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# History of Tantra

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### ABSTRACT

The review article explains that the Tantra is oldest tradition of mind and body health, Universal is not creating any one, it is create by god. Its truth no scientific an evidence of various natural things in 21st century, Tantra explains systematic life, visualization of nothings etc... Tantra is best way of good things only.

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## Introduction:

Tantra is not easily to understand for everyone, this is a practical way of life, till continue A number of techniques to help mind and physical impact.

Tantra (/ˈtʌnrə, ˈtæn-/; Sanskrit: तन्त्र, literally "loom, weave, system") denotes the esoteric traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism that co-developed most likely about the middle of the 1st millennium AD. The term tantra, in the Indian traditions, also means any systematic broadly applicable "text, theory, system, method, instrument, technique or practice".

Tantras centering on Vishnu, Shiva or Shakti emerged. In Buddhism, the Vajrayana tradition is known for its extensive tantra ideas and practices. Tantric Hindu and Buddhist traditions have influenced other Eastern religious traditions such as Jainism, the Tibetan Bön tradition, Daoism and the Japanese Shintō tradition.

In Hinduism, the tantric traditions are found in Shaivism's Shaiva Siddhanta and the Mantrapīṭha (Bhairava-centred), and in Shaktism's Vidyāpīṭha and the Kulamārga traditions. The Tantra texts of the Vaishnava tradition are the Pancharatra, and typically called the Agamas in the Shaiva traditions. The term "Tantra" in Hindu genre of literature is usually used specifically to refer to Shakta Agamas. The Agamas literature is voluminous, and includes 28 Shaiva Agamas, 77 Shakta Agamas (also called Tantras), and 108 Vaishnava Agamas (also called Pancharatra Samhitas), and numerous Upa-Agamas.

Some Tantra texts in Hinduism are Vedic and others non-Vedic. Agama traditions include Yoga and Self Realization concepts, some include Kundalini Yoga, asceticism, and philosophies ranging from *Dvaita* (dualism) to *Advaita* (monism). The means of worship in the Hindu Tantric practice differs from the Vedic

form. While the Vedic practice of yajna there are no idols and shrines, in its Tantric traditions, idols and symbolic icons with puja are the means of worship. Temples, symbolism, icons that remind the devotee of attributes and values are a necessary part of the Agamic practice, while non-theistic paths are one of the many alternative means in the Vedic practice. This, however, does not necessarily mean that Tantra-Agamas and Vedas are opposed, according to medieval era Hindu theologians. Tirumular, for example, explained their link as, "the Vedas are the path, and the Agamas are the horse.

Each Tantra-Agama text consists of four parts:

- Jnana pada, also called Vidya pada—consists of doctrine, the philosophical and spiritual knowledge, knowledge of reality and liberation.
- Yoga pada - precepts on yoga, the physical and mental discipline.
- Kriya pada - consists of rules for rituals, construction of temples (Mandir); design principles for sculpting, carving, and consecration of idols of deities for worship in temples; for different forms of initiations or diksha. This code is analogous to those in Puranas and in the Buddhist text of *Sadhanamala*.
- Charya pada - lays down rules of conduct, of worship (puja), observances of religious rites, rituals, festivals and prayaschittas.

The Pierre Bernard (1875–1955) is widely credited with introducing the philosophy and practices of tantra to the American people, at the same time creating a misleading impression of its connection to sex.

André Padoux (2013), is found among Tantra practitioners — it is any "system of observances" about the vision of man and the cosmos where correspondences between the inner world of the person and the macrocosmic reality play an essential role. Another definition, more common among observers and non-practitioners, is some "set of mechanistic rituals, omitting entirely the

ideological side". According to David N. Lorenzen(2006), two different kinds of definitions of Tantra exist, narrow and broad. According to the narrow definition, Tantrism, or "Tantric religion", is the elite traditions directly

based on the Sanskrit texts called the Tantras, Samhitas, and Agamas. Lorenzen's "broad definition" extends this by including a broad range of "magical beliefs and practices" such as Yoga and Shaktism.

### "Tantra" in Indian texts hide

Text or author	Contextual meaning of tantra
R̥gveda X, 71.9	Loom (or weaving device)
Sāmaveda, Tandya Brahmana	Essence (or "main part", perhaps denoting the quintessence of the Sastras)
Atharvaveda X, 7.42	Loom (or weaving)
Yajurveda, Taittiriya Brahmana 11.5.5.3	Loom (or weaving)
Pāṇini in Aṣṭādhyāyī 1.4.54 and 5.2.70	Warp (weaving), loom
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa	Essence (or main part; see above)
Chanakya on Arthaśāstra	Science; system or shastra
Īśvarakṛṣṇa author of Sāṅkhya Kārikā (kārikā 70)	Doctrine (identifies Sankhya as a tantra)
Viṣṇu Purāṇa	Practices and rituals
Poet Kālidāsa on Abhijñānaśākuntalam	Deep understanding or mastery of a topic
Gangdhar stone inscription in Rajasthan	Worship techniques (Tantrodbhuta) Dubious link to Tantric practices. <sup>[29]</sup>
Sabarasvamin's commentary on Mimamsa Sutra 11.1.1, 11.4.1 etc.	Thread, text; beneficial action or thing
Chinese Buddhist canon (Vol. 18–21: Tantra (Vajrayāna) or Tantric Buddhism	Set of doctrines or practices
Kāmikāgama or Kāmikā-tantra	Extensive knowledge of principles of reality
Sanskrit scholar and poet Bāṇabhaṭṭa (in Harṣacarita and in Kādambari), in Bhāsa's Cārudatta and in Śūdraka's Mṛcchakatika	Set of sites and worship methods to goddesses or Matrikas.
Philosopher Abhinavagupta in his Tantrāloka	Set of doctrines or practices, teachings, texts, system (sometimes called Agamas)
Jayaratha, Abhinavagupta's commentator on Tantrāloka	Set of doctrines or practices, teachings
Bhāskaraṛāya (philosopher)	System of thought or set of doctrines or practices, a canon

Richard Payne (2006), states that Tantra has been commonly but incorrectly associated with sex, given popular culture's prurient obsession with intimacy. Tantra has been labelled as the "yoga of ecstasy", driven by senseless ritualistic libertinism. This is far from the diverse and complex understanding of what Tantra means to those Buddhists, Hindu and Jains who practice it.

David B. Gray; Ryan Richard Overbey (2016), disagrees with broad generalizations and states that defining Tantra is a difficult task because "Tantra traditions are manifold,

spanning several religious traditions and cultural worlds. As a result they are also diverse, which makes it a significant challenge to come up with an adequate definition".The challenge of defining Tantra is compounded by the fact that it has been a historically significant part of major Indian religions, including Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, both in and outside South Asia and East Asia. To its practitioners, Tantra is defined as a combination of texts, techniques, rituals, monastic practices, meditation, yoga, and ideology. According to Georg Feuerstein, "The scope of topics discussed in the Tantras is

considerable. They deal with the creation and history of the world; the names and functions of a great variety of male and female deities and other higher beings; the types of ritual worship (especially of Goddesses); magic, sorcery, and divination; esoteric "physiology" (the mapping of the subtle or psychic body); the awakening of the mysterious serpent power (kundalinî-shakti); techniques of bodily and mental purification; the nature of enlightenment; and not least, sacred sexuality." Hindu puja, temples and iconography all show tantric influence. These texts, states Gavin Flood, contain representation of "the body in philosophy, in ritual and in art", which are linked to "techniques of the body, methods or technologies developed within the tantric traditions intended to transform body and self".

Teun Goudriaan in his 1981 review of Hindu Tantrism, states that Tantrism usually means a "systematic quest for salvation or spiritual excellence" by realizing and fostering the divine within one's own body, one that is simultaneous union of the masculine-feminine and spirit-matter, and has the ultimate goal of realizing the "primal blissful state of non-duality". It is typically a methodically striven system, consisting of voluntarily chosen specific practices which may include Tantric items such as mantras (*bijas*), geometric patterns and symbols (*mandala*), gestures (*mudra*), mapping of the microcosm within one's body to the macrocosmic elements outside as the subtle body (kundalini-yoga), assignments of icons and sounds (*nyasa*), meditation (*dhyana*), ritual worship (*puja*), initiation (*diksha*) and others. Tantrism, adds Goudriaan, is a living system that is decidedly monistic, but with wide variations, and it is impossible to be dogmatic about a simple or fixed definition.

### Vedic texts

Rig Veda (10.136) describes the "wild loner" who, states Karel Werner (1977), "carrying within oneself fire and poison, heaven and earth, ranging from enthusiasm and creativity to depression and agony, from the heights of

spiritual bliss to the heaviness of earth-bound labor". The Rigveda uses words of admiration for these loners, and whether it is related to Tantra or not, has been variously interpreted. According to David Lorenzen (2006), it describes *munis* (sages) experiencing Tantra-like "ecstatic, altered states of consciousness" and gaining the ability "to fly on the wind". In contrast, Werner suggests that these are early Yoga pioneers and accomplished yogis of the ancient pre-Buddhist Indian tradition, and that this Vedic hymn is speaking of those "lost in thoughts" whose "personalities are not bound to earth, for they follow the path of the mysterious wind".

The two oldest Upanishadic scriptures of Hinduism, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in section 4.2 and Chandogya Upanishad in section 8.6, refer to nadis (*hati*) in presenting their theory on how the Atman (soul) and the body are connected and interdependent through energy carrying arteries when one is awake or sleeping, but they do not mention anything related to Tantric practices. The Shvetashvatara Upanishad describes breath control that became a standard part of Yoga, but Tantric practices do not appear in it. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are an early codification of Yogic practices. Later, according to Lorenzen, these early Yoga-related ideas develop into Hatha Yoga, and then diversify into the "mystical anatomy" of nadis and chakras of Tantric practices. The 7th-century shamanic-yogic component of Tantrism appears clearly in Tantric form in Bāṇabhaṭṭa's Harshacharita and Daṇḍin's Daśakumaracharita. In contrast to this theory of Lorenzen, other scholars such as Mircea Eliade consider Yoga and the evolution of Yogic practices to be separate and distinct from the evolution of Tantra and Tantric practices.

David Gordon (2014), White views Yogini cults as foundational to early tantra but disputes scholars who see their roots in an "autochthonous non-Vedic source" such as indigenous tribes or the Indus Valley

Civilization. Instead, White suggests Vedic Sruta texts mention offerings to goddesses Rākā, Sinīvālī, and Kuhū in a manner similar to a tantric ritual. Frederick Smith – a professor of Sanskrit and Classical Indian Religions, views Tantra to be a parallel religious movement to Bhakti movement of the 1st millennium AD. Tantra along with Ayurveda, states Smith, has traditionally been attributed to Atharvaveda, but this attribution is one of respect not of historicity. Ayurveda has primarily been an empirical practice with Vedic roots, but Tantra has been an esoteric, folk movement without grounding that can be traced to anything in *Atharvaveda* or any other vedic text.

### Sadhanas

- Dakshina: Donation or gift to one's teacher
- Diksha: Initiation ritual which may include shaktipat
- Yoga, including breathing techniques (*pranayama*) and postures (*asana*), is employed to balance the energies in the body/mind.
- Mudras, or hand gestures
- Mantras: reciting syllables, words, and phrases
- Singing of hymns of praise (*stava*)
- Mandalas
- Yantras: symbolic diagrams of forces at work in the universe
- Visualization of deities and Identification with deities
- Puja (worship ritual)
- Animal sacrifice
- Use of taboo substances such as alcohol, cannabis, meat and other entheogens.
- Prāyaścitta - an expiation ritual performed if a puja has been performed wrongly
- Nyasa
- Ritual purification (of idols, of one's body, etc.)
- Guru bhakti (devotion) and puja
- Yatra: pilgrimage, processions

- Vrata: vows, sometimes to do ascetic practices like fasting
- The acquisition and use of siddhis or supernormal powers. Associated with the left hand path tantra.
- Ganachakra: A ritual feast during which a sacramental meal is offered.
- Ritual Music and Dance.
- Maithuna: ritual sexual union (with an actual physical consort).
- Dream yoga

### Conclusion:

Tantra is oldest tradition of mind and body health, Universal is not creating any one, it is create by god. Its truth no scientific an evidence of various natural things in 21st century, Tantra explains systematic life, visualization of nothings etc... Tantra is best way of good things only.

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