7. ŚAKTI, THE WORLD

7.0 Śakti, the world potential

The important characteristic of Kashmir Saivism lies in ascribing power as the manifestation of the world. Kṣemarāja starts his digest Pratyabhijñārādayam, "citih svatantrā viśvasiddhihetuḥ"; Power is the cause of siddhi (creation, maintainance, and reabsorption) of the universe. The universe as a product is not different from Śakti, as she flashes forth the entire universe from Śiva down to the earth in complete identity. This is "the potential world possibility lying dormant in the supreme consciousness" which assumes their forms "antargata viśva vīryamā samucchalat" as Abhinava writes.

7.1. World, the manifestation of Śakti

(svaśakti-pracayo viśvam)

The expansion (prasara) of the world from consciousness in this system is very vital and exhaustive. It plays an integral role, where the universe is considered nothing but the expansion of that what lies within. Creation is not something new but that what lies inside only. In Swamiji's language, it is "the world possibility lying dormant in the Supreme". "This is exactly what Kṣemarāja writes, unmilana means only making explicit what is already lying implicit in citi. By this it is meant the ex-
istence of the universe (in citi) as identical with the light of citi". The illustrations of the seed for a banayan tree and the egg of a peacock are generally cited here. Such creation emanates out of the mere will of the Lord. Will is the creative desire, called power or Śakti. The desire as the universal energy appears in the forms of innumerable physical entities. Such explanation of the creation completely corresponds with the Vedantic explanation of creation. Dr. K.C. Pandey compares the power with the electric energy (current), which because of resistance, appears in the innumerable physical phenomena, as the light in the bulbs, sound in radios, air from fan, etc. In his words "The physical universe with all its varieties is a mere manifestation of the universal energy and is connected with it exactly in the manner in which light is connected with Electric Energy".

Ācarya Śankara presents a parallel illustration borrowing the idea from the Upaniṣads where we find a beautiful description of the seven flames that shoot out through seven holes. Śankara illustrates it with a pot having many holes, a bright light burning inside and the beams of its inner illumination shooting out through these holes. He writes- "nānā chidraghātodara-ṣṭhitamahādīpa-prabhābhāsvarām."

For a Vedāntin, the unity of the Self like the electric current, is established by removing all the electric bulbs, heaters, etc. Whereas for the Śaivite there is no necessity of removing these equipments to establish the unity of consciousness (or the current). This is a benefit of integralism in Kashmir Saivism.
To support this “potential world possibility lying dormant in the supreme”, Ṣvarpratyabhijñā says that the creative desire (śakti) due to infinite power, illuminates the things to be existent. Abhinava commenting on it writes, “By the infinite power means all the objective multiple things in the world were existent identically with it in the forms of energy”.

In the Pratyabhijñāhrdayam, it is said that all these multiple forms (from Śiva to earth) are displayed by the Lord, on account of His own Will, and the different things are demonstrated due to various gradations, in which that absolute free will either chooses to reveal or to create itself. Moreover the whole of the second sūtra “svačchhayāsvabhittau visvamunnīlayati” is nothing but an exposition of the world as the own form of the Absolute. It corresponds with Vedanta when Sankara writes “nijāntargatam” and “yogīva yah svecchaya”. This is what Utpalacārya illustrates, “Salutations to Him, the expert Artist, who paints the world-picture without any material and not in any canvass but on his body: nirūpādana-sambhāramabhittāveva tānvate/jagacitrāṁ namastasmai”. This is philosophised in Kaivalyopanisāda, when the Supreme says, “all emanented from Me, exist on Me, goes into Me. I am that non-dual Brahman”. Kṣemaraja explains the word svabhītāu, “The world is just like a city on a mirror, though not different, appears to be different (abhinna mapi bhinnamiva unmīlayati). It corresponds with Sankara’s verses, “visvam darpanādriyamānanagaritulyam nijāntargatam”.
7.2. Five powers

Sakti (having the root šak, to be able) has infinite number of aspects of which five are the most fundamental. They are Cit, Ananda, Techa, Jñana and Kriyā.

(I) Cit-sakti

It is the power of self-revelation by which the Supreme shines by himself. It lights up even though there is no object. Cit-Sakti is identical with Light which is invariable from vimarsa. In this aspect of the power the Supreme is known as Śiva. By this power the absolute becomes omnipresent.

(II) Ānanda-sakti

It is the power of realising absolute bliss and joy. It is ever independent, free and at rest. This is called svātantrya Sakti. In this aspect the Supreme is called Śakti and it becomes eternal.

(III) Techa-sakti

It is the power of feeling to be Supremely able. It is the divine resolve by which the universe is created and no other material is required except his will. In this aspect the Supreme is known as Sadāśīva and it becomes perfect.

(IV) Jñāna-sakti

It is the power of holding and bringing all objects in conscious relation with oneself and also with another. It is the knowledge without any reference to emotional feeling or will. In this aspect the Supreme becomes omniscient and is known as Śvara.

(V) Kriyā-sakti

It is the power of assuming any and every form. By this the Supreme becomes omnipotent and the Supreme is known as Sadvidyā.
7.3. Three aspects of Śakti: para, aparā and parāparā

Para, aparā and parāparā are the three aspects of the Supreme. These three Śakties in Pratyabhijñāḥrdayam are represented as the three heads of Bhairava. These Śakties are distinguished from the power of creation which is the heart of the Absolute. Another distinction among these three Śakties can be made from the individual or from the sadhana point of view. In this view, the three states of manifestation of the Śakties are described as the para, parāparā and aparā avasthas. Aparā is the manifestation of worldly existence as different forms of Śakties. For the sake of sadhana, the manifestation is different-cum-non-different and for the sake of siddha, it is non-different. These three powers are represented by the three letters, viz, “A”, “I” and “U” which are ascribed for Anuttara, Techā and Unmesa respectively. Para is the state of saccidananda where Jñāna, Jñāna and Kriyā are identical. Parāparā is unity and difference where Techā is fully manifested. Here ananda manifests when there arises self-consciousness. It is a condition of slight stire. Aparā is the state of awakening, where knowledge and action are fully manifested. The first two powers (i.e. cit and ananda) are the very nature of the Supreme. Techā Śaktī is His svabhāva; jñāna and kriyā Śaktis are the extension of the Techā Śakti. These five powers are represented as the five faces of Śiva. The embodiments of these five Śaktis are named as Tātputra, Vāmadeva, Sadyojāta and Aghora in South. In every manifestation, all the five Śaktis work together. The activity of the following Śakti presupposes the working of the preceding Śaktis. Even if one Śakti be absent, no action would ever be possible. Each Śakti has infinite number of Śaktis in it. The entity of these Śaktis constitutes the
third eye of Śiva in the state of their complete fusion as bindu. The Śaktis contain all that is to be. When energy contracts, they take different forms at different levels\(^9\). Owing to ignorance these five Śaktis take the form of limited forms. When the non-dual Lord assumes duality, His will and other powers assume limitation, though essentially unlimited. The icchā Śakti transforms into ānava-māla due to which one becomes imperfect. Omniscience is reduced to the knowledge of few things due to māyā-māla; and kriyāsakti is reduced by kārmyamāla to limited action. Even there it remains principally in the form of the madhyānādi...right from brahmarandhra down to adhovaktra (cocyx). \(^{30}\) In this way the ultimate Śiva becomes a jīva.

The individual energy, like the monard supports the proverb, “yadihāsti tadanyatra yannēhāsti na tat kvacit”, i.e. “what exists here, exists elsewhere and what does not exist here, exists nowhere”. The individual has all these five functions that the absolute possesses but in a limited way.\(^{31}\) These are presented on the following table:
The whole process of the contraction of the Supreme Šakti in becoming an individual being can be shown by the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pañcadhārā</th>
<th>Vyomāva</th>
<th>Khecārī</th>
<th>Dikcārī</th>
<th>Gocārī</th>
<th>Bhūcārī</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 manifestations</td>
<td>meśvāri</td>
<td>Khecārī</td>
<td>Dikcārī</td>
<td>Gocārī</td>
<td>Bhūcārī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspects of speech</td>
<td>parā</td>
<td>suksmā</td>
<td>paśyanti</td>
<td>madhyamā</td>
<td>vaikhari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articulating sounds</td>
<td>vimarsā</td>
<td>vindu</td>
<td>nāda</td>
<td>sphota</td>
<td>śabda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>powers of Lord</td>
<td>srṣṭi</td>
<td>sthiti</td>
<td>samhāra</td>
<td>tirodhāna</td>
<td>anugraha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjective aspects of absolute</td>
<td>cit</td>
<td>ānanda</td>
<td>icchā</td>
<td>jñāna</td>
<td>kriyā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.4. Three phases of śakti: māyā, prakṛti and mahāmāyā.

The divine śakti functions in three levels. These are the principal modes of self-expression known as Mahāmāyā, māyā and prakṛti. The first one is the in-alineable nature of the Supreme Lord which expresses itself as Mahāmāyā. Her operation is responsible for Supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the pure tattva, beginning with Sadāśīva down to the Suddha Vidyā. Secondly when the divine Śakti functions as power of obscuration (tirodhānakāri) she conceals the nature of the Supreme Lord and gives rise to dvaitabhāsa. Here she is called māyā. Thirdly, the divine Śakti on a further lower level expresses herself as material power when she is called prakṛti.

7.4.1. Māyā

"Māyā denotes that phase of divine śakti which conceals the real nature of the Supreme Lord. It eclipses the unrestricted divine glory (aisvarya). In this level the multiplicity makes its first appearance. As long as the Supreme Experiencer experiences the totality of creation epitomised in the form of idam, as is the case on the level of Ādya vidyā, the multiplicity cannot be manifested. Māyā causes simultaneous disappearance of the aham and idam. This results in the creation of a vacuum as it were, which is subsequently filled up by the rise of idam in māyā and its splitting into limited subject (pasupramātā) and limited object (māyā). In this way it is said that māyā śakti is the principle which is responsible for the appearance in the self by its nature of negation. In
itself it is the negation of the Bliss and is of the form of the power of action. To distinguish the Saivite’s notion of māyā from that of the Vedanta, the author of the Paramārthāsāra says, “by which the subject-object manifestation up to the earthly world is measured out, or delimited by, is called māyā; or being the delusor of the worlds it is māyā. Being a spouse for the meriment of God, she is divine, but not alien, like the exponent of Brahman. The question how is she free, is answered that she is “accomplishing the possible to the impossible (for the all-possible”).

7.4.2. Prakṛti

Prakṛti is a product of māyā/sakti. It is contrasted with the Vedantic thought where prakṛti is the cause of māyā. Before the creation of prakṛti there is no material creation. Prakṛti is defined as the equipose (akṣobha) of the three self-contracted aspects of divine Śakt, icchā, jñāna and kriyā. Cit and ānanda aspects form the locus for the operation of icchā, jñāna and kriyā aspects which are directly responsible for the manifestation of the world. Like puruṣa, prakṛti in this system is countless, because each puruṣa has separate pradhāna (prakṛti). It has also a state of equilibrium of three qualities, sattva etc. These guṇas are produced because of the influence of the māyā at the empirical level. Paramā/sakti of knowledge, action and obscuration (māyā) appear as sattva etc. In this way these guṇas as well prakṛti differ from the Sāṅkhya concept. Guṇas here are the limited powers. Guṇaśvyobha in prakṛti is the factor responsible for the involution of prakṛti into twenty three tattvas.
7.4.3. **Mahāmāyā**

At the level of the ultimate metaphysical principle, the entire manifestation shines as "I", i.e., as identical with the Self. But at the lower levels of Sadāśiva and Ṭīvura, the manifestation does not shine as "I", but it shines as "This". That which is responsible for the manifestation as not self but as "This" (or object) is called Māyā or Mahāmāyā at the empirical and transcendental levels respectively. In other words Mahāmāyā is that which influences prakāśa and vimarsā and makes them related to distinct objectivity, the "this", so as to appear them as the power of knowledge and action respectively.

7.5 **Two forms of Šakti: sentient and insentient**

(*dvayī gati*)

When for the creation’s sake, Šakti conceals her real nature, the act of such concealment consists in two ways. One in which, consciousness predominates forming the sentient or the experiants, like Vijnānakalas, Vidyā-pramātās, Ṭa...etc. Another in which concealment predominates so that the consciousness is sublated and thus insentients like vijnā-pramātā and sakala like plants and stones are produced. These two types of creations are called *cit-pradhāna* and *sañkoca-pradhāna*. These creations are illustrated by Dr. Pandey as the two types of waves, one opaque, transparent enough to receive the reflection and the other as
impure wave, namely jivabhāsa and jadabhāsa respectively.

Fig- Power Descendance:

Power as individual: śaktidārḍrya

"The exalted Cittākāti takes the form of an individual called cittam by concealing the śakti of itself". The powers of the Absolute, viz. icchā, jñāna and kriyā, assume as sattva, rajas and tamas by the individual in a limited form. From this concept of the Śaivites, their extreme proximity with the Vedantins can be understood. Sattva, rajas and tamas are the objective realities for the paśu and constitute the limbs of the Lord.
In this way the Supreme Consciousness in the aspect of Sakti assumes the centre of all sentiment and insentiments. "Inspite of its being the inner most reality and ground of every possible things, according to the dictum-"at first sahvit is transformed into präna", it conceals its real nature in the stage of mäyä and accepting the role of präna-säkti, resting on the planes of buddhi, body etc. in a descending order, it has followed the course of the thousand nädies. Even at the stage of the individual, the Sakti remains...in the form of präna-sakti right from brahmarandhra down to adhovaktra like the central rib of a palaśa leaf."

7.6. Stages of (cosmic) evolution

In the process of manifestation there is the breaking up of the subjects and objects from One Pure Being, though held in an un-distinguishable union of Śiva and Sakti. Evolution is consisted of a gradual succession or bifurcation. The process is the work of Sakti whose special function is to negate. By that the power becomes the finite centre assuming a centralised and limited subject, perceiving a limited object, both being the aspects of the one Divine Self. Sakti takes the forms of manifested world extending thirty four categories from Sadäsiva to  Earth. Saivites expose two types of evolution, transcendental and empirical, pure and impure. In transcendental state the Lord holds with Himself the unmanifested universe as High ideal expression. In Supreme Egoity all objects shine in identity with the subject. When there arises a tendency towards self-forgetfulness, there appears a limitation in the infinite bliss
of self-consciousness. This limitation in the perfect experience gives rise to the creative will. This state has been described in various systems as śūnyatā, Vacuity, indeterminateness, loss of consciousness, avidyā etc. Kṣemarāja calls it “un experienced consciousness and more void than the void itself”, from the point view of any objective manifestation. Then the Divine Śakti unfolds Herself “in the totality of manifestations, viz., principles (tattvas), worlds (bhuvanas), entities (bhāvas) and their respective experients (pramātāras), that are only a solidified form of Cit-essence.

These tattvas are neither separate from Śiva nor from one another. For, in each tattva, all other tattvas are present. They are real and can be realized in Yogic experience. In the pure creation, there are five kinds of super sensous beings, called Śambhava, Śaktaja, mantra-mahēśvara, mantreśvara and mantra, where one of the five powers viz., cit, ānanda, icchā, jñāna and kriyā predominates respectively.

Śivatattva: Śivatattva is the first manifestation of Paramaśiva where consciousness predominates. It is the state of experience of pure ‘I’.

Śaktitattva: Śakti is the simultaneous manifestation with Śiva. Śakti withdraws “This”. So Siva becomes devoid of objective contents. Śakti is Śiva’s Own Experience (aham vimarśa). When Śiva intends to roll out the universe, He is called Śakti, which is merely the kinetic aspect of consciousness. In Vedanta it is called “īkṣīrtva”. Even in dissolution they are One. They are not ābhāsas but the seed of all ābhāsas. The experience here assumes the form “I am”.

Saddaśiva: Here ‘will power’ predominates. The experience is “I am This”. Here consciousness is dominant.
Iśvara: Here the power of knowledge is predominant. The experience is “This am I”. “This” is predominant.

Sad-vidyā: “I” and “This” side of experiences are equally balanced. Power of action is predominant. The Experience is “I am I” and “This is This”. Reality of Divinity is not yet veiled. The above five creations are called śuddha-adhvā where there is universal experience and the five tattvas are the principles of the Universe. What follows next is the adhva-adhvā characterised by limited individual experience.

Māyā and five kañcukas: At this level the unity of subject-object entity manifests as divided. Aham manifests as puruṣa and “Idam” as prakṛti. Its coverings are called kañcukas having the following five functions.

(i) Kalā: It reduces omnipotency of the Supreme. By transcending it, one attains freedom from karma and he is said “vijñāna-kala”.
(ii) Vidyā reduces Omniscience.
(iii) Rāga reduces perfectness and produces attachment.
(iv) Kāla reduces eternity.
(v) Niyati reduces Freedom and effects limitation in respect of space and casualty.

Puruṣa and prakṛti are the two principles of limited individual: subject and object. Due to these kañcukas, the universal Self assumes the innumerable limited forms, called Puruṣas, which are affected by ānava and kāma malas due to which they are deprived of the Absolute power of knowledge and action; and they desire to use the limited power but free from māyiya malas.
The role of Śakti played for various functions are represented diagramacally as follows in a nut-shell:

1. Čit—Niyati
2. Ānanda—Kāla

1. ŚAKTI
   3. Icchā—Rāga
   4. Jñāna—Vidyā
   5. Kriyā—Kāla

1. Śunya.
2. Prāṇa
3. Puryaśṭaka.
   (Five tanmātra)
4. Sarīra.

1. ŚAKTI
   3. ŚAKTI
      Māyāya-Cosmic-Pralayākāla
       Knowledge (Vijnākāla)
       Losses

1. ŚAKTI
   1. Prakāśasvarūpa
   2. Samkocaravabhāsattva

1. Śiva Pramātā
2. Mantra Maheśvara
3. Manifested
4. Mantra
5. Vijnākāla
6. Pralayākāla
7. Sakala

5. ŚAKTI

6. ŚAKTI = 37 Tattvās

This is how what the Supreme power Śakti pervades and takes the roles of all objects and plays the drama of the creation in the character of Mahāmāyā. Śankara's praying in the verse, "bhūrambho..." "i.e. the eight forms of the Supreme: earth, water etc.," has been satisfactory represented in this system. So, Kṣemarāja while quoting Utpalācārya, sa-
lutes. “Since all the creations, even Brahma, Indra and Vishnu go on devouring, therefore, Oh God, I adore the Universe that is your own form. He who considers the body or even the jar etc. consisting of the thirty six Tattvas as a form of Siva, attains perfection^{10}.

\[\text{vartante jantavo \'ses\' api brahmendravis\'navah/}
\[\text{grasam\'anastato vande devam vi\'svam bhavanmayam//.}

7.7. **Sound as power: world of sounds (\textit{sabdaprapana\'a})**

Besides the evolution of the world of things (\textit{arthaprapana\'a}), Kashmir Saivism gives another phase of evolution called the world of sounds (\textit{sabdaprapanca}). In this context parames\'vara is \textit{sabdabrahman}. The entire world is said to be a form of \textit{\'abda}. In the pure stage of the evolution of subtle to the gross, sounds are said as \textit{\'ara}, \textit{\'asyanti}, \textit{\'adyam\'a} and \textit{\'aikhari}, which reside in \textit{\'a\'n-\'akt tattva} represented as \textit{n\'ada and vinda}. K\'\text{\'e}maraja deals with these powers in \textit{Pratyabhijnahrdayam} and uses the terms like “\textit{sakticakra, khecari}” etc. He also states about their presiding deities like Br\'\text{\'a}nmi etc. According to him, \textit{Cit-sakti} known as \textit{\'avame\'\text{\'a}ri}, is the form of great mantras. It contains the whole assembles of \textit{\'akti} formed by sound beginning with “\textit{\'A}” and ending with “\textit{\'Ka}”, and She brings the creation etc. For the sake of limitation it is not elaborated here. This aspect of \textit{\'akti} has been elaborated in one of the unpublished articles of this researcher. The article included in a minor research project submitted to UGC in December '95.