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# Interpreting *Caryā* No. 2 Composed by Kukkuripā and its Association with the Legend of Kānhapā

APARNA BHOGAL

Alumna of Deccan College Post- Graduate and Research Institute, Pune.  
Curator (Archaeology), CSMVS, Mumbai.

**Abstract:** *Caryās* are mystical verses written by or sung by some of the eighty four *Mahāsiddhas*. Composed in dialects, predecessors of Oriya, Bengali, Magadhi or Maithili, they were, and are sung by itinerant yogis, even today. These songs have double meanings and are full of similes and metaphors. It is believed that a *sādhaka* or practioner can perceive the real meaning. An attempt is made here to interpret one *caryā* of *Mahāsiddha Kukkuripā*, which possibly alludes to an episode in the life of *Mahāsiddha Kānhapā* or *Kāniphnāth*, as he is popularly known in Maharashtra. The scenes depicted on the walls of numerous temples in Maharashtra confirm that the event was well known by the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. I have linked this *caryā* with sculptural representations of *Mahāsiddha Kānhapā* and also with a 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Mahānubhāva* text: '*Līlacharitra*'. His own *caryā* given here (presumably written during the last few days of his life) emphasizes that in this world, no one actually comes or goes; all these are mental images or perception of the mind. *Kānhu* yogi likes the idea that soon he will be part of this voidness that constitutes ultimate reality. This event concluded tragically; nevertheless, *Kānhapā* will always remain in the hearts of the populace, including scholars, for generations.

**KeyWords:** *Caryā*, *kānhapā*, Medieval marathi, Translation, Yoga.

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*Caryās* are mystical verses written by or sung by some of the eighty four *Mahāsiddhas*. These verses were composed in different languages, ancestors of modern Oriya, Bengali, Magadhi, or Maithili. The collected *Caryās* are known as '*Caryāpāda*'. Itinerant yogis, it seems, travelled from village to village, from town to town, singing, playing a simple instrument, and dancing to these songs just like our Baul singers of West Bengal.

These songs have double meanings and are full of similes and metaphors. The words and descriptions are given in such a way that the uninitiated take one meaning. Still, the initiated could take another secret meaning often related to the *sāadhanā* or practice. In the context of Buddhism, the

word ‘*caryā*’ may actually stand for a code of conduct or rules and regulations, e.g., *Caryāpīṭaka*. *Pāda* means verses which can also be sung (Chaturvedi 1969: 9, 10).

We are discussing here *caryā* no. 2, one of the *caryās* of *caryāpāda*. It was composed by Kukkuripā. He appears in at least four contexts in the lineal history of the *Siddhas*. In the Nyingmapa anuyoga lineage, he is believed to be a transmitter of the Dupaido, a text that he received from Indrabhūti I and taught to Garab Dorje; this would have been in the eighth century. Then he is identified as the Guru of King Dza of Zahor (8<sup>th</sup> century), a disciple of Lilavajra and a *guru* of Kambala and Indrabhūti the Younger (late 9<sup>th</sup> century), the Guru of Minapā (early 10<sup>th</sup> century), and the mother-tantra teacher of Marpa (11<sup>th</sup> century). While all these references point to Eastern India and Tibet, one source that identifies Kukkuripā with Jñānagarbha from whom Marpā received the Guhyasamāja-tantra is linked to Western India. Marpā also refers to Kukkuripā as Śāntibhadra. Jñānagarbha lived at Talakshetra in Western India, and most of the contexts in which we find Kukkuripā relate to western India and to the North-west and Oddiyana in particular. He flourished in c. 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (Dowman and Tenzin 1986: 202, 203).

Ancient Oddiyana has generally been associated with Swat my most scholars. The spread of the network of these traditions in Western India and up to Swat is not the concern of the present study. I intend to focus instead on the meaning of one particular *caryā*, to improve upon various translations of *caryā* available online and also Nilratan Sen’s ‘Charya Gitikoshā’, Acharya Parashuram Chaturvedi’s Hindi book, ‘Bauddha Siddhonke Charyapada’. This essay is an outcome of my interpretation of the *caryā* under discussion. In order to do this, I will first present the *caryā* and move on to the lineage of its writer to establish that he was commenting on references and ideas he had received from his preceptors. I will then contextualize this verse within the wider style of this poet to show that he makes particular and repeated references to specific sexual *kriyās* in his work. This makes it appropriate to situate this verse within the context of the discussions on the *vajroli mudrā* and a narrative of a competition on the retention of sexual fluids by the *yogī* and *yoginī* to keep the listener enraptured by the idea about who can derive the bliss and power of nothingness. (The wider context of *vajroli* is a subject that is less well-known outside the circle of scholars on *tantra* and the Nātha *siddha*-s, and will therefore be explained in the following pages.)

दुलि दुहि पिटा धरण न जाअ। रुखेर तेन्तलि कुम्भीरे खाअ।।  
 आङगण घरपण सुन भो विआती। कानेट चौरी निल अधराती।।  
 सुसुरा निद गेल बहुड़ी जागअ। कानेट चोरे निल का गइ मागअ।।  
 दिवसइ बहुड़ी काउइ डरे भाअ। राति भइले कामरू जाअ।।  
 अइसन चर्या कुवकुरी पाएँ गाइइ। कोड़ि एकु मा झँ हिअहिँ समाइइ।।  
 चर्या .२ (चतुर्वेदी: १ २८)

It is translated by Prof. Nilratan Sen, as follows:

Milking the she tortoise (it) cannot be contained in a pail.

The crocodile (alligator) eats tamarind off the tree.

Oh learned woman, listen, the courtyard is towards the house.

The thief has taken away kanet (ear-ring) at midnight.

The father-in-law fell asleep; Bahuḍi (daughter-in-law) was awake.

The thief has taken away kanet- the ear-ring; going where can it be asked for?

In daytime Bahuḍi (the daughter-in-law) is afraid of a crow,

When it is night she goes to Kamaru (amorous Kamarupa, the land of love).  
Such a *caryā* is sung by Kukkuripā;  
Which enters in to the heart of one among ten millions (Sen 1977: 129).

Scholars so far could not decipher the real meaning in this *caryā* probably because all of them tried to seek its meaning in the metaphysical or spiritual context. Instead the present writer believes that this *caryā* makes allusion to the legend of Kānhapā and a *yoginī* (*ḍākinī*) called Bahudī.

Let us now consider Kānhapā a 10<sup>th</sup> century *Sahaja Siddha* who is also known as Kānhu, Kṛṣṇapāda, Kāniph, Kānanīpā in literary and spiritual tradition. He was a disciple of Jālandharipā or Jālandharanāth. An episode from Kānhapā's life is depicted on the exterior of cave 14 at Panhale Kaji (1<sup>st</sup> register of the panels on the right side of the entrance) in Maharashtra \* (Sarde 2018: 3). (Figure1). It is a synoptic and symbolic representation of the story of Kānhapā and *yoginī* Bahudī.

According to the Tibetan version of the story, once, while travelling, Kānhapā reached the outskirts of the village Bhadhokora. There, he met a young girl beneath a tree laden with ripe fruit. He requested for permission to pick some ripe fruits from the tree. The girl did not allow him to take any fruit which enraged the proud *siddha* and with his powerful gaze he plucked some fruits from the tree. The girl was actually the *ḍākinī* Bahudi who sent the fruits back to the tree with her equally powerful gaze. When the *ḍākinī* revealed herself, both were engaged in the competition of ritualistic gaze. Soon both the adversaries cursed each other. The *ḍākinī* started bleeding heavily, but after the request of the villagers, Kānhapā reversed his curse. But the curse of the *ḍākinī* made Kānhapā vomit and bleed. Kānhapā could not get the medicine he needed due to the trick of the *ḍākinī* and in the end, he prepared himself for death. The *ḍākinī* Bahudi was also punished, later, by Bhānde, Kānhapā's faithful *ḍākinī* (Downman: 127).

Cakradhara, the guru of the Mahānubhāva sect (c.13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.), narrated the episode to his disciples with additional information (*Līlācaritra Uttarārḍha*, a Maharashtra vernacular text in Marathi, a biography of Cakradhara Swāmi): The incident happened under a coconut tree (in the sculptural art of Maharashtra a coconut tree is depicted wherever this legend is delineated). (Figure: 2, a narrative sculptural panel from the Vishnu temple at Palasdev, Maharashtra, c. 14<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) (Sarde 2019: 104, 105). When the coconuts were stuck back to the tree, the enraged Kānhapā challenged the *yoginī* (*ḍākinī*) Bahudī for a sexual competition (the one who retains sexual fluid wins).

या : तुम्ही, आम्ही सगळे जूझो : मी आपुले वीर्ये खरो नेदी : कां तू आपुले वीर्ये खरो नेदी :

In the first attempt, she was defeated as he absorbed sexual fluid from her vagina, but then *yoginī* Kāmākhyā advised Bahudī to insert a diamond in her vagina.

रमतां रंघ्रीं हीरा धरि आणि जीकसी :

When the diamond got stuck in the penis of Kānhu it caused health problems (Joshi 1977: 517, 518).

Kukkuripā captured this event in *sāndhyabhāṣā* –an enigmatic language.

दुलि दुहि पिटा धरण न जाअ। रुखेर तेन्तलि कुम्भीरे खाअ।।

Milking the tortoise cannot fill a pail. It is as impossible as the eating of tamarinds from the tree by an alligator. (Something impossible has happened. No one could think of it.)

आडगण घरपण सुन भो विआती। कानेट चौरी निल अधराती।।

It is a polysemic language (words with multiple meanings, eg. *sūn-* (*śūnya*) empty, void and also listen). One of the meanings is:

Home and courtyard are *sūna-* empty (Chaturvedi: 80). Oh, learned woman (female ascetic) (Sen: 155), kanet has been stolen during midnight.

According to another version: oh, musician *Kanet* has been stolen at midnight (esoteric erotic practices were followed during midnight). Biati/viati= musician (<https://in.okfn.org>). *Kanet* is an earring but the word here may stand for *Kānhu*. The multi-talented *siddha* *Kānhu* was also well known as the musician (Dowman: 123-4,131). In the sculptural representations also, he is depicted with *damarus* above his head or by his side (Sarde: 104, 105).

सुसुरा निद गेल बहुड़ी जागअ। कानेट चोरे निल का गइ मागअ।।

Father-in-law (here, a respectable man- *Kānhu*) is fallen asleep, Bahudī (*dākinī* Bahudī) is awake, and where can we find the kanet stolen by the thief? (as *Kānhu* is already gone).

दिवसइ बहुड़ी काउइ डरे भाअ। राति भइले कामरू जाअ।।

Bahudī is scared of even a crow in daylight, at night she goes to (amorous) Kamarupa.

Bahudī doesn't show her real nature during daylight but she is secretly involved with tantric *sāadhanā* at night. Indian masters kept their practice entirely secret until they accomplished it and became genuine *siddhas*. Until then, no one knew they were practicing a tantra. For example, Kukkuripā spent his days with dogs. During the day, nothing in his behavior gave the slightest indication to anyone that he was a practitioner. At night, the dogs manifested their real nature as *dākinīs* when they encircled him as consorts. Many *siddhas* practiced in secret (Klein 2016: 206). A similar example can be given of Virūpā's sojourn in Kanchi, where he teaches the citizens by day and sports with women by night (Mallinson and Singleton 2017: 6).

Saraha observed the laws of the Brahmins by day and received instruction in the tantric mysteries from Buddhist masters by night (Dowman: 66-72). Virupa's disciple Dombipā's *sāadhanā* was also hidden for 12 years (Dowman: 53-59). Tāntipā also did the same (Dowman: 100-103). It is not surprising that people didn't know the real nature of Bahudī.

अइसन चर्या कुक्कुरी पाएँ गाइइ। कोडि एकु मा झँ हिअहिँ समाइइ।।

Kukkuripā sang such a *caryā*. Only one in a million can understand it.

*Kānhapā* is dated to approximately the 10th century C.E. (Mallinson 2011: 6). Kukkuripā, who flourished in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, was certainly aware of the legend of *Kānhu*. Now, this Tibetan version of the legend of *Kānhu* doesn't give us a full picture of the event. It conceals many facts regarding the *siddha's* end. The tree under which the event is supposed to have happened is different in many versions of the story. Sometimes it is Litchi, and sometimes it is coconut.

As mentioned earlier, Cakradhara told his disciples that *Kānhapā* died in the competition with a *yoginī* to retain semen during their sexual intercourse. Now, this is more logical and it may be a reference to the *Vajroli Mudrā* (Sarde: 254).

Commonly, *vajra* is thunderbolt or lightning. In Vajrayana Buddhism ' *vajra* ', however, can also refer to the male sexual organ, penis, and the word ' *padma* ' meaning lotus is used to denote the female sexual organ, vagina. *Vajroli Mudrā* is an esoteric *yoga* practice in *hathayoga* which requires the *yogi* to preserve his semen. *Mahāvajroli mudrā* is a technique by which an accomplished *yogi* reabsorbs his seminal fluid after emission. Thus, the semen can be preserved either by learning not to release it or if released by drawing it up through his urethra from the vagina of his «consort» devoted to the practice of *yoga* (Mallinson and Singleton 2017: 242, 250-252). It requires contraction of the urogenital muscles and later the sucking up of liquids. Thus, *Vajroli Mudrā* helps to preserve the sexual fluids. It is generally believed that by practicing *hathayoga* one can remain physically young even in old age. This also gives one a great spiritual and physical benefits, including attainment of supernatural powers (Nene 1936: 34).

(लीळाचरित्र, भाग- २, पूर्वार्ध, खंड- १, पा: ३४). Cakradhara mentions advantages of *hathayoga* as: हतें वयस्तंभे: अपमृत्यु जीके :

वळित पळित लोपति : (नेने: ३१) (लीळाचरित्र, भाग- २, पूर्वार्ध, खंड-१, पा:३१)

He describes further, what seems, process of *vajroli mudrā*, the practice of preserving semen.

उर्ध्वरिते हेति : ते बिंदुते बिंदुचि जाणता जाणति : उर्ध्व रेत घेति : ते भितरिचिया भितरि जाणति : Cakradhar also praises Gorakṣanāth for his ability of preserving semen... उर्ध्व रेता तो गोरक्ष : (नेने: ३४) (लीळाचरित्र, भाग- २, पूर्वार्ध, खंड-१, पा:३४).

The *Shiva Samhitā* 4.78-104 calls the *vajroli mudrā* «the secret of all secrets» and it calls for the man to draw up the ‘*rajas*’, the woman’s sexual fluid, from her vagina: (Mallinson and Singleton: 250-252). Now this will work if the sexual practice is done with one’s own consort or any lady who can be easily dominated. That is why the females chosen for such magico-erotic practices are very young in age and submissive. Abhinavagupta’s description of the perfect *dutī* (literally: a messenger), the ideal sexual partner for the tantric rites is given in his *Tantrāloka*, Chapter 29. A *dutī* necessary in the performance of the secret ritual, he says, is to be a woman who can personify *Shakti*. Prerequisites for the selection of *dutī* are given, like «*Nakhashikhā* genre» of Sanskrit poetry (literally «from toes to tresses»). He provides a verbal picture of an extraordinarily beautiful girl (Abhinavagupta: Ch. 29):

...Let him, then, bring a sexual partner to the place (of ritual), her eyes reeling with desire; her lips are red as bimba fruit, her teeth are lovely, her face is furrowed at the brow, she is beautiful; her eyes are like those of a trembling fawn; pleasantly she smiles; her abundant hair is like a glittering swarm of large black bees; her eyes are tremulous because of the furrowing of her brows which are shaped like Cupid’s bow; her complexion is the colour of liquid gold; she is tranquil; she is made very beautiful in a hundred ways by the varied beauty of her ear ornaments; she is adorned with a lovely necklace on her lovely conch-like throat; she is bent down by the weight of her breasts which are as haughty as the frontal lobes of an elephant in rut; she is adorned with *kandali* flowers on her well-rounded arms; the fingers of her hand flare like cobra’s hood; she is adorned with a finger-ring streaming with the variegated flames of a glittering jewel; her face, with the lovely charm of the full moon, ravishes the heart; her slim lovely waist resembles a noble lion or a rainbow; the languid movement of her loins reveals the triple row of folds (over her navel); her lovely thighs are like a plantain tree and her lovely calves are like the trunk of an elephant; she is most beautiful, with feet and ankles like cupid’s chariot wheel; she is adorned with a string of beautiful (pearls) which tinkle like ghee falling (into the sacrificial fire); she makes a clinking sound with her trembling anklet and jingling girdle; she makes a murmuring hum with her bracelet and jingling armlet; her gait is like that of a huge elephant in rut, her navel is deep; her speech is beautiful like the many stammering cries of the goose; she is adorned with a garland of fragrant flowers on the thread of her armlet; she is perfectly eager for the gift of harmless betel-nut from ‘the huge cobra’; she dances, she sings and makes cries of pleasure (sit), she plays and pretends to repulse a lover’s caress... (Dupuche 2003: 245-246).

It is further added:

...She is untroubled, and she retains her composure, her mind is devoted to the goddess alone; greed and folly having disappeared from her mind, she is consciousness itself; her one attitude is that of savouring the unique wonder of Bhairava: she is the sexual partner, the enchantress, the *mudrā* in this world of the movable-and-immovable ...She is very distinguished and virtuous, obedient to her teacher’s command; her speech is agreeable, her form is pleasing, she is placid, free from attachment; she is accomplished in the Bhairava ceremony and eager for the nectars; she is unfailingly committed to the non-dual, devoted to practice, firm in her vow; she looks on everyone as a son, she abhors nothing, she is clearly wise; she is born of a family who always performs the (Kula) ceremony; she is childless...(Dupuche: 245-246).

The 'eyes like fawn in fear' is a description of a girl or woman who can be easily dominated by the male *yogi*. A beautiful, yet submissive young woman, who can be easily dominated, is less likely to frighten the male and he is less likely to have performance problems during the tantric ritual. *Guru Padmasambhava* is known to have had teenager consorts like *Mandaravā* and *Yeshe Tsogyal* and both of them were of royal descent. Examples can be given of *mahāsiddhas* like *Saraha* (Dowman: 66-72), *Dombipā* who took teenage girls as their consorts (Dowman: 53-59). The consorts of *Padmasambhava* and *Naropā* are well known as *yoginīs* in their own right, but consorts of the many other *siddhas* and *mahāsiddhas* were not so privileged.

However, it seems that commentators like *Jayarath* were also aware of the fact that the external *shakti* with the aforementioned characteristic qualities is simply unobtainable! All the qualities listed in that way have not been seen, anywhere, at any time, assembled in one person. So they compromised promptly on 'the characteristic quality of a *shakti* which is that she is in no way separated from him who possesses her without regard to castes. Many a supernatural power is acquired even from a deficient *shakti*. Even though she is without (some of) the characteristics, for the *siddhas* she is still the sexual partner. With her mindset solely on the hero, unflinching, she is approached in all the rituals. The castes are 'outcaste' and so on. Thus age, caste etc., is irrelevant. Having, therefore, devoted (herself) solely to identity with him (who possesses her), it is said she can assume all forms. (Dupuche: 246-247). Usually, the consorts for such esoteric erotic rituals were obtained from the lowest stratum of the society. Hence, even *Kānhapā* had *ḍombī* or *Cāṇḍalī* as his consort.

It can be inferred that in the initial stages, like their *Kaula* counterparts, *Vajrayana yoginīs* or *ḍākinīs* were encouraged for attaining *siddhis* (supra-mundane powers) and liberation. But later on, a patriarchal system developed that influenced their number immensely. Names of the consorts of many of the *siddhas* are not known to the history. They are not recorded even in the *Tantras*.

Nevertheless, it is laid down in *tantras* that the women (*yoginīs* in their own status) can also practice a female version of *Vajroli mudrā* which is known as *Sahajoli*. It is said that an advanced *yoginī* can even suck up male fluids during practice with a partner. Perhaps that was a clash of titans in the *tantra*, *Kānhapā* came across the *yoginī* (or *ḍākinī*) *Bahuḍī* who herself was engaged in yogic practices, including esoteric sexual practices in secrecy. She had *Kāmākhyā* as her preceptor. The present writer has identified a small image of *Vārāhi* depicted along with. i *Bahuḍī* on the wall of the *Kālikā* temple at *Hira gate, Dabhoi* (Figure 3). The depiction of sow-headed *Vārāhi* or *Vajra-Vārāhi* (a tantric goddess who is believed to be the epitome of a force of this universe which can create or annihilate) presents the *yoginī* as adept in the *Vajra-Vārāhi* tantra.

In the words of *Kukkuripā*:

दिवसइ बहुड़ी काउइ डरे भाअ। राति भइले कामरू जाअ।।

More likely, *mahasiddha yogis* like *Kānhapā* practiced these sexual rites regularly with the women much devoted to them and not with independent minded, powerful equals who may even have been antagonistic *yoginīs*, who were followers of erotic rituals on their own accord.

*Vajroli Mudra* if not done properly, can cause injury to the urinary tract. According to *Williams Wynne*, if these techniques are not practiced properly, practitioners may harm themselves physically and mentally. The secrecy of teachings was often protected through the use of allusive, indirect, symbolic and metaphorical language, which required interpretation and guidance from a teacher (*Williams et al.* 2002: 193). If the process of re-assimilation of sexual fluids is obstructed the transmutation of energy does not go to the right place and it can cause *sādhaka* health problems. Seemingly, *mahāsiddha Kānhapā* and *yoginī Bahuḍī* were aware of this fact. The advice of *Kāmākhyā* given to *Bahuḍī* according to *Cakradhara Swāmi* is.... रमतां रंधंिं हीरा धरि आणि जींकसी : (लीळाचरित्र) that means 'hold 'hirā' in the hole



Figure 1: Sculpture on the exterior of cave 14 at Panhale Kaji (1<sup>st</sup> register of the panels on the right side of the entrance), Maharashtra, c. 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Image Courtesy: Dr. Shreekant Jadhav



Figure 2: A narrative sculptural panel from the Vishnu temple at Palasdev, Maharashtra, c. 14<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Image Courtesy: Dr. Vijay Sarde



Figure 3: Image on the wall of the Kalika temple at Hira gate, Dabhoi, Gujarat, c. 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Image Courtesy: Dr. Vijay Sarde

during sexual intercourse and win!’ Although ‘*hirā*’ means diamond, another name for ‘*hirā*’ is ‘*vajra*’, which again indicates *Vajroli mudrā*. Possibly Bahudī *yoginī* obstructed the efforts of Kānhapā for the transmutation of energy inward, and this sexual encounter proved fatal for the great Kānhapā or perhaps she did really use diamond as narrated in *Līlacaritra*! Who knows? Kānhapā, as it seems, was not ready for such a malicious and deceptive act on his opponent’s part.

Thus was the end of multi-faceted *siddha* who was a gifted poet, talented singer, musician and dancer as well as a great human being with a compassionate heart (Bahudī was spared by him. As the story goes, she was later avenged by his disciple). He bled profusely and finally was ready to welcome his death. Kānhapā had seven days to teach his disciples before finally leaving his karmically-matured body for the *ḍākinī*’s Paradise. He taught them the *sādhana* called the Severed-headed Vajra Vārāhi (Santideva: vol. 2, 443).

The present writer believes that after this Bahudī episode happened in his life, Kānhu consoled his disciples and advised them not to mourn his death as ‘*śūnya*’ (void, emptiness) is the ultimate truth and there is nothing like coming and going in this world. During his last few days, he composed the following *Caryā*:

In Kānhu’s words:

चिअ सहजे शून संपुन्ना ।  
कान्धवियोएँ मा होहि विसन्ना ॥

भण कइसे काह्न नाहि ।  
फरइ अनुदिनँ तेलोए पमाइ ॥

मूढा दिठ नाठ देखि काअर ।  
भाइग तरङ्ग कि सोषइ साअर ॥

मूढा अछन्ते लोअ न पेखइ ।  
दुध माझे लइ ण च्छन्ते देखइ ॥

भव जाइ ण आवइ ण एथु कोइ ।  
अइस भावे विलसइ काह्लिल जोइ ॥ चर्या ४२ (चतुर्वेदी: १६८)

The mind is full of the void by the grace of sahaaja.  
Do not be sorry for the loss of the *skandhas* (the body which is composed of five *skandhas*).  
Tell, how Kānhā does not exist  
He is flourishing every day, entering into the three worlds at once...  
The fool is sad to see the scene of destruction.  
Do the broken waves suck (absorb) the ocean?  
The fool cannot see the existing man.  
The butter contained in the milk is not seen.  
Nobody goes or comes in this world.  
In this style the *yogin* Kānhā makes sport.... (*Caryā* 42) (Sen 1977:143)

The gist of this *Caryā* can be given as:



Kānhu says:

My mind is empty. Even if I leave this body, no one can say that Kānhu doesn't exist! I will be part of the three worlds even if I will not be visible. Only ignorant man rues the loss of mental images. Just like waves are part of the sea and butter part of the milk, (Kānhu will be part of this voidness). In this world, no one actually comes or goes (means all these are mental images or perception of mind). Kānhu *yogi* likes the idea (that soon he will be part of this voidness that constitutes ultimate reality).

Similarly, *Carya* 2, the main verse I have been interested in studying, may be interpreted with an additional layer of meaning. The retention of sexual fluids in intercourse is a metaphor for performing an action that is not interested in pleasure, release, or fruit (child). It is then a metaphor for the often-repeated spiritual discourse in many Indian religions of disinterested action/engagement with the world, which is seen as being transitory.

The manner in which this is communicated, however, is equally laden with the possibility of reconstructing a rich cultural and literary context that can inform us about the society's gender politics. Bahuḍī touched Kānhu's ego, and perhaps this forced him to engage in the erotic competition as described by Cakradhara Swāmi. It was the play of male-female power dynamics in *tantra* (Kāmākhyā who played the vital role in this episode was an accomplished *yoginī* and she requested (or challenged?) Cakrapāni or Cāngdev Rāula of Mahānubhāva sect for sexual practice with her, but the great *yogī* preferred to leave his body instead (Joshi: 515). It seems that the actual event was concealed in a mystic garb just like *sāndhyabhāṣā* of *caryās* sung by Kānhapā and other *Mahāsiddhas*. Like these deeply encoded songs, perhaps even behind this tale of plucking of fruits and sticking them back to the tree lies the more serious event of sucking of the sexual fluid by Kānhu and reabsorbing of the same by the mundane *yoginī*. Kānhapā and Bahuḍī's tale is actually evidence of male-female polarity in the tantric tradition. Overarching female energy underpins Kaula *Tantra*. In Vajrayana Buddhism, however, the masculine aspect is dynamic representing skillful means or compassion (*upāya*) and the feminine aspect is passive and is associated with emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and wisdom (*prajñā*). In *Yoginī Tantras*, e. g., *Vajrayoginī*, female *yoginīs* are given high status as the embodiment of female deities (Williams et al.: 198, 240) and evidence also show that women participated in tantric practice alongside men and were also teachers, adepts and authors of tantric texts (Williams et al.: 198, 242). Nonetheless, in such kind of *vajroli mudrā* the consort no longer remains a person, an individual but perceived as an object or symbol to be used in *sāadhanā*. An alert woman having knowledge of *tantra* and exclusive secret rites therein, herself and who understands her own sexuality well can understand the intention of a *sādhaka* and will find this unsettling. She will be quite angry for being exploited. Possibly male yogis often tried to make an erotic use of the vitality of females for their spiritual and physical benefits as ejaculation was usually controlled for attaining exalted states of awareness and enlightenment or sometimes to present evidence of power dynamics.

Kukkuripā's *caryā* makes us think about aspects of gender, caste, the understanding of the body, and the lineage of poetry and teaching in the tantric tradition. By using medieval references in Marathi we also extend the geographical spread of the tradition to western India.

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\*Note: Vajrayāna to Nāth Sampradāya in Maharashtra

Mallinson has enlisted examples of Vajrayāna activities in Konkan and surrounding region. Vajrayāna had a small but significant presence in Konkan and in surrounding areas from the sixth to thirteenth centuries, and perhaps later. Sixth-century statues of Tārā and Avalokitesvara are found in the western Deccan. At Panhale Kaji, which is eight kilometers inland from the Konkan coast about halfway between Mumbai and Goa, there are 29 rock-cut caves dating from approximately the 6th century C.E. onwards, one of them houses a statue of the Vajrayāna deity Acala. Mallinson further states that an illustrated manuscript of the *Ashtasahasrika Prajñāpāramitā* dated 1015 CE include six sites in the Konkan among 72 Vajrayāna places of worship (Mallinson, 2019: 9-10).

At Panhale Kaji both Vajrayāna and Nāth traditions flourished and which are thus possible locations for a transition from the former to the latter (besides Vajrayāna deity multiple images of Nāth, including depictions of Matsyendra overhearing Siva teach Pārvati the Kaula doctrine, Virupāksha, groups of 9 (or perhaps 10) and 84

siddhas, and a relief of Tripurasundari are found). An impressive but damaged statue of Gorakṣaṇāth was also found at the site when it was restored in the 1970s (Mallinson, 2019: 12). Scholars believe that the Vajrayana Buddhist caves were later occupied by Nāth sidhas in 13<sup>th</sup> century. But in 13<sup>th</sup> century “Līlacaritra”, as noted earlier, Cakradhara informs his disciples that Virupa was converted from Vajraoli to Amraoli by Gorakṣaṇāth.

It is possible that the process of conversion began much earlier in late 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

Early lists of 84 *siddhas* such as those found in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Tibetan account ascribed to Abhayadattaśrī, the early 14<sup>th</sup>-century Maithili *Varṇaratnākara*, and the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Sanskrit *Hatḥa pradīpikā* (1.5–1.8), include Ādinātha, Matsyendra, Gorakṣa, Caurāṅgī, Jālandhara, Charpaṭa, Kānhapa, and Bhartṛhari, all of whom appear in some or all of the later lists of the nine Nāths. Kanhapa is well-known as Kāniphnāth in Maharashtra. Jālandharnāth was also known as Jālandhari, Jālandharipā, Hāḍipā, Jvāendra, Bālnāth, Bālgundāī. He is often said to have been Matsyendra’s disciple and the *guru* of both Kānhapā and Gopīchand (Mallinson, 2011: 5). Another disciple of Matsyendra, Gorakṣaṇāth was also quite popular in Maharashtra. In Līlacaritra, Cakradhara admires Gorakṣa for his austere celibacy. Gahinināth the disciple of Gorakṣaṇāth had initiated Nivrttināth the elder brother and guru of 13<sup>th</sup> century Maharashtra Saint Poet Jñāneshvara.

It is no wonder, several early sculptural representations of the Nāth Yogīs (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) are found in Maharashtra and Gujarat. In his PhD dissertation, Sarde gives examples of sculptural panels on the walls of the temples like Jabāreshvara, Palasdev, Kankaleshvara at various sites in Maharashtra (Sarde 2019).

Moreover, in the adjacent state of Karnataka, on a hill on the outskirts of Mangalore on the Malabar Coast, we find what may be the oldest Nāth monastery still in use. A statue of Manjughosha from this Kadri monastery (now in the Mangalore government museum) dates to the ninth century or earlier. The temple of Mañjunāth houses three beautiful Buddhist bronzes (now interpreted as Hindu) from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Kadri is sometimes identified with Kadalīdeśa, the land in which Matsyendra is said in legend to have been ensnared in the ways of wine, women, and song before being rescued by his disciple, Gorakṣa (Mallinson, 2011: 7).

It seems that the popularity of the *siddhas* transcended sectarian boundaries.

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