Anatomy:

Introduction:

Physical body is the main gate for approaching the soul. In the body, Lord who controls the entire universe also is present. Lord in a form of power lies dormant in body. In a course of time, through constant efforts and through yogic practices, man unfolds his latent powers. The physical body is the reservoir of energy and the only means for the unfoldment of which is the goal of the śadhaka. And because of this, body is not given for the unholy purpose or only for the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The prime purpose is to attain liberation from limitations of body and mind, and attainment of spirituality through body.

Physical frame, in the Tantra system, is highly esteemed as the temple of Spirit or God. (Deha devālayo devi). And hence, it should be kept pure and perfect in condition. The process of Tantra śādhanā starts from gross and ends into subtle. And hence it has accepted physical body positively. Miercea Eliade with the reference of the Gheranda Samhitā declares that, "The body is no longer the source of pain, but the most reliable and effective instrument at man's
disposal for 'conquering death'. And since liberation can be gained even in this life, the body must be preserved as long as possible and in perfect condition, precisely as an aid to meditation.¹

The Rasārṇavam, the another Tantric treatise also supports the positivity of the body. As it views, it is of no use if liberation is gained after death. Even donkey can also get it. So in order to attain liberation in this life, the preservation of body is very essential.²

For Tantra, the preservation of body can be prolonged according to the will power or desire through the Hāthayogic āsanāsa, prāṇāyāma, Tantric techniques and also by the intake of mercury preparations.

Physical diseases and mental ailments are hurdles in the way of longevity. There are various ways and means


². Piṇḍapāte cayomoksah sa ca moksa nirarthakah | Pinde tu patite devi | gadarbhastī vimucyate || Rasārṇava Tantra 1-9.
through which one can overcome these hurdles. They are known as various therapies. Healthy body-mind complex is the goal of all therapies. Any therapy, is first applied on the physical body and it ultimately affects the mind. So different therapies have worked out the anatomy. At present Allapathy, Ayurveda, Homeopathy etc., are the leading ones. Tantra also has being a therapy its own view regarding anatomy. It is really a very surprising to note that the anatomy which is worked out, in the twentieth century with the help of the scientific instruments, largely tellies with the Tantra anatomy which is revealed out in a hoary past.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to present the anatomy given by Tantra and Allopathy. The concluding portion covers the synthesis of the both. We shall, first, briefly survey the anatomy of Allopathy.

A. Anatomy given by the Allopathy System:

The literature of the anatomy given by the Allopathy system is very large, hence, it is difficult to present it here in detail. This system has accepted nine main systems for the sustainence of body which are namely, (1) Bones,

All these systems have significant place in the maintenance of the body but here we shall mention only the nervous system and the gland system as they are directly related with the Tantra anatomy.

1. The nervous system:

The nervous system is connected with all bodily systems because it controls all activities which are going on in the body.

The nervous system consists of two divisions. (1) Central system and (2) Autonomus system. The central nervous system mainly consists of the brain, twelve pairs of cardinal nerves, spinal cord and fortythree pairs of the spinal nerves. The autonomus nerves system consists of spinal cord, sympathetic nervous system and the para sympathetic nervous system.

The spinal cord which is elongated in the shape, is a prolongation of brain, and, is located in the hollow
of the spinal column. Spinal nerves start from the spinal cord and issue out from the spinal column. All these forty-three pairs of nerves spread out themselves throughout the body and form a closely woven network.

Functionally, nerves may be divided into two groups. Motor and Sensory or efferent and afferent respectively. All muscular activities are responsible for motor nerves while the feeling of smell, taste, touch etc., are responsible for sensory nerves.

The autonomous nervous system consists of two rows of ganglionic that is group of nerve cells. These two rows of nerves are mutually connected and cross each other at certain points along the spinal cord. These cords on each side of the spinal column are known as sympathetic nervous system and the para sympathetic nervous system.

Life process which is going on in our body, without the interference of our will, is under the control of these systems. They work independently, hence, they are known as autonomous system. The effort of Hathayogi and Tantric sadhaka is to make this autonomic system under his will and that way he controls the bodily activities.
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Gland System:

In body there are certain organs which themselves secret fluid with their special properties, which help in the action and growth of the body, known as glands. The secreration of glands is known as hormones on which physical-mental growth depends. Long before the Allopathy system has found out the glands, the Hathayoga has advocated exercises for the proper secretion which ultimately result into the growth of body-mind complex.

These glands are known as the ductless glands because they pass their secretions directly into blood and lymph etc. These glands are namely, Pituitary, Pineal, Thyroid, Thymus, Pancreas Adrenal and Testes or in case of woman ovaries.

The ductless glands are situated at the different parts of the body. The Pineal and the Pituitary are situated in the brain. The Thyroid is located in the neck. The Thymus is situated between the neck and the chest. The adrenals are situated above the kidneys. The ovaries in the case of female are situated in the pelvic region where as the testes, the corresponding male reproductive gland are located in the Scrotum.
It has been scientifically found out that the ductless gland secretion very powerfully affects the physiological balance of the body. Hence proper secretion of it enhances the growth of body-mind and over secretion and under secretion results into abnormalities.

Now after having seen about the Allopathy anatomy, let us turn our attention towards the Tantra anatomy.

B. Tantra anatomy:

The Tantra anatomy runs round the concept of centres (cakras) and subtle channels (nādis).

1. **Theory of six centres**:

   The lexical meaning of the term cakra is wheel. Here it denotes the centres of consciousness. Cakras are believed to be situated in the subtle body or prāṇamaya S'arīra where energy is concentrated at the highest level.

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These centres have a great resemblance with the glands which are located in the physical body. In the gland system, we could see that the secretion of gland affects the growth of body-mind complex. The energy which is required for the growth of body-mind is provided by the centres or cakras. So the concentration on centres automatically affects on the secretion of glands and it ultimately results into healthy body.

Diseases arise when a person is not in a position to distribute the energy properly through centres. Poor digestion, which is considered as the root of all diseases may mean inadequate supply of energy in the navel region or the Manipura cakra.

How many centres are present in the body is still a matter of controversy. An exact figure is still not known to us. All Hathayogic and Tantric treatise give different numbers. According to some it is nine, for others it is eleven but seven is generally accepted figure and here we also follow that figure. These seven cakras are namely, Muladhāra, Svādhisthāna, Manipura, Anāhata, Vīśuddha, Ājñā and Sahasrāra cakra.
These centres are also known as lotuses. They contain specific number of petals namely, 4, 6, 10, 12, 16 and 1000 respectively. On every petal Samskrita letter is ascribed. It means, the Mūlādhāra cakra contains four petals hence four letters. The Swādhishthāna cakra contains six petals hence six letters and so on. The specific number of petals of yoga nadis situated around that centre. Now let us see the details of all cakras.

1. **Mūlādhāra cakra**

In the term 'Mūlādhāra', 'mūla' means root while 'dhāra' means support. It is the root of all yogic subtle nadis and also the supporter of the root of energy, that is, Kuṇḍalinī.

This centre is located between the genital and the anus region. This centre contains four petals on which four letters from Vam to Sam are ascribed. The bīja mantra of Prithvi or earth element is predominant here. This is

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4. \[ \text{Atha ādhārāpadmam suṣumnāsyā lag nam dhava jādho gudordhva catuḥ s'ona patram.} \]
\[ \text{Sat cakranirupanam} \]
also represented by the elephant or Aārūvat. Symbolically as it is the centre of gross physical powers. Elephant is the most powerful among animals and hence it is symbolized by elephant. In this centre, Kūpdalinī rests on the Svayambhu linga or the root of the genital organ, which is covered by the triangle with downward apex, which again is a geometrical representation of gross energy. The triangle is a symbol of all human powers like power of knowledge, will and action.

2. **Swādhisthāṇa cakra:**

The term 'Swādhisthāṇa' is a combination of two words, that is Swa and adhisthāna. Swa means prāṇa while adhisthāna means resting place. Hence Swādhisthāṇa means the resting place of prāṇa. This centre is situated at the root of the genital organ. The bīja mantra Yam of the water element is predominant here. This six petalled lotus contains the letters from Bām to Lam. The vehicle of this centre is Makar or crocodile. The aspirant who mediates on this centre becomes free immediately, from all his enemies.

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5. Sva s'abdena bhavet prānḥ swādhisthāṇam tadas'rāyam
   Yogacudamani upanisad. 11.

6. Sousumnya madhya ghatitama dhvajamūla des'e.
   Sat cakra nirupanam. 14.
3. **Manipura cakra:**

This centre is located above the **Swādhiṣṭhāna** cakra and anatomically at the root of the navel region. The bija mantra **Ram** of the fire element is predominant here. It has ten petals on which the letters from **Dam** to **Pham** are located. Meditation on this centre makes one free from the fear of fire. Even if he throws himself into fire, he remains alive.

4. **Anāhata cakra:**

This centre is believed to be situated in the region of heart. The seed letter **yam** of the element air is predominant here. The vehicle of this centre is antelope. The nature of both antelope and the air is the same, i.e., the fleeting nature. A sādhaka who meditates on this centre controls vāyu and is full of capacity either to create or to destroy the world. This claim though seems to be exaggerated, it shows to what an extent the meditator can develop himself. The simily given shows that he virtually becomes as powerful as Lord himself.

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7. \[\text{Tasyordhāve nābhīmuśe das'adāla lasite pūrqamegha prakāś'e,}\]
\[\text{Sat cakra niruṇāṇam.}\]

8. \[\text{Vacāṁś'vāra es'varoṣpi jagatām raksā vināś'e ksmah}\]
\[\text{Sat cakra niruṇāṇam - 26.}\]
5. **Vis'uddha cakra:**

This centre is situated in the region of throat. All sixteen vowels are located on this sixteen petalled lotus. Vis'uddha means pure. Concentration on this centre makes the mind of a śādāhaka pure from all impurities. The bīja mantra Ham of the ether element is predominant here. Meditation on this centre gives the knowledge of three worlds. It also makes śādāhaka free from diseases and sorrows.  

6. **Aśā cakra:**

This centre is located in the body at the space between the two eyebrows. The bīja mantra Aum is located here. This centre is a seat of mind. The mind of a śādāhaka receives the commands (Aśā) of guru through the concentration on this centre. Concentration on it also destroys the past deeds of śādāhaka and he becomes Śivanamukta. It is equated as a third eye of Śiva which destroys ignorance as well as desires.

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9. **Trikālānām dars'ī sakalāhita kas'e rogās'oka pramukta.**

Sat cakra nirupanam. 31.
7. **Sahasrāra cakra**

The Sahasrāra cakra is located at the top of the head. This centre contains thousand petals. (Sahasra means thousand) It is the place where the union of S'iva S'akti takes place. Here we should note that, this centre is very subtle in nature and because of this, it is not considered as belong to the plan of body. Because of its subtlety, it is not counted in the six centres.

2. **Nādi**: Theory of channels :-

In Tantra, nādi does not mean gross channels but it contains subtle energy or prāṇa. These channels are spread throughout the body and hence they are many in number. Because of this, they can not be counted. Though, however, some figures have been proposed. According to some treatise the figure is 3,00,000 for others, it is 2,00,000. But the figure 72,000 is largely accepted.

Among all these nādis, ten are important namely, Idā, Pingalā, Suṣumṇā, Gandhāri, Hastajihvā, Puṣā, Yas'asvini.
Ālambusā, Kuhū and Samkhini. The first three, among these are more significant.

Idā and Pingalā are located at the end of the spine. They extend from the end of spine to nostrils. They are considered as the container of the lunar and solar or mental and the vital currents in the body respectively. The Susumṇa nādi is said to be generally closed at the base of the spine and can be opened by certain yogic practices.

Prāṇa or life force flows either through Idā or through Pingalā generally. The Tantra sādhaka arrests this way of flowing of prāṇa and he tries for drawing prāṇa through the Susumṇa nādi.

Conclusion:

All therapies revolve round the concept of the physical body. According to Tantra, all organs of the body are connected with cakras or centres through subtle channels or nādis. The power which is required by the limbs of body is provided by the centres of consciousness through nādis. This concept has a great resemblance with the Allopathic concept of glands and the nervous system. We have seen in the anatomy of Allopathy that the growth of body and efficiency
of nervous system depends upon proper or balanced secretion of glands.

According to the Tantra, the Muladhāra cakra is situated at the base of the spine of which prithvi or earth element is predominant, the supporter of all things. The Ayurveda Sūtraṇi also declares, the Muladhāra cakra is a supporter of all bodily substance, sapta dātus.

To show the predominance of gross element, Tantra declares this centre as the seat of prithvi tattva or earth element. Physiologically, this centre situated at the anus region and is also associated with the area of excretion of solid matter from body.

The Swādhishthāna cakra is located at the root of the genital organ of which water element is predominant. In body, all output of fluids, i.e. urination and discharges of semen takes place here.

10. Nanu yogāṇamspti mulādhāra mādibhūtam sakala dātutu pāṣakam tetal 3-90......||
The Ayurveda Sūtraṇi with commentry of Yogānandaṇāth. Edited by Dr. R. Sharma Easiry, p.141, Mysore 1922.
The Magipura cakra is believed to be situated at the navel region which is associated with the fire element. Physiologically, when the inner flame of fire (Jatharāgni) is properly regulated, it results into health. Otherwise, it can be the source of diseases.

The Anāhata cakra is located at the heart region. This is the centre where the air element is predominant. It is a centre of nutrition. Heart distributes purified blood sent to it by lungs to various parts of the body. The efficiency of lungs is very much needed for the purification of blood. This efficiency of lungs can be increased by prānā-yama which is highly related with the air element.

The Vīṣuddha cakra is located in the area of the throat. The element ether is predominant here. All vowels are located on this centre. Physiologically, this centre is considered as the centre of vocalization.

The Ājñā cakra is located between the two eyebrows. It is also known as the third eye. It is the place of the pineal gland. This centre controls our desires as well as gives us knowledge. The Pineal gland does this same work according to Allapathy.
The Sahasrāra cakra is located at the top of the skull, where the consciousness is evolved at the highest degrees. Physiologically, it is a place of the Pitutary gland.

According to the Allopathy, the Pitutary gland is located in between two brains and is known as master gland. Because it controls the functions of all other glands. The secretion which it releases are important from the point of view of maintenance and destruction of the body. It is a seat of the desire of reproduction also. Hence Tantra has aptly described it as kāmesvara.

The Tantric centres and nādis are very subtle in nature. So it is not proper to identify them with the gross physical system. Here we have mentioned it just to show the resemblance between the two systems namely Allopathy and Tantra.

The anatomy which is mentioned by Tantra is very subtle in nature and can be seen only through the yogic vision, and not by the dissection of the body.