the realm of pan-Indian intellectual debate, responding especially to Buddhist interlocutors, who they regarded as their most worthy opponents, and whose doctrine (in its Vijñānavāda instantiation) paralleled their own more closely than any of the other so-called 'Hindu' sects. The 'Hindu' school which did share perspectives with Śaivism, that of early Vedānta, probably did so because of Vijñānavāda influence. We saw a special indebtedness to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Dharmakīrti, and Bhartṛhari. When drawing on earlier non-Śaiva sources, however, the exegetes did not hesitate to reconfigure, alter, and recontextualize their ideas and arguments, to the point of even

dropping tenets their original authors would have regarded as fundamental. A diachronic analysis of Śaiva textuality, then, reveals a unique body of revelations with largely undocumented antecedents⁴⁹ being progressively justified, legitimated, and brought into the Indian intellectual mainstream by the apologetic hermeneutics of skilled and educated brāhmanical exegetes. Yet, at the same time, those very exegetes (in the left current) concealed through their legitimizing discourse a form of practice done in secrecy that preserved some of the transgressive elements of the earlier untamed heterodox (Śākta) tradition. These elements disappeared slowly, and at the present time the surviving Tantric sects (such as the Śrīvidyā found in the South) no longer have any transgressive elements; though there is some suggestion of their persistence among the Bauls of Bengal⁵⁰ and Bengali saints such as Rāmakṛṣṇa,⁵¹ who, however, have only tenuous links to the 'high' Śaiva Tantra discussed here.

⁴⁹ Except in the realm of ritual—for though it did include uniquely Śaiva elements (esp. mantras), the daily ritual was designed strictly on the model of Vedic smārta ritual, as Sanderson (1995) has shown.

⁵⁰ See the work of Hugh Urban.

⁵¹ See Jeff Kripal's *Kālī's Child: The Mystical and Erotic in the Life and Teachings of Rāmakṛṣṇa*, 2nd ed., University of Chicago Press, 1998.

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