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Performance as Religious Observance in Some Śaiva Ascetic Traditions from South and Southeast Asia

SUMMARY: My essay synthesizes, and elaborates on, previous research on the overlaps between performative arts and ascetic traditions of the Śaiva Atimārga in South and Southeast Asia. My analysis focuses mainly on textual data from Sanskrit and Old Javanese literature from the 4th to the 15th centuries, with contributions from modern and contemporary ethnography of Java and Bali. Here I will argue that categories of Śaiva practitioners who combined dance, recitation, and drama in both areas may derive from a shared tantric fund, and that those low-status agents characterized by antinomian behaviours were not only driven by ideals of individual salvation or quest for powers, but also contributed to their local social milieus (i.e. as ‘folk’ entertainers) and ritual economies (i.e., as performers attached to temples and royal palaces).

KEYWORDS: dance, dramaturgy, comedy, Śaivism, Tantra, Atimārga, Pāsupatas, Lākulas, Kārukas, Kāpālikas, *Nātyaśāstra*, Vidus, Canthang Balungs, Sidha Karya

The relationship between Śaiva Tantric traditions and the performing arts constitutes a fascinating and still little explored field of study. Besides being aware of theatrical technical terminology, various sources within the medieval Śaiva traditions of both the Atimārga and Mantramārga describe rituals or observances (*vrata*) incorporating acting, singing, and dancing. This internal, prescriptive evidence seems to be confirmed by the external testimony provided by a number of coeval non-Śaiva (either religious or belletristic) texts, which mention categories of practitioners involved in the performing arts, often associating them (with satirical intent) with antinomian behaviours

and ‘marginal’ or non-elite social contexts. Additional evidence can be gathered from the realm of the visual arts, in particular temple reliefs, where we find depictions of ascetic types involved in worship through dance and music-making,¹ as well as from ethnographic accounts recording different types of ‘folk’ religious practitioners-cum-performers in modern India. This state of affairs suggests that, while the Sanskrit sources often display a tendency to represent stereotypical types according to a “prescriptive imagination” (White 2005: 9), they may nonetheless reflect actual, and common enough, realities in the socio-religious landscape of South Asia and beyond. At any rate, the task of matching this disparate array of evidence about heterogeneous—and often extinct—Śaiva groups who integrated some elements of performance in their practice (or *vice-versa*) in the course of more than a millennium is still a desideratum.

Building on my previous research, in this chapter I will present a survey of the textual data on ascetics or, more generally, Śaiva *sādhakas* enjoining singing, dancing, and drama in the Śaiva Atimārga tradition (and its offshoots) in South and Southeast Asia. I will first focus on groups of Atimārga ascetics known to us from Sanskrit sources, such as the Pāśupatas, Lākulas/Kārukās, and Kāpālikas, then move on to describe their putative descendants or ‘cousins’ in Java and Bali.

Pāśupatas

The earliest textual evidence prescribing dancing and singing as a constitutive part of the worship of Śaiva ascetics is found in the *Pāśupatasūtra* [PS] and its commentary (*Pañcārthabhāṣya*) attributed to Kauṇḍinya (probably 4th–5th century AD). Singing (*gīta*) and dancing (*ṛt̥ya*) are mentioned among the six ‘offerings’ (*upahāra*)—intended as forms of worship—to be undertaken by the Pāśupata practitioner in the first stage of his ascetic career: “One should serve [the Lord] with the offerings

¹ Studies in this area are still lacking. For a survey of evidence from the Khmer and Cam domains, see Chemburkar, Kapoor 2018; for a discussion of some temple reliefs in Java, see Acri 2014a.

the occurrence of boisterous laughter (*aṭṭahāsa*) and the imitation of the bull's cry (*huḍukkāra*) would lead one to think that the injunction of PS 1.8 was originally conceived in a different, more antinomian context of practice and ideology that could be linked to the 'theatrical' acts of trembling, snoring, etc., prescribed in PS 3.11–15 (see *infra*). Indeed, acting is an activity that we would not expect to find associated with consecrated Brahmins, lest their status be lowered to that of a *śūdra*;⁷ moreover, the *Pañcārthabhāṣya ad loc.* explains that singing and dancing have to be performed randomly and not in strict accordance with the rules of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Gandharvaśāstra* (Törzsök 2016: 460), as well as simultaneously, unlike in a proper performance (*ibid.*: 461).⁸ Since these acts (especially *aṭṭahāsa* and *huḍukkāra*)

were employed for the worship of Śiva, although it is not clear whether the Pāśupatas themselves were involved in such activities: see, e.g., the 8th-century Lodhiā copper plates of Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna, mentioning the Pāśupata *ācārya* Pramathācārya and an endowment for the temple worship with dance (*nṛtya*) and music (*vādīra*) (Rajaguru 1966: 86–87). The 8th-century novel *Kuṭṭanīmata* by Dāmodaragupta (vv. 539 and 753) informs us that the Pāśupata *ācārya* Bhavaśuddha built a mansion for the dancer Anaṅgadevī, who was then mockingly addressed as *ācāryanī* by the people.

⁷ See Ganser, Cuneo 2012; cf. *Ratnaṭīkā* 1.7, p. 57, quoted *infra*, p. 6.

⁸ *Pañcārthabhāṣya*, p. 14, line 1: *niyamakāle niyamārthaṃ geyasahakṛtaṃ nṛttaṃ prayoktavyam* / “At the time of the particular commandment, dancing should be performed along with singing for the sake of the [fulfillment of the] particular commandment” (cf. *ibid.* ad PS 3.12, which unfortunately appears to be garbled); and *Ratnaṭīkā* 1.7, p. 18, line 27: *tato gītasahitam eva nṛtyam kuryāt / tatrādau gītaṃ parisamāpya paścān nṛtyam samāpayet* / “Then he should dance along with song; at first he should complete the singing, and thereafter the dance”. Törzsök, to my mind correctly, concludes that “unlike in a proper performance, the practitioner here acts as singer and dancer at the same time” (Törzsök 2016: 461); however, it is also possible that the author might have wanted to convey just the opposite idea, namely that the Pāśupata practitioner should perform dancing together with singing and not one after the other, that is just like in a performance, where one never dances to no music.

are regarded as improper for orthodox Brahmins during ritual and worship, the point of the *sūtra* may be that the practitioners, while living in a temple (*āyatanavāsī*, PS 1.7), are required to unorthodoxly execute what would be normal worship activities, such as *namaskāra* and *japa*, along with other improper behaviours.⁹ However, a mimetic intent—that is, to embody Śiva’s persona by enacting his deeds—may also have been conveyed.¹⁰ An additional list of antisocial and uncivilized behaviours is given in chapter three of the PS, where it is prescribed that the practitioner should “act like a demon” (*pretavat caret*, PS 3.11), namely snore, pretend to be limp, make explicit gestures, speak non-sensical words, etc. These behaviours were apparently ‘acted out’ by the Pāśupata ascetic, “as if he were an actor in the middle of people

⁹ Cf. the verse of the *Niśvāsaguhyā* quoted below, fn. 12, where the activities of singing, dancing, laughing and bellowing (*bruvan?*), as well as the prescribed Pāśupata attire, are associated with the *unmattavrata*. With time, these antinomian behaviours might have been incorporated into mainstream practice (even among the laity), and perhaps also regulated—witness the alternative reading *nāṭyaśāstrasamayānusāreṇa*, “according to the rules of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*”, attested in the *Nakulīśa-pāśupata-darśana* section of such a late source as the *Sarvadarśanaśaṅgraha* (Hara 2002: 216).

¹⁰ Commenting on a passage of the *Sarvadarśanaśaṅgraha* describing the offerings, Hara argues that “The laugh intended, of course, is the laugh ascribed to Siva himself. Similarly, the dance [...] may have been intended as mimesis of Siva’s dance” (Hara 2002: 216, fn. 123). The behaviours mentioned in PS 1.8 (as well as those associated with *unmatta*) are indeed enacted by Śiva himself in a passage of the *Anuśāsanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (13.14.84d04): *nandate kupyate cāpi tathā humkārayaty api* (52) [...] *hasate gāyate caiva nṛtyate sumanoharam* (56) *vādayaty api vādyāni vicitrāṇi gaṇair vṛtaḥ* (57) [...] *unmattamattarūpaṃ ca bhāṣate cāpi susvaraḥ* (59) *atīva hasate raudras trāsayan nayanair janam* (60), “At times he rejoices, at times he is angry, and at times he utters the sound *hum* [...] He laughs, sings, and dances beautifully. He plays a variety of musical instruments, surrounded by the Gaṇas. [...] At times he assumes the appearance of a madman, at times of a drunk, while at times he utters sweet words. Endowed with fierceness, he laughs loudly, frightening the creatures with his eyes”.

standing [around him] like spectators” (*raṅgavad avasthiteṣu janeṣu madhye naṭavad avasthito*, *Ratnaṭikā* 1.7, p. 57), with the aim of attracting the disgust and slander of the onlookers. Addressing him as a madman (*unmatta*)¹¹ instead of a consecrated Brahmin, common people would pass their good karma to him and take his bad karma upon them, through the mechanism of “transfer of karma” (Ingalls 1962: 293). Here it is relevant to point out that, in order to describe how to act out madness, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (7.83ff.) gives a ‘proverbial’ description of a Pāśupata ascetic engaged in causeless laughing (*hasita*) and nonsensical speech, alternating lying down, sitting, standing up, running, dancing (*nṛtta*) and singing (*gīta*), along with other typically Pāśupata practices of wearing used garlands, smearing ashes on the body, etc. (Acharya 2013: 103–104). The same acts of dancing, singing, laughing, and speaking (randomly), along with smearing with ashes and wearing rags, are associated with the *gaṇavṛata* performed by a madman (*unmatta*, apparently a Pāśupata or Lākula performing the *unmattavṛata*) in *Niśvāsaguhya* 3.32cd–33ab.¹²

All the above epitomizes the fundamentally paradoxical status of Pāśupata practitioners, having a Brahmanical pedigree and ascetic status while at the same time being studiously involved in actions and behaviours associated with lower castes, madmen, and demons. While the Pāśupatas acted out antinomian behaviours primarily in order to provoke an exchange of karma, the sources suggest that

¹¹ In PS 4.6, the practitioner is required to remain alone and act like a madman in the world or towards people (*unmattavad eko vicareta loke*).

¹² Cf. *Niśvāsaguhya* 3.30–33: *nṛtyate gāyate caiva unmatto hasate bruvan / bhasmāṅgī cīravāśāś ca gaṇavratam idaṃ smṛtam*. The context of the passage is that of Lākula observances, such as the carrying of skull, *khaṭvāṅga*, the permanent ash-smear, taking residence in a cremation ground, etc. Compare *Niśvāsamukha* (1.166–167b), stating that the playing of the lute (*tantrīvādya*), bellowing (*huḍukkāra*), dancing (*nṛtya*), performing the mouth-sound (*mukhavādya*) and boisterously laughing (*aṭṭahāsa*) confers the status of *gaṇa*.

they were also imitating the wild behaviours of their *iṣṭadevatā*, Rudra-Śiva—perhaps to facilitate the mental visualization of him.¹³

Lākulas and Kārukas

The public practice of Pāśupata ascetics, and especially the emphasis on staged performance, will become a characterizing feature of post-Pāñcārthika Atimārga groups like the Lākulas, the Kārukas, and the Kāpālikas. These groups added an extra set of observances to the *pāśupatavrata*, including the carrying of a skull (*kapāla*) and a skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), and had an ever more dramatic aspect insofar that they engaged in acting and role-playing in order to identify themselves with their elected deity. This identification was presumably achieved by mimicking some of his/her features and actions, or by being possessed by the same deity in a trance-like state (*āveśa*), probably induced by frantic dances.

While virtually no textual sources of the Lākulas have reached us, scant evidence on their practices is found in secondary accounts interspersed

¹³ A mention of reflection or meditation is found in association with *gīta* and the performance of the *upahāras* in Pāśupata texts: cf. *Pañcārthabhāṣya* ad 1.8 (p. 13, lines 14–16): *gītam api gāndharvaśāstrasamayānabhiṣvaṅgena yatra bhagavato maheśvarasya sabhāyām gaṇadravayajakarmajānīnāmāni cintyante*, “Song is what is performed according to the rules of Gāndharvaśāstra and in which, in public hearing, the names of God, those which derive from his qualities, his substances, and his acts, are called to mind” (trans. Hara 1966: 182); *Ratnaṭīkā* ad *kārikā* 1.7 (p. 19, lines 4–7): *dhyāyann īsam hasitaḡātanṛtyahuḡukkāranamaskāraḡapyaiḡ ṣaḡaṅgopahāraḡ bhagavan mahādeva yusmadanujñayā nirvartitavān aham avabhṛthasnānaḡ ca kariṣyāmīty evaḡ nivedayet*, “Meditating upon the Lord, he should declare thus: ‘O Lord Mahādeva, with your consent I have performed the acts consisting of six parts, [namely] laughter, song, dance, bellowing, inner worship and prayer, and [now] I will carry out the purificatory bath’”; *Lakulīśapāśupatadarśanam, Sarvadarśanasanḡgraha* (p. 63, lines 9–10): *gītaḡ [...] maheśvarasaḡbandhiḡuḡadharmādīnīmīttānām cintanam*, “Singing [...] is the reflecting upon such signs as the qualities, properties, etc., which are connected with Maheśvara”.

within the later Mantramārga literature, especially in Śākta- and Bhairava-tantras. As argued by Törzsök, these sources show “much more awareness of theatre and performing [...] than in pretantric *pāśupata* practice and particular effort seems to be made to integrate some aspects of theatre into religious practice” (Törzsök 2016: 485). Indeed, the various *vratas*, like the above-mentioned *unmatta-* and *gaṇa-vratas*, as well as the *devī-/strī-*, *kāma-*, and *vidyā-vratas*, all involve an element of performance like singing, dancing, acting out and/or masquerading, and laughing.¹⁴ These observances involved the transgression of mainstream norms pertaining to socio-ritual etiquette, hierarchy, gender, and sex. Another eminently performative religious observance—where, indeed, a play is actually enacted—is the *mahākriḍa* described in chapter 54 of the *Brahmayāmala* (*ibid.*: 482–483). This is an observance infused with the terminology of music, dance, and theatre, in which the practitioner, after carrying out anti-nomian activities associated with Bhairava, such as wandering around at night in the cremation ground, eating meat, drinking alcohol, and shouting,

should play on an hourglass-shaped drum or a kettle drum and emit a jackal’s cry or the sound of a demon. Then he should take up there, at the sound [of musical instruments] (*śabdāt*), the starting position in dance (*nṛtyārambham*), while his self is infused with the [dominant] sentiment. He must undertake the performance of a play (*nāṭyam*) with *yoginīs*, which is based on the heroic sentiment (*vīrabhāva-*). (Trans. *ibid.*: 483)

The fact that *yoginīs* are mentioned in the role of actresses would point at some sort of ritual context, much of which however still remains obscure, or perhaps at a Kāpālīka-style staged performance. Apparently, Śākta sources took over some Pāśupata and Lākula observances and changed their original purpose (perhaps towards a ritual or ritualized direction)

¹⁴ Cf. *Jayadrathayāmala* 1.47.10cd–15ab (quoted and translated in Törzsök 2016: 475–476), describing how a practitioner should decorate himself in various ways, sing, babble and play around a lot (*gītālāpavilāsāḍhyo*), and wander around singing (*gāyan*), laughing (*hasan*), reciting texts (*paṭhan*), dancing (*nṛttam* > *nṛtyan*), etc. On the *strīvrata*, cf. *Niśvāsaguhya* 3.35cd: *gāyate nṛtyate jāpī strīrūpī valabhūṣitaḥ*. Cf. also Kiss 2015 for references to such *vratas* in the *Brahmayāmala*, and translations thereupon.

so as to fit the goal of achieving the identification between the practitioner and the deity through antinomian rituals leading to the elimination of dualities (e.g. pure and impure, male and female, etc.) and social norms of Brahmanical society.

A little-known subgroup of the post-Pāñcārthika stream of Pāśupatism was the Kāruka. From rare references in the Śaiva Mantramārga sources and those of rival systems we can infer that this group was accorded a particularly low status in the Śaiva hierarchy, even within the Atimārga division. Elsewhere (Acri 2011: 78–79) I suggested *en passant* that the Kārukas might have come to be regarded as a category of itinerant Śaiva ascetics focusing on performance as their main religious practice. I will elaborate on this below.

The first type of evidence in support of this hypothesis may be concealed in their very name: while the *prima facie* interpretation of the word *kāruka* would be “maker, doer, artisan” (Monier-Williams 1899 s.v. *kāru*, from *kr* 1; cf. Böthlingk and Roth 1855–75, s.v.), one could also consider a derivation from the other stem *kāru*, attested in Vedic and Classical Sanskrit literature in the meaning of “one who sings or praises, a poet” (*ibid.*, from *kr* 2).¹⁵ The latter meaning of ‘bard’, where the *-ka* may be a mere expletive or even have the function of a pejorative, would seem to make more sense in the context of

¹⁵ Besides in the *Ṛgveda* and *Atharvaveda* (see Böthlingk, Roth 1855–75: 238–239), the word *kāru* is also attested in the *Arthasāstra*, where it occurs in invariably defamatory passages featuring the compound *kārukuśilava*: cf., e.g., 1.3.8 (*śūdrasya dvijātīsuśrūṣā vārttā kārukuśilavakarma ca*), 3.18.8, “By that are explained defamation concerning the learning of professional story-tellers (*vāgijīvana*), slander of the profession of artisans and actors (*kārukuśilava*), and libel of the country of those from Prājñāna, Gandhāra and so on” (trans. Kangle 1963). While *kāru* is generally understood and translated as ‘artisan’, the latter passage is ambiguous. Other instances where *kārus* and *kuśilavas* are mentioned alongside service-persons are *Mānavadharmasāstra* 8.102 (*gorakṣakān vāñijakāms tathā kārukuśilavān / preṣyān vārduṣikāms caiva viprāñ chūdravad ācaret*) and chapter 35 of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, vv. 90 and 105–106.

an itinerant Śaiva group than the former. This state of affairs is also suggested by the occurrence of the term *kāṭhakasiddhāntin* besides the (mainstream, i.e. Saiddhāntika) Śaivas, Pāsupatas, and Kāpālikas, as a gloss to the denominator Māheśvaras in Bhaskara's (ca. AD 850) commentary to Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. The term *kāṭhaka-siddhāntin* (and presumably its real-world referent too) corresponds to *kāruṇikasiddhāntin* found in the other commentaries *Ratnaprabhā*, *Bhāmatī* and *Bhāṣyanyāyanirṇaya*, and both of them correspond to the denominator *kālamukha* (another Atimārga group) found in Yāmuna's and Rāmānuja's commentaries. As noted by Hara, Bhāskara's text "suffers from considerable difficulties" (Hara 2002: 189); indeed, the link between the Kāṭhaka school of the Black *Yajurveda* and this Atimārga group is tenuous (Lorenzen 1991: 182, fn. 48), although passages in Sanskrit literature associate the sage Kaṭha (the promulgator of the *Chāndasa-Śākhā* text) and the so-called 'Kaṭhas' (the students of this body of doctrine) with oral recitation (*vyākhyāna*, *pravacana*, *uccāraṇa*) in opposition to written composition.¹⁶ A more compelling solution could be to read *kāṭhaka(-siddhāntinaḥ)*, "those following the doctrine related to *kāṭhakas*", where *kāṭhaka* is "relating, reciting [...] m. a narrator, relater, one who recites a story (or who publicly reads and expounds the Purāṇas &c.), one who speaks or tells, a professional story-teller...", "the speaker of a prologue or monologue, chief actor" (Monier-Williams 1899, s.v.), "a type of storyteller, whose oral renditions of devotional texts were accompanied by gesture and dance and whose art eventually moved from the temple to the royal court" (Lutgendorf 1991: 124). *Kathakas* were also considered synonymous with *granthikas* or "book specialists" (that is, reciters of books: see Varma 1962: 107–108). The term *kāruṇikasiddhāntin* (*kāruṇika* = compassionate?) is equally problematic, and may be interpreted as either an ex-post

¹⁶ See, e.g., *Abhinavagupta ad Nāṭyaśāstra* 1.1 (p. 2); commentary by Śrī Nandamiśra ad *Siddhāntadarpaṇa* 21.

attempt to make sense, or be a corruption, of *kārukasiddhāntin*—an obvious reference to the little-known group of the Kārukas mentioned in rare Śaiva sources.¹⁷

In my opinion all the above instances suggest that the commentators misunderstood, or were trying to make sense of, the names of groups of the Śaiva Atimārga they were not familiar with. But even in the scriptural and post-scriptural sources of the Śaiva Mantramārga, the term *kāruka* was in several instances—namely, passages describing the subdivisions of the Atimārga—corrupted and/or changed into the more intelligible *kāraka*, an ‘agent’ or ‘doer’.¹⁸ A more uncertain instance is a lost verse-quarter from the *Raurava* cited in Sadyojyotis’ *Paramokṣanirāsakārikā* and in the *Vṛtti* by Rāmakaṇṭha as *viśikhāmalakārukāḥ*, “[those] agents [who hold that liberation is brought about by the transference] of powers, those agents who are devoid of Impurity” (Watson et al. 2013: 222; see also 65–69). This could be a corruption of (or an attempt to make sense of, perhaps from a philosophically-oriented perspective) an original *viśikhāmalakārukāḥ*. If my reading is correct, the compound in its original form could have referred to a threefold division within

¹⁷ It is only after this article reached the proofreading stage that I realised I had overlooked a relevant footnote in a recent publication by Alexis Sanderson, where he proposes to emend both *kāṭhakasiddhāntinaś* and *kāruṇikasiddhāntinaś* in this passage into *kārukasiddhāntinaś* ‘followers of the Kāruka doctrine’—the spurious readings having been “introduced by later Vaidika scholars unfamiliar with this somewhat obscure Śaiva tradition” (Sanderson 2015: 164, fn. 20). Sanderson’s independent conclusion lends further credibility to the hypothesis that both readings are corrupted. Even though his suggestion to emend *kāṭhaka-* into *kāruka-* is sound and justifiable on paleographic grounds, I still regard *kāṭhaka-* as a viable alternative, suggesting as it does that a social reality or textual trope known to Bhāskara could have played a role in his exegesis.

¹⁸ Cf. *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* 1.18 (Brunner et al. 2004, s.v. *kāruka*), *Niśvāsaguhya* 12.18b and *Niśvāsakārikā* (*Dīkṣottara*) 18.123 (Acri 2014b: 28, 38), *Lakṣaṇasamuccaya* 16.212.

the Atimārga, namely “those without a topknot” (*vi-śikhā*), i.e. the Pāśupatas,¹⁹ “those without impurity”, i.e. the Vaimalas,²⁰ and the Kārukās.

One more piece of evidence found within the Śaiva tradition in support of a connection between the Kārukās and performance is the reference by the 11th-century Kashmirian Śaiva exegete Kṣemarāja in his commentary ad *Svacchandatantra* 11.73 to the Kārukās and Mausulas as inferior to the followers of the gnostic Pramāṇaśāstras and the Vaimalas (*vaimalapramāṇaśāstraniṣṭho*) on account of the former’s allegiance to the chiefly ritual- and observance-oriented among the Pramāṇaśāstras (*proktakriyāpradhānavratamātraniṣṭhamausulakārukebhya*). These scriptures (all of which are lost) are the six Pramāṇas extracted from the *Hṛdayapramāṇa*, and chiefly devoted to the six ritual acts (*ṣaṭkriyāpradhānāni pramāṇāni*).²¹ As suggested by Bakker, these “six ritual acts” or *ṣaṭkriyās* could have been subsumed under the “six forms of worship” (*upahāra*) mentioned in *Pāśupatasūtra* 1.8 and other sources, including, as we have seen above, singing (*gīta*), dancing (*nṛtta*), laughing (*hasita*), etc. (Bakker 2004: 4, fn. 12). This indicates that the Kārukās may have considered these acts as the mainstay of their ascetic practice. It is, perhaps, for this reason that they were regarded as occupying a relatively low position in the Śaiva hierarchy, i.e. just above the Pāśupatas and below the Vaimalas and the followers of the gnostic Pramāṇas, and having their ultimate

¹⁹ On the identification of the *viśikha/viśikhā* with Pāśupatas, see Watson et al. 2013: 66–67; noteworthy is the mention in the *Sam-skāravidhi* of the removal of the topknot in Pāśupata initiation (see Acharya 2007: 35–36 and 46–47), as well as the testimony of the Old Javanese *Kuñjarakarna* about a group of Śaiva ascetics named *viśikhin* (“Those who lack a topknot”; see Acri 2008: 201, fn. 37).

²⁰ The *amalakārakas* are identified by Rāmakaṇṭha as those who regard liberation as consisting in what Sadyojyotis calls *nirmalatvaṃ ca kevalam*, i.e. a lack of impurity alone (and not omniscience or omnipotence).

²¹ Cf. Kṣemarāja ad *Svacchandatantra* 10.1134 (Bakker 2000: 4; Sanderson 2006: 171).

goals within the realm of *māyā*, below the pure universe (and thus still qualifying as bound souls). Even though practice is commonly regarded as inferior to gnosis in the Indian tradition, their involvement with singing and dancing—and, eventually, stage performance too?—could have been another reason behind their ‘bad name’, for the latter activity in particular is regarded as impure and relegated to the lower castes. Kārukas were, indeed, considered impure and polluting, and contact with them was avoided even by other Śaivas.²²

Kāpālikas

The Kāpālikas were antinomian itinerant ascetics worshipping the terrific hypostases of Śiva (e.g. Kapālin, Kapāleśvara/Kapālīśa, Bhairava) and/or the Goddess (e.g. Cāmuṇḍā, Caṇḍā Kapālinī); they likely evolved from the Lākula stream of Atimārga Śaivism. While no original Kāpālika sources have survived to us, from the 7th century references to Kāpālikas become widespread in the Sanskrit and vernacular literature from all over the Indian Subcontinent and beyond (e.g. Java; see below), eventually fading away after the 12th century. Their name is derived from the observance of the skull (*kapālavrata*), which they took over from the Lākulas, adding an additional set of insignia, such as a sacred thread made of the hairs of a corpse, necklaces, large earrings, bracelets and other ornaments crafted out of human bones.

The Kāpālikas were scornfully depicted in the literature as evil sorcerers who often posed as false Brahmans or ascetics; who sang, danced, and played in theatrical (comic) performances; who encouraged the practice of drinking alcohol and engaging in sexual intercourse with promiscuous female attendants (*dūtīs*, *kapālinīs*, *yoginīs*); and whose attire included ornaments and musical instruments made of (allegedly human) bones, as well as human skulls or parts thereof. As such, they were considered the scum of society, highly impure

²² Cf. *Kīraṇatantra* 35.8, 38.7; *Mohacūḍottara* fol. 44v; *Pūrvakāmikāgama* 1.111 (listed in Brunner et al. 2004, s.v. *kāruka*).

and to be avoided by mainstream Śaivas. The Kāpālikas aimed at identifying themselves with their elected deity not only by mimicking it, but also through possession, i.e. being penetrated by it through the mouth (*āveśa*); this trance-like state may also have been triggered by frantic dances, *mudrās*, and transgressive behaviours (Törzsök 2011, 2016: 457–461).

The Kāpālikas' imitative behaviours and their engagement in possession open up intriguing connections with the realm of the performing arts as well as folk milieus. The emphasis on dancing, singing, drama, buffoonery, etc., may reflect their goal to become the 'theatrical' human embodiments of their selected deity; see, for instance, the textual and iconographical representations of dancing Bhairavas carrying *mṛdaṅgas* and *ḍamarus*.²³ But we also know of folk/tribal wandering practitioners specialised in dramatic performances, sorcery and exorcism, and the worship of demonic forms of Śiva and the Goddess; these could have been linked to the Kāpālikas in the Indic imaginary. For instance, in the 7th-century South Indian farce *Mattavilāsa* a drunk Kāpālika praises his Kapālinī for having obtained a beautiful appearance through the supernatural ability to assume any form at will (*kāmarūpatā*): compare the term *kāmarūpitva*, "the ability to assume any form at will", which could be interpreted as a technical term denoting one of the eight supernatural qualities of Śiva, an usual attribute of demons (*rākṣasa*) in Sanskrit literature, as well as a descriptor for actors. Thus, the compound *kāmarūpatā/kāmarūpitva* could be connected to both play-acting (in a literal sense) and to supernatural powers (in a technical sense).²⁴ The Santal tribal group knows of one

²³ Cf. the *Tirthikacāṇḍālikā* by the Siddha Acinta, describing himself as follows: "the Kāpālika is a glorious dancer; he will beat the *ḍamaru* in the sky and on the ground" (Davidson 2002: 218).

²⁴ The analogy between the actor/dancer (*naṭa*) and the Self, as well as the former and the Lord, is found in non-dualist Śaiva sources to convey the identity between the Self and godhead or consciousness, enacting the play constituted by the phenomenal world (see Törzsök 2016: 462, 468–470). It is possible that the concept of *kāmarūpitva* and its association to drama-turgy may stem from the same constellation of ideas.

Kamru (also: Kambru, Kamruk, or Kam), who was the first magician and teacher of witchcraft (Ojhaism); it seems natural to connect the word with Sanskrit *kāma* and *kāmarūpa*, whether in its original meaning of “taking any shape at will, beautiful, pleasing”, or as the name of the predominantly tribal western portion of Assam, i.e. *Kāmarūpa* (Koppers 1940–41: 766). Similarly, a class of Indian mendicant actors are called *Bahrūpia*, from Sanskrit *bahū* (‘many’) + *rūpa* (‘form’; *bāhurūpya* = ‘manifoldness’), as referring to the ability to enact and masquerading; at the same time, *Bahurūpa* is a name for the black, fanged Southern face of the skull-bearing Aghora form of Śiva/Bhairava. The *Bahrūpia* were known for impersonating gods, especially in their terrible forms (such as the Goddess *Kālī*) (*ibid.*).

The strong association reflected in the sources between *Kāpālikas* and the performing arts suggests that those practitioners could have made a living as travelling performers-cum-ritual agents (Samuel 2005: 219); furthermore, there might have been a cross-fertilization between Sanskritic and marginal/tribal milieus where folk practitioners/magicians akin to ‘shamans’ also covered the roles of itinerant performers—like it happened, for instance, over much of Southeast Asia.

Atimārga ascetics-cum-performers in Java

On the basis of evidence gathered from Old Javanese textual sources—most notably the 9th-century Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa kakavin* (RK), the early 13th-century *Sumanasāntaka*, and the ca. 15th-century *Pārthayajña*—and Central Javanese temple reliefs, elsewhere (Acri 2011, 2014b) I proposed to identify some figures of itinerant ascetics-cum-performers (e.g. the *vidus* and *piruses*) as localised counterparts of Indic prototypes, namely low-status, antinomian practitioners belonging to the *Atimārga* stream of Śaivism. Our knowledge about these categories of ascetics could contribute to appreciate the extent of the expansion of Śaivism in Southeast Asia, and perhaps illuminate little-known groups in India itself.²⁵ I will summarize my findings below.

²⁵ See, for instance, Acri 2008 on the *Vaimalas/Alepakas*.

A category of itinerant, power-seeking ascetics is scornfully portrayed in stanzas 6 and 9 of the eighth canto of the *Pārthayajña*:

*hana viku mañidan mañidəri bhuvana
makuravit agəluñ sukər aburarutan
təhər ikana purih niñ avak əpəniñan
si hurip ika ya vastu sukər aburarutan* (6)

There are ascetics who behave in a crazy manner, wandering through the world; untidy, hindered by their matted hair, in disorder.

And so it is the natural state of the body [of one] exerting [himself in performing austerities]. The Life principle is in fact hindered, in disorder.

*hana viku mañigəl macarita rinubun
biša tivas ika siñ vvañ atika vihikan
vvañ atika mañaləm ri guṇa nika ləvih
vvañ atika sañ asuñ mamigunani guṇa* (9)

There are ascetics who dance and recite stories, surrounded [by spectators]. Everyone should know that they are powerful [and yet] they come to nothing.

Such persons boast of their exceeding magical powers;
Such persons are the ones who render magical powers worthless.

The first stanza seems to depict a Pāsupata or Lākula wandering ascetic performing the *unmattavrata*—witness the Old Javanese word *mañidan*, ‘to behave in a crazy manner’, while the second epitomizes a class of itinerant anchorites-cum-performers of the Kāpālīka or Siddha type. Both types were despised in Sanskrit and vernacular sources produced in elite milieus on account of their uniting a quest for asceticism and supernatural powers (*siddhi*, *guṇa*) with transgressive behaviours and a career in the performing arts.

A series of stanzas satirically depicting behaviours that are strongly remindful of those of an Atimārga ascetic is found in the allegorical *Sargas* 24 and 25 of the RK. There, various kinds of birds are comically equated to ascetics and other religious figures. Such is the case of the *kuvon* (black coucal) and the *vidu*, a kind

of performer who appears to hold religious functions, and also to carry out the Atimārga observance of lying on ashes. In stanza 24.112, a bird, having accused the *kuvon* of being stained, to reside in a hole²⁶ and to “perform like a *vidu*” (*mamidu-midu*), jeers at it as follows:

tan pomah tan katrṣṇān laku vidu mavayaṅ kom gunya saguṇa

Homeless, unattached, while leading the life of a *vidu*-performer, a wayang-player,
you are a sorcerer, endowed with magical powers!

The word *gunya* could mean ‘having manifold supernatural abilities’, ‘powerful’, or simply a ‘sorcerer’—note that among the Baigals of Central India and the Santals of (South-)Eastern India, *guṇia* means “sorcerer” (Koppers 1940–41: 770), and a class of Tantric practitioners connected to *yoginī*-cults referred to as *guṇiā* is still known in contemporary Orissa (cf. Keul 2013: 6). In 24.114 the *kuvon* invites a she-*kuvon* to become a female ascetic (*kili*) and bring satisfaction to naked wandering ascetics (*kalavan lagnāmutusana*), obviously of his own kind, thereby becoming an object of enjoyment (*bhukti*) for the devotees (*bhakta*) in the forest, who have low-ranking wives (*kula-kula*). In stanza 25.22, the she-*kuvon* is said to have successfully attained liberation by following the path of the *kuvon* (*makamārga mārga niṅ kuvon*), who has renounced the world and performs austerities in the hollow of a tree.

In stanza 25.21ab the *kuvon* is called “*vidu*-bird” (*manuk vidu*) and associated with storytelling and drama:

tat ujar manuk vidu vidagha dahat
prakaṭākathak maṅaji nātaka ya

One should not say that the *vidu*-bird is very clever! Making much noise,
he recites a story, and practices the art of acting.

²⁶ This could be the hollow in a tree or, allegorically, a cave, in the case of the bird’s human alter ego.

Zoetmulder's (Zoetmulder 1982) dictionary s.v. *kaṭak* (a hapax) gives the meaning of "frog?" (on account of a much later Balinese gloss), and adds: "is *akaṭak* perhaps the call of the *manuk vidu*?" However, given the great variability and uncertainty between the sounds *ṭ* and *th* in Old Javanese language and their graphic representation in the later Javanese manuscript tradition, it may be proposed to emend *kaṭak* into *kathak*, a Middle Indo-Aryan word corresponding to the Sanskrit *kathaka* "to recite; a professional story-teller", which we have encountered *supra* as possibly referring to the Kārukās. The fact that in the Old Javanese text the bird is said to be practicing recitation and dance—activities that require a good amount of study and expertise: witness the synonymy between *kathakas* and *granthikas* that I mentioned *supra*—and, at the same time, defined as not "very clever" (*vidagdha dahat*) is somewhat paradoxical; apparently, the author here is satirically playing on the double meaning of the word *vidu* ('intelligent', 'wise' in Sanskrit vs. a type of performer in Old Javanese). Perhaps significantly, in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (cf. e.g. 1.48) *vidagdha* is one of the characteristics of actors, famously in 1.48, along with *kuśala* and other good qualities attributed to Bharata's disciple; further, *Nāṭyaśāstra* 35.106 makes a connection between cleverness and the ability to play music while giving the semantic analysis of the word *kuśilava* 'actor', 'bard', 'mime': "He who can apply the principles of instrumental music (*ātodya*) and is himself an expert in playing instruments is called a *kuśilava* because of his being clever (*kuśala*) and refined (*avadāta*) and free from agitation (*avyathita*)". I may also refer to Abhinavagupta's gloss of the term *naṭa* 'actor' as meaning 'foolish' (*mūrkhā*), implying that the term "already harbours some despicable connotations" in the Sanskrit tradition (Ganser, Cuneo 2012: 97). Although the learned author(s) of the RK composed the text before Abhinavagupta flourished, it seems to me that they might have been aware of (and played on) the controversial and paradoxical status of the actor in the Indic tradition.

Stanzas 3–4 of canto 113 of the East Javanese *kakavin Sumanasāntaka* describe some *vidus* in the context of

a comic performance staged during a royal wedding ceremony. In stanza 4, the *vidus* are mentioned along with another category of religious functionaries-cum-performers called *tañkil hyaṅs*:²⁷

*para vidu səḍəñ ayvan sañ tañkil hyaṅ acarita
paḍa gumuyu kapūhan sakveh niñ vidu binisa
hana kavatək ujarnyān guyvāvarṇa macarita
uḍuh uḍuh uḍuh āhāhāhāhāh bisa dahatən*

The *vidus* were acting together; the *tañkil hyaṅs* were reciting a story. Laughing all together and [appearing] highly astonished were the *vidus*, skillful. Some of them felt compelled to cry out while laughing (or: jesting), narrating, and reciting: *uḍuh uḍuh uḍuh āhāhāhāhāh*—with too much power.

What is striking here is the *vidus*' triple uttering of the sounds *uḍuh uḍuh uḍuh*, which may be compared to the exclamation *hud(d)u(k)*²⁸ attributed to the Pāśupatas by some Sanskrit sources, followed by *āhāhāhāhāh*, a boisterous laughter reminding of *aṭṭahāsa* (*aṭṭa* 'high, over-measured' is identical in meaning to the Old Javanese *dahatən* in line d). Both acts were performed while narrating (*avarṇa*) and reciting (*macarita*).

An explicit link between *vidus* and ascetics is made in an allegorical stanza of the probably 15th–16th-century text *Nītisāra* (4.8), which is part of a larger passage describing the disruption of the social

²⁷ We may compare these figures, including the *vidus*, the *piruses*, and the *bvat hyaṅ*, to the various categories of reciters and singers performing divine service or entertainers of the 'bard' type of the temple-communities recorded in Khmer inscriptions (see Pou 1997: 242).

²⁸ The reading *huḍukkāra* is attested in the oldest manuscript of the *Śivadharmasaṅgraha* (Kafle 2015: 205, fn. 271). In the light of this Old Javanese passage, I wonder whether the other frequently encountered form, *huḍukkāra*, could be the result of the *sandhi huḍuḥ+kāra*. A type of *ḍamaru*-like drum called *huḍukkā* is mentioned in Sanskrit texts, such as the *Abhinavabhāratī*, *Saṅgītaratnākara*, as well as the Prakrit *Karpūramañjarī* (Ganser 2016).

and religious order in the Kali-age. Two simultaneous translations of it are possible:

sañ vidv aṅga vanapraveśana samudragati manut i lampah in kali

(1) The naked *vidus*²⁹ enter the forest and reach the sea (i.e., reach liberation), following the course of the rivers.

(2) The naked *vidus* live as hermits, while they perform *mudrās* (*sa+mudra+gati*), in harmony with the fashion of the Kali(-age).

The above may be one of the last occurrences of the word *vidu* in the Old Javanese corpus, from which an element of mockery and social critique is still discernible. The word *mudra* clearly hides a pun hinting at *mudrā*, the hand-gestures used in storytelling and, perhaps, also the bodily positions—probably a heritage of Kāpālika practices—described in some Śāktatantras to induce possession and worship the deity (Serbaeva Saraogi 2012).

A striking evidence of the existence in Java of Kāpālikas³⁰ are the mysterious *canthang balungs*, a category of antinomian, low-status

²⁹ Aichele (Aichele 1931: 156) envisaged the presence of a double-entendre in the line, and interpreted the words *vidv aṅga* in the light of Modern Javanese *mārā badan* ‘naked’, often attributed to the *topeng* (the name of the mask-dancers coming naked at a performance), where the Arabic loanword *badan* ‘body’ would be a synonym of the Sanskrit *aṅga*.

³⁰ Kāpālika ascetics and Kāpālika-influenced traditions of the Kaula- and Bhairavatantras appear to have reached Java by the 9th century. The expression (*sañ brāhmaṇa*) *kāpālikabrata* ‘(a Brahman) adhering to the observance of the Kāpālikas’ is attested in the ca. 10th-century *Udyogaparva*, while a prob. 8th–10th-century bronze skullcap has been unearthed in Central Java. The use of skulls as drinking-bowls is mentioned in the ca. 16th-century text *Tantu Paṅgalaran*, which also describes a grueling ritual performed at a cemetery at midnight by two devotees of Bhairava (*bheravapakṣin*) with a corpse (Pigeaud 1924: 104–106, 112–113, 121). The depiction of skulls and cemetery-ground lore is pervasive in the statuary of the East Javanese kingdoms of Siṅhasāri (13th century), to which period is ascribed the impressive ‘dancing Bhairava’ from Candi Siṅhasāri, bearing many of the Kāpālika insignia.

functionaries observed at the court of Surakarta in the late 19th and early 20th century, who Brandts Buys not unreasonably described as “degenerate Brahmins” (*gedegeneerde Brahmanen*) (Brandts Buys 1933: 259).³¹ Their name, meaning ‘rattling bones’, could be a ‘survival’ pointing to their former status of Kāpālikas, who were indeed wearing ornaments made of bones and carrying musical instruments made of the same material. The *canthang balungs* wore strings of flowers adorning their naked bodies—being reminiscent of the garland of flowers offered to the gods (*nirmālya*) worn by Pāśupata ascetics; performed dances and buffooneries; emitted dog’s cries (and imitated their mating), nonsensical interjections, and vehement laughter; superintended female dancers (*taledhek*) who also doubled as prostitutes, and engaged in obscene acts on stage during their plays; indulged in drinking liquor on stage; held a staff or a pike; used *mudrās* during their performances; and originally possessed seals of office depicting a phallus inside a heart-shaped vulva, which are remindful of the heart-shaped pubic plaques worn by ascetics in East Javanese art. Their most un-Islamic and transgressive practices, as well as their role as superintendents of dancing girls-cum-prostitutes, strongly suggest that they represent localized Javanese ‘descendants’ of the Kāpālikas, who became marginally Islamized and integrated within the ritual economy of the Surakarta royal palace.³² This transformation could perhaps be explained in the light of Samuel’s insightful observation that “[m]any *siddha* and *kāpālika* ascetics made a living, at least in the earlier period, as travelling ritual performers, but over time there was a growth of permanent centres and of formal patron-client relations between Tantric practitioners and the upper social strata” (Samuel 2005: 219).

³¹ See Acri 2014a: 32–42 for a detailed discussion of this group.

³² The *canthang balungs* were also involved in a dance called *edan-edanan* ‘dance of the crazy ones/playing the fool’, performed with female counterparts during royal weddings. This seems to correspond to the comic performance staged by *vidus*, *tañkil hyanis*, *piruses*, and female dancers, described in the *Sumanasāntaka* (see above and especially Acri 2011: 70–74, 2014a: 23–28).

The Balinese mask Sidha Karya

Let us now turn to Bali, where some of the ceremonies and ritual performances that are still practiced today both within and outside the temple context may find their historical predecessors in those described in Old Javanese epigraphic and textual sources.³³ Among such Balinese ceremonies are those involving Sidha Karya, a fundamentally paradoxical Balinese mask character that evokes many of the antinomian, and more specifically Tantric, features that we have seen in some of the performing figures thus far discussed. Sidha Karya is a dancer and comic performer who appears at the end of *topeng pajegan* masked dance-drama; but his function is of paramount importance in that it ‘makes the ritual (*karya*) accomplished (*sidha*)’. His appearance is that of “an old man with bright eyes, a smiling, buck-toothed mouth, and large bushy white mustache and eyebrows. He enacts an odd comic dance [...]. He is said to be a form of the demon Kala, and his act dramatizes the submission of the demon and his transformation into a being of beneficent attitudes toward the congregation” (Geertz 1994: 125). According to various Balinese stories—with variants with respect to details—reported by oral informants or written chronicles (*babad*), Sidha Karya was a Brahman travelling from Java (in some versions, the son of a Śaiva priestess and a Buddhist priest), who arrived at Pura Besakih when an important ritual to avert a disgrace that had fallen upon the kingdom was being performed. On account of his filthy attire—he was covered in ash—he was not believed to be a real Brahman; he was not allowed to cross the temple’s premises, but rather ordered to go south (*kelod*)—the inauspicious point of the compass associated with the ‘demonic’ in both Indic and Javano-Balinese cosmology. Sidha Karya cursed the ritual, which resulted in even direr consequences for the kingdom and its inhabitants. Eventually,

³³ Stephen has rightly drawn attention to the important role played by entertainment and the performing arts in the Balinese ritual cycle, and especially in the process of Kāla’s and Durgā’s returning to the original (divine/benign) form of Śiva and Umā (Stephen 2002).

his Brahmanical status and kinship relationship with the ruling prince is recognized, and Sidha Karya ‘makes the ritual complete’, thereby healing the kingdom.

Sidha Karya’s mask may be white or black; a third eye—Śīva’s attribute—is represented in the middle of the forehead. Some masks have large teeth and wide grin, whereas others have fangs. This mask shares with demonic characters his bushy eyebrows, moustache, large eyes, and unruly hair; however, “while iconographically the character looks a lot like a demon, narratively we know that this is a high-class Brahman” (Kodi et al. 2005: 176). Coldiron describes his dance as follows: “Sidha Karya laughs maniacally, as if privy of some great joke at the expense of the audience. He waves his white cloth, laughs, executes bird-like hops to the right and left, laughs again in the manner of Rangda and then rushes at the audience” (Coldiron 2005a: 186). In another study, Coldiron drew attention to the apparent similarities between this figure and the Tantric Siddhas known from Vajrayāna Buddhism, observing that, although the Sidha Karya’s dance contains elements of entertainment such as storytelling and buffoonery, it is mainly “addressed to the gods and fulfill a purely ritual function”, including the appeasement of the *bhūta kālas* or malignant ghostly beings through the recitation of mantras and offerings to the cardinal directions, beginning from the demonic/inauspicious South and ending with Śīva in the centre (Coldiron 2005b: 241). His Brahmanical pedigree and ascetic attire, oddly mixed with demonic and frightening features, such as the stylized lines on the face that seem to denote laughter, his ash-smear, and his dance, all conjure up the prototypical devotee of Rudra/Bhairava, an anchorite of the Pāśupata, Kāpālīka, or Siddha type. It is possible that Sidha Karya represents a Balinese development of that model, i.e., a quintessentially ‘unorthodox’, impure, and marginal character, which eventually became integrated into the local ritual economy as a ‘specialized’ temple dancer.

Conclusion

In this article I have presented evidence from Sanskrit and Old Javanese textual sources on Śaiva groups that integrated, to varying degrees of magnitude, elements of performance into their religious practice—from the dancing and singing of the Pāśupatas to the more theatrical observances of the Lākulas and Kāpālikas. While most of these groups are long extinct, I have argued that some modern Javanese and contemporary Balinese performers might represent the historical continuations of Atimārga or Tantric practitioners, who ended up ‘specializing’ as professional singers, dancers, actors, and storytellers.

A characteristic common to both Indian and Javanese Śaiva anchorites is their somewhat paradoxical role: in spite of their ascetic (and, in some cases, Brahmanical) status, and their being grounded in the Sanskritic *śāstric* tradition of the elites, they also held a low position in the social hierarchy (as well as within the Śaiva fold) and were often mocked by the establishment because of their antinomian behaviours and, perhaps, their engagement in the performing arts. Indeed, the profession of performer (especially actor) was held in both India and Java in particularly low esteem, probably because it involved a vagrant and promiscuous lifestyle and other polluting or inappropriate behaviours. This state of affairs is also reflected in the ambiguous and paradoxical status of the actor in ancient India: while the mythical author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Bharata, is customarily regarded as a Brahman and a sage (*muni*), he is also attributed a decayed status of *śūdra*; furthermore, both the Sanskrit legal codes and the very *Nāṭyaśāstra* count actors in the ranks of unreliable testimonies and other low-status characters (Ganser, Cuneo 2012). A similar fate could have been suffered by the Kāpālikas and other categories of Śaiva itinerant ascetics and ritual practitioners of *śūdra* status.

As to the ritual function that the Javanese and Balinese practitioners (and, perhaps, their Indian forerunners) appear to have come to cover, one may note a commonality of themes like the reorientation and pacification of evil forces, especially on the occasion of liminal moments

(royal consecrations, weddings, and key calendrical festivals). This association could have been dictated by the fact that the performers themselves lived at the margins of society and were connected with impurity and the ‘Demonic’. More comparative research is required in order to unravel the possible common tantric roots of related categories of ritual performers in South and Southeast Asia.³⁴

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³⁴ Interesting in this respect are the studies by Emigh (Emigh 1996, cf. in particular p. 96) and Coldiron (Coldiron 2005a, Coldiron 2005b); cf. Acri 2014a.

Niśvāsaguhya cf. *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*

Niśvāsamukha cf. Kafle 2015.

Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā

- (1) Palm-leaf MS, early Nepalese “Licchavi” script, NAK 1-227, NGMPP Reel No. A 41/14; 114 leaves.
- (2) e-text (Roman and Devanāgarī) prepared by Dominic Goodall, with the contribution of Diwakar Acharya, Peter Bisschop and Nirajan Kafle, from MS NAK 1-227, supplemented with readings from its two Devanāgarī apographs, MS 5-2401, NGMPP Reel No. A 159/18 and Sanskrit MS i.33 of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London. [Includes the *Niśvāsamukha*, *Niśvāsamūla*, *Niśvāsottara*, *Niśvāsanaya* and *Niśvāsaguhya*].
- (3) *The Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā: The Earliest Surviving Śaiva Tantra, Volume 1. A Critical Edition of the Mūlasūtra, Uttarasūtra and Nayasūtra*, ed. by Dominic Goodall in collaboration with Alexis Sanderson and Harunaga Isaacson. With contributions of Nirajan Kafle, Diwakar Acharya and others. 2015. Pondicherry: EFEO / IFP / Asien-Afrika-Institut, Universität Hamburg.

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