

An Analysis of Tantrayana (Vajrayana)

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Tantra is a discipline, a method and study. It is based on a rational foundation, is conceivable in theoretic consciousness and relizeable through Yogik experiences. Ironically, however, there are those who have ignored these points and picked up bits from particular sadhanas, parts of which are apparently vulgar and obnoxious, and come to the conclusion that Tantrik spiritual practices resort to sexual indulgence. Before entering further into this debate, it needs to be mentioned here that in the Tantras, the ideal of womanhood has been epitomized and raised to the exalted position of motherhood which in itself is unique in the history of spiritual literature of the world. Moreover, it is clearly stated in the Tantras that the secret of life lies in sexual control and death in sexual indulgence (*Maranam Bindu paten, tevetam Bindu Dharanat*).

As against the conventional ascetic disciplines, the Tantras uphold the theory of sublimation in which asceticism has been equated with sexuality. In this theory, desire itself is subjected to rigorous discipline and used to conquer desire. There are others who subscribe anything ugly, erotic, spiritualistic and magical to the Tantras. They produce fantastic stories garnished with absurd episodes relating to astral plane and connect them to Tantras. They forget that Tantra is a meta-science (surya-vitnam) dealing with consciousness, variable at every stage of spiritual experience. Further, the realization of supreme Truth which will give a true perspective of the Tantras has been interpreted in various ways. Tantra has been analyzed as a critique of experience. Consciousness in different aspects plays a vital role in the philosophy of the Tantras and experience is the guideline which analyzes and determines the nature of the said consciousness, both in the empirical and in the transcendental. Experiences in the Tantras may also be analyzed

in terms of consciousness, conscious of itself. A Tantra aspirant must be intelligent (daksa), have his senses in control (Jitendriya), abstaining from injuries to all beings (Sarva himsa-Vinirmukta), ever doing good to all (Sarva prani-hiterata), a believer in the self as existence (astika), have faith and refuge in Brahman (Brahmav-adi...Brahm parayana) and who is a non-dualist (dvaitahina).

Further, intellectual apprehension of the Tattvas, strenuous self-sacrifice, unflinching devotion to sastras and their teachings, observance of the ritual and yogika practices are regarded as efficient methods of approach to siva, the supreme self. Three ways to realization, those of Sambhava, Sakta and Anava, are recognized in Kasmira Saivism, together with the vira saiva idea of freedom have been discussed. It is interesting to note that the pratyabijna school of Kasmira Saivism has close affinity to the Saktadvaitavada of the eastern regions, particularly of Bengal and Assam. In this context, the six cakras (Satcakra), piercing of the cakras (Sat-cakra-bheda), the power as Kundalini and the role of Kundalini in realizing the self as knowledge in awakening our latent consciousness and self-analysis. The subject-contents reveal the outline of an Indian system of thought which is resourceful in experience, rich in contents and colourful in many of the inner secrets of Indian culture. It is realistic in attitude, practical in application and sublime in spiritual aspiration. In this system, nothing is rejected as completely lost, rather, everything is accepted and hence accommodated in its respective potential value. It is a living philosophy whose true spirit is now lost. May be not lost, but it is definitely ill-conceived, misinterpreted and badly practised. In the modern world crisis, it had got a definite role to play and delivers a message of hope to problem-stricken humanity. The influence of Tantras over the people from the past to the present is significant to note. 'Tantra', 'Mantra' and 'Yantra' are sometimes used as synonyms for each other, but the Yantra aspect of the Tantras will not be discussed in this work and Mantra will only be referred to in a stray manner. Even the terms 'Agama' and 'Tantra' are sometimes used in the same sense as the Veda is sometimes referred to as 'Nigama'. The scope of Tantra is, however, much wider than that of Agama as the former deals with as many as twenty-five subjects such as the knowledge of Brahman as consciousness, the nature of the Brahman as consciousness, the principle of creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, concealment and grace etc. Agama, on the other hand, covers only seven of the said twenty-five subjects. In this connection, it might be of interest to note that the Yamala precede the Tantras and deals with only five of the subjects covered by the Tantras.

The term 'Tantra' is also sometimes used to mean a system having predominance of Saktaika (power) while Agama bears an overtone of siva in

terms of knowledge. It is, however, a recognized fact that in the philosophy of Tantra, consciousness as power and that of Saktimana, are identical in the sense that in the Tantras, consciousness as power is always considered as being conscious of itself as 'I' in terms of Siva. Hence, the term 'Tantra' is used in the general sense as accommodating all other aforesaid meanings it covers. The prime object of this work is to exhibit the philosophy of Tantras in general terms of consciousness as power and gaining experience thereof. However, like the Vedas, the base of the Tantra is revelation, or in other words, consciousness involving knowledge as a transcendental act. Hence the Agamas or Tantras fall within the fold of Sruata Sastra (that which is heard) or revealed scriptures. To discuss and interpret sastras or scriptures from the historical point of view is difficult. The said scriptures are not supposed to have originated in time nor are they creations of ordinary human consciousness; such scriptures are believed to be of divine origin. Further, they are called eternal and immutable, they are what they are - pure and simple.

Like the Vedas, the Tantras or the Agamas are designated as Sruata Sastras brought down to us from time immemorial through spiritual tradition. Outwardly, these scriptures denote injunctions (niyama) and practices (vidhi) and essentially connote the nature of being revealed and revealing at the same time. Spiritually, they are some pure experience concepts realizable in terms of revelations of the mysteries of men and matter. Ethically they are the directive principles determining what is good and what is bad in the empirical. But then, there are the complications of a world to live in and consciousness to know and survive. Culture expresses itself in manners, customs, patterns of belief, ways of life, religion, philosophical thinking etc. Civilization is sometimes measured by the degree of material prosperity. Indian culture or civilization is broadly represented by two diverse traditions - Aryan cum Vaidika and non-Aryan cum a-Vaidika. The term 'a-Vaidika' is synonymous to Agamika cum Tantrika even though the term Veda is at times used for both Agama and Nigama. It should be noted here that the Aryan cum Vaidika culture is not very different from some of the main Agamika and Tantrika practices. Yoga (concentration), Asanabandha, Garuda (the vehicle of Vishnu), Conch Shell (Samkha), Conch Bangles (Sakha), Altars (Vedi) Posts (Yupa), Sivalinga (symbol of Siva), the image of Siva as Pasupati and seals on similar other finds in archaeological excavations bear testimony to the fact that the Indus Valley Civilization is not at least anti-Vaidika. There are different phases of cultural patterns of a particular civilization which alternate in different ages and finally evolve into a full-fledged system covering within itself the history of thought of that period. Similarly, Indian culture had to pass through different phases such as Agamika or Tantrika cum Vaidika, Jaina, Buddha and the like. Notwith-

standing the unity of thought within the six systems of Indian philosophy (sad darsana), there are differences within them not only in details of the discussion of a particular problem but also in some of the basic concepts. These differences crop up even within a particular system in the interpretations that different commentators have made of them. All these show a progressive trend of the Indian mind. The asta-tanu and asta-murti concepts of the Puranas bring out the eminent aspect of the supreme God, Siva, and the same concept is fleshed out again in the Mahabharata when it says:

*Bhut-adyan sarvabhuvanamn utpadyasadivaukasah
dadhati devas-tanubhir-astabhir-
yo bibharti ca -*

The Tantrika ritual includes the asta-murti puja of Siva in the eight forms of Sarva (Earth), Bhava (Water), Rudra (Fire), Ugra (Air), Bhima (Ether), Pasupati (Yajmana), Isana (Sun), and Mahadev (Moon). The concept of Siva finds expression in the famous Mahimah stotrum of Pasupadanta where the eight aspects of Siva are named and depicted as the earlier explanation with the only difference lying in the replacement of Yajamana with Atman. This representation of Siva as Atman or Ksetratna is also mentioned in the Siva Purana. In his Sakta Philosophy, M. M. Gopinath Kaviraja has stated: Siva and Sakti are conceived as constituting the two aspects of one and the same divine principle, inalienably associated and essentially identical. Siva is the agent, Sakti is the instrument. One is transcendent, the other immanent. The cosmic manifestations of Sakti is, however, in essence, the manifestation of Siva himself and is conceived as immanent. It is further to be noted here that from the point of view of manifestation, Siva cannot even be conceived of as other than Sakti. The Asta-tanu concept of Siva finds prominence in the works of Kalidasa, viz. Abhijnana-sakuntalam, Malavikagni-mitram and Kumarasambhavam (cf 1.57, vi. 26).

The Tantras are not ancient authentic religious scriptures of the Aryan race and they are not accepted as religious scriptures throughout India. This so-called scripture or Sastra is the creation of Bengalese and its injunctions have been in practice only in Bengal (Gauda). The Bengalese are believers of self-determination (Svatantrya) and have full confidence in their own strength and the Tantras propound precisely such an attitude towards life.

Amongst the Mahayana Buddhist, worship of deities such as Tara, Vajrayogini, Ksetrapala and others have been in vogue and there are mantras, vijas and japas in Mahayana Buddhism prescribed for propitiating the same. So, if in the Hindu Tantras, there are similar Gods and Goddesses worshipped with specific mantras, vijas and japas, Hindu Tantra must have originated from the Mahayana sect of Buddhism.

The aboriginal tribes in India are worshippers of Sakti, spirits, ghosts, serpents, trees and the like and such practices are found in the tradition of Tantrika worship, too. Hence, the Tantras owe their origin to the so-called barbaric tradition. The influence of Tantrika tradition is found not only in Bengal but throughout India. That the Tantras follow Mahayana Buddhism is also untenable from historical/traditional point of view in the same way that the belief that Mahayana Buddhism is derived from Tantra is unacceptable. Similarity of some of the religious practices is after all no proof of one being derived from the other. Whether the Hindu mind was moved, drawn and attracted by the teachings of Buddhism only and not with its fundamental tenets, in other words, should the Hindus pay obeisance to Buddhist Gods for beauty, victory, glory and destruction of foes or strive for Buddha Nirvana? There is a great difference between the yoga undertaken for the extinction of all desires and the yoga practised for acquisition of power, wealth and destruction of foes. It is true that in a particular type of Tantrika sadhana, there is a provision for practices (kriya) alleged to be maleficent such as Marana, Ucatana, Vasikarana and Stambhavana. These are also called abicara, but it is specifically stated in the Tantras that these practices should never be directed or motivated towards the satisfaction of any selfish end. Tantras, being primarily practical and realistic in nature, provide such practices as a guard against evildoers and doings. Further, the said practices have no physical bearing. They work only in the psychical region.

The Bhagvadgita preaches niskama karma (right to work only and not to the fruits thereof) which might lead to the acquisition of knowledge. This is akin to the Buddha's philosophy of Nirvana. On this account, can any body say that the Bhagvadgita also provides for Sakama Karma (works with some object in view i.e. work for power, wealth, beauty etc.) which is contrary to the spirit of Buddhism. Moreover, Hinduism, of all religions, provides different forms of religious practices for persons having different dispositions and competence (adhikara). This also does not fit in with the principles and practices of Buddhism. In the above context, how is it possible for them to explain the Sakya-Muni's renunciation (Vairagya), his loss of faith in Hinduism and his discovery of the new path whereby man could escape infirmities of old age and death and achieve the final extinction of sorrows, in line with the practices of the Tantras? Lalita-vistara, the biography of Sakya-simha, states that Buddha was well conversant with Nigama, Puranas, Itihasa and the Vedas. When, both, the Vedas and Nigama are mentioned in the same context, the latter term refers to the Tantras which goes by the names Agama and Nigama. In light of this fact, the belief that Hindu Tantras originate from the Mahayana sect of Buddhism are rendered defunct. Again, Sakya-simha is said to have addressed the Bhikshus thus: "There are fools

who seek protection of and pay obeisance to Brahma, Indra, Rudra, Visnu, the Devi, Kartikeya, Mother Katyayani, Ganapati and others. Some perform tapasya (ascetic practices) in the cremation ground and at the crossing of four roads." Speaking of the practices of heretics, he had once mentioned the use of wine and flesh which is practices in some special form of Tantrika sadhana. Had not the Tantrika form of worship, then, been in existence before the advent of Sakya Muni? (*Lalitavistara xi, ch. v. six III*)

It may be said that the strength of the aforesaid analogical arguments depends on the fundamental points of agreement between the Tantras and Buddhism; but no such agreement or similarity is found between them save and except some superficial points in regard to the worship of some of the Gods and goddesses. Even in this context, it may be said that there are cases where there is no similarity between the vijamantra, as in the case of Nila-Sarasvati, of the two systems. In spite of these fundamental differences, it cannot be ignored that Buddhism and Tántrism grew on Indian soil and it is not impossible that in the process of cultural synthesis, there was mutual exchange of ideas just as we find similarities in the subsequent period of history between Vajrayana, Sahajayana, Mantrayana, Natha and Sahajiya cults of Buddhism on the one hand and Saivism on the other.

Who are the persons called barbaric aborigines? Should we suppose that Bengalese pandits composed the Tantra sastra in imitation of Dravidians inhabiting the distant South? Or, Should we suppose that the Tantrika system was adopted from the Mundas, Santhals, Garos, Meches, Kuches, Khasias and the primitive inhabitants of Assam? Such interpretations are definitely absurd. The concept of Sakti is found almost in every literary work from India. It is in the Vedas, Samhitas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Puranas and other literatures. Moreover, the Goddess Sakti is worshipped in different forms through out India - in Kamakhya, Vindya Hills, Kasi, Vrindavana, Rajasthan, Tirhut, Haridwar and so on. Historical survey of religious practices prevalent in ancient India does not support the vie that because Tantra advocates the practice of Sakti, therefore it is of recent origin and that the advocates of this sastra are Bengalese. Sometimes, it is even believed that Yogini Tantra is of recent origin and at the most only three hundred years old. This is obviously an incorrect assessment since Raghunandana Bhattacharya, the great Smarta, and Krsnananda Bhattacharya Agamavagisa, who were contemporaries of Sri Caitanya, have referred to Yogini Tantra as an authentic work on the Tantra in their works, Smrtitattva and Tantra-sara. There are also scholars who are of the opinion that because the term Tantra is no specifically mentioned in Svarga-varga by Amarkosa Tantra, therefore it is not be considered as an authentic scripture. But it should be noted here that the name of some of ancient scriptures too

have not been mentioned there. Those scholars have also not noticed in the Nanartha-varga of the said work, there is a mention of Agama Sastra, which is but another name for Tantra.

Madhavacarya, the commentator of the Vedas, in dealing with the Patanjali system in his compilation of different systems of Indian philosophy, named Sarva-Darsana-Samgraha which quoted many passages from the Tantra Sastras, particularly with reference to what is called the ten fold disposition (Dasavidha Samskara). Acharya Vacaspati Misra, the great commentator of the six systems of Indian philosophy, has spoken of the practice of meditation (Dhyana) as of Tantrika origin. Srimat-Samkaracarya, in his Sariraka-Bhasya, mentions the determination of six bodily centres (Satacakras) of the Tantras. It is hardly necessary to say that one of three great Acaryas is a Bengali. Before the compilation of Krsnanadas Tantra Sara, there have been many compilers of Tantras such as Raghavananda, Raghavabhata, Virupaksa, Govind Bhatta to mention only a few. Krsnananda, in his observation of the Goddesses Nila Sarasvati featured in Tantra Sara, reveals that even Samkaracarya himself claimed that the famous hymns of Sakti (Ananda Lahari and Dakshinamurti-stotra) are his works. Besides, there are many important compilations of Tantras such as Ramarcand-candrika, passages from which have been quoted by Vacaspati Misra in the chapter of Vasanti Puja in his Kritiya-cintamani which proves the antiquity of the Tantra, Mantra, Muktaivali, Sara-Samraha, Bhuvaneshvari-parijata, Sarada-tilaka, Tripura-siva samuccaya, svacchadda-samgraha, Sara-samuccaya, Mantra-tantra-prakasa and others. These compilations were prepared long before the time of Krsnananda and Raghunandana. Harita says: "Now we shall explain Dharma. Dharma is based on the authority of Sruti. Sruti is of two kinds - Vaidika and Tantrika." Tantra-sastra, in some authoritative works, is referred to by the terms Rahasya (mysticism) and vidya (metascience) in addition to Agama and Nigama which again is used in some context in lieu of the Vedas. There is a great Tantrika scripture called 'Sivagma'. One of its commentators is the great Abhinavgupta, the propounder of Kasmira Saivism, otherwise called Pratyabhijna. Krsnananda has quoted some of the sutras of the said Agama as authoritative. This shows the affinity between Kasmira Pratyabhijna and Saktavaitavada prevalent in the eastern region of India.

SOME OPINIONS ON THE TANTRAS

Professor Masaharu Auzaki, in his *History of Religion in Ancient India*, after citing *Raja Tarangini* as evidence of Tantrika worship at the time of Asoka (240 BC), says that Tantra appeared even before Nagarjuna (220 AD) and that it has been successful in absorbing Buddhism despite all efforts to the contrary. In fact, as regards Buddhism, Tantra stands for a Hindu conquest. Further, in Tara-Tantra, it is stated that the Buddha and

Vasistha were Tantrika seers and Khulavbhairavas. Prof. Heyman Wilson says that the Tantrika tradition is not the creation of a day, it has a long history behind it. Creation, maintenance and dissolution, propitiation of Gods and Goddesses, religious cum spiritual practices, Purascarana, sat karma, dhyana, yoga and other similar practices have been discussed in the Tantras (see Varahi-Tantra). Prof. Cowell believes that the Tantras form a highly esteemed branch of literature. Sir Monier Williams, in his Indian Wisdom, has mentioned the Tantras and spoken ill of them though some of his findings are believed to be improperly presented.

Tantra Sastra is meant for all classes irrespective of caste, creed and sex. In this system, sex is no bar against spiritual initiations. It is stated in the Tantras that far from the Vaidika exclusiveness, the practice of family tradition is essential for all two-footed beings. By family is meant persons coming from a particular specific stock and tradition, in this context, consists of some long-standing practices both in the social and the spiritual.

Tantra sastra affords to all, freedom to be engaged in spiritual practice according to one's competence and shows the practical method which would qualify the spiritual aspirant (sadhak) to proceed along the higher path of knowledge (Jhana marga) - knowledge in terms of experience as distinguished from intellectual theorizing alone. Tantra is above all, a metascience, primarily concerned with the performance of rituals aiming at liberation, for, according to Tantra, not only theorizing, but also practice in proper direction is indispensable for gaining experience and freedom.

Tantra-sastra is primarily a sadhana-sastra, and all religions recognize spiritual practice (sadhana). The Tantra claims to be thoroughly practical in the sense that it affords direct proof of spiritual practices. Tantra also bears great affinity with the art of medicine (bhaisajya) in so far as its practice outlook is concerned. Apart from primarily practical and realistic attitude of the Tantras, the rational side of this grand system is well developed. Tantra believes in Right and Competency (adkikara and yogyata) of the spiritual aspirants. The sacramental energy of the mantra, even when the spiritual preceptor (Guru) has vivified it with consciousness, depends on the competency of the aspirant for its efficacy. Tantra believes in different stages of spiritual progress such as japa, dhyana, bhava and Brahma-sadhana which is the highest state of mind. For the Brahmajnani, one who has realized Brahma, there is no difference in these stages. Tantra is vehemently oppose to any sort of lifeless, mechanical formality. It is pointedly stated in the Tantras liberation comes only through tattva-jhana or intellectual conviction of the tattvas. Knowledge of the Brahman cannot be attained without self purification and for such self purification, Tantra provides means taking cognizance of the secret spirit of the age (Kala-dharma). Tantra-sastra speaks of spiritual experience constituting of the fourth stage - Turiya state of con-

sciousness - through the practice of Yoga. Hathayoga and various other forms of spiritual training have been admitted in the Tantras. Prof. De La Valle Poussin, speaking in context of Buddhist Tantra, remarks that the essential concepts of Tantra are metaphysical and subtle in character. His understanding is also applicable to the Hindu Tantra, where, for instance, the significance of Sakti-Tattva, Mantra-Tattva, Yoga-Tattva, the principle of Kundalini, Bija-mantra and the like are highly subtle, metaphysical and esoteric in nature. Besides, the technical terms or concepts such as yantra, mantra, mudra, nyasa, sadhana, upasana, yoga, panca tattva and sat-cakra are used in the Tantras and practised by the Sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) demonstrating the technical character of Tantra.

The Tantra, at present, are available in the Indian scriptures and also in Tibetan and Chinese records. It may be said that the Tantra is of divine origin, realized and realizable in super-sensuous experience of the yogins, practiced by Sadhakas and expressed in manners, customs and religious behavior of the tradition. Tantra forms an essential part of the dynamic aspect of Indian culture. Both, in philosophic speculation and religious practices, it exhibits that spiritual renunciation (nihilism) and material progress (abhyudaya), go side by side in the history of Indian thought and the art of living.

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TANTRA IN PALI BUDDHISM

TANTAM - A thread, main point, a literary work, religious treatise Ab. 523, 878, 882, pat 82 Tantravaya, a weaver (Ab. 507 pat 82), Ananta Tantaratanakara, ocean of boundless literature (vuttodaya)

TANTI (f) - A string, line cord, the string of a lute, sacred text, a passage from a sacred text Ab. 882, 996, pl. tantio (Dh. 154). Tanti is to a great extent a synonym of Pali which see, Tattha dhamm to tanti attho. Here the law means the scriptures: Tantipadam, scriptural term (vi j.). Tantikamam Kanci Avokkamitva: Without overstepping any Pali idiom (vi j.) Tantiyahita, adopted to the sacred texts (ALW/vi). Sammasambuddho pi tepitakam, Buddhavacanana tantim aropento Magadhi bhasay' eva aropesi: the supreme Buddha when elevating his sayings contained in the Tripitaka in a text did so in the Magadhi language (ALW, I.V, comp, vi, note). The Dighanikayo is called tanti, a text (Ditto)

TANTRA IN PALI BUDDHISM

The Awakened One is said to have achieved a distinction of being the Buddha. Pali Buddhism preserves the traditions in a discourse with Upaka prior to his running of the wheel of Dhamma (Dhammacakka pavattana). Gautama the Buddha declares the eminence:

*Victorious one all, omniscient am I.
Among all things defiled.
Leaving all through death of craving freed.
By knowing for myself when should I follow.
For me there is no teacher.
One like me does not exist.
In the world with its devas
no one equals me.
For I am perfected in the world.
The Teacher supreme am I.
I alone am all awakened.
Became cool am I, Nirvana attained.*

The above sayings explicitly refer to the core of the Tantra practice tending to retroversion (paravrtti). A successful practitioner confidently declares, "No one equals me, I am all awakened." These are the characteristics of one who has regained his self-nature by freeing the mind from cravings and not instances of boasting or vanity of the Gautama the Buddha.

The Buddhist literature delves on measures which help in realizing a man's self-nature. The life force of a being emerges out of a bindu and dissolves into it and arrives at the condition from which it originates. This is retroversion (of matter). In the depths of the mind, similar retroversions function and it should be borne in mind that retroversion is distinct from extroversion (Pravrtti) and introversion (nivrtti). Living beings, according to Buddha, are the conglomeration of mind and matter (nama-rupa) with a strong attachment (upadana) under latent impressions (Samskara) of ignorance about their self-nature. A being is easily delighted by pleasures and remains stuck in the cycle of life and death. A being fails to know what is deathlessness and finds pleasure in the realm of Maya under the letters of craving.

The Awakened One, knowing himself, becomes "Victorious" (Jina). He claims: "Victorious one all, omniscient am I...by knowing for myself." Man possesses omniscience but fails to realize it because of his ignorance. The Tantra teaches one how to visualize the self-nature (Sva-bhava) which is essencelessness (nihsva-bhava). He who visualizes this essencelessness is

Awakened from the slumber of ignorance.

Gautama exclaims:

*This that through many tides I have won
Enough, why should I make it known?
By folk with lust and hate consumed.
This dhamma is not stream,
subtle, deep, difficult to see delicate.
Unseen it will be by passions slave
Cloaked in the musk of ignorance.*

The teachings of Buddha are also 'leading on against stream', but these are aids to develop vision (cakkhukarani) and awareness of mind (nana karani). His followers thereby possess an appropriate contemplation to concentrate on the source or root of beings in the worlds (Yonisumansikara) for right sight (Sammaditthi) and right concentration (Sammāsamadhi). The self-nature (sava-bhava) of beings is correctly visualized by going on against the stream. In other words, practices are done in the method of retroversion which is followed in the Tantra. The Tantra seeks to extinguish five passions to attain Buddhahood as the achiever exclaims, "Become cool am I Nirvana attained."

With undaunted confidence, Buddha proclaims deathlessness among the 'blind on account of ignorance'. Thereafter, Gautama Buddha turns the Dhammacakka in Isipattana at Sarnath, Varanasi for the welfare of all beings of the world:

*Evam me Sutam - Ekam Samayam Bhagava
Baranasiyam viharti Isipatane migadaye*

*Thus have I heard - Once the blessed one was sojourning
near Varanasi, at Isipatana in the Deer park*

*Tatrakho Bhagava Pancavaggiye bhikku amantisi
Dve' me bhikkhave anta pabba jitena na sevitabba
Katame dve?*

*Then, the blessed one addressed the company of five Bhikkhus.
Bhikkhus, these two extremes should not be followed by one
who has gone out of home to the homeless life
What two?*

Yocayam kamesu kamasukha, likanuyogo, hino, gammo, pothujjaniko,

anariyo, annatthasambhito, Yo cayam attakilamathanuyogo dukkho, anariyo, anathha samhito, Ete to bhikkhave ubhoante anuaagamma majjhima patipada Tathagatena abhisam buddha, cakkhukarani, nana karani, upsamaya abhinnaya, Sambhodhaya, Nibbanaya Samvattati

The giving unto the pleasures of sense which is low, vulgar, worldly, unworthy and harmful, and the giving into self mortification which is painful, unworthy and harmful. O Bhikkus, by avoiding these two extremes the Tathagata has found out that middle which gives the vision, which gives the knowledge, which tends the peace, higher wisdom, enlightenment and Nibbana.

Katama casa Bhikkhave majjhima patipada Thathagatena abhisambuddha, cakkhu karani nana karani, upasamaya, abhinnaya, sambodhaya, Nibbanaya samvattati? Ayam sammaditthi, Sammasankappo, samma vaca, Sammakammanto, samma ajivo, sammavayamo, sammasati, sammasadham, Ayam kho sa bhikkhave, majjhima patipada Tathagatena abhisambuddha cakkhukarani, nana karani, upsamaya, abhinnaya, sambodhaya, nibbanaya samvattati

And what, O Bhikkus, is that middle path found by the Tathagata, which giveth wisdom, which giveth knowledge, which tends to peace, higher wisdom, enlightenment and Nibbana? It is this very noble eight-fold path, namely, right view, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This, O Bhikkhus, is that middle path which is found by the Tathagata, which giveth vision, which giveth knowledge, which tends to peace, higher wisdom, enlightenment and Nibbana.

Idam kho pana Bhikkhave dukkham ariya saccam: jati pi dukkha, jarapi dukkha, vyaohi pi dukkha, maranam pi, appiyeha sampayogo dukkho, piyeha vipayogo dukkho, yampiccham labhato tam pi dukkham, Sankhittena pancupanakkhandha dukkha.

Now this, O Bhikkus, is the Ariya (noble) truth of sufferings: Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, death is suffering to be conjoined with things we dislike is suffering, to be separated from things we like is suffering, not to get what one wants, that is also suffering. In short, these five aggregates, which are the objects of grasping are suffering.

Iti he tena khanena tena layena tena muhuttana yava Brahmaloaka saddo abhuggacchi, ayanca dasa sahasi lokadhatu samkampi sampakampi sampavedhi, appamano ca ularo obhaso loke paturahosi atikamma

devanam devanubha vanti.

Thus, at that very hour, at that very moment, in an instant of time, the cry reached even to the realm of Brahma and this whole system of ten thousand world system quaked and quaked again, it was shaken to and fro and an immeasurable, mighty radiance shone forth, surpassing even the effulgence of Devas.

Atha kho Bhagava udanam udanesi, "Annasi vata bho kondanno annasi vata bho kondanno ti, Iti hidam ayasmato kondannassa Annata-kondanno tveva namamahose ti."

Thereupon, the exalted one uttered this solemn saying, "Kondanna indeed has understood, Kondanna indeed has understood." Thus, it was that the venerable Kondanna who had his name Annata Kondanna "the one who hath understood."

'Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta'

The First Sermon

1. Abhana Sutta and Mangala Sutta - Sunday
2. Ratana Sutta - Monday
3. Mata Sutta - Tuesday
4. Handa, Mora and Batta Sutta - Wednesday
5. Dhajaga Sutta - Thursday
6. Ata Natya Sutta - Friday
7. Angulimala, Bojjhaga and Pubbnha Sutta - Saturday.

The Sammasambuddha (Thoroughly Awakened One) sees the worlds of existence through his wisdom eyes (Buddhacakkhu) and understands the real state of happenings where he see (Yathabhutajha-nadarsana). No dialectic therefore arises and his dhamma is beyond dialectics. The Tantra also disowns any debate or dialectics as it is based on direct visualization of the Truth. The Pali Vinaya Pitaka refers to that state through which Udanagatha was uttered by Buddha immediately after attainment of Nirvana. Truly, things grow plain to the ardent meditating Brahman.

Routing the host of Mara does he stand.

Like as the Sun, white, lighting up the sky.

Likewise, the Tantra aims at the coordination of the mundane (idam) and the supra-mundane (tat).

To sum up, it is now evident that the Buddha's experiences as traditionally depicted in the Pali literature and philosophy bear resemblance with the experiences of an accomplished Tantra practitioner (Ratnapudgala). En-

trance of the Tantra in the Buddhist thought is generally said to be a later addition or a phase of later Buddhism since 3-4 century AD.

Gautama is said to have achieved supra-mundane attributes like bala, vasita, vaisaradya, abhijna and bodhayana as his experiences, and these details are narrated in the Vinayaka Pitaka. These evidences suggest that the nucleus of the Tantra prevails in the Pali Vinaya Pitaka as the earliest source from which it has come down to us.

Seeing the Dhamma is the same as seeing the Lord Buddha himself as the First Sermon details, "He who sees the Dhamma, sees Tarhagata."

DHAMMACAKKAPPAVATTANA (TANTRAS) THE FIRST SERMON OF LORD BUDDHA

The sermon is based on the noble eight-fold path and the four noble truths and forms the foundation of Tantric and many other suttas proclaimed by the Buddha and delivered at Isipatane. The basic teachings of Lord Buddha are full of Tantra. "If it were impossible to cultivate the Good, I would not tell you to do so," said the Buddha. This is indeed a positive, optimistic assurance common to Tantra.

In the vast bulk of Indological and other orientalist writings of Indocentric religious thought, practice and literature, serious work on the Tantras has remained so limited and so specialized that they have not come to form a genre within the oriental studies though they are as qualified as, say the Upanishads and the Pali canon. There is no excuse for this omission, unless prudishness, fear of social and scientific opprobrium and other items of puritanical calculus were presented as some. The fore-cited are perhaps valid excused because Tantrism is a delicate theme because of its intensive and extensive erotic ramification.

The Buddhist Tantrism, and to a certain degree the Hindu tradition, offers an interesting exception in a way. The Buddha may not have been counted among the learned of his day, but he was certainly a sophisticated speaker and a good propounder of his own doctrine.

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VAJRAYANA

Vajrayana emerged as the third major division of Buddhism in the eighth century AD after Buddhism had already off-shooted into the Hinayana and Mahayana forms. This altogether new form of Buddhism developed with much emphasis on rituals, meditational practices, gods and goddesses and

included within its fold elements like mantra, mudra, mandala etc. These were probably inclusions in the process of adjustments to the pressures of the environment. This phase of Buddhism is a kind of Buddhist Tantrism and the appellation of Mantrayana or Tantrayana is also given to this school as being based on mantras, tantras etc. Tantric Buddhism is similar to Hindu Tantric Sastra in its form, characteristic, principles, doctrine and paraphernalia. It is important to remember in this connection that Tantrik tradition was not evolved by Hinduism or Buddhism out of its own select material, but has in fact grown out of the soil which both the Hindus and Buddhists use. Tantric literature should be regarded as an independent religious literature consisting essentially of religious methods and practices current in India from ancient times.

The Tantras, Brahmanic or Buddhist, represent a special aspect of social, religious and cultural life of India and it is not possible to trace the origin of any of these groups to any system or systems of philosophy. It is also a historical fact that some tantric trends arose particularly in India's extreme boundaries; some even outside Indian territory. The supreme ideal of Tantric worship and practice is the identifying of the individual with the supreme. This characteristic of Tantra holds good for both the Hindu and Buddhist tantras. Both forms inculcate a theological principle of duality in non-duality and hold that the ultimate non-duality possesses two aspects in its fundamental nature - the negative and the positive, *nivṛtti* (cessation) and *pravṛtti* (origin). These two forces are represented as *Siva* and *Sakti* in Brahmanism and *Prajna* and *Upaya* in Buddhism. In the case of Brahmanism, the metaphysical principles of *Siva* and *Sakti* are manifested in the material world as the male and the female, and Buddhism, too, has the same interpretation for the manifestations of *Prajna* and *Upaya*. The ultimate goal of both is the state of perfect union of the two and the realization of the non-dual nature of self and nonself.

With the present level of knowledge on the subject, it is difficult to either trace any organic relation between Buddhism and Tantrism or to ascertain exactly when these esoteric elements were introduced to Buddhism. It is, however, an interesting study to try and find out how the teachings of *Sakyamuni* could incorporate so many heterogenous and sometimes even revolting ideas within its fold. On the basis of a statement in the *Tattvasamgraha*, it has been said that the Teacher made provision for these practices to help the disciples of lower calibre who would not be able to understand his noble and subtle teachings. This seems to contradict the life and teachings of the master who has always been represented as an uncompromising critic of the Brahmanic system of rituals and ceremonies. No testimony from any source can convince one that the Buddha, whose entire

life was dedicated to stem the tide of the evils generated by the prevalent religious systems, should have himself advocated for these elements only to attract a larger number of people to his fold.

Traditionally, Asanga, the exponent of the Yogacara philosophy has been credited with introduction of esoteric principles to Buddhism and some sources name Nagarjuna, the propounder of the Madhyamika philosophy, as the founder of the Buddhist esoteric school. It has been said that the Buddhist Dharanis are the first codification of the ideas underlying the Tantra and that they form the "first kernel from which the tantras developed". The Dharanis have been thought to as old as the Mahasanghikas and in this context the origin of Buddhist Tantras may be traced to the beginning of the Christian era.

Whatever be the time and the reason for the introduction of esoteric elements and whoever be the person responsible for this, it seems reasonably certain that the Mahayanic pledge for universal redemption had to make way for the current popular religious practices in Buddhism to make it generally acceptable. Buddhist principle and traditions tinged with these materials helped the growth of Tantrik Buddhism or Vajrayana. As a corporate system, Vajrayana has incorporated a large number of popular beliefs and practices which have played a significant role in the development of Buddhism in its later phase. With continuous flow of these elements into the body of Buddhism, the Teacher, who was so much against anything connected with deities and divinity, himself became edified and considered a Lokottara or superhuman. The Buddhist master with their broad-minded receptiveness, strengthened by the tendency of spreading over the backward frontier people, did not hesitate to accept their ideas and even deities into their fold after the elements were fully transformed and 'purged of their primitive crudeness'. This formed an essential feature of later Buddhism. Many mandalas of Vajrayana reveal contact of Buddhism with the frontier people. For example, Goddess Ekajata, later considered to be an aspect of Tara, is said to have been introduced by Nagarjuna with her liturgy taken from the Bhota country.

Vajrayana as a later development of Buddhism has included many heterogenous elements from the abicara (spells employed for evil purposes) to the elaborate ritualistic worship of deities, compassionate attitude for the well being of all sentient beings, subtle meditational practices and so on and so forth. These inclusion also make a precise and comprehensive definition of Vajrayana impossible. The incorporation of a large number of Hindu deities along with the elements of mantra, dharani, japa, tapa and other similar concepts have changed the complexion of the Buddha's religion be-

yond recognition, provoking some scholars to brand this phase of Buddhism as Hinduism of Buddhists or Hinduism in the garb of Buddhism. This criticism of Tantric Buddhism does not, however, appear to be justified since this phase of Buddhism has still not lost the essence of Buddhism despite the strong interfusion of Brahmanic ideas and beliefs. Though Manjusri-mila-kalpa describes a number of Gods and Goddesses, Buddhism did not have, till the second century AD, any conception of a well-classified pantheon and it was only with the emergence of the Tantric phase that Buddhist deities multiplied. In the Vajrayana pantheon, Vajrasattva is the 'Adi-Buddha' - the primal enlightened one, the primordial God. Later Buddhist texts describe the Adi Buddha variously as Swayambhu, Dharmaraja, formless, and as the nature and form of the void and so on. The concept of a supreme Lord, developed itself into the idea of Adi Buddha, who is even held as the originator of Dhyani Buddha. Though there is much uncertainty about the time and place of origin of the theory of Adi Buddha, the idea of Adi Buddha as the supreme Lord finds a prominent place in the Swayambhu Purana and enjoys an important position in Nepalese Buddhism. As the highest deity in Vajrayana, the lord has been attributed with five kinds of knowledge which are to be taken as the five kinds and creative potencies in the ultimate nature of the Lord, that is pure consciousness. These attributes of the Lord produce five kinds of dhyanas (meditation) and the five Dhyani Buddhas who occupied so important a place in later Buddhism as having emanated from these five kinds of dhyana. The five Dhyani Buddhas represent and the five primordial cosmic forces responsible for creation and are considered the presiding deities over the five skandha or material elements the world is composed of. Described as the progenitors of five kulas or families which help the fulfillment of all desires and attainment of emancipation, the deities are represented with a colour, a crest, a particular mudra (symbol), a mount (vahana), a particular Bodhisattva, a human Buddha, a bija mantra (mystic syllable), a particular kula and are associated with the five elements, the five sense organs and perceptions. In the process, Buddhists have introduced numerous gods and goddesses and it is perhaps in the text of the Guhyasamaja that we get a proper description of the Vajrayanic pantheon for the first time. The different branches or sects of Vajrayana accepted the ideas and institutions current among the masses and with their tolerant universalism, incorporated popular indigenous deities in their mandalas (magic circles) as acolytes of their chief Gods. As a result of this tendency, popular Hindu deities like Indra, Varuna, Mahesvara, Kuvera, Skanda, Visnu and even Kama, the God of Love, have all been admitted into Buddhism and find places in the magic circles as keepers of quarters. With the divergence of Buddhism into this direction, a large number of divine and fiendish beings, often in female form and sometimes with monstrous appearances, also found place in Vajrayanic texts. In almost

all texts of later Buddhism, we find references to such beings as Chunda, Amba, Dakini, Yogini, Yaksini and a host of others like them. The incorporation of Hindu gods and goddesses into Buddhism reached its maximum limit with the development of the Kalacakra system which appears to be the latest phase of Buddhism or for that matter Vajrayana. Though Buddhist tantra have been divided into three schools - Vajrayana, Shajayana and Kalacakrayana - there is no source available to clarify this division. In its essence, form and character, the Kalacakra system is a developed form of Vajrayana and so is the Sahajiya cult of Sahajyana. Both, Tibetan and Indian sources agree that the Kalacakra system was introduced to India from a country named Sambhala about sixty years before it went to Tibet. It is generally accepted that the system reached Tibet through Kashmir in 1026 AD. The lamaist religion is fully covered by the ideas and thoughts of this system and a large number of treatises have been written by Tibetan scholars on the subject.

The Vimalaprabha locates Sambhala in the north of river Sita and the *arya-visaya*, the land of the Aryans, India, is described as situated to the south of the river and in between the Himavat and the island of Lanka. Csoma de koros places the land between 45 degrees and 50 degree north latitude beyond river Sita which he identifies as Jaxartes. Description of the way leading to the mysterious land of Sambhala as found in the Tibetan sources, however, suggests Tarim in East Turkestan to Sita of the Kalacakra fame. The Sanskrit text and various Tibetan commentaries of the Kalacakra school help us understand the real nature and characteristic of the system which, true to the principles of Tantras and Vajrayana, attempts to explain the whole creation within this body. An elaborate system of Yoga practice with the control of the vital winds in the body has been regarded as a very important and fundamental factor in realizing the truth in the form of the Lord Kalacakra. A Kalacakrayanist wants to keep himself above the influence of the cycle of time which is ever moving to cause decay, death and rebirth. The flow of time is nothing but the working of vital winds in the body. It is in the action of these winds that time reveals itself and if a Sadhaka can control and stop this action, he can stop the flow of time and can thereby raise himself up to the state of Mahasukha, removing suffering, death and rebirth.

Kalacakra, the highest God in this system, is essentially of the same nature as that of the concept of Vajrasattva found in different Vajrayana texts. He is the unity of Prajna and Upaya, the Bodhicitta, the ultimate immutable one in the form of the motionless great bliss - Mahasukha. He is without origins and without destruction, the unitary embodiment of knowledge and knowable embraced by Prajna, Transcendent wisdom, both en-

dowed with and bereft of forms (content). He is the creator of all Buddhas and the Adi Buddha. As the state of absolute unification of Sunyata and Karuna, Kalacakra is the one Lord to be realized by all Buddhists to free themselves from the bondage of repeated existences (Samsara). The importance of this concept, once exercised among the Buddhists, may be evident from the famous sentences reported by Padma Karpo to have been inscribed by Tai Lu Pa on the upper side of the main entrance to the Nalanda monastery: "He who does not know the Adi Buddha, does not know the Kalacakra. He who does not know the kalacakra, does not know how to utter the mystic syllables properly."

The Buddha supposed to have preached the doctrine himself on the famous Grandhrakuta mountain in Rajgriha after his proclamation of Mahayana Prajna paramitanaya. He proclaimed the kalacakra teachings again at Dhanyakata which, with the famous Amaravati stupa and the sacred Sri-Parvata, must have played an important and significant role in the propagation and development of Vajrayana in general and Buddhist Tantricism in particular.

Some Tibetan sources hold that the Buddha revealed the Mula Tantra of the Kalacakra in the year of enlightenment while others hold that the basic text was preached by the master in his eighteenth year of enlightenment. It is said that while the master was exposing the esoteric teachings in the assembly of Gods, Bodhisattvas and others, King Sucandra of Sambhala was also present in a mysterious way and prayed to the Buddha for the text of the teachings. A year later, the Mulatantra with 12,000 verses was recorded and preserved in Sambhala. In course of his treatment of the lost portions of the Buddhist canon, Bu-sTon notes the mulatantra in his history of Buddhism as having 12,000 verses. The extant Laghu text on the Tantra, however, has only 1047 verses in Srag-dhara metre. We cannot say with certainty as to who first made the system known to India. Tasi Lu Pa, Pitopa and the older kala-cakra pada are generally regarded in different sources as the first Indian scholars of the system. Pitopa was a pupil of Atisa or of Naropa, according to Taranatha, and so cannot be held as the first Indian scholar to master the new teachings. If we believe the report that a new name was adopted by a sadhaka after every new initiation, then Tasi Lu Pa and the older kalacakrapada could be the one and the same person. Padma Karpo gives an account of Tasi Lu Pa's birth and also how he had acquainted himself with the knowledge of the Tantras and the secrets of kalacakra through the grace of a Bhiksu who later instructed him to go to East India and spread the new system. He visited Nalanda and defeated the Acarya Naropa in debate there. Naropa studied the new teachings of the Kalacakra under the victorious Taso Lu Pa and later became a prominent interpreter of the

school himself. Tasi Lu Pa is said to have established a line of teachers including the tradition of kalacakras. A more important school of teachers was started by Pandit Somanatha, a disciple of Naropa. The tradition of Somanatha and his followers is known as the school of Rva as it was established by Chosrab of Rva.

Hence, with the Kalacakra tantra as the most important factor in their philosophy, the Buddhists have attached greatest importance to astronomical speculations and to the movement and position of the sun, the planets, the constellations etc. As experts in astrology and astronomy, they interpret the principles and fundamentals of Buddhism in relation with time and its different units.

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TANTRAYANA: By H. H. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama

The paths I have mentioned are doctrinal paths and they must be followed to provide a sound foundation before Tantrayana (the way of yogic method) is practised. In Tibet, the greatest care was taken before any Tantric doctrine was introduced. Spiritual teachers always investigated whether the doctrine was among those preached by Lord Buddha and submitted it to logical analysis by competent pandits and so tested its effects in the light of experience before they confirmed its authenticity and adopted it. This was necessary as there were many non-Buddhist Tantric doctrines which were apt to be confused with those of Buddhism because of superficial resemblances. The Tantrayana falls into four classes and it has a vast number of treatises which cannot be enumerated here. In the simplest terms, it can be described thus: bad karma are held responsible for the various miseries we suffer. The bad karma are created through delusion. Delusion is essentially due to an undisciplined mind. The mind should therefore be disciplined and controlled by exercises that stop the flow of evil thoughts. This flow may be stopped as the wandering or projecting mind is brought to rest by concentration on the physical make up of one's body and the psychological make up of one' mind. The mind may also focus on the external objects of contemplation. For this, strong contemplative powers are needed and the figures of deities are found to be suitable objects for this contemplation. For this reason, there are many images of deities in Tantrayana (Vajrayana). These are not arbitrary creations. Images, as objects of contemplations to purify the body, mind and senses have been created in wrathful as well as peaceful aspects and sometimes with multiple heads and hands so that they suit the physical, mental and sensuous aptitudes of different individuals striving for the final goal.

Progress towards this goal is achieved in some cases mainly through strong

faith and devotion, but in general it is achieved by the power of reason. And if the transcendental path is systematically followed, reason itself will prevail.

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BEGININGLESS AND THE ENDLESS TANTRA

Initiation of Tantrik Dharmacakra tradition cannot be explained by the historical chronology of modern concept. Tantra has been delivered mostly by spiritual planes of Devaloka and Ekanistha (unabused). It also manifests in Jambu Dwipa as various Isth Deva (Ideal Conceptions). The enlightened masters of India and Tibet mostly acknowledged this fact. Even those who have a grip over this kind of meditation and contemplation, and have attained ordinary and extraordinary siddhis, admit the same. Therefore, this mystic fact can not be disobeyed by little knowledge, intellectual imagination and futile arguments. This kind (Tantric) of mystic sayings are found not only in Tantra but also in 'Paramita Naya' kind of texts. Not only in Paramita Naya, but also in Shravak Yana (Dighanikaya in Pali), many of the esoteric and exoteric demonstrations by Buddhas are noted. In brief, it may be said that Yoga Sadhana of Yogic Buddhas must be unfolding newer Tantric Deshanas (revelations, deliverance). As such, it is not possible to enact any historical chronicle of Tantra, neither for analysis nor for practices, because even today, those who are meant to be carriers of Kriyatantra may get direct communications from Buddhas and Bodhisattavas and do the needful. Admissibility of the outlook of today's theoreticians to conceptualize any orderly chronology of matra, dharani, Deva Upashana, kriya, chariya, yoga or annutarayoga and siddhas sahitya (teaching) as unfolding of the Sahaja vision is redoubtable.

Briefly, Tantra is not bound by a beginning or an end. Its field is vast, self-expanding and serious in understanding. In Karandak Vyuha, both, Tantra and Mantra are available. In this way, the same text observes Adi Buddha, Srastha Buddha and Mantra-Tantra correlated Bauddha Dharma and Bhakti Marga.

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