

TANTRĀGAMA & SALIENT FEATURES OF SAIVĀGAMA

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ABSTRACT: The word 'Tantra' derives from the Sanskrit root 'tan' which indicates extension. The root 'tanu' combining with another root.- 'trayī' in accordance with the rule of Grammar also bears the meaning of protection i.e the word 'tantra' comprehends the sense of extension as well as the protection of knowledge. It is applied to denote that class of literature which elaborates or extends the frontiers of knowledge. In its broad sense the word 'Tantra' has been used by the scholars for the elaborate, systematic knowledge that not only manifests the wisdom but also protects life and helps to attain the goal. Hindu Tantric tradition has been divided into three, viz. the Vaiśvānara, Śākta and Śaiva as per their image of worship and the attitude towards the object of worship. It is to be noted here that Śākta and Śaiva traditions are closely related and possess so many things common to each other that it is quite difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the two. Still 28 Āgamas have been considered as the basic scriptures of Śaiva sect and is believed to be emanated from the five faces of Śiva that reaches to the Goddess Pārvatī. Much emphasis has been given in Śākta Tantra on the process of worship and attaining the end. The reality in the form of divine energy is the ultimate principle both the source and end of the world. Creation is the manifestation of that ultimate power which is the origin, the substratum as well as the absorber of all that is exposed. Religion, in TantrĀgama, has been defined as the superior power, either for attainment of divine life or for extinction of evils of the worldly life. The essence of religion consists in worshipping the image. Āgamic school may very well be said as the earliest source of the Kalpa and Vaidik schools of the process of worship. SaivĀgamas maintain that the realization of goal is the nature of knowledge. Knowledge of the supreme (patijñāna) is the integral intuition of the truth of existence which causes the freedom of the self from the grip of the mala and consequently the enjoyment of the bliss of śiva by being 'one with' and immersed in śiva. Though saivism, may very aptly be termed as the religion of knowledge but saivĀgamas never discard the elements of bhakti, rather have mingled the means of bhakti and karmawithjñāna. The combined force of jñāna, karma and bhakti develops and get fully matured by the onset of grace through the process of dikṣa. Bestowed by guru. The TantrĀgamas attach immense value to dikṣa for the attainment of spiritual goal. Through the grace of śiva is imparted by guru. So, guru processes the highest place in spiritual life. Particularly in Āgama-Tantra and the whole Indian culture in general. the enjoyment of the bliss of śiva is the end of life.

Keywords: SaivĀgamas; TantrĀgama; Paddathis; philosophy; Hinduism

Introduction:

The word 'Tantra' derives from the Sanskrit root 'tan' which indicates extension. The root 'tanu' combining with another root.- 'trayī' in accordance with the rule of grammar also bears the meaning of protection i.e the word 'tantra' comprehends the sense of extension as well as the protection of knowledge. It is applied to denote that class of literature which elaborates or extends the frontiers of knowledge (Kāraṇāgama 1973). In its broad sense the word 'Tantra' has been used by the scholars for the elaborate, systematic knowledge that not only manifests the wisdom but also protects life and helps to attain the goal. Śāṅkarācārya has used the word 'Tantra' to indicate the teachings of the saint kapila i.e sāṅkhya.

In specific sense the words point out to the scriptures that comprehends both the doctrines and processes of mantra. Kīla, kavaca etc. In Mahābārata the word has been used for the philosophical systems like Nyāya, yoga, Dharma śāstras and also smritis. Technically Tantra is “That which elaborates great things, consists of Truth (tattvas) and mystical incantations (mantras) and saves us from the danger, is termed as Tantra” (Kamikāgama 1900).

Āgamas and Tantras

The word Āgama is the synonym for Tantra. Vacaspathi Mishra, in his famous commentary of yoga, the tattva vaiśarādī, has defined the word as that scripture which inspires and prepares the intelligence to know the ways and means of progress and end of life. (Tattva vaiśarādī 1933) According to Sanskrit lexicon the word ‘Nigama’ has been used for Veda that propounds the philosophy of action, worship and the nature and aim of knowledge, whereas Āgama i.e Tantra describes, in detail, the religious rites and process to attain the end, of course alongwith the philosophical doctrines underlying them. According to Vārāhī Tantra, the vast literatures of Āgama scriptures have been divided into three broad heads, viz, Āgama, Yāmala and Tantra. Seven salient features have been enumerated in the Āgamic literatures, namely, (i) Creation of the world of the diversity (ii) Process of dissolution (iii) Process of worship of the different gods and goddesses, (iv) Spiritual disciplines to attain the end (v) Initiatory rites (puraścaraṇa). (vi) A group of six rites (ṣaṭkarma i.e the rites of śānti, vaśikaraṇa, stambhana, vidveṣaṇa and maraṇa), (vii) Profound meditation (dhyānayoga).

The literatures of Yāmalas consists of eight distinguishing features are : (i) account of creation (sṛṣṭi) (ii) Position of planets and stars, (iii) regular daily rites (nityakṛtyapratipādanam), (iv) theory of evolution (karma), (v) verses (sūtras), (vi) characteristics of varṇa (varṇa bheda), (vii) duties of the different castes of society (jāti bheda), (viii) duties of the different phases of life (āśrama dharma). Apart from the above, some more characteristic features of Āgama Tantra have been mentioned in Vārāhī Tantra, such as powerful incantation (mantra), ritualistic diagram symbolizing the deity (yantra), descriptions of various gods and goddesses (mūrti), pilgrimages (tīrthas), observance of disciplines and the aiming at the spiritual progress (vrata), distinctive statements about the concept of holy and unholy (śuddha and aśuddha), ascertaining the duties of king (rājadharmā), norms of common behavior (vyavahāra), discussion on the nature of spiritual wisdom (adhyātma varṇanam). Though the aforesaid characteristics have been mentioned in the Vārāhī Tantra as the special features of Āgama Tantra but all the Tantras do not possess these characteristics uniformly. What is common to this religio-philosophical scripture is their emphasis on the religio-spiritual discipline

(Kriyā-yoga) of the Tāntric system. Through this process of spiritual discipline worshipper (sādhaka) not only transcends the three kinds of sufferings (duhkhatraya) of the world but also attains the state of union with and enjoyment of the universal, eternal energy- the cause, origin and the end of the creation. According to Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, Śruti or Veda is the basic scripture for Satya yuga, Smṛiti for Tretāyuga and Āgamic knowledge and discipline are the only ways and means for the present kaliyuga. So, one should earnestly accept and follow the teachings and instructions of Āgamic scriptures. (Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 1974) No other means is able to lead to the goal.

Source of Tāntrika cult:

It has been stated that the vast literatures of Āgama scriptures have been emanated from the five faces of the God Śiva and assumed the name accordingly. The manifestation of eastern face is named as 'Purvāmnāya', that of western face is called the 'Pāścimāmnāya', whereas the northern face is called the 'uttarāmnāya' and the upper face is known as 'uttarāmnāya'. The scriptures emanated from the upper face is the bestower of liberation. The scripture that comes out of the western face deals with the elimination of the evil effects of the unfavorable stars. Āgama: that is manifested from the southern face eradicates the enemy and the last but one i.e. the face of the eastern side eradicates the poisonous effects of all kinds, whereas scriptures that got the expression from the northern face deals with the hymns and process of hypnotism as such. The whole manifestation of the world of sound have been emerged from the five faces of Śiva. Kāmikāgama describes it in detail. It has also been stated in Kāmikāgama that five streams have flown from the five faces of Śiva, viz. (i) Loukika i.e. empirical (ii) Vaidic (scriptural) (iii) Ādhyaत्मika (Spiritual) (iv) Atimārga (extremism) and (v) Mantrāत्मika (hymn).

The numbers of the different scriptures of Tantra have been mentioned in different books of Tantra. Out of that the list of 64 Tantras mentioned in Śrikantha Samhitā and Vāmakeśvara Tantra have widely been accepted. Apart from that the same number is available in Rathkrāntā, Viṣṇukrāntā and Aśvkrāntā with little difference of names. The geographical area of Viṣṇukanta was extended from Vindhya mountain range to eastern side upto Chittāgong (presently in Bangladesh) including the area of northern part of India. Rathkrāntā is known to cover the entire western region starting from Vindhya mountain. Aśvkrāntā was extended from Vindhya region up to the ocean of the south. During the long time of centuries, a large number of centers of Tāntrika cult including Buddhism have flourished.

64 Śākta Tantras

The list of 64 Śākta Tantras according to Vāmakeśvara Tantra is as follows-
(Tāntrik Sāhitya , 1931)

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|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mahāmāyā, | 28. Vātulottar, | 55. Paścimāmnāya, |
| 2. Śambar, | 29. Hṛdbheda, | 56. Dakṣiṇāmnāya, |
| 3. Yoginī, | 30. Tantrabheda, | 57. Uttarāmnāya, |
| 4. Jālaśambar, | 31. Guhya Tantra, | 58. Urdhvamnāya, |
| 5. Tattvaśambar, | 32. Kāmika, | 59. Vaiśeṣika mata, |
| 6. Bhairavāṣṭak, | 33. Kalāvāda, | 60. Jñānārṇava, |
| 7. Brāhmī, | 34. Kalāsāra, | 61. Virāvatī, |
| 8. Māheśvarī, | 35. Kubjikā Mata, | 62. Aruṇuśa, |
| 9. Koumārī, | 36. Tanttrottara, | 63. Mohinśa, |
| 10. Vaiṣṇavī, | 37. Cīnākhyā, | 64. Viśuddheśvara. |
| 11. Vārāhī , | 38. Trotala, | |
| 12. Māhendrī, | 39. Trotalottara, | |
| 13. Cāmuṇḍā, | 40. Pañcāmṛta, | |
| 14. Śivadūtī, | 41. Rūpabheda, | |
| 15. Brahmayāmal, | 42. Bhūtoiddāmara, | |
| 16. Viṣṇuyāmal, | 43. Kulasāra | |
| 17. Rudrayāmal, | 44. Kuloddiśa, | |
| 18. Laksmiyāmal, | 45. Kulcudāmani, | |
| 19. Umāyāmal, | 46. Sarvajñānottara, | |
| 20. Skandayāmal, | 47. Mahākālī mata, | |
| 21. Gaṅcāyāmal, | 48. Mahālakṣmi mata, | |
| 22. Jayadhratyāmal, | 49. Siddhayogeśvarī mata | |
| 23. Candrajñāna, | 50. Kurupikā mata, | |
| 24. Vāsuki, | 51. Rūpikā mata, | |
| 25. Mahāsamohan, | 52. Sarvavīra mata, | |
| 26. Mahocchuśma, | 53. Vimala mata, | |
| 27. Vātul, | 54. Purvāmnāya, | |

Three kinds of Tantric tradition

1. It has been mentioned earlier that the names of the Āgama s differ in Viṣṅkrāntā, Aśykrāntā and Rathkrāntā, though the number of the scripture is the same. It will not be out of place to mention here that the Hindu Tantric tradition has been divided into three, viz. the Vaiṣṅava, Śākta and Śaiva as per their image of worship and the attitude towards the object of worship. The devotee of Viṣṅu or any form of Viṣṅu i.e Kṛṣṅa or Rāma or any incarnation of Viṣṅu is known as Vaiṣṅava; so the devotee of Śiva is named as Śaiva, whatever may be the process of their worship; likewise the devotee of Goddess of any form such as Kālī, Tārā, Śrīvidyā etc. are known as Tāntrika or Śākta sect. Śaiva and Śākta tradition have many elements common with one another and so it is very difficult to draw the line of demarcation between the two. So far as Vaiṣṅavāgama is concerned, it has got its specific āgamic literatures, viz., Pāñcarātra, Vaikhānasa etc. that are voluminous in number of and form but a large part of the literature is now gone to oblivion. Otto Scharader holds that only 13 Samhitās are now available out of 215. (Schrade 1992)

Ahīrbudhnya Samhitā, Jayākhyā Samhitā, Viṣṅu Samhitā and Sattatya Samhitā are very famous among them. Lakṣmī Tantra is another important Vaiṣṅava Tantra text widely known in this system. It has been admitted by the scholar that the Pāñcarātra school of Vaiṣṅava tradition is closely related to Ekāyana śākhā of Śukla yajurveda. In the same way Vaikhānasa scripture is also believed to be related to the Auraveya Śākhā of kṛṣṅa yajurveda.

References are found in dharma sūtra of Gautama, Dharma śāstra of Bodhāyana and Manusmṛti. Only four texts belonging to the Vaikhānasa school of the Vaiṣṅava Tāntrika Tradition, namely, Vaikhānasa, Dharaśūtra and Śrauta sūtra are available. Vaikhānasa Āgama referred to by Mārīcī has been published in the Anantśayana Sanskrit series No.12 which gives a detailed philosophical description of the tenets and rituals of the Vaiṣṅava Tāntrika tradition, According to Tāntrik tradition spiritual wisdom is eternal and exists in the form of Parāvāk, inseparable with the Supreme Reality on the transcendent state which symbolisms the self-reflective experience by the Supreme Reality. Then it gets its expression through the subtle pulsation from the subtle to the gross manifestation. The first manifestation of Parāvāk is known as Paśyanti, then Madhyamā and

Vaikhari. Thus the manifestation of Nāda-tattva flows from subtle to gross. This stream of manifestation is known as Mātrikā which is an important special feature of Śākta philosophy.

It is to be noted here that Śākta and Śaiva tradition are closely related and possess so many things common to each other that it is quite difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the two. Still 28 Āgama s have been considered as the basic scriptures of Śaiva sect and is believed to be emanated from the five faces of Śiva that reaches to the Goddess Pārvatī. It is mentioned in yāmala that –आगतं शिव वक्त्रेभ्यः गतं च गिरिजा मुखे । Out of the twenty eight Āgamas ten are said to be SivĀgama s and eighteen are known as Rudrāgamas. The twenty eight Āgamas are collectively named as Siddhantāgamas. Following is the list of the scriptures as per the commentary on Tantrāloka by Jayaratha on the authority of Śrikanṭha Saṁhitā. (Tantraloka 1987)

Saivāgamas		Rudrāgamas
1.Kāmikāgama or Kāmaja	1.Vijaya	11. Svyambhūva
2.Yogaja	2.Niḥśvāsa	12. Viraya
3.Cinta or Cintya	3.Pārameśvara	13. Kauravya
4. Kāranāgama	4.Prodgīta	14. Makuṭa
5. Ajitāgama	5.Mukhabimba	15. Kirāṇa
6. Sudīptaka or Dīpta	6.Siddha	16. Vātulāgama
7. Sūkṣmāgama	7.Sanātana	17. Āgneya
8. Sahasra	8.Narasimha	18. Name not known
9. Suprabhedha	9.Candrajñāna or Candrahāsa	
10. Anśumata	10. Virabhadra	

In Śrikanṭhī Saṁhitā Mukṭāgama has been mentioned in place of Suprabhedha. Mrgendrāgama also supports the above mentioned list. The list of the Āgama in slightly different way has been found in other scriptures also but unfortunately most of the original texts are missing.

In addition to the above mentioned Siddhantāgamas that preach both dualistic and non-dualistic or monistic philosophy, there are a group of sixty four Bhairava-tantra which advocates a purely non-dualistic or monistic view. Śrikanṭhī Saṁhitā has given the list of Bhairava Tantrās in eight groups comprising eight tantrās in each group as hereunder that preach purely non-dualistic views:

1. Bhairavāṣṭaka or Bhairava Tantra

- i. Svachchanda Bhairava
- ii. Caṇḍa Bhairava
- iii. Krodha Bhairava
- iv. Unamatta Bhairava
- v. Aṣṭāṅg Bhairava
- vi. Mohacchuṣma Bhairava
- vii. Kapalisa Bhairava
- viii. Name not known

3. Matāṣṭaka or Mata Tantra

- i. Rakta
- ii. Lampata
- iii. Lakṣmī mata
- iv. Cūlikā
- v. Piṅgala mata
- vi. UtpHallaka mata
- vii. Viśvāsa mata
- viii. Viśvādyā mata

5. Cakrāṣṭaka or Cakra Tantra

- i. Mantra Cakra
- ii. Varṇa Cakra
- iii. Śakti Cakra
- iv. Kāla Cakra
- v. Biṅdu Cakra
- vi. Nāda Cakra
- vii. Gūhya Cakra
- viii. Pūrṇa Cakra

2. Yāmala Tantra Yāmalāṣṭaka or

- i. BrahmaYāmala
- ii. Viṣṇuyāmala
- iii. Svachchandayāmala
- iv. Ruruyāmala
- v. Atharvaṇayāmala
- vi. Vetalayāmala
- vii. Rudrayāmala
- viii. Name not known

4. Mangalastaka or Mangala Tantra

- i. Picubhairavī
- ii. Tantrabhairavī
- iii. Tata
- iv. Brāhmī kalā
- v. Vijaya
- vi. Maṅgala
- vii. Caṇḍra
- viii. Sarva Maṅgala

6. Bahurūpāṣṭaka or Bahurūpa Tantra

- i. Andhaka
- ii. Rurubheda
- iii. Aja
- iv. Mūla
- v. Varṇa bheda
- vi. Vīdaṅga
- vii. Matrādāna
- viii. Jvālīna

7. Vāgiṣṭaka or Vāgīśa Tantra

- i. Bhairavī
- ii. Citraka
- iii. Haṁsa
- iv. Kadambika
- v. Hrllekha
- vi. Vidyullekha
- vii. vii.Candralekha
- viii. viii. Vidyumat

8. Śikhāṣṭaka or sikha Tantra

- i. Bhairavī Śikhā
- ii. Viṇā Śikhā
- iii. Vīnamaṇi
- iv. Sammoha
- v. Dāmara
- vi. Atharvaka
- vii. Kavandha
- viii. Śiraścheda

Pratyabhijñā Philosophy recognized a different set of Āgamas as the basic texts of the sect. it regards the Malinīvijayottara Tantra, Svacchnda Tantra. Vijñāna Bhairava, Mrgendra Tantra, Mataṅga Tantra, and Netra Tantra etc. As the specific scriptures for the non-dualistic Advaita śaiva tradition of Kashmira. Ucchuṣma Bhairava, Ānand Bhairava, Nihśvasa Bhairava, Svāyambhūva Tantra have frequently been referred to by the great saint scholars of Pratyabhijñā sect, though these scriptures are not available now in published form. As it has been mentioned in the introduction of the book Bhaṣkari Vol.III by K.C. Pandey that almost eight Śaiva schools have emerged basing on the above mentioned Śaiva Tāntrik texts. Those sects are Pāśupata, Lakulīsapāśupata, Śaiva siddhānta, Vīraśaiva, Nandikeśvara Śaiva, Raseśvara śaiva, Trika Śaiva and Viśiṣṭādvaita śaiva of Śrikantha.

Out of these sects, only some evidences are found about the Pāsūpata and Lakulīsa Pāśupata and the three viz. Śaivasiddhānta, Vīraśaiva and Pratyabhijna schools are the present prevalent schools possessing a rich developed philosophy of modern age. M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj has mentioned thirteen Tantrika Śaiva schools, namely Kapalika, Kalamukha, Karunika, Kalanala, Jangama, Raudra, Bhairava, Batta, Mahavrantis, Vamaka, Ksapanaka and Krama. With the exception of Krama, all other schools are known with the references available in different texts. The Kapalika school has been mentioned by Vacaspati Mishra, Yamunacarya, Śiva Purana and the Vamana Purana als. Śivapurana mentions a sects as Mahavratin. Gopinath Kaviraj maintains that the Mahavratin., Somasiddhantin and Kapalika are most probably the same. To arrive at a definite conclusion is very difficult in

the absence of proper literature. Only Krama Tantrik Śaiva school has flourished before the emergence of Trika Philosophy in the early 8th century. Abhinava Gupta, the greatest exponent of this sect has intermingled the metaphysical elements between the two and thus both the schools are with each other.

Śākta tradition

1. Like Śaiva tradition, Śākta tradition also possess a very rich literatures which has been mentioned in the texts like Vamakeswar Tantra, Laksmidhara's Commentary on the Saundarya Lahari of Sankaracarya, Todala Tantra etc. also provide the list of 64 Tantras. It has been referred to by M.M.Gopinath Kaviraj that sankaracarya himself has mentioned the names of 64 Tantras in Catuhsasti. (Tantrik Āgamaśāstra 1921)

Maḥamaya Tantra and sambara Tantra describe the process of creation by the illusory mayasakti named as Mohini vidya, Yoginijala and sambara Tantra advocate the process of emerging the evolutes. Siddhi Bhairava, Bhuta Bhairava, Kankala Bhairava, Kala Bhairava, Kalani Bhairava, Maha Bhairava and Santi Bhairava are the scriptures of Kapalika sect which is the Śaiva stream of Tantrik traditions. In the same way the group of Bahurupa Tantra, viz., Brahmi, Maheswary, Kaumari, vaisnavi, Vārāhī, Camundi, śivaduti etc. propagates the eight kinds of Matrika and so seem to be the Śākta Tantra. A group of Yāmala and some other Tantras, namely, Malini, vidya, Mahasamohana, Candrajnana Tantra describes the process of acquiring the supernormal powers and kayasiddhi respectively, that indicate the characteristics of both the Tantrika Śaiva and Śākta schools. Vamajusta, Mahadeva, Vatula, Vatulottara, Kamika, Hrdhbheda, Tantrabheda and Guhyabheda etc. preach the processes, some secret means that help the person to acquire the supernatural powers. Kubjika Tantra deal with the rasa-siddhi, yogini, siddhi and Ajnana and Padaka siddhi respectively.

Most of the above mentioned Tantras are not available at present; only the information have been provided by the commentary of Laksmidhar on Saundarya Lahari, Most of the mentioned Tantras are related to the magical superhuman powers that help to achieve some worldly treasures (nidhi vidya) only, not the

spiritual fulfillment. Another list of 64 Tantras has been provided by the Todala Tantra which appears to be of a quite later period than catuhsasti and srikanthi Samhitā.⁹ (Tantrik Āgamaśāstra, 59) The names of those Tantras are as follows :

1. Kali Tantra, 2. Mundamala Tantra, 3. Tara Tantra, 4. Nirvana Tantra, 5. Śivasara Tantra, 6. Vira Tantra, 7. Nidarsana Tantra, 8. Latacana Tantra, 9. Todala Tantra, 10. Nila Tantra, 11. Radha Tantra, 12. Vidyasara Tantra 13. Bhairava Tantra, 14. Bhairavi Tantra, 15. Siddhesvara Tantra, 16. Matrikabhed Tantra, 17. Samaya Tantra, 18. Gupta Sadhana Tantra, 19. Maya Tantra, 20. Mahamaya Tantra, 21. Aksaya Tantra, 22. Kumari Tantra, 23. Kularnava Tantra, 24. Kalikakalasvasya Tantra, 25. Kalikakalpa Tantra, 26. Vārāhī Tantra, 27. Yogini Tantra, 28. Yogini Hrdaya, 29. Sanatkumara Tantra, 30. Tripurasara Tantra, 31. Yoginivijay Tantra, 32. Malini Tantra, kukkuta Tantra, 34. Sri Ganesa Tantra, 35. Bhuta Tantra, 36. Uddisa Tantra, 37. Kamadhenu, 38. Uttama Tantra, 39. Virabhadra Tantra, 40. Vamakesvar Tantra, 41. Kulcudamani Tantra, 42. Bhavacudamani Tantra, 43. Jnanarnaya Tantra, 44. Varada Tantra, 45. Tantra Cintaman Tantra, 46. Vani vilasa Tantra, 47. Hamsa Tantra, 48. Cidambara Tantra, 49. Phetkarini Tantra, 50. Nitya Tantra, 51. Uttara Tantra, 52. Narayani Tantra, 53. Urdhvamnaya Tantra, 54. Jnanadipa Tantra, 55. Gautamiya Tantra, 56. Niruttara Tantra, 57. Garjana Tantra, 58. Kubijika Tantra, 59. Tantra Muktavali, 60. Brhat srikarma Tantra, 61. Svatantra Tantra, 62. Yoni Tantra, 63. Kamakhya Tantra, 64. Name not known.

Aims of Tantra system

It may be noted here that the teachings and practices of the Tantrika scriptures were strictly confined secretly to the genuine knower and practitioner on the one hand and also rejected the weak and incapable persons who have misused and polluted the difficult means of the spiritual end of life. Nevertheless, the vast treasure of Tantrika scriptures were not protected with utmost care and thus are now unfortunately lost or destroyed. Jayaratha, the vrtti commentator of the magnum opus of Abhinava Gupta, the Tantraloka, has mentioned the names and verses of many Tantras in his work through which the references of the texts are made available.

Much emphasis has been given in Śākta Tantra on the process of worship and attaining the end. The reality in the form of divine energy is the ultimate principle both the source and end of the world. Creation is the manifestation of that ultimate power which is the origin, the substratum as well as the absorber of all that is exposed. This ultimate principle deified in different forms, named as Mahavidyas have been worshipped and thus ten schools have developed in course of time in accordance with the image and its specific contemplative characteristics. According to the Gandharva Tantra the ten Mahavidyas are Kali, Tara, Sodasi (sri vidya or Tripurasundari). Bhuvanesvari, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta, Dumavati, Bagala, Matangi and Kamala (Tantrasāra 1986). Every school of Śākta tradition has got its own specific process of worship and these schools of sakti worship prevailed in different parts of our country and each sect has its own specific scripture propounding the teaching and also the mode of worship (upasana) to realise the ultimate goal in life.

Charles Iliot, in his famous work on 'Hinduism and Bhuddhism' (1921 A.D.), has opined that Tantra, Āgama and Samhitā have presented the scriptural knowledge in four forms i.e. Jnana, Yoga, Kriya, and Carya. In Buddha Tantra the word Jnana has been replaced by the word 'Anuttara'. Though mainly saivĀgama s and Pāñcarātra Samhitās are divided into four parts, but it can not be denied that almost all the scriptures of Tantra advocate the aforesaid four kinds of subject matter in the discussion without hving the proper division. Bhagvata (Pāñcarātra) and pasupata schools gradually had developed such as process of worship in which a reconciliation between the inner and outer process of worship was held and the rites of the material body (मूल शुद्धि-) installation of the life principle (प्राण प्रतिष्ठा) the process of nyasa and the particular physical posture (मुद्रा) of worship, are some of the specific points evolved and developed in the Tantra school of Religion. Thus "देवो मूर्त्या देवं यजेत्" is the prime dictum of the Tantra school. One should contemplate himself as a divine being for welcoming the divinity. Various rites only aims at that purpose. Inner worship (आंतर बरिवस्या), according to Tantra tradition, is the practice of the ascending movement of the Kundalini tattva. Scholars have propounded the authenticity of the system by referring to the scriptures of sruti, Smriti, Purana and dharmasastra. (Chintra Haran Chakravorty 1963)

The second principle aim of Tantra system is to unite the devotee with his object of worship by transforming him into the essence, the Reality. In that state one remains united with the world by being one-with the ultimate Reality.

According to Tantrik view the human body is the miniature form of the world. The whole creation, a small representative of the broadest and dynamic palpable energy of the ultimate Reality which remains immanent in each and every particle of the world. The whole literature of Āgama Tantra exposes both the material and efficient causality of Cit sakti. Third important characteristic of Tantrāgama is the recognition of both the enjoyment (भोग) and liberation (मोक्ष). God is regarded as the bestower of enjoyment as well as liberation. Worship of sabda Brahma is the another special feature of Tantrāgama. Creation of Varṇa (मनुका) has been developed in Tantric Tradition (Bagchi 1988). World as the manifestation of sadadhva has also been established quite systematically in the literature of Tantrāgama. The celebrated scriptures recognize the right of study of tantra for everybody, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, and sex. Guru the preceptor, is the only deciding authority for the eligibility of the follower of Tantra. It is obvious that in ancient time, there were two disciplines of culture, one for the special one known under the caption 'tray', whereas the other one is meant for all as per the capability of the person concerned.

1. In the Narayaniyopakhyan of Mahabharata five schools i.e. Veda, Sankhya, Yoga, Pasupata and Pāñcarātra are named as the Krtanta Pancaka and regarded as of the equal authenticity. In later period, the doctrines of the aforesaid systems were intermingled not only with each other but also with the other disciplines, such as, Bauddha and Jain Tantra. Kularnava Tantra states that the springs of Āgama i.e. Vaiṣṇava, Daksina. Vama and Siddhanta schools are superior to thr other philosophies and kaula discipline is of the highest value among the all (Kularnava 1984)

1. (The doctrines of Vama, Daksins, Bhairava, pasupata, Bhuta, Vaiṣṇava, Bauddha and Jaina have been mentioned in Ajitāgama. (Ajitāgama Kriyāpāda

1964). In the preface of *Ajitāgama*, the schools of Garuda, Bhuta, Bhairava, Vama, Kapala, Pāñcarātra, Lakula, Kulasastra and Pasupata doctrines etc. were being discussed with reference to *Kamikāgam* (*Kāmikāgama* 1990). According to *Ajitāgama*, the *Saivāgamas* are to be traced in three forms i.e. Vama, Daksina and Siddhanta. *Mulavatara* etc. are to be named as Vama. *Svacchanda Tantra* etc. are to be included within the group of Daksina and *Kamika Tantra* etc. are to be known as the scripture of Siddhanta school. (*Ajithāgama Kriyapāda* 1964)

Netra Tantra also asserts that the ultimate Reality śiva assumes the forms of Sadaśiva, Bhairava and Tumburu to expose the various schools of Saivism. *Srikantha Saṁhitā* propounds that the source of 28 *Siddhantāgamas* is the upper mouth of śiva, 64 non dualistic *Bhairavāgamas* spring from the South face, 28 Garuda group emanates from the eastern face named *Tatpurusa* and the western face is the origin of *Bhuta Tantras*. Nothing has been mentioned regarding the *Vamadeva* face. *Ajitāgama*, *Rauravāgama* and some other scriptures also state that the emanation of *Āgama-Tantra* happened from the highest source i.e. śiva himself. Though there are some differences regarding the names and numbers of the *Āgamas* and *Upāgamas* but the scriptures are unanimous in maintaining the source or origin of *Tantrigāgamās*.

Unique feature of *Āgamic* tradition

It is to be noted here that there is no evidence of image worship in ancient Vedic time. There were five *Yajnas*: *deva* (gods), *rsi* (sages), *pitr* (ancestors), *manusya* (men), and *bhuta* (semi-divinities). Gods were *Agni*, *Surya*, *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Prajapati*, *Soma* etc. how the *devayajna* in the form of fire ritual was transformed into the *deva-worship* is to be as old as *Panini*. *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and some of the *grhyasutras* have referred to the temple and images. According to the scholars the worship of deities in the form of images was flourished as early as 5th century B.C. On the other hand, regarding the temple worship, the images, consecration, ritual etc. along with the rules and process of temple construction have been described in the *Āgamic* scriptures prior to *puranas* or other vedic literatures. So, Indian culture contains two parallel streams of tradition, vedic and

Āgamic , though independent but have influenced each other in course of time. Gradually Vedic tradition was not able to maintain its uniqueness, rather was mingled with me Āgamic philosophy, yaga and other rituals in such a way that at present, it is difficult to define the two traditions separately. As it is stead earlier, one, according to Āgama , should observe the Kriyapada and Caryapada with a complete knowledge of Jnana and Yogapada for the achievement of purusarthas- the Dharma, Artha, Kama, which, in Āgamic tradition, is known as ‘bhukti’ and gradually on the saturation of -bhogas, he attains the moksa by ascending to the state of complete detachment, the vairagya. This is the unique feature of Āgamic tradition.

Divine life

1. Religion, in Tantrāgama , has been defined as the superior power, either for attainment of divine life or for extinction of evils of the worldly life. The essence of religion consists in worshipping the image (Netra Tantra 2004).

Āgamic school may very well be said as the earliest source of the Kalpa and Vaidik schools of the process of worship. Soma- sambhu-paddhati and Kriyakarmadyotika of Aghora śivacharya (12th Century), the main texts followed for the temple ritual in South India, though with a little variation in present practice, are the compilation of Āgamic views.

Vidyapada of the Āgama s expound the concept of Pati (god), Pasu (soul) and Pāsa (bonds), their relationship and the nature and means of release from the bondage.

Pancakrtya

1. Supreme Reality is the omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient pure intelligence who is formless and undefinable. Through His dynamic power which is identically united with him, śiva manifests the creation and also performs the Pancakrtya (Bhatt 2008).

i.e. Sristy, Sthiti, Samhara, Tirodhana and Anughara. The concept of Pancakrtya is the unique feature of saivĀgama . The five-fold cosmic functions which is the prerogative of Lord (Pati), impiles the finitude of the fettered soul (Pasutva) and

the natural and spontaneous response of God towards the soul (Mṛgatrāgama Vidyāpāda 1928). Tirodhana and Anugraha are the two aspects of the one and the same Principle, the Cit-sakti of śiva that exposes Herself as the Iccha, Kriya and Jnana. Creation is a free phenomenalisation. It is by this dynamism only God could be conceived of as the agent of freedom (moksa). So, there can be no 'bhoga' and 'moksa' without the Divine will.

The soul, though eternally all pervading consciousness, being enveloped with the pasa, the bond, is named as pasu. Pasu gets the maturity through the experiences of life and at proper time the power of God reveals Itself and bestows the freedom from the bonds (anava, karma and maya) and the soul becomes one with śiva.

The cosmic creation consists of thirty six categories of realities, named tattvas- these are :

(1) Śiva (2) Bindu or Sadaśiva, (3) Isvara (the governer), (4) Suddavidya (pure knowledge), (5) Maya (illusion), (6) Kala (action), (7) Vidya (knowledge), (8) Raga (passion), (9) Kala (Time), (10) Niyati (regulation), (11) Purusa (cosmic man), (12) Prakrti or Avyakta (the non-manifested), (13) Guna (qualities), (14) Buddhi (intelligence), (15) Ahamkara (ego), (16) Manas (mind), (17) Srotra(ear), (18) Tvak (skin) (19) Netra (eyes), (20) Jihva (tongue), (21) Ghrana (nose), (22) Vak (speech), (23) Pani (hand), (24) Pada (feet), (25) Payu (anus), (26) Upasth (genitals) (27) Sabda (sound), (28) Sparsa (touch), (29) Rupa (form) (30) Rasa (taste), (31) Gandha (smell), (32) Ākasa (ether) (33) Vayu (air) (34) Agni (fire), (35) Apo (water), (36) Prthivi (earth).

Conclusion

Saivāgamas maintain that the realization of goal is the nature of knowledge (Suprabheda Āgama jñānapāda 1907).

Knowledge of the supreme (patijnana) is the integral intuition of the truth of existence which causes the freedom of the self from the grip of the mala and consequently the enjoyment of the bliss of śiva by being 'one with' and immersed in śiva. Though saivism, may very aptly be termed as the religion of knowledge but saivāgama s never discard the elements of bhakti, rather have mingled the

means of bhakti and karmawith jnana. The combined force of jnana, karma and bhakti develops and get fully matured by the onset of grace through the process of diksa. Bestowed by guru. The Tantrāgama s attach immense value to diksa for the attainment of spiritual goal. Through the grace of śiva is imparted by guru. So, guru processes the highest place in spiritual life. Particularly in Āgama -Tantra and the whole Indian culture in general.the enjoyment of the bliss of śiva is the end of life. Attainment of the nature of śiva by being immerced in him is the end of spiritual journey (Parākhyatantra vidāpāda 1966).

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