

Converting the Ḍākinī: Goddess Cults and Tantras of the Yoginīs between Buddhism and Śaivism¹

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Introduction

The corpus of Mahāyāna scripture known as *Yoginītantras* (“Tantras of the Yoginīs”) or *Yoganiruttaratantras* (“Highest Yoga Tantras”), according to some classification schemas,² represents the last major wave of Buddhist literary production in India, along with its exegetical traditions. The pantheons and practices of the *Yoginītantras* assumed considerable prominence in the latter centuries of Indian Buddhism, and characterize the religion as it took root in Tibet. Some texts of this corpus, as Alexis Sanderson has delineated in a pioneering, if somewhat controversial series of articles (1994, 2001, 2009), also have remarkable parallels in another body of tantric literature: scriptures of the *vidyāpīṭha* division of the Śaiva *tantras*. Much as texts of the *vidyāpīṭha* (“Wisdom Mantra Corpus”) mark a shift from the pacific deity Sadāśiva to the skull-bearing Bhairava and his wild female companions, maṇḍalas of the Buddhist *Yoginītantras* (and some precursors) center not upon Mahāvairocana, the radiant supreme Buddha of the *Yogatantras*, but upon divinities of the *vajra* clan (*kula*) presided over by the Buddha Akṣobhya. Their iconography is frequently mortuary (*kāpālīka*), while their maṇḍalas exhibit increasing emphasis on goddesses, including consorts of the Buddhas. It is within the scriptures and practice systems centered upon divinities of Akṣobhya’s clan, especially erotic, *kāpālīka* deities such as Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra, that the goddesses known as *yoginīs* or *ḍākinīs* rise into prominence, parallel to the cult of *yoginīs* evidenced in Śaiva *tantras* of the *vidyāpīṭha*.

Sanderson’s contention that the *Yoginītantra* corpse drew heavily upon Śaiva models has generated fresh debate on the nature of Buddhist–Hindu interaction in early medieval India. Undoubtedly some of the most fascinating historiographic issues surrounding Indian tantric traditions lie in the dynamics of this interaction, and the formation of parallel ritual systems across sectarian boundaries focused, to a surprising degree, upon the figure of the *yoginī*. For while there is much that is similar in older forms of Tantric Śaivism and Buddhism, it is with the cult of *yoginīs* represented by the Śaiva *vidyāpīṭha* and Buddhist *Yoginītantras* that parallels in ritual, text, and iconography reach their most remarkable levels. Assessment of the enormous body of comparative evidence and its interpretation in light of the social and historical contexts of early medieval India shall

¹ I would like to thank Jacob Dalton, David Gray, Harunaga Isaacson, and Iain Sinclair for their comments on this essay, the shortcomings of which are my responsibility alone.

² For an insightful study of classifications of the Buddhist tantric canon in India and Tibet, see Dalton (2005).

require sustained scholarly engagement, admirably begun in the works of Sanderson (1994, 2001, 2009), Davidson (2002), and others (Sferra 2003; Gray 2007, 7–11; Ruegg 2008). Recent scholarship (Davidson 2002; Sanderson 2009) has extended the earlier focus on systemic influences and textual appropriation (cf. Sanderson 1994, 2001) to historical processes and contexts, thereby navigating some of the problems inherent to historiography focused upon origins and influences. For while such analysis seems in some measure integral to historical inquiry, the attendant problems are considerable: excessive focus on the sources and influences involved in complex cultural phenomena risks obscuring both the actual phenomena and the agency of the historical persons involved. Such analysis may also inadvertently depend upon essentialist constructions of religion (e.g. ‘Original Buddhism’ and ‘syncretism’). Particularly vexing is the problem of implicitly positioning what is under scrutiny in a hierarchy of authenticity. As Carl Ernst (2005, 15) poses the problem, “once influence has been established, it is felt, one has said something of immense significance; the phenomenon has been explained—or rather, explained away... ‘Sources’ are ‘original’ while those ‘influenced’ by them are ‘derivative’.” With this predicament in mind, I should like to clarify from the beginning that while this essay seeks to highlight ways in which certain Vajrayāna Buddhists may have creatively adapted aspects of a competing tradition—one itself having remarkably hybrid roots, including a long history of exchange with Buddhism—I certainly do not intend to contribute to a perception of Buddhist *Yoginītantra* traditions as ‘derivative’, but rather to explore some of the ways in which they are historically situated.

The present essay seeks to elaborate upon the evolving figure of the *yoginī/ḍākinī* in Indian Tantric Buddhism, tracing its antecedents and shifting representations in relation to non-Buddhist traditions. My aims hence depart from those of Herrmann-Pfandt (2001) and Simmer-Brown (2002), for instance, whose important studies draw predominantly on Tibetan source material and are more synchronic in orientation, advancing interpretations of the cultural, religious, and psychological ‘meanings’ of the Vajrayāna *ḍākinī*. It will be shown that the latter represents a goddess typology shared by contemporaneous Buddhist and Śaiva tantric traditions. The first section reviews non-Buddhist conceptions of the *yoginī* and *ḍākinī*, their relationship to deities known as Mother-goddesses (*mātrī*), and their roles in Tantric Śaivism. Though Buddhist and Śaiva conceptions of *yoginīs* share much in common, there exists a distinction in terminology: while in Śaiva goddess taxonomies (as in earlier Buddhist sources) the term *ḍākinī* frequently connotes a dangerous, often vampiric variety of female being, the Buddhist *Yoginītantras* by and large treat the word as a synonym of *yoginī*. This terminological choice seems meaningful, reflecting an elevation of the *ḍākinī* consonant with Buddhist precedents for “conversion” and incorporation of hostile deities, noteworthy examples of which include the early tradition’s assimilation of *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs*, and of the Mother-goddess Hārītī. Within tantric Buddhist literature, transformations in conceptions of *ḍākinīs* and related female deities, especially the Seven Mothers (*sapta mātaraḥ*), appear to provide key indicators for the historical developments culminating in the *Yoginītantras*. In the second section of this essay I attempt to map out aspects of this process, limited by reliance upon Sanskrit sources and the scholarship of others on account of my lack of competence in Tibetan and Chinese. The third and final section discusses the relationship between two influential, indeed formative, works of tantric literature focused upon *yoginīs*: the *Brahmayāmala* or *Picumata* of the Śaiva *vidyāpīṭha*, and the *Laghuśaṃvaratantra* or *Herukābhīdhāna* of the Buddhist *Yoginītantras*. I will adduce additional evidence in support of Sanderson’s contention that the latter draws upon the former; however, I will

also argue that one section of the *Brahmayāmala* shows signs of having been redacted from an unknown Buddhist *Kriyātantra*.

Yoginīs and Dākinīs in non-Buddhist traditions

The roots of the figure of the *yoginī* lie above all in ancient Indic goddesses known as *mātr̥s*, “the Mothers” or “Mother-goddesses,” as I have attempted to demonstrate elsewhere and summarize below.³ Much like *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* or *yakṣiṇīs*, divinities intimately connected with the natural world, *mātr̥s* were popular deities in ancient India whose identities and worship were not initially circumscribed by a single religious tradition, whether Buddhism or the emergent theistic sects of the early common era. Defined by maternity and a nexus of beliefs concerning nature’s feminized powers of sustenance, fecundity, contagion, and mortality, *mātr̥s* figure prominently in Kuṣāṇa-era statuary, early medical literature, and the tale-cycles of Skanda in the *Mahābhārata*. In their early manifestations, especially in the context of the apotropaic cult of Skanda’s “seizers” (*skandagrahāḥ*), Mother-goddesses represent potentially dangerous forces who afflict children with disease if not propitiated, hence being intimately associated not only with fertility and life, but also sickness and death. By the fifth century, a particular heptad of Mothers coalesces with identities mirroring those of a series of major Brahmanical gods—Brahmā, Śiva, Skanda, Viṣṇu, Varāha (or Yama), and Indra. In this “Hinduized” form, *mātr̥s* became the focus of a widespread temple cult linked closely to Śiva which attracted considerable elite patronage in the Gupta era. As do their iconic forms, the names of these Mothers mirror those of their male counterparts: Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī (or Yāmī), and Aindrī, each name having several variants. Exceptional is the seventh goddess, Cāmuṇḍā, the fierce and skeletal hag who is “leader of the Mothers” (*mātr̥nāyikā*) and the counterpart of no male deity. Her identity appears closely linked to that of the warrior goddess Caṇḍī or Caṇḍikā,⁴ one of the principle ciphers for emergent conceptions of the singular Mahādevī, “the Great Goddess.” As a set, they become known as the “Seven Mothers” (*sapta mātarāḥ*, *saptamātr̥kāḥ*), though an eighth member often joins their ranks (e.g. Mahālakṣmī, Yogeśvarī or Bhairavī).

In addition to the temple cult of the Mothers, *mātr̥s* also emerge among the earliest important tantric goddesses. Their significance extends beyond chronology, for the figure and cult of the *mātr̥* appear to underlie those of *yoginīs*. In the most archaic textual sources of Tantric Śaivism, goddesses have little cultic importance. Such is true of the *Niśvāsataṭṭvasaṃhitā*, one of the earliest surviving Śaiva *tantras*,⁵ which refers to the Mother-goddesses not as tantric mantra-deities, but goddesses of public, lay religion (*laukikadharmā*) alone.⁶ The only evidence for their appropriation as tantric deities occurs in the context of cosmology, rather than ritual. Chapter five of its *Guhyasūtra* (5.1–21), a comparatively late stratum of the text, lists several varieties of goddess among the lords of a series of seven netherworlds (*pātāla*). In particular, the *kapālamātr̥s*, “Skull Mothers,” who preside over the fourth netherworld, appear to represent a transformation

³ Hatley (2012); see also White (2003, 27–66).

⁴ Note, for instance, that the *Brahmayāmala* uses the names Caṇḍikā, Carcikā (or Carcā), and Cāmuṇḍā interchangeably (Hatley 2007, 376).

⁵ Goodall and Isaacson’s preliminary assessment would place “the earlier parts of the text between 450–550 AD” (2007, 6).

⁶ *Niśvāsataṭṭvasaṃhitā*, *Mukhasūtra* 2.28, 3.33–34ab.

of the Mothers into deities whose *kāpālika* iconography presages that of the *śākta vidyāpīṭha*'s cult goddesses. Positioned higher in the series of netherworlds are the *yogakanyās*, “yoga maidens” or “daughters of Yoga,” of the sixth and seventh *pāṭālas*. Powerful, youthful goddesses, they appear to intimate the deities subsequently referred to as *yoginīs* or *yogeśvarīs*. The evidential record is unfortunately fragmentary for Śaiva traditions bridging the gulf between the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* and Śaiva cult of *yoginīs*, which perhaps first comes into evidence with the cult of the four Sisters of Tumburu (*bhaginīs*), attested as early as the sixth century (Sanderson 2009, 50, 129–30). The (poorly preserved) scriptures of this system were classified as the *vāmasrotas* or “Leftward Stream” of scriptural revelation, spoken by Sadāśiva’s northern or leftward face, the feminine Vāmadeva.

Linked by tradition to the Sanskrit verbal root $\sqrt{dā}$, “to fly,”⁷ *dākinī* is the basis for *dāin* (Hindi, etc.) and a number of related modern Indo-Aryan terms for “witch” (Turner 1962–6, 311)—one of the senses it had in the medieval period as well. Like the *yoginī*, the figure of the *dākinī* has roots interwoven with Mother-goddesses (*mātrī*), a connection evident in the early fifth-century inscription of Gaṅgdhār, in western Mālwa district.⁸ Dated 423/24 or 424/25 CE, this mentions (v. 23, on lines 35–37) the construction of an “extremely terrible temple of the Mothers” (*mātrīṇāṃ...veśmātyugraṃ*) “filled with *dākinīs*” (*dākinīsaṃprakīrṇam*). The inscription speaks of the Mothers as deities “who make the oceans tumultuous through powerful winds arising from tantras” (*tantrad-bhūtaprabalapavanodvartitāmbhonidhīnām*). This description of *mātrīs* uses imagery suggestive of powerful, “unfettered” tantric goddesses,⁹ not at all in the image of the protective World Mothers (*lokamātaraḥ*) mentioned in other Gupta-era inscriptions. Of unspecified number and identity, *mātrīs* are here associated with *dākinī* hordes, a temple cult, and occult spells (*tantra*) and powers,¹⁰ suggesting that some key elements of the subsequent tantric cult of *yoginīs* had come together by the early fifth century. Unfortunately, this inscription is exceptional: we have no other firmly dated evidence for a cult of Mother-goddesses in the company of *dākinīs* in the fifth century, which makes the inscription difficult to contextualize.

A tantric tradition foregrounding *dākinīs* first comes into evidence in the seventh century, it seems, when the Mādhyamaka philosopher Dharmakīrti makes critical remarks concerning *Dākinītantras* and *Bhaginītantras*. The commentary of Karṇakagomin

⁷ The derivation of “*dākinī*” is discussed by Hermann-Pfandt (1992, 115–16). The etymological link to the root $\sqrt{dā}$ or \sqrt{dai} is traditional; H. Isaacson (personal communication) points out that the connection is drawn in chapter 1 of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, in a verse quoted widely (e.g. p. 3 in Ratnākaraśānti’s *Guṇavatī* commentary on the *Mahāmāyātānta*). Bhavabhaṭṭa and Jayabhadra, commentators on the *Laghuśaṃvaratantra*, also both connect the word *dākinī* to \sqrt{dai} ; see Bhavabhaṭṭa ad *Laghuśaṃvara* 1.2, Sarnath edition, p. 6; and Jayabhadra commenting on the same verse, p. 107 in Sugiki’s edition of the *Cakrasaṃvarapañjikā*.

⁸ This inscription was first published by John F. Fleet in *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. III (72–78), and subsequently by Sircar (1965, vol. 1, 399–405).

⁹ Borrowing an expression from the title of an article of Chitgopekar (2002).

¹⁰ The inscription’s use of the word *tantra* is probably, as D. C. Sircar recognized (1965, vol. 1, 405), in the well-attested sense of “spell,” such as in the expression *tantramānta*. (Cf., e.g., *Mālatīmādhava* IX.52.) It seems improbable that the word could refer here to tantric scripture, as “powerful winds” (*prabalapavana*) would not be described as having arisen (*udbhūta*) from texts. My interpretation of this passage undoubtedly has been influenced by H. Isaacson’s remarks on the subject, in a lecture given at the University of Pennsylvania in January 2003.

identifies the latter as “Tantras of the Four Sisters” (*caturbhaginītantras*)—in all probability, Sanderson argues (2001, 11–12), scriptures of the Leftward Stream (*vāmasrotas*) of Śaiva revelation. The *Ḍākinītantras* Dharmakīrti refers to, which appear not to have survived, seem to represent a Śaiva tradition; he implies that these are non-Buddhist, and the existence of Śaiva texts by this designation can be confirmed from other sources.¹¹ Authors mentioning these texts associate them with parasitic, violent magical practices mirroring activities ascribed to *ḍākinīs*. Descriptions of similar practices do survive in *vidyāpīṭha* sources, and it is possible that the tradition represented by the *Ḍākinītantras* was, at least in part, subsumed within the *yoginī* cult of the *vidyāpīṭha*.¹² While not clearly documented until Dharmakīrti, magical practices centered upon *ḍākinīs* could date to the period of the Gaṅgdhār inscription, and seem to represent an important formative influence in the development of Buddhist and Śaiva *yoginī* cults.

With earlier precedents, Tantric Śaiva goddess cults become prominent in the *Bhairavatantras*, which have two primary divisions: tantras of the *mantrapīṭha* and *vidyāpīṭha*, distinguished by whether their pantheons consist predominantly of mantras—i.e. male mantra-deities—or *vidyās*: the “lores” or “wisdom mantras” which are the female mantra-deities (Sanderson 1988, 668–671; 2009, 19–20, 45–49). Literature of the *vidyāpīṭha* is hence intrinsically concerned with goddesses, and the *vidyāpīṭha/mantrapīṭha* divide appears intended, primarily, for distinguishing *Bhairavatantras* with goddess-dominated pantheons from those centered upon forms of Bhairava (cf. the distinction between Buddhist *Yoganiruttaratantras* and *Mahāyogatantras*). Four major *vidyāpīṭha* works appear to be extant: the *Brahmayāmala*, *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, *Tantrasadbhāva*, and *Jayadrathayāmala*, none of which has been fully edited.¹³ Much as the *vidyāpīṭha* appears to represent a development from the *mantrapīṭha* cult of Bhairava, additional tantric systems referring to themselves as Kaula (“Of the Clans of [Goddesses]”) appear to have developed within and have substantial continuity with the *vidyāpīṭha*. Hence, while the earliest attested literature of the Śaiva *yoginī* cult belongs to the *vidyāpīṭha*, a substantial corpus of Śaiva literature concerned with *yoginīs* instead identifies itself with Kaula lineages (*āmṇāya*), the lines between the two sometimes being problematic (Sanderson 1988, 679–680; 2009, 45–49).

The close connection between Mother-goddesses and emergent conceptions of *yoginīs* is evident in numerous ways. *Vidyāpīṭha* accounts of “the characteristics of *yoginīs*” (*yoginīlakṣaṇa*)¹⁴ classify these goddesses according to clans (*kula*, *gotra*) that have the Seven or Eight Mothers as matriarchs, clan mothers in whose natures the *yoginīs* partake as *aṃśas*, “portions” or “partial manifestations.” Tantric practitioners too establish kinship with the Mother-goddesses, leaving behind their conventional clan and caste identities and entering into initiatory kinship with the deities, who when propitiated

¹¹ See Sanderson (2001, 12 [n. 10]), who identifies several other references to *Ḍākinītantras*, including Kṣemarāja’s *Netroddyota*, ad *Netratantra* 20.39.

¹² It seems likely that *Ḍākinītantras* taught practices such as *pañcāmṛtākaraṇa*, “extraction of the five [bodily] nectars,” said in the *Mālatīmādhava* to be the source of the wicked *yoginī* Kapālakuṇḍalā’s flight. On the bodily nectars (blood, semen, etc.) and the methods of their extraction, yogic and otherwise, see “*dikcarī*,” “*nāḍyudaya*,” “*pañcāmṛta* (3),” and “*pañcāmṛtākaraṇa*” in *Tāntrikābhidhānakośa*, vol. 3 (forthcoming).

¹³ Among these, most of the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* has been edited by Törzsök (1999), while the present author has edited several chapters of the *Brahmayāmala* (Hatley 2007)—both in doctoral theses yet unpublished.

¹⁴ *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, ch. 29; *Brahmayāmala*, ch. 74; and *Tantrasadbhāva*, ch. 16.

may bestow *siddhi* upon individuals initiated into their own clans.¹⁵ Beyond tantric literature proper, the old *Skandapurāṇa* (circa 6–7th centuries CE) also intimates these connections, linking the temple cult of the Seven Mothers to *yoginīs* and to Śaiva texts it refers to as Tantras of the Mother-goddesses (*māṭṛtantra*) or Union Tantras (*yāmala*). These include the *Brahmayāmala*, an extant scripture of the *vidyāpīṭha* with extensive parallel passages in the Buddhist *Laghuśaṃvaratantra*. While the *Brahmayāmala* may have been reworked in the interval between the copying of its earliest extant manuscript (mid eleventh-century) and its mention in the *Skandapurāṇa*, its attestation in the latter is an important piece of evidence pointing toward the development of a Śaiva cult of *yoginīs* by, at the latest, the early eighth century (Hatley 2007).

Representations of *yoginīs* in tantric Śaiva literature are extremely diverse, but some of the most common characteristics of this deity typology include occurrence in groups (e.g. sextets, with configurations of sixty-four becoming common by the tenth century), organization into “clans” of the Mother-goddesses, theriomorphism and shapeshifting, the ability to fly, association with guarding and/or transmitting tantric teachings, and potency as sources of both grave danger and immense power. In addition, *yoginīs* often blur the boundaries between human and divine, for through perfection in tantric ritual, it was held that female practitioners could join the ranks of these sky-traveling (*khecarī*) goddesses (Hatley 2007, 11–17; cf. White 2003, 27). In tantras of the *vidyāpīṭha*, the entire edifice of tantric ritual appears oriented toward the aim of power-bestowing “union” or encounter (*melaka*, *melāpa*) with *yoginīs*, a communion through which the *sādhaka* assumes the powers of Bhairava himself. Originally esoteric deities, from the tenth century *yoginīs* became prominent in the wider Indic religious landscape, as attested by their entry into purāṇic literature and the unique circular, open-air temples enshrining them across the subcontinent (Dehejia 1986; Hatley, *forthcoming B*).

Though connected intimately with the Seven Mothers, *yoginīs* demonstrate remarkable continuity with more ancient Mother-goddess conceptions. Their theriomorphism, shapeshifting, multiplicity, extraordinarily variegated appearances, bellicosity, independence, and simultaneous beauty and danger all find precedent in the *Mahābhārata*’s representation of the Mother-goddesses, as does, suggests White (2003, 39, 205), their connection with flight. While taking on the powerful iconography of tantric deities, *yoginīs* also maintain clear visual continuity with the Kuṣāṇa-era Mother-goddess, as reflected in statuary. Other ancient feminine deities figure in their formation as well: White (2003, 27–66) highlights notable continuities with the *apsaras* (“celestial maiden”) and the *yakṣī* or *yakṣiṇī* (“dryad”), in addition to early *māṭṛs* and other *grahas* (“seizers”). Other significant sources for conceptions of *yoginīs* include *vidyādhārīs* (flying, semi-divine sorceresses), and in particular, Śiva’s *gaṇas*: male deities whose theriomorphic or otherwise bizarre forms, multiplicity, variety, and engagement in activities such as warfare are highly suggestive of *yoginīs*. Serbaeva (2006, 71) also points out that *gaṇas* and *yoginīs* share an important similarity in representing states of being that Śaiva practitioners sought to attain.

¹⁵ A *yoginī* of the clan of Brāhmī/Brahmānī is said to be *brahmāṇyaṃśā*, “possessing a portion of Brahmānī.” See, e.g., *Tantrasadbhāva* 16.253cd. An initiate too is said to be “connected to” or “possess” (*yukta*) an *aṃśa* of a Mother-goddess. Note, e.g., *Brahmayāmala* 74.47cd: *brahmāṇīkulajā devī svāṃśasiddhipradāyikā* (“[She is] a *yoginī* of the clan of Brahmānī, O Goddess, who bestows *siddhi* upon those [*sādhakas*] of her own [Mother-goddess] *aṃśa*”).

Beyond *yoginī* taxonomies based on clans of the Mother-goddesses, *vidyāpīṭha* and Kaula sources develop additional classificatory schemata that order a much more diverse cast of divine and semi-divine female beings, based for instance upon notions of “habitat” (e.g. *yoginīs* who are aerial, terrestrial, aquatic, of the netherworlds, or who inhabit sacred places), degrees of divinity, or disposition.¹⁶ Prominent in such taxonomies is the figure of the *ḍākinī*, which the *Brahmayāmala*, among other sources, associates with cruelty and ritual violence. Attainment of their state of being transpires through “perverse” (*viloma*) methods.¹⁷ The Śaiva *ḍākinī* appears closely linked to, and sometimes synonymous with the decidedly non-vegetarian *śākinī*, of which Kṣemarāja quotes the following definition from the *Tantrasadbhāva*:

A female who, for the purpose of shapeshifting, ever drinks the fluids of living beings after drawing them close by artifice, and who after obtaining [that fluid] slays the creatures—she should be known as a *śākinī*, ever delighting in dreadful places.¹⁸

The conflation of the *ḍākinī* and *śākinī* is evident in a verse occurring in multiple *vidyāpīṭha* sources, with minor variations, which in some cases defines the *rudraḍākinī* but elsewhere the *rudraśākinī*.¹⁹ Note also, for instance, that a taboo on uttering the word “*ḍākinī*” (*Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 6.51) is applied by other sources to the word “*śākinī*.”²⁰

Representations of the *ḍākinī* as a vampiric, *śākinī*-like being also find expression in period non-tantric literature, especially the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of 11th-century Kashmir. The colorful *yoginīs* of its tales range from powerful goddesses to impetuous, even vile “witches” as well as virtuous and accomplished female tantric adepts.²¹ Reflecting *yoginī* taxonomies from tantric Śaiva literature, those referred to with the epithets *ḍākinī* or *śākinī* are invariably malevolent, while *yoginīs* not given such qualifiers are benevolent, or at least ambivalent. The *yoginī* Citralekhā, for instance, utilizes her prowess in flight to facilitate the union of the princess Uṣā with Aniruddha of Dvāravatī.²² Another well-meaning *yoginī* instructs her friend in mantras for turning her illicit lover into a monkey, and for restoring her pet to human form on demand.²³ In contrast, the *ḍākinī* Kālarātri, the

¹⁶ Note for instance chapters 56 and 101 of the *Brahmayāmala*, both of which concern the classification of goddess clans.

¹⁷ For descriptions of the *ḍākinī* as a dangerous variety of female spirit, see, e.g., *Brahmayāmala* 56.12, 56.43–44, and 101.38–39. Cf. Sanderson (2001, 12 [n. 10]).

¹⁸ *Netroddyota*, quoted in the commentary on *Netrat Tantra* 2.71:

chalenākṛṣya pibati kṣudrā prāṇipayaḥ sadā |
rūpaparivartanārthaṃ labdhvā pātayati paśūn |
śākinī sā tu vijñeyā raudrasthānaratā sadā |

With minor variants and corruptions, this corresponds to 16.163cd–64 in Dyczkowski’s draft edition of the *Tantrasadbhāva*. Cf. *Tantrasadbhāva* 16.181–218, which describes the pernicious activities of several varieties of *yoginī*, such as the *adhoniśvāsikā* and its sub-types; several verses from this passage are quoted by Kṣemarāja ad *Netrat Tantra* 19.55.

¹⁹ The verse defines the *rudraḍākinī* in *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 26.14 and the *Sarvavīrat Tantra* (as quoted by Kṣemarāja in *Netrat Tantra* 2.16); it defines the *rudraśākinī* in *Tantrasadbhāva* 16.165, also quoted by Kṣemarāja ad *Netrat Tantra* 19.71.

²⁰ *Tantrāloka* 15.552ab and *Tantrasadbhāva* 9.544ab; see Törzsök (1999, 18).

²¹ For more detailed discussions, see Herrmann-Pfandt (1996) and Hatley (2007, 101–6).

²² *Kathāsaritsāgara* VI, 5.1–36. Cf. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* X, 62.

²³ *Kathāsaritsāgara*, VII.107–18.

grotesque and lusty wife of an orthodox brahmin teacher (*upādhyāya*), possesses the power of flight through mantra-practice and consumption of human flesh, and acts secretly as guru to a coven of *ḍākinīs*.²⁴ Another story tells of a weary traveller who unknowingly accepts the hospitality of a *śākinī*. He thwarts her attempt to use enchanted barley to turn him into a goat, but ends up being turned into a peacock by the butcher's wife, a "wicked" (*duṣṭa*) *yoginī*.²⁵ Elsewhere, a jealous queen, a greedy female renunciant, and clever barber conspire to make the king think his newest bride is secretly a *ḍākinī*, who sucks out his vitals whilst he sleeps.²⁶ Book seven tells of Bhavaśarman of Vārāṇasī, who had an affair with a fickle brahmin woman, Somadā, a "secret *yoginī*" (*guptayoginī*, 150d) of the worst sort—a "petty *śākinī*" (*kṣudraśākinī*, 168b) who eventually turns him into an ox. After his sale as a beast of burden, the *yoginī* Bandhamocinī spots him and restores him to human form.²⁷ In another, parallel episode, a certain Vāmadatta discovers that his wife, Śaśiprabhā, is secretly both an adultress and a *śākinī*. Caught in the act with a herdsman, she turns her enraged husband into a buffalo, beats him, and sells him off. A "perfected" (*siddhā*) *yoginī*, however, recognizes him in animal form and restores his humanness, eventually imparting to him the *vidyā*-mantra of goddess Kālasaṃkarṣaṇī, the supreme deity of Krama Śaivism.²⁸ In these tales, the *yoginī/ḍākinī* dichotomy functions virtually to demarcate the 'good witch' from the 'bad', echoing *yoginī* taxonomies of Tantric Śaivism. In light of this, it is remarkable that the categories came to be largely interchangeable in the Vajrayāna *Yoginītantras*.

Mother-goddesses and *Ḍākinīs* in early Buddhist tantric literature

Significant uncertainties surround the chronology of Buddhist tantric literature, though attenuated by the assistance Chinese and Tibetan sources offer in dating specific works. Of particular value, we know the periods of early learned authors such as Buddhaguhya and Vilāsavajra, active in the mid and late eighth century, respectively, who quote or comment upon tantric scriptural sources; for extant, reliably pre-tenth century commentary on Tantric Śaiva scripture, we have only Sadyojyotis, who may have been active in the period *circa* 675–725 (Sanderson 2006a).²⁹ As is well known, "proto-tantric" Buddhist literature of the variety later classified as *Kriyātantras* survives from the early centuries of the common era, often only in Chinese translation. Concerned largely with accomplishing worldly aims, this literature contains much that is characteristic of later tantric ritual, yet without articulating mantra-practice within a Mahāyāna soteriological

²⁴ Ibid., III, 6.102–218.

²⁵ Ibid., XII, 4.263–77.

²⁶ Ibid., VI, 6, especially vv. 153–80.

²⁷ This episode occurs as *Kathāsaritsāgara* VII, 3.147–69.

²⁸ Ibid., XII, 1.31–72.

²⁹ On the dating of Buddhaguhya, see Hodge (2003, 22–23); see also Sanderson (2009, 128–32). Concerning Vilāsavajra, I follow Davidson (1981, 6–7). Evidence Sanderson (2006a) cites for dating Sadyojyotis includes the fact that he was known to Somānanda (early tenth-century), appears to have been familiar with Kumārila (but not Dharmakīrti), that his commentary on the *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṃgraha* is paraphrased in the *Haravijaya* (circa 830 CE), and that in his critique of the Vedāntins, he displays no awareness of the *vivartavāda* or "illusionism" associated with Śaṅkara (fl. c. 800 CE?) and Maṇḍanamiśra. See also Watson (2006, 111–14).

framework.³⁰ Evidence for a developed tantric literature and eye-witness reports concerning the prevalence of tantric Buddhist traditions in India emerge only in the middle or latter half of the seventh century.³¹

Cultic emphasis upon the figure of the *yoginī* is not yet evident in the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi*(-tantra/sūtra)—hereafter *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*—though closely related goddesses register a presence. This is one of the few extant Buddhist texts of the transitional variety sometimes classified as *Caryātantras*, similar in many respects to the subsequent *Yogatantras* but appearing to lack a developed soteriological vision of tantric ritual.³² Composed, according to Stephen Hodge, around 640 CE or somewhat earlier, this survives primarily in Chinese and Tibetan translations.³³ Prominent in the maṇḍala of the supreme Buddha Mahāvairocana, as delineated in the second chapter, are goddesses such as Tārā. In the same maṇḍala appear “wrathful Mother-goddesses” headed by the goddess Kālarātri, who form the retinue of Yama, lord of Death and guardian of the southern direction (II.50). Kālarātri is accompanied by Raudrī, Brahmī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Cāmuṇḍā, and Kauberī (XIII.89)—an unusual heptad, being a variant upon the Seven Mothers: Brāhmī, Raudrī/Māheśvarī, Kaumarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, and Cāmuṇḍā. In this case Kauberī replaces Indrāṇī/Aindrī, while Cāmuṇḍā’s preeminent position is usurped by Kālarātri, who appears to be identified with Yāmī, the female counterpart of Yama.³⁴ That they are tantric divinities, however minor, is evidenced by occurrence within the maṇḍala and their invocation by mantra.³⁵ Kālarātri and seven unspecified Mother-goddesses also figure in the entourage of Śākyamuni,³⁶ while elsewhere Mothers are included in an enumeration of potentially dangerous spirits.³⁷ Chapter six links them to

³⁰ Hodge (2003, 5–8) provides a valuable account of the chronology of the Chinese translations of early tantric literature. Buddhist *Kriyātantras* in all likelihood drew upon ancient and perhaps nonsectarian magical traditions, such as the *vidyā* practices attested in an early Jaina narrative, the *Vasudevaḥiṇḍī* (on which see Hatley 2007, 95–101).

³¹ Hodge (2003, 9–11) points out that a Chinese traveller, Xuanzang, gives no indication that Buddhist tantric traditions were prevalent in India in the period up to 645 CE. On the other hand, there are first-hand reports concerning tantric practices and scripture from the latter half of the century.

³² See Tribe (2007, 207–10). Hodge, offering a different assessment of the soteriological dimension of the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*, considers this text “likely to have been one of the first, if not actually the first *fully* developed tantra to be compiled, that has survived in some form to the present day” (2003, 29 [quotation], 33–39). In my discussion of this text, I rely entirely upon Hodge’s English translation from the Chinese and Tibetan.

³³ Concerning the dating, see Hodge (2003, 14–17). Translated into Chinese in 724 CE, the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* appears to have been among the manuscripts collected by Wuxing in India at some point during the eight years prior to his death in 674.

³⁴ “Wrathful Mothers” perhaps translates the Sanskrit *rudramātaraḥ* (“Rudra/Śiva’s Mother-goddesses”). That this could refer specifically to the Seven Mothers is suggested by Kṣemarāja’s explanation of the term as it occurs in *Netratantra* 2.13c (he glosses *rudramātaraḥ* with *brahmyādyās*—“Brahmī, etc.”). The identification of Yāmī with Kālarātri is suggested in the Chinese translation of I.19; see Hodge’s note thereon (2003, 63). Yāmī and the sow-faced Vārāhī alternate in textual accounts of the Seven Mothers, while sculpted sets appear as a rule to depict Vārāhī.

³⁵ Note also their association with a series of drawn insignia (*mudrā*), as with the other maṇḍala deities (XIII.89). While Kālarātri is invoked with her own mantra, the others are paid reverence with the generic NAMAḤ SAMANTABUDDHĀNĀM MĀTRBHYAḤ SVĀHĀ (IV.11).

³⁶ See *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* IV.11.

³⁷ *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* XVII.13; also mentioned are, e.g., *piśācas* and *rākṣasas*.

mantras for causing illness, bridging the goddesses' roots as *grahas* ("Seizers") in the entourage of Skanda, as described in the *Mahābhārata* and early medical literature, with tantric "magical" practices.³⁸ Furthermore, as do the Śaiva *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* and a variety of other tantric sources, the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* lists Mother shrines—as well as temples of Śiva—among the places appropriate for performing solitary *sādhana*, though without cultic emphasis on these deities.³⁹

In addition to Mother-goddesses, the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* contains several references to *ḍākinīs* and female divinities such as the *yakṣiṇī* ("dryad"), while the text's "appendix *tantra*" (*Uttaratantra*) describes rites for bringing the latter and female denizens of the netherworlds under one's power.⁴⁰ While in *Yoginītantras* of the subsequent period *ḍākinīs* would become prominent deities, the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* groups them with minor, potentially pernicious beings such as the *rākṣasa*, *yakṣa*, and *piśāca*, consistent with early non-Buddhist conceptions of the *ḍākinī*. Early Buddhist works also emphasize the malevolence and predatory violence of the *ḍākinī*, with the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* linking them to the nocturnal, flesh-eating *rākṣasī* of Indic folklore.⁴¹ No evidence for the figure of the *yoginī* is present in the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*, although the vocative-case epithets *yogini* and *yogeśvari* appear in a mantra; the deity is not named.⁴² In this text we hence find evidence for interest in some of the divinities prominent in the later *Yoginītantras*, in particular a limited appropriation of the Mothers as tantric deities. This accords with roughly contemporaneous sculptural evidence for Buddhist interest in these goddesses, for a shrine of the Mothers is present in the Buddhist cave temple complex at Aurangabad (Hatley 2007, 68–69).

The *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*⁴³ attests a similar, yet broader range of female deities and spirits. Classified within the tradition as a *Kriyātantra*, a portion of this heterogeneous text has been shown to date to the middle of the eighth century, the period in which some sections appear in Chinese translation (Matsunaga 1985). In its opening chapter, the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* enumerates a vast pantheon of divine, semi-divine, and human beings who assemble to hear the Dharma, among whom are an array of female divinities that include *pūtanās* ("Stinkers"), *bhaginīs* ("Sisters"), *ḍākinīs*, *rūpiṇīs* ("Beauties"),

³⁸ VI.15: "Then, for example, the Asuras manifest illusions with mantras. Or, for example, there are [mundane] mantras which counteract poison and fevers. Or else there are the mantras with which the Mothers send sickness upon people..." (Hodge 2003, 170–71).

³⁹ Lists of suitable locations are present in V.9 and VI.30. In *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*, *Uttaratantra* III.2, Mother shrines are listed among the places appropriate for fire sacrifice having as its goal "subduing" (Sanskrit *vaśīkaraṇa*, presumably).

⁴⁰ A short series of mantras for minor divinities and spirits such as *rākṣasas*, *ḍākinīs*, and *asuras* is provided in IV.16, while *mudrās* and mantras for a larger series, including *ḍākinīs*, are listed in XI.98–99. A list of dangerous beings in the *Uttaratantra* includes both *ḍākinīs* and what Hodge translates as "witches" (IV.1). As described in III.9 of the *Uttaratantra*, through fire sacrifice one may "draw to himself *yakṣiṇīs* and likewise girls of the subterranean realm with the male and female assistants."

⁴¹ *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* 8.10–16 (verse version) speaks of birth from the womb of a *ḍākinī* or *rākṣasī* as a potential fate for the carnivore. See the discussion of Gray (2005, 50–51).

⁴² XV.10; the mantra for the "Mudrā of Upholding the Bhagavat's Yoga" is given as NAMAḤ SAMANTABUDDHĀNĀM MAHĀYOGAYOGINI YOGEŚVARI KHĀṆJALIKĀ SVĀHĀ.

⁴³ The text is better known as the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. While both titles occur in manuscript colophons, I follow the convention preferred by Martin Delhey, who is currently preparing a critical edition of sections of the text.

yakṣiṇīs (“Dryads”), and *ākāśamātṛs* (“Sky Mothers”). Each of these beings is said to have ordinary and “greater” (*mahā-*) varieties; the “Great [Sky] Mothers” include the standard Seven augmented by Yāmyā, Vāruṇī, Pūtanā, and others, with retinues of innumerable nameless Mothers.⁴⁴ This is highly suggestive of the range of female divinities described in literature of the Śaiva and Buddhist *yoginī* cults.

Although they are not prominent in the ritual of this text, the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*, like the *Vairocanaḥisambodhi*, positions the Seven Mothers in the retinue of Yama among the non-Buddhist deities in the outer layers of the maṇḍala.⁴⁵ The effort to give them a Buddhist identity is suggested by the addition of “Vajracāmuṇḍi” to their ranks.⁴⁶ In general, the depiction of the Mothers is consonant with the ancient cult of Skanda’s countless *grahas*, with whom their connection is made explicit: most of the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*’s copious references to the Mothers point toward their identity as dangerous female spirits, and only rarely the seven Brahmanical goddesses. Mother-goddesses are mentioned among the spirits by whom one may become possessed, alongside beings such as the *piśāca* and *ḍākinī*,⁴⁷ while the “Mothers of Skanda” (*skandamātaraḥ*) are mentioned in 22.24b (TSS edition vol. 1, p. 233)—a chapter rich in its accounts of beings fabulous and dangerous. As for *ḍākinīs*, their characterization is entirely that of pernicious, possessing female spirits, against whom one requires mantras for protection; no indications are present of the positive associations and prominence assigned to them in *Yoginītantras*. One *vidyā*-mantra, for instance, is said to have the power to conjure a *yakṣiṇī*, or else to destroy *ḍākinīs*.⁴⁸ Among a number of other references is described a curious rite for removing the breasts and genitalia of proud, wicked *ḍākinīs* and women. Used on a man, it changes his gender.⁴⁹ Of additional interest in this *tantra* is its incorporation, as tantric deities, of Tumburu and the Four Sisters—Jayā, Vijayā, Ajitā, Aparājītā—the core pantheon of Śaiva *tantras* of the Leftward Stream (*vāmasrotas*). Chapters forty-seven to forty-nine are devoted to practices connected with these deities, and include the tale of their conversion to Buddhism.⁵⁰

Further developments towards a cult of *yoginīs* are evident in the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha* (hereafter *Tattvasaṃgraha*), among the earliest extant scriptures classified as *Yogatantras* and representative of a developed Buddhist soteriological vision

⁴⁴ *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* 1, vol. 1, p. 20–21 (Trivandrum Sanskrit Series edition).

⁴⁵ The Seven Mothers (precise identities unspecified) occupy a position in the southeastern direction, adjacent to Yama in the south, and are also among the deities around the perimeter of that layer of the maṇḍala; their company includes major brahmanical gods, *gaṇa*-lords such as Mahākāla, sages, Tumburu and the Four Sisters, the Planets, and so forth. *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* 2, vol. 1, p. 44–45.

⁴⁶ *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* 45 provides *mudrās* connected to and named after the Mothers, and includes both Cāmuṇḍi (45.229cd–30ab) and Vajracāmuṇḍi (45.228cd–229ab). Vol. 2, p. 510. Verse numbers here and elsewhere are given as per the reprint edited by P. L. Vaidya, while volume and page numbers are those of the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series edition.

⁴⁷ See for example *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* 3, vol. 1, p. 53, and chapter 9, vol. 1, p. 82. Cf., e.g., 22.229 (vol. 1, p. 249), in a vivid description of the activities of Mother-goddesses.

⁴⁸ *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* 2.4–5, vol. 1, p. 30.

⁴⁹ Chapter 52, vol. 3, p. 563–64.

⁵⁰ The *vidyā*-mantras of these deities are first given in 2.15–17, where they are said to be “attendants of the Bodhisattva” (*bodhisattvānucārikā[h]*, 2.16b). Vol. 1, p. 32. *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* ch. 47 presents a brief narrative of their taking refuge in the Dharma, after which begin instructions on their worship. See also the discussion of Sanderson (2009, 129–30).

of tantric ritual. Its composition had apparently commenced by the last quarter of the seventh century, and the text was partially translated into Chinese in 753.⁵¹ Although the *Tattvasaṃgraha* thus does not necessarily postdate the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*, it takes the “conversion” of goddesses considerably further, and its range of female deities even more clearly intimates that of the *Yoginītantras*. Here, for instance, we find reference to Mother-goddesses classified under the categories *antarīkṣacārī* (“aetherial”), *khecārī* (“aerial”), *bhūcarī* (“terrestrial”), and *pātālavāsīnī* (“denizens of the netherworlds”)—closely related to categories applied in later classifications of *yoginīs*.⁵² Along with a host of other erstwhile hostile deities, headed by Śiva, Vajrapāṇi confers upon them tantric initiation and initiatory names; thus Jātaḥārīṇī becomes Vajramekhalā, Māraṇī becomes Vajravilayā, Kauberī becomes Vajravikāṭā, and Cāmuṇḍā becomes Vajrakālī, to name one from each respective class.⁵³ The latter goddess, adorned with a garland of skulls and bearing a skull-staff, is once addressed as Vajraḍākinī.⁵⁴ Leaving behind their identities as *grahas* of Skanda or as maternal, Brahmanical goddesses, the Mothers here explicitly take on identities as goddesses of the “Adamantine Vehicle,” the Vajrayāna.

In the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, we are presented with perhaps the earliest narrative of the conversion and accommodation of *ḍākinīs*. Charged with quelling wicked beings, Vajrapāṇi utters the “Heart Mantra for Drawing Down All *Ḍākinīs* and other Wicked Possessing Spirits,” upon which the *ḍākinīs* and other *grahas* assemble in a circle, supplicate, and express concern about the dietary restrictions their new allegiance will entail:

Then Vajrapāṇi, the great Bodhisattva, again spoke the Heart Mantra for Drawing Down All *Ḍākinīs* and other Wicked Possessing Spirits: ‘OM VAJRA quickly draw down all wicked possessing spirits by the word of Vajradhara HUM JAḤ’! Then, as soon as this had been uttered, all the *ḍākinīs* and other wicked possessing spirits formed a ring around the summit of Mt. Meru and remained there. Then Vajrapāṇi, the great Bodhisattva, summoned the *ḍākinīs* and other wicked possessing spirits, and said, ‘Resort, O friends, to the assembly of the pledge of teaching abstention from slaughter, lest I should incinerate your clans with my burning *vajra*, [when it has] become a single, blazing flame’. Then the *ḍākinīs* and other wicked possessing spirits, folding their hands to where the Lord was, entreated the Lord: ‘O lord, we eat meat; hence direct [us] how [this] should be obtained’.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Elements of this text were introduced in China by an Indian, Vajrabodhi, who would have learnt the teachings around 700 CE; Amoghavajra partially translated the text in 753. See the discussion of Hodge (2003, 11–12).

⁵² Among Buddhist sources, note for instance *Laghuśaṃvaratantra* 2.26–27, referring to *ḍākinīs* of the skies, earth, and netherworlds, as well as Mother-goddesses of the eight directions. (*Laghuśaṃvara* verse numbers are given as per the forthcoming edition of David Gray.) On the Śaiva classification of *yoginīs* as aerial, terrestrial, and so forth, cf., e.g., the Śaiva *Kulasāra*, discussed by Törzsök (“*dikcarī*,” in *Tāntrikābhidhānaśāstra*, vol. 3).

⁵³ *Tattvasaṃgraha* 6, p. 173 (lines 3–21). I cite the text from the edition of Yamada (1981).

⁵⁴ *Tattvasaṃgraha* 14, pp. 306–7 (lines 10–14, 1–4); Cāmuṇḍā/Vajrakālī is addressed as e.g. *kapālamālāṅkṛtā* (“adorned with a garland of skulls”) and *vajrakhaṭvāṅgadhārīṇī* (“bearer of a *vajra* and skull-staff”).

⁵⁵ *Tattvasaṃgraha* 6, p. 180–81 (lines 8–17, 1–3):

atha vajrapāṇir mahābodhisattvaḥ punar api sarvaḍākinīyādiduṣṭagrahākaraṣaṇahrdayam abhāṣat | OM VAJRĀKARṢAYA ŚIGHRAṀ SARVADUṢṬAGRAHĀN VAJRADHARASATYENA HUM

Advised by Vajrasattva, the supreme Buddha, the compassionate Vajrapāṇi does indeed provide appropriate means:

Next, the Lord spoke to Vajrapāṇi thus: ‘O Vajrapāṇi, after generating great compassion for these beings, assent to give them a means’. Then Vajrapāṇi, possessing great compassion, spoke this, the Heart Mantra of the Mudrā for Knowing the Deaths of All Living Beings: ‘OM VAJRA seize extract the heart if this being dies within a fortnight then let its heart emerge SAMAYA HŪM JJAḤ’. Now this is the binding of the *mudrā*: ... Through this *mudrā*, you may extract hearts from all living beings and eat them’. Then the *ḍākinīs* and other wicked possessing spirits made clamorous *hulu hulu* sounds and returned home.⁵⁶

The episode, a conversion story of sorts, suggests growing concern with the figure of the *ḍākinī*, and perhaps also the entry of mantra techniques associated with them into the battery of those available to practitioners. An early eighth-century Chinese commentary on the *Vairocanaḥśambodhi* provides a closely related narrative, wherein the association of *ḍākinīs* and their practices with Śiva and Śaivism is made explicit.⁵⁷ While this signals a process of providing Buddhist identities to *ḍākinīs* and connected practices—techniques presumably similar to those described in the lost (presumably Śaiva) *Ḍākinītantras* referred to by Dharmakīrti—there is as yet little indication in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* of their transformation into the wild and ambivalent, yet supremely powerful and potentially beneficent sky-wanderers of the *Yoginītantras*.

A scripture completed perhaps in the latter half of the eighth century, the *Guhyasamājatantra* evidences a marked increase in engagement with the erotic and the impure, intimating developments carried even further in the *Yoginītantras*. Its ritual has a significant *kāpālika* dimension and incorporates both coitus and ingestion of impure substances, while erotic imagery distinguishes the iconography of its deities.⁵⁸ Focused

JJAḤ || athāsmiṇ bhāṣitamātre ḍākinīyādayaḥ sarvaduṣṭagrahāḥ sumeruḡirimūrdhni bāhyato maṇḍalībhūtvāvasthītā iti || atha vajrapāṇir mahābodhisattvaḥ tāṃ ḍākinīyāḍiṇ sarvaduṣṭagrahāṇ āhūyaivam āha | pratipadyata māṃsāḥ prāṇātipātavairamaṇyaśikṣāsamayasaṃvare mā vo vajrenādīptena pradīptenaikajvalībhūtena kulāni nirdaheyam | atha te ḍākinīyādayaḥ sarvaduṣṭagrahā yena bhagavān tenāñjaliṃ baddhvā bhagavantam vijñāpayām āsuh | vayan bhagavan māṃsāsīnas tad ājñāpayasva katham pratipattavyam iti

Concerning *vairamaṇya*, see its lexical entry in Edgerton (1953, vol. 2).

⁵⁶ *Tattvasaṃgraha* 6, p. 181 (lines 4–12, 15–18):

atha bhagavān vajrapāṇim evam āha | pratipadyasva vajrapāṇe eṣāṃ sattvānām mahākāruṇām utpādyopāyam dātum iti | atha vajrapāṇir mahākāruṇika idaṃ sarvasattvamaraṇa-nimittajñānamudrāhrdayam abhāṣat | OM VAJRA PRATIGRḤṆA HRDAYAM ĀKARṢAYA YADY AYAM SATTVO MĀSĀD ARDHENA MRIYATE TAD ASYA HRDAYAN NIṢKRAMATU SAMAYA HŪM JJAḤ || athāśya mudrābandho bhavati | ... anayā mudrayā bhavadbhiḥ sarvasattvahrdayāny apakṛṣya bhoktavyāntīti | atha te ḍākinīyādayaḥ sarvaduṣṭagrahā hulu hulu prakṣveḍitāni kṛtvā svabhavanam gatā iti ||

⁵⁷ This passage from the commentary of Śubhakarasiṃha and his disciple Yixing is translated and discussed by Gray (2005, 47–49). The commentators’ remarks concern *Vairocanaḥśambodhi* IV.16, mentioned above (n. 40).

⁵⁸ On the dating of the *Guhyasamāja*, I follow Matsunaga (1978, xxiii–xxvi). On eroticism in the iconography and ritual of the *Guhyasamāja*, see Sanderson (2009, 141–42).

upon the Buddha Akṣobhya, patriarch of the *vajra*-clan deities, the transitional status of this and closely related literature is reflected in its classification, frequently, as neither *Yoga*- nor *Yoginī*-, but *Mahāyogatantras* (Tribe 2000, 210–13). In chapter seventeen of the *Guhyasamāja* occurs an important early reference to *vajradākinīs*—transformations of these hostile beings into wielders of the *vajra* sceptre, marking their entry into the Vajrayāna pantheon. Vajrapāṇi discloses a series of initiatory pledges (*samaya*) connected with specific deities, among whom are female beings: *yakṣiṇīs*, *nāga* queens (*bhujagendrārājñī*), *asura* maidens, *rākṣasīs*, and *vajradākinīs*. The pledge connected with the latter is as follows:

Next, Vajrapāṇi, lord of all Buddhas, sent forth from the *vajras* of his body, speech, and mind the Pledge of All *Vajradākinīs*:

‘One should always eat urine, feces, and blood, and drink wine and so forth. One should slay through the *vajradākinī* yoga, through *padalakṣaṇas* (?). Arisen by their very nature, they [*dākinīs*] roam the triple universe. One should observe this pledge wholly, desiring the good of all beings’.

[Then Vajrapāṇi entered?] the meditative trance called ‘The Assembly of the Entire Triple Universe’.⁵⁹

That the “Pledge of All Adamantine *Dākinīs*” binds one to the consumption of urine, feces, blood, and alcohol, and to magical slaying suggests as yet little fundamental transformation in conceptions of *dākinīs*, despite their conversion. Some evidence points toward the emergence of material with close affinity to the *Yoginītantras* in the eighth century, separated little in time from the *Yogatantras*. Amoghavajra wrote a description of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinījālasamvara*, a text referred to in some scholarship as a “proto-*Yoginītantra*” (English 2002, 5), after his return to China in 746 CE (Giebel 1995, 179–82); it seems likely that, with possible exceptions, most other *Yoginītantras* date to the ninth century and beyond. The *Yoginītantras* and their exegetical literature constitute a vast corpus, much of which survives only in Tibetan translation and relatively little of which has been published, in cases where the Sanskrit original is preserved.

⁵⁹ *Guhyasamāja* XVII, p. 99:

*atha vajrapāṇiḥ sarvatathāgatādhipatiḥ sarvavajradākinīsamayaṃ svakāyavākcittavajrebhya
niścārayām āsa |*

viñmūtrarudhiraṃ bhakṣed madyādīṃś ca pibet sadā |

vajradākinīyogena mārayet padalakṣaṇaiḥ ||24||

svabhāvenaiva sambhūtā vicaranti tridhātuke |

ācāret samayaṃ kṛtsnaṃ sarvasattvāhitaiṣiṇā ||25||

sarvatraidhātukasamayasaṃavasaraṇo nāma samādhiḥ |

Aspects of this seem puzzling; *vajradākinīyoga* might refer to the invasive yogic processes by which *dākinīs* prey upon victims (cf., e.g., “*pañcāmṛtākaraṇa*,” in *Tāntrikābhidhānaśāstra*, vol. 3). *padalakṣaṇaiḥ* suggests no plausible interpretation to me, while the interpretation of the next verse-quarter is unclear as well. Candrakīrti, commenting on this verse, glosses *vajradākinīyogena* with “the yoga of Gaurī, etc.” (*gauryādiyogena*). His remarks on *padalakṣaṇaiḥ* are unfortunately corrupt, but contain clear reference to the parasitic practices of *dākinīs* (*padalakṣaṇaiḥ duṣṭānām ṛudyaṛraktāk[r]ṣṭyādiprayogaiḥ mārayet*, “One should slay with *padalakṣaṇas*, i.e. the application of ... extraction of blood from the wicked”). *Pradīpoddyotana*, p. 206.

Among the most important *Yoginītantras* are the *Laghuśaṃvaratantra* or *Herukābhīdhāna*, and the *Śrīhevajraḍākinījālasaṃvara* (i.e. the *Hevajratantra*), texts considered foundational to the systems of practice and cycles of scripture focused upon Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra, respectively. Other important texts of this genre include, for instance, the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇatantra* and *Kṛṣṇayamāritantra*—although the latter is perhaps more commonly considered a *Mahāyogatantra*⁶⁰—texts teaching the cults of their namesake deities.

While the dating of the major *Yoginītantras* is problematic, most undoubtedly belong to the period prior to the *Laghukālacakratantra* and its important commentary, the *Vimalaprabhā*, which date between 1025 and circa 1040 CE, as Newman (1998, 319–49) shows convincingly. It has been observed that the late eighth-century commentator Vilāsavajra may quote from the *Laghuśaṃvara* (Davidson 1981, 6–7), probably the earliest and most authoritative scripture in the cycle of *Yoginītantras* focused upon Cakrasaṃvara. Gray (2007, 12–14), however, demonstrates that most of the citations at issue are shared with and could instead derive from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*; evidently only two cases cannot be accounted for in this manner, with Sanderson (2009, 161–63) suggesting that these offer “no more than a possibility that Vilāsavajra knew the *Laghuśaṃvara*”—though this possibility still seems significant. In addition, Sanderson (2009, 158–61) argues that Jayabhadra, an abbot of Vikramaśīla and probably the text’s earliest commentator, was active in the tenth century, rather than the ninth, as had previously been supposed (Gray 2005, 62). While these considerations are inconclusive, they raise questions concerning the extent of Buddhist incorporation of the figure of the *yoginī* prior to the ninth century.

The cult of *yoginīs* thoroughly permeates the literature and ritual of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition. I shall focus on the *Laghuśaṃvaratantra*,⁶¹ one of the foundational scriptures of the *Yoginītantra* corpus, to illustrate representations of goddesses in the *Yoginītantras*, for this text’s parallels and relationship with the *Brahmayāmala* of the Śaiva *vidyāpīṭha* form the focus of the subsequent section. In the *Laghuśaṃvara*, the cult deities comprise a *kāpālīka* male divinity, Cakrasaṃvara or Heruka, and his consort, Vajravārāhī or Vajrayoginī, who preside over a maṇḍala primarily of goddesses referred to as *ḍākinīs*, *vajraḍākinīs*, or *dūtīs* (“consorts”).⁶² While the maṇḍala *ḍākinīs* have male counterparts in the twenty-four “heroes” (*vīra*), the latter have only secondary significance.⁶³ The *Laghuśaṃvara*’s *ḍākinīs* are fully representative of the *yoginī* typology evident in the Śaiva *vidyāpīṭha*, combining in their *kāpālīka*, theriomorphic iconography images of power and eroticism. They “pervade the universe,”⁶⁴ a wild horde with names such as Khagānānā (“Bird-face”), Sūrābhakṣī (“Drunkard”), Cakravegā (“Wheel-speed”), Vāyuvegā (“Wind-speed”), Mahābalā (“Mighty”), Mahānāsā (“Big-nose”), and Caṇḍākṣī

⁶⁰ H. Isaacson, personal communication (May, 2007).

⁶¹ The orthographies *-saṃvara* and *-śaṃvara* sometimes alternate in the names of the text and its deity. I have adopted the convention Sanderson argues for (2009, 166–68) in referring to the deity as Cakrasaṃvara but the text as the *Laghuśaṃvara(-tantra)*.

⁶² The primary maṇḍala is described in chapter 2 of the *Laghuśaṃvara*, while the twenty-four *ḍākinīs* are listed in chapter 4. For a discussion of the maṇḍala, see Gray (2007, 54–76); see also Sanderson (2009, 170).

⁶³ Mentioned first in 2.19cd, the *vīras* are not named until chapter forty-eight.

⁶⁴ *Laghuśaṃvara* 4.1ab, ... *ḍākinīyo bhuvanāni vijrmbhayanti*. Cf. 41.16ab, *caturviṃśatir ḍākinīya etābhiḥ sarvavyāptam sacarācaram*.

(“Grim-eyes”). All but the first two of these names are held in common with goddesses mentioned in the *Brahmayāmala*, while the remaining names reflect general typological congruence,⁶⁵ illustrating the shared Śaiva-Buddhist image of the *yoginī* or *ḍākinī*.

As goddesses of the clan of Vajrayoginī/Vajravārāhī, the *Laghuśaṃvara*’s maṇḍala *ḍākinīs* represent a single class among the spectrum of female beings with which the text is concerned—deities whose principal varieties are the *yoginī*, *ḍākinī*, *rūpiṇī*, *lāmā*, and *khaṇḍarohā*.⁶⁶ Collectively, they comprise the “web” or “matrix” (*jāla*) of *ḍākinīs* that pervades the universe. They take cultic form in the “great maṇḍala” of deities (*mahācakara*) described in chapter forty-eight, the abode of all *ḍākinīs* (*sarvaḍākinīyālaya*);⁶⁷ based upon the “heart mantra of all *yoginīs*,” this incorporates goddesses of the five classes together with the twenty-four male heroes. “Consisting of all *ḍākinīs*,” the whole constitutes the supreme Buddha himself, Vajrasattva, the highest Bliss.⁶⁸ The nature of the goddesses’ manifestation and movement (*sañcāra*) on the earth forms a central focus, reflected in the several chapters of the *Laghuśaṃvara* delineating typologies of the clans of goddesses. The text devotes several chapters to the subject of *chommā* as well, the secret verbal and nonverbal codes for communication between practitioners and the deities, or between initiates mutually.⁶⁹ Sacred geography forms a concern as well, a mapping of the powerful places where the goddesses are said to manifest.⁷⁰ As with the Śaiva *vidyāpīṭha*, the *yoginī* cult of the *Laghuśaṃvara* is thoroughly *kāpālīka* in character,⁷¹ and this text’s rites of fire sacrifice utilize a battery of meats and other things impure, largely with aggressive magical aims.⁷² Prominent among the goals of ritual is attainment of encounters with *ḍākinīs*; to the heroic *sādhaka*, they may bestow the power of flight and freedom from old age and death.⁷³ Enabled by the *ḍākinīs*, the *sādhaka* comes to traverse the entire world as their master.⁷⁴ Significant attention is devoted,

⁶⁵ The names of the twenty-four are given in *Laghuśaṃvara* 4.1–4. While Khagānanā has no precise counterpart in the *Brahmayāmala*, for avian imagery, note Lohatuṇḍī, “Iron-beak.” Surābhakṣī too does not figure in the *Brahmayāmala*; however, the principal Six Yoginīs are said to be fond of alcohol (*madirāsavapriyā nityaṃ yoginyaḥ śaṭ prakīrtitāḥ*, 54.15ab).

⁶⁶ Lists of the five goddess classes occur in e.g. 13.3 and 14.2. Additional subcategories of *ḍākinī* are described in chapters 16–19 and 23. The twenty-four maṇḍala *ḍākinīs* are said to belong to the *vārāhikula* in 2.18cd (*ḍākinīyaḥ tu caturviṃśā vārāhyā[h] kulasambhavāḥ*).

⁶⁷ The description of the *sarvaḍākinīyālaya* (“abode of all *ḍākinīs*”) begins in 48.8, and is based upon the pantheon of the *hṛdaya* mantra stated in 48.3. The “great cakra” is also described as *ḍākinījālasaṃvara* (“the assembly (?) of the matrix of *ḍākinīs*”) in 48.16 (*pūrvoktena vidhānena yajed ḍākinījālasaṃvaram | mahācakram sarvasiddhyālayaṃ tathā*).

⁶⁸ *Laghuśaṃvara* 1.3ab: *sarvaḍākinīmayaḥ sattvo vajrasattvaḥ paraṃ sukham*.

⁶⁹ Chapters on *chommā* include *Laghuśaṃvara* 15 (single-syllable *chommās*), 20 (communication through pointing at parts of the body), 21 (similar gestures plus their correct responses), 22 (gestures made only with the fingers), and 24 (single-syllable and other verbal codes).

⁷⁰ Lists of *pīṭhas* occur in *Laghuśaṃvara* 41, which associates specific sets of goddesses with these; and *Laghuśaṃvara* 50.19ff.

⁷¹ Note, for instance, that the initiatory maṇḍala described in chapter 2 is constructed with mortuary materials such as cremation ashes.

⁷² Particularly noteworthy are the *homa* rites described in *Laghuśaṃvara* 50.

⁷³ See for instance the brief chapter thirty-nine; the heroic *sādhaka* is promised attainment of the state of a Sky-wanderer (*nīyate khecarīpadam*, 4b [Pandey edition]), and freedom from old age and death (*na jarāmṛtyuḥ sarvatra sādhaḥko mantravigrahaḥ*, 5ab).

⁷⁴ *Laghuśaṃvara* 3.16:

ḍākinīyo lāmayaś caiva khaṇḍarohā tu rūpiṇī |

furthermore, to rites of bodily transformation, a domain of magic characteristic of the shapeshifting, theriomorphic *yoginī*.⁷⁵

While in the *Yogatantras* deities were organized according to clans (*kula*) of the five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala, *Yoginītantras* sometimes introduce new, in some cases matriarchal, deity clans for the classification of *yoginīs*. In the case of the *Laghuśaṃvara*, the chapters concerned with *yoginī* classification are among those which Sanderson claims drew most heavily from Śaiva exemplars (2001, 42–43): chapters 16–19, and 23. It would appear that chapters 16, 18, and 19 reduce a taxonomy of seven or eight deity clans—in all likelihood those the Seven Mothers—to a smaller set of clans with distinctively Buddhist names, including clans of Śrīheruka, Vajravārāhī, and the Tathāgatas. The resultant overlap and lack of coherent systematization seem consonant with a non-Buddhist pedigree. *Laghuśaṃvara* chapter 17, in contrast, parallel to and possibly based on *Jayadrathayāmala* III, 32.137ff, provides an unusual taxonomy of deity clans neither based upon the Mothers nor obviously “Śaiva” or “Buddhist” in sectarian identity. In the cases of *Laghuśaṃvara* chapters 16 and 19, the apparent *vidyāpīṭha* exemplars are the extant *Jayadrathayāmala* (III, 32.119cd–127ab) and *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* (ch. 29), respectively, which delineate *yoginī* taxonomies based upon the Seven Mothers. Törzsök’s (1999, 192–196) careful comparison of the latter and *Laghuśaṃvara* chapter 19 (identical to *Abhidhānottaratantra* ch. 38) finds multiple indications that the direction of redaction was from the Śaiva source to the Buddhist, her observations including “changes of non-Buddhist references to Buddhist ones” (cf. Gray 2007, 9–10), alterations which render a metrical verse in the Śaiva text unmetrical in the Buddhist, and “Śaiva iconographic features left unchanged in the Buddhist version.”⁷⁶ Such intertextuality, irrespective of the direction of influence, highlights common patterns of representing *yoginīs*, and illustrates the degree to which their cult and figure come to stand at the intersection of Buddhism and Śaivism in early medieval India.

etaiṛ vicarej jagat sarvaṃ ḍākinyaiḥ saha sādhaḥaḥ ||16 ||

sarvā kiṅkarī tasya sādhaḥasya na saṃśayaḥ |

Highly irregular grammatical forms such as *etaiḥ* (masculine, for the feminine *etābhiḥ*) and *ḍākinyaiḥ* (for *ḍākīnībhiḥ*) are none too rare in this text, while the metrical irregularities of 16c and 17a are even more typical.

⁷⁵ Note in particular the rituals of *Laghuśaṃvara* 49, which promise the yogin the power to transform himself at will (*kāmarūpo mahāvīrya yogī syān nātra saṃśayaḥ*, 49.15cd, Pandey edition).

⁷⁶ Regarding *Laghuśaṃvara* ch. 16, Sanderson claims that this is based upon a passage from the *Yoginīsañcāraprakaraṇa* of the *Jayadrathayāmala*. The parallel text comprises *Jayadrathayāmala* III, 32.119cd–127ab (= *Yoginīsañcāraprakaraṇa* 9.119cd–127ab). The texts differ substantively primarily in the verse-quarters providing clan-names; the actual descriptions of the *yoginīs* differ relatively little. The Buddhist version is sometimes unmetrical or nonsensical precisely where the texts differ: compare especially *Jayadrathayāmala* III, 32.120cd (*śivagoṣṭhīratā caiva sā jñeyā śivagotrājā*) with *Laghuśaṃvara* 16.3cd: *saugatagoṣṭhīratā caiva sā jñeyā kulagotrājā*; 3c has metrical faults (short syllables in both positions 2 and 3, as well as hypermetricism), while 3d challenges interpretation (“born in the clan of the clan”?). I am grateful to Alexis Sanderson for sharing his draft edition of the *Yoginīsañcāraprakaraṇa* with me, and to Olga Serbaeva for sharing her transcription of other portions of the vast *Jayadrathayāmala*.

Buddhist and Śaiva *Yoginītantras*: the case of the *Laghuśaṃvaratantra* and the *Brahmayāmala*

In a pioneering article of 2001, Sanderson identified extensive parallel passages in tantric literature within and across sectarian boundaries, and argued that substantial portions of important Buddhist *Yoginītantras* were redacted from Śaiva sources, largely unpublished (Sanderson 2001, especially 41–47). This constitutes some of the most important evidence marshalled in support of his thesis concerning the historical relationship between Śaivism and the esoteric Buddhism of the *Yoginītantras*, first argued in an article of 1994, where he asserts, “almost everything concrete in the system is non-Buddhist in origin even though the whole is entirely Buddhist in its function” (p. 92). More recently (2009), he has added substantially to the text-critical evidence, and framed his findings within a broader hypothesis on the reasons for Śaivism’s efflorescence in the early medieval period. While Sanderson’s examples concern several Buddhist texts, the most remarkable case is that of the *Laghuśaṃvaratantra*, nearly half the contents of which he holds “can be seen to have been redacted from Śaiva originals found in texts of the Vidyāpīṭha division” of the *Bhairavatantras*—namely, the *Brahmayāmala*, *Siddhayaogeśvarīmata*, *Tantrasadbhāva*, *Nīśisañcāra*, and the *Yoginīsañcāraprakaraṇa* of the *Jayadrathayāmala* (Sanderson 2001, 41–47 [quotation on p. 42]; 2009, 187–220).

In the present discussion I shall confine myself to a specific case of textual history, rather than attempt to address the larger picture of Śaiva–Buddhist interactions. The longest of the passages Sanderson identifies as shared by the *Brahmayāmala* (*Picumata*) and *Laghuśaṃvara* belongs to the first portion of chapter eighty-eight of the *Brahmayāmala*, entitled “The Section on the Pledges” (*samayādhikārapaṭala*),⁷⁷ and to the greater part of chapters twenty-six to twenty-nine of the *Laghuśaṃvara*. He notes that this intertextuality extends to the *Abhidhānottara* as well, a text of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle, in which the *Laghuśaṃvara* is fundamental: chapter forty-three begins with text corresponding to *Laghuśaṃvara* 26.6 and *Brahmayāmala* 88.9. Though the text of *Abhidhānottara* chapter 43 closely parallels *Laghuśaṃvara* chapters 26–29—fortuitously so, given that this section of the *Laghuśaṃvara* does not survive in Sanskrit—the former contains none of the latter’s divisions into chapters.⁷⁸ In addition to shared passages, the *Brahmayāmala* and *Laghuśaṃvara* share a number of idiomatic expressions, to a degree unlikely to be coincidental.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ The colophon reads, in the oldest manuscript (NAK 3-370), *samayādhikāro nāmañcāśṭīmaḥ paṭalaḥ*—with *nāmañcāśṭīmaḥ* no doubt corrupt for *nāma pañcāśṭīmaḥ*. Sanderson evidently follows the emended colophon in numbering this chapter 85 rather than 88, the latter being its number in order of occurrence (an estimate, given that several folia are missing).

⁷⁸ I have consulted two manuscripts of the *Abhidhānottara*, as detailed in the list of references.

⁷⁹ For instance, *Laghuśaṃvara* 26.13cd (*aprakāśyam idaṃ guhyaṃ gopānīyaṃ prayatnataḥ*), which occurs again as 31.14ab, is parallel to *Brahmayāmala* 90.2cd (*aprakāśyam idaṃ devī gopānīyaṃ prayatnataḥ*); variants of this phrase appear in chapters 21, 22, 45, and 46 of the *Brahmayāmala* as well. Note the absence of the (contextually inappropriate) vocative *devī* in the *Laghuśaṃvara* version. There are other similarities of idiom: another phrase shared by the *Brahmayāmala* and *Laghuśaṃvara*, and not with other Buddhist sources I am aware of, is *nātaḥ parataraṃ kiñcit triṣu lokeṣu vidyate*. This occurs as *Laghuśaṃvara* 5.25cd and 50.14ab (cf. 26.1ab and 48.7ab), and *Brahmayāmala* 14.262ab and 87.222ab. (Cf., e.g., the *Revākhaṇḍa* attributed to the *Skandapurāṇa*, 71.1cd: *nātaḥ parataraṃ kiñcit triṣu lokeṣu viśrutam*.) Other

To the passages identified by Sanderson I can add the final five verses of *Brahmayāmala* chapter 87, which correspond to the opening verses of *Laghuśaṃvara* chapter 26 (Table 1). Hence, *Laghuśaṃvara* chapters 26–29 roughly correspond, more or less in sequence, to the last several verses of *Brahmayāmala* chapter 87 and the first fifty-odd verses of 88, although individual verses and several short sections in both have no parallels in the other. The crucial Baroda codex of the *Laghuśaṃvara* is unfortunately lacunose from the third verse of chapter 22 up to the colophon of 29.⁸⁰ Pandey (2002) has attempted a reconstruction of the Sanskrit, utilizing the Tibetan translation, the commentary of Bhavabhaṭṭa, and parallels in the *Saṃputatantra* and *Abhidhānottara*. This has been improved upon considerably in the new edition of Gray (*forthcoming*), who utilizes testimonia from additional Sanskrit commentaries and *vyākhyātantras*. Interestingly, though Gray does not utilize Śaiva testimonia in constituting the text (cf. Sugiki 2008), his well-considered reconstruction of the opening passage of chapter 26 brings it much closer to the parallel passage of the *Brahmayāmala* than Pandey’s does, particularly where he follows the oldest commentary: Jayabhadra’s *Cakrasaṃvarapañjikā*. Jayabhadra appears to have commented upon an early version of the *Laghuśaṃvara* lacking chapter divisions—much like the parallel text of *Abhidhānottara* chapter 43—as well as the concluding section of the received text. The latter includes some of the passages most recognizably ‘Buddhist’ in content (Sanderson 2009, 158–59).

Table 1 places the passage from *Brahmayāmala* chapter 87 alongside the corresponding verses of *Laghuśaṃvara* chapter 26, as given in Gray’s edition. The passage in question is also shared by the *Brahmayāmalasāra*, a short recension of the *Brahmayāmala* preserved in two Nepalese codices.⁸¹ This short recension presupposes the existence of the twelve-thousand verse recension—although not precisely as transmitted in its oldest extant manuscript, for several readings of the *Brahmayāmalasāra*, as reported in the annotation below, are closer to those of the *Laghuśaṃvara*, and may derive from an earlier stage in the *Brahmayāmala*’s transmission.

Table 1. A parallel passage in *Brahmayāmala*, ch. 87 and *Laghuśaṃvara*, ch. 26

idiomatic expressions shared by the *Brahmayāmala* and the *Laghuśaṃvara* include variations upon the following (*Laghuśaṃvara* 3.20cd–21ab):

adr̥ṣṭamaṇḍalo yogī yogitvaṃ yaḥ samīhate ||
hanyate muṣṭinākāśaṃ pibate mṛgatṛṣṇikām ||

Striking the sky and drinking from a mirage are proverbial expressions for futile endeavor. My attention was first drawn to this verse by Harunaga Isaacson in the autumn of 2003. Compare e.g. *Brahmayāmala* 91.44:

aviditvā -d- imaṃ sarvaṃ yaḥ pūjāṃ kartum arhati ||
hanate muṣṭinākāśaṃ īhate mṛgatṛṣṇikām ||

Verses with remarkable similarities occur as *Brahmayāmala* 3.5, 11.44cd–45ab, 22.106, 75.212, 85.50, and 90.56. These parallels are not however unique to the *Brahmayāmala*; note also *Tantrasadbhāva* 28.88ab and *Niśvāsakārikā* (T.17) 44.241cd (*hanate muṣṭinākāśaṃ pibate mṛgatṛṣṇikām*).

⁸⁰ Oriental Institute of Baroda manuscript no. 13290.

⁸¹ The short recension is transmitted in two manuscripts, as detailed in the list of references, one of which is incomplete. In its final chapter (81), the text refers to itself as the *sāra* (“essence”) of the twelve-thousand verse *Brahmayāmala*, just as the latter was drawn from the (putative) recension of 125,000 verses. I hence refer to the shorter recension as the *Brahmayāmalasāra*.

Brahmayāmala 87.222–28:

Laghuśaṃvaratantra 26.1–5:

nātaḥ parataraṃ kiñcit
triṣu⁸² lokeṣu vidyate |
jñātvā picumataṃ tantraṃ
sarvatantrān⁸³ parityajet ||222||
carvāhāravibhāge⁸⁴ 'pi
tālakārādhake⁸⁵ tathā |
sarvātmake ca yogo 'yaṃ
sarvataḥ svānurūpataḥ ||223||
dūtīyogātmayogāc ca
prakriyāyogayojanāt |
sarvatra ca caturṇāṃ tu
yogo 'yaṃ parikīrtitaḥ ||224||
anulomavilomena
dūtayaḥ saṃvyavasthitāḥ |
adhordhvasiddhidā devi
ātmadūtī⁸⁶ tu sarvadā ||225||
tadravyaṃ sarvadā siddhaṃ⁸⁷
darśanāt⁸⁸ sparśabhakṣaṇāt |
cumbanā gūhanāc caiva⁸⁹
śivapīṭhe⁹⁰ viśeṣataḥ ||226||
yāvato dravyasaṅghātāḥ⁹¹
sarvasiddhikaraḥ param⁹² |
dātavyaṃ mantrasadbhāvaṃ
nānyathā tu kadā cana⁹⁴ ||227||
mātā ca bhaginī putrī
bhāryā vai⁹⁵ dūtayaḥ smṛtāḥ⁹⁶ |

ataḥ paraṃ mantrapadaṃ
triṣu lokeṣu na vidyate |
śrīherukamantraṃ jñātvā
sarvān mantrān parityajet ||1||

anulomavilomena
dūtayaḥ saṃvyavasthitāḥ |
adhordhvasiddhidā nityam
ātmadūtīm tu sarvagām ||2||
taṃ dūtīm sarvasiddhidāṃ
darśanaṃ sparśanaṃ tathā |
cumbanāvagūhanā nityam
yogapīṭhe viśeṣataḥ ||3||
yāvanto yogasaṅghātāḥ
sarvasiddhikarāḥ smṛtāḥ⁹³ |
dātavyaṃ sarvasadbhāvaṃ
nānyathā tu kadā cana ||4||
mātā bhaginī putrī vā
bhāryā vai dūtayaḥ sthitāḥ⁹⁷ |

⁸² triṣu] *corr.*; trṣu MS (= National Archives of Kathmandu ms. no. 3-370)

⁸³ Here the *Brahmayāmalasāra* (NGMPP reel no. E1527/6) reads *mantrāṃ sarvāṃ*, rather closer to the *Laghuśaṃvara*'s *sarvān mantrān*.

⁸⁴ carvāhāravibhāge] *em.*; °vibhāgo MS

⁸⁵ °ārādhake] *em.*; °ārādhane MS

⁸⁶ The *Brahmayāmalasāra* reads *ātmadūtīn*.

⁸⁷ siddhaṃ] *em.*; siddha MS

⁸⁸ The *Brahmayāmalasāra* reads *darśanā*.

⁸⁹ cumbanā gūhanāc caiva] *em.*; cumbanā gūhanañ caiva MS. Understand *cumbanā* as ablative, with elision of the final -d (cf. Edgerton 1953, vol. 1, §8.46–48). The *Brahmayāmalasāra* agrees in reading *cumbanā gūhanañ* (the latter probably corrupt for the ablative), but, like the *Laghuśaṃvara*, reads *nityaṃ* rather than *caiva*.

⁹⁰ The *Brahmayāmalasāra* reads *atpīṭhañ*, which is hypometrical and presumably secondary.

⁹¹ yāvato dravyasaṅghātāḥ is supported by the *Brahmayāmalasāra*; understand *yāvato* as singular (cf. Edgerton 1953, vol. 1, §18.33).

⁹² °siddhikaraḥ param] *conj.*; siddhikaraḥ paraḥ MS. The *Brahmayāmalasāra* reads °siddhikara *smṛtāḥ*; the latter lexeme is shared with the *Laghuśaṃvara*, and might represent the older reading.

⁹³ In 4ab, there is evidence that some versions of the *Laghuśaṃvara* read the singular, as the *Brahmayāmala* appears to; see Gray (*forthcoming*, apparatus ad 26.4ab).

⁹⁴ kadā cana] *em.*; kadā canaḥ MS. The *Brahmayāmalasāra* reads *kathañ canaḥ*.

⁹⁵ The *Brahmayāmalasāra* reads *vā*.

yasyā mantraṃ daden nityaṃ
tasyaiṣo hi vidhiḥ smṛtaḥ ||228||

yasya⁹⁸ mantraṃ daden nityaṃ
tasya so hi vidhiḥ smṛtaḥ ||5||

In the *Brahmayāmala*, this passage concludes the first chapter of the *Uttaratantra*, an “addendum *tantra*” to the *Brahmayāmala* probably belonging to a comparatively late stratum of the text. Parallels for the some of the passage’s obscure terminology occur earlier in the chapter and elsewhere in the *Brahmayāmala*.⁹⁹ In the *Laghuśaṃvara*, this passage instead opens chapter 26. With the negative particle *na* not in the initial position, as in the *Brahmayāmala*, but in the hypermetrical second verse-quarter, the opening gives the appearance of having been awkwardly rewritten to introduce a new topic. That the verse is unclear semantically is suggested by its divergent interpretations.¹⁰⁰ The *Laghuśaṃvara* passage as a whole, or so it seems to me, reads as a tract of decontextualized text assembled with scant regard for meter and still less for grammar, the interpretation of which challenges the imagination. In verse six, the subject shifts to the Eight Pledges, with a passage parallel to *Brahmayāmala* 88.1–42.¹⁰¹

There are multiple and clear indications of the dependence of *Laghuśaṃvara* chapters 26–29 upon *Brahmayāmala* chapters 87–88, for the redactors appear to have been less than successful in removing traces of technical terminology distinctive to their source text. One case Sanderson (2001, 44–47) has discussed in detail is a reference to the *smaraṇa*, a word in ordinary parlance meaning “recollection,” but in the *Brahmayāmala*, a technical term for the seed-mantra of Kapālīsabhairava (HUM). An ostensibly neutral word, the Buddhist redactors allowed this to remain, unconcerned with or perhaps unaware of its significance in the source text.¹⁰² In addition to the *smaraṇa*, I would single out another case in which characteristic jargon from the *Brahmayāmala* has not been redacted out of the *Laghuśaṃvara*: 26.15, which corresponds to *Brahmayāmala*

⁹⁶ For *smṛtāḥ*, the *Brahmayāmalasāra* reads *sthitāḥ*, which is shared by the *Laghuśaṃvara* and possibly original.

⁹⁷ See the previous note.

⁹⁸ Jayabhadra reads *yasyā*, as does the *Brahmayāmala*, while the *Brahmayāmalasāra* reads *tasya*.

⁹⁹ Note, for instance, that the reference to consorts (*dūtī*) being “with the grain” or “against the grain” (225ab) is apparently explained in 87.14cd: *ṛtuyogaviyogena anulomavilomajā[h]*, which seems to mean, “[consorts either] go with or against the grain, according to whether or not they are in their menstrual period (*ṛtu*).”

¹⁰⁰ Gray (2007, 265) translates, “Furthermore, having known Śrī Heruka’s mantra, which does not exist in the triple world, all [other] mantras should be disregarded.” Cf. Bhavabhaṭṭa’s gloss: *ato mūlamantrāt śreṣṭhamantrapadam* | *vidyatā vajravārāhī tasyāḥ sambodhanaṃ vidyate* | *nāstītyasya nirdeśo vā* | *mantram mūlamantrādikam* | *jñātvā sarvān mantrān parityajet* | (“‘From/than this’ [*ataḥ*] refers to the root mantra; [*paraṃ mantrapadam*] means ‘most excellent mantra word’. *vidyate* is the vocative of *vidyatā*, which refers to Vajravārāhī. Or else, [*na vidyate*] specifies, ‘does not exist’ (*nāsti*). *mantra* refers to the root mantra and so forth. Having learnt [it], one should abandon all [other] mantras”). It is striking that Bhavabhaṭṭa would go so far as to seek a vocative epithet of Vajravārāhī in the commonplace verb *vidyate* (“exists”), illustrating his predicament in making sense of some of the *Laghuśaṃvara*’s more obscure passages.

¹⁰¹ Preceding *Brahmayāmala* 88.1 is a short series of mantras in prose, the text of which is badly damaged. These have no precise counterpart in the *Laghuśaṃvara*. There may however be a structural parallel, for the short chapter preceding *Laghuśaṃvara* ch. 26 consists of a single long mantra.

¹⁰² The term *smaraṇa* occurs in *Laghuśaṃvara* 29.3c. Concerning the *smaraṇa* and mantra-deities of the *Brahmayāmala*, see also Hatley (2007, 251–258).

88.9. This verse concerns a typology of the practitioner (*sādhaka*) that is as far as I can determine distinctive to the *Brahmayāmala*—and certainly alien to the *Laghuśaṃvara*. The text of the *Laghuśaṃvara* version of the verse is as follows, in Gray’s reconstruction:

śuddho ’śuddho ’tha miśraś ca sādhaś ca trividhā sthitāḥ |
ārādhako viśuddhaś ca dīpako guṇavān naraḥ ||

Jayabhadra, the earliest commentator on the *Laghuśaṃvara*, recognized that this verse should concern a classification of practitioners, and offers the following interpretation:

The “man of virtue” (*guṇavān naraḥ*)—the yogin—has a threefold division. *Ārādha-**ka* means “one in whom understanding has not arisen”; *viśuddha* means “one in whom capacity has arisen”; *dīpaka* (“lamplight”) means the *madhyadīpaka* (“average luminary”): one in whom some understanding has arisen, and who enlightens himself and others. Or else, *ārādhaka* means “worshipper of the deity through practice of mantra and yoga,” *guṇavān* means “one who understands the meaning of scripture,” [while] *dīpaka* means “capable of fulfilling the goals of all living beings,” like a lamp (*pradīpa*).¹⁰³

Jayabhadra’s creative yet incongruent attempts to find three *sādhakas* in the second line testify to the fact that this verse lacks context; a threefold classification of this nature is otherwise absent from the *Laghuśaṃvara* and related literature.

In contrast, the triad of ‘pure’, ‘impure’, and ‘mixed’ comprises a key conceptual framework in the *Brahmayāmala*: practitioners, ritual, scripture, and the Three Śaktis are patterned accordingly.¹⁰⁴ *Ārādhaka* too has a specific, contextually germane meaning. In the *Brahmayāmala*, the verse in question occurs in a passage which follows the enumeration of initiatory Pledges (*samaya*):

... ity aṣṭau samayāḥ¹⁰⁵ parāḥ || 7 ||
jñātavyāḥ¹⁰⁶ sādhaś nityam¹⁰⁷ sādhanārādhanaśthitaiḥ¹⁰⁸ |
sāmānyāḥ sarvatantrāṇāṃ na hantavyāḥ tu hetubhiḥ || 8 ||
śuddhāśuddhaviśuddhaś tu sādhaś trividhaḥ¹⁰⁹ smṛtaḥ |
ārādhako viśuddhaś tu dīpakaḥ¹¹⁰ diguṇair vinā || 9 ||
grāme grāme vrataṃ tasya devatārūpalakṣaṇam |
unmattam asidhāraṇ ca pavitrakṣetravarjitam || 10 ||

¹⁰³ Jayabhadra, *Cakraśaṃvarapañjikā*: *ārādhako viśuddhaś ca dīpako guṇavān nara ity guṇavān naro yogī tridhā bhidyate* [em. H. Isaacson; vidyate Ed.] *ārādhaka ity anutpannapratibhaḥ viśuddha ity utpannasāmarthyāḥ dīpaka ity madhyadīpakaḥ kiṃcidutpannapratibhaḥ svaparārthabodhaś ca || athavārādhako mantrayogābhyāśena devatārādhakaḥ guṇavān śāstrārthavettā dīpakaḥ pradīpavat sarvasattvārthakriyāsamarthaḥ ||*

¹⁰⁴ On the classification of scripture in relation to the *śaktis*, see Hatley (2007, 264–68); see below concerning the threefold classification of *sādhakas*.

¹⁰⁵ samayāḥ | *corr.*; samayā MS

¹⁰⁶ jñātavyāḥ | *corr.*; jñātavyā MS

¹⁰⁷ sādhaś nityam | *em.*; sādhaś nityam MS (*tops damaged*)

¹⁰⁸ °sthitaiḥ | *conj.* (Cs. Kiss); °sthitau MS

¹⁰⁹ °vimiśraś tu | *em.*; °vimuktaś tu MS

¹¹⁰ trividhaḥ | *corr.*; trividhaḥ MS

sādhakas tu dvidhā proktaś carumārgo 'tha tālakah |
 tālamārgaratānām tu na carur naiva saṃyamah || 11 ||
 vidyāvrataviśuddhis tu triṣaṣṭivratam¹¹¹ eva ca |
 abhedyatvaṃ tatas tasya tālādu sādhane vidhau || 12 ||
 carumārgaikadeśo hi tālah sarvātmako bhavet |
 kṣetrasthānāni siddhāni yogīnyo yatra saṃgatāḥ || 13 ||
 teṣu sthītvā japaṃ kuryāc carum ālabhate dvijaḥ |

“... these are the supreme eight Pledges. [7d] They should always be known by *sādhakas* [whether] engaged in [mantra-]*sādhana* or [deity] worship (*ārādhana*). They are common to all the *tantras*, and should not be assailed with reasoned arguments. [8] The *sādhaka* is threefold—pure, impure, and mixed¹¹²—while the *ārādhaka* is very pure, free from the qualities of ‘lamplight’ and so forth (?).¹¹³ [9] From village to village, his observance (*vrata*) is [that of taking on] the form and characteristics of the deities, and the ‘madman’ and ‘razor’s edge’ [observances],¹¹⁴ avoiding the sacred fields. [10] But the *sādhaka* is [actually] twofold: the one following the path of *caru* (‘oblation gruel’), and the *tālaka*. For those on the *tālaka* path, there is neither *caru* nor self-restraint. [11] [After engaging in] purification by the *vidyā*-mantra observance and the ‘sixty-three observance’,¹¹⁵ he then [reaches] the state of [making] no distinction between the ritual procedures of the *tālaka*, etc. [12] Following the way of the *caru*, having a single location, the *tālaka* would become a *sarvātman* (‘universal’) [*sādhaka*].¹¹⁶ Remaining in the sacred, empowered places where

¹¹¹ triṣaṣṭi°] *em.*; ttriṣaṣṭhi° MS

¹¹² There are strong grounds for emending *śuddhāśuddhavimuktas* to °*vimīśras*, as I have done, for this threefold classification of *sādhakas* based upon degrees of ‘purity’ pervades the *Brahmayāmala* and fits the present context. Cf., e.g., *Brahmayāmala* 33.331c, *śuddhāśuddhavimīśreṣu*. Furthermore, several Buddhist sources support the emendation: Gray (*forthcoming*) reads *śuddho 'tha mīśraś ca* in *Laghuśaṃvara* 26.15a, reporting as testimonia, for the last three syllables, *mīśras ca*, *mīśra vaiḥ*, and *mimra vai* (apparatus ad 26.15a). In 9b, one could consider emending to *sādhakah trividhā smṛtaḥ*, or to *sādhakās trividhā sthitaḥ*; a range of variants are attested in the Buddhist parallels (see Gray, *forthcoming*, apparatus at 26.15b).

¹¹³ I am unable to determine the probable intended sense of 9d, *dīpakādiguṇair vinā*, as transmitted in the codex. The parallel text in *Laghuśaṃvara* 26.15d provides no assistance obvious to me.

¹¹⁴ The *unmattakavrata* is fourth of the Nine Observances described in *Brahmayāmala* ch. 21, involving feigned insanity, as the name implies. The *asidhāvrata* (‘observance of the sword’s edge’) for its part comprises the subject of *Brahmayāmala* ch. 40 (edited by Hatley, *forthcoming* A).

¹¹⁵ While the various observances taught in *Brahmayāmala* ch. 21, are referred to collectively as *vidyāvratas*, “observances of the [nine-syllable] *vidyā*,” this term is primarily used for the final and most important of these, a *kāpālika* observance also called the *mahāvrata* (108a) or *bhairavavrata* (109ab). As for the *triṣaṣṭivrata*, this appears to be connected with a mantra-deity pantheon (*yāga*) of the same name; yet while the “*yāga* of the sixty-three” and its *vrata* are mentioned in several chapters, I have not identified a detailed description.

¹¹⁶ The implication is that the *sarvātman sādhaka* is bound by no single discipline and may engage at will in practices associated with the lower grades of initiate. This is consistent with the description of the *sarvātman* found in *Brahmayāmala* ch. 97.

the *yoginīs* assemble, he should perform his mantra recitation in those; the twice-born one obtains an oblation (*caru*) [from the *yoginīs*].”¹¹⁷ [13–14ab]

Here *ārādhaka*, “worshipper,” refers to a specific category of practitioner. In its core chapters, the *Brahmayāmala* describes a threefold typology of the *sādhaka*: pure, impure, and impure-cum-pure, for which the primary designations are *tālaka*, *carubhojin* (“eater of the oblation gruel”), and *miśra* (“mixed”), respectively.¹¹⁸ This classification receives detailed elaboration in the text’s massive forty-fourth chapter, “the section on the *sādhaka*” (*sādhakādhikāra*). However, the latter chapters of the *Brahmayāmala*—chapters 87–104, comprising the *Uttara*- and *Uttarottaratantras*—introduce a new fourfold taxonomy of initiates: the *ārādhaka*, *carubhojin*, *tālaka*, and *sarvātman* (“universal”), whose activities and subdivisions comprise the respective subjects of *Brahmayāmala* chapters 94–97. This typology differs from the threefold insofar as the category of *miśra*, the practitioner of “mixed” purity, appears to be reconfigured as the highest grade, the *sarvātman*—above the *tālaka*.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, the *ārādhaka* represents a variety of householder practitioner.¹²⁰

That the redactors of the *Laghuśaṃvara* had intended to remove references to a Śaiva typology of practitioners is suggested by comparison; in Table 1, note that *Brahmayāmala* 87.223–24, which makes specific reference to the classification of *sādhakas* in question, has no parallel in the *Laghuśaṃvara* (nor in the *Brahmayāmalasāra*, which also omits this passage). Yet *Laghuśaṃvara* 26.15 nonetheless contains a reference to what is, in the *Brahmayāmala*, the same typology expressed with different terminology: the designations pure, impure, mixed, and “worshipper” (*ārādhaka*), as opposed to the more

¹¹⁷ The notion that one may attain *siddhi* through consuming oblation gruel (*caru*) offered directly by the *yoginīs* is mentioned in e.g. *Brahmayāmala* 104.29, and is in all likelihood alluded to here in 14b. For a detailed description, see *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* 11.7cd–10.

¹¹⁸ The terms for the threefold *sādhaka* are provided in *Brahmayāmala* 45.10cd–11ab:

śuddhas tu tālakaḥ proktaś [corr.; *proktaś* MS] *carubhojī tv aśuddhakaḥ* || 10 ||

śuddhāśuddho bhaven miśraḥ [em.; *miśraṃ* MS] *sādhakas tu na saṃśayaḥ* |

On the term *tālaka*, see the entry in *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa*, vol. 3 (*forthcoming*). A detailed study of the *Brahmayāmala*’s threefold typology of *sādhakas* is currently under preparation by Csaba Kiss.

¹¹⁹ It is evident from the descriptions in *Brahmayāmala* 45 that the *miśra*, as one might expect, constitutes the middle grade of *sādhaka*. Hence in 45.472, it is said that a *miśra* purified through constant practice may become a *tālaka* (*kadācin miśrako devi karmayogena nityaśaḥ | tālamārga[m] samāpnoti yadā śuddhaḥ prajāyate*). However, the *sarvātman* *sādhaka* is “mixed” in an entirely different sense: he is free from all regulations, engaging at will in the disciplines associated with lower practitioners.

¹²⁰ It appears that the *ārādhaka* might not be considered a *sādhaka*, per se; their characteristic modes of ritual, *ārādhana* (“worship”) and *sādhana*, are placed in contrast. See e.g. 88.8b above. Nonetheless, the term *ārādhaka* figures in later Śaiva typologies of the *sādhaka*. In the *Kulasāra*, the *ārādhaka* features as fourth of the five grades of *sādhaka*, above the *tālaka*, *cumbaka*, and *cārvāka* (= *carubhojin*, presumably); transcending the *ārādhaka* is the *śivodbhūta*:

tālako cumbakaś caiva cārvākārādhakas [em.; °*korādhakas* MS] *tathā* |

śivodbhūta -m- [em. (Vasudeva); *śivobhūtam* MS] *ataḥ proktaḥ pāncabhedo ’pi sādhakaḥ* |

I am grateful to Somadeva Vasudeva for providing me his draft edition of this passage. Given the terminological continuities, it seems possible that this fivefold typology develops out of the threefold classification present in the *Brahmayāmala*, the addition of the *ārādhaka* reflecting an intermediate stage.

distinctive “oblation eater” (*carubhojin*), *tālaka*, “worshipper” (*ārādhaka*), and “universal” (*sarvātman*).¹²¹ Verse 26.15 was perhaps retained by the Buddhist redactor either under the assumption that the more neutral terminology would not appear alien, or on account of ignorance of the jargon.

Considered alongside the already strong evidence adduced by Sanderson, the presence of a typology of practitioners distinctive to the *Brahmayāmala* in the *Laghuśaṃvara*, where it lacks not only context but a plausible interpretation, provides strong indication of the direction of redaction in the passages shared by these texts. That the *Laghuśaṃvara* has drawn from the *Brahmayāmala*, whether directly or through another derivative source, seems the most plausible explanation for the relationship between the material in question. Derivation from an unknown common source is not impossible, but this would in all likelihood have been a Śaiva text intimately related to the *Brahmayāmala*, to the extent of sharing unusual terminological similarities.

Although the case for the *Laghuśaṃvara* drawing on Śaiva source material seems compelling, this proposal, and especially Sanderson’s broader claims, have elicited controversy. Davidson (2002), in particular, has questioned the plausibility of extant *tantric* Śaiva texts being significant sources of material found in the Buddhist *Yoginītantras*, though he highlights the influence of the (non-tantric) Kāpālika and Pāśupata Śaiva ascetic orders on the Vajrayāna. One of his principal objections is chronological: he considers problematic the evidence attesting specific, extant works of tantric Śaiva literature prior to the ninth and tenth centuries.¹²² He questions, for instance, whether the mid eleventh-century Cambodian Sdok Kak Thom inscription should be taken as an accurate record for the existence in the ninth century of the Śaiva texts it mentions—several texts of the Leftward Stream (*vāmasrotas*) of the cult of Tumburu and the Four Sisters (*bhaginī*)—which the inscription associates with a brahmin in the court of that period. While such caution may be laudable in principle, here it is perhaps excessive: the existence of Śaiva *tantras* of the *vāmasrotas* prior to the ninth century may be inferred in multiple manners, including Dharmakīrti’s reference to the genre and the presence of two loose folios of an exegetical work of this tradition among the Gilgit manuscripts (perhaps mid-6th century). The texts mentioned in the inscription, including the extant *Vīṇāśikhātantra*, are known to have been fundamental scriptures of this genre.¹²³ In fact,

¹²¹ Reference to the fourfold typology of practitioners is clearly present in *Brahmayāmala* 87.223, although out of sequence: *carvāhāra* (= *aśuddha* or *carubhojin*), *tālaka* (= *śuddha*), *ārādhaka* (by emendation of °*ārādhane*; = *viśuddha*), and *sarvātmaka* (= *miśra*). The point of 224cd is that the yoga expounded in this chapter is applicable to all four (*caturṇām*) types of practitioner.

¹²² On the evidence for pre-11th century works of Śaiva literature, see Sanderson (2001, 2–19; 2009, 45–53). Davidson’s cautious views on the chronology of Śaiva literature occasionally veer to the extreme, as when he refers to “the fact that most Kaula works appear composed after the sites [of the *circa* 9th–13th century *yoginī* temples] were constructed” (2002, 180).

¹²³ Davidson addresses Sanderson’s remarks on this inscription as they were presented in Sanderson (2001, 7–8). Sanderson has subsequently discussed this material in greater detail (2003–4, 355–57). On the Gilgit fragment of an exegetical work of the *vāmasrotas*, see Sanderson (2009, 50–51). On early evidence for the *vāmasrotas*, see all of the preceeding. Recently, Tomabechi (2007) has identified a passage in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*—sometimes spoken of as a proto-*Yoginītantra*—as being shared with the *Vīṇāśikhātantra*, apparently the only extant *tantra* of the *vāmasrotas*. He does not venture an opinion concerning the direction of redaction, but notes also that the text’s mantra code results in the supreme buddha, Vajrasattva, being given

Davidson's objection appears inconsistent considering that he himself draws upon a single reference in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* for reconstructing the allegedly pre-Buddhist origins of the deity Heruka, relying heavily on a mythological text for reconstructing history, perhaps at a remove of well more than half a millenium. His speculations concerning the origins of Bhairava raise similar problems.¹²⁴

Critiquing Sanderson's thesis of the Buddhist *Yoginītantras*' indebtedness to Śaivism, Davidson (2002, 217) counters that "a more fruitful model would appear to be that both heavily influenced the final formations of the agonistic other and that each had alternative sources as well." A model of mutual influence certainly has appeal when considering Buddhist-Śaiva interactions broadly over the course of the first millenium,¹²⁵ yet such cannot be assumed *a priori* in any particular case; indeed, most of what Davidson cites as examples of Tantric Śaiva texts having syncretic sources appear to be post twelfth-century works, and accordingly have little bearing upon the relation between the Śaiva *vidyāpīṭha* and Buddhist *Yoginītantras*. A potential exception is the *Jayadrathayāmala*, a *vidyāpīṭha* scripture which, as Davidson points out, shows awareness of the Vajrayāna in its account of the scriptural canon.¹²⁶ The *Jayadrathayāmala*, Sanderson

the mantra HAMSA, "... the famous mantra representing the Śaiva Tantras' supreme being, which is often identified with the movement of vital energy (*prāṇa*) within the human body" (p. 918).

¹²⁴ Davidson's attempts to show that Bhairava and "his Buddhist counterpart, Heruka," have (independent) roots in tribal or local divinities seem unconvincing. The *Kālikāpurāṇa*, which may contain old material but which in its current form is unlikely to predate the sixteenth century (Stapelfeldt 2001, 35–40), associates a cremation ground called Heruka with Kāmākhyā; Davidson identifies this (plausibly) as the modern site called Masānbhaira (*śmaśānabhairava*). He further postulates that "Buddhists apparently appropriated a local term [Heruka] for a specific Assamese ghost or cemetery divinity and reconfigured it into the mythic enemy of evil beings in general" (Davidson 2002, 211–16 [quotations on 211, 214]). Even if it could be demonstrated that the reference to Heruka comes from a comparatively early stratum of the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, to argue that he was originally an Assamese cremation-spirit deity on this basis calls to mind what Davidson (2002, 206) elsewhere describes as "sustained special pleading about single reference citations, a questionable method of arguing history." For another view on the origin of the name Heruka, see Sanderson 2009, 148 (n. 340).

As for Bhairava, Davidson (2002, 211) asserts that he "seems to have been little more than a local ferocious divinity at one time... eventually appropriated by Śaivas, much as they aggressively appropriated so much other tribal and outcaste lore for their own ends." He cites little evidence for this beyond origin myths found in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* for a *līṅga* called "Bhairava" near Guwahati. While the roots of Bhairava remain unclear, the evidence extends back well before the *Kālikāpurāṇa*. Mahābhairava ("The Great Terrifier") is named as a Śaiva place of pilgrimage in the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* (*Mukhāgama* 3.21d and *Guhyasūtra* 7.115d) as well as the old *Skandapurāṇa* (chapter 167); the latter source makes clear that the site is named after the form of Śiva enshrined there (cf. Mahākāla of Ujjayinī). A fourth-century Vākātaka king is described as a devotee of Mahābhairava in an inscription of the fifth century, on which see Sanderson (2003–4, 443–44) and Bisschop (2006, 192–93). The emergence of Bhairava in the tantric Śaiva pantheon, whatever his roots may be, appears to have involved some degree of identification with Aghora, the southern, fierce face of Sadāśiva who is said to reveal the *Bhairavatantras*.

¹²⁵ Note for instance Davidson's (2002, 183–86) plausible suggestion that Pāśupata monasticism is a response to the *śramaṇa* ascetic orders. One should also mention the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought upon the nondualist Śaiva exegetical tradition. For a recent and insightful study, see Ratié (2010); see also Torella (1992).

¹²⁶ Davidson (2002, 217), citing Dyczkowski (1987, 102), also claims that the *Jayadrathayāmala* names the Buddhist *Guhyasamājatantra*. This is Dyczkowski's interpretation of the compound

argues, is a historically layered composition that, though assimilating early material, took its final form in Kashmir at some point prior to the period of Jayaratha (13th cent.).¹²⁷ That sections of the text reveal awareness of Tantric Buddhism is neither surprising nor unusual, and Davidson’s assertion (2002, 217) that this suggests “dependence on Buddhist tantras” should require demonstration of the nature of such dependence. Among the other Śaiva texts Davidson singles out is “the *Brahmayāmala*,” but what he refers to is in fact a late medieval east Indian composition by this title, rather than the early *vidyāpīṭha* scripture.¹²⁸ It would indeed appear that the late medieval *śākta* tradition of Śaivism, particularly in east India, appropriated much from Tantric Buddhism during the centuries of the latter’s decline. This is dramatized, for instance, in tales of the brahmanical sage Vāsiṣṭha’s sojourn to Mahācīna (“Greater China”) in order to learn worship of Tārā from the inebriated Buddha, and evidenced by the emergence of syncretic pantheons such as the “Ten Great Wisdom-mantra Goddesses” (*daśa mahāvidyāḥ*), who include Tārā (Bühnemann 1996; Sanderson 2009, 240–43).

Regrettably, Davidson goes so far as to suggest that Sanderson’s model of the *vidyāpīṭha* is informed by a “curious theology of scripture,” contending that “while it is seldom that a received body of texts reflects no influence at all, this seems to be Sanderson’s ultimate position on the *vidyāpīṭha* Śaiva scriptures” (2002, 386 [n. 105]). This assertion appears entirely unsustainable in light of Sanderson’s research into the complex genealogies of Śaiva scriptures, including those of the *vidyāpīṭha*. Concerning the *Tantrasadbhāva*, a Trika text of the *vidyāpīṭha*, he demonstrates that it has incorporated and expanded upon cosmological material from the *Svacchandatantra*—an extensive tract of text which the latter, in turn, drew in part from the *Guhyasūtra* of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, transforming this in the process within its own cultic system (Sanderson 2001, 23–32). He argues, moreover, that the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* itself—perhaps the earliest extant tantric Śaiva scripture—is heavily indebted to pre- and proto-tantric Śaiva

Guhyādi (“those [scriptures] beginning with the *Guhya*”). The verse Dyczkowski might have had in mind reads differently in the version quoted and discussed by Sanderson (2007, 233): *bhairavaṃ vajrayānaṃ ca guhyātantraṃ sagāruḍaṃ || bhūtatāntrāditantraṃ ca viśeṣataraṃ ucyate* I. Here *vajrayāna* is mentioned as a class of scripture in the *viśeṣatara* (“more esoteric/restricted”) category, but the compound following it, *guhyātantra*, appears not to be its adjective but to represent another, distinct class of scripture—*tantras* of the Leftward Stream (*vāmasrotas*) of Śaiva revelation, according to Sanderson (2007, 233).

¹²⁷ Sanderson sees within the *Jayadrathayāmala* multiple texts that might originally have been independent: the *Śiraścheda*, an early *Vāmatantra* (2001, 31–32 [n. 33]; 2002, 1–2); the *Mādhavakula*, a text cited by Abhinavagupta and incorporated into the fourth book (*ṣaṭka*) of the *Jayadrathayāmala* (2002, 1–2); and the *Yoginīsañcāra* of *Jayadrathayāmala*, book three (2009, 187). See also Sanderson (1990, 32 [n. 6]; 2002, 2). He has recently argued (2009, 203–12) in detail that a passage from the eighth chapter of the latter is “an expanded variant” of the Śaiva source for *Laghuśaṃvara* 8.3–28. Cf. Sanderson (2001, 41–43).

¹²⁸ Davidson refers to the *Rudrayāmala*, *Tārātantra*, and *Brahmayāmala* as texts transmitting the legend of Vāsiṣṭha learning “*cīnācāra*” (“the Chinese method”) from the Buddha (2002, 216, citing Bhattacharya 1925–28, vol. 2, cxi–ii [in fact cxli–ii]; 1930). In this matter Bhattacharya drew upon Sanskrit textual materials edited from Bengali manuscripts by Vedāntatīrtha (1913). This publication includes excerpts from the first two chapters of a certain “*Brahmayāmala*” preserved in a manuscript of the Varendra Research Society. I find no indication that the text is related to the *vidyāpīṭha* scripture of the same name.

sects of the Atimārga.¹²⁹ Particularly noteworthy is Sanderson’s more recent investigation (2005) into the formation of the *Netratantra*, a Śaiva text he argues was produced in the milieu of an eighth- or early ninth-century Kashmiri court. Note also his demonstration that the *Bṛhatkāḷottara*, a Kashmiri-provenance *tantra* of the Śaivasiddhānta, has incorporated material from a Vaiṣṇava scripture of the Pāñcarātra (Sanderson 2001, 38–41). In light of this obvious commitment to identifying agents, circumstances, and sources involved in the formation of Śaiva scriptural literature, it hardly seems defensible to attribute bias to Sanderson for failing to unearth examples of the indebtedness of early texts of the *vidyāpīṭha* to Buddhist *Yogīntantras*.

Nonetheless, the picture may well be more complex, for it is possible that the *Brahmayāmala* has itself drawn upon material redacted from an unknown Buddhist source—most probably not a *Yogīntantra*, but a more archaic text of the *Kriyātantra* variety. The principal chapter (*paṭala*) in question is *Brahmayāmala* chapter 65,¹³⁰ the “chapter on the practices for mastering dryads” (*yakṣiṇīsādhanaṭaḷaḥ*). This delineates a fourfold classification of *yakṣiṇīs* (*yakṣiṇīkulacatuṣṭaya*): those belonging to the clans (*kula*) of *yakṣas*, Brahmā (*brahmakula*), the lotus (*padma*), and *vajra*. The designations arouse immediate suspicion, for clans of the *padma* and *vajra* feature prominently in deity taxonomies of the *Kriyātantras*, and have no evident precedent or obvious rationale in Śaivism. While the Buddhist *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*, for instance, attests a variety of mantra-deity taxonomies, constant are the clans of the Buddhas/Tathāgatas, *padma* (associated with Avalokiteśvara), and *vajra* (associated with Vajrapāṇi); a *yakṣa* or *guhyaka* clan is attested as well.¹³¹ Another *Kriyātantra*, the *Amoghapāśakalparāja*, provides a fourfold clan system with deity clans of the *vajra*, *tathāgata*, gem (*maṇi*), and lotus (*padma*).¹³² It is possible that the *Brahmayāmala* draws upon a similar fourfold system, its Brahmā-clan *yakṣiṇī* perhaps supplanting what was, in the hypothetical Buddhist exemplar, a dryad of the clan of the Buddhas (*tathāgatakula*).

I am presently unaware of a classification of dryads comparable to the *Brahmayāmala*’s in a Buddhist source, though one does find the expressions *padmayakṣiṇī* and *vajrayakṣiṇī*.¹³³ The closest parallel for the *Brahmayāmala*’s fourfold classification is found instead in another Śaiva, *vidyāpīṭha* source: the *Jayadrathayāmala*.¹³⁴ Here the

¹²⁹ The windows afforded by the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* into early Śaiva systems and its own dependence upon these comprise the subject of Sanderson (2006b). See also Sanderson (2001, 29).

¹³⁰ While the chapter is the 65th in sequence, it is numbered 60 in its colophon (*iti mahābhairave yakṣiṇīsādhanaṭaḷaḥ ṣaṣṭhiṃ*); chapter 63 in sequence is likewise numbered 60 (*iti kaṅkālabhairavādhikāro nāma ṣaṣṭhiṃ ṭaḷaḥ*). A critical edition of chapter 65 is currently under preparation.

¹³¹ A *yakṣakula* is mentioned in 30.31ab, 38.22cd, and throughout chapter 37.

¹³² *Amoghapāśakalparāja*, p. 114 (folio 25a, line 7): *taṃ grhya ākāśenotpatati | ye ca vajrakulā tathāgatakulā maṇikulā padmakulā sarvve te mukhāgre ’vatiṣṭhanti |* (“After taking hold of that [empowered noose], he flies into the air; and all [deities] of the Vajra clan, the clan of the Buddhas, the Gem clan, and the Lotus clan stand before him”).

¹³³ *Padmayakṣiṇī* is the name of a *mudrā* in *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* 1605 (edition Horiuchi, vol. 2, p. 37); in 1638 (vol. 2, p. 49), it occurs as an epithet of Padmanarteśvarī. *Padmoccā* (Sanskrit *Padmotsā*, “lotus-born”) occurs as the name of a *yakṣiṇī* in *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* ch. 52. The expression *vajrayakṣiṇī* occurs in *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha* 1137 (edition Horiuchi, vol. 1, p. 465).

¹³⁴ The material on *yakṣiṇīs* occurs in *ṣaṭka* II, chapters 25 (vv. 457ff) and 26. I am grateful to Olga Serbaeva for allowing me to consult her electronic transcription.

yakṣiṇī clans are designated lotus (*padma*), red (*rakta*), white (*śveta*), and *vajra*. Though this too lacks precise Buddhist parallels, the occurrence of clans of the *padma* and *vajra* arouses similar suspicion. That such suspicion may indeed have strong grounds finds support in another Śaiva text—the *Uḍḍāmareśvaratantra*—in the case of its instructions for conjuring a divine maiden (*surasundarī*). Here the Buddhist pedigree of the passage in question is suggested by the fact that the practitioner is instructed to perform the rite in a temple of [the *bodhisattva*] Vajrapāṇi.¹³⁵

The *Brahmayāmala* shows signs of being a composite document, and chapter 65 belongs to a textual stratum which I have argued (Hatley 2007, 200–11) has incorporated materials from disparate sources. Chapters 51–104 have in some respects a miscellaneous character, containing a large number of short, often untitled chapters, many of which are devoted to deities marginal to the text’s primary mantra-deity systems. These include chapters that might originally have circulated as independent works: the *Tilakatantra* (ch. 62) and *Utpullakamata/tantra* (ch. 83), titles matching those of texts quoted by Abhinavagupta. Chapter 62, for its part, has incorporated material apparently from the *Uttarasūtra* of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* (Hatley 2007, 219–20). In most cases, the passages redacted into the *Brahmayāmala* appear to have undergone substantial modification, being reasonably well-integrated in terms of both content and style of expression (the latter being a rather dubious distinction). This is evident in the treatment of *yakṣiṇīs* too, where one encounters the idea that one purpose of attracting a *yakṣiṇī* is for generating the sexual fluids required as offerings for the deities—a distinctive dimension of the ritual system of the *Brahmayāmala*. By and large, however, the *Brahmayāmala*’s treatment of rites for controlling dryads is remarkably free of identifiably Śaiva content.

Chapters 63–66 of the *Brahmayāmala* appear closely related, forming a distinctive unit: the end of chapter 64 (vv. 162–164) intimates the subject of chapter 65, while the corpse ritual (*kaṅkālavrataśādhana*) of chapter 63 appears, inexplicably, to find closure in the final verses of chapter 66, tacked on at the end of a discussion of recipes for magical pills (*guḍikā*). The mantras delineated in chapters 64–65 also share a common structure, one not elsewhere attested in the *Brahmayāmala*.¹³⁶ If chapter 65’s rites for subjugating *yakṣiṇīs* draw on a Buddhist *Kriyātantra*, one might hence expect this to be true of material in the adjacent chapters as well. Chapter 66 may in fact suggest this

¹³⁵ *Uḍḍāmareśvaratantra* 9, p. 34:

atha surasundarīśādhanaṃ—oṃ hrīṃ āgaccha āgaccha surasundarī svāhā | vajrapāṇinigrhaṃ gatvā gugguladhūpaṃ dattvā trisaṃdhyāṃ pūjayet sahasraṃ trisaṃdhyāṃ māsaparyantaṃ japet tato māsābhīyāntare pratyakṣā bhavati antimadine raktacandanenārghyaṃ dadyāt | tata āgatya mātā bhaginī bhāryā vā bhavati tāsāṃ yāni karmāṇi tāny eva karoti | yadi mātā bhavati tadā siddhadravyāṇi rasāyanāni dadāti | yadi bhaginī bhavati tadā pūrvavad amūlyaṃ vastraṃ dadāti | yadi bhāryā bhavati tadā sarvaṃ aiśvaryaṃ paripūrayati |

¹³⁶ Note, for instance, the mantra of the *yakṣa*-clan dryad given in *Brahmayāmala* 65.6cd–8ab: OM YAKṢAKUMĀRIKE YAKṢAMUKHI EHY EHI RUDRO JÑĀPAYATE NIṢ SVĀHĀ. (Cf. the much simpler YAKṢAKUMĀRIKE SVĀHĀ of *Mañjuśrīyamūlakaḥ* ch. 52, *saptayakṣiṇyaḥ* section.) Compare this with the mantra for enslavement (*kaṅkālavrataśādhana*) in *Brahmayāmala* ch. 64, which I reconstruct as follows: OM NAMO MAHĀKĪṆKARĀYA KIRI KIRI KHAḌGAHASTĀYA VIḌĀLAVAKTRĀYA BHUJANGAHASTARAUDRĀYA [] EHY EHI RE RE RE RUDRO JÑĀPAYATE ṬAK[A?] SVĀHĀ. The formula RUDRO JÑĀPAYATI SVĀHĀ occurs with great frequency in the *Kriyākālaguṇottara*, one of the few surviving works of *Gāruḍatantra* variety. A similar expression occurs several times in the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakaḥ*, e.g. after 2.29: OM GARUḌAVĀHANA CAKRAPĀṆI CATURBHUJA HUM HUM SAMAYAM ANUSMARA BODHISATTVO JÑĀPAYATI SVĀHĀ.

possibility in its description of procedures for preparing magical pills. After readying the substances and wrapping them with pipal (*aśvattha*) leaves, one engages in mantra recitation until success (*siddhi*) is signalled by one of three “signs” (*cihna*): heat, smoke, or fire (*uṣman*, *dhūma*, *jvalana*), which betoken increasingly greater degrees of magical attainment. Isaacson (2007) has drawn attention to this passage, pointing out that its threefold typology of signs and levels of *siddhi* finds attestation in the *Niśvāsa-tattvasaṃhitā*, perhaps the earliest extant Śaiva *tantra*, but is otherwise rare in Śaiva sources; on the other hand, it pervades the Buddhist *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*.¹³⁷ While the mere presence of the tripartite typology in the *Brahmayāmala* might not intimate a Buddhist source, the presence of similarly suspicious material in the adjacent chapter lends greater weight to the possibility. In addition, the passage referring to the threefold *siddhi* contains another potential link to the *Kriyātantras*: the use of seven pipal leaves to wrap or cover the empowered substances has close and extensive parallels in the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*, where the procedure is remarkably similar to that outlined in the *Brahmayāmala*.¹³⁸ In this case too a similar practice is outlined in the *Niśvāsa-tattvasaṃhitā* (*Guhyasūtra*, especially 10.30), leaving open multiple historical scenarios.

Identifying the possible origins of the *Brahmayāmala*’s *yakṣinī* rites in an unknown Buddhist source complexifies the issue of Śaiva *vidyāpīṭha* influence upon the *Yoginītantras*. While Sanderson’s thesis remains compelling, the case of the *Brahmayāmala* highlights the complex redactional histories of *vidyāpīṭha* literature, and suggests that the textual “flow” may have been multidirectional in some cases. Finding potential intertextuality at the level of Buddhist *Kriyātantra* and early *vidyāpīṭha* points toward what is likely to be a history of interaction, shared ritual paradigms, and textual appropriation extending back to early strata of Śaiva and Buddhist tantric literatures. Indeed, the extant *Kriyātantra* offering the most useful parallels to *Brahmayāmala*, chapters 63–66—the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*—itself appears to have drawn extensively from Tantric Śaivism, as is especially evident in its wholesale incorporation of the cult of Tumburu and his Four Sisters (*caturbhaginī*), principal deities of the archaic Leftward Stream (*vāmasrotas*) of Śaiva scriptural revelation.¹³⁹ Severe losses of early Śaiva scripture—especially those of the *vāmasrotas*, as well as *Bhūta-* and *Gāruḍatantras*, which among Śaiva sources

¹³⁷ Note, for instance, the following passage from *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* ch. 55:

tām grhyātmano mukhe prakṣipyā sarvabhūtikabalim upāhṛtya dakṣiṇāmūrtau sthitaḥ haritāla-manahśilāñjanamañjiṣṭhārocānāmekatrayaṃ grhya aśvatthapatrāntaritam kṛtvā tāvaj japed yāvat trividhā siddhir iti ūṣmāyati dhūmāyati jvalati | ūṣmāyamāne pādapracārikāṃ pañcavarṣasahasrāyur bhavati | sarvasattvavaśṭikarāṇam | dhūmāyamāne ’ntardhānam daśavarṣasahasrāyur bhavati | jvalitena sarvavidyādhara bhavati |

¹³⁸ Note for instance the following passage from *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* ch. 29:

kapilāyāḥ samānavatsāyāḥ ghṛtaṃ grhya tāmraabhājanam saptabhir aśvatthapatraiḥ sthāpya tāvaj japed yāvat trividhā siddhir iti | taṃ pītvā śrutidharam antardhānākāśagamanam iti ||

My attention was drawn to this use of *aśvattha* leaves by Harunaga Isaacson at the Third International Workshop on Early Tantra in Hamburg, July 2010. Compare with a procedure for preparing magical pills (*guḍikā*) in *Brahmayāmala* 66.4–5:

*kṛtayatnaḥ sudhīrātmā patirair aśvatthasaṃbhavaiḥ |
tribhis tu rocanāliptair viśṛṭtai rugvivar[j]itaiḥ ||
saṃsthāpya guḍikāṃ tatra cchādaye[t] tu tataḥ punaḥ |
caturbhir upariṣṭā[t] tu rocanāmbuyutais tathā ||*

¹³⁹ As mentioned previously, this comes into evidence as early as the sixth century (Sanderson 2009, 50, 129–30).

perhaps exhibit the closest affinity to the Buddhist *Kriyātantras*—suggest that much of this history is likely to remain opaque.

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