

The Concept of Mind in Hindu Tantrism

Abstract

This paper presents an account of the mind as found in pre-philosophical and philosophical Śaiva and Śaiva-Śākta literature and examines some important terms that the English word translates, notably, *citta*, *cit*, and *manas*, although there are others, mostly in the medieval or post-Gupta period. Through such inquiry we see an ambivalent attitude towards the category mind, on the one hand being a cause of bondage while on the other being elevated to the highest ontological category. Such an examination raises interesting historical questions about influences on the Śaiva and Śaiva-Śākta material and interesting philosophical questions about the category mind in relation to the category of the person.

It is well over sixty years since Herbert Guenther published his famous article on the concept of mind in Buddhist Tantrism, for which he used exclusively Tibetan sources. Guenther articulates the problem of translation and what we mean by ‘mind’ and ‘mental’ as translations of Sanskrit *citta* and *caitta* and the Tibetan *sems* and *sems las-byun-ba*.¹ This current article is not so much an attempt to emulate Guenther’s masterful study, although like him I do present an analysis of sources, but to present an account of mind as found in pre-philosophical and philosophical Śaiva and Śaiva-Śākta literature. Of course, such a procedure is not ahistorical and although I may refer backwards to earlier sources, my focus will be on the post-Gupta or early medieval period. I will firstly proceed through an examination of key terms in selected tantric texts of what I have called elsewhere a pre-philosophical level of discourse,² then go on to use examples from philosophical texts within the Śaiva-Śākta milieu. Through such inquiry we see an ambivalent attitude towards the category mind – that translates a number of Sanskrit terms as we shall see – on the one hand being a cause of bondage while on the other being elevated to the highest ontological category. Although beyond the scope of the current paper to demonstrate thoroughly, we see different historical trajectories flowing in to the Śaiva traditions, namely a classical Yoga tradition, the Sāṃkhya hierarchy of ontic levels, and a view of the mind as all-pervasive. The yogic model of the mind as unstable is shared across traditions, while different understandings occur in philosophical discourse. Along the way, I will make reference to related traditions of Yoga and Buddhism and conclude with a historical reflection and a philosophical reflection on the category of mind in relation to

¹ Herbert V. Guenther, ‘The Concept of Mind in Buddhist Tantrism,’ *Journal of Oriental Studies Hong Kong*, vol. 3, July 1956, pp. 261-77. Allowing for the somewhat outmoded adjective ‘Eastern’, Guenther perceptively writes: ‘If it is already difficult to know what we mean by these terms “mind” and “mental” in our own language, it will be readily admitted that it is still more difficult to ascertain the meaning of what is translated by “mind” or “mental” from Eastern texts. The question of whether the authors of the original texts actually meant the same as we do by those words about whose meaning we ourselves are not quite clear, should always be present, no only when translating texts but still more when dealing with a systematic presentation of Eastern philosophies’ (p. 262). He later turned his article into a book, but the article remains a succinct summary.

² Gavin Flood, ‘Implicit Anthropologies in Pre-Philosophical Śaivism,’ *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 48 (4), 2020, pp. 675-701.

those of self and person. An unthematized sub-text is that philological and textual work is a precondition for higher level historical and philosophical consideration.

The English word ‘mind’ (with its implicit distinction from ‘body’), along with the term ‘consciousness,’ is used to translate a number of Sanskrit expressions, namely *cit*, *citta*, *cetas*, *caitanya* and *manas* and, in mostly Śaiva and Śākta sources, *saṃvit*. There are also the words *viññāna* and even *jñāna* that is often translated as ‘cognition’ rather than ‘knowledge’ in philosophy.³ Related to the concept of ‘mind’ are other categories implied by the word, such as memory (*smaraṇam*), whose semantic range is wider than the English term to include awareness, and appearance (*ābhāsa*), the objects of consciousness. *Citta*, and associated terms such as *manas*, *viññāna*/ *viññāna*, have been used extensively in early Buddhist discourse – in the Abhidhamma of the Pāli Canon⁴ and in later Abhidharma of the Mahāyāna⁵ – as well as in Yoga, where Patañjali presents a Buddhist inspired analysis of mind.⁶ Through examining early texts we can build up a picture of the general concept and its place within the overall eschatological expectation of Śaiva Tantrism.

The Concept of Mind in Pre-Philosophical Śaivism

Guenther’s view of mind within Tibetan sources is that that it has an ‘inherent tendency to assume its ‘natural’ state when left alone’, a view reflected to some extent in yogic texts such as the *Amanaska* that advocate the idea of no-mind and mindless yoga.⁷ In Śaiva sources,

³ E.g. Alex Watson, *The Self’s Awareness of Itself: Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s Arguments Against the Buddhist Doctrine of No-Self* (Vienna: Institut für Südasiens-, Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde der Universität Wien, 2006), p. 258.

⁴ R.M.L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening* (Oxford: One World, 2001 [1992]), pp. 312-21; K.N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), pp. 434-38.

⁵ Herbert V. Guenther, *Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma* (Delhi: Motilal, 1974), pp. 4-94.

⁶ On the influence of Buddhism on the *Yoga-sūtras* see Lance Cousins, ‘Vitakka/Vitarka and Vicāra: The Stages of Samādhi in Buddhism and Yoga,’ *Indo-Iranian Journal*, vol. 35, nos. 2 and 3, (1992), pp. 137-55; Eli Franco, ‘Introduction’ p. 8, in Eli Franco (ed.) in collaboration with Dagmar Eigner, *Yogic Perception, Meditation, and Altered States of Consciousness* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), pp. 1-54.

⁷ Jason Birch, *The Amanaska: king of all yogas: a critical edition and annotated translation with a monographic introduction*, DPhil., University of Oxford, 2013.

however, the picture is more complex, with the category of ‘mind’ – as a translation of *citta* and also *manas* – being individually unstable and the product of a cosmological process which explains human experience in the world, as well as accounting for the withdrawal of the mind from the world back to its origin in a transcendent reality. The sections on yoga in the Śaiva Siddhānta Tantras follow the general orientation set by the yoga system of Patañjali, who the Śaiva commentators quote, although there are other traditions influencing them, namely the cosmological hierarchy of Sāṃkhya and an earlier Yoga tradition discussed by Vasudeva that emphasized the mind as pervasive.⁸ The mind is uncontrolled and undisciplined, driven by desire, which leads to suffering and rebirth, yet the controlled mind leads to transformation, to magical accomplishment (*siddhiḥ*) and liberation (*mokṣaḥ*).

i) Controlling the uncontrolled mind

On the one hand the mind, as a rendering of both *citta* and *manas*, is negatively evaluated because of its nature to wander from one object of consciousness to the next, which needs to be controlled in order to raise up the self in a verticality towards transcendence. This is the standard yogic model of the mind found in Patañjali’s *Yoga-sūtras* 1.2 where he defines yoga as ‘the cessation of mental fluctuation’ (*yogaś cittavṛttinirodhaḥ*).⁹ In this gnostic model, through mental control, the self is freed from the mind’s clutches and can go beyond the body, although using the body as the means to achieve this end. The model is almost certainly influenced by Buddhism and the Buddhist understanding of mind (see note 6) and influenced the Śaiva Siddhānta scriptures in which yoga comprises ‘limbs’ (*aṅgāni*), although often six

⁸ Somadeva Vasudeva, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra* (Pondichéry: Institut Français, 2004), p. 430.

⁹ Hariharananda Aranya, *Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali: containing his yoga aphorisms with commentary of Vyāsa in Sanskrit, and annotations thereon with copious hints on the practice of yoga* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1977), 1.2.

rather than eight. An example of this yogic understanding is found in the Yogapāda section of the *Mṛgendrāgama*.¹⁰ The text begins with a curious statement:

Now, having thought that it is very difficult for those who do not possess a self to have their own mastery, the teachers and others, desiring to win, make an effort to possess the self.¹¹

The commentary of the Śaiva Siddhānta theologian Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha¹² tells us that those who possess the self are those for whom the self is known (*ātmā vidyate*). He goes on to ask, ‘but what is this ‘possession of the self?’ (*ātmavatvam*)?’ The text answers:

A possessor of self is the condition of being a Yogin. It is produced for someone who has controlled his senses, performing breath control and so on; very gradually the senses are controlled.¹³

This gradual achievement is through the process of breath control, contraction of the senses, fixing or focusing the mind, meditation, examination, repetition of mantra, concentration, and the eighth stage is yoga itself.¹⁴ And because of this process, the controlled mind is free to settle on whatever the Yogin desires:

¹⁰ This, along with the *Mataṅgaparameśvara*, is a scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta, a branch of Mantra Mārga Śaivism, whose scriptures can mostly be dated between the ninth and twelfth centuries, although part of the *Niśvāsa* corpus goes back to the fifth. See Alexis Sanderson, ‘Śaiva Literature,’ *Journal of Indological Studies*, nos. 24 & 25 (2012–2013), pp. 5-8. The *Mṛgendra* was commented on by the theologian Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha who lived in the second half of the tenth century and the *Mataṅga* by his son Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha (Sanderson, ‘Śaiva Literature,’ pp. 15-16).

¹¹ *Mṛgendrāgama* Yogapāda, 1: *athānātmavatām matvā / svādhikāraṃ suduṣkaram / yaterannātmavanto ye / deśikādyā jigīṣavaḥ*. This idea is echoed in the *Netra-tantra* (1.23) where the text refers to ‘unmade souls’ (*akṛtātmāḥ*), perhaps referring to unrestrained souls. Perhaps this is also the sense here.

¹² Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha and his son Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha were active during the second half of the tenth century. Sanderson, ‘Śaiva Literature,’ pp. 16-17.

¹³ *Mṛgendrāgama* Yogapāda, 2: *tadātmavatvaṃ yogitvaṃ jīṭākṣasyopapadyate | prāṇāyāmādyanuṣṭhānāj- jīṭākṣatvaṃ śanaiśśanaiḥ*. (Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own. After completing this, I discovered that Alexis Sanderson has an unpublished translation of the Yogapāda, but at the time of writing this I have no access to it.)

¹⁴ Ibid. 3: *prāṇāyāmaḥ pratyāhāro dhāraṇā dhyānavīkṣaṇe | japas samādhir ityaṅgānyaṅgī yogo ’ṣṭamas svayam*.

Through this, the intention of consciousness to turn back from contact with the objects of the senses [means that the mind] is suitable for focusing on a condition produced by one's own will.¹⁵

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha explains that through the discipline of the breath, thought (*matih*) is cut off from contact with sense objects and this allows it to settle on any object it chooses. He explains:

With the withdrawal of the mind (*cit*) from contact with the objects of the senses, by the mind (*citta-*), [consciousness is] cut off. This cessation (*virati-*) of its own usual occupation (*svavyāya-*) is the reason why the mind goes towards something [higher] that can be focused upon, in a condition according to its own will, as about to be described. The mind (*matih*) here does not [mean] the intellect (*buddhiḥ*) but the usual activity of the mind (*cetaso vyāpārah*) which is called bringing together of thought (*matissāṅkalpa-*), which is thinking (*mananam*). This is due to the support of its being focused. So, Patañjali says: 'the focusing of the mind (*citta-*) is the strength of the body,' 'thus the mind (*mana-*) becomes adapted to its focuses.'¹⁶

Through the discipline of Yoga, the mind becomes detached from the objects of the senses and because of this withdrawal, it achieves a freedom to settle, to become fixed according to the Yogin's will. I rendered the expression *mati* as 'thought' and 'intention' although it could designate mind more generally and so be a synonym for *manas*. Thought adapting to its focus is saying that the mind takes the form of its objects. Once detached from sense objects, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha is saying, the mind can go to whatever the Yogin desires, perhaps with the

¹⁵ Ibid. 6: *tenendriyārthasamsargavinivṛtteś cito matih | dhāraṇāyogyatāmeti pade svecchāprakalpate.*

¹⁶ Ibid. com: *tena pratyāhāreṇa citaś cittasyendriyārthasamyogāt pratyāhṛtatvādyā vinivṛttiḥ svavyāpāraviratis-tasyā hetubhūtāyāḥ svecchāprakalpate pade vakṣyamānadhāraṇāyogyatām matir abhyeti | nacātra matirbuddhiḥ api tu mananam matissāṅkalpākhyas̥cetaso vyāpārah tasyaiva dhāraṇāśravaṇāt | yadāha patañjaliḥ dehabalaś cittasya dhāraṇā iti | tathā dhāraṇāsu manasoyogyateti.*

connotation of going to whatever world he desires. *Ichhā* has the double connotation of both ‘will’ and ‘desire’ as the driver of what objects (or worlds) the mind settles upon.¹⁷

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha goes on to define the remaining eight ‘limbs’ (*aṅgāni*) of Yoga, although they are different to those of Patañjali (*Yogasūtra* 2.29) whom he cites with approval, so after defining breath control, contraction of the senses, focusing the mind, he goes on to meditation, examination, repetition of mantra, and concentration. There is no restraint (*yamaḥ*) or control (*niyamaḥ*) and examination (*vīkṣaṇam*) and repetition (*japaḥ*) are added with yoga being a summative eighth.¹⁸ So, in the text, meditation (*dhyānam*) is defined as thought (*cintā*) fixed on a particular object (*tadviṣayā*). And here Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha brings out the distinctly Tantric meaning of *dhyāna* as visualization, for he describes it as identification with the object of meditation, or more literally, meditation is when the mind (*cittam*) is overspread with its focus (*dhāraṇāruddham*), which we can take to mean comes to be absorbed in its objects. More specifically, at this level, the specific focus refers to Śiva with three eyes, five faces, and so on, each face having a particular colour. So, he explicitly links meditation to visualizing Śiva in the form of the five faced Sadāśiva, the central deity of the Śaiva Siddhānta. The basic idea is clear, that through the forced control of the breath, the mind (*manaḥ*) can be controlled because there is a link between mind and breath: ‘the reason for the repression of the mind is because of its contact with breath and affliction’ (*nivṛtter manaso hetuḥ saṃsargāt prāṇakhedanam*).¹⁹ Once the mind is calmed, then higher levels of awareness that are higher levels of the cosmos, can be entered into: ‘whenever [the Yogin] calms the mind (*cittam*) in

¹⁷ In the Śaiva context of the methods (*upāyāḥ*) to attain liberation, Sanderson captures the sense of the concept *icchā* in translating it as ‘pre-cognitive impulse,’ Alexis Sanderson, ‘Maṇḍala and Āgamic Identity in the Trika of Kashmir,’ p. 170, in A. Padoux (ed.), *Mantras et diagrammes rituels dans l’hindouisme* (Paris: CNRS, 1986), pp. 169-214.

¹⁸ Different tantras have varying lists. The *Suprabhedāgama* (Yogapāda 3.54-55) gives the same list as Patañjali but inverts *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*. The *Kiraṇa-tantra* (Yogapāda 3) presents six limbs and the *Raurava* (Vidyāpāda 7.5) enumerates six as well, namely *pratyahāra*, *dhyāna*, *prāṇayāma*, *dhāraṇa*, *āsana*, *saṃādhi* (see the discussion N.R. Bhatt, ‘introduction,’ pp. xxv-xxvi, *Mataṅgaparamaśvara-tantra (Kriyāpāda, Yogapāda, et Caryāpāda) avec le commentaire de Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha* (Pondichéry: Institut Français d’Indologie, 1982), pp. v-lxxviii).

¹⁹ Ibid. 12ab.

the body of becoming, or in the body of being, there progress (*bhūyobhūyah*) can be meditated upon through being united in concentration to the teachings of the master.²⁰ The two bodies referred to, probably mean the subtle and gross bodies respectively, the vehicles of the soul's journey. A new word here has been introduced: *cintā*, 'thought' which Vasudeva takes to mean the flow of thoughts as the object of consciousness,²¹ in other words, intentional objects. The term *manas* is thus used in two senses, to mean the restricted awareness of the bound person as well as more specifically the category (*tattvam*) of the sense that perceives inner objects or thoughts. In a Nyāya context, that can also apply to the Śaiva Siddhānta, Chakrabarti translates *manas* as 'inner sense.'²² Thus the *manas* is the function or even organ or perception that perceives the flow of intentional objects (*cintāḥ*).

The same idea is found in other Śaiva Siddhānta texts such as the *Maṭaṅga-parameśvara*, where meditation (*dhyānam*) is strong attachment to the object of meditation, and this is determined by the power of the object, followed by breath control in which breath (*prāṇah*) becomes united to consciousness. Posture (*āsanam*) is complete immobility of the body during breath control, followed by one-pointed concentration (*ekāgrataḥ*), then examination (*tarkah*) which discriminates different ontic levels (*tattvāni*) as the mind (*manah*) rises to the highest, the *śiva-tattva*. As in other Tantras, meditation is placed before focusing (*dhāraṇā*), thereby emphasizing the stability of the mind in one-pointed concentration.²³ Withdrawal (*pratyahārah*) is the beginning of stabilizing the mind and stopping it from wandering. The text begins its description of the limbs of yoga in a somewhat enigmatic and obscure way. Śiva is speaking:

²⁰ *Mr̥gendrāga*, Yogapāda 59, comm: *yatra yatra bhāvaśarīre bhūtaśarīre vā cittam upaśāmyati tatra tatra bhūyobhūyah prayatnavatā gurūpadeśasamadhigatayuktinā dhyātavyam*.

²¹ Vasudeva, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra*, pp. 428-32.

²² Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Mind: The Nyāya Dualist Tradition* (Delhi: MLBD, 1999), p. 104.

²³ Bhatt, 'Introduction,' *Maṭaṅgaparameśvara*, p. xxvii.

Now I will name concisely the extensive limbs of the immeasurable splendour of yoga.

Listen, O Sage, with your own mind focused.

2.1. [We suffer] due to the usual operation (*niyogataḥ*) of senses turning around in their own [spheres or objects] such as sound and so on, with desire [for them] because of the agitating force from [the place of] one's own abiding.

2.2. Having pulled together the afflicted [senses] each by its own path, this is the success of [mental] behaviour contrary [to the usual working of the mind], after entering the belly of the lotus.

2.4. [The uncontrolled mind] is a stone worn down and tossed about [but pierced] by the needle of knowledge, strung with the thread of the mind, held by the hand of thinking.

2.5-6ab. This is the rosary to be counted, for the one embodied in the refuge of the lotus of the heart, having drawn together the moving mind for the sake of the refuge of the heart, by which it will be properly sheltered. This is called withdrawal.

2.6cd-7. From procuring [this meditational] nourishment, pure joy arises. There is satisfaction in sweeping together the objects [of the senses], but also with obtaining unimpaired [focus], then having brought together [consciousness] due to the cessation [of the moving mind], that is called withdrawal.²⁴

So, withdrawal is the cessation of the movement of the mind and abiding in the heart. There is no commentary by Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha on this section of the text and there are difficulties regarding the precise meaning of some terms. I have taken *svādhiṣṭhāṭṛbalerāṇāt* to mean

²⁴ *Mataṅgaparameśvara-tantra*. Yogapāda 2.1-7, pp. 251-52: *athāṅgāni variṣṭhāni yogasyāmitatejasaḥ / samā-sato 'bhīdhāsyāmi śṛṇuṣvaikamaṇā mune // 2.1// sveṣu sveṣu pravṛttānām indriyāṇām niyogataḥ / śabdādiṣv abhilāṣeṇa svādhiṣṭhāṭṛbalerāṇāt // 2.2// niṣaṇṇānām samākṛṣya svena svena tu vartmanā / pratīpācārasiddhis tu praveśya kamalodare // 2.3// jñānasūcisamāviddhanighṛṣṭārthopalā purā / manahsūtreṇa saṃprotā matihasta-samāśritā // 2.4// prasamkhyeyākṣamāleyaṃ hrīpadmāśrayamūrtinaḥ / cittam pratisamāhṛtya calitam hrdayāśrayāt // 2.5// samyaksamāśrayo yena pratyāhāraḥ sa ucyate / āhārāt poṣaṇam prītiḥ prasādaḥ saṃ-prajāyate // 2.6// saṃtoṣo 'rthasamūhe tu pratipattyāpy akhaṇḍitaḥ / tadā hrītya nirodhāc ca pratyāhāraḥ sa ucyate // 2.7//*

‘because of the agitating force (*īraṇa-*) from [the place of] one’s own abiding’ but *īraṇa* could refer to ‘wind,’ in which case one might speculate that the phrase refers to a ‘wind’ or breath in the body that rises upwards from the ‘own place’ as the lowest circle in the body’s esoteric anatomy, although this somatic system of hierarchical levels or centres in the body had not yet developed at the time of the *Matāṅga*’s composition and we should be cautious about reading later meanings back into the earlier texts. But the sense seems to be that the wandering mind, settling on the different objects of the senses, is itself driven by somatic forces. This kind of model would be in consonance with other texts such as the *Netra-tantra* where, in chapter seven, a structure of the body is presented with various centres located along a central axis with a network of channels pervading the body through which the breath or subtle power flows.²⁵ The term *kamalodaram* might similarly refer to such esoteric anatomy of a subtle body, perhaps another term for the *svādhiṣṭhātā* mentioned in the passage, that was to become famous in later yoga traditions. So, the sense is that the Yogin’s concentration is focused on this centre in the body at or below the stomach and that this concentration turns the mind away from the usual occupation of the mind in the sense spheres. The bodily image then shifts to the heart, where the image of the self abides, concentrating on which the wandering mind is contained. The mind is controlled by the Yogin concentrating on this who then achieves withdrawal from the sense spheres.

With the withdrawal of the mind from the sense spheres, the *Matāṅga* offers an account of the ascent of the soul through the levels of the cosmos within the body, from the earth to nature (*prakṛtiḥ*) (chapter four) and then the conquest of the *puruṣa-tattva* upwards (chapter five). Once in the pure realm, souls can attain seven kinds of liberation (*prakāraḥ*) in a hierarchical order.²⁶ Here the text presents correspondences between ontic levels (*tattvāni*) and

²⁵ *Netra tantra* chapter 7.1-5.

²⁶ *Mrgendrāgama*, Yogapāda 5.63-69.

levels of liberation. This section of the text does not refer to ‘mind’ which has been left behind in the lower creation.

The same idea is found in non-Saiddhāntika scriptures too, such as the *Mālinīvijayottara-tantra*, for Abhinavagupta the foundational scripture of the Trika religion.²⁷ Like the *Matāṅga*, it presents a journey through the ontic levels of the cosmos that the Yogin needs to follow: ‘The Lord of yoga should master all [of the realities] beginning with earth up to Śakti with a view to the destination (*lakṣya*), or in accordance with his disposition (*citta*).’²⁸ The term *cittabheda*, Vasudeva informs us, means ‘in accordance with one’s disposition’ and refers to the Yogin’s motivation for his journey. So, the variety of dispositions might correspond to the variety of goals because different targets are different manifestations of Śiva and approaches to him.²⁹ In the *Mālinī* there are six such goals that the Yogin may approach, each bringing its own reward.³⁰ Here *citta* designates a motivating force and individual character, although there are places in the text where it is used in the senses we have examined, as a fluctuating distraction that needs to be repressed. The *Mālinī* also contains the idea of limbs or ancillaries of yoga, only here there are six.³¹

ii) Mind in Cosmology

The human mind in this worldview is set within a cosmological context and is the result of massive forces controlling the particularity of mind into what it is. There are a number of terms we need to look at, in particular *citta*, which is all pervasive in tantric texts in varying degrees and we need to pay attention to the cosmological process that controls consciousness

²⁷ Vasudeva, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottara*, p. xxxix.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 253 citing the *Mālinī* 12.8-9.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 255.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 256 citing *Mālinī* 12.9: ‘The category of the aim (*lakṣya*) is considered to be six-fold according to the division of [1.] void (*vyoman*), [2.] body (*vigraha*), [3.] drop (*bindu*), [4] phoneme (*arṇa*), [5.] world (*bhuvana*) and [6.] resonance (*dhvani*)...’

³¹ Vasudeva, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottara*, pp. 367-82, *prāṇayāma*, *dhāraṇa*, *tarka*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi*, and *pratyahāra*.

into its particularity. We need to locate the idea of the mind within the broader conception of person and world, which is to place the mind in the context of the hierarchical cosmology. Details of this cosmology can be found elsewhere,³² but briefly the worldview of the Śaiva tantras is that the hierarchical universe emanates from a subtle source (referred to as the ‘drop’, *bindu*, the subtle material substrate). The pure cosmos is the first emanation from Śiva and Śakti comprising the ontic levels or tattvas associated with forms of Śiva, namely Sadāśiva, Īśvara, and Śuddhavidyā, each combined with their power, Icchāśakti, Jñānaśakti and Kriyāśakti. The powers of Cit- and Ānanda are associated with Śiva- and Śakti-tattvas, the highest ontic categories concerning which there is an ambiguity, being both the first emanations and the source of emanation. Following the pure course, the impure cosmos is a more solidified emanation from the ontic category of *māyā*, the substrate and substance of the lower universe, which in turn is reflected in an even lower manifestation of *prakṛti*, material nature, from which emanates the, yet lower still, universe down to earth (*prthivī*). This whole structure is conceptualized as thirty-six ontic levels or categories (*tattvāni*) made up of the standard twenty-five Sāṃkhya categories plus eleven Śaiva ones, woven together. The human mind is the consequence of these higher forces emerging from *prakṛti*. Thus, the ‘inner instrument’ (*antaḥkaraṇaḥ*) comprising intellect (*buddhiḥ*), ego (*ahaṃkāraḥ*) and ‘mind’ (*manas*) covers much of what the English term ‘mind’ designates. *Citta* is not listed as one of the ontic categories, although individual conscious awareness is a consequence of this cosmological sequence.

In the process of the unfolding of the cosmos outlined in the Śaiva Siddhānta scripture, the *Mṛgendrāgama*, the *buddhi* faces towards the self, which is pure consciousness, and

³² E.g. Dominic Goodall, ‘How the Tattvas of Tantric Śaivism Came to Be 36: the Evidence of the *Niśvāsātattva-saṃhitā*,’ in Dominic Goodall and Harunaga Isaacson (eds.), *Tantric Studies: Fruits of a Franco-German Project on Early Tantra* (Pondichéry: Institut Français, 2016), pp. 77-112. André Padoux, *Recherches sur la Symbolique et l’Énergie de la Parole dans certains textes tantriques* (Paris: de Boccard, 1963), pp. 261-86; Jagdish Chandra Chatterji, *Kashmir Shaivism* (Srinagar: Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies, 1914), pp. 64-147.

towards material nature which is its immediate origin. It contains two structures, the fundamental predispositions (*bhāvēḥ*)³³ and the fundamental conceptions (*pratyayāḥ*), the latter emerging from the former which is its material cause (*upādānaḥ*),³⁴ and the *bhāva*-s themselves emerging from, and being caused by, the qualities or *guṇa*-s of *prakṛti*, which pervade all the world.³⁵ There are eight fundamental predispositions: towards virtue (*dharma*), knowledge (*jñāna*), dispassion (*vairāgya*), sovereignty/power (*aiśvarya*), and their opposites, non-virtue (*adharma*) and so on, which in turn give rise to the four fundamental conceptions of power (*siddhi*), contentment (*tuṣṭi*), non-power (*aśakti*), and error (*viparyaya*). The positive fundamental predispositions, virtue, knowledge, and so on, are governed by the quality of lightness (*sattvam*) whereas their opposites are governed by darkness (*tamaḥ*). We might simplify or generalize this scheme to say that these predispositions innate within the mind predispose the person either towards higher knowledge and power or towards lower pleasure and obstacles to enlightenment. The chapter on the *bhāva*-s in the *Mṛgendrā* concludes:

[The innate dispositions] naturally result in a power over dominated beings and are linked to complete knowledge [of them]. [On the one hand they result in] lack of desire towards [worldly] pleasures, the withdrawal from the group of obstacles, [yet also on the other to] attachment to [worldly] pleasures, being humiliated, to the illumination of the body, obstacles, and objects.³⁶

³³ I follow Larson's translation of *bhāva*, G.J. Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya (eds), *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* vol IV, *Sāṃkhya, a Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: MLBD, 1987), p. 53. *Mṛgendrāgama*, Vidyāpāda, 10.24: *bhāvā buddhiguṇā dharmajñānavairāgyabhūṭayaḥ | sātvikā vyatyayenaite rāgamutsṛjya tāmasāḥ*. 'The dispositions are the qualities of intelligence, virtue, knowledge, dispassion, power. They are light and their opposite, apart from passion, is darkness (*tamas*).'

³⁴ *Mṛgendrāgama*, Vidyāpāda, 10.25. These categories are themselves curious. First occurring in the *Sāṃkhya-kārikās* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, these lists seem to be an attempt to account for aspects of experience given positive and negative value. In his commentary Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha says that *pratyāya*-s, that I have called fundamental conceptions, make known the transmigrating soul: *te dharmādāya upādānam utpattihetur yeṣāṃ te saṃsāryaṇoḥ pratyāyanāt pratyayā iṣṭāḥ*. 'Fundamental conceptions [are so called] because they make known the transmigrating soul of which they are the reason for its arising.' I have followed Hulin who renders *pratyāyanāt* 'font connaître' (Michel Hulin, *Mṛgendrāgama, Sections de la Doctrine et du Yoga* (Pondichéry: Institut Français, 1980), p. 241).

³⁵ *Mṛgendrāgama*, Vidyāpāda, chapter 11

³⁶ *Mṛgendrāgama*, Vidyāpāda, 10.30: *vaśyākrāntis tat pariññānayogo bhogānicchā vighnasaṅghavyapāyaḥ | bhogāsaktir nyakkṛtir dehabuddhir vighnaś cārthās teṣu sāmśiddhikeṣu*.

This is somewhat obscure, but I take it that the innate dispositions lead to power over others who become dominated beings (*vāśyā*), on the one hand, and on the other they can be the cause of attachment, rebirth and being overcome by obstacles. Aghoraśiva's commentary helps illuminate the meaning of the passage to some extent, that complete knowledge of other beings occurs when one attains to the state in which others appear as objects of perception (*tatpari-jñānayoga iti tadviṣayajñānaprāptiḥ*) towards which there is lack of desire. From the innate disposition of attachment or specifically non-detachment (*avairāgyāt*) there arises the illumination of the body (*dehabuddhiḥ*). The commentators do not remark on the use of *buddhi* but if we take this as a *tatpuruṣa* compound, we can perhaps take this to mean that a new body arises for the bound self because of attachment. Although the detailed meanings of such verses are often now obscure, the general analysis of mind is clear that within the *buddhi* there are two orientations, one towards power and success (power over others) and liberation – upwards in the Śaiva metaphor – the other towards worldly pleasures and so obstacles and embodiment in a new body. The mind (*cittam*) as consequence of this evolution is the instrument of perception within a person that is formed through complex cosmological structure of which the ordinary mind is mostly unaware.

The *Mrgendra* precisely follows the Sāṃkhya system, even in its analysis of the *pratyaya*'s into further categories.³⁷ These dispositions and conceptions determine the quality of a living entity's experience and are both orientated towards liberation and towards material nature (*prakṛti*).³⁸ Similarly, the fundamental conceptions that determine the quality of embodiment, are themselves controlled by the qualities of material nature, the *guṇa*-s, so *sattva* becomes active in a person's ability to perceive the higher ontic levels and so attain liberation.³⁹ A number of terminologically complex features are thus introduced to explain human

³⁷ *Mrgendrāgama*, Vidyāpāda, 10. 25 corresponds to *Sāṃkhya-kārikās* 12.43-52. Larson and Bhattacharya, *Sāṃkhya*, pp. 160-61.

³⁸ *Mrgendrāgama*, Vidyāpāda, 10.29cd.

³⁹ *Mrgendrāgama*, Vidyāpāda, 11. 2-3.

experience and the mind's orientation towards the world and so entrapment in rebirth and the mind's orientation towards transcendence. This complexity is arguably because of the historical inheritance of the Sāṃkhya categories within the Śaiva system and also of ideas about *citta* from a yogic understanding of consciousness. The fundamental conceptions are drivers of mind in that they give rise to awareness or realization and the satisfied sense (*tuṣṭiḥ*) of having realized a goal or attained an action.⁴⁰

The complex of function of the 'inner instrument' (*antaḥkaraṇam*) that maps onto the idea of mental functioning is the consequence of cosmological forces. It is the *buddhi* that contains the traces, the potentially active force remaining latent until brought to fruition, that result in future action and future experience. And so, these latent traces are, in a sense, memories of the past, although not at the level of awareness. Indeed, the *buddhi* itself is unconscious (*jaḍaḥ*), illuminated only by the consciousness that is the self (*puruṣa-/ puṃs-tattvam*). The person's interaction with the world through the group of senses and whole structure of the lower ontic levels – the five senses, the five faculties of action, the five subtle senses – are embodied in world through the gross body (*sthūlaśarīraḥ*) that comprises the material elements, itself derived from the subtle body (*sūkṣmaśarīraḥ*) or 'city of eight' (*puryāṣṭakaḥ*) comprising the inner instrument plus the five subtle senses (*tanmātrāṇi*).⁴¹ Turning away from the world towards an inner transcendence, consciousness particularized through the apparatus of the inner instrument withdraws from interaction with the world and moves upwards, and inwards, towards Śiva. In the earliest Śaiva scripture that has come down

⁴⁰ *Mṛgendrāgama*, Vidyāpāda, 11.2: *puṃprakṛtyādiviṣayā buddhiryā siddhir atra sā |tuṣṭir nur akṛtārthasya kṛtārtho'smīti yā matiḥ*. 'Intellect whose object is the pure self and material nature etc., is called here understanding, contentment is the thought: 'I have reached my goal,' [but in fact] he has not reached his goal.' That is, the sense of satisfaction arises even though the goal has not, in reality, been reached.

⁴¹ For this overall structure being constitutive of ancient Indian view of person see Jessica Frazier, *Hindu Worldviews: Theories of Self, Ritual and Reality* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 41-47.

to us, the *Niḥśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* we read how the disciple of Śiva should meditate, concentrating his mind within himself:

4.17c-18b: He should concentrate his thoughts/mind in his head and fix his eyes [to look] upwards. [While he is] practicing thus, the door into the fourth state is broken through.

4.18c-19: There arises [for him] there a sensation/awareness/sign (*pratyayam*) comparable to the touch of wind. Or like [the crawling of] an ant [upon him], or like being pricked by a thorn. Smokeless burning fire flames in his body.

4.20: A divine smell will arise, and a divine voice begin [to speak]. He knows whatever he thinks about, even [in the realm of] unknown Śāstras.

4.21: He becomes radiant, full of beauty, ascending [into the air] he moves about. After three months, conversation with Siddhas comes about [in his experience].

4.22-3: He sees [all creatures] from Brahmā down to blades of grass with divine vision; within a year he sees a crescent moon above [his own] head. Above that [crescent moon?] he sees Śiva at peace and becomes immortal, omniscient, able to change form at will and becomes equal to Śiva.⁴²

Here we see a focus on inner, contemplative experience and the idea of mind (*cittam*) as something that can be used to focus his concentration. Through the practice of fixing the *citta* within, the practitioner breaks through the ‘door’ into the fourth state, the state beyond waking, dreaming and sleeping. Through this elevation he experiences transactions with supernatural beings, otherwise invisible, and eventually becomes equal to Śiva (*śivatulyaḥ*),

⁴² *Niḥśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, *Nayasūtra* 4.17c-23: *mūrdhni cittam samālambya ūrdhvaṅkṛtvā tu cakṣuṣī //4.17// evaṃ abhyasamānas tu turyadvāraṃ vibhidyate /pratyayañjāyate tatra vāyusparśasamopamaḥ //4.18// pipīlikāsamo vāpi kaṇṭakā[vedha]{sa}[pra]bhāḥ /agnir jvalati dehe tu adhūmo dahanātmakaḥ //4.19// divyagandhaś ca jāyeta divyavāṇī pravarttate /apūrvaśāstraṃ yatkiñcintitaṃ tu vijānate //4.20// tejasvī kāntiyuktaś ca ūrdhvagāmī tu mañicaret /siddhaiś ca saha sambhāṣyaṃ tribhirmāsaiḥ //4.21// ābrahmastambaparyantaṃ paśyate divyacakṣu[ṣā]/[saṃca]tsareṇārdhacandraṃ paśyate ca śiropari //4.22// tatopari śivaṃ śāntantandṛṣṭvā cāmṛtībhavet /sarvajñaḥ kāmṛpī ca śivatulyaś ca jāyate //4.23// (Goodall’s translation.)*

the idea of liberation in this tradition. In these passages the mind is a force that rise upwards, through the inner door into the higher state and the cognition of God. Here we see *citta* as the process of being aware, which is turned inwards through a technology of meditation and ritual in the belief that liberation and/or pleasure in higher worlds can be a consequence. An eschatological hope drives the practices that turn the mind away from the world.

This basic model is found not only in the scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta but in the non-Saiddhāntika corpus of scriptures as well. In a reinterpretation of the eight limbs classical yoga, the *Netra-tantra* describes a similar process of the Yogin turning the mind inwards.

8.12-13ab. Having abandoned the gross condition of the breath and so on, [the Yogin should] similarly [abandon] the subtle, inner path; after that he will attain the supreme vibration beyond the subtle. This is called breath control (Prāṇayāma) from which the mind does not move.

8.13cd-14. The fluctuations of the qualities beginning with sound are experienced by the mind, abandoning which, [the Yogin] may enter the supreme place by his own mind. This is called 'withdrawal' (Pratyahāra), cutting the noose of becoming.

8.15. Having gone beyond the intellect, the qualities, [and] the mind, meditating on the unchanging Lord without qualities, who is the object of meditation and reflexive awareness, the wise know this to be 'meditation' (Dhyāna).

8.16. The supreme self is held by the 'supporting concentration' (Dhāraṇa) at all times. That 'supporting concentration' (Dhāraṇa) is defined [here as] the destruction of the bond of becoming.

8.17. The placing of consciousness equally in all beings is called 'absorption' (Samādhi). [This is the real meaning] otherwise people are befuddled.⁴³

⁴³ *Netra-tantra* 8. 12-17 (Na f.19r) : *prāṇādisthūlabhāvaṃ tu tyaktvā sūkṣmaṃ pathāntaram / sūkṣmātītaṃ tu paramaṃ spandanaṃ labhyate yataḥ // 12 // prāṇayāma[h] samuddiṣṭo yasmān na cyavate manaḥ / śabdādi-guṇavṛttir yā cetasā hy anubhūyate // 13 // tyaktvā tāṃ paramaṃ dhāma praviśet tat svacetasā / pratyāhāram iti proktaṃ bhavapāśanikṛntanam // 14 // dhīr guṇān samatiṃ kramya nirguṇaṃ cāvyayaṃ vibhum / dhyātvā*

Consciousness that arises from breath control is a means of going beyond its limitation to a higher state of absorption (*samādhiḥ*) and realizing that consciousness that is placed in all beings is the same. Elsewhere in the text this process moves upwards through levels of sound to a condition ‘beyond the mind’ (*unmanā*), a condition that has transcended the lower levels of manifestation. In the NT’s account, this sound cosmology is divided into twelve parts (*kalā*) of which eleven are perishable and the twelfth is imperishable as Śiva’s power (*śaktiḥ*). These levels are in order: A, U, M, *bindu*, *ardhacandra*, *nirodhī*, *nāda*, *nādānta*, *kaundalī*, *vyāpinī*, and *samanā*, which also correspond to the ontic levels. The eleventh is *unmanā*, transcendence, the ‘beyond mind,’ identified with Śiva and Śakti.⁴⁴ The text states:

[The sound sequence is] the syllables A, U, M and then the drop, the half-moon, cessation, the sound, and the end of the sound, then the circular one, the all-pervading power, and [the level] with mind. [These are to be] pacified. Then the partless ontic level of the self, then power which is beyond mind. This [level] has brilliance [then follows] the supreme, highest ontic level without brilliance [i.e. Śiva].⁴⁵

The first eleven levels culminate in *samanā*, ‘with mind,’ while the transcendent level is *unmanā*, ‘beyond mind’ with the ontic category of the self (*ātmatattvam*) being between the two. Here the term *manas* refers not to the ontic category that comprises one of the components

dhyeyaṃ svasaṃvedyaṃ dhyānaṃ tac ca vidur budhāḥ // 15 // dhāraṇā paramātmānaṃ dhāryate yena sarvadā / dhāraṇā sā vinirdiṣṭā bhavabandhavināśinī // 16 // samas sarveṣu bhūteṣu ādhānaṃ cittavigrahaṃ / samādhānaṃ iti proktaṃ anyathā lokadāmbhikaṃ // 17 // 8.12b *pathāntaram*] Na: *athāntaram* K; 8.13b *manaḥ*] Na: *punaḥ* K; 14a *paramaṃ*] Na: *praviśet* K; 14b *praviśet*] Na: *paramaṃ* K; 14c *pratyāhāraṃ iti proktaṃ*] Na: *pratāhāra iti prokto* K; 14d *bhavaṃpāśanikṛntanam*] Na: *bhavaṃpāśanikṛntakaḥ* K; 15b *nirguṇaṃ*] Na: *nirdhyeyaṃ* K; 16a *paramātmānaṃ*] Na: *paramātmataṃ* K; 17a *samas*] Na: *samaṃ* K; 17b *ādhānaṃ cittavigrahaṃ*] Na: *ādhāraṃ cittanigrahaḥ* K.

⁴⁴ For correspondences between this structure and other cosmological structures, levels of speech, energies, ontic levels and so on, see the diagram in Padoux, *Recherches*, p. 347.

⁴⁵ *Netra-tantra* 24.21-23 (f.85 r) = K 22.21-23: *akāraś ca ukāraś ca makāro bindur eva ca |ardhacandro nirodhī ca nādo nādānta eva ca //24.21// kaundālī vyāpi[nī śaktiḥ samanāś] ...tastu sāmāyā[h] / niṣkalaṃ cātmatattvaṃ tu śaktiś caiva tathonmanā //24.22// sābhāsaṃ tam nīrābhāsaṃ / paratattvaṃ anuttamaṃ //24.23//* 24.22b ...*tastu*] Na: *ceti* K; 24.22c *tu*] Na: *ca* K; 24.23a *tam*] Na: *tat* K. Translation follows K as Na damaged at edges. The *Netra-tantra* adds *kaundālī* and according to Kṣemarāja’s commentary on K, qualifies *śakti* as *vyāpinī*, making eleven before *unmanā*. The sequence in other texts such as the *Somaśambhupaddhati* is that after AUM we have *bindu*, *ardhacandra*, *nirodhinī*, *nāda*, *nādanta*, *śakti*, *vyāpinī*, *samanā* and *unmanā* (Hélène Brunner-Lachaux, *Somaśambhupaddhati* vol. 3 (Pondichéry: Institut Français, 1977), pp. 368-369 and plate XII).

of the inner instrument, but rather to the vast cosmic structure itself. This is a cosmological understanding of mind in which all levels within the manifested cosmos are classified as being within mind, whereas the transcendent level of Śiva is beyond mind. These ontic levels are used ritually, mapped onto the body and associated with different mantras⁴⁶: the purification of the body through the ritual process recapitulating the purification (and destruction) of the cosmos itself at the dissolution. This process is found in other texts as well such as the *Svacchanda-tantra*.⁴⁷ There are, therefore, two senses of the mind as the term *manas*, the narrower sense of one of the ontic levels that comprise the inner instrument and the broader sense of the cosmos itself as comprising ‘mind’ and the mind’s transcendence to higher ontic levels.

The term *citta* is used to indicate awareness and the verbal root *cint* is used to mean meditation or visualisation. Thus *cintayet*, third person singular optative, one should meditate, is common in tantric literature and is a synonym for *dhyāyet*, one should visualise, and *vikalpayet*, one should imagine.⁴⁸ For example, in the *Netra-tantra* after the purification of body, the practitioner should visualise a process of the moon arising in his mind’s eye, arising in the east, with the aid of the root mantra [OM JUM SAḤ], then he should meditate upon the fixing of mantras on the body in the ritual of making the body divine and fit for worship:

⁴⁶ For these cosmic-somatic correspondences see the diagrams in Brunner-Lachaux, *Somaśambhupaddhati*, pp. 690-89.

⁴⁷ *Svacchanta-tantra* 5.7-9: *māyātattvaṃ makāreṇa vidyātattvaṃ kṣakārataḥ | repheṇa caiśvaraṃ tattvaṃ ha-kāreṇa sadāśivaḥ //5.7// praṇavena tathā śaktir nyasitavyā varānane / vyāpinīm samanām cordhve tatraiva tu viśodhayet //5.8// śodhayitvā krameṇaiva mūlamantreṇa suvrate / yojya ātmā pare tattve unmanātītasarvage //5.9//*. ‘The ontic level of the material substrate (*māyā*) is associated with the syllable MA; the ontic level of [Śuddha] Vidyā with the syllable KṢA; the ontic level of Īśvara with RA; and Sadāśiva with the syllable HA. Then Śakti is to be placed with OM, O lovely faced woman, Śakti with OM and the drop. This is the ontic level of Śakti, [followed by] the form of Supreme Śiva. And so, one should purify [the levels named] all-pervading, with mind, and above that in the ontic category of Śiva, also with the syllable OM. This has been previously described with instruction [how it is to be performed]. Having purified [the levels in the body] in due order with the root mantra, O disciplined one, he unites the self with the highest ontic level which is beyond mind’.

⁴⁸ *Jayākhyasamhitā* 10.26 (*cintayet*); 10.33b-34a (*smaret*); 10.46a (*bhāvayet*); 10.54a (*dhyāyet*); *Skandapurāṇa* 81.23 (*vikalpayet*). See Gavin Flood, ‘The Purification of the Body in Tantric Ritual Representation,’ pp. 33-34, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, vol 45, 2002, pp. 25-43.

3.15. After [the purification of the body] he should visualise the series of phases of the rising moon, sprinkled with nectar [along with] the eastern image, in the three realities with the root [mantra].

3.16. Then he should fix the ancillary [mantras] on the body with both hands once more. With the practice of concentration, he should meditate the mantra [that gives him] a sense of self presence.⁴⁹

‘He should meditate’ (*cintayet*) is used synonymously with ‘he should imagine’ (*prakalpayet*) and it is associated with another mental faculty of self-presence. *Abhimāna* is often rendered as ‘pride’ but I think we need to take it, in this instance, as not so much pride, which is a negative attribute, but a sense of who one is, one’s own self presence, even though this is limited and for non-dual Śaivas, in the end a delusion.⁵⁰ The object of the meditation practice is the mantra and its consequence would seem to be *abhimāna*. The text carries on in the next verse with the visualisation of the deity:

3.17.-20. Having assumed the cow gesture or also the lotus gesture, he should meditate on the Lord of gods in the self. [This self] is equal in splendor to ten million moons, resembling the fruit released from a jujube tree, having equal splendor to camphor, like jasmine, the moon, and cow’s milk, resembling a [crystal] mountain. [The self is] adorned with white ornaments, with sandal, delightful camphor, saffron and so on, with limbs smeared with white sandal, powdered, grey camphor. [It is] submerged by many wide waves of nectar from the throbbing moon, situated in the middle of the lunar disc, single faced with three eyes.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Netra-tantra* 3. 15-16 (f.6r): *paścāt kalākalāpottham peyūṣena tu siṃcitam / mūrtipūrvaṃ tṛtattve tu mūlenaiva prakalpayet* // 3.15 // *tato [’]ṃgāni karābhyāṃ tu śarīre vinyāset punaḥ / mantraṃ caivābhimānaṃ tu cintayed dhyānayogataḥ* // 3.16 // 3.15 b: *siṃcitam*] Na: *secayet* K; 3.15c: *mūrtipūrvaṃ tṛtattve*] Na: *mūrtibhūtaṃ tritattvaṃ* K; 3.16a: *tu*] Na: *ca* K; *vinyāset*] Na: *kalpayet* K.

⁵⁰ Isabelle Ratié, *Le Soi et l’Autre: Identité, différence et altérité dans la philosophie de la Pratyabhijñā* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 206-208, note 76.

⁵¹ *Netra-tantra* 3.17-20 (f.6r-f.7v): *dhenumudrā tato badhvā padmamudrā tatathāpi vā / dhyāyed ātmani deveśaṃ candrakoṭisamaprabhaṃ* // 17 // *svacchamuktāphalaprakhyāṃ sphaṭikādrisamaprabhaṃ / kuṇḍemḍugokṣīre nibhaṃ himādrśadrśaṃ vibhum* // 18 // *śubhrahāreṃdukāṃtāṃdisitabhūṣaṇabhūṣitaṃ / sitacandanaliptāṅgaṃ*

Here ‘he should visualize’ (*dhyāyet*) is synonymous with *cintayet* and *prakalpayet*. All three terms indicate a mental action orientated towards a spiritual elevation as, here, part of daily practice. One more example:

13.31. Now [the practitioner] should visualise God with many arms, the dancing Lord, the God bearing half [of his body] as Umā or bearing half as Viṣṇu.⁵²

Cintayet indicates a model of the mind in which it can be controlled and focused on a desired object. In view of the understanding that the mind takes the form of its objects, the pure object of the form of God functions to purify the mind. *Cintayet* is also close to the idea of worship. Thus, we read in the same chapter:

13.28. [The practitioner] should worship [the Sun] on the ground, in fire and in water, and at the tops of mountains, or where it shines in the mind. It bestows the fruit of desired magical accomplishments.⁵³

When applied to the mind, ‘one should worship’ (*pūjayet*) is equivalent to ‘one should visualize’ (*dhyāyet*, *cintayet*, *vikalpayet*).

Let us take stock for a moment. So far, we have explored three senses of the English word ‘mind’ in the Śaiva sources, firstly as *citta* and sometimes as *manas*, a term for the ordinary individual mind. We have seen that pre-philosophical Śaivism has a concept of the mind as inherently unstable and wandering, keeping a person from realization of a higher reality or journey to God. This is in consonance with the Patañjala yogic conception of mind as unstable and the definition of yoga as its cessation. Secondly, there is a cosmological understanding of the mind as the term *manas*, as being mapped onto the general ontic categories

karpūrakṣodadhūsaram // 19 // sphurac candrāmṛtasphārabahulormipariplūtam / somamaṇḍalamadhyastham ekavaktram trilocanam // 20 // 3.17a dhenumudrā tato badhvā] Na: mudrām caivāmṛtām baddhvā K.

⁵² *Netra-tantra* 13.31: *atho bahubhujam devam nātyastham cintayet prabhum / umārdhadhāriṇam devam viṣṇur evārdhadhāriṇam // 13. 31 // 13.31a atho bahubhujam devam] Na: atha vā bahubāhum ca K; 13.31b nātyastham Na: nādyastham K; 13.31c devam] Na: yadvā K; 13.31d viṣṇur evārdhadhāriṇam] Na: viṣṇor ardhārdhadhāriṇam K.*

⁵³ *Netra-tantra* 13.28 (f.32r): *sthale 'nale jale caiva parvatāgreṣu pūjayet / yatra vā rocate cittam icchāsiddhiphalapradam // 13. 28 // 13.28b parvatāgreṣu pūjayet] Na: parvatāgre prapūjayet K; 13.28c cittam] Na: citte K.*

and process of emanation. Thus, the ontic categories that comprise manifestation are regarded as being within mind (*samanā*), while transcendent Śiva and Śakti are beyond mind (*unmanā*). The term *manas* is also used for the human faculty, the inner faculty of perception whose object is thought; as the eye has forms and colours as its object, or the faculty of hearing perceives sounds, so the mind perceives thoughts. This is the Sāṃkhya system adopted by the Śaiva tantras where *manas* is part of a larger structure, the inner instrument, that also comprises the sense of self or ego and the intellect or higher mind that contains the compulsions, the predispositions towards experience in the world. These ideas are common in the pre-philosophical literature, both in the Tantras regarded as dualist and those regarded as non-dualist. Thirdly, we have verbal forms used in an instructional or injunctive sense that the practitioner should ‘meditate’ or ‘bring to mind’ the object of contemplation. *Cintayet*, ‘one should think,’ *vikalpayet*, ‘one should imagine’, and ‘*smaret*’, one should bring to mind or recall, are focused on the mind as a way of transforming self towards an eschatological goal.

(iii) Mind in Meditation

The mental activity of meditation indicated by the use of the third person optatives discussed above, focusses on the mind as a flow or continuity of thought as its object in the context of meditation (*bhāvanā*, *dhāraṇā*). Texts so far discussed, scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta and Non-Saiddhāntika Śaivism, absorb a yogic model of the mind that accompanies their ritual systems and verbal forms such as *cintayet*, *vikapayet*, and *smaret* are used in the context of visualizations in the procedures of ritual systems with a focus on specific deities and their mantras. There is also at least one meditation manual outside of the ritual systems in which we find an understanding of mind as both object of meditation and as all-pervasive reality. This and related texts are within the Śaiva-Śākta tradition, with an emphasis on the Goddess abstracted to a non-anthropomorphic ideal of pure or all-pervading consciousness. This medit-

ation manual is the *Vijñānabhairava*, an instruction that assumes the Goddesses of the Trika. This text can be classified, as Sanderson shows, as a Śakti Tantra in a tradition that includes the *Mālinīvijayottara-tantra*, which for Abhinavagupta is the basic revelation of the Trika religion.⁵⁴

The *Vijñānabhairava* – the God who is consciousness – presents a view of the mind, on the one hand as a process in the Yogin’s ascent through the body and on the other as identified with pure consciousness in a spontaneous expansion that occurs in human experience. The text adopts the usual yogic model that the mind (*cit*) needs to be restrained (*niruddham*)⁵⁵ and of the withdrawal of the mind from the sense spheres through closing off the senses by adopting a particular posture, using the hands to block the apertures or ‘doors’ of the face. The Yogin then perceives the ‘drop’ (*binduḥ*) internally, having penetrated between the eyebrows (*bhrūmadhya-*), which then disappears leaving the Yogin established in the supreme condition.⁵⁶ Again, when the Yogin casts the mind (*manaḥ kṣipet*) in the point at the crown of the head, then the mind will become ‘out of use’ (*kṣīṇavṛttih*) and he will attain a state of mind contrary to the usual, an unsignified condition (*vailakṣaṇyam*).⁵⁷ The commentary

⁵⁴ To briefly summarize Sanderson’s work here, within the non-Saiddhāntika traditions, scriptures can be divided into the Mantra- and Vidyāpīṭha. Within the latter group of scriptures, which are Śākta in orientation, there are three sub-divisions, the Vāma Tantras (such as the *Vīṇāśikha*), the Yāmala Tantras (such as the *Brahmayāmala*), and the Śakti Tantras. Of these, there are two groups, one forming the scriptural corpus of the Trika religion, expositing worship of the three Goddesses Parā, Parāparā and Aparā (such as the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* from which develops the *Mālinīvijayottara*), the other focused on worship of the Goddess Kālasaṃkārśinī or Kālī such as the *Jayadrathayāmala*, that also overlaps with the Kulamārga traditions (Kaula worship such as the Krama tradition). The *Vijñānabhairava* is a Śakti Tantra within the former subdivision of the scriptures of the Trika. See Alexis Sanderson, ‘Śaiva Literature,’ pp. 37-42.

⁵⁵ *Vijñānabhairava with commentaries of Kṣemarāja and Śivopadhyāya*, edited by M.R.Śāstri (Bombay: Tatvavivechaka Press, 1918), v. 62.

⁵⁶ *Vijñānabhairava* v. 36: *karaṇuddhadṛgasteṇa bhrūbhedād dvārarodhanāt / dṛṣṭe bindau kramāt līne tanmadhe paramā sthitiḥ* // ‘Due to stopping the doors [of the senses and consequent] penetration of the [space between] the eyebrows, by means of the weapon mantra and by sight stopped with the hands, seeing the drop which is gradually dissolved, the supreme state is established in the middle of that.’ My understanding and translation of the text have been guided by Jaidev Singh’s (*Vijñānabhairava*, Delhi: MLBD, 1963) and Lilian Silburn’s (*Le Vijñānabhairava* (Paris: de Boccard, 1961) translations. On the hand gesture involved here, Silburn writes that this is a gesture (*mudrā*) taught by the master, involving the blocking of the senses by the hands: ‘les dix doigts des mains s’opposent au fonctionnement des organes des sens, les pouces s’appliquent sur les oreilles, les index sur les yeux, les médus obstruent les narines tandis que les annulaires et les auriculaires servent à clore la bouche’ (p. 86).

⁵⁷ *Vijñānabhairava* v. 51.

by Śivopādhyāya tells us that *vailakṣaṇyam* means ‘uncommon’ (*asamānya-*) and that this is the condition or nature of being the supreme Bhairava (*asāmānyaparabhairavarūpatā*).⁵⁸ We might extend this idea to mean that while the ordinary mind is characterized by its ability to signify through language, the absolute state cannot be signified for we know it is beyond language from verse 14.⁵⁹ The Yogin should meditate (*vicintayet*) the universe as being empty (*śūnyabhātaṃ*) and through this the mind becomes dissolved (*mano līnaṃ*) and absorbed in this void.⁶⁰ This is to have freed the mind from thought construction and support.⁶¹ The text mostly uses the term *manas* but sometimes *citta* is a synonym; as *manas* can become dissolved so can *citta* (*cittalayaḥ sphuṭam*).⁶²

But the mind not only recognizes itself as absolute consciousness through the process of meditation, but also that pure consciousness pervades all of experience. Thus, the elevation of mind (*manorūḍhaḥ*) in sexual pleasure or the pleasure of eating and drinking, is the realization of absolute, Bhairava consciousness. Or having meditated (*dhyātvā*) the great joy that arises when, for example, one sees a relative after a long time, the mind becomes one with that experience (*tan mano bhavet*).⁶³ Even ordinary acts of worship, such as ritual ablution (*snānam*) or worship, need to be understood as absolute consciousness.⁶⁴ Once the indicators of distinction and individuality are dissolved, namely the sense of self (*ātmā*), power (*śaktiḥ*), intelligence (*cetasā*), and mind (*manaḥ*), Bhairava remains,⁶⁵ which is the realization of the

⁵⁸ *Vijñānabhairava*, p. 44.

⁵⁹ *Vijñānabhairava* v.14: ... *vyapadeṣṭum aśakyāśav akathyā paramārthataḥ*, ‘... according to the supreme reality [the absolute state] cannot be told, in this matter there is an inability to name.’ This absolute is beyond predicates, being that which speech cannot speak. Cf. the *Netra-tantra*, 8.3c: ‘[God is that] which speech cannot speak’ (*yan na vāg vadate*).

⁶⁰ *Vijñānabhairava*, v. 58.

⁶¹ *Vijñānabhairava*, v. 108: *nirārdhāraṃ manaḥ kṛtvā vikalpān na vikalpayet / tadātmaparātmatve bhairavo mṛgalocane* //. Having made the mind to be without support, he will not imagine thought construction, then there will be [the state of] Bhairava in the condition of the supreme self, which is the self [entered into] that, O deer-eyed one.

⁶² *Vijñānabhairava*, v.115.

⁶³ *Vijñānabhairava*, vv. 69-71.

⁶⁴ *Vijñānabhairava*, vv. 153-54.

⁶⁵ *Vijñānabhairava*, v.138: ‘When the four – mind, intellect, power, and self – are dissolved, O dear one, then the body which is Bhairava [remains]’. *mānasam cetanā śaktir ātmā ceti catuṣṭayam / yadā priye parikṣiṇam tadā tad bhairavaṃ vapuḥ*. Śivopādhyāya tells us that here *cetanā* means *buddhi*, *śakti* means *prāṇa*, while *ātmā* refers

emptiness of the universe, of pure consciousness and of the Goddess. Indeed, wherever the mind goes, there is the condition of Śiva.⁶⁶

The *Vijñānabhairava* would seem to be a standalone text on meditation, not directly linked to a mantra system of deity visualisation. The *Mālinīvijayottara* also contains meditation practices, such as meditation upon the elements earth, air, water, fire and ether, imagining the body wreathed in flame and so on,⁶⁷ and an account of transferring consciousness out of the body as an act of will at death, namely *utkrānti* translated as yogic suicide.⁶⁸ But unlike the *Vijñānabhairava*, it is rooted more clearly in the Trika tradition and its ritual system, developing out of the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, and its maṇḍala is for the Trika's goddesses.⁶⁹ Its concept of mind is in consonance with the other texts we have encountered here; there is an intimate relation between mind and breath, so calming the breath is calming the mind⁷⁰ and in this way there is elevation to higher cosmological levels. As with other Tantras we find the idea of casting the mind and placing it in a concentrated way, with a focus on inner experience. For example, in the text we have the following instructions:

16.48-51. The Yogin, having bound himself in the lotus posture, remembering the supreme seed syllable, should place the mind between the eyebrows, [focusing on the place] in front, outside. Having closed his eyes, his self enraptured, abandoning sound and vision, he sees there the self, established [at the place] twelve fingers length [from the eye centre]. There he should make the mind firm, then after three months [practice],

to the particular experient (*pramāṭr*); once dissolved there remains 'the inner joy in one's own experience' (*antaḥ svānubhavānandā*).

⁶⁶ *Vijñānabhairava* v. 116: *yatra yatra mano yāti bāhye vābhyantare 'pi vā / tatra tatra śivāvasthā vyāpatkatvāt kva yāsyati //* 'Wherever the mind goes, whether within or without, there is the condition of Śiva. Due to its all-pervasiveness, where else may [the mind] go?'

⁶⁷ Vasudeva, *Yoga*, p. 319.

⁶⁸ Vasudeva, *Yoga*, pp. 437-45.

⁶⁹ Vasudeva, p. xxxix. He describes the text as follows: 'The Trika's three Goddesses Parā, Parāparā, and Aparā with their consorts Navātmabhairava, Bhairavasadbhāva and Ratiśekharaibhairava are the high deities in the centre of the *Mālinīvijayottara*'s maṇḍala, surrounded by the alphabet deities Mālinī and Śabdarāśibhairava.' Also see Alexis Sanderson, 'Maṇḍala and the Āgamic Identity in the Trika of Kashmir,' André Padoux (ed.), *Mantras et Diagrammes Rituels dans l'Hindouisme* (Paris: CNRS, 1986), pp. 169-207.

⁷⁰ Vasudeva p. 371.

with the divine eye he sees the form of splendour, immoveable, resplendent like the moon, completely full. Having seen that self, he attains the divine knowledge of time.⁷¹ Here the text describes a meditation practice and the consequent inner vision of a form of light, the mind's focus and object. Thus, meditation involves focusing the mind within and perceiving the flow of the objects of consciousness. Vasudeva discusses the term *cintā* to refer to this flow as an object of awareness. Terminology one might expect to find in this regard are *cittasantāna* and *cittasantati*, the flow of the mind, but they only occur in two Yoga texts, not in the Śaiva Tantras to my knowledge.⁷² But the inner vision described in the *Mālinī* is the object of consciousness that the mind settles upon or is the focus that, with the cutting off of the senses, leads to a vertical ascent from the eye centre to Śiva at the crown of the head. With practice, the Yogin will obtain omniscience by making the mind firm.⁷³

The Śaiva-Śākta Philosophical Discourse on Mind

Emerging from the ambient discourse a distinctive philosophy of mind develops within a Śaiva-Śākta ethos that is idealistic in its orientation, in the weaker version meaning that there can be no account of the world independent of an account of consciousness, for the world is an emanation of cosmic mind, and in the stronger version meaning that the world is consciousness. This philosophical trajectory comes to be articulated in the Pratyabhijñā or Recognition school of philosophy. While Abhinavagupta presents systematic arguments for Pratyabhijñā idealism,

⁷¹ *Mālinīvijayottara* 16. 48-51: 16.48ab: *baddhvā padmāsanaṃ yogī parābījaṃ anusmaran / 16.48cd: bhrūvor madhye nyasec cittaṃ tadbahih kiṃ cid agrataḥ / 16.49ab: nimīlitākṣo hr̥ṣṭātmā śabdālokavivarjite / 16.49cd: paśyate puruṣaṃ tatra dvādaśāṅgulaṃ āyatam / 16.50ab: tatra cetaḥ sthiraṃ kuryāt tato māsatrayopari / 16.50cd: sarvāvayavasampūrṇaṃ tejorūpaṃ acañcalam / 16.51ab: prasannaṃ indusaṃkāśaṃ paśyati divyacakṣuṣā / 16.51cd: taṃ dr̥ṣṭvā puruṣaṃ divyaṃ kālajñānaṃ pravartate. Cf. the *Vijñānabhairava* v. 37.*

⁷² *Cittasantāna* occurs in the *Amṛtasiddhi* 8.18 (*na vetti cittasantānaṃ ...*) and *cittasantati* in the *Amaraugha-prabodha* 4ab *yaccittasantatilayaḥ sa layaḥ pradiṣṭaḥ*.

⁷³ *Mālinīvijayottara* 18.40cd: *tatra cittaṃ sthīrīkurvan sarvajñatvam avāpnuyāt*. 'He may attain omniscience making the mind firm there.'

especially against the Buddhists,⁷⁴ others in this tradition are less argumentative and more expository, stating the truths of the doctrine within the parameters of its own discourse. Kṣemarāja, writes commentaries on the inspired texts of Vasugupta, the pithy and obscure *Śiva-sūtras* and *Spanda-kārikās* that lays some of the foundations of this way of thinking. The opening of the *Śiva-sūtras* simply states: *caitanyam ātmā*, the self is the mind or consciousness. Kṣemarāja comments that there is nothing outside of consciousness:

Here [in this world], because of the non-existence of a being that is not perceived, the activity of supreme consciousness has the nature of being common to all. The conscious being, who is free in all-knowledge and action, perceives. His being is consciousness which is said to be completely full freedom which comprises a relation between all-knowledge and action. And that is only of the Lord Supreme Śiva. [This is the case for all beings] from those who are dependent on him to those up to [the level of] the not dependent.⁷⁵

There is no existence (*sattvam*) that is not perceived (*acetita-*) is a statement of idealism, that there is no reality outside of consciousness and this supreme consciousness (*citiḥ*) is common to all. Although the verb *cetayate* is a causative ātmanepada of *cit*, I have taken it in an active sense with the subject of the verb as the conscious being (*cetanaḥ*) who is free to attain all knowledge and action. In other words, the Supreme Śiva is in reality the ordinary subject of experience, although the ordinary subject appears to be dependent on him. This contrast between freedom (*svatantra-*) and dependence (*paratantra-*) maps on to the reality of pure consciousness and illusion of the bound self. In truth there is no reality outside of consciousness and this consciousness is freedom. Although he refers to the Lord Śiva, in this passage

⁷⁴ Arguments are found in particular in Abhinavagupta's commentary on Utpaladeva's *Verses on the Recognition of the Lord*, the *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*, analyzed in great detail by Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, e.g. pp. 257-64; 289-306.

⁷⁵ *Śivasūtra-vimarśinī*, v.1, p. 4: *iha acetitasya kasyāpi sattvābhāvāt, citikriyā sarvasāmānyarūpā iti, cetayate iti cetanaḥ sarvajñānakriyāsvatantraḥ, tasya bhāvaḥ caitnayaṁ sarvajñānakriyāsaṁbandhamayaṁ paripūrṇaṁ svātnatryam uccyate.* (My translation, guided by Singh and Silburn.)

Kṣemarāja uses the feminine noun *citi* to refer to absolute consciousness as well. This is significant because it aligns ultimate reality with the Goddess whose nature is *citi*. Indeed, he picks up this term in the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* where he identifies the limited individual mind with the cosmic mind of the Goddess. The opening verse states:

Consciousness, due to her own freedom, is the reason for the actualization of the universe.⁷⁶

In his auto commentary Kṣemarāja explicates these terms: ‘of the universe’ he says, ‘means from the level beginning with Sadāśiva to the earth’ (i.e. the total cosmos) and ‘consciousness’(*citi*) means ‘the Goddess (*bhagavatī*) whose form is absolute power (*parāśaktirūpā*)’. Freedom is constitutive of awareness itself and inseparable from it: to be the one reality of consciousness is to be free. Particular or individual consciousness is but a contraction of this universal Consciousness-Goddess:

That very consciousness, descended from the level of [universal] consciousness, becomes limited consciousness contracted to [the form of] its objects.⁷⁷

In his commentary he expounds the meaning:

That which is called consciousness is not another thing, but only the Goddess herself. When having hidden her own nature she manifests contraction, then she is divided in two. Although shining [she still contracts and], having produced the quality which is contraction, she shines forth [again] with the predominance of consciousness, and whenever [she subordinates consciousness then] contraction predominates. In one case (*pakṣe*) with the innate predominance of consciousness, there is [also] the predominance of light alone [and this is] the condition of the experient of consciousness (*vijñāṅkalatā*). With the predominance of [both] light and awareness [we have] the

⁷⁶ *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* sūtra 1: *citiḥ svatantrā viśvasiddhihetuḥ*.

⁷⁷ *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* sūtra 5: *citiḥ eva cetanepadād avarūḍhā cetyasaṃkocinī cittam*.

condition of the experient of knowledge (*vidyāpramāṭṛtā*). And in the next case (*tatrāpi*), with the gradual attenuation of contraction, there are the forms of Īśa, Sadāśiva and Anaśrita. When consciousness is predominant, acquired through the effort of concentration, the experient of the pure cosmic course is drawn gradually [to higher levels]. But when contraction predominates, the experient's [fields of perception] are emptiness and so on. Therefore, in this context that very consciousness (*citir eva*) is the form of contracted subjectivity. 'Descended from the level of [universal] consciousness' [means] intentionality towards objects (*arthagrahaṇonmukhī*).⁷⁸ By 'object of consciousness' [is meant objects such as] blue, happiness and so on. 'Being contracted' [means] consciousness contracted by both [internal and external kinds of] contraction.⁷⁹

I have cited this at length because it presents this doctrine in a pithy summary of the entire philosophy. The term *citi* elevates the mind to the highest level of the cosmos which is yet the totality of everything and pervades all. The limited mind of sentient beings, who are graded in a hierarchy depending upon their degree of awakening, is but a contraction of this universal power such that there appears to be a conformity of particular consciousness to its objects or realms. This is quite a radical departure from the Śaiva Siddhānta scriptures where the self is transcendent, and the mind is the product of the material substrate (*prakṛtiḥ*) as we saw in our earlier discussion. Here the cosmic mind, which is the Goddess, manifests the universe and the

⁷⁸ I have interpreted the phrase *arthagrahaṇonmukhī* simply as 'intentionality towards objects' taking 'intentionality' in the phenomenological sense of consciousness taking an object.

⁷⁹ *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* sūtra 5 commentary: *na cittam nāma anyat kiṃcit api tu saiva bhagavatī tat | tathā hi sāvam svarūpam gopayitvā yadā saṃkocaṃ grhṇāti tadā dvayī gatiḥ kadācit ullasitam api saṃkocaṃ guṇīkṛtya citprādhānyena sphurati kadācit saṃkocapradhānatayā | citprādhānyapakṣe sahaje prakāśamātrapradhānatve vijñānākalatā prakāśaparāmarśapradhānatve tu vidyāpramāṭṛtā | tatrāpi krameṇa saṃkocasya tanutāyām īśa-sadāśivānāśritarūpatā | samādhiprayatnopārjite tu citpradhānatve śuddhādhvapramāṭṛtā kramāt kramam prakarṣavatī | saṃkocapradhānye tu śūnyādiḥ citir eva saṃkucitagrāhakarūpā cetanepadāt avarūdhā arthagrahaṇonmukhī satī cetyena-nīla-sukhādinā saṃkocinī ubhayasaṃkocasaṃkucitaiva cittam.*

beings within it, which is a contraction of her nature, and makes the particular mind correspond to a world of experience.

Citi as the supreme consciousness Goddess has other synonyms, most notably *saṃvit*. Consciousness (*saṃvit*) is self-manifesting in its objects (*saṃvedya*).⁸⁰ Abhinavagupta says that this consciousness (*saṃvit*) is subjectivity (*pramāṭṛtā*), which in everyday speech means ‘Caitra is a subject’ and so refers to the first person singular, the ‘I.’ This subjective awareness is reflexive (*vimarśaḥ*), aware of its awareness, and also the light of consciousness (*prakāśa*), within which apparently distinct objects of consciousness appear, which from the ultimate perspective are only constituted within consciousness.⁸¹ A number of terms for an ultimate reality of consciousness would seem to be synonymous in philosophical Śaiva non-dualism, namely *cit*, *citi*, *saṃvit* and also *vijñāna*.

The Śaiva-Śākta non-dualists thus have an understanding of the mind distinct from the dualist Tantras and their commentators. The idea of *citi* as expounded in the *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya* as absolute, cosmic power and consciousness is different from the dualist notion of a restricted and restrictive organ of human limitation. We can see this in the particularity of terms used. In the context of the Nyāya school of philosophy, Chakrabarti translates *manas* as ‘inner sense’ because it perceives inner objects in a parallel way to the eye perceiving external objects or colours.⁸² In phenomenological terms we might say that the inner sense takes the flow of thoughts and memories as its direct object of perception. *Manas* in the Śaiva Siddhānta texts is the inner sense, part of the inner instrument at the self needs to be aware of anything. This is contrast with non-dualist interpretation of the *Pratyabhijñā* where *manas* is taken in a broader

⁸⁰ e.g. Abhinavagupta *Tantrāloka* 10.27-28ab; *bhāvasya vedyatā saiva saṃvido yaḥ saudbhavaḥ / arthagrahaṇarūpaṃ hi yatra vijñānam ātmani // samavaiti prakāśyo'rthas taṃ praty eṣaiva vedyatā*. Quoted in Ratié, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, p. 330. ‘An object of knowledge to be of an existing thing is only the appearance of consciousness. For where consciousness is in the self, whose nature is the grasping of the object, the object to be illuminated is innate [within consciousness]. This condition of an object of knowledge is only in him.’ [My translation guided by Ratié’s p. 330 note 47].

⁸¹ Ratié p. 627, quoting Abhinavagupta, *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinīvivṛtti*, vol. 1, p. 108.

⁸² Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Mind*, p. 104.

way to be identical with the absolute consciousness that is Śiva. For example, in the *Netra-tantra*, *manas* goes to the condition of absolute consciousness:

With 'I am not and there is no other' there is no object of meditation here; [the Yogi's] mind (*manaḥ*) has gone to the sameness of flavour [with Śiva], dissolved in the condition of joy.⁸³

Interestingly, the Nepalese recension of the text has *jñānam*, rather than *manaḥ*, that we might render here as 'cognition'. Here *manas* is more than simply the inner sense that takes internal intentional objects but is identified with highest absolute, a liberating cognition.

This idea that the unliberated mind (*manaḥ*) is constrained yet once freed from constraint, realizes itself as identical with the supreme reality is a theme rearticulated through the history of the Pratyabhijñā. The seventeenth or eighteenth century *Cittānubodhaśāstra* by Bhāskarakaṇṭha rearticulates the non-dualist philosophy of the earlier tradition, although informed by the terminology of Advaita Vedānta. Here the mind as the inner sense, *manas*, is simply consciousness that has been restricted by the turning of imaginary conception ('the mind is consciousness whose nature is the turning of imaginary conception').⁸⁴ The truth of the world is entirely consciousness only (*cinmātram*) which shines in its own light (*svabhāśā bhāti*) even in object of consciousness (*cetyam*) or the midst of the flow of intentional objects (*cintāmadhye*).⁸⁵

A Historical Conclusion

What are we to conclude from this survey? Referencing Herman Jacobi who argues that Yoga and Sāṃkhya have distinct models of the mind, Vasudeva observes that along with the

⁸³ *Netra-tantra* 8.40: *nāham asmi na cānyo'sti dhyeyaṃ cātra na vidyate / ānandapadasaṃlīnaṃ jñānaṃ samarasīgatam // 40 //*.

⁸⁴ *Cittānubodhaśāstra* 2.292a com: *manaḥ saṅkalpavṛttirūpaṃ cittam*. I thank the anonymous reader for drawing my attention to this text.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 3.116-117.

rigid cosmological hierarchy of Sāṃkhya, there is an idea of the mind in the Yoga tradition as all-pervasive, which the Śaiva scriptures inherit or adopt. This idea of *citta* as ‘a pervasive entity which is capable of expanding and retracting its functions’⁸⁶ goes back before Patañjali born witness to in a quotation in the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*, where Vācasaptimiśra attributes the origin of Yoga to Svāyambhū, and this pre-Patañjala tradition influences texts such as the *Mālinīvijayottara*.⁸⁷ Developing this idea, the textual material I have presented suggests that we can conclude the following. Firstly, following Vasudeva and Goodall, there is a strong Sāṃkhya influence on the Śaiva Siddhānta scriptures as we see with the *Mṛgendra*, the *Mataṅgaparameśvara*, and other tantras. To the twenty-five Sāṃkhya ontic categories, the Śaivas add a further eleven to the hierarchical sequence. Here mind as *manas* is a lower function of the cosmological hierarchy, the inner sense that Chakrabarti identifies. Secondly, these scriptures and their commentators are also influenced by the classical Yoga of Patañjali in which the mind, and the term *citta* is used, is unstable, wandering, and difficult to control. But through practice, especially breath control, the mind can be brought to order and subdued. Once there is a withdrawal of awareness from the spheres of the senses, then the Yogin can develop an interiority in which the mind is cast to an inner focus of concentration that propels it into a vertical ascent. This vertical ascent through the cosmos that is mapped onto the body is, moreover, classified as being within the realm of mind (*samanā*) or beyond mind (*unmanā*): the Yogin’s purpose is transcendence of mind and cosmos. A further transformation is that in Śaiva tantric practice, meditation as visualization develops to a high degree of sophistication and is integrated into the ritual system. Here *dhyāna* comes to mean visualization. All this we find in the theistic and dualistic Śaiva Tantras along with their commentators. Śaiva orthodox

⁸⁶ Vasudeva, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra*, p. 430. I was unable to access Jacobi’s text at the time of writing.

⁸⁷ Vasudeva, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra*, p. 425. Referencing Jacobi, Vasudeva observes how his painstaking work has enabled us to identify an original yoga that ‘employs the terms *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *cetas* synonymously to denote the locus of psychic events.’

doctrine and practice absorbs Yoga into the ritualistic system, but which cannot replace that system as the main route to redemption in which the material substance of karmic residues are cleaned through action and the grace of Śiva.

But as we move into the non-Saiddhāntika realm, thirdly, a new understanding of mind seems to develop, one in which the mind (as *citta* or *manas*) is identified with an all-pervading reality of consciousness (*caitanya*, *cit*) identified with the self (*ātmā*). This cosmic mind is not simply located at the top of the cosmical hierarchy but pervades the hierarchy. This model of mind as all-pervasive we find in the non-Saiddhāntika inspired texts of Vasugupta (the *Śiva-sūtras* and *Spanda-kārikās*) and in the Śaiva-Śākta philosophies that comment upon the Śaiva scriptures. We also find this idea in the Śakti tantras, particularly the *Vijñānabhairava* and other Goddess focused texts such as the *Brahmayāmala*, as we have seen. It is the idea of the all-pervasive mind that comes to be thematised by the non-dualistic philosophers such as Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja. We might even say that the Goddess orientated traditions, the Śākta traditions, are more saturated by the idealistic model of the mind as all-pervading: the all-pervading mind is in fact the Goddess. There is presumably a link between this theology and the model of the person in which the Goddess embodied as the nectar of immortality, pervades the body through yogic practice: Wernicke-Olesen has called this a ‘Śākta anthropology.’⁸⁸

Lastly, we need to consider the relationship between Buddhism and the Hindu tantric traditions. It has been shown that the Śaiva tantras directly influence the Buddhist,⁸⁹ but also

⁸⁸ Wernicke-Olesen, Bjarne and Silje Lyngar Einarsen. ‘Übungswissen in Yoga, Tantra und Asketismus.’ In Almut-Barbara Renger and Alexandra Stellmacher (eds.). *Übungswissen in Religion und Philosophie: Produktion, Weitergabe, Wandel*. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2018: 241-57.

⁸⁹ E.g. Alexis Sanderson, ‘Vajrayāna: Origin and Function,’ in *Buddhism Into the Year 2000. International Conference Proceedings* (Bangkok and Los Angeles: Dhammakaya Foundation, 1995), pp. 89–102; Harunaka Isaacson, ‘Initiation (abhiṣeka) in the Higher Buddhist Tantric Systems,’ p. 263, in Astrid Zotter and Christoff Zotter (eds.), *Hindu and Buddhist Initiations in India and Nepal* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), pp. 261-79.

that *haṭhayoga*'s origins are in Buddhism.⁹⁰ Except in situations where explicit borrowings can be established, as with the Buddhist Anuttara Yoga Tantras from the Śaiva corpus, it is often difficult to establish specific instances of influence. But we might suggest that the Abhidharmic understanding of mind influences classical Yoga (see footnote 6 for references) and thereby has indirect influence on the Śaiva Tantras' understanding of *citta*. This is the idea of the mind as needing to be controlled to stop suffering. Here the term *citta* is used to mean the individual mind that is uncontrolled, as we have seen. But in one or two places in the early Buddhist scriptures, the Pāli Canon, there is a more positive understanding of mind as luminous: 'The mind, O Monks, is brightly shining (*pabbasara-cittam*)' says the Buddha in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.⁹¹ This early idea of the brightly shining mind goes into Yogācāra Buddhism and Tathāgatagarbha doctrine thereby becoming an ultimate reality.⁹² Alongside the pan-psychism of the Yogācāra, Madhyamaka philosophy presents a model of the mind as empty and emptiness being the heart of reality. This idea of emptiness seems to have had some influence on the *Vijñānabhairava*'s meditations on the cosmos as empty. And associated with the Buddhist notion of emptiness, we have the idea of the mind attaining its natural, calm state which is to be identified with the Buddha. It is this idea that Guenther highlights as the main characteristic of the tantric Buddhist understanding of mind and that echoes in the *Vijñānabhairava*'s identification of the universe with emptiness in verse 58. Lastly, perhaps, we need to reflect not only on the historical picture that these readings of the texts present, but also on the philosophical implications of such inquiry.

⁹⁰ James Mallinson, 'Haṭhayoga's Early History: From Vajrayāna Sexual Restraint to Universal Somatic Soteriology,' in Gavin Flood (ed.), *The Oxford History of Hinduism: Hindu Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 177-97.

⁹¹ *Aṅguttara Nikāya* 1.8-10.

⁹² Jikido Takasaki, *A Study of the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra), Being a Treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966), p. 163.

A Philosophical Conclusion

Two distinct, although related, problematics in the history of Western philosophy have been the problem of personal identity and the philosophy of mind. There is a vast literature on each, but bringing these two problems to bear on the material I have discussed highlights certain concerns in the Śaiva-Śākta traditions because the two issues encapsulated in those discussions, namely the problem of what constitutes identity of a person through time (e.g. bodily continuity and/or memory have been two candidates) and what the relationship is between the mind and the body (e.g. dualism, epiphenomenalism, identity theory and so on). In the context of medieval India these problematics are arguably conflated in the sense that the question of identity or continuity through time is linked to the question of the mind and what persists. For Buddhism there is no personal identity because the person is constructed from constantly changing causes and conditions.⁹³ For Śaiva Siddhānta, personal identity is constrained by the weight of the cosmological process bearing down upon a person and while the mind as lower emanation of nature changes with different causes under different conditions, the self does not. The non-dual Śaivas also accept the notion that the self is unchanging and that it is the lower emanations of mind and body that are subject to causal effects. Mind in this sense is a property of the self rather than the subject of experience. Abhinavagupta's challenge to the Buddhists is just this, that while the flow of perceptions might change, there needs to be an unchanging subject for whom the flow of perceptions is its object.⁹⁴ But in contradistinction to the Śaiva Siddhānta theologians, Abhinavagupta's unchanging self is nothing other than the supreme Śiva himself, or pure consciousness without distinction and identified also with the Goddess, especially by Kṣemarāja.

⁹³ J. Duerlinger, *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons. Vasubandhu's 'Refutation of the Theory of a Self'* (London: Routledge, 2003).

⁹⁴ *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī* of Abhinavagupta, 1.6.5, pp. 313-14, cited in Gavin Flood, *The Truth Within: A History of Inwardness in Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 151; Ratić, *Le Soi et l'Autre*, for example, on the auto luminosity of consciousness, pp. 38-45.

So if, as Ganeri claims, philosophy is ahistoric in the sense that the goal of the philosopher is to decontextualize (and so philosophy and the history of philosophy are quite distinct), then the same philosophical problematics will emerge in different cultural contexts.⁹⁵ I think this is partly true in the sense that analogous problematics emerge in different civilizations, but only partly, because philosophical problems have their own unique histories. While it would be unfair to project issues of Western philosophy onto the Indian context, it is nevertheless fruitful to raise questions of identity and the philosophy of mind in distinct cultural locations because it highlights the concerns of those philosophers and brings into sharper profile the issues at stake. We have seen above that the category of the mind translates a number of terms in Hindu Tantrism, including *citta*, *manas*, and *vijñāna*, and that the mind here has a negative evaluation in that it prevents the development of a person's fullness through its distracting capacity, driven by desire. And yet the mind is also the vehicle for change and through its use in meditation and ritual procedures, the self can be transformed to realize its innate divinity and, for the non-dual Śaivas, its spontaneous freedom.

Paul Ricoeur introduced a distinction between two kinds of personal identity, namely sameness through time, that he calls *idem*, and selfhood or *ipse*, that entails a continuity of narrative. To be a capable person, in Ricoeur's view, is to be able to develop four stages in which the self recognizes itself as a self rather than an object, the self as the speaking subject has the capacity to act, the self has a narrative identity, and the self inevitably acts ethically and seeks ways to do so.⁹⁶ As a result of this developmental process, a person is therefore characterized as a creature with a set of lasting dispositions that allow him to be recognized as a person, this Ricoeur calls character, along with the constancy of the self, revealed in the act of promising: a person is a person because of character and the ability to make, and break, a

⁹⁵ Jonardon Ganeri, *Philosophy in Classical India* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 4.

⁹⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, translated by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp. 113-68.

promise.⁹⁷ So in this framing of the discussion, the problem of the mind-body relation is transformed into the problem of what constitutes a self through time. It is a question of the person rather than mind, linked to the question of agency and the ‘who’ of action.⁹⁸ Placed in the context of the Śaiva-Śākta philosophers, we can see resonances with the Ricoeur position in the sense that the subject recognizes itself as subject and indeed, this is the whole orientation and goal of the Pratyabhiñā school, for the self to recognize itself as unlimited and unconstrained. But Ricoeur’s second criterion of being a capable person, narrative identity, is not explicitly recognized as being of value. The self is unchanging and eternal, so what changes is the body and the mental faculty, change driven by innate dispositions within the *buddhi* that constrain the empirical person into what they are. And the capacity to act is not actually a property of the individual self, who, as we have seen, is dependent (*paratantra*-) on the higher power. Rather the liberated self is spontaneously free, with an inner freedom as realization of the self’s identity with God. The full description of this argument has been very ably achieved by Ratié, but extensions of the argument and engagement with a comparative philosophy has yet to be developed. Guenther went some way to developing a comparative philosophy of mind in his analysis of Buddhist tantric material in Tibetan, especially his account of ‘appearance’ and the analysis of perceptual situations,⁹⁹ and others have argued for the contemporary philosophical relevance of a Buddhist philosophy of mind,¹⁰⁰ which has even begun to influence analytic philosophy.¹⁰¹ Sixty years on, Guenther’s study stands as a landmark in the history of tantric scholarship and the serious philosophical engagement with Buddhist tantric ideas that he initiated needs to be developed further in new directions. A Hindu tantric

⁹⁷ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, pp. 118-20.

⁹⁸ See Frazier, *Hindu Worldviews*, pp. 195-96.

⁹⁹ Guenther, ‘The Concept of Mind in Tantric Buddhism,’ p. 266-67.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. Jay Garfield, *Engaging Buddhism: Why it Matters to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 37-40.

¹⁰¹ Kris McDaniel, *The Fragmentation of Being* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp159-60, 174-75; and in an earlier generation, Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 502-03.

philosophy of mind and philosophy of the person are clearly topics of comparative philosophical interest that might yet provide resource for contemporary debate.

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Abbreviations

K = *Netra-tantra* (KSTS edition)

Na = *Amṛteśatantra* (Nepalese recension of the *Netra-tantra*)

Sources

Amṛteśatantra, Na = National Archives of Nepal, Kathmandu, MS 1-285, Nepal German Manuscript Preservation Project, Reel No. B 25/5. Palm Leaf; Nepalese variant of proto-Bengali script, 1200 CE (= Nepālīya Saṃvat 320). Also see *Netra*.

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