

## The *Amṛtasiddhi*: *Hathayoga*'s tantric Buddhist source text

Like many of the contributors to this volume, I had the great fortune to have Professor Sanderson as the supervisor of my doctoral thesis, which was a critical edition of an early text on *hathayoga* called the *Khecarīvidyā*. At the outset of my work on the text, and for several subsequent years, I expected that Professor Sanderson's encyclopedic knowledge of the Śaiva corpus would enable us to find within it forerunners of *khecarīmudrā*, the haṭhayogic practice central to the *Khecarīvidyā*. However, notwithstanding a handful of instances of teachings on similar techniques, the fully-fledged practice does not appear to be taught in earlier Śaiva works. In subsequent years, as I read more broadly in the corpus of early texts on *hathayoga* (which, in comparison to the vast Śaiva corpus, is very small and thus may easily be read by one individual), I came to the realisation that almost all of the practices which distinguish *hathayoga* from other methods of yoga were unique to it at the time of their codification and are not to be found in the corpus of earlier Śaiva texts, despite repeated assertions in secondary literature that *hathayoga* was a development from Śaivism (or "tantra" more broadly conceived).<sup>1</sup>

The texts of the *hathayoga* corpus do, however, couch their teachings in tantric language. The name of the haṭhayogic *khecarīmudrā*, for example, is also that of an earlier but different Śaiva practice. When I was invited to speak at the symposium in Professor Sanderson's honour held in Toronto in 2015, I decided to try to articulate my rather inchoate thoughts on this subject by presenting a paper entitled "*Hathayoga*'s Śaiva Idiom". The inadequacy of my theories was brought home to me some months after the symposium when I started to read, together with two other former students of Professor Sanderson, Dr Péter-Dániel Szántó and Dr Jason Birch,<sup>2</sup> a 12th-century manuscript of the *Amṛtasiddhi*, the earliest text to teach many of the key principles and practices of *hathayoga*.<sup>3</sup> I had already read much of the text with Professor Sanderson and others, but only from later manuscript sources. As

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<sup>2</sup>We were joined at our reading sessions by Sam Grimes, Diwakar Acharya, Camillo Formigatti, Anand Venkatkrishnan and Paul Gerstmayr, whom I thank for their valuable comments.

<sup>3</sup>I thank Kurtis Schaeffer and Leonard van der Kuijp for sharing with me photographs of printouts from a microfilm copy of this manuscript. Professor Schaeffer also kindly shared his draft edition of the Tibetan translation of the *Amṛtasiddhi* given in this witness. We read the manuscript together with a collation of other witnesses, including a transcription of the Grantha manuscript M<sub>2</sub> prepared by Viswanath Gupta, whom I thank for his assistance.

we read the older manuscript it gradually became clear that the *Amṛtasiddhi* was composed in a Vajrayāna (tantric Buddhist) milieu.

Thus my notion of *haṭhayoga* having a Śaiva idiom needed readdressing. One might perhaps talk instead of its “tantric idiom”. But I shall leave reflections on that topic for a later date and in this short paper focus on the *Amṛtasiddhi* and, in particular, the features of it which make it clear that it was composed in a Vajrayāna milieu. I am currently preparing a critical edition and annotated translation of the text with Dr Szántó; what follows here results from our work in progress. Despite our edition being incomplete, I am confident that the conclusion drawn here about the origins of the text is sound (and that further work on the text will provide additional and complementary evidence) and I think it important enough to warrant preliminary publication. Subsequent publications will address this unique text’s many other remarkable features.

## The Amṛtasiddhi

The importance of the *Amṛtasiddhi* was first brought to scholarly attention by Professor Kurtis Schaeffer in an article published in 2002.<sup>4</sup> Here I shall reprise as little of his rich and dense article as is necessary to provide the background to what follows. Schaeffer focuses on the twelfth-century<sup>5</sup> manuscript of the text, photographs of printouts from a microfilm of which he and Professor Leonard van der Kuijp have kindly shared with me. At the time that the microfilm was made, the manuscript was in Beijing, although Professor Schaeffer believes that it has since been returned to Tibet. The manuscript is unique in that it is bilingual, with three registers: the Sanskrit text in a Nepali or east Indian script, a transliteration of the Sanskrit in Tibetan hand-printing script and a translation<sup>6</sup> into Tibetan in the Tibetan cursive script.

This manuscript is referred to in what follows by the siglum C. The other witnesses of the text which have been collated are considerably later than C (the oldest is perhaps the c. 17th-century K<sub>1</sub>). They present versions of the text in which redaction has removed or obscured some of the Buddhist features evident in C. These witnesses may be divided into two groups. The first is a single Grantha manuscript from the Mysore Government Oriental Library (M<sub>2</sub>), the second seven north Indian and Nepali manuscripts, two from Jodhpur’s Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash (J<sub>1</sub> and J<sub>2</sub> = J) and four from the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (K<sub>1</sub>-K<sub>4</sub> = K).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Prior to Schaeffer’s article, the only mention of the text of which I am aware (other than in manuscript catalogues) is Gode 1954:22, in which its citations in the *Yogacintāmaṇi* are noted.

<sup>5</sup>Schaeffer (2002: 517) says that the manuscript’s colophon gives a date which “may read 1159 C.E.” The reading is clear: *ekāṣṭījute* [<sup>o</sup>jute is Newar scribal dialect for Sanskrit <sup>o</sup>jute] *śāke sabāsraike tu phālgune* | *keṣṇāstamyām samāpto ’yaṁ kṛtvāmṛtasiddhir mayā* || (f. 37v). The eighth day of the dark fortnight of the lunar month of Phālguna in Śāka 1081 corresponds to March 2nd 1160 CE (according to the calculator at <http://www.cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp/~yanom/pancanga/>). It is possible that the colophon has been copied from an exemplar and that the manuscript itself does not date to 1160. The manuscript’s Tibetan colophon says that the Tibetan translation is that of the “monk of the Bya [clan]” (*Bya ban de*) Pad ma ’od zer, who worked towards the end of the eleventh century, which provides us with an earlier *terminus ante quem* for the text than the date of the manuscript itself.

<sup>6</sup>As noted in the manuscript’s Tibetan colophon, the translation is of a different recension of the Sanskrit text from that given in the manuscript. At some places, e.g. 7.10 and 7.26, the translation corresponds to the text as found in the other witnesses, but not that in C.

<sup>7</sup>Full details of these witnesses are given at the end of this article.

The text of the *Amṛtasiddhi* consists of 292 verses divided into 35 short *vivekas*.<sup>8</sup> The first ten *vivekas* teach the constituents of the yogic body. *Vivekas* 11-13 teach three methods of manipulating those constituents (*mahāmudrā*, *mahābandha* and *mahāvedha*) and *viveka* 14 teaches the practice (*abhyāsa*), i.e. how the three methods are to be used together. *Vivekas* 15-18 teach the four grades of aspirant, 19-33 the four states (*avasthās*) of yoga, and 34-35 the final transformation of the body leading up to *nirvāṇa*.<sup>9</sup>

## The Amṛtasiddhi in the Haṭhayoga tradition

### Citations and Borrowings

The *Amṛtasiddhi* is a seminal work in the *haṭhayoga* textual tradition.<sup>10</sup> Schaeffer (2002, 518-519) mentions its citations in the *Yogacintāmaṇi* (c. 1600 CE)<sup>11</sup> and *Haṭhapradīpikā-jyotsnā* (1837 CE).<sup>12</sup> In addition, several *haṭhayoga* texts borrow directly from the *Amṛtasiddhi* without attribution. The c. 13th-century *Gorakṣasāta* shares three half-verses with it.<sup>13</sup> The *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*, which is also likely to date to the 13th century redacts four of the *Amṛtasiddhi*'s verses into three.<sup>14</sup> The c. 14th-century *Amarāughaprabodha* shares six verses with the *Amṛtasiddhi* and paraphrases it extensively elsewhere.<sup>15</sup> The *Gorakṣayoga-sāstra* (15th century or earlier) borrows two and a half verses<sup>16</sup> and extensively paraphrases other parts of the text. The c. 15th-century *Śivasambhitā* is much the biggest borrower from the *Amṛtasiddhi*, sharing 34 verses with it.<sup>17</sup> The *Haṭhapradīpikā* shares five half-verses with the *Amṛtasiddhi*, but these may be borrowed from the *Amarāughaprabodha* since all the shared passages are also in that text.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>8</sup>There are 35 *vivekas* in the Beijing ms and 38 in the others. All verse numbering given here corresponds to the order of verses in C (which does not itself give verse numbers).

<sup>9</sup>*Vivekas* 19-35 are interspersed with very short chapters on a variety of topics. In the first *viveka* (vv. 10-13) there is a list of the topics to be taught in the text. The list corresponds exactly to the *vivekas* up to *viveka* 19, but then goes awry. More analysis is needed to be sure, but it seems likely that at least some of the *viveka* divisions after 19 are later additions to the text.

<sup>10</sup>Despite the compound *haṭhayoga* being found in earlier Vajrayāna works (Birch 2011, 535-536) and its teachings being central to later haṭhayogic texts, the *Amṛtasiddhi* does not call its yoga method *haṭha*. This paradox will be addressed in subsequent publications.

<sup>11</sup>*Yogacintāmaṇi* p. 13 [AS 6.11, 6.13], p. 26 [14.4, 14.8-12, 14.16c-19d], p. 34 [7.25, 7.15, 7.18, 7.8-9, 7.12, 7.5, 7.2cd, 7.3cd, 7.6-7, 7.16c-17d, 7.19ab, 7.17cd, 7.20-24], p. 39 [32.3-4], p. 40 [33.1, 34.1] p. 101 [6.10], 107 [3.1-4, 4.1a-4.2b, 4.4c-4.12d], p. 112 [5.1, 5.3-4], p. 213 [25.3c-4d, 26.1-2, 27.1, 28.1, 29.1, 31.3c-4b, 31.5ab, 31.5c-7b (with significant differences), 31.8c-9b, 3.10, 3.12], p. 218 [15.3a-4b, 16.1ab, 16.2a-3b, 17.1, 17.2ac (with differences), 17.3, 18.1-5, 19.1ab].

<sup>12</sup>*Haṭhapradīpikājyotsnā ad* 3.100 [AS 7.8c-9d, 7.12, 7.5a-, 7.2cd] and 4.1 [AS 33.1, 32.3-4, 7.23, 34.1, 7.17, 7.20, 7.6c-7d, 7.16cd].

<sup>13</sup>AS 6.7a-6.8b = GŚ 34a-35b. This verse is also found at *Gheraṇḍasambhitā* 5.62.

<sup>14</sup>AS 7.16-20 ≈ VM 90-92.

<sup>15</sup>AS 16.1c-2b, 11.3, 11.9cd, 11.3cd, 14.6, 13.5cd, 13.7cd, 19.2 = AP 20, 29, 32cd, 37ab, 38, 39cd, 40ab, 45.

<sup>16</sup>AS 3.1, 6.11ab, 11.4 = GYS 5, 13ab, 17.

<sup>17</sup>AS 1.15b-1.16d, 1.17c-1.18b, 1.19ab, 3.1-4, 4.3-4, 11.1ab, 11.3cd, 11.4bc, 11.5ab, 11.6, 11.7cd, 12.6, 15.1, 16.1-3, 19.2 = B 2.1b-2.2d, 2.3, 2.4ab, 2.6c-9, 2.11-12, 4.28cd, 4.27ab, 4.27dc, 4.28ab, 4.31, 4.34cb, 4.38, 5.13, 5.17c-5.20b, 3.31.

<sup>18</sup>AS 11.3, 11.9cd, 19.2 = HP 3.9, 3.13cd, 4.69.

## Doctrinal Innovations

Several of the *Amṛtasiddhi*'s teachings have no prior attestation and are central to teachings on *haṭhayoga* in later texts, where they are either reproduced verbatim, as noted above, or incorporated into new compositions. These may be summarised as follows.

### 1. The Yogic Body

- (a) The *Amṛtasiddhi* is the first text to relocate to the body the old tantric triad of sun, moon and fire.<sup>19</sup> The idea of a moon in the skull dripping *amṛta* is found in many earlier tantric works, but that of the sun in the stomach consuming it is new, as is the conflation of the sun and fire.

#### i. The Moon

*meruśṛṅge sthitaś candro dviraṣṭakalayā yutaḥ |*  
*aharniṣaṃ tuṣārābhāṃ sudhāṃ varṣaty adbhomukhaḥ ||3.1||*

“The moon is on the peak of Meru and has sixteen digits.  
Facing downwards, it rains dewy nectar day and night.”

#### ii. The Sun

*madhyamāmūlasaṃsthāne tiṣṭhati sūryamaṇḍalaḥ |*  
*kalādvādaśasampūrṇo dīpyamānaḥ svaraśmibhiḥ ||4.1||*  
*ūrdhvaṃ vahati dakṣeṇa tiṣṭamūrtiḥ prajāpatiḥ |*  
*vyāpnoti sakalaṃ dehaṃ nāḍyākāśapathāśritāḥ ||4.2||*  
*grasati candraniryāsaṃ bhramati vāyumaṇḍale |*  
*dahati sarvadhātūṃś ca sūryaḥ sarvaśarirake ||4.3||*  
**2d** °pathāśritāḥ ] CK<sub>4</sub>; yathāśritāṃ K<sub>3</sub>, yathāśritāḥ *cett.*  
**3b** °maṇḍale ] M<sub>2</sub>; °maṇḍalaiḥ C, °maṇḍalaṃ *cett.*

“(1) The sphere of the sun is at the base of the Central Channel, complete with twelve digits, shining with its rays. (2) The lord of creatures (Prajāpati), of intense appearance, travels upwards on the right. Staying in the pathways in the spaces (*ākāśapatha*)<sup>20</sup> in the channels it pervades the entire body. (3) The sun consumes the lunar secretion, wanders in the sphere of the wind and burns up all the bodily constituents in all bodies.”

#### iii. Fire

*kalābhīr daśabhir yuktaḥ sūryamaṇḍalamadhyataḥ |*  
*vasati vastideśe ca vahnir annavipācakaḥ ||5.1||*  
*yo vai vahnīḥ sa vai sūryo yaḥ sūryaḥ sa hutāśanaḥ |*  
*etāv ekatarau dṛṣṭau sūkṣmabhedena bheditau ||5.2||*

**1b** °madhyataḥ ] CJK, °madhyagaḥ M<sub>2</sub> Y  
**1c** vasati vastideśe ] *conj.*; vasati vatideśe C, vasate vastideśe M<sub>2</sub> Y, vasatir asthideśe *cett.*  
**2d** sūkṣmabhedena bheditau ] C; sūkṣmāt sūkṣmatarau nṛbhiḥ M<sub>2</sub>, sūkṣma-  
bhedena bhedinau *cett.*

<sup>19</sup>This triad is mentioned at *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā Nayasūtra* 4.147 and in many subsequent tantric works.

<sup>20</sup>This is a *śleṣa*: *ākāśapatha* can also mean the sun's orbit in the sky.

“(1) Endowed with ten digits, in the middle of the sphere of the sun in the region of the stomach dwells fire, which digests food. (2) Fire is the sun; the sun is fire. The two look almost the same [but] differ subtly.”

(b) The use of the word *bindu* for semen, *bindu*'s identification with the *amṛta* dripping from the moon, its preservation being essential for life and its division into male and female are all innovations of the *Amṛtasiddhi* which are widely adopted in later *haṭhayoga* texts.

i. *adhaś candrāmṛtaṃ yāti tadā mṛtyur nṛṇāṃ bhavet* ||4.11||

11a yāti ] M<sub>2</sub>K; yati C, °mṛtaṃ yasya J

“The nectar of immortality in the moon goes downwards; as a result men die.”

ii. *bindupātena vṛddhatvaṃ mṛtyur bhavati debinām* ||21.3||

“The fall of *bindu* makes men grow old [and] die.”

iii. *sa bindur dviividho jñeyah pauruṣo vanitābhavaḥ |*  
*bījaṃ ca pauruṣaṃ proktaṃ rajas ca strīsamudbhavam* ||7.8||  
*anayoḥ bāhyayogena sṛṣṭiḥ saṃjāyate nṛṇāṃ |*  
*yadābhyantarato yogas tadā yogīti gīyate* ||7.9||  
*kāmarūpe vased binduḥ kūṭāgārasya koṭare |*  
*pūrṇagirimudāsarsād vrajati madhyamāpathe* ||7.10||  
*yonimadhye mahākṣetre javāsindūrasannibham |*  
*rajo vasati jantūnām devitattvasamādhṛtam* ||7.11||  
*binduś candramayo jñeyo rajaḥ sūryamayā tathā |*  
*anayoḥ saṃgamaḥ sādhyah kūṭāgāre ’tidurghaṭe* ||7.12||

9cd yadābhyantarato yogas tadā yogīti gīyate ] CH; yadābhyantarato  
yogas tadā yogī sa gīyate M<sub>2</sub>, yadā tv abhyantare yogas tadā yogo hi  
bhaṇyate cett.

10a kāmarūpe ] CM<sub>2</sub>; kāmarūpo cett.

10b kūṭāgārasya° ] CM<sub>2</sub>; kūṭādhāraṇya J, kūṭādhārasya K

10d °mudā° ] C; °sadā° J, °guhā° cett.

10d vrajati ] C; vrajate M<sub>2</sub>, rājanti cett.

11d °samādhṛtam ] C; °samāvṛtaṃ M<sub>2</sub>, °samāvṛta K<sub>1</sub>, samāvṛtaḥ cett.

“(8) Know *bindu* to be of two kinds, male and female. Semen (*bīja*) is said to be the male [*bindu*] and *rajas* (female generative fluid) is female. (9) As a result of their external union people are created. When they are united internally, then one is declared a yogi. (10) *Bindu* resides in Kāmarūpa in the hollow of the multi-storied palace (*kūṭāgārasya*).<sup>21</sup> Through pleasurable contact at Pūrṇagiri it travels along the Central Channel. (11) *Rajas* resides in the great sacred field in the perineal region (*yonimadhye*). It is as red as a *javā* flower<sup>22</sup> and is supported by the Goddess element (*devitattvasamādhṛtam*). (12) Know *bindu* to be made of the moon and *rajas*

<sup>21</sup>On the *kūṭāgāra*, see below, p.9.

<sup>22</sup>The bright red *javā* flower (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L.), popularly known as the China Rose, is common throughout south, southeast and east Asia.

to be made of the sun. Their union is to be brought about in the very inaccessible multi-storeyed palace.”

- (c) A connection between the mind and breath is taught as early as the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.8.2). The *Amṛtasiddhi* is the first text to teach that mind, breath and *bindu* are connected, a notion found in many subsequent *haṭhayoga* texts.

*calaty ayaṃ yadā vāyus tadā binduś calaḥ smṛtaḥ |*  
*binduś calati yasyāyaṃ cittaṃ tasyaiva cañcalam ||7.17||*

17a *calaty ayaṃ yadā* ] C; *yadāyan calate* M<sub>2</sub>, *yadā cañcalate* JK, *calaty eṣa yadā* YH<sub>1</sub>

17b *calaḥ smṛtaḥ* ] JKYH<sub>1</sub>; *calaḥ smṛ[ta]ḥ* C, *ca cañcalaḥ* M<sub>2</sub>

17c *binduś calati yasyāyaṃ* ] C; *yasyāyan calate binduḥ* M<sub>2</sub>, *yasyāyaṃ calate binduś* JK, *binduś calati yasyāṅge* YH<sub>1</sub>

17d *tasyaiva* ] CKYH<sub>1</sub>; *tasthyai\** M<sub>2</sub>, *tathaiva* J

“It is taught that when the breath moves *bindu* moves; the mind of he whose *bindu* is moving is restless.”

- (d) The three *granthis*.

The *Amṛtasiddhi*'s system of three *granthis*, *brahma*<sup>o</sup>, *viṣṇu*<sup>o</sup> and *rudra*<sup>o</sup>, which are situated along the central channel of the body and are to be pierced by the *mahāvedha* (13.10-11), is very common in subsequent *haṭhayoga* texts.<sup>23</sup>

2. The three practices, *mahāmudrā*, *mahābandha*, *mahāvedha* (*vivekas* 11-13).

These practices, which involve bodily postures and breath control, are used to make the breath enter the central channel and rise upwards. They are an innovation of the *Amṛtasiddhi* and are taught in all subsequent *haṭhayoga* texts, albeit sometimes with different names.

3. The four *avasthās*

The four *avasthās*, “states” or “stages” of yoga practice (*ārambha*, *ghaṭa*, *paricaya*, *niṣpanna/niṣpatti*) introduced in the *Amṛtasiddhi* (*vivekas* 19-33), are taught in many Sanskrit *haṭhayoga* texts; they are also mentioned in the old Hindi *Gorakhbānī* (*śabds* 136-139).

In addition to these innovations, in *viveka* 14 (*abhyāsa*, “practice”) the *Amṛtasiddhi* describes, at a level of detail unparalleled in other texts, the internal processes brought about by its methods, in particular the movement of the breaths.

## Buddhist features of the Amṛtasiddhi

In Schaeffer's analysis of the *Amṛtasiddhi* (2002: 521-524), he notes how it is unique amongst Tibetan Buddhist works because its teachings are said to bestow *jīvanmukti*, “liberation

<sup>23</sup> *Granthis* are mentioned in many earlier Śaiva texts, some of whose lists include *brahma*, *viṣṇu* and *rudra granthis* but not in the *Amṛtasiddhi*'s configuration. See e.g. *Kubjikāmatatantra* 17.61-84, in which there are sixteen *granthis* and *Netratantra* 7.22-25, in which there are twelve.

while living”, and make the yogi identical with Śiva. Despite these Śaiva features, however, close reading of manuscript C, the 12th-century bilingual witness of the text, shows that the text was composed within a Vajrayāna milieu. Furthermore, it pits its teachings against those of other Vajrayāna schools, not Śaiva ones.

As can be seen in the examples given below, manuscript C generally has the best readings of the text and presents its Buddhist teachings intact. In the other manuscripts the specifically Buddhist doctrines found in C are either unwittingly included, misunderstood (and sometimes presented in corrupt forms as a result) or deliberately changed or omitted.

Some of the text’s Buddhist features are ambiguous or obscure enough for them to have been preserved by the redactors of the text as presented in the later witnesses. Thus we find multiple examples of Vajrayāna (or more broadly Buddhist) terminology such as *mahāmudrā* (*viveka* 11 and 31), *vajrapañjara* (7.26d), *jñānasambhāra* (6.9c, 20.2bc), *sūnya* (8.2a, 8.8d, 8.10d, 19.15a, 20.7b, 25.1c), *niṣpanna* (19.2c, 31.1c) and *abhiṣeka* (13.15a). Similarly, *Amṛtasiddhi* 7.4 mentions the very specifically Vajrayāna notion of the four blisses:<sup>24</sup>

*ānandā ye prakathyante viramāntāḥ śarīrataḥ |*  
*te ’pi bindūdbhavāḥ sarve jyotsnā candrabhavā yathā ||7.4||*  
 4c °viramāntāḥ ] C; ciram antaś M<sub>2</sub>, viramāntā JK

“The [four] bodily blisses whose last is [the bliss of] cessation all arise from *bindu*, just as moonlight arises from the moon.”

Other Buddhist features of the text as found in C are deliberately omitted or altered in the later witnesses. Examples of these are listed below. This list is not exhaustive; further close reading of the text is likely to reveal more examples.

#### 1. Chinnamastā

Manuscript C opens with a *sragdharā maṅgala* verse in praise of the goddess Chinnamastā:

*nābhau subhrāravindaṃ tadupari vimalaṃ maṅḍalaṃ caṇḍaraśmeh*  
*samsārasyaikasārā tribhuvanajanāni dharmavartmodayā yā |*  
*tasmīn madhye trimārge tritayatanudharā chinnamastā praśastā*  
*tāṃ vande jñānarūpāṃ maraṇabhayaharāṃ yoginīṃ yogamudrām ||*  
 a subhrā° ] C; candrā° M<sub>2</sub> • vimalaṃ ] C; vivaraṃ M<sub>2</sub>  
 c tasmīn ] C; tasyāṃ M<sub>2</sub> • tri° ] M<sub>2</sub>; tre° C • chinnamastā praśastā ] C;  
 cittahasthāṃ praśastāṃ M<sub>2</sub>  
 d tāṃ vande jñānarūpāṃ ] C; vande jñānasvarūpāṃ M<sub>2</sub>

“At the navel is a white lotus. On top of that is the spotless orb of the sun. In the middle of that, at the triple pathway, is she who is the sole essence of samsara [and] the creator of the three worlds, who arises on the path of dharma, who has three bodies [and] who is lauded as Chinnamastā, ‘she whose head is cut’. I worship her, she who has the form of knowledge, who removes the danger of death, the yoginī, the seal of yoga.”

<sup>24</sup>On the four blisses see Isaacson and Sferra 2014, *passim*.

Until the 16th century, Chinnamastā is not mentioned in non-Buddhist texts (Bühnemann 2000, 37). Her Vajrayāna origins have been demonstrated by Sanderson (2009, 240-241), who notes how the epithet *dharmodayā*, found in the *Amṛtasiddhi* as *dharmavartmodayā*, is “strictly Buddhist”. One might argue that this *maṅgala* verse could be an addition to the text when it was redacted by a Vajrayāna tradition, but the verse is also found in the Grantha manuscript M<sub>2</sub> in a corrupt form. Chinnamastā’s name is given therein as Cittahasthā, but the epithets *dharmavartmodayā* and *tritayatānudharā* are preserved. The Rajasthani and Nepali manuscripts omit the verse.

## 2. *chandoha*

At *Amṛtasiddhi* 1.16, manuscript C uses the specifically Buddhist term *chandoha*:<sup>25</sup>

*sāgarāḥ saritas tatra kṣetrāṇi kṣetrapālakāḥ |*  
*chandohāḥ puṇyatīrthāni pīṭhāni pīṭhadevatāḥ ||1.16||*

16c chandohāḥ ] *em.*; chandohā C, saṃbhedaḥ M<sub>2</sub>JK

“There are oceans, rivers, regions [and] guardians of the regions; gathering places (*chandohāḥ*), sacred sites, seats [of deities and] the deities of the seats”

In Śaiva texts *chandoha* is found as *saṃdoha*.<sup>26</sup> That the manuscripts other than C read *saṃbhedaḥ*, which makes no sense, suggests that they may derive from an archetype that had *saṃdohāḥ*, which subsequent copyists did not understand.

## 3. The four elements

*Amṛtasiddhi* 6.2 refers to four physical elements:

*prthivyādīni catvāri vidhṛtāni pṛthak pṛthak ||6.2||*

2a catvāri ] C; tattvāni *cett.*

“The four [elements] earth etc. are kept separate [by the breath].”

In Śaiva and other Hindu traditions there are five primary physical elements. The later manuscripts therefore change *catvāri*, “four”, to *tattvāni*, “elements”.

## 4. *kūṭāgāra*

This is a common term in the Pali Canon, meaning “a building with a peaked roof or pinnacles, possibly gabled; or with an upper storey” (Rhys Davis and Stede 1921-1925, s.v. *kūṭāgāra*). It is also found in several Vajrayāna texts, where it refers to a “multi-storeyed palace” in the middle of a *maṅḍala* (Reigle 2012, 442). It is not found in Śaiva texts and is not recognised by the later north Indian and Nepali witnesses of the *Amṛtasiddhi*.

<sup>25</sup>Sanderson 2009, 180 n.436.

<sup>26</sup>Sanderson *loc. cit.*: “This substitution of initial ch- for s-/ś- is probably an east-Indianism”.

7.10ab *kāmarūpe vased binduḥ kūṭāgārasya koṭare* |

10a °rūpe ] CM<sub>2</sub>; °rūpo JK

10b kūṭāgārasya ] C, \*ūṭāgārasya M<sub>2</sub>, kūṭādhāraṇya° J, kūṭādhārasya K

“*Bindu* resides at Kāmarūpa,<sup>27</sup> in the hollow of the multi-storeyed palace.”

5. *trivājra*

8.21 in C mentions the three *vajras*, i.e. the common Vajrayāna triad of *kāya*, *vāk* and *citta*. In the other witnesses *trivajrāṇām* is found as *trivargāṇām*.

*trivajrāṇām samāveśas tadā vai jāyate dhruvam* ||8.21||

21c trivajrāṇām ] C; trivargāṇām M<sub>2</sub>JK

“Then absorption into the three *vajras* is sure to arise.”

6. *trikāya*

A reference to the Buddhist notion of the triple body is expunged in the later witnesses:

*sarvajñatvaṃ trikāyasya sarvajñānāvabodhakam* |  
*lakṣaṇam siddhacittasya jñātavyam jñānaśālibhiḥ* ||29.2||

2a °kāyasya ] C; °kālasya M<sub>2</sub>, °kāryasya JK

2b °bodhakam ] CM<sub>2</sub>; °bodhanam JK 2c siddhacittasya ] C; siddhivītasya JK

“Omniscience, which brings about complete understanding of the triple body, should be known by the knowledgeable to be the mark of he whose mind has been mastered.”

7. *buddha*

Verses in which C has (or its archetype is likely to have had) *buddha* are reworked in the later witnesses.

*bindur buddhaḥ śivo bindur bindur viṣṇuḥ prajāpatiḥ* |  
*binduḥ sarvagato devo bindus trailokyadarpaṇaḥ* ||7.15||

15a buddhaḥ ] *em.*; vṛddhaḥ C, ūrdhvaḥ *cett.*

“*Bindu* is Buddha, *bindu* is Śiva, *bindu* is Viṣṇu, the lord of creatures, *bindu* is the omnipresent god, *bindu* is the mirror of the three worlds.”

*tāvad buddho 'py asiddho 'sau naraḥ sāṃsāriko mataḥ* | 32.3ab

3a buddho ] C; \*ddho M<sub>2</sub>, ḷdvo J<sub>1</sub>, siddho J<sub>2</sub>, vaddho K

<sup>27</sup>The *Mahāmudrātilaka* (draft edition of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preuss. Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung Hs. or. 8711, folio 17 verso) locates the bodily Kāmarūpa between the eyebrows.

“Even a Buddha, as long as [he remains] unperfected [by means of the practice taught in the *Amṛtasiddhi* ], is considered a worldly man.”

#### 8. *svādhiṣṭhāna yoga*

In two places the *Amṛtasiddhi* mentions *svādhiṣṭhāna yoga*. This is a method of visualising oneself as a deity which is central to the teachings of a wide variety of Vajrayāna texts (e.g. *Guhyasamāja* 7.2, where it is called *svādhidaivatayoga*, and the *Pañcakrama*, whose third *krama* is called the *svādhiṣṭhānakrama*). In the two verses from the *Amṛtasiddhi* given below, the methods of *svādhiṣṭhāna yoga* are said to be ineffective; to achieve the goals of yoga one must use the practice taught in the *Amṛtasiddhi*. The later witnesses of the text do not understand the phrase *svādhiṣṭhānena yogena* and, presumably surmising *svādhiṣṭhāna* to refer to the second of the six *cakras* in a system taught in many *haṭhayoga* texts (but not in the *Amṛtasiddhi*, which makes no mention of *cakras*), they change *yogena* to *mārgeṇa* in an attempt to make the phrase refer to a pathway in the yogic body.

*svādhiṣṭhānena yogena yasya cittam prasādhyate |*  
*śilām carvati mohena tṛṣṭaḥ kham pibatya api ||8.9||*

9a *yogena* ] C; *mārgeṇa* M<sub>2</sub>JK    9b *yasya* ] JK; *yastuṣ* C, *yatna* M<sub>2</sub>    • *prasādhyate* ] M<sub>2</sub>JK; *prasādhyati* C

“He who tries to master his mind by means of self-established yoga deludedly chews a rock and, thirsty, drinks the sky.”

*svādhiṣṭhānena yogena na kṣīyete guṇau nṛṇām |*  
*asti mudrā viśeṣeṇa gurumukhābjasambhavā ||10.11||*

11a *yogena* ] C; *mārgeṇa* M<sub>2</sub>JK    11b *na kṣīyete* ] *em.*; *na kṣīyate* C, *prakṣīyante* M<sub>2</sub>, *nākṣipeti* JK    • *guṇau* ] C; *guṇā* M<sub>2</sub>, *guṇo* JK    11c *viśeṣeṇa* ] CJK; *viśeṣād vā* M<sub>2</sub>    11d *guru°* ] CJK; *guror* M<sub>2</sub>    • *°mukhābja°* ] C; *°vaktrābja°* M<sub>2</sub>, *°mukhāt tu* JK    • *°sambhavā* ] JK; *°sambhavam* C, *°sambhavāt* M<sub>2</sub>

“The two [unwanted] *guṇas* [*rajas* and *tamas*] in men are not destroyed by self-established yoga. There is a *mudrā* especially [for that], born from the lotus-mouth of the guru.”

## Conclusion

The *Amṛtasiddhi* was composed in a Vajrayāna Buddhist milieu and its intended audience was other Vajrayāna Buddhists. Its teachings are subsequently found in *haṭhayoga* texts from a wide range of non-Buddhist traditions. This does not mean, however, that *haṭhayoga* itself was a product of Vajrayāna Buddhists. I have argued elsewhere (e.g. Mallinson 2015) that some *haṭhayoga* techniques were current among ascetics long before their codification. The *Amṛtasiddhi* was the first text to codify many of *haṭhayoga*'s distinctive principles and practices and was thus the first to assign names to them. As a result the *Amarauḥaprabodha*, the first text to teach physical yoga methods under the name *haṭha*, includes among its techniques the *Amṛtasiddhi*'s *mahāmudrā*, *mahābandha* and *mahāvedha* (with slight variations

in their methods). In addition to these physical techniques, the *Amaraughaprabodha* also adopts from the *Amṛtasiddhi* the more theoretical doctrine of the four *avasthās* or stages of yoga, showing that the *Amṛtasiddhi*'s influence was more than simply terminological.

Because they share traditions of 84 *siddhas*, several scholars have posited connections between Vajrayāna Buddhists and Nāth yogis,<sup>28</sup> with whom the practice of *haṭhayoga* has long been associated. The *Amṛtasiddhi*'s Vajrayāna origins and its borrowings in subsequent *haṭhayoga* texts, some of which are products of Nāth traditions, provide the first known doctrinal basis for this connection and a stimulus for its further investigation.<sup>29</sup>

## Witnesses of the Amṛtasiddhi

### Manuscripts collated

- (C) China Nationalities Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities MS No. 005125 (21). Paper. Sanskrit text in both Nepali (or perhaps East Indian) and Tibetan hand-print scripts, Tibetan translation in Tibetan cursive script.
- Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash, Jodhpur
  1. (J<sub>1</sub>) 1242. Paper. Devanāgarī.
  2. (J<sub>2</sub>) 1243. Paper. Devanāgarī.
- Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project. All entitled *Amṛtasiddhi*.
  1. (K<sub>1</sub>) E655/39. Paper. Devanāgarī.
  2. (K<sub>2</sub>) E1501/11. Paper. Devanāgarī.
  3. (K<sub>3</sub>) H232/37. Paper. Newari.
  4. (K<sub>4</sub>) E68/7. Paper. Devanāgarī.
  5. (K<sub>5</sub>) H233/6. Paper. Newari.
- (M<sub>2</sub>) Mysore Government Oriental Manuscripts Library D-4342 (ff. 21v-40v). Palm leaf. Grantha.

### Other collated witnesses

These two texts are mentioned in the apparatus only in the small number of instances that they provide readings.

- (Y) *Yogacintāmaṇi* ed. Haridās Śarmā, Calcutta Oriental Press, n.d.

<sup>28</sup>Although such usage is not found in pre-modern texts, to avoid confusion I use the word “Nāth” to refer to ascetics usually called *yogīs* or *joḡīs* in texts and travellers’ reports and whose traditions, with some exceptions such as those which trace their lineages to Kānhapa or Kṛṣṇācārya, came, by the sixteenth century at the latest, to be grouped together in twelve *panths* or lineages. On the Nāth Saṃpradāya, see Mallinson 2011.

<sup>29</sup>The historical context of this connection is explored in Mallinson 2019, in which the Konkan site of Kadri (in present-day Mangalore) is proposed as the location of the transition from Vajrayāna Buddhism to Nāth Śaivism evinced by the *Amaraughaprabodha*'s reworking of the teachings of the *Amṛtasiddhi*.

- (H) *Haṭhpradīpikājyotsnā* of Brahmānanda, *ālocanātmak saṃskaraṇ* (Hindī), ed. Svāmī Maheśānand, Dr Bāburām Śarmā, Jñānaśaṃkar Sahāy, Ravindranāth Bodhe. Lonavla: Kaivalyadhām S.M.Y.M. Samiti. 2002.

### Manuscripts not yet collated

1. Mysore Government Oriental Library D-4341. Paper. Grantha.
2. Mysore Government Oriental Library R-2881(n). Palm leaf. Grantha. Incomplete.
3. Adyar Library 75278. Palm leaf. Grantha.
4. Baroda Oriental Institute 7970(b). Palm leaf. Grantha.

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<sup>30</sup>This edition was read with Professor Alexis Sanderson, Jason Birch, Péter-Dániel Szántó and Andrea Aciri in Oxford in early 2012, all of whom I thank for their valuable emendations and suggestions.

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