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**TOLERANCE AND ITS LIMITS IN TWELFTH  
CENTURY KASHMIR: TANTRIC ELEMENTS IN  
KALHAᅇA'S RĀJATARANĀIᅇI \***

Judit Törzsök

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JUDIT TÖRZSÖK

TOLERANCE AND ITS LIMITS IN TWELFTH  
CENTURY KASHMIR: TANTRIC ELEMENTS  
IN KALHAṆA'S *RĀJĀTARAṄGIṆĪ*\*

**Introduction: questions of genre**

Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* (RT) is often cited as a unique Sanskrit work on ancient Indian, in particular Kashmirian, history, which unlike most purāṇic sources aims to relate actual historical facts.<sup>1</sup> While the uniqueness of this chronicle is undoubtable, it should also be emphasized that Kalhaṇa himself does not reject purāṇic sources, as is clear from his introduction<sup>2</sup> and from his use of the *Nīlamatapurāṇa* to reconstruct Kashmir's ancient past.<sup>3</sup>

Most research on the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* attempts to strip the text of purāṇic and other legendary or religious material and to identify major historical events, the chronology of kings and the like on the basis of Kalhaṇa's account, compared with other independent

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<sup>1</sup> Kalhaṇa himself states in his introduction (RT 1.15) that he bases his account on historical records such as inscriptions, royal charters and the like to correct the mistakes of his predecessors. For a well-balanced and thorough discussion of the ways in which Kalhaṇa's historicity has been understood and misunderstood, see W. Slaje "In the Guise of Poetry"—Kalhaṇa Reconsidered" In: *Śāstrārambha: Inquiries into the Preamble in Sanskrit* ed. W. Slaje, Wiesbaden, 2008. pp. 207-12.

<sup>2</sup> RT 1.14. For the *Nīlamatapurāṇa* itself, see the editions by K. de Vreese, *Nīlamata or Teachings of Nīla. Sanskrit Text with Critical Notes*, Leiden, 1936 and Ved Kumari, *The Nīlamata Purana*, Srinagar, 1973. See also *A Study of the Nīlamata, aspects of Hinduism in ancient Kashmir*, ed. Ikari Y. Kyoto, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> For the *Nīlamata*'s importance in Kalhaṇa's work, see, for instance, M.A. Stein in RT vol. I. p. 72 ff. and B. Kölver, *Textkritische und philologische Untersuchungen zur Rājatarāṅgiṇī des Kalhaṇa*, Wiesbaden, 1971, p. 133 ff.

witnesses.<sup>4</sup> While such work is necessary and important, other aspects of Kalhaṇa's account have been somewhat less focused upon (with some notable exceptions), including what he may tell us about religion and religious history.<sup>5</sup>

Concerning religious history, even more caution should be applied than in the case of Kalhaṇa's political history. Most myths and legends cited by Kalhaṇa certainly reflect the state of religious currents of his own time rather than of the past he deals with. In spite of problems of chronology, an analysis of religion as described by Kalhaṇa would certainly be useful at least in one respect: to determine Kalhaṇa's own point of view in religious matters. If Kalhaṇa's position becomes clearer, it may also help us to evaluate some of his remarks concerning certain religious currents.

There is of course a certain circularity involved in this inquiry: Kalhaṇa is used to determine his own potential partiality, and then we turn back to him to look for other facts. However, in reality, the circle is usually not completed in full; rather, one question leads to another, although the answers may sometimes be lacking.

Kalhaṇa has been particularly referred to as witness to various tantric or āgamic cults and practices: he mentions several tantric masters, esoteric practices of the *yoginī* cult, the installation of Śaiva images etc.<sup>6</sup> In this paper, I would like to concentrate on a few details that may help us to define better which of these were recommendable, acceptable or unacceptable to Kalhaṇa, and therefore to what extent Kalhaṇa's attitude can be considered tolerant.

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<sup>4</sup> This direction of research was first taken in a thorough way by Stein, whose annotated critical edition (RT) is still the best available.

<sup>5</sup> Kalhaṇa's RT has however been referred to repeatedly in major studies on the religious history of Kashmir, see A. Sanderson, "Religion and the State : Śaiva Officials in the Territory of the Brahmanical Royal Chaplain (with an appendix on the provenance and date of the Netraṅtra) » *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47 (2004): 229-300 and A. Sanderson, "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir" In: *Mélanges tantriques à la mémoire d'Hélène Brunner* ed. D. Goodall et A. Padoux, Pondichery, 2007. pp. 231-44.

<sup>6</sup> For studies that involve discussions of Kalhaṇa's work in this context, see e.g. A. Sanderson "The Śaiva Age—The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism During the Early Medieval Period" In: *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. S. Einoo, Kyoto, 2009. pp.41-350; O. Serbaeva, *Yoginīs in Śaiva Purānas and Tantras*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lausanne, 2006; and S. Hatley, *The Brahmayāmalā and Early Śaiva Cult of Yoginīs*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2007.

First, I shall use an example to show that not everything that potentially looks tantric in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* may indeed belong to tantrism proper. Second, I shall examine some cases in which the king seems to be involved in tantric practices. Finally, I shall cite a few instances in which certain tantric gurus seem to cause the fall of a king. These case studies may shed some light on Kalhaṇa's position concerning tantric cults and traditions. I shall use the word tantric (*tāntrika*) in the more restricted sense of the word, involving the prescription of impure offerings, cremation ground practices and the like, and excluding the domains of mainstream *saiddhāntika* śaivism.

### **Mother goddesses are not always tantric**

The circle of Mothers or *mātr̥cakra* is a recurring set of deities in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*. Stein assumes<sup>7</sup> that the word *mātr̥cakra* is a synonym of *devīcakra* and *rājñīcakra* ('circle of goddesses'), denoting a group of female tantric deities represented in a diagram on stone. In the same context, another translator, R.S. Pandit, identifies them as the set of seven mothers including Vārāhī, represented as statues.<sup>8</sup> Stein's assumption could be supported by the fact that *mātr̥-* is indeed used as a synonym of tantric goddesses, but whether or in what sense they are indeed tantric goddesses in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* is doubtful.

They figure several times in connection with installations in temples: a certain Ugra, guru to king Khiṅkhila also known as Khiṅgala (who appears to have ruled in the first third of the seventh century),<sup>9</sup> established in his own name a god called Ugreśa

<sup>7</sup> In the note to his translation at 1.122.

<sup>8</sup> R.S. Pandit, *Rājatarāṅgiṇī: the Saga of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, Allahabad, 1935. Pandit assumes here that the seven mothers are meant; but when they form a circle, there are always eight of them in the eight directions. *Cakra* of course could just denote 'group,' but it is more likely to refer to the circular arrangement too. Witzel, (1991, *The Brahmins of Kashmir* <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/witzel/kashmirbrahmins.pdf>) remarks that no hard evidence is available on the question.

<sup>9</sup> Stein in RT vol. I. p. 65 and p. 80 identifies this Khiṅkhila as a hephthalite ruler, placing him in the fifth or sixth century. However, D.C. Sircar in *Epigraphia Indica*, 1963, p. 44 identifies the name Khiṅgala in an inscription (found in Kabul, originally from Gardez, on a Vināyaka image) with Khiṅkhila, and on paleographical grounds places the inscription

and a circle of mothers (*māṭṛcakra*).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Śreṣṭhasena, also known as Pravarasena the first (unidentified),<sup>11</sup> founded a sanctuary for a deity called Pravareśvara, together with a *māṭṛcakra*.<sup>12</sup> In these cases, the circle of mothers seems to accompany the main male deity, possibly with a protective function. However, nothing suggests that they receive esoteric *tāntrika* worship. The names imply rather that the male deity is perhaps in the form of a *liṅga* established in the name of the sponsor, according to general *śaiva* practice.<sup>13</sup> No *tāntrika* cult needs to be assumed here. The *māṭṛs* may well be represented by statues (unlike most *tāntrika* mothers) or otherwise, although whether there were seven or eight of them is another question.

In other contexts, when the *māṭṛs* are associated with *tāntrika* practices in some way, they may well be tantric, as well as the male deity who accompanies them. One such story concerns king Baka (said to be son of Mihirakula),<sup>14</sup> who, attracted by a *yoginī* called Bhaṭṭā, becomes a sacrificial victim offered to a circle of goddesses (*devīcakra*).<sup>15</sup> The *yoginī* acquires supernatural powers and flies up into the sky. At the end of the story, it is mentioned that the footprints of the *yoginī*, a god named Śatakapāleśa and the circle of mothers provide a recollection of this event in the monastery (*maṭha*) of Kherī.<sup>16</sup>

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in the first half of the seventh century. See also further references to this king in A. Biswas, *A Political History of the Hūnas in India*, New Delhi, 1973, p. 137. The dating Biswas proposes is between 597 and 633.

<sup>10</sup> According to RT 1.348.

<sup>11</sup> The only mention of this king seems to appear in Kalhaṇa's RT, see Stein in RT vol. I. p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> See RT 3.99.

<sup>13</sup> On this royal practice, see e.g. A. Sanderson, *Religion and the State*, p. 233. Installation manuals such as the *Mohacūḍottara* also include the installation of other deities (see fragment on fol. 19v NGMPP A 182/2, NAK MS 5-1977, transcribed by Dominic Goodall), among others, Gaṇeśa and the mothers, whose cult probably goes back well beyond the beginning of tantric practices. On the pre-tantric cult of mothers, see inscriptional and other evidence cited by Y. Yokochi, Y. 2005. *The Rise of the Warrior Goddess in Ancient India. A Study of the Myth Cycle of Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsini in the Skandapurāṇa*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Groningen, p. 99 ff. and S. Hatley, *The Brahmayāmala*, p. 31 ff.

<sup>14</sup> No other source than Kalhaṇa's RT is available on this king, see Stein in RT vol. I. p. 79.

<sup>15</sup> This story has been referred to and analysed in O. Serbaeva, *Yoginīs*, p. 190 ff.

<sup>16</sup> *devaḥ śatakapāleśo māṭṛcakraṃ śilā ca sā / kherīmaṭheṣu tadvārtāsmṛtīm adyāpi yacchati* (RT 1.335). Stein takes *maṭheṣu* in the sense of the plural ('monasteries'), while

The god Śatakapāleśa or ‘the Lord of a Hundred Skulls’ could well be a *tāntrika* deity. His name suggests cremation ground or *kāpālika* practices similar to those of the *Brahmayāmala*, whose main male deity is Kapālīśa.<sup>17</sup> The story itself, in which the king is a sacrificial victim, is clearly based on *tāntrika* ritual or on the way in which it was perceived, and it is also reasonable to assume that the circle of mothers associated with Śatakapāleśa represents the circle of goddesses to which Bhaṭṭā offers the victim.<sup>18</sup> The deities of the legend, however, must not be confused with the deities of the Maṭha of Kherī. While the legend clearly refers to blood-thirsty tantric goddesses, the actual circle of mothers who remind us of these events may well receive non-tantric worship, just as Śatakapāleśa could also be a frightening, but non-tantric deity.

A similar but less evidently tantric context is seen in the story of how Śūra, minister to Avantivarman (r. 855/6–883),<sup>19</sup> has the chief of the *ḍāmaras* killed in a temple.<sup>20</sup> The king worships Bhūteśa in a nearby temple while his minister lures the *ḍāmaras* to the temple of Bhairava and the mothers. He then decapitates the chief *ḍāmara* in front of Bhairava. The scene suggests that the act is intended at the same time as a bloody offering to the god. The mothers may be tantric inasmuch as the main Bhairava image could be tantric and receive a human offering, although, as Kalhaṇa points out, the body of the *ḍāmara* was then simply dumped in the nearby water tank.

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Pandit translates ‘in the mountains.’ The word must clearly refer to a *śaiva* monastery, but I think the plural is either honorific or is used to express that the institution consisted of several buildings. The three things mentioned must be at the same place and not scattered around, therefore I have preferred using and understanding the singular. For the identification of Kherī with the region of Khur, see Stein’s note *ad loc.*

<sup>17</sup> For the *Brahmayāmala*, see S. Hatley, *The Brahmayāmala* and Cs. Kiss’s forthcoming volume. For its possible relation with *kāpālika* practices, see J. Törzsök ‘Kāpālikas’ In: *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. K.A. Jacobsen, Leiden, vol. III. 2011. pp. 355-61.

<sup>18</sup> Circles of goddesses or mothers are commonly invoked to gain supernatural powers. Although human flesh or blood etc. are often offered to these goddesses, human sacrifice is less commonly prescribed. It is nevertheless mentioned in the *Brahmayāmala* and the *Yoginīsamcāra* (for which see Hatley *op. cit.* p. 89), and appears in various works of fiction, in, for example, Bhavabhūti’s *Mālatīmādhava*, ed. R.G. Bhandarkar Bombay, 1905, Act 5.

<sup>19</sup> It is with this king that we reach truly historical records in Kalhaṇa, as Stein observes in RT vol. I. p. 97.

<sup>20</sup> RT 5.53 ff.

What these examples show is that the *mātr̥cakra* or circle of mothers is commonly associated with a male deity.<sup>21</sup> The nature and cult of these mothers are probably determined by the male deity they are attached to: they may receive ordinary worship or the *tāntrika* one accordingly, but in most cases they seem to belong to mainstream śaivism.

Although *mātr̥s* mostly accompany a male deity in the *Rājataranṅiṇī*, there is nevertheless one example in which the circle of mothers figures independently: queen Īśānadevī, king Jalauka's wife,<sup>22</sup> installed circles of mothers in the regions that formed the gateways of the kingdom.<sup>23</sup> No matter what kind of

<sup>21</sup> See also RT 3.99, which says that Śreṣṭhasena/Pravarasena I (an otherwise unidentifiable ruler) established Pravareśvara with a circle of mothers.

<sup>22</sup> No other record about this royal couple seems to have survived, as is the case for many rulers of the first book of the RT. As A. Sanderson ("Kashmir" In: *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism* ed. K.A. Jacobsen vol. II, Leiden, 2009. p. 106) points out, what is written about this king, allegedly Aśoka's son, is probably a projection of events pertaining to the rule of a later hephthalite king, Jalauka. It must be noted that the name of the king's preceptor, Avadhūta, seems to come from an even later period, for it has tantric associations ('he who has shaken off [all mundane conventions]'), although this could also be a common name for an ascetic and is an extremely frequent word in the *Brahmayāmala* (manuscript NAK 3-370, NGMPP A 42-6 transcribed by S. Hatley and Cs. Kiss) denoting the main mantra deity. One or several Avadhūtas seem to be known and cited in tantric literature; see in particular Avadhūtasiddha cited by Yogarāja in his commentary on Abhinavagupta's *Paramārthasāra* verse 9 (cf. text at MIRI). For other occurrences and quotes, see L. Bansat-Boudon in L. Bansat-Boudon and K.D. Tripathi, *Prolegomena to Tantric Philosophy. The Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Yogarāja*, London, 2010. p. 102. See also one of the main sources of citation, the *Bhagavadbhaktistotra* by Avadhūtasiddha, edited by R. Gnoli in *East and West* 9 (1958) "Miscellanea Indica", 215-222. Gnoli places this Avadhūta in the 9th or 10th century CE. As Dominic Goodall remarks in a yet unpublished translation of the *Paramokṣanirāsakārikāvṛtti*, some citations suggest that Avadhūta (or one of the Avadhūtas) belonged to the Atimārga, for he mentions, for instance, that the soul's properties are cut off from it before liberation. Given his recurring emphasis on various Śaktis (and the title of the text *Vaṭayakṣiṇī* cited in the *Paramokṣanirāsakārikāvṛtti*, although it may be corrupt), Avadhūta may have been a Lākula or Kāpālika rather than a Pāśupata. However, this historically existing Avadhūta was probably known to Kalhaṇa and he would not have placed him in Jalauka's time. Jalauka's Avadhūta is then most probably a legendary double of the historical one (unconnected with the later Jalauka), again created with the intention to strengthen the claim of antiquity of the Kashmirian Śaiva tradition. It must also be remarked that Jalauka obtains powers commonly promised in tantras: he transforms other metals into gold and has intercourse with Nāga women (RT 1.110-111). The fact that Avadhūta instructed him is mentioned immediately after these exploits are attributed to him.

<sup>23</sup> *dvārādiṣu pradeśeṣu prabhāvogrāṇy udayayā īśānadevyā tatpatnyā mātr̥cakraṇī cakrire*. RT 1.122.

worship these mothers, ‘powerful with their force,’<sup>24</sup> received, they had clearly a protective function. Given the context, it is again more likely that they are intended as some kind of warrior mothers without necessarily being *tāntrika*. They are deities who need to be fierce to protect the enclosed place against intruders, quite similarly to Bhairava functioning as a doorkeeper at temple entrances.

### **To what extent is the king supposed to be involved in tantric practices?**

The story involving king Avantivarman’s minister leads us to another question. While the minister Śūra performs as it were a human sacrifice of the *ḍāmara* chief in front of Bhairava, the king remains in the nearby temple of Bhūteśa. Why does he need to stay away? Perhaps it is better for a ruler not to be involved in a massacre. Or perhaps the king is kept at a distance to protect him from the potentially ill effects of an impure sacrifice. It is uncertain whether his absence is significant here from a religious point of view, for Śūra certainly needs to get the dirty business done without the king being present.

While the narration of Śūra’s massacre does not focus on the king’s role, the story of king Baka, who is sacrificed by a *yoginī*, seems to serve as an explicit warning to kings: they better not get involved in rites of magic concerning *yoginīs*, lest they should become the victims to be sacrificed.

The warning does not imply that the king must refrain from any act of tantric magic or from dealing with goddesses who possess supernatural powers. As book 3 relates,<sup>25</sup> King Raṇāditya<sup>26</sup> fell in

<sup>24</sup> The adjective *prabhāvogra* and the choice of words in the above sentence is reminiscent of the description of mothers that Khinkhila’s minister established around Ugreśa. Īśānadevī’s Mothers are said to be *prabhāvogra* (fierce with their power), while Ugra’s mothers are *prabhāvodagravighra* (whose forms are radiant with their power). Īśānadevī herself is said to be radiant (*udagrā*), while Ugra himself possesses the name ‘fierce.’ Thus, in both cases, the words *ugra*, *udagra* and *prabhāva* recur in the context of Mothers. This may be due to the fact that Kalhaṇa uses a somewhat stereotyped description; but it could also show that the same type of powerful, but not necessarily tantric, mothers are denoted.

<sup>25</sup> RT 3.386 ff.



love with the goddess Bhramaravāsīnī who lived on the Vindhya mountain. The name and location of the goddess suggest that she may be a (Kashmirian?) mixture of Vindhyavāsīnī and the bee-goddess Bhramarāmbā.<sup>27</sup> They got married in a subsequent birth, when the goddess became incarnate as princess Raṅārambhā. The story mentions several times that Raṅārambhā retained her supernatural powers such as her divine vision; and, since she was uncomfortable with the idea of sleeping with a mortal, she placed her own double next to her husband every night and flew out herself in the form of a bee. The same goddess gave her husband the mantra of Hātakeśvara, which helped him to descend to the underworld and enjoy himself there for many years—a superhuman achievement which is called *pātālasiddhi* in many tantric texts.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Hātakeśvara is indeed the deity in charge of the underworlds or of the uppermost golden level of *pātāla*, according to, for instance, the *Svacchandatantra*.<sup>29</sup> The king's

<sup>26</sup> As Stein puts it (RT vol. I. p. 86), this king seems to be a fairy-tale hero rather than a real ruler.

<sup>27</sup> The name Bhrāmārī, identified with the warrior goddess, and her story (she becomes a swarm of bees to kill a demon) are already known in the *Devīmāhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāna*, Bombay, 1910, 11.52-5. However, the oddly named goddess Bhramaravāsīnī appears to be worshipped in Kashmir in particular: she is also mentioned by Kṣemarāja in his commentary on *Svacchandatantra* (ed. M.K. Shastri, Bombay, 1921-35, see also MIRI 10.1004-5, next to Vindhyavāsīnī. According to Kalhana (RT 3.394) Bhramaravāsīnī also lives in the Vindhya, but Kṣemarāja's commentary suggests that although these two goddesses are identified with the warrior goddess Durgā, the names denote two different manifestations (contrarily to what Stein assumed in RT vol. I. p. 107, note 394). The goddess Bhramarāmbā is worshipped today on another mountain, on Śrīśaila in Andhra (<http://gugampoo.com/srisailam/>).

<sup>28</sup> This supernatural power is mentioned from the earliest tantric texts onwards, see my entry *pātālasiddhi* in TAK vol. III.

<sup>29</sup> See *Svacchanda* 9.43, 10.115. The *Kathāsaritsāgara* (ed. P. Durgaprasad and K.P. Parab, rev. W.L.S. Pansikar, Bombay, 1930, 12.6.116 ff.) also mentions that Hātakeśvara is worshipped as the god of the underworld (12.6.124). In this story, people gain access to the *pātāla* by worshipping the goddess Śārikā. This worship appears tantric (at least in the weaker sense of the word, i.e. following *śaiva* scriptures), for it starts with the closing of the directions (*digbandhana*). Interestingly, the ascetic who knows how to reach *pātāla* seems to be a magician, said to come from South India (his father is from *dākṣiṇātya*). He learned the rituals and mantras to propitiate Hātakeśāna (sic!, but certainly identical with Hātakeśvara), and then went to Śrīparvata (in Andhra) to worship Śiva. Śiva then directed him to Kashmir, where he was to find one of the holes to descend to the underworld, guarded by Śārikā. It is notable that knowledge of Hātakeśvara and the underworld is associated with the South and Śrīparvata. There is today a small sacred village near Śrīparvata called Hatakeswaram, which may be associated with this Hātakeśvara, but popular etymologies of the name, which all appear rather fanciful, do not refer to this association.

involvement in this act of magic is by no means presented as undesirable. On the contrary, he even helps his subjects to enjoy the company of *daitya* women for three weeks and is then praised as comparable to Rāma himself.

Female creatures of supernatural powers are involved also in the legendary story of Sandhimat (2.82-110).<sup>30</sup> As a minister, he is executed without being guilty, but *yoginīs* put his bones together and revive him in the cremation ground, in front of his guru. Sandhimat enjoys himself with the intoxicated *yoginīs* as a ‘leader of their circle’ (*cakranāyaka*). Subsequently, he becomes a king and a *śaiva* devotee. The scene of his revival at the cremation ground is clearly a tantric feast of *yoginīs*. However, unlike in the case of king Baka, this time the (future) king profits from the magic power of *yoginīs* and can become a king thanks to their intervention. When relating the story, Kalhaṇa is eager to point out that all this was written by fate (*vidhi*).

It must be remarked that both Raṇāditya and Sandhimat belong to a distant legendary past. Neither of them can be identified with any historically recorded king, and their legendary character and distance in time may explain the indulgence with which Kalhaṇa treats their involvement in tantric magic, which in the case of Sandhimat includes his participation in a transgressive ritual. Moreover, it is also to be noted that after Sandhimat is revived, he no longer practices any tantric rites as a king.

Another story, in which the king also becomes involved in magic, although only indirectly and without any transgression, is that of a hephthalite king, Pravarasena II.<sup>31</sup> After learning about the

<sup>30</sup> For an analysis of this story in the context of *yoginī* cults, see O. Serbaeva *op. cit.* p. 193 ff.

<sup>31</sup> See RT 3.265 ff. Stein (RT vol. I. p. 66 and pp. 84-5) mentions that Pravarasena II’s coins (with the legend *kidāra*) can be identified and argues for a dating in the second half of the sixth century. A. Biswas, *op. cit.* p. 123 accepts a reign of sixty years attributed to this king by Kalhaṇa and arrives at a dating between 537 and 597. Witzel, *op. cit.* p. 22 seems more cautious and places the same king around 580, similarly to Stein. In addition to *śaiva* foundations, this king is also said to have installed a set of five, probably *śaiva*, goddesses in his capital. Kalhaṇa mentions that their names ended with Śrī and that the name of the first was Sadbhāvaśrī, which suggests that they were perhaps ectypes of the goddess of fortune, meant to ensure prosperity in the kingdom. It is rather unlikely that they stand for the eight *māṭṛs* as Witzel *op. cit.* suggests, but some circular arrangement was certainly envisaged, just as for *māṭṛcakras* in which the *māṭṛs* are in the eight directions. I propose that similarly to the arrangement of Vāma deities (for example in the *Vṃśīkhatantra* ed. T. Goudriaan,

death of his father, he meets a holy man, a *siddha*, on the magic mountain of Śrīparvata. This mountain is most probably identical with Śrīśaila in Andhra,<sup>32</sup> although it is not certain whether Kalhaṇa had any precise information about its location. The Śrīparvata is a holy place for *kāpālika* and other *śaiva* ascetics; and the *siddha* in question, named Aśvapāda, appears before Pravarasena disguised as a *pāśupata* ascetic (*pāśupata-vrati-veṣadhara*).<sup>33</sup> He explains to the future king that they were fellow *sādhakas* in a previous birth and that Śiva then promised to make Pravarasena a king. Pravarasena, after practicing asceticism, sees and recognizes Śiva, although Śiva himself is also disguised as an ascetic. The whole story resembles the purāṇic legend of Upamanyu;<sup>34</sup> and the king is only vaguely associated with tantrism, only inasmuch as he is said to have been a *sādhaka* in a former birth.

The same Aśvapāda reappears at the end of Pravarasena's life. At this point, Aśvapāda claims to be a *kāpālika* ascetic<sup>35</sup> and is about to send a brahmin messenger to the king, to inform him that his time has come to join Śiva. The brahmin tells Aśvapāda that he is unable to deliver Aśvapāda's letter immediately, since he is exhausted by his travels. To this Aśvapāda replies: 'Then take a purificatory bath now, for you are a brahmin, I am a *kāpālika*, and I have touched you.' After these words, Aśvapāda throws the brahmin in a nearby water tank. When the brahmin emerges, he miraculously finds himself in Kashmir. He then manages to deliver the message to Pravarasena. Pravarasena, obeying Śiva's command, flies up in the sky to join his Lord, making a hole in the ceiling of the Pravareśvara temple.

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Delhi, 1985), one deity was meant to stand in the centre and the other four in a circle around her in the four directions, to ensure universal prosperity. *Sadbhāvaśrī* may have been the central one.

<sup>32</sup> For a summary of research concerning this identification, certainly valid from around 600 CE, see P. Bisschop, *Early Śaivism and the Skandapurāṇa. Sects and Centres*. Groningen, 2006, p. 201.

<sup>33</sup> This is an important detail, for he is not said to be *pāśupata*, only disguised as such. D. Lorenzen (*The Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects*, Delhi, 1972, p. 67) seems to ignore this detail and assumes that Kalhaṇa confuses *pāśupatas* and *kāpālikas*, which is quite unlikely.

<sup>34</sup> The king himself alludes to the legend of Upamanyu in 3.276.

<sup>35</sup> Again, it is not said that he is *kāpālika*, but he presents himself as such.

Although Aśvapāda's exact religious status remains uncertain,<sup>36</sup> his powers, location and his own statements suggest that he was a *kāpālika* ascetic. Whether he was a *somasiddhāntin* or not, he was certainly considered impure from the orthodox point of view, which is made clear in the course of the story itself. This, however, does not seem to have any adverse effect on the king. Although the king is in contact with him, he is not involved in his impure rites, at least not in his life as a king. Therefore, he remains the ideal *laukika* devotee in the manner of Upamanyu.

The *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*'s account is not limited to *śaiva* tantric magic. In the fourth book (4.246-62), Caṅkuṇa, who is the brother of a magician specialized in alchemy (*rasasiddha*), helps the king with two jewel-charms (*maṇi*), which he then exchanges for a Buddha image. The story suggests that Caṅkuṇa was a Buddhist or became one, and that the king was wise to profit from his services.

It is in the same book that Kalhaṇa makes an interesting remark about kings' employing black magic. He relates a story in which a brahmin uses a *khārkhoda* (a kind of magic diagram or *yantra*)<sup>37</sup> to kill another brahmin. Later, the king's brother employs this brahmin to kill the king with black magic (*abhicāra*). In 4.114 Kalhaṇa states, perhaps not without resentment, that from this time onwards, kings employed witchcraft and similar practices against their elder relatives when they desired kingship. In a way, the fourth book and this remark signal a milestone: it is after the fourth book that Kalhaṇa starts speaking of kings who become heavily involved in transgressive rites and behaviour, which result in their downfall.

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<sup>36</sup> Even when he claims to be a *kāpālika*, it may be just another disguise, in order to have a reason for throwing the brahmin in the water tank.

<sup>37</sup> For this diagram, used for killing or expulsion, see A. Sanderson "Religion and the State" pp. 290-2.

## What the king is not supposed to do: kaula or krama practice

Contrary to the above examples, king Kalaśa (r. c. 1063-1089)<sup>38</sup> becomes himself a tantric practitioner, which contributes to his demise. Kalhaṇa mentions that this king had deeds of mixed kind (*śabalakṛtya*): he was driven by lust and was attracted to evil gurus, but made important *śaiva* foundations too. In Kalhaṇa's account, king Kalaśa became influenced by tantric gurus because he had a licentious character from the outset. As he relates (7.276-8):

*dvijendre 'marakaṇṭhe tu yāte śivasamānatām /  
rājā pramadakaṇṭhasya yayau tājāsya śiṣyatām //  
duḥśīlasya prakṛtyaiva tasyākṛtyopadeśakṛt /  
gamyāgamyaivicārasya parihartābhavad guruḥ //  
guror gatavikalpatvaṃ tasyānyat kim ivocyatām /  
tyaktaśaṅkaḥ pravavṛte svasutāsurate 'pi yaḥ //*

‘After Amaraṅṭha the eminent royal priest [died and] was united with Śiva, the king became a disciple of [this priest's] son, Pramadaṅṭha. This guru instructed him, who was disposed to evil by nature, to do forbidden things, and to ignore the difference between women who are approachable and those who are not. What else can be said of this guru who had no scruples? He lacked any inhibition and had sex even with his own daughter.’<sup>39</sup>

Parts of the description of this tantric guru agrees with the expressions with which some tantric scriptures prescribe practitioners to behave: they are to discard all distinctions between pure and impure (*avikalpa*),<sup>40</sup> and to be free of inhibitions or

<sup>38</sup> 7.276 ff. For Kalaśa, see Stein in RT vol. 1 pp. 110-1.

<sup>39</sup> My translation; but the interpretation of the passage is the same in Stein's (RT) and in Pandit's version (*op. cit.*).

<sup>40</sup> Here, Pandit translates the word *gatavikalpatvam* by ‘who had lost the sense of reasoning,’ which seems to be a less adequate interpretation here. For the prescription of *avikalpatva* in tantras, see e.g. *Brahmayāmala* 24.34 ff, and *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 17.39 ff. (in J. Törzsök, *The Doctrine of Magic Female Spirits — A critical edition of selected chapters of the Siddhayogeśvarīmata(tantra) with annotated translation and analysis,*

doubts (*aviśaṅkitaḥ*).<sup>41</sup> Incest may be prescribed in order to make the act of ritual copulation free from any sexual desire,<sup>42</sup> but Kalhaṇa may also be exaggerating. Given the context, ‘women who are not to be approached’, *agamyā*, denotes probably relatives and outcaste women<sup>43</sup> rather than the upper castes.<sup>44</sup>

Later on (7.523), Kalaśa is also said to take part in tantric rituals himself.

*mahāsamayapūjāsu vyagraḥ sa gurubhiḥ samam /  
mahācarūṇām āhāraṃ nītim utsrjya cākarot //*

‘He was eager to take part in *mahāsamaya* worship with his gurus and abandoning proper behaviour, he consumed *mahācarus*.’

The line refers to tantric rites that involve probably more than alcohol or meat consumption.<sup>45</sup> *Mahācaru* or ‘great rice meal’

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unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, available for download at <http://www.academia.edu>.

<sup>41</sup> See e.g. *Brahmayāmala* 24.66 ff, *Jayadrathayāmala* (manuscript of the 1st Śaṅka NAK MS 5-4650, NGMPP B122/7 transcribed by O. Serbaeva) 1.12.397 ff and *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 17.53 ff, for which see Törzsök, *The Doctrine of Magic Female Spirits*.

<sup>42</sup> Several texts seem to prescribe that mothers, sisters and daughters should be female ritual partners (see e.g. *Tantrasadbhāva* (D) 15.127 ff, *Brahmayāmala* 24.32 ff), but it is not entirely clear in each case whether these words denote actual relations or are meant as honorific titles or metaphorical designations of various categories of women. The prescription of using one’s mother, daughter or sister as female partner seems to be understood literally in a scriptural source quoted in *Tantrālokaviveka ad 29.101-2* (ed. M.R. Sastri, Srinagar, 1919-38, see also MIRI) and by Abhinavagupta himself. On the basis of Abhinavagupta’s prescription, Jayaratha argues that one’s wife is not to be used to avoid the arousal of sexual desire in the practitioner.

<sup>43</sup> They are listed as female partners, *dūtīs*, in several texts. See, for instance *Tantrasadbhāva* (D) 15.127cd-129 (borrowed in the *Kubjikāmatatantra* 25. 153-155ab, ed. T. Goudriaan and J.A. Schoterman, Leiden, 1988), which also prescribes food consumption with them, mixing twice-born and outcaste women (*mātā duhitā bhaginī sahaḥ ca tathāntyajā // rajakī carmakārī ca mātāṅgī cāgrajātmikā / annapānaṃ tathā bhakṣam ācarec chaktibhiḥ saha // antyājānā[m] dvijānāṃ ca ekatra carubhojanam / kartavyaṃ sādakenaiva yadīchet siddhimuttamām*). The *Devīdyardhaśatikā* (D) 84ab prescribes the guru to have a *caṇḍālā* female ritual partner (*guruś cādvaitasamyukto varacaṇḍālīsamyaṭaḥ*). See also *Tantrāloka* 28.39cd-40ab and 29.66. (Cf. the translation into Italian by R. Gnoli, *Luce dei Tantra*, Milano, 1999. and the translation of the 29th chapter in J.R. Dupuche, *Abhinavagupta The Kula Ritual As Elaborated in Chapter 29 of the Tantrāloka*, Delhi, 2003.)

<sup>44</sup> Pandit assumes in his note (p. 284) that superior castes are meant.

<sup>45</sup> Stein and Pandit assumed only this much in their translation.

most probably denotes a preparation containing the sexual fluids.<sup>46</sup> The rite of *mahāsamayapūjā* does not seem to be a commonly used expression.<sup>47</sup> At least three different rites are possible candidates for it. First, it could denote the *mahāyāga*, which, in the *Brahmayāmala*'s account<sup>48</sup> is a cremation ground ritual involving the eating of the impure *caru* and may be associated with the disciple's initiation. Alternatively, it could be a reference to *kaula* worship, which again involves the consumption of the impure *caru*. In this case, it could either refer to regular *kaula* worship, which could involve (*mahā*)*caru* consumption (*caruprāśana*),<sup>49</sup> or to a *kaula* initiation rite,<sup>50</sup> possibly the *kaula* version of the *samayadīkṣā*.<sup>51</sup> However, since Kalhaṇa uses the plural, one expects rather that some form of regular worship is meant, performed repeatedly, rather than an initiation rite. In fact, the element *samaya* is likely to denote a meeting (*melaka*), perhaps in view of some kind of orgiastic rite as in the *cakramelaka*, rather than the *samaya* initiation.

<sup>46</sup> There exist several different impure *caru* offerings that tantras may prescribe. Although their main ingredient is usually cooked rice, they contain impure substances additionally, or the impure substances can even make up the whole *caru*: human flesh with meat and wine (*Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 6.35), or the mingled sexual fluid (*Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 22.11, *Tantrasadbhāva* (D) 16.134), or just menstrual blood mixed with water (*Brahmayāmala* 24.9 ff), or various body fluids mixed together (the five impure body fluids mixed with wine in *Tantrāloka* 15.437, or the five humours in *Brahmayāmala* 3.223). For more details, see my entry on eight kinds of impure *caru* in the *addenda* and *corrigenda* of TAK vol. III.

<sup>47</sup> The word *mahāsamaya* does occur in tantric scriptures, but apparently not in the same sense in which Kalhaṇa uses it, and I have found no appropriate description. It is worth noting that another word for a tantric ritual that Kalhaṇa uses, *cakramelaka*, is also not used in this exact form in tantric scriptures (in which *cakrakriḍā* and *vīramelāpa* occur), as A. Sanderson remarks in "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir" p. 287.

<sup>48</sup> See *Brahmayāmala* chapter 15, as well as 3.225 ff.

<sup>49</sup> See e.g. *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* 11.1 ff. ed. P.C. Bagchi, Calcutta, 1934 and S. Hatley, *The Brahmayāmala* p. 162 note 90.

<sup>50</sup> See the so-called *vedhadīkṣā* in *Tantrāloka* 29.282-3, which ends with *caruprāśana*.

<sup>51</sup> See *Tantrāloka* 29.198cd ff. After describing the *kaula samayadīkṣā* according to the *Mālinīvijayottara*, Abhinavagupta mentions an alternative *prakriyā* (198cd-200), which can even replace the full *dīkṣā*: the way in which the impure *caru* offering is accepted and consumed by the disciple determines the degree of his initiation. If he does not hesitate, he is fully initiated; if he trembles, the rite counts as the preliminary *Samaya* initiation (*carv eva vā gurur dadyād vāmāmrtapariplutam // niḥśaṅkaṃ grahaṇāc chaktigotro māyojjhito bhavet / sakampas tv ādadānaḥ syāt samayī vācanādiṣu // kālāntare 'dhasvaṃsuddhyā pālānāi samayasthiteḥ / siddhipātram iti śrīmadānandeśvara ucyate*).

Tantrism, according to Kalhaṇa's account, was taken up by this king out of lust, and his death is explained similarly as due to his overindulgence in pleasures.<sup>52</sup> In this context, Kalhaṇa does not fail to point out (7.726) that Kalaśa's favorite concubine, Kayyā, whom the author considers the shame of womankind, was of low origins (*anuccābhijanodbhavā*).

Indeed, according to Kalhaṇa, many kings of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* fall because of their close contact with low caste people, in particular with women.<sup>53</sup> King Yaśaskara (r. 939-48)<sup>54</sup> is served by outcastes who eat what is left by *ḍombas* (*ḍombocchiṣṭabhuj-*) and makes a *veśyā* his first concubine, without knowing that she is also seeing a watchman. Similarly, king Cakravarman<sup>55</sup> is assassinated after he becomes infatuated with the daughters of the *ḍomba* singer, Raṅga. As Kalhaṇa puts it sarcastically:<sup>56</sup> 'Robbers for ministers, a *ḍomba* for queen and *ḍombas* for friends: what wonder of the world was there that did not belong to king Cakravarman?' (Or: Did not king Cakravarman possess a wonder of the world?)

These remarks and king Kalaśa's story show that Kalhaṇa certainly did not consider it proper for a king to be involved in transgressive tantric rites, in particular in *kaula* and *krama* ritual. At one point, he seems to reject explicitly the use of several impure substances as well as new-fangled tantric gurus. The passage describes a period of golden age during the reign of king Yaśaskara by listing various things that gurus and brahmins did not do during that time.<sup>57</sup> The first verse seems to be understood as a general statement about this golden age without any tantric reference, but the second and the third refer to tantric gurus in particular.

*na vipraguravaḥ sāma gāyanto madirāṃ papuḥ /  
na tāpasāḥ putradārapaśudhānyāny aḍhaukayan //*

<sup>52</sup> The word *atisambhoga* is used in 7.699.

<sup>53</sup> I make this remark not to pass judgement on Kalhaṇa's sense of equality, which would make no sense in any case, but to explore his reasoning and attitude in general, which may influence his position concerning tantrism.

<sup>54</sup> RT. 6.69 ff. In other respects, this king's reign is presented in a good light by Kalhaṇa.

<sup>55</sup> This happens when he obtains the throne the third time, between 936-937.

<sup>56</sup> RT 5.391: *mantriṇas taskarā rājñī śvapāki śvapacāḥ priyāḥ / kim na lokottaram abhūd bhūpateś cakravarmaṇaḥ.*

<sup>57</sup> The full description can be found in RT 6.2-13, of which I cite verses 10-12.



Brahmin preceptors<sup>58</sup> did not drink wine while chanting the Sāmaveda, and ascetics did not take wives, children, cattle and corn.

*na mūrkhaguravo matsyāpūpayāgavidhāyinaḥ /  
cakrīre svakṛtair granthais tarkāgamaparīkṣaṇam //*

Ignorant gurus, who perform ritual worship with fish and cakes,<sup>59</sup> did not revise philosophical and scriptural statements<sup>60</sup> in their own writings.

*nādrśyanta ca gehinyo gurudīkṣoṭhadevatāḥ /  
kurvāṇā bhartṛśīlaśrīṇīṣedhaṃ mūrdhadhūnanaiḥ //*

Housewives did not figure as deities during the initiation of gurus, denying their husbands' virtue and dignity by the shaking of their heads / bringing their husbands, virtues and glory to contempt by shaking their heads.

Contrary to Stein's understanding,<sup>61</sup> who takes the last verse to imply that women criticized their husband's conduct by shaking their heads, I propose that the verse refers to tantric ritual, possibly

<sup>58</sup> Stein takes the word *guru* to denote officiating priests in tantric ritual. This, however, seems somewhat odd if they spend their time chanting the Sāmaveda. Therefore, I understand that ordinary brahmanical preceptors are meant, who appear (later) to violate the rule not to drink alcohol, or who are perhaps involved in tantric ritual of alcohol offering and consumption. The latter explanation is in fact less likely. For the verse describes (holy) men that do not follow the rules prescribed for them: first, brahmins drink alcohol, second, ascetics, who should remain in celibacy and without possessions, become family men with considerable wealth. Therefore, this particular verse does not seem to refer to tantric ritual.

<sup>59</sup> Stein takes the compound *matsyāpūpa* to refer to a particular tantric *śrāddha* offering. Pandit understands it as a *Dvandva*, in the sense of 'fish and cakes,' which can also be justified, for both items figure separately in lists of offerings, in the *Brahmayāmala* (34.312-18) for instance, as *naivedya*. In any case, the offering is clearly tantric.

<sup>60</sup> Pandit's translation seems more precise on *tarkāgama*, which he clearly takes as a *Dvandva* compound to denote 'philosophy and scriptures,' while Stein speaks of 'traditional doctrines.'

<sup>61</sup> Stein understands 'by shakes of their heads detracting from the distinguished character of their husbands.' Pandit translates the Sanskrit differently and without any explanation as to the intended meaning or the implications: 'bringing their chastity, dignity and their husbands into contempt.'

*kaula*, in which women are involved and worshipped.<sup>62</sup> The shaking, expressed with the word *dhūnana*, is among the commonly listed signs (*pratyaya*) to prove the presence of Śakti.<sup>63</sup> Here, this shaking is used by Kalhaṇa in a satirical way: he suggests it shows that these women deny or bring to shame their husbands' virtues and/or their own.

That more transgressive tantric currents were not appreciated by Kalhaṇa is also seen in his treatment of Cakrabhāṇu, a famous Krama master.<sup>64</sup> Kalhaṇa relates two versions of how king Yaśaskara died.<sup>65</sup> First, he mentions that when after two or three days the sick king still had not died, his confidants, relatives, servants and *velāvittas* (officials), who were in a hurry to seize the kingdom, gave him poison.<sup>66</sup> According to the alternative version, which Kalhaṇa does not accept to be true, it was the magician Vīranātha, Cakrabhāṇu's uncle,<sup>67</sup> who magically caused the king's death, to revenge the humiliation of his nephew. Kalhaṇa argues that the purpose of this alternative version is only to exalt the power of tantric gurus, and that it is more likely to assume that the king died due to a disease he had anyway (which is, in fact, a third version of the story).

Now as we have seen, Kalhaṇa does not always refrain from giving rather fanciful explanations of events. Therefore, it is

<sup>62</sup> See e.g. *cakrayāga* by André Padoux in TAK vol. II. The *Tantrāloka* includes this in its chapter on *kaula* ritual (29.56 ff).

<sup>63</sup> *Timirodghātana* (manuscript NAK pam 690, NGMPP A35/3 transcribed by Somdev Vasudeva and recollated by the present author) 4.20 mentions *dhunana* as a sign of possession by the power of Rudra (*rudraśaktisamāveśa*). See also *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* 14.16, in which it is the second sign. *Dhunana* is also said to be a sign observed during initiation of *putrakas* (*Tantrāloka* 16.33d ff.), provoked by the rite of *avalokana* (the empowered gaze of the guru) in a certain type of initiate (listed as second). Similarly, the *Kubjikāmatatantra* (4.70 ff.), borrowing from *Tantrasadbhāva* (D) 3.93 ff, lists it as a sign produced by the second type of *saṃkrānti* or 'transmission of grace,' by the guru, which is called *avaloka*. See the entry *avaloka* by Teun Goudriaan in TAK vol. I. The *Jayadrathayāmala* (manuscript of the 4th Śaṅka NAK 1-1468, NGMPPB122/4 transcribed by Olga Serbaeva) 4.65.31d also mentions it as being produced during initiation. *Brahmayāmala* 54.134, however, lists it as a sign (*chommaka*) by which a certain type of *yoginī* can be recognized, similarly to the *Tantrasadbhāva* (D) 16.227, which attributes it to *śākinis*.

<sup>64</sup> On Cakrabhāṇu, see A. Sanderson, "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir" p. 280 ff.

<sup>65</sup> RT 6.99-114.

<sup>66</sup> RT 6.106: *tadā suhrdbandhubhṛtyavelāvittaiḥ kṛtatvaraiḥ / jihūṣubhiś ca sāmṛāyaṃ viṣaṃ dattvā vipāditaḥ //*.

<sup>67</sup> Identical with the Krama master Hrasvanātha, as A. Sanderson proposes in "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir" p. 281 ff.

possible that here he went for a more plausible version of the story not simply because it seemed more probable, but because he did not want to attribute too much power to Krama adepts, who, as he mentions, took part in the orgiastic rite of *cakramelaka*, and were punished by the king himself.<sup>68</sup>

### Conclusion: Kāvya and instruction

To summarize Kalhaṇa's position concerning tantrism: if the king uses mantras to obtain superhuman powers and effects, even if they only serve his own pleasure, or if the king makes use of an untouchable practitioner such as a *kāpālika* indirectly, Kalhaṇa has no objections. This is especially true if the king belongs to the more distant past. However, he presents the king's direct involvement in transgressive tantric rituals (*mahācarubhojana*, *yoginīsādhana*) as undesirable and dangerous. He is particularly against *kaula* or *krama* rites, which may involve not only impure substances, but rites performed with women, even with untouchable women. *Kaula* rites in general and the king's direct involvement in any transgressive rites usually cause the decline and fall of a king— this seems to be the moral of the stories. And this moral is not to be taken as secondary to historiography in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*. For Kalhaṇa does not intend his *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* to be a history book in the first place, but a piece of poetry, *kāvya*,<sup>69</sup> which should give emperors instruction, a kind of remedy to counteract various types of royal excess. As Kalhaṇa himself puts it:

*iyam nṛpānām ullāse hrāse vā deśakālayoḥ /  
bhaiṣajyabhūtasamvādikathā yuktopayujyate //*

‘The present account [of mine, which] in correspondence (*yuktā*) to time and place fully agrees (*samvādin*) with what

<sup>68</sup> RT 6.108-114. For this rite, mentioned and described elsewhere too, see A. Sanderson, “The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir” p. 282 ff, with a detailed description based on unpublished sources.

<sup>69</sup> This primary aim has been brought out and analysed in detail by W. Slaje “In the Guise of Poetry”.

has happened [in the past] (*bhūta*), is a *remedy*, prescribed (*upayujyate*) for presumptuousness or timidity of kings.<sup>70</sup>

I understand this statement, in agreement with R.S. Pandit,<sup>71</sup> R. Salamon and W. Slaje, to imply that the work is meant as beneficial instruction for kings. As Salamon and Slaje point out, *ullāsa* and *hrāsa* refer either to prosperity and depression in general, or to the king's condition in particular.<sup>72</sup> Both conditions are viewed here as potentially difficult for kings to deal with, therefore both conditions require special instructions. As Slaje summarizes: 'Awareness of the fates of their predecessors on the throne should serve the kings as medication, antidoting the disease of extremes.'

Kalhaṇa's statements about tantric practices must also be viewed in the light of his intention to instruct. His view on religion appears to be similar to Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's view of *sarvāgamaprāmānya*:<sup>73</sup> any scripture can be accepted as valid, if (in addition to some other conditions) it does not cause abhorrence or fear among people (*yebhyo nodvijate janah*). This considerable

<sup>70</sup> I cite W. Slaje's translation (*op. cit.* pp. 323-3), which is the only one to bring out the sense of *bhūtasamvādi*.

<sup>71</sup> It must be remarked that Pandit's translation is the first to point out the right direction of interpretation, against Stein and Buhler.

<sup>72</sup> R. Salamon ("Notes on the Translations of Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī I-IV" *Berliner Indologische Studien* 3.1987 p. 153) takes them to refer to external conditions (agreeing in this, but not otherwise, with B. Kölver *op. cit.* p. 116), prosperity or growth of the kingdom or its decline, and he construes *hrāsa* with *deśakālayoḥ*. ('This medicine-like tale is fit to be prescribed when kings grow (too) great or when their reigns and realms are shrinking.') Slaje (*op. cit.* pp. 232-3) understands them to refer to the king's attitude, presumptuousness or timidity, and construes *deśakālayoḥ* with *yuktā*. This latter construction seems definitely more symmetrical and better, but it does not exclude the possibility that Kalhaṇa means both excessive prosperity (external *ullāsa*) and the king's presumptuousness (internal *ullāsa*) contrasted with extreme decline (external *hrāsa*) and the king's withdrawal or timidity (internal *hrāsa*).

<sup>73</sup> See *Nyāyamañjarī* p. 648 and Cs. Dezső in Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, *Much Ado about Religion*, New York, 2005, p. xxii. See also p. 246-7 of the *Āgamaḍambara* with Dezső's translation for a fuller list of criteria: 'provided it has a widely acknowledged, unbroken tradition, provided the Aryas are not repulsed by associating with it or discussing it, provided its accepted practice is neither antisocial nor dangerous, provided it has not just recently sprung into being, provided it is not based upon the ramblings of a madman, nor on something outlandish, nor simply on something like greed [...]' For a detailed discussion, see also D. Slakter, "Though He Is One, He Bears All Those Diverse Names: A Comparative Analysis of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's Argument for Toleration", unpublished article available on the author's web page at <http://www.academia.edu>.

tolerance,<sup>74</sup> in turn, is not of dharmasāstric or brahmanical origin, and was probably not motivated by a theoretical conviction:<sup>75</sup> it is, as has been shown in the case of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, rather a reflection of existing royal practice in Kashmir, at least from Śaṅkaravarman's time. Given that Kalhaṇa also expects kings to be his audience, his tolerance is bound to be determined in a similar way.

There are, however, important differences between Jantabhāṭṭa's and Kalhaṇa's attitude. Unlike Jayantabhāṭṭa, in no way does Kalhaṇa attempt to put forward a theoretical argument in favour of, or against, certain kinds of tolerance. Since his work is intended to give a general lesson to kings, Kalhaṇa does not try to determine which religious movements should be banned, either, if any at all. His main concern is the king's—and, consequently, his subjects'—prosperity, therefore his advice concerns the king: it is the king that should not be involved in transgressive rituals. The people will then, Kalhaṇa implies in his description of Yaśaskara's reign, follow his example.

Moreover, one must also bear in mind that Kalhaṇa himself was *śaiva* (perhaps with a Buddhist uncle) which may have played some role in his view concerning religious tolerance. It could be assumed that as a *śaiva* he was more inclined to accept unusual *śaiva* practices. However, it is perhaps even more likely that being a *śaiva*, he found transgressive *śaiva* practices less acceptable, for they could possibly defame śaivism as a whole. All this remains of course highly speculative. But whatever were Kalhaṇa's motivations, he clearly stands in the relatively tolerant tradition of

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<sup>74</sup> There appears to exist a particular definition of 'tolerance' as being a non-judgemental attitude, while 'toleration' would be defined as a mere acceptance of something that one does not approve of (see e.g. the definitions by Merriam-Webster on <http://www.merriam-webster.com>). Slakter *op. cit.* uses only toleration when writing about Jayanta Bhaṭṭa and seems to imply on p. 1 that tolerance would be something different (although one could also understand his preference for 'toleration' to reflect the context of religion and state policy). I do not make this distinction, but consider toleration to denote the act of tolerating someone or something, and tolerance to mean the ability to tolerate. Slakter *op. cit.* p. 16 argues convincingly that Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's view can be described as the esteem conception of toleration.

<sup>75</sup> For the first important and thorough analysis of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's tolerance and its being motivated by political considerations, see A. Wezler, "Zur Proklamation religiös-weltanschaulicher Toleranz bei dem indischen Philosophen Jayantabhāṭṭa" *Seculum* 27.4 (1976) pp. 329-47.

many Kashmirian rulers, a tradition that would be worth exploring in more detail.

### Abbreviations:

- (D) text transcribed under the supervision of Mark Dyczkowski and available in electronic form at the website of the Muktabodha Indological Research Institute [http://muktalib5.org/digital\\_library.htm](http://muktalib5.org/digital_library.htm)
- MIRI Muktabodha Indological Research Institute. Texts available at [http://muktalib5.org/digital\\_library.htm](http://muktalib5.org/digital_library.htm).
- NAK National Archives, Kathmandu
- NGMPP Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project
- RT *Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr* Translated, with an introduction, commentary and appendices by M.A. Stein. 3 vols, Delhi, 1989 (1st ed. London, 1900)
- TAK *Tāntrikābhidhānaśoḍa. A Dictionary of Technical Terms from Hindu Tantric Literature* vol.s I-II. Dir. H. Brunner, G. Oberhammer and A. Padoux. Vol. III. Dir. D. Goodall and M. Rastelli. Wien, 2000, 2004, and 2012.

## APPENDIX

### List of potential references to tantric practices and deities in Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*

Not all the passages listed below are references to tantrism, but they are often suggestive of a tantric background. When compiling this list, I tried to include all references or allusions to tantrism, and preferred erring on the side of listing too much rather than omitting something. I have not included references to Saiddhāntika śaivism, as they have been amply analysed in A. Sanderson "Kashmir" and "The Śaiva Age," and because they are not relevant in the context of the present study, which deals with the question of how transgressive tantric rites are represented by Kalhaṇa. References to goddesses who may not be tantric but who are associated with bloody offerings and the like have, however, been included, because such goddesses may be associated with transgressive rites.

1.110-113 King Jalauka, said to be Aśoka's son, obtains powers often attributed to tantric practices. He can transform other metals into gold thanks to a magic substance and obtains charming youth through intercourse with Nāga women. His instructor is Avadhūta, a possible double of a later *siddha*. The name Jalauka comes perhaps from a hephthalite name, Javūka, see A. Sanderson, "Kashmir" p. 106.

1.122 Īśānadevī placed circles of mothers at the entry points to Kashmir. They are probably not tantric, although Stein identifies them with the tantric *devīcakra* mentioned in 1.333, also referred to as *mātrcakra* in 1.335. (Cf. also *mātrcakra* in 1.348, 3.99, 5.55.)

1.155-6 Dāmodara II was Kubera's friend and Guhyakas obeyed him. This is not necessarily a tantric reference, but tantras often promise the power to control *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs*.

1.234 ff. A watchman, who is a *māntrika*, does not let the Nāgas touch the crop, which he himself does not touch either, due to a vow he has taken. He appears to keep them away thanks to his mantric power, which implies a tantric *mantrasādhana*. Then a brahmin plays a trick on the *māntrika* ascetic: he drops fresh corn in his food to break his observance. Due to the (inadvertent) breaking of his vow, the ascetic can no longer keep the Nāgas away. Thus the brahmin saves the Nāgas.

1.331 ff. The sorceress Bhaṭṭā sacrifices king Baka to a circle of goddesses (*devīcakra*), to gain superhuman powers. The memory of this event is kept alive by the deity Śatakapāleśa, the circle of mothers and a rock bearing the prints of Bhaṭṭā's knees (when she flew up into the sky) at the monastery of Kherī. See O. Serbaeva *Yoginīs* p. 193.

1.347-8 Narendrāditya I / Khiñkhila had Ugra as guru. Ugra constructed a shrine for Ugreśa, surrounded by a circle of mothers, who are probably not tantric.

2.82-110 Minister Saṃdhimat is executed without being guilty but is then revived by *yoginīs* in front of his guru, Īśāna. He enjoys himself with the *yoginīs* and later becomes king (2.116) and a great *śaiva* devotee. See O. Serbaeva *op. cit.* p.193 ff.

3.31-69 King Meghavāhana sees a barbarian (*śabara/kirāta*) about to kill a man in front of a Caṇḍikā/Cāmuṇḍā temple. The barbarian wants to offer the victim to save his son from dying. The king volunteers to become the victim and is about to cut his own head off, when Varuṇa appears and saves him. The king had to go through this ordeal because of his cruel ancestor, Mihirakula, although he was compassionate himself. Varuṇa later helps him to cross over to Lankā. (Nb: the story resembles very much the Vikramāditya stories.)

3.83-95 A brahmin claims that without giving an animal oblation (forbidden under Meghavāhana) to Durgā, his son will perish. The king decides again to sacrifice himself. During the night, Durgā restores the boy. Kalhaṇa is embarrassed to relate this unbelievable story.

3.99 Śreṣṭhasena/Pravarasena I. establishes Pravareśvara with a circle of mothers. (This is probably not tantric. Moreover, the verse itself may be spurious. It is supplied only by Stein's manuscript A3, and missing in L, according to Stein.)

3.267 ff and 3.366 ff. A *siddha* named Aśvapāda pretends first to be a *pāśupata*, then a *kāpālika*. He lives on Śrīparvata and has supernatural powers, such as sending a messenger back to Kashmir in a second.

3.340 ff The story of the foundation of Pravarapura (ancient Shrinagar) involves a *rākṣasa* or *vetāla*. Although it has nothing tantric on its own, the fact that the king is helped by this creature may allude to his tantric powers.

3.353 Pravarasena II establishes Sadbhāvaśrī and four other goddesses. They are clearly *śaiva* deities (the king is *śaiva*), but they may or may not receive tantric worship.

3.374-8 In order to join Śiva, Pravarasena II flies up into the sky, making a hole in the ceiling of the temple. Although the aim is his



liberation (*mokṣa*), and no tantric allusion is made, the act implies an ability often promised in tantras: *khecaratva*.

3.465 ff. The Hātakeśvara mantra is given to king Raṇāditya by the queen, who is a manifestation of the goddess Bhramaravāsini. The king goes to the underworld (*pātāla*), and enjoys himself there (*pātālasiddhi*).

4.94 ff. With a *khārkhoda*, a brahmin kills another one. 4.112 ff: The king's brother uses the guilty brahmin to kill the king through black magic (*abhicāra*). 4.114 states that from this time on, kings used witchcraft (*abhicāra*) etc. 4.124: When brahmins wanted to eliminate this king, they destroyed him with secret witchcraft (*gūḍhābhicāreṇa*). 4.246-63 Caṅkuṇa, the brother of a magician (*rasasiddha*), produces gold by magic (*rasena*); he then creates a dry passage in water with a charm (*maṇi*) and withdraws the charm with another one from the water. Then he exchanges these two charms for a Buddha image.

4.276 mentions the establishment of a Śiva Cakreśvara (image). This may not be tantric at all, but Cakreśvara is often a ruler of *yoginīs*.

4.390 ff. King Kuvalayāpīḍa obtains *siddhi* through quietism (*śama*) and shows himself even today to the pious on Śrīparvata.

4.594-604 A Dravidian magician dries up a lake with arrow mantras (which is preceded by the rite of *digbandhana*). He almost kills a Nāga, Mahāpadma, whom the king saves.

5.48 ff. Śūra, a minister of Avantivarman, has a *dāmara* chief decapitated in front of a Bhairava image. The situation suggests a mock human sacrifice.

5.66 Kallaṭa is mentioned as a great *siddha*. Other holy *siddhas* are also referred to during Avantivarman. (See A. Sanderson "Kashmir" p. 120.)

5.239 Another mention of the *khārkhoda* (cf. 4.94 above). A treasurer is found to have cheated. He asks a relative to help, who causes the king to die with the help of a *khārkhoda*. This relative of the treasurer (called Rāmadeva) then commits suicide.

5.390 King Cakravarman is attracted to *domba* singers and other low caste people, *śvapākas*. 5.392: A *śvapāka* woman offers her clothes with menstrual stains, which ministers intend to use for clothes. 5.400: Intercourse with a *śvapāka* woman. Tantrism is not referred to, but the use of menstrual blood may allude to it.

5.469-75 Pīṭhadevī's benediction of Yaśaskara. Pīṭhadevī is likely to be tantric, as Stein also remarks *ad loc*.

6.10-12 Description of a golden age and what was not practiced during Yaśaskara: brahmins did not drink alcohol, no *matsyāpūpa*

sacrifices were performed, new scriptures were not invented, housewives did not act as divinities shaking their heads.

6.108-112 Mention of the tantric rite of *cakramelaka*, the Krama author Cakrabhāṇu and Vīranātha (=Hrasvanātha). See A. Sanderson, “The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir” pp. 280-90.

6.121-2 Parvagupta tries to employ witchcraft (*karmābhicārakam*) to destroy the child-king, Saṃgrāmadeva.

7.17-9 A fire offering of human hair (*keśahoma*) produces a demoness (*kr̥tyā*), who then turns against the brahmins who produced her. Stein identifies the rite as purāṇic (cf. *Padmapurāṇa* 2.23.5ff, Delhi, 1984-5), but it may be of tantric origin.

7.44 A cruel tax officer is compared to a *kāpālika* who lives on corpses (*śavājīvaḥ*). Stein takes this to refer to the *kāpālika* sect, but it is also possible that by *kāpālika* the cremation ground attendant is meant, as in 8.995.

7.276 ff. Kalaśa is under the bad influence of a guru, who incites him to have intercourse with women not to be had. The guru seems to be tantric. In 7. 279 ff, the story of the cat-merchant also has tantric aspects, as Stein remarks, although the cat-merchant himself may not be tantric or, in any case, he does not teach any identifiable tenets.

7.523 King Kalaśa takes part in *mahāsamaya* rites, drinks with gurus etc.

7.799-800 Kālī is mentioned as representing death, which is not necessarily tantric.

7.1129 ff. Harṣa has slave girls who pretend they were instructed by gods. In 7.1132-3 they pretend to have the elixir of long life and to perform *piṇḍasiddhi*. The slave girls thus appear to pretend that they are powerful *yoginīs*, who receive divine instructions directly.

7.1230 During the massacre of *dāmaras* the country of Kashmir became like Bhairava’s kitchen. This is not tantric, but suggestive of a tantric Bhairava.

7.1233 The governor sent to a Bhairava-like king strings of *lavanya* heads. Not tantric, but suggestive.

7.1635 Harṣa takes refuge at the house of a magician (*siddha*) called Somānanda, who worships Someśvara. This may be a tantric magician, but no further detail is given.

7.1707 Harṣa standing on the body of a soldier is compared to Cāmuṇḍā standing on Ruru. As Stein points out, the image is purāṇic (see *Padmapurāṇa* 5.26.59-95), but again suggestive of a tantric background.

[It is remarkable that the eighth book contains almost no historical reference to tantric practices by kings or others. Almost all references are found in similes or metaphors. It seems that Kalhaṇa is particularly silent on the religious practices of his own contemporaries.]

8.45 King Uccala remembers like magic spells (*mantravat*) two useful counsels.

8.90 If a man raises up a *kāyastha* (*utthāpyate*) and gives him distinction, the rogue slays him without scruples, just like a [resurrected corpse or a] *vetāla* would (*vetāla iva*). [This is a reference to the use of a *vetāla* (or of a resurrected corpse) as a servant, also called *vetālasādhana*. This supernatural power, figuring already in the earliest tantra, the *Niśvāsa's Guhyasūtra*, is perhaps also named *uttiṣṭha*; see my entry *uttiṣṭha* in TAK vol. III. *Addenda and corrigenda*.]

8.106: *Kāyastha* officials chased away and humiliated by the king devote themselves to reciting *stotras* and mumbling spells like the *durgottāriṇīvidyā*. [Stein himself remarks that this may allude to a tantric text, or possibly the *Devīmāhātmya*. The latter is less likely. The word *durgottāriṇī*, perhaps denoting a mantra deity, figures in a list in the *Kubjikā upaniṣad*, ed. T.Goudriaan and J.A. Schoterman, Groningen, 1994, etext by Somdev Vasudeva.]

8.143 lists various things the king is supposed to have given to tantric gurus (*bhaṭṭapādānām*), according to the falsified accounts of a merchant. The word *bhaṭṭapāda* denotes tantric gurus, according to Stein.

8.759 Pṛthivīhara rushes about in battle like a *vetāla* intoxicated by a drink (*madhumattena ... vetāleneva*). [This is probably not tantric; but it could also refer to the resurrected *vetāla*, see 8.90.]

8.995 Maṅkha, a *ḍāmara*, searches dead bodies like a *kāpālika* and gratifies himself with the objects found upon them. Lorenzen (*The Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas*, p. 66) takes the word *kāpālika* here to denote a skull-bearer, but Stein remarks in a note that it is probably used in the sense of 'attendant at the burning ground,' who obtains the clothes and other possessions of the dead person before burning the body. Stein also refers to *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* 8.105 ff. The wording, *prītim ... āyayau* ('is pleased' with the objects found upon them) does not have any particular religious connotation and *kāpālikas* did not gratify themselves with objects found on dead bodies (but rather with alcohol etc.). Given the wording and the context, Stein's interpretation is much more likely.

8.1211 During famine, the ground scattered with fragments of skulls and of (rather than ‘from,’ as Stein has it) fleshless human skeletons performs, as it were, a *kāpālika* vow. (Ref. also given in Lorenzen, *op. cit.* p. 66.)

8.1369 The night seems to be frequented by furious (or intoxicated) *vetālas* and filled with Kālarātrī demons. (This is not necessarily tantric, although Kālarātrīs often figure in tantric texts.)

8.2187 The service of a king is more dangerous than the raising of a *vetāla* (*vetālothāpana*). Cf. 8.90.

8.2241 A youth sacrifices his own life without an immediate cause: he has planned his death, because his mind was seized by a charm (*krtyā*) which the brahmins had sent. (Although *Kṛtyās* are not necessarily tantric.)

8.3427 Cippatajayāpīḍa’s uncles, Utpala and the rest, by mutual consent killed him by witchcraft (*abhicāreṇa*).

Mention must be made of the Kashmirian festival called *āśvayujgāli*. It is not a tantric event, but the transgressive behaviour prescribed may be inspired by tantric prescriptions. See RT 5.710 and 7.1551, and cf. *Nilamata* 391. Stein also remarks *ad loc* a reference given by Alberuni.

Kalhaṇa also speaks of a rite named *kṣāntīcaru* ‘rice offering of appeasement,’ which may possibly be tantric, although I have not found any other occurrences. RT 7.15 speaks of the expulsion of a king as (a symbolic) *kṣāntīcaru*. See also 8.2513, which says that the wailing of villagers served as *kṣāntīcaru*.