

Saving the Kashmirian Sanskrit Heritage

An ERC Advanced Grant

ॐ क स ह रक्ष हूं फट् स्वाहा



The ERC project “Saving (*rakṣā*) the Kashmirian Sanskrit Heritage” (KSHRakṣā)¹ aims at contributing to the preservation of the literary heritage of Kashmir, which is in danger of sinking into oblivion. The catastrophic events in Kashmir in 1989,² the pogroms resulting in a dissipation and relocation of Kashmirian Hindus³ have thwarted all hope that Kashmirian academia might tackle the task of recovering its cultural heritage. With the curbing of Indology in Europe and the resulting loss of Indological expertise in many fields, one cannot fail to notice that research on this field is in peril.

The study of Kashmirian Sanskrit Literature started late in the nineteenth century, when scholars on their search tours encountered manuscripts with hitherto unknown specimens of ancient, medieval or modern Sanskrit literature. Some of these had had an impact on the rest of subcontinent much earlier, as for instance, the texts of Kashmirian Śaiva Siddhānta, to which today’s South Indian religion of the same name is indebted. Or take the famous commentary of Abhinavagupta on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which has become the main reference for Indian aesthetics. Another, different example would be the recently edited *Vīraratnaśekharaśikhā*, a 19th Sanskrit rendering of a wide-spread Persian text motivated to a considerable extent by the intellectual exigencies of a new Hindu state. Here high literary Sanskrit is contrary to common Indological belief utilized in an eminently political function.



Severely damaged birch bark manuscript

It is no exaggeration to say that the steady stream of important Kashmirian Sanskrit texts has had the potential to change our view of Indian cultural history. The “discovery” of Tantric

¹ The Anglo-Sanskritic acronym “KSHRakṣā” should remind the Indological reader of the main mantra of in Śrīvidyā Tantrism, as used in Kashmirian ritual manuals (*oṃ aiṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ hasakhaphreṃ hasarakṣamalavaya* [...]). The word *rakṣā*, “protection”, which can mean “protection of texts” (Renou), also describes a Tantric rite of protection. And finally, the second part of the (invented) mantra given above, uses the words of the protection mantra as given in Sāhib Kaul’s *Śyāmāpaddhati*, which will be published in this project.

² Due to more prominent changes in world politics in the same year, these events were hardly noticed outside.

³ This included the destruction of whole manuscript libraries during the pogroms.

Shaivism and its forgotten dominance in the Indian religious landscape would be one case in point. More than two decades of intensive work with Kashmirian materials has convinced us that more literary gems are waiting to be found: Previous examples of first editions of texts, to cite only some produced in our research group in Marburg, comprise the most complex specimen of visual poetry in world literature (dated 1676),¹ the largest translation or adaptation of a Persian text in Sanskrit (composed in the 1840s),² and a partial translation of Don Quixote into Sanskrit (completed 1936).³ None of these texts had been ever printed and remained unknown to research.



The World's Largest Carmen Cancellatum

The most spectacular discovery is a puzzling text called *Wish-fulfilling Tree (kalpavrkṣa)*, a work composed by a 17th century author, whose large oeuvre remained mostly unpublished. It was not clear what this text, available in a few manuscripts, actually was, until two crucial parts of the puzzle surfaced in archives that were thousands of kilometres apart. It became known that the library in Srinagar held objects, cloths of 1.5 metres in square, containing a chess-board like layout, into which the whole 45 page text of the *Kalpavrkṣa* was written. The cloth was obviously meant for display as a piece of art, with clearly visible red lines in all directions formed by rubricated letters. These lines form cross-word like intexts, of which some are in Sanskrit, some in Indian vernaculars, yet others unrecognized.

¹ See Hanneder 2021.

² This is an ongoing project, see <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fb10/iksl/faecher/indologie/arbeitsstelle-der-akademie-der-wissenschaften-und-der-literatur-mainz-1/sahib-ram>

³ Dimitrov 2019. See also <http://www.traduccionliteraria.org/1611/art/dimitrov.htm>.

A reproduction of the cloth was displayed at the World Sanskrit Conference in Delhi 2012, but no scholar could make much sense of it. Absurdly, the final piece of the puzzle had been in Germany all along, in a singular manuscript kept in Berlin—in the *Sammlung Janert*. It contained a text, previously unknown of course, which states in the colophon that it lists the texts in different languages (!) contained in the *Kalpavṛkṣa*. The texts listed are indeed the red *intexts* from our cloth, and since names of the languages are mentioned, we know that the author intended to incorporate 30 languages into his visual poetry, most of them from the subcontinent, but also including Persian and Arabic. To the non-Indologist implications of these findings may not be immediately evident, but the first text mentioned is the world’s largest *carmen cancellatum*, which means that the international history of visual poetry (Ernst 1991) needs to be rewritten.

In the present project, funded by the *European Research Council* and located in the *Arbeitsstelle der Akademie der Wissenschaften* in the Indological Institute at Marburg University,¹ a group of five scholars will scour the archives for highlights and make them accessible in critical editions. The task might seem simple, but editing Sanskrit texts is far from trivial and requires extensive training. The well-known general methods and principles of textual criticism will have to be joined with considerations of Sanskrit styles, of specific genres, times and individual authors. These skills are not regularly developed to the required extent, and consequently many Indologists never edit any text, but prefer to rely on ready-made editions with commentaries and translations. In my view, as far as the comparatively young academic field of Sanskrit Studies is concerned, in which many texts remain unpublished, editing is not a menial service rendered by specialists to the Indological public, but the very foundation, on which all other more complex research questions are necessarily based.

The result of the project will be a series of first editions of unique texts, each accompanied by an introduction, dealing with its literary, religious or philosophical context, so that their significance for the history of Sanskrit literature can be grasped. Where appropriate, this may include partial or even full translations, or summaries. The project is in other words a bold attempt to drastically improve the situation of scholarship in Kashmirian Sanskrit by making a careful selection of previously unknown works available.

By the way, some expectations entertained by a segment of academia, and the general public, that all this might be more efficiently accomplished through modern digital technology remain unfortunately just projections into a future, in which all the minor problems we have just now will be solved. Surely editors would be delighted if automatic editing, or even OCR of handwritten Śāradā would work, but a high rate of error persists at present. And our experience in using cutting edge software has often conformed that “digital is faster, but it takes longer”.²

¹ See <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fb10/iksl/faecher/indologie/arbeitsstelle-der-akademie-der-wissenschaften-und-der-literatur-mainz-1>.

²The software that has proved its value in a previous project and is used by us on a regular basis encompasses *ekdosis*, a package developed for T_EX by Roberto Alessi (CNRS), who has kindly integrated some Indology related additions at our request. This package, heavily tested in the *Light on Haṭhayoga* project, produces critical editions with multiple apparatuses, but with additional xml output. Maximilian Mehner (Marburg) has written further tools for transforming this (TEI conformant) xml output into html, which has resulted in his *Sanskrit Editing Suite*. The double workflow from input to print-ready output on the one hand, and to an online edition, is thereby greatly simplified: Users are working on a single file that produces both the printed book as well as the online edition in a single run without further user intervention. The workflow is explained here: <https://github.com/mmehner/sanskrit-editing-suite/blob/master/charts/editing-workflow-with-ekdosis.pdf>.

Our focus on Kashmir is not merely a reaction to the current political situation. In ancient and medieval India, Kashmir was regarded as the metaphorical seat of the goddess of language and learning—in recognition of the enormous proliferation of almost all important schools of drama, rhetoric and poetology in the comparatively small Kashmirian valley. As indicated above, even in far away South India, the religion of Śaiva Siddhānta traced its intellectual ancestry to Kashmir. However, since the Indian subcontinent remained a manuscript culture until well into the 19th century, transregional distribution of texts had its limits, and the plethora of Kashmirian Sanskrit literature remained unknown to the rest of India even when the massive printing of Sanskrit texts commenced. It was only when research scholars like Georg Bühler or Marc Aurel Stein made their famous tours in search of manuscripts to Kashmir¹ that Kashmirian literature became more widely known. Soon after, a series called *Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies* published literary highlights from the Kashmirian valley in a pioneering effort.²

The history of Indology teaches us that such pioneering efforts depend on individual researchers and may disperse in the next generation. Bühler deposited his collection of Kashmirian manuscripts in Pune, and many of these texts continue to lie there unexplored. M. A. Stein's Kashmirian collections are now in Oxford, Budapest and Vienna. Both scholars had accomplished a lot during their lifetime, but perusing these collections gives one the impression that they were hoping for later generations to find the means of continuing where they had to break off. The thoughtful selection of interesting manuscripts in Stein's Oxford collection is like an invitation for Indologists to raise the treasures. Stein's own work was cut short during the Second World War, and it took until the late eighties that scholars followed his lead in an unprecedented interest in Kashmirian Sanskrit Culture.³

From the 1980s a renewed interest in Kashmirian Sanskrit thrived in Indological centres such as Oxford and later Halle. In Oxford, Alexis Sanderson and his pupils unearthed not only many highlights of the literature of Śaivism, but reaped the harvest from the new field of unstudied manuscripts: Following his research, the history of Hinduism had to be partly rewritten,⁴ acknowledging the role of Tantric traditions in shaping Indian religions. In the absence of editions, Sanderson has often worked directly from manuscripts in ways that few scholars were able to, often leaving it to his students to produce first editions and studies of relevant works.⁵ In the field of political history of Kashmir, Walter Slaje made spectacular progress in Halle.⁶ Ignoring the widely-held conviction that India had no sense of history and consequently no historical writings, Slaje demonstrated that in Kashmir systematic early attempts were made at a consistent historiography, starting from mythical beginnings, becoming much more realistic and reliable nearer to the author's times, and extremely detailed for the times the authors themselves had witnessed. Interestingly regular updates continued the practice of writing a continuous history

¹ A landmark publication was Bühler 1877.

² In the first half of the 20th century more than 70 volumes appeared.

³ The Sanskrit translation of *Don Quixote* that Stein had prepared for publication is a case in point. It was deposited in an archive, where no one would look for this sort of text. After a recent "rediscovery" it was published almost a century later (Dimitrov 2019).

⁴ An overview is provided by Goodall and Isaacson 2011.

⁵ Compare merely his "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir" (Sanderson 2007), which contains a whole history of Śaiva literature produced to a large extent from manuscripts, not from printed books.

⁶ See Slaje 2019 and the complete bibliography there for an overview.

of Kashmir into the 19th century! Today it seems unbelievable that Indology could have missed this fact.

I had the privilege to learn from both these scholars in Oxford and Halle, and when Indology in Halle had to close its doors forever despite its spectacular track record, the *Arbeitsstelle für Historiographie und Geistesgeschichte Kaschmirs* of the Mainz Academy (*Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur*) was transferred to Marburg, where I have tried to continue this line of work. The ERC project, located in this *Arbeitsstelle* in Marburg, is a unique chance to intensify and accelerate this endeavour.

The Sources

Despite the somewhat gloomy prospect for Indological research on Kashmirian literature, the situation has in recent years changed. The last decade has seen an unprecedented surge of manuscript materials online, a large segment of which are from Kashmir. I suppose the fear of imminent further losses has prompted some libraries and private collectors to relinquish their long cherished reservations about sharing materials with scholars or even the public domain.

We can also diagnose a shift in mentality, from that of old-style protective librarians, who consider it their duty to restrict and even deny access for the sake of preservation, to one of modern digital natives sharing materials online. There is even a new urge to present *one's own* cultural heritage, which makes this attitude strangely compatible with current Indian nationalism. Be that as it may, as a result, large online reservoirs of Sanskrit manuscripts have recently become available, including libraries that were highly restricted, and even private libraries previously unknown. Due to the way that these manuscripts are stored and displayed online, it is not easy to get an estimate of their total number. In recent years I have collected links to online archives, and also saved some of the interesting items, should they again disappear from the internet.¹ From previous experience easy access to 10.000 Kashmirian manuscripts can be expected, but such numbers are not very telling, since some manuscripts will have already been listed or described catalogues. What is more important for the present project is that scanning whole shelves usually turns up forgotten manuscripts that have never been catalogued. Being able to quickly check a scan of a manuscript opens the possibility to find new things in insufficiently catalogued items.

Experience shows that for a search for unknown texts, catalogue entries can be of limited value, they may be even misleading. For a long time scholars assumed that Germany had exemplary catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts in the VOHD² series, and, though it was to my knowledge never claimed, it was widely assumed that this catalogue covered virtually everything, especially in the case of those libraries that had been in the focus of the cataloguing project. Much later it became clear that the cataloguing was quite selective and had focussed on texts already known, since only those could be described easily and with copious references. As a result, even larger collections of Kashmirian manuscripts remain unexplored until today.³ After the death of

¹ This may be unnecessary in the case of the largest online source, that is, www.archive.org.

² *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*. See *References* below.

³ See the statement on the website of the Göttingen library: "Die Sammlung Cod. Ms. Sanscr. Vish. — Diese noch nicht katalogisierte Sammlung stammt aus Kaschmir und umfasst ca. 250 Sanskrit-Handschriften, grössten-

the main editor of the VOHD and Indological manuscript expert, Klaus Ludwig Janert, the sale of his sizeable private collection of Kashmirian manuscripts to the Berlin Library by his widow in 1996¹ came as a shock to scholars focussing on Kashmir, for no one had known or even suspected that the most precious pieces of Kashmirian manuscripts were not those mentioned in the VOHD and available in public libraries, but were privately owned by Janert—and kept secret during his lifetime. In the *Mokṣopāya* editing project, in which I was working at the time, we realized only then that some important manuscripts for our project were not lying in Srinagar, but had been as close as Cologne. Then an interesting thing happened. The “Sammlung Janert”, once in Berlin, was catalogued in the VOHD, and the cataloguer Gerhard Ehlers, instead of producing another selective catalogue with elaborate descriptions and exuberant references to secondary literature, produced an honest catalogue of the complete collection, with question marks employed when texts were hitherto unknown and explicit mention of other insecurities.² This was a catalogue not produced for library representation, but for scholars interested in further research—and it was of invaluable help in some of our previous projects.

The perhaps largest online collection of Kashmirian manuscripts was amassed by a team led by Chetan Pandey, who has deposited the results in archive.org under the names *eGangotri* or *Dharmatrust*. Gaining an overview of these materials is tricky, since they are stored under the names of the holding libraries, or under the names of the individuals whose private collections were scanned.³ For instance, the collection https://archive.org/details/dharmarht_rustjkcollectionbyegangotri with 3500 items is quite large, the private collection https://archive.org/details/@uma_raman_jha is quite small in comparison. There are many more online resources to search, some are complete libraries with a known focus on Kashmirian manuscripts, as for instance the Lalchand Research Library which records manuscripts from Chandigarh, which inherited old Kashmirian materials from Lahore.

There is a collection of 250, mostly Śāradā, manuscripts, which remain uncatalogued and unscanned in nearby Göttingen. Another collection that still contains interesting new texts is the collection of Bühler. The Indologist Georg Bühler had deposited the manuscripts from his search tours in his home institution at the time, the Deccan College (Pune), from where they were transferred within Pune to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI).

Our present endeavour will take a kind of bottom-up approach: We shall go through the mass of uncatalogued and newly available manuscripts and first establish whether a text is already known and edited. If so, we will save minimal information, that is, a link to the manuscript scan and a reference to the edition. With this it will be excluded from further consideration. Since the information can be useful to research, we intend to collect the data in a form that can be exported to online catalogues. Then the main phase of the project will follow, the production of critical editions of a selected group of texts with introductory studies etc.

teils in Sarada-Schrift.” <https://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/geisteswissenschaften-und-theologie/sued-und-suedostasiatische-philologien/sammlung/handschriften/>

¹ See Ehlers 2006, p. 7f.

² See Ehlers 2006–2016.

³ A word search of texts is equally difficult, since the names associated with the texts are not in any standard or regulated orthography, which leaves the scholar at the mercy of the search methods implemented on the website.

Editing

As is well-known the method behind Indological editing took shape in the early 19th century, when August Wilhelm Schlegel and others demanded that a proper assessment of the sources had to be the basis of research on Indian literature and culture, thereby adopting what he perceived to be the then “modern” method in Classical Philology. Indology has since then regularly updated its methods with reference to various European philologies: later in the 19th century it followed the so-called “Lachmannian” editing¹ where possible, but there is also a recognition of what is called the “Bédier” or “best manuscript” method, when it came to editing medieval works in unregulated varieties of Sanskrit or in vernaculars. The school of Pasquali and its emphasis on contamination has also informed modern Indological editing, as has the latest computer aided stemmatology.

The texts in the purview of the present project usually differ from many famous works with an Indian-wide dissemination in multiple scripts and possibly a large number of manuscripts. For instance, our project of editing the *Haṭhāpradīpikā*, a well-known Yoga text, had to deal with ca. 200 manuscripts, which severely complicated editing.

However, the texts we are looking for in the project are mostly transmitted in a very different scenario, i.e. in few manuscripts with a single script within a comparatively closed regional dissemination, for Kashmir was at times sealed off from the rest of the subcontinent, had its local script for Sanskrit (Śāradā), and introduced the pan-Indian Nāgarī script only during Dogra rule in the 19th century. This means that many Kashmirian works remained unknown outside.

During times of persecution the Pandit communities had to flee the valley, which contributed to decimating the number of copies available. As a result it is common that rare items in Kashmirian Sanskrit Literature are preserved merely in few, or even one copy. Works available in many manuscripts are usually those that were used in daily religious life, like ritual manuals, astrological works, as well as hymns, or prayers, which were part of the liturgy. In other words, the texts we are looking for are very likely preserved only in few manuscripts, but today scattered in libraries all over India and even around the globe.

For editorial practice this means that despite our arsenal of methods, the scope of textual criticism may sometimes be limited to the editing of a “singular manuscript” (*codex unicus*). In rare cases, when this last manuscript is poorly preserved we may not even be able to produce a reasonable edition, but may present the text, or the damaged passages, in a diplomatic transcript. However, experience shows that Śāradā manuscripts of texts composed in Kashmir are usually more reliable than those of many other scribal traditions of South Asia, where we have to expect a large number of banal and a fair number of complicated scribal errors. In my experience, editing of Kashmirian texts transmitted only in the Kashmirian script, which means without any intervening process of transcription into other scripts, is often much faster and yields more reliable results than editing texts from a pan-Indian, multi-script transmission, which calls for more complicated methods.

It is not to be expected that that we will often be able to dispose of stemmatical observations in the course of editing. We may have to rely on the usual “inner criteria” as metre, grammar (which is quite strict in this layer of Sanskrit), general consistency of style, and the cultural,

¹ There is no space to go into details of this. See Hanneder 2017 for details of the Indological method of editing.

philosophical or religious background that is assumed behind the text, as the main tools for this type of editing. Should there be other cases, up-to-date software for creating cladograms or stemmatic groups¹ are readily available.

We shall exclude works on astrology and astronomy. These texts were in daily practical use in ritual, had to be in many households, and therefore abound in collections. A study would possibly be worthwhile, but the sheer volume of manuscripts would require a different project design as well as a team with intensive training in old-Indian astronomy. Another field of considerable size that will be largely excluded is that of ritual manuals. Manuscripts of ritual give important insights into daily religious practice, but not even the long-term research project on Indian Ritual² has tried to edit more than a few hand-picked pieces from the enormous mass of available sources. Should we, however, find literary, or otherwise sophisticated or historically relevant ritual manuals, these would definitely qualify for further consideration.

Practically all other genres are included, the largest segment being within the categories of religious and philosophical literature, or poetry. However, since we are looking for the unusual, it does not make much sense giving a detailed list of genres. The three findings mentioned above as examples—an adaptation from Persian, a translation from Spanish via English, and a cloth containing visual poetry—would not have been part of any taxonomy.

The aim is a careful selection of previously unknown Kashmirian Sanskrit works, for which we are planning ten volumes in a new series (Kashmirian Sanskrit Heritage). These first editions will be accompanied by studies of their literary, religious or philosophical aspects, from which their significance for the history of Sanskrit Literature can be grasped. The project is a bold attempt to drastically improve the basis of scholarship in Kashmirian Sanskrit.

A Practical Example

In our Yoga project, an Anglo-German collaboration to critically edit the *Hathapradīpikā* from almost 200 manuscripts, we had found a larger manuscript containing many texts.³

For the discovery of new and interesting texts, normal browsing of digital manuscript libraries can be sufficient. It may sound paradox, but the most interesting digital archives are often those that come with a minimum description of manuscripts, for this means that the scanning followed no system except to proceed shelf by shelf. It is this mechanical, mindless method that is most likely to give access to forgotten, or uncatalogued items.

Digital browsing has further advantages: In normal archives it is not possible to look at everything in a shelf, one has to select manuscripts from a catalogue or hand-list, and have them brought into the reading room.



¹ In our Yoga project we have successfully used *SplitsTree*.

² *Sonderforschungsbereich „Ritualdynamik“ (SFB 619)*, running from 2002 to 2013.

³ See <https://dav.splrarebooks.com/collection/view/hathayogapradipikadi-granhasamgrahah>.

There are few places where one could order ten or twenty manuscripts from the librarian, go through the material quickly, and expect to order the next batch (which needs to be selected again from the catalogue). In comparison, looking through a digital shelf is much more effective, and it can yield accidental findings that are unlikely or prohibitively time-consuming in a normal library setting. Let me give an example, made during the preparation planning of the project, when I was browsing a manuscript online.

While the web interface of the Lalchand Research Library is excellent, the catalogue has no more information on the item than the title made up probably by the librarians: *haṭhayoga-pradīpikādisaṃgrahaḥ*, which means a codex with a “collection of texts starting with *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā*”,¹ but it remains unclear what the other texts are. I did not have time to go through all the texts at first, and returned to this manuscript only for planning the present project, hoping that this would be a good example for explaining our approach.

The manuscript is a Kashmirian “Sammelhandschrift” containing a variety of texts. It belongs to a class of voluminous, but pocket size manuscripts, vaguely resembling an almanach, since it often contains texts, or excerpts from texts centering on a specific topic, sometimes collected works of an author, or of a school.

The texts can be roughly identified with the help of marginal abbreviations and colophons. Following the *Haṭhapradīpikā* that starts the codex, we find, on the 727 exposures, a sizeable collection of texts:

<i>Mokṣopāya</i> (some chapters)	<i>Vāsiṣṭhasāra</i> (159–219)
<i>Nārāyanabhṭastava</i> (220–)	<i>Amarauḡhasāsana</i> (250–278)
<i>Gāyatrījapavidhi</i> (281–)	<i>Gāyatrīvivaraṇa</i> (295–)
<i>Oṃkāramāhātmya</i> (311–)	Abhinavagupta: <i>Paramārthasāra</i> (–388)
<i>Hastāmalakastotra</i> (443–447)	<i>Dakṣiṇāmūrtistotra</i> (448–453)
<i>Spandaśāstra</i> (454–467)	<i>Vijñābhhairava</i> (468–512)
<i>Goraḡśasataka</i> (515–73)	<i>Ṣaṭcakraṇirṇaya</i> (573–584)
<i>Vedāntasāra</i> (–592)	<i>Bodhaprasavamañjarī</i> (593–613)
<i>Pratyabhijñāsūtra</i> (= <i>kārikā</i>) 614–669	<i>Pratyabhijñāvivṛtīvimarśinī</i> 675–689
<i>Parāpraveśikā</i> -702	<i>Bahurūpagarbhistotra</i>
addenda (partly Persian)	

One can easily² identify the roughly twenty text contained in this codex, and thereby rule out from further consideration as known and edited almost all. Much could be said about these texts, but for Kashmir experts most names are household items³—except the *Bodhaprasavamañjarī*. This name occurs in no index or reference work known to me. Checking some of the verses

¹ By the way, the text is called *Haṭhapradīpikā* in all manuscripts. The *-yoga-* was inserted by the first editors for clarification, and as is not unusual in such cases, was never changed again.

² A more thorough description of all smaller notes might take more time, but was not necessary for the present purpose.

³ The *Ṣaṭcakraṇirṇaya* is perhaps an exception, a rare Yogatext, not yet printed, but available in a few manuscripts and used by the London Haṭhayoga Project.

against the known collection of electronic texts yielded no hit. In other words, this seems to be an original and hitherto unknown work.

Here is the beginning and end of this text:

*praṇāñcottīrṇarūpāya namas te viśvamūrtaye
sadānandaprakāśāya svātmane nanu śaktaye* (1)

Obeisance to you, who transcends the multifaceted world,
has the world as his body, who is the light of being and bliss,
one's own self, indeed the power.

*tvam cettā cetanīyo 'haṃ tvam evāsi na cāsmi aham
aham tvam ity ubhau na sto yatra tasmai namo namaḥ* (2)

You are the perceiver¹, I am the perceived. You exist, but I do not.
Obeisance to you, in which both, I and you, do not exist.

*antardehe mayā nityaṃ tvam cātmā ca gaveśitaḥ
na dr̥ṣṭas tvam na caivātmā draṣṭā dr̥śyaḥ kathaṃ bhavet* (3)

I have always looked for you and the self in this body,
but have not seen you, nor a self—how could the seer be seen? [...]

*ity advayāmṛtarasaphalasaṃpadvivardhinī
niveditā tvatpadayor bodhaprasavamañjarī* (78)

With these verses I lay a bouquet of flowers of awakening at your feet,
which increases the wealth of the immortal scent (lit. taste) of non-duality.

Colophon:

*ity anirvācyādvayarasāsuvādasamāveśavatā kenāpi prakāśitā bodhaprasavamañjarī
bhaktajanahṛdayeṣu saṃsphuratāt.*

“May this “bouquet of flowers of awakening” shine forth, revealed by an anonymous,
who has immersed himself in relishing the taste of this indescribable non-duality.”

The colophon reinforces the doctrinal or mystical direction of the text, according to which an individuum does not really exist, by not mentioning any named author, but an anonymous, who has experienced this “taste of non-duality”.

Since no other manuscript of this text is known, and the manuscript does not seem to have serious errors, this is a case where producing a solid critical edition is fairly straightforward. The scant remarks thrown for the expert reader of Kashmirian Sanskrit, in our case, the wording—especially the use of the term *samāveśa*—points to a non-dual Śaiva background, for only there is the word used in this manner. However, the emphasis on *advaita* and on personal experience does not suggest that this is a very early text. It more likely stems from the time when Advaita (Vedānta) and non-dual Kashmirian Śaivism became fused in Kashmir. We have more examples

¹ More literally, the “subject of consciousness”.

of this from the 17th century, as Sāhib Kaul, but in the absence of any objective data this is just a first guess.

I would furthermore argue that this text should be allotted to a new genre of mystical literature, in which personal experience of the absolute, the self (*ātman*) or of god, is the main topic, and where philosophical content recedes to the background. In my own collection of unedited Kashmirian texts there are more specimina with a similar emphasis, and I would argue that such works are ill placed in devotional literature or religious praise (*stotra*).¹ Especially if we compare these works with Christian mystical literature, we may wonder why Indological literary history has avoided this category altogether for Sanskrit works. However, the reluctance to use the term has its parallels in European medieval studies and theology, where an author like Meister Eckhart has historically been placed within mysticism, but has more recently, referring to his Latin works, been denied this categorisation—discussions along the same lines have not even begun in Indology.

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¹ As does Stainton 2019, who reevaluates parts of “devotional” literature as a form of liturgical prayer.