

Chapter 2

The Emergence and Formation of Śaiva *antyeṣṭi* in the Earliest Extant Śaiva Siddhānta Scriptures

1. Preliminary remarks: Three stages in the development of Śaiva funerary rites

This chapter is dedicated to examining the earliest sources on Śaiva funerary rites in tantric literature, namely, Saiddhāntika scriptural sources dating from about the fifth to the ninth century. These texts are witnesses to the formative phase of tantric death practices and document the earliest modalities and rationales for their performance. In general, it seems the redactors of the scriptural sources were careful to conceal clues about the actual social context, using a façade of ambiguity. This was most likely a means for preserving the authoritative character of these scriptures. Ambiguity of this kind would especially be expected in the transitional phase of Śaiva tantric groups beginning to develop their own funerary practices and doctrinal positions. Nevertheless, due to the essentially communal nature of death rites, as Śaiva ritual specialists tried to meet the needs and expectations of their respective target audiences, the different accounts inadvertently reflect various social contexts and degrees of engagement with the underlying doctrinal issues. They therefore do give us some insight into how this sphere of death rites was conceptualized during the early stages of this development. It can be shown that their introduction into the ritual repertoire was a gradual process, reflecting the doctrinally problematic position of these rites in the Śaiva tantric context. In our analysis, the development of Śaiva tantric cremation rites can be divided into the following three stages:

- (1) the cremation of the corpse with a specially consecrated Śiva fire (*śivāgni*), probably intended mainly for Śaiva ascetics, a procedure I shall refer to as “simple cremation” in the following;
- (2) the cremation of the corpse with the Śiva fire together with an additional ritual feature involving the deceased person’s soul, but not its proper initiation; and

(3) the full initiation of the deceased person's soul followed by the cremation of the corpse with the Śiva fire, which in the following I shall call "initiatory cremation".

These stages relate approximately to the relative chronology of the early scriptures in which these descriptions appear.¹ However, while the texts will be examined within a chronological framework, it must be kept in mind that absolute statements concerning the dates or provenance of Śaiva scriptures are impossible. There is simply not enough evidence regarding their composition. At most, the order and age of these scriptures can be determined by considering them in relation to each other, but no decisions can be considered final.² Further, it would be rash to assume that the progression described above occurred uniformly throughout the Śaiva world. Nevertheless, a relative chronology offers a useful framework for tracing the development of these Śaiva tantric funerary practices. Accordingly, the order in which the respective scriptures will be discussed follows the chronology established by Goodall. A brief overview of sources and comments on their relative dates is also given.

***Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā* (Ni)**: The earliest extant scripture in this group is the Ni, consisting of five books, namely the *Niśvāsamukha*, the *Mūlasūtra*, the *Uttarasūtra*, the *Nayasūtra*, and the *Guhyasūtra*. These also represent different compositional layers, of which the *Mūlasūtra* has been identified as "the kernel of the text" and therefore the oldest part,³ with the *Nayasūtra* and *Uttarasūtra* being subsequent expansions on it, and the *Guhyasūtra* added after this as a supplement. In addition to this is the *Niśvāsamukha*, which appears to have been the final compositional layer, included as the opening section of the Ni to provide a frame story and situate the scrip-

¹ For more on this, see in particular Goodall 1998, p. xlvi–lxxiii and 2004, p. xviii–xxxiv, as well as Sanderson 2001.

² For a set of basic comparison points for determining a relative chronology between early Saiddhāntika scriptures, see the discussion in Goodall 1998, pp. xxxvi–lxxiii. See also the introduction to this volume, p. 20.

³ Goodall 2014, p. 20.

ture's teaching in the context of the wider Śaiva world of the time.⁴ Amongst these books, it is only in the *Guhyasūtra* that we find one brief and isolated reference to funerary practices. Regarding the dates of composition of the various books, Dominic Goodall has hypothesised that the four *sūtras* – i.e. the *Mūlasūtra*, *Uttarasūtra*, *Nayasūtra* and *Guhyasūtra* – were completed at the latest by the seventh century.⁵ Circumstantial evidence has led him to hypothesise that the earliest compositional layers – i.e. the first three *sūtras* – may have been composed as early as the fifth century.⁶ The Ni is characterised by archaisms in doctrinal⁷ and socio-religious matters. While the Ni is listed in the present chapter as a work of the Saiddhāntika corpus, it should be noted that the Ni itself does not classify itself as such anywhere. In fact, it seems as if the Ni was composed before the period in which a taxonomy of Śaiva scriptures and the category “Siddhānta” existed; nonetheless, the tradition later classifies the work as part of the canon of Saiddhāntika scriptures.⁸

***Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṃgraha* (SvāSS):** The SvāSS is the earliest Śaiva scripture to contain an account of cremation rituals. The early date of the work is attested by the fact that it received a commentary by Sadyojyotiḥ, who was active around 675–725 CE.⁹ Structurally it is archaic, with a Nepalese manuscript showing that it was originally not divided into the four *pādas* (doctrinal units) characteristic of later works.¹⁰

⁴ See Goodall 2015, pp. 19–21. In the *Niśvāsamukha*, the Ni thus provides a survey of the then existing Śaiva communities, which mainly involved lay forms of Śaivism and the Atimārga traditions; see Sanderson 2006 and Kafle 2015, the latter containing a critical edition of the text.

⁵ Goodall 2015, pp. 71–73.

⁶ For arguments for this early date, see Sanderson 2006, pp. 153–154, Goodall & Isaacson 2007, Goodall 2009, Goodall 2010, Goodall & Isaacson 2014, and Goodall 2015, pp. 19–84.

⁷ Archaic doctrinal features are, for instance, the absence of the concept of *mala* and of any initiatory categories; see Goodall 2015, p. 42.

⁸ See Goodall 2015, p. 17.

⁹ See Sanderson 2006b, pp. 45–79 and 2014, p. 15, fn. 54. Further, Sanderson (2006b, p. 2) has noted that there is a cross reference to the early *Rauravasūtrasaṃgraha*.

¹⁰ See p. 21.

Sārdhatriśatikālottara (SārK): The SārK is one of the many recensions of the *Kālottara*, a lost text also known as *Āgneyya*, *Vāthula* or *Vātula* that is found in the common canonical list of the twenty-eight Saiddhāntika scriptures.¹¹ As Goodall has pointed out, it is currently not possible to identify which parts of this text are from the original *Kālottara*. However, there are a number of shorter recensions which have been identified as containing shared material, material that may go back to the original *Kālottara*; these versions are referred to as the non-eclectic *Kālottara* recensions and feature the number of verses as part of their name.¹² The SārK is the 350-verse version and one of these so-called non-eclectic recensions. As for the SārK's place in the relative chronology of Saiddhāntika scriptures, the existence of one (undated) palm-leaf manuscript and its archaic linguistic features suggest a relatively early date. Regarding the relative chronology of the various non-eclectic recensions of the *Kālottara*, Goodall has established that the SārK is later than the 200-verse recension, the *Dviśatikālottara*,¹³ which Sanderson has identified as the source of the basic mantra-system underlying all medieval Saiddhāntika ritual manuals.¹⁴ However, in terms of firm dates, the only tangible indication we have is that the *Dviśatikālottara* was composed sometime before Brahmaśambhu's ritual manual *Naimittikakriyānusandhāna*, which has been dated to 937/8 CE (see chapter 3).

Sarvajñānottara (SJU):¹⁵ The SJU is another scripture claiming to be a recension of the above-mentioned *Kālottara*. The work is also clearly an early Saiddhāntika scripture and is also preserved in an old Nepalese palm-leaf manuscript. It is archaic in structure since it is not arranged according to *pāda* divisions. In terms of doctrine, the SJU is notable in that it presents a slightly different position than all the other Saiddhāntika scriptures.

¹¹ See Goodall 2009, p. 125.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Goodall (2009, p. 126) has shown that the *Sārdhatriśatikālottara* explicitly refers to the *Dviśatikālottara*.

¹⁴ See Sanderson 2003/2004, pp. 253–361.

¹⁵ I would like to thank Dominic Goodall for making available to me his etext of his edition in progress of large parts of the SJU; the numbering for chapters and verses in passages quoted from the text other than chapters 12 and 13 are following his preliminary edition.

While the Siddhānta is strictly dualistic in its philosophical outlook, that is to say, it considers God, individual souls and the material that makes up the universe to be distinct entities, the SJU contains some monistic features, features that are usually associated with non-Saiddhāntika tantric traditions.¹⁶ This doctrinal blend possibly indicates that this is an early work, if it may be supposed that this type of doctrinal distinction was not yet as clearly formulated and distinguished amongst Śaiva tantric schools.

Kiraṇatantra (Kir): The Kir is preserved in a number of early Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts and thus falls within the category of pre-tenth century Saiddhāntika scriptures as well. However, amongst this early corpus, it shows signs that it is one of the later texts. For example, although it also has no obvious *pāda* division, its structure already alludes to such a division; also its language is more polished and represents a higher level of the Sanskrit *śāstric* style.¹⁷ Of all these early Saiddhāntika scriptures, it shows the highest degree of involvement with brahmanical mainstream society, also in the sphere of Śaiva funerary practices. It is thus an important witness for the current study.

Dīkṣottara (DīU): The DīU is associated with the *Niśvāsakārikā*, itself a work claiming to be part of the *Niśvāsa* corpus, that is, the collection of works associated with the earliest extant Saiddhāntika scripture, the Ni listed above.¹⁸ Presently it is not possible to assign a certain date to the work, but Goodall has put forward that the window in which the DīU could have been composed must be sometime after the old corpus of the Ni was closed in the seventh century, but before the tenth, when the DīU was quoted by the Kashmirian Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka* (TĀ).¹⁹

¹⁶ Sanderson 1992, pp. 291–292. For another example of monistic doctrinal features in a Saiddhāntika work, see the *Pārameśvara* as quoted and discussed in Goodall 1998, p. lvi.

¹⁷ See Goodall 1998.

¹⁸ See Goodall 2015, p. 20 and pp. 23ff. Goodall points out that the last book of the Ni, the *Guhyasūtra*, mentions another work referred to as *kārikā* in its very last verse, this probably meaning the *Niśvāsakārikā*; he has further established that parts of the *Niśvāsakārikā* are contemporary with the last lines of the *Guhyasūtra*. The *Niśvāsakārikā* is currently accessible through transcripts preserved at the IFP (for a list and their assessment, see Goodall 2015, p. 23, fn. 23).

¹⁹ See Goodall 2015, p. 26.

Mataṅgapārameśvara (MatP): Another scripture in this corpus of pre-tenth-century Siddhāntatantras is the MatP. According to Sanderson, the earliest evidence for its dating is the fact that the Mahākāvya *Haravijaya*, composed in Kashmir around 830 CE, draws on the MatP.²⁰ This suggests that the MatP is to be placed towards the end of the early corpus. Characteristics of a later date are its more advanced engagement with doctrinal issues, its use of a high level of the Sanskrit *śāstric* style, and its arrangement into four *pādas*, a structural feature absent in the earlier scriptures.

Details about the ritual actions prescribed in these texts will be compared in chapter 4. In the present chapter, each source will be examined individually in order to determine the identity and social status of the beneficiaries of the funerary rites and to understand the social context in which these rites were to be performed.

2. The *Guhyasūtra*: A brief reference to *antyeṣṭi* in the last book of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*

The *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā* (Ni), also referred to as the *Niśvāsa*, is the earliest extant tantric scripture. As mentioned briefly above, Goodall has noted that it appears to address a tantric community at the periphery of society and does not contain any ritual repertoire suggesting a strong engagement with mainstream society.²¹ One reason Goodall has come to this conclusion is the fact that the scripture contains no proper account of death rites.²² There is only a brief reference to funerary practices in a half verse of the last book of the *Niśvāsa* corpus, namely the *Guhyasūtra* (GuhS).²³ The reference is found at the end of the prescriptions for the two types of initia-

²⁰ See Sanderson 2001, pp. 5–6, fn3.

²¹ This also matches the other features noted by Goodall as indicating that the Ni does not yet represent the tantric community as a wide socially engaged movement. This includes the lack of internal hierarchical structures, which became common in tantric communities from the 7th century onwards (Goodall 2015, pp. 47–51), as well as the lack of initiations for women or kings (ibid., p. 51), initiation names (ibid., p. 58), rites of expiation (ibid., pp. 58–59) or public festivals (ibid., p. 59).

²² Goodall 2015, p. 47.

²³ Goodall 2015, p. 44.

tion taught in the scripture, the so-called *vidyādīkṣā* and *muktidīkṣā*, these respectively bestowing the ability to propitiate mantras (*vidyā*) for attaining supernatural powers and liberation (*mukti*). It is then mentioned that for a cremation, the reverse order of the cosmic principle is used. Goodall's edition and translation read as follows:

vilomahomaṃ hy antyeṣṭyā ekāśītipadena tu

For death rites, the oblations should be performed using the world[s] of the eighty-one-word mantra [namely the Vyomavyāpin] in reverse order.²⁴

The intention of this instruction is presumably some sort of funerary initiation. The lack of any further text and context, however, makes it difficult to understand the exact purpose of such a ritual at this point. Goodall has already noted in several places that the socio-religious world envisaged by the *Ni* is that of “a movement recruited from the adherents of a substrate Brahmanism that provided the rites and values of social religion”.²⁵ With this, he explains the scripture's lack of death rites, since such rites fall firmly in the category of social religion. We are thus operating on the premise that death rites had merely a social function and were doctrinally and ritually meaningless to the tantric communities using the *Ni*. If needed for the sake of social convention, they would have reverted to the brahmanical model. On this basis, we would have to rule out the possibility that this passage is tantamount to a complete tantric cremation ritual as we later find it.

Why then does the *GuhS* include this brief reference? One possibility might be that this instruction was simply intended to teach the option of a posthumous initiation for those who had not received an initiation during their lifetime. Clearly such a rite would have to be performed in the context of a funeral. If the interpretation that this is a posthumous initiation is correct, this instruction could be considered a third initiation option, after the *mukti*- and *vidyādīkṣā*. It would therefore not function as a cremation ritual

²⁴ Goodall 2015, p. 47. Note that the use of the reverse cosmic order for the oblations fits the general Indic paradigm of reversing the order of procedures during death rites to signal the inauspicious nature of the event. See p. 132.

²⁵ Goodall 2015, p. 73.

for the initiated. However, as we will see below in the context of the SJU, the idea of an uninitiated person receiving an initiation after death was highly controversial. It was also attacked sharply by later Saiddhāntika commentators.²⁶ Of course, we have to keep in mind that such theoretical considerations may be a phenomenon that postdates this reference and therefore such an option may not have been as problematic for the ritual specialists in the Ni's system.

Another possibility is that this short reference may, in fact, already constitute the first formulation of how ordinary cremation could be turned into a ritual meaningful for initiates in Śaiva terms. Even if the GuhS did not yet envisage a full initiatory cremation for initiates as found in later texts, this reference to pouring oblations into the fire for each cosmic level during the cremation may allude to some form of purificatory process that is intended as complementing the initiation proper for those feeling compelled to add a tantric feature for the cremation of an initiate. This procedure would then anticipate the purpose attributed to the initiatory cremation a few centuries later, namely as an expiatory ritual to counteract any accidental transgressions in the individual's ritual life that would hinder his ascending to ultimate liberation (see chapter 1).

Without other sources, this matter cannot be settled. However, despite the brevity of the injunction and the uncertainty of its interpretation, given the complete absence of references to a funerary context in the earlier parts of the *Niśvāsa* corpus, it clearly shows that changes had occurred between the time of the Ni's earlier books being composed (ca. fifth century) and the GuhS. As discussed above, according to Goodall, this timespan probably amounted to about a hundred years, which would place the GuhS's time of composition around the sixth century.²⁷ Judging by the lack of any further mention of this topic in the scripture, it seems likely that when this novel reference was included by the redactors, funerary initiations, or funeral rituals in general, were still at an early stage and their function was

²⁶ See the discussion on the SJU's *mṛtadīkṣā* in the next section. Note that at the time of the Ni's composition, the Siddhānta's philosophical dualism had not yet been unanimously established (see Goodall 2015, pp. 39–40). Thus this would not have caused any hesitation to perform posthumous initiations.

²⁷ See Goodall 2015, p. 73. Note that Goodall stresses that any decisions regarding the timeframe of the work's composition must remain hypothetical at this point.

not yet fully worked out. However, the very fact that the redactors felt compelled to add it – or at least felt no inhibition to do so – indicates that some form of death practices had started to take place in Śaiva tantric circles when the GuhS was composed. This development is corroborated by the fact that the SvāSS, which was probably composed close in time to the GuhS, already contains an account for an early form of Śaiva cremation, as will be discussed in the next section.

Such a development in the realm of social ritual by the time of the GuhS also fit other changes that took place in the period between the time of composition of the early and later compositional layers of the Ni. For instance, as Goodall has shown, the GuhS is the earliest extant tantric scripture to include prescriptions for the consecration of *liṅgas* (*liṅgapraṭiṣṭhā*).²⁸ Although the GuhS itself is ambiguous about whether the rite for consecrating the cult object is to be performed for private or public worship,²⁹ such a ritual signals that Śaiva tantric priests were starting to offer services to the general public, which, in turn may be another indication that the religion's institutionalization had increased slightly from the time the earliest parts of the Ni were composed. To extend the ritual repertoire of these priests to the funerary context would seem an obvious move.

3. The *Svāmbhuvasūtrasaṃgraha*: Simple cremation

The *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṃgraha* (SvāSS) is the earliest extant Śaiva Siddhānta scripture to contain an account of a Śaiva cremation ritual.³⁰ However, it does not yet describe the fully developed form, but enjoins a simple cremation involving no initiation. This appears indeed to be an ar-

²⁸ See Goodall 2015, pp. 60–66. Here, Goodall also demonstrates that these consecration rituals were, in fact, also modelled on brahmanical predecessors, much like the funerary rituals. For instance, Vedic mantras are used instead of tantric, and “no part of the ritual seems yet to have been singled out as a defining moment that makes the *praṭiṣṭhā* logical in its new tantric context” (Goodall 2015, p. 64), thereby suggesting that the development of these rites did not evolve from an intrinsic tantric rationale.

²⁹ Goodall 2015, pp. 64–66.

³⁰ As mentioned in the overview of scriptures above, the SvāSS received an early commentary by the 6th/7th-century author Sadyojyotiḥ. However, Sadyojyotiḥ only commented on the Vidyāpāda section of the scripture (see Filiozat 1991) and thus we do not have a commentary on the sections on rituals. One might speculate whether this indicates that the Kriyāpāda section postdates the Vidyāpāda.

chaic version since if initiatory cremation were a common practice at the time and place of its composition, the redactors would surely have felt no need to include an outmoded practice in lieu of a more tantric version.³¹ The text briefly describes a procedure in which the corpse is burnt with a Śiva fire after the officiant has visualized a sacred mantra on the corpse. He then offers the corpse to the Great Lord (i.e. Śiva) while reciting a special formula, followed by giving water offerings to the deceased.³² At this point in the development of Śaiva tantric cremation, it is only the disposal of the corpse that is important. There is no mention of the ritual being a soteriological act, nor are doctrinal justifications provided for its performance. The instruction to carry out water offerings for the deceased after the incineration³³ implies that this cremation model includes ritual acts related to the soul's ghost-like state after it leaves the corpse during the incineration of the pyre. As such, ritually, the deceased person's soul is not treated as a liberated entity after cremation, but rather as a ghost, just as in conventional brahmanical death rites, a contradiction that is silently accepted by the scripture.

3.1. The monastic context

When trying to infer the social framework of the cremation in the SvāSS, we find that the immediate context of the passage suggests that this rite was to be performed primarily in a monastic setting, since the effect of the initiate's death on his students is discussed immediately after the funeral instructions. The topic at this point concerns the mourners' impurity and the suspension of their performing certain rites (*adhikārasaṃkoca*) as a consequence of someone's death.³⁴ More specifically, it is stated that the students of the deceased person are to suspend the performance of their obligatory

³¹ The fact that the SvāSS contains only a description of simple cremation, apparently an archaic version of such rites, may in itself support its antiquity within the corpus of Saiddhāntika scriptures.

³² SvāSS 22.9–15. For the text and a translation, see the appendices.

³³ SvāSS 22.15: *snātvodakam tato dattvā punaḥ snātvā śivam japet | sadyādi netrapar-yantam śāvakarmaviśuddhaye ||*. For the edition and an annotated translation, see the appendices.

³⁴ For more on this topic, see chapter 4.

rituals for three days.³⁵ Nevertheless, while this strongly suggests that the beneficiary of this cremation rite was a Śaiva *ācārya*,³⁶ it must be noted that this is not stated explicitly. The beneficiary is simply referred to as twice-born (*dvijanma*), a term frequently used to refer to any Brahmin, and sometimes also to members of the warrior (*kṣatriya*) and merchant (*vaiśya*) classes.³⁷ Thus, despite the immediate context that makes the teacher-student relationship explicit, the status of the beneficiary of the funeral rite remains ambiguous, also in terms of whether the ritual is for a deceased ascetic or householder. After all, if only ascetics were intended, one would expect a term making this clear.

Nevertheless, the next passage, which continues to expound on impurity regulations, also suggests a monastic setting. We learn here that not only the immediate disciples of the deceased are affected, but also the wider community – that is to say, not only ascetics, but also householder initiates active in society. The SvāSS specifies that anyone who is not a student of the deceased but who is nevertheless on the Śaiva path (*śivamārgastha*) – whether householder or not – should abstain from rituals for one day.³⁸ If we are correct in understanding these instructions as referring to a monastic setting, this might imply that all initiates linked to a certain monastic institution were to observe a day of impurity upon the death of a guru. The effect of this would be that this injunction extended beyond the circle of his immediate disciples and also included householders associated with the institution.³⁹ Such a wider community of initiates fits the fact that the SvāSS is the earliest extant text describing a more elaborately structured Śaiva community divided into four ranks, as was to become standard in tantric circles: the *ācārya*, the only person allowed to initiate and perform rites for others; the *sādhaka*, a practitioner initiated and consecrated to pursue practices for supernatural powers (*siddhi*); the *putraka*, who has re-

³⁵ SvāSS 22.16-19. For the text and a translation, see the appendices.

³⁶ Note that in Śaiva literature, the terms *guru* and *ācārya* are synonymous and designate the Śaiva officiant who performs public worship, rites of initiation, consecration and installation, and who moreover teaches the scriptures.

³⁷ SvāSS 22.9. For the text and a translation, see the appendices.

³⁸ SvāSS 22.17: *tebhyo 'nye śivamārgasthā grhiṇo 'grhiṇo 'pi vā | dinam ekaṃ kṣapeyus te śāvāśaucanimittataḥ* ||. For an edition and annotated translation, see the appendices.

³⁹ Trilocana's *Prāyaścittasamuccaya* (563ab) also teaches the observation of a day of impurity upon the death of one's teacher.

ceived the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* and is thus fully initiated but does not hold an office; and the *samayin*, who is a neophyte and has received the lower level, preliminary initiation that has to be undertaken before the *nirvāṇadīkṣā*. Quoting from Goodall's edition and translation of the relevant passage,⁴⁰ we see, in fact, how the *putraka* and *samayin* were linked to the monastic institution and the guru through the stipulation to constantly venerate him, which probably included serving him as well as giving him donations. Further, the *samayin* would have been connected to the guru also by studying the scriptures with him:

The *putraka* is held to be one who, being engaged in the [use of] mantras and tantric scripture (?), has emerged [thanks to his initiation] from the cosmic paths of the *triparva*; **he venerates Śiva [in the *liṅga*], the fire and his guru.** The *samayin* [is so called] in as much as (*san*) he observes the post-initiatory rules; he is a man who has **received the entitlement for [the study of] scripture.** Fearful of the woes of *samsāra*, his mind fixed upon the Śaiva liberation; he has received the Śiva-hand [of the *ācārya* laid upon his head]; **he venerates Śiva [in the *liṅga*], the fire and his guru; he is subject to the guru at all times in all his actions and cannot act independently.**⁴¹

Especially the last instruction for the *samayin* – to be completely at the disposal and mercy of the guru – implies that the *samayin* actually spent time living at the monastery, working his way towards the qualifications to undertake the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* to become a *putraka*.⁴² This indicates that the SvāSS is indeed describing a higher degree of institutionalization and the social cohesion such an institution represents, cohesion whereby the death of one member affects all those associated with that institution.

In this context, it is clear that including a cremation rite for a guru was considered relevant at the time of the SvāSS's composition. After the Śaiva community had moved into the public sphere through monastic institutions,

⁴⁰ See Goodall 2015, pp. 48–50.

⁴¹ Goodall 2015, p. 50; the bold marking is mine.

⁴² The position of the *samayin* can be considered comparable to that of the *brahmacārin* in the brahmanical system. See Olivelle 1993, pp. 18 and 154.

the death of a guru was a relatively public event. It is inconceivable that a guru's corpse would not be ritually disposed of for the doctrinal reason that renders anything that happens after liberation at death meaningless – not only would such behaviour betray a lack of respect for the deceased, but it would also pose an imminent threat due to the inauspicious and frightening aspects associated in India with corpses that have not been ritually processed.⁴³ The orthodox brahmanical society would not have tolerated such behaviour.⁴⁴ Though their opinion may at first seem irrelevant in the light of Śaiva doctrine, it is clear that the approval of the mainstream became important when the religion was seeking to attract the support of society at large and establishing religious institutions (*maṭha*) interacting with, and dependant on, pious lay devotees.⁴⁵

The monastic setting is also associated with this type of cremation in later sources, when simple cremation is only an option taught next to the more elaborate initiatory cremation. For example, this passage is adopted in the BK, which, in turn, is adopted in the JR.⁴⁶ In these two later works, it is

⁴³ This topic is also addressed in Evison's unpublished doctoral thesis on Indian death rites (Evison 1990). She points to the strongly ambivalent emotional responses generated at the time of a death and how they are reflected in the ritual actions, which feature both rites for mourning the deceased and for pacifying and fending off his ghostly spirit.

⁴⁴ It has been argued that this was also the case for the early Buddhist tradition; Schopen has collected passages showing that Buddhist monks were also cremated for the sake of conforming to social conventions. See Schopen 1997, pp. 218–219.

⁴⁵ That such a link existed has been discussed in Sanderson 2003/2004, pp. 231ff.

⁴⁶ The JR's account, drawing from the BK (NGMPP B24/57, f. 214r3–241v2), is largely parallel to that of the SvāSS, although it contains a few more details. For instance, it specifies that the cremation should take place on a river bank (JR AP 102), gives a different and more elaborate set of preparatory rites for the site (JR AP 103–104ab) and adds the ritual sequence of pouring a stream of water out of a vase around the pyre after its ignition (JR AP 108). Particularly the last addition of pouring a stream of water around the pyre is notable; while this feature is a standard element of the rite in the brahmanical model, it does not feature in any of the other scriptural accounts apart from the householder-orientated Kir, thereby possibly suggesting influence from the householder milieu in this simple cremation rite. See JR AP 102c–110b: *nadītīraṃ samāsādyā gomāyenopalipayet* || 102 || (<= SvāSS 22.10ab *śuciṃ deṣaṃ samāsādyā gomāyenopalipya ca*) *kalaśaṃ cāstrakalaśaṃ sampūjya vidhivat tataḥ* | *sthaṅḍile hastamātre ca śivaṃ sampūjya pūrvavat* || 103 || *tadvad dhomaṃ ca kartavyaṃ mantrān samtarpya dīpayet* | *mṛdbhasmagomayodghṛṣṭaṃ śodhitavyaṃ śivāsīnā* || 104 || (<= SvāSS 22.11ab *mṛdbhasmagomayodghṛṣṭaṃ pracurodakaśodhitam*) *savam āhrtya tatrāgner dakṣiṇasyāṃ diśi nyaset* | (<= SvāSS 22.11cd *śavam āhrtya tasyāgner dakṣiṇasyāṃ niveśayet*) *prokṣitoddhūlitasyātha cintayet praṇavaṃ hr̥di* || 105 || (<= SvāSS 22.12ab *prokṣitoddhūlitasyātha cintayet praṇavaṃ hr̥di*) *sakalīkr̥tya sampūjya tato homaṃ samācāret* | (<= SvāSS 22.12cd *sakalīkr̥tya sampūjya tato homaṃ samācāret*)

even more explicitly framed within the monastic context, with familial relations being superimposed onto the monastic community, of which any member may receive such a cremation.⁴⁷ The JR further argues that the simple form of Śaiva cremation without initiation is intended for those more spiritually elevated and observant in their post-initiatory practices.⁴⁸ However, in the context of the SvāSS, simple cremation remains the only mode taught. This may imply that either such a Śaiva cremation was indeed only prescribed for an *ācārya*⁴⁹ or that it potentially had a wider scope of

tadātmanāṃ śivaṃ dhyātvā taṃ devāya nivedayet || 106 || (<= SvāSS 22.13ab †*padādhvanā† śivaṃ dhyātvā taṃ devāya nivedayet) pratigrhṇīṣva bhagavan śāvyām enām mahāhutiṃ |* (<= SvāSS 22.13cd *pratigrhṇīṣva bhagavan śāvyām enām mahāhutiṃ) evam uktvā śivaṃ devam ubhayasthaṃ viśrjya ca || 107 || tatas taṃ indhanenāgniṃ praśastena nayeḥ citām |* (<= SvāSS 22.14cd *tataḥ taṃ indhanenāgniṃ praśastena nayeḥ citiṃ) avyuchinnāṃ tato dhārām astrakumbhena dāpayet || 108 || akhaṇḍamaṇḍalākāraṃ śivaṃ astu tavādhunā | snātvodakaṃ tato dattvā punaḥ snātvā śivaṃ japet || 109 ||* (<= SvāSS 22.15ab *snātvodakaṃ tato dattvā punaḥ snātvā śivaṃ japet) paścimān netraparyantam āvartya śāvasodhane |* (<= SvāSS 22.15cd *sadyādi netraparyantam śāvākarmaviśuddhaye*). For the apparatus and the translation, see the appendices.

⁴⁷ See, the JR 101–102b, drawing from the BK (NGMPP B24/57, f. 214r2–214r3): *ācāryeṇa caturṇāṃ tu sādhakena trayasya ca | dvābhyāṃ ca putrakenaiva samayajñaiḥ svasanatau || 10 || abhāvād api sarveṣāṃ samayajñena kārayet |*, and JR 112c–113, drawing from the BK (NGMPP B24/57, f. 214v3–214v4): *putraḥ svaśiṣyo vijñeyo bhrātā yaḥ putrako mataḥ || nityaṃ samayaniṣṭhaś ca putrakaś ca tathā mataḥ | sādhakaḥ putrako bhrātā mataḥ || ācāryaḥ syāt pitā teṣāṃ sarveṣāṃ ca kriyāvātām | dinaikam sūtakam teṣāṃ śāvāśaucanimittataḥ ||*. For the apparatus and the translation, see the appendices.

⁴⁸ See, e.g., JR AP 1–2, which makes explicit that for a *yogin* who has performed yogic suicide (*utkrānti*) only a simple cremation with Śiva fire is enjoined since all his impurities have already been burned; and JR AP 4, which teaches that the simple cremation is performed for devout initiates who have observed their post-initiatory duties without fault. For the text and a translation of these passages, see the appendices.

⁴⁹ Note that in the case of the *ācārya*, performing this Śaiva *antyeṣṭi* as described does not necessarily contradict Śaiva doctrine, since the cremation rite here consists merely of burning the corpse with the Śiva fire, without any initiation rite or manipulation of the soul. It is simply the ritual disposal of a guru's corpse in the sense of disposing of a religious object that can no longer be used. This would conform to how the guru's role is perceived in Śaivism – as a medium between Śiva and his devotees, be it during public worship or rites of initiation, consecration or installation. Śiva is believed to act through the guru, who transforms himself into the deity prior to each ritual. Any materials or instruments used during a ritual are rendered inappropriate for using again, and thus they must be ritually disposed of (*pratipatti*). Otherwise they represent an awkward and threatening object that is neither divine nor mundane. The cremation of a guru could therefore be perceived as such a *pratipatti*.

application within the initiatory community, within and perhaps even beyond the monastic institution.

3.2. The *lokamārgastha*: Adherence to the brahmanical order

In the provisions for impurity restrictions, the SvāSS makes another significant remark that offers a point of reference for how the text situates its adherents in the wider society. As mentioned above, the group of initiates affected by the death of the guru is referred to as *śivamārgastha*; this is contrasted with *lokamārgastha*, those “following the worldly (i.e. orthodox brahmanical) path”.⁵⁰ Here, the scripture clearly states that the initiate, when he is *lokamārgastha*, that is, in his position as part of orthodox brahmanical society, must not transgress ordinary practices:

[Initiated] householders, [when] they are [in the context of] the mundane path (*lokamārgasthāḥ*), should not transgress the mundane (*laukikam*) [order]. Therefore, [though] initiated they should maintain [brahmanical] practice (*ācāram*) for the sake of mundane convention.⁵¹

As it stands, the precise scope implied by this injunction is difficult to define. Is it intended to refer to the initiate conforming to worldly regulations and maintaining the rites and rules of impurity according to the brahmanical order on the occasion of a non-Śaiva’s death? Or does it dictate that brahmanical rules come into effect upon the death of the initiate himself if he is a householder? In case of the former, we might interpret this as the Śaiva initiate – in his role as a householder – having to follow the impurity regulations incumbent on him in his position in orthodox society. In the case of the latter, the statement could have two meanings. First, the passage could be enjoining that a deceased householder who was a Śaiva initiate received a funeral rite and post-mortem offerings according to the brahmanical order rather than the Śaiva. Or secondly, a deceased householder

⁵⁰ A treatment of this passage is offered in chapter 4 (see pp. 169ff.) and in appendix B.

⁵¹ SvāSS 22.18: *grhiṇo lokamārgasthā laṅghayeyur na laukikam | ācāram dīkṣitās tasmāt kurvīran lokasamvṛteḥ ||*. For a critical apparatus and annotations, see the appendices.

initiate received a cremation with the Śiva fire as described, but the impurity regulations affecting his family were those of the brahmanical order.

Given that the scripture only teaches one type of cremation – unlike in later manuals – and is vague about its application, all of the above possibilities are plausible. The degree of ambiguity may have been intentional so this authoritative scripture could accommodate a variety of practices at a time when death rites for Śaiva initiates were in an early phase of their development and not yet fully worked out. After all, we see that the procedure is still very close in structure to the brahmanical counterpart and does not yet contain a transformative element as found in the initiatory cremation. Rather, the difference lies in the use of Śaiva mantras and visualization, and the fact that the fire is not an ordinary ritual fire, but one into which Śiva has been invoked, a *śivāgni*. Since it lacks a soteriological function, it is possible that this type of cremation did not yet carry much importance, but was rather a matter of convention. Indeed, in the case of a householder initiate, the choice of cremation type may have been less significant at this stage.

While interpreting the precise scope of application is thus problematic, the passage does clearly reveal that the religious order associated with this text included initiates who were active members of the brahmanical householder society. Even if the modalities of their participation during Śaiva death rituals remain uncertain, the present instruction for them to maintain their practices and position in the brahmanical socio-religious order is significant.⁵² It is part of our earliest evidence of Śaiva tantric communities trying to regulate certain points of interface between Śaiva ritual life and that inherited from the brahmanical socio-religious order. In addition, Goodall has also emphasized that the SvāSS is the first extant work to show a higher degree of systematization in terms of doctrine and practice,⁵³ a circumstance further suggesting that by the time of its composition, the religion had acquired a more institutionalized form, such as initiatory communities attached to a monastic centre. Of course, we are limited in our

⁵² Similar to the sentiment expressed in SvāSS 12.18, the SJU and MatP (Caryāpāda 2.2-7b) expound carefully on this topic of adherence to the brahmanical order. For a discussion of the relevant sections, see Sanderson 2006a, pp. 4–14.

⁵³ Goodall 2015, pp. 40–42 and 47–51.

analysis by the fact that these passages are purely prescriptive and not descriptive. One thus cannot assume that the scripture is depicting social reality. However, given the ambiguity of the instructions regarding cremation and its scope, as well as the directive to adhere to the brahmanical order, it seems that the work's redactors were struggling to consolidate precisely those kinds of different views and practices which would come together at a moment of social expansion.

3.3. Yogic suicide (*utkrānti*)

Just before the SvāSS describes the act of cremation, the scripture provides instructions for the correct way to die, that is, for performing yogic suicide (*utkrānti*). After the initiate finally feels complete indifference to the world, he is instructed to meditate on the real nature of his body, perform the worship of Śiva on himself, and eject his soul out of his body at the top of his head towards liberation.⁵⁴ It is stressed that he must not do so out of desire

⁵⁴ See SvāSS 22.1–8: *athātmano vadhaṃ mantrī na kuryāt phalavāñchayā | na ca duḥkhasamutpattau kāmato deham utsrjet || 1 || yadi nirvedam āpannaḥ prāptabhogo 'thavā punaḥ | dhyānadhāraṇāyogena śivalīnamanās tyajet || 2 || parisamkhyāya śabdādīn svayaṃ tatsādhanāni ca | śarīram indriyagrāmaṃ bhoktuḥ sthānaṃ nijam ca yat || 3 || tataḥ śaivīm tanuṃ kṛtvā śivaṃ sampūjya bhaktiḥ | āsanaṃ kuśasaṃkṛptaṃ āśrayed astrapūjitaṃ || 4 || tataḥ puroditaṃ sarvaṃ tśānīdhāraṇāśritaḥ | kṛtvākṛṣya kapālasthaṃ vāyum ūrdhvaḥ pathā nayet || 5 || tena yāyāt pathādityaṃ somam agniṃ paraṃ śivaṃ | acalaṃ sarvagaṃ devaṃ sarvāntaṃ sarvatomukhaṃ || 6 || tatstho līnasvatattvena tanmayo na vibhāvyate | nādeyam iva samprāptaṃ salilāṃ lavaṇāmbhasi || 7 || anena kramayogena kāmād deham imaṃ tyajet | adhruvaṃ sarvaduḥkhānāṃ āśrayaṃ ca jugupsitaṃ || 8 ||* (For the sigla used in the apparatus, see appendix A or the bibliography.) [1d kāmato] Ed_MN; kāmado P 2a yadi] N; yadā Ed_MP 2b punaḥ] Ed_MP; tratuḥ N 2c dhyānadhāraṇāyogena] Ed_MP; dhāraṇādhyānaayogena N 2d śivalīnamanās tyajet] Ed_MN; śivalīnamanān yajet P 3d nijam ca yat] N; nirañjanam Ed_MP 4b bhaktiḥ] Ed_MP; yatnataḥ N 4c kuśasaṃkṛptaṃ] Ed_MN; kuśasaṃskāram P 5a puroditaṃ] NP; paroditaṃ Ed_M 5b tśānīdhāraṇāśritaḥ] Ed_M; aiśānīm dhāraṇāṃ śritaḥ N; tśānīm dhāraṇāṃ śritaḥ P 5c kṛtvākṛṣya] Ed_MN; kṛṣṭvākṛṣya P 6a yāyāt] Ed_MP; pāyāt N * pathādityaṃ] N; pathā nityam Ed_MP 6b agniṃ] Ed_MN; agniḥ P 6c acalaṃ] Ed_MN; avālaṃ P 7a tatstho] N; tatsthā Ed_M; tatsthau P * līnasvatattvena] Ed_MP; līnasatattvena N 7d lavaṇāmbhasi] Ed_MN; lavaṇāmbhasā P 8b deham imaṃ] Ed_MN; demahimaṃ P 8d jugupsitaṃ] Ed_M; sujupsitaṃ N; jupupsitaṃ P]. “Next, an initiate (lit. ‘a possessor of mantras’) should not kill himself out of desire of reward [such as heaven], and neither should he voluntarily abandon his body at the arising of suffering. If he has attained a complete indifference [to worldly matters] or *has experienced the fruition of all his karma (prāptabhogo)*, he should abandon [his body] with his mind immersed in Śiva through the practice of meditation and visualization [of elements]. He should contemplate deeply [on the real nature of sense objects] beginning with sounds and what brings them about/the means of perceiving

for any heavenly reward (as would be the case with certain brahmanical forms of suicide), nor as a result of some form of suffering, but, again, only if he has achieved a state of indifference to worldly matters.⁵⁵

While the present section will not provide a comprehensive overview of Śaiva scriptural sources on yogic suicide,⁵⁶ let us just briefly consider the possible purpose of this passage in the cremation context of the SvāSS. While the instructions for *antyeṣṭi* seamlessly follow the prescription for yogic suicide, it is not certain whether these two procedures are intrinsically connected, that is to say, whether the performance of a Śaiva *antyeṣṭi* is bound to a stipulation to undertake yogic suicide. If that were the case, this would limit the scope of application for the *antyeṣṭi*, given that it would then only apply for ascetic initiates advanced enough in their yogic practice to undertake the *utkrānti* procedure.⁵⁷ However, as we have seen above, the cremation section does not specify the recipient as a yogic ascetic practitioner (which might have been done, for example, by using a term such as *yogin*), but rather uses the broad term *dvijanma*, a twice-born, which is applicable to a householder as well. On the other hand, we have also seen

them (i.e. the senses), and [then should also meditate on] his body and the collection of his faculties [including the faculties of action and everything] as merely the personal location of [himself as] the experiencer [of the effects of his karma]. Then he should create the Śiva-body (i.e. transform his body into Śiva), and worship Śiva with devotion. Then he should sit down on a seat made out of *kuśa* grass, which had been worshipped with the *astramantra* [in order to purify it and remove all the obstacles]. Then he should do all as it was previously taught having adopted the *aiśānī dhāraṇā*, and then he should draw up all vital energy so that it is in his head and lead it [out of the body] by the upper route (i.e. above the head). By that path he travels one by one to the sun, moon, fire, and then to supreme Śiva, who is the fixed [and] omnipresent deity, the end of all and facing in all directions. Staying in that [Śiva], *his own reality being immersed, he consists of Śiva and is not manifested [anymore] (?) (līnasvatattvena tanmayo na vibhāvyaṭe)*. [It is] just as water from a river dissolves into saltwater [from the ocean]. With this method he should voluntarily abandon his body, which is impermanent, the locus of all suffering, and disgusting.” I would like to thank Alexis Sanderson for having provided me his own collation of this section of the SvāSS, which I have used as the basis for the quoted text.

⁵⁵ SvāSS 22.1–2 in the fn. above. These first two verses are also critically edited in Vasudeva 2004, p. 441, fn. 214.

⁵⁶ See Vasudeva 2004, pp. 437–439, and his list of passages of Śaiva scriptural sources for yogic suicide in his testimonia to *Mālinīvijayottara* 17.25–34, in 2004, p. 138.

⁵⁷ Vasudeva (2004, pp. 437–439) stresses that yogic suicides are to be considered a completely different category from suicides of devotees, which do not require such yogic competence and practice.

that what appears to be primarily envisaged is the funeral of a guru with disciples; the scope beyond this is ambiguous. In the case of a guru, one might expect that he would follow this ideal procedure for exiting his body.

These considerations again raise the question of how we are to understand the social reality of this practice. In fact, unlike in the case of brahmanical forms of suicide,⁵⁸ we do not have any evidence for yogic suicide beyond the obscure instructions found in the scriptural corpus. Since the SvāSS's account of yogic suicide is found just before its prescriptions for death rites, it might be speculated that here, these instructions were also used to aid the dying, much in the manner of the widespread Indian practice of the dying being instructed to concentrate on a specific deity and sacred verses being recited into his ear at the moment of death. They may thus have been used to help the initiate to focus on his liberation by visualizing his soul leaving the body and uniting with Śiva.⁵⁹ When compared to other tantric accounts of yogic suicide, such as that in the *Mālinīvijayottara* as offered by Vasudeva, which features concrete instructions such as filling the body with air and repeating certain mantras until getting a headache,⁶⁰ one gets the sense that the SvāSS's account is less exacting and perhaps more suitable for final deathbed visualizations. However, it is also true that one instruction challenges this view, namely that the practitioner is to carry out these meditative practices after sitting down on a seat of *kuśa* grass.⁶¹ At the same time, it could also be the case that this instruction entails – as we would expect – that the adherent is to practice such yogic visualizations during his lifetime, completing the process, as it were, on his deathbed.

⁵⁸ Brahmanical forms of suicide include setting out into the forest or to some sacred site towards the end of one's life (*mahāprasthāna*, *mahāpathayātra*), or suicides involving sacred sites, such as drowning oneself in a sacred river or jumping off a sacred cliff. Vasudeva (2004, p. 438) refers to descriptive accounts of devotees jumping off the cliff at Oṃkāra Mandhātā in 1822; Sanderson, in a handout for a series of lectures during Michaelmas term 2004/5 on early sources on suicide, listed several passages from epigraphs that attest to such brahmanical practices.

⁵⁹ There are also meditation practices in which visualizing the departure of the soul while still alive somehow prepares the practitioner for death, and at the same time calls to mind the impermanence of life and the downfalls of *samsāra* as a means of attaining liberating knowledge; see, for instance, the so-called *vaiṣṇavayoga* in the Śaiva *Umāmaheśvara-saṃvāda*, chapter 4. See De Simini & Mirnig 2017.

⁶⁰ Vasudeva 2004, pp. 439–440.

⁶¹ See SvāSS 22.4, see fn. 54.

4. The *Sārdhatriśatikālottara*: An intermediary stage towards initiatory cremation

The *Sārdhatriśatikālottara* (SārK), another of our early pre-tenth-century Saiddhāntika sources, is one of several recensions of the so-called *Kālottara*. It is, as far as I am aware, the only one to include a cremation procedure.⁶² The account here of *antyeṣṭi* is very short and in fact looks very similar to the one set out in the SvāSS. It prescribes a standard procedure for preparing the corpse by purifying it with substances such as cow-dung, smearing it with ashes and covering it with various garlands and pieces of cloth. Then the guru is to pour oblations into the fire, using the order of dissolution, light the pyre and focus on the fire-visualization (*āgneyadhāraṇā*) while the corpse is burning.⁶³

After this, unlike in the SvāSS, there is an additional ritual action that suggests a manipulation of the deceased person's soul. At the end of the ritual procedure, a kind of union with the deceased person's soul is prescribed:

⁶² In a private communication, Alexis Sanderson has informed me that *Saptaśatikālottara* 29 contains virtually the same text as the SārK.

⁶³ The entire procedure up to the burning of the corpse runs as follows in SārK 26.1–5ab: *antyeṣṭim sampravakṣyāmi yathāvad anupūrvaśaḥ | śivāgñim janayitvā tu *śavaṃ* (em. *śivaṃ* Ed.) *paścād viśodhayet || 1 || mṛdgomayādyaiḥ samśodhya bhasmasnānaṃ yathā purā | vastrapuṣpair alaṃkrtya astrabījena śodhayet || 2 || iṣṭim sāmhārikīm kṛtvā udakpādaṃ niveśayet | darbhāstaraṃ purākṛtvā astram vinyasya sarvataḥ || 3 || astreṇa jvālayed agñim samantāt susamāhitaḥ | candanāgarukāṣṭhaiś ca tilaiś cājyasamanvitaiḥ || 4 || vittavatām ca tat sarvam itareṣāṃ tad icchayā | āgneyadhāraṇām dhyātvā dahed astreṇa mantravit || 5 ||* “I will teach the funeral ritual properly in regular order. Having produced a Śiva fire, he should then purify the corpse. Having cleaned [the corpse] with such things as mud and cow-dung, he should perform an ash-bath as before. Having decorated [the corpse] with [new] clothes and flowers and purified [it by sprinkling it using] the *astramantra*, he should perform the sacrifice [into the fire] in the reverse order. He should place [the corpse] [on the pyre] with the feet to the North, having beforehand prepared a bed of *darbha* grass and emplaced the *astramantra* all around it. Then, [reciting] the *astramantra* he should light the fire all around [the *darbha* grass bed], being very concentrated. For those who are rich, all of this [should be done] with sandalwood and *agaru* wood, with sesame seeds and [offerings of] clarified butter; for others this [is to be done] according to ones wishes (i.e. financial capacity). The guru should meditate on the *āgneyadhāraṇa* and burn the corpse with the *astramantra*.”

The [procedure of] taking hold [of the soul] should be [performed] through the union of the [guru's] consciousness with the spirit [of the deceased] just as [taught] before.⁶⁴

This injunction is mentioned after that of the incineration. It is unclear what this rite refers to, or whether its position in the order of the text is the same as its execution in practice. Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, a tenth-century Kashmiri conservative commentator of the Śaiva Siddhānta (*fl.* c. 950–1000 CE), also had difficulties to explain this part of the verse and simply altered the order, choosing to read it as applying to a point before the incineration and interpreting it to refer to a full funerary initiation as was practiced by his time.⁶⁵

From this short passage, the precise procedure is also unclear. It appears to involve a manipulative element through which the guru ensures the deceased person's liberation. However, it is unlikely that a full funerary initiation is intended here, unless the term *pūrvavat*, “as before”, refers to the initiation ritual (*dīkṣā*) described earlier in the SārK. If the latter were the case, we would expect, however, some sort of instruction indicating that the procedure for purifying the cosmic levels is to be undertaken in the reverse order, as becomes standard in later sources. Thus, perhaps nothing more is intended here than to perform a final enactment of the union with Śiva – that is to say, amounting only to the final part of the initiation ritual proper.⁶⁶ In this case, *pūrvavat* would serve to indicate that the procedure is the immediately preceding ritual action of *grahaṇam* – the procedure of grasping the soul in order to unite it with the guru's soul to lead it to the site of divine union. The fact that this is enjoined after the incineration of the corpse may support the thesis that it is not yet a full-fledged funerary initiation which is being envisaged here.

⁶⁴ SārK 26.6ab: *citāś cittasya samyogād grahaṇam pūrvavad bhavet |*

⁶⁵ Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary *ad* SārK 26.3–6b: *tato 'gnau iṣṭiṃ sām̐hārakīṃ prāgvat kṛtvā, citau darbheṇāstreṇāstīrya, tenaitam udakśīrasaṃ sāmānyaśāstraprasiddhyā tatra niveśya, āgneyadhāraṇayā astreṇa tatra samantād agniṃ candanāgarukāṣṭhaiḥ abhijvālayed vittavatām | itareṣāṃ tu yathāsambhavaṃ kāṣṭhādinaiva | tato 'strapaṭam dagdhvā bhagavantaṃ visrjya snāyāt.*

⁶⁶ For instance, this is parallel to the procedure we find in the Atimārgic funerary manual of Gārgya, where the final stages are enacted in a similar manner, see Acharya 2010.

In either case, here the function of the funeral rite has been modified to go beyond the mere disposal of the corpse. That is, it now involves some sort of manipulation of the soul. This paradigm shift, it seems, reveals an attempt to transform the cremation ritual into one meaningful in Śaiva terms. At the same time, this also led to the need to justify the performance of this step doctrinally: for why would a ritual enacting the liberation of the soul be needed, if this had already taken place at the moment of death through the power of the *nirvāṇadīkṣā*? An answer to this question is put forward here for the first time in our extant sources, namely that the Śaiva cremation has a purificatory function and counteracts previous faults in practice or other transgressions, transgressions whose consequences would impede the soul's liberation. SārK 26.6c-8ab reads:

The funerary ritual has been ordained, O Skanda, to remove the sin of anyone who transgresses the rules to be observed during the period after initiation, [one who] is guilty of a major sin against Śiva and the gurus, those who have not lost their doubts [concerning their liberation at death through initiation], and for any others who have some impurity.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ SārK 26.6cd–8ab: *dīkṣātas tūttare kāle samayāms tu na laṅghayet || devasya ca gurūnām ca mahāpātakabhāg bhavet | amuktasaṃśayā ye ca ye cānye samalātmakāḥ || teṣāṃ pāpāpanodārtham antyeṣṭir vihitā guha |*. Note that the two *pādas* concluding this section are not quoted here. They are problematic. SārK26.8cd reads: *svasaṃjñā layam āpnoti samayādyeṣu laṅghanāt*. This appears to refer to the destiny of an initiated person's soul who has transgressed his post-initiatory practice during his lifetime and does not receive a Śaiva tantric cremation to purify him from the negative consequences of these transgressions. However, it is unclear how to interpret the expression *svasaṃjñā layam*. A possible interpretation is to see *layam* as referring to the cosmic state of dissolution, more commonly called *pralaya*. In Śaiva tantric cosmology, souls in *pralaya* are unconscious individuals who are only tainted by the impurities of karma and/or *mala*, but not by the material universe (*māyā*); however, at the level of *pralaya* they have no power to act to purify themselves of these impurities and are solely dependent on Śiva's grace. Therefore, they float, as it were, between the impure material universe and the highest spiritual level of ultimate Śiva-hood until Śiva feels compassion and either liberates them, or, during the cosmic cycle of emanation (*srṣṭi*), bestows some power upon them to act and take on a role in creating the universe (see *s.v. pralayakevala, pralayakevalin, pralayākala* in TAK 3, and reference to Sadyojyotiḥ's commentary on this principle *ad SvāSS 1.2.* therein). If the word *layam* refers here to this cosmic level, the *pādas* could be translated as follows: “[If an ordinary and not a tantric cremation was performed], [the individual's] own consciousness (*svasaṃjñā*) reaches the state of cosmic dissolution (*layam*) [rather than ultimate liberation] due to [his] transgressions regarding such matters as [his] post-initiatory discipline.” If this interpretation is

Evidently, the redactors of the SārK felt uncomfortable about including *antyeṣṭi* in the ritual repertoire without giving it some sort of extra value. None of the subsequent Saiddhāntika sources go beyond the basic premise established here that Śaiva cremation has a purificatory function. In the DīU, for example, the *antyeṣṭi* is even explicitly classified as a rite of reparation (*prāyaścitta*).⁶⁸ And Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, in his commentary on these verses of the SārK, also refers to *antyeṣṭi* as a reparatory sacrifice, insisting on making a clear distinction between the function of the *antyeṣṭi* and the initiation rite proper:

Because [all karmas which have been committed] prior to the *dīkṣā* were destroyed by it (i.e. the *dīkṣā*) alone, this penance sacrifice is performed for the purpose of purification only [regarding actions that have taken place] after the [initiation] (1) for those who belong to the group beginning with *ācāryas* (i.e. *ācāryas*, *sādhakas*, and *putrakas*) and transgress [post-initiatory rules], starting with the obligatory rites, which are taught in the *śāstras* and relate to the deity and the gurus, (2) for

correct, the SārK teaches that even if a tantric *antyeṣṭi* is not performed, a tantric initiate who transgressed during his lifetime does not return to *saṃsāra* in the impure universe. Rather, more fitting to his initiated status, he rises above the impure universe, even if only to a semi-liberated level. Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, commenting on this passage in the SārK (with a slightly different reading: *svasaṃjñālayam āpnoti samayādyeṣu laṅghanāt*), also seems to struggle with interpreting these two *pādas*; however, while his commentary is not entirely clear to me, I will attempt a tentative translation, which amounts to the same point just stated. Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha *ad* SārK 26.8ab: *anayā ceṣṭyā samayādyeṣu prāyaścittopalaṅghanād dhetoḥ svasaṃjñāyā ca svapratyayena parameśvareṇa layam dīkṣāphalaṃ prāpnotīti*, “If another sacrifice [than the Śaiva tantric *antyeṣṭi*] is performed (*anayā ceṣṭyā*) [after death] he (i.e. the deceased person’s soul) reaches the state of dissolution (*layam*) as the fruit of his initiation [and not ultimate liberation], through his own consciousness, that is to say through his own faith and through Parameśvara, because of the breach [regarding the necessity to perform] an expiatory ritual (i.e. the tantric *antyeṣṭi*) with respect to [the deceased initiate’s] obligations [during his lifetime] such as his post-initiatory discipline.” Note that Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, unlike in my interpretation above, reads *svasaṃjñālayam* as a *tatpuruṣa* compound, even though his rendering of the compound in the commentary seems awkward. That these *pādas* were considered problematic even within the later tradition is suggested by the fact that Nirmalamāṇi, who quotes the entire preceding passage of the SārK, omits precisely these last two *pādas* in his citation. Further, Trilocana, who quotes the full passage in his commentary on SP (cited in Brunner-Lachaux 1977, p. 571, [1b]), comments on the entire passage but does not explain these two *pādas*.

⁶⁸ See pp. 73ff.

those who belong to the group of people starting with the *putrakas*, who perform those [post-initiatory rites] effortfully but with doubt [concerning the efficiency of the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* as the cause for their final liberation], because they did not learn the scriptures whose purpose it is to remove all doubt, (3) and also the *sādhakas*, whose impurity of *bhoga* (enjoyment) and impurity of office has not been destroyed. **But it is not right to explain that [the funeral ritual is performed] for those people in whom impurities still reside because they have not received the initiation ritual, because that would be a contradiction of the words “right after the initiation ritual” [in the text].**⁶⁹

Since, as mentioned above, Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha envisages an initiatory cremation in the SārK, although the scripture itself does not actually give instructions for this, it is important for him to clarify that a Śaiva cremation may not be performed as a liberating ritual for someone who has not received initiation during his lifetime. This touches on the main conceptual problem in classifying the function of tantric cremation. If funerary initiation were not considered purely expiatory in function, but to have the power to liberate an uninitiated person, this would amount to a posthumous initiation, something considered highly problematic in the light of the logic of tantric initiation and the Siddhānta’s metaphysics: first, a guru is only allowed to perform tantric initiation if the candidate shows signs that Śiva’s grace has descended upon him (a process referred to as the “descent of Śiva’s power”, *śaktipāta*), which signals to him that Śiva considers this individual ready for liberation, a principle widely encountered in Śaiva scriptures. Secondly, in contrast to the monistic tantric traditions, in the dualistic Siddhānta God, the individual souls and the material universe are considered ontologically distinct for eternity. For Rāmakaṇṭha and other Saiddhāntika commentators, it was therefore crucial that an initiation candidate be alive, for according to this doctrine, the signs of *śaktipāta* can

⁶⁹ Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha *ad* SārK 26.6–8: *dīkṣātaḥ pūrvam tayaiva kṣapitavāt taduttarakālam ye devagurusambandhiṇaḥ śāstravihitā nityānuṣṭhānādayas, tān laṅghayanti pramādād ācāryādayaḥ, ye ca samastasamśayacchedahetoḥ śāstrasyāśravaṇāt samdehenāpi tān avaśyaṃ paripālayanti putrakādayaḥ, ye 'pi cāparikṣiṇa-bhogādihikāramalāḥ sādhakās teṣām eva śuddhyartham iyaṃ prāyaścitteṣṭir iti | na tu samalānām akṛtadīkṣānām iti vyākhyeyam | dīkṣāto 'nantaram iti virodhād |*

only be displayed by someone alive and not through any other ontologically distinct medium.⁷⁰ These considerations are yet again symptomatic of the awkward doctrinal position of tantric death rites.

As for the status of the recipient in the SārK, since the scripture does not explicitly refer to either an ascetic or a householder, not much restricts the performance of this Śaiva cremation to one or the other. One might argue that the cremation, with its explicit purificatory function, is less appropriate for an ascetic, who to some degree is considered at a higher level in the process of liberation than the householder involved in ordinary life; the doctrinal justification for a Śaiva cremation of removing transgressions towards Śiva and the guru, or impurity incurred through doubting the Śaiva religion does not seem fitting here. A more specific indication that the householder is intended as the recipient of this Śaiva cremation here is perhaps the prescription concerning the choice of wood; the wood is to be selected according to the wealth of the deceased person,⁷¹ an instruction implying members of society who have possessions and not ascetics who have none.⁷²

5. Full initiatory cremation: the *Sarvajñānottara*, *Kiraṇatantra* and *Dikṣottara*

The *Sarvajñānottara* (SJU), *Kiraṇatantra* (Kir) and *Dikṣottara* (DīU) are the earliest extant scriptures to introduce a full initiatory cremation for a deceased Śaiva initiate. They prescribe the repeating of the initiation ritual, using the reverse cosmic order to purify the deceased person's soul, before the corpse is incinerated. The SJU and Kir also give details on how to pre-

⁷⁰ More on this in the context of the SJU is discussed on pp. 69ff. Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha expresses this, for instance, in his commentary on Kir 6.11d–12; see Goodall 1998, pp. 376–377, in particular fn. 621.

⁷¹ SārK 26.4c–5b: *candanāgarukāṣṭhaiś ca tilaiś cājyasamanvitaiḥ || 4 || vittavatām ca tat sarvaṃ itareṣāṃ tad icchayā*. See fn. 65 above.

⁷² On the other hand, we must also note that from epigraphic material as well as later sources we know that ascetic gurus from important monasteries were often king-like figures with a great deal of material wealth that they seemed to own, so a monastic context cannot be completely excluded here. Again, quite a lot must be left to speculation.

pare the corpse and the site, as well as on conventional water offerings to the deceased person's ghost⁷³ and purificatory rites for the officiant.

5.1. The *Sārvajñānottara*: Initiatory cremation

The thirteenth chapter of the SJU is dedicated to funeral procedures. Compared to the other scriptural sources, the text gives more details about the preparatory rituals for the corpse, the *ācārya* who is conducting the ritual, the funeral site and the pyre.⁷⁴ In contrast, the actual initiation procedure is described very briefly, in only two verses.⁷⁵ Any details must be inferred from the earlier sections on initiation rites. After this, the lighting of the pyre is described, as well as final procedures regarding the cremation site and the subsequent bath of the guru, water offerings, and the appeasement of deities.⁷⁶

The scripture does not explicitly state whether the recipient is a deceased ascetic or a householder. However, there are a few indications that the beneficiary envisaged here is primarily the latter. For instance, in the instructions for worshipping Śiva during the funeral rite, it is specified that this worship be carried out as lavishly as possible (*yathāśaktyā*). This may imply that the person sponsoring the rite was a property owner and hence actively involved in society at large (in contrast to ascetics, who renounced any family or material relations).⁷⁷ Another indication that a wider scope of application is intended are doctrinal justifications for the rite as found in the SJU's opening and closing verses. Here, too, we find the statement that the rite is to be performed for those initiates who had transgressed post-initiatory rules.⁷⁸ As discussed, if only ascetic practitioners were intended,

⁷³ See SJU 13.21 and Kir 60.15–16. For the text and translation of the passages, see the appendices.

⁷⁴ SJU 13.2–16. For the text and a translation, see the appendices.

⁷⁵ SJU 13.17–18. For the text and a translation, see the appendices.

⁷⁶ SJU 13.19–21. For the text and a translation, see the appendices.

⁷⁷ See SJU 13.14. For the text and a translation, see the appendices. Note that we have seen a similar injunction in the SārK, where the wood for the pyre is selected according to the wealth of the deceased person; see p. 65.

⁷⁸ SJU 13.1: *ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi samayācāralaṅghane | yathā viśuddhyate dehī vipanno 'pi śaḍānana ||*, and 13.22: *evaṃ vimucyate dehī samayādivilaṅghane | ājñānāj*

this purpose would be less appropriate, given their spiritually elevated status.

5.1.1. The *mṛtadīkṣā*: Cremation of an effigy

The SJU is the only early Śaiva Siddhānta scripture that contains a chapter on posthumous initiation being performed for an individual through the medium of a puppet, the *mṛtadīkṣā*. This puppet is fashioned out of *darbha* grass or cow-dung and is consecrated by the *tattvas* and mantra deities being placed on it, along with the name of the individual.⁷⁹ Then the guru extracts the soul, installs the entire cosmos on the puppet and performs the funerary initiation, which culminates in the union of the soul with Śiva. At the conclusion of this puppet ritual, the puppet, together with oblations of milk, ghee and coagulated milk, is thrown into the sacred fire, which has been consecrated with Śaiva mantras.⁸⁰

The text is not explicit about the exact function of this rite, or when or for whom it is to be performed. Looking at the brahmanical tradition, we find that rites involving the cremation of an effigy as a substitute are usually associated with two situations: deaths occurring under inauspicious circumstances, and deaths in which the corpse could not be located for the cremation ceremony or was too badly deformed due to illness or battle. It is notable that throughout this long chapter of the SJU, though it specifies that the ritual is an initiation for the dead, the corpse is not mentioned. It therefore appears likely that the context concerns a death under circumstances whereby the corpse is unavailable. In fact, verse 12.50 teaches that the initiation can be performed for someone who is either alive or dead:

Thus the initiation (*dīkṣā*) for the dead has been taught, O Skanda, [and] also for someone who is still alive. [This kind of *dīkṣā*] is free from [any

jñānato vāpi kṛte tv anteṣṭikarmaṇi ||. For the apparatus and a translation, see the appendices.

⁷⁹ SJU 12.5–7. For the text and translation of the passage, see the appendices.

⁸⁰ SJU 12.25. For the text and translation of the passage, see the appendices.

obligations] such as post-initiatory rituals. [Through this ritual, the soul in question] is easily freed from bondage.⁸¹

The implication is that the rite can also be performed if the person's death is not certain, which would only be the case if there were no direct evidence of the death or a witness to it, as in the case of a missing person. In the *Tantrāloka* (TĀ), such a rite is in fact taught and referred to as *parokṣadīkṣā* ("initiation [*dīkṣā*] of someone who is absent [*parokṣa*-, lit. 'invisible']"); here the initiation ritual is performed on a puppet for cases in which it is feared, but not certain, that the person is dead.⁸² In the light of this, it seems probable that the procedure taught in SJU 12 is also intended to be such a *parokṣadīkṣā*.

But in our context of death rites, there is a significant difference: not only is a procedure for cremation described, but an initiation rite proper, that is, an initiation that brings about the transformative function of initiation on a soul which had not yet received the *nirvāṇadīkṣā*. It is not a mere purificatory act or an expiatory ritual for the already initiated. Soteriologically, it is thus a more potent rite. Indeed, the chapter outlining the rite is positioned directly after a chapter on the initiation rite proper and before the funeral chapter, a position indicating that the propagators primarily consider this puppet ritual to be an initiation rather than a funeral procedure. Another indication for this is that the redactors felt the need to make explicit that there is no need for post-initiatory practices in the case of this *mṛtadīkṣā*. Given that the person is presumed dead, this may seem a trivial statement at first, but post-initiatory duties constitute an integral part of the initiation procedure. As we have seen in chapter 1, it is only through these rites that the candidate can remove the residue karma that fuels his present existence (*prārabdha karman*). If in special cases, the candidate is freed of having to

⁸¹ SJU 12.50: *evaṃ dīkṣā mṛtasyoktā jīvato 'pi hi ṣaṇmukha | samayādibhir nirmuktā sukhaṃ bandhād vimucyate ||*. For the apparatus, see appendix A.

⁸² *Tantrāloka* 21.43–44ab: *jīvatparokṣadīkṣāpi kāryā nirbījikā tu sā | tasyāṃ darbhākṛtiprāyakaḥpane jālayogataḥ || saṅkalpamātreṇākarṣo jīvasya mṛtibhūtiḥ |*. "The initiation for someone absent and [maybe still] alive is to be performed without the seed [of post-initiatory obligations]. If [this ritual is being performed], he should make a puppet out of *darbha* grass, and attract the soul through pure imagination using the [great-] net method, because of fear [that he might be] dead."

perform them, this has to be made explicit by the *ācārya* during the procedure, as is the case, for instance, with the *nirbījadīkṣā*, “the initiation without the seed (*bīja*) [of the obligation to perform post-initiatory rites]”. The fact that the same is done in the case of the *mṛtadīkṣā* is therefore meaningful and underlines that the function of the rite is considered on par with the initiation rite proper. In contrast, for the funerary initiation the issue of post-initiatory practice does not play a role since it is a purificatory act for an initiate who would have performed his post-initiatory ritual duties during his lifetime.

In its structure and function, the *mṛtadīkṣā* of the SJU therefore calls to mind the prescriptions for the *mṛtoddhāradīkṣā*, “initiation for the rescue of the dead”, an initiation form encountered in non-Saiddhāntika sources.⁸³ Here a deceased individual who was not initiated during his lifetime is initiated posthumously upon the request of relatives. However, in the opening verses to this chapter, the SJU makes the important specification that a *mṛtadīkṣā* grants liberation to a person who has had the misfortune of dying without having received the highest initiation, even though he was energetically devoted to the guru and had applied much effort towards liberation.⁸⁴ Unlike in the case of the *mṛtoddhāra*, this suggests that the person envisaged as being eligible for this rite was not just any kind of uninitiated person, but a deceased *samayin*, that is, a neophyte who had not yet received his *nirvānadīkṣā*, but had undertaken the lowest level of initiation during his lifetime, which bound him to venerate the guru and study the scriptures.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that this *mṛtadīkṣā* bestows liberation in cases in which the *nirvānadīkṣā* was not yet performed. We have seen

⁸³ Cf. Sanderson 1995, pp. 32–33 for the regular tantric cremation with funerary initiation and the *mṛtoddhāra* in non-Saiddhāntika sources. Abhinavagupta, being part of the non-Saiddhāntika tradition, specifies that the procedure for the funerary initiation in the Śaiva *antyeṣṭi* is the same as in the *mṛtoddhāra*, except for the fact that the former is performed on a corpse and the latter, on a puppet. *Tantrāloka* 24.5 reads: *yatkiñcit kathitaṃ pūrvam mṛtoddhārābhidhe vidhau | pratimāyāṃ tad evātra sarvaṃ śavatanau caret* ||. “Everything that was taught earlier with regard to a puppet for the ritual called rescue of a dead person, he should [now, in the funeral procedure,] do on the corpse.”

⁸⁴ SJU 12.1–3.: *na prāpto 'pi parāṃ dīkṣāṃ gurubhaktō 'pi yatnataḥ | †kālenāntasthito† yaḥ syāt tasya mokṣaḥ kathaṃ bhavet || 1 || kiṃ vṛthā tasya saṃkleśo mokṣam uddīśya yaḥ kṛtaḥ | kiṃ kiṃcid vidyate karma tasya yan mokṣasādhanam || 2 || gurubhaktāya śāntāya sadācārya suvrata | mṛtasyāpi paraṃ skanda dīkṣākarma vidhīyate || 3 ||*. For the apparatus and an annotated translation, see the appendices.

above in Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary on the SārK how the principles underlying this practice are in conflict with the view of conservative medieval Saiddhāntika theorists, who argue that initiation cannot be performed on a deceased individual. The underlying reasons were that this theology requires visible signs of Śiva's grace having fallen upon a living individual before their initiation takes place (*śaktipāta*), and that these signs could not be inferred from individuals speaking on someone else's behalf due to the fundamentally dualistic ontology of the Siddhānta.⁸⁵ However, such doctrinal considerations based on dualistic and non-dualistic ontologies were not necessarily a problem for the redactors of the SJU. As mentioned above, Sanderson has observed that this text, although classified as a Saiddhāntika scripture, does not comply in all places with dualistic philosophical principles.⁸⁶ Thus, a posthumous initiation being included in the SJU seems less problematic, since its doctrinal outlook may predate the period in which the Siddhānta had established firm doctrinal positions on such topics and demarcated itself from the monism of non-Saiddhāntika tantric schools. Also in the case of the demonstrably early Ni, matters of dualistic or non-dualistic theol-

⁸⁵ Rāmakaṇṭha's strong argumentation against such a practice may be his reaction against common practices; see Goodall 1998, pp. 376–377, in particular fn. 621. There is abundant evidence that the ritual was performed in Kashmir, as for example the references in Kṣemendra's satires *Deśopadeśa* and *Narmamālā*. Theoretical justification was further offered by non-Saiddhāntika authorities such as Abhinavagupta, who criticized the more restrictive view of Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha. He insists that the descent of Śiva's grace, that is to say, Śiva's desire that a guru perform a liberating initiation for a deceased person, can be validly inferred from the fervour of the requests of relatives or his own compassion; see Sanderson 1995, p. 30, fn. 70. E.g. *Tantrāloka* 21.9c-11b: *bandhubhāryāsuhṛtputragāḍhābhyarthanayogataḥ || svayaṃ tadviśayoṭpannakaruṇābalato 'pi vā | vijñātanmukhāyātaśaktipātāmśadharmāṇaḥ || gurur dikṣaṃ mṛtoddhārīm kurvīta śivadāyinīm*. "The guru can perform the Śiva-bestowing initiation ritual which rescues the dead for someone in whom some element of the descent of Śiva's power (*śaktipāta*) has arrived and recognized through his mouth either through the vehement requests from his relatives, wife, friends or son, or even through the strength of his own compassion for that person." Evidently, the scruples of Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha were not sufficient to undermine the practice, though it is conceivable that Kashmirian Saiddhāntika officiants may have been persuaded to surrender this source of income to their non-Saiddhāntika competitors. Further, behind these theoretical considerations on the rationale of Śaiva initiation, one also suspects a more general objection if post-mortem initiation were possible, namely that the necessity of undertaking *nirvāṇadīkṣā* while alive along with the arduous post-initiatory practices would appear to be gravely undermined by such a possibility.

⁸⁶ Sanderson 1992, pp. 291–292 and p. 44 above.

ogy do not yet play a role.⁸⁷ In fact, the brief reference to the funeral context in the Ni's *Guhyasūtra* may be describing precisely this option of performing a posthumous initiation during cremation, as noted above.⁸⁸

5.1.2. Some remarks on the position of the *Sarvajñānottara* in the development of Śaiva tantric funerary rites

It is difficult to ascertain what stage the SJU represents in the development of Śaiva cremation. On the one hand, it provides more detail about the ritual than any other pre-tenth-century Śaiva Siddhānta scripture. It is also the only early Saiddhāntika scripture to contain not only a regular Śaiva cremation, but also the *mṛtadīkṣā*, a procedure for someone who is feared dead but whose body is not available. The only other scriptural source where this is found is the quite late eclectic BK.⁸⁹ This would indicate that this part of the SJU was only composed when Śaiva tantric funerary procedures had already reached the stage of an established tradition. On the other hand, we have noted that the SJU's doctrinal position does not follow standard Saiddhāntika doctrine, but includes monistic features in the *mṛtadīkṣā*, a tenet that may indicate the work's relative archaism. Then again, these factors may simply indicate that the SJU was composed within a different tradition than the other early Saiddhāntika scriptures and may have been trying to accommodate rites and teachings from non-Saiddhāntika traditions. For instance, this tradition may have been located geographically somewhere else. That geographical considerations should be taken into account is indicated by the fact that the SJU was largely ignored by the Kashmirian Śaiva Siddhānta exegetes,⁹⁰ even though posthumous initiation appears to have been a common practice in Kashmir already by the tenth century,⁹¹ for which the SJU would have provided scriptural authority. In contrast, the SJU does have a traceable impact on the prescriptions for death rites in the South Indian Saiddhāntika ritual manual tradition; despite the doctrinally clumsy position of the *mṛtadīkṣā*, this type of funerary initi-

⁸⁷ See Goodall 1998, p. lviii.

⁸⁸ See p. 47.

⁸⁹ See NGMPP B24/57, ff. 219r2–224r2. For the place of BK in Śaiva literature, cf. p. 83.

⁹⁰ See Goodall 1998, p. xlvi.

⁹¹ See p. 70, fn. 85.

ation even reappears in a slightly modified form in the manuals by Ag-horaśiva and Jñānaśiva. The former, who also wrote a detailed commentary on the SJU, in fact draws heavily on the SJU's *mṛtadīkṣā* chapter in his own treatment of the subject.⁹² While Jñānaśiva bases himself on a different text, he also explicitly envisages the initiatory cremation of an effigy in place of the deceased for a *samayin* who has died "out of sight" (*parokṣa*).⁹³ Further, Jñānaśiva's manual contains a small ritual detail that it shares only with the SJU, namely the preparation of the bottom of the fire pit by drawing first a square and then a triangle.⁹⁴

5.2. The *Kiraṇatantra*: A high degree of integration into the brahmanical mainstream

In the Kir, chapter 60 contains an account of the cremation ritual. The chapter opens (Kir 60.2–5) with prescriptions for preparing the corpse and site, this in less detail than found in the SJU. Then the rite of initiating the deceased person's soul is described.⁹⁵ After this initiation is completed, the corpse is to be lifted to the top of the pyre and burnt, whereby a stream of water is to be poured around the pyre.⁹⁶ The concluding verses then describe purificatory rites and water offerings to the ancestors.⁹⁷

From the prescriptions it seems that by the time and place of the Kir's composition, Śaiva tantric circles had extended into the brahmanical mainstream. One indication for this is that Śaiva tantric funerary practices had become a fixed part of the ritual repertoire offered by tantric officiants. Unlike the SJU, SārK and DīU, the Kir no longer includes any doctrinal justification for these rites, but rather takes their performance for granted. Further, the Kir also includes instructions for officiating at Śaiva versions of the brahmanical procedures for post-mortem ancestral offerings (*śrād-*

⁹² See p. 121.

⁹³ JR AP 74c–75. For the text and translation of the passage, see the appendices.

⁹⁴ However, it should also be noted that in terms of order, the SJU's account and that of the JR vary. See p. 147.

⁹⁵ Kir 60.7–12ab. For the text and translation of the passage, see the appendices.

⁹⁶ Kir 60.12cd–14. For the text and translation of the passage, see the appendices.

⁹⁷ Kir 60.15–17. For the text and translation of the passage, see the appendices.

dha), a unique feature amongst the early Saiddhāntika scriptures.⁹⁸ As will be discussed in chapter 5, this indicates the text's strong orientation towards householders actively involved in mainstream society, for whom these *śrāddha* rituals constituted important ritual obligations.

This involvement in public life and the sphere of death rites as envisaged by the Kir indicates that ritual specialists of that school saw the economic potential for broadening their clientele base and aimed for a higher degree of institutionalization and visibility that would allow for their services to be commissioned by members of society at large. There is a similar tendency in the text regarding consecration rituals for cult-objects (*pratiṣṭhā*). The Kir not only provides *pratiṣṭhā* rituals for setting up *līngas*, as we would expect, but also for the temples to house them,⁹⁹ therewith implying that Saiddhāntika tantric priests had also become engaged in the consecration and maintenance of public temples. Further, the Kir contains instructions for *ācāryas* to perform *śrāddha* rituals for recipients extending beyond Śaiva initiates – Śaiva lay devotees and even ordinary orthodox twice-born not specifically devoted to Śiva.¹⁰⁰ This suggests that the Saiddhāntika order may have already had a class of professional funerary and *śrāddha* priests.

5.3. The *Dikṣottara*: Cremation defined as *prāyaścitta* for Śaiva initiates

The DīU¹⁰¹ is classified as an addition to the Ni, the earliest extant Saiddhāntika scripture. Goodall has pointed out that of all the texts associated with the Ni, the DīU is the most systematic in its treatment of doctrinal matters,¹⁰² and it therefore records the developments that had taken place between the time of the early composition of the Ni (i.e. ca. fifth–seventh cent.) and that of the DīU, sometime before the tenth century. The passage

⁹⁸ See below, chapter 5.

⁹⁹ See Takashima 2005, pp. 128–132 and pp. 136–138.

¹⁰⁰ See below, chapter 5.

¹⁰¹ I am grateful to Dominic Goodall, Nirajan Kafle, Nibedita Rout, S.A.S. Sarma and R. Sathanarayanan for having kindly made their e-text available to me.

¹⁰² Such topics include, for instance, enumerating the 36 *tattvas* or the 28 Śaiva scriptures. See Goodall 2015, p. 25.

on Śaiva cremation is short, with just eight verses, and only includes an injunction to perform the purification of the deceased person's soul through initiation and the procedure for offering the corpse into the Śiva fire together with oblations. For the initiatory purification of the deceased person's soul, the DīU uses a different model than that taught earlier in the brief reference in the Ni's GuhS, where the letters of the Vyomavyāpin mantra are taught to be used as the cosmic units through which the guru eradicates the deceased person's karmas.¹⁰³ In contrast, the DīU offers the two following models: dividing the cosmos into the six parallel paths, or dividing it by the letters of the alphabet.¹⁰⁴

Other than this, no rites before or after the cremation are mentioned. Instead of practical ritual matters, the scripture seems more concerned with the doctrinal justification for performing a Śaiva *antyeṣṭi*. Amongst the pre-tenth-century scriptures, it is unique in that it explicitly classifies the initia-

¹⁰³ See p. 47.

¹⁰⁴ DīU 16.30–38 (T17, pp. 1059–1061; T150, pp. 157–158): *dīkṣāsamśuddhadehe* (conj.; *dīkṣāsamśuddhadehaṃ* T17T150) *tu pañcatve* **samupāgate* (T17; *samupāgame* T150) | **samayabheda*(conj.; *samayabhede-* T17T150)*hetvarthe* 'ntyeṣṭim *tu samārabhet* || 30 || **ṣaḍvidhādhvāna*(T17; *ṣaḍvidhādhvāna-* T150)*mārgasya* **yasyocyate* (conj.; *yadraucyeta* T17; *yad ucyate* T150) *varānane* | *evaṃ samhārayogena hunec caiva yathākramam* || 31 || *ekaikām* **āhutim* (T17; *āhutim* T150) *hunec* (em.; *juhuyād* codd.) *ante pūrṇāhutim dadet* | *samayācāradoṣasya pramādāt skhalitasya* **ca* (T17; *tu* T150) || 32 || *antyeṣṭis tu śivenaikā* (T150; *śivenaikā* T17) **prāyaścittam* (T17; *prāyaścitta* T150) *viśuddhaye* | *athavā mātṛkādihvānaṃ kṣakārādi* **samāsataḥ* (T17; *samasataḥ* T150) || 33 || *akārāntais tu deveśi pañcapañcāhutim hunet* | *ekaikena tu* **varṇena* (T17; *pūrveṇa* T150) *homayeta vicakṣaṇaḥ* || 34 || **samastena tu mantreṇa mātṛkeṇa vicakṣaṇaḥ* (T17; om. T150) | *tena pūrṇāhutim dadyād antyeṣṭim tu samarpayet* || 35 ||. “In the case of someone whose body was purified by the initiation ritual, when he has died, [the *ācārya*] should perform the funeral ritual if there are transgressions of post-initiatory practice. O beautiful one, for him whose cosmic path is divided into six paths, [the following] is taught. He should make the oblations thus, [following the cosmic path divided into six paths,] by applying [the order of] dissolution (i.e. in the reverse order, starting from the highest level and going to the lowest) and do so successively. He should make oblations one by one and at the end, make a full oblation. Śiva has taught the funeral ritual as a reparatory rite for the purification of someone who has made mistakes in his conduct and post-initiatory practice out of negligence, or of someone who is unsteady [with regard to his belief in the Śaiva doctrine]. Alternatively, [the purification of the levels should be performed] in short [using the] path of the alphabet, starting with *kṣa* (i.e. in the reverse order). O Goddess, he should make 25 oblations with [the letters] ending in *a*; the guru should make the oblations with each letter one by one or with the entire mantra of the alphabet [at once?]. After that he should make a full oblation and should perform the cremation.”

tory cremation as an expiatory ritual (*prāyaścitta*), a feature we will only encounter again in later works. DīU 16.32cd–33ab reads as follows:

Śiva has taught the funeral ritual as a reparatory rite for the purification of someone who has made mistakes in his conduct and post-initiatory practice out of negligence or someone who is unsteady [with regard to his belief in the Śaiva doctrine].¹⁰⁵

The underlying principle is the same as the one already encountered in the SārK and the SJU, namely to cleanse the soul of impurities incurred through transgressions of post-initiatory observance, even if there the rite is not explicitly termed a *prāyaścitta*.¹⁰⁶ The DīU's concept is also picked up by Abhinavagupta, in his TĀ, where he refers to this verse of the DīU in his chapter on funerary rituals, also using this reasoning as the doctrinal justification for *antyeṣṭi*.¹⁰⁷

The DīU further makes the point that funeral rites for an initiate must be performed by a Śaiva *ācārya*.¹⁰⁸ While this seems a redundant comment at first, it is possible that the redactors felt the need to make this explicit, perhaps to reassert their position in an environment in which families still resorted to ordinary funerary priests for the cremation of initiated family members. Indeed, the SvāSS explicitly mentions, as described above, that those involved in worldly life (*lokamārgastha*) should follow conventional orthodox practices in the sphere of death rites. As was argued earlier, this possibly suggests that some initiates simply received a brahmanical funeral if

¹⁰⁵ For the Sanskrit text, see fn. 104 above.

¹⁰⁶ See also DīU 16.30 in fn. 104 above for a similar statement. For cremation as a purificatory rite in order to counteract past transgressions, see p. 62 for the SārK, and p. 66 for the SJU.

¹⁰⁷ TĀ 24.4: *samayācāradoṣeṣu pramādāt skhalitasya hi | antyeṣṭidīkṣā kāryeti śrīdīkṣot-taraśāsane ||*.

¹⁰⁸ DīU 16.37c–38 (T 17, p. 1061 and T 150, p. 158): *jñānavijñānasampanna ācāryas tattvapāragah || kālacakravīdhānājñāḥ kālajñāḥ *so 'bhidhīyate* (conj. Sanderson; *sa vidhīyate* T 17 and T 150) **sa vai mocayate* (T 17; *sa vaimē + T 150) *jantūddhārajñō* (conj. Sanderson; *jantu dhārajñō* T 17; *jantuḥ cārajñō* T 150) *nātra saṁśayaḥ*. “An *ācārya*, endowed with knowledge and wisdom, who has mastered the *tattvas*, who knows the way of the cycle of time, is called a master of time. He alone liberates, being expert in the raising of souls [out of *saṁsāra*]. Of this there is no doubt.”

their family found it suitable. A situation like this may have gradually given rise to tensions between Śaiva and brahmanical funerary priests, resulting in the increased effort by Śaiva tantric priests to propagate their services and gain an advantage over their competitors.

Not much can be gleaned from the instructions in terms of the socio-religious status of intended recipients other than an emphasis being made that the deceased should have received a *nirvāṇadīkṣā* during his lifetime, a requirement that would be applicable to householder and ascetic initiates alike. This injunction does underline, however, that the redactors of the scripture wanted to make sure to exclude the possibility that the initiatory cremation was used as an initiation rite proper for uninitiated, such as in the SJU's *mṛtadīkṣā*.

5.3.1. *Nyāsadīkṣā*: A ritual to remove the subtle body (*puryaṣṭaka*)

This account of *antyeṣṭi* in the DīU is preceded by a description of the subtle body (*puryaṣṭaka*), including the post-mortem path the soul travels while attached to it,¹⁰⁹ and the means for being freed of it. The latter is referred to as the *nyāsadīkṣā*.¹¹⁰ Framed as a dialogue between Śiva and his wife Devī, the entire chapter is a response to Devī's question of how the subtle body moves after death and experiences the various tortures of hell. This passage provides a clue about afterlife beliefs at the time of the DīU's composition,¹¹¹ beliefs that had clearly not been overcome by the doctrine of liberation at death.

It is explained that after death, the soul is still attached to the subtle body and therefore continues to experience objects of the senses,¹¹² only by

¹⁰⁹ DīU 16.5–16.

¹¹⁰ DīU 16.19–28b. This *nyāsadīkṣā* is declared here to be the last of the five kinds of *dīkṣā*.

¹¹¹ DīU 16.1–5ab: *devy uvāca–puryaṣṭakasamāyukta ātmā sarvatra yujyate | tadahaṃ śrotum icchāmi bhagavan vaktum arhasi || 1 || sukṛte karmabhokṛtve duṣkṛte ca tathaiva hi | puryaṣṭake yadā hy ātmā vāyubhūto vyavasthītaḥ || 2 || vidyamāne 'pi taddehe pratyakṣeṇa tu dr̥śyate | śrūyate yātanā tasya narakeṣu anekadhā || 3 || svarge ca vividhaṃ bhogam aṇimādyā maheśvara | tanubhūtaś śarīrātmā bhogān bhuñjati śaṅkara || 4 || narake yātanā tasya kathayasva prasādataḥ |*

¹¹² DīU 16.7–8: **tyakte (T17; vyakte T150) *sthūla(T17; sthala- T150)śarīre tu laukike bhūtasambhave | puryaṣṭake yadā hy ātmā vāyubhūto vyavasthītaḥ || 7 || śabdasparsaṃ*

being freed of this subtle body and its constituents does one attain liberation.¹¹³ The subtle body thus acts as the vehicle of the soul between rebirths, a concept that is frequently encountered in Śaiva sources and is also reflected in ritual procedures.¹¹⁴ For instance, several initiation accounts (especially in the context of the *nirbījadīkṣā*) include the removal of the subtle body by offering the constituents to various deities.¹¹⁵ In the DīU, however, we find this procedure prescribed as a separate initiation ritual in the form of this *nyāsadīkṣā* in the context of death practices. The description of this ritual is located after an account of post-mortem experiences and, as mentioned, before the funerary procedure. In this *nyāsadīkṣā*, the beneficiary is referred to as a yogic practitioner (or *yogin*). The rite essentially consists in offering all of the *puryaṣṭaka*'s constituents to the various deities, presumably in order to free the soul of the subtle body and thus of the medium that would carry it to rebirths.¹¹⁶ However, it is not clear from the text whether this *nyāsadīkṣā* is to be performed together with the following cremation procedure for all initiates – on the occasion of the cremation, referred to as *yogins* – or whether it is a separate ritual performed only for *yogins*, with the understanding that they do not need a funerary initiation.

In the later TĀ of Abhinavagupta, we find a passage that is more explicit about the function of this rite and its position within the funerary procedure. Abhinavagupta, in fact, cites this DīU *puryaṣṭaka* passage in his chap-

*tathā rūpaṃ *gandhādiviṣayo rasaḥ (conj.; gandhādiviṣayoragaḥ T17; gandhatvavṛṣayor api T150) | tridhāntahkaraṇaṃ devi tair na mucyet kṣaṇād api || 8 ||*. “After the gross body pertaining to the world and origin of the spirit has been abandoned, when the soul is [situated] in the *puryaṣṭaka*, it is everywhere. And not for a moment, O Goddess, is [the soul] freed from the objects of the senses, such as sound, tangibility, form, taste and smell, [nor from] the three internal organs (i.e. the *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṃkāra*).”

¹¹³ DīU 16.17–18: *tair yuktaṃ tu *sambadhyeta (T17; buddhyeta T150 [unmetr.]) tair vimuktas tu *mucyate (T150; mucyate T17) | tasmāt tu devadeveṣe nyased devi sadāśive || 17 || evaṃ nyaste tadā yogī niścayaṃ śivatāṃ vrajet | sa nyāsa eṣa vikhyātaḥ śivena paramātmā || 18 ||*.

¹¹⁴ See *s.v.* *puryaṣṭaka* in TAK 3.

¹¹⁵ See *s.v.* *puryaṣṭakāṃśārpaṇa* in TAK 3. It mentions, for instance, the MatP and SvT.

¹¹⁶ Only in transcript T 150, the connection between the previous account and the prescriptions for the *nyāsadīkṣā* is made explicit: it is explained that by offering the constituents of the *puryaṣṭaka* to the various deities, one frees oneself from it (p. 156): *tair yuktaṃ tu *sambadhyeta (em.; –budhyate Cod.) tair muktas tu mucyate | tasmāt tu devadeveṣe vinyaseta yathākramam || śabdasparsaṃ nyased brahma (sic) rasaṃ vai keśave nyaset | rūpaṃ gandhaṃ nyased rudre buddhyahaṃkāraṃ tsvare || namaḥ tu deva deveṣe nyased devi sadāśivam | evaṃ nyāsaḥ tadā yogi *niścittaṃ (em.; niścathaṃ Cod.) śivatāṃ vrajet ||*

ter on cremation rites (chapter 24) and explicitly names the work as the source.¹¹⁷ After listing various procedures to be performed for a deceased person, Abhinavagupta then describes the same procedure of offering the eight constituents of the body (*puryaṣṭavargārpaṇa*),¹¹⁸ referring to this as the *sāṃnyāsikī dīkṣā*.¹¹⁹ Abhinavagupta further makes explicit that it is only through freeing the soul of the *puryaṣṭaka* that it is freed of experiencing heavens and hells; as a consequence, no worldly post-mortem rituals need to be performed.¹²⁰ With this, he is probably referring to the various *bali* and water offerings to appease the ghost, which imply that the soul is not yet freed of the *puryaṣṭaka*, although theoretically the same could also extend to the whole cycle of *śrāddha* rituals. This procedure calls to mind practices of deathbed asceticism, with the dying person converting to this highest spiritual state in the last moment of his life, thereby also freeing the mourners of the obligation to perform post-mortem rituals. The fact that Abhinavagupta refers to this procedure as *sāṃnyāsikī dīkṣā* and that the DīU refers to the recipient of this *dīkṣā* as a *yogin* may indicate that this procedure was considered to have the same function. However, whether this also implies that performing a *nyāsadīkṣā/sāṃnyāsikī dīkṣā* would make the performance of any post-mortem offerings superfluous is a matter of speculation. After all, in Abhinavagupta's case, we find this procedure explained as a fixed part of a funeral for initiates, for whom procedures for post-mortem ancestor worship are subsequently also taught.

¹¹⁷ TĀ 24.17cd: *dīkṣottare ca puryaṣṭavargārpaṇam ihoditam*.

¹¹⁸ Note that the SvT also includes the offering of the constituents of the *puryaṣṭaka* in the procedure for the initiation rite proper taught in its chapter 4; passages from there are also quoted in the commentary *ad* TĀ 24.18–20 (i.e. SvT 4.136c–137c, 4.167cd, 4.179, 4.189c–190b, 4.204ab, 4.205ab).

¹¹⁹ TĀ 24.20cd: *eṣā sāṃnyāsikī dīkṣā puryaṣṭakaviśodhanī*. Note that DīU 16.18 uses the term *sāṃnyāsa* to describe the procedure of the *yogin* freeing himself of the *puryaṣṭaka*, his ensuing experiences and his renouncing into Sadāśiva (who is also the centre of worship in the TĀ's account of the *sāṃnyāsikī dīkṣā*): *evam *nyaste* (T17; *nyāsa* T150) *tadā yogī niścayaṃ śivatāṃ vrajet | sāṃnyāsa eṣa vikhyātaḥ śivena paramātmanā ||*.

¹²⁰ TĀ 24.21: *puryaṣṭakasyābhāve ca na svarganarakādayaḥ | tathā kṛtvā na kartavyaṃ laukikaṃ kiñcanāpi hi ||*.

6. Burial in the Saiddhāntika scripture

Mataṅgapārameśvara: Connections with the Atimārga

Amongst the pre-tenth-century Śaiva Siddhānta scriptures, the *Mataṅgapārameśvara* (MatP) was composed relatively late.¹²¹ This unique scripture contains a feature not found anywhere else in the Saiddhāntika corpus, namely the burial of the corpse.¹²² This is mentioned in the context of a monastic institution, and it is explicitly stated that the beneficiary of this ritual should be an ascetic (*yati*),¹²³ as one would expect for a burial in the brahmanical context, where only those who have renounced the worldly life and ritual fires are not cremated. We can infer the monastic context from the subsequent passages, which describe the guru's property, such as his bowl and manuscripts, being distributed to co-ascetics and disciples.¹²⁴ Moreover, the scripture regulates the management of the property of monastic institutions and presents rules governing the succession of their ab-

¹²¹ On the dating of the MatP, see p. 46.

¹²² MatP Caryāpāda 10.70–72: *niṣkramya leśayāvāsād avakuṅṭhya paṭena tam | vijanaṃ deśam āsādyā pracchannaṃ śivasamṣkṛtaiḥ || 70 || nayoktāc chivam tśānyām udagdiśi sragādibhiḥ | yaṣṭvā tatraiva deveśaṃ sthaṅḍile caiva pūjayet || 71 || śaktim uccārya sampūrṇāṃ sthāpayec ca tataḥ kṣītau | kṣamāpayeta deveśaṃ [vihitaiḥ stutibhir mune] || 72 ||* “He should bring out [the corpse] only a short way from the house, and cover it with a shroud. He should then go to a deserted, hidden place [together] with [other] Śaiva initiates. In the Northeast [of that place] he should worship Śiva in the manner taught [in the Kriyāpāda] with such things as flower garlands and right there [also] worship the Lord of Gods (i.e. Śiva) on the platform. He should utter the root mantra (*śakti*) completely and place [the corpse] into the ground. He should ask the deity for forgiveness with the verses taught, O wise one.” *Prachannaṃ śivasamṣkṛtaiḥ* in 70d might also be interpreted as “[a place] surrounded by Śaiva initiates”; alternatively *śivasamṣkṛtaiḥ* can be seen as the agent of *āsādyā*, if the latter is understood in the causative sense: “He should have [the corpse] brought to a deserted place by Śaiva initiates”. The interpretation of verse 71 is also ambiguous, since we have two directional commands, *tśānyām* and *udagdiśi*, but only one ritual action, unless the *sthaṅḍila* from 71d is understood as being in the north; it is also possible to emend *śivam* to *śavam* and to suspect some corruption behind *udagdiśi*, such as *udakpādam* (note that one manuscript reads *udakpa-*). The verse could thus be translated something like this: “According to the manner taught before, he should worship the corpse in the Northeast, with the feet turned towards the North, with garlands etc. and right there on the *sthaṅḍila* worship Śiva.” Placing the corpse with the feet facing north is common in funerary prescriptions; mixing up *śi* and *śa* is also a common mistake in the transmission of texts. Note that *yaṣṭvā* is here the incorrect absolutive of *yaj-*, which should read *iṣṭvā*.

¹²³ See MatP Caryāpāda 10.67cd–68ab: *yates tato vipannasya kālaprāptasya liṅginah || yo vidhiḥ sa samāsenā kathyate te muniśvara*. “O Lord of sages, I shall briefly teach you the rite for a deceased Śaiva ascetic.”

¹²⁴ Cf. p. 175, where MatP Caryāpāda 10.76–79ab is quoted.

bots.¹²⁵ The rules of impurity after a death, which prescribe the number of days to interrupt the daily study, are regulated according to the status of the deceased based on the four initiatory classes, rather than family relations. This, too, points to a monastic context.¹²⁶

In terms of the rite's function, the MatP clearly states that it considers the reason for carrying out the funeral procedure as being merely to comply with the mundane order, insisting that funeral rites are futile with regard to spiritual matters:

Whatever regulation there is, I will explain that to you in brief, O Lord of Sages (i.e. Mataṅga), since [in general] ritual cannot be of any use for the deceased ascetic. For having previously gone forth, for the remaining rituals [during his lifetime] (*śeṣānām*) he acts [only] in conformity with mundane order. The reason [for this] is known from being shown in the Jñāna- and Caryāpāda.¹²⁷

That the funeral rite is conceptualized here as a purely social ritual is further underlined by the fact that the prescriptions for funeral rites are found in the section governing behaviour and customs (*caryā*) – the Caryāpāda – rather than in the section on rituals (*kriyā*) – the Kriyāpāda – as is the case in the other sources. Further, performing funeral rites out of mere social convention is in keeping with the MatP's clear and strong position that brahmanical observances should only be undertaken to avoid the mundane order from being pointlessly offended.¹²⁸ In all of these cases, the scripture insists that these rites should not be considered efficacious in any other way. It can thus be argued that burying a Śaiva tantric ascetic just follows common brahmanical practice and therefore protects the mundane order, since a brahmanical ascetic – unlike the Śaiva ascetic of the Mantramārga –

¹²⁵ For more on this, see chapter 4.

¹²⁶ See p. 169.

¹²⁷ MatP Caryāpāda 10.68–69: *yo vidhiḥ sa samāsenā kathyate te munīśvara | nāsyopakāraḥ karma svaryātasya yato bhavet || 68 || prāg eva hi *viniṣkrāntaḥ* (conj.; *viniṣkrāntaḥ* Ed.) *śeṣānām carati sthitau | vihitam kāraṇam jñānacaryāpādotkidarśanāt || 69 ||*. Note that in the present context, *svaryātasya* is a strange term for referring to the death of an ascetic, considering that it means literally “having gone to heaven”.

¹²⁸ See Sanderson (forthcoming), pp. 10–14.

has given up the fires necessary for the rituals pertaining to the world of householders as part of his renunciation. His corpse is therefore disposed of through burial or immersion in a sacred body of water.

Another possibility is that the burial rite found in the MatP was directly influenced by earlier Atimārgic ascetic traditions. A compelling consideration is the fact that burying ascetics was a feature of at least the community governed by the rituals set out in the Lakulīśa Pāśupata ritual manual said to have been composed by Gārgya.¹²⁹ Here, burial rather than cremation is the preferred option. This is consonant with the fact that the traditions of the Pāñcārthika Pāśupatas and of the later Lākulas,¹³⁰ who have been shown to bridge the gulf between the Atimārga and the early Mantramārga,¹³¹ were purely ascetic and fireless. Since they did not use fire in any part of their worship, cremation would not be appropriate as a means of disposing of a corpse.¹³² The MatP might thus be seen as preserving a long established element of Atimārgic Śaivism.¹³³

7. Conclusion: Gradual increase of doctrinal justification

Looking at the above evidence concerning the formation of funerary rites in these early Śaiva tantric scriptures, we can see the process of how Śaiva ritual specialists gradually transformed the cremation ritual into a tantric act of funerary initiation to ensure the soul's liberation. We have also seen how this process was occasionally accompanied by attempts to compensate resulting doctrinal inconsistencies by offering theoretical justifications for their performance. Despite the façade of ambiguity that carefully conceals any specifications about the social context – especially in the earlier texts – several clues have emerged that allow us to trace the increasing involvement of householder initiates in death practices, both as beneficiaries and as

¹²⁹ See Acharya 2010.

¹³⁰ The Pāñcārthika Pāśupatas and Lākulas were ascetic sects associated with the Śaiva Atimārga (see the introduction chapter).

¹³¹ See Sanderson 2007.

¹³² See Sanderson 2006a, pp. 152–158.

¹³³ This hypothesis is in keeping with evidence of other Atimārgic features in the MatP, most notably its instructions for a certain observance for *sādhakas* that is associated with Pāśupatas and called Rudravrata, which preserve large elements of Pāñcārthika doctrine and devotional practice. See Sanderson 2006a, pp. 203–208.

ritual agents. In other words, a general trend can be observed in which the redactors of these scriptures, over time, formulated prescriptions for funeral rites that were increasingly tailored towards householders active in society.

To summarise, the earliest source with a full funerary procedure, the SvāSS, makes no mention of the exact meaning or function of Śaiva cremation, but merely provides an injunction that the corpse be burned, without implying that this has any soteriological purpose. While there is a vagueness about defining the beneficiary of the rite, the SvāSS strongly implies a monastic context – in particular that of the death of a teacher – and also notably specifies the involvement of householder initiates who are active in society. However, in the case of the latter, it is not made explicit how Śaiva conventions are to be synchronized with mundane brahmanical ones.

With the subsequent sources, the ritual focus shifts to the deceased person's soul and his liberation. At this point the redactors begin to include doctrinal justifications for performing a Śaiva *antyeṣṭi*, giving it a purificatory function to counteract transgressions regarding post-initiatory practices or doubts about Śaiva teachings that may impede the soul's final liberation. By doing so, the redactors made sure that the initiatory cremation was not mistaken for a posthumous initiation of an uninitiated person. The DīU even goes as far as to classify Śaiva cremation as an expiation (*prāyaścitta*). However, there is a significant exception to this doctrinal development: in the Kir, which also prescribes an initiatory cremation, the redactors did not see any need for its doctrinal justification. But their procedures clearly show that this group already enjoyed a higher degree of interface with the brahmanical mainstream in the form of the householder. Here, it is likely that Śaiva versions of funeral rites had become such a fixed part of the repertoire that doctrinal justifications had become redundant. What these Saiddhāntika scriptures share is that the beneficiary of a Śaiva cremation had to receive an initiation ritual during his lifetime. Even in the SJU, which contains a posthumous initiation, it is specified that this be done only for someone who was already engaged in devotion to Śiva, probably referring to a *samayin*.¹³⁴ The scope of application for tantric funerary rites in

¹³⁴ See p. 69 for the interpretation that this stipulation of having been engaged in devotion before death can most probably be interpreted as specifically referring to a deceased *samayin* who died before having the chance to receive the *nirvāṇadīkṣā*.

the pre-tenth-century Siddhānta was therefore clearly demarcated as applying only to the initiatory community both inside and outside the monastic institution, with a tendency to increasingly cater for the householder initiate active in society. The only exception to a purely initiatory context is again the Kir, which, as has been indicated, also includes instructions for post-mortem rites for non-initiates, as will be discussed in chapter 5. It is only a few centuries later that we find a Saiddhāntika scriptural source which covers a wide variety of funeral rites in the same work, namely the *Brhat-kālottara* (BK),¹³⁵ composed sometime between the mid-eleventh and mid-twelfth century,¹³⁶ probably in Kashmir.¹³⁷ However, the BK is not only a later work, witnessing a time in which a wider variety of death rites was already well established, but it is also an extremely eclectic scripture and has been shown to draw on a wide range of scriptural sources, including non-Śaiva ones.¹³⁸ It is, however, an important witness for the development of Śaiva funerary rites in the period after the earliest scriptures and before the

¹³⁵ For example, chapter 69 (NGMPP B24/57, ff. 214r1–215r1) prescribes a Śaiva funeral of the simple type, without a funerary initiation, with the account based on a passage from the SvāSS. And in chapter 72, the BK (NGMPP B24/57, ff. 219r2–224r2) describes various forms of funerary procedures, including a *mṛtoddhārādīkṣā* (which in structure is similar to the funerary initiation in the SJU, Kir and DīU) and cremation rites to be performed in special cases such as premature or inauspicious deaths, including the performance of a funerary initiation for an individual on a puppet in case of a death “out of sight” or an inauspicious death. In their collecting of passages, the redactors appear to have even consulted non-Śaiva material; it has been shown that both chapter 72 and the next, chapter 73 (NGMPP B 24/57, ff. 224r2–227v5) on *śrāddha* rituals were adapted with small modifications in their entirety from the Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātrika scripture *Jayākhyasamhitā* (JayS); see Sanderson 2001, pp. 17 and 38–41.

¹³⁶ See Sanderson 2001, pp. 17–18, where it is shown that the BK echoes the *Span-dakārikā* of Bhaṭṭa Kallata, who flourished approximately between 855 and 883 CE; see also *ibid.*, pp. 38–40 on the clear influence of the Pāñcarātrika *Jayākhyasamhitā*. Mills 2014, p. 58, notes that the earliest dated palm-leaf manuscript is NGMPP A43/1 (1169 CE), and that the earliest dateable author to cite the text is Vaktraśambhu, a pupil of Aghoraśiva, the author of the ritual manual *Kriyākramadyotikā* completed in 1157 CE. However, as will be shown below, a contemporary or even slightly earlier quotation is found in the chapter on funerary rites in the *Jñānaratnāvalī*; its author Jñānaśiva was a contemporary of Aghoraśiva. In a personal communication, Goodall furthermore informed me that the BK may have been composed after the *Somaśambhupaddhati*, which Somaśambhu completed in 1048/9 CE (Sanderson 2014, p. 21). This would restrict the BK’s possible period of composition to between the mid-11th and mid-12th century.

¹³⁷ Sanderson 2014, p. 12, fn. 49.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

“second wave” of Saiddhāntika scriptural composition from the twelfth century onwards, as will be shown in chapter 3.¹³⁹

Within the Saiddhāntika corpus, the only exception to this development of Śaiva tantric death rites towards initiatory cremation as the default is the MatP; here the scripture focuses only on the ascetic *yogin* and prescribes burial rather than cremation. At the same time, the meaninglessness of funeral rites is emphasised. However, the MatP’s passage is in accordance with the scripture’s general tendency to preserve ascetic practices, especially those relating to the Atimārga. The work is thus not typical for the Saiddhāntika scriptural corpus as a whole.

The development, from the simple Śaiva funeral primarily for a member of the monastic order found in the SvāSS, to the initiatory cremation and tantric mode of *śrāddha* for householders in the Kir, where potentially also lay worshippers are catered for, demonstrates the increasing involvement of tantric officiants in society at large. Tracing the possible points of connection between Śaiva tantric communities and the brahmanical mainstream in this development shows how death rites became a new field of specialisation amongst Śaiva tantric priests. It is therefore likely that such new groups of tantric professionals had established themselves by the ninth century.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ As will be discussed in chapter 3 and 4, as well as the appendices, it constituted an important source for the 12th-century South Indian author Jñānaśiva, who composed the ritual manual *Jñānaratnāvalī*.

¹⁴⁰ More on this will be discussed in chapter 4.