Dressing for Power: On *vrata*, *caryā*, and *vidyāvratā* in the Early Mantramārga, and on the Structure of the *Guhyasūtra* of the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*

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If, twenty years ago, you had read most of the literature published before the 1990s about the Śaivasiddhānta, you would probably have received the impression that this was primarily a South Indian movement, whose scriptures, called *āgamas*, were divided into four sections, or *pādas*, devoted to ritual (*kriyā*), doctrine (*jñāna*), *yoga* and pious conduct (*caryā*). The first two of these four sections, the *kriyā-pāda* and the *jñāna-pāda*, you would have learnt, were the most important, the *kriyāpāda* being devoted to describing the rituals practised in the Śaiva temples of the Tamil-speaking area, and the *jñānapāda* (or *vidyāpāda*) being devoted to teaching and defending a strictly dualist system that presents an ontological ladder of thirty-six *tattvas*, but that recognises three irreducible ontological categories: *pati*, *paśu* and *pāśa*. That is to say: the Lord (*pati*), bound souls (*paśu*), and the bonds that bind them (*pāśa*), namely Matter, *karman* and an innate impurity called *mala* or *āṇava-mala*.

Each one of these pieces of received wisdom has been challenged by the discoveries of the last two decades, so that we now know that none of the above propositions actually holds true for the earliest strata of the religion to which surviving primary literature can give us access. A great many of those discoveries are those of Alexis Sanderson and the students to whom for decades he devoted much of his time and energy.

Of course it is wide reading of a very broad corpus of published and unpublished sources that has gradually revealed to us quite a different picture of the early phases of the religion. But if one were to single out any one text for its importance in expanding our knowledge of the early history of the Mantramārga, it would probably be the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*.

Ten years ago, hardly any aspect of the text had been explored in print, but, thanks in part to the spotlight of the Franco-German 'Early Tantra' project, which between 2008 and 2011 focussed the minds of many people present at the Toronto symposium on the *Niśvāsa* and on its relation to other early tantric literature, parts of the work have been commented upon in an array of publications. The first major article actually predates the 'Early Tantra' project, and is,

of course, by Professor Sanderson himself: it is his study of the Lākulas (2006). Apart from the first volume of the collaborative edition and translation, covering the earliest three books of the *Niśvāsa*—the *Mūlasūtra*, *Uttarasūtra* and *Nayasūtra*—there are now substantial articles on, for instance, the evolution of the system of *tattvas* that can be traced as it gradually takes shape within the *Niśvāsa*-corpus (Goodall 2016), and on the lengthy grimoires of magical rites contained in the *Guhyasūtra* that are similar in style and content to those found in Buddhist *kriyātantra* works, and most strikingly similar to the those in the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* (Goodall and Isaacson 2016).

Now that the earliest three books of the *Niśvāsa* are published at last, and now that the introductory book, the *Niśvāsamukhatattvasaṃhitā*, has been thoroughly examined in a doctoral thesis defended this year at the University of Leiden by Nirajan Kafle (2015*), what remains is the largest book of them all: the *Guhyasūtra*. The ninth-century manuscript of the corpus (NGMPP Reel No. A 41/14) comprises 114 folios, and all of the hitherto edited works together cover only the first 40 of those. The remaining 74 folios give us the text of the *Guhyasūtra*. Here is a very brief outline of the structure of its eighteen chapters:

A. SĀDHANA

Ch. 1 personality-types of *sādhakas* and types of *liṅgas* that may be used for *siddhi*.

Ch. 2 *liṅgapraṭiṣṭhā*.

Ch. 3 preparations for *sādhana*, prognosticatory rites, *vratas*, procedures for attaining certain *siddhis*.

B. COSMOGRAPHY

Chs. 4–7 a lengthy cosmography (*prakriyājñāna*).

Ch. 8 a variant form of *dikṣā* in the form of worship of a series of *maṇḍalas* peopled by deities of the different levels of the cosmos (*prakriyāyāga*).

C. OTHER MANTRA-SYSTEMS

Finally, the use, primarily for magical powers, of mantra-systems other than those given in the earlier three *sūtras*, namely

a) Chs. 9–11 The *vyomavyāpin*.

b) Chs. 12–14 The five *brahmamantras*.

Ch. 15 Long forms of their *aṅgamantras*.

c) Chs. 16–18 A ten-syllable mantra called *vidyā*.

The *Guhyasūtra* is somewhat like a series of appendices to the earlier *sūtras*, containing more detailed accounts of some topics that have already been cov-

ered (cosmography), but also entirely new subjects (new mantras) or treatments of subjects that have hitherto only been alluded to, notably the acquisition of *siddhis*. As I have tried to indicate with the overarching titles (A, B, C) in the brief summary above, I think that it can be said that chapters 1 to 3 have a certain sort of unity because they cover the acquisition of magical powers in much greater detail than we see in earlier layers of the text: the first chapter gives information about *sādhakas*, then stresses the importance of the *līṅga* for attaining *siddhis*, after which, in chapter 2, the installation of *līṅgas* is covered, and then in the third chapter we return to the preparations for *sādhana* and finally the procedures to be followed. Chapters 4–7 then give us a very detailed account of the Śaiva cosmos, the higher reaches of which have been further expanded and embroidered upon since the composition of the earlier *sūtras* of the text.¹ This is undertaken because *dīkṣā* involves purging the soul of the fruits of *karman* that would need to be experienced—and thus expended—through every layer of the Śaiva universe. Using the same cosmography, chapter 8 describes an alternative *dīkṣā* involving the worship of *maṇḍalas* representing successive layers of the universe, and it then contains a number of add-on discussions that suggest, it seems to me, that the text once drew to a close at that point, as we shall see below. What follow, taking us up to the end of the *Guhyasūtra*, are three distinct textual layers each devoted to introducing an extra mantra-system, namely 1) that of the 81-word VYOMAVYĀPIN, 2) that of the *brahmamantras*, and 3) that of the ten-syllable VIDYĀ. To each of these is attached a grimoire of magical recipes (*kalpa*).

Turning to the conclusion of chapter 8, I think that we can see from the summary given below that it reads like a series of codas. Verse 105 gives a clear statement of what we are supposed to have learnt from the preceding chapters, and it is followed immediately by remarks about the persons to whom these teachings may and may not be submitted, a typical closing device. Tagged on to this, from verse 116 onwards, is a treatment of religious suicide, again a theme suitable to the conclusion of a work of scripture. The final section, from verse 125, is introduced by Devī's question about the status of rival religious traditions. In answer, Śiva explains that He and Devī, as consonants and vowels, are the source of all language, and that they are the source of all the universe in that they are to be identified with the various *tattvas* from which all else evolves.

1 A full examination of this embroidery will have to await the publication of the relevant parts of the *Guhyasūtra*, but some idea of its extent and nature may be gained from the table on pp. 290–293 of Goodall, Sanderson and Isaacson 2015 and from the surrounding annotation, as well as from Goodall 2016.

Summary of the conclusion of *Guhyasūtra* 8:²

- 8.88–89 Devī asks how an initiate may foretell his own death.
 8.90–98 Śiva recounts signs of death.
 8.99–104 Activities that can be done under particular asterisms that grant release [from death?].
 8.105 Summary of teachings from chapter 4 up to this point in chapter 8.
 8.106–110 Those to whom one should and should not transmit this knowledge.
 8.111–114b The 4 means of liberation: *dīkṣā*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, *caryā*.
 8.114c–115 One should transmit this only to someone worthy.
 8.116–117 Devī asks about religious suicide.
 8.118–122 Śiva deprecates death in *tīrthas* for initiates; he teaches instead 5 varieties of a ‘razor’-mantra for suicide by *japa*.
 8.123 Increasing length of life by yogic *dhāraṇās*.
 8.124 The supreme Śaiva knowledge, without which one cannot be liberated, has been taught!
 8.125–127 Devī asks about the fate of those who follow rival religions.
 8.128–133 Śiva explains that He and Devī, as the consonants and vowels of the alphabet, are the source of all linguistic expression (*vāṇ-mayam*) and of all that has evolved (*vikārāḥ*).
 8.134–136 The MŪLA-mantra is a panacea (*mṛtasañjīvanī*).
 8.137–138 Śiva and Pārvatī are parents of everything in that they are respectively these *tattvas*: *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*; *kāla* and *niyati*; *īśvara* and *māyā+vidyā*; *sadāśiva* and *kalā*.
 8.139–140 They are also respectively [supreme] Śiva and His Will (*icchā*).
 8.141 Those who do not know the NAVĀTMAN, who are devoid of *dīkṣā* and *jñāna*, who do not know the MŪLA, do not attain the highest state.

2 Much of this conclusion has, by the way, been borrowed and adapted into the *Niśvāsakārikā*, which seems itself like another series of addenda that further modify and extend the teachings of the *sūtras* of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*. Thus *Guhyasūtra* 8.88–89 and 8.92–104 have been reworked to produce chapter 21 of the *jñānakāṇḍa* of the *Niśvāsakārikā* (T. 17, pp. 131–133; T. 127, pp. 36–38); and *Guhyasūtra* 8.125–136 have been reworked to form the beginning of chapter 20 (23 in T. 127) of the *jñānakāṇḍa* of the *Niśvāsakārikā* (T. 17, pp. 122–124; T. 127, pp. 231–233). The chapter continues, at least in T. 17, for a further 32 verses on rival notions of liberation and methods for attaining it.

We may remark in passing that a noteworthy feature of this final passage is that the text takes no clearly defined position on the debate between dualism, which was to become a defining characteristic of classical mainstream Śaiva-dhāntika doctrine, and non-dualism: it seems as though this debate had not yet caught the interest and attention of Śaiva thinkers. Here is the passage in question:

ahaṃ pumāṃs tvaṃ prakṛti niyati puna[[r eva ca]]
 niya---[2] kālarūpī maheśvaraḥ 8.137
 tvam mātṛā ca tathā vidyā aham punas tatheśvaraḥ
 sadāśiva ahan devi tvañ caturdhā kaleśvarī 8.138
 īśitvāc ca vaśitvāc ca sarvajñatvāc ca nityaśaḥ
 śāntatvān niṣkalatvāc ca samatvāc ca ahaṃ śivaḥ 8.139
 mama icchā na hanyā tvaṃ tvaṃ hi śaktibalodayā
 tvatsūtañ ca jagat sarvaṃ śivadā sadanugrahe 8.140

I am *puruṣatattva* and you are *prakṛti* and also *niyati*; ... Maheśvara is Time; you are Mātṛā and Vidyā, while I am Īśvara-tattva. I, O goddess, am Sadāśiva [and] you are mistress of the 4 *kalās*. (137–138)
 Because I rule, I control, I am omniscient, because I am permanently at rest, without division and in equilibrium, I am Śiva. (139)
 You are my Will, not to be crossed, for you are the one from whom the power of the śaktis arises!
 The whole universe has sprung from you; You bestow Śiva-nature, O you of true compassion! (140)

Having proposed an identification of the principal layers of redaction that are detectable in the *Guhyasūtra*, I should like now to skip back to the verses in the conclusion of chapter 8 that speak about those to whom the teachings may and may not be transmitted, since these verses bear both upon the themes that structure the work and upon the subject of *caryā*. For, slipped into the middle of that section, beginning in verse 8.111, is a short sequence of verses that make the claim that the teachings of the text comprise four independently salvific parts: *dikṣā*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and *caryā*.

etad buddhvā na dātavyaṃ śivadevāmṛtaṃ param 8.110
 dikṣājñānena yogena caryayā ca yathākramam
 pratyekaśaḥ śivāvāptis tantre 'smin pārameśvare 8.111
 dikṣayā sukaram mokṣaṃ yad gurus sādhayet sadā
 jñānañ ca gurum āsādy labhyate tat[[prasādataḥ]] 8.112

---[f. 72r] te mX yo xx(?) ca gurupādataḥ³
 ātmaśaktyā carec caryāṃ sarvasiddhipradāyikām 8.113
 etac catuṣṭayam proktaṃ saṃsārabhayanāśanam
 parasyaiva na deyan tu yadi 'cchet siddhim ātmanaḥ 8.114

Knowing this, one should not give [lightly] the supreme nectar of Lord Śiva. (110)

According to this scripture of the Lord, one may attain Śiva by each of the following [practised individually] (*pratyekaśaḥ*): initiation, knowledge, yoga and *caryā* in due order. (111)

By initiation one attains liberation easily, since it is the guru who invariably accomplishes it.⁴ And knowledge is obtained, once one finds a guru, through his grace. (112)

... yo[ga] ... from the feet of the guru; One must practise *caryā*, which bestows all supernatural powers, using one's own strength (*ātmaśaktyā*). (113)

This tetrad has been taught to destroy the dangers of *saṃsāra*. It should not [lightly] be given to others if one desires supernatural power for oneself. (114)

An innocent might here at first suppose that we find here what may be the earliest allusion to the notion that each Śaiva scripture should be arranged in four text-units called *pādas*, for it is not difficult to see that the *kriyāpāda* might easily be referred to by the most significant ritual of all, namely *dīkṣā*. Now Brunner (1992) and others⁵ have shown that most early scriptures are not in fact divided into four such text-units, and the *Niśvāsa* certainly is not. Nonetheless, one might reasonably suppose that the four topics to which some later scriptures devote four text-sections called *pādas* are referred to here. But are they? Plainly the first three, *dīkṣā*, *jñāna* and *yoga*, may be found treated at length in the *Niśvāsa*; but is there anything that we might recognise as *caryā*? This is a word we are rather used to seeing translated as “conduct” or “comportment,” as for instance in the title of Brunner's 1985 translation of the *kriyāpāda* and *caryāpāda* of the *Mr̥gendratantra*: *Mr̥gendrāgama*[.] *Section des rites et section du comportement*. When she characterises the content of the *caryāpāda* there, she observes (p. xxxvii):

3 Perhaps N once read: *yogañ ca gurupādataḥ*?

4 At the beginning of the *kriyāpāda* of the *Matariga* (1.2), initiation is similarly presented as an alternative route to salvation that is easier than taking the more difficult path of *jñāna*.

5 See Goodall 1998, lviii–lxv.

La presque totalité de l'exposé (śl 1–105) est consacrée à un sujet unique: le comportement normal des différents groupes d'initiés.⁶

This is a topic that we really do not find addressed in the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, and it is therefore clear that *caryā* probably does not mean “comportement normal” in this text. When speaking in Toronto, I was unaware that Christian Wedemeyer, faced with similar difficulties of interpretation resulting from assuming such a meaning, had already devoted a chapter of his work on *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism* (2013, 133–169) to discussing how *caryā* and related terms should be understood in early Buddhist and Śaiva tantric works.⁷ An exploration of this theme therefore now seems in some respects less pressing to me than it once did. But there are still some issues that can usefully be commented upon, and there are several early Śaiva attestations of the nexus of *caryā*-related terms of which Wedemeyer was not aware and which serve to adjust, I think, some of what he has said about this semantic field, and that go some way to explaining a significant juncture in the semantic voyage of the term *caryā* that led to its being commonly assumed in modern scholarship to mean something like “comportement normal,” even in passages in which such a meaning does not fit. Wedemeyer’s account does clarify a number of confusions, and he is to be commended for taking into account several Śaiva passages, but a combination of a desire to show that it is the Śaivas who have borrowed from the Buddhists rather more than the Buddhists have from the Śaivas here (2013, 136–137, 154) and of not having had access to the earliest known Śaiva material (which I should like to have made widely available long ago, but editing concurrently the *Niśvāsa*, the *Kiraṇa* and the *Sarvajñānottara* is proving a very time-consuming project) have led him to some problematic assertions and assumptions, some of which I hope to correct below.⁸ In what follows, I will

6 “Almost the entire exposition (verses 1–105) is devoted to a single subject: the regular comportment of different groups of initiates.”

7 I am grateful to Tim Cahill for bringing Wedemeyer 2013 to my attention by kindly giving me a copy when he was visiting Pondicherry in 2015.

8 John Nemecek too expresses some reserves in his generally positive review (2014, 272–273) and encourages further investigation of the Śaiva understanding of *vrata*s:

Even if we grant that Wedemeyer limits his argument to instances of the antinomian practices that were understood to lead to liberation through a nondualistic, epistemological, or gnostic insight, as I think he wishes to do, there is nevertheless some work left to be done, in my view, to prove that even this particular understanding of the rites in question originated with tantric Buddhism (and the *Guhyasamājatantra* in particular [160–162, 166]). What is needed is a more thorough effort to establish the relative chronology of the relevant texts and, more importantly, a more detailed account of the Śaiva self-understandings of the religious observances in question.

be expanding upon and shoring up what was advanced rather too tentatively in a lengthy note on *Mūlasūtra* 4.17c–18 (Goodall, Sanderson, Isaacson et al. 2015, 284–287).

In fact, the basic difficulty with the central term *caryā* had arguably already been resolved, *in nuce*, by Alexis Sanderson in his 2006 article on the Lākulas, but in a somewhat laconic fashion. What he writes, just before presenting the *vratas* in the ninth chapter of the *caryāpāda* of the *Matanṅapārameśvara*, is the following:

The Śaivas have conventionally divided the means of liberation taught in the Āgamas, that is to say their subject matter, into the four categories, ritual (*kriyā*), doctrine or gnosis (*jñānam*, *vidyā*), meditation (*yogaḥ*), and ascetic observance and other rules governing the conduct of the various classes and kinds of initiate (*caryā*). Continuities between the Lākulas and the Śaivas have now been shown in the areas of the ritual of initiation and in the doctrine of the path to liberation, [...] Insufficient evidence exists to permit much of a comparison in the domain of meditation. [...] This leaves only the domain of ascetic observance (*vratacaryā*).

It is clear, in other words, that *caryā*, in early Śaiva works, may refer specifically to ascetic observance, presumably indeed because it is a contraction of the collocation *vratacaryā/vratacaraṇa*, “the performance (*caryā/caraṇa*) of timed religious observances (*vrata*).” The verb *car*, “to move,” but also “to be engaged in,” has indeed long been the natural idiomatic verb of choice for use with *vrata*, and this accounts for the frequency of such *bahuvrīhi* expressions as *cīrṇavrata* (“who has observed his observances”), both in non-Mantramārga works (e.g. *Bodhāyanagr̥hyasūtra* 4.12.2 on p. 118, *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 3.298c, *Mahābhārata* 3.81.135c) and in works of the Mantramārga (e.g. *Mālinīvijayottara* 10.17c and 10.34c, *Mohacūḍottara* 1.14a, etc), as well as for the distinctively tantric *bahuvrīhi* expression *cīrṇavidyāvratā* (e.g. *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 13.1a),⁹ to which we shall return below.

9 One non-tantric instance has been pointed out to me by Harunaga Isaacson (email of 26.xii.2015).

... I find one occurrence of *cīrṇavidyāvratā* in a non-tantric text and a non-tantric context. It is in Vyomaśiva's *Vyomavatī*, the oldest of the commentaries on the *Padārthadhar-masaṃgraha* (perhaps early 10th century; might be even slightly earlier). Of course, even though the context is here of orthodox Vedic/brahmanical practice, we can be pretty certain that Vyomaśiva, as his name already suggests, was familiar with the Siddhānta and

If we were concerned only with the meanings of the word *caryā*, then it might seem that we could almost end our essay here: Wedemeyer has pointed out that *caryā* conventionally refers to virtuous behaviour and conduct in accordance with religious precepts in a number of early non-tantric Buddhist texts (2013, 135), where he characterises it as “by far the most common generic term for the spiritual undertakings of buddhas and bodhisattvas,” just as it does in much later Śaiva works of the Mantramārga, such as the *Mr̥gendra*; Sanderson has alluded (in the passage just quoted) to the observed fact that it may refer in Śaiva sources both to the prescribed “conduct of the various classes and kinds of initiate” as well as to “ascetic observance,” and he has pregnantly suggested that this second meaning is connected with the notion of *vratacaryā*; finally, Wedemeyer has observed that *caryā* in Buddhist tantric sources, and in some Śaiva ones, refers not to life-long virtuous conduct, but rather to timed antinomian practices, in troubling places such as cremation grounds and involving transgressive sexual and mortuary elements.

But, as my title indicates, there is in fact a nexus of terms to be examined here. Wedemeyer indeed points out that there are several other related terms that seem to be used in places where *caryā* might have served instead, *caryāvrata* and *vratacaryā* being apparently “used with identical meaning” (2013, 136), to which he adds instances of these words “in compound with qualifiers related to ideas of secrecy or madness,” such as *guhyavrata*, *guhya-caryā*, *prachannavrata*, *unmattavrata*, and “a cluster of interrelated terms that appear in the same contexts, and which seem to be largely synonymous,” which he tabulates on p. 137. Among these, he singles out *vidyāvrata*, for which he suggests the translations “knowledge observance, spell observance, and/or consort observance” (2013, 136) as being “treated as essentially equivalent to *caryāvrata*/*vratacaryā* in Buddhist and Śaiva sources.”

Now it may indeed be the case that several of these terms appear to be used interchangeably, but a slightly broader and chronologically deeper slice of Śaiva samples reveals, it seems to me, both how the terms in fact differ from each other and also why it is that they may in some contexts appear to be interchangeable, while at other times they are not. This may seem hair-splittingly tedious, but, as Wedemeyer points out, if we do not understand the words, then we cannot understand what it is that they serve to express.¹⁰ The Viennese

quite likely other forms of Śaivism, so there is a chance that his terminology has been unconsciously influenced by tantric usage.

In the passage in question, on p. 233 of the edition, Vyomaśiva is glossing Praśastapāda's use of the term *vidyāvratasnātaka*.

10 Wedemeyer does not put this truism into such simple words, for he is particularly con-

endeavour that has so far produced three out of five volumes of the *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa* is a step towards a better understanding of technical terms and of common terms used with technical senses in the literature of the Mantramārga, even if it does not, alas, cover Tantric Buddhist literature.¹¹

Turning to the Viennese dictionary for an understanding of *caryā* is, however, not yet particularly useful, for the entry under this word consists only of a cross-reference to the term *caryāpāda*. But the account of that term does contain what will one day be a useful cross-reference to a future article on the term *vrata*, and it includes one useful pointer to a moment in the history of the term *caryā*:

Note that *vrata* is substituted as a synonym for *caryā* in Kir[āṇa] 6.6c; indeed it is conceivable that the term is an abbreviation of *vratacaryā* (Kir[āṇa] 49.4).

The volume of the *Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa* in question appeared back in 2004; by the time the fifth volume appears, including the terms *vrata* and *vidyāvrata*, this dictionary will be a still more useful resource for tracing out the shifting semantics of this and many another nexus of tantric terms.

Let us follow up this reference to the *Kiraṇatantra*. Since its chapter, 49, on *vratacaryā* is short, we may quote much of it below, omitting from the middle a detailed treatment of the ideal *kamaṇḍalu*, and giving just the readings of the Devakottai edition (*E_D*) and the Nepalese manuscript of 924AD (*N*, f. 70r):

garuḍa uvāca—
 samayī putrakaś cāpi deśikaś ca maheśvara
 eṣāṃ vṛttiḥ samākhyātā sādhakasya bravihi me 49.1
 bhagavān uvāca—
 sādhaḥ sātviko dhīraḥ sahiṣṇur mantradhīr varaḥ
 apradhṛṣyo mahāprājñaḥ samaloṣṭāsmakāñcanaḥ 49.2
 udyukto homaṇiṣṭhaś ca japaḍhyānarataḥ sadā

cerned with understanding the meanings of common words that are used with technical senses (2013, 134): “Recognition of these terms as terms of art is, however, essential, insofar as failure in this regard creates and sustains broad and systemic misinterpretation of Tantric literature and of the traditions that produced (and were, in turn, produced by) these works.”

- 11 The desirability of covering Buddhist Tantric literature is alluded to in the preface to the third volume (p. 11), but it is obvious that the project cannot be simply “tweaked” at this late stage to incorporate a huge extra corpus only in volumes 4 and 5.

vighnaprotsāraṇe kalyo vrataniṣṭhaḥ samaḥ śuciḥ 49.3
 sasakhāyo vanaṃ gatvā vratacaryāṃ samārabhet
 asakhāyo tadā tasmim̐ svasakhāyaḥ kamaṇḍaluḥ 49.4

1ab samayī putrakāś cāpi deśikaś ca] N; samayisūtaḥ cāpi deśikasya E_D • 1b maheśvara] E_D; maheśvaraḥ N • 1c eṣāṃ vṛttiḥ] E_D; eṣā vṛtti N • 2a sādhaḥ sātṛviko dhīraḥ] E_D; sādhaḥ sātṛviko dhīra N • 2b varaḥ] E_D; vara N • 2c apradhṛṣyo] E_D; apradhṛṣyo N • 3c °protsāraṇe] E_D; °procchāraṇe N • 3d śuciḥ] E_D; śucit N • 4a sasakhāyo] N; sasakhāyo E_D • 4b vratacaryāṃ samārabhet] E_D; vratacāraṇam ārabhet N • 4cd tadā tasmim̐ svasakhāyaḥ] em.; tadā tasmim̐ svasakhāya° N; yadā tasmin̐ susahāyaḥ E_D

Garuḍa spoke:

You have taught me, O great Lord, the activities of the neophyte, the *putraka* and the *ācārya*. Tell me those of the *sādhaka*. (1)

The Lord spoke:

The excellent (*varaḥ*) *sādhaka* [should be] full of *sattva*, firm, capable of endurance, his mind fixed on [his] mantra, unassailable, of great wisdom, looking impartially on mud, stones and gold, (2)

engaged, regular in [the performance of] oblations, always devoted to recitation and meditation, dexterous in the dispelling of obstacles, firm in [the practice of his] religious observance, calm, pure. (3)

Accompanied by his ritual assistant, he should go to the forest and begin the practice of his religious observance (*vratacaryāṃ*). [If he is] without a ritual assistant, then his spouted water-pot is his ritual assistant in that [practice].¹² (4)

[Description of spouted water-pot omitted.]

saśalyas tumbako vā syād evaṃ kṛtvā vratañ caret 49.13
 jaṭāmakutaśaṭopaṃ śulakhaṭvāṅgalāñchitam
 śuddhamuṇḍārdhasaṃyuktaṃ tṛlocanakṛtādaram 49.14

12 This idea that the *sādhaka*, when embarking on the pursuit of supernatural powers, must be accompanied either by a ritual assistant or by his water-pot is expressed elsewhere too, for instance in *Sarvajñānottara* 25.19:

susakhāyo yadā mantrī mantrasādhanam ārabhet
 asakhāyo yogī siddhiṃ kamaṇḍalukaraḥ sadā 19

19a susakhāyo yadā] N; ṁ sāyo yadā L • 19c asakhāyo yogī siddhiṃ] conj.; asākhayo-gasiddhiṃ N; ṁ hāyo yogī siddhiṃ L • 19d kamaṇḍalukaraḥ] N; kamaṇḍaludharas L

vyāghracarmāmbaram śāntam raudram vratam idam śubham
 suniṣṭhasya bhavet ṣaḍbhir mmāsaiḥ siddhir ihottamā 49.15
 madhyā māsaiḥ caturbhiḥ ca kṣudrā māsaiḥ tribhir bhavet
 vratānām pravaram raudram tatsiddhau sakalo bhavet 49.16
 kāryam mantravratam siddhyai sādakenānurūpakam

13c saśalyas tumbako] *em.*; saśalyatumbako N; saśalāstambhako E_D • 14c śuddha°] N; śud-
 dham E_D • 14d trilocanakṛtādaram] N; trilocanakṛtodaram E_D • 15b raudram] N; raudra°
 E_D • 15cd suniṣṭhasya bhavet ṣaḍbhir mmāsaiḥ siddhir ihottamā] N; kaniṣṭhasya bhavet
 chuddhir māsaiḥ ṣaḍbhir ihottamā E_D • 16ab caturbhiḥ ca kṣudrā māsaiḥ] E_D; caturbhi
 syāt kṣudra māsai N • 16c vratānām pravaram] N; vratampravaram E_D • 16d sakalo
 bhavet] N; sakaḷam punaḥ E_D • 17a kāryam mantravratam] E_D; kāryamantravrata N • 17b
 sādakenānurūpakam] N; sādhakair nānurūpataḥ E_D

Alternatively, [instead of a *kamaṇḍalu*,] it may be a gourd with a shaft.

Having made this [ready], he should practise his observance. (13cd)
 This is the auspicious Raudra-vrata: imposing with a chignon of mat-
 ted locks, marked by a trident and *khaṭvāṅga*, equipped with a clean
 half skull, awe-inspiring with a third eye, clothed in the skin of a tiger,
 peaceful. (14–15b)

For one firm [in this observance], the highest *siddhi* will arise in six
 months; middling [powers] in four months; the lowest [powers] will
 arise in three months. (15c–16b)

The highest of the observances is the Raudra[-vrata]. On accomplishing
 that, one becomes [equal to] the Sakala [form of Śiva]. (16cd)

For attaining *siddhi*, the *sādhaka* should perform a mantra-observance
 that is appropriate [to the mantra in question].¹³ (17ab)

What we see here, it seems to me, is a reflection of the old notion that *caryā* refers to *vratacaryā*, “the performance of a *vrata*,” where *vrata* is a timed religious observance that typically involves adopting an unusual diet (not mentioned here), an unusual style of dress (often with accoutrements of the cremation ground, in this case the *khaṭvāṅga*), and unusual behaviour (sexual transgressions, mortuary obsessions, or, as here, ascetic detachment). This observance is furthermore a preparation for the attainment of magical powers through the use of a mantra.

This is, I think, in essence, the same as what is meant by the term *vrata* in all early tantric literature. It explains therefore how *vratacaryā*, “the performance

13 Or perhaps “appropriate [to the desired *siddhi*].”

of such a *vrata*,” and therefore sometimes also *caryā* have come to be used interchangeably with *vrata*.¹⁴ But the term *caryā* evidently began to expand and then slip in meaning as the Mantramārga expanded to include not just *sādhakas* (who seem to be the only audience of the *Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā*¹⁵), but also other categories of initiates. We can see that this slippage has in fact already taken place by the time of the *Kiraṇa*, for that work begins its thirty-first chapter with an announcement that the next topic to be taught will be *caryā*, and yet, as we have just seen above, does not deal with the *vratacaryā* of the *Sādhaka* until chapter 49, which follows eighteen chapters later.

Here is the beginning of chapter 31, in which the topic called *caryā* is first introduced in such a way as to suggest that the primary meaning has now become something like regular enjoined “comportment.”

garuḍa uvāca—
 samayisutayor deva kā vṛttis tu dine dine
 evaṃ mayi samācakṣva caryā me noditā purā 31.1

1a samayisutayor] N (unmetrical); samayīputrayor E_D • 1b vṛttis tu] E_D; vṛtyatra N • 1c mayi] conj.; mayā N; sarvaṃ E_D

Garuḍa spoke:

What are the day-to-day activities of the neophyte and the *putraka*?

Tell me this. You have not taught me the [regular rules of] behaviour (*caryā*) before. (1)

No such clear evidence can be found of this broadening of the meaning of the word *caryā* in another post-*Niśvāsa* but pre-tenth-century Saiddhāntika scripture for which we have an early Nepalese palm-leaf witness, this time apparently of the ninth-century, namely the *Sarvajñānottaratantra*.¹⁶ That work gives

- 14 As for *caryāvrata*, which, as we have seen above, Wedemeyer considers to be synonymous with *vratacaryā*, I suspect that it rather means “one of the timed religious observances belonging to [the body of activities that can collectively be called] [*vrata*]-*caryā*.” No doubt there is, in certain contexts, little difference between saying this and saying “the performance of timed religious observances” (*vratacaryā*).
- 15 For the absence of initiates who are not *sādhakas* from the religious teachings of the *Niśvāsa*, see Goodall, Sanderson, Isaacson et al. 2015, 47 ff.
- 16 In case it should be supposed that the work’s structure is itself evidence of a shift in meaning of the term *caryā*, I should mention that, although Aghoraśiva’s commentary divides it

us an account of another sort of *vrata* that will be useful to us in the discussion below, in this case somewhat more detailed, but involving no transgression of brahmanical rules about purity and sexual behaviour.

ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi vratānāṃ vratam uttamam¹⁷
 śivavrateti vikhyātaṃ sadevāsurapūjitam¹⁸ 18.1
 viśuddhaṃ pāṇḍaraṃ bhasma¹⁹ śuklavāsonulepanam
 śuklayajñopavitī²⁰ ca jaṭāmaṣṭamaṇḍitaḥ²¹ 18.2
 sarvābharaṇasampannaḥ²² śuklamāyavibhūṣitaḥ²³
 carubhug brahmacaryasthaḥ²⁴ śivāgnigurupūjakaḥ²⁵ 18.3
 mantramūrṭiḥ²⁶ śivasyaiva yathā rūpaṃ²⁷ prakīrtitam
 tathā vai sādhakendrāṇāṃ²⁸ vrataṃ jñeyaṃ tadātmakam²⁹ 18.4
 śuklakaupīnavāso vā uṣṇīṣākṣakamaṇḍaluḥ³⁰
 śivālaye vasen nityaṃ³¹ bhikṣābhakṣo³² jitendriyaḥ 18.5
 japadhyānarato³³ maunī śivāgnigurupūjakaḥ
 saṃvatsare vyatīkrānte śivatulyo bhaved asau³⁴ 18.6³⁵

into four *pādas*, including a *caryāpāda*, it was clearly not originally so divided: see Goodall 1998, lix–lxi.

- 17 vratam uttamam] NL; uttamam vratam M
 18 śivavrateti vikhyātaṃ sadevāsurā°] N; śivavratam iti khyātaṃ sarvodāsurā° M; śivavratam iti khyātaṃ sarvadā sura° L
 19 pāṇḍaraṃ bhasma] N; pāṇḍuraṃ bhasma M; pāṇḍaraṃ janma L
 20 śukla°] NL; □ M
 21 °maṇḍitaḥ] ML; °maṇḍitam N
 22 °sampannaḥ] M; °saṃpanna° NL
 23 °māyavibhūṣitaḥ] N; °mālāvibhūṣitaḥ M; °mālāvibhūṣitaiḥ L
 24 carubhug brahmacaryasthaḥ] M; carabhug brahmacaryastho N; carubhūt brahmacar-yasya L
 25 °pūjakaḥ] NM; °pūjitaḥ L
 26 °mūrṭiḥ] M; °mūrṭi° NL
 27 rūpaṃ] NM; pūrvaṃ L
 28 sādhakendrāṇāṃ] NM; sādhakaindrāṇā L
 29 vrataṃ jñeyaṃ tadātmakam] NM; vrata jñeyaṃ tathātmakam L
 30 śuklakaupīnavāso vā uṣṇīṣākṣakamaṇḍaluḥ] NM; śuklakaubī(pī)navāsaṃ va uṣṇīṣākṣata-(ka)maṇḍalum L
 31 vasennityaṃ] N; vasannityaṃ ML
 32 bhikṣā°] ML; bhikṣa° N
 33 japa°] NM; śiva° L
 34 bhaved asau] conj.; bhavedasauditi N; bhaved iti ML
 35 Here there is a flourish marking a chapter-break in N, and in the Southern sources there is a chapter-colophon: iti śrī matsarvajñānottare śivavratapataḥ 'ṣṭādaśaḥ M; iti sarvajñānottare kriyāpāde śivavrataprakaraṇam L

ataḥ param pravakṣyāmi lakṣaṇam³⁶ tu śivālaye
sthāpanam caiva liṅgasya yasmin sarvaṁ pratiṣṭhitam³⁷ 19.1
brahmādyā devatāḥ sarvā liṅgam āśritya saṁsthitāḥ³⁸
tasmād vai sthāpayel liṅgam³⁹ śāstradr̥ṣṭena karmaṇā 19.2
cīrṇavidyāvratō⁴⁰ yogī gurudevāgnipūjakah⁴¹

Next, I shall teach the best observance among observances, which is known as the Śiva-vrata and which is revered by *asuras* and gods alike. (18.1)

Pure pale ash [should be used, and] white dress and unguents; he should wear a white sacred thread and be adorned by a chignon of matted locks. (18.2)

He should be equipped with all [suitable] ornaments, [and] adorned with white garlands; he should consume [only the pure ritual gruel-offering known as] *caru*; he should observe the chaste conduct of a student; he should venerate Śiva, the fire and his guru. (18.3)

He should be mantra-bodied;⁴² the appearance (*rūpam*) of excellent *sādhakas* [who follow this observance] is to be the same as that of Śiva: the observance must be understood as consisting in this. (18.4)

Alternatively, he may wear [just] a white loin-cloth, [and bear] a turban, rosary and spouted water-pot. (18.5ab)

He should dwell constantly in a temple of Śiva, eating alms, controlling his senses, devoted to recitation and meditation, maintaining silence, venerating Śiva, the fire and his guru. When a year has passed, he will become equal to Śiva. (18.5c–6)

Next, I shall teach the characteristics of a temple of Śiva, as well as [how to perform] the installation of the *liṅga*, in which the universe is [itself] ‘installed.’ (19.1)

36 lakṣaṇam] NMT; lakṣmaṇam L

37 sarvaṁ pratiṣṭhitam] M; sarvapratiṣṭhitam N; sarvapratiṣṭhitāḥ TL

38 devatāḥ sarvā liṅgam āśritya saṁsthitāḥ] *em.*; devatā sarvā liṅgam āśritya saṁsthitā N; devatāḥ sarve liṅgam āśritya saṁsthitāḥ M; devatā sarve liṅgam āśritya saṁsthitāḥ T; devatās sarve liṅgam āśritya saṁsthitāḥ L

39 sthāpayel liṅgam śāstra°] MTL; sthāpaye liṅgam śāstra° N

40 cīrṇavidyāvratō yogī] N; cīrṇo vidyāvratō yena M; cīṇyām vidyāvratā yoga T; cīṇyām vidyāvratō yogī L. Cf., e.g., *Mohacūḍottara* (NGMPP A 182/2, f. 2r): *cīrṇavidyāvratō mantrījñāna-vān susamāhitaḥ*.

41 °pūjakah] NML; °pūrvakah T

42 I assume that this means that the mantras of Śiva should be installed upon his body.

All the gods, beginning with Brahmā, reside in the *liṅga*; therefore a yogin who venerates his guru, God and the fire and who has performed his *vidyāvratā* should install the *liṅga*, following the procedure taught in scripture. (19.2–3b)

We shall return below to the use of the term *vidyāvratā*, which I have not translated here. First we may observe that these passages of the *Kiraṇa* and *Sarvajñānottara* might appear to confirm Wedemeyer's observation that the *vrata*s in early Śaiva works were observances in which the *sādhaka* imitated God (2013, 165).

The early Śaiva Tantric paradigm for the transgressive *vrata*, then, was one of *imitatio dei*—mimicking the activity of the god in the interest of eliding the (presumably mistaken) sense of a gulf between him and the devotee. In none of these rites is there mention of transcendence of conceptuality or attainment of any epistemic nonduality—the concern seems entirely to be one of nonduality in the sense of union with the god Śiva.

Imitation of forms of god, whether pure or transgressive, seems indeed to be typical of *vrata*s in early Śaiva sources, but it is not the invariable rule, as the *Nīśvāsa* demonstrates.⁴³ Several *vrata*s are described in the course of the work, but there is one passage in which a set of nine is concisely described together, namely in chapter 3 of the *Guhyasūtra*. A brief summary of the contents of that chapter will help to contextualise that description, showing that it is part of a chapter devoted to 1) preparations for magical pursuits, and 2) magical procedures:

43 Nemec also (2014, 273) expresses doubt about this point of Wedemeyer's:

I am, in a word, not convinced that the many transgressive practices in the “early period” of Śaiva tantra, defined as “pre-tenth century” (165), involve a practice of *imitatio dei*, “of union with the god Śiva,” to the exclusion of “transcendence of conceptuality or attainment of any epistemic nonduality” (ibid.).

As to what states of consciousness such non-imitative observances might or might not be intended to achieve, the text gives us no direct information; we can only say that it does elsewhere describe practices whose purpose is said to be transcending duality, for example in yogic meditations described in *Uttarasūtra* 5.42–43 and *Nayasūtra* 4.55 ff., and that a non-dualist cosmogony is sketched out in *Uttarasūtra* 1.13.

Summary of *Guhyasūtra* 3

Preparations for magical pursuits

- 3.1–2 Having set up the God of gods in a suitable place, one may employ a ritual assistant (*uttarasādhaka*) for attaining the highest *siddhi*.
 3.3–6 Qualifications of the *uttarasādhaka*.
 3.7–11 Construction of a special dwelling for the pursuit of *siddhi*.
 3.12c–16 Alternative: a suitable cave or empty temple. One should live from vegetables or begging or from roots, and perform fasts (*cān-drāyaṇa*, etc.)
 3.17–22 Prognostication of success in *siddhi* by consulting SVAPNA-MĀṆAVAKA by calling him to appear in one's sleep.
 3.22–23 Prognostication by consulting AMOGHAMANTRARĀJA.
 3.24–27 Catoptromantic prognostication (*prasīnā*) using virginal children and the mantra of CAṆḌĪ.
 3.28–29 *japa* using the *akṣamālā* [in order to prepare it].
 3.31–43b *vratas*.

Magical procedures

- 3.43c–112 *sādhana*s for attaining various *siddhis*.

Having underlined the context, we may now turn to the *vratas* given in this chapter, followed, by way of example, by one magical procedure. We may note that all of these observances transgress social norms to some degree, but that none unambiguously involves *imitatio dei*:

siddhi-m-aiśvaryayogyas⁴⁴ tu na ca hiṃsanti hinsakāḥ 3.29
siddhavidyāvratastho hi jape⁴⁵ ca vratam ārabhet
 go mātā ca pitā bhrātā atithir mitra brāhmaṇaḥ 3.30
 hatō me pāpa[[(cāre)]]_{ṇa}⁴⁶ caren (1) **Mithyāvratam** vrati
 <<karasthena kapā>>lena⁴⁷ khaṭvāṅgī bhasmaguṇṭhitaḥ 3.31
 śmaśāne carate rātrau (2) **Śmaśānavrata** ucyate

44 °yogyas tu] NW; °yogye tu K

45 jape] NW; japam K

46 pāpa[[(cāre)]]_{ṇa} K; yāpa XX_{ṇa} N; yāpa Xreṇa W; pāpakāreṇa conj. Sanderson (2006, 209)

47 karasthena kapālena] conj. Sanderson; ---lena NW; lna K

nṛtyate gāyate caiva unmatto hasate bruvan⁴⁸ 3.32
 bhasmāṅgī cīravāśaś ca (3) Gaṇavratam idaṃ smṛtaṃ
 japayukto bhaikṣabhujo loṣṭuśāyī jitendriyaḥ 3.33
 dhyānaśaṃyamayuktaś ca (4) Loṣṭukavratam ācaret
 rikṣavyāghrasamā[[kīrṇe]]⁴⁹ <<vane siṃ>>hasamākule 3.34
 jitanidrāśano⁵⁰ jāpī (5) Kāṣṭhavratam idaṃ caret
 gāyate nṛtyate jāpī strīrūpī valayabhūṣitaḥ⁵¹ 3.35
 śūrppakandukaveṇībhiś (6) Citravratam idaṃ caret
 śastrapāṇir dayāyukta-m-aṭe trāteva⁵² †jativān† 3.36
 japadhyānārccanirato (7) Vīravratam idaṃ caret
 varṣaśītātapair ddehan tāpayed dhi su--- 3.37⁵³
 japadhyānarataś caiva (8) Mahāvratas sa ucyate
 ratisaṃbhogakuśalāṃ rūpayauvanaśālinīm 3.38
 īdṣīṃ striyam āsādy niruddhendriyagocaraḥ
 cumbanālīṅganaṃ kuryāl līṅgaṃ sthāpya bhagopari 3.39
 japadhyānaparo bhūtvā (9) Asidhāravrataṃ caret
 yadi kāmavaśaṃ gacchet patate⁵⁴ narake dhruvam 3.40
 navātmakaṃ japel lakṣaṃ ((tasya)) ---ddhaye⁵⁵
 abdaṃ ṣaṇmāsamātraṃ vā yaś cared vratam uttamam 3.41
 tasya siddhiḥ prajāyeta adhamā madhyamottamā⁵⁶
 vratasthaḥ⁵⁷ pañcalakṣāṇi punar japtvā tu siddhyate 3.42
 sarve mantrāś ca siddhyante īpsitaṃ ca phalaṃ bhavet

[A spell for travelling great distances:]

oṃ namo vāyupathacāriṇe amitagatiparāṅkramāya vimale kulu 2⁵⁸
 †thaṭha 3.43

48 bruvan] NW; dhruvam K

49 °kīrṇe] conj.; °kīrṇa° K; °kā--- N; °kā ⊔ W

50 °drāśano] N; drāmano K; °drāsano W

51 valayabhūṣitaḥ] conj. (unmetrical); valabhūṣitaḥ NKW

52 m-aṭe trāteva] conj.; maṭhe trā--- N; maṭhatrā ⊔ ca K; maṭhe trā ⊔ W

53 °tāpayed dhi su] N; °tāpaye ⊔ K; °tāpayed vi ⊔ W

54 °vaśaṃ gacchet patate] conj.; °vaśaṃ cche patate N; °vratam gacchet patate K; °vaśaṃ chai Xpatate W

55 lakṣaṃ tasya ---ddhaye] em.; lakṣa---ddhaye N; lakṣa ⊔ dvaye K; lakṣaṃ tasya ⊔ dvaye W;
 lakṣaṃ tasya mantrasya siddhaye conj. Diwakar Acharya; lakṣaṃ saṃvatsaradvaye conj.
 Diwakar Acharya

56 °mottamā] K; °mottamāḥ NW

57 vratasthaḥ] K; vratastha NW

58 kulu 2] conj. Sanderson; kula---2 N; kulaṃ 2 K; kula 2 W

śilā suvarṇadhātuṅ ca ((ka)) --- tam
 varāhavaśasaṃpiṣṭaṃ⁵⁹ sahasraparimantritam 3.44
 navātmakam punar japtvā pādaū caiva pralepaye[[t]]
 gacchate so 'parīśrānto yojanānām śatadvayam 3.45

[Once the rosary has been thus prepared, he becomes] ready for *siddhis* and power. (29cd)

Dangerous creatures do not harm one who has [first] accomplished an observance [that qualifies one] for [using] Spells: he should begin an observance by means of recitation (*jape*[= *japena*]).⁶⁰ (30ab)

The one engaged in observance should practise the False Observance (*mithyāvrata*) [by wandering about proclaiming]: "I have committed bad deeds: I have killed a cow, mother, father, brother, a guest, friend, brahmin!" (30c–31b)

[If] one wanders in the cremation-ground at night, with a skull in one's hand and a *khaṭvāṅga*, covered in ashes, that is called the cremation-ground observance (*śmaśānavrata*). (31c–32b)

If one dances, sings, laughs and talks madly, with the body smeared in ashes and wearing rags, this is called the Gaṇavrata. (32c–33b)

One performs the Clod-of-Earth Observance (*loṣṭukavratam*) by being engaged in recitation, feeding on alms, sleeping on the earth, with senses controlled, engaged in meditation and restraint. (33c–34b)

One may perform the Block-of-Wood Observance (*kāṣṭhavratam*) in a forest full of bears, tigers and lions, conquering the urges to sleep and eat, [constantly] reciting. (34c–35b)

If one takes on the appearance of a woman and sings and dances, adorned with bracelets, with a winnowing fan, ball and plait, one observes the Colourful Observance (*citravratam*). (35c–36b)

With a weapon in hand, full of compassion, if one wanders like a saviour of creatures (?)⁶¹ focussed upon recitation, meditation and worship, one performs the Warrior Observance (*vīravratam*). (36c–37b)

59 varāhavaśasaṃpiṣṭaṃ] *conj.*; varāhava+sa+saṃpiṣṭa^o N; varāhavamasaṃpiṣṭaṃ K; varāhavaśasaṃpiṣṭa W

60 This replaces the translation, in which I no longer believe, of 30ab that we offered on p. 285 of Goodall, Sanderson, Isaacson et al. 2015.

61 This tentative translation assumes that *jatavān* is an error for *jantavām*, intended as a genitive plural with the sense of *jantūnām*!

If one torments the body with rain, cold and heat, ..., devoted to recitation and meditation, this is called the Great Observance (*mahāvratāḥ*). (37c–38b)

A woman skilled in the pleasures of love-making, endowed with beauty and youth; such a woman one should procure, holding one's senses back from the objects of the senses, and one should kiss and embrace [her], placing the penis upon her sex while remaining focussed upon recitation and meditation—one performs [thus] the Sword-Blade Observance (*asidhārāvrataṃ*). If one should succumb to the control of desire, then one certainly falls into hell. (38c–40)

One should recite the NAVĀTMAN one lakh times ... for [*si*] *ddhi*: one who [thus] observes such an excellent observance for a year or just six months attains lowest, middling or best *siddhi*. But if, while observing such a *vrata*, someone recites five lakh times, then [that mantra] succeeds [for him] (*siddhyate*), and all mantras succeed for him and he attains the fruits he desires. (41–43b)

[Using the mantra] OM NAMO VĀYUPATHACĀRIṆE AMITAGATI-PARĀKRAMĀYA VIMALE KULU KULU SVĀHĀ, [and taking] arsenic, gold [and?] a mineral, ..., ground up with pig fat/marrow, over which one has recited [the NAVĀTMAN] 1000 times, he should smear [the mixture] on his feet/legs, while once again reciting the NAVĀTMAN: he will travel 200 *yojanās* unwearied! (43c–45)

Right at the beginning of the above-quoted passage, we find a further attestation of the term *vidyāvrata*, and this time, rather than prevaricating further, I have proposed translating it as “an observance [that qualifies one] for [using] Spells.” There are other passages that can and will be adduced in support of this, but I think that it should already be becoming clear from this passage of the *Guhyasūtra* and from the passage quoted just before from the *Sarvajñānottara* that the different particular *vratas* that are performed serve to prepare the performer for some subsequent religious activity that involves the use of the mantra or *vidyā*. In the case of the *Guhyasūtra*, it is the pursuit of *siddhi* for which the *sādhaka* is prepared; in the case of the *Sarvajñānottara*, the individual is prepared for the performance of the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) of a *linga*. From the beginning of chapter 10 of the *kriyāpāda*, we learn that it is also an essential to the consecration of an *ācārya* in the *Matanḡapārameśvara*:

catuṣpādārthakuśalaṃ mahotsāhaṃ hy aninditaṃ 10.2
 ṣaṭpadārthapraṇītārthaṃ sarvabhūtahite ratam
 gurus tam abhiṣīñcet tu cīrṇavidyāvrataṃ naram 10.3

Rāmakaṇṭha: *atha kiṃ tad vidyāvratam yat tena cīrṇam ity ucyate:*

vidyāśaktir ihopāttā japtavyā prāk chivālaye
saṃniyamendriyagrāmam abdam ekaṃ śuciṣmatā 10.4
nityaṃ carubhujā bhūmyāṃ kuśaprastaraśāyinā
pūjāgnibhavane yuktacetasā bhāvitātmanā 10.5

Rāmakaṇṭha: [*vidyāśaktiḥ*] *vyomavyāpilakṣaṇā*.⁶²

The guru should consecrate [as an *ācārya*] a man who is skilled in what is taught in all four *pādas*, who has great energy, who is beyond reproach, who expounds the meaning of the teachings [encapsulated] in the six topics [of this scripture], who is devoted to the welfare of all beings, who has performed the observance for [the propitiation of his] mantra.

Rāmakaṇṭha: Now if you ask what this *vidyāvrata* is which he must have observed, this is what the text teaches:

The power of the *vidyā* that is mentioned here [in this compound *vidyāvrata*] is first to be recited for a year in a temple to Śiva, while exercising control of the senses, maintaining purity, eating daily [only the sacrificial gruel known as] *caru*, sleeping on the ground in the room reserved for *pūjā* and fire[-sacrifice] on a spread of *kuśa*-grass, with his mind engaged [in meditation], focussed.

Rāmakaṇṭha: It [viz. the power of the *vidyā*] is the *VYOMAVYĀPIN*.

Once this preparation, taking the form of the observance of one among a variety of possible *vratas* (but ideally one suitable to the mantra to be put to use, as seems already to be implied in *Kiraṇa* 49.17ab above, and as we shall see confirmed below), is complete, the observer can be called *cīrṇavidyāvratatḥ* (as here and in *Sarvajñānottara* 19.3a) or *siddhavidyāvratasthaḥ* (as in *Guhyasūtra* 3.30a).

If we make such an assumption, then we can see how the expressions *vratacaryā* and *vidyāvrata* might be regarded as interchangeable in some con-

62 From Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary, only the *avataraṇikā* and the commentary to 10.4–6 are quoted here (not the remarks on 10.2c–3). The *pratika* in square brackets is supplied by the editor.

texts,⁶³ even though they are not actually synonymous. It also becomes clear how it is that *vidyāvrata* can be characterised as preparatory mantra-propitiation and therefore equivalent to what may also be called *puraścaraṇa*. Sanderson characterises it in such a way when referring to the account of the Bhairavācārya in Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*:

With this account of a *pūrvasevā*, also called *puraścaryā* or *vidyāvrata*, i.e. the initial period of ascetic *japaḥ* etc. to be undertaken after one has received a Mantra, whereby one becomes able to accomplish feats (*kar-māṇi*) with that Mantra ...⁶⁴

So if *vrata* and *vratacaryā* and some other terms may seem to be used interchangeably in some works with *vidyāvrata*, it is because the principal purpose of the *vratas* taught in the early Mantramārga seems to be to propitiate mantras prior to further religious activities involving those mantras, rendering those who complete such observances describable by such terms as *cīrṇavidyāvrata*, *siddhavidyāvrata* and so forth.⁶⁵ Various observances can, in other words, be observed in order to become one “who has completed the observance [required for the propitiation] of a *vidyā*.”

This discussion might seem to suggest that in finding the *original* meaning of the expression *vidyāvrata* we believe that we have found its immutable semantic core, but that is not really what I intend to say. Of course the term *vidyāvrata* may have gone on to evolve and be used in contexts that suggest that one might elsewhere also or instead render it as “knowledge observance” or “con-sort observance” (Wedemeyer 2013, 136) or, as we shall see below, “observance relating to a *vidyāṅgamantra*.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, one might argue that we have in

63 Cf. Wedemeyer 2013, 159: “It is worth noting that the *Tantrasadbhāva/Kubjikāmata* and the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* clearly take the terms *vidyāvrata* and *vratacaryā* to be synonymous.”

64 Sanderson 2001, 13, note 11. Wedemeyer quotes from this definition (2013, 255, note 96), but in a manner that suggests that he was oddly not convinced by it, or not convinced that the same kind of *vidyāvrata* was being alluded to by Sanderson:

Sanderson (“History”, 13n11) also describes a very different rite [*scil.* from that referred to in *Vīṇāśīkhatantra* 180?] when he speaks of *vidyāvrata* as an “initial period of ascetic *japaḥ* etc. to be undertaken after one has received a Mantra,” i.e., he takes it to be a kind of *pūrvasevā* or *puraścaryā*.

65 Another purpose of performing *vratas* in the early Mantramārga is of course expiation: see, for example, *Guhyasūtra* 9.10a, *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 10.3c, both quoted below, and Hṛdayaśiva's *Prāyaścittasamuccaya paśsim* (appendix to Sathyanarayanan 2015).

66 We do not aim, however, to examine here all later passages in which the meaning of *vidyāvrata* is arguably stretched. One such passage is a sequence of verses discussing the term that has been borrowed from the *Tantrasadbhāva* into the *Kubjikāmata*: that dis-

any case not started from its point of *origin*, for the term has presumably been drawn from or at least coloured by the brahmanical expression *vidyāvratasnāta* that is common from the *Gr̥hyasūtras* onwards and that we find, for instance, in *Manusmṛti* 4.31:

*vedavidyāvratasnātān śrotriyān gr̥hamedhinaḥ
pūjayed dhavyakavyena viparītāṃś ca varjayet*

Olivelle (2005, 125–126) translates:

At rites for gods and ancestors, he should honor individuals who have bathed after completing the Vedas, vedic learning, or vedic vows, who are vedic scholars, or who are householders, but avoid individuals different from these.⁶⁷

It seems to me very likely that the use of *vidyāvrata* in the Mantramārga—and *a fortiori* of *vidyāvratasnāta* (*Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 10.20 and *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha* 21.35)—should have been influenced by earlier brahmanical usage such as we see in the *Gr̥hyasūtras* and in the *Manusmṛti*. Nonetheless, in the

cussion begins with Bhairava saying (*Tantrasadbhāva* 4.2ab = *Kubjikāmata* 25.30ab): *śṛṇu devī pravakṣyāmi vidyāyā vrataṃ uttamam*, “Listen, O goddess: I shall teach the excellent observance of/for *vidyā*.”

- 67 Olivelle also adds a note that explains that there is doubt about the term (2005, 270):
[M]ost commentators take *vedavidyāvrata* as three separate categories. The first refer to those who have only learned the Veda by heart; the second to those who have mastered its meaning; and the third to those who have completed the vows associated with vedic study, such as living with the teacher for a certain number of years, even if they have not mastered the Veda.

This interpretation is not wholly consistent with what we find earlier in *Gr̥hyasūtra* literature. In *Jaiminigr̥hyasūtra* 1.19 (p. 18), for instance, we read:

trayaḥ snātakā bhavanti ha smāhāruṇir gautamo vidyāsnātako vratasnātako vidyāvratasnātaka iti teṣāṃ uttamah śreṣṭhas tulyau pūrvau.

Caland (1922, 32) translates:

According to Āruṇi Gautama there are three kinds of Snātakas: the Snātaka by knowledge, the Snātaka by the completion of his observances, and the Snātaka by knowledge and by the completion of his observances. Of these the last ranks foremost, the first two are equal (to each-other).

Cf. *Pāraskaragr̥hyasūtra* (*kāṇḍa* 2, *kāṇḍikā* 5, sentences 32–35, p. 220):

trayaḥ snātakā bhavanti: vidyāsnātako vratasnātako vidyāvratasnātaka iti 32 samāpya vedam asamāpya vrataṃ yaḥ samāvartate, sa vidyāsnātakah 33 samāpya vrataṃ asamāpya vedam yaḥ samāvartate, sa vratasnātakah 34 ubhayaṃ samāpya yaḥ samāvartate, sa vidyāvratasnātaka iti 35

Niśvāsa certainly, and probably throughout the early Mantramārga, the use of *vidyāvrata* to mean “observance for [the propitiation of] a mantra” seems to be the norm. As Sanderson has observed in the note of his that we have just quoted, *vidyāvrata* seems indeed to be used in the same way as *pūrvasevā* in the *Niśvāsa*. Many short paragraphs of prose in the grimoires (*kalpa*) that we find in the *Guhyasūtra* sketch out the essential features of particular observances, and these paragraphs are very often concluded with a succinct statement of the magical powers that can be won by following them (the power to fly, for example, or to disappear); but sometimes we find instead the assertion that the observance fulfils the requirements of *pūrvasevā* (10.27, 10.99, 14.26) or *puraścaraṇa* (14.24) or, as here in *Guhyasūtra* 10.91, the requirements of the *vidyāvrata*:

devaṃ pūjyāgnau juhuyād audumbarasamidhānāṃ tryaktānāṃ sahasraṃ tṛsandhyaṃ. kṣīrāśī saptā dināni juhuyāt. cīrṇṇavidyāvrato bhavati.

Having worshipped the Lord, he should oblate into the fire at the three junctures of the day a thousand pieces of Udumbara-wood smeared with the three [sweet substances]. Consuming [only] milk, he should make oblations [in this manner] for seven days. He will become one who has accomplished the *vidyāvrata*.

Before I wrap up the discussion, it should be mentioned that a different hypothesis as to the meaning of *vidyāvrata* was advanced some years ago, when many of the above-cited passages had not yet come to light, by Judit Törzsök when translating chapter 10 of the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*. We quote here the beginning of the chapter (without the apparatus) from Törzsök’s 1999 edition:

devy uvāca
 mayā deva purā prṣṭaṃ vratayāgavivarjitam
 siddhayogeśvarīṇāṃ tu mataṃ mantraprasādhakam 1
 kiṃ tu deva pratijñātaṃ siddhir vidyāṅgasamsthita
 tasmāt teṣu samāsenā vratacaryāṃ bravīhi me 2
 bhairava uvāca
 ādau tu sarvasiddhyartham sarvaviḡhnavināśanam
 sarvapāpāpanodārtham **vidyāvrataṃ** samārabhet 3
 sādhaḡ sādhaḡ vātha mantratadgatacetasāḡ
 yāḡam kṛtvā vidhānena vratacaryāṃ samācaret 4
 bhasmalepitasarvāṅḡ maunī śuklāmbaraḡ sudhīḡ
 sitayajñopavītaś ca akāmo niyame sthitaḡ 5

Here is Törzsök's translation (1999*, 143):

The Goddess spoke

I have previously asked you about the Doctrine of the Yoginīs (*Siddha-yogeśvarīmata*), O God, which helps to make mantras effective (*mantraprasādhakam*) without any observances or worship. (1)

However, you have asserted, O God, that success depends on the ancillary mantras; therefore, tell me briefly about how to practise the observance[s] associated with them (*teṣu*). (2)

Bhairava spoke

First [before any other practice to attain a specific supernatural power], for all kinds of supernatural powers, [and] for expiatory purposes, one has to start the observance of the [ancillary] mantras, which destroys all obstacles. (3)

The male or female practitioner, with his/her mind focused on the mantra, should perform worship according to prescriptions and then undertake the vow (*vratacaryāṃ*). (4)

[In the first of these] all his limbs covered with ashes, the practitioner is to observe silence and should wear a white garment; he should be of good understanding. He must have a white sacred thread, he should be free from desire and established in self-restraint. (5)

Now the reason that Törzsök translates *vidyāvrata* with “the observance of the [ancillary] mantras” is that each of the *vratas* in the chapter is specific to the cultivation of a particular auxiliary mantra—the first one, given above in verse 5, must, by elimination, be an observance for the HṚDAYA-mantra—and those auxiliary mantras belong to a set known in this work and in others as the *vidyāṅgamantras*.⁶⁸ It was therefore reasonable for her to assume that *vidyāvrata* was short for *vidyāṅgavrata*, for she had no evidence to suggest otherwise, and she had parallel evidence that seemed to reinforce this hypothesis, namely the testimony of *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha* 21 (from which Törzsök quotes, citing Alexis Sanderson's collation, in her notes on p. 78).

That passage again gives a series of *vratas*, which are, by the way, again not instances of *imitatio dei*, and which are again specific to the *vidyāṅgamantras*; so it is wholly understandable that this seemed to Törzsök in 1999 to confirm

68 For these mantras and their individual names, see Brunner 1986 and, more recently, Goodall 2004, 222–223.

the notion that the element *vidyā* in the collocation *vidyāvrata* must refer to the *vidyāṅgamantras*. I think, however, that it will now be clear that chapter 21 of the *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha* might in fact be interpreted equally well internally if we assume that *vidyāvrata* is used instead to mean “observance for [propitiation of] a mantra” and that, given the other attestations of the term that we now know about in, for instance, the *Guhyasūtra*, the *Mataṅga*, and the *Sarvajñānottara*, it actually makes better sense to assume this broader interpretation in this passage too.

There is somewhat better evidence for pinpointing the place of the *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha* in a relative chronology of Saiddhāntika writings than there is for most other pre-tenth-century Siddhāntatantras, for in terms of both doctrinal and social developments, it seems later than the *sūtras* of the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā* (see Goodall, Sanderson, Isaacson et al. 2015, 41–44, 47–50, 58), and yet it cannot be later than Sadyojyotiḥ, who has written a commentary upon it and who, Sanderson argues (2006b, in particular p. 76), lived between c. 675 and 725 AD. The edition is not widely accessible, which may be why Wedemeyer did not refer to this passage, and its text almost invariably needs to be corrected against manuscripts, but this particular chapter has just been published anew, in the form in which it appears when quoted by Hṛdayaśiva in his *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (see Sathyanarayanan 2015, Appendix chapter 10).⁶⁹

japtvā vratais ca vidhivat snātaḥ siddhyai japet manum 10.27
 na vilambitam aspaṣṭan na cāsvikṛtam adrutam
 nāsaṃkhyam na manobhrāntam japaṃ kuryād vicakṣaṇaḥ 10.28
 sitavāsāḥ sitoṣṇīṣī sitayajñopavīty api
 sitānulepanasragvī cared VIDYĀDHIPAVratam 10.29
 raktāmbaradharo mantrī raktamālyānulepanaḥ
 māsam ekam puroktaṇ ca cared BRAHMAŚIROvratam 10.30
 pītavāsās caren māsam pītamālyānulepanaḥ
 pītayajñopavīti ca RUDRĀṆYĀ vratam uttamam 10.31
 vrataṃ PURUṢTUTASYāpi māsam ekam cared budhaḥ
 sarvakṛṣṇopacāreṇa śivārcanarataḥ sadā 10.32

69 In the collation below, H is the reading of Sathyanarayanan's transcription of the twelfth-century manuscript transmitting Hṛdayaśiva's work (where this chapter is the tenth); Ed. is of course the Mysore edition of 1937 (where the chapter is the twenty-first), and N marks the readings of the old Nepalese palm-leaf manuscript filmed by the NGMPP on Reel A 30/6.

citrāmbaṛadharo dhīraś citramālyānulepanaḥ
 sarvasiddhiparo mantrī caret PĀŚUPATAM vrataṁ 10.33
 vratavratasamāptau ca kalaśena śivāmbhasā
 svamantraparijaptena svātmānam abhiṣecayet 10.34
 evaṁ vidyāvratasnātaḥ sarvatrādhikṛto 'naghaḥ
 japeṇ mantram anudvignaḥ svakalpavidhinā tataḥ 10.35

27c vrataiś] H, Ed.; vrajaiś N • 27d manum] H, Ed.; matam N • 28a na vilambitam] H, Ed.; avilambitam N • 28c manobhrāntam] H; mobhrāntam N (unmetrical); manobhrānta° Ed. • 29ab sitavāsāḥ sitoṣṇīṣi sita°] *em.*; sitavāsā sitoṣṇīṣi sita° N; sitavāsā sitoṣṇīṣi sita° H; sitavāsāḥ sitoṣṇīṣaḥ sita° Ed. • 29c sitānulepanasragvī] *conj.*; sitānulepanaḥ sragvī N, Ed.; sitānulepanaḥ sragmī H • 29d vidyādhipa°] Ed.; vidyādhipam N, H • 30a raktā°] H, Ed.; rattā° N • 31a pītavāsāḥ] N, Ed.; pītavāsā H • 31c rudrāṇyā] N, Hac, Ed.; rudrāṇī° Hpc • 32a puruṣtutasyāpi] N, H; puruḥtutasyāpi Ed.pc; purutasyāpi Ed.ac • 33c sarvasiddhi°] N, H; sarvasiddha° Ed. • 33d pāśupatam] N, H; pāśupata° Ed. • 34a vratavratasamāptau ca] Ed.; vrataṁ vratasamāptau ca N; vratavrataṁ samāptau tu H • 35a vidyāvrata°] N, H; vidyāvrataḥ Ed. • 35b sarvatrādhikṛto] N; sarvatrāvīkṛto H; sarvato dhikṛto Ed.

Having recited [a particular mantra] along with [the practice of one of the] observances in accordance with the rules, and having bathed [at the end of the observance], one may recite that mantra for attaining supernatural powers. (27cd)

The skilled practitioner should do his recitation not too slowly, not indistinctly, not without taking [the meaning of what he recites] in, not too fast, not without counting, and not with his thoughts in confusion. (28)

Dressed in white, with a white turban and a white sacred thread and white unguents and garland, he should perform the observance for the VIDYĀDHIPĀ-mantra. (29)

Dressed in red garments and red garlands and unguents the Mantrin should first perform for one month the stated observance for the BRAHMAŚIRĀḤ. (30)

Wearing yellow garments and yellow garlands and unguents and a yellow sacred thread he should perform the excellent observance of RUDRĀṆĪ for a month. (31)

The competent ritualist (*budhaḥ*), constantly devoted to the worship of Śiva, should perform the observance for PURUṢTUTA for one month with all accoutrements being black. (32)

The mantrin, intent on attaining all manner of special powers, should perform the observance for the PĀŚUPATĀSTRA resolutely (*dhīraḥ*) dressed in multi-coloured garments and with multicoloured garlands and unguents. (33)

And upon the completion of one or another of these observances (*vrata* *vratasamāptau*),⁷⁰ he should pour upon himself Śiva-water that has been consecrated by recitation of his mantra over it from a pot. (34)

Being thus bathed after the observance [in propitiation] of [his] mantra, invested in the right to [pursue] all [manner of special powers], faultless, he should then recite [his chosen] mantra according to the rules of his hand-book,⁷¹ without being afraid. (35)

In the above lines, 27d and 35 seem to make particularly plain that these *vratas* are performed by way of *pūrvasevā*, also known as *vidyāvrata*, as a preliminary to the pursuit of *siddhi*.

Csaba Kiss, following Judit Törzsök's lead, has also alluded to the link between *vidyāṅgamantras* and the name *vidyāvrata*, but I think it will be clear from what he says below that the evidence that his new edition of parts of the *Brahmayāmala* has recently brought to the discussion again supports rather the broader interpretation, in which the element *vidyā* alludes to any mantra, not just a *vidyāṅgamantra*. Below are his remarks (2015, 211) on *Brahmayāmala* 21.4–5b, which he constitutes and translates as follows:

ete nava vratā proktā vidyābhede vyavasthitā
eteṣāṃ tu yathānyāyaṃ yathā caryā bhavē tv iha
kathayāmi mahādevi tan me nigadataḥ śṛṇu

These are the nine ascetic observances (*vrata*), corresponding to [the syllables of] the Vidyā[, Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī's nine-syllable mantra]. I shall now teach you how to perform them correctly, O Mahādevī. Listen to me [while I] teach you.

... these observances are in fact called the *vidyāvratas* in 21.10c, 42d, 47a, 51b, 53b, 75d and 102d; the nine types of observances obviously correspond to the nine syllables of the Navākṣaravidyā (OM CAṆḌE KĀPĀLINI SVĀHĀ), taught in BraYā 2; *vidyāvratas* may also serve, as seen in many tantric texts, as preliminary propitiation, by the use of *vidyāṅgamantras*, of a mantra to be applied later, or simply for the purpose of gaining

⁷⁰ The text and interpretation are not certain here. A possible conjectural emendations that suggests itself is *vratī vratasamāptau*.

⁷¹ For this sense, see *Tāntrikābhīdhānaśāstra*, vol. 2, s.v. *kalpa*.

mastery over the Vidyā, similarly to the way it is taught in the *Yoginīsaṃcāra*; as Sanderson (2009:134 n. 31) remarks: ...

More closely parallel to these nine observances, as we can now see, are the nine taught in chapter 3 of the *Guhyasūtra*, which are probably each for one of the nine elements of the NAVĀTMAN. So perhaps the association with *vidyāṅga*-mantras is simply a red herring.

Kiss's reference there to Sanderson 2009, 134, note 31 proves to be another passage in which Sanderson reveals that, although he did not spell out every detail of his assumptions and the evidence upon which he based them, he had in fact already assumed the interpretation for which we have been somewhat long-windedly arguing here, both of *vidyāvrata* and of its relation to individual named *vratas*:

The *Yoginīsaṃcāra* requires anyone who has gone through its initiation ceremony and then received consecration (*abhiṣekaḥ*) to adopt one of three forms of ascetic observance in order to gain mastery over the Vidyā (*vidyāvrataṃ*): the Bhairavavrata, the Cāmuṇḍāvrata, or the Triṣaṣṭikula-vrata, the observance of the sixty-three families [of the Mothers], which it also calls the Kāpālavrata, i.e. the Kāpālika.

So let me reiterate my conclusion: we should probably assume that, even if the expression *vidyāvrata* was originally drawn from the common brahmanical expression *vidyāvrataśnāta* that we saw in *Manusmṛti* 4.31, and even if it may have been subsequently coloured in some contexts by other associations of the word *vidyā* (*vidyāṅgamantra*, “knowledge,” “consort”), the expression *vidyāvrata* appears throughout the early Mantramārga to be used with the understanding that it refers primarily to an “observance for [the preliminary propitiation of a] mantra.” While some works (such as the *Saiddhāntika Kiraṇatantra*, and the *Sarvajñānottaratantra*) appear to mention only one way of fulfilling the requirements of the *vidyāvrata*, many others (*Nīśvāsa*, *Yoginīsaṃcāra*, *Brahmayāmala*, *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha*, *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, *Tantrasadbhāva*, *Kubjikāmata*) teach several *vratas*, not all of which are equally transgressive and not all of which involve *imitatio dei*, as alternative ways of realising the *vidyāvrata*.

Finally, let me show how this assumption seems to me to throw light even on passages where none of the terms that we have been discussing actually occur. The first few times I read the beginning of chapter 9 of the *Guhyasūtra*, it seemed to begin with a curious *non sequitur*: the goddess asks a question about how the alphabet, treated as mantra, can be used to bring about supernatural

power and liberation; Śiva's reply, however, first explains at some length how someone should dress half his body as the goddess and the other half as Śiva. How could this, I asked myself, be an answer to the goddess' question? Was the apparent incoherence of the text here an indication that it had become corrupt?

devy uvāca—

mātrkāyā bhavet siddhir mmokṣaṇ caiva maheśvara
 mātrkāśiddhim ākhyāhi mokṣaṇ caiva yathā bhavet 9.1
 tatsamutthās ca ye mantrāḥ kimarthaṇ kathitās tvayā
 etat praśnavaram brūhi ((bha))---phalaṇ hi me 9.2
 īśvara u—
 arddhastrīveśadhārī tu arddhena puruṣas tathā
 arddhena alakaṇ kuryād arddhenaiva jaṭādharāḥ 9.3
 tilakārdhena netrārdhe vālikā hy ekakarṇṇake
 kuṇḍalaṇ hy ekakarṇṇe tu śulan dakṣiṇahastataḥ 9.4
 vāmapārśve⁷² stanaṇ kuryād vāmārdhe caiva mekhalām
 valayaṇ vāmahaste tu vāmapāde tu nūpuraṇ 9.5
 rucakaṇ dakṣiṇe pāde muñjamālāṇ tathā kaṭau⁷³
 kaupīnan dakṣiṇe kuryād vāme strīvastradhāritā 9.6
 śūrppaṇ vāmakare grhṇed ardhanārīśvaravrate⁷⁴
 etad vrataṇ grhītvā tu bhikṣāśī tu jitendriyaḥ 9.7
 japhamarato nityam pratigrahavivarjitaḥ
 triṣkālaṇ⁷⁵ arcayed devaṇ triṣkālaṇ snānaṇ ācāret 9.8
 śākayāvakaḥ bhikṣāśī skandamūlaphalāśinaḥ⁷⁶
 māsam e[[ka]]---samanvitaḥ 9.9
 mucyate 'sau⁷⁷ mahāpāpāt kṣudrasiddhiṇ ca vindate
 dvimāsān madhyamā siddhir abdarddhād uttamā bhavet 9.10
 saṇvatsareṇa siddhis tu vidyāsiddhim avāpnuyāt
 aṇimādyās tu jāyante siddhaiś ca saha modate 9.11
 īpsitāṇ labhate kāmān akāmo mokṣaṇ āpnuyāt

72 vāmapārśve] KW; vāmapārśe N

73 dakṣiṇe pāde muñjamālāṇ tathā kaṭau] *conj.*; dakṣiṇe pa—ñjamālāmstathā kaṭe N; dakṣiṇe ı muñjamālāṇ tathā kaṭau K; dakṣiṇe ıñṭhamālāmstathā kaṭe W

74 °nārīśvara°] *conj.*; °nārīśvaraṇ NW; °nārīśvare K

75 triṣkālaṇ] KW; triṣkāla° N

76 skanda°] NW; kanda° K

77 mucyate 'sau] *em.*; mucyate so NW; mucyate sa K

The Goddess spoke:

From the MĀTRKĀ supernatural power and liberation can come about,
O Lord. Tell me [how to attain] supernatural power and liberation
through the MĀTRKĀ. (1)

Why did you teach the mantras that arise from it? Tell me [the answer
to] this excellent question. ... fruit to me. (2)

The Lord spoke:

Wearing half the dress of a woman and half [that of] a man, on one half,
he should place [feminine] tresses, on one half, he should wear mat-
ted locks. (3)

On one half, there should be a forehead mark; on one half a [forehead]
eye. A ring (*vālikā*) [should be] in one ear; a [pendant] ear-ornament
(*kuṇḍalam*) in one ear. He should put a trident (*śūlam*) in his right
hand and a breast on his left side, a girdle (*mekhalām*) on the left
half, a bangle on the left arm, a woman's anklet on the left leg, a man's
anklet on the right leg and a *muñja*-grass belt. At the hips, he should
put a loin-cloth on the right and wear a woman's garment on the left.
(4–6)

In the left hand, he should hold a winnowing fan in the observance of
Ardhanārīśvara. Adopting this observance he should eat alms, keep
his senses under control, be devoted to regular obligatory recitation
and oblation, rejecting the receipt of gifts. (7–8b)

He should venerate God three times [a day] and perform ablutions
three times [a day]. Eating vegetables and barley-gruel, eating bulbs
(*skanda*^o [= *kanda*^o]), roots and fruits, for one month ... (9)

He will be released from [the retributive force of] major transgressions;
and he will attain low *siddhis* after two months, middling *siddhis* after
half a year and high *siddhis* after a year; he will attain power over the
spell (*vidyāsiddhim*). (10–11b)

The ability to make himself atomic, along with the others [of the yogic
powers], will arise. He will take pleasure in the company of *siddhas*.
He will attain the wishes he desires; if he is without desires, he will
attain liberation. (11c–12b)

Although the words *vrata*, *caryā* and *vidyāvrata* are none of them to be found, it
is now clear to me that this passage makes implicit allusion to the structure now
familiar to us from numerous other passages: the *sādhaka* propitiates a given
mantra, here the MĀTRKĀ, by performing a timed religious observance involv-
ing unusual dress and diet, the rules of which are ideally held to be in some way
appropriate to the mantra in question, and then becomes eligible for the pur-

suit of particular *siddhis*. In the case of the MĀTRKĀ, adopting the appearance of Ardhanārīśvara is particularly appropriate because the MĀTRKĀ is made up of feminine vowels and masculine consonants, which, as is explained elsewhere in the *Niśvāsa*-corpus, are to be applied respectively to the left and right halves of the *sādhaka*'s body before worship in a preliminary rite that prefigures what came to be called *sakalīkaraṇa*.⁷⁸ The *imitatio dei* that is such a prominent feature of some observances, such as this one, now seems as if it should be more precisely characterised as identification with the mantra-deity being propitiated.

Conclusion

So what can be learned from the foregoing pages? In the beginning of this paper, I tried to emphasise the layered structure not only of the *Niśvāsa-tattvasaṃhitā*, but also of the *Guhyasūtra* itself. This incidentally means that we should not only be, as always, cautious in proposals for dating both this and related literature, but that we should perhaps also allow for a broad *fourchette* for the composition of this work, broad enough to cover the periods of composition of other related works.⁷⁹ We should also bear in mind, while attempting to model the relative chronology of early Tantric literature, that it is the very latest layers of the *Guhyasūtra* that provide the closest parallels with the grimoires of the Buddhist *kriyātantras*, in particular with the final chapter, 55, of the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* (see Goodall and Isaacson 2016, *passim*).

We have also learned, I believe, about a further early stage in the history that precedes the familiar idea that Śaiva scriptures were divided into four sections treating knowledge, ritual, yoga and day-to-day behaviour (*jñāna*, *kriyā*, *yoga*, *caryā*). In the period of the redaction of the *Niśvāsa*, initiates were, *de facto*, all *sādhakas* seeking to harness the power of mantras and their *caryā* was not a matter of approved day-to-day behaviour, or “comportment,” but rather of *vrata-caryā*, the performance of timed religious observances. Such timed religious observances could be used, as in many other religious traditions, for expiation, but their primary use in the early Mantramārga was for

78 See *Uttarasūtra* 2.8 and annotation on pp. 351–352 of Goodall, Sanderson, Isaacson et al. 2015.

79 For the possibility that, for instance, the *Rauravasūtrasaṅgraha* might have influenced the cosmographical chapters of the *Guhyasūtra*, see Goodall 2016, 89ff. For the most recent discussion of the dating of the layered corpus that is the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*, see Goodall, Sanderson, Isaacson et al. 2015, 30–73.

mantra-propitiation prior to other activities involving the mantras. Such preliminary mantra-propitiation could also be referred to by such expressions as *vidyāvratā*, *puraścaryā* and *pūrvasevā*. These notions about mantra-use and mantra-propitiation may be found reflected in a wide range of post-*Niśvāsa* pre-tenth-century writings. But once the intake of the religion had broadened to include many who were not occupied with spell-mastery at all, the term *caryā* in the tetrad of tantric topics also regained its (usually non-technical) sense of day-to-day “comportment.” This shift in usage had taken place by the time of the composition of the *Kiraṇa*, in other words by the beginning of the ninth century at the latest.⁸⁰ Finally, the early Śaiva evidence furnished here suggests that this nexus of notions and labels is not such a fertile field as might have been supposed for those searching for evidence of instances of Buddhist influence upon the early Śaiva Mantramārga.

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80 For the observation that the *Kiraṇa* belongs to a group of scriptures whose teachings can be found paraphrased in the *Haravijaya*, which was composed in Kashmir around 830 AD, see Sanderson 2001, 5–6.

Tantrasadbhāva. Electronic edition of Mark Dyczkowski based on NGMPP Reel Nos. A 188/22, A 44/1, and A 44/2.

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