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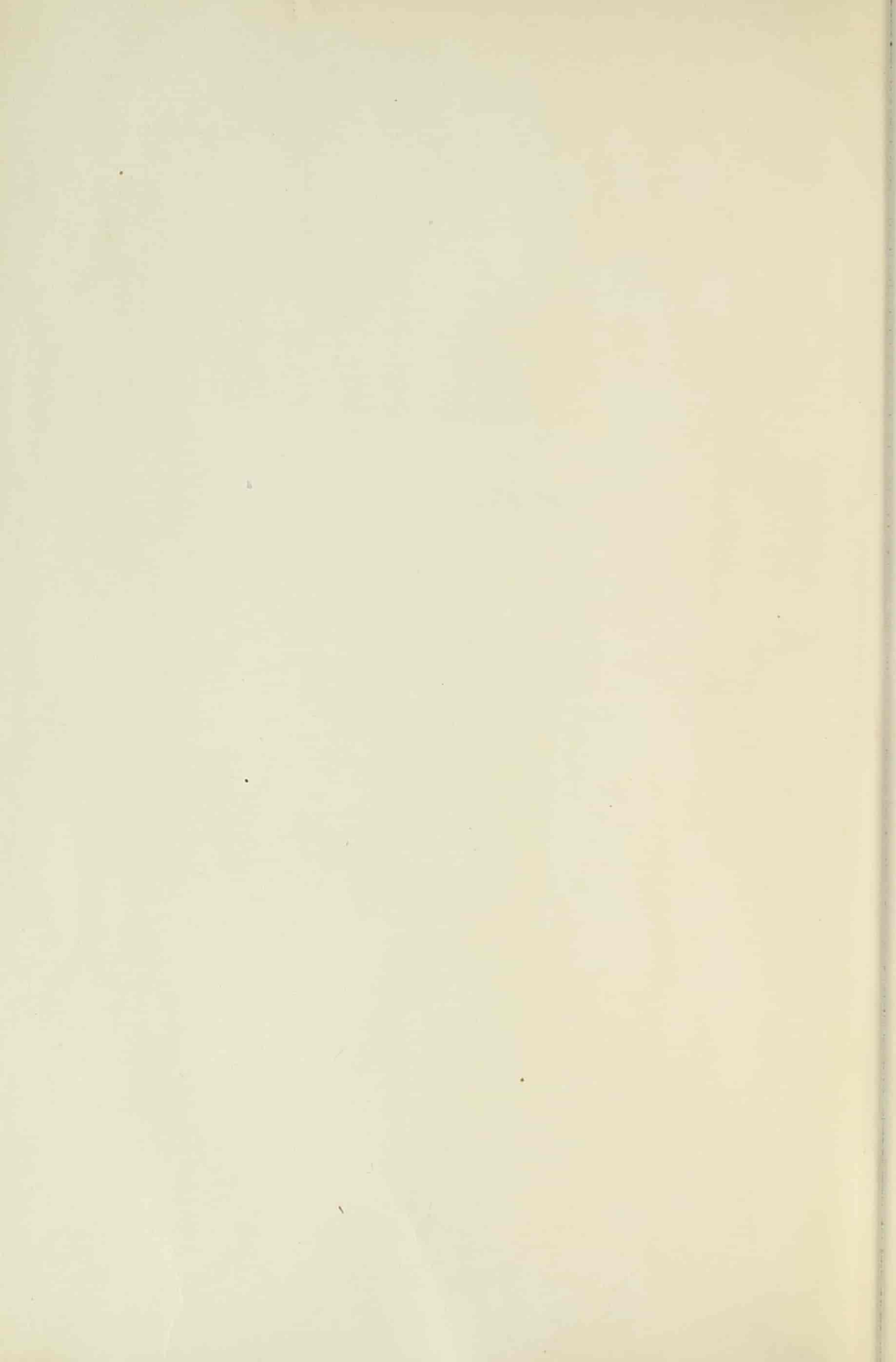
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SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA



SHAKTI AND BHAKTA



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# SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES ON  
THE SHĀKTA TANTRASHĀSTRA

BY  
SIR JOHN WOODROFFE

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## CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. Introductory ... ..	1
II. What are the Tantras and their significance ?	17
III. Tantra Shâstra and Veda ... ..	32
IV. Shakti and Shâkta ... ..	63
V. Chînâchâra (Vashishtha and Buddha) ...	104
VI. The Tantra Shâstras in China ... ..	116
VII. Chit-Shakti ... ..	124
VIII. Mâyâ-Shakti ... ..	156
IX. Shakti and Mâyâ ... ..	200
X. Shakti in Taoism ... ..	216
XI. Shakti as Mantra ... ..	224
XII. Varnamâlâ ... ..	256
XIII. Shâkta Sâdhanâ (The Ordinary Ritual) ...	262
XIV. Panchatattva (The Secret Ritual) ...	325
XV. Matam Rutra (The right and wrong inter- pretation) ... ..	377
XVI. Kundalinî Shakti (Yoga) ... ..	403
XVII. Some Conclusions ... ..	430
Addenda (1) Is Shakti Force ? ... ..	436
(2) Veda and Tantra ... ..	440



CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Chapter I	2
3	Chapter II	3
4	Chapter III	4
5	Chapter IV	5
6	Chapter V	6
7	Chapter VI	7
8	Chapter VII	8
9	Chapter VIII	9
10	Chapter IX	10
11	Chapter X	11
12	Chapter XI	12
13	Chapter XII	13
14	Chapter XIII	14
15	Chapter XIV	15
16	Chapter XV	16
17	Chapter XVI	17
18	Chapter XVII	18
19	Chapter XVIII	19
20	Chapter XIX	20
21	Chapter XX	21
22	Chapter XXI	22
23	Chapter XXII	23
24	Chapter XXIII	24
25	Chapter XXIV	25
26	Chapter XXV	26
27	Chapter XXVI	27
28	Chapter XXVII	28
29	Chapter XXVIII	29
30	Chapter XXIX	30
31	Chapter XXX	31
32	Chapter XXXI	32
33	Chapter XXXII	33
34	Chapter XXXIII	34
35	Chapter XXXIV	35
36	Chapter XXXV	36
37	Chapter XXXVI	37
38	Chapter XXXVII	38
39	Chapter XXXVIII	39
40	Chapter XXXIX	40
41	Chapter XL	41
42	Chapter XLI	42
43	Chapter XLII	43
44	Chapter XLIII	44
45	Chapter XLIV	45
46	Chapter XLV	46
47	Chapter XLVI	47
48	Chapter XLVII	48
49	Chapter XLVIII	49
50	Chapter XLIX	50
51	Chapter L	51
52	Chapter LI	52
53	Chapter LII	53
54	Chapter LIII	54
55	Chapter LIV	55
56	Chapter LV	56
57	Chapter LVI	57
58	Chapter LVII	58
59	Chapter LVIII	59
60	Chapter LIX	60
61	Chapter LX	61
62	Chapter LXI	62
63	Chapter LXII	63
64	Chapter LXIII	64
65	Chapter LXIV	65
66	Chapter LXV	66
67	Chapter LXVI	67
68	Chapter LXVII	68
69	Chapter LXVIII	69
70	Chapter LXIX	70
71	Chapter LXX	71
72	Chapter LXXI	72
73	Chapter LXXII	73
74	Chapter LXXIII	74
75	Chapter LXXIV	75
76	Chapter LXXV	76
77	Chapter LXXVI	77
78	Chapter LXXVII	78
79	Chapter LXXVIII	79
80	Chapter LXXIX	80
81	Chapter LXXX	81
82	Chapter LXXXI	82
83	Chapter LXXXII	83
84	Chapter LXXXIII	84
85	Chapter LXXXIV	85
86	Chapter LXXXV	86
87	Chapter LXXXVI	87
88	Chapter LXXXVII	88
89	Chapter LXXXVIII	89
90	Chapter LXXXIX	90
91	Chapter LXXXX	91
92	Chapter LXXXXI	92
93	Chapter LXXXXII	93
94	Chapter LXXXXIII	94
95	Chapter LXXXXIV	95
96	Chapter LXXXXV	96
97	Chapter LXXXXVI	97
98	Chapter LXXXXVII	98
99	Chapter LXXXXVIII	99
100	Chapter LXXXXIX	100
101	Chapter LXXXXX	101
102	Chapter LXXXXXI	102
103	Chapter LXXXXXII	103
104	Chapter LXXXXXIII	104
105	Chapter LXXXXXIV	105
106	Chapter LXXXXXV	106
107	Chapter LXXXXXVI	107
108	Chapter LXXXXXVII	108
109	Chapter LXXXXXVIII	109
110	Chapter LXXXXXIX	110
111	Chapter LXXXXXX	111
112	Chapter LXXXXXXI	112
113	Chapter LXXXXXXII	113
114	Chapter LXXXXXXIII	114
115	Chapter LXXXXXXIV	115
116	Chapter LXXXXXXV	116
117	Chapter LXXXXXXVI	117
118	Chapter LXXXXXXVII	118
119	Chapter LXXXXXXVIII	119
120	Chapter LXXXXXXIX	120
121	Chapter LXXXXXXX	121
122	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	122
123	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	123
124	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	124
125	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	125
126	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	126
127	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	127
128	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	128
129	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	129
130	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	130
131	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	131
132	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	132
133	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	133
134	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	134
135	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	135
136	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	136
137	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	137
138	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	138
139	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	139
140	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	140
141	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	141
142	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	142
143	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	143
144	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	144
145	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	145
146	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	146
147	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	147
148	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	148
149	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	149
150	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	150
151	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	151
152	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	152
153	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	153
154	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	154
155	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	155
156	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	156
157	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	157
158	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	158
159	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	159
160	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	160
161	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	161
162	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	162
163	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	163
164	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	164
165	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	165
166	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	166
167	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	167
168	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	168
169	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	169
170	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	170
171	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	171
172	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	172
173	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	173
174	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	174
175	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	175
176	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	176
177	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	177
178	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	178
179	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	179
180	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	180
181	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	181
182	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	182
183	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	183
184	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	184
185	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	185
186	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	186
187	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	187
188	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	188
189	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	189
190	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	190
191	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	191
192	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	192
193	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	193
194	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	194
195	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	195
196	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	196
197	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	197
198	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	198
199	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	199
200	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	200
201	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	201
202	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	202
203	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	203
204	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	204
205	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	205
206	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	206
207	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	207
208	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	208
209	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	209
210	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	210
211	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	211
212	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	212
213	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	213
214	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	214
215	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	215
216	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	216
217	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	217
218	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	218
219	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	219
220	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	220
221	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	221
222	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	222
223	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	223
224	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	224
225	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	225
226	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	226
227	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	227
228	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	228
229	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	229
230	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	230
231	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	231
232	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	232
233	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	233
234	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	234
235	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	235
236	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	236
237	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	237
238	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	238
239	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	239
240	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	240
241	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	241
242	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	242
243	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	243
244	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	244
245	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	245
246	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	246
247	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	247
248	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	248
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250	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	250
251	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	251
252	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	252
253	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	253
254	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	254
255	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	255
256	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	256
257	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	257
258	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	258
259	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	259
260	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	260
261	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	261
262	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	262
263	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	263
264	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	264
265	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	265
266	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	266
267	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	267
268	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	268
269	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	269
270	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	270
271	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	271
272	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	272
273	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	273
274	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	274
275	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	275
276	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	276
277	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	277
278	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	278
279	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	279
280	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	280
281	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	281
282	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	282
283	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	283
284	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	284
285	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	285
286	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	286
287	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	287
288	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	288
289	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	289
290	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	290
291	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	291
292	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	292
293	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	293
294	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	294
295	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	295
296	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	296
297	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	297
298	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	298
299	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	299
300	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	300
301	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	301
302	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	302
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304	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	304
305	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	305
306	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	306
307	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	307
308	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	308
309	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	309
310	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	310
311	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	311
312	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	312
313	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	313
314	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	314
315	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	315
316	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	316
317	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	317
318	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	318
319	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	319
320	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	320
321	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	321
322	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	322
323	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	323
324	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	324
325	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	325
326	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	326
327	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	327
328	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	328
329	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	329
330	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	330
331	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	331
332	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	332
333	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	333
334	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	334
335	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	335
336	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	336
337	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	337
338	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	338
339	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	339
340	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	340
341	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	341
342	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	342
343	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	343
344	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	344
345	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	345
346	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	346
347	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	347
348	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	348
349	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	349
350	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	350
351	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	351
352	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	352
353	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	353
354	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	354
355	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	355
356	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	356
357	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	357
358	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	358
359	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	359
360	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	360
361	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	361
362	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	362
363	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	363
364	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	364
365	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	365
366	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	366
367	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	367
368	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	368
369	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	369
370	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	370
371	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	371
372	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	372
373	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	373
374	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	374
375	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	375
376	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	376
377	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	377
378	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	378
379	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	379
380	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	380
381	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	381
382	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	382
383	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	383
384	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	384
385	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	385
386	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	386
387	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	387
388	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	388
389	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	389
390	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	390
391	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	391
392	Chapter LXXXXXXXI	392
393	Chapter LXXXXXXXII	393
394	Chapter LXXXXXXXIII	394
395	Chapter LXXXXXXXIV	395
396	Chapter LXXXXXXXV	396
397	Chapter LXXXXXXXVI	397
398	Chapter LXXXXXXXVII	398
399	Chapter LXXXXXXXVIII	399
400	Chapter LXXXXXXXIX	400



## ERRATA

Circumstances connected with the preparation of this book in a country where good printers readers are still unfortunately rare have led to the commission of a number of typographical errors most of which however the intelligent reader will be able to correct for himself. It is only necessary to note in respect of errors in *English* as follows:—  
Preface p. xii, l. 21 *for* soul *read* soil; pp. 121-123, 216-223, *for* Geiger *read* Wieger; p. 209, l. 2 *for* ideal of *read* ideal or; p. 210, l. 18 *after* which *insert* with Mâyâ as the third; p. 219, l. 29 *for* agents intelligents *read* agents non-intelligents; p. 220, l. 9 *for* Principle *read* Principe; p. 221, l. 7 *for* accuracy of distinctions *read* the accuracy of distinction; p. 288, l. 5 *for* right *read* rite; p. 299, l. 3 *for* tensure *read* tonsure; p. 365, l. 15 *for* Harkman *read* Hartmann; p. 369, l. 15 *for* religions *read* religious; p. 378, l. 2 *for* site *read* cite; p. 390, l. 27 *for* communi-  
tion *read* communion; p. 403, l. 2 *for* spiral *read* spiritual; p. 431,  
l. 7 *for* like *read* life; *Press notices* p. xi, l. 33 *for* performel *read*  
preformed; p. xx, l. 27 *for* ill-route *read* ill-repute

As regards *Sanskrit words and accents* p. 17, l. 11 *for* stran *read*  
tran; p. 54, l. 29 *for* prakâshânam *read* prakâshanam; p. 93, l. 7  
*for* Hangsâ *read* Hangsah; p. 103, l. 16 *for* nididhyâsitaryah  
*read* nidhidhyâsitavyah; p. 223, l. 27 *for* Kashthavate *read* Kâshtha-  
vat; p. 229, l. 14 *for* bijânam *read* bijânâm; p. 229, l. 15 *for*  
Mantrochchânan amâtrena *read* Mantrochchâranamâtrena; p. 231,  
l. 35 *for* Varna *read* Varma; p. 265, l. 16 *for* Kaleni *read* Kâlê hi;  
p. 265, l. 18 *for* sangsnayah *read* sangshayah; p. 265, l. 28 *for*  
Kulachakra *read* Kulâkulachakra; p. 272, l. 33 *for* nrinam *read*  
nrinâm; p. 289, l. 23 *for* vaher *read* vahir; p. 294, l. 36 *for* susidâha  
*read* susiddha; p. 295, l. 8 *for* vâchikâ *read* vachikâ; p. 302, l. 25  
*for* Shaktijnânang vina devi nirvana naiva jayate *read* Shakti-  
jnânang vinâ devi nirvânang naiva jâyate; p. 344, l. 5 *for* lakshanâm  
*read* lakshanam.







## PREFACE

THIS present edition is practically a new work, for I have revised and added to all the original Chapters and written six new ones (1, 5, 6, 10, 14, 15). Seven of the original Chapters embodied a set of Lectures delivered before, and at the request of, the Vivekânanda Society in Calcutta, a circumstance which will explain both the manner of them as also the "Conclusions" with which the volume closes. These conclusions are based on the conviction that the English-educated Indian, (for the question does not arise as regards any other), who has hitherto neglected his Scriptures (Shâstra) should adhere to his ancestral religion and thereby save both himself and his country, unless, after restudying it, in the light of his present knowledge, he is satisfied that it is false, in which case he should conscientiously abandon it and accept or (if he can) devise some other. But this Indian religion is not necessarily the Shâkta form of it, though my remarks happened to be directed to Shâktas with whose doctrine and practice I alone dealt.

These Lectures and other collected papers traverse new ground in the Literature of Indian Religion, for they are the first attempt to give an authenticated and understanding general account, from the Indian standpoint, of the chief features of the Doctrine and Practice of that class of Indian worshippers who are called Shâktas, that is those who adore the Divine Power (Mahâshakti) as Mahâdevî the Great Mother (Magna Mater) of the universe. As this religious community shares in common with others certain principles and practices, the work is also necessarily an account of the worship and spiritual disciplines called Sâdhanâ which, in varying forms, are adopted by all communities of Indian



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

worshippers (Sâdhakas) governed by the Âgama and its numerous scriptures called Tantras. These Shâktas are to be found all over India, but are largely predominant in Bengal and Assam, in which former Province I have lived for about the last thirty years, and with the belief of whose people therefore I am closer acquainted than with any other. And this in part accounts for the fact that I deal with their faith. Their doctrine and practice has not hitherto been understood and has been ill-spoken of, due to abuses which have occurred among the members of some sections of the community. If then I have succeeded in giving in this and other works a just account of the Scripture, and in reducing such evil as has been charged against some of its adherents to its right proportions, I shall be glad to have been in a position to make some small return to a Land which, more than any other, has been my home, and to which I am, in manifold ways, indebted.

Though, as I said in the last edition, I rate highly Shâkta doctrine and (with some exceptions) Shâkta rituals, I do not commit myself to the acceptance of everything which any Shâkta may have held or done. And though I have furnished argument in favour of his much-abused faith and practice, I am not here concerned to establish the truth and rightness of either. It is sufficient for my present purpose to show that it is reasonable, and that neither it nor "the Tantra" is the absurd and altogether immoral thing which some have supposed it to be. My attitude is an objective one. I have endeavoured to explain my subject as simply and lucidly as the recondite matters treated of allow, from an entirely detached and unprejudiced standpoint.

In giving an account of Indian beliefs and practices, we, who are foreigners, must place ourselves in the skin of the Hindu and must look at their doctrine and ritual through their eyes and not our own. It is difficult I know for most to do this: but until they can, their work lacks real value. And this is why, despite their industry and learning, the



## PREFACE

accounts given by Western authors of Eastern beliefs so generally fail to give their true meaning. Many I think do not even make the attempt. They look at the matter from the point of view of their own creed, or, (what is much worse), racial prejudice may stand in the way of the admission of any excellence or superiority in a coloured people. The method I follow is that of the Indian commentator, who, for the nonce, adapts himself to the standpoint of the doctrine which he explains. I mention this because two of my critics seem to think that my object is to establish the superiority of this particular form of Vedântik teaching over others. One may of course have one's personal preferences, but it is not my object here to establish the superiority of any school of Indian thought. This is a matter which each will decide for himself. One of these critics has said "The Tantras are claimed to be the specific Shâstra for the Kaliyuga by the Tantriks. Mr. Avalon seems to have taken these later at their own valuation; and this has considerably influenced his whole estimate of these books as Shâstras or authorities on the Hindu system. In doing so he has fallen into a series of curious errors in regard to other and particularly the Vaishnavic denominations." This criticism which was passed on one of my earlier books has been repeated as regards this. What these errors are my critics have not told me. I did not intend to deal, nor am I aware of having dealt, with the Vaishnava system beyond pointing out in the most general way that there is a Vaishnava and Shaiva as well as a Shâkta Agama. I have criticised neither this nor the Shaiva Âgama, both of which schools are also of high value. Though the instructed Western reader is aware that there are other interpretations of Vedânta besides that of Shangkara, many write as if the Vedânta meant his Mâyâvâda. This is not so. Vedânta is Upanishad of which there are varying interpretations. Each has certain merits and certain defects, as must necessarily be the case when we apply logic to that which is alogical. Indeed the point



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

which I took, and which I had hoped I had made plain was this.—Tantra Shâstra does not simply mean the Shâkta Tantra. The latter is only one division of Âgama which has to-day three main schools, Shâkta, Shaiva, and Vaishnava. There are certain things common to all. There are certain matters wherein they differ. When it is said that the Tantra Shâstra is the scripture of the Kali age, what is meant is that the Âgama in *all* its schools is that. There are some ancient schools of Vaishnava Âgama such as the Pancharâtra, and there are comparatively modern developments of Vaishnava teaching and practice such as that of the great Chaitanya. “Tântrik” does not mean only “Shâkta.” This is the main error of these critics and others. Naturally I have taken the Shâktas “at their own valuation,” for my object is not that of a missionary sectarian to show that they are right and others wrong, or the contrary, but to state what they the Shâktas hold. They alone can say this. A quarrelsome attitude as regards other creeds is the mark of a lower mind and of what the Shâktas call a Pashu. I believe a different position is assumed by all higher Sâdhakas to what every denomination they belong. Certainly a wide and liberal view is taken by the Shâkta. The Sammohana Tantra (Ch. IX) says that “it is only a fool who sees any difference between Râma and Shiva.” Each has his path which, if sincerely pursued, will procure for him the fruit of it. Whether some paths in the Indian or other religion are better and surer than others, and gain for their followers greater fruit, I do not here discuss.

The present work deals only with its subject in a very general and, as far as the matter permits, popular way. I refer those who wish to pursue it further to the other works on Tantra Shâstra which are published under the name “Arthur Avalon” to denote that they have been written with the direct co-operation of others and in particular with the assistance of one of my friends who will not permit me to mention his name. I do not desire sole credit for what



## PREFACE

is as much their work as mine. I, in particular refer, my reader to the series of Articles on the Mantra Shâstra which I wrote for the "Vedânta Kesari" now reprinting and to the "Serpent Power" shortly to be published. In this last there is given, for the first time, the rationale of Yoga through the Kundalinî Shakti, the outlines of which are indicated in Chapter 16 of this volume.

The Shâkta Tantra is a Sâdhanâ Shâstra of Monistic (Advaitavâda) Vedânta. It is to me a profound and powerful system, and its doctrine of Shakti or Divine Power is one of the greatest evolved, through spiritual intuition, by the human mind which, according to its teaching, is a manifestation of the Divine Consciousness Itself (Shiva). Its fundamental principles, some of which it shares with other Indian faiths, form a complete answer to the ignorant assertion recently made, for political purposes, in a leading English journal, that this country has never evolved during the whole course of its History any spiritual concept capable of uplifting a nation. What a capacity for failure! But what can stir and lift man if the doctrine that he *is* Power (Shakti) can not do so? As he has made his past, he can make his future; he and none other.

The Doctrine is laid on grand lines and what is not, in this Vast Land of great distances?

I write this on a high plateau in Palamow and look across a wide stretch of tall grass with tips of waving silver, the home, until about nine years ago (when the place was opened up), of the wild bison. The green and silver of the Prairie is splashed here and there with patches of orange flower, which the blazing sun jewels with its points of light. The near distance shows the water of a mountain tarn and two clumps of trees—the groves of worship of the ancient Kolarian peoples. Here a sparse remnant adore to-day as did their ancestors thousands of years ago. Of Brâhmanism or other Aryan faith, there is no sign. Beyond, the grassland rises to meet the great length of a



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

mounting hill-forest, dark green against the blue of distance, in which other Hill tops beckon forward the curious mind with their lure of mystery. And this lure is all around, for the upland is girdled some fifteen hundred feet below with wooded valleys, valleys on the East black with great Sal forests, which, as those of the upland, are the haunt of bear, tiger and sambur,—wild forests, lit only here and there by rare open spaces, and the glinting stream and white sands of the Koel River. Beyond the valleys, and all around the upland are a circle of Hills rising on the East wave upon wave. Here man, who has not known himself and his greatness seems nought, and Nature all, a feeling which deepens as night falls on the earth with quick assault, the dark dome of heaven sparkling with the light of countless rising stars, fading again at Dawn as the Visible Devatâ, the resplendent joyous Sun, the Eye of Vishnu, arises from out the "Eastern Mountain."

Such a vast scene is but one of many in this, itself vast, secular, and awe-inspiring land. Such a view we may imagine was displayed before the eyes of the incoming Aryan peoples. Upon them the influence of the *Soul* fell, filling them with awe. The Spirit, manifesting in this sacred earth, at length revealed Itself in their minds. Within them arose the Inner Sun, which is the Light of all, unveiling to the eye of mind truths hidden in its subtle garb of thought. These tenuous veils again fell away, when, by the intuition of the forest-sages, was realised the Spiritual Ether of Consciousness, whose Mother-Power (Shakti) as Will, Thought and Action ever personalizes as the life of this magnetic stretch of earth which is India, as the world of which it is an head-ornament, and as (in the words of the Indian Scripture) the countless other universes, which are but the dust of Her Sovereign Feet.

NETURHAT, }  
11th October 1918. }

J.W.



# SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTORY

A FRIEND of mine who read the last edition of this book suggested that I should add to it an opening Chapter, stating the most general and fundamental principles of the subject as a guide to the understanding of what follows, together with an outline of the latter in which the relation of the several parts should be shown. I have not at present the time, nor in the present book the space, to give effect to my friend's wishes in the way I would have desired, but will not altogether neglect them.

To the Western, Indian Religion generally seems a "jungle" of contradictory beliefs amidst which he is lost. Only those who have understood its main principles can show them the path.

It has been asserted that there is no such thing as Indian Religion, though there are many Religions in India. This is not so. As I have already pointed out ("Is India Civilized?") there is a common Indian religion which I have called Bhârata Dharma, which is an Aryan religion (Âryadharmâ) held by all Âryas whether Brâhmanic, Buddhist or Jaina. These are the three main divisions of the Bhârata Dharma. I exclude other religions in India, namely, the Semitic religions, Judaism, Christianity and



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Mahommedanism. Not that all these are purely Semitic. Christianity became in part Aryanised when it was adopted by the Western Aryans, as also happened with Mahommedanism when accepted by such Eastern Aryans as the Persians and the Aryanised peoples of India.

Thus Sufism is either a form of Vedânta or indebted to it. The general Indian religion or Bhârata Dharma holds that the world is an Order or Cosmos. It is not a Chaos of things and beings thrown haphazard together, in which there is no binding relation or rule. The world-order is Dharma, which is that by which the universe is upheld (Dhâryate). Without Dharma it would fall to pieces and dissolve into nothingness. But this is not possible, for though there is Disorder (Adharma), it exists, and can exist only locally, for a time, and in particular parts of the whole. Order however will and, from the nature of things, *must* ultimately assert itself. And this is the meaning of the saying that Righteousness or Dharma prevails. This is in the nature of things, for Dharma is not a law imposed from without by the Ukase of some Celestial Czar. It is the nature of things; that which constitutes them what they are (Svalakshanadhâranât Dharma). It is the expression of their true being and can only cease to be, as regards them, when they themselves cease to be. Belief in righteousness is then in something not arbitrarily imposed from without by a Law-giver, but belief in a Principle of Reason which all men can recognise for themselves if they will. Again Dharma is not only the law of each being but necessarily also of the whole, and expresses the right relations of each part to the whole. This whole is again harmonious, otherwise it would dissolve. The principle which holds it together as one mighty organism is Dharma. The particular Dharma calls for such recognition and action in accordance therewith. Religion, therefore, which etymologically means that which obliges or *binds* together, is in its most fundamental sense the *recognition*



## INTRODUCTORY

that the world is an Order, of which each man, being, and thing, is a part, and to which each man stands in a definite, established relation; together with *action* based on, and consistent with, such recognition, and *in harmony* with the whole cosmic activity. Whilst therefore the religious man is he who feels that he is *bound* in varying ways to all being, the irreligious man is he who egoistically considers everything from the standpoint of his limited self and its interests, without regard for his fellows, or the world at large. The essentially irreligious character of such an attitude is shown by the fact that, if it were adopted by all, it would lead to the negation of Cosmos that is Chaos. Therefore all religions are agreed in the essentials of morality and hold that selfishness, in its widest sense, is the root of all sin and crime (Adharma). Morality is thus the true nature of man. The general Dharma (Sâmânya Dharma) is the universal law governing all, just as the particular Dharma (Vishesa Dharma) varies with, and is peculiar to, each class of being. It follows from what is above stated that disharmony is suffering. This is an obvious fact. Wrong conduct is productive of ill, as right conduct is productive of good. As a man sows, so he will reap. There is an Immanent Justice. But these results, though they may appear at once, do not always do so. The fruit of no action is lost. It must, according to the law of causality, which is a law of reason, bear effect. If its author does not suffer for it here and now in the present life, he will do so in some future one. Birth and death mean the creation and destruction of bodies. The spirits so embodied are infinite in number and eternal. The material universe comes and goes. This in Brâhmanism has been said (see Sanâtana Vaidika Dharma by Bhagavan Das) to be "the Systole and Diastole of the one Universal Heart, Itself at rest—the moveless play of Consciousness." All would say that the appearance and disappearance of the universe is the nature of That which



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

it ultimately is, or Svabhâva. Its immediate cause is Desire, which Buddhism calls Trishnâ—or thirst, that is desire or thirst for world-enjoyment in the universe of form. Action (Karma) is prompted by desire and breeds again desire. This action may be good (Dharma) or bad (Adharma) leading to enjoyment or suffering. Each embodied soul (Jivâtmâ) will be reborn and reborn into the world until it is freed from all desire. This involves the doctrine of Re-incarnation. These multiple births and deaths in the transmigratory worlds are called Sangsâra or wandering. The world is a Dvandva, that is a composite of happiness and suffering. Happiness of a transitory kind may be had therein by adherence to Dharma in following Kâma (Desire) and Artha (the means) by which lawful desires may be given effect. These constitute what Brâhmanism calls the Trivarga of the Purushârtha, or three aims of sentient being. But just as desire leads to manifestation in form, so desirelessness leads away from it. Those who reach this state seek Moksha or Nirvâna (the fourth Purushârtha), which is a state of eternal bliss beyond the worlds of changing forms. For there is an eternal rest from suffering, which desire, (together with a natural tendency to pass its right limits) brings upon men. They must therefore either live with desire in harmony with the universal order, or if desireless, they may (for each is master of his future) pass beyond the manifest to That which is Moksha or Nirvâna. Religion, and therefore true civilization, consists in the upholding of Dharma as the individual and general good, and the fostering of spiritual progress, so that, with justice to all beings, true happiness, which is the immediate and ultimate end of all Humanity, and indeed of all being, may be attained.

Anyone who holds these beliefs follows the Bhârata Dharma or common principles of all Aryan beliefs. Thus as regards God we may either deny His existence (Atheism)



## INTRODUCTORY

or affirm it (Theism) or say we have no sufficient proof one way or another (Agnosticism). It is possible to accept the concept of an eternal Law (Dharma) and its sanctions in a self-governed universe without belief in a personal Lord (Îshvara). So Sângkhya, which proceeds on intellectual proof only, does not deny God but holds that the being of a Lord is "not proved."

There are then based on this common foundation three main religions, Brâhmanism, Buddhism and Jainism. Of the second, a great and universal faith, it has been said that, with each fresh acquirement of knowledge as to Buddhism, it seems more difficult to separate it from the Hinduism out of which it emerged and into which (in Northern Buddhism) it relapsed. This is of course not to say that there are no differences between the two, but that they share in certain general and common principles as their base. Brâhmanism, of which the Shâkta doctrine and practice is a particular form, accepts Veda as its ultimate authority. By this, in its form as the four Vedas, are revealed the doctrine of the Brahman the "All-pervader," the infinite Substance which is in Itself (Svarûpa) Consciousness (Chaitanya or Chit) from which comes creation, maintenance and withdrawal, commonly called destruction, (though man, not God, destroys), and Which in Its relation to the universe which the Brahman controls is known as Îshvara, the Ruling Lord or "Personal" God. Veda both as spiritual experience and the word "which is heard" (Shruti) is the warrant for this. But Shruti, as the ultimate authority, has received various interpretations and so we find in Brâhmanism, as in Christianity, differing schools and sects adopting various interpretations of the Revealed Word. Veda says "All this (that is the universe) is Brahman." All are agreed that Brahman or Spirit is, relatively to us, Being (Sat), Consciousness (Chit) and Bliss (Ânanda). It is Sachchidânanda. But in what sense is "This" (Idam) Brahman? The Monistic interpretation (Advaitavâda), as



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

given for instance by the great scholastic Shangkarâchâryya, is that there is a complete identity in essence of both. There is one Spirit (Âtmâ), with two aspects ; as transcendent supreme (Paramâtmâ), and as immanent and embodied (Jivâtmâ). The two are at base one when we eliminate Mâyâ in the form of mind and body. According to the qualified Monism (Vishishtâdvaita) of the great scholastic Râmânuja, "This" is Brahman in the sense that it is the body of the Brahman, just as we distinguish our body from our inner self. According to the Dualists (Dvaitavâda) the saying is interpreted in terms of nearness (samîpya) and likeness (sâdrishya) for, though God and man are distinct, the former so pervades and is so unextricably involved in the universe as creator and maintainer, that the latter, in this sense, seems to be Brahman through proximity.

Then again there is the Shuddhâdvaita of that branch of the Âgamas which is called Shaivasiddhânta, the Vaishnava Pancharâtra doctrine, the Advaita of the Kashmirian Shaivâgama (Trika), the followers of which, though Advaitins, have very subtly criticised Shangkara's doctrine on several points. Difference of views upon this question and that of the nature of Mâyâ, which the world is said to be, necessarily implies difference upon other matters of doctrine. Then there are, with many resemblances, some differences in ritual practice. Thus it comes about that Brâhmanism includes many divisions of worshippers calling themselves by different names. There are Smârtas who are the present-day representatives of the old Vaidik doctrine and ritual practice, and on the other hand a number of divisions of worshippers calling themselves Shâktas, Shaivas, Vaishnavas and so forth with subdivisions of these. These latter are governed in general, that is, in their older forms, by the Âgamas or Tantra-Shâstras, which, at any rate to-day and for centuries past (whatever may have been their origin), admit the authority of the Vedas and recognise other Scriptures. (As to these, see the Intro-



## INTRODUCTORY

duction to the Kaulâchâryya Sadânanda's Commentary on the Îsha Upanishad which I have published.)

The meaning of Veda is not commonly rightly understood. But this is a vast subject which underlies all others, touching as it does the seat of all authority and knowledge into which I have not the space to enter here. There are four main classes of Brâhmanical Scripture, namely, Veda or Shruti, Smriti, Purâna, and Âgama. There are also four ages or Yuga the latter being a fraction of a Kalpa or Day of Brahmâ of 4,320,000,000 years. This period is the life of an universe on the expiration of which all re-enters Brahman and thereafter issues from it. A Mahâyuga is composed of the four ages called Satya, Treta, Dvâpara, Kali, the first being the golden age of righteousness since when all has gradually declined physically, morally, and spiritually. For each of the ages a suitable Shâstra is given, for Satya or Krita the Vedas, for Tretâ the Smritishâstra, for Dvâpara the Purânas, and for Kaliyuga the Âgama or Tantra Shâstra. So the Kulârnavâ Tantra says:—

*Krite shrutyukta âchârastretâyâm smriti-sambhavah  
Dvâpare tu puranoktah, kalâvâgamasammatah*

(see also Mahânirvâna Tantra I—28 *et seq.*) and the Târâpradîpa says that in the Kaliyuga (the supposed present age) the Tântrika and not the Vaidika Dharma, in the sense of mode of life and ritual, is to be followed (See "Principles of Tantra." Ed. A. Avalon). When it is said that the Âgama is the peculiar Scripture of the Kali Age, this does not mean (at any rate to any particular division of its followers) that something is presented which is opposed to Veda. It is true however that, as between these followers, there is sometimes a conflict on the question whether a particular form of the Âgama is unvedic (avaidika) or not. The Âgama, however, as a whole, purports to be a presentment of the teaching of Veda, just as the Purânas and Smritis are. It is that



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

presentment of Vaidik truth which is suitable for the Kali age. Indeed the Shâkta followers of the Âgama claim that its Tantras contain the very core of the Veda to which it is described to bear the same relation as the Supreme Spirit (Paramâtmâ) to the embodied spirit (Jîvâtmâ). In a similar way, in the seven Tantrik Âchârâs (see Ch. IV post), Kaulâchâra is the controlling, informing life of the gross body called Vedâchâra, each of the Âchâras, which follow the latter up to Kaulâchâra, being more and more subtle sheaths. The Tantra Shâstra is thus that presentment of Vedantic truth which is modelled, as regards mode of life and ritual, to meet the characteristics and infirmities of the Kaliyuga. As men have no longer the capacity, longevity and moral strength required to carry out the Vaidika Karma-Kânda (ritual section), the Tantra Shâstra prescribes a Sâdhanâ of its own for the attainment of the common end of all Shâstra, that is a happy life on earth, Heaven thereafter, and at length Liberation. Religion is in fact the true pursuit of happiness.

As explained in the next and following Chapters, this Âgama, which governs according to its followers the Kaliyuga, is itself divided into several schools or communities of worshippers. One of these divisions is the Shâkta. It is with Shâkta doctrine and worship, one of the forms of Brâhmanism, which is again a form of the general Bhârata Dharma, that this book deals.

The Shâkta is so called because he is a worshipper of Shakti (Power) that is God in Mother-form as the Supreme Power which creates, sustains and withdraws the universe. His rule of life is Shâktadharmâ, his doctrine of Shakti is Shaktivâda or Shâkta Darshana. God is worshipped as the Great Mother because, in this aspect, God is active, and produces, nourishes, and maintains all. But this is for worship. God is no more female than male or neuter. God is beyond sex. God is thought of as Mother in the mind, and is so felt by the



## INTRODUCTORY

heart, of the Sâdhaka who worships Her Lotus Feet, the dust on which are millions of universes. The Power, or active aspect of God the immanent, is thus called Shakti. In Her static transcendent aspect the Mother or Shakti or Shivâ is Shiva or "the Good." That is, philosophically speaking, Shiva is the unchanging Consciousness, and Shakti is its changing Power appearing as mind and matter. Shiva-Shakti is therefore Consciousness and Its Power. This then is the doctrine of dual aspects of the one Brahman acting through Its Trinity of Powers (Ichchhâ, will; Jnâna, knowledge; Kriyâ, action). In the static transcendent aspect (Shiva) the one Brahman does not change, and in the kinetic immanent aspect (Shivâ or Shakti) It does. There is thus changelessness in change. The individual or embodied Spirit (Jîvâtmâ) is one with the transcendent spirit (Paramâtmâ). The former is a part (Angsha) of the latter, and the enveloping mind and body are manifestations of Supreme Power. Shâkta Darshana is therefore a form of Monism (Advaitavâda). In creation an effect is produced without change in the Producer. In creation the Power (Shakti) "goes forth" (Prasarati) in a series of emanations or transformations, which are called, in the Shaiva and Shâkta Tantras, the 36 Tattvas. These mark the various stages through which Shiva, the Supreme Consciousness, as Shakti, presents itself as object to Itself as subject, the latter at first experiencing the former as part of the Self, and then through the operation of Mâyâ Shakti as different from the Self. This is the final stage in which every self (Purusha) is mutually exclusive of every other. Mâyâ, which achieves this, is one of the Powers of the Mother or Devî. The Will-to-become-many (Bahu syâm prajâyeya) is the creative impulse which not only creates but reproduces an eternal order. The Lord remembers the diversities latent in His own Mâyâ Shakti due to the previous Karmas of Jîvas and allows them to unfold themselves by His volition. It is that Power by which infinite formless



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Consciousness veils Itself to itself and negates and limits itself in order that it may experience itself as form.

This Mâyâ Shakti assumes the form of Prakriti Tattva, which is composed of three Gunas or Factors called Sattva, Rajas, Tamas. The function of Prakriti is to veil, limit, or *finitise* pure infinite formless Consciousness, so as to produce form, for without such limitation there cannot be the appearance of form. These Gunas work by mutual suppression. The function of Tamas is to veil consciousness, of Sattva to reveal it, and of Rajas the active principle to make either Tamas suppress Sattva or Sattva suppress Tamas. These Gunas are present in all particular existence, as in the general cause or Prakriti Shakti. Evolution means the increased operation of Sattva guna. Thus the mineral world is more subject to Tamas than the rest. There is less Tamas and more Sattva in the vegetable world. In the animal world Sattva is increased, and still more so in man, who may rise through the cultivation of the Sattva guna to Pure Consciousness (Moksha) Itself. To use Western parlance consciousness more and more appears as forms evolve and rise to man. Consciousness does not change, but its mental and material envelopes do, thus releasing and giving consciousness more play. As Pure Consciousness is Spirit, the release of It from the bonds of matter means that Forms which issue from the Power of Spirit (Shakti) become more and more Sâttvik. A truly Sâttvik man is therefore a spiritual man. The aim of Sâdhanâ is therefore the cultivation of the Sattva Guna. Nature (Prakriti) is thus the Veil of Spirit as Tamas Guna, the Revealer of Spirit as Sattva Guna, and the Activity (Rajas Guna) which makes either work. Thus the upward or revealing movement from the predominance of Tamas to that of Sattva represents the spiritual progress of the embodied Spirit or Jîvâtmâ.

It is the desire for the life of form which produces the universe. This desire exists in the collective Vâsanâ, held



## INTRODUCTORY

like all else, in inchoate state in the Mother-Power, which passing from its own (Svarûpa) formless state gives effect to them. Upon the expiration of the vast length of time which constitutes a day of Brahmâ, the whole universe is withdrawn into the great Causal Womb (Yoni) which produced it. The limited selves are withdrawn into it, and again, when the creative throes are felt, are put forth from it, each appearing in that form and state which its previous Karma had made for it. Those who do good Karma but with desire and self-regard (Sakâma) go on death to Heaven and reap their reward in good future birth on earth—for Heaven is also a transitory state. The bad are punished by evil births on earth and suffering in the Hells which are also transitory. Those however who have rid themselves of all self-regarding desire and work selflessly (Nishkâma Karma) realise the Brahman nature which is Sachchidânanda. Such are liberated, that is never appear again in the world of form, which is the world of suffering, and enter into the infinite ocean of Bliss Itself. This is Moksha or Mukti or liberation. As it is freedom from the universe of form, it can only be attained through detachment from the world and desirelessness. For those who desire the world of form cannot be freed of it. Life therefore is a field in which man, who has gradually ascended through lower forms of mineral, vegetable and animal life, is given the opportunity of heaven-life and liberation. The universe has a moral purpose, namely the affording to all existence of a field wherein it may reap the fruit of its actions. The forms of life are therefore the stairs (Sopâna) on which man mounts to the state of infinite, eternal, and formless Bliss. This then is the origin and the end of man. He has made for himself his own past and present condition and will make his future one. His essential nature is free. If wise, he adopts the means (Sâdhanâ) which lead to lasting happiness, for that of the world is not to be had by all, and even when attained is



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

perishable and mixed with suffering. This Sâdhanâ consists of various means and disciplines employed to produce purity of mind (Chittashuddhi), and devotion to, and worship of, the Magna Mater of all. It is with these means that the religious Tantra Shâstras are mainly concerned. The Shâkta Tantra Shâstra contains a most elaborate and wonderful ritual, partly its own, partly of Vaidik origin. To a ritualist it is of absorbing interest.

Ritual is an art, the art of religion. Art is the outward material expression of ideas intellectually held and emotionally felt. Ritual art is concerned with the expression of those ideas and feelings which are specifically called religious. It is a mode by which religious truth is presented, and made intelligible in material forms and symbols to the mind. It appeals to all natures passionately sensible of that Beauty in which, to some, God most manifests Himself. But it is more than this. For it is the means by which the mind is transformed and purified. In particular according to Indian principles it is the instrument whereby the consciousness of the worshipper (Sâdhaka) is *shaped in actual fact* into forms of experience which embody the truths which Scripture teaches. The Shâkta is thus taught that he is one with Shiva and His Power or Shakti. This is not a matter of mere argument. It is a matter for experience. It is ritual and Yoga-practice which secures that experience for him. How profound Indian ritual is, will be admitted by those who have understood the general principles of all ritual and symbolism, and have studied it in its Indian form, with a knowledge of the principles of which it is an expression. Those who speak of "mummery," "gibberish" and "superstition" betray both their incapacity and ignorance.

The Âgamas are not themselves treatises on Philosophy, though they impliedly contain a particular theory of life. They are what is called Sâdhanâ Shâstras, that is practical Scriptures prescribing the *means* by which happiness, the



## INTRODUCTORY

quest of all mankind, may be attained. And as lasting happiness is God, they teach how man by the worship of Him in Her form, and by practice of the disciplines prescribed, may attain a divine experience. From incidental statements and the practices described the philosophy is extracted. The speaker of the Tantras and the revealer of the Shâkta Tantra is Shiva Himself or Shivâ the Devî Herself. Now it is the first who teaches and the second who listens (Âgama). Now again the latter assumes the role of Guru and answers the questions of Shiva (Nigama). For the two are one. Sometimes there are other interlocutors. Thus one of the Tantras is called Îshvara-kârtikeyasamvâda, for there the Lord addresses his son Kârtikeya. The Tantra Shâstra therefore claims to be a Revelation, and of the same essential truths as those contained in the Eternal Veda which is an authority to itself (Svatahsiddha). Those who have had experience of the truths recorded in Shâstra, have also proclaimed the *practical means* whereby their experience was gained. "Adopt those means" they say, "and you will also have for yourself our experience." This is the importance of Sâdhanâ and all Sâdhanâ Shâstras. The Guru says "do as I tell you. Follow the method prescribed by Scripture. Curb your desires. Attain a pure disposition, and then and thus only will you obtain that certainty, that experience which will render any questionings unnecessary." The practical importance of the Âgama lies in its assumption of these principles and in the methods which it enjoins for the attainment of that state in which the truth is realised. The following Chapters shortly explain some of the main features of both the philosophy and practice of the Shâkta division of the Âgama. For their full development many volumes are necessary. What is here said is a mere sketch in a popular form of a vast subject.

I will conclude this Chapter with extracts from a Bengali letter written to me shortly before his death,



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

now some six years ago, by Pandit Shivachandra vidyârnavâ the Shâkta author of the "Tantratattva" which I have published under the title "Principles of Tantra." The words in brackets are my own.

"At the present time the general public are ignorant of the principles of the Tantra Shâstra. The cause of this ignorance is the fact that the Tantra Shâstra is a Sâdhanâ Shâstra, *the greater part of which becomes intelligible only by Sâdhanâ*. For this reason the Shâstra and its Teachers prohibit their general promulgation. So long as the Shâstra was learnt from Gurus only, this golden rule was of immense good. In course of time the old Sâdhanâ has become almost extinct, and along with it the knowledge of the deep and mighty principles of the Shâstra is almost lost. Nevertheless some faint shadowings of these principles (which can be thoroughly known by Sâdhanâ only) have been put before the public partly with the view to preserve Shâstric knowledge from destruction, and partly for commercial reasons. When I commenced to write Tantratattva some 25 years ago (some 31 years from date) Bengali society was in a perilous state owing to the influx of other religions, want of faith and a spirit of disputation. Shortly before this a number of English books had appeared on the Tantra Shâstra which, whilst ignorant of Dharma, Sâdhanâ and Siddhi, contained some hideous and outrageous pictures drawn by the Bengali historians and novelists ignorant of, and unfaithful to, Shâstric principles. The English books by English writers contained merely a reflection of what English-educated Bengalis of those days had written. Both are even to-day equally ignorant of the Tantra Shâstra. For this reason in writing Tantratattva I could not go deeply into the subject as my heart wished. I had to spend my time in removing thorns (objections and charges) from the path by reasoning and argument. I could not therefore deal in my book with most of the subjects which, when I



## INTRODUCTORY

brought out the first volume, I promised to discuss. The Tantra Shâstra is broadly divided into three parts, namely Sâdhanâ, Siddhi (that which is gained by Sâdhanâ) and philosophy. Unlike other systems it is not narrow nor does it generate doubt by setting forth conflicting views. For its speaker is One and not many and He is omniscient. The philosophy is however scattered throughout the Tantrik treatises and is dealt with, as occasion arises, in connection with Sâdhanâ and Siddhi. Could (as I had suggested to him) such parts be collected and arranged, according to the principles of the subject matter, they would form a vast system of philosophy wonderful, divine, lasting, true, and carrying conviction to men. As a Philosophy it is at the head of all others. You have prayed to Parameshvara (God) for my long life, and my desire to carry out my project makes me also pray for it. But the state of my body makes me doubt whether the prayer will be granted. By the grace therefore of the Mother the sooner the work is done the better. You say 'that those who worship Parameshvara He makes of one family. Let therefore all distinctions be put aside for all Sâdhakas are as such one.' This noble principle is the final word of all Shâstras, all communities, and all religions. All distinctions which arise from differences in the physical body are distinctions for the human world only. They have no place in the world of worship of Parameshvara. The more therefore that we shall approach Him the more will the differences between you and me vanish. It is because both of us pray for the removal of all such differences, that I am led to rely on your encouragement and help and am bold to take up this difficult and daring work. If by your grace the gate of this Tantrik philosophy is opened in the third part of Tantratattva I dare to say that the learned in all countries will gaze and be astonished for it is pure truth, and for this reason I shall be able to place it before them with perfect clearness."



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Unfortunately this project of a third part of the Tantra-tattva could not be carried out owing to the lamented death of its author, which followed not long after the receipt of this letter. Naturally, like all believers throughout the whole world, he claimed for his Scripture the possession in all its details of what was true or good. Whilst others may not concede this, I think that those with knowledge and understanding and free from prejudice will allow that it contains a profoundly conceived doctrine, wonderfully worked out in practice. Some of its ideas and principles are shared (though it be under other names and forms) by all religious men, and others either by all or some Indian communities, who are not Shâktas. Leaving therefore for the moment aside what may be said to be peculiar to itself it cannot be that wholly absurd, repulsive, and infamous system ("lust, mummary and magic" as Brian Hodgson called it) which it has been said to be. An impartial criticism may be summed up in the few words that together with what has value, it contains some practices which are not approved and which have led to abuse. As to these the reader is referred to the Chapter on the Panchatattva or Secret Ritual.



## CHAPTER II

### WHAT ARE THE TANTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE ?

**A** VERY common expression in English writings is "The Tantra ;" but its use is often due to a misconception and leads to others. For what does Tantra mean ? The word denotes injunction (Vidhi), regulation (Niyama), Shâstra generally or treatise. Thus Shangkara calls the Sânkhya a Tantra. A secular writing may be called Tantra. For the following note I am indebted to Professor Surendranath Das Gupta. "The word 'Tantra' has been derived in the Kâshikâ-Vritti (7-2-9) from the root 'Tan' to 'Spread' by the Aunâdika rule Sarvadhâtubhya stran, with the addition of the suffix 'stran.' Vâchaspati, Ânandagiri, and Govindânanda, however, derive the word from the root 'Tatri' or 'Tantri' in the sense of Vyutpâdana, origination or knowledge. In Ganapâtha, however, 'Tantri' has the same meaning as 'Tan' 'to Spread' and it is probable that the former root is a modification of the latter. The meaning Vyutpâdana is also probably derived by narrowing the general sense of Vistâra which is the meaning of the root 'Tan.'"

According to the derivation of 'Tantra' from *Tan* to spread, Tantra is that (Scripture) by which knowledge (Jnâna) is spread (Tanyate, vistâryate jnânam anena iti Tantram). The suffix *Tra* is from the root "to save." That knowledge is spread which saves. What is that but religious knowledge ? Therefore, as here and generally used, Tantra means a particular kind of religious scripture. The



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Kâmika Âgama of the Shaiva Siddhânta (Tantrântara Patala) says

*Tanoti vipulânarthân tattvamantra-samanvitân*

*Trânancha kurute yasmât tantramityabhidhîyate*

(It is called Tantra because it promulgates great knowledge concerning Tattva and Mantra and because it saves). It is a common misconception that Tantra is the name of the Scripture of the Shâktas or worshippers of Shakti. This is not so. There are Tantras of other sects of the Âgama, Tantras of Shaivas, Vaishnavas and so forth. We cannot speak of "The Treatise" nor of "The Tantra" any more than we can or do speak of the Purâna, the Samhitâ. We can speak of the Tantras as we do of the Purânas. These Tantras are Shâstras of what is called the Âgama? In a review of one of my works it was suggested that the Âgama is a class of Scriptures dealing with the worship of Saguna Îshvara which was revealed at the close of the age of the Upanishads, and introduced partly because of the falling into desuetude of the Vaidika Âchâra, and partly because of the increasing numbers of persons entering the Hindu fold who were not competent (Adhikârî) for that Âchâra. I will not however deal with this historical question beyond noting the fact that the Âgama is open to all persons of all castes and both sexes, and is not subject to the restrictions of the Vaidika Âchâra. This last term is a common one and comes from the verbal root *char*, which means to move or to act, the prefix *a* being probably used in the sense of restriction. Âchâra thus means practice, way, rule of life governing a Sâdhaka, or one who does Sâdhanâ or practice for some desired end (Siddhi).

The Âgamas are divided into three main groups according as the Ishtadevatâ worshipped is Shakti, Shiva or Vishnu. The first is the Shâkta Âgama, the second the Shaivâgama, and the third the Vaishnava Âgama or Pancharâtra. This last is the Scripture to which the Shrîmad Bhâgavata refers as Sâttvata Tantra in the lines,



## TANTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

*Tenoktang sâttvatang tantram*

*Yaj jnâttvâ muktibhâg bhavet*

*Yatra strîshûdradâsânâng*

*Sangskâro vaishnavah smritah.*

Some Âgamas are called Vaidik (Vaidika Âgama) and some non-Vaidik (Avaidika). The Kûrma Purâna (XVI. 1) mentions as belonging to the latter, Kapâla, Lâkula, Vâma, Bhairava, Pûrva, Pashchima, Pancharâtra, Pâshupata and many others. Pâshupata again is said to be both Vaidika and Avaidika such as Lâkula. Kûrma Purâna (Uttarabhâga Ch. 38) says "By Me was first composed, for the attainment of liberation, Shrauta (Vaidika) Pâshupata which is excellent, subtle, and secret, the essence of Veda (Vedasâra). The learned devoted to Veda should meditate on Shiva Pashupati. This is Pâshupata Yoga to be practised by seekers of liberation. By Me also have been spoken Pâshupata, Soma, Lâkula and Bhairava opposed to Veda. (Vedavâdaviruddhâni). These should not be practised. They are outside Veda." Sanatkumâra Samhitâ says :—

*Shrautâshrautavibhedena dvividhastu shivâgamah*

*Shrutisâramayah shrautah sah punardvividho matah*

*Svatantra itarashcheti svatanthro dashadhâ purâ*

*Tathâshtadashadhâ pashchât siddhânta iti gîyate*

*Itarah shrutisârastu shatakoti-pravistarah,*

(See also Vâyû Sâmhita Ch. 28).

[Shaivâgama is of two kinds, Shrauta and Ashrauta. Shrauta is Shrutisâramaya and of two kinds, Svatantra and Itara. Svatantra is first of ten kinds and then Siddhânta of eighteen kinds. (This is the Shaivasiddhânta Âgama with 28 Mûla Agamas and 207 Upâgamas. It is Shuddhâdvaita because in it there is no Visheshana). Itara is Shrutisâra with numerous varieties.] Into this mass of sects I do not attempt to here enter, except in a general way. My subject is the doctrine and ritual of the Shâktas. There are said to be Shaiva, Vaishnava, Mâyâvâda, and Shâkta Upanishads favouring one or another doctrine.



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

We must however in all cases distinguish between what a School says of itself and what others say of it. So far as I am aware all Âgamas, whatever be their origin, *claim* now to be based on Shruti, though of course as different interpretations are put on Shruti, those who accept one interpretation are apt to speak of differing Schools as heretical. These main divisions again have subdivisions. Thus there are several Schools of Shaivas; and there are Shâktas with their nine Âmnâyas, four Sampradâyas (Kerala, Kashmîra, Gauda and Vilâsa) each divided into twofold division of inner and outer worship (Sammohana Tantra Ch. V.) There is for instance the Northern Shaiva School called Trika of Kashmir, in which country at one time the Tantra Shâstra was very prevalent. There is again the Southern Shaiva School called Shaivasiddhânta. The Shâktas who are to be found throughout India are largely prevalent in Bengal and Assam. The Shâktas are rather allied with the Northern Advaita Shaiva than with the others, though in them also there is worship of Shakti. Shiva and Shakti are one and he who worships one necessarily worships the other. But whereas the Shaiva predominantly worships Shiva, the Shâkta predominantly worships the Shakti side of the Ardhanârîshvara Mûrti, which is both Shiva and Shakti.

Mahâvishnu and Sadâshiva are also one. As the Sammohana Tantra (Ch. VIII) says "Without Prakriti the Sangsâra (World) cannot be. Without Purusha true knowledge cannot be attained. Therefore should both be worshipped; with Mahâkâlî, Mahâkâla." Some, it says, speak of Shiva, some of Shakti, some of Nârâyana (Vishnu). But the supreme Nârâyana (Âdinârâyana) is supreme Shiva (Parashambhu), the Nirguna Brahman pure as crystal. The two aspects of the Supreme reflect the one in the other. The reflection (Pratibimba) is Mâyâ whence the World-Lords (Lokapâlas) and the Worlds are born. The Âdyâ Lalitâ (Mahâshakti) at one time assumed the male form of Krishna



## TANTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

and at another that of Râma. (Ch. IX). For all aspects are in Mahâkâlî, one with Bhairava Mahâkâla, Who is Mahâvishnu. "It is only a fool" it says, "who sees any difference between Râma and Shiva." This is of course to look at the matter from the high Vedantik standpoint of Shâkta doctrine. Nevertheless separate worship and rituals exist among the Sects. A common philosophical basis of the Shaivas and those Shâktas, who are Âgamavâdins, is the doctrine of the thirty-six Tattvas. These are referred to in the Tantra (Ch. VII) so well known in Bengal which is called Kulârnavâ. They are also referred to in other Shâkta works and their commentaries such as the Ânandalaharî. The Shâradâ Tilaka, a great authority amongst the Bengal Shâktas, is the work of Lakshmanâchâryya an author of the Kashmir Shaiva school. The latter school as also the Shâktas are Advaitins. The Shaiva Siddhânta and Pancharâtra are Shuddhâdvaita and Visishtâdvaita respectively. There is also a great body of Buddhist Tantras of differing schools. Now all these schools have Tantras of their own. The original connection of the Shaiva schools is said to be shown amongst other things, by the fact that some Tantras are common, such as Mrigendra and Mâtanga Tantras. It has been asserted that the Shâkta school is not historically connected with the Shaivas. No grounds were given for this statement. Whatever be the historical origins of the former, the two appear to be in several respects allied at present, as any one who knows Shâkta literature may find out for himself. In fact Shâkta literature is in parts unintelligible to one unacquainted with some features of what is called the Shaiva Darshana. How otherwise is it that the 36 Tattvas and Shadadhvâ are common to both? The Shâktas have again been divided into three groups. Thus Pandit R. Ananta Shâstri in the Introduction to his edition of the Ânandalaharî speaks of the Kaula or Shâkta Shâstras with sixty-four Tantras; the Mishra with eight Tantras; and the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Samaya group which are said to be the most important of the Shâkta Âgamas, of which five are mentioned. This classification purports to be based on the nature of the object pursued, according as it belongs to one or other of the Purushârtha. As so explained the classification seems too neat and artificial to be altogether historically accurate. I express here no opinion on the point. Pancharâtra literature is very considerable, one hundred and eight works being mentioned by the same Pandit in Vol. XIII. p. 357-363 of the "Theosophist." I would refer the reader also to the very valuable and recent edition of the Ahirbudhnya Samhitâ by my friend Dr. Otto Schrader, with an Introduction by the learned Doctor on the Pancharâtra system where many Vaishnava Tantras and Samhitâs are cited. The Trika school has many Tantras of which the leading one is Mâlinîvijaya. The Svachchhanda Tantra comes next. Jagadîsha Chandra Chattopâdhyâya Vidyâvârîdhi has written with learning and lucidity on this school. The Shaiva-siddhânta has twenty-eight leading Tantras and a large number of Upâgamas, such as Târaka Tantra, Vâma Tantra and others, which will be found enumerated in Schomerus' "Der Shaivasiddhânta", Nallasvami Pillai's "Studies in Shaiva Siddhânta" (p. 294), and "Sivajnânasiddhiyar" (p. 211). The Sammohana Tantra (Ch. VI) mentions 64 Tantras, 327 Upatantras, as also Yâmalas, Dâmaras, Samhitâs and other Scriptures of the Shâkta class; 32 Tantras, 125 Upatantras, as also Yâmalas, Dâmaras, Purânas and other Scriptures of the Shaiva class; 75 Tantras 205 Upatantras, as also Yâmalas, Dâmaras, Samhitâs of the Vaishnava class; numerous Tantras and other scriptures of the Gânapatya and Saura classes, and a number of Purânas, Upapurânas and other variously named Scriptures of the Bauddha class. It then (Ch. VII) mentions over 500 Tantras and nearly the same amount of Upatantras, of some 22 Âgamas, Chînâgama (See Ch. IV post) Bauddhâgama, Jaina, Pâshupata, Kâpâlîka Pancharâtra, Bhairava and others. There is thus a vast



## TANTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

mass of Tantras in the Âgamas belonging to differing schools of doctrine and practice, all of which must be studied before we can speak with certainty as to what the mighty Âgama as a whole is. In this book I briefly deal with one section of it only. Nevertheless when these Âgamas have been examined and are better known, it will, I think, be found that they are largely variant aspects of *the same general ideas and practices*. As instances of general ideas I may cite the following:—the conception of Deity as a supreme Personality (Parâhantâ) and of the double aspect of God in one of which He really is or becomes the Universe; a true emanation from Him in His creative aspect; successive emanations (Âbhâsa, Vyûha) as of “fire from fire” from subtle to gross; doctrine of Shakti; pure and impure creation; the denial of unconscious Mâyâ such as Shangkara teaches; doctrine of Mâyâ Kosha and the Kanchukas (the six Shaiva Kanchukas being represented by the possibly earlier classification in the Pancharâtra of the three Samkochas): the carrying of the origin of things up and beyond Purusha-Prakriti; acceptance at a later stage of Purusha-Prakriti, the Sângkhyân Gunas, and evolution of Tattvas as applied to the doctrine of Shakti; affirmance of the reality of the Universe; emphasis on devotion (Bhakti); provision for all castes and both sexes. Instances of common practice are for example Mantra, Bîja, Yantra, Mudrâ, Nyâsa, Bhûtashuddhi, Kundaliyoga, construction and consecration of temples and images (Kriyâ), religious and social observances (Charyâ) such as Âhnika, Varnâshramadharmâ, Utsava; and practical magic (Mâyâyoga).

Where there is Mantra, Yantra, Nyâsa, Dikshâ, Guru and the like there is Tantra Shâstra. In fact one of the names of the latter is Mantra Shâstra. With these similarities there are certain variations of doctrine and practice between the schools. Necessarily also, even on points of common similarity, there is some variance in terminology and exposition which is unessential. Thus when looking at



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

their broad features, it is of no account whether with the Pancharâtra we speak of Lakshmî Shakti, Vyûha, Samkocha ; or whether in terms of other schools we speak of Tripurasundarî and Mahâkâlî, Tattvas and Kanchukas. Again there are some differences in ritual which are not of great moment except in one and that a notable instance. I refer to the well-known division of worshippers into Dakshinâchâra and Vâmâchâra. The secret Sâdhanâ of some of the latter, (which I may here say is not usually understood) has acquired such notoriety that to most the term "The Tantra" connotes this particular worship and its abuses and nothing else. I may here also observe that it is a mistake to suppose that aberrations in doctrine and practice are peculiar to India. A Missionary wrote to me some years ago that this country was "a demon-haunted land." There are demons here, but they are not the only inhabitants ; and tendencies to be found here have existed elsewhere. The West has produced many a doctrine and practice of an antinomian character. Some of the worst are to be found there. Moreover, though this does not seem to be recognised, it is nevertheless the fact that these Kaula rites are philosophically based on doctrines which are the common property of all monistic schools. The difference consists in the fact that these common doctrines are practically applied in an extremist fashion, which the general bulk of Hindus disapprove. Now it is this extremist doctrine and practice, limited probably as being a secret doctrine at all times to comparatively few, which has come to be known as "The Tantra." Nothing is more incorrect. This is but one division of worshippers who again are but one section of the numerous followers of the Âgamas, Shaiva, Shâkta and Vaishnava. Though there are certain common features which may be called Tântrik yet one cannot speak of "The Tantra" as though it were one entirely homogeneous doctrine and practice. Still less can we identify it with the particular practices and theories of



## TANTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

one division of worshippers only. Further the Tantras are concerned with Science, Law, Medicine and a variety of subjects other than spiritual doctrine or worship. Thus Indian chemistry and medicine is largely indebted to the Tântrikas.

According to a common notion the word "Tantra" is (to use the language of a fairly well-known work) "restricted to the necromantic books of the later Shivâic or Sakti mysticism" (Waddell's Buddhism of Tibet p. 164). As charity covers many sins, so "mystic" and "mysticism" are words which cover much ignorance. "Necromancy" too looms unnecessarily large in writers of this school. It is however the fact that Western authors generally so understand the term "Tantra." They are however in error in so doing as previously explained. Here I shortly deal with the significance of the Tantra Shâstra, which is of course also misunderstood, being generally spoken of as a jumble of "black magic," and "erotic mysticism," cemented together by a ritual which is "meaningless mummary." A large number of persons who talk in this strain have never had a Tantra in their hands, and such Orientalists as have read some portions of these Scriptures have not generally understood them, otherwise they would not have found them to be so "meaningless." They may be bad, or they may be good, but they have a meaning. Men are not such fools as to believe in what is meaningless. The use of this term implies that their content had no meaning to them. Very likely; for to define as they do Mantra as "mystical words," Mudrâ as "mystical gestures" and Yantra as "mystical diagrams" does not imply knowledge. These erroneous notions as to the nature of the Âgama are of course due to the mistaken identification of the whole body of the Scripture with one section of it. Further this last is only known through the abuses to which its dangerous practices as carried out by inferior persons have given rise, It is stated



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

in the Shâstra itself in which they are prescribed that the path is full of difficulty and peril and he who fails upon it goes to Hell. That there are those who have so failed, and others who have been guilty of evil magic, is well known. I am not in this Chapter concerned with this special ritual or magic but with the practices which govern the life of the vast mass of the Indian people to be found in the Tantras of the Âgamas of the different schools which I have mentioned.

A Western writer has expressed the opinion that the Tantra Shâstra (I think he meant the Shâkta) was, at least in its origin, alien and indeed hostile to the Veda. He said "We are strongly of opinion that in their essence the two principles are fundamentally opposed and that the Tantra only used Vedic forms to mask its essential opposition." I will not argue this question here. It is however the fact now, as it has been for centuries past, that the Âgamavâdins claim to base their doctrine on Veda. The Vedânta is the final authority and basis for the doctrines set forth in the Tantras, though the latter interpret the Vedânta in various ways. The real meaning of Vedânta is Upanishad and nothing else. Many persons however speak of Vedânta as though it meant the philosophy of Shangkara, or whatever other philosopher they follow. This of course is incorrect. Vedânta is Shruti. Shangkara's philosophy is merely one interpretation of Shruti just as Râmânuja's is another and that of the Shaivâgama or Kulâgama is a third. There is no question of competition between Vedânta as Shruti and Tantra Shâstra. It is however the fact that each of the followers of the different schools of Âgama contend that their interpretation of the Shruti texts is the true one and superior to that of other schools. As a stranger to all these sects, I am not here concerned to show that one system is better than the other. Each will adopt that which most suits him. I am only stating the facts. As the Ahirbudhnya Samhitâ of the



## TANTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Pancharâtra Âgama says, the aspects of God are infinite, and no philosopher can seize and duly express more than one aspect. This is perfectly true. All systems of interpretation have some merits as they have defects, that of Shangkara included. The latter by his Mâyâvâda is able to preserve more completely than any other interpretation the changelessness and stainlessness of Brahman. It does this however at the cost of certain defects, which do not exist in other schools, which have also their own peculiar merits and shortcomings. The basis and seat of authority is Shruti or experience and the Âgama interprets Shruti in its own way. Thus the Shaiva-Shâkta doctrines are specific interpretations of Vedânta which differ in several respects from that of Shangkara, though as they agree (I speak of the Northern Shaiva School) with him on the fundamental question of the unity of Jivâtmâ and Paramâtma, they are therefore Advaita. Âgama then is one interpretation of Vedânta ; an interpretation doubtless influenced by the *practical* ends which this Shâstra has in view.

The next question is how Vedantic experience of which the Âgama speaks may be gained ? This is also prescribed in the Shâstra in the form of peculiar Sâdhanâs or disciplines. In the first place there must be a healthy physical and moral life. To know a thing in its ultimate sense is to *be* that thing. To know Brahman, is according to Advaita, to *be* Brahman. One cannot realise Brahman the Pure except by being oneself pure (Shuddhachitta). But to attain and keep this state, as well as for progress therein, certain specific means, practice, rituals or disciplines are necessary. The result cannot be got by mere philosophical talk about Brahman. Religion is a practical activity. Just as the body requires exercise, training and gymnastic, so does the mind. This may be of a merely intellectual or spiritual kind. The means employed are called Sâdhanâ which comes from the root "*Sâdh*," to exert. Sâdhanâ is



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

that which leads to Siddhi. Sâdhanâ is the development of Shakti. Man is consciousness (Âtmâ) vehicled by Shakti in the form of mind and body. But this Shakti is at base consciousness, just as Âtmâ is; for Âtmâ and Shakti are one. Man is thus a vast magazine of both latent and expressed power. The object of Sâdhanâ is to develop man's Shakti, whether for temporal or spiritual purposes. But where is this Sâdhanâ to be found? Seeing that the Vaidika Âchâra has fallen into practical desuetude we can find it nowhere but in the Âgamas and in the Purânas which are replete with Tantrik rituals. The Tantras of these Âgamas therefore contain both a *practical* exposition of spiritual doctrine and the means by which the truth it teaches may be *realised*. Their authority does not depend, as Western writers, and some of their Eastern followers, suppose, on the date when they were revealed but on the question whether Siddhi is gained thereby. This too is the proof of Âyurveda. The test of medicine is that it cures. If Siddhi is not obtained, the fact that it is written "Shiva uvâcha" or the like counts for nothing. The Âgama therefore is a practical exposition and application of Vedânta varying according to its different schools.

The latest tendency in modern Western philosophy is to rest upon intuition, as it was formerly the tendency to glorify dialectic. Intuition has however to be led into higher and higher possibilities by means of Sâdhanâ. This term means work or practice, which in its result is the gradual unfolding of the Spirit's vast latent magazine of power (Shakti), enjoyment and vision which everyone possesses in himself. The philosophy of the Âgama is, as a friend of mine Professor Pramathanâtha Mukhyopâdhyâya very well put it, a practical philosophy, adding, that what the intellectual world wants to-day is this sort of philosophy; a philosophy which not merely *argues* but *experiments*. The form which Sâdhanâ takes is a secondary matter. One goal may be reached by many paths. What is the path in



## TANTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

any particular case depends on considerations of personal capacity and temperament, race and faith. For the Hindu there is the Âgama which contains forms of discipline which his race has evolved and are therefore *prima facie* suitable for him. This is not to say that these forms are unalterable or acceptable to all. Others will adopt other forms of Sâdhanâ suitable to them. Thus, amongst Christians, the Catholic Church prescribes a full and powerful Sâdhanâ in its sacraments (Sangskâra) and worship (Pûjâ, Upâsanâ), meditation (Dhyâna), rosary (Japa) and the like. But any system to be fruitful must *experiment* to gain *experience*. The significance of the Tantra Shâstra lies in this that it claims to afford a means available to all, of whatever caste and of either sex, whereby the truths taught by Vedânta may be practically realised.

The Tantras both in India and Tibet are the expression of principles which are of universal application. The mere statement of religious truths avails not. What is necessary for all is a *practical method* of realization. This too the occultist needs. Further the ordinary run of mankind can neither apprehend, nor do they derive satisfaction from mere metaphysical concepts. They accept them only when presented in personal form. They care not for Shûnyatâ the Void, nor Sachchidânanda in the sense of mere Consciousness—being—bliss. They appeal to personal Bodhi-sattvas, Buddhas, Shiva, Vishnu, Devî who will hear their prayer, and grant them aid. Next they cannot stand by themselves. They need the counsel and guidance of priest and Guru and the fortifying virtues of the sacraments. Then again it is not enough for them to meditate, to uplift their minds in homage to the great Spirit. They need a definite picture of their object of worship, such as is detailed in the Dhyâna of the Devatâs, an image, a Yantra, a Mandala and so forth, a developed ritual and pictorial religion. These natural tendencies become accentuated in



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

course of time to a point where "superstition" mechanical devotion and lifeless formalism and other abuses are produced. There then takes place what is called a "Reform," in the direction of a more spiritual religion. This too is accentuated to the point of barrenness. Religion becomes sterile to produce practical result and ritual and pictorial religion recurs. So Buddhism, which in its origin has been represented to be a reaction against excessive and barren ritualism, could not rest with a mere statement of the noble truths and the eightfold path. Something practical was needed. The Mahâyâna (Thegpa Chhenpo) was produced. Nâgârjuna in the second century A.D. (?) is said to have promulgated ideas to be found in the Tantras. In order to realise the desired end, use was made of all the powers of man, physical and mental. Theistic notions as also Yoga came again to the force in the Yogâchârya and other Buddhist systems. The worship of images and an elaborate ritual was introduced. The worship of the Shaktis spread. The Mantrayâna and Vajrayâna found acceptance with, what an English writer ("The Buddhism of Tibet" by L. Waddell) describes in the usual style as its "silly mummerly of unmeaning jargon and gibberish," the latter being said to be "the most depraved form of Buddhist doctrine." So-called Tantrik Buddhism became thus fully developed. A Tantrik reformer in the person of Tsongkhapa arose, who codified the Tantras in his work Lam-rim Chhen-mo. The great code, the Kah-gyur, contains in one of its sections the Tantras (Rgyud) containing ritual, worship of the Divine Mothers, theology, astrology and natural science, as do their Indian counterparts. These are of four classes, the Kriyâ, Charyâ, Yoga, Anuttara, Tantras, the latter comprising Mahâ, Anu and Ati-Yoga Tantras. The Tan-gyur similarly contains many volumes of Tantras (Rgyud). Then, at length, Buddhism was driven from out of India. Brâhmanism and its rituals survived and increased, until both in our day and the nearer past we see in the



## TANTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

so-called reformed sects a movement towards what is claimed to be a more spiritual religion. Throughout the ages the same movements of action and reaction manifest. What is right here lies in the middle course. Some practical method and ritual is necessary if religion is not to be barren of result. The nature of the method and ritual will vary according to the capacity and development of men. On the other hand the "crooked influence of time" tends to overlay the essential spiritual truths with unintelligent and dead formalism. The Tantra Shâstra stands for a principle of high value though, like things admittedly good, it is capable of, and has suffered, abuse. An important point in this connection should be noted. In Europe we see extreme puritan reaction with the result that the religious movements which embody them become one-sided and without provision for ordinary human needs. Brâhmanism has ever been all-inclusive, producing a Sâdhanâ of varying kinds, material and mental, for the different stages of spiritual advancement and exempting from further ritual those for whom, by reason of their attainment, it is no longer necessary.



### CHAPTER III

#### TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

**I**N writing this Chapter I had in mind the dispute which some have raised upon the question whether the Âgamas, or some of them, are Vaidik or Non-Vaidik.

I do not here deal with the nature and schools of Tantra or Âgama nor with their historical origin. Something has been said on these points in the Introductions to the English translations of Pandit Shiva Chandra Vidyârnavâ's Tantratattva. I have also dealt with this subject in the two Chapters. "What are the Tantras and their significance?" and "Shakti and Shâkta." I wish to avoid repetition, except so far as is absolutely necessary for the elucidation of the particular subject in hand. On the disputed question whether the Âgamas are Vaidik or Non-Vaidik I desire to point out that an answer cannot be given unless we keep apart two distinct matters, *viz.*, (1) what was the origin of the Âgamas and (2) what they are now. I am not here however dealing with the first or historical question, but with the second so far as the Shâkta Âgama is concerned. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that (to take a specific example) worship of Kâlî and other Devîs by the Shâktas indicates the existence of non-Aryan elements in their Âgama. The question of real importance here, as always, is not as to what were the facts in remote past ages, but what they are now. The answer then is—let it be as you will regarding the origin of the Shâkta Âgama; but at present Shâkta worship is an integral part of the general Hinduism and as



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

such admits the authority of Veda, accepting, as later explained, every other belief held by the general body of the Hindu people.

In a recent prosecution under Sections 292, 293 of the Indian Penal Code against an accused who had published a Tantra (but who was rightly acquitted), an Indian Deputy Magistrate who had advised the prosecution, and who claimed to be an orthodox Hindu, stated (I am informed) in the witness box, that he could not define what the Tantra Shâstra was, or state whether it was a Hindu scripture of the Kali age, or whether a well-known particular Shâstra shown to him was one of the Tantras. Such ignorance is typical of many at the present time and is a legacy from a vanishing age. How is it that a Shâstra which has had its followers throughout India from the Himâlaya (the abode of Shiva and of Pârvatî Devî), to Cape Comorin (a corruption of Kumârî Devî) which ruled for centuries, so that we may speak of a Tântrik epoch; which even to-day governs the household and temple ritual of every Hindu; how is it that such a Shâstra has fallen into complete neglect and disrepute amongst the larger body of the English-educated community? I remember a time when mention of the Shâstra was only made (I speak of course of the same class) with bated breath; and when any one who concerned himself therewith became thereby liable to the charge of giving licentious sway to drink and women. The answer is both a general and particular one. In the first place the English-educated people of this country were formerly almost exclusively, and later to a considerable extent, under the entire sway of their English educators. In fact they were in a sense their creation. They were, and some of them still are, the Mânasaputra of the English. For them what was English and Western was the mode. Hindu religion, philosophy and art were only, it was supposed, for the so-called "uneducated" women and peasants and for native Pandits



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

who, though learned in their futile way, had not received the illuminating advantages of a western training. In my own time an objection was (I am informed) taken by Indian Fellows of the Calcutta University to the appointment of the learned Pandit Chandrakânta Tarkâlangkâra to a chair of Indian philosophy on the ground that he was a mere native Pandit. In this case English Fellows and the late Vice-Chancellor opposed this absurd and snobbish objection. When the authority of the English teachers was at its highest, what they taught was law, even though their judgments were in respect of Indian subjects of which they had but a scant and imperfect knowledge. If they said with, or in anticipation of, one Professor, that the Vedas were "the babbling of a child humanity" and the Brâhmanas "the drivel of madmen," or with another that the thought of the Upanishads was so "low" that it could not be correctly rendered in the high English language; that in "treating of Indian philosophy a writer has to deal with thoughts of a lower order than the thoughts of the every day life of Europe;" that Smriti was mere priestly tyranny, the Purânas idle legends and the Tantras mere wickedness and debauchery; that Hindu philosophy was (to borrow another English Professor's language concerning the Sâmkhya) "with all its folly and fanaticism little better than a chaotic impertinence;" and that Yoga was, according to the same man of learning, "the fanatical vagaries of theocracy;" that Indian ritual was nothing but superstition, mummery, and idolatry, and (Indian) art inelegant, monstrous, and grotesque—all this was with readiness accepted as high learning and wisdom, with perhaps here and there an occasional faint, and even apologetic, demur. I recollect in this connection a rather halting, and shamefaced, protest by the late Rajendra Lala Mitra. I do not say that none of these or other adverse criticisms had any ground whatever. There has been imperfection, folly, superstition, wickedness, here as else-



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

where. There has been much of it, for example, in the countries whence these critics of India came. It is however obvious that such criticisms are so excessive as to be absurd.

Even when giving an account of Eastern thought the Western is apt to take up a "superior" attitude because he believes himself to be superior. The Bishop of Durham very clearly reveals this sense of superiority ("Christian Aspects of Life" by B. F. Westcott, 175) when after stating that the duty of the Christian missionary was to substitute for "the sterile theism of Islam and the shadowy vagueness of Hindu Philosophy a belief in a living and speaking God" he goes on to point out that "our very advantages" by way of "the consciousness of social and intellectual superiority with which we are filled" and "the national force which sets us as conquerors where we come as evangelists" constitute a danger in the mission field. It is this notion of "superiority" also which prevents a right understanding, and which notwithstanding the facts, insists on charges which, if established, would maintain the reputation for inferiority of the coloured races. It is this reiterated claim to superiority that has hypnotised many persons amongst Eastern races into the belief that the European is, amongst other things, always a safe and learned critic even of their own beliefs and practices.

Râjâ Rammohan Roy was the first to take up the cause of his faith, divorcing it from the superstitious accretions which gather around all religions in the course of the ages. The same defence was made in recent times by that man of upstanding courage, Svâmî Vivekânanda. Foreign criticism on Indian religion now tends in some quarters to greater comprehension. I say in some quarters; for even in quite recent years English books have been published which would be amazing, were one not aware of the deep ignorance and prejudice which exist on the subject. In one of these books the Hindu religion is described as "a mixture of nightmare nonsense and timewasting



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

rubbish fulfilling no useful purpose whatever: only adding to the general burden of existence borne by Humanity in its struggle for existence." In another it is said to be "a weltering chaos of terror, darkness, and uncertainty." It is a religion without the apprehension of a moral evolution, without definite commandments, without a religious sanction in the sphere of morals, without a moral code and without a God: such so-called God, as there is, being "a mixture of Bacchus, Don Juan and Dick Turpin." It is there further described as the most material and childishly superstitious animalism that ever masqueraded as idealism; not another path to God but a pit of abomination as far set from God as the mind of man can go; staggering the brain of a rational man; filling his mind with wild contempt for his species and which has only endured "because it has failed." Except for the purpose of fanatical polemic, one would assume that the endurance of a faith was in some measure the justification of it. It is still more wonderful to learn from this work ("The Light of India" written by Mr. Harold Begbie and published by the Christian Literature Society for India) that out of this weltering chaos of all that is ignominious, immoral and crassly superstitious, come forth men who (in the words of the author) "standing at prayer startle you by their likeness to the pictures of Christ—eyes large, luminous and tranquil—the whole face exquisite with meekness and majestic with spirit." One marvels how these perfect men arise from such a worthless and indeed putrescent source. This absurd picture was highly coloured in a journalistic spirit and with a purpose. In other cases, faulty criticism is due to supercilious ignorance. As another writer says (the italics are mine) "For an Englishman to get a plain statement of what Brâhmanism really means is far from easy. The only wonder is that people who have to live on nine pence a week, who marry when they are ten years old, are prevented from caste life from rising out of what is often, if not



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

always, a degraded state, *have any religion at all.*" As the Bishop of Peterborough has recently said it is difficult for some to estimate worth in any other terms than £. s. d. It is to be hoped that all such snobbish materialism will be hindered from entrance into this country. These quotations reveal the depths of ignorance and prejudice which still exist. As we are however aware, all English criticism is not as ignorant and prejudiced as these, even though it be often marred by essential error. On the contrary there are an increasing number who appreciate and adopt, or appreciate if they cannot accept, Indian beliefs. Further than this, Eastern thought is having a marked influence on that of the West, though it is not often acknowledged. Many have still the notion that they have nothing to learn in any domain from this hemisphere. After all, what any one else says should not affect the independence of our own judgment. Let others say what they will. We should ourselves determine matters which concern us. The Indian people will do so when they free themselves from that hypnotic magic, which makes them often place blind reliance on the authority of foreigners, who, even when claiming to be scholars, are seldom free from bias, religious or racial. Such counsel, though by no means unnecessary to-day, is happily becoming less needed than in the past.

There are however still many, particularly those of my own generation, whose English Gurus and their teaching have made them captives. Their mind has been so dominated and moulded to a western manner of thinking (philosophical, religious, artistic, social and political) that they have scarcely any greater capacity to appreciate their own cultural inheritance than their teachers, be that capacity in any particular case more or less. Some of them care nothing for their Shâstra. Others do not understand it. The class of whom I speak are, in fact, as I have said, the Mânasaputra of the English in a strict sense of the term. The Indian who has lost his Indian soul must regain it if he



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

would retain that independence in his thought and in the ordering of his life which is the mark of a man, that is of one who seeks Svarâjyasiddhi. How can an imitator be on the same level as his original? Rather he must sit as a Chela at the latter's feet. Whilst we can all learn something from one another, yet some in this land have yet to learn that their cultural inheritance with all its defects (and none is without such) is yet a noble one; an equal in rank, (to say the least), with those great past civilizations which have moulded the life and thought of the west. All this has been admitted by Indians who have discernment. Such value as my own remarks possess, is due to the fact that I can see and judge from without as an outsider, though (I will admit in one sense) interested observer—interested because I have at heart Indian welfare and that of all others which, as the world now stands, is bound up with it.

As regards the Tantra Shâstra in particular, greater ignorance prevailed and still exists. Its Vâmâchâra practice however seemed so peculiar, and its abuses were so talked of, that they captured attention to the exclusion of everything else; the more particularly that this and the rest of the Shâstra is hard to understand. Whilst the Shâstra provides by its Âchâras for all types from the lowest to the most advanced, its essential concepts, under whatever aspect they are manifested, and into whatever pattern they are woven, are (as Professor De La Vallée Poussin says of the Buddhist Tantra) of a metaphysical and subtle character. Indeed it is largely because of the subtlety of its principles, together with the difficulties which attend ritual exposition, that the study of the Tantras, notwithstanding the comparative simplicity of their Sanskrit, has been hitherto neglected by western scholars. Possibly it was thought that the practices mentioned rendered any study of a system, in which they occurred, unnecessary. There was and still is some ground for the adverse criticism which has been passed on it. Nevertheless it was



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

not a just appreciation of the Shâstra as a whole, nor even an accurate judgment in respect of the particular ritual thus singled out for condemnation. Let those condemn this Shâstra who will. That is their affair. But let them first study and understand it.

I have dealt with the subject of the Tantras in several papers. It is only necessary here to say that "the Tantra" as it was called was wrongly considered to be synonymous with the Shâkta Tantras; that in respect of the latter the whole attention was given to the Vâmâchâra ritual and to magic (Shatkarma); that this ritual, whatever may in truth be said against it, was not understood; that it was completely ignored that the Tantras contained a remarkable philosophic presentment of Vedantic teaching, profoundly applied in a ritual of true psychological worth; and that the Shâstras were also a repertory of the alchemy, medicine, law, religion, art and so forth of their time. It was sufficient to mention the word "Tantra" and there was supposed to be the end of the matter.

I have often been asked why I had undertaken the study of the Tantra Shâstra, and in some English (as opposed to Continental) quarters it has been suggested that my time and labour might be more worthily employed. My answer is this:—Following the track of unmeasured abuse I have always found something good. The present case is no exception. I protest and have always protested against unjust aspersions upon the civilization of India and its peoples. If there be what is blameworthy, accuracy requires that criticism should be reduced to its true proportions. Having been all my life a student of the world's religions and philosophies, I entered upon a particular study of this Shâstra to discover for myself what it taught, and whether it was, as represented, a complete *reversal* of all other Hindu teaching with which I was acquainted. For it was said to be the cultivation or practice of gluttony, lust, and



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

malevolence ("ferocity, lust, and mummery" as Brian Hodgson called it) which I knew the Indian Shâstra, like all the other religious Scriptures of the world, strictly forbid.

I found that the Shâstra was of high importance in the history of Indian religion. The Tantra Shâstra or Âgama is not, as some seem to suppose, a petty Shâstra of no account; one, and an unimportant sample, of the multitudinous manifestations of religion in a country which swarms with every form of religious sect. It is on the contrary with Veda, Smriti and Purâna one of the foremost important Shâstras in India, governing, in various degrees and ways, the temple and household ritual of the whole of India to-day and for centuries past. Those who are so strenuously averse to it, by that very fact recognise and fear its influence. From a historical point of view alone, it is worthy of study as an important part of Indian culture, whatever be its intrinsic worth. History cannot be written if we exclude from it what we do not personally like. As Terence grandly said:—We are men and nothing which man has done is alien to us. There are some things in some of the Tantras and a spirit which they manifest of which their student may not personally approve. But the cause of history is not to be influenced by personal predilections. It is so influenced in fact. There are some who have found in the Shâstra a useful weapon of attack against Indian religion and its tendencies. Should one speak of the heights which Indian spiritual experience has reached, one might be told that the infamous depths to which it had descended in the Tantra Shâstra, the Pushtimârگا, the Vaishnava Sahajîya and so forth was more certainly established. Did one praise the high morality to be found in Indian Shâstra, it might be admitted that India was not altogether destitute of the light of goodness; but it might also be asked, what of the darkness of the Tantra? And so on and so forth. Let us then



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

grapple with and not elude the objection. There was of course something in all this. But such objectors and others had not the will (even if they had the capacity to understand) to give a true presentment of the teachings of the Shâstra. But the interests of fairness require both. Over and above the fact that the Shâstra is an historical fact, it possesses, in some respects, an intrinsic value which justifies its study. Thus it is the storehouse of Indian occultism. This occult side of the Tantras is of scientific importance, the more particularly having regard to the present revived interest in occultist study in the West. "New thought" as it is called and kindred movements are a form of Mantravidyâ. Vashîkaranam is hypnotism, fascination. There is "Spiritualism" and "Powers" in the Tantras and so forth. For myself, however, the philosophical and religious aspect of the Scripture is more important still. The main question for the generality of men is not Power (Siddhi). Indeed the study of occultism and its practice has its dangers; and the pursuit of these powers is considered an obstacle to the attainment of that true Siddhi which is the end of every Shâstra. A subject of greater interest and value is the remarkable presentation of Vedantic knowledge which the Shâkta Tantra in particular gives (I never properly understood the Vedânta until after I had studied the Tantras) as also the ritual by which it is sought to gain realization (Aparokshajnâna). The importance of the Shâkta Tantra may be summed up by the statement that it is *the Sâdhana Shâstra of Advaitavâda*. I will develop this last matter in a future paper. I will only say now that the main question of the day everywhere is how to *realise* practically the truths of religion, whatever they be. This applies to all, whether Hindu, Mohamedan or Christian. Mere philosophical speculation and talk will avail nothing beyond a clarification of intellect. But that we all know is not enough. It is not what we speculate but what we are, which counts. The fundamental question



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

is, how to realise (Sâkshâtkâra) religious teaching. This is the fruit of Sâdhanâ alone; whether the form of that Sâdhanâ be Christian, Hindu, Mohamedan, Buddhist or what else. The one and only Sâdhanâ-shâstra for the orthodox Hindu is the Tantra Shâstra or Âgama in its varying schools. In this fact lies its chief significance, and for Hindus its practical importance. This and the Advaitavâda on which the Shâkta ritual rests is in my opinion the main reason why Shâkta Darshana or doctrine is worthy of study.

The opinion which I had formed of the Shâstra has been corroborated by several to whom I had introduced the matter. I should like to quote here the last letter I had only a month ago from an Indian friend, both sanskritist and philosopher (a combination too rare). He says "they (the Tantras) have really thrown before me a flood of new light. So much so, that I really feel as if I have discovered a new world. Much of the mist and haziness has now been cleared away and I find in the Tantras not only a great and subtle philosophy but many of the missing links in the development of the different systems of Hindu philosophy which I could not discover before but which I have been seeking for, for some years past." These statements might perhaps lead some to think that the Shâstra teaches something entirely, that is in every respect, new. As regards fundamental doctrines, the Tantra Shâstra (for convenience I confine myself to the Shâkta form) does not teach anything which is not to be found in essence in the Advaita Vedânta. Therefore those who think that they will find in the Shâstra some fundamental truths concerning the world which are entirely new will be disillusioned. The observation does not apply to the form of Vedantic presentment, methods, and details; to which doubtless my friend's letter referred. He who has truly understood Indian Shâstras as a whole will recognise, under variety of form and degree of spiritual advancement, the same substance by way of doctrine.

Whilst the Shâkta Tantra recognises, with the four



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

Vedas, the Âgamas and Nigamas, it is now based, as are all other truly Indian Shâstras on Veda. Veda, in the sense of knowledge, is ultimately Spiritual Experience, namely the Jnâna which Brahman is, and in the one partless infinite ocean of Which the world, as a limited stress in consciousness, arises. So it is said of the Devî in the Commentary on the Trishatî:—

*Vedântamahâvâkyajanya-sâkshâtkârarûpabrahmavidyâ*

She is Brahma vidyâ in the form of immediate knowledge arising from the Vedantic Mahâvâkya—that is “Tat tvam asi” (“That thou art”) and all kindred sayings So’ham, (“He I am”) Brahmâsmi (“I am Brahman”) and so forth. In other words, self-knowledge is self-luminous and fundamental and the basis of all other knowledge. Owing to its transcendency it is beyond both prover and proof. It is self realized (Svânubhava). But Shruti is the source from which this knowledge arises, as Shangkara says, by removing (as also to some extent reason may do) false notions concerning it. It reveals by removing the superincumbent mass of human error. Again, Veda in a primary sense is the world as Idea in the Cosmic Mind of the creating Brahman and includes all forms of knowledge. Thus it is eternal, arising with and as the Sangskâras at the beginning of every creation. This is the Vedamûrtibrahman. Veda in the secondary sense is the various partial revelations relating to Tattva, Brahman or God, and Dharma, morality, made at different times and places to the several Rishis which are embodied in the four Vedas, Rik, Yajus, Sâma and Atharva. Veda is not co-extensive therefore with the four Vedas. But are these, even if they be regarded as the “earliest,” the only (to use an English term) revelations? Revelation (Âkâshavânî) never ceases. When and wherever there is a true Rishi or Seer there is revelation. And in this sense the Tantra Shâstra or Âgama claims to be a revelation. The Shabdabrahmamûrti is Nigamâdishâstramaya: it being said that Âgama is the Paramâtmâ of that Mûrti, the four Vedas with their Angas



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

are its Jîvâtmâ; the six philosophies its Indriyas; the Purânas and Upapurânas its gross body; Smriti its hands and other limbs and all other Shâstras are the hairs of its body. In the Heart-lotus are the fifty Tejomayî Mâtrikâ. In the pericarp are the Âgamas glittering like millions of suns and moons which are Sarvadharmamaya, Brahma-jnânamaya, Sarvasiddhimaya, and Mûrtimân. These were revealed to the Rishis. In fact all Shâstras are said to constitute one great Shatakoti Samhitâ, each being particular manifestations to man of the one, essential Veda. From this follows the belief that they do not contradict, but are in agreement with, one another: for Truth is one whatever be the degree in which it is received, or the form in which the Seers (Rishis) promulgated it to those whose spiritual sight has not strength enough to discern it directly and for themselves. But how, according to Indian notions, can that which is put forward as a revelation be proved to be such? The answer is that of Âyurveda. A medicine is a good one if it cures. In the same way a Shâstra is truly such if the Siddhi which it claims to give is gained as the fruit of the practice of its injunctions, according to the competency and under the conditions prescribed. The principle is a practical and widely adopted one. The tree must be judged by its fruit. This principle may, if applied to the general life of to-day, lead to an adverse judgment on some Tantrik practices. If so, let it be. It is however an error to suppose that even such practices as have been condemned, claim to rest on any other basis than Veda. It is by the learned in Tantra Shâstra said to be Avidyâ to see a difference between Âgama and Veda.

Ignorant notions prevail on the subject of the relation of the Tantras to Veda and the Vedas. I read some years ago in one Bengali book by a Brahmo author that "the difference was that between Hell and Heaven." Now on what is such a condemnatory comparison based? It is safe to challenge production of the proof of such an assertion.



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

Let us examine what the Shâkta Tantra (to which allusion was made) teaches.

In the first place "Hell" recognises "Heaven," for the Shâkta Tantra, as I have said, acknowledges the authority of Veda. All Indian Shâstras do that. If they did not, they would not be Indian Shâstra. The passages on this point are so numerous, and the point itself is so plain that I will only cite a few.

Kulârnavâ Tantra says (II. 140, 141) that Kuladharmâ is based on and inspired by the Truth of Veda (Tasmât vedâtmakang shâstrang viddhi kaulâtmakang priye.) In the same place Shiva cites passages from Shruti in support of His doctrine. The Prapanchasâra and other Tantras cite Vaidika Mahâvâkya and Mantras; and as Mantras are a part of Veda therefore Meru Tantra says that Tantra is part of Veda (Prânatoshinî 70). Niruttara Tantra calls Tantra the Fifth Veda and Kûlâchâra is named the fifth Âshrama (*i b*); that is it follows all others. Matsyasûktamahâtantra (XIII) says that the disciple must be pure of soul (Shuddhâtmâ) and a knower of Veda. He who is devoid of Vaidika kriyâ (Vedakriyâ-vivarjita) is disqualified (Mahârudrayâmala I Khanda Ch. 15; II Khanda Ch. 2; Prânatoshinî 108). Gandharva Tantra (Ch. 2 Prânatoshinî 6) says that the Tântrik Sâdhaka must be a believer in Veda (Âstika), ever attached to Brahman, ever speaking of Brahman, living in Brahman and taking shelter with Brahman; which, by the way, is a curious demand to make of those, the supposed objects of whose rites is mere debauchery. The Kulârnavâ says that there is no knowledge higher than that of Veda and no doctrine equal to Kaula (III. 113 Nahi vedâdhikâ vidyâ). Here a distinction is drawn between Veda which is Vidyâ and the Kaula teaching which he calls Darshana. See also Mahânirvâna Tantra I. 18, 19 II. 8—15). In Mahânirvâna Tantra (III. 72) the Mantra Ong sachchidekam Brahma is given and in the Prapanchasâra (Ch. XXIX) this, (what it calls) "Secret of the Vedas" is explained.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

That the Shākta Tantra claims to be based on Veda admits of no doubt. In fact Kulluka Bhatta the celebrated commentator on Manu says that Shruti is of two kinds, Vaidik and Tāntrik (Vaidikī tāntrikī chaiva dvividhā shrutih kīrttitā).

It is of course the fact that different sects bandy words upon the point whether they in fact truly interpret Shruti and follow practice conformable to it. Statements are made by opposing schools that certain Shāstras are contrary to Shruti even though they profess to be based thereon. So a citation by Bhāskararāya in the Commentary to V. 76 of the Lalitāsahasranāma speaks of some Tantras as "opposed to Veda" (Vedaviruddhāni). The Vāyu Samhitā says "Shaivāgama is twofold that which is based on Shruti and that which is not. The former is composed of the essence of Shruti. Shrauta is Svatantra and Itara (v. ante p. 19).

*Shaivāgamo 'pi dvividhah, shrauto' shrautashcha sangsmritah  
Shrutisāramayah shrautah svatantrastvitaro matah.*

So again the Bhāgavata or Pancharātra Āgama has been said to be non-vaidik. This matter has been discussed by Shangkarāchāryya and Rāmānuja following Yamunāchāryya.

We must in all cases distinguish between what a school says of itself and what others say of it. In Christianity both Catholicism and Protestantism claim to be based on the Bible and each alleges that the other is a wrong interpretation of it. Each again of the numerous Protestant sects says the same thing of the others.

But is Shākta Tantra contrary to Veda in fact? Let us shortly survey the main points in its doctrine. It teaches that Paramātmā Nirguna Shiva is Sachchidānanda (Prapanchasāra Ch. XXIX: Kulārnavā Ch. I vv. 6-7). Kulārnavā says "Shiva is the impartite Supreme Brahman, the all knowing (Sarvajna) Creator of all. He is the Stainless One and the Lord of all. He is one without a second (Advaya). He is Light itself. He changes not, and is without begin-



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

ning or end. He is attributeless and above the highest. He is Sachchidânanda" (I. 6-7. And see the Dhyâna and Pancharatnastotra in Mahânirvâna Tantra III. 50, 59-63). Brahman is Sachchidânanda, eternal (Nitya) changeless (Nirvikâra) partless (Nishkala) untouched by Mâyâ (Nirmala), attributeless, (Nirguna) formless (Arûpa), imperishable (Akshara), all spreading like space (Vyomasannibha), self-illuminating (Svayangjyotih) Reality (Tattva), which is beyond mind and speech and is to be approached through spiritual feeling alone. (Bhâvanâgamya,)(Kulârnavâ I. 6-8 ; III. 92, 93 ; IX. 7). Mahânirvâna (III. 50, 59-63, 67-68, 74 III. 12). In His aspect as the Lord (Îshvara) of all, He is the all-Knower (Sarvajna) Lord of all : whose Body is pure Sattva (Shuddhasattvamaya), the Soul of the universe (Vishvâtmâ) (Mahânirvâna I. 61, III. 68). Such definitions simply re-affirm the teaching of Veda. Brahman is That which pervades without limit the universe (Prapanchasâra XXIX Mahânirvâna III. 33-35) as oil the sesamum seed (Shâradâ Tilaka I. Shâktânandataranginî I. Prânatoshinî 13). This Brahman has twofold aspect as Parabrahma (Nirguna, Nishkala) and Shabdabrahman (Saguna, Sakala). Sammohana, a highly interesting Tantra, says (Ch. I) that Kubjikâ is of twofold aspect namely Nishkalâ when She is Chandra-vaktrâ, and Sakalâ called Paramukhâ. So too is Guhyâ Kâlî who as the first is Ekavaktrâ mahâpashu-patîshî advaita-bhâvasampannâ and as the second Dashavaktrâ. So the Kulârnavâ says Shabdabrahmaparambrahmabhedena Brahmano dvaividhyam uktam. (Khanda V. Ullâsa 1). The same Tantra says that Sadâshiva is without the bonds (of Mâyâ) and Jîva is with them (Pâshabaddho bhavajjîvah pâshamuktah sadâshivah IX 42) upon which the author of the Prânatoshinî citing this passage says "thus the identity of Jîva and Shiva is shown (iti Shivajîvayoraikyam uktam). The Shâkta Tantra is thus Advaitavâda : for it proclaims that Paramâtmâ and Jivâtmâ are one. So it affirms the "grand



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

words" (Mahâvâkya) of Veda—"Tat tvam asi," "Soham," "Brahmâsmi" (Mahânirvâna VIII.264-265, V.105 Prapancha-sâra II; identifying Hrîng with Kundalî and Hangsah and then with So'ham. Yah Sûkshmah So'ham (ib. XXIV, Jnânârnavâ Tantra XXI. 10. As to Brahmâsmi, see Kulârnavâ IX. 32 and ib. 41 So'hambhâvena pûjayet). The Mantra "all this is surely Brahman (Sarvam khalvidam Brahma) is according to the Mahânirvâna (VII. 98) the end and aim of Tântrika Kulâchâra, the realization of which saying the Prapanchasâra Tantra describes as the fifth or Supreme State (Ch. XIX); for the identity of Jîvâtmâ and Paramâtmâ is Liberation which the Vedântasâra defines to be Jîvabrahmanoraikyam). Kulârnavâ refers to the Advaita of which Shiva speaks (Advaitantu shivenoktam I. 108. See also Mahânirvâna II. 33-34, III. 33-35; 50-64; Prapancha-sâra II, XIX, XXIX). Gandharva Tantra says that the Sâdhaka must be a nondualist (Dvaitahîna). See Ch. II. ib. Prânatoshinî 108 Mahârudrayâmala 1 Khanda Ch. 15; II Khanda Ch. 2). It is useless to multiply quotations on this point of which there is no end. In fact that particular form of worship which has earned the Shâkta Tantras ill-fame claims to be a practical application of Advaitavâda. The Sammohana Tantra (Ch. VIII) gives high praise to the philosopher Shangkarâchâryya saying that He was an incarnation of Shiva for the destruction of Buddhism. Kaulâchâryya is said to properly follow a full knowledge of Vedantik doctrine. Shiva in the Kulârnavâ (I. 110) says "some desire Dvaita, others Advaita but my truth is beyond both (Dvaitâdvaitavivarjita)." The (Jnâni) is beyond all philosophical argument.

Advaitavedânta is the whole day and life of the Shâkta Sâdhaka. On waking at dawn (Brahmamuhûrta) he sits on his bed and meditates "I am the Devî and none other. I am Brahman who is beyond all grief. I am a form of Sachchidânanda whose true nature is eternal liberation."



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

*Aham Devî na chânyo 'smi, Brahmaivâham na shokabhâk,  
Sachchidânandarûpo 'ham nityamuktasvabhâvavân.*

At noon again seated in Pûjâsana at time of Bhûta-shuddhi he meditates on the dissolution of the Tattvas in Paramâtmâ. Seeing no difference between Paramâtmâ and Jîvâtmâ he affirms Sâ'ham "I am She." Again in the evening after ritual duties he affirms himself to be the Akhilâtmâ and Sachchidânanda, and having so thought he sleeps. Similarly (I may here interpose) in the Buddhist Tantra—the Sâdhaka on rising in the state of Devadeha (hLayi-sku) imagines that the double drums are sounding in the heavens proclaiming the Mantras of the 24 Vîrâs (dPahvo), and regards all things around him as constituting the Mandala of himself as Buddha Vajrasattva. When about to sleep he again imagines his body to be that of Buddha Vajrasattva and then merges himself into the tranquil state of the Void (Shûnyatâ).

Gandharva Tantra says "having saluted the Guru as directed and thought 'So'ham' the wise Sâdhaka the performer of the rite should ponder the unity of Jîva and Brahman."

*Gurûn natvâ vidhânena so'ham iti purodhasah*

*Aikyam sambhâvayed dhîmân jîvasya Brahmano 'pi cha.*

Kâlî Tantra says "Having meditated in this way, a Sâdhaka should worship Devî as his own Âtmâ, thinking I am Brahman." Kubjikâ Tantra says (Devî is called Kubjikâ because She is Kundalî) "A Sâdhaka should meditate on his own self as one and the same with Her (Tayâ sahitamâtmânam ekîbhûtam vichintayet): and so on; for I might quote indefinitely from a Shâstra the basis of which is the Advaitavedânta.

The cardinal doctrine of these Shâkta Tantras is that of Shakti whether in its Svarûpa as Chidrûpinî, the Parâ-prakriti of Paramâtmâ (Mahânirvâna IV, 10) or as Mâyâ and Prakriti (see as to the latter the great Hymn to Prakriti in Prapanchasâra Ch. XI). Shakti as the Kubjikâ Tantra



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

says (Ch. 1) is Consciousness (Chaitanyarûpinî) and Bliss (Ânandarûpinî). She is at the same time support of (Gunâshrayâ) and composed of the Gunas (Gunamayî). Mâyâ is however explained from the standpoint of Sâdhanâ, the Tantra Shâstra being a Sâdhanâ Shâstra, and not according to the Mâyâvâda, that is transcendental standpoint, of Shangkara.

What is there in the great Devî Sûkta of the Rigveda (Mandala X Sûkta 125) which the Shâkta Tantra does not teach? The Rishi of this revelation was a woman the daughter of Rishi Ambhrina. It was fitting that a woman should proclaim the Divine Motherhood. Her Hymn says "I am the Sovereign Queen the Treasury of all treasures; the chief of all objects of worship whose all-pervading Self all Devatâs manifest; whose birthplace is in the midst of the causal waters: who breathing forth gives form to all created worlds and yet extends beyond them, so vast am I in greatness."

It is useless to cite quotations to show that the Shâkta Tantra accepts the doctrine of Karma which as the Kulârnavâ (IX. 125) says Jîva cannot give up until he renounces the fruit of it; an infinite number of universes, and their transitoriness (Mahânirvâna III. 7,) the plurality of worlds, Heaven and Hell, the seven Lokas, the Devas and Devîs, who as the Kulachûdâmani (following the Devîsûkta) says (Ch. 1) are but parts of the great Shakti (Shâktânandataranginî III); the state of liberation and so forth. Being Advaitavâda, Moksha is the state of Paramâtmâ. It accepts Smriti and Purânas; the Mahânirvâna and other Tantras saying that they are the governing Shâstras of the Tretâ and Dvâpara ages respectively, as Tantra is that of the Kaliyuga. So the Târâpradîpa (Ch. 1) says that in the Kaliyuga the Tântrika and not the Vaidika Dharma is to be followed. It is said that in Satya, Veda was undivided. In Dvâpara, Krishnadvaipâyana separated it into four parts. In Satya, Vaidika Upâsanâ was Pradhâna, Sâdhakas



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

worshipping Indra for wealth, children and the like ; though Nishkâma Rishis adored the Sarvashaktimân (Devî-sûkta is Advaitasiddhipûrna). In Tretâ, worship according to Smritî prevailed. It was then that Vashishtha is said to have done Sâdhanâ of Brahmavidyâ according to Chînâchârakrama. Though in the Dvâpara there was both Smriti and Purâna, rites were generally performed according to the Purânas. There was also then, as always, worshippers of the Pûrnashaktimahâvidyâ. At the end of Dvâpara and beginning of the Kali age the Tantra Shâstra was taught to men. Then the ten Sangskâras, Shrâddha and Antyeshtikriyâ were, as they are now, performed according to the Vaidikadharma : Âshramâchâra according to Dâyabhâga and other Smriti Texts ; Vratas according to Purâna ; Dîkshâ and Upâsanâ of Brahman with Shakti, and various kinds of Yoga Sâdhanâ, according to the Âgama which is divided into three parts Tantra (Sattvaguna) Yâmala (Rajoguna) and Dâmara (Tamoguna). There were 64 Tantras for each of the three divisions Ashvagrântâ, Rathagrântâ, Vishnugrântâ.

Such is a Tântrik tradition concerning the Ages and their appropriate Scriptures. Whether this tradition has any historical basis still awaits inquiry, which is rendered difficult by the fact that many Tantras have been lost and others destroyed by those inimical to them. It is sufficient for my purpose to merely state what is the belief ; that purpose being to shew that the Tantra Shâstra recognises, and claims not to be in conflict with, Veda or any other recognised Shâstra. It accepts the six Philosophies (Darshana) which Shiva says are the six limbs of Kula and parts of His body, saying that he who severs them severs His limbs (Kulârnavâ II, 84, 84-95). The meaning of this is that the Six Philosophies and the Six Minds, as all else, are parts of His body. It accepts the Shabda doctrine of Mîmângsâ subject to certain modifications to meet its doctrine of Shakti. Though it, in common with the Shaiva Tantra,



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

accepts the doctrine of the 36 Tattvas, and Shadadhvâ (Tattva, Kalâ, Bhuvana, Varna, Pada, Mantra), this is only an elaboration of detail which explains the origin of the Purusha and Prakriti Tattvas of the Sângkhya. These are shown to be twin facets of the One and the "development" of Shakti into Purusha-Prakriti Tattva is shown. These Tattvas include the ordinary 24 from Prakriti with its Gunas to Prithivî. It accepts the doctrine of the three bodies (causal, subtle, gross) and the three states (Jâgrat, Svapna, Sushupti) in their individual and collective aspects. It follows the mode of evolution (Parinâma) of Sângkhya in so far as the development of Jîva is concerned, as also an Âbhâsa, in the nature of Vivartta, "from Fire to Fire" in the Pure Creation. Its exposition of the body includes the five Prânas, the seven Dhâtus, the Doshas (Vâyû, Pitta, Kapha) (Prapanchasâra II) and so forth. On the ritual side it contains the commonly accepted ritual of present day Hinduism ; Mantra, Yantra, Pratimâ, Lingga, Shâlagrâma, Nyâsa, Japa, Pûjâ, Stotra, Kavacha, Dhyâna and so forth, as well as the Vaidik rites which are the ten Sangskâras, Homa and the like. Most of the commonly accepted ritual of the day is Tântrik. It accepts Yoga in all its forms Mantra, Hatha, Laya, Jnâna ; and is in particular distinguished by its practice of Laya or Kundalî-yoga and other Hatha processes.

Therefore not only is the authority of the Veda acknowledged along with the Âgama, Nigamas and Tantras but there is not a single doctrine or practice, amongst those hitherto mentioned, which is either not generally held, or which has not the adherence of large numbers of Indian worshippers. It accepts all the notions common to Hinduism as a whole. Nor is there a single doctrine previously mentioned which is contrary to Veda, that is on the assumption of the truth of Advaitavâda. For of course it is open to Dualists and Vishishtâdvaitins to say that its Monistic interpretation of Vedânta is not a true exposition



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

of Vaidik truth. No Shâkta will however say that. Subject to this, I do not know of anything which it omits and should have included, or states contrary to the tenor of Vaidik doctrine. If there be anything I shall be obliged, as a student of the Shâstra, to any one who will call my attention to it. The Shâstra has not therefore up to this point shown itself as a "Hell" in opposition to the Vaidik "Heaven."

But it may be said that I have omitted the main thing which gives it its bad and unvaidik character namely the ill-famed Panchatattva or worship with meat, wine, fish, grain and woman. I have also omitted the magic to be found in some of the Shâstras.

The latter may be first shortly dealt with. Magic is not peculiar to the Tantras. It is to be found in plenty in the Atharvaveda. In fact the definition of Abhichâra is "the Karma described in the Tantras and Atharvaveda." Abhichâra is magical process with intent to destroy or injure. It is Hingsâ-Karma, or act injurious to others. There is nothing anti-vaidik then in Magic. I may however here also point out that there is nothing wrong in Magic (Shatkarma) *per se*. As with so many other things it is the use or abuse of it which makes it right or wrong. If a man kills by Mârana Karma a rival in his business to get rid of competition and to succeed to his clients custom, he commits a very grave sin—one of the most grievous of sins. Suppose however that a man saw a tiger stalking a child, or a dacoit about to slay it for its golden ornament; his killing of the tiger or dacoit would, if necessary for the safety of the child, be a justifiable act. Magic is however likely to be abused and has in fact been abused by some of the Tantriks. I think this is the most serious charge established against them. For evil magic which proceeds from malevolence is a greater crime than any abuse of natural appetite. But in this, as in other matters, we must distinguish between what the Shâstra says and the practices



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

of its followers. The injunction laid upon the Sâdhaka is that he "should do good to other beings as if they were his own self." *Âtmavat sarvabhûtebhyo hitam kuryyât kuleshvâri.* (Kulârnavâ Tantra XII 63.) In the Kulârnavâ Samhitâ (a different and far inferior work to the Tantra of that name) Shiva recites some horrible rites with the flesh of rat and bat; with the soiled linen of a Chandâla woman, with the shroud of a corpse, and so forth; and then he says "My heart trembles (*hridayam kampate mama*) my limbs tremble (*gâtrâni mama kampante*) my mouth is dry oh Pârvati (*mukham shushyate Pârvati!*) Oh gentle one my mind is all disturbed (*kshobho me jâyate bhadre.*) What more shall I say? Conceal it (*Na vaktavyam*) "conceal it, conceal it." He then says:—"In the Kali age Sâdhakas are generally greedy of money. Having done greatly sinful acts they destroy living beings. For them there is neither Guru nor Rudra nor Thee nor Sâdhikâ. My dear life they are ready to do acts for the destruction of men. Therefore it is wrong to reveal these matters oh Devi. I have told Thee out of affection for Thee, being greatly pleased by Thy kisses and embrace. But it should be as carefully concealed by Thee as thine own secret body. Oh Pârvatî all this is greatly sinful and a very bad Yoga. (*Mahâpâtakayuktang tat kuyogo 'yamudâhritah.*)"

*Kalikâle sâdhakâstu prâyasho dhanalolupâh  
Mahâkrityâng vidhâyaiva prâninâng badhabhâginah  
Na gurur nâpi Rudro vâ naiva tvang naiva sâdhikâ  
Mahâprânivinâshâya samarthah prânavallabhe  
Etat prakâshânam devi doshâya parikalpyate  
Snehena tava deveshi chumbanâlinganaistathâ  
Santushyaiva mayâ devi sarvam etat prakâshitam  
Tvayâ gopyang prayatnena svayoniriva Pârvati  
Mahâpâtaka-yuktang tat kuyogo' yamudâhritah*

"None of these things are ever to be done by Thee Oh Daughter of the mountain (*Sarvathâ naiva kartavyang tvayâ Parvatanandini*) Whoever does so, incurs the sin of



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

destroying Me. I destroy all such as does fire dry grass. Of a surety such incur the sin of slaying a Brâhmana. All such incur the sin of slaying a Brâhmana."

*Sarvathâ naiva kartavyas tvayâ Parvatanandini  
Badhabhâk mama deveshi krityâmimâng samâcharet  
Tasya sarvang harâmyâshu vahnih shushkatrinang  
yathâ  
Avyarthâng brahmahatyâncha brahmahatyâng sa  
vindati*

When therefore we condemn the sin of evil magic it is necessary to remember both such teaching as is contained in this quotation, and the practice of those of good life who follow the Shâstra. To do so is to be both fair and accurate. There is nothing, in any event, in the point that the magical contents of the Tantra Shâstra make it contrary to Veda. Those who bring such a charge must also prefer it against the Atharvaveda. As a matter of fact magic is common to all early religions. It has been practiced, though condemned, in Christian Europe. It is not necessary to go back to the old witchcraft trials. There are some who protest against its recrudescence to-day. It has been well observed that there are two significant facts about occultism namely its catholicity (it is to be found in all lands and ages) and its amazing power of recuperation after it has been supposed to have been disproved as mere superstition. Even some quarter of a century ago (I am quoting from the same author) there were probably not a score of people in London (and those kept their preoccupation to themselves) who had any interest at all in the subject except from a purely antiquarian standpoint. Magic was dismissed by practically all educated men as something too evidently foolish and nonsensical to deserve attention or inquiry. In recent years the position has been reversed in the West, and complaint is again made of the revival of witchcraft and occultism to-day. The reason of this is that modern scientific investigation has established the objectivity of leading phenomena



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

of occultism. For instance about a century or so ago it was still believed that a person could inflict physical injury on another by means other than physical. And this is what is to be found in that portion of the Tantra Shâstras which deal with the Shatkarma. Witches confessed to having committed this crime and were punished therefor. At a later date the witchcraft trials were held to be evidence of the superstition both of the accused and accusers. Yet psychology now allows the principle that Thought is itself a Force, and that by Thought alone, properly directed, without any known physical means the thought of another, and hence his whole condition, can be affected. By physical means I mean direct physical means, for occultism may, and does avail, itself of physical means to stimulate and intensify the force and direction of thought. This is the meaning of the magic rituals which have been so much ridiculed. Why is black the colour of Mârana Karma? Because that colour incites and maintains and emphasizes the will to kill. So Hypnotism (Vashîkaranam) as an instance of the exercise of the Power of Thought makes use of gestures, rotatory instruments and so forth.

The Magician having a firm faith in his (or her) power (for faith in occultism as in religion is essential) surrounds himself with every incentive to concentrated, prolonged and (in malevolent magic), malevolent thought. A figure or other object such as part of the clothing, hair, nails and so forth of the victim represents the person to be attacked by magic. This serves as the 'immediate object' on which the magical thought is expended. The Magician is helped by this and similar aids to a state of fixed and malignant attention which is rendered intense by action taken on the substituted object. It is not of course the injuries done to this object which are the direct cause of injury to the person attacked, but the thought of the magician of which these injuries are a materialisation. There is thus present the circumstances which a modern psychologist would demand



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

for success in a telepathic experiment. As the witchcraft trials show, the victim is first affected in thought and then in body by the malignant thought thus focussed upon him. Sometimes no apparent means are employed, as in a case reported to me by a friend of mine as occurring in a Bombay Hotel when a man well-known in India for his "Powers" (Siddhi) drove away, by the power of his thought only, a party of persons sitting at a neighbouring table whose presence was greatly distasteful to one of his companions. This, if the effect of magical power, was an instance of what the Tantras call Uchchâtana. In all cases the general principle is the same, namely the setting in motion and direction of powerful thought by appropriate means.

This is the view of those who give what may be called a psychological explanation of these phenomena. These would hold that the magical symbolisms are without inherent force but work according to race and individual characteristics on the mind which does the rest. Others believe that there is an inherent power in Symbolism itself, that the "Symbol" is not merely such but an actual expression of, and instrument by which, certain occult laws are brought into play. In other words the power of "Symbolism" derives not merely from the effect which it, may have on particular minds likely to be affected by it but from itself as a law external to human thought. Some again (and Indian magicians amongst others) believe in the presence and aid of discarnate personalities (such as the unclean Pishâchas) given in the carrying out of occult operations. Similarly it is commonly held by Catholics that where so-called "spiritualistic" phenomena are real and not fraudulent (as they sometimes are) the action is not that of the dead but of Infernal Spirits stimulating them and misleading men to their damnation. Occultism in the sense of a belief in, and claim to be able to use, a certain range of forces which may be called preternatural



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

has the adherence not only of savage and barbarous people (who always believe in it) but also of an increasing number of "civilised" Londoners, Berliners, Americans, Parisians and other Western peoples. They differ in all else but they are united in this. Even what most would regard as downright superstition still abundantly flourishes in the West. Witness the hundreds of thousands of "touchwood" figures and the like sent to the troops in the recent war, the horror of "serving salt," of sitting 13 to a table, and so on. In fact, from the earliest ages, magic has gone hand in hand with religion, and if for short periods the former has been thought to be dead it always rises again. Is this, as some say, the mark of the inherent silly credulity of mankind, or does the fact show that there is something in the claims which occultism has made in all ages? India (I do not speak of the English-educated community which shares in the rise and fall of English opinion) has always believed in occultism and some of the Tantra Shâstras are repertoires of its ritual. Magic and superstition proper exist in this country but are also to be found in the West. The same remark applies to every depreciatory criticism passed upon the Indian people. Some have thought that occultism is the sign both of savagery and barbarism on the one hand and of decadent civilization on the other. In India it has always existed and still exists. It has been well said that there is but one mental attitude impossible to the educated man, namely blank incredulity with regard to the whole subject. There has been, and is, a change of attitude due to an increase of psychological knowledge and scientific investigation into objective facts. Certain reconciliations have been suggested, bringing together the ancient beliefs, which sometimes exist in crude and ignorant forms. These reconciliations may be regarded as insufficiently borne out by the evidence. On the other hand a proposed reconciliation may be accepted as one that on the whole seems to meet the claims



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

made by the occultist on one side and the scientific psychologist on the other. But in the present state of knowledge it is no longer possible to reject both claims as evidently absurd. Men of approved scientific position have, notwithstanding the ridicule and scientific bigotry to which they have been exposed, considered the facts to be worthy of their investigation. And on the psychological side successive and continuous discoveries are being made which corroborate ancient beliefs in substance, though they are not always in consonance with the mode in which those beliefs were expressed. We must face the fact that (with religion) occultism is in some form or another a widely diffused belief of humanity. All however will be agreed in holding that malevolent Magic is a great Sin. In leaving the subject of magic I may here add that modern psychology and its data afford remarkable corroboration of some other Indian beliefs such as that Thought is a Force, and that its operation is in a field of Consciousness which is wider than that of which the mind is ordinarily aware. We may note also the aid which is derived from the establishment of dual and multiple personalities in understanding how it may be possible that in one unity there may be yet varying aspects.

The second charge is the alleged anti-vaidik character of the secret Panchatattva Sâdhanâ, with wine, flesh and woman, its alleged immorality of principle, and the evil lives of those who practise it. I am not in the present paper dealing in full with this subject; not that I intend by any means to shirk it; but it is more appropriately the subject of consideration in future Chapters on the subject of Shâkta Tântrik Sâdhanâ of which it forms a part. What I wish to say now is only this:—We must distinguish in the first place between a *principle* and its *application*. A principle may be perfectly right and sound and yet a supposed application may not be an application in fact; or if there be an application, the latter may violate some other moral or



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

physical law, or be dangerous and inexpedient as leading to abuse. I will show later that the principle involved is one which is claimed to be in conformity with Vaidik truth, and is in fact recognised in varying forms by all classes of Hindus. Some do so dualistically. The Sâdhanâ of the Shâkta Tantra is, whether right or wrong, an application of the principles of Advaitavâda and in its full form should not, it is said, be entered upon until after Vedântic principles have been mastered. For this reason Kauladharmâ has been called the fifth Âshrama. Secondly I wish to point out that this ritual with wine and meat is not as some suppose a new thing ; something introduced by the Shâkta Tântriks. On the contrary it is very old and has sanction in Vaidik practice. So much is this so, that a Tântrik Sâdhu discussing the matter with a Bengali friend of mine said of himself, as a follower of this ritual, that he was a Hindu and that those who were opposed to it were Jainas. What he meant, and what seems to be the fact, is that the present day general prohibition against the use of wine, and the generally prevalent avoidance, or limitation of an animal diet, are due to the influence of Jainism and Buddhism which arose after, and in opposition to, Vaidik usage. Their influence is most marked of course in Vaishnavism but has not been without effect elsewhere. When we examine ancient Vaidik usage we find that meat, fish and Mudrâ (the latter in the form of Purodâsha) were consumed, and intoxicating liquor (in the form of Soma) was drunk, in the Vaidik Yajnas. We also discover some Vaidik rites in which there was Maithuna. This I have dealt with in my article on "Shakti and Shâkta."

The abovementioned facts show in my opinion that there is ground for the doctrine of the Tântrikas that it is Avidyâ to sever Veda and Tantra. My conclusion is not however a counsel to follow this nor any other particular form of ritual. I am only concerned to state the facts. I may however here add two observations.



## TANTRA SHÂSTRA AND VEDA

From an outside point of view (for I do not here deal with the subject otherwise) we must consider the age in which a particular Shâstra was produced and consequently the conditions of the time, the then state of society, its moral and spiritual development and so forth. To understand some rites in the past history of this and other countries one must seek, in lieu of surface explanations, their occult significance in the history of the human race; and the mind must cast itself back into the ages whence it has emerged, by the aid of those traces which it still bears in the depths of its being of that which outwardly expressed itself in ancient custom.

Take for instance the rite of human sacrifice which the Kâlikalpalatâ says that the Râjâ alone may perform (Râjâ naravaling dadyânnânyo 'pi parameshvari) but in which, as the Tantrasâra states, no Brâhmana may participate (Brâhmanânâng naravalidâne nâdhikârah). Such an animal sacrifice is not peculiarly "Tântrik" but an instance of the survival of a rite widely spread in the ancient world; older than the day when Jehovah bade Abraham sacrifice his son (Gen XXII) and that on which Sunahsepa (Aitareya Brâhmana VII, 3) like Isaac was released. Reference it is true is made to this sacrifice in the Shâstras, but save as some rare exception (I had a case in Court some years ago) it does not exist to-day and the vast mass of men do not wish to see it revived. The Chakra ritual similarly is either disappearing or becoming in spirit transformed.

What is of primary value in the Tantra Shâstra are certain principles with which I have dealt elsewhere, and with which I deal again in part in this and the following lectures. The application of these principles in ritual is a question of form. All form is a passing thing. In the shape of ritual its validity is limited to place and time. As so limited it will continue so long as it serves an useful purpose and meets the needs of the age, and the degree of its spiritual advancement, or that of any particular body of



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

men who practise it; otherwise it will disappear, whilst the foundations of Vedânta on which it rests may remain. In the same way it is said we ourselves come and go with our merits and demerits, but the Spirit ever abides beyond both good and evil.



CHAPTER IV  
SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

**S**HAKTI who is in Herself pure blissful Consciousness (Chidrûpinî) is also the Mother of Nature and is Nature itself born of the creative play of Her thought. The Shâkta faith, or worship of Shakti, is, I believe, in some of its essential features one of the oldest and most widespread 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 Sâdhanâ both higher and lower. There are books of disguised magic as how to control others (Vashîkarana) 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 Tântrik Shavara, as a low class of books on magic are called. Shavara or Chandâla 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



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

of Devîs and of the Magna Mater (the great Vaidik Devatâ 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 Shâktas with the Greek Telestica or Dynamica, the Mysteries of Dionysus "Fire born in the cave of initiation" with the Shakti Pûjâ, the Shakti Shodhana with the purification shown in d' Hancarville's "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 Shâkta 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 Âdyâ Shakti, the dusk Divinity, many breasted crowned with towers whose veil is never lifted, Isis, Kâlî, Hathor, Cybele, the Cowmother Goddess Ida, Tripurasundarî, 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 Târâ, the Mexican Ish, Hellenic Osia the consecrated, the free and pure, African Salambo who like Pârvatî 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, Mûlaprakriti, Semele, Mâyâ, Ishtar, Saitic Neith Mother of the Gods, eternal deepest ground of all things, Kundalî, Guhyamahâbhairavî and all the rest.



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

And yet there are people who allege that the "Tântrik" 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 unillumined 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 recognises 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 Tântrik Sâdhanâ 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 Pûjâ. 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 Tântrik 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 Kundalîshakti; of the "air tube" or "White-cord" or the Sushumnâ Nâdi; of the "two-fold air tube" that is Idâ and Pingalâ; and of various bodily centres which are marked by animal glyphs.

Perhaps the Panchatattva Ritual followed by some of the adherents of the Tantras is one of the main causes



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

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 Vaidikâchâra, 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 Panchatattva 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 Mângsâshtaka Shrâddha; fish in the Ashtaka-shrâddha and Pretashrâddha; and Maithuna as a recognised rite will be found in the Vâmadevya Vrata and Mahâvrata of universally recognised Vaidik texts, apart from the alleged, and generally unknown, Saubhâgyakânda of the Atharvaveda to which the Kâlikopanishad and other "Tântrik" Upanishads are said to belong. Possibly however this element of Maithuna may be foreign and imported by Chînâchâra (See Ch. V). So again, as that distinguished scholar Professor Ramendra Sundara Trivedi has pointed out in his Vichitraprasanga, the Mudrâ of the Panchatattva corresponds with the Purodâsha cake of the Soma and other Yâgas. The present rule of abstinence from wine, and in some cases, meat is due, I believe, to the original Buddhism. It is so-called "Tântriks," who follow (in and for their ritual only) the earlier practice. It is true that the Samhitâ of Ushanâh says "Wine is not to be drunk,



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

given or taken (Madyam apeyam adeyam agrâhyam)" but the yet greater Manu states, "There is no wrong in the eating of meat or the drinking of wine (Na mângsabakshane dosho na madye) though he rightly adds, as many now do, that abstention therefrom is productive of great fruit (Nivrittistu mahâphalâ). The Tântrik practice does not allow extra-ritual or "useless" drinking (Vrithâpâna).

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 to-day 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 Ârsha 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 (Pâramparyya) 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 a fragmentary character. Even if these did appear later than some other Shâstras, 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 1000 years ago be on that account only truer than what



## ŚHAKTI AND ŚHĀKTA

was said 100 years ago? It is held that whilst the teaching of the Âgama 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 Brahmâ wrote the celebrated Vaishnava poem called the Brahmasamhitâ, it is not meant that Shiva and Brahmâ materialised 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 Shâstra is determined by the question whether Siddhi is gained through its provisions or not. It is not enough that "Shiva uvâcha" is writ in it. The test is that of Âyurveda. A medicine is a true one if it cures. The Indian test for everything is experience. It is from Samâdhi that the ultimate proof of Advaitavâda 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 favour 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. Age however is not wholly without its uses: because one of the things to which men look to see in a Shâstra is whether it has been accepted or quoted in works of recognised authority. Such



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

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" *to-day* (whatever be its origins) will disclose the following results:—Vedânta 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 Vedânta doctrines are realised in actual fact. We must carefully distinguish these two. Thus the Vedânta says "So'ham"; which is Hangsa. "Hakâra is one wing; Sakâra is the other. When stripped of both wings She Târa is Kâmakalâ." (Tantrarâja Tantra.) The Âchâras set forth the means by which "So'ham" is to be translated into actual fact for the particular Sâdhaka. Sâdhanâ comes from the root "Sâdh" which means effort or striving or accomplishment. Effort for and towards what? The answer 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" affirm. 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 the 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 watch-word of the Tantras is Kriyâ or action.



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

The next question is what Kriyâ should be adopted towards this end of Jnâna. "Tanyate, vistâryate jnânam anena iti Tantram." According to this derivation of the word Tantra from the root "Tan" "to spread", it is defined as the Shâstra by which knowledge (Jnâna) is spread. Mark the word Jnâna. The end of the practical methods which these Shâstras employ is to spread Vedantic Jnâna. 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 analyse 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 Tântrik Âchâras, 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 Shaivas, Vaishnavas, and Shâktas and of various subdivisions of these. So amongst the Shaivas there are the Shaivas of the Shaiva Siddhânta, the Advaita Shaiva of the Kashmir School, Pâshupatas and a multitude of other sects which have their Tantras. If "Tântrik" be used as meaning an adherent of the Tantra Shâstra, 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 Devatâs (Sûrya, Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti) and of any of the various Sampradâyas worshipping that Devatâ with their 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 "Tântriks" do not themselves generally use this



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

term but call themselves Shâktas, Shaivas and the like, of whatever Sampradâya they happen to be.

Again Tantra is the name of only one class of Scripture followed by "Tântriks." There are others, namely, Nigamas, Âgamas, Yâmalas, Dâmaras, Uddîshas, Kakshapûtas and so forth. None of these names are used to describe the adherents of these Shâstras except, so far as I am aware, Âgama in the use of the term Âgamavâdin, and Âgamânta in the descriptive name of Âgamânta Shaiva. I give later a list of these Scriptures as contained in the various Âgamas. If we summarise them shortly under the term Tantra Shâstra, or preferably Âgama, then we have four main classes of Indian Scripture, namely, Veda (Samhitâ, Brâhmana. Upanishad), Âgama or Tantra Shâstra, Purâna, Smriti. Of these Shâstras the authority of the Âgama or Tantra Shâstra has been denied in modern times. This view may be shown to be erroneous by reference to Shâstras of admitted authority. It is spoken of as the Fifth Veda. Kulluka Bhatta the celebrated commentator on Manu says: "Shruti is twofold, Vaidik and Tântrik" (Vaidikî tântrikî chaiva dvividhâ shrutih kîrtitâ). This refers to the Mantra portion of the Âgamas. In the Great Vaishnava Shâstra, the Shrimad Bhâgavata, Bhagavân says: "My worship of the three kinds—Vaidik, Tântrik and Mixed (Mishra) and that, in Kaliyuga, Keshava is to be worshipped according to the injunction of Tantra." The Devîbhâgavata speaks of the Tantra Shâstra as a Vedânga. It is cited as authority in the Ashtavingshati Tattva of Raghunandana who prescribe for the worship of Durgâ as before him had done Shridatta, Harinâtha, Vidyâdhara and many others. Some of these and other references are given in Mahâmahopâdhyaya Yâdaveshvara Tarkaratna's Tantrer Prâchînatva in the Sâhitya Sambhitâ of Aswin 1317. The Târâpradîpa and other Tantrik works say that in the Kaliyuga the Tântrika and not the Vaidika Dharma is to be followed. This objection about the late character and therefore



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

unauthoritativeness of the Tantra Shâstras generally (I do not speak of any particular form of it) has been taken by Indians from their European Gurus.

According to the Shâkta Scriptures, Veda in its wide sense does not only mean Rik, Yajus, Sâma, Atharva as now published but comprises these together with the generally unknown and unpublished Uttara Kânda of the Atharva Veda, called Saubhâgya, with the Upanishads attached to this. Sâyana's Commentary is written on the Pûrva Kânda. These are said (though I have not yet verified the fact) to be 64 in number. Some of these, such as Advaitabhâva, Kaula, Kâlikâ Upanishads and others, I am shortly publishing. I may also here refer my reader to the Kaulâchâryya Sadânanda's Commentary on the great Îsha Upanishad. Included also in "Veda" (according to the same view) are the Nigamas, Âgamas Yâmalas and Tantras. From these all other Shâstras which explain the Artha of Veda such as Purâna and Smriti, also Itihâsa and so forth are derived. All these Shâstras constitute what is called a "Many millioned" (Shatakoti) Samhitâ which are developed the one from the other as it were an unfolding series. In the Tântrik Sangraha called Sarvollâsa by the Sarvavidyâsiddha Sarvânandanâtha the latter cites authority (Nârâyani Tantra) to show that from Nigama came Âgama. Here I pause to note that the Sammohana says that Kerala Sampradâya is Dakshina and follows Veda (Vedamârgastha), whilst Gauda (to which Sarvânandânatha belonged) is Vâma and follow Nigama. Hence apparently the pre-eminence given to Nigama. He then says from Âgama came Yâmala, from Yâmala the four Vedas, from Vedas the Purânas, from Purânas Smriti, and from Smriti all other Shâstras. There are, he says, five Nigamas and 64 Âgamas. Four Yâmalas are mentioned, which are said to give the Sthûlarûpa. As some may be surprised to learn that the four Vedas came from the Yâmalas (*i.e.*, were Antargata of the Yâmalas) which literally means what is



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

uniting or comprehensive, I subjoin the Sanskrit verse from Nârâyanî Tantra.

*Brahmayâmalasambhûtam sâmaveda-matam shive  
Rudrayâmalasamjâta rigvedo paramo mahân  
Vishnuyâmalasambhûto yajurvedah kuleshvare  
Shaktiyâmalasambhûtam atharva paramam mahat.*

Some Tantras are called by opposing sects Vedaviruddhâni (opposed to Veda), which of course those who accept them deny, just as the Commentary of the Nityâshodashikârnava speaks of the Pancharâtrin as Vedabhrashta. That some sects were originally Avidika 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 Âgamas and kindred Shâstras are given not merely equal authority with the four Vedas but in a sense priority (that is of derivation), 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 Shâkta worshipper. We find on the one hand the four Vedas with their Samhitâs, Brâhmanas, and Upanishads and on the other what has been called the "Fifth Veda", that is Nigama, Âgama and kindred Shâstras and certain especially "Tântrik" Upanishads attached to the Saubhâgya Kânda of the Atharvaveda. There are Vaidik and Tântrik Kalpa Sûtras and Sûktas such as the Tântrika Devî and Matsya Sûktas. As a counter-part of the Brahmasûtras we have the Shakti Sûtras of Agastya. Then there is both Vaidik and "Tântrik" ritual such as the ten Vaidik Sangskâras and the Tântrik Sangskâras, such as Abhisheka; Vaidik and Tântrik initiation (Upanayana and Dîkshâ); Vaidik and Tântrik Gâyatrî; the Vaidik Om, the so-called "Tântrik" Bîjas such as Hrîng; Vaidika Guru and Deshika Guru and so forth. This dualism may be found



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

carried into other matters as well, such as medicine, law, writing. So whilst the Vaidik Âyurveda employed vegetable drugs, the "Tântriks" used metallic substances. A counterpart of the Vaidika Dharmapatnî was the Shaiva wife, that is, she who is given by desire (Kâma). I have already pointed out the counterparts of the Panchatattva in the Vedas. Some allege a special form of Tântrik 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 Âgamas. If they are not both of authority, why should such reverence be given to the Deshika Gurus and to Tantrik Dîkshâ?

Probably there were many A vaidika cults, not without a deep and ancient wisdom of their own, that is, cults outside the Vaidik religion (Vedabâhya) which in the course of time adopted certain Vaidik rites such as Homa: the Vaidikas in their own turn taking up some of the A vaidika practices. It may be that some Brâhmanas joined these so-called Anârya Sampradâyas just as we find to-day Brâhmanas officiating for low castes and being called by their name. At length the Shâstras of the two cults were given at least equal authority. The Vaidik practice then largely disappeared, surviving chiefly both in the Smârta rites of to-day and as embedded in the ritual of the Âgamas. These are speculations to which I do not definitely commit myself. They are merely suggestions which may be worth consi-



## SHAKTĪ AND SHĀKTA

deration when search is made for the origin of the Âgamas. 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 "Âryas" who followed the Vaidik rites and who in their turn influenced the various religious communities without the Vaidik fold.

The Smârtas of to-day represent what is generally called the Shrauta side, though in these rites there are mingled many Puranic ingredients. The Ârya Samâja is another present-day representative of the old Vaidika Âchâra, 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 Shaivas, Shâktas, 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 Shaivasiddhânta, of the Pancharâtra Âgama, and of the Northern Shaivaism of which the Mâlinîvijaya Tantra sets the type. The old fivefold division of worshippers was according to the Panchopâsana, Saura, Gânapatya, Vaishnava, Shaiva, and Shâkta whose Mûla Devatâs were Sûryya, Ganapati, Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti respectively. At the present time the threefold division Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shâkta, 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 Amnâyas are mentioned in the Tantras. (Shadâmnâyâh). These are the six Faces of Shiva, looking East (Pûrvâmnâya) South (Dakshinâmnâya) West (Pashchimâmnâya) North (Uttarâmnâya) Upper (Urddhvâmnâya) Lower and concealed (Adhâmnâya). The six Âmnâyas are thus so called according to the order of their origin. They



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

are thus described in the Devyagâma cited in the Tantra-rahasya (See also, with some variation probably due to corrupt text, Patala II of Samayâchâra Tantra):—“ (1) The face in the East (that is in front) is of pearl-like lustre with three eyes and crowned by the crescent moon. By this face I (Shiva) revealed (the Devîs) Shrî Bhuvaneshvari, Tripûtâ, Lalitâ, Padmâ, Shûlinî, Sarasvatî, Tvaritâ, Nityâ, Vajraprastârini, Annapûrnâ, Mahâlakshmî, Lakshmî, Vagvâdinî with all their rites and Mantras. (2) The southern face is of a yellow colour with three eyes. By this face I revealed Prasâdasadâshiva, Mahâprâsadamâtra, Dakshinâmûrti, Vatuka, Manjughosha, Bhairava, Mritasanjivânîvidyâ, Mrityunjayâ with their rites and Mantras (3) The face in the West (that is at the back) is of the colour of a freshly formed cloud. By this face I revealed Gopâla, Krishna, Nârâyana, Vâsudeva, Nrisingha, Vâmana, Varâha, Râmachandra, Vishnu, Harihara, Ganesha, Agni, Yama, Sûryya, Vidhu (Chandra) and other planets, Garuda, Dikpâlas, Hanumân and other Suras, their rites and Mantras (4) The face in the North is blue in colour and with three eyes. By this face I revealed the Devîs Dakshinakâlikâ, Mahâkâlî, Guhyakâlî, Smashânakâlikâ, Bhadrakâlî, Ekajatâ, Ugratârâ, Târinî, Kâtyâyanî, Chhinnamastâ, Nîlasarasvatî, Durgâ, Jayadurgâ, Navadurgâ, Vâshulî, Dhûmâvâtî, Vishâlâkshî, Gaurî, Bagalâmukhî, Pratyanggirâ, Mâtanggî, Mahishamardini, their rites and Mantras, (5) The upper face is white. By this face I revealed Shrîmattripurasundarî, Tripureshî, Bhairavî, Tripurabhairavî, Smashânabhairavî, Bhuvaneshîbhairavî, Shatkutabhairavî, Annapûrnâbhairavî, Panchamî, Shodashî, Mâlinî, Valâvalâ, with their rites and Mantras (6) The sixth face (below) is lustrous, of many colours and concealed. It is by this mouth that I spoke of Devâtasthâna, Âsana, Yantra, Mâlâ, Naivedya, Validâna, Sâdhanâ, Purashcharana, Mantrasiddhi. It is called Îshânâmnâya.” The Samayâchâra Tantra (Ch. 2) says that whilst the first four Âmnâyas are for the Chaturvarga or Dharma,



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Artha, Kâma, Moksha, the upper (Urddhvâmnâya) and Lower Adhâmnâya) are for liberation only. The Sammohana Tantra (Ch. V.) first explains Pûrvâmnâya, Dakshinâmnâya, Paschimâmnâya, Uttarâmnâyâ, Urddhvâmnâya according to what is called Deshaparyyâya. I am informed that no Pûjâ of (Adhâmnâya) is generally done but that Shadanvaya Shâmbhavas, very high Sâdhakas, at the door of Liberation do Nyâsa with this sixth and concealed Face. It is said that Pâtâla Âmnâya is Sambhogayoga. The Nishkala aspect in Shaktikrama is for Pûrva, Tripurâ; for Dakshina, Saura, Gânapatya and Vaishnava; for Pashchima, Raudra, Bhairava; for Uttara, Ugrâ, Âpattârinî. In Shaivakarma the same aspect is for the first, Sampatpradâ and Mahesha; for the second, Aghora, Kâlikâ and Vaishnava Darshana; for the third, Raudra, Bhâirava, Shaiva; for the fourth, Kuvera, Bhairava, Saudarshaka; and for Urddhvâmnâya, Ârddhanârisha and Pranava. Niruttara Tantra says that the first two Âmnâyas contain rites for the Pashu Sâdhaka (see as to the meaning of this and the other classes of Sâdhakas, the Chapter on Panchatattva ritual *Pûrvâmnâyoditam karma pashavam kathitam priye*, and so with the next). The third or Pashchimâmnâya is a combination of Pashu and Vîra (*Pashchimâmnâyajam karma pashu-vîrasamâshritam*) Uttarâmnâyâya is for Vîra and Divya (*Uttarâmnâyajam karma divya-virâshritam priye*). The upper Âmnâya is for the Divya (*Urddhvâmnâyoditam karma divyabhâvâshritam priye*). It adds that even the Divya does Sâdhanâ in the cremation ground in Vîrabhâva (that is heroic frame of mind and disposition) but he does such worship without Vîrâsana.

The Sammohana also gives a classification of Tantras according to the Âmnâyas as also special classifications, such as the Tantras of the six Âmnâyas according to Vatukâmnâya. 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.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

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 Krântâs, Deshaparyyaya, Kâlaparyyâya and so forth.

The Sammohana Tantra mentions 22 different Âgamas including Chinâgama (a Shâkta form), Pâshupata, (a Shaiva form) Pancharâtra, (a Vaishnava form) Kâpâlîka, 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 Kâlaparyyâya are the 64 Shâkta Tantras, with 327 Upatantras, 8 Yâmalas, 4 Dâmaras, 2 Kalpalatâs and several Samhitâs, Chûdâmanis (100) Arnavas, Purânas, Upavedas, Kakshapûtas, Vimarshinî and Chintâmanis. The Shaiva class contains 32 Tantras with its own Yâmalas, Dâmaras and so forth. The Vaishnava class contains 75 Tantras with the same, including Kalpas and other Shâstras. The Saura class has Tantras with its own Yâmalas, Uddîshas and other works. And the Gânapatya class contains 30 Tantras with Upatantras, Kalpas and other Shâstras, including one Dâmara and one Yâmala. The Bauddha class contains Kalpadrumas, Kâmadhenus, Sûktas, Kramas, Ambaras, Purânas and other Shâstras.

According to the Kulârnavâ and Jnânadîpa Tantras there are seven Âchâras of which the first four, Veda Vaishnava, Shaiva and Dakshina belong to Pashvâchâra ; then comes Vâma, followed by Siddhânta, in which gradual approach is made to Kaulâchâra the reputed highest. Elsewhere six and nine Âchâras are spoken of and different kind of Bhâvas, Sabhâva, Vibhâva and Dehabhâva and so forth which are referred to in Bhâvachûdâmani.

An account of the Âchâras is given in the Haratattva-dîdhiti (pp. 339-342. See in particular Vishvasâra Tantra (Ch. 24) and Nityâ Tantra and Prânatoshinî. The first is the best account).



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Vedâchâra is the lowest and Kaulâchâra the highest. (Kulârnavâ Tantra II). Their characteristics are given in the 24th Patala of Vishvasâra Tantra. The first four belong to Pashvâchâra (See Chapter on Shâkta Sâdhanâ) and the last three are for Vîra and Divya Sâdhakas. Summarising the points of the Vishvasâra :—a Sâdhaka in Vedâchâra 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 Vaishnavâchârâ he follows the injunctions (Nîyama) of Vedâchâra. He must give up eating of flesh (Nityâ Tantra says he must not kill animals) avoid sexual intercourse and even the talk of it. This doubtless means a negation of the Vîra ritual. He should worship Vishnu. This Âchâra is distinguished from the last by the great endurance of Tapas and the contemplation of the Supreme everywhere. In Shaivâchâra, Vedâchâra is prescribed with this difference that there must be no slaughter of animals and meditation is on Shiva. Dakshinâchâra is said to have been practised by Rishi Dakshinâmûrti and is therefore so called. This Âchâra is preparatory for the Vîra and Divya Bhâvas. Meditation is on the Supreme Îshvarî after taking Vijayâ (Hemp). Japa of Mantra is done at night. Siddhi is attained by using a rosary of human bone (Mahâshangkha) at certain places including a Shaktipîtha. Vâmâchâra is approved of Vîras and Divyas. One should be continent (Brahmachârî) at day and worship with the Panchatattva at night (“*Panchatattvakramenaiva râtrau devîng prapûjayet.*”) The statement of Nityâ (*Panchatattvânukalpena râtrau devîng prapûjayet*) is if correctly reported I think incorrect. This is Vîra Sâdhanâ and the Vîra should generally only use substitutes when the real Tattvas cannot be found.) Chakra worship is done. Siddhi is destroyed by revelation thereof; therefore the Vâma path is hidden. The Siddhântâchârî is superior to the last by his knowledge “hidden in



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

the Vedas, Shâstras and Purânas 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 Panchatattva ritual. Open and frank he cares not what is said." He offers the Panchatattvas openly. Then follows a notable passage. "Just as it is not blameable to drink openly in the Sautiâmani Yajna, so in Siddhântâchâra wine is drunk openly. As it is not blameable to kill horses in the Ashvamedha Yajna, so no offence is committed in killing animals in this Dharma." Nityâ Tantra says that an article, be it pure or impure, becomes pure by purification. Holding a cup made of human skull, and wearing the Rudiâksha, the Siddhântâchârî moves on earth in the form of Bhairava Himself. The knowledge of the last Âchâra, 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 Kula-dharma. 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 Sadâshiva and none are superior to him. Kaulas are of three classes, inferior (the ordinary or Piâkrita Kaula), who is ever engaged in ritual such as Japa, Homa, Pûjâ, follows Vîrâchâra (with Panchatattva) and strives to attain the highland of knowledge; middling is the Kaula who does Sâdhanâ with the Panchatattva, is deeply immersed in meditation (Dhyâna) and Samâdhi; 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 sandal-paste, gold and straw, a home and the cremation ground. He is a superior Kaula who meditates on the Self with the self, who has equally regard for all, who is full of contentment, forgiveness and compassion. Nityâ 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



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

as one who has fallen therefrom (Brashta). At other times he seems to be as weird and unearthly as a ghost (Bhûta). Kaulâchâra is, it says, the essence which is obtained from the ocean of Veda and Âgama after churning it with the staff of knowledge.

In a modern account of the Âchâras (See Sanâtana-sâdhana-Tattva or Tantra-rahasya by Sachchidânanda Svâmî) it is said that some speak of Aghorâchâra and Yogâchâra 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) Sangsâra. In Yogâchâra was learnt the upper heights of Sâdhanâ and the mysteries of Yoga such as the movements of the Vâyu in the bodily microcosm (Kshudrabrahmânda), the regulation of which controls the inclinations and propensities (Vritti). Yogâchâra is entered by Yoga-dîkshâ and achievement in Ashtânggayoga qualifies for Kaulâchâra. Whether there were such further divisions I cannot at present say. I prefer for the time being to follow the Kulârnava. The Svâmî's account of these is as follows:—Vedâchâra which consists in the daily practice of the Vaidik rites (with I may add some Tantrik observances) is the gross body (Sthûla-deha) which comprises within it all the other Âchâras, which are as it were its subtle body (Sûkshma 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) Kriyâmârga. 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 Vaishnavâchâra is the path of devotion (Bhaktimârga) 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



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

determination to uphold Dharma and to destroy Adharma, the Sâdhaka passes into the third stage or Shaivâchâra 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 (Jnânamârga). Following this is the fourth stage or Dakshinâchâra, which originally and in Tantra Shâstra does not mean "right-hand worship" but according to the author cited is the Âchâra "favourable" to the accomplishment of the higher Sâdhanâ of which Dakshina-Kâlikâ is Devî. (The Vishvasâra already cited derives the word from Dakshinâmûrti muni, but Dakshina in either case has the same meaning. Dakshinakâlî is a Devî of Uttarâmnâya and approach is here made to Vîrâ rituals). This stage commences when the worshipper can make Dhyâna and Dhâranâ of the threefold Shakti of the Brahman (Ichchhâ, Kriyâ, Jnâna), and understands the mutual connection of the three and of their expression as the Gunas, and until he receives the rite of initiation called Pûrnâbhishekha. At this stage the Sâdhaka is Shâkta and qualified for the worship of the threefold Shâkti of Brahman. (Brahmâ, Vishnu, Maheshvara). He worships the Âdyâ Shakti as Dakshina-Kâlikâ 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 Sâdhaka has followed Pravritti Mârga, or the outgoing path, the path of worldly enjoyment, albeit curbed by Dharma. The Sâdhaka now upon the exhaustion of the forces of the outward current makes entry on the path of return (Nivrittimârga). As this change is one of primary importance, some have divided the Âchâras into the two broad divisions of Dakshinâchâra (including the first four) and Vâmâchâra (including the last three).



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Strictly however the first three can only be thus included in the sense that they are preparatory to Dakshinâchâra proper and are all in the Pravritti Mârga and are not Vâmâchâra). It is thus said that men are born into Dakshinâchâra but are received by initiation into Vâmâchâra. As Dakshinâchâra does not mean "right-hand worship" so Vâmâchâra 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 Shâstra, which prescribes this Âchâra, itself gives it a bad name. Vâma is variously interpreted. Some say it is the worship in which woman (Vâmâ) enters that is Latâsadhanâ. Vâma, this author says, means "adverse" that is the stage adverse to the Pravritti, which governs in varying degrees the previous Âchâras. For entry is here made on the Nivritti path of return to the Source of outgoing. (In this Âchâra also there is worship of the Vâmâ Devî.) In Vâmâchâra the Sâdhaka 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 Mârga but nothing can be achieved in Vâmâchâra 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 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 Sâdhaka must at this stage



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

commence (the process continues until the fruit of Kaulâchâra is obtained) to cut off all the eight bonds (Pâsha) which have made him a Pashu, for up to and including Dakshinâchâra is Pashu worship. These Pâsha, bonds or "afflictions" are variously enumerated but the more numerous classifications are merely elaborations of the smaller divisions. Thus, according to the Devî-bhâgavata, Moha is ignorance or bewilderment, and Mahâmoha is the desire for worldly pleasure which flows from it. The Kulârnavâ Tantra mentions eight primary bonds, Dayâ (that is pity as the feeling which binds as opposed to divine compassion or Karunâ), Moha (ignorance), Lajjâ (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) Shîla (here usage, convention) and Varna (caste; for the enlightened is beyond all its distinctions). When, to take the Svâmî's example, Shrî Krishna stole the clothes of the bathing Gopîs or milkmaids and cowherds and made them approach Him naked, He removed the artificial coverings which are imposed on man in the Sangsâra. The Gopîs were eight, as are the Bonds, and the errors by which the Jîva is misled are the clothes which Krishna stole. Freed of these the Jîva 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 Sâdhaka 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 Sâdhanâ to liberate man from the bonds which bind him to the Sangsâra and to qualify the Vîra Sâdhaka, through Râjasika Upâsanâ, (see Chapter on Panchatattva) for the highest grades of Sâdhanâ in which the Sâttvika Guna predominates. He is



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

then Divya or divine. To the truly Sâttvik there is neither attachment, fear or disgust (Ghrinâ). What is thus commenced in Vâmâchâra, is gradually completed by the rituals of Siddhântâchâra and Kaulâchâra. In the last three Âchâras the Sâdhaka becomes more and more freed from the darkness of Sangsâra 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 Avadhûta 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 (Smashâna). He attains Brahmajnâna or the Gnosis in perfect form. On receiving Mahâpûrnadîkshâ, he performs his own funeral rites and is dead to the Sangsâra. Seated alone in some quiet place, he remains in constant Samâdhi (ecstasy), and attains it in its highest or Nirvikalpa form. The Great Mother the Supreme Prakriti Mahâshakti 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 (Jîvanmukta).

From the above it will be seen that the Âchâras are not various sects in the European sense, but stages in a continuous process through which the Sâdhaka 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 Vedâchâra, 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 Jîva 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 Sâdhaka may commence at any stage. If he



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

is a true Kaula now it is because in previous births he has by Sâdhanâ 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 Mahânirvâna Tantra it is by merit acquired in previous births that the mind is inclined to Kaulâchâra.

Kauladharmâ is in no wise sectarian but on the contrary claims to be the head of all sects. It is said "at heart a Shâkta, 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-shâktah vâhîh-shaivâh sabhâyâng vaishnavâmatâh  
Nâna-rûpadharâh Kaulâh vicharanti mahitâle*

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 Kaulâchâra. It is indifferent what the Kaulas apparent sect may be. The form is nothing and everything. It is nothing in the sense that it has no power to narrow the Kaulas 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 Âshramas, that is states and stages in the life of the Ârya, namely (in their order) that of the chaste student (Brahmacharyya), secular life as a married house-holder (Grihastha), the life of the forest recluse with his wife in retirement from the world (Vânaprastha), lastly that of the beggar (Bhikshu or Avadhûta), 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



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Brāhmana caste, the first three for the Kshatriya, the first two for the Vaishya and for the Shūdra the second only (Yogiyâjnavalkya 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 Âshrama the Mahânirvâna Tantra states (VIII. 8) that in the Kali age there are only two Âshramas, 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 Kulayogîs or Avadhûtas namely the Shaivâvadhûta and Brahmâvadhûta, which are each of two kinds imperfect (Apûrna) and perfect (Pûrna). The first three have enjoyment and practise 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 Devatâ. The Bhairavadâmara classes the Avadhûta into (a) Kulâvadhûta (b) Shaivâvadhûta (c) Brahmâvadhûta (d) Hangsâvadhûta. Some speak of three divisions of each of the classes Shaivâvadhûta and Brahmâvadhûta (see pp. XLIII, XLIV of Introduction to A. Avalon's Ed. of Mahânirvâna). The Shaivâvadhûtas are not, either, from a Western or Shâstric standpoint, as high as the Brahmâvadhûta. The lowest of the last class can have intercourse only with the own wife (Svakîya 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 practise any rites or keep any observances.

The main divisions here are Vedâchâra, Dakshinâchâra and Vâmâchâra. Vedâchâra is not Vaidikachâra, that is, in the Shrauta sense, for the Shrauta Vaidikâchâra appears to be outside this sevenfold Tântrik division of which Vedâchâra is the Tântrik counterpart. For it is Tântrik Upâsanâ with Vaidik rites and mantras, with, I have been told, Agni as Devatâ. As a speculation we may suggest that this Âchâra was for those not Adhikârî for what is



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

called the Shrauta Vaidikâchâra. The second and third belong to, and lead up to, the completed Dakshinâchâra. This is Pashvâchâra. Vâmâchâra commences the other mode of worship, leading up to the completed Kaula the Kaulâvadhûta, Avadhûta, and Divya. Here, with the attainment of Brahmajnâna, we reach the region which is beyond all Âchâras which is known as Svehchhâchâra. All that those belonging to this state do or touch is pure. In and after Vâmâchâra there is eating and drinking in, and as part of, worship and Maithuna. After the Pashu there is the Vîra and then the Divya. Pashu is the starting point, Vîra is on the way and Divya is the goal. Each of the sects has a Dakshina and Vâma division. It is commonly thought that this is peculiar to Shâktas: but this is not so. Thus there are Vâma Gânapatyas and Vaishnavas and so forth. Again Vâmâchâra 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 Svakîyâ Shakti or Sâdhaka's own wife; in the latter and more advanced stage drinking is done from a skull and worship may be with Parastrî that is some other Shakti. In the case however of some sects which belong to the Vâmâchâra division, whilst there is meat and wine, there is I am told no Shakti for the members are chaste (Brahmachârî). So far as I can ascertain these sects which are mentioned later seem to belong to the Shaiva as opposed to the Shâkta group.

The Tântrik Sangraha called Shâktânanda-Taranginî by Brahmânanda Svâmî says (Ch. 2) that Âgama is both Sadâgama and Asadâgama and that the former alone is Âgama according to the primary meaning of the word (*Sadâgama eva âgamashabdasya mukhyatvât*). He then says that Shiva in the Âgama Samhitâ condemns the Asadâgama saying "Oh Deveshi, men in the Kali age are generally of a Râjasik and Tâmasik disposition and being addicted to forbidden ways deceive many others. Oh



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Sureshvari, those who *in disregard of their Varnâshrama Dharma* offer to us flesh, blood and wine become Bhûtas, Pretas, and Brahmarâkshasas," that is various forms of evil spirits. This prohibits such worship as is opposed to Varnâshramadharmâ. It is said however by the Vâmâchârîs, who take consecrated wine and flesh as a Yajna, not to cover their case.

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

Moreover it is to be noted that the Devî whom they worship is on the left of Shiva. In Vâmâchâra we find Kâpâlikas, Kâlamukhas, Pâshupatas, Bhândikeras, Digambaras, Aghoras, followers of Chînâchâra and Kaulas generally who are initiated. In some cases, as in that of the advanced division of Kaulas, worship is with all five Tattvas (Panchatattva). In some cases there is Brahmacharya as in the case of Aghora and Pâshupata, though these drink wine and eat flesh food. Some Vâmâcharîs, I am informed, never cease to be chaste (Brahmachârî), such



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

as Oghada Sadhus, worshippers of Batuka Bhairava, Kanthadhârî and followers of the Nâthas, such as Gorakshanâtha, Sitanâtha and Matsyendranâtha. In Nîlakrama there is no Maithuna. In some sects there are differing practices. Thus, I am told, amongst the Kâlâmukhas the Kâlavîras only worship Kumârîs up to the age of nine, whereas the Kâmamohanas worship with adult Shaktis.

Some advanced members of this (in its general sense) Vâmâchâra division do not, I am informed, even take wine and meat. It is said that the great Vâmâchârî Sâdhaka Râjâ Krishnachandra of Nadia, Upâsaka of the Chhinna-mastâ Mûrti did not take wine. Such and similar Sâdhakas have passed beyond the preliminary stage of Vâmâchâra, and indeed (in its special sense) Vâmâchâra itself. They may be Brâhma Kaulas. As regards Sâdhakas generally it is well to remember what the Mâhâkâla Samhitâ the great Shâstra of the Madhyastha Kaulas says in the 11th Ullâsa called Sharîra-yoga-kathanam :—“Some Kaulas there are who seek the good of this world (*Aihikârthadhritât mânah*). So also the Vaidikas enjoy what is here (*Aihikârtham kâmayante*) (as do, I may interpose, the vast bulk of present humanity) and are not seekers of liberation (*Amrite ratim na kurvanti*). Only by Nishkâmasâdhanâ is liberation attained.”

The Panchatattva are either real (Pratyaksha. “Idealising” statements to the contrary are, when not due to ignorance, false), substitutional (Anukalpa) and 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 cocoanut 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 Mahânirvâna of the Bhairavî and Tattva Chakras may be compared with



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

some more unrestrained practice ; and the former again may be contrasted with a modern Chakra described in the 13th Chapter of the Life of Bejoy Krishna Gosvāmī by Jagadbandu Maitra. There a Tāntrika Siddha formed a Chakra at which the Gosvāmī 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 Devatās whom the Chakreshvara 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 Chakra of a different kind from that of which we have more commonly heard. There are some practices which are not correctly understood ; there some principles which the bulk of men will not understand ; for to so understand there must be besides knowledge that undefinable Bhāva, 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 Panchatattva. There are expressions which do not bear their surface meaning. *Gomāngsa-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 Kundalī Yoga and so forth. Lastly and this is important ; a distinction is seldom, if ever, made between Shāstric 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 generalisations.

There are said to be three Krântās or geographical divisions of India, of which roughly speaking the North-Eastern portion is Vishnukrântā, the North-Western Rathakrântā and the remaining and Southern portion is



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

Ashvagrântâ. According to the Shâktamangala and Mahâsiddhisâra Tantras, Vishnukrântâ (which includes Bengal) extends from the Vindhya range to Chattala or Chittagong. From Vindhya to Thibet and China is Ratha-krântâ. There is then some difference between these two Tantras as to the position of Ashvagrânta. According to the first this last Krântâ extends from the Vindhya to the sea which perhaps includes the rest of India. According to the Mahâsiddhisâra Tantra it extends from the Karatoyâ 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 question awaiting solution is whether the Tantras of these three geographical divisions are marked by doctrinal and ritual peculiarities and if so what they are. This subject has been referred to in the first volume of the "Principles of Tantra" wherein a list of Tantras is given.

In the Shâkta division there are four Sampradâyas namely Kerala, Kâshmîra, Gauda and Vilâsa in each of which there is both outer and inner worship. The Sammo-hana Tantra gives these four Sampradâyas, also the number of Tantras, not only in the first three Sampradâyas, but in Chîna and Drâvida. I have been informed that out of 56 Desha (which included beside Hunas, places outside India, such as Chîna, Mahâchîna, Bhota, Singhala), 18 follow Gauda extending from Nepâla to Kalinga and 19 follow Kerala extending from Vindhyâchala to the Southern Sea, the remaining countries forming part of the Kashmîra Desha; and that in each Sampradâya there are Paddhatis such as Shuddha, Gupta, Ugra. There is variance in Devatâs and Rituals some of which are explained in the Târasukta and Shaktisangama Tantra.

There are also various Matas such as Kâdi Mata called Virâdanuttara of which the Devatâ is Kâlî; Hâdi Mata called Hangsarâja of which Tripurasundarî is Devatâ and Kahâdi Mata the combination of the two of which Târâ is



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

Devatâ that is Nîlasarasvatî. Certain Deshas are called Kâdi, Hâdi, Ka-hâdi Deshas and each Mata has several Âmnâyas. It is said that the Hangsatârâ Mahâvidyâ is the Sovereign Lady of Yoga whom Jainas call Padmâvatî, Shâktas Shakti, Bauddhas Târâ, Chîna Sâdhakas Mahogrâ, and Kaulas Chakreshvarî. The Kâdis call her Kâlî, the Hâdis Shrîsundarî and the Kâdi-Hâdis Hangsâ. A forthcoming Volume VIII of "Tantrik Texts" contains that portion of the Tantrarâja which belongs to Kâdi Mata and in the English Introduction I have dealt with this subject.

Gauda Sampradâya considers Kâdi the highest Mata, whilst Kâshmîra and Kerala worship Tripurâ and Târâ. 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 Sampradâyas 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 Shâktas 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 Brahmajnânî Shâkta group but the Sammohana in one passage already cited mentions Kaula and Shâkta separately. Possibly it is there meant to distinguish ordinary Shâktas from the special group called Kaula Shâktas. 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 Pangkoddhâra, clearing of mud 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.



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

He who has not understood Tantra Shâstra 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 Shâkta, and that there were several Sampradâyas of these worshippers. What we can, and should first, do, is to study the Shâkta Darshana as it exists to-day, working back from the known to the unknown. What I am about to describe is the Shâkta faith as it exists *to-day*, that is Shaktivâda, not as something entirely new but as the development and amalgamation of the various cults which were its ancestors.

Summarising Shâkta doctrine we may first affirm that it is *Advaitavâda* or Monism. This we might expect seeing that it flourished in Bengal which, as the old Gauda Desha, is the Guru both of Advaitavâda and of Tantra Shâstra. From Gauda came Gaudapâdâchâryya, Madhusûdana Sarasvatî author of the great Advaitasiddhi, Râmachandra-tîrthabhâratî, Chitsukhâchâryya and others. There seems to me to be a strong disposition in the Brahmaparâyana Bengali temperament towards Advaitavâda. For all Advaitins the Shâkta Âgama and Advaitâ Shaivâgama must be the highest form of worship. A detailed account of the Advaita teachings of the Shâktas is a matter of great complexity and of a highly esoteric character, beyond the scope of this paper. I may here note that the Shâkta Tantras speak of 94 Tattvas made up of 10, 12 and 16 Kalâs of Fire, Sun and Moon constituting the Kâmakalâ respectively; and 19 of Sadâshiva, 6 of Îshvara, 10 each of Rudra, Vishnu and Brahmâ. The 51 Kalâs or Mâtrikâs which are the Sûkshmarûpa of the 51 letters (Varna) are a portion of these 94. These are the 51 coils of Kundalî from Bindu to Shrîmâtrîkotpatti-Sundarî mentioned in my "Studies on the Mantra Shâstra." These are all worshipped in the wine



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

jar by those Shâkts who take wine. The Shâstras also set out the 36 Tattva which are common to Shâktas and Shaivas; the five Kalâ which are Sâmânya of the Tattvas namely Nivritti, Pratishtâ, Vidyâ, Shântâ, Shântyatâtâ, and the Shadadhvâ namely, Varna, Pada, and Mantra. Kalâ, Tattva, Bhuvana, which represent the Artha aspect and the Shabda aspect respectively.

To pass to more popular matters, a beautiful and tender concept of the Shâktas 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 Sâmmohana Tantra gives high place to Shangkara as conqueror of Buddhism, (speaking of him as a manifestation of Shiva and identifying his five disciples with the five Mahâpretas), the Âgamas as Shâstras of worship do not teach Mâyâvâda as set forth according to Shangkara's transcendental method. Mâyâ to the Shâkta worshipper is not an unconscious something, not real, not unreal, not real-unreal, which is associated with Brahman in its Îshvara aspect, though it is not Brahman. Brahman is never associated with anything but Itself, Mâyâ to the Shâkta is Shakti; Shakti veiling Herself as Consciousness, but which, as being Shakti, is Consciousness. To the Shâkta all that he sees is the Mother. *All* is Consciousness. This is the standpoint of Sâdhanâ. The Advaitins of Shangkara'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 Mâyâ and must think and act according to the forms which it imposes on him. It is more important after all to realise 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 Kâlikâ, She reveals Herself in old age, disease and death,



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

It is She who manifests, and not without a purpose, in the vast outpouring of Sanghâra Shakti which is witnessed in the great world-conflict of to-day. 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 Châmundâ-mûrti called the Devî 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 Shâkta faith, as held by those who understand it, is *free from a narrow sectarian spirit*.

Nextly it, like the other Âgamas, 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 woman and Shûdras. It is easy to understand why the so-called Anâryya Sampradâyas did not do so. A glorious feature of the Shâkta faith is the *honour which it pays to woman*. And this is natural for those who worship the Great Mother, whose representative (Vigraha) all earthly women are. *Striyo devâh striyah prânâh*. "Women are Devas; women are life itself," as an old Hymn in the Sarvollâsa has it. It is because Woman is a Vigraha of the Ambâ Devî, Her likeness in flesh and blood, that the Shâkta Tantras enjoin the honour and worship of women and girls (Kumârîs), and forbade 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 Mahânirvâna prescribes that even if a man speaks rudely (Durvvâchyang kathayan) to his wife, he must fast for a whole day, and enjoins the education of daughters before their marriage. The Shâkta 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 Shâkta the whole universe is Strî or,



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Shakti. "Aham strî" as the Advaitabhâva 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 Shâstra, nor of modern social science and to honour, cherish, educate and advance women (Shakti). *Striyo devâh striyah prânâh.* Gautamîya Tantra says *Sarvavarnâdhikârashcha nârînâm yogya eva cha*; that is the Tantra Shâstra is for all castes and for women: and the Mahânirvâna says that the low Kaula who refuses to initiate a Chandâla 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 Tantrik philosophy," said that it was "*Religious Feminism run mad,*" adding "What is all this but the *feminisation* of orthodox Vedânta? 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 Shâkta Sâdhaka 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 Yâmala says for the benefit of the ignorant "*neyam yoshit na cha pumân na shando na jadah smritah.*" That is God is neither female, male, hermaphrodite or unconscious thing. Nor is his doctrine concerned with the theories of the American Professor



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

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 Shâkta 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 Shivâ the "female," for both are one and the same. An Orientalist might have remembered that in the Sângkhya, Prakriti is spoken of as "female," and Purusha as "male." And in Vedânta, Mâyâ and Devî 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 Chit 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 Shankara's Mâyâvâda, or the Sângkhya 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 case give unnecessary ground for offence.



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

The characteristic features of Shâkta-dharma are thus its Monism; its concept of the Motherhood of God; its unsectarian spirit and provision for Shûdras and women, to the latter of whom it renders high honour, recognizing that they may be even Gurus; and lastly its Sâdhanâ skilfully designed to realise its teachings.

As I have pointed out on many an occasion this question of *Sâdhanâ* 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 Âgama or Tantra Shâstra. Mere talk about religion is only an intellectual exercise. Of what use are grand phrases about Âtmâ 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 Shâkta 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 Svarûpa of Shakti is Consciousness and mind and body are Shakti. The problem then is how to raise and vivify Shakti. This is the work of Sâdhanâ in the Religion of Power. The Âgama is a practical philosophy, and as a Bengali friend of mine Professor Pramathanâtha Mukhyopâdhyâya, 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 Kriyâ. The form which Sâdhanâ takes necessarily varies according to faith, temperament and capacity. Thus, amongst Christians, the Catholic Church, like Hinduism, has a full and potent Sâdhanâ in its sacraments Sangskâra, temple (Church) and private worship (Pûjâ, Upâsanâ) with Upachâra "bell, light and incense" (Ghantâ, Dîpa, Dhûpa), Images or Pratimâ (hence it has



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

been called idolatrous), devotional rites such as Novenas and the like, (Vrata) the threefold "Angelus" at morn, noon and evening (Sandhyâ), rosary (Japa), the wearing of Kavachas (Scapulars, Medals, Agnus Dei), pilgrimage (Tirtha) fasting, abstinence and mortification (Tapas), monastic renunciation (Sannyâsa), meditation (Dhyâna), ending in the union of mystical theology (Samâdhi) and so forth. There are other smaller details such for instance as Shânti-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 Svâmî Vivekânanda call the Italian Catholics, Shâktas; and the use of wine (Madya) and bread (corresponding to Mudrâ) in the Eucharist or Communion Service. Whilst however the Blessed Virgin evokes devotion as warm as that which is here paid to Devî, she is not Devî for she is not God but a creature selected as the vehicle of His incarnation (Avatâra). 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 Târâ is Dravamayî that is the "Saviour in liquid form." (Mahânirvâna 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 Yajna. Agape or "Love Feasts," a kind of Chakra, 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



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

Christian sects of the day. There are other points of ritual which are peculiar to the Tantra Shâstra and of which there is no counterpart in the Catholic ritual such as Nyâsa and Yantra. Mantra exists in the form of prayer and as formulæ of consecration, but otherwise the subject is conceived of differently here. There are certain gestures (Mudrâ) 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 Sâdhanâ in the Tantras of the Âgama in forms which his race has evolved. In the abstract there is no reason why his race should not modify these forms of Sâdhanâ or evolve new ones. But the point is that *it must have some form of Sâdhanâ*. 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 like 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



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

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 Âgama 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 Kulârnava Tantra calls the Varna and Âshrama of Light (Jyotirvarnâshramî), 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 realisation in fact.

The Buddhists called Brâhmanism Shîlavrataparâmarsha, that is a system believing in the efficacy of ritual acts. And so it is, and so at length was Buddhism, when passing through Mâhayâna it ended up with the full Tantrik Sâdhanâ of the Vajrayâna School. There are human tendencies which cannot be suppressed. Hinduism will however disappear, if and when Sâdhanâ (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 Shâkta Tantra Shâstra lies in this, that it affirms the principle of the *necessity of Sâdhanâ* and claims to afford a *means* available to all of whatever *caste* and of either *sex* whereby the teachings of Vedânta may be practically *realised*.

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 Shâktas may be pleased at what I have said about their faith. It must not however be supposed that a



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

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, Nididhyâsitaryah*,”—“listen, reason and ponder;” for as Manu says “*Yastarkenânusandhatte sa dharmam veda, netarah*”—“He who by discussion investigates, he knows Dharma and none other.” Ultimately there is experience alone which in Shâkta speech is *Sâham*—“She I am.”



CHAPTER V  
CHÎNÂCHÂRA

(VASHISHTHA AND BUDDHA)

IT has been the subject of debate whether the Tantrik Panchatattva ritual with wine and so forth is a product of Buddhism, and whether it is opposed to Vaidika Dharma. Some have supposed that these rites originally came from yellow Asia, penetrated into India where they received its impress, and again made their way to the north to encounter earlier original forms. I have elsewhere put forward some facts which suggest that these rites may be a continuance, though in another form, of ancient Vaidik usage in which Soma, Meat, Fish and Purodâsha formed a part. Though there are some Maithuna rites in the Vedas it is possible that the Shâkta ritual in this respect has its origin in Chînâchâra. Possibly the whole ritual comes therefrom. The matter is so obscure at present that any definite affirmation as to historical origins lacks justification. Most important however in the alleged Buddhist connection is the story of Vashishtha to be found in the Tantras. He is said to have gone to Mahâchîna (Tibet), which, according to popular belief, is half way to heaven. Mahâdeva is said to be visible at the bottom of the Manasarova Lake near Kailâsa. Some of the Texts bearing on it have been collected in the Appendix to the edition of the Târâ Tantra which has been published by the Varendra Anusandhâna Samîti. The Târâ Tantra opens (I—2) with the following question of Devî Târâ or Mahânîla-Sarasvatî. “Thou didst speak of the two Kula-bhairavas, Buddha and Vashishtha. Tell me by



## CHÎNÂCHÂRA

what Mantra they became Siddha." The same Tantra (IV. 10) defines a Bhairava as follows: "He who purifies these five (*i.e.* Panchatattva) and after offering the same (to the Devatâ) partakes thereof is a Bhairava." Buddha then is said to be a Kula-bhairava. It is to be noted that Buddhist Tantriks who practice this ritual are accounted Kaulas. Shiva replied "He Janârdana (Vishnu) is the excellent Deva in the form of Buddha (Buddharûpî)". It is said in the Samayâchâra Tantra that Târâ and Kâlikâ, in their different forms, as also Mâtanggî, Bhairavî, Chhinnamastâ, and Dhûmâvatî belong to the northern Âmnâya. The Sixth Chapter of the Sammohana Tantra mentions a number of Scriptures of the Bauddha class, together with others of the Shâkta, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Saura and Gânapatya classes.

Vashishtha is spoken of in the XVIIth Chapter of the Rudrayâmala and the 1st Patala of the Brahmâyâmala. The following is the account in the former Tantrik Scripture:—

Vashishtha, the self-controlled, the son of Brahmâ practised for ages severe austerities in a lonely spot. For six thousand years he did Sâdhanâ, but still the Daughter of the Mountains did not appear to him. Becoming angry he went to his father and told him his method of practice. He then said "Give me another Mantra Oh Lord since this Vidyâ (Mantra) does not grant me Siddhi (success) otherwise in your presence I shall utter a terrible curse."

Dissuading him Brahmâ said "Oh son who art learned in the Yoga path do not do so. Do thou worship Her again with whole-hearted feeling, when She will appear and grant you boons. She is the Supreme Shakti. She saves from all dangers. She is lustrous like ten million suns. She is dark blue (Nîlâ). She is cool like ten million moons. She is like ten million lightning-flashes. She is the spouse of Kâla (Kâlakâminî), She is the beginning of all. In Her there is neither Dharma nor Adharma. She is in the form



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

of all. *She is attached to pure Chînâchâra* (Shuddhachînâchâraratâ). She is the initiator (Pravarttikâ) of Shaktichakra. Her greatness is infinitely boundless. She helps in the crossing of the ocean of the Sangsâra. *She is Buddheshvari* (possibly Buddhîshvarî, Lord of Buddhi). She is Buddhi (intelligence) itself (Buddhirûpâ). *She is in the form of the Atharva branch of the Vedas* (Atharvavedashâkhinî. Numerous Shâstric references connect the Tantra Shâstra with the Atharvaveda. See in this connection my citation from Shaktisangama Tantra in "Principles of Tantra"). She protects the beings of the worlds. Her action is spread throughout the moving and motionless. Worship Her my son. Be of good cheer. Why so eager to curse? Thou art the jewel of kindness. Oh son worship Her constantly with thy mind (Chetas). Being entirely engrossed in Her, thou of a surety shalt gain sight of Her."

Having heard these words of his Guru and having bowed to him again and again the pure one (Vashishtha), *versed in the meaning of Vedânta*, betook himself to the shore of the ocean. For full a thousand years he did Japa of Her Mantra. Still he received no message (Âdesha). Thereupon the Muni Vashishtha grew angry, and being perturbed of mind prepared to curse the Mahâvidyâ (Devî). Having sipped water (Âchamana) he uttered a great and terrible curse. Thereupon Kuleshvarî (Lady of the Kaulas) Mahâvidyâ appeared before the Muni.

She who dispells the fear of the Yogins said "How now Vipra (Are Vipra) Why have you terribly cursed without cause. Thou dost not understand *my Kulâgama* nor knowest how to worship. How *by mere Yoga practice* can either man or Deva get sight of My Lotus-Feet. *My worship* (Dhyâna) *is without austerity and pain*. To him who desires My Kulâgama, who is Siddha in My Mantra, and knows *My pure Vedâchâra*, my Sâdhanâ is pure (Punya) *and beyond even the Vedas* (Vedânâmapyagochara). [This does not mean unknown to the Vedas



## CHÎNÂCHÂRA

or opposed to them but something which surpasses the Vaidik ritual of the Pashu. This is made plain by the following injunction to follow the Atharvaveda]. *Go to Mahâchina (Tibet) and the country of the Bauddhas and always follow the Atharvaveda (Bauddhadeshe 'tharvavede Mahâchine sadâ braja)*. Having gone there and seen My Lotus-Feet which are Mahâbhâva (the great blissful feeling which in Her true nature She is) thou shalt Oh Maharshi become versed in my Kula and a great Siddha."

Having so said, She became formless and disappeared in the ether and then passed through the ethereal region. The great Rishi having heard this from the Mahâvidyâ Sarasvatî *went to the land of China where Buddha is established (Buddhapratishthita)*. Having repeatedly bowed to the ground, Vashishtha said, "Protect me Oh Mahâdeva who art the Imperishable One in the form of Buddha (Buddharûpa). I am the very humble Vashishtha the son of Brahmâ. My mind is ever perturbed. I have come here (Chîna) for the Sâdhanâ of the Mahâdevî. I know not the path leading to Siddhi. Thou knowest the path of the Devas. Seeing Thy way of life (Âchâra) *doubts assail my mind (Bhayâni santi me hridi*: because he saw the, (to him) extraordinary ritual with wine and woman). Destroy them and my wicked mind which inclines to Vaidik ritual (Vedagâminî; that is the ordinary Pashu ritual) Oh Lord in Thy abode there are ever rites *which are outside Veda (Vedavahishkrita*: that is the Vaidik ritual and what is consistent with Veda as Vashishtha then supposed). How is it that wine, meat, woman (Angganâ) are drunk, eaten and enjoyed by naked (Digambara) Siddhas who are high (Vara), and awe-inspiring (Raktapânodyata). They drink constantly and enjoy (or make enjoy) beautiful women (*Muhurmuhuh prapivanti ramayanti varângganâm*). With red eyes they are ever exhilarated and replete with flesh and wine (*Sadâ mângsâsavaih pûrnâh*). They are powerful to favour and punish. *They are beyond the Vedas (Veda-*



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

syâgocharâh *ante*). They enjoy wine and women (Madya-strîsevane ratâh)." (Vashishtha merely saw the ritual surface).

Thus spoke the great Yogî having seen the rites which *are outside the Veda* (Veda-vahishkrita. v *ante*). Then bowing low with folded hands he humbly said " *How can inclinations such as these be purifying to the mind. How can there be Siddhi without Vaidik rites.*"

*Manah-pravrittireteshu katham bhavati pâvani*

*Kathang vâ jâyate siddhir veda kâryyang vinâ prabho*

Buddha said " Oh Vashishtha, listen the while I speak to thee of the excellent Kula path, by the mere knowing of which one becomes in a short time like Rudra Himself. I speak to thee in brief of the Âgama which is the essence of all and which leads to Kulasiddhi. *First of all the Vira (hero) should be pure* (Shuchi. Buddha here states the conditions under which only the rites are permissible). His mind should be penetrated with discrimination (Viveka) and freed of all Pashubhâva (state of an uninitiate Pashu or animal man). Let him avoid the company of the Pashu and remain alone in a lonely place, *free from lust*, anger and other passions. He should constantly devote himself to Yoga practice. He should be firm in his resolve to learn Yoga ; he should ever tread the Yoga path and *fully know the meaning of the Veda* (Vedârthanipuno mahân). In this way the pious one (Dharmâtmâ) of good conduct and largeness of heart (Audârya) should, by gradual degrees, restrain his breath, and through the path of breathing compass the destruction of mind. Following this practice the self-controlled (Vashî) becomes Yogî. In slow degrees of practice the body firstly sweats. This is the lowest stage (Adhama). The next is middling (Madhyama). Here there is trembling (Kampa). In the third or highest (Para) stage one is able to levitate (Bhûmityâga). By the attainment of Siddhi in Prânâyâma one becomes a master in Yoga. Having become a Yogî by practice of Kumbhaka (restraint



## CHÎNÂCHÂRA

of breath) he should be Maunî (given over to silence) and full of intent devotion (Ekânta-bhakti) to Shiva, Krishna and Brahmâ. The pure one should realise by mind, action, and speech that Brahmâ, Vishnu, and Shiva are restless like the moving air (Vâyavîgatichanchalâh. *Quæere*. Perhaps the transient nature of these Devatâs, as compared with the supreme Shakti, is indicated.) The man of steady mind should fix it on Shakti, who is consciousness (Chidrûpâ). Thereafter the Mantrin should practice Mahâvîrabhâva (the feeling of the great hero) and follow the Kula path, the Shakti-chakra, the Vaishnava Sattva-chakra and Navavighraha and should worship Kulakâtyâyanî, the excellent one, the Pratyaksha Devatâ (that is the Deity who responds to prayer) who grants prosperity and destroys all evil. She is consciousness (Chidrûpâ) She is the abode of knowledge (Jnâna) and is Consciousness and Bliss, lustrous as ten million lightnings, of Whom all Tattvas are the embodiment, who is Raudrî with eighteen arms, fond of wine and mountains of flesh (the text is *Shivamângsâchala-priyâm*, but the first word should be *Surâ*). Man should do Japa of the Mantra, taking refuge with Her, and following the Kula path. Who in the three worlds knows a path higher than this? By the grace gained therein, the great Brahmâ Himself became the Creator, and Vishnu, whose substance is Sattva-guna, the object of adoration of all, highly deserving of worship, the great, and Lord of Yajurveda became able to protect. By it Hara the Lord of Vîras, the wrathful one, Lord of wrath and of mighty power became the Destroyer of all. By the grace of Vîrabhâva the Dikpâlas (Protectors of the quarters) became like unto Rudra. By a month's practice Âkarshanasiddhi (power to attract) is attained. In two months one becomes the Lord of Speech. In four months one becomes like unto the Dikpâlas, in five months one becomes the five arrows (probably masters the five Tanmâtras), and in six months he becomes Rudra Himself. The fruit of this method (Âchâra) is beyond all others. This



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

is Kaulamârga. There is nothing which surpasses it. If there be Shakti, the Vipra becomes a complete Yogî by six months practice. Without Shakti even Shiva can do nought. What then shall we say of men of small intelligence.”

Having said this, He whose form is Buddha (Buddharûpî) made him practise Sâdhanâ. He said “Oh Vipra do thou serve Mahâshakti. Do thou practise Sâdhanâ with wine (Madyasâdhanâ) and thus shalt thou get sight of the Lotus Feet of the Mahâvidyâ.” Vashishtha having heard these words of the Guru and meditating on Devî Sarasvatî went to the Kulamandapa to practise the wine ritual (Madirâ-sâdhanâ) and having repeatedly done Sâdhanâ with wine, meat, fish, parched grain and Shakti he became a complete Yogî (Pûrnayogî).

A similar account is given in the Brahmayâmala. There are some variants however. Thus while in the Rudrayâmala, Vashishtha is said to have resorted to the shore of the ocean, in the Brahmayâmala he goes to Kâmâkhyâ the great Tantrik Pîtha and shrine of the Devî. (The prevalence of Her worship amongst the Mongolian Assamese is noteworthy). It may be here added that this Yâmala states that, except at time of worship, wine should not be taken nor should the Shakti be unclothed. By violation of these provisions life it says is shortened, and man goes to Hell.

According to the account of the Brahmayâmala, Vashishtha complaining of his ill-success was told to go to the Blue Mountains (Nîlâchala) and worship Parameshvarî near Kâmâkhyâ (Kamrup in Assam). He was told that Vishnu in the form of Buddha (Buddharûpî) alone knew this worship according to Chînâchâra. Devî said “without Chînâchâra you cannot please Me. Go to Vishnu who is Udbodharûpî (illumined) and worship Me according to the Âchâra taught by Him. Vashishtha then went to Vishnu in the country Mahâchîna, which is by the side of the Himâlaya (Himavatpârshve), a country inhabited by great Sâdhakas



## CHÎNÂCHÂRA

and thousands of beautiful and youthful women whose hearts were gladdened with wine, and whose minds were blissful with enjoyment (Vilâsa). They were adorned with clothes which inspired love (Shringâravesha) and the movement of their hips made tinkle their girdles of little bells. Free of both fear and prudish shame they enchanted the world. They surround Îshvara and are devoted to the worship of Devî. Vashishtha wondered greatly when he saw Him in the form of Buddha (Buddharûpî) with eyes drooping from wine. "What" he said "is Vishnu doing in His Buddha form? *This way (Âchâra) is opposed to Veda (Vedavâdavidruddha). I do not approve of it (Asammato mama.)*" Whilst so thinking, he heard a voice coming from the ether saying "Oh thou who art devoted to good acts think not like this. This Âchâra is of excellent result in the Sâdhanâ of Târinî. She is not pleased with anything which is the contrary of this. If thou dost wish to gain Her grace speedily, then worship Her according to Chînâchâra." Hearing this voice, Vashishtha's hairs stood on end and he fell to the ground. Being filled with exceeding joy he prayed to Vishnu in the form of Buddha (Buddharûpa). Buddha, who had taken wine, seeing him was greatly pleased and said "Why have you come here?" Vashishtha bowing to Buddha told him of his worship of Târinî. Buddha who is Hari and full of knowledge (Tattvajnâna) spoke to him of the *five Makâras* (M: that is the five commencing with the letter M or Madya, or wine and so forth) *which are in Chînâchâra (Majnânam Chînâchârâdikâranam) saying that this should not be disclosed* (a common injunction as regards this ritual and renders it from the opponents' standpoint suspect). "By practising it thou shalt not again sink into the ocean of being. It is full of knowledge of the Essence (Tattvajnâna) and gives immediate liberation (Mukti)." He then goes on to explain a principal feature of this cult, namely its freedom from the ritual rules of the ordinary worship above which the Sâdhaka has risen). It



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

is mental worship. In it bathing, purification, Japa, and ceremonial worship is by the mind only. (No outward acts are necessary ; the bathing and so forth is in the mind and not in actual water, as is the case in lower and less advanced worship). There are no rules as to auspicious and inauspicious times, or as to what should be done by day and by night. Nothing is pure or impure (there is no ritual defect of impurity) nor prohibition against the taking of food. Devî should be worshipped even though the worshipper has had his food, and even though the place be unclean. Woman who is Her image should be worshipped (*Pûjanam striyah*) and never should any injury be done to her (*Strîdvesho naiva kartavyah*).

Are we here dealing with an incident in which Shâkyamuni or some other Buddha of Buddhism was concerned ?

According to Hindu belief the Râmâyana was composed in the Tretâ age, and Vashishtha was the family priest of Dasharatha and Râma (*Âdikânda VII. 4. 5., VIII. 6 Ayodhyâ-kânda V. 1*). The Mahâbhârata was composed in Dvâpara. Krishna appeared in t' e Sandhyâ between this and the Kaliyuga. Both Kurukshetra and Buddha were in the Kali age. According to this chronology, Vashishtha who was the Guru of Dasharatha was earlier than Shâkyamuni. There were however Buddhas before the latter. The text does not mention Shâkyamuni or Gautama Buddha. According to Buddhistic tradition there were many other Buddhas before him such as Dîpankara "The Luminous one" Krakuchhanda and others, the term Buddha being a term applicable to the enlightened, whoever he be. It will no doubt be said by the Western Orientalist that both these Yâmalas were composed after the time of Shâkyamuni. But if this be so, their author or authors, as Hindus, would be aware that according to Hindu Chronology Vashishtha antedated Shâkyamuni. Apart from the fact of there being other Buddhas, according to Hinduism "types" as distinguished from "forms" of various things, ideas, and faiths,



## CHÎNÂCHÂRA

are persistent, though the forms are variable, just as is the case with the Platonic Ideas or eternal archetypes. In this sense neither Veda, Tantrashâstra nor Buddhism had an absolute beginning at any time. As types of ideas or faiths they are beginningless (Anâdi), though the forms may have varied from age to age, and though perhaps some of the types may have been latent in some of the ages. If the Vedas are Anâdi so are the Tantra-shâstras. To the Yogic vision of the Rishi which makes latent things patent, variable forms show their hidden types. Nothing is therefore absolutely new. A Rishi in the Treta Yuga will know that which will apparently begin in Kali or Dvâpara but which is already really latent in his own age. Vishnu appears to his vision as the embodiment of that already latent, but subsequently patent, cult. Moreover in a given age, what is latent in a particular land (say Âryâvartta) may be patent in another say (Mahâchîna). In this way, according to the Hindu Shâstra, there is an essential conservation of types subject to the conditions of time, place, and person (Deshakâlapatra). Moreover, according to these Shâstras, the creative power is a reproducing principle. This means that the world-process is cyclic according to a periodic law. The process in one Kalpa is substantially repeated in another and Vashishtha, Buddha, and the rest appeared not only in the present but in previous grand cycles or Kalpas. Just as there is no absolute first beginning of the Universe, so nothing under the sun is absolutely new. Vashishtha therefore might have remembered past Buddhas, as he might have foreseen those to come. In Yogic vision both the past and future can project their shadows into the present. Every Purâna and Samhitâ illustrates these principles of Yogic intuition backwards and forwards. To the mind of Îshvara both past and future are known. And so it is to such who, in the necessary degree, partake of the qualities of the Lords' mind. The date upon which a particular Shâstra is compiled is, from this view-point,



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

unimportant. Even a modern Shâstra may deal with ancient matter. In dealing with apparent anachronisms in Hindu Shâstra, it is necessary to bear in mind these principles. This of course is not the view of "Oriental scholars" or of Indians whom they have stamped into regarding the beliefs of their country as absurd. It is however the orthodox view. And as an Indian friend of mine to whose views I have referred has said "What the Psychic research society of the West is conceding to good 'mediums' and 'subjects' cannot be withheld from our ancient supermen—the Rishis."

The peculiar features to be noted of this story are these. Vashishtha must have known what the Vedas and Vaidik rites were, as ordinarily understood. He is described as *Vedântavit*. Yet he was surprised on seeing Chînâchâra rites and disapproved of them. He speaks of it as "outside Veda" (*Vedavahishkrita*) and even opposed to it (*Vedavâdavidruddha*). On the other hand the connection with Veda is shown, in that the Devî who promulgates this Âchâra is connected with the Atharvaveda, and directs Vashishtha always to follow that Veda, and speaks of the Âchâra not as being opposed to, but as something so high as to be beyond, the ordinary Vaidik ritual (*Vedânâmapyagocharah*). He is to be fully learned in the import of Veda (*Vedârthanipuno*). It was by the grace of the doctrine and practice of Chînâchâra that Vishnu became the Lord of Yajurveda. The meaning therefore appears to be, that the doctrine and practice lie implicit in the Vedas, but go beyond what is ordinarily taught. Vishnu therefore says that it is not to be disclosed. What meaning again are we to attach to the word Vishnubuddharûpa. Buddha means "enlightened" but here a particular Buddha seems indicated, though Vishnu is also spoken of as Udbodharûpî and the Devî as Buddheshvarî. The Târâ Tantra calls him a Kulabhairava. As is well known, Buddha was an incarnation of Vishnu. Vashishtha is told to go to Mahâchîna by the Himâlaya



## CHÎNÂCHÂRA

and the country of the Bauddhas (Bauddhadeshe). The Bauddhas who follow the Panchatattva ritual are accounted Kaulas. It is a noteworthy fact that the flower of the Devî is Jabâ, the scarlet hibiscus or China rose. As the last name may indicate it is perhaps not indigenous to India but to China whence it may have been imported possibly through Nepal. This legend, incorporated as it is in the Shâstra itself, seems to me of primary importance in determining the historical origin of the Panchatattva ritual.



CHAPTER VI  
THE TANTRA SHÂSTRAS IN CHINA

**A**DOPTING for the purpose of this essay, and without discussion as to their accuracy, the general views of Orientalists on chronology and the development of the Buddhistic schools, the history of the Buddhistic Tantra is shortly as follows. The Mahâyâna, (which commenced no one knows exactly when,) was represented in the first and second centuries by the great names of Ashvaghosha and Nâgârjuna. Its great scripture is the Prajnâpâramitâ. Its dominance under the protection of Kanishka marks the first steps towards metaphysical, theistic, and ritualistic religion, a recurring tendency amongst men to which I have previously referred. In the second half of the first century A.D., Buddhism, apparently in its Mahâyâna form, spread to China, and thence to Corea, then to Japan in the sixth century A.D. and to Tibet in the seventh. Some time between the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. Asanga, a Buddhist monk of Gândhâra is said to have promulgated the Buddhist Yogâchâra which, as its name imports, was an adaptation of the Indian Patanjali's Yoga Darshana. Dr. Waddell whose want of understanding and evident repulsion for the subject ("Buddhism of Tibet") makes one wonder why he troubled himself with it, says that "this Yoga parasite (most Europeans dislike what they understand of Yoga) containing within itself the germs of Tantrism" soon developed "monster out-growths" which "cankered" "the little life of purely Buddhistic stock" in the Mahâyâna, which is itself characterised as merely "sophistic nihilism." Whatever that may mean, it certainly has the air of reducing the Mahâ-



## THE TANTRA SHÂSTRAS IN CHINA

yâna to nothingness. We are then told that at the end of the sixth century "Tantrism or Sivaic mysticism (a vague word) with its worship of female energies (Shakti) and Fiendesses began to tinge both Hinduism and Buddhism, the latter of which "became still more debased with silly contemptible mummery of unmeaning jargon, gibberish, charmed sentences (Dhâranî) and magic circles (Mandala)" in the form of the "Vehicle" called Mantrayâna alleged to have been founded by Nâgârjuna who received it from the Dhyâni Buddha Vairochana through the Bodhisattva Vajrasattva at the "Iron tower" in Southern India. Continuing he says "that on the evolution in the tenth century of the demoniacal Buddhas of the Kâlachakra (system) the Mantrayâna has developed into the Vajrayâna the most depraved form of Buddhist doctrine" wherein the "Devotee" endeavours with the aid of the "Demoniacal Buddhas" and of "Fiendesses" (Dâkinî) "to obtain various Siddhis." The missionary author the Revd. Graham Sandberg, who is so little favourable to Buddhism that he can discover (p. 260) in it "no scheme of metaphysics or morality which can be dignified with the title of an ethical system," when however speaking of this "most depraved form" in a short Chapter on the Tantras and Tantrik rites ("Tibet and the Tibetans" 218) says that this new vehicle (Ngag-kyi Thegpa) did not profess to supersede the time honoured Vajrayâna (Dorje-Thegpa) but it claimed "by its expanded mythological scheme and its fascinating and even sublime mystic conceptions to crystalise the old Tantrik methods into a regular science as complicated as it was resourceful." We are all naturally pleased at finding resemblances in other doctrines to teachings of our own, and so the reverend author, after pointing out that a leading feature of the Kâlachakra (Dus-Kyi-khorlo) was the evolution of the idea of a Supreme Personal Being, says that "many fine and distinctively theistic characteristics of the Deity, His disposition, purity, fatherliness, benevolence and isolated power are set out in



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

the Kâlachakra treatises." But he is, as we might expect, of the opinion that this was only an effort towards the real thing, probably influenced by the fact of Christian and Mahomedan teaching. We commonly find that a Semitic source is alleged for what cannot be denied to be good in Hinduism, or its child Buddhism. One wonders however how the "demoniacal Buddhas" and "Fiendesses" work themselves into this be-praised effort to teach Christian ideas. At the risk of straying from my subject, I may point out that in Buddhism the Devatâs are given both peaceful (Zhi) and wrathful (Khro) aspects. The latter denotes the terrible (what in India is called Bhairava) aspects of the Divinity, but does not change Him or Her into a Demon, at least in Buddhist or Indian belief. Even to the Christian, God has both a terrible and benign aspect. It is true that some of the representations of the former aspect in Northern Buddhism are, to most Westerns, demonic in form, but that is the way the Tibetan mind works in endeavouring to picture the matter for itself, as the Hindus do with their Devîs Kâlî, Chhinnamâstâ and Chandî. Another and artistically conceived idea of Bhairava is pictured in a beautiful Indian Kangra painting in my possession in which a smouldering restrained wrath, as it were a lowering dark storm-cloud, envelopes the otherwise restrained face and immobile posture of the Devatâ. As regards the esoteric worship of Dâkinîs I have said a word in the Foreword to the seventh volume of my "Tantrik Texts." Without having recourse to abuse, we can better state the general conclusion by saying that the Tantrik cult introduced a theistical form of organised worship with prayers, litanies, hymns, music, flowers, incense, recitation of Mantra (Japa) Kavachas or protectors in the form of Dhâranîs, offerings, help of the dead: in short with all practical aids to religion for the individual together with a rich and pompous public ritual for the whole body of the faithful.



## THE TANTRA SHÂSTRAS IN CHINA

For the following facts, so far as China is concerned, I am indebted in the main to the learned work of the Jesuit Father L. Wieger "Histoire des Croyances religieuses et des opinions philosophiques en Chine (Paris Challamel 1917). The author cited states that Indian Tantrism "the school of efficacious formula" developed in China in the seventh and eighth centuries of our era, as a Chinese adaptation of the old Theistic Yoga of Patanjali (Second century B.C.) recast by Samanta Bhadra, "and fixed in polytheistic (?) form" by Asamgha (circ. 400 A.D. or as others say 500 A.D.). A treatise of the latter translated into Chinese in 647 A.D. had but little success. But in 716 the Indian Shubhakara came to the Chinese Court, gained the support of the celebrated Tchang-soei, known under his monastic name I-hing, to whom he taught Indian doctrine, the latter in return giving aid by way of translations. Shubhakara, in the Tantrik way, thought that the Buddhist Monks in China were losing their time in mere philosophising since (I cite the author mentioned) the Chinese people were not capable of abstract speculations. Probably Shubhakara, like all of his kind, was a practical man, who recognised, as men of sense must do, that in view of the present character of human nature, religion must be organised and brought to the people in such a form as will be fruitful of result. Metaphysical speculations count with them for little either in China or elsewhere. Shubhakara and his school taught the people that "man was not like the Banana a fruit without kernel." His body contained a Soul. A moral life was necessary; for after death the Soul was judged and if found wicked was cast into Hell. But how was man to guard against this and the evil spirits around him? How was he to secure health, wealth, pardon for his sins, good being in this world and the hereafter? The people were then taught the existence of Divine Protectors, including some forms of Hindu Divinities as



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

also the manner in which their help might be invoked. They were instructed in the use of Mantras, Dhâranîs, and Mudrâs the meaning of which is not explained by Dr. Waddell's definition "certain distortions of the fingers." They were taught to pray, to make offerings, and the various other rituals everywhere to be found in Tantra Shâstra. Father Geiger says that pardon of sins and saving from the punishment of Hell was explained by the Chinese Tantriks of this school not as a derogation from justice, but as the effect of the appeal to the Divine Protector which obtained for the sinful man a fresh lease of life, a kind of respite during which he was enabled to redeem himself by doing good in place of expiating his sins by torture in Hell. The devout Tantrik who sought after his death to be born in the heaven of such and such Buddha, obtained his wish. Sinners who had done nothing for themselves might be helped even after their death by the prayers of relatives, friends and priests. The devotion of the Tantriks for the salvation of the deceased was very great. "Let us suppose" says one of the Texts "that a member of your family is thrown in prison. What will you not do to relieve him there, or to get him out from it. In the same way we must act for the dead who are in the great Prison of Hell." Prayer and charity with the view to aid them is accounted to their merit. Above all it is necessary to obtain the aid of the priests who deliver these bound souls by the ritual *ad hoc*, accompanied by music which forms an important part of the Buddhist Tantrik rites. The resemblance of all this to the Catholic practice as regards the souls in purgatory is obvious. As in the Indian Compendia, such as the Tantrasâra, there were prayers, Mantras and Dhâranîs to protect against every form of evil, against the bad Spirits, wild beasts, natural calamities, human enemies, and so forth, which were said to be effective, provided that they were applied in the proper disposition and at the right time and in the right manner. But more effective



## THE TANTRA SHÂSTRAS IN CHINA

than all these was the initiation with water (Abhisheka). For innumerable good Spirits surround the initiates in all places and at all times so that no evil touches them. It was recommended also to carry on the body the written name of one's protector (Ishtadevatâ) or one of those signs which were called "Transcendent seals conquerors of all Demons." This practice again is similar to that of the use by the Indian Tantriks of the Kavacha, and to the practice of Catholics who wear scapulars, "Agnus Dei", and consecrated medals. In order to encourage frequent invocations, as also to count them, the Buddhist Tantriks had Buddhistic chaplets like the Indian Mâlâ and Catholic Rosary. The beads varied from 1080 (Quaere 1008) to 27. In invoking the Protectors the worshipper held firmly one bead with four fingers (the thumb and first finger of both hands) and then centred his mind on the formula of invocation. Carried on the body, these Rosaries protected from every ill, and made all that one said, a prayer. To use the Indian phrase all that was then said, was Mantra.

Tantricism was re-inforced on the arrival in 719 A.D. of two Indian Brâhmanas, Vajrabodhî and Amogha. The demand for Tantras then became so great that Amogha was officially deputed by the Imperial Government to bring back from India and Ceylon as many as he could. Amogha who was the favourite of three Emperors holding the rank of minister and honoured with many titles lived till 774. He made Tantricism the fashionable sect. Father Geiger says that in the numerous works signed by him, there is not to be found any of those rites, Indian or Tibetan, which come under the general term Vâmâchâra, which includes worship with wine and women. I have it from Buddhist sources that they deplore the abuses which as regards this matter have taken place in India. In the state of decadence witnessed to-day there largely remains only a liturgy of invocations accompanied by Mudrâ and Music, with lanterns and flags from which Bonzes of low degree



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

make a living when called upon by householders to cure the sick, push their business and so forth. Amogha however demanded more of those who sought initiation. In the Indian fashion he tested (Parîkshâ) the would-be-disciple and initiated only those who were fit and had the quality of Vajra. To such only was doubtless confided the higher esoteric teachings and ritual. Initiation was conferred by the ritual pouring of water on the head (Abhisheka), after a solemn act of contrition and devotion.

The following is a description of the rite of initiation (Abhisheka). It is the Buddha who speaks. "Just as an imperial prince is recognised as he who shall govern so my disciples, tested and perfectly formed, are consecrated with water. For the purpose of this ceremony one places on a height, or at least on rising ground, a platform seven feet in diameter strewn with flowers and sprinkled with scented water. Let silence be kept all around. Persian incense is burnt. Place a mirror of bronze and seven arrows to keep away demonic spirits. The candidate who has been previously prepared by a rigorous abstinence, fully bathed and clad in freshly washed garments kneels on the platform and listens to a lecture explaining the meaning of the rite. His right shoulder is uncovered and his two hands joined. He forms interiorly the necessary intention. Then the Master of the ceremony, holding him firmly by the right hand, pours with the left on the head of the candidate for initiation the ritual water." This initiation made the Chelâ a son of Buddha and a depository of the latter's doctrine, for the Tantras were deemed to represent the esoteric teaching of the Buddha, just as in India they contain the essence of all knowledge as taught by Shiva or Devî.

The initiates of Amogha were distinguished by their retired life and secret practices, which gained for them the name of "School of Mystery." It transpired that they were awaiting a Saviour in a future age. This rendered them suspect in the eye of Government who



## THE TANTRA SHÂSTRAS IN CHINA

thought that they were perhaps a revolutionary society. The sect was accordingly forbidden. But this did not cause it to disappear. On the contrary. For as the Reverend Father says, in China (and we may add elsewhere) the forbidden fruit is that which is of all the most delicious. The lower ranks avoided this higher initiation and largely lapsed into mechanical formalism, and the true adepts wrapt themselves in a mystery still more profound, awaiting the coming of the future Buddha Maitreya, who, they taught, had inspired Asamgha with the doctrine they held. Father Geiger says that their morality is severe and their life very austere. (*Leur morale est sévère, leur vie très austère*). There is a hierarchy of teachers who visit the households at appointed intervals, always after nightfall, leaving before daybreak and supported by the alms of those whom they thus teach. The learned missionary author adds that Tantrik adepts of this class are often converted to Christianity and quickly become excellent Christians "since their morals are good and they have a lively belief in the supernatural." (*Leurs mœurs ayant été bonnes et leur croyance au surnaturel étant très vive.*)

Here I may note on the subject of Dhâranis, that it has been said that these were only introduced into China during the Tang Dynasty. Father Weiger however (p. 385) says that an authentic Riddhi-mantra is to be found in translations made by Leou-Keatch'an in the second century A.D. Buddha is said to have announced to Ânanda, who accompanied him, that five hundred years after his Nirvâna, a sect of magicians (whom the author calls Sivaite Tantriks) would be the cause of the swarming of evil spirits. Instructions were then given for their exorcism. This puts the "Sivaïtes" far back.



CHAPTER VII  
CHIT-SHAKTI

(THE SPIRIT ASPECT OF THE UNIVERSE)

**C**HIT-SHAKTI is Chit, as Shakti, that is as power, or that aspect of Chit in which it is, through its associated Mâyâ-Shakti, operative to create the universe. It is a commonly accepted doctrine that the ultimate Reality is Samvid, Chaitanya or Chit.

But what is Chit? There is no word in the English language which adequately describes it. It is not mind: for mind is a limited instrument through which Chit is manifested. It is that which is behind the mind and by which the mind itself is thought, that is created. The Brahman is mindless (Amanah). If we exclude mind we also exclude all forms of mental process, conception, perception, thought, reason, will, memory, particular sensation and the like. We are then left with three available words namely, Consciousness, Feeling, Experience. To the first term there are several objections. For if we use an English word, we must understand it according to its generally received meaning. Generally by "Consciousness" is meant self-consciousness, or at least something particular, having direction and form, which is concrete and conditioned; an evolved product marking the higher stages of Evolution. According to some, it is a mere function of experience, an epiphenomenon, a mere accident of mental process. In this sense it belongs only to the highly developed organism and involves a subject attending to an object of which, as of itself, it is conscious. We are thus said to have most consciousness when we are awake (Jâgrat avasthâ) and have full experience of all objects presented to us; less so when



## CHIT-SHAKTI

dreaming (Svapna avasthâ) and deep anaesthesia in true dreamless sleep (Sushupti). I may here observe that recent researches show that this last state is not so common as is generally supposed. That is complete dreamlessness is rare ; there being generally some trace of dream. In the last state it is commonly said that consciousness has disappeared, and so of course it has, if we first define consciousness in terms of the waking state and of knowledge of objects. According to Indian notions there is a form of conscious experience in the deepest sleep expressed in the well-known phrase "Happily I slept I knew nothing." The sleeper recollects on waking that his state has been one of happiness. And he cannot recollect unless there has been a previous experience (Anubhava) which is the subject-matter of memory. In ordinary parlance we do not regard some animal forms, plants, or mineral as "conscious." It is true that now in the west there is (due to the spread of ideas long current in India) growing up a wider use of the term "consciousness" in connection not only with animal but vegetable and mineral life, but it cannot be said that the term "consciousness" has yet generally acquired this wide signification. If then we use (as for convenience we do) the term "Consciousness" for Chit, we must give it a content different from that which is attributed to the terms in ordinary English parlance. Nextly, it is to be remembered that what in either view we understand by consciousness is something manifested, and therefore limited, and derived from our finite experience. The Brahman as Chit is the infinite substratum of that. Chit in itself (Svarûpa) is not particular, nor conditioned and concrete. Particularity is that aspect in which it manifests as, and through, Mâyâ-Shakti. Chit manifests as Jnâna-Shakti which, when used otherwise than as a loose synonym for Chit, means knowledge of objects. Chit-Svarûpa is neither knowledge of objects nor self-consciousness in the phenomenal sense. Waking, dreaming and dreamless slumber are all



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

phenomenal states in which experience varies ; such variance being due not to Chit but to the operation or cessation of particular operation of the vehicles of mind (Antahkarana) and sense (Indriya). But Chit never disappears nor varies in either of the three states, but remains one and the same through all. Though Chit-Svarûpa is not a knowledge of objects in the phenomenal sense, it is not, according to Shaiva-Shâkta views (I refer always to Advaita Shaivadarshana), a mere abstract knowing (Jnâna) wholly devoid of content. It contains within itself the Vimarsha-Shakti which is the cause of phenomenal objects, then existing in the form of Chit (Chidrûpinî). The Self then knows the Self. Still less can we speak of mere "awareness" as the equivalent of Chit. A worm or meaner form of animal may be said to be vaguely aware. In fact mere "awareness" (as we understand that term) is a state of Chit in which it is seemingly overwhelmed by obscuring Mâyâ-Shakti in the form of Tamoguna. Unless therefore we give to "awareness", as to consciousness, a content, other than that with which our experience furnishes us, both terms are unsuitable. In some respects Chit can be more closely described by Feeling, which seems to have been the most ancient meaning of the term Chit. Feeling is more primary, in that it is only after we have been first affected by something that we become conscious of it. Feeling has thus been said to be the raw material of thought, the essential element in the Self, what we call personality being a particular form of feeling. Thus, in Sângkhya, the Gunas are said to be in the nature of happiness (Sukha) sorrow (Duhkha) and illusion (Moha) as they are experienced by the Purusha-Consciousness. And in Vedânta, Chit and Ânanda or Bliss or Love are one. For Consciousness then is not consciousness of being (Sat) but Being-consciousness (Sat-Chit) : nor a Being which is conscious of Bliss (Ânanda) but Being—Consciousness-bliss (Sachchidânanda). Further "feeling" has this advantage that it is associated with all



## CHIT-SHAKTI

forms of organic existence even according to popular usage, and may scientifically be aptly applied to inorganic matter. Thus whilst most consider it to be an unusual and strained use of language, to speak of the consciousness of a plant or stone, we can and do speak of the feeling or sentiency of a plant. Further the response which inorganic matter makes to stimuli is evidence of the existence therein of that vital germ of life and sentiency (and therefore Chit) which expands into the sentiency of plants, and the feelings and emotions of animals and men. It is possible for any form of unintelligent being to feel however obscurely. And it must do so, if its ultimate basis is Chit and Ânanda, however vested by Mâyâ-Shakti these may be. The response which inorganic matter makes to stimuli is the manifestation of Chit through the Sattva-guna of Mâyâ-Shakti, or Shakti in its form as Prakriti-Shakti. The manifestation is slight and apparently mechanical because of the extreme predominance of the Tamoguna in the same Prakriti-Shakti. Because of the limited and extremely regulated character of the movement which seems to exclude all volitional process as known to us, it is currently assumed that we have merely to deal with what is an unconscious mechanical energy. Because vitality is so circumscribed and seemingly identified with the apparent mechanical process, we are apt to assume mere unconscious mechanism. But as a fact this latter is but the form assumed by the conscious Vital Power which is in and works in all matter whatever it be. To the eye, however, unassisted by scientific instruments, which extend our capacity for experience, establishing artificial organs for the gaining thereof, the matter appears Jada (or unconscious); and so both in common English and Indian parlance we call that alone living or Jîva which, as organised matter, is endowed with body and senses. Philosophically, however, as well as scientifically, all is Jîvâtmâ which is not Paramâtmâ: everything in fact with form, whether the form exists as



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

the simple molecule of matter, or as the combination of these simple forms into cells and greater organisms. The response of metallic matter is a form of sentiency—its germinal form—a manifestation of Chit intensely obscured by the Tamoguna of Prakriti-Shakti.

In plants Chit is less obscured, and there is the sentient life which gradually expands in animals and men, according as Chit gains freedom of manifestation through the increased operation of Sattvaguna in the vehicles of Chit; which vehicles are the mind and senses and the more elaborate organisation of the bodily particles. What is thus mere incipient or germinal sentiency, simulating unconscious mechanical movement in inorganic matter, expands by degrees into feeling akin, though at first remotely, to our own, and into all the other psychic functions of consciousness, perception, reasoning, memory and will. The matter has been very clearly put in a Paper on "The Four Cosmic Elements" by C. G. Sander which, (subject to certain reservations stated) aptly describes the Indian views on the subject in hand. He rightly says that sentiency is an integrant constituent of all existence, physical as well as metaphysical, and its manifestation can be traced throughout the mineral and chemical as well as vegetable and animal worlds. It essentially comprises the functions of relationship to environment, response to stimuli, and atomic memory in the lower or inorganic plane; whilst in the higher or inorganic planes it includes all the psychic functions such as consciousness, perception, thought, reason, volition and individual memory. Inorganic matter through the inherent element of sentiency is endowed with aesthesia or capacity of feeling and response to physical and chemical stimuli such as light, temperature, sound, electricity, magnetism and the action of chemicals. All such phenomena are examples of the faculty of perception and response to outside stimuli of matter. We must here include chemical sentiency and memory; that is the



## CHIT-SHAKTI

atom's and molecule's remembrance of its own identity and behaviour therewith. Atomic memory does not, of course, imply self-consciousness, but only inherent group-spirit which responds in a characteristic way to given outside stimuli. We may call it atomic or physical consciousness. The consciousness of plants is only trance-like (what the Hindu books call 'Comatose') though some of the higher aspects of sentiency (and we may here use the word 'consciousness') of the vegetable world are highly interesting; such as the turning of flowers to the sun; the opening and shutting of leaves and petals at certain times, sensitiveness to the temperature and the obvious signs of consciousness shewn by the sensitive and insectivorous plants, such as the Sundew, the Venus Fly-trap, and others. The sentiency of micro-organisms which dwell on the border-land between the vegetable and animal worlds have no sense organs, but are only endowed with tactile irritability yet they are possessed of psychic life, sentiency, and inclination, whereby they perceive their environment and position, approach, attack and devour food, flee from harmful substances and reproduce by division. Their movements appear to be positive not reflex. Every cell both vegetable and animal possesses a biological or vegetative consciousness, which in health is polarised or subordinate to the government of the total organism of which it forms an integral part; but which is locally impaired in disease and ceases altogether at the death of the organism. In plants, however, (unlike animals) the cellular consciousness is diffused or distributed amongst the tissues or fibres; there being apparently no special conducting or centralizing organs of consciousness such as we find in higher evolutionary forms. Animal consciousness in its highest modes becomes self-consciousness. The psychology of the lower animals is still the field of much controversy; some regarding these as cartesian machines and others ascribing to them a high degree of psychic development. In the animals



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

there is an endeavour at centralization of consciousness which reaches its most complex stage in man, the possessor of the most highly organised system of consciousness, consisting of the nervous system and its centres and functions, such as the brain and solar plexus, the site of Âjnâ and upper centres, and of the Manipûra Chakra. Sentiency or feeling is a constituent of all existence. We may call it consciousness however, if we understand (with the author cited) the term "consciousness" to include atomic or physical consciousness, the trance consciousness of plant life, animal consciousness and man's completed self-consciousness.

The term Sentiency or Feeling, as the equivalent of manifested Chit, has, however, this disadvantage :—whereas intelligence and consciousness are terms for the highest attributes of man's nature, mere sentiency, though more inclusive and common to all, is that which we share with the lowest manifestations. In the case of both terms, however, it is necessary to remember that they do not represent the Chit Svarûpa or Chit as It is in itself. The term Svarûpa corresponds with the Platonic "Idea" and Aristotelean "Form." That which constitutes anything what it is, was called by Plato its "Idea." Aristotle sought to convey the same meaning by a term which the Schoolmen rendered "Form." Bacon adopted the word "Form" in this sense and the corresponding word Svarûpa (own form) is employed to convey the notion of what constitutes anything what it is, namely, its true nature as it is in itself. Thus, though the Brahman or Shiva manifests in the form of the world as Mâyâ-Shakti, its Svarûpa is pure Chit.

Neither sentiency nor consciousness, as known to us, are Chit-svarûpa. They are only limited manifestations of Chit just as reason, will, emotion and memory, their modes, are. Chit is the back-ground of all forms of experience which are its modes, that is Chit veiled by Mâyâ-Shakti. Chit-Svarûpa is never to be confounded with, or limited to, its particular modes. Nor is it their totality, for whilst it manifests in



## CHIT-SHAKTI

these modes It yet, in Its own nature, infinitely transcends them. Neither sentiency, consciousness, nor any other term borrowed from a limited and dual universe adequately describe what Chit is in Itself (Svarûpa). Vitality, mind, matter are its limited manifestations in form. These forms are ceaselessly changing, but the homogeneous substratum of which they are particularised modes is changeless. That eternal, changeless, substratum is Chit, which may thus be defined as the *changeless principle of all our changing experience*. All is Chit, clothing itself in forms by its own Power of Chit-Shakti and Mâyâ-Shakti: and that Power is not different from Itself. Chit is not the subject of knowledge or speech. For as the Varâha Upanishad (Chap. IV) says it is "The Reality which remains after all thoughts are given up." What it is in Itself is unknown but to those who become It. It is fully realised only in the highest state of Ecstasy (Samâdhi) and in bodiless liberation (Videha Mukti) when Spirit is free of its vehicles of mind and matter. A Modern Indian Philosopher has (See "Approaches to Truth" and the "Patent Wonder" by Professor Pramathanâtha Mukhyopâdhyâya) very admirably analysed the notion of the universal Ether of Consciousness (Chidâkâsha) and the particular Stress formed in it by the action of Mâyâ-Shakti. In the first place, he points out that logical thought is inherently dualistic and therefore presupposes a subject and object. Therefore to the pragmatic eye of the western, viewing the only experience known to him, consciousness is always particular having a particular form and direction. Hence where no direction or form is discernible, they have been apt to imagine that consciousness as such has also ceased. Thus if it were conceded that in profound sleep there were no dreams, or if in perfect anæsthesia it were granted that nothing particular was felt, it was thereby considered to be conceded that consciousness may sometimes cease to exist in us. What does in fact cease is the consciousness of objects which we have in the waking and



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

dreaming states. Consciousness as such is neither subjective nor objective and is not identical with intelligence or understanding—that is with directed or informed consciousness. Any form of unintelligent being which feels, however chaotically it may be, is yet, though obscurely so (in the sense here meant) conscious. Pure consciousness, that is consciousness as such, is the background of every form of experience.

In practical life and in Science and Philosophy when swayed by pragmatic ends, formless experience has no interest, but only certain forms and tones of life and consciousness. Where these are missed we are apt to fancy that we miss life and feeling-consciousness also. Hence the essential *basis* of existence or Chit has been commonly looked upon as a very much specialised and peculiar manifestation in nature.

On the contrary, Chit is the one and only true Being or Reality itself. Chit as such is identical with Being as such. The Brahman is both Chit and Sat. Though in ordinary experience, Being and Feeling-Consciousness are essentially bound up together, they still seem to diverge from each other. Man by his very constitution inveterately believes in an objective existence beyond and independent of his self. And this is so, so long as he is subject to the veil (Mâyâ-Shakti). But in that ultimate basis of experience which is the Paramâtmâ the divergence has gone ; for the same boundless substratum which is the continuous mass of experience is also that which is experienced. The self is its own object. To the exalted Yogin the whole universe is not different from himself as Âtmâ. This is the path of the “upward going” Kundalî (Urddhva-Kundalinî).

Further, there has been a tendency in fact to look upon consciousness as a mere function of experience ; and the Philosophy of unconscious ideas and mind-stuff would even go so far as to regard it as a mere accident of mental process. This is to reverse the actual facts.



## CHIT-SHAKTI

Consciousness should rather be taken as an original datum than as a later development and peculiar manifestation. We should begin with it in its lowest forms, and explain its apparent pulse-life by extending the principle of veiling (Mâyâ-Shakti) which is ceaselessly working in man, reducing his life to an apparent series of pulses also. An explanation which does not start with this primordial extensity of experience cannot expect to end with it. For if it be not positive at the beginning, it cannot be derived at the end.

But what, it may be asked, is the proof of such pure experience? Psychology which only knows changing states does not tell us of it. This is so. Yet from those states, some of which approach homogeneity, inferences may be drawn; and experience is not limited to such states for it may transcend them.

It is true that ordinarily we do not meet with a condition of consciousness which is without a direction or form; but tests drawn from the incidents of ordinary normal life are insufficient, it has been argued, to prove that there is no consciousness at all when this direction and form are supposed to have gone. Though a logical intuition will not tell its own story, we can make reflection on intuition render us some sort of account, so that the intuitive fact appears in review, when it will appear that consciousness is the basis of, indeed existence itself, and not merely an attendant circumstance. But the only proof of pure consciousness is an instance of it. This cannot be established by mere reflection. The bare consciousness of this or that, the experience of just going to sleep and just waking, and even the consciousness of being as such, are but approximations to the state of consciousness as such, that is pure consciousness, but are not identical with it. Then, what evidence, it may be asked, have we of the fact that pure consciousness is an actual state of being? In normal life as well as in abnormal pathological states,



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

we have occasional stretches of experience in which simplicity of feature or determination has advanced near to homogeneity, in which experience has become almost structureless. But the limit of pure homogenous experience is not there reached. On the other hand, there is no conclusive proof that we have ever had a real lapse of consciousness in our life, and the extinction of consciousness as such is inconceivable in any case. The claim, however, that consciousness as such exists, rests not so much on logical argument as on intuitive grounds, on revelation (Shruti) and spiritual *experience* of the truth of that revelation.

According to Indian Monism, a Pure Principle of Experience not only is, but is the one and only ultimate permanent being or reality. It does not regard Chit as a mere function, accident, or epiphenomenon, but holds it to be the ever existing *plenum* which sustains and vitalises all phenomenal existence, and is the very *basis* on which all forms of multiple experience, whether of sensation, instinct, will, understanding, or reason rest. It is, in short, the unity and unchanging Reality behind all these various changing forms which, by the veil or Mâyâ-Shakti, Jîva assumes.

The Chit-Svarûpa, inadequately described as mere blissful awareness of feeling, exists as the basis and appears in the form of, that is clothed with, mind; a term which in its general sense is not used merely in the sense of the purely mental function of reason but in the sense of all the forms in which consciousness is displayed, as distinguished from Chit Itself, which is the unity behind all these forms whether reason, sensation, emotion, instinct or will. All these are modes wherein the plastic unformed clay of life is determined. For every conception or volition is essentially an apparent circumscription or limitation of that Sat which is the basis of phenomenal life.

Professor P. N. Mukhyopâdhyâya has described pure consciousness to be an infinitude of "awareness," lacking name



## CHIT-SHAKTI

and form and every kind of determination, which is a state of complete quiescence where the potential is zero or infinity—a condition without strain or tension which is at once introduced when the slightest construction is put upon it, resulting in a consciousness of bare “this” and “that.” It is not a consciousness of anything. It is an experience of nothing *in particular*. But this must not be confounded with *no* experience. The former is taken to be the latter because life is pragmatic, interest being shown in particular modes of awareness. To man’s life, which is little else than a system of partialities, pure experience in which there is nothing to observe or shun, love or hate seems practically to be no experience at all. Pure Consciousness is impartial. There is no difference (Bheda) so far as pure Awareness is concerned. Pure Consciousness is a kind of experience which stands above all antithesis of motion and rest. It does not know Itself either as changing or statical, since it is awareness *as such* without any determinations or mode whatever. To know itself as changing or permanent, it must conceal its alogical and unspeakable nature in a veil. (Mâyâ). Every determination or form makes experience a directive magnitude. Consciousness then assumes a direction or special reference. It is not possible to direct and refer in a special way without inducing such a feeling of strain or tension, whether the conditions be physiological or psychological. Pure consciousness has, thus, been compared to an equipotential surface of electrical distribution. There is no difference of potentials between any two points A and B over this surface. It is a stretch of consciousness, in which there is, apparently, no sensible diversity of features, no preference, no differential incidence of subjective regard. Like the equipotential surface, such consciousness is also quiescent. To secure a flow on it, there must be a difference of potentials between any two points. Similarly, to have a reference, a direction, a movement of attention, there must be a determination in the total experience of the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

moment in the given mass of consciousness. Absolute quiescence is a state of consciousness which is pure existence, with no special subjective direction, and reference; with no difference of level and potential between one part of the experience and another. Experience will show special subjective direction and reference if it assumes at least form or determination, such as "this" or "that;" to have no difference of level or potential, experience must be strictly homogeneous—that is to say, must not involve the least ideal or representative structure. Absolute quiescence exists only with that Consciousness which is pure Being, or Paramâtmâ.

With regard however, to all descriptions of this state, it must be borne in mind that they only negatively correspond with their subject matter by the elimination of characteristics which are peculiar to, and constitute the human consciousness of, the Jîva, and are therefore alien to the Supreme Consciousness. They give us no positive information as to the nature of pure Chit, for this is only known in Yoga by the removal of ignorance (Avidyâ) under which all logical thinking and speaking is done. This "ignorance" is nothing but a term for those limitations which make the creature what he is. It is a common place in Indian religion and philosophy that the Brahman as It exists in Itself is beyond all thought and words, and is known only by the Samâdhi of Yoga. As the Mahâ-nirvâna Tantra says (III. V. 6. *et. seq.*): "The Brahman is known in two ways: from His manifestations which are the object of Sâdhanâ or as It is in itself in Samâdhiyoga:" for, as Ch. XIV., V. 135 *Ibid.*, says, Âtmâjnâna is the one means of liberation in which Its nature is realised. It is, perhaps, in part at least, because the merely negative and imperfect character of such description is not sufficiently noted that pure consciousness, as the author cited points out, has in general awakened no serious interest in the practical West; though it has been the crown of glory for some of, what have been said to be, the stateliest forms



## CHIT-SHAKTI

of Eastern thought, which asserts itself to be in possession of an *experimental* method by which the condition of pure consciousness may be realised. The question is, thus, not one of mere speculation, but of *demonstration*. This state, again, is believed by the East to be not a dull and dreary condition a dry abstraction or *reductio ad absurdum* of all which imparts to our living its worth and significance. Not at all; since it is the first Principle from which all existence proceeds. It is reasonable, therefore, it is contended, to assume that all which life possesses of real worth exists in the Source of life itself. Life is only a *mode* of infinite beatitude, which is pure Being and Consciousness in all its metaphysical grandeur, an absolutely ununderstandable condition which no imagination can depict and no categories can reach and possess.

Owing to the necessarily negative character of some of the descriptions of the Supreme Brahman we find such questions "How can it differ from a nullity?" (Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy," 259 by Rev. K. M. Banerjee): and the statement of the English Orientalist Colonel Jacob (whose views are akin to those of others) that Nirvâna is an unconscious (*sic*) and stone-like (*sic*) existence." Such a misconception is the more extraordinary in that it occurs in the work of an author who was engaged in the translation of a Vedantic treatise. These and many similar statements seem to establish that it is possible to make a special study of Vedânta and yet to misunderstand its primary concepts. It is true that the Brahman is unconscious in the sense that It has not our consciousness; for if so, It would be Jîva and not Paramâtmâ. But this is only to say that it has not our limitations. It is unlimited Chit. A stone represents its most veiled existence. In its Self it is all light and self-illuminating (Svaprakâsha). As Shruti says (Katha Up. 5-15). "All things shed lustre by His lustre. All things shine because He shines." All things depend on It: but It has not to depend on any thing else for Its manifestation. It is



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

therefore better to say with the Hangsa Upanishad and the Christian Gospel that It is the Peace beyond all understanding. It has been drily remarked that "The idea that Yoga means a dull state is due, perhaps, to the misunderstanding of Patanjali's definition of it."

Man, however, ordinarily and by his nature craves for modes and forms (Bhaumânanda); and though all enjoyment comes from the pure Supreme Consciousness, it is supposed that dualistic variety and polarity are necessary for enjoyment. What, thus, in its plenitude belongs to the sustaining spirit of all life is transferred to life alone. All knowledge and existence are identified with variety, change, polarity. Whilst skimming over the chequered surface of the sea, we thus, it is said, ignore the unfathomed depths which are in repose and which nothing stirs, wherein is the Supreme Peace (Shântâ) and Bliss (Paramânanda).

The Brihadâraneyaka Upanishad says "Other beings live on a fraction of this great Bliss." The Bliss of Shiva and Shakti are one, for they are inseparable. Hence she is called (Trishatî II. 32) Ekabhogâ: for Eka = Îshvara and Bhoga = Svasvarûpânanda.

Nyâya and Sângkhya say that the chief end of man is the absolute cessation of pain, but Vedantins, going beyond this negative definition, say that, all pain having surceased on Unity with the Supreme, the chief end is that positive Bliss which is of its essence. The Devî Kalyânî, the Mother of all, is Herself Bliss—that is, all bliss from earthly bliss (Bhaumânanda) to Brahman-bliss (Brahmânanda). As the Commentator Shankara in his commentary on the Trishatî says (citing Shruti): "Who else can make us breathe, who else can make us live, if this blissful Ether were not?"

If, further, it be asked *what* is pure Experience which manifests itself in all these diverse forms, it must be said that from Its very definition pure Chit, or the Supreme Brahman (Parabrahman), is that about which nothing in particular can be predicated: for predication is possible



## CHIT-SHAKTI

only in relation to *determinations* or modes in consciousness. And in this sense Yogatattva Upanishad says that those who seek a knowledge of it in Shâstras are deluded: "How can that which is self-shining be illuminated by the Shâstras? Not even the Devas can describe that indescribable state." The Mândukya Upanishad, speaking of the fourth aspect (Pâda) of Âtmâ, says that it is the non-dual Shiva which is not an object which can be sensed, used, taken, determined (by any marks), or of which an account can be given, but is unthinkable and knowable only by the realisation of Âtmâ. Negative predication may, however, clear away improper notions. It is really an inscrutable condition of existence upon which no category can be fastened. This must always be borne in mind in any attempted definition of this transcendent state. It is a condition of self-existent (Nirâdhâra), unending (Nitya), changeless (Âvikâri, undifferentiated (Abhîna), spaceless (Pûrna), timeless (Shâsvata), all-pervading (Sarvatrâvastha), self-illuminating (Svayamjyotih), pure (Shuddha) experience. As the Kulârnavâ Tantra says (I—6, 7): "Shiva is the impartite Supreme Brahman, the all-knowing Creator of all. He is the stainless One and the Lord of all. He is one without a second (Advaya). He is light itself. He changes not, and is without beginning or end. He is without attribute and above the highest. He is existence (Sat), Consciousness (Chit), and Bliss (Ânanda)." As Sat, It is unity of being beyond the opposites of "this" and "that," "here and there," "then and now." As Chit, It is an experiencing beyond the opposites of worldly knowledge and ignorance. As Supreme Ânanda, It is the Bliss which is known upon the dissolution of that dualistic state which fluctuates between, and is composed of, happiness and sorrow; for created happiness is only an impermanent change of state (Vikâra) or Becoming, but the Supreme Bliss (Paramânanda) endures. Bliss is the very nature (Svarûpa) of this Supreme Consciousness, and not, as with the creature, a mere



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

changing attribute of some form of Becoming. Supreme Being (Sat) is a unity without parts (Nishkala). Supreme Feeling-Consciousness (Chit) is immediacy of experience. In the Jīva, Consciousness of Self is set over against the not-self; for logical thought establishes a polarity of subject and object. Thus the undifferentiated Supreme Consciousness transcends, and the Supreme Bliss (Paramānanda) is beyond, the changing feelings of happiness and sorrow. It is the great Peace (Shāntā) which, in the words of the Hangeśopaniṣad. (V. 12, Ed. Ānandāshrama, XXIX., p. 593) as of the New Testament, passes all worldly understanding. Sachchidānanda, or Pure Being, persists in all the states of Becoming which are its manifestation as Shakti. It is a continuous, partless, homogeneous Unity universally pervading the manifested world like ether or space, as opposed to the limited, discontinuous, discrete character of the forms of "matter" which are the products of its power or Shakti. It is a state of quiescence free of all motion (Nihspanda), and of that vibration (Spandana) which, operating as the Primordial Energy, evolves the phenomenal world of names and forms. It is, in short, the innermost Self in every being—a changeless Reality of the nature of a purely experiencing principle (Chaitanyam Ātmā) as distinguished from whatever may assume the form of either the experienced, or of the means of experience. This Chit in bodies or Chaitanya underlies as their innermost Self all beings. The Chit or Ātmā as the underlying Reality in all is, according to Vedānta, one, and the same in all: undivided and unlimited by any of them, however much they may be separated in time and space. It is not only all-pervading, but all-transcending. It has thus a two-fold aspects: an immanent aspect as Shakti (Power), in which It pervades the universes (Saguna Brahman); and a transcendental aspect, in which It exists beyond all Its worldly, manifestations. (Nirguna Brahman). Chit, as it is in itself, is spaceless and timeless, extending beyond all limitations of time and



## CHIT-SHAKTI

space and all other categories of existence. We live *in* the Infinite. All limits exist *in* Chit. But these limits are also another aspect of Himself that is Shakti. It is a boundless tranquil ocean on the surface of which countless varied modes, like waves, are rising, tossing, and sinking. Though It is the one Cause of the universe of relations, in itself It is neither a relation nor a totality of relations, but a completely relationless Self-identity unknowable by any logical process whatever.

Chit is the boundless permanent *plenum* which sustains and vitalises everything. It is the universal Spirit, all-pervading like the Ether, which is, sustains, and illumines all experience and all process in the *continuum* of experience. In it the universe is born, grows and dies. This *plenum* or *continuum* is as such all-pervading, eternal, unproduced, and indestructible: for production and destruction involve the existence and bringing together and separation of parts which in an absolute partless *continuum* is impossible. It is necessarily in itself, that is as Chit, motionless, for no parts of an all-filling *continuum* can move from one place to another. Nor can such a *continuum* have any other form of motion, such as expansion, contraction, or undulation, since all these phenomena involve the existence of parts and their displacement. Chit is one homogeneous, partless, all-pervading, eternal, spiritual substance. In Sanskrit, this *plenum* is called Chidâkâsha; that is, just as all material things exist in the all-pervading physical Ether, so do they and the latter exist in the infinitely extending Spiritual "Ether" which is Chit. The Supreme Consciousness is thought of as a kind of permanent spiritual "Space" (Chidâkâsha) which makes room for and contains all varieties and forms appearing and disappearing. Space itself is an aspect of spiritual substance. It is a special posture of that stress in life which takes place in unchanging consciousness (P. Mukhyopâdhyâya "The Patent Wonder," 21—24). In this Ocean of Being-Consciousness we live, move and have our



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

being. Consciousness as such, (that is, as distinguished from the products of Its power or Shakti), is never finite. Like space, it cannot be limited, though, through the operation of its power of self-negation or Mâyâ-Shakti, it may appear as determined. But such apparent determinations do not ever for us express or exhaust the whole consciousness, any more than space is exhausted by the objects in it. Experience is taken to be limited because the Experiencer is swayed by a pragmatic interest which draws his attention only to particular features in the *continuum*. Though what is thus experienced is a part of the whole experience, the latter is felt to be an infinite expanse of consciousness or awareness in which is distinguished a definite mass of especially determined feeling.

As Chit is the infinite *plenum*, all limited being exists *in* it, and it exists in all such beings as the Spirit or innermost and true Self and as Shakti it is their mind and body. When the existence of anything is affirmed, the Brahman is affirmed, for the Brahman is Being itself. This pure Consciousness, or Chit is the Paramâtmâ Nirguna Shiva who is Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Sachchidânanda). Consciousness is Being. Paramâtmâ, according to Advaita Vedânta, is not a consciousness *of* being, but Being-Consciousness. Nor it is a consciousness *of* Bliss, but it *is* Bliss. All these are one in pure Consciousness. That which is the nature of Paramâtmâ never changes, notwithstanding the creative ideation (Srishtikalpanâ) which is the manifestation of Shakti as Chit-Shakti and Mâyâ-Shakti. It is this latter Shakti which, according to the Shâkta Tantra, evolves. To adopt a European analogy which is yet not complete, Paramâtmâ is God-head (Brahmatva). Shakti, or Saguna Âtma, is God (Îshvara). Each of the three systems Sângkhya, Mâyâvâda, Vedânta, and Tantrik monism agrees in holding the reality of pure consciousness (Chit). The question upon which they differ is as to whether unconsciousness is a second independent reality, as Sângkhya alleges; and, if



## CHIT-SHAKTI

not, how the admitted appearance of unconsciousness is to be explained consistently with the unity of the Brahman.

Such then is Chit, truly known as it is in Itself only in Yoga and Moksha ; known only through Its manifestations in our ordinary experience, just as, to use the simile of the Kaivalya Kâlikâ Tantra, we realise the presence of Râhu or Bhûchchhâyâ by his actions on the sun and moon. The Eclipse is seen but not the cause of it. Chit-Shakti is a name for the same changeless Chit when associated in creation with its operating Mâyâ-Shakti. The Supreme Chit is called Parâsamvit in the scheme of the Thirty-six Tattvas which is adopted by both the Shaiva and Shâkta Âgamas.

According to Shangkara, the Supreme Brahman is defined as pure Jnâna without the slightest trace of either actual or potential objectivity. The Advaita Shaiva-Shâktas regard this matter differently in accordance with an essential principle of the Âgamic School with which I now deal.

All occultism whether of East or West posits the principle that there is nothing in any one state or plane which is not in some other way, actual or potential, in another state or plane. The Western Hermetic maxim runs "As above so below." This is not always understood. The saying does not mean that what exists in one plane exists *in that form* in another plane. Obviously if it did the planes would be the same and not different. If Îshvara thought and felt and saw objects, in the human way, and if he was loving and wrathful, just as men are, He would not be Îshvara but Jîva. The saying cited means that a thing which exists on one plane exists on all other planes, according either to the form of each plane, if it be an intermediate causal body (Kâranâvântarasharîra) or ultimately as the mere potentiality of becoming which exist in Âtmâ in its aspect as Shakti. The Hermetic maxim is given in another form in the Vishvasâra Tantra "what is here is



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

elsewhere. What is not here is no where." (*Yadihâsti tad anyatra, Yannehâsti natat kvachit*). Similarly the northern Shaiva Shâstra says that what appears *without* only so appears *because* it exists *within*. One can only take out of a receptacle what is first assumed to be within it. What is in us must in some form be in our cause. If we are living, though finite forms, it is because that cause is infinite Being. If we have knowledge though limited, it is because our essential substance is Chit the Illuminator. If we have bliss, though united with sorrow, it is because It is Supreme bliss. In short our experience must exist in germ in It. This is because in the Shâkta Âgama, there is for the worshipper a real creation and, therefore, a real nexus between the Brahman as cause and the world as effect. According to the transcendent method of Shangkara, there is not in any real sense any such nexus. The notion of creation by Brahman is as much Mâyâ as the notion of the world created.

Applying these principles we find in our dual experience an "I" (Aham or subject) which experiences as object a "This" (Idam): that is the universe or any particular object of the collectivity which compose it. Now it is said that the duality of "I" and "This" come from the One which is in its essential nature (Svarûpa) an unitary experience without such conscious distinction. For Vedânta, whether in its Mâyâvâda or Shakta form, agree in holding that in the Supreme there is no consciousness of objects such as exists on this plane. The Supreme does not see objects outside Itself, for it is the whole and the experience of the whole. It is Pûrna. How then, it may be asked, can a supreme, unchanging, partless, formless, Consciousness produce from Itself something which is so different from Itself, something which is changing, with parts, form and so forth. Shangkara's answer is that really, that is transcendentally, it does not produce anything. The notion that it does so is Mâyâ. What then is his Mâyâ? This I have



## CHIT-SHAKTI

more fully explained in my papers on "Mâyâ-Shakti" and on "Mâyâ and Shakti." I will only here say that his Mâyâ is an unexplainable (anirvachaniya) principle of unconsciousness which is not real, not unreal, and not partly either; which is an eternal falsity (Mithyâbhûtâ sanâtani) which though not Brahman is inseparably associated with It in Its aspect as Îshvara; which Mâyâ has Brahman for its support (Mâyâ Brahmâshritâ); from which support it draws an appearance of reality which in truth it does not possess. The Parabrahman aspect of the One is not associated with Mâyâ.

According to the Shâkta Tantrik exposition of Advaitavâda, Mâyâ is not an unconscious (jada) principle but a particular Shakti of Brahman. Being Shakti, it is at base consciousness, but as Mâyâ-Shakti it is Consciousness veiling Itself. Shakti and Shaktimân are one and the same: that is, Power and its Possessor (Shaktimân). Therefore Mâyâ-Shakti is Shiva or Chit in that particular aspect which He assumes as the material cause (Upâdâna-kârana) in creation. Creation is real; that is, there is a direct causal nexus between Shiva as Shakti (Chitshakti and Mâyâshakti) and the universe. In short Shiva as Shakti is the cause of the universe, and as Shakti, in the form of Jîva (all manifested forms), He actually evolves. Comparing these two views;—Shankara says that there is in truth no creation and therefore there can be no question how it arose. This is because he views the problem from the transcendental (Paramârthika) standpoint of Siddhi. The Tantra Shâstra, on the other hand, being a practical Sâdhanâ Shâstra views the matter from our, that is the Jîva standpoint. To us the universe and ourselves are real. And Îshvara the Creator is real. Therefore there is a creation, and Shiva as Shakti creates by evolving into the Universe, and then appearing as all Jîvas. This is the old Upanishadic doctrine of the spider actually evolving the web from itself, the web being its substance in that form. A flower cannot be raised from seed unless the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

flower was in some way already there. Therefore as there is an "Aham" and "Idam" in our experience, in some way it is in the supreme experience of Parashiva or Parâsamvit. But the Idam is not there as with us; otherwise It would be Jîva. Therefore it is said that there are two principles or aspects in the Brahman namely Prakâsha or Chit aspect, and Vimarsha Shakti, the potential Idam, which in creation explicates into the Universe. But in the supreme experience or Âmarsha, Vimarsha-Shakti (which has two states) exists in its supreme form. The subtler state is in the form of consciousness (Chidrûpinî); the gross state is in the form of the Universe. (Vishvâtmikâ). The former is beyond the universe (Vishvottîrnâ). But if Vimarsha Shakti is there in the form of consciousness (Chidrûpinî), it is one with Chit. Therefore it is said that the Aham and Idam, without ceasing to be in the supreme experience, are in supreme Shiva in undistinguishable union as Chit and Chidrûpinî. This is the Nirguna state of Shivashakti. As She is then in undistinguishable union with Shiva, She is then also simple unmanifested Chit. She is then Chaitanya-rûpâ or Chidrûpinî: a subtle sanskrit expression which denotes that She is the same as Chit and yet suggests that though in a present sense She is one with Him, She is yet in a sense (with reference to Her potentiality of future manifestation) different from Him. She is Sachchidânandamayî and He is Sachchidânanda. She is then the unmanifested universe in the form of undifferentiated Chit. The mutual relation, whether in manifestation or beyond it, whether as the imperfect or Ideal universe, is one of inseparable connection or inherence, (Avinâbhâva-sambandha, Samanvaya) such as that between "I-ness" (Ahantâ) and "I" (Aham), existence and that which exists (Bhâva, Bhavat), an attribute and that in which it inheres (Dharma, Dharmin), sunshine and the sun and so forth. The Pancharâtra School of the Vaishnava Âgama or Tantra, speaking of the Mahâshakti Lakshmî says, that in Her supreme state She is undistinguishable from the



## CHIT-SHAKTI

“ Windless Atmosphere (Vasudeva), existing only as it were in the form of “darkness” and “emptiness” (that is of unmanifested formlessness). So the Mahânirvâna Tantra speaks of Her “dark formlessness.” In the Kulachûdâmani Nigama Devî says (I. 16-24)—“I, though in the form of Prakriti, rest in consciousness-bliss” (Ahang prakritirûpâ chet chidânanda-parayanâ). Râghava Bhatta in his commentary on the Shâradâ Tilaka (Ch. 1) says “She who is eternal existed in a subtle (that is, unmanifested) state, as it were Chaitanya, during the final dissolution (Yâ anâdirûpâ chaitanyâdhyâsena mahâpralaye sūkshmâ sthitâ). It would be simpler to say that She is then what She is (Svarûpa) namely consciousness, but in creation that consciousness veils itself. These terms “formless”, “subtle”, “dark”, “empty” all denote the same unmanifested state in which Shakti is in undistinguishable union with Shiva, the formless consciousness. The Pancharâtra (A'hirbudhnya Samhita, Ch. IV), in manner similar to that of the other Âgamas, describes the supreme state of Shakti in the dissolution of the Universe as one in which manifested Shakti “returns to the condition of Brahman (Brahmabhâvam brajate). “Owing to complete intensity of embrace” (Atisangkleshât) the two all pervading ones Nârâyana and His Shakti become as it were a single principle (Ekam tattvam iva). This return to the Brahman condition is said to take place in the same way as a conflagration, when there is no more combustible matter, returns to the latent condition of fire (Vahni-bhâva). There is the same fire in both cases but in one case there is the activity of combustion and in the other there is not. It follows from this that the Supreme Brahman is not a mere knowing without trace of objectivity. In It the Aham is the Self as Chit and the Idam is the Self as Chidrûpinî. There is Âtmârâma in which the Self knows and enjoys the Self, not in the form of external objects, but as that aspect of consciousness whose projection all objects are. Shakti is always the object of the self and one with it. For the object is always the self,



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

since there is nothing but the self. But in the supreme experience the object is one in nature with Shiva being Chaitanya-rûpa ; in the universe the object seems to the Jîva, the creation of and subject to Mâyâ and Avidyâ Shakti, to be different from the Self as mind and matter.

The next point is the nature of creation or rather emanation (Âbhâsa) for the former term is associated with dualistic notions of an extra-Cosmic God, who produces a world which is as separate from Himself as is the pot from the potter. According to this doctrine there is an Evolution of Consciousness or Chit Shakti associated with Mâyâ-Shakti into certain forms. This is not to say that the Brahman is wholly transformed into its emanations, that is exhausted by them. The Brahman is infinite and can never, therefore, be wholly held in this sense in any form, or in the universe as a whole. It always transcends the universe. Therefore when Consciousness evolves, it nevertheless does not cease to be what it was, is, and will be. The Supreme Chit becomes as Shakti the universe but still remains supreme Chit. In the same way every stage of the emanation-process prior to the real evolution (Parinâma of Prakriti) remains what it is, whilst giving birth to a new Evolution. In Parinâma or Evolution as known to us on this plane, when one thing is evolved into another, it ceases to be what it was. Thus when milk is changed into curd, it ceases to be milk. The Evolution from Shiva-Shakti of the Pure Tattvas is not of this kind. It is an Âbhâsa or "shining forth", adopting the simile of the sun which shines without (it was supposed) change in, or diminution, of its light. This unaffectedness in spite of its being the material cause is called in the Pancharâtra by the term Vîryya, a condition which, the Vaishnava Lakshmî Tantra says, is not found in the world "where milk quickly loses its nature when curds appear." It is a process in which one flame springs from another flame. Hence it is called "Flame to Flame." There is a second Flame but the first from which it comes is unexhausted and still there. The



## CHIT-SHAKTI

cause remains what it was and yet appears differently in the effect. God is never "emptied" as it is said wholly into the world. Brahman is ever changeless in one aspect ; in another It changes, such change being as it were a mere point of stress in the infinite Ether of Chit. This Âbhâsa, therefore, is a form of Vivartta, distinguishable however from the Vivartta of Mâyâvâda, because in the Âgama, whether Vaishnava, or Shâkta, the effect is regarded as real, whereas according to Shangkara, it is unreal. Hence the latter system is called Sat-kâranavâda or the doctrine of the reality of the original source or basis of things, and not also of the apparent effects of the cause. This Âbhâsa has been called Sadrisha Parinâma (Introduction to Principles of Tantra, Vol. II) a term borrowed from the Sângkhya but which is not altogether appropriate. In the latter Philosophy the term is used in connection with the state of the Gunas of Prakriti in dissolution when nothing is produced. Here on the contrary we are dealing with creation and an evolving Power-Consciousness. It is only appropriate to this extent that, as in Sadrisha Parinâma there is no real evolution or objectivity, so also there is none in the evolution of the tattvas until Mâyâ intervenes and Prakriti really evolves the objective universe.

This being the nature of the Supreme Shiva and of the evolution of consciousness, this doctrine assumes, with all others, a transcendent and a creative or immanent aspect of Brahman. The first is Nishkala Shiva ; the second Sakala Shiva ; or Nirguna, Saguna ; Parama, Apara (In Shangkara's parlance) ; Paramâtmâ, Îshvara ; and Paramabrahman, Shabdabrahman. From the second or changing aspect the universe is born. Birth means 'manifestation.' Manifestation to what? The answer is to consciousness. But there is nothing but Chit. Creation is then the evolution whereby the changeless Chit through the power of its Mâyâ-Shakti appears to Itself in the form of object. All is Shiva whether as subject or object.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

This evolution of consciousness is described in the scheme of the Thirty-six Tattvas.

Shankara and Sāṅkhya speak of the 24 Tattvas from Prakriti to Prithivî. Both Shaivas and Shâktas speak of the Thirty-six Tattvas, showing, by the extra number of Tattvas, how Purusha and Prakriti themselves originated. The northern or Advaita Shaiva Âgama and the Shâkta Âgama are allied, though all Shaiva Scripture adopts the same Tattvas. In all the Âgamas whether Vaishnava, Shaiva, or Shâkta, there are points of doctrine which are the same or similar. The Vaishnava Pancharâtra, however, moves in a different sphere of thought, and its expression. It speaks in lieu of the Âbhâsa here described of four Vyûha or forms of Nârâyana, viz., Vâsudeva, Sangkarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. The Thirty-six Tattvas are the 24 from Prithivî to Prakriti together with (proceeding upwards) Purusha, Mâyâ and the five Kanchukas (Kalâ, Kâla, Niyati, Vidyâ, Râga) Shuddhavidyâ (or Sadvidyâ), Shakti, Shiva. These are divided into three groups signified by the terms Shiva Tattva, Vidyâ Tattva, Âtma Tattva, common in the ritual. Shiva Tattva is the Tattvas from and including Shiva Tattva to Shuddhavidyâ. These are known as the Pure Tattvas (Shuddha-Tattva). They are the Tattvas of the pure universe of Consciousness because they precede Mâyâ-Shakti and all dualities. Vidyâ Tattva includes Mâyâ, the five Kanchukas and Purusha. These are the pure-impure Tattvas (Shuddhâshuddha), because they stand midway between the first and the last. Âtmâ Tattva is the impure Tattvas (Ashuddha Tattva) of the world of duality namely the 24 Tattvas from Prakriti to Prithivî. The particular description here of the 36 Tattvas, held by both Shaivas and Shaktas, is taken from the northern Shaiva Kashmir philosophical school, itself based on the older Âgamas such as Mâlinîvijaya Tantra and others.

It is common doctrine of Advaitavâda that the One is of dual aspect; the first static (Shiva) and the other kinetic



PARĀSAMVIT

SHIVATATTVA  
(UNMANT SHAKTI)

SHAKTITATTVA  
(SAMANT SHAKTI)

MANTRAMAHAESHVARA

SADĀKHYA TATTVA  
(NĀDA SHAKTI)

SHUDDHA TATTVA  
OR  
SHIVATATTVA

MANTRESHVARA

ISHVARA TATTVA  
(BINDU SHAKTI)

VIJNĀNĀKALA  
BELOW SADVIDYĀ  
& ABOVE MĀYĀ

MANTRAS &  
EIGHT VIDYESHVARAS

SADVIDYĀ TATTVA

PRALAYĀKALA  
IN MĀYĀ

HERE MĀYĀ & THE KANCHUKAS  
INTERVENETO PRODUCE

SHUDDHA  
SHUDDHATATTVA  
OR  
VIDYĀ TATTVA

SAKALĀ ALL  
BEINGS FROM  
BRAHMĀ DOWNWARDS  
WHO ARE NOT MUKTA

AHAM

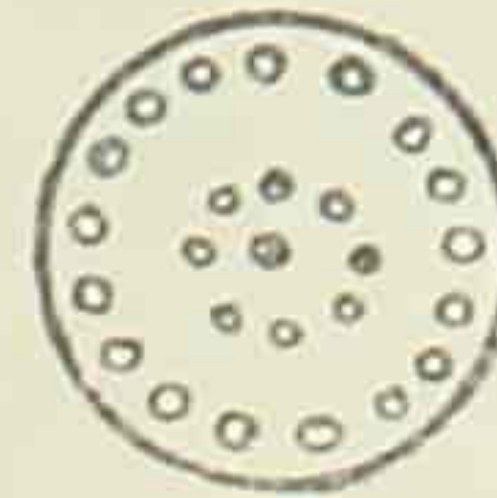
PURUSHATATTVA

PRAKRITITATTVA

IDAM

ASHUDDHA  
TATTVA  
OR  
ĀTMA  
TATTVA

THE TATTVAS FROM  
BUDDHI TO PRITHIVĪ









## CHIT-SHAKTI

(Shakti). This doctrine of aspects is a device whereby it is sought to reconcile the fact that there is changelessness and change. Philosophically it is an evasion of the problem and not a solution. The solution is to be found in revelation (Veda) and in direct Spiritual Experience (Samâdhi). These states vary in different men and in different races and creeds. But in support of Advaitavâda, reliance may be placed on the fact that Samâdhi or ecstasy, in all parts of the world and in all faiths, *tends* towards some kind of unity, more or less complete. All seek union with God. But the dispute is as to the nature of that union. Pure Advaitavâda is complete identity. The scheme now outlined shows how that unitary experience, without ceasing to be what it is, assumes limited forms.

The reader is referred to the diagram. Personally I always work with diagrams. I do not think a subject is understood until it can be represented (so far, of course, as in such matters it is possible) by diagram.

Parâsamvit shown on top of the Diagram is Nishkala Shiva or the changeless Brahman aspect; and Shiva-Shakti below is the aspect of the supreme Brahman from which change comes and which appears as its products or changing forms. Both are Shiva-Shakti. When, however, Shiva is kinetic, He is called Shakti. Regarding the matter from the Shakti aspect both are Shakti. Neither ever exist without the other, though Shakti is in one aspect Chidrûpinî, and in the other in the form of the Universe (Vishvâtmikâ). In themselves and throughout they are one. The divergence takes place in consciousness, after it has been subjected to the operation of Mâyâ, the effect of which is to polarize consciousness into an apparently separate "I" and "This." Parasamvit is not accounted a Tattva, for It is beyond all Tattvas (Tattvâtîta). Shiva Tattva and Shakti Tattva are counted separately, though Shakti Tattva is merely the negative aspect of Shiva Tattva. Shiva Tattva and Shakti Tattva are not produced. They thus are, even in dissolution. They are



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Saguna-Brahman ; and Parâsamvit is the Nirguna-Brahman. The first evolved Tattva is Sadâshiva or Sadâkhya Tattva of which the meaning is Sat âkhyâ yatah, or that state in which there is the first notion of Being ; for here is the first incipency of the world-experience as the notion "I am this" which ultimately becomes a separate "I" and "This." In my "Studies in the Mantra-Shâstra" I have with more technical detail described the evolution of Jîva-consciousness. Here I will only shortly summarise the process.

As already stated, the Aham and Idam exist in an unitary state which is indescribable in Parâsamvit. Shakti Tattva is called negative because negation is the function of Shakti (Nishedha-vyâpâra-rûpâ Shaktih). Negation of what? The answer is negation of consciousness. The universe is thus a product of negation. Where there is pure experience there is no manifested universe. Shakti negates the pure experience or consciousness to the extent that it appears to itself limited. Shakti disengages the unified elements (Aham and Idam) which are latent in the Supreme Experience as an undistinguishable unity. How? The answer is one of great subtlety.

Of the Shiva-Shakti Tattvas, Shiva represents the Prakâsha and Shakti the Vimarsha aspect, which contains potentially within it the seed of the Universe to be. The result is that the Prakâsha aspect is left standing alone. The Shiva-tattva is Prakâsha-mâtra that is, to use the imagery of our plane, an "I" without a "This." This a state in which the unitary consciousness is broken up to this extent, that it is no longer a Perfect Experience in which the Aham and Idam exist in undistinguishable union, but there is one Supreme Aham Consciousness only, which is the root of all limited subjectivity. To this Aham or Shiva Tattva, Shakti gradually unveils Herself as the Idam or Vimarsha aspect of consciousness. The result is that from Shiva and Shakti (in which the latter takes the playful part) there is evolved the first produced consciousness called



## CHIT-SHAKTI

Sadâkhya Tattva. There is then an Aham and Idam aspect of experience. But that experience is not like the Jîva's, which arises at a later stage after the intervention of Mâyâ-Shakti. In the Jîva consciousness (Jîvâtmâ) the object (Idam) is seen as something outside and different from itself. In Sadâkhya Tattva and all the subsequent pure Tattvas that is Îshvara Tattva and Shuddhavidyâ Tattva the "This" is experienced as part of the Self and not as separate from it. There is (as will appear from the Diagram) no outer and inner. The circle which represents the one Consciousness is divided into "I" and "This" which are yet parts of the same figure. The "This" is at first only by degrees and hazily (Dhyâmala prâyam) presented to the Aham like a picture just forming itself (Unmîlitamâtrachitrâkalpam). For this reason it is said that there is emphasis on the Aham which is indicated in the diagram by the arrow-head. This is called the "Nimesha" or "closing of the eyes" of Shakti. It is so called because it is the last stage in dissolution before all effects are withdrawn into their first cause. Being the last stage in dissolution it is the first in creation. Then the Idam side becomes clear in the next evolved Îshvara Tattva in which the emphasis is therefore said to be on the "This" which the Aham subjectifies. This is the "Unmesha" or "opening of the eyes" state of Shakti; for this is the state of consciousness when it is first fully equipped to create and does so. The result again of this is the evolved consciousness called Shuddhavidyâ Tattva in which the emphasis is equal on the "I" and "This." Consciousness is now in the state in which the two halves of experience are ready to be broken up and experienced separately. It is at this state that Mâyâ-Shakti intervenes and does so through its power and the Kanchukas which are forms of it. Mâyâ-Shakti is thus defined as the sense of difference (Bhedabuddhi): that is the power by which things are seen as different from the Self in the dual manifested world. The Kanchukas which are evolved from, and are particular forms of, the operation of Mâyâ are



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

limitations of the natural perfections of the Supreme Consciousness. These are Kâla which produces division (Parichchheda) in the partless and unlimited; Niyati which affects independence (Svatantratâ); Râga which produces interest in, and then attachment to, objects in that which wanted nothing (Pûrna); Vidyâ which makes the Purusha a "little knower" in lieu of being all-knower (Sarvajnatâ) and Kalâ which makes Purusha a "little doer," whereas the Supreme was in its Kartrittva almighty. The result of Mâyâ and its offshoots which are the Kanchukas is the production of the Purusha and Prakriti Tattvas. At this stage the Aham and Idam are completely severed. Each consciousness regards itself as a separate 'I' looking upon the "This" whether its own body or that of others as outside its consciousness. Each Purusha (and they are numberless) is mutually exclusive the one of the other. Prakriti is the collectivity of all Shaktis in contracted (Sangkuchadrûpâ) undifferentiated form. She is Feeling in the form of the undifferentiated mass of Buddhi and the rest and of the three Gunas in equilibrium. The Purusha or Self experiences Her as object. Then on the disturbance of the Gunas in Prakriti the latter evolves Vikritis of mind and matter. The Purusha at this stage has experience of the multiple world of the twenty-four impure Tattvas.

Thus from the supreme "I" (Parâhantâ) which is the creative Shiva-Shakti aspect of Parâsamvit which changelessly endures as Sachchhidânanda, Consciousness experiences Itself as object (Sadâkhyâ, Îshvara, Sadvidyâ Tattvas) and then through Mâyâ and the limitations or contractions which are the Kanchukas or Samkochas it loses the knowledge that it is itself its own object. It sees the "other;" and the one Consciousness becomes the experiencers which are the multiple selves and their objects of the limited and dual universe. (Shakti who in Herself (Svarûpa) is Feeling-Consciousness (Chidrûpinî) becomes more and more gross until physical energy assumes the form and becomes



## CHIT-SHAKTI

embedded in the "crust" of matter vitalised by Herself as the Life-Principle of all things. Throughout all forms it is the same Shakti who works and appears as Chit-Shakti and Mâyâ-Shakti, the Spirit and Matter aspect of the Power of the Self-illuminating Consciousness or Chit.



## CHAPTER VIII

### M Â Y Â - S H A K T I

(THE MATTER ASPECT OF THE UNIVERSE)

**S**PIRIT and matter are ultimately one, being the twin aspects of the Fundamental Substance or Brahman and Its power or Shakti. Spirit is the substance of matter, the Reality (in the sense of the lasting changelessness) out of which, by Its Power, all Appearance is fashioned not by the individual mind and senses but by the cosmic mind and senses of which they are but a part. What It creates It perceives. In my last lecture I dealt with the Spirit or Consciousness (Chit) aspect: in this I consider the matter aspect in which Consciousness veils itself in apparent unconsciousness. These twin principles are called Purusha, Brahman, Shiva on the one hand: and Prakriti, Mâyâ, and Mâyâ-Shakti on the other by the Sângkhya, Mâyâvâda Vedânta and Shaktivâda of the Shâkta Âgama respectively. The latter Shâstra, however, alone treats them as aspects of the one Substance in the manner here described and thus most aptly in this respect accomodates itself to the doctrine of Western scientific monism. So, Professor Haeckel points out in conformity with Shâkta Advaitavâda that Spirit and Matter are not two distinct entities but two forms or aspects of one single Entity or fundamental Substance. According to him, the One Entity with dual aspect is the sole Reality which presents itself to view as the infinitely varied and wondrous picture of the universe. Whatever be the case transcendently in what the Buddhist Tantra aptly calls "The Void" (Shûnyatâ = or, In Tibetan sTong-pa-nyid) which



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

is not "nothing" as some have ignorantly supposed, but That which is like nothing known to us; the ultimate formless (Arûpa) Reality as contrasted with appearance (sNang-va-dang or form (Rûpa) of which the Prajnâpâramitâ-hridaya-garbha says only "neti neti" can be affirmed,—in this universe immaterial Spirit is just as unthinkable as spiritless matter. The two are inseparately combined in every atom which, itself and its forces, possess the elements of vitality, growth and intelligence in all their developments. In the four Âtmâs which are contemplated in the Chitkunda in the Mûlâdhâra Chakra, Âtmâ prânarûpî represents the vital aspect, Jnânâtmâ the Intelligence aspect and Antarâtmâ is that spark of the Paramâtmâ which inheres in all bodies and which when spread (Vyâpta) appears as the Bhûta or five forms of sensible matter which go to the making of the gross body. These are all aspects of the one Paramâtmâ (Jnânârnavâ Tantra, Ch. XXI, Vv. 1—9).

The Vedânta recognises four states of experience, Jâgrat, Svapna, Sushupti and Turiya. These, as my friend Professor Pramathanath Mukhyopâdhyâya has, in his radical clear-thinking way, pointed out, may be regarded from two standpoints. We may with Shangkara from the standpoint of Siddhi alone regard the last only, that is transcendental or pure experience (Nirvishesha-jnâna), as the real Fact or Experience: or we may with the Shâkta Âgama looking at the matter from the standpoint of both Sâdhanâ (that is practical experience) and Siddhi (or transcendental experience) regard not only the supreme experience as alone real, but the whole of experience without any reservation whatever—the whole concrete Fact of Being and Becoming—and call it the Real. This is the view of the Shaiva-Shâkta who says that the world is Shiva's Experience and Shiva's Experience can never be unreal. The question turns upon the definition of "Real." Shangkara's conception of that term is, that That to which it is applied must be absolutely changeless in all the "three times." It is That which absolutely continues



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

through and underlies all the changes of experience ; being that which is given in all the four states Jâgrat and the rest. It is That which can never be contradicted (Vâdhita) in all the three tenses of time and the four states of Experience. This is the Ether of Consciousness (Chidâkâsha) and none of Its modes. Our ordinary experience, it is claimed, as well as Supreme non-polar, Nirvikalpa Samâdhi proves this unchanging aspect of the ultimate Substance as the changeless principle of all our modes of changing experience, which according to this definition are unreal. Thus Shankara's Real = Being = Sat-Chit-Ânanda : Unreal = Becoming = Vivartta = Jagat—Prapancha or universe. According to this view there are three levels or planes of being (Sattâ); namely transcendental (Pâramâarthika), empirical (Vyâvahârika) and illusory (Prâtibhâsika). The Real (Satya) is that which is given in all the three planes (Pâramâarthika Satya): the empirical (Vyâvahârika Satya) is that which is given in the second and third planes but not in the first. It is worldly or imperfect dual experience and not undual experience of Samâdhi or Videha-Mukti which latter, however, underlies all states of experience, being the Ether of Consciousness Itself. The last (Prâtibhâsika Satya) is given or obtains only in the last plane, being only such reality as can be attributed to illusion such as "the rope-snake." A higher plane contradicts a lower: the third is contradicted by the second, the second by the first, and the first by nothing at all. Thus there is a process of gradual elimination from changing to changeless consciousness. Real change or Parinâma is said by the Vedânta Paribhâshâ to exist when the effect or phenomenon and its ground (Upâdâna or material cause) belong to the same level or plane of existence ; as in the case of clay and pot, milk and curd which both belong to the Vyâvahârika plane ; milk being the Upâdâna and curd the effect or change appertaining it (Parinâmo hi upâdâna-sama-sattaka-kâryyâpattih). When, however, the effects level of existence is different from (Vishama) and therefore



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

cannot be equalled to that of its material cause or Upâdâna ; when, for instance, one belongs to the Vyâvahârîka experience and the other to the Prâtibhâsika, there is Vivartta. Vivartto hi upâdâna-vishama-sattaka-kâryyâ-pattih. Thus in the case of the "rope-snake" the Sattâ of the rope is Vyâvahârîka whilst that of the Rajju-sarpa is only Prâtibhâsika. For the same reason the rope, and the whole Jagat-prapancha (universe) for the matter of that, is a Vivartta in relation to the Supreme Experience of pure Chit. On its own plane or level of Sattâ every phenomenon may be a Parinâma but in relation to a higher level by which it becomes Vâdhita it is only a Vivartta.

The Shâkta Âgama differs in its presentment as follows. The Fact or Concrete Experience presents two aspects—what my friend has aptly called in his work the "Patent Wonder"—the Ether and the Stress—the quiescent background of Chit and the sprouting and evolving Shakti. Âgama takes this whole (Shiva-Shakti) embracing all the aspects as its real. If one aspect be taken apart from the others we are landed in the unreal. Therefore, in the Shâkta Âgama all is real ; whether the transcendent real of Shangkara (Turiya) or the empirical real of waking (Jâgrat) dreaming (Svapna) or dreamless sleep (Sushupti). It is conceded that is Real = changelessness, then the last three states are not real. But this definition of Reality is not adopted. It is again conceded that the Supreme Substance (Paravastu) is alone real in the sense of changeless, for the worlds come and go. But the Âgama says with the Sângkhya that a thing is not unreal because it changes. The Substance has two aspects in one of which It is changeless and in the other of which It changes. It is the same Substance in both its Prakâsha and Vimarsha aspects. Shangkara limits Reality to the Prakâsha aspect alone. Âgama extends it to both Prakâsha and Vimarsha ; for these are aspects of the one. As explained later, this divergence of views turns upon the definition of Mâyâ given by Shangkara and of



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Mâyâ-Shakti given by the Âgama. The Mâyâ of Shangkara is a mysterious Shakti of Îshvara by which Vivartta is sought to be explained and which has two manifestations *viz.*, Veiling (Âvarana) and moving, changing and projecting (Vikshepa) power, Îshvara is Brahman reflected in Mâyâ; a mystery which is separate, and yet not separate, from Brahman in Its Îshvara aspect. Mâyâ-Shakti is an aspect of Shiva or Brahman Itself.

Starting from these premises we must assume a real nexus between the universe and its ultimate cause. The creation is real, and not Mâyâ in Shangkara's sense of Mâyâ, but is the operation of and is Shakti Herself. The cause being thus real, the effect or universe is real though it changes and passes away. Even when it is dissolved, it is merged in Shakti who is real; withdrawn into Her as the Sângkhyan tortoise or Prakriti withdraws its limbs (Vikriti) into itself. The universe either *is* as unmanifested Shakti, which is the perfect formless universe of Bliss or *exists* as manifested Shakti the limited and imperfect worlds of form. The assumption of such nexus necessarily involves that what is in the effect is in the cause; not necessarily or indeed in fact actually but potentially. Of course, the follower of Shangkara will say that if creation is the becoming patent or actual of what is latent or potential in Shiva, then Shiva is not really Nishkala. A truly Niranjana Brahman cannot admit potential differentiation within Itself (Svagatabheda). Again potentiality is unmeaning in relation to the absolute and infinite Being for it pertains to relation and finite existence. If it is suggested that Brahman passes from one condition in which Mâyâ lies as a seed in it to another in which Mâyâ manifests Herself we are involved in the Hegelian doctrine of an Absolute in the making. It is illogical to affirm that whilst Brahman in one aspect does not change, It in another aspect, that is as Shakti, does change. All such objections are logically sound and it is for this reason that Shangkara says that all change (Srishti,



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

Sthiti, Laya) are only apparent, being but a Kalpanâ or imagination. But an answer is given to these objections. The Shâkta will say that the one Brahman Shiva has two aspects in one of which, as Shakti, it changes and in the other of which, as Shiva, It does not. It is true that the doctrine of aspects evades, and does not solve, the problem. Creation is ultimately inscrutable. It is, however, he urges, better to hold two contradictory affirmations, leaving spiritual experience to synthesise them, than to neglect one at the cost of the others. For this, it is argued, is what Shangkara does. His solution is obtained at the cost of a denial of true reality to the world which all our worldly experience affirms; and this solution is supported by the illogical statement that Mâyâ is not real and is yet not unreal, not partly real and partly unreal. This also flies in the face of the logical principle of contradiction. Both theories, therefore, it may be said in different ways run counter to logic. All theories ultimately do. The matter is admittedly alogical that is beyond logic, for it is beyond the mind and its logical forms of thinking. Practically, therefore, it is said to be better to base our theory on our experience of the reality of the world, frankly leaving it to spiritual experience to solve a problem for which all logic, owing to the very constitution of the mind, fails. The ultimate proof of authority is Spiritual Experience either recorded in Veda or realised in Samâdhi.

As I have already said in my paper on the spirit-aspect of the One Substance, all occultism, whether of East or West, posits the principle that there is nothing in any one state or plane which is not in some way, actual or potential, in another state or plane. The Western Hermetic maxim "as above so below" is stated in the Vishvasâra Tantra in the form "what is here is there. What is not here is nowhere" (Yad ihâsti tad anyatra yan nehâsti na tat kvachit); and in the northern Shaiva Scripture in the form "that what appears *without* only so appears *because* it exists *within*



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

“ Vartamânâvabhâsânâm bhâvânâm avabhâsanam antahs-  
sthitavatâm eva ghatate bahirâtmanâ.” For these reasons  
man is rightly called a microcosm (Kshudrabrahmânda). So  
Charaka says that the course of production, growth, delay  
and destruction of the universe and man are the same. But  
these statements do not mean that what exists on one plane  
exists in that form or way on another plane. It is obvious  
that if it did the planes would be the same and not different.  
It means that the same thing exists on one plane and on all  
other levels of being or planes, according either to the form  
of that plane, if it be what is called an intermediate causal  
body (Kâranâvantara-sharîra) or ultimately as mere formless  
potentiality. According to Shangkara all such argument is  
itself Mâyâ. And it may be so to those who have realised  
true consciousness (Chitsvarûpa) which is beyond all  
causality. The Tantra Shâstra is, however, a practical and  
Sâdhanâ Shâstra. It takes the world to be real and then  
applies, so far as it may, to the question of its origin the logic  
of the mind which forms a part of it. It says that it is true  
that there is a supreme or perfect experience which is beyond  
all worlds (Shakti Vishvottîrnâ) but there is also a worldly or  
(relatively to the supreme) imperfect (in the sense of limited)  
and partly sorrowful experience. Because the one exists, it  
does not follow that the other does not : though mere logic  
cannot construct an unassailable monism. It is the one Shiva  
who is Bliss itself and who is in the form of the world  
(Vishvâtmaka). Shiva is both changeless as Shiva and  
changeful as Shakti. How the One can be both is a mystery.  
To say, however, with Shangkara that it is Mâyâ, and in  
truth Brahman does not change, is not to explain, in an  
ultimate sense, the problem but to eliminate some other  
possible cause and to give to what remains a name.  
Mâyâ by itself does not explain the ultimate. What can ?  
It is only a term which is given to the wondrous power of  
the Creatrix by which what seems impossible to us becomes  
possible to Her. This is recognised, as it must be, by



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

Shankara who says that Mâyâ is unexplainable (Anirvachanîyâ) as of course it is. To "explain" the Creator one would have to be the Creator Himself and then in such case there would be no need of any explanation. Looking, however, at the matter from our own practical standpoint, which is that which concerns us, we are drawn by the foregoing considerations to the conclusion that what we call "matter" is in some form in the cause which, according to the doctrine here described, produces it. But matter as experienced by us is not there ; for the Supreme is Spirit only. And yet in some sense it is there, or it would not be here at all. It is there as the Supreme Shakti which is Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Chidrûpinî, Ânandamayî) who contains within Herself the potentiality of all worlds to be projected by Her Shaktî. It is there as unmanifested Consciousness-Power (Chidrûpinî Shakti). It here *exists* as the mixed conscious-unconsciousness (in the sense of the limited consciousness) of the psychical and material universe. If the ultimate Reality be one, there is thus one Almighty Substance which is both spirit (Shiva-Shakti Svarûpa) and force-matter (Shiva-Shakti-Vishvâtmaka). Spirit and Matter are thus in the end one.

This ultimate Supreme Substance (Paravastu) is Shakti, which is again of dual aspect as Chit-Shakti which represents the spiritual, and Mâyâ Shakti which represents the material aspect. The two, however, exist in inseparable connection (Avinâbhâva-sambandha) ; as inseparable to use a simile of the Shâstra as the winds of heaven from the Ether in which they blow. Shakti, who is in Herself (Svarûpa) consciousness, appears as the Life-force, as subtle Mind, and as gross Matter. As all is Shakti and as Shakti-svarûpa is Being-Consciousness-Bliss, there is and can be nothing absolutely lifeless or unconscious. For Shakti-svarûpa is unchanging Being-Consciousness beyond all worlds (Chidrûpinî Vishvot-tîrnâ) the unchanging principle of experience in such worlds ; and appears as the limited psychical universe and as the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

apparently unconscious material forms which are the content of man's Experience (Vishvâtmikâ). The whole universe is Shakti under various forms. Therefore it is seen as commingled Spirit-matter.

According to Shaiva-Shâkta doctrine Shiva and Shakti are one. Shiva represents the static aspect of the Supreme substance, and Shakti its kinetic aspect: the term being derived from the root "Shak" which denotes capacity of action or power. According to Shankara, Brahman has two aspects, in one of which or Îshvara, it is associated with Mâyâ and seems to change and in the other dissociated from Mâyâ (Parabrahman). In the Âgama the one Shiva is both the changeless Parashiva and Parashakti and the really changing Shiva-Shakti or universe. As Shiva is one with Himself, He is never associated with anything but Himself. As, however, the Supreme, He is undisplayed (Shiva-Shakti Svarûpa) and as Shiva-Shakti He is manifest in the form of the universe of mind and matter (Vishvarûpa).

Before the manifestation of the universe there was Mahâsattâ or Grand-being. Then also there was Shiva-Shakti, for there is no time when Shakti is not; though She is sometimes manifest and sometimes not. But then Shakti is not manifest and is in its own true nature (Svarûpa); that is, Being feeling-consciousness-Bliss (Chinmayî, Ânandamayî). As Shiva is consciousness (Chit) and Bliss or Love (Ânanda,) She is then simply Bliss and Love. Then when moved to create, the Great Power or Megale Dunamis of the Gnostics issues from the depths of Being and becomes Mind and Matter whilst remaining what She ever was: the Being (Sat) which is the foundation of all manifested life and the Spirit which sustains and enlightens it. This primal Power (Âdyâ Shakti), as object of worship, is the Great Mother (Magna Mater) of all natural things (Natura Naturans) and nature itself (Natura Naturata). In Herself (Svarûpa) She is *not a person* but She is ever and incessantly *personalizing*; assuming the multiple masks (Persona) which are the varied



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

forms of mind-matter. As therefore manifest, She is all Personalities and as the collectivity thereof the Supreme Person (Parâhantâ). But in Her own ground from which, clad in form, She emerges and personalizes She is beyond all form, and therefore beyond all personality known to us. She works in and as all things; now greatly veiling Her consciousness-bliss in gross matter now by gradual stages more fully revealing Herself in the forms of the one universal Life which She is.

Let us now first examine Her most gross manifestation that is, sensible matter (Bhûta), then Her more subtle aspect as the Life-force and Mind, and lastly Her Supreme Shakti aspect as Consciousness.

The physical human body is composed of certain compounds of which the chief are water, gelatine, fat, phosphate of lime, albumen and febrine and of these water constitutes some two-thirds of the total weight. These compounds, again, are composed of simpler non-metallic elements of which the chief are oxygen (to the extent of about two-thirds), hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, calcium and phosphorus. So about two-third of the body is water and this is H<sub>2</sub>O. Substantially then our gross body is water. But when we get to these simpler elements, have we got to the root of the matter? No. It was formerly thought that matter was composed of certain elements beyond which it was not possible to go, and that these elements and their atoms were indestructible. These notions have been reversed by modern science. Though the alleged indestructibility of the elements and their atoms is still said by some to present the character of a "practical truth," well-known recent discoveries and experiments go to re-establish the ancient doctrine of a single primordial substance to which these various forms of matter may be reduced, with the resultant of the possible and hitherto derided transmutation of one element into another; since each is but one of the many plural manifestations of the same underlying unity. The



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

so-called elements are varied forms of this one substance which themselves combine to form the various compounds. The variety of our experience is due to permutation and combination of the atoms of the matter into which the primordial energy materialises. We thus find that owing to the variety of atomic combinations of H N O C there are differences in the compounds. It is curious to note in passing how apparently slight variations in the quantity and distribution of the atoms produces very varying substances. Thus gluten which is a nutrient food and quinine and strychnine which are in varying degree poisons are each compounds of C H N O. Strychnine a powerful poison is  $C_{21}H^{22}N_2O_3$  and quinine is  $C_{20}H_{24}N_2O_2$ . N and O are the same in both and there is a difference of one part only of C and 2 of H. But neither these compounds nor the so-called elements of which they are composed are permanent things. Scientific matter is now found to be only a relatively stable form of cosmic energy. All matter dissociates and passes into the energy of which it is a materialised form and again it issues from it.

Modern western science and Philosophy have thus removed many difficulties which were formerly thought to be objections to the ancient Indian doctrine on the subject here dealt with. It has, in the first place, dispelled the gross notions which were hitherto generally entertained as to the nature of "matter." According to the notions of quite recent science, "matter" was defined to be that which has mass, weight, and inertia. It must be now admitted that the two latter qualities no longer stand the test of examination, since, putting aside our ignorance as to the nature of weight, this quality varies, if we conceive matter to be placed under conditions which admittedly affect it; and the belief in inertia is due to superficial observation, it being now generally conceded that the final elements of matter are in a state of spontaneous and perpetual motion. In fact, the most general phenomenon of the universe is vibration, to



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

which the human body as all else is subject. Various vibrations affect differently each organ of sensation. When of certain quality and number, they denote to the skin the degree of external temperature ; others incite the eye to see different colours ; others again enable us to ear to hear defined sounds. Moreover, "inertia," which is alleged to be a distinguishing quality of "matter," is said to be the possession of electricity, which is considered not to be "material." What, then, is that to which we attribute "mass"? In the first place, it is now admitted that "matter," even with the addition of all possible forces, is insufficient to explain many phenomena, such as those of light ; and it has, accordingly, come to be an article of scientific *faith* that there is a substance called "Ether," : a medium which, filling the universe, transports by its vibrations the radiations of light, heat, electricity, and perhaps action from a distance, such as the attraction exercised between heavenly bodies. It is said, however, that this Ether is not "matter," but differs profoundly from it, and that it is only our infirmity of knowledge which obliges us, in our attempted descriptions of it, to borrow comparisons from "matter" in its ordinary physical sense, which alone is known by our senses. But if we assume the existence of Ether, we know that "material" bodies immersed in it can change their places therein. In fact, to use an Indian expression, the characteristic property of the vibrations of the Âkâsha Tattva is to make the space in which the other Tattvas and their derivatives exist. With "Matter" and Ether as its materials, Western purely "scientific" theories have sought to construct the world. The scientific atom which Du Bois Raymond described as an exceedingly useful fiction—"ausserst nutzliche fiction"—is no longer considered the ultimate indestructible element, but is held to be, in fact, a kind of miniature solar system, formed by a central group or nucleus charged with positive electricity, around which very much smaller material elements, called electrons or corpuscles, charged with negative electricity, gravitate in



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

closed orbits. These vibrate in the etheric medium in which they and the positively charged nucleus exist, constituting by their energy, and not by their mass, the unity of the atom. But what, again, is the constitution of this "nucleus" and the electrons revolving around it? There is no scientific certainty that any part of either is due to the presence of "matter." On the contrary, if a hypothetical corpuscle consisting solely of an electric charge without material mass is made the subject of mathematical analysis, the logical inference is that the electron is free of "matter," and is merely an electric charge moving in the Ether; and though the extent of our knowledge regarding the positive nucleus which constitutes the remainder of the atom is small, an eminent mathematician and physicist has expressed the opinion that, if there is no "matter" in the negative charges, the positive charges must also be free from it. Thus, in the words of the author upon whose lucid analysis I have drawn, (Houllevigue's "Evolution of Science") the atom has been *dematerialised*, if one may say so, and with it the molecules and the entire universe. "Matter" (in the scientific sense) *disappears*, and we and all that surround us are physically, according to these views, mere disturbed regions of the ether determined by moving electric charges—a logical if impressive conclusion, because it is by increasing their knowledge of "matter" that physicists have been led to doubt its reality. But the question, as he points out, does not remain there. For if the speculations of Helmholtz be adopted, there is nothing absurd in imagining that the two possible directions of rotation of a vortex formed within, and consisting of, ether correspond to the positive and negative electric charges said to be attached to the final elements of matter. If that be so, then the trinity of matter, ether, and electricity, out of which science has hitherto attempted to construct the world, is reduced to a single element, the ether (which is not scientific "matter,") in a state of motion, and which is the basis of the physical universe. The old duality



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

of force and matter disappears these being held to be differing forms of the same thing. Matter is a relatively stable form of energy into which, on disturbance of its equilibrium, it disappears ; for all forms of matter dissociate. The ultimate basis is that energy called in Indian Prakriti, Mâyâ or Shakti.

Herbert Spencer, the Philosopher of Modern Science, carries the investigation farther, holding that the universe, whether physical or psychical, whether within or without us, is a play of Force, which, in the case of Matter, we experience as object, and that the notion that the ultimate realities are the supposed atoms of matter, to the properties and combinations of which the complex universe is due, is not true. Mind, life, and matter are each varying aspect of the one cosmic process from the first cause. Mind as such is as much a "material" organ as the brain and outer sense organs, though they are differing forms of force.

Both mind and matter drive from what Herbert Spencer calls the Primal Energy (Âdyâ Shakti) and Haeckel the fundamental spirit-matter Substance. Professor Fitz Edward Hall described the Sângkhya philosophy as being "with all its folly and fanaticism little better than a chaotic impertinence." It has doubtless its weaknesses like all other systems. Wherein however consists its "fanaticism" I do not know. As for "impertinence" it is neither more nor less so than any other form of Western endeavour to solve the riddle of life. As regards its leading concept "Prakriti", the Professor said that it was a notion for which the European languages were unable to supply a name ; a failure, he added, which was "nowise to their discredit." The implication of this sarcastic statement is that it was not to the discredit of Western languages that they had not a name for so foolish a notion. He wrote before the revolution of ideas in science to which I have referred and with that marked antagonism to things Indian which is so common a feature of the ordinary professional orientalist,



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

The notion of Prakriti is not absurd. The doctrine of a primordial substance was held by some of the greatest minds in the past and has support from the most modern developments of Science. Both now concur to reject what the great Sir William Jones called "vulgar notion of material substance." (Opera I. 36) Many people were wont, as some still are, to laugh at the idea of Mâyâ. Was not matter solid, permanent and real enough? But according to science what are we (as physical beings) at base? The answer is infinitely tenuous formless energy which materialises into relatively stable, yet essentially transitory, forms. According to the apt expression of the Shâkta Shâstra, Shakti as She creates becomes Ghanîbhûtâ, that is, massive or thickened; just as milk becomes curd. The process by which the subtle becomes gradually more and more gross continues until it develops into what a friend of mine calls the "crust" of solid matter (Pârthiva bhûta). This whilst it lasts is tangible enough. But it will not last for ever and in some radio-active substances dissociates before our eyes. Where does it go, according to Shâkta doctrine, but to that Mother-Power from whose womb it came; who exists as all forms gross and subtle and is the formless Consciousness Itself. The poet's inspiration led Shakespeare to say "We are such stuff as dreams are made of." It is a wonderful saying from a Vedântic standpoint, for centuries before him Advaitavâda had said "Yes, dreams; for the Lord is Himself the Great World-dreamer slumbering in causal sleep as Îshvara, dreaming as Hiranyagarbha the universe experienced by Him as the Virât or totality of all Jîvas, on waking. Scientific revision of the notion of "matter" helps the Vedântic standpoint by dispelling gross and vulgar notions upon the subject; by establishing its impermanence in its form as scientific matter; by positing a subtler physical substance which is not ponderable matter; by destroying the old duality of matter and Force; and by these and other conclusions leading to the acceptance of one Primal



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

Energy which transforms itself into that relatively stable state which is perceived by the senses as gross "matter." As, however, science deals with matter only objectively, that is, from a dualistic standpoint it does not (whatever hypotheses any particular scientist may maintain) resolve the essential problem which is stated in this country in the word Mâyâ. That problem is "How can the apparent duality be a real unity? How can we bridge the gulf between the object and the Self which perceives it? Into whatever tenuous energy the material world is resolved we are still left in the region of duality of Spirit and Matter. The position is not advanced beyond that taken by Sâṅkhya. The answer to the problem stated is that Shakti which is the origin of, and is in, all things has the power to veil Itself so that whilst in truth it is only seeing itself as object, it does not, as the created Jîva, perceive this but takes things to be outside and different from the Self. For this reason Mâyâ is called, in the Shâstra, Bhedabuddhi or the sense of difference. This is the natural characteristic of the mind.

Herbert Spencer the Philosopher of Modern Science, carrying the investigation beyond physical matter, holds, as I have already said, that the universe whether physical or psychical, whether as mind or matter, is a play of Force; Mind, Life and Matter being each varying aspects of the one cosmic process from the First Cause. This, again, is an Indian notion. For the affirmation that "scientific matter" is an appearance produced by the play of Cosmic Force, and that mind is itself a product of the same play is what both Sâṅkhya and Mâyâvâda Vedânta hold. Both these systems teach that mind, considered in itself, is, like matter, an unconscious thing and that both it and matter ultimately issue from the same single Principle which the former calls Prakriti and the latter Mâyâ. Consciousness and Unconsciousness are in the universe inseparable, whatever be the degree of manifestation of veiling of Consciousness. For the



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

purpose of analysis, Mind in itself—that is considered hypothetically as dissociated from Consciousness which, in fact, is never the case, (though Consciousness exists apart from the mind)—is a force-process like the physical brain. Consciousness (Chit) is not to be identified with mind (Antahkarana) which is its organ of expression of mind. Consciousness is not a mere manifestation of material mind. Consciousness must not be identified with its *mental modes*; an identification which leads to the difficulties in which western metaphysic has so often found itself. It is the ultimate Reality in which all modes whether subjective or objective exist.

The assertion that mind is in itself unconscious may seem a strange statement to a Western reader who, if he does not identify mind and consciousness, at any rate, regards the latter as an attribute or function of mind. The point, however, is of such fundamental importance for the understanding of Indian doctrine that it may be further developed.

According to the Lokâyata School of Indian materialism, mind was considered to be the result of the chemical combination of the four forms of material substance, earth, water, fire and air, in organic forms. According to the Pûrva Mîmângsâ and the Nyâya-Vaisheshika, the Self or Âtma is in itself and that is by nature (Svabhâvatah), unconscious (Jada, Achidrûpa): for Âtmâ is said to be unconscious (Achetana) in dreamless sleep (Sushupti); and consciousness arises as a produced thing by association of the Âtmâ with the mind, senses and body. The reader is referred to Pandit Chandra Kânta Tarkâlangkâra's Bengali Lectures on Hindu Philosophy, an achievement of the Calcutta University which is a credit to it. At p. 105 he cites Prabhakâra Mîmângsakâchâryya, saying that Vaisheshika-Nyâya supports the view. Sachetanashchittayogât tadyogena vinâ jadah " Âtmâ is Conscious by union with knowledge [Jnâna] which comes to it by association with mind and body.



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

Without it, it is unconscious." Âtmâ, according to this Darshana, is that in which (Âshraya) Jnâna inheres. Kumârila Bhatta says Âtmâ is partly Prakâsha and Aprakâsha (luminous and non-luminous) like a fire-fly. But this is denied, as Âtmâ is Nirangsha (partless). Knowledge thus arises from the association of mind (Manas) with Âtmâ, the senses (Indriya) with Manas, and the senses with their objects. That is, worldly (laukika) knowledge, which is the true that is non-illusive—apprehension of objects. Jnâna in the spiritual Vedantic sense of Mâyâvâda is Paramâtmâ, or pure Consciousness realised. The former Jnâna, in that it arises without effort on the presentation of the objects is not action (Kriyâ), and differs from the forms of mental action (Mânasî Kriyâ), such as will (Ichchhâ), contemplation and the like. Âtmâ manasâ sangyujoyate, mana indriyena, indriyam arthena, tato bhavati jnânam. Both these theories are refuted by Sângkhya and Advaitavâda Vedânta (as interpreted by Shankara, to which unless otherwise stated I refer) which affirm that the very nature of Âtmâ is Consciousness (Chit), and all else, whether mind or matter, is unconscious, though the former appears not to be so. The Jîva mind is not itself conscious, but reflects consciousness, and therefore appears to be conscious. Consciousness as such is eternal and immutable; Mind is a creation and changeable. Consciousness as such is unconditional. In the mind of the Jîva, Consciousness appears to be conditioned by that Mâyâ Shakti which produces mind, and of which Shakti, mind is a particular manifestation. Mind, however, is not the resultant of the operation of the Bhûta—that is, of gross natural forces or motions—but is, in Sângkhya and in Vedântic monism, an evolution which is cosmically prior to them.

The mode of exposition in which Consciousness is treated as being in itself something apart from, though associated with, mind is profound; because, while it recognises the intermingling of Spirit and Matter in the embodied being



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

(Jīva), it yet at the same time clearly distinguishes them. It thus avoids the imputation of change to Spirit (Ātmā). The latter is ever in Its own true nature immutable. Mind is ever changing, subject to sensations, forming ideas, making resolves, and so forth. Spirit in Itself is neither thus affected nor acts. Manifold change takes place through motion and vibration in the unconscious Prakriti and Mâyâ. Mind is one of the results of such motion, as matter is another. Each of them is a form of specific transformation of the one Principle whence unconsciousness, whether real or apparent, arises. That, however, mind *appears* to be conscious the Vedânta and Sâṅkhya admit. This is called Chidâbhâsa—that is, the appearance of something as Chit (Consciousness) which is not really Chit. This appearance of Consciousness is due to the reflection of Chit upon it. A piece of polished steel which lies in the sunshine may appear to be self-luminous, when it is merely reflecting the sun, which is the source of the light it appears to give out. Chit as such is immutable and never evolves. What do evolve are the various forms of natural forces produced by Prakriti or Mâyâ. These two are, however, conceived as being in association in such a way that the result of such association is produced without Chit being really affected at all. The classical illustration of the mode and effect of such association is given in the Sâṅkhyan aphorism, “Just like the jewel and the flower”—Kusumavachcha manih (Sâṅkhya-Pravachana-Sûtra, II, 35)—that is, when a scarlet hibiscus flower is placed in contiguity to a crystal, the latter appears to be red, though it still in fact retains its pure transparency, as is seen when the flower is removed. On the other hand, the flower as reflected in the crystal takes on a shining, transparent aspect which its opaque surface does not really possess. In the same way Consciousness appears to be conditioned by the force of unconsciousness in the Jīva, but is really not so. “Changeless Chit Shakti, which does not move towards anything, yet seems to do so” (Sâṅkhya-Pravachana-Sûtra).



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

And, on the other hand, Mind as one of such unconscious forces takes on the semblance of Consciousness, though this is borrowed from Chit and is not its own natural quality. This association of Unconscious Force with Consciousness has a two-fold result, both obscuring and revealing. It obscures, in so far as, and so long as it is in operation it prevents the realisation of pure Consciousness (Chit). When mind is absorbed pure Consciousness shines forth. In this sense this Power, or Mâyâ is spoken of as a Veil. In another sense it reveals—that is, it manifests—the world, which does not exist except through the instrumentality of Mâyâ which the world is. Prakriti and Mâyâ produce both Mind and Matter; on the former of which Consciousness is reflected (Chidâbhâsa.) The human mind, then, appears to be conscious, but of its own nature and inherent quality is not so. The objective world of matter is, or appears to, be an unconscious reality. These alternatives are necessary, because in Sângkhya unconsciousness is a reality; in Vedânta an appearance. In the Shâkta Tantra apparent unconsciousness is an aspect (Avidyâ Shakti) of Conscious Shakti. Consciousness is, according to Advaita Vedânta, the true existence of both, illumining the one, hidden in the other.

The internal instrument (Antahkarana) or Mind is one only, but is given different names—Buddhi, Ahangkâra, Manas—to denote the diversity of its functions. From the second of these issue the senses (Indriya) and their objects, the sensibles (Mâhâbhûta), or gross matter with the supersensibles (Tanmâtra) as its intermediate cause. All these proceed from Prakriti and Mâyâ.

Therefore, according to these systems, Consciousness is Chit, and Mind or Antahkarana is a transformation of Prakriti and Mâyâ respectively. In itself Mind is an unconscious specialised organ developed out of the Primordial Energy, Mula-prakriti or Mâyâ. It is thus, not in itself, consciousness but a special manifestation of conscious existence, borrowing its consciousness from the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Chit which is reflected on it. Shâkta doctrine states the same matter in a different form. Consciousness at rest is Chit-Svarûpa. Consciousness in movement is Chit-Shakti associated with Mâyâ-Shakti. The Shiva-Shakti Svarûpa is consciousness (Chit, Chidrûpinî). There is no independent Prakriti as Sângkhya holds, nor an unconscious Mâyâ which is not Brahman and yet not separate from Brahman, as Shangkara teaches. What there is, is Mâyâ-Shakti; that is Consciousness (for Shakti is in itself such) veiling, as the Mother, Herself to herself as Her creation, the Jîva. There is no need then for Chidabhâsa. For mind is consciousness veiling itself in the forms or limitation of apparent unconsciousness.

This is an attractive exposition of the matter because in the universe consciousness and unconsciousness are mingled and the abolition of unconscious Mâyâ satisfies the desire for unity. In all these cases however, mind and matter represent either the real or apparent unconscious aspect of things. If man's consciousness is, or appears to be limited, such limitation must be due to some principle without, or attached to, or inherent in, consciousness; which in some sense or other must *ex hypothesi* be really, or apparently different from the consciousness, which it seems to affect or actually affects. In all these systems mind and matter equally derive from a common *finitising* principle which actually or apparently limits the Infinite Consciousness. In all three there is, beyond manifestation, Consciousness or Chit which in manifestation appears as a paralellism of mind and matter; the substratum of which from a monistic standpoint is Chit.

Hebert Spencer, however, as many other Western Philosophers do, differs from the Vedânta in holding that the noumenon of these phenomena is not Consciousness, for the latter is by them considered to be by its very nature conditioned and concrete. This noumenon is therefore declared to be unknown and unknowable. But force as such



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

is blind, and can only act as it has been predetermined. We discover consciousness in the universe. The cause must, therefore, it is argued be Consciousness. It is but reasonable to hold that, if the first cause be of the nature of either Consciousness or Matter, and not of both, it must be of the nature of the former, and not of the latter. An unconscious object may well be conceived to modify Consciousness, but not to produce Consciousness out of its Self. According to Indian Realism the Paramânus are the material (Upâdâna), cause (Kârana), and Îshvara the instrumental (Nimitta) cause, for He makes them combine. According to Vedânta Matter is really nothing but a determined modification of knowledge in the Îshvara Consciousness, itself unaffected by such determination. Îshvara is thus both the material and instrumental cause. A thing can only dissolve into its own cause. The agency (Kartritva) of Îshvara is attributed (Aupâdhika) only.

The Vedânta, therefore, and its Shâkta presentment say that the Noumenon is knowable and known, for it is the inner Self, which is not an unconscious principle as the will of Schopenhauer, has been said (rightly or wrongly) to be, but Being-Consciousness, which, as above explained, is not conditioned or concrete, but is the absolute Self-identity. Nothing can be more intimately known than the Self. The objective side of knowledge is conditioned because of the nature of its organs which, whether mental or material, are conditioned. Sensation, preception, conception, intuition are but different modes in which the one Consciousness manifests itself, the differences being determined by the variety of condition and form of the different organs of knowledge through which consciousness manifests. There is thus a great difference between the Agnostic and the Vedântist. The former, as for instance Herbert Spencer, says that the Absolute can not be known because nothing can be predicated of it. Whereas the Vedântin when he says that It cannot be known (in the ordinary sense) means



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

that this is Because It is knowledge itself. Our ordinary experience does not know a consciousness of pure being without difference. But though it can not be pictured it may be apprehended. It cannot be thought because it is Pure Knowledge itself. It is that state which is realised only in Samâdhi but is apprehended indirectly as the Unity which underlies and sustains all forms of changing finite experience.

What, lastly, is Life? The underlying substance is Being-in-itself. Life is a manifestation of such Being. If by Life we understand life in form, then the ultimate substance is not that; for it is formless. But in a supreme sense it is Life; for it is Eternal Life whence all life in form proceeds. It is not dead Being. If it were It could not produce Life. The Great Mother is Life; both the life of Her children and the Life of their lives. Nor does She produce what is without life or something different from Her. What is in the cause is in the effect. Some Western Scientists have spoken of the "Origin of Life" and have sought to find it. It is a futile quest, for Life has no origin. We cannot discover the beginnings of that which is essentially eternal. The question is vitiated by the false assumption that there is anything dead in the sense that it is wholly devoid of Life. There is no such thing. The whole world is a living manifestation of the source of all life which is Absolute Being. It is sometimes made a reproach against Hinduism that it knows not a "living God." What is meant I cannot say. For it is certain that it does not worship a "dead God" whatever such may be. Perhaps by "living" is meant "Personal." If so, the charge is again ill-founded. Îshvara and Îshvarî are Rulers in whom all personalities and personality itself are. But in their ground they are beyond all manifestation, that is limitation which personality, as we understand it, involves. Man, the animal and the plant alone, it is true, exhibit certain phenomena which are commonly called vital. What exhibits such



## MĀYĀ-SHAKTI

phenomena, we have commonly called "living." But it does not follow that what does not exhibit the phenomena which belong to our definition of life is itself "dead." We may have to revise our definition, as in fact we are commencing to do. Until recently it was commonly assumed that matter was of two kinds:—inorganic or dead, and organic or living. The mineral was "dead," the vegetable animal and man were endowed with "life." But these living forms are compounded of so-called "dead" matter. How, then, is it possible that there is life in the organic kingdom the parts of which are ultimately compounded of "dead" matter? This necessarily started the futile quest for the "origin of life." Life can only come from life: not from death. The greatest errors arise from the making of false partitions in nature which do not exist. We make these imaginary partitions and then vainly attempt to surmount them. There are no partitions, no gulfs. All is continuous, even if we cannot at present establish in each case the connection. That there should be such gulfs is unthinkable to any one who has in small degree grasped the notion of the unity of things. There is a complete connected chain in the hierarchy of existence from the lowest forms of apparently inert (but now observed to be moving) matter, through the vegetable, animal, human worlds; and then through such Devatās as are super-human intelligences up to the Brahman. From the latter to a blade of grass (says the Shâstra) all are one.

Western Scientific notions have, however, in recent years undergone a radical evolution as regards the underlying unity of substance, destructive of the hitherto accepted notions of the discontinuity of matter and its organisation. The division of nature into the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms is still regarded as of practical use; but it is now recognised that no such clear line of demarcation exists between them as has hitherto been supposed in the West. Between each of nature's types there are said to be



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

innumerable transitions. The notion of inert "dead" matter the result of superficial observation, has given way upon the revelation of the activities at work under this apparent inertia—forces which endow "brute substance" with many of the characteristics of living beings. It is no longer possible to dogmatically affirm where the inorganic kingdom ends and "life" beings. It must be rather asserted that many phenomena hitherto considered characteristic of "life" belong to "inert matter" composed of molecules and atoms, as "animated matter" is of cells and micellæ. It has been found that so-called "inert matter" possesses an extraordinary power of organisation, and is not only capable of apparently imitating the forms of "living" matter, but presents in a certain degree the same functions and properties.

Sentiency is a characteristic of all forms of Existence. Physiologists measure the sensibility of a being by the degree of excitement necessary to produce in it a reaction. Of this it has been said (Le Bon "Evolution of Matter," 250). "This sensibility of matter, so contrary to what popular observation seems to indicate is becoming more and more familiar to physicists. This is why such an expression as the "life of matter", utterly meaningless twenty-five years ago has come into common use. The study of mere matter yields ever increasing proofs that it has properties which were formerly deemed the exclusive appanage of living beings." Life exists throughout, but manifests in various ways. The arbitrary division which has been drawn between "dead" and "living" matter has no existence in fact, and speculations as to the origin of "life" are vitiated by the assumption that there is anything which exists without it, however much its presence may be veiled from us. Western science would thus appear to be moving to the conclusion that there is no "dead" matter, but that life exists everywhere, not merely in that in which, as in "organic matter," it is to us plainly and clearly expressed, but also in the



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

ultimate "inorganic" atoms of which it is composed—atoms which, in fact, have their organisations as have the beings which they go to build—and that all, to the minutest particle, is vibrating with unending Energy (Tejas).

Manifested life is Prâna, a form of Kriyâ Shakti in, and evolved from, the Linga Sharîra, itself born of Prakriti. Prâna or the vital principle has been well defined ("Hindu Realism" by J. C. Chatterji) to be "the special relation of the Âtmâ with a certain form of matter which by this relation the Âtmâ organises and builds up as a means of having experience." This special relation constitutes the individual Prâna in the individual body. Just as in the West, "life" is a term commonly used of organised body only; so also is the term Prâna used in the East. It is the technical name given to the phenomena called "vital" exhibited by such bodies, the source of which is the Brahman Itself. The individual Prâna is limited to the particular body which it vitalises and is a manifestation in all breathing creatures (Prânî) of the creative and sustaining activity of the Brahman. All beings exist so long as the Prâna is in the body. It is as the Kaushitakî Upanishad says "the life duration of all." The cosmic all-pervading Prâna is the collectivity of all Prânas and is the Brahman as the source of the individual Prâna. On the physical plane Prâna manifests as breath through inspiration "Sa" or Shakti and expiration "Ha" or Shiva. So the Niruttara Tantra (Chapter IV) says:—By Hangkâra it goes out and by Sakâra it comes in again. A Jîva always recites the Supreme Mantra Hangsa."

*Hang-kârena vahir yâti sah-kârena vishet punah*

*Hangseti paramang mantrang jîvo japati sarvadâ.*

Breathing is itself the Ajapâ Mantra. Prâna is thus Shakti as the universally pervading source of life, organising itself as matter into what we call living forms. When the Prâna goes, the organism which it holds together disintegrates. Nevertheless each of the atoms which remain has



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

a life of its own, existing as such separately from the life of the organised body of which they formed a part ; just as each of the cells of the living body has a life of its own. The gross outer body is heterogeneous (Parichchhinna) or made up of distinct or well-defined parts. But the Prânamaya Self which lies within the Annamaya Self is an homogeneous undivided whole (Sâdhârana) permeating the whole physical body (Sarvapindavyâpin). It is not cut off into distinct regions (Asâdhârana) as is the Pinda or micro-cosmic physical body. Unlike the latter it has no specialised organs each discharging a specific function. It is a homogeneous unity (Sâdhârana) present in every part of the body which it ensouls as its inner vital Self. Vâyû as universal vital activity, on entry into each body, manifests itself in ten different ways. It is the one Prâna though different names are given according to its functions of which the five chief are appropriation (Prâna) Rejection (Apâna) Assimilation (Samâna) Distribution (Vyâna) and that vital function (Udâna) which is connected with self-expression in speech. Prâna in its general sense represents the involuntary reflex action of the organism ; just as the Indriyas are one aspect of its voluntary activity. Breathing is a manifestation of the Cosmic Rhythm to which the whole universe moves and according to which it appears and disappears. The life of Brahmâ is the duration of the outgoing breath (Nishvâsa) of Kâla.

The Sângkhya rejecting the Lokâyata notion that Vâyû is a mere bio-mechanical force or mechanical motion resulting from such a Vâyû holds, on the principle of the Economy of categories, that life is a resultant of the various concurrent activities of other principles or forces in the organism. This again the Vedantists deny, holding that it is a separate independent principle and material form assumed through Mâyâ by the one consciousness. In either case it is an unconscious force since everything which is not the Âtmâ or Purusha is according to Mâyâvâda and



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

Sângkhya unconscious or, in Western parlance, material (Jada).

If we apply Shâkta principles, then Prâna is a name of the general Shakti displaying itself in the organisation of matter and the vital phenomena which bodies, when organised, exhibit. Manifest Shakti is vitality, which is a limited concrete display in forms of Her own formless Being or Sat. All Shakti is Jnâna, Ichchhâ, Kriyâ, and in its form as Prakriti, the Gunas Sattva, Rajas, Tamas. She desires, impelled by Her nature, (Ichchhâ) to build up forms; sees how it should be done (Jnâna); and then does it (Kriyâ). The most tâmasic form of Kriyâ is the mechanical energy displayed in material bodies. But this is itself the product of Her Vitivity and not the cause of it. Ultimately then Prâna, like everything else, is consciousness which, as Shakti, limits Itself in forms which it first creates and sustains; then builds up into other more elaborate forms and again sustains until their life-period is run. All creation and maintenance is a limiting power with the appearance of unconsciousness, in so far as, and to the degree that, it confines the boundless Being-Consciousness-Bliss; yet that power is nothing but consciousness negating and limiting itself. The Great Mother (Shrî mâtâ) limits Her infinite being in and as the universe and maintains it. In so far as the form and its life is a limited thing, it is apparently unconscious, for consciousness is thereby limited. At each moment there is creation but we call the first appearance creation (Srishti) and its continuance, through the agency of Prâna, maintenance (Sthiti). But both that which is apparently limited and that whose operation has that effect is Being-Consciousness. Prâna Vâyu is the self-begotten but limited manifestation of the eternal Life. It is called Vâyu (Vâ = to move) because it courses throughout the whole universe. Invisible in itself yet its operations are manifest. For it determines the birth, growth, and decay of all animated organisms and as such receives the homage of all



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

created Being. For it is the Prânarûpî Âtmâ, the Prâna Shakti.

For those by whom inorganic matter was considered to be "dead" or lifeless, it followed that it could have no Feeling-Consciousness, since the latter was deemed to be an attribute of life. Further, consciousness was denied because it was, and is in deed now, commonly assumed that every conscious experience presupposes a subject, conscious of being such, attending to an object. As Professor P. Mukhyopâdhyâya ("Approaches to Truth") has well pointed out, consciousness was identified with intelligence or understanding—that is with directed consciousness; so that where no direction or form is discernible, Western thinkers have been apt to imagine that consciousness as such has also ceased. To their pragmatic eye consciousness is always particular having a particular direction and form.

According, however, to Indian views there are three states of consciousness; (1) a supramental supreme consciousness dissociated from mind. This is the Paramâtmâ Chit which is the basis of all existence, whether organic or inorganic, and of thought; of which the Shruti says "know that which does not think by the mind and by which the mind is thought." There are then two main manifested states of consciousness; (2) consciousness associated with mind in organic matter working through its vehicles of mind and matter; (3) consciousness associated with and almost entirely veiled by inorganic gross matter (Bhûta) only; such as the muffled (consciousness evidenced by its response to external stimuli as shown in the experiments with which Dr. Jagadish Bose's name is associated. Where are we to draw the lowest limit of sensation; and if a limit be assigned, why there? As Dr. Ernst Mach has pointed out (Analysis of Sensations, 243) the question is natural enough if we start from the commonly current physical conception. It is, of course, not asserted that inorganic matter is conscious to itself in the way that the higher organised life is. The



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

response, however, which it makes to stimuli is evidence that consciousness lies heavily veiled in, and imprisoned by it. Inorganic matter displays it in the form of that seed or rudiment of sentiency which, enlarging into the simple pulses of feeling of the lowest degrees of organised life, at length emerges in the developed self-conscious sensations of human life. Owing to imperfect scientific knowledge the first of these aspects was not in antiquity capable of physical proof in the same way or to the same extent, as Modern Science with its delicate instruments have made possible. Starting, however, from the revealed and intuitionally held truth that all was Brahman the conclusion necessarily followed. All Bhûta is composed of the three Gunas of Prakriti. It is the Sattva in gross matter (almost entirely suppressed by Tamas though it be) which manifests the phenomena of sensibility observed in matter. In short, nature, it has been well said, knows no sharp boundaries or yawning gulfs though we may ignore the subtle connecting links between things. There is no break in continuity. Being and Consciousness are co-extensive. Consciousness is not limited to those centres in the Ether of consciousness which are called organised bodies. But just as life is differently expressed in the mineral and in man, so is Consciousness which many have been apt to think exists in the developed animal and even in man only.

Consciousness (Chit-Shakti) exists in all the hierarchy of Being and is, in fact, Being. It is, however, in all bodies veiled by its power or Mâyâ-Shakti which is composed of the three Gunas. In inorganic matter, owing to the predominance of Tamas, Consciousness is so greatly veiled and the life force is so restrained that we get the appearance of insensibility, inertia and mere mechanical energy. In organised bodies the action of Tamas is gradually lessened so that the members of the universal hierarchy become more and more Sâttvik as they ascend in the scale of evolution. Consciousness itself does not change. It remains the same



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

throughout. What does change is its wrappings, unconscious or apparently so, as they may alternatively be called. This wrapping is Mâyâ and Prakriti with their Gunas. The figure of "wrapping" is apt to illustrate the presentment of Sângkhya and Mâyâvâda. From the Shâkta aspect we may compare the process to one in which it being assumed that in one aspect there is an unchanging light, in another it is either turned up or turned down as the case may be. In gross matter the light is so turned down that it is not ordinarily perceptible and even delicate scientific experiment gives rise to contending assertions. When the veiling by Tamas is lessened in organic life and the Jîva is thus less bound in matter, the same Consciousness (for there is no other) which previously manifested as what seems to us a mere mechanical reaction, manifests in its freer environment in that sensation which we associate with consciousness as popularly understood. Shakti who ever negates herself as Mâyâ Shakti, more and more reveals Herself as Chit-Shakti. There is thus a progressive *release* of Consciousness from the bonds of matter until it attains complete freedom or liberation (Moksha) when the Âtmâ is Itself (Âtmâ Svarûpî) or Pure Consciousness. At this point the same Shâkta who had operated as Mâyâ is Herself, that is Chidrûpinî or Consciousness.

According to the Hindu books, plants have a sort of dormant Consciousness, and are capable of pleasure and pain. Chakrapâni says in the Bhânumatî that the Consciousness of plants is a kind of stupified, darkened, or comatose Consciousness. Udayana also says that plants have a dormant Consciousness which is very dull. The differences between plant and animal life have always been regarded by the Hindus as being one not of kind, but degree. And this principle may be applied throughout. Life and Consciousness is not a product of evolution. The latter merely manifests it. Manu speaks of plants as being creatures enveloped by darkness caused by past deeds, having,



## MĀYĀ-SHAKTI

however, an internal Consciousness and a capacity for pleasure and pain. And, in the Mahābhārata, Bhrigu says to Bharadvāja that plants possess the various senses, for they are affected by heat, sounds, vision (whereby, for instance, the creeper pursues its path to the light), odours, and the water which they taste. I may refer also to such stories as, that of the Yāmalārjunavriksha of the Shrīmad Bhāgavata mentioned in Professor Brajendra Nath Seal's learned work on "The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus" and Professor S. N. Das Gupta's studious paper on Parināma to which I am indebted for these instances.

Man has passed through all lower states of Consciousness and is capable of reaching the highest through Yoga. The Jīva attains birth as man after having been, it is said, born 84 lakhs (8,400,000) of times as plants (Vrikshādi), aquatic animals (Jalayoni), insects and the like (Krīmi), birds (Pakshī), beasts (Pashvādi), and monkeys (Bānara). He then is born 2 lakhs of times (2,00,000) in the inferior species (of humanity, and then gradually attains a better and better birth until he is liberated from all the bonds of matter. The exact number of each kind of birth is in lakhs 20, 9, 11, 10, 30, 4, lakhs, respectively—84 lakhs. As pointed out by Mahāmahopādhyāya Chandrakānta Tarkālangkāra Lectures or "Hindu Philosophy," (5th year, P. 227, Lecture VII), preappearance in monkey forms is not a Western theory only. The Consciousness which manifests in him is not altogether a new creation, but an unfolding of that which has ever existed in the elements of which he is composed, and in the Vegetable and Animal through which prior to his human birth he has passed. In him, however, matter is so re-arranged and organised as to permit of the fullest manifestation which has hitherto existed of the underlying Chit. Man's is the birth so "difficult of attainment" (Durlabha). This is an oft-repeated statement of Shāstra in order that he should avail himself of the opportunities which Evolution has brought him.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

If he does not, he falls back and may do so without limit into gross matter again, passing intermediately through the Hells of suffering. Western writers in general describe such a descent as unscientific. How, they ask, can a man's Consciousness reside in an animal or plant. The question shows ignorance. The answer is that it does not. When man sinks again into an animal he ceases to be a man. He does not continue to be both man and animal. His consciousness is an animal consciousness and not a human consciousness. It is a childish view which regards such a case as being the imprisonment of a man in an animal body. If he can go up he can also go down. The soul or subtle body is not a fixed but an evolving thing. Only Spirit (Chit) is eternal and unchanged. In man the revealing constituent of Prakriti Shakti (Sattvaguna) commences to more fully develop and his consciousness is fully aware of the objective world and his own Ego and displays itself in all those functions of it which are called his faculties. We here reach the world of ideas but these are a superstructure on consciousness and not its foundation or basis. Man's consciousness is still however veiled by Mâyâ Shakti. With the greater predominance of Sattvaguna in divine man consciousness becomes more and more divine until it is altogether freed of the bonds of Mâyâ and the Jîva Consciousness expands into the pure Brahman Consciousness. Thus life and Consciousness exist throughout. All is living. All is Consciousness. In the world of gross matter they seem to disappear being almost suppressed by the veil of Mâyâ Shakti's Tamoguna. As however ascent is made, they are less and less veiled and True Consciousness is at length realised in Samâdhi and Moksha. Chit Shakti and Mâyâ Shakti exist inseparable throughout the whole universe. There is therefore according to the principles of the Shâkta Shâstra not a particle of matter which is without life and consciousness variously displayed or concealed though they be. Manifest Mâyâ Shakti is the universe of which Chit



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

Shakti is the changeless Spirit. Unmanifest Mâyâ-Shakti is Consciousness. (Chidrûpinî). There are many persons who think that they have disposed of a doctrine when they have given it an opprobrious, or what they think to be an opprobrious, name. And so they dub all this "Animism" which the reader of Census Reports associates with primitive and savage tribes. There are some people who are frightened by names. It is not names but facts which should touch us. Certainly "Animism" is in some respects an incorrect and childlike way of putting the matter. It is, however, an imperfect presentment of a central truth which has been held by some of the profoundest thinkers in the world, even in an age which we are apt to think to be superior to all others. Primitive man in his simplicity made discovery of several such truths. And so it has been well said that the simple savage and the child who regard all existence as akin to their own, living and feeling like himself, have, notwithstanding their errors, more truly felt the pulse of being than the civilized man of culture. How essentially stupid some of the latter can be needs no proof. For the process of civilization being one of abstraction, they are less removed from the concrete fact than he is. Hence their errors which seem the more contorted due to the mass of useless verbiage in which they are expressed. And yet as extremes meet, so having passed through our present condition we may regain the truths perceived by the simple, not only through formal worship but by that which consist of the pursuit of all knowledge and science, when once the husk of all material thinking is cast aside. For him who sees the Mother in all things, all scientific research is wonder and worship. The seeker looks upon not mere mechanical movements of so-called "dead" matter but the wondrous play of Her Whose form all matter is. As She thus reveals Herself She induces in him a passionate exaltation and that sense of security which is only gained as approach is made to the Central Heart of things. For as the Upanishad says "He only fears



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

who sees duality." Some day may be, one who unites in himself the scientific ardour of the West and the all-embracing religious feeling of India will create another and a modern Chandî with its multiple salutations to the sovereign World-Mother. (Namastasyai namo namah). Such an one seeing the changing marvels of Her world-play will exclaim with the Yoginîhridaya Tantra "I salute Her the Samvid Kalâ who shines in the form of Space, Time and all Objects therein."

*Deshakâlapadârthâtma yad yad vastu yathâ yathâ,  
Tattadrûpena yâ bhâti tâng shraye samvidang kalâm.*

This is, however, not mere Nature-worship as it is generally understood in the West, or the worship of Forces as Keshub Chunder Sen took the Shâkta doctrine to be. All things exist *in* the Supreme who in Itself infinitely transcends all finite forms. It is the worship of God as the Mother-Creatrix who manifests in the form of all things which are, as it were, but an atom of dust on the Feet of Her who is Infinite Being (Sat), Experience (Chit), Love (Ânanda) and Power (Shakti).

I have in my paper "Shakti and Mâyâ" (here reprinted from the Indian Philosophical Review 1918, No. 2) contrasted the three different concepts of the Primal Energy as Prakriti, Mâyâ and Shakti of Sânkhya, Vedânta and the Âgama respectively. I will not, therefore, repeat myself but will only summarise conclusions here. In the first place, there are features common to all three concepts. Hitherto greater pains have been taken to show the differences between the Darshanas than by regarding their points of agreement; (or as regard apparent disagreement, their view-point) and to co-ordinate them systematically. It has been said that Truth cannot be found in such a country as India in which there are six systems of philosophy disputing with one another, and where even in one system alone there is a conflict between Dvaita, Vishishtâdvaita and Advaita. One



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

might suppose from such a criticism that all in Europe were of one mind, or that at least the Christian Community was agreed instead of being split up, as it is, into hundreds of sects. An American humourist observed with truth that there was a good deal of human nature in man everywhere. Of course there is difference which, as the Radd-ul-Muhtar says, is also the gift of God. This is not to deny that Truth is only one. It is merely to recognise that whilst Truth is one, the nature and capacities of those who seek it, or claim to possess it, vary. The same white light which passes through varicoloured glass takes on its various colours. All cannot apprehend the truth to the same extent or in the same way. Hence the sensible Indian doctrine of competency or Adhikâra. In the Christian Gospel it is also said "Throw not your pearls before swine lest they trample upon them and then rend you." What can be given to any man is what only he can receive.

The Six Philosophies represent differing standards according to the manner and to the extent to which the one Truth may be apprehended. Each standard goes a step beyond the last, sharing however with it certain notions in common. As regards the present matter all these systems start with the fact that there is Spirit and Matter, Consciousness and Unconsciousness, apparent or real. Sângkhya, Vedânta and the Shâkta Âgama called the first Purusha, Brahman, Shiva; and the second Prakriti, Mâyâ, Shakti respectively. All agree that it is from the association together of these two Principles that the universe arises and that such association is the universe. All, again, agree that one Principle namely the first is infinite, formless, consciousness, and the second is a *finitising* principle which makes forms. Thirdly, all regard this last as a veiling principle that is, one which veils consciousness; and hold that it is eternal, all-pervading, existing now as seed (Mûlaprakriti, Avyakta) and now as fruit (Vikriti), composed of the Gunas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; unperceivable except through its



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

effects. In all it is the Natural principle the material cause of the material universe.

The word Prakriti has been said to be derived from the root "*Kri*" and the affix "*Ktin*" which is added to express Bhâva or the abstract idea, and sometimes the Karma or object of the action corresponding with the Greek affix *Sis*. *Ktin* inflected in the nominative becomes *tis*. Prakriti, therefore, has been said to correspond with *Phusis* (Nature) of the Greeks. In all three systems, therefore, it is, as the natural, contrasted with the spiritual aspect of things.

The first main point of difference is between Sângkhya on the one hand and the Advaita Vedânta, whether as interpreted by Shangkara or taught by the Shaiva-Shâkta Tantra on the other. Classical Sângkhya is a dualistic system, whereas the other two are monism. The classical Sângkhya posits a plurality of Âtmans representing the formless consciousness with one unconscious Prakriti which is formative activity. Prakriti is thus a real independent principle. Vedantic monism does not altogether discard these two principles but says that they cannot exist as two independent Realities. There is only one Brahman. The two categories of Sângkhya, Purusha and Prakriti are reduced to one Reality the Brahman; otherwise the Vâkya "All this is verily Brahman" (Sarvang khalvidam Brahma) is falsified.

But how is this effected? It is on this point that Mâyâvâda of Shangkara and the Advaita of Shaiva-Shâkta Âgama differ. Both systems agree that Brahman has two aspects in one of which It is transcendent and in another creative and immanent. According to Shangkara, *Brahman* is in one aspect Îshvara associated with, and in another one dissociated from, Mâyâ which in his system occupies the place of the Sângkhyan Prakriti, to which it is (save as to reality and independence) similar. What is Mâyâ? It is not a real independent Principle like the Sângkhyan Prakriti. Then is it Brahman or not? According to Shangkara



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

It is an unthinkable, alogical, unexplainable (Anirva-  
chanîyâ) mystery. It is an eternal falsity (Mithyâbhûtâ  
sanâtanî) owing what false appearance of reality it possesses  
to the Brahman with Which in one aspect It is associated.  
It is not real for there is only one such. It cannot be said to  
be unreal for it is the cause of and is empirical experience.  
It is something which is neither real (Sat) nor unreal (Asat)  
nor partly real and partly unreal (sadasat), and which  
though not forming part of Brahman, and therefore not  
Brahman, is yet, though not a second reality, inseparably  
associated and sheltering with (Mâyâ brahmâshritâ)  
Brahman in Its Îshvara aspect. Like the Sângkhyan  
Prakriti, Mâyâ (whatever it be) is in the nature of an  
unconscious principle. The universe appears by the reflec-  
tion of consciousness (Purusha, Brahman) on unconscio-  
ness (Prakriti, Mâyâ). In this way the unconscious is made  
to appear conscious. This is Chidâbhâsa.

Mâyâ is illusive and so is Shangkara's definition of it.  
Further though Mâyâ is not a second reality but a myste-  
rious something of which neither reality nor unreality can  
be affirmed, the fact of positing it at all in this form gives  
to Shangkara's doctrine a tinge of dualism from which the  
Shâkta doctrine is free. For it is to be noted that notwith-  
standing that Mâyâ is a falsity, it is not according to  
Shangkara a mere negation or want of something (Abhâva)  
but a positive entity (Bhâvarûpam ajnânam), that is in the  
nature of a Power which veils (Âchchhâdaka) consciousness,  
as Prakriti does in the case of Purusha. Shangkara's sys-  
tem, on the other hand, has this advantage from a monistic  
standpoint, that whilst he, like the Shâkta, posits the  
doctrine of aspects saying that in one aspect the Brahman is  
associated with Mâyâ (Îshvara) and in another it is not  
(Parabrahman); yet in neither aspect does his Brahman  
change. Whereas according to Shâkta doctrine Shiva does  
in one aspect, that is as Shakti, change.

Whilst then Shangkara's teaching is consistent with



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

the changelessness of Brahman he is not so successful in establishing the saying "All this is Brahman." The position is reversed as regards Shaiva-Shâkta Darshana which puts forth its doctrine of Mâyâ Shakti with greater simplicity. Shâkta doctrine takes the saying "All this is Brahman" (the realisation of which, as the Mahânirvâna states, is the aim and end of Kulâchâra) in its literal sense. "This" is the universe. Then the universe is Brahman. But Brahman is Consciousness. Then the universe is really That. But in what way? Shangkara says that what we sense with our senses is Mâyâ which is practically something, but in a real sense nothing; which yet appears to be something because it is associated with the Brahman which alone is Real. Its appearance of reality is thus borrowed and is in a sense (when that term is rightly understood) "illusory." When, therefore, we say "All this is Brahman"—according to Shangkara this means that what is at the back of that which we see is Brahman; the rest or appearance is Mâyâ. Again according to Shangkara, man is spirit (Âtmâ) vested in the mâyik falsities of mind and matter. He, accordingly, can then only establish the unity of Îshvara and Jîva by eliminating from the first Mâyâ and from the second Avidyâ; when Brahman is left as a common denominator. The Shâkta, however, eliminates nothing. For him in the strictest sense "All is Brahman." For him man's spirit (Âtmâ) is Shiva. His mind and body are Shakti. But Shiva and Shakti are one. Paramâtmâ is Shiva-Shakti in undistinguishable union. Jîvâtmâ is Shiva-Shakti in that state in which the self is distinguished from the not-self. Man, therefore, according to the Shâkta Tantra is not Spirit seemingly clothed by a non-brahman falsity but spirit covering Itself with its own power or Mâyâ-Shakti. All is Shakti whether as Chit-Shakti or Mâyâ-Shakti. When, therefore, the Tântrika says "All this is Brahman" he means it literally. "This" here means Brahman as Shakti; in appearance Mâyâ-Shakti; in itself Chit-Shakti.



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

Shiva as Parabrahman is Shiva-Shakti in that state when Shakti is not operating and in which She is Herself; that is pure consciousness (Chidrûpinî). Shiva as Îshvara is Shiva-Shakti in that state in which Shiva, through Mâyâ-Shakti, is the source of movement and change and as such (though still in itself changeless) is called Shakti. Shiva-Shakti as Jîva is the state produced by such action which is subject to Mâyâ, from which Îshvara the Mâyin is free. The creative Shakti is therefore changeless Chit-Shakti and changing Mâyâ-Shakti. Yet the One Shakti must never be conceived as existing apart from, or without the other, for they are only twin aspects of the fundamental Substance (Paravastu). Vimarsha-Shakti as Mâyâ-Shakti produces the forms in which Spirit as Chit-Shakti inheres and which it illuminates (Prakâsha). But Mâyâ-Shakti is not unconscious. How can it be; for it is Shakti and one with Chit-Shakti. All Shakti is and must be consciousness. There is no unconscious Mâyâ which is not Brahman and yet not separate from Brahman. Brahman alone is and exists whether as Chit or as manifestation or Mâyâ. All is consciousness as the so-called "New Thought" of the West also affirms.

But surely it will be said there is an unconscious element in things. How is this accounted for if there be no unconscious Mâyâ. It is conscious Shakti veiling Herself and so appearing as limited consciousness. In other words, whilst Shangkara says mind and matter are in themselves unconscious but appear to be conscious through Chidâbhâsa; the Shâkta Âgama reverses the position and says that they are in themselves, that is in their ground, conscious, for they are at base Chit; but they yet appear to be unconscious, or more strictly limited consciousness, by the veiling power of Consciousness Itself as Mâyâ-Shakti. This being so there is no need for Chidâbhâsa which assumes as it were two things, the Brahman and unconscious Mâyâ in which the former reflects itself. Though some of the Shâstras do speak of a reflection, Prativimba is between Shiva and Shakti.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Brahman is Mâyâ-Shakti in that aspect in which it negates itself for it is the function of Shakti to negate (Nishedha-vyâpâra-rûpâ shaktih), as it is said by Yoga-Râja or Yoga Muni (as he is also called) in his commentary on Abhinava Gupta's Paramârthasâra. In the Shâkta Tantras it is a common saying of Shiva to Devî "There is no difference between Me and Thee." Whilst Shangkara's Îshvara is associated with the unconscious Mâyâ, the Shaiva Shâkta's Îshvara is never associated with anything but Himself, that is as Mâyâ-Shakti.

Whether this doctrine be accepted as the final solution of things or not, it is both glorious and immensely powerful. It is glorious because the whole world is seen in glory according to the strictest monism as the manifestation of Him and Her. The mind is not distracted and kept from the realisation of unity by the notion of any unconscious Mâyâ which is not Brahman nor yet separate from It. Nextly, this doctrine accommodates itself to Western scientific monism, so far as the latter goes, adding to it however a religious and metaphysical basis ; infusing it with the spirit of deep thought and devotion. It is powerful because its standpoint is the here and now, and not the transcendental *Siddhi* standpoint of which most of us know nothing and cannot, outside Samâdhi, realise. It assumes the reality of the world which to us is real. It allows the mind to work in its natural channel. It does not ask it to deny what goes against the grain of its constitution to deny. It is again powerful because we stand firmly planted on a basis which is real and natural to us. From the practical view point it does not ask man to eschew and flee from the world in the spirit of asceticism ; a course repugnant to a large number of modern minds, not only because mere asceticism often involves what it thinks to be a futile self-denial ; but because that mind is waking to the truth that all is one ; that if so, to deny the world is in a sense to deny an aspect of That which is both Being and Becoming. It thinks also



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

that whilst some natures are naturally ascetic, to attempt ascetic treatment in the case of most is to contort the natural being and to intensify the very evils which asceticism seeks to avoid. Not one man in many thousands has true Vairâgya or detachment from the world. Most are thoroughly even glued to it. Again, there are many minds which are puzzled and confused by Mâyâvâda; and which, therefore, falsely interpret it, may be to their harm. These, men, Mâyâvâda, or rather their misunderstanding of it, weakens or destroys.

Their grip on themselves and the world is in any case enfeebled. They become intellectual and moral derelicts who are neither on the path of power nor renunciation and who have neither the strength to follow worldly life, nor to truly abandon it. It is not necessary, however, to renounce when all is seen to be Her. And when all is so seen then the spiritual illumination which transfuses all thoughts and acts make them noble and pure. It is impossible for a man who truly sees God in all things to err. If he does so, it is because his vision is not fully strong and pure; and to this extent scope is afforded to error. But given perfect spiritual eyesight then all "this" is pure. For as the Greeks profoundly said "panta kathara tois katharois" "to the pure all things are pure." The Shâkta doctrine is thus one which has not only grandeur but is intensely pragmatic and of excelling worth. It has always been to me a surprise that its value should not have been rightly appreciated. I can only suppose that its neglect is due to the fact that it is the doctrine of the Shâkta Tantras. That fact has been to most enough to warrant its rejection, or at least a refusal to examine it. Like all practical doctrines it is also intensely *positive*. There are none of those negations which weaken and which annoy those who, as the vital Western mind does, feel themselves to be strong and living in an atmosphere of might and power. For power is a glorious thing. What only is wanted is the sense that all Power is of God and is God



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA .

and that Bhâva or feeling which interprets all thoughts and acts and their objects in terms of the Divine and which sees God in and as all things. Those who truly do so will exercise power not only without wrong but with that compassion (Karunâ) for all beings which is so beautiful a feature of the Buddha of northern and Tantrik Buddhism. For in them Shakti Herself has descended. This is Shakti-pâta as it is technically called in the Tantra Shastra; the descent of Shakti which Western theology calls the grace of God. But grace is truly not some exterior thing, though we may think of it as streaming from above below. Âtmâ neither comes nor goes. It is truly man himself in that state in which he commences to realise himself as Shiva-Shakti. His power is, to use a western phrase, "converted." It is turned from the husk of mere outwardness and of limited self-seeking to that inner Reality which is the great Self Which, at base, he in truth is.

The principles of Shâkta doctrine which will vary according to race is a regenerating doctrine, giving strength where there is weakness and, where strength exists, directing it to right ends. "Shivo, ham" "I am Shiva" "Sâ, ham" "I am She (the Devî)" the Tantras say. The Western may call It by some other name. But names matter not. Some call It this and some that, as the Veda says. "I am He" "I am She" "I am It" matters not so long as man identifies himself with the Oversoul and thus harmonizes himself with its Being, with its Dharmic actions (as it manifests in the world) and therefore necessarily with Its true ends. In its complete form the Shâkta doctrine is monistic; but those to whom monism makes no appeal, who have not known the hunger for Unity which joyously afflicts other minds, may yet, by adopting its spirit, so far as the forms of their belief and worship allow, experience a reflection of the joy and strength of those who truly live because they worship Her who is Eternal life—the Mother who is seated on the couch of Shivas (Mahâpreta) in the



## MÂYÂ-SHAKTI

Isle of gems (Manidvîpa) in the "Ocean of Nectar" which is all Being-consciousness and Bliss.

This is the pearl which those who have churned the ocean of Tantra discover. That pearl is there in an Indian shell. There is a beautiful nacre on the inner shell which is the Mother of Pearl. Outside, the shell is naturally rough and coarse and bears the accretions of weed and parasite and of things of all kind which exist, good or bad as we call them in the ocean of existence (Sangsâra). Remove these accretions. Pass within through the crust, gross, though not on that account only, bad; for there is a gross (Sthûla) and subtle (Sûkshma) aspect of worship. Seek then to see the Mother of Pearl and lastly the Pearl which, enclosed therein, shines with the brilliant yet soft light which is that of the Moon-Chit (Chichchandra) Itself.



## CHAPTER IX

### SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

**I**N the Eighth Chapter of the unpublished *Sammohana Tantra* it is said that Shangkara manifested on earth in the form of Shangkarâchâryya in order to root out Buddhism from India. It compares his disciples to the five Mahâpreta (who form the couch on which the Mother of the Worlds rests) and identifies his Maths with the Âmnâyas namely the Govardhana in Puri with Pûrvâmnâya, (the Sampradâya being Bhogavâra), and so on with the rest. Whatever be the claims of Shangkara as destroyer of the great Buddhistic heresy, which owing to its subtlety was the most dangerous antagonist which the Vedânta has ever had, or his claims as expounder of Upanishad from the standpoint of Siddhi, his Mâyâvâda finds no place in the Tantras of the Âgamas, for the doctrine and practice is given from the standpoint of Sâdhanâ. This is not to say that the doctrine is denied. It is not considered. It is true that in actual fact we often give accommodation to differing theories for which logic can find no living room, but it is obvious that in so far as man is a worshipper he must accept the world-standpoint if he would not, like Kâlîdâsa, cut from beneath himself the branch of the tree on which he sits. Nextly it would be a mistake to overlook the possibility of the so-called "Tantrik" tradition having been fed by ways of thought and practice which were not, in the strict sense of the term, part of the Vaidik cult, or in the line of its descent. The worship of the Great Mother, the Magna Mater of the near East, the Âdyâ Shakti of the Tantras, is



## SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

in its essentials (as I have elsewhere pointed out) one of the oldest and most widespread religions of the world, and one which in this country was possibly, in its origins, independent of the Brâhmanic religion as presented to us in the Vaidik Samhitâs and Brâhmanas. If this be so it was later on undoubtedly mingled with the Vedânta tradition, so that the Shâkta faith of to-day is a particular presentation of the general Vedântik teaching. This is historical speculation from an outside standpoint. As the Sarvollâsa of Sarvânandanâtha points out, and as is well-known to all adherents of the Shâkta Âgamas, Veda in its general sense includes these and other Shâstras in what is called the great Shatakoti Samhitâ. Whatever be the origins of the doctrine (and this should not be altogether overlooked in any proper appreciation of it), I am here concerned with its philosophical aspect as shown to us to-day in the teachings and practice of the Shâktas who are followers of the Âgama. This teaching occupies in some sense a middle place between the dualism of the Sângkhya and Shangkara's ultra-monistic interpretation of Vedânta to which, unless otherwise stated, I refer. Both the Shaiva and Shâkta schools accept the threefold aspect of the Supreme known as Prakâsha, Vimarsha, Prakâsha-Vimarsha ; called in Tantrik worship "The Three Feet" (Charana-tritaya). Both adopt the Thirty-six Tattvas, Shiva, Shakti, Sadâshiva, Îshvara and Shuddhavidyâ, preceding the Purusha-Prakriti Tattvas with which the Sângkhya commences. For whereas these are the ultimate Tattvas in that Philosophy, the Shaiva and Shâkta schools claim to show how Purusha and Prakriti are themselves derived from higher Tattvas. These latter Tattvas are also dealt with from the Shabda side as Shakti, Nâda, Bindu and as Kalâs which are the Kriyâ of the various grades of Tattvas which are aspects of Shakti. The Shâkta Tantras such as the Saubhâgyaratnâkara and other works, speak of 94 of such Kalâs appropriate to Sadâshiva, Îshvara, Rudra,



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Vishnu, and Brahmâ, "Sun," "Moon," and "Fire," (indicated in the form of the Ram Bîja with Chandrabindu transposed) of which 51 are Mâtrikâ Kalâs, being the subtle aspects of the gross letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. This last is the Mîmângsaka doctrine of Shabda adopted to the doctrine of Shakti. Common also to both ShĀkta and Shaiva Sampradâyas is the doctrine of the Shadadhvâ.

I am not however here concerned with these details but with the general concept of Shakti which is their underlying basis. It is sufficient to say that ShĀkta doctrine is a form of Advaitavâda. In reply to the question what is "silent concealment" (goptavyam) it is said:—  
Âtmâham-bhâva-bhâvanayâ bhâvayitavyam ityarthah.  
Hitherto greater pains have been taken to show the differences between the Darshanas than, by regarding their points of agreement, to co-ordinate them systematically. So far as the subject of the present article is concerned, all three systems Sângkhya, Mâyâvâda, Shaktivâda, are in general agreement as to the nature of the infinite formless Consciousness and posit therewith a finitising principle called Prakriti, Mâyâ, and Shakti respectively. The main points on which Sângkhya (at any rate in what has been called its classical form) differs from Mâyâvâda Vedânta is in its two doctrines of the plurality of Âtmans on the one hand and the reality and independence of Prakriti on the other. When however we examine these two Sângkhya doctrines closely we find them to be mere accommodations to the infirmity of common thought. A Vedântic conclusion is concealed within its dualistic presentment. For if each liberated (Mukta) Purusha is all pervading (Vibhu), and if there is not the slightest difference between one and another, what is the actual or practical difference between such pluralism and the doctrine of Âtma? Again it is difficult for the ordinary mind to conceive that objects cease to exist when consciousness of objects ceases. The mind naturally conceives of their existing for others,



## SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

although according to the hypothesis it has no right to conceive anything at all. But here again what do we find? In liberation Prakriti ceases to exist for the Mukta Purusha. In effect what is this but to say with Vedânta that Mâyâ is not a real independent category (Padârtha)?

A secular writing may be called Tantra. For the following note I am indebted to Professor Surendranath Das Gupta. "The word 'Tantra' has been derived in the Kâshikâ-Vritti (7-2-9) from the root 'Tan' to 'Spread' by the Annâdika rule Sarvadhâtubhya stran, with the addition of the suffix 'tran.' Vâchaspati, Ânandagiri, and Govindânanda, however, derive the word from the root 'Tatri' or 'Tantri' in the sense of Vyutpâdana; origination of knowledge. In the Ganapâtha, however, "Tantri" has the same meaning as 'Tan' to 'Spread' and it is probable that the former root is a modification of the latter. The meaning Vyutpâdana is also probably derived by narrowing the general sense of Vistâra which is the meaning of the root 'Tan.'"

A critic has taken exception to my statement that the classical Sâmkhya conceals a Vedântik solution behind its dualistic presentment. I was not then, of course, speaking from a historical standpoint. Shiva in the Kulârnavâ Tantra says that the Six Philosophies are parts of His body and he who severs them severs His body. They are each aspects of the Cosmic Mind as appearing in Humanity. The logical process which they manifest is one and continuous. The conclusions of each stage or standard can be shewn to yield the material of that which follows. This is a logical necessity if it be assumed that the Vedânta is the truest and highest expression of that of which the lower dualistic and pluralistic stages are the approach.

In Sângkhya the Purusha principle represents the formless consciousness and Prakriti formative activity. Shanghara, defining Reality as that which exists as the same in all the three times, does not altogether discard



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

these two principles but says that they cannot exist as two independent Realities. He thus reduces the two categories of Sâṅkhya, the Purusha Consciousness and Prakriti Unconsciousness to one Reality the Brahman; otherwise the Vâkya "all is Brahman" (Sarvang khalvidam Brahma) is falsified. Brahman however in one aspect is dissociated from and in another associated with, Mâyâ, which in his system takes the place of the Sâṅkhyan Prakriti. But whereas Prakriti is an independent Reality, Mâyâ is something which is neither real (Sat) nor unreal (Asat) nor partly real and partly unreal (Sadasat), and which though, not forming part of Brahman, and therefore not Brahman, is yet, though not a second reality, inseparately associated and sheltering with, Brahman (Mâyâ Brahmâshritâ) in one of its aspects: owing what false appearance of reality it has, to the Brahman with which it is so associated. It is an Eternal Falsity (Mithyâbhutâ sanâtanî) unthinkable, alogical, unexplainable (Anirvachanîya). In other points the Vedântic Mâyâ and Sâṅkhyan Prakriti agree. Though Mâyâ is not a second reality but a mysterious something of which neither reality nor unreality can be affirmed, the fact of positing it at all gives to Shankara's doctrine a tinge of dualism from which the Shâkta theory is free. According to Sâṅkhya, Prakriti is real although it changes. This question of reality is one of definition. Both Mûlaprakriti and Mâyâ are eternal. The world, though a changing thing, has at least empirical reality in either view. Both are unconsciousness. Consciousness is reflected on or in unconsciousness: that is to state one view for, as is known, there is a difference of opinion. The light of Purusha-Consciousness (Chit) is thrown on the Prakriti-Unconsciousness (Achit) in the form of Buddhi. Vijnânabhikshu speaks of a mutual reflection. The Vedântic Prativimbavâdins say that Âtmâ is reflected in Antahkarana, and the apparent likeness of the latter to Chit which is produced by such reflection is Chidâbhâsa or Jîva. This question of Chidâbhâsa is one of



## SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

the main points of difference between Mâyâvâda and Shaktivâda. Notwithstanding that Mâyâ is a falsity, it is not, according to Shangkara, a mere negation or want of something (Abhâva) but a positive entity (Bhâvarupama-ajnanam): that is it is in the nature of a power which veils (Âchchhâdaka) consciousness, as Prakriti, does in the case of Purusha. The nature of the great "Unexplained" as it is in Itself, and whether we call it Prakriti or Mâyâ, is unknown. The Yoginîhridaya Tantra beautifully says that we speak of the Heart of Yoginî who is Knower of Herself (Yoginî svavid) because the heart is the place whence all things issue. "What man" it says "knows the heart of a woman? Only Shiva knows the Heart of Yoginî." But from Shruti and its effects it is said to be one, all-pervading eternal, existing now as seed and now as fruit, unconscious, composed of Gunas (Gunamayî); unperceivable except through its effects, evolving (Parinâmî) these effects which are its products; that is the world, which however assumes in each system the character of the alleged cause; that is in Sângkhya the effects are real: in Vedânta, neither real nor unreal. The forms psychic or physical arise in both cases as conscious—unconscious (Sadasat) effects from the association of Consciousness (Purusha or Îshvara) with Unconsciousness (Prakriti or Mâyâ). Mîyate anena iti Mâyâ. Mâyâ is that by which forms are measured or limited. This too is the function of Prakriti. Mâyâ as the collective name of eternal ignorance (Ajnâna) produces, as the Prapanchashakti, these forms by first veiling (Avarnashakti) Consciousness in ignorance and then projecting these forms (Vikshepashakti) from the store of the cosmic Sangskâras. But what is the Tamas Guna of the Sângkhyan Prakriti in effect but pure Avidyâ? Sattva is the tendency to reflect consciousness and therefore to reduce unconsciousness. Rajas in the activity (Kriyâ) which moves Prakriti or Mâyâ to manifest in its Tâmasik and Sâttvik aspect. Avidyâ means "na vidyate," "is not seen," and therefore does not



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

exist. Chit in association with Avidyâ does not see Itself as such. The first experience of the Soul reawakening after dissolution to world experience is "There is nothing" until the Sangskâras arise from out this massive Ignorance. In short Prakriti and Mâyâ are like the *materia prima* of the Thomistic philosophy the *finitising* principle; the activity which "measures out" (Mîyate) that is limits and *makes forms* in the *formless* (Chit).

In one respect Mâyâvâda is a more consistent presentation of Advaitavâda than the Shâkta doctrine to which we now proceed. For whilst Shangkara's system like all others posits the doctrine of aspects, saying that in one aspect the Brahman is associated with Mâyâ (Îshvara) and that in another it is not (Parabrahman); yet in neither aspect does his Brahman change. In Shâkta doctrine Shiva does in one aspect (Shakti) change. Brahman is changeless and yet changes. But as change is only experienced by Jîvâtmâ subject to Mâyâ, there is not perhaps substantial difference between such a statement and that which affirms, changelessness and only seeming change. In other respect however, to which I now proceed, Shâkta doctrine is a more monistic presentation of Advaitavâda. If one were asked its most essential characteristic, the reply should be the absence of the concept of unconscious Mâyâ as taught by Shangkara. Shruti says "all is Brahman." Brahman is Consciousness: and therefore all is consciousness. There is no second thing called Mâyâ which is not Brahman even though it be "not real" "not unreal;" a definition obviously given to avoid the imputation of having posited a second Real. To speak of Brahman and Mâyâ which is not Brahman is to speak of two categories, however much it may be sought to explain away the second by saying that it is "not real" and "not unreal;" a falsity which is yet eternal and so forth. Like a certain type of modern Western "New Thought," Shâkta doctrine affirms "all is consciousness" however much unconsciousness appear in it.



## SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

With the boldness and certainty born of a Sâdhakas insight, the Kaulâchâryya Sadânanda says in his commentary on the 4th Mantra Îsha Upanishad. "The changeless Brahman, which is consciousness appears in creation as Mâyâ which is Brahman, (Brahmamayî), consciousness (Chidrûpinî) holding in Herself unbeginning (Anâdi) Karmik tendencies (Karmasangskâra) in the form of the three Gunas. Hence She is Gunamayî despite being Chinmayî. As there is no second principle these Gunas are Chit-Shakti." The Supreme Devî is thus Prakâshavimarshasâmarasyarûpinî.

According to Shangkara, man is a Spirit (Âtmâ) vested in the Mayik falsities of mind and matter. He accordingly can only establish the unity of Îshvara and Jîva by eliminating from the first Mâyâ and from the second Avidyâ; when Brahman is left as common denominator. The Shâkta eliminates nothing. Man's spirit or Âtmâ is Shiva, His mind and body are Shakti. Shakti and Shiva are one. The Jîvâtmâ is Shiva-Shakti. So is the Paramâtmâ. This latter exists as the one: the former as the manifold. Man is then not a Spirit covered by a non-Brahman falsity but Spirit covering Itself with Its own power or Shakti.

What then is Shakti and how does it come about that there is some principle of unconsciousness in things; a fact which cannot be denied. Shakti comes from the root "*shak*" "to be able," "to have power." It may be applied to any form of activity. The power to see is visual Shakti, the power to burn is Shakti of fire and so forth. These are all forms of activity which are ultimately reducible to the Primordial Shakti (Âdyâ Shakti) whence every other form of Power proceeds. She is called Yoginî because of Her connection with all things as their origin. It is this original Power which is known in worship as Devî or Mother of Many Names. Those who worship the Mother, worship nothing "illusory" or unconscious, but a Supreme



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Consciousness, whose body is all forms of consciousness-unconsciousness produced by Her as Shiva's power. Philosophically the Mother or Daivashakti is the kinetic aspect of the Brahman. All three systems recognise that there is a static and kinetic aspect of things: Purusha, Brahman, Shiva on the one side, Prakriti, Mâyâ, Shakti on the other. This is the time-honoured attempt to reconcile the doctrine of a changeless Spirit, a changing Manifold, and the mysterious unity of the two. For Power (Shakti) and the possessor of the Power (Shaktimân) are one and the same. In the Tantras Shiva constantly says to Devî "There is no difference between Thee and Me." We say that the fire burns, but burning is fire. Fire is not one thing and burning another. In the supreme transcendental changeless state, Shiva and Shakti exist, for Shiva is never without Shakti. The connection is called Avinâbhâvasambandha. Consciousness is never without its Power. Power is active Brahman or Consciousness. But as there is then no activity they exist in the supreme state as one Tattva (Ekam tattvam iva); Shiva as Chit, Shakti as Chidrûpinî. This is the state before the thrill of Nâda, the origin of all those currents of force which are the universe. According to Shangkara the Supreme Experience contains no trace or seed of objectivity whatever. In terms of speech it is an abstract consciousness (Jnâna). According to the view here expressed, which has been profoundly elaborated by the Kashmir Shiva School, that which appears "without" only so appears because it, in some form or other, exists "within." So also the Shâkta Vishvasâra Tantra says "what is here is there, what is not here is nowhere." If therefore we know duality, it must be because the potentiality of it exist in that from which it arises. The Shaivashâkta school thus assume a real derivation of the universe and a causal nexus between Brahman and the world. According to Shangkara this notion of creation is itself Mâyâ and there is no need to find a cause for it. So it is held that the supreme ex-



## SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

perience (Âmarsha) is by the Self (Shiva) of Himself as Shakti, who as such is the Ideal of Perfect Universe ; not in the sense of a perfected world of form but that ultimate formless feeling (Bhâva) of Bliss (Ânanda) or Love which at root the whole world is. All is Love and by Love all is attained. The Shâkta Tantras compare the state immediately prior to creation with that of a grain of gram (Chanaka) wherein the two seeds (Shiva and Shakti) are held as one under the single sheath. There is, as it were a Maithuna in this unity of dual aspect, the thrill of which is Nâda giving birth to Bindu. When the sheath breaks and the seeds are pushed apart, the beginning of a dichotomy is established in the one consciousness, whereby the "I" and the "This" (Idam or Universe) appear as separate. The specific Shiva aspect, is, when viewed through Maya, the Self, and the Shakti aspect, the Not-Self. This is to the limited consciousness only. In truth the two Shiva and Shakti are ever one and the same, and never dissociated. Thus each of the Bindus of the Kâmakalâ are Shiva-Shakti appearing as Purusha-Prakriti. At this point Shakti assumes several forms of which the two chief are Chit-Shakti or Chit as Shakti and Mâyâ-Shakti or Mâyâ as Shakti. Mâyâ is not here a mysterious unconsciousness, a non-Brahman non-real non-unreal something. It is a form of Shakti, and Shakti is Shiva who is Consciousness which is real. Therefore Mâyâ Shakti is in itself (Svarûpa) Consciousness and Brahman. Being Brahman It is real. It is that aspect of conscious power which conceals Itself to Itself. "By veiling the own true form (Svarûpa = Consciousness), its Shaktis always arise" ; as the Spandakârikâ says (Svarûpâvarane châsya shaktayah satatotthitâh). This is a common principle in all doctrine relating to Shakti. Indeed this theory of veiling, though expressed in another form, is common to Sangkyâ and Vedânta. The difference lies in this, that in Sângkyâ it is a second independent Principle which veils ; in Mâyâvâda Vedânta it is the non-brahman Mâyâ (called



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

a Shakti of Îshvara) which veils ; and in Shâkta Advaita-vâda (for the Shâktas are monists) it is Consciousness which, without ceasing to be such, yet veils Itself. As already stated the Monistic Shaivas and Shâktas hold certain doctrine in common such as the 36 Tattvas and what are called Shadadhvâ which also appear as part of the teaching of the other Shaiva Schools. In the 36 Tattva scheme Mâyâ which is defined as "the sense of difference" (Bhedabuddhi), for it is that which makes the Self see things as different from the Self, is technically that Tattva which appears at the close of the pure creation, that is after Suddhavidyâ. This Mâyâ reflects and limits in the Pashu or Jîva, the Ichchhâ, Jnânâ, Kriyâ Shaktis of Îshvara. These again are the three Bindus which are "Moon" "Fire" and "Sun." What are Jnâna and Kriyâ (including Ichchhâ its preliminary) on the part of the Pati (Lord) in all beings and things (Bhâveshu) which are His body : it is these two which, are the Sattva, Rajas and Tamas Gunas of the Pashu. This veiling power explains how the undeniable element of unconsciousness, which is seen in things exists. How, if all be consciousness, is that principle there ? The answer is given in the luminous definition of Shakti ; "It is the function of Shakti to negate" (Nishedhavyâpârarûpâ shaktih ; that is to negate consciousness and make it appear to Itself as unconscious. (Kârikâ 4 of Yogarâja or Yogamuni's Commentary on Abhinava Gupta's Paramârthasâra). In truth the whole world is the Self whether as "I" (Aham) or "This" (Idam). The Self thus becomes its own object. It becomes object or form that it may enjoy dualistic experience. It yet remains what it was in its unitary blissful experience. This is the Eternal play in which the Self hides and seeks itself. The formless cannot assume form unless formlessness is negated. Eternity is negated into finality ; the all-pervading into the limited ; the all-knowing into the "little knower ;" the almighty into the "little doer" and so forth. It is only by



## SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

negating Itself to Itself that the Self becomes its own object in the form of the universe.

It follows from the above that, to the Shâkta worshipper, there is no unconscious Mâyâ in Shangkara's sense and therefore there is no Chidâbhâsa in the sense of the reflection of consciousness on unconsciousness, giving the latter the appearance of consciousness which it does not truly possess. For all is Consciousness as Shakti. "Aham Strî" as the Advaitabhâvopanishad exclaims. In short Shangkara says there is one Reality or consciousness and a not-real not-unreal unconsciousness. What is really unconscious appears to be conscious by the reflection of the light of consciousness upon it. Shâkta doctrine says consciousness appears to be unconscious or more truly to have an element of unconsciousness in it (for nothing even empirically is absolutely unconscious) owing to the veiling play of Consciousness Itself as Shakti.

As with so many other matters, these apparent differences are to some extent a matter of words. It is true that the Vedântists speak of the conscious (Chetana) and unconscious (Achetana) but they, like the Shâkta Advaitins, say that the thing in itself is Consciousness. When this is vividly displayed by reason of the reflection (Prativimbha) of consciousness in Tattva, (such as Buddhi), capable of displaying this reflection, then we can call that in which it is so displayed, conscious. Where though consciousness is all pervading, Chaitanya is not so displayed there we speak of unconsciousness. Thus gross matter (Bhûta) does not reflect Chit and so appears to us as unconscious. Though all things are at base consciousness, some appear as more, and some as less, conscious. Shangkara explains this by saying that Chaitanya is associated with a non-conscious mystery or Mâyâ which veils consciousness, and Chaitanya gives to what is unconscious the appearance of consciousness through reflection. "Reflection" is a form of pictorial thinking. What is meant is that two principles



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

are associated together without the nature (Svarûpa) of either being really affected, and yet producing that effect which is Jîva. Shâkta doctrine says that all is consciousness, but this same consciousness assumes the appearance of changing degrees of unconsciousness, not through the operation of anything other than itself (Mâyâ), but by the operation of one of its own powers (Mâyâshakti). It is not unconscious Mâyâ in Shangkara's sense which veils consciousness, but Consciousness as Shakti veils Itself, and as so functioning it is called Mâyâshakti. It may be asked how can Consciousness become Unconsciousness and cease to be itself? The answer is that it does not. It never ceases to be Consciousness. It appears to itself as Jîva to be otherwise, and even then not wholly: for as recent scientific investigations have shown, even so called "brute matter" exhibits the elements of that which, when evolved in man, is self-consciousness. If it be asked how consciousness can obscure itself partially or at all; the only answer is Achintyâ Shakti, which Mâyâvâdins as all other Vedântists admit. Of this, as of all ultimates, we must say with the Scholastics "omnia exeunt mysterium."

Prakriti is then according to Sângkhya a real independent category different from Purusha. This both Mâyâvâda and Shaktivâda deny. Mâyâ is a not real, not-unreal Mystery dependent on, and associated with, and inhering in, Brahman; but not Brahman or any part of Brahman. Mâyâ-Shakti is a power of and, in its Svarûpa, not different from Shiva, is real, and is an aspect of Brahman itself. Whilst Brahman as Îshvara is associated with Mâyâ, Shiva is never associated with anything but Himself. But the function of all three is the same, namely to make forms in the formless. It is That by which the Îshvara or Collective Consciousness pictures the universe for the individual Jîva's experience. Shakti is threefold as Will (Ichchhâ), Knowledge (Jnâna), and action (Kriyâ). All three are but differing aspects of the one Shakti. Consciousness and its power or action are



## SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

at base the same. It is true that action is manifested in matter, that is apparent unconsciousness, but its root, as that of all else, is consciousness. Jnâna is self-proved and experienced (Svatahsiddha) whereas Kriyâ, being inherent in bodies, perceived by others than ourselves. The characteristic of action is the manifestation of all objects. These objects again characterised by consciousness-unconsciousness are in the nature of a shining forth (Âbhâsa) of Consciousness. (Here Âbhâsa is not used in its sense of Chit-sadrisha, but as an intensive form of the term Bhâsa). The power of activity and knowledge are only differing aspects of one and the same Consciousness. According to Shangkara, Brahman has no form of self-determination. Kriyâ is a function of unconscious Mâyâ. When Îshvara is said to be a doer (Kartâ) this is attributed (Aupâdhika) to Him by ignorance only. It follows from the above that there are other material differences between Shâkta doctrine and Mâyâvâda, such as the nature of the Supreme Experience, the reality and mode of creation, the reality of the world, and so forth. The world it is true is not, as the Mahânirvâna Tantra says, absolute reality in the sense of unchanging being, for it comes and goes. It is nevertheless real, for it is the experience of Shiva and Shiva's experience is not unreal. Thus again the evolution of the world as Âbhâsa, whilst resembling the Vivarta of Mâyâvâda, differs from it in holding, as the Sângkhya does, that the effect is real and not unreal, as Shangkara contends. To treat of these and other matters would carry me beyond the scope of this article which only deals, and that in a summary way, with the essential differences and similarities in the concepts Prakriti, Mâyâ and Shakti.

I may however conclude with a few general remarks. The doctrine of Shakti is a profound one and I think likely to be attractive to Western minds when they have grasped it, just as they will appreciate the Tantrik watchword Kriyâ or action, its doctrine of progress with and through



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

the world and not against it, which is involved in its liberation-enjoyment (Bhukti-mukti) theory and other matters. The philosophy is in any case not, as an American writer in his ignorance absurdly called it, "worthless," "religious Feminism run mad," and a "feminization of Vedânta for suffragette Monists." It is not a "feminization" of anything, but a distinctive, original, and practical doctrine worthy of a careful study. The Western student will find much in it which is more acceptable to generally prevalent thought in Europe and America—than in the "illusion" doctrine (in itself an unsuitable term) and the ascetic practice of the Vedântins of Shangkara's school. This is not to say that ways of reconciliation may not be found by those who go far enough. It would not be difficult to show ground for holding that ultimately the same intellectual results are attained by viewing the matter from the differing stand points of Sâdhanâ and Siddhi.

The writer of an interesting article on the same subject in the Prabuddha Bhârata (August 1916) states that the Sannyâsî Totapurî the Guru of Shrî Râmakrishna maintained that a (Mâyâvâdin) Vedântist could not believe in Shakti, for if causality itself be unreal there is no need to admit any power to cause, and that it is Mâyâ to apply the principle of causation and to say that everything comes from Shakti. The Sannyâsî was converted to Shâkta doctrine after all. For as the writer well says, it is not merely by intellectual denial but by *living* beyond the "unreal" that the Real is found. He however goes on to say "the Shaktivâda of Tantra is not an improvement on the Mâyâvâda of Vedânta, (why of Vedânta, rather doctrine of Shangkara?) but only its symbolisation through the chromatics of sentiment and concept." It is true that it is a form of Vedânta, for all which is truly Indian must be that. It is also a fact that the Âgama as a Shâstra of worship is full of Symbolism. Intellectually however it is an



## SHAKTI AND MÂYÂ

original presentment of Vedânta, and from the practical point of view, it has some points of merit which Mâyâvâda does not possess. Varieties of teaching may be different presentations of one truth leading to a similar end. But one set of "chromatics" may be more fruitful than another for the mass of men. It is in this that the strength of the Shâkta doctrine and practice lies. Moreover (whether they be an improvement or not) there are manifest differences between the two. Thus the followers of Shangkara do not so far as I am aware, accept the thirty six Tattvas.

Mâyâvâda is a doctrine which, whether true or not, is fitted only for advanced minds of great intellectuality, and for men of ascetic disposition, and of the highest moral development. This is implied in its theory of competency (Adhikâra) for Vedântic teaching. When as is generally the case it is not understood, and in some cases when it is understood; but is otherwise not suitable, it is liable to be a weakening doctrine. The Shâkta teaching to be found in the Tantras has also its profundities which are to be revealed only to the competent, and contains a practical doctrine for all classes of worshippers (Sâdhaka). It has, in this form for the mass of men a strengthening pragmatival value which is beyond dispute. Whether, as some may have contended, it is the fruit of a truer spiritual experience I will not here discuss, for this would lead me into a polemic beyond the scope of my present purpose, which is an impartial statement of the respective teachings, on one particular point, given by the three philosophical systems here discussed.



## CHAPTER X

### SHAKTI IN TAOISM

THE belief in Shakti or the Divine Power as distinguished from the Divine Essence (Svarûpa), the former being generally imagined for purposes of worship as being in female form, is very ancient. The concept of Shâkti in Chinese Taoism is not merely a proof of this (for the Shakti notion is much older) but is an indication of the ancient Indian character of the doctrine. There are some who erroneously think that the concept had its origin in "Sivaic mysticism," having its origin somewhere in the sixth century of our era. Lao-tze or the "old master" was twenty years senior to Confucius and his life was said to have been passed between 570-490 B.C. A date commonly accepted by European Orientalists as that of the death of Buddha (Indian and Tibetan opinions being regarded, as extravagant ") is 477 B.C. which would bring his life into the sixth century B.C. one of the most wonderful in the world's history. Lao-tze is said to have written the Tao-tei-king the fundamental text of Taoism. This title means Treatise on Tao and Tei. Tao which Lao-tze calls "The great" is in its Sanskrit equivalent Brahman and Tei is Its power or activity or Shakti. As Father Geiger S. J., to whose work (*Histoire des croyances religieuses et des opinions philosophiques en Chine* p. 143 et seq 1917) I am indebted, points out, Lao-tze did not invent Taoism no more than Confucius (557-419 B.C.) invented Confucianism. It is a characteristic of these and other Ancient Eastern Masters that they do not claim to be more than "transmitters" of a wisdom



## SHAKTI IN TAOISM

older than themselves. Lao-tze was not the first to teach Tao-ism. He had precursors who however were not authors. He was the writer of the first book on Taoism which served as the basis for the further development of the doctrine. On this account its paternity is attributed to him. There was reference to this doctrine it is said in the official archives (p. 743). The pre-Taoists were the annalists and astrologers of the Tcheou. Lao-tze who formulated the system was one of them (ib. 69). The third Ministry containing these archives registered all which came from foreign parts, as Taoism did. For as Father Geiger says, *Taoism is in its main lines a Chinese adaptation of the contemporary doctrine of the Upanishads* ("or le Taoisme est dans ses grandes lignes une adaptation Chinoise de la doctrine Indienne contemporaine des Upanishads"). The actual fact of importation cannot in default of documents be proved but the learned author says that the fact that the doctrine was not Chinese, that it was then current in India, and its sudden spread in China, creates in favour of the argument for foreign importation almost a certain conclusion. The similarity of the two doctrines is obvious to any one acquainted with that of the Upanishads and the doctrine of Shakti. The dualism of the manifesting Unity (Tao) denoted by Yinn-Yang appears for the first time in a text of Confucius, a contemporary of Lao-tze, who may have informed him of it. All Chinese Monism descends from Lao-tze. The patriarchal texts were developed by the great Fathers of Taoism Lie-tzeu and Tchong-tzeu (see "Les Pères du système Taoiste" by the same author) whom the reverend father calls the only real thinkers that China has produced. Both were practically prior to the contact of Greece and India on the Indus under Alexander. The first development of Taoism was in the south. It passed later to the North where it had a great influence.

According to Taoism there was in the beginning, now, and ever be an ultimate Reality which is variously



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

called *Huan* the Mystery, which cannot be named or defined, because human language is the language of limited beings touching limited objects, whereas Tao is imperceptible to the senses and the unproduced cause of all, beyond which there is nothing : *Ou* the Formless, or *Tao* the causal principle the unlimited inexhaustible source from which all comes ("Tao le principe parceque tout deriva de lui") Itself proceeds from nothing but all from It. So it is said of Brahman that It is in Itself beyond mind and speech, formless and (as the Brahmasûtra says) That from which the Universe is born, by which it is maintained and into which it is dissolved. From the abyss of Its being It throws out all forms of Existence and is never emptied. It is an infinite source exteriorising from Itself all forms, by Its Power. (*Tei*). These forms neither diminish nor add to Tao which remains ever the same. These limited beings are as a drop of water in Its ocean. Tao is the sum of, and yet as infinite, beyond all individual existences. Like Brahman, Tao is one, eternal, infinite, self-existent, omnipresent, unchanging (Immuable) and complete (*Pûrna*). At a particular moment (to speak in language for It was then beyond time) Tao threw out from Itself *Tei* Its Power (*Vertu* or *Shakti*) which operates in alternating modes called *Yinn* and *Yang* and produces, as it were by condensation of its subtlety, (*Shakti ghanîbhûtâ*) the Heaven and Earth and Air between, from which come all beings. The two modes of Its activity *Yinn* and *Yang* are inherent in the Primal That, and manifest as modes of its *Tei* or *Shakti*. *Yinn* is rest, and therefore after the creation of the phenomenal world a going back, retraction, concentration towards the original Unity, whereas *Yang* is action and therefore the opposite principle of going forth or expansion (*Pravritti*). These modes appear in creation under the sensible forms of Earth (*Yinn*) and Heaven (*Yang*). The one original principle or Tao, like Shiva and Shakti, thus becomes dual in manifestation as Heaven-Earth from which emanate other existences.



## SHAKTI IN TAOISM

The state of *Yinn* is one of rest, concentration and imperceptibility which was the own state (Svarûpa) of Tao before time and things were. The state of *Yang* is that of action, expansion, of manifestation in sentient beings and is the state of Tao in time, and that which is in a sense not Its true state ("L'état *Yinn* de concentration, de repos, d'imperceptibilité, qui fut celui du Principe avant le temps, est son état propre. L'état *Yang* d'expansion et d'action, de manifestation dans les êtres sensibles, est son état dans le temps, en quelque sorte impropre)." All this again is Indian. The primal state of Brahman or Shiva-Shakti before manifestation is that in which It rests in Itself (Svarûpa-vishrânti), that is the state of rest and infinite formlessness. It then by Its Power (Shakti) manifests the universe. There exists in this Power the form of two movements or rythms namely the going forth or expanding (Pravritti) and the return or centering movement (Nivritti). This is the Eternal Rhythm, the Pulse of the universe, in which it comes and goes from that which in Itself, does neither. But is this a real or ideal movement? According to Father Geiger Taoism is a realistic and not idealistic pantheism in which Tao is not a Conscious Principle but a Necessary Law, not Spiritual but Material, though imperceptible by reason of its tenuity and state of rest ("Leur système est un panthéisme réaliste, pas idéaliste Au commencement était un être unique non pas intelligent mais loi fatale, non spirituel mais matériel, imperceptible à force de tenuité, d'abord immobile). "He also calls Heaven and Earth unintelligent agents of production of sentient beings (Agent intelligents de la production de tous les êtres sensibles). I speak with all respect for the opinion of one who has made a special study of the subject which I have not, so far as its Chinese aspect is concerned. But even if, as is possible, at this epoch the full idealistic import of the Vedânta had not been developed, I doubt the accuracy of the interpretation which makes Tao material and unconscious. According to Father



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Geiger Tao prolongates Itself. Each being is a prolongation (Prolongement) of the Tao, attached to it and therefore not diminishing It. Tao is stated by him to be Universal Nature, the sum (Samashti) of all individual natures which are terminal points (Terminaisons) of Tao's prolongation. Similarly in Upanishad we read of Brahman producing the world from Itself as the spider produces the web from out itself. Tao is thus the Mother of all that exists ("la mère de tout ce qui est"). If so, it is the Mother of mind, will emotion and every form of consciousness. How are these derived from merely a "material" principle? May it not be that just as the Upanishads use material images to denote creation and yet posit a spiritual conscious (though not in our limited sense) Principle, Lao-tze, who was indebted to them, may have done the same. Is this also not indicated by the Gnostic doctrine of the Taoists? The author cited says that to the cosmic states of Yinn and Yang correspond in the mind of man the states of rest and activity. When the human mind thinks, it fills itself with forms or images and is moved by desires. Then it perceives only the effects of Tao namely distinct sentient beings. When on the contrary the action of the human mind stops and is fixed and empty of images of limited forms, it is then the Pure Mirror in which is reflected the ineffable and unnameable Essence of Tao Itself of which intuition the fathers of Taoism speak at length. "Quand au contraire l'esprit humain est arrêté est vide et fixe, alors miroir net et pur, il mire l'essence ineffable et innomable du Principe lui-meme. Les Peres nous parleront au long de cette intuition"). This common analogy of the Mirror is also given in the Kâmakalâvilâsa (v. 4.) where it speaks of Shakti as the pure mirror in which Shiva reflects Himself (*pratiphalati Vimarshadârpane Vishade*). The conscious mind does not reflect a material principle as its essence. Its essence must have the principle of consciousness which the mind itself possesses. It is to Tei the Virtue or Power which Tao emits



## SHAKTI IN TAOISM

from Itself ("ce Principe se mit à émettre Tei sa vertu") that we should attribute what is apparently unconscious and material. But the two are one, just as Shiva the possessor of power (Shaktimân) and Shakti or power are one, and this being so distinctions are apt to be lost. In the same way in the Upanishads statements may be found which have not accuracy of distinctions between Brahman and its Prakriti, which we find in later developments of Vedânta and particularly in the Shâkta form of it. Moreover we are here dealing with the One of Its character both as cause and substance of the World Its effect. It is of Prakriti-Shakti and possibly of *Tei* that we may say that it is an apparently material unconscious principle, imperceptible by reason of its tenuity and (to the degree that it is not productive of objective effect) immobile. Further Father Geiger assures us that all contraries issue from the same unchanging Tao and that they are only *apparent* ("Toute contrariété n'est qu' apparente"). But relative to what? He says that they are not subjective illusions of the human mind, but objective appearances, double aspects of the unique Being, corresponding to the alternating modalities of *Yinn* and *Yang*. That is so. For as Shankara says external objects are not merely illusory projections of the individual human mind but of the cosmic mind, the Ishvarî Shakti.

We must not of course read Taoism as held in the sixth century B.C. as if it were the same as the developed Vedânta of Shankara who, according to European chronology, lived more than a thousand years later. But this interpretation of Vedânta is an aid in enabling us to see what is at least implicit in earlier versions of the meaning of their common source—the Upanishads. As is well-known, Shankara developed their doctrine in an idealistic sense, and therefore his two movements in creation are Avidyâ the primal ignorance which produces the appearance of the objective universe and Vidyâ or knowledge which dispels such ignorance, ripening into that Essence and Unity which is



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

Spirit-Consciousness Itself. Aupanishadic doctrine may be regarded either from the world or material aspect, or from the non-world and spiritual aspect. Men have thought in both ways and Shankara's version is an attempt to synthesise them.

The Taoist master Ki (Op. cit, 168) said that the celestial harmony was that of all beings in their common Being. All is one as we experience in deep sleep (Sushupti). All contraries are sounds from the same flute, mushrooms springing from the same humidity, not real distinct beings but differing aspects of the one universal Being." "I" has no meaning except in contrast with "you" or "that." But who is the Mover of all? Everything happens *as if* there were a real governor. The hypothesis is acceptable provided that one does not make of this Governor a *distinct being*. He (I translate Father Geiger's words) is a tendency without palpable form, the inherent norm of the universe, its immanent evolutionary formula. The wise know that the only Real is the Universal Norm. The unreflecting vulgar believe in the existence of distinct beings. As in the case of the Vedântâ, much misunderstanding exists because the concept of Consciousness differs in East and West as I point out in detail in the essay dealing with Chit-Shakti.

The space between Heaven and Earth in which the Power (Vertu, Shakti, Tei) is manifested is compared by the Taoists to the hollow of a bellows of which Heaven and Earth are the two wooden sides; a bellows which blows without exhausting itself. The expansive power of Tao in the middle space is imperishable. It is the mysterious Mother of all beings. The come and go of this mysterious Mother, that is the alternating of the two modalities of the One produce Heaven and Earth. Thus acting, She is never fatigued. From Tao was exteriorised Heaven and Earth. From Tao emanated the producing universal Power or Shakti, which again produced all beings without self-exhaustion or fatigue. The one having put forth its Power,



## SHAKTI IN TAOISM

the latter acts according to two alternating modalities of going forth and return. This action produces the middle air or *Ki* which is tenuous Matter, through Yinn and Yang, issue all gross beings. Their coming into existence is compared to an unwinding (Dêvidage) from That or Tao, as it were a thread from reel or spool. In the same way the Shâkta Tantra speaks of an "uncoiling." Shakti is coiled (Kundalinî round the Shiva-point (Bindu), one with It in dissolution. On creation She begins to uncoil in a spiruline movement which is the movement of creation. The Taoist father Lieu-tze analysed the creative movement into the following stages:—"The Great Mutation" anterior to the appearance of tenuous matter (Movement of the two modalities in undefined being). "The Great Origin" or the stage of tenuous matter, "the Great Commencement" or the stage of sensible matter, "the Great Flux" or the stage of plastic matter and actual present material compounded existences. In the primitive state, when matter was imperceptible, all beings to come were latent in an homogeneous state.

I will only add as bearing on the subject of consciousness that the author cited states that the Taoists lay great stress on intuition and ecstasy which is said to be compared to the unconscious state of infancy, intoxication, and narcosis. These comparisons may perhaps mislead just as the comparison of the Yogî state to that of a log (Kâshthavate) has misled. This does not mean that the Yogî's consciousness is that of a log of wood, but that he no more perceives the external world than the latter does. He does not do so because he has the Samâdhi conscious, that is Illumination and true Being Itself. He is one then with Tao and Tei or Shakti in their true state.



CHAPTER XI  
SHAKTI AS MANTRA  
(MANTRAMAYI SHAKTI)

THIS is in every way both a most important, as well as most difficult, subject in the Tantra Shâstra; so difficult that it is not understood and on this account has been ridiculed. Mantra in the words of a distinguished Indian has been called "meaningless jabber." When we find Indians thus talking of their Shâstra it is not surprising that Europeans should take it to be of no account. They naturally, though erroneously suppose, that the Indian always understands his own beliefs, and if he says they are absurd it is taken that they are so. Even, however, amongst Indians, who have not lost themselves through an English Education, the Science of Mantra is largely unknown. There are not many students of the Mîmângsâ now-a-days. The English Educated have in this, as in other matters, generally taken the cue from their Western Gurus and passed upon Mantravidyâ a borrowed condemnation. There are those among them (particularly in this part of India) those who have in the past thought little of their old culture, and have been only too willing to sell their old lamps for new ones. Because they are new they will not always be found to give better light. Let us hope this will change, as indeed it will. Before the Indian condemns his cultural inheritance let him at least first study and understand it. It is true that Mantra is meaningless—to those who do not know its meaning: but to those who do, it is not "Jabber"; though of course like everything else it may become, and indeed has become, the subject of ignorance and superstitious use. A telegram written in code in a merchant's office will seem



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

the merest gibberish to those who do not know that code. Those who do may spell thereout a transaction bringing lakhs of real Rupees for those who have sent it. Mantra-vidyâ whether it be true or not is a profound science, and, as interpreted by the Shâkta Âgama, is a practical application of Vedântic doctrine.

The textual source of Mantras is to be found in the Vedas (see in particular the Mantra portion of the Atharva-veda so associated with the Tantra Shâstra), the Purânas and Tantras. The latter Scripture is essentially the Mantra-Shâstra. In fact it is so called generally by Sâdhakas and not Tantra Shâstra. And so it is said of all the Shâstras, symbolised as a body, that Tantra Shâstra which consists of Mantra is the Paramâtmâ, the Vedas are the Jîvâtmâ, Darshana or systems of philosophy are the senses, Purânas are the body and the Smritis are the limbs. Tantra Shâstra is thus the Shakti of Consciousness consisting of Mantra. For, as the Vishvasâra Tantra (Ch. 2) says, the Parabrahman in Its form as the Sound Brahman (Shabda-Brahman or Saguna Brahman), Whose substance is all Mantra, exists in the body of the Jîvâtmâ. Kundalinî Shakti is a form of the Shabda-Brahman in individual bodies (Shâradâh-Tilaka Ch. 1). It is from this Shabdabrahman that the whole universe proceeds in the form of sound (Shabda) and the objects (Artha) which sound or words denote. And this is the meaning of the statement that the Devî and the Universe are composed of letters, that is the signs for the sounds which denote all that is.

At any point in the flow of phenomena we can enter the stream and realise therein the changeless Real. The latter is everywhere and in all things, and is hidden in, and manifested by, sound as by all else. Any form (and all which is not the Formless is that) can be pierced by the mind, and union may be had therein with the Devatâ who is at its core. It matters not what that form may be. And why? What I have said concerning Shakti gives the



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

answer. All is Shakti. All is Consciousness. We desire to think and speak. This is Ichchhâ Shakti. We make an effort towards realization. This is Kriyâ Shakti. We think and know. This is Jnâna Shakti. Through Prânavâyu, another form of Shakti, we speak ; and the word we utter is Shakti Mantramayî. For what is a letter (Varna) which is made into syllable (Pada) and sentences (Vâkya)? It may be heard in speech, thus affecting the sense of hearing. It may be seen as a form in writing. It may be tactually sensed by the blind through the perforated dots of Braille type. The same thing thus affecting the various senses. But what is the thing which does so. The senses are Shakti and so is the objective form which evokes the sensation. Both are in themselves Shakti as Chit Shakti and Mâyâ Shakti and the Svarûpa of these is Chit or Feeling-Consciousness. When, therefore, a Mantra is realised ; when there is what is called in the Shâstra Mantra-Chaitanya, what happens is the union of the consciousness of the Sâdhaka with that Consciousness which manifests in the form of the Mantra. It is this union which makes the Mantra "work."

The subject is of such importance in the Tantras that their other name is Mantra Shâstra. But what is a Mantra? Commonly Orientalists and others describe Mantra as "Prayer," "Formulæ of worship," "Mystic syllables" and so forth. These are but superficialities of those who do not know their subject. Wherever we find the word "Mystic" we may be on our guard: for it is a word which covers much ignorance. Thus Mantra is said to be a "mystic" word; Yantra a "mystic" diagram and Mudrâ a "mystic" gesture. But have these definitions taught us anything? No, nothing. Those who framed these definitions knew nothing of their subject. And yet, whilst I am aware of no work in any European language which shows a knowledge of what Mantra is or of its science (Mantra-vidya), there is nevertheless perhaps no subject which



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

has been so ridiculed ; a not unusual attitude of ignorance. There is a widely diffused lower mind which says " what I do not understand is absurd." But this science, whether well-founded or not, is not that. Those who so think might accept Mantras which are prayers and the meaning of which they understand ; for with prayer the whole world is familiar. But such appreciation itself displays a lack of understanding. For there is nothing necessarily holy or prayerful alone in Mantras as some think. Some combinations of letters constitute prayers and are called Mantras, as for instance the most celebrated Gâyatri Mantra.

A Mantra is not the same thing as prayer or self-dedication (Âtma-nivedana). Prayer is conveyed in what words the Sâdhaka chooses. Any set of words or letters is not a Mantra. Only that Mantra in which the Devatâ has revealed His or Her particular aspects can reveal that aspect, and is therefore the Mantra of that one of His or Her particular aspects. The relations of the letters (Varna), whether vowel or consonants, Nâda and Bindu, in a Mantra indicate the appearance of Devatâ in different forms. Certain Vibhûti or aspects of the Devatâ are inherent in certain Varna but perfect Shakti does not appear in any but a whole Mantra. All letters are forms of the Shabda Brahman, but only particular combination of letters are a particular form, just as the name of a particular being is made up of certain letters and not of any indiscriminately. The whole universe is Shakti and is pervaded by Shakti. Nâda, Bindu, Varna are all forms of Shakti and combinations of these, and these combinations only are the Shabda corresponding to the Artha or forms of any particular Devatâ. The gross lettered sound is, as explained later, the manifestation of sound in a more subtle form and this again is the production of causal "sound" in its supreme (Para) form. Mantras are manifestations of Kulakundalinî (See Chapter on the same) which is a name for the Shabda Brahman or Saguna-brahman in individual



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

bodies. Produced Shabda is an aspect of the Jīvas vital Shakti. Kundalī is the Shakti who gives life to the Jīva. She it is who in the Mûlâdhâra Chakra (or basal bodily centre) is the cause of the sweet, indistinct, and murmuring Dhvani which is compared to the humming of a black bee. Thence Shabda originates and being first Parâ gradually manifests upwards as Pashyantī, Madhyamâ, Vaikharī (see *post.*) Just as in outer space waves of sound are produced by movements of air (Vâyû), so in the space within the Jīva's body, waves of sound are said to be produced according to the movements of the vital air (Prâna-vâyû) and the process of in and out breathing. As the Svarûpa of Kundalī, in whom are all sounds, is Paramâtmâ, so the substance of all Mantra, Her manifestation, is Consciousness (Chit) manifesting as letters and words. In fact the letters of the Alphabet which are called Akshara are nothing but the Yantra of the Akshara or Imperishable Brahman. This is however only realised by the Sâdhaka when his Shakti generated by Sâdhanâ is united with Mantra-Shakti. Kundalinī, who is extremely subtle, manifests in gross (Sthûla) form in differing aspects as different Devatâs. It is this gross form which is the Presiding Deity (Adîshthâtrī Devatâ) of a Mantra, though it is the subtle (Sûkshma) form at which all Sâdhakas aim. Mantra and Devatâ are thus one and particular forms of Brahman as Shiva-Shakti. Therefore the Shâstra says that they go to Hell who think that the Image (or "Idol" as it is called) is but a stone and the Mantra merely letters of the alphabet. It is therefore also ignorance of Shâstric principle which supposes that Mantra is merely the name for the words in which one expresses what one has to say to the Divinity. If it were, the Sâdhaka might choose his own language without recourse to the eternal and determined sounds of Shâstra (See generally as to the above the Chapter on Mantra-tattva in second volume of "Principles of Tantra," Ed. A. Avalon). The particular Mantra of a Devatâ is that Devatâ. A Mantra on the contrary



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

consists of certain letters arranged in definite sequence of sounds of which the letters are the representative signs. To produce the designed effect, the Mantra must be intoned in the proper way according to both sound (Varna) and rhythm (Svara). For these reasons a Mantra when translated ceases to be such and becomes a mere word or sentence.

By Mantra the sought-for (Sâdhya) Devatâ appears and by Siddhi therein is had vision of the three worlds. As the Mantra is in fact Devatâ, by practice thereof this is known. Not merely do the rhythmical vibrations of its sounds regulate the unsteady vibrations of the sheaths of the worshipper but therefrom the image of the Devatâ appears. As the Brihad-Gandharva Tantra says (Ch. V.):—

*Shrinu devi pravakshyâmi bijânam deva-rûpatâm*

*Mantrachchânan amâtrena deva-rûpam prajâyate*

Mantrasiddhi is the ability to make a Mantra efficacious and to gather its fruit in which case the Sâdhakâ is Mantrasiddha. As the Prânatoshinî (619) says "Whatever the Sâdhakâ desires that he surely obtains." Whilst therefore prayer may end in merely physical sound, Mantra is ever, when rightly said, a potent compelling force, a word of power effective to produce both material gain and accomplish worldly desires, as also to promote the four aims of sentient being (Chaturvarga), Advaitic knowledge, and liberation. And thus it is said that Siddhi (success) in the certain result of Japa or recitation of Mantra.

Some Mantras constitute also what the European would call "prayers" as for instance the celebrated Gâyatrî. But neither this nor any other Mantra is simply a prayer. The Gâyatrî runs *Om* (the thought is directed to the threefold Energy of the One as represented by the three letters of which *Om* is composed namely A or Brahmâ the Shakti which creates; U or Vishnu the Shakti which maintains; and M or Rudra the Shakti which "destroys": Nâda and Bindu, *Earth, Middle region Heaven* (of which as the transmigrating worlds or Sangsâra, God, as *Om*, as also in the



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

form of the Sun, is the creator). *Let us contemplate upon the Adorable Spirit of the Divine Creator who is in the form of the Sun (Âditya-Devatâ). May He direct our minds, (towards attainment of the fourfold aims) Dharma, Artha, Kâma, Moksha) of all sentient being, Om.* This great Mantra bears a meaning on its face, though the Commentaries explain and amplify it. The Self of all which exists in the three regions appears in the form of the Sun-god with His body of fire. The Brahman is the cause of all and as the visible Devatâ is the Eye of the World and the Maker of the day who vivifies, ripens and reveals all beings and things. The Sun-god is to the sun what the Spirit (Âtmâ) is to the body. He is the Supreme in the form of the great Luminary. His body is the Light of the world, and He Himself is the Light of the lives of all beings. He is everywhere. He is in the outer ether as the sun, and in the inner ethereal region of the heart. He is the Wondrous Light which is the smokeless Fire. He it is who is in constant play with creation, (Srishti) maintenance (Sthiti) and "destruction" (Pralaya); and by His radiance pleases both eye and mind. Let us adore Him that we may escape the misery of birth and death. May He ever direct our minds (Buddhivritti) upon the path of the world (Trivarga) and liberation (Moksha). Only the twice born castes and men may utter this Gâyatri. To the Shûdra whether man or woman, and to women of all other castes, it is forbidden. But the Tantra Shâstra has not the exclusiveness of the Vaidik system. Thus the Mahânirvâna provides (IV. 109-111) a Brahmagâyatri for all. "May we know the Supreme Lord. Let us contemplate the Supreme Essence. And may the Brahman direct us." All will readily understand such Mantras as the Gâyatri, though some comment, which is thought amusing, has been made on the "meaningless" Om. I have already stated what it means namely on (shortly speaking) the Energy (Nâda) in Sadâkhya Tattva which springing from Shiva-Shakti Tattva "solidifies" itself



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

(Ghanibhûta) as the creative Power of the Lord (Bindu or Îshvara Tattva) manifesting in the Trinity of Creative Energies. (For further details see my "Studies in Mantra Shâstra). "Om" then stands for the most general aspect of That as the Source of all. As it is recited, the idea arises in the mind corresponding with the sound which has been said to be the expression on the gross plane of that subtle "sound" which accompanied the first creative vibration. When rightly uttered this great syllable has an awe-inspiring effect. As I heard this Mantra chanted by (one after the other) some hundred Buddhist monks in a north-monastery it seemed to be the distant murmuring roll of some vast cosmic ocean. "Om" is the most prominent example of a "meaningless" Mantra, that is one which does not bear its meaning on its face, and of what is called a seed or Bîja Mantra, because they are the very quintessence of Mantra and the seed (Bîja) of the fruit which is Siddhi (spiritual achievement). These are properly monosyllabic. Om is a Vaidik Bîja, but it is the source of all the other Tântrik Bîjas which represent particular Devatâ aspects of that which is presented as a whole in Om. As a Mantra-shâstra, the Tantras have greatly elaborated the Bîjas and thus incurred the charge of "gibberish," for such the Bîjas sound to those who do not know what they mean. Though a Mantra such a Bîja-mantra may not convey its meaning on its face, the initiate knows that its meaning is the own form (Svarûpa) of the particular Devatâ whose Mantra it is, and that the essence of the Bîja is that which makes letters sound and exists in all which we say or hear. Every Mantra is thus a particular sound form (Rûpa) of the Brahman. There are a very large number of these short unetymological vocables or Bîjas such as Hrîng, Shring, Krîng, Hûng, Hung, Phat called by various names. Thus the first is called the Mâyâ Bîja, the second Lakshmî Bîja, the third Kalî Bîja, the fourth Kurcha Bîja, the fifth Varna Bîja, the sixth Astra Bîja. Ram is Agni Bîja, Eng is Yoni



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Bîja, Klîng is Kâma Bîja, Shrîng is Badhû Bîja, Aing Sarasvati Bîja and so forth. Each devatâ has His or Her Bîja. Thus Hrîng is the Mâyâ Bîja, Kring the Kâlî Bîja. The Bîja is used in the worship of the Devatâ whose Mantra it is. All these Bîjas mentioned are in common use. There are a large number of others, some of which are formed with the first letters of the name of the Devatâ for whom they stand, such as for Gang (Ganesha) Dung for (Durgâ).

Let us then shortly see by examples what the meaning of such a Bîja is. (For a fuller account see my "Studies in the Mantra Shâstra"). In the first place the reader will observe the common ending "ng" or "m" which represents the Sanskrit breathings known as Nâda and Bindu or Chandrabindu. These have the same meaning in all. They are the Shaktis of that name appearing in the table of the 36 Tattvas given *ante*. They are states of Divine Power immediately preceding the manifestation of the objective universe. The other letters denote subsequent developments of Shakti, and various aspects of the manifested Devatâ mentioned below. There are sometimes variant interpretations given. Take the great Bhubaneshvari or Mâyâ Bîja, Hrîng. I have given one interpretation in my Studies above cited. From the Tântrik compendium the Prânatoshinî quoting the Baradâ Tantra we get the following. Hrîng = H + R + Î + Ng. H = Shiva. R = Shakti Prakriti. Î = Mahâmâyâ. "Ng" is as above explained, but here stated in the form that Nâda is the Progenitrix of the Universe, and Bindu which is Brahman as Îshvara and Îshvarî (Îshvaratattva) is described for the Sâdhaka as the "Dispeller of Sorrow." The meaning therefore of this Bîja Mantra which is used in the worship of Mahâmâyâ or Bhubaneshvarî is, that that Devî in Her Turiya or transcendent state is Nâda and Bindu and is the causal body manifesting as Shiva-Shakti in the form of the manifested universe. The same idea is expressed in varying form but



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

with the same substance by the Devîgîtâ (Ch. IV) which says that H = gross body R = subtle body Î = causal body and Ng = the Turîya or transcendent fourth state. In other words the Sâdhaka worshipping the Devî with Hrîng by that Bîja calls to mind the transcendent Shakti who is the causal body of the subtle and gross bodies of all existing things. Shrîng (see Baradâ Tantra) is used in the worship of Lakshmî Devi. Sh = Mahalakshmî R = Wealth (Dhanârtham) which as well as Î (= satisfaction or Tushtyartham) She gives. Krîng is used in the worship of Kâlî. Ka = Kâlî (Shakti worshipped for relief from the world and its sorrows). R = Brahma (Shiva with whom She is ever associated) Î = Mahâmâyâ (Her aspect in which She overcomes for the Sâdhaka the Mâyâ in which as Creatrix She has involved him). "Aing" is used in the worship of Sarasvatî and is Vâgohava Bîja. Dung is used in worship of Durgâ. D = Durgâ. U = protection. Nâda = Her aspect as Mother of the Universe and Bindu is its Lord. The Sâdhaka asks Durgâ as Mother-Lord to protect him and looks on Her in Her protecting aspect as upholder of the universe (Jagadhâtrî). In "Strîng," S = saving from difficulty. T = deliverer. R = (here) liberation (Muktyartho repha ukto'tra) Î = Mahâmâyâ. Bindu = Dispeller of grief. Nâda = Mother of the Universe. She as the Lord is the dispeller of Mâyâ and the sorrows it produces, the Saviour and deliverer from all difficulties by grant of liberation. I have dealt elsewhere ("Serpent Power") with Hung and Hûng the former of which is called Varmma (armour) Bîja and the latter Kûrcha H denoting Shiva in "û", His Bhairava or formidable aspect (See generally Vol. I Tântrik Texts. Tantrâbhidhâna). He is an armour to the Sâdhaka by His destruction of evil. Phat is the weapon or guarding Mantra used with Hung, just as Svâhâ (the Shakti of Fire) is, with Vashat, used in making offerings. The primary Mantra of a Devatâ is called Mûla-mantra. Mantras are solar (Saura) and masculine, and lunar (Saumya) and feminine, as also neuter. If it be asked why things of mind are given sex, the answer is for the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

sake of the requirements of the worshipper. The masculine and neuter forms are called specifically Mantra and the feminine Vidyâ, though the first term may be used for both. Neuter Mantras end with Namah. Hung Phat are masculine terminations and "Thang" or Svâhâ, feminine (See Shâradâ-tilaka II. Nârada-pancha-râtra VII, Prayoga-sâra, Prânatoshinî 70).

The Nityâ Tantra gives various names to Mantra according to the number of the Syllables such as Pinda, Kartarî, Bîja, Mantra, Mâlâ. Commonly however the term Bîja is applied to monosyllabic Mantras.

The word "Mantra" comes from the root "*man*" to think. "*Man*" is the first syllable of *manana* or thinking. It is also the root of the word "Man" who alone of all creation is properly a Thinker. "*Tra*" comes from the root "trâ," for the effect of a Mantra when used with that end, is to save him who utters and realises it. *Tra* is the first syllable of *Trâna* or liberation from the Sangsâra. By combination of *man* and *tra*, that is called Mantra which, from the religious stand-point, calls forth (Âmantrana) the four aims (Chaturvarga) of sentient being as happiness in the world and eternal bliss in Liberation. Mantra is thus Thought-movement vehicled by, and expressed in, speech. Its Svarûpa is, like all else, consciousness (Chit) which is the Shabda Brahman. A Mantra is not merely sound or letters. This is a form in which Shakti manifests Herself. The mere utterance of a Mantra without knowing its meaning, without realisation of the consciousness which Mantra manifests is a mere movement of the lips and nothing else. We are then in the outer husk of consciousness; just as we are when we identify ourselves with any other form of gross matter which is, as it were, the "crust" (as a friend of mine has aptly called it,) of those subtler forces which emerge from the Yoni or Cause of all, who is, in Herself Consciousness (Chidrûpinî). When the Sâdhaka knows the meaning of the Mantra he makes an



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

advance. But this is not enough. He must through his consciousness realise that Consciousness which appears in the form of the Mantra and thus attain Mantra-Chaitanya. At this point thought is vitalised by contact with the centre of all thinking. At this point again thought becomes truly vital and creative. Then an effect is created by the realisation thus induced.

The creative power of thought is now receiving increasing acceptance in the West, which is in some cases taking over, and in others, discovering anew, for itself what was thought by the ancients in this country. Because they have discovered it anew they call it "New Thought"; but its fundamental principle is as old as the Upanishads which said "what you think that you become." All recognise this principle in the limited form that a man who thinks good becomes good, and he who is ever harbouring bad thoughts becomes bad. But the Indian and "New thought" doctrine is more profound than this. In Vedântic India, thought has been ever held creative. The world is a creation of the thought (Chit Shakti associated with Mâyâ Shakti) of the Lord (Îshvara and Îshvari). Her and His thought is the aggregate, with almighty powers of all thought. But each man is Shiva and can attain His powers to the degree of his ability to consciously realise himself as such. Thought now works in man's small magic just as it first worked in the grand magical display of the World-Creator. Each man is in various degrees a creator. Thought is as real as any form of gross matter. Indeed it is more real in the sense that the world is itself a projection of the World-thought, which again is nothing but the aggregate in the form of the Sangskâras or impressions of past experience, which give rise to the world. The universe exists for each Jîva because he consciously or unconsciously wills it. It exists for the totality of beings because of the totality of Sangskâras which are held in the Great Womb of the manifesting Chit Itself. There is theoretically nothing that man cannot



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

accomplish, for he is at base the Accomplisher of all. But in practice he can only accomplish to the degree that he identifies himself with the Supreme Consciousness and Its forces, which underlie, are at work in, and manifest as, the universe. This is the basal doctrine of all magic, of all powers (Siddhi) including the greatest Siddhi which is Liberation itself. He who knows Brahman, becomes Brahman to the extent of his "knowing." Thought-reading, thought-transference, hypnotic suggestion, magical projections (Mokshana) and shields (Grahana) are becoming known and practised in the West, not always with good results. For this reason some doctrines and practices are kept concealed. Projection (Mokshana) the occultist will understand. But Grahana, I may here explain, is not so much a "fence" in the Western sense, to which use a Kavacha is put, but the knowledge of how to "catch" a Mantra thus projected. A stone thrown at one may be warded off or caught and, if the person so wishes thrown back at him who threw it. So may a Mantra. It is not necessary, however, to do so. Those who are sheltered by their own pure strength, automatically throw back all evil influences which, coming back to the ill-wisher, harm or destroy him. Those familiar with the Western presentment of similar matters will more readily understand than those who like the Orientalist and Missionary as a rule know nothing of occultism and regard it as superstition. For this reason their presentment of Indian teaching is so often ignorant and absurd. The occultist, however, will understand the Indian doctrine which regards thought like mind, of which it is the operation, as a Power or Shakti; something therefore, very *real* by which man can accomplish things for himself and others. Kind thoughts, without a word, will do good to all who surround us and may travel round the world to distant friends. So we may suffer from the ill-wishes of those who surround us, even if such wishes do not materialise into



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

deeds. Telepathy is the transference of thought from a distance without the use of the ordinary sense organs. So in initiation the thought of a true Guru may pass to his disciple all his powers. Mantra is thus a Shakti (Mantra Shakti) which lends itself impartially to any use. Man can identify himself with any of nature's forces and for any end. Thus, to deal with the physical effects of Mantra, it may be used to injure, kill or do good ; by Mantra again a kind of union with the physical Shakti is by some said to be effected. So the Vishnu-Purâna speaks of generation by will power, as some Westerns believe will be the case when man passes beyond the domination of his gross sheath and its physical instruments. Children will then again be "mind-born." By Mantra the Homa fire may be lit. By Mantra, again in the Tântrik initiation called Vedha-dîkshâ there is such a transference of power from the Guru to his disciple that the latter swoons under the impulse of the thought-power which pierces him. But the spiritual aspect of Mantra is that by which man identifies himself with That which is the Ground of all spiritual thought. In short Mantra is a power (Shakti) in the form of idea clothed with sound. What, however, is not yet understood in the West is the particular Thought-science which is Mantravidyâ, or its basis. Much of the "New thought" lacks this philosophical basis which is supplied by Mantravidyâ, resting itself on the Vedântik doctrine. Mantravidyâ is thus that form of Sâdhanâ by which union is had with the Mother Shakti in the Mantra form (Mantramayî) in Her Sthûla and Sûkshma aspects respectively. The Sâdhaka passes from the first to the second. This Sâdhanâ works through the letters, as other forms of Sâdhanâ work through form in the shape of the Yantra, Ghata or Pratimâ. All such Sâdhanâ belongs to Shâktopâya Yoga as distinguished from the introspective meditative processes of Shâmbhavopâya which seeks more directly the realisation of Shakti, which is the end common to both. The Tantrik doctrine as regards Shabda is that of the Mimângsa



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

with this exception that it is modified to meet its main doctrine of Shakti.

In order to understand what a Mantra is, we must know its cosmic history. The mouth speaks a word. What is it and whence has it come? As regards the evolution of consciousness as the world I refer my reader to the lectures on 'Chit Shakti and Mâyâ Shakti' dealing with the 36 Tattvas. Ultimately there is Consciousness which in its aspect as the great "I" sees the object as part of itself, and then as other than itself, and thus has experience of the universe. This is achieved through Shakti who, in the words of the Kâmakalâvilâsa, is the pure mirror in which Shiva experiences Himself (Shivarûpa-vimarsha-nirmalâdarshah). Neither Shiva nor Shakti alone suffice for creation. Shivarûpa here = Svarûpa. Aham ityevamâkâram, that is the form (of experience) which consists in the notion of "I." Shakti is the pure mirror for the manifestation of Shiva's experiences as "I" (Aham). Aham ityevam rûpam jnânam tasya prakâshane nirmalâdarshah: as the commentator Natanânananda (V-2) says. The notion is, of course, similar to that of the reflection of Purusha on Prakriti as Sattvamayî Buddhi and of Brahman on Mâyâ. From the Mantra aspect starting from Shakti (Shakti-Tattva) associated with Shiva (Shivah-Tattva) there was produced Nâdâ, and from Nâdâ, came Bindu which, to distinguish it from other Bindus, is known as the causal, supreme or Great Bindu (Kârana, Para, Mahâbindu). This is very clearly set forth in the Shâradâ Tilaka and Tantrik work by an author of the Kashmirian School which was formerly of great authority among the Bengal Shâktas. I have dealt with this subject in detail in my "Studies in the Mantra Shâstra." Here I only summarise conclusions.

Shabda literally means and is usually translated "sound," the word coming from the root *Shabd* "to sound." It must not however be wholly identified with sound in the sense of that which is heard by the ear or sound as effect



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

of cosmic stress. Sound in this sense is the effect produced through excitation of the ear and brain by vibrations of the atmosphere between certain limits. Sound so understood exists only with the sense organs of hearing. And even then it may be perceived by some and not by others due to keenness or otherwise of natural hearing. Further the best ears will miss what the microphone gives. Considering Shabda from its primary or causal aspect, independent of the effect which it may or may not produce on the sense organs, it is vibration (Spandana) of any kind or motion, which is not merely physical motion, which may become sound for human ears, given the existence of ear and brain and the fulfilment of other physical conditions. Thus Shabda is the possibility of sound and may not be actual sound for this individual or that. There is thus Shabda wherever there is motion or vibration of any kind. It is now said that the electrons revolve in a sphere of positive electrification at an enormous rate of motion. If the arrangement be stable we have an atom of matter. If some of the electrons are pitched off from the atomic system what is called radio-activity is observed. Both these rotating and shooting electrons are forms of vibration as Shabda though it is no sound for mortal ears. To a Divine Ear all such movements would constitute the "music of the spheres." Were the human ear subtle enough a living tree would present itself to it in the form of a particular sound which is the natural word for that tree. It is said of ether (Akâsha) that its Guna or quality is sound (Shabda); that is ether is the possibility of Spandana of any kind. It is that state of the primordial "material" substance (Prakriti) which makes motion or vibration of any kind possible (Shabdaguna âkâshah). The Brahman Svarûpa or Chit is motionless. It is also known as Chidâkâsha. But this Âkâsha is not created. Chidâkâsha is the Brahman in which stress of any kind manifests itself, a condition from which the whole creation proceeds. This Chidâksâha is



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

known as the Shabdabrahman through its Mâyâshakti, which is the cause of all vibrations manifesting themselves as sound to the ear, as touch to the tactile sense, as colour and form to the eye, as taste to the tongue and as odour to the nose. All mental functioning again is a form of vibration (Spandana). Thought is a vibration of mental substance just as the expression of thought in the form of the spoken word is a vibration affecting the ear. All Spandana presupposes heterogeneity (Vaishamya). Movement of any kind implies inequality of tensions. Electric current flows between two points because there is a difference of potential between them. Fluid flows from one point to another because there is difference of pressure. Heat travels because there is difference of temperature. In creation (Srishti) this condition of heterogeneity appears and renders motion possible. Âkâsha is the possibility of Spandana of any kind. Hence its precedence in the order of creation. Âkâsha means Brahman with Mâyâ which Mâyâshakti or (to use the words of Professor P.N. Mukhyopâdhyâyâ) Stress is rendered actual from a previous state of possibility of stress which is the Shakti's natural condition of equilibrium (Prakriti=Sâmyâ-vasthâ). In dissolution the Mâyâ-shakti of Brahman (according to the periodic law which is a fundamental postulate of Indian cosmogony) returns to homogeneity when in consequence Âkâsha disappears. This disappearance means that Shakti is equilibrated and that therefore there is no further possibility of motion of any kind. As the Tantras say, the Divine Mother becomes one with Paramashiva.

The Shâradâ says—From the Sakala Parameshvara who is Sachchidânanda issued Shakti ; from Shakti came Nâda ; and from Nâda issued Bindu.

*Sachchidânandavibhavât sakalât parameshvarât  
Âsîchchhaktistato nâdo nâdâd bindusamudbhavah.*

Here the Sakalâ Parameshvara is Shiva Tattva. Shakti is Shakti Tattva wherein are Samanî Vyâpinî, and Ânjanî Shaktis. Nâda is the first produced source of Mantra, and



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

the subtlest form of Shabda of which Mantra is a manifestation. Nâda is threefold, as Mahânâda or Nâdânta and Nirodhiñî representing the first moving forth of the Shabda Brahman as Nâda, the filling up of the whole universe with Nâdânta and the specific tendency towards the next state of unmanifested Shabda respectively. Nâda in its three forms is in the Sadâkhyâ Tattva. Nâda becoming slightly operative towards the "speakable" (Vâchya), [the former operation being in regard to the thinkable (Mantavya)] is called Arddhachandra which develops into Bindu. Both of these are in Îshvara Tattva. This Mahâbindu becomes three fold as the Kâmakalâ. The undifferentiated Shabda-brahman or Brahman as the immediate cause of the manifested Shabda and Artha is an unity of consciousness (Chaitanya) which then expresses itself in three-fold function as the three Shaktis, Ichchhâ, Jnâna, Kriyâ; the three Gunas Sattva, Rajas, Tamas; the three Bindus (Kâryya) which are Sun, Moon and Fire; the three Devatâs, Rudra, Vishnu, Brahmâ and so forth. These are the product of the union of Prakâsha and Vimarsha Shakti. This Triangle of Divine Desire is the Kâmakalâ, or Creative Will and its first subtle manifestation, the cause of the universe which is personified as the Great Devî Tripurasundari, the Kâmeshvara and Kâmeshvarî the object of worship in the Âgamas. Kâmakalâvilâsa as explained in the work of that name is manifestation of the union of Shiva and Shakti, the great "I" (Aham) which develops through the inherent power of its thought-activity (Vimarsha-Shakti) into the universe, losing as Jîva the knowledge of its true nature and the secret of its growth through Avidyâ Shakti. Here then there appears the duality of subject and object; of mind and matter, of the word (Shabda) and its meaning (Artha). The one is not the cause of the other, but each is inseparable from, and concomitant with, the other as a bifurcation of the undifferentiated unity of Shabda-Brahman whence they proceed. The one cosmic movement produces at the same



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

time the mind and the object which it cognises; names (Nâma) and language (Shabda) on the one hand; and forms (Rûpa) or object (Artha) on the other. These are all parts of one co-ordinated contemporaneous movement and therefore each aspect of the process is related the one to the other. The genesis of Shabda is only one aspect of the creative process namely that in which the Brahman is regarded as the Author of Shabda and Artha into which the undifferentiated Shabdabrahman divides Itself. Shakti is Shabda Brahman ready to create both Shabda and Artha on the differentiation of the Parabindu into the Kâmakalâ, which is the root (Mûla) of all Mantras. Shabda Brahman is Supreme "Speech" (Parâ Vâk) or Supreme Shabda (Para-Shabda). From this fourth state of Shabda there are three others—Pashyantî, Madhyamâ and Vaikharî, which are the Shabda aspect of the stages whereby the seed of formless consciousness explicates into the multitudinous concrete ideas (expressed in language of the mental world) the counterpart of the objective universe. But for the last three states of sound the body is required and, therefore, they only exist in the Jîva. In the latter the Shabda Brahman is in the form of Kundalinî Shakti in the Mûlâdhâra Chakra. In Kundalinî is Parashabda. This develops into the "Mâtrikâs" or "Little Mothers" which are the subtle forms of the gross manifested letters (Varna). The letters make up syllables (Pada) and syllables make sentences (Vâkya), of which elements the Mantra is composed. Para Shabda in the body develops in Pashyantî Shabda or Shakti of general movement (Sâmânya Spanda) located in the tract from the Mûlâdhâra to the Manipura associated with Manas. It then in the tract upwards to the Anâhata becomes Madhyamâ or Hiranyagarbha sound with particularised movement (Visheshâ Spanda) associated with Buddhi-Tattva. Vâyû proceeding upwards to the throat expresses itself in spoken speech which is Vaikharî or Virât Shabda. Now it is that the Mantra issues from the mouth



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

and is heard by the ear. Because the one cosmic movement produces the ideating mind and its accompanying Shabda and the objects cognised or Artha, the creative force of the universe is identified with the Mâtrikâs and Varnas, and Devî is said to be in the forms of the letters from A to Ha which are the gross expressions of the forces called Mâtrika ; which again are not different from, but are the same forces which evolve into the universe of mind and matter. These Varnas are for the same reason associated with certain vital and physiological centres which are produced by the same power which gives birth to the letters. It is by virtue of these centres and their controlled area in the body that all the phenomena of human psychosis run on and keep man in bondage. The creative force is the union of Shiva and Shakti and each of the letters (Varna) produced therefrom and thereby are part and parcel of that Force, and are therefore, Shiva and Shakti in those particular forms. For this reason the Tantra Shâstra says that Devatâ and Mantra composed of letters, are one. In short, Mantras are made of letters, (Varna). Letters are Mâtrikâ. Mâtrikâ is Shakti and Shakti is Shiva. Through Shakti (one with Shiva) Nâda-Shakti, Bindu-Shakti, the Shabda-Brahman or Para Shabda, arise the Mâtrikâ, Varna, Pada, Vâkya of the lettered Mantra or manifested Shabda.

But what is Shabda or "Sound"? Here the Shâkta Tantra Shâstra follows the Mîmângsâ doctrine of Shabda with such modifications as are necessary to adapt it to its doctrine of Shakti. Sound (Shabda) which is quality Guna of ether (Akâsha) and is sensed by hearing is twofold namely lettered (Varnâtmaka Shabda) and unlettered or Dhvani (Dhvanyâtmaka Shabda). The latter is caused by the striking of two things together and is apparently meaningless. Shabda on the contrary which is Anâhata (a term applied to the Heart Lotus) is that Brahman sound which is not caused by the striking of two things together. Lettered sound is composed of sentences (Vâkya) words



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

(Pada) and letters (Varna). Such sound has a meaning. Shabda manifesting as speech is said to be eternal. This the Naiyâyikas deny saying that it is transitory. A word is uttered and it is gone. This opinion the Mîmângsâ denies saying that the perception of lettered sound must be distinguished from lettered sound itself. Perception is due to Dhvani caused by the striking of the air in contact with the vocal organs namely the throat, palate and tongue and so forth. Before there is Dhvani there must be the striking of one thing against another. It is not the mere striking which is the lettered Shabda. This manifests it. The lettered sound is produced by the formation of the vocal organs in contact with air; which formation is in response to the mental movement or idea which by the will thus seeks outward expression in audible sound. It is this perception which is transitory, for the Dhvani which manifests ideas in language is such. But lettered sound as it is in itself, that is as the Consciousness manifesting Idea expressed in speech is eternal. It was not produced at the moment it was perceived. It was only manifested by the Dhvani. It existed before, as it exists after, such manifestation just as a jar in a dark room which is revealed by a flash of lightning is not then produced, nor does it cease to exist on its ceasing to be perceived through the disappearance of its manifester the lightning. The air in contact with the voice organs reveals sound in the form of the letters of the alphabet and their combinations in words and sentences. The letters are produced for hearing by the person desiring to speak and become audible to the ear of others through the operation of unlettered sound or Dhvani. The latter being a manifester only, lettered Shabda is something other than its manifester.

Before describing the nature of Shabda in its different form of development it is necessary to understand the Indian psychology of perception. At each moment the Jîva is subject to innumerable influences which from all quarters



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

of the Universe pour upon him. Only those reach his Consciousness which attract his attention and are thus selected by his Manas. The latter attends to one or other of these sense-impressions and conveys it to the Buddhi. When an object (Artha) is presented to the mind and perceived, the latter is formed into the shape of the object perceived. This is called a mental Vritti (modification) which it is the object of Yoga to suppress. The mind as a Vritti is thus a representation of the outer subject. But in so far as it is such representation, the mind is as much an object as the outer one. The latter that is the physical object is called the gross object (Sthūla artha) and the former or mental impression is called the subtle object (Sūkshma artha). But besides the object there is the mind which perceives it. It follows that the mind has two aspects in one of which it is the perceiver and in the other the perceived in the form of the mental formation (Vritti) which in creation precedes its outer projection, and after the creation follows as the impression produced in the mind by the sensing of a gross physical object. The mental impression and the physical object exactly correspond, for the physical object is in fact but a projection of the cosmic imagination, though it has the same reality as the mind has; no more and no less. The mind is thus both cogniser (Grâhaka) and cognised (Grâhya) revealer (Prakâshaka) and revealed (Prakâshya) denoter (Vâchaka) and denoted (Vâchya). When the mind perceives an object it is transformed into the shape of that object. So the mind which thinks of the Divinity which it worships (Ishtadevatâ) is at length, through continued devotion, transformed into the likeness of that Devatâ. By allowing the Devatâ thus to occupy the mind for long it becomes as pure as the Devatâ. This is a fundamental principle of Tântrik Sâdhanâ or religious practice. The object perceived is called Artha, a term which comes from the root " Ri ", which means to get, to know, to enjoy. Artha is that which is known and which



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

therefore is an object of enjoyment. The mind as Artha that is in the form of the mental impression is an exact reflection of the outer object or gross Artha. As the outer object is Artha so is the interior subtle mental form which corresponds to it. That aspect of the mind which cognises is called Shabda or Nama (name) and that aspect in which it is its own object or cognised is called Artha or Rûpa (form). The outer physical object, of which the latter is in the individual an impression, is also Artha or Rûpa, and spoken speech is the outer Shabda. The mind is thus, from the Mantra aspect, Shabda and Artha, terms corresponding to the Vedântic Nâma and Rûpa or concepts and concepts objectified. As the Vedânta says, the whole creation is Nâma and Rûpa. Mind as Shabda is the Power (Shakti) the function of which is to distinguish and identify (Bhedasangsargavritti-Shakti).

Just as the body is causal, subtle and gross, so is Shabda, of which there are four states (Bhâva) called Parâ, Pashyantî, Madhyamâ and Vaikharî. Parâ sound is that which exists on the differentiation of the Mahâbindu before actual manifestation. This is motionless causal Shabda in Kundalinî in the Mûlâdhâra centre of the body. That aspect of it in which it commences to move with a general, that is non-particularised, motion (Sâmânya Spanda) is Pashyantî whose place is from the Mûlâdhâra to the Manipûra Chakra the next centre. It is here associated with Manas. These represent the motionless and first moving Îshvara aspect of Shabda. Madhyamâ Shabda is associated with Buddhi. It is Hiranyagarbha sound (Hiranyagarbharûpa) extending from Pashyantî to the heart. Both Madhyamâ sound which is the inner "naming" by the cognitive aspect of mental movement, as also its Artha or subtle (Sûkshma) object (Artha) belong to the mental or subtle body (Sûkshma or Linga Sharîra). Perception is dependent on distinguishing and identification. In the perception of an object that part of the mind which identifies



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

and distinguishes and thus "names" or the cognizing part is, from the Shabda aspect, subtle Shabda: and that part of it which takes the shape of, and thus constitutes, the object (a shape which corresponds with the outer thing) is subtle Artha. The perception of an object is thus consequent on the simultaneous functioning of the mind in its twofold aspect as Shabda and Artha which are in indissoluble relation with one another as cogniser (Grâhaka) and cognised (Grâhya). Both belong to the subtle body. In creation Madhyamâ sound first appeared. At that moment there was no outer Artha. Then the Cosmic Mind projected this inner Madhyamâ Artha into the world of sensual experience and named it in spoken speech (Vaikharî Shabda). The last or Vaikharî Shabda is uttered speech, developed in the throat issuing from the mouth. This is Virât Shabda. Vaikharî Shabda is therefore language or gross lettered sound. Its corresponding Artha is the physical or gross object which language denotes. This belongs to the gross body (Sthûla sharîra). Madhyamâ Shabda is mental movement or ideation in its cognitive aspect and Madhyamâ Artha is the mental impression of the gross object. The inner thought-movement in its aspect as Shabdârtha and considered both in its knowing aspect (Shabda) and as the subtle known object (Artha) belongs to the subtle body (Sûkshma sharîra). The cause of these two is the first general movement towards particular ideation (Pashyantî) from the motionless cause Para shabda or Supreme Speech. Two forms of inner or hidden speech, causal, subtle, accompanying mind movement thus precede and lead up to spoken language. The inner forms of ideating movement constitute the subtle, and the uttered sound the gross, aspect of Mantra which is the manifested Shabda Brahman.

The gross Shabda called Vaikharî or uttered speech and the gross Artha or the physical object denoted by that speech are the projection of the subtle Shabda and Artha through the initial activity of the Shabda Brahman into



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

the world of gross sensual perception. Therefore in the gross physical world Shabda means language that is sentences, words and letters which are the expression of ideas and are Mantra. In the subtle or mental world, Madhyama sound is the Shabda aspect of the mind which "names" in its aspect as cogniser and Artha is the same mind in its aspect as the mental object of its cognition. It is defined to be the outer in the form of the mind. It is thus similar to the state of dreams (Svapna), as Parashabda is the causal dreamless (Sushupti) and Vaikharî the waking (Jâgrat) state. Mental Artha is a Sangskâra, an impression left on the subtle body by previous experience, which is recalled when the Jîva reawakes to world experience and recollects the experience temporarily lost in the cosmic dreamless state (Sushupti) which is destruction (Pralaya). What is it which arouses this Sangskâra? As an effect (Kriyâ) it must have a cause (Kârana). This Kârana is the Shabda or Name (Nâma) subtle or gross corresponding to that particular Artha. When the word "Ghata" is uttered, this evokes in the mind the image of an object namely a jar; just as the presentation of that object does. In the Hiranyagarbha state Shabda as Sangskâra worked to evoke mental images. The whole world is thus Shabda and Artha that is name and Form (Nâma rûpa). These two are inseparably associated. There is no Shabda without Artha or Artha without Shabda. The Greek word Logos also means thought and word combined. There is thus a double line of creation, Shabda and Artha; ideas and language together with their objects. Speech as that which is heard, or the outer manifestation of Shabda, stands for the Shabda creation. The Artha creation are the inner and outer objects seen be the mental or physical vision. From the cosmic creative standpoint, the mind comes first and from it is evolved the physical world according to the ripened Sangskâras which led to the existence of the particular existing universe. Therefore the mental Artha precedes the physical Artha which is an



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

evolution in gross matter of the former. This mental state corresponds to that of dreams (Svapna) when man lives in the mental world only. After creation which is the waking (Jâgrat) state there is for the individual an already existing parallelism of names and objects.

Uttered speech is a manifestation of the inner naming or thought. This thought-movement is similar in men of all races. When an Englishman or an Indian think of an object the image is to both the same, whether evoked by the object itself or by the utterance of its name. For this reason possibly a thought-reader whose cerebral centre is *en rapport* with that of another may read the hidden "speech", that is thought, of one whose spoken speech he cannot understand. Thus whilst the thought-movement is similar in all men, the expression of it as Vaikharî Shabda differs. According to tradition there was once an universal language. According to the Biblical account, this was so before the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. Similarly there is, (a friend tells me though he has forgotten to send me the reference), in the Rigveda a mysterious passage which speaks of the "Three Fathers and three Mothers" by whose action like that of the Elohim "all comprehending speech" was made into that which was not so. Nor is this unlikely, when we consider that difference in gross speech is due to difference of races evolved in the course of time. If the instruments by which, and conditions under which, thought is revealed in speech were the same for all men then there would be but one language. But now this is not so. Racial characteristics and physical conditions, such as the nature of the vocal organs, climate, inherited impressions and so forth differ. Therefore, so also does language. But for each particular man speaking any particular language, the uttered name of any object is the gross expression of his inner thought-movement. It evokes the idea and the idea is consciousness as mental operation. That operation can



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

be so intensified as to be itself creative. This is Mantra-Chaitanya.

It is said in the Tantra Shâstras that the fifty letters of the alphabet are in the six bodily Chakras called Mûlâdhâra, Svâdhishthâna, Manipûra, Anâhata, Vishuddha, and Âjnâ. These 50 letters multiplied by 20 are in the thousand-petalled Lotus or Sahasrâra.

From the above account it will be understood that when it is said that the "Letters" are in the six bodily Chakras it is not to be supposed that it is intended to absurdly affirm that the letters as written shapes, or as the uttered sounds which are heard by the ear are there. The letters in this sense, that is as gross things, are manifested only in speech and writing. This much is clear. But the precise significance of this statement is a matter of some difficulty. There is in fact no subject which presents more difficulties than Mantravidyâ, whether considered generally or in relation to the particular matters in hand.

What proceeds from the body is in it in subtle or causal form. Why, however, it may be asked are particular letters assigned to particular Chakras. I have heard several explanations given which do not in my opinion bear the test of examination.

If the arrangement be not artificial for the purpose of Sâdhanâ, the simplest explanation is that which follows :— From the Brahman are produced the five Bhûtas Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth, in the order stated ; and from them issued the six Chakras from Âjnâ to Mûlâdhâra. The letters are (with the exception next stated) placed in the Chakras in their alphabetical order ; that is the vowels as being the first letters or Shaktis of the consonants (which cannot be pronounced without them) are placed in Vishuddha Chakra: the first consonants Ka to Tha in Anâhata and so forth until the Mûlâdhâra wherein are set the last four letters from Va to Sa. Thus in Âjnâ there are Ha and Ksha as being Brahmabîjas. In the next or Vishuddha Chakra are the 16



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

vowels which originated first. Therefore they are placed in Vishuddha the etherial Chakra ; ether also having originated first. The same principle applies to the other letters in the Chakras namely Ka to Tha (12 letters and petals) in Anâhata ; Da to Pha (10) in Manipûra ; Ba to La (6) in Svâdhishthâna ; and Va to Sa (4) in Mûlâdhâra. The connection between particular letters and the Chakras in which they are placed is further said to be due to the fact that in uttering any particular letter the Chakra in which it is placed and its surroundings are brought into play. The sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet are classified according to the organs used in their articulation and are guttural (Kantha) palatals (Tâlu) cerebrals (Mûrddhâ) dentals (Danta) and labials (Oshtha). When so articulated each letter it is said "touches" the Chakra in which it is and in which on this account it has been placed. In uttering them certain Chakras are affected ; that is brought into play. This it is alleged will be found to be so if the letter is carefully pronounced and attention is paid to the accompanying bodily movement. Thus in uttering Ha the head (Âjnâ) is touched and in uttering the deep-seated Va the basal Chakra or Mûlâdhâra. In making the first sound the forehead is felt to be affected, and in making the last the lower part of the body around the root-lotus. This is the theory put forth as accounting for the position of the letters in the Chakras.

A Mantra is, like everything else, Shakti. But the mere utterance of a Mantra without more is a mere movement of the lips. The Mantra must be awakened (Prabuddha) just like any other Shakti if effect is to be had therefrom. This is the union of sound and idea through a knowledge of the Mantra and its meaning. The recitation of a Mantra without knowing its meaning is practically fruitless. I say "practically" because devotion, even though it be ignorant, is never wholly void of fruit. But a knowledge of the meaning is not enough ; for it is possible by reading a book or receiving oral instructions to get



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

to know the meaning of a Mantra, without anything further following. Each Mantra is embodiment of a particular form of Consciousness or Shakti. This is the Mantra-Shakti. Consciousness or Shakti also exists in the form of the Sâdhaka. The object then is to unite these two, when thought is not only in the outer husk but is vitalised by will, knowledge, and action through its conscious centre in union with that of the Mantra. The latter is Devatâ or a particular manifestation of Shakti : and the Sâdhaka who identifies himself therewith, identifies himself with that Shakti. According to Yoga when the mind is concentrated on any object it is unified with it. When man is so identified with a Varna or Tattva, then the power of objects to bind ceases, and he becomes the controller. Thus in Kunda-  
linî-Yoga the static bodily Shakti pierces the Chakras to meet Shiva-Shakti in the Sahasrâra. As the Sâdhaka is, through the power of the rising Shakti, identified with each of the Centres, Tattvas and Mâtrikâ Shaktis they cease to bind, until passing through all he attains Samâdhi. As the Varnas are Shiva-Shakti, concentration on them draws the mind towards, and then unifies it with, the Devatâ which is one with the Mantra. The Devatâ of the Mantra is only the creative Shakti assuming that particular form. As already stated, Devatâ may be realised in any object, not merely in Mantras, Yantras, Ghatas, Pratimâs or other ritual objects of worship. The same power which manifests to the ear in the Mantra is represented in the lines and curves of the Yantra which the Kaulavalî Tantra says is the body of the Devata :—

*'Yantram mantramayang proktang mantrâtmâ devatâiva hi  
Dehâtmanor yathâ bhedo yantra-devatayostathâ.'*

The Yantra is thus the graphic symbol of the Shakti indicated by the Mantra with which identification takes place. The Pratimâ or image is a grosser visual form of the Devatâ. But the Mantras are particular forms of Divine Shakti, the realisation of which is efficacious to produce



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

particular results. As in Kundalî-Yoga, so also here the identification of the Sâdhaka with different Mantras gives rise to various Vibhûtis or powers: for each grouping of the letters represents a new combination of the Mâtrikâ Shaktis. It is the eternal Shakti who is the life of the Mantra. Therefore Siddhi in Mantra Sâdhanâ is the union of the Sâdhaka's Shakti with the Mantra Shakti; the identification of the Sâdhaka with the Mantra is the identification of the knower (Vedaka) knowing (Vidyâ) and known (Vedya) or the Sâdhaka, Mantra and Devatâ. Then the Mantra works. The mind must feed, and is always feeding, on something. It seizes the Mantra and works its way to its heart. When there, it is the Chitta or mind of the Sâdhaka unified with the Shakti of the Mantra which works. Then subject and object, in its Mantra form, meet as one. By meditation the Sâdhaka gains unity with the Devatâ behind, as it were, the Mantra and Whose form the Mantra is. The union of the Sâdhaka of the Mantra and the Devatâ of the Mantra is the result of the effort to realise permanently the incipient desire for such union. The will towards Divinity is a dynamic which pierces everything and finds there Divinity itself. It is because Westerns and some Westernised Hindus do not understand the principles of Mantra; principles which lie at the centre of Indian religious theory and practice, that they see nothing in it where they do not regard it as gross superstition. It must be admitted that Mantra Sâdhanâ is often done ignorantly. Faith is placed in externals and the inner meaning is often lost. But even such ignorant worship is better than none at all. "It is better to bow to Nârâyana with one's shoes on than never to bow at all." Much also is said of "vain repetitions." What Christ condemned was not repetition but "vain" repetition. That man is a poor psychologist who does not know the effect of repetition when done with faith and devotion. It is a fact that the inner kingdom yields to violence and can be taken by assault. Indeed it yields to nothing but the strong will of



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

the Sâdhaka, for it is that will in its purest and fullest strength. By practice with the Mantra the Devatâ is invoked. This means that the mind itself is Devatâ when unified with Devatâ. This is attained through repetition of the Mantra (Japa).

Japa is compared to the action of a man shaking a sleeper to wake him up. The Sâdhaka's own consciousness is awakened. The two lips are Shiva and Shakti. The movement in utterance is the "coition" (Maithuna) of the two. Shabda which issues therefrom is in the nature of Bindu. The Devatâ then appearing is, as it were, the son of the Sâdhaka. It is not the supreme Devatâ who appears (for It is actionless) but in all cases an emanation produced by the Sâdhaka's worship for his benefit only. In the case of worshippers of the Shiva-Mantra a Boy-Shiva (Bâla-Shiva) appears who is then made strong by the nurture which the Sâdhaka gives to him. The occultist will understand all such symbolism to mean that the Devatâ is a form of the Consciousness which becomes the Boy-Shiva and which when strengthened is the full grown Divine Power Itself. All Mantras are forms of consciousness (Vijnânarûpa) and when the Mantra is fully practised it enlivens the Sangskâra and the Artha appears to the mind. Mantras used in worship are thus a form of the Sangskâras of Jîvas; the Artha of which manifests to the consciousness which is pure. The essence of all this is—concentrate and vitalise thought and will power, that is Shakti.

The Mantra method is Shâktopâya Yoga working with concepts and form whilst Shâmbhavopâya Yoga has been well said to be a more direct attempt at intuition of Shakti apart from all passing concepts, which, as they cannot show the Reality, only serve to hide it the more from one's view and thus maintain bondage. These Yoga methods are but examples of the universal principle of Sâdhanâ, that the Sâdhaka should first work with and through form, and then, so far as may be, by a meditation which dispense with it.



## SHAKTI AS MANTRA

It has been pointed out to me by Professor Surendra Nath Das Gupta that this Varna-Sâdhanâ, so important a content of the Tantra Shâstra, is not altogether its creation, but, as I have often in other matters observed, a development of ancient Vaidik teaching. For it was, he says, first attempted in the Âranyaka Epoch upon the Pratîkopâsanâ on which the Tântrik Sâdhanâ is, he suggests, based ; though, of course, that Shâstra has elaborated the notion into a highly complicated system which is so peculiar a feature of its religious discipline. There is thus a synthesis of this Pratîkopâsanâ with Yoga method, resting as all else upon a Vedântic basis.



## CHAPTER XII

### VARNAMÂLÂ

(THE GARLAND OF LETTERS)

THE world has never altogether been without the Wisdom, nor its Teachers. The degree and manner in which it has been imparted have, however, necessarily varied according to the capacities of men to receive it. So also have the symbols by which it has been conveyed. These symbols further have varying significance according to the spiritual advancement of the worshipper. This question of degree and variety of presentation have led to the superficial view that the difference in beliefs negatives existence of any commonly established Truth. But if the matter be regarded more deeply, it will be seen that whilst there is one essential Wisdom, its revelation has been more or less complete according to symbols evolved by, and, therefore, fitting to, particular racial temperaments and characters. Symbols are naturally misunderstood by those to whom the beliefs they typify are unfamiliar, and who differ in temperament from those who have evolved them. To the ordinary Western mind the symbols of Hinduism are often repulsive and absurd. It must not, however, be forgotten that some of the Symbols of Western Faiths have the same effect on the Hindu. From the picture of the "Slain Lamb," and other symbols in terms of blood and death, he naturally shrinks in disgust. The same effect on the other hand is not seldom produced in the Western at the sight of the terrible forms in which India has embodied Her vision of the undoubted Terrors which exist in and around us. All is not smiling in this world. Even amongst persons of the same race and indeed of the same faith we may observe such



## VARNAMÂLÂ

differences. Before the Catholic Cultus of the "Sacred Heart" had overcome the opposition which it at first encountered, and for a considerable time after, its imagery was regarded with aversion by some who spoke of it in terms which would be to-day counted as shocking irreverence. These differences are likely to exist so long as men vary in mental attitude and temperament, and until they reach the stage in which, having discovered the essential truths, they become indifferent to the mode in which they are presented. We must also in such matters distinguish between what a symbol may have meant and what it now means. Until quite recent times the English peasant folk and others danced around the flower-wreathed Maypole. That the pole originally (like other similar forms) represented the great Lingga admits of as little doubt as that these folk, who in recent ages danced around it, were ignorant of that fact. The Bishop's mitre is said to be the head of a fish worn by ancient near-eastern hierophants. But what of that? It has other associations now.

Let us illustrate these general remarks by a short study of one portion of the Kâlî symbolism which affects so many, who are not Hindus, with disgust or horror. Kâlî is the Deity in that aspect in which It withdraws all things which It had created, into Itself. Kâlî is so called because She devours Kâla (Time and then resumes Her own dark formlessness. The scene is laid in the cremation ground (Shmashâna), amidst white sun-dried bones and fragments of flesh, gnawed and pecked at by carrion beasts and birds. Here the "heroic" (Vîra) worshipper (Sâdhaka) performs at dead of night his awe-inspiring rituals. Kâlî is set in such a scene, for She is that aspect of the great Power which withdraws all things into Herself at, and by, the dissolution of the universe. He alone worships without fear, who has abandoned all worldly desires, and seeks union with Her as the One Blissful and Perfect Experience. On the burning ground all worldly desires are burnt away. She is naked and



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

dark like a threatening rain-cloud. She is dark, for She who is Herself beyond mind and speech, reduces all things into that worldly "nothingness," which, as the Void (Shûnya) of all which we now know, is at the same time the All (Pûrna) which is Peace. She is naked, being clothed in space alone (Digambarî), because the Great Power is unlimited ; further She is in Herself beyond Mâyâ (Mâyâtîtâ) ; that Power of Hers which creates all universes. She stands upon the white corpse-like (Shavarûpa) body of Shiva. He is white, because he is the illuminating transcendental aspect of consciousness. He is inert, because he is the changeless aspect of the Supreme and She the apparently changing aspect of the same. In truth She and He are one and the same, being twin aspects of the One who is changelessness in, and exists as, change. Much might be said in explanation of these and other symbols such as Her loosened hair, the lolling tongue, the thin stream of blood which trickles from the corners of the mouth, the position of Her feet, the apron of dead men's hands around Her waist, Her implements and so forth. See Hymn to Kâlî by Arthur Avalon. Here I take only the garland of freshly-severed heads which hangs low from Her neck.

Some have conjectured that Kâlî was originally the Goddess of the dark-skinned inhabitants of the Vindhya Hills taken over by the Brâhmanas into their worship. One of them has thought that She was a deified Princess of these folk, who fought against the white incoming Âryans. He pointed to the significant fact that the severed heads are those of white men. The Western may say that Kâlî was an objectification of the Indian mind, making a Divinity of the Power of Death. An Eastern may reply that She is the Sangketa (symbol) which is the effect of the impress of a Spiritual Power on the Indian mind. I do not pause to consider these matters here.

The question before us is, what does this imagery mean now, and what has it meant for centuries past to the initiate



## VARNAMÂLÂ

in Her symbolism? An exoteric explanation describes this Garland as made up of the heads of Demons, which She, as a power of righteousness, has conquered. According to an inner explanation, given in the Indian Tantra Shâstra, this string of heads is the Garland of Letters (Varnamâlâ), that is the fifty, and as some count it, fifty-one letters, of the Sanskrit Alphabet. The same interpretation is given in the Buddhist Demchog Tantra in respect of the garland worn by the great Heruka. These letters represent the universe of names and forms (Nâmarûpa) that is Speech (Shabda) and its meaning or object (Artha). She the Devourer of all "slaughters," (that is, withdraws), both into Her undivided Consciousness at the Great dissolution of the Universe which they are. She wears the Letters which, She as the Creatrix bore. She wears the Letters which, She as the Dissolving Power takes to Herself again. A very profound doctrine is connected with these Letters which space prevents me from fully entering into here. I have set it out in greater detail in a recently published work of mine on the "Serpent Power" (Kundalinî) which projects Consciousness, in Its true nature blissful and beyond all dualisms, into the World of good and evil. The movements of Her projection are indicated by the Letters subtle and gross which exist on the Petals of the inner bodily centres or Lotuses.

Very shortly stated, Shabda which literally means Sound—here lettered sound—is in its causal state (Parashabda) known as "Supreme Speech" (Parâ Vâk). This is the Shabda Brahman or Logos; that aspect of Reality or Consciousness (Chit) in which it is the immediate cause of creation; that is of the dichotomy in Consciousness which is "I" and "This," subject, and object, mind and matter. This condition of causal Shabda is the Cosmic Dreamless State (Sushupti). This Logos, awakening from its causal sleep, "sees," that is, creatively ideates the universe, and is then known as Pashyantî Shabda. As Consciousness "sees" or ideates, forms arise in the Creative Mind, which are them-



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

selves impressions (Sangskâra) carried over from previous worlds, which ceased to exist as such when the Universe entered the state of causal dreamless sleep on the previous dissolution. These re-arise as the formless Consciousness awakes to enjoy once again sensual life in the world of forms.

The Cosmic Mind is at first itself both cognising subject (Grâhaka) and cognised object (Grâhya); for it has not yet projected its thought into the plane of Matter; the mind as subject cogniser is Shabda and the mind as the object cognised, that is the mind in the form of object is subtle Artha. This Shabda called Madhyamâ Shabda is an "Inner Naming" or "Hidden Speech." At this stage that which answers to the spoken letters (Varna) are the "Little Mothers" or Mâtrikâ, the subtle forms of gross speech. There is at this stage a differentiation of Consciousness into subject and object, but the letter is now within and forms part of the Self. This is the state of Cosmic Dreaming (Svapna). This "Hidden Speech" is understandable of all men if they can get in mental *rapport* one with the other. So a thought-reader can read the thoughts of a man whose spoken speech he cannot understand. The Cosmic Mind then projects these mental images on to the material plane and they there become materialised as gross physical objects (Sthûla artha) which make impressions from without on the mind of the created consciousness. This is the cosmic waking state (Jâgrat). At this last stage the thought-movement expresses itself through the vocal organs in contact with the air as uttered speech (Vaikharî Shabda) made up of letters, syllables and sentences. The physical unlettered sound which manifests Shabda is called Dhvani. This lettered sound is manifested Shabda or Name (Nâma), and the physical objects denoted by speech are the gross Artha or form (Rûpa).

This manifested speech varies in men, for their individual and racial characteristics and the conditions,



## VARNAMĀLĀ

such as country and climate in which they live, differ. There is a tradition that there was once an universal speech before the building of the Tower of Babel, signifying the confusion of tongues. As previously stated a friend has drawn my attention to a passage in the Rig Veda which he interprets in a similar sense. For it says that the Three Fathers and the Three Mothers, like the Elohim, made (in the interest of creation) all comprehending speech into that which was not so.

Of these letters and names and their meaning or objects, that is concepts and concepts objectified the whole Universe is composed. When Kâlî withdraws the world, that is the names and forms which the letters signify, the dualism in consciousness, which is creation, vanishes. There is neither "I" (Aham) nor "This" (Idam) but the one non-dual Perfect Experience which Kâlî in her own true nature (Svarûpa) is. In this way Her garland is understood.

"Surely" I hear it said "not by all. Does every Hindu worshipper think such profundities when he sees the figure of Mother Kâlî?" Of course not, no more than, (say) an ordinary Italian peasant knows of, or can understand, the subtleties of either the Catholic mystics or doctors of theology. When, however, the Western undertakes to depict and explain Indian symbolism, he should, in the interest both of knowledge and fairness, understand what it means both to the high as well as to the humble worshipper.



## CHAPTER XIII

### SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

#### THE ORDINARY RITUAL

**S**ÂDHANÂ is that which produces Siddhi or the result sought, be it material or spiritual advancement. It is the means or practice by which the desired end may be attained and consists in the training and exercise of the body and psychic faculties, upon the gradual perfection of which Siddhi follows. The nature or degree of spiritual Siddhi depends upon the progress made towards the realisation of the Âtmâ whose veiling vesture the body is. The means employed are numerous and elaborate, such as worship (Pûjâ) exterior or mental, Shâstric learning, austerities (Tapas) Japa or recitation of Mantra, Hymns, meditation, and so forth. The Sâdhanâ is necessarily of a nature and character appropriate to the end sought. Thus Sâdhanâ for spiritual knowledge (Brahmajnâna) which consists of external control (Dama) over the ten senses (Indriya), internal control (Shama) over the mind (Buddhi, Ahankâra, Manas) discrimination between the transitory and eternal, renunciation of both the world and heaven (Svarga), differs from the lower Sâdhanâ of the ordinary householder, and both are obviously of a kind different from that prescribed and followed by the practitioners of malevolent magic (Abhichâra). Sâdhakas again vary in their physical, mental, and moral qualities and are thus divided into four classes Mridu, Madhya, Adhimâtraka and the highest Adhimâtrama who is qualified (Adhikarî) for all forms of Yoga. In a similar way the Shakta Kaulas are divided into the Prâkrita or common Kaula following Vîrâchâra with the Panchatattvas described in the following Chapter ;



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

the middling (Madhyama) Kaula who (may be) follows the same or other Sâdhanâ but who is of a higher type, and the highest Kaula (Kaulikottama) who, having surpassed all ritualism, meditates upon the Universal Self. These are more particularly described in the next Chapter.

Until a Sâdhaka is Siddha all Sâdhanâ is or should be undertaken with the authority and under the direction of a Guru or Spiritual Teacher and Director. There is in reality but one Guru and that is the Lord (Îshvara) Himself. He is the Supreme Guru as also is Devî His Power, one with Himself. But he acts through man and human means. The ordinary human Guru is but the manifestation on earth of the Âdi-nâtha Mahâkâla and Mahâkâlî the Supreme Guru abiding in Kailâsa. As the Yoginî Tantra (Ch. 1) says *Guroh sthânam hi kailasam*. He it is who is in, and speaks with the voice of, the Earthly Guru. So, to turn to an analogy in the West, it is Christ who speaks in the voice of the Pontifex Maximus when declaring faith and morals, and in the voice of the priest who confers upon the penitent absolution for his sins. It is not the man who speaks in either case but God through him. It is the Guru who initiates and helps and the relationship between him and the disciple (Shishya) continues until the attainment of spiritual Siddhi. It is only from him that Sâdhanâ and Yoga are learnt and not (as it is commonly said) from a thousand Shastras. As the Shatkarmadîpikâ says, mere book knowledge is useless.

*Pustake likhitâ vidyâ yena sundâri japyate*

*Siddhirna jâyatetasya kalpakoti-shatair api*

Manu therefore says "of him who gives natural birth, and of him who gives knowledge of the Veda, the giver of sacred knowledge is the more venerable father." The Tantrashâstras also are full of the greatness of the Guru. He is not to be thought of as a mere man. There is no difference between Guru, Mantra, and Deva. Guru is father, mother and Brahman. Guru, it is said, can save from the



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

wrath of Shiva, but none can be saved from the wrath of the Guru. Attached to this greatness there is however responsibility ; for the sins of the disciple may recoil upon him. The Tantra Shāstras deal with the high qualities which are demanded of a Guru and the good qualities which are to be looked for in an intending disciple (See for instance Tantrasāra Ch. I). Before initiation the Guru examines and tests the intending disciple for a specified period. The latter's moral qualifications are purity of soul (Shuddhātmâ), control of the senses (Jitendriyah) the following of the Purushārtha or aims of all sentient being (Purushārthaparâyana). Amongst others, those who are lewd (Kāmuka) adulterous (Para-dârâtura) addicted to sin, ignorant, slothful and devoid of religion should be rejected (See Matsyasûkta Tantra XIII, Prânatoshinî 108 Mahârudrayâmala, I. XV, II. ii. Kulârnava Tantra Ch. XIII). The good Sâdhaka who is entitled to the knowledge of all Shâstra is he who is pure-minded, self-controlled, ever engaged in doing good to all beings, free from false notions of dualism attached to the speaking of, taking shelter with and ever living in the consciousness, of the supreme Brahman (Gandharva Tantra Ch. ii).

All orthodox Hindus of all divisions of worshippers submit themselves to the direction of a Guru. The latter initiates. The Vaidik initiation into the twice-born classes is by the Upanayana. This is for the first three castes only *viz.*, Brâhmana (priesthood and teaching), Kshatriya (warrior) Vaishya (merchant). All are (it is said) by birth. Shûdra (Janmanâ jâyate Shudrah) and by sacrament (that is the Upanayana ceremony) twice-born. By study of the Vedas one is a Vipra. And he who has knowledge of the Brahman is a Brâhmana (Brahma jânâti brâhmanah). From this well-known verse it will be seen how few there really are who are entitled to the noble name of Brâhmana. The Tântrik Mantra-initiation is a different ceremony and is for all castes. Initiation (Dîkshâ) is the giving of Mantra



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

by the Guru. The latter should first establish the life of the Guru in his own body ; that is the vital power (Prâna-shakti) of the Supreme Guru in the thousand petalled lotus (Sahasrâra). He then transmits it to the disciple. As an image is the instrument (Yantra) in which Divinity (Devatva) inheres, so also is the body of the Guru. The candidate is prepared for initiation, fasts and lives chastely. Initiation (which follows) gives spiritual knowledge and destroys sin. As one lamp is lit at the flame of another, so the divine Shakti consisting of Mantra is communicated from the Guru's body to that of the Shishya. I need not be always repeating that this is the theory and ideal, which to-day is generally remote from the fact. The Supreme Guru speaks with the voice of the earthly Guru at the time of giving Mantra as the Yoginî Tantra (Ch. 7) says :—

*Mantra-pradâna-kaleni mânushe Naganandini  
Adhishthânang bhavet tatra mahâkâlasya Shangkari  
Atas tu gurutâ devi mânushe nâtra sangsnayah,*

Guru is the root (Mûla) of initiation (Dîkshâ). Dîkshâ is the root of Mantra. Mantra is the root of Devatâ, and Devatâ is the root of Siddhi. The Mundamâlâ Tantra says that Mantra is born of Guru and Devatâ of Mantra, so that the Guru is in the position of Father's Father to the Ishtadevatâ. Without initiation, Japa (recitation) of the Mantra, Pôjâ, and other ritual acts are useless. The Mantra chosen for the candidate must be suitable (Anukula). Whether a Mantra is Svakula or Akula to the person about to be initiated is ascertained by the Kulachakra, the zodiacal circle called Râshichakra and other Chakras which may be found in the Tantrasâra. Initiation by a woman is efficacious ; that by a mother is eightfold so (ib.) For, according to the Tantra Shâstra, a woman with the necessary qualifications may be a Guru and give initiation. The Kulagurus are four in number each of them being the Guru of the preceding ones. There are also three lines of Guru (See Mahânirvâna Ed. A. Avalon p. 111, n. 10 ; p. 120, n. 3).



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

So long as the Shakti communicated by a Guru to his disciple is not fully developed the relation of Teacher and Director and Disciple exists. A man is Shishya so long as he is Sâdhaka. When however Siddhi is attained, Guru and Shishya, as also all other dualisms, and relations, disappear. Besides the preliminary initiation there are a number of other initiations or consecrations (Abhisheka) which mark greater and greater degrees of advance from Shâktâbhisheka when entrance is made on the path of Shâkta Sâdhanâ to Pûrnadîkshâbhisheka and Mahâpûrnadîkshâbhisheka also called Virajâ-grahanâbhisheka. On the attainment of perfection in the last grade the Sâdhaka performs his own funeral rite (Shrâddha) makes Pûrnâhuti with his sacred thread and crown lock. The relation of Guru and Shishya now ceases. From this point he ascends by himself until he realises the great saying So'ham "He I am" Sâ'ham "She I am." Now he is Jîvan-mukta and Paramahansa.

The word Sâdhanâ comes from the root *Sâdh* to exert or strive and Sâdhanâ is therefore striving, practice, discipline and worship in order to obtain success or Siddhi, which may be of any of the kinds, worldly or spiritual, desired, but which, on the religious side of the Shâstras, means spiritual advancement with its fruit of happiness in this world and in Heaven and at length Liberation (Moksha). He who practises Sâdhanâ is (if a man) called Sâdhaka or (if a woman) Sâdhikâ. But men vary in capacity, temperament, knowledge and general advancement and therefore the means (for Sâdhana also means instrument) by which they are to be led to Siddhi must vary. Methods which are suitable for highly advanced men will fail as regards the ignorant and undeveloped for they cannot understand them. What suits the latter has been long out-passed by the former. At least that is the Hindu view. It is called Adhikâra or competency. Thus some few men are competent (Adhikârî) to study Vedânta and to follow high



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

mental rituals and Yoga processes. Others are not. Some are grown-up children and must be dealt with as such. As all men, and indeed all beings, are, as to their psychical and physical bodies, made of the primordial substance Prakriti-shakti (Prakriti-âtmaka), as Prakriti is Herself the three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and as all things and beings are composed of these three Gunas in varying proportions, it follows that men are divisible into three general classes namely those in which the Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas Gunas predominate respectively. There are of course degrees in each of these three classes. Amongst Sâttvika men, in whom Sattva predominates, some are more and some less Sâttvika than others and so on with the rest. These three classes of temperament (Bhâva) are known in the Shâkta Tantras as the Divine (Divyabhâva) Heroic (Virabhâva) and Animal (Pashubhâva) temperaments respectively. Bhâva is defined as a property or quality (Dharma) of the Manas or mind (Prânatoshinî, 570). The Divyabhâva is that in which Sattva-guna predominates only, because it is to be noted that none of the Gunas are, or ever can be, absent. Prakriti cannot be partitioned. Prakriti is the three Gunas. Sattva is essentially the spiritual Guna, for it is that which manifests Spirit or Pure Consciousness (Chit). A Sâttvika man is thus a spiritual man. His is a calm, pure, equable, refined, wise, spiritual temperament, free of materiality and of passion, or he possesses these qualities imperfectly, and to the degree that he possesses them he is Sâttvik. Pashubhâva is, on the other hand, the temperament of the man in whom Tamas guna prevails and produces such dark characteristics as ignorance, error, apathy, sloth and so forth. He is called a Pashu or animal because Tamas predominates in the merely animal nature as compared with the disposition of spiritually minded men. He is also Pashu because he is bound by the bonds (Pâsha). The term Pâsha comes from the root *Pash* to bind. The Kulârnava enumerates eight bonds namely pity (Dayâ, of the type which



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

Taoists call "inferior benevolence" as opposed to the divine compassion or Karunâ), ignorance and delusion (Moha), fear (Bhaya) shame (Lajjâ), disgust (Ghrinâ), family (Kula), habit and observance (Shîla), and caste (Varna). Other larger enumerations are given. The Pashu is the man caught by the world, in ignorance and bondage. Bhâskararâya on the Sûtrâ "have no converse with a Pashu" says that a Pashu is Vahirmukha or outward looking, seeing the outside only of things and not inner realities. The injunction he says only applies to converse as regards things spiritual.

The Shaiva Shâstra speaks of three classes of Pashu namely Sakala bound by the three Pâshas, Anu, Bheda, Karma, that is limited knowledge, the seeing of the one Self as many by the operation of Mâyâ, and action and its product. These are the three impurities (Mala) called Ânavamala, Mâyâmala, and Kârma-mala. The Sakala Jîva or Pashu is bound by all three, the Pralayâkâla by the first and last and the Vijnânâkâla by the first only. See as to these the diagram of the 36 Tattvas. He who is wholly freed of the remaining impurity of Anu is Shiva Himself. Here however Pashu is used in a different sense, that is as denoting the creature as contrasted with the Lord (Pati). In this sense Pashu is a name for all men. In the Shâkta use of the term, though all men are certainly Pashu as compared with the Lord, yet as between themselves one may be Pashu (in the narrower sense above stated) and the other not. Some men are more Pashu than others. It is a mistake to suppose that the Pashu is necessarily a bad man. He may be and often is a good one. He is certainly better than a bad Vîra who is really no Vîra at all. He is however not according to this Shâstra an enlightened man in the sense that the Vîra or Divya is, and he is generally marked by various degrees of ignorance and material-mindedness. It is the mark of a bad Pashu to be given over to gross acts of sin. Between these two comes the Hero or Vîra of whose temperament (Vîrabhâva) so much is heard in the Shâkta



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

Shâstras. In him there is prevalent the strongly active Rajas Guna. Rajas is always active either to incite Tamas or Sattva. In the former case the result is a Pashu in the latter case either a Vîra or Divya. Where Sattva approaches perfection of development there is the Divyabhâva. Sattva is here firmly established in calm and in high degree. But until such time and whilst man who has largely liberated himself through knowledge of the influence of Tamas, is active to promote Sattva he is a Vîra. Being heroic, he is permitted to meet his enemy Tamas face to face, counter-attacking where the lower developed man flees away. It has been pointed out by Dr. Garbe (Philosophy of Ancient India, 481) as before him by Baur, that the analogous Gnostic classification of men as material, psychical, and spiritual also corresponds (as does this) to the three Gunas of the Sângkhya Darshana.

Even in its limited Shâkta sense, there are degrees of Pashu, one man being more so than another. The Pâshas are the creations of Mâyâ Shakti. The Devi therefore is pictured as bearing them. But as She is in Her form as Mâyâ and Avidyâ Shakti the cause of bondage, so as Vidyâ Shakti She breaks the bonds (Pashupâsha-Vimochinî. See v. 78 Lalitâsahasranâma) and is thus the Liberatrix of the Pashu from his bondage.

Nityâ Tantra says that the Bhâva of the Divya is the best, the Vîra the next best and Pashu the lowest. In fact the state of the last is the starting point in Sâdhanâ, that of the first the goal, and that of the Vîra is the stage of one who having ceased to be a Pashu is on the way to the attainment of the goal. From being a Pashu a man rises in this, or some other, birth to be a Vîra and Divyabhâva or Devatâbhâva is awakened through Vîrabhâva. The Pichchhilâ Tantra says (X. see also Utpatti Tantra LXIV) that the difference between the Vîra and the Divya lies in the Uddhatamânasa, that is passionateness or activity by which the former is characterised and which is due to the great



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

effort of Rajas to procure for the Sâdhaka a Sâttvik state. Just as there are degrees in the Pashu state so there are classes of Vîras some being higher than others.

The Divya Sâdhaka also is of higher or lower kinds. The lowest is only a degree higher than the best type of Vîra. The highest completely realise the Deva-nature wherein Sattva exists in a state of lasting stability. Amongst this class are the Tattvajnânî and Yogî. The latter are emancipated from all ritual. The lower Divya class may apparently take part in the ritual of the Vîra. The object and end of all Sâdhanâ, whether of Pashu or Vîra or Divya, is to develop Sattvaguna. The Tantras give descriptions of each of these three classes. The chief general distinction, which is constantly repeated, between the pure Pashu (for there are also Vibhâva-pashus) and the Vîra, is that the former does not, and the latter does, follow the Panchatattva ritual in the form prescribed for Vîrâchâra and described in the next Chapter. Other portions of the description are characteristics of the Tâmasik character of the Pashu. So Kubjikâ Tantra (vii) after describing this class of man to be the lowest, points out various forms of their ignorance. So it says that he talks ill of other classes of believers. That is he is sectarian-minded and decries other forms of worship than his own, a characteristic of the Pashu the world over. He distinguishes one Deva from another as if they were really different and not merely the plural manifestations of the One. So the worshipper of Râma may abuse the worshipper of Krishna and both decry the worship of Shiva or Devî. As the Veda says the One is called by various names. Owing to his ignorance "he is always bathing" that is he is always thinking about external and ceremonial purity. This, though good in its way, is nothing compared with internal purity of mind. He has ignorant or wrong ideas, or want of faith, concerning (Shâkta) Tantra Shâstra, sacrifices, Guru, Images and Mantra, the last of which he thinks to be mere letters only and not Devatâ (See Prâna-



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

toshinî 547 *et seq.* Pichchhilâ X). He follows the Vaidik rule relating to Maithuna on the fifth day when the wife is Ritusnâta (*Ritu-kâlang vinâ devi ramanang parivarjayet*). Some of the descriptions of the Pashu seem to refer to the lowest class. Generally however one may say that from the standpoint of a Vîrâchârî, all those who follow Vedâchâra, Vaishnavâchâra and Shaivâchâra are Pashus. The Kubjikâ Tantra (VII) gives a description of the Divya. Its eulogies would seem to imply that in all matters which it mentions, the Pashu is lacking. But this, as regards some matters, is Stuti (praise) only. Thus he has a strong faith in Veda, Shâstra, Deva and Guru, and ever speaks the truth which, as also other good qualities, must be allowed to the Pashu. He avoids all cruelty and other bad actions and regards alike both friend and foe. He avoids the company of the irreligious who decry the Devatâ. All Devas he regards as beneficial, worshipping all without drawing distinctions. Thus for instance whilst an orthodox up-country Hindu of the Pashu kind who is a worshipper of Râma cannot even bear to hear the name of Krishna, though both Râma and Krishna are each Avatâra of the same Vishnu, the Divya would equally reverence both knowing each to be an aspect of the one Great Shakti Mother of Devas and Men. This is one of the first qualities of the high Shâkta worshipper. As a worshipper of Shakti he bows down at the feet of women regarding them as his Guru (*Strînâng pâdatâlang drishtvâ guruvad bhâvayet sada*). He offers everything to the supreme Devî regarding the whole universe as pervaded by the Strî (Shakti, not "woman") and as Devatâ. Shiva is (he knows) in all men. The whole universe (Brahmânda) is pervaded by the Shiva Shakti.

The description cited also deals with his ritual, saying that he does daily ablutions, Sandhyâ, wears clean cloth, the Tripundra mark in ashes or red sandal and ornaments of Rudrâksha beads. He does Japa (recitation of Mantra external and mental) and worship (Archchanâ). He worships



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

the Pitris and Devas and performs all the daily rites. He gives daily charity. He meditates upon his Guru daily and does worship thrice daily and, as a Bhairava, worships Parameshvarî with Divyabhâva. He worships Devî at night, (Vaidik worship being by day) and after food, (ordinary Vaidik worship being done before taking food). He makes obeisance to the Kaula Shakti (Kulastrî) versed in Tantra and Mantra, whoever She be and whether youthful or old. He bows to the Kula-trees (Kulavriksha). He ever strives for the attainment and maintenance of Devatâbhâva and is himself of the nature of a Devatâ.

Portions of this description appear to refer to the ritual and not Avadhûta Divya, and to this extent are applicable to the high Vîra also. The Mahânirvâna (I. 56) describes the Divya as all but a Deva, ever pure of heart, to whom all opposites are alike (Dvandvâtîta) such as pain and pleasure, heat and cold, who is free from attachment to worldly things, the same to all creatures and forgiving. The text I have published therefore says that there is no Divyabhâva in the Kaliyuga nor Pashubhâva; for the Pashu (or his wife) must with his own hand collect leaves, flowers and fruit, and cook his food, which regulations and others are impossible or difficult in the Kali age. As a follower of Smriti he should not "see the face of a Shûdra at worship, or even think of a woman" (referring to the Panchatattva ritual). The Shyâmârchana (cited in Haratattvadîdhi, 348) speaks to the same effect. On the other hand there is authority for the proposition that in the Kaliyuga there is only Pashubhâva. Thus the Prânatoshinî (510-517) cites a passage purporting to come from the Mahânirvâna which is in direct opposition to the above:—

*Divya-virâ-mâyo bhâvah kalâu nâsti kadâchana*

*Kevalang pashu-bhâvena mantra-siddhir bhaven nrinam*

(In the Kali age there is no Divya or Vîrabhâva. It is only by the Pashu-bhâva that men may attain Mantra-siddhi).



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

I have discussed this latter question in greater detail in the introduction to the sixth volume of my series of "Tāntrik Texts."

Dealing with the former passage from the Mahānirvāna the Commentator explains it as meaning "that the conditions and characters of the Kaliyuga are not such as to be productive of Pashubhāva, or to allow of its Âchāra (in the sense of the strict Vaidik ritual). No one, he says, can nowadays fully perform the Vedâchāra, Vaishnavâchāra, and Shaivâchāra rites without which the Vaidik and Paurānic Yajna and Mantra are fruitless. No one now goes through the Brahmacharya Âshrama or adopts, after the fiftieth year, Vānaprastha. Those whom the Vaidik rites do not control cannot expect the fruit of their observances. On the contrary men have taken to drink, associate with the low and are fallen, as are also those who associate with them. There can therefore be no pure Pashu. (That is apparently whilst there may be a natural Pashu disposition the Vaidik rites appropriate to this Bhāva cannot be carried out). Under these circumstances the duties prescribed by the Vedas which are appropriate for the Pashu being incapable of performance, Shiva for the liberation of men of the Kali age has proclaimed the Âgama. Now there is no other way."

We are perhaps therefore correct in saying that it comes to this:—In a bad age, such as the Kali, Divya men are, (to say the least) very scarce, though commonsense and experience must, I suppose, allow for exceptions. Whilst the Pashu natural disposition exists, the Vaidik ritual which he should follow cannot be done. It is in fact largely obsolete. The Vaidik Pashu or man who followed the Vaidik rituals in their entirety is non-existent. He must follow the Âgamic rituals which as a fact the bulk of men do. The Âgama must now govern the Pashu, Vîrâ and would-be Divya alike.

As I have frequently explained there are various schools



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

of Tantra or Âgama according to the several divisions of the worshippers of the five Devatâs (Panchopâsanâ). Of the five classes the most important are Vaishnava, Shaiva and Shâkta. I never however hesitate to repeat a statement of a fact of which those who speak of "The Tantra" ignore.

The main elements of Sâdhanâ are common to all such communities following the Âgamas; such as Pûjâ (inner and outer) Pratimâ or other emblems (Linga, Shâlagrama) Upachâra, Sandhyâ, Yagna, Vrata, Tapas, Mandala, Yantra, Mantra, Japa, Purashcharana, Nyâsa, Bhûta-shuddhi, Mudrâ, Dhyâna, Sangskâra and so forth. Even the Vâmâchâra ritual which some wrongly think to be peculiar to the Shâktas, is or was followed by members of other Sampradâyas including Jainas and Bauddhas. Both in so far as they follow this ritual are reckoned amongst Kaulas though, as being nonvaidik, of a lower class.

A main point to be here remembered and one which establishes both the historical and practical importance of the Âgamas is this:—that whilst some Vaidik rites still exist, the bulk of the ritual of to-day is Âgamic that is what is popularly called Tântrik. The Purânas are replete with the Tântrik rituals.

Notwithstanding a general community of ritual forms, there are some variances which are due to two causes; firstly to difference in the Devatâ worship, and secondly to difference of philosophical basis according as it is Advaita, Vishistâdvaita, or Dvaita. The presentment of fundamental ideas is sometimes in different terms. Thus the Vaishnava Pancharâtra Âgama describes the creative process in terms of the Vyûhas, and the Shaiva-Shâkta Âgamas explain it as the Âbhâsa of the thirty-six Tattvas. I here deal with only one form, namely Shâkta Sâdhanâ in which the Ishtadevatâ is Shakti in Her many forms.

I will here shortly describe some of the ritual forms above mentioned premising that so cursory an account does not do justice to the beauty and profundity of many of them.



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

There are four different forms of worship corresponding to four different states and dispositions (Bhāva) of the Sādhaka himself. The realisation that the Supreme Spirit (Paramātmā) and the individual spirit (Jīvātmā) are one, that everything is Brahman and that nothing but the Brahman has true or lasting being is the highest state or Brahma-bhāva. Constant meditation with Yoga-processes upon the Devatā in the heart is the lower form (Dhyānabhāva). Lower still is that Bhāva of which Japa (recitations of Mantra) and Hymns of praise (Stava) is the expression ; and lowest of all is external worship (Vāhyapūjā).

Pūjābhāva is that which arises out of the dualistic notions of worshipper and worshipped, the servant and the Lord, a dualism which necessarily exists in greater or less degree until Monistic experience (Advaita-bhāva) is attained. He who realises the Advaitatattva knows that all is Brahman. For him there is neither worshipper nor worshipped, neither Yoga, nor Pūjā nor Dhāranā, Dhyāna, Stava, Japa, Vrata or other ritual or process of Sādhanā. For he is Siddha in its fullest sense, that is, he has attained Siddhi which is the aim of Sādhanā. As the Mahānirvāna says "for him who has faith in and knowledge of the root, of what use are the branches and leaves?" Brāhmanism thus sagely resolves the Western dispute as to the necessity or advisability of ritual. It affirms it for those who have not attained the end of all ritual. It lessens and refines ritual as spiritual progress is made upwards, it dispenses with it altogether when there is no longer need for it. But until a man is a real "Knower" some Sādhanā is necessary if he would become one. The nature of Sādhanā again differs according to the temperaments (Bhāva) above described and also with reference to the capacities and spiritual advancement of each in his own Bhāva. What may be suitable for the unlettered peasant may not be so for those more intellectually and spiritually advanced. It is however a fine general principle of Tāntrik worship that capacity,



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

and not social distinction such as caste, determines competency for any particular worship. This is not so as regards the Vaidik ritual proper. One might have supposed that credit would have been given to the Tantra Shâstra for this. But credit is given for nothing. Those who dilate on Vaidik exclusiveness have nothing to say as regards the absence of it in the Âgama. The Shûdra is precluded from the performance of Vaidik rites, or the reading of the Vedas or the recital of Vaidik Mantras. His worship is practically limited to that of his Ishtadevatâ, the Vâna-linga-pujâ with Tântrik and Paurânik mantra and such Vrata as consist in penance and charity. In other cases the Vrata is performed through a Brâhmana. The Tantra-shâstra makes no caste distinction as regards worship, in the sense that though it may not challenge the exclusive right of the twice born to Vaidik rites, it provides other and similar rites for the Shûdra. Thus there is both a Vaidik and Tântrik Gâyatrî and Sandhyâ and there are rites available for worshippers of all castes. All may read the Tantras which contain their form of worship, and carry them out and recite the Tântrik Mantras. All castes even the lowest Chandâla may, if otherwise fit, receive the Tântrik initiation and be a member of a Chakra or circle of worship. In the Chakra all the members partake of food and drink together and are then deemed to be greater than Brâhmanas, though upon the break-up of the Chakra the ordinary caste and social relations are re-established. It is necessary to distinguish between social differences and competency (Adhikâra) for worship. Adhikâra, so fundamental a principle of Brâhmanism, means that all are not equally entitled to the same teaching and ritual. They are entitled to that of which they are capable, irrespective (according to the Âgama) of such social distinctions as caste. All are competent for Tântrik worship, for in the words of the Gautamîya Tantra (Cap. I) the Tantra Shâstra is for all castes and all women.

*Sarva-varnâdhikârash cha nârînâm yogya eva cha.*



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

Though according to Vaidik usage the wife was co-operator (Sahadharminî) in the household rites, nowadays, so far as I can gather, they are not accounted much in such matters, though it is said that the wife may with the consent of her husband fast, take vows, perform Homa, Vrata and the like. According to the Tantra Shâstra a woman may not only receive Mantra, but may, as Guru, initiate and give it (See Rudrayâmala II. ii, and XV). She is worshipped both as wife of Guru and as Guru herself (See ib. I. i. Mâtrikâbheda Tantra (c. vii) Annadâkalpa Tantra cited in Prânatoshinî p. 68, and as regards the former Yoginî Tantra cap. i. *Guru-patnî Mahe-shânî gurur eva*). The Devî is Herself the Guru of all Shâstras and woman, as indeed all females Her embodiments, are in a peculiar sense, Her representatives. For this reason all women are worshipful and no harm should be ever done them, nor should any female animal be sacrificed.

Pûjâ is the common term for ritual worship of which there are numerous synonyms in the Sanskrit language such as Archanâ, Vandana, Saparyyâ, Arhanâ, Namasyâ, Archâ, Bhajanâ, though some of these stress certain aspects of it. Pûjâ as also Vrata which are Kâmya, that is done to gain a particular end, are preceded by the Sangkalpa that is a statement of the resolve to worship as also of the particular object (if any) with which it is done. It runs in the form "I—of Gotra———and so forth (identifying the individual) am about to perform this Pûjâ (or Vrata) with the object——". Thereby the attention and will of the Sâdhaka are focussed and braced up for the matter in hand. Here as elsewhere the ritual which follows is designed both by its complexity and variety (which prevents the tiring of the mind) to keep the attention always fixed, to prevent it from straying and to emphasize both attention and will by continued acts and mental workings.

The object of the worship is the Ishtadevatâ, that is the particular form of the Deity whom the Sâdhaka wor-



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

ships, such as Devî in the case of a Shâkta, Shiva in the case of the Shaiva (in eight forms in the case of Ashtamûrti-pûjâ as to which see Todala Tantra cap. V) and Vishnu as such or in His forms as Râma and Krishna in the case of the Vaishnava Sâdhaka.

An object is used in the outer Pûja (Vâhyapûjâ) such as an image (Pratimâ) a picture, and emblem such as a jar (Kalasa) Shâlagrâma (in the case of Vishnu worship) Linga and Yoni or Gaurîpatta (in the case of the worship) of Shiva (with Devî) or a geometrical design called Yantra. In the case of outer worship the first is the lowest form and the last the highest. It is not all who are capable of worshipping with a Yantra. It is obvious that simpler minds must be satisfied with images which delineate the form of the Devatâ completely and in material form. The advanced contemplate Devatâ in the lines and curves of a Yantra.

In external worship the Sâdhaka should first worship inwardly the mental image of the Devatâ which the outer objects assist to produce and then by the life-giving (Prânapratishthâ) ceremony he should infuse the image with life by the communication to it of the light, consciousness, and energy (Tejas) of the Brahman within him to the image without, from which there then bursts the lustre of Her whose substance is Consciousness Itself (Chaitanyamayî). In every place She exists as Shakti whether in stone or metal as elsewhere, but in matter is veiled and seemingly inert. Chaitanya (Consciousness) is aroused by the worshipper through the Prânapratishthâ Mantra. An object exists for a Sâdhaka only in so far as his mind perceives it. For and in him its essence as Consciousness is realised.

This is a fitting place to say a word on the subject of the alleged "Idolatry" of the Hindus. We are all aware that a similar charge has been made against Christians of the Catholic Church, and those who are con-



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

versant with this controversy will be better equipped both with knowledge and caution against the making of general and indiscriminate charges.

It may be well doubted whether the world contains an idolator in the sense in which that term is used by persons who speak of "the heathen worship of sticks and stones." According to the traveller A. B. Ellis ("The Tshi speaking peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa") even "negroes of the Gold Coast are always conscious that their offerings and worship are not paid to the inanimate object itself but to the indwelling God, and every native with whom I have conversed on the subject has laughed at the possibility of its being supposed that he would worship or offer sacrifice to some such object as a stone." Nevertheless a missionary or some traveller might tell him that he did. An absurd attitude on the part of the superior Western is that in which the latter not merely tells the coloured races what they should believe but what notwithstanding denial, they *in fact* believe and *ought* to hold according to the tenets of the latter's religion.

The charge of idolatry is kept up, notwithstanding the explanations given of their beliefs by those against whom it is made. In fact the conviction that Eastern races are inferior is responsible for this. If we disregard such beliefs then anything may be idolatrous. Thus to those who disbelieve in transubstantiation the Catholic worshipper of the Host is an idolater worshipping the material substance bread. But to the worshipper who believes that it is the Body of the Lord under the accident or form of bread such worship can never be idolatrous. Similarly as regards the Hindu worship of images. They are not to be held to worship clay or stone because others disbelieve in the efficacy of the Prânapratishthâ ceremony. When impartially considered, there is nothing superstitious or ignorant in this rite. Nor is this the case with the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Whether either rite has the alleged



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

effect attributed to it is another question. All matter is, according to Shâkta doctrine, a manifestation of Shakti that is the Mother Herself in material guise. She is present in and as everything which exists. The ordinary man does not so view things. He sees merely gross unconscious matter. If, with such an outlook, he were fool enough to worship what was inferior to himself he would be an idolater. But the very act of worship implies that the object is superior and conscious. To the truly enlightened Shâkta everything is an object of worship for all is a manifestation of God who is therein worshipped. But that way of looking at things must be attained. The untutored mind must be aided to see that this is so. This is effected by the Prânapratishthâ rite by which "life is established" in the image of gross matter. The Hindu then believes that the Pratimâ or image is a representation of and the dwelling place of Deity. What difference it may be asked does this really make? How can a man's belief alter the objective fact? The answer is, it does not. God is not manifested by the image merely because the worshipper believes Him to be there. He is there in fact already. All that the Prânapratishthâ rite does is to enliven the consciousness of the worshipper into a realisation of His presence. And if He be both in fact, and to the belief of the worshipper, present then the Image is a proper object of worship. It is the subjective state of the worshipper's mind which determines whether an act is idolatrous or not. The Prânapratishthâ rite is thus a mode by which the Sâdhaka is given a true object of worship and is enabled to affirm a belief in the divine omnipresence with respect to that particular object of his devotion. The ordinary notion that it is matter is cast aside and the divine notion that Divinity is manifested in all that is, is held and affirmed. "Why not then" (some missionary has said) "worship my boot." There are contemptible people who do so in the European sense of that phrase. But nevertheless there is no reason, according



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

to Shâkta teaching, why even his boot should not be worshipped by one who regards it and all else as a manifestation of the One who is in every object which constitutes the Many. Thus this Monistic belief is affirmed in the worship by some Shâktas of that which to the gross and ordinary mind is merely an object of lust. To such minds this is a revolting and obscene worship. To those for whom such object of worship is obscene, such worship is and must be obscene. But what of the mind which is so purified that it sees the Divine presence in that which to the mass of men is an incitement to and object of lust? A man who without desire can *truly* so worship must be a very high Sâdhaka indeed. The Shâkta Tantra affirms the Greek saying that to the pure all things are pure. In this belief and with, as the Jnânârnavâ Tantra says, the object of teaching men that this is so, we find the ritual use of substances ordinarily accounted impure. The real objection to the general adoption or even knowledge of such rites lies, from the Monistic standpoint, in the fact that the vast bulk of humanity are either of impure or weak mind, and that the worship of an object which is capable of exciting lust will produce it, not to mention the hypocrites who under cover of such a worship would seek to gratify their desires. In the Paradise Legend, just as amongst some primitive tribes, man and woman go naked. It was and is after they have fallen that nakedness is observed by minds no longer innocent. Rightly therefore from their standpoint the bulk of men condemn such worship. Because whatever may be its theoretical justification under conditions which rarely occur, pragmatically and for the bulk of men they are full of danger. Those who go to meet temptation should remember the risk. It is recorded of Robert d'Arbrissel the saintly founder of the community of Fonte d'Evrault that he was wont on occasions to sleep with his nuns, to mortify his flesh and as a mode of strengthening his will against its demands. He did not touch the nuns, but his



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

exceptional success in preserving his chastity would be no ground for the ordinary man undertaking so dangerous an experiment. In short, in order to be completely just, we must, in individual cases, consider intention and good faith. But practically and for the mass, the counsel and duty to avoid the occasion of sin is, according to Shâstrik principles themselves, enjoined. As a matter of fact such worship has been confined to so limited a class that it would not have been necessary to deal with the subject were it not connected with Shâkta worship the matter in hand. To revert again to the "missionary's boot", whilst all things may be the object of worship, choice is naturally made of those objects which, by reason of their effect on the mind, are more fitted for it. An image or one of the usual emblems is more likely to raise in the mind of the worshipper the thought of a Devatâ than a boot, and therefore, even apart from scriptural authority, it would not be chosen. But it has been again objected, if the Brahman is in and appears equally in all things how do we find some affirming that one image is more worthy of worship than another. Similarly in Catholic countries we find worshippers who prefer certain churches, shrines, places of pilgrimage and representations of Christ, His Mother and the Saints. Such preferences are not statements of absolute worth but of personal inclinations in the worshipper due to his belief in their special efficacy for him. Psychologically all this means that a particular mind finds that it works best in the direction desired by means of particular instruments. The image of Kâlî provokes in general only disgust in an European mind. But to the race-consciousness which has evolved that image of Deity it is the cause and object of fervent devotion. In every case those means must be sought and applied which will produce a practical and good result for the individual consciousness in question. It must be admitted however that image worship like everything else is capable of abuse; that is a wrong and (for want of a



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

better term) an idolatrous tendency may manifest. This is due to ignorance. Thus the aunt of a Catholic school boy friend of mine had a statue of St. Anthony of Padua. If the saint did not answer her prayers, she used to give the image a beating, and then shut it up in a cupboard with its "face to the wall" by way of punishment. I could cite numbers of instances of this ignorant state of mind taken from the past and present history of Europe and other Christian lands. It is quite erroneous to suppose that such absurdities are confined to India, Africa or other coloured countries. Nevertheless we must in each case distinguish between the true scriptural teaching and the acts and notions of which they are an abuse.

The materials used or things done in Pûjâ are called Upachârâ. The common number of these is sixteen but there are more and less (see Principles of Tantra, vol. ii). The sixteen which include some of the lesser number and are included in the greater are (1) Âsana (seating of the image) (2) Svâgata (welcoming of the Devatâ) (3) Pâdya (water for washing the feet) (4) Arghya (offerings which may be general or Sâ mânâya and special or Vishesha) made in the vessel (5) (6) Âchamana (water for sipping and cleansing the lips offered twice) (7) Madhuparka (honey, ghee, milk and curd) (8) Snâna (water for bathing) (9) Vasana (cloth for garment) (10) Âbharana (jewels) (11) Gandha (Perfume) (12) Pushpa (flowers) (13) Dhûpa (incense) (14) Dîpa (lights) (15) Naivedya (food) (16) Vandana or Namaskriyâ (prayer).

Why should such things be chosen? The Western who has heard of lights, flower and incense in Christian worship may yet ask the reason of the rest. The answer is simple. Honour is paid to the Devatâ in the way honour is paid to friends and those men who are worthy of veneration. So the Sâdhaka gives that same honour to the Devatâ, a course that the least advanced mind can understand. When the guest arrives he is bidden to take a seat, he is welcomed



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

and asked how he has journeyed. Water is given to him to wash his dusty feet and his mouth. Food and other things are given him and so on. These are done in honour of men, and the Deity is honoured in the same way.

Some particular articles vary with the Pûjâ. Thus Tulasî leaf is issued in the Vishnu-pûjâ; bael leaf (Bilva) in the Shiva-pûjâ and to the Devî is offered the scarlet hibiscus (Jabâ). The Mantras said and other ritual details may vary according to the Devatâ worshipped. The seat (Âsana) of the worshipper is purified as also the Upachâra. Salutation is made to the Shakti of support (Âdhâra-shakti) the Power sustaining all. Obstructive Spirits are driven away (Bhûtâpasarpana) and the ten quarters are fenced from their attack by striking the earth three times with the left foot, uttering the weapon-mantra (Astrabîja) "Phat", and by snapping the fingers round the head. Other rituals also enter into the worship besides the offering of Upachâra such as Prânâyâmâ or Breath control, Bhûtashuddhi or purification of the elements of the body, Japa of Mantra, Nyâsa (v. *post*) meditation (Dhyâna) and obeisance (Prânâma).

Besides the outer and material Pûjâ there is a higher inner (Antarpûjâ) and mental (Mânasapûjâ). Here there is no offering of material things to an image or emblem but the ingredients (Upachâra) of worship are imagined only. Thus the Sâdhaka in lieu of material flowers offered with the hands, lays at the feet of the Devatâ the flower of good action. In the secret Râjasik Pûjâ of the Vâmâchârî the Upachâra are the five Tattvas (Panchatattva), wine, meat and so forth described in the next Chapter. Just as flowers and incense and so forth are offered in the general public ritual, so in this special secret ritual, dealt with in the next Chapter, the functions of eating, drinking and sexual union are offered to the Devatâ.

A marked feature of the Tantra Shâstras is the use of the Yantra in worship. This then takes the place of the



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

image or emblem, when the Sādhaka has arrived at the stage when he is qualified to worship with Yantra. Yantra, in its most general sense, means simply instrument or that by which anything is accomplished. In worship it is that by which the mind is fixed on its object. The Yantra in lieu of the image or emblem holds the attention, and is both the object of worship, and the means by which it is carried out. It is said to be so called because it subdues (Niyāntrana) lust, anger and the other sufferings of Jīva and the sufferings caused thereby. (Tantra-tattva, 519. Sādhāraṇa Upāsānā-tattva). The Yantra is a diagram drawn or painted on paper, or other substances, engraved on metal, cut on crystal or stone. The magical treatises mention extraordinary Yantras drawn on leopard's and donkey's skin, human bones and so forth. The Yantras vary in design according to the Devatā whose Yantra it is and in whose worship it is used. The difference between a Mandala (which is also a figure, marked generally on the ground) is that whilst a Mandala may be used in the case of any Devatā, a Yantra is appropriate to a specific Devatā only. As different Mantras are different Devatās, and differing Mantras are used in the worship of each of the Devatās, so variously formed Yantras are peculiar to each Devatā and are used in its worship. The Yantras are therefore of various designs according to the object of worship. The cover, of "Tāntrik Texts" shows the great Shrī Yantra. In the metal or stone Yantras no figures of Devatās are shown, though these together with the appropriate Mantras commonly appear in Yantras drawn or painted on paper, such as the Devatā of worship, Āvarana Shaktis and so forth. All Yantras have a common edging called Bhūpura, a quadrangular figure with four "doors" which encloses and separates the Yantra from the outside world. A Yantra in my possession shows serpents crawling outside the Bhūpura. The Kaulāvalīya Tantra says that the distinction between Yantra and Devatā is that between the body and the self. Mantra is Devatā



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

and Yantra is Mantra, in that it is the body of the Devatâ who is Mantra.

*Yantram mantra-mayang proktang mantrâtma devataiva hi Dehâtmanor yatha bhedo, yantradevatâyos tatha*

As in the case of the image certain preliminaries precede the worship of Yantra. The worshipper first meditates upon the Devatâ and then arouses Him or Her in himself. He then communicates the Divine Presence thus aroused to the Yantra. When the Devatâ has by the appropriate Mantra been invoked into the Yantra, the vital airs (Prâna) of the Devatâ are infused therein by the Prânapratishtâ ceremony, Mantra and Mudrâ (see for ritual Mahânirvâna VI. 63 *et seq.*) The Devatâ is thereby installed in the Yantra which is no longer mere gross matter veiling the Spirit which has been always there, but instinct with its aroused presence which the Sâdhaka first welcomes and then worships.

In Tântrik worship the body as well as the mind has to do its part, the former being made to follow the latter. This is of course seen in all ritual, where there is bowing, genuflection and so forth. As all else, gesture is here much elaborated. Thus certain postures (Âsana) are assumed in worship and Yoga. There is obeisance (Pranâma) sometimes with eight parts of the body (Ashtangapranâma) and circumambulation (Pradakshina) of the image. In Nyâsa the hands are made to touch various parts of the body and so forth. A notable instance of this practice are the Mudrâs which are largely used in the Tântrik ritual. Mudrâ in this sense is ritual manual gesture. The term Mudrâ has three meanings. In worship (Upâsanâ) it means these gestures. In Yoga it means postures in which not only the hands but the whole body takes part. And in the secret worship with the Panchatattva Mudrâ means various kinds of parched cereals which are taken with the wine and other ingredients (Upachâra) of that particular worship. The term Mudrâ is derived from the root "to please" (Mud). The Tantrarâja



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

says that in its Upâsanâ form, Mudrâ is so called because it gives pleasure to the Devatâs. These Mudrâs are very numerous. It has been said that there are 108 of which 55 are in common use (*Shabdakalpadruma Sub, Voc Mudrâ* and see *Nirvâna Tantra Chap. XI*). Possibly there are more. 108 is a favourite number. The Mudrâ of Upâsanâ is the outward bodily expression of inner resolve which it at the same time intensifies. We all know how in speaking we emphasize and illustrate our thought by gesture. So in welcoming (âvâhana) the Devatâ, an appropriate gesture is made. When veiling any thing the hands assume that position (*Avagunthana Mudrâ*). Thus again in making offering (*Arghya*) a gesture is made which represents a fish (*Matsya Mudrâ*) by placing the right hand on the back of the left and extending the two thumbs finlike on each side of the hands. This is done as the expression of the wish and intention that the vessel which contains water may be regarded as an ocean with fish and all other aquatic animals. The Sâdhaka says to the Devatâ of his worship, "this is but a small offering of water in fact, but so far as my desire to honour you is concerned regard it is as if I were offering you an ocean." "The Yoni in the form of an inverted triangle represents the Devî. By the Yonî Mudrâ the fingers form a triangle as a manifestation of the inner desire that the Devî should come and place Herself before the worshipper, for the Yoni is Her Pîtha or Yantra. Some of the Mudrâ of Hathayoga which are in the nature both of a health giving gymnastic and special positions required in Yoga-practice are described in A. Avalon's "The Serpent Power." The *Gheranda Samhitâ*, a Tântrik Yoga work, says (III. 4. 8. 10.) that knowledge of the Yoga Mudrâs grant all Siddhi and that their performance produces physical benefits, such as stability, firmness, and cure of disease.

Bhûtashuddhi, an important Tântrik rite, means purification of five "elements" of which the body is composed and not "removal of evil demons," as Professor Monier



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Williams Dictionary has it. Though one of the meanings of Bhûta is Ghost or Spirit, it is never safe to give such literal translations without knowledge, or absurd mistakes are likely to be made. The Mantramahodadhi (Taranga I.) speaks of it as a right which is preliminary to the worship of a Deva

*Devârchâ-yogyatâ-prâptyai bhûta-shuddhing samâcharet*

The material human body is a compound of the five Bhûtas of "earth" "water" "fire" "air" and "ether." These terms have not their usual English meaning but denote the five forms in which Prakriti the Divine Power as *materia prima* manifests Herself. These have each a centre of operation in the five Chakras or Padmas (Centres or Lotuses) which exist in the spinal column of the human body (See A. Avalon's *Serpent Power* where this matter is fully described). In the lowest of these centres (Mûlâdhâra) the Great Devî Kundalinî, a form of the Saguna Brahman, resides. She is ordinarily sleeping there. In Kundalinî-yoga She is aroused and brought up through the five centres, absorbing as She passes through each the Bhûta of that centre, the subtle Tanmâtra from which it derives and the connected organ of sense (Indriya). Having absorbed all these, She is led to the sixth or mind centre (Âjnâ) between the eyebrows where the last Bhûta or ether is absorbed in mind, and the latter in the Subtle Prakriti. The last in the form of Kundalî Shakti then unites with Shiva in the upper brain called the thousand petalled lotus (Sahasrâra). In Yoga this involution actually takes place with the result that ecstasy (Samâdhi) is attained. But very few are successful Yogîs. Therefore Bhûtashuddhi in the case of the ordinary worshipper is an imaginary process only. The Sâdhaka imagines Kundalî, that She is roused, that one element is absorbed into the other and so on, until all is absorbed in Brahman. The Yoga process will be found described in "The Serpent Power" and Ch. V. 93 *et seq.* of the Mahânirvâna (see transla-



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

tion by Arthur Avalon) gives an account of the ritual process. The Sâdhaka having dissolved all in Brahman, a process which instils into his mind the unity of all, then thinks of the "black man of sin" in his body. The body is then purified. By breathing and Mantra it is first dried and then burnt with all its sinful inclinations. It is then mentally bathed with the nectar of the water-mantra from head to feet. The Sâdhaka then thinks that in lieu of his old sinful body a new Deva body has come into being. He who with faith and sincerity believes that he is regenerated is in fact so. To each who truly believes that his body is a Deva body it becomes a Deva body. The Deva body thus brought into being is strengthened by the Earth-mantra and divine gaze (Divya-drishti). Saying, with Bîjâs, the Mantra "He I am" (So'ham) the Sâdhaka by Jîva-nyâsa infuses his body with the life of the Devî the Mother of all.

Nyâsa is a very important and powerful Tântrik rite. The word comes from the root "to place" and means the placing of the tips of the fingers and palm of the right hand on various parts of the body accompanied by Mantra. There are four general divisions of Nyâsa *viz.* Inner (Antar) outer (Vaher) according to the creative (Srishti) and dissolving (Sanghâra) order (Krama) Nyâsa is of many kinds such as Jîva-nyâsa, Mâtrikâ or Lipi-nyâsa, Rishi-nyâsa Shadanga-nyâsa on the body (Hridayâdi-shadanga-nyâsa) and with the hands (Angushthâdi-shadanga-nyâsa) Pîtha-nyâsa and so on. The Kulârnava (IV. 20) mentions six kinds. Each of these might come under one or the other of the four general heads.

Before indicating the principle of this rite let us briefly see what it is. After the Sâdhaka has by Bhûta-shuddhi dissolved the sinful body and made a new Deva body, he by Jîva-nyâsa infuses into it the life of the Devî. Placing his hand on his heart he says "He I am" thereby identifying himself with Shiva-Shakti. He then emphasises it by going



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

over the parts of the body in detail with the Mantra Âng and the rest thus:—saying the Mantra and what he is doing, and touching the body on the particular part with his fingers, he recites:—Âng, (and the rest) the vital force (Prâna) of the blessed Kâlikâ (in this instance) are here. Âng (and the rest) the life of the Blessed Kâlikâ is here; Âng (and the rest) all the senses of the Blessed Kâlikâ are here; Âng (and the rest) may the speech, mind, sight, hearing, smell of the Blessed Kâlikâ coming here ever abide here in peace and happiness. Svâhâ. By this the body is thought to become like that of Devatâ (Devatâmaya). Mâtrikâ are the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, for as from a mother comes birth, so from the Brahman who, as the creator of “ sound ” is called “ Shabdabrahman ”, the universe proceeds. The Mantra-bodies of the Devatâ are composed of the Mâtrikâ or letters. The Sâdhaka first sets the letters mentally (Antar-mâtrikâ-nyâsa) in their several places in the six inner centres (Chakra) and then externally by physical action (Vâhya-mâtrikâ-nyâsa). The letters of the alphabet form the different parts of the body of the Devatâ which is thus built up in the Sâdhaka himself. He places his hand on different parts of his body, uttering distinctly at the same time the appropriate Mâtrikâ for that part. The mental disposition in the Chakra is that given in the “ Serpent-Power ” by A. Avalon, each letter being repeated thus Ong Hang Namah (obeisance) Ong Kshang Namah and so on with the rest. The external disposition is as follows:—The vowels are placed on the forehead, face, right and left eye, right and left ear, right and left nostril, right and left cheek, upper and lower lip, upper and lower teeth, head and hollow of the mouth. The consonants Ka to Va are placed on the base of the right arm and the elbow, wrist base and tips of fingers, left arm, and right and left leg, right and left side, back navel, belly, heart, right and left shoulder, and space between the shoulders (Kakuda). Then from the heart to the right palm, Sha; from the heart to the left palm Sha



## SHAKTA SÂDHANÂ

(second) ; from the heart to the right foot Sa ; from the heart to the left foot Ha ; and lastly from the heart to the belly and the heart to the mouth Ksha. This Mâtrikânyâsa is of several kinds.

One form of Rishi-nyâsa is as follows :—In the head Salutation to Brahmâ and the Brahmashis ; in the mouth Salutation to Gâyatrî and other forms of Verse ; in the heart Salutation to the primordial Devatâ Kâlî ; in the hidden part (Guhya) salutation to the Bîja Krîng, in the two feet salutation to Hrîng ; in all the body salutation to Shrîng and Kâlikâ. In Shadanga-nyâsa on the body, certain letters are placed with the salutation Namah, and with the Mantras Svâhâ, Vashat, Vaushat, Hrîng, Phat on the heart, head, crown-lock (Shikhâ) eyes, the front and back of the palm. In Kara-nyâsa the Mantras are assigned to the thumbs, index fingers, middle fingers, fourth fingers, little fingers, and the front and back of the palm. From the above examples the meaning of Nyâsa is seen. By associating the Divine with every part of the body and with the whole of it, the mind and body are sought to be made divine to the consciousness of the Sâdhaka. They are that already but the mind is made to so regard them. What if it does the English reader may ask? How can the regarding a thing as divine make it so? In one sense it does not, for mind and body are as Shakti divine whether this be known or not. But this must be known to the Sâdhaka or they are not divine *for him*. His mind is trained to look upon them as divine manifestations of the one Supreme Essence which at base he and they are. According to Hindu views primary importance is attached to mental states, for as the Divine Thought made the World, man makes his character therein by what he thinks. If he is always thinking on material things and has desires therefor he becomes himself material and is given over to lust and other passions. If on the contrary he has always his mind on God, and associates everything with the thought of Him, his mind becomes pure



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

and divine. As the Upanishad says "What a man thinks that he becomes." Thought is everything moulding our bodily features, moral and intellectual character and disposition, leading to and appearing in our actions. Much superficial criticism is levelled at this or other ritual, its variety, complexity, its lengthy character and so forth. If it is performed mechanically and without attention, doubtless it is mere waste of time. But if it is done with will, attention, faith and devotion it must necessarily achieve the result intended. The reiteration of the same idea under varying forms brings home with emphasis to the consciousness of the Sâdhaka the doctrine his Scripture teaches him, *viz.*, that in his essence he is spirit and in his mind and body its manifestation. All is divine. All is Consciousness. The object of this and all the other ritual is to make that statement a real experience for the Sâdhaka. For the attainment of that state in which the Sâdhaka feels that the nature (Bhâva) of the Devatâ has come upon him, Nyâsa is a great auxiliary. It is as it were the wearing of Divine jewels in different parts of the body. The Bîjas of the Devatâs (which are Devatâs) are the jewels which the Sâdhaka places on the different parts of his body. By the particular Nyâsa he places his Abhîshta-devatâ in such parts and by Vyâpaka-Nyâsa he spreads its presence throughout himself. He becomes thus permeated by the Divine and its manifestations, thus merging or mingling himself in or with the Divine Self or Lord. Nyâsa, Âsana and other ritual are necessary for the production of the desired state of mind and its purification (Chittashuddhi). The whole aim and end of ritual is Chittashuddhi. Transformation of thought is transformation of being, for particular existence is a projection of thought, and thought is a projection from the Consciousness which is the Root of all.

This is the essential principle and rational basis of this, as of all, Tântrik Sâdhanâ. Nyâsa also has certain physical



## SHAKTA SÂDHANÂ

effects for these are dependent on the state of mind. The pure restful state of meditation is reflected in the body of the worshipper. The actions of Nyâsa are said to stimulate the nerve centres and to effect the proper distribution of the Shaktis of the human frame according to their dispositions and relations, preventing discord and distraction during worship, which itself holds steady the state thus induced.

In the Chapters on Mantramayî Shakti and Varnamâlâ as also in my "Studies in the Mantrashâstra" I have dealt with the nature of Mantra and of its Sâdhanâ. An account will also be found of the subject in the Mantratattva Chapter of the second volume of "Principles of Tantra." Mantra is Devatâ and by Sâdhanâ therewith the sought for (Sâdhya) Devatâ is attained, that is, becomes present to the consciousness of the Sâdhaka or Mantrin. Though the purpose of Worship (Pûjâ) Reading (Pâtha) Hymn (Stava) Sacrifice (Homa) Meditation (Dhyâna) and that of the Dîkshâ mantra obtained on initiation are the same, yet the latter is said to be far more powerful, and this for the reason that in the first the Sâdhaka's Sâdhanâ-shakti only operates, whilst in the case of Mantra that Sâdhanâ shakti works in conjunction with Mantra shakti which has the revelation and force of fire, than which nothing is more powerful. The special Mantra which is received at initiation (Dîkshâ) is the Bîja or Seed-Mantra sown in the field of the Sâdhaka's heart and the Tântrik Sandhya, Nyâsa, Pûjâ, and the like are the stem and branches upon which hymns of praise (Stuti) and prayer and homage (Vandana) are the leaves and flower, and the Kavacha consisting of Mantra, the fruit. (See Chapter on Mantratattva, vol. ii, Principles of Tantra, Ed. A. Avalon).

The utterance of a Mantra without knowledge of its meaning or of the Mantra-sâdhanâ is a mere movement of the lips and nothing more. The mantra sleeps. This is not infrequently the case in the present degeneracy of Hindu



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

religion. Not long ago, for example, a Brâhmana lady confided to me her Dîkshâ-mantra and asked me for its meaning, as she understood that I had a Bîja-kosha or Lexicon which gave the meaning of the letters. Her Guru had not told her of its meaning and enquiries elsewhere amongst Brâhmanas were fruitless. She had been repeating the Mantra for years, and time had brought the wisdom that it could not do her much good to repeat what was without meaning to her. Japa is the utterance of Mantra as described later. Mantra-sâdhânâ is elaborate. There are various processes preliminary to and involved in its right utterance which again consists of Mantra. There are the sacraments or purifications (Sangskâra) of the Mantra (Tantrasâra p. 90). There are "birth" and "death" defilements of a Mantra (ib. 75 *et seq.*) which have to be cleansed. This and of course much else mean that the mind of the Mantrin has to be prepared and cleansed for the realisation of the Devatâ. There are a number of defects (Dosha) which have to be avoided or cured. There is purification of the mouth which utters the Mantra (Mukha-shodhana). See as to this and the following Shâradâ Tilaka (cap. x) purification of the tongue (Jihvâ-shodhana) and of the Mantra (Ashaucha-bhanga), Mantra processes called Kullûka, Nirvâna, Setu (see Shâradâ Tilaka *loccit* Tantra-sâra, and Purashcharanabodhinî, p. 48) which vary with the Devatâ of worship, awakening of Mantra (Nidrâbhanga) its vitalizing through consciousness (Mantra-chaitanya) pondering on the meaning of the Mantra and of the Mâtrikâs constituting the body of the Devatâ (Mantrârtha bhâvanâ). There are Dîpanî, Yoni-mudrâ (see Purohita-darpanam) with meditation on the Yoni-rûpa-bhagavatî with the Yonibîja (Eng). and so forth. In ascertaining what Mantra may be given to any particular individual certain Chakra calculations are made according to which Mantras are divided into those which are friendly, serving, supporting or destroying (Siddha, Sâdhya, Susidâha, Ari). All this



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

ritual has as its object the establishment of that pure state of mind and feeling which are necessary for success (Mantra-siddhi). At length the Mantrin through his Chit-shakti awakening and vitalising the Mantra which in truth is one with his own consciousness (in that form) pierces through all its centres and contemplates the Spotless One (Kubjikâ Tantra V). The Shakti of the Mantra is called the Vâchâkâ Shakti or the means by which the Vâchyâ Shakti or ultimate object is attained. The Mantra lives by the energy of the former. The Saguna-shakti in the form of the Mantra is awakened by Sâdhanâ and worshipped and She it is who opens the portals whereby the Vâchya-Shakti is reached. Thus the Mother in the Saguna form is the Presiding Deity (Adhisthâtrî Devatâ) of the Gâyatrî Mantra. As the Nirguna (formless) One, She is its Vâchyâ Shakti. Both are in truth one and the same. But the Sâdhaka, by the laws of his nature and its three Gunas, must first meditate on the gross (Sthûla form before he can realise the subtle (Sûkshma) form which is his liberator. So far from being merely superstition the Mantra sâdhanâ is, in large part, based on profound notions of the nature of Consciousness and the psychology of its workings. The Sâdhaka's mind and disposition are purified, the Devatâ is put before him in Mantra form and by his own power of devotion (Sâdhanâ Shakti) and that latent in the Mantra itself (Mantra-shakti) and expressed in his mind on realization therein, such mind is first identified with the gross, and then with the subtle, form which is his own transformed consciousness and its powers.

Japa is defined as *Vidhânenâ mantrochchâranam* that is (for default of other more suitable words) the utterance or recitation of Mantra according to certain rules. Japa may however be of a nature which is not defined by the word recitation. It is of three kinds (Jnânârnavâ Tantra XX) namely Vâchika Japa, Upângshu Japa, Mânasa Japa. The first is the lowest and the last the highest form. Vâchika is



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

verbal Japa in which the Mantra is distinctly and audibly recited (Spashta-vâchâ). Upângshu Japa is less gross and therefore superior to this. Here the Mantra is not uttered (Avyakta) but there is a movement of the lips and tongue (Sphurad-vaktra) but no articulate sound is heard. In the highest form or mental utterance (Mânasa-japa) there is neither articulate sound nor movement. Japa takes place in the mind only by meditation on the letters (Chintanâkshara-rûpavân). Certain conditions are prescribed as those under which Japa should be done, relating to physical cleanliness, the dressing of the hair, garments worn, the seated posture (Âsana), the avoidance of certain states of mind and actions, and the nature of the recitation. Japa is done a specified number of times, in lakhs by great Sâdhakas. If the mind is really centred and not distracted throughout these long and repeated exercises the result must be successful. Repetition is in all things the usual process by which a certain thing is fixed in the mind. It is not considered foolish for one who has to learn a lesson to repeat it himself over and over again until it is got by heart. The same principle applies to Sâdhanâ. If the "Hail Mary" is said again and again in the Catholic rosary, and if the Mantra is similarly said in the Indian Japa, neither proceeding is foolish, provided that both be done with attention and devotion. The injunction against "vain repetition" was not against repetition but that of a vain character. Counting is done either with a Mâlâ or rosary (Mâlâ-japa) or with the thumb of the right hand upon the joints of the fingers of that hand according to a method varying according to the Mantra Kara-japa.

Purashcharana is a form of Sâdhanâ in which, with other ritual, Japa of Mantra, done a large number of times, forms the chief part. A short account of the rite is given in the Purashcharana-bodhinî by Harakumâra Tagore (1895). (See also Tantrasâra 71 and the Purashcharyârnavâ of the King of Nepal). The ritual deals with preparation



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANA

for the Sâdhanâ as regards chastity, food, worship, measurements of the Mandapa or Pandal and of the altar, the time and place of performance and other matters. The Sâdhaka must lead a chaste life (Brahmacharyya) during the period prescribed. He must eat the pure food called Havishyânnam or boiled milk (Kshîra), fruits, Indian vegetables, and avoid all other food which has the effects of stimulating the passions. He must bathe, do Japa of the Sâvitri Mantra, entertain Brâhmanas and so forth. Panchagavya is eaten that is the five products of the cow namely milk, curd, ghee, urine, and dung the two last (except in the case of the rigorously pious) in smaller quantity. Before the Pûjâ there is worship of Ganesha and Kshetrapâla and the Sun, Moon, and Devas are invoked. Then follows the Sangkalpa. The Ghata or Kalasa (jar) is placed in which the Devatâ is invoked. A Mandala or figure of a particular design is marked on the ground and on it the jar is placed. Then the five or nine gems are placed in the jar which is painted red and covered with leaves. The ritual then prescribes for the tying of the crown lock (Shikhâ), the posture (âsana) of the Sâdhaka, Japa, Nyâsa, and the Mantra ritual. There is meditation as directed, Mantra-chaitanya and Japa of the Mantra the number of times for which vow has been made.

The daily life of the religious Hindu was in former times replete with worship. (I refer those who are interested in the matter to the little work "The Daily Practice of the Hindus" by Srîsha Chandra Vasu, the Sandhyâvandana of all Vedik Shâkhâs by B. V. Kamesvara Aiyar, the Kriyâkândavâridhi and Purohita-darpanam. The positions and Mudrâs are illustrated in Mrs. S. C. Belnos "Sandhyâ or daily prayer of the Brahmin" published in 1831.) It is not here possible to do more than indicate the general outlines of the rites followed.

As the Sâdhaka awakes he makes salutation to the Guru of all and recites the appropriate Mantras and confess-



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

ing his inherent human frailty (" I know Dharma and yet would not do it. I know Adharma and yet would not renounce it,") the Hindu form of the common experience " Video meliora ", he prays that he may do right and offers all the actions of the day to God. Upon touching the ground on leaving his bed he salutes the Earth, the manifestation of the All-Good. He then bathes to the accompaniment of Mantra and makes oblation to the Devas, Rishis or Seers and the Pitris who issued from Brahmâ the Pîtâmaha of humanity, and then does Sandhyâ rite.

This is of Vaidik form which differs according to Veda and Shâkhâ for the twice-born and there is a Tântrikî Sandhyâ for others. It is performed thrice a day at morn, at noon, and evening. The Sandhyâ consists generally speaking of Âchamana (sipping of water) Mârjjana-snâna (sprinkling of the whole body) Prânâyâma (Breath-control), Aghamarshana (expulsion of sin), prayer to the Sun and then (the canon of the Sandhyâ) Japa of the Gâyatrî-mantra. Rishi-nyâsa and Shadanga-nyâsa (v. *ante*), and meditation on the Devî Gâyatrî in the morning as Brahmânî (Shakti of Creation) at midday as Vaishnavî (Shakti of maintenance) and in evening of Rudrânî (Shakti which "destroys" in the sense of withdrawing creation). The Sandhyâ with the Aupâsana fire-rite and Panchayajna are the three main daily rites, the last being offerings to the Devas to the Pitris, to animals and birds after the Vaishvadeva rite, to men (as by entertainment of guests) and the study of Vaidik texts. By these five Yajnas the worshipper daily places himself in right relations with all being, affirming such relation between Devas. Pitris, Spirits, men, the organic creation and himself.

The word Yajna comes from the root *Yaj* (to worship) and is commonly translated "sacrifice" though it includes other rituals than what an English reader might understand by that term. Thus Manu speaks of four kinds of Yajna as Deva, Bhauta (where ingredients are used) Nriyajna, and Pitri-



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

yajna. Sometimes the term is used in connection with any kind of ceremonial rite and so one hears of Japa-yajna (recitation of Mantra) Dhyâna-yajna (meditation) and so on. The Panchatattva ritual with wine and the rest is accounted a Yajna. Yajnas are also classified according to the dispositions and intentions of the worshipper into Sâttvika, Râjasika, and Tâmasika Yajna. A common form of Yajna is the Deva-yajna Homa rite in which offerings of ghee are made (in the Kunda or firepit) to the Deva of Fire who is the carrier of oblations to the Devas. Homa is an ancient Vaidik rite incorporated with other in the General Tântrik ritual. It is of several kinds and is performed either daily, or on special occasions, such as the sacred thread ceremony, marriage, and so forth. Besides the daily (Nitya) ceremonies such as Sandhyâ there are occasional rites (Naimittika) and the purificatory sacraments (Sangskâra) performed only once.

The ordinary ten Sangskâras (see Mahânirvana Tantra Ch. IX) are Vaidik rites done to aid and purify the individual in the important events of his life, namely the Garbhâdhâna sanctifying conception prior to the actual placing of the seed in the womb, the Pungsavana and Sîmantonnayana or actual conception and during pregnancy. It has been suggested that the first Sangskâra is performed with reference to the impulse to development from the "fertilization of the ovum to the critical period: the second with reference to the same impulse from the last period to that of the viability stage of the foetus" and the third refers to the period in which there is viability to the full term (See Appendix on Sangskâras. Pranavavâda I-194). Then follows the Sangskâra on birth (Jâta-karma) the naming ceremony (Nâma-karana) the taking of the child out doors for the first time to see the sun (Nishkramana), the child's first eating of rice (Annaprâsana), his tonsure (Chûdâkarana), the investiture in the case of the twice born with the sacred thread (Upanayana) when the child is reborn into spiritual life.



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

This initiation must be distinguished from the Tantrik initiation (Mantra-dîkshâ) when the Bîja-mantra is given by the Guru. Lastly there is marriage (Udvâha). These Sangskâras, which are all described in the ninth Chapter of the Mahânirvâna Tantra, are performed at certain stages in the human body with a view to effect results beneficial to the human organism through the superphysical and subjective methods of ancient Eastern science.

Vrata is a part of Naimittika occasional ritual or Karma. Commonly translated as vows, they are voluntary devotions performed at specified times in honour of particular Devatâs (such as Krishna's birthday or at any time (such as the Sâvitri-vrata). Each Vrata has its peculiarities but there are certain features common to all, such as chastity, fasting, bathing, taking of pure food only and no flesh or fish. The great Vrata for a Shâkta is the Durgâ-pûjâ in honour of the Devî as Durgâ.

The fasting which is done in these or other cases is called Tapas, a term which includes all forms of ascetic austerity and zealous Sâdhana such as the sitting between five fires (Panchâgni-tapah) and the like. Tapas has however a still wider meaning and is then of three kinds namely bodily (Shârîraka) by speech (Vâchika) and by mind (Mânasa) a common division both of Indian and Buddhist Tantra. The first includes external worship, reverence, support of the Guru, Brahmanas and the wise (Prâjna), bodily cleanliness, continence, simplicity of life and avoidance of hurt to any being (Âhingsâ). The second form includes truth, good gentle and affectionate speech, and study of the Vedas. The third or mental Tapas includes self-restraint, purity of disposition, tranquillity and silence. Each of these classes has three subdivisions, for Tapas may be Sâttvika, Râjasika, or Tâmasika according as it is done with faith, and without regard to its fruit; or for its fruit; or is done through pride and to gain honour or respect or power; or lastly which is done ignorantly or with a view to injure and destroy



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

others such as Abhichâra or the Sâdhanâ of the Tântrik Shat-karma (other than Shânti), that is fascination or Vashîkarana paralyzing or Stambhana, creating enmity or Vidveshana, driving away or Uchchâtana, and killing or Mârana when performed for malevolent purpose. Karma ritual is called Kâmya when it is done to gain some particular end such as health, prosperity and the like. The highest worship is called Nishkâma-karma, that is it is done not to secure any material benefit but for worship's sake only.

Though it is not part of ordinary ritual this is the only place where I can conveniently mention a peculiar Sâdhanâ, prevalent, so far as I am aware, mainly and if not wholly amongst Tântrikas of a Shâkta type which is called Nîlasâdhanâ or Black Sâdhanâ. This is of very limited application being practised by some Vîra Sâdhakas in the cremation ground. There are terrifying things in these rituals and therefore only the fearless practise them. The Vîra trains himself to be indifferent and above all fear. A leading rite is that called Shava Sâdhanâ which is done with the means of a human corpse. I have explained elsewhere (See "Serpent Power") why a corpse is chosen. The corpse is laid with its face to the ground. The Sâdhaka sits on the back of the body of the dead man on which he draws a Yantra and then worships. If the rite is successful it is said that the head of the corpse turns round and asks the Sâdhaka what is the boon he craves, be it liberation or some material benefit. It is believed that the Devî speaks through the mouth of the corpse which is thus the material medium by which She manifests Her presence. In another rite the corpse is used as a seat (Shavâsana). There are also (Âsana) on skulls (Mundâsana) and the funeral pyre (Chitâsana). However repellent or suspect these rites may appear to be to a western, it is nevertheless the fact that they have been and are practised by genuine Sâdhakas of fame such as in the past the famed Mahârâjâ of Nattore and others. The interior



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

cremation ground is within the body that being the place where the passions are burnt away in the fire of knowledge.

The Âdyâ Shakti or Supreme Power of the Shâktas is in the words of the Trishatî, concisely described as Ekânanda-chidâkritih. Eka = Mukya, Ânanda = Sukham, Chit = Chaitanyam or Prakâsha = Jnânâ ; and Âkritih = Svarûpa. She is thus Sachchidânanda-brahmarûpâ. Therefore the worship of Her is direct worship of the Highest. Shâkta doctrine is Advaitavâda. Therefore for all Advaitins its Sâdhanâ is the highest. The Shâkta Tantra is thus the Sâdhanâ Shâstra of Advaitavâda. This will explain why it is dear to, and so highly considered by, all Advaitins. It is claimed to be the one and only stepping stone which leads directly to Kaivalya or Nirvânâ-mukti; other forms of worship procuring for their followers (from the Saura to the Shaiva) various ascending forms of Gaunamukti. Others of course may claim this priority. Every sect considers itself to be the best and is in fact the best for those who, with intelligence, adopt it. Were it not so its members would presumably not belong to it but would choose some other. No true Shâkta however will wrangle with others over this. He will be content with his faith of which the Nigamakalpataru says, that as among castes the Brâhmanas are foremost, so amongst Sâdhakas are the Shâktas. For as Niruttara Tantra says, there is no Nirvâna without knowledge of Shakti (*Shaktijnanam vina devi nirvâna naiva jayate*). Amongst the Shâktas the foremost are said to be the worshippers of the Kâlî Mantra. The Âdimahâvidyâ is Kâlîkâ. Other forms are Mûrttibheda of Brahmarûpinî Kâlîkâ. Kâlîkula is followed by Jnânîs of Divya and Vîra Bhâvas ; and Shrîkula by Karmin Sâdhakas. According to Niruttara, Kâlîkula include Kâlî, Târâ, Raktakâlî, Bhuvanâ, Mardini, Triputâ, Tvaritâ, Pratyangirâ-vidyâ, Durgâ ; and Shrî Kula includes Sundarî, Bhairavî, Bâlâ, Bagala, Kamalâ, Dhûmâvatî, Mâtangî, Svapnavatî-vidyâ, Madhumatî Mahâvidyâ. Of these forms Kâlîkâ is the highest or Âdyamûrti as being Shuddhasattvaguna-



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

pradhânâ, Nirvikâra, Nirgunabrahmasvarûpaprakâshikâ, and, as the Kâmadhenu Tantra says, directly Kaivalya-dâyini. Târâ is Sattvagunâtmikâ, Tattvavidyâdâyini, for by Tattvajnâna one attains Kaivalya. Shodashî, Bhuvaneshvarî Chhinnamastâ are Rajahpradhânâ Sattvagunâtmikâ the givers of Gaunamukti and Svarga. Dhûmâvatî, Kamalâ, Bagalâ, Mâtangî are Tamahpradhânâ whose action is invoked in the magical Shatkarma.

The most essential point to remember as giving the key to all which follows is that Shâktadharmâ is Vedântik Monism (Advaitavâda). Gandharva Tantra says, "Having as enjoined saluted the Guru and thought "So'ham" the wise Sâdhaka the performer of the rite should meditate upon the unity of Jîva and Brahman."

*Gurûn natvâ vidhânena so'ham iti purodhasah*

*Aikyam sambhâvayet dhiman jivasya brahmano'pi cha*

Kâlî Tantra says: "Having thus meditated, the Sâdhaka should worship Devi with the notion So'ham"

*Evang dhyâtva tato deving so'hamâtmânam archayet.*

Kubjika Tantra says "A Sadhaka should meditate upon himself as one and the same with Her" (*Tayâ sahitmâtmânam ekîbhûtang vichintayet*). The same teaching is to be found throughout the Shâstra: Nîla Tantra directing the Sâdhaka to think of himself as one with Târinî; Gandharva Tantra telling him to meditate on the self as one with Tripurâ not different from Paramâtmâ; and Kâlîkulasarvasva as one with Kâlîkâ and so forth. For as the Kulârnavâ Tantra says "The body is the temple of God. Jîva is Sadâshiva. Let him give up his ignorance as the offering which is thrown away (Nirmâlya) and worship with the thought and feeling 'I am He.'"

*Deho devâlyah proktah jivo devah sadâshivah.*

*Tyajed ajnânanirmâlyam, so-ham bhâvena pujayet.*

This Advaitavâda is naturally expressed in the ritual. The Samhitâ and Brâhmanas of the four Vedas are (as contrasted with the Upanishads) Traigunyavishaya. There



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

is therefore much in the Vaidik Karmakanda which is contrary to Brahmajnâna. The same remarks apply to the ordinary Pashu ritual of the day. There are differences of touchable, and untouchable, food, caste, and sex. How can a man directly qualify for Brahmajnâna who even in worship is always harping on distinctions of caste and sex and the like? He who distinguishes does not know. Of such distinctions the higher Tântrik worship of the Shâkta type knows nothing. As the Yoginî Tantra says, the Shâstra is for all castes and for women as well as men. Tantra Shâstra is Upâsanâ Kânda and in this Shâkta Upâsanâ the Karma and Jnâna Kândas are mingled (Mishra). That is Karma is the ritual expression of the teaching of Jnâna Kânda and is calculated to lead to it. There is nothing in it which contradicts Brahmajnâna. This fact therefore renders it more conducive to the attainment of such spiritual experience. Such higher ritual serves to reveal Jnâna in the mind of the Pashu. So it is rightly said that a Kulajnânî even if he be a Chandâla, is better than a Brahmana. It is on these old Tântrik principles that the Indian religion of to-day can alone, if at all, maintain itself. They have no concern however with social life and what is called "social reform". For all secular purposes the Tantras recognise caste, but in spiritual matters spiritual qualifications alone prevail. There are many such sound and high principles in the Tantra Shâstra for which it would receive credit, if it could only obtain a fair and unprejudiced consideration. But there are none so blind as those who will not see. And so we find that the "Pure and high" ritual of the Veda is set in contrast with the supposed "low and impure" notions of the Tantras. On the contrary a Tântrik Pandit once said to me "The Vaidik Karmakânda is as useful for ordinary men as is a washerman for dirty clothes. It helps to remove their impurities. But the Tantra Shâstra is like a glorious tree which gives jewelled fruit".



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

Sâdhanâ as I have said is defined as that which leads to Siddhi. Sâdhanâ comes from the root "Sâdh"—to exert to strive. For what? That depends on the Sâdhanâ and its object. Sâdhanâ is any means to any end and not necessarily religious worship, ritual and discipline. He who does Hathayoga, for physical health and strength, who accomplishes a magical Prayoga, who practises to gain an "eightfold memory" and so forth are each doing Sâdhanâ to gain a particular result (Siddhi), namely health and strength, a definite magical result, increased power of recollection and so forth. A Siddhi again is any power gained as the result of practice. Thus the Siddhi of Vetâla Agni Sâdhanâ is control over the fire-element. But the Sâdhanâ which is of most account and that of which I here speak, is religious worship and discipline to attain true spiritual experience. What is thus sought and gained may be either Heaven (Svarga) secondary liberation (Gaunamukti) or full Nirvânâ. It is the latter which in the truest and highest sense is Siddhi, and striving for that end is the chief and highest form of Sâdhanâ. The latter term includes not merely ritual worship in the sense of adoration or prayer but every form of spiritual discipline such as sacraments (Sangskâra), austerities (Tapas), the reading of Scripture (Svâdhyâya), meditation (Dhyâna) and so forth. Yoga is a still higher form of Sâdhanâ; for the term Yoga means strictly not the result but the means where by Siddhi in the form of Samâdhi may be had. Ordinarily however Sâdhanâ is used to express all spiritual disciplines based on the notion of worshipper and worshipped; referring thus to Upâsanâ not Yoga. The latter passes beyond these and all other dualisms to Monistic experience (Samâdhi). The first leads up to the second by purifying the mind (Chittashuddhi) character and disposition (Bhâva) so as to render it capable of Jnâna or Laya Yoga; or becomes itself Parabhakti which as the Devîbhagavata says is not different from Jnâna.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

The great Siddhi is thus Moksha ; and Moksha is Paramâtmâ that is the Svarûpa of Âtmâ. But the Sâdhaka is Jîv' tmâ that is Âtmâ associated with Avidyâ of which Moksha or Paramâtmâ is free. Avidyâ manifests as mind and body, the subtle and gross vehicles of spirit. Man is thus therefore Spirit (Âtmasvarûpa) which is Sachchidâ-nanda ; Mind (Antahkarana) and body (Sthûla-sharîra). The two latter are forms of Shakti that is projections of the Creative Consciousness through and as its Mâyâ. The essential operation of Mâyâ and of the Kanchûkas is too seemingly *contract* consciousness. As the Yoginîhridaya Tantra says, the going forth (Prasara) of Consciousness (Samvit) is in fact a contraction (Samkocha as Mâtri, Mâna, Meya). Consciousness is thus finitised into a limited self which and other selves regard one another as mutually exclusive. The One Self becomes its own object as the many forms of the universe. It conceives itself as separate from them. Oblivious in separateness of its true nature it regards all other persons and things as different from itself. It acts for the benefit of its limited self. It is in fact selfish in the primary sense of the term ; and this selfishness is the root of all its desires of all its sins. The more mere worldly desires are fostered, the greater is the bondage of man to the mental and material planes. Excessively selfish desires display themselves as the sins of lust, greed, anger, envy and so forth. These bind more firmly than regulated desire and moreover lead to Hell (Naraka). The most general and ultimate object of Sâdhanâ is therefore to cast off from the Self this veil of Avidyâ and to attain that Perfect experience which is Âtmasvarûpa or Moksha. But to know Brahman is to *be* Brahman. *Brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati* as Shruti says. In truth and essence man is Brahman. But owing to Avidyâ it is necessary to do something in order that this ever existent fact may be realised. That action (Kriyâ) is the work of Sâdhanâ in its endeavour to clear away the veiling Avidyâ which is the source of pain and sin. In the sense



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

that Avidyâ is being removed man may be said by Sâdhanâ to become Brahman : that is he realises himself as what he truly is and was. Sâdhanâ therefore by the grace of Devî or “descent of Shakti” (Shaktipâta) “converts” (to use an English term) the Sâdhaka, that is, turns him away from separatist worldly enjoyment to seek his own true self as the pure spiritual experience. This transformation is the work and aim of Sâdhanâ. But this experience is not to be had in its completest sense at once and at a bound. It is as Patanjali says very rare. Indeed those who truly desire it are very few. Brahman is mindless (Amanah); for mind is a fetter on true consciousness. This mindlessness (Nirâlambapurî) is sought through the means of Yoga. But no would-be Yogî can attain this state unless his mind is already pure; that is not only free from gross sin, but already possessing some freedom from the bondage of worldly desires, cultivated and trained, and desirous of liberation (Mumukshu). The aim therefore of preliminary Sâdhanâ is to secure that purification of mind (Chittashuddhi) which is alone the basis on which Yoga works. The first object then is to restrain the natural appetites, to control the senses, and all that excessive selfishness beyond the bounds of Dharma which is sin (Pâpa), Dharma prescribes these bounds because unrestricted selfish enjoyment leads man downward from the path of his true evolution. Man, is as regards part of his nature, an animal and has according to the Shâstra passed through all animal forms in his 84 lakhs of previous births. But he has also a higher nature and if he conforms to the path laid out for him will progress by degrees to the state of that Spirit whose limited form he now is. If he strays from that path he falls back, and continued descent may bring him again to the state of apparently unconscious matter through many intervening Hells in this and other worlds. For this reason the Shâstra repeats that he is a “self-killer” who having with difficulty attained to manhood neglects the opportuni-



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

ties of further progress which they give him. (Kulârnavâ Tantra I). Therefore he must avoid sin which leads to a fall. How can the impure realise the Pure? How can the seeker of sensual enjoyment only desire formless liberating Bliss? How can he recognise his unity with all if he is bound in selfishness which is the root of all sin? How can he realise the Brahman who thinks himself to be the separate enjoyer of worldly objects and is bound by all sensualities? In various forms this is the teaching of all religions. It would be hardly necessary to elaborate what is so plain were it not apparently supposed that the Tantra Shâstra is a strange exception to these universally recognised principles. "I thought" said a recent English correspondent of mine "that the Tantra was a wholly bad lot belonging to the left hand path." This is not so: common though the notion be. The Shâstra teaches that the Sâdhaka must slay his "six enemies" which are the six cardinal sins and all others allied with them. Whether all the *means* enjoined are good, expedient, and fitting for the purpose is a different matter. This is a distinction which none of its critics ever make; but which accuracy and justice require they should make if they condemn the method. It is one thing to say that a particular method prescribed for a good end is bad, dangerous, or having regard the present position of the generality of men, unadvisable; and a totally different thing to say that the *end* which is sought is itself bad. The Tantra like all Shâstras seeks the Paramârtha and nothing else. Whether all the forms of search are good (and against the bulk of them no moral objection can be raised) is another question. Let it be for argument supposed that one or other of the means prescribed is not good. Is it accurate or just to condemn not only the particular Shâstra in which they occur (as the discipline of a particular class of Sâdhakas only) but also the whole of the Âgamas of all classes of worshippers under the misleading designation "The Tantra?"



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

I am here speaking from the point of view of one who is not a believer in the scriptural authority (in the orthodox sense) of the Indian Shâstra. Those however who are Hindus must logically either deny that there are the Word of Shiva or accept all which that Word says. For if a Tantra prescribes what is wrong this vitiates the authority in all matters of the Tantra in which wrong is ordained. It may be that other matters dealt with should be accepted but this is so not because of any authority in the particular Tantra but because they have the countenance elsewhere of a true authoritative scripture. From this logical position no escape is possible.

Let us for the moment turn to the celebrated Hymn to Kâlî (of, as those who read it might call, the extremist that is Vîra Shâkta worship) entitled the Karpûrâdi Stotra which like most (probably all) of its kind has both a material (Sthûla) and subtle (Sûkshma) meaning. In the 19th verse it is said that the Devî delights to receive in sacrifice the flesh, with bones and hair, of goat, buffalo, cat, sheep, camel and of man. In its literal sense this passage may be taken as an instance of the man-sacrifice of which we find traces throughout the world (and in some of the Tantras) in past stages of man's evolution. Nothing is more common in all religions (and Christianity as by some understood provides many examples) than to materially understand spiritual truths. For such is the understanding of material or Sthûla-darshin (grossly seeing) men. But even in the past the spiritual referred such sacrifice to the self; an inner sacrifice which all must make who would attain to that Spirit which we may call Kâlî, God, Allah, or what we will. But what is the Svarupa-vyâkhyâ or true meaning of this apparently revolting verse. The meaning is that inner or mental worship (Antaryâga) is done to her who is black (Asitâ) because She is the boundless (Sitâ = Baddhâ) Consciousness (Chidrupâ) whose true nature is eternal liberation (Nityamukta-Svabhâvâ). And just as in outer worship



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

material offerings (Upachâra) are made, so the Sâdhaka sacrifices to Her his lust (the Goat-Kâma) his anger (the Buffalo-Krodha) his greed (the Cat-Lobha) his stupidity of illusion (the Sheep-Moha) his envy (the Camel-Mâtsaryya) and his pride and infatuation with worldly things (the Man-Mada). All will readily recognise in these animals and man the qualities (Guna) here attributed to them. It is to such as so sacrifice to whom is given Siddhi in the form of the five kinds of Mukti.

Competency for Tantra (Tantrashâstrâdhikâra) is described in the second chapter of the Gandharva Tantra as follows:—The aspirant must be intelligent (Daksha) with senses controlled (Jitendriya) abstaining from injury to all beings (Sarvahingsâ-vinirmukta) ever doing good to all (Sarvaprâni-hite rata) pure (Shuchi) a believer in Veda (Âstika) a non-dualist (Dvaitahîna) whose faith and refuge is in Brahman (Brahmanishtha, Brahmavâdî, Brâhma, Brahmaparâyana) “Such an one” it adds “is competent for this Scripture *otherwise he is no Sâdhaka*” (*So' smin shastre dhikâri tad anyatra na sâdhakah*). It will be allowed by all that these are strange qualifications for a follower of “a bad scripture of the left hand path.” Those who are on such a path are not supposed to be seekers of the Brahman nor solicitous for the good of all being. Rather the reverse. The Kulârnavâ Tantra (which I may observe deals with the ill-famed Panchatattva ritual) gives in the Thirteenth Chapter a long list of qualifications necessary in the case of a Tântrik disciple (Shishya). Amongst these, it rejects the slave of food and sexual pleasure (Jihvopasthâpara); the lustful (Kâmuka) shameless (Nirlajja) the greedy and voracious eater, the sinner in general who does not follow Dharma and Âchâra, who is ignorant, who has no desire for spiritual knowledge, who is a hypocrite with Brahman on his lips but not in his heart and who is without devotion (Bhakti). Such qualifications are inconsistent with its alleged intention to encourage sensuality unless we assume that all



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

such talk in all the Shâstras throughout all time is mere hypocrisy.

It is not however sufficient for the Sâdhaka to turn from sin and the occasions of it. It is necessary to present the mind with a pure object and to busy it in pure actions. This not only excludes other objects and actions but trains the mind in such a way towards goodness and illumination that it at length no longer desires wrongful enjoyment; or lawful Pashu enjoyment or even enjoyment infused with a spiritual Bhâva, and thus finally attains desirelessness (Nishkâmabhâva). The Mind dominated *by* matter, then regulated in matter, consciously releases itself to first work *through* matter, then *against* matter; then rising *above* matter it at length, enters the Supreme State in which all the antithesis of matter and Spirit have gone.

What then are the means by which spiritual Siddhi is attained. Some are possibly common to all religions; some are certainly common to more than one religion, such as objective ritual worship (Vâhyapûjâ) inner or mental worship (Mânasa-Pûjâ or Antarpujâ) of the Ishtadevatâ, prayer (Prârthanâ), sacraments (Sangskâra) self discipline for the control of the will and natural appetites (Tapas) meditation (Dhyâna) and so forth. There is for instance as I have elsewhere pointed out a remarkable similarity between the Tântrik ritual of the Âgamas and Christian ritual in its Catholic form. It has been suggested that Catholicism is really a legacy of the ancient civilisation an adaptation of the old religions (allied in many respects with Shâkta worship) of the Mediterranean races; deriving much of its strength from its non-Christian elements. I will not observe on this except to say that you do not dispose of the merits of any ritual by showing (if it be the fact) that it is extremely old and non-Christian. Christianity is one of the great religions but even its adherents, unless ignorant, will not claim for it the monopoly of all that is good.



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

To deal in detail with Tântrik Sâdhaka would take more than a volume. I have shortly summarised some important rituals. I will now shortly indicate some of the general psychological principles on which it is based and which is understood, will give the key to an understanding of the extraordinary complexity and variety of the actual ritual details. I will also illustrate the application of these principles in some of the more common forms of worship.

It is recognised in the first place that mind and body mutually react upon one another. There must therefore be a physical Sâdhanâ as the groundwork of the mental Sâdhanâ to follow. India has for ages recognised what is now becoming generally admitted namely, that not only health but clarity of mind, character, disposition, and morals, are affected by the nourishment, exercise, and general treatment of the body. Thus from the moral aspect one of the arguments against the use of meat and strong drink is the encouragement they give to animal passions. Why then it may be asked do these form a part of some forms of Shâkta Sâdhanâ? I answer this later. It is however a Hindu trait to insist on purity of food and person. Tântrik Hathayoga deals in full with the question of bodily cleanliness, food, sexual continence, and physical exercise. But there are injunctions, though less strict, for the ordinary householder to whom wine and other intoxicating drinks and the eating of beef (thought by some to be a material foundation of the British Empire but now recognised by several medical authorities to be the source of physical ills) and some other foods, as also all gluttony, as regards permitted food, are forbidden. Periodical fasts are enjoined; as also during certain religious exercises the eating of the pure food called Havishyânnam made of fruit, vegetable and rice. The sexual life has also its regulations. In short it is said let the body be well treated and kept pure in order to keep the mind sane and pure and a good and not rebellious instrument for mental Sâdhana. In the Tantras



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

will be found instance or several bodily perfections in the Sâdhaka. Thus he should not be deformed, with defective limbs, wanting in, or having excess of, any limb, weak of limb, crippled, blind, deaf, dirty, diseased, with unnatural movements, paralysed, slothful in action (Kulârnavâ XIII).

Let us now pass to the mind. For the understanding of Hindu ritual it is necessary to understand both Hindu philosophy and Hindu psychology. This point so far as I am aware has never been observed. Certainly Indian ritual has never been dealt with on this basis. It has generally been considered sufficient to class it as "Mummery" and then to pass on to something supposed to be more worthy of consideration. It is necessary to remember that (outside successful Yoga) the mind (at any rate in its normal state) is never for one moment unoccupied. At every moment of time, worldly objects are seeking to influence it. Only those actually do so to which the mind, in its faculty as Manas, gives attention. In one of the Tântrik Texts (Shatchakra-nirûpana) the Manas is aptly spoken of as a door-keeper who lets some enter and keeps others outside. For this reason it is called Sangkalpavikalpâtmaka: that is it selects (Sangkalpa) some things which the senses (Indriya) present to it and rejects (Vikalpa) others. If the Manas attends to the sensation demanding entrance it is admitted and passed on to the Buddhi and not otherwise. So the Brihadâraryaka Upanishad says "My Manas was elsewhere and therefore I did not hear." This is a secret for the endurance of pain which not only the martyrs and the witches knew, but some others who have suffered lesser pains. When the sensation is passed on to the Buddhi, as also when the latter acts upon the material of remembered percepts, there is formed in the Buddhi a Vritti. The latter is a modification of the Mind into the form of the perceived object. Unless a man is a Siddhayogî, it is not possible to avoid the formation of mental Vrittis. The object therefore of Sâdhanâ is firstly to take the attention away from undesirable objects



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

and then to place a desirable object in their stead. For the mind must feed on something. This object is the Ishtadevatâ. When a Sâdhaka fully, sincerely and deeply contemplates and worships his Ishtadevatâ his mind is formed into a Vritti in the form of the Devatâ. As the latter is all purity, the mind, which contemplates it, is during, and to the depth of, such contemplation pure. By prolonged and repeated worship the mind becomes naturally pure and of itself tends to reject all impure notions. What to others is a source of impurity is pure. To the pure, as the Hellenes said, all things are pure. Things are not impure. It is the impure mind which makes them so. He learns to see that everything and act are manifestations of the Divine. He who realises Consciousness in all objects no longer has desire therefor. In this way a good Bhâva, as it is called, is attained which ripens into Devatâbhâva. This is the principle on which all Sâdhanâ as well as what is called specifically Mantrayoga, is based. It is profoundly said in the Kulârnavâ Tantra that a man must rise by means of the same things which are the cause of his fall. If you fall on the ground you must raise yourself by it. The mind is thus controlled by means of its own object (Vishaya); that is the world of name and form (Nâmarûpa). The unregulated mind is distracted by Nâmarûpa. But the same Nâmarûpa may be used as the first means of escape therefrom. A particular form therefore of Nâmarûpa productive of pure Bhâva is therefore given as the object of meditation. This is called Sthûla or Saguna Dhyâna of the five Devatâs. Material media are used as the first steps whereby the Formless One is through Yoga attained, such as Images (Pratimâ) emblems (Linga, Shâlagrâma) pictures (Chitra) mural markings (Bhittirekhâ) Jar (Ghata) Mandalas and Yantras. To these worship (Pûjâ) is, done with other rites such as Japa, Nyâsa and so forth, and gestures (Mudrâ). Siddhi in this is the Samâdhi called Mahâbhâva.



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

The second principle to be noted is that the object or minds content as also the service (Sevâ) of it may be either gross (Sthûla) or subtle (Sûkshma). This distinction pervades all the rituals and rightly so. Men are not all at the same degree of intellectual and spiritual advancement. For the simple-minded there are simple material and mental images. Progressively considered, the objects used to fix in the mind the thought of the Devatâ are images in human or semi-human form, similar pictures, non-human forms or emblems (such as Linga and Gaurîpatta, Shâlagrâma, the Jar or Ghata, Mandalas and lastly Yantras). The image is not merely used for instruction (*ut pictura pro scriptura habere-tur*) or to incite in the mind a mental picture, but after the Prâna-pratishthâ rite is itself worshipped. So also amongst Christians, where however this rite is unknown, "eikones acheiropoietai" (what are called in Sanskrit Svayambhu emblems) and wonder working images have been directly venerated. Superficial persons doubtless think themselves profound when they ask how the Devatâ can be invoked (Âvâhana). To them also the dismissal (Visarjana) savours of childish impudence and absurdity. How (I have read) can God be told to come and go? A Christian who sings the Hymn "Veni creator Spiritus" is indeed ignorant if he fancies that at his request the Holy Ghost comes to him through the skies. As Shankara says, Spirit (Âtmâ) never comes and never goes. That which in fact moves is the mind of the Sâdhaka in which, if pure, Spirit manifests Itself. That Spirit is in all places, and when the Sâdhaka's mind fully realises its presence in the Image, the latter as the manifestation of that Spirit is a fitting object of worship. Some knowledge of Vedânta is needful for the understanding and performance of image-worship. Yantra worship is however higher and is fitter for those who have reached a more advanced stage in Sâdhanâ. The term as I have said literally means an instrument; that by which anything is accomplished. In Upâsanâ it is that instrument by which the mind is fixed



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

upon the Devatâ of worship. It is, as drawn, a diagram consisting of lines, angles and curves, varying with the Devatâ worshipped as also, to some extent, according as it is a Pûjâ or Dhârana Yantra, the whole being included in a common Bhûpura. A Yantra is three-dimensional, though it is very generally represented by a drawing on the flat. The Yantra and each part of it, as representing certain Shaktis, has a significance which is known to the instructed Sâdhaka. On the great Shrî Yantra with its Baindava and other Chakras there is an entire literature. It is neglected nowadays. Those who have fully understood it are masters in Tantra Shâstras. The subject is shortly dealt with in the Introduction to the Tantrarâja (Vol. VIII Tântrik Texts Ed. A. Avalon). Not only is the object of worship subtle or gross, but so also is the ritual with which it is worshipped. For the simple, Indian worship avails itself of the ordinary incidents of daily life understood by even the most ignorant. And so we see the tending of the idol, waking it, bathing it, giving it food, putting it to sleep and so forth. In ordinary worship there is the offer of flowers, light, incense and the like Upachâra. In the subtle inner or mental worship (Antarpûjâ) these are but symbols. Thus the Jnâneshvara Samhitâ cited in the Mantrayogarahasyanirnaya speaks of the offering of "flowers of feeling" (Bhâvapushpa) to the Divinity—namely the virtue of selflessness (Anahangkâra) desirelessness (Arâga) guilelessness (Adambha) freedom from malice and envy (Advesha, Amâtsaryya) and infatuation and delusion (Amada and Amoha) and control over the feelings and mind (Akshobhaka; Amanaka). He who can truly make such offerings to Devî is a high Sâdhaka indeed. The Shâstra makes wonderful provision for all types. It recognises that there must be a definite object to which the mind must turn; chooses that object with a view to the capacities of the Sâdhaka; and similarly regulates the ensuing worship. Much ignorant talk takes place as to the supposed worship of the Formless. Worship



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

implies an object of worship and every object has some form. But that form and the ritual vary to meet the needs of differing capacities and temperaments; commencing with the more or less anthropomorphic image (or Doll; Puttalī, as those who dislike such worship call it) with its material service reproducing the ways of daily life, passing through pictures, emblems, Yantras, and mental worship to adoration of the Point of Light (Jyotirbindu) in which at length, consciousness being merged, all worship ceases.

The Shaktirahasya summarises the stages of progress in a short verse, thus:—“By images, ceremonies, mind, identification, and knowing the Self, a mortal attains Liberation (Kaivalya).”

In the same way meditation is either gross (Sthūla) or subtle (Sūkshma). The forms of the Mother of the Universe are threefold. There is first the Supreme (Para) form of which the Vishnuyāmala says “None know.” There is next Her subtle form which consists of Mantra. But as the mind cannot settle itself upon that which is formless She appears also in physical form as celebrated in the Devī-stotras of the Purānas and Tantras.

The third principle to be noticed is the part which the body is made to take in the ritual. Necessarily there is action in any case to carry out the ritual but this is so prescribed as to emphasise the mental operation (Mānasī kriyā), and in addition certain symbolic gestures (Mudrā) are prescribed. The body is made to take its part in the ritual, the mental processes being thus emphasized and intensified. This is based on a well-known natural tendency. When we speak with conviction and intensity of feeling we naturally adopt appropriate movements of the body and gestures of the hands. We thus speak with the whole body.

Take for example Nyāsa which like Yantra is peculiar to the Tantras. The object of the Sādhaka is to identify himself with the Devatā he contemplates and thus to attain



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

Devatâbhâva for which it is, in its many forms, a most powerful means. Regarding the body of the Devatâ as composed of Bîja Mantras he not merely imagines that his own body is so composed but he actually places (Nyâsa means placing) these Bîjas with the tip of his fingers on the various parts of his own body. The Abhîshta Devatâ is thus in imagination (expressed by outward acts) placed in each of the parts and members of the Sâdhaka's body and then with the motion of his arms he, by Vyâpaka Nyâsa, as it were, spreads the presence of the Devatâ all over his body. He thus feels himself permeated in every part by the presence of Devatâ and identified with the Divine Self in that its form. How it may be asked can the Devatâ be spread as it were butter on bread. These are crude questionings and because critics of the ritual do not get beyond this crude state of mind, this ritual is not understood. Devatâ is not spread. God is everywhere and He is not to be placed by man's fingers any where. What is done is to produce in man's mind the notion that he is so spread. Again with certain ritual acts Mudrâ is made. This Mudrâ expresses by the hands the thought of the worshipper of which it is sometimes a kind of manual shorthand.

A further important point for consideration is that the mental Vritti is not only strengthened by accompanying physical action but by a prolonged repetition of either or both. There may be a literal repetition of either or both similar words and their accompanying ideas of which a prominent example is Japa of Mantra with which I have dealt in the Chapters on Shakti as Mantra and on the Varnamâlâ ; or the object of contemplation may be severed into parts, as where meditation is done not simply on the Devatâ as a whole but on each of the parts of His body and then on the whole ; or a particular result, such as the dissolution of the Tattvas in Bhûtashuddhi, may be analysed into the component parts of a process commencing with the first movement and ending with the last. Repetition of a word



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

and idea fixes it in the mind and if the same essential thought can be presented in varied forms the effect is more powerful and at the same time less calculated to tire. "Vain repetition" is itself in the mouths of many a vain criticism when not a platitude. If it is in fact vain it is vain. But it need not be so. In the current gross way of looking at things it is asked "Will the Deity yield (like a modern politician) to repeated clamour?" The answer is the Devatâ is not so affected. What is in fact affected is the mind of the Sâdhaka himself which being thus purified by insistent effort, becomes a fit medium for the manifestation of a divine consciousness (Devatâbhâva). In short fact Indian ritual cannot be understood unless the Vedântik principles of which they are a particular practical application are understood. Even when in devotion, complete understanding and feeling are not attained the intention to gain both will achieve success by quickening the worshippers interest and strengthening the forces of the will.

A word now as to Symbolism which exists in all religions in varying degrees. The Tantra Shâstra is extraordinarily full of it in all its kinds—form, colour, language, number, action. The subject is a highly interesting but very lengthy one. I can only make two remarks with regard to it here. Red is a favourite colour in the Shâkta Tantras. As pointed out in the Bhâvanopanishad (Sûtra 28) an Upanishad of the Kâdimata and Bhâskararâya's commentary thereon, Redness denotes Râga and Vimarsha Shakti. (See Introduction to Tantrarâja Ed. by A. Avalon). There is a good deal of what is called erotic symbolism in some of the Tantras. This is apt to shock many English people who are by no means all so moral in fact as some might think this sensitivity suggests. It does not necessarily carry this suggestion to me. Such fear of erotic symbols is rather indicative in the generality of cases of a natural tendency to impurity and want of self-control. The great Edward Carpenter speaks of the "impure hush" in these matters. A person



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

whose mind is naturally bent towards sensual thoughts but who desires to control them has no doubt a fear, which one readily understands, of anything which may provoke such thoughts. But such a man is, in this respect, lower than him who looks upon natural things in a natural way without fear of injury to himself; and infinitely lower than him to whom all is a manifestation of the One Consciousness, and who realises this in those things which are the cause of all to the imperfectly self-governed Pashu. Nothing is in itself impure. It is the mind which makes it so. It is however absolutely right that persons who feel that they have not sufficient self-control should, until they gain it, avoid what they think may do them injury. Recently an old, and I had thought experienced, man wrote to me that he had come across in the Tantras "obscenities the very reading of which was demoralising." The very fact that these portions of the scripture had such an effect on him is a sufficient reason that he and others similarly situated should not read them. Neither should such persons study art from the nude, the curious and obscene customs recognised by anthropology, certain parts of the medical science; works on sexual psychopathy or the casuistical treatises of Catholic Theology. The Tantra Shâstra recognises this principle by certain injunctions into which I cannot enter here. The Kulârnava expressly says that the Chapter on the Wine ritual is not to be read (*Na pathed âsavollâsam*); that is by the unqualified. Here two rules are to be observed. No one is to think of these sexual matters except in and during the course of worship, when the Mantras and the direction which they give to thought are held to protect the Sâdhaka from evil influences. Secondly no one is to worship in this way unless duly qualified. It was never meant that these portions of the Shâstra should be read by any and every one from mere curiosity only. Even then portions of some Shâstras may seem to their modern reader needlessly obscene, with a sensual emphasis unworthy of that fine application of its



## SHÂKTA SÂDHANÂ

ideas of which the Shâkta Shâstra is capable ; though as to this it is to be remembered both that they were written in an age the mentality of which was not ours and at a time when, both in the East as in the West, a spade was called a spade and not a horticultural instrument ; and that their readers were meant to be persons who, having passed through the necessary disciplines had attained to both knowledge and self-control. Similarly the casuistical works of Catholic Theologians contain obscenities some of a very filthy kind. They were not however written for public or curious reading, but for priests whose fortified character protected them (it was hoped) from the influences of their libidinous suggestions. The letter of a Catholic correspondent has shown me that my language is capable of misunderstanding. He writes "judging only by what you yourself write of the Tantras. I would think that your comparison of them to our 'Moral Theologies' is not to the point. It is a very different thing to expose even very dismal moral diseases in order to teach their cure and to give as a means of spiritual advancement what is repugnant to the moral sense. *Omnia pura puris*. Yes, and that is why even obscene descriptions may be permitted for a good purpose and they are not bad in themselves. But even the end of the Tantras cannot justify the means they prescribe." My words were not meant to compare the Tantras with the Catholic Moral Theologies in themselves. I referred to the latter merely as one illustrative instance of a case of writings not meant for general public reading, writings only properly available to a class who might be able to read them without danger. I was not otherwise comparing the writings themselves—their respective aims and objects being obviously different. Again it is not necessary to admit either that every Text which calls Itself a Tantra is a genuine one or if so that it was the product of a high class Sâdhaka. What is authoritative is that which is generally admitted to be so.

Erotic symbolism however (for to this I now limit myself)



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

is not peculiar to the Tantras. It is as old as the hills and may be found in other Scriptures. It is a matter of embarrassment to the class I have mentioned that the Bible is not free from it. If we would picture the cosmic processes we must take the materials therefor from our own life. It is not always necessary to go to the erotic life. But man has generally done so for reasons I need not discuss here; and his selections must sometimes be admitted to be very apt. It has however been said that throughout Shâkta symbolism and pseudo-philosophising there lies at the basis of the whole system the conception of sexual relationship as the ultimate explanation of the universe. Reading these words as they stand they are nonsense. What is true is that some Shâkta Tantra convey philosophic and scientific truths by the media of erotic imagery; which is another matter. But so also does Upanishad. The charge of pseudo-philosophy betrays equal ignorance, unless the Advaitavedânta is such. The Shâkta Tantra simply presents the Vedântik teachings in a symbolical ritualistic form for the worshipper to whom it also prescribes the means whereby they may be realised in fact. Those who think otherwise have not mastered the alphabet of the subject.

I will conclude with a reply to a possible objection to what I have above written. It may be said that some of the rituals to which I have alluded are not merely the property of the Tantra Shâstras, and that they are not entitled to any credit for them. It is a fact that some (many have become extinct) Vaidik rituals such as the ten Sangskâras, Sandhyâ, Homa and so forth are imbedded in and have been adopted by the Âgamas. These and other rituals are to be found also in the Purânas. In any case the Âgama is what it is whether its elements are original or derived. If the rites adopted are creditable then praise must be given for the adoption of that which is good. If they are not, blame equally attaches to the original as to the copy. What however the Âgamas have adopted has been shaped so as to be



## SHĀKTA SĀDHANĀ

suitable for all, that is for others than those for whom the original rituals were intended. Further many of the rituals here described seem to have been introduced by and to be peculiar to the Âgamas. Possibly some of these may have been developed from other forms or seeds of form in the Vaidik ritual. The whole subject of Indian ritual and its origins is still awaiting enquiry. Personally I am disposed to favour the view that the Âgamas have made a contribution which is both original and considerable. To me also the contribution seems to have greater conformity with Vedântik doctrine, which is applied by the ritual in a psychological manner which is profound. On an "historical" view of the matter this seems necessarily to be so. For according to that view, the early Vaidik ritual either antedated or was contemporaneous with the promulgation of the Vedântik doctrine to be found in the Upanishads, for the general acceptance of which considerable time was necessary. It could not therefore (if at all) embody that doctrine in the same way or to the same degree as a Ritual developed at a time when that doctrine had been widely disseminated, generally accepted and at least to a greater degree systematised. Ritual is only a practical expression of doctrine, and the Âgamas, according to a generally accepted view, did not come into being earlier than a date later than the first and chief Upanishads, and perhaps at the close of what is generally called the Aupanishadik age. No "historical" argument however is yet entirely trustworthy, as the material upon which it is to be based has not been sufficiently explored. For myself I am content to deal with present-day facts. According to the Indian view all Shâstras are various parts of one whole and that Part which as a present-day fact contains the bulk of the ritual, now or recently in practice, consists of the Tantras of the various schools of Âgama. As an Indian author and follower of the Shaivâgama has said—the Temple ritual throughout India is governed by the Âgamas. And this must be so, if it be the



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

fact as alleged, that Temples, Images, and other matters were unknown to the original Vaidik Âryas. If the Âgamas have adopted some of the ritual of the latter, those in their turn in course of time took to themselves the practices of those outside the body of men for whom the Vaidik Karmakânda was originally designed. Vedânta in its various forms has now for centuries constituted the religious notions of India, and the Âgamas in their differing schools are its practical expression in worship and ritual affording the means whereby Vedântik doctrine is realised.



CHAPTER XIV  
THE PANCHATATTVA  
(THE SECRET RITUAL)

THE notoriety of the Panchatattva ritual with wine and woman has thrown into the shade not only the practical topics with which I have dealt but every other, including the valuable philosophical presentment of Vedânta contained in the Shâkta Tantra. Notwithstanding, and indeed because of, the off-hand and (in certain respects) ignorant condemnation which this ritual has received, the interests of both scholarship and fairness (which by the way should be identical) require that we should first ascertain the facts, think clearly and fearlessly and then determine without prejudice. From both the Shâstrik and historical point of view the subject is of such importance that it is not possible for me to here deal with it otherwise than in a very general way. It is necessary however, in a paper on Upâsanâ, to at least touch upon the matter because as against everything one says about the Tantras there is raised the express or implied query "That may be all very well. But what about the infamous Pancha-ma-kâra?" Anything said in favour of the Shâstra is thus discounted in advance.

We must first disentangle the general *principles* involved from their particular *application*. The principle may be sound and yet the application may not be so. We may for instance approve striving for Vedântik Audâsînya, whilst at the same time we may rightly reject the Aghora's application of it in eating human carrion. Next let us see *what in fact is the ritual* application of these principles. Then



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

let us judge the *intention* with which the ritual was prescribed. A principle may be good and the intention may be good but its application may be intrinsically bad, or at least dangerous, and therefore inexpedient as leading to abuse. In life it is a mistake to altogether neglect the pragmatic aspect of any theory. Logic and life do not always go hand in hand. Lastly let us see whether the *application* is good or bad or inexpedient ; or whether it is partially one or the other.

In the first place it is necessary to clear the air of some common misconceptions. It is commonly thought that all the practitioners of the Panchatattva ritual with wine, woman, and so forth are immoral men professing to follow a Scripture which does not accept the ordinary rules of morality as regards food, drink and woman enjoining that men should curb their sensual desires. Rather is it thought that it teaches that men should yield to them and thus "enjoy" themselves. This view turns at least this portion of the Shâkta Tantra into a scripture of libertinism, thinly veiling itself in pseudo-religious forms. Its followers are supposed to be in the condition of a sensual man who finds his wishes thwarted by the rules of morality of his fellows around him and who, asking himself how he can infringe those rules under colour of some supposed authority, gives to the fulfilment of desire a "religious" sanction. In the words of an English writer, the bent towards religion of some sort is so strong in India that some of its people even "sin religiously." They are on this view hypocrites putting themselves to a deal of unnecessary trouble, for men can and do in India, as elsewhere, gratify their desires without religious rituals, and if wishful to establish a theory of enjoyment justifying their conduct, they can, as some have also done in India as elsewhere, advocate an epicurean materialism for that purpose. For the true sensualist who wishes to get at the object of his desire, these long Tântrik rituals would be obstructive and



## THE PANCHATATTVA

wearisome. Whatever may be thought of the ritual in question, these notions of it are wrong. The charge however if unrefuted, constitutes a blot on this country's civilisation, which has been allowed to remain because some who know better are either afraid to acknowledge that they follow these rites, or if they do not, that it may be supposed that they do so. This blot, in so far as it is not justified by actual fact, I propose in the present Chapter to remove.

The word Shâstra or Scriptures comes from the root *Shâs* to control because its object is to control the conduct of men otherwise prone to evil. Whether its *methods* be mistaken or not the Shâkta Scripture is a Shâstra. Morality or Dharma is preached by all Shâstra whether of East or West. That morality (Dharma) is in its essentials the same in all the great Scriptures. For what purpose is conduct controlled? The Indian answer is—in order that man may make for himself a good Karma which spells happiness in this and the next world (Paraloka) and that then he may at length free himself of all Karma and attain Liberation (Moksha). Bad Karma leads to suffering here and in the Hells of the after life. This is taught in the Shâkta, as in other Shâstras, which seek to train the Sâdhaka to attain Liberation. In a work of the present scope I have not the space to cite authority in support of all these elementary propositions. There is however an abundance of Texts in support of them. Consult for instance the grand opening Chapter of the Kulârnava Tantra, which points out the frailty of Man, the passing nature of this world and of all it gives to Man and his duty to avail himself of that Manhood which is so difficult of attainment so that he does not fall but rises and advances to Liberation. I cite the Kulârnava not merely because it is reputed to be a great Tantra and authority readily accessible, but because it teaches in full the practice of the rituals under consideration. But what is Liberation? It is the state of Brahman the Pure. How can the Pure be attained by counselling the practice of what the author of the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Shâstra thought to be impure. Every Tantra counsels the following of Dharma or morality. The same Tantra (above cited) in its Chapter dealing with the necessary qualifications of a disciple points out that he must be of good character and in particular must not be lewd (Kâmuka) and given over to drink, gluttony and woman. If he is so, he is not competent for this particular ritual and must be trained by other disciplines (Pashvâchâra).

I here and hereafter deal with these particular infractions of morality because they alone in this matter concern us in our attempt to understand a ritual which is supposed to be an instance of the commission of these very sins.

The Mahânirvâna Tantra, which is of special interest because it is an attempt to provide a general code including law (in its European sense) for the followers of its cult, makes provision, amongst other matters, (such as general decency and so forth,) for the state-punishment (unknown to English legislation) of men who go with prostitutes (XI. 43) as also with unmarried girls (*ib.* 29-34) with women of prohibited degree (*ib.*) with the wives of others (*ib.* 35-41) or who merely look with an eye of lust upon them (*ib.* 47) stating (*ib.* 46) "A man should consider as wife only that woman who has been married to him according to Brâhma (the common) or Shaiva form. All other women are the wives of others." It deplures (I-37) the evil customs of the present age (Kaliyuga) with its irreligion, lust, adultery, gluttony and addiction to strong drinks. How strangely hypocritical are these laments in a Shâstra which is supposed to consciously promote the very tendencies it deplures. It has been said that the Mahânirvâna is a worthy exception in an unworthy class. It is true that this Tantra evidences what may be called a reforming tendency on account of abuses which had occurred and thus puts restrictions on the ordinary householder as regards particular portions of the ritual, a fact which made a Pandit, of whom I was told, say that in



## THE PANCHATATVA

comparison with the Mahânîla Tantra it was "a woman's Shâstra." Nevertheless on the general matters here dealt with it is not an exception. Possibly those who so speak had only read the Mahânirvâna which is the sole Tantra which has been translated in English. Certainly nothing that they say indicates any real acquaintance with any other. There are in fact other fine and more philosophical Tantras, and all the great authoritative Scriptures are at one, so far as I am aware, on the general question of morality and the search for Liberation with which I here deal. How as I have said could it, on commonly accepted principles, be otherwise? Whether the Sâdhanâ they teach is good and effective for the end sought is another matter, and still more so is the question whether it has been productive in fact of abuse.

What then are the general Indian rules touching drinking, eating, and sexual intercourse? In ancient Vaidik times intoxicating liquor was taken in the form of Soma. Such drink was found however in the course of time to be productive of great evils and was thrice cursed by Brahmâ, Shukrâchârya and Krishna. It was then prohibited with the result that India has been the most temperate among the great peoples of the world, Manu having declared that though the drinking of wine was a natural tendency, abstinence therefrom was productive of great fruit, the Ushanah Samhitâ says "Wine should not be drunk, given or taken" (*Madyam apeyam adeyam agrâhyam*). The drinking of wine is one of the great sins (Mahâpâtaka) involving expiation (Prâyash-chitta) and otherwise leading the sinner to that great Hell in which the slayer of a Brâhmana is confined (Vishnu Purâna II. c. vi). In ancient Vaidik times meat was eaten by the fair-coloured auburn-haired Aryans, including even beef as is done by their fellow Aryans of the West. But in process of time the slaughter of cattle for food was absolutely prohibited and certain meats such as that of the domesticated fowl and pig were held to



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

be impure. As regards the eating of flesh and fish to-day I believe the higher castes (outside Bengal) who submit to the orthodox Smârta discipline take neither. Nor do high and strict Brâhmanas in that province. But the bulk of the people there, both men and women, eat fish, and men consume the flesh of male goats previously offered to the Deity. Grain of all kinds is a common diet. I speak of course of orthodox Hindus. Some who have adopted western civilisation have taken on with it the eating of beef, the whisky peg and champagne, the curses of Brahmâ, Shukra, Krishna, and the Hell of their Shâstras being nothing to them.

It is common ground to all Shâstras that sexual intercourse (Maithuna) by a man with a woman who is not lawful to him is a sin. The Vaidik Dharma is strict on this point. It forbids not merely actual Maithuna but what is called Ashtânga (eightfold) Maithuna namely Smaranam (thinking upon it) Kîrttanam (talking of it) Keli (play with women) Prekshanam (making eyes at women) Guhyâbhâshanam (talk in private with women) Sangkalpa (wish or resolve for sexual union) Adhyavasâya (determination towards it) Kriyânishpatti (actual accomplishment of the sexual act). In short the Pashu or follower of the ordinary ritual (and except for ritual purposes those who are not Pashu) should in the words of the Shâktakramîya (cited by Mahâmahopâdhyâya Krishnanâtha Nyâya-panchânana Bhattâchâryya in his Commentary to v. 15 of the Karpûrâdistotra) avoid Maithuna, conversation on the subject and assemblies of women.

*Maithunang tatkathâlâpang tadgoshthîng parivarjayet.*

Even in marriage certain rules are to be observed such as that which confines intercourse to the fifth day after the termination of the period (*Ritukâlang vinâ devi ramanang parivarjayet*) which is said by the Nityâ Tantra to be a characteristic of the Pashu. Polygamy is permissible to all Hindus.



## THE PANCHATATVA

The Divinity in woman which the Shâkta Tantra in particular proclaims is also recognised in the ordinary Vaidik teaching. The wife is an House-Goddess (Grihadēvatâ) united to her husband by the sacrament (Sangskâra) of marriage and is not to be regarded merely as an object of enjoyment. Further Vaidik Dharma (now neglected) prescribes that the householder should ever worship, with, his wife as necessary partner therein, *Sastrîko dharmamâcharet* (See also Matsyasûkta Tantra XXXI). According to the sublime notions of Shruti the union of man and wife is a veritable sacrificial rite—a sacrifice in fire (Homa) wherein she is both hearth (Kunda) and flame—and he who know this as Homa attains Liberation (See Mantra 13 of Homaprakarana of Brihadâraryaka Upanishad and Edward Carpenter's remarks on what is called the obscenity of this Upanishad). Similarly the Tântrik Mantra for Maithuna runs (See Prânatoshinî and Tantrasâra 698) "Om, Into the Fire which is Spirit (Âtmâ) brightened by (the pouring thereon) of the ghee of merit and demerit, I by the path of Sushumnâ (the central "nerve") ever sacrifice (do Homa of) the functions of the senses using the mind as the ladle Svâhâ" (In the Homa rite the performer pours ghee into the fire which causes it to shoot up and flame. The ghee is poured in with a ladle. This being internal Homa the mind is the ladle which makes the offering of ghee).

*Om Dharmâdharma-havirdîpte âtmâgnau manasâ sruchâ  
Sushumnâvartmanâ nityam akshavrittîr juhomyaham  
Svâhâ.*

Here sexual union takes on the grandeur of a great rite (Yajna) compared with which the ordinary mere animal copulation to ease desire, whether done grossly, shamefacedly, or with flippant gallantry is mean and base. It is because this high conception of the function is not known that a "grossness" is charged against the association of sexual function with religion which does not belong to it. Grossness is properly attributable to those who



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

mate like dumb animals, not to such as realise in this function the cosmic activity of the active Brahman or Shiva-Shakti with which they then, as always, unify themselves.

It has been already explained that Sâdhakas have been divided into three classes—Pashu, Vîra, and Divya and for each the Shâstra prescribes a suitable Sâdhanâ, Tâmasik, Râjasik and Sâttvik accordingly. As later stated the Panchattattva ritual in its full literal sense is not for the Pashu, and (judging upon principle) the Divya, unless of the lower ritual order, should be beyond it. In its fullest and literal sense it is for the Vîra and is therefore called Râjasik Sâdhanâ or Upâsanâ. It is to be noted however that Pashu, Vîra and Divya are the three primary classes (Mukhyasâdhaka). Besides these there are secondary divisions (Gaunasâdhaka). Thus in addition to the primary or Svabhâva Pashu there is the Vibhâva Pashu who is a step towards Vîrâchâra. Vîras again have been said to be of three kinds, Svabhâva Vîra, Vibhâva Vîra, and Mantrasiddha Vîra. It is to this Râjasik Pûjâ that the Hymn to Chhinnamastâ from the Devîrahasyakhandâ of the Rudrayâmala refers when the Vîra therein says

*Alipishitapurandhrî-bhogapûjâparo'ham*

*Bahavidhakulamârgârambha-sambhâvito'ham*

*Pashujanavimukho'ham Bhairavîm âshrito'ham*

*Gurucharanarato'ham Bhairavo'ham Shivo'ham*

(“ I follow the worship wherein there is enjoyment of wine, flesh and wife as also other different forms of Kula worship. In Bhairavî (the Goddess) I seek my refuge. To the feet of Guru I am devoted. Bhairava am I. Shiva am I.”)

To the ordinary English reader the association of eating, drinking and sexual union with worship will probably be incongruous if not downright repulsive. “ Surely ” he might say “ such things are far apart from prayer to God. We go and do them it is true because they are a necessity of our animal nature but prayer or worship have nothing to do



## THE PANCHATATVA

with such coarseness. We may pray before or after (as in Grace) on taking food, but the physical acts between are not prayer. Such notions are based partly on that dualism which keeps separate and apart God and His creature and partly on certain false and depreciatory notions concerning matter and material functions. According to Indian Monism such worship is not only understandable but (I am not speaking of any particular form of it) the only religious attitude consistent with its principles. Man is, in his essence or spirit, divine and one with the universal Spirit. His mind and body and all their functions are divine, for they are not merely a manifestation of the Power (Shakti) of God but that Power itself. To say that matter is in itself low or evil is to calumniate that Power. Nothing in natural function is low or impure to the mind which recognises it as Shakti and the working of Shakti. It is the ignorant and, in a true sense, vulgar mind which regards any natural function as low or coarse. The action in this case is seen in the light of the inner vulgarity of mind.

External worship demands certain acts and instruments, such as bodily attitude, speech, and materials with which the rite is done such as flowers, incense, lights, water and other offerings. These materials and instruments are called Upachâra. Ordinarily there are sixteen of these but they may be more or less. There is nothing absolute in either the quality, quantity or nature of the offerings. Ordinarily such things are offered as might be given to guests or friends or others whom the worshipper loves, such as seat (Âsana) welcome (Svâgata) water to wash the feet (Pâdya) food (Naivedya) cloths (Vasana) jewels (Âbharana) with other things such as lights, incense and flowers. In inner or mental worship (Mânasapûjâ) these are not things material, but of the mind of the worshipper. Pleasing things are selected as offering to the Devatâ because the worshipper wishing to please Devatâ offers what he thinks to be pleasant and would be glad himself to receive. But a man who



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

recognised the divinity (and therefore value) of all things might offer any. With such a disposition a piece of mud or a stone would be as good an offering as any other. There are some things the ordinary man looks upon as "unclean" and, as long as he does so, to offer such a thing would be an offence. But if to his "equal eye" these things are not so they might be given. Thus the Vîra-sâdhanâ of the Shâkta Tantra makes ritual use of what will appear to most as impure and repulsive substances. This (as the Jnânârnavâ Tantra says) is done to accustom the worshipper not to see impurity in them but to regard them as all else as manifestation of Divinity. He is taught that there is nothing impure in itself in natural functions though they be made by misuse or abuse the instruments of impurity. Here again impurity consists not in the act *per se* but in the way and in the intention with which it is done. To a Vîra all things, acts, and functions, done with right intention, may be instruments of worship. Therefore the natural functions of eating, drinking and sexual union may be used as Upachâra of worship. This does not mean that a man may do what he likes as regards these things and pass them off as worship. They must be rightly done otherwise a man would be offering his sin to Devatâ. The *principle* of all this is entirely sound. The only question which exists is as regards the *application* to which the ritual in question puts it. Worship and prayer are not merely the going aside at a particular time or place to utter set formulæ or to perform particular ritual acts. The whole of life, in all its rightful particulars, without any single exception, may be an act of worship if man but makes it so. Who can rightly deny this? Of course as long as a man regards any function as impure or matter of shame, his mental disposition is such that he cannot worship therewith. To do so would distract and perturb him. But both to the natural-minded and illuminate man this is possible. The principle here dealt with is not entirely peculiar to this school. Those Hindus who are not



## THE PANCHATATTVA

Monists, [and whatever be their philosophical theories no worshippers in practice are so for worship connotes the dualism of worshipped (Upâsya) and worshipper (Upâsaka) of the means or instrument (Sâdhana) and that to be attained thereby (Sâdhya)] yet make offering of their acts to Devatâ. By thus offering all their daily speech, each word they say becomes, in the words of Shâstra, Mantra. Nor, if we examine it, is the principle alien to Christianity, for the Christian may in opening his day offer all his acts therein to God. What he thereafter does is worship. The difference in these cases and that of the Vîra principle lies (at any rate in practice) is this, that the latter is more thorough in its application, no act or function being excluded, and in worship the Shâkta being a Monist is taught to regard the offering not as given to someone other than his own essential self but to That. He is thus according to the theory of this practice led to divinise his functions and by their constant association with the thought of Brahman his mind is purified and led away from all carnal desires. If these functions are set apart as something common or impure, victory is not easily won. There is still some part of his life into which Brahman does not enter and which remains the source of distraction. By associating them with religion, it is the religious feeling which works first *through* and then *supersedes* them. He thus gradually attains Divyabhâva and the state of the Devatâ he has worshipped. For it is common Indian principle that the end of worship is to assimilate oneself to its object or Devatâ. Thus it is said in the Agni Purâna that by worship of Rudra one becomes Rudra, by worship of Vishnu one becomes Vishnu, and by worship of Shakti one becomes Shakti. This is so because the mind mentally transforms itself into the likeness of that on which it is set. By thinking always on the other hand on sensual objects one becomes sensual. Even before worship, one should strive to attain the true attitude of worship and so the Gandharva Tantra says "He who is not



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Deva (Adeva) should not worship Deva. The Deva alone should worship Deva." The Vîra or strictly the Sâdhaka qualified to enter Vîrâchâra—since the true Vîra is its finished product—commences Sâdhanâ with this Râjasik Upâsanâ with the Panchatattva as Upachâra which are employed for the destruction of the sensual tendencies they connote. I have heard the view expressed that this part of the Shâstra was really promulgated for Shûdras. Shiva knowing the animal propensities of their common life must lead them to take flesh and wine, prescribed these rites with a view to lessen the evil and to gradually wean them from enjoyment by promulgating conditions under which alone such enjoyment could be had, and in associating it with religion. "It is better to bow to Nârâyana with one's shoes on than never to bow at all." A man with a taste for drink will only increase his thirst by animal satisfaction (Pashupâna). But if when he drinks he can be made to regard the liquid as a divine manifestation and have thought of God, gradually such thoughts will overcome and oust his sensual desires. On the same principle children are given powders in jam, though this method is not confined to actual children only. Those who so argue contend that a Brâhmana should on no account take wine, and Texts are cited which are said to support this view. I have dealt with this matter in the Introduction to the sixth volume of my "Tântrik Texts." It is sufficient to say here that the reply given is that such Texts refer to the unauthorised consumption of wine as by uninitiated (Anabhishikta) Brâhmanas. In the same place I have discussed the question whether wine can be taken at all by any one in this Kali age. For according to some authorities there is only Pashubhâva in the Kaliyuga. If this be correct then all wine-drinking whether ritual or otherwise is prohibited.

For the worship of Shakti the Panchatattva are declared to be essential. Without the Panchatattva in one form or another Shaktipûjâ cannot be performed (Mahânirvâna V.



## THE PANCHATATTVA

23-24). The reason of this is that those who worship Shakti, worship Divinity as Creatrix and in the form of the universe. If She appears as and in natural function She must be worshipped therewith otherwise as the Tantra cited says, worship is fruitless. The Mother of the Universe must be worshipped with these five elements namely wine, meat, fish, grain, and woman, or their substitutes. By their use the universe (Jagad-brahmânda) itself is used as the article of worship (Upachâra). The Mahânirvâna (VII-103-111) says that wine which gives joy and dispels the sorrows of men is Fire; flesh which nourishes and increases the strength of mind and body is Air; fish which increases generative power is Water, cereals grown in earth and which are the basis of life are Earth, and sexual union, which is the root of the world and the origin of all creations, is Ether. They thus signify the Power (Shakti) which produces all fiery elements, all terrestrial and aquatic life, all vegetable life, and the will, knowledge and action of the Supreme Prakriti productive of that great bliss which accompanies the process of creation. (See also Haratattvadîdhiti XV, Kâmâkhyâ Tantra, Nigamatattvasâra IV). The Kailâsa Tantra (Pûrvâkhyâ Ch. XC) identifies this Pentad (Panchatattva) with the five vital airs (Prânâdi) and the five Mahâpreta which support the couch of Tripurasundarî.

With these preliminaries, and postponing for the moment further comment, we may proceed to an examination in greater detail of the five (Pancha) elements (Tattva) namely Wine (Madya) Meat (Mângsa) Fish (Matsya) Parched Cereal (Mudrâ) and sexual union (Maithuna) which stand for drinking, eating and propagation. Because they all commence with the letter M., they are vulgarly called Pancha-ma-kâra (or five M's).

These Panchatattva, Kuladravya or Kulatattva as they are called have more esoteric names. Thus the last is known as "the fifth." Woman is called Shakti or Prakriti. A Tântrik commonly calls his wife his Shakti or Prakriti.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Woman is also called Latâ or “creeper” because woman clings to and depends on man as the creeper does to the tree. Hence the ritual in which woman is enjoyed is called Latâsâdhana. Wine is called “causal water” (Kâranavâri) or Tîrtha water (Tîrthavâri).

But the Panchatattva have not always their literal meaning. The meaning differs according as they refer to the Tâmasik (Pashvâchâra) Râjasik (Vîrâchâra) or Sâttvik (Divyâchâra) Sâdhanâs respectively. “Wine” is only wine and Maithuna is only sexual union in the ritual of the Vîra. To the Pashu the Vîra ritual (Vîrâchâra) is prohibited as unsuitable to his state, and the Divya, unless of the lower ritual kind, is beyond such things. The result is that the Panchatattva have each three meanings. Thus “wine” may be wine (Vîra ritual), or it may be cocoanut water (Pashu ritual) or it may mean the intoxicating knowledge of the Supreme attained by Yoga, according as it is used in connection with the Vîra, the Pashu, or the Divya respectively. The Panchatattva are thus threefold namely real (Pratyakshatattva) where “wine” means wine, substitutional (Anukalpatattva) where wine means cocoanut water or some other liquid, and symbolical or divine (Divyatattva) where it is a symbol to denote the joy of Yoga-knowledge. The Pashu worships with the substitutional Tattvas mentioned later and never takes wine, the Vîra worships with wine, and the Divya’s “wine” is spiritual knowledge. There are further modifications of these general rules in the case of the intermediate Bhâvas. Thus the author next cited says that whilst the Svabhâva Vîra is a drinker of wine, the Vibhâva Vîra worships internally with the five mental Tattvas and externally with substitutes. The Mantrasiddhavîra is free to do as he pleases in this matter, subject to the general Shâstrik rules. In an essay by Pandit Jayachandra Siddhântabhûshana answering certain charges made against the Tantra Shâstra he, after stating that neither the Vibhâva Vîra nor Vibhâva Pashu need worship with real



## THE PANCHATATTVA

wine, says that in modern Bengal this kind of worship is greatly prevalent. Such Tântriks do not take wine but otherwise worship according to the rule of Tantra Shâstra. It is, as he says, an erroneous but common notion that a "Tântrika" necessarily means a drinker of wine. Some Sâdhakas again, in lieu of the material Maithuna, imagine the union of Shiva and Shakti in the upper brain centre known as the Sahasrâra.

The Divya Panchatattva for those of a truly Sâttvika or spiritual temperament (Divyabhâva) have been described as follows:—"Wine" (Madya) according to Kaula Tantra (see p. 85 of Panchatattva-vichâra by Nîlamani Mukhyopâdhyâya) is not any liquid but that intoxicating knowledge acquired by Yoga of the Parabrahman which renders the worshipper senseless as regards the external world. "Meat" (Mângsa) is not any fleshly thing, but the act whereby the Sâdhaka consigns all his acts to Me (Mâm) that is the Lord. "Fish" (Matsya) is that Sâttvik knowledge by which through the sense of "Mineness" (a play upon the word Matsya) the worshipper sympathises with the pleasure and pain of all beings. Mudrâ is the act of relinquishing all association with evil which results in bondage. Coition (Maithuna) is the union of the Shakti Kundalinî, the "Inner woman" and World-force in the lowest centre (Mûlâdhâra Chakra) of the Sâdhaka's body with the Supreme Shiva in the highest centre (Sahasrâra) in the upper Brain (See Essay on Kundalinî Shakti *post*). This the Yoginî Tantra (Ch. VI) says is the best of all unions for those who are Yati that is who have controlled their passions.

*Sahasrâropari bindau kundalyâ melanam Shive*

*Maithunangparamangdravyang yatînângparikîrtitam*

According to the Âgamasâra, "wine" is the Somadhârâ or lunar ambrosia which drops from the Sahasrâra. "Meat" (Mângsa) is the tongue (Mâ) of which its part (Angsha) is speech. The Sâdhaka in eating it controls his speech. "Fish" (Matsya) are those two (Vâyû or currents) which are



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

constantly moving in the two "rivers" (that is Yoga "nerves" or Nâdis) called Idâ and Pingalâ that is the sympathetics on each side of the spinal column. He who controls his breath by Prânâyâma, "eats" them by Kumbhaka or retention of breath. Mudrâ is the awakening of knowledge in the pericarp of the great Sahasrâra Lotus (the upper brain) where the Âtmâ resplendent as ten million suns and deliciously cool as ten million moons is united with the Devî Kundalinî, the World-force and Consciousness in individual bodies, after Her ascent thereto from the Mûlâdhâra in Yoga. The esotêric meaning of coition or Maithuna is thus stated in the Âgama. The ruddy hued Ra is in the Kunda (ordinarily the seed-mantra Ram is in Manipûra but perhaps here the Kunda in the Mûlâdhâra is meant). The letter Ma (white like the autumnal moon, Sattvaguna, Kaivalyarûpa-prakritirûpî—Ch. 2 Kâmadhenu Tantra) is in the Mahâyoni (not I may observe the "female genitals" but the lightning-like triangle or Yoni in the Sahasrâra or upper brain) in the form of Bindu (a Ghanîbhûta or "condensed" form of Shakti and transformation of Nâda-shakti). When M (Makâra) seated on the Hangsa (the "bird" which is the pair Shiva-Shakti as Jîva) in the form of A (A-kâra) unites with R (Ra-kâra) then Brahman knowledge (Brahmajnâna) which is the source of supreme bliss is gained by the Sâdhaka who is then called Âtmârâma (Enjoyer with the Self) for his enjoyment is in the Âtmâ in the Sahasrâra. (For this reason too the word Râma which also means sexual enjoyment is equivalent to the liberator-Brahman, Ra + a + ma). The union of Shiva and Shakti is described (Tantrasâra 702) as true Yoga *Shivashakti-samâyogo yoga eva na sangshayah*) from which as the Yâmala says arises that Joy which is known as the Supreme Bliss (ib. 703). (*Sangyogâj jâyate saukhyam paramânandalakshanam*).

This is the union on the purely Sâttvik plane which corresponds in the Râjasik plane to the union of Shiva and



## THE PANCHATATVA

Shakti in the persons of their worshippers. It will have been observed that here in this Divya or Sâttvik Sâdhanâ "Wine" "Woman" and so forth are really Yogik operations.

The substitutional Tattvas of Pashvâchâra also do not answer to their names, being other substances which are taken as substitutes of wine, meat, fish (See Kulachûdâmani; Bhairavayâmala Ch. 1.) These have been variously described and sometimes as follows:—In lieu of wine the Pashu should, if a Brâhmana, take milk, if a Kshatriya ghee, if a Vaishya honey, and if a Shûdra a liquor made from rice. Cocoanut water in a Bell-metal utensil is also taken as a substitute. Salt, ginger, sesamum, wheat beans (Mâshakalâi) and garlic are some of the substitutes for meat; the white brinjal vegetable, red radish, masur (a kind of gram) red sesamum and Pâniphala (an aquatic plant) take the place of fish. Paddy, rice, wheat and grain generally are Mudrâ both in Tâmasik (Pashvâchâra) and Râjasik (Vîrâchâra) Sâdhanâs. In lieu of Maithuna there may be an offering of flowers with the hands formed into the gesture called Kachchhapa-mudrâ, the union of the Karavîra flower (representative of the Linga) with the Aprâjitâ (Clitoria) flower which is shaped as and represents the female Yoni and other substitutes, or there may be union with the Sâdhaka's wife. On this and some other matters here dealt with there is variant practice.

The Kaulikârchanadîpikâ speaks of what is called the Âdyatattvas. Âdyamadya or wine is hemp (Vijayâ) Âdyashuddhi or meat is ginger (Âdraka) Âdyamîna or fish is citron (Jambîra) Âdyamudrâ is Dhânyaja that is made from paddy and Âdyashakti is the worshipper's own wife. Quoting from the Tantrântara it says that worship without these Âdya forms is fruitless. Even the strictest total abstainer and vegetarian will not object to "wine" in the shape of hot milk or cocoanut water, or to ginger or other substitutes for meat. Nor is there any offence in regarding sexual union between the Sâdhaka and his wife not



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

as a mere animal function but as a sacrificial rite (Yajna).

At this point we may pass to the literal Tattvas. Wine here is not merely grape-wine but that which is made from various substances such as molasses (Gaudî) rice (Paishtî) or the Madhûka flower (Mâdhvî) which are said by the Mahânirvâna Tantra (Ch. VI) to be the best. There are others such as wine made from the juice of the Palmyra and date tree, and aniseed (Maureya wine). Meat is of three kinds that is animals of the water, earth, and sky. But no female animal must be slain. Superior kinds of fish are Shâla, Pâthîna, and Rohita. Mudrâ which every Orientalist whom I have read calls "ritual gesture" or the like is nothing of the kind here, though that is a meaning of the term Mudrâ in another connection. They cannot have gone far into the subject, for it is elementary knowledge that in the Panchatattva, Mudrâ means parched cereal of various kinds and is defined in Yoginî Tantra (Ch. VI) as:—

*Bhrishtadhânyâdikang yadyad charvanîyam prachakshate*

*Sâ mudrâ kathitâ devi sarvveshâng Naganandini*

(Oh Daughter of the mountain fried paddy and the like—in fact all such (cereals) as are chewed—are called Mudrâ).

The Mahânirvâna (Ch. VI) says that the most excellent is that made from Shâli rice or from barley or wheat and which has been fried in clarified butter. Meat, fish, Mudrâ offered to the Devatâ along with wine is technically called Shuddhi. The Mahânirvâna says that the drinking of wine without Shuddhi is like the swallowing of poison and the Sâdhanâ is fruitless. It is not difficult to see why. For wine taken without food has greater effect and produces greater injury. Moreover another check on indiscriminate drinking is placed, for wine cannot be taken unless Shuddhi is obtained, prepared, and eaten with the necessary rites. Woman, or Shakti, as She is properly called, since She is purified and



## THE PANCHATATVA

consecrated for the rite and represents the Devî, is of three kinds namely Svîyâ or Svakîyâ (one's own wife) Parakîyâ the wife of another or some other woman, and Sâdhâranî or one who is common. This aspect of the subject I deal with later. Here I will only say that, where sexual union is permitted at all, the ordinary Shakti is the Sâdhaka's Brâhmî wife. It is only under certain conditions that there can be any other Shakti. Shaktis are also of two kinds namely those who are enjoyed (Bhogyâ) and those who are worshipped only (Pûjyâ). A Sâdhaka who yields to desire for the latter commits the sin of incest with his own mother.

Here again, according to Shâkta notions, one must not think of these substances as mere gross matter in the form of wine, meat and so forth, nor on woman as mere woman; nor upon the rite as a mere common meal. The usual daily rites must be performed in the morning, midday and evening (Mahânirvâna V. 25). These are elaborate (*ib*) and take up a large part of the day. Bhûtashuddhi is accomplished, at which time the Sâdhaka thinks that a Deva body has arisen as his own. Various Nyâsas are done. Mental worship is performed of the Devî the Âdyâ Kâlikâ, who is thought of as being in red raiment seated on a red lotus. Her body dark like a rain-cloud, Her forehead gleaming with the light of the crescent moon. Japa of Mantra is then done and outer worship follows. A further elaborate ritual succeeds.

I pause here to ask the reader to conceive the nature of the mind and disposition of the Sâdhaka who has sincerely performed these rites. Is it likely to be lustful or gluttonous? The curse is removed from the wine and the Sâdhaka meditates upon the union of Deva and Devî in it. Wine is to be considered as Devatâ. After the consecration of the wine, the meat, fish and grain are purified and are made like unto nectar. The Shakti is sprinkled with Mantra and made the Sâdhaka's own. She is the Devî Herself in the form of woman. The wine is charged with Mantras ending with the realization (Mahânirvâna Tantra VI. 42) when Homa is



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

done that offering is made of the excellent nectar of "Thisness" (Idantâ) held in the cup of "I-ness" (Ahantâ) into the Fire which is the Supreme I-ness (Parâhantâ).

*Ahantâpâtra-bharitam idantâparamâmrítam*

*Parâhantâmaye vahnau homasvîkâralakshanâm*

Here the distinction is drawn between the "I" (Aham) and the "This." The former is either the Supreme "I" (Parâhantâ or Shiva) or the individual "I" (Jîva) vehicled by the "This" or Vimarsha-Shakti. The Sâdhaka is the cup or vessel which is the individual Ego. "Thisness" is offered to the Supreme. Drinking is an offering to that Fire which is the transcendent Self "whence all individual selves (Jîva) proceed." Wine is then Târâ Dravamayî, that is the Saviouress Herself in the form of liquid matter (Mahânirvâna XI. 105-107). None of the Tattvas can be offered unless first purified and consecrated, otherwise the Sâdhaka goes to Hell. With further ritual the first four Tattvas are consumed, the wine being poured as an oblation into the mouth of Kundalî after meditation upon Her as Consciousness (Chit) spread from Her seat the Mûlâdhâra to the tip of the tongue. The whole ritual is of the highest interest and I hope to give an exposition of it on some future day.

Worship with the Panchatattva generally takes place in a Chakra or circle composed of men and women, Sâdhakas and Sâdhikâs, Bhairavas and Bhairavîs sitting in a circle, the Shakti being on the Sâdhaka's left. Hence it is called Chakrapûjâ. A Lord of the Chakra (Chakreshvara) presides sitting with his Shakti in the centre. During the Chakra there is no distinction of caste, but Pashus of any caste are excluded. There are various kinds of Chakra—productive it is said of differing fruits for the participator therein. As amongst Tântrik Sâdhakas we come across the high, the low, and mere pretenders, so the Chakras vary in their characteristics from say the Tattva-chakra for the Brahma-kaulas, and the Bhairavî-chakra (as described in Mahânirvâna, VIII. 153) in which in lieu of wine the householder



## THE PANCHATATTVA

takes milk, sugar and honey (Madhura-traya) and in lieu of sexual union does meditation upon the Lotus Feet of the Divine Mother with Mantra, to Chakras the ritual of which will not be approved such as Chûdâchakra, Ânanda-bhuvanayoga and others referred to later. Just as there are some inferior "Tântrik" writings so we find rituals of a lower type of men neither whose notions nor practices were adopted by high Sâdhakas in the past nor will they, if they survive, be approved for practice to-day. What is wanted is a discrimination which avoids both unjust general condemnations and, with equal ignorance, unqualified commendations which do harm. I refer in my Essay on "Shakti and Shâkta" to a modern Chakra. I heard a short time ago of a Guru, influenced by an English education, whose strictness went so far that the women did not form part of the Chakra but sat in another room. This was of course absurd.

The two main objections to the Râjasik Pûjâ are from both the Hindu and European standpoint the alleged infraction of sexual morality, and from the former standpoint, the use of wine. By "Hindu" I mean those who are not Shâktas. I will deal with the latter point first. The Vîra Shâkta admits the Smârta rule against the drinking of wine. He however says that drinking is of two kinds, namely extra-ritual drinking for the satisfaction of sensual appetite, and the ritual drinking of previously purified and consecrated wine. The former is called Pashupâna or "animal drinking," and Vrithâpâna or "useless drinking": for, being no part of worship, it is forbidden, does no good, but on the contrary injury, and leads to Hell. The Western's drinking, (even his moderate "whisky and soda,") is Pashupâna. The Vîrâchârî, like every other Hindu, condemns this and regards it as a great sin. But drinking for the purpose of worship is held to stand on a different ground. Just as the ancient Vaidiks drank Soma as part of the Sacrifice (Yajna), so does the Vîra drink wine as part of his ritual. Just as the killing of animals for the purpose of sacrifice is accounted no "killing,"



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

so that it does not infringe against the rule against injury (Ahingsâ), so also drinking as part of worship is said not to be the drinking which the Smritis forbid. For this reason it is contended that the Tântrik secret worship (Rahasya-pûjâ) is not opposed to Veda.—The wine is no longer the gross injurious material substance, but has been purified and spiritualised, so that the true Sâdhaka looks upon it as the liquid form of the Saviour Devî (Târâ Dravamayî). The joy it produces is but a faint welling up of the Bliss (Ânanda), which in its essence it is. Wine moreover is then taken under certain restrictions and conditions which should, if adhered to, prevent the abuse which follows on merely sensual drinking (Pashupâna). The true Sâdhaka does not perform the ritual for the purpose of drinking wine, (though possibly in these degenerate days many do) but drinks wine in order that he may perform the ritual. Thus to take an analogous case, a Christian abstainer might yet receive wine in the Eucharist believing it to be the blood of his Lord. He would not partake of the sacrament in order that he might have the opportunity of drinking wine, but he would drink wine because that is the way by which he might take the Eucharist of which wine together with bread (Mudrâ) is an element. I may here mention in this connection that not only are drops of wine sometimes sprinkled on the Prasâda (sacred food) at Dûrgâpûjâ and thus consumed by persons who are not Vîrâchârîs but (though this is not generally known and will perhaps not be admitted) on the Prasâda which all consume at the Vaishnava shrine of Jagannâtha at Puri.

This question about the consumption of wine will not appear to the average European a serious affair, though it is so to the non-Shâkta Hindu. So strong is the general feeling against it that when Babu Keshab Chandra Sen, in one of his imitations of Christian doctrine and ritual, started an Eucharist of his own, the elements were rice and water. It is however a matter of common reproach against these Tântriks that some at least drink to excess. That may be



## THE PANCHATATVA

so. From what I have heard but little credit attaches to the common run of this class of Tântriks to-day. Apart from the general degeneracy which has affected all forms of Hindu religion it is to be remembered that in ancient times nothing was done except under the authority of the Guru. He alone could say whether his disciple was competent for any particular ritual. It was not open to any one to enter upon it and do as he pleased. Nevertheless we must clearly distinguish between the commands of the Shâstra itself and abuses of its provisions by pretended Sâdhakas. It is obvious that excessive drinking prevents the attainment of success and is a fall. As the Mahânirvâna (VI. 195-197. See also VIII. 171) with good sense says "How is it possible for a sinner who becomes a fool through drink to say 'I worship Âdyâ Kâlikâ'". Wine, as is well-known, manifests and emphasises the true disposition of a man ("In vino veritas.") When the worshipper is of a previously pure and devout disposition the moderate use of wine heightens his feelings of devotion. But if it is drunk in excess there can be no devotion at all, but only sin. This same Tantra therefore, whilst doing away with wine in the case of one class of Chakra, and limiting the consumption in any case for householders, says that excessive drinking prevents success coming to Kaula worshippers, who may not drink to such an extent "that the mind is affected (literally "goes round"). "To drink beyond this" it says "is bestial."

*Yâvan na châlayed drishting yâvan na châlayan manah*

*Tâvat pânang prakurvîta pashu-pânam atahparam*

The Mahânirvâna is, it is true, of a moderate and reforming character, and the fact that it thought it necessary to give this injunction is significant of some abuse. Similar counsel may be found however elsewhere; as in the Shyâmarahasya which says that excessive drinking leads to Hell. Thus also the great Tantrarâja (Kâdimata) says (Ch. VIII).

*Na kadâchit pivet siddho devyarghyam aniveditam*

*Pânancha tâvat kurvîta yâvatâ syân manolayah*



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

*Tatah karoti chet sadyah pātakī bhavati dhruvam  
Devatāgurusevānyat pivannāsavam āshayā  
Pātakī rājadandyaschāvi dyopāsaka eva cha*

(The Siddha should never drink the Arghya (wine) meant for the Devī unless the same has been first offered (to Her). Drinking again should only be continued so long as the mind is absorbed (in the Devī). He who does so thereafter is verily a sinner. He who drinks wine through mere sensual desire and not for the purpose of worship of Devatā and Guru is a worshipper of Ignorance (Avidyā) and a sinner punishable by the King).

It must be admitted however that there are to be found words and passages which, if they are to be taken literally, would indicate that wine was not always taken in moderation (See Āsavollāsa in Kulārnava). In reading any Hindu Scripture however one must allow for exaggeration which is called "Stuti." Thus if there is much meat and wine we may read of "mountains of flesh" and "oceans of wine." Such statements were not made to be taken literally. Some descriptions again may refer to Kaulāvadhūtas who, like other "great" men in other matters appear to have more liberty than ordinary folk. Some things may not be "the word of Shiva" at all. It is open to any one to sit down and write a "Tantra," "Stotra" or what not. The Ānanda Stotra for example reads in parts like a libertine's drinking song. Though it has been attributed both to the Kula-chūdāmani and Kulārnava, a learned Tāntrik Pandit, to whom I am much indebted and to whom I showed it, laughed and said "How can this be the word of Shiva. It is not Shiva Shāstra. If it is not the writing of some fallen Upāsaka (worshipper) it is the work of Āchāryyas trying to tempt disciples to themselves." Though a man of Tāntrik learning of a kind rarely met with to-day and a practitioner of the Chakrapūjā, he told me that he had never heard of this Stotra until it was sung at a Chakra in Benares. On asking another Pandit there about it he was told not to



## THE PANCHATATTVA

trouble himself as that is "what these people did." Even when the words *Shiva uvâcha* (Shiva said) appear in a work it does not follow that it has any authority. Though all the world condemns, as does the Shâstra itself, excessive drinking, yet it cannot be said that, according to views generally accepted by the mass of men in the world to-day, the drinking of alcohol is a sin. General morality may yet account it such in some future day.

I pass then to the other matter, namely sexual union. The ordinary rule, as the *Kaulîkârchana-Dîpikâ* says (I refer to the exception later) is that worship should be done with the worshipper's own wife, called the *Âdyâ Shâkti*. This is the general Tântrik rule. Possibly because the exception to it led to abuse, the *Mahânirvâna* (VIII. 173), after pointing out that men in the Kali age are weak of mind and distracted by lust, and so do not recognise woman (Shakti) to be the image of Deity, prescribes for such as these (in the *Bhairavî Chakra*) meditation on the Feet of the Divine Mother in lieu of Maithuna, or where the worship is with the Shakti (*Bhogyâ*) in *Bhairavî* and *Tattva Chakra* the worshipper should be wedded to his Shakti according to Shaiva rites. It adds (ib 129) that "the *Vîra*, who without marriage worships by enjoyment a Shakti, is without doubt guilty of the sin of going with another woman." Elsewhere (VI-14) it points out that when the evil age (*Kaliyuga*) is at its strength the wife alone should be the fifth *Tattva* for "this is void of all defect" (*Sarva-dosha-vivarjita*). The *Sammohana Tantra* (Ch. 2) also says that the Kali age is dominated by lust (*Kâma*) and it is then most difficult to subjugate the senses and that by reason of the prevalence of ignorance (*Avidyâ*) the female *Yoni* is used for worship. That is, by reason of the material nature of man a material form is used to depict the supreme *Yoni* or Cause of all. The commentator on the *Mahânirvâna Tantra*, Pandit *Jaganmohana Tarkâlangkâra* (See *Bhakta Ed.* 345) says that this rule is not of universal application. Shiva (he says)



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

in this Tantra prohibited Sâdhanâ with the fifth Tattva with other Shaktis in the case of men of ordinary weak intellect ruled by lust; but for those who have by Sâdhanâ conquered their passions and attained the state of a true Siddha Vîra, there is no prohibition as to the mode of Latâsâdhanâ. With this I deal later, but meanwhile I may observe that because there is a Shakti in the Chakra it does not follow that there is sexual intercourse, which, when it occurs in the worship of householders, ordinarily takes place outside the Chakra. Shaktis are of two kinds—those who are enjoyed (Bhogyâ Shakti) and those who are worshipped only (Pûjyâ) as earthly representatives of the Supreme Mother of all. Those who yield to desire, even in thought, as regards the latter commit the sin of incest with their mother. Similarly there is a widespread practice amongst all Shâktas of worship of Virgins (Kumârîpûjâ) a very beautiful ceremony. So also in Brahmarâjayoga there is worship of virgin only.

It is plain that up to this point there is (apart from the objection of other Hindus to wine) nothing to be said against the morality of the Sâdhanâ prescribed, though some may take exception to the association of natural function of any kind, however legitimate, with what they regard as worship. This is not a question of morality and I have dealt with it. The reader will also remember that the ritual already described applies to the general mass of worshippers, and that to which I am passing is the ritual of the comparatively few, and so called advanced Sâdhakas. The charge of immorality against all Shâktas whether following this ritual or not fails, and people need not run away in fear on hearing that a man is a "Tântrik." He may not be a Shâkta Tântrik at all, and if he is a Shâkta he may have done nothing to which the world at large will take moral exception.

I now pass to another class of cases. Generally speaking, we may distinguish not only between Dakshinâchâra and



## THE PANCHATATTVA

Vâmâchâra in which the full rites with wine and Shakti are performed, but also between a Vâma and Dakshina division of the latter Âchâra itself. It is on the former side that there is worship with a woman (Parakîyâ Shakti) other than the Sâdhaka's own wife (Svakîyâ Shakti.) But under what circumstances? It is necessary (as Professor de la Valleê Poussin, the Catholic Belgian Sanskritist says (Adhikarma-pradîpa 141) of the Buddhist Tantra) to remember the *conditions* under which these Tântrik rituals are, according to the Shâstra, admissible, when judging of their morality, otherwise he says condemnation becomes excessive (*“ Je crois d'ailleurs qu'on a exagéré la caractère d'immoralité des actes liturgiques de Maithuna faute d'avoir fixé les diverses conditions dans lesquelles ils doivent être pratiqués.”*) As I have said, the ordinary rule is that the wife or Âdyâ Shakti should be co-performer (Sahadharminî) in the rite. An exception however exists where the Sâdhaka has no wife or she is incompetent (Anadhikârinî). There seems to be a notion that the Shâstra directs union with some other person than the Sâdhaka's wife. This is not so. A direction to go after other women as such would be counsel to commit fornication or adultery. What the Shâstra says is—that if the Sâdhaka has no wife, or she is incompetent (Anadhikârinî), then only may the Sâdhaka take some other Shakti. Next, this is for the purpose of ritual worship only. Just as any extra-ritual drinking is sin, so also outside worship any Maithuna, otherwise than with the wife, is sin. The Tattvas of each kind can only be offered after purification (Shodhana) and during worship according to the rules, restrictions, and conditions of the Tântrik ritual (See Tantrasâra 698 citing Bhâvachûdâmani, Uttara-Kulâmrita. In Ch. IV Brihannîla Tantra it is said *Paradârânnâ gachchherân gachchhechcha prâpayed yâdi*, but that is for purposes of worship). Outside worship the mind is not even to think of the subject, as is said concerning the Shakti in the Uttara Tantra.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

*Pûjâkâlang vinâ nânyang purushang manasâ sprishet  
Pûjâ-kâle cha Deveshi veshyeva paritoshayet*

What then is the meaning of this "competency" the non-existence of which relaxes the ordinary rule? The principle on which worship is done with another Shakti is stated in the Guhyakâlikhanda of the Mahâkâla Sanghitâ as follows:—

*Yâdrishah sâdhakah proktah sâdhikâ'pi cha tâdrishî  
Tatah siddhim avâpnoti nânyathâ varsha-kotibhih*

("As is the competency of the Sâdhaka so must be that of the Sâdhikâ. In this way only is success attained and not otherwise even in ten million years"). That is both the man and the woman must be on the same level and plane of development. Thus in the performance of the great Shodhânyâsa the Shakti must be possessed of the same powers and competency as the Sâdhaka. In other words a Sahadharminî must have the same competency as the Sâdhaka with whom she performs the rite. Next, it is not for any man at his own undisciplined will to embark on a practice of this kind. He can only do so if adjudged competent by his Guru. A person of an ignorant, irreligious, and lewd disposition is, properly, incompetent. Then it is commonly thought that because another Shakti is permitted, unlimited promiscuity is allowed. This is of course not so. It must be admitted that the Shâkta Tantra at least pretends to be a religious Scripture, and could not as such directly promote immorality in this way. For under no pretence can morality, or Sâdhanâ for spiritual advancement, be served by directions for, or tacit permissions of, uncontrolled promiscuous sexual intercourse. There may of course have been hypocrites wandering around the country and its women who sought to cover their lasciviousness with the cloak of a pretended religion. But this is not Sâdhanâ but conscious sin. The fruit of Sâdhanâ is lost by license and the growth of sensuality. The proper rule, I am told, is that the relationship with such a Shakti should be of a permanent



## THE PANCHATATTVA

character; it being indeed held that a Shakti who is abandoned by the Sâdhaka takes away with her the latter's merit (Pûnya). The position of such a Shakti may be described as a wife "in religion" for the Sâdhaka, one who being of his competency (Adhikâra) works with him as Sahadharminî in the performance of the rituals of their common cult. In all cases the Shakti must be first made lawful according to the rules of the cult by the performance of the Shaiva sacrament (Shaiva-sangskâra). From a third party attitude it may of course be said that the necessity for all this is not seen. I am not here concerned with that, but state the rules of the cult as I find it. It is desirable, in the interests both of the history of religion and of justice to the cult described, to state these facts accurately. For it is sound theology, that good faith is inconsistent with sin. We cannot call a man immoral who is acting according to his lights and in good faith. Amongst a polygamous people such as were the Jews and as are the Hindus, it would be absurd to call a man immoral who in good faith practised that polygamy which was allowable by the usage which governed him. Other Hindus might or might not acknowledge the status of a Shaiva wife. But a Shaiva who was bound to a woman in that form would not be an immoral man. Immorality, in the sense in which an individual is made responsible for his actions, exists where what is believed to be wrong is consciously followed. And so whilst a Tântrik acting in good faith and according to his Shâstra is not in this sense immoral, other Tântriks who misused the ritual for their libidinous purposes would be so. So of course would also be those who to-day, without belief in the Tantra Shâstra, and to satisfy their passions, practised such rituals as run counter to prevalent social morality. Though the genuine Tântrik might be excused, they would not escape the charge. When however we are judging a religion by the standard of another, which claims to be higher, the lower religion may be considered immoral. The distinction is



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

commonly overlooked which exists between the question whether an individual is immoral and whether the teaching and practice which he follows is so. We may with logical consistency answer the first in the negative and the second in the affirmative. Nevertheless we must mention the existence of some practices which seem difficult to explain and justify, even on the general principles upon which Tântrik Sâdhanâ proceeds. Peculiar liberties have been allowed to the Siddha Vîras who are said to have taken part in them. Possibly they are non-existent to-day. A Siddha Vîra I may incidentally explain, is a Vîra who has become accomplished (Siddha) by doing the rite called Purashcharana of his Mantra the number of times multiplied by one lakh (100,000) that the Mantra contains letters. A Pandit friend tells me that the Siddhamâlarahasya describes a rite (Chûdâchakra) in which fifty Siddha Vîras go with fifty Shaktis, each man getting his companion by lot by selecting one out of a heap of the Shakti's jackets (Chûdâ). His Shakti is the woman to whom the jacket belongs. In the Snehachakra (Love Chakra) the Siddha Vîras pair with the Shaktis according as they have a liking for them. Ânandabhuvanayoga is another unknown rite done with not less than three and not more than one hundred and eight Shaktis who surround the Vîra. He unites with one Shakti (Bhogyâ shakti) and touches the rest. In the Urnâ Chakra (Urnâ = spider's web) the Vîras sit in pairs tied to one another with cloths. A clue to the meaning of these rites may perhaps be found in the fact that they are said to have been done at the instance, and at the cost of, third parties for the attainment of some worldly success. Thus the first was done, I am told, by the Râjâs to gain success in battle. If this be so they belong rather to the side of magic than of religion and are in any case no part of the ordinary Sâdhanâ to attain the true Siddhi which is spiritual advancement. It may also be that just as in the ordinary ritual Brâhmanas are fed and receive gifts, these Chakras were, in part at least, held with the



## THE PANCHATATTVA

same purpose by the class of people who had them performed. It is also to be noted (I report what I am told) that the body of the Shakti in the Chakra is the Yantra. By the union of Vîra and Shakti, who is a form (Âkâra) of the Devî, direct union is had with the latter who being pleased grants all that is desired of Her. There is thus what is technically called Pratyaksha of Devatâ whereas in Kumârî pûjâ and in Shavasâdhanâ the Devî speaks through the mouth of the virgin or the corpse respectively. The Siddha Vîras communicate with Shiva and Shakti in Avadhûtaloka.

I the more readily here and elsewhere state what is unfavourable to this Shâstra as my object is not to "idealise" it (a process to which my strong bent towards the clear and accurate statement of facts is averse) but to describe the practice as I know it to be; on which statement a just judgment may be founded. After all men have been and are of all kinds high and low, ignorant and wise, bad and good, and just as in the Âgamas there are differing schools so it is probable that in the Shâkta practices themselves there are the same differences.

Lastly the doctrine that the illuminate knower of Brahman (Brahmajnânî) is above both good (Dharma) and evil (Adharma) should be noted. Such an one is a Svechchhâchârî whose way is Svechchhâchâra or "do as you will." Similar doctrines and practice in Europe are there called Antinomianism. The doctrine is not peculiar to the Tantras. It is to be found in the Upanishads and is in fact a very commonly held doctrine in India. Here again, as so stated and as understood outside India, it has the appearance of being worse than it really is. If Monistic views are accepted, then theoretically we must admit that Brahman is beyond good and evil, for these are terms of relativity applicable to beings in this world only. Good has no meaning except in relation to evil and *vice versa*. Brahman is beyond all dualities and a Jnânî who has become Brahman (Jîvanmukta) is also logically so. It is however, equally obvious that if a



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

man has complete Brahman-consciousness he will not, otherwise than unconsciously, do an act which if done consciously would be wrong. He is *ex hypothesi* beyond lust, gluttony and all other passions. A theoretical statement of fact that a Brahmajnânî is beyond good and evil is not a statement that he may will to do, and is permitted to do, evil. Statements as regards the position of a Jîvanmukta are mere praise or Stuti. In Svecchhâchâra there is theoretical freedom but it is not consciously availed of to do what is known to be wrong without fall and pollution. Svecchhâchârinî is a name of the Devî, for She does what She pleases since She is the Lord of all. But of others the Shakti-sanggama Tantra (Part IV) says

*Yadyapyasti trikâlaajnastrailokyâkarshana-kshamah  
Tathâ'pi laukikâchâram manasâ'pi na langhayet*

("Though a man be a knower of the Three Times, past, present, and future, and though he be a Controller of the three worlds, even then he should not transgress the rules of conduct for men in the world, were it only in his mind").

What these rules of conduct are the Shâstra provides. Those who wrote this and similar counsels to be found in the Tantra Shâstras may have prescribed methods of Sâdhanâ which will not be approved but they were not immoral minded men. Nor, whatever be the actual results of their working (and some have been evil) was their Scripture devised with the intention of sanctioning or promoting what they believed to be immoral. They promoted or countenanced some dangerous practices under certain limitations which they thought to be safeguards. They have led to abuse as might have been thought to be probable.

Let us now distil from the mass of material to which I have only cursorily referred, those principles underlying the practice which are of worth from the standpoint of Indian Monism of which the practice is a remarkable illustration.

The three chief physical appetites of man are eating and drinking whereby his body is sustained, and sexual



## THE PANCHATATTVA

intercourse whereby it is propagated. Considered in themselves they are natural and harmless. Manu puts this very clearly when he says "There is no wrong (Dosha) in the eating of meat and drinking of wine, nor in sexual intercourse for these are natural inclinations of men. But abstention therefrom is productive of great fruit." Here I may interpose and say that the Tântrik method is not a forced abstention but a regulated use with the right Bhâva, that is Advaitabhâva. When this is perfected, natural desires drop away (except so far as their fulfilment is absolutely necessary for physical existence) as things which are otherwise of no account. How is this done? By transforming Pashubhâva into Vîrabhâva. The latter is the feeling, disposition, and character of a Vîra.

All things spring from and are at base Ânanda or Bliss whether it is perceived or not. The latter therefore exists in two forms; as Mukti which is Ânandasvarûpâ, and as Bhukti or worldly bliss. Tântrik Sâdhanâ claims to give both. The Vîra thus knows that Jîvâtâmâ and Paramâtmâ are one; that it is the One Shiva who appears in the form of the multitude of men and who acts, suffers, and enjoys through them. The Shivasvarûpa is Bliss itself (Paramâ-nanda). The Bliss of enjoyment (Bhogânanda) is one and the same Bliss manifesting itself through the limiting forms of mind and matter. Who is it who then enjoys and what Bliss is thus manifested? It is Shiva in the forms of the Universe (Vishvarûpa) who enjoys, and the manifested bliss is a limited form of that Supreme Bliss which in His ultimate nature He is. In his physical functions the Vîra identifies himself with the collectivity of all functions which constitute the universal life. He is then consciously Shiva in the form of his own and all other lives. As Shiva exists both in His Svarûpa and as the world (Vishvarûpa) so union may, and should, be had with Him in both aspects. These are known as Sûkshma and Sthûla Sâmarasya respectively. The Sâdhaka is taught not to think that we are one with the



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Divine in Liberation only, but here and now in every act we do. For in truth all such is Shakti. It is Shiva who as Shakti is acting in and through the Sâdhaka. So though, according to the Vaidik injunctions, there is no eating or drinking before worship, it is said in the Shâkta Tantra that he who worships Kâlikâ when hungry and thirsty angers Her. Those who worship a God other than their own Essential Self may think to please Him by such acts but to the Shâkta, Shiva and Jîva are one and the same. Why then should one give pain to Jîva? Here is sense indeed. It was I think, Professor Royce who said, borrowing (though probably unconsciously) an essential Tântrik idea, that God suffers and enjoys *in* and *as* and *through* man. This is so. Though the Brahmasvarûpa is nothing but the perfect, actionless Bliss, yet it is also the one Brahman who as Jîva suffers and enjoys; for there is none other. When this is realised in every natural function then each exercise thereof ceases to be a mere animal act and becomes a religious rite—a Yajna. Every function is a part of the Divine Action (Shakti) in Nature. Thus, when taking drink in the form of wine the Vîra knows it to be Târâ Dravamayî that is “the Saviour Herself in liquid form.” How (it is said) can he who truly sees in it the Saviour Mother receive from it harm? Meditating on Kundalinî as pervading his body to the tip of his tongue, thinking himself to be Light which is also the Light of the wine he takes, he says, “I am She” (Sâ ’ham) “I am Brahman” “I Myself offer Âhuti to my own Self, Svâhâ.” When therefore the Vîra eats, drinks or has sexual intercourse he does so not with the thought of himself as a separate individual satisfying his own peculiar limited wants; an animal filching as it were from nature the enjoyment he has, but thinking of himself in such enjoyment as Shiva, saying “Shivo’ham,” “Bhairavo’ham.” It is a fact that right sexual union may, if associated with meditation and ritual, be the means of spiritual advance; though persons who



## THE PANCHATATTVA

take a vulgar and animal view of this function will not readily understand it. The function is thereby ennobled and receives a new significance. The dualistic notions entertained, by both some Easterns and Westerns, that the "dignity" of worship is necessarily offended by association with natural function is erroneous. As Tertullian says, the Eucharist was established at a meal. Desire is often an enemy but it may be made an ally. A right method does not exclude the body, for it is Devatâ. It is a phase of Spirit and belongs to and is an expression of the Power of the Self. The Universe was created by and with Bliss. That same Bliss manifests, though faintly, in the bodies of men and women in union. At such time the ignorant Pashu is intent on the satisfaction of his passion only, but Kulasâdhakas then meditate on the Yogânanda-Mûrti of Shiva-Shakti and do Japa of their Ishtamantra thus making them in the words of the Kâlîkulasarvasva like sinless Shuka. If the union be legitimate what I may ask is wrong in this? On the contrary the physical function is ennobled and divinised. An act which is legitimate does not become illegitimate because it is made a part of worship (Upâsanâ). This is Vîrabhâva.

The notions of the Pashu are in varying degrees the reverse of all this. If of the lowest type, he only knows himself as a separate entity who enjoys. Some more sophisticated, yet in truth ignorant, enjoy and are ashamed; and thus think it unseemly to implicate God in the supposed coarseness of His handiwork as physical function. Some again, who are higher, regard these functions as an acceptable gift of God to them as lowly creatures who enjoy and are separate from Him. The Vaidikas took enjoyment to be the fruit of the sacrifice and the gift of the Devas. Others who are yet higher offer all that they do to the One Lord. This dualistic worship is embodied in the command of the Gîtâ "*Tat madarpanam kurushva.*" "Do all this as an offering to Me." What is "all?" Does



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

it mean all or some particular things only? But the highest Sâdhanâ from the Monistic standpoint, and which in its Advaitabhâva differs from all others, is that of the Shâkta Tantra which proclaims that the Sâdhaka *is* Shiva and that it is Shiva who in the form of the Sâdhaka enjoys.

So much for the principle involved to which, whether it be accepted or not, cannot be truly denied nobility and grandeur.

The application of this principle is of greatly less interest and importance. To certain of such ritual applications may be assigned the charges commonly made against this Shâstra, though without accurate knowledge and discrimination. It was the practice of an age the character of which was not that of our own. The particular shape which the ritual has taken is due I think, to historical causes. Though the history of the Âgamas is still obscure, it is possible that this Panchatattva-Karma is in substance a continuation, in altered form, of the old Vaidik usage in which eating and drinking were a part of the sacrifice (Yajna), though any extra-ritual drinking called "useless" (Vrithâpâna) or Pashu drinking (Pashupâna) in which the Western (mostly a hostile critic of the Tantra Shâstra) so largely indulges, is a great sin. The influence however of the original Buddhism and Jainism were against the consumption of meat and wine; an influence which perhaps continued to operate on post-Buddhistic Hinduism up to the present day, except among certain followers of the Âgamas who claimed to represent the earlier traditions and usages. I say "certain," because (as I have mentioned) for the Pashu there are substitutes for wine and meat and so forth; and for the Divya the Tattvas are not material things but Yoga processes. I have shown the similarities between the Vaidik and Tântrik ritual in my paper on "Shakti and Shâkta" to which I refer. If this suggestion of mine be correct, whilst the importance and prevalence of the ancient ritual will diminish with the passage of time and the changes



## THE PANCHATATTVA

in religion which it effects, the principle will always retain its inherent value for the followers of the Advaita Vedânta. It is capable of application according to the modern spirit without recourse to Chakras and their ritual details in the ordinary daily life of the householder within the bounds of his Dharmashâstra.

Nevertheless the ritual has existed and still exists, though at the present day often in a form free from the objections which are raised against certain ancient liberties of practice which led to abuse. It is necessary therefore, both for the purpose of accuracy and of a just criticism of its present adherents, to consider the *intention* with which the ritual was prescribed and the *mode* in which that intention was given effect to. It is not the fact, as commonly alleged, that the intention of the Shâstra was to promote and foster any form of sensual indulgence. If it was, then the Tantras would not be a Shâstra at all whatever else they might contain. Shâstra as I have previously said comes from the root "Shâs" to control; that is Shâstra exists to control men within the bounds set by Dharma. The intention of this ritual, when rightly understood, is on the contrary to regulate natural appetite, to curb it, to lift it from the trough of mere animality; and by associating it with religious worship, to effect a passage from the state of desire of the ignorant Pashu to the completed Divyabhâva in which there is desirelessness. It is another instance of the general principle to which I have referred that man must be led from the gross to the subtle. A Sâdhaka once well explained the matter to me thus: Let us suppose he said that man's body is a vessel filled with oil which is the passions. If you simply empty it and do nothing more, fresh oil will take its place issuing from the Source of Desire which you have left undestroyed. If, however, into the vessel there is dropped by slow degrees the Water of Knowledge (Jnâna) it will, as being heavier than oil, descend to the bottom of the vessel and will then expel an equal quantity of oil. In



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

this way all the oil of passion is gradually expelled and no more can re-enter, for the water of Jnâna will then have wholly taken its place. Here again the general principle of the method is good. As the Latins said "If you attempt to expel nature with a pitchfork it will come back again." You must infuse something else as a medicament against the ills which follow the natural tendency of desire to exceed the limits which Dharma sets.

The Tântrik Pandit Jaganmohana Tarkâlangkâra in his valuable notes appended to the commentary on the Mahânirvâna Tantra of Hariharânanda Bhârati the Guru of the celebrated "Reformer" Râjâ Ram Mohan Roy (Ed. of K. G. Bhakta 1888) says "Let us consider what most contributes to the fall of a man, making him forget his duty, sink into sin and die an early death. First among these are wine and women, fish, meat, Mudrâ and accessories. By these things men have lost their manhood. Shiva then desires to employ these very poison in order to eradicate the poison in the human system. Poison is the antidote for poison. This is the right treatment for those who long for drink or lust for women. The physician must however be an experienced one. If there be a mistake as to the application the patient is likely to die. Shiva has said that the way of Kulâchâra is as difficult as it is to walk on the edge of a sword or to hold a wild tiger. There is a secret argument in favour of the Panchatattva, and those Tattvas so understood should be followed by all. None however but the initiate can grasp this argument and therefore Shiva has directed that it should not be revealed before anybody and everybody. An initiate when he sees a woman will worship her as his own mother and Goddess (Ishtadevatâ) and bow before her. The Vishnu Purâna says that by feeding your desires you cannot satisfy them. It is like pouring ghee on fire. Though this is true, an experienced spiritual teacher (Guru) will know how, by the application of this poisonous medicine, to kill the poison of



## THE PANCHATATTVA

the world (Sangsâra). Shiva has however prohibited the indiscriminate publication of this. The object of Tântrik worship is Brahmasâyujya or union with Brahman. If that is not attained nothing is attained. And with men's propensities as they are, this can only be attained through the special treatment prescribed by the Tantras. If this is not followed, then the sensual propensities are not eradicated and the work is, for the desired end of Tantra, as useless as harmful magic (Abhichâra) which worked by such a man, leads only to the injury of himself and others." The passage cited refers to the necessity for the spiritual direction of the Guru. To the want of such is accredited the abuse of the system. When the patient (Shishya) and the disease are working together, there is poor hope for the former: but when the patient, the disease and the physician are on one, and that the wrong, side, then nothing can save him from a descent in that downward path which it is the object of Sâdhanâ to prevent.

All Hindu schools seek the suppression of mere carnal worldly desire. What is peculiar to the Kaulas is the particular method employed for the subjugation of, and attainment of freedom from, desire. The Kulârnavâ Tantra says that man must be taught to rise by the means of those very things which are the cause of his fall. "As one falls on the ground one must lift oneself by aid of the ground." So also the Buddhist Subhâsita Sangraha says that a thorn is used to pick out a thorn. Properly applied the method is a sound one. Man falls through the natural functions of drinking, eating, and sexual intercourse. If these are done with the feeling (Bhâva) and under the conditions prescribed, then they become (it is taught) the instruments of his uplift to a point at which such ritual is no longer necessary and is surpassed.

In the last edition of the work I spoke of Antinomian Doctrine and Practice, and of some Shâkta theories and rituals which have been supposed to be instances of it. This



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

word however requires explanation, or it may (I have since thought) lead to error in the present connection. There is always danger in applying Western terms to facts of Eastern life. Antinomianism is the name for heretical theories and practices which have arisen in Christian Europe. In short the term, as generally understood, has a meaning in reference to Christianity, namely contrary or opposed to Law which here is the Judaic law as adopted and modified by that religion. The Antinomian for varying reasons considered himself not bound by the ordinary laws of conduct. It is not always possible to state with certainty whether any particular sect or person alleged to be Antinomian was in fact such, for one of the commonest charges made against sects by their opponents is that of immorality. We are rightly warned against placing implicit reliance on the accounts of adversaries. Thus charges of nocturnal orgies were made against the early Christians, and by the latter against those whom they regarded as heretical dissidents, such as Manichaeans, Montanists, Priscillianists and others, and against most of the mediaeval sects such as the Cathari, Waldenses and Fraticelli. Nor can we be always certain as to the nature of the theories held by persons said to be Antinomian, for in a large number of cases we have only the accounts of orthodox-opponents. Similarly every account hitherto of the Shākta Tantra was given by persons both ignorant of, and hostile to, it. In some cases it would seem (I speak of the West) that matter was held in contempt as the evil product of the Demiurge. In others Antinomian doctrine and practice was based on "Pantheism." The latter in the West has always had as one of its tendencies a leaning towards, or adoption of, Antinomianism. Mystics in their identification with God supposed that upon their conscious union with Him they were exempt from the rules governing ordinary men. The law was spiritualised into the one precept of the Love of God which ripened into a conscious union with Him, one with man's essence. This was



## THE PANCHATATTVA

deemed to be a sinless state. Thus Amalric of Bena (d. 1204) is reputed to have said that to those constituted in love no sin is imputed (*Dixerat etiam quod in charitate constitutis nullum peccatum imputabatur*). His followers are alleged to have maintained that harlotry and other carnal vices are not sinful for the spiritual man, because the spirit in him which is God is not affected by the flesh and cannot sin, and because the man who is nothing cannot sin so long as the spirit which is God is in him. In other words sin is a term relative to man who may be virtuous or sinful. But in that state beyond duty, which is identification with the Divine Essence, which at root man is, there is no question of sin. The body at no time sins. It is the state of mind which constitutes sin, and that state is only possible for a mind with a human and not divine consciousness. Johann Harkmann is reputed to have said that he had become completely one with God; that a man free in spirit is impeccable and can do whatever he will, or in Indian parlance he is Svehchhâchârî. (See Dollinger's *Beitrage zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalter's* ii. 384). This type of Antinomianism is said to have been widespread during the later middle ages and was perpetuated in some of the parties of the so-called Reformation. Other notions leading to similar results were based on Quietistic and Calvinistic tenets in which the human will was so subordinated to the Divine will as to lose its freedom. Thus Gomar (A. D. 1641) maintained that "sins take place, God procuring and Himself willing that they take place". God was thus made the author of sin. It has been alleged that the Jesuit casuists were "constructively antinomian" because of their doctrines of philosophical sin, direction of attention, mental reservation, and probabilism. But this is not so, whatever may be thought of such doctrines. For here there was no question of opposition to the law of morality, but theories touching the question "in what that law consisted" and whether any particular act was in fact a violation of it. They did not teach that



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

the law could in any case be violated but dealt with the question whether any particular act was such a violation. Antinomianism of several kinds and based on varying grounds has been charged against the Manichaeans, the Gnostics generally, Cainites, Carpocrates, Epiphanes, Messalians (with their promiscuous sleeping together of men and women), Adamites, Bogomiles, followers of Amalric of Bena, Brethren of the Free Spirit, Beghards, Fratricelli, Johann Hartmann ("a man free in spirit is impeccable"; the pantheistic "Libertines" and "Familists" and Ranters of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries ("Nothing is sin but what a man thinks to be so": "God sees no sin in him who knows himself to be in a state of grace"; see Gataker's *Antinomianism discovered and refuted* A.D. 1632) the Alumbrados or Spanish Illuminate (Prabuddha) Mystics of the sixteenth century; Magdalena de Cruce d'Aguilar and others (Mendesy Pelayo—"Historia de los Heterodoxos Espanoles) whose teachings according to Malvasia (*Catalogus omnium haeresium et conciliorum*) contained the following proposition "A perfect man cannot sin; even an act which outwardly regarded, must be looked upon as vicious cannot contaminate the soul which lives in mystical union with God." The Alumbrada Francisca Garcia is alleged to have said that her sexual excesses were in obedience to the voice of God and that "carnal indulgence was embracing God" (Lea's *Inquisition in Spain* III 62.) Similar doctrines are alleged of the French Illuminés called Guerinets of the Seventeenth Century; the German "Theosophers" of Schonherr: Eva Von Buttler: the Muckers of the Eighteenth Century; some modern Russian sects (Tsakni "La Russie Sectaire") and others. Whilst it is to be remembered that in these and other cases we must receive with caution the accounts given by opponents, there is no doubt that Antinomianism, Svecchhâchâra and the like is a well known phenomenon in religious history often associated with so-called "Pantheistic" doctrines. Some Antinomian



## THE PANCHATATVA

doctrines on the contrary, such as those of the Italian nuns Spighi and Buonamici recorded by Bishop Scipio de Ricci “*L'uomo e nato libero y nessuno lo puo legare nello spirito :*” “man is born free and none can chain his free Spirit” and the consequence of this teaching is of a demoniac character.

As the writer Edward Sellon “(Annotations on the writings of the Hindus”) thought that he had found in the last cited case an instance of “Tântrik doctrine” in the convents of Italy in the Eighteenth century, I will give some details which refute his view, the more particularly that they are contained in a very rare work, namely the first edition of De Potter’s “*Vie de Scipion de Ricci Eveque de pistoie et Prato*” published at Brussels in 1825, and largely withdrawn at the instance of the Papal Court. The second edition is I believe much expurgated. Receiving report of abuses in the Dominican convent of St. Catherine de Prato, the Bishop of Pistoia and Prato made an inquisition into the conduct of the nuns and in particular as to the teaching and practice of their leaders the Sister Buonamici formerly Prioress and afterwards novice-mistress and the Sister Spighi assistant novice-mistress. De Potter’s work contains the original interrogatories, in Italian (I. 381) in the writing of ‘Abbe Laurent Palli’ Vicar-Episcopal at Prato taken in 1781 and kept in the archives of the Ricci family. The Teaching of the two Sisters I summarise as follows. “God” (I. 413, 418) “is a first principle (*Primo principio*) who is a collectivity (in Sanskrit *Samashti*) of all men and things (*un complesso di tutti le cose anzi di tutto il genere umano*). The universal Master or God is Nature (*ci è il maestro, che e Iddio ceve la natura*). As God is the totality of the universe and is nothing but Nature we all participate in the Divine Essence (*Questo Dio non e altro che la Natura. Noi medesimi per questa ragione partecipiamo in qualche maniera dell'esser divino*). Man’s soul is a mortal thing consisting of Memory, Intelligence and Will. It dies with the body disappearing as might a mist. Man is free and



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

therefore none can enchain his free spirit (I. 428). The only Heaven and Hell which exists is the Heaven and Hell in this world. There is none other. After death there is neither pleasure nor suffering. The Spirit, being free, it is the intention which renders an act bad. It is sufficient (I. 460) to elevate the spirit to God and then no action, whatever it be, is sin (*Essendo il nostro spirito libero, l'intenzione e quello che rende cattiva l'azione. Basta dunque colla mente elevarsi a Dio perche qualsivoglia azione non sia peccato*). There is no sin. Certain (impure) acts are not sin provided that the spirit is always elevated to God. Love of God and one's neighbour is the whole of the commandments. Man (I. 458) who unites with God by means of woman satisfies both commandments. So also does he who, lifting his spirit to God, has enjoyment with a person of the same sex or alone (*Usciamo con alcuno d'equal sesso o da se soli*). To be united with God is to be united as man and woman. The eternal life (I. 418) of the soul and Paradise in this world is the transubstantiation (or it may be transfusion) which takes place when man is united with woman (*Depone credere questa vita eterna dell'anima essere la transustanziazione (forse transfusione) nell'unirsi che fa l'uomo con la donna*). Marie Clodesinde Spigh having stated that Paradise consisting in the fruition in this world of the Enjoyment of God (*la fruizione di Dio*) was asked "How is this attained?" Her reply was by that act by which one unites oneself with God. "How again" she was questioned "is this union effected" To which the answer was by operation of man and woman in which I recognise God Himself." I. 428. (*Mediante l'uomo nel quale ci riconosco Iddio.*) Everything was permissible because man was free, though sots might obey the law enjoyed for the general governance of the world. Man, she said, (I. 420) can be saved in all religions (*In tutti le religione ci possiamo salvare*). In doing that which we erroneously call impure is real purity ordained by God, without which man cannot arrive at a



## THE PANCHATATVA

knowledge of Him who is the truth (*e esercitando erroneamente quello che diciamo impurita era la vera purita : quella Iddio ci comanda e virole noi pratichiamo, e senza della quale non vi e maniera di trovare Iddio, che e verita*) “ Where did you get all this doctrine ?” The sister said “ I gathered it from my natural inclinations ” (*L'ho ricevuto dall inclinazione della natura*).

Whilst it will not be necessary to tell the most ignorant Indian that the above doctrines are not Christian teaching, it is necessary (as Sellon's remark shows) to inform the English reader that this pantheistic libertinism is not “Tântrik.” This ridiculous charge is due to the author's ignorance of the principles of Kaula Sâdhanâ. I will not describe all the obscene and perverse acts which these “Religions” practised. It is sufficient that the reader should throw his eye back a few lines and see that their teaching justified sodomy, lesbianism and masturbation, sins as abhorrent to the Tantra Shâstra as any other. Owing however to ignorance or prejudice everything is called “Tântrik” into which woman enters and in which sexual union takes on a religious or so-called religious character or complexion. The Shâstra on the contrary teaches that there is a God other than and transcending Nature, that Dharma or morality governs all men, that there is sin and that the acts here referred to are heinous impurities leading to Hell ; for there is (it says) both suffering and enjoyment not only in this but in an after life. It was apparently enough for Edward Sellon to adjudge the theories and practices to be T ntrik that these women preached the doctrine of intention and of sexual union with the feeling or Bhâva (to use a Sanskrit term) that man and woman were parts of the one Divine essence. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing and this is an instance of it. These corrupt theories are merely the “religious” and “philosophical” basis for a life of unrestrained libertinism which the Tantra Shâstra as emphatically as any other Scripture condemns. The object of the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Tântrik ritual is to forward the morality of the senses by converting mere animal functions into acts of worship. The Scripture says in effect "Just as you offer flowers, incense and so forth to the Devatâ, in the Râjasik worship let these physical functions take their place, remembering that it is Shiva who is working in and through you." The doctrine of the Brethren of the Free Spirit (Delacroix "Le Mysticisme speculatif en Allemagne au quatorzième siècle) so far as it was probably really held, has, in points, resemblance to some of the Tântrik and indeed Aupanishadic teachings, for they both hold in common certain general principles to which I will refer (See also Preger's "Geschichte der Deutschen Mystik im Mittelalter"). Other doctrines and practices with which they have been charged are wholly hostile to the Shâkta Darshana and Sâdhanâ. Amalric of Bena, a disciple of Scotus Erigena, held that God is all, both creature and creator, and the Essence of all which is. The soul which attains to Him by contemplation becomes God Himself. It was charged against him that man could act in the manner of God's action and do what he pleased without falling into sin. The doctrine that the Brahmajnânî is above good and evil is so generally misunderstood that it is probable that, whatever may have been the case with some of his disciples, the charges made against the master himself on this point are false. It has been well said that one is prompt to accuse of immorality any one who places himself beyond traditional morality. As regards the Brethren of the Free Spirit also, this alleged doctrine comes to us from the mouths of their adversaries. They are said to have held that there were two religions, one for the ignorant (Mûdha), the other for the illuminate (Prabuddha), the first being the traditional religion of the letter and ritual observance and the other of freedom and spirituality. The soul is of the same substance as God (identity of Jîvâtmâ and Paramâtmâ). When this is realised man is deified. Then he is (as Brahmajnânî) above all law (Dharma). The



## THE PANCHATATVA

ordinary rules of morality bind only those who do not see beyond them, and who do not realise in themselves that Power which is superior to all these laws. United with God (*Anima deo unita*) man enjoys a blessed freedom. He sees the inanity of prayers, of fasts, of all those supplications which can do nothing to change the order of nature. He is one with the Spirit of all. Free of the law he follows his own will (*Svechchhâchârî*). What the vulgar call "sin" he can commit without soiling himself. There is a distinction between the act which is called sinful and sin. Nothing is sin but what the doer takes to be such. The body does not sin. It is the intention with which an act is done which constitutes sin. "The angel would not have fallen if what he did had been done with a good intention" (*Quod angelus non cecidisset si bona intentione fecisset quod fecit*). Man becomes God in all the powers of his being including the ultimate elements of his body. Therefore wisdom lies not in renunciation, but in enjoyment and the satisfaction of his desires. The tormenting and insatiable passion for woman is a form of the creative spontaneous principle. The worth of instinct renders noble the acts of the flesh, and he who is united in spirit with God can with impunity fulfil the sensual desires of the body (*item quod unitus deo audacter possit explere libidinem carnis*). There is no more sin in sexual union without marriage than within it and so forth. With the historian of this sect and with our knowledge of the degree to which pantheistic doctrines are misunderstood, we may reasonably doubt whether these accusations of their enemies represent in all particulars their true teaching. It seems however to have been held by those who have dealt with this question that the pantheistic doctrine of the Brethren led to conclusions contrary to the common morality. It is also highly probable that some at least of the excesses condemned were the work of false brethren, who finding in the doctrine a convenient excuse for, and an encouragement of, their licentiousness, sheltered themselves behind its



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

alleged authority. As this remark of Dr. Delacroix suggests, one must judge a doctrine (and we may instance that of the Shâktas) by what its sincere adherents hold and do and not by the practices of impostors who always hie to sects which seem to hold theories offering opportunities for libertinism.

Whilst there is a similarity on some points between Kaula teaching and some of the Western pantheistic theories above alluded to, in others the two are manifestly and diametrically opposed. There are some who talk as if intellectual and moral aberrations were peculiar to India. No country is without them but the West, owing to its chaos of thought and morals, has exhibited the worst. With the exception of the atheistic Chârvâkas and Lokâyatas no sect in India has taught the pursuit of sensual enjoyment for its own sake, or justified the commission of any and every (even unnatural) sin. To do so would be to run counter to ideas which are those of the whole intellectual and moral Cosmos of India. These ideas include those of a Law (Dharma) inherent in the nature of all being; of sin as its infraction, and of the punishment of sin as bad Karma in this and the next world (Paraloka). It is believed and taught that the end of man is lasting happiness but that this is not to be had by the satisfaction of worldly desires. Indeed the Kaula teaches that Liberation (Moksha) can not be had so long as a man has any worldly desires whether good or bad. Whilst however there is an eternal Dharma (Sanâtana Dharma) one and the same for all, there are also particular forms of Dharma governing particular bodies of men. It is thus a general rule that a man should not unlawfully satisfy his sexual desires. But the conditions under which he may lawfully do so have varied in every form and degree in times and places. In this sense, as the Sarvollâsa says, marriage is a conventional (Pâribhâshika) thing. The convention which is binding on the individual must yet be followed, that being his Dharma. Sin again, it is taught,



## THE PANCHATATTVA

consists in intention, not in a physical act divorced therefrom. Were this otherwise, then it is said that the child which, when issuing from the mother's body, touches her Yoni would be guilty of the heinous offence called Guru-talpaga. The doctrine of a single act with differing intentions is illustrated by the Tântrik maxim "A wife is kissed with one feeling, a daughter's face with another" (*Bhâvena chumbitâ kântâ bhâvena duhitânanam*). In the words of the Sarvollâsa a man who goes with a woman, in the belief that by commission of such act he will go to Hell, will of a surety go thither. On the other hand it may be said that if an act is really lawful but is done in the belief that it is unlawful and with the deliberate intention of doing what is unlawful, there is subjective sin. The intention of the Shâstra is not to unlawfully satisfy carnal desire in the way of eating and drinking and so forth, but that man should unite with Shiva-Shakti in worldly enjoyment (Bhaumânanda) as a step towards the supreme enjoyment (Paramânanda) of Liberation. In so doing he must follow the Dharma prescribed by Shiva. It is true that there are different observances for the illuminee, for those whose power (Shakti) is awake (Prabuddha) and for the rest. But the Sâdhanâ of these last is as necessary as the first and a stepping stone to it. The Kaula doctrine and practice may from a western standpoint only be called Antinomian, in the sense that it holds, in common with the Upanishads, that the Brahmajnânî is above both good (Dharma) and evil (Adharma), and in the sense that some of these practices are contrary to what the general body of Hindu worshippers consider to be the lawful. Thus Shâkta Darshana is said by some to be Avaidika. It is however best to leave to the West its own labels and to state the case of the East in its own terms.

After all, when everything unfavourable has been said, the abuses of some Tântriks are not to be compared either in nature or extent with those of the West with its widespread



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

sordid prostitution, its drunkenness and gluttony, its sexual perversities and its so-called pathological but truly demonical enormities. To take a specific example.—Is the drinking of wine, by a limited number of Vâmâchârî Tântriks in the whole of this country to be compared with (say) the consumption of whisky in the single city of Calcutta? Is this whisky drinking less worthy of condemnation because it is Pashupâna or done for the satisfaction of sensual appetite alone? The dualistic notion that the “dignity” of religion is impaired by association with natural function is erroneous.

An English writer, Mr. Conan Doyle, doubtless referring to these and other wrongs, has recently expressed the opinion that during the last quarter of a century we Westerns have been living in what (with some few ameliorating features) is the wickedest epoch in the world's history. However this may be, if our own great sins were here known, the abuses real and alleged of Tântriks would be seen in better proportion. Moreover an effective reply would be to hand against those who are always harping on Devadâsis and other sensualities of, or, connected with, Indian worship. India's general present record for temperance and sexual control is better than that of the West. It is no doubt a just observation that abuses committed under the supposed sanction of religion are worse than wrongs done with the sense that they are wrong. That there have been hypocrites covering the satisfaction of their appetites with the cloak of the religion is likely. But all Sâdhakas are not hypocrites and all cases do not show abuse. I cannot therefore help thinking that this constant insistence on one particular feature of the Shâstra, together with ignorance both of the particular rites, and neglect and ignorance of all else in the Âgama Scripture is simply part of the general polemic carried on in some quarters against the Indian religion. The Tantra Shâstra is doubtless thought to be a very useful heavy gun and is



## THE PANCHATATTVA

therefore constantly fired in the attack. There may be some who will be disappointed if it be shown that the weapon is not as formidable as was thought. All this is not to say that there have not been abuses, or that some forms of rite will not be considered repugnant, and in fact open to objection founded on the interests of society at large. All this again is not to say that I counsel the acceptance of any theories or practice, not justified by the evolved morality of the day. According to the Shâstra itself, some of these methods, even if carried out as directed, have their dangers. This is obvious in the actions of a lower class of men, whose conduct has made the Scripture notorious. The ordinary man will then ask:—"Why then court danger when there is enough of it in ordinary life". I may here recall an observation of the Emperor Akbar which, though not made with regard to the matter in hand, is yet well in point. He said "I have never known of man who was lost on a straight road."

It is necessary for me to so guard myself because those who cannot judge with detachment are prone to think that others who deal fairly and dispassionately with any doctrine or practice are necessarily its adherents and the counsellors of it to others.

My own view is this.—Probably we should most of us be, in general, better if we took neither Alcohol or Meat, particularly the latter, which is the source of much disease. Though it is said that killing for sacrifice is no "killing" it can hardly be denied that total abstention from slaughter of animals constitutes a more complete conformity with Ahimsâ or doctrine of non-injury to any being. Moreover at a certain stage meat-eating is repugnant. A feeling of this kind is growing in the West, where even the Meat-eater, impelled by disgust and a rising regard for decency, hides away the slaughter houses producing the meat which he openly displays at his table. In the same way sexual errors are common to-day and nothing should be done or



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

said which fosters them; nor was this the intention of the Shâstra.

I understand the basis on which these Tântrik practices rest. Thus what seems repellent is sought to be justified on the ground that the Sâdhaka should be above all likes and dislikes, and should see Brahman in all things. But the Western critic will say that we must judge practice from the practical standpoint. It was this consideration which was at the back of the statement of Professor de la Vallée Poussin (Boudhisme. Etudes et Matériaux) that there is in this country what Taine called a 'reasoning madness' which made the Hindu stick at no conclusion however strange, willingly accepting even the absurd. (*Il y règne des lôriginie ce que Taine appelle la folie raisonante. Les Hindous vont volcmtiers jusquâ l'absurde*). This may be too strongly put; but the saying contains this truth that the Indian temperament is an absolutist one. But such a temperament, if it has its fascinating grandeurs, also carries with it the defects of its qualities; namely dangers from which those who make a compromise between life and reason are free. The answer again is, that some of the doctrines and practices here described were never meant for the general body of men.

After all as I have elsewhere said the question of this particular ritual practice is largely of historical interest only. Such practice to-day is, under the influences of the time, being transformed, where it is not altogether disappearing, with other ritual customs of a past age. Apart from my desire to clear away, so far as is rightly possible, charges which have lain heavily on this country, I am only interested here to show firstly that the practice is not a modern invention but seems to be a continuation in another form of ancient Vaidik usage; secondly that it claims, like the rest of the ritual with which I have dealt, to be an application of the Advaitavâda of the Upanishads; and lastly that (putting aside things generally repugnant and extremist practices



## THE PANCHATATTVA

which have led to abuse) a great principle is involved which may find legitimate and ennobling application in all daily acts of physical function within the bound of man's ordinary Dharma. Those who so practice this principle may become the true Vîra who has been said to be not the man of great physical or sexual strength, the great fighter, eater, drinker, or the like but

*Jitendriyah satyavâdî nityânushthâna-tatparah  
Kâmâdi-validânashcha sa vîra iti gîyate.*

“He is a Hero who has controlled his senses, and is a speaker of truth; who is ever engaged in worship and has sacrificed lust and all other passions.”

The attainment of these qualities is the aim, whatever is said of some of the means, of all such Tântrik Sâdhanâ.



CHAPTER XV  
MATAM RUTRA

(THE RIGHT AND WRONG INTERPRETATION)

**I**N connection with the doctrine and Sâdhanâ just described it is apposite to cite the following legend from Thibet, which shows how, according to its Sâdhakas, it may be either rightly or wrongly interpreted and how in the latter case it leads to terrible evils and their punishment.

Guru Padma-sambhava, the so-called founder of "Lamaism," had five women disciples who compiled several accounts of the teachings of their Master and hid them in various places for the benefit of future believers. One of these disciples—Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal—was a Tibetan lady who is said to have possessed such a wonderful power of memory that if she was told a thing only once she remembered it for ever. She gathered what she had heard from her Guru into a book called the Padma Thangying Serteng or Golden Rosary of the history of her Guru who was entitled the Lotus-born (Padma-sambhava). The book was hidden away and was subsequently under inspiration revealed some five hundred years ago by Terton.

The first Chapter of the Work deals with Sukhavatî the realm of Buddha Amitâbha. In the second the Buddha emanates a ray which is incarnated for the welfare of the Universe. In Chapter III it is said that there have been a Buddha and a Guru working together in various worlds and at various times, the former preaching the Sûtras and the latter the Tantras. The fourth Chapter speaks of the Mantras and the five Dhyânî Buddhas (as to which see Shri-chakra-sambhâra Tantra edited by Arthur Avalon), and in the fifth we find the subject of the present chapter, an account



## MATAM RUTRA

of the origin of the Vajrayâna Faith. The present chapter is based on a translation, which I asked Kazi Dawasamdub to prepare for me, of portions of the Thangyig Serteng. I have further had, and here acknowledge, the assistance of the very learned Lama Ugyen Tanzin in the elucidation of the inner meaning of the legend. I cannot go fully into this but give certain indications which will enable the competent to work out much of the rest for themselves from the terrible symbolism in which evil for evil's sake is here expressed.

The story is that of the rise and fall of the Self. The disciple "Transcendent Faith" who became the Bodhisattva Vajrapâni illustrates the former; the case of "Black Salvation" who incarnated as a Demonic Rutra displays the latter. He was no ordinary man, for at the time of his initiation he had already attained eight out of the thirteen stages (Bhûmikâ) on the way to perfect Buddhahood. His powers were correspondingly great. But the higher the rise the greater the fall if it comes. Through misunderstanding and misapplying, as so many others have done the Tântrik doctrine, he "fell back" as an apostate consciousness from the Faith into Hell. Extraordinary men who were teachers of recondite doctrines such as those of Thubka, who was himself "hard to overcome", seem not to have failed to warn lesser brethren against their dangers. It is commonly said in Thibet of the so-called "heroic" modes of extremist Yoga, that they waft the disciple with the utmost speed either to the heights of Nirvâna or to the depths of Hell. For the aspirant is compared to a snake which is made to go up a hollow Bamboo. It must ascend and escape at the top, at the peril otherwise of falling down. Notwithstanding these warnings many of the vulgar, the vicious, the misunderstanding, and the fools who play with fire on the physical path, have gone to Hells far more terrible than those which await human frailties in pursuance of the common life of men whose progress if slow is sure. "Black Salvation" though an advanced disciple misinterpreted his



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

teacher's doctrine and consciously identifying himself with the world-evil fell into Hell. In time he rose therefrom and incarnating at first in gross material forms he at length manifested as a great Rutra, the embodiment of all wickedness. The Tibetan Rutra here spoken of and the Indian Rudra seem to be etymologically the same but their meaning is different. Both are fierce and terrible Spirits; but a Rutra as here depicted is essentially evil and neither the Lord of any sensual celestial paradise, nor the Cosmic Shakti which loosens forms. A Rutra is rather what in some secret circles is called (though in ungrammatical Sanskrit) an Adhâtmâ, or a soul upon the lower and destructive path. It may be and in fact is the case that the general destructive energy (Sanghâra-Shakti) uses for its purpose the disintegrating propensities of these forms. The evil which appears as Rutra is the expression of various kinds of Egoism. Thus Matam Rutra is Egoism as attached to the gross physical body. Again, all sentient worldly being gives expression to its feelings, saying "I am happy, unhappy, and so forth." All this is here embodied in the speech of the Rutra and is called Akar Rutra. Khatram Rutra is Egoism of the mind, as when it is said of any object "this is mine." "Black Salvation" became a Rutra of such terrific power that to save him and the world the Buddhas intervened. There are four methods by which they and the Bodhisattvas subdue and save sentient being, namely the Peaceful, the Grand or Attractive, the Fascinating which renders powerless (Vashîkaranam), and the stern method of downright force. All forms of Egoism must be destroyed in order that the pure "That Which Is" or formless Consciousness may be attained. Black Salvation incarnated as the Pride of Egoism in its most terrible form. And in order to subdue him the last two methods had to be employed. He was, through the Glorious One, redeemed by the suffering which attends all sin and became the "Dark defender of the Faith", which by his egoistic apostasy he had abjured, to



## MATAM RUTRA

be later the Buddha known as the "Lord of Ashes" in that world which is called "the immediately self-produced." How this came about the legend describes.

The fifth Chapter of the Golden Rosary says that Guru Padma-Vajradhara was reborn as Bhikku Thubkazhyonnu which means the "youth who is hard to overcome." He was a Tântrik who preached an abstruse doctrine which is condensed in the following verse:—

"He who has attained the 'That Which Is'  
Or uncreated In-itself-ness  
Is unaffected even by the 'four things'  
Just as the cloud which floats in the sky  
Adheres not thereto.  
This is the way of Supreme Yoga.  
Than this in all the three worlds  
There is not a higher wisdom."

This Guru had two disciples Kuntri and his servant Pramadeva. To the latter was given on initiation the name "Transcendent Faith" and to the former "Black Salvation." This last name was a prophetic predication that he would be saved not through peaceful or agreeable means but through the just wrath of the Jinas. The real meaning of the verse as understood and practised by Pramadeva and as declared to be right by the Guru was as follows:—"The pure Consciousness" (Dagpa-ye-shes) is the foundation (Gshi-hdsin) of the limited consciousness (Rnam-shes) and is in Scripture "That which is," the real uncreated "In-Itself-ness" (Ji-bshin-nid-dema-bcos-pa). This being unaffected or unruffled is the path of Tantra. Passions (Klesha) are like clouds wandering in the wide spaces of the sky. (These clouds are distinct from, and do not touch the back-ground of space against which they appear). So passions do not touch but disappear from the Void (Shûnyatâ). Whilst ascending upwards the threefold accomplishments (Activity, non-activity, absolute repose) must be persevered in; and this is the meaning of our Teacher Thubka's doctrine."



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

The latter, however, was misunderstood by "Black Salvation" (Tharpa Nagpo) who took it to mean that he was to make no effort to save himself by the gaining of merit but that he was to indulge in the four sinful acts of killing, thieving, lying and fornication [or it may be four enjoyments by the eye, nose, tongue and organ of generation]. On this account he fell out with his brother in the faith Pramadeva and later with his Guru, both of whom he caused to be persecuted and banished the country. Continuing in a career of reckless and sin-hardened life he died unrepentant after a score of years passed in various diabolical practices. He fell into Hell and continued there for countless ages. At the close of the time of Buddha Dîpangkara (Marmedzad or "Light giver") he was reborn several times as huge sea monsters. At length just before the time of the last Buddha Shâkya Muni he was born as the son of a woman of loose morals in a country called Langkâpurî of the Râkshasas. This woman used to consort with three Spirits—a Deva in the morning, a Fire Genius at noon, and a Daitya in the evening. "Black Salvation" was reborn in the eighth month as the offspring of these three Spirits. The child was a terrible monster, black of colour with three heads, each of which had three eyes, six hands, four feet and two wings. He was horrible to look at and immediately at his birth all the auspicious signs of the country disappeared and the eighteen inauspicious signs were seen. Malignant epidemics attacked the whole region of Langkâpurî. Some died, others suffered only, but all were in misery. Lamentation, famine and sorrow beset the land. There was disease, bloodshed, mildew, hailstorms, droughts, floods and all other kinds of calamities. Even dreams were frightful and ominous signs portending a great catastrophe oppressed all. Evil spirits roamed the land. So great were the evils that it seemed as if the good merits of everyone had been exhausted all at once.

The mother who had given birth to this monster died



## MATAM RUTRA

nine days after its birth. The people of the country decreed that this monstrous infant should be bound to the mother's corpse and left in the cemetery. The infant was then tied on his mother's breast. The mother was borne away in a stretcher to the cemetery and the stretcher was left at the foot of a poisonous tree called Nalbyi which had a boar's den at its root; a poisonous snake coiled round the middle of its trunk and a bird of prey sitting in its uppermost branches. (These animals are the emblems of lust, anger and greed respectively which "kindle the fire of individuality.") At this place there was a huge sepulchre built by the Râkshasas where they used to leave their dead at the foot of the tree. Elephants and tigers came there to die; serpents infested it and witch-like spirits called Dâkinîs and Ghouls brought human bodies there. After the bearers of the corpse had left, the infant sustained his life by suckling the breasts of his mother's corpse. These yielded only a thin yellowish watery fluid for seven days. Next he sucked the blood and lived a week; then he gnawed at the breast and lived the third week; then he ate the entrails and lived for a week. Then he ate the outer flesh and lived for the fifth week. Lastly he crunched the bones, sucked the marrow, licked the humours and brains and lived a week. He thus in six weeks developed full physical maturity. Having exhausted his stock of food he moved about; and his motion shook the cemetery building to pieces. He observed the Ghouls and Dâkinîs feasting on human corpses which he took as his food and human blood as his drink, filling the skulls with it. His clothing was dried human skins as also the hides of dead elephants, the flesh of which he also ate. He ate also the flesh of tigers and wrapped his loins in their furs. He used serpents as bracelets, anklets, armlets and as necklaces and garlands. His lips were thick with frozen fat and his body was covered with ashes from the burning ground. He wore a garland of dead skulls on one string; freshly severed heads on another; and decomposing heads on a



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

third. These were worn crosswise as a triple garland. Each cheek was adorned with a spot of blood. His three great heads ever wrathful, of three different colours, were fierce and horrible to look at. The middle head was dark blue and those to the right and left were white and red respectively. His body and limbs which were of gigantic size and proportions were ashy grey. His skin was coarse and his hair as stiff as hog's bristles. His mouth wide agape showed fangs. His terrible eyes were fixed in a stare. Half of the dark brown hair on his head stood erect bound with four kinds of snakes. The nails of his fingers and toes were like the talons of a great bird of prey which seized hold of everything within reach, whether animals or human corpses which he crushed and swallowed. He bore a trident and other weapons in his right hands, and with his left he filled the emptied skulls with blood which he drank with great relish. He was a monster of ugliness who delighted in every kind of impious act. His unnatural food produced a strange lustre on his face, which shone with a dull though great and terrible light. His breath was so poisonous that those touched by it were attacked with various diseases. For his nostrils breathed forth illnesses caused by cold. His eyes, ears and arms produced 404 different ills. Thus the diseases paralysis, epilepsy, bubonic swellings, urinary ills, skin diseases, aches, rheumatism, gout, colic, cholera, leprosy, cancer, small pox, dropsy and various other sores and boils appeared in this world at that time. (For evil thoughts and acts make the vital spirit sick and thence springs gross disease).

The name of this great Demon was Matam Rutra. He was the fruit of the Karma of the great wickedness of his former life as Tharpa Nagpo. At that time in each of the 24 Pilgrimages there was a powerful destructive Bhairava Spirit. These Devas, Gandharvas, Râkshasas, Asuras and Nâgas were proud malignant and mighty Spirits, despotic masters of men, with great magical powers of illusion and



## MATAM RUTRA

transformation. These Spirits used to wander over these countries dressed in the eight sepulchral raiments, wearing the six kinds of bone ornaments and armed with various weapons, accompanied by their female consorts, and revelled in all kinds of obscene orgies. Their chief occupation consisted in depriving of their lives all sentient beings. After consultation, all these spirits elected Matam Rutra as their Chief. Thus all these non-human beings became his slaves. In the midst of his horrible retinue he continued to devour human beings alive until the race became almost destroyed and the cities emptied. He was thus the most terrible scourge that the earth had ever seen. All who died in those days fell into Hell. But as for Matam Rutra himself, his pride knew no bounds, he thought there was no one greater than himself and would roar out

“Who is there greater and mightier than I? If there be any Lord who would excel me, Him too will I subjugate.”

As there was no one to gainsay him the world was oppressed by heavy gloom. At that time however Kâlî proclaimed

“In the country of Langkâ the land of Râkshasas  
In a portion of the city called Koka-Thangmaling  
On the peak of Malaya the abode of Thunder  
There dwells the Lord of Langkâ, King of Râkshasas  
He is a disciple of the light-giving Buddha  
His fame far excels thine  
He is unconquerable in fight by any foe  
He sleeps secure and doth awake in peace.”

Hearing this, the pride and ambition of the Demon was roused into fire. His body emitted flames great enough to have consumed all worlds at the great Kalpa dissolution. His voice resounded in a deep thundering roar like that of a thousand claps of thunder heard together. With sparks of fire flying from his mouth he summoned a huge force. He filled the very heavens with them and moving with the speed of a meteor he invaded the Râkshasa's capital of



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Koka-Thangmaling. Encamping, Matam-Rutra proclaimed his name proudly, at which the entire country of Langkâ trembled and was shaken terribly as though by an earthquake. The Râkshasas, both male and female, became terrified. The King of the Râkshasas sent spies to find out the cause of these happenings. They went and saw the terrible force, and being terrified at the sight reported the fearful news to their king. He sat in Samâdhi for a while, and divined the following:—According to the Sûtra of king Gunadhara it was said “One who has vexed his Guru’s heart, and broken his friend and brother’s heart: the haughty son of Srulpo Nyadak, being released from the three Hells, will take rebirth here, and he will surely conquer the Lord of Langkâ. In the end, he will be conquered by many Sugatas (the blissful ones or Buddhas). And this event will give birth to the Anuttara-Vajrayâna Faith.” The Buddha Marmedzad having revealed the event, he wished to see whether this was the Matam-Rutra Demon referred to in the prophesy. So he collected a force of Râkshasas and went forth to fight a battle with the Demon force. Matam Rutra was very angry and said

“I am the Great Invincible One, who is without a peer,  
I am the Îshvara Mahâdeva.

The four great Kings of the four quarters are my  
vassals,

The eight different tribes of Spirits are my slaves,  
I am the Lord of the whole World.

Who is going to withstand and confront me?

Rutra, Matra, Marutra.”

With this battle cry he overcame the forces of the Râkshasas. Then the King of the Râkshasas and all his forces submitted to the King of the Demons, saying “I repent me of my attempt to withstand you, in the hope of upholding the Faith of the Buddhas, and to spread it far and wide. I now submit to you and become your loyal subject. I will not rebel against you.” When he had thus overcome



## MATAM RUTRA

the Râkshasas, he assumed the title of Matamka the Chief of all the Râkshasas. His pride increased, and he proclaimed "Who is there greater than I?"

Then Kâlî again, cleverly excited his ambition and pride, by saying "The Chief of the armies of the Asuras (Lhamin that is "not Devas") named Mahakaru, is mightier than you." Thereupon he invaded the realms of the Asuras, with his demon force, and all the Asuras becoming affected with various terrible maladies were powerless to resist him. The Rutra caught hold of the Asura King by the leg and whirling him thrice round his head flung him into the Jambudvîpa where he fell into a place called the Ge-ne-gyad, meaning the place of eight merits. Then those of the Asuras who had not been killed, the eight planets (Grahas) and the twenty-eight constellations (Nakshatras) and their hosts sought refuge in every direction, but failing to obtain safety anywhere, they returned and surrendered themselves to the Demon Matam-Rutra. Then the Asuras guided the Rutra and his forces to a Palace named Bamril-Thod-pamkhar (meaning the Globular Palace like a skull) where they established their Capital. In the centre of this Palace, the Rutra hoisted his banner of Victory. They arranged their dreadful weapons by the side of the Entrance, and the place was surrounded by numerous followers with magical powers. Having thus shewn his own great magical powers, he took up the King of Mountains, Meru, upon the tip of his finger and whirling it round his head, he proclaimed these boastful words, "Rutra-Matra-Marutra, who is there in this universe greater than myself? In all the three Lokas, there is none greater than I. And if there be any, him also will I subdue." To these boastful words Kâlî answered

- "In the thirty-third Deva-Loka and in the happy celestial regions of the Tushita Heavens,
- "Sitting amidst the golden assembly of disciples,
- "Is the Holy Saviour of all beings, Regent of the Devas (Tampa-Togkar)



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

“ Having been anointed, He is venerated and praised by all the Deva Kings.

“ He summons all the Devas to his assembly by sounding the various instruments of heavenly music

“ Accompanied by a celestial Chorus.

“ He is greater than yourself.”

On her so saying the Archdemon blazed forth into a fury of pride and wrath and set forth to conquer the Tushita Heavens. The Bodhisattva (Tampa-Togkar) was sitting enthroned on a throne of precious metals, in the midst of thousands of Devatâs, both male and female, and was preaching Dharma to them. The Archdemon seized Tampa-Togkar from his throne, and threw him down into this world-system. All the Devas and Devîs there gathered exclaimed, “ Alas, what a fate, O, the sinful wretch !” seven times over. Thereupon the Rutra fiercely said :

“ Put on two cloths, and sit down on your seats, every one of you !

“ How can I be conquered by you ? I am the mighty destroyer and subjugator of all.”

(The expression “ Put on two cloths ” was said by way of contempt for the priestly robes which consist of three pieces, being a wrapper above, and one below and one over both).

Tampa-Togkar is the Bodhisattva who is coming as Buddha to teach in the human world. He descends from the Tushita Heavens where he reigns as Regent. When the celestial Regent of the Tushita Heavens, (Tampa-Togkar) was about to pass away from there, he uttered this prophesy to his disciples, who were around him :

“ Listen unto me, Ye my disciples :

“ This apostate disciple, Tharpa-Nagpo (Black Salvation)

“ Who does not believe in the Buddha’s Doctrine,

“ He is destined to pervert the Devas and Asuras,

“ And to bend them to his yoke.



## MATAM RUTRA

“ He hates the perfect Buddha, and he will work much evil in this world-system.

“ There are two, who can deprive him of his terrible power ;

“ They are Thubka-Zhonnu and Dad-Phags (Prameda called Transcendent Faith)

“ They will be able to make him taste the fruits of his evil deeds in this very life.

“ He will not be subdued by peaceful, nor by any generous means.

“ He will only be conquered by the methods of Fascination and Sternness.

(The various means of redemption have been previously explained. Thubka and his good disciple “ Transcendent Faith ” who had then become Buddha Vajra-Sattva and Bodhisattva Vajrapâni were selected for this purpose. They assumed the forms of the Devatâs with the Horse’s head (Hayagrîva) and the Sow’s head (Vajra-Vârâhî).

“ Who of the Noble Sangha, will doubt this,

“ That Hayagrîva and Vajra-Vârâhî will give him their bodies.

(When it is said “ These will give him their bodies ” this means as hereafter described entering the Rutra’s body, assuming his shape and destroying his Rutra life and nature. They give him their divine bodies so that they may destroy his demonic body).

“ And who will not trust in the Wisdom of the Jinas, to conquer him by the upward-piercing method

“ From this (demon) will come the Precious-nectar, which will be of use in acquiring Virtue.

“ From this (demon) will originate the changing of poison into elixir.

(There are various Tântrik methods suited to various natures. “ The upward piercing ” (Khatar-ya-phig) is that of Vajrayâna. This is the method which goes upward and upward, that is straight upward without delay and without



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

going to right or left. To change poison into nectar or elixir is a well known principle of these schools).

“ This Demon will have to be ground down and destroyed to the last atom, in one body

(It is said “ in one body ” because ordinarily several lives are necessary ; but in this case and by this method Liberation is achieved in a single life-time and in one body. Not one atom of the Rutra body is left, for Egoism is wholly destroyed).

“ The Divine Horse-headed Deity (Vajra-Hayagrîva), is he who will dispel this threatening misfortune,

“ Dad-phags, (Pramadeva who was given on initiation the name “ Transcendent faith ”) is at present Vajrapâni (Bodhisattva).

“ And Thubka-Zhonnu, is at present, the Buddha Vajrasattva.

“ The divine prophecies of the Jinas, are to be interpreted thus:—

“ They will exterminate their opponents

“ For myself I go to take birth in Mâyâ-Devî's womb.

“ I will practise Samâdhi at the root of the Bodhi-Tree.

“ I will not hold those beliefs in doubt

“ For it has been said that the Buddha's Faith will triumph over this,

“ And will remain long in the Jambudvîpa.

“ By means of the mysterious practice of Emancipating by means of communion.

(The practice here referred to is the method called Jordol (sByor sGrol) which has both exoteric and esoteric meanings, such as in the case of the latter the communion of the Divine Male and Female whose union destroys to its uttermost root egoistic attachment; the communion with Shûnyatâ whose innermost significance is the non-dual Consciousness (gNyismed-yeshes) which dispels ignorance and cuts at the root of all Sângsârik life by the destruction of all the Rutra forms. “ Female ” here is Shûnyatâ and not



## MATAM RUTRA

a woman. When a learned Lama is asked why the terms of sex are used they say it is to symbolise Thabs and Shes which it is not possible to further explain here).

“The Matam Rutra, which is clinging to the body as ‘I’ will be dispelled

“All forms of worldly happiness and pain, the Egoism of Speech (Akar Rutra).

“Will be destroyed.

“The saying ‘this is mine’ of anything,

“The mental ‘I’ (or Khatram-Rutra) is freed.

“The true nature and distinguishing attributes of a Rutra

“Which is manifest outwardly, exists inwardly, and lies hidden secretly.

“In short all the fifty-eight Rutras, with their hosts will be destroyed completely.

(I have already dealt with the meaning of the term, Rutra. Here the Egoisms of body, feelings, mind are referred to. The Glorious One, will eradicate the physical and all other Rutras, the monster of the self in all its forms gross, subtle and causal).

“The world though deprived of happiness will rejoice again.

“The world will be filled with the Precious Dharma of the Tri-Ratna.

“The Righteous Faith has not declined, nor has it passed away.

(Thus did the Regent of the Tushita Heavens prophesy the advent of the Tântrik method for the complete destruction and the elimination of the demon of “Egotism” from the nature of the devotees on the path by means of Jor-drol).

After uttering these prophecies he passed away and took re-birth in the womb of Queen Mâyâ Devî. Then the Arch-demon having subjugated all the Devas of the thirty-third and the Tushita Heavens, appointed the two Demons



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

Mâra and Devadatta, his two chief officers, to suppress Indra and Brahmâ. The Archdemon himself took up his abode in the Malaya Mountain, in the place called Bamril-mi-thod-khar, (the human-skull-like Mansion). He used to feed upon Devas and human beings, both males and females. Drums, bells, cymbals and every kind of stringed and other musical instruments were played to him in a perpetual concert with songs and dances. Every kind of enjoyment which the Devas used to enjoy, he enjoyed perpetually. (8th Chapter ends).

The 9th Chapter deals with defeat and destruction of the Arch-demon Matam-Rutra by the Buddhas of the ten directions :—

Then there assembled together, Dharmakâya Buddha Samantabhadra (Chosku Kuntu Rangpo) and his attendants from the Wogmin Heavens, from the Tugpo-kod Heavens, Sambhoga-kâya Vajra-dhara with his attendants; from the Changlo-Chan Heaven, there came Vajrapâni Nirmâna-kâya with his attendants. In short from the various heavens of the ten directions, came the different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. All held a consultation together and came to this resolution :—

“ Unless the power of the Buddhas be exerted to subjugate the Rutra, the Faith of the Buddhas will cease to spread and will degenerate. That body which has committed such violent outrages on every other being, must be made to suffer the agonies of being hurt by weapons, wielded by avengers. If he is not made to feel the consequences of his deeds, the Jinas who have proclaimed the Truth will be falsified. He is not to be destroyed but to be subdued.” Having thus agreed all the Buddhas began to seek with their omniscient eyes, him who was destined to conquer this Rutra. They saw that Thubka-Zhonnu who had attained the state of Buddha Vajra-sattva and Dadphags who had become Vajra-pâni were to subdue him, and that the time was also ripe. So both of them came with their



## MATAM RUTRA

respective retinue and were blessed and endowed with Power by all the Buddhas, who gave these instructions. "Do ye, assume the forms and sexes of Chenrezi and Dolma (Avalokita and Târâ) and do ye subdue the Enemy by assuming the shapes of the Deities having the Horse-head and the Sow's head (Hayagrîva and Vajra-Vârâhî).

(The latter is commonly known in English translations as the "Diamond Sow." As is usual, want of knowledge and a predilection for facile and gross meanings lead to absurd results of which the Orientalist (whose lack of knowledge is alone responsible for them) complains. Vajra is the Sanskrit equivalent of the word Dorje in Thibetan. The latter has many meanings; Indra's thunderbolt, the Lamas sceptre, diamond and so forth; and is in fact used of anything of a high and mystical character which is lasting, indestructible, powerful and irresistible. Thus the high priest presiding at Tântrik Rites is called Dorje Lupon. In fact diamond is so called because of the hard character of this gem. In the Indian Tântrik worship, Vajra occurs as in Vajrapushpa (Vajra-flower) Vajra-bhûmi (Vajra-ground) and so forth, but these are not "diamond" flowers or earth. An extremely interesting enquiry is here opened which is beyond the scope of the article, for the term Vajra, which is again the appellation of this particular school (Vajra-yâna), is of great significance in the history of that power-side of religion which is dealt with in the Tantra. See Introduction to Shri-Chakra-Sambhâra edited by Arthur Avalon. Here without further attempt at explanation I keep the term Vajra adding only that Harinisa is not, as has been thought, Vajra-Vârâhî (Dorge-phagmo) Herself but the Bîja Mantras (Ha, ri, ni, sa) of Her four attendant Dâkinîs.)

Vajra-Sattva and Vajrapâni, Buddha and Bodhisattva of the Vajrayâna faith transformed themselves into the forms of Haya-grîva and Vajra-Vârâhî, and assumed the costumes of Herukas. (The Herukas are a class of Vajra-yâna Devatâs of half terrible features represented as partly



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

nude with an upper garment of human skin and tiger skin round the loins. They have a skull headdress, carry bone rosaries, a staff and Damaru like Shiva. The Herukas are described in the Tibetan books as being beautiful, heroic, awe-inspiring, stern and majestic). Blazing in the nine kinds of physical magnificence and splendour, they proceeded to the Malaya Mountain,—the abode of the Rutra. On the four sides of the Mountain, were four gates. Each gate was guarded by a Demoness, bearing respectively a Mare's, Sow's, Lion's and a Dog's head. These the Glorious One conquered, and united therewith in a spirit of non-attachment. From their union were born the following female issue: (1) The White Horse-faced, (2) The Black Sow-faced, (3) The Red Lion-faced, (4) and the Green Dog-faced daughters. Proceeding still further He met another cordon of sentries, who, too were females, bearing the heads of (1) Lioness (2) Tigress (3) Fox (4) Wolf (5) Vulture (6) Kanka, (7) Raven and (8) Owl. With these Demonesses too, the Glorious One united in a spirit of non-attachment, and blessed the act. Of this union were born female offspring, each of whom took after the mother in outward shape or Matter, and after the father in Mind. Thus were the eight Phra-men-mas or Demi-goddesses born: *viz*: The Lion-headed, Tiger-headed and so forth. Being divine in mind, they possess prescience and wisdom, although from their mother they retained their shape and features, which were those of brutes.

Then again proceeding further inward, He came upon the daughters of the Rutras and of Rākshasas; named respectively, Nyobyed-mâ or "She who maddens," Tagjed-mâ "She who frightens," Dri-medmâ "The unsullied," Kempamâ "She who dries one up," Phorthogmâ "She who bears the Cup" and Zhyongthogmâ the "bowl bearer."

The Glorious One united with these in the same manner, and from them, were born the eight Mâtrikâs of the eight Sthânas, (sacred places) known as Gaurimâ and so forth.



## MATAM RUTRA

These, too, possessed divine wisdom, from their father and terrific features and shapes from their mothers.

(There are 24 Sthânas which are places of pilgrimage and eight great cemeteries making 32 in all. In each of these cemeteries there is a powerful Phramenmâ also called Mamo that is Mâtrikâ. These terrible Goddesses are according to the Zhi-Khro, Gaurîmâ, Tsaurimâ, Chândâlî, Vetâlî, Ghasmarî, Shonamâ, Pramo, Puskasî. These are in colour white, yellow, yellowish white, black, dark green, dark blue, red, reddish yellow, and are situated in the East, South, N.W., North, S.W., N.E., West, S.E., "nerve-leafs of the conch-shell mansion" (brain) respectively. These are the eight great Mâtrikâs of the eight great Cemeteries, to whom prayer is made, that when forms are changed and entrance is made on the plane of uncertainty (Bardo), they may place the spirit on the clear light path of Radiance (Wot-sal).

(These various accouplements denote the union of Divine Mind with gross matter. In working with matter the Divine mind is always detached. Work is possible even for the liberated consciousness when free from attachment, that is desire (Kâma) which is bondage. The Divine Mind unites with terrible forms of gross matter that these may be instruments; in this case instruments whereby the gross Egoism of the Rutra is to be subdued).

Then going right into the innermost abode, he found that the Rutra had gone out in search of food, which consisted of human flesh and of Devas. Adopting the disguise of the Rutra, the Glorious One went in to the Consort of the Rutra, the Râkshasî-Queen Krodheshvarî (Lady of wrath) in the same spirit as before, and blessed the act. By Krodhesvarî, He had male issue, Bhagavân Vajra-Heruka, with three faces and six hands, terrific to behold. Then the Glorious one, Haya-grîva, and his divine Consort, Vajra-Vârâhî, each expressed their triumph by neighing and grunting thrice. Upon hearing these sounds the Rutra



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

was struck with mortal fear, and coming to the spot, he said.

“What sayest Thou, little son of Hayagrīva and Vajra-Vârâhî.

“All the world of Devas and Asuras

“Proclaim my virtues and sing my praises.

“I cannot be conquered. Rest yourself in peace,

“Regard me with humility, and bow down to me.

“Even the Regent of the Devas,  
of the odd garment (priestly dress).

“Failed to conquer me in days of yore.”

Saying this he raised his hands, and came to lay them on the young one's head. Thereupon Hayagrīva at once entered the body of the Rutra by the secret path (Guhya) and piercing him right through from below upwards, He showed His Horse's Head, on the top of the head of the Rutra. The oily fat of the Rutra's body made the Horse's head look green. The mane being dyed with blood became red, and the eye-brows having been splashed with the bile of the Demon became yellow. The forehead being splashed with the brains, became white. Thus the Glorious One, having assumed the shape, and dresses of the Rutra took on a terrible majesty.

At the same time, Vajra-Vârâhî, His Consort, also entered the body of the Rutra's Consort Krodheshvarî, in the same manner piercing and impaling her. She forced her own Sow's head right up through the crown of the Demone's head, until it towered above it. The Sow's head had assumed a black colour, from having been steeped in the fat of the Râkshasî. Then the two Divine Being embraced each other, and begot as offspring, a Divine Being of the terrific Male Order a Krodhabhairava, (Mewa Tsegpa). Having done this Hayagrīva neighed shrilly six times, and Vajra-Vârâhî grunted deeply five times. Then the hosts of the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, assembled there as thickly as birds of prey, settling down on a carrion. They



## MATAM RUTRA

filled all space. They were of the peaceful, the wrathful, the half-peaceful and the half-wrathful orders, in inconceivably large numbers. They began to surround the Rutra-Tharpa-Nagpo, who being unable to bear the pain of being stretched asunder cried in agony :—

“ Oh, I am defeated ! The Horse and the Sow have defeated the Rutra.

“ The Buddhas have defeated the Demons.

“ Religion has conquered Ir-religion,

“ The Sangha has defeated the Tīrthikas,

“ Indra has defeated the Asuras,

“ The Asuras have defeated the Moon

“ The Garuda has defeated the Ocean

“ Fire defeats fuel, Wind scatters the Clouds

“ Diamond (Vajra) pierces metals

“ Oh it was I who said that last night's dream portended evil.

“ Oh slay me quick, if you are going to slay me.”

As he said this his bowels were involuntarily loosened and from the excreta which, being thus purified, fell into the Ocean, there at once arose a precious sandal tree, which was a wish-granting tree. This tree struck its root in the nether world of the Serpent-spirits, spread its foliage in the Asura-lokas, and bore its fruits in the Deva-lokas. And the fruits were named Amrita (the essence and elixir of life).

Then the two, Chief Actor and Actress, Hayagrīva and Vajra-Vârâhî acted the joyful plays called the ‘ Plays of Happy Cause,’ ‘ Happy Path and Happy Result,’ in the nine glorious measures. (That is plays in which the actors are happy being the male and female Divinities, in this case Hayagrīva and Vajra-Vârâhî. They are the cause ; their play being exoterically “ Dalliance ” (Lîlâ) and their result the dispelling of Egoism which is Illumination).

Just as a victor in a battle, who has slain his enemy, wins the armour and the accoutrements of his slain opponent,



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

and puts them on as a sign of triumph, so also, the Glorious One having conquered the Rutra, assumed the eight accoutrements of the foe, including the wings, and the other adornments which made him look so bright and magnificent. These the Glorious One blessed and consecrated to the use of the Divine Deities. Having done all this, both Hayagrîva and Vajra-Vârâhî returned to the Realm of pure Spiritual Being (Dharmadhâtu). Thus it comes about, that those costumes, assumed by the Rutra, came to be adopted as the attire of the Deities. Their having three heads, the eight sepulchral ornaments, and the eight glorious costumes and wings, had origin in this event.

Then Pal Chag-na-dorje (Shrî Vajrapâni) multiplied himself into countless Avatâras, and these again multiplied themselves into myriads of Avatâras, all of the terrible and wrathful type. The Rutra too showed supernatural powers for he transformed himself into a nine-headed Monster, having eighteen hands, as huge as the Mount Meru. Should it be doubted, how this sinful being could still possess such supernatural powers, one must know that he was a Bodhisattva of the eighth degree (One who has attained eight Bhûmikâs out of thirteen) who had fallen back. Hence was it, that even the Buddhas found it difficult to subdue him, not to count the world of Devas and men. Then Vajrapâni manifested still greater divine powers of every imaginable description, and all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas fixed their abodes on the greatly enlarged and distended body of the Rutra. The latter being unable to bear the agony of these pressures, roared with pain.

“Come quick to the rescue, O my followers, who inhabit  
the ten directions

“To the right and left of the Skull-like mansion

“And those who live in the gardens and the  
orchards.

“Yakshas, Râkshasas, and Pretas millions in number,  
advance to the rescue at once



## MATAM RUTRA

- “O, ye followers and adherents of the Rutra, who dwell  
in the twenty-four places, and countries  
“ Numbering millions and tens of million, who have  
sworn allegiance to me  
“ And promised to serve me faithfully, and ye from the  
illimitable spaces in every direction  
“ Fill the heavens and the earth with your innumerable  
hosts  
“ And all in one body strike (at the foe) with the wea-  
pons in your hands, sounding the battle cry  
“ Om-rulu-rulu.”

Though he uttered these commands, there was none to obey him. Everyone surrendered to Bhagavân Vajra-Heruka. Thus all the subordinates of the Rutra, the thirty-two Dâkinîs, the seven Mâtrikâs, and the four “ Sisters,” (Sring-bzhi), the eight Furies (Barmas or flaming ones), the eight Genii (Gings ; spirits or attendants on the Devatâs) and the sixty-four Messengers all came over to the Heruka and the Divine offspring (Mewa-Tsegpa) took upon himself the duty of serving the food of the Deities.’’

(Mewa-Tsegpa is the Deity usually invoked when any purification and religious contrition has to be performed or done. By this it is seen that his undertaking to serve the food of the Deities means purifying and absolving the sins of the Rutra).

Vajra-pâni, producing ten divine beings of the terrific type, (Krodhabhairava) gave a Phurpa (triangular shaped dagger) to each of them, and commanded them to go and destroy the Rutra and his party. Thereupon Hayagrîva came again, and neighed three times ; upon hearing which sound the entire host of the Rutra were seized with a panic and all were subdued. Then Black Salvation (Tharpa-nagpo) and his followers were rendered powerless and helpless : humbled and quite submissive. So they surrendered their own homes, personal ornaments, and the vital principles of their lives and uttered these words of entreaty,



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

“Obeisance to Thee, O, Thou field of the Buddhas’ influence

“Obeisance to Thee, O, Thou who dost cause Karma to bear fruit.

“I and all of us having sown previous evil Karma”

“Are now reaping the fruits thereof, which all indeed may see

“Our future depends on what we have done now ”

“Karma follows us, as inexorably as the shadow does the body.

“Every one must taste the fruit of what each has himself done

“Even should one repent, and be sorry for his deeds

“There is no help for him as Karma cannot be avoided

“So we who are destined by Karma to drink the bitter cup to the very dregs,

“We do therefore offer up our bodies to serve as the cushion of Thy footstool

“Pray accept them as such.

Having so said, they laid themselves prostrate and from this originates the symbolism of every Deity having a Rutra underneath his feet. Then the vassal Chiefs of the Rutra submitted their prayers:—

“We have no claim to sit in the middle,

“Be pleased to place us at the extremities of the Mandalas.

“We have no right to demand of the best of the banquets.

“We pray to be favoured with the leavings, and the dregs of food and drink,

“Henceforth we are Your subjects, and will never disobey Your commands

“We will obey You in whatever You are pleased to command,

“As a loving mother is attracted towards her son



## MATAM RUTRA

“So shall we too, be surely drawn near those who remind us of this oath of allegiance.”

Thus did they take the oath of allegiance. Then the Holder of the Mysteries, the Glorious One—Vajrapâni, pierced the heart of the prostrate Rutra (with the Phurpa dagger and absolved him. All his Kârmik sins and his Passions (Klesha) were thus immediately absolved. Then power was conferred on him, and vows were laid on him, and the water of Faith was poured on him. His body, speech and mind were blessed and consecrated towards Divine Service, and the Dorje of Faith was laid on the head, throat and heart. Thence-forward he was empowered to be the Guardian of the Faith, and named Legs-IDan-nagpo (the Good dark One), and his secret name conferred at the Initiation was Mahâkâla. Thus was he included in the assembly of the Vajrayâna Deities. Finally it was revealed to him that he would become a Buddha, by the name of Thalwai-Wangpo (Thalvayi-dbang-po—the Lord of Ashes) in the World called Kod-pa-lhundrup (that is “self produced” or “built-all-at-once”). Then the Rutra’s dead body was thrown on this Jambu-dvîpa, where it fell on its back. The head fell on Sinhala (Ceylon), the right arm and hand upon the Thogar country and the left hand on Le (Ladak country). The right leg fell on Nepal, and the left on Kashmir. The entrails fell over Zahor. The heart fell on Urgyen (Cabul), and the Linga on Magadha. These form the eight chief countries. Thus the eight Mâtrikâs of the eight Sthânas, headed by Gaurîmâ and others: the eight natural Stûpas headed by Potala; the eight occult powers, which fascinate; the eight guardians (female), who enchant; the eight great trees, the eight great realm-protectors (Shing-kyongs) the eight lakes, the eight great Nâga spirits, the eight clouds, and the eight great Dikpâlas (Chogs-kyongs or Protectors of the Directions) as well as the eight great cemeteries originated.

With the end of the sixth chapter of the Golden Rosary



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

is concluded the account of the Vajrayâna Devatâs who appeared to aid in the conquest of human Egoism which had manifested in terrible form in the person of the great Rutra. As all but the fully pure have in them Rutra elements, they are enjoined in Vajrayâna to follow the methods of expurgation there revealed.



CHAPTER XVI  
KUNDALINÎ SHAKTI  
(YOGA)

THE word Yoga comes from the root “*Yuj*” which means “to join” and, in its spiral sense, it is that process by which the human spirit is brought into near and conscious communion with, or is merged in, the Divine Spirit, according as the nature of the human spirit is held to be separate from (Dvaita, Vishishtâdvaita) or one with, (Advaita) the Divine Spirit. As according to Shâkta doctrine, with which we are alone concerned, the latter proposition is affirmed. Yoga is that process by which the identity of the two (Jîvâtmâ and Paramâtmâ), which ever in fact exists, is realised by the Yogî or practitioner of Yoga. It is so realised because the Spirit has then pierced through the veil of Mâyâ which as mind and matter obscures this knowledge from itself. The means by which this is achieved is the Yoga process which liberates from Mâyâ. So the Gheranda Sanghitâ, a Hathayoga treatise of the Tântrik school, says (Chap. 5): “There is no bond equal in strength to Mâyâ and no power greater to destroy that bond than Yoga.” From an Advaita or Monistic standpoint, Yoga in the sense of a final union is inapplicable, for union implies a dualism of the Divine and Human spirit. In such case it denotes the process rather than the result. When the two are regarded as distinct Yoga may apply to both. A person who practises Yoga is called a “Yogî.” According to Indian notions all are not competent (Adhikârî) to attempt Yoga; only the very few. One must first in this or in other lives have first gone through Karma or ritual and Upâsanâ or devotional worship and obtained



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

the fruit thereof namely a pure mind (Chittashuddhi). This Sanskrit term does not merely mean a mind free from sexual impurity, as an English reader might suppose. The attainment of this and other good qualities is the A B C of Sâdhanâ. A person may have a pure mind in this sense and yet be wholly incapable of Yoga. Chittashuddhi consists not merely in moral purity of every kind, but in knowledge, detachment, capacity for pure intellectual functioning, attention, meditation and so forth. When by Karma and Upâsanâ the mind is brought to this point and when, in the case of Vedântik Yoga, there is dispassion and detachment from the world and its desires, then the Yoga path is open for the realization of Tattvajnâna that is ultimate Truth. Very few persons indeed are competent for Yoga in its higher forms. The majority should seek their advancement along the path of ritual and devotion.

There are four main forms of Yoga, according to a common computation, namely Mantrayoga, Hathayoga, Layayoga, Râjayoga the general characteristics of which have been described in "The Serpent Power." It is only necessary here to note that Kundalî-yoga is Laya-yoga. The Eighth Chapter of the Sammohana Tantra however speaks of five kinds namely Jnâna, Râja, Laya, Hatha, Mantra, and mentions as five aspects of the spiritual life Dharma, Kriyâ, Bhâva, Jnâna, Yoga; Mantrayoga being said to be of two kinds according as it is pursued along the path of Kriyâ or Bhâva. Many forms of Yoga are in fact mentioned in the Books. There are seven Sâdhanâs of Yoga namely Shatkarma, Âsana, Mudrâ, Pratyâhâra, Prânâyâma, Dhyâna, Samâdhi which are cleansing of the body, seat, postures for gymnastic and Yoga purposes, the abstraction of the senses from their objects, breath control, (the celebrated Prânâyâma) meditation, and ecstasy, which is of two kinds imperfect (Savikalpa) in which dualism is not wholly overcome and perfect (Nirvikalpa) which is complete Monistic experience—"Ahang



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

Brahmâsmi ” “ I am the Brahman ”—a knowledge which, it is to be observed, does not produce Liberation (Moksha) but is Liberation itself. The Samâdhi of Laya-yoga is said to be Savikalpasamâdhi, and that of complete Râjâ Yoga is said to be Nirvikalpasamâdhi. The first four processes are physical and the last three mental and supramental (see Gheranda Sanghitâ Upadesha I). By these seven processes respectively certain qualities are gained, namely, purity (Shodhana), firmness and strength (Dridhatâ, fortitude (Sthiratâ), steadiness (Dhairya), lightness (Lâghava), realisation (Pratyaksha), detachment leading to Liberation (Nirliptattva).

What is known as the eight-limbed Yoga (Ashtânga-yoga) contains five of the above Sâdhanâs (Âsana, Prânâyâma, Pratyâhâra, Dhyâna, Samâdhi) and three others namely Yama or self control by way of chastity, temperance, avoidance of harm (Ahingsâ) and other virtues) Niyama or religious observances, charity and so forth, with Devotion to the Lord (Îshvara-pranidhâna), and Dhâranâ the fixing of the internal organ on its subject as directed in the Yoga practice. For further details I refer the reader to my work entitled “The Serpent Power.” Here I will only deal shortly with Layayoga or the arousing of Kundalinî Shakti, a subject of the highest importance in the Tantra Shâstra, and without some knowledge of which much of its ritual will not be understood. I cannot here enter into all the details which demand a lengthy exposition and which I have given in the Introduction to the two Sanskrit works called Shatchakranirûpana, and Pâdukâpanchaka translated in the volume “The Serpent Power” which deals with Kundalinî Shakti and the piercing by Her of the six bodily centres or Chakras. The general principle and meaning of this Yoga has never yet been published and the present Chapter is devoted to a short summary of these two points only.

All the world (I speak of course of those interested in



## SHAKTI AND SHAKTA

such subjects) is beginning to speak of Kundalinî Shakti "cette fameuse Kundalinî" as a French friend of mine calls Her. There is considerable talk about the Chakras and the Serpent Power but lack of understanding as to what they mean. This, as usual, is sought to be covered by an air of mystery, mystical mists and sometimes the attitude; "I should much like to tell you if only I were allowed to give it out." A silly Indian boast of which I lately read is "I have the key and I keep it." Those who really have the key to anything are superior men, above boasting. "Mysticism," which is often confused thinking, is also a fertile soil of humbug. I do not of course speak of true Mysticism. Like all other matters in this Indian Shâstra the basis of this Yoga is essentially rational. Its thought, like that of the ancients generally, whether of East or West, has in general the form and brilliance of a cut gem. It is this quality which makes it so dear to some of those who have had to wade through the slush of much modern thought and literature. No attempt has hitherto been made to explain the general principles which underlie it. This form of Yoga is an application of the general principles relating to Shakti with which I have already dealt. The subject has both a theoretical and practical aspect. The latter is concerned with the teaching of the method in such a way that the aspirant may give effect to it. This cannot be learnt from books but only from the Guru who has himself successfully practised this Yoga. Apart from difficulties, inherent in written explanations, it cannot be practically learnt from books because the carrying out of the method is affected by the nature and capacity of the Sâdhaka and what takes place during his Sâdhanâ. Further, though some general features of the method have been explained to me, I have had no practical experience myself of this Power. I am not speaking as a Yogî in this method, which I am not; but as one who has read and studied the Shâstra on this matter and has had the further advantage of some oral expla-



## KUNDALINÎ SHAKTI

nations which have enabled me to better understand it. I have dealt with this practical side, so far as it is possible to me, in my work on the "Serpent Power." Even so far as the matter can be dealt with in writing, I cannot, within the limits of such a paper as this, deal with it in any way fully. A detailed description of the Chakras and their significance cannot be attempted here. I refer the reader to my work called "The Serpent Power." What I wish to do is to treat the subject on the broadest lines possible and to explain the fundamental principles which underlie this Yoga method. It is because these are not understood that there is much confused thinking and misty, if not mystical, talk upon the subject. How many persons for instance can correctly answer the question "What is Kundalinî Shakti?" One may be told that it is a Power or Shakti; that it is coiled like a serpent in the Mûlâdhâra; and that it is awakened and goes up through the Chakras to the Sahasrâra. But what Shakti is it? Generally it seems to be thought that it is one particular Shakti named Kundalinî amongst the many moving Shaktis which make up the Universe. This is an error as later shown. Why again is it coiled like a serpent? What is the meaning of this? What is the nature of the Power? Why is it in the Mûlâdhâra? What is the meaning of "wakening" the power. Why if awakened should it go up? What are the Chakras? It is easy to say that they are regions or lotuses. What are they in themselves? Why have each of the lotuses a different number of petals? What is a petal? What and why are the "Letters" on them? What is the effect of going to the Sahasrâra: and how does that effect come about? These and other similar questions require an answer before this form of Yoga can be understood. I have said something as to the Letters in the chapters on Shakti as Mantra and Varnamâlâ. With these and other general questions, rather than with the details of the six Chakras, set forth in "Serpent Power" I will here deal.



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

In the first place it is necessary to remember the fundamental principle of the Tantra Shâstra to which I have already referred *viz.*, that man is a microcosm (Kshudra-brahmânda). Whatever exists in the outer universe exists in him. All the Tattvas and the worlds are within him and so are the supreme Shiva-Shakti.

The body may be divided into two main parts, namely the head and trunk on one hand and the legs on the other. In man the centre of the body is between these two at the base of the spine where the legs begin. Supporting the trunk and throughout the whole body there is the spinal cord. This is the axis of the body, just as Mount Meru is the axis of the earth. Hence man's spine is called Merudanda the Meru or axis-staff. The legs and feet are gross matter which show less signs of consciousness than the trunk with its spinal white and grey matter; which trunk itself is greatly subordinate in this respect to the head containing the organ of mind, or physical brain, with its white and grey matter. The position of the white and grey matter in the head and spinal column respectively are reversed. The body and legs below the centre are the seven lower or nether worlds upheld by the sustaining Shaktis of the universe. From the centre upwards, consciousness more freely manifests through the spinal and cerebral centres. Here there are the seven upper regions or Lokas a term which Satyânanda in his commentary on Îsha Upanishad says means "what are seen" (Lokyante) that is attained and are hence the fruits of Karma in the form of particular re-birth. These regions namely Bhûh, Bhuvah, Svah, Tapah, Jana, Mahah, Satya Lokas correspond with the six centres; five in the trunk, the sixth in the lower cerebral centre; and the seventh in the upper Brain or Satyaloka the abode of the supreme Shiva-Shakti.

The six centres are the Mûlâdhâra or root-support situated at the base of the spinal column in a position midway in the perinæum between the root of the genitals and the anus. Above it in the region of the genitals,



## KUNDALINÎ SHAKTI

abdomen, heart, chest or throat and in the forehead between the two eyes (Bhrûmadhye) are the Svâdhishthâna, Manipûra, Anâhata, Vishuddha and Âjnâ Chakras or lotuses (Padma) respectively. These are the chief centres, though the books speak of others such as the Lalanâ and Manas and Soma Chakras. In fact, in the Advaita Mârtanda, a modern Sanskrit book by the late Guru of the Mahârâjâ of Kashmir, some fifty Chakras and Âdhâras are mentioned : though the six stated are the chief upon which all accounts agree. And so it is said "How can there be any Siddhi for him who knows not the six Chakras, the sixteen Âdhâras, the five Ethers and the three Lingas in his own body?" The seventh region beyond the Chakras is the upper brain, the highest centre of manifestation of Consciousness in the body and therefore the abode of the supreme Shiva-Shakti. When "abode" is said, it is not meant of course that the Supreme is there placed in the sense of our "placing," namely it is there and not elsewhere. The Supreme is never localized whilst its manifestations are. It is everywhere both within and without the body, but it is said to be in the Sahasrâra because it is there that the Supreme Shiva-Shakti is realised. And this must be so, because consciousness is realised by entering in and passing through the highest manifestation of mind, the Sattvamayî Buddhi, above and beyond which is Chit and Chidrûpinî Shakti themselves. From their Shiva-Shakti Tattva aspect are evolved Mind in its form as Buddhi, Ahangkâra, Manas and associated senses (Indriyas) the centre of which is in and above the Âjnâ Chakra and below the Sahasrâra. From Ahangkâra proceed the Tanmâtras or generals of the sense-particulars which evolve the five forms of sensible matter (Bhûta) namely Âkâsha ("Ether") Vâyu ("Air") Agni ("Fire") Apas ("Water") and Prithivî ("Earth"). The English translation given of these terms do not imply that the Bhûtas are the same as the English elements of air, fire, water, earth. The terms indicate varying degree of matter



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

from the etherial to the solid. Thus Prithivî or earth is any matter in the Prithivî state; that is which may be sensed by the Indriya of smell. Mind and matter pervade the whole body. But there are centres therein in which they are predominant. Thus Âjnâ is a centre of mind and the five lower Chakras are centres of the five Bhûtas; Vishuddha of Âkâsha, Anâhata of Vâyu, Manipûra of Agni, Svâdhishthâna of Apas, and Mûlâdhâra of Prithivî.

In short man as a microcosm is the all-pervading Spirit (which most purely manifests in the Sahasrâra) vehicled by Shakti in the form of Mind and Matter the centres of which are the sixth and following five Chakras respectively.

The six Chakras have been identified with the following plexuses commencing from the lowest the Mûlâdhâra :—The Sacrococcygeal plexus, the Sacral plexus the Solar plexus (which forms the great junction of the right and left sympathetic chains Idâ and Pingalâ) with the cerebro-spinal axis. Connected with this is the Lumbar plexus. Then follows the Cardiac plexus (Anâhata) Laryngeal plexus and lastly the Âjnâ or cerebellum with its two lobes and above this the Manas Chakra or sensorium with its six lobes, the Soma chakra or middle Cerebrum and lastly the Sahasrâra or upper Cerebrum. To some extent these localizations are yet tentative. This statement may involve an erroneous view of what the Chakras really are and is likely to produce wrong notions concerning them in others. The six Chakras themselves are vital centres within the spinal column in the white and grey matter there. They may however, and probably do, influence and govern the gross tract outside the spine in the bodily region lateral to, and co-extensive with, that section of the spinal column in which a particular centre is situated. The Chakras are centres of Shakti as vital force. In other words they are centres of Prânashakti manifested by Prânavâyu in the living body, the presiding Devatâs of which are names for the Universal Consciousness as It manifests in the form of those centres. The Chakras are not



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

perceptible to the gross senses whatever may be a Yogi's powers to observe what is beyond the senses (Atîndriya). Even if they were perceptible in the living body which they help to organise they disappear with the disintegration of organism at death.

In an article on "The Physical Errors of Hinduism" (Calcutta Review XI 436-440) it was said :—"It would indeed excite the surprise of our readers to hear that the Hindus, who would not even touch a dead body, much less dissect it (which is incorrect), should possess any anatomical knowledge at all.....It is the Tantras that furnish us with some extraordinary pieces of information concerning the human body...But of all the Hindu Shâstras extant, the Tantras lie in the greatest obscurity.....The Tântrik theory, on which the well-known Yoga called 'Shatchakrabheda' is founded, supposes the existence of six main internal organs, called Chakras or Padmas, all bearing a special resemblance to that famous flower, the lotus. These are placed one above the other, and connected by three imaginary chains, the emblems of the Ganges, the Yamunâ, and the Sarasvatî..... Such is the obstinacy with which the Hindus adhere to these erroneous notions, that, even when we show them by actual dissection the non-existence of the imaginary Chakras in the human body, they will rather have recourse to excuses revolting to common-sense than acknowledge the evidence of their own eyes. They say, with a shamelessness unparalleled, that these Padmas exist as long as a man lives, but disappear the moment he dies." This alleged "Shamelessness" reminds me of the story of a doctor who told my father "that he had performed many post mortems and had never yet discovered a soul."

The petals of the lotuses vary being 4, 6, 10, 12, 16, 2 respectively; commencing from the Mûlâdhâra and ending with Âjnâ. There are 50 in all, as are the letters of the alphabet which are in the petals; that is the Mâtrikâs, are associated with the Tattvas since both are products of the



## SHAKTI AND SHĀTKA

same creative Cosmic Process manifesting either as physiological or psychological function. It is noteworthy that the number of the petals is that of the letters leaving out either Ksha or the Second La and that these 50 multiplied by 20 are in the 1000 petals of the Sahasrâra a number which is probably only indicative of multitude and magnitude.

But why it may be asked do the petals vary in number? Why for instance are there 4 in the Mulâdhâra and 6 in the Svâdhishthâna? The answer given is that the number of petals in any Chakra is determined by the number and position of the Nâdîs or Yoga "nerves" around that Chakra. Thus four Nâdîs surrounding and passing through the vital movements of the Mûlâdhâra Chakra give it the appearance of a lotus of four petals. The petals are thus configurations made by the position of Nâdîs at any particular centre. These Nâdîs are not those which are known to the Vaidya of Medical Shâstras. The latter are gross physical nerves. But the former here spoken of are called Yoga-Nâdîs and are subtle channels (Vivara) along which the Prânik currents flow. The term Nâdî comes from the root "Nad" which means motion. The body is filled with an uncountable number of Nâdîs. If they were revealed to the eye the body would present the appearance of a highly complicated chart of ocean currents. Superficially the water seem one and the same. But examination shows that it is moving with varying degrees of force in all directions. All these lotuses exist in the spinal column.

An Indian physician and Sanskritist has, in the Guy's Hospital Gazette, expressed the opinion that better anatomy is given in the Tantras than in the purely medical works of the Hindus. I have attempted elsewhere to co-relate present and ancient anatomy and physiology. I can, however, only here mention some salient points. Firstly pointing out that the Shivasvarodaya Shâstra gives prominence to nerve centres and nerve currents (Vâyu) and their control, such



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

teaching being for the purpose of worship (Upâsanâ) and Yoga. The aims and object of the two Shâstras are not the same.

The Merudanda is the vertebral column. Western Anatomy divides it into five regions; and it is to be noted in corroboration of the theory here exposed that these correspond with the regions in which the five Chakras are situate. The central spinal system comprises the brain or encephalon contained within the skull (in which are the Lalanâ, Âjnâ, Manas, Soma Chakras and the Sahasrâra); as also the spinal cord extending from the upper border of the Atlas below the cerebellum and descending to the second lumbar vertebra where it tapers to a point called the *filum terminale*. Within the spine is the cord, a compound of grey and white brain matter, in which are the five lower Chakras. It is noteworthy that the *filum terminale* was formerly thought to be mere fibrous cord, an unsuitable vehicle one might think for the Mûlâdhâra Chakra and Kundalî Shakti. Recent microscopic investigations have, however, disclosed the existence of highly sensitive grey matter in the *filum terminale* which represents the position of the Mûlâdhâra. According to western science the spinal cord is not merely a conductor between the periphery and the centres of sensation and volition but is also an independent centre or group of centres. The Sushumnâ is a Nâdi in the centre of the spinal column. Its base is called the Brahmadvâra or Gate of Brahman. As regards the physiological relations of the Chakras all that can be said with any degree of certainty is that the four above the Mûlâdhâra have relation to the genito-excretory, digestive, cardiac and respiratory functions, and that the two upper centres the Âjnâ (with associated Chakras) and the Sahasrâra denote various forms of its cerebral activity ending in the repose of pure consciousness therein gained through Yoga. The Nâdis on each side called Idâ and Pingalâ are the left and right sympathetic cords crossing the central



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

column from one side to the other, making at the Âjnâ with the Sushumnâ a three-fold knot called Trivenî; which is said to be the spot in the Medulla where the sympathetic cords join together and whence they take their origin. These Nâdîs together with the two-lobed Âjnâ and the Sushumnâ forming the figure of the *Caduceus* of the God Mercury which is said by some to represent them.

How then does this Yoga compare with others?

It will now be asked what are the general principles which underlie the Yoga practice above described. How is it that the rousing of Kundalinî Shakti and her Union with Shiva effects the state of ecstatic union (Samâdhi) and spiritual experience which is alleged. The reader who has understood the general principles recorded in the previous essays should, if he has not already divined it, readily appreciate the answer here given.

In the first place there are two main lines of Yoga, namely Dhyâna or Bhâvanâ Yoga and Kundalî Yoga the subject of this work; and there is a marked difference between the two. The first class of Yoga is that in which ecstasy (Samâdhi) is attained by intellectual processes (Kriyâ-jnâna) of meditation and the like with the aid, it may be, of auxiliary processes of Mantra or Hatha Yoga (other than the rousing of Kundalî Shakti) and by detachment from the world; the second stands apart as that portion of Hatha Yoga in which, though intellectual processes are not neglected, the creative and sustaining Shakti of the whole body is actually and truly united with the Lord Consciousness. The Yogî makes Her introduce him to Her Lord and enjoys the bliss of union through Her. Though it is he who arouses Her, it is She who gives Jnâna for She is Herself *that*. The Dhyâna-Yogî gains what acquaintance with the supreme state his own meditative powers can give him and knows not the enjoyment of union with Shiva in and through his fundamental Body-Power. The two forms of Yoga differ both as to method and result. The Hatha-



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

yogī regards his Yoga and its fruit as the highest. Perhaps the Jñānayogī may think similarly of his own. Kundalinī is so renowned that many seek to know Her. Having studied the theory of this Yoga I have been often asked "Whether one can get on without it." The answer is "It depends upon what you are looking for." If you want to rouse Kundalinī Shakti to enjoy the bliss of union of Shiva and Shakti through Her and to gain the accompanying Powers (Siddhi), it is obvious that this end can only, if at all, be achieved by the Yoga here described. But if Liberation is sought without desire for union through Kundalinī then such Yoga is not necessary; for Liberation may be obtained by pure Jñānayoga through detachment, the exercise, and then the stilling of the mind without any reference to the central Bodily-Power at all. Instead of setting out in and from the world to unite with Shiva, the Jñānayogī to attain this result detaches himself from the world. The one is the path of enjoyment and the other of asceticism. Samādhi may also be obtained on the path of devotion (Bhakti) as on that of knowledge. Indeed the highest devotion (Parabhakti) is not different from knowledge. Both are realisation. But whilst Liberation (Mukti) is attainable by either method there are other marked differences between the two. A Dhyāna-yogī should not neglect his body knowing that as he is both mind and matter each reacts the one upon the other. Neglect or mere mortification of the body is more apt to produce disordered imagination than a true spiritual experience. He is not concerned however with the body in the sense that the Hathayogī is. It is possible to be a successful Dhyānayogī and yet to be weak in body and health, sick, and shortlived. His body and not he himself determines when he shall die. He cannot die at will. When he is in Samādhi, Kundalinī Shakti is still sleeping in the Mūlādhāra and none of the physical symptoms and psychical bliss, or powers (Siddhi) described as accompanying Her rousing are observed in his



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

case. The Ecstasis which he calls "Liberation while yet living" (Jîvanmukti) is not a state like that of real Liberation. He may be still subject to a suffering body from which he escapes only at death, when if at all, he is liberated. His ecstasy is in the nature of a meditation which passes into the Void (Bhâvanâsamâdhi) effected through negation of all thought-form (Chitta-vritti) and detachment from the world; a comparatively negative process in which the positive act of raising the central power of the body takes no part. By his effort the mind, which is a product of Kundalinî as Prakriti Shakti together with its worldly desires is stilled so that the veil produced by mental functioning is removed from Consciousness. In Layayoga, Kundalini Herself when roused by the Yogî (for such rousing is his act and part) *achieve for him* this illumination.

But why it may be asked should one trouble over the body and its Central Power, the more particularly that there are unusual risks and difficulties involved? The answer has been already given—alleged completeness and certainty of realisation through the agency of the Power which is knowledge itself (Jnânarûpâ Shakti), an intermediate acquisition of Powers (Siddhi) and intermediate and final enjoyment. This answer may however, usefully be developed as a fundamental principle of the Shâkta Tantra is involved.

The Shâkta Tantra claims to give both Enjoyment (Bhukti) in this and the next world and Liberation (Mukti) from all worlds. This claim is based on a profoundly true principle, given Advaitavâda as a basis. If the ultimate reality is the One which exists in two aspects of quiescent enjoyment of the Self, in liberation from all form and active enjoyment of objects; that is as pure spirit and spirit in matter, then a complete union with Reality demands such unity in both of Its aspects. It must be known both "here" (Iha) and "there" (Amutra). When rightly apprehended practised, there is truth in the doctrine which teaches that



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

man should make the best of both worlds. There is no real incompatibility between the two provided action is taken in conformity with the universal law of manifestation. It is held to be false teaching that happiness hereafter can only be had by absence of enjoyment now, or in deliberately sought-for suffering and mortification. It is the one Shiva who is the Supreme Blissful experience and who appears in the form of man with a life of mingled pleasure and pain. Both happiness here and the bliss of Liberation here and hereafter may be attained, if the identity of these Shivas be realised in every human act. This will be achieved by making every human function without exception a religious act of sacrifice and worship (Yajna). In the ancient Vaidik ritual, enjoyment by way of food and drink was preceded and accompanied by ceremonial sacrifice and ritual. Such enjoyment was the fruit of the sacrifice and the gift of the Devas. At a higher stage in the life of a Sâdhaka it is offered to the One from whom all gifts come and of whom the Devatâs are inferior limited forms. But this offering also involves a dualism from which the highest Monistic (Advaita) Sâdhanâ of the Shâkta Tantra is free. Here the individual life and the world-life are known as one. And so the Tântrik Sâdhaka when eating or drinking or fulfilling any other of the natural functions of the body does so saying and believing Shivo'ham "I am Shiva" Bhairavo'ham "I am Bhairava" "Sâ'ham" "I am She." It is not merely the separate individual who thus acts and enjoys. It is Shiva who does so *in* and *through* him. Such an one recognises, as has been well said, that his life and the play of all its activities are not a thing apart, to be held and pursued egotistically for its and his own separate sake, as though enjoyment was something to be filched from life by his own unaided strength and with a sense of separatedness; but his life and all its activities are conceived as part of the Divine action in nature; Shakti manifesting and operating in the form of man. He realises in the pulsing



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

beat of his heart the rhythm which throbs through and is the sign of the Universal Life. To neglect or to deny the needs of the body, to think of it as something not divine, is to neglect and deny the greater life of which it is a part; and to falsify the great doctrine of the unity of all and of the ultimate identity of Matter and Spirit. Governed by such a concept even the lowliest physical needs take on a cosmic significance. The body is Shakti. Its needs are Shakti's needs; when man enjoys, it is Shakti who enjoys through him. In all he sees and does it is the Mother who looks and acts. His eyes and hands are Hers. The whole body and all its functions are Her manifestation. To fully realise Her as such is to perfect this particular manifestation of Hers which is himself. Man when seeking to be the master of himself so seeks on all the planes physical, mental and spiritual; nor can they be severed for they are all related, being but differing aspects of the one all pervading Consciousness. Who is the more divine; he who neglects and spurns the body or mind that he may attain some fancied spiritual superiority, or he who rightly cherishes both as forms of the one Spirit which they clothe? Realisation is more speedily and truly attained by discerning Spirit in and as all being and its activities, than by fleeing from and casting these aside as being either unspiritual or illusory and impediments in the path. If not rightly conceived they *may* be impediments and the cause of fall; otherwise they become instruments of attainment; and what others are there to hand? And so the Kulârnavâ Tantra says "By what men fall by that they rise." When acts are done in the right feeling and frame of mind (Bhâva) those acts give enjoyment (Bhukti) and the repeated and prolonged Bhâva produces at length that divine experience (Tattvajnâna) which is Liberation. When the Mother is seen *in* all things She is at length realised as She who is *beyond* them all.

These general principles have their more frequent application in the life of the world before entrance on the path



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTĪ

of Yoga proper. The Yoga here described is however also an application of these same principles in so far as it is claimed that thereby both Bhukti and Mukti are attained. Ordinarily it is said that where there is Yoga there is no Bhoga (enjoyment) but in Kaula teaching Yoga is Bhoga and Bhoga is Yoga and the world itself becomes the seat of Liberation (*Yogo bhogāyate, mokshāyate sāṅsārah*).

By the lower processes of Hathayoga it is sought to attain a perfect physical body which will also be a wholly fit instrument by which the mind may function. A perfect mind again approaches, and in Samādhi passes into, Pure Consciousness itself. The Hathayogī thus seeks a body which shall be as strong as steel, healthy, free from suffering and therefore long-lived. Master of the body he is master of both life and death. His lustrous form enjoys the vitality of youth. He lives as long as he has the will to live and enjoy in the world of forms. His death is the "death at will" (*Ichchhā-mrityu*) when making the great and wonderfully expressive gesture of dissolution (*Saṅghāra-mudrā*) he grandly departs. But it may be said the Hathayogīs do get sick and die. In the first place the full discipline is one of difficulty and risk and can only be pursued under the guidance of a skilled Guru. As the Goraksha Saṅghitā says, unaided and unsuccessful practice may lead not only to disease but death. He who seeks to conquer the Lord of Death incurs the risk, on failure, of a more speedy conquest by Him. All who attempt this Yoga do not of course succeed or meet with the same measure of success. Those who fail not only incur the infirmities of ordinary men but others brought on by practices which have been ill pursued or for which they are not fit. Those again who do succeed, do so in varying degree. One may prolong his life to the sacred age of 84, others to 100, others yet further. In theory at least those who are perfected (*Siddha*) go from this plane when they will. All have not the same capacity or opportunity through want of will, bodily strength, or cir-



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

cumstance. All may not be willing or able to follow the strict rules necessary for success. Nor does modern life offer in general the opportunities for so complete a physical culture. All men may not desire such a life or may think the attainment of it not worth the trouble involved. Some may wish to be rid of their body and that as speedily as possible. It is therefore said that it is easier to gain Liberation than deathlessness. The former may be had by unselfishness, detachment from the world, moral and mental discipline. But to conquer death is harder than this, for these qualities and acts will not alone avail. He who does so conquer holds life in the hollow of one hand, and if he be a successful (Siddha) Yogî, Liberation in the other. He has Enjoyment and Liberation. He is the Emperor who is Master of the World and the Possessor of the Bliss which is beyond all worlds. Therefore it is claimed by the Hathayogî that every Sâdhanâ is inferior to Hathayoga.

The Hathayogî who works for Liberation does so through the Yoga Sâdhanâ here described which gives both Enjoyment and Liberation. At every centre to which he rouses Kundalinî he experiences a special form of bliss (Ânanda) and gains special powers (Siddhi). Carrying Her to the Shiva of his cerebral centre he enjoys the Supreme Bliss which in its nature is that of Liberation and which when established in permanence is Liberation itself on the loosening of Spirit and Body. She who "shines like a chain of lights" a lightning flash—in the centre of his body is the "Inner Woman" to whom reference was made when it was said "What need have I of any outer woman? I have an Inner Woman within myself." The Vîra (Heroic) Sâdhaka, knowing himself as the embodiment of Shiva (Shivo'ham) unites with woman as the embodiment of Shakti on the physical plane. The Divya (Divine) Sâdhaka or Yogî unites within himself his own Principles, female and male, which are the "Heart of the Lord" (Hridayam Parameshituh) or Shakti and Her Lord Consci-



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

ousness or Shiva. It is their union which is the mystic coition (Maithuna) of the Tantras. There are two forms of union (Sâmarasya) namely the first which is the gross (Sthûla) or the union of the physical embodiments of the Supreme Consciousness; and the second which is the subtle (Sûkshma) or the union of the quiescent and active principles in Consciousness itself. It is the latter which is Liberation.

Lastly, what in a philosophical sense is the nature of the process here described? Shortly stated, Energy (Shakti) polarises itself into two forms, namely static or potential (Kundalinî) and dynamic (the working forces of the body as Prâna). Behind all activity there is a static background. This static centre in the human body is the central Serpent Power in the Mûlâdhâra (Root-support). It is the Power which is the static support (Âdhâra) of the whole body and all its moving Prânik forces. This Centre (Kendra) of Power is a gross form of Chit or Consciousness; that is, in itself (Svarûpa) it is Consciousness; and by appearance it is a Power which, as the highest form of Force, is a manifestation of it. Just as there is a distinction (though identical at base) between the supreme quiescent Consciousness and Its active Power (Shakti): so when Consciousness manifests as Energy (Shakti) it possesses the twin aspects of potential and kinetic Energy. There can be no partition in fact of Reality. To the perfect eye of the Siddha the process of Becoming is an ascription (Adhyâsa). To the imperfect eye of the Sâdhaka, that is the aspirant for Siddhi (perfected accomplishment); to the spirit which is still toiling through the lower planes and variously identifying itself with them, Becoming is tending to appear and appearance is real. The Shâkta Tantra is a rendering of Vedântik Truth from this practical point of view and represents the world-process as a polarization in Consciousness itself. This polarity as it exists in, and as, the body is destroyed by Yoga which disturbs the equilibrium of bodily consciousness which consciousness is



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

the result of the maintenance of these two poles. In the human body the potential pole of Energy which is the Supreme Power is stirred to action, on which the moving forces (dynamic Shakti) supported by it are drawn thereto and the whole dynamism thus engendered moves upward to unite with the quiescent Consciousness in the Highest Lotus.

There is a polarisation of Shakti into two forms—static and dynamic. In a correspondence I had with Professor Pramatha Nātha Mukhopādhyāya on this subject he very well developed this point and brought forward some suitable illustrations of it of which I am glad to avail myself of. He pointed out that in the first place in the mind or experience this polarisation or polarity is patent to reflection: namely the polarity between pure Chit and the Stress which is involved in it. This Stress or Shakti develops the mind through an infinity of forms and changes, themselves involved in the pure unbounded Ether of Consciousness, the Chidākāsha. This analysis exhibits the primordial Shakti in the same two polar forms as before, static and dynamic. Here the polarity is most fundamental and approaches absoluteness, though, of course, it is to be remembered that there is no absolute rest except in pure Chit. Cosmic energy is in an equilibrium which is relative and not absolute. Passing from mind let us take matter. The atom of modern science has, as I have already pointed out, ceased to be an atom in the sense of an indivisible unit of matter. According to the electron theory the so-called atom is a miniature universe resembling our solar system. At the centre of this atomic system we have a charge of positive electricity round which a cloud of negative charges called Electrons revolve. The positive and negative charges hold each other in check so that the atom is in a condition of equilibrated energy and does not ordinarily break up, though it may do so on the dissociation which is the characteristic of all matter, but which is so clearly



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

manifest in radio-activity of radium. We have thus here again a positive charge at rest at the centre and negative charges in motion round about the centre. What is thus said about the atom applies to the whole cosmic system and universe. In the world-system the planets revolve round the Sun and that system itself is probably (taken as a whole) a moving mass around some other relatively static centre until we arrive at the Brahma-bindu which is the point of Absolute Rest round which all forms revolve and by which all are maintained. He has aptly suggested other illustrations of the same process. Thus in the tissues of the living body the operative energy is polarised into two forms of energy—anabolic and katabolic, the one tending to change and the other to conserve the tissues; the actual condition of the tissues being simply the resultant of these two co-existent or concurrent activities. In the case, again, of the impregnated ovum, Shakti is already presented in its two polar aspects, namely the ovum (possibly the static) and the spermatozoon the dynamic. The germ cell does not cease to be such. It splits into two, one half the somatic cell gradually developing itself into the body of the animal, the other half remaining encased within the body practically unchanged and as the germ-plasm is transmitted in the process of reproduction to the offspring.

In short, Shakti when manifesting divides itself into two polar aspects—static and dynamic—which implies that you cannot have it in a dynamic form without at the same time having it in a static form much like the poles of a magnet. In any given sphere of activity of force we must have according to the cosmic principle a static back-ground—Shakti *at rest* or “coiled” as the Tantras say. This scientific truth is illustrated in the figure of the Tāntrik Kālī. The Divine Mother moves as the Kinetic Shakti on the breast of Sadāshiva who is the static back-ground of pure Chit which is actionless (Nishkriya); the Gunamayī Mother being all activity.



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

The Cosmic Shakti is the collectivity (Samashti) in relation to which the Kundalî in particular bodies is the Vyashti (individual) Shakti. The body is, as I have stated, a microcosm (Kshudrabrahmânda). In the living body there is, therefore, the same polarisation of which I have spoken. From the Mahâkundalî the universe has sprung. In Her supreme form She is at rest, coiled round and one (as Chidrûpinî) with the Shivabindu. She is then at rest. She next uncoils Herself to manifest. Here the three coils of which the Tantras speak are the three Gunas and the three and a half coils to which the Kubjikâ Tantra alludes are Prakriti and its three Gunas together with the Vikritis. Her 50 coils are the letters of the alphabet. As She goes on uncoiling, the Tattvas and the Mâtrikâs, the Mothers of the Varnas, issue from Her. She is thus moving and continues even after creation to move in the Tattvas so created. For as they are born of movement they continue to move. The whole Jagat, as the Sanskrit term implies, is moving. She thus continues creatively active until She has evolved Prithivî the last of the Tattvas. First She creates mind and then matter. This latter becomes more and more dense. It has been suggested that the Mahâbhûtas are the Densities of modern science:—Air density associated with the maximum velocity of gravity; Fire density associated with the velocity of light; Water or fluid density associated with molecular velocity and the equatorial velocity of the Earth's rotation; and Earth density that of basalt associated with the Newtonian velocity of sound. However this be, it is plain that the Bhûtas represent an increasing density of matter until it reaches its three-dimensional solid form. When Shakti has created this last or Prithivî Tattva what is there further for Her to do? Nothing. She therefore, then again *rests*. She is again coiled which means that She is at rest. "At rest" again means that She assumes a static form. Shakti, however, is never exhausted, that is, emptied into any of its forms. Therefore Kundalî Shakti at this



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

point is, as it were, the Shakti *left over* (though yet a plenum) after the Prithivî, the last of the Bhûtas has been created. We have thus Mahâkundalî at rest as Chidrûpinî Shakti in the Sahasrâra the point of absolute rest; and then the body in which the relative static centre is Kundalî at rest and round this centre the whole of the bodily forces move. They are Shakti and so is Kundalî Shakti. The difference between the two is that they are Shakti in specific differentiated forms *in movement*; and Kundalî Shakti is undifferentiated residual Shakti at *rest*, that is, coiled. She is coiled in the Mûlâdhâra, which means fundamental support, and which is at the same time the seat of the Prithivî or last solid Tattva and of the residual Shakti or Kundalinî. The body may, therefore, be compared to a magnet with two poles. The Mûlâdhâra, in so far as it is the seat of Kundalî Shakti, a comparatively gross form of Chit (being Chit-Shakti and Mâyâ-Shakti) is the static pole in relation to the rest of the body which is dynamic. The "working" that is the body necessarily presupposes and finds such a static support; hence the name Mûlâdhâra. In one sense the static Shakti at the Mûlâdhâra is necessarily co-existent with the creating and evolving Shakti of the body; because the dynamic aspect or pole can never be without its static counterpart. In another sense it is the residual Shakti left over after such operation.

What then happens in the accomplishment of this Yoga? This static Shakti is affected by Prânâyâma and other Yogik processes and becomes dynamic. Thus when completely dynamic, that is when Kundalî unites with Shiva in the Sahasrâra the polarisation of the body gives way. The two poles are united in one and there is the state of consciousness called Samâdhi. The polarisation, of course, takes place in consciousness. The body actually continues to exist as an object of observation to others. It continues its organic life. But man's consciousness of his



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

body and all other objects is withdrawn because the mind has ceased, so far as his consciousness is concerned, the function having been withdrawn into its ground which is consciousness.

How is the body sustained? In the first place, though Kundalī Shakti is the static centre of the whole body as a complete conscious organism, yet each of the parts of the body and their constituent cells have their own static centres which uphold such parts or cells. Next, the theory of the Tāntriks themselves is that Kundalī ascends, and that the body, as a complete organism, is maintained by the "nectar" which flows from the union of Shiva and Shakti in the Sahasrâra. This nectar is an ejection of power generated by their union. My friend, however, whom I have cited, is of opinion (and for this strong grounds may be urged) that the potential Kundalī Shakti becomes only partly and not wholly converted into kinetic Shakti; and yet since Shakti—even as given in the Mûla centre is an infinitude, it is not depleted; the potential store always remaining unexhausted. In this case the dynamic equivalent is a partial conversion of one mode of energy into another. If, however, the coiled power at the Mûla became absolutely uncoiled, there would result the dissolution of the three bodies gross, subtle and causal, and consequently Videha-Mukti,—because the static back-ground in relation to a particular form of existence would, according to this hypothesis, have wholly given way. He would explain the fact that the body becomes cold as a corpse as the Shakti leaves it as being due not to the depletion or privation of the static power at the Mûlâdhâra but to the concentration or convergence of the dynamic power ordinarily diffused over the whole body, so that the dynamic equivalent which is set up against the static back-ground of Kundalī Shakti is only the diffused five-fold Prâna gathered home—withdrawn from the other tissues of the body and concentrated along the axis. Thus ordinarily the dynamic equivalent is



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

the Prâna diffused over all the tissues: in Yoga it is converged along the axis, the static equivalent of Kundalī Shakti enduring in both cases. Some part of the already available dynamic Prâna is made to act at the base of the axis in a suitable manner by which means the basal centre or Mûlâdhâra becomes, as it were, oversaturated and re-acts on the whole diffused dynamic power (or Prâna) of the body by withdrawing it from the tissues and converging it along the line of the axis. In this way the diffused dynamic equivalent becomes the converged dynamic equivalent along the axis. What, according to this view, ascends, is not the whole Shakti but an eject like condensed lightning, which at length reaches the Parama-Shivasthâna. There the Central Power which upholds the individual world-consciousness is merged in the Supreme Consciousness. The limited consciousness transcending the passing concepts of worldly life directly intuits the unchanging Reality which underlies the whole phenomenal flow. When Kundalī Shakti *sleeps* in the Mûlâdhâra, man is *awake* to the world; when she *awakes* to unite, and does unite, with the supreme static Consciousness which is Shiva, then consciousness is *asleep* to the world and is one with the Light of all things.

Putting aside detail, the main principle appears to be that when "wakened" Kundalī Shakti either Herself (or as my friend suggests in Her eject) ceases to be a static Power which sustains the world-consciousness, the content of which is held only so long as She "sleeps:" and when once set in movement is drawn to that other static centre in the Thousand-petalled Lotus (Sahasrâra) which is Herself in union with the Shiva-consciousness or the consciousness of ecstasy beyond the world of forms. When Kundalī "sleeps" man is awake to this world. When She "awakes" he sleeps, that is loses all consciousness of the world and enters his causal body. In Yoga he passes beyond to formless Consciousness.

I have only to add, without further discussion of the



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

point, that practitioners of this Yoga claim that it is higher than any other and that the Samādhi (ecstasy) attained thereby is more perfect. The reason which they allege is this. In Dhyānayoga ecstasy takes place through detachment from the world and mental concentration leading to vacuity of mental operation (Vritti) or the uprising of pure Consciousness unhindered by the limitations of the mind. The degree to which this unveiling of consciousness is effected depends upon the meditative powers (Jnānashakti) of the Sādḥaka and the extent of his detachment from the world. On the other hand Kundalī who is all Shaktis and who is therefore Jnānashakti Herself produces, when awakened by the Yogī, full Jnāna for him. Secondly in the Samādhi of Dhyānayoga there is no rousing and union of Kundalī Shakti with the accompanying bliss and acquisition of special Powers (Siddhi). Further, in Kundalī Yoga there is not merely a Samādhi through meditation, but through the central power of the Jīva a power which carries with it the forces of both body and mind. The union in that sense is claimed to be more complete than that enacted through mental methods only. Though in both cases bodily consciousness is lost, in Kundalinī-yoga not only the mind, but the body in so far as it is represented by its central power (or may be its ejet) is actually united with Shiva. This union produces an enjoyment (Bhukti) which the Dhyānayogī does not possess. Whilst both the Divya Yogī and the Vīra Sādḥaka have enjoyment (Bhukti) that of the former is said to be infinitely more intense, being an experience of Bliss Itself. The enjoyment of the Vīra Sādḥaka is but a reflection of it on the physical plane, a welling up of the true Bliss through the deadening coverings and trammels of matter. Again, whilst it is said that both have Liberation (Mukti) this word is used in Vīra Sadhanā in a figurative sense only, indicating a bliss which is the nearest approach on the physical plane to that of Mukti and a Bhāva or feeling of momentary union of



## KUNDALINĪ SHAKTI

Shiva and Shakti which ripens in the higher Yoga Sādhanâ into the literal liberation of the Yogî. He in its fullest and literal sense has both Enjoyment (Bhukti) and Liberation (Mukti). Hence its claim to be the Emperor of all Yogas.

However this may be, I leave at this point the subject with the hope that others will continue the enquiry I have here initiated. It and other matters in the Tantra Shâstra seem to me (whatever be their inherent value) worthy of an investigation which they have not yet received.



## CHAPTER XVII

### SOME CONCLUSIONS

**I** WILL conclude by some general practical observations, from the Indian standpoint, upon the utility of the doctrines exposed: for the Shâstra is essentially practical and in full contact both with life and its renunciation. Its watch-word is Kriyâ or action.

It has been rightly said that the general character of Indian civilization is its spiritual outlook on life, devotion to religious practice, and metaphysical aptitudes; though to-day there are to be found those who, in bar of this country's advancement, are ready to call in question the possession by its people of any quality or worth; and thus we now hear of the so-called "spirituality" of India in inverted commas. A recent English book ('India and the Future' by William Archer) now on its way to this country works with another tactic. It decries the worth of Indian spirituality and its religious knowledge: says that Her ancient metaphysic (described as mere luxurious cerebration) will not do; that her noble idealism is an amazing illusion and her popular religion "the lowest professed and practised by any people that purports to have risen above savagery" and so forth. The Indian people are then invited to throw out the poisonous stuff about India's glorious past, to give up their inheritance, and to receive in return the mess of political pottage which he offers to them. In other words, let them surrender their souls and their culture, make themselves one with its author's people and then they (he says) will accept the Indian people as their "civilized" equal; for the latter are said to be as yet "barbarous." Since the last edition I have dealt with some



## SOME CONCLUSIONS

of this critics contentions in my book "Is India Civilized." Were I an Indian, I should never surrender my soul to any. Of what value is any gift when to obtain it you must cease to be yourselves. It is, however, absurd to talk, as some do, as though India produced nothing but Sâdhus, Yogîs, Mahâtmâs, philosophers and the like. The life of India (I speak of the past) has displayed itself in all activities. It has meditated both as the man of religion and of philosophy but it has also worked in every sphere of activity. There have been the splendid Courts of great Kingdoms and Empires, skilful administration (Râjadharmâ) practical autonomies of village and communal life (Prajâdharmâ), prowess in war and in the chase, scientific work, a world-commerce and prosperous agriculture, a monumental and sumptuous art (where can we find stronger and more brilliant colour?) and a life of poetry, emotion, and passion, both written and lived. It is significant of the variety of India's life that the same land of ascetic austerity produced the Kâma Shâstra, (Erotic Scriptures), and kindred literature and art.

For sometime past, and even to-day, we have to tell a different story. Those, who believe Karma, must know that the present conditions are due to the collective Indian Karma and not to the Ruling Power, or to anything else. For had that Karma been good, British Power would not have been here. Therefore is religion a nation-builder. Yet what has been, may be again by the aid of some of the Shâstrik principles of which I have spoken, some of which are again common (whatever be the variety of form) to all the great Scriptures of mankind.

Few can be, and few should, therefore, attempt to be, Yogîs. The bulk of men are so firmly implanted in this enjoyable world that they are loathe to leave it even when suffering. Few, again, care, or have the capacity, for philosophy. Most are more than sufficiently occupied in getting through the ordinary life of the day. That life is getting harder and harder. It is with grinding labour that



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

most can keep themselves alive. Even where there is the desire, there is little opportunity to carry out the lengthy and complicated rituals of a more leisured age. But our life is not wholly dependent on, or concerned with, externals. We can make good Karma and so alter ourselves and our environment. Those who speak of Karma as being "inexorable", and who liken it to the physical law of causality, misunderstand the doctrine. If it be inexorable, how can anyone be liberated? The will is free; for freedom is man's essential nature. Those who know all this, and wherein is placed the centre of Power, will gain the strength to rise superior to adverse circumstance, which is often but the cumbering relict of some past and decaying life. Not only are such successful in their contest with evil surroundings, but they become creative to produce an exterior world in harmony with their interior spirit and its desires. True life is at every moment creative. True life follows on unity, in all acts, with the World-soul. Life cannot be creative unless we have knowledge of, and faith in, our Power or Shakti. It is said in the Shâstra that without knowledge of Shakti Liberation is not possible. But this statement is true of the phenomenal life also. Real life, imposing itself upon and creating the environment, is only to be had through the knowledge that within man is the same Cosmic Power or Prapancha Shakti (and none other) which creates the whole universe. Man is thus a magazine of Power. And this is so, even if we regard man as a distant and secondary source of Energy, ultimately itself derived from the Supreme Power. He can, if listless, merely exist by that Power, drifting here and there in the cross currents of the stream of life, or he may consciously unify himself with this Power by Sâdhanâ and evoke it to strengthen himself and modify the surrounding world. This is the life of action and energy when Shakti displays itself, piercing though the veil and inertia of Tamoguna, thrilling the mind with the thought "Sâ'ham"—"She I am." To realise this it is not necessary



## SOME CONCLUSIONS

to abandon the world. The universe is Shakti Herself in that form. All that is needed is to know this and to act with such knowledge. There are those who speak of abandoning all on some future day, thinking thus only to entirely place themselves at, as they call it the Mother's Feet. Such think that their desire for worldly prosperity, for wife, children, relations, friends and self is something which stands in the way of Her service. This is according to Shâkta principles an essential error. Why should such desire stand in the way of entire service? It might if we looked upon the world as mere unconscious Mâyâ. But it is Shakti. Wife and children and all else are Her, and service of them is service of Her. It is the one Devî who appears in the form of all. Service of the Devî in any of Her aspects is as much worship as are the traditional forms of ritual Upâsanâ. This is not to say that these may, therefore, be neglected. India also is one of Her forms—a specific Shakti, the Bhârata Shakti. Those who merely talk of the difference between its peoples have not seen beyond the surface of things. Those who have, will have experienced a peculiar influence shed by this country alone. So much is this so, that an English writer of great insight has said that the contrast is not between the East and West, but between India and the rest of the world. It is not without reason, therefore, that it has been called a Punya-bhûmi and Karma-bhûmi. Service of that Mother-form is that aspect of religion which is called true patriotism which is then one and not in conflict with that which is higher than patriotism namely true Humanity. The whole of man's life may thus be made the worship of Her. The Siddhi or result of such worship is all worldly-prosperity and that Chitta-shuddi or purity of mind which leads through Yoga to Liberation from the world of form. The Devî is both formless and form. Union may be had with Reality in either of its aspects, in Bhukti as in Mukti, in Enjoyment as well as Liberation. The former is the Sthûla (gross), the latter the



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Sûkshma Sâmarasya (subtle union). For the benefit of those who read into all things gross meanings, it is necessary to say that Enjoyment (Bhoga or Bhukti) is not merely "Beer and Skittles." Enjoyment is the life of and in form; in fact all being except the formless Paramâtmâ.

The mass of men are worshippers of the Srishtirûpâ or creative Devî. Those in whom all worldly desires are burnt, seek the Formless through the worship of the Sanghârârûpinî Devî, who leads man back to Herself alone. The one Devî is worshipped in either case and the One gives the fruit desired. In the latter instance, Liberation is directly sought and attained; in the other it is gained after eating the sweet and bitter fruit of this world. From whatever standpoint the doctrine which I have exposed is tested, it will be found to be all inclusive and profound; and to my mind singularly in accord, or at least in harmony with, some forms of the more "advanced" thought in the West. Vitality there abounds as it once did throughout the East. Large numbers of Westerns (though unconscious of it) are guided in some degree by the principles of the Indian doctrine of Shakti. What the West now wants is a generally recognised foundation on which to base its social and political structure. I speak of the West which has not found in the Christian revelation a sure and understood basis. In this country, on the contrary, there are ancient and massive foundations supporting what is sometimes a weak and tumbling building, like the decaying temples which one sees throughout the land. We all need power, though some speak slightingly of its form as physical force that is Power translated on to the plane of the senses. That form is however, useful and necessary. What is true is that no force can ultimately (whatever temporary success it may have) suppress the truth. Nevertheless physical power may be necessary or useful for its establishment. But physical force (Kriyâ Shakti) in bodies must be accompanied by physical energy in the form of knowledge (Jnâna Shakti), and all



## SOME CONCLUSIONS

action must be infused by the spirit of the Religion of Power. All power must be directed to right ends. What is right is that which is presently called for by the evolving Spirit of Life. What can make such evolutionary call but Dharma or the law of the world itself? All past institutions everywhere tend to become hostile to life, though it does not follow that their destruction (though this in some cases may be necessary) is the only remedy. The recent great European conflict is evidence of the necessity of the right use of Power. An answer is always given to those who question why they should do right or who do wrong. This answer is given by Dharma as the Immanent Justice of the world. Those who have faith in Dharma have no need to trouble. There are some who though professing to believe in God are always complaining that the world is "going to the Devil." Amidst however, these ruins, let India at the time of re-building be prepared to speak with Her own and not with some borrowed voice. Let Her contribution be Her own, from Her own true civilization, and not some mere imitation of others. This does not exclude the adoption, in conformity with all honesties, of what others hold or do, if by such adoption it is made part of one's own nature. Neither we nor any one else have any true use for copies, poor or perfect though they be. The original is enough and alone of worth. Your doctrine of Shakti will revivify yourselves, who have faith in it, and give to the ignorant and to others, whose activity is ill-directed, the religious and metaphysical basis of which they now stand in need. Now, when India is about for the first time to be drawn into the world-vortex, is the moment to act. Is that action to be based on principles which are foreign to you and your ancient beliefs. Can and will you justify what is of best in your own? It is you alone who can give the answer for which you will find in religion both an inspiration and a guide.



## ADDENDA

### I

#### IS SHAKTI FORCE ?

**T**HERE are some persons who have thought, and still think, that Shakti means force and that the worship of Shakti is the worship of force. Thus Keshub Chunder Sen (*New Dispensation*, p. 108), wrote :

“Four centuries ago the Shâktas gave way before the Bhaktas. Chaitanya’s army proved invincible, and carried all Bengal captive. Even to-day his gospel of love rules as a living force, though his followers have considerably declined both in faith and in morals. Just the reverse of this we find in England and other European countries. There the Shâktas are driving the Bhaktas out of the field. Look at the Huxleys, the Tyndalls and the Spencers of the day. What are they but Shâktas, worshippers of Shakti or Force ? The only Deity they adore, if they at all adore one, is the Prime Force of the universe. To it they offer dry homage. Surely then the scientists and materialists of the day are a sect of Shakti-worshippers, who are chasing away the true Christian devotees who adore the God of Love. Alas ! for European Vaishnavas They are retreating before the advancing millions of Western Shâktas. We sincerely trust, however, the discomfiture of devotion and Bhakti will be only for a time, and that a Chaitanya will yet arise in the West, crush the Shâktas, who only recognise Force as Deity and are sunk in carnality and voluptuousness, and lead natures into the loving faith, spirituality, simplicity, and rapturous devotion of the Vaishnava.

Professor Monier Williams (“*Hinduism*”) also called it a doctrine of Force.

Recently the poet Rabindranath Tagore has given the authority of his great name to this error (*Modern Review*, July, 1919). After pointing out that Egoism is the price paid for the fact of existence and that the whole universe is assisting in the



## IS SHAKTI FORCE ?

desire that the "I" should be, he says that man has viewed this desire in two different ways, either as a whim of Creative Power, or a joyous self-expression of Creative Love. Is the fact then of his *being*, he asks, a revelation of Force or of Love? Those who hold to the first view must also, he thinks, recognise conflict as inevitable and eternal. For according to them Peace and Love are but a precarious coat of armour within which the weak seek shelter, whereas that which the timid anathematise as unrighteousness, that alone is the road to success. "The pride of prosperity throws man's mind outwards and the misery and insult of destitution draws man's hungering desires likewise outwards. These two conditions alike leave man unashamed to place above all other gods, Shakti the Deity of Power—the Cruel One, whose right hand wields the weapon of guile. In the politics of Europe drunk with Power we see the worship of Shakti."

In the same way the poet says that in the days of their political disruption, the cowed and down-trodden Indian people through the mouths of their poets sang the praises of the same Shakti. "The Chandi of Kavikangkan and of the Annadâ-mangala, the Ballad of Mânasâ, the Goddess of Snakes, what are they but Pæans of the triumph of Evil? The burden of their song is the defeat of Shiva the *good* at the hands of the cruel deceitful *criminal* Shakti." "The male Deity who was in possession was fairly harmless. But all of a sudden a feminine Deity turns up and demands to be worshipped in his stead. That is to say that she insisted on thrusting herself where she had no right. Under what title? Force! By what method? Any that would serve."

The Deity of Peace and Renunciation did not survive. Thus he adds that in Europe the modern Cult of Shakti says that the pale anæmic Jesus will not do. But with high pomp and activity Europe celebrates her Shakti worship.

"Lastly the Indians of to-day have set to the worship of Europe's Divinity. In the name of religion some are saying that it is cowardly to be afraid of wrong-doing. Both those who have attained worldly success, and those who have failed to attain it are singing the same tune. Both fret at righteousness as an obstacle which both would overcome by physical force." I am



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

not concerned here with any popular errors that there may be. After all, when we deal with a Shâstrik term it is to the Shâstra itself that we must look for its meaning. Shakti comes from the root *Shak* "to be able," "to do". It indicates both activity and capacity therefor. The world, as world, is activity. But when we have said that, we have already indicated that it is erroneous to confine the meaning of the term Shakti to any special form of activity. On the contrary Shakti means both power in general and every particular form of power. Mind is a Power: so is matter: Mind is constantly functioning in the form of *Vritti*. Reasoning, Will and Feeling (*Bhâva*) such as love, aversion, and so forth are all aspects of Mind-power in its general sense. Force is power translated to the material plane, and is therefore only one and the grossest aspect of Shakti or power. But all these special powers are limited forms of the great creative Power which is the Mother (*Ambikâ*) of the Universe. Worship of Shakti is not worship of these limited forms, but of the Divine will, knowledge and action, the cause of these effects. That Mahâshakti is perfect consciousness (*Chidrûpinî*) and Bliss (*Ânandamayî*) which produces from Itself the contracted consciousness experiencing both pleasure and pain. This production is not at all a "whim". It is the nature (*Svabhâva*) of the ultimate.

Bliss is Love (*Niratishayapremâspadatvam ânandatvam*). The production of the Universe is an act of love, illustrated by the so-called erotic imagery of the Shâstra. The Self loves itself whether before, or in, creation. The thrill of human love which continues the life of humanity is an infinitesimally small fragment and faint reflection of the creative act in which Shiva and Shakti join to produce the Bindu which is the seed of the Universe.

I quite agree that the worship of mere Force is *Âsurik* and except in a transient sense futile. Force however may be moralized by the good purpose which it serves. The antithesis is not rightly between Might and Right but between Might in the service of Right and Might in the service of wrong. To worship force merely is to worship matter. He however who worship the Mother in Her Material forms (*Sthûlarûpâ*) will know that She



## IS SHAKTI FORCE ?

has others, and will worship Her in all such forms. He will also know that She is beyond all limited forms as that which gives being to them all. We may then say that Force is a gross form of Shakti, but Shakti is much more than that " here " (Iha), and the infinite Power of Consciousness " there " (Amutra). This last, the Shakti of worship, is called by the Shâstra the Pûrnâ-hambhâva or the experience " All I am."



## APPENDIX II

### THE VEDAS AND THE TANTRAS

BY

SJ. BRAJA LAL MUKHERJI, M.A.

**M**Y purpose in this paper is not to give to the public any pre-conceived opinion, but is simply to put together certain facts which will enable it to form a correct opinion on the subject.

These facts have been collected from sources as to the authenticity of which there is no doubt. There is no dispute that most of these works disclose the state of Vaidik society prior to the 6th century B.C. and that at the time when the said works were composed the Vaidik rituals were being observed and performed. Certain elements which have been *assumed* to be non-Vaidik, appear in the said works or at least in many of them, and they have been summarily disposed of by some scholars as supplementary (Parishishta), or interpolations (Prakshipta). The theory that these portions are interpolations is based on the *assumption* that the said elements are non-Vaidik or post-Vaidik and also on the *assumption* that at the times when the said works were composed, the Anushtup-chhandah was not known; and that therefore, those portions of the said works which appear in Anustubh, must be later interpolations. We need not go into the propriety of these assumptions in this paper; but suffice it to say, that the first assumption simply begs the question, and the second one is not of any importance in connection with the subject of this paper; in as much as, the statements made in the Anustubh portions are corroborated by earlier authorities as to whose antiquity there is no question, and in any case, the fact that the statements have been made are proof of earlier usage or custom.

Vaidik sacrifices are divided into three classes (1) Pâkayajnas, (2) Haviryajnas and (3) Soma sacrifices; and there are



## THE VEDAS AND THE TANTRAS

subdivisions under each of the said classes. The Soma sacrifices are classed under three heads according to the number of days required for performance *viz.*, Ekâha, Ahina and Satra. Ekâha sacrifices are those which are performed in one day by three Savanas, exactly as in the Jagaddhâtrî Pûjâ; Ahina sacrifices are performed from two to eleven days and Satras are performed during a long period, the minimum number of days required being thirteen and the maximum being a thousand years. The twelve-day sacrifices are arranged as a separate class. The principal Somayajnas are (1) Agnishtoma, (2) Atyagnishtoma, (3) Ukthyah, (4) Shodashî, (5) Vâjapeyah, (6) Atirâtrah, (7) Âptor yâma. The Ishtis or Haviryajnas are also principally seven in number, namely, (1) Agnyâdheyam, (2) Agnihotram, (3) Darsha-purnamâsa, (4) Châturmâsyam, (5) Âgrayaneshti, (6) Niruddhapashubandha, (7) Sautrâmani. The Pâkayajnas are also seven in number, namely, (1) Ashtakâ, (2) Pârvanam, (3) Srâddham, (4) Srâvani, (5) Âgrahâyani, (6) Chaitri and (7) Âshvayuji. The last seven are to be performed with the help of the Grihya fire and are described in the Grihya works. The others are described in the Srauta works.

Whatever be the difference among these Yajnas in regard to the number of stomas or stotras and the Sâmans to be sung and the Kapâlas, grahas, or the number and nature of sacrifices or as to other particulars, there are some ideas which prevail in all of them. All Yajnas are based on the idea that Mithunîkarana (copulation) leads to spiritual happiness. Sexual intercourse is Agnihotra (S. B. XI. 6. 2. 10) Mithunîkarana is consecration (S.B. III. 2. 1. 2. etc.) They enclose the sadas secretly, for enclosing is Mithunîkarana and therefore it must be done secretly (S.B. IV. 6, 7, 9 and 10). Bricks (Vishvajyotis) are made because the making of the bricks causes generation (S.B.VI. 5. 3. 5.) Two Pâdas or Charanas of an Anushtubh verse are read in a detached manner and the two remaining are read together to imitate the manner of sexual union (A.B. II. 5. 3); they do not worship a female Devatâ unless she is coupled with a male Deva (A.B. III. 5. 4); they use a couple of Chhandas distinguishing the one as male from the other as female and the two are taken together and believed to be the symbol of Maithuna, and by such



Maithuna the desired result of a ritual is achieved (A. B. V. 3. 1); they believe that the reading of the Âhanasyâ mantra (S. S. S. XII. 24. 1-10; A. V. XX. 136) will confer bliss, (A. B. VI. 5. 10); they say that the highest and best form of Maithuna is that of Shraddhâ and Satya, Piety and Truth (A. B. VII. 2. 9) and this kind of Maithuna in the abstract is directed for Agnihotrîs who have purified themselves by actual performances and observances in a religious spirit.

They direct the observance and performance of Maithuna as a religious rite or part of a religious rite (L.S.S. IV. 3. 17; K.S.S. XIII. 42; T.A. IV. 7. 5 X 62, 7. A.A. I. 2. 4. 10; V. 1. 5. 13; G.G.S. II. 5. 6, 9, 10; S.G.S. I. 19 2-6; K.G.S. I. 4, 15; H.G.S. I. 24. 3; Ap. G. S. III. 8. 10. P.G.S. I. 11. 7. Ap. S.S. V. 25. 11; Tan. B. VIII. 7. 12; Chh. Up. II. 13, 1-2) and they even direct that Mantras are to be uttered during the observance of this rite Br. D. V. 90; VIII. 82; R.V. V. 82. 4; R.V. X. 85. 37 R. V. Kh. 30, 1; Rik P. II. 15. 1-8; As. S. S. VIII. 3. 28; G. B. VI. 15). One of the articles of faith of the Vaidik people therefore was, that sexual union led the way to bliss hereafter and must be performed in a true religious spirit to ensure spiritual welfare; wanton indulgence being severely deprecated. Idâ (a woman) said:—"if thou wilt make use of me at the sacrifice, then whatever blessing thou shalt invoke through me, shall be granted to thee" (S. B. I. 8.—1. 9. etc.)

The Vaidik people performed their Somayajnas and Havir-yajnas which included the Sautrâmani, with libations and drinks of intoxicating liquor (L. S. S. V. 4, 11; K S S. XIX. 1. etc. S. S. S. XV. 15; XIV. 13. 4 S. B. V. 1. 2. 12; V. 1 5. 28; XII. 7 3. 14. etc.; Xii. 8. 1. etc.; Xii. 8. 2. 21, 22; V. 5. 4. 19. etc.; XII. 7. 3. 8. Ap. S. S. XVIII. 1. 9.) Surâ purifies the sacrificer whilst itself is purified (S. B. XII. 8. 1. 16). Rishi Kakshivân sings the praises of Surâ (R. V. I. 116, 7). It is said to be a desirable thing (R. V. X. 107. 9; VIII 2, 12). They prefer Soma, the sweet drink. Soma is Paramâhutih (S. B. VI. 6. 3. 7); it is the nectar of immortality (S. B. IX. 4. 4, 8). They deprecate and punish the wanton use of intoxicating liquor (Ap. Dh. S. I. 25. 3. Ga. Dh. S. XXIII. 10; Va. Dh. S. XX. 19. Ba. Dh. S. II. 1. 18. etc.; S. V. B. I. 5). They direct the use of Surâ and Soma for attainment of



## THE VEDAS AND THE TANTRAS

happiness and prescribe the manner and purpose of drinking the same ; they prescribe the measure and number of drinks to be offered or taken at a sacrifice, (S. B. V 1. 2. 9. etc., V. 5, 4) and they add that a breach of these rules destroys the efficacy of the rite. They offer libations of Surâ to the Fathers (A. B. III. 1. 5 ; S. B. V. 5 4. 27. etc.) They offer Surâ to the Ashwins (R. V. B. I. 44). They offer Surâ to Vinâyaka's mother (Yag. I. 288). During the performance of a sacrifice, the priests and the householder sit together ; they all touch their cups, and raise them to their mouths, all the while reciting proper Mantras addressed to Devas (A. B. VI. 3. 1) and then they drink. (A. B. VII. 5, 7).

The Vaidik people used to offer to their Devatâs at their sacrifices animal and vegetable food. The vegetable substances Tandula, Pishtaka, Phalîkarana, Purodâsha, Odana, Yavâgûh, Prithuka, Lâja, Dhâna and Saktu, and the animal food was Payah, Dadhi, Âjyam, Âmikshâ, Vâjinam, Vapâ, Mâmsam, Lohitam, Pashurasah ; the principal of these being Dhâna, Karambha, Paribâha, Purodâsha and Payasyâ (A. B. II. 3. 6.) Indeed it would not be incorrect to say that no Vaidik rite can be performed without these offerings ; the forms and the mode of preparation and the number of cakes to be offered, differing in each case (A. B. I. 1. 1 ; II. 1-9 ; II. 3, 5 ; II. 3-6 ; S. B. I. 2. 2 ; L S S. V. 4. 1. etc. ; Ap. S. S. XII. 3. 12 ; XII. 4. 9. 14 ; K. S. S. V. 309. Tait Br. III. 2, 6. etc.) They offer animal sacrifices (Kat. S. S. Chap. VI ; S. B. III. 6. 4 ; III. 8. 1 ; V. 1. 3. 2 14 ; V. 3. 1. 10 ; VI. 2. 2. 15. Kanda XIII As. G. S. I. 11. P. G. S. III. 11. G. G. S. III. 10. 18 ; Kh. G. S. III 4 H. G. S. II. 15), which include the horse, goats, sheep, oxen (Tait Br. II. 8. 1. etc.) and human beings (Tait. Br. III. 4. 1.) They believe that by performing animal sacrifices, the sacrificer ransoms himself (S. B. XI. 7. 1. 3. A. B. II. 1. 3) or wins all these worlds (Ap. S. S. VII. 1. 1.) The animal is the sacrificer himself (A. B. II-2, 1.) They direct by special rules, in what manner the animal should be killed, cut and offered (A. B. II. 6 ; S. B. III. 8. 1. 15.) They were aware that wanton killing of animals was wrong (A. B. II. 1. 7) and believed that offering animal sacrifices to the Devatâs, was one of the means whereby bliss hereafter could be attained (Ba Dh. S. II. 4. 23.) And it was only for certain Yajnas that animals could be slain (Va. Dh. IV. 5-8.



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

S. G. S. II. 16. 1 Ba. S. S. IV.) Wanton killing of animals was very severely punished (Ap. Dh. S. I. 25. 13-26; Ga. Dh. S. XXII. 18. etc. Va. Dh. S. 18. 23. etc. Ba. Dh. S. I. 19. 6.)

The Vaidik people from the time of the earliest Yajnas severely deprecated lust of any kind whatsoever; and they allowed Maithuna, Mâmsa, Madya and Mudrâ for religious purposes only and as offerings to the Devas. The Chakra sittings of the Tântriks (M. N. T. Ch. VI) have unmistakable similarities with the Vâjapeya and Sautrâmani (S. B. V; K. S. S. XIV; A. B. III. 4. 3; S. B. XII. 7. 1. etc. K. S. S. XIX) and even the manner of drinking in company has been preserved as will appear from the references given above.

When performing Yajna in company, the members of the company become Brâhmanas and there is no distinction of caste (A. B. VII. 4. 1.)

The worship in both Vaidik and Tântrik rites begins with Âchamana, which is a form of ablution, in which certain parts of the body are touched with water. In this respect, the Vaidik and the Tântrik practices are exactly similar (G. G. S. I. 2. 5; Tait. A. II. 11 M. N. T. Chap. V.) They purify themselves by uttering some mantras as Bijas while contemplating the Deities of certain parts of their bodies and touching such parts with their fingers (A. A. III. 2. 1. 2; III. 2. 5. 2; R. V. B. II. 16.); They contemplate each Deva through his or her Particular Mantras (R. V. III. 62. 10) which will be found collected in the Parishishta to the Taittirîya Âranyaka. They make use of certain sounds for removing unclean spirits, *e.g.*, Khat Phat. Hum. (T. A. IV. 27. S. V. St. I. 2-1. I. 1, 3. Aranyagâna VI. 1-8; IV. 2. 19, S. B. I. 5. 2. 18; I. 3. 3. 14; I. 7. 2. 11-14; I. 7. 2. 21; XI. 2. 2. 3. and 5; M. N. T. Chap. III) and for other purposes (A. B. II. 3. 6.) They attribute a Deity to each letter in a Mantra (A. B. II. 5, 5).

They make gestures with their fingers as part of their religious rites (S. B. III. 1. 3. 25; III. 4. 3. 2) and locate the Devatâs of particular sounds in particular parts of their bodies (P. S. 54 56 K. S. S. VII. 71. 73.) They perform their baths as a means of and with the view of pleasing their Devas (G. Sn. S. and M. N. T.) and in performing the Âchamana they sacrifice unto themselves conceiving that they are part and parcel of the Great



## THE VEDAS AND THE TANTRAS

Brahma (T. A. X. i.) They worship the Great Brahma thrice daily, such worship being called Sandhyâ-bandanâ or Âhnikâ-kriyâ, twilight prayers or daily rites. How and when the forms of Vaidik Sandhyâ now practised by Vaidikas commenced has not yet been ascertained but, there is no doubt that prior to the time when the Taittirîya Âranyaka was composed the practice existed in its present form. It will be remembered that it is only in that work that we find the Sandhyâ-mantras recorded. The practice of Prânâyâma and Tarpana to Rishis, Fathers, and Devas also existed before Baudhâyana. This practice of Vaidik Sandhyâ worship should be compared with the Tântrik mode, to gain an insight into the relationship of the Vedas and the Tantras.

In the Yajnas, the Vaidik people principally worshipped (1) Sarasvatî (S. B. II. 5. 4. 6; III. 1. 4. 9; III. 9. 1. 7; V. 2. 2. 14; V. 3. 5. 8; V. 4. 5. 7; V. 5. 2. 7;) to whom animals are sacrificed (S. B. III. 9. 1. 7; V. 5. 4. 1; XII. 7. 2. 3) and who is the same as Vâk or Vâgdevî who became a lioness and went over to the Devatâs, on their undertaking that to her offerings should be made before they were made to Agni (S. B. III. 5. 1. 21) and who bestows food (S. B. XII. 8. 2. 16); (2) Mahâdeva or Mahesha another form of Agni, in all his eight forms (S. B. VI. 1. 3. 10 *et seq*); (3) Rudra, (4) Vishnu, (5) Vinayaka (Ganesha), (6) Skanda (Kârtikeya) (S. V. B. I. 4. 31 *et seq*); (7) the Lingam or Phallus (T. A. X. 17) on whom they meditated during the daily Sandhyâ worship and who is the same as Shambhu riding on a bull, (8) Shiva (S. V. B. I. 2, 2). They also worshipped (9) the cow whom they called Bhagavatî (A. B. V. 5. 2) and also (10) Indra, Varuna, Agni, Soma, Rudra, Pushan, the Ashwins, Sûryya and some other Deities. For purposes of attaining eternal bliss they worshipped Râtridevî (S. V. B. III. 8) and this Râtridevî is described as a girl growing into womanhood who bestows happiness. She has long and flowing hair, has in her hand a noose. If she is pleased, then all other Devas are pleased. She being pleased offers boons, but the worshipper must reject the same and then he will gain freedom from re-birth. This is the worship of Râtri; it requires no fasting and must be performed at night. The Mantras to be recited, is the Râtri Sûkta which



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

commences with Râtrir bakhyad (Rig Veda X. 127. 1) to be followed by âratri pârthivam rajas.

The Rig-Vidhâna-Brâhmana (IV. 19) which follows the Sâma-Vidhâna-Brâhmana declares that the Râtri Sûkta must be recited ; the worship must be performed as a Sthâlipâka Yajna. Râtri is substantially the same with, but in form different from, Vâgdevî ; and they are sometimes worshipped as one and the same. (Tait. Br. II. 4 6 10 *et seq.*) The Râtri Sûkta describes her as black (R. V. X. 127. 2-3). The portion of the Râtri Sûkta which is included in the Khila portion of the Rig Veda (R. V. Kh. 25) calls Râtri Devî by the name of Durgâ and this Mantra appears in Taittirîya Âranyaka (X. 1). She is described here, as the bearer of oblations ; therefore, she is the same as Agni (Fire) and as such she has tongues which are named as follows: (1) Kâlî, (2) Karâlî, (3) Manojabâ, (4) Sulohitâ, (5) Sudhûmra-varnâ, (6) Sphulinginî, (7) Shuchismitâ and these tongues loll out and by these tongues offerings are received (Grihya-Sangraha I. 13. 14). The Brihad-devatâ mentions that Aditi, Vâk, Sarasvatî and Durgâ are the same. (II. 79).

In conformity with Vaidik system the Tântrik system of worship acknowledges that Om is the supreme Bîja, (A. B. VII. 3. 6. II. 1. 2. : V. 5. 7. A. A. II. 3. 8 : Chh. Up. I. 1. 1. *et seq.* T. A. VII. 8. X-63. 21 *et seq.* Shakatâyana, p. 106 (Oppert). Pânini VIII 2.87. Vr. D. II. 127, 133 : G. B. IX. 1. 24. I. 1. 17. 19. (M.N.T. II 32) and they also acknowledge and use the Hinkâra of the Vedas pronounced Hum (S.B. I. 4. 1, 2 ; IX. 1.2.3.4 ; A. B. III, 2, 12 ; L.S. S.I. 10, 25 ; I. 1,27 ; II. 1. 4 ; IV. 3. 22). The rules and practice of Âchamana, and the bath are exactly the same as will be found on a comparison of chapter V. of the Mahânirvâna Tantra with the Snânasûtra of Gobhila. The Tantras prefer to use single compounds instead of long sentences to express an idea and form one letter Mantras very much according to the Vaidik method. We also find the practice of Nyâsa and Shuddhi foreshadowed in the Vedas as has been already mentioned. (See also S. B. VII. 5. 2. 12). The principal Devî of the Veda is Sarasvatî, who is called Nagna in the Nîghantu, expressing nudeness, and also referring to that age of a woman when womanhood has not expressed itself. If we again, take these ideas with that of the



## THE VEDAS AND THE TANTRAS

Sâma-Vidhâna Brâhmana, we have the almost complete form of a Devî who is called at the present day by the name of Kâlî. Another Devî whose worship is very popular at the present day is Durgâ, who has a lion for her carrier. It will have been observed, that Vâch turned herself into a lion, and after earnest solicitations went over to the Devas; and therefore, Vâch and the lion are identically the same. We have already given references which show that Vâch and Durgâ were the same; and these facts explain how Durgâ has a lion to carry her. The worship of Râtri is to be performed at night and therefore the worship of Kâlî must be a night performance; and therefore, must partake of all the features of a night performance; and these elements must be sought for in the Vaidik Atirâtra. The Atirâtra is a performance of three Paryâyas or rounds of four Stotras and Shâstras in each and at the end of each libations are offered, followed by drinking of Soma. The same rules and practices as in the Atirâtra are substantially followed in the worship of the Devî Kâlî, *bhâng* being very largely used under the name of Vijayâ and Amrita. It will be remembered that the Devî of the Atirâtra is Sarasvatî. The principal male Devatâ of the Tantras is Mahâdeva named also Shiva, Mahesha, Shambhu, Soma and also in a different aspect Rudra. Rudra and Mahâdeva are admittedly Vaidik gods. Rudra is described as having bows and arrows and has hundred heads and thousand eyes (S.B. IV. 1. 1. 6; Yajur Veda III. 27). Mahâdeva is Mahân devah, the great God (S.B. VI. 1. 3. 16). It appears that the Mantras of the different aspects of Mahâdeva, which are even now used by Tântrikas, were known and used by the Vaidik people. I cannot, however, trace the name Mahesha in Vaidik literature. Shiva can be identified with Rudra Susheva, who is a kind god (S.B.V. 4. 4. 12). Mahâdeva (Soma) is clad in a tiger skin which can be traced in Vaidik literature (S. B. V. 3. 5. 3; V. 4. 1.11) Rudra is black, in the Tantras as well as in the Vedas. He is the same as Manyu with a Devî on each side of him (S.B. IX. 1. 1. 6; Xi. 6. 1. 12 and 13). In this connection, we must not fail to note some of the attributes of Vaidik Nirriti. Nirriti is black and is a terrible Devî and punishes those who do not offer Soma to her. She is the Devî of misfortunes and removes



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

all misfortune. She is the genetrix and she is fond of the cremation ground (S.B. VII. 2. 1; A.B. IV. 2. 4).

The Tantras direct the worship also of Ganesha, Kârtika and Vishnu, for whose worship the Sâma-Vidhâna-Brâhmana prescribes the singing of certain Sâmans, known as the Vinâyaka Samhitâ, (S. V. 4. V. 3, 3. Skanda-Samhitâ (S. V. 3. 2. I. 4) and the Vishnu-Samhitâ (S. V. 3. 1. 3. 9) respectively.

The Tantras also direct the use of certain figures which are called Yantras. These may be of various kinds and forms and may be used for various purposes. One of these which is constantly used, is a triangle within a square (M.N.T. Chap. V) and this can be traced to the rules for the preparation of the Agnikshetra, or the Fire Altar of the Vaidik people, (S.B. VI. 1. 1. 6). Another curious circumstance in connection with the altar is, that both in the Vaidik and the Tântrik ritual, the heads of five animals are used in its preparation (S.B. VI. 2. 1. 5-8). The worship of the Lingam is foreshadowed by the Vaidik deity Vishnu Sipivishta (R. V. VII. 1001. etc. Nirukta V 2. 2) and the serpent which twines round Devas or Devîs is foreshadowed by the Sarparajni, the Serpent Queen (S.B. IV. 6.9.17) who is the same as Vâch.

The facts collected here will, it is hoped, enable impartial readers to come to a definite conclusion as to the relationship of the Vaidik to the Tântrik ritual.



## ABBREVIATIONS

A.A. = Aitareya Âranyaka. A. B. = Aitaraya Brâhmana.  
As. S. S. = Âshvalâyana Shruta Sûtra. Ap. S. S. = Âpastamba  
Shrauta Sûtra. Ap. Dh. S. = Âpastamba Dharma Sûtra. Ap.  
G. S. = Âpastamba Grihya Sûtra. A. V. = Atharva Veda. Ba.  
Dh. S. = Baudhâyana Dharma Sûtra. Ba. S. S. = Baudhâyana  
Shrauta Sûtra. Br. D. = Brihad-devatâ (Calcutta edition).  
Chh. Up. = Chhândatra Upanishad. Ga. Dh. S. = Gautama  
Dharma Sûtra. G. B. = Gopatha Brâhmana. G. G. S. =  
Gobhila Grihya Sûtra. G. Sn. S. = Gobhila Snâna Sûtra. H.  
G. S. = Hiranyakeshîya Grihya Sûtra. K. S. S. = Kâtyâyana  
Shrauta Sûtra. Kh. G. S. = Khâdira Grihya Sûtra. L. S. S.  
= Lâtyâyana Sruta Sûtra. M. N. T. = Mahânirvâna Tantra.  
N. S. = Nâradiya Shikshâ. Ngh. = Nighantu. Nir = Nirukta. P. S.  
Pâniniya Shikshâ. P. G. S. = Paraskara Grihya Sûtra. R. V. =  
Rig Veda. R. V. B. = Rig Vidhâna Brâhmana. Rik. P. = Rik-  
Parishishta. R. V. Kh. = Rig Veda Khila, S. B. = Shatapatha  
Brâhmana. S. G. S. = Sânkhyâyana Grihya Sûtra. S. V. B. =  
Sâma Vidhâna Brâhmana. S. V. St. = Sâma Veda Stobha por-  
tion. S. V. = Sâma Veda. S. S. S. = Sankhyâyana Shrauta  
Sûtra. T. A. = Taittirîya Âranyaka. Tait. Br. = Taittirîya  
Brahmana. Tan. Br. = Tândya Brahmana. Va. Dh. S. =  
Vashishtha Dharma Sûtra. Yag = Yâjnavâlkyâ.







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### ON SOME WORKS IN THE AFOREGOING LIST

“ MR. AVALON, is so far as I am aware, a new comer in Oriental studies, but he makes his entrance therein with ‘eclat.’ His book brilliantly inaugurates the study of the Tantras, the literature of which occupies a front rank in the religious life of Modern India. For the Tantra governs Indian beliefs, doctrines, practices, and institutions. Nevertheless, the learned in Europe have hitherto put them aside, and have neither published any Tāntrik text nor translation of them. Western opinion has crushed them all under the weight of a common ill-fame, and summarily condemned them as compilations which are both stupid and obscene. Mr. Avalon has therefore set himself to work for the rehabilitation of this calumniated literature, and announces for early publication a series of works on the Tantra and its texts. As a commencement he has selected the Mahānirvāna Tantra, notwithstanding, or, rather, for the very reason, that the text has already been translated in India by a Bengali author. For he wished to show how much light an attentive and serious study can shed upon the mere mechanical understanding of words. In his work he has not made the least demand on European learning. He had, on the contrary, been able to dispense with it without prejudice to his research. On the other hand, he shows himself to be familiar with a considerable number of Tāntrik works. He cites them with profusion in the original Sanskrit, and derives from them the explanation of technical terms of which the dictionaries do not give us the meaning. His translation is preceded by an Introduction of 150 pages, which is the most solid and exact account that has as yet been written on the doctrines of the Tantras, their ontology, mystical phraseology, worship, Yoga, and ethics. All items of information given in this exposition are supported by the authorities he cites. We, however, greatly regret that Mr. Avalon has not added to his work an index of the technical terms which he defines in one or another part of his work ; for in that case our dictionaries would have been enriched by an extremely valuable supplement. The depth of the Tāntrik current which runs



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

through the whole range of Indian literature will only be appreciated when we are in a position to give precise meanings to many terms which are at present vague and without definition. It is also to the Tantras with their magical invocations (Sâdhanâ) that we must look for an explanation of all the enigmatical figures which decorate in their swarming multitudes the facades of the Indian temples.

Mr. Avalon's second volume, part of which has been written in collaboration with Ellen Avalon, has not the same range. Mr. Avalon has there gathered together from various sources in the Tantras, Purânas, Mahâbhârata, etc., Hymns addressed to the 'Goddess,' or Devî, the most popular figure in the Indian Pantheon, and the perfect symbol of the Eternal Feminine in all its innumerable manifestations. The greater number of these Hymns are well known even in Europe (amongst Orientalist be it understood), and several have been already translated. But here, again, the notes with which Mr. Avalon has accompanied the text, and which are based on the commentaries or oral instructions of the Pandits, give us a large amount of useful explanation. *Litterateurs* will appreciate the moving strains of these hymns with their tone which is exalted and yet grave. The historians of religion may with confidence gather therefrom reliable materials for his study."—Translated from *Review Critique*. (Professor Sylvian Lêvi.)

"The Tantras have hitherto played in Indology the part of a jungle which everybody is anxious to avoid. It is therefore a matter of congratulation that at last somebody has made up his mind scientifically to explore the jungle . . . That these books (including those in preparation) are likely to become a great boon, everybody will admit who knows to what an extent Mediæval and Modern Hinduism are penetrated by Tantrism."—*Theosophist*.

"So far scholars have fought very shy of this Tantric and Shâkta Library and with good reason . . . The subject is one of the most difficult to disentangle. For the serious student of comparative religion, however, the Tantra is a mine of information . . . Sufficeit has now been said to give the reader some slight indication of the problems and puzzles that await solution in this strange world of religious practice and experience contained in the Tantras. There are few who are in any way competent even to study the subject; much less to deal with it. Mr. Avalon is a courageous pioneer into this unknown land . . . His translation is therefore a very useful piece of work and practically opens up for us a new field of study, though per-



## PRESS NOTICES

haps the most baffling in the whole vast complex of Hindu religion. We wish him success in his labours."—*Quest.*

"Tantrik literature has been neglected by Sanskrit scholars as well as students of comparative religion . . . Mr. Arthur Avalon has devoted himself to the study of these obscure writings with an enthusiasm worthy, some would think, of other Sanskrit writings as yet untranslated. One may join in his hope that much of the prejudice against them will disappear when the Tantras are read in their entirety . . . excellent translation . . . Mr. Avalon and his collaborator deserve to be congratulated on their success in a really difficult task."—*Times of India.*

"These two valuable volumes for the first time try to present what may well be described as an inside view of a most important branch of Hindu spiritual culture, not only to the western world but even to the so-called modern reader in Hindustan itself . . . The translators are—their apparently French pen-name notwithstanding—unmistakably English, but without the least little insularity characteristic of their race. They evidently went to the study of these uninviting books with an absolutely open mind, and have availed themselves of every help that they could get from genuine Hindu Pandits and Sâdhakas in their study and interpretation of these sacred texts. These and other volumes in preparation will throw considerable light upon an aspect of Hindu thought and culture which has so long baffled the modern intellect."—*Hindu Review.*

"These two works deal with a decadent phase of Indian religion professed by the sect of Shâktas. In the Tantras or Scriptures of this sect we find the lofty conceptions of earlier and purer beliefs often almost entirely obscured by brainless hocus pocus and debasing and sensual rites. Of such a character is the religion which the translator of this work extols and recommends to the world of the twentieth century! It appears that this Tantra is the first to be translated into English. Unfortunately the programme of similar enterprises projected by the translator deprives us of the hope that it might also prove the last."—*Athenaum.*

"To speak frankly, we believe the Tantrik teachings to represent the Hindu spirit at its very worst . . . But whatever be the merit of the Tantras from a moral and intellectual point of view, there can be no doubt of their immense influence over India, and as a document of the Hindu mind—almost at its lowest, we think—this translation, made



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

with considerable skill and furnished with useful notes, has distinct value.”—*Luzac's Oriental List*.

“ The present translation is the first ever published in Europe of any Indian Tantra . . . masterly translations . . . Tantra is synonymous to many with black magic, pure and simple. The worship of the Divine Feminine as Devi or Shakti, however, despite the frailty of human nature, is fraught with great possibilities for ennobling and dignifying the lives of men, and the Hymns to the Goddess especially . . . offer to the Devotee a fountain of mingled tenderness and splendour from which many a life-giving and inspiring draught may be quaffed. We can therefore warmly recommend these works to the open-minded occultist and mystic alike—but only to such ; to all but these they will remain ‘ a sealed book.’ ”—*Occult Review*.

“ On hearing that an European has translated a Tāntrik treatise a feeling of disregard for his work at once comes over us ; for the Tantra is not a Shāstra which reveals its true meaning except it has been studied under a Guru . . . We commenced reading the translation with misgivings. Happily, however, a perusal of it has charmed us. That the author has taken every effort and care to express the true senses of all that is contained in the original is patent in the translation of every verse. The Introduction not only reveals the learning of the author, but is also the proof that he has understood in what light Hindus regard the Tantra Shāstra . . . He commenced his work with a Hindu's heart, with a Hindu's regard, and a Hindu's faith, and so his translation is what it ought to be.”

Speaking of the “ Texts” the same Journal says: “ The books have been edited with very great care. We have never before seen such a faultless edition of any Tantra. May the labours of the workers be fruitful.”—*Hitabādi*.

“ The lucid Introduction of his book is extremely valuable. The great principles of this Tantra which he so admirably places before the public will endure. The English rendering is faultless. The translators have shown consummate knowledge of Sanskrit in the beautiful English rendering . . . Every line of the Preface and Introduction is replete with tender sympathy for the ancient Hindu ideal. The translators have given two valuable works to the Hindu world, and we recommend them to all Hindu libraries and institutions.”—*Indian Mirror*.

“ In perusing the author's Introduction to the Mahānirvāna Tantra, we have been bewildered with astonishment. We could never have



## PRESS NOTICES

dreamt that it was possible for a modern Christian Englishman to so fully understand such matters as the mode of Tântrik Sâdhanâ . . . The author has learnt a great deal of the inner and secret doctrine of the Tantra. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that we have never heard, even from any Bengali Pandit, such a clear exposition of Mantra-Shakti, as that which the author has given . . . We may certainly say that he could only make this impossible thing possible through inherent tendencies (Sangskâra) acquired in his previous life . . . Arthur Avalon has not spoken a single word to satisfy himself, nor tried to explain things according to his own imagination. He has only given what are true inferences, according to the principles of Shâstrik reasoning . . . will create a revolution of ideas among the scholars of Europe. And if they commence to appreciate the Tantras it is probable that then the Shâstra may be held in greater respect in Bengal, the home of Tântrik Sâdhanâ . . . It seems as if the World-Mother has again willed it, and has again desired to manifest Her power so that Arthur Avalon is studying the Tantras and has published so beautiful a version of the Mahânirvâna.”  
—*Sâhitya*.

“ These Hymns, as revealing the heart of India, are sure to be of interest to those who sympathize with real faith and heartfelt piety ; with spiritual aspiration found in whatever garb. The authors have done well in placing them before the English public.”—*Indian Review*.

“ The present translation (Mahânirvâna) is distinguished by its elegance and by the profound and comprehensive knowledge by which it is backed. The footnotes are all to the point, and contain many a valuable hint. The most admirable part of the book, however, is the Introduction, which contains a complete survey of the all manifold subjects treated in the book...contains much new matter, and on that account must be welcome to the general reader and the Orientalist. We heartily congratulate Mr. Avalon on the publication of this fine book, and look forward with pleasure to the books he is preparing...‘ Hymns to the Goddess ’ occupies a prominent place among the documents so far published of the history of religions ; for no book has yet been published in any European language which give us such a deep insight into the mind of the Devî worshipper as this...The editing (of the ‘text’) has been done with great care.” On Shakti and Shākta same journal says “ It is not fair to judge a movement by its extremist exponents and therefore he presents the Tantras to us just as he finds them impartially but sympathetically and brings to bear upon them all the weight of his



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

learning and scholarship reveals a wonderful grasp of the fundamentals of consciousness.—*Theosophist*.

“ If we exclude the notes by the author we may at once say that European scholars will get in this book (Mahânirvâna) a thoroughly reliable translation of the text. The learned Introduction shows that the author has not only studied many works dealing with the so-called Tantrik doctrines, but has made himself acquainted with the Yoga systems of later times, with a good deal of care and patience. This lengthy and erudite introduction, as well as the explanatory footnotes, will rather have the effect of misleading the readers instead of helping them in understanding the simple purpose of the author of the Mahânirvâna . . . (for) the author has considered all the Tantrik works as complementary to each other. We hope that in bringing out other works on the subject of Tantra the learned and capable author will use more discretion and will exercise his critical judgment.”—*Modern Review*.

“ Arthur Avalon’s English translation of the Mahânirvâna Tantra is destined to inaugurate a new epoch in the advancement of Oriental studies both because he has by his excellent Introduction of the Tantra opened out a new field of study and has also, in so doing, followed the orthodox interpretations without making the least effort to inflict upon the reader, in the name of the Shâstra, ideas and aspirations which are foreign to it. This has been done in a way which discloses his deep insight into the Shâstra.”—*Calcutta University Magazine*.

“ Our first impression was one of amazement and delight. As all students of the Shâstras are aware, the Mahânirvâna is one of the most important of Hindu philosophical works combined with elaborate ritualism, and its translation, therefore, by a European involved certainly a prodigious amount of study, sympathy, and real understanding. Of the Introduction alone it may be said that for its lucidity, conciseness, directness, and for its depth of penetration and insight, it may itself claim to be a standard work on the much-abused Tantras, and the author would have rendered Hinduism indebted if he had done nothing else. It is a powerful literary and philosophical production...an unbiassed reader will be sure to find out how ridiculously misrepresented have been the Tantrik principles and practices...remarkable Sanskrit scholarship and thoroughly Hinduized outlook on, and true understanding of, one of the most abstruse branches of Hindu thought. He has sustained a burning interest and vividly poetic interpretation through his entire work. He has succeeded in his difficult enterprise . . .



## PRESS NOTICES

commendable to writers of rare and yet perfect translations of 'Hindu scriptures. The Hymns selected are some of the most imaginative and beautiful of all the songs to the Divine Mother. We have rarely come across such an illuminating exposition and a masterly vindication of the underlying ideas and principles of Devî worship."—*Prabuddha Bhârata*.

"A task of no ordinary difficulty, but Mr. Avalon has performed it with remarkable success . . . His commentaries have elucidated many knotty problems ; he has brought to our knowledge an immense store of information of prime importance, which has been so long hidden from us . . . the Introduction is a masterly dissertation on the subject, and furnishes proof of his familiarity with the subject, a grasp of mind, and facility of treatment which we cannot but admire . . . he has elucidated to an extent, hitherto unattempted, some of the abstrusest mysticisms and obscurities of Tântrik literature. In reading his terse and lucid explanations of the many extremely abstruse points with which Mr. Avalon deals, it is impossible to realize that the writer is dealing with a subject which is quite foreign to the sphere in which he was born. We cannot but repeat an expression of thanks for the valuable services which Mr. Avalon is rendering to Tântrik literature."—*Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

"The author has treated the subject with care and attention, and discussed the Shâstra in an impartial manner. In the Tantra, as in other Shâstras dealing with the inner life, there are passages full of technical expressions. It is, therefore, not difficult to realize what endless trouble the author has gone through in the endeavour to master this technical language so as to enable him to write this book. The footnotes show that he has sought the assistance of Sâdhakas versed in the inner meaning of the Tantra. We cannot say whether the publication to the world by a foreigner of these secret scriptures is a fulfilment of the prophecy contained in the Tantras, but we think that more good than evil is likely to result . . . The two volumes in question deserve a very high rank among books of their class. The translation is as lucid as it is complete. In its perusal we do not recognize that we are reading a translation at all. We heartily desire that these books should be warmly received by all."—*Udbodhana*.

"Here again, ('The Hymns'), as in the case of the Tantra, Mr. Avalon is a courageous pioneer, and deserves our grateful thanks, for he opens up still another field of research. One would imagine, from



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

the ill-informed and misinformed animadversions on Indian religion which we meet with so frequently in the West, that all ended there in empty abstraction without any emotional content whatever. But this is not so. For one religious philosopher of that type of abstractionism there are perhaps 100,000 Bhaktas in India. It is in the soul of the people that we must seek the main characteristics of a national religion, and not in the mind of the exceptional philosopher."—*The Quest*.

"Personally, we are not admirers of either the Tāntrik cult or literature . . . but it cannot be ignored by any serious student of Hinduism . . . judged from this point of view, the editor, translator, and commentator are entitled to the gratitude of all students of religion . . . editing has been done with great care . . . with excellent introductions and commentaries."—*Hindustan Review*.

"We welcome these two books for more reasons than one. The Tantras embrace every phase of human life, and there is hardly a branch of learning which is not covered by them. It has been the custom among some people to run down the Tantra Shāstra as obscene and immoral—as containing the germs of anarchy and disorder. It has been the custom among these superficial writers and speakers to opine that our Shāstras are dry, intellectual speculations, which do not, in their higher phases, though devoid of the taint of idolatry, contain anything to touch the different phases of human nature. To them we recommend these two books, if they have a genuine desire to know our Shāstras in their true aspect. They have been translated with great care, and are as faithful reproductions of the texts as translations could be. The Introduction to the Mahānirvāna is a masterly summary of everything that the beginner ought to know, and the footnotes to the translations have added greatly to the value of the book, and have made clear many a knotty point which to the ordinary reader is obscure. We are pleased to notice that the learned author is bringing out other books of this class. It was through the efforts of European scholars that the Vedas and Darshanas were saved from oblivion, and it was left to another European scholar to do justice to the sacred Tantras."—*The Bengalee*.

"These books, dealing with the secret mysticism and magic of India, are the most interesting which have been published in recent years. We will in a forthcoming number deal fully with these volumes. Meanwhile we recommend to our readers the comprehensive volume entitled 'Tantra of the Great Liberation.'"—*Neue Metaphysische Rundschau*.



## PRESS NOTICES

“ An inestimable benefit to all interested in India and Indian thought, opening up the vast domain of Tāntrik lore, which forms one of the most important yet strangely neglected regions in the realm of Samskritic learning. . . . the prejudice of Western Samskritists, and the consequent distrust of English-educated Hindus, taking their cue from their European Gurus, have been instrumental in making the Tantra looked upon with disfavour by the present generation. But there is no denying that almost the whole of present day Hinduism, on both its philosophic and ritualistic sides, has a Tāntrik basis. . . . masterly translations and admirable introduction to the Tāntrik system of thought and self-culture. . . . with their very careful editing and beautiful printing in bold Devanagiri characters, their handsome get-up and covers in red, symbolic of the Shāktas faith in the ‘mother aspect’ of the Supreme, the publications in this series can vie with all the most famous series of Sanskrit Texts published by the premier Orientalistic societies of the world.”—*The Calcutta University Magazine*.

“ A great historian has said that it would be the unfortunate lot of some future scholar to wade through the disgusting details of drunkenness and debauchery, which were regarded as an essential part of their religion by a large section of the Indian Community not long ago. It is a matter of congratulation that such an unfortunate scholar has made his appearance. . . . To the European reader unacquainted with Tantras it will reveal a new world altogether, so unlike things they have seen, heard, or even read ; for few have heard of a religious system which enjoins the enjoyment of the pleasures of life, and even excessive indulgence in them—a system which enjoins offerings of wine and meat and even things unspeakable to the Deity. . . . Even the most squeamish critic is bound to pronounce this first attempt at translating a Tāntrik work into English to be a success. . . . The footnotes will be very much appreciated, as they really elucidate the ideas embodied in the words of the original in the majority of cases.”—*The Englishman* (Calcutta).

“ For many years past the Shāstra has suffered neglect at the hands of both Indian and European scholars, and manuscripts are rapidly disappearing. This, with the general ignorance prevailing regarding the subject-matter of the Tantra, threatens to pass the Shāstra itself into oblivion, and the thanks of the public, especially of the Hindu public, are due to Arthur Avalon for his attempt at rescuing them from this undeserved fate. . . . Arthur Avalon changes all this. He penetrates into the innermost sanctum of our religion . . .



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

dispenses, too, with the supercilious and arrogant manner that is generally adopted by the European scholar in dealing with matters Indian. He writes in the English language, but the matter and method are entirely those of a devout Pandit.—” *The Express* (Bankipore).

“Two very welcome additions to our store of translations from the Sanskrit . . . It was a happy thought on the part of Arthur Avalon to present the chief works of this ancient religion in English dress . . . extremely fascinating phenomenon which is presented in the books here translated . . . their interpretation of the Hymns selected for translation is generally unimpeachable . . . The learned introduction consists largely in a well-ordered explanation of the strange terms used in Tantrik worship, knowledge of which is indispensable to anyone taking up the subject for the first time . . . We are glad to learn that Mr. Avalon proposes to translate more of these Tantras. Very few scholars have the training to attempt the task.—” *The Nation* (New York).

“Arthur Avalon has made a very happy choice from amongst the immense material of Indian literature. . . The first attempt which has been made in a European language to place within the reach of a wider circle of scholars one of the numerous Tantras, which constitute the sacred scripture of the Kali, or Sinful age, and which are, therefore, a highly important source for the study of present day orthodox Hinduism. The undertaking is as praiseworthy as it is difficult—praiseworthy because of the above mentioned importance which attaches to these magical texts, and difficult by reason of the innumerable obstacles which oppose the European who tries to understand and translate the technical terminology here employed. In this circumstance lies doubtless the reason which up to now has hindered the untiring band of investigators into Indian literature from approaching the Tantras, and it is therefore to be reckoned to the special credit of Arthur Avalon that he has not been deterred from his task by these difficulties . . . The whole work bears the stamp of conscientiousness and accuracy . . . In the case of such a translation even the best Sanskrit dictionary fails in matters of difficulty. It is necessary, therefore, to be familiar with commentaries on the same subject if we would understand what Hindu worship is and means . . . Arthur Avalon has conscientiously fulfilled his obligation ; a fact which is noted, so that even the layman may have a notion of the labour which has had to be expended in the completion of this compilation. It is praiseworthy, deserves to be specially mentioned, that a lady should successfully take part in so difficult an undertaking, and be able to help in the translation,



## PRESS NOTICES

. . . For the student of religions there is, then, a mine opened for his inquiries, and we may therefore welcome with pleasure the announcement that the distinguished English Sanskritist has decided to continue his work on the Tantras, and to publish shortly three new works on the same subject."—*Literarisches Zentralblatt für Deutschland* (F.B.)

"Mr. Avalon is greatly daring in attempting an English version of the Tantrik literature describing the belief of the Shākta sect worshippers of the Mother Goddess. This body of literature is little known to European students, partly because the subject is repulsive, and partly because its followers are reticent in communicating or interpreting their sacred books. In the present volume (*Mahānirvāna*), amidst much verbiage and puerility, the reader will find valuable accounts of domestic and temple ritual. A full Introduction and Commentary clears up most of the difficulties. . . . We know so little of the cult of the Goddess Devī that this version of the Hymns in her honour is welcome."—*Folklore*.

"This is not the first time that the Shāstras (other than the Tantra) of the Hindus have been translated by European savants. Since the 'discovery' of the Sanskrit language by Sir W. Jones, the attention of the learned in Europe has been widely drawn to other Shāstras of the Hindus. But the Tantra Shāstra has not been so fortunate, European savants having been previously under the impression that it was utterly contemptible and full of superstition. Mr. Avalon is the first to attempt to remove this stigma, and he is therefore undoubtedly the object of gratitude of every Hindu. . . . It is not sufficient praise to say that the translation (*Mahānirvāna*) is excellent and as faithful as possible, for the book has a distinctive feature of its own which we will here describe. . . . The difference between Europe and India is very great. The surroundings, education, inclination, and notions of the European are totally distinct from ours. Whenever, therefore, he endeavours to analyze our Shāstra, Dharma, Arts, and Literature, he judges them by the same standard as his own. The European savants study Indian Shāstra with European eyes, and apply their own performed conceptions to it. Whilst they show great eagerness to judge what is good and what is bad, they do not show any desire to ascertain the real character of our Scriptures. Where such Scriptures resemble those of the European, they call it good, and condemn it as bad where they differ. Taine displays this defect in the European character in the following observation 'Here close by us is poor Mr. Max



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

Muller, who, in order to acclimatize the study of Sanskrit, was compelled to study in the Vedas the worship of a moral God—that is to say, the religion of Paley and Addison.’ Whether that be so or not I will not inquire my purpose being merely to illustrate how Europeans impose their notions either consciously or unconsciously on us. And thus their incomparable zeal and great labour is often lost. Mr. Avalon, however, has not so done. He did not begin his study with any preconceived notions, but in the true spirit of a searcher after truth. He has carefully examined the Shâstra with Indian eyes. Abstaining from abuse, he has endeavoured to understand it. . . . I do not wish to discuss whether the Mahânirvâna Tantra is good or bad, or adapted to the present age or not. What I have to say is that the way A. Avalon has dealt with it is best. . . . Praise or blame the Shâstra if you like, but first try to understand the subject before expressing your opinion.”  
—*Pratibhâ* (Sj. Upendra Chandra Guha).

” It is quite true that hitherto the Tantra Shâstra, or body of treatises dealing with the rites, ceremonies, and practices and doctrine of what we may venture to call Hindu nature-worship, has hitherto been practically a closed book to Western scholars, and that Mr. Avalon is doing a very great service for students of comparative religion by making small part of it accessible. But it is a most difficult and dangerous subject in every way, and confronts us with endless problems, religious, psychical and moral, that are almost undreamed of to-day in the West...Pandit Battâchâryya’s treatise is a very able polemic filled with outbursts of high rhetorical beauty in defence of the Tantra, in which he skilfully avoids the abuses that cluster so thickly round the subject, and dexterously makes the high ideas of Indian philosophy subservient to his purpose... The treatise, of which the present volume represents Part I. only, is the most remarkable pronouncement on the subject which has yet appeared, and Mr. Avalon is to be thanked for making it accessible to Western readers. It is full of points of very great interest.”—*The Quest*.

“ It is strange that, though Hinduism and its sacred writing have been critically studied by Western scholars for nearly a century, this Tântrik phase and its Scriptures have been hitherto neglected, with result that very little is known of them, and that little, too, is full of misconception. To the ordinary mind the Tantra is associated with all that is abominable in Hinduism, and its very mention is enough to provoke disgust...This work of Mr. Avalon is a generous as well as a courageous task, and if at the end of his labours he succeeds in removing even



## PRESS NOTICES

something of the stigma which attaches to the name of Tantra he will have achieved no ordinary triumph...This particular corner of the field of Sanskrit is virgin soil, and Mr. Avalon has entered upon it with enthusiasm, and persists in it with a doggedness that augurs well for his final success. His programme of operations has already met with discouragement from what we may call the orthodox school of philologists, and one critical authority rather uncritically said that he was devoting his years to the elucidation of 'brainless hocus pocus.' But we are glad to see that his labours have been highly extolled in Bengal, the present home of Tantrism, which is delighted at the disinterested efforts of an Englishman to vindicate their faith and its underlying philosophy before the learned world. One excellent trait of his scholarship is that he does not treat the Tantra writings as merely to be understood with the aid of the Sanskrit dictionary and grammar. He has studied them as living human documents expounded by indigenous Pandits...a skilful exposition ('Principles of Tantra') of Tantrik doctrines by one of these Pandits themselves...it is very trenchant."—*The Times of India* (Bombay).

"The appearance of Arthur Avalon as an exponent and defender of the Tantras is a momentous event in the history of Sanskrit research. No better or sturdier champion the Tantras could secure in modern times, and his powerful grasp of the Tāntrik philosophy and ritualism, his thorough appreciation of the Tāntrik ideals and methods, his unabating energy and zeal in tackling the Tāntrik mysteries, more than justify in us the hope that educated mind in the East as well as West will be ere long disabused of all that mass of prejudice that they have allowed to gather round the name of Tantra. It is needless to point out that this noble vindication of the Tantras redounds directly to the benefit of Hinduism as a whole; for Tantricism 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 later historical events and developments thrust upon it...In this new publication ('Principles of Tantra') Mr. Avalon has not only fully maintained the tradition of Superior merits in his translation, but has again brought out before the world of Sanskrit research another testimony of his wonderful amount of study and insight in the shape of another Introduction, no less profound and weighty, than his Introduction to the 'Tantra of the Great Liberation.' But the most noteworthy feature of this new Introduction 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."—*Prabuddha Bharata*.



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

“Mr. Avalon has not only rendered a great service to Indian literature, but has rescued from obscurity the life-work (‘Principles of Tantra’) of that great Pandit. . . . The crowning merit of his work consists in this—that it is, to the best of our belief, a first handbook of Tantra written straight out of personal experience. . . . To a mind of superior vigour and acuteness Mr. Avalon unites a far more extensive intimacy with the products of Indian thought than we have ever encountered, after acquaintance with hundreds of educated Europeans, in any other individual of his class. . . . A work of this nature, which seems to anchor the mind in the solid substance of Tantrik principles, cannot but be beneficial.”—*Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

“The book chosen by Mr. Avalon for introducing the West to the study of the Tantras is, at all events an extraordinary work. . . . The author has written the book with his life-blood, as it were, and it is impossible not to feel sympathy with him. . . . There is perhaps no one living at present from whom we may get so much solid information on the subject concerned than from S. Shiva Chandra, author of his work. . . . A. Avalon’s scholarly Introduction and Preface contain an able and exhaustive criticism of the various unfavourable opinions on Tantrism which have so far come forth in the West. These at least should be ready by everybody interested in Indian religions.”—*The Commonweal*.

“Most of those who know India know what moral and social results have been associated with Tantrik rites, and it may be doubted whether, even as an historical document, this long, obscure, and repulsive apology (‘Principles of Tantra’) was worth the considerable labour of translation and annotation.”—*Spectator*.

“This (‘Principles of Tantra,’ Vol. I.) is an English translation by Mr. Arthur Avalon, the pioneer in the field of Tantrik research, and dedicated by him to the author of the work, who is one of the highest living authorities in Bengal on the subject concerned. . . . There are still many people who believe that ‘the chief, and practically the sole, subjects of the Tantra’ are ‘sensual rites and black magic.’ To them this book will be a revelation, for it will show them that there is still quite a different aspect of the Tantras, which is no less prominent for having been altogether neglected so far. They will be astonished to find that it is possible to deal with the philosophy of the Tantras without even referring to those rites and that magic, and they will grow suspicious with regard to those general statements about which our translator very aptly remarks. . . . The value of the book is undeniable, as nothing like it has been so far available to the Western student. . . . Arthur Avalon’s



## PRESS NOTICES

Introduction is like that to his translation of the Mahânirvâna—a very remarkable piece of work.”—*The Theosophist* (Dr. F. O. Schrader).

“Mr. Arthur Avalon has rendered an unique service to humanity generally and the Indian people, in particular, in editing the Tantric Text series and in translating some thought provoking works on Tantra—For truly there is no more marvellous form of mystic Hinduism than the practical creed of the Tantric. . . . English reader interested in mystic Hinduism will, we doubt not for a moment, cordially thank the translator and editor of the work for the intellectual and spiritual treasure associated therein for the first time. . . . Mr. Avalon appears to have evidently been well acquainted with some of the best Tântrik Sâdhakas of the day and has used his best endeavours to study his subject through the Indian eye of wisdom until his own has been trained to its angle of vision.”—*Kalpa*.

“The merit of Mr. Avalon’s timely publication has become widely known by this time in India and outside: Nobody can deny that his works have dispelled a mass of gloom that was hitherto enshrouding the Tântrik lore in the minds of the outside world and scholars have come to realise now that the religious history of the land would but be partially understood if no proper study be made of the Tântrik literature. . . . Tantra imbues this Power of Nature *i.e.*, Nature Herself with a conscious soul and thus transfigures the whole life and creation as a manifestation of a *living* Power, self-conscious and self-sufficient. Unlike Vedânta, Tantra never views Mâyâ or Prakriti as something separate and yet not separate from Brahman. It asserts that Brahman and its Shakti are one and the same when viewed from the standpoint of creation. It makes no hair splitting difference between Mâyâ and Mâyin. Making too much of this distinction without a difference has led to the degeneracy of the Vedantic cult in some quarters. Punjabi Vedânta has become a term of reproach. Such extreme view in the case of unfit persons cuts them away from the natural and safe moorings of worship and leaves them adrift in the chaos of Vichâra.”

“The most curious of absurdities is the opinion which the Western Orientalist holds about Tantra. Devoid of all traditional culture of the land; untaught and unaided by any teacher; often in stupendous ignorance about the inner life of the people with a bit of sprattling knowledge of Sanskrit and the dry spirit of research, the Western Orientalist makes bold to open the treasure-house of the Hindu scriptures with the help of his premature science of philology. No wonder that he often puts in the wrong key and commits egregious blunders. And there are some in our



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

own land who take the cue from their Western Gurus and pass invectives upon the Shâstra. . . At present the entire ritualism and Upâsana in India are mainly conducted according to the rules of Tantra. A thorough knowledge of its philosophy is necessary to understand the meaning of Hindu rituals and ceremonies. The present work will be of invaluable service of this purpose.”—*Vedanta Kesari*.

“We have already on several occasions drawn the attention of our readers to the courageous effort which Arthur Avalon is making to supply students of comparative religion with materials which will enable them to treat with greater understanding certain aspects of religion in India hitherto veiled in almost impenetrable obscurity. . . . His industry and wise co-operation with Indian Pundits have thus supplied us with a mass of material that requires the most careful sifting and analysis and we owe him a debt of gratitude for making it accessible to us.”—*The Quest*.

“Evidently the doctrine of the Tantras is nothing but a pure Vedantic one. . . . One of the most striking features of the Tantra is its doctrine of both enjoyment and liberation. . . . The Tantras have long been neglected by foreign scholars and their blind Indian followers. But now it is believed that through the unflinching zeal and energy of Mr. Arthur Avalon, these works will be rescued from obscurity and truly appreciated.”—*Modern Review*.

“Arthur Avalon has by his learned edition of Tantrik Texts in both Sanskrit and English, indeed rendered an eminent service to the cause of Sanskrit literature. The Tantras have hitherto been a sealed book to many and this attempt to produce in lucid and eloquent English the main principles of the cult cannot fail to elicit admiration from all lovers of the sacred literature of this country. . . . admirable introduction.”—*Mahamahopâdhyaya Satish Chandra Vidyâbhûshana in The Calcutta Review*.

“We suspect that ‘Arthur Avalon’ is one of the learned Pandits of Bengal whose native speech has not been without influence upon his almost impeccable English. He seems to share the belief of the ‘saint’ whose work he edits and his historical acumen is not, so far as he revealed, any greater. His linguistic sense is purely native. But (rightly) he lays the greatest stress on the philosophical importance of Tantra. It contains ‘a deep philosophic doctrine.’ Let us see what it is. We may pass over the ritual, granting that it is perhaps the most elaborate system of auto-suggestion in the world. . . . What is this (doctrine) except the feminization of orthodox Vedânta. It is a doctrine for suffragette monists, the dogma



## PRESS NOTICES

unsupported by any evidence that the female principle antedates and includes the male principle and that this principle is supreme divinity, Shiva himself worships her...The series is of importance since the Tantrik Texts are the legitimate continuation of mediæval Hinduism and their content has long been veiled by absence of documents and by lack of understanding of such works as were available. It will now be possible to pass upon these texts a judgment based on knowledge rather than the snap judgment founded on hearsay. We see no reason, however, to modify the opinion hitherto held in regard to the philosophic or historical value of the Tantras. The works thus far offered in this series corroborate that opinion. But we value highly the work done in editing the series if for no other reason that it gives us a real insight into the jargon of the ritual and the worthlessness of Tantrik Philosophy. It is a distinct gain to know just why it is worthless and to have this point demonstrated by its adherents."—*The Nation* (New York).

"The Catholicity is typical of the whole Tantrik system which is in its aspiration one of the greatest attempts yet made to embrace the whole of God manifested and unmanifested in the adoration, self-discipline and knowledge of a single soul...Mr. Avalon in his publications insists upon the greatness of the Tantra and seeks to clear away by a dispassionate statement of the real facts the cloud of misconceptions which have obscured our view of this profound and powerful system...The work of translation has been admirably done. It is at once faithful, simple and graceful in style and rhythm."—*Arya*.

"The Tantras are obscene, the Tantras are full of indecency, the Tantras are flooded with Âdirasa, the Tantras are loathsome, the Tantras are terrible, the Kâlî of the non-Aryan is the object of worship of the Tãntrika." Such loud words of condemnation were wont to resound without pause in the mouths of the English educated class. Fifteen annas of the high class Brâhmana families in Bengal are Shâkta and yet their religious books were being censured in this fashion. Having received an English initiation and education they were cutting with their own hand the branch on which they were seated. At that moment Arthur Avalon (people say he is Mr. Justice Woodroffe) broke their false pride and revealed the greatness of the Tantra and the English educated Babus to rub their eyes. Bravo, Oh Englishman! What could not be done by others from Krishnânanda Âgamavâgîsha to Shiva Chandra Vidyârnavâ that you have done. But what is there of novelty in it? What work of ours can be done unless a white workman is employed. Hume started the Congress and we assumed the garb of Patriots. We were about to



## SHAKTI AND SHĀKTA

consign to the waters Hindu Dharma as something full of rubbish when the Trimūrti in the shape of Colonel Olcott, Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant came across the seven oceans and thirteen rivers and gave mystical interpretations of sneezing and the sound of the lizard and we made obeisance to you, Oh Trimūrti! and batch after batch of us assumed the garb of the Theosophist."—*Bhāratavarsha*.

"The Tantra has not been so fortunate. The savants of Europe have previously been under the impression that the Tantra Shāstra is utterly contemptible and full of superstitions. Mr. Avalon's is the first attempt to remove that stigma from the Tantra Shāstra. He is undoubtedly, therefore, the object of gratitude of every Hindu. There is another feature which distinguishes his work from the Hindu Shāstras published by other European Scholars. Mr. Arthur Avalon did not begin the study of this Shāstra with any pre-conceived notions. He has attempted to interpret it in the true spirit of a searcher after truth, a characteristic which is lacking in the case of the majority of European scholars. Mr. Avalon has not imposed his own notions in this manner. He has carefully seen the Indian Shāstra with Indian eyes...He has not abused but in place of doing so, he has tried carefully to understand the Shāstra. Those who in the name of scientific faith have put wicked interpretations on the Shāstra have done evil and not good.—*Pratibhā*.

"To the Western mind the generic term Hinduism" conveys for the most part the idea of Vedantic philosophy. With the religious and ritualistic side of Hinduism the Occident is practically unacquainted. In fact till Mr. Avalon approached the subject of the Tantra Shāstra hitherto relegated by scholars to the limbo of superstition if nothing worse, the European mind knew nothing of orthodox Hinduism . . . In a masterly critical introduction Mr. Avalon approaches a field of research almost unexplored. The result of his investigations into the nature, origin, age and authority of Tantric worship, whilst providing the casual reader with a fund of useful information, should also prove of no small value to the Oriental student and pave the way to a more and more complete apprehension of the underlying truth of a form of worship which has come erroneously to be associated with wine and women, black magic and so on. The fearless and impersonal efforts of Mr. Avalon to remove the handicap from a much misunderstood form of worship deserves the support of all students of Eastern and especially of Hindu religious thought."—*Occult Review*.

"These books (Tantras) are probably the worst that Hinduism has produced, for they consist in the main of grossly superstitious rites,



## PRESS NOTICES

charms and diagrams and meaningless syllables said to be instinct with supernatural power with here and there horrible filth. . . . The translator who writes under a *nom de plume* is clearly an European disciple of some Pandit belonging to the left-hand Shâktas; and he shows great sympathy for the sect. He is always ready to defend any of its doctrines and practices even the most shameful. The spell of Hinduism seems to have worked within him in another direction also for he does not show the slightest scintillation of historical interest in all that he writes, although the whole subject bristles with historical problems. On the other hand, his faithful discipleship has brought him a wonderful understanding of the teaching and cult of the sect. . . his introduction and commentary are of great exegetical value."—*International Review of Missions*. (J. N. Farquahar).

"Students of Hinduism will be thankful to Mr. Arthur Avalon for this new contribution to the study of Tantric philosophy and culture . . . The Tantras are claimed to be the specific Shâstra for the Kali-Yuga by the Tantriks. Mr. Avalon seems to have taken these latter at their own valuations; and this has considerably influenced his whole estimate of these books as Shâstras or authorities in the Hindu system. In doing so he has fallen into a series of curious errors, in regard to other and particularly the Vaishnavic denominations."—*Hindu Review*.

"It seems not quite clear why Tantra has been hitherto neglected. We have, however, much pleasure in noticing with growing interest and admiration Mr. Avalon's activity in his attempts to promote the Tantrik branch of Indian literature."—*The Hindu Spiritual Magazine*.

"The developed intelligence will grasp the situation. It is fully explained in these works. Here it is that we find the value of the so-called Introduction by Mr. Avalon. It is really a Treatise, well-worth publication as a volume complete in itself . . . It is a fascinating study which can be successfully undertaken only by an Indian student learned in Western methods of investigation or by a Western savant in full sympathy with Indian thought and feeling. The learned editor is competent to undertake this task . . . The laws about drink are peculiar. The Tantra says that as man is sinful, there is no use of total abolition? It was, therefore, enacted that wine *may* be taken during worship after purification . . . It is for the same reason that men are born weak in intellect and their minds are distracted by lust that all the rules of Tantra regulating man's indulging in matters prohibited by the Smritis are enjoined. . . The fate of the cult is instructive. Its ritual was taken over by and absorbed in the orthodox Brahmanism of the Smritis . . . The result is



## SHAKTI AND SHÂKTA

that the term "Tantric worship" is now by the other classes confined to its so called lower forms and is associated in the public mind with wine and immorality....All students of Hinduism are invited to read the learned author's introduction."—*The Modern World* (C. S. N.)

"The "Principles of Tantra" is a remarkable production of the day . . . . In his illuminating Introduction Arthur Avalon has evinced a thorough grip of the true inwardness of the Tantra."—*The Indian Mirror*.

"The general impression about Tantrism of which Mr. Avalon is an enthusiastic and fearless exponent has been that it is a degraded form of religion sanctioning immoral practices under its veil . . . . The author has indirectly shown that taking its philosophical aspect into consideration, it can attain a very high level and compare favourably with, or even excel, the doctrines of Sankhya or Mâyâvâda. There is, no doubt, that the author has done good service to the Tantra Âgama and students of philosophy in general by his scholarly contribution which has filled his heart and is a labour of love."—*Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*.

"Completely vindicates himself as a student of Orientalism who has shown more profound sympathy with the essentials of the Easterner's spiritual life than almost any scholar one can readily think of. No religion has suffered more grievously on account of prejudice and superficial study than the doctrine of Tantrism.....We cordially commend the essays."—*Bombay Chronicle*.

This attitude towards life is especially open to the extreme of sensuality. The author frankly admits that worship presented by this school has led to abuses which have attached to the word Tantra such an exaggerated onus of ill-route. But similar excesses have been found in other sects and a system must not be judged only by its failures...The place of prominence throughout is given to the philosophic aspect. The first fact which strikes the student of Eastern philosophy is the author's extraordinary knowledge and the second is his impartiality. He is evidently attracted by the Tantrik conception of Shakti but he is careful to avoid claiming any merit for his protege that he does not justify by facts and lucid reasoning and what is more he writes neither as a practitioner nor even as an adherent of the system he champions."—*New India*.







