CHAPTER II
CHAPTER II

AUTHORS AND THEIR PERSONALITIES

This chapter is devoted to the life history of the authors of the texts, undertaken in this study. The text of Vijñānabhairava, which is listed in the category of the Āgamas is published by the KST&S under its publication series No.VIII in the year of 1918, along with the incomplete commentary of Kṣemarāja and the complete commentaries of Śivopādhyāya and Ananda Bhatta. The commentary of Kṣemarāja, which is called "Udyota" runs up to the end of the 23rd verse with these remarks:

'itātaḥ uttaraṁ Śivopādyāya-kritā vīrvitīṭitaḥ'¹

¹. VB:V.16
Vijñānabhairava Tantra has been referred to as āgama; and is held in very high esteem in śaivāgamas, particularly on yoga.¹

The text of Vijñānabhairava claims to be the quintessence of the Rudrayāmala Tantra.² The complete text of Rudrayāmala tantra, which is said to be an authority, is not available. It is, therefore, difficult to say how far the text of Vijñānabhairava correspond to the Rudrayāmala Tantra. A portion of it is also produced in Parātrīśaṅkā, but this also is undecided as to which part it represents.

In this context Kṣemarāja contemplates that śāstras, Vijñānabhairava and others have been revealed in the form of supreme sound by Lord Siva, who is one, appeased, doer of semblance and the chief cause of this cosmic manifestation. Kṣemarāja refers to the śāstras

-------------

1. यदृक्ष्यां लोकमः
न वल्लभातिकसंविनितः-------

IPV: I, P. 287

2. कृतं देव फलं सर्वं संप्रभावममर्यं
प्रसं भृदक्षणं सारासार विषण्णं

VB: V.1
as paramadurlabha, very difficult to be received. This word would indicate towards the tradition of the Śāstras, which were imparted through oral tradition of teaching, but afterwards keeping the limited power of mortals in view, they were scribed down and accepted as Śāstras. These Śāstras have been referred to as āmnāya.

Ananda Bhatta in his commentary on the Viśuṇabhairava claims tantras as composed by Lord Siva himself. He says that Lord Siva with his free will conceals his nature and his devotees take efforts to discover him through his prakāśa, which is, indeed, his Śāstras, 

1. अनांदाबह्त्त श्लोकाय द्वापर्याप्तं मन्त्रम् निष्पादितेऽन्नहितत्वं प्रकरणम् ।
 भविष्यति विनिष्ठाः सन्तः प्रमुखं परां ॥

Comm. of Kṛṣṇapāla
on VB:V.1
and that Lord Siva has composed these śāstras for the goodsake of the mankind.

In the beginning of the commentary on the Netra Tantra Kṣemarāja has used a word 'kaścit tantravatāraka āha', which definitely seems used to indicate the originator of tantras. Kṣemarāja has also used a word 'tasmāi hīvaya' which would go to the first word and would clearly refer to that Siva who revealed the tantras. It is only later on that they were scribed down.

1. तदिक शास्त्रेऽः खऽय 'पृवः' नीलपीता दिविविकारणरातातरायाः
   करुपापमिः राज्यामनादाय तत्तव सूत परिविनिकर्तु विकृतिः
   खऽय भक्तं नाना विज्ञान गाय दारा दुः प्रतिशनु तदवयुपयानमव
   हति प्रयोजनमुष्टिधि रघ विज्ञानस्तारतान-क्रियान्ति शिल्नि दारा
   प्रकट रापालमना वा

   Comm.of Ananda Bhaṭṭa on VB.P.2

2. कृषि तत अवस्यार्क वा
   तत्तम कृषय विदानस्थम आयुपाण परमात्मणे नमः

   Comm.of Kṣemarāja on NT:P.2
It is a fact that the tantras, which were too big and beyond the reach of mortals, summarised and scribed down baffiling the power of study by mortals, particularly in the Iron age, wherein shortlivedness, penury and mental lessitude prevail.

In the Introduction to the Svachchanda tantra it is observed that tantras are regarded as āgama-Śāstra, hence of super human authorship.

Since all the tantras and āgamas are unanimously attributed to Lord Siva, no author, as in other texts which are, either composed or written

\[ \text{ST: I; V.6-7} \]
by mortals, can be mentioned. A long search in this context has ended to no avail. As such, references leading to some relevant source of their evolution, either scriptural or oral, could not be found. There is no doubt that tantras were revealed to the siddhas by Lord Śiva himself. Information pertaining to the manifestation of the āgamas has already been furnished in the preceding chapter. However, a curiosity arises, though it is a fact that tantras were revealed by Lord Śiva, it is equally valid that somebody may also have scribed them down. It is said that the siddhas, the earlier possessors of the Śāstras, and the mind born sons were so proficient and elucidate and possessed such a sharp memory that they did not need to be taught by the written scriptures, therefore, the tradition was passed down through oral teachings. Thus, they received the Śāstras from Lord Śiva and maintained their flow by passing them down to their descendents. As the Kali age started to enwrap the world in
pangs of ignorance, the siddhas were so perturbed that they began to hide themselves in far unknown places, so as not to be traced by the mortals. Therefore, when the Śāstras were revealed to the mortals they were imparted through oral teachings and not by written scriptures. The fact which sheds light onto this, is that it was Kali age when the disciples as well as their masters were not so powerful, as their ancestors were, and therefore, they could not hold the knowledge without the help of written scriptures, and that the Śāstras were scribed down.

There is, however, another fact to be considered, as to who gave scribed shape to those Śāstras. A traditional lore, as no scriptural evidence would enlighten this fact, can bring some resolution to this fact.

It is believed in Kashmir that the great souls, who lived in those days were sheer devotees of Lord Siva, and used to be living just to perform the duties. Not for getting ease and
enjoyments but to achieve absolute immersion in the state of Lord Siva, 'Bharāvāyāmya', for they were living only by the grace of Lord Siva. They considered themselves as the creation of Lord Siva and, therefore, were far away from their personal achievements. They wanted to spread the knowledge of Śaivāgamas, which they received by the grace of Lord through siddhas, but it was felt impossible to maintain the oral tradition of teaching of the Śāstras. Therefore, they scribed them down, so that the mortals who were unable to hold the knowledge by means of oral teachings could benefit. They were so great and well wishers of people that they did not think of making mentions of themselves. Their only aim was to live the life according to the command towards life by the Śāstras, and which was indeed jīvanmukti. Though no scriptural reference is available to this context, yet has been generally accepted by all the scholars belonging to this school. They confess that these contentions have truth to believe on.
Now it seems that the scribed shape given to the śāstras, or present tantras, is the work of some unknown personality who might have thought to save the divine scriptures from vanishing, for it was beyond the capacity of the mortals of the Kali age. Some scholars, however, maintains that the Śaivāgamas, particularly Viśnūnābhaśśava, were scribed long time before the Christian Era. It has been said that the Viśnūnābhaśśava and Svacchanda tantra were scribed five thousand years before the Christ and Mahā Viśaya tantra goes one more thousand years back. The significance of the Viśnūnābhaśśava lies in what it presents to seekers of the truth. It has been declared as to be a most important tantra.

As it has been said that Kṣemarāja's commentary on this tantra is not available in complete form. The rest part of the commentary therefore, is of Śivopādhyāya and an independent commentary of Ānanda Bhaṭṭa. As far as the

commentators are concerned, the commentary of Kṣemarāja is considered to point out the actual theme of the tantra and is believed have been made with special intention to expound the tantra. The other two commentators, respectively flourished in the 18th and 19th century A.D. are greatly influenced by Saṅkara's Vedānta, therefore, they are removed from the original intention of the text for which it was revealed.

It is, therefore, concluded that the tantras are divine scriptures revealed by the siddhas and by all means attributed to Lord Śiva as author. The scribed shape in which presently they are found is not the primary concern, but their authority is supreme and highest Lord. As far as their composition is concerned, mortals are not able to act such a divine task.

The second text of the present study, is the Tantrasāra of Abhinavagupta, published by the KSTM&S under its serial No. XVIII, in the year of 1918. The text of Tantrasāra, as the title
indicate, is an epitome of Tantraloka. The Tantraloka is considered as an encyclopaedia of Kashmir Saivism, comprising several volumes. The work itself is a testimony to the greatness and vastness embodied in it. It deals in detail with all the schools of Kashmir Saivism. Abhinavagupta has himself defined the need of Tantrasāra by contemplating that the Tantraloka is voluminous and to be throughly studied by less assiduous people is impossible. The Tantrasāra has been composed in a simple way and as an epitome of the Tantraloka, will be useful to readers.¹

The aim of this text is also stated by Abhinavagupta in one of its verses, which propounds that the ignorance is said to be verily cause of all traumers, termed in the Śāstras as mala.

With the rise of dawning of complete knowledge

¹. विज्ञानस्वाम सोऽण्यो विबोधिन नैव शक्ति लक्षे।
क्षुद्रवचन विविक्षिलस्य हद्गु तन्म सारे तत: कृप्त॥

TS:P.2
this mala is vanished to its end. Thus, having reduced these malas to nothingness one arrives at what is called mokṣa or liberation by śāstras. Here the knowledge of that nature is explained, which causes the end of the malas, comprises of the explanation of the tattvas and whereof is indispensable for self realisation.

Thus the Tantrasāra, which is an essence of the Tantrāloka is written by great Abhinavagupta to fulfill the purpose, stated above. Unlike his ancestors, he maintained a different tradition of giving complete biographical sketch of his activities in some of his works. In Parātrīśikā Vivaraṇa and in the Tantrāloka, not only he has given his own account but also has laid down his predecessors and successors who followed him in those days, alongwith his masters, whom he approached time to time to receive the knowledge.

1. अलांक विभिन्न विद्वान: शास्त्री विद्वानलोक दृष्टि पान विद्वानोत्तर प्रयोगानि निष्कृतां गच्छनि ।
   विद्वानविद्वानलोकां विद्वानिद्वारा विद्वानां सम्बन्धां न विद्वाना
   शास्त्रीय अनुश्ठानिः निष्कृत न्यायां तत्त्व नाचेतु ॥
   TS: P.5

2. हर्ष्य प्रिन्य जनतौवद्हरण प्रवृत्तिमन्नत्वद्वार पदायद्विव्यापितः
   वाचिन अवतार विस्मयस्विविशेषां सवध विशाल वेदविद्वाद्विव्यापितः
   जना॥
Thus the Tantrasāra, which, according to Abhinavagupta's own statement presents the Tantrāloka in brief, is an important text on the Kashmir Śaivism written by great authority. The information furnished by Abhinavagupta, not only treats with the history of his own background, but virtually provides a sole source to look into the situation of his time. The information in Tantrāloka and Parātrīṃśikā Vivaraṇa, in this context have to be explored in the light of other works of Abhinavagupta.

So far the evidences stands to support the statements found in Parātrīṃśikā vivaraṇa by

प्रकाशित प्रमुख स्रोत: परत्र मानवनाथ उपाध्याय

PTV:PP. 278-283
revealing that the earliest ancestor of Abhinavagupta was Atrigupta, who lived in Antarvedi. This place was situated between the Ganges and the Yamuna, during the reign of King Yaśovarman of Kannauja, who probably ruled in the eighth century A.D. The sources close to it say that Atrigupta was an extraordinary euridict in all the branches of Śāstras, and particularly in Kashmir Śaivism. History has marked his great fame by recording the victory of king Lalitāditya of Kashmir, who ruled the beautiful land during the period of the eighth century (725-761 A.D.) over king Yaśovarman. As a result the victor asked for nothing, but earnestly approached and requested Atrigupta.

1. कन्तोपामानिकण्ठविशिष्टदः प्रायोगिकत्वं प्रति प्राक्षिपत्यसायनम्

PTV: P.280

कौशिक पितृज्ञयुत सरल नाम नैकिकलिचः

TA: XXXVII: V.38
to accompany him to his regime in Kashmir, and the latter was so earnestly approached that he could but accede to it.¹

The beauty of the place with its big house, in which the family of Atrigupta was accommodated has been described by Abhinavagupta in detail giving all descriptions of surrounding natural beauty which spread all round. The king offered Atrigupta a palace and a big jagīra-estate to live on. The description of Abhinavagupta is so clear that it made the imagination come alive. He states that the palace in which the family was inhabited, was surrounded by the houses of saints and intellectuals, and was decorated with the beauty of nature. He then continues to describe the calibre of the intellectuals resided there. According to Abhinavagupta they were absolutely dedicated to Lord Śiva and could be compared to the white moonlight of the moon in winter, for the Goddess Saradā herself was present in

¹
that place in form of white moonlight of winter. It shows that the atmosphere of this family, who later on produced such a great philosopher, was of very high regard and honour.

So the family which was to produce Abhinavagupta, migrated from Kanyakubja to Kashmir. The family was provided with all the necessary requirements and was well accommodated for in the palace which was situated on the bank of the river Jehlum (Vitasta). The biography of Abhinavagupta has remained the only source of information, therefore, has to rely on it accordingly. He maintains that the earliest

---

1. तमः ललितादिवतः राजा निज पुर्णमदः।
   प्रसारणमात्र कष्टिरसं हिमालययुगिमय ि।

   TA:XXXVII; V.38-39

1. विविधतां वैभवो विशिष्टा: कर्किश्यादिगिरिर-।
   लाक्षणिकः नङ्गिरीविविधताविशलयिणि निर्मित मुनयवन्या ॥
   यत्र रक्षा शारदवन्द्र शुरुआ श्रीशाश्वेति प्रच्छिता जनेशु।

   TA:XXXVII; V.39-50
generation was Atrigupta, but then leaves a gap and moves on to his grandfather, Varahagupta. According to historians he can not be placed before the tenth century A.D. The fact has been related very clearly by Abhinavagupta, that the scholastic and learned reputation of the family was maintained strictly by all successive generations. He has emphasised that this was the main aspect of the family to keep the tradition alive and maintained. They all, besides having scholarly qualities, were great devout worshippers of Lord Siva.

The word anvaya used by Abhanavagupta in the verse, indicate the immediate descent of Chukhulaka, Abhinavagupta's father. Thus, Varahagupta, the grandfather of Abhinavagupta

1. वैतस्तराध्यसि निवासमुक्ष्य चक्षः |
राजा विलुप्ते परिक्रियत हुष्टि संपतिः।

---

Not at all an immediate descendent.

---

TA:XXXVII:V.52

तस्तानन्दे मन्ति कौशिकी वराहृष्टस्य नामाः स्वयम् भावाः क्षमन्त्वा।
-- यस्याकरोऽपि वरम् गणेऽ॥

---

TA:XXXVII:V.53
was a great śaiva scholar as well as devout worshipper of Lord Śiva.

The recording made by Abhinavagupta in the context to his patronage, says that his father's name was Narasimhagupta alias Chukhulaka. He was a man of great intellectual calibre, and had equal proficiency on Śāstras of all faculties, and was a great devotee of Lord Śiva. The name of his mother was Vimalakalā. She was very religious lady and was extremely devoted to Abhinavagupta. It was her affection that made home so sweet to Abhinavagupta. His parents were a happy couple, enjoined by the scriptures to perform their observances, not to enjoy the worldly pleasures because they were united to attain the goal of life, so as to produce such a son as Abhinavagupta. Thus the atmosphere of the family was very religious and earnestly rich for the development of calibre which Abhinavagupta deserved.  

-------------------------------
1. Śrīnārāynayayam kṣuriḥ mahābhāvanī ।
śārīrakusum śāpaśrupanāṃśaścaṁ ।
ākṣaṁ śaṁ brnubhūtā śrīnārāyaṇaśūlapārāś śīvāśūlapārāś pitaro-ākṣaṁ mūrdhava ।
Comm. of Jayaratha on

TA: I; V.1
No doubt Abhinavagupta was a Yoginībhū, as he had all symbols of being Yoginībhū. In his time it was a common belief to follow the religious observances for the attainment of the desired fruit, such as good son, property or likewise. When failure occurred, in spite of such observance, it was attributed to some flaw in the performance of the prescribed rites.

In the Śaiva scriptures it is realized that the parents, desirous of a son, who in Śaiva terminology is nominated as Yoginībhū, should at the time of their meeting rise above all worldly ideas, the mother should identify herself with the Sakti and the father should with Siva. And it is also added that it is only Yoginībhū alone that can understand the Śaivāgamas fully and can propound them intelligibly. The greatness of literary activities of Abhinavagupta clearly reveals

नया रामस्कन्तकृति जै प्रचिदेः
स्वज्ञारसातिवाण ये नरक्षिण्यैः
ये सताना स्वरुपमूल नुमाणिविन
पार्कश्वरी परमक्रृते स्वरूपा
-क्षीः TA:XXXVII; V.54
that the exceptional calibre bestowed upon him was natural, not so much to do with his extensive studies that he undertook, but due to his parents religious frame of mind that had united for his birth. The universal fact, according to the information supplied in the Tantraloka about Abhinavagupta's being Yoginībhū, is his authority over all branches of Sāstras.¹

The exact date of Abhinavagupta's birth has not been recorded, but he has mentioned the time of

1. ॥ शिवार्धान्तान्तरं रापं भावकव्य परस्परः ॥
   न कुण्डीन्यानको इति रागमीन्द्रविक्रत्यवः ॥
   सान्यात्सान्यात् कर्त्तरं काव्यास्त्यां ॥
   ततः अवतारिक्ष निर्वाक्षपिन्नतुद्वयं परेऽवेत्र परम् ॥
   उत्तरः सं योगीगति पुः स्वयमेव ज्ञानगाजनं परमः ॥

Comm. of Jayaratha on
TA:1;P.14-15
his works. According to his own statement, the Īśvarapratyabhijñā Vivṛtti Vimarśini was finished in the 90th day of the year 4115, which correspond to 1014 A.D.¹

Krama stotra, a small work of Abhinavagupta, and Bhairavastava both indicate the time of their completion. The former was written on the 9th day of the darker half of the Mārgaśīrṣa in the year of 66 (3), the latter was on the 10th day of the darker half of Paugā in the year of 68 (4).²

---

1. शति नवतिलिपिमिर्तु (हस्ते) नवसेोिति
   तिधिराशिजलापिली मासशीर्षनिधोनि।
   अमतिरूपायाप्रायास्तित्वविशिष्टा
   व्यवस्थित पर्यौपयुप्रायिति नमङ्गुनायः॥
   IPVV: Concluding V.

2. दत्तायन्तानामेव कन्यावासीतारेषि।
   मायामिनकमुग्नेन मामगेषि रत्नः चित्तः॥
   KS: V.30
   BS: V.10
The above mentioned years correspond to the Saptarṣi Era. The earliest and latest dates of his literary activities clearly show that the period extended over a quarter of a century, from 990-1015 A.D. Abhinavagupta seem to have begun his literary activities when he was in his teens or in his early twenties. He persuaded his learnings and extensive studies at the houses of his masters, and the maturity and style of judgement found in his works is clear evidence in support of his early writings. It is, therefore, not wrong to say that he was born between 950 and 960 A.D.

While Abhinavagupta was a child, he was sent to a neighbouring Pāṭhaśālā, located on the second storey. There, he not only performed his studying but showed exceptional calibre in speech and intellectual power also. Due to this he was recognised as an incarnate of Śiva and an object of terror to his fellow students. It is also believed that the name by which this great Acārya is known, was not one given by his parents, but
given by his masters. His name Abhinavagupta is ample testimony to it.

The endless love of learning for the acquisition of knowledge was vested in Abhinavagupta. It is said that even though Abhinavagupta was lucky enough to get a good line of masters, perfect in their field, who could make perfect, incessant lust of acquiring knowledge for the sake of knowledge was the only reason why he also studied the texts of other religions such as Buddhism and Jainism.

------------------
1. अभिनवगुप्तस्य कृतिः कैम् यशोऽविता पुराणपरायणा !
   त्रिक्षित वेदाः सर्वेन हृदयनिदर्शन नन्दे भृसिदिरिति ॥

   TA:I.V.20

2. भृसिदिरि न्यूनं हृदयं नायेकश्च ॥
   प्राणस्य चूजनं वाहिनश्च दशैशतु कू ॥
   कामाणां शुरुणाति हे प्रोक्तः श्रीपुनवासे ॥

   TA:VII;V.206,209
Abhinavagupta approached the best teachers of his time in the different subjects for the traditional and most authoritative expositions. His humility and devotion towards his teachers was so great and earnest, that out of sheer love for him, they revealed to him all the knowledge they had in their possession. So well did he learn and retain the trasure that was revealed to him, and so much did he impress his teachers, that they unanimously declared him all round Aṣārya.

He went outside Kahmir in the search of a bigger fountainhead to quench his lust for the knowledge. No information is found which can state

1. साहित्य सात्र स पाणिपार्थ मनै भक्ति वर्त्तं त्रृण दृष्टा गृहीतः ।
भवयानं प्राप्तां जातवतिनी वक्तीयणू अण्मीर्य वेलिनः ।
तदर्थ विषोग विवृते पुरा करार्ति दार्श्यं गुरु-वैक्रमः स्वविधः ॥

TA:XXXVII;V.58-59
exactly how many time and how many places he visited to have his desire fulfilled. However, there is no doubt that he went to Jālandhara and studied Kaulika literature and practices from Sambhunātha. It was Sambhunātha from whose teachings he attained peace and self realisation. It is a fact that Sambhunātha was a great authority on the Kula system and that he taught Abhinavagupta so well that he attained mastery on this system. It was his father who taught him grammar as his master. Next in the line of masters was Vāmananātha, with whom he studied dvaita tantras, and it was Bhūtirāja who taught him Brahmavidyā.

1. श्रीमण्डपपुराणित प्रची तिमण्डकान्त्यार चाराकूलित्व:॥

2. वशताःकुमारपूर्णान्तोतित नारायणः

3. फँसा स लवमङ्गलेन प्रैकः॥

Comm. on TA:IX;V.13
Bhūtirājatanaya and Lakmanagupta taught him dvaitadvaita and advaita tantras respectively. It is through Indurāja that he attained perfection in dhvani and dramaturgy through Bhaṭṭa Toṣa.  

In many parts of Abhinavagupta's works some other names of his masters are also found, but the subjects that he studied with them are not mentioned. Among such Śrīcanda and Bhāskara are important.

Thus the atmosphere of the family, which was very highly spiritual and scholastic provided him with necessary environment for his brain. Besides his parents, his uncle Vāmananātha was

----------

1. वानन्द संतिमहायतिकण्यार: समर्पित वरात्स वामनाथामः।
श्रीनाथ संतित महान्यरमीतिति: श्री प्रति राजस्थान: स्वागिलादासः।
श्रीचन्द्र प्रधान सागर शान्ति वीरानन्ददात्मज्जीत्यं जनकमुक्तानायः।
तुषळों संतित महादिपुरुष: बन्धु: श्रीप्रभुत: सहन विलक्ष श्रीमनाथाः।

TA:XXXVII;V.60-61

विष्णुस्वरूप दूरोधित नावेनद-तल्लायनं च बनवाचितिपदः। ABh.I;1
a great scholar, writer and his cousin Kgema, if taken for Kgemaraja was a great scholar. Thus he had an ideal family atmosphere, highly surcharged with the spirit of renunciation. To conclude all the members of his family were highly zealous for knowledge and were greatly devoted to Lord Siva.

As it has already been described he was loved very much by his parents. His mother was extremely dear to him. She was unfortunately, or as Abhinavagupta put it fortunately, snatched from this world by death, and his dearest father, still young embraced asceticism.

1. वन्यपुरुषं शिशुकान्ति श्रेयः
   चाहैत्यायदिनः चंद्रोऽपभासितः
   ये समयं वृक्षासंगमं सांहुकान
   छूँरितं सर्वदा भूषि भाववान

   TA:XXXVII;V.67

2. माता परं बन्धुरितं प्रवादः
   सन्तोति गाढ़ेकु तै सि पाणाः
   तन्मुखं गृहितं किलासा
   मन्ने सिखलं जीव एव वृक्षः

   TA:XXXVII;V.57
These two incidents seem to have made a great change in his life. His interest in worldly life changed to the spiritual world and which led him to the feet of Lord Siva. He then decided never to marry. This was a great transformation in his life and attitude towards worldly affairs and seem to have taken place while he was still young. This was the end of his literary activities, from then he never thought of that life again, but continued feeding his flame of devotion with the oil of Agamic study by spending a great deal of time studying monism. The living testimony of his zeal, was that he attained unparalleled proficiency over all the Sāstras in the Tantraloka. Thus having soaked himself in beauty, spirituality, peace and passion he was above all in the scholastic field, and flavoured his achievements with religious purity. Being equally proficient, not only in Śaivāgamas, but poetry and drama also, he used his pen so well on these branches that even today he is recognised as an unchallenged authority.
Symptoms of jivanmukti were observed in his practical life at that stage. The flame which suddenly kindled to offer his entire devotion to Lord Siva was very first time fed with complete nutrition by his master Lakṣmanagupta in form of an exposition of the Pratyabhijñā and the Krama Darśana. This saying that he was first taught and enlightened by Pratyabhijñā's teachings is a controversial one. After consulting some important works of Abhinavagupta, and long searches made by scholars, it has been proved that whatever branch may have been taught to him, he, first of all used his pen on the Krama system. Kramakeli, a treatise on Krama system, is an important evidence to this support. However, to such a great giant, this work did not quite satisfy and quench the lust which motivated him to that mission. As usual,

1. नद्यं जीवितं स्वयः मुखितं:

Comm. on TA:I;P.31

2. लक्ष्मणागुप्तस्मातिचाहि भ्रष्टप्रत्याविष्ठमहं:

श्री मल्लक्ष्मागुप्तस्वरूपानि वर्तमानं वचः

TA:I;V.29
he once again maintained himself to collect himself, owing to his maiden work's unsatisfactory result, but felt his next attempt as no better than the previous one. Disappointed by this he put all his efforts into the Kula system, and it was his efforts on this system that brought perfect satisfaction and peace to him.\textsuperscript{1} This fact is supported by the evidence that Abhinavagupta has paid more glowing tribute to his Kula master, Sambhunātha, than any one else.\textsuperscript{2}

Abhinavagupta had attained complete perfection in his spiritualism before he began writing, as his works may prove.\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{1} \\
\textsuperscript{1} \textbf{Comm.on} \textit{TA:I;P.31}
\item \textsuperscript{2} \\
\textsuperscript{2} \textbf{TA:I;V.29}
\item \textsuperscript{3} \\
\textsuperscript{3} \textbf{PS:P.198}
\end{enumerate}
The spiritual perfection that Abhinavagupta attained caused by the teachings of Sambhunātha. Since Abhinavagupta was a yoginībhū and possessor of infallible calibecy, he was recognised as an unchallengeable authority on all branches of Śaivāgamas. Jayaratha contemplates that all the signs of being Yoginībhū were present in him and have been described as thus:

1. Unswearing devotion to Rudra
2. Mantra siddhi
3. Control over all elements
4. Capability to accomplish the desired fruit with perfection
5. Sudden dawning of all Śāstras

All these signs were unmistakingly found in Abhinavagupta by his contemporaries.

1. Śrī छात्रानाथ चरणावलंकारणिः Śrī छात्रानाथ चरणावलंकारणिः गुरुवत्ततिः‖
   विायानन्याय निःशुचन्न कालवल्लभच्चानाभिरङ्गितान्नपुस्त: हंदेक हरिनी।
   TA:II;V.16
2. समस्त वैदिकविज्ञानं विद्यमाणेन गुणवत्त वर्ण कारे प्राप्तरूपदिति प्रसिद्धिः।
   Comm.on TA:VIII;V.134-137,
The activities that Abhinavagupta carried out for literary services seem to have centered around the valley of Kashmir. The place of composition of Vārtika on the Mālinī Vijaya tantra, was somewhere in the east of Pravapura. The exact place of the composition of the Tantraloka is not known. It is said that it was not composed at Abhinavagupta's own house, but at his disciples house, on whose request Abhinavagupta agreed to write such a systematic guide to various paths leading to final emancipation, as found in trika. Such a place where this kind of activity took place had to be an ideal environment and conducive to his work. His disciple's house was such place, and this was the reason why Abhinavagupta moved into that place, so as to concentrate on the work he had already taken.

---------------------

1. MVV:V.135

2. अङ्गज्वल प्रथमवान रस्म्य तथा
   नोगुणानं प्रृति महापुर्णि कृष्णा वार्तायेन!
   तदाहु निरवथ्य महि:गुणाँ: प्रक्रियः
   कीपञ्ज: हत्वचित्तू सार गुणार्थिराम॥

TA:XXXVII;V.65-66
A list of his works is given below:
1. Bodhapancadasikā
2. Mālīhi Vijaya Vārtika
3. Parātrīṃśikā Laghuvaṛtī
d. Parātrīṃśikā Viavarāpa
5. Tantrāloka
6. Tantrasāra
7. Tantravatadhānikā
d. Dhvanīloka Locana
9. Abhinavabhāratī
d. Bhagavadītārtha Saṅgraha
11. Paramārthasāra
12. Iśvarapratyabhijñā Vivṛtti
13. Iśvarapratyabhijñā Vivṛtti Vimarśinī
14. Krama Stotra
15. Dehasthadevatācakram
16. Bhairava Stava
17. Tantroccaya
18. Kramakeli
19. Paramārtha Carcā
20. Kāvyakautuka Vivaraṇa
Apart from the names given above there is enough evidence that he wrote many other works. The authority of these is known from the references which Abhinavagupta made at different places and time.

In the trika system, Abhinavagupta first of all used his pen on the Krama system, from the point of commenting upon the existing tantras. This was his aim to comment upon the monistic tantras. Thus having worked on the Krama system, he ultimately took Kaulism.

1. निपृततं मण्डली पूर्व प्रमृत्तिष्ठ पंचिकारः यथा कार्य विष्णु प्रस्तुतानावै तदुक्तं काव्य स्त्रोते। PTV:PP.147,116,22

2. तत्रापायणम् गर्भायुप्रकाशकक्षात् तत्रः
The contribution to the Kaulism by Abhinavagupta is no other than the recognised texts on the system. His works are quite famous as well as authentic on this school. These includes the Parātrīṃśikā Vivaraṇa and the Bhairavastava. The former is an important text on the Kula system and constitutes the essence of the Kula system. It is a work produced in thirty verses, followed by a masterly commentary of Abhinavagupta on the verses. The latter part of Abhinavagupta's life seem to have dealt with the encyclopedic work, the Tantrāloka, which particularly deals with all the allied schools of Kashmir Śaivism, and three summaries; the Tantrasāra, the Tantroccaya and the Tantravaṭṭadhānīkā. Each briefer than the preceding one.

निमित्तस्तथापनत्या कुलप्रक्रिया पुरस्परे उत्कर्षित ।

TA:1;31
From a dry spiritualist, Abhinavagupta changed to begin more inclined towards the vision of an admiring poet. In the concluding portion of the Tantraloka his taste has become quite noticeable, he talks about the taste of wine, the fair complexion and facial cuts of women and describes the beauty of the flaura and fauna found in Kashmir. This was his Kārikā period, in which he contributed such great works as Dhvanyālokā and Abhinavabhairati. It appears that Abhinavagupta took this great work after completing the Tantraloka for he refers to it as Brahmaśāstra.

The last stage of Abhinavagupta's life was a philosophical one. The philosophical ideas seem to have taken supremacy in the last days of his writing Abhinavabhairati and Dhvanyālokā so much that these works still hold the ground still as the best exposition on these texts. It is also

1. नुवीणोऽस्मात् । सर्वं परमेश्वरार्थं भनेत्तीलयस्यानुपास्या
विदितग्न तत्वात्माकामस्यं ।

DL: P.19
believed that these two works definitely composed before he began the Pratyabhijñā school. The monumental works belonging to this period, in which he wrote two works, the Iśvarapratyabhijñā Vimarsaṇī and the Iśvarapratyabhijñā Vivṛtti Vimarsaṇī. The latter is better known as Brihatti Vimarsaṇī for its large size and the former owing to its briefer size is known as Laghvī Vimarsaṇī. By these two works Abhinavagupta is recognised as an outstanding and chief exponent on the Pratyabhijñā philosophy.¹

Parātrimśikā Vivaraṇa is a text based on thirty verses, in fact more than thirty, present a summary of the Rudrayamala Tantra.² It is second in the Yamala group of eight tantras groups constituting

1. तत्त्वজ्ञानीय व तद्विद्यार्थ यद्यपि बहुदयानोऽविनाशः
   कथाणियम्

   AB:I;P.334

2. स्म मनोकल्पचित्रितस्माद शूच्यवानम्

   PTV:P.35
sixty four monistic tantras. The group of verses constituting the text of Parātrīśikā is from the concluding portion of the Rudrayāmala Tantra. It is evident that the Parātrīśikā was commented on by Somānanda, great grandmaster of Abhinavagupta. He refers to him so often that the supposition of his being a great authority on this school becomes valid. In this text there is the exposition of the theory of speech, which is given in an exhaustive way, dealing with all the aspects of the Kashmir Śaivism. Abhinavagupta has discussed the different aspects of the vāk to a great length. The text deals with Parā, or Anuttara saṃvit, which is referred to as Anuttara Prakriyā, leading an individual to Anuttara Saṃvit.

The Tantrāloka is a voluminous work of Abhinavagupta. It primarily deals with all the allied schools of Kashmir Śaivism. He has presented this system in his text in systematic order, supported by the information gathered
from the tantras and other available tratises of his time. The text is based on twelve volumes and thirty seven śāhnikas, along with the well recognised commentary of Jayaratha, entitled "Viveka". The text does not deal with the topics and subjects that were popular in his days, it has also become an encyclopaedia of Abhinavagupta's masterly presentation of different views in one systematic order, based on the extensive studies of Saivāgamas, well supported by the experiences and traditional expositions he received from his teachers in course of his studies. The text is based on the authority of the Mālinī Vijaya Tantra, an important authority, originally contains the tantras and Saivāgamas; bheda, bhedābheda and abheda and represents the essential ninety two āgamas. The composition of Tantraloka appears to have been carried out at his disciple's house. It is also found that it was written on the request

1. 

Trivikramarājaḥ nāmaḥ labhahāsan śāhikāḥ

Bhaviṭṭhāḥ śīlānaḥ lāke śīlāhā samānaḥ mānade 11

TA:II;V.17
of Mandra's brother, Manoratha.

The Tantraloka and the summaries of it presents the complete essence of the Kashmir Shaivism. The three summaries of the Tantraloka, the Tantrasāra, the Tantroccaya and the Tantra-vaṭadhānīkā are just like a seed of the huge tree of the Tantraloka, and the last one is briefer than the first.

Dhvanyālokalocana is a commentary on the Dhvanyāloka of Anandavardhānācārya and is entitled Locana.

Abhinavabhāratī is the commentary on the text of Bharata's Nāṭya Sūtra, an important work on the dramaturgy. In this text Abhinavagupta has followed his Master Somānanda, whereas, in many places he has disagreed with his master Bhaṭṭa Toṭa in the field of rasa and dhvani. Abhinavagupta has not only written this work to prove his

1 हलव्यू गुरुवार वातावः वर्तीरता स्थानिक-चत्र विपद्ये पहाराचम्
विविधाता मात्र परिहासः तिक्रोधानां मन्त्र: रत्ने पुरवे स्थानिकम्
हृः।

TA:XII;P.419
predecessors interpretation of Bharata's Nāṭya Sūtra, but rather has given a new shape and modification to it. The exposition and new line added to it by Abhinavagupta, is so authoritative that even to this day it is held as the highest exposition.¹

Bhagavadgītārtha Saṅgraha is a very simple and short commentary of the subject matter of the Bhagavadgītā. In this work, the point view of Śiva tradition has been produced, and fully justified and judged on the teachings which he received from his master, Bhaṭṭendurāja. The purpose of this work was to expose the deep secret of the text according to the theory of trika. However, in many parts, Abhinavagupta has entered his own verses into the text so as to produce better clarity and understanding of this work. Though many other commentaries were brought up to expose the theme of this text, no one could succeed.

¹ That is, it is composed by Abhinavagupta.
It was only Abhinavagupta who attributed such importance to this text that it is now classified with the āgamas.

The trika, as a whole is very vast system, first time epitomized in the Paramārthasāra. The most essential matter of the trika philosophy has been explained in one hundred verses. Abhinavagupta has interpreted this text according to the belief and traditional thought of Śaivas, followed by Yogarāja in his further exposition.

Īśvarapratyabhijñā vimarśinī is a commentary on Utpaladeva's Īśvarapratyabhijñā Kārikā. It is a short commentary and is called Laghū Vimarśinī, because its comparatively less detailed than the Vivṛtti.

Īśvarapratyabhijñā Vivṛtti Vimarśinī is detailed commentary on the same text of Utpaladeva.

1. आयामलोक तत्तह वर्णाध्यायं आय्यामलोक तत्तह वर्णाध्यायं
   बर्तिषु यम्म |

PS: P.198
This commentary was primarily based on Utpaladeva's own commentary, Vivṛitti, which is lost irrecoverably. However, there is evidence that at the time when Abhinavagupta wrote this commentary, it was available. Some important facts have been discussed at great length in this text.

Mālinī Vijaya Vārtika is comprehensive commentary on the very first verse of the Mālinī Vijaya Tantra, also known as Sripūrva Śāstra. However, the commentary, which is now available only up to the first verse, and is limited only to some subjects, seem to have been expanded to more than one verse. This was written on a request made by his loving disciple. In this work Abhinavagupta refutes the rival theories as of Nyāya and other schools.

The traditional belief in Kashmir clearly indicates towards Abhinavagupta's being Yoginībhū.  

1. कृत्यर्म प्रत्यविनिष्ठाः क्रायामपि श्रीमुद्गादेक-पदार्थिश्चिदा

PTV:P.195
Besides it he was a great yogī, who practised all the aspects of yoga, rituals and other observances as laid down by śaiva yoga in the monistic theory. He was recognised as a spiritual head of all the śaiva sects, such as Siddhānta, vāma, bhairava, yāmala, kula and ekavīra etc. He had a great congregation of male and female devotees as well as spiritualists. Though he was, at that time comparatively young, but his authoritative exposition of the śaivāgamas had convinced his contemporaries that he was an incarnate of Śrīkapṭhanātha. Hence they all affectionately recognised him to be the spiritual head of all the śaiva sects.

The belief about Abhinavagupta's last appearance on the Earth, although not supported by the scriptural references, it is favoured by the mass, is that he went into samādhi in a cave.

According to Dr. Pandey, Abhinavagupta, on the day

1. Śrīमान्मिन्नकुपातायं Śrīवणानान्य स्वतिः।
   प्रतिपक्षा-पितरसा तास्व दूस्वं कः तत्वेऽदित्यम्।

   GP:V.23

of his samādhi, having finished his work, along-
with his twelve hundred disciples, went into the
cave. The cave now falls at a place called Magam,
between Srinagar and Gulmarg. Dr. Pandey has
gathered further information in this context from
the local residents, who claims that after his
entry into that cave, Abhinavagupta was never
seen on the Earth again. It seems that after
completing the life on Earth, he got samāvāsa
in Lord Bhairava, which was credited to his
contributions and the calibecy of his works. The
information supplied above is also accepted by
the scholars; the possessors of the oral tradition
of Śaivāgamas in Kashmir.

Thus a great philosopher, and in fact . . .
incarnate of Lord Bhairava, having completed and
dominated the intellectual's world in the history
for over half a century with his remarkable and
everlasting activities towards philosophy, and in
particular Śaivism, finally attained Jīvanmukti.