

Chapter Six Shakti and Shakta

Shakti who is in Herself pure blissful Consciousness (Cidrupini) is also the Mother of Nature and is Nature itself born of the creative play of Her thought. The Shakta faith, or worship of Shakti, is I believe, in some of its essential features one of the oldest and most wide-spread religions in the world. Though very ancient, it is yet, in its essentials, and in the developed form in which we know it to-day, harmonious with some of the teachings of modern philosophy and science; not that this is necessarily a test of its truth. It may be here noted that in the West, and in particular in America and England, a large number of books are now being published on "New Thought," "Will Power," "Vitalism," "Creative Thought," "Right Thought," "Self Unfoldment," "Secret of Achievement," "Mental Therapeutics" and the like, the principles of which are essentially those of some forms of Shakti Sadhana both higher and lower. There are books of disguised magic as how to control (Vashikarana) by making them buy what they do not want, how to secure "affection" and so forth which, notwithstanding some hypocrisies, are in certain respects on the same level as the Tantrik Shavara as a low class of books on magic are called. Shavara or Candala are amongst the lowest of men. The ancient and at the same time distinguishing character of the faith is instanced by temple worship (the old Vaidik worship was generally in the home or in the open by the river), the cult of images, of Linga and Yoni (neither of which, it is said, were part of the original Vaidik Practice), the worship of Devis and of the Magna Mater (the great Vaidik Devata was the male Indra) and other matters of both doctrine and practice.

Many years ago Edward Sellon, with the aid of a learned Orientalist of the Madras Civil Service, attempted to learn its mysteries, but for reasons, which I need not here discuss, did not view them from the right standpoint. He, however, compared the Shaktas with the Greek Telestia or Dynamica, the Mysteries of Dionysus "Fire born in the cave of initiation" with the Shakti Puja, the Shakti Shodhana with the purification shown in d'Hancarvilles' "Antique Greek Vases"; and after referring to the frequent mention of this ritual in the writings of the Jews and other ancient authors, concluded that it was evident that we had still surviving in India in the Shakta worship a very ancient, if not the most ancient, form of Mysticism in the whole world. Whatever be the value to be given to any particular piece of evidence, he was right in his general conclusion. For, when we throw our minds back upon the history of this worship we see stretching away into the remote and fading past the figure of the Mighty Mother of Nature, most ancient among the ancients; the Adya Shakti, the dusk Divinity, many breasted, crowned with towers whose veil is never lifted, Isis, "the one who is all that has been, is and will be," Kali, Hathor, Cybele, the Cowmother Goddess Ida, Tripurasundari, the Ionic Mother, Tef the spouse of Shu by whom He effects the birth of all things, Aphrodite, Astarte in whose groves the Baalim were set, Babylonian Mylitta, Buddhist Tara, the Mexican Ish, Hellenic Osia, the consecrated, the free and pure, African Salambo who like Parvati roamed the Mountains, Roman Juno, Egyptian Bast the flaming Mistress of Life, of Thought, of Love, whose festival was celebrated with wanton Joy, the Assyrian Mother Succoth Benoth, Northern Freia, Mulaprakriti, Semele, Maya, Ishtar, Saitic Neith Mother of the Gods, eternal deepest ground of all things, Kundali, Guhyamahabhairavi and all the rest.

And yet there are people who allege the "Tantrik" cult is modern. To deny this is not to say that there has been or will be no change or development in it. As man changes, so do the forms of his beliefs. An ancient feature of this faith and one belonging to the ancient Mysteries is the distinction which it draws between the initiate whose Shakti is awake (Prabuddha) and the Pashu the unilluminated or "animal," and, as the Gnostics called him, "material" man. The Natural, which is the manifestation of the Mother of Nature, and the Spiritual or the Mother as She is in and by Herself are one, but the initiate alone truly recognizes this unity. He knows himself in all his natural functions as the one Consciousness whether in enjoyment (Bhukti), or Liberation (Mukti). It is an essential principle of Tantrik Sadhana that man in general must rise through and by means of Nature, and not by an ascetic rejection of Her. A profoundly true principle is here involved whatever has been said of certain applications of it. When Orpheus transformed the old Bacchic cult, it was the purified who in the beautiful words of Euripides "went dancing over the hills with the daughters of Iacchos". I cannot, however, go into this matter in this paper which is concerned with some general subjects and the ordinary ritual. But the evidence is not limited to mysteries of the Shakti Puja. There are features in the ordinary outer worship which are very old and widespread, as are also other parts of the esoteric teaching. In this connection, a curious instance of the existence, beyond India, of Tantrik doctrine and practice is here given. The American Indian Maya Scripture of the Zunis called the Popul Vuh speaks of Hurakan or Lightning, that is (I am told) Kundalishakti; of the "air tube" or "Whitcord" or the Sushumna Nadi; of the "two-fold air tube" that is Ida and Pingala; and of various bodily centers which are marked by animal glyphs.

Perhaps the Pañcatattva Ritual followed by some of the adherents of the Tantras is one of the main causes which have operated in some quarters against acceptance of the authority of these Scriptures and as such responsible for the notion that the worship is modern. On the contrary, the usage of wine, meat, and so forth is itself very old. There are people who talk of these rites as though they were some entirely new and comparatively modern invention of the "Tantra," wholly alien to the spirit and practice of the early times. If the subject be studied it will, I think, be found that in this matter those worshippers who practice these rites are (except possibly as to Maithuna) the continuators of very ancient practices which had their counterparts in the earlier Vaidikacara, but were subsequently abandoned, possibly under the influence of Jainism and

Buddhism. I say "counterpart," for I do not mean to suggest that in every respect the rites were the same. In details and as regards, I think, some objects in view, they differed. Thus we find in this Pañcatattva Ritual a counterpart to the Vaidik usage of wine and animal food. As regards wine, we have the partaking of Soma; meat was offered in Mamsashtaka Shraddha; fish in the Ashtakashraddha and Pretashraddha; and Maithuna as a recognized rite will be found in the Vamadevya Vrata and Maravrata of universally recognized Vaidik texts, apart from the alleged, and generally unknown, Saubhagykanda of the Atharvaveda to which the Kalikopanishad and other "Tantrik" Upanishads are said to belong. Possibly, however, this element of Maithuna may be foreign and imported by Cinacara (see Ch. V). So again, as that distinguished scholar Professor Ramendra Sundara Trivedi has pointed out in his Vicitrprasanga, the Mudra of Pañcatattva corresponds with the Purodasa cake of the Soma and other Yagas. The present rule of abstinence from wine, and in some cases, meat is due, I believe, to the original Buddhism. It is so-called "Tantriks," who follow (in and for their ritual only) the earlier practice. It is true that the Samhita of Ushanah says, "Wine is not to be drunk, given or taken (Madyam apeyam adeyam agrahyam)" but the yet greater Manu states, "There is no wrong in the eating of meat or the drinking of wine (Na mamsabakshane dosho na madye)" though he rightly adds, as many now do, that abstention therefrom is productive of great fruit (Nivrittistu mahaphala). The Tantrik practice does not allow extra-ritual or "useless" drinking (Vrithapana).

Further, it is a common error to confound two distinct things, namely, belief and practice and the written records of it. These latter may be comparatively recent, whilst that of which they speak may be most ancient. When I speak of the ancient past of this faith I am not referring merely to the writings which exist today which are called Tantras. These are composed generally in a simple Sanskrit by men whose object it was to be understood rather than to show skill in literary ornament. This simplicity is a sign of age. But at the same time it is Laukika and not Arsha Sanskrit. Moreover, there are statements in them which (unless interpolations) fix the limits of their age. I am not speaking of the writings themselves but of what they say. The faith that they embody, or at least its earlier forms, may have existed for many ages before it was reduced to writing amongst the Kulas or family folk, who received it as handed down by tradition (Paramparyya) just as did the Vaidik Gotras. That such beliefs and practices, like all other things, have had their development in course of time is also a likely hypothesis.

A vast number of Tantras have disappeared probably for ever. Of those which survive a large number are unknown. Most of those which are available are of fragmentary character. Even if these did appear later than some other Shastras, this would not, on Indian principles, affect their authority. According to such principles the authority of a Scripture is not determined by its date; and this is sense. Why, it is asked, should something said 1,000 years ago be on that account only truer than what was said 100 years ago? It is held that whilst the teaching of the Agama is ever existent, particular Tantras are constantly being revealed and withdrawn. There is no objection against a Tantra merely because it was revealed to-day. When it is said that Shiva spoke the Tantras, or Brahma wrote the celebrated Vaishnava poem called the Brahmasamhita, it is not meant that Shiva and Brahma materialized and took a reed and wrote on birch bark or leaf, but that the Divine Consciousness to which men gave these and other names inspired a particular man to teach, or to write, a particular doctrine or work touching the eternally existing truth. This again does not mean that there was any one whispering in his ear, but that these things arose in his consciousness. What is done in this world is done through man. There is a profounder wisdom than is generally acknowledged in the saying "God helps those who help themselves". Inspiration too never ceases. But how, it may be asked, are we to know that what is said is right and true? The answer is "by its fruits." The authority of a Shastra is determined by the question whether Siddhi is gained through its provisions or not. It is not enough that "Shiva uvaca" (Shiva says) is writ in it. The test is that of Ayurveda. A medicine is a true one if it cures. The Indian test for everything is actual experience. It is from Samadhi that the ultimate proof of Advaitavada is sought. How is the existence of Kalpas known? It is said they have been remembered, as by the Buddha who is recorded as having called to mind 91 past Kalpas. There are arguments in favor of rebirth but that which is tendered as real proof is both the facts of ordinary daily experience which can, it is said, be explained only on the hypothesis of pre-existence; as also actual recollection by self-developed individuals of their previous lives. Modern Western methods operate through magnetic sleep producing "regression of memory". (See A. de Rochas Les Vies Successives and Lancelin La Uie Posthume.) Age, however, is not wholly without its uses: because one of the things to which men look to see in a Shastra is whether it has been accepted or quoted in works of recognized authority. Such a test of authenticity can, of course, only be afforded after the lapse of considerable time. But it does not follow that a statement is in fact without value because, owing to its having been made recently, it is not possible to subject it to such a test. This is the way in which this question of age and authority is looked at on Indian principles.

A wide survey of what is called orthodox "Hinduism" today (whatever be its origins) will disclose the following results: Vedanta in the sense of Upanishad as its common doctrinal basis, though variously interpreted, and a great number of differing disciplines or modes of practice by which the Vedanta doctrines are realized in actual fact. We must carefully distinguish these two. Thus the Vedanta says "So'ham"; which is Hamsha. "Hakara is one wing; Sakara is the other. When stripped of both wings She, Tara, is Kamakala." (Tantraraja Tantra.) The Acaras set forth the means by which "So'ham" is to be translated into actual fact for the particular Sadhaka. Sadhana comes from the root "Sadh" which means effort or striving or accomplishment. Effort for and towards what? The answer for those who desire it is liberation from every form in the hierarchy of forms, which exist as such, because consciousness has so limited itself as to obscure the Reality which it is, and which "So'ham" or "Shivo'ham" affirms. And why should man liberate himself from material forms? Because it is said, that

way only lasting happiness lies: though a passing, yet fruitful bliss may be had here by those who identify themselves with active Brahman (Shakti). It is the actual experience of this declaration of 'So'ham' which in its fundamental aspect is Veda: knowledge (Vid) or actual Spiritual Experience, for in the monistic sense to truly know anything is to be that thing. This Veda or experience is not to be had sitting down thinking vaguely on the Great Ether and doing nothing. Man must transform himself, that is, act in order to know. Therefore, the watchword of the Tantras is Kriya or action.

The next question is what Kriya should be adopted towards this end of Jñana. "Tanyate, vistaryate jñanam anena iti Tantram." According to this derivation of the word Tantra from the root "Tan" "to spread," it is defined as the Shastra, by which knowledge (Jñana) is spread. Mark the word Jñana. The end of the practical methods which these Shastras employ is to spread Vedantic Jñana. It is here we find that variety which is so puzzling to those who have not gone to the root of the religious life of India. The end is substantially one. The means to that end necessarily vary according to knowledge, capacity, and temperament. But here again we may analyze the means into two main divisions, namely, Vaidik and Tantrik, to which may be added a third or the mixed (Mishra). The one body of Hinduism reveals as it were, a double framework represented by the Vaidik and Tantrik Acaras, which have in certain instances been mingled.

The word "Tantra" by itself simply means as I have already said "treatise" and not necessarily a religious scripture. When it has the latter significance, it may mean the Scripture of several divisions of worshippers who vary in doctrine and practice. Thus there are Tantras of Salvias, Vaishnavas, and Shaktas and of various sub-divisions of these. So amongst the Salvias there are the Salvias of the Shaiva Siddhanta, the Advaita Shaiva of the Kashmir School, Pashupatas and a multitude of other sects which have their Tantras. If "Tantric" be used as meaning an adherent of the Tantra Shastra, then the word, in any particular case, is without definite meaning. A man to whom the application is given may be a worshipper of any of the Five Devatas (Surya, Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti) and of any of the various Sampradayas worshipping that Devata with varying doctrine and practice. The term is a confusing one, though common practice compels its use. So far as I know, those who are named, "Tantrics" do not themselves generally use this term but call themselves Shaktas, Salvias and the like, of whatever Sampradaya they happen to be.

Again Tantra is the name of only one class of Scripture followed by "Tantrics". There are others, namely, Nigamas, Agamas, Yamalas, Damaras, Uddishas, Kakshaputas and so forth. None of these names are used to describe the adherents of these Shastras except, so far as I am aware, Agama in the use of the term Agamavadin, and Agamanta in the descriptive name of Agamanta Shaiva. I give later a list of these Scriptures as contained in the various Agamas. If we summarize them shortly under the term Tantra Shastra, or preferably Agama, then we have four main classes of Indian Scripture, namely, Veda (Samhita, Brahmana, Upanishad), Agama or Tantra Shastra, Purana, Smriti. Of these Shastras the authority of the Agama or Tantra Shastra has been denied in modern times. This view may be shown to be erroneous by reference to Shastras of admitted authority. It is spoken of as the Fifth Veda. Kulluka Bhatta, the celebrated commentator on Manu, says: "Shruti is twofold, Vaidik and Tantrik (Vaidiki tantriki caiva dvividha srutih lurtita)". This refers to the Mantra portion of the Agamas. In the Great Vaishnava Shastra, the Srimad Bhagavata, Bhagavan says: "My worship is of the three kinds -- Vaidik, Tantrik and Mixed (Mishra)" and that, in Kaliyuga, "Keshava is to be worshipped according to the injunction of Tantra." The Devibhagavata speaks of the Tantra Shastra as a Vedanga. It is cited as authority in the Ashtavimshati Tattva of Raghunandana who prescribes for the worship of Durga as before him had done Shridatta, Harinatha, Vidyadhara and many others. Some of these and other references are given in Mahamahopadhyaya Yadaveshvara Tarkaratna's Tantrer Pracinatva in the Sahitpa Samhita of Aswin 1317. The Tarapradipa and other Tantrik works say that in the Kali-yuga the Tantrika and not the Vaidika Dharma is to be followed. This objection about the late character and therefore unauthoritativeness of the Tantra Shastras generally (I do not speak of any particular form of it) has been taken by Indians from their European Gurus.

According to the Shakta Scriptures, Veda in its wide sense does not only mean Rig, Yajus, Sama, Atharva as now published but comprises these together with the generally unknown and unpublished Uttara Kanda of the Atharva Veda, called Saubhagya, with the Upanishads attached to this. Sayana's Commentary is written on the Purva Kanda. These are said (though I have not yet verified the fact) to be 64 in number. Some of these, such as Advaitabhava, Kaula, Kalika, Tripura, Tara, Aruna Upanishads and Bahvricopanishad, Bhavanopanishad, I have published as the XI volume of Tantrik "texts. Aruna means "She who is red". Redness (Lauhityam) is Vimarsha. (See Vol. XI, Tantrik Texts. Ed. A. Avalon.) I may also here refer my reader to the Kaulacarya Satyananda's Commentary on the great Isha Upanishad. Included also in "Veda" (according to the same view) are the Nigamas, Agamas, Yamalas and Tantras. From these all other Shastras which explain the meaning (Artha) of Veda such as Purana and Smriti, also Itihasa and so forth are derived. All these Shastras constitute what is called a "Many millioned" (Shatakoti) Samhita which are developed, the one from the other as it were an unfolding series. In the Tantrik Sangraha called Sarvollasa by the Sarvavidyasiddha Sarvanandanatha the latter cites authority (Narayani Tantra) to show that from Nigama came Agama. Here I pause to note that the Sammohana says that Kerala Sampradaya is Dakshina and follows Veda (Vedamargastha), whilst Gauda (to which Sarvanandanatha belonged) is Vama and follows Nigama. Hence apparently the pre-eminence given to Nigama. He then says from Agama came Yamala, from Yamala the four Vedas, from Vedas the Puranas, from Puranas Smriti, and from Smriti all other Shastras. There are, he says, five Nigamas and 64 Agamas. Four Yamalas are mentioned, which are said to give the gross form (Sthularupa). As some

may be surprised to learn that the four Vedas came from the Yamalas (i.e. were Antargata of the Yamalas) which literally means what is uniting or comprehensive, I subjoin the Sanskrit verse from Narayani Tantra.

Brahmayamalasambhutam samaveda-matam shive

Rudrayamalasamjata rigvedo paramo mahan

Vishnuyamalasambhuto yajurvedah kuleshvari

Shaktiyamalasambhutam atharva paramam mahat.

Some Tantras are called by opposing sects Vedavirud-dhani (opposed to Veda), which of course those who accept them deny, just as the Commentary of the Nityashodashikarnava speaks of the Pañcaratrin as Vedabhrashta. That some sects were originally Avaidika is probable, but in process of time various amalgamations of scriptural authority, belief and practice took place.

Whether we accept or not this theory, according to which the Agamas and kindred Shastras are given authority with the four Vedas we have to accept the facts. What are these?

As I have said, on examination the one body of Hinduism reveals as it were a double framework. I am now looking at the matter from an outside point of view which is not that of the Shakta worshipper. We find on the one hand the four Vedas with their Samhitas, Brahmanas, and Upanishads and on the other what has been called the "Fifth Veda," that is Nigama, Agama and kindred Shastras and certain especially "Tantrik" Upanishads attached to the Saubhagya Kanda of the Atharvaveda. There are Vaidik and Tantrik Kalpa Sutras and Suktas such as the Tantrika Devi and Matsya Suktas. As a counterpart of the Brahma-sutras, we have the Shakti Sutras of Agastya. Then there is both Vaidik and "Tantrik" ritual such as (the ten Vaidik Samskaras and the Tantrik Samskaras, such as Abhisheka; Vaidik and Tantrik initiation (Upanayana and Diksha); Vaidik and Tantrik Gayatri; the Vaidik Om, the so-called "Tantrik" Bijas such as Hring; Vaidika Guru and Deshika Guru and so forth. This dualism may be found carried into other matters as well, such as medicine, law, writing. So, whilst the Vaidik Ayurveda employed generally vegetable drugs, the "Tantriks" used metallic substances. A counterpart of the Vaidika Dharmapatni was the Shaiva wife; that is, she who is given by desire (Kama). I have already pointed out the counterparts of the Pañcatattva in the Vedas. Some allege a special form of Tantrik script at any rate in Gauda Desha and so forth.

What is the meaning of all this? It is not at present possible to give a certain answer. The subject has been so neglected and is so little known. Before tendering any conclusions with any certainty of their correctness, we must examine the Tantrik Texts which time has spared. It will be readily perceived, however, that if there be such a double frame as I suggest, it indicates that there were originally two sources of religion one of which (possibly in some respects the older) incorporated parts of, and in time largely superseded the other. And this is what the "Tantriks" impliedly allege in their views as to the relation of the four Vedas and Agamas. If they are not both of authority, why should such reverence be given to the Deshika Gurus and to Tantrik Diksha?

Probably, there were many Avaidika cults, not without a deep and ancient wisdom of their own, that is, cults outside the Vaidik religion (Vedabahya) which in the course of time adopted certain Vaidik rites such as Homa: the Vaidikas, in their own turn, taking up some of the Avaidika practices. It may be that some Brahmanas joined these so-called Anarya Sampradayas just as we find to-day Brahmanas officiating for low castes and being called by their name. At length the Shastras of the two cults were given at least equal authority. The Vaidik practice then largely disappeared, surviving chiefly both in the Smarta rites of to-day and as embedded in the ritual of the Agamas. These are speculations to which I do not definitely commit myself. They are merely suggestions which may be worth consideration when search is made for the origin of the Agamas. If they be correct, then in this, as in other cases, the beliefs and practices of the Soil have been upheld until to-day against the incoming cults of those "Aryas" who followed the Vaidik rites and who in their turn influenced the various religious communities without the Vaidik fold.

The Smartas of to-day represent what is generally called the Srauta side, though in these rites there are mingled many Pauranic ingredients. The Arya Samaja is another present-day representative of the old Vaidika Acara, mingled as it seems to me with a modernism, which is puritan and otherwise. The other, or Tantrik side, is represented by the general body of present-day Hinduism, and in particular by the various sectarian divisions of Salvias, Shaktas, Vaishnavas and so forth which go to its making.

Each sect of worshippers has its own Tantras. In a previous chapter I have shortly referred to the Tantras of the

Shaivasiddhanta, of the Pañcaratra Agama, and of the Northern Saivism of which the Malinivijaya Tantra sets the type. The old fivefold division of worshippers was, according to the Pañcopasana, Saura, Ganapatya, Vaishnava, Shaiva, and Shakta whose Mula Devatas were Surya, Ganapati, Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti respectively. At the present time the three-fold division, Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta, is of more practical importance, as the other two survive only to a limited extent to-day. In parts of Western India the worship of Ganesha is still popular and I believe some Sauras or traces of Sauras here and there exist, especially in Sind.

Six Amnyas are mentioned in the Tantras. (Shadamnyah). These are the six Faces of Shiva, looking East (Purvamnaya), South (Dakshinamnaya), West (Pashcim amnaya), North (Uttaramnaya), Upper (Urddhvamnaya), Lower and concealed (Adhamnaya). The six Amnyas are thus so called according to the order of their origin. They are thus described in the Devyagama cited in the Tantrarahasya (see also, with some variation probably due to corrupt text, Patala II of Samayacara Tantra): "(1) The face in the East (that is in front) is of pearl-like luster with three eyes and crowned by the crescent moon. By this face I (Shiva) revealed (the Devis) Shri Bhuvaneshvari, Tripura, Lalita, Padma, Shulini, Sarasvati, Tvarita, Nitya, Vajraprastarim, Annapurna, Mahalakshmi, Lakshmi, Vagvadini with all their rites and Mantras. (2) The Southern face is of a yellow color with three eyes. By this face I revealed Prasadasadashiva, Mahaprasadamanttra, Dakshinamurti, Vatuka, Mañjughosha, Bhairava, Mritasanjivanividya, Mrityunjaya with their rites and Mantras. (3) The face in the West (that is at the back) is of the color of a freshly formed cloud. By this face I revealed Gopala, Krishna, Narayana, Vasudeva, Nrishimha, Vamana, Varaha, Ramacandra, Vishnu, Harihara, Ganesha, Agni, Yama, Surya, Vidhu (Candra) and other planets, Garuda, Dikpalas, Hanuman and other Suras, their rites and Mantras. (4) The face in the North is blue in color and with three eyes. By this face, I revealed the Devis, Dakshinakalika, Mahakali, Guhyakah, Smashanakalika, Bhadrakali, Ekajata, Ugratara, Taritni, Katyayani, Chhinnamasta, Nilasarasvati, Durga, Jayadurga, Navadurga, Vashuli, Dhumavati, Vishalakshi, Gauri, Bagalamukhi, Pratyangira, Matangi, Mahishamardini, their rites and Mantras. (5) The Upper face is white. By this face I revealed Shrimattripurasundari, Tripureshi, Bhairavi, Tripurabhairavi, Smashanabhairavi, Bhuvaneshibhairavi, Shatkutabhairavi, Annapurnabhairavi, Pañcami, Shodashi, Malini, Valavala, with their rites and Mantras. (6) The sixth face (Below) is lustrous of many colors and concealed. It is by this mouth that I spoke of Devatasthana, Asana, Yantra, Mala, Naivedya, Balidana, Sadhana, Purashcarana, Mantrasiddhi. It is called "Ishanamnaya." The Samayacara Tantra (Ch. 2) says that whilst the first four Amnyas are for the Caturvarga or Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, the upper (Urddhvamnaya) and lower (Adhamnaya) are for liberation only. The Sammohana Tantra (Ch. V) first explains Purvamnaya, Dakshinamnaya, Pashcimamnaya, Uttaramnaya, Urdhvamnaya according to what is called Deshaparyaya. I am informed that no Puja of Adhamnaya is generally done but that Shadanvaya Shambhavas, very high Sadhakas, at the door of Liberation do Nyasa with this sixth concealed Face. It is said that Patala Amnaya is Sam-bhogayoga. The Nishkala aspect in Shaktikrama is for Purva, Tripura; for Dakshina, Saura, Ganapatya and Vaishnava; for Pashcima, Raudra, Bhairava; for Uttara, Ugra, Apattarini. In Shaivakarma the same aspect is for the first, Sampatprada and Mahesha; for the second, Aghora, Kalika and Vaishnava darshana; for the third, Raudra, Bhairava, Shaiva; for the fourth, Kubera, Bhairava, Saudrashaka; and for Urddhvamnaya, Ardhanarisha and Pranava. Niruttara Tantra says that the first two Amnyas contain rites for the Pashu Sadhaka (see as to the meaning of this and the other classes of Sadhakas, the Chapter on Pañcatattva ritual Purvamnyoditam karma Pashavam kathitam priye, and so with the next). The third or Pashcimamnaya is a combination of Pashu and Vira (Pashcimamnayajam karma Pashu-virasamashritam). Uttaramnaya is for Vira and Divya (Uttaramnyajam karma divya-virashritam priye). The upper Amnaya is for the Divya (Urdhvamnayoditam karma divyabhavashritam priye). It adds that even the Divya does Sadhana in the cremation ground in Virabhava (that is, heroic frame: of mind and disposition) but he does such worship without Virasana. The Sammohana also gives a classification of Tantras according to the Amnyas as also special classifications, such as the Tantras of the six Amnyas according to Vatukamnaya. As only one Text of the Sammohana is available whilst I write, it is not possible to speak with certainty of accuracy as regards all these details.

Each of these divisions of worshippers have their own Tantras, as also had the Jainas and Bauddhas. Different sects had their own particular subdivisions and Tantras of which there are various classifications according to Krantas, Deshaparyaya, Kalaparyaya and so forth.

The Sammohana Tantra mentions 22 different Agamas including Cinagama (a Shakta form), Pashupata (a Shaiva form), Pañcaratra (a Vaishnava form), Kapalika, Bhairava, Aghora, Jaina, Bauddha; each of which is said there to contain a certain number of Tantras and Upatantras.

According to the Sammohana Tantra, the Tantras according to Kalaparyaya are the 64 Shakta Tantras, with 327 Upatantras, 8 Yamalas, 4 Damaras, 2 Kalpalatas and several Samhitas, Cudamanis (100) Arnavas, Puranas, Upavedas, Kakshaputas, Vimarshini and Cintamanis. The Shaiva class contains 32 Tantras with its own Yamalas, Damaras and so forth. The Vaishnava class contains 75 Tantras with the same, including Kalpas and other Shastras. The Saura class has Tantras with its own Yamalas, Uddishas and other works. And the Ganapatya class contains 30 Tantras with Upatantras, Kalpas and other Shastras, including one Damara and one Yamala. The Bauddha class contains Kalpadrumas, Kamadhenus, Suktas, Kramas, Ambaras, Puranas and other Shastras.

According to the Kularnava and Jñanadipa Tantras there are seven Acaras of which the first four, Veda, Vaishnava, Shaiva and Dakshina belong to Pashvacara; then comes Vama, followed by Siddhanta, in which gradual approach is made to Kaulacara the reputed highest. Elsewhere six and nine Acaras are spoken of and different kinds of Bhavas, Sabhava, Vibhava and Dehabhava and so forth which are referred to in Bhavacudamani.

An account of the Acaras is given in the Haratattvadidhiti [pp. 339-342. See in particular Vishvasara Tantra (Ch. 24) and Nitya Tantra and Pranatoshini. The first is the best account].

Vedacara is the lowest and Kaulacara the highest. (Kularnava Tantra II). Their characteristics are given in the 24th Patala of Vishvasara Tantra. The first four belong to Pashvacara (see Chapter on Shakta Sadhana) and the last three are for Vira and Divya Sadhakas. Summarizing the points of the Vishvasara: a Sadhaka in Vedacara should carry out the prescriptions of the Veda, should not cohabit with his wife except in the period following the courses. He should not eat fish and meat on the Parva days. He should not worship the Deva at night. In Vaishnavacara he follows injunctions (Niyama) of Vedacara. He must give up eating of flesh (Nitya Tantra says he must not kill animals), avoid sexual intercourse and even the talk of it. This doubtless means a negation of the Vira ritual. He should worship Vishnu. This Acara is distinguished from the last by the great endurance of Tapas and the contemplation of the Supreme everywhere. In Shaivacara, Vedacara is prescribed with this difference that there must be no slaughter of animals and meditation is on Shiva. Dakshinacara is said to have been practiced by Rishi Dakshinamurti and is therefore so called. This Acara is preparatory for the Vira and Divya Bhavas. Meditation is on the Supreme Ishvari after taking Vijaya (Hemp). Japa of Mantra is done at night. Siddhi is attained by using a rosary of human bone (Mahshankha) at certain places including a Shaktipitha. Vamacara is approved for Viras and Divyas. One should be continent (Brahmacari) at day and worship with the Pañcatattva at night. ("Pañcatattvakramenaiva ratrau devam prapujayet"). The statement of Nitya (Pañcatattvanukalpena ratrau devam prapujayet) is, if correctly reported, I think incorrect. This is Vira Sadhana and the Vira should generally only use substitutes when the real Tattvas cannot be found. Cakra worship is done. Siddhi is destroyed by revelation thereof; therefore the Vama path is hidden. The Siddhantacari is superior to the last by his knowledge "hidden in the Vedas, Shastras and Puranas like fire in wood, by his freedom from fear of the Pashu, by his adherence to the truth, and by his open performance of the Pañcatattva ritual. Open and frank, he cares not what is said." He offers the Pancatattvas openly. Then follows a notable passage. "Just as it is not blameable to drink openly in the Sautramani Yajña (Vaidik rite), so in Siddhantacara wine is drunk openly. As it is not blameable to kill horses in the Ashvamedha Yajña (Vaidik rite), so no offense is committed in killing animals in this Dharma." Nitya Tantra says that an article, be it pure or impure, becomes pure by purification. Holding a cup made of human skull, and wearing the Rudraksha, the Siddhantacari moves on earth in the form of Bhairava Himself. The knowledge of the last Acara, that of the Kaula, makes one Shiva. Just as the footprint of every animal disappears in that of the elephant, so every Dharma is lost in the greatness of Kuladharmas. Here there are no injunctions or prohibitions, no restriction as to time or place, in fact no rule at all. A Kaula is himself Guru and Sadashiva and none are superior to him. Kaulas are of three classes, inferior (the ordinary or Prakrita Kaula), who is ever engaged in ritual such as Japa, Homa, Puja, follows Viracara (with Pañcatattva) and strives to attain the highland of knowledge; middling is the Kaula who does Sadhana with Pañcatattva, is deeply immersed in meditation (Dhyana) and Samadhi; superior, the Kaula who "Oh Mistress of the Kaulas sees the imperishable, and all-pervading Self in all things and all things in the Self." He is a good Kaula who makes no distinction between mud and sandalpaste, gold and straw, a home and the cremation ground. He is a superior Kaula who meditates on the Self with the self, who has equal regard for all, who is full of contentment, forgiveness and compassion. Nitya Tantra (Patala III) says that Kaulas move about in various shapes, now as an ordinary man of the world adhering to social rules (Shishta), at other times as one who has fallen therefrom (Bhrashta). At other times, he seems to be as weird and unearthly as a ghost (Bhuta). Kaulacara is, it says, the essence which is obtained from the ocean of Veda and Agama after churning it with the staff of knowledge.

In a modern account of the Acaras (see Sanatana -- sadhana-Tattva or Tantra-rahashya by Saccidananda Svami) it is said that some speak of Aghoracara and Yogacara as two further divisions between the last but one and last. However this may be, the Aghoras of to-day are a separate sect who, it is alleged, have degenerated into mere eaters of corpses, though Aghora is said to only mean one who is liberated from the terrible (Ghora) Samsara. In Yogacara was learnt the upper heights of Sadhana and the mysteries of Yoga such as the movements of the Vayu in the bodily microcosm (Kshudravrahmanda), the regulation of which controls the inclinations and propensities (Vritti), Yogacara is entered by Yoga-diksha and achievement in Ashtangayoga qualifies for Kaulacara. Whether there were such further divisions I cannot at present say. I prefer for the time being to follow the Kularnava. The Svami's account of these is as follows: Vedacara which consists in the daily practice of the Vaidik rites (with, I may add, some Tantrik observances) is the gross body (Sthula-deha) which comprises within it all the other Acaras, which are as it were its subtle body (Sukshma-deha) of various degrees. The worship is largely of an external character, the object of which is to strengthen Dharma. This is the path of action (Kriyamarga). This and some other observations may be a modern reading of the old facts but are on the whole, I think, justified. The second stage of Vaishnavacara is the path of devotion (Bhaktimarga) and the aim is union of devotion with faith previously acquired. The worshipper passes from blind faith to an understanding of the supreme protecting Energy of the Brahman, towards which his devotion goes forth. With an increasing determination to uphold Dharma and to destroy Adharma, the Sadhaka passes into

the third stage or Shaivacara which the author cited calls the militant (Kshattriya) stage, wherein to love and mercy are added strenuous striving and the cultivation of power. There is union of faith, devotion, and inward determination (Antarlaksha). Entrance is here made upon the path of knowledge (Jñanamarga). Following this is the fourth stage or Dakshinacara, which originally and in Tantra Shastra does not mean "right-hand worship" but according to the author cited is the Acara "favorable" to the accomplishment of the higher Sadhana of which Dakshina-Kalika is Devi. (The Vishvasara already cited derives the word from Dakshinamurthi muni, but Dakshina in either case has the same meaning. Dakshinakali is a Devi of Uttaramnaya and approach is here made to Vira rituals.) This stage commences when the worshipper can make Dhyana and Dharana of the threefold Shakti of the Brahman (Iccha, Kriya, Jñana) and understands the mutual connection of the three and of their expression as the Gunas, and until he receives the rite of initiation called Purnabhisheka. At this stage the Sadhaka is Shakta and qualified for the worship of the threefold Shakti of Brahman (Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshvara). He worships the Adya-Shakti as Dakshina-Kalika in whom are united the three Shaktis. The aim of this stage is the union of faith, devotion, and determination with a knowledge of the threefold energies. (Passage is thus made from the Deva-aspect to the Deva-whole.) Up to this stage the Sadhaka has followed Pravritti Marga, or the outgoing path, the path of worldly enjoyment, albeit curbed by Dharma. The Sadhaka now, upon the exhaustion of the forces of the outward current, makes entry on the path of return (Nivritti-Marga). As this change is one of primary importance, some have divided the Acaras into the two broad divisions of Dakshinacara (including the first four) and Vamacara (including the last three). Strictly, however, the first three can only be thus included in the sense that they are preparatory to Dakshinacara proper and are all in the Pravritti Marga and are not Vamacara. It is thus said that men are born into Dakshinacara but are received by initiation into Vamacara. As Dakshinacara does not mean "right-hand worship" so Vamacara does not mean, as is vulgarly supposed, "left-hand worship". "Left-hand" in English has a bad sense and it is not sense to suppose that the Shastra, which prescribes this Acara, itself gives it a bad name. Vama is variously interpreted. Some say it is the worship in which woman (Vama) enters, that is Lata-sadhana. Vama, this author says, means "adverse" that is the stage adverse to the Pravritti, which governs in varying degrees the previous Acaras. For, entry is here made on the Nivritti path of return to the Source of outgoing. (In this Acara also there is worship of the Vama Devi.) In Vamacara the Sadhaka commences to directly destroy Pravritti and, with the help of the Guru, to cultivate Nivritti. The help of the Guru throughout is necessary. It is comparatively easy to lay down rules for the Pravritti Marga but nothing can be achieved in Vama-cara without the Guru's help. Some of the disciplines are admittedly dangerous and, if entered upon without authority and discretion, will probably lead to abuse. The method of the Guru at this stage is to use the forces of Pravritti in such a way as to render them self-destructive. The passions which bind (notably the fundamental instincts for food, drink, and sexual satisfaction) may be it is said so employed as to act as forces whereby the particular life, of which they are the strongest physical manifestation, is raised to the universal life. Passion which has hitherto run downward and outwards (often to waste) is directed inwards and upwards and transformed to power. But it is not only the lower physical desires of eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse which must be subjugated. The Sadhaka must at this stage commence (the process continues until the fruit of Kaulacara is obtained) to cut off all the eight bonds (Pasha) which have made him a Pashu, for up to and including Dakshinacara is Pashu worship. These Pasha, bonds or "afflictions", are variously enumerated but the more numerous classifications are merely elaborations of the smaller divisions. Thus, according to the Devi-Bhagavata, Moha is ignorance or bewilderment, and Mahamoha is the desire for worldly pleasure which flows from it. The Kularnava Tantra mentions eight primary bonds, Daya (that is pity as the feeling which binds as opposed to divine compassion or Karuna), Moha (ignorance), Lajja (shame, which does not mean that a man is to be a shameless sinner but weak worldly shame of being looked down upon, of infringing conventions and so forth), Family (Kula, which ceases to be a tie), Shila (here usage, convention) and Varna (caste; for the enlightened is beyond all its distinctions). When, to take the Svami's example, Shri Krishna stole the clothes of the bathing Gopis or milkmaids and cowherds and made them approach Him naked, He removed the artificial coverings which are imposed on man in the Samsara. The Gopis were eight, as are the Bonds, and the errors by which the Jiva is misled are the clothes which Krishna stole. Freed of these the Jiva is liberated from all bonds arising from his desires, family and society. Formerly it was sufficient to live in worldly fashion according to the morality governing life in the world. Now the Sadhaka must go further and transcend the world, or rather seek to do so. He rises by those things which are commonly the cause of fall. When he has completely achieved his purpose and liberated himself from all bonds, he reaches the stage of Shiva (Shivatva). It is the aim of the Nivritti Sadhana to liberate man from the bonds which bind him to the Samsara, and to qualify the Vira Sadhaka, through Rajasika Upasana (see Chapter on Pañcatattva) of the highest grades of Sadhana in which the Sattvika Guna predominates. He is then Divya or divine. To the truly Sattvik, there is neither attachment, fear nor disgust (Ghrina). What is thus commenced in Vamacara, is gradually completed by the rituals of Siddhantacara and Kaulacara. In the last three Acaras the Sadhaka becomes more and more freed from the darkness of Samsara and is attached to nothing, hates nothing, is ashamed of nothing (really shameful acts being ex hypothesi below his acquired stage), and has freed himself of the artificial bonds of family, caste, and society. He becomes an Avadhuta, that is, one who has "washed off" everything and has relinquished the world. Of these, as stated later, there are several classes. For him there is no rule of time or place. He becomes, like Shiva himself, a dweller in the cremation ground (Smashana). He attains Brahmajñana or the Gnosis in perfect form. On receiving Mahapurnadiksha, he performs his own funeral rites and is dead to the Samsara. Seated alone in some quiet place, he remains in constant Samadhi (ecstasy), and attains it in its highest or Nirvikalpa form. The Great Mother, the Supreme Prakriti, Mahashakti dwells in his heart which is now the inner cremation ground wherein all passions have been burnt away. He becomes a Paramahansa who is liberated whilst yet living (Jivanmukta).

From the above it will be seen that the Acaras are not various sects in the European sense, but stages in a continuous process through which the Sadhaka must pass before he reaches the supreme state of the highest Kaula (for the Kaulas are of differing degrees). Passing from the gross outer body of Vedacara, he learns its innermost core of doctrine, not expressed but latent in it. These stages need not be and are not ordinarily passed through by each Jiva in the course of a single life. On the contrary they are as a rule traversed in the course of a multitude of births, in which case the weaving of the spiritual garment is recommenced where, in a previous birth, it was dropped on death. In one life the Sadhaka may commence at any stage. If he is a true Kaula now it is because in previous births he has by Sadhana in the preliminary stages won his entrance into it. Knowledge of Shakti is, as the Niruttara Tantra says, acquired after many births; and according to the Mahanirvana Tantra it is by merit acquired in previous births that the mind is inclined to Kaulacara.

Kauladharmā is in no wise sectarian but on the contrary claims to be the head of all sects. It is said "at heart a Shakta, outwardly a Shaiva, in gatherings a Vaishnava (who are wont to gather together for worship in praise of Hari) in thus many a guise the Kaulas wander on earth."

Antah-shaktah bahih-shaivah sabhayam vaishnava matah

Nana-rupadharah Kaulah vicaranti mahitale.

The saying has been said to be an expression of this claim which is I think involved in it. It does however also I think indicate secrecy, and adaptability to sectarian form, of him who has pierced to the core of that which all sects in varying, though partial, ways present. A Kaula is one who has passed through these and other stages, which have as their own inmost doctrine (whether these worshippers know it or not) that of Kaulacara. It is indifferent what the Kaula's apparent sect may be. The form is nothing and everything. It is nothing in the sense that it has no power to narrow the Kaula's inner life. It is everything in the sense that knowledge may infuse its apparent limitations with an universal meaning. A man may thus live in all sects, without their form being ever to him a bond.

In Vaidik times there were four Ashramas, that is, states and stages in the life of the Arya, namely (in their order) that of the chaste student (Brahmacarya), secular life as a married house-holder (Grihastha), the life of the forest recluse with his wife in retirement from the world (Vanaprastha), lastly that of the beggar (Bhikshu or Avadhuta), wholly detached from the world, spending his time in meditation on the Supreme Brahman in preparation for shortly coming death. All these four were for the Brahmana caste, the first three for the Kshatriya, the first two for the Vaishya and for the Shudra the second only (Yogayajñavalkya, Ch. I). As neither the conditions of life nor the character, capacity and powers of the people of this age allow of the first and third Ashrama, the Mahanirvana Tantra states (VIII. 8) that in the Kali age there are only two Ashramas, namely, the second and last, and these are open to all castes indiscriminately (ib. 12). The same Tantra (XIV. 141 et seq.) speaks of four classes of Kulayogis or Avadhutas namely the Shaivavadhuta and Brahmavadhuta, which are of two kinds, imperfect (Aurna) and perfect (Purna). The first three have enjoyment and practice Yoga. The fourth or Paramahansa should be absolutely chaste and should not touch metal. He is beyond all household duties and caste, and ritual, such as the offering of food and drink to Devata. The Bhairavadamara classes the Avadhuta into (a) Kulavadhuta, (b) Shaivavadhuta, (c) Brahmavadhuta, (d) Hamsavadhuta. Some speak of three divisions of each of the classes Shaivavadhuta and Brahmavadhuta (see pp. 32-33 of Introduction to Tantra Shastra). The Shaivavadhutas are not, either, from a Western or Shastric standpoint, as high as the Brahmavadhuta. The lowest of the last class can have intercourse only with the own wife (Shvakiya Shakti as opposed to the Shaiva Shakti); the middling has ordinarily nothing to do with any Shakti, and the highest must under no circumstance touch a woman or metal, nor does he practice any rites or keep any observances.

The main divisions here are Vedacara, Dakshinacara and Vamacara. Vedacara is not Vaidikacara, that is, in the Srouta sense, for the Srouta Vaidikacara appears to be outside this sevenfold Tantrik division of which Vedacara is the Tantrik counterpart. For it is Tantrik Upasana with Vaidik rites and mantras, with (I have been told) Agni as Devata. As a speculation we may suggest that this Acara was for those not Adhikari for what is called the Srouta Vaidikacara. The second and third belong and lead up to the completed Dakshinacara. This is Pashvacara. Vama-cara commences the other mode of worship, leading up to the completed Kaula, the Kaulavadhuta, Avadhuta, and Divya. Here, with the attainment of Brahmajñana, we reach the region which is beyond all Acaras which is known as Sveccacara. All that those belonging to this state do or touch is pure. In and after Vamacara there is eating and drinking in, and as part of, worship and Maithuna. After the Pashu there is the Vira and then the Divya. Pashu is the starting point, Vira is on the way and Divya is the goal. Each of the sects has a Dakshina and Vama division. It is commonly thought that this is peculiar to Shaktas: but this is not so. Thus there are Vama, Ganapatyas and Vaishnavas and so forth. Again Vamacara is itself divided again into a right and left side. In the former wine is taken in a cup of stone or other substance, and worship is with the Svakiya-Shakti or Sadhaka's own wife; in the latter and more advanced stage drinking is done from a skull and worship may be with Parastri, that is, some other Shakti. In the case however of some sects which belong to the Vama-cara division, whilst there is meat and wine, there is, I am told, no Shakti for the members are chaste (Brahmacari). So far as I can ascertain these sects which are mentioned later seem to belong to the Shaiva as opposed to the Shakta group.

The Tantrik Samgraha called Shaktanandatarangini by Brahmananda Svami says (Ch. 2) that Agama is both Sadagama and Asadagama and that the former alone is Agama according to the primary meaning of the word (Sadagama eva agamashabdasya mukhyatvat). He then says that Shiva in the Agama Samhita condemns the Asadagama saying "Oh Deveshi, men in the Kali age are generally of a Rajasik and Tamasik disposition and being addicted to forbidden ways deceive many others. Oh Sureshvari, those who in disregard of their Varnashrama Dharma offer to us flesh, blood and wine become Bhutas, Pretas, and Brahmarakshasas," that is, various forms of evil spirits. This prohibits such worship as is opposed to Varnashramadharmas. It is said, however, by the Vamacaris, who take consecrated wine and flesh as a Yajña, not to cover their case.

It is not uncommonly thought that Vamacara is that Acara into which Vama or woman enters. This is true only to a certain extent: that is, it is a true definition of those Sadhakas who do worship with Shakti according to Vamacara rites. But it seems to be incorrect, in so far as there are, I am told, worshippers of the Vamacara division who are chaste (Brahmacari). Vamacara means literally "left" way, not "left-handed" in the English sense which means what is bad. As the name is given to these Sadhakas by themselves it is not likely that they would adopt a title which condemns them. What they mean is that this Acara is the opposite of Dakshinacara. Philosophically it is more monistic. It is said that even in the highest Siddhi of a Dakshinacari "there is always some One above him"; but the fruit of Vamacara and its subsequent and highest stages is that the Sadhaka "becomes the Emperor Himself". The Bhava differs, and the power of its method compared with Dakshinacara is said to be that between milk and wine.

Moreover it is to be noted that the Devi whom they worship is on the left of Shiva. In Vamacara we find Kapalikas, Kalamukhas, Pashupatas, Bhandikeras, Digambaras, Aghoras, followers of Cinacara and Kaulas generally who are initiated. In some cases, as in that of the advanced division of Kaulas, worship is with all five Tattvas (Pañcatattvas). In some cases there is Brahmacarya as in the case of Aghora and Pashupata, though these drink wine and eat flesh food. Some Vamacaris, I am informed, never cease to be chaste (Brahmacari), such as Oghada Sadhus worshippers of Batuka Bhairava, Kanthadhari and followers of Gorakshanatha, Sitanatha and Matsyendranatha. In Nilakrama there is no Maithuna. In some sects there are differing practices. Thus, I am told, amongst the Kalamukhas, the Kalaviras only worship Kumaris up to the age of nine, whereas the Kamamohanas worship with adult Shaktis.

Some advanced members of this (in its general sense) Vamacara division do not, I am informed, even take wine and meat. It is said that the great Vamacari Sadhaka Raja Krishnacandra of Nadia, Upasaka of the Chinnamasta Murti, did not take wine. Such and similar Sadhakas have passed beyond the preliminary stage of Vamacara, and indeed (in its special sense) Vamacara itself. They may be Brahma Kaulas. As regards Sadhakas generally it is well to remember what the Mahakala Samhita, the great Shastra of the Madhyastha Kaulas, says in the 11th Ullasa called Sharira-yoga-kathanam: "Some Kaulas there are who seek the good of this world (Aihikarthadhritatmanah). So also the Vaidikas enjoy what is here (Aihikartham kamayante: as do, I may interpose, the vast bulk of present humanity) and are not seekers of liberation (Amrite ratim na kurvanti). Only by Nishkamasadhana is liberation attained."

The Pañcatattva are either real (Pratyaksha. "Idealizing" statements to the contrary are, when not due to ignorance, false), substitutional (Anukalpa) or esoteric (Divyatattva). As regards the second, even a vegetarian would not object to "meat" which is in fact ginger, nor the abstainer to "wine" which is coconut water in a bell-metal vessel. As for the Esoteric Tattva they are not material articles or practices, but the symbols for Yogic processes. Again some notions and practices are more moderate and others extreme. The account given in the Mahanirvana of the Bhairavi and Tattva Cakras may be compared with some more unrestrained practice; and the former again may be contrasted with a modern Cakra described in the 13th Chapter of the Life of Bejoy Krishna Gosvami by Jagad-bandhu Maitra. There a Tantrika Siddha formed a Cakra at which the Gosvami was present. The latter says that all who were there, felt as if the Shakti was their own Mother who had borne them, and the Devatas whom the Cakreshvara invoked appeared in the circle to accept the offerings. Whether this is accepted as a fact or not, it is obvious that it was intended to describe a Cakra of a different kind from that of which we have more commonly heard. There are some practices which are not correctly understood; there are some principles which the bulk of men will not understand; for to so understand there must be besides knowledge that undefinable Bhava, the possession of which carries with it the explanation which no words can give. I have dealt with this subject in the Chapter on the Pañcatattva. There are expressions which do not bear their surface meaning. Gomamhsa-bhakshana is not "beef-eating" but putting the tongue in the root of the throat. What some translate as "Ravishing the widow" refers not to a woman but to a process in Kundalini Yoga and so forth. Lastly and this is important: a distinction is seldom, if ever, made between Shastric principles and actual practice, nor is count taken of the conditions properly governing the worship and its abuse. It is easy to understand that if Hinduism has in general degenerated, there has been a fall here. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that the sole object of these rites is enjoyment. It is not necessary to be a "Tantrik" for that. The moral of all this is, that it is better to know the facts than to make erroneous generalizations. There are said to be three Krantas or geographical divisions of India, of which roughly speaking the North-Eastern portion is Vishnukranta, the North-Western Rathakranta and the remaining and Southern portion is Ashvakranta. According to the Shaktamarigala and Mahasiddhisara Tantras, Vishnukranta (which includes Bengal) extends from the Vindhya range to Chattala or Chittagong. From Vindhya to Tibet and China is

Rathakranta. There is then some difference between these two Tantras as to the position of Ashvakranta. According to the first this last Kranta extends from the Vindhya to the sea which perhaps includes the rest of India. According to the Mahasiddhisara Tantra it extends from the Karatoya River to a point which cannot be identified with certainty in the text cited, but which may be Java. To each of these 64 Tantras have been assigned. One of the questions awaiting solution is whether the Tantras of these three geographical divisions are marked by both doctrinal and ritual peculiarities and if so what they are. This subject has been referred to in the first part of the Principles of Tantra wherein a list of Tantras is given.

In the Shakta division there are four Sampradayas, namely, Kerala, Kashmira, Gauda and Vilasa, in each of which there is both outer and inner worship. The Sammohana Tantra gives these four Sampradayas, also the number of Tantras, not only in the first three Sampradayas, but in Cina and Dravida. I have been informed that out of 56 Deshas (which included besides Hunas, places outside India, such as Cina, Mahacina, Bhota, Simhala), 18 follow Gauda extending from Nepala to Kalinga and 19 follow Kerala extending from Vindhya to the Southern Sea, the remaining countries forming part of the Kashmira Desha; and that in each Sampradaya there are Paddhatis such as Shuddha, Gupta, Ugra. There is variance in Devatas and Rituals some of which are explained in the Tarasukta and Shaktisamgama Tantra.

There are also various Matas such as Kadi Mata, called Viradanuttara of which the Devata is Kali (see Introduction to Tantraraja Tantra, A Short Analysis); Hadi Mata called Hamsaraja of which Tripurasundari is Devata and Kahadi Mata the combination of the two of which Tara is Devata that is Nilasarasvati. Certain Deshas are called Kadi, Hadi, Kahadi Deshas and each Mata has several Amnyas. It is said that the Hamsatara Mahavidya is the Sovereign Lady of Yoga whom Jainas call Padmavati, Shaktas Shakti, Bauddhas Tara, Cina Sadhakas Mihogra, and Kaulas Cakreshvari. The Kadis call her Kali, the Hadis Shrisundari and the Kadi-Hadis Hamsah. Volumes VIII and XII of "Tantrik Texts" contain that portion of the Tantraraja which belongs to Kadi Mata and in the English Introduction, mentioned above, I have dealt with this subject.

Gauda Sampradaya considers Kadi the highest Mata, whilst Kashmira and Kerala worship Tripura and Tara. Possibly there may have been originally Deshas which were the exclusive seats of specific schools of Tantra, but later and at present, so far as they exist, this cannot be said. In each of the Deshas different Sampradayas may be found, though doubtless at particular places, as in Bengal, particular sects may be predominant.

In my opinion it is not yet possible to present, with both accuracy and completeness, the doctrine and practice of any particular Tantrik School, and to indicate wherein it differs from other Schools. It is not possible at present to say fully and precisely who the original Shaktas were, the nature of their sub-divisions and of their relation to, or distinction from, some of the Shaiva group. Thus the Kaulas are generally in Bengal included in the Brahmajñani Shakta group but the Sammohana in one passage already cited mentions Kaula and Shakta separately. Possibly it is there meant to distinguish ordinary Shaktas from the special group called Kaula Shaktas. In Kashmir some Kaulas, I believe, call themselves Shaivas. For an answer to these and other questions we must await a further examination of the texts. At present I am doing clearing of mud (Pankodhara) from the tank, not in the expectation that I can wholly clear away the mud and weeds, but with a desire to make a beginning which others may complete.

He who has not understood Tantra Shastra has not understood what "Hinduism" is as it exists to-day. The subject is an important part of Indian culture and therefore worth study by the duly qualified. What I have said should be sufficient to warn the ignorant from making rash generalizations. At present we can say that he who worships the Mantra and Yantra of Shakti is a Shakta, and that there were several Sampradayas of these worshippers. What we can, and should first do, is to study the Shakta Darshana as it exists to-day, working back from the known to the unknown. What I am about to describe is the Shakta faith as it exists to-day, that is Shaktivada, not as something entirely new but as the development and amalgamation of the various cults which were its ancestors.

Summarizing Shakta doctrine we may first affirm that it is Advaitavada or Monism. This we might expect seeing that it flourished in Bengal which, as the old Gauda Desha, is the Guru both of Advaitavada and of Tantra Shastra. From Gauda came Gaudapadacarya, Madhusudana Sarasvati, author of the great Advaitasiddhi, Ramacandratirthabharati, Citsukhacarya and others. There seems to me to be a strong disposition in the Brahmoparayana Bengali temperament towards Advaitavada. For all Advaitins the Shakta Agama and Advaita Shaivagama must be the highest form of worship. A detailed account of the Advaita teachings of the Shaktas is a matter of great complexity and of a highly esoteric character, beyond the scope of this paper. I may here note that the Shakta Tantras speak of 94 Tattvas made up of 10, 12 and 16 Kalas of Fire, Sun and Moon constituting the Kamakala respectively; and 19 of Sadashiva, 6 of Ishvara, 10 each of Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma. The 51 Kalas or Matrikas which are the Sukshmarupa of the 51 letters (Varna) are a portion of these 94. These are the 51 coils of Kundali from Bindu to Shrimatrikotpatti-Sundari mentioned in my Garland of Letters or Studies on the Mantra Shastra. These are all worshipped in the wine jar by those Shaktas who take wine. The Shastras also set out the 36 Tattvas which are common to Shaktas and Salvias; the five Kalas which are Samanya to the Tattvas, namely, Nivritti, Pratishta, Vidya, Shanta, Shantyatita, and the Shadadhva, namely, Varna, Pada, and Mantra, Kala, Tattva, Bhuvana, which represent the Artha aspect and the Shabda aspect respectively. (See Garland of Letters.)

To pass to more popular matters, a beautiful and tender concept of the Shaktas is the Motherhood of God, that is, God as Shakti or the Power which produces, maintains and withdraws the universe. This is the thought of a worshipper. Though the Sammohana Tantra gives high place to Shamkara as conqueror of Buddhism (speaking of him as a manifestation of Shiva and identifying his four disciples and himself with the five Mahapretas), the Agamas as Shastras of worship do not teach Mayavada as set forth according to Shamkara's transcendental method. Maya to the Shakta worshipper is not an unconscious something, not real, not unreal, not real-unreal, which is associated with Brahman in its Ishvara aspect, though it is not Brahman. Brahman is never associated with anything but Itself. Maya to the Shakta is Shakti veiling Herself as Consciousness, but which, as being Shakti, is Consciousness. To the Shakta all that he sees is the Mother. All is Consciousness. This is the standpoint of Sadhana. The Advaitins of Shamkara's School claim that their doctrine is given from the standpoint of Siddhi. I will not argue this question here. When Siddhi is obtained there will be no argument. Until that event Man is, it is admitted, subject to Maya and must think and act according to the forms which it imposes on him. It is more important after all to realize in fact the universal presence of the Divine Consciousness, than to attempt to explain it in philosophical terms.

The Divine Mother first appears in and as Her worshipper's earthly mother, then as his wife; thirdly as Kalika, She reveals Herself in old age, disease and death. It is She who manifests, and not without a purpose, in the vast outpouring of Samhara Shakti which was witnessed in the great world-conflict of our time. The terrible beauty of such forms is not understood. And so we get the recent utterance of a Missionary Professor at Madras who being moved to horror at the sight of (I think) the Camundamurti called the Devi a "She-Devil". Lastly She takes to Herself the dead body in the fierce tongues of flame which light the funeral pyre.

The Monist is naturally unsectarian and so the Shakta faith, as held by those who understand it, is free from a narrow sectarian spirit.

Nextly it, like the other Agamas, makes provision for all castes and both sexes. Whatever be the true doctrine of the Vaidikas, their practice is in fact marked by exclusiveness. Thus they exclude women and Shudras. It is easy to understand why the so-called Anarya Sampradayas did not do so. A glorious feature of the Shakta faith is the honor which it pays to woman. And this is natural for those who worship the Great Mother, whose representative (Vigraha) all earthly women are. Striy devah striyah pranah. "Women are Devas; women are life itself," as an old Hymn in the Sarvollasa has it. It is because Woman is a Vigraha of the Amba Devi, Her likeness in flesh and blood, that the Shakta Tantras enjoin the honor and worship of women and girls (Kumaris), and forbid all harm to them such as the Sati rite, enjoining that not even a female animal is to be sacrificed. With the same solicitude for women, the Mahanirvana prescribes that even if a man speaks rudely (Durvacyam kathayan) to his wife, he must fast for a whole day, and enjoins the education of daughters before their marriage. The Moslem Author of the Dabistan (ii. 154. Ed. 1843) says "The Agama favors both sexes equally. Men and women equally compose mankind. This sect hold women in great esteem and call them Shaktis and to ill-treat a Shakti, that is, a woman, is a crime". The Shakta Tantras again allow of women being Guru, or Spiritual Director, a reverence which the West has not (with rare exceptions) yet given them. Initiation by a Mother bears eightfold fruit. Indeed to the enlightened Shakta the whole universe is Stri or Shakti. "Aham stri" as the Advabhavano Upanishad says. A high worship therefore which can be offered to the Mother to-day consists in getting rid of abuses which have neither the authority of ancient Shastra, nor of modern social science and to honor, cherish, educate and advance women (Shakti). Striy devah striyah pranah. Gautamiya Tantra says Sarvavarnadhikarashca narinam yogya eva ca; that is, the Tantra Shastra is for all castes and for women; and the Mahanirvana says that the low Kaula who refuses to initiate a Candala or Yavana or a woman out of disrespect goes the downward path. No one is excluded from anything except on the grounds of a real and not artificial or imagined incompetency.

An American Orientalist critic, in speaking of "the worthlessness of Tantric philosophy", said that it was "Religious Feminism run mad," adding "What is all this but the feminisation of orthodox Vedanta? It is a doctrine for suffragette Monists: the dogma unsupported by any evidence that the female principle antedates and includes the male principle, and that this female principle is supreme Divinity." The "worthlessness" of the Tantrik philosophy is a personal opinion on which nothing need be said, the more particularly that Orientalists who, with insufficient knowledge, have already committed themselves to this view are not likely to easily abandon it. The present criticism, however, in disclosing the grounds on which it is based, has shown that they are without worth. Were it not for such ignorant notions, it would be unnecessary to say that the Shakta Sadhaka does not believe that there is a Woman Suffragette or otherwise, in the sky, surrounded by the members of some celestial feminist association who rules the male members of the universe. As the Yamala says for the benefit of the ignorant "neyam yoshit na ca puman na shando na jadah smritah". That is, God is neither female, male, hermaphrodite nor unconscious thing. Nor is his doctrine concerned with the theories of the American Professor Lester Ward and others as to the alleged pre-eminence of the female principle. We are not here dealing with questions of science or sociology. It is a common fault of western criticism that it gives material interpretations of Indian Scriptures and so misunderstands it. The Shakta doctrine is concerned with those Spiritual Principles which exist before, and are the origin of, both men and women. Whether, in the appearance of the animal species, the female "antedates" the male is a question with which it is not

concerned. Nor does it say that the "female principle" is the supreme Divinity. Shiva the "male" is co-equal with Shivé the "female," for both are one and the same. An Orientalist might have remembered that in the Samkhya, Prakriti is spoken of as "female," and Purusha as "male". And in Vedanta, Maya and Devi are of the feminine gender. Shakti is not a male nor a female "person," nor a male nor a female "principle," in the sense in which sociology, which is concerned with gross matter, uses those terms. Shakti is symbolically "female" because it is the productive principle. Shiva in so far as He represents the Cit or consciousness aspect, is actionless (Nishkriya), though the two are inseparably associated even in creation. The Supreme is the attributeless (Nirguna) Shiva, or the neuter Brahman which is neither "male" nor "female". With such mistaken general views of the doctrine, it was not likely that its more subtle aspects by way of relation to Shamkara's Mayavada, or the Samkya Darshana should be appreciated. The doctrine of Shakti has no more to do with "Feminism" than it has to do with "old age pensions" or any other sociological movement of the day. This is a good instance of those apparently "smart" and cocksure judgments which Orientalists and others pass on things Indian. The errors would be less ridiculous if they were on occasions more modest as regards their claims to know and understand. What is still more important, they would not probably in such cases give unnecessary ground for offense.

The characteristic features of Shakta-dharma are thus its Monism; its concept of the Motherhood of God; its un-sectarian spirit and provisions for Shudras and women, to the latter of whom it renders high honor, recognizing that they may be even Gurus; and lastly its Sadhana skillfully designed to realize its teachings.

As I have pointed out on many an occasion this question of Sadhana is of the highest importance, and has been in recent times much overlooked. It is that which more than anything else gives value to the Agama or Tantra Shastra. Mere talk about religion is only an intellectual exercise. Of what use are grand phrases about Atma on the lips of those who hate and injure one another and will not help the poor. Religion is kindness. Religion again is a practical activity. Mind and body must be trained. There is a spiritual as well as a mental and physical gymnastic. According to Shakta doctrine each man and woman contains within himself and herself a vast latent magazine of Power or Shakti, a term which comes from the root "Shak" to be able, to have force to do, to act. They are each Shakti and nothing but Shakti, for the Svarupa of Shakti, that is, Shakti as it is in itself is Consciousness, and mind and body are Shakti. The problem then is how to raise and vivify Shakti. This is the work of Sadhana in the Religion of Power. The Agama is a practical philosophy, and as the Bengali friend and collaborator of mine, Professor Pramathanatha Mukhyopadhyaya, whom I cite again, has well put it, what the intellectual world wants to-day is the sort of philosophy which not merely argues but experiments. This is Kriya. The form which Sadhana takes necessarily varies according to faith, temperament and capacity. Thus, amongst Christians, the Catholic Church, like Hinduism, has a full and potent Sadhana in its sacraments (Samskara), temple (Church), private worship (Puja, Upasana) with Upacara "bell, light and incense" (Ghanta, Dipa, Dhupa), Images or Pratima (hence it has been called idolatrous), devotional rites such as Novenas and the like (Vrata), the threefold "Angelus" at morn, noon and evening (Samdhya), rosary (Japa), the wearing of Kavacas (Scapulars, Medals, Agnus Dei), pilgrimage (Tirtha), fasting, abstinence and mortification (Tapas), monastic renunciation (Samnyasa), meditation (Dhyana), ending in the union of mystical theology (Samadhi) and so forth. There are other smaller details such for instance as Shanti-abhisheka (Asperges) into which I need not enter here. I may, however, mention the Spiritual Director who occupies the place of the Guru; the worship (Hyperdulia) of the Virgin-Mother which made Svami Vivekananda call the Italian Catholics, Shaktas; and the use of wine (Madya) and bread (corresponding to Mudra) in the Eucharist or Communion Service. Whilst, however, the Blessed Virgin evokes devotion as warm as that which is here paid to Devi, she is not Devi for she is not God but a creature selected as the vehicle of His incarnation (Avatara). In the Eucharist the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ appearing under the form or "accidents" of those material substances; so also Tara is Dravamayi, that is, the "Saviour in liquid form". (Mahanirvana Tr. xi. 105-107.) In the Catholic Church (though the early practice was otherwise) the laity no longer take wine but bread only, the officiating priest consuming both. Whilst however the outward forms in this case are similar, the inner meaning is different. Those however who contend that eating and drinking are inconsistent with the "dignity" of worship may be reminded of Tertullian's saying that Christ instituted His great sacrament at a meal. These notions are those of the dualist with all his distinctions. For the Advaitin every function and act may be made a Yajña. Agape or "Love Feasts," a kind of Cakra, were held in early times, and discontinued as orthodox practice, on account of abuses to which they led; though they are said still to exist in some of the smaller Christian sects of the day. There are other points of ritual which are peculiar to the Tantra Shastra and of which there is no counterpart in the Catholic ritual such as Nyasa and Yantra. Mantra exists in the form of prayer and as formulae of consecration, but otherwise the subject is conceived of differently here. There are certain gestures (Mudra) made in the ritual, as when consecrating, blessing, and so forth, but they are not so numerous or prominent as they are here. I may some day more fully develop these interesting analogies, but what I have said is for the present sufficient to establish the numerous similarities which exist between the Catholic and Indian Tantrik ritual. Because of these facts the "reformed" Christian sects have charged the Catholic Church with "Paganism". It is in fact the inheritor of very ancient practices but is not necessarily the worse for that. The Hindu finds his Sadhana in the Tantras of the Agama in forms which his race has evolved. In the abstract there is no reason why his race should not modify these forms of Sadhana or evolve new ones. But the point is that it must have some form of Sadhana. Any system to be fruitful must experiment to gain experience. It is because of its powerful sacraments and disciplines that in the West the Catholic Church has survived to this day, holding firm upon its "Rock" amid the dissolving sects, born of what is called the "Reform". It is likely to exist when these, as presently existing sects, will have disappeared. All things survive by virtue of the truth in them. The particular truth to which I here refer is that a faith cannot

be maintained by mere hymn-singing and pious addresses. For this reason too Hinduism has survived.

This is not necessary to say that either of these will, as presently existing forms, continue until the end of time. The so-called Reformed or Protestant sects, whether of West or East, are when viewed in relation to man in general, the imperfect expression of a truth misunderstood and misapplied, namely, that the higher man spiritually ascends, the less dependent is he on form. The mistake which such sects make is to look at the matter from one side only, and to suppose that all men are alike in their requirement. The Agama is guilty of no such error. It offers form in all its fullness and richness to those below the stage of Yoga, at which point man reaches what the Kularnava Tantra calls the Varna and Ashrama of Light (Jyotirvarnashrami), and gradually releases himself from all form that he may unite his self with the Formless One. I do not know which most to admire -- the colossal affirmations of Indian doctrine, or the wondrous variety of the differing disciplines, which it prescribes for their realization in fact.

The Buddhists called Brahmanism Shilavrataparamarsha, that is, a system believing in the efficacy of ritual acts. And so it is, and so at length was Buddhism, when passing through Mahayana it ended up with the full Tantrik Sadhana of the Vajrayana School. There are human tendencies which cannot be suppressed. Hinduism will, however, disappear, if and when Sadhana (whatever be its form) ceases; for that will be the day on which it will no longer be something real, but the mere subject of philosophical and historical talk. Apart from its great doctrine of Shakti, the main significance of the Shakta Tantra Shastra lies in this, that it affirms the principle of the necessity of Sadhana and claims to afford a means available to all of whatever caste and of either sex whereby the teachings of Vedanta may be practically realized.

But let no one take any statement from any one, myself included, blindly, without examining and testing it. I am only concerned to state the facts as I know them. It is man's prerogative to think. The Sanskrit word for "man" comes from the root man "to think". Those who are Shaktas may be pleased at what I have said about their faith. It must not, however, be supposed that a doctrine is necessarily true simply because it is old. There are some hoary errors. As for science, its conclusions shift from year to year. Recent discoveries have so abated its pride that it has considerably ceased to give itself those pontifical airs which formerly annoyed some of us. Most will feel that if they are to bow to any Master it should be to a spiritual one. A few will think that they can safely walk alone. Philosophy again is one of the noblest of life's pursuits, but here too we must examine to see whether what is proposed for our acceptance is well founded. The maxim is current that there is nothing so absurd but that it has been held by some philosopher or another. We must each ourselves judge and choose, and if honest, none can blame our choice. We must put all to the test. We may here recollect the words of Shruti -- "Shrotavyah, Mantavyah, Nididhyasitavyah," -- "listen, reason and ponder"; for as Manu says "Yastarke-nanusandhatte sa dharmam veda, netarah" -- "He who by discussion investigates, he knows Dharma and none other." Ultimately there is experience alone which in Shakta speech is Saham -- "She I am".

NOTE TO CHAPTER VI

I have referred to the Vaidik and Agamic strands in Indian Dharma. I wish to add some weighty remarks made by the well-known Vedantic Monthly The Prabuddha Bharata (Mayavati, U. P., July 1914). They were elicited by the publication of Arthur Avalon's Principles of Tantra. After pointing out that a vindication of the Tantras rebounds directly to the benefit of Hinduism as a whole, for Tantrikism in its real sense is nothing but the Vedic religion struggling with wonderful success to reassert itself amidst all those new problems of religious life and discipline which historical events and developments have thrust upon it, and after referring to the Introduction to that work, the author of the review wrote as follows:

"In this new publication, the most noteworthy feature of this new Introduction he has written for the Tantra-tattva is his appreciative presentation of the orthodox views about the antiquity and the importance of the Tantras, and it is impossible to overestimate the value of this presentation.

"For hitherto all theories about the origin and the importance of the Tantras have been more or less prejudiced by a wrong bias against Tantrikism which some of its own later sinister developments were calculated to create. This bias has made almost every such theory read either like a condemnation or an apology. All investigation being thus disqualified, the true history of Tantrikism has not yet been written; and we find cultured people mostly inclined either to the view that Tantrikism originally branched off from the Buddhistic Mahayana or Vajrayana as a cult of some corrupted and self-deluded monastics, or to the view that it was the inevitable dowry which some barbarous non-Aryan races brought along with them into the fold of Hinduism. According to both these views, however, the form which this Tantrikism -- either a Buddhistic development or a barbarous importation -- has subsequently assumed in the literature of Hinduism, is its improved edition as issuing from the crucibles of Vedic or Vedantic transformation. But this theory of the curious co-mingling of the Vedas and Vedanta with Buddhistic corruption or with non-Aryan barbarity is perfectly inadequate to explain the all-pervading influence which the Tantras exert on our present-day religious life. Here it is not any hesitating compromise that we have got before us to explain, but a bold organic synthesis, a legitimate restatement of the Vedic culture for the solution of new problems and new

difficulties which signaled the dawn of a new age.

"In tracing the evolution of Hinduism, modern historians take a blind leap from Vedic ritualism direct to Buddhism, as if to conclude that all those newly formed communities, with which India had been swarming all over since the close of the fateful era of the Kurukshetra war and to which was denied the right of Vedic sacrifices, the monopoly of the higher three-fold castes of pure orthodox descent, were going all the time without any religious ministrations. These Aryanized communities, we must remember, were actually swamping the Vedic orthodoxy, which was already gradually dwindling down to a helpless minority in all its scattered centers of influence, and was just awaiting the final blow to be dealt by the rise of Buddhism. Thus the growth of these new communities and their occupation of the whole land constituted a mighty event that had been silently taking place in India on the outskirts of the daily shrinking orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism, long before Buddhism appeared on the field, and this momentous event our modern historians fail to take due notice of either it may be because of a curious blindness of self-complacency or because of the dazzle which the sudden triumph of Buddhism and the overwhelming mass of historical evidences left by it create before their eyes. The traditional Kali Yuga dates from the rise of these communities and the Vedic religious culture of the preceding Yuga underwent a wonderful transformation along with a wonderful attempt it made to Aryanize these rising communities.

"History, as hitherto understood and read, speaks of the Brahmins of the Buddhistic age -- their growing alienation from the Jñāna-kānda or the Upanishadic wisdom, their impotency to save the orthodox Vedic communities from the encroachments of the non-Vedic hordes and races, their ever-deepening religious formalism and social exclusiveness. But this history is silent on the marvelous feats which the Upanishadic sects of anchorites were silently performing on the outskirts of the strictly Vedic community with the object of Aryanizing the new India that was rising over the ashes of the Kurukshetra conflagration. This new India was not strictly Vedic like the India of the bygone ages, for it could not claim the religious ministrations of the orthodox Vedic Brahmins and could not, therefore, perform Yajñas like the latter. The question, therefore, is as to how this new India became gradually Aryanized, for Aryanization is essentially a spiritual process, consisting in absorbing new communities of men into the fold of the Vedic religion. The Vedic ritualism that prevailed in those days was powerless, we have seen, to do anything for these new communities springing up all over the country. Therefore, we are obliged to turn to the only other factor in Vedic religion besides the Karma-kānda for an explanation of those changes which the Vedic religion wrought in the rising communities in order to Aryanize them. The Upanishads represent the Jñāna-kānda of the Vedic religion and if we study all of them, we find that not only the earliest ritualism of Yajñas was philosophized upon the earlier Upanishads, but the foundation for a new, and no less elaborate, ritualism was fully laid in many of the later Upanishads. For example, we study in these Upanishads how the philosophy of Pañca-upasana (five-fold worship, viz., the worship of Shiva, Devi, Sun, Ganesha and Vishnu) was developed out of the mystery of the Pranava ("Om"). This philosophy cannot be dismissed as a post-Buddhistic interpolation, seeing that some features of the same philosophy can be clearly traced even in the Brahmanas (e.g., the discourse about the conception of Shiva).

"Here, therefore, in some of the later Upanishads we find recorded the attempts of the pre-Buddhistic recluses of the forest to elaborate a post-Vedic ritualism out of the doctrine of the Pranava and the Vedic theory of Yogic practices. Here in these Upanishads we find how the Bija-mantras and the Shatcakra of the Tantras were being originally developed, for on the Pranava or Udgitha had been founded a special learning and a school of philosophy from the very earliest ages and some of the "spinal" centers of Yogic meditation had been dwelt upon in the earliest Upanishads and corresponding Brahmanas. The Upakaranas of Tantrik worship, namely, such material adjuncts as grass, leaves, water and so on, were most apparently adopted from Vedic worship along with their appropriate incantations. So even from the Brahmanas and the Upanishads stands out in clear relief a system of spiritual discipline -- which we would unhesitatingly classify as Tantrik -- having at its core the Pañca-upasana and around it a fair round of rituals and rites consisting of Bija-mantras and Vedic incantations, proper meditative processes and proper manipulation of sacred adjuncts of worship adopted from the Vedic rites. This may be regarded as the earliest configuration which Tantrik-ism had on the eve of those silent but mighty social upheavals through which the Aryanization of vast and increasing multitudes of new races proceeded in pre-Buddhistic India and which had their culmination in the eventful centuries of the Buddhistic coup de grace.

"Now this pre-Buddhistic Tantrikism, perhaps, then recognized as the Vedic Pañca-upasana, could not have contributed at all to the creation of a new India, had it remained confined completely within the limits of monastic sects. But like Jainism, this Pañca-upasana went forth all over the country to bring ultra-Vedic communities under its spiritual ministrations. Even if we inquire carefully into the social conditions obtaining in the strictly Vedic ages, we find that there was always an extended wing of the Aryanized society where the purely Vedic Karma-kānda could not be promulgated, but where the molding influence of Vedic ideals worked through the development of suitable spiritual activities. It is always to the Jñāna-kānda and the monastic votaries thereof, that the Vedic religion owed its wonderful expansiveness and its progressive self-adaptability, and every religious development within the Vedic fold, but outside, the ritualism of Homa sacrifices, is traceable to the spiritual wisdom of the all renouncing forest recluses. This 'forest' wisdom was most forcibly brought into requisition when after the Kurukshetra a new age was dawning with the onrush and upheaval of non-Aryan and semi-Aryan races all over India -- an echo of which may be found in that story of the Mahabharata where Arjuna fails to use his Gandiva to save his

protégés from the robbery of the non-Aryan hordes.

"The greatest problem of the pre-Buddhistic ages was the Aryanization of the new India that rose and surged furiously from every side against the fast-dwindling centers of the old Vedic orthodoxy struggling hard, but in vain, by social enactments to guard its perilous insulation. But for those religious movements, such as those of the Bhagavatas, Shaktas, Sauryas, Shaivas, Ganapatyas and Jainas, that tackled this problem of Aryanization most successfully, all that the Vedic orthodoxy stood for in the real sense would have gradually perished without trace. These movements, specially the five cults of Vedic worship, took up many of the non-Aryan races and cast their life in the mold of the Vedic spiritual ideal, minimizing in this way the gulf that existed between them and the Vedic orthodoxy and thereby rendering possible their gradual amalgamation. And where this task remained unfulfilled owing to the mold proving too narrow still to fit into the sort of life which some non-Aryan races or communities lived, there it remained for Buddhism to solve the problem of Aryanization in due time. But still we must remember that by the time Buddhism made its appearance, the pre-Buddhistic phase of Tantrik worship had already established itself in India so widely and so firmly that instead of dislodging it by its impetuous onset -- all the force of which, by the bye, was mainly spent on the tattering orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism -- Buddhism was itself swallowed up within three or four centuries by its perhaps least suspected opponent of this Tantrik worship and then wonderfully transformed and ejected on the arena as the Mahayana.

"The publication of these two volumes is an event of great interest and importance. The religious beliefs of the modern Hindus have been represented to English readers from various points of view, but the peculiar mold into which they have been sought to be cast in comparatively modern centuries has not received adequate attention. The exponents of the religion of modern Hindus take cognizance more of the matter and source of their beliefs than of the change of form they have been undergoing through the many centuries. The volumes under review, as well as other publications brought out by Arthur Avalon, serve to carry this important question of form to such a prominence as almost makes it obligatory for every exhaustive exposition of Hindu doctrines in future to acknowledge and discriminate in them the formative influences of the Tantrik restatement. In the Tantratattva, the presentation and vindication of the Hindu religious beliefs and practices avowedly and closely follow the methodology of the Tantras, and the learned pundit has fully succeeded in establishing the fact that what lies behind these beliefs and practices is not mere prejudice or superstition but a system of profound philosophy based on the Vedas. Every student of modern Hinduism should acquaint himself with this, namely, its immediate background of Tantrik philosophy and ritualism.

"The Hindu religious consciousness is like a mighty Ganges emerging from the Himalayas of Vedic wisdom, receiving tributaries and sending out branch streams at many points in its course. And though the nature of the current, its color, velocity or uses may vary at different places, the Ganges is the same Ganges whether at Hardwar, Allahabad or Calcutta. The stream is not only one but it has also its one main channel in spite of all the many tributaries and branches. And the whole of the stream is sacred, though different sects may choose special points and confluences as of special sanctity to themselves, deriving inspiration thence for their special sectarian developments. Now, though the rise of Tantrik philosophy and ritualism created in former times new currents and back-waters along the stream of Hinduism, it was essentially an important occurrence in the main stream and channel; and instead of producing a permanent bifurcation in that stream, it coalesced with it, coloring and renovating, more or less, the whole tenor of the Hindu religious consciousness. As a result, we find Tantrik thought and sentiment equally operative in the extreme metaphysical wing of Hinduism as well as in its lower matter-of-fact phases.

This actual permeation of Hindu religious consciousness by Tantrik thought and sentiment should receive the fullest recognition at the hands of every up-to-date exponent. His predecessors of former generations might have to strengthen their advocacy of Tantrik doctrines by joining issue with the advocates of particular phases of Hindu religion and philosophy. But the present epoch in the history of our religious consciousness is pre-eminently an epoch of wonderful synthetic mood of thought and sentiment, which is gradually pervading the Hindu religious consciousness ever since Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa embodied in himself its immediate possibilities, to find in the literature that is being so admirably provided for English readers by Arthur Avalon an occasional tendency to use Tantrik doctrines as weapons for combating certain phases of Hindu belief and practice. This tendency seems to betray quite a wrong standpoint in the study of the Tantras, their relation to other Scriptures and their real historical significance."

Next: Chapter Seven: Is Shakti Force?