

Offprint

JNRC

JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL RESEARCH CENTRE

Edited by
A. WEZLER

In collaboration with
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VOL. XII 2001

Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH Wiesbaden

The Inner Pilgrimage of the Tantras:
The Sacred Geography of the Kubjikā Tantras with reference to the Bhairava
and Kaula Tantras

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This paper focuses on the sacred geography of a few Śaiva schools of the Bhairava Tantras and their parallel Śākta schools, in particular that of the little-known goddess Kubjikā and, to a lesser extent, the much better known goddess Tripurā. Apart from the Tantras themselves, a major source for this paper is the work of the great 11th-century Kashmiri, Abhinavagupta, especially his *Tantrāloka*. All the sources belong to the culmination of the formative period of Tantrism, that is, between the 9th and 12th century. A major feature of these geographies, which this paper will briefly explore, is the manner in which they have been interiorized.

In 1950 D.C. Sircar published the *Śākta Pīṭhas*. In this work he presents an edition of the *Pīṭhanirṇaya* that lists 51 goddess sites (*pīṭha*). In his lengthy introduction, Sircar reproduces a number of such lists from other sources, mostly Purāṇas and Tantras. Apart from this well-known work very little research has been done on the sacred geographies of the Tantras in comparison to the relatively large amount of research that has been done on the geographies of the Purāṇas and the Epics. One obvious reason for this is that many of the sacred sites of the Purāṇas and Epics are still functional. Hence they can be accurately located and much can be learnt about them from work in the field. Although a number of the sites found in the early Tantras have been absorbed into the sacred geography of the Purāṇas and Epics or may have been common to both from an early period, their connection with the Tantric tradition has mostly been lost. It follows, therefore, that the Sanskrit tradition associated with most of these sites does not generally refer to the Tantras as its authority. And even where such references exist, they are to Tantras of a later period.

Another reason why the sacred geography of the Tantras has not received much attention is that the roots of Tantrism belong to a culture originally developed by peripatetic ascetics. In the transition to the idiom of the Sanskrit normative texts (*śāstra*)—in this case the Tantras—the forms of the earlier proto-Tantric cults¹ were necessarily domesticated to varying degrees and systematized by those who knew this idiom best, namely, Brahmins and those ascetics who were well versed in Brahminical culture.² This was not at all a unique phenomenon in the history of Hinduism; Dumont, amongst others, has drawn attention to the fact that:

¹I deliberately refer to these seminal cults as "proto-Tantric" to reserve the adjective "Tantric" for those cults and their elemental contents found in the texts denoted as Tantras or by some equivalent term. One of these terms is "Āgama" which literally means '(a tradition) coming from the past'. This "coming" (*āgama*) is often presented in the texts as being originally, and most fundamentally, an oral transmission. Many of the numerous rituals described in the early Tantras, especially the Śaiva and their offshoot, the goddess-centred or Kaula Tantras, are best suited for the solitary peripatetic ascetic. The great Tantric systems that developed in the early period, that is, prior to the 12th century, are highly elaborate. Those who built these systems must have been erudite scholars who approached their task from the perspective of the prior and contemporary literary traditions. These traditions furnished ready-made forms and norms that served as a filter through which what remained of the "external," "oral" elements was transformed and absorbed. This took place so thoroughly and the additional, purely literary input was so massive that contact with these sources became highly tenuous, a correct assessment of their nature being now problematic.

²The Buddhist Tantras, especially those of the Yoga and Anuttara Yoga, which were, in some respects, strongly influenced by their Śaivite equivalents, probably developed in an analogous manner. In this case

The secret of Hinduism may be found in the dialogue between the renouncer and the man-in-the-world. . . . In fact the man-in-the-world, and particularly the Brahman, is given the credit for the ideas which he may have adopted but not invented. Such ideas are much more relevant and they clearly belong to the thought of the renouncer.³

This is particularly true of the early Śākta and Śaiva Tantric ascetics. Behaving in accord with a different code of conduct which, although ethically very stringent, differs from the commonly accepted one of smārta Dharma, these antinomian ascetics lived in a separate reality. Enjoined in their rituals (*pūjā*), religious conduct (*caryā*), and itinerant life, to make no distinction between pure and impure, in terms of the conventional moral code of the householder they were little different from the outcastes with whom they freely associated. And yet these ascetics were the workers of wonders and, above all, accomplished adepts who founded many, if not all of the numerous Tantric traditions.⁴

Some Tantric cults, particularly those of the Śaiva Siddhānta and the Vaiṣṇava Pañcarātra, took to temple-building and hence managed to establish extensive public cults. But other forms of Tantrism, particularly the Śākta cults, stayed closer to their roots and so maintained their original strongly closed, esoteric character, despite the inevitable process of domestication. The householder in such cases did not need to go to a temple or sacred site. He simply reproduced the temple and the original wayfaring life in his imagination by means of symbolic representations. These, and the sacred space he created to perform the prescribed rituals and Yoga, he projected into himself. Accordingly, the sacred geographies of such cults lay close to the edge of redundancy and were subject to considerable transformation and assimilation into the greater encompassing smārta sacred geographies of the Purāṇas.

Nowadays, the literate (as opposed to the folk) religions of the populations of large areas of South Asia are still based to a large degree on the Tantras. The Śaiva rituals performed in the temples of South India are adapted from the Śaivasiddhānta Āgamas just as the Vaiṣṇava rituals are based on those prescribed in the Pañcarātra and Vaikhānasa Samhitās.⁵ The

wandering Buddhist ascetics contributed substantially, although not exclusively, to laying the foundations of the Tantric systems, which were mostly developed systematically by erudite monks in their monasteries. In this case the input of the system builders was supplemented not only by the Buddhist literary traditions (*sāstra*) but also by the Śaiva. The Buddhists conceived this process to be one of interiorization of the Śaiva elements. These elements were "external" both because they were outside Buddhism and, above all, because they were literally done. "Internalized," they could be inserted into the monumental structures of the great Buddhist Tantric systems.

³Dumont 1980: 270, 275 quoted by Quigley 1993: 56.

⁴The examples that could be quoted are innumerable. A Kubjikā Tantra tells us about Vidyānanda who received initiation from Niṣkriyānanda. The text tells us:

Here was a sage (muni) called Śīlācīti. His (spiritual) son was an accomplished adept—Siddha—whose appearance was like that of a (tribal) Śābara. He was called Vidyānanda. He lived in cremation grounds and devoutly practised nightly vigils (niśāṭana). He was a Tantric adept (vīra lit. 'hero') intent on the practice of Kuṇḍalīni Yoga (cakracāra—lit. 'practice of the wheels' or 'devoutly attended Tantric rites'). Śrīśaila is a Śivapīṭha. To the north of it, on a mountain with many peaks, is a divine cave made of gold that is venerated by Siddhas and gods. He, the Vidyāśābara, worshipped there. He practised desirous of the Knowledge Free of Action (niṣkriyājñāna). He practised the most intense form of divine devotion. Thus Niṣkriyānanda was pleased with him and transmitted Kālikā's tradition (krama) to him. (CMSS 7/188ff.)

⁵The term *samhitā* literally means '(a thing that has been) assembled' i.e. a 'compilation'. In this case, the term is a synonym of the term Tantra. These texts also refer to themselves as "Tantras" and "Āgamas," just as

Līṅgāyat Śaivism of Andhra and Karnāṭaka is based on a corpus of Śaiva Āgamas developed independently of the Siddhānta, although similar to it in many respects and clearly influenced by it. In Bengal, Maithila and Assam the Śāktism of the late (post-6th century) Śākta Tantras is still extensively practised. Especially relevant from the point of view of this paper is the esoteric literate religion of the inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, which is thoroughly rooted in the Tantric traditions of the texts I have chosen to examine here.

There are good reasons to believe that the role of Tantrism in the religions of South Asia was much greater in the past than it is at present. Its expansion in the past (especially between the 6th and 12th centuries) and survival up to the present was possible to the degree in which Tantrism managed to adapt to the requirements and conditions of the householder. The strategies adopted to make these adaptations possible are no less extensive and diverse than the extent of the cultural forms, philosophical thought, ritual and lifestyles to which they have given rise.

This paper is an attempt to analyze a few examples, drawn from selected Tantric sources (especially the Kubjikā Tantras), of one of these strategies, namely, the interiorization of their own sacred geography. These texts perceive how the external sacred geography draws its power from its internal counterpart, while the inner geography derives its form from the outer. Thus the two give life to one another, even when their relationship has been interiorized and become purely ideal. The dialectical interplay between the inner and outer yields more than just the accumulation of the energy of an interiorized sacred place. It sucks into itself the outer form to place it at the very centre of reality. The Nameless and Formless thus assumes name and form—as the geography of the innermost creative core of reality.

Thus, an essential feature of the sacred geography of these texts is that it is always understood to have an internal equivalent. As one would expect, the ideal, interior pole progressively assumes increasingly greater prominence over the exterior one until the latter dwindles away into a virtual cipher. Even so, we should not forget that for this dialectic to function properly, this sacred geography must, at its origins at least, be external, that is, empirically real. This is true not in spite of, but because of the ideal reality of the inner, even though the inner is the product of the power of the creative imagination applied to the creation of a sacred universe for the purpose of ritual, contemplation (i.e. Yoga) and the development of insight (*jñāna*). We shall therefore need to examine both, that is, the concrete outer geography and its ideal inner equivalent, in order to understand the manner of their interaction and with it the sacred geography of these Tantras.

In order to do this I will present a few exemplary geographies both to determine their content and to see how these principles operate in the doctrines of the Tantras chosen for study. I will focus especially on the Tantras of the goddess Kubjikā.

An important feature of this geography is that it can be interiorized to varying degrees depending on the interiority of the locus of projection. This can be:

1) The Body: The corporeal surface of inscription⁶ may be on or around the body as well as in the centres and channels within it. Examples we will examine include the projection of the

some of their Śaiva equivalents, aware of their own composite, compiled nature, refer to themselves as *sahhitās*.

⁶I am indebted to Professor Sanderson of Oxford for this expression.

sacred places founded by the goddess Kubjikā in her tour of India onto the face, as described in the Kubjikā Tantras, and the imaginary lotus of sacred sites projected into the body according to the *Niśaṃcāra*, a Bhairava Tantra quoted by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka*.

2) The Breath: This is variously represented. In some of the following examples, the twofold character of the breath, dynamic and at rest, characterized as Sound (*nāda*) and the Point (*bindu*), respectively, are the loci of projection.

3) Core reality: At this, the innermost level, the ground of existence itself is the surface of inscription. In this case, sacred place is the Divine Core. This is not a projection but the radiating source of all projections that together constitute the manifest world with its sacred geography. According to the Tantras of the Kālī cult (the Kālīkrama), for example, the supreme power of the deity's divine consciousness is simultaneously both the source and the sacred seat—*pīṭha*—of its energies:

O mother! This, the great sacred seat (pīṭha) born from You, is the energized vitality (of consciousness) which pours forth when Śiva becomes one with You by virtue of your perpetually expanding body of energy.

And this, the (divine) intellect, the supreme vitality (of consciousness) is You, O (goddess) Śivā, whose body of light abides within the five elements beginning with Earth and who generates the Wheel of the Sacred Seats (pīṭhacakra—corresponding to them). You, who alone possess all the powers of the Wheel of the Sacred Seats, abide always and everywhere. Perceived, O Mother, by the wise who are at one with the force (of pure consciousness—udyama), You are the unobscured dawning (of enlightenment).⁷

In the Kubjikā cult, in a manner typical of the symbolism of Śākta cults in general, the Divine Core is primarily characterized as the triangular geometric icon that represents the goddess as the Source—Yoni—of manifestation. Let us begin from this inner core first, as the teaching that concerns it is central to the doctrine of the Kubjikā Tantras that I have chosen for detailed study.

As emanation itself, Kubjikā is the Maṇḍala that is both the source of the universe and its ideal geometry. In this case the Maṇḍala is primarily the Triangle of the Vulva (*yonī*) which is the goddess herself. This is why she is called *Vakrā* (Crooked) and *Kubjikā* (Hunchbacked). This basic triangular form has four components located at the three corners and the centre. These are the four primary seats (*pīṭha*) of the goddess. The goddess is the entire economy of all the energies both in the universe and in their microcosmic and transcendent parallels in consciousness. But she is not just the sum of all energies; she is also every one of them individually. They are deployed in sacred space that the Tantras in general characterize as an Emptiness (*śūnya*) called the Sky (*kha*, *vyoman*) or the ethereal space of consciousness (*cidākāśa*). The pervasive condition of these energies precedes and, in one aspect, perpetually transcends manifestation, which is understood to take place on the analogy of speech and its attendant vehicle, breathing. Every cosmogonic manifestation of deity (theophany) and power (kratophany) occurs in a specific place, the Sacred Place

⁷ *amba śaktivapuṣā tvayonmeśadrūpayā samarasah śivo yadā |
yat tadollasati vīryam ūrjitaṃ pīṭha eṣa hi mahārṃs tvadutthitaḥ ||
yā śive sphuraṇasaktir akṣayā kṣmādīpañcakaniviṣṭabhātanuḥ |
sā mahad bhavati vīryam agrimaṃ yanmayī tvam asi pīṭhacakraśūḥ ||
pīṭhacakraṇīkarāikadharmiṇī tvam śhīṭā ca satataṃ samantataḥ |
sadbhir udyamanirantarātambhir lakṣyase 'mba niravagrahodayā ||*

(*sthāna*) that is the locus of immanence. Presenting itself to itself, the transcendent becomes immanent through a process of localization analogous to that of the articulation of speech.

Powerful cosmogonic sounds emanate from powerful places; indeed powerful sounds are powerful places and as such the phonemic components of these sounds are the mantric energies of sacred places. Thus the identity of these energies as sacred objects of worship is determined by their vital mantric character and locations (*sthāna*), of which four are the most important. Accordingly, we read in a Kubjikā Tantra:

The energy called the Vulva (yoni) is endowed with the movement of the three paths (i.e. the three major channels of the vital breath), consists of the three syllables (of creation, persistence and destruction i.e. AIM, HRĪM, ŚRĪM) and three aspects (the powers of will, knowledge and action). (It contains) the venerable Uḍḍiyāna which, endowed with the supreme energy and well energized, is located in the middle. The venerable (sacred seat) called Jālandhara is located within the abode manifested in the right corner. The venerable sacred seat Pūrṇa is in the left (corner), being formed through the fear of the fettered, while Kāmarūpa is in the front (lower corner of this downward pointing triangle).⁸

The earliest manuscripts of the Kubjikā Tantras (all of which discovered so far are Nepalese) belong to the 11th century. These include manuscripts of Tantras that presuppose a development of not less than a century. Thus by the 10th century, at the latest, this scheme of four primary sacred sites (*pīṭha*), which became largely standard for the whole of subsequent Tantric Śāktism, was already well established and thoroughly interiorized in the Kubjikā Tantras. The primary importance of these places for such forms of Tantrism, both Śaiva and Śākta, cannot be overstated. An important example on the Hindu side is the incorporation of this triangle, wholesale with its sacred seats, into the centre of Śrīcakra by the Tantras of the goddess Tripurā. The same grouping of sacred seats is also given pride of place in the Buddhist Hevajra Tantra and some of the other major Buddhist Tantras of the Anuttara Yoga and Yoga groups.⁹ They interiorized these places so thoroughly in fact that the Four Sacred Seats (*catuṣpīṭha*) came to represent metaphysical principles.¹⁰ As Map 9, plotted on the basis

⁸yā sā śāktir bhagākyā tripathagatiyutā tryakṣarā triprakārā
tasyāḥ śrī-uḍḍiyānaṁ parakalasahtarṁ madhyasahstharṁ sudiptam |
tacchrījālandharākhyarṁ prakāṭitanilaye dakṣiṇe caiva koṣe
vāme śrīpūrṇapīṭharṁ paśujanabhayakṛt kāmārūpaṁ tadagre || CMSS 1/4

The above verse is in *śragdharā* metre. Apart from the standard śloka, the metre in which most of the Tantras are written, this complex metre appears to have been especially favoured by Tantric authors prior to the 11th century. The Buddhist *Kālacakra Tantra* is almost entirely written in this metre. The above passage is of special interest because it is quoted in the *Vimalaprabhā*, a commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra* by Śrīpuṇḍarīka, who lived in the middle of the 11th century. In the usual derisive manner of Buddhist commentators towards others who are not Buddhists, Puṇḍarīka refers to those who accept the authority of this text as demons to be devoured (*bhakṣadaitya*). They have not known the supreme secret and their body is like that of the demon Māra who tormented the Buddha (*Vimalaprabhā*, vol. 3, 146-8). This body is the triangular Vulva (*bhaga*) of the goddess that this verse describes and the Kubjikā Tantras teach the adept should project into his own body. Here is yet another testimony to the existence of the Kubjikā Tantras in the 11th century outside Nepal, possibly in Bengal, if this is the place where Śrīpuṇḍarīka wrote his commentary as some scholars believe.

⁹The Hevajra Tantra declares that:
pīṭharṁ jālandhararṁ khyātam uḍḍiyānarṁ tathaiva ca |
pīṭharṁ paurṇagirīś caiva kāmārūpaṁ tathaiva ca ||

of a selection of such texts indicates, the sacred geography of these Tantras has much in common with those of their Hindu equivalents of the time, including the Kubjikā Tantras.

The process of interiorization of these places is so ancient and thorough that the exact location of these places is an object of much scholarly dispute. An additional process, which, in the case of the Tantras at least, accompanies, as well shall see, that of interiorization, renders the exact identification of these places even more difficult. I am referring to the phenomenon of replication, whereby sacred places of pan-Indian importance are projected into local geographies.

Although I cannot hope to resolve these disputes, I shall venture to present hitherto unanalyzed material pertinent to this problem with a few modest observations and a very tentative hypothesis. Firstly, I assume that the commonly held view that the locations of Kāmarūpa and Jālandhara are in Assam and the Jammu region, respectively, is correct. This is a reasonable assumption, inasmuch as both these places, unlike the other two, Uḍḍiyāna and Pūrṇagiri, are important centres of Śāktism to this day. Moreover, the character of at least one of these places and its characterization in the Tantras appear to correspond. I am referring to Jālandhara. Tantric etymology derives the first part of this name from the word *javāla* meaning 'flame' or *jāla* meaning 'net'. These two derivations are combined to furnish a description of Jālandhara as the place that "bears (-dhara) the net or series of the goddess's flaming energies."¹¹ Most Hindus know that in the Kangra Valley, close to the modern town of Jālandhara in the Jammu region, there is a cave where natural gas leaks from cracks in the rock. The small flames that this produces are worshipped to this day as the manifest form of the goddess Jvālamukhī whose name literally means '(the goddess) whose mouth is made of flames.'¹²

'Jālandhara is said to be a sacred seat (pīṭha), as is Uḍḍiyāna. Paurṇagiri is a sacred seat and so is Kāmarūpa.' Hevajra Tantra 1/7/12

Note that these are the same four places mentioned in the reference quoted above (fn. 8) from a Kubjikā Tantra.

¹⁰Sircar 1973: 11.

¹¹mahājvālālisandīptarṇ dīptatejānalaprabham |
mahājvālāvalīṭoparṇ devyās tejo mahādbhutam |
dhṛtarṇa yena pratāpo 'syās tena tajjālasarṇjñakam || KMT 2/50cd-51

Powerful with its series of great flames, the radiant energy (tejas) of the goddess is very astonishing. Intensified with rows of great flames, it has the light of intensely burning fire. (This sacred seat) which bears her great heat is (therefore) called Jāla.

¹²Bakker examines the sources concerning Jālandhara. These range from the accounts of the 6th-century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan tsang, Muslim accounts from the 16th century onwards and 19th-century British archeologists and travellers, as well as Sanskrit sources. Bakker (1983: 60f.) reports that the country of Jālandhara is said to have received its name from a Daitya king called Jālandhara. According to the *Padmapurāna*, Jālandhara, the son of the Ocean and the Ganges, was given a part of India (*jambudvīpa*) for his residence. This country came to be known as Jālandhara. (*Padmapurāna*, Uttarakhanda, 4/3 ff.). Mythology identifies this area with the vast body of the demon Jālandhara who was slain by Śiva in battle. The local tradition of the Kangra Valley, which is a part of this area, identifies Jālandhara's mouth with the goddess Jvālamukhī, whose shrine is located in the Valley. Examining the sources at his disposal, Bakker perceives a connection between the location of this goddess and Jālandhara even without referring to the Tantras where this connection is explicit.

Kāmarūpa is harder to identify. The original name of this place, known to both early Hindu and Buddhist sources, is Kāmaru. The Sanskritized form "Kāmarūpa" is easily derivable from it. This place is of great importance for the early Śākta—technically called Kaula—Tantras and the strongly Śākta orientated Bhairava Tantras. This is largely because of its association with Matsyendranātha, the reputed originator of the Kaula teachings and therefore, by extension, all the Kaula Tantric traditions, including those of Kubjikā, Tripurā and Kālī.¹³ Abhinavagupta praises him first, before all the other teachers he venerates at the beginning of his monumental work on Tantra, the *Tantrāloka*. Jayaratha, in his commentary on the *Tantrāloka*, tells us that this is because Matsyendranātha is "famous as the one who revealed all the Kula scriptures."¹⁴ He was especially important for Abhinavagupta because the latter, like many Tantrics of the 11th-century Kashmir in which he lived, considered Śākta Kaula ritual and doctrine (*kulaprakriyā*) superior to its Śaiva-cum-Bhairava equivalent (*tantraprakriyā*), with which it is blended both in the Tantras and Abhinava's *Tantrāloka*.¹⁵ The many Kaula traditions that link this site with such an important figure and its persistent identification with Kāmākhyā (modern Gauhati) in Assam lend credibility to the correctness of this identification.

Of the four places discussed here, the location of Pūrṇagīri has been the least investigated. The inhabitants of the Nainital district of the Himalayas identify a sacred mountain in that region as Pūrṇagīri. This name, however, is relatively recent. The older form, reported in the *Almora Gazetteer* of 1911, is Puniagīri, which is derivable from the Sanskrit Puṇyagīri ('Mountain of Merit'), rather than Pūrṇagīri. Another candidate is found in Orissa. There,

¹³For the sake of precision, it is important to specify that the Tantric (rather than "folk" or Purāṇic) worship of Kālī makes its first substantial appearance in the Bhairava Tantras. Although the Tantras of this group are centred on the worship of Bhairava, a fierce and erotic form of Śiva, Kaula (i.e. early Śākta) Tantrism developed out of them. The adept (variously called *sādhaka* or, in the *Brahmayāmala*, *adhūta*) is identified in the rituals of many of these Tantras with Bhairava in order to satisfy the hordes of Yoginīs who are his encompassing and otherwise dangerous followers. Kālī and her numerous ectypes came to prominence in this context in the Bhairava Tantras. The unedited *Jayadrathayāmala*, which is said to consist of 24,000 verses, is an important Bhairava Tantra. Dedicated virtually exclusively to the worship of this goddess in numerous forms, it is one of our oldest and most substantial sources of her worship.

¹⁴sakalakulaśāstrāvātāratayā prasiddhaḥ | TĀ vol. 1, p.25.

¹⁵Jayaratha in his commentary on the *Tantrāloka* writes:

... it is said that : "just as the stars, although they remain in the sky, do not shine when the sun is present, in the same way the (Śaiva) Siddhāntatantras do not shine in the presence of the Kulāgama. Therefore, nothing apart from the Kula (teachings) can liberate from transmigratory existence." Thus, even though the work about to be expounded (namely, the *Tantrāloka*) has two aspects because it consists of (an exposition of both the) Kula and the Tantric methods (*prakriyā*), and because, as the aforementioned reference declares, the Kula method is more fundamental (*prādhānya*) than other methods, he who has revealed it, the fourth teacher (belonging to this the fourth era, i.e. Matsyendranātha), is praised first in accord with the view (expressed in the following reference):

"Beloved, Bhairavī first obtained (the teachings concerning the practice of) Yoga from Bhairava and so pervaded (the entire universe). Then, fair-faced one, it was obtained from their presence by the Siddha called Mīna, that is, by the great soul, Macchanda (i.e. Matsyendra), in the great seat (*mahāpīṭha*) of Kāmarūpa." TĀ vol. 1, 24.

learned Oḍiyas, on the basis of their local traditions, identify it with the town of Puṣpagiri.¹⁶ Another possibility is a mountain by this name in central India that to my mind appears to be the most likely identification. In order to understand why I believe this, let us return to our triangle. Most accounts locate Pūrṇagiri in the right corner of the triangle and Jālandhara in the left with respect to Kāmarūpa which is located in the "front (i.e. top) corner" (*agrakoṇa*). We see the same layout in Figure 1, which we shall discuss in some detail below. If Pūrṇagiri is identified with the mountain by that name in central India, then the points plotted for these three sites would in fact be located in the corners of an almost perfectly equilateral triangle (traced in red on Map 1).¹⁷

If we accept this view to be the correct one, the only major inconsistency with the texts is the location of Uḍḍiyāna. If this place was, as most scholars believe, located in the Swat Valley of northern Pakistan, it is far from the centre of this triangle, where many texts position Uḍḍiyāna. This anomaly is more striking if we compare this standard layout with the one found in the *Niśisamcāra* tantra. Although it appears that this Tantra has been lost, the reference we have is particularly important because it was chosen by Abhinavagupta who lived in 11th-century Kashmir which, more extensive than today, included Uḍḍiyāna in its outlying north-western provinces. Uḍḍiyāna, also called Oḍḍiyāna, was an extremely important Tantric site. It is still famous in Vajrayāna circles as the land of the great exponent of Vajrayāna in Tibet, Padmasambhava, whom Tibetan historians refer to as a Kashmiri.¹⁸ The site must have been well known to Abhinava as the place where Jñānāneta, the founder of the branch of the Kālī tradition (*kālikrama*) that was most important for Kashmir Śaivites, was said to have received his revelations.

The layout presented by the *Niśisamcāra*, a Bhairava Tantra (see Map 5), gives pride of place to Kāmarūpa as the main sacred seat. Its pre-eminent status is vividly symbolized by deriving it directly from the core of reality as the cosmogonic will (*icchā*), an identification suggested by the first member of its name Kāmarūpa which literally means 'sexual desire'. This assumes the form of the foundation (*ādhāra*) wherein all creation resides and finds its support. This desire emanates the Point (*bindu*) and Sound (*nāda*), which are the breath of the core as its pervasive vitality at rest within itself and in an active state, respectively. Uḍḍiyāna, to the left, is the Point and Pūrṇagiri, to the right, is the Sound. Abhinava rejects the possibility of a fourth seat in the centre, even one that some refer to as a "half (i.e. not fully

¹⁶This site greatly impressed the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan tsang, who visited Orissa in the 7th century. From his description it appears that Puṣpagiri was an important Buddhist centre at that time. Unfortunately, the exact location of Puṣpagiri remains uncertain. See Dehejia 1979: 14.

¹⁷I am grateful to Rana Singh for pointing this out to me. I should take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge Rana Singh's assistance. His help in making the maps for this paper has been invaluable, as has been his encouragement and scholarly advice on many matters related to pilgrimage studies and the sacred geography of India.

¹⁸See Dyczkowski 1987: 3 with reference to Nadou 1968: 38. Bakker notes that several locations for Uḍḍiyāna have been suggested. The best known are the Swat Valley in northern Pakistan, Orissa, and a region in Bengal. After briefly examining various views, Bakker opines that "the arguments for the location of Uḍḍiyāna in the Swat Valley seem to be stronger. Actual proof that the Swat Valley was known as Uḍḍiyāna is obtained from Tibetan travellers in the area. The Tibetan name for the Swat Valley was O rgyan or U rgyan, but a Buddhist pilgrim from Tibet, named Buddhagupta, tells us that Tibetan U rgyan is derived from Uḍḍiyāna, on account of the similarity of sound" (Bakker 1983: 54).

formed) sacred seat" (*ardhapīṭha*).¹⁹ This layout also produces a reasonably well-shaped triangle, although it is not equilateral, unlike the one of the first scheme (see Map 1: triangle traced in black). The *Niśisaṃcāra* knows of the existence of Jālandhara but relegates it to the status of a "secondary sacred site" (*upasaṃdoha*), along with the borderlands of India, Nepal, Kashmir and "the direction in which foreigners (live)" (*mlecchadik*). Perhaps, when the *Niśisaṃcāra* was redacted, Jālandhara, along with these other places, had not yet gained the importance it was to have later.²⁰

Thus, I would tentatively suggest that there are two triangles: an earlier one which did not include Jālandhara and a later one that did. The importance of Uḍḍiyāna would not allow its omission in the later scheme and so it was conveniently placed in the centre to symbolize not its location, but excellence. A more realistic variant found in the Kubjikā Tantras, which lends further credence to the realism of the triangular model, locates Omkārapīṭha, that is, the town of Omkāreśvara in Madhyapradeśa, in the centre. Although this site is not in the literal geographical centre it does, at least, lie within the triangle.²¹

Let us return to the Kubjikā Tantras to examine in greater detail their symbolic geography of the core reality—the goddess's triangular Yoni. As is the case with Tantric deities in general, one of the fundamental aspects of the goddess Kubjikā is her aniconic form as mantric sound. This is portrayed as the pure dynamic energy from which the universe is generated, of which the universe consists and into which it ultimately is resolved. In this perspective, the Triangle, representing the unified field of universal energy, through which the cycles of existence are perpetuated, consists of the primary energy of the fifty phonemes of the Sanskrit alphabet that together constitute the womb of Mantras. Laid out in a triangular diagram (*prastāra*),²² called Meru, they are assigned to forty-nine small triangles drawn within the triangle. The conjunct consonant, KṢ, treated as an independent phoneme, is placed below the centre where H is located in the Triangle. The remaining letters are arranged in the diagram in the normal alphabetical order in an anti-clockwise spiral of three and a half turns. This is why Kuṇḍalinī, the inner form of the goddess, is likened to a serpent with three and a half coils. Each letter is worshipped as a Bhairava or a Siddha. Each one of them lives in his own compartment that is itself a Yoni, said to be "wet" with the divine Command (*ājñā*) of the energy of the transmission that takes place through the union they enjoy with their female counterparts. The sacrality of sacred sites is derived from such hierogamies and so each compartment corresponds to a sacred site where these Siddhas are said to reside, practise and teach. These

¹⁹A "half sacred seat" (*ardhapīṭha*) added on to the three main ones appears also in the *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* (Bagchi: 24). There it is called Arbuda which is the Sanskrit name of what is now a sacred site especially for the Jains, namely, Mount Abu in Rajasthan.

²⁰Largely on the basis of these references, Divedi states in his introduction to the *Nityāśoḍaśikārnava* (p. 81) that there were originally three primary seats, not four. This view is examined and rejected by Bakker (1993: 50-2).

²¹See *Ambāmatasamhitā*, fols. 10b-11a, where Omkāra replaces Uḍḍiyāna.

²²The word *prastāra* simply means 'grid' or 'diagram'. This term is used in this sense in other types of Sanskrit texts as well. Thus, for example, Sanskrit musicological texts use this term to denote a diagram or "graph" (as Lath calls it) on which the notes and *śrutis* are schematically represented. "The *vṛtti* on the *Bṛhaddeśī* speaks of three ways of representing the *śruti* and *svara* positions within a *grāma*. These were known as the three *prastāras*: (1) the *daṇḍaprastāra* (2) the *viṇāprastāra* and (3) the *maṇḍalaprastāra*" (Lath 1988: 74).

sites have been plotted on Maps 1 and 2. The source of the first map is a commentary on parts of the *Manthānabhairava Tantra* and the *Ṣaṣṣāhasrasaṅhītā*. The second map presents a secondary variant drawn from the *Ambāmatasaṅhītā*²³ which, like the previous source, belongs to the corpus of the Kubjikā Tantras I have edited from manuscripts. In the Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the *Manthānabhairava Tantra* the goddess is said to visit these fifty places.²⁴ Before doing so, she utters a hymn praising the four sacred seats along with another, fifth one, identified as Trisrota (site 11 on Map 1) which, she says, will be the sacred seat of a future revelation.²⁵ This statement suggests to the modern scholar that the place was already a sacred site and that it was one of such special importance for the initiates of the Kubjikā Tantras that they integrated it, somewhat haphazardly, into the older scheme that enjoyed a high degree of prestige in other Tantric traditions also. Another source informs us that the order in which the letters are placed within the triangular diagram (*varṇanyāsa*) corresponds to the sequence (*gati*) of the sacred seats. And this is, indeed, the order in which they are listed in the Kumārikākhaṇḍa²⁶ of the *Manthānabhairavatāntra* as the places the goddess converts into sacred sites (*āyatana*, *tīrtha*, *samdoha*) by visiting and casting her empowering gaze upon them in one of her colonizing rounds of India.

Just as the goddess Kubjikā moves around India to establish her sacred sites, she also moves through this Triangle—the Yoni—which is her own body—the Body of Energy (*kulaṇḍa*)—sanctifying its parts by filling them with the energy of empowerment (*ājñā*). Although the texts do not say so explicitly, they imply that the triangular land of Bhārata is just that Portion of the Virgin Goddess.²⁷

At the same time this, the female body, is that of the core reality; conversely, its complement, the outer body, is male. This relationship is established to allow for the exteriorization of the letters and so, by extension, the sacred sites onto the surface of the body. In this case, the Triangle contains the goddesses of the female form of the alphabet, which is itself a goddess called Mālinī (lit. 'Garlanded One', i.e. the goddess who wears the Garland of Letters). The figure of a standing man identified with a form of Bhairava called Śrīkaṇṭha (who is the guardian of the first letter of the alphabet) is the male form of the alphabet called Śabdarāśi—

²³*Ambāmatasaṅhītā*, fol. 13a.

²⁴The variants in the list found in the *śikā* and the KuKh (6/212-8) have been noted in Appendix 2.

²⁵These are the standard four with the addition of Tisra, also called Trisrota, as the fifth. This may well be the same as Mataṅgapīṭha mentioned in the KMT as a fifth "pervasive" sacred seat which, as such, has no separate location. In the account found in the KuKh (chapter six), the consort of the goddess is Mataṅga. The goddess would therefore be Mataṅgī, which may account for its alternative name. This is the sacred seat of the future revelation. Thus the goddess says to the god: "I have told you, O handsome one, of this, the descent (into the world) of the (four) sacred seats. (Moreover, I) anticipate that Tisrapīṭha will be the future fifth one." (KuKh 6/187). The latter is symbolically located above the triangle formed by the other four seats in the form of a point "above the half Moon." This sacred seat has emerged on top of the triangular Yoni, above the Half Moon. The supreme Kālī, who illumines divine knowledge, is located there. The original triangle, which is the shape of the letter E, is thus converted into the mantric syllable AIM.

²⁶KuKh 6/212-8.

²⁷We read in the Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the *Manthānabhairava Tantra* that "there are sacred sites (*āyatana* and other sacred places), *tīrthas* and *samdohas*, wherever the goddess went and wherever she cast her gaze. The mother of Kula established her fame in the land of Bhārata (in this way), and so the meritorious and holy Region of the Virgin (*kaumārikākhaṇḍa*) came into being" (KuKh 6/219-20).

the Aggregate of Words. This is the male Person (*puruṣa*) who resides within Nature identified, by implication, with the Triangle. In this way the Triangle with the letters it contains, the Bhairavas that preside over them, and the places that symbolically enshrine their energies can be projected onto the body (see Fig. 2).

An interesting consequence of these symbolic associations is that the letters that are extracted from the Triangle to form Mantras are not only pervasive sounds and deities, but also places. Accordingly, we occasionally find in the Kubjikā Tantras that the letters extracted from the triangular diagram to form Mantras are labelled with the name of the place to which they correspond in the grid. In this perspective, this means that Mantras are interiorizations of sacred places. This startling symbolic association is the result of an important principle, namely, that each deity must be associated with a place in order to be effectively immanent and hence an object of the worship by which it is propitiated to bestow its gifts. Thus the deities of the letters of a Mantra, which is the sonic icon of its presiding deity, in order to be effective and hence render the Mantra effective, must carry along within themselves their own divine locations.

We should note before proceeding further that the first two maps are derived from two substantially different lists of the fifty sites collocated in the triangle. The first is found in the Kumārikākhandā of the *Manthānabhairavatantra*. This is the same list, with minor variants, as the one in the *Manthānabhairava Ṭikā*.²⁸ The other list is found in the *Ambāmatasāhītā*. The Triangle with its fifty compartments is described in the earliest Tantra of the Kubjikā school, the *Kubjikāmata*, but it does not equate them with sacred places. Conversely, the fifty places listed as a group in the Kumārikākhandā are not related to this Triangle in that text. The section of the *Ṭikā* which presents this group of fifty sites and equates them with the letters placed in the Triangle is not presented as a commentary on any specifically named text, but examination of the contents of the *Ṭikā* clearly establishes that it postdates the Kumārikākhandā. We can therefore safely conclude that this group of fifty sites was introduced after the redaction of the KMT and was subsequently fitted into the Triangle formed by the four primary sacred seats that is already highly elaborated in the KMT. Although the list of fifty sites found in the *Ambāmatasāhītā* is similar, it is substantially different from this one, not just a variant. It presents an ulterior elaboration of this scheme and so can be safely assumed to postdate the Kumārikākhandā. The fact that the number of places listed makes exactly fifty clearly indicates that they have been compiled and standardized for a specific purpose and are not simply lists of sacred sites.

That the list in the Kumārikākhandā, in particular, is a standard one is confirmed by the fact that it appears, with just a few variants entries, in the *Yoginīhrdaya*, which is an important Tantra of the Tripurā cult. All of these texts are certainly prior to the 12th century. As we have noted already, the KMT belongs to at least the 10th century. The sophistication of the *Yoginīhrdaya* which contains many notions elaborated by Kashmiri Śaivites between the 9th and 11th centuries leads one to suppose that it may well have been compiled in that period. Anyway, it is certainly older than Amṛtānanda, who was its first known commentator. He lived in South India in the 13th century. Another indication of its relatively recent origin is its

²⁸This text, which I have edited, is a commentary compiled by a certain Rūpaśiva on scattered chapters of the Kubjikā Tantras. Several sections are simply wholesale copies of the commentary on various chapters of the *Śaṣṭasāhasrasāhītā*. This important text is an expanded version in 6,000 verses of the *Kubjikāmātantra* consisting of 3,500 verses. For a table comparing the contents of these two texts see Schoterman 1982: 14f.

high degree of domestication. The liturgy centred on the worship of Śrīcakra that it expounds can be performed entirely in one place—at home, in a temple or monastery—by a householder or non-itinerant ascetic. Unlike the Kubjikā Tantras and Abhinava's *Tantrāloka*, it makes no provisions at all for the possibility of any real peregrination to these sites, not even as a secondary alternative or along with their projection on the body. Thus, as in the *Tantrāloka*, in which Abhinava, a master of the theory and practice of interiorization, expounds a thoroughly domesticated cult, the projection of these sacred sites onto the body is of relatively minor importance.

According to the liturgy of the *Yoginīhr̥daya*, the placing of the fifty seats on the body is the sixth of a sixfold projection onto the body that is done right at the beginning of the rite. The first of these depositions is that of fifty Gaṇeśas, one for each letter of the alphabet. This is done to remove obstacles to the performance of the rite. Then comes a deposition of the nine planets and twenty-seven constellations (*nakṣatra*). The six Yoginīs presiding over the six Wheels (*cakra*) within the body come next. They govern the gross elements and mind along with the physical constituents of the body (*dhātu*). They are accompanied by an entourage of fifty yoginīs who govern the fifty letters of the alphabet, the phonemic equivalents of the forces within the Wheels that operate within the adept's cosmic body. Once the inner, subtle body has been energized in this way, the fifth deposition is performed, which is that of the twelve signs of the zodiac (*rāśi*). Thus, the outer body has been freed of obstacles, transformed into the universe, and its central vitalizing axis is energized. Finally, this process is completed by the projection of the fifty sacred sites, corresponding to the letters, onto the surface of this cosmic body. In this way, the body is prepared as a pure, cosmic and energized surface of inscription onto which the adept projects the Śrīcakra in which he will worship and become one with his deity. Thus Śrīcakra is drawn on the whole of the sacred land of Bhārata, which is set in the spheres of the cosmic forces with which it is vitally linked and forms an essential part.

From the point of view of the present inquiry, there is one important feature of this group of fifty places. Not only are the individual places the same as those found in the Kubjikā Tantras, but the order in which they are listed is such that when they are projected onto a triangular grid in the manner prescribed in the Kubjikā Tantras, we find the main sacred seats—Kāmarūpa, Jālandhara, Pūrṇagiri and Uḍḍiyāna—in the corners and centre, in the way noted above. The Śrīvidyā system does not know of this grid and so this serial order is of no consequence for it. This leads one to suppose that the group has been lifted wholesale from the Kubjikā Tantras or a common source. However, such a possibility would only be a feasible option if other early Tantric systems had the same grid as the one found in the Kubjikā Tantras, which make extensive use of it, and others like it, to extract the letters of their mantras. Up to now none has been found. If then we accept the Kubjikā Tantras as its source, we can say that this part of the *Yoginīhr̥daya* postdates those Kubjikā Tantras where this grid is elaborated. This ascertainment is not central to our inquiry. What is that it appears that by that time this set had been instituted as a standard one. This suggests that by the 10th or 11th century pilgrimage by Tantric initiates to these sites was already becoming redundant, if it was not already totally so. What remained was the projection onto the body and other techniques of transposition that served, amongst other things, as a means of purifying the adept. We have seen how this worked in the case of the Tantric system taught in the *Yoginīhr̥daya*; let us now return to the *Niśīsamcāratāntra*, and see how it functions there.

Abhinava chooses this as his source for the sacred sites that are projected onto the body of the neophyte as a part of the preliminary rites of purification that form the prelude to the rite of initiation. This deposition is performed immediately after the ritual bathing and precedes the very important deposition of the letters onto the body. Abhinava is following a model already formed for him in the Tantras themselves. The projection of the sacred sites onto the body serves to transform it into a sacred universe, the geography of which is marked by these sacred sites. We have already noted that according to the *Niśisaṃcāra* the ultimate goddess site (*pīṭha*) is Śiva's will, which is identified with the most important sacred seat, namely, Kāmarūpa. The cosmogonic Sound (*nāda*) and the primordial, dimensionless Point (*bindu*) from which the cosmic process unfolds are the sacred seats of Pūrṇagiri and Uḍḍiyāna. Similarly, the three subsidiary seats (*upapīṭha*) are said to be Kuṇḍalinī and the first derivatives of Sound and the Point. Externally, these three correspond to Devīkoṭa, Kollāgiri, and Ujjayinī. This is followed by another triad, that of the three *Saṃdohakas*.²⁹ These are the sense of taste (*lalanā*, lit. 'the tongue'), a tertiary derivation of the Point (*bindu*) and Pervasion (*vyāpti*), from which sacred energy emanates. These correspond to Puṇḍravardhana, Vārendra and Ekāmra, respectively. Around these three triads, arranged on the eight petals of the "lotus of the heart," are twenty-four more sacred places. They are eight primary sacred fields (*kṣetra*), eight secondary ones (*upakṣetra*) and eight secondary *saṃdohas*. These three groups are located on the main part of the petals, the tips and joints between them, respectively.

A similar grouping in three sets of eight and projection onto a lotus in a similar way is known to the Kubjikā Tantras. This developed from an original set of twenty-four sites presented without internal differentiation.³⁰ These are the twenty-four sites of the *Kubjikāmatatantra* plotted on Map 6. It is, I believe, very significant that these twenty-four places are, apart from a few minor variants, the same as those listed in the Mādhavakula section of the *Jayadrathayāmala* quoted by Abhinavagupta. Not only are the entries in the two lists virtually the same, they are practically in the same order.³¹ This coincidence tells us that when

²⁹The terms *saṃdoha* and *upasaṃdoha* are of uncertain derivation. They are also found in Buddhist Tantras in this or a similar form (such as *chandoha*). See HT 1/7/10-8. Jayaratha, the commentator on the *Tantrāloka*, derives the term from the root *saṃduh*, meaning to milk, suck, or ooze (milk). Thus he says that "a *saṃdohaka* (is what has been milked) because it consists mainly of the exuded secretion of the secondary seats" (*saṃdohaketi upapīṭhaniṣyandaprayātvāt TĀ vol. VI p. 2,489*).

³⁰It appears that apart from the grouping together of the most important seats, Kāmarūpa and the rest, the division of other such sites into separate subsets is neither uniform nor significant.

³¹The entries and their order coincide in the two lists up to the eighth entry in the *Jayadrathayāmala* list, namely, Śrīpīṭha. The KMT lists Śrīkoṭa. That this is another name for Devīkoṭa is confirmed by the corresponding entry in the list found in the commentary on the *Ṣaṣṭhasaṃhita* (25/8). Eḍābhī, the tenth entry in the list, corresponds to Airuḍī in the KMT. But these appear to be two names for the same place, namely, Eruḍī. The next entry, Hālā, which Jayaratha glosses as Alipura, replaces Hastināpura in the KMT's list. The following entry in the KMT, that is, the twelfth, is Elāpura; this is the sixteenth entry according to the JY. The next entry according to the JY is Gokaṛṇa. The corresponding entry in the KMT is Kāśmarī, which is another name for Gokaṛṇa. According to the commentary on the *Ṣaṣṭhasaṃhita* mentioned above, this place is called Narmadā Gokaṛṇa while the KMT states that the goddess of Kāśmarī is Gokaṛṇā, which further confirms this identification. The following entry in the edited text of the KMT is Maruḍeśa. The corresponding entry in the JY, according to the printed edition of the *Tantrāloka* that quotes it, is Marukośa. This is a mistake for Marukeśa. The corresponding entry in the commentary in the *Ṣaṣṭhasaṃhita*, Marukeśvara, confirms this. The next entry in the printed edition of the KMT is Caitrakaccha, but some manuscripts read Nagar, which is the same as the corresponding entry in the JY. The corresponding entry in the commentary on the *Ṣaṣṭhasaṃhita* is Bhṛṅgunagara. The seventeenth entry in the KMT reads Parastīra; the equivalent entry in the JY is Purastīra, which is the correct

these Tantras were redacted, these places were already considered to be a standard group by at least these two traditions, one centred on the goddess Kubjikā and the other on the goddess Kālī as taught in the JY. It would be a mistake, therefore, to think of this sacred geography as being specific to any one school. The close association between the obscure goddess Kubjikā and Kālī, still maintained in the Śākta Tantrism of the Newars, and attested in numerous ways in the Kubjikā Tantras, thus finds further confirmation. Indeed, the edition and detailed analysis of the Tantras of other related schools will most probably reveal that these were places sacred to all, if not most, other Kaula and Bhairava Tantric systems.

The formation of standard sets renders their individual members easily amenable to assimilation to cosmic principles and interiorization. Let us trace the stages of this development in the case of these twenty-four sites in the Kubjikā Tantras to observe the way this process operates.

The KMT prescribes the worship of these places as atonement for inadvertently omitting some part of the worship of Kubjikā's main Maṇḍala. Such omissions are transgressions of the Rule (*samaya*), as a result of which the adept's strength fails (*glāni*) and obstacles afflict him. Worshipping these sacred places along with the goddesses who reside there, their weapons and the protectors of the field (*kṣetrapāla*) can purify the adept who has thus sullied himself. It seems that a literal pilgrimage is enjoined here because the Tantra goes on to say that if the adept cannot do this or is lazy, he can purify himself by simply praising the sacred seats.³² The worship of these and other sites is a regular feature of all Kaula ritual. It is a major feature of the Kubjikā Tantras which, therefore, contain many such hymns dedicated to the sacred seats. In this case this means reciting the verses in the Tantra in which these twenty-four places are listed in the morning just after getting up or before going to sleep. The Tantra promises that even if the initiate has committed terrible sins, he is respected (*sammata*) by the Mothers (*mātrkā*) who reside there.

Moreover, the adept can recite the hymn when he is in the sacrificial area where the rites of the goddess are performed, in front of Kubjikā's Maṇḍala, her icon, or a Liṅga. He may also recite it standing in water when he makes his ablutions. In this way, we are told, calamities, poison, fire, water or disease does not overcome him.³³

The Tantra supplies an alternative, more elaborate, method of worshipping these places if the adept is overcome by great fear (*mahābhaya*). To remedy his distress, he should fashion twenty-four circles (*maṇḍala*). These are divided into four groups of six, one group for each direction starting with the east. Flowers of various colours are offered—in the east white, south yellow, west red, and north dark blue. A jar full of water is placed in the centre. A lamp

spelling. This is followed by Prṣṭhāpura in the KMT, missing in the JY. The next variant is the nineteenth entry in the KMT, Kuhuḍī (comm. ṢaṭṢ: Kuhuḍī); this corresponds to Kuḍyākeṣi in the JY. Then come Sopāna in JY and Sopāra in the KMT. Sopāna is a mistaken reading and so Sopāra is the same in both lists. This entry is followed by Kṣīrika and Māyāpurī in that order, according to the KMT, and in the reverse order according to the JY. The final entry in the KMT is Rājagrha; this is the penultimate one in the JY's list, which ends with Śrīśaila (according to the *Kulakramodaya* quoted by Jayaratha in his commentary on the *Tantrāloka* [Vol. VII, p. 3334], the Mātrkā Brahmāṇī was worshipped at this important site). This fact was apparently so well known that Abhinava calls this place Vairīñci, the place of the goddess Vīriñci, that is, Brahmāṇī.

³²KMT 22/18-22.

³³*Ibid.* 22/47-54ab.

is placed in each of the twenty-four circles. The adept should then move around through these replications of the sacred seats in due order. He should do this for a day and a night. Having passed the night keeping himself well under control, he should then make offerings of meat and wine (technically called *vīrabhojya*). Then he should propitiate the sacred seats, prostrating before them repeatedly. In this way he is freed of his fear along with other impediments and diseases. The Tantra promises that he will quickly attain success and become wealthy. If he is celibate, he will get a good wife and sons, and if he is a student, knowledge.³⁴ Finally, we may note that the name of the chapter of the *Kubjikāmata* where this is taught is appropriately called "the Pervasion of the Whole and the Parts."

The *Ṣaṣṭhasrasamhitā* presents an interesting interiorization of this replication of the twenty-four sites. In this Tantra they figure as the components of the Wheel of the Sun, which, along with those of Fire and Moon, are the three forms of the Wheel of the Skyfaring Goddesses (*khecariṅcakra*) located in the throat in the Wheel of Purity (*viśuddhicakra*).³⁵ They are divided into three groups, according to whether they are primary or secondary Sacred Fields (*kṣetra*, *upakṣetra*) or meeting grounds (*sandoha*). The sites are arranged on the petals of the lotus in four groups of six. There are two sacred fields on the first two petals. Then there are two secondary sacred fields on the next two petals and two meeting grounds on the following two. The remaining three groups of six are placed on the remaining petals in serial order in the same way.

These twenty-four places, arranged in this way on the petals of the lotus, correspond to the twenty-four principles of existence (*tattva*) ranging from Earth to Nature (*prakṛti*). Thus a connection is made with the principles of existence that constitute the whole of empirical reality, not just the body. The pilgrimage to the sacred places takes the adept around the manifest universe. The stops on the journey are linked in a developing progression, which is at the same time, in a seemingly paradoxical manner, circular. When he reaches the upper extremity, he continues beyond from the beginning again. In this perspective, there is no descent, only a continuous rising up through the spheres of manifestation from gross to subtle and subtle to gross.³⁶

The establishment of a sacred geography externally and its subsequent systematic interiorization is an essential part of the formation of the complex of symbolic forms and their dynamic interaction that constitute the distinctive features of the Tantric system

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵Chapter 25 of the *Ṣaṣṭhasrasamhitā* opens with a beautiful description of this Wheel. Bhairava says to the goddess:

O fair-faced one! I will (now) tell (you about) the great wheel of the Skyfaring Goddesses. (Shaped like a lotus), its sprouts are the worlds and it is adorned with the parts of Mantras (pada) as its leaves. It is strewn with letters that are (its) thorns and (its) holes are Mantras. Divine, it is fashioned with the threads of the cosmic forces (kalā) and, (resting) on the knots which are the principles of existence (tattva), it is firm. Possessing twenty-four petals, it extends for billions (of leagues). In the middle of the ocean of the Void (vyoman), it looks like blue collyrium. Shining like a thousand suns, its radiant energy is like the Fire of Time. (Ṣaṣṭhasrasamhitā 25/2-5ab)

³⁶This material has been drawn from *Ṣaṣṭhasrasamhitā* 25/2-9. Here is, it seems to me, a fine example of how pilgrimage is conceived. The pilgrim's route, rather than being a representation of the Path to Liberation, which would be straight, is more of the nature of a circumambulation of sacred space. This is done not to achieve liberation but to propitiate the deities of the sacred space and gain benefits thereby.

expounded in the Kubjikā Tantras. The goddess establishes a sacred geography to delineate her specific worldly domain and so colonize site, city, region, country and the world through her descent from the transcendent. She thereby spreads the teachings concerning her and the geography thus established and internalized in her Tantric system. In this system, as in most others of its kind, time and location serve as the prerequisites for the delineation of the specific entities that lend their identity to the energies, which are internally configured so as to replicate their concrete, external existence in ideally perfect geometric patterns and regular rhythms. These geometries and rhythms constitute the system in its complexity and, hence, its spiritual transformative power. Specific forms, places and time thus become ideal ciphers that mark the configuration and development of Abstract Transcendent Reality, which becomes immanent at first as sacred geometries within the divine consciousness of the deity so as to constitute its Body of Energies (*kulapīṇḍa*), the latter then being replicated in the body of the adept.³⁷ This then is the intermediate reality that is vitalized by the universal, abstract energy from the upper transcendent reality. This energy flows out to the chaotic configurations of outer concrete entities that, by lending this energy their forms, concretize the transcendent, rendering it amenable to approach. In this way they become intelligible because they are no longer perceived as disconnected phenomena but as parts of a greater abstract Whole which is a meaningful, albeit, complex, system.

Accordingly, the root Tantra of the Kubjikā cult begins by delineating this sacred geography and in so doing explains the origins of the goddess herself. This starts from the goddess's land of origin, the *Santānabhuvana*—the World of the Lineage. This is presented as the "outside world" of myth. Its three peaks, arranged in a triangle, enclose an idyllic land behind the Himalaya³⁸ to the west of Meru.³⁹ Internally this is located at the top of the Twelve Finger Space above the head (see Fig. 4). This is the hermitage of Himavān, who receives Bhairava with such devotion that the god grants him a number of boons.⁴⁰ Himavān, by way of recompense, introduces Bhairava to his daughter, the virgin (*kumārikā*) Kālikā who asks him to be the deity she worships. Bhairava responds by imparting to her a vision of the universe and insight into the energy that sustains it.

This is the divine Command (*ājñā*) that was transmitted through the six lineages of the six accomplished adepts (*siddha*) who were the disciples of Matsyendranātha, who, as we have seen, is the legendary founder of Kaulism in this age.⁴¹ The places where the six disciples received initiation and whence they spread the teachings are listed in Tantras of different

³⁷The KMT explains that the teaching concerning the Body of Energies (*kulapīṇḍa*) is the practice of the Sequence of the Sacred Seats and the Body (*pīṇḍa*). It is present in the world of men, as is the goddess (KMT 1/53).

³⁸KMT 1/2, ŚaṭSS 1/6.

³⁹ŚaṭSS 1/27a. The western direction noted here may possibly be connected with characterization of the Kubjikā cult as the Western Tradition.

⁴⁰KMT 1/24f.

⁴¹This is what the *Kubjikāmata* calls the "previous tradition" (*pūrvāmnāya*). This Tantra maintains that by the time of its redaction, this tradition had decayed and so required the establishment of a new, subsequent and definitive one. This is the Kubjikā cult that is appropriately called *Paścimāmnāya* meaning 'the last and final tradition'.

schools.⁴² These places clearly belong to the geography of the early Kaula Tantras. Moreover, each disciple is also linked with a village and a sacred grove.⁴³ Unfortunately, these places have not yet been identified. This is certainly because of their local character, reflecting the close relationship these pan-Indian Sanskritic traditions had with local and regional traditions. A twofold process of domestication and interiorization marks the transition from one to the other.

Bhairava goes on to tell the goddess that her power will manifest itself in the land of the Virgin Goddess (Kumārikā), namely, India. He tells her that until she has established her authority in India—the land of Bhārata—there can be no union with him. He then disappears telling her to go to Mount Kaumāra.⁴⁴ She abandons her companions and, in order to seek her god, she goes to the Mountain of the Moon, which she ascends, there to assume the form of a Liṅga in which the entire universe is enveloped. The god now begins to worship the Liṅga, called Udyānabhairava, and asks the goddess to abandon her unmanifest form. Accordingly, the goddess bursts apart the Liṅga and emerges out of it.⁴⁵ Then the goddess promises to impart the teachings to the god. This she does in the various places she now proceeds to visit, where she imparts the teachings to the resident Siddha, an aspect of Bhairava, by “sporting” (sexually) with him. In this way she generates spiritual sons and daughters that make up her lineage.

The first place the goddess visits is the Kula mountain. This is Śrīparvata, called Kumāra. When the goddess looks at it, Śrī, the goddess of royal power and wealth, suddenly becomes manifest, so it is called Śrīśaila. She draws a line on the ground with her toe and so creates a river that serves as a boundary. She establishes (the goddess) Chāyā there and gives her the command that whoever enters that sacred area will be her equal. The goddess continues her journey to Mount Trikūṭa and then to Mount Kiṣkindha. In these places she gives the power of her command and graces the demons who protect them (*rākṣasa*). She then goes to the shore of the ocean, where she stands for a while, and so there she is Kanyākumārī. Then,

⁴²Two have been compared, namely, a source belonging to the Kubjikā Tantras and the *Kulakṛīḍavatāra* that is quoted by Abhinavagupta in the *Tantrāloka*, and they have been found to agree. See Map 10.

⁴³See Appendix 3 for a table displaying this information.

⁴⁴KMT 1/48-54. In the ŚaṭṢS this place is identified with Śrīśaila, which is the sacred seat of Mātāṅga. Internally, it the trunk of the body up to the neck.

⁴⁵KMT 2/3. The theme of the goddess emerging from the Liṅga is well known. In the *Devīmāhātmya* of the *Markaṇḍeya Purāna* Mahāmāyā “rent open the Śiva Liṅga and came forth.” The same is stated in the *Kālikā Purāna* (76/83-93). A similar conception, namely that this primordial energy comes from the Person (*puruṣa*) is found in the *Bhagavadgītā* (15/4). The idea is well known to the Śaivasiddhānta, according to which spheres of energy (*kalā*) emerge from the Liṅga. Śrīcakra is also worshipped in association with the Liṅga and is sometimes even drawn on it. Banerjee (1974: 508) tells us that a “unique image was discovered in the ruins of Vikrampur, within the limits of the ancient capital of the Senas and their predecessors, in the quarter of the town known as Kagajipara.” He goes on to describe it as “four feet in height. It shows in its lower part a well-carved Śivaliṅga, from the top of which emerges the half-length figure of a four-armed goddess with her front hands in the *dhyanamudrā*, the back hands carrying a rosary and a manuscript. The Devī is profusely ornamented, and her beautifully carved youthful face with three eyes has a serene meditative expression.” It is reproduced in Plate XLV, 2 of Banerjee’s book. He identifies it as Mahāmāyā. The iconography Banerjee describes corresponds to that of the goddess Parā. Although this figure may not be that of the goddess Kubjikā, who is frequently identified with both Parā and Mahāmāyā, she could well be depicted in this way.

having graced the ocean, she goes to a cave called Daradaṇḍi. There the goddess assumes the form of Shade (*chāyādhari*), her mind set on the Unmanifest.

She then goes a long distance to the western Himagahvara. The forest goddess (*vanapallikā*⁴⁶) Olambikā resides there. The goddess is pleased and declares that this place is called Uḍḍiyāna because she flew up into the sky there.⁴⁷ She resides there in the Kṛta Age along with her consort Uḍḍamaheśa, who is Mitrānanda, a founder of the Kubjikā tradition. There, she is called Raktacāmuṇḍā.⁴⁸ She then goes to Karāla. The place is said to be brilliant with radiant energy; it is therefore renamed Jālandhara, the place of the flame—*jvāla*. The burning radiance of the goddess's flames has been awakened and she sees countless marvelous creations like those produced by magic (*indrajāla*, here too, apparently, an etymology is implied). She wonders what this marvelous creation is. She is told that although she has fallen because of the god's great energy, she has not fled from it and so she is addressed as the one who extends the net (*jāla*) of Māyā. She is told that she will be given lordship over Jālandhara. In this role she is called Karālī and her consort in the Tretā Age is Siddhakaunḍalī.⁴⁹

The goddess then goes to the great forest called Sahya. There, she fills the three worlds with the flames of her halo and is called Caṇḍākṣī. As all things are filled this way, she is addressed as one who is "full" of all things (*pūrṇarūpiṇī*). By virtue of the Yoga (*viśuvayoga*) by which she has done all this, she becomes the mistress of the mountain which is identified with Pūrṇagiri. Her authority is exerted at the end of the Dvāpara Age. Her consort is Cakrānanda.⁵⁰ The goddess then goes to a place called Kāmika. There is a river there called Uchchuśmā, there in the forest of Mahocchuśma. In the same forest there are two lakes. One is called Mahāhrada and the other Nīla. Here the Great Goddess again meets the local goddess, who is "melting with passion and melts the three worlds with (her) desire." Kubjikā is pleased to see her and names her Kāmeśvarī—the 'Mistress of Passion'. She explains that the nature of the sacred seat where Kāmeśvarī resides is her passion itself (*kāmarūpa*) and so this place is the sacred seat Kāmarūpa where the goddess Kāmeśvarī resides in the Age of Strife (*kaliyuga*). Her consort will be Candrānanda. Seated on the Wind and passionate, he is Kāmadeva—the God of Love, himself. This completes the formation of the four main sacred seats common to all traditions.⁵¹

The god goes on to talk of a fifth sacred seat (associated with the Kula of Mātāṅga) which is located in the northern part of Lake Nīla in the forest of Mahocchuśma, located in Madhyadeśa. The whole universe is generated from it. This sacred seat is said to be located in the middle, above the sacred seat of Kāma. It is filled with three streams (*srotas*), and so the

⁴⁶Alternatively, a *vanapallikā* may be a small village in the jungle.

⁴⁷uḍḍitā yena āṅgribyān teneḍam uḍḍiyānakam | KMT 2/40cd.

⁴⁸*Ibid.* 2/40-9.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* 2/50-63ab.

⁵⁰*Ibid.* 2/63cd-81.

⁵¹*Ibid.* 2/82-100.

goddess there is Trisrotā and her form is that of a river.⁵² Presumably, this place is the Trisrota referred to previously.

The goddess then goes to the eight places where the Eight Mothers (*mātṛkā*) are located (see Map 7). Not only Tantric meeting grounds (*saṃdoha*) but also sacred bathing places (*tīrtha*) are created wherever the goddess goes and casts her gaze. The virgin goddess—Kumārikā—thus spreads her fame throughout the land of Bhārata, so that it becomes a veritable part of the goddess (*kumārikākhaṇḍa*).⁵³

Once she has completed her journey around India she can unite with the god. We are told that this takes place repeatedly. The god of the previous lineage gives the goddess the command to travel around India, and then when she returns to the same place she couples with the god who is the Great Lord of Oḍra (Orissa?). He again tells her to travel around India and then to return to the sacred seat of Uḍḍa (Orissa?) where she should create the universe repeatedly countless times. Then the god disappeared in an instant.

It appears at first sight that the goddess is travelling all around India to visit the major Śākta sites. In fact the story of this pilgrimage records, at least from when she reaches Himagahvara, the local replication of pan-Indian sites, especially the most important of them for the Kaula and Bhairava Tantras—the four sacred seats. The phenomenon of replication, which is fundamental to Purāṇic sacred geography, is no less so in its Tantric counterpart. Thus the goddess reveals various aspects of herself in the places she visits and thereby replicates the location where this aspect is present in the macrocosmic India. She also infuses the local goddess with her power as the Great Pan-Indian Goddess and so, as the Śakti of śakti, she becomes her essential nature. Another important feature of her colonizing tour is the hierogamies that take place in the individual places with aspects of the male deity, embodied in the adept who resides there. These unions, which are the source of the spiritual power of these places, generate the goddess's spiritual offspring, who form what the texts variously call a household (*grha*), lineage (*anvaya*, *santati*) or clan (*gotra*) through which the teaching is transmitted.

A further development in the definition of the location of these places took place in the *Ṣaṣṭhasrasaṃhitā*, where they are projected onto the head. This has been graphically represented in Figure 4. Worth noting is the position of the four major sacred seats, Uḍḍiyāna (also called Uḍra) in the ears, Jālandhara in the mouth, Pūrṇagiri in the uvula and Kāmarūpa in the eyes. This is because, the Tantra tells us, these four seats manifest when the goddess wishes to hear, speak, thrive and see, respectively. Sacred place is thus interiorized into the cognitive processes and metabolism. Two rivers flow from the Mahocchuṣma Forest located in the Cavity of Brahmā at the top of the head into the two lakes represented by the eyes. Above the Cavity of Brahmā is an inverted pyramid that resonates with a series of energies culminating with the Transmental (*unmanī*) at the base of the pyramid. Thus the rivers that flow from the Cavity of Brahmā represent the flow of spiritualizing energy that vitalizes sight.

⁵²*Ibid.* 2/101-11.

⁵³*Ibid.* 2/118.

The culmination of this sacred geography is the upper triangle that forms the base of the pyramid, (see Fig. 5). This triangle is significantly equated with a place called Candrapura, which the texts tell us is the "home of the Paścima (i.e. Kubjikā Tantra)" (*paścimagrha*), and so is represented as the Vulva (*yonī*) of the goddess which is this tradition (*paścimāmnāya*) itself. This interiorized representation of place is typical of the innumerable references to Candrapura, variously interiorized and otherwise used as a key symbol in the Kubjikā Tantras. The triangle emanates a circle called the Seat of Yoga (*yogapīṭha*), and this latter is identified with the main Maṇḍala of the Kubjikā Tantras, namely, the Saṁvartāmaṇḍala. This is an interiorization of two locations. One is Candraparvata (the Mountain of the Moon) and the other is Candradvīpa (the Island of the Moon). Candraśīlā (the Moon Rock) is in the centre and within it is Candraguhā (the Cave of the Moon). All these "places"—mountain, island, rock, and cave—are linked with the goddess.

No less frequent is the association the later Kubjikā Tantras make between the goddess and the land of Koṅkaṇa.⁵⁴ This is a long strip of land along the western coast of India known as the Western Ghāṭs (see Map 2) that includes, in its southern part, the area nowadays familiar as Goa. Candrapura, located in the north of this region, was for several hundred years, up to the middle of the 11th century, the capital of Koṅkana. This place is now called Chandor and is located in what is now west-central Mahārāṣṭra.

We know of another Candrapura that fits the description found in the earliest Kubjikā Tantra, the *Kubjikāmata*. This was an important town in what is now the Garwal district of the western Himalaya. Not far from it is a mountain called Candraparvata (the Mountain of the Moon) which the Kubjikā Tantras frequently relate to the goddess.⁵⁵ Moreover, the erratic identification of these places at times with Candradvīpa, further confuses the picture. Candradvīpa is an island in the Bay of Bengal well known as the place where, according to a myth familiar to most early Kaula schools,⁵⁶ including the Kubjikā Tantras, Matsyendranātha overheard Śiva teaching Kaula doctrine to his consort. The similarity of these names, the prestige of these places and the strong lunar qualities of the goddess may have combined to create a composite mythical location made up of the combined replication of these three places. Despite the confusion created by the possible incorporation of more than one physical location into the mythical characterization of Candrapura, it would make sense if the places mentioned in the goddess's local tour, especially the part in which the four sacred seats are replicated, were to be in a (possibly extensive) region around the ancient Candrapura in the Garhwal district. This is more likely than the area around Chandor because the former location is the one that corresponds best to the description found in the *Kubjikāmata* which is the earliest text containing an account of the goddess's tour. Perhaps a study of the local *Māhātmyas* of this area will confirm this hypothesis.

⁵⁴Thus, for example, the Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* declares:

Again, the Mother known as Kamalā (Lotus) descended (to earth) in Koṅkaṇa. That, indeed, is authority made clearly manifest in Koṅkaṇa. (KuKh 17/43cd-44)

⁵⁵See Dyczkowski 2001.

⁵⁶See introduction to Bagchi 1934.

But whether these places can be located or not, the fact that the projections onto the head taught by the *Ṣaṣṣāhasrasamhitā* produce the forced symmetry they do is an indication of the original, external existence of these places. Thus compare and contrast the projection of the four main sacred seats along the axis of the body up to the neck,⁵⁷ prescribed by the *Kubjikāmata*. This is a perfectly symmetrical arrangement—which is certainly because it is purely ideal. One could hazard to say that, for the *Ṣaṣṣāhasrasamhitā*, the body serves as the locus of projection for the pan-Indian macrocosm and the head for its localized replication. Perhaps because the latter was no longer functional by the time of the redaction of the *Ṣaṣṣāhasrasamhitā* or because the cult had spread from its place of origin, the author of the *Ṣaṣṣāhasrasamhitā* chose to internalize it. He thus integrated the local geography into the overall system of interiorization of its macrocosmic counterpart that had already taken place in the *Kubjikāmata* tantra.

Despite the thoroughness with which the sites and all that had to do with pilgrimage had been internalized, until the 10th century (the possible time of the redaction of the *Kubjikāmata* tantra), if not later, the injunction to actually visit these places was not modified. The following passage from a *Kubjikā* Tantra not only encourages the worship of the sacred seats, which can be done anywhere, it tells us of the fruits of visiting them in the standard style of pilgrimage texts:

*He who constantly worships the sequence of the sacred seats that has come down through the sequence of the lineage, having known it thus, is himself Bhairava directly apparent. He who does the round of the sacred seats, whether he be a teacher (ācārya) or an adept (sādhaka), is liberated. He is Śiva directly apparent, he is (a true) member of the lineage and the best of teachers. By resorting countless times to the sacred seats, all sins are destroyed whether one has committed brahminicide a thousand times (or even) if one has killed a myriad cows. So one should worship the four seats at all times. The desire of one (who does) so becomes an accomplishment (siddhi) and he is dear to the yoginīs.*⁵⁸

That the injunction to visit these places should be taken literally is further reinforced by the warning that follows that the adept who goes or resides in these places should not be proud.⁵⁹

⁵⁷KMT 14/7-11 says that this standard set of four places is located in the body as follows: 1) Uḍḍiyāna—(the genitals?) below the navel 2) Jālandhara—stomach 3) Pūrṇagiri—heart and 4) Kāmarūpa—throat. The *Ciñcīṇimatasārasamuccaya*, a late middle period *Kubjikā* Tantra, illustrates the ease with which it is possible to produce a symmetrical projection of the sacred seats onto the face. The method, the Tantra tells us, is drawn from the *Siddhayogēśvarīmata*, a prime authority for the Trika Tantrism Abhinavagupta expounds in the *Tantrāloka*. This Tantra, in this case at least, substitutes Omkārapīṭha (i.e. Omkāreśvara in modern Madhyapradeśa) for Uḍḍiyāna. As the projection requires the simultaneous display of ritual gestures (*mudrā*) it cannot be brought about by touching the respective parts of the body, as is usually done. Instead, the Tantra prescribes that one must look at these locations, that is, visualize them there, in a manner reminiscent of how the goddess sacralizes sites by the energy of her gaze.

The four sacred seats are located in the head as follows: 1) Omkāra—mouth 2) Jāla—right ear 3) Pūrṇa—left ear 4) Kāmarūpa—tip of the nose (CCMS 7/34). In this way a triangle is projected onto the face with Kāmarūpa in the centre.

⁵⁸KuKh 6/191-4.

⁵⁹*The hero who has entered Uḍḍiyāna and cultivates pride (there) will become poor and die; (indeed) he will live (barely) for a month. A robber, river or terrible disease will kill the deluded soul who is given to pride in Jālandhara. He will live for (only) six months and then will die along with his relatives. Or, again, he who despises (others) in Pūrṇapīṭha or is proud will die by fire or else he will die in the fifth month in a fierce battle. An unseen hammer falls on the head of one who, seated comfortably in Kāmarūpa, acts proudly. His body will*

Peregrination to the sacred places is variously termed. It may be simply called a "wandering" (*aṭana*, *bhramaṇa*). This may be associated with the pious wandering of the renunciate ascetic in search of alms (*bhikṣātana*)⁶⁰ and, especially, begging for alms in the eight sacred Kaula places listed below. Accordingly, these places are called "sacred seats of peregrination" (*aṭanapīṭha*). They are also the residences of goddesses, accomplished adepts and Tantric partners who are represented as low-caste women or close female relatives. From this point of view they are called "houses" (*gr̥ha*, *ghara*, *veśman*). Thus, according to the Kubjikā Tantras, the eight major Kaula sacred sites each have a house occupied by a woman of low caste who is identified with a Mother (*Mātṛkā*), as recorded in the following table⁶¹ and plotted on Map 7. The second entry in bold records the identifications made by the *Mādhavakula* and the *Devyāyāmala*, both Kālī Tantras that prescribe the worship of Kālasaṅkarṣaṇī as the supreme form of Kālī.⁶²

- 1) Prayāga—prostitute (*veśyā*), **sweeper** (*mātāṅgī*)—Brahmāṇī—navel
- 2) Varāṇā⁶³—liquor seller (*śuṇḍinī*), **collyrium girl** (*kajjalī*)—Māheśvarī (Śāṅkarī)—heart
- 3) Kollā⁶⁴—fisherwoman (*kaivartī*), **butcher woman** (*saunī*)—Kaumārī—throat
- 4) Aṭṭahāsa—chalk miner woman (*khaṭṭikā*), **passionate woman** (*kāmukī*)⁶⁵—Vaiṣṇavī—palate
- 5) Jayantikā—ball-making woman (*kaṇḍukī*), **leather worker** (*carmakāriṇī*)—Vārāhī—drop
- 6) Caritra—washerwoman (*rajakī*), **liquor seller** (*dhvajinī*)—Indrāṇī—sound
- 7) Ekāmra—sculptress (*śilpinī*), **bone crusher woman** (*asthividāriṇī*)—Cāmuṇḍā—the place of power (*śaktisthāna*)
- 8) Devīkoṭa⁶⁶—outcaste woman (*antyaajā*), **fisherwoman** (*dhīvarī*)—Mahālakṣmī⁶⁷—teacher's mouth⁶⁸

dry up and he will die in the middle of the lunar fortnight. The teacher, O handsome one, who has been proud will go to hell. (KuKh 6/196-201)

⁶⁰KuKh 16/1-2.

⁶¹The identifications of the resident low-caste women (who are referred to as goddesses) with the Eight Mothers (*Mātṛkā*) is according to KuKh 16/13-5. The identification of these female beings with the Mothers may not be an original part of the teachings of the Kubjikā Tantras. There are several places in the Kubjikā Tantras where these eight places with their low-caste residents are listed as a group, with occasional variants, without associating them with the Mothers. This is the case in the *Kubjikāmata* (25/90-5ab), which is certainly the oldest of the Kubjikā Tantras and also, for example, in KuKh 14/78-80. The later source supplies the inner equivalents (*adyātma*). Note also that this identification is not made in the *Mādhavakula* and *Devyāyāmala*.

⁶²Quoted in TĀ 29/66-7.

⁶³The quotation in the printed edition of the *Tantrāloka* lists Varuṇā as the name of this place. This may well be an editorial error for Varāṇā. Referring to this place, the KuKh declares that "Varāṇā is in Vārāṇasī" (16/17). Thus we can safely identify this place with Vārāṇasī not Varuṇā, which is site number 46 in Map 1.

⁶⁴This place is Kollāgiri. The edition of the *Tantrāloka* reads Kulāgiri.

⁶⁵The edition of the *Tantrāloka* reads *kārmukī*.

⁶⁶The KuKh calls this place Koṭīvaṛṣa, as does KMT (25/94). This is an alternative name for Devīkoṭa (also spelt Devīkoṭja).

⁶⁷There is an extra ninth entry according to the *Mādhavakula* and the *Devyāyāmala*. This is Haimapura, where the oil-grinding woman (*cakriṇī*) resides. As the "mistress of the wheels" she is appropriately identified

It is a matter of great interest, known only to a few learned initiates, that this set of eight, as presented in the Kubjikā Tantras, is worshipped regularly by Newar Kaula initiates. This they do both in their secret domestic rites and outside in sites situated around the Kathmandu Valley and large urban areas. A representative example of this replication is the circle of Mothers that surround Bhaktapur (see Map 8). Although we cannot be sure how long this sacred geography has been in place, tradition ascribes its establishment to King Ananda Malla, who probably ruled Bhaktapur in the fourteenth century.⁶⁹ The reader is referred to published studies for details.⁷⁰ Suffice it to say for our present purpose that the individual Mothers are represented by icons kept in special temples (*dyāḥchem*) and by stones in sites called *pīṭha* situated around the border of Bhaktapur. A New Year festival that takes place once a year in April serves, amongst other things, to commemorate the founding of the city of Bhaktapur. The founding of the city in this case effectively means the establishment of its sacred geography, of which the circle of Mothers is one of its cardinal features. Amongst several other important events that take place in the nine days the festival lasts is the installation of both the icons of the Mothers and the re-affirmation, by the same token, of their presence in the stones. Now, although the worship of groups of Eight Mothers is a common feature of most if not all the Tantric systems of the Kaula and Bhairava Tantras, their exact configuration in the form listed above is peculiar to the Kubjikā Tantras. The secret liturgies of many, if not all, of the Kaula traditions (*āmnāya*) in Bhaktapur take this set with these particular eight low-caste women associated with them as the standard format in which the Mothers are worshipped. This is true of the Newar Śrīvidyā liturgies even though the root Tantras of this school know nothing of these identifications. It is true also for forms of Kālī Newar initiates worship, such as Guhyakālī and the cult of Siddhalakṣmī. The former was, in any case, absorbed early on into the Kubjikā cult, as I have already noted elsewhere. If any doubt remains that the Eight Mothers of Bhaktapur are derived from the Kubjikā Tantras, the identification is confirmed by the fact that while the Mothers are being installed, one a night, on the border of the outer civic space, the principal goddesses on whom the Mothers attend are worshipped in the royal palace as the deities of the king, the state and the people. As one would expect, these goddesses include, in a prominent manner, the tutelary of the Malla kings, Siddhalakṣmī. Indeed, the secret rite performed in the royal palace on the main day of the festival which mirrors the erection a large pole (*yasiñ*) in a public place in Bhaktapur culminates with the erection of a flag pole and flag (*dvaṣārohaṇa*) to the goddess Siddhalakṣmī. Even so, the main goddess worshipped secretly in the course of this secret rite is Kubjikā. Accordingly, the Mothers who are her attendants in the Tantras are those who are worshipped as her attendants in the city of Bhaktapur. This is symbolized by the collocation of the goddess Tripurā in the centre of the circle, thus marking the "true" (i.e. esoteric) centre of town. Although the public worship Tripurā there in the form of an aniconic stone as

with Kuṇḍalinī. More specifically, she is Kālasaṃkarṣaṇī who, as the Mistress of Kula (*kuleśvartī*), is worshipped in the centre either alone, with her consort or even independently of the eight listed above. Although the references quoted in the *Tantrāloka* do not tell us this specifically, the eight may also be identified with the Eight Mothers who surround Kālasaṃkarṣaṇī represented by her 17-syllabled mantra.

⁶⁸Alternative inner maps of these eight places and the projection of the Eight Mothers onto the body drawn from the *Śrīmatottara*, which is a Kubjikā Tantra, and the *Śrīkāmākyahyugyāsiddhi* have been published by Dehejia 1986: 48.

⁶⁹See Levy 1992: 489f.

⁷⁰See, for example, *ibid.*: 464-500.

a ninth Mother, initiates know that this is the place where initiates worship their own lineage goddess, who may or may not be Tripurā.⁷¹

Here then we have a fine example of the replication of Tantric sacred geography mediated by its initial interiorization in the domestic rites of the Newar Kaulas. We may note here one of the important functions of interiorization, namely that, once the initiate has interiorized a sacred geography, he can transport it within himself. Then, if his cult receives the necessary patronage, which occurs when, for example, a king becomes an initiate, he can project it outside.⁷² In this case *this* projection makes the foundation of the civic space a mesocosmic replication of Kaula geography. Thus it allows Newar initiates the possibility of visiting these places, as did their Indian Kaula ancestors. This example serves to demonstrate the need for the continuing existence of such places in the outer, public domain. Not only do the Mothers serve as demarcators and protectors of the sacralized civic space, it also makes the pilgrimage to their sacred sites possible. And the citizens of Bhaktapur do in fact do this on the occasion of the New Year's festival and the nine-day worship in autumn of Durgā, who is the public identity of each Kaula goddess.

The pilgrimage to such places, whether by Newars in their towns or by their predecessors in India, is undertaken as a vow (*vrata*). The pilgrimage can be interiorized as a possible alternative to its actual performance. When this happens it is called the Vow of Knowledge (*vidyāvra*). The *Kubjikāmatatantra* declares that, "he who practises the Vow (*vrata*) and internalizes what is external achieves success (*siddhi*)."⁷³ The practice of the vow is living in accord with one's basic state of being (*bhāva*); this is why the Tantra says that it is called the Vow of Knowledge. This basic state of being is full of awareness, through which the perceptible is discerned in the course of cognition, and so the power of consciousness is awakened.⁷⁴ The application and development of this awareness through spiritual discipline and its continued maintenance in daily life, which is manifest in adherence to the rules of right spiritual conduct, is to live in accord with one's inner being, which is the internal Vow of Knowledge. As the Tantra says:

⁷¹Newar initiates frequently worship their own esoteric deities in place of the public ones. The public deity is venerated as the surface onto which the esoteric deity is projected and worshipped in secret. Notable examples of this phenomenon is the worship of the main Bhairava in Bhaktapur as Kubjikā, Paśupati as Śikhāvachhanda Bhairava, and his consort Guhyakālī as the goddess embodying the weapon (*astra*) of the goddess Kubjikā.

⁷²One of the many examples of this phenomenon can be seen in the temple of Śarīvara/Bde-mchog in Tsaparang. Tucci (1989: 43-5) has described this temple, which contains detailed frescos of the maṇḍalas of the Śarīvara cycle of the Buddhist Anuttarayoga Tantra. On one of the walls there are three maṇḍalas representing the body, speech and mind of the enlightened adept. They are squares, on the sides of each of which are represented eight sacred Vajrayāna sites in India. These sites correspond to those plotted on Map 9. Just as these sacred sites were transported to Tsaparang in this way, they travelled wherever Śarīvara was worshipped, including the entire Himalayan region. Thus Tucci remarks that "now all these places are [found] through Zanskar, Kashmir, Kulu, the districts of Hazara and Swat" (*ibid.*: 43). They were not only transposed in this way from place to place but were also internalized as the parameters of the adept's body, speech and mind. And, by means of another reversal, they marked spots of the giant body of the enlightened adept projected onto the landscape.

⁷³KMT 25/121.

⁷⁴*Ibid.* 25/38.

*Meditation, worship, the repetition of Mantra, the fire sacrifice and the practice of the Rule (samayācaraṇa)—this is said to be the Vow of Knowledge. The external vow is not the best.*⁷⁵
Again:

*These places (sthāna) I have mentioned are within the inner (Supreme) Self (adyātma) and are grounded in the individual soul. The eternal (Self), residing in the Wheel of the Heart, wanders constantly within them. As long as (a person) does not attain the inner teaching (adyātmanirṇaya) concerning the sacred seats, how can he have success (siddhi) even if he wanders (throughout) the triple universe?*⁷⁶

But the Kubjikā Tantras do not prescribe the elimination of the outer sacred sites or outer pilgrimage. Though the outer pilgrimage is fruitless without the inner, it serves a necessary function for those who are not yet fully developed.⁷⁷ In order to achieve success both the internal and external vows should be practised together.⁷⁸ As the Tantra says: "Both the inner and outer aspects have an inner and outer condition."⁷⁹

One of the major aims of this vow coincides with that of the performance of penitential vows in general, including those suggested by the Dharmaśāstras, namely, the purification of the individual from sin. According to the Kubjikā Tantras, this purification leads to liberation, just as the performance of the vow in itself gives the adept magical and yogic power—*siddhi*. In order to understand the outer form of this and other such vows in a larger perspective, we should have to retrace its history right back to Vedic times and Vedic sacrifices which demanded the observance of a range of vows on the part of the patron of the sacrifice (*yajamāna*) and his officiants. For the specifically Śaiva historical precedents, we would first have to turn to the (Lakulīśa) *Paśupatasūtras* belonging to the 3rd century. Then we would need to examine the Śaivasiddhānta Āgamas that followed after. We could then proceed on to the Bhairava Tantras, which logically and in actual fact (some parts of them at least) were the immediate historical predecessors of the Kaula Tantras. These texts contain prescriptions for numerous vows (*vrata*). The unedited *Brahmayāmala* is an example of a Bhairava Tantra that is especially rich in this respect. The important and likewise unedited Kālī-centred *Jayadrathayāmala* also lists many such vows. These include the Vow of Madness (*unmattavrata*), the Vow of Nakedness (*nagnavrata*), the Vow to Be Transvestite (*strīveśadharavrata*), the Vow to Wear Red Clothes (*raktaveśadharavrata*), and many more, including the most famous of all, the Great Vow (*mahāvrata*). This vow requires that the ascetic wander constantly from place to place imitating Bhairava's penance for having severed one of Brahmā's heads. He should wear six insignia, namely, a necklace (*kuṅṭhikā*), neck ornament (*rucaka*), earrings (*kuṅḍala*), crest-jewel (*śikhāmaṇi*), ashes (*bhasma*) and a

⁷⁵KuKh 14/22cd-23ab.

⁷⁶*Ibid.* 14/80cd-82ab.

⁷⁷Accordingly, a Kubjikā Tantra succinctly states: "The external sacred seats have been revealed in order to (instill) devotion in the (common) people." (KuKh 14/83ab)

⁷⁸*One who has thus performed the internal and external vow, (practised right) conduct and (applied the spiritual) means (sādhana), has success (siddhi). O god, (this is) the truth, without a doubt.* (*Ibid.* 14/99cd-100ab)

⁷⁹*Ibid.* 14/82cd.

sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*). Most important of all is the skull he should carry. The ascetics who observed this vow were accordingly called Kāpālikas ('Skull Bearers').

The *Brahmayāmala*⁸⁰ has been described as a Kāpālika Tantra. This is partly because the form of the cult it prescribes is relatively literal and undomesticated. In particular, it devotes lengthy passages to a description of the aforementioned insignias, above all to the skull. The Kubjikā and other Kaula traditions were close descendants of such cults, and many traces of their connection remain. Thus the Kubjikā Tantras prescribe five rather than six insignias and omit the infamous skull. They also admit the wandering life. Thus a Kubjikā Tantra says:

Adorned with (the sacred insignias),⁸¹ the recitor of Mantra, taking (each sacred) field (kṣetra) as a refuge, should wander (from one to the other and within them. These places include), in due order, a cremation ground, (a deserted) forest, (an abandoned) well (or) garden, an auspicious temple, an empty palace, the peak of a mountain, a crossroad of four roads, one of three roads, village roads, the seashore, the bank of the confluence of rivers or, O sinless one, (a desert where there is only) a solitary tree or (where there is just) a single liṅga or (any) fearful (caṇḍa) (sacred) field.⁸²

Abhinava, who belonged to the 11th century, systematically expounded a possible pattern of total interiorization of such sites and, indeed, all Tantric ritual. The reason why this is possible and should be realized is in every case the same, namely, everything is a manifestation of consciousness within consciousness, like a reflection in a mirror. Thus as long as this has not been realized rituals and pilgrimages may be performed "but," as Abhinava says, "for one who sees that all this rests primarily in the body, the inner vital breath and in consciousness, what use are these other outer deluding peregrinations (*bhramaṇaḍambara*)?"⁸³

Worship at sacred sites does not lead to liberation, even if they have been internalized. Even if they are projected onto the body, or, deeper, into the vital breath, they remain external to consciousness. Nonetheless, Abhinava does not deny that pilgrimage may be beneficial, in the sense that it does yield some fruit, namely, the specific benefits and accomplishments (*siddhi*), magical and yogic, that each of these places and its resident deities is supposed to

⁸⁰It is worth noting in passing that the *Brahmayāmala* recommends that the neophyte take initiation in a cremation ground in Vārāṇasī confirming the connection of this now, dominantly, Purāṇic city with the early Bhairava and Śākta cults. See Dyczkowski 1988: 6.

⁸¹The sacred circle shown to the neophyte in the course of his initiation into the cult of the *Brahmayāmala* is to be drawn in a cremation ground with the ashes of a cremated human corpse. In it are worshipped Yakṣas, Piśācas and other demonic beings, including Rākṣasas led by Rāvaṇa, who surround Bhairava to whom wine is offered with oblations of beef and human flesh prepared in a funeral pyre. The name of the circle is the 'Great Cremation Ground' (*mahāśmaśāna*) and is to be drawn in Vārāṇasī." (See also *ibid.*: 30).

⁸²The KMT (25/43) explains that the five insignias are the Five Instruments (*kaṛaṇa*). These are the five deities who generate, sustain and withdraw the five gross elements, namely, Brahmā (Earth), Viṣṇu (Water), Śiva (Fire), Rudra (Air), and Mahēśvara (Etheric Space).

⁸³KuKh 14/29cd-32ab.

⁸⁴TĀ 15/100b-1a.

bestow.⁸⁴ These, however, are a part of worldly enjoyment (*bhoga*) rather than the liberated condition.⁸⁵ Even so Abhinava does not reject external ritual. Pilgrimage to sacred sites, like all ritual and yogic practice, are part of a hierarchy of possibilities depending on the spiritual development of the aspirant.⁸⁶ Moreover, going to places where spiritual people gather is conducive to the practice of Yoga and therefore to the acquisition of spiritual knowledge.⁸⁷ Even so, he denies that places have any inherent power in themselves. One may worship successfully wherever the lotus of the heart of consciousness unfolds.⁸⁸

While the Kubjikā Tantras agree that for this, or any, spiritual discipline to be effective, its interior equivalent must be experienced, they do not deny the existence of the power of place (*sthānaśakti*). According to this theory, the rays of the deity's consciousness converge in certain places by virtue of these places' inherent power. This convergence and formation in this way of a location where the deity may descend into the world is essential because no worship is possible in the absence of location. Each deity, whether in the outside world or within the body, must have a place of its own. This place, which serves as the sacred seat and field of the deity, is where union (*melāpa*) with the deity takes place. Consuming a sacrificial meal of meat and wine, the adept receives the grace of the deity of that place which is thus no less sacred than the deity itself.

In a more archaic, magical perspective, such places were originally believed to be potent in themselves, and this potency could be channelled and applied. Indeed, the Tantras prescribe the practice of magical rites aimed at the control of others and the destruction of one's enemies in these same places. Abhinava's warning against attachment to the practice of magic⁸⁹ recalls to mind the large amount of space dedicated to such matters in the Tantras in general and most particularly in ones such as these. The passages are eloquent testimony of

⁸⁴Abhinava writes: "Thus all these places, internal and external, concern (only) those who wish to obtain the fruits of this or that Wheel (*cakra*). According to the (Śaiva) scripture these places (*sthāna*) are diverse and without number" TĀ 15/101b-2a.

⁸⁵Abhinava writes: "Mountain tops, riverbanks, solitary liṅgas and the like mentioned (in the Tantras) are external (places). Here (in this doctrine) they serve (as a means to attain) particular accomplishments, not for liberation. Mountain peaks and the like, projected into the vital breath within the body serve as a means for (Tantric) practitioners (*sādhaka*) to gain accomplishments (*siddhi*) not for liberation" (TĀ 15/80b-2a).

⁸⁶Abhinava quotes the *Mataṅgatantra* as saying that "This prescription to ritual action (*vidhāna*) is an easy means (*sukhopāya*) which the teacher explains to those who are unable to contemplate (the true liberating) knowledge" (TĀ 15/8). Therefore, initiation (*dikṣā*), Tantric spiritual discipline (*caryā*) and concentration (*samādhi*) are for those who are unable to attain reality directly by knowledge. Even so, initiation and the rest are based on knowledge and so, according to Abhinava, the man of knowledge (*jñānin*), rather than the one who performs rituals, or even the yogi, is the most excellent. Similarly, he says that teachers are of increasing orders of excellence according to whether they are proficient in the performance of rituals, Yoga or knowledge (TĀ 15/18-9).

⁸⁷*Ibid.* 15/98b-100a.

⁸⁸Abhinava writes: "The wealth of the sacrifice (*yāgaśrī*) is well established in that place (*dhāman*), whether internal or external, where the lotus of the heart blooms (*vikāsa*). Liberation is not (attained) in any other way except by severing the knot of ignorance and that, according to the venerable Virāvalī Tantra, is (brought about) by the expansion (*vikāsa*) of consciousness" (*ibid.* 15/107b-9a).

⁸⁹*andrajālikavṛttānte na rajyeta kadācana | ibid.* 14/26a.

the primitive animistic and magical substratum of the religious culture out of which they developed as more elevated refinements—literally “sanskritizations.” One of these refinements is the incorporation of the ideal of liberation as a part of this geography of magical power places where the adept acquires powers, including the Great Accomplishment (*mahāsiddhi*), namely, liberation. The culmination of this process of refinement was not the addition of a totally different, higher ideal, but rather its interiorization. These Tantras did not teach, as did Abhinava, that liberation and the attainment of accomplishment (*siddhi*) are contrasting ideals belonging to different realms. On the contrary, the Kubjikā Tantras say that:

If one perceives the pure inner aspect with the mind, O beloved, then the subtle rays (of the light of the Supreme Principle) within each external thing bestow union (melaka), the sacrificial pap (caru) or the liberated state (apāśavīdhi). They endow the lineage (with the teachings) and explain the self-established (reality—svastha). O god, he who wanders on the earth with an impure inner being does not, for that reason, have a vision (of the deity—darśana) anywhere through me, O Rudra. Although he sees, he sees not; although (reality is) perceivable, it is not perceived. He cannot know (the rays of consciousness which are) the goddesses of various kinds.⁹⁰

[. . .] *(The rays arise) in town, village, forest, city or crossroad, peasant's hut, Tantric meeting ground (saṁdoha), sacred seat (pīṭha), field, grove, garden, small grove or in (any of the other) aforementioned (places). (Indeed), the rays of consciousness (jñāna) arise in every single place. O fair-hipped one, they are innumerable within earth or in water, fire, wind, and air.⁹¹*

Thus the aspirant is admonished to be a pilgrim. But along with his outer pilgrimage he must learn to travel through his own body along the conduits of the vital force to their vital centres. This is his inner journey through the world orders arranged as stations along his ascent to freedom. He must travel through the universe—the Egg of Brahmā. Then when he reaches the top he will find Daṇḍapāṇi who with his staff cracks open the Egg for him to ascend up beyond it.⁹² The accomplished adept is one who is free to move at will (*svecchācarin*) throughout the cosmic order⁹³ and move beyond it. Thus, the Tantras envisage an end to the initiate's cosmic wayfaring. The universe is not a closed system, reality extends beyond it, for otherwise there could be no freedom from the cosmic order. There is no break between the realms of worldly experience (*bhoga*) and those of the liberated state. Even beyond the cosmic order, at the very summit of reality (*parā kāṣṭhā*), movement does not cease. But the perfected initiate (*siddha*) no longer needs to suffer the strains of a long and tiring journey. No longer held fast by the forces of attraction to the glorious diversity (*vicitratā*) of the cosmic order, he is free to take flight. No longer wandering in the complex net of Māyā with its countless locations and times, he moves through the Sky of Pure Consciousness. This then

⁹⁰KuKh 14/83cd-87ab.

⁹¹Ibid. 14/89f.

⁹²Paraphrasing the *Svacchandatantra* Abhinava writes: “Above Rudra's abode is (the abode of) of Daṇḍapāṇi who, in accord with Śiva's will, breaks the egg and fashions the path to liberation” (TĀ 8/159b-60, see also SvT 10/611b-4).

⁹³ŚM fol. 137b: bhramate ca yathecchayā ābrahmabhuvanāntikam |

is the ideal of the early Bhairava Tantras and, especially, the Kaula (Śākta) Tantra, namely, the Accomplishment of Flight (*khecavatvasiddhi*).⁹⁴

The Siddhas and Yoginīs who reside in the sacred places in the Triangle are all Skyfarers. They move in the Void of the Yoni, nourishing themselves with the nectar of immortality that exudes from it. They are one with the energy that "wanders in the Sky" (*khecari*). As the energy of Speech she vitalizes all the phonemic energies that combine in infinite variety. As each of them is a sacred place, she is not only the Nameless (*anāmā*) Letter but also Place (*sthāna*); what the text calls the divine inner Place that is one's own place (*svasthāna*).⁹⁵

Abhinava, in accord with his hermeneutic, provides a more sophisticated phenomenological interpretation. The energy that "wanders in the Void" is the reflective awareness of the light of consciousness that shines as all things. This energy wanders amidst the objects of the senses and they thus become objects of perception. By extension, this same power is responsible for the subjective responses to the object, namely, attraction or repulsion. Thus, this energy consists of both the inner and outer senses as well as their objects.⁹⁶ The Skyfarer is one with this energy. Thus, whatever she or he sees becomes a divine manifestation of consciousness. We are reminded here of one of the modalities through which the goddess generates sacred place, that is, by her powerful and gracious gaze.⁹⁷

⁹⁴According to the Kubjikā Tantras, the fruits of travelling to the sites of the Eight Mothers with the prescribed inner mindfulness are indeed, as Abhinava says of all such pilgrimages, the acquisition of various magical and yogic powers (*siddhi*). These are attained over years of practice in a graded order until the final one is attained, which is the Accomplishment of Flight. Even though it comes at the end of a graded series of worldly attainments, this culminating accomplishment is not worldly (*bhoga*), but liberation itself. Ideally, the KMT tells us that in this particular case, this takes place in twelve years when "even a brahminicide" achieves success. In the first year he gains political power. The king and his harem come under his control and the king's vassal lords and ministers venerate him. In two years he gains power over the fair damsels of the spirits of vegetation (*yakṣakanyā*). In three years, the women of the demons of the seven hells are so aroused by the adept that they literally die in their yearning for him. In the following years he attains the higher worlds, starting with that of Brahṁā up to that of Rudra. In the eighth year he reaches that of Íśvara, in the ninth that of Sadāśīva and in the tenth he becomes a veritable repository of knowledge. By the eleventh year, he can sport in the sky with the mighty beings who reside there, and in the twelfth, endowed with all eight yogic powers, he moves with the Skyfarers in the Firmament of Pure Consciousness beyond the sky (KMT 25/53-64ab).

⁹⁵*Khecari* is the letter Without Name (*anāmā*). The series of letters from A to KṢ are the sleeping form of bliss radiant like the Wish-granting Gem, the whole extent of which is Kula Bhairava. It is the Place (*sthāna*), the divine inner Place which is one's own place (*svasthāna*) that has emerged from OM. It is bliss whose body is invisible (*adṛṣṭa*). The pure transcendent tradition (*anvaya*). This is the teaching concerning the Sequence of the Divine Current (CCMS 1/37ab).

⁹⁶PTv, p. 39

⁹⁷Abhinava arrives at the same creative idealism through an analysis of the more purely Śaiva (rather than Kaula Śākta) spirituality when he says:

"Śīva, the agent of the five functions of emanation, persistence, reabsorption, obscuration and grace, is (our own pure) consciousness. The yogi who is firmly identified with (Śīva) in his fullness and freedom is the author of (these) five functions. For him worship, the repetition of Mantra, contemplation and Yoga are a perennial, undecaying reality" (TĀ 14/24-5).

In this ideal we can perceive a continuity with the ascetic traditions of India that stretch right back to Vedic times. Even the *Rgveda* describes the earliest known ascetics, the munis, who imitated Rudra, the Vedic prototype of Śiva/Bhairava, as Skyfarers:

The Munis, girdled with the wind, wear garments soiled of yellow hue; they, following the wind's swift course, go where the gods have gone before. . . . Wind (vāyu) hath churned for him: for him he poundeth things most hard to bend, when he with long loose locks hath drunk, with Rudra, poison⁹⁸ from the cup.⁹⁹

Conclusion

To conclude and complete the circuit, as it were, let us return back to earth with its physical, cultural and historical geography. At this point a question naturally comes to mind, namely, to what extent are the geographies of these texts realistic? Are these real places or mere names that serve as another set of ciphers the Tantras employ to feed their seemingly limitless appetite for symbolic representation?

A detailed geographical and historical study of each of the places plotted on the maps and listed in the chart appended to this paper is in the course of preparation. This will certainly yield a good deal of information. But we should not be disappointed if we do not find all that we expect. These forms of Tantrism are not well suited to be public religions. Even when internalized, they remain esoteric, private cults that require neither temples nor public, communal festivals. Even so traces do remain in, for example, forms of temple architecture, iconography, literary references, occasional inscriptions, and in the sacred geographies of the Purāṇas that are still in place.

The sacred geography of some traditions, at least, of the Buddhist Yoga and Anuttara class of Tantras of the same period coincided in many respects with that of the Bhairava and Kaula Tantras (see Map 9). It is not surprising therefore that the Tantras and commentaries on both Buddhist and Śaiva-cum-Śākta sides of the fence contain admonitions to stay clear of one another if encounters happen to take place in such sites. Vajrayāna Buddhists who have been initiated into the Yoga and Anuttarayoga Tantras, which have been the most influenced by Śaivism, call themselves Kaulas. The Hindu Kaula Tantras¹⁰⁰ call them "Bauddhakaula." The Buddhists, however, considered themselves to be superior to their Śaiva counterparts because they maintained that, unlike the Śaivites, they found internal symbolic equivalents for the elements of Kaula ritual, including the sacred geography. The distance both parties feel should be maintained between each other is a measure of their similarity. Indeed, there are numerous details such as these that confirm their common cultural heritage that, at its grass roots, one could call the culture of the vagrant ascetic and the sacred seats.¹⁰¹ These

⁹⁸Griffith: water

⁹⁹Rg 10/136/2,7 translation by Griffith.

¹⁰⁰The KMT 100/146a expressly says: varjayet kaulikān bauddhān "one should avoid the Buddhist Kaulas."

¹⁰¹The KMT declares: "One should know that that is Kula which graces everybody. Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, the last born and those without caste (*prākṛta*), including sweepers and foreigners (*mlecchajāti*), Buddhists, followers of the Sāṅkhya and Jains, ascetics with three sticks (*tridaṇḍa*), those who shave their

were power places that were felt to have power in themselves, and so it would not be surprising if many of them existed before these Tantric developments.

By the 9th century when, I believe, the earliest Kubjikā Tantra was redacted, the sacred geography of these places had assumed the form of the regular and recurrent pattern of an ideal scheme. But even so, it was still functional. It was, moreover, purely Tantric, that is to say, sanctioned by and recorded in the Tantras. For the followers of the Bhairava and Kaula Tantras, this appears to be a period of transition from the vagrant life of the solitary ascetic to that of the householder. Thus, the group of fifty sacred sites that, as far as we know at present, appears for the first time in the Kubjikā Tantras were simply treated as a standard ideal set. The list appears, as we have noted, in the *Yoginīhrdaya*, where it is already formalized. And it continued to be a popular list long past the days when it could have reflected an objective situation. Thus it recurs in the *Jñānārṇavatānta* and several other Tantric texts¹⁰² throughout the medieval period right up to the 17th-century *Tantrasāra* by the Bengali Kṛṣṇānanda. By his time the original grid of fifty letters was long forgotten. He must have thought the correct number the lucky 51. Thus, he divides one entry—Merugiri—into two, Meru and Giri.

Parallel to these developments in the Tantras are those in the Purāṇas. These sacred texts sanctioned public forms of religion, including the Śāktism that developed from the middle of the first millennium. An early list of 108 sacred sites is found in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.¹⁰³ This list was reproduced in several Purāṇas, including the *Devībhāgavata*, where the sites are called "pīṭhas," a specifically Tantric term (the Purāṇic term is "tīrtha"). One hundred and fifty sites mentioned in Tantras have been plotted on the first ten maps appended to this essay. Twenty-eight of them are amongst the 108 (see Map 11). This is because the sacred geography of the Śākta pīṭhas in the Purāṇas extended its range to include a number of clearly Purāṇic sites. The cluster around Badrinātha on Map 11 is an example. Citrakūta, Gāyā and Vṛndāvana are other notable examples. The myth of origin of these places which relates them to the dismembered parts of Satī's body is not found in the early Tantras. This is all the more surprising because they know the story of Dakṣa's sacrifice and how his daughter, Satī/ Umā, threw herself into the sacrificial fire and died because Śiva, her husband, was not invited to it. The subsequent evolution of the sacred geography of the Śākta pīṭhas thus mirrors the evolution of Śāktism in the Purāṇas as much, if not more, than in the Tantras.

heads, (carry) ascetics' staffs (*khaṭvāṅga*) and clubs (*muṣala*) or perform other rituals (*anyakriyā*)—all these reach the Supreme Śaiva reality. The Śaivite (has reached the goal and so) does not go anywhere" (*ibid.* 10/139-40).

¹⁰²The passage is found in the 15th chapter of the *Jñānārṇavatānta* which postdates the *Yoginīhrdaya*. It recurs in the *Śāktānandatarāṅgini* (chapter 15) by the 17th-century Bengali Brahmananda, who quotes it from the *Gāndharvatānta*. See also chapter 5 of the *Bṛhannīlātānta*.

¹⁰³*Matsya Purāṇa* 13/26-56. Sircar (1973: 25) informs us that: "An early list of this nature can be traced in the *Mahābhārata* (VI, ch. 23); but a complete list of the 108 names of the mother goddess with the specification of her association with particular holy places is probably to be found for the first time in the *Matsya Purāṇa*." Sircar places the text in the "early medieval period," but it may well be quite late. It is certainly not prior to the 12th century. This is because the Purāṇa refers to Vṛndāvana as a resort of Rādhā and to Puruṣottama in Puri. The former was certainly unknown as a divinity before the post-Gupta period. The latter did not attain to eminence prior to Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga (1078-1147 A.D.), who laid the foundation of the great temple of Jagannātha at Puri.

An example of the degree to which this process has progressed is how few have observed that the goddess Mahiṣāsuramardī/Durgā is actually a purely Purāṇic goddess. Prior to the 13th century or even later, the goddess Durgā, although known to the Tantras, plays no significant role in the Tantras' ritual programmes. She is the public non-Tantric representative of the secret Tantric goddesses. The Śāktism of the Purāṇas, on the other hand, gives this goddess pride of place, assimilating other goddesses, including those of the Tantras, to her. The same process can be observed geographically in the layout of the 108 Śākta pīṭhas.

Thus Tantrism and its sacred geography survives both within the adept and his home as well as in the outer world to the degree in which it can be assimilated or adapted to the public domain without losing its essentially secret, internal identity.

Abbreviations:

- BT Buddhist Tantra
 CGC *Cidgaganacandrikā*
 CMSS *Cīncīñimatasārasamuccaya**¹⁰⁴
 HT *Hevajra Tantra*
 KK *Kulakrīḍāvatāra*
 KMT *Kubjikāmatatantra*
 KuKh Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the *Manthānabhairavatantra*
 JY *Jayadrathayāmala*
 MBT *Manthānabhairavatantra*
 NAK National Archives Kathmandu
 NŚ *Nīśisamcāratatra*
 NGMPP Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project
 PTv *Parātrīṃśikāvivarāṇa*
 ŚaṭSS *Śaṭsāhasrasaṃhitā**
 ŚM *Śrīmatottara**
 TĀ *Tantrāloka*
 YHṛ *Yoginīhṛdaya*

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¹⁰⁴I have edited the texts marked with an asterisk from their manuscripts but have not yet published them.

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Appendix 1: A list of the sites plotted on the maps.

Appendix 2: A table of locations associated with the Six Kaula Siddhas.

Appendix 3: Maps. These include:

- 1) The Fifty Sites according to the Kumārikākhandā of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* and *Ṭikā* by Rūpaśiva fol. 3a.
- 2) The Fifty Sites according to the *Ambāmatasamhitā* fol. 13a.
- 3) The Fifty Sites according to the *Yoginīhrdaya* 3/36-43.
- 4) The Twenty-Four Sites according to the *Jayadrathayāmala* quoted in TĀ 29/59-63.
- 5) The Thirty-Four Sites according to the *Niśisaṃcāratāntra* quoted in TĀ 15/84-93ab.
- 6) The Twenty-Four Sites according to the *Kubjikāmatatantra* 22/23-46.
- 7) The Eight Mothers: KuKh 16/13-5 and KMT 25/90-5ab.
- 8) The Eight Mothers surrounding Bhaktapur. Map by Niels Gutschow in Levy 1992: 155. The numbers designate the deities in the sequence in which they are worshipped. They are 1) Brāhmaṇī 2) Maheśvarī 3) Kumārī 4) Vaiṣṇavī 5) Vārāhī 6) Indrāṇī 7) Mahākālī 8) Mahālakṣmī 9) Tripurā. The dense bands of dots represents the edge of the present city.
- 9) The Buddhist Sites. The map has been plotted on the basis of the lists of sacred sites found in selected Buddhist Tantras in an article in Hindī called "Bauddha tantram meri piṭhopapīṭhādi kā vivecana" published in *Dhīh*, Sarnath, Varanasi, 1986 vol. I: 137-148. The Tantras and texts consulted were the *Vasantatilaka*, *Jñānodaya*, *Vajravārāhīyogārājottamarahasya*, *Śricakrasaṃvaraherukābhisamaya*, *Laghutantraṭīkā*, *Abhisamayamañjarī*, *Yoginī-jāla*, *Saṃvarodaya* and *Hevajratāntra*. Details of the sources, all of which are manuscripts, apart from the *Saṃvarodaya* and *Hevajratāntra*, can be found in the aforementioned article. The places listed in all these Tantras apart from the *Hevajratāntra* (1/7/12-18) are virtually identical. Thus, effectively, there are only two lists. One is labelled HT in the table and the other BT.
- 10) The Six Kaula Siddhas: See Appendix 2.
- 11) 108 Śākta Sites according to the *Matsyapurāṇa*: Sircar 1973: 26-28.

Figures

- 1) The Triangular *Meruprastāra*.
- 2) The projection onto the body of the fifty Bhairavas and sacred sites.
- 3) The projection onto the body of the twenty-four sacred sites (*kṣetras*) according to the *Jayadrathayāmala* quoted in TĀ 29/59-63.
- 4) The projection of Kubjikā's tour (*yātrā*) onto the head according to the *Ṣaṭśāhasrasamhitā*
- 5) The Triangle of *Santānabhuvana*, the House of the Moon (*candraḡra*).

Appendix 1: A list of the sites plotted on the maps

Sacred Site	KuKh/tikā	Ambā	YHr	JY	NS	KMT	HT	BT
Aṭṭahāsa	25	22	26	1	12	1	X	X
Arcapīṭha	X	10	X	X	X	X	X	X
Arbuda	8	X	8	X	X	X	13	4
Āmrātakesvara	9	X	9	22	X	23 ¹⁰⁵	X	X
Ihā	X	15	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ujjayinī	33	X	34	5	5	5	X	X
Uḍḍiyāna ¹⁰⁶	49	9	49	X	2	X	5	X
Uḍḍiśa	X	X	41	X	X	X	X	X
Udadhestaṭa	X	X	X	X	X	X	30	X
Udyāna	X	X	X	X	X	X	31	X
Urasā	41	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ekāmrā ¹⁰⁷	10	25	10	X	9	X	X	X
Ekāra	18 ¹⁰⁸	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eruḍī ¹⁰⁹	44	X	X	10	19	10	X	X
Elāpura ¹¹⁰	30	X	30	16	21	12	X	X
Omākārapīṭha	X	X	18	X	X	X	X	X
Omākāra	X	X	31	X	X	X	X	X
Odra	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Odukasa	37 ¹¹¹	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Karmārapātaka	X	X	X	X	X	X	11	X
Kaliṅga	X	X	X	X	15	X	20	13
Kāsmīrā	X	X	X	X	28	X	X	X
Kāncī	X	26	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kānyakubja	6	32 ¹¹²	6	X	X	X	X	X
Kāmarūpa	1	7	1	X	1	X	4	9
Kāruṇyapātaka	X	X	X	X	X	X	9	X
Kuḍyākeśī	X	X	X	18	X	X	X	X

¹⁰⁵Āmrātikesvara. The spellings of place names are susceptible to variation. It has therefore been necessary to establish a uniform spelling for all the maps. Variant spellings are listed in the footnotes.

¹⁰⁶KuKh and Tikā: Udyāna. Ambā: Oḍḍiyāna. YHr: Udyāna. The spelling of this place name is liable to considerably more variations than others. I have chosen this spelling as it is generally, the most common. Note, however that the spelling Oḍḍiyāna is also common.

¹⁰⁷KuKh 6/212: Tāmra. Ambā: Kāmra

¹⁰⁸KuKh 6/212: Ekoṇa.

¹⁰⁹Found only in the Tikā. JY: Eḍābhī. NS: Eruḍikā. YHr: Airuḍī.

¹¹⁰YHr: Melāpura. NS: Elāpurī.

¹¹¹Tikā: Auḍikā.

¹¹²Kubjaka.

Sacred Site	KuKh/ṭikā	Ambā	YHṛ	JY	NS	KMT	HT	BT
Kurukṣetra	X	38	X	X	34	X	X	X
Kulūta ¹¹³	21	3	22	X	16	X	12	24
Kuhundī	X	X	X	X	X	19	X	X
Kedāra	15	X	15	X	X	X	X	X
Kailāśa	13	39	13	X	X	X	X	X
Koṅkaṇa	X	12	X	X	X	X	22	X
Kollāgiri ¹¹⁴	30	27	X	3	6	3	X	X
Kaumārīpura	X	X	X	X	X	X	28 ¹¹⁵	X
Kauśala	X	X	X	X	X	X	26	12
Kṣīraka ¹¹⁶	35	X	X	21	22	21	X	X
Khetaka	X	X	X	X	34	X	X	X
Gajendra	X	8	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gargikā	X	X	X	X	29	X	X	X
Grhadevatā	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	18
Gokaṇa ¹¹⁷	23	31	24	12	X	13	X	X
Godāvarī	X	X	X	X	X	X	14	5
Grāmāntastha	X	X	X	X	X	X	23	X
Candrapura ¹¹⁸	16	14	16	X	X	X	X	X
Caritra	34	30	34 ¹¹⁹	2	X	2	25	X
Chāyāchatra	50	X	50	X	X	X	X	X
Jayantikā ¹²⁰	32	29	3	4	13	4	X	X
Jālandhara	19	13 ¹²¹	19	X	27	X	1	2
Triśakuni ¹²²	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Trisrota ¹²³	11	18	11	X	X	X	X	X
Devikoṭa ¹²⁴	23	34	22	X	4	8	10	7

¹¹³KuKh 6/212: Kulūṭi. YHṛ: Kulānta—variant: Kulūna. HT: Kulatā. BT: Kulatā.

¹¹⁴KuKh and Ṭikā: Kaullagiri. Ambā: Kullagiri. JY: Kollagiri. NS: Kulagiri. KMT: Kolāgiri.

¹¹⁵Kaumārāpurikā.

¹¹⁶KuKh, Ṭikā and KMT: Kṣīrikā.

¹¹⁷Ambā: Kaṇa. KMT: Kāśmarī

¹¹⁸KKh and Ṭikā: Candrapuryaka. Ambā: Candrapūrya. YHṛ: Pūrṇacandraka—variant reading: Candrapuṣkara.

¹¹⁹Citrā.

¹²⁰KuKh and Ṭikā, Ambā and KMT: Jayantī.

¹²¹Jālapīṭha.

¹²²Variant names: Triśakuna and Triśakulī.

¹²³KuKh and Ṭikā: Trisrotā. Ambā: Tisraka. YHṛ: Triśrota.

¹²⁴KuKh and Ṭikā: Devikoṭā. Ambā: Devikoṭṭa. KMT: Śrīkoṭa.

Sacred Site	KuKh/ <i>tīkā</i>	Ambā	YHr	JY	NS	KMT	HT	BT
Drukka	X	42	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dvāravṛtti	X	X	X	X	33	X	X	X
Nagara ¹²⁵	X	X	X	14	X	X ¹²⁶	7,24	21
Nepāla	3	37 ¹²⁷	3	X	27	X	X	X
Pāripātra	X	43	X	X	X	X	X	X
Puṇḍravardhana	4 ¹²⁸	5	4	15	7	16	X	X
Pullīramalaya	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1 ¹²⁹
Purastīra ¹³⁰	5	X	5	17	X	17	X	X
Pūrnagiri ¹³¹	7	4	7	X	3	X	3	1
Pūryagiri	X	17	X	X	X	X	X	X
Prsthāpura	39 ¹³²	X	39	X	X	18	X	X
Prayāga	38	11	38	6	10	6	X	X
Pretapurī ¹³³	X	X	X	X	X	X	29	X
Brahmavāhā	X	48	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bhṛgunagara	14	X	14	X	X	X	X	X
Bheruṇḍaka	44	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bhopāla	31 ¹³⁴	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Marukeśvara ¹³⁵	24	X	44	13	X	X	X	X
Marudeśa	X	X	X	X	25	14	X	23 ¹³⁶
Malaya ¹³⁷	42	24	42	X	X	X	X	1
Mahāpatha	28	X	29	X	X	X	X	X
Mahālakṣmī	48	1	48	X	X	X	X	X

¹²⁵I suppose that this Nagara is the modern Nagapur, not Bhṛgunagara.

¹²⁶Caitrakaccha

¹²⁷Paśupati.

¹²⁸KuKh 6/212: Pūrnāvardhana. Ambā: Varidhana. YHr: Pauṇḍravardhana.

¹²⁹Abhisamaya: Pullīra. This entry is missing in the *Vasantatilaka* and *Laghutantraṭīkā*.

¹³⁰YHr: Purasthira. This is a variant reading the editor of the printed edition rejected. The accepted reading in that edition is Carasthira. KMT: Parastīra.

¹³¹Ambā: Pūrṇa. YHr: Pūrṇaśaila. In the *Saṃvarodaya* and *Laghutantraṭīkā*, this entry takes the place of Pullīramalaya found in the other texts of this group.

¹³²Not found in the list in the KuKh. *Tīkā*: Prsthāpura. YHr: Śaṣṭha.

¹³³HT: Pretasaṅghāta. *Saṃvarodaya*, *Yoginījāla*, *Vasantatilaka*, and *Vajravārāhī*: Pretādhivāsini.

¹³⁴Not found in the *Tīkā*. The equivalent entry there is Supāraka.

¹³⁵KuKh and *Tīkā*: Meruvara. YHr: Meru. JY: Marukośa.

¹³⁶*Saṃvarodaya*: Roru. *Yoginījāla*, *Vasantatilaka*, and *Abhisamaya*: Meru. *Laghutantraṭīkā*: Mero.

¹³⁷Ambā: Mala. This entry is found only in the *Vasantatilaka*.

Sacred Site	KuKh/ṭikā	Ambā	YHr	JY	NS	KMT	HT	BT
Mahendra ¹³⁸	45	23	45	X	X	X	X	X
Māyāpuri ¹³⁹	40	33	40	20	25	22	X	X
Māruṭeśvara	X	X	25	X	X	X	X	X
Mālava	20 ¹⁴⁰	X	21	X	X	X	5	8
Munmuni	X	X	X	X	X	X	8	X
Mlecchadik	X	X	X	X	31	X	X	X
Rājagṛha ¹⁴¹	27	X	28	23	23	24	X	X
Rāmeśvara	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
Rudrālaya	X	46	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lampāka	X	X	X	X	X	X	17	14
Lāhulā	X	X	X	X	17	X	X	X
Vāpikātira	X	X	X	X	X	X	32	X
Vāmana	X	X	46	X	X	X	X	X
Vārāṇasī	2	6	2	7	14	7	X	X
Varuṇā ¹⁴²	46	19	X	X	11	X	X	X
Virajā ¹⁴³	26	X	26	9	18	9	X	X
Śrīgiri	X	20	X	X	X	X	X	X
Śrīpīṭha/parvata	17	28 ¹⁴⁴	17	8	X	X	X	X
Śāṣṭha	X	X	39	X	X	X	X	X
Samānaka	X	40	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sarasvatī	X	49	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sindhu	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	22
Suvarṇadvīpa	X	X	X	X	X	X	21	20
Sopāra ¹⁴⁵	31	X	X	19 ¹⁴⁶	X	20	X	X
Saurāṣṭra	X	X	X	X	X	X	19	19
Strirājya	X	44 ¹⁴⁷	X	X	X	X	X	X

¹³⁸KuKh, ṭikā and Ambā: Māhendra.

¹³⁹KuKh, ṭikā and Ambā: Haridvāra. YHr and JY: Māyāpura.

¹⁴⁰KuKh 6/212: Mālaya.

¹⁴¹YHr: Rājageha. NS: Rājapurī.

¹⁴²KuKh, ṭikā: Vāruṇa. Ambā: Varuṇa. NS: Varāṇā. Varāṇā is sometimes a synonym of Vārāṇasī. But as Vārāṇasī is a separate entry in the NS, I take Varāṇā there to be Varuṇā. Note also that according to the reading found in the TĀ, the seat of the second Mother in the JY is Varuṇā. According to the KMT, and other sources, it is Varāṇā, that is, Vārāṇasī. I assume, therefore, that the correct reading in the TĀ should be "varāṇā".

¹⁴³KuKh 6/212: Virāja. NS: Virajā. KMT: Virajā.

¹⁴⁴Ambā: Śrīparvata

¹⁴⁵Listed in the ṭikā only as Sopāraka. The equivalent entry in the KuKh is Bhūpāla. JY: Sopāna.

¹⁴⁶JY: Sopāna.

¹⁴⁷Śrīrājya.

Sacred Site	KuKh/tikā	Ambā	YHr	JY	NS	KMT	HT	BT
Hara	X	X	X	X	30	X	X	X
Harikela	X	X	X	X	X	X	16	X
Hastināpura	36 ¹⁴⁸	X	36	X	X	11	X	X
Hālā ¹⁴⁹	X	X	X	11	20	X	X	X
Himādri	X	X	X	X	X	X	15	X
Himālaya	X	36	X	X	X	X	X	16
Hiranyapura ¹⁵⁰	47	X	47	X	X	X	X	X

¹⁴⁸Hastikāpura.

¹⁴⁹Jayaratha identifies Hālā as Alipura.

¹⁵⁰Haimapura, which is the location of the ninth Mother according to the JY (see map 7), is Hiranyapura.

Prince	Master	Ovallī ¹⁵¹	Pīṭha	Town	Direction in relation to Śrīsaīla	Grove	Ghara ¹⁵²	Pallī ¹⁵³
Amara	Siddhanātha	Bodha	Trippurōtara	Dohāla	South	Kambhī	Patīla	Dakṣiṇāvarta
Varadeva	Vidyānanda	Prabhu	Kamada	Kuṅḍī	West	?	Karabīla	Kumbhāṛkā
Citrānātha	Kaulasīnhamuni	Pāda	Aṭṭhāsa	Daṅḍaratna	North	Bīlvākṣa	Ambīla	Bīla
Olinātha ¹⁵⁴	Śrīgālamuni	Ānanda	Devīkoṭa	Bālahoma	East	Pāyavākṣa	Pulinda	Āḍavī
Viddhanāth ¹⁵⁵	Śāṅḍilyamuni	Yoga	Dakṣiṇādī ¹⁵⁶	Pīṇḍa	South-West	Khairavākṣa	Śarabīla	Akṣara
Gudīkanātha	Candrabimba	Oṃ	Kaulagiri	Gauḍikā	North-West	Nāṛikelaphala	Āḍabīla	Domḍī

¹⁵¹ Like the word *oli*, with the same meaning and to which it may be related, *ovallī* is not a word of Sanskrit derivation. It means 'tradition' or 'lineage'.

¹⁵² A *ghara* is literally a 'house' or 'home' and, as in this case, a 'monastic centre'.

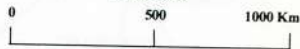
¹⁵³ A *pallī* is a small village in general. Specifically, it is small tribal settlement.

¹⁵⁴ KK: Alinātha. According to the CMSS Olinātha travelled to Kamara, to the south of which was a place called Trikaṅḍinī. There he performed austerities according to the instructions of Candrabimbamuni.

¹⁵⁵ KK: Vinḍhyānātha.

¹⁵⁶ KK: Dakṣiṇāpātha.

The 50 Sites of the Manthānabhairava Tantra

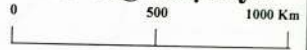


The 50 Sites of the Ambāmatasamhitā

0 500 1000 Km



The 50 Sites of the Yoginīhṛdaya



The 24 Sites of the Jayadrathayāmala

0 500 1000 Km



*8 Sripitha

Māyāpuri 20*

Marukeśvara 13*

*3 Kollāgiri

Prayāga 6*

*7 Vārāṇasī

Rājagṛha 23*

*4 Jayantikā

*15

Pundravardhana

Hālā 11

Aṭṭahāsa 1*

Kśīraka 21*

Ujjayinī 5*

*17 Purasfira

Kūdyākeśī 18*

*10 Erundī

*22 Āmrātakeśvara

*14 Nagara

Viraja 9*

Caritra 2*

*16 Elāpura

*19 Sopāra

Śrīśaila 24*

*12 Gokarna

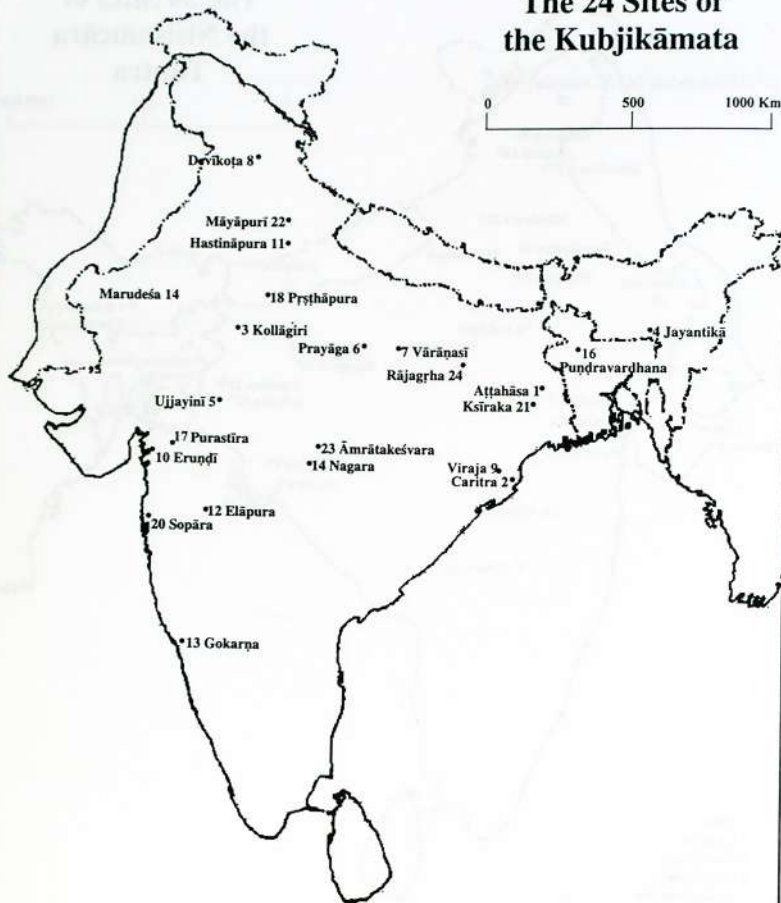
The 34 Sites of the Nīśisamcāra Tantra

0 500 1000 Km



The 24 Sites of the Kubjikāmata

0 500 1000 Km

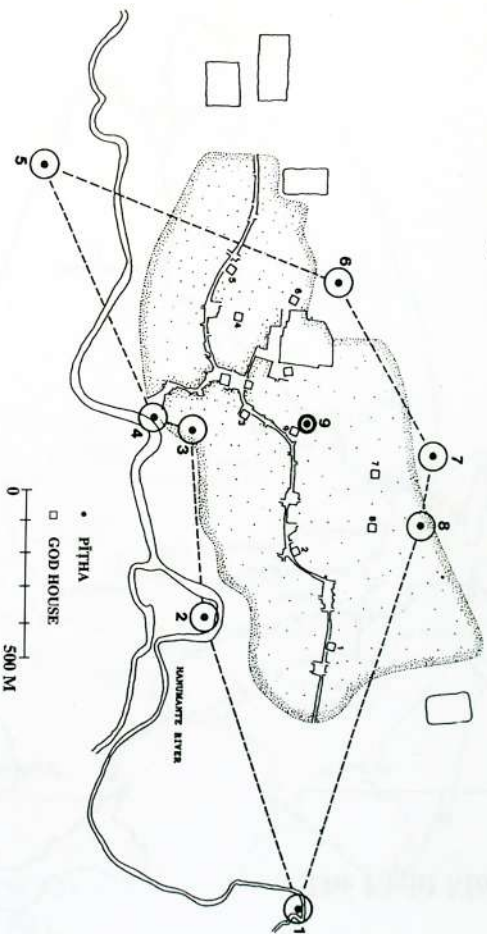


The Eight Mothers

0 500 1000 Km



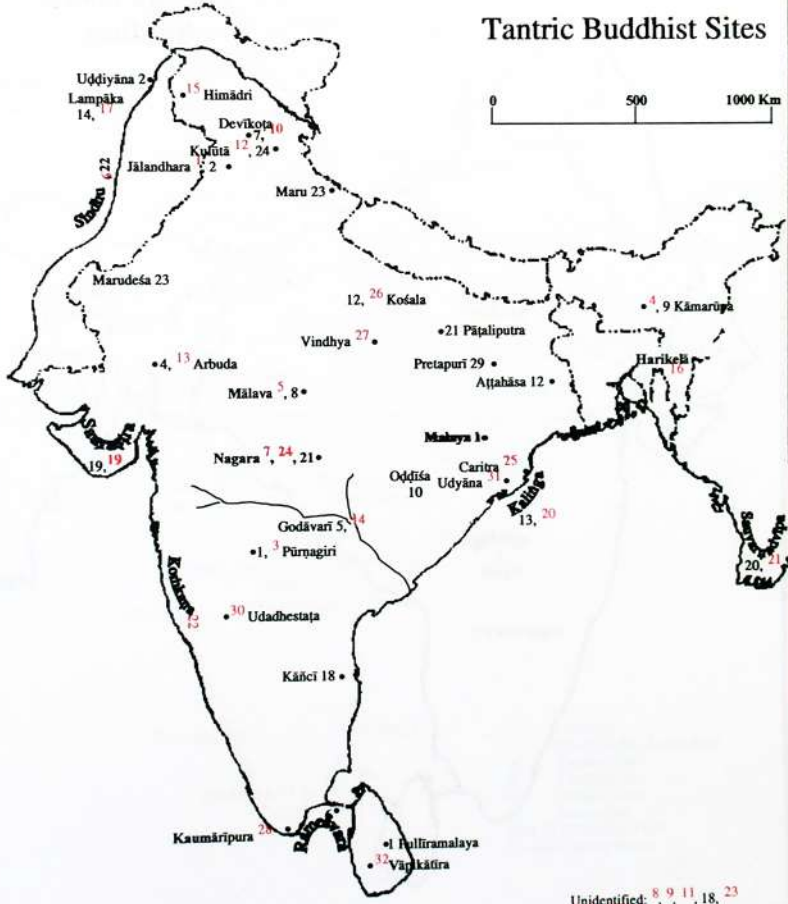
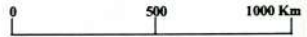
The Eight Mothers surrounding Bhaktapur



- 1) Brahmani
- 2) Mahesvari
- 3) Kumari
- 4) Vaisnavi
- 5) Varahi
- 6) Indrani
- 7) Mahakali
- 8) Mahalaksmi
- 9) Tripura

Map courtesy of Nils Gutschow

Tantric Buddhist Sites

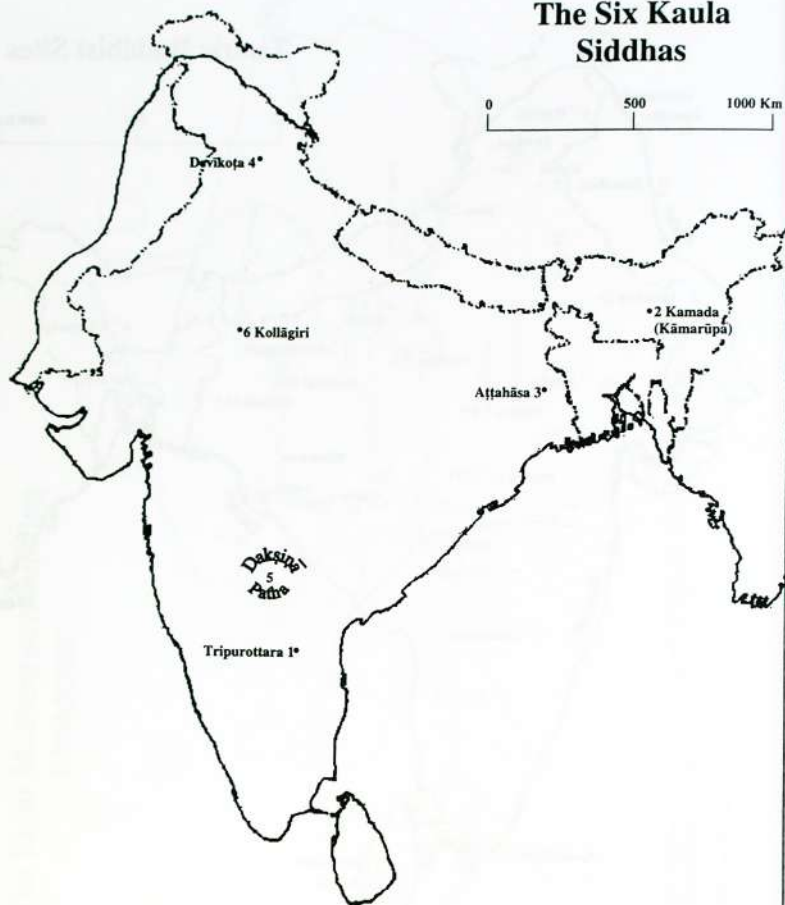


Unidentified: 8, 9, 11, 18, 23
 Red = HT
 Black = BT

Map 9

The Six Kaula Siddhas

0 500 1000 Km



108 Śākta Sites of the Matsyapurāṇa



Unidentified: 9, 20, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 41, 47,
68, 76, 92, 96, 99, 100

PŪRNAGIRI

JĀLANDHARA

KĀMARŪPA

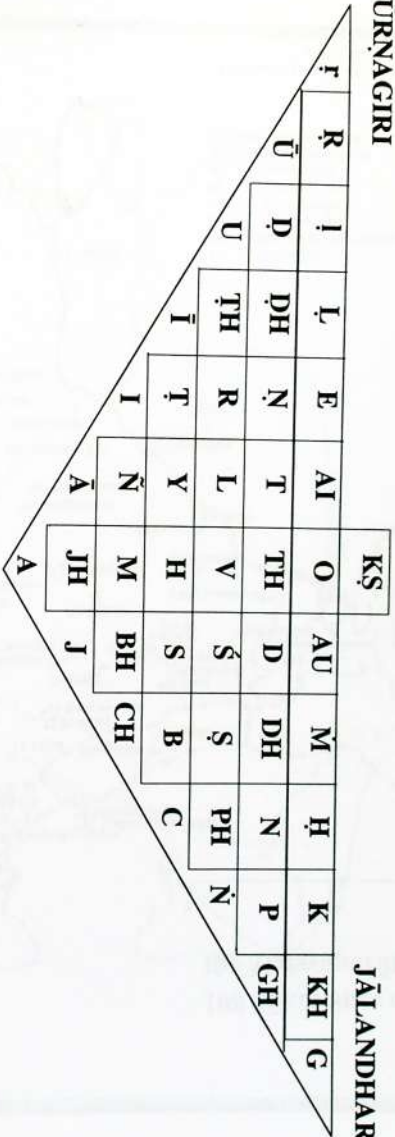
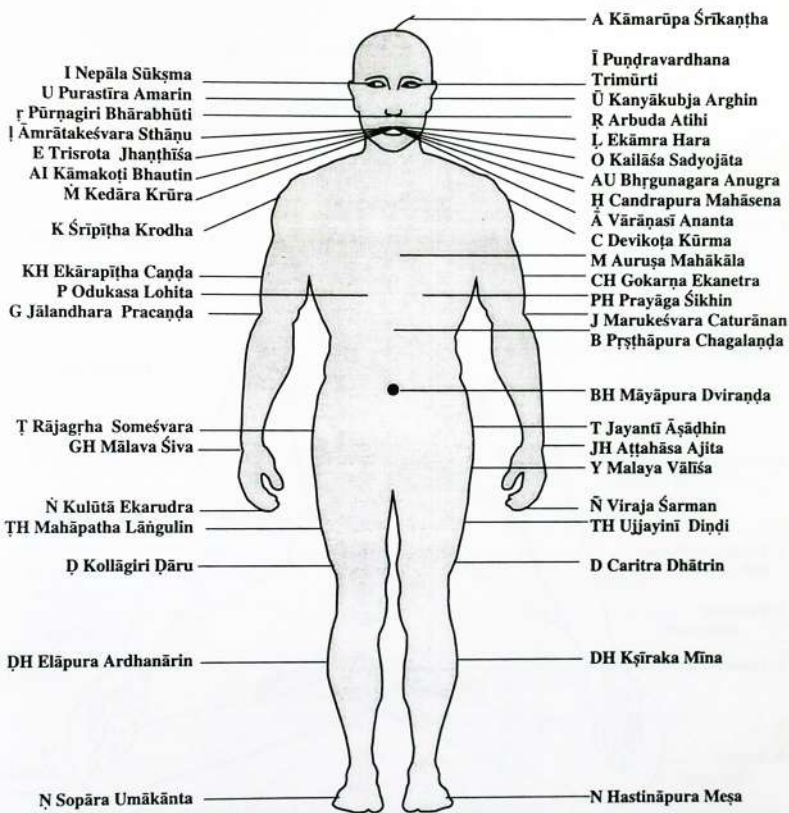


Figure 1



B	Prṣṭhāpura	Chagalaṇḍa	Spine	V	Mahendra	Khaḍgin	Sinews
BH	Māyāpura	Dviraṇḍa	Navel	Ś	Varuṇā	Vakiśa	Bones
M	Auruṣa	Mahākāla	Heart	Ṣ	Hiraṇyapura	Śveta	Marrow
Y	Malaya	Vālīśa	Skin	S	Mahālakṣmī	Bhṛgu	Semen
R	Śrīśaila	Bhujāṅga	Blood	H	Uḍḍiyāna	Lākuliśa	Breath
L	Eruṇḍī	Pinākin	Flesh	KṢ	Chāyāchatra	Sarivartaka	Anger

Figure 2

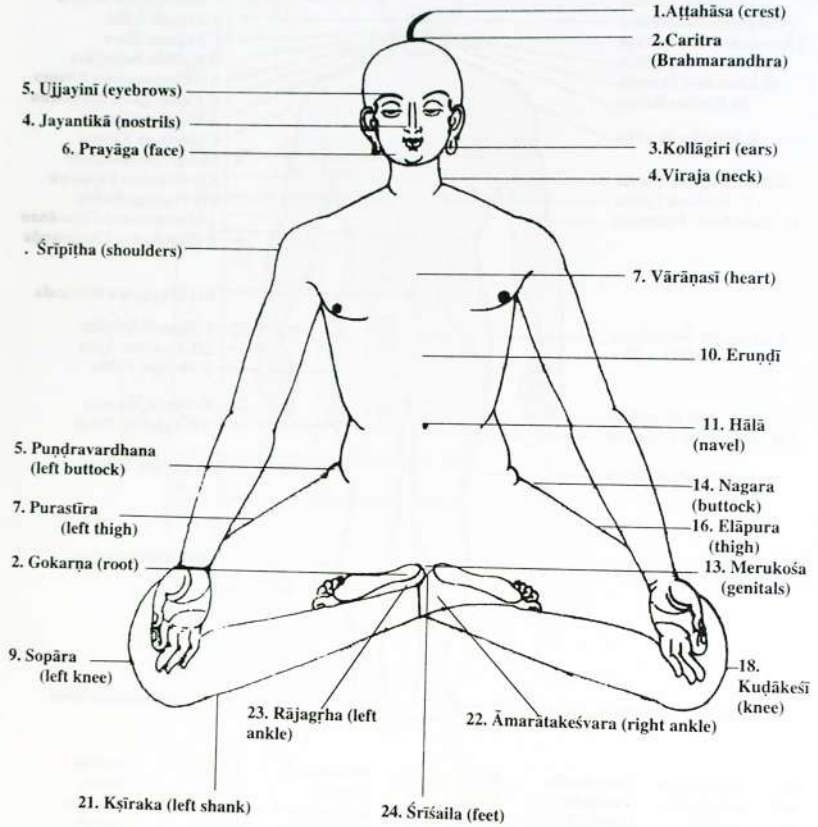


Figure 3

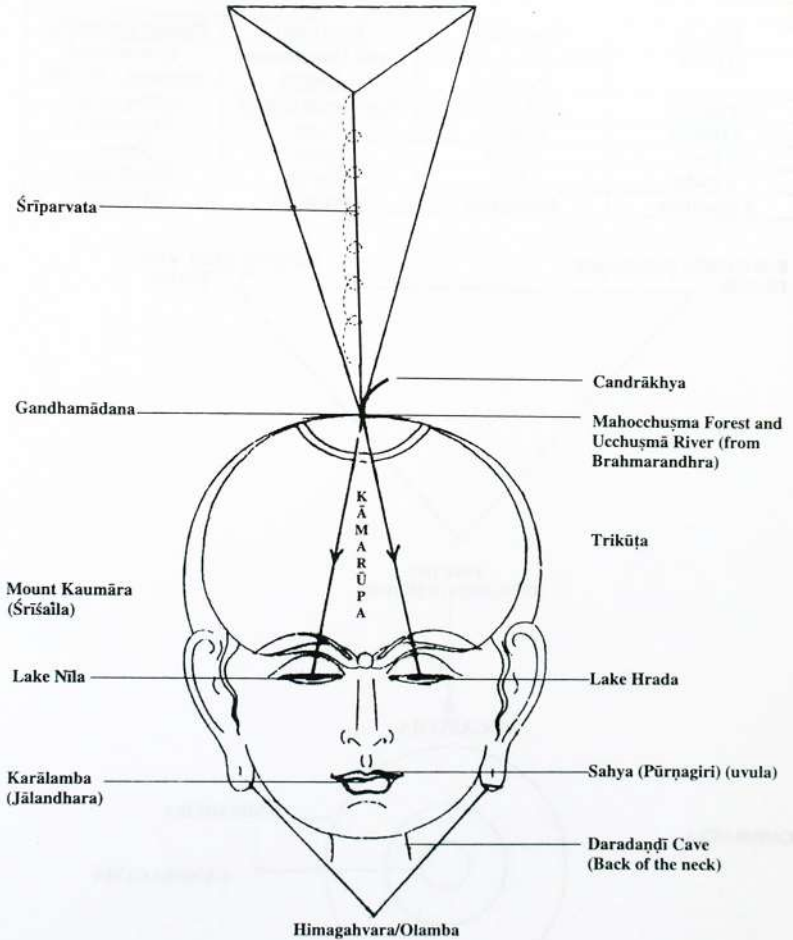


Figure 4

On the corners:			
3 Doorkeepers	Tamo'ri	Nisāṭana	Kālānala
3 Bhairavas	Lākulin	Bhṛgu	Saṁvarta
On the sides:			
3 Doors	Wind (<i>vāta</i>)	Bile (<i>pitta</i>)	Phlegm (<i>śaleṣmika</i>)
3 Bolts	Pervasive (<i>vyāpinī</i> < Passion)	Equal One (<i>samanā</i> < Anger)	Transmental (<i>unmanā</i> < Greed)
3 Energies	Will (<i>icchā</i>)	Knowledge (<i>jñānī</i>)	Action (<i>kriyā</i>)
3 Deities	Brahmā	Viṣṇu	Maheśvara
3 Walls	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
3 Paths	Idā	Piṅgalā	Madhyamā
3 Junctions	Exhalation	Inhalation	Retention

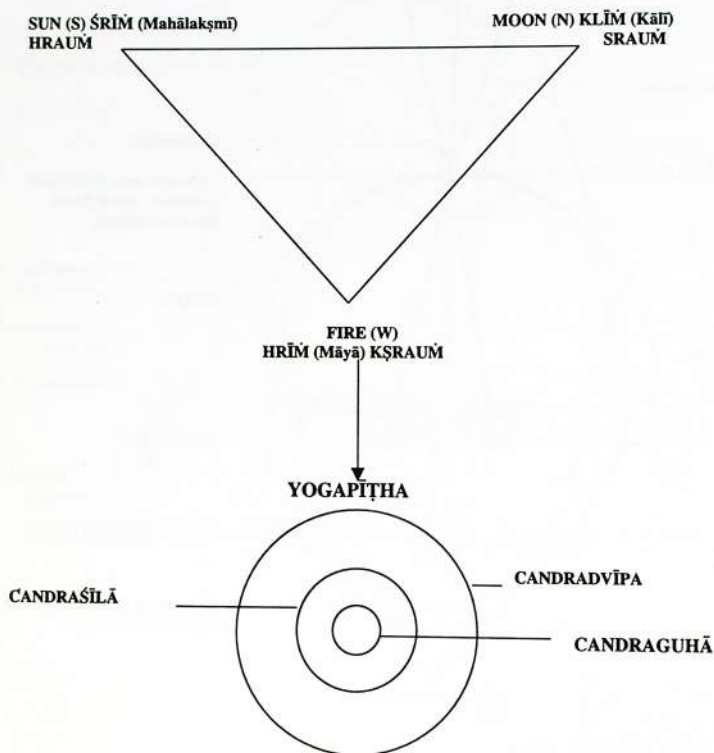


Figure 5