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ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS AND AUTHORS MORE FREQUENTLY QUOTED
(At the end of this thesis there is a complete list of works cited).

AbhiG	- Abhinavagupta	
AgP	- Agnipurāna	
BV	- Brhadvimsarīnī = IPVV	
HCC	- Haracaritacintāmani	
HDh	- History of Dharmasāstra of P.V.Kane, 5 vols.	
HT	- Hevajratantra	
IPV	- Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarsinī	
IPVV	- Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛttivimsarīnī	
J	- Jayaratha Rājānaka	
KR	- Kṣemarāja	
LV	- Laghuvimsarīnī	
MrT	- Mrgendratantra	
MV	- Malinīvijayatāntra	
MVV	- Malinīvijayavārttikam	
NT	- Netratantra	
PK	- Pratyabhijñākarikā	PS - Pāśubata Sūtra
PT	- Parātrīśikā	
PTV	- Parātrīśikkāvivarānam	
RT	- Rājatarāṅginī	
SDR	- Śivadr̥ṣṭi	
Spk	- Spandakārikā	
SpN	- Spandanirnaya	
SSP	- Somasambhupaddhati	
SVT	- Svacchandatāntra	
TA	- Tantrāloka	TP - Tāṭiva Prakāśikā
TS	- Tantrasāra	
VEh	- Vijñānabhairava	
VP	- Vākyapadīya	

ARGUMENT

Siva is not only an extremely important Hindu god, but he is in many ways the most uniquely Indian god of them all. Therefore it is not a mere metaphor to affirm that his mythology and cult lie at the very heart of Indian spirituality. The mythological paradoxes that wrap his personality, viz. the paradox of Siva the erotic-ascetic (i.e. the great ascetic is the god of phallus), Siva the Creator and Destroyer, life and death etc., have supplied the philosophical thinking to point out the universal coincidentia oppositorum. The so-called opposing stands of Siva's nature have been resolved and accepted as aspects of one unitary nature. Thus, the Siva of Brammin philosophy is predominantly ascetic, while the Siva of tantric tradition is predominantly sexual, in his dual aspect: Siva - Sakti (W.D.O'Flaherty - Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva, London, 1973, I, 1).

We must introduce a certain perspective into this statement. Emphasizing his virile and sexual function, Siva stands for vital energy pervading the whole cosmos in perpetual formation. On the contrary, his asceticism symbolises the uncreated state. Siva's sexual function is a metaphor characterizing ontogenetic actualisation of his potential state which is imagined as asceticism. In this relationship, the uncreated, and hence potential aspect, prevails upon the creative activity at least from two points of view. Only the period of great tapas is able to ensure successfully the creative process and, on the other hand, creation means the loss of primordial equilibrium, consequently, a degradation. The whole Saiva tantric practice aims lastly to recover the uncreated state where Siva is identical with himself only.

Failure to connect Śiva with the Vedic gods Indra, Prajāpati and Agni led to the assumption that the sexual elements of his cult were pre-aryan. In the same way, the obvious correspondence between Śiva's mystical ambiguity and tantric procedures led some scholars to seek the origins of tantra on the early development of Indian civilization as it was revealed in the Indus Valley (c. 2000 B.C.) (Mircea Eliade - Yoga, Immortality and Freedom, New-York, 1958, p. 354 - 358).

The phallic emblem of Śiva as found in the ruins of Harappa and Mohenjodaro was certainly a dominant element of religion at that time. Among material proofs to support this view, there were four pieces of great significance: a rectangular terracotta plate which wears the image of an ithyphallic god sitting in padmāsana and surrounded by animals, a conical terracotta object with a rounded top which most probably represents a phallus, a large thick ring representing a yoni and a receptacle for holy water (caraṇāmṛtakūṇḍa). These are peremptory evidences of such a worship of Śiva and Śakti, main tantric deities.

The Śaiva philosophy is an outgrowth of religion. As we know, it highly influenced other systems of Indian philosophy like Vaiśeṣika, Nyāya and the grammatical schools of Kashmir. Eight systems of Śaiva philosophy have been traced so far. In the Tantrāloka, Abhinavagupta classified all the Śaiva philosophical tendencies into three main branches: dualism (dvaita), dualism-cum-monism (dvaitādvaita) and monism (advaita), which could be also a maintainable view on the topic in so far as the three systems were based upon ten, eighteen and sixty-four Śaivāgamas.

Concerning the āgamas, their origin, classification, outlook etc.,

many theories have been suggested so far, as usually happens when the preliminary evidence is not available: in this case few of the original texts have come to light. I feel inclined to accept the general classification of agamic literature into three great groups, conformable to the three main istadevatās worshipped: Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu (Sir John Woodroffe, Śakti and Śākta, pp.35). This division is upheld by a good deal of statements found in the Śaivite tantras, where the other tantric schools - which evolved from the corresponding bulk of āgamas - are presented like gradual steps toward Śaivite teaching. Thus, the Vaiṣṇava tantra is dealing with the mayic world in so far as viṣṇu is ruling only upon the material world. The Śakti tantric branch understands the existent as power and the devotee is to merge into this all-pervading power that creates and destroys, but can not annihilate. The total extinction comes therefore only for the follower of Śaiva tantra who succeeds to surpass even the consciousness of absolute creation. This supreme state is Anuttara or Parama Śiva.

Now, still within the tantric schools that are based upon the ninety-two Śaivāgamas, there is a discrimination and they could be considered also as successive steps in realization of the unique aim, that is the final emancipation. The standpoint expounded above, i.e. the three main groups of āgamas and their corresponding tantras articulate mutually, was made on the metatheoretical level, as a consequence of analysing their conception upon freedom. In reality no serious vaiṣṇava will ever accept that a Śākta follower has a higher mystical aim or goal than himself, and the Śakti's devotee will consider Śiva a passive and secondary element in cosmogenesis. Therefore, the Śaiva tantra has developed its own way towards self-realization.

zation which includes and synthesizes theoretic elements and techniques from other systems. All these "heterogeneous" elements are gathered under a unitary vision, so that they appear as a coherent technique in Śaiva tantra.

The three metaphysical levels of understanding the reality practiced in Śaiva tantra, i.e. dualistic, dualistic-cum-monistic and monistic, must be traversed by the follower one by one. Thus the tantrika will assume a changeable conception on the reality, consonant with the stage of his evolution. At the beginning of his initiation, the disciple recognises the fundamental duality on which the multiplicity is based; afterwards he becomes aware of unity-in-multiplicity and, on the summit of his self-realisation, he regards the whole as primordial unity and identity. It seems that absolutization of each of these stages to the detriment of the others was one of the reasons that led to later diversification of Śaivism (K.C.Pandey - Bhāskarī III, Introduction, p.6).

The dualistic, dualistic-cum-monistic and monistic sets of Śaivāgamas are expressed according to the three different names of Śiva, respectively Śiva, Rudra and Bhairava. They are considered to have emanated from diverse mouths of the five-faced (pañcavaktra) Śiva, which symbolize actualization of his powers: creation, maintenance, destruction, obscuration (nirodha) and grace (anugraha). As early as the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka asserts, these functions are the result of exerting the five powers which are imagined as the Supreme Śiva's faces or mouths, viz. Īśa, Tatpuruṣa, Sadyojāta, Vāma and Aghora. The dualistic Śaivāgamas are said to have come from the first three mouths (powers) enumerated above, i.e. Īśa, Tatpuruṣa and Sadyojāta, the dualistic-cum-monistic from Vāma and Aghora and monism from the union of Śiva and Śakti. Nevertheless, the symbolism of Lord Śiva's five faces is by far much more com-

plex. Sāyana for instance, in his interpretation at the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka connects them with a spiritual space dominated by the five Mantras: Sadyojātam, Vāmadevāya, Aghorebhyah, Tatpuruṣāya and Īśanaḥ, while Abhinavagupta in the Mālinīvijayavārttikam (KSTS, n.31; 375 seq. and 383 seq.) presents the successive apparition of the Śaivāgamas and the philosophical branches by a kind of factorial calculation. He obtains diads, triads, tetrads and a supreme pentad - ĪTṢVA - by circular permutations of the five powers in mutual combinations.

The first group of the Śaivāgamas is called dualistic because it deals with such aspects of reality that presuppose diversity, namely, action (kriyā), knowledge (jñāna) and will (icchā). Another is called dualistic-cum-monistic because it is concerned with the self (cit) and self-awareness (ānanda) as essentially identical but logically and formally different. The third is called monistic because it presents a spiritual level which is beyond the reach of will, knowledge and action, where logical and formal diversities disappear, where the what-is-real shines in itself, by itself and to itself.

Now, speaking about tantric "philosophy" of Śaivism, it is to be understood as shorthand for a "psycho-experimental-speculation" which envisages the practical aspect, the sādhanā-part of the path to final self-realization. It is important for our discussion to outline the specificity of Śaiva tantra among the tantric constellation and especially vis-à-vis Śāktism.

The fundamental presupposition of Śaivism is that Śiva phenomenalises the whole universe. It means the degradation of primordial uncreated equilibrium by Śakti's creative energies. The Śaivite tantrika's effort aims

at traversing the phenomenal existence in reverse order for the sake of regaining a stable and pure condition. We may call it "reintegration" in the case of monism, where the individual selves appear as the results of creative involution due to Śakti. My formulation could sound a bit paradoxically, but it denominates very accurately the process of creation as it is conceived by Śaivites. The ideal status does not mean to exist as a product of creation, but the withdrawal into what is uncreated. Therefore, the process of universal formation represents an involution in comparison with the primordial state which is something like a lost paradise that the tantrika is striving to regain. This is to be realized on two gradual levels: a) the homologation of the individual self with the whole phenomenal universe; b) the identity between the devotee and the absolute Śiva.

The first purpose is carried out through the projective techniques that constitute the main method in the Śaiva tantra. These projections of outside universe into the tantrika's body have multifarious proceedings that must correspond both to the follower's mystic target and to his native abilities. The generic name for these techniques is the inner sacrifice and they are performed mentally by the master who touches with his fingers different parts of uisciple's body on which he projects the letters of the alphabet, various worlds etc. In his turn, the disciple must facilitate the introjection of the outside universe into his body by repeating on his own, the same projections. He will make this process easier by using a mystical diagram of his own body which is called a mandala, various finger-poses, i.e. mudrās, and especially magic incantations known as mantras.

These projections must not be understood grosso modo like

pouring the outside universe into the tantrika's body. The tantric methods actualize these potentialities making the disciple self-conscious that he is identical with the whole cosmos. Thus, the practitioner will thoroughly regenerate as a consequence of this inner sacrifice; this is something like a new birth whereat the adept reaches a new level of knowledge and, for the Śaiva thought, the knowledge characterizes the real existential states of a being. Therefore, the Śaivite tantric path is a gnosis, and freedom is obtained as a result of acquiring mystical knowledge. The "re-birth" on a new level of knowledge is made possible through the purification of component elements of one's body, i.e. principles, powers, phonemes etc. Consequently, whenever I speak about projections, it must be understood implicitly the purificatory purpose of those techniques also. This purification envisages certainly a spiritual point of view and it aims to endow the adept with a mystic body.

The second stride in Śaiva tantra is the external sacrifice through which the adept is tantamount to Śiva. During the inner sacrifice the whole universe is "incapsulated" consciously into the practitioner's body, while the external sacrifice is the supreme offering to the Lord, that is the offering of one's own body enriched with the whole existent. The identification with Śiva is made by virtue of the principle: "to whom one sacrifices, there he goes merge". Therefore, sacrificing the whole universe to the supreme Lord, one will surpass all the existential stages, entering the uncreated state which is mythologically represented as Śiva's imperturbable asceticism.

Now, concerning the difference between Śākta and Śaiva tantra, one could answer in the same manner as the Ratna-Traya answered to the Śaktya-dvayavādin. The latter asserts that Śakti alone is the cause of the world and that Śiva is an unnecessary assumption. The Ratna-Traya justifies the

admission of Śiva on the basis that Śakti is an attribute (dharma) and as such, it can have no existence without a substratum (dharmin) (RT, 103); Śakti is said to be related to Śiva as the rays are to the sun (RT, 68), that is non-different from Śiva (svasaktyāmanyabhūṭayā, RT, 42), but a manifestation of him. In the Tattva Prakāśikā it is asserted that the transcendental Śiva is "cidghana" (TP, 2); in this context the analogy conveys the idea that, just as power effects its purpose by means of a body, so the Lord acts by means of powers which are, in the last analysis, mere instruments in his hands. This is reflected on the sāḥanā plane of Śaiva tantra by the whole ritualism whose main target is the non-manifested Śiva, who may be reached only by experiencing and surpassing his bipolar aspect, as power and possessor of power.

For this reason I have especially used the word "power" for Śakti, even though it seems like a deliberate depersonalisation, but - in my opinion - the translation will better help our purpose which is to point out Śiva's pre-eminence in all the Śaivite tantric sādhanās, and also, it corresponds to the spirit of Śaivite teaching. On the other hand, I am fully aware that any attempt to depersonalise a certain entity, runs counter to the general manner in which any tantrika - irrespective of his affiliation to one or another tantric school - understands the reality. That is because all the tantric practitioners will think of the whole world as peopled by gods, goddesses and spiritual entities.

Here, a methodological problem arises. In dealing with Śaiva tantra in an exegetical work like this, three levels of exposition must be demarcated. Firstly, the language-object which is the tantric exposition of different sādhanās as we usually find them in the available texts; secondly,

the theoretical plane which is also included in the classic texts providing theoretical support for tantric behaviour; and thirdly, a plane that belongs to the metatheory, i.e. an exegetical and analytic position making up the framework of the whole thesis. This last level, on which any scientific work must be placed, constitutes an elaborated point of view as a result of modern methods investigating the topic.

It can be stated that the diversification of tantras appears actually clearer and clearer with each new theoretical plane added, because on the basic level, i.e. that of sādhanās, we can find out a rather common pattern. Thus, between the Buddhist vajrayāna and Śaivite tantric sādhanās there are incomparably more similarities than between the two philosophies. It has led some scholars to the supposition that tantra (and yoga) as soteriological techniques were already developed before the Aryan epoch of Indian culture. Having entered into a strife with the Vedic standpoint, tantra was banished from the "orthodox" territory, to where similar techniques were found (cīnacāra etc.). Like Śaivism, the tantric tradition coexisted in the popular milieu a long time after the establishment of Brahmanic hegemony. Gradually, Brahmanism was much influenced by both Śaiva religion and soteriological procedures, i.e. yoga and tantra. In his commentary on the Vedānta Sūtra, Śrīkantha tries to create a bridge between Veda and Śaivāgamas, as both equally authoritative, but also he outlines the great differences involuntarily; the Vedas address themselves to the three higher castes only, while the Śaivāgamas are for all, irrespective of caste. Recognition of the universal brotherhood of mankind and refutation of caste-barriers, is the distinctive mark of Śaivism and tantra. Therefore, tantra came to

an understanding with Buddhism (as a reaction to the official religion) and from it received an ideological background (as yoga received it from s̄āṅkhya). Further more, the s̄ādhanās were taken over by Hinduism during its struggle against Buddhism. As often happens in the history of culture, a conflict brings about an exchange of cultural features between opponents. Thus, Śaiva tantra seems a reunification of Śaivism as filtered in a long speculative tradition of metaphysics and the tantric method, i.e. an attempt to cast the inherited techniques into a new philosophical and rational armour.

The manner in which Śaiva tantra appears to us is more sophisticated than the Śākta branch. This is because a long series of paṇḍits successively edified a theoretical apparatus around it, hardly accessible to the wide public, while the Śāktism was preserved mainly by a folk tradition. It explains why today the "practitioners" of Śaiva tantra are less in number than the Śākta followers and also justifies the tantric division into periods. By the tenth century the whole classic bulk of Śaiva tantric literature was thoroughly completed, while the "golden age" of Śākta scriptures was the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This made even very serious historians of Indian Philosophy, like Heinrich Zimmer, ascribe the whole tantric movement to the Śākta branch of the later centuries (H. Zimmer - The Philosophies of India, Meridian G6, New York, 1958, the last chapter, on tantra).

What is beyond any doubt is that during the last centuries tantra has changed much of its content. And these aspects appear mainly within Śākta schools which extrapolate the power of action, hence the

condition of being-in-world. Perhaps it is the pre-eminence of worldly powers in the Śākta techniques that made Lama Govinda Anagarika affirm that Hindu tantra aims only at propitiation (Lama A. Govinda - Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism, London, 1959). Certainly, he is not right in expounding such a general assumption without discriminating between variegated tantric tendencies which have evolved in India. I believe that Śaiva tantra points to the highest level of transcendency and freedom. Such a state may be reached - the Śaivite tantric scriptures teach - only by uprooting oneself from the world of powers and gaining the uncreated condition.

Now, what is the aim of Śākta tantra? Firstly the practitioner must immerse into powers, becoming one with Śakti and lastly, he receives ~~power~~ pacification in union with Śiva who embodies passivity. But this level corresponds in the Śaiva outlook to the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth principles, ānanda and cit. The only difference is that the Śaivite aims even beyond these two stages, viz. to reach anuttara, the absolute level, where there is no power at all. The absolutisation of power in Śāktism causes undue emphasis on action with all its consequences. At the same time, spreading the tantric knowledge in the folk milieu it has started bearing a more and more pragmatistical character turning to some practices that have nothing to do with liberation. If it is true that tantra was destined to this kali-yuga which has been the worst epoch so far, it is also true that the late fusion of tantra with some practices pertaining to witchcraft and black magic made this yuga seem gloomier than it would have looked without it.

No doubt, the Śaiva tantra revealed in the classic works is not a lesson of moral for our times and certain erotical proceedings

could arouse disgust in even the most depraved persons among us. Sexual intercourse that has to be practiced most successfully with your own daughter, mother, etc., is a teaching that does not make room for what mankind has concluded about normal human behaviour. There are enough evidence that Ashinavagupta kept such relationships with his sister after she had become a young widow. However, the old "knowers" argued that the sensuality implied usually by the sexual act can be easier removed in this manner, giving way to pure gnosis and mystic ecstasy, and henceforth, to freedom.

But which kind of soteriological goal is achieved through necrophiliac practices with the body of a dead woman for instance, which is said to be revitalized due to the practitioner's semen? Human sperm is believed to be the only thing as energetical and powerful as blood. The first is assimilated to male consciousness in its waking state and the latter to the female state of mind which is characterized - according to the tantric view - by subconscious activity. Life means especially waking state, while death is like sleep, an immersion into one's own subconscious. Therefore, when a young and beautiful woman dies, the tantrika will take (sometimes buy) and keep the corpse for several days, at times warming it with hot bricks. Performing sexual intercourse with the dead body, he restores life to the woman through his semen and incantations (i.e. he confers the waking state upon the corpse), using her for necromantic purposes. Before destroying the corpse, he will cut off its head and mount it on a plate engraved with magical symbols which is permanently retained by the necromancer, who, from time to time, would pronounce a conjuration and force it to answer some questions.

A somewhat similar technique may be performed on any corpse drawing a magic circle around it and placing on its right side a vessel containing the five makaras (N.E. mudrā is represented here through a coin) which are offered to the body's spirit. The chief practitioner touches the corpse some times with a wand made from the thighbone of a dead man, or with his sacrificial knife and commands it: " In the name of Kālīkā

(i.e. goddess Durga) I commend you to rise and answer!". There are people who swear that the corpse rises to its feet and in a hallow voice replies to the questions asked.

In my opinion, all these necromantic practices - and many others that I am not going to list here - prove a basic powerlessness and instead of leading to freedom, they bind more and more the practitioner. What is the reason to appeal to bound spirits for finding out the future, unless one is incapable of mastering events, or his lack of knowledge? One of Śaiva tantra's main goals is to achieve non-discursive and intuitive knowledge which means gnosis. Such an achievement frees of any enslavement - in one way or another - to external entities; Śaivite gnosis means inwardness of the whole existent, because the practitioner is omniscient Śiva himself.

This is to say nothing about other terrific practices like sacrificing young girls and drinking their blood, murder by remote control (mūṭh) etc., which have brought a bad reputation to tantra. Destructive devices are presented at length in the kaulāvalinirṇaya of Jñānānanda Paramahansa (Tantric Texts, vol. XIV, Calcutta, 1928), which gives full instructions on such meditations, mantras and yantras. These manoeuvres created a situation whereby nowadays a tantrika is understood in common parlance as a person who is much better to be avoided if somebody is not fond of troubles.

The purpose of this work is not to present anomalies, against which even the classic Śaiva tantra warned. We regard here Śaiva tantra as a way of redemption and freedom, trying to restore its whole soteriological value and meaning as it comes out from the old teaching. It has been pointed out that Śaivite ^{sādhanās} have much in common with a good deal of Śākta,

Buddhist etc. tantric procedures. Thus, some scholars had difficulty trying to make a sharp classification of certain systems as belonging to one or another tendency. For instance, the similarity between a large amount of sāhanās used in Krama tantra with those employed in Śākta, has led to the conclusion that Krama is more like a Śākta branch.

What is characteristic for Śaiva tantra is that the practitioner identifies himself with Śiva lastly, despite the fact that he could worship now and then other gods who are actually imagined as intermediate steps. Thus, on the Śaivite path it is quite clear why Śakti is worthy of a great devotion since she personifies Śiva's manifest power. But for the Śaivite, Śakti is an emanation and an instrument, not a goal in herself. Therefore, in Śaiva tantra the male principle is the foremost element, fully active. The Śākta iconological thesis establishes that "Śiva without Śakti is a corpse" (śivasakṣivihīnaḥ śavāḥ). Buddhist vajrayāna considers, on the contrary, that the male is the active factor while the female takes only a passive part. Śaivite tantric outlook has a special position among tantras, upholding that both male and female principles are active, despite their opposition. In fact, a real opposition can not manifest if one of the components is passive; both Śiva and Śakti oppose each other as two contrary but equal energies, creating only in this way universal equilibrium. This activism of the two highest principles results from the Śaivite theory of interaction and interdependence between subject and object.

Now, although we find some essays on the theoretical aspect of Śaivism, little has been done on Śaiva tantra so far, on the exegetical ground. Thereby the great difficulty that I have to overcome was to

systematize a very large amount of material on the topic, for the first time. It gave me the possibility to reach some new points of view and consequently, I have suggested a thoroughly different interpretation on a good deal of items considered "standardised" and generalized solutions. I tried my best to make the problems clear and to point out all the particular features of Śaiva tantra vis-à-vis the other tantras. Inasmuch as the present work is an analysis destined to a circle of scholars, I have not detailed the elements of Śaiva philosophy, thinking that they are already known. I would have been able to add three more chapters concerning the sādhanās performed on the first three levels of initiation, but it would have made the work look like a tantric textbook which was not my intention. Consequently, I preferred to maintain throughout the thesis rather a metatheoretical approach to the matter.