

# QUINTESSENCE OF THE HIGHEST PURPOSE: A TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS OF ŚRĪ ABHINAVAGUPTA'S PARAMĀRTHASĀRA

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## ABSTRACT

Abhinavagupta (ca. 975-1025 C.E.) is the greatest synthesizer of Indian Tantric thought and practice. His works influenced and shaped theoretical paradigms in the field of Indian aesthetics, Tantra, literature, and philosophy. In this paper, the author examines the 105 verses of Abhinavagupta's Paramārthasāra (Quintessence of the Highest Purpose) in which Abhinavagupta articulates his philosophy of absolute monism, known popularly as Kashmir Śaivism. An earlier Paramārthasāra was composed by the South Indian legendary saint, Ādiśeṣa during the sixth century, some four hundred years before Abhinavagupta. Abhinavagupta's reinvention of this older text indicates the constant transaction of ideas between Kashmir and South India, Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite sects. The present shape of Indian thought emerged only as a result of the fusion and appropriation of different thought-streams. A translation of the Paramārthasāra along with an introduction into Abhinavagupta's Monistic Śaivism has been herewith attempted.

**Keywords:** ābhāsa, Anuttara, kuṇḍalinī-śakti, Paramaśiva, Para Samvit, saḥsārā, satguru, tattva, Trika, twilight language.

## Introduction

The writings of the famous Tāntric guru and philosopher, Abhinavagupta (ca. 975-1025 C.E.), represent some of the finest reflections of Indian religio-philosophical thought. Of his many extant works, the Paramārthasāra (Quintessence of the Highest Purpose) offers a succinct distillation of Abhinavagupta's literary and philosophical genius while also encapsulating the system of esoteric practices at the heart of his Tāntric system. The one-hundred-and-five verses of this composite text lay out the śaivite vision of the universe as the unfolding of a unitary consciousness, called verily Paramaśiva, Para Samvit, Caitanya, Cit Śakti, and Anuttara. Through a process of hierarchical manifestation, this Supreme Principle assumes the form of thirty-six evolutes (tattvas), and in this way, projects the universe of diverse objects upon its own screen. At the core of this universal projection, the absolute assumes the form of the limited human experiencer. Veiling itself with the three cloaks (trimala), Paramaśiva assumes self-limitation (saṅkocana). Yet, this contracted experience is only temporary. Through the awakening of coiled power (kuṇḍalinī-śakti) received in Tantric initiation (dīkṣā) the limited agent (kartā) internally ascends the ladder of tattvas and reclaims his status as the omnipotent Absolute.

In this essay, I have attempted to illuminate how the Paramārthasāra serves as a guide for this process of the awakening and internal ascension of kuṇḍalinī-śakti. Towards this end, I have rendered my own translation of the

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text and have written a brief introduction and commentary with the aim of framing for the reader the context in which Abhinavagupta penned his masterful text. In this way it is hoped that my essay serves as an introduction to both the text and the Trika-Kaula tradition in which it arises. By tracing the history of this tradition, and by analyzing its fusion of philosophy and practice in the context of tantric *sādhana*, I hope to provide an illuminating glimpse into one of the most gifted minds in the history of Indian civilization.

### Contextualizing The Text

As a guide for this voyage into the uncharted realm of Tantric practice, we will follow the map drawn by Abhinavagupta in his condensed text, the *Paramārthasāra* (PS). In 105 *ārya-ghaṭa* verses, this cryptic and highly codified text details the fourfold path (*upāya-catuṣṭayam*) to realization (*śivattva*).

The first English rendering of this text appeared in 1910 in an article entitled "The Paramarthasara of Abhinava-Gupta" by L. D. Barnett.<sup>1</sup> In the preface to this outdated yet useful translation, Barnett writes that his intention in publishing the PS is part of a further project in proving that the "living faith of the majority of modern Tamils is in almost every respect...the same doctrine that was taught in Kashmir about the beginning of the eleventh century by Abhinavagupta."<sup>2</sup> This argument for a connection between southern and northern Śaiva traditions is clearly strengthened by the fact that Abhinavagupta's work is based on an earlier southern text of the same name.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, this sixth century text, also known as the *Ādhāra-kārikā*, is authored by a South Indian Vaiṣṇavite Guru, *Ādiśeṣa*, known more popularly as Patañjali, the legendary incarnation of Viṣṇu's serpentine companion and the famous author of multiple important Sanskrit works. That Abhinavagupta based his 10<sup>th</sup>-century Śaiva text on this early work suggests not only that there was a shared corpus of texts between the North and South, but also a shared philosophical and practical basis among the numerous traditions then present in Kashmir.

As Silburn points out, this unifying basis was the *Sāṃkhya* -Yoga system. *Ādiśeṣa*'s PS is essentially a *Sāṃkhya* text overlaid with Vaiṣṇava theology. It borrows the classic *Sāṃkhya* dualism of contentless consciousness (*puruṣa*) and materiality (*prakṛti*), while reframing it in the context of *Viśiṣṭādvaita*.

### The Trika-kaula as a Tradition of experience (anubhavasampradāya)

While Abhinavagupta's PS is clearly an adaptation of this earlier text, we would be unwise to follow Chatterji's lead in labeling it as "only the *Ādhāra-kārikās* with a few alterations here and there." In fact, only a quarter of Abhinavagupta's 105 verses directly parallel the *Ādiśeṣa* text. The remaining three-quarters are an expression of Abhinavagupta's own Trika-Kaula system and have no direct counterpart in the older text. For this reason Abhinavagupta states that his purpose is not simply to transcribe the *Ādhāra-kārikās* verbatim, but to elucidate them in "accord with the tenets of Trika-Śaiva philosophy."<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, taking into account the frequent double intentionality of Tantric "twilight language" (*sandhā-bhāṣā*), this same verse can also be understood to mean that Abhinavagupta has written the PS "in accord with [his] yogic intuition of Śaiva doctrine." The crucial word in the text is *drṣṭi* (*√drś*, "to see"). Chatterji translates it as a synonym of *darśana*, or philosophical system,<sup>5</sup> while Barnett renders it as "mystic vision."<sup>6</sup> Certainly, these are not mutually exclusive renderings, but rather equally valid and important translations of *drṣṭi*.<sup>7</sup> Taken together, they reveal an essential feature of Indian philosophy: namely, its direct relation to direct experience (*anubhava*).<sup>8</sup> In other words, in the context of Indian philosophizing, "spiritual vision" is often the logical precursor to a "philosophical system"; consequently, one's own direct experience (*anubhava*) is a necessary and logical prerequisite to the writing of a philosophical treatise. Hence, we are to interpret Abhinavagupta's use of the word "*drṣṭi*" as a conscious attempt to appropriate its polyvalency. In other words, his intention is to show that his capacity to elucidate the principles of Śaiva philosophy (*darśana*) resides precisely in his own yogic perception (*drṣṭi*) attained through *sādhana*.

This interpretation would clearly be in line with Abhinavagupta's own epistemological views that direct experience (*anubhava*) forms the apex of the three-fold means of correct knowledge (*pramāṇa*), whose base is scripture (*āgama*) and the word of the guru (*yukti*).<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Abhinavagupta considers Tantra to be a "tradition based on experience" (*anubhavasampradāya*).<sup>10</sup> Thus, the significance of the third verse of the PS is not only that it establishes the text's relation to an older scripture, but, more importantly, the author's own

attainment.<sup>11</sup> For this reason, Abhinavagupta's Trika-Kaula deserves to be viewed not solely as fuel for the fires of philosophical abstraction (*tarkajvāla*), but rather as a practical system "providing a viable means for the attainment of *mokṣa*."<sup>12</sup>

### Abhinavagupta as *adhikārin*

In the final chapters of his *Tantrāloka*, Abhinavagupta narrates the special circumstances of his birth. Desiring to parent a *siddha*, or perfected being, Abhinavagupta's parents—Narasimhagupta and *Vimalā*—performed an esoteric ritual. Consequently, when Abhinavagupta entered the world nine months later he was viewed not as an ordinary child, but as a *yoginībhū*, a special child conceived from the union of a *siddha* and a *yoginī* during the course of Tantric ritual. Due to the extraordinary circumstances of his birth and the rich devotional environs of his childhood, Abhinavagupta readily acquired mastery of a wide array of subjects ranging from Buddhist doctrine to Śaiva Tantra, to grammar and poetry. However, according to Abhinavagupta, the apex and culmination of learning came through his "studies" with the Kaula guru, Śambhunāth. It was from this teacher that Abhinavagupta received initiation into the esoteric Kula lineage. In this initiation he received the descent of power (*śaktipāta*) which produced a condition of embodied liberation (*jīvan-mukta*).<sup>13</sup>

Regardless of the authenticity of this autobiographical account, the fact that Abhinavagupta is compelled to narrate it in his magnum opus, the *TĀ*, suggests the prominent status of Tantric practice in his philosophical thought. As if compelled to justify his qualification for composing the *TĀ*, an authoritative synthesis of Tantric doctrine and practice, Abhinavagupta asserts that his authority lay in the very fact that he is quite simply a product of Tantra. Tantra is not something he learned solely from books, but is a practice that radically conditioned his birth and, later, produced his final enlightenment. In other words, in no uncertain terms Abhinavagupta is stating, "This doctrine is not simply something I have thought about; rather, it is a reality I have become." Logically, then, his emphasis is not on providing intellectual stimulation, but on transmitting his own experience and knowledge (*jñāna*). For this reason, he states clearly that his duty as a teacher is to awaken his disciples.<sup>14</sup>

Ultimately, as Müller-Ortega, points out, Abhinavagupta's teachings are to be seen as a method of realization leading to a state in which one "becomes something that moves in the Heart (*hṛdayaṅgamībhūta*)".<sup>15</sup> This state of inner absorption is something that, as Abhinavagupta himself points out, transcends the limits of language and for this reason the scholar attempting an exegesis of the Trika-Kaula, is bound to confront an intriguing hermeneutical challenge. Addressing this matter Müller-Ortega asks rhetorically:

Can we completely hope to understand Abhinavagupta?...[In attempting do so] [W]e immediately encounter an important and central cross-cultural perplexity. We have been using the term understand in its commonly accepted denotation: to have a thorough technical acquaintance with something. The term may be used in a stronger sense: Abhinavagupta distinguishes between an understanding that is purely intellectual, and one gained from experiential knowledge. There is an important sense in which to understand the Heart actually requires replicating the journey of return that is the tantric *sādhana*: we must play Śiva's game to its most serious and hilarious conclusion, which is the unmasking of Śiva within ourselves.<sup>16</sup>

As Müller-Ortega himself points, this type of radical understanding challenges the traditional paradigms of western scholarship. Still, the scholar of Tantra ought not ignore the fact that much of Tantric thought stems from and is geared towards contemplative experiences. In other words, much of Tantric thought is properly classified as pertaining to the realms of spiritual practice and its concomitant experiences. Does this mean that we should accept Frits Staal's bold assertion that to understand practice-based ritual traditions the scholar himself must learn the logic of its practice?<sup>17</sup> Abhinavagupta's unequivocal answer would be "yes".

However, Abhinavagupta's views would perhaps not fare well in the post-enlightenment environs of 21<sup>st</sup>-century academia. The deeply entrenched demand for scholarly distance and objectivity perhaps does not allow for the kind of full-bodied engagement that Abhinavagupta demanded of his own students. However, the equally important demand for hermeneutical accuracy necessitates a proper contextualizing of Abhinavagupta's system. In other words, although as scholars we may feel duty-bound not to practice *sādhana*, we are obligated nonetheless to be sensitive to the practice-based nuances of Abhinavagupta's densely coded writings.

This is not to say that pure philosophical inquiry has no place in the PS for such a statement would be far from the truth. Abhinavagupta's stature in Indian history is primarily due to his great gift for verbal expression. In a way unparalleled by any one prior to him, he was able to formalize the numerous esoteric streams of Tantra into a single, unified river of thought and practice. On this grand achievement Kamalakar Mishra writes:

Abhinavagupta presents the otherwise difficult philosophy of Tantra in a cogent and coherent way that makes the Tantric position logically and rationally acceptable. What is complex in Tantra becomes simple in his treatment; what is esoteric and mystical becomes rationally understandable.<sup>18</sup>

Abhinavagupta's cogent systematization stems from his own initiation and training in the various lineages and philosophical schools (*sampradāya*) of his time. In other words, Abhinavagupta's philosophy is not the product of a single line of thought; rather, it is a rich synthesis of the multiple indoctrinations he pursued during the years of his own *sādhana*. In his person, the plethora of Tantric schools were united through the intensity of his own critical insight and fused into a single system in which the practices and philosophical views of the various schools were grouped as a hierarchy of ascending powers culminating with the esoteric branch of Āgamic Tantrism known now as Trika-Kaula, "The Family of the Triad".<sup>19</sup> And it was this ability to unify the plurality of Śaivism into a single doctrinal system that makes Abhinavagupta's work so intriguing. Before his time, there was no single tradition. Rather, as Alper has pointed out, there were only "a series of overlapping preceptorial lines, and a plenitude of spiritual techniques available to each teacher."<sup>20</sup> Hence, it was through Abhinavagupta's teachings that these numerous techniques and lineages were subsumed within a larger theoretical framework that embraced them all. And it is this carefully crafted framework that is now commonly referred to as Kashmir Śaivism.<sup>21</sup> Although, historically speaking, there never was a Kashmir Śaivism, the fact that scholars now look at the traditions of Kashmir as a unified whole is due largely to Abhinavagupta (perhaps, then, the appropriate term would be "Abhinavagupta-ism"). For this reason no text better captures Abhinavagupta's gift-for-synthesis than the *Paramārthasāra*. A careful study of this brief yet dense text enables us to unpack the many levels of teachings and techniques he received and thereby appreciate the way in which he fuses them into a single Tantric "river".<sup>22</sup>

This introduction to the PS is intended to guide the reader through the multiple initiatory streams that Abhinavagupta himself journeyed in the course of his *sādhana*. In this way we can come to see that these streams-of-revealed-thought-and-practice were viewed by Abhinavagupta as ultimately united in a larger river-of-divine-consciousness that itself flows from and returns ever again into the infinite sea of radical freedom. The key to successfully charting this voyage lies in identifying the PS as a map for this most majestic of journeys. This text's purpose, as Abhinavagupta clearly states, is to guide the aspirant through the ascending levels of consciousness until there is the realization of one's identity with the Highest Purpose (*paramārtha*). It is along this route to the final destination that Tantric aspirant, or *sādhaka*, ontologically encounters the various philosophical systems as inner states of consciousness and being. In other words, in the initial stages of *sādhana*, when one's consciousness is still mired by dualistic thought patterns (*dvaitavikalpa*), the teachings of the dualistic scriptures (*dvaitāgama*) are necessary. However, as one advances in *sādhana*, one's internal ascension is paralleled externally by initiation (*dīkṣā*) into scriptural traditions which claim to grant states of non-dual awareness. Hence, in the external world there is a plurality of teachings and spiritual techniques. Yet, in the inner life of the *sādhaka* these distinctions are fused in a process of internal bodily ascension.

To understand the mechanisms of this ascension we must first come to grips with the central philosophical systems embedded in the PS and the principle tenets that undergird Abhinavagupta's thought. Constructing these tenets as our boat, we will then be ready to explore the vast, mysterious waters of *sādhana* that Abhinavagupta charts in the latter third of his treatise on the Quintessence of the Highest Purpose.

## The Tantric Streams

Abhinavagupta's Tantric Trika-Kaula 'river-system' is a careful re-channeling of four scriptural streams. One stream is the ancient Āgamic Śaivism, itself fed by three smaller tributaries based, respectively, on dualism (*dvaita*), dual-cum-non-dualism (*dvaitādvaita*), and non-dualism (*advaita*). A second stream is the *Pratyabhijñā* which receives its currents from both Āgamic waters and from the philosophical tributaries of *Vedānta*. The third stream, the *Spanda*, is similar to the *Pratyabhijñā*, in that while its source is the Āgamas it then branches off on a different

course before being redirected by Abhinavagupta. The fourth stream appears to be fed not only by the Āgamas, but from various sources ranging from Tamil Nādu in the South to Nepal in the North. This poly-sourced stream-of-revelation is the Kaula tradition with its emphasis on radical antinomian practices (called “left-handed”, *vāmācāra*) as a means to immediate salvation. Of the many Kaula streams, there are two that flowed directly into Abhinavagupta’s system: the goddess-centered cults of the Krama and the Trika. Apparently, Abhinavagupta experienced the Kaula waters as the most satisfying, for he claimed the Kaula to be the pinnacle of all traditions. And of the many streams that fed the Kaula system, he saw Trika as the greatest. In his words, Trika was to the Kaula as fragrance to a rose—its finest essence.<sup>23</sup> Hence, Abhinavagupta proclaimed his philosophy to be Trika-Kaulism. As we have seen, this Trika-Kaula river results from the confluence not just of the Trika and Kaula, but from the Āgama, Pratyabhijñā, and Spanda streams as well.

### Commencing The Journey into The highest purpose

The opening verse of the PS crystallizes the Trika śaivas’ paradoxical conception of the Śiva, the Trika-Kaula Absolute. Here, Abhinavagupta honors Śiva as the “one without beginning” who “dwells manifoldly in secret places” as “the receptacle of all.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, for the Kaśmirī Tāntrikas, the Absolute is simultaneously one and many. Endowed with unlimited power (*śakti*), the Supreme Principle can manifest itself infinitely without losing its essential unity. For this reason, the universe, though appearing divided, is really only the flashing forth (*ābhāsa*) of the One. Abhinavagupta writes (PS 4-5):

This sphere ( *aṇḍa*, cosmic egg) ...is brought forth by the Lord through the bestowal of his innate power and might. This universe with its succession of manifold bodies, organs and worlds is within these spheres; and therein is the enjoyer, the embodied Śiva who assumes the condition of creatures.

In other words Śiva contains within Himself the ability to manifest distinctions within unity (*bhedābheda*). Yet, just as a crystal remains untainted by the various hues it adopts, so the Absolute remains one despite its appearance in the form of “gods, humans, animals, and plant-life” (PS 6).

The process of universal manifestation is elaborately explained by the Trika system through the doctrine of the thirty-six evolute or *tattvas*. The supreme reality—called *Paramaśiva*, *Para Samvit*, *Caitanya*—is pure consciousness beyond the sphere of manifestation. In reference to its transcendent-ness Abhinavagupta refers to the Absolute as the “thirty-seventh *tattva*” in the TĀ.<sup>25</sup> Yet, this transcendent principle is also the ocean of consciousness out of which creation arises. For unlike the Vedāntin conception of Brahman as static consciousness, the Trika Śaiva absolute embodies both consciousness (*caitanya*) and dynamism or *spanda-śakti*. Acting as an inner pulse, the *spanda-śakti* unfolds the universe of *tattvas* within the body of the absolute (PS 10). Hence, in the Trika schema, the transcendent contains the manifest. And even during the time of cosmic manifestation, the supreme principle (*para-tattva*) remains “free of delusion, pure, peaceful and beyond creation and dissolution” (PS 11).

This capacity for internal self-manifestation is explained through a dialectic of illumination and reflection (*prakāśa/vimarśa*). Indeed, the Absolute is characterized as being endowed with these two principles (*prakāśa-vimarśa-śakti*). The Absolute embodies not only an illuminating consciousness, but also a reflective capacity for self-knowledge that plays out on all levels of manifestation. At the cosmogonic level, *prakāśa* is the first *tattva*, the *śivatattva*, and *vimarśa* is the second, the *śaktitattva*. These two, *śiva* and *śakti*, are understood to be the Lord (*īśvara*) and his consort, *devī*. In Tantric cosmogonic schemes the union of Śiva and Śakti gives rise to creation; and in a philosophical context the union of these two principles is the fusing of a knowing agent (*pramātr*) with the means of knowing (*pramāṇa*) which necessitates the need for a source of objective knowledge (*prameya*). Hence, in cosmogonic terms the *prameya* is the very universe itself, for the product of the union of *śiva* and *śakti*, *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, *pramātr* and *pramāṇa*, is the additional thirty-four *tattvas* that form the basis of objective manifestation.

The key to understanding Trika-Kaula discourse is to realize that the *prakāśa-vimarśa* dialectic plays out at all levels of reality. Another way to say this is that each of the lower *tattvas* incorporates within itself those *tattvas* that precede it. Hence, even the lowest *tattvas*, the elemental substances (*pañca-mahābhūta*), contain within themselves the essence of the *tattvas* from even the most subtle stages of creation. Hence, the principle of illumination (*prakāśa*) and self-reflection (*vimarśa*) are present at all levels of creation. In other words, all

objects (prameyas) are constituted of prakāśa and vimarśa and for this reason Abhinavagupta claims that the knower, the means of knowing, and the object known comprise a triune Self. It is in this spirit that the Tantras state that there is nothing that is not Śiva.<sup>26</sup> Hence, the world itself, when properly understood becomes a basis for mystical realization. Indeed, the higher states of sādhanā are said to consist in the awareness that the world itself is composed of the bliss experienced in yogic samādhi.<sup>27</sup> There is, in other words, no need to meditate in caves: the highest realization can just as easily be apprehended while doing such mundane things as sipping chai (Indian tea).

Abhinavagupta gives a potent metaphor for this extrovertive samādhi in his comparison of the relationship of the universe to the absolute with that of reflected images to a mirror:

Just as the images of a town, a village, and other objects reflected in a mirror appear inseparable from the mirror yet appear distinct both from one another and from the mirror, in the same way, arising from the absolute consciousness of Para Bhairava, this universe, though inherently void of divisions, nevertheless appears internally apportioned and distinct [from Para Bhairava] (PS 12-13).

In this multilayered metaphor there are three important elements: the objects (nagaragrāmādi), the reflections, and the mirror itself (darpaṇa). The relationship between them reveals both the fundamental principles of prakāśa and vimarśa and the key to understanding śaiva yoga. The mirror itself is Śiva, or pure illumination (prakāśa). Possessing within itself the capacity for revelation (vimarśa), the mirror contains a variety of reflected images. In terms of epistemology, these images are the prameya. The fact of their reflection, which is the means of their being perceived—hence known—, is the pramāṇa, and the mirror is the metaphorical knower (pramātr).

What is the relationship between the three? The answer to this question is more nuanced than it first appears. On a surface level, the reflected images appear distinct both from one another and from the mirror. In other words, according to conventional reality, one would consider the knower, the known, and means of knowing all distinct. However, as Abhinavagupta states, conventional understanding has no basis at the level of the Supreme Truth (PS 27). For this reason, the true relation of the three is stated to be one of inseparability (avibhāgin). Developing this theme of inseparability, Abhinavagupta goes on to equate the mirror with the absolute consciousness of highest Bhairava (vimalatama-parama-bhairava-bodham) who, both in terms of the metaphor and Trika cosmology, is the supreme knower (pramātr).

Now, what is the relationship between Bhairava and the universe? Abhinavagupta answers that despite the appearance of being mutually apportioned and distinct (vibhaktamābhāti), the relationship of Bhairava (pramātr) to the universe (prameya) and its reflection (pramāṇa)—like that of the mirror to its objects—is one void of distinctions (vibhāgaśūnyam). In other words, from the highest perspective, the trinity of epistemological and cosmological principles is a unity. Like the various forms of candy, which are but modifications of syrup, these three are but modifications of the Supreme Self (PS 26).

## **Bondage And Embodiment**

The purpose (prayojana) for writing the PS is clearly established by Abhinavagupta in the third verse where he explains that his treatise (śāstra) is written in response to the pleas of a disciple caught in the “wheel of suffering that begins with dwelling in the womb and ends with death.” Living in a universe that is inherently devoid of distinctions, being the self-manifestation of omnipotent consciousness, how then can there be an occasion for bondage? Abhinavagupta answers that this condition paradoxically arises as the result of the absolute's power of freedom (svātantrya-śakti). In other words, it is precisely because Paramaśiva is unbounded that He/She/It can assume the condition of bondage.

In terms of cosmic emanation, the cause of bondage arises at the level of the sixth tattva (māyā-tattva). At this level, Consciousness is said to assume the capacity of self-limitation (saṅkocana) which makes possible the appearance of duality and multiplicity. The māyā-tattva is itself composed of five sheaths (kañcukas) which limit the functioning of the five powers (pañca-śakti) of the Pure Order (śuddhādhvan) (PS 16). What results is the formation of the ‘three taints’ (trimala) which encase consciousness and transform it into a limited soul (PS 24).

This limited soul is the twelfth principle, the *puruṣa-tattva*. In verse sixteen Abhinavagupta refers to the *puruṣa* as a “fettered beast” who, due to the influence of *māyā*, has contracted from the condition of pure consciousness (*bodham*) to that of a tainted soul (*malinas*). At this level of the cosmic hierarchy, the Supreme Self, “due to its associations with the darkness of ignorance comes to perceive Itself as a wondrous diversity of subjects and objects.” In other words, at the level of the *puruṣa-tattva*, there is a perceived split between self and other.

And at this stage there unfolds the twenty-four material categories of the classical *Sāmkhya* schema, beginning with *prakṛti* and progressing through the threefold psychic instrument (*antahkāraṇa*)—intellect (*buddhi*), ego (*ahaṃkāra*), and mind (*manas*)—, the organs of knowledge (*buddhīndriya*)—the ear (*śrotra*), the skin (*tvak*) the eye (*caṅśus*), the tongue (*rasana*), and the nose (*ghrāna*)—, the organs of action (*karmendriya*)—speech (*vāk*), hands (*pāni*), feet (*pāda*), anus (*payu*), generative organ (*upastha*)—, the five subtle elements (*tanmātra*)—sound (*śabda*), touch (*sparśa*), color (*mahas*), taste (*rasa*) and smell (*gandha*)—, and, lastly, the physical sphere (*sthūla-vaṣayas*) constituted by the five material elements (*pañca-mahābhūtas*)—sky (*nabhas*), wind (*pavanas*), fire (*tejas*), water (*salila*) and earth (*ṛthvi*) (PS 19-22).

The result of this process is that consciousness takes the form of a body (*dehabhāva*) (PS 23). In other words, according to the Trika, the final result of cosmic manifestation is embodiment. Hence, in this system, the body is both the product of creation and the receptacle of manifestation itself. Hence, the body contains within itself each of the thirty-six *tattvas*, and for this reason reflects the structure of the universe.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, the *tattva* schema is to be understood simultaneously as a map of the universe and of the human being--the two, in Tantric circles, being inseparable.<sup>29</sup>

As we will see below in my translation of Abhinavagupta's *Paramārthasāra*, in the practices of Trika *sādhana* the homologies between the universe and the body play out on several levels. According to Abhinavagupta's *Śaivism*, the body itself is not the cause of bondage. It is the final product of *Paramaśiva*'s expansive power (*unmeṣa-śakti*). The true source of bondage is the *malas* which encase the finite soul (*puruṣa*, *anu*) in ignorance (*avidyā*) and create the experience of cyclical existence or *saṃsāra*. In such a condition, the limited soul, “like a spider with its web, spins for itself a variegated pattern by means of association with the body, breath, perception, thought, knowledge and the expanse of ether” (PS 32). In other words, while governed by the *malas*, the *tattvas* are an apparent source of bondage:

When the multitude of *tattvas* are unagitated the Lord likewise appears still; likewise is He excited when they are so and bewildered when there is the state of bewilderment. However, in actuality, from the [perspective of the] Highest Truth He is not these conditions (PS 38).

The last line of the above verse is the key to understanding the Trika conception of bondage. It suggests, that ultimately, the entire notion of limitation is a cosmic joke, or play (*līla*). In the final analysis, *Śiva* is never bound, and in the moment of this re-cognition (*pratyabhijñā*), the *sādhaka* is awakened. At that point, the body becomes the temple of god (*devagrha*) and delusion is shattered. Then, there is the condition of embodied liberation (*jīvan-mukta*). Hence, for the Trika *śaivite*, death is not a prerequisite for final release (*videha-mukta*).<sup>30</sup> Knowledge alone is necessary, for in the moment of awakening there is the understanding that *Śiva* alone unfolds the drama of bondage and release:

He (the *sādhaka*) would free his own Self from bondage by means of the splendor of the greatness of self-knowledge. Thus, the Supreme *Śiva* unfolds the drama consisting of the wonders of bondage and liberation. (PS 33).

Paradoxically, this moment of re-cognition, this condition of knowing, often requires ritual practices (*karman*) to produce a condition of purification in which pure knowledge can arise. Consequently, the Trika *sādhana* system enjoins the combining of knowledge and action (*jñāna-karma-samuccaya-vāda*) as a means to freedom. In defense of this position, the Trika defines the absolute as constituted of a triadic power: will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and action (*kriyā*).

## The dimensions of *sādhana*

Trika theology describes this world as the self-manifestation of an omnipotent and dynamic consciousness. Logically, then, as we have seen, bondage is an impossibility, an illusion or mirage. Yet, there is the experience of suffering and consequently the need for a method (*upāya*) which brings about the dissolving of the mirage of ignorance. Herein, enters the essential features of Tantra—an elaborate technology of self-release based on a science of the body (*dehavidyā*). Within this system, abstract philosophical inquiry as found in the initial sections of the PS, forms part of the means to liberating knowledge (*jñāna*).<sup>31</sup> In other words, descriptions of the *tattvas*, the nature of the cosmogonic process, etc., serve not only to satisfy intellectual curiosities, but to finally produce an existential awakening and release. And this condition, the Tantras declare, requires “active ritual participation leading the aspirant to experiential knowledge (*bhāvanajñāna*).”<sup>32</sup>

Hence, for the initiated *sādhaka*, the PS is to be understood not as representing a philosophical stance to be agreed or disagreed with, but as a guideline for acquiring experiential knowledge that was disseminated within guarded circles of initiation and secrecy. Initiation was understood to be the *sine qua non* of proper textual exegesis, since it was only through this consecration that the *malas* could be removed. Through *dīkṣā* came the descent of power (*śaktipāta*) which made possible the revelation of the Self. “As the face is revealed in a spotless mirror,” writes Abhinavagupta, “so This (Self) is revealed as light in the mind purified by *śaktipāta* (PS 9).”

This initiatory transmission was believed to awaken the aspirant’s own dormant power, the *kuṇḍalinī-śakti*, which, when awakened arose through the central current (*suṣumnā-nādi*), purifying the latent tendencies (*samskāras*) and uniting the *sādhaka*’s limited identity with that of cosmic identity situated at the crown of the head in the *sahāsrāra*. This path of internal ascension was called the upward yoga (*udmukhyayoga*) and was considered the distinctive feature of the Kaula school. In mythological terms, the upward path was the upward face of Śiva’s five-faced icon (*pañca-mukha-līṅga*). This path removed all ignorance and established the *sādhaka* in the highest state of empowerment through the shredding of the *malas*:

As the chaff surrounding the rice grain seems inseparable and yet is removed, so this (=the trimala) is shed by the upward yoga of the path of Śaivism (PS 18).

For one to enter the path of upward yoga, the essential prerequisite was the meeting with a qualified master (*satguru*). Contact with the teacher was understood to produce an alchemical process of transformation that liberated the disciple from all impurities (PS 17). Under rare circumstances, the empowerment received from the guru was so intense (*atītivra-śaktipāta*) it would produce instant enlightenment and the *sādhaka* would become “Śiva Himself” (PS 96). More often, however, liberation occurred gradually (*karma-mukti*) through “ascending the steps of the ladder [of *tattvas*]” (PS 97).

For a fuller understanding of this process of ascension one can benefit by turning to other texts, both primary and secondary. Quality work in the field of Kashmir Śaivism is now quite established, thanks particularly to scholars like Alexis Sanderson and his kula in the UK, the many American scholars working in the field (Lawrence, White, Skora, Muller-Ortega) as well as a host of Indian *paṇḍitas*, including Timalina, Dyckowski, Mishra and others. In particular, one ought to read the *Tantrālokā* and *Tantrasāra* in which Abhinavagupta maps out the path to liberation as a fourfold means (*upāyacatuśyayam*) in which advanced ritual techniques are understood to correspond to the *sādhaka*’s own internal state of cognitive development.

Towards this end one can also reflect on the following translation of the *Parmārthasāra*, in which I have attempted to capture both the literal power and poetic sweetness of Abhinavagupta’s reflections on the quintessence (*sāra*) of the highest (*parama*) purpose (*artha*). While this brief text does not provide the detail of other works by Abhinavagupta, it nonetheless distills the essence of his spiritual brilliance. Practiced in its own context, the *Parmārthasāra* is chanted as litany to a ritualized and meditative visualization practice through which the initiate seeks to re-cognize her own identity as the highest purpose (for the objectivized “goal” is inevitably one’s own subjective “self” in Trika-Kaulism). In this state of refined self-as-awareness, purpose (*artha*), aim (*artha*) and truth (*artha*) are all grounded in that Supreme Being who is one’s own self-of-self. With this awareness firmly established, the *sādhaka* realizes that, indeed, “I alone am the Deity I worship” (*śivo’ham*).



**The Essence of the Supreme Truth**  
**Paramārthasāra**  
by  
**Abhinavagupta**

Om, om. Salutations to Śiva, the ever-favorable, inherently benevolent, Supreme Auspiciousness

**om om namah śivāya, sadāśivāya, saśivāya paramaśivāya//**

1. To you, the supreme standing beyond the abyss (=Māyā), the one without beginning, dwelling manifoldly in secret places (= 'the heart'), the receptacle of all, abiding in all that moves and moves not—to you, Śambhu, I come seeking refuge.

**param parasthaṃ gahanād anādim ekaṃ niviṣṭhaṃ bahudhā guhāsu /**

**sarvālayaṃ sarvacarācarasthaṃ tvām eva śambhuṃ śaraṇam prapadye //1**

2. A disciple, wandering dazed in the wheel of suffering which begins with dwelling in the womb and ends with death, beseeched the lord, the substratum, regarding liberation.

**garbhādhivāsapūrvakamaraṇāntaduḥkhacakra-vibhrāntaḥ /**

**ādhāraṃ bhagavantaṃ śiṣyaḥ papraccha paramārtham //2**

3. The Guru answered him with the Verses on the Foundation, the essence of which Abhinavagupta here narrates in accord with [his] yogic intuition of Śaiva doctrine.

**ādhārakārikābhiḥ taṃ gurur abhibhāṣate sma tatsāraṃ /**

**kathayatya abhinavaguptaḥ śivaśāsanadṛṣṭiyogena //3**

4. This sphere, which is distributed in a quaternary as Śakti, Māyā, Prakṛti, and Pṛthvī, is brought forth by the Lord through the bestowal of his innate power and might.

**nijaśaktivaibhavabharād aṇḍacatuṣṭayam idaṃ vibhāgena /**

**Śaktirmāyā prakṛtiḥ pṛthvī ceti prabhāvitaṃ prabhuṇā //4**

5. This universe with its succession of manifold bodies, organs and worlds is within these spheres; and therein is the enjoyer, the embodied Śiva who assumes the condition of animals.

**Tatrāntar viśvam idaṃ vicitratanukaraṇabhuvanasaṃtānam /**

**bhoktā ca tatra dehī śiva eva gṛhītapaśubhāvaḥ //5**

6. As the clear crystal assumes a multi-colored form, so the Lord assumes the form of gods, men, animals and plant-life.

**nānāvidhavarṇānām rūpam dhatte yathāmalaḥ sphaṭhikaḥ /**

**suramānuṣapaśupādaparūpatvaṃ tadvad iśo' pi //6**

7. As the orb of the moon [appears] to move in disturbed water, and likewise [appears] motionless in still water, so this Self, the great Lord [is reflected] in the unceasing flow of bodies, organs and worlds.

**gacchati gacchati jala iva himakarabimbaṃ sthite sthitiṃ yāti /**

**tanukaraṇabhuvanavarge tathāyamātmā maheśānaḥ //7**

8. Just as Rāhu, though invisible, becomes manifest when standing in the orb of the moon, so this all-pervasive [hence, invisible] Self [is revealed] in the mirror of intelligence through engagement in the sense-spheres.

**rāhur adṛśyo' pi yathā śaśibimbasthaḥ prakāśate tadvat /  
sarvagato' pyayam ātmā viṣayāśrayaṇena dhīmakure //8**

9. As the face is revealed in a spotless mirror so This (Self) is revealed as light in the mind (lit., 'Intelligent Principle') purified by śaktipāta.

**ādarśe malarahite yadvad vadana m vibhāti tadvad ayam /  
śivaśaktipātavimale dhītattve bhāti bhārūpaḥ //9**

10-11. The universe consisting of the thirty-six tattvas shines in that Supreme Principle which is the form of light, completely full, reposed in its own self, of great bliss, perfect by means of will, consciousness and instrumentality, replete with endless power, free of delusion, pure, peaceful and free from creation and dissolution.

**bhārūpaṃ paripūrṇaṃ svātmani viśrāntito mahānandam /  
icchāsaṃvitkaraṇair nirbharitam anantaśaktipariūrṇam //10  
sarvavikalpavihīnam śuddhaṃ śāntaṃ layodayavīhīnam /  
yat paratattvaṃ tasmin vibhāti śaṭṭhriṃśadātma jagat // 11**

12-13. Just as the images of a town, a village, and other objects reflected in a mirror are inseparable from it and yet appear distinct both from one other and from the mirror, in the same way, arising from the absolute consciousness of Para Bhairava, this universe, though inherently void of divisions, nevertheless appears internally apportioned and distinct [from Para Bhairava].

**darpaṇabimbe yadvan nagaragrāmādi citram avibhāgi / bhāti  
vibhāgenaiva ca parasparaṃ darpaṇād api ca // 12  
vimalatamaparamabhairavabodhāt tadvad vibhāgaśūnyamapi /  
anyonyaṃ ca tato' pi ca vibhaktamābhāti jagat etat // 13**

14. By means of the distinct nature of the five powers, He (Bhairava) reveals the condition of śiva, śakti, and Sadāśiva as well as the principle tattva composed of lordship and knowledge.

**śivaśaktisadāśivatām īśvaravidyāmayiṃ ca tattvadaśām /  
śaktinām pañcānām vibhaktabhāvena bhāsayati // 14**

15. This veil of śiva is the supreme spontaneity, capable of all accomplishments; it is Māyā, the divine power of the Great Lord.

**paramaṃ yat svātantryaṃ durghaṭhasaṃpādanaṃ maheśya /  
devī māyāśaktiḥ svātmāvaraṇaṃ śivasyaitat // 15**

16. Consciousness, from the influence of possession by Māyā, becomes the tainted soul, the fettered beast. This union is from the powers of time, restriction, and determination under the influence of passion and ignorance.

**māyāparigrahavaśād bodho malinaḥ pumān paśur bhavati /  
kālakalāniyatibalād rāgāvidyāvaśena saṃbaddhaḥ // 16**

17. Now (kāla) this (niyati) is something (kalā) I know (vidyā) completely (rāga): this hexad of cloaks which includes Māyā is known as the interior organ of the finite soul.

**adhunaiva kiñcid evedam eva sarvātmanaiva jānāmi /**

**māyāsahitaṃ kañcukaṣaṭhkam aṅor antaraṅgam idam uktam // 17**

18. As the chaff surrounding the rice grain seems inseparable and yet is removed, so this (kañcuka) is shed by the upward yoga (=the Kaula Mārga) of Śiva's Path.

**kambukam iva taṇḍulakaṇaviniviṣṭhaṃ bhinnam apy abhidā /**

**bhajate tat tu viśuddhiṃ śivamārgaunmukhyayogena // 18**

19. Nature, constituted by pleasure, pain and delusion, is the inner organ consisting of resolution, will and conceit which correspond respectively to intellect, mind and ego.

**sukhaduḥkhamohamātraṃ niścayasañkalpanābhimānās ca /**

**prakṛtir athāntaḥkaraṇaṃ buddhimanohañkṛtikramaśaḥ // 19**

20. The ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose are the organs of the intellect in respect to sound (and the other corresponding elements); and speech, hands, feet, anus and the generative organ are the organs of action.

**śrotraṃ tvagakṣirasanaḥrāṇaṃ buddhīndriyāṇi śabdādau /**

**vākpāṇipādapāyupasthaṃ karmendriyāṇi punaḥ // 20**

21. The sphere grasped by these (=sense organs), which would be subtle and without division, consist in the five subtle elements—sound, touch, color, taste, and smell.

**eṣāṃ grāhyo viśayaḥ sūkṣmaḥ pravibhāgavarjito yaḥ syāt /**

**tanmātrapañcakaṃ tac chabdaḥ sparśo maho raso gandhaḥ // 21**

22. From the mixture of these comes the gross sphere which consists in the pañca mahābhūtas (five elements)—sky, wind, fire, water, and earth.

**etatsaṃsargavaśāt sthūlo viśayas tu bhūtapañcakatām /**

**abhyeti nabhaḥ pavanas tejaḥ salilaṃ ca pṛthvī ca // 22**

23. As the chaff covers the rice-grain so this creation beginning with Prakṛti and ending with Pṛthvī adorns consciousness in embodiment.

**Tuṣa iva taṇḍulakaṇikām āvṛṇute prakṛtipūrvakaḥ sargaḥ /**

**pṛthviparyanto 'yam caitanyaṃ dehabhāvena // 23**

24. Regarding defilement, there is a supreme veil (āṇava mala), a subtle veil (māyīya mala) consisting of the five kañcukas and māyā, and a gross, external veil (karma mala) in the form of the body. In this way the Self is enveloped by a triadic sheath.

**param āvaraṃ mala iha sūkṣmaṃ māyādikañcukaṃ sthūlaṃ /**

**bāhyaṃ vigraharūpaṃ kośatrayaveṣṭhito hy ātmā // 24**

25. From Its association with the darkness of ignorance, the Self, though its own self-nature is non-dual, comes to perceive itself as a wondrous diversity of subjects and objects.

**ajñānatimirayogād ekam api svasvabhāvam ātmānam /**

**grāhyagrāhakanānāvaicitryeṇāvabudhyeta // 25**

26. As syrup, molasses, candied sugar, sugar balls and hard candy, etc. are all juice of the sugar cane, so the plurality of conditions are all of śambhu, the Supreme Self.

**rasaphāṇitaśarkarikāguḍakhaṇḍādyā yathekṣurasa eva /**

**tadvad avasthābhedāḥ sarve paramātmanaḥ śambhoḥ // 26**

27. The various philosophies—Yogācāra, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Upaniṣads, Nyāya, Smārta—are limited to conventional reality. They have no existence in the Highest Truth.

**viññānāntararyāmiṣṇāvirāḍdehajātipiṇḍāntāḥ /**

**vyavahāramātram etat paramārthena tu na santy eva // 27**

28. There is no snake in the rope, yet [this false perception] creates a deathly fear. This great power of delusion cannot be easily asundered.

**rajivāṃ nāsti bhujāṅgas trāsaṃ kurute ca mṛtyuparyantam /**

**bhrānter mahatī śaktirna vivektuṃ śakyate nāma // 28**

29. In the same way, merit, demerit, heaven, hell, birth, death, happiness, pain, caste and such things as the stages of life all arise in the Self due to the power of delusion.

**Tadvad dharmādharmasvarṇirayotpattimaraṇasukhaduḥkham /**

**varṇāśramādi cātmanyasad api vibhramabalād bhavati // 29**

30. It is blindness when there is the erroneous identification of “not-Self” regarding states of being [which ought to be recognized as] indistinct from the Self due to their being pervaded by light.

**etat tad andhakāraṃ yad bhāveṣu prakāśamānatayā /**

**ātmanātirikṣv api bhavaty anātmābhimāno 'yam // 30**

31. Moreover, it is a darkness from a darkness, a great boil upon a cyst when that which is not-Self, such as the body, breath, etc., is imagined as the Self.

**Timirād api timiram idaṃ gaṇḍasyopari mahān ayaṃ sphoṭhaḥ /**

**yad anātmany api dehaprāṇādāv ātmamānitvam // 31**

32. Like a spider with its web, [the finite soul (aṇu)] spins for itself a variegated pattern by means of association with the body, breath, perception, thought, knowledge and the expanse of ether.

**dehaprāṇavimarśanadhijñānanabhaḥprapañcayogena /**

**ātmanaṃ veṣṭhayate citraṃ jālena jālakāra iva // 32**

33. He would free his own Self from bondage by means of the method of the splendor of the greatness of self-knowledge. Thus, the supreme śiva unfolds the drama consisting of the wonders of bondage and liberation.

**svajñānavibhavabhāsanayogenodveṣṭhayen nijātmānam /**

**iti bandhamokṣacitrām kṛidāṃ pratanoti paramaśivaḥ // 33**

34. It is in Him, the fourth abode, that creation, maintenance, and destruction [as well as] waking, dreaming, and deep sleep all appear. However, He [the Self] does not reveal Himself while veiled by these [diverse conditions].

**ṣṛṣṭhiṣṭhitisaṃhārā jāgratsvapnau suṣuptam iti tasmin /**

**bhānti turiye dhāmani tathāpi tair āvṛtaṃ bhāti // 34**

35. Due to differentiation the waking is the universe; due to the majesty of light, dreaming is illumination; due to the Knowledge Mass, deep sleep is understanding; beyond that is the fourth.

**Jāgrad viśvam bhedāt svapnas tejaḥ prakāśamāhātmyat /****prājñāḥ svapnāvasthā jñānaghanatvāt tataḥ paraṃ turyam // 35**

36. As the surface of the sky is unsoiled by clouds, smoke, and dust, so the Supreme Self is untouched by the modifications of Māyā.

**Jaladharadhūmarajobhir malinīkriyate yathā na gaganatalam /****tadvan māyāvīkṛtibhir aparāmrṣṭhaḥ paraḥ puruṣaḥ // 36**

37. When the space in one jar is pervaded by dust the others are not thereby defiled. So it is with these souls which undergo differentiation by suffering and joy.

**ekasmin ghaṭthagagane rajasā vyāpte bhavanti nānyāni /****malināni tadvad ete jīvaḥ sukhaduḥkhabhedajuṣaḥ // 37**

38. When the multitude of tattvas are unagitated the Lord likewise appears still; likewise is He exited when they are so and bewildered when there is the state of bewilderment. However, in actuality, from the [perspective of the] Highest Truth He is not these conditions (tathā).

**śānte śānta ivāyaṃ hr̥ṣṭhe hr̥ṣṭho vimohavati mūḍhaḥ /****tattvagaṇe sati bhagavān na punaḥ paramārthataḥ sa tathā // 38**

39. Having first removed the appearance of that form [the Self] in that which is not-Self, the Supreme Self then shatters the false perception of the not-Self in that which is the Self.

**yad anātmani tadrūpāvabhāsanam tat purā nirākṛtya /****ātmany anātmarūpām bhrāntiṃ vidalayati paramātma // 39**

40. When this dyad of error is thus cut out at the roots, the supreme yogin, having accomplished his aim, is then no longer burdened by societal injunctions.

**itthaṃ vibhramayugalakasamūlavicchedane kṛtārthasya /****kartavyāntarakalanā jātu na parayogino bhavati // 40**

41. Thus from the power of meditation on non-duality, this triad—earth, nature and illusion—having ascended from the form of objective knowledge, becomes the remnant of mere Being.

**pṛthivī prakṛtir māyā tritayam idaṃ vedyarūpatāpatitam /****advaitabhāvanabalād bhavati hi sanmātrapariśeṣam // 41**

42. Just as through the rejection of duality a necklace, earring and bracelet are seen as gold, so when there is the abandoning of distinction everything appears as Truth alone.

**raśanākunḍalakaṭhakaṃ bhedyāgena dṛśyate yathā hema /****tadvadbhedyāge sanmātraṃ sarvam ābhāti // 42**

43. This is the Supreme Brahman: pure, peaceful, innately non-dual, undifferentiated, complete, deathless Truth, abiding in that śakti whose form is sheer effulgence.

**Tadbrahma paraṃ śuddham śāntam abhedātmakaṃ samaṃ sakalam /****amṛtaṃ satyaṃ śaktau viśrāmyati bhāsvarūpāyām // 43**

44. On the other hand, what is untouched by the Self-luminosity composed of will, knowledge, and action thus transits into the condition of a sky-lower (i.e., is merely imagination).

**iṣyata iti vedyata iti saṃpādyata iti ca bhāsvarūpeṇa /  
aparāmrṣṭhaṃ yadapi tu nabhaḥprasūnatvam abhyeti // 44**

45. By means of the attainment of the trident of powers (para, parāpara, and apara) the totality is emitted by the god of gods named śiva within the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Truth.

**śaktitriśūlaparigamayogena samastamapi parameśe /  
śivanāmani paramārthe visrjyate devadevena // 45**

46. And on the other hand, through the successive emanation of the five powers outwards, this variegated triad of spheres is created through the appropriation of an external self.

**punarapi ca pañcaśaktiprasaraṅakrameṇa bahirapi tat /  
aṅḍatrayam vicitraṃ sṛṣṭhaṃ bahirātmalābhena // 46**

47. Thus turning the power wheel, the cosmic mechanism, by means of His play, the God, the I whose form is pure, is situated in the position of conductor of the great wheel of power.

**iti śakticakrayantraṃ krīyāyogena vāhayan devah /  
ahameva śuddharūpaḥ śaktimahācakranāyakapadasthaḥ // 47**

48. In me the universe appears like jars and other external objects in a clear mirror. From me everything emanates like the various dreams which arise from sleep.

**mayyeva bhāti viśvaṃ darpana iva nirmale ghaṭhādīni /  
mattaḥ prasaratī sarvaṃ svapnavicitratvam iva deham // 48**

49. Like a body naturally constituted of hands, feet, etc., I assume the form of the universe. It is I alone who bursts forth in all beings as a luminous form.

**aham eva viśvarūpaḥ karacaraṅādīsvabhāva iva dehaḥ /  
sarvasmin aham eva sphurāmi bhāveṣu bhāsvarūpam iva // 49**

50. Though without the organs of the body I am the seer, the hearer, the smeller; though a non-doer I alone fashion the numerous philosophical systems (siddhānta), revealed scriptures (Āgama), and systems of logic (tarka).

**draṣṭhā śrotā ghrātā dehenriyavarjito' py akartāpi /  
siddhāntāgamatarkāṃścitrānahameva racayāmi // 50**

51. When the false conception of duality has thus fallen away and the seductress Māyā has been transcended, one becomes absorbed in Brahman like water in water, milk in milk.

**itthaṃ dvaitavikalpe galite pravilaṅghya mohiniṃ māyā /  
salile salilaṃ kṣīre kṣīamiva brahmaṇi layī syāt // 51**

52. In this way, through meditation on the aggregate of tattvas he (the yogin) obtains the nature of śiva. What sorrow, what delusion can there be for one who perceives all this as Brahman?

**itthaṃ tattvasamūhe bhāvanayā śivamayatatattvamabhiyate /  
kaḥ śokaḥ ko mohaḥ sarvaṃ brahmāvalokayataḥ // 52**

53. The fruit of action, whether pleasant or unpleasant, is therefore from the confluence of false knowledge. Indeed, the defilement of company is as dangerous as the meeting of a non-thief and a thief.

**karmaphalaṃ śubhamaśubhaṃ mithyājñānena saṃgamādeva /**

**viṣamo hi saṅgadoṣas taskarayogo' pyataskarasyeva // 53**

54. The foolish people here who adhere to worldly concepts go to birth and death bound by the bolt of merit and demerit.

**Iokavyavahārakṛtaṃ ya ihāvidyām upāsate mūdhaḥ /**

**te yānti janmamṛtyū dharmādharmārgalābaddhāḥ // 54**

55. But due to the power of the light of knowledge, the action constituted by merit and demerit accrued during the period of ignorance perishes like cotton acquired long ago [upon the descent of śiva's grace].

**ajñānakālanicitam dharmādharmātmakaṃ tu karmapi /**

**ciraśaṃcitamiva tūlaṃ naśyati vijñānadīptivaśāt // 55**

56. When knowledge is obtained, then action no longer bears fruit; how then could there be rebirth for him whose association with the bond of rebirth is gone, he who is self luminous like śiva Sun.

**Jñānaprāptau kṛtam api na phalāya tato' sya janma katham /**

**gatajanmabandhayogo bhāti śivārkaḥ svadīdhitibhiḥ // 56**

57. As a seed separated from chaff, husk, and bran produces no sprout, so the Self freed from āṇava, māyā, and karma [i.e., the three malas] produces no sprout of existence.

**Tuṣakambukakiṃśārūkamuktaṃ bījaṃ yathāñkuraṃ kurute /**

**naiva tathāṇavamāyākarmavimukto bhavāñkuraṃ hyātmā // 57**

58. He who knows the Self does not fear anywhere, for everything is his innate form; and he does not grieve, since in the Highest Reality there is no destruction.

**ātmajño na kutaścana bibheti sarvaṃ hi tasy nijarūpam /**

**naiva ca śocati yasmāt paramārthe nāśitā nāsti // 58**

59. From the accumulation of the jewels of supreme truth amassed in the treasury at the heart of the great mystery, [one realizes] "I alone am." In the state of Maheśvara, what misfortune is there, and of whom?

**atigūdḥahṛdayagañjanprarūdḥaparamārtharatnasamcayataḥ /**

**ahameveti maheśvarabhāve kā durgathiḥ kasya // 59**

60. For the liberated one there is neither a dwelling place nor anywhere to go. Liberation is the revelation of the power of the Self through the breaking of the knot of ignorance.

**mokṣasya naiva kiṃcid dhāmāsti na cāpi gamanamanyatra /**

**ajñānagrānthibhidā svaśaktyabhivyaktatā mokṣaḥ // 60**

61. He who has pierced the knot of ignorance, who is freed from doubt, whose delusion has been cast away, whose merit and sin have been destroyed—that one is liberated even while still united to the body.

**bhinnājñānagrānthir gatasamdehaḥ parākṛtabhrāntiḥ /**

**prakṣiṇapuṇyapāpa vigrahayoge' pyasau muktaḥ // 61**

62. As the seed burnt by fire becomes incapable of germinating, so action burnt in the fire of knowledge does not produce rebirth.

**agnyabhidagdhaṃ bījaṃ yathā prarohāsamarthatāmeti /**

**jñānāgnidagdhamevaṃ karma n jnmapradaṃ bhavati // 62**

63. Indeed, through the conception of a future body determined by [present] action [arising from] limited intelligence, the mind accordingly appears contracted at the [time of] death of this body.

**parimitabuddhitvena hi karmocitabhāvidehabhāvanayā /**

**sa ḥkucitā citiretaddehadhvaṃse tathā bhavati // 63**

64-66. But if one were to know the Self as the very nature of śiva, as immaculate intelligence comprised of a knowing subject who transcends the universe, omnipresent, an unsetting arisen sun, the divine will devoid of space-time continuum, immovable, imperishable, the completely perfect Lord, sole agent in the formation of the dissolution and arising of the multitude of powers, the wise creator of the laws of creation, etc., how then could there be transmigration for such an omniscient one? Where would he roam, and why?

**yadi punar amalaṃ bodhaṃ sarvasamuttīṇaboddhṛkartṛmayam /**

**vitatam anastamitoditabhārūpaṃ satyasaṃkalpam // 64**

**dikkālakalanavikalāṃ dhruvam avyayam śivaraṃ suparipūrṇam /**

**bahutaraśaktivrātapralayodayaviracaṇaikakartāram // 65**

**sr̥ṣṭyādividhisuvedhasamātmānaṃ śivamayaṃ vibudhyeta /**

**kathamiva saṃsārī syād vitatasya kutaḥ kva vā saraṇam // 66**

67. Thus it can be proven that the work accomplished by the wise one does not bear fruit, for due to his firm conviction, "this is not mine, but His" there is no fructification [of actions] in this world.

**iti yuktibhir api siddhaṃ yat karma jñānino na tat saphalam /**

**na maedam api tu tasyeti dārdḥyo na hi phalaṃ loka // 67**

68. Awakened in this way by the energy of meditation, he sacrifices all limited cognitions into the flaming fire of Self and thereby attains the nature of light.

**itthaṃ sakalvikalpān pratibuddho bhāvanāsamīraṇataḥ /**

**ātmaḥjyotiṣi dīpte juhvaj jyotirmayo bhavati // 68**

69. Eating anything whatever, clothed with anything at all, peaceful, dwelling anywhere, He, the Self of all beings, is liberated.

**aśnan yad vā tad vā saṃvito yena kenacic chāntaḥ /**

**yatra kvacan nivāsi vimucyate sarvabhūtātmā // 69**

70. Though he performs a hundred thousand horse sacrifices, or a hundred thousand killings of brāhmanas, the stainless one, knowing the highest truth, is touched neither by good nor evil deeds.

**hayamedhaśatasahasrāṅy api kurute brahmaghātalakṣāṇi /**

**paramārthavin na puṅyair na ca pāpaiḥ spr̥ṣyate vimalaḥ // 70**

71. Abandoning passion, pleasure, anger, desire, depression, fear, greed, and delusion, being without hymns of praise or ritual exclamations, he would wander about like a senseless being devoid of speech or thought.

**madahaṛṣakopamanmathaviṣādabhayalobhamohaparivarjī /**

**nisstotravaṣaṭhkāro jaḍa iva vicared avādamatiḥ // 71**



72. This group beginning with passion, pleasure, etc., originates from the illusion of separation; pray, how may one who has [received] the awakening of the nondual Self be touched by this (i.e., the group of afflictions).

**madarṣaprabhṛtir ayaṃ vargaḥ prabhavati vibhedasaṃmohāt /**

**advaitātmavibodhas tena kathāṃ spryatāṃ nāma // 72**

73. There is nothing whatsoever distinct from him to be worshipped or praised. Should he, the liberated one, beyond praise and ritual exclamation, rejoice in such things as religious hymns?

**stutyāṃ vā hotavyāṃ nāsya vyatiriktam ast kiṃcana ca /**

**stotrādīnā sa tuṣyed muktas tan niranmaskṛtīvaṣaṭhkaḥ // 73**

74. His abode of worship is both his innate body, comprised of the thirty-six principles and filled with walls and windows as his form, as well as the external world consisting of such things as jars.

**ṣaṭhriṃśattattvabhṛtaṃ vighraharacanāgavākṣapaaripūrṇam /**

**nijam anyad api śarīraṃ ghaṭhādi vā tasya devagṛham // 74**

75. And therein he (the sādḥaka) resides, worshipping with the stainless substance of self-reflection the auspicious Lord, the Supreme Self, Mahābhairava united with his consort.

**Tatra ca paramātmamahābhairavaśivadevatāṃ svaśaktiyutām /**

**ātmāmarśanavimaladravyaiḥ paripūjyann āste // 75**

76. When the pile of the great seed containing the duality of outer and inner thought-constructs is offered to the raging fire of consciousness, this becomes his fire oblation, enacted without exertion.

**bahirantaraparikalpanabhedamahābījanīcayan arpayataḥ /**

**tasyātidīptasaṃvijjalane yatnād vinā bhavati homaḥ // 76**

77. [The sādḥaka's] meditation is not subject to setting or declining since the Lord Himself projects the forms of diversity. Indeed, that divine form which patterns his (i.e., the sādḥaka's) imagination is itself meditation.

**dhyānam anastamitam punar eṣa hi bhagavān vicitrarūpāṇi /**

**srjati tad eva dhyānaṃ saṅkalpanalikhitasatyarūpatvam // 77**

78. When in an inner vision he turns the entire series of worlds, the construction of the sequence of principles, as well as the group of sense organs, this is declared his prayer (japa).

**bhuvanāvaliṃ samastāṃ tattvakramakalpanām athākṣagaṇam /**

**antarbodhe parivartayati ca yat so 'sya japa uditaḥ // 78**

79-80. His religious duty, at once very difficult and yet easy to accomplish, is when he sees everything with a vision of unity and meditates on Consciousness residing in the cremation ground of the universe, bearing the emblem of the skeleton of the body. He drinks from the skull of limited cognition which resides in his own hand and which is filled with the nectar of the universal essence.

**sarvaṃ samayā drṣṭyā yat paśyati yacca saṃvidāṃ manute /**

**viśvaśmaśānīratāṃ vighrahakhaṭhvāṅgakalpanākalitām // 79**

**viśvarasāsavapūrṇaṃ nijakaragaṃ vedyakhaṇḍakakapālam /**

**rasayati ca yattadetad vratamasya sudurlabhaṃ ca sulabhaṃ ca // 80**

81. Having thus obtained the highest reality, that which is called the Great Lord, free from birth and destruction,

and having accomplished all that is to be accomplished due to the revelation of the inner Seer, [the sādḥaka] lives according to his own will.

**iti janmasāsahinaṃ paramārthamaheśvarākhyam upalabhya /  
upalabdhr̥tāprakāśāt kṛtkṛtyas tiṣṣati yatheṣṭham // 81**

82. He who knows the universal, all-pervasive Self beyond distinctions, [the Self] thus proclaimed that is the incomparable highest bliss—that one attains identification with That.

**vyāpinam abhihitam itthaṃ sarvātmānaṃ vidhūtanānātvam /  
nirupamaparamānandaṃ yo vetti sa tanmayo bhavati // 82**

83. Whether he abandons his body in a pilgrimage place or in the dwelling of an untouchable, and even if he has lost his memory, he attains Self-isolation for he has destroyed sorrow and become liberated in the moment of knowing.

**Tirthē śvapacapr̥ṭhe vā naṣṭhamṛtirapi parityajan deham /  
jñānasamakālamuktaḥ kavalyaṃ yāti hataśokaḥ // 83**

84. Visiting holy places produces merit; meeting death in an untouchable's home leads to death; yet what affect can there be on him whose state is untouched by the stains of merit and demerit?

**puṇyāya tirthasevā nirayāya śvapacasadanidhanagatiḥ /  
puṇyāpuṇyakalaṅkasparśābhāve tu kiṃ tena // 84**

85. The casting of a rice-grain which has been removed from its chaff and bran into another chaff does not maintain its original form.

**Tuṣakambukasupr̥thakkṛtataṇḍulakaṇṭuśadalāntarakṣepaḥ  
taṇḍulakaṇṭasyaa kurute na punas tadrūpatādātmyam // 85**

86. In the same way, that Consciousness which is separated from Its veillings assumes a liberated nature free from their influence even while they continue to exist.

**Tadvat kañcukapaṭhalipr̥thakkṛtā saṃvid atra saṃskārāt /  
tiṣṣanty api muktātmā tatsparśavivarjitā bhavati // 86**

87. A gem made translucent by a highly skilled artisan suffers discoloration from the box which encases it. However, when the cause of this contamination is removed, the jewel then reveals its own true nature.

**kuśalatamaśilpikalpitavimalābhāvaḥ samudgakopādheḥ /  
malino 'pi maṇir upādher vicchede svacchaparamārthaḥ // 87**

88. Likewise, Consciousness abiding in the purity of the sadguru's teachings is liberated from the limitations of the body and acquires the form of śiva, void of all impurities.

**evaṃ sadguruśāsanavimalasthiti vedanaṃ tanūpādheḥ /  
muktam upādhyantaraśūnyam api samābhāti śivarūpam // 88**

89. By means of unwavering faith in the authority of such things as religious texts, one is absorbed in that (i.e., the object of faith), and before [death] attains heaven, hell, or the human condition.

**śāstrādiprāmānyād avicalitaśraddhayā hi tanmayatām /  
prāptas sa eva pūrvaṃ svargaṃ narakam manuṣyatvaṃ // 89**

90. But that last moment which, producing a condition of merit or sin, becomes for the ignorant a cause of future birth, is not [for the wise one] a cause of destiny.

**antyaḥ kṣaṇas tu tasmin puṇyāṃ pāpāṃ ca vā sthitiṃ puṣyan /  
mūdhānāṃ sahaikāibhāvaṃ gacchati gatau tu na sa hetuḥ // 90**

91. Those who realize their true nature to be the Self—even if they be cattle, snakes, or other beasts—are purified from past actions by this awakened knowledge and [now] go to that destiny (i.e., union with the Ātman).

**ye `pi tadātmatvena vidhuḥ paśupakṣisarīrpādayaḥ svagatim /  
te `pi purātanasambodhasaṃskṛtās tāṃ gatim yānti // 91**

92. The person imprisoned within the body [creates his] own heaven and hell; and with the destruction of that (=the body) he acquires another body in accordance with his past tendencies (vāsanās).

**svargamayo nirayamayas tad ayaṃ dehāntarālagāḥ puruṣaḥ /  
tadbhaṅge svaucityād dehāntarayogam abhyeti // 92**

93. At the moment of awakening his own Self is instantaneously revealed and he thus becomes That. Even with the decay of the body such a being is not effected.

**evaṃ jñānāvasare svātmā sakṛd asya yādṛg avabhātaḥ /  
tādṛśa eva tadāsau na dehapāte `nyathā bhavati // 93**

94-95. Paralysis of the organs, loss of memory, faltering of the breath, rumititis of the joints, a variety of diseases—all are the fruition of bodily processes. Indeed, how could these [ailments] not arise while one is identified with the body? Even so, the wise one, although still bound by illusion, does not fall away from the highest truth, his own Self, at the time of death.

**karaṇagaṇasampramoṣaḥ smṛtināśaḥ śvāsakalilatā chedaḥ /  
marmasu rujāviśeṣāḥ śarīrasaṃskārajo bhogaḥ // 94**

96. When one receives the path of the Supreme Truth from the mouth of the teacher, then by means of intense empowerment (atitīvraśaktipāta) all obstacles are removed and one becomes śiva Himself.

**paramārthamārgam enaṃ jhag iti yadā gurumukhāt samabhyeti /  
atitīvraśaktipātāt tadaiva nirvighnam eva śivaḥ // 96**

97. [Others] rise to the state of the Supreme Principle, the universally transcendent form, in a gradual way by ascending the steps of the ladder [of tattvas], and at the time of death are absorbed in śiva.

**sarvottīrṇaṃ rūpaṃ sopānapadakrameṇa saṃśrayataḥ /  
paratattvarūdḥilābhe paryante śivamayībhāvaḥ // 97**

98-99. But that sādḥaka who, despite the ardent desire of his heart, has reached only the middle stages of sādḥana and not that highest state, the Supreme Reality, will thus one day die [without attaining liberation]. Nevertheless, this type of aspirant, though having fallen from yoga (yoga-bhraṣṭas), is said in the sacred texts to become a lord of the worlds of wondrous enjoyments; and due to the power of his [previous] spiritual practice, destined to attain śiva in his next lifetime.

**Tasya tu paramārthamayīṃ dhārām agatasya madhyaviśrānteḥ /  
tatpadalābhotasukacetaso `pi maraṇaṃ kadācit syāt // 98  
yogabhraṣṭhaḥ śāstre `sau citrabhogabhuvanapatiḥ /  
viśrāntisthānavaśād bhūtvā janmāntare śivībhavati // 99**

100. That one who, in spite of repeated efforts, does not attain union on this path of Supreme Truth nevertheless enjoys for a long time with contented mind the experiences of pleasure in the god worlds.

**paramārthamārgam enaṃ hy abhyasyāprāpya yogam api nāma /  
suralokabhogabhāgi muktamanā modate suciram // 100**

101. As a universal monarch is honored by all people in his domain, so the one fallen from yoga is honored in the [celestial] worlds by all the gods.

**viṣayeṣu sārvaḥmaṇi sarvajanaṇi pūjyate yathā rājā /  
bhuvaneṣu sarvadevair yogabhraṣṭhas tathā pujaḥ // 101**

102. After a long time, he again obtains a human body. Practicing yoga, he then reaches the divine, immortal state from which he never again returns.

**mahatā kālena punar mānuṣyaṃ prāpya yogam abhyasya /  
prāpnoti divyam amṛtaṃ yasmād āvartate na punaḥ // 102**

103. Therefore, whosoever is devoted to this path of Truth attains the state of śiva. One should strive for the Supreme Reality by meditating in this manner (i.e., as prescribed in the Paramārthasāra).

**Tasmāt sanmārge `smin nirato yaḥ kaścīd eti sa śivatvam /  
iti matvā paramārthe yathā tathāpi prayataniyam // 103**

104. By meditating on that supreme Brahman which Abhinavagupta has revealed in this concise exposition, one instantaneously experiences possession by śiva within one's own heart.

**idam abhinavaguptoditasamkṣepaṃ dhyāyataḥ paraṃ brahma /  
acirād eva śivatvaṃ nijahṛdayāveśam abhyeti // 104**

105. This most secret essence of doctrine has been encapsulated in a hundred āryā-verses by me, Abhinavagupta, who am inspired by remembrance of śiva's feet.

**āryāśatena tad idaṃ samkṣiptaṃ śāstrasāram atigūḍham /  
abhinavaguptena mayā śivacaraṇasmarāṇadīptena // 105**

Thus the venerable great lord, the most eminent teacher, Abhinavagupta, has composed this comprehensive text called the Essence of Supreme Truth.

**iti śrīmanmāheśvarācāryābhinavaguptaviracitaḥ  
paramārthasārābhido  
granthaḥ samāptaḥ**

### ABBR E VIATI on S

- ĪP Īśvarapratyabhiḍā  
ĪPv Īśvarapratyabhiḍāvimarśinī  
PS Paramārthasāra  
PTIv Partrikśikālaghuvritti  
PTV Parātrikāvivarana

PrHD Pratyabhijāhṛdayam

ŚSū Śiva Sūtra

SpKā Spanda Kārikā

TĀ Tantrāloka TSā

Tantrasāra

VB Vijānabhairava

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## Notes

1. Published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Parts 3-4, 1910, pp. 707-747.
2. Ibid., p. 707.
3. Barnett seems to dismiss this point and appears to miscalculate the chronological connection between the two texts by mistakenly placing Abhinavagupta's text as historically senior. He writes: "Our Paramarthasara must be distinguished from another little work of the same name.... The latter consists of seventy-nine Ārya verses; a considerable number of these are borrowed directly from our Paramarthasara, and with them have been incorporated others, the whole work being painted over with Vaiṣṇava colours. Needless to say, it is valueless for the criticism of our book" [my italics].
4. Abhinavagupta, PS, v. 3.
5. Chatterji, p. 11f.
6. Barnett, p. 719.
7. Cf. Chandradhar Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy (Delhi: Motilala Banarsidass, 1976), p. 13. Sharma writes, "The word darshana means 'vision' and also 'the instrument of vision.' It stands for the direct, immediate and intuitive vision of Reality, the actual perception of Truth, and also includes the means which leads to this realization."
8. Cf. Swami Prabhavananda, The Spiritual Heritage of India (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962) p. 15. Prabhavananda writes: "Indian philosophy is not merely metaphysical speculation, but has its foundation in immediate perception."
9. TĀ, 4.77.
10. PTV, p. 161. Text quoted in Kamalakar Mishra's Kashmir Shaivism, The Central Philosophy of Tantrism (Massachusetts: Rudra Press, 1993), p. 5.
11. My exegesis here would be in line with Radhakrishnan's own sense of the primacy of experience. He writes, "[In Indian philosophy] the highest evidence is perception... The authoritative nature of the Śruti (scripture) is derived from the fact that it is but the expression of experience..." Indian Philosophy, 2 vols. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), p. 518.
12. Anantanand Rambachan, Accomplishing the Accomplished, The Vedas as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Śāṅkara (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), p.xi.
13. Pandey, K. C., Abhinavagupta, An Historical and Philosophical Study (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963), p. 23.
14. PTV. Introduction, verse 5.
15. See Müller-Ortega's discussion in the Triadic Heart of Śiva, Kaula Tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-dual Shaivism of Kashmir (SUNY Press, Albany: New York, 1989), pps. 2, 57, 183.
16. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
17. See Frits Staal's important theoretical discussions in Exploring Mysticism (Berkeley: UC Press, 1975), esp. Part III "How to Study Mysticism", pp. 123-199.
18. Op. cit., Mishra, p. 45.

19. See Dyczkowski (1987) for further discussion: *The Doctrine of Vibration, An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism* (Albany: SUNY Press) pp. 5-14.
20. Harvey Alper, "Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness: the Spaciousness of an Artful Yogi." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 7 (1979): note 1, p. 386.
21. See Gerald Larson's insightful discussion on the issue of "ism" in his review of *Kashmir Shaivism* by L. N. Sharma in *Philosophy East and West* 28 (April 1978): 236-239. There, Larson points out that the Śaivism of Kashmir should not be viewed as a single unit, but rather as a "network of esoteric tantric practices, a network of theories concerning language and aesthetics, a network of philosophies for attaining discrimination, and a plurality of 'paths' for attaining moksha." Despite the efforts of Larson and others to highlight the inaccuracies inherent in the use of the term "Kashmir Shaivism", it is still in vogue with many important scholars. Take, for example, the title of Kamalaka Mishra's recent book: *Kashmir Shaivism, The Central Philosophy of Tantrism* (1993).
22. See Dyczkowski's excellent synthesis of this "river" in *The Doctrine of Vibration, An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), pp. 12-13.
23. TĀ 1.304a. Translated by Alexis Sanderson in "Mandala and Agamic Identity in the Trika of Kashmir" in *Mantras et Diagrammes Rituels Dans L'Hindouisme* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1986), p. 181.
24. PS 1.
25. TĀ 15.295c-328b. Translated by Sanderson (1986), op. cit., p. 187.
26. Svacchanda Tantram: Na śivam vidyate kvacit.
27. ŚSū 1.19: Lokānanda samadhi sukham.
28. The most detailed discussion of the correspondences between the universe and the body is found in Gavin Flood's recent work, *Body and Cosmology in Kashmir Śaivism* (San Francisco: Mellen University Press, 1993), esp. chapter 5 "Structures of the Body", pp. 159-190.
29. Cf. Dimock's discussion of microcosm/macrocosm correspondences in *The Place of the Hidden Moon, Erotic Mysticism in the Vaishnava-Sahajiya Cult of Bengal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), On page 137 Dimock writes: "The essence of Tantric thought is that man is a microcosm. He contains within himself all the elements of the universe; he is a part that contains all the elements of the whole."
30. See SenSharma's excellent analysis of jivan-mukta vs. videha-mukta in *The Philosophy of Sadhana* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), pp. 67-68.
31. See Brook's discussion of the interrelation of philosophy and practice in his *Secret of the Three Cities, An Introduction to Hindu Śakta Tantrism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), esp. 49.
32. Ibid, p. 49.